
Language Assessment- Classroom Profile for Mixed Level Students

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Abstract: This article presents a classroom-based language assessment profile for a mixed-level group of 11th-grade students in an IELTS preparatory course in Uzbekistan. The class consists of 12 learners aged 16–17, with English proficiency levels ranging from IELTS Band 3.0 to 4.0. Drawing on Fulcher (2016) and Sawaki (2016), the study emphasizes the importance of aligning assessment design with learner diversity to ensure validity and promote motivation. Three representative learner profiles—Umid, Malika, and Sirojiddin—illustrate key differences in linguistic ability, learning style, and affective needs, including support for mild dyslexia. External assessment is shaped by the IELTS Academic exam, whose band descriptors guide instructional goals and progress monitoring. To complement this, teacher-created writing assessments modeled after IELTS Writing Tasks 1 and 2 are used to foster academic writing competence through criterion-referenced feedback and differentiated scaffolding. Adaptations such as audio-based brainstorming, color-coded essay structures, and multisensory supports promote inclusive learning and reduce test-related anxiety. The article concludes that differentiated, criterion-referenced classroom assessments not only prepare students for external examinations but also build autonomy, confidence, and long-term academic language skills.

Keys words: language assessment, mixed-level classroom, IELTS preparation, differentiation, classroom-based assessment, Uzbekistan

Introduction. 1. General Description of Learners. The learners described here are 11th-grade students attending an IELTS preparatory course in Uzbekistan. There are 12 students in total, aged between 16 and 17 years old. All students are enrolled in a Russian-language school system and come from homes where Uzbek, Russian, or Tajik is spoken. Their English proficiency currently ranges from Band 3.0 to Band 4.0 on the IELTS scale, placing them in the category of basic users with limited operational command of the language, according to Sawaki (2016). Most students began learning English in Grade 2 or 3, primarily through grammar-based instruction. These curricula typically lacked communicative and task-based language learning, focusing instead on structural drills and vocabulary memorization. A few students have had supplementary exposure through private tutoring or instruction at language centers. These extra classes often followed Cambridge exam preparation or the IELTS Academic module. As this is an IELTS-focused course, the main instructional goals are to improve the learners' listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills, alongside academic vocabulary development, grammatical accuracy, and strategies for test-taking. Most students aim to sit for the IELTS Academic test within 6 to 12 months.

Detailed Description of Individual Learners					
Pseudonym	IELTS Band	Strengths & Needs	Background	Learning Style	Motivation
Umid	4.0 (L-4.5, R-4, W-3.5, S-3.5)	Strong listening; weak fluency in writing	Informal exposure to English via YouTube; cousin in the UK	Auditory; prefers podcasts	Highly motivated; wants to study abroad
Malika	3.5 (L-3, R-3.5, W-3, S-4)	Confident speaker; avoids grammar drills	One year with private tutor	Visual; responds well to color-coded notes	Moderately motivated; aspires to be a nurse
Sirojiddin	3.0 (L-3, R-2.5, W-3, S-3)	Needs extra time and structured input	Mild dyslexia; no private instruction	Needs scaffolded routines; multisensory aids	Easily discouraged; needs external encouragement

These three students differ significantly in their cognitive, affective, and sociocultural profiles. As Fulcher (2016) emphasizes, differentiating instruction according to learner needs supports both assessment validity and learner progress.

- Umid benefits from self-selected, engaging input like TED Talks and podcasts and tends to perform better with tasks that involve listening. His motivation is strong, driven by clear academic and career goals abroad.
- Malika demonstrates stronger speaking confidence but tends to avoid traditional grammar-focused learning. She responds well to visually organized materials and seems to thrive in collaborative, interactive environments.
- Sirojiddin requires a more structured learning environment, as he has mild dyslexia and limited previous exposure to English beyond the classroom. He benefits from explicit instruction, additional processing time, and multisensory supports that allow for repeated and reinforced learning opportunities.

2. External Language Assessment. The primary external assessment shaping this course is the IELTS Academic exam. This high-stakes, norm-referenced international test assesses proficiency across four skill areas: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. IELTS is used worldwide to evaluate readiness for academic study in English-speaking contexts. According to Sawaki (2016), while IELTS is primarily norm-referenced, its detailed criterion-referenced rubrics especially in writing and speaking allow for nuanced feedback and classroom-aligned assessment. In this course, the IELTS band descriptors provide clear benchmarks for both instruction and progress measurement. For instance, learners aiming to move from Band 3.0 to Band 5.0 need instruction targeting fluency, grammatical accuracy, lexical range, and task response. Teachers use the band descriptors not only to give students a realistic understanding of their level, but also to scaffold targeted improvements. One of the challenges of relying on external tests like IELTS is the potential for negative washback where the pressure of test preparation narrows the curriculum (Cheng & Curtis, 2012). To mitigate this, instruction includes skill-building tasks that develop academic English for long-term goals, not just exam success.

3. Teacher-Created Assessment. In preparation for the IELTS Academic exam, the classroom uses a series of teacher-created assessments modeled after IELTS Writing Tasks 1 and 2. These assessments are designed to both reflect the format of the official test and support the unique learning profiles of

individual students. Timed writing tasks are regularly administered to simulate real test conditions and build learner stamina. Additionally, peer and teacher feedback is provided using simplified rubrics based on the IELTS band descriptors.

Teacher-Created Writing Assessment Overview				
Assessment Type	Task Description	Focus Areas	Feedback Mechanism	Adaptation for Learners
Task 1	Summarize visual data (e.g., graphs, pie charts)	Describing trends, using comparatives, lexical variety	Simplified rubric: cohesion, grammar, vocabulary, task achievement	Sirojiddin: visual aids + sentence frames
WTask 2	Write an opinion or argument essay on an academic topic	Argument structure, coherence, grammar accuracy, lexical resource	Peer checklist + teacher rubric	Malika: color-coded outlines; Umid: audio prompts & brainstorming sessions

These assessments serve a dual purpose: they develop core academic writing skills and prepare learners for IELTS success. Students are taught to revise and edit their own work with the aid of band descriptor checklists. According to Sawaki (2016), this type of criterion-referenced classroom assessment helps foster learner autonomy, allowing students to track their progress and identify specific areas for improvement.

Teacher-created rubric (adapted from IELTS)

Criteria	Band 1–2 (Limited)	Band 3–4 (Developing)	Band 5–6 (Competent)	Band 7+ (Strong)
Task Achievement	Task is incomplete or off-topic	Ideas are partially developed	Addresses task with relevant ideas	Fully addresses task, ideas clear and well-supported
Coherence and Cohesion	Sentences are disconnected or hard to follow	Basic organization; limited linking words	Clear paragraphing; linking devices with some errors	Logical flow, cohesive devices used effectively
Lexical Resource	Very limited vocabulary; basic word repetition	Some range of vocabulary; occasional misuse	Adequate range, some variety and attempts at precision	Wide range of vocabulary; accurate, flexible use
Grammatical Accuracy	Frequent errors affecting meaning	Some control of grammar, but frequent errors	Generally accurate with occasional errors	High accuracy; variety of complex structures used

Differentiation is central to the assessment process. For instance:

- Umid, with strong listening skills, benefits from pre-writing brainstorming activities that include audio materials (e.g., podcast segments or recorded prompts), followed by transcription practice and vocabulary extraction.
- Malika, a visual learner, is provided with color-coded essay structures, linking words charts, and visuals to support idea generation. She thrives in group brainstorming sessions that reduce anxiety and increase confidence.

- Sirojiddin, who has mild dyslexia, is given additional processing time and structured scaffolds such as sentence starters, vocabulary banks, and graphic organizers. He also responds well to multisensory input that pairs reading and listening.

Conclusion. By aligning assessments to student needs, the teacher ensures that the preparation is inclusive, meaningful, and empowering. As Fulcher (2016) emphasizes, when classroom assessments are responsive to individual differences, they enhance not only validity but also learner engagement and motivation.

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