

Chapter 11: Episode 1, Tasks 1 and 2

Task 1: Analyze the following traditional test given to a French 1 class

1) Is there a context. If there is none, what context could be applied?

In the contemporary assessment paradigm, there is no place for decontextualized test of discrete language elements. In order to be useful to the language development of our students, assessments need to be based in some form of context so that the language used is meaningful and based on real life situations. Instead, this test measures the amount of knowledge accrued on discrete and varied grammatical elements. If a context were to be development from the material used in the test, one possible option could be Travel or Visiting a city.

2) What knowledge and skills are being evaluated?

Tests need to be contextualized and engage students in some form of meaning making and in meaningful communication with others. This test does not do that but instead is measuring student knowledge of discrete grammatical and vocabulary items like numbers, verb conjugations, tenses and translation. Furthermore, the questions asked only required one specific response.

3) How is the learner asked to use the target language

Due to the fact that the test's questions are based on discrete language elements that only have one possible answer, the main skill students are asked to use is recognition which at times can fall into the interpretive mode of communication. However, the other two modes of communication (interpersonal and presentational) are not being used. Furthermore, it is

important to point out that even if a learner scores a perfectly on this test, one cannot assume that the learner will be able to use the language covered in the test in a real-life communicative situation.

4) Does the test address standards-based competencies?

In a standards-based program, assessments feature a series of interrelated tasks that reflect the three modes of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive and Presentational), more than one goal area and the integration of authentic material. Single written answers, like those in this test, are not based on the standards. Today's assessments are comprised of performance-based tasks that reflect communicative activity we would use in real world situations.

5) Why is this test no considered performance-based?

The test is not performance-based because its only objective is to evaluate learner achievement and assign grades. Performance-based assessment deepens understanding and involves multiple perspectives whereas this test is very one dimensional and is only measuring discrete grammatical and vocabulary elements.

6) What might this test reflect concerning the classroom practices of the test designer

This test raises the possibility of if there is a clear curriculum that class follows. It also appears that the test does not comprise a clear thematic unit. It also does not do anything to enhance learner communicative ability or use authentic materials suggesting that the course may not be adhering to standards.

Task 2: Adapt this test and make it a contextualized task-based performance

In order to make this test contextualized and performance-based, the test will have to be restructured so that learners use their prior knowledge and skills to create a product or a response. In addition, the various grammatical and vocabulary elements of the current test can be integrated into a single context that reflects a real-life situation. An example of the test restructured in this way could be as follows:

Chapter 6 Test, French 1

You and a Friend went to Paris for 3 days last Summer. Describe your time in Paris. Make sure to include your itinerary over the 3 days. Describe 3 modes of transport you used to travel around the city making sure to include the verbs we just learned regarding transportation and getting in and out of buses, taxis and trains. Describe one day trip you did that required you to purchase train tickets the price of those tickets and as well as the dinner you had on your last night in fancy restaurant.

How to grade this performance-based test

I would use a rubric to grade this test. The rubric would be based on 4 criteria: 1) Quality of writing, 2) including all the criteria, 3) correct usage of the past tense, 4) correct usage of the vocabulary we recently learned for traveling and cities. Each criteria will be graded with one of the following: Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, Poor.