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Using the CEFR for assessing discussion in class

Abstract

Die Durchführung von Diskussionen in der Klasse kann eine effektive Methode sein, die Fertigkeit Sprechen im Hochschulbereich sowohl im EAP- als auch im ESP-Unterricht zu vermitteln. Eine der größten Herausforderungen für Lehrer besteht jedoch darin, die Gesprächskompetenzen ihrer Studierenden zu bewerten. Dieser Beitrag konzentriert sich auf die Frage, wie der GER für die Gestaltung einer Diskussionsbewertungsskala verwendet werden kann. Der Beitrag basiert auf der Erfahrung der Referentin aus einem Kurs „Akademische Präsentation / Diskussionskompetenz für Sozial- und Politikwissenschaften (UNICert III-Kurs)“ an der Universität Bremen. Er enthält auch Forschungsergebnisse der Referentin aus ihrer Dissertation in Erziehungswissenschaften an der Open University (UK). Es werden praktische Richtlinien vorgeschlagen, um das Diskussionsbewertungsformular als Instrument für die formative und summative Beurteilung von Studierenden zu nutzen.

Conducting discussions in class can be an effective way of teaching speaking skills in tertiary education both in EAP and ESP classes. However, one of the main challenges for teachers is assessing the discussion competences of their students. This talk will focus on examining how CEFR can be used for designing a discussion assessment form. The talk is based on the speaker's experience of teaching a course of 'Advanced Academic Presentation/Discussion Skills for Social and Political Sciences (UNiCert III course)' at the University of Bremen. It also includes the results of the speaker's research conducted for the degree of Doctorate in Education at the Open University (UK). Practical guidelines will be suggested for using the discussion assessment form as an instrument for both formative and summative assessment of students. Examples from videos will demonstrate how cross-cultural communication can be taught and taken into account in assessment forms.

My talk was focused on analysing how the book 'Common European Framework of Reference' can be used for selecting an approach to teaching and for devising an assessment form. I was sharing my own experience in teaching and designing an assessment form for evaluating argumentative discussions in EAP and ESP courses.

I am working at Bremen University teaching English to students of political science and sociology as well as EAP and working on the scales for assessing a discussion was a part of my action research conducted for the Doctorate in Education (Makarova, 2013).

In order to assess students' performance we need to understand what is it that we are assessing.

Which elements of discourse are particularly important for an interaction to be successful?

Let me start by looking at how we select the material and tasks for teaching. Of course, we need to select materials that match the level and needs of our students. Many students, who come to study in EAP classes when asked about their objectives, cannot specify what exactly they need to improve. Last year my colleague from the Language Centre Mrs Kayser (Kayser, Makarova, 2016) conducted a survey of EAP teachers and learners in this language centre. In chart 1 here from her survey you can see that 52 per cent of respondents answered that they wanted to improve their English in general. Many identified vocabulary and grammar as the most important areas for improvement. Which is truly important. But what we as teachers understand is that they need to be able to use the language for oral and written communication in their area of studies and work. So they need to know how to create texts or to participate in oral communicative

References

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