Transforming Teaching Practices in the EFL Classroom

VIII Seminar for English Teaching Professionals

August 24th, 2024

Effective assessment practices in the EFL classroom

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AGENDA

- Assessment strategies and types of assessments

- CEFR guidelines

- Relation between teaching strategies and assessment strategies

- Other assessment considerations

Assessment is today's means of modifying tomorrow's instruction.

Carol Ann Tomlinson

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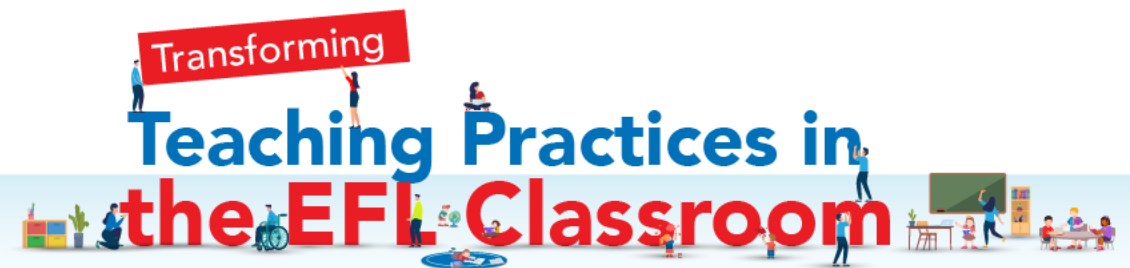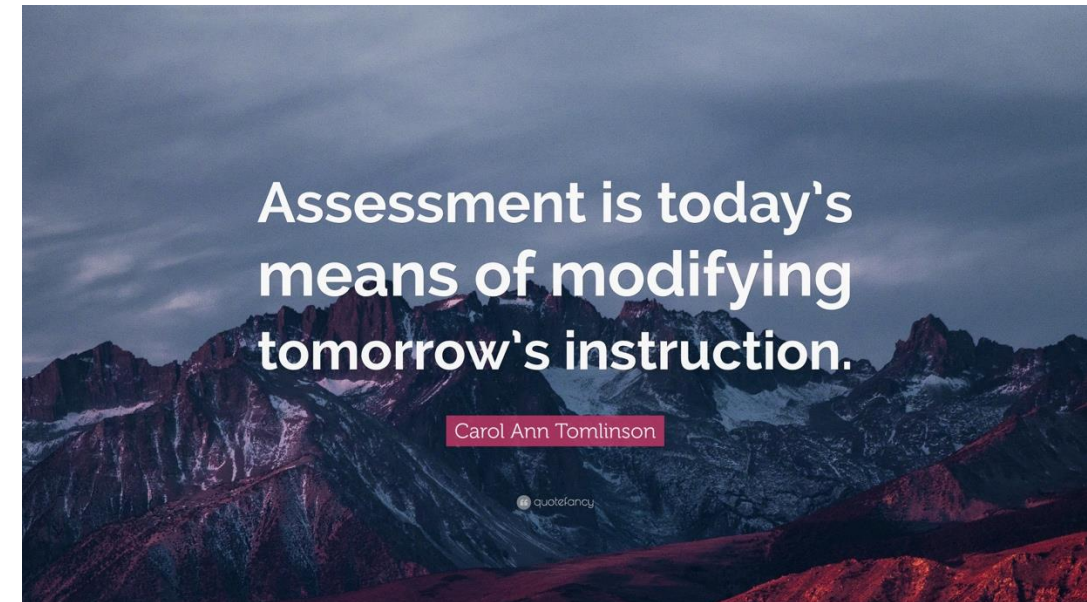
Teaching is ultimately an act of hope.
Every time I teach a lesson, I hope it will inspire learning. Every time I intervene with a struggling student, I hope it will change the trajectory of their path. The temptation to fall into cynicism is alive and well in education. *However, hope is a choice I make every day.*

—RACHEL JORGENSEN, Educator

- Mentimeter:

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https://www.menti.com/alkszrv8zgsi

- **What are Assessment strategies?**
- Methods we use in our classrooms to evaluate and track students' progress in our classrooms
- These need to align with our teaching goals.
- Examples: Quizzes, interviews, role-plays/acting, projects, presentations, tests, portfolios, dictations, classroom interactions and class activities, journals, vocab logs, essays, concept maps, discussion groups, debates, surveys.

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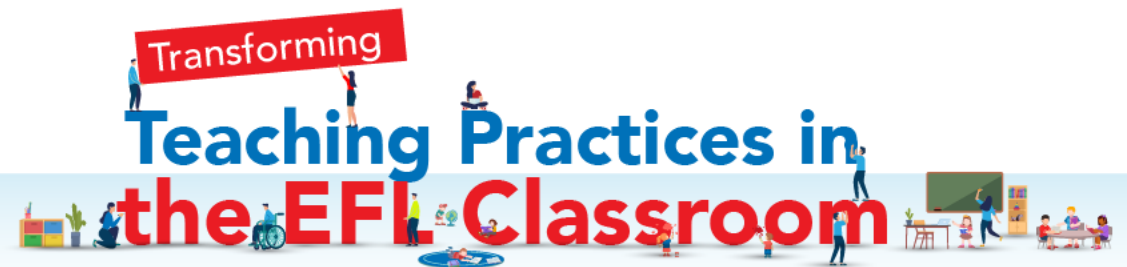
Decide on purpose of the evaluation

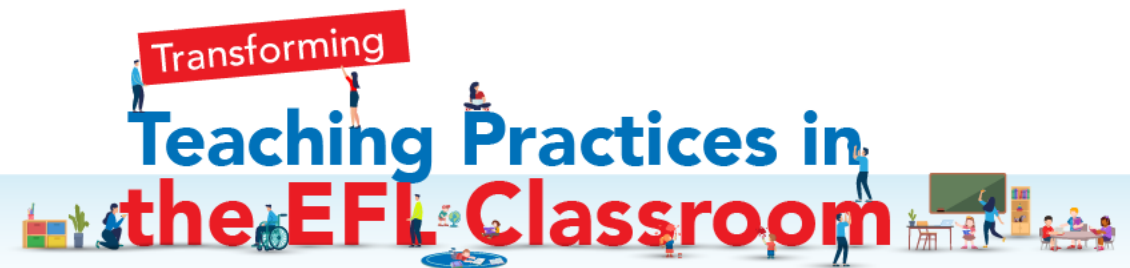| Diagnostic	Formative	Summative	Norm-referenced assessment	Criterion-Referenced Assessment	Benchmark Assessment
Assesses a student's strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction	Assesses a student's performance during instruction, and usually occurs regularly throughout the instruction process	Measures a student's achievement at the end of instruction.	Compares a student's performance against other students (i.e., most standardized tests)	Measures a student's performance against a specific standard. These can be formative assessments to guide the adjustment of teaching over time. Competency-based learning uses criterion-referenced assessments.	Evaluates student performance at periodic intervals. Can predict student performance on end-of-the-year summative assessments.

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Rubrics and Defining Courses/Projects by CEFR

- Creation, types and use of rubrics: How subjective are they? What makes a good rubric? Rubric plus explanation helps better achievement.

- Expectations of different professors

- Standardization in course programs. What levels do we expect from our students by year? (CEFR)

- **Example ESP descriptor from English for Economy 4 program:**

- *Al finalizar el curso, basado en los criterios del Marco Común Europeo para la Referencia de Lenguajes la persona estudiante debe tener un nivel B2. El nivel mencionado se clasifica y evalúa en las macro funciones de recepción, producción, interacción y mediación con énfasis en el componente de inglés para propósitos específicos que responde a los contenidos del curso.*
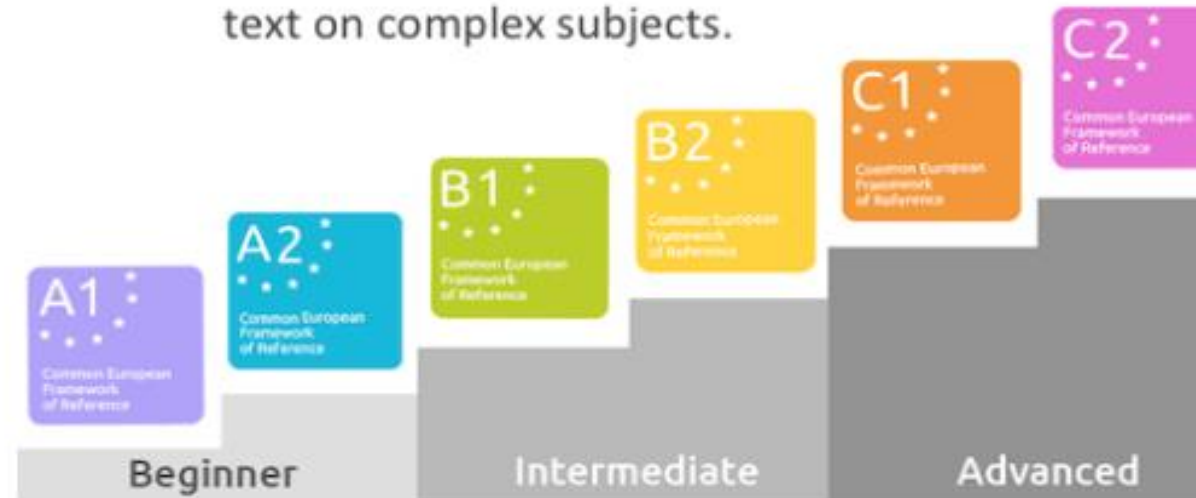
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B2 (Intermediate high/Adv Low) user is supposed to be able to understand and communicate on text regarding concrete and abstract subject, to communicate fluently with other native speaker without any stain on either sides.

- **What level are our students? Where should they be?**

- **A2** (ACTFL Inter Low/Novice High) can communicate more easily if the communication has a direct and simple exchange of information or on familiar matters.

- **B1** (Intermediate Mid) is able to produce simple connected text on familiar topics or personal interest and can describe experiences, events, dreams and give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

C1 (Advanced mid) is supposed to understand longer and demanding text of wide range and also recognize implicit meaning; express opinion and ideas on a certain topic without searching for expressions; use the language in both social, academic and professional areas; produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects.

A1 Common European Framework of Reference

A2 Common European Framework of Reference

B1 Common European Framework of Reference

B2 Common European Framework of Reference

C1 Common European Framework of Reference

C2 Common European Framework of Reference

Beginner Intermediate Advanced

Common European Framework: Guidelines

- Not focused on assessment but "learning, teaching, assessment". It raises questions, does not tell HOW to teach or assess.

- Brings a new, empowering vision of the learner. The CEFR presents the language user/learner as a "social agent", acting in the social world and exerting agency in the learning process.

- Paradigm shift in planning, teaching and assessing by promoting learner engagement and autonomy.

- Courses oriented towards real-life tasks and constructed around purposefully selected notions and functions. This promotes a "proficiency" perspective guided by "can do" descriptors rather than a "deficiency" perspective focusing on what the learners have not yet acquired
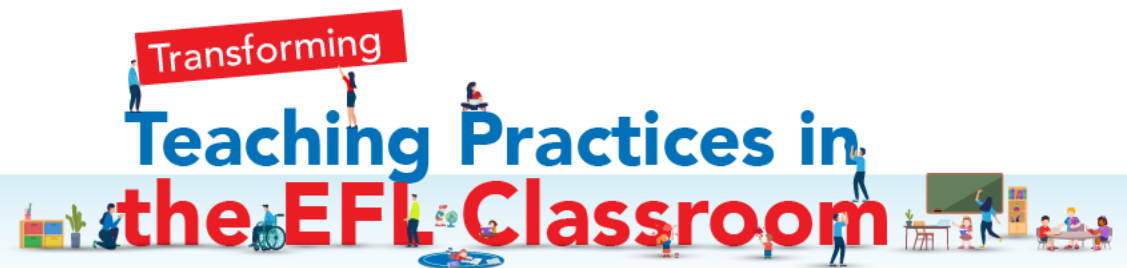
Communicative to the Action-Oriented Approach

- Action-oriented approach considers the learner as a social agent in classroom where learning is a social learning environment and develops linguistic and pragmatic skills besides communicative skills. The creation of social language environment where the learner will be able to jointly communicate with each other in the middle of pluricultural and plurilingual environment depends on teachers' skills and knowledge.

- Learners participate as active and autonomous agents through collaborative efforts while the mediator serves as a catalyst to the learning process. The action-oriented approach is task-oriented and can be applied utilizing methodologies such as project-based learning and integrated projects putting "the co-construction of meaning through interaction at the centre of the learning and teaching process" (CEFR, 2018, pg. 27).
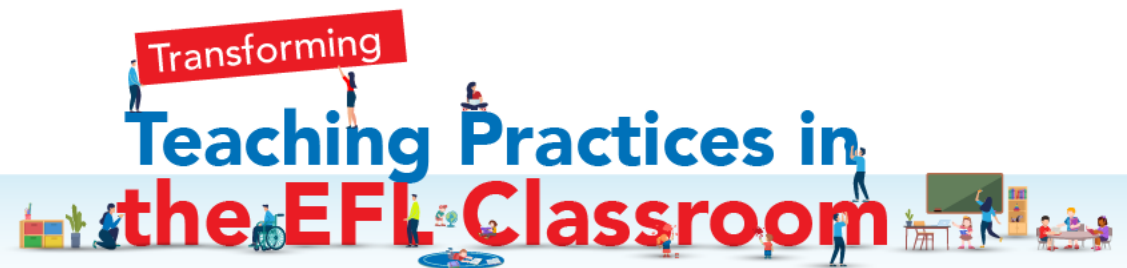
Shifts in the Framework

Involves learners in the learning process

Recognize the social nature of language learning and language use: the interaction between the social and the individual

Sees learners as language users: extensive use of the target language in the classroom – learning to use the language rather than just learning about the language.

Purposeful, collaborative tasks , the primary focus not language but product or outcome (planning an outing, making a poster, creating a blog, designing a festival or choosing a candidate). Descriptors help design tasks, observe and assess the language use of learners.

Puts the co-construction of meaning (through interaction) at the center of the learning and teaching process in a collaborative nature.
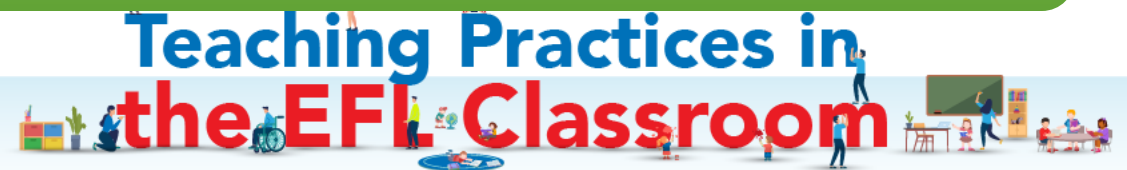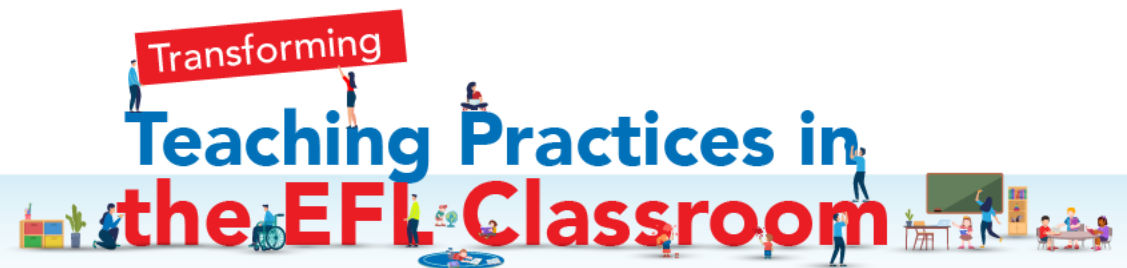
How do you apply these aspects? What challenges do you encounter? Have you had a successful experience applying this approach?

"Measure what you value instead of valuing only what you can measure."
Andy Hargreaves

Talk with in a small group.

Considerations for assessments

- What are the goals? Is this an effective evaluation for this goal?

- Proficiency vs accuracy?

- Communicative, task-based, action-oriented, authentic materials?

- Banking system of education vs. application of learned skills?

- Is this useful for their future? Will it help them in real-life?

- Is this evaluation technique mirrored in class activities? Have they practiced?

- Spontaneous vs. prepared production?

- Reading, writing, speaking, listening: Individual or integrated skills: Intensive, responsive, selective, extensive, interactive, imitative, perceptive

- Practicalities: time, number of students, grading requirements, the program itself and other professors
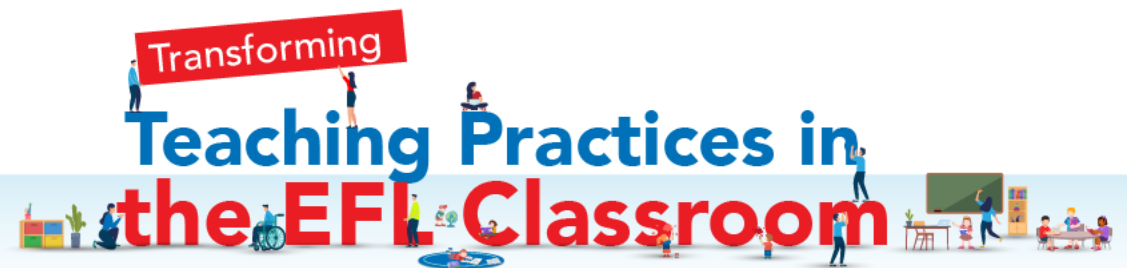
Artificial Intelligence in Assessment

- **How can we use it in assessment?**

- Magic School:
  https://app.magicschool.ai/tools/rubric-generator

- CourseBox: https://www.coursebox.ai

- Classpoint: https://www.classpoint.io

Plan to be better today, but don't ever plan to be finished.

Carol Ann Tomlinson

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