

Teachers' Assessment Practices in English for Young Learners Classroom

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Abstract

Teachers' assessment in EYL classrooms is essential since the young learners have different characteristics from adult learners. Research shows that the teachers often find it challenging to implement the teaching and learning process due to a lack of clear guidelines or sufficient training. Consequently, if the teachers lack of competence in teaching young learners, it can be assumed that they too lack of competence in assessing young learners. This study aims to investigate the assessment techniques employed by teachers in assessing EYL, the language skills assessed, and to identify the difficulties encountered by teachers during assessment process. The research design of the study is a case study. The data were collected through 32 classroom observations, interviews with 3 English teachers and document analysis on students' work and assessment records. The main results of the study, First, the study indicates that EYL teachers conducted four assessment techniques, namely on-the-run assessment, self and peer assessment, classroom tests, and portfolios assessment. The most frequently conducted assessment technique was classroom tests and on-the-run assessment. Second, the study also reveals that teachers conducted assessment for all language skills and the most frequently language skill assessed by the three teachers was the writing skill, and followed by speaking. Third, the difficulties encountered by teachers during assessment process were mainly derived from the limitation of time, large number of students in the classroom and the students' limited vocabulary that leading to reluctant to practice, despite the teachers had attempted various techniques in assessing young learners in the EYL Classrooms. Hence, they should consider alternative assessment, rather than only traditional paper and pencil tests.

Keywords: *Assessment, Teachers' assessment practices, English young Learners*

INTRODUCTION

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a type of assessment in formal education, covering all levels from basic to higher education. Other assessment types include Assessment of Learning (AoL) and Assessment as Learning (AaL), as well as formative and summative assessments. AfL is often equated with formative assessment, though they are not identical. According to Stiggins, formative assessment involves frequent evaluations, while AfL emphasizes continuity and informing students.

AfL has been extensively studied, with experts such as Bartlett, Berry, Laveault & Allal, and Spendlove writing about it. Researchers have explored various aspects of AfL, including its application in writing, prerequisites for implementation, teachers' perspectives, and meta-analyses in East Asian countries. Despite its benefits, many teachers

lack understanding of AfL, with only 10 to 25 percent implementing it in their classrooms. Barriers include limited comprehension and external pressures, like parents' focus on national exams. This article aims to clarify AfL's concept, objectives, prerequisites, and implementation in schools.

METHOD

This article was written using the bibliography method (Ridley, 2012; Onwuedbuzie & Frels, 2016; and Dickson, Cherry, and Boland, 2017). The mechanisms or steps we take are as follows. First, search for and select references that are relevant to the topic discussed (i.e. assessment for learning). Second, read and understand the references was selected. Third, carry out a critical analysis of the selected references, by identify the strengths and weaknesses of each selected reference. Fourth, do comparative analysis of selected references based on the results of critical analysis. Fifth, make decisions, namely which references to choose and use as material for writing This article. The references we use are a combination of references in the form of books and research articles from credible scientific journals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This article explains and discusses four aspects of Assessment for Learning (AfL): its concept, objectives, prerequisites, and implementation.

1. AfL Concept: Klenowski (2009) defines AfL as everyday practice by students, teachers, and peers to reflect and respond to information, enhancing learning.
 - Everyday practice: Part of interactive teaching and learning.
 - By students, teachers, and peers: Student-centered, leading to autonomy.
 - Seeks, reflects upon, and responds to: Gathering and interpreting evidence of abilities
 - Enhances ongoing learning: Improves learning quality.
 - The Assessment Reform Group (1989) outlines seven criteria for effective AfL, including integration with learning, clear objectives, and feedback.
 - Sadeghi and Rahmati (2017) differentiate AfL from AoL and AaL by time, objectives, tools, main components, and assessors.
2. AfL Objectives:
 - ✓ The main goal is to improve learning quality and foster independent learners (Black and William, 1998; Miedijensky and Tal, 2016; Kippers et al., 2018).
 - ✓ Cognition stage: Gaining knowledge and skills.
 - ✓ Metacognition stage: Understanding and regulating learning.
 - ✓ Autonomy stage: Becoming independent learners.
 - ✓ Teachers should use various methods to check student understanding and ensure objectives are met. Developing metacognitive abilities requires student-centered approaches like inquiry-based and project-based learning.
 - ✓ Independent learners plan, organize, monitor progress, seek practice opportunities, and use resources and technology to manage learning.

The article provides detailed explanations on these aspects to enhance understanding and implementation of AfL in schools.

CONCLUSION

From the Results and Discussion section, it is concluded that Assessment for Learning (AfL) is an integral part of daily learning activities involving teachers and students. It focuses on seeking, reflecting, and responding to academic information from dialogue, demonstrations, and observations to improve learning quality. The main goal of AfL is to enhance the learning process, helping students gain knowledge, develop metacognitive abilities, and become independent learners. Successful implementation of AfL requires fulfilling prerequisites across four categories: assessment, teacher, student, and context.

Despite its importance, not all teachers apply AfL due to obstacles like national exams, teacher dominance, and limited knowledge of AfL. To address these issues, the following suggestions are provided:

1. Curriculum developers should create detailed guidelines for AfL implementation.
2. Principals should support and motivate teachers to focus on quality learning, not just assessment.
3. Teachers need to enhance their AfL knowledge and skills through updated references and discussions with colleagues in forums like MGMP.

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