The Effectiveness of Implementing Group Work in the Classroom and Its Benefits in Assessing

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Abstract: As we know, multiple use of assessing of the educational process and the use of information and communication technologies can improve the learning process in a very good way. It can develop educational activities and contribute to the objectiveness of the assessment of learning results. The article deals with the issues based on analyzing the efficiency of group work activities in assessing students’ knowledge.

Keywords: second language learners, group work, assessment, educational process, communication technologies.

Introduction

Nowadays, knowing foreign language perfectly is the major thing of achieving high professional skill. The English language takes leading place among the other languages of the world, so we too forced to learn this language and it is not without reason that there was given separate attention for learning it. Today, we can see a lot of success, and new scientific approaches in using new pedagogical technologies in teaching English.

Our education system achieved its high quality in this actual process. Such factors of finding out new technologies of teaching and preparing high quality specialists are the great importance of today.

As is generally known, the expression of thought and communication among people, spiritual and other types of communication are realized by the help of the language. Academic L.V. Scherba¹ noted that there should be differentiate three sides of language- speech activity, language system and text. According to him speech activity is the process of speaking and understanding the speech, and language system consists of from the dictionaries of languages and their grammar, language material consists of from the text.

Teacher creates his/her own materials and devises tasks based on the needs of the learners and assesses their knowledge.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The teachers rely on their own materials rather than depending on other resources. There are many different aims when teaching English and it might differ when teaching it to native speakers or second language speakers. This blog post is going to focus on the aims of teaching English to second language learners.

The assessment reveals what the learner knows and does not understand, which training material is well absorbed, which is not yet sufficiently absorbed or not mastered at all. This is the basis for organizing and managing the learner's cognitive activity. The educator critically evaluates the pros and cons of their work. Assessment results are also important for reviewing and evaluating

¹ Щерба Л.В. Практическое, общеобразовательное и воспитательное значение в изучении иностранных языков. - М., 1947
materials in the curriculum from the learner's ability to learn.

As a result of the evaluation it becomes clear which concepts and principles are difficult to understand and which ones can be easily implemented. This provides the basis for the learner's creative preparation for the lesson and conducting the training. Likewise, the learner will know which learning material is good, which is satisfactory and what is bad.

One of the important structural elements of each lesson and the entire learning process as a whole is a test of students' knowledge and skills. It is always in the close attention of the teacher. A good teacher will not expose new material until he is convinced of the full understanding and assimilation by all students of just completed. For a student, the testing his knowledge and skills is often a source of deep emotions - he feels satisfaction with his work, feels pride, receiving high marks, or, conversely, loses faith in his strength, and sometimes interest in learning. Without examining the student, the learner is not able to deeply, comprehensively and accurately evaluate his knowledge. As a result of the assessment, students will be able to identify, understand, remember, understand, apply, analyze and critically evaluate their knowledge. The learner will have the opportunity to have a positive description of his/her knowledge, improve the way he/she works at the educational institution and at home, develop the positive aspects of his/her knowledge, skills and abilities and correct the gaps.

The educational value of controlling and evaluating knowledge, skills and competencies of students' attitudes towards learning is that their successes and failures are formed, and becomes desire to overcome difficulties. Assessment always creates a particular attitude of the learner towards himself. The educator should focus on developing the student's attitude, feelings, and personality (Afanasyeva M.P., 1999).

Sometimes, in the evaluation process, the learner gains additional knowledge, skills and abilities. Understands the essence of concepts that are not mastered in the learning process. Therefore, evaluation can also be considered a continuation of the learning process.

Group work can be an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. But without careful planning and facilitation, group work can frustrate students and instructors and feel like a waste of time. Use these suggestions to help implement group work successfully in your classroom.

Preparing for group work

Think carefully about how students will be physically arranged in groups. Will it be easy for groups to form and for all students to be comfortable? Also think about how the layout of your classroom will impact volume. Will students be able to hear one another clearly? How can you moderate the activity to control volume?

Insist on professional, civil conduct between and among students to respect people’s differences and create an inclusive environment.

Talk to students about their past experiences with group work and allow them to establish some ground rules for successful collaboration. This discussion can be successfully done anonymously through the use of note cards.

Designing group activity:

Identify the instructional objectives. Determine what you want to achieve through the small group activity, both academically (e.g., knowledge of a topic) and socially (e.g., listening skills). The activity should relate closely to the course objectives and class content and must be designed to help students learn, not simply to occupy their time. Roberson and Franchini (2014) emphasize that for group learning to be effective, students need a clear sense that group work is "serving the stated learning goals and disciplinary thinking goals" of the course (280). When deciding whether or not to use group work for a specific task, consider these questions: What is the objective of the activity? How will that objective be furthered by asking students to work in
groups? Is the activity challenging or complex enough that it requires group work? Will the project require true collaboration? Is there any reason why the assignment should not be collaborative?

Make the task challenging. Consider giving a relatively easy task early in the term to arouse students’ interest in group work and encourage their progress. In most cases collaborative exercises should be stimulating and challenging. By pooling their resources and dealing with differences of opinion that arise, groups of students can develop a more sophisticated product than they could as individuals. See our teaching tip “Group work in the Classroom: Small-Group Tasks” for some ideas.

Assign group tasks that encourage involvement, interdependence, and a fair division of labour. All group members should feel a sense of personal responsibility for the success of their teammates and realize that their individual success depends on the group’s success. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2014) refer to this as positive interdependence and argue that this type of cooperative learning tends to result in learners promoting each other’s success. Knowing that peers are relying on you is a powerful motivator for group work.

Allocate essential resources across the group so that group members are required to share information (e.g., the jigsaw method). Or, to come up with a consensus, randomly select one person to speak for the group, or assign different roles to group members so that they are all involved in the process (e.g., recorder, spokesperson, summarizer, checker, skeptic, organizer, observer, timekeeper, conflict resolver, liaison to other groups).

Another strategy for promoting interdependence is specifying common rewards for the group, such as a group mark. See the CTE teaching tip “Methods for Assessing Group Work” for more information.

Decide on group size. The size you choose will depend on the number of students, the size of the classroom, the variety of voices needed within a group, and the task assigned. Groups of four-five tend to balance the needs for diversity, productivity, active participation, and cohesion. The less skillful the group members, the smaller the groups should be (Gross Davis, 1993).

Decide how you will divide students into groups. Division based on proximity or students’ choice is quickest, especially for large and cramped classes, but this often means that students end up working together with friends or with the same people.

To vary group composition and increase diversity within groups, randomly assign students to groups by counting off and grouping them according to number. Another idea is to distribute candy (e.g., Starburst or hard, coloured candies) and group students according to the flavour they choose.

For some group tasks, the diversity within a group (e.g., gender, ethnicity, level of preparation) is especially important, and you might want to assign students to groups yourself before class. Collect a data card from each student on the first day of class to glean important information about their backgrounds, knowledge, and interests. Alternately, ask students to express a preference (e.g., list three students with whom they would most like to work or two topics they would most like to study), and keep their preferences in mind as you assign groups.

Allow sufficient time for group work. Recognize that you won't be able to cover as much material as you could if you lectured for the whole class period. Cut back on the content you want to present in order to give groups time to work. Estimate the amount of time that subgroups need to complete the activity. Also plan for a plenary session in which groups’ results can be presented or general issues and questions can be discussed.

Try to predict students’ answers. You won’t be able to expect the unexpected, but by having some idea about what students will come up with, you will be better prepared to answer their questions and tie together the group work during the plenary session.
Design collaborative work in multiple forms: pairs, small groups, large groups, online synchronously, online asynchronously, etc. Some students might be better at contributing after they have had time to digest material, while others might be better at thinking on the spot. Other students will defer to others in large groups but actively contribute in pairs. All roles should be valued and included.

Introducing the group activity

Share your rationale for using group work. Students must understand the benefits of collaborative learning. Don't assume that students know what the pedagogical purpose is. Explicitly connect these activities to larger class themes and learning outcomes whenever possible.

Have students form groups before you give them instructions. If you try to give instructions first, students may be too preoccupied with deciding on group membership to listen to you.

Facilitate some form of group cohesion. Students work best together if they know or trust each other, at least to some extent. Even for brief group activities, have students introduce themselves to their group members before attending to their task. For longer periods of group work, consider introducing an icebreaker or an activity designed specifically to build a sense of teamwork.

Model how you want students to participate. When responding to students’ answers, model the respect and sensitivity that you want the students to display towards their classmates. Be ready to acknowledge and value opinions different from your own. Be willing to share your own stories, critique your work, and summarize what has been said.

Connect the ideas raised to course content and objectives. Recognize that groups might not come up with the ideas you intended them to, so be willing to make your lecture plans flexible. Wherever possible, look for a connection between group conclusions and the course topic. However, be aware that misconceptions or inaccurate responses need to be clarified and corrected either by you or by other students.

Don’t provide too much closure. Although the plenary session should wrap up the group work, feel free to leave some questions unanswered for further research or for the next class period. This openness reflects the nature of knowledge.

Ask students to reflect on the group work process. They may do so either orally or in writing. This reflection helps them discover what they learned and how they functioned in the group. It also gives you a sense of their response to group work.

CONCLUSION

Thus, group work can be an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. But without careful planning and facilitation, group work can frustrate students and instructors and feel like a waste of time. Creativity thrives when people work together on a team. Brainstorming ideas as a group prevents stale viewpoints that often come out of working solo. Combining unique perspectives from each team member creates more effective selling solutions.

References:


