Formulating and implementing communicative tests of foreign language proficiency

Abstract

The communicative approach to language *teaching* is now the most widely accepted pedagogical methodology in EFL classrooms around the world, communicative *testing* has not accompanied communicative teaching. Instead,

educators teaching according to the communicative approach in their regular classes often use more traditional styles of testing. The communicative approach to language learning and teaching involves learners engaging in real-world, authentic communication rather than rote learning such as memorizing and drilling of grammar structures. Communicative testing requires students to successfully communicate in the target language in order to fulfill the requirements of the test. This presentation will define the characteristics of a communicative test. It will then give reasons why communicative testing is superior in the communicative classroom to earlier forms of testing. It will discuss how to assess student performance on communicative tests. It will also suggest how communicative testing can be used in a variety of learning and teaching contexts from Content and Integrated Language Learning (CLIL) to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to more traditional classrooms where curricula revolve around language structures or communicative functions. Communicative testing tests the real communication that learners do in a communicative classroom and can be profitably administered in a variety of learning environments.