

Study on Effective Continuous Assessments Methods to Improve Undergraduates English Language Skills

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Abstract : Sri Lanka is a developing country in South Asia which uses English as its second language. Today, most of the university students in Sri Lanka are eagerly exploring knowledge giving special consideration to English as their 2nd Language with the understanding that to climb up the career ladder, English is inevitable both in local and international contexts. However, still a considerable failing rate in English can also be seen among the Sri Lankan undergraduates. Further, most of the Sri Lankan universities now practice English as their medium of instructions making English a credited Subject to brighten the future of the Sri Lankan students. Accordingly, in many universities an array of assessments are employed to evaluate undergraduates' competence in English language. The main objective of this study was to ascertain the effective assessment methods to improve the 2nd language skills of the Sri Lankan university students which also create a more interest in them to learn English. Accordingly, hundred (100) undergraduates were selected as the research sample and the primary data was collected employing a semi structured questionnaire along with class room observations and semi structured interviews. Data was mainly analyzed descriptively employing graphical illustrations. According to the research findings, it was revealed that practical assessments such as oral tests, competitive drama and presentations are more effective in improving their language skills and preferred by the majority of students than written assignments and papers. Further, most of the students have scored better in practical assignments than in the written assignments. Hence, the study concludes that best and the benefited way of improving English language skills of Sri Lankan undergraduates is practical assessments as it gives them the opportunity to apply the language with much confidence and competence in actual situations. Further, the study recommends the language teachers to improve their own skills and creativity in practicing and employing such assessments as it will develop both second language teaching and learning skills. Ultimately, the university graduates will be able to secure their positions internationally as they are well capable in English, the lingua franca of the world.

Keywords : assessments, second language, Sri Lanka, undergraduates

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