An Approach from Formative to Constructive Evaluation through an Autonomous Learning Process

Propuesta de evaluación formativa a constructiva a través del proceso de aprendizaje autónomo

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The present text seeks to encourage a reflection around the meaning and possibilities of the evaluation of learning from a formative view and to focus on the aim to move towards a constructive evaluation that responds to the necessities of our students. This implies a continuous process that could be a fundamental source to get teachers aware of their role as a guide and, most importantly, help students make relevant decisions to achieve meaningful English learning through autonomy, a main element of constructive evaluation.

Key words: Autonomy, constructive evaluation, formative evaluation, learning English

El presente texto quiere propiciar una reflexión en torno al sentido y posibilidades de la evaluación de aprendizajes desde una perspectiva formativa y la necesidad de movernos hacia una evaluación constructiva que responda a las necesidades de nuestros estudiantes. Esto acarrea un proceso de evaluación continuo, que ha de constituirse en un recurso fundamental para que el profesorado sea consciente de su papel como guía y, lo que es más importante, para ayudar a los estudiantes a tomar

decisiones importantes tendientes al aprendizaje significativo del inglés a través de la autonomía, un elemento central de la evaluación constructiva.

Palabras claves: aprendizaje del inglés, autonomía, evaluación constructiva, evaluación formativa

Introduction

This text aims to encourage reflection around the meaning and possibilities of the evaluation of different kinds of learning from a formative perspective and, additionally, the necessity of one's moving toward a more complex kind of evaluation that responds to the necessities of our students. This is understood to be a constructive evaluation, which implies continuous assessment and one that has to be established within a basic resource that aids the teaching staff, but, especially, for the student to make decisions which lead to improving her or his English learning.

As such, an evaluation of the student's learning, which must be concerned with both the process and results, should include both a constructive aim as well as a formative one.

On the other hand, it has been considered very important to make a brief recap of evaluation throughout history; this perspective enables one to have a glimpse at the transformations this has undergone and, as such, readopt some of the methods utilized in teaching English; for example, illustrations of the evolution of the evaluation of learners concerning this area.

Afterwards, we will take up what is understood as formative evaluation, its meaning and possibilities. Then, we will thoroughly study the importance of the passage from the formative evaluation to constructive evaluation, understanding it as the evaluation from a perspective of autonomy and complexity.

Background of the Concept of Evaluation and the Evaluation of Learners

Education has always been viewed as a fundamental part of human growth. What is interesting to note is how the logic of the education model in most cultures has always been that of evaluation. Perafán (1996) asserts that the "historical" project of humanity has consisted of educating others and educating oneself, and that this assertion has responded in different eras to distinct political, economical,

epistemological, and pedagogical principles. For example, in the years from 1930 to 1950, Taylor conceives evaluation to be synonymous with measurement and examination. His fundamental proposal is to carry out periodic verifications over the effectiveness of learning. Such an evaluative concept is reflected in the foundation of theory, the curricular plan and the procedures of direct method. His evaluative techniques were based principally on repetition, the sequential and progressive paraphrasing of acquired knowledge, and the use of dictation as the principal source of knowledge and error correction.

A few years later, Tyler (1967) proposed an evaluative model with tendencies to surpass psychological or psychometric evaluation. This author claimed the necessity for a scientific evaluation which would serve to perfect the quality of education. In other words, Tyler asserted that the main reference in evaluation consists of pre-established objects that should be carefully defined in terms of "conduct" (Mager, 1974), keeping in mind that they must trace the development of the observable, individual behavior of students, but within a socializing process.

This evaluative model coincides with the establishment of audiovisual and audio lingual methods, whose principal objectives were to train the student for both using the foreign language with communicative aims, via memorization and constant repetition, as well as for contrasting it with the use of the native language; nevertheless, the way to evaluate learners was limited to the use of tests that evaluated each skill separately, with special emphasis on the use of correct grammar.

According to Díaz Barriga and Pacheco (2000), these evaluative practices, in which tests were highlighted, are marked within the model called academic-technical, which refers to concepts such as trustworthiness and validity; these factors point toward the utilization of non-contextualized instruments that attempt to remain neutral in order to provide greater objectivity.

Conversely, authors like Parlett and Hamilton (1972) established a new evaluation concept in the 1970s, validating the utilization of flexible techniques that are incorporated in the context of the process, as well as ethnographical and ethnological methodologies, in order to comprehend the study object situation. In other words, the concept of evaluation becomes an internal demand for the act of perfecting, seen as a reflection that enables the recognition of the limits and possibilities of change and transformation. This type of evaluation is known as illuminative evaluation, which represents an alternative paradigm called the

socio-anthropological paradigm. It is considered to be an alternative model to the traditional types of evaluation.

There arose in this era, then, the cognitive method as an answer to studies undertaken by cognitivists and linguists who concluded that the learning of a language is an internal, mental process of the individual. Given the above, developing competences and linguistic performances that would permit using the foreign language in communicative situations was proposed as a main objective. In order to achieve the aforementioned, activities such as writing, games, interviews, role play, and audio materials were utilized. These activities helped the student slowly but conscientiously to activate her/his communicative competence completely and within context. For success with this method, the evaluation focused on error treatment as part of the process of learning a foreign language; furthermore, the way to evaluate it was left up to the educator. The above is framed within the new paradigm based on the illuminative evaluation.

Finally, alternative visions arise that are proposed by various authors such as Álvarez (2001), Flórez (2002), and Díaz Barriga & Pacheco (2000), among others, who think that evaluation must be understood as a critical activity of learning, never as an activity that is disqualifying or punitive. Given this, one cannot make everything uniform or homogeneous or, even less, universal because, among other things, "not all that is taught should be automatically turned into something that is evaluated. Everything one learns cannot even be evaluated" (Álvarez, 2001, p. 33). Evaluation, to the contrary, requires having experience with the *constructive process*, a process which plays a role in the development of the human being; in other words, the subject is considered a process. Thus, it is plausible to always carry out an evaluation with and "from" the actors since it cannot be undertaken without the subject who is evaluated. These authors suggest the possibility of experiencing the evaluation differently, in rather a more humane way that enables one to see the complexity of the educational process and its implications.

It is imperative, then, to note the importance of this new vision as a possibility to redefine the very concept of evaluation and to take a new look at the kinds of evaluations we implement. Díaz Barriga and Pacheco (2000) note the relevance of adopting an evaluation paradigm tied to the formative evaluation, in which importance is given to focusing on what has been the historical function of the school: "instill culture, instill knowledge of national matters, and to enable discovery

and human development" (Díaz Barriga & Pacheco, 2000, p. 28). Consequently, it becomes necessary to highlight some of the strengths that this vision provides such as, first, one recognizes that knowledge is not foreign to the human being but, to the contrary, is a construction, an elaboration of the meaning a specific context has; second, one experiences the evaluation as a values process both with and "from" the actors, which allows a joint growth that, of course, does not reduce the human being or human event to a mechanical simplicity; and third, as Santos (1998) purports, this alternative vision establishes the evaluation as a process of dialog-understanding that seeks to provide a new look at reality.

These are the earlier theories of the concept of evaluation; from these we will analyze the concept of formative evaluation.

The Formative Evaluation: Meaning and Possibilities

The concept of formative evaluation was first introduced by Scriven in order to refer to "the procedures utilized by teachers with the aim of adapting their didactic process to the progress and necessities of learning as observed in their students" (Sanmartí & Jorba, 2000, p. 1). This information, according to the author, responds to a concept of teaching in which learning is a lifelong process through which the student goes along restructuring her/his knowledge from the activities that are being carried out.

Mora (2004) agrees with Sanmartí about the principal function of formative evaluation which is to provide pertinent information for planning and the later production of some object. Mora also suggests that formative evaluation is an answer to teachers' initiative and characterizes this as that which emerges from the teaching process, which stems from relations outside and which requires the intervention of teachers, reverberating in a positive change from that "outside". In other words, it is that which helps the teaching staff to know, analyze, and judge how learning is being produced with the aim of taking appropriate measures which will facilitate students' progress.

Moreover, Sanmartí and Jorba (2000) assert that formative evaluation seeks to understand the way the student assumes responsibility regarding the tasks given to her or him. The information sought refers to the mental representations of the student and to the strategies she or he uses to achieve a predetermined result. This

author proposes that errors are an object of study in that they reveal the nature of the representations or the strategies implemented by the student.

When examining the term "error", Harmer (2009) establishes the difference between slips and error mistakes; the first are mistakes which students can correct themselves once they have been pointed out to them, and the second are the ones which they cannot correct themselves and which, therefore, need explanation. It is the category of error that most concerns teachers, though the students' attempts will tell us a lot about their current knowledge – and may provide chances for learning. In other words, via errors, students will have the capacity to recognize that there is something that prevents them from getting a good understanding of the task so they might be able to find ways to succeed in carrying it out. This clearly means that students need to be helped in their self regulation and teachers can determine what type of approaches might be implemented to help them overcome those problems. We should not forget that formative evaluation starts when teachers build many opportunities to assess the way their students are learning and using the information obtained to make beneficial changes in instruction. In fact, Boston (2002) states that formative assessment is the diagnostic use of assessment which provides feedback to teachers and students along the course.

There are several strategies and approaches that could be fostered along a good, self regulation process and that refer to highlighting those aspects of learning with which the students have had success; by doing so, one strengthens this type of learning. Sanmartí and Jorba (2000, p. 13) propose, then, that "formative evaluation should emphasize the regulation of pedagogical attitudes and, therefore, create more basic interest in the procedures of the tasks than in the results". In addition, Sadler (1989) goes beyond and proposes that formative assessment include both feedback and self-monitoring. The goal of many instructional systems is to facilitate the transition from feedback to self-monitoring. Thus, formative evaluation is characterized in the above definitions as a diagnostic and continuous evaluation that tells teachers how their students are learning and progressing. This evaluation is based, among other things, on the appropriate decision-making to promote the students' progress, feedback on students' strengths and weaknesses and self-regulation to overcome unforeseen learning. Likewise, it informs teachers about the necessary adjustments that teaching needs in order to be more efficient (Zambrano, 2006). To sum up, according to this author the following can be considered the intentions of formative evaluation:

1. It contrasts the results of the evaluation with the objectives proposed at the beginning of the teaching-learning process.
2. It gives feedback to teachers in order to reflect on the effectiveness of the activities carried out in the classroom with the purpose of optimizing them.
3. It gives feedback to students to improve their possibilities to overcome weaknesses and consolidate strengths.
4. It encourages the students' active participation in their own learning process.
5. It promotes the students' reflection on the obtained results and the aspects to be improved in the learning process.
6. It provides a relaxed and friendly environment to motivate active learning.
7. It informs students about their progress at the right time.

In short, formative evaluation seeks the following goals: pedagogical regulation, management of errors, and consolidation of successes.

From Formative Evaluation to Constructive Evaluation: A Way to Evaluate from Autonomy

"You can bring the horse to water, but you cannot make her/him drink."

In language teaching, teachers can provide all the necessary input, but learning can only happen if learners are willing to contribute. And in order for learners to be actively involved in the learning process, they first need to realize and accept that success in learning depends as much on them as on the teacher. In other words, success in learning depends on learners having a responsible attitude.

To achieve a real constructive evaluation process, it is necessary to first comprehend the concept of autonomy and the reason that we should develop autonomy and responsibility. According to Holec (1985), autonomy is described as an internal capacity an individual has to learn; in other words, it is the "ability to undertake one's own learning" (p. 31). As for their part, Scharle and Szabo (2000) define autonomy as the freedom and ability to manage one's own affairs. From these definitions, we can assume that autonomy refers to learners as independent thinkers. These kinds of learners should have a clear view of the whole learning process, including the purpose of learning, the aim of learning, the way of learning, the choice of materials in learning, etc. From this viewpoint, learners progress to a more

advanced stage when they are able to carry out certain tasks alone, which in the previous assessments would have required the help of the teacher. Oxford (2003) says that learner autonomy in language education is interpreted in various ways in the literature on the topic, and various terms (learner autonomy, learner independence, self-direction, autonomous learner and independent learner) have been used to refer to similar concepts, while Benson and Voller (1997) distinguish three broad ways of talking about learner autonomy in language education:

- A technical perspective emphasizing skills or strategies for unsupervised learning: specific kinds of activity or process, such as the meta-cognitive, cognitive, social and other strategies identified by Oxford (2003).
- A psychological perspective emphasizing broader attitudes and cognitive abilities which enable the learner to take responsibility for his/her own learning.
- A political perspective emphasizing empowerment or emancipation of learners by giving them control over the content and processes of their learning.

Various theoretical perspectives have been proposed to describe how students become responsible learners in regard to regulating their own learning and performance (e.g. Bandura, 1977, 1986; Paris & Byrnes, 1989; Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974; Zimmerman, 1990). Although these theories present different perspectives on autonomy and self-regulation, they largely share a view that self-regulated learners meta-cognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally direct their own academic learning processes (Zimmerman, 1986, 1990). Zimmerman (1986, 1989, and 1990) asserted that self-regulated learning occurs to the degree that a student can use personal processes to strategically regulate his or her behavior and immediate learning environment through feedback loops. Utilizing personal and behavioral determinants of self-regulation, self-regulated learners plan, organize, self-instruct, self-monitor, and self-evaluate at various stages of the learning process (i.e. meta-cognitive component) and they perceive themselves as competent, self-efficacious, and autonomous. Ridley, Shutz, Glanz, and Weinstein (1992) proposed that self-regulated learning is composed of three dimensions: (1) meta-cognition (awareness of self, environment, and situation); (2) goal setting; and (3) the monitoring of one's actions. These dimensions were considered interactive facets of the same process.

In addition, Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) proposed that self-regulation operates through a set of psychological sub functions that includes self-monitoring of one's activities, applying personal standards for judging and directing one's performances, enlisting self-reactive influences to guide and motivate one's efforts, and employing appropriate strategies to achieve success. Strong relationships among motivation, self-efficacy, and self-regulation have been indicated in a number of studies. Bandura (1993), for example, asserted that self-directed learning requires motivation as well as cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies.

According to Sanmartí (2002), constructive evaluation promotes the learning of self-regulation because when a person examines the work of others, he/she not only recognizes their mistakes, but also his/her own. Thus, constructive evaluation is the complement of formative evaluation because although both support the self-regulating learning process, formative evaluation responds more to teachers' initiative and, therefore, is destined to emerge from the teaching process, while the second is autonomous and edifying, and stems from the reflection of the students and, as such, fosters self-learning.

It is well known that the apprentice or learner never learns by her/himself but that learning is a process of social arbitration in specific contexts. Learning that is facilitated by the actors involved should promote consciousness as regards one's own process, which means that to be autonomous is to construct one's learning highway and to generate it from and for one's own reality via cognitive strategies that permit knowing, recognizing, evaluating, constructing and improving the different learning processes and procedures with the intention of promoting an evaluation with a constructive aim, which consists of "offering guidelines so the person, little by little, becomes able to critically and permanently evaluate her/his performance without fearing her/his mistakes, but learns from them and becomes more aware of her/his role as the person responsible for designing and implementing the curriculum" (Mora, 2004, p. 4). This person is working both in favor of her/his personal benefit as well as for the benefit of others.

Therefore, the constructive evaluation, according to Nunziati (1990), cited in Sandonato and Fus (2003), is a complementary alternative to the formative evaluation which has as its main objective the progressive transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the student. With this type of evaluation, it is the student who regulates the process of learning and the teacher helps her or him to be autonomous

by developing self-regulatory mechanisms supported by meta-cognitive processes, understood as being related to superior mental processes that imply reflection on one's own thoughts and that aim at the construction of knowledge. The mistakes and cognitive strategies used to understand them as part of the learning process are positive for the learners; that is, constructive evaluation should allow students to do the following:

> …feel like active agents in their own evaluation, facilitating the fact that they learn and evaluate their own actions and learn using self-evaluation techniques and their being able to transfer those in various situations and contexts. By the same token the constructive evaluation should offer the possibility for apprentices to learn to adapt and/or define models of self-evaluation such as values, contexts, social realities, events, etc. (Bordas & Cabrera, 2001, p. 12)

From this angle, the student empowers her/his implication in the process of learning by way of becoming knowledgeable of the strategies she/he develops and in the management of her/his own errors. For these reasons, self-evaluation and autonomous tasks become instruments that maximize learning.

Consequently, the products of the evaluation with formative and constructive aims, before being considered symbolic and numerical, have to occur significantly in the teaching-learning process of students and provide evidence of a process that permits demonstration of the self-regulatory capacity that each person develops in order to adapt and modify all things that have to do with individual learning and that help the student to make decisions and take positions regarding the reality of her/his being human (INEVAFOR, 2008).

The product, concretely, can be referred to in terms of qualitative reports, which register the process and permit observing improvements and setbacks and, at the same time, show the way to avoid errors and difficulties. Along these lines, the evaluation should be a process that runs simultaneously with didactic development.

To summarize, one can suggest the necessity of an evaluation that is not only formative but constructive as well which, according to Allal (1979), cited in Barbera (1991), provides students with the capacity for basic regulation to adapt and modify everything related to one's own learning. The student is the one responsible for her/his own learning which should be considered a continuous construct.

Just as with the constructive evaluation, the tendency is to "provoke the reconstruction of the intuitive schemes of thought, feeling and conduct, not only with each subject but collectively" (Pérez, 2004, p. 50), a practical teaching paradigm to develop a reflective individual in that she/he does not juxtapose general knowledge with her or his own, but that knowledge becomes significant in the sense that the subject is going to support and employ it successfully throughout all of her/his life.

An Approximation of the Formative Evaluation to the Constructive Evaluation in Learning English

Using the proposals dealt with in this text, we see that the constructive evaluation is the complement of formative evaluation since, in considering both, the self-regulatory processes of learning are present. In the words of Álvarez, "Teaching is not a question of knowledge but of ways to reason." (1998, p. 20) Equally, the evaluation is an ethical and critical learning activity. If the evaluation is influenced by what is just, this would be formative. In the teaching-learning process, the actors commit themselves to an attitude and to activities that are conducive to learning, and this is when one can speak of a new conceptualization of such a process, understood as a construction of meaning in a social context.

That is the way the evaluation largely determines students' learning and, as teachers, if we wish to address the different levels, styles, and rhythms of our students' learning, we should recognize how they progress and what their successes and difficulties are in order to be able to take subsequent actions. This is the reason one has to consider the importance of formative evaluation in learning English since it is the kind that allows us to provide information over the changes that are produced and that should be introduced so that the learning of the language has meaning; in other words, the teachers' responsibility is to reinforce or adjust strategies and activities according to the necessities that she/he detects—even making adjustments in the planning process. The students' responsibility is to improve her/his learning processes.

According to Sanmartí and Jorba (2000), it becomes absolutely necessary to go back to the idea of adjusting actions to the established objectives as well as to work with errors, just because their use makes learning meaningful. One of the ways to do this is via feedback, which is considered a reflection or dialogue whose main aim is

that of explaining to the student her/his weaknesses with the aim of improving the processes and results of learning. Through this method, teacher and student plan tasks, activities and/or strategies which lead to the overcoming of difficulties found and, consequently, enable learning. In accordance with Black and William (1998), these dialogues should be profound and reflective, focused on evoking and exploring understanding and conducted in such a way that students will have the possibility to explore their ideas. Thus, providing information that stems from the evaluation of students' learning processes is worthy because, among other things, it allows reflection on what one does, it helps to understand what happens, to detect difficulties and to describe possible motives as well as to permit making decisions connected with improvement, promoting dialogue and participation. Finally, it enables error correction and helps students to become more autonomous (Avolio de Cols & Iacolutti, 2006).

Equally, constructive evaluation offers students tasks in a realistic context, reduces both teacher control and student dependency and, at the same time, promotes students' freedom, responsibility and autonomy. Hence the need to seek creative and alternative ways to evaluate arises and it is precisely there where the concept of self-evaluation emerges; it can be experienced through the reflective diary whose main purposes are accommodating the development of meta-cognitive abilities and valuing students' own learning through reflection on the formative process and the experiences that contribute to the development of the learner. This diary is organized around questions or topics that encourage reflection on aspects that can either be limiting or strengthening of students' learning, such as the achieved, conceptual development, the mental processes, feelings and attitudes, difficulties solved and unsolved, suggestions for improvement, class environment, the teacher's performance, and resources used, etc. (Zambrano, 2006).

It should be noted that with the application of these strategies and activities, the student learns to evaluate by performing her/his own evaluation; in other words, she/he learns to set goals and reflect upon her/his strengths and weaknesses while being at the same time subject and object of the evaluation. This allows growth, taking charge of one's own development and being autonomous in one's learning but, in addition, it allows students to develop collaborative processes in favor of the learning of their peers by recognizing them as important participants in learning along with the teacher.

Lastly, it becomes necessary to reflect on the proposals of Sadler (1989), who says that the formative evaluation includes both feedback and self-regulation and that our objective as English teachers is to facilitate the transition from feedback to self-regulation as the beginning of a constructive evaluation which should become part of the teaching-learning process and in which the teacher should allow the student to play an active, democratic and autonomous role, thus, enabling her/him to achieve a significant level of learning.

Enhancing Constructive Assessment through Meaningful Activities

As teachers, we are ideally placed to provide accurate assessments of students' performance; they can be very effective at monitoring and judging their own language production. We frequently have a clear idea of how well they are doing; students' self-assessment is bound up with the whole matter of learner autonomy since teachers encourage them to reflect upon their own learning process and, of course, on their constructive evaluation. Moreover, this innovative way of evaluating offers students authentic tasks in a real context, reduces the teachers' control and dependency of students, and, more importantly, promotes freedom, responsibility, autonomy and understanding of the evaluation criteria on the students' part.

In keeping coherent with the paragraph above, we have to say that the performance of a real constructive evaluation demands the development of genuine assignments where students can face challenging situations that comprise part of the realia, communicative spontaneous situations with the guidance/assessment of the teacher. Besides that, new necessities and new and creative ways to evaluate may emerge.

Many English teachers have designed not only summative and quantitative evaluations such as those used for examinations, but more demanding and critical ways to evaluate; for that, teachers have changed their roles and now as mediators, they are fond of helping their students to facilitate them to think to be more critical and to learn to develop learning strategies as well as strengthen the pupil's learning style. Teachers are now more interested in the way students learn more than in how much they learn. Teachers are conscious of enhancing their student's awareness of their processes and mental strategies called meta-cognitive strategies.

The central characteristics of critical well-thought-out and designed activities suggested for carrying out a relevant constructive evaluation are associated with the following: the dynamic, interpersonal nature of communicative activities and its dependence on the negotiation of meaning between two or more students, their application to both spoken and written language, the role of context in determining a specific communicative competence, the infinite variety of situations in which communication takes place, and the dependence on the success of a particular role in one's understanding of the context and on prior experience of a similar kind and, finally, the concept of the collaborative situation of all participants, a situation which makes it reasonable to speak of degrees of communicative competence.

The carrying out of classroom projects such as video production and theatrical plays, which could be based on text readings, may encourage thinking and creativity; they let students develop and practice new language and behavioral skills in a relatively safe setting and can create the motivation and involvement necessary for real learning to occur. As everybody knows, TV and radio commercials are a powerful tool as any politician, industrialist, businessman or communications expert will attest. A well-crafted commercial is both visually and linguistically memorable, making use of clever slogans, catchy songs, and striking visual images to capture the attention of television viewers. The impact of an entertaining commercial is beyond the pedagogical powers and resources of teachers to create. Commercials are ideal for teaching listening for several reasons. First, commercial messages are short and catchy, with key words and phrases repeated. The redundancy and brevity of commercials help make the language used accessible to second language learners (Smith & Rawley, 1997).

A second benefit of the commercial is that it is designed to have an impact. Viewers remember what they hear, sometimes even when they do not understand the message, because the visual and musical reinforcement is strong and lasting. The use of authentic video is more and more prevalent in both second and foreign language classrooms because it offers students opportunities to hear language intended for native speakers. Commercials are also a rich source of vocabulary presented in memorable contexts. There are other ways that commercials benefit the development of listening; one is the introduction of elements of visual literacy i.e. signs, symbols, gestures, and other non-verbal features of a message. A related benefit is the introduction of cultural values and attitudes. Television commercials provide students with a picture of the sociocultural context of the language they are

studying. The products advertised on television provide clues to what is important to a society.

And another source to be evaluated constructively is songs written by the students, since the use of music in the classroom can make the entire learning process more enjoyable and can stimulate "right-side" brain learning. Furthermore, using music to introduce an exercise is a great way to activate vocabulary and get students thinking in the right direction. (Smith & Rawley, 1997)

Finally, but not less important, is the portfolio, which is a purposeful collection of any aspect of the student's work, that tells the story of his/her efforts, skills, abilities, achievements and contributions to his/her colleagues. The level of autonomy involved in the preparation of portfolios is a key factor, as it provides an opportunity for the student to shape the task to fit the specific purposes of his/her learning. Finally, portfolios serve as an excellent tool to maximize the chances for success; they represent an opportunity the student avails her/himself of as apprentice and upon reflection and making decisions regarding her/his learning and evaluating her/his development.

It is necessary to reintroduce feedback as a relevant aspect of constructive assessment; some ways of providing it to students are firstly, through evaluative activities such as oral presentations whose main objective, when filmed, is maximized since the filming permits going over strengths and weaknesses precisely and thoroughly because students can see themselves; secondly, through carrying out classroom projects mentioned above such as video production, TV and radio commercials, theatrical plays, and songs created by the students, among other activities (Del Campo & Bonilla, 2009).

It is necessary to say that this feedback can stem from classmates and not only the teacher. In the evaluative activities spaces can be included to accommodate pair evaluation, which allows students to fashion judgments and opinions about a peer's work under the consensual agreement to analyze strengths and weaknesses. Such an evaluation can be carried out in the form of student-group, group-student or group-group.

Given the above information, one understands, then, that the evaluation as an aid to learning English is carried out at the same moment as the teaching-learning process in order to provide better understanding of the processes, strengths and

weak points. Through reflection, the evaluation becomes a tool for improving or perfecting and a medium for achieving significant learning. With reflection we start an internal dialogue known as regulation which allows the student to be conscious of what she/he has learned.

One of the available tools for self-regulation is that of speech when the student verbalizes her/his conceptualizations. Somehow she or he is restructuring them. In other words, besides regulation for action and interaction, it becomes imperative to consider the regulation of meta-cognitive order, which is the pillar of a new form for considering learning and evaluation.

Conclusion

In the educative context and more so in teaching and learning languages, it is necessary to continuously carry out a constructive authentic evaluation. But also it is essential to enable learners to be involved in a dynamic and pedagogical process.

Thus, the constructive evaluation should be considered an essential resource from which students would accomplish their task of learning a language, a process that might be performed through meaningful and motivating activities with which learners develop awareness of their personal formation.

Besides those features above, learners will be heartened by self-regulation exercises, which would help them invest time to identify and solve mistakes and difficulties. Under this modality curiosity and motivation are generated in order to realize a review of their own tests and to correct their mistakes thus turning learning into a means of meta-cognition.

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