

A STUDY ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Continuous assessment is a really necessary part of education. The goal of this research is to learn about the attitudes of students towards continuous assessment. The participants in this study were 30 English-majored students at Tay Do University. Interview was used as the main instrument to identify students' attitudes towards continuous assessment. The results showed that most of the students thought that continuous assessment was necessary for them in learning. In general, the student recognized that continuous assessment had both negative and positive effects on their study. Continuous assessment helped them have effective learning and working habits, improve academic motivation and achievement. However, some student also thought that continuous assessment was time-consuming and it didn't show students' overall performance.

Key words: *Continuous assessment, Attitude towards assessment, Assessment*

1. INTRODUCTION

In outcome-based education, continuous assessment plays a pivotal role. Continuous assessment helps students have a serious attitude to study, know their own strengths and weaknesses, improve where they have problems and develop themselves, invest in learning more to have better academic performance. Assessment is associated with teaching and learning, helping to collect data about teaching and learning (Hanna & Dettmer, 2004)

However, continuous assessment also brings problems for students. The continuous assessment may be time-consuming for both teachers and students, and the results do not always reflect exactly students' academic performance because they can cheat in the exam process. In addition, it may have negative effects on students' health such as insomnia, eyestrain, not getting enough sleep. More seriously, continuous assessment could cause students to become discouraged and drop out of school. Therefore, it is important to know more about the attitude of students toward continuous assessment. The purpose of this investigation is to investigate the attitude of students toward continuous assessment and offer solutions that can help students find ways to learn better.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definitions of assessment

Assessment is an essential part of language teaching and learning. Assessment is the process of gathering information about how learners are progressing in their tasks. According to Mcmillan (1997, p.10) "There is a change from assessment that focuses on objective testing at the end of instruction assessment during instruction to help teachers make moment by moment decision".

Similarly, in the word of Hughes (2009, p.5), "Testing is not only the way in which information about people's language ability is gathered. It is just one form of assessment and other methods will often be more appropriate". That is to say, assessment is an umbrella term for referring the linguistic capacity of students.

According to Hughes (2003), there are the two forms of assessment. The formative and summative assessment, Formative assessment is the assessment used by teachers to check on the progress of their students to see how far they have mastered. What they should have learned, and then use this information to modify their future teaching plans. Such type of assessment is very useful to provide the feedback to the students. On the other hand, summative assessment is used at the end term, semester, or year in order to measure what has been achieved by groups and individuals.

Assessment covers all methods of measurement and evaluation, whereas testing is a more specific term that refers to one of the tools or means of

assessment. Thus, assessment might also indicate as assignments, presentation or class work that helps a teacher get on ideas of what a student knows that helps a teacher get on ideas of what a student knows and what he doesn't know.

2.2. The importance of continuous assessment

The purpose of continuous assessment is to collect evidence related to student learning in the learning process to provide feedback to students and teachers to know what they have done compared to with the goals, requirements of the lesson, of the program and what they have not done to regulate teaching and learning activities. Continuous assessments make recommendations so that students can do better at what they have not done, thereby improving learning outcomes in the next time.

In addition to timely encouragement, continuous assessment also focuses on developing present, find out the shortcomings, errors, factors that adversely affect the results of learning and training of students to have timely adjustment support solutions to help improve and improve the quality teaching and education.

Continuous assessment also helps diagnose or measure a student's current knowledge and skills in order to predict or predict how future lessons or curriculum should be developed for the future.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

In this study, the participants were 30 students from English 16A class at Tay Do University. There were 13 males and 17 females participated in the research. Their ages ranged from 19 to 20. All of them were sophomores, so they considered as at equal level. Especially, most of them had experienced continuous assessment including examinations, finals, quizzes, and graded papers in their learning process.

3.2. Instruments

Interview questions were used as an instrument of this study. They are used to collect the participants' opinions about continuous assessment. The interview consisted of nine open questions. Thirty students were invited for face-to-face interviews. Each interview took place for about 20 minutes.

4. RESULTS

The data collected from students' answers in the interviews were presented in the following sections.

4.1. The general perception of students towards continuous assessment

The results of the interviews showed that over seventy percent of the students agreed continuous assessment was very necessary.

"My idea is that I find continuous assessment quite important. It creates people's self-education, their ability to understand, in turn, identify the strengths and weaknesses to overcome in learning". (Male, English translation)

Besides, there was a few students who felt it was unnecessary. The followings are some examples from the students' opinions.

"I felt that assessment, like tests, seemed to be unnecessary. I was getting really depressed every time I heard that, and because of grades, I was so stressed out at school." (Female, English translation)

4.2. The benefits of continuous assessment

Most of the students completely agreed with advantages of continuous assessment. They gave many ideas about the benefits they could get from the continuous assessment.

"Continuous assessment like regular tests, midterm test, final test helps me find and detect errors, things that I don't understand and helps me deal and correct them so that I can have better learning outcomes"(Male, English translation)

Besides that, the students also shared with us about the way they were studying independent

"For every test, I have to work with my actual ability to show my understanding of the lectures, and therefore it helps us gain more and more knowledge to learn. In my opinion, continuous assessment allows me to fully demonstrate my knowledge and understanding". (Male)

Continuous assessment also created motivation for students to study better.

"I think that continuous assessment is very effective. It gives me more motivation to study harder if the score is not good."(Female, English translation)

Continuous assessment showed your knowledge taking through the lessons

"It shows my ability to learn and understand. Because only if you really understand the lessons, you can do your best on the exam and get good results." (Male, English translation)

4.3. The drawbacks of continuous assessment

Some students felt that continuous assessment was an obstacle in studying.

"Continuous assessment like exams or tests often makes me feel stressed. Moreover, when I am in the exam or test, I feel anxious and uncomfortable, which is not good for my health." (Female, English translation)

"I often feel uncomfortable in an exam environment, so I am unable to reach my true ability due to stress. Poor exam results cause me discouragement in learning." (Female, English translation)

Continuous assessment that was not only necessary but also consuming studying-time.

"I think that tests take a lot of time. Every class has 45 minutes, if you spend 15 minutes or all that time for tests, it takes a lot of time". (Male, English translation)

"In my opinion, lots of tests will take a lot of time, and we will lose time to learn new knowledge that we need to learn". (Female, English translation)

Furthermore, according to the students, the test or exam results just showed one part of their knowledge.

"Exams or tests only test part of knowledge I have learnt in class, rather than all of it, so sometimes what I have learnt before may be missed or ignored." (Female, English translation)

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to find out the attitude of students toward continuous assessment. The results showed that most of the students recognized the benefits of continuous assessment and thought that it was actually useful for learning. In general, it makes them eager to learn effectively to get high scores. However, other negative aspects of continuous assessment such as causing stress and cheating also need to be considered.

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