

Sử dụng bài kiểm tra đánh giá - trắc nghiệm trong giảng dạy tiếng Anh

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Abstract: From generation to generation, society has seen schools as a practical place to locate social reform efforts because there are groups of young people from diverse backgrounds. As a result of such societal trends, there have been rules of implementation and types of programs in education set out to meet the varying needs of a more diverse student population. Among those criteria, testing is also one of the most powerful tools to measure students' abilities as well as improve their attitude towards learning in general. Understanding the level of students and the importance of testing, in this document, we focus on achievement testing as a kind of main test to evaluate the process of students' studying in language learning and mostly use multiple-choice questions in designing comprehension test to bring overall benefits for students in our teaching context.

Keywords: The importance of testing, achievement test, multiple-choice questions, students

1. Introduction

It cannot be denied that there are many reasons for developing understanding of principles and practice of language assessment. The first thing is that language tests play a necessary role in learners' lives as a gateway at important transitional moments in education system or employment. Second, people may work with language tests as teachers in their professional life. Finally, people who conduct language study may have measure the language proficiency of their subjects. For this, an understanding of language testing relates to both those involved in creating language tests and those involved in using tests in practical context (McNamara, 2000).

2. Definition of achievement test

It is clear that there are different types of tests, for example: proficiency tests, achievement tests, diagnostic tests, placement tests and so on, which bases on the various test purposes. However, the most familiar test we use as a main tool to meet the requirements of measuring students' ability in process is achievement test. According to McNamara (2000), "Achievement tests are associated with the process of instruction (p.6). For example, the final achievement test and progress achievement test, portfolio assessment, observational procedures for recording progress on the basis of classroom work and participation. The feature of achievement test is not only to accumulate evidence during the whole of a course of study in order to know whether and where progress has been made with the aim of learning, but

also to support the teaching what they related to.

3. The functions of achievement test

It can be undeniable that achievement tests meet a variety of purposes in education (Perrone, 2014). It can be a well-written, content-valid test which provides teachers and students with an opportunity to take stock of what they have learned, to demonstrate themselves, and to others the knowledge and skills they have accumulated. It is helpful for teachers to have invaluable information regarding students' needs, abilities, and a measure of how well the students have met the course objectives. What is more, achievement tests make students foster their self-confidence, create multiple chances for them to experience success and to excel as language learners. It provides one of the strongest ways where people can help to instill and strengthen positive feelings towards learning in general.

Considering such factors, achievement tests can be administered in the second language classroom without jeopardizing the interactive, communicative focus of the ESL classroom that we, as teachers, value so greatly. On the other hand, every test is also a learning situation. The results of tests must produce positive backwash, which is the effect of testing on teaching and learning. Backwash therefore, can be harmful or beneficial. When the test content and testing techniques are at variance with the objectives of the course, then there is likely to be harmful backwash. So when writing achievement test items, writers must begin with a list of content standards which specify

exactly what students are expected to learn in a given school year. The goal of item writers is to create test items that measure the most important skills and knowledge attained in a given grade-level. The number and type of test items written is determined by the grade-level content standards. Content validity is determined by the representativeness of the items included on the final test.

4. Multiple-choice questions (MCQs)

A multiple-choice test can be a good way of finding out what students know. According to Valiathan (2009) MCQs is a kind of “ a simple question or incomplete statement which poses the problem (the stem), and four or more possible answers, one of these being correct (the answer) and the others being incorrect (the distracters)” (p.4). also, MCQS can be understood by Victoria, 1986) that “students select the correct answer to a question from an array of alternative responses that are written by the instructor” (p.1). The rule of MCQs is to allow one and only one answer to be chosen.

Although the multiple-choice technique has been widely applied in achievement testing for many years, these ones have been controversial about its applications. It has been widely accepted that MCQs bring a number of advantages in creating tests in students' lives. They are good for testing factual knowledge and easy for teachers to mark, with total parity across students and therefore can be marked and scored electronically. This is a reason why most e-learning courses adopt this as the mode of assessing learners by using a computer to mark. Most online assessment programs make use of MCQs, primarily because they can be easily used in LMS systems and other web-based training courses. Despite the fact that MCQs gain lots of attention and get great benefits, they remain limitations. Over the last years, MCQs have been criticized for a number of reasons. It can be the construction of challenging MCQs that require special care and is therefore time-consuming for test takers and they cannot measure complex human performance, and designers tend to favor “recall” type questions, as these are the easiest to design. Finally, learners can guess their way through an MCQ test.

Understanding the weaknesses and strengths of MCQ items can help us make better decisions about whether or not to use those in particular testing situations. The first solution would be to add more questions that contain more contents to make students think rather than tick very quickly. This may take

less time for them to answer but easily choose wrong answers without understanding why. Second, when people test by giving a variety of learning levels MCQs should be flexible in that they can be used to assess the full ranges of Bloom's taxonomy (1956). Another possible solution is that multiple choice test should be efficient to avoid boredom. If the class is very small in size, it usually is not worth the time but it will take to construct an effective set of MCQs. The last recommendation is that when it is not important to determine how well the students can formulate a correct or acceptable answer. The answers are definitely provided in multiple-choice items. Even if the question requires critical thinking skills, it may be possible for students to get the answer right because of clues in the options or by guessing.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, we cannot deny the obvious role of testing in education system in general. Achievement tests, in particular have been the most popular test that is used to measure the abilities of students in learning language. At the same time, that this kind of test is presented by multiple-choice questions is fairly good. Due to their many advantages, multiple-choice questions will continue to dominate the e-learning assessment that is common nowadays. However, the decision to test in an assessment should be based on what the purpose of the assessment is and the uses that will be made of the assessment results. If the purpose is only to check on factual and procedural knowledge, if the assessment content is not critical for job performance, correct answer scoring will suffice. If the assessment is going to be the basis for major conclusions (pass/fail criterion) negative scoring should be adopted.

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