

**An Exploratory Study of Teachers' Assessment of Project Work.
The Case of EFL Middle School Teachers in Batna
During the 2007-2008 School Year**

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ملخص:

إن الغرض الرئيس من هذا البحث هو استكشاف الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لمعلمي المدارس المتوسطة لفهم الغرض من التقييم والقيمة في إطار عمل المشروع وتحديد طريقة عمل مشاريع تلاميذهم والأسباب التي أدت بهم إلى ممارستها التقييم الفعلي.

وقد كشفت النتائج بأن أغلب أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية المشاركين في هذه الدراسة فهموا الغرض من التقييم والقيمة ضمن عمل المشروع، ولكن لا يزالون يعتمدون على تقييم التلخيص والتوجه نحو تقييم جودة العمل بدلا من نوعية التعلم. وتكشف هذه الدراسة أيضا الصعوبات العملية التي تواجه المعلمين في استخدام التقييم التكويني للأطفال وردود فعل التعلم من ذلك: القسم المدرسي، عدم كفاية التدريب، نقص التنمية المهنية ومقاومة التغيير.

Abstract:

The overall purposes of this research is to explore English as a Foreign Language (EFL) middle school teachers' understanding of the purpose and value of assessment within project work (PW), determine the way they assess their pupils' project work and identify the reasons that have led them to their actual assessment practices.

The results show that most EFL teachers involved in this study do understand the purpose and value of assessment within PW but still rely on summative assessment (SA) and tend to assess the quantity of work rather than the quality of learning. This study also reveals the practical difficulties teachers face in using formative assessment (FA) to provide feedback children's.

Among these are: class and time management, insufficient training, lack of professional development and resistance to change.

Introduction

Following the initiatives taken by numerous educational systems worldwide and in response to English being an important communicative tool in the global village, the Algerian Ministry of Education has placed a great emphasis on the study of English as a foreign language (EFL) to help the society to get harmoniously integrated in modernity; give access to science, technology and universal culture; equip the pupil with the necessary asserts to succeed in tomorrow's world . Bearing in mind that, in the Algerian educational context, English is taught as a second foreign language after French. English is not used extensively outside the classroom to serve people's needs; neither does it have an administrative status.

In September 2003, English has become a compulsory subject for all four levels in the Algerian middle schools (MS). Until this period, MS consisted of three levels and English was taught to two levels only. New syllabi for the teaching of English came into effect. New courses and new teaching materials were incorporated into the new programs of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), among them Project Work (PW).

As a teacher of English, with fourteen (14) years of teaching experience, we are very interested in and affected by the monumental changes that have been taken by the Ministry of Education to improve language instruction and assessment in Algeria. In addition, the researcher has a close working connection with numerous teachers of English. As a result of an on-going communication with colleagues, it is apparent that many teachers experience difficulties as regards to PW. Its implementation in MS syllabi has not raised hopes to improve the quality of teaching / learning English in the Algerian educational system, but worries and threats, as well.

The immediate worry concern the teachers who are called upon to adopt new roles because the newly adopted approach implies some changes in the way EFL is taught. The present trend is learner-centred. This is why all the efforts must tend to have him (the student) act as an active partner. The teachers, then, are called upon to carry this shift from the providers of knowledge to the mediators between the pupil and knowledge as stated in the programme of the 3 AM classes: "From a holder of knowledge, the teacher becomes a mediator between the learner and knowledge. He has to create an environment that helps encourage the learning and the development of the learner. His task is to guide, help, support and encourage the learner all along his learning process . As language teaching is centred on the learner, emphasis is placed on training pupils to take gradual charge of their learning. The learner's role is to participate actively and creatively in language learning using both the material studied in class and his own knowledge and resources. Teachers are asked to implement PW in their classrooms to make apparent all the efforts developed by pupils. Pupils have to elaborate projects initiated by groups working together through brainstorming, negotiation and argumentation.

As foreign language instruction changed direction, the need for different approaches to assessment becomes urgent. This is the case with PW which is intended to be the visible and assessable manifestation of the students' competencies, i.e., the end result of their primary and social skills. Its preparation, structuring, realisation and assessment are an illustration of the "Learning by Doing Approach".

Statement of the Problem

Most PW proponents assert that its advantages outweigh its disadvantages¹ . Assessment is also an essential part of the curriculum

¹ - G.Beckett & T. Slater. The project framework: a tool for language, content, and skills integration. (ELT Journal., Volume 59 Number 2 (2005),pp 108-116

and of the projects within the curriculum. Through appropriate assessment, students may improve their learning, on the one hand, and on the other, incentives to learn are strengthened.¹

However, and after five years of teaching within the PW method, we have noticed that the implementation of PW as well as its assessment in practical terms was not always as easy as the theory provided in the official documents. PW has presented challenges for teachers who "...are the ultimate key to educational change and improvement"². Our assumption is built on our daily contact with EFL teachers in our school because we have been responsible for the coordination for five years. Moreover, pupils' poor final PW products in some MS collected by the inspector of education in Batna prove evidence that pupils are not learning through PW. What pupils do is only to go to cybercafés and bring the final work of the project ready made without any effort. Many projects given in class do not really challenge the pupils to higher thinking levels. On the contrary, teachers often give projects without much thought to the overall aims of the projects or to how it will be evaluated. A project, which requires pupils to choose a topic and find out about it, will result in nothing more than a fact-gathering project. Throughout a journey in literature review of PW we have found that PW is an instrument that can be used to make learning motivational and relevant. Why isn't it the case in our classrooms ? Instead of looking at the heart of PW and where the greatest value lies, teachers seem to rely on isolated and teacher-centred activities and assess the final product only.

In an attempt to investigate EFL middle school teachers' assessment of PW, the present study examines three related domains including teachers' understanding of the purpose and value of

¹ - D. Rowntree *Assessing Students: How Shall We Know Them?* London. (1987)

² - M.G.Fullan, *Successful School Improvement*. Buckingham: Open University Press (1992).

assessment within PW, the way they actually assess their pupils' PW and the practical reasons that have led them to their actual assessment practices. In light of the goals of the study, the following research questions guide this investigation:

- Do teachers understand the purpose and value of assessment within PW ?
- Do they use formative assessment within PW ?
- What are the main factors responsible for their actual assessment practices?

Research Hypothesis

The study is designed to either confirm or reject the following hypothesis:

EFL middle school teachers at Batna 2¹ still heavily rely on summative assessment within project work and tend to assess the quantity of work rather than the quality of learning because of some contextual, subject matter and psychological factors.

Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are to explore EFL middle school teachers' understanding of the purpose and value of assessment within project work, determine EFL middle school teachers' actual way of assessing their pupils' PW and identify the main factors responsible for their actual assessment practices.

¹ - The 399 EFL (MS) teachers were divided into two administrative divisions called 'circonscriptions': Batna 1 and Batna 2 and supervised by two inspectors of English. Batna 1 comprised 219 teachers and Batna 2 with 180 teachers. For reasons of time and distance, the researcher could not contact all teachers. She chose to conduct this study with teachers belonging to Batna 2, the circonscription that she belonged to.

Research Methodology Design

The population was EFL middle school (MS) teachers in Batna during the 2007 - 2008 school year, with a total number of 399 teachers (70 males, 18 % ; 329 females, 82 %). The list of EFL (MS) teachers was provided to the researcher from the Academy of Education in Batna after getting the approval from its director for acceptance to be in touch with the Academy for reasons of research .

The sample meant for the study comprised 169 teachers (30 males, 18 % and 139 females, 82 %) belonging to Batna 2 under the supervision of the same inspector of English.

The sampling for the questionnaire included only teachers who were knowledgeable and experienced in the subject area and who met the following criteria:

- they currently teach English in middle schools in Batna 2.
- they were aware of the requirements set by the Ministry of Education to implement project work and new assessment methods into their teaching.
- they have taught at least one year on the new curriculum using PW.
- They were not temporary or supply teachers.
- The researcher was out of the sample.
- The number of teachers who met these criteria was 169 teachers.

Data Gathering Tools

To explore EFL middle school teachers' assessment of PW, the researcher used a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis which included analysis of pupils' final production of PW, teachers' training books and the official documents

sent by the Ministry of Education. These information-gathering tools added detail and depth to the study of this research.

169 questionnaires were distributed to EFL Middle School teachers during in-service training sessions of which eight were returned without any answers . Therefore only 161 questionnaires were considered valid and then analyzed.

Definitions of Project Work (PW)

Project-based learning has a long history. As far back as the early 1900s, John Dewey¹ supported "learning by doing". Students learn best by doing, not by having information "poured" into their heads. Also, he proposed "directed living" in which students would engage in the real world. They would demonstrate their knowledge through creativity and collaboration. Students should be provided with opportunities to think from themselves and articulate their thoughts. Dewey views learning as "a continuous reconstruction of experience, and thus, education, in his view, is a process of continual reorganizing, reconstructing and transforming."²

Projects are generally thought of "as a long-term (several weeks) activity"³ which are part of an instructional method which "promote[s] the simultaneous acquisition of language, content, and skills."⁴ A major goal of project-based instruction is comprehensible output⁵, which generally occurs both during the project and as the

¹- J. Dewey, *Education and Experience*. New York: Collier Books (1938).

²- J. Hendrick, *Next Steps toward Teaching the Reggio Way. Accepting the Challenge to Change (2nd Edition)*. New Jersey: Pearson Education (2004).

³- G.H. Beckett, *Teacher and Student Evaluations of Project-Based Instruction*. TESL Canada Journal (2002), Volume 19, Number 2. 52-66, p. 54.

⁴- G. Beckett & T. Slater (2005). *The project framework: a tool for language, content, and skills integration*. ELT Journal. 59(2), 108-116, p. 108.

⁵- .H. Beckett, *Teacher and Student Evaluations of Project-Based Instruction*. TESL Canada Journal (2002), Volume 19, Number 2. 52-66, p: 54.

final product of the project. In terms of the final product, Stoller¹ outlines several variations such as production projects, performance projects and organizational projects, all of which yield qualitatively different end products.

Haines² suggests that PW is “an approach to learning which complements mainstream methods and which can be used with almost all levels, ages and abilities of students.” In terms of language learning, PW involves “multi-skill activities focusing on topics or themes rather than on specific language targets.”³ Marx and Blumenfeld et. al⁴ define PW as “primary tasks through which students explore topics, or they supplement instruction by providing ways for students to demonstrate understanding.” In a more recent definition, Katz and Chard⁵ suggest that PW is “an in-depth study of a particular topic worth learning more about.”

Similar definitions of PW learning are used and stated in middle school teaching curriculum in Algeria, “...the project is the visible and assessable manifestation of the students’ competencies, i.e., the end result of their primary and social skills. Its preparation, structuring, realisation and assessment are an illustration of the learning by doing approach.”⁶ In Teacher’s Handbook⁷ clarifies the notion of project by stating “This part constitutes the final output of the file. Indeed, with the production of a project all the efforts developed along the file will

¹ - F. Stoller, *Project work: A means to promote language content*. English Teaching Forum Online, (1997). Volume 35, Number 4. Retrieved December 13, 2006 from <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol35/no4/p2.htm>, p.2.

² - S. Haines (1989). *Project for the EFL Classroom: Resource Materials for Teachers*. Harlow, Essex Oxford University Press, p. 1.

³ - *ibid*

⁴ - R. W. Marx, P. C. Blumenfeld, J. S. Krajcik & E. Soloway (1997). *Enacting Project-Based Science*. The Elementary School Journal, 97(4), 341-358, p: 344.

⁵ - L. G Katz & S. C, Chard, *Engaging Children’s Minds: The Project Approach (2nd Edition)*. Ablex Publishing Corporation, (2000), p:1.

⁶ - Guide du Professeur de la 4eme Année Moyenne, 2006, p :78.

⁷ - Teacher’s Handbook, Khelifa 2004, p:10.

be made apparent.” He adds that (“learners are expected to use all the available resources in and out of the classroom: the school library facilities, cyber cafés, the internet as well as out of school institutions will help the learners gather adequate information to produce their projects.” Teachers no longer actively create and direct exercises for passive students, but instead become facilitators, coaches and sounding boards for student ideas. In other words, students shape their projects to fit their own interests and abilities. Thus, PW allows more flexibility for students to make the learning more personally relevant by situating themselves into the content. For example, “students are able to ask themselves ‘What does this mean for us today?’ or ‘How does this affect my family and friends?’”¹

In this study, the terms project-based learning and project approach are used interchangeably with project work to refer to a number of tasks more or less complex, in which the pupil is involved with his / her classmates and with the help of the teacher using all the available resources in and out of the classroom: the school library facilities, cyber cafés, the internet as well as out of the school. It is both process- and product-oriented. It is process-and product oriented since it involves students in a process of planning, discussion, negotiation, decision-making, etc..over an extended period of time.

Defining Assessment

According to Gipps², assessment is a “wide range of methods for evaluating student performance and attainment including formal testing and examinations, practical and oral assessment, classroom based

¹- M. M.Grant (2002). *Getting a Grip on Project-based Learning” Theory, Cases and Recommendations*, [Online]. Available:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2002/514/index.html> [2007, August 7].

²- C.V. Gipps (1994) *Beyond Testing: Towards a Theory of Education Assessment*. London: Falmer Press.

assessment carried out by teachers.” Marsh¹ has extended it to “activities, formal and informal, undertaken by a teacher to obtain information about the knowledge, skills and attitudes of students.” According to Black & William² assessment refers to “all those activities undertaken by teachers – and by the students in addressing themselves – that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities.” Assessment is an attempt to know a person “as assessment data can reveal the strengths and weaknesses in the students’ learning and help to identify a child’s learning needs.”³ This information enables the teacher and the pupil together to remedy the situation for the educational benefit of the students who provided it.

In broad agreement with the definitions stated above, and in the programme of teaching English in MS set by the Ministry of Education, assessment presents the integral part of the educational process. It forms the core component in curriculum planning, development and implementation. Classroom assessment is viewed as an integral part of the teaching-learning process, where the teaching goals, instruction and assessment procedures are planned in advance and integrated into a whole. Teachers and pupils should be involved in monitoring the learning process as well as evaluating outcomes.

Types of Assessment

There are several types of assessment that are utilised at different times and for different purposes. In this literature review, we limit our concern to two types only, summative and formative assessment. Roos and Hamilton⁴ have brought a major theoretical insight into the

¹- Marsh, C.J. (1997) *Perspectives: Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum*. London: Falmer Press.

²- P. Black and D. William (1998) *Assessment and classroom learning. Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 5(1), 7-68.

³- D. Rowntree, (1987) *Assessing Students: How Shall We Know Them?* London , p:6

⁴- B. Roos, And, D. Hamilton (2005). *Formative Assessment: A Cybernetic viewpoint. Assessment in education: Principals, Policy and Practice*.

distinction between summative assessment and formative assessment, as both are rooted in fundamentally different conceptions of learning. The first one sits well with the behaviourist conception of learning whilst constructivist perspective is for the other.

Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning, AoL)

James¹ regards summative assessment as “a description of learning achieved by learners at a certain time for the purpose of reporting to parents, teachers, learners and others.” Feedback in this type of assessment is usually in the form of a mark or letter. As shown, summative assessment has more to do with external purposes of accountability than to provide internal feedback for improving learning. Moreover, learners are passive recipients of how they perform in tasks as assessed only by the teachers.

Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning, AfL)

Formative assessment is “to assist in the learning process by providing information on pupils’ strengths and weaknesses”² so that the teacher can recognize the positive achievement of the pupil, feedback in terms that the pupil can understand and feeding forward in terms of next steps and targets. It takes place in the course of the learning cycle and provides immediate feedback to both teachers and tudents, therefore, it is also called diagnostic assessment. Black & William indicate that” formative assessment, if properly implemented in schools, is a powerful means to improve student learning”³. Feedback is important to students within formative assessment as “it contributes directly to progress in learning through the process and

¹- M. James, (1998). *Using Assessment for School Improvement*. Oxford: Heinemann.

²- H. Torrance, (1993) *Formative assessment: Some theoretical problems and empirical questions*. Cambridge Journal of Education, 23 (30), 333-343. P: 333.

³- P. Black, and D. William, (1998) *Assessment and classroom learning. Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 5(1), 7-68.

indirectly through its effects on pupils' academic self-esteem."¹ Biggs also affirms that "feedback from formative assessment facilitates learning providing the information needed for a deep approach."² It is important to note that assessment is truly formative only when information is actually used to reduce the gap between what has been learned and what now needs to be learned.

Assessment of Project Work

Assessment can be a challenging factor for a teacher to implement PW. Since students are constructing knowledge that represents their learning, it is important to "provide timely feedback that is constructive and authentic to the objectives of the assignment."³ If teachers have overloaded schedules, "teachers as well as students have no time to sit down together at regular and fixed intervals to evaluate the progress of the project."⁴ Besides, multiple-choice and true-false tests may be inappropriate to judge the quality of learning that has occurred. Assessment is the process of gathering information about the pupils – what they know and what they can do. The traditional form of assessment is testing, but with projects this is neither practical nor valid. Because projects are an authentic activity regarding both topics and mode of investigation, the type of assessment must also be authentic; i.e., pupils must have a role in the assessment process. Instead of being passive test takers, pupils become active participants in the assessment activities, by helping design the tools for assessment and using them to evaluate themselves and their peers. Furthermore, the

¹- C.V. Gipps, (1994) *Beyond Testing: Towards a Theory of Education Assessment*. London: Falmer Press, p.129.

²- J. Biggs, (1998b). *Assessment and classroom learning: a role for summative assessment? Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, p.106.

³- M. M. Grant, (2002). *Getting a Grip on Project-based Learning" Theory, Cases and Recommendations*, [Online]. Available: <http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2002/514/index.html> [2007, August 7].

⁴- K.U. Leuven (1997). *Report of the Euro-Seminar Comenius 3.2 BE 16 A Project Work* [Online]. Available: <http://doku.cac.at/comenius1.pdf> [2007, July 28].

tools of assessment (rubrics, checklists, self assessment) are not fixed or permanent once they have been designed. They can be changed or improved upon as needed.

When we assess a project, we are not only assessing linguistic accuracy but also other aspects of the project, as stated in its aims or goals, such as: content, language, presentation (both written and oral), effort, cognitive development, attitude to learning, collaboration, self discipline, independence and responsibility of the learner.

Factors That May Hinder Formative Assessment of PW

It is obvious that formative assessment described so far is 'idealistic'. However, in a context like the Algerian educational system in which evaluation has always been viewed as a process of making 'pass/fail' final decisions, the assessment can be a challenging factor for a teacher to implement PW. It is, therefore, important to bear in mind a number of restrictions that may prevent, or at least hamper, the introduction of formative assessment within project work. In our study, we will limit our literature review to the main contextual, subject matter and psychological factors and the relationship between these factors and teachers' practices which has been highlighted in several studies.

Contextual Factors

Several studies have focused on the challenges that teachers encounter when they are in the process of implementing new and different assessment practices. Among the many factors, they concluded that the school environment limited changes in classroom practice. Such factors were seen to play a key role in teachers' decisions, planning and instructional content. Crookes & Arakaki discovered that "difficult conditions and heavy workloads had a powerful impact on the pedagogical decisions that teachers

made.”¹ Johnson also reports on a pre-service teacher on a practicum who struggled with contextual demands that were incompatible with her own beliefs about teaching².

Subject Matter Factors

1- Knowledge of Methods of Assessment

Valid assessment is complex and difficult. PW is greatly different from other subjects in formal curriculum. Its benefits also bring along lots of uncertainty and thus anxiety. A strategy for the implementation of PW in the school time-tabled periods is extraordinarily necessary. Effective feedback comprises “conceptual help and detailed factual strategies for learners”³. This is to say that the success of any assessment depends on “the effective selection and use of appropriate tools and procedures, in addition to being essential for evaluating students’ progress and achievement, also helps in evaluating the suitability and effectiveness of the curriculum, the teaching methodology and the instructional materials.”⁴ This may be achieved by using a rubric that reflects the goals of the project, as well as self-assessment, group-assessment and peer-assessment tools. Both the ongoing process and the final product must be assessed. Rubrics must be designed for both parts of the project. Teachers unfamiliar with rubrics may turn to the chapter on assessment and use or adapt the rubric discussed there to design his/her own.

¹ - G., Crookes & A, L. Arakaki (1999). *Teaching Idea Sources and Work Conditions in an ESL Program*. *TESOL Journal*, 8(1), 15-19, p:17.

² - K. E. Johnson, (1996). *The Role of Theory in L2 Teacher Education*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(4), 765-771, p.768.

³ - C.V. Gipps, (1994) *Beyond Testing: Towards a Theory of Education Assessment*. London: Falmer Press.

⁴ - K. Shaaban, (2001). *Assessment of Young Learners*. *English Teaching Forum*. Vol.39.No4.16-22, p.19.

2- Teacher Training: The New Role of Teachers

Richards and Nunan define teacher training as “an approach to teacher preparation which involves techniques and skills to apply in the classroom.”¹ Freeman also points out that “training deals with building specific teaching skills: how to sequence a lesson or how to teach a dialogue, for instance.”² Head and Taylor state that “training is related to external aspects of teaching, such as knowledge of the topics, the methodology, the classroom techniques and skills.”³

The Ministry of Education has initiated major changes in the curriculum for English language study, on one hand, emphasises the use of diverse teaching strategies. On the other hand, it calls for changes in the role of teachers. Teachers, as the front line with the students every day, play an essential role in implementing PW. Teachers’ role changes from knowledge-transmitters to facilitators or coaches. The new role may be uncomfortable for the teachers⁴. As the classroom is becoming less and less teacher centred, it is important for them to rethink their role within the environment of learner centred classes and project based learning. Facing these drastic changes in their role and the use of new teaching strategy, teachers need time to adapt to the new teaching and learning environment. “Teachers also need to face other problems including classroom management, group monitoring and supervision, availability of resource materials, and kinds of

¹ - J.C. Richards, & D. Nunan, (1990). *Second Language Teacher Education*. Cambridge:CUP.

² - D. Freeman, (1982). *Observing Teachers: Three Approaches to in-service Training and Development*.TESOL 13/1.

³ - K. Head, & P. Taylor, (1997).*Readings in Teacher Development*. Oxford: Macmillan. Heinemann.

⁴- M. M. Grant, (2002). *Getting a Grip on Project-based Learning” Theory, Cases and Recommendations*, [Online]. Available: <http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2002/514/index.html> [2007, August 7].

evaluation and assessment.”¹ Since the role of the teachers had changed, it is important to “provide training and sufficient resources so as to modify teachers’ attitude and equip them with the essential skills.”² PW is a teaching and learning strategy that shifts from the classroom practices of isolated and teacher-centred lessons to learning activities that are student-centred, and connected with real world issues. Teacher no longer acts as a knowledge transmitter, but a facilitator, who makes plans for the learning experiences that students will enter into, taking into consideration students’ prior knowledge, prerequisites for learning and what students will be able to learn next. Teachers feel uneasy because they are not knowledgeable about the content. Teachers are vulnerable to the criticisms of parents and the community. School administrators can fault teachers for not covering the curriculum. The challenges are that teachers have to cope with these changes through continuing professional development. They can no longer depend on their previous academic qualifications for the new development in education.

3- Teacher Development

Teacher development has come much into vogue in recent times. In the teacher education literature, a differentiation is often made between teacher training and teacher development. Brown defines it as “the process of life-long learning in the teaching profession”³. He optimistically remarks that “one of the most interesting things about teaching is that we never stop learning.”⁴ This is to say that what is

¹- A. Williams, (1984). *Projects: Skills and Strategies*. London: Pitman Publishing Limited.

²- P. Morris, (1985) *Teachers’ perception of the barriers to the implementation of a pedagogic innovation: A South East Asian case study*. *International Review of Education*, 31, 3-18, p.17.

³- H. Brown, (1994). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (3rd Ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

⁴- *ibid.*

meant by development is the focus on the teacher, his personal and professional growth. It is an expansion of skills and understanding. It addresses long-term needs and concerns: how a teacher can grow and be encouraged to develop, and explore new horizons and ideas. Professional development involves “any activities aiming to achieve personal and professional growth for teachers.”¹ Development activities can range from observing colleagues’ classes, reading academic journals and books, and attending conferences, to collaborating with other teachers in classroom research or other professional projects. The need for teacher development arises from the inadequacy of training courses, which alone can not fully enable teachers to be dynamic and competent in their job. Any training course, either pre-service or in-service, long-term or short-term, can be criticised for shortcomings. Different factors have contributed to raise the importance of teacher development. First, the increasing role of English as an international language, which requires teachers to be able to handle different learner needs. Second, the fact that language teaching has experienced an intense process of methodological change and curriculum renewal. And third, the knowledge about language learning and teaching has grown considerably over the past several years. Under these circumstances, it could be argued that there is a need for teachers to be up-to-date with respect to current trends.

Training courses, such as those EFL teachers attend each term and that are held by their inspectors, can not satisfy all teachers’ needs, nor can they solve most of the problems occurring in their classrooms. PW is a new learning and teaching mode. Both experienced and new teachers, who are inexperienced, required new instructional knowledge, strategies and skills to supervise, organise, monitor the implementation of PW. Facing the new role of teachers, professional trainings are required to modify teachers’ attitude and equip them with essential

¹ - *ibid.*

skills. However, it is not sufficient for teachers to attend professional development courses to achieve the skills. Supports from school administration are critical. It would be useful for peer support groups to be set up within schools so that the teachers can obtain further assistance while practicing project-based learning in the classroom. The reservation of specific time for PW in the school calendar or class timetables also allows teachers and students to balance the PW and formal curriculum, which is one of the determined factors for successful PW.

Psychological Factors

Resistance to Change

The implementation of new ideas always creates challenges because the change process inevitably meets with resistance. Teachers who are comfortable with their current method of instruction and evaluation need to be convinced of the benefits of the innovative teaching philosophies and creative teaching strategies. Several major studies show that the success of educational change is mainly attributed to teachers' efforts¹. They stress that the success of change involves alteration in behaviour, beliefs and skills on the part of teachers.

Change facilitators need to provide interventions aligned with the concerns of the people engaged with the change. At the beginning of the implementation of an innovation, task concern is prevalent among the teachers. Therefore, the change facilitator should provide specific and detailed procedural plans and specific techniques of practice to the teachers to help the teachers to work smoothly. The philosophy of the innovation is of greater interest to the teachers with impact concerns. Therefore, it is not of great use to explain the philosophy of the innovation to the teachers at this moment. More concerns are solved,

¹ - M.G. Fullan, and P. Park, (1981). *Curriculum Implementation: A Resource booklet*. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Ontario.

higher the stage of concerns the teachers can arrive, and greater the chance of the success is.

Data Results and Analysis of Findings

For reasons of clarity , comprehensiveness and explicitness , all the items contained in the questionnaire administered to teachers , the semi-structured interviews and the documents collected will be analysed using, tables, figures and graphs to illustrate and interpret the responses obtained . During the process of analysis, the researcher concentrated on the aims of the study and the corresponding research questions. As a whole, it was carried out through comparison of answers obtained from questionnaires, different interviewees and documents. The results and interpretations will be organized as follows:

Section One: Purpose and Value of Assessing PW

Responses to this item show that the most important purposes of assessment of PW were identified . The major purposes of assessing project work perceived by teachers were classified in the table below:

Table 1: Purposes of Assessment as Perceived by Teachers

Description	Percentage	Rank
(b) To identify the strengths and weaknesses of students' learning.	62%	1
(c) To motivate students to learn.	24%	2
(d). To understand the learning difficulties of individual students.	9%	3
(a) To evaluate students' achievement and determine marks .	5%	4

Section Two: Teachers' Actual Assessment of PW

Table 2: Teachers' Actual Assessment of PW

	Learners' Progress	Final Work	No Answer
Nber of Teachers	30	100	31
Percentage	18%	62%	20%

Linked to the objectives set in MS curriculum, PW is both process- and product-oriented since it involves students in a process of planning, discussion, negotiation, decision-making, etc. Shift in focus from merely assigning marks to show pupil's achievement to a more formative process of measuring learning effectiveness means that assessment changes from assessment of learning to assessment for learning .However, most EFL teachers(62%) who were the subjects in our study do not seem to give much importance to the process through which PW goes but rather give marks at the end of the project.

Section Three: Main Factors Responsible for such Assessments

By providing the respondents with a table containing items, the researcher meant to probe the most important difficulties teachers encounter in their work so that they can be studied by order of merit.

Table 3 : Teachers' Perceived Reasons

Item	Rank
Overcrowded classes	1
Time management	2
Lack of knowledge of formative assessment methods	3
Lack of training	4
Number of projects	5
Adapt to the new role	6

Indeed, we received answers from respondents of the semi-structured interviews who admitted that they had experienced difficulties in assessing PW at some point in their teaching .Their descriptions of the difficulties were classified in terms of priority and fell into three main categories as shown in the table below.

Table 4 : List of Difficulties and Challenges Listed from the Semi-Structured Interviews

Factors	Difficulties	N of Teachers
Contextual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respondents' inability to use this mode in large classes -Time management : not enough time for processing the visual and verbal reports of the findings of children. The schedule in the schools was usually very tight. -The number of projects per level can not facilitate a valid assessment. 	12
Subject Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Insufficient professional training of teachers on new methods of assessment and on how to develop pupils' ability to find and use information. - Little workshops and seminars for the teachers in the fieldwork practice. - No comprehensive guidelines to help teachers become more familiar with all aspects of project work assessment. - Difficulties in assessing pupils with different abilities in the same group. - No idea how to assess both the process and the product of project work. - Students need systematic guidance in the different skills required to pursue a piece of project work. - Meeting the curriculum guidelines may lessen teachers'choice to use formative assessment techniques. - No idea which skill to assess. - Pupils are to young and lack adequate baseline skills for researching and collecting information. 	10
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers prefer traditional testing. - Pupils not interested in the subject. - Tests and exams are easier. - Feel more confident with lessons. 	12

What have you done to reduce the intensity of these problems and change your assessment practices?

The researcher then, wanted to see whether the respondents are doing effort to find on their part what literature says about PW and apply or adapt it to their classes so that they could compensate the lack of training .The item provided was “If yes ,what have you done to reduce the intensity of these problems and change your assessment practices?.The researcher supplied the teachers with a table in which they had to show how often they have consulted web sites or read documents about project learning, collaborated with colleagues or adapted their own assessment tools.

Table 5: Teacher Development Activities and Resistance to Change

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	No Answer
Consulted web sites	9	17	125	10
Read documents	19	32	98	12
Collaborated with colleagues	5	30	120	6
Adapted your own assessment tools	20	35	96	10

Conclusion

The teachers were the key informants of this study. While in theory, teachers were aware of the purposes and value of assessment for learning within PW, there were discrepancies between the actual implementation of the method of teaching adopted by the teachers and the philosophy of this method. Here were several factors that led them to these discrepancies: classroom and time management constraints, insufficient teacher-training and development as well as resistance to change.

Continuous assessment of PW should be conducted to give students timely feedback. To strive for a better balance between

summative and formative assessments and to provide a positive effect, teachers should make extensive use of formative assessments before determining students' marks. It is important, then, to ensure common understanding on the criteria of assessment to ensure both parties perceive accurately the purpose and use of assessment. Teachers should be informed clearly about the assessment of project work. A comprehensive scheme of assessment can facilitate the work of teachers who are not familiar with project assessment. To actualize the intended purposes of project assessment, all the participants need to share the same vision and targets. A paradigm shift of teachers, from examination-oriented to learning-oriented, is needed. A change in school policy of assessment, together with more information and training on formative assessment, may enable them to have such a shift. Diversified formative assessment generally means assessing students over an extended period. A project programme with ongoing formative as well as summative assessments is desirable. Concerning the teachers who claim that they are facing difficulties in assessing their pupils' PW, we also believe that indeed, these problems exist. However, they still can improve the situation while they wait for change. For instance, collaborating among colleagues, adapting the techniques in hand to adjust them to their pupils' needs, consult internet resources and so on.

To conclude, learning and assessment are closely related. Formative assessment of PW should be used to provide effective feedback that motivates and improves learning, feedback which leads to students recognizing their next steps and how to take them forward. Project learning without formative assessment cannot provide students with feedback that will improve their performance and positively influence their attitudes and perspectives towards themselves, and toward other. This was recognized by most of the teachers who perceived assessment of project work an effective means to help students to explore strengths and weaknesses. The assessment of

project work is capable to support learning and the development of skills. Understanding of the factors in this study would facilitate implementation and help to avoid problems. A change in teachers' role from "assessor of learning" to "assessor for learning" is a precondition for successful formative project assessment. School policy toward class and time management, teachers' training and teachers' professional development are also important catalysts. To implement formative assessment successfully, summative assessments (final product only) need to change in order to cope with the new expectations in education.

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