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*To my family and friends.*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**Act:** Activity

**ALM:** Audio-Lingual Method

**BAC:** Baccalaureate

**BBC:** British Broadcasting Corporation

**CNN:** Cable News Network

**BEM:** Brevet d' Enseignement Moyen

**CBA:** Competency-Based Approach

**CBALT:** Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**FL:** Foreign Language

**MS1:** Middle School Year One

**MS2:** Middle School Year Two

**MS3:** Middle School Year Three

**MS4:** Middle School Year Four

**P:** Page

**PPP:** Presentation-Practice-Production

**ESOL:** English for Speakers of Other Languages

**UK:** United Kingdom

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## Abstract

The following work tackles the issue of assessment in the Algerian Middle and Secondary schools. More specifically, it seeks to examine the place of assessment and the way it is implemented in the Middle School syllabuses and textbooks. Also, two of the Secondary School course books; that is, *Getting Through* and *New Prospects*. In addition, it evaluates the BEM and the BAC tests to check whether they meet the criteria of a good test and the corresponding levels of their items in Bloom's taxonomy. To this end, we have conducted our research which is a '*context evaluation*' in the light of the '*Mastery Learning Approach*' and '*Bloom's Taxonomy*'. Accordingly, our study identifies the main weaknesses and strengths of the aforementioned materials. First, the syllabuses stress the importance of assessment above all formative assessment. This is a noticeable positive point. However, we found that the syllabuses do not include comprehensible hints which show how such formative assessment including self-and peer assessment can be carried out systematically and effectively, nor do they (syllabuses) include assessment criteria specific to each year of study, or well-elaborated grading system, etc. As regards the Middle School textbooks, we have noted that the latter include assessment sections made up of many activities. This is a good aspect. Nevertheless, the textbooks adopt the three Ps approach and their assessment activities are designed in a summative way and they often overemphasise language structures and discrete-point items. Moving to the two Secondary School textbooks mentioned above, it appears that they merely include assessment grids with a multiplicity of items to be ticked by the students. Last but not least, the BEM and the BAC tests are mainly of discrete-point items and they particularly target the lower-order skills and they lack reliability and construct validity. Finally, we have tried to include suggestions that can be used as remediation for the insufficiencies of the materials we evaluated.

## **General Introduction**

Assessment is an integral and a vital activity in the education process. The most visible types of assessments within the Algerian educational system were for many years summative, measuring the students' achievement through testing and examination, for earning certification or selecting students for entry into further education. This fact lasted until the launching of the educational reform in 2001 which aimed at improving the quality of the teaching materials in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools as well as the teachers' work. Indeed, there is an appeal to stress the importance of formative assessment and to call attention for its neglect for many years. This reality will be shown and discussed when we deal with the evaluation of the syllabuses' assessment area.

This dissertation is intended to provide a thorough account of the basic issues that lie behind English language assessment in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools. More significantly, we aim at showing the place of assessment in the teaching/learning process relying on three fundamental elements: the syllabuses, the textbooks, and the BAC and BEM tests. These three elements are of key importance within any educational setting because either they enhance learning or impede it.

Being a salient component in the domain of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), assessment, especially the formative one, should be a central plank of any syllabus, an integral part of any textbook, and a concern of any teacher. It is worth mentioning that the prime purpose of assessment is to support the teaching/learning process, hence enabling students to improve their level and to achieve a good command of English. Therefore, English language teachers in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools should see it as a necessity.

Within the Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching (CBALT), the priority is to promote the goals of lifelong learning, including higher level of student achievement, a greater equity of students' outcomes, and this in order to enable them to become active

participants in the rapid changing economic and social world. At this level, it is important to remember that no educational system can be effective unless it puts a considerable stress on the assessment of the students' competences through a real demonstration, and this by relying more on alternative assessments whose chief feature is the demonstration of performance.

In addition, one should know that formative assessment can be carried out not only by teachers, but also by students and this through self-and peer assessment. This is a salient tenet and a striking feature of the student-centred approach. In more precise terms, the student should not only be a passive recipient of information, but an active participant in the instructional process as well. The issue of self-and peer assessment will be also raised in our work. That is to say, we shall see whether the students are given the opportunity to assess their work or not.

To deal with the aforementioned issue, we divide our work into two main parts. The first part is theoretical and it essentially deals with a number of foundational principles of assessment. More importantly, it includes three chapters. The first chapter discusses the nature of assessment and it highlights concepts like formative and summative assessment, formal and informal assessment, self-and peer assessment, feedback, etc. The second chapter examines the area of testing and looks at many points as, for instance, the definition of testing, types of testing, the different approaches to testing, the criteria of a good test, the different test formats, and so forth. The third and the last chapter of the first part deals with the concept labelled "*Mastery Learning*" advocated by Samuel Bloom; the different points which lie behind such an approach, and Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives. Indeed, through this chapter these two concepts will be tackled in a more detailed way.

As far as the second part of our study is concerned, it is principally practical and it is made up of three chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the evaluation of the assessment area of the Middle School syllabuses. Its second chapter examines the way assessment is

implemented in the Middle School textbooks, and the two Secondary School textbooks: *Getting Through* and *New Prospects*. The third chapter relates to the evaluation of the BEM and BAC tests; their contents and their formats. Therefore, to achieve such an aim the “**mastery learning**” approach which includes three phases: teaching, testing and re-teaching, and Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives should be applied. Consequently, it follows that our objective is to check how the English language assessment in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools is implemented within the syllabuses and textbooks and what are the different formats adopted in the BEM and BAC tests, and what stages of education they test.

To sum up, we can say that our study is a “*context evaluation*” through which we try to sort out the positive and the negative aspects of the teaching materials mentioned so far and the possible remediations to suggest.

## **The Review of the Literature**

Since many years it has been shown by studies that formative assessment is a key element of teachers’ classroom practice and if it is well implemented the learners’ achievements and performance can be greatly facilitated and improved. Indeed, Harry Black, a researcher in Scotland, introduced his account of the subject by pointing out that formative assessment should be an integral part of the teachers’ classroom work. As evidence, he quoted a letter written by the principal of the Greenwich Hospital School (quoted in Chadwick, 1864) attracting attention to its neglect in the following words:

Consider the amount of time, energy and money spent by both individual teachers and schools in general, on setting and marking continuous assessment tests, end of session examinations [...] Compare these in turn with the complete lack of support normally given to teachers in dividing and applying procedures to pinpoint the students’ learning problems, with the virtual absence of outside agencies to develop formative assessment instruments and procedures, and the limited literature on the topic.

(Black, 1986: 7 quoted in Paul Black and Dylan William, 2006: 9)

In addition, such importance of formative assessment has been made clear by Linn who states: “*The design of tests useful for the instructional decisions made in the classroom requires an integration of testing and instruction*” (Linn, 1998 in Black and William, 2006: 10).

Nonetheless, Black’s and Linn’s extracts should not be interpreted wrongly. In more precise terms, Henry Black’s words ‘*procedures*’ and ‘*instruments*’ do not denote conventional summative tests. In fact, Black had just referred to the methods and procedures which would be used for developing formative assessment. As for Linn’s terms ‘*tests were useful for instructional decisions*’ are not references to such tests either. Significantly, Linn’s work turned around the importance of formative assessment, which can serve as a powerful tool in improving students’ learning as well as teachers’ instruction.

In the research literature on formative assessment, there is a formidable body of evidence that can support claims for its importance. In fact, early reviews by Natriello (1987), Crooks (1988), and Marshal and Hodgan (2005) drew attention to this evidence. However, these reviews have not shown sufficiently that formative assessment is a powerful means to raise standards (ibid).

One of the most significant reviews carried on formative assessment was undertaken by Pearl Black and Dylan William. In fact, within a period of nine years the two authors checked through many books and issues of over 160 journals and studied earlier reviews undertaken by authors as Crooks (1988) and Natriello (1987). Such a process included about 580 articles or chapters to study. The main focus of the review was to explore some aspects of formative assessment between teachers and students (ibid).

The first section of the review showed that substantial learning gains could be achieved through the strengthening of the practice of formative assessment. The second section raised

the gap between the teaching methods and the current teachers' practices in testing the students' understanding. In addition, the feedback that the teachers provided their students with did not enhance their achievements. The third section stressed the importance of involving students in assessing their own work. Put another way, this point involved self- and peer assessment. The fourth section examined the strategies that could be useful for teachers in performing their task as assessors including the importance of classroom discourse. At this stage, it is necessary to show that a student who was thanked by his/her teacher would learn better than the student who was blamed. The fifth section turned around approaches namely mastery learning in which formative assessment was a key component. The main tenet of mastery learning is that students are intended to reach mastery through correctives and enrichment activities. Finally, the sixth section tackled the positive impact of feedback in improving students' outcomes (Black and William, 2006: 11-12). The main characteristics of many of the studies reviewed by Black and William were:

1. Feedback from classroom assessments should provide students with a clear picture of their learning outcomes and how they might improve.
2. Feedback on classroom assessments should enhance learning and encourage students to progress.
3. Teachers should assess their students formatively and that any programme should provide teachers with the procedures to do this.
4. Formative classroom should be frequent and deserves careful attention (Morzano, 2006: 3).

In brief, we can say that Black and Williams's review confirms that formative assessment is a key tenet of good teaching and critically important for students' learning. That is to say without informative feedback on what they do, students will relatively know little on which to support their development (Boud 1995 in Mantz York, 2003: 482-483).



As regards the publications about assessment in French, the concept “*formative evaluation*” was introduced by Scriven (1967) in an article on the evaluation of the educational programs. According to Scriven the purpose of formative evaluation is to provide data that allow development and implementation of a new programme. Later on in 1968, Benjamin Samuel Bloom used the term formative evaluation as a basic component of his approach which he labelled ‘**mastery learning**’ (Bloom 1976, Bloom *et al*, 1971). The term “*formative assessment*” has little by little replaced the term “*formative evaluation*” (Allal and Lopez, 2005: 241).

To carry out their review, Linda Allal and Lucie Mottier Lopez relied on a database of over 100 journal articles published in the major French language journal in the area of assessment, and a number of key books. The research focused on the conception of formative assessment and its practice in the classroom. The name of the journal from which the articles were extracted is *mesure et evaluation en education* (*Measurement and Assessment in Education*). It is worth mentioning that the term “evaluation” in French refers to both programme evaluation and assessment of the students’ achievement, but in this context it refers to the latter. The database used by Allal and Lopez for carrying out this review was composed of 105 articles published in the journal cited above. In addition, Allal and Lopez examined the chapters appearing in six edited books: Allal, *et al* (1979), De Ketele (1986), Depover and Noel (1999), Figari and Achouche (2001), Lavault (1992), Weiss (1971) (*ibid*:241-243). In this context, many researchers working in French have enlarged the initial conception of formative assessment proposed by Bloom in 1968 (Gusky, 1997 in Cizeck, 2010: 111).

Additionally, it is to be mentioned that our literature review draws on many key books that address the issue of assessment. Nearly all of them are updated. Indeed, they are all published within the last two decades. Their authors examined the basic concepts that lie

behind assessment. First of all, Grant P. Wiggins in *Assessing Student Performance* claimed that within the social studies assessment has received little attention. For remediating this lack, Wiggins provided a detailed study of the foundational aspects of assessment. Above all, he significantly tackles the issue of “*morality*” in testing in which he referred to the relationship between the student and the teacher. In fact, he asserts: “*Instead of having an adversarial relationship, teachers and students are allies .The teacher is the student’s guide through the challenges of assessment, not an enemy to be psyched out*” (Wiggins, 1993: 2). In addition, Wiggins shades light on concepts such as “*test security*” where he criticized the fact of following the old habits in testing, which neglected the right of the students to full knowledge of the form and content of tests and the criteria on which their work will be judged ( ibid:72-73). All in all, Wiggins affirms that assessment deserves a great attention and that the relationship between teachers and students plays a crucial role in promoting assessment.

Besides, Caroline V. Gipps showed that educational assessment shifted “*from testing and examination culture to an assessment culture*” and that assessment should be used to achieve many purposes as supporting teaching and learning, providing information about students, teachers and schools and assigning grades and certifications (Gipps, 1994: 1). Similarly, Gary D.Phye provides a thorough account on classroom assessment. Many important points are developed and tackled by the author. Among them we find his assertion that classroom assessment must be multidimensional. Put differently, students should not be assessed only summatively but formatively as well (Phy, 1997). Similarly, in *Investigating Formative Assessment*, Harry Torrance and John Pryor studied and investigated classroom assessment and its impact on students’ performance. Indeed, they assert that if formative assessment is given the importance it deserves, students’ outcomes are likely to be improved (Pryor and

Torrance, 1989). Even though Torrance and Pryor carried out their research within the UK context, it is applicable on any other educational context.

Besides, E.C.Wragg through his book *Assessment and Learning in the Secondary School* has focused on the basic elements of assessment. For example he has spoken about the nature of assessment including formal and informal means, the purposes of assessment and the development of effective policies of assessment. Anyway, Wragg aims at dealing with the main purposes of assessment. Speaking on the aim of the book Wragg writes: “*Most often the principal aim is to give feedback to teacher and pupil, so that each knows what has been learned and what is not yet understood*” (Wragg, 2001: 2).

Moreover, Jan Winter and Patricia Broadfoot in their book *Assessment: What's in it for Schools* have shown how assessment functions as a measurement device used to promote learning. Other parts of the book are devoted to issues as feedback, self-assessment, and the policy to develop assessment for learning; that is to say formative assessment. The authors have clearly presented the relationship between teaching, learning and assessment in a very interesting diagram. Additionally, they identified the key features of formative assessment among which we find that it is integral to any educational instruction, and that students should be involved in assessing their work (Winter and Broadfoot , 2002). Furthermore, Ruth Dann claims that formative assessment should promote learning. Indeed, he writes: “*At a simplistic level, formative assessment should inform the teaching learning process*” (Dann, 2002: 28). That is to say thanks to an efficient use of formative assessment, teachers can be informed about the effectiveness and relevance of their teaching methods and if they should alter them or not, and the students also can be informed about their performance.

A further research on assessment is the book entitled: *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices* (2003) by the American linguist Douglas Brown who also considers assessment as an integral part in the teaching learning process. In fact, he assumes that: “A

*good teacher never ceases to assess students whether those assessments are incidental or intended.*” Also, Brown contends that the four language skills should be assessed together. He writes: “*Every TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) will tell you that the integration of skills is of paramount importance in language learning*” (Brown, 2003: 116). Moreover, Brown focused on the importance of determining the objectives of testing. He claims: “*Remember that every curriculum should have appropriately framed assessable objectives, that is; objectives that are stated in term of overt performance by students*” (ibid: 49). Briefly, we can say that, according to Brown, assessment should be considered as an indivisible part of teaching and learning and that the assessable objectives should be determined in advance.

Many issues were developed by many writers in a *Forum Anthology* edited by John Gardner in a book entitled: ***Assessment and Learning*** in 2006. In the first chapter of the book, Paul Black and Dylan William provided a very interesting literature review of assessment that we presented so far. In chapter two, Mary James and David Pedder talked about the necessity of adopting a new pedagogical practice for an effective assessment for teaching, that is; formative assessment. Indeed, according to them, assessment becomes challenging if teachers and students are ready to adopt their different roles to the different purposes of assessment. In chapter four, Wynne Harlen states: “*Assessment is one of the key factors that affect motivation*” (Harlen, 2006: 60). Other chapters were devoted to other issues as the role of assessment in developing motivation for learning.

One of the key books on assessment is a Forum Anthology edited by Heidi L. Andrade and Gregory J. Cizek. The book is: ***Handbook of Formative Assessment*** where many writers stressed the importance and the necessity of assessing the students’ work formatively.

## **The Issue and the Hypothesis**

The review of the literature we have developed so far shows that most of the studies that raising the issue of assessment agree that assessment, especially if it is used formatively, does promote learning and that it should be an integral part of any teaching/learning process. In addition, they contend that students should be involved in assessing their own work through self-and peer assessment. Therefore, our purpose is to determine the extent to which English language assessment is given the importance it deserves within the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools.

To better explore the issue we try to carry out our research on three levels of investigation. The first level concerns the Middle School syllabuses. More explicitly, we check whether the syllabuses include assessment and if so, what kinds of assessment do they include? We also seek to learn if are there any guidelines which show how teachers can use such assessment to positively affect students' achievement? In addition, we try to examine the place of self-and peer assessments in the syllabuses and if there are hints and guidelines which show how these two types of assessment can be carried out and organised. Moreover, at this stage, it seems necessary to ask the question: Are the assessment criteria made clear in the syllabuses? Furthermore our study bears on the evaluation of the assessment area in the Middle School textbooks and the two Secondary School textbooks mentioned so far. Last but not the least, our study aims at evaluating the BEM and BAC exams formats, and if they meet the criteria of a good test. To clearly address our issue we ask the following research questions:

- 1- Is there any assessment in the syllabuses and textbooks? And if so, how is it implemented?
- 2- Does the assessment deal with the learning objectives cited in the syllabuses?
- 3- Are the assessment criteria clearly implemented and stated in the syllabuses?
- 4- Do the syllabuses include guidelines and hints about self-and peer assessment?

- 5- Are the three Ts (teach-test-re-teach) implemented in the textbooks?
- 6- Do the textbooks include assessment and if so how is it implemented and on which language items does it focus?
- 7- What levels of knowledge and skills are targeted through the BEM and BAC tests?
- 8- Do the BEM and BAC tests meet the testing requirements like practicality, reliability, and validity?

Finally by carrying out such a research, which according to the best of our knowledge has not yet been undertaken, we hope to reach consistent results and expand them in order to suggest possible remediation for the issue of assessment within the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools.

## **Materials and Methods**

To better tackle the issue raised above, we use as materials the English Middle School syllabuses and textbooks, the two Secondary School textbooks: *Getting Through* and *New Prospects*. In addition, the BEM and BAC tests are part of the materials. To this end, we aim to conduct some ‘context evaluation’ which is a study technique defined by Daniel Stufflebeam (1971) as a type of evaluation “*designed to evaluate a program by evaluating and critiquing its strengths and weaknesses*” (Stufflebeam in Nunan, 1992: 193). As for the theory or the approach to follow in doing our research we shall adopt Bloom’s Mastery Learning and Bloom’s Taxonomy that we judge relevant to our issue.

It is to be highlighted that Bloom’s mastery learning and Bloom’s Taxonomy will be fully discussed in chapter three of our research. Indeed, we shall discuss and define the main components of the two approaches and the rationale behind their application in assessment and testing; the reasons to adopt these two theories in our research.

## Part One: Assessment: Theoretical Points

### Introduction:

People write the history of experiments and those born blind, on wolf-children, or those under hypnosis. But who will write the more general, more fluid, but also more determinant history of the “examination” its results, its methods, its characters and their roles, its play of questions and answers, systems of marking and classification? For in this slender techniques are to be found a whole domain of knowledge, a whole type of power.

(Foucault, 1979: 185 quoted in Wiggins, 1993: 1)

The above quotation from Michel Foucault shows that “*examination*” which refers both to assessment and testing is an area of great fascination which is worth of being explored and studied. To write on the examination process is to write on its methods and techniques, on the examiner and the examinee, and the systems of marking and classification of the results. That is to say on the criteria and procedures to follow in assessing the work of the examinees. In a nutshell, to write on the examination is to lead a research of a great instructional challenge.

The literature of both first and foreign languages asserts that within the context of assessment, the teacher assesses the student’s work by guiding him or her to the required correctives. In order to face the challenges of assessment teachers and students interact with each other and work as partners (Wiggins, 1993: 2). This teacher-student relationship is a key feature of constructivism. Accordingly, assessment should be viewed as a two-way process involving interaction and dialogue between the assessor and the assessed in order to find out the current level of performance and looking for the possible ways to improve it. This is why “*assessment and learning should be seen as inextricably linked and not separate process*” (William, Morion & Burden Robert L., 1997: 42). To this end, one needs to understand how the assessment process works and whether such a feature is to be found in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools teaching materials.

## **Chapter One: The Nature of Assessment**

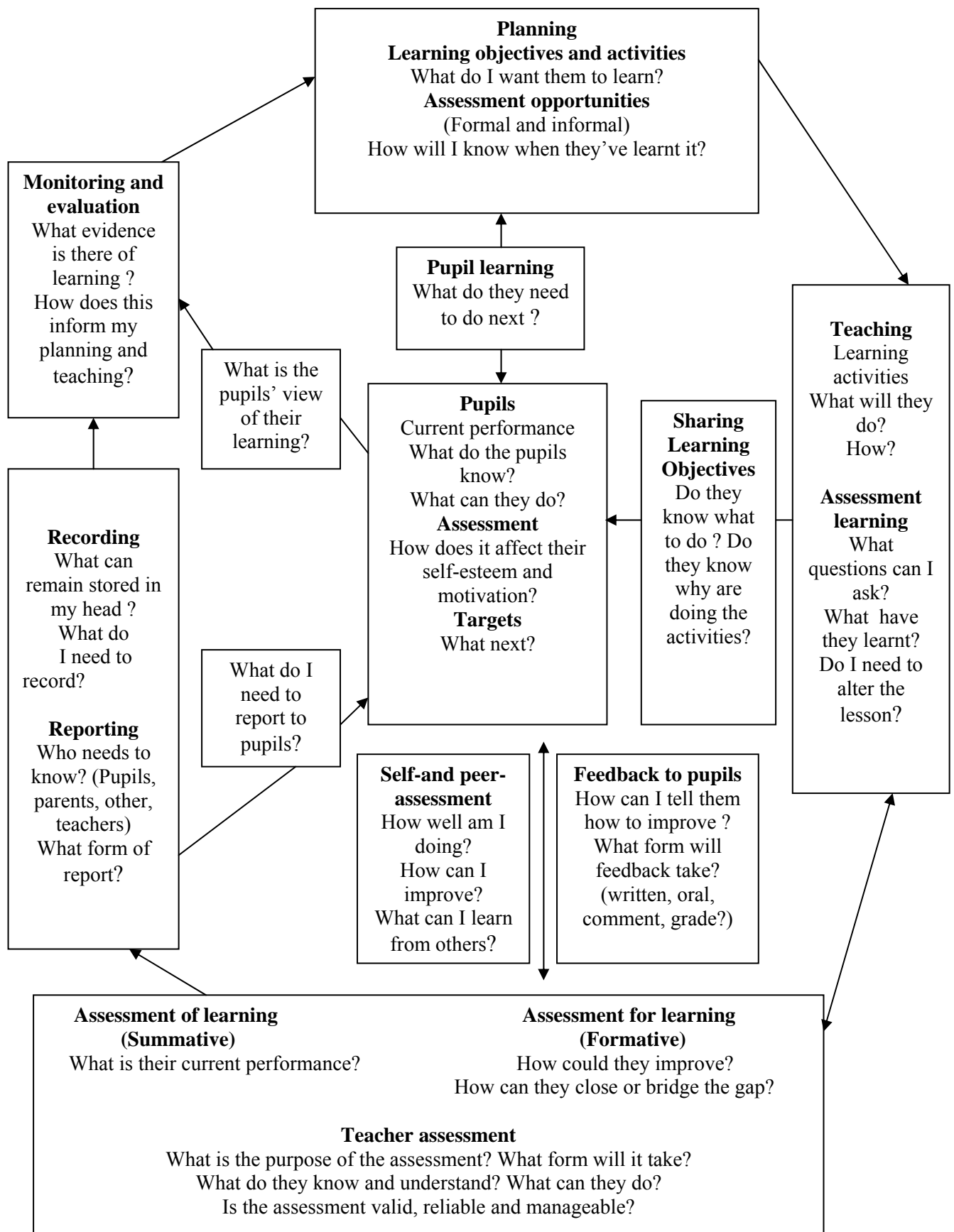
### **Introduction**

In the present chapter, we review the most basic elements of assessment. Indeed, we try to look at the relationship between teaching, learning, and assessment. Also, we mention the necessity of integrating assessment into instruction, its definitions, types, and purposes. In addition, we try to tackle in detail the two types of formative assessment: self-and peer assessment. Furthermore, a distinction between evaluation and assessment will be examined and drawn. Clearly, this assessment terminology will help us to effectively evaluate the assessment areas of the English language teaching materials within the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools.

### **I-1-Teaching, Learning, and Assessment**

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), or of English as a Second Language (ESL) it is not possible to think of teaching without assessment as it is impossible to think of a night without a day or vice versa (Brown, 2003: 3). Students should be continuously assessed on how well they learned and reached the targeted goals of instruction. Indeed, it is through assessment that teachers can check their students' performances and to get information about how well they progress. By doing so, the teachers will find out what lacks in their teaching methods and what goes right. That is why assessment is mainly used to support the teaching/learning process. The following diagram (**figure 1**) in (Weeden *et al*, 2002: 23) shows the relationship between teaching, learning and assessment:





**Figure (01): The Relationship between Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

## **Interpretation of Figure (1)**

Figure (1) shows that teaching, learning and assessment are interrelated; no one among the three can be separated from the other. The interpretation of the diagram can be made clear if we explain its starting point: *“pupil learning. What do they need to do next?”*

First, this starting point of the diagram informs us that the receivers of the teaching are the pupils. Once this has become an established fact in the teachers’ mind, there should be a planning of the learning objectives and activities, in which the pupils should also be involved, and the assessment opportunities either formal or informal. Next, the pupils are taught the learning objectives and, then, they are assessed to check their understanding. Such assessment which is happening during the lesson (formative assessment) is carried out by the teacher (teacher assessment) and it is associated with feedback through which the pupils are informed how well they learned. Also, the students can assess their own work and the work of their peers (Pee-assessment). Both self-and peer-assessment can be of considerable effect on the pupils’ motivation and self-esteem; when pupils are judged competent to assess their work, this stimulates their interest in learning and looking for next targets.

If the assessment results are not good, the teacher can alter the lesson. In addition, in order to check what has been learned and grasped by pupils at the end of a particular stage of instruction and to assign grades, summative assessment is required. After such summative assessment (assessment of learning) which can be used as an evaluative means to improve the teaching methods and materials, the teacher reports the results to pupils, parents or other teachers.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the students are not placed at the center of the figure by chance (Butt, 2010: 23). This means that the central function of assessment is to promote the students’ learning and this by taking into consideration their needs. Such principle should be reflected in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools teaching materials; that is, the

nature of the assessment implemented in the textbooks should support the real demonstration of the students' communicative abilities not only their abilities in performing mechanical drills. Similarly, the BEM and BAC tests should include communicative tests so that they will not have negative washback on teaching and learning. By providing this explanation, the relation between this section and what comes later becomes clear.

## **I-2- What is Assessment? Preliminary Definition**

In recent educational studies and discussions, the term assessment has been used so differently. It is a great fallacy to consider that everyone agrees on the meaning of assessment. This point is well clarified by Cizek who says: *“There is certainly no standard usage of the term: It is used in so many different ways, in so many different contexts, and for so many different purposes”* (Cizek, 1997: 8).

In current literature dealing with assessment, there are at least four definitions of assessment. The first definition regards assessment as the *“methods and procedures”* used for gathering information about students' performance as, for instance, “portfolio assessment” in which we find samples of the students' work gathered by the teacher. The second definition considers assessment as a *“new attitude”*, which is perhaps kinder than that which exists in standardized testing. At this stage, the assessment function is gathering information. In addition, assessment can be seen as an important means which helps teachers as well as students gather the information they need. In this case, assessment represents a *“new ethos”*. i.e. *“to serve the information needs of students and teachers.”* The last definition but not the least views assessment as a *“medical instrument”* used by a physician *“for diagnosing and treating the person's condition”* (Ibid, 8-9).

Each of these four definitions of assessment is concerned with a usage for gathering information with reference to different contexts and different purposes. However, the most

known and noticeable assessment and the one in which we are interested in is the assessment used by the teacher as a means to get information about his/ her students' achievement.

Interestingly, in the field of research, it is important to opt for a clearer and broader definition. Within the field of language teaching and learning, we attempt to give the definition of assessment from a larger perspective and conceptualization. The first definition has been presented by Airasian. P.W (1994: 5) who defines assessment as “*the full range of information teachers gather in their classrooms: information that helps them understand their pupils, monitor their instruction, and establish a variable classroom culture*” (quoted in ibid 1997: 9). Even though the definition given by Airasian seems to be larger, it lacks two fundamental components; that is, peer assessment and self-assessment which are both unavoidable and necessary within the era of constructivism. The second definition has been given by the Assessment Reform Group (ARG) which is based in the United Kingdom and which considers assessment as “*the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers, to identify where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there*” (ARG, 2002, cited in Gardner 2006: 2). This definition involves the process of assessment, that means the methods and techniques for gathering information and it reveals the three kinds of assessment, that is, co-assessment which is carried out by the teacher, peer and self-assessment.

A more typical and explicit definition of assessment is provided by Douglas Brown who asserts that assessment entails any judgment vis-à-vis the students' performance, be it little or much. Such assessment can be carried out by the teacher or the students in case of self and peer-assessments. Moreover, Brown insists that assessment always goes hand in hand with teaching. In other words, teaching and assessment are interrelated. Furthermore, assessment can be either incidental, that is to say not scheduled by the teacher or intended; that is,

planned and scheduled by the teacher. In brief, assessment is the gathering of information about the student's ability to perform learning tasks (Brown, 2003: 4).

### **I-3- The Nature and Function of Feedback**

It is an established fact that within any teaching context, assessment should be present. This assessment is best expressed through feedback. The latter is defined as: *"information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance"* (Ur, 1996: 242). This definition sees feedback as any written or oral comment that teachers deliver to the students about their work. In other words, the teacher tells the students how well or bad they performed. Therefore, the main function of feedback is to help learners get rid of their weaknesses and be aware of their strengths; they are informed if they are on the right way or not and this of course through correction and discussion.

Additionally, another issue which is related to feedback is its strategies. The latter can vary in several dimensions: timing, amount, mode, and audience. First of all, with reference to timing feedback should be immediate so that the students can use it on the right time when they are still mindful of their performance; that is, there is still time to refer to it and remind their work. This means that delaying the return of tests and assignments should be avoided because it is part of bad timing feedback. Secondly, being able to deliver the right amount of feedback, the teacher should know the topic in general and the instructional objectives in particular. In addition, he/she should know the individual students as some students need much more feedback than others. Thirdly, feedback should be selective and focus only on the important learning points. Furthermore, with relation to the mode feedback can be given orally or in written form. The teacher should make a good choice. For instance, it is advisable to give a written feedback on students' written work because generally speaking the students need to look over the comments and use them later on. On the other hand, oral feedback is

better at the moment while students are performing or when there is much information to deliver. Furthermore, to effectively provide students with a good feedback, the teacher should judge if the audience should be an individual student, a part of class, or the whole class. More explicitly, feedback should be addressed to individual students in case it is necessary that the teacher should show his/her care about the student, to a group of students for saving time, or the whole class when the same remediating work is required for the whole class (Brookhart, 2008: 11-18). Knowing how to provide students with feedback is closely related to the knowledge that any teacher should have about assessment and which is called "*Assessment Literacy*" ("Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students, 1990 cited in Hoover, 2009: 9). Accordingly, it is really required that the English language teachers in the Algerian Middle and secondary Schools understand the right way to follow, as the one paved by Brookhart above, when providing their students with feedback.

#### **I-4- Types of Assessment**

In order to make the complicated terminology about assessment easily accessible and clear, it appears advisable to start from distinguishing between informal and formal assessment, formative and summative assessment.

##### **I-4-1- Informal and Formal Assessment**

Informal assessment involves any kind of an unplanned comment or feedback carried out by the teacher about the student's work. It can include expressions like: "*Good work*", "*You should revise the past tense*", "*Carry on*", and so forth. More importantly, informal assessment is carried out by the teacher during instruction and this without recording results and making a fixed judgment about a student's performance. As examples, we can find the teacher's marginal comments on the students' papers and his or her advice to the student like, for instance, how to better write an argumentative essay (Brown, 2003: 5). On the other hand,

formal assessment deals with the planned techniques and systematic methods used by the teacher to get into the student's achievement (Brown, 2003: 5).

### **I-4-2- Formative and Summative Assessment**

Another useful distinction to bear in mind is the one which exists between formative and summative assessment. Actually, the term formative assessment has been given many definitions. In their review Black and William see assessment

As encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.

(Black and William, 1998: 7 cited in William 2010: 23)

The above quotation shows that formative assessment specifically deals with the decisions to be made by both teachers and students as far as the teaching and learning activities are concerned. One can notice that Black and William have not mentioned that such assessment occurs during the process when students are forming their competences. For this reason, Carrie and Bell limited formative assessment to the assessment which occurs during the teaching/learning process. In fact, they define formative assessment as *"the process used by teacher and students to recognize and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning during the learning"* (Cowie and Bell, 1999: 32 quoted in Ibid). Clearly, it follows from these definitions that it is the last one which is complete and typical, for it entails the whole components which make up formative assessment. Accordingly, we shall follow this definition to examine the way formative assessment is implemented in the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools teaching materials. However, before that we shall mention the principal features of formative assessment in the following table:

- 
1. Requires students to take responsibility for their own learning.
  2. Communicates clear, specific learning goals.
  3. Focuses on goals that represent valuable educational outcomes with applicability beyond the learning context.
  4. Identifies the student's current knowledge/skills and the necessary steps to follow for reaching the desired goals.

5. Requires development of plans for attaining the desired goals.
  6. Encourages students to self-monitor progress toward the learning goals.
  7. Provides examples of learning goals including, when relevant, the specific grading criteria or rubrics that will be used to evaluate the student's work.
  8. Provides frequent assessment, including peer and student self-assessment embedded within learning activities.
  9. Includes feedback that is non-evaluative, specific, timely, related to the learning goals, and provides opportunities for the student to revise and improve work products and deepen understandings.
  10. Promotes metacognition and reflection by students on their work
- 

**Table 1: Characteristics of Formative Assessment** adapted from (Cizek, 2010: 8).

Unlike formative assessment which is an ongoing process through which the teacher checks his/her students' understanding, summative assessment occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction. In addition, it deals with the exams which take place at the end of a semester or a year of study (end-year exams) (Brown, 2003: 5). Within the Algerian educational context, the most known forms of summative assessment in the Middle and Secondary Schools are the BEM and BAC exams. Another definition of summative assessment is any test or method used to get information about the students' achievements if it respects two criteria. First, "*it is administered at the end of some unit of instruction (e.g. unit, semester, school year)*". Second, summative assessment aims at assigning grades, determining students who will pass and those who will not, classifying test-takers according to their performance, etc. (Cizek, 2010: 3).

### **I-4-3- Self-and Peer Assessment**

#### **I-4-3-1- Self-Assessment**

As mentioned so far, self-assessment allows students to judge their learning progress and reflect on the quality of their work. Self- assessment is done on drafts of works in progress in order to inform revision and improvement and stimulate the students' learning and performance (Andrade, 2010: 90). Effective self-assessment includes three steps. The first step involves articulating expectations either by the teacher, by the students, or both together, perhaps by reviewing model assignment or co creating a rubric which includes clear criteria



and instructions on which to base the assessment. The second step is the criticism of work in terms of expectations during which students engage in making their first drafts on their work or assignment, be it a composition, a translation, or an essay, etc. By comparing their performances-in-progress to the articulated expectations, students seek evidence of success in their draft following the rubric carefully (Andrade *et al*, 2008 cited in *ibid*). The third step refers to the students' revision of their own work and this by using the feedback they got from their self-assessment (*Ibid*: 92). In our analysis we shall look at the materials and see whether they dealt with self-assessment in such a way. In order to be effective, self-assessment should respect basic elements that we cite in the following table:

- 
1. Awareness of the value of self-assessment.
  2. Access to clear criteria on which to base the assessment.
  3. A specific task or performance to assess.
  4. Models of self assessment.
  5. Direct instruction in and assistance with self-assessment, including feedback.
  6. Practice.
  7. Cues regarding when it is appropriate to self-assess.
  8. Opportunities to revise and improve the task or performance
- 

**Table 2: Necessary Elements for Effective Student Self-Assessment** adapted form (Goodrich, 1996 in *Ibid*: 93)

Table (2) shows that in order to be effective, self-assessment should be based on some key elements among which we find the assessment criteria, the task to be assessed, the appropriate moment of self-assessment, the motivation of students and the improvement of the task being assessed by correctives and revision. In addition, it is to be highlighted that in many cases, students hesitate to judge the quality of their achievement and to assess their own work because the conditions to do such a task are not available, as for example, the absence of criteria of self-assessment. Indeed, it was affirmed by Goodrich (1996) that the elements of self-assessment are also its conditions and if they are available in a classroom, effective self-assessment is likely to occur (Andrade, 2010: 93).

#### **I-4-3-1-1- Research on Self-Assessment**

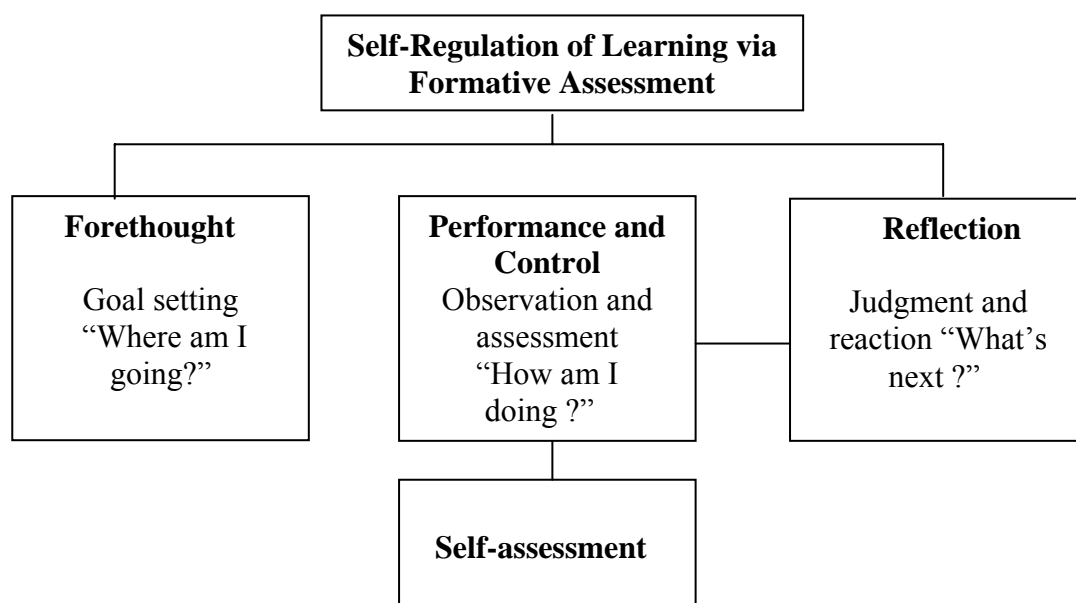
According to Lewbel and Hibbard (2001), the effectiveness of self-assessment in improving students' performance in social studies is proved by research. This effectiveness lies, for example, in motivating students and in making them feel confident and in security when learning. Self-assessment is by and large a powerful element which enables students to develop their hidden competencies especially for those who are shy (Ibid). It may be helpful to consider classrooms where students are not given an opportunity to assess their own work and to which extent this fact represents a considerable lack of communication and makes the teaching-learning process diametrically teacher-centred.

In addition, there is a considerable research on self-assessment on writing that has found a positive relationship between self-assessment and the quality of writing (Andrade *et al*, 2003 cited in *ibid*). *“The improvements in students writing include more effective handling of sophisticated qualities such as ideas and content, organization, and voice not just mechanics”* (Ibid). Furthermore, Black *et al* (2004) points out that any programme of formative assessment should entail self-assessment (Ibid: 94). Therefore, no one can deny the positive effect that self-assessment can have on the students' performance as well as on the teachers' attitudes when monitoring formative assessment. After these clarifications about self-assessment, now we move on to examine the concept labelled *“self-regulated learning”*.

#### **I-4-3-1-2- Self-Regulated Learning**

Self-regulation is a process in which the student is the assessor of his/her own work. In self-regulation, students set goals, make flexible plans to meet them, and monitor their progress. According to Zimmerman (2000), self-regulation consists of three elements. The first element refers to *“forethought”*, which refers to the moment when learners set goals and make plans for reaching them. The second element is *“performance and control”*, which occurs during learning and involves self-monitoring. Last but not least is *“reflection”* during

which learners evaluate and reflect on their own work (cited in *ibid*). In brief, it may be useful to say that in addition to having much in common with each other, theories of self-assessment and self-regulation have many commonalities with recent scholarship on formative assessment. The following figure represents formative assessment and self-assessment as two aspects of self-regulation:



**Figure 2: Self-Regulated Learning and Self-Assessment** (Andrade, 2010: 96).

Figure (2) is a synthesis of Zimmerman's taxonomy and the three questions posed by Hattie and Timperley (2007). The first element of Zimmerman's model, that is to say "*forethought*" corresponds to Hattie's and Timperley's question: "*Where am I going?*" which deals with goal setting. The second element which is "*performance and control*" includes, among other things, self-assessment by asking oneself: "*How am I doing?*" In other words, what progress is being made toward the learning goals? The last element; that is, "*reflection*" is the equivalent of the question "*What is next?*" or what activities need to be undertaken to make better progress? To sum up, it can be said that self-regulation theory posits the effective learners ask similar questions and engage in regular self-assessments (Ibid: 96).

In the light of what has been said, it is worth emphasizing that teachers in Middle and Secondary Schools need engage students in setting goals that are meaningful to them and help them generate feedback for themselves as well as providing them with meaningful instruction to correct their work. Such genuine interaction between the teacher and the students will undoubtedly enhance and promote both teaching and learning.

### **I-4-3-2- Peer Assessment**

In the domain of teaching and learning, formative feedback has been studied endlessly (Shute, 2008 cited in Topping, 2010: 61). It has become a clear fact for us that a student work can be assessed by self, his or her teacher as well as peers. The word peers leads us to what is called in literature "*peer assessment*". At this stage the obvious question which comes to every one's mind is: What is peer assessment? As an answer to this question, we find the following: "*Peer assessment is an arrangement for learners to consider and specify the level, value, or quality of a product or performance of other equal-status learners* (Topping et Ehly, 1998, quoted in Topping, 2010: 62).

In the light of the above definition, it is clear that peer assessment is classroom based and may operate through classroom tests, discussions, projects or homework. The work to be assessed can include oral or written performances. Peer assessment can be done one-to- one or mutually in small groups. Formative feedback from peers can be given anonymously, if required. Assessors and assessed may come from the same or different year of study, and may be of the same or different ability. Moreover, the objectives of peer assessment may vary: The teacher may target cognitive or meta-cognitive gains, time saving or other goals. Therefore, formative peer assessment can serve as a powerful tool whose aim is to help students help each other identify their areas of strengths and weaknesses and, hence, do remedial work (Topping et Ehly, 1998, quoted in Topping, 2010: 62, 63).

#### **I-4-3-2-2- Theoretical Underpinnings of Peer Assessment**

For many years, peer assessment was under-theorized and supported simply by old sayings such as *“to teach is to learn twice”*. In the last 25 years, a number of theories have emerged. However, as this fact does not help researchers and practitioners design which forms of peer assessment are adaptive and effective, synthesis into a single theoretical model has been sought. Indeed, Topping affirms that such a model of peer assessment can be divided into five categories. The first category involves organizational features of the learning interaction and the engagement with the task in which we find the elaboration of goals, and individualization of learning. The second category includes the cognitive conflict which encompasses the Piagetian school of thought. This concerns the need to get rid of cognitive blockages formed from old myths and false beliefs by presenting conflict and challenge via one or more peers. The third category of the model relates to the Vygotskian theory which incorporates support from a more competent other, requiring management of activities to be within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Topping: 63). The helper has the role of a monitor of the learner's work and the role of assessor as well. The fourth element deals with the communication skills of both helper and helped. The participants need communicate their thoughts and ideas to each other. This fact of transferring thought into language is another key feature of the Vygotskian thought. Accordingly, peer assessment seems to be of a key value. Here we can speak of the atmosphere of confidence and loyalty which exists between the helper and the helped and to which extent each of them is motivated (Ibid: 64-65). This is about the theory which lies behind peer assessment. Now we discuss how to organize peer assessment.

#### **I-4-3-2-3- How to organize Peer Assessment**

Many teachers manage to involve students in an organized and effective peer assessment while others find difficulties to do such a task or in many cases they do not care about. Good

organization of peer assessment helps students improve and develop social and communication skills and learn how to give and accept criticism. To reach this aim, (Topping, 2003 in Topping, 2010: 69, 70), provides useful and important guidelines which are outlined below.

- 1- Collaborate with colleagues instead of developing the initiative alone.
- 2- Specify the nature of learning outcomes to be assessed and clarify the rationale and the aim of such assessment.
- 3- Work with other participants to develop and clarify the assessment criteria. Students need to be involved in this task in order to feel a sense of responsibility and confidence.
- 4- Divide students into pairs or groups and arrange contact among them.
- 5- Show students how to practice peer assessment and try to guide them while practicing it and tell them what outcomes are expected of them.
- 6- Give individual pairs guidelines on a sheet to help them remember the process of peer assessment.
- 7- Specify activities to be assessed and try to find what to do with the students who finish early and those who finish late.
- 8- Monitor the process, circulate among the pairs, giving feedback, coaching and sequencing activities necessary.
- 9- Compare the quality of peer feedback with your own assessment and try to accept the difference.
- 10- If more than one peer assesses the same work, match between peer assessments.
- 11- Evaluate and give students feedback as peer assessors.

Such guidelines and hints about peer assessment should be a central plank of any syllabus, and teachers should help their students to be effectively engaged in this kind of tasks which considerably reflect the basic tenets of Communicative Language Teaching. Because the Algerian educational reform stresses the importance of formative assessment, we try to look how peer assessment is accounted for in the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses.

### **I-5- Purposes of Assessment**

There are numerous purposes which can be attained through the process of assessment, be it formative or summative. First of all, we can mention knowledge of results or feedback; that is, every learner is curious to know how well he/she has grasped and learned knowledge (Wragg, 2001: 27). Second, assessment has as a purpose support and encouragement. Put another way, when pupils are informed by their teacher that they made progress, this will certainly be an effective support and encouragement for them. A student who is thanked by the teacher for having answered a question or participated in a lesson will undoubtedly be of a useful help for him/her to expend and broaden his/her knowledge (Geeslin, 2003). Third, motivation is among the main purposes of assessment. It is worth considering the difference between pupils who know that they will be assessed and those who do not. The difference is that the former are motivated more than the latter. Hence, more work and achievement is expected from them. This is why supporters of regular assessment consider motivation as its main objective (ibid). Fourth, thanks to the diagnostic function of assessment which indicates the real capacities of students, both teachers and pupils can be in a better position to move ahead. If, for instance, a student shows a misunderstanding of word and sentence stress, hence it will be useless to move on to intonation or rhythm (Wragg, 2001: 28).

Additionally, one of the most known and common purposes of assessment is selection. This can entail an entry test or an end-year test; after the students' work is assessed there will be a selection of those who will pass and those who will not. Two fundamental concepts

should be always associated with assessment when it is linked to selection. The first is “*fairness*”. Put another way, pupils dislike those teachers who are unfair in their evaluations (Wragg, 1999 in Wragg, 2001: 28) and they always judge a selection which is based on an unfair evaluation a very hateful act. The second concept is “*labelling*”, that is to say the criteria on which to base the assessment should be made clear for every student. Last but not least, once the students’ work is assessed and measured, it becomes possible to compare it to other students’ work. Indeed: “*One people, one class, one teacher, one school, one local authority, one country or one particular year group may be compared with others.*” Here, we speak about measurement and comparison as purposes of assessment (ibid). After this discussion of assessment, we try to clarify the relationship between evaluation and assessment.

## **I-6- Evaluation and Assessment**

While many writers use the terms *assessment* and *evaluation* as different in meaning, some of them do not make a distinction between the two. Indeed, Gronlund writes: “*Evaluation may be defined as a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by pupils.*” Gronlund, 1981: PP 5-6 quoted in Nunan, 1992: 184 Ibid). Such a definition can be considered as the same as that of assessment we have provided so far and this is due to two reasons. On the one hand, there are specific learning objectives to be attained by students. On the other hand, the students are assessed whether they achieved the objectives or not and this is a straightforward definition of assessment.

Even if the two concepts (evaluation and assessment) are interrelated, for Nunan, however, there is a clear cut distinction between them. Indeed, he defined assessment as “*the processes and procedures whereby we determine what learners are able to do in the target language*” (Nunan, 1992: 185). This definition deals with the means and processes to be used



in judging the students' outcomes in learning a target language. On the other hand, in defining evaluation, Nunan argues that evaluation entails a process of data gathering which in fact includes assessment of the learning objectives and the interpretation of this data. In addition, after the interpretation of the data there should be a set of decisions to make about the effectiveness of the course objectives and the methods followed by teachers to attain such objectives. To make the point clearer we can say that if, for example, the course book designed to teach pupils English does not provide the activities necessary to develop the pupils' communicative abilities, as a result of decision making the course book will be changed or altered (Nunan, 1988: 118 quoted in Ibid). Therefore, it becomes clear that assessment can serve as a basic key to evaluation. However, evaluation does not necessarily entail assessment (Weiss, 1972 quoted in Bachman, 1990: 22).

## **Conclusion**

At any level of instruction, the learners' progression and understanding should be checked and evaluated. Writers like Brown, Phye, Weeden, etc. always stress the importance of assessing the students' work continuously. Indeed, they consider assessment as a powerful means which supports both teaching and learning. On the one hand, assessment tells the teachers about the effectiveness of their methods of instruction and, on the other hand, it shows the students their areas of strengths and their areas of weaknesses and this through the feedback they receive from their teachers. For this sake, we highlighted in the first chapter of our research the basic elements related to the field of assessment, its meaning, its importance, its types, its function, its relation with evaluation, and so forth. This is about assessment, the following chapter relates to testing.

## Chapter Two: Testing

### Introduction

What should be born in mind is that the two terms; that is, testing and assessing do not denote the same thing. Hence, in order to provide a more general description of the process of assessment, it seems necessary and important to shed light on the key concepts in testing starting from the definition of what a test is and the characteristics of a good test and, then, move to the different kinds of tests.

### II-1- Preliminary Definition: What is a Test?

According to Brown: *“a test is a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain”* (2003: 3). To explain the definition, it is worth throwing light on its components. First, the word **method** involves a set of techniques, procedures, or items which should be explicit and structured as, for instance, a gap filling exercise with a list of words. Second, a test deals with **measuring**. Some tests are general measurements while others measure a specific knowledge, like measuring a student’s ability in writing a narrative text. Third, a test is designed to measure a **person’s** ability. This is why it is necessary for the tester to take into account the individual’s background in the domain in which he or she is tested. Fourth, a test measures a person’s **performance**, that is to say to what extent the test taker is able to speak, to write, to read or to listen to a language. Finally, a test targets a specific language domain. A test of grammar should cover a given number of elements studied in a particular course or unit. Also, Brown assumes that: *“Tests are prepared administrative procedures that occur at identifiable times [...] when learners master all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured”* (2003: 4). This definition indicates that all kinds of tests are perceived as formal assessment, for being administered and for their characteristic of determining the failure and success of

students. In a nutshell, one can say that constructing tests that measure accurately the test taker's competence in a specific area of knowledge is a highly demanding task but it is not an easy one as claimed by Brown "*The definition sounds fairly simple, but in fact, constructing a good test is a complex task involving both science and art*" (2003: 3-4).

## **II-2- Kinds of Tests**

In this section we shall look at the four types of tests which are proficiency tests, achievement tests, diagnostic tests, and placement tests.

### **II-2- 1- Proficiency Tests**

This kind of tests is designed to check whether a person is proficient in a language or not. That is to say if he or she has a required mastery of the language for a specific aim as, for instance, being a successful translator of the United States of America. A characteristic feature of such tests is that they are not based on a previous knowledge that candidates may have previously been trained in (Hughes, 1989: 9). Another definition of proficiency tests is provided by Douglas Brown who assumes that "*A proficiency test is not limited to any one course, curriculum, or single skill in the language; rather, it tests overall ability*" (Brown, 2003: 44).

It follows from the two definitions that a test taker is said to be proficient in a language if he or she shows a sufficient command of the four language skills. Put another way, he/she can speak fluently, write coherently and cohesively, read without difficulty, and listen to a BBC or CNN channels with a full understanding of the message.

A common example of a standardized proficiency test is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) which is widely used in the United States and which involves the language ability in the four language skills. In other words the testee is required to show his/her language usage and language use mastery (Ibid: 44, 45).

## **II-2- 2- Achievement Tests**

Unlike proficiency tests, achievement tests are directly related to language courses (Hughes, 1989: 10). The essential role of achievement tests is to check whether lesson objectives have been achieved. In addition, Brown assumes that: *“They also play an important formative role. An effective achievement test will offer washback about the quality of a learner’s performance in subsets of the unit or course”* (Brown, 2003: 48).

## **II-2- 3- Diagnostic Tests**

Diagnostic tests are designed to diagnose students’ areas of strengths and weaknesses. For example, they might identify the grammatical points that are difficult for the learners and need further teaching (Hughes, 1989: 13).

## **II-2- 4 - Placement Tests**

The role of placement tests is to place students into a particular level in the curriculum which fits their abilities (Ibid). In addition, they are defined by Brown as: *“A placement test usually, but not always, includes a sampling of the material to be covered in the various courses in a curriculum”*. The test should determine the required material for the student. (Brown, 2003: 45)

## **II-2-5- Direct versus Indirect Testing**

According to Hughes (1996: 15) testing is qualified as being *direct* *“when it requires the candidate to perform precisely the skill which we wish to measure.”* That is, the test-taker is directly and actually exposed to the skill to perform in an authentic like situation as in a test of writing which requires the testee to write an essay or a composition in a straightforward way, and a *“face-to-face”* test of speaking between a tester and a testee (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 160).

Testing speaking and writing, such kind of tests can be easily carried out as they directly mirror the testee's performance. In addition, it should be highlighted that three main advantages are behind direct testing. The first lies in their straightforwardness. The second relates to the direct test results that can be obtained about the test-taker ability. The third advantage regards their positive backwash, for they facilitate an actual and a direct measurement of the student performance, something which effectively supports the skills being assessed (Hughes, 1996: 15).

As to the indirect testing, Brown states: "*in an indirect test learners are not performing the task itself but rather a task that is related in some way.*" (2003: 23, 24). For example, if a test-taker's performance in stress is evaluated through writing rather than through the actual speaking of the candidate, the test is therefore qualified as being indirect (Ibid).

As a result, it is useful to emphasise that promoting the use of direct testing is something worth of effort as this kind of testing is of high reliability and as a result they tell us about the real performance of the student in the skill where he/she has been assessed.

## **II-2-6- Norm-Referenced and Criterion-Referenced Tests**

In a norm-referenced testing the focus is on relating the student's performance to that of other students without really tapping into his/her real performance. In other words, they just place the students with reference to results of their work (Hughes, 1996: 17 and Brown, 2003: 7). Criterion-referenced tests, on the other hand, aim at providing information about the student's competence when performing in the target language (Hughes, 1996: 17). Here, the essence of testing lies in the feedback the teachers should provide their students with (Brown, 2003: 7). This feedback is what Oller calls "*instructional value.*" That is to say the primary aim of assessment is to support instruction (Oller, 1979: 92 quoted in *ibid*). Thus, it follows

from this that criterion-referenced testing is more advantageous than norm-referenced testing and this thanks to the feedback which is their core function.

## **II-3- Approaches to Language Testing**

Three main trends in the area of language testing are distinguished by Spolsky (1978, 1981). The first is called: *“the pre-scientific or traditional”*, the second is called: *“the psychometric-structuralist or modern approach”*, and the third is called: *“psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic or post-modern approach”* (Van Els et al, 1984: 324). Such a classification is of a very noticeable usefulness, for it allows us to see to which approach the BEM and the BAC tests gravitate more and belong.

### **II-3- 1- The Traditional Approach**

The main tenet of this approach is that it does not take into account reliability and objectivity as well as the *“use of statistical methods.”* In addition, the student’s work under such an approach is evaluated by only one person; the teacher who is *“elitist and authoritarian”* (Ibid: 324, 325). Moreover, it should be stated that translation, essay writing, grammar, and sometimes oral tests are the most familiar types within this approach. Furthermore, according to Klein Braley (1981): *“the high face validity of these types of tests still does not to be truly valid”* (quoted in Ibid: 325). Among the main characteristics of the traditional assessments is that focus is on discrete-points as multiple-choice, matching or true false- items which *“test passive knowledge (student is merely required to recognize the correct answer not to produce it)”* (New Mann, 1995 cited in PHY, 1997: 385).

### **II-3- 2- The Psychometric-Structuralist Approach**

Within the traditional approach testing has never received the attention it deserves. Indeed, tests have been unreliable and of *“non-scientific interest.”* As a reaction to such a situation, the psychometric-structuralist approach stresses the importance of measurement experts (Spolsky, 1978: 218 in Ibid). More importantly, such a reaction resulted in making

tests more reliable as well as in developing multiple-choice questions. The link between psychometrics which is “*a branch of psychology concerned with measurement*” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 433) and linguistics is advocated by Robert Lado who emphasised the importance of testing not only knowledge about language but language usage as well, and that the “*structures to be tested should be valid structures in colloquial language use*” (Klein Braley, 1981 cited in Van Els *et al*, 1984: 325). Furthermore, within this approach stress is on discrete-point items. Finally, Klein Braley states that the assessment criteria are also changed: “*student responses should not only be linguistically correct, but situationally appropriate*” (Klein Braley, 1981 cited in Ibid). In other words, the students should know how to use language in social contexts when greeting, thanking, inviting, etc.

### **II-3-3- Psycholinguistic-Sociolinguistic or Post-Modern Approach**

As it has been mentioned so far, psychometrics is the basis or the core aspect of the psychometric-structuralist approach whereas in the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach it is psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics which is the “*driving force*.” As regards testing under the post-modern approach, emphasis is put on both discrete-point and integrative testing.

It is interesting to mention that there are two opposing standpoints which try to answer the question: “*what is language competence?*” which is extremely fundamental in psycholinguistics. The first is “*the devisable competence hypothesis*”, and the second is “*the unitary competence hypothesis*” (Pallmer, 1981 in Ibid). The first viewpoint states that language competence underlines both “*linguistic and non-linguistic competences*.” The second, on the other hand, deals with an overall language proficiency based on an underlying linguistic competence.

Interestingly being a part of this approach, sociolinguistics raised the importance of communicative competence. As a matter of fact, the communicative contexts in which the

behaviour to be measured should be specified (Fishman and Cooper cited in Ibid: 326). Furthermore, It is to be shown that within this approach a great attention is paid to the validity of tests and focus is on the integrative tests and the tests used in the traditional approach with more stress on “*the psychometric quality of the measuring instruments*” (Ibid).

Last but not least, two major approaches exist in the testing literature: discrete-point and integrative testing.

### **II-3-4- Discrete-Point Testing**

The basic tenet of this approach is that language components can be tested separately (Brown, 2003: 8). In this context Hughes states that: “*Discrete point testing refers to the testing of one element at a time, item, by item. This might involve, for example, a series of items each testing a particular grammatical structure*” (Hughes, 1989: 16). Testing linguistic competence particularly in the early steps of language learning, discrete-point tests are considered suitable. More importantly, Cornell (1981) affirms that discrete-point tests are very useful in cases where accuracy is highly required (Van Els *et al*, 1984: 321). The main shortcomings of the discrete-point testing are the following:

- It impedes communication rather than encouraging it.
- It is too mechanical.
- Testing language items separately is a purely behaviourist teaching.
- Such an approach does not really tap into one’s language competence.

Because the discrete-point approach did not take into consideration fundamental elements in language learning as context and communication, other approaches were sought like integrative testing and communicative language testing.



## II-3-5- Integrative Testing

The integrative testing approach emerged as a reaction to the discrete-point approach. Such a reaction was principally advocated by John Oller in 1979 (Keith, 2001: 295). Oller (1979) argued that “*language competence is a unified act of interacting abilities that cannot be tested separately*” (Oller, 1979 quoted in Brown, 2003: 8). A clear definition of what does integrative testing mean is provided by Arthur Hughes who writes:

Integrative testing, by contrast, requires the candidate to combine many language elements in the completion of a task. This might involve writing a composition, making notes while listening to a lecture, taking a dictation, or completing a cloze passage.

(1989: 16-17)

As examples of tests which subscribe into integrative testing approach, there are cloze tests and dictations. A cloze test can be defined as reading passage which has omitted words and that the test-taker is required to fill the blanks with relevant words (Brown, 2003: 8-9). In this context, it is useful to mention that even though cloze tests measure lower-order skills than higher skills (Alderson 1979 cited in Van Els *et al*, 1984: 327) they are better than those gap-filling items where the student has been given a list of words to choose from in accomplishing the task hence they are more reliable and valid. Most important, the student is going to use “*linguistic knowledge, textual knowledge, and knowledge of the world*” (Cohen, 1980: 97 quoted in *ibid*). That is the student should express his/her ideas which correspond to the real-life situations through a clear language presented in a form of texts.

As far as the scoring of such a kind of testing is concerned, there are two methods. The first method is called the “*exact word method*” and it only considers true those words which appear in the original text. The second method on the other hand is the “*acceptable word method*” and which accounts more for the context. It clearly appears that in the first method objectivity is higher than in the second. Finally, it should be highlighted that it is also possible to use a cloze test in oral form (*Ibid*: 328).

Dictation, on the other hand, deals with the writing down of a passage after having listened to it (Brown, 2003: 8-9) and “*it is an excellent measure of overall language proficiency*” (Johansson 1974; Oller 1972 in Jones and Spolsky, 1975: 71). Integrative tests are also known as “*holistic*” tests in that, unlike discrete-point tests, they do not isolate language items and test them separately (Keith, 2001: 295). The advocates of integrative testing base their arguments on the unitary trait hypothesis which claims that the four language skills should be tested in an integrative way (Brown, 2003: 9).

## **II-4- Recent Types of Tests**

Any educational system should effectively account for such recent types of testing as communicative and performance-based testing. In Algeria, the BEM and the BAC exams should be no longer conventional; that is, they should also tap into the real use of language in communication and the real demonstration of the students’ learning abilities through open-ended questions, for example. Now, it is necessary to know what do these recent types of assessment mean.

### **II-4-1- Communicative Language Testing**

Communicative Language Testing goes parallel with Communicative Language Teaching which emerged in 1970s (Hughes, 1989: 19), and opposes the structural approaches whose stress is on lexis, grammar, and phonology (Skehan, 1990). However, by the mid-1980s, considerable attention has been given to such a kind of testing (Brown, 2003: 10). Indeed, Bachman and Palmer stress the necessity of linking “*language test performance*” with “*language use*” in the following terms: “*In order for a particular language test to be useful for its intended purposes, test performance must correspond in demonstrable ways to language use in non-test situations*” (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 9 cited in *ibid*). More importantly, it should be stated that such an approach stems from the Canale and Swain

framework for communicative competence (Skehan: 1990). The latter has been defined by Canale and Swain (1980) in terms of three components: *grammatical competence*, which entails knowledge of language structure, lexical items, rules of morphology, and phonology, *sociolinguistic competence*, that is, knowledge of language use as, for example, knowing how to use and respond to apologies, thanks, invitations, and so forth. More significantly, it regards the functions of language in different social situations. The third component is *strategic competence*, which deals with strategies that can compensate weaknesses in communication. In addition, there is a fourth component which was added by Canale (1982) and which is called *discourse competence*, which means knowing how to take part in communication; how, for example, to begin and end a conversation (Hall, 2002: 106).

Additionally, according to Langham and Body (2000) this kind of testing is “*intended to provide the tester with information about the testees’ abilities to perform in the target language in certain context-specific tasks.*” Furthermore, as Weir (1990) stated “*communicative language testing has several masters to serve, linguistic, pedagogic, administrative, acquisitional, and ideological.*” This reality clearly shows the practical difficulties which lie behind this type of testing. However, test designers as well as all those who have relation with teaching and learning should contrive as much as to make this an attainable goal.

## **II-4-2- Performance-Based Assessment**

For a most significant implementation of the student-centred learning, test constructors are now discussing such a type of assessment (Alderson, 2001, 2002 in Brown, 2003: 10). Unlike the assessment based on discrete-point items, performance-based assessment entails “*oral production, written production, open-ended responses...*” (Ibid). In other words, in performance-based assessment the tasks approximate the authenticity of real-world language

use as, for instance, evaluating the student on how well he/she can deliver a speech or write an essay (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 392).

It is of a considerable interest to show that performance assessment has been designed to remediate the limitations of written tests that cannot measure how well a learner can interact socially, or carry out a conversation. In addition, the aim of performance-based assessment is to measure the student's ability when performing an observable task through the incorporation of his/her linguistic knowledge as incorporating grammar rules when writing (Oosterhoof, 2003: 147). Furthermore, it is to be clarified that in the assessment literature performance-based assessment and authentic assessment have been used interchangeably (Phy, 1997: 339). The latter as Oosterhoof (2003: 147) states "*involves a real application of a skill beyond its instructional context.*" Nonetheless, O'Mally and Valdez Pierce (1996) considered performance-based assessment to be a subset of authentic assessment (cited in Brown, 2003: 255). Finally, it should be stated that performance-based assessments are time consuming and expensive but they are of higher reliability and validity (Oosterhoof, 2003: 150).

## **II-5- Criteria of a Good Test**

So far, we have provided definitions and clarifications of the basic concepts in testing. Now, we try to answer the question: What is a good test? The answer to such a question lies primarily in shedding light on the three key and classic criteria for qualifying a test as a good test: **practicality**, **reliability**, and **validity**. Indeed, our evaluation of the BEM and the BAC tests turns principally around the examination of the validity, practicality, and reliability of these two national official exams.

### **II-5-1- Practicality**

A test is said to be practical if it is possible to administer and score it within time and financial limitations. A test that requires too much money and too much time is impractical

(Brown, 2001: 386). We can, for instance, say that a test which deals with mathematical questions and there is no specialist of mathematics to evaluate the test takers is impractical. Also, a test that can be taken in no less than eight hours is impractical.

### **II-5-2- Reliability**

This criterion deals with two essential points. The first point relates to what is called **test reliability** and which regards the test per se. To be more explicit, if the results of the same test on two different occasions are identical the test, therefore, should have test reliability. There are cases where the test results are unreliable because of the bad conditions where the test occurs as too much cold or too much noise or the test-taker is not in good health conditions. The second point deals with what is known in the testing literature as **scorer reliability**. This point refers to the fact that a test is scored by two or more scorers following very objective techniques. However, subjectivity is sometimes unavoidable as in writing proficiency (Brown, 2001: 386-387).

### **II-5-3- Validity**

A test is said to be valid if it really measures what it should measure. If a writing test which is intended to measure the writing abilities of the test-taker, seeks to measure the rapidity in writing and the use of colour pencils it is said to be invalid (ibid). Another definition of validity is provided by Richards and Schmidt who state that validity is the *“degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, or can be used successfully for the purposes for which it is intended”* (2002: 575). As to the different types of validity, we find: *content validity, criterion-related validity, face validity and construct validity*.

#### **II-5-3- 1- Content Validity**

A test can be claimed to have content validity if the points to be measured are included by the test. For example, a grammar test should deal with items testing knowledge or control of

grammar (Hughes, 1989: 22). Hence, we can say that a phonetics test which asks the test-taker to write on the geography of Russia lacks content validity. Similarly, a test of grammar which does not cover elements related to grammar or which requires students to write on elements that they have not studied does not meet the content validity criterion.

### **II-5-3- 2- Criterion-Related Validity**

Another means to check validity is to see whether the test results correlate with other results provided by an external valid indicator of the candidate's performance ((Hughes, 1989: 23). Two kinds of criterion-related validity are identified: *concurrent validity* and *predictive validity*. Concurrent validity is defined by Richards and Schmidt as: “*a type of validity that is based on the extent to which a test correlates with some other test that is aimed at measuring the same skill*” (200: 105). To exemplify this kind of validation, let us consider a situation where the results of a new reading test taken by a group of students compared to that of an existing valid and reliable test of reading taken by the same group of students at about the same time. If the test results are similar in both cases the test is said to have concurrent validity (Ibid).

#### **II-5-3-3- Predictive validity**

It is concerned with the extent to which a test predicts a candidate's future performance or achievement (Hughes, 1989: 25). For example, a language aptitude test is said to have predictive validity if the results indicate that the candidate will be able to learn a second or foreign language (Richards and Schmidt, 2001: 413).

#### **II-5-3-4- Face Validity**

This concept means that the test-taker is convinced that the test measures what it intended to measure (Brown, 2001: 388). For example, it is not acceptable to say that a pronunciation

test has face validity if the candidate is not asked to speak and to show his/her capacities when pronouncing words (Hughes, 1989: 27).

### **II-5-3-5- Construct Validity**

The term construct validity refers to whether there is a relationship between the language item being tested and the language theory to which such an item belongs (Brown, 2001: 389 and Hughes, 1989: 26). For instance, if a relationship is demonstrated between a test of communicative competence and theory of communicative competence the test can, therefore, claim construct validity (Richards and Schmidt, 2001: 112).

## **II-6- Test Formats**

A number of assessment formats can be used by classroom teachers so that to evaluate students' work. Indeed, teachers may use *selected-response formats* and *constructed-response formats*. The distinction between the two is that in the first type the students choose the answer from a ready-made list whereas in the second type the students respond by constructing an answer by writing or by speaking. Now, we shall discuss in more details the two types beginning with *selected-response formats*.

### **II-6-1- Selected-Response Formats**

This type includes multiple-choice, true-false, and matching items. The peculiarity of selected-response formats is that their scope is limited and the student is not given the opportunity to argue or explain. In other words the test items have one right answer (Quellmalz & Hoskin cited in Phyl, 1997: 111). Even if selected-response formats can be quickly and objectively scored, they are, however, susceptible to guessing. (Oosterhof, 2003: 103) students with no knowledge of the items being tested can blindly guess the correct answer to half the items (Ibid: 87).

## **II-6-2- Constructed-Response Formats**

Here the student is required to answer a “*series of open-ended questions by writing, speaking, or doing something rather than choose answers from a ready-made list*” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 113). The essence of these testing formats is that the student is given the opportunity to construct answers of different lengths, “*from short answers to full essays*”. As a result, the students can provide different acceptable answers by reasoning, explaining, or interpreting (Quellmalz & Hoskin cited in Phy, 1997: 112). The most familiar kinds of constructed-response formats are “*fill-in, short answers, and performance assessment*” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 113). However, it is worth mentioning that within constructed-response formats, test designers should specify assessment criteria for acceptable responses because the students’ answers can vary (Quellmalz & Hoskin cited in Phy, 1997: 112).

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have first of all discussed the meaning of tests and we have shown that there are many types of tests; each has its essence and purpose. We then tackled the different approaches used in testing and the characteristics of each approach. In addition, we have spoken about the requirements and the criteria of a good test including practicality, reliability, and validity with its different types. In our discussion, we have also dealt with the test formats and looked in details to *selected-response formats* and *constructed-response formats* and the different test items which belong to each testing format. This is what has been developed in this chapter. The next chapter will be devoted to the study of Mastery Learning and Bloom’s Taxonomy.



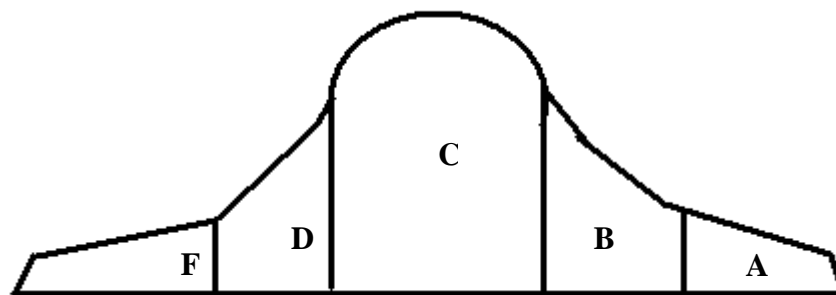
## **Chapter Three: Mastery Learning and Bloom's Taxonomy**

### **Introduction**

Any learner who has been engaged in learning an EFL or an ESL aims at reaching mastery of the language. Such mastery can be regarded as the basic goal of any instruction. This chapter addresses one of the most effective approaches that makes this situation possible to occur. More precisely, it addresses the '*Mastery Learning Approach*'. Indeed, the essential elements which form the mastery learning approach as: feedback, correctives, and enrichment activities will be explained and examined. After that, we move on to tackle the distribution of achievement in the traditional classrooms and in classrooms adopting the mastery learning. Then, we shall look at Bloom's taxonomy, its different stages, the meaning of each stage, and how it is possible to apply it in the field of testing. Clearly, we shall adopt these two approaches in our analysis of the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools teaching materials we cited so far.

### **III-1- Mastery learning: Background**

In the 1960s, important studies on individual differences in school learning were carried out by Bloom and his graduate students at the University of Chicago. Through his research, Bloom noted that teachers followed the same way of teaching and provided their students with the same amount of time to learn. Such little variation in teaching brought about great variation in students' learning. Indeed, most students learned less because of their differences in their backgrounds or learning styles. Within these conditions of teaching and learning of traditional classrooms, the students' achievement often resulted in a normal distribution of performance, as shown in the following figure:



**Figure 3 Distribution of achievement (grades) in traditional classrooms** (Guskey, 2010: 107).

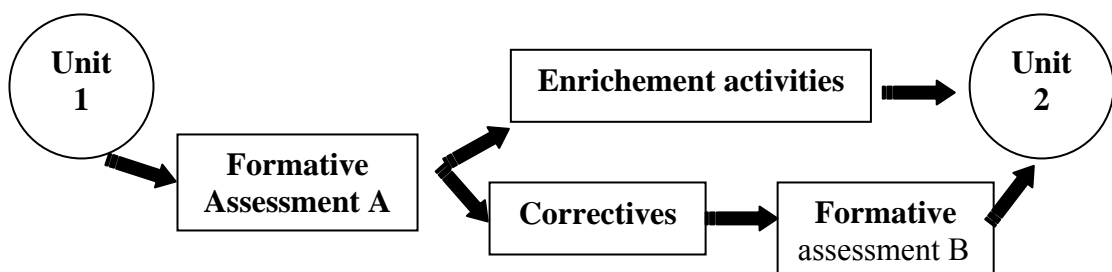
Figure (3) shows that mastery in traditional classrooms is far from being reached by the majority of students and that gains in achievement appear to be considerably weak. Indeed, within the traditional instruction it is only a small number of students who have a good learning level and the majority is between a weak and a medial level. This is principally due to the bad instructional methods followed by the teachers namely their linear teaching which does not respect the variation of the students' needs.

To close and reduce variation in students' achievements Bloom argued that teachers should vary their ways of teaching. As students vary in their learning styles and aptitudes, educators also must vary their instructional methods to better meet the students' individual learning needs. In searching for such a strategy, Bloom advocated two different sources of evidence. The first evidence deals with tutoring. Put differently, each student is paired with an excellent tutor. The second evidence draws from the work of Dollard and Miller (1950) dealing with the learning strategies of good students. From this research, Bloom attempted at identifying the activities of high achieving students in group-based classrooms that distinguish them from their less successful classmates (Ibid: 108).

To make use of this feedback and corrective procedure, Bloom developed a particular instructional strategy which he labelled learning for mastery then to shorten the name to simply mastery learning in 1971 (Bloom, 1968 cited in Gardner, 2008: 12). To use mastery

learning, teachers first put into instructional units the concepts and skills they want students to learn. Then, teachers follow their instruction with a brief formative assessment and this after a week or two of instructional time and this in order to provide students with information or feedback about their learning and help them become aware of their areas of strengths and what they need to learn better (Bloom *et al* 1971- 1981 cited in Guskey, 2010: 107).

To pinpoint learning difficulties, teachers then pair with each formative assessment specific corrective activities. The correctives regard those concepts or skills not yet mastered. In other words, the correctives are individualized. They may point out sources of information on a particular concept, or they may suggest study guides, independent or guided practice activities, or collaborative group activities (Ibid). After having completed their corrective activities, Bloom recommended formative assessment to check whether or not the correctives really enabled the students to overcome their individual learning difficulties and to offer students a second opportunity of success, something which is of a great motivational value. However, concerning those students who performed well on the first assessment, Bloom recommended that teachers provide them not with correctives but with enrichment activities in order to help them extend their learning experiences. These enrichment activities may involve academic games or a variety of complex but engaging problem-solving tasks (Gusky, 1980). The following figure illustrates the mastery learning instructional process.



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**Figure 4: The mastery learning instructional process (Gusky, 2010: 110).**

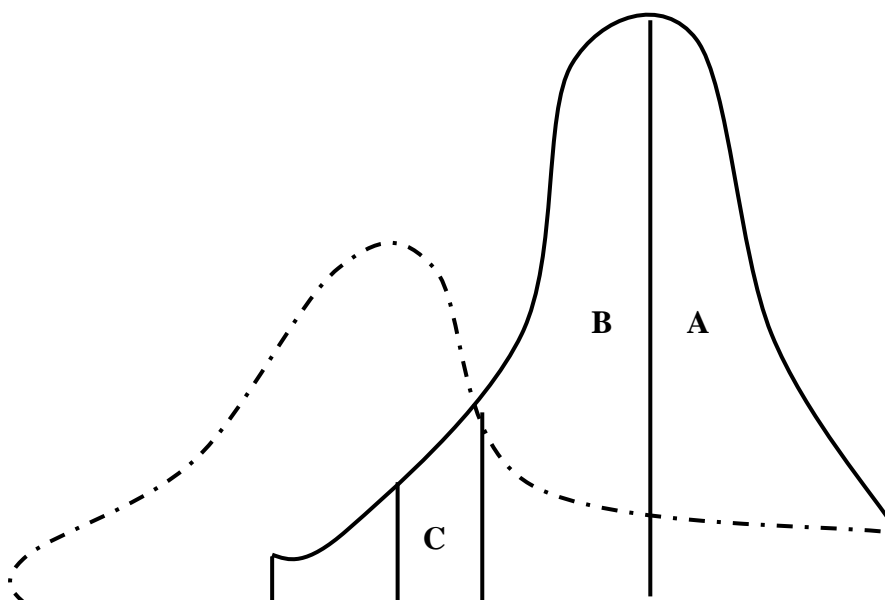
Figure 4 shows that the mastery learning approach can be defined in terms of three foundational components which are teaching, testing and re-teaching. Indeed, the figure starts with “**unit 1**” which simply indicates the starting point of the teaching/learning process followed by “**formative assessment A**” through which the teacher assesses and checks his/her students’ understanding. Next, the teacher provides his/her students either with “**correctives**” for the students who did not find the activities or with “**enrichment activities**” for those who showed understanding and this in order to permit them broaden and extend their knowledge rather than wasting time. Before moving on to “**unit2**”, the teacher provides the students who were engaged in the correctives with “**formative assessment B**” and this in order to ensure if the students have grasped the correctives or not. Accordingly, it appears that under the mastery learning approach the teacher should not move on from one unit of instruction to the next unless the majority of the students or all of them have shown mastery of the previous unit. To better clarify the point, it seems advisable to give the following definition of mastery learning:

An individualized and diagnostic approach to teaching in which students proceed with studying and testing at their own rate in order to achieve prescribed level of success. Mastery learning is based on the idea that all students can master a subject given sufficient time. For example in an ESL reading programme, students might be assigned graded reading passage to read in their own time. Test questions after each passage allow the learners to discover what level of comprehension they reached, and re-read the passage if necessary. They must reach a specific comprehension level before they move on to the next passage.

(Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 321)

Additionally, Bloom believed that through the combination of this process of regular classroom formative assessments with the correction of individual learning errors all students could be provided with a more appropriate quality of instruction than is possible under more traditional approaches to teaching. As a result, the unit concepts or learning goals could be mastered nearly by all students. Even under these more favourable learning conditions of mastery learning, Bloom emphasized that some students undoubtedly will learn more than

others, mainly those involved in enrichment activities (Bloom, 1976, 1981 in Gusky, 2010: 110). The following figure shows the distribution of performance in mastery learning classrooms and how variation in students' achievement is reduced.



**Figure 5 Distribution of achievement (grades) in mastery learning classrooms** (Ibid, 110).

Figure 5 shows how achievement is distributed within the mastery learning classrooms. More precisely, the figure indicates that mastery is achieved by the majority of students and only a small party of them has not attained it. The letters 'A' and 'B' represent approximately the percentage of the students who attained mastery and which is considerably greater than that represented by the letter 'C' which represents those students who did not reach mastery. Consequently, it seems clear that the mastery learning approach greatly and significantly promotes and develops the students' outcomes and the effectiveness of mastery learning will be discussed later on in '**Research results on mastery learning**'.

### **III-2- Essential Elements of Mastery Learning**

Numerous programs sprang up in schools throughout the United States and around the world based on mastery learning principles. Even such programs true to Bloom's ideas differ

from setting to setting include two essential elements: (1) the feedback, corrective, and enrichment process, and (2) instructional alignment (Gusky 1997 in Gusky, 2010: 111).

### **III-2- 1- Feedback, Correctives, and Enrichment Activities**

In mastery learning classrooms, students are provided by teachers with frequent and specific feedback on their performance through regular formative assessments. This feedback is both diagnostic and prescriptive (Hattie & Timperley, 2007 in *ibid*). It identifies the students' strengths and what needs to be learned better and it helps teachers plan the next instructional activities (Guskey, 2003 in *Ibid*). Because the feedback offered through regular classroom formative assessments is only a measurement of the students learning, it does little if any to improve their performance. Put differently, it is not enough. Therefore, significant improvement requires such a feedback to be paired with corrective activities that help and guide students on how to remedy and overcome their learning problems (Allal & Lopez, 2005: 244).

In order to be effective, the corrective activities should possess three essential characteristics. First, they should present the concepts differently. For instance, if a linguistic unit is taught deductively (presenting the general concept and then giving specific examples), the corrective activity might be carried out inductively (presenting examples to build up a general concept). Second, effective corrective activities engage students differently in learning. They use different learning styles or modalities (Given, 2000; Lawrence, 1997; Stenberg, 1994 in Gusky, 2010: 112). If, for example, students learned the events of the World War I, a useful corrective activity might employ a group discussion of the events. Finally, effective corrective activities provide students with successful learning experiences. The teacher should abandon any activity that does not enable students remedy their learning problems and opt for another one (Gusky, 2010: 112).

It is worth mentioning that while using formative assessment, some students will have no need for corrective activities as they have demonstrated their mastery of learning on the first try. What such students need, is to provide them with enrichment or extension activities in order to broaden their learning rather than wasting their time. More importantly, effective enrichment activities provide these students with valuable, challenging, and rewarding learning experiences. For example, if some students in mathematics demonstrate their learning of a unit and have no need for correctives, the teacher can assign them a range of related topics.

In addition, it should be noted that under the Mastery Learning approach two basic principles should be taken into account. The first is related to the “*achievability principle*”; that is, the teacher should teach towards an attainable instructional objective, “*one that can be attained by a motivated student.*” In other words the focus is on what can be learned and not on what can be covered. The second is “*flexible-time principle*” which means that the time allotted to the accomplishment of the instructional objectives is sufficient. By doing so, the teacher will have enough time to teach and to re-teach, to assess and to re-assess the students (Laska 1985: 228).

### **III-2-2- Instructional Alignment**

Another element which is necessary in mastery learning is the one Bloom labelled “*instructional alignment*” (Bloom, 1971: p52 cited in Gusky, 2010:116). In other words there should be linkage (coherence) among the different instructional components. Indeed, according to Bloom the instructional process should include behavioural objectives which announce what the students are going to be able to do, then comes instruction, and finally comes assessment which, as stated above, can be either followed by correctives or enrichment activities. However, it should be noted that the learning objectives should turn around higher order skills which challenge both teachers and students (ibid: 116, 117). Such a reality shows

clearly that mastery learning highly fosters the development of competencies that represent the core elements of the Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching such as problem solving, analytical skills that the learners encounter in real-life situations. Therefore, we can say that mastery learning is an approach which fits well with CBLT. Accordingly, our evaluation of the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools teaching materials we mentioned so will be achieved following the essential elements of Mastery Learning we mentioned above.

After having dealt with the mastery learning instructional process and discussed its different elements, we move on to deal with research results on mastery learning.

### **III-3- Research Results on Mastery Learning**

Extensive research evidence shows that using mastery learning can have exceptionally positive effects on students' achievement. Whiting *et al* (1995) investigated the cognitive and affective learning outcomes of more than 7.000 students over 36 semesters in high school classes in the USA using mastery learning. Their investigations showed that mastery learning had a statistically significant effect on both students' achievement and measures of their learning; that is to say formative assessment tools. Another evidence of the effectiveness of mastery learning is that of a field experiment conducted in elementary and middle school classrooms in Michigan. The result was that the students' confidence in learning situations, school attendance rates, involvement in class sessions, and a variety of other effective measures were statistically improved (Gusky, 2010: 119, 120). In addition, James Block tells us that mastery learning: *"Enables 75 to 90 percent of the students to achieve the same high level as the top 25 percent learning under typical group-based instructional methods"* (Block, 1971: 73 cited in Dibiasio, 1973). Certainly, in terms of broad national, regional and local educational goals, a learning-teaching situation where 90 percent of students can achieve mastery is highly desirable. In addition Bloom affirmed that:



Most students (perhaps more than 90 percent) can master what we have to teach them, and it is the task of instruction to find the means which will enable them to master the subject under consideration. A basic task is to determine what we mean by “mastery of the subject” and to search for the methods and materials which will enable the largest proportion of our students to attain such mastery.

(Bloom, 1971 quoted in Di Biasio, 1973)

Through the quotation cited above, it appears very clear that the principal aim in any kind of instruction is to reach mastery. Bloom asserted that this is possible if the meaning of mastery is well defined and then the materials and methods towards such mastery are available. Put another way, every student wants to reach the end of the curriculum and be able to read and to write well. In the field of English teaching and learning, the approach labelled “mastery learning” offers the possibility to make the students learn competently and to attain the English program objectives.

In our country, Algeria, the Ministry of Education and other interested bodies have attempted to reform the educational system so that to offer teachers and students the required means of making the instruction as effective as possible. Even though such reform, in a way or another, should be able to revitalize the methods and materials, the schools carry on to produce functional illiterates who have not become “lifelong readers”, that is to say active participators in the rapid economic and social changing world. This fact is, by and large, due to the methods that English teachers follow in their teaching among which we find their stress on the summative assessment and neglecting the formative assessment. Hence, it is especially important to help our students and teachers overcome the problem mentioned above and this in the way that Bloom has suggested, and that is “*to develop strategies which will take into account individual differences in such a way as to promote rather than inhibit the fullest development of the individual*” (Bloom cited in ibid 1973).

Therefore, it is high time for the Algerian instructors and teachers to implement the mastery learning principles in schools so that students will develop their learning capacities

and reach a higher level of performance. With the presence of crowded classrooms, this will be a great challenge.

Several reasons account for my selection of Bloom's Mastery Learning approach as the framework of this research:

**1-** Mastery Learning is an approach which considers teaching and assessment as interrelated. Indeed, speaking about Mastery Learning, Weeden *et al* stated: *"Clearly, this is an example where the teaching and assessment were interlinked and informed each other"* (2002: 25).

The expression *"informed each other"* means that the instructional process deals with the learning objectives to be reached and assessed and the assessment process informs how well such objectives have been met.

**2-** If we try to consider what Bloom has said, we notice that the mastery learning approach can develop the skills necessary for effective citizenship and social and economic participation of the students. All these aspects are key features of the constructivist view of education. To sum up, it is necessary to say that mastery learning sides with both the constructivist view of education and the Competency-Based Language Teaching as affirmed by Schenck 1978 (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 141).

The constructivist learning theory is based on the work of the educational philosopher John Dewey, and educational psychologists like Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, Brooks and Brooks who see that knowledge construction happens within a shared social context as Piaget asserts: *"Human knowledge is essentially collective and social life constitutes an essential factor in the creation and growth of knowledge"* (Piaget, 1995: in Harry, 2001: 38). Thus, within constructivist learning theory students learn best by actively participating in the teaching/learning process and by making sense of new knowledge. As far as the Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching is concerned, it is a teaching approach grounded in the constructivist principles. This approach enables the students to

transfer what they learned outside the classroom. In other words, it prepares them to become competent when facing real-life situations.

**3-**Being an approach which has a significantly and statistically effect on students' learning, a focus on multidimensional competencies as problem solving, deductive reasoning, drawing inferences and creative expression and the transfer of such competencies outside classroom in order to meet the students' needs in day-to-day living, and an important impact on the measurement tools, mastery learning seems to be as the relevant approach to follow in our research. Now we deal with Bloom's taxonomy in detail. We try first to define and explain its components and then we explain why such taxonomy is applicable in testing.

### **III-4- Bloom's Taxonomy**

#### **III-4-1- Definition of the Taxonomy**

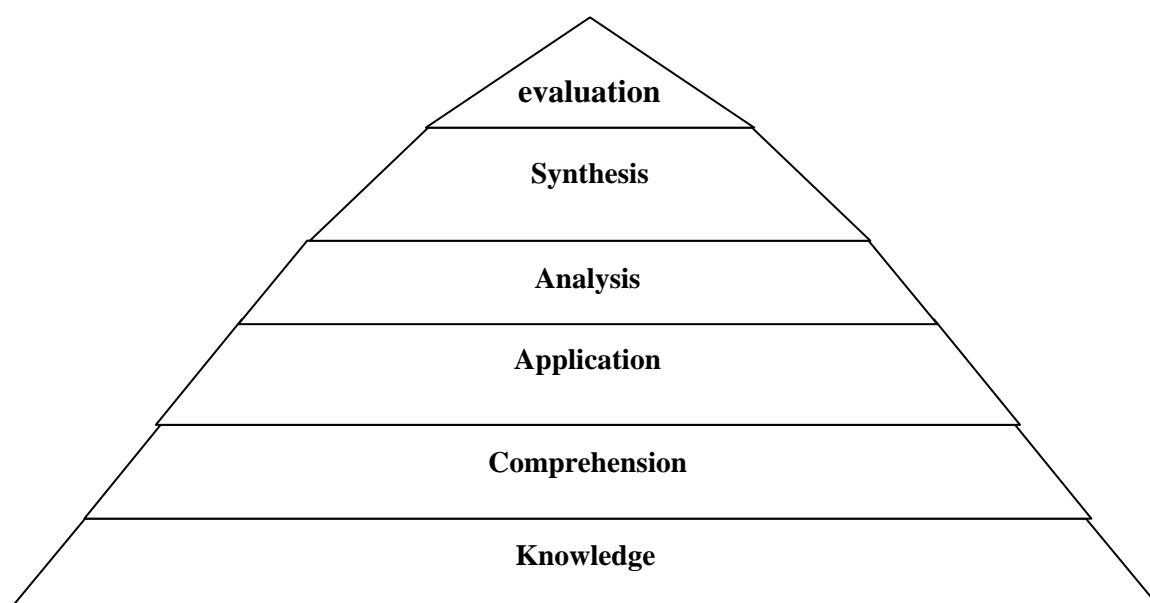
It is worth mentioning that the crucial function of the taxonomy, as it has been affirmed by Bloom, is to facilitate communication among the different persons engaged in the field of education teachers, students, textbook designers, etc. This idea appears in this definition of the taxonomy provided by Bloom himself:

In our original consideration of the project we conceived of it as a method of improving the exchange of ideas and materials among test workers, as well as other persons concerned with educational research and curriculum development (Bloom, 1958: 10).

In addition, one should state that the taxonomy in its original plan called for three major parts: the cognitive, the affective, and the psychometric domains. The first domain which is the concern of the taxonomy can be defined as "*the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills*". The second domain deals with "*changes in interest, attitudes, and values, and the development of appreciations and adequate adjustment*". The third and the last domain is related to manual and physical skills (Ibid: 7).

### III-4-2- The Classes of the Taxonomy and the Meaning of each Class

The major classes of the taxonomy which mainly deal with the cognitive domain are: “*knowledge*”, “*comprehension*”, “*application*”, “*analysis*”, “*synthesis*”, and “*evaluation*”. The following diagram shows how the different levels of the taxonomy go from the simplest level which is “*knowledge*” to the most complex level; that is, “*evaluation*”. The following diagram represents point clearly:



**Figure 6: Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain (Forhand, 2005).**

#### III-4-2-1- *Knowledge*

According to *Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary* (2003: 693) knowledge is the “*understanding of or information about a subject which has been obtained by experience or study, and which is either in a person’s mind or possessed by people generally*”. And according to Bloom: “*Knowledge as defined here includes those behaviors and test situations which emphasize the remembering, either by recognition or recall, of ideas, material, or phenomena*” (1958: 62).

Bloom's definition indicates that in a testing situation, the student is required to recall a behavior highly identical to the behavior that he/she normally learned during the original learning situation, despite the fact that the material to be remembered can be slightly altered by the student who is intended to meet a testing situation where questions or problems are posed in a different way than in the original learning situation. In addition, it should be remembered that the other classes of the taxonomy also include knowledge, yet Bloom has clearly established the difference between knowledge and the rest of the categories in the following terms:

...the knowledge category differs from the others in that remembering is the major psychological process involved here, while in other categories the remembering is only one part of a much more complex process of relating, judging, and reorganizing (Ibid).

Moreover, it should also be recognised that there are many forms of knowledge among which we find "*knowledge of specifics*" which mainly regards specialists in a given domain, "*knowledge of terminology*" which deals with words or expressions with reference to a given field, activity, subject, etc., "*knowledge of specific facts*" which includes "*dates, events, persons, places, sources of information, etc.*" and knowledge of criteria, conventions, theories, methodology, trends, ways of learning and studying, ways of classifying, etc. (Ibid: 63-77).

### **III-4-2-2- Comprehension**

According to *Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary* (2003: 248) comprehension is "*the ability to understand completely and be aware of a situation.*" Such a definition entails two important terms: understanding and awareness which both relate to intellectual abilities.

As to Bloom, comprehension regards the ability to understand and respond to what is communicated orally, symbolically, or in writing (Bloom, 1958: 89). In addition, for Bloom comprehension deals with an understanding of the literal communicative message that can be represented by objectives, behaviors or responses. Moreover, Bloom identified three types of

*“comprehension behavior”*; translation, interpretation, and extrapolation. The first type concerns the ability to put communication from one language to another. The second entails the understanding of the different ideas of a communication and their interrelationships. The third type; that is, extrapolation is the ability to extend the communication and apply some of its ideas to other situations (Ibid: 89, 95).

### **III-4-2-3- Application**

According to *Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary* (2003: 51) application is *“a way in which something can be used for a particular purpose.”* This entails the use of an already acquired knowledge in a given situation. And according to Bloom, application entails *“comprehension”* of, for example, an abstraction and the ability to use such an abstraction to solve problems in new situations (Bloom, 1958: 120). Therefore, the criterion of application according to Bloom is that the knowledge should be used in new situations.

### **III-4-2-4- Analysis**

Analysis is from the verb *“to analyse”* which means *“to study or examine something in detail, in order to discover more about it”* (*Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary*, 2003: 39). As to Bloom, analysis is to know the different parts of a material, the relationship between them, and the way they are organised and this by dividing such a material into its different constituents. In addition, analysis can be used as a device to express the meaning of a communication and to draw conclusions from it (Bloom, 1958: 144).

### **III-4-2-5- Synthesis**

The term synthesis can be defined as *“the mixing of different ideas, influences or things to make a whole which is different or new.”* (*Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary*, 2003:1299). Similarly, Bloom defined synthesis as *“the putting together of elements and parts so as to form a whole, [...] a pattern or structure not clearly there before”* (Bloom, 1958: 162). At this level, it is worth mentioning that analysis is mainly related to the creative

capacities of the learner; but, within the limits of the material and the work to deal with. Besides, one should know that comprehension, application, and analysis entail the mixing of elements and the building of meaning but in a less complete and noticeable manner than in synthesis (Ibid).

### **III-4-2-6- Evaluation**

Evaluation is from the verb “to evaluate” which, according to *Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary*, means “to judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount or value of something” (2003: 416). Such term which is placed at the point of the taxonomy is defined by Bloom as the fact of judging quantitatively or qualitatively works, materials, methods, etc., by following given criteria for a given purpose ( Bloom, 1956: 185).

Having finished with the definitions and the meanings of the different stages of the taxonomy, the following part is intended to shed light on the reasons that can support the application of the taxonomy in the field of language assessment.

It is worth mentioning that among the taxonomy levels, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation correspond to the *procedural knowledge* which refers to the “*knowing how*”; that is, when assessing such kind of knowledge we are informed about the student’s ability in knowing “*how to use knowledge*” (Phy, 1997: 48).

### **III-4-3- What Makes Bloom’s Taxonomy a Theory and the Rationale Behind its Application in Testing?**

To answer such a question, it appears advisable to define what a theory is. In this context, Richards and Schmidt point out: “*A theory is a statement of general principles or a set of propositions, based upon a reasoned argument and supported by evidence, that is intended to explain a particular fact, event, or phenomenon*” (2005: 551). This definition is applicable to Bloom’s taxonomy as the latter was originally created to develop a system of categories of learning behavior to assist in the design and assessment of educational learning. In addition,

the foregoing definition of a theory is compatible with what Bloom said about his taxonomy in the following trenchant terms:

We are of the opinion that our method of ordering educational outcomes will make it possible to define the range of phenomena for which such a theory must account. The taxonomy also uses an order consistent with research findings and it should provide some clues as to the nature of the theory which may be developed (Bloom, 1956: 17, 18).

The phrase “*educational outcomes*” from the above quotation clearly indicates that the taxonomy is principally and mainly related to an academic context which is based on both teaching and assessment. This close relation between the taxonomy and assessment was affirmed by Bloom who declared: “*the taxonomy is useful in developing testing techniques.*” (Ibid: 21). He followed: “*altogether, the taxonomy is suggestive in pointing to a large number of problems in the field of education and testing*” (Ibid: 23). Moreover, illustrative evidence that shows that Bloom’s taxonomy has much to do with assessment has been made clear by Gary Phy who states: “*One of the strengths of Bloom’s taxonomy is that it lends itself to the development of instructional objectives as well as assessment targets.*” (1997: 46). Accordingly, it is possible to use Bloom’s taxonomy as a theory to evaluate the BEM and BAC tests and the assessment activities of the Middle and Secondary Schools textbooks.

## **Conclusion**

On the light of what has been said so far, it seems very clear that classroom formative assessments offer educators a valuable tool to improve students’ learning. However, it is not enough to simply gather information on students’ learning through well designed classroom formative assessments. Indeed, teachers at all levels should focus on how best to use assessment results to close achievement gaps and help the students attain the instructional goals. Especially, they must add to the feedback correctives and enrichment activities.

In addition, we have seen that the two types of assessment; that is, formative and summative assessments have different purposes. The former are known as the assessments *for*



learning, that is to say they have as the prime purpose to support the teaching/learning process. The latter, on the other hand, are known as the assessments *of* learning; they are used to certify what students know or to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials and methods (Wrag, 2006: 28). Also, in order to realize the true benefits of formative assessments, teachers at all levels need to base their assessments on an approach that facilitates the application of the essential elements of formative assessment. As far as our research is concerned, it is the mastery learning approach advocated by Samuel Bloom that we see as the most relevant. Such approach fits well with the Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) which is the application of the principles of the Competency Based Education (Schenck 1978 in Richards and Rodgers 2001: 141). Adding to this compatibility that exists between CBLT and the mastery learning, it appears necessary to remember that mastery learning effectiveness has been demonstrated in many educational settings in the world.

Moreover, we have dealt with Bloom's taxonomy and discussed the meaning of its different stages including: *knowledge*, *comprehension*, *application*, *analysis*, *synthesis*, and *evaluation*. Finally, we have addressed the rationale behind the application of Bloom's taxonomy in testing and what makes it a theory.

Until now we have dealt with the theoretical part of our work. The following part will be practical and it will deal with the evaluation of the Middle School syllabuses, textbooks, the two Secondary School textbooks; that is, Getting Through and New Prospects, and the BEM and BAC tests.

## **PART TWO: The Algerian Middle School Syllabuses and Textbooks, the Secondary School Textbooks, BEM and BAC Tests**

The present part deals with the evaluation of the place of assessment in the Algerian Middle Schools syllabuses, and with the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools textbooks. Also, it examines the BAC and the BEM tests. To reach our aim we rely on Bloom's Mastery Learning approach as well as on Bloom's taxonomy. However the latter will be used only in our evaluation of the textbooks assessment activities and in the BEM and BAC tests. Consequently, three chapters are to be found in this part: the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses, the Algerian Middle and Secondary Schools Textbooks, BEM and BAC Tests.

### **Chapter Four: The Algerian Middle School Syllabuses**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, our focus will be on the evaluation of the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses with relation to their assessment area. More significantly, we shall throw light on the syllabuses' content and consider how assessment is accounted for; whether is it in line with Bloom's mastery learning approach or not. Our analysis targets the four Middle School syllabuses in general rather than in isolation. This is due to the fact that the general framework of the four syllabuses is the same, even though slight differences can be noticed among them. Before that, it seems important to throw a brief look at the general objectives as well as the theoretical assumptions underlying the recent reform of the Algerian educational system.

#### **IV-1- The Algerian Educational Reform**

It is claimed that the current Algerian educational system aims at forming autonomous individuals by applying the principles of constructivism. Schools must provide opportunities for teachers to help students reach mastery so that they become able to cope with the rapid changes of the present world. Such an aim remained unattainable within the traditional

approach to teaching. In this context, it is useful to remember that the teaching/learning process witnessed a very noticeable paradigm shift from what is known as teacher-centred approach to learner-centred approach in general and language assessment in particular. Said differently, from psychometrics to a broader model of educational assessment; from a “*testing and examination culture to an assessment culture*” (Gipps, 2003:20). The Algerian educational reform which was launched in 2001 is grounded in constructivism and Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching (CBALT).

## IV-2- Teaching Approach

In order to achieve the general teaching objectives mentioned above, syllabus designers consider the Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching (CBALT) to be the most appropriate means. Indeed, it is assumed that : “*L’approche par **compétences** consiste à relier les apprentissages acquis à l’école à des contextes d’utilisation variés et pertinents [...] à des situations-problèmes scolaires et extra scolaires*” (MS3, 2004: 40). All in all, there are three competencies in the syllabuses. The first competency: **interacting orally in English** and which requires the student to use the verbal language to produce oral texts and to enter into oral discussions with others. The second: **interpreting authentic texts (oral and written)** calls on the student to prove his/her understanding by paraphrasing orally or in writing different types of authentic texts (prose, songs, tales, carton...). The third competency: **producing simple oral and written texts** expects the students to produce coherent oral and written messages (MS2 Syllabus, 2003: 43-44).

It seems necessary to remember that the Middle School syllabuses are task-based. This type is defined as “*a SYLLABUS which is organized around TASKS*” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002:541). A task in its turn is “*an activity or goal that is carried out using language such as finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions or reading a set of*

*instructions...*” (Richards, 1986: 159). The following extracts show how the syllabuses are task-based:

1. “L’élève est amené à interagir dans des situations scolaires courantes en utilisant un langage verbal et /ou non verbal. Ainsi, il pourra se situer dans le temps et dans l’espace pour mieux se connaître, pour découvrir l’Autre, pour s’adapter aux réactions de son interlocuteur et pour mieux formuler des demandes et exprimer ses besoins” (MS1 Syllabus, 2002 :52).

2. “L’élève est amené à démontrer sa compréhension par la reformulation orale et/ou écrite de différents types de textes à travers différents supports didactiques...” (Ibid).

#### **IV-3- The Place of Assessment in the Syllabuses**

The syllabuses include two sections related to assessment: “*Indications méthodologiques/l’évaluation*” (Methodological Hints/Assessment) and “*Mise en oeuvre de chaque compétence/critères d’évaluation*” (Implementation of each competence/assessment criteria).

These two sections include the following extract:

1. “ L’évaluation constitue un élément essentiel dans toute démarche pédagogique et intervient au cours de tout processus d’apprentissage. Centrée sur l’élève elle permet à l’enseignant d’accomplir sa mission de médiateur afin de mesurer et faire prendre conscience de l’opérationnalisation des objectifs et des compétences requises. Elle est diagnostique et ainsi permet l’organisation du travail et de remédiation. Elle est formatrice, régulatrice des tâches, permet d’analyser les pré-requis de l’élève en vue de les renforcer ou passer des tâches simples vers d’autres plus complexes. Elle est sommative, s’inscrivant dans une logique d’orientation d’un niveau scolaire à un autre conformément à tout cours scolaire et répondant à tout cursus scolaire et répondant à des directives officielles” (MS 2 syllabus: 65).

In order to carry out our evaluation of the syllabuses assessment area it is necessary to design the following checklist:

1) Do the syllabuses go along with the three ‘TS approach’, or are the mastery learning strategies implemented in the syllabuses? This question includes the following sub-questions:

A) Are the learning objectives clearly stated in the syllabuses?

B) Are there any formative tests matched to those objectives?

C) Are those formative tests followed by correctives and enrichment activities?

- 2) What types of assessment are provided in the syllabuses? Are they explained and defined clearly?
- 3) Do the syllabuses provide assessment criteria for the four language skills? Or are the assessment objectives clearly stated in the syllabuses?
- 4) Are the techniques of marking and correcting available in the syllabuses?
- 5) Do the syllabuses provide opportunities for self-and-peer assessment of learning?

#### **IV-4- Results and Discussion**

Our analysis reveals that the four syllabuses comprise the general learning objectives. Indeed the four Middle Schools syllabuses include the following:

##### **1) Objectifs linguistiques** (linguistic objectives)

They aim at equipping the students with the basic language items which may help them carry on their language learning.

##### **2) Objectifs méthodologiques** (methodological objectives)

They aim at helping the students acquire learning strategies which enable them to reach autonomy. In addition, such objectives target the working methods as organisation, coherence, self-assessment, and the use of different documents.

##### **3) Objectifs culturels** (cultural objectives)

They are designed to help the students become aware of their culture as well as of the foreign culture. Such cultural awareness has a key role within the constructivist view of education (MS1 Syllabus: 48). In addition to these three learning objectives, it is mentioned in (MS4 Syllabus: 50) what is called *objectifs socioprofessionnels* or (socioprofessional objectives) and which seek to enable the learners to effectively behave in the professional life

as, for example, in vocational training. The aforementioned objectives can be reached through the effective use of English in real life situations (Ibid).

However, the way the learning objectives are stated in the syllabuses can be criticised for two important reasons. First, the syllabuses do not include a behavioural component which announces the leaning objectives in a way to make them become behavioural objectives because teaching under CBLT aims principally at enabling the students acquire the “Know-how-to-do” rather than concentrating only on the declarative knowledge. In other words *“Behavioral objectives take the idea of describing learning outcomes”* (Richards: 2001, 139). Hence the syllabuses should, for example, include this statement which announces each objective: ***Les élèves vont apprendre comment.....***which best expresses a competency or performance, which indicates what a learner is expected to be able to do. Second, a behavioral objective requires a performance-based assessment which requires a real demonstration of the competency. As a result a linkage will be established between learning for becoming competent and performance assessment.

As to the results of the second and the third parts of the first question, we notice that the syllabuses stress the importance of formative assessment which is designed to check whether the students have mastered the learning objectives or not. It follows from this situation that the syllabuses implicitly speak about correctives that should follow the formative assessment. However, it is not mentioned in such syllabuses that there will be students who will not need correctives but enrichment activities. Being so, the syllabuses do not guide the teachers to take into account the students’ learning differences which require variation in the instructional process that Bloom considered important in mastery learning classrooms. Therefore, the students’ achievement will result in a normal distribution of performance which is typical to traditional classrooms.

Regarding the results of the second question: What types of assessment are provided in the syllabuses? Are they explained and defined clearly? We can say that the syllabuses include: “*l’auto-évaluation*” (self-assessment), “*co-évaluation*” (peer assessment) (MS4 Syllabus: 54). This latter type is known in literature as a form of peer assessment. Therefore, there is only one type of evaluation which is mentioned in the syllabuses. This type is formative assessment including both self-and- peer assessment. However, it should be clarified that a teaching material can be designed together with a supporting material that clarifies its components and adds items which are not present in it. This is why at this level we refer to documents designed to support the syllabuses and which are called “***Documents d’accompagnement***” (Accompanying Documents).

Our analysis of ***Documents d’accompagnement des programmes d’anglais*** in the Middle School reveals that they include four types of assessment. Indeed, in the accompanying documents of MS3 syllabus, it has been stated that: “*Ce dispositif s’articule autour de 4 types d’ évaluation*” (90). These types are: *l’évaluation diagnostique* (diagnostic assessment), *l’évaluation sommative* (summative assessment), *l’évaluation formative* (formative assessment), and *l’évaluation formatrice*. The following table illustrates the four types of evaluation with their characteristics:

Types of Assessment as Presented in the Documents with their Translation to English	Characteristics and Aims of the Assessment
1) L’évaluation diagnostique (diagnostic assessment)	-It is a kind of test at the beginning of year -It shows and reveals the real level of the students by showing their strengths and weaknesses -It helps to prepare activities which fit the students’ level.
2) L’évaluation sommative (summative evaluation)	-It is based on selection and orientation. -It is made of texts and exams -It comes at the end of year or semester. -Under such type of assessment, the student work is marked.
3) L’évaluation formative	- It is an integral part of the teaching/learning

(formative assessment)	process - It supports teaching and learning - It is carried out through regulation and remediation and enrichment activities. - it seeks to equip the students with individualized help - to assess the learning outcomes - the teacher can use: a- Journals b- portfolio c- questionnaires and interviews d- Debate and discussion
4)L'évaluation formative (formative assessment)	It is made of: -La co-évaluation (assessment carried out by teachers and students). -L'évaluation mutuelle (peer-assessment): it is carried out by two or more students. -L'auto-évaluation (self assessment).

**Table 3: The Four Types of Evaluation with their Characteristics**

Table 3 shows the results of the second evaluation question. Indeed, it indicates that the *accompanying documents* of the Middle School syllabuses include the different types of assessment: Diagnostic, formative, and summative. These three types are presented with their definitions. Also, it should be mentioned that another type of assessment is included in the documents; “*l'évaluation formative*”. However, such typology of assessment as it is implemented in the documents cannot remain without a critic. Put differently, we say that in literature the last type of evaluation mentioned in the documents; that is, “*l'évaluation formative*” which, according to the document, includes self-and peer assessment should not be considered as an independent type of assessment like summative or formative assessment. Indeed, it should be considered as a sub-set of formative assessment as Douglas Brown asserts: “*Self-and peer-assessments are among the best formative types of assessment*” (2003). Similarly, in *Glossaire de didactique d'anglais*, Mireille Quivy and Claire Tardieu considered “*l'évaluation formative*” as a form of “*l'évaluation formative*” (formative assessment) (2002:148).



Furthermore, it should be shown that even though the documents comprise useful points about assessment there are some shortcomings that require remediation. First, the different types of evaluation are not clearly defined. For instance, the diagnostic assessment has been defined as a test without mentioning if this test will be marked or not. In this context, Quivey and Tardieu affirm that : “*Cette évaluation en début d’année scolaire, est destinée à la mise en place des enseignements modulaires [...] Elle n’est pas notée [...]*”. The last part of the quotation shows clearly that the students’ work in diagnostic assessment is not marked. Also, the teachers are not provided with hints about how to implement such diagnostic assessment. Put differently, the teachers should know which tasks better serve for diagnostic assessment as, for instance, essay writing and oral tasks which both include many aspects of language which really show the strengths and the weaknesses of the students.

Secondly, the two types of assessment; that is, self-and peer assessment which are key tenets of constructivism have not received the attention they deserve. In fact, the strategies of self-assessment borrowed from Meireieu and which are presented in the **Appendix A** need simplification and clarification. In other words, the students should be provided with clear guidelines to follow in assessing their own work. This aim, for example, can be reached by following Zimmerman's taxonomy dealing with self-regulation and which consists of goal setting, self-assessment based on clear criteria, and the next learning step; that is, going forward and making progress. Similarly, no guidelines are provided in the documents about how to conduct peer assessments in class. This is why we have mentioned in the theoretical part the conditions of good self-and peer assessment as, for instance, the presentation of the criteria on which to base the assessment and the different steps to follow in engaging the students in such a task.

As for the results of the third question of our evaluation checklist, the programs provide different assessment criteria revolving around three competencies that we shall discuss later.

This means that the assessment as it has been mentioned in the syllabuses is competency based. The following table shows the assessment criteria of the three competencies:

<b>The Competences</b>	<b>The Assessment criteria</b>	<b>Translation</b>
<b>- Competence1:</b> Interagir oralement en anglais	a-réactions verbales/non verbales appropriées b-interventions adaptées à la situation d'interaction c-formulation appropriée d-prononciation adéquate e-utilisation adéquate d'un langage fonctionnel f- utilisation de stratégies appropriées g- création de messages personnalisés appropriés à la situation	a- suitable verbal/non verbal answers b-communication within the interactive situation c- appropriate formulation d- appropriate pronunciation e- suitable use of functional language f-use of appropriate strategies g-creation of appropriate messages that fit the communicative situation
<b>Competence2:</b> Interpréter des documents authentiques oraux et écrits	a-compréhension de consignes b-démonstration verbale et non verbale de sa compréhension globale du sujet  c-démonstration verbale et non verbale de sa compréhension détaillée du sujet	a-understanding of instructions b-verbal and non verbal demonstration of his/ her global understanding of the subject c-verbal and non verbal demonstration of his /her detailed understanding of the subject
<b>Competence3 :</b> Produire des messages simples, oraux et écrits	a-formulation adéquate b-pertinence des idées c-cohérence du texte (lien entre les idées, chronologie..) d-cohésion (respect des règles sémantiques et syntactiques) e- respect de la présentation ((mise en page, écriture...) f-respect de l'organisation textuelle g-originalité de la production h- authenticité des informations	a-suitable formulation b-relevance of ideas c- coherence of text ( chronological order of ideas) d-cohesion (use of syntactic and semantic rules) e-good presentation of the work: making into pages, writings... f-respect of the textual organisation g-originality of the work h-authenticity of ideas

**Table 4** cited in the *Accompanying Documents* of MS4 syllabus (56-63).

#### IV-4-1- Criticism of the Assessment Criteria

A remark worthy of note for the assessment criteria included in the syllabuses is that they are the same, and as it is assumed in the language teaching methodology, we assess the way we teach. Put differently, it is obvious and very clear that the students' level in the Middle School vary from one year to another. For instance, first year students have not the same level as second, third, or fourth year students. As an evidence of this insufficiency, one can notice that the four syllabuses include the same assessment criteria of speaking, which is shown through "**Competence One**" where the student should show an "*appropriate pronunciation*" (MS1 Syllabus: 48). Hence, two important questions can be asked at this stage: (i) how can a first year student of English show an appropriate pronunciation? And (ii) how a first year Middle School student can be assessed in the same way as a fourth year student? Our aim through these two questions is to show the necessity of designing assessment criteria according to each level of instruction.

To develop effective assessment practices and strategies, students must have a clear understanding of the criteria on which the assessment of their work will be based. To better express and clarify this idea, Frederiksen and Collins (1989) use the term "*transparency*". In more precise terms, the features of each level of performance should be made clear for both teachers and students. This quotation illustrates better the point: "*The assessment systems should provide a basis for developing a metacognitive awareness of what are important characteristics of good problem solving, good experimentation, good historical analysis, and so on.*" (Frederiksen and Collins quoted in Shepard, 2000).

In addition, there are no corresponding grades of the assessment criteria. To be more precise, the students should be assessed according to their learning outcomes and their performance. For example, in assessing a student, we judge if his/her performance is *excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, poor, or inadequate*. These corresponding grades

allow the teachers to efficiently gauge the students' real performance and guide the students to know their real learning achievement as well. Moreover, it should be noted that the assessment criteria of the first competence (Interagir oralement en anglais) are not well stated. Indeed, the criterion "prononciation adéquate" (adequate pronunciation) should be made clear. That is, teachers as well as students should know what this means; if focus should be on segmental features as vowels and consonants or on suprasegmental as intonation and stress or on both of them. Furthermore, 'fluency' which is one of the principle criteria in oral assessment is not made explicit even if the whole criteria of the syllabuses may imply it. Finally, it seems necessary to point out that the importance of this clarity lies in facilitating the task for the teachers and avoiding any ambiguity that might mislead them. Indeed, according to Richards: *"the more detailed the syllabus"* the less differences in teaching. That is to say *"uncertainty will be eliminated in teaching performance resulting from individual differences, professional inexperience or the absence of propinquity"* (Richards, 2001: 199).

#### **IV-4-2- Criticism of the Grading and Scoring System in the Syllabuses**

Dealing with the results of the fourth question, our analysis reveals that neither the syllabuses nor the accompanying documents comprise guidelines about grading or scoring. This fact will not help the teachers to effectively assess the students work and as a result the students will not be well informed about their real performance. Assessing a student's work should not be without comments, and grades or scores. The two common forms of grades are "numerical" and "letter" grades. The following principles (descriptors of letter grades) adopted from Brown (2003: 294) can be considered as a useful suggestion for implementing a powerful grading system in the teaching and learning manuals in the Middle School:

- A*    *excellent*
- B*    *good*
- C*    *adequate*
- D*    *inadequate/ unsatisfactory*
- E*    *fail / unacceptable*

Such letter grades can be used as a solution to remedy the shortcomings of the syllabuses with relation to scoring or grading. However, it should be remembered that the meaning of grades should be only as indicators of achievement and just a system of representing the students' ability (Gronlund: 174-175 in Ibid: 284). Another possible way of evaluation is to assign numerical grades or scores. Therefore, it is possible, for instance, to design scores (on a 100-point basis or on 20-point basis) (Brown: 288). Indeed, both letter and numerical grading can be matched together with meaningful comments to efficiently evaluate the students' work (Ibid: 288, 295).

Finally, the results of the fifth evaluation question are related to the issue of whether the syllabuses provide opportunities for self-and peer-assessment. In examining the syllabuses, we noticed that they include the two types of assessment. Indeed, the four syllabuses show that "l'auto-évaluation" (self-assessment) and "l'évaluation mutuelle" (peer assessment) are means which can be used to check the students' progress. In the accompanying documents of MS2 syllabus, (87-89), there are strategies which are taken from Meireieu (1989) that deal with self-assessment. The table of the strategies will be presented in the Appendix about Middle School syllabuses. Such strategies show the activities related to self-assessment but the students are not told how to proceed to such task; that is, the process of self-assessment is not made clear also that of peer assessment. In other words, the syllabuses do not include guidelines as to how to organize peer assessment and what aims should be targeted through it.

## **Conclusion**

Our look at the Middle School syllabuses has highlighted positive and negative features. Being task-based, the syllabuses concentrate on the importance of presenting language as a set of tasks to be accomplished by the students rather than presenting language solely or predominantly as form. This positive point relates to our general evaluation of the syllabuses. As to the positive points of the syllabuses with relation to their assessment section, it appears

that the materials put a considerable emphasis on the necessity of considering teaching and assessment as prominently interrelated entities. Put another way, the syllabuses incorporate important extracts where assessment especially formative assessment is perceived as a pivotal tool to support the teaching/learning process. Always associated with formative assessment, self-and peer assessment are also included in the syllabuses.

As for the weaknesses of the syllabuses that our evaluation has spotlighted, we can mention the absence of guidelines which show how formative assessment which encompasses both self-and peer assessment can be carried out during the teaching/learning process. In addition, designing the same assessment criteria for the four Middle School years is another insufficiency which requires remediation. Moreover, no grade or score system is included in the syllabuses. This fact is not really helping teachers to systematically and effectively grade their students' work.

In short, we can say that even if the syllabuses do not account for assessment in a satisfactory way, yet their regard paid to the necessity of evaluating the students' work in a formative way remain an undeniable advantage in the full sense of the word. No syllabus is wholly complete and the Algerian Middle School syllabuses are not exception.

## **Chapter Five: The Algerian Middle and Secondary School Textbooks: An Assessment**

### **Introduction**

Even though there is a plethora of English language teaching material available on the market, covering many aspects of English language teaching and learning in Algeria, neither the teachers nor the students can get rid of the textbook which always remains a necessary tool for language instruction. This section starts with the description of the material that constitutes the corpus of our investigation; that is, the four Middle School textbooks: *Spotlight on English One*, *Spotlight on English Two*, *Spotlight on English Three* and *On the Move* and the two Secondary School textbooks: *Getting Through* and *New Prospects*. First, we try to examine if their teaching procedures are compatible with the “three TS” approach and then we analyse their assessment sections. To analyse the textbooks teaching procedure against the Mastery Learning components, the following checklist will be used:

- Are the learning objectives clearly announced in the textbooks?
- Do the contents of the units correspond to the learning goals?
- Are the units followed by formative assessment so as to check the students’ understanding of the learning goals?
- Is there any consistency (linkage) between the different components of Mastery learning?

### **V-1- Middle School Textbooks**

#### **V-1-1- *Spotlight on English One***

##### **V-1-1-1- Textbook Description**

*Spotlight on English One* is the official English textbook intended for the first year Middle School learners who start learning English for the first time. The textbook includes seven files entitled; ‘Hello’, ‘Family and Friends’, ‘Sport’, ‘In and Out’, ‘Food’, ‘Inventions

*and Discoveries*', and *'Environment'*. There are five sections within each file: "*Learn the Language*", "*Learn about culture*", "*Reminder*", "*Check*", and "*Project*".

The first file deals with language items as lexis, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. Moreover, this section comprises many sequences. Each sequence contains three rubrics: *'Listen and Speak'*, *'Practice'*, and *'Produce'*. The first rubric presents the learners the language items to be learned. The second rubric *'Practice'* offers the learners to practise what has been presented in the previous rubric. The last rubric *'Produce'* requires the learners to do some writing activities as order and alphabetic completion. The second file "*Learn about Culture*" shows the learners that learning a foreign language is also learning a foreign culture as Claire Kramsh says: "*Through all its verbal and non verbal aspects, language embodies cultural reality*" (1998: 3). The third file "*Check*" is related to language assessment. It is intended to support the teaching/learning process via the evaluation of the learners' performance and progress all along the whole file. The last rubric "*Project*" demands the learners to do a project work as a personal product.

### **V-1-1- 2- The Teaching Procedure**

Our analysis of *Spotlight on English One* reveals that the latter's teaching procedure is not compatible with the principles of the Mastery Learning approach and this is due to many reasons. First, the textbook units as well as the sequences do not include the learning objectives the students should reach. Indeed, the textbook does not include clear and specific behavioural objectives about the four language skills, which can be considered as the criteria on which to base the assessment as, for example, the student should be able to listen for gist, to read for specific information, and so on. Second, the textbook does not include an explicit teaching of the language items; its major part is devoted to session lead questions or testing. Third the activities the textbook includes cannot be considered as formative assessment because the latter is mainly used to check the students' understanding of what they learned



and as mentioned above no clear distinction is made between testing and teaching in the textbook. This element will be discussed later on. However, if the elements of the Mastery learning approach are not reflected in the textbook, what teaching procedure is implemented in the textbook?

It is noticeable that the teaching procedure adopted in *Spotlight on English One* is the ‘Three PS’ approach. The latter can be defined as a methodology that aims at teaching the language items following a sequence of three distinct stages: presentation of the item, practice of the item, and finally production of the item (Tomilson, 1998:12 quoted in Raquel Criado Sánchez, 2008: 72). In *Spotlight on English One*, the first stage is related to the ‘Listen and Speak’ rubric and aims at developing items of language dealing with structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. As a matter of fact, the following activity illustrates the sequence presentation:

**d- Listen and repeat:**

**b. Role play: work in pairs. Ask and answer**

*e.g. What’s your name?*

*My name’s Sally. / I’m Sally (Spotlight on English One: 21).*

The above activity clearly reflects one of the most common principles of the behaviourist view of teaching which lies in repetition and habit formation. In addition, the students are not informed about the reasons of listening; they listen because they are asked to do so. As a result, the students are not really involved in the teaching/learning process and they just learn unconsciously. Said differently, the learners should be aware of what they are doing otherwise they will lose concentration and interest. More importantly this reflects a conventional view of listening which considers it as “*the mastery of discrete skills or micro-skills and that these should form the focus of teaching and testing*” (Richards: 2002).

Regarding the *practice* phase, it purports at enabling the students to *practise* the language in classroom. It is a general fact that in order to learn to speak, learners should be pushed to

actually speak the language in class and in order to write, learners should write. The following extract from the textbook illustrates the point.

***c. Read then put the right punctuation.***

<i>Hellow Sami my name is</i> <i>Michel Nice to meet you</i>
---

***(Spotlight on English One: 22)***

This activity relates to learning punctuation when using expressions dealing with greeting. The students have already encountered items like this one in the presentation phase. Therefore, the activity clearly represents the *practice* phase of sequence one in the first file. Also, such an activity reflects one of the principles of the Audio-Lingual Method and which refers to memorisation of structures through practice.

The last stage requires the learners to produce or to use language items orally or in writing. In the rubric '*Produce*', we can find the following activity which best illustrates the case:

***c. Order the sentences and write down the conversation on your exercise-book***

*Nice to meet you, Rym. What is your name? Glad to meet you Massil. Hello, I m Massil. Hi, Massil. My name s Rym. (Ibid: 23)*

The activity is a follow-up of the *practice* stage of sequence one of the first file. Indeed, the activity calls on the students to order a number of scrambled sentences so that to produce a coherent conversation with which they have already become familiar. Such a *production* stage informs whether the students have learned how to greet each other using expressions like “hello” and “hi” and which ones to use in starting the conversation.

In short, we can say that Spotlight on English One does not meet the principles of the Mastery Learning approach which consist in teaching-testing-re-teaching. This fact shows that the textbook does not include a formative assessment designed in a manner to support

learning. In other words, the textbook activities do not assess the extent to what the students have learned behavioural objectives; they mainly refer to the practice stage of the ppp approach. This is the analysis of the teaching procedure.

### **V-1-2- *Spotlight on English: Book Two***

#### **V-1-2-1- Textbook Description**

*Spotlight on English: Book two* is the official second year textbook in the Middle School .It consists of five files. Each file includes three sequences. Each sequence is made of '*Listen and Speak*', '*Discover the Language*', and finally '*Self- assessment*'.

As to the sections of the textbook, they are "*Listen and speak*", "*Discover the language*", "*Learn about culture*", "*Check*", "*Project*", and "*Self-assessment*". The first section is made of three rubrics: "*Pronunciation and Spelling*" which is designed to help the learners to improve their spelling and pronunciation, "*Practise*" which relates to revision and consolidation of language items learned in the previous rubric, and "*Go Forward*" which is a matter of reading activity. The second section intends to enable the learners to discover new language items through reading and conversation. Its rubrics are: "*Reading Passage*", "*Practise*", and "*Reminder*". In the last rubric the learners are asked to learn inductively like finding out rules through language activities and tasks. The third section allows the learners to read about the universal culture through many texts. The fourth section, that is, "*Check*" is made up of activities through which the teachers can assess their students' performance. As to the fifth section, its aim is to call on the students to carry out a project. The last section "*Self-assessment*" is made up of a grid that allows the learners assess their own work.

#### **V-1-2-2- The Teaching Procedure**

The results of the first evaluative question show that each file and each sequence of the textbook includes the learning objectives the students should reach. More importantly, the

learning objectives of the first file are announced by a statement which includes a behavioural component. Indeed, the file starts with the statement: **In this file you will learn how to: describe a person’s physical appearance, revise the present simple**, and so forth (Spotlight on English: Book Two, page 7). However, it is only the learning objectives of the first file which are announced with a behavioural component. Indeed, the learning objectives of the second file, for example, are announced by the statement: **In this file you’re going to**. In addition, it should be mentioned that the learning objectives of the sequences do not start with a behavioural component. As evidence, the learning objectives of the first sequence “*Listen and Speak*” of the first file are implemented in the following way:

**OBJECTIVES**

- Consolidate 1<sup>st</sup> AM vocabulary
- Consolidate “can”
- Use synonyms and antonyms
- Use demonstratives: *these/those* (Spotlight on English: Book Two, page 28).

Next, it should be shown that our examination of the learning objectives of the first file with relation to “*the achievability principle*”, and “*the flexible-time principle*” indicates that the learning objectives are feasible but it is difficult to say that they meet “*the flexible-time principle*”. Indeed, the file includes fourteen (14) objectives and a project which means that too much time is required to well teach and re-teach them to well assess and re-assess them. Interestingly, the nature of the objectives does not meet one of the core principles of Mastery Learning because they only deal with lower-order skills; focus is on language structures. This reality is to be found in the **Appendix: B**. Clearly, it should be stated that the way the objectives are implemented in the textbook does not really meet the principles of the Mastery Learning approach. In other words, the number of the objectives should be reduced and focus should be on higher-order skills.

As regards the results of the second evaluative question stated above, we notice that the textbook does not include an explicit teaching of the objectives. Indeed, the textbook includes

only one part related to as such and which is called “*Reminder*”. However, the box stresses only the language structures. The following is an illustration:

<b><i>Reminder</i></b>	
<b><i>To form the past simple</i></b>	
▪ We add ‘ <b>ed</b> ’ to the regular verbs.	▪ We change ‘ <b>y</b> ’ to ‘ <b>i</b> ’ for the verbs Ending in ‘ <b>y</b> ’ and we add ‘ <b>ed</b> ’
e.g. <i>tour      toured</i>	e.g. <i>carry      carried</i>
▪ We add ‘ <b>d</b> ’ to the verbs ending in ‘ <b>e</b> ’.	▪ we form questions with ‘ <b>did</b> ’+ infinitive without ‘ <b>to</b> ’
e.g. <i>puzzle      puzzled</i>	e.g. <i>Did your father know that?</i>
▪ We double the last consonant for the verbs Ending in one consonant and we add ‘ <b>ed</b> ’	▪ We form negative statements with ‘ <b>did not</b> ’ ( <b>didn’t</b> )+ infinitive without ‘ <b>to</b> ’
e.g. <i>star      starred</i>	e.g. <i>He didn’t like that at all.</i> <i>He did not like that at all.</i>

(Spotlight on English: Book Two: 15).

This is the unique part included in the textbook which deals with an explicit teaching. However, this does not correspond to the teaching stage of the Mastery Learning Approach because the **Reminder** box of the textbook is placed after the learners have been tested. Following this way, we can say that the teaching procedure implemented in the textbook is not compatible with the Mastery Learning approach and that the activities implemented in the textbook cannot be considered as a formative assessment because, as we have seen earlier, formative assessment is principally used to check whether the students have really grasped the content they have been taught or not and as we mentioned above the textbook includes only one sub-rubric related to teaching and which is placed after the students have been tested.

Interestingly, it is to be highlighted that the teaching procedure implemented in Spotlight on English: Book Two is the three Ps approach. This point can be made clear through our analysis of the rubric “*Listen and Speak*” of the first file.

First of all, it is important to show that the “*Listen and Speak*” rubric in “*Sequence One*” starts with a presentation of the language forms mainly in a dialogue between two persons;

“Sally and Steve” (Spotlight on English: Book Two: 8) and according to Harmer such a presentation phase is the stage where “the teacher introduces a situation which contextualizes the language to be taught.” (Harmer, 2001: 80). In other words, the students are presented the language items to be learned within a context. The following activity from the textbook shows clearly the point:

▪ **Sally and Steve are watching a video film. Listen to what they say then choose a partner to play their roles.**

Sally: *Who’s the woman with the red dress?*

Steve: *It’s Jane Smith.*

Sally: *I don’t think so: Jane Smith is young, tall and slim.*

*She’s got blue eyes and fair hair, hasn’t she?*

Steve: *Yes, you’re right. Perhaps, she’s wearing a wig in this film!*

Sally: *She does not look nice, doesn’t she?*

Steve: *Never mind. She’s a fantastic actress and I’m a fan!*

Sally: *I’m not. In fact, I think she’s a bad actress!*” (Spotlight on English: Book Two: 20)

It seems clear that the dialogue contains the language items to be learned in the “*listen and Speak*” rubric and which have been announced in the learning objectives of the **sequence 1**: “description of a person’s physical appearance, using adjectives to describe a person, discriminating between the final sounds [s], [z] and [iz].” The aim of the presentation stage as Elis says is: “to help the learners acquire new linguistic knowledge or to restructure knowledge that has been wrongly presented.” He explains this by saying: “new language will ‘build’ on top of what was taught previously (Elis, 1988: 21 cited in Evans 1999). The activity the students are asked to do can be qualified as a substitution drill designed under the Audio-lingual Method. However, as Harmer says: “But because they are contextualized by the situation that has been presented, they carry more meaning than a substitution drill.” (Harmer, 2001: 80).

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that this “*Listen and Speak*” rubric does not start in a manner that activates the students’ previous knowledge and help them understand better. Thus it would be better if there had been a pre-listening activity. Also, the mere instruction “**Sally and Steve are watching a video film. Listen to what they say, then choose a partner**

*and play their roles*” (Spotlight on English: Book Two: 8) is less useful than *“Sally and Steve are watching a video film. Each of them is talking about and describing the actress ‘Jane Smith’. Listen to what they say, then choose a partner and play their roles”*. The latter instruction as Penny Ur contends: *“activates learners’ relevant schemata [...] and enables them to [...] build anticipatory ‘scaffolding’ that will help them understand”* (Ur, 1996: 108). Consequently, thanks to the reformulation of the task we suggested the learners are likely to understand the passage dealing with a description of an actress physical profile and the objective of the activity will become clearer and more specific. Our evidence is that as Carla Brewington Ford (1988: 2) argues that in presenting the lesson, the mastery teacher should keep in mind to use the techniques that attract the students’ attention and get them involved in the learning process. Indeed, involvement as Harmer asserts is one of the fundamental elements in making the learning process efficient and benefic (2001: 84).

Also, just after the first activity, the language items are presented straightforwardly as the following activity shows:

▪**Listen and repeat**

*actress, actresses, singers, painters*

<i>Sounds</i>		
<i>[s]</i>	<i>[z]</i>	<i>[iz]</i>
<i>She acts</i>	<i>She sings</i>	<i>She addresses</i>
<i>He paints</i>	<i>He listens</i>	<i>He teaches</i>
<i>She works</i>	<i>She tries</i>	<i>She practices</i>
<i>He checks</i>	<i>He reads</i>	<i>He notices</i>

(Spotlight on English: Book Two: 8)

The table presents the final sounds [s], [z] and [iz] in a straightforward way. However, this is just a simple presentation with no guidelines and proper teaching of the point. Put differently, if the teacher does not show the students where to use each sound, the students will not learn the item. Therefore, it’s up to the teacher to provide the learners with the language rules which explain clearly the item. Also, rather than saying *“listen and repeat”* we should give a specific instruction such as: *listen and find out when we use [s], [z], [Iz]*. In

addition, it is to be mentioned that for the sake of practice of what has been presented the students are required to do the following activity:

▪**Identify**

*cakes, teachers, comics, pupils, kisses, partners, misses, stars.*

▪**Compare**

*comics, pupils, partners, kisses, listens, writers* (Spotlight on English: Book Two: 8).

Even if this activity is not directly indicated to be under the *practice* phase, but its nature tells us that it is designed for such. And it seems very clear that the activity, as Evans says, aims at helping the learners “*internalize the structure*” (Evans, 1999). However, it should be mentioned that “*this is a behaviorist view of learning, the practice leads to mastery*” (Ibid). In addition, the aim of the activity is not clear because the way it is designed does not tell the students why they are going to do it. Therefore, to make it clear we suggest the following: ***‘now you are going to be able to: 1-identify when we put the final sounds [s], [z] and [iz] and 2- compare between the pronunciation of the letter ‘s’ at the end of words with justification of your answer.’*** Such instruction makes the aim of the activity clearer and shows the students why they are asked to do it. Thus they will learn consciously. Interestingly, the purpose of the listening task should be clear and this in order to help the students concentrate on what they should learn as knowledge as Ur states: “*The definition of a purpose enables the listeners to listen selectively for significant information-easier, as well as more natural than trying to understand everything*” ( 1996: 108). As a result, it should be mentioned that the importance of putting stress on behavioral objectives and making such objectives clear and specific is that this fact represents the criteria on which to base the assessment. That is to say there should be an assessment which provides us with an evidence which indicates that the students has really been brought to a point where he knows how to use the knowledge targeted through a behavioral objective. By this way, the relation between the emphasis on specific behavioral objectives and assessment becomes clear.



As a result, we can say that in the rubric “*Listen and Consider*” there is no clear linkage between the learning objectives of the sequence and teaching. Our argument is that the textbook does not provide the teachers and the students with necessary instructional content about how to describe a person’s physical appearance or when to use the final sounds [s], [z] and [iz]. Moreover, it seems clear that no clear distinction is made between teaching and testing the point that we shall tackle in more details when we speak of teaching versus testing.

As regards the sub-rubric “*practice*”, it explicitly represents the *practice* phase of the rubric “*Listen and Speak*” as the following activity shows:

***1- Choose one of these people and describe him/her.***

*e.g. Jane Smith is a young, tall and slim woman with blue eyes and fair hair.*

<i>Name: Salim</i> <i>Surname: Nasser</i> <i>Age: 21</i> <i>Height: 1. 80</i> <i>Weight: 78kg.</i> <i>Eyes: brown</i> <i>Hair: black</i>	<i>Name: Michael</i> <i>Surname: Young</i> <i>Age: 70</i> <i>Height: 1. 65m</i> <i>Weight: 90kg.</i> <i>Eyes: blue</i> <i>Hair: grey</i>	<i>Name: Carla</i> <i>Surname: Giovanni</i> <i>Age: 15</i> <i>Height: 1. 35m</i> <i>Weight: 35kg.</i> <i>Eyes: green</i> <i>Hair: brown</i>
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**(Spotlight on English: Book Two: 8)**

This activity principally deals with the practice of one of the items presented in the *presentation* phase; ‘***describing a person’s profile.***’ However, the problem with the activity is that it is not creative. In other words, the students can just link the words and get a paragraph. In addition, the students are not taught how to describe by showing them the guidelines to follow in reaching this aim. This is why these activities are mechanical; based on repetition and reproduction rather than on creation and imagination.

As regards the next sub-rubric; that is, “*Go Forward*” which is included in the first sequence we can say that it can be considered as the *production* stage of the “*Listen and Speak*” rubric. This sub-rubric contains a reading text illustrated with photos to facilitate the students’ understanding. And even if the first activity seems to be highly controlled, the two other activities, on the other hand, makes the stage more interesting and motivating and this

thanks to the opportunity the students have been given in using their knowledge in a freer and more creative way. The first activity which is highly controlled and which only checks literal comprehension of the reading passage is as follows:

**1- Read this article from “Today’s Star”. Then write questions for the answers below.**

*e.g. Is he fat?*

*No, he isn’t. He is slim.*

.....?

*No ha hasn’t. He’s got brown eyes.*

.....?

*Yes, he’s got a moustache.*

.....?

*Yes, he does. He writes all his shows.*

.....?

*In Arabic, Tamazight and French.*

*No, he doesn’t. He lives in France (Spotlight on English: Book Two activity 1 page: 9).*

On the other hand, the activities two and three give the students the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and their communicative competence through pair work and individual work. Also, the degree of control is highly reduced. The activities are as follows:

**2- Pair work.**

***Look at these photos. Do you recognize these people? What are their names? What do they look like? Where do they live? Ask and answer questions about them.***

**3- Now, imagine you interview one of them (Ibid: 9).**

In brief, our analysis of Spotlight on English: Book Two shows that the textbook files include too many learning objectives that should be reduced. Also, the units’ format does not show a clear distinction between teaching and assessment except the sub-rubric **Reminder**, which as mentioned above deals with an explicit instruction but this is implemented after the students have been tested. Thus there is no formative assessment in the textbook implemented to support the teaching/learning process.

After having shown that it is the three PS (Presentation-Practice-Produce) and not the three Ts (Teach-Test-Re-teach) which are implemented in Spotlight on English: Book Two we move on to analyse Spotlight on English: Book Three teaching procedure and we see if the three Ts are implemented in the textbook.

## **V-1-3- Spotlight on English: Book Three**

### **V-1-3- 1- Textbook Description**

*Spotlight on English: Book Three* is the official textbook designed for teaching English for third year learners at the Middle School. It consists of four files: “*communication*”; “*Travel*”, “*Work and Play*”, and “*Around the World*”. Each file is made of six sections; that is, “*Language Skills*”, “*Snapshots of Culture*”, “*Activate your English*”, “*Do the Exercises and Draw the Rules*”, “*Project Round-up*”, and “*Where Do We Stand Now?*” The first section comprises three sequences turning around five rubrics: “*Listen and Speak*”, “*Say it Clear*”, “*Practise*”, “*Imagine*” and “*Read and write*”. The second section aims at helping the learners become aware of the different cultures around the world and acquiring a cross-cultural competence. The third section; that is, “*Activate your English*” is mainly designed to help the learners keep in mind the words they have learned in the files of the book by using them in meaningful sentences of their own. The fourth section “*Do the Exercises and Draw the Rules*” is related to language practice. The fifth section “*Project Round-up*” requires the students to carry out a project. Last but not least, “*Where Do We Stand Now?*” deals with a set of activities to check the students’ progress through the file.

### **V-1-3- 2- The Teaching Procedure**

As it has been mentioned above Spotlight on English: Book Three is made up of five files. Our evaluation will be focused only on the first file; that is, “Communications” and more precisely on “Listen and Speak” and “Read and Write” rubrics.

First of all, the results of the first evaluative question show that all the textbook files start with a **Preview** which includes the learning objectives the students should reach through the file. However, in no file of the textbook the learning objectives are announced with a behavioral component. In fact, **File One** starts directly with *Preview, Sequence One: Hello*

*Again! Greetings, Introducing someone, etc. (Spotlight on English: Book Three: 15).* More importantly, our analysis indicates that the textbook sequences do not start with a learning objective. Such a reality means that the principle of the Mastery Learning which lies in informing the students about the learning objectives of each lesson is not reflected in the textbook. This is about the implementation of the learning objectives in the textbook. As regards the evaluation of the learning objectives implemented in the **Preview** of the first file with relation to the “*the achievability principle*”, and “*the flexible-time principle*” we can say that the objectives are feasible but they are too many. In fact, the first file includes twenty (20) objectives, which means that too much time is required to teach and to re-teach them, to assess and to re-assess them. Thus, we can affirm that “*the flexible-time principle*” cannot be met. The learning objectives of the first file of the textbook are to be found in the **Appendix: C**. Hence reducing the number of the objectives is required.

Dealing with the results of the second evaluative question; that is, do the contents of the units correspond to the learning goals? We notice that the book does not include an explicit teaching of the objectives. Indeed, the unique part of the textbook which deals with the teaching is the sub-rubric called **Tips**, but the latter deals only with pronunciation. The following illustrates the point:

### ***Tips***

*There are two types of questions: **wh**-questions and **Yes/no** questions.*

*A. **Wh-questions** have a **question word** such as **who, what, where, when, why, how, etc.** These questions ask for information answers. The **intonation/voice** goes down at the end of such questions.*

*B. **Yes/no** questions do not have question words. We answer these questions with **Yes** or **No**. The **intonation/voice** goes up at the end of such questions.*

(Ibid: 17).

Even if this sub-rubric shows a clear teaching of intonation, it is not sufficient to say that the textbook includes an explicit teaching of the learning objectives included in the **Preview**. Indeed, the textbook does not include an explicit instruction, for example, of how to read or

how to listen. Put another way, the majority of the objectives are presented through lead question sessions which means that no clear distinction is made between teaching and assessing in the textbook. As a result the activities which the textbook includes cannot be considered as formative assessment except those implemented after the Tip box because they are after teaching which means that coherence exists between teaching and assessing. Accordingly, through such an analysis we can say that the teaching procedure implemented in ***Spotlight on English: Book Three*** is not compatible with the Mastery Learning approach. More than this, it is the three Ps approach which is implemented in the textbook. Such a reality can be shown through our analysis of the “Listen and Speak” and “Read and Write” rubrics of the first file.

To begin with, our evaluation of the “Listen and Speak” rubric shows that the latter follows the three phases: Presentation, Practice, and Production. The first phase relates to the warm-ups to the listening and comprehension tasks. Indeed, the students are first required to do activities related to greetings as the following shows:

***1- Greet your new classmate and introduce yourself to him/her.***

*Follow the example.*

*Example: You: hello, my name is...*

*Your classmate: Nice to meet you, I am... (Spotlight on English: Book Three: 16)*

It seems clear that the activity presents the items the students will encounter in the file and which relate to greetings. Such an activity is important in that it prepares the students to the listening task. Indeed, next the students are required to listen to a dialogue which turns around greetings as the following activity shows:

***3-Now listen to dialogue one and check your answers (Ibid).***

*Mr Green: Good morning.*

*The Headmaster: Good morning. Are you Mr Green?*

*Mr Green: Yes, I am.*

*The Headmaster: How do you do?*

*Mr Green: How do you do?.....(Ibid: 164).*

This is about the presentation phase of the rubric. As regards the practice stage, it is explicitly indicated in the textbook. Indeed, the following activity shows how the students are required to do a task related to greeting; something which they have already encountered:

**3- What do you say in these situations? Fill in the blanks.**

a. When you leave someone for the night or before going to bed:

.....

b. When you leave someone whom you have just met:

.....

c. When you part with someone who is just about to travel:

.....? (Spotlight on English: Book Three: 18)

As regards the production stage of the “Listen and Speak” rubric, it is called **Imagine** and where the students are required to produce answers themselves. In this stage, as we have mentioned earlier, the students are freer and they use the language in a more creative way than in the two preceding stages as the following activity shows:

**3- With your partner, prepare a dialogue following the outline below.**

-greeting

-introducing

-responding to an introduction

-parting (Ibid: 19).

As regards the second rubric “*Read and write*”, it seems that it also follows the *Presentation Practice Production* stages. First of all, the rubric is made up of a pre-reading phase which activates the learners’ background knowledge and then the learners are asked to read a text and do activities. It is through these two stages that the learners are presented the items which relate to the description of a personality and how to use this to write an application letter as a response to an advertisement. As a matter of fact, the following activity deals with the presentation stage:

**2- The e-mail below is a response to the advertisement above. Read it and do the activities (A to D) on the next page.**

*Dear madam,*

*I read your advertisement in the newspaper yesterday. I would like to participate in the competition for teenage pop stars.*

*My name is Sarah Bint. I will turn 15 next August. I go to Middle School, year 3. I am slim and quite tall for my age. I am 1.65 m tall. I 've long, wavy, red hair with sparkling brown eyes and a short turned-up nose [....] I am generally quiet but not shy.....(Spotlight on English: Book Three: 20).*

The text presents to the students a description of a personality and the use of link words as *but*, *and* , and *because*. This is referred to the presentation stage within a context. After that the students are asked to practice the items through a number of activities as the following shows:

***B. Join each of the pairs of sentences (a to e) below to get one meaningful sentence.***

- a. I live in England. I spend my summer holidays in Algeria.*
- b. He sings well. He plays the banjo wonderfully.*
- c. I study at Colonel Amirouche school. Latifa studies at the same school.*
- d. I like football. I also like tennis.*
- e. I can play the piano. I cannot play the guitar (Ibid: 22).*

The activity is related to the practice of the linking words as: ***and***, ***but***, and ***because*** the students have been already presented in the text above. As regards the production phase of this “Read and Write” rubric it is called “Write it Out” as the following activity shows how the students are asked to write an application letter by using the linking words ***but***, ***and***, and ***because*** as well the description of personality:

- ***Use the clues below to write an application letter for membership in sports club. Use ‘and’, ‘but’ and ‘because’.***

*Dear.....,*  
*I would.....*  
*Name: .....Forename (S):*  
*Age: .....*  
*Address: .....*  
*Education: .....*  
*Appearance: .....*  
*.....*  
*Personality: .....Likes*  
*and dislikes: .....*  
*.....*  
*I look forward.....(Ibid)*

By doing so we have shown how the PPP approach is implemented in Spotlight on English Book: Three and how the textbook does not include an explicit instruction of the language skills followed by a formative assessment. Now we move on to evaluate the textbook *On the Move*.

#### **V-1-4- On the Move**

##### **V-1-4-1- Textbook Description**

*On the Move* is the fourth and the last official textbook designed for teaching English in the Middle School. It consists of six (6) files showing the same organisation structure: “*It’s my threat*”, “*You Can Do It*”, “*Great Expectations*”, “*Then And Now*”, “*Dreams, Dreams...*” and “*Fact And Fiction*”. Each file is divided into six sections: “*Language Learning*”, “*Skills Building*”, “*Project Round Up*”, “*Where Do We Stand Now?*” and “*Time For...*”

The first section aims at helping the learners discover and practise grammar in oral and written texts. The second section “*Skills Building*” is a matter of reading and writing activities to be carried out individually, in pair, or in group. The third section “*Project Round Up*” requires the students to compare their projects to the one given to them as an example. The fourth section “*Where do we stand now*” is related to the assessment of the students’ achievements via two rubrics: “*Progress Check*” and “*Learning Log*” which is in its turn devoted to the student self-assessment. The fifth and the last rubric “*Time for*” comprises songs, words of wisdom and cartoons for laughing. It comes as *a step of rest* after a considerable intellectual effort and before moving on to the next file.

##### **V-1-4-2- The Teaching Procedure**

First of all, the results of the first question show that the first element of the Mastery Learning approach which lies in the learning objectives is reflected in the textbook. Indeed, *On the Move* includes a “**Preview**” which announces what learning objectives will be covered through each file. Nevertheless, the learning objectives included in the preview are



not announced with a statement which reflects a competency. To be more explicit, the statement which opens the preview is: ***In this file you will learn the following*** which does not refer to the “*know-how-to-do*”. In this way, Carla Brewington Ford states that the mastery learning teacher opens the lessons with a behavioral component which indicates “*what is the student will be able to do*” (1988: 25). That is to say under the mastery learning approach the learning objectives should include a behavioural component which indicates that the students are learning to reach mastery or competency that can be shown through demonstration. More importantly, the textbook sequences do not start with the learning objectives.

In this context, Carla Brewington Ford assumes: “*Mastery learning depends on the students having a clear idea at the start of each lesson what is they will be learning that day*” (Ibid). Such principle is not reflected in the textbook especially when speaking about the primary skills or the social skills which are difficult to locate within the sequences. Being so, the textbook will not help the teachers to better structure the lessons and the students to be aware of what they are learning and why they are engaged in such learning. Indeed, the “*Listen and Consider*” rubric of the first file on page **18** consists of a “pre” listening phase, a “while” listening phase, and a “post” listening phase. But, the rubric starts with no specific objectives. As a solution the aim can be formulated in this way: “*In this rubric, the students will be able to get the gist and specific information of short conversations in English on topics related to origins of some meals and food*” and, of course, this is in the case where the objective of listening is for both main and supporting ideas. Doing this allows teachers to organize their lessons and manage their time and helps students focus on the learning objectives well. In other words, such a point would make the listening task more interesting and helps the teacher be more explicit and specific. Thus, the assessment which should be based on the learning objectives will be in most cases impossible to implement. Therefore,

each sequence of the textbook should include the behavioral objectives the students should reach and master. This is about the implementation of the learning objectives in the textbook.

Next, it should be remembered that speaking about the learning objectives two other principles should be taken into consideration: “*the achievability principle*”, and “*the flexible-time principle*”. More explicitly, we can say that the learning objectives included at the beginning of each file of the textbook can be claimed to be attainable, but they are too many. In fact, the first file of the textbook includes twenty seven (27) learning objectives without including the project and the assessment sections implemented at the end of each file. That is if each one of the learning objectives requires one hour to be mastered by the majority of the students, and I am sure that there are those which require more than one hour, the number of the hours then required to teach all the objectives of the file is twenty seven and this without counting those to be spent on the project and the assessment activities. The learning objectives of the first file of the textbook are presented in the **Appendix: B.** and as it is the case I am certain that teachers will not have enough time to well teach the objectives and to well assess them. More than this, the teachers will not be able to re-teach and to re-assess the objectives. Hence it becomes clear that the format of the textbooks units is not compatible with the Mastery Learning principle mentioned above, i.e. “*the flexible-time principle*”. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that the objectives are clear. Indeed, the teaching of listening for example is well designed because its aim is clear (Listening for gist, listening for specific information)

Besides, it should be stated that under the Mastery Learning approach the students are taught the content and the skills which correspond to the learning objectives. For example, if the day’s lesson is about reading, the students should first be taught how to read and what are the different techniques to follow to become a good reader. This principle is not reflected in the textbook. In other words, there are many objectives included in the preview and which are not taught in the textbook. For example, the textbook does not include clear instruction about

the meaning of listening for gist and listening for specific information and what should be done in each case. Indeed, the “*Listen and Consider*” rubric of the first file on page 18 consists of a “pre” listening phase, a “while” listening phase, and a “post” listening phase. But, the rubric starts with no specific objectives. Therefore, as a solution the aim can be formulated in this way: “*In this rubric, the students will be able to get the gist and specific information of short conversations in English on topics related to origins of some meals and food*” and, of course, this is in the case where the objective of listening is for both main and supporting ideas. Doing this allows teachers to organize their lessons and manage their time and helps students focus on the learning objectives well. In other words, such a point would make the listening task more interesting and helps the teacher be more explicit and specific.

Moreover, the learning objective “**Writing a letter of invitation**” is presented only once through the first file and this under the form of testing and the following activity illustrates the case:

**2- Fill in the invitation card below. Then write a letter of invitation to classmate of yours.**

***You’re invited***

***Occasion:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Date:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Time:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Place:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Directions:*** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Regrets only: Fatima Boudraj 425 1788 or e-mail***

**[FatimaBou@yahoo.com](mailto:FatimaBou@yahoo.com)**

***(On the Move: 34).***

The above activity is of great importance in the present life. It is directly related to social skills which should be based on clear communication and exchange of ideas and opinions. However, the learning objective targeted through the activity; **writing a letter of invitation**

did not receive the importance it deserves; because, the students should first know how to write a letter of invitation following clear guidelines and exemplars and then comes the assessment to check whether the students have really learned and mastered the point or not and what should be done to remediate the weaknesses that can be found in learning the objective. Consequently, we can say that there are learning objectives in the preview which are not taught in the way to reflect the elements of mastery learning. To be more explicit there is no consistency between the objectives, their teaching and their assessment. Hence, no instructional alignment is ensured in the way the objectives are taught.

Interestingly, it should be mentioned that it is the grammar and the pronunciation items which are developed and taught in a clear way in the “Grammar Reference” of the textbook. This fact is illustrated in **the Appendix: C**. Indeed, the learning objective which relates to **the imperative** is to be found in the “Grammar Reference” and assessed through the following activity designed under the *Practice* rubric of the sequence “Read and Consider”:

***1- Re-write the following checklist of instructions (1-4) for table manners using the imperative form only.***

*When you eat, you should hold the knife firmly in one hand and the fork the other. You should cut your food with the knife. You should push the food onto your fork with the knife. You should put the food into your mouth with the fork and not with the knife. (1)*

*You must chew food very slowly. You must keep your mouth closed while chewing. You must never speak while you have food in your mouth. (2)*

*You mustn't put too much food in your mouth at a time. You must take small bites only. (3)*

*You should put the napkin on your lap. When you have finished eating, you should wipe your mouth with your napkin and place it neatly on the plate. You should put your knife and fork on the plate. You should not put them on the table cloth. (4) (On the Move : 23).*

Moreover, the learning objective dealing with **tag questions** is clarified and presented with clear hints and examples in the “Grammar Reference” and assessed through the following activity:

***1- Write tag questions for the following sentences.***

- a. She knows the recipe for Shorba, .....?*
- b. This restaurant can sit thirty people, .....?*
- c. They drink tea in Tamanrasset, .....?*

- d. *They eat pudding in England, .....?*
- e. *(It's a) lovely evening for a party, .....?*
- f. *You don't know how to make English tea, ....? (On the Move : 20).*

Being so, the textbook reflects an inherent focus on the language structures and little stress is put on the meaning which means that the traditional view of teaching is still persistent in our schools and that the Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching (CBALT) has not yet been implemented in an effective way.

A point worth mentioning is that the textbook includes a rubric called “Coping” and which deals with an explicit instruction. Such a case can be clarified by the following example:

*Coping*

*When you face a vocabulary problem in a conversation, don't stop talking. Use one of the following strategies:*

**A** *Use a synonym*

**B** *Explain the meaning of the word with a complete sentence.*

**C** *Ask for help using one of the questions below.*

*a. I don't know how to say it/ what you call it. b. I don't know the word in English.*

*c. What is the English for...? d. What is /How do you say (own language word) in English?*

(Ibid: 30).

It appears clear that the rubric is dealing with items related to speaking. However, it should be mentioned that this point is not to be found in the learning objectives included in the preview. This case means that no consistency exists between the content and the learning objectives. Hence, the activity which is designed after the “Coping” box can be considered as a valid formative assessment. In this case, Carla Brewington Ford writes about the criteria of effective formative assessment designed under the Master Learning: *“To be valid it must really measure the learning objectives the teacher is after [....] It also means that the teacher must not test things that were not in the objectives”* (1988: 36). This criterion is of a noticeable usefulness because it helps the teacher stick to the assessment of what should be

learned and what should be learned should be announced by the objectives which means that effort and time should be spent only on the teaching and assessment of the learning objectives.

Because providing students with necessary instructional skills and assessing them to what extent they acquired the skills is the core of Mastery Learning; as a result establishing a clear distinction between assessment and learning becomes a necessity. Indeed, the following section is intended to clarify the point.

The next element of the mastery learning approach relates to formative assessment designed to check if really the students have learned and mastered the ideas and skills they were taught; that is, to close the gap between the students achievement and the intended learning objectives. Again this principle is not reflected in the textbooks. Indeed, if the students are not taught the necessary ideas and skills which in their turn refer to the learning objectives how a formative assessment, whose primary aim is to ensure whether the students have really learned what they were taught, can be implemented. Consequently, there will be no individualised correctives which fit the needs of each student and which address the learning problems of each of them, which means that the teacher will not design enrichment activities and instruction will be distributed in the conventional way.

### **V-1-5- Teaching versus Testing**

Under the mastery learning Approach, the students should be provided with necessary instruction. However, it seems clear that the major part of the units of the textbooks is devoted to assessment of learning skills rather on the teaching of such skills which means that if the teacher follows the structure of the units; thus, nearly the entire period of the teaching/learning process will be devoted to lead question and answer sessions. As a matter of fact, Shawn A. Faulkner *et al* have warned that *“The use of frequent assessment influences the amount of time that can be spent on other concepts, so it influences the amount of time to*

*teach concepts.*” That is, it “*limits what can be covered in language arts*” (Shawn A. Faulkner *et al.*, 2006: 6). They add that frequent assessments reduce time that should be devoted to teach “*content material*” (Ibid). Thus the tasks should have a clear aim and a clear distinction should be made between testing and teaching. However, what are our arguments that support our claim; that is, what criteria to follow to say that the great part of the textbooks is devoted to testing rather than to teaching?

To answer our question, it is advisable to refer to what Harmer considers as a criterion to qualify a task as testing and not as teaching. That is, if the tasks require right answers on the part of the students and this by asking them questions with “*what, when, how many, and how often*” the task then is dealing with the assessment of the students’ performance and not with teaching (Harmer, 2001: 207). Such a feature is reflected in the Middle School textbooks which include a great number of tasks requiring correct answers. Indeed, the above analysis of the different phases of the Three Ps approach implemented in the textbooks shows how the students are in most cases obliged to stick to one correct answer which means that they are not free in their thinking and accuracy is more prominent than fluency. Such a point is especially reflected in the *Presentation* and *Practice* stages which both show a higher degree of teacher control. As a result, we suggest reducing the number of activities which do not help students to acquire knowledge through reflection and interpretation. In other words, the textbooks should provide much closer guidance about the content that would be tested rather than making it all assessment and textbook designers should think of assessment as a necessary element for improving instruction.

In short, we can say that in Middle School textbooks the students are from the beginning of the units dealing with activities which take the form of testing. In other words, the textbooks do not include an explicit formative assessment designed in a way to support what the students have been taught as language skills except in a few cases where there are

activities designed after an explicit teaching as the case in *On the Move*. Such insufficiency can impede the teaching/learning process because the activities are not providing feedback that moves learners forward; that is, setting the next learning goals after having acquired the previous ones. In other words, all the students should acquire the necessary language skills that they will use later on as a basis to build on other knowledge and the teacher should check whether the students have really learned what they should learn through an ongoing assessment and this before moving on to the next unit of study. In this context, Kahl (2005: 11) wrote “*A formative assessment is a tool that teachers use to measure student grasp of specific topics and skills they are teaching*” (cited in Dylan William, 2010: 23). Such a clarification of the function of formative assessment by Kahl supports our claim that the majority of the textbooks activities are not dealing with formative assessment because the latter are not designed in the way that shows what skills have been acquired by the students and for whom re-teaching is necessary.

#### **V-1-6- Why the P-P-P approach is still persistent in the textbooks?**

The adoption of the ‘Three PS’ approach in the Middle School textbooks can be explained by the positive points that such an approach has. Among such points, there is what is called “*the straightforward identification*” of the teaching/learning phases which help teachers and students to be rapidly involved in the instructional process (Lewis, 1996; Skinner, 1996; Skihhan 1998 in Sánchez, 2008: 82). Also, it has been asserted that the *Presentation* stage of the approach can be beneficial to students in that if well designed it helps the students relate the “*new form to what they already know*” (Hedge, 2000 cited in Sánchez, 2008: 83) . In other words, it gives the students an opportunity to use their previous knowledge to build on a new one. Also, we can say that the language of the texts is clear and comprehensible to the learners as well as the content. In addition, the *practice* phase of the approach is seen as a vital means in enabling the students to internalise what they have been presented through a



real involvement in the learning process; if the students want to know how to speak they should speak, if they want know how to write they should write, etc (ibid). Besides, the presentation of the language elements within a context is among the most noticeable features of the three Ps approach (Harmer, 2001: 80). This characteristic is reflected in the textbooks except *Spotlight on English One* whose main drawback is decontextualisation of language items. Moreover, the approach gives the students a feeling of security as they work in atmosphere which they know well; that is, they are not faced with tricky situations as in discovery learning. Furthermore, it facilitates the task for teachers and makes them feel more comfortable regarding lesson preparation and testing (Ibid: 86). All these factors and others may be behind the persistence of the *P-P-P* approach in the Algerian Middle School textbooks.

#### **V-1-7- Negative Criticisms of the PPP Approach with Illustrations from the Textbooks**

While such features like “*straightforwardness*” and “*recurrence of pedagogic phases*” may represent the positive criticisms of the ‘Three PS’ in principle, the negative criticisms that this approach has are more often seen in terms of the limitations and the disapproval of this classical pattern. Indeed, one of the negative criticisms of the ‘Three PS’ can be seen clearly in Lewis’ quotation: “*For a long time language teaching has gone in diametrically wrong direction- the ppp paradigm was a travesty for philosophical, psychological, ideological and methodological reasons*” (Lewis in Sánchez, 2008: 82). A point emphasised through Lewis’ quotation is the multiplicity of criticisms of the p-p-p approach. Such criticisms can be linguistic, psychological, psycholinguistic, and pedagogic.

Firstly, the linguistic-based criticisms concern its focus on structure and discrete-items. According to Lewis “*the core of meaning and thus of communication is lexicon in its varied*

*forms, collocations, idioms, etc.*” (Lewis in Sánchez, 2008: 82). This negative aspect is above all reflected in Spotlight on English One which is mainly characterised by decontextualisation of the language items. Also, focus on structure is a feature of Spotlight on English Two. Indeed, as we have seen so far the first file of the textbook is principally based on language structures. Secondly, it should be emphasised that it is the behaviouristic psychological theory which is behind the ‘Three PS’ approach (Scriven, 1994, 1996, Willis, D. 1996). This is why under this paradigm; learning is a matter of habit formation as in Audio-Lingual Method. Put differently, the practice phase of the textbooks is aimed at helping the learners assimilate language through stimulus-response. However, sometimes practice is not necessary for the acquisition of knowledge (Sánchez, 1993 cited in *ibid*: 90).

In addition, the psycholinguistic-based criticisms of the p-p-p approach lie in the “*uni-model style of learning languages*”; on the excessive focus on accuracy and mechanical drills. Finally, the pedagogic-based criticisms of the approach are related to its excessive fostering of teacher control, its neglect of real-life communication and its use of a limited number of teaching options (*Ibid*: 90, 96). This high degree of teacher control is clearly reflected through the stress on activities which require one correct answer and minimize the role of the students and make that of the teacher more prominent. In fact, according to Sanchez, such a practice phase “*still reflects a high level of teacher control since he/she checks his/her students’ correct understanding of the items presented in the first stage*” (Sánchez, 2008: 72). More importantly, this fact is to be found even in the production stage of the textbooks. For example, it is the guided writing which is dominant in the textbooks. That is, each time the students are required to write a paragraph or an essay, they are asked to follow the hints and the guidelines they have been provided with. Indeed, the activities implemented in the production stage include introductory sentences. This seems to be as important in helping the learners accomplishing the tasks. However, this has a noticeable drawback in restricting the

students' intellectual abilities. This case can be shown by the activity: **With your partner prepare a dialogue following the outline below:** *-greetings, -introducing, -responding to an introduction, -parting* (Spotlight on English Three: 19). Another illustration is the activity implemented in the **Write it out** sub-rubric of *On the Move: A friend of yours always considers himself/herself a failure. Write for him/her a recipe for success using the imperative and sequencers. Use the information below. Start like this: You want to be successful...* The activities show how the students are not let alone to find out the outline using their creativity. Clearly, these controlled activities do not go along with the Communicative Language Teaching whose principle aim is to provide students with opportunities to use the language in a spontaneous way relying on the criteria of unpredictability nor they reflect an assessment meeting the requirements of the CBALT like, for example, the unpredictability of the activities and the real demonstration of the students productivity.

It follows from what has been said so far that the adoption of the 'Three Ps' approach as the teaching procedure in the Middle School textbooks contradicts with the communicative approach in which the goal of language learning is communicative competence. In addition, it is not compatible with the Competency-Based Approach in which the students are called on to perform tasks in real-life situations. In contrast to the P-P-P (presentation- practice- production) model of activity sequencing found in the textbooks the instruction through textbooks based on Mastery learning will achieve a higher degree in English learning because the latter stresses the necessity of bringing the students to a point where they become able to show their mastery of higher-order thinking, which better reflect responsibility and autonomy in learning.

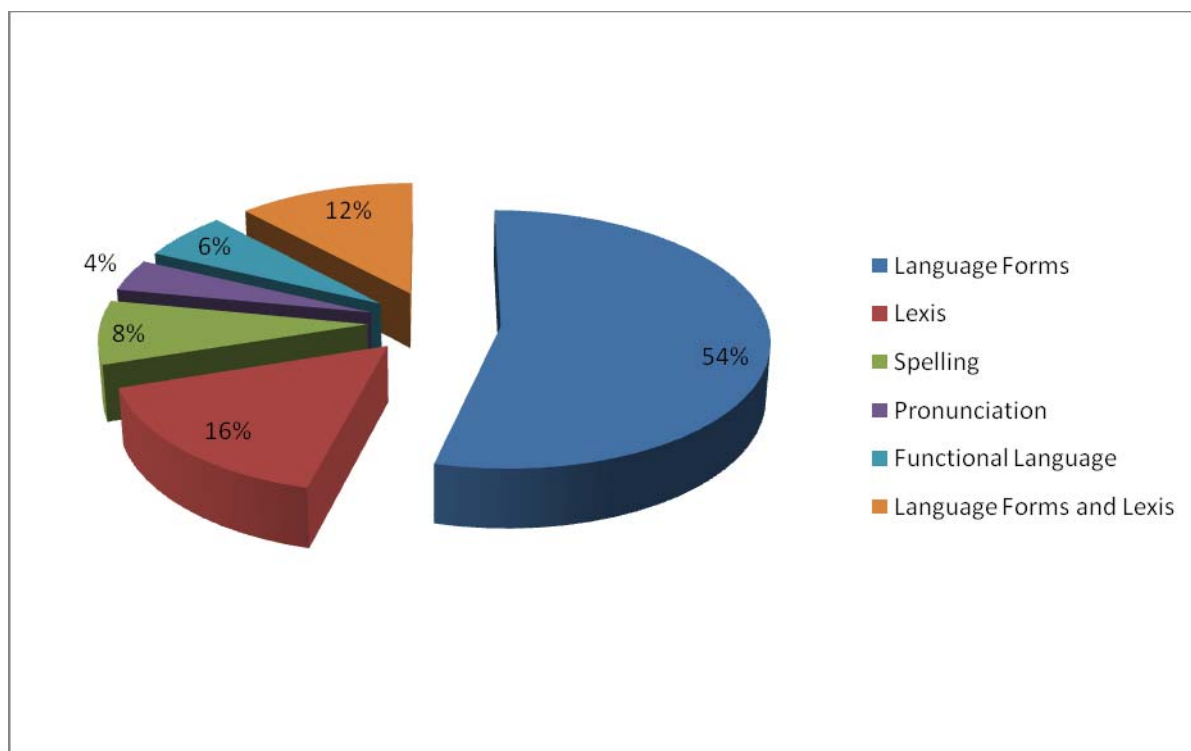
## **V-1-8- Analysis of the Textbooks Assessment Sections**

### **V-1- 8-1- *Spotlight on English One***

Our analysis of *Spotlight on English One* shows that the first assessment section; that is, “*Check*” includes fifty (50) activities. Such activities are designed to check the students’ achievement and progress in language learning. In more precise terms, they purport to evaluate the students’ performance in order to pinpoint areas of strengths and those needing further reading or remedial work. A detailed analysis of the activities is presented in **Appendix D.**

Twenty seven (27) of the activities are evaluated as being designed to check the students’ performance and achievement with relation to language forms. They are mainly gap-filling activities as completing a sentence with the right preposition, and transforming activities as, for instance, transforming singular words to plural ones, active sentences to passive ones, or putting a verb between brackets into the correct form, etc. To assess the students’ learning of lexis or vocabulary, eight (8) activities are devoted to such an aim. They are mainly matching-items in which the students are required, for instance, to match words and definitions, synonyms and antonyms, and so on. As far as the activities which concern spelling, we find four (4) in which the students are asked to correct spelling mistakes.

In addition, there are two (2) activities which aim at checking the learners’ progress in pronunciation. Moreover, three (3) of the activities are suggested to assess the learners’ ability with relation to items of functional language. Such activities are generally carried out through free writing, as for instance, describing a person’s profile, expressing feelings, experiences, etc. Furthermore, six (6) activities check language forms and lexis. The chart below represents the ratio of the activities in the textbook:



**Chart One: The Ratio of the Assessment Activities in Spotlight on English One**

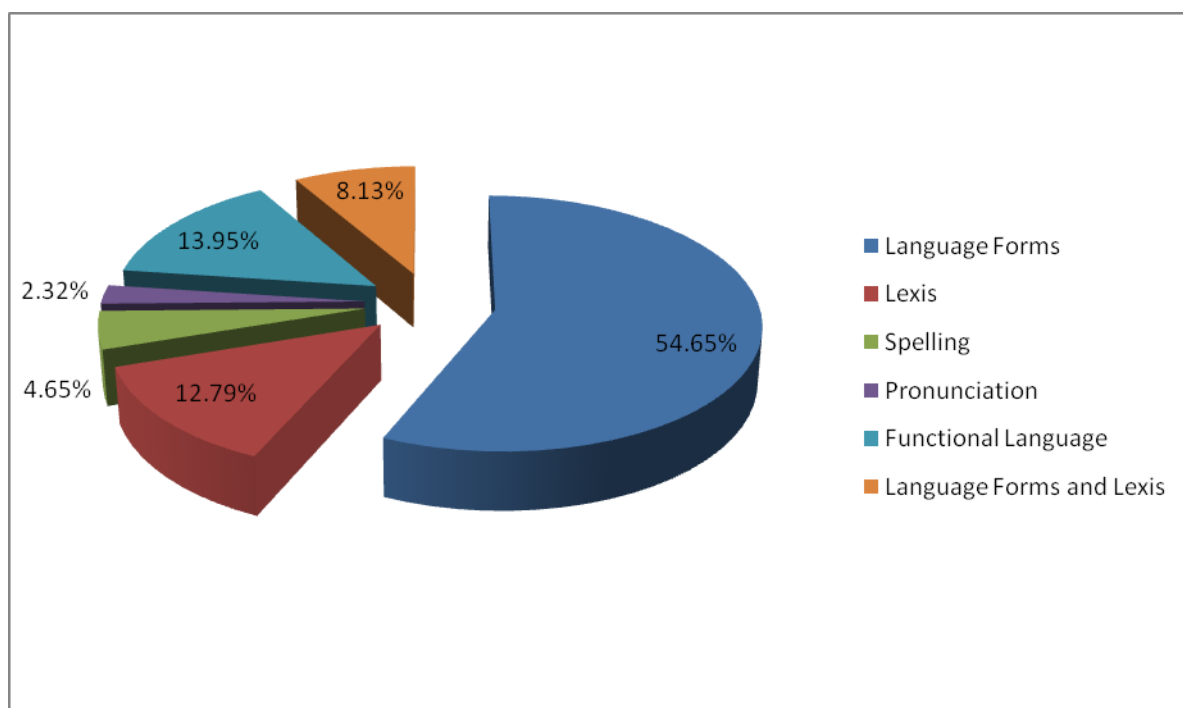
The evaluation of the textbook assessment activities with relation to Bloom’s taxonomy reveals that the majority of the activities correspond to the first level of the taxonomy; that is, “*knowledge*”. In more precise terms, all the activities related to language form, lexis, spelling, and pronunciation that are shown in the chart with their ratio correspond to this level. Our argument is that these activities mainly deal with recall of information through which the students’ faculty in remembering is assessed and checked. On the other hand, the activities which relate to functional language and those activities which assess language forms and lexis correspond to the “*synthesis*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy because they are related to either paragraph writing or expressing oneself feelings. Accordingly, it becomes clear that the textbook assessment activities overemphasise language structures and lower order-skills, which means that the assessment is conventional and does not fit the CBALT.

#### **V-1-8-2- *Spotlight on English Two***

Unlike *Spotlight on English One*, *Spotlight on English Two* comprises two sections devoted to assessment. The first section is called “*Check*”, and the second is entitled “*self-*

*assessment*". In the "*Check*" section, there are eighty six (86) activities devoted to check the students' understanding and assimilation of the different language items. A detailed analysis of the activities is illustrated in the **Appendix E**.

Forty seven (47) of the activities aim at checking the students' progress in language forms. They are principally gap-filling or transforming activities. Eleven (11) activities are devoted to lexis or vocabulary. Here, the students are required to match words and definitions, synonyms and antonyms, and so forth. As to the activities dealing with spelling, we find four (4). In addition, there are two (2) activities which aim at checking the learners' progress in pronunciation. Besides, twelve (12) of the activities are suggested to assess the learners' ability in functional language. Such activities are generally carried out through free writing, as for instance, describing a person's profile, expressing oneself (feelings, experiences...). Moreover, seven (7) activities check language forms and lexis. Furthermore, two (2) activities also check at once spelling and language forms. Finally, one (1) activity deals with spelling and lexis. The chart below represents the ratio of the activities in the textbook:



**Chart Two: The Ratio of the Assessment Activities in Spotlight on English Two**

Like *Spotlight on English One*, *Spotlight on English Two* assessment activities principally correspond to the “*knowledge*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy. Indeed, the activities related to language forms, lexis, spelling, and pronunciation all relate to recall of information and they do not require application, analysis or evaluation. On the other hand, the activities which correspond to the “*synthesis*” level are very few. The latter mainly deal with functional language. This is about the first section of the textbook related to assessment.

On the other hand, the second section of the textbook which is designed for evaluation and which is entitled “*self-assessment*” comes at the end of each unit of instruction. Hence, there are five grids which are devoted to the students’ self-assessment. Here, the students check what they know by just putting a tick in the box “*yes*”, or in the box “*no*” of the grid. In addition, these sections are self-evaluation checklists that give the students the opportunity to think about the extent to which they have reached a desirable competency level in the specific objectives of the unit. Through this technique, the students are reminded of the learning objectives they have been focusing on and are given an opportunity to identify those are essentially accomplished, those that are not yet fulfilled and those which need more work.

The teacher follow-up is to spend more time on items on which a number of students checked “*no*” or possibly to individualize assistance on students working on their own challenge. The information to be gathered from the checklist is of value to both teachers and students in identifying the following teaching and learning steps. However, it is important to pinpoint out that such self-assessment grids have strengths and weaknesses. As regards the strengths they are source of autonomy, motivation and responsibility. In addition, they can pinpoint areas of strengths and areas needing further reading and remediation. On the other hand, one of the greatest drawbacks of such grids is the threat of subjectivity. Put another way, it is nearly not possible to know if the student ticked in the boxes of the grid objectively or subjectively, honestly or dishonestly because the students are not required, in this case, to

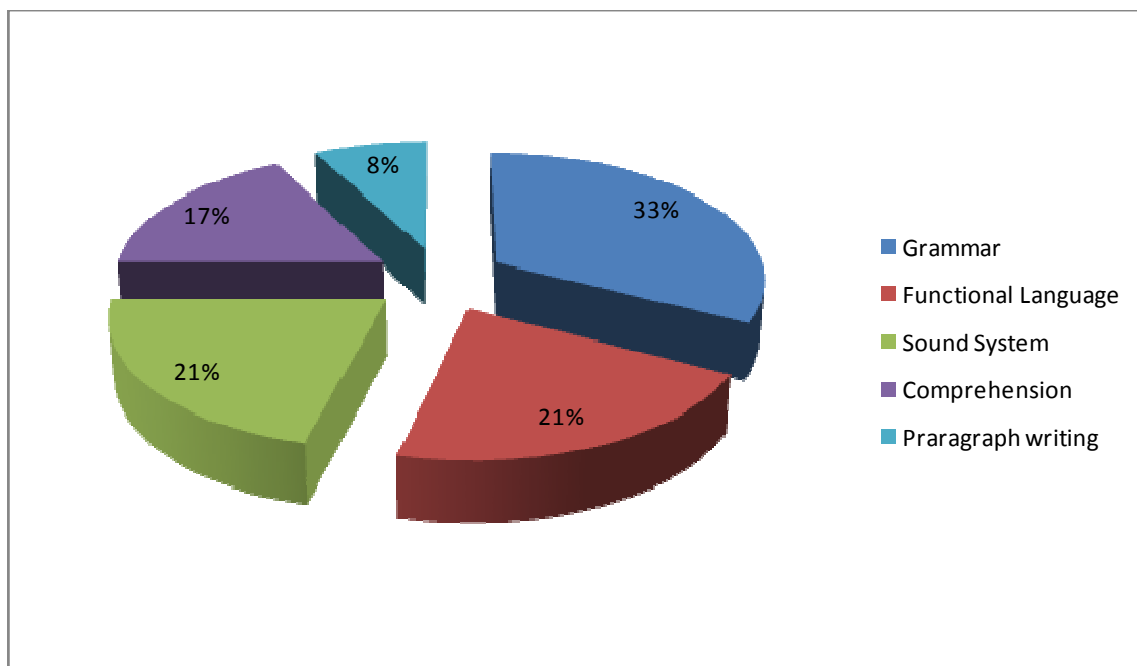
justify their answers. Moreover, such assessment technique is too much vulnerable to unreliability; reliability risks remaining at a low level given the variation among and across learners. As a result, it can misguide the teacher in relying on the results of the grid to conduct remedial work. The self-assessment grid is to be found in the appendix.

### **V-1-8--3- *Spotlight on English: Book Three***

*Spotlight on English Three* includes two assessment sections. One section is called “*Test Yourself*” and the other is entitled “*Learning Log*”. In the first section, the activities are organised in a systematic way. They are either reading comprehension activities or mastery of language activities. The latter are divided into grammar, functional language, sound system, and written expression activities. **Appendix F** illustrates the assessment activities of the textbook.

The totality of the activities is fifty two (52). Nine (9) of the activities are designed for reading comprehension and aim at checking the learners’ understanding of texts. Forty three (43) of the activities are devoted to mastery of language: seventeen (17) for grammar, eleven (11) for functional language, eleven (11) for checking sound system, and four (4) activities target written expression. The chart below represents the ratio of the activities in the textbook:





**Chart Three: The Ratio of the Assessment Activities in Spotlight on English Three**

The assessment activities represented in the above chart correspond to three levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. More precisely, the activities related to grammar and sound system correspond to the “*knowledge*” level, the activities dealing with comprehension in the textbook correspond to the “*comprehension*” level in Blooms taxonomy, and finally the activities which turn around paragraph writing can be considered as performance assessment and they correspond to the “*synthesis*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy.

The grammar activities aim at checking the learners’ achievements and competence in language forms like transforming an active sentence to a passive one or putting a verb between brackets into the right form. The functional activities, on the other hand, aim at assessing the learners’ progress in using language for different purposes like, for example, greeting, requesting politely, making and accepting suggestions, expressing oneself, and so forth. As for the sound system activities, they mainly target aspects of phonology as intonation, stress, and pronunciation. Finally, the written expression activities are designed to

be as an integrative assessment where different language items as grammar, lexis, spelling and ideas are assessed and checked.

Regarding the second assessment section of the textbook: “*Learning Log*”, it is principally designed for self-assessment. Each file of the textbook comprises one (1) learning log divided into part “**A**” where the students tick the activities/tasks they can do in English and part “**B**” where the students are asked the question: *What do you need to study again?* which mainly aims at identifying the areas which need expanding reading and remediation.

The learning logs provide the students with an opportunity to reflect on learning and may help the teachers find out how the students are progressing. They can also be a way of establishing a dialogue between the teachers and the students through comments, questions and reactions (Richards, 2005: 300). As the learning logs are types of self-assessment, they can lack reliability which means that the way to decision making is blocked. However, it is possible to avoid this drawback by telling in advance the students that objectivity and honesty should be the key tenet of their judgments.

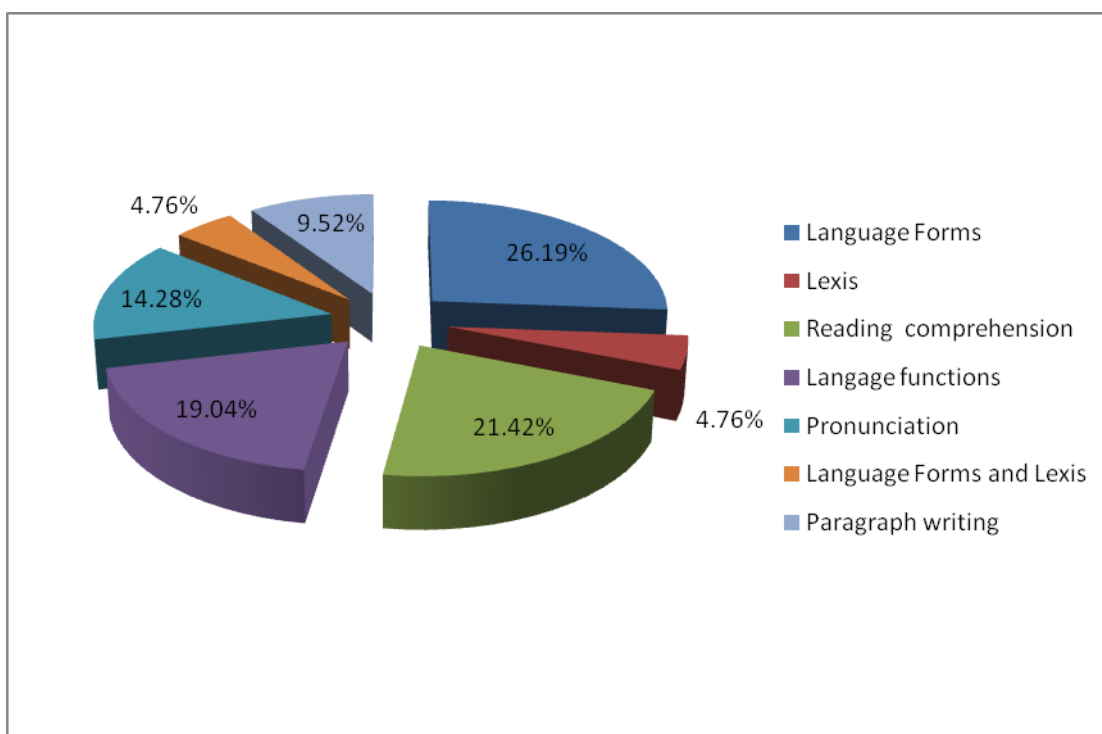
After having dealt with the description of *Spotlight on English Three* and analysed its assessment sections; looking at the nature of the activities and their corresponding level in Bloom’s taxonomy now we try to do so with *On the Move*.

#### **V-1-8-4- *On the Move***

Our analysis of *On the Move* reveals that its first assessment section, that is to say ‘*Progress Check*’ includes forty two (42) activities. A detailed analysis of the activities is presented in the **Appendix G**.

Among the activities, eleven (11) are designed to check language forms, eight (8) for assessing language functions, nine (9) activities for assessing reading comprehension, two (2) for lexis, six (6) for checking pronunciation, two (2) for assessing at once language forms and lexis and finally four (4) activities are devoted to paragraph writing which means that they are

integrative activities which call on the students to respect lexis, grammar, spelling and cohesion. The chart below represents the ratio of the activities in the textbook:



**Chart Four: The Ratio of the Assessment Activities in On the Move**

Our examination of the assessment activities included in *On the Move* with reference to Bloom's taxonomy reveals that the whole activities correspond to three levels which are "*knowledge*", "*comprehension*", and "*synthesis*". That is to say the activities which deal with language forms, lexis, language functions, and pronunciation correspond to the "*knowledge*" level in Bloom's taxonomy. As regards the activities which deal with reading comprehension and which check the students' understanding of texts they correspond to the "*comprehension*" level. Finally, the activities which turn around paragraph writing and those activities dealing with language forms and lexis correspond to the "*synthesis*" level.

On the other hand, the second assessment section is devoted to self-assessment through the use of a learning log. After each unit of instruction there is a learning log to fulfil by the students. The following is an example from the textbook:

***Copy the questionnaire below in your learning log. Fill it in and hand a copy of it to your teacher. Don't write your name on it.***

I can ...	Very well	Fairly well	A little
A. use questions to express interest in conversation. B. use questions to express surprise . C. re-assure people in embarrassing situations. D. respond to compliments, thanks and wishes. E. use appropriate intonation in questions. F. derive new words by adding the suffix-tion. G. pronounce words ending with the suffix-tion. H. pronounce vowels /æ/, /e/ and /ʌ/ . I. use <b>while</b> , <b>when</b> and <b>as</b> in complex sentences. J. narrate personal experiences. K. write a report about an accident.			

***On the Move*** (Page: 163).

The above learning log implemented in ***On the Move*** is similar to the rest of the learning logs included in the textbook. Here, the students tick in one of the three boxes which correspond to the level of their performance. Such a self-assessment technique allows the students to feel a sense of responsibility and self-esteem. In addition, it is a source of motivation. However, it should be remembered that subjectivity and lack of reliability are among the drawbacks of learning logs. This is why it is up to the teachers to tell the students how well to assess their own works using this kind of assessment technique. Furthermore, one can notice that the assessment as it is implemented in the learning log is competency-based; that is, it deals with the “*know-how-to-do*” of the students. Nevertheless, this remains theoretical unless the students prove this “*know-how-to-do*” through real performance of the language items. Therefore, it is advisable to add to the learning logs another box which represents the evidence of what the students tick in the boxes “*very well*”, or “*fairly well*”.

### **V-1-9-The Nature of the Assessment Activities**

It follows from our analysis of the four Middle School textbooks assessment sections that the focus is put on exercises in usage especially in Spotlight on English One. The best known

limitation of such exercises is that they do not get learners to be well involved in writing which has some communicative purposes because the concentration is on separate sentences in isolation. In other words, the learners are just required “*to manifest their knowledge of the working of the system of language*” (Widdowson, 1996: 115). As a result, the learners in most cases are not given the opportunity to demonstrate their language use. However, this does not mean that the knowledge of language forms has no role to play in learning a second or a foreign language. Indeed, it is not possible to reach effective communication without the demonstration of knowledge of linguistic rules (Ibid: 3). Now, we try to see in a more detailed way the types of grammar exercises included in the textbooks. First of all, we try to look at assessment activities turning around completion and gap-filling items. The activity below best illustrates the case:

▪***Complete the conversations.***

**Boy:** *When is the plane going to take off?*

**Steward:** *Right now. Are you comfortable, young man?*

**Boy:** .....we.....to have a cartoon?

**Steward:** *No, I'm sorry.*

**Boy:** .....you.....serve breakfast?

**Steward:** *Yes, we .....to serve it soon.*

( Spotlight on English Two: activity 5 page 91).

The above activity requires the students to construct the answers themselves. Being so, they are better than multiple-choice activities where the students are given an already made list from which to choose the answers the fact which makes them more reliable, too. In addition, they foster the students' creativity in looking for relevant lexis and grammatical structures, and in understanding the items so that to be able to fill in the gaps. As regards the activities which deal with multiple-choice items, the following is an illustration:

▪**Fill in the blanks in the letter below with: was able to / wasn't able to / will be able to / could or couldn't.**

*Dear Jack.*

*Sorry I — attend your party last Saturday. I was quite ready to come and just about to leave when a friend of mine from Algeria on her way to America dropped in. She wanted me to spend the evening with her before she left for the U.S. the next morning. Well I refuse, — ?*

*Of course, I tried to phone you, but I — get through. Your number was engaged. I hope you will understand. I know you needed my CD player, but I'm sure you all had a good time just the same.*

*My parents have bought a house in Brighton. When we move in, I — visit you every week.*

*Yours*

*Jill.*

(On the Move: activity 2 page: 62)

These multiple-choice items are that they do not require the students to construct the answers themselves; that is, they just test passive knowledge which means that the students are not given an opportunity to develop their intelligence and creativity. Also, the activities lack reliability because they are subject of guess-work something which makes learning more traditional and far from helping the students cope with the changing world where effective communication is the required goal. Also, conversion and transformation exercises are two types of grammar exercises that can be found in the textbooks. The following are representative examples:

▪**Write these sentences again. Make the singular sentences plural and the plural sentences singular.**

*Are you buying a book?*

*They want three cassettes.*

*The boys are unhappy.*

*The baby is crying.*

(Spotlight on English One: activity f page 99).

▪**Make these sentences negative.**

*-There were many fans at the entrance to the hall.*

*-We attended the concert.*

*-She sang all her hits.*

*-I liked her last song very much. What about you?*

(Spotlight on English Two: activity 14 page 24)

The above two activities require the students to show their ability in language forms by constructing the answers themselves. This can be considered as their main positive point because they meet the criteria of reliability. Moreover, among the activities that can be found in the Middle School textbooks we can mention ordering activities which require the students to order either words to get correct sentences, or sentences to get coherent paragraphs. As illustrative examples, we mention the following activities:

▪**Correct the word order.**

e.g. *It's a puzzle very difficult.*

*It's a very difficult puzzle.*

*-I can write very well English.*

*-We saw on Monday afternoon the film.*

*-They together practise tennis.*

*-You could help me with my homework? (Spotlight on English Two: activity 15 page 45).*

▪**The sentences below are not in order. Reorder them to get a coherent narrative.**

*B. In June, I helped my father paint the garden fence, and I hated painting.*

*C. I had a really boring summer vacation.*

*A. In August, I went on a fishing trip with my father, but the weather was cold and wet and we didn't catch any fish.*

*D. I wanted to go to camp in July, but none of my friends wanted to go. So I just sat around the house doing nothing. (Spotlight on English: Book Three: activity 5 page 121).*

It seems clear that the two above activities require the students to order either words or sentences to get a coherent whole. Such kinds of activities are good because they are of *constructed-response formats* and they correspond to the “*synthesis*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy especially if the activity deals with sentence order.

Furthermore, there are activities related to paragraph writing. Indeed, the following illustrates the point:

▪**Write a short autobiographical paragraph telling about your childhood.**

*Start like this:*

*How time flies! Eight years ago,... (On the Move: activity 10 page 114).*

▪**Story chain. Write about what you would do if you had ten billion dollars. Each time you write a sentence, transform the result clause into a condition to build another sentence. Conclude when you reach about seven lines.**

*Example: If I had ten billion dollars, I would buy a boat. If I bought a boat, I... ( On the Move: activity 3 page 138).*

The above two activities are related to paragraph writing. They are of *open-ended format* and they require the students to show their mastery of language through the integration of different language skills including lexis, grammar, spelling forms, ideas, and so forth. Such activities really are one of the most noticeable strengths of *On the Move* because they turn around performance assessment and they correspond to the “synthesis” level of Bloom’s taxonomy. In brief, they target both content and structure.

### **V-1-10- Discussion**

The four Middle School textbooks include many assessment activities related to different language items. However, our evaluation of such activities reveals that they are mainly of discrete-point items. That is to say they do not tap into the students’ overall language performance. To be more precise, these kinds of exercises are not sufficient to develop the learners’ communicative competence as they are generally related to sentences used in isolation and which carry no communicative value. Put another way, the learners should also be required to do exercises related to language use as S. Pit Corder asserts: “*A learner of a language is not only concerned with learning the ‘formation rules’ of the language but also its ‘speaking rules’*” (1993: 357).

In addition, it should be mentioned that the four Middle School textbooks include too little activities which deal with paragraph writing which are in reality among the best representative examples of performance-based assessment. On the other hand, the textbooks comprise many activities which are of *selected-response formats* as multiple-choice, true/false, and matching activities which only require the learners to apply certain automatic procedures, and do not expect them to be creative because this kind of activities is a type of convergent thinking; the right answer is fixed in advance. Also, they are subject of guess-work; that is, they lack reliability.



Moreover, as we have mentioned so far the majority of the assessment activities deal with recall of information which means that they correspond to the first level in Bloom's taxonomy which is "*knowledge*". In other words, the students are not exposed to handle activities which correspond to "*synthesis*" level, for example, as Wiggins asserts: "*Synthesis is thus inherently resistant to testing by multiple-choice or other methods that assume uniform, correct answers*" (1993: 10). Clearly, too many assessment activities which are implemented in the textbooks mainly in ***Spotlight on English One*** reflect the principles of the Audio-Lingual Method whose focus is on accuracy rather than on fluency.

Interestingly, our evaluation of the textbooks reveals that they really include assessment sections. Nevertheless, the issue as to whether such assessment sections are they related to assessment *for* learning or to assessment *of* learning needs to be asked? To answer this question one should make reference to the main features of both formative and summative assessment. To be more explicit, it appears that the activities implemented at the end of each unit cannot be considered as formative assessment whose principle function is the support of learning. In other words, this is not assessment in the sense assessment *for* learning because the feedback the students can be provided with lacks one of its main features as we mentioned so far; that is immediate timing. Moreover, criticism of these summative assessments should be understood as concern for the harm that occurs when assessment for learning (assessment which supports and improves learning) is reduced in most cases to drilled skills which represent a simplistic stimulus view of learning.

Interestingly, the assessment sections include too many items which means that providing students with individualized correctives will be not possible. Put differently, there's no enough time to teach everything the educators would like their students to learn. Similarly, there's no enough time to test everything educators would like to know if their students have learned

As a result, there will be no discussion which means that teaching will continue to be carried out in a conventional way resulting in normal distribution of results. Furthermore, our analysis of the nature of the activities indicates that there is no applicability of the majority of them beyond the classroom context.

### **V-1-11- Solutions and Suggestions**

The biggest change that we suggest is that the Middle School textbooks should include test batteries turning around more open-ended items and expecting more in-depth answers from the students. Put another way, the activities should be designed principally for accomplishing worthwhile curricular goals as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In this context Newman speaks about the assessment activities: *“each activity’s primary goal must be an important one, worth stressing and spending time on”* (Newman, cited in Phy, 1997: 345).

Other changes that are prominent are communicative testing. In other words, the textbooks should provide students with opportunities to speak a lot because this technique can be regarded as the best way through which real demonstration of knowledge can be targeted. In addition, it is considered in the literature as the most powerful means which help reaching communicative competence. Following this way the textbook will provide much closer guidance about what students need to be able to do in real-life situations rather than sticking to the accomplishment of traditional assessment activities

After having dealt with the analysis of the four Middle School textbooks assessment activities and their teaching procedures, we move on to examine and evaluate the two Secondary Schools textbooks ***Getting Through***, and ***New Prospects*** and this by looking at their teaching procedures; that is, if they are compatible with the principles of the Mastery Learning and their assessment areas.

## V-2- The Secondary School Textbooks

### V-2-1- *Getting Through*

#### V-2-1-1- Textbook Description

*Getting Through* is the official English Textbook designed by the Ministry of National Education for the students in their second year in Secondary School. It was issued in April 2006. The Textbook is developed through eight units with a specific theme for each. The following table shows the different units with their themes:

The Units	The themes
Unit 1 : Signs of the time	Life styles
Unit 2 : Make peace	Peace, conflict resolutions and the human rights
Unit 3 : Waste not, want not	Pollution, world resources and sustainable development
Unit 4 : Budding scientist	Scientific and technological advances
Unit 5: News and tales	The impact of mass media on literature
Unit6: No man is an island	Charity and solidarity: the role of youth and organic disasters
Unit7: Science or fiction?	The world of fiction
Unit8 : Business	Life in society

**Table 5: Units and Themes in *Getting Through***

Each of the aforementioned units comprises five different stages which are called respectively: “*Discovering Language*”, “*Developing Skills*”, “*Putting Things Together*”, “*Where Do We Go From Here?*” and “*Exploring Matters Further.*” In the first stage the student is going to learn grammar items dealing with modals as ‘*must/ have to/ need to*’, the comparative and the superlative, the passive with models, etc., pronunciation as the vowels, diphthongs, primary stress in connected speech, etc., and vocabulary as the words related to food and clothes. The second stage deals with the different language skills like: describing, analysing, etc. At this stage the student is expected to carry out a project like “*writing a life style profile*” relying on the acquired and learned skills we mentioned above. The third stage relates to the project itself. It permits to the students to show their personal competencies. As regards the fourth stage; that is, “*Where do we go from here?*” it turns around grids and portfolios through which the students are given the opportunity to monitor and assess their

own work. Finally, the fifth stage as its name indicates deals with extensive and enrichment activities that allow the students to deepen their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and to become aware of new topics and language items.

### **V-2-1-2- The Teaching Procedure**

Our focus here is to analyse the first unit; that is, “*Signs of the Time*” and more precisely the two rubrics “*Discovering Language*” and “*Developing Skills*”. The first rubric is related to items of vocabulary, grammar, and spelling or pronunciation. The second rubric, on the other hand, deals with the four language skills.

The results of the first evaluative question; that is, are the learning objectives clearly announced in the textbook? Reveal that each unit of the textbook opens with the learning objectives to be learned. However, the learning objectives do not include a behavioral component which means that they are not on line with the Mastery Learning Approach. Indeed, the learning objectives of the first unit open with the statement: ***In this unit you will learn the following: - semi-modal used to, -present simple tense, etc*** (Getting Through: 14). Hence, it is possible to remediate this weakness by saying: ***In this unit you will be able to learn the following: semi-modal used to, -present simple tense, etc*** which better reflects mastery and targets a competency. In addition the students as well as the teachers are reminded that the aim of instruction is to acquire competences and to reach mastery.

In addition, the learning objectives can be evaluated with relation to the two principles we have mentioned so far; that is, the “*achievability principle*” and the “*flexible-time principle*”. Therefore, we can say that the objectives can be reached but they are too many, which means that the teacher will not have enough time to teach them all and to assess them all. As evidence, the first unit includes twenty three (23) learning objectives without counting the project and the assessment section. This fact is shown in the **Appendix B**. More than this the teacher will not have enough time to provide the students with individualized correctives

which is one of the core principles in Mastery Learning; that is, the students should learn at their rate and each student should master the learning objectives of **unit 1** before moving on to **unit 2**. As result, we suggest to reduce the number of the learning objectives and to focus on what the students can really master within time limitations.

Moreover, it should be stated that the learning objectives do not only include lower-order skills. That is to say the students will also learn matters of language functions as: *narrating, predicting, expressing certainty and doubt*, etc., and items related to the four language skills as: *reading for specific information and general ideas, listening for specific information and general ideas, writing a policy statement*, etc. (Getting Through: 14). Such objectives really require synthesis and interpretation or creativity. As a result, they are interesting and challenging. Such a point can be considered as a positive aspect of the learning objectives.

As regards the second evaluative question; do the contents of the units correspond to the learning goals? Our evaluation of the first unit reveals that the rubric “*Discovering Language*” is made up of a pre-reading phase, a while-reading phase and an after-reading phase. The pre-reading phase entitled “*Before you read*” is of a key importance in activating the learners’ schemata and preparing them to the understanding of the reading passage which comes just after. It is through the reading passage that the students are presented the language items to be learned. There are grammar items as semi-modal *used to, present simple, going to and present progressive*, phonetic items as: *the final [s], [z], and [Iz]*, and vocabulary items as suffixes *-ic, -ical, -ism* and words related to food, clothes, etc. All these language items are presented within a context; that is, within a reading passage. More importantly, the textbook includes a “Grammar Reference” at the end which better explains the language items related to vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Therefore, the teacher can use it for teaching, which means that there is teaching and instruction. Furthermore, the textbook includes activities which can be considered as a formative assessment of what has been included in the

“Grammar Reference” as, for instance, the semi-modal *‘used to’*. Indeed, the following activity illustrates the case:

**Complete the sentences below with the positive, negative or interrogative forms of the semi-modal ‘used to’. An example is given.**

- a. Samira doesn’t like reading now, but she used to read a lot.
- b. I know that Nassima is living in a small village now, but.....?
- c. Now, there are four libraries in our town, but.....only one.
- d. When I was a child I .....a burnous, but now I wear one.
- e. I know that she doesn’t work in a bank now, but .....?

(Getting Through: Activity One: 18).

The above language item targeted through the activity is the *semi-modal used to*. The latter is well explained in the “Grammar Reference” of the textbook which means that the function of the activity in this case is to check whether the students have really learned the point. As a result, we can affirm that there is consistency between the learning objective, its teaching, and its formative assessment. In addition, *the comparative and the superlative* which is another learning objective included in the first part “Discovering Language” has been in its turn well explained and developed in the “Grammar Reference” which means that there is a linkage between the objective and its teaching. More than this the first unit includes activities which can serve as formative assessment of the item. The following shows the point:

**1- Group work. Write five or six advertisement slogans for a car of your choice using the information in the table. Compare your answers.**

<i>Superlative and comparative forms</i>	<i>Adjectives and adverbs</i>
<i>Adjectives/adverb+ er + than.....</i>	<i>Pretty</i>
<i>More+ adjective/adverb+than....</i>	<i>Beautiful</i>
<i>As + adjective/adverb + as</i>	<i>Cheap</i>
<i>not+ as + as + adjective/adverb + as</i>	<i>Quickly</i>
<i>less + adjective/adverb + est the most/least</i>	<i>Safe</i>
<i>+ adjective/ adverb</i>	<i>Comfortable</i>
	<i>Expensive</i>
	<i>smoothly</i>

(Ibid: Activity: 1 page: 26).

The activity requires the students to produce sentences in form of slogans using the comparative and the superlative forms. Therefore, we can say that an explicit teaching of the language items announced in the learning objectives of the first part of the textbook is ensured

and provided in the “Grammar Reference”, to which the teacher is required to refer. Also, the textbook includes activities related to the assessment of the objectives which means that there is coherence between the three elements corresponding to Mastery Learning: Learning objectives, instruction, and formative assessment.

In addition, the textbook includes a “**Tip Box**” which is related to an explicit teaching of the learning objectives. The following deals with the learning objective *Expressing certainty and doubt* included in the second part “Developing Skills”:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Tip Box</i></p> <p><i>You need the following phrases to express certainties and doubts about the future.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>I’m (almost) certain that/ (quite) sure that...</i></li> <li>▪ <i>I have the conviction that/ the firm belief that.....</i></li> <li>▪ <i>It seems to me that.....</i></li> <li>▪ <i>It’s likely that/probable that.....</i></li> <li>▪ <i>I have doubts about.....</i></li> <li>▪ <i>It’s improbable/unlikely that.....</i></li> </ul>
--

(Getting Through: 23).

Interestingly, after the “Tip Box” there are two sub-rubrics called respectively “Your turn” and “Write it up” which can be considered as formative assessment of what has been taught in the “Tip Box”. The following activity included in “Your turn” sub–rubric illustrates the case:

▪ **Pair work.** *Make predictions about the future using the clues in the blue box. Your partner will express certainty or doubts about what you say.*

**Example**

**You:** *I’m sure that scientist will invent a vaccine against tooth decay in 20 years*

**Your partner:** *Personally, I have doubts about that. That may or may not happen/might/or might not happen.*

**You:** *Scientists may/might (well) find a cure for cancer soon.*

**Your partner:** *May (well)? /Might (well)? Personally, I have the firm conviction that they will/won’t invent anything in the near future.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We/ travel/ space/some day</li> <li>▪ Man/live/up to 130 years</li> <li>▪ Helicopter/carry/people to work/ next decade</li> <li>▪ Children/stay and study/home/through/use computers</li> </ul>
--

(Ibid)

As regards the activity which is included “Write it up” sub-rubric, we find the following:

▪**Pair work. Write a short dialogue predicting what might happen in the future in different fields. Then act out the dialogue in front of the class.**

*Example*

*You: Will all people accept to eat GME in the future?*

*Your partner: I don't know/I have no idea. They may possibly eat them, but on the other hand, they may well refuse to do so (Getting Through: 23).*

It follows from what has been said above that there is a consistency between the learning objectives and teaching, between teaching and formative assessment. However, not all the learning objectives announced at the beginning of the unit are well taught in the textbook. Indeed, the textbook, does not include clear hints about narration which is an objective stated at the beginning of the unit yet there are activities in the textbook which require the students to narrate. As evidence, we find the following:

**2- Which food groups did our grandparents use to eat most and which ones do we eat most today? Discuss.** (Ibid: 24).

It is worth mentioning that even if the textbook does not include explicit hints about narration the teacher, however, can show the students how to narrate as, for example, the use of past simple and past continuous, the use of the semi-modal **'used to'** and other techniques which are included in the textbook as the followings:

**4- Read the tips below and find examples from the text to complete the blanks in the tip box. There are many possible answers.**

*Tip Box*

*Writers use a lot of techniques to avoid repetition because it is not good to repeat the same words when writing. They often express what they mean in different ways. They use*

- a. Synonyms e.g.,.....*
- b. Antonyms e.g.,.....*
- c. Pronouns instead of nouns or noun phrase e.g.,.....*
- d. A verb instead of a noun e.g.,.....*
- e. A noun instead of a verb e.g.,.....*

(Ibid: 25)

However, the problem is that the techniques are after the students have been required to do the activity related to narration. In other words, the teaching of the above techniques of



writing should be before the activity and this in order to consider the activity as a formative assessment; otherwise no coherence can be claimed between teaching and assessing.

Furthermore, the learning objectives: “*reading for specific information and general ideas*” and “*listening for specific information and general ideas*” are not taught in the textbook. Therefore, if the teacher does not explain what this means, the students will not be well involved in such language skills and the teacher will not be able to well assess whether the students have really reached the objectives or not. In this context, Tierney claims:

The goal of any literacy lesson is the development of good reader behaviors. A teacher or coach who has identified a good reader behavior as the focus of a lesson knows what to assess. However, if the teacher is unsure about the lesson goal, assessment will probably be unfocused and ineffective. Teachers and coaches need to develop their own assessment systems based upon their instructional goals. In this way, assessment emerges from classroom; it is not opposed upon it (Tierney, 1998 in Jo Anne Schudt, 2008: 16).

The above quotation means that any literacy lesson should have as focus the development of good reader behaviors because it is on this that assessment will be based. Accordingly, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to show the students what is the meaning of reading for gist and specific information and how they can read for such and what is the meaning of listening for gist and for specific information and how they can listen for such.

As concerns the last evaluative question; that is, does the textbook include correctives and enrichment activities? We can say that the teacher should provide the students with correctives, which means that the textbook is implicitly dealing with correctives. But as regards the enrichment activities, it seems that no activities in the textbook are designed for such. Consequently, we can say that *Getting Through* includes some of the elements of the Mastery Learning but not all. Having said that about the textbook *Getting Through*, the next examination will be devoted to *New Prospects*.

## V-2-2-New prospects

### V-2-1- Textbook Description

*New Prospects* is the official English textbook designed by the Ministry of National Education for third year pupils in the Secondary School. The textbook complies with the New English syllabus for SE3 developed within the recent educational reform which aimed at adopting the Competency-Based Approach to Language Teaching (CBALT).

*New Prospects* comprises six units showing a similar organisation, dealing each with a particular theme. The six units and their themes are presented in **table 6** as follows:

The Units	The Themes
(1) Exploring the Past	Ancient Civilisations
(2) ILL- Gotten Gains Never Prosper	Ethics in Business: Fighting Fraud and Corruption
(3) School : Different and Alike	Education in the World: Comparing Educational Systems
(4) Safety First	Advertising, Consumers and Safety
(5) It's Giant Leap For Mankind	Astronomy and The Solar System
(6) Keep Cool!	Feeling, Emotion, Humour and Related Topics.

Every unit of the textbook contains two parts: “*Language Outcomes*” and “*Skills and Strategies Outcomes*”. The first part is in its turn divided into “*Listen and Consider*” and “*Read and Consider*”. The focus of these two sequences is the study of grammatical structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. The second part of the unit, i.e. “*Skills and Strategies Outcomes*” has as a purpose to help the students develop their communication skills. Two sequences make up this part: “*Listening and Speaking*” and “*Reading and Writing*”. The role of this part is making use of the four language skills and social skills (collaborative work, peer assessment, responding to problem solving situation, and so on).

As far as the evaluation implemented in *New Prospects* is concerned, it is of two types. One type is self-assessment combined together with peer assessment, intending at evaluating the functions and the language components. Another kind of evaluation is called objective assessment, bearing on the skills and strategies. By the end of the book, a selected number of texts corresponding to each unit are gathered in the “*Resource Portfolio*.”

### V-7-2-2- The Teaching Procedure

As it is mentioned above *New Prospects* includes six units each of which is organized around a given topic. However, our analysis will focus only on the first unit whose theme is **Ancient Civilizations**. Our choice stems from the fact that all the units have the same organizational structure which means that dealing with more than one will be a redundant work.

Our first evaluative question reveals that the textbook includes the learning objectives the students should reach. Indeed, each section of the textbook includes a rubric called **Language Outcomes** which states and presents the learning objectives to be encountered through the section. As evidence, the first section “*Listen and Consider*” includes the following:

#### ***Language outcomes***

- *Informing: asking and answering questions with ago....*
- *Narrating: using had to, used to, was able to and past simple of be*
- *Using dependent prepositions: adj+prep and vb+prep*
- *Pronouncing was/ were / wasn't/ weren't in connected speech*
- *Giving a talk about changes in lifestyles*

(*New Prospects*: 15)

The fact that each unit and each sequence of the textbook includes the instructional objectives the students should learn, this can be considered as a noticeable strength of *New Prospects* because this will help the teachers to effectively organize their teaching, and the students to concentrate well on what should be learned.

However, it should be mentioned that the learning objectives as they are implemented at the beginning of each unit or each sequence do not include a behavioral component which, as

we have stated so far, shows the teachers as well as the students that they are following the CBLT and not the traditional teaching, and that focus is put on mastery and not on the amount of courses to be covered. Accordingly, we can say that in order to be compatible with the *Mastery Learning* approach the textbook units and sequences learning objectives should be announced by a statement which includes a behavioral component as, for example, **in this unit you will learn how to**, or **in this sequence you will be able to** which better reflect the procedural knowledge or the “know-how-to-do.” This is about the implementation of the learning objectives within each unit and each sequence and the way they are announced, but what about the nature of the objectives; that is, do they target higher-order skills or only lower order- skills?

Our examination of the learning objectives included in *New Prospects* indicates that they include lower order- skills and higher-order skills. In fact, the **BOOK MAP** shows that in the first unit the students will learn: *past simple of be and questions with ago, past perfect with when, as soon as, until, after, etc.*, which all refer to lower-order skills. Also, the learning objectives as: *writing an expository essay, developing positive attitudes towards one’s culture and those of other peoples*, and so forth., all correspond to higher-order skills which means that the textbook with reference to the nature of the objectives it includes is compatible with the Mastery Learning.

Coming up to the results of our evaluation of the textbook learning objectives with reference to the “*achievability principle*” and “*time-flexible principle*”, it seems that all the objectives are achievable or feasible but it seems that they are too many, which means that the “*time-flexible principle*” is not taken into consideration. Our argument in saying that is based on the fact that the “Language Outcomes” of the first file include twenty five (25) learning objectives, which means that the teacher will not be able to teach and to re-teach, to assess and to re-assess the objectives. More importantly, the number of the learning objectives

makes the teaching/learning process seems more traditional whose main tenet is the amount of teaching to be covered. Consequently, we suggest to reduce the number of the learning objectives and to focus more on what the students can master before moving on to the next unit.

As to the second evaluative question; that is, do the contents of the units correspond to the learning goals? Our evaluation deals first with “*Listen and Consider*” rubric. More explicitly, it should be mentioned that just after the “*Language outcomes*” which announces the learning objectives to be covered through the rubric there is a sub-rubric entitled **Getting Started** which aims at activating the students’ background knowledge of the topic through a number of comprehension questions and this by looking at thematic pictures. Indeed the following activity illustrates the case:

● ***Look at the map below and answer the questions that follow:***

1. *What ancient civilizations are represented in the map?*
2. *Which civilization, do you think, is the oldest?*
- 3- *Why do you think these civilizations first flourished in these areas?*
- 4- *What’s your definition of civilization? What do you associate with it?*

**(New Prospects: 15)**

However, is it possible to consider the above questions as teaching or not? To answer such a question we refer to the criterion we mentioned so far and which is stated by Harmer. Put differently, we can say that the questions appear to be dealing with testing because the students are asked questions with: *what, which, why* which require right answers. However, if the teacher discusses well the task with the students then it becomes teaching because according to Harmer if the questions require reflection and discussion they can be considered as useful tools for teaching (Harmer, 2001: 207). Therefore, the questions can be considered as teaching about ancient civilizations which is the topic of the unit. Above all question three: *Why do you think these civilizations first flourished in these areas?* help the students to acquire critical understanding of the problems and to give their standpoints which means that focus is on the acquisition of learning skills. Nevertheless, learning about ancient civilizations

is not included as an objective in the “*Language Outcomes.*” This reality can be explained by the fact that the topic represents the context (the text) through which the learning objectives of the unit are presented. Therefore, it seems logical to start first by discussing the theme and then the rest of the instructional objectives.

In addition, the first learning objective included in the “*Language outcomes*”; that is, *Informing: asking and answering questions with ago...* is to be found in the following activity:

**1-** Listen to the first part of a radio interview about ancient civilizations and note down in each of the five boxes below **how long ago** each of them began.

<i>Ancient Greek civilization</i>	<i>Ancient Egyptian civilization</i>	<i>Sumerian civilization</i>	<i>Indus Valley civilization</i>	<i>Chinese Civilization</i>

(*New Prospects*: 16)

The above activity calls on the students to listen to a text and then answering the questions using **ago**. However, does this activity relate to teaching or assessment? Our answer is that the activity can be considered as dealing with testing listening comprehension unless the teacher considers it as an inductive teaching of how to ask and answer questions using **ago**. In this case the teacher can clarify the point with clear examples and can therefore make the activity as teaching. Consequently, we can affirm that the textbook does not provide an explicit teaching of the first learning objective mentioned above which means that there is no clear linkage between the learning objective and its teaching.

Interestingly, at the end of the textbook there is a “Grammar reference” dealing with an explicit instruction of the grammar items included in the learning objectives of the units. Indeed, the following activity can be considered as a formative assessment of the teaching included in the “Grammar Reference”:

▪ **Fill in each of the blanks in the text below with a zero article, a definite, or an indefinite article. Then explain why you have used each of them.**

*For me — (1) civilization is synonyms with — (2) refinement, — (3) refinement in — (4) architecture, in — (5) law, and in — (6) life styles. — (7) culture and — (8) literature of — (9) society also contribute to — (10) flourishing of its civilization (New Prospects: 16).*

The above activity is related to the assessment of the definite article, the indefinite article, and zero articles. However, this point has not been mentioned in the “*Language outcomes*” and it is only presented in the **BOOK MAP**. This fact does not help the teachers to better structure their lessons and the students to better concentrate on what should be learned within each lesson and each day. Therefore, if we refer to the principles of the Mastery Learning approach the “*Language outcomes*” should include as an objectives the use of the different articles covered in the activity.

As regards the activities related to the assessment of pronunciation and spelling we mention the following:

**1- How do you expect speakers A and B in the dialogue below to pronounce the past forms of the auxiliary be? Circle what you think is the correct pronunciation.**

*A: When was /wəz/ /wɜz/ Christopher Columbus born?*

*B: It was /wəz/ /wɜz/ in 1450.*

*A: Was he a Spaniard /wəz/ /wɜz/ ?*

*B: No, he wasn't /wəznt/ /wɜznt/. He was /wəz/ /wɜz/ Italian (New Prospects: 20).*

The above activity relates to one of the learning objectives mentioned in the “*Language outcomes*”; that is, *Pronouncing was/ were / wasn't/ weren't in connected speech*. However, the activity is dealing with testing and we are not sure if the teacher provides the students at the end of the activity with clear hints about the point. More importantly, the activity cannot be considered as formative assessment because the pronunciation items covered in the activity are not to be found in the “Grammar Reference” of the textbook and as we have mentioned so far formative assessment is mainly used to check whether the students have learned what they were taught and whether the teachers should adjust their teaching methods or not. Accordingly, we can assert that there is no consistency between teaching and assessing, which

means that one of the Mastery Learning elements; that is, “*Instructional Alignment*” is not reflected through the activity.

Like the first sequence, the second sequence “*Read and Consider*” of the first part “*Language Outcomes*” also starts with the learning objectives to be covered through the sequence. This case can be clarified as follows:

***Language outcomes***

- *Comparing: the comparative and the superlative of quantifiers*
- *Expressing concession with though, in spite of....*
- *Expressing time relations with conjunctions when, before.....*
- *Forming new words with prefixes de- and dis-*
- *Forming new words with suffixes -ic, -ment*
- *Describing things, places and people using well+past participle*
- *Spelling words: stop→ stopped, try→tried, etc.*
- *Pronouncing letters ch and final -ed*
- *Writing an expository essay*

(*New Prospects*: 21).

It is possible to say that the textbook sequence meets one of the principles of the Mastery Learning approach. In other words, the learning objectives the students should reach are implemented from the beginning of the sequence. However, like the learning objectives of the previous sequence the learning objectives of the sequence under examination are not announced by a statement that includes a behavioral component. Therefore, the “*Language outcomes*” should start, for example, with: **In this sequence you will be able to.** Here, a point worth being mentioned is that eight (8) of the nine (9) objectives included in the “*Language outcomes*” turn around language structures dealing with grammar, spelling, or pronunciation and only the ninth or the last objective can be considered as dealing with higher-order thinking. This fact makes the teaching/learning process gravitate more towards traditional views of teaching whose chief feature is focus on language structures. In addition, even if the learning objectives of the sequence meet the “*achievability principle*”, it is almost impossible to say that they meet the “*time-flexible principle*”. To be more explicit, if each one of the objectives requires one hour to teach and to re-teach, to assess and to re-assess this



means that at least nine hours are required to teach all of them. More importantly, the last objective; that is, **writing an expository essay** is not an easy objective to be mastered within at least five hours unless if the teacher teaches it without ensuring that more than 90% of the students have mastered it and this before moving on to the next unit. Accordingly, we suggest reducing the number of the objectives to be learned within each sequence and this in order to put stress on mastery and not on the quantity of knowledge to be covered.

After having examined the learning objectives of the sequence “*Read and Consider*”, we try to see if there is consistency between the objectives and the content of the units and the assessment of the latter. First of all, we notice that the learning objectives **1, 2, 3, 7, and 8** are to be found in the “Grammar Reference” of the textbook. In other words, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth objectives included in the “*Language outcomes*” mentioned above are not to be found in the “Grammar Reference” of the textbook, yet the sequence “*Read and Consider*” includes activities turning around such points. As a matter of fact, we mention the followings:

**3-** Add negative prefixes **de-** or **dis** to the words in bold type in texts A and B below so that they make sense.

A. The Aztec civilization integrated as a result of the Spanish conquest. The Spanish conquistador Hernán Ferdinand Cortés (1458-1547) possessed the Aztecs of their wealth and populated the major of Aztec cities.

B- Historians agree on the real causes of the fall of Maya civilization. Some of them say that its integration was due to the spread of epidemics. But others approve by arguing that it came as a result of the regulation of the climate, and domestic satisfaction and content.

**5-** Fill in the blanks **with well+past participle** form of the verbs in italics. Some verbs are irrelevant. An example is given.

*Inform, know, establish, keep, refine, found, balance, preserve, support, appreciate, document*

*Archeologists with well-established reputation argue that Easter Island had —(1) civilization before the European’ arrival there on Easter Sunday in 1722. On the basis of the —(2) statues still standing on the hills of Easter Island,..... (New Prospects: 27).*

The above activities can be considered as the teaching of the learning objectives because the points included in them are a matter of learning by heart. Similarly, the learning objective

related to the pronunciation of **ch** included in the “*language outcomes*” is not to be found in the “Grammar Reference” of the textbook because the point is also a matter of learning by heart. The point can be illustrated by the following activity:

3- *Classify the words in the box below in the table that follows according to the pronunciation of the letters **ch**.*

*Archives- church- architect- coach- architecture- arch- alchemy- archaic- archipelago- archetype- epoch- archer- archeology- artichoke- Archimedes- archway- archduke- archangel*

/tʃ/	/k/	/tʃ/	/k/
church			

(New Prospects: activity 3: page: 28)

It follows from what has been said above that the learning objectives explained and taught in the “Grammar Reference” are followed by activities included in the sequence and which can be considered as formative assessment. For example, the first objective *Comparing: the comparative and the superlative of quantifiers* is to be found in the “Grammar Reference” and it is assessed through the following activity:

3- *Fill in the blanks in the short exchanges below with appropriate quantifiers (**many, few, much, little**), or their comparatives and superlative forms.*

A. ‘How — (1) merchandise transited through the port of Algiers in comparison with the ports of Skikda and Annaba in the Phoenician period?’

B. ‘Well, in those days there was very — (2) merchandise transited through Algerian ports on the whole. But in comparison with the ports of skikda and Annaba, only the — (3) quantity of merchandise circulated through the port of Algiers, I mean, — (4) than either through the port of Skikda or that of Annaba.’ (New Prospects: activity 3: page: 24)

Interestingly, the last objective of the sequence; that is, **writing an expository essay** which is a challenging task and which refers to the higher-order skills is not taught in an adequate way so that to ensure that the students have really acquired the necessary knowledge related to the point. Indeed, the objective is presented under the form of assessment. The following activity illustrates the point:

▪ **Follow the guidelines below to write an expository essay about the challenges faced by our modern civilization.**

**1- Work individually. Select three ideas from the thesis statement in the essay structure below.**

### **Essay structure**

#### **Introduction**

*There are three major threats to our civilization: nuclear warfare- Pollution- natural catastrophes – diseases – economic collapse – collision with heavenly bodies.* ← **Thesis statement**

#### **Body paragraph 1**

_____	<b>Topic sentence</b>
_____	
_____	<b>Supporting sentences</b>
_____	
_____	<b>Concluding sentence</b>

#### **Body paragraph 2**

_____
_____
_____
_____

#### **Body paragraph 3**

_____
_____
_____

#### **Conclusion**

_____
_____

(New Prospects: 29).

The above activity clearly shows that the last objective of the sequence is not an easy task to master through a unique presentation and this under the form of testing. Said differently, writing an expository essay requires much time to master. Indeed, the teacher should make sure that all or at least the majority of the students know what a thesis statement is and this by providing them first with an explicit teaching about the point and then assessing them to see to what extent they can write a good thesis statement. In addition, mastering the meaning of a topic sentence requires a specific instruction and assessment. Hence it should be stated that it is impossible that the students could reach the mastery of the last objective within at least four

sessions. Accordingly, we can say that the textbook does not really provide the students with an explicit teaching of the last objective and the activity cited above cannot be considered as formative assessment and this is due to the fact that under the mastery learning formative assessment is mainly used to check whether the students have learned what they have been taught or not and as we mentioned above the textbook does not include a clear teaching about an expository essay.

As to the second sequence of the first unit, it includes five sections which are “Research and Report”, “Listening and Speaking”, “Reading and Writing”, “Project outcome” and “Assessment”. The first rubric “Research and Report” relates to behavioral outcomes and it is a task that the students should do outside the classroom as homework and then present it to the class. It can be done individually, in pairs or in groups. After this section comes the section “*Listening and Speaking*” and which starts with the rubric “Skills and Strategic

After having dealt with the first part of the textbook “*Language outcomes*” we move on to examine the second part which is “*Skills and strategic outcomes*”. First, we notice that the first sequence “Listening and Speaking” of this part starts with the learning objectives to be learned through the sequence. The following is an illustration:

*Skills and Strategic Outcomes*

- *Making and checking hypotheses/predictions*
- *Listening for gist*
- *Listening for detail*
- *Recognizing and showing a sequence of events*
- *Giving a narrative account*

(*New Prospects*: 32)

Like all the preceding sequences, the learning objectives of the present sequence are not announced by a statement including a behavioral component. However, a point worth mentioning is that the objectives can be claimed to meet the “*achievability principle*” and the “*time-flexible principle*”. Indeed, the objectives are feasible and they can be learned with time limitations. More importantly, the teacher can re-teach and re-assess them. Additionally, it

seems clear that the objectives are precise. For example, the two objectives *Listening for gist* and *Listening for detail* help the students to effectively engage in the listening skill and allow them to better concentrate on the aim of listening because as we know in real-life situations listening is always for a clear and a specific aim. For instance, if we listen to a weather forecast and we are sailors in this case our aim is more concentrated on the speed of the wind.

As regards the results of the second evaluative question; that is, do the contents of the sequence correspond to its learning objectives; we notice that the sequence includes an explicit instruction of the objectives in a sub-rubric called “Coping”. In fact, the following is an example:

<p><i>Coping</i></p> <p><i>In many listening situations, whether in your own language or in a foreign one, it is necessary to <b>recognize</b> and <b>sequence</b> the <b>main ideas</b> in order to be able to <b>follow</b> the thread of <b>what is being said</b>. We call this <b>listening for gist</b> (main ideas). When you listen <b>for gist</b>, it is not <b>necessary to understand every</b> word. You should concentrate on recognizing <b>key words</b>, i.e. the words that the speaker considers to be <b>important</b> and which are usually <b>stressed</b> in English.</i></p>
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(New Prospects: 33)

This “Coping Box” is to be found in the “while listening” phase. The box is followed by an activity to check whether the students have learned what was taught in the box or not. The following illustrates the case:

**2- Sentences A-E below are not in order. Listen to the lecture again and re-order them according to their occurrence in the lecture. Write letters A-E in the following table.**

Order in the lecture	1	2	3	4	5
Jumbled Sentences					

- A. The Phoenicians didn't simply barter their goods, but they also spread the alphabet in the Mediterranean Basin.*
- B. Later they settled along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean.*
- C. By 1000 B.C., they sailed from one end of the Mediterranean to another.*
- D. Originally, the Phoenicians used to live in the desert.*
- E. Down to 1200 B.C., most of their trade was with Egypt.*

(New Prospects: activity: 2, page: 33)

It seems clear that the aim of the activity is to assess the students' abilities in listening for gist or main ideas and there is another activity which deals with listening for detail. The activity is as follows:

**3- Listen again to the same lecture and select from the box below the 4 terms that best describe the qualities of the people who developed the civilization represented on the map on page 32. Justify your choice.**

<i>a. warlike</i>	<i>b. peaceful</i>	<i>c. nomadic</i>	<i>d. business-minded</i>	<i>e. ignorant</i>	<i>f. knowledgeable</i>
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(Ibid. activity: 3, page: 33)

In addition, textbook includes explicit instruction about the two last objectives as in the following box:

### ***Coping***

*When we give a historical account or tell the story of something or someone, we resort to an organizational pattern based on **chronology**. To convey chronological order we use:*

- *Past tenses (generally the past simple and occasionally the past perfect)*
- *Sequencers which express:*
  - 1-the beginning of a list: first, to start with, to begin with, originally, etc.*
  - 2-the continuation of a list: next, then, shortly afterwards, later, etc.*
  - 3-the end of a list: finally, at last, eventually, in the end, etc.*
- *Time conjunctions: when, as soon as, while, before, after, once, etc.*

(Ibid: 34)

After this “Coping” box, the students are required to do activities to show their understanding of the two last learning objectives mentioned in the “*Language and strategic outcomes*” above. Indeed, the following activity is mainly related to the learning objective *Recognizing and showing a sequence of events*:

● **Task:** *The sentences below are not in order. Re-order them to get a coherent text about the history of papermaking. Write letters A-G in the table below. Then explain how you have found the order of the sentences.*

<i>Order of the sentences</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Jumbled sentences</i>							

*A. For a long time papermaking with such materials was a monopoly of the Chinese.*

- B. The Arabs improved the papermaking process considerably.
- C. About the year 105 A.D., a Chinese official called Ts'ai-Lum discovered that paper could be made from bark, old linen and other materials.
- D. It reached the Maghrib about 1100, and then was introduced into Spain, France, Italy and Germany.
- E. It was so made until about the eighth or ninth century A.D.
- F. The craft spread to Baghdad and Damascus.
- G. The Arabs learned the secret from Chinese prisoners, captured in the fighting around Samarkand between 704 and 750 A.D. (Ibid).

It is after this activity that the students are called on to do activities on the Western civilization by listing, selecting, and organizing the major events in timeline order passing through The Antiquity, The Middle Ages, The Renaissance, The Enlightenment, The Industrial Revolution, and finally The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The student should present the work to the class (*New Prospects*: 34, 35). Such an activity is mainly related to the objective: *Giving a narrative account* included cited above.

Furthermore, the textbook includes a “Coping” sub-rubric and which includes guidelines about the techniques of reading. The following is an example:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Coping</i></p> <p><b>Skimming</b> means reading quickly for gist (general meaning). You skim through a written text in order to find out about the topic, the main ideas and its general organization.</p> <p>When you are asked to skim through a text, <b>you needn't</b> know every word and sentence in the text. You should concentrate, instead, on recognizing <b>key words</b>, i.e. words that the writer considers to be important. Key words are often repeated in the text.</p>
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(Ibid: 37)

This coping box is followed by activities to check whether the students have learned the points it covered or not. In other words, the students are asked to skim the text in order to pick out six key words. This means that the activity is designed to see to what extent the students have grasped the meaning of skimming. Indeed, the following activity shows the case:

**1- Skim through the introduction and the conclusion of the textbook below and pick out four to six key words** (Ibid).

The last sequence “*Reading and Writing*” of the unit also starts with the learning objectives to be covered through the sequence. This case can be clarified as follows:

reading and writing skills. The following is an illustration:

*Skills and strategic Outcomes*

- *Skimming*
- *Scanning*
- *Identifying reference words*
- *Recognizing types of discourse*
- *Summarizing*
- *Writing a story*

(*New Prospects*: 36)

It seems clear that the learning objectives of the sequence are not announced by a statement including a behavioral component yet the objectives meet the “*achievability principle*” but it is difficult to say that they the “*time-flexible principle*” because the last two objectives; that is, ***summarizing*** and ***writing a story*** require much time to be taught and assessed and above all to be mastered by the majority of the students.

As far as the results of the second evaluative question, it appears that the sequence includes a “*Coping*” box which deals with an explicit instruction of the four first objectives.

The second coping box about reading is the following:

*Coping*

*Scanning means reading for specific pieces of information (a fact, or a detail, or a particular word). When you scan written texts, your eyes should move quickly to find the information you are interested in. Ignore irrelevant items. What counts here is your power of observation.*

(Ibid: 39)

Also, the sub-rubric which entails the definition and the meaning of scanning is followed by a set of questions targeting the point. In other words the students are invited to demonstrate their understanding of what scanning is. In fact the following activity clarifies the point:

● ***Task: Scan the text and answer the following questions.***

- A. *What is the major difference between ancient Sumer and ancient Egypt?*
- B. *What are the benefits that ancient Egyptians derived for their system of national government?*
- C. *What does the name ‘Pharaoh’ mean in the ancient Egyptian language ?*
- D. *Why were the pyramids important for ancient Egyptians?*



E. Who discovered Tutankhamun's tomb? (*New Prospects*: Activity: 4)

As regards the “After reading” phase, it also includes the “Coping” sub-rubric which in this time deals with the meaning of the major different types of discourse in prose and which deals with the fourth objective cited in “Skills and Strategic outcomes”. Indeed, the students are required to do the following activity relying on the guidelines included in the coping” box:

**1- Have a quick look at the coping box below. Then decide which type of discourse the text you have studied belongs to?**

*Coping*

*There are five major types of discourse in prose texts: descriptive, expository, narrative, argumentative and prescriptive.*

● *As their name indicates, descriptive texts do just that: they **describe** people, places, things, etc.*

● *Expository texts **explain** how things work and why these things are what they are.*

● *Narrative texts **tell** the story of something or someone.*

● *Argumentative texts are texts which **defend** points of view.*

● *Prescriptive texts are texts which **give instructions**.*

*Note: There may be more than one type of discourse in the same text.*

(Ibid: 40)

However, what about the fifth and the sixth objectives? Our analysis reveals that the textbook does not include teaching of these two objectives. Indeed, the students are called on to an activity dealing with summarizing without having dealt with the point before. The activity is the following:

**2- Writer s short summary of the text (about one-fifth of it) you have studied. Your teacher will tell you about the strategies for making a summary** (Ibid, act: 2).

Even if the activity requires the teachers to teach their students how to summarize we wonder if really the teachers will do the task and above all if the task will not pose problems for some teachers especially the novice ones because as we know summarizing is not an easy task. Similarly, the textbook does include guidelines and explicit teaching of how to write a story. The following activity clarifies the point:

●The picture below illustrates the story of Joseph/Sidna Yucef. Study it. Then write your own version of the story following the guidelines on the next page.

1- Jot down ideas about the story using the cycle of episodes below. Some of the events in episodes are given to you.

Episode 1 ● Joseph's brothers' jealousy
Episode 2 ● Joseph thrown down a well
Episode 3 ● merchants heard him calling for help
Episode 4 ●
Episode 5 ●

2- Select ideas from your cycle of episodes and start writing your draft narrative. Don't pay attention to mistakes at this stage.

3- Check whether your ideas are developed coherently. Then review your story for grammar and spelling mistakes.

4- Exchange drafts your partner for error checking.

5- Hand your revised version of the story to you teacher. (*New Prospects*: 40, 41).

The above activity is dealing with the last objective included in “Skills and Strategic Outcomes” cited above. However, it seems that the activity falls half between teaching and testing. In other words, the students have normally been already familiar with essay writing following a chronological order and the different types in discourse in prose texts. Therefore, we can affirm that the activity is dealing with assessment.

### **V-3- Analysis of the Textbooks Assessment Sections**

#### **V-3-1- Getting Through**

The textbook assessment section is entitled “*Where Do We Go From Here*” which indicates that the totality of the assessment sections to be found in the textbook is eight (8). This part is of two steps. The first step is where the students are required to fill in the learning logs joined to each unit and it is entitled “*Check over the language*”. During this step the students are asked to put a tick to show how well they know each of the language items check listed in the learning log and at the same time they should illustrate by giving relevant examples in each case. The second step, on the other hand, is named “*Skills check*” and it is designed to check the students' skills performance by using tasks sheet that the teachers will

hand out to the students. Our focus will be on the first step. The following is an example of the learning logs:

I can...	Very well	Fairly well	A little
A.use <b>used to</b> in positive, negative and interrogative sentences to narrate. B.use the <b>present simple</b> +when/while/until/before and after to describe a routine. C.use <b>going to</b> and the present simple. D.use <b>will</b> and <b>won't</b> to make predictions. E.use modales <b>may</b> and <b>might</b> to talk/ write about future events. F.use defining relative clauses and non-defining relative clauses G.use the comparative and the superlative with short and long adjectives and with adverbs. H.use the link word <b>by contrast/in contrast to/ on the contrary</b> . I.form new words by adding suffixes J.distinguish between homophones and homonyms. K.pronounce the final /s/ in verbs and nouns.			

(Getting Through: 31)

### V-3-2- New Prospects

*New Prospects* comprises six (6) learning logs through which the students can show their underlined performance. At the end of each unit of instruction the students are required to tell their teachers what goes well and what does not. Three corresponding levels to the students' performance are provided in the learning logs: "*very well*", "*fairly well*", and "*not well*". As an example, we mention the following illustrative items included in the learning log:

I can...	Very well	Fairly well	A little
A. speak about beliefs and customs using <b>used to</b> . B.ask for and give information about a civilization using <b>ago</b> . C.speak about obligations in the past using <b>had to</b> . D.talk about the past achievements of ancient civilizations. E.use appropriate articles with concrete and abstract words. F.use <b>though/ although/despite the fact that/in spite of the fact that</b> to express concession. G.narrate a very short episode in the life of a legendary figure using the past simple, the past perfect and appropriate conjunctions of time. H.use adjectives and verbs with <b>dependent prepositions</b> .			

(*New Prospects*, 2006:43)

The language items as they have been shown in the learning log above deal with what the students have learned through the whole file. They mainly deal with language forms, lexis, pronunciation, and so forth. The second step which forms the assessment section of the textbook is the one in which the students are asked to tick each item in the learning log to indicate what they think is their level of performance and then the students are called on to hand a copy of the learning log with their examples on a separate page to their teacher.

As to the last step, it consists of a test that the teacher will assign to the students on one of the texts which are provided in the “**Resource Portfolio**” at the end of the textbook so that to check the students achievements in terms of skills and strategies.

### **V-3-4-Discussion**

It is fairly well established that the assessment technique implemented in the textbooks is of a higher usefulness in making students feel autonomous and motivated, for they have been given the opportunity to assess their own work. More importantly, it tells the teachers to a certain extent where more work is needed. In addition, this type of self-assessment reflects an important aspect of social constructivism with an additional stress on the learner-centred approach. Moreover, it (self-assessment) “*boosts learner control, confidence, and esteem*” (Williers & Ward, 2008: 30). Furthermore, being involved in such a task the students will have more responsibility for their own learning progress. Finally, the fact the students are called on to illustrate their choices with examples makes the learning logs more reliable; something which is of great importance in assessment. These are the positive aspects that lay behind the implementation of the learning logs in the textbooks.

It is worth mentioning that teachers can review the logs of a few students and that they should avoid correcting the student language in the learning log (O’Mally &Valdez Pierce, 1996: 153).

Having mentioned the positive aspects of implementing learning logs in the textbook and how they are basic characteristics of the learner-centred approach, now we try to comment on the way they are implemented. First of all, it seems necessary to mention that the learning logs implemented in the textbooks include too many language items that require, as a result, too much time to review. Additionally, the learning logs are designed in a summative way; that is to say they are implemented at the end of each file. As a result this “*may contribute little or nothing to the ongoing teaching/learning process*” (Ur, 1996: 245). In this context, it is worth to mention that this contradicts with the European instruction which tends to use self-assessment as a formative tool and goes along with the United States instruction which uses self-assessment in a summative way (Moritz quoted in Geeslin, 2003). Using self-assessment summatively, Geeslin (2003) points out:

It is not necessary, nor advantageous, that this be the case. Evaluation should provide regular feedback, not as a summative step in the instructional process but rather an important formative part of development.

Furthermore, it should be indicated that the learning logs implemented in ***Getting Through*** include only discrete-point items and this fact makes the assessment traditional rather than alternative. Accordingly, they do not test the overall language proficiency of the students. Put differently, testing should also tap into the students’ creative competences which can be best shown through analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

## **Conclusion**

Our examination of the Middle and Secondary Schools textbooks shows that the latter include strengths and insufficiencies. Starting with the strengths of the Middle School textbooks, we notice that they are rich in assessment activities which turn around different language items and skills. They are, then, important in stimulating the student’s competencies in using language. Above all, they (the activities) help the students revise and consolidate

many language rules especially those related to language forms as tenses, pronouns, comparatives, and so on. These are advantages.

As far as the shortcomings are concerned, our evaluation reveals that the Middle School textbooks lack focus on communicative activities, and performance assessment as, for instance, composition writing. Their over-emphasis on grammar practice makes them look like textbooks gravitating more towards the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) than towards the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This point appears clearer in *Spotlight On English One*. However, one should not understand from our aforementioned comments that grammar is not indispensable in language teaching and learning. Indeed, this fact is sufficiently clarified by Cunningsworth who points out: “*grammar is immensely important, being the system of rules for the formation of correct sentences and it is essential that learners are able to both understand and use the rules of grammar*” (1984: 18).

Furthermore, our evaluation indicates that the majority of the assessment activities implemented in the Middle School course books correspond to the first level of Bloom’s taxonomy; that is “*knowledge*”. This means that the textbooks are poor in activities related to the advanced levels of the taxonomy like “*analysis*”, “*synthesis*”, and “*evaluation*” which are effective means in developing higher-order thinking.

Regarding our analysis of the two Secondary School textbooks; *Getting Through*, and *New Prospects*, it shows us that the latter course books assessment sections display positive and negative points. Concerning the positive points, we can assert that the implementation of the “*learning logs*” in both textbooks effectively increases the learners’ autonomy, motivation, and feel of responsibility. More importantly, this fact makes the textbooks accurately reflect one of the most salient principles (self-assessment) of the learner-centred approach based on the constructivist learning theory. As for the negative points, our evaluation indicates that the “*learning logs*” as they have been implemented in *Getting*

*Through* and *New Prospects* do not efficiently tap into the assessment of the learners' actual use of language through the accomplishment of different tasks using different language skills.

Finally, even though the Middle and Secondary Schools textbooks include weaknesses this remains a normal fact because no textbook in the world is perfect. In other words, a textbook is just a support for language teaching and learning and it is up to the teachers to make efforts to better use it. This reality allows us to say that the educational reform in Algeria can be considered as an important leap towards an accurate improvement of the teaching and learning materials. The next chapter of our dissertation is about the evaluation of the BEM and BAC tests. It principally examines whether they meet the requirements of good tests. And other points will be found in the chapter.

## **Chapter Six: English BAC and BEM Exams**

### **Introduction**

This chapter points out important considerations about the practicality, reliability, validity, and instructional value of the BEM and BAC exams. In addition, it discusses their contents (the activities) with their corresponding levels in Bloom's taxonomy. At this level our aim is to start by providing a brief description of the exams. Also, it is to be remembered that the BAC exams are made up of two topics of which the students should choose only one, and we shall stick to the evaluation of the first topic because both topics have the same structure and they differ only in their contents.

### **VI-1- The BEM Exams**

#### **VI-1-1- Definition**

The BEM exams are official and national exams designed by the Ministry of National Education to test the Middle School students' learning competencies and this at the end of the fourth year of their English learning. Once the student succeed in the exam, he/she will have right to carry on his/her studies in the Secondary School.

#### **VI-1-2- General Description**

The BEM exams are, as it has been mentioned above, of a written mode; the students are not tested on their oral competencies but only on their writing abilities. The exams include two essential parts. The first part is divided into two sections. The first section is related to "*Reading Comprehension*" and the activities which can be found in this section can be done by the students with reference to the text. The second section is named "*Mastery of Language*" and it is mainly related to language forms. The second part, on the other hand,



relates to “*Written Expression*” and which requires the students to write a composition on a given topic.

### **VI-1-3- The Corresponding Level of the Items in Bloom’s Taxonomy**

#### **VI-1-3-1- Part One: Section One: Reading Comprehension**

Here the students are called on to read the text and to do a number of activities by referring to the text. Indeed, the statement “*Read the text carefully and answer the following activities*” always appears in the first part of the BEM exams. The number of activities to be found in this section is generally three and the assessment format used to judge the students’ achievement is usually *selected-response formats*. The following activity is an illustrative example:

#### **Part One**

##### **A- Reading Comprehension**

*Read the text carefully and do the following activities:*

**B- Write “true” “false”. Correct the wrong statement.**

- 1- *There are different languages in the world.*
- 2- *Egyptian is the most used language in the world.*
- 3- *English is the language of technology.*

(BEM, June 2006).

The Bloom’s taxonomy level which corresponds to these “true/false” items is “*comprehension*”. However, even if the student responds correctly to the activity this does not mean that he/she has understood the text. That is this kind of activities deal only with the literal comprehension of the text; that is, the students are not required to show their in-depth understanding of the text. Hence such kind of activities mirrors the traditional view of assessment and as suggestion they should be replaced by activities which really require the students to draw inferences creatively and intelligently.

However, it should be mentioned that the reading comprehension activities include also “yes/no” or “short-answer” questions and sometimes “WH” questions which both belong to *constructed-response format* because the student is going to construct an answer rather than selecting it from a list. The following examples best illustrate the case:

**Activity Two:**

***Answer the following questions:***

- a) *Is Nadir staying at home?*
- b) *Will he be busy tomorrow in the morning?* (BEM, June 2010).

**Activity Two:**

***Answer the following questions:***

- 1) *Did people feel concerned about children’s work?*
- 2) *Were their activities against children’s work unsuccessful?* (BEM, June 2009).

**Activity One:**

***Read the text and answer the following questions:***

- 1- *In which paragraph is it mentioned that people in Alaska had no idea of what was happening there?*
- 2- *What do the underlined words in the text refer to?*

<i>which</i>	
<i>its</i>	

(BEM, June 2007).

These “yes/no” items also correspond to the “*comprehension*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy. But unfortunately, they do not tap into the students’ non-literal comprehension of the text by asking them, for example, to draw inferences and to make interpretations which allow them to go beyond the reproduction stage of knowledge. Accordingly, this type of activities gravitates more towards traditional and conventional testing and the right answers the students may provide do not mean or reflect an authentic academic achievement. This is why we stress the necessity of making the activities challenging in the sense that they show the level of proficiency the learners have attained in reading comprehension.

Interestingly, the third activity of the “*Reading Comprehension*” section is always related to lexis; the students are asked to give opposites or synonyms of words. Such activities are of *constructed-response formats* as the following examples show:

**Activity Three:**

**1. Find in the text words that are opposite in meaning to the following:**

a) new≠

b) in≠

**2. Find in the text words that are closest in meaning to the following:**

a- the next day=

b-mend=

(BEM, June 2010).

**C- Lexis:**

**1. Find in the text words that are closest in meaning to the following:**

a-nearly=

b-inhabitants=

**2. Find in the text words that are opposite in meaning to the following:**

a- newest≠

b-easy≠

(BEM, June 2006).

The above activities belong to the first level of Bloom’s taxonomy; that is, “*knowledge*” and more precisely to “*knowledge of terminology*”. However it should be noticed that even if the items are contextualised, the task is too easy is for students who have learned four years of English. In addition, the items are susceptible to guessing as it will be mentioned later on when we deal with the reliability of the BEM exams.

Another activity which relates to the first level of Bloom’s taxonomy; “*knowledge*” and specifically “*knowledge of terminology*” is the following:

**Activity Three: Match each word with its appropriate meaning.**

ship	People travelling in train, boat, train....
passengers	Take people or things from one place to another
crew	Means of transport used to travel across water
carry	People working on a ship ( or a plane)

(BEM, June 2008)

This activity is typical of conventional testing as it belongs to matching-items which are highly susceptible to guessing and which just deal with reproduction of knowledge. Being so, the students who have the lowest level in English can get the whole mark which means that asking the students to answer that activity does not imply that the students are required to show their knowledge rather than reproducing an answer in a mere mechanistic way. Therefore, we wonder to know why the students were not asked, for example, a question like this: read the text carefully and say what the words; *ship, passengers, crew, and carry* mean? Indeed, to answer the question we suggested the students are going to rely on reflection rather than guessing. Also, the students are obliged to integrate grammar and other lexis in expressing the meaning. As a result the right answers the students can give really indicate their real level in lexis to an extent that they used their own intelligence and creativity in resolving the problem.

After having dealt with the activities included in the first section “*Reading Comprehension*” and spoken about their corresponding level in Bloom’s taxonomy, now we are going to do the same task with the second section “*Mastery of Language*”.

### **VI-1-3-2- Section Two: “Mastery of Language”**

In this section it is the students’ performance in language forms as punctuation, transformation activities, pronunciation, and gap-filling activities which is assessed and measured. Like the previous section, this one also generally includes three activities. To be clearer, we can mention the following examples:

#### **Activity One:**

***Supply the punctuation and capital letters where necessary:***

*Tomorrow, Nadir will send a letter to ali*

(BEM, June 2010).

***B- Complete the table with correct comparative and superlative.***

<i>Adjective</i>	<i>comparative</i>	<i>superlative</i>
.....	<i>Larger than</i>	.....
.....	.....	<i>The earliest</i>

(BEM, June 2006).

**Activity Three:**

***Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of their final “ed”.***

*Called—decided—stopped—wanted*

<i>/t/</i>	<i>/d/</i>	<i>/Id/</i>

(BEM, June 2007).

**Activity Three:**

***Find in the text four words that have the following sounds:***

<i>/aI/ ( five)</i>	<i>/I/ ( sit)</i>
<i>-1</i>	<i>-1</i>
<i>-2</i>	<i>-2</i>

(BEM, June 2008).

These two above activities require the students to construct answers themselves. More importantly, they correspond to the first level of Bloom’s taxonomy; that is, “*knowledge*” because such activities mainly deal with recall of information and they do not require the students to do application, synthesis, or evaluation tasks. Even if the activities are related to grammar and pronunciation which are both necessary in communication, it should be mentioned, however, that the focus on the right answer and on reproduction rather than on creativity makes them gravitate more towards traditional assessment rather than towards other kinds of alternative assessment like performance-based as it has been assumed in literature.

Interestingly, the pronunciation activity of (BEM, June 2007) is highly susceptible to guessing and it is at all unacceptable that such kind of activities measure the students' achievement in pronunciation, for it lacks both face validity and reliability as it will be mentioned later in a more detailed way.

Having examined the activities included in the “*Mastery of Language*” section of the BEM exams, the following examination will be devoted to the second part of the exams which refers to “*Written Expression*”.

### **VI-1-3-3- Part Two (Written Expression)**

In this part, the students are required to write a short composition on a given topic. The following examples illustrate the case:

#### **Example One:**

***Fill in the gaps so that the text makes sense.***

*Ahmed's teacher asked him to.....an article.....language. He went to.....cybercafé. There he learnt that Esperanto.....an artificial language which was invented.....1887. It sounds like Italian and.....are no irregular verbs.*

(BEM, June 2006).

#### **Example Two:**

***Your schoolmates have created an association because they want to live in a clean district. Interview one of its members for your school magazine and write down the conversation. You can use the following clues to help you.***

- *When you started the association*
- *Name of the association*
- *Activities (what you did/ are doing)*
  - *Do not write names. Use A and B.*

(BEM, June 2007).

The above “*Written Expression*” activities which make up the second part of the BEM tests tap into the students' knowledge of language in an integrative way and they correspond to the “*synthesis*” level of Bloom's taxonomy.

#### **VI-1-4- Discussion**

From the examples we have provided so far, it clearly appears that the BEM exams include activities of *selected-response formats*, and activities of *constructed-response formats*. Indeed, we notice that all the tests include a part where the students are asked to do “true/false” activities. These activities can be criticised for being a real threat of unreliability; they can be easily done by guessing. Being so, they do not reflect the students’ real understanding of the text. Likewise, the matching-items best illustrate a case of guesswork. Indeed, in the activity three of the “*Reading Comprehension*” section in the BEM exam of 2008, we cited above, the assessment of lexis through matching can be negatively affected by guessing and this makes the test less reliable and the test makers in this case are required to take into consideration context when designing assessment activities dealing with lexis. Similarly, the “classifying activities” that are included in the “*Mastery of Language*” section of the BEM exams are in reality matching-items and are, as a result, susceptible to guesswork. In fact, from the examples we gave above, one can notice how the students can answer the whole activity only and simply by guessing. Indeed, this kind of activities does not indicate the real performance of the students. In other words, any student can get the full mark allotted to the activity. Therefore, the test makers should be aware of such insufficiency which impede effective learning and which makes the BEM tests unchallenging.

However, in order to do justice to the test designers we should mention that sometimes it is added to the “true/false” activities another part which requires the students to correct the false statement as the following example mentions: “*Write “true” or “false”. Correct the wrong statement*” (BEM, June 2006). The fact of asking the student to correct the wrong statement allows the assessors to know if the student has responded only by guessing or through his/her understanding of the text. Also, contrary to the BEM exam of 2006, the BEM exam of 2007 has the characteristic of assessing the students’ achievement in lexis with more

reliability as there is no way of guessing. Yet, such a test just involves recall of information. Therefore, the student can easily find out the synonyms of the words “*started*” and “*named*” and the antonyms of “*safe*” and “*nowhere*”; that is, the activity is reliable but unchallenging.

Unlike the *selected-response formats*, the assessment in *constructed-response formats* is more reliable. Nevertheless, in the case of lexis, the activities deal with items which are somehow susceptible to guessing. To be more precise, the student can find out the answer only by eliminating some of the distractors that can be found in the text. This case becomes clearer if we try to look to what extent it is easy to find out the antonym of the word “*newest*” only by eliminating the word “*largest*” which can be considered as its distractor regarding the resemblance in their morphology. As a result, it will be obvious for the students that the opposite of “*newest*” is “*oldest*” (BEM, June 2006). Similarly, the student is able to give the antonym of a word simply by looking at the same word in the text used with a negation like the word “*easy*” which has as an opposite in the text the phrase “*it is not easy*” (Ibid). Furthermore, it is necessary to show that the BEM exams in the “*Reading Comprehension*” and “*Mastery of Language*” sections diametrically and principally deal with ***discrete-point*** testing which “*only tests one thing at a time such as asking students to choose the correct tense of a verb*” (Harmer, 2002: 323).

Additionally, our analysis of the BEM exams’ content with reference to Bloom’s taxonomy reveals that they turn around the three levels relating to “*knowledge*”, “*comprehension*”, and “*synthesis*”. To be more precise, the content of the activities of the first section; that is, “*Reading Comprehension*” corresponds to either “*comprehension*” and this in the case of questions which check the students’ understanding of the text, or to “*knowledge*” as in the case of lexis, for instance. As to the content of the activities of the second section; that is, “*Mastery of Language*” they diametrically correspond to the



“*knowledge*” level of Bloom’s taxonomy. Last but not least, the content of the second part of the BEM exams corresponds to the “*synthesis*” level.

### **VI-1-5- Important Questions about the BEM Exams**

Here we try to ask some questions regarding the practicality, reliability, and validity of the BEM exams. The questions are as follows:

#### **1- Are the BEM exams practical?**

This question deals with the possibility of administering, scoring and interpreting easily the exams within the time and budgetary limitations. So far, we have seen that discrete-point testing or multiple-choice formats are easy to score; they can be quickly and objectively scored as Oosterhof (2008:87) affirms “*Because students respond to each item with a single mark, multiple-choice items are easily scored.*” Thus, we can say that the BEM exams formats have a great impact on their practicality. In brief, the BEM exams are practical as they can be administered, scored and interpreted within the time and monetary constraints.

#### **2- Are the BEM exams reliable?**

Owing to the fact that the major part of the BEM exams is made up of *selected-response items* as “multiple-choice items”, “true-false items”, “and matching items” , these exams are object of guessing and, as a result, they lack one of the main characteristics of a good test; that is, reliability. However, it is possible to remediate this drawback and this by “*restricting the scope for variety in the answers and making sure that the test conditions remain constant*” (Harmer, 2002: 322).

#### **3- Are the BEM exams valid?**

A test is valid if it tests what is it supposed to test. Thus, it is not valid, for instance, to test students by asking them to perform activities which are not similar to those actually acquired

in the classroom. Put another way, the students should share the knowledge on which they do the test (Harmer, 2002: 222). These clarifications about validity make us see that the BEM exams are valid in terms of **content validity**. In clearer words, the tests accurately reflect the fourth year Middle School syllabus on which it is based and the students are, according to the best of our knowledge, tested on what they have normally asked to perform in the classroom.

As regards the **face validity** of the BEM tests, our evaluation shows that the tests can only claim poor face validity which “ *is always perceived in terms of content; if the test samples the actual content of what the learner has achieved or expects to achieve, then face validity will be perceived.*” (Brown, 2003: 388, 389). Our argumentation in this case stems from the fact that there are activities in the BEM tests like “ *dialogue completion*” and “ *phonetic transcription*” which the students normally expect to be activities to be done orally to show their performance in phonetics and when interacting with others through dialogues.

Being the desired goal through the teaching and learning of English in Algeria, communicative competence can be considered as a construct. The latter underlies the ability to use language for purposeful and effective communication in context-specific tasks or in real world situation. Following this way, we can argue that the BEM exams focus on measuring the students’ knowledge of discrete pieces and patterns of the language. Such tests tell us more about the students’ ability to produce correct elements of the language than about their communicative competence by conveying their ideas efficiently to the reader. Said differently, these discrete-point tests seem to elicit most likely “*language like behaviour*” (Ingram in *ibid*) and give us only a narrow glimpse “*of potential communicative capacity*” (Evola *et al* 1980 in *ibid*). Following this way, it should be indicated that the BEM tests in their first part; that is, in the “*Reading Comprehension*” and “*Mastery of Language*” sections seem more like exams given under the Audio-Lingual Method rather than possessing the noticeable characteristics of the exams prepared under the Communicative Language

Teaching or the Competency-Based Language Teaching ( CBLT). More importantly, the second part of the BEM exams; that is, “*written Expression*” which is supposed to be a matter of integrative testing where the students are expected to use a variety of language items to show their ability to write a composition is no longer a matter of connecting statements. This case is well reflected through the “*written Expression*” of the BEM of 2006.

However, in order to be fair towards the BEM exams designers, it should be shown that from 2007 till 2010 the BEM exams’ second part; “*Written Expression*” has been made more integrative. That is to say, the students are required to write a composition in a more integrative and personal way even if they are given some hints to help them do such a task. This fact of expecting the students to show their communicative ability by integrating specific language abilities such as lexis, language forms, punctuation, tenses, and spelling should be an omnipresent characteristic in the BEM exams as Oller states:

If the purpose of the curriculum is to teach people to communicate in a foreign language, the criterion of success is how well they can communicate in the language after they have had the course. Then, the validity of tests in education must be referenced against the skill, performance, ability or whatever the educational program purports to in skill (Oller in Jacobs 198: 2).

This quotation permits us to say that the students should prove their ability to communicate in the language they have been taught in the classroom. In our country, Algeria, the BEM exams are, as it has been already mentioned, designed to assess the students’ achievements after a four-year English learning in the Middle School. The test designers, then, must know that a test which taps into the communicative ability of the students is worth the effort (Jacobs, 1981: 4). Clearly, we can say that the BEM exams lack **construct validity** which as pointed out by Keith Morrow (2006) “*reflects accurately the principles of a valid theory of foreign language learning.*” That is, construct validity refers to whether there is a relationship between the language item being tested and the communicative competence

which can be regarded as a language theory on which CLT is based. (Brown, 2001: 389 and Hughes, 1989: 26).

Finally, it is necessary to evaluate the BEM exams, albeit briefly, with relation to *predictive validity*. That is, the point here is to see to what extent it is possible to say that the results of the BEM exams allow us to predict the students' future performance. Therefore, it becomes clear from what has been said earlier that the scores the students can get in the BEM exams do not tell us much about their intellectual skills required to become proficient learners. Indeed, what evidence can be provided by "true/false" answers about good reader behaviours and how can we know if the test-takers can really understand a written text if they are not tested about their abilities in predicting and making inferences. This fact is principally due to guesswork which is a pivotal feature of the BEM exams; a weak student can get a good mark in the exam.

#### 4- Are the BEM tests understandable?

The aforementioned BEM exams permit us to say that the task is understandable. In more precise terms, the exams are stated as briefly and simply as possible. In addition, all the words or terms used in the exams are likely to be understood by the majority of the students. This fact allows the students to spend more time on writing rather than thinking about or analysing the assignment. In this context, Coffman (1971: 280) states "*the more complicated the questions, the more time required to compose and record an answer*" (quoted in Jacobs, 1981: 13-14)). Hence, the exam papers will be easily marked when the topic is clear and straightforward.

#### 5- Are the BEM exams challenging?

Our evaluation of the BEM exams shows that the latter are not really challenging in a way that they do not tap into the students' creativity and intelligence. This fact reflects the

traditional trends of testing which focus more on structure and neglect the functional aspects of language; that is, the accomplishment of tasks that the students meet in their real-life situations. Such a drawback is brought about by the nature of the activities which mainly revolve around recall of information and activities which generally deal with selected-response items that are vulnerable to guessing. Put differently, the activities should correspond to an appropriate level of difficulty as New Mann affirms “*The activity must be difficult enough to provide some challenge and extend learning but not so difficult as to leave many students confused or frustrated*” (New Mann: 1995 cited in Phy, 1997: 346- 347). Hence, the test makers are required to make the BEM exams more challenging and this by taking into consideration the activities which deal with higher-order skills and which reflect the daily use of language through communication.

In brief, we can say that the BEM exams reveal many weaknesses. First of all, they include many items of *selected-response formats* which make the exams unreliable, for such items are object of guessing. As a result, the BEM exams mainly lack construct and face validity which is closely related to reliability. And as a solution to this insufficiency the test designers should focus more on the assessment of the communicative aspects of language without neglecting the importance of language forms or structures. Second, the BEM exams are not challenging in the sense that they are very easy and they mainly correspond to either the first level of Bloom’s taxonomy; that is, “*knowledge*”, or the second level; that is, “*comprehension*”. This means that the test designers should include activities which challenge the students as activities dealing with analysis and evaluation, higher-order skills, and which reflect the actual use of language in real-life situations.

After having examined and looked at the BEM exams items and their corresponding level in Bloom’s taxonomy and whether they meet the criteria of a good test, we move on to evaluate the BAC tests.

## **VI-2- The BAC Exams**

### **VI-2-1- Definition**

The BAC exams are national and official exams designed by the National Ministry of Education to evaluate the third year secondary school students' work and this at the end of the year of study. The students who pass the exam will have right to carry on their studies at the university.

### **VI-2-2-Overall Description**

The BAC exams are made up of two parts. The first part is called "*Reading*" which in its turn includes two sections. The first section is named "*Comprehension*" and it purports to assess the students' comprehension of the text. The second section is entitled "*Text Exploration*" and it relates to lexis, grammar, phonetics and other language forms. The second part, on the other hand, is called "*Written Expression*" and it is principally designed to assess the students' competencies in writing. Such a part is always made up of two topics. The student should choose only one topic.

### **VI-2-3- The Corresponding Level of the Items in Bloom's Taxonomy**

The corresponding level of the "*Comprehension*" section items of the BAC exams in Bloom's taxonomy is generally the second level; that is, "*Comprehension*" as the following examples illustrate:

**1) Circle the letter that corresponds to the right answer. The text is**

*a- prescriptive    b- argumentative    c- narrative    d- expository*

(BAC, June 2008).

**2) Choose a title for the reading text**

*a) International Cooperation*

*b) Medical Business*

*c) Counterfeit Medicines* (BAC, June 2009).

The above two examples check the students' understanding of the text. Such testing is neither challenging nor reliable; the students can respond easily through guessing. As a result, the items lack reliability and construct validity; because they do not require the students to deal with activities which turn around tasks that help them understand how language functions in real- life situations; that is the activities have no communicative value, something which makes them gravitate more towards traditional testing whose lack of reliability and focus on structure are the main tenets. Therefore, the test designers should avoid testing comprehension through such activities which do not at all indicate that the student is going to solve a problem in reading comprehension. Put differently, they (test designers) should develop questions which really ask the students to prove their understanding of the text by making inferences and drawing conclusions.

In addition, there are “true false” items which are used to check the students' understanding of the text as the following examples show:

***Are the following statements true or false? Write “T” or “F” to the corresponding sentence letter.***

- a) The risks of counterfeit medicines are seriously taken into consideration.*
- b) Developing countries are suffering a lot from infectious diseases.*
- c) Governments should protect people from counterfeit products.*
- d) The WHO, WCO, and Interpol efforts are insufficient (BAC, June 2009).*

***Are the following statements true or false? Justify the false ones.***

- a-Very few students in England and Wales go to private schools.*
- b-In state schools, parents must pay for everything.*
- c-Most of the primary schools are mixed sex.*
- d-At the age of 11 children go to comprehensive schools or grammar schools (BAC, June 2008).*

The above activities correspond to the second instructional level of Bloom's taxonomy; that is “*comprehension*”. As mentioned so far this kind of activities reflect the traditional methods of testing which mainly neglect activities related to language functions and problem-

solving. As a result, the exams remain unchallenging and the students respond to the questions without really solving any learning problem.

As regards the activities which correspond to the “*knowledge*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy we find the following matching-items:

***Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of their final ‘s’.***

*[medicines — ingredients — controls — diseases]*

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/

( BAC, June 2009).

***Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of their final ‘s’.***

*a. schools      b. ingredients —      c. parents      d. preferences*

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/

(BAC, June 2008).

The above two activities require the students to classify words according to the pronunciation of their final ‘s’ and they correspond to the “*knowledge*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy, for they deal with recall of phonetics items. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that such activities lack reliability because they are subject of guessing; that is, the student can get the whole mark allotted to the activity without really knowing the rule to follow in solving such a problem. Therefore, even if the student manages to respond to the activity this does not automatically mean that he/ she has knowledge of the item being tested. As a result, testing pronunciation should be done through speech or at least through phonetic transcription which indicates if the student knows the rule or not.

Additionally, the BAC tests include constructed-response formats which correspond to the “*comprehension*” level of Bloom’s taxonomy, for they measure the students’ understanding of the text. The following are illustrative examples:



**1) Answer the following questions according to the text.**

- a) Why can't some counterfeit medicines cure diseases?
- b) What can wrong ingredients cause?
- c) What must multilateral organizations do? (BAC, June 2009).

**2) Answer the following questions according to the text.**

- a) Is education in public schools free?
- b) Are comprehensive schools selective?
- c) What's the difference between primary and grammar schools?

(BAC, June 2008).

The above two activities require the students to construct answers themselves through 'yes/no' or 'WH' questions. Such activities are more reliable than multiple-choice items because they require the students to draw inferences by understanding the meaning of the text and more precisely the passage where the answer is to be found. However, in the case of 'yes/no' questions there is a threat of guesswork because the student is not required to justify his/her answer. Therefore, these 'yes/no' questions are unreliable and they, as a result, affect the validity of the exam. As a solution to this insufficiency the test makers are invited to ask students to justify their answers in order to prove their real understanding and performance.

Moreover, we find the completion-items which mainly test recall of information and which correspond to the "knowledge" level in Bloom's taxonomy. The following is an illustrative activity:

**2) Complete the following chart as shown in the examples.**

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Adjective</i>
<i>Example: civilize</i>	<i>civilization</i>	<i>civilized</i>
.....	<i>introduction</i>	.....
.....	.....	<i>dedicated</i>
<i>persevere</i>	.....	.....

(BAC, June 2010).

The above activity can claim reliability and it is a challenging activity in word-formation and lexis. The students are required to construct the answer themselves and any student who

responds to the activity can claim knowledge of the item. However, it would be better if the students have not been given examples because these examples can help the students deduce the answer something which reduces the reliability of the items.

Besides, belonging to *constructed-response formats* that can be found in the BAC tests are ordering items. The following examples are activities that illustrate the case:

***Reorder the following ideas according to their occurrence in the text.***

- a- Few of children go to private schools.*
- b- Grammar schools are not mixed sex.*
- c- Children go first to primary then the comprehensive or grammar schools.*
- d- The majority of the pupils in the UK go to state schools.*

(BAC, June 2008).

The above activity requires the students to order the sentences just for the sake of ordering. Put differently, the activity is not tapping into any kind of knowledge and it is unreliable. In addition, it seems to be completely unchallenging because it is a matter of a mechanical drill that does not require any kind of creativity or intelligence. Moreover, it should be stated that the corresponding level of ordering activities in Bloom's taxonomy is normally "*synthesis*" but this is not the case of this activity. Hence, the test designers are required to avoid such kind of mechanical drills especially the unreliable and invalid ones which do not indicate the real performance of the students and which do not predict about their future performance.

Furthermore, gap-filling items are also used in the BAC exams. The following is an illustrative example:

***Fill in each gap with one word from the list below.***

*[Counterfeiting — it — to — people]*

*Counterfeiting is not limited to medicines only....1.....is also affecting other products like clothes and food. Thanks....2.....some associations.....3.....have become aware of the dangerous effects of.....4.....* (BAC, June 2009).

This gap-filling activity seems to be an item which gravitates more towards selected-response formats than towards constructed-response formats. To be more precise, it would be better if the students have not been given the list of words from which to choose the answers. Yet, it is possible to say that such an activity corresponds to the “*synthesis*” level in Bloom’s taxonomy because in order to respond correctly to the item without relying on guessing the student should relate the whole parts of the activity in a coherent way.

The last but not the least type of *testing* items that are included in the BAC tests is composition writing. Indeed, in the second part of the BAC exams; that is, “*Written Expression*” the students are required to write a composition on a given topic. There are always two different topics and the students should opt only for one. This case can be made clearer by the following example:

***Write a composition of 100 words on one of the following topics. Choose Either Topic One:***

*Education in poor countries is in a very bad situation. Write a composition explaining:*

- a) The causes ( poverty, poorly equipped schools...)*
- b) The effects ( illiteracy, delinquency...)*
- c) Suggestions ( collect money to build schools, recruit teachers...)*

***Or topic two:***

*A group of students from Great Britain are visiting your school soon. Your teacher of English has asked you to write a document to inform the visitors about the secondary school education in Algeria: the different streams, the subject matters and exams (BAC, June 2008).*

As it has been mentioned earlier essay writing is among the tasks which deal with performance assessment and with integrative language testing. Put another way, the student should convey his/her ideas in a good English respecting both content and structure. Indeed, such “Written Expression” part included in the BAC tests will effectively inform the test designers and the assessors about the students’ abilities in combining different language elements to form a cohesive and a coherent written passage. Accordingly, it is to the

“synthesis” level of the Bloom’s taxonomy that this part of the BAC exams corresponds. However, it should be mentioned that the first topic where the students have been given hints and guidelines is easier than the second; as a result, it is less challenging and less reliable than the second topic. Therefore, it would be better to test students on composition writing without providing them with hints.

#### **VI-2-4- Discussion**

Among the testing items adopted in the BAC tests we find multiple-choice, true-false, and matching-items. All these types subscribe under *discrete-point* testing or in other terms they are *closed-ended tests* whose main characteristic is “*that the testees themselves do not have to formulate answers*” (Els *et al*, 1984: 322).

So far, we mentioned that such tests can be scored objectively and easily and take little time to administer, yet they are threat of guessing. Being so, the student can take a gamble on the right answer. Indeed, Hopkins (1980) remarks that “*somebody who has only partly mastered the material can still obtain a high score by eliminating the incorrect answers*”. (quoted in Els *et al*, 1984: 322). Also, it should be remembered that *discrete-point testing* mainly focus on testing language structures separately and they do not tap into the students’ communicative competence (Jacobs, 1981: 3). Yet, such testing formats are the dominant in the BAC exams and this represents one of the most remarkable drawbacks of the BAC tests. To remediate such insufficiency, Carroll (1980: 35) suggests that “*closed-ended tests should only be used on a limited scale*” (cited in Els *et al*, 1984: 322).

*Restricted- response items* are also to be found in the BAC exams. Here, the answers are formulated by the students themselves. The shortness and the predictability of these tests make them objective and easy to score (ibid: 322, 323). With reference to BAC tests, we note that it is the “*short answer*” and the “*completion or blank-filling*” activities which belong to

this type. Unlike closed-ended tests, restricted response tests are more reliable and provide the testers with more information about the testees' learning abilities, for requiring the students to formulate the answers themselves and thus avoiding guesswork. However, it should be remembered that there are many restricted-response items that are included in the BAC tests and which lack both reliability and validity.

The second part of the BAC tests; "*Written Expression*" deals with *open-ended items*. In this context, Phy (2006: 112) states that "*the students are asked to produce answers of different lengths from short answers to full essays*". Here the student can argue, exemplify, interpret, etc. In a nutshell, he/she can express his/her ideas in a more communicative way. However our analysis of the BEM and BAC exams reveals that stress is put on guided writing activities rather than on free ones. In other words, the students are in all cases provided with guidelines and hints as for example introductory sentences. Such a way of testing does not bring the students to a point to use their intellectual faculties as imagination and creativity effectively.

As the students' answers in open-ended tests can vary, it is then essential that "*criteria for acceptable responses must be specified and applied consistently by judges*" (ibid). Making the idea more plausible and clearer, Els *et al.* write about open-ended tests:

One problem in these types of tests is of course comparability: responses may vary quite considerably. Open-ended tests may be made more reliable by standardizing tasks, and by using explicit criteria in rating (1984: 223).

The formats of the BAC tests make them conventional; such tests have nearly the same formats before and after the Algerian educational reform. Indeed, the BAC of 1998 is similar to the BAC exams designed after 2002 except that the latter includes items of phonetics. Such a reality is illustrated in the appendixes about BAC tests.

As regards the practicality, reliability, and validity of BAC tests, we can assert that the BAC tests are practical. Except the '*Written Expression*' part, they can be scored easily and

objectively. In addition, even though multiple-choice items are difficult to administer (ibid), this fact does not have a considerable effect on the practicality of the tests which remain in their whole easy to administer. This makes us see that the effect of the BAC tests' format on their practicality is very noticeable.

As far as the BAC tests' reliability is concerned, our evaluation reveals that they lack this criterion. This fact is principally due to the nature of the questions which are in their majority object of guessing with the exception of the '*Written Expression*' where the students can be creative and show their mastery of different language items; spelling, grammar, vocabulary, etc. The rest of the tests will not provide results which really reflect the students' level. This drawback can be avoided by making sure that the BAC tests do not include '*guesswork*' activities.

Coming up to the validity of the BAC tests, our discussion of such a criterion covers the different types of validity. First of all and with relation to content validity, it appears clearly that the students are tested on items that are to be found in 3AS syllabus and in 3AS textbook; *New Prospects*. Hence, the BAC tests can claim content validity. Secondly, the face validity criterion is not met by the BAC tests especially in the pronunciation activities which do not really measure the students' knowledge of such a skill in a relevant way. In other words, claiming that a student has a good pronunciation he/she should show this verbally or through effective transcription and not through guesswork activities. Finally and speaking about construct validity, the BAC tests cannot claim this criterion because the tests do not reflect the essential components and aspects of the theory of communicative competence on which the teaching/ learning process should be based, hence the assessment process. Accordingly, the BAC tests lack construct validity unless they test the students' competencies in communicating in real-life situations.

Moreover, the BAC tests items generally correspond to the three levels in the Bloom's taxonomy; that is, "*knowledge*", "*comprehension*", and "*synthesis*". The «*knowledge*» level which turns around recall of information is mainly found in the "*Text Exploration*" section. The "*comprehension*" level relates to the questions which check the students' understanding of the text. As regards the "*synthesis*" level, it principally deals with the second part of the BAC tests; that is, '*Written Expression*'. Therefore, it seems clear that the BAC tests do not deal with the rest of Bloom's taxonomy levels as "*application*", "*analysis*", and "*evaluation*". Such a reality shows one of the biggest drawbacks of the BAC tests. That is to say it is high time to design tests which do not only focus on the recall of information but which rather tap into the students' capacities in analysing, applying rules in new situations, and evaluating as well. Last but not least, it seems that the BAC tests can be easily understood by the students and this is a remarkable strength. Indeed, the students will not meet difficulties to better handle with the meaning of the questions.

In a nutshell, we can say that the BAC tests have their strengths and weaknesses. And the negative features we mentioned above can be remediated by improving the format, the reliability, and the validity of the tests and this by reducing or 'avoiding' emphasis on selected-response items and designing challenging activities which deal with higher-order skills. Similarly, there should be communicative BAC tests so that the construct validity criteria will be met by so important exams and the students will be motivated to better focus on the oral performance.

### **VI-3- Suggestions and Hints for Effective Testing**

If we intend to test the students effectively, we should construct effective tests that will tap into their real language abilities. To reach such an aim, the tests formats and content should be well elaborated. Put another way, the format of the test should be favourable for assessing "*reasoning strategies*" and the "*depth of understanding*", rather than emphasizing

the simplest recall of information, and mechanical drills (Phy, 1997: 112). For this sake, the test samples should include questions which ask for interpretations, explanation, justification, and reasoning, and higher-order thinking as New Mann states: *“The best activities challenge students not just to locate and reproduce information but to interpret, analyze, or manipulate information in response to a question or problem”* (New Mann, 1995 cited in Phy, 1997: 351).

As we have seen earlier, it is the *open-ended formats* which ask the students to construct this kind of answers. In addition, the tests can include questions which accurately indicate the students’ strengths and weaknesses in handling with discrete-point items. However, this guess work should be avoided and such format should not receive the lion’s share in the test. Moreover, the test should stress to learners the importance of using language for useful oral communication in real life situations rather than sticking to use language exclusively for writing within the classroom context. This point diametrically relates to the construction of communicative language tests or performance assessment. Indeed, as Wiggins puts it *“Our ability to perform with knowledge can therefore be assessed as we produce some work of our own”* (1993: 209). The rationale of designing such a type of tests is that the teaching approach adopted in Algeria is the CLT whose core aim is to enable the learners to become communicatively competent. Also, if there are oral tests the teachers will be obliged to focus well on teaching speaking which implies that if speaking is not tested teachers won’t pay attention to it. Speaking about the necessity of oral examination Ur states:

I think that oral testing is worth the investment: not so much for the sake of the overall validity of the proficiency test of which it is part, as for the sake of the backwash. An example: some years ago an oral component was introduced into the Israeli school-leaving exam, with a 20 % weighting in the final grade; the immediate effect was a very noticeable rise in the emphasis on oral work in school classrooms and a corresponding improvement in learners’ speaking skills (Ur, 1996: 135).



If Penny Ur considers oral testing as a necessity and as a very strong tool in supporting and motivating the students to be efficiently interested in learning speaking, we can assert that such kind of tests will also oblige the teachers to improve their level in speaking because they should get the required qualities in assessing the students speaking abilities, something which solve one of the biggest problems in implementing such kinds of tests; lack of proficient assessors of speaking.

Additionally, it is important to remember that any test should be understandable; the questions should be stated in a simple lexis and in a concise manner that facilitate the students the task of devoting their time to answer the questions rather than spending much time considering their sense ( Jacobs *et al*, 1981: 13). Furthermore, it is advisable to test the students only on one topic. That is, if the students have a choice of topics they will probably spend much time to choose which one to do. As far as the content of the tests is concerned, the test planners are required to design tests which ask the students what they learned in the classroom in a manner to avoid making them (the tests) too hard or too easy as well as the time allotted to the test is sufficient.

All in all, the simplest way to sum up the potential harm of the BEM and BAC tests is to say that they do not require students to do tasks which prepare them for real uses of knowledge in context or the “know-how-to-do”. Hence the negative wash back on teaching. Nonetheless, we can start making our tests good by keeping in mind that the aim of education is to help the individual become a competent intellectual performer and an efficient learner, not a person whose principle concern is the reproduction of knowledge and the completion of drilled skills.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we dealt with the BEM and the BAC tests. More precisely, we examined the corresponding level of their activities or items in Bloom's taxonomy. In addition, we have spoken about the practicality, the reliability, and the validity of both tests and we mentioned how the BEM and the BAC tests do not meet one of the most important requirements of a good test and which is "*construct validity*" and this is due to the fact that the BEM and BAC tests are mainly of a written mode and they do not check the students communicative abilities, something which should be their principal aim. Finally, at the end of this chapter we provided suggestions for an effective testing and which deal with hints and guidelines to follow before, during, and after the exam without neglecting the pivotal aspect which relates to the tests per se and which address the issue of constructing tests which meet the necessary requirements.

## General Conclusion

In its theoretical part, the research provided a description of the most basic concepts and elements related to the field of language assessment. This descriptive part shed light on the different definitions of assessment, its types, its purposes, and the techniques to follow in carrying out such a task, etc. In addition, it looked at the terminology related to testing as well as the “Mastery Learning Approach” and “Bloom’s Taxonomy”. Moreover, within the practical part of the study we evaluated the assessment area of the Middle School Syllabuses. Moreover, we examined the teaching procedure and the assessment areas of the Middle School textbooks and the two Secondary School course books; *Getting Through* and *New Prospects*. Similarly, we looked at and examined the BEM and BAC test samples. Indeed, we evaluated their items and the corresponding levels of such items in Bloom’s taxonomy. Our survey of such didactic materials revealed positive and negative features.

On the positive side and starting with the Middle School syllabuses, it appears that the latter put a considerable emphasis on the importance of assessment and more specifically on the necessity of assessing the students’ achievement not only summatively but formatively as well. Such emphasis clearly mirrors the principles of the Competency-Based Language Teaching and the learner-centred approach; because, speaking of formative assessment also means speaking of self-and peer assessment. In addition, a set of assessment criteria of the four language skills are implemented in the syllabuses. Last but in no way least, being task-based is another positive aspect of the syllabuses.

Nonetheless, many insufficiencies also characterize the syllabuses. First of all, the syllabuses do not include clear guidelines about formative assessment and particularly about self-and peer assessment. Secondly, no specific and corresponding assessment criteria for each year of study are provided in the syllabuses. Put another way, it is not suitable to design the same assessment criteria for the four Middle School years. Otherwise, this fact indicates

that the teaching/ learning process is static, which is unacceptable at all. And as a remediation, we have stressed the importance of designing varied assessment criteria; each deals with the corresponding year of study. Additionally, the absence of a well elaborated assessment grading system in the syllabuses makes part of their drawbacks. Finally, no hints about the BEM exams are to be found in the syllabuses.

As regards the Middle School textbooks and beginning with their strengths, we note that such teaching materials include sections dealing with assessment. In more precise terms, they provide teachers with an important number of activities at the end of each unit of instruction to measure the students' performance. More importantly and following a general evaluative way, the Middle School textbooks with the exception of *Spotlight on English One* present the language items to be learned within a context.

As concerns the Middle School textbooks weak aspects, we note that it is the three Ps approach which is implemented in the textbooks and not the three Ts approach. Also, the assessment activities included in the textbooks are designed in a summative way and this will not provide teachers with accurate information about the learners' learning ability in an ongoing way, nor will it support the teaching/learning process. Above all, the 'Check' sections of the textbooks overemphasize discrete-point items which mainly correspond to the "knowledge" level in Blooms taxonomy. Put another way, the textbooks only include very few activities which correspond, for example, to the "synthesis" level in Bloom's taxonomy. As a result, this will not bring the learners to a point where they become communicatively competent, for the aim of Communicative Language Teaching goes far beyond manipulating structural drills. Also, the learners will not effectively develop divergent thinking through analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This fact, as we mentioned earlier, lead us to stress the importance of developing course books-linked achievement tests. Such tests should motivate the students to focus more on language functions without neglecting the structure. The tests,

too, should include performance-based assessment which can greatly help the students move from competence to the actual use of language in meaningful situations and activities which correspond to the advanced levels in Bloom's taxonomy as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. More explicitly, the nature of the Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBALT), or the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) whose focus is communicative competence requires the teaching materials writers to develop specific communicative tests which provide the teachers with information about their students' ability to perform in the target language in real-world situations because at times the students' competence should go beyond those classroom-specific tasks.

As to the Secondary School textbooks; *Getting Through* and *New Prospects*, we can claim that the textbooks include some principles of the Mastery Learning approach as, for example, the implementation of explicit instructional parts in the textbooks followed by activities which take the form of formative assessment. Additionally, the textbooks assessment areas which are exclusively related to self-assessment strongly motivate the students and make them feel more responsible as they have been given the opportunity to assess their own work. Besides, such a characteristic spotlight the important place accorded to the constructivist learning theory in the textbooks. But, it should also be highlighted that the way the '*learning logs*' are implemented in the course books do not really represent an assessment which helps the students move forward; because, they include too many items which means that too much time is required to deal with in an efficient way. Clearly, as stated earlier, the textbooks should include a battery of tests especially *New Prospects* which is designed for the students preparing for the BAC exams.

In the last chapter of our study which dealt with the evaluation of the BEM and BAC tests, we found out that the tests include good and bad features. Starting with the positive aspects of the BEM and BAC tests, our examination reveals that they meet the criteria of 'content

validity' and at a certain point 'face validity'. In addition, they are understandable; that is, the students can easily understand the tests. On the other hand, our evaluation also shows that many weaknesses characterize the BEM and BAC exams. First, the tests lack 'construct validity' as they do not tap into the assessment of the students' communicative competence through oral examination. Second, the tests designers focus more on discrete-point items or on selected-response formats as multiple-choice, true-false, and matching items. As a result, BEM and BAC tests are subject of unreliability. That is to say the students can in many occasions answer by simply guessing. Moreover, the majority of the BEM and BAC items correspond to the "knowledge" and "comprehension" levels in Bloom's taxonomy and nearly only the "Written Expression" part of the exams which correspond to the "synthesis" level of the taxonomy. Finally and in order to remediate the weaknesses of such so important tests, we provided hints about effective testing.

Last but not least, even though the teaching materials we evaluated reveal many weaknesses we strongly confirm that the Algerian educational reform is a giant leap towards an effective improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in our country. Also, we hope that our research will be a valuable means of communicating within the field of education and more specifically within the domain of language assessment. Also, we hope that it will stimulate further thought and research on educational problems.

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# APPENDIXES

## Appendix: A

### Self-Assessment Strategies adopted from the Accompanying Documents of MS2 Syllabus (87, 89).

The Strategies as Borrowed from Meireieu	Translation
<p>▪En ce qui concerne les outils de mes apprentissages, je peux:</p> <p><b>a</b>-Faire un schéma;</p> <p><b>b</b>-reformuler par écrit une explication</p> <p><b>c</b>-parler avant d'écrire;</p> <p><b>d</b>-souligner;</p> <p><b>e</b>-illustrer;</p> <p><b>f</b>-découper et reconstituer;</p> <p><b>g</b>-m'accompagner par des gestes, etc.</p>	<p>▪As concerns my learning tools, I can:</p> <p><b>a</b>-make an outline;</p> <p><b>b</b>-reformulate an explanation in writing;</p> <p><b>c</b>-speak before writing;</p> <p><b>d</b>-underline;</p> <p><b>e</b>-illustrate;</p> <p><b>f</b>-divide and form sentences;</p> <p><b>g</b>-use gestures, etc.</p>
<p>▪En ce qui concerne les démarches, je peux:</p> <p><b>a</b>-analyser chaque élément pour comprendre l'ensemble;</p> <p><b>b</b>-prendre connaissance de l'ensemble avant de revenir à chaque élément;</p> <p><b>c</b>-rechercher le rapprochement avec les mots connus;</p> <p><b>d</b>-chercher des objections;</p> <p><b>e</b>-chercher des analogies avec des questions ou des problèmes de même type;</p> <p><b>f</b>-partir de l'exercice avant d'entreprendre la leçon;</p> <p><b>g</b>-chercher moi-même des exercices d'application à la leçon, etc.</p>	<p>▪As for the learning processes, I can:</p> <p><b>a</b>-analyse each element to understand the whole;</p> <p><b>b</b>-analyse the whole to understand each element;</p> <p><b>c</b>-establish semantic relations between words;</p> <p><b>d</b>-look for objections;</p> <p><b>e</b>-drew analogies between questions or issues belonging to the same category;</p> <p><b>f</b>-start with an exercise before undertaking the lesson;</p> <p><b>g</b>-look for exercises applicable to the lesson, etc.</p>
<p>▪En ce qui concerne le degré de directivité, je peux:</p> <p><b>a</b>-commencer un travail sans planification préalable;</p> <p><b>b</b>-me faire un plan de travail très précis;</p> <p><b>c</b>-m'interroger régulièrement pour des vérification partielles;</p> <p><b>d</b>-ne pas m'interrompre avant d'avoir terminé, etc.</p>	<p>▪As for the straightforwardness of my work, I Can:</p> <p><b>a</b>-start my work without a previous planning;</p> <p><b>b</b>-outlining my work;</p> <p><b>c</b>-ask myself regularly for potential checks;</p> <p><b>d</b>-do my work until I finish it, etc.</p>
<p>▪En ce qui concerne mes rapport avec les autres, je peux:</p> <p><b>a</b>-travailler seul;</p> <p><b>b</b>-confronter de temps en temps mon interprétation à</p>	<p>▪As regards my relations with other students, I can:</p> <p><b>a</b>-work alone;</p> <p><b>b</b>-compare my interpretation with that of my</p>



celle d'autrui; c-travailler longuement avec quelqu'un d-demander à quelqu'un de faire une critique systématique de mon travail; e-alternier des temps de travail personnel avec des temps de confrontation collective, etc.	classmates; c-work with others for a long time; d-ask somebody to criticise my work systematically; e-alternate time for a personal work with time of a collective work, etc.
▪En ce qui concerne ma gestion de temps, je peux: a-engager mon travail tout de suite;  b-laisser murir ma réflexion; c-recueillir beaucoup d'informations avant d'agir; d-commencer à agir et recueillir des informations au fur et à mesure; e-travailler longuement sur le même objectif, etc.	▪As regards the management of my time, I can: a-start my work as quickly as possible; b-let my reflection nurture; c-collect data before starting my work; d-start collecting data step by step;  e-work on the same subject for a long time, etc.

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## Appendix: B (The learning objectives of the first files of the textbooks)

### Spotlight on English: Book Two

#### **File One: A PERSON'S PROFILE**

***In this file you're going to learn how to:***

##### ***Sequence 1***

- describe a person's physical appearance,
- revise the present simple,
- use adjectives to describe a person,
- discriminate between the final sounds: [s], [z] and [iz],
- use a dictionary

##### ***Sequence 2***

- talk about a person's life,
- revise the past simple,
- use ordinal and cardinal numbers,
- discriminate between the final sounds: [t], [d] and [id],

##### ***Sequence 3***

- write a biography,
- use the past simple with ago,
- revise the present continuous,
- ask and answer about possession,
- discriminate between (s') short form of third person, of "to be" and (s') sign of possessive case.

#### **For Your Project**

**You and your friends are going to write a famous person's profile:**

- Physical description

- life

- career (Spotlight on English: Book Two, Page: 7).

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## Spotlight on English: Book Three

### **FILE 1: COMMUNICATIONS**

#### ***PREVIEW***

#### ***Sequence One: Hello Again!***

*Greetings.*

*Introducing someone.*

*Partings.*

*Describing personality.*

*Describing physical appearance (order of adjectives)*

#### ***Sequence Two: Who's Calling, please?***

*Making and answering requests.*

*Asking for clarification.*

*Making apologies and giving explanations.*

*Responding to an advertisement.*

*Writing to thank you note.*

#### ***Sequence Three: What's on?***

*Talking about likes and dislikes.*

*Expressing emotions.*

*Expressing preferences.*

*Inviting and accepting/ declining invitations.*

*Talking/ writing about points and periods of time.*

#### ***Snapshots of Culture***

#### ***Activate Your English***

#### ***Where Do We Stand Now?***

*Project Round-up*

*Language Summary*

*Test Yourself*

*Learning Log*

***Project:*** A wall sheet about greetings (Spotlight on English: Book Three, Page: 15).

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## On the Move

### ***File One: IT'S MY TREAT***

#### ***Preview***

***In this file you will learn the following:***

#### **●Language Learning**

##### ***1. Functions:***

*Making suppositions*

*Seeking agreement*

*Giving instructions/warning/advice*

*Carrying out a procedure*

*Asking for and giving information*

## **2. Grammar**

*Tag questions*

*The imperative (consolidation)*

*Sequencers (consolidation)*

*Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives (consolidation)*

## **3. Words and sounds**

*Vocabulary related to street directions*

*Vocabulary related to food, cooking and eating*

*Short and long vowel sounds /I/ and /i/*

*Vowel sounds /I/ and /i/*

*Silent letters*

*Rising and falling intonation in tag questions*

## **●Skills Building**

### **1. Primary skills**

*Listening for gist*

*Listening for specific information*

*Predicting and checking predictions in written and 'spoken' texts*

*Reading and making inferences*

*Writing instructions, a menu, a recipe...*

*Distinguishing between fact and opinion in a text*

*Checking and interpreting food labels*

### **2. Social skills**

*Dining out*

*Talking about meal times*

*Giving a recipe to a guest*

*Advertising a restaurant*

*Writing a letter of invitation*

**PROJECT:** Designing and advertising a leaflet for a restaurant (On the Move: 16).

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## **Getting Through**

### **Unit 1: SIGNS OF THE TIME**

**In this unit, you will learn the following:**

#### **I- DISCOVERING LANGUAGE**

##### **A. Grammar:**

- Semi-modal used to
- Present simple tense
- Going to and the present progressive
- Will-future
- Modals may, might....
- Relative pronouns
- Link words: in contrast to/by contrast...
- The comparative and the superlatives

##### **B. Pronunciation:**

- Comma pauses
- Vowels and diphthongs
- Sounds alike ( homonyms/homophones)

##### **C. Vocabulary:**

- Suffixes -ic, ical, -ism
- Words related to food, clothes....

## II- DEVELOPING SKILLS

### A. Functions:

- Narrating
- Predicting
- Expressing certainty and doubt
- Talking about plans and intentions

### B. Skills:

- Reading for specific information and general ideas
- Listening for specific information and general ideas
- Writing a policy statement
- Writing a word map using suffixes
- Writing a short essay using comparison and contrast
- Writing a slogan

## III- PROJECT

*Making a Life Styles Profile (Getting Through: 14).*

## Appendix: C (Taken from Grammar References of the Textbooks)

### On the Move

#### 1● Tag Questions

-**Intonation** is very important in tag questions. We can have four types of tag questions.

**Negative** tag questions with a raising tone. You'll come tomorrow, won't you? ↗

**Negative** tag questions with a falling tone. It's beautiful day, isn't it? ↘

**Positive** tag questions with a raising tone. They didn't succeed, did they? ↗

**Positive** tag questions with a falling tone. She hasn't passed her exam, has she? ↘

#### Meaning and use

If the tag question has a **raising tone** ↗, I am asking the question because "I really don't know the answer. So I expect the listener to answer my question with **yes** or **no**. Example: "They were working hard, weren't they?" "No, they weren't."

If the tag question has a **falling tone** ↘ it means that I am sure about what I said. So I expect the listener to agree with me.

Example: "She is doing a good job, isn't she?" "I totally agree with you." ↘

**Note:** 1- After **let's** ... the tag question is **shall we?** E.g., let's go for a walk, shall we? 2- After the imperative (do, don't do something, the tag is **will you?** E.g. Stop shouting **will you?** –Don't be late, **will you?** (*On the Move*: 176).

#### 2● The Imperative

##### Form

- To form imperatives, we use the base form of the verb i.e., the infinitive without to. The command is given to you (singular or plural). In the third person commands, the base is preceded by let and followed by me/him/her/it/us/them.

Positive command	Negative command
-Go out. -Come here, please! -Let me/him/her/us/them/it see!	Don't go out! Don't come here! Don't let me/him/her/us/them/it see!

## Meaning

We use the imperative to give orders, commands, instructions, advice and directions, and also to make suggestions, requests and invitations.

Sentences with imperatives	Situations and meanings
1. <b>Help</b> yourself to more soup. —————→	(A host to guest) Offer
2. <b>Come</b> to celebrate Becky's birthday. —————→	(A friend to a friend) Invitation
3. <b>Take</b> a table twice a day before meals. —————→	(A doctor to his/her patient) Instructions
4. <b>Go</b> straight ahead and turn right. —————→	(A passer-by to another passer-by)
5. <b>Take</b> it easy and <b>have</b> some fun. —————→	Directions Suggesting and reassuring (A friend to a friend)
6. <b>Don't be</b> silly! —————→	A negative command (a mother to her child)
7. <b>Move on!</b> —————→	(A policeman to onlookers) Order
8. <b>Keep off</b> the grass. —————→	A positive command (public notice)

(*On the Move*: 177).

## 3•Comparatives of Adjectives

### I- Comparatives of equality

#### A. Comparative of positive equality: as + adjective + as

Your house is **as big as** your neighbour's.

This exercise is **as difficult as** the one we did yesterday.

#### B. Comparatives of negative equality: not + as/so + adjective + as

The Thames is **not as long as** the Nile.

(= The Nile is longer than the Thames.)

### II- Comparatives of superiority

To compare two things, two animals, two people etc., we use the following comparative forms:

#### Adjective + er - More + adjective

A. We use Adjective + er + than in the following cases:

##### a. Adjectives of one syllable:

The Nile is longer than the Thames.

It is hotter in the Sahara desert than in the Gobi desert.

##### b. Adjectives ending with -y, w, or -le

My satchel is heavier than yours.

This street is narrower than that one over there.

Your teacher is gentler than mine. = Your teacher is gentler than mine.

B. We use more + adjective + than with adjectives which have more than two syllables.

A meal in a restaurant is more expensive than a sandwich.

### III. Comparatives of inferiority

We use adjective + less + than with all adjectives

A sandwich is **less** expensive **than** a meal in a restaurant.

## 4•Superlatives of Adjectives

### I. Superlatives of superiority

#### Form

To compare three or more things, animals, people etc. and pick out one thing , one animal, or one person as being more “superior” to all others we use the following superlative forms of adjectives:

**The + adjectives + -est + in/of.....**

**The + most + adjectives + in/of ....**

I have three brothers. I am **the oldest** and **the tallest of** them all.

**The most difficult** subject in school is Mathematics.

### II. Superlative adjectives of inferiority

Form: the least + adjective + in/of

**The least careful** driver in my family is my father (*On the Move*: 188, 189).

## Getting Through

### 1• Semi-modal: Used to

#### Form

**Used + to + infinitive**

**Used to is the same in all persons**

#### Meaning and use

1▪ **Used + verb** refers to a **habit** in the **past**.

Examples:

**I used to** believe in ghosts; but now I don't believe in them any longer. I know they don't exist.

2▪ **Used to** also refers to past situations/states that no longer exist.

Examples:

She **used to** study in Ibn Badis Middle School, but now she studies in Lala Fadhma N'Soumer *Lycée*.

This room is now a reading room of the school library. It **used to** be a canteen (*Getting Through*: 187).

3▪ **Used to** has **no** present simple tense. So if you want to refer to a habit in the present, you must use the simple present.

Example:

I ~~use~~ **to get** up early = I'm in the habit of getting early (**habit in the present**) (*Getting Through*: 187).

## 2● The present simple tense

### I- Form

Affirmative	Interrogative	Negative
I/we/you/they/the Children like fashion. He/she/the child likes fashion. The cat /it likes pet food.	Do I/we/you/they/the children like fashion? Does he/she like fashion? Does the cat/it like pet food?	I/we/you/they/the children don't like traditional clothes. He/she/it doesn't like traditional clothes. The cat/it doesn't like cold water.

### II- Meaning and use

#### We use the simple present when we:

- talk about **habitual actions**. e.g., I generally wake up at 7 on weekdays and at weekends.
- talk about permanent truths. e. g., Uncle Hassen works in a factory.
- make future references to timetable. E.g., The conference begins at 8.30 next Saturday.
- make declarations. e.g., I love you. I wish you full success.
- give instructions. E.g., You go straight ahead.
- Say how often we do things. e.g. I regularly go for a check-up. (Getting Through: 188).

### 3●Will or going to?

In English, we often use will and going to speak about future actions. But there is a clear difference in their uses.

#### A. The different uses of will/shall

Will/shall is used in the following ways:

1. making predictions(i.e., talking about something we know, or expect, will happen) e.g., It' ll be stormy tomorrow. There will be heavy rain in some areas. (weather forecast)
2. expressing a decision about the immediate future.  
e.g., 'Which T-shirt do you want?' 'I'll take the green one, please.'
3. making offers "my head hurts." "I will fetch you an aspirin."
4. giving orders/making requests  
e.g., Come here, will you? Will you take your seat please.
5. making suggestions: It's sunny. Shall we go out?

#### B. Be + going to + verb

1. This form is usually used to talk about pre-arranged plans or intentions. The decision has been made before the moment of speaking.

e.g. 'Do you remember the dress I was talking about?

Yes. Are you going to buy it? (Not ~~will you buy it?~~)

2. It is also used to talk about something that will happen in the future and for which we have present evidence.

e.g., It's going to rain. ('I can see the clouds.') (Getting Through: 189).

## 4● Modals may/might/could

### Forms of may and its functions

Forms	Functions
Bashir is absent. He <b>may be</b> ill	Possibility
It <b>will</b> rain tomorrow in the North of Wales. (Weather forecast)	Prediction (sure)
It <b>may</b> rain tomorrow. The sky is <u>a little bit cloudy</u> today.	Future possibility (not sure)
It <b>might/could</b> rain tomorrow, but there are <u>no clouds in the sky</u> .	Remote possibility (less sure)
I haven't done well in the exams. I <b>may not</b> ( <del>mayn't</del> ) pass.	Negative of may (possibility)
May I/we go out?	Asking for permission
Yes, you <b>may</b>	Giving permission
No you <b>may not</b> / No, you can't.	Refusing permission
Don't eat lot of sugar; you <b>might/could</b> have diabetes.	Expressing a warning
"I'm not good at maths." "Well, you <b>might/could</b> revise with me."	Making a suggestion
<b>May</b> god bless you.	Expressing a wish.

(Getting Through: 190).

## 5●Relative Pronouns

1. Who, which and that as subjects of a defining relative clause.

### A. Relative clauses about people

We can join simple sentences (**a** and **b**) below with **who** and **that** to form a complex sentence:

**a.** The police have found **the boy**. **b.** **The boy/He** disappeared last week.

The police have found the boy **who/that** disappeared last week.

### B. Relative clauses about things and animals

We can join simple sentences (**a** and **b**) below to form another complex sentence:

**a.** That's the cat. **b.** It belongs to Becky.

That's the cat which/that belongs to Becky (Getting Through: 191).

## New prospects

### ● Comparative and superlative forms of quantifiers

Quantifiers	Comparative forms	Superlative forms
many	more – as many as	the most
much	more – as much as	the most
little	less – as little as	the least
few	fewer – as few as	the fewest

### Examples: The comparatives and the superlatives of many and much.

▪ I haven't got **many** books. I mean, I haven't got as many books as my sister.

▪ My sister has got **more** books than I, but **most** of her books are old.

▪ I haven't got **much** money. I haven't got **as much** money as Saïd. Saïd has more (money) than I, but our friend Saïd has the most money. He has a part-time job (*New prospects*: 217).



● **Link words (discourse connectors)**

**Conceding:** Admittedly, despite (the fact that), in spite of (the fact that), though, naturally, certainly, of course, nevertheless, this being said, etc. express concession.

E.g. I agree with you that work is key to success; this being said, there is no reason why you should stay awake all night studying (Ibid: 227).

● **Pronunciation rules for final –ed**

- If a verb itself ends in –t or –d the final –ed is pronounced /ɪd/
- If a verb ends in a voiceless consonant (/p/, /s/, /k/, /f/, /tʃ/, /θ/, or /tʃ/ the final –ed is pronounced /t/
- If a verb ends in a voiced consonant (/b/, /g/, /l/, /z/, /v/, /d/, /ð/, /m/, /n/, or a vowel sound, the final –ed is pronounced /d/ (*New prospects: 237*).

## Appendix D: Spotlight on English One

### Section: Check

**File One: Hello (Page: 37).**

Activity and Page	Type/ Description	Aim and Focus
Act A p37	Spelling	To check pronunciation
Act B p37	Correcting mistakes	To check spelling
Act C p37	Completing sentences	To check language forms
Act D p37	Ordering words to get correct sentences	To check language forms
Act E p37	Put the right punctuation then write the dialogue	To check language forms and lexis
Act F p37	Work in pairs	To check language functions (the use of greeting expressions...)

**File Two: Family and Friends (Page: 58).**

Activity and Page	Type/ Description	Aim and Focus
Act A p58	When to say what (good morning, good evening...)	To check language functions
Act B p58	Cross the odd word out	To check language forms and lexis
Act C p58	Add a word to the list	To check lexis
Act D p58	Matching pictures with jobs	To check lexis
Act E p58	Gap filling	To check language forms

Act F p58	Underline the right word	To check language forms
Act G p58	Find the questions	To check language functions

**File Three: Sports (Pages:77-78).**

<b>Activity and Page</b>	<b>Type/ Description</b>	<b>Aim and Focus</b>
Act A p77	Gap-filling	To check lexis
Act B p77	Write the time	To check spelling
Act C p77	Completing a list	To check lexis
Act D p77	Cross the odd word out	To check language forms and lexis
Act E p77	Choose the correct preposition	To check language forms
Act F p77	Match the subject and the pronoun	To check language forms
Act G p78	Correcting mistakes	To check language forms
Act H p78	Completing sentences	To check language forms

**File Four: In And Out (Page: 99)**

<b>Activity and Page</b>	<b>Type/ Description</b>	<b>Aim and Focus</b>
Act A p99	Gap filling	To check lexis
Act B p99	Ordering of adverbs	To check language forms
Act C p99	Ordering of frequency adverbs	To check language forms
Act D p99	Gap filling	To check language forms
Act E p99	Use the correct word	To check language forms
Act F p99	Transforming	To check language forms
Act G p99	Correcting mistakes	To check language forms

**File Five: Food (Page: 119).**

<b>Activity and Page</b>	<b>Type/ Description</b>	<b>Aim and Focus</b>
Act A p119	Cross the odd word out	To check lexis
Act B p119	Correct the word order	To check language forms
Act C p119	True or False	To check language forms
Act D p119	Rewrite the incorrect sentences	To check language forms

Act E p119	Correcting mistakes	To check spelling
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#### **File Six: Inventions and Discoveries**

<b>Activity and Page</b>	<b>Type/ Description</b>	<b>Aim and Focus</b>
Act A p140	Gap filling	To check language forms
Act B p140	Use the right preposition	To check language forms
Act C p140	Gap filling	To check language forms
Act D p140	Correcting mistakes	To check spelling
Act E p140	Write the past forms of verbs	To check language forms
Act F p141	Change the vowel sound to get the past simple of verbs	To check language forms
Act G p141	Ask questions on the underlined words	To check language functions
Act H p141	Transforming	To check language forms
Act I p141	Answer the questions	To check language forms

#### **File Seven: Environment (Pages: 162-163)**

<b>Activity and Page</b>	<b>Type/ Description</b>	<b>Aim and Focus</b>
Act Ap162	Reorder the words to get correct sentences	To check language forms and lexis
Act Bp162	Transforming	To check language forms
Act Cp162	Completing a conversation	To check language forms and lexis
Act Dp162	Cross the odd word out	To check lexis
Act Ep162	Completing a table	To check language forms
Act Fp163	Comparing animals	To check language forms and lexis
Act Gp163	Put the right capitalization and punctuation	To check language forms
Act Hp163	Matching colours with seasons	To check lexis

## Appendix E: *Spotlight on English Two*

### File One: A Person's Profile

#### Section: Check (Pages: 22, 23, 24)

Activity and Page	Type / Description	Focus and Aim
Act 1 p22	Are these verbs regular or irregular? Write their past simple form in the boxes.	To check language forms
Act 2 p 22	[ s ] or [ z ] ? Classify the words according to their final sound	To check the students' progression in pronunciation
Act 3 p 22	What is the final sound of the words? [ t ] [ d ] or [ id]	To check the students' progression in pronunciation
Act 4 p 22	Correct the spelling mistakes	Checking of spelling and language forms
Act 5 p 22	Matching questions with answers	To check language forms and lexis
Act 6 p 22	Word order and punctuation	To check language forms
Act 7 p 23	Correcting mistakes	To check the students' understanding of present simple: language forms.
Act 8 p 23	Add the missing word to each answer	To check language forms
Act 9 p 23	Is the " s " the short form of the verb to be ( a ) or the sign of the possessive ( b )	To check the students achievements in language forms
Act 10 p 23	Put the words in the write order and write sentences	To check language forms and lexis
Act 11 p 23	Find answers to questions	To check language forms
Act 12 p 23	Write these dates in ful	To check spelling
Act 13 p 23	Matching verbs with their definitions	To check lexis
Act 14 p 24	Making sentences negative	To check language forms
Act 15 p 24	Using the right punctuation	To check language forms
Act 16 p 24	Putting the verbs in the past tense	To check language forms

Act 17 p 24	Pu the verbs into the right form	To check language forms
Act 18 p 24	Find the opposite of words	To check the students' progression in lexis.
Act 19 p 24	Describing a person's profile	To check language functions

## **File two: Language Games**

### **Section: Check (Pages: 43, 44, 45, and 46).**

Activity and page	Type / Description	Focus and Aim
Act 1 p 43	Match questions with answers	To check language forms and lexis
Act 2 p 43	Writing plurals of words	To check language forms and lexis
Act 3 p 43	Fill in the crossword puzzle : finding opposites of words	To check the students' progression in lexis
Act 4 p 43	Change the first letter to get new words	To check the students' progression in lexis
Act 5 p 44	Completing a grid	To check the students' progression in lexis
Act 6 p 44	Building up a telephone conversation from these messages	To check the students' progression in language function
Act 7 p 44	Cross the odd word out	To check language forms and lexis
Act 8 p 44	Matching adjectives with their opposites	To check the students' level in lexis
Act 9 p 44	Correcting mistakes	To check the students progression in spelling
Act 10 p 45	Use the right tense of the verbs in brackets	To check language forms
Act 11 p 45	Use the right punctuation and capitalization	To check the learners' achievement in language forms
Act 12 p 45	Naming countries	Assessing language functions
Act 13 p 45	Find the anagram	Assessing language functions
Act 14 p 45	Find the palindromes	Assessing language functions
Act 15 p 45	Correct the word order	To check language forms
Act 16 p 46	Forming new words	Assessing the learners' progression in using a dictionary

Act 17 p 46	Writing abbreviations in full and matching them with appropriate terms	Assessing spelling and lexis
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### **File Three: Health**

#### **Section: Check (Pages: 67, 68, and 69)**

<b>Activity and page</b>	<b>Type / Description</b>	<b>Focus / aim</b>
Act 1 p 67	How do these things make you feel?	Checking of language forms
Act 2 p 67	Agreeing with statements	Checking of language forms (adverbs of manner)
Act 3 p 67	Forming adverbs from adjectives	Checking of language forms ( word- formation )
Act 4 p 67	When did it happen ?	Checking of language forms ( passive voice in past simple )
Act 5 p 67	Completing a conversation with the right preposition	Checking of language forms ( prepositions : to /in/for )
Act 6 p 67	Cross the odd word out	Checking of lexis
Act 7 p 68	Write the sentences in active voice	Checking of language forms ( passive voice )
Act 8 p 68	Writing the passive form of verbs	Checking of language forms ( passive form)
Act 9 p 68	Filling the gap with must or mustn't	Checking of language forms
Act 10 p 68	Transforming sentences using must	Checking of language forms
Act 11 p 68	Giving a piece of advice	Checking of language functions
Act 12 p 68	Gap filling	Checking of language forms
Act 13 p 68	Unscramble the sentences and write the conversation	Checking of lexis and language forms
Act 14 p 69	Correct the spelling mistakes	Checking of spelling
Act 15 p 69	Correcting mistakes	Checking of spelling and language forms
Act 16 p 69	Asking questions about underlined words	Checking of language forms
Act 17 p 69	What do these sentences express?	Checking of language forms
Act 18 p 69	translating	Checking of lexis and language forms

### **File Four: Cartoons**

#### **Section: Check (Pages: 90, 91, and 92).**

<b>Activity and page</b>	<b>Type / Description</b>	<b>Focus and Aim</b>
Act 1 p 90	Asking for advice	Checking of language functions
Act 2 p 90	Sentence order	Checking of language forms
Act 3 p 90	Gap-filling	Checking of language forms

Act 4 p 90	Forming sentences with “ going to”	Checking of language forms
Act 5 p 91	Completing a conversation	Checking of lexis and language forms
Act 6 p 91	Completing a conversation with a correct verb form	Checking of language forms
Act 7 p 91	Planning activities	Checking of language functions
Act 8 p 91	Planning activities	Checking of language functions
Act 9 p 91	Writing a letter to a friend	Checking of language functions
Act 10 p 91	Using the right punctuation	Checking of language forms
Act 11 p 92	Adding the missing word	Checking of language forms and lexis
Act 12 p 92	Talking about someone activities	Checking of language functions
Act 13 p 92	Writing instructions in a more polite way	Checking of language functions
Act 14 p 92	Correcting mistakes	Checking of spelling
Act 15 p 92	Writing questions for answers	Checking of language forms
Act 16 p 92	Gap-filling	Checking of language forms

## **File Five: Theatre**

### **Section: Check (Pages: 112,113,114).**

<b>Activity and Page</b>	<b>Type / Description</b>	<b>Focus and aim</b>
Act 1 p112	Word order	Checking of language forms
Act 2 p 112	Gap filling	Checking of language forms ( “wh” questions)
Act 3 p 112	Matching answers with questions	Checking of lexis and language forms
Act 4 p112	Correcting mistakes	Checking of language forms
Act 5 p113	Asking questions	Checking of language forms
Act 6 p113	Asking questions	Checking of language forms
Act 7 p113	Paragraph writing	Checking of language functions (talking about likes and dislike )
Act 8 p113	Writing sentences about what others like and dislike	checking of language functions (talking about likes and dislikes )
Act 9 p113	Punctuation and capitalization	Checking of language forms
Act 10 p113	Complete the sentence with the correct form of the verbs in brackets	Checking of language forms
Act 11 p113	Unscrambling sentences	Checking of language forms
Act 12 p114	Write the present perfect of the verbs between brackets	Checking of language forms
Act 13 p114	Questioning	Checking of language forms
Act 14 p114	Talking about past activities	Checking of language functions
Act 15 p114	Correcting mistakes	Checking of language forms
Act 16 p114	Using the right form of verbs	Checking of language forms

## Self-Assessment (Page: 116).

### Check what you know!

I know how	Yes	No	See page
To listen to an aural text and to pick information			
To act out a conversation I have just heard			
To ask and answer about places			
To ask and answer about distances			
To ask and answer about time			
To ask and answer about someone's plans			
To ask and answer about someone's activity			
To read a simple play			
To use a "wh" questions			
To talk about likes and dislikes			
To enquire about someone's preferences			
To use punctuation and capitalisation			
To use the gerund			
To write sentences from the table			
To expand notes			
To talk about daily activities			
To talk about leisure activities			
To use the present perfect			
To imagine an end to a story			
To deduce unknown words from context			
To understand a written passage containing some difficult words			
<b>I enjoyed</b>			
The theme of the file			
The project			
Choosing the exercises I wanted to do			
Working alone			
Working with a partner			
Working in groups			

## APPENDIX F: *Spotlight on English Three*

### File One: Communications

#### Section One: Test yourself I (Pages: 46, 47, 48, 49).

What is assessed?	Activity and page	Type/Description	Focus and Aim
Reading Comprehension	Act 1 p46	Fill in a table with information	Checking the learners understanding of the text
	Act 2 p46	Extracting synonyms, antonyms... from a text	Checking of lexis



<b>II/ Mastery of Language</b>	<b>Grammar</b>	Act 1 p 47	Writing questions to get answers	Checking of language forms
		Act 2 p47	Fill in the gaps with <u>in</u> , <u>on</u> or <u>at</u> .	Checking of language forms
	<b>Functional Language</b>	Act 1 p47	Circle the correct responses	Checking of functional language (introducings and greetings)
		Act 2 p48	Circle the correct item	Checking of functional language (expressing emotions)
		Act 3 p48	Correcting inappropriate parts of a dialogue and writing a coherent dialogue	Checking of functional language.
		Act 4 p48	Using polite forms	Checking of functional language.
		Act 5 p49	Completing responses	Checking of functional language (acceptance or refusal)
	<b>Sound System</b>	Act p 49	Marking intonation	Checking the learners' understanding of the falling and rising tones.
	<b>Written expression</b>	Act p49	Writing a letter	Checking of language functions

## **File Two: Travel (Pages: 84, 85, 86, 87).**

### **Section One: Test yourself II**

<b>What is assessed?</b>	<b>Activity and page</b>	<b>Type/Description</b>	<b>Focus and Aim</b>
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	Act 1 p84	Fill in the table with information from the text	Checking the learners understanding of the text
	Act 2 p84	True or False	Checking the learners understanding of the text
	Act 3 p84	Find in the text definitions of words	inference
<b>II/ Mastery of Language</b>	<b>Grammar</b>	Act 1 p 85	Extracting items from the text and finding their tense
		Act 2 p85	Blank filling with the appropriate verb tense

		Act 3 p85	Putting words into the plural form	Checking of language forms
		Act 4 p86	Turning commands into requests	Checking of language forms
		Act 5 p86	Adjective order and blank filling	Checking of language forms
	Functional Language	Act 1 p86	Completing a dialogue	Checking of functional language (making and accepting suggestions)
		Act 2 p86	Writing a dialogue	Checking of functional language (asking for and giving directions)
	Sound System	Act 1 p86	Circle the most stressed word	Checking the students' understanding of the sentence stress
		Act 2 p87	Circle the stressed syllable	Checking the students understanding of the word stress
		Act 3 p87	Circle the silent letter	Checking of pronunciation
		Act 4 p87	Showing intonation	Checking the students' understanding of the falling and rising tones
	Written Expression	Activity page 87	Preparing a short talk with English speaking tourists	Checking of language functions

### File Three: Work and Play

#### Section One: Test yourself III (Pages: 119, 120, 121, and 122).

What is assessed?		Activity and page	Type/Description	Focus and Aim
Reading Comprehension		Act 1 p119	Comprehension questions	Checking the learners' understanding of the text
		Act 2 p119	What do the words refer to in the text?	Checking the learners' understanding of the text
II/ Mastery of language	Grammar	Act 1 p 120	Fill in the gaps	Checking of language forms
		Act 2 p120	Put <b>yet, just, ever</b> ... where appropriate	Checking of language forms
		Act 3 p120	Matching and going sentences with <b>when</b> or <b>while</b>	Checking of language forms
		Act 4 p120	Put the verb in brackets into past simple or past continuous	Checking of language forms

		Act 5 p121	Reordering	Checking of language forms (coherence)
	Functional language	Act 1 p121	Fill in the blanks with an appropriate modal	Checking of language forms (modals)
		Act 2 p121	Completing a text with the right modal	Checking of language functions (modals)
	Sound system	Act 1 p121	Tick the right pronunciation	Checking of pronunciation (weak and strong forms of the auxiliary “ <b>have</b> ”)
		Act 2 p122	Word-formation with clusters	Checking of pronunciation
		Act 3 p122	Forming adjectives with the suffixes “ful” and “less”	Word-formation
	Written expression	Activity page 87	Writing a short narrative	Checking of language functions

### File Four: Around the world

#### Section One: Test yourself IV (Pages: 157, 158, 159, and 160).

What is assessed?		Activity and page	Type/Description	Focus and Aim
Reading Comprehension		Act 1 p157	Matching	Checking the students’ understanding of the text
		Act 2 p158	Fill in the blanks with information from the text	Checking the students’ understanding of the text
II/ Mastery of Language	Grammar	Act 1 p 158	Asking questions	Checking of language forms
		Act 2 p158	Filling the blanks	Checking of language forms
		Act 3 p158	Using comparative adjectives of superiority	Checking of language forms
		Act 4 p158	Comparing by using “less” instead of “more”	Checking of language forms
		Act 5 p159	Put the adjectives between brackets into the superlative forms	Checking of language forms

	Functional Language	Act 1 p159	Fill in the blanks	Checking of functional language (the use of the verbs agree and disagree)
		Act 2 p159	Writing dialogue	Checking of functional language (making a recommendation)
	Sound System	Act 1 p159	Say how the letters “ <b>ph</b> ” are pronounced	Checking of pronunciation
		Act 2 p160	Completing a rule about the pronunciation of the letters “ <b>ph</b> ”	Checking of pronunciation
		Act 3 p160	Classifying words according to the pronunciation of their diagraph “ <b>th</b> ”	Checking of pronunciation
	Written Expression	Activity page 160	Writing a presentation of a country	Checking of language functions

## LEARNING LOG (Page: 161)

### A. Tick ☒ the things you can do in English.

#### I can ...

- ☐ Locate and describe countries and towns;
- ☐ Compare countries using comparatives and superlatives;
- ☐ Talk about distances;
- ☐ Talk about time using ago;
- ☐ Talk about the history of towns and countries using the past simple;
- ☐ Talk about measurements (size, height, length, width, etc.);
- ☐ Agree and disagree;
- ☐ Use exclamations to express feelings and emotions;
- ☐ Ask for and give opinions;
- ☐ Use country adjectives and nouns;

### B. What do you need to study again?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G: *On the Move*

### File One: It's My Treat

#### Section One: Progress check (Pages: 36, 37, 38).

What is assessed?	Activity and Page	Type/Description	Focus and Aim
Listening and Speaking	Act 1 p36	Use polite forms	Checking of language functions
	Act 2 p36	Expecting a conversation between a customer and a waiter about a drink called <i>sherbet</i>	Checking of language functions
	Act 3 p36	Fill in the blanks	Checking of language functions
	Act 4 p36	Use tag questions to ask for information	Checking of language functions
	Act 5 p36	Mark the intonation on the question tags in exercises 3 and 4	Checking of pronunciation
Words and Sounds	Act 1 p 37	Cross the silent letter	Checking of pronunciation
	Act 2 p37	Complete the phonetic transcription with a short /i/ or a long /i: /	Checking of pronunciation
Reading and Writing	Act 1 p37	Circle the correct answer	To check the students' understanding of the text
	Act 2 p38	Classifying words according to categories: spices, meats, kitchen ...	Checking of lexis
	Act 3 p38	Gap filling	Checking of lexis
	Act 4 p38	Writing a coherent paragraph	Checking of lexis, spelling and language forms

### File Two: You can Do It

#### Section One: Progress check (Pages: 61, 62).

What is assessed?	Activity and Page	Type/Description	Focus and Aim
Listening and Speaking	Act A p61	Fill in the blanks with the appropriate modal	Checking of language forms
	Act B p61	Agree or disagree with statements	Checking of language forms
	Act C p62	Rewrite the words in bold	Checking of pronunciation

<b>Reading and Writing</b>	Act 1 p 62	Making predictions with an appropriate modal	Checking of language functions
	Act 2 p62	Fill in the blanks with: was able/ wasn't able/ will be able to ...	Checking of language forms and lexis
	Act 3 p62	Write a letter of apology	Checking of spelling, lexis and language forms

### **File Three: Great Expectations**

#### **Section One: Progress check (Pages: 86, 87).**

<b>Activity and Page</b>	<b>Type/Description</b>	<b>Focus and Aim</b>
Act 1 p86	Answer the questions	Checking the students' understanding of the text (reading comprehension)
Act 2 p86	Completing sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets	Checking of language forms
Act 3 p87	Use <b>if</b> or <b>when</b> and choose the correct verb form	Checking of language forms
Writing page 87	Paragraph writing	Checking of language forms, spelling and lexis

### **File Four: Then and Now**

#### **Section One: Progress check (Pages: 112, 113, 114).**

<b>Activity and page</b>	<b>Type/Description</b>	<b>Focus and Aim</b>
Act 1 p112	Circle the letter of the correct answer	Checking the students' understanding of the text (reading comprehension)
Act 2 p112	Asking questions to get answers	Checking of language forms
Act 3 p112	Guessing the next of a paragraph	Checking of language functions
Act 4 p112	Check your answer to a previous questions	Reading activity
Act 5 p113	Comprehension questions	To check the students' understanding of a previous text
Act 6 p113	Comprehension questions	To check the students' understanding of a previous text
Act 7 p113	Reordering sentences	Checking of language forms

Act 8 p113	Conveying the author's surprise using <b>used to</b> .	Checking of language forms
Act 9 p114	Joining sentences to get a coherent paragraph	Checking of language forms and lexis
Act 10 p114	Writing an autobiographical paragraph	Checking of language functions

### File Five: Dreams, Dreams ...

#### Section One: Progress check (Pages: 137, 138).

What is assessed?	Activity and Page	Type/Description	Focus and Aim
Listening and Speaking	Act 1 p137	Using appropriate modals to get correct responses.	Checking of language forms (using of the modal "might")
	Act 2 p137	Recognising tone in <b>yes</b> .	Checking of pronunciation.
Reading and Writing	Act 1 p138	Reordering sentences to get a coherent letter and say what type of a letter it is.	Reading comprehension
	Act 2 p138	Put the verb in brackets with correct form.	Checking of language forms
	Act 3 p138	Story chain.	Checking of language functions

### File Six: Fact and Fiction

#### Section one: Progress check (Pages: 160, 161, 162).

What is assessed?		Activity and Page	Type / Description	Focus and Aim
Listening and Speaking		Act 1 p 160	Matching	Checking of comprehension
		Act 2 p 160	Speaking aloud and marking initiation	Checking of pronunciation
Reading and Writing		Act 1 p 161	Comprehension questions	Checking the learners , understanding of the text
	Grammar	Act A p 162	Joining sentences with conjunction and using appropriate past tense	Checking of language forms

		Act B p 162	Correcting mistakes	Checking of language forms
		Act C p 162	Write a short narrative following a plane	Assessing writing

## LEARNING LOG (Page: 163).

Copy the questionnaire below in your learning log. Fill it in and hand a copy of it to your teacher. Don't write your name on it.

I can ...	Very well	Fairly well	A little
A. use questions to express interest in conversation. B. use questions to express surprise . C. re-assure people in embarrassing situations. D. respond to compliments, thanks and wishes. E. use appropriate intonation in questions. F. derive new words by adding the suffix-tion. G. pronounce words ending with the suffix-tion. H. pronounce vowels /æ/, /e/ and /ʌ/ . I. use <b>while</b> , <b>when</b> and <b>as</b> in complex sentences. J. narrate personal experiences. K. write a report about an accident.			



# **BEM TESTS**

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2006

**Read the text carefully then do the activities:**

**Text:**

There are thousands of languages all over the world. India has the largest number.

English is the most used language on Earth, but Mandarin Chinese is spoken by 70% of the Chinese population. The oldest written language is Egyptian.

English is the language of business and technology. However, it is not easy to learn. It has the largest vocabulary. English has borrowed many words from other languages such as French and Arabic.

**Activities:**

**Section one: Reading comprehension (08pts)**

**A-Read the text and answer the following questions. (3pts)**

- 1- Where is Mandarin spoken?
- 2- Which is the oldest written language?
- 3- Is English easy to learn?

**B-Write “true” or “False”. Correct the wrong statement. (03pts)**

- 1- There are different languages in the world
- 2- Egyptian is the most used language in the world
- 3- English is the language of technology.

**C-Lexis: (2pts)**

**1- Find in the text words or phrases that are closest in meaning to the following:**

a- nearly=.....

b-inhabitants=.....

**2- Find in the text words or phrases that are opposite in meaning to the following:**

a- newest ≠.....

b- easy ≠.....

**Section two: Mastery of language (06pts)**

**A- Reorder the following words alphabetically (02pts)**

language – word – vocabulary – population

**B-Complete the table with the correct comparative and superlative. (2pts)**

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
.....	Larger than	.....
.....	.....	The easiest

**C-Write the correct of the verbs in brackets (02pts)**

Next week, Madjid (to fly) to England to follow English courses at university. He already (to pack) his things. Yesterday, his father (to go) to a travel agency and (to buy) him a plane ticket.

**Section three: Written expression (06 pts)**

**Fill in the gaps so that the text makes sense.**

Ahmed's teacher asked him to.....an article.....languages, he went to.....cybercafé, there he learnt that Esperanto.....an artificial language which was invented.....1887. It sounds like Italian and.....are no irregular verbs.

### Greenpeace

In 1969, the USA began a series of nuclear tests on a little island near Alaska. At that time, the Alaskans did not realize that those tests were dangerous. They did not even know they were happening! A Canadian decided to do something about this. With some friends they bought a boat which they called Greenpeace. And they went to the island in their boat, just when the Americans wanted to explode another bomb.

The Americans had to end testing bombs in Alaska, and the Greenpeace people and their organization have become famous all over the world.

Since then, Greenpeace has never stopped working; its members try to stop people and governments doing things that pollute the environment.

From 'Top 3' Nathon.

### Part One (14pts)

#### A-Reading Comprehension (7pts)

#### Activity One: Read the text and answer the following questions: (2pts)

1-In which paragraph is it mentioned that people in Alaska had no idea of what was happening there?

2-What do the underlined words in the text refer to?

which	
its	

#### Activity two: Read the text and write "true" or "false". Correct the wrong statement. (3pts)

- 1- At the beginning Greenpeace was the name of a boat.
- 2- Greenpeace couldn't prevent the USA from exploding nuclear bombs in Alaska.
- 3- Greenpeace is still fighting pollution.

#### Activity Three: (2pts)

##### 1-Find in the text words that are closest in meaning to the following: (1pts)

a) started=

b) named=

##### 2-Find in the text words or phrases that are opposite in meaning to the following:

a) Safe ≠

b) nowhere ≠

**B- Mastery of Language (7pts)****Activity One: Complete the table with the infinitive or the simple past. (2pts)**

Infinitive	Simple Past
to pollute	.....
.....	began
to become	.....
to try	.....

**Activity Two: Reorder the following words to get coherent questions: (03pts)**

1- decided / to create / when / they /?/ organization / did / this

2- got / many / has / ?/ members / Greenpeace / How

3- I / Greenpeace/ ?/ join / have to / to/ do/ what / do

**Activity Three: Classify then following words according to the pronunciation of their final**

**“ed”:** (2pts)

called — decided — stopped — wanted.

/t/	/d/	/Id/

**Part Two: Written Expression:**

Your schoolmates have created an association because they want to live in a clean district. Interview one of its members for your school magazine and write down the conversation.

You can use the following clues to help you.

- when you started the association
- name of the association
- activities (what you did/are doing)

- Do not write names. Use A and B.

Nobody could believe it, but it happened! The Titanic, which was the largest ship ever built, sank a few hours after hitting an iceberg.

The tragedy happened in 1912, on its first trip across the Atlantic Ocean. The Titanic was travelling from Southampton to New York with 2201 people on board. Only 711 of them could be saved by the Carpathia, a ship which was sailing some miles away, while 1490 people lost their lives in the accident.

Too many people died because there were not enough lifeboats for all of them and the crew was not prepared for such a catastrophe; they thought that the ship was safe in any difficult condition and could not sink. And also many passengers were sleeping and were not dressed warmly enough to survive in the very cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

New safety measures were taken after accident and now ships carry enough lifeboats, lifevests and survival kits for all the people on board and the crew is well trained for emergency situations.

Adapted from various sources.

## PART ONE (14pts)

### A- Reading Comprehension (07pts)

**Read the text carefully and do the following activities:**

**Activity one (03pts): Answer the following questions:**

- 1- Did the Titanic reach its destination?
- 2- Could all the passengers get into the lifeboats?
- 3- Are ships safer nowadays?

**Activity two (02pts) : Complete the table with information from the text:**

A	B
number of survivors	
number of the dead	
number of passengers and crew members	
the year the Titanic sank	

**Activity three (02pts): Match each word with its appropriate meaning**

ship	people travelling in a plane, boat, train,.....
passengers	take people or things from one place to another
crew	means of transport used to travel across water
carry	people working on ship (or a plane)

## **B-Mastery of Language (07pts)**

### **Activity one (02 pts): Supply the punctuation and capital letters where necessary.**

the tourists came to tamanrasset by plane didn't they

### **Activity two (03pts): Fill in the gaps with the suitable words. Choose from the following list:**

**So - until - but - because.**

We usually travel by train,.....yesterday we missed it.....we didn't get up early.  
.....we had to take a taxi.

### **Activity three (02pts): Find in the text four words that have the following sounds:**

<b>/at/ (five)</b>	<b>/i/ (sit)</b>
1-	1-
2-	2-

## **PART TWO (06pts) Written Expression.**

The editor of the school magazine wishes to publish some articles about the means of transport.

You are really interested in this topic. Write an article about the means of transport you prefer.

The following hints can help you:

- Plane / boat / train.....
- Cheap /expensive.....
- comfortable.....
- quick.....
- safe.....

2009 :

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What if you had to work today ?

A hundred years ago many children had to work. Some weren't even ten years old. Their workday was often sixteen hours long. These children never went to school. They had no time to play. They hardly ever got fresh air. How could this happen?

Some children had no mothers or fathers who could look after them. Others had to take care of their sick parents. Most were just helping their families earn enough money to live.

Many people worried about such children. They forced the people who made the laws to do something about this problem.

In 1916, a new law was passed. For the first time in the United States, young children were not allowed to have jobs in factories.

People today understand that children need to rest and play. They know, too, that schoolwork is the best kind of "job" for young minds.

Adapted from "Reading for content"  
by Jane Culter and Janet Joers.

### **Part one (14pts)**

#### **A) Reading Comprehension (07pts)**

**Read the text carefully and do the following activities:**

##### **Activity one (03pts):**

**Read the following statements and write "true", "false" or "not mentioned"**

- 1) All the children had to go to school a century ago.
- 2) It was hard for some parents to look after their children.
- 3) Parents who sent their children to work had problems.

##### **Activity two (02pts):**

**Answers the following questions:**

- 1) Did people feel concerned about children's work?
- 2) Were their actions against children's work unsuccessful?

##### **Activity Three (02pts)**

**Find in the text words or phrases that are closest in meaning to the following:**

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| a) were obliged = .....  | b) the majority = ..... |
| c) not permitted = ..... | d) relaxed = .....      |



## B) Mastery of language (07pts)

### Activity One (02pts):

**Supply the punctuation and the capital letters where necessary.**

all children should have the right to education they should also have the right to free  
medical  
care

### Activity Two (03pts):

**Write the correct form of the verbs in brackets**

Years ago, children (to not have to) go to school. Now, there's a law; children must (to  
stay) at  
school till the age of sixteen. So, if some parents (to not respect) the law, they will be in  
troubl  
toruble.

### Activity Three (02pts):

**Find in the text four words that have the following sounds:**

/ei/ (say)	/ai/ (right)
1-	1-
2-	2-

## PART TWO (06 pts)

### Written Expression

A lot of children, in the world, do not go to school because they have to work to help  
their parents. You feel concerned about this problem.

Write an article for your school magazine about children's rights.

These hints can help you:

- children's protection (education/health/food....)
- children's leisure (games/sports.....)

2010 :

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**TEXT**

Tonight, Nadir is staying at home because he wants to write a letter to his friend.

Tomorrow morning, he will have Maths and English as usual at college, but he will be free in the afternoon, so he is going to help his father. They are going to repair the roof of their old garage. In the evening, he will go out with his friends.

*Adapted from -Teacher English- by Adrian Doff*

**Part One (14pts)**

**A-Reading Comprehension (07pts)**

**Read the text carefully and do the following activities:**

**Activity one : (03pts)**

**Read the following statements and write 'true' or 'false'.**

**Correct the false statements:**

- a) Nadir has a pen friend.
- b) He is not going to help his father.
- c) In the evening, Nadir will receive his friends at home.

**Activity two: (02pts)**

**Answer the following questions:**

- a) Is Nadir staying at home tonight?
- b) Will he be busy tomorrow in the morning?

**Activity three: (02 pts)**

**1- Find in the text words that are opposite in meaning to the following:**

- a) new ≠.....
- b) in ≠.....

**2- Find in the text words that are closest in meaning to the following:**

- a) the next day =.....
- b) mend =.....

## **B- Mastery of Language**

### **Activity one:** (02pts)

**Supply the punctuation and capital letters where necessary:**  
tomorrow, Nadir will send a letter to ali

### **Activity two:** (03pts)

**Change the following sentences to negative:**

1. Nadir will be free tomorrow afternoon.
2. They are going to repair the roof.
3. He wants to write a letter.

### **Activity three:** (02pts)

**Write the following verbs in the right box according to the pronunciation of their final 'ed':**

Wanted – stayed – helped – repaired

/t/	/d/	/id/
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

## **Part two:**

### **Written Expression**

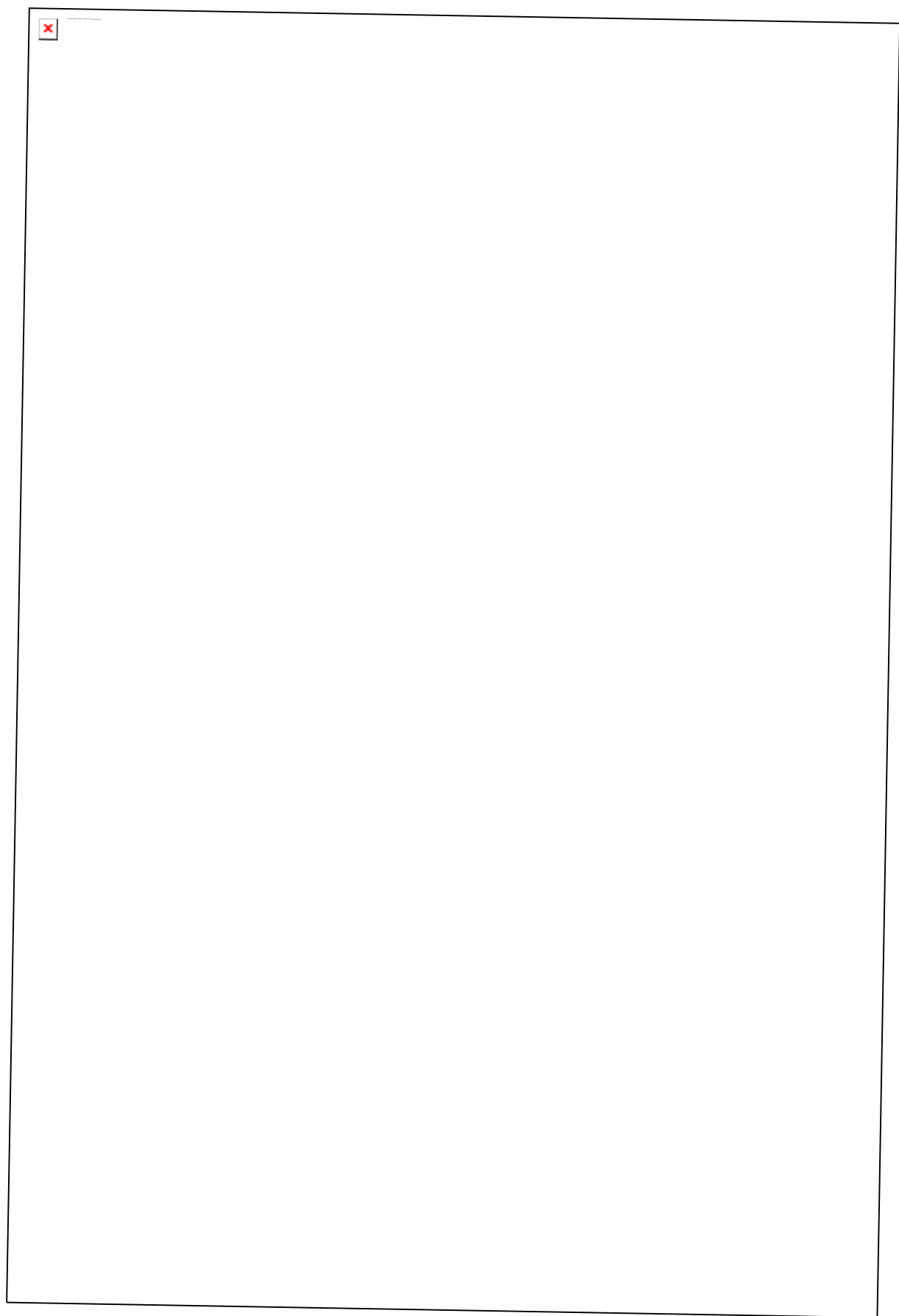
In his last letter your friend Nadir informed you about his intention to come and visit you.

Write a letter telling him what you are going to do when he comes.

Talk about:

- places to visit
- activities to do (photos, sightseeing,.....)
- people to meet.....

# **BAC TESTS**



5. Choose a title that best suits the reading passage.

- a- Education in the United Kingdom  
c- Public Schools

- b- Mixed-Sex Schools in the UK  
d- Free Education

**B ) Text Exploration**

**(7points)**

1. Find in the text words closest in meaning to the following:

- a. donations (§2) b) be present at (§3) c) near (§4) d) choices (§5)

2. Fill in the table with the missing word category.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
.....	.....	oriented
To organize	.....	.....
.....	selection	.....
.....	education	.....

3. Choose the appropriate connector to join the following pairs of sentences to make meaningful statements.

- a) as b) while c) although d) then e)so

- a. Parents have a little to pay. They always complain.  
b. Comprehensive schools take children of all abilities. Grammar schools are selective.

4. Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of their final "s".

- a. schools b. boys c. parents d. preferences

/ s /	/ z /	/ ɪz /

5. Complete the following conversation between A and B.

A: Why do only few children go to school in poor countries?

B:.....

A: Is it the only reason?

B: .....

A: Could you give me an example?

B: .....

A: What can we do to help these children to go to school ?

B: .....

A: That's a good idea.

**Part Two : Written expression**

**( 6points)**

Write a composition of 100 words on one of the following topics.

Choose

**Either Topic one:**

Education in poor countries is in a very bad situation. Write a composition explaining:

- a) the causes ( poverty, poorly equipped schools ...)  
b) the effects ( illiteracy, delinquency ...)  
c) suggestions ( collect money to build schools, recruit teachers ....)

**Or Topic two:**

A group of students from Great Britain are visiting your school soon. Your teacher of English has asked you to write a document to inform the visitors about secondary school education in Algeria: the different streams, the subject matters and exams...

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

الديوان الوطني للمسابقات والمسابقات

دورة: جوان 2009

وزارة التربية الوطنية

امتحان بكالوريا التعليم الثانوي

الشعبة: لغات أجنبية

المدة: 3 ساعات ونصف

اختبار في مادة: اللغة الانجليزية

على المترشح أن يختار أحد الموضوعين التاليين:

الموضوع الأول

PART ONE: Reading

(14 points)

*Read the text carefully then do the activities below.*

Counterfeit medicines are a threat to health, and the risks they pose have been largely underestimated. Counterfeits containing no active ingredient will fail to cure disease; those with wrong ingredients may cause mental and physical damage—and even death. No area of the world is unaffected, as exposed by the recent deaths in the United States.

Growing evidence shows that the problem is disproportionately severe in developing and emerging-market countries, which also have the highest burden of infectious diseases. National governments have the primary responsibility—both in stopping criminal manufacturing and distribution and in protecting their citizens from counterfeit products. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is highly active in fulfilling this responsibility, but this is not true in many other countries in the world.

Multilateral organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) must do more to expose the problem and help countries tighten regulatory controls.

Companies affected by counterfeiting in developing countries are expending private resources to perform roles which should be carried out by police and regulators, including assisting multilateral organizations in building capacity among local customs and regulatory officials.

A) Comprehension

(7points)

1-Circle the letter that corresponds to the right answer.

The text is about.....

- a. fake medicines      b. medicines      c. healthcare

2-Are the following statements true or false? Write "T" or "F" next to the corresponding sentence letter.

- a) The risks of counterfeit medicines are seriously taken into consideration.  
b) Developing countries are suffering a lot from infectious diseases.  
c) Governments should protect people from counterfeit products.  
d) The WHO, WCO, and Interpol efforts are insufficient.

3-Answer the following questions according to the text.

- a) Why can't some counterfeit medicines cure diseases?  
b) What can wrong ingredients cause?  
c) What must multilateral organizations do?

4-Reorder the following ideas according to the text.

- a) Governments should protect people from counterfeit medicines.  
b) Counterfeit medicines are not only inefficient but dangerous as well.  
c) International organizations have to make more efforts.

**5-Choose a title for the reading text.**

- a) International Cooperation      b) Medical Business      c) Counterfeit Medicines

**B) Text Exploration**

**(7points)**

**1-Find in the text words, phrases or expressions that are closest in meaning to the following:**

- a-fake (§1)      b-illnesses (§2)      c-show (§3)      d-helping (§4)

**2-Complete the chart as shown in the example.**

Verb	Adjective	Noun
To manufacture	manufactured	manufacturer
To affect	.....	.....
.....	exposed	.....

**3-Connect each pair of sentences using the connector in brackets. Make changes where necessary.**

- a) Governments have made a lot of efforts. They have been unable to stop the import of counterfeit products. (although)  
b) Local authorities are encouraging citizens. They want them to be more active. (to)

**4-Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of their final's'.**

[medicines — ingredients — controls — diseases]

/s/	/z/	/iz/

**5- Fill in each gap with one word from the list below.**

[counterfeiting — it — to — people]

Counterfeiting is not limited to medicines only. ...1... is also affecting other products like clothes and food. Thanks...2...some associations....3...have become aware of the dangerous effects of...4... .

**PART TWO: Written Expression**

**(6points)**

**Write a composition of about 100 words on one of the following topics.**

Choose either

**Topic one:** Why do some people buy counterfeit products? The following notes may help you to answer the question. (cheap / easily found /no big difference /same shape...)

Or

**Topic two:** What can be done to fight counterfeiting? Make suggestions.



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

الديوان الوطني للمسابقات

دورة: جوان 2010

وزارة التربية الوطنية

امتحان بكالوريا التعليم الثانوي

الشعبة: لغات أجنبية

المدة: 3 ساعات و نصف

اختبار في مادة: اللغة الإنجليزية

على المترشح أن يختار أحد الموضوعين التاليين:

الموضوع الأول

**Part One: Reading**

(14 points)

**A/ Comprehension**

(07 points)

*Read the text carefully then do the activities.*

Each of the great civilizations of the past contributed some way or another to enhance the technical level of human communities. They all achieved realizations that gradually transformed the destiny of nations and turned them to highly organized groups, having in their hands more efficient means that enabled them to develop a better capacity in the fight for survival and therefore to lead a more comfortable life.

The Chinese, for example, were among the first people to show to the others how to combine intelligence and discipline in order to construct a dynamic society able to offer to its inhabitants prosperity and security. The Egyptians in their turn managed to bring considerable improvements in the branches of farming, architecture, medicine, writing and religion. Despite the hostile environment where they evolved they succeeded to impose their will-power and perseverance so as to win the respect of their neighbours and immortalize their name in history.

As regards the Babylonians, they devoted their skills to further the spheres of astronomy, law-making, building, cattle-breeding, and land-working. The Phoenicians, too, helped in accomplishing exceptional advances in matters connected with ship-building, international trade and sailing across seas. When the Greeks arrived, they promoted mathematics, philosophy, and democracy. They also gave a strong impetus to scientific research, rational thinking, mythology and artistic creations. In their wisdom they went as far as using sport as a channel through which to consolidate peace and harmony among tribes and races. The Romans as well applied themselves for elevating the fate of the human race. They dedicated their talent for the pursuit of art, the construction of towns and public works, the laying of rules and political bodies, the expansion of commerce and the introduction of more effective strategies in the military field.

**1. Choose a title to the text.**

- a) Conflict of Civilizations
- b) The Achievements of Past Civilizations
- c) The Supremacy of the Egyptian Civilization

**2. Say whether the following statements are True or False according to the text.**

- a) Today's civilization does not draw any advantages from the cultures of the past.
- b) The Phoenicians were expert at attacking the other nations in the sea.
- c) The Greeks encouraged their people to practise sport to consolidate peace.

**3. Classify the following ideas according to their occurrence in the text.**

- a) Games and sports were used to set up friendly relations among tribes.
- b) The accomplishments of the ancient people helped in the progress of human societies in various fields.
- c) Intelligence and discipline constructed a dynamic and secure nation.
- d) The Greeks brought to mankind logical thinking.

4. Answer the following questions according to the text.

- List some of the main realizations of the Babylonian civilization.
- How did the Chinese contribute in advancing mankind?

5. In which paragraph is it mentioned that civilizations influenced one another?

B/ Text Exploration

(07 points)

1- Find in the text words or phrases closest in meaning to the following:

- accomplishments (§ 1)
- build (§ 2)
- extraordinary (§ 3)

2- Complete the following chart as shown in the example.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
Example: civilize	civilization	civilized
.....	introduction	.....
.....	.....	dedicated
persevere	.....	.....

3- Ask the questions that the underlined words answer.

- The Egyptians managed to bring considerable improvements.
- The Greeks brought artistic creations.

4- Complete sentence (b) so that it means the same as sentence (a).

- The Greeks promoted mathematics, philosophy and democracy.
  - Mathematics, philosophy and democracy .....
- He admitted that they had succeeded to impose themselves.
  - ".....," he admitted.

5- Complete the following dialogue.

- A: .....
- B: Yes, I enjoy reading about ancient people.
- A: .....
- B: Well, I learn about their life-style, their myths and their realizations.
- A: .....
- B: No, books are not my only source; museums, ruins and the Internet also enrich my knowledge about history.
- A: .....
- B: The main thing that fascinates me is the success they realized despite the hardships they met.

6. Classify the following words according to the pronunciation of their final "ed".

achieved - developed - constructed - succeeded - transformed - helped

/t/	/d/	/id/

Part Two: Written Expression

(06 points)

Choose one of the following topics.

**Either Topic 1 :**Expand the following notes to write a composition of about 150 words on the contributions of the Greeks in the universal civilization.

- mathematics, philosophy, democracy promotion
- scientific research, rational thinking ..... etc
- peace, harmony among tribes

**Or Topic 2:** Write a composition of about 150 words explaining and illustrating how the ancient civilizations have helped humanity in its present life.

امتحان بكالوريا التعليم الثانوي

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مادة اللغة الانجليزية

SECTION ONE : READING COMPREHENSION

(7 points)

*Read the passage carefully then answer the questions.*

- Many of you will soon leave school and look for work. How are you going to decide what job to choose? Firstly, your choice may be limited by the work available in your own town. Secondly, any particular ability you may have will influence your choice. For the people who are lucky to have a definite talent, the choice of a career is not difficult, but for the majority of people this is not the case. So it is important to consider exactly what you want from a job.
- Some of you will reply 'Money'. But is money enough to keep you contented for the next years? When you consider that part of your life may be spent working, you will realise that it is important to choose wisely. So if you decide that money is not everything, what else is necessary? How about job satisfaction? What it actually means is that people must feel necessary to their work and, not just that their work is necessary for them to live.
- Next, consider what you like doing. Working with your hands? Well there are plenty of technical and mechanical jobs about. Are you an intellectual? I advise you, then, to go on to University and get yourself a higher qualification. Perhaps you are creative in some way: you like painting, drawing, acting, singing, dancing, then your best choice is to take a diploma in your particular field. Some talented people in the creative world have made their way to the top. And, lastly, for those of you who really like people, why not consider social work? In big cities, there is a need for young people to take up social work such as nursing because the number of homeless people is growing every year.
- I hope I've given you some ideas to think about. Thank you for your kind attention.

*Answer the following questions according to the text.*

- Why are some people restricted in choosing a job?
- Why are some people luckier than others in finding a job?
- What are the factors to consider in choosing a career?
- What job opportunities are available?
- Why are social workers needed more in big towns?

SECTION TWO : MASTERY OF LANGUAGE

(7 points)

*Synonyms: Find in the text words or phrases closest in meaning to the following.*

(a) search (§1)

(b) satisfied (§2)

(c) degree (§3)

*Definitions: Find in the text words or phrases whose definitions follow.*

(a) what exists and may be obtained (§1)

(b) to tell people what you think they should do (§3)

**Transformations:** Complete sentence (b) so that it means the same as sentence (a).

1. (a) Your choice may be limited by the work available in your town.  
(b) The work available .....
2. (a) "I hope I've given you some ideas to think about," the writer said.  
(b) The writer said that .....

**Tenses:** Give the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

Adults are too ambitious. All they want out of life is money, a bank account, a big house, a car ... Our neighbour **(have)** all this and much more but he **(be)** miserable for years. He has climbed the ladder of success and **(find)** that it **(lead)** nowhere. I refuse to be like him.

**Jumbled Sentences:** Reorder the following sentences to make a coherent paragraph. One sentence is irrelevant and must be left out.

- (a) In conclusion, you have to present your most attractive qualities.
- (b) Besides creating a good image, it is important to pay attention to the way you speak
- (c) He is having an interview with a candidate.
- (d) since speech is a reflection of personality.
- (e) To be successful in a job interview,
- (f) you should demonstrate certain personal and professional qualities.

**Dialogue completion:** A and B are speaking with each other. Complete what B says.

A: Have you seen this job offer in the paper?

B: The one about Davies Electronics in Leicester? I've seen it.

A: Well, aren't you going to apply for it?

B: .....

A: What's wrong with the job? It seems interesting.

B: .....

A: Oh, but moving to another town should not be a problem.

B: .....

A: If you don't write to them, you'll never find out.

B: .....

### SECTION THREE : WRITTEN EXPRESSION

(6 points)

Choose one of the following topics.

**Either 1 :** Using the following notes, write a composition of about 120 to 150 words.

Why is work necessary?

— vital need (money)

- food / clothing / medical care / fees / taxes / bills
- economic independence
- enjoy modern facilities
- improve one's standard of living

— satisfaction

- serve others
- meet people
- pleasant surroundings
- give an aim to one's life

**Or 2 :** Write a composition of about 120 to 150 words on the following topic.

In your opinion, which is more satisfying, an intellectual job or a manual one? State your reasons.



## Résumé

Notre recherche vise à examiner la place accordée à l'évaluation dans les écoles moyennes et secondaires Algériennes. Plus précisément, elle porte sur l'évaluation des programmes et des manuels scolaires du cycle moyen, les deux manuels scolaires du cycle secondaire, à savoir: ***Getting Through*** et ***New Prospects***, ainsi que les examens du BAC et du BEM. Pour atteindre notre but, nous avons opté pour les deux approches intitulées '*Apprendre pour Maîtrise*' et la '*Taxonomy de Bloom*'. Notre étude a montré que le matériel évalué est caractérisé par des aspects positifs et négatifs. Premièrement et commençant par les programmes du cycle moyen, nous constatons que ces derniers comprennent des extraits qui montrent l'importance de l'évaluation, surtout celle, formative, ce qui est un aspect positif. Cependant, les programmes ne mettent pas les enseignants tout comme les élèves sur la bonne voie qui leur indique comment procéder à cette tâche (l'évaluation) d'une manière efficace et systématique. Concernant les livres scolaires du cycle susdit, il apparaît qu'ils incluent un nombre d'exercices assez appréciable pour évaluer les acquis des élèves. Toutefois, ces exercices ne représentent pas une partie d'évaluation bien élaborée; formée de tests pour vérifier la progression des élèves d'une manière formative. Revenons aux deux livres de lycée cités auparavant, notre étude révèle que l'évaluation telle qu'elle est incorporée dans ces manuels ne peut servir beaucoup le contrôle des acquis. Finalement, notre mémoire de Magistère montre qu'il est temps pour intégrer des examens d'oral au niveau du BAC et du BEM et de se concentrer sur le fait que la langue est un tout qui ne doit pas être séparé et que l'évaluation doit aussi porter sur les niveaux de réflexion plus avancés tels que l'analyse et la synthèse.