APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT

TEDU English Language School strongly believes in the importance and indicative value of student production. Without being restricted by writing or speaking conventions, students are guided and taught in such ways as to encourage as much production as possible. The driving force behind this belief is that, by the time students complete the preparatory program, they should be able to communicate confidently both in written and oral forms. The assessment system, therefore, is designed to reflect this approach.

Approach to the assessment of productive skills:

ELS places great emphasis on the assessment of Writing and Speaking skills as these are the skills enabling a clear assessment of whether students have been able to reach the expected language levels or not. Both speaking and writing tasks are designed in such ways that students can relate to the contexts personally so that they can generate more ideas, use the target language they have learned and try to get their points across. In other words, they fulfill the tasks with a clear purpose given to them, and an awareness of an audience which serves the purpose of helping them be more engaged in the tasks.

Some of the task types used in ELS tests of productive skills are:

• Writing texts at certain lengths

• Discussing scenarios using pictures

• Discussing situations

• Giving presentations

Approach to the assessment of receptive skills:

The TEDU ELS approach to the assessment of receptive skills is actually a reflection of the importance we attach to productive skills. Students' reading and listening abilities are tested to see if they have progressed in these areas, however, as mentioned before, the way they display comprehension needs to be done in a language-wise accurate manner. Although content related accuracy is prioritized in the marking of receptive skills tests, students are expected to do this in a grammatically correct manner. Otherwise, they are partly or totally penalized on the items/questions they have answered grammatically incorrect. This approach has resulted in quite a positive backwash effect on students because students know that whatever they say needs to be worded correctly and they need to be communicating with correct/clear English.

Task types:

Some of the task types used in ELS tests of receptive skills are:

• 3 or 4 option multiple choice,

• Open-ended,

• Matching information,

• Gap-fill,

• Choosing the best summary, etc.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM:

The values that shape the curriculum system (*reconstructionism, progressivism, and constructivism)* also shape our assessment system. Below is the way these educational values influence our assessment.

With reconstructionism, skills development, not just linguistic knowledge is emphasized. Therefore, we believe that an integral part of its mission is to teach students certain language skills that they will need in their departmental studies. To ensure this, traditional assessment, i.e. traditional skills exams, and grammar and vocabulary quizzes, is required.

However, we also acknowledge the fact that students learn in different ways, so they need to be tested in different ways. Progressivism emphasizes not only the outcomes but also the process of learning to value the experience of education, a learner-centered approach to give students a chance to learn by doing, encouraging students to be active participants shaping their own learning, pursuing answers through problem-solving and critical thinking. Constructivism emphasizes learning resulting from a personal interpretation of experience, and the use of collaboration by encouraging students to work together.

Lastly, in order to ensure reliable marking and high quality feedback for ELS students, after each exam, before papers are marked, and for the speaking exams before the exam day, all teachers have to attend standardization meetings in which the tasks are closely examined by all so that marker familiarization with expectations is made possible and sample student responses are discussed and marked.