

Assessment Effectiveness and Anxiety: Students' Perception

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Abstract

Traditional methods of assessing university students' speaking and writing abilities, especially those in creative and design fields, can be perceived both impractical and monotonous. This study aims to show college students' perception of the degree of effectiveness of the tools currently being used to assess them, either through authentic assessment or through standardized testing, and whether or not anxiety plays any role in the students' performance. 21 graphic design students at a private university in Madrid taking a course in advanced English for Specific purposes (ESP) completed the survey. The survey, mostly qualitative, asked students to evaluate how effective were the different forms of authentic assessment used throughout the academic year, both in speaking and writing, compared to the standardized tests they were mainly and currently evaluated on. The results of the survey found that students, in general, deemed the various forms of authentic assessment more effective, albeit not in a significant way. Similarly, there was no clear difference between the anxiety levels authentic assessment produced versus standardized and classical formative assessment. Not surprisingly however, most students preferred the use of social media platforms, such as Instagram as a form of writing assessment, even though they did not consider it valid. Hopefully, this paper will have positive implications to encourage syllabus designers and material developers to consider students' perceptions and preferences on the assessment process while keeping in mind what their fields of choice expect once they become professionals, as current trends and attitudes on assessment should be more in line with the industry.

Keywords: assessment, perception, standardize testing, authentic, ESP