

Portfolio Assessment and English as a Foreign Language Aboriginal Students' English Learning Outcome in Taiwan

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Abstract : The lack of empirical research on portfolio assessment in aboriginal EFL English classes of junior high schools in Taiwan may inhibit EFL teachers from appreciating the utility of this alternative assessment approach. This study addressed the following research questions: 1) understand how aboriginal EFL students and instructors of junior high schools in Taiwan perceive portfolio assessment, and 2) how portfolio assessment affects Taiwanese aboriginal EFL students' learning outcomes. Ten classes of five junior high schools in Taiwan (from different regions of Taiwan) participated in this study. Two classes from each school joined the study, and each class was randomly assigned as a control group, and one was the experimental group. These five junior high schools consisted of at least 50% of aboriginal students. A mixed research design was utilized. The instructor of each class implemented a portfolio assessment for 15 weeks of the 2015 Fall Semester. At the beginning of the semester, all participants took a GEPT test (pretest), and in the 15th week, all participants took the same level of GEPT test (post-test). Scores of students' GEPT tests were checked by the researcher as supplemental data in order to understand each student's performance. In addition, each instructor was interviewed to provide qualitative data concerning students' general learning performance and their perception of implementing portfolio assessments in their English classes. The results of this study were used to provide suggestions for EFL instructors while modifying their lesson plans regarding assessment. In addition, the empirical data were used as references for EFL instructors implementing portfolio assessments in their classes effectively.

Keywords : assessment, portfolio assessment, qualitative design, aboriginal ESL students

Conference Title : ICCP 2023 : International Conference on Cultural Psychology

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : August 10-11, 2023