

Impact of Testing in the English Language Teaching Classroom.

S.G.S. Samaraweera

Although language forms and grammatical structures are taught in the classroom to the students of Extension Courses in English program at the University of Ruhuna, it is difficult to realize whether they have understood them properly due to lack of a proper testing mechanism. It is advocated that testing plays a significant role in English Language teaching classroom. "Language teaching and learning and testing and evaluation are interdependent" (Samaraweera: 2009). "Language testing involves both linguistics and psychology because it is concerned with both language and learning. It is also experimental because it sets up learning tasks in order to study behavior; and also evaluative because it makes use of statistical techniques in order to study that behavior" (Davies (1968:01). But what the most effective way to test and evaluate is remains still debatable. The learners have individual differences. The teacher should understand the individual differences of the learners in order to understand their strengths and weaknesses. It is easy to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the students with the help of a proper testing and evaluation mechanism. Therefore this paper discusses the viability and validity of incorporating a proper testing and evaluation mechanism in the English language syllabus of my teaching situation, Extension Courses in English program at the University of Ruhuna. This paper suggests that a proper testing and evaluation mechanism should be maintained throughout the lesson so that the teacher can test and evaluate each student and give feedback to each student. The sample comprised 70 Certificate course students of the Extension Courses in English program at the University of Ruhuna. They come from a variety of socio-educational backgrounds. After implementing a proper testing and evaluation mechanism, Questionnaires, interviews, and observations were used to gain an in-depth insight into students' attainment of language skills. The findings of the study depicted that testing and evaluation plays a significant role in the language classroom. Thus the findings are significant in providing information to the relevant authorities so that they can prepare curricula to teach the English language effectively for the educational, professional and socio-economic benefit of the students.

Key words: Testing, Evaluation, Language, Teaching, Classroom