

Innovative Approaches to Student Knowledge Assessment

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Annotation: *The article deals with the modern conditions of teachers using innovative ways to assess students' achievements, providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate the necessary skills and key competencies.*

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The revision of target goals and priorities in determining educational outcomes leads to the emergence of new approaches to assessing the quality of students' academic achievements. The level of development of universal learning skills and abilities cannot be assessed using the traditional system, which makes the transition to innovative technologies logical, as their mechanisms allow for evaluating the effectiveness of learning based on personal results.

The vector of the modern approach to education is its practical and activity-oriented focus, aiming not only at knowledge acquisition but also at the ability to apply it in practice. In this context, new forms of assessment are "adjusted" not to the information reproduced by the student, but to the independent product created by them, ideally having practical value.

The modernization of the educational process, and consequently, the assessment system, is carried out based on the system of key competencies.

The term "competence" comes from the Latin *competentia*, meaning a range of issues in which a person is well-informed, possesses knowledge, and has experience. A competent person in a specific field has the necessary knowledge and abilities that enable them to make reasoned judgments about the area and act effectively within it.

Different sources highlight different groups of key competencies, for example, those outlined by Khutorskoy:

- **Value-Meaning Competencies.** The student's ability to see and understand the surrounding world, navigate within it, realize their role and purpose, and make decisions. This competency determines the overall program of their life activities.
- **General Cultural Competencies.** The range of issues in which the student should be well-informed, possessing knowledge and experience in practice. This includes the features of national and universal culture, the cultural foundations of family, social, and public phenomena and traditions, the role of science and religion in human life, their influence on the world, as well as competencies in domestic and cultural-recreational spheres.
- **Learning-Cognitive Competency.** The student acquires creative skills in productive activities: extracting knowledge from reality, mastering methods of action in non-standard situations, heuristic problem-solving methods, and the ability to organize independent cognitive activities. They learn to

distinguish facts from assumptions, master measurement skills, and use other methods of knowledge acquisition.

- **Information Competencies.** Skills related to working with information in academic subjects and educational areas, as well as in the surrounding world. Mastery of modern information tools (television, tape recorder, email, media, Internet), the ability to independently search for, analyze, and select necessary information, organize, transform, store, and transmit it.
- **Social-Labor Competencies.** The student learns to fulfill the role of a citizen, observer, voter, consumer, buyer, and producer. The student acquires the minimum necessary skills for life in modern society, including social activity and functional literacy.
- **Communicative Competencies,** which include sociocultural, speech, compensatory, and language competencies. This includes knowledge of necessary languages, methods of interacting with people and distant events, skills for working in a group, and mastery of various social roles in a collective.

Thus, the competence-based approach in education is based on the following principles:

1. Education for life, for successful socialization in society, and personal development.
2. Assessment to provide the student with the opportunity to plan their educational outcomes and improve them through continuous self-assessment.
3. Various forms of organizing independent, meaningful activities for students based on their own motivation and responsibility for the outcome.

In connection with these principles, the approach to assessment changes.

What is the function of assessment in the modern school? This measure allows the student not only to assess the degree of mastery of narrow subject knowledge and skills but also to evaluate the readiness for moving to the next stage of education. It is an indicator of the student's personal achievements in various aspects of their academic activity.

The innovative approach to assessment requires a radical change in the traditional philosophy of assessment according to the following system of projections:

Traditional vs. Innovative Approaches to Assessment

1. Discreteness – Continuity

In traditional assessment, learning is seen as a discrete process: it is completed and fixed at the final evaluation stage.

The core idea of the new approach is that learning is recognized as a continuous process, and instead of traditional assessment as a measurement of the final result, the focus shifts to assessing the process of movement towards the result. It becomes evident that students have the right to make mistakes, and when corrected, they are considered progress in learning.

2. Fragmentation – Systematic Approach

Traditional assessment is usually focused on determining the level of mastery of subject knowledge and skills: it is often tied to specific topics within individual subjects. This knowledge is mostly fragmented and narrowly specialized.

The new approach to assessment implies measuring the development of systemic interdisciplinary knowledge and generalized skills. The assessment becomes multidimensional and interdisciplinary, focused on measuring not "bookish" but practical knowledge.

Its tools are developed based on the practical and applied nature of knowledge and skills, emphasizing their application in real-life situations.

3. Singularity – Multiplicity

The tools of the traditional assessment system are mostly limited: they include either independent tasks or tests, which follow the same format—justifying the solution process or choosing an answer from a set of options. Moreover, practice shows that traditional assessment tends to measure a specific type of intelligence (logical-mathematical, linguistic, etc.), is predominantly individual, and does not account for group learning achievements.

The new approach assumes multiple procedures and methods of assessment: variability in tools and means, measurement of various forms of intelligence, and so on.

4. Quantitative – Qualitative

Traditional quantitative assessment does not always reflect the real creative abilities of students. Moreover, in some cases, it distorts the picture as it is more related to the level of diligence and discipline of the student rather than their creative qualities. Important characteristics, such as the student's communication skills, ability to work in a team, attitude towards the subject, level of effort in mastering the subject, and individual thinking style, are often overlooked .

The qualitative assessment information is taken into account, derived from observations, conversations, interviews with the student, and analysis of their cognitive activities. The qualitative component significantly enriches the assessment, reflecting the "invisible" aspects of the student's cognitive activity, providing a comprehensive view of their abilities.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative elements in subject assessment shifts the focus from the student's immediate knowledge as the object of the learning process to their prospective potential as a subject of continuous self-education.

5. Rigidity – Flexibility

The traditional system is rigidly determined by directive standards (e.g., time constraints, etc.). Undoubtedly, there are positive aspects to this, such as helping to standardize assessment and make it more objective. However, the rigidity of assessment leads to several negative phenomena. For example, students develop a "dependency" mindset: they learn only what is assessed, and those who work quickly (sometimes at the expense of quality) are favored. It does not take into account that the creative factor always contradicts the pre-set boundaries in the activity. The new approach suggests assessing everything that the student knows and can do, with encouragement for going beyond the established curriculum and standards. Time is no longer one of the main criteria, especially for creative tasks and projects. It gives way to the factor of educational effectiveness. The transition to a flexible assessment system reconsiders the organizational aspects of traditional education (such as scheduling, forming class groups, etc.).

6. Artificial – Natural

The procedure for most traditional forms of assessment is artificial and, moreover, often stressful for students. Typically, it is strictly regulated by place and time, and conducted under heightened teacher control. In such conditions, most students (due to excessive anxiety, time pressure, and other circumstances) cannot demonstrate even the knowledge and skills they actually possess.

Objective assessment should be conducted in natural conditions for the learner that reduce stress and tension. Therefore, the new approach emphasizes non-traditional forms of assessment such as conversation, interviews, and dialogue, among others.

7. Assessment – Self-Assessment

In traditional assessment, all control mechanisms are in the hands of the teacher: they point out the student's knowledge gaps and deficiencies. When performing independent or controlled tasks, interaction between the teacher and the student is often excluded.

The new approach encourages peer evaluation, recognizes the right of students to self-assess, and enhances self-control and responsibility for the learning process and results. The teacher's role as judge and controller is transformed into that of a consultant and helper. Their interaction with students does not end during assessment but continues as a natural extension of cooperation in mastering new knowledge. The student independently and consciously identifies their gaps and works to eliminate them, seeking advice and necessary help from the teacher.

The concepts discussed form the structure of the innovative assessment system, set the general framework for its functioning, and simultaneously serve as criteria for the success and completeness of each specific educational system, one of the main subsystems of which is the assessment system.

The second component of the innovative assessment activity is the introduction of the rules for the technology of assessing educational achievements (academic success) of students, developed by a team of authors, methodologists, and teachers from the "School 2100" Educational System.

Assessment Technology – This is a technology of action in assessment situations, described in the form of rules for each type of case:

- **"What to assess?"** – Any action, especially successful ones, is assessed, but a mark is given only for solving a complete task, i.e., the ability to use knowledge.
- **"Who assesses?"** – Both the teacher and the student, when possible, determine the grade in a dialogue (external assessment + self-assessment). The student can argue the mark given, provided they have a valid reason.
- **"When to assess?"** – Each academic task or set of tasks demonstrating mastery of a specific skill is given a separate mark. For tasks completed when studying a new topic, the mark is given only at the student's discretion, as they have the right to make mistakes while mastering the skills and knowledge of the topic. For tasks in a review (control) assignment at the end of the topic, marks are given to all students, as each student must demonstrate their mastery of the skills and knowledge of the topic. The student cannot refuse this mark but has the right to retake the assessment.
- **"Where to record the results?"** – Marks (or part of them) are recorded in the requirements table (teacher's working journal, student's diary) in the column of the skill that was the focus during the solution of the specific task.
- **"By what criteria to assess?"** – The student's assessment is determined by a universal scale of three levels of success, which is then related to the score. Final assessments and marks (for the quarter, semester, or trimester) are recommended to be determined not just for the time segment of the school year (number of lessons in the quarter), but for the academic module (block of topics) studied during this period of time. The final grade reflects the level of achievement demonstrated by the student during this period.

The final grade is an indicator of the level of educational achievements [1].

One of the main requirements for innovative assessment activities is for the student to master assessment skills (reflection), which allows them to become a true subject of the assessment process and to independently perform the corresponding actions without the teacher's intervention. Self-assessment as a subject of activity is, in essence, the process of an individual determining their potential for real (or planned) involvement in a particular type of activity.

In innovative learning, various methods of assessment are used:

1. Assessment of students' activity in a project.
(In the new Standards project, one of the key components is the completion of an educational project by students);
2. Assessment of the ability to work with various search systems;
3. Assessment of the ability to work with information;
4. Assessment of the ability to present information;
5. Assessment of the student's skills and abilities in the form of a "Portfolio";
6. Assessment of their own educational outcomes – essay;
7. Self-assessment of the student – reflection.

Thus, under modern conditions, teachers are required to use innovative methods for assessing student achievements, providing students with opportunities to demonstrate the necessary skills and key competencies.

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