

Student and Teacher Attitude towards a Performance Assessment of College English Courses Connected to Extra-curricular Activities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate college students' and teachers' attitude towards a performance assessment connected with extra-curricular activities to see how students and teachers understand it. To do this, a quantitative survey was given to 956 sophomore students who enrolled for an English conversation course at a university near Seoul. The survey was also completed by eight native English instructors who taught the English conversation program at the same university. The results show that both teachers and students agreed on the necessity of a performance assessment connected with extra-curricular activities; Both teachers and students believed that the performance assessment connected with extra-curricular activities was helpful to improve students' general English ability; Students prefer a one-on-one interview to a group presentation, even though they believe the group presentation improves their linguistic ability; Teachers believe the performance assessment connected with extra-curricular activities helps, but do not strongly agree with maintaining the performance test due to a heavy workload. The pedagogical implications were provided.

Keywords

Performance assessment, college English conversation courses, student perception, teacher perceptions

Introduction

A number of studies have been conducted highlighting the necessity of a performance assessment (J. Han & J. Jeon, 2001; C. Kim, 1999; S. Lee, 2000; J. Lee, 2002; K. Pyo, 2003), since the introduction of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1990) in Korea.

As Kim (1999) points out, traditional discrete-point tests such as multiple choice, paper and pencil, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false tests can only measure what information and/or knowledge the learners have memorized instead of whether the learners can actually use the skills and/or knowledge to produce a product. On a similar line of thought (J. Lee, 2002) argues that a language assessment should be focused on 'what learners can do with the language, not what they know about the language.' Simply put, a performance assessment reflects what learners will use in real-world situations.

1 Method

1.1 Participants

Eight native English instructors and 969 sophomore students enrolled in an English conversation course at a university near Seoul were the participants of this study. The teacher participants consisted of five males and three females, ranging from 30-40 years in age, from various countries such as America, England, Ireland and New Zealand. Of the 969 participating students, 800 were sophomores and 156 were juniors and seniors. The gender ratio of the student participants was 2:8 (male: female), consisting of 773 girls and 196 boys.

1.2 Course description

The course is 15 weeks long, and the class met once a week for 100 minutes. The average class size is 20 students, with some fluctuation in the size of classes. The course is partially standardized, using a shared syllabus. The course syllabus outlines 15% participation, 15% attendance, 10% project-related homework (submitting a PPT for the group presentation), 10% project presentation, 10% English clinic

(students visit their professors for a 1:1 interview to demonstrate their project outline), and 40% for a written final exam.

2 Results

Table 1: Teacher and Student Preferences Percentage of Spoken and Written Tests for Conversation Courses

		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	S	7	17	27	36	13
	T	0	0	12.5	37.5	50
2	S	9	25	30	27	9
	T	12.5	0	12.5	37.5	37.5
3	S	6	12	29	41	13
	T	12.5	25	25	25	12.5
4	S	5	11	34	36	14
	T	0	12.5	25	50	12.5

Note: SD(Strongly Disagree), D(Disagree), N(Neutral), A(Agree), SA(Strongly Agree)

1. Speaking tests are necessary for conversation classes (87.5%).
2. Both speaking and written tests are necessary (75%).
3. Speaking tests should be conducted only once during the semester (38%).
4. Speaking tests should be conducted several times per course(62.5%).

Table 2: Teacher and Student Attitude Percentage of the Structure and Assessment Methods Selected for the Performance Assessment

		SD	D	N	A	SA
5	S	6	14	29	35	16
	T	0	25	37.5	25	12.5
6	S	7	23	34	25	11
	T	25	25	37.5	0	12.5
7	S	2	12	36	39	11
	T	0	0	50	37.5	12.5
8	S	4	13	40	33	10
	T	25	12.5	0	37.5	25
9	S	3	10	35	38	14
	T	0	0	0	50	50
10	S	3	8	36	41	12
	T	12.5	0	50	25	12.5
11	S	2	9	34	41	14
	T	12.5	0	62.5	25	0

Note: SD(Strongly Disagree), D(Disagree), N(Neutral), A(Agree), SA(Strongly Agree)

5. A 1-on-1 interview is the best performance assessment method (38%).
6. English Clinic with a Group presentation is better than an interview to assess speaking skills (12.5%).

7. The presentation topic plays an important role in the performance assessment (50%).
8. English Clinic improves speaking competence (62.5%).
9. English Clinic improves the group presentation (100%).
10. The performance assessment consisting of homework (PPT submission) and a group presentation is adequate (37.5%).
11. The current structure of the performance assessment should be maintained (25%).

Table 3: Teacher and Student Attitude Percentage of the Performance Assessment and Its Effect

		SD	D	N	A	SA
12	S	3	11	47	31	8
	T	0	0	25	50	25
13	S	3	8	29	47	13
	T	0	12.5	12.5	50	12.5
14	S	2	11	41	37	9
	T	0	0	12.5	50	37.5
15	S	3	15	39	35	8
	T	0	12.5	25	37.5	25
16	S	2	12	42	35	9
	T	0	12.5	25	37.5	25
17	S	2	8	39	41	10
	T	12.5	0	37.5	25	25

Note: SD(Strongly Disagree), D(Disagree), N(Neutral), A(Agree), SA(Strongly Agree)

12. The performance assessment improves overall English ability (75%).
13. The group presentation improves linguistic competence (62.5%).
14. The group presentation is a good chance for students to interact (87.5%).
15. The performance assessment provides a positive learning environment (62.5%).
16. The performance assessment is a creative and meaningful task (62.5%).
17. The performance assessment helps teachers measure students' overall English ability (50%).

In sum, teachers preferred multiple types of tests throughout the semester, but students do not show clear preferences. Students prefer a one-on-one interview to a group presentation, even though they believe the group presentation improves their linguistic ability.

References

- Han, Jong-Im & Jeon, Ji-Hyun. (2001). A study of performance assessment of English oral communicative competence based on the 7th national curriculum. *Foreign Languages Education*, 8(2), 193-222.