Young Learners

Name

Institution
Young Learners

Question (2): What are the best tools you advice instructors to use when assessing their young learners of E.F.L.?

Assessment is viewed as an essential part of instruction. It helps teachers to make decisions about students’ progress and achievement in EFL classes. I believe that the success of any assessment is based on the right selection of the assessment tools. Language teachers used to assess children using traditional tests, which may cause anxiety and frustrate children. It makes the learning environment threatening and may hinder children’s learning process. Fortunately, there is a shift from this type of collective assessment to an informal method of assessing learners that are constant and formative. These changes are aligned with the new movements towards learner-centered and communicative approaches in teaching English as a foreign language.

Language teachers should look for new assessment tools that are effective in evaluating the performance of their students. As for me, I think that observation is the most useful tool for assessing young learners. English teachers can create their own checklists and observe their students while doing some learning tasks like reading, writing, and speaking activities. By doing this, they will be able to monitor how student participates in individual, pair, and group work. The key point of observation is that children are not aware they are being assessed. Moreover, it is a highly effective method for assessing personal and communication skills.

Assessment may include some performance activities such as interviews, role plays, presentations, describing, and retelling. For example, young learners may choose pictures to talk about or describe their families. The teacher works as a guide and asks questions so as to encourage students use their pre-taught language. Role-play would be also beneficial during this process because it includes both oral and physical activities. Role-plays can be effective in reducing anxiety and building confidence in children. They can also increase motivation and interaction among students. Furthermore, oral presentations are very important in assessing young learners’ oral and written performances. Children can read poems, role plays or tell stories.

I would also recommend teachers to provide children with opportunities to assess their own abilities. This will help them to develop the habit of monitoring their own progress. Besides, it will be valuable if learners are involved in assessing each other’s performances during pair or group work activities. Teachers may study students’ portfolios, as well. A portfolio means a collection of student’s work and evidence of student achievement over time (Pinter, 2009). This way, teachers can measure the extent to which the students have mastered what they have been taught and then use that information to plan the future teaching to be more effective.

To conclude, I am confident that these ways of assessment are very useful. They consider different needs, skills, abilities, interests and learning styles of students. They also try to make the assessment as a part of daily learning activities. In addition, these tools of assessment provide valuable information concerning young learners’ performance.
References