Tiered Assessment: Supporting and Challenging Students While Utilizing Skills-Based Grading

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Tiered Assessment: Challenging Students While Utilizing Skills-Based Grading

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Research Question
• How does tiered assessment facilitate skills-based grading within foreign language learning?

Literature Review
• Many researchers found that the more options students had, the better they scored on assessments (Kang, 2014; Tomlinson et al, 2008).
• Generally, tiered assessment bettered students’ average scores, especially when students reassessed (Tomlinson et al, 2008).
• Few studies addressed tiered assessment specifically within the foreign language classroom.

Methodology
• Participants were 23 students in a Spanish I class in a rural school district.
• I created tiered assessments to better target specific learning objectives in order to better demonstrate which areas students needed to focus on.
• The concept of Vygotsky’s scaffolding and Thominson’s differentiation guided the implementation of tiered assessment in this study.
• Data Analysis included analysis of student work and field notes.

Results and Data Analysis
• Students who did not meet or exceed the learning objective were more likely to have had a scaffold.
• Students who had a scaffold the first time and reassessed without a scaffold were more likely to meet or exceed the learning objective.
• 100% of students who were originally assessed without a scaffold or were provided an extra challenge met or exceeded standards on 100% of the assessments.
• A possible reason for the improvement was that students were required to complete extra tasks to work toward mastery of the learning objective.

Conclusion
• The implementation of tiered assessment is most conducive with formative assessment.
• This study was limited to only an entry level Spanish course, so higher-level learning methods were not often implemented.
• Further research should be done keeping in mind the changes and development currently occurring within standards-based grading.

Figure 1. Data reflecting how many students received a scaffold, used a scaffold, and met or exceeded the learning objective on three assessments. Roughly 50% of students who were provided a scaffold met or exceeded the standard of the learning objective assessed on the particular assessment.