



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2019; 5(10): 327-328
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 16-08-2019
Accepted: 21-09-2019

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Benefits of project based assessment in teaching foreign languages

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Abstract

Having a planned lesson and accomplish completely of completely result in students' achievements. One of the important parts of the lesson, measuring plays one of the most crucial roles to prepare students for future life by integrating real life and curriculum. Nowadays teachers use traditional and non – traditional assessments to measure students' skills. In the article we would like to discuss one of the effective non – traditional assessments, this is project based assessment as well as its benefits to students.

Keywords: measuring, traditional and nonconventional assessment, project based assessment, real life, work independently

Introduction

As we have above mentioned, organizing interesting assessment and fair measuring of knowledge are the most essential factors which motivate learners' continuous study in educational establishments. In order to evaluate students' progress on foreign language skills teachers have them assessments and testing. Generally, both of them are used practically to measure learners' skills, abilities, or knowledge but there is deference between them. According to Law and Eckes, testing is formal and often standardized, assessment is based on a collection of information about what students know and what they are able to do. Whereas Mitchell claims that testing can be defined as "single-occasion, unidimensional, timed exercise, usually in multiple choice or short-answer form."^[9] Dietel, Herman, and Knuth define assessment as "any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses" (online document)^[2].

Assessment is divided into two types such as traditional assessment that comprises a test or quiz, with questions being multiple choice, true or false, matching, short answer, and essay and non – traditional one, which is based on ways to judge students' language skills according to their continuous knowledge or understanding, not being used traditional tools of assessment^[3].

21st century is demanding from every field to use range of approaches and methods, including project based assessment, which motivates students to study and work independently, creatively, and cooperatively as well as thinking critically and work in deadline.

Above mentioned requirements include in one of the most applying non – traditional assessment, project based assessment which we are going to describe the importance and effectiveness of this kind of awareness measurement in our article.

Literature Review

In Longman English on-line dictionary the term "project" is defined as: "A part of a school or college course that involves careful study of a particular subject over a period of time"^[5]

The first study is a longitudinal research done by Summers & Dickinson^[9]. They have studied how project-based instructions have influenced learners' achievement. The next study is the one conducted by Tiangco. He scrutinized project-based assessment for ESL and its realization in Taiwan^[10].

Blumenfeld, as quoted in Land and Greene mentions that "...project based learning encourages meaningful learning through student directed investigation...pursue solutions to

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open-ended problems...or products of their understanding”.

[4] Bender states concerning project based learning as: “Working cooperatively to solve a problem” [1].

In addition to those, Urvi Bhargi gave relevant definition to project learning and indicated in his article “12 Reasons why project-based Learning is better than traditional classroom learning as in the following: “12 Reasons: Scope of work, real world problem simulation, improves the interpersonal skills of a student, concept and creativity development, determines the actual knowledge, choice of selecting real world problems, new style assessment of students’ skills hone, visits to field-sites of real world problems, direct demonstration of the capability, technology inclusion, tracking of progress, end-to-end problem-solving skills” [11].

Benefits of PBA in EFL classroom

When we reviewed literature there are given a comparison of traditional and non – traditional assessment and advantages and disadvantages between them. In terms of project based assessment, it is mentioned that it develops the most essential skills, communicative and interpersonal technical and professional skills. At the same, according to scholars such as Simonson and Rentz claim that it requires from teachers considerably plenty of time to assess their students’ knowledge in comparison with other traditional tools including multiple-choice tests [7]. However we focus on only benefits of this kind assessment. Project based assessment:

- Motivates students’ own decisions less being controlled by teachers;
- Encourages students to deepen their knowledge and understand concepts in reality based on their interest or to be a specialist on a scope;
- gives learners an opportunity to finish their projects with partners or themselves;
- makes learners work in deadline which there will be a period of time to complete their work more creatively;
- identifies learners strong and weak sides before, during, after the project is done and students will have a chance to improve their skills from one work to another;
- having different forms such as various forms, such as plans, art work, research proposals, multimedia presentations multimedia presentation, role-play, and written report [8];
- having integration between being aware and accomplishing

Conclusion

Students differ from each other. Their interests and intentions are not the same time. For this reason many teachers assess their students differently and various forms. But in most situations, students themselves prefer to have them prepared more multiple choice tests such IELTS and TOEFL to continue their education at higher education in abroad. Unfortunately, they will frequently fail or have difficulties to adapt in real life conditions no matter they have good results in their study. In this case teachers’ role is to clarify their students’ misconceptions by using multiple choice tests to reach their goals. In addition to this, a teacher should act a facilitator and have project based assessments more frequently according to learners’ specialties and interests so that they will positively assessed by the community and by their employers in the future.

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