

## CHALLENGES OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN ONLINE LEARNING

## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ПІД ЧАС ДИСТАНЦІЙНОГО НАВЧАННЯ

*Knowledge assessment is an important aspect of the educational system, as it allows educators to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods and the understanding of the students. It helps to identify areas of strength and weakness in the learning process, and enables educators to provide individualized support to students who may be struggling. It is also important to note that assessment should not be the only measure of a student's success. While it can provide valuable feedback, it should not be used as the sole determinant of a student's understanding or potential. Other factors, such as creativity, critical thinking skills, and the ability to work collaboratively, are also important for success in the real world. It should be balanced with other forms of evaluation to provide a comprehensive understanding of a student's learning and potential.*

*Assessing student learning in online settings presents unique challenges and opportunities. One of the most critical aspects of the educational process is verifying and evaluating educational achievements, which should be done remotely. The analysis of foreign sources' literature only confirms that the issue of online learning assessment is becoming increasingly significant and must be explored and strengthened. Despite the constant changes and crises, knowledge assessment is an integral part of the educational system. Simultaneously, the search for the best assessment framework is ongoing, particularly in online education. This study examined assessment techniques used in ESP classes and how the online environment supports or restricts different techniques. Four departments were surveyed to determine the assessment techniques used to assess student learning and the challenges university ESP teachers face; written assignments, tests, and presentations fall into three categories. Nine ESP teachers participated in a survey that included open-ended questions on the challenges of the online assessment. Findings revealed the challenges that emerged due to the lack of contact between teachers and students, academic integrity, time management concerns and teacher workload.*

**Key words:** online assessment, assessment methods, challenges of online assessment, Ukraine, university.

*Оцінювання знань є важливим аспектом освітньої системи, оскільки дозволяє педагогам оцінити ефективність своїх методів навчання та розуміння учнями. Це допомагає визначити сильні та слабкі сторони процесу навчання та дає змогу викладачам надавати індивідуальну підтримку учням, які можуть*

*відчувати труднощі. Важливо також зазначити, що оцінка не повинна бути єдиним критерієм успішності учня. Хоча це може надати цінний зворотний зв'язок, його не слід використовувати як єдиний визначальний фактор розуміння або потенціалу студента. Інші фактори, такі як креативність, навички критичного мислення та здатність працювати разом, також важливі для успіху в реальному світі. Його слід збалансувати з іншими формами оцінювання, щоб забезпечити всебічне розуміння навчання та потенціалу студента.*

*Оцінювання навчання студентів в онлайн-режимі створює унікальні виклики та можливості. Одним із найважливіших аспектів навчального процесу є перевірка та оцінювання навчальних досягнень, яка має здійснюватися дистанційно. Аналіз іноземної літератури лише підтверджує, що питання онлайн-оцінювання навчання стає все більш актуальним і потребує вивчення та посилення. Незважаючи на постійні кризи, пошук найкращого методу оцінювання знань залишається невід'ємною частиною системи освіти. Навіть коли створюються нові системи, існуючі традиції зберігаються. У цьому дослідженні розглядаються різні методи оцінювання, які використовуються на курсі англійської мови професійного спрямування на чотирьох факультетах одного університету в Україні, і те, як онлайн-середовище підтримує або обмежує ці методи. Для того, щоб визначити методи, які застосовуються для оцінювання навчання студентів. Було опитано викладачів англійської мови професійного спрямування університету з чотирьох факультетів. Письмові завдання, онлайн-обговорення, тести та презентації – усі вони належали до однієї з трьох категорій. Дев'ять викладачів англійської мови професійного спрямування взяли участь в опитуванні, яке включало відкриті запитання про проблеми та найкращі практики онлайн-оцінювання. В висновках зазначено проблеми, які виникли в результаті впливу фізичної відстані між викладачем і студентами, академічної доброчесності, проблем з робочим навантаженням і управлінням часом, а також постійної вимоги збирати та надавати відгуки щодо ряду даних оцінювання. Дослідження завершується рекомендаціями щодо об'єднання результатів цього дослідження та тих, що містяться в літературі.*

**Ключові слова:** онлайн-оцінювання, методи оцінювання, виклики онлайн-оцінювання, Україна, університет.

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**Introduction.** Due to the pandemic outbreak, online education has become more popular worldwide in various countries' educational systems. This method of education is not new, but it has only recently received widespread acceptance. The educational process entails collecting intermediate outcomes that is significant for measuring students' achievements. First and foremost, this occurs in the form of student evaluation. The assessment is a collection of objective and subjective elements that, when combined,

evaluate the level of assimilation and consolidation of educational content. Identifying the obstacles that university professors encounter and emphasizing the practices they have established in this setting will allow us to provide testable strategies for practical online assessment. Developing an efficient evaluation method is a complicated, multi-level process that requires the involvement of the most significant number of stakeholders associated with the organization and the outcomes of academic activities. In addition,

constant changes in professional training requirements need to implement a dynamic assessment system in educational institutions, which should strive for coherence with societal demands and the profession's future. This includes how teachers assess student progress with formative and summative assessments, how they distribute scored tasks over an ESP course, and the techniques they implement to overcome these hurdles.

**The aim of the study.** This research aims to investigate the ESP curriculum and what forms of assessments were used in ESP courses and to report on obstacles among ESP teachers assessing online at one Ukrainian university.

**Theoretical framework and research methods.** The analysis of scientific sources made it possible to consider investigation of the evaluation concerns, to single out the fields of scientific interest of researchers, identify frequently used assessment techniques. Domestic and foreign researchers have shown considerable interest in these issues (Hannafin, Oliver, Hill, Glazer and Sharma, Swan, Gaytan, McEwen, and Meyer). Vonderwell and Boboc support this idea of the evaluation concerns of seven teachers who transitioned their face-to-face courses to an online setting [2]. The instructors were concerned about five issues: time management; student responsibility and initiative, the difficulty of the content, and informal evaluation. Hannafin, Oliver, Hill, Glazer and Sharma claimed that distant assessment techniques involve challenging observational assessments [1]. Other issues raised in the literature on assessment in online learning include concerns about academic integrity [3] and the difficulties in assessing online discussion and collaboration [4]. Providing common forms and methods for assessing student's knowledge during distance learning is a significant concern related to using modern information technology to manage the educational process. Based on literature data, the article

"Ensuring control of students' knowledge in distance learning" presents the main functions and didactic principles of knowledge control from the perspective of distance learning, as well as the essential components of the successful organization of the pedagogical process and the components of the learning management system. There needs to be more research on the types and distribution of assessments teachers use for formative and summative assessment during online education. Swan analyzed online courses and noted approaches such as discussion, papers, other written assignments, projects, quizzes and examinations, and group work among those that exist [5]. Half of the courses employed were written assignments, examinations, or quizzes. Gaytan and McEwen asked online teachers to indicate evaluation strategies that they considered especially useful in an online setting [6]. They are projects, self-assessments, peer evaluations, peer evaluations with feedback, exams and quizzes. A greater understanding of language teachers' evaluation issues and practical techniques may shed light on the next steps in developing a framework for researching and practising online teaching. As a result, the following research issues were addressed in this study concerning assessment methods used in ESP classes and the helpful digital environment for specific assessment methods.

The study was carried out in the autumn of 2022 in English departments at a university in Ukraine. Participants included ESP teachers teaching ESP courses in different departments (Economics, Biology, Geography, and Geology). The aim was to examine syllabi to determine what assessments were employed in ESP courses. Questionnaires with open-ended questions were distributed to ESP teachers to learn about the obstacles they faced and the techniques they thought were beneficial in the online evaluation. The previous two years' curriculums were reviewed, and assessments were noted. The following inquiries

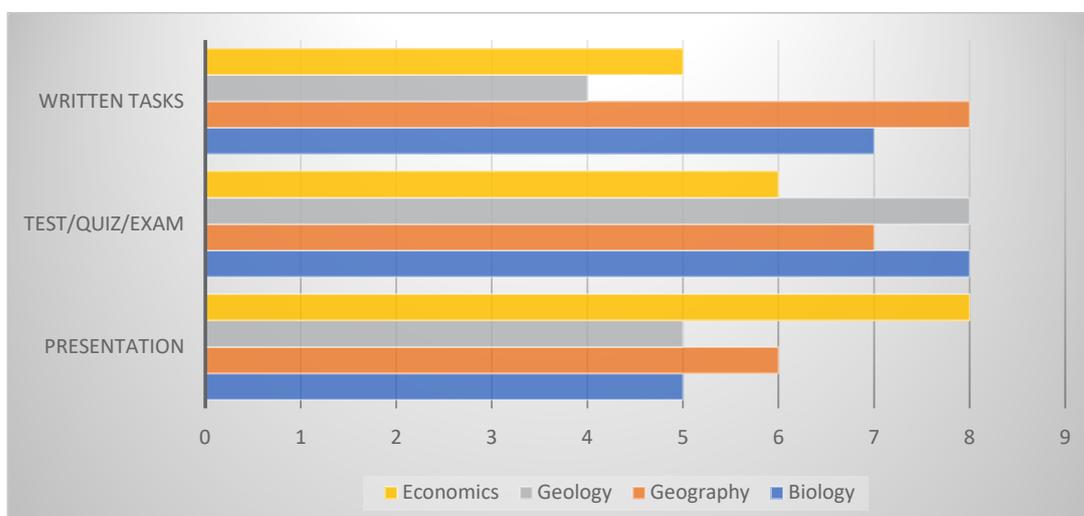


Fig. 1. Assessment categories, frequency of use

were made: a) What assessment challenges do you have while teaching online? b) What online assessment techniques have you found to be especially effective?

**Results.** The syllabus review data analysis began with creating a frame with scored assessments for each ESP course in the sample. The evaluations were then categorized, most of which are found in the literature. This phase identified three categories: written assignment, test/quiz/exam, and presentation.

The collected data revealed the existence of three types of assessment at ESP courses: written assignments, tests/quizzes/exams, and presentations. ESP instructors employed various methods of assessment, depending on the faculty. The written task was the most commonly utilized evaluation across the Biology and Geography departments' ESP courses due to the content of the course. However, these were less commonly used assessments at Geology and Economics faculties. Case-study tasks and critical analysis parts were divided into two divisions. Students were randomly allocated to small groups and asked to offer peer review of writing, similar to a synchronous discussion. Essay assessments also allow to remark on students' development, the quality of their thinking, and the depth of their learning. Essay assessments only ask a few questions, and their content validity could be higher. Moreover, subjectivity or discrepancies in scoring undermine the reliability of essay assessments. Written tasks contributed 8% to the final course mark.

The test/quiz/exam category was frequently used by ESP teachers across Biology and Geology departments, with a contribution of 10% to a final score for the course. However, this assessment method was rare among ESP teachers of the Economics and Geography departments. Multiple-choice or short-answer questions are excellent for measuring students' mastery of particular facts and specifics. In contrast, essay questions measure literacy, the potential to integrate and interpret the data, and the ability to apply information to new contexts. Short-answer questions may require one or two words or a lengthy paragraph, depending on your goals. Short-answer exams are more accessible to write than multiple-choice examinations, but they take longer to score. It correlates with the challenges teachers face during online assessment as workload and time management.

The last category consists of student presentations. The students frequently used Microsoft PowerPoint and Prezi to present the presentation. In all presentation sessions, students had to be prepared to answer questions concerning the subject they presented to their peers. This category was frequently employed in the syllabi of the faculty of Economics ESP course. The presentation session was an output of the projects. This category accounted for an average of 20% of the final score.

Survey responses were evaluated for themes that may be used to categorize difficulties and beneficial techniques. Concerns and problems backed all three assessment categories listed above. Three critical themes emerged from the challenges research: lack of contact between a teacher and a student, academic integrity, workload and time management. Participants agreed that evaluations should be carried out to promote academic integrity. To prevent cheating, educational institutions must have plagiarism detection software in place. Cut and paste information may be easily detected when the assignments are processed through such a system. Teachers should be encouraged to build a social presence and engage with students, contributing to their quality of life and their students' overall growth. Engagement in self-assessment exercises, collaborative problem-solving assignments, and teacher-student interactions on several occasions so that teachers may gain relevant and appropriate insights into their learning process. Systematically planning and delivering instructional materials can assist teachers in selecting the most appropriate assessment techniques and technology to improve learning and conducting frequent peer reviews where students are invited to assess the work of their peers. Such activities can encourage students to benefit from one another. Furthermore, well-planned group projects and discussions can assist students in mastering course material and improving their teamwork abilities.

#### **Conclusions and prospects of further research.**

This study aimed to reveal the challenges of online assessment ESP teachers encountered in online studies. The current research contributed to the existing literature on ESP online assessment challenges encountered in online studies. ESP teachers have identified various assessment activities, from monitoring students for cheating to providing synchronous or asynchronous feedback on students' work.

The limitations of the current study should be acknowledged when interpreting its results. However, these restrictions may also pave the path for more study. The sample size is the present study's biggest drawback. Nevertheless, this study suggests some potential future research areas. Teachers, in particular, are concerned about student evaluation during online study.

Furthermore, because online contact is so often utilized as an assessment approach in online learning, a more significant study into how to apply it to handle some of the issues highlighted in this work is likely helpful. Finally, an examination of teachers' assessment thinking and decision-making processes, particularly the method by which they judge the effectiveness of their tests, might be valuable. The study's results can assist university teachers as it provides a clear view of the challenges during the online assessment.

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