

A Study on “Teachers Beliefs and Practices in Higher Education”

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Abstract

Assessment is a part of teaching and learning process which has a large impact on the learning process of students. Teachers have a role to teach and facilitate the students to develop their abilities. However, the research which focused on the beliefs of the teacher about assessment has not been done much by researcher, especially in higher education in the EFL context. The term ‘belief’ itself is defined as what people think and do. Pajares defined belief as what people say, intend and do as the impression of someone’s judgement over the things around her. In education, beliefs of teachers about teaching and learning influence their instructions process in the classroom. According to, the focus of teachers’ beliefs are on how they think about the best way to do to have an effective teaching and learning. The beliefs of the teachers also mean as their convictions and used as a guide which are considered to be true and act as a media that can perceive new experiences. When the teachers assess their students, their judgement on the students’ behaviour and performance are shaped by the theories from their teaching and learning experience. Teachers’ beliefs are being shown through their selection of approaches and materials, their procedures, judgements and behaviour in teaching and learning process. It influences not only on what to teach and how to do it, but also how to assess their students’ development ability.

Key Words: develop, learning, model, practice, role, skills, students, teaching, traditional

Introduction

The students’ learning needs nowadays do not fit the traditional model. They are no longer learn the learning facts and basic skills, but the students need to acquire more complex skills in conceptualisation and problem-solving. Students are expected to use and develop the knowledge they get, connect all the knowledge they have to build understanding of the topics that have been determined, practice them with assignments and present the final results through communication. They need learning experiences from those kind of tasks that they may expect to face in real life. Authentic assessment is needed to achieve the purpose. It helps teachers to analyze the students’ ability improvement that is consistent with the environment outside the class. Authentic assessment is designed to show their ability of the skills and competencies needed to face real-life problems and also provides feedback to inform them about their development. Performance assessment is one of the assessments that fulfill all of those characteristics.

Performance assessment is a method that measure the knowledge and skills that have been mastered by the students. It offers more than one ways for the students to do the demonstration of their content knowledge and sets of additional skills within the classroom. These additional skills are attitude, creativity, ethics, honesty, teamwork and others behaviors and dispositions that needed in the classroom and real-world. Performance assessment assess productive and observable skills, like oral production, written production,

open-ended responses and integrated performance of content-valid tasks. The types of knowledge and skills that should be mastered by the students are able to create, reflect, solve problems, collect and use informations. The teachers should assess not only these aspects but also on how they use them to perform the tasks.

In the implementation of performance assessment, it needs a concrete task, also its coherence with response format and scoring system done by a student and scored by a rater or teacher who assess his/her performances based on the provided procedure and the accuracy of the response. Gareis supported that a cogent set of intended learning outcomes, authentic performance task, appropriate and feasible response format, accurate and clear prompt, and accurate and reasonably objective performance criteria should be included in implementing performance assessment. Ruiz-Primo and Shavelson also made a frame work of performance assessment that consists of the components of its assessment which is needed in its implementation.

Intended learning outcome or learning objective is general statement to be achieved in teaching learning process which is made by the teacher. It is very important to be achieved by the learners in order to know their capabilities in mastering the lessons. It is a result statement that captures specifically what knowledge, skills, and attitude that should be achieved for the learners, while for the teachers, they should be able to demonstrate all of them in order to help the learners achieved the learning objectives. Tasks, that consist of significant problems and require solutions that use concrete materials correlating with the actions of the students. Wren states that performance task is a structured situation where the materials given and requested information or action are demonstrated to an individual, who generate a response that can be assessed using explicit standards. The performance tasks consist of problems that are targeting the students' knowledge and content as well as their ability in using these skills for reasoning and problem-solving. It also should reflect the real problems that appear in the real-world (authentic). These tasks are very useful to be practiced and used repeatedly because it requires the students to apply their skill and knowledge.

Response-format is the media that is used by the teachers to get the students' information of the assessment. Mislevy and Knowles state that in educational assessment, there are two response-formats available that can be used to collect performance information of the students, that are: (a) selected-response items (where the students are choosing from the choices available, for example multiple-choice, matching or true-false) and (b) constructed-response items (where the students construct their answers by their own responses, for example short-answers or essays). Prompts are usually used to help in teaching, reminding, and reinforcing students abilities in compiling tasks or practicing set of skills. It can be used also to increase the possibilities of the students to show the desired response. Prompts can be for challenging the students in completing the tasks, but must be recognizable and easily interpreted by them. There are six types of prompts that usually used by the instructors in guiding their students, that are: (a) physical prompts, (b) verbal prompts, (c) model prompts, (d) gestural prompts, (e) visual prompts and (f) propositional prompts. A scoring system, consists not only the judgment of the right answers, but also the reasons of the answers used to do the tasks. The performance assessments scoring should always be made before the tasks and the assessment are being developed.

According to, there are three scoring system that usually used by a teacher in assessing students' performance. The scoring system are rubrics, check list and rating scale. These components of performance assessment are used by the researcher to define the beliefs of the teachers about this assessment and how it influence its implementation.

Stiggins adds that the teachers should use another approach to assess their students. They should use assessment not only to measure students' progress continuously, but also to show and tell them about the useful information that they can use in the real practice. Recently, assessment discourse has identifies that feedback for the students is central in teaching and learning process. When the forms of assessment used by the instructors have already authentic, then they should also provide feedbacks on the students performances which reflected on the kinds of real-world feedbacks that they might face. With these new information about assessment, the practices in assessing the students have change the way teachers believe it, especially in India.

In India, the importance of assessment has been realized which is marked by the changes in curriculum from the old paradigm into the newest concept that students as the center of learning. The educators also aware of the role of assessment that should be considered as a process in which its purpose is not only focusing on the score of the students and achieveing the general goals but also to know the students' progress in learning, to tell their weaknessess and help them to cover it. This phenomenon is in line with opinion that teachers cannot fed anything from the outside to teach the students. Piaget also states that they should realize that a classroom is their media to teach the students constructing their knowledge through critical thinking, primary resources and direct activities. While the assessment itself has a role in finding out the extent to which the students improvements in using the knowledge and skills they get during the learning process.

Assessment, however, is not used in traditional way of assessing like focusing only on grades, licensure or etc. It has become a media both for the students and the teachers to learn. But not all of the English teachers in India are aware on the implementation of an appropriate assessment method used to assess the students ability in English for Foreign Language (EFL) classes. It is also valid for the higher education where the ultimate goal of learning English is that the students can apply the knowledge they get from the college in the workplace. Higher education is a stage of education that is expected to be able to prepare students to be ready to enter the world of work after they finish their education. Therefore, the role of assessment is very important for the students to know their strengths and weaknesses in mastering a skill. Assessment also has an important role for lecturers to be able to know the abilities of their students and also help them to be able to compete with graduates from other institutions. The lecturers have responsible to find the assessment criteria that suitable for the students ability development. These criteria are decided based on the students need and also their future workplaces. The lecturers also should consider the autenticity of learning and assessing in order for the students familiar with the condition they have in the work place. The assessment process begins with the construction of reality. Bruner stated that reality construction is the result of meaning making formed by the way of thoughts. These thoughts are based on beliefs that guide them in determining the most effective way to teach and assess the students.

In line with the main aim of assessment process, one of public college under Ministry of Industry in India is applying this goal. This institution has applying performance

assessment to know their students improvement abilities. The challenges they faced were varied when using this assessment method. Because they taught in ESP program, they should give more efforts in doing research about their students future workplace in order to create and conduct a suitable assessment method. Besides that, this assessment needs additional time than traditional assessment in arranging all the aspects of assessment. But, despite with all the challenges faced by the lecturers in implementing the new assessment method, they stated that this kind of assessment method were very helpful in helping the students to master the intended skills and knowledge, along with the attitude that is expected to guide them become independent learners. According to the reason, the aim of this research is to find out the beliefs and practices of the teachers in using performance assessment to assess their students development.

Mubarak's work stated that teachers' belief that performance task is able to outline the realistic context of the content and at the same time, integrate the different learning outcomes of different topics. But there are different facets of student's understanding. According to the teacher interviewed, performance task is unable to measure all the different facets. On the contrary, the crafting of the performance task starts from looking at the different facets of understanding. In addition to Mubarak work, Aliningsih and Sofwan, in their work also stated that all of the participants agreed that using authentic assessment to assess their students improvements lead them to have positive perceptions toward it. Applying a meaningful task which has relation with the students real-world really affected the students results in using their knowledge and skills achieved during teaching and learning process. However, the participants did not apply the assessment process properly because they directly assessed the students without using the recommended instruments, like rubric, checklist, rating scale and many others.

In Chang's work, the participants believed that by using various way in oral language assessment, they could understand better the students oral language abilities in a whole view. Most of them saw assessment as an extention of teaching and learning process and have very important effects on student developments. These beliefs really influenced the participants decision making about the practices of assessment they do. Ping Wang also explained that the participants beliefs and practices were shaped by the objectives of the science schools and The National College Entrance Examination. They used the assessment to evaluate the students performances, to give the score or grade and to guide the instructions. Another aspects that influence their beliefs and prcatices were the culture of the schools, like administration, colleagues, classsize and the length of the class period. While the purpose of this paper is to find out the beliefs of the participants about the implementation of performance assessment in one of public university under Ministry of Industry in India. The research that has been conducted on performance assessment only occurs in secondary schools. In addition, using performance assessment to assess the students in higher education, especially in EFL context, is still very rare. The problems faced by the instructors who have used authentic assessment in assessing their students become as courge for others. In the other hand, this public university under Ministry of Industry in India determined to use performance assessment in assessing their students. This is the reason why the researcher decided to find out the beliefs of the lecturers in choosing to use this assessment.

Research method

This research is qualitative study and case study is used as the approach when conducting it because the main purpose is to find out the actual case. In this research, the researcher is trying to find out teachers' beliefs in implementing performance assessment to assess their students. It uses case study since it can give a deeper information about the subject being researched. The research was conducted during May until July 2022 in a public college under Ministry of Industry in India. It investigates two participants as the teachers in the college who use performance assessment to assess their students' ability. Each of the teacher has 5 and 8 years teaching experiences (further the participants will be called as T1 and T2). Teachers' experience in teaching is really important because it can lead them to create their beliefs in how to manage the class, how to teach the students, how to solve the problems happened in class and how to choose the best assessment systems to assess the students' ability development. The data were taken using interview, observation and document analysis as the data collecting method. The elements of performance assessment from Ruiz-Primo & Shavelson and Gareis are used to define the beliefs of performance assessment.

The analysis was based on the three main stages of data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman. The validity and reliability of the data is very important as well as the process of collecting and analyzing the data.

Conclusion

This research belongs to case study about teachers beliefs on performance assessment. Most of the experts stated that belief is a domain that needs efforts to study. But for the instructors, their beliefs really help them in deciding what is best for their students, especially in the selection of the assessment methods. The findings of the study revealed that the participants beliefs that performance assessment is the best assessment method that can be used to assess students abilities improvement in using the knowledge and skills acquired. They mentioned that there were five indicators that must be considered in designing performance assessment, that are: learning objectives, performance task, response-format, prompt and scoring system. They also become more aware on the students needs and their level abilities as it is their references in creating and directing the performance assessment. The participants saw assessment as an extension of teaching and learning process which certainly has an influence on the students development process. This thought of the participants has been a big reason for them in decision-making as the teachers. They believed that the best tools that is used to assess in performance assessment is rubric because it covers all of the students descriptions as their work results. In designing the performance assessment, the participants have already arranged it according to what was conveyed by the experts. In scoring the students, they have adjusted the rubric used based on the objectives, the levels and abilities of the students. However, it has not been conducted properly in the implementation of performance assessment and in giving feedback to the students.

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