

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research



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# An Exploratory Study of Teachers' Assessment of Project Work

The case of EFL Middle School Teachers in Batna 2 During  
The 2007- 2008 School Year

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Of Magister in Language and Civilisation*

By

*Mouas samia*

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## *Acknowledgement*

Road locks and detours often challenge one's journey on the road to success. No matter how great the challenge, as long as the will to succeed stays in control, one ultimately reaches the final destination. While this philosophy was the guiding force throughout this dissertation, there have been many who have been instrumental in helping me reach the final destination.

First and foremost, all grand thanks and praise to Allah for giving me strength, courage, blessings and guidance. With Allah's grace and help, I was able to finish this work. Thanks to Him from everlasting to everlasting.

I wish to pay my deepest gratitude to the following people who accepted to be part of this challenging but rewarding process. I am particularly indebted to **Dr. Nadia Daghbouche**, my dissertation supervisor, for her continuous assistance and guidance in the study. Her expertise and professional advice empowered me to proceed on the study smoothly. I would also like to express my gratitude to the members of the jury, **Dr. Bahloul**, **Dr. Menani** and **Dr. Kaouli** who contributed their time, expertise and much- appreciation attention to examine my dissertation. Warm thanks are also due to the EFL middle school teachers who gave me their time to complete the questionnaire. I especially owe the inspector of education in Batna 2 my sincerest gratitude for the willingness to share his views during the administration of the questionnaire to teachers. I would also like to extend special thanks to my parents, my sisters and brothers for giving endless support so that I can finish this dissertation.

Finally, but most importantly, I wish to thank my family. I am immensely grateful for the sacrifice of my husband who injured the rough constraints of student life with understanding and love. I am also thankful for my daughters, **Ihcene** and **Meriem**, who saw in my struggles a source of inspiration for their own educational achievement.

**Thank you all**

*DEDICATION*

*I dedicate my first major  
challenge to the candles of my life  
, Shcene and Meriem ,  
my daughters .*

## **Abstract**

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

This study takes the form of an exploratory descriptive investigation using a case study to collect data on the population of EFL Middle School teachers in the city of Batna during the 2007-2008 school year (N=399). In the first phase, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to **169** sample teachers selected from the population. In the second phase, qualitative data were generated by in-depth semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample of **12** teachers. In addition to that, documentary analysis was used as another tool for investigation. Among the documents that were reviewed were a collection of some pupils' project work samples, teachers' training books and the official documents sent by the Ministry of Education concerning Middle School Syllabi. This dissertation starts with an introductory chapter in which the researcher states the problem under investigation with the provision of the research questions and hypothesis. The aims, significance and limitations of the study are then highlighted. This chapter ends with a description of the population, the sample and the methodology adopted in this study.

Part One offers an in depth discussion on the teaching of English as a foreign language in Algeria, the implementation of project work as a new method of assessment and some of the main factors that may hinder the use of formative assessment within project work. It comprises three chapters.

Part Two is devoted to the field work and sets out the findings from data used in this study. Additionally, some useful implications and suggestions are proposed based on the research findings in order to help teachers implement assessment for learning more effectively. Results revealed that most EFL teachers involved in this study do understand the purpose and value of assessment within project work but still rely on summative assessment and tend to assess quantity of work rather than the quality of learning. This study also revealed the practical difficulties teachers faced in using formative assessment to feedback children's learning. Among these are: class and time management, insufficient training, lack of professional development and resistance to change.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Full Forms</b>
<b>AfL</b>	Assessment for learning
<b>AoL</b>	Assessment of learning
<b>BA</b>	Bachelor of Art
<b>CBA</b>	Competency Based Approach
<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>MS</b>	Middle School
<b>I.T.E</b>	Institut Technologique de l'Education
<b>P.C.E.F</b>	Professeur Certifié de l'Enseignement Fondamental
<b>PW</b>	Project Work
<b>TEFL</b>	Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Formative Assessment (Assessment for learning):** It stresses the importance of measuring progress over time. It is an ongoing evaluation of pupils' progress through observation, keeping records of children's working samples. It occurs when teachers feed information back to students in ways that enable the student to learn better, identifying learning difficulties, encouraging pupils to value their achievement.

**Competency Based Approach:** an approach which "relies a great deal on the active part taken by pupil in the process of learning a foreign language" (Khelifa, 2004).

**Constructivism:** A learning theory of how student constructs knowledge from experience; through interacting, investigations, conversations or activities; which is unique to each individual (Perkins, 1991).

**English as a Foreign Language:** This term describes the phenomenon that English is taught as a subject in schools but not as the medium for instruction nor as the language for daily communication.

**Feedback:** Information the learner receives about current work to improve in the future. Given as part of formative assessment helps learners become aware of any gaps that exist between their desired goal and their current knowledge, understanding, or skill and guides them through actions necessary to obtain the goal (Sadler, 1989).

**In-service Training:** It is the training that teachers receive within the teaching profession

**Middle School (MS):** According to the Algerian Educational system, it is the school that receives pupils aged between 12 and 16 and who have finished their primary school education. It consists of four levels.

**Official Documents:** Pupils' course books, teachers' handbooks and documents accompanying the programs of EFL in Middle Schools.

**Pre-service Training:** The expected training teachers to be receiving before they actually start teaching.

**Project work :** It refers 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 ( Programme of 3AM , 2004) 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.

**Pupils / Students:** They are used interchangeably to mean learners who are presently registered in middle schools.

**Summative Assessment (Assessment of learning):** It is an attempt to summarize student learning at some point in time, say the end of a course. However, they are not designed to provide the immediate, contextualized feedback useful for helping teacher and student during the learning process.



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**CHAPTER ONE**  
**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**



## **Introduction**

Following the initiatives taken by numerous educational systems worldwide and in response to English being an important communicative tool in the global village (Crystal,1997), 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” (Finalities of The Study of English, Programme of 2AM, 2003). Bearing in mind that, in the Algerian educational context, English is taught as a second foreign language after the French language. English is not used extensively outside the classroom to serve people’s needs; neither does it have 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. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education extended English Education coefficient to two (2) in the 2006/2007 school year for the fourth –year level. 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). Teachers, then, were asked to meet the requirements of these new syllabi. 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 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 in PW. Its implementation in MS syllabi did not raise hopes to improve the quality of teaching / learning English in the Algerian educational system, but worries and threats, as well.

The immediate worry concerned the teachers who were called upon to adopt new roles because the newly adopted approach implied some changes in the way EFL was taught. "The present trend is learner-centred. This is why all the efforts must tend to have him act as an active partner."(Teacher's Handbook, Khelifa, 2004).The teachers, then, were called upon to carry this shift from providers of knowledge to 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 ” (Programme OF 3 AM, 2004). As language teaching was 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 “ Indeed, with the production of a project all the efforts developed along the file will be made apparent.” (Teacher’s Handbook, Khelifa, 2004). 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” (Teacher’s Guide, 2006).

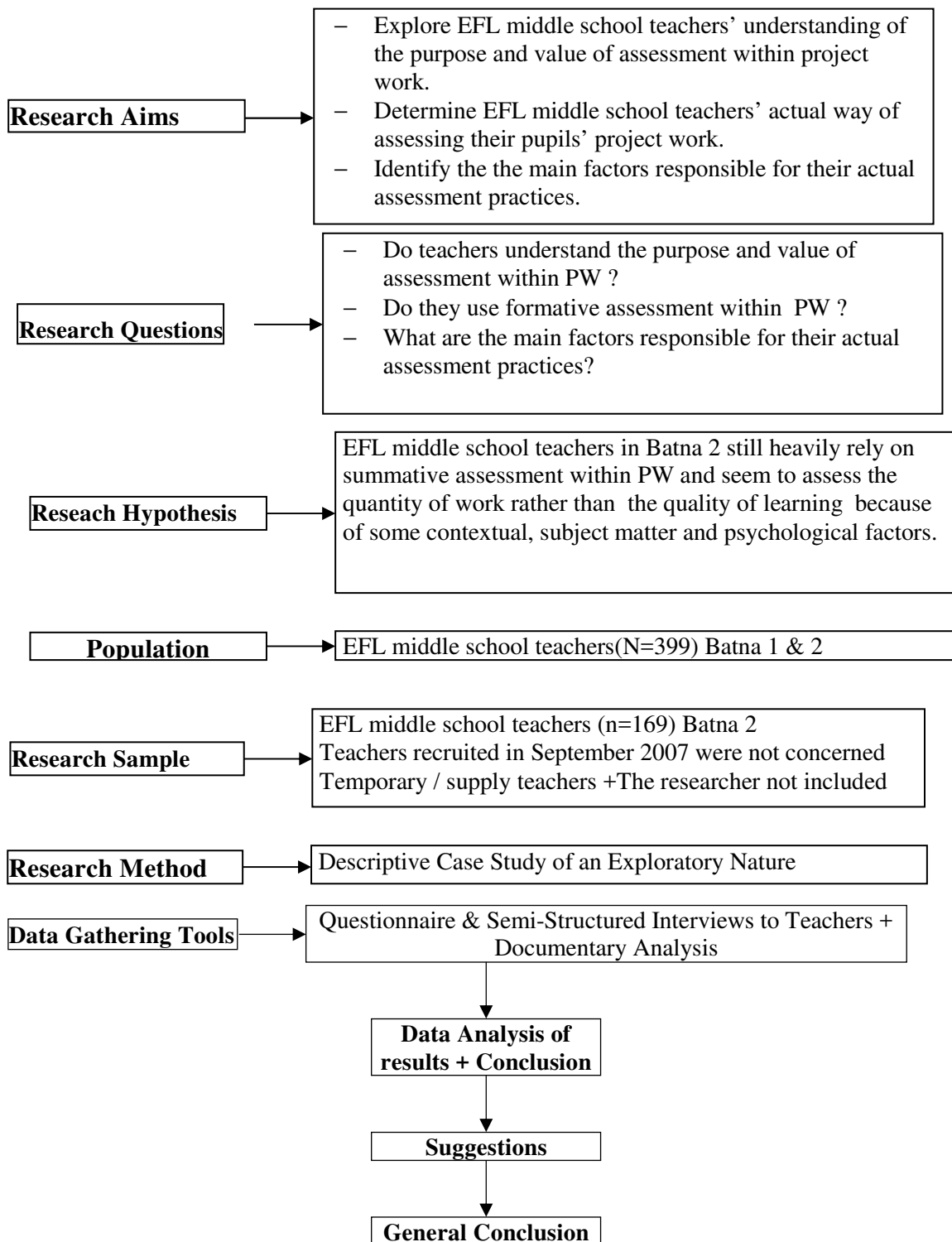
## **I-1- Statement of the Problem**

Most PW proponents assert that its advantages outweigh its disadvantages (Beckett, 2002 ; Stoller, 1997). Assessment is also an essential part of curriculum and of projects within the curriculum. Assessment as supporting learning also maintains overall control over educational development and change (Broadfoot, 1979). Through appropriate choice of assessment, students can be either motivated by achievement and success or demotivated. Through appropriate assessment, students may improve their learning, on the one hand, and on the other, incentives to learn are strengthened (Rowntree, 1977).

However, and after five years of teaching /learning 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 presented challenges for teachers who "... are the ultimate key to educational change and improvement" (Fullan,1994).Our assumption was 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 proved evidence that pupils are not learning through PW. The inspector of English

education in Middle Schools also raised this issue many times during in-service training sessions. He sent an official paper to EFL teachers in MS claiming that the way pupils were doing PW did not go with its pedagogical objectives. What pupils did was only to go to cybercafés and bring the final work of the project ready made without any effort (see Appendix 1). 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 (see Chapter Two) we 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.

Figure 1 will make the reader become acquainted with the main framework of the methodology followed for this study.



**Figure 1 : Methodological Framework**

In an attempt to investigate EFL middle school teachers’ assessment of PW, the present study examined three related domains including teachers’ understanding

of the purpose and value of assessment within PW, the way they actually assess their pupils' PW and the practical reasons that led them to their actual assessment practices. In light of the goals of the study, the following research questions guided 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?

### **I-2- Research Hypothesis**

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

EFL middle school teachers in Batna 2 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.

### **I-3- Aims of the Study**

This study was designed 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.
- identify the the main factors responsible for their actual assessment practices.

Although this study uses a sample of 169 teachers which is not representative of the whole population in Batna, we hope that further studies will build on the results of this study to enrich the existing knowledge in the area being investigated. It is hoped that this study will offer suggestions for EFL middle school teachers’ practice.

#### **I-4-Significance of the Study**

According to Hargreaves (1994), teachers are the ultimate key to educational change and improvement. They are the ones who define and reinterpret curriculum as they implement it (Fullan, 1992). This study explores teachers’ understanding of assessment within PW. It attempts to map out what teachers believe in and what they do in practice by discovering how teachers monitor and assess it. The views of teachers on the assessment and feedback provided in the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are studied. To the best knowledge of the researcher, no research studies have been done on project work in the city of Batna. This research



will be the first study of the ways that EFL middle teachers perceive and interpret assessment of project work. An analysis of what actually happens, as compared with ideal situation (intended assessment), may help project leaders and teachers have a better understanding of the effectiveness of PW in helping students improve learning. This study can help illuminate problems and barriers of the assessment of PW, highlight and generate suggestions for improvement.

### **I-5- Basic Assumptions**

Throughout this research , we will be assuming that EFL middle school teachers in Batna 2 understand the purpose and value of assessment within PW but would have assess only the final product because of class and time management constraints, insufficient training, professional development activities and resistance to change.

### **I-6- Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Our work remains a very modest investigation of EFL middle school teachers' assessment of project work. As with all research, the present study was not without some limitations. One such limitation was related to the sample. All participants were teachers from only one 'circonscription' in Batna during the 2007 – 2008

academic year. The responses of the participants involved are not representative of all EFL teachers in Batna constituting the population of the current study. Therefore, the findings and conclusions to be reached will be limited in their application to EFL middle school teachers in Batna 2 only. There is, hence, no ambition of generalization to other EFL middle school teachers where different school environment and different conditions of implementation of project work exist. The other restrictions that limited our research to a certain extent were the definitions of project work and assessment which were adopted in this study.

### **I-7- Research Methodology Design**

Research is about understanding reality (Cohen et al., 2001). It is about description, interpretation and understanding of phenomena in real life situations. The decision of which method to use should be made after a careful consideration of which method will bring the most useful data to the questions posed in this research. This section provides a description of the research methodology that was used to explore EFL middle school Teachers' assessment of project work and determine the reasons that led them to their actual assessment practices. First, a general description of the research design is provided. Second,

the method that the researcher adopts and the reasons for this choice are outlined.

Third, the population that was of interest to the researcher, the sample size and sampling procedures are presented. Finally, a description of the data used in this study including a detailed account of how they were collected and analyzed is discussed.

This is a descriptive case study of an exploratory nature. Cresswell (2003) suggests that 'exploratory studies are most advantageous when not much has been written about the topic or the population being studied'. To the best knowledge of the researcher, no previous study was done on EFL middle school teachers in Batna to explore their assessment practices within project work.

### **I-7-1- Choice of the Method: A Descriptive Case Study**

#### **I-7-1-1- A Descriptive Method**

There are many research methods that can be used in a research work: the descriptive, the experimental and the historical. The nature of the issue, the population involved, and the kind of the data required are factors which determine the research method most appropriate to be used. Since our research project tries to explore and describe EFL middle school teachers' understanding of the purpose and

value of assessment within PW, determine the actual way they assess their pupils' PW and identify the reasons that led them to their actual assessment practices, we opted for the descriptive method. Landman (1988) defines the descriptive research as that type of research that is primarily concerned with describing the nature or conditions and degree in detail of the present situation. In our point of view as a teacher of English which is supported by the reality in the field of education in Batna, a good understanding of the problem is better gained through a description of the situation with an attempt to provide EFL teachers with some suggestions for their development in the field of assessment of PW to MS pupils. Although we acknowledge the usefulness of other methods like the historical, and the experimental ones, we did not make use of them for the following reasons:

- The historical method tells us about what existed in the past, which is not convenient for our work. Its limitations might stem from the fact that we are dealing with a synchronic study of actual assessment of project work rather than a historical account of it.

- Our attempt in this study is not to test a new theory of assessment of PW, but just provide EFL teachers with some suggestions for their development and improvement in the field of assessment of PW to MS pupils. This is why we did not

see it appropriate to adopt the experimental method which requires the manipulation of variables and a cause-effect relationship.

### **I-7-1-2- Case Study**

Patton (1987) defines a case study as “ a research strategy for empirical inquiry”.A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context and multiple sources of information are employed. It is generally preferred when the researcher aims to find out the answers of ‘how’ and ‘why’ question (Patton, 1990). Kantrov and Miller (1998) note that the case method is a useful approach to bring out, explore, and change beliefs as well as to expand knowledge.A case study enables a researcher to gain an in-depth understanding and a holistic view of a situation. Anderson and Arsenault (1998) suggested “a case study is a holistic research method that uses multiple sources of evidence to analyse or evaluate a specific phenomenon”. Since the present study is focussed on exploring how teachers assess their pupils’ PW and the reasons that led them to their actual assessment practices, this method suits the purpose of the study well.

To accomplish the objectives of this study, a descriptive case study using a qualitative research method was employed with some statistics in order to collect a

variety of data for analysis. In this study, data were collected through the use of a questionnaire to teachers who have supervised their pupils in project work. The questionnaire allows the collection of data from a larger number of respondents (Cohen and Manion,1994). Semi- structured interviews and documentary analysis were used to complement the statistical findings of the questionnaire.

## **I-8- Population and Sample**

### **I-8-1- Population**

A population is defined as ‘any group of individuals that have more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher’ (Best and Kahn, 1993). In this study, 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 (see Appendix 2).

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 circonsription that she belonged to.

### **I-8-2- Sample Size and Sampling Procedures**

Wiersma (2000) defines a sample as “a sub set of the population to which the researcher intends to generalize the results”. Conducting an empirical investigation on 399 teachers, the entire population of EFL teachers in Batna presents immense practical difficulties and renders our attempt no more than an ambition. Research theorists assert that sufficient data can be obtained through the study of a proportion of the population; that is, a sample.

The sample meant for this 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 subjects are all currently engaged in EFL teaching in middle schools in Batna 2 and whose teaching experience varied. All the participants were familiar with the new requirements set by the Ministry of Education in Algeria and each participant has taught at least one year on the new

curriculum using project work. Teachers recruited in September 2007 were not concerned in our study. Also temporary or supply teachers who were teaching for some months, because the former teachers were on sick leave (congé de maladie), were not included in this study. The total number of the newly recruited and temporary teachers was 10. Moreover, the researcher was not part of the sample. The sampling for the questionnaire, thus, 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.



## **I-9- Data Gathering Tools**

In order to obtain enough appropriate data for the research questions and the research hypothesis, the methods of data collection were designed with the help of several literatures and the real teacher's context.

To explore EFL middle school teachers' assessment of PW as well as the reasons that led them to their actual assessment practices, 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 (Martyn, 1999).

### **I-9-1- Questionnaire**

Questionnaire is "a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information" (Cohen, 2000). A number of advantages are associated with the questionnaire.

Cohen and Manion (1994) see the advantages of the questionnaire as 'fair' reliability and relatively easy access to a large sample. The same questionnaire can

be given to the respondents at the same time, which makes the data more uniform and standard. Besides, the analysis of the questionnaire data can be self-administered, and confining data collection to a questionnaire is also comparatively straightforward to analyze. It is a self report instrument useful for economically and speedily obtaining data from a large number of respondents (Brown, 2001).

Questionnaire was chosen as one of the data collection instruments used in this study since it has the advantage of reaching more teachers in a short period of time and generating quantifiable data to answer the research questions easily (Bryman, 1988). The researcher would gain an overview of the situation and answer the research questions.

#### **I-9-1-1- Questionnaire Design**

After deciding on the questionnaire as one of the instruments for collecting data for this study, another important key to be considered is how to design the questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this research was designed by the researcher with the guidance of her supervisor.

It contained four Sections. Section One (4items) contained items to collect background information about the respondents. This was followed by Section Two

(2 items), which asked the teachers about what they perceive as the purpose and value of assessment within PW, which were grouped as follows:

- Assessment **for** learning and improvement: items(a), (c) and (d).
- Assessment **of** learning and achievement: item (b).

Section Three (4 items) asked teachers about their actual assessment of PW and Section Four (6 items) was designed to collect information about the reasons that led EFL teachers in Batna 2 to these practices.

### **I-9-1-2- Piloting The Questionnaire: Validity and Reliability of Data**

“Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring” (Gay and Airasian, 2000). In this study, some strategies were adopted to ensure validity and reliability. The strategies included the piloting of the questionnaire, and documentary analysis to verify the data collected from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the pilot test was to check whether there were any misunderstanding, ambiguities or inappropriateness in the questionnaire. According to the opinions collected, the researcher only needed to slightly modify it. The draft questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher’s supervisor. She made some comments on the wording, and more

importantly, insisted on consistency. She suggested the omission of four items in Section Two concerning the purpose of assessment of project work giving teachers opportunity to add others. The questionnaire was revised according to her comments. The revised version of the questionnaire was trialled out in a pilot test to see how well it could generate responses from the teachers. The pilot test was undertaken in November 2007. A sample of 8 teachers was selected from 2 different middle schools.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher to see if the teachers understood the questions and gave responses without any difficulty. The aim of this pilot test was to check if there was any ambiguous statement and to check the time required to complete the questionnaire. It was found that the time required for teachers to complete the questionnaire was about fifteen minutes and was considered appropriate for the main study. Based on teachers' responses, there were a few questions which were required to be modified and clarified. The final form of the questionnaire was e-mailed to the supervisor for final consent (see Appendix 6 ).

### **I-9-1-3- Administering The Questionnaire**

It was recognized at the outset that there would be a number of potential difficulties arising from the manner of delivery of the questionnaire. To guarantee a full return rate, the questionnaire that was administered to teachers was conducted on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2007 during in-service training sessions held by the inspector of English in Batna. This latter was contacted by the researcher early in October 2007 to get approval for asking the teachers to participate in the study and requested his help in disseminating the questionnaire during these sessions and he accepted willingly. Before the distribution of the questionnaire, the respondents were told about the purpose of the study. They were also assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The inspector asked the teachers not to discuss their responses with each other. Besides, the respondents were allowed as much time as was necessary to complete the questionnaire. There was no fixed time limit for the completion of the questionnaire.

### **1-9-2- Semi-Structured Interviews**

Using the questionnaire as the only data-gathering tool, and in accordance with the nature of the information sought for, we recognized that a criticism can be

made on the ground that the researcher may fall onto some kind of subjective judgments stemming from biased responses which result from the only use of the questionnaire. Indeed, even though both open-form and closed-form items were used, some would argue that the questions contained in the questionnaire are rarely answered in their totality, and there is the risk of obtaining inappropriate responses because of bias or approval motive. We thought it wiser, therefore, not to limit the data-gathering technique to the only use of the questionnaire. Including the use of the semi-structured interviews deepens our investigation and consolidates the information obtained by the use of the questionnaire. Before making the decision to use questionnaire as the instrument to collect data, alternative method – interview, was considered as well. Rogers and Bouey (1996) point out, "Without a doubt, the most utilized data collection method in qualitative research studies is the interview." Bell (1993) points out that one major advantage of interview is its adaptability. The interviewer can clarify questions and probe the answers of the respondents, thereby eliciting more information. In this study, the interview was also an important way to verify the data collected through the questionnaire. Interviews can be classified into unstructured, semi-structured and structured (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996). It was felt that unstructured interviews

were too open and not focussed. Completely structured interviews, however, would limit the richness of the findings. For this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews (also called ‘guided interviews’) to collect data, i.e. the interviews were guided by a list of questions, but the interviewees were prompted to elaborate on their answers.

Due to the limitation of this research in time and conditions, it was hard to have face-to-face interview with all the 169 respondents. In addition, the working schedule of EFL teachers and the job obligations of the researcher did not facilitate the task to interview all the teachers who participated in this study. The researcher was present during the first training session only. Her presence facilitated the task to interview some of the teachers who showed interest in the topic and wanted to share with us what they really experienced in their classrooms concerning project work. She realised that their opinions would be of much better use to understand the problem under study and to make suggestions as far as assessment of project work is concerned. Four teachers were selected according to their teaching experience (PEF teachers with ITE certificate and PCEF teachers who are BA holders), and their responses to project assessment, either positive or negative, to the questionnaire survey. The other teachers who were selected for the semi-structured

interview belonged to two different middle schools. The researcher got in touch with their headmasters to inquire about the free hour the EFL teachers had each fortnight and get consent to arrange the meeting and conduct the interviews with them. The researcher got permission from the head of the academy first (see Appendix 3). All in all, 12 teachers were interviewed. Four after the training session of the 10<sup>th</sup> November and eight on two separate days.

### **I-9-2-1- Interview Guide**

An interview guide containing a list of questions to be explored in an interview is helpful to the interviewer (Patton, 1980). The focuses and the guiding questions for the interviews were carefully designed to save the time of interviewees, based on the research questions and findings of the questionnaire. The interview questions were arranged according to the order of the questions in the questionnaire so as to make it easy to verify and elaborate on what the informants had responded in the questionnaire. The first section sought to discover views about the purposes of assessing project work other than the ones provided in the questionnaire and which few teachers specified. The second section sought concrete answers on these teachers' actual assessment of PW and the different methods they used in their



classes. The third section evaluated the reasons teachers provided on their actual assessment practices. Each interview lasted about 20 to 30 minutes.

The interview guide only provided a framework to guide the interview. The questions were open-ended and the order of questioning is subjected to the circumstance. In order to have thorough information, the interviewer was free to explore the subject matter further. She might ask other questions which can clarify and explain that particular subject. This method made a balance between the efficiency and the effectiveness on collecting data (refer to Appendix 7).

### **I-9-3- Documentary Analysis**

Document analysis was used as another tool for investigation “Documentary analysis of educational files and records can prove to be an extremely valuable source of data.” (Johnson in Bell, 1993). Documents can provide information to verify the data collected from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. Through documents, the deviation between what are stated and planned and what really happens can be discovered to clearly understand teachers’ actual assessment practices. For this research, various forms of document data were collected from schools. The documents reviewed included:

1 A collection of some pupils' project work samples used as a source of evidence through which the researcher observed the learning outcomes of pupils.

2 The official documents (books and handbooks) sent by the Ministry of Education concerning Middle School Syllabi.

3 The teachers' training books to collect information on what kind of in-service training teachers received.

4 Pupils' yearly plannings for all MS levels. As the researcher could not observe and follow the whole process of PW in classes, since each lasted 3 weeks, these documents can provide valuable information about the process of the project.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided an introduction to the study. It outlined the research problem, hypothesis and the aims of the study. It provided details of the research methodology design that was used to study teachers' assessment of project work and the factors that may influence those practices.



**PART ONE**

**REVIEW OF RELATED  
LITERATURE**

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **The Implementation of Project Work in the Teaching / Learning of English as a Foreign Language in Algerian Middle Schools**

## **Introduction**

There has been substantial education reform over the last twenty years in education systems all over the world (Hopkins, 2001). Like other countries which have undergone education reform, Algeria's reform efforts were driven in response to increasing changes in education worldwide. Putting PW in the school time-tabled period as a new method to teaching / learning English within the Competency Based Approach is a kind of curriculum reform in Algeria. The literature review is done for the purpose of providing the researcher and readers with some basic ground works, which can be used to examine and analyze this case study. The previous chapter was an introductory chapter giving some background to the research problem. This chapter offers an in depth discussion and provides a literature review of the major concepts and terminologies related to change in education, foreign language teaching in Algeria and the implementation of project work in Algerian middle schools.

## **II-1- WorldWide Change in English Education**

The field of education has gone through a major metamorphosis in the past several decades. The monumental changes that have taken place can be traced to four significant influences. Firstly, dissatisfaction with existing school systems resulted in modifications in teaching practices. It was the case in the United States in the 1980s (Marzano & Kendall, 1998). Secondly, the role of education was seen in a more contemporary light. According to Lewis (1995), 'it became clear that education was the major vehicle that could prepare young people for the increasing challenges of modern life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, radical adjustments in education needed to be made. Thirdly, as more divergent views concerning knowledge acquisition began to emerge, educators were pressured to respond to the newly discovered patterns of learning. This resulted in widespread changes in educational practices, in which greater efforts have been invested in teaching methods that could best assure academic success. An example of this can be seen in the adoption of various alternative instructional and assessment practices which abandoned behaviourist theories for the more progressive theories of cognitivism and constructivism (that will be discussed in Chapter III). Fourthly, as English continued to gain strength as a lingua franca of the world, a major influence on

education reform, particularly in the area of English language study, were changes in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language.

According to Crystal (1997), English is now the dominant or official language in over sixty countries and holds some position in every continent. Many reasons, he asserts, have contributed for its global expansion. Political, military, and economic influences have been the primary factors (ibid). In addition, the technological inventions and developments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as telephone, fax, electronic mail, internet etc. have facilitated worldwide communication in which the most frequent language used is English (Crystal, 1997). English remains the international language of the world. Therefore, schools have the responsibility to empower students to communicate in English. In addition, since global education has become a growing worldwide trend it is now an important goal of education to help students become aware of issues that affect the world (Dyer & Bushell, 1996). The objectives of global education in language teaching are to enable students to attain and use foreign language in discussions about world issues and global problems (Cates, 1990).



## **II-2- Foreign Language Teaching in Algeria**

### **II-2-1- Finalities**

The challenge of globalisation has affected English language teaching in Algeria. As a consequence, the Ministry of Education has initiated major changes in the curriculum for English language study. According to the program of the 1<sup>st</sup> level MS issued in 2003, teaching English must imperatively be conceived with the objectives to:

- help our society to get harmoniously integrated in modernity. This means a fully complete participation in a rising linguistic community of people: who use English in all types of transaction, share and exchange ideas as well as experiences in the field of science, culture and civilisation. This will make it possible to know oneself and the other.
- give access to science, technology and universal culture in order to develop in the pupil the spirit of criticism, tolerance and open-mindedness.
- Equip the pupil with the necessary asserts to succeed in tomorrow's world.
- guarantee the pupil the mastery of an efficient linguistic tool:

the greater the language mastery, the better the pupils achievement and development in a professional and academic world.

- acquire competencies that will help the pupil live comfortably in his environment: these competencies are interdependent and the non acquisition of one of them will impede the acquisition of the others. All competencies must be included in the school programme.
- master competencies through moving from a logic of linguistic knowledge storing to a logic of integration and interaction. Through learning, the pupil can achieve a cognitive progress and its experimentation, gradually reaching metacognition and autonomy.
- acquire transversal competencies related to intellectual, methodological, communicative, personal and social fields.
- develop capacities that will enable him to get integrated in the society he lives in to learn what sharing is, what cooperating is and what being offensive without being aggressive is.
- face the process of acquisition before developing the process of competencies that will gradually turn him into a real citizen who will be self conscious and fully responsible. (Programme De La Première Année Moyenne, 2003)

These finalities aim at "supplying our learners with the necessary pedagogical tools to promote learning. They go with information that help understand the pedagogical tools as well as with principles of teaching and learning, to reach assigned goals" (Teacher's Handbook, Khelifa, 2004)

### **II-2-2- Goals**

In his introduction to Teacher's handbook, Khelifa (2004) specifies the objectives of the Algerian English teaching program set by the Ministry of Education. He states that from the finalities derive linguistic, methodological, and cultural objectives. What matters most is that, he reminds, these finalities aim at supplying Algerian students with the necessary pedagogical tools to develop learning. Accordingly, finalities, pedagogical tools and principles of teaching and learning are combined to reach already established goals. We should assume that teaching English or any other foreign or second language in Algerian schools is to enable learners develop the ability to communicate in the target language (Ghouar, 2003). According to the 1976 Ordinance, students are supposed to communicate in the various forms, aspects and dimension of English. Four main categories of goals can be mentioned: socio-cultural, humanistic, educational and academic.

### **II-2-3- The Implementation of the Competency Based Approach in Middle School Curriculum**

In recent years, the teaching of English as a foreign language in Algerian MS has become the focus of new educational policies applied at the national level. In 2003, the Ministry of Education issued a new set of curriculum guidelines and course descriptions of the instruction of English in MS. Another major change in English as a foreign language policy was the adoption of the Competency Based Approach (CBA). This approach “relies a great deal on the active part taken by pupil in the process of learning a foreign language” (Khelifa , 2004).

Khelifa (2004) provides us with the general definition of a competency to be “a know how which integrates and mobilises a number of abilities and knowledge to be efficiently used in problem solving situations that have never been met before”.The programs of all MS levels are learner-centred and focus on the construction of the learner’s knowledge.They aim at developing competencies that are regarded as essential for the learner of the new century. These competencies are the ability:

- to interact orally in English.

- to interpret authentic oral or written documents.
- to produce simple oral or written messages.

Although the CBA is a novelty, the finalities are not new:

- To develop general know - how processes and fix knowledge acquired in class.
- To make the school acquisitions viable and sustainable. The pupil has to reinvest his knowledge not only in school context but from one situation to another, from one discipline to another and in context outside the school.
- To develop the thinking process of the learner by establishing tight relationships between acquiring knowledge and developing thinking process.
- To put an end to disciplinary barriers focussing on basic learning.
- To choose a personalized pedagogy in order to facilitate the development of the learners' competencies. To do so, it will be necessary to rely on the resources that have to be exploited, developed and enriched. To achieve this aim, various pedagogical approaches will be preferred, keeping individual differences in mind
- To present learning contents in relation to the needs of the learner.

- To view the learning. The programme determines learning that will call upon intellectual procedure and attitudes such as respect differences, co-operation and team work which are at the heart of project work values .

## **II-3- Project Work**

### **II-3-1- Theoretical Foundation**

In education, the word ‘project work’ has many connotations in learning. Dewey (1938) stated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that, it was believed that children’s learning was best through daily experiences in projects. In the literature of Second / Foreign Language learning, a variety of terms such as ‘ project work’ (Shoring, 1990 ; cited in Beckett, 1999), ‘project method’ (e.g., Kilpatrick, 1926), ‘project approach’ (Diffily, 1996) and ‘ project-based learning’ (Peterson & Myer, 1995) are used to refer to short / long term activities that involve language / content learning through planning, researching, analyzing data and reflecting on the process and product orally and / or in writing.

### **II-3-2- Definitions of Project Work (PW)**

Project-based learning has a long history. As far back as the early 1900s, John Dewey supported "learning by doing" (Grant, 2002). Students learn best by doing, not by having information "poured" into their heads. Also, he proposed "directed living" (Perkins, 1991) 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.

Constructivism, as will be stated in the next chapter, is a learning theory of how student constructs knowledge from experience, which is unique to each individual (Perkins, 1991). Through interacting with their environment, conducting investigations, conversations or activities, an individual constructs new knowledge on his/ her prior knowledge and thus each individual's knowledge construction is different. Constructivism is grounded in project-based learning by creating a student-centred learning environment and the learning outcome is based on authentic and real life experiences with multiple perspectives. Thus, students are allowed to be active builders of knowledge. Dewey views learning, as a continuous

reconstruction of experience, and thus, education, in his view, is a process of continual reorganizing, reconstructing and transforming (Hendrick, 2004). The relevant dictionary meaning of project is a “task set as an educational exercise that requires students to do their own research and present the results” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 1993). Many educators (Grant, 2002; Wolk, 1994 and others) stated that project-based learning refers to a set of teaching strategies, which enable teachers to guide students through in-depth studies of real world topics.

Haines (1989) 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”. Ribe & Vidal, (1993) revealed that ‘ project work ’ is students’ study or investigation of a specific theme or topic on individual or group basis. Its objective is to develop a better and deeper understanding of the theme or topic or achieve other forms of learning outcomes such as independent work. Marx and Blumenfeld et. al (1997) 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 Chard (2000) suggest that PW is “an in-depth study of a particular topic... and investigation-a piece of research that involves children in seeking answers to questions”.

Similar definitions of PW learning were 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’ (Guide du Professeur, 2006).In Teacher’s Handbook, Khelifa (2004) 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 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" (Khelifa, 2004).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” (Moursund, 1998). 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?’ ” (Grant, 2002).

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 (Definition as stated in the Program of 3AM, 2003) 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.

### **II-3-3- Phases of Project Work**

#### **II-3-3-1- As Set in the Literature**

According to Katz & Chard (2000), the implementation of a project includes three phases. They are:

- Phase 1– Beginning the project
- Phase 2 – Developing the project
- Phase 3 – Concluding the project

- **Phase 1 – Beginning the project**

The teacher discusses the topic with the children and comes to know their related interest and experience. Children can then initiate work on a specific portion of the topic. During the ensuing discussions, the teacher helps the children develop questions, which their subsequent investigation would answer. The teacher then creates a topic to record all the information about children's interests, that are revealed during investigation, and, then plans, along with the children, the method of carrying out the project and the preparations that have to be made thereof.

- **Phase 2 – Developing the project**

On the basis of the discussions in Phase 1, children investigate and collect different information, resources and material for the project. The teacher suggests ways for children to carry out a variety of investigations. Each child is involved in presenting whatever he or she is learning, according to his or her interest and ability.

- **Phase 3 – Concluding the Project**

In the concluding stage, children share with others what they have learned. They present their new knowledge through the medium of art, story or drama. During this process, the entire class is purposefully involved in reviewing and evaluating the whole project.

### **II-3-3-2- PW as Set in the Official Documents Sent by the Ministry of Education**

According to what has been stated in the programs of 1AM, 2 AM and 3AM, PW is organised in three phases: the preparation phase, the realisation phase and the restitution (presentation) phase. The researcher has explained them in the following table:

<b>PHASE</b>	<b>PROCESS</b>	<b>ROLE OF THE TEACHER</b>	<b>ROLE OF THE PUPIL</b>
<b>PREPARATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clearly define the project.</li> <li>- set objectives.</li> <li>- set tasks and learning activities.</li> <li>- involve the product to be made, the means to adopt.</li> <li>- distribute the tasks.</li> <li>- set deadlines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- defines the project.</li> <li>- adjusts it to the competencies aimed for.</li> <li>- opts for number of sequences.</li> <li>- plans learning and assessment activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work individually or form groups according to the objectives of the project.</li> </ul>
<b>REALIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pilot the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- monitor / advisor / facilitator / guide /a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- design their own materials (such as</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- collect of ideas.</li> <li>- formulate objectives.</li> <li>- plan actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>source / a re-adjuster.</li> <li>- reduces his control over the pupils.</li> <li>- assists pupils in collecting ideas, planning actions, practising the language, taking notes and documentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>questionnaires, interviews ...).</li> <li>- collect information.</li> <li>- organize the work.</li> <li>- get prepared for the presentation of the final work.</li> </ul>
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- deals with the final presentation of the product in front of the audience.</li> <li>- the audience includes classmates from other classes and even guests such as parents or administrators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- encourages pupils to present their projects.</li> <li>- prepares them to explain their work using photos, tables ....</li> <li>- discusses honestly the pupils' performance and gives comments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- after the presentation, the pupils review their previous actions, discuss them and think of possible improvements.</li> </ul>

**Table 1: The Three Phases of PW, The Role of The Teacher And Pupils.**

(Documents D'Acompagnement Des Programmes De La 1ERE, 2EME, 3EME Années Moyennes, 2003, 2004, 2005)

### **II-3-4- Characteristics of Project Work**

Although educators approach PW from different perspectives, their interpretations share some common characteristics. According to Stoller (2002), PW can be summarized as an approach which “focuses on content learning rather than on specific language targets”. It is “student-centred” and it is both a “process and product orientation”. Most importantly, it is “potentially motivating,

stimulating, empowering, and challenging” as it results in “building student confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy as well as improving students’ language skills, content learning and cognitive abilities”. In a brief review of literatures (Joyce & Weil, 2000), six features have been identified as key components of the PW, as follows:

#### **II-3-4-1- Real world connection**

Projects should connect to the real world because it addresses real world issues that are relevant to students' lives or communities (Grant, 2002). Real world connection component can take on many forms such as communicating with the world outside the classroom, via the Internet or collaboration with community members and mentors, depending on the goal of the project. PW helps make learning relevant and useful to students by establishing connections to life outside the classroom and addressing real world concerns. Professor Sylvia Chard (Curtis, 2001) stated that project-based learning makes school more like real life. In real life, people don't spend several hours listening to authorities who tell us what and how to do. We have to know how to ask questions of a person we're learning from and able to link what the person is telling us with what we already know. In short,

through students' engagement with real-life problem in the following ways

(William, 1984):

- Encourages students to determine what to work on, under certain circumstances and accepts them as experts about their needs.
- Encourages the development of habits of mind associated with life-long learning.
- Integrates curriculum areas, thematic instruction and community issues.
- Meets the needs of learners with varying skill levels and learning styles.
- Promotes systematic thinking and a higher level of cognitive activity.
- Provides students with opportunities to apply skills.
- Allows students work together as a team.
- Demands participation, action and involvement.
- Other particular benefits of project-based instruction include:

\* Preparing children for the workplace. Children are exposed to a wide range of skills and competencies such as collaboration, project planning, decision making, and time management (Blank, 1997).

\* Teachers often note improvement in attendance, more class participation, and greater willingness to do homework (Moursund, Bielefeldt, & Underwood, 1997).

#### **II-3-4-2- Student-centred**

The project-based learning is designed to maximize student decision-making and initiative throughout the course of the project from topic selection to design, production, and presentation decisions. That is, students are more autonomous to make decision, including forming groups, selection of topics, methods of collecting data, ways of presenting the findings and planning of the learning process (Thomas, 2000). During the process, teachers act as the coaches or facilitators to give feedback to help students making thoughtful decisions and revisions (Grant, 2002).

#### **II-3-4-3- Collaboration**

PW enhances students' co-operation with each other in moving towards a mutually agreed goal (Haines, 1989). Ideally students undertaking projects should be capitalized on the success of cooperative or collaborative learning in some manner (Marx et al., 1997). Since students are inexperienced when working in groups, they may have difficulties negotiating to reach compromise (Johnson &



Johnson, 1989). In order to know how to get along with others, it may be necessary to teach students how to interact within groups and manage conflict within groups. Project learning encourages collaboration in some form, either through small groups, student-led presentations or whole class evaluation of project results.

#### **II-3-4-4- Skill-based**

Project learning helps to develop an array of skills including planning, reading, observing, judging, enquiring, collaborating and thinking (Haines, 1989). In the programme, it is recognised the use of essential tools and skills including technology for learning.

Many educators support the implementation of project work in schools. Joyce and Weil (2000) claim that project-based learning is a teaching strategy for classroom activity that moves away from the classroom practices of isolated, standardized and teacher-centred lessons to that of interdisciplinary, student-centred and integrated with real world issues and practices. In addition, it calls upon students to explain or define their position to others in their project groups, so that their learning is more apt to be 'owned', that is, personalized and valued. It serves as a medium to involve students who don't usually participate.

As a result, PW provides a means for transferring, in whole or in part, the responsibility for learning from teachers to students. Since project learning offers multiple ways for students to participate and to demonstrate their knowledge, students are motivated to find excitement and develop pleasure in learning. They challenge themselves by exploring new points of view or tapping into new sources of information. They possess a passion for solving problems and understanding ideas or concepts, which enables them to develop the life-long learning capabilities that are needed in our ever-changing society.

Professor Howard Gardner (1983) suggests that teachers be trained to present their lessons in a wide variety of ways using cooperative learning, role play, field trips, etc so as to develop different intelligences. For example, field trips allow students to provide an opportunity for students to excel in understanding in working with others and to excel in understanding themselves. Also, PW can be matched to the different learning styles of students such as learning alone by reading and reviewing, or learning in a group by reading and discussing.

### **II-3-5- Educational Benefits of Project Work**

It is not always easy to introduce a new methodology, so we need to be sure that the effort is worthwhile. What benefits does project work bring to the language class? Literature shows that children can benefit from the project work in different ways. One immediate benefit of practising PW is the unique way that it can motivate students intrinsically by engaging them in their own learning. Traditionally, teachers do the 'learning' for the student by spoon feeding with neatly packaged dollops of ready organized knowledge (Henry, 1994).

According to PW in the literature ( see for example Helm and Katz, 2001), there are many aspects in which children can benefit from the Project Approach. These are:

#### **II-3-5-1- Intellectual Achievement**

Many studies claim that children benefit a lot from project work, as it provides them with opportunities to direct their work, to select and explore their areas of interest. The studies suggest that programmes based on child-initiated learning activities, contribute to children's short, and long-term, academic and social development (Schweinhart, 1997 in Helm & Katz, 2001). Katz and Chard (1989)

state that project work could stimulate intellectual skills like reading, writing, counting, measuring, creative work and critical thinking. Moreover, Katz and Chard (1989) and Katz (1994) point out that the idea of curriculum integration in project work contributes to the intellectual development of young children.

### **II-3-5-2- Social and emotional development**

Katz and Chard (1989) emphasize that one of the important rationale for the introduction of project work into childhood education, is the development of a community ethos. The Project Approach could provide a natural content and environment for children to interact with others. During project work, children have to apply social skills: to discuss the work plan, to pay attention to each other's efforts and ideas, to share responsibility for what has been accomplished, and to solve conflicts. Such varied interaction helps in promoting the spirit of socialization among children. PW provides collaborative opportunities to construct knowledge. 'Collaborative learning allows kids to bounce ideas off each other, voice their own opinions, and negotiate solutions, all skills that will be necessary in the workplace'. (Bryson, 1994).

### **II-3-5-3- Project and parent involvement**

Parents can participate in the planning and implementing of projects. Henderson and Berla (1994) state that parents' involvement in their children's education is significantly related to children's success in school (in Helm & Katz, 2001). The Project Approach invites a great deal of parental involvement. Once parents are involved and interested in their children's work, they tend to help them continue the learning at home.

### **II-3-5-4- Projects develop children's problem solving skills**

Britz (1993) recognizes that children's social and cognitive experiences in project work could facilitate problem solving and promote strategies useful in the life long process of learning. "Piaget states that children understand only what they discover or invent themselves" (Britz, 1993). Helm and Katz (2001) also mention that the Project Approach can help enhance children's problem solving skills. Most projects involve various types of problems. Project work in the classroom provides opportunity for children to construct knowledge through exploring, experimenting, trying out, and finally solving problems. Choices, decision making and a

curriculum framework that integrates learning, such as Katz and Chard's project method (1989), are especially appropriate for young learners" (Britz, 1993,).

### **II-3-5-5- Connecting learning at school with reality**

Students retain more knowledge and skills when they are engaged in stimulating projects. With projects, kids use higher order thinking skills rather than memorizing facts in an isolated context without a connection to how and where they are used in the real world (Blank, 1997).

### **II-3-6- Why Project Work in the Language Classroom?**

There are many reasons why projects are suitable vehicles for learning and should be encouraged within the classroom setting. Here are some of the reasons (Mann.et.al.2002):

- Projects represent authentic activities that pupils may encounter later in life.
- Pupil-chosen topics are always more motivating than teacher-chosen topics.
- Projects encourage genuine pupil-pupil and pupil teacher collaboration.
- Well-designed projects demand higher learning skills like problem solving or devising a research question.

- Projects can be presented to an audience and allow pupils to demonstrate what they have learned. The pupils are now the “experts” on the subject, creating genuine dialogue within the classroom setting (something that does not often take place with teacher-generated questions).
- Projects are suitable for heterogeneous classes where weak and strong pupils work together in order to achieve success.
- Projects can be designed for all levels of language learners.
- Projects are open-ended and require collaboration between teacher and pupils to build the rubrics that will be used to evaluate the work. Rubrics should include both peer and self evaluation.
- Projects should contain a written part as well as an oral presentation. This should not be a frontal lecture but rather a creative means of presenting what the pupils have learned. It may be as simple as a poster or something more sophisticated like a video or PowerPoint presentation.
- Projects should be done in class, during which time there should be no frontal lessons. This allows for a change in classroom routine from frontal, teacher centred lessons to pupil-centred lessons.
- Projects help raise the standards of language. (Mann et al, 2002)

### **III-3-7- Facilitating Factors for PW**

Project work offers an opportunity for students being active constructors of knowledge. Rooted in constructivism, PW has strong theoretical support for successful achievement. In order to make projects learning work in the classroom effectively, several factors should be recognized.

#### **III-3-7-1- Cultural Attitude**

The first facilitating factor for PW is to consider the cultural attitude of what schooling ought to be. The general public view schooling should be ‘with a teacher in charge of curriculum, directing memorization of facts, utilizing textbook worksheets, and assessing with paper-pencil tests’ (Newell, 2003) as they have been taught in this manner. People were quizzed as to what were their most meaningful learning experiences. When people hear of doing school differently, with student-directed projects and teachers as facilitators or coaches, it generally does not conjure up a picture of rigorous learning experience (Newell, 2003). It sounds like too much fun, and if it is fun it can’t be meaningful learning!

However, the general public must be understood that mere memorization of factual information is not the only type of learning. Many educators know that



students are not served well under the typical and traditional schooling, but learn best in an open atmosphere created by the project-based system (Williams, 1984). If students can be given the chance to learn how to do research, accomplish long-term projects, and create new knowledge they have an opportunity of being more purposeful adults.

### **III-3-7-2- School Policy**

An overall school policy towards project work is important. The school authority, including the principal and administrators should show support for project-based learning so that the staffs recognize its importance. In order to ensure teachers' commitment, school administrators work closely with teachers to define the vision, purposes and practices of the school (Martinello and Cook, 1994). Teachers are always relegated to a status of employee with very little say in the operation of the school. School administrators can stimulate project work by inviting them to join the team, questioning the team about developments and by offering positive feedback, especially in the initial stage. It can avoid from running the risk of having teachers in the school who do not share the same philosophy of education. McClelland (1984) points out that 'one prerequisite for appropriate

curriculum development is for teachers to acquire a vision of themselves as interpreters and developers of curriculum, rather than a presenter of schemes of work devised by others.’

### **III-3-7-3- Resources Availability**

The school authority makes sure that resources such as copies of books and computers are available to the project team and who encourages project work (Grant, 2002). Make sure all students have opportunities to interact and develop skills with resources may be necessary. Katz and Chard (2000) identify that poor physical facilities and limited supplies of learning materials are one of the significant obstacles of implementing project-based learning.

### **III-3-7-4- Collaborative Learning**

Ideally students undertaking projects should be capitalized on the success of cooperative or collaborative learning in some manner (Marx et al., 1997). Often the philosophy applied is that of ‘sink or swim’, and remarkably little preparatory training is given (Henry, 1994). Since students are inexperienced when working in groups, they may have difficulties negotiating to reach compromise (Johnson &

Johnson, 1989). In order to know how to get along with others, it may be necessary to teach students how to interact within groups and manage conflict within groups.

### **III-3-7-5- Students' Expenses**

Another consideration of implementing project-based learning is that students can be involved in considerable expenses, in travelling to and from the sites, and in acquiring appropriate source material and paying for documents, photos, etc. (Henry, 1994).

### **Conclusion**

Putting project work in the school time-tabled period was a kind of curriculum reform in Algeria. 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. This chapter provided us with the literature concerning the nature of educational change, especially the curriculum reform in Algeria followed by an in-

depth and systematic analysis of the implementation of project work in Middle School Syllabi.

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 extraordinary necessary. Assessment through formative and on-going activities can help pupils develop an awareness of what they have learned. This issue is discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **THE NEED FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the definitions of assessment as stated in the literature and the one the researcher will refer to in this study. Then, the theories underlying assessment practices are discussed. A literature review of the major concepts and terminologies used in the study concerning assessment are introduced.

### **III-1- Defining Assessment**

According to Gipps (1994), assessment is a wide range of methods for evaluating student performance and attainment including formal testing and examinations, practical and oral assessment, classroom based assessment carried out by teachers. Marsh (1997) has extended it to activities, formal and informal, undertaken by a teacher to obtain information about the knowledge, skills and attitudes of students. Knight and York (2003) assert that it is integral to the educational process. Satterly (1989) views educational assessment as an omnibus term which includes all the processes and products which describe the nature and extent of learning and its degree of correspondence with the aims and objectives of teaching and its relationship with the environments that are designed to facilitate learning. 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 (Black & William, 1998). Hancock (1994) shares related thoughts about assessment which he views as an ongoing strategy through which students' learning is monitored.

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. As stated in the [Curriculum](#) (Programme of 3AM, 2004), 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.

### **III- 2- Theories Underlying Assessment Practices**

A great deal of development has been seen in the field of foreign language instruction and assessment over the last several decades. Ross (2005) claims that the last decade has witnessed widespread change in language assessment concepts

and methods. This has been the direct result of the global spread of English. Hasman (2000) estimates the number of people who speak English as a second language will exceed the number of native speakers. Therefore, it is not surprising that new approaches to language instruction have been adapted. Bachman (1990) argues that the focus on language instruction needed to shift from elements of language, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, to the teaching of communicative skills that could be used in authentic language settings.

As foreign language instruction changed direction, the need for different approaches to assessment became apparent. Assessment methods changed over time to coincide with the findings of more current studies in the area of knowledge acquisition. The most prominent theories that influenced assessment and led to changes in assessment were: behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism.

### **III-2-1- Behaviourism**

Behaviourists dominated the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with their belief that a person's actions were completely on stimuli. Behaviourists maintained that learning could be maximised by the accumulation of small bits of knowledge, and by rigidly organising information in sequential and hierarchical order (Shepard, 2000). This



idea of dividing processes into numerous, small steps and reinforcing each step frequently and systematically in order to achieve maximum learning was pioneered by B.F. Skinner in the 1930s. Since he believed that people “are nothing more than simple mediators between behaviour and the environment”, he directed the focus of learning on the external environment and the ways in which it shapes behaviour (Skinner, 1931).

As a result of Skinner’s research, behaviourists promoted a mechanical approach to learning, which consigned the learner to a relatively inactive role. Therefore, teaching was based on factual and procedural rules that students were required to follow. Study material was broken down into small instructional steps, and memorisation, drilling and rote learning were considered effective methods of learning. The behaviourist views heavily influenced assessment. As motivation was externally generated and learning was based on the reinforcement of numerous small steps, the “one-skill-at-a-time” (matching, multiple-choice, true/false) test items were popular with behaviourists (Shepard, 2000). Tests that offered questions like multiple-choice, true/false, matching and fill-ins could check the distinct skills that students needed to master by relying on responses to external stimuli (i.e. “choose the correct answer from the choices below”) rather than requiring students

to develop their own streams of thought. A skill which they were not trained to develop. In addition, this type of testing was appealing since it is relatively quick and efficient to administer (Worthen, 1993).

The subsequent interest in constructive and cognitive approaches to learning changed the direction of language instruction: turning the view of learning away from the environment and inward toward the student.

### **III-2-2- Cognitivism**

Whereas the 1940s and 1950s abounded with behaviourist views on learning, the following years marked a rejection of the previously accepted behaviourist theories, which were now believed to limit the individual's potential for knowledge acquisition (Alvermann & Phelps, 1994). The cognitive revolution, which gained recognition in the 1960s, emphasised the importance of the mind learning process.

Although repetition and reinforcement were still considered important, attention was given to how the individual process of mental construction and sense making'' (Shepard, 2000). Cognitive psychologists maintain that cognitive learning principles influence teaching and learning. The main objective of learning is being able to apply skills and knowledge in order to perform meaningful tasks in

authentic situations (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). In addition, cognitive abilities are created and strengthened through socially supported interactions, Therefore, it is understandable that as language began to centre on its communicative role, more emphasis was placed on the importance of social interaction and performance in authentic situations connected to the real world (Shepard, 2000). It was believed that students who desire to communicate successfully would invest time and exert effort to perform well.

Therefore, cognitive psychologists insist that the behaviourist approach to learning is incorrect. Students need to process information and relate it to their own experiences. Assessment needs to extend beyond factual recall and selecting a correct response from a choice of possible answers. Assessment should reflect understanding, reasoning and problem solving (Shavelson & Baxter, 1992).

Cognitivism has had a considerable impact on assessment. Since cognitive learning suggests learning on a more complex scale than memorisation and recall, teaching and assessment in the light of this understanding is not served by traditional testing methods. Cognitive theories have brought attention to the concept of the mind, and the understanding that learning is ‘an active process of

mental construction and sense making'' (Shepard, 2000). Learning, therefore, needs to be assessed by methods that call for greater student activity and involvement. Alternative assessment requires students to integrate and produce (Huerta Macias, 1995) and is more suited to cognitive learning. Alternative assessment can be the vehicle through which students show what they can do with their knowledge and skills. They can provide scenarios where students can transfer learning between contexts and carry information from one area of study to another.

### **III-2-3- Constructivism**

While cognitivism advanced the area of educational psychology, constructivism developed these theories even further in the 1990s. Constructivism, like cognitive psychology firmly places the individual at the centre of the learning process. The theory of constructivism argues that human beings do not learn by passively absorbing knowledge. Instead, they are active participants in the acquisition of knowledge, building their own understandings, drawing on prior knowledge and formulating mental concepts (Perkins, 1992). This explains why different learners construct different meanings from learning experiences sine they call on their own individual

backgrounds. Teaching principles during this period supported activities that engage students in issues and experiences that are familiar, where the focus of learning is on interpreting meanings, discovering and problem solving (Harris. 2000).

A feature of constructivist teaching is that it is more student-centred, and it requires students to become active participants in the learning and assessment processes. Students who are involved in their own learning experience by making their own associations and creating their own understandings tend to be more motivated and anxious to succeed. Teachers however, have to adjust their teaching practices to allow their students to assume a more active role. They need to cultivate a safe, encouraging environment where students will feel comfortable to express their own ideas and develop their own concepts (Airasian & Walsh, 1997).

Alternative assessment methods in the form of presentations, projects, portfolios and creative expressive activities (such as journals, diaries and student logs) offer students opportunities to demonstrate what they are able to do with the knowledge and skills they have acquired. It challenges them to create and express themselves by drawing upon the post of experiences they have shared.

### **III-3- Assessment and Evaluation**

Assessment and evaluation are often used interchangeably although they are different. Assessment is a general term for all efforts to obtain information pertaining to learners' performance and ability, irrespective of purpose (Todd, 2002). Airasian (1997) cites the various elements of assessment by defining it as the process of collecting, synthesising and interpreting, information to aid in decision making'. Sieborger and Macintosh (2004) believe that assessment describes a broad array of methods that are used to measure a learner's accomplishment.

Evaluation., on the other hand, refers to something bigger than assessment. Sieborger and Macintosh (2004) view assessment as just one aspect of evaluation. Evaluation entails judging or deciding about the value and worth of a performance or activity (Airasian, 1997). It is used for those efforts that generate quantitative data that can be used to produce scores measuring the learner's performance and ability (Todd, 2002).

Clearly, both assessment and evaluation must be considered when viewing student performance. Whereas the former stresses the importance of measuring

progress over time, the latter recognises the value of the student's ultimate accomplishment.

There are several forms of assessment, which are differentiated their role and purpose in the learning process.

### **III-4- Testing and Assessment**

There seems to be a misunderstanding of the terms testing and assessment. Since these two words are so frequently interchanged with each other they are often, thought to have identical meaning. Yet there are distinct differences between the two words, and their intentions are different. There are a variety of means by which students' abilities are measured. The teacher normally makes a decision on the grounds of information obtained from measuring by means of tests and examinations, which are popular measurement instruments. Tests are a "formal, systematic, usually paper and pencil procedure to gather information about pupils' learning" (Airasian, 1997). Tests are only one of the many types of assessment information that teachers use.

However, while testing focuses on measuring accomplishment at particular intervals, assessment should include a wide spectrum of information that teachers

collect in their classrooms that assist them in understanding and supervising their pupil's accomplishments (Airasian, 1997).

From the above, it is clear that assessment is more expansive than testing and as a result the role of the assessor becomes more comprehensive than the role of the tester.

Perhaps, the most significant difference between testing and assessment is in their intended objective. While testing is concerned with comparing student achievement generally for ranking purposes; assessment, on the other hand is used to strengthen individual student progress (Stiggins, 2002).

### **III-5- Purposes of Assessment**

Black (1998) categorizes the purposes of assessment into three groups: summative for review, transfer and certification; summative for accountability ; and formative to aid learning. Bonthron and Gordon (1999) similarly divide the purposes of assessment into two general categories (1) for achievement: focus on outcome of student learning to monitor progress and determine grades i.e. assessment of learning (2) for diagnosis and improvement: focus on progress and



look at student strengths and weaknesses to identify appropriate programs and students' learning strategies, i.e. assessment for learning.

The classic role of assessment as expressed in (1) is to measure achievement of students for ranking, screening, and selection of candidates for different kinds of educational opportunity or career. Most important tests and examinations in schools are about sorting students by academic ability for the next stage of schooling (Biggs, 1996). Assessment is a tool of certification as it allows free competition based on academic ability and industry and thus is regarded as the 'fairest' basis for the allocation of opportunities for high status or remunerative careers (Broadfoot, 1979).

In terms of accountability, assessment seen as an objective and fair way of judging schools and teachers provide information for decision makers on value for money spent. Assessment can contribute to course evaluation and curriculum improvement. It also provides information which is potentially capable of improving teaching (Satterly, 1989) and let the teacher know how well he/she has taught (Rowntree, 1987). It equips teachers to define and teach for objectives which are suitably poised for the abilities and aptitudes of the pupils in question (Satterly, 1989). Assessment of learners' progress is necessary in order to evaluate the

efficacy of the educational programme, to know whether the good intentions are being translated into the desired outcomes.

Increasingly, however, assessment for enhancing achievement i.e. formative is being seen as significant. This refers to Bonthron and Gordon second category. For diagnosis and improvement, assessment represents a means for feedback, motivation of pupils and an aid to learning, a preparation for life and the prediction of future capabilities. Assessment is an attempt to know a person (Rowntree 1987) as assessment data can reveal the strengths and weaknesses in the students' learning and help to identify a child's learning needs. This information enables the teacher and the pupil together to remedy the situation for the educational benefit of the students who provided it. The teacher may also use it to modify his teaching for the benefits of subsequent students (Rowntree, 1977).

### **III-6- Modes and Methods of Assessment**

Linked to purposes, two paradigms of assessment are recognized: Assessment of learning is a process of measuring learning effectiveness with a focus on the product of learning. It is concerned with assigning marks and grades to show pupil's achievement. On the other hand, assessment for learning is "interpreted as

encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (Black & William, 1998). Shift in focus to the latter paradigm means that assessment changes from assessment as the external ‘stick’ to coerce to a ‘carrot’ of help and support for learning (Rowntree, 1987). It is for enhancing student learning and viewed by Rowntree (1987) as the lifeblood of learning.

As suggested above, the value that assessment can have in the process of learning as well as for summative of grading work and recording achievement is ideally recognized (see for example Black and William, 1998). Rowntree (1987) related to different purposes and paradigms of assessment. The modes of assessment of learning identified include summative, formal, terminal, quantitative, norm-referenced, convergent and external. On the other hand, the modes of assessment for learning are generally, though not exclusively, formative, informal, continual, qualitative, criterion referenced, divergent and internal.

### **III-7- Types of Assessment**

There are several types of assessment that are utilised at different times and for different purposes. In this literature review, we limited our concern to two types only, summative and formative assessment. Roos and Hamilton (2005) have brought a major theoretical insight into the 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.

#### **III-7-1- Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning, AoL)**

Sutton (1992) described summative assessment as a summary given at the beginning or the end of a learning process. James (1998) regarded it 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 summative assessment is usually in the form of a mark or letter (Wortham, 2001). 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.

### **III-7-2- Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning, AfL)**

Formative assessment is “to assist in the learning process by providing information on pupils’ strengths and weakness” (Torrance, 1993) so that 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” (Lambert & Balderstone, 2000). It takes place in the course of the learning cycle and provides immediate feedback to both teachers and students, therefore, it is also called diagnostic assessment. Black & William (1998) indicate that formative assessment, if properly implemented in schools, is a powerful means to improve student learning. Feedback is important to students within formative assessment as “it contributes directly to progress in learning through the process and indirectly through its effects on pupils’ academic self-esteem” (Gipps, 1994). “The feedback from formative assessment facilitates learning providing the information needed for a deep approach” (Biggs, 1998b). 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 (Black and William, 1998). They indicate that formative assessment, if properly implemented in schools, is a powerful means to improve student learning.

### **III-7-3- Comparison between formative and summative assessment**

The key difference between formative assessment and summative assessment is not timing, but purpose and effect. Assessment made during the course of a unit or session may be used for summative or grading purposes rather than for truly formative purposes. The present practice of assessment is generally weak in formative assessment identified by Black (1998). Harlen and James (1997) stress that “one way to assure that assessment can have a positive impact on learning is to begin by understanding the nature of formative assessment. Understanding the distinction between formative and summative assessment will make it possible to use each for improvement of education.” Summative assessment being designed mainly with the need to grade pupils in relation to each other is likely to be norm-referenced. Summative assessment takes place at the end of a learning cycle, or achievements attained by students. Its main function is for election, rejection, streaming, prediction, rewarding, or certification (Falvey et al., 1994).

“Formative assessment, however, needs to be criterion-referenced” (Lambert Balderstone, 2000). “Norm-referenced assessment is a screening device for finding out who is good, bad, or indifferent, by comparing them with others. Alternatively,

criterion-referenced assessment measures performance against criteria. Criteria are standards which should be passed or mastered in order to pass the test” (Lloyd-Jones & Bray, 1986). Good formative assessment is generally qualitative with feedback given to students at different stages to help students to learn and construct their knowledge continuously. Summative assessment that is quantitative “cannot tell us much about changes in standards of performance over time” (Gipps, 1991).

Summative assessment is formal as it consists of a planned, systematic format, for example, tests and examinations. Formative assessment is usually informal, often less planned and ongoing assessment of students in a more natural way, for example classroom observation, one-off quick quizzes, practical tests or projects. Broadfoot (1996) stressed that forms of assessment were the most powerful drivers of forms of teaching and learning.

With respect to assessment of learning, traditional methods such as multiple choice, short answers, essays, tests and examinations are often employed to collect assessment data. In contrast, to collect information for improving learning, alternative broader means of assessment including the varied day-to-day learning activities classroom exercises, projects, portfolios, profiles, peer assessment, self assessment, observation and listening, oral assessment, presentations, drama, field

work, debates, etc. can be used as well as tests. Assessment for learning includes any education task which can be seen as offering the opportunity to gather, record and interpret information on pupil processes and outcomes and provide the basis for feedback. Project work is one form of formative assessment and was for the reason chosen for study.

To conclude, five domains are identified from this wide range of literature to differentiate formative assessment from summative assessment. They are ‘conception of learning’, ‘time frame’, ‘purposes or functions’, ‘form’, and ‘interactivity’. Table 2 summarizes their distinctions.

	<b>Summative Assessment</b>	<b>Formative Assessment</b>
<b>Conception of learning</b>	- Behaviourist	- Constructivist
<b>Time frame</b>	- Periodic (at the beginning or at the end of a learning cycle)	Ongoing and continuous (in a learning cycle)
<b>Purposes / Functions</b>	- External (e.g. accountability, quality control) Provide evaluative data about outcomes - Measurement-oriented	- Internal (e.g. improvement, aid to learning) - Provide feedback to inform learning and adjust teaching Developmental
<b>Form</b>	- Formal (e.g. tests, examinations)	- Informal (e.g. observations, self and peer assessment)
<b>Interactivity</b>	- Teachers judge the learners - Learners are passive recipients	- Specific and immediate - interactive



**Table 2:** Comparison between Summative Assessment and Formative Assessment

### **III-8- Assessment of Project Work**

The 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 (Grant, 2002). 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 (Leuven, 1997). 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 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.

### **III-8-1- Methods of Assessment of Project Work**

Projects are to be evaluated using pre-designed tools of assessment. A large variety of assessment tools ensures a more valid assessment, which should be as reliable as possible. This is 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 can also be used as checklists for pupils to see that they have included everything. Pupils must also be told at the outset the weight of each part of the project in the overall mark. These are some assessment tools for evaluating pupils' progress and final product:

- checklists
- rubric for the working file
- rubric for the final product
- rubric for the oral presentation
- self evaluation
- peer evaluation
- final verbal evaluation by the teacher

From literature review of methodes used to assess PW, we concluded that rubrics and checklists may be good tools that teachers may use to assess their pupils' learning progress through PW.

### **III-8-1-1- Rubrics**

Rubrics allow assessment to be more objective and reliable across students. Pickett & Dodge (2001) state that students recognize how their work will be evaluated when teachers can communicate their expectations of the project in the rubric prior of doing it. Wherever possible, pupils should be partners in building the rubrics for assessment; if not, they must be shown the assessment tools before they

start the project. This helps them to focus on the elements of the project that will be assessed. A rubric is a tool for evaluation, which consists of three dimensions:

1. It shows the criteria according to which the evaluation will be made.
2. It describes the standards of proficiency for each criterion.
3. It reflects various levels of proficiency and the weight of each level in a grade.

There are several reasons for using rubrics as assessment tools in projects:

- They allow assessment to be objective and consistent.
- They show pupils how their work will be evaluated and what is expected.
- They make pupils aware of the criteria used in assessing their own and peer performance.
- They provide effective feedback to pupils about their strengths and weaknesses and how they can improve. Table 3 may be a good illustration of a rubric.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>
Content: understanding the main idea	The product shows an understanding of the main ideas. The group was able to extract the relevant information from the resources.	The product shows a generally good understanding of the topic and of main ideas found in the resources.	The product shows little understanding of the main ideas of the topic. Not all relevant information was included.
Expressing an opinion	Group members added to their understanding of the topic by expressing their own opinions on the topic.	Group members were able to express some of their own opinions on the topic, demonstrating a good understanding of the topic.	Group members were not able to express any opinions other than what they had read, indicating a lack of in-depth understanding of the topic.
Group work	The group worked well and was always on task. Each member contributed to the final product.	The group worked quite well together most of the time. There is evidence that each member contributed to the final product.	The group did not work well together and not everyone contributed to the final product.
Presentation and effort	Aesthetically presented, legible, includes pictures and charts	Reasonably presented with some pictures and charts	Presentation of work not aesthetic: no inclusion of pictures or charts
Language	No spelling mistakes, correct use of punctuation and grammar	A few spelling mistakes and some grammar and punctuation mistakes	Many spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes

**Table 3:** A model Rubric

This rubric is an example of how some of the project goals must relate to the final assessment. Assessing the final product, working portfolio and the oral presentation requires three separate rubrics to be used at different stages of the project. A rubric can and should be revised and reviewed as project planning is

consolidated. Following is an example of a checklist for the written project, which should be used by pupils for self assessment before handing in their work.

### **III-8-1-2- Checklists**

Checklists are among the tools used in formative assessment. They are lists of specific criteria that teachers wish to focus on during a particular process (McNamara & Deane, 1995; cited in Ghouar, 2003). Checklists inform teachers, being the evaluators, of the areas where their teaching instructions have been successful. Implicitly, they indicate the areas of weaknesses and tell where reinforcement has to be made. Pupils should be told that checklists are used throughout the project for monitoring progress and planning work. Following is an example of a checklist for the written project, which should be used by pupils for self assessment before handing in their work.

Check-list for written work	Yes	Not Yet
Project contains all the required parts.		
Project is typed and in a folder opening from left to right.		
Project has name, date, and any other necessary information on the cover page.		
Project has been edited by all the members of the group/by me for spelling, grammar and punctuation.		
Project contains picture, maps, charts or other documents that add to the understanding of the topic.		
Project has a bibliography.		
Project is neatly presented, easy to read and represents our/my best efforts.		

**Table 4:** A Model Checklist

### III-8-1-3- Self-and Peer-Assessment

Brown optimistically remarks: “Self-and peer-assessment are among the best possible formative types of assessment and possibly the most rewarding, but they must be carefully designed and administered for them to reach their potential(2004). Self-assessment is a form of assessment appropriate within a learner-centered educational philosophy (Hamp-Lyons, 1990).It is defined as an analysis of student work based on judgments made by the student which are meant to lead meaningful learning. The benefit of self-assessment is that it involves learners directly in the learning process and encourages greater autonomy in

language learning (Brown & Hudson, 1999). Peer-assessment, on the other hand, is valuable in the EFL classroom because it encourages students to reflect critically on the abilities of other learners who share a goal. Stoller (2002) points out that by looking back and evaluating their work, students gain a better understanding of what they have learnt. For example, they can reflect on the language they used, the content knowledge they learned the stages that they needed to follow to bring their work to completion and the merits of their final project.

### **III-9- The effectiveness of Feedback**

Formative assessments play a crucial role in modifying teaching and improving learning (Brooks, 2002). There is a lot of literature stressing the importance of feedback in improving teaching and learning. Earl (2003) suggests that feedback provides information which is used to fulfill two functions, giving feedback and then being used for feedforward purposes in the teaching and learning process. In other words, feedback indicates whether teachers should re-explain the task or concept to an individual student, give further practice to an individual student on it, or let an individual student move on to the next stage of study, so both teachers and students know what to do next so as to enhance teaching and learning. Unlike



external exams, students do not merely get scores, but also feedback which tells them what they have learnt and what they need to learn next. (Gipps, 1994) . Feedback does not simply mean identifying students' strengths, difficulties and errors but provides information about how well they are doing, guides their subsequent efforts and corrects their weaknesses.

However, there are several inhibiting factors limiting the effectiveness of feedback. Teachers tend to mark and grade students' work rather than give feedback for improving students' learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Gipps (1994) suggests that aggregating detailed assessment information into a single grade does not help students to improve. Instead of giving constructive feedback and understanding individual students' learning needs, teachers tend to pay much attention and effort to marking, grading and the quantity and presentation of work (Black and Wiliam, 1998). It might be due to the dominance of norm-referenced public exams (Black, 2000). He comments that the influence of external exams might weaken the effectiveness of feedback. Such a phenomenon might apply to the Algerian situation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has intended to provide a comprehensive look at the role of assessment in learning. Summative assessment methods, which were popular for a considerable period of time, fail to meet the needs of contemporary education. Clearly, the cognitive revolution illuminated the concept that the mind has a vital and active role in understanding and construction. This has resulted in the implementation of alternative methods of assessing knowledge and skills. Formative assessment has brought the student to the centre of the learning process. Students need the opportunity to direct and manage their own learning.

Project work is one such and encourages students to gain knowledge and understanding through learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary, student-centred, and integrated with real world issues and practices instead of deriving from a transmission model of teaching. It is clear that many factors may influence formative assessment within PW. Difficulties which hinder it from widespread implementation in schools are discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

# **FACTORS THAT MAY HINDER THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF PW**

## **Introduction**

It is obvious that formative assessment described so far in Chapter Three 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.

### **IV-1- 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.

Using a long-term case study approach, Lock & Munby (2000) investigated the factors that affect the implementation of a new assessment program. 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. Spada & Massey (1992) found that such contextual factors may have been responsible for the differences between teachers' principles and practices. Crookes & Arakaki (1999) discovered that difficult conditions and heavy workloads had a powerful impact on the pedagogical decisions that teachers made. Johnson (1996) also reports on a preservice teacher on a practicum who struggled with contextual demands that were incompatible with her own beliefs about teaching.

#### **IV-1-1- Classroom Management**

Managing the class during the "project period" requires thought and organization (Mann.et.al, 2002). It is cumbersome to use PW in large classrooms or with younger students. Pupils may feel that they are free to chat and fool around, since the traditional frontal lessons do not take place. There may be more noise in the classroom while pupils sit in groups discussing their work. Therefore, it is

important for teachers to lay down ground rules and make clear that this is an important working situation, so pupils will cooperate and use their time fruitfully.

#### **IV-1-2- Time Management**

Satisfactory PW generally need an extended time period, which tends to eat into the time available for other curriculum material. Projects involve additional supervisory and assessment duties, but offer students a means of following their own interests and teachers a means of motivating students while encouraging the development of higher cognitive skills and assessing the students' abilities at undertaking the independent work (Jane, 1994). PW is a teaching strategy, which allows teachers to guide students through in-depth investigation of real world topics. Formative assessments, then, may increase teachers' workload and involve many steps and time which is a constraint in practice. Some teachers find they spend more time marking (Weeden, 2002) and time to give detailed feedback to every student is rare. Since students are constructing artefacts that represent their learning, it is important to provide timely feedback that is constructive and

authentic to the objectives of the assignment (Grant, 2002). 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 (Leuven, 1997) or allocate time for investigation and discussion, meeting curriculum guidelines, classroom management, control of lessons, support of student learning, technology use and assessment. Providing timely feedback that is constructive and authentic to the objectives of the assignment is time consuming. Formative assessments increase teachers' workload and involve many steps and time which is a constraint in practice. Effective feedback comprises conceptual help and detailed factual strategies for learners (Gipps, 1994). Without quality interaction between teachers and students, students show little or even no improvement and development despite regular, accurate feedback.

## **IV-2- Subject Matter Factors**

### **IV-2-1- 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 extraordinary necessary. Effective feedback comprises conceptual help and detailed factual strategies for learners (Gipps, 1994). 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 help in evaluating the suitability and effectiveness of the curriculum, the teaching methodology and the instructional materials' (Shaaban, 2005). 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.

#### **IV-2-2- Teacher Training: The New Role of Teachers**

Richards and Nunan (1990 ) define teacher training as “an approach to teacher preparation which involves techniques and skills to apply in the classroom”. Freeman (1982) also points out that “training deals with building specific teaching skills: how to sequence a lesson or how to teach a dialogue, for instance”. Head and



Taylor (1997) state that training is related to external aspects of teaching, such as knowledge of the topics, the methodology, the classroom techniques and skills.

As already stated in Chapter Two, 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 the knowledge-transmitters to facilitators or coaches. The new role may be uncomfortable for the teachers (Grant, 2002). As the classroom is becoming less and less teacher centred, it is important for the teachers to rethink their role within the environment of learner centred classes and project based learning. Ghefaili (2003) states that the teachers' role needs to change form that of a knowledge transmitter to one of coach or facilitator of student's understanding. 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 evaluation and assessment (Williams, 1984). 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 (Morris, 1985). 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. Therefore, researchers claim that teacher training is a vital component in the introduction of innovation and improvement in schools (Goodlad, 1991; Sarason, 1993). 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.

#### **IV-2-3- 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 (Freeman 2001). Brown (1994) defines it as “the process of life-long learning in the teaching profession”. He optimistically remarks that “one of the most interesting things about teaching is that we never stop learning” (ibid.). This is to say that what is 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 (Brown, 1994). 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 (ibid.). 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. England (1998) identifies different factors that 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 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 time-tables also allows teachers and students to balance the PW and formal curriculum, which is one of the determined factors for successful PW.

### **IV-3- Psychological Factors**

#### **IV-3-1- 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' efforts (Fullan and Park, 1981). They stress that the success of change involves alteration in behaviour, beliefs and skills on the part of teachers.

As teachers are the key persons in the implementation of an innovation and change is a personal experience, we are better to draw the focus to the personal factors and see how we can implement an innovation more effectively. 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, higher the stage of concerns the teachers can arrive, and greater the chance of the success is.

**PART TWO**

**FIELD WORK**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDIDNGS**



## **Introduction**

This chapter sets out the findings from the questionnaire , the semi-structured interviews and the documentary analysis . The purpose is to report on the research results. The analysis and interpretation of data will be outlined and the findings from the empirical research will be categorised according to the research questions and aims of this case study.

### **V-1- Data Analysis and Interpretation**

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:

<b>Data</b>	<b>Source of Data</b>
<b>Section One Teachers' Background Information</b>	<b>Questionnaire</b>
<b>Section Two Purpose And Value of Assessing PW</b>	<b>Questionnaire Semi-Structured Interviews</b>
<b>Section Three Teachers' Actual Assessment of PW</b>	<b>Questionnaire Semi-Structured Interviews Documentary Analysis</b>
<b>Section Four Main Factors Responsible For Such Assessments</b>	<b>Questionnaire Semi-Structured Interviews Documentary Analysis</b>

**Table 5:** Data Analysis Framework

## **V-2- Analysis of the Findings**

The questionnaire , as already stated in Chapter One , contained four parts : to collect background information on the teachers who participated in this study ; their understanding of the purpose and value of assessment within PW , their actual assessment methods and the main factors responsible for such assessments . 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.

<b>Number of Questionnaires</b>		
<b>Distributed</b>	<b>Without any answers</b>	<b>Valid</b>
169	8	161
<b>100%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>95 %</b>

**Table 6:** Response Rate and Percentages

### **V-2-1- Section One :Teachers' Background Information**

In this section the reader would come across the general characteristics of the sample of teachers that took part in this research . Nominal data related to background information are: 1. gender; 2. age range; 3. teaching experience; 4. teachers' degree.

#### **Item 1 :Gender**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>MALE</b>	24	15 %
<b>FEMALE</b>	137	85 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	161	100%

**Table 7 :** Teachers' Gender

It is clear from the above table that the leading majority of teachers who participated in this study were females with 137 ( 85 % ) which largely exceeded males' number representing 24 (15 % ) only .

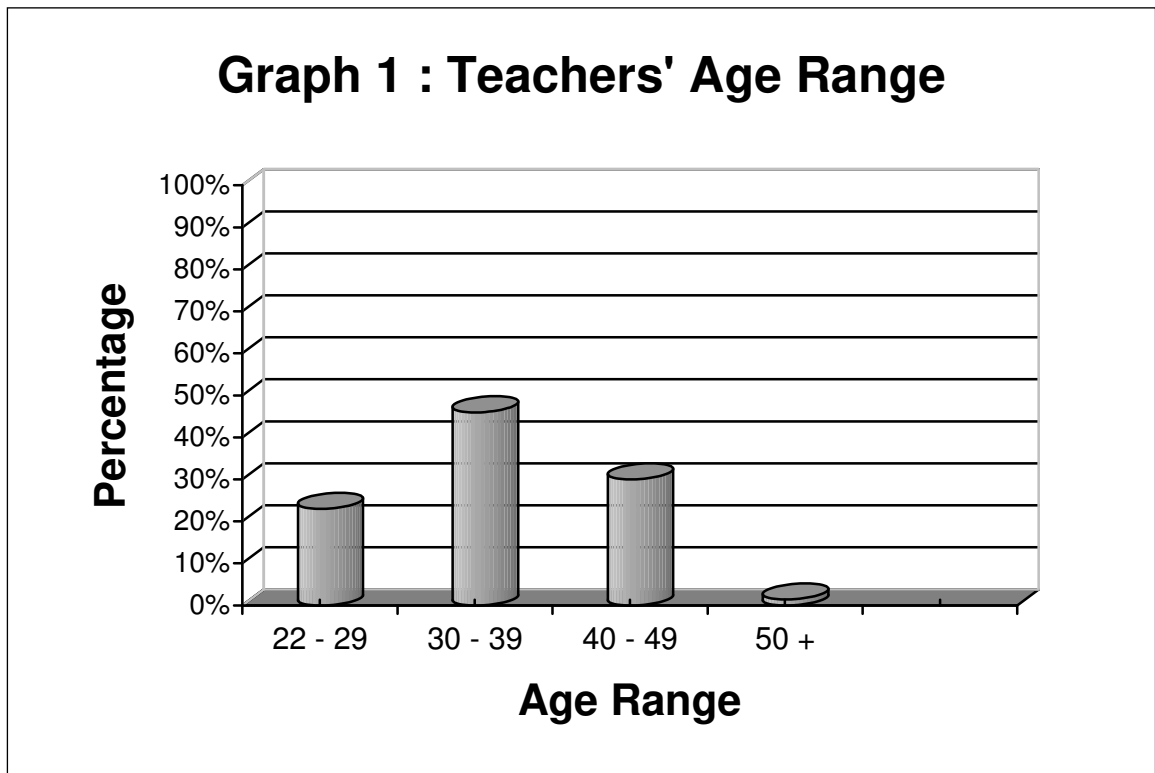
### **Item 2: Age**

Age was measured by asking respondents to tick the appropriate box with a choice of year intervals as guided responses.

<b>AGE RANGE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
22 – 29	37	23 %
30 – 39	73	46 %
40 – 49	49	30 %
50 +	2	1 %
	161	100 %

**Table 8 : Teachers' Age Range**

As shown in Table 8 , 46 % of the teachers who participated in this study were aged between 30and 39 years old and 23% of them are less than 30 years. This is to say that more than one-half of EFL teachers (62%) are below the forties. 31% are above forty.Graph 1 below clearly shows that the sample of teachers investigated is rather young.



### Item 3 : Teaching Experience

Teaching experience was measured by asking respondents, “**Including the current year, how many years have you been teaching English ?**” with a choice of 5-year interval as guided responses.

Teaching Experience	Number of Teachers	Percentage
1 – 5	40	25%
6 -9	26	16 %
10 – 15	36	23 %
16 – 20	28	17 %
Over 20	31	19%

**Table 9:** Teaching Experience of the Respondents

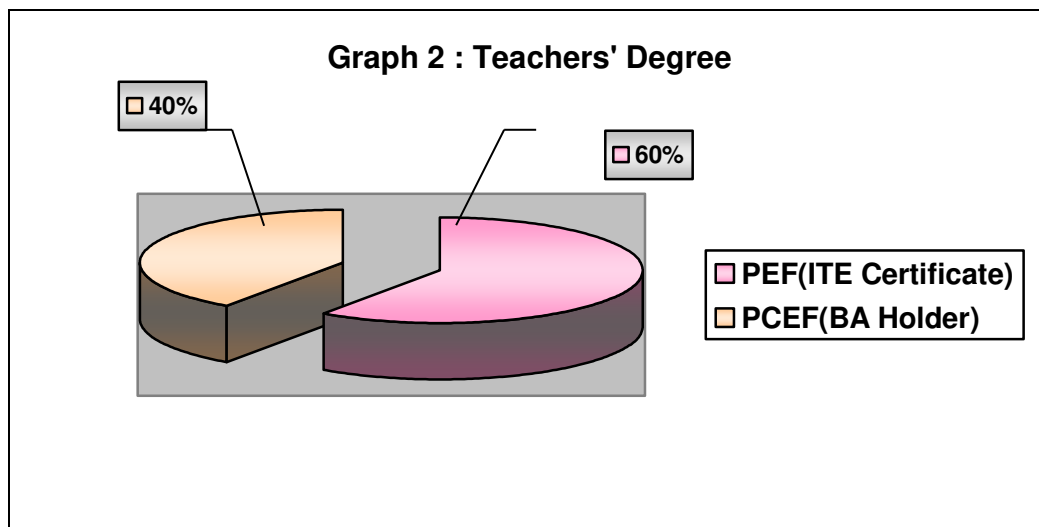
The first conclusion we may have from the table above concerning EFL teachers in Batna2 is that their experience varied .As shown in Table 9 ,25% of them have less than 5 years experience,16% have between six and nine year-experience.Teachers who had 10 to 15 years teaching experience were 36(23%). The table also indicates that 17% of the respondents had more than 16 years of experience and, over 20, we found 29 teachers (19%).The responses in Table 9 indicate that 59% of the respondents have more than 10 years experience and this corroborates with the findings of Table 10 below where 60% of the respondents followed a pre-service training at the IT.E which closed its doors in 1997.

#### **Item 4 : Teachers' Qualifications**

Teachers' qualifications were measured by asking the respondents , **“What is your highest academic degree ? ”**

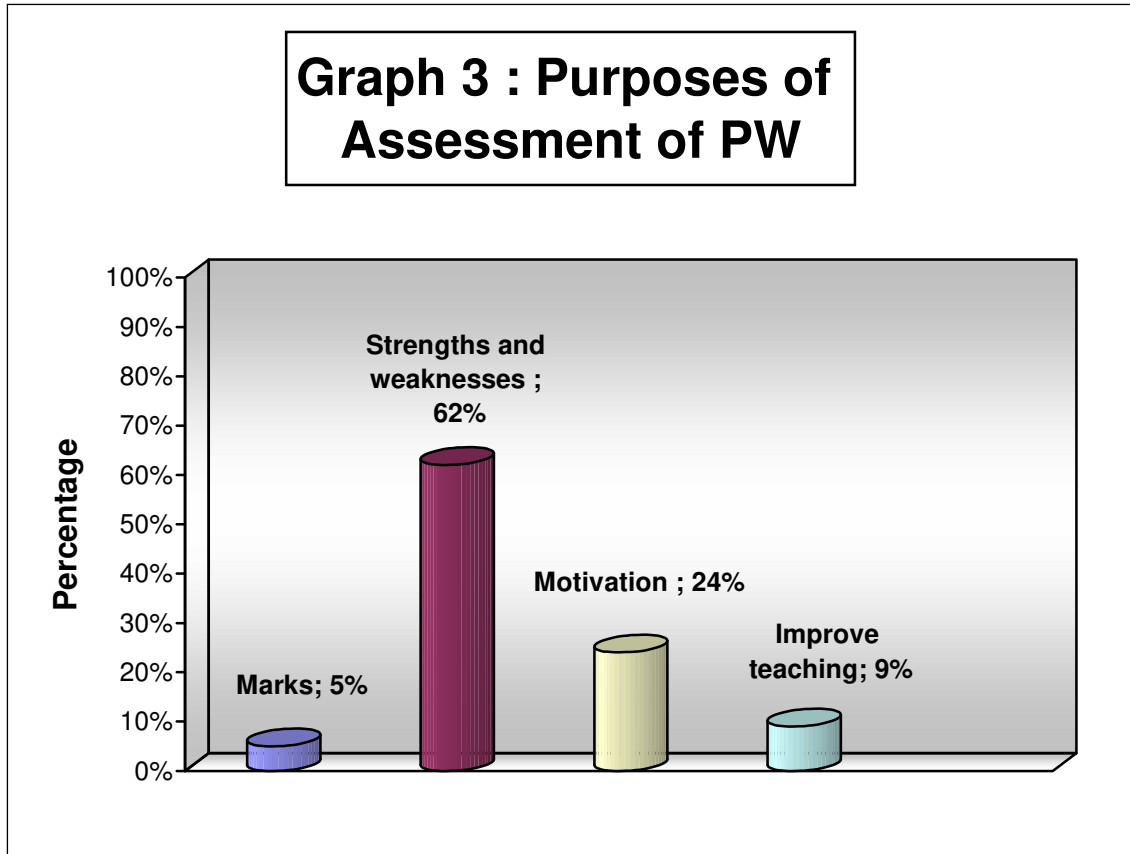
<b>Teachers' Degree</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>PEF (I.T.E Certificate)</b>	95	<b>60%</b>
<b>PCEF (BA Holder)</b>	66	<b>40%</b>
<b>Total</b>	161	<b>100 %</b>

**Table 10 : Teachers' Degree**



After having tabulated the information concerning teachers' degrees as shown in Table 10, the researcher represented it into a graph (Graph 2) . It shows that we have two categories of teachers who were subjects in our work : 95( 60 % ) P.E.F teachers who hold the I.T.E certificate and 66 (40 % ) P.C.E.F teachers who hold a B.A degree . As statistics show , the number in the first category outweigh the one in the second . P.E.F teachers followed a pre-service training in the Technological Institute of Education before coming to teach in middle schools, whereas P.C.E.F(Professeur Certifié De l'Education Fondamentale ) teachers who graduated from the universities were recruited due to the government policy to encourage B.A students to join the different teaching levels and not to rush to the secondary schools only and to supply the deficiencies in teachers .

### V-2-2- Section Two: Purpose and Value of Assessing PW



#### Item 5 : Why do you think we should assess our students through PW?

Responses to this item as illustrated in Graph 3 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:

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

**Table 11:** Purposes of Assessment as Perceived by Teachers

Nearly (62%) of the teachers revealed that the major purpose of assessing project work was for identifying and better understanding students' strengths and weaknesses, which could help improve their learning i.e. assessment *for* learning. Answers from the semi-structured interviews also revealed that teachers do understand why we should assess pupils through PW .They even added other purposes they see important such as:

- To find out what students have learnt.
- To monitor students' learning progress.
- To measure the learning performance of students.
- To provide information to improve my teaching.

**Item 6 :** According to you,assessment of PW should be :

**formative**

**summative**

**Both****Explain briefly :**

	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Formative	100	62%
Summative	32	20%
Both	29	11%

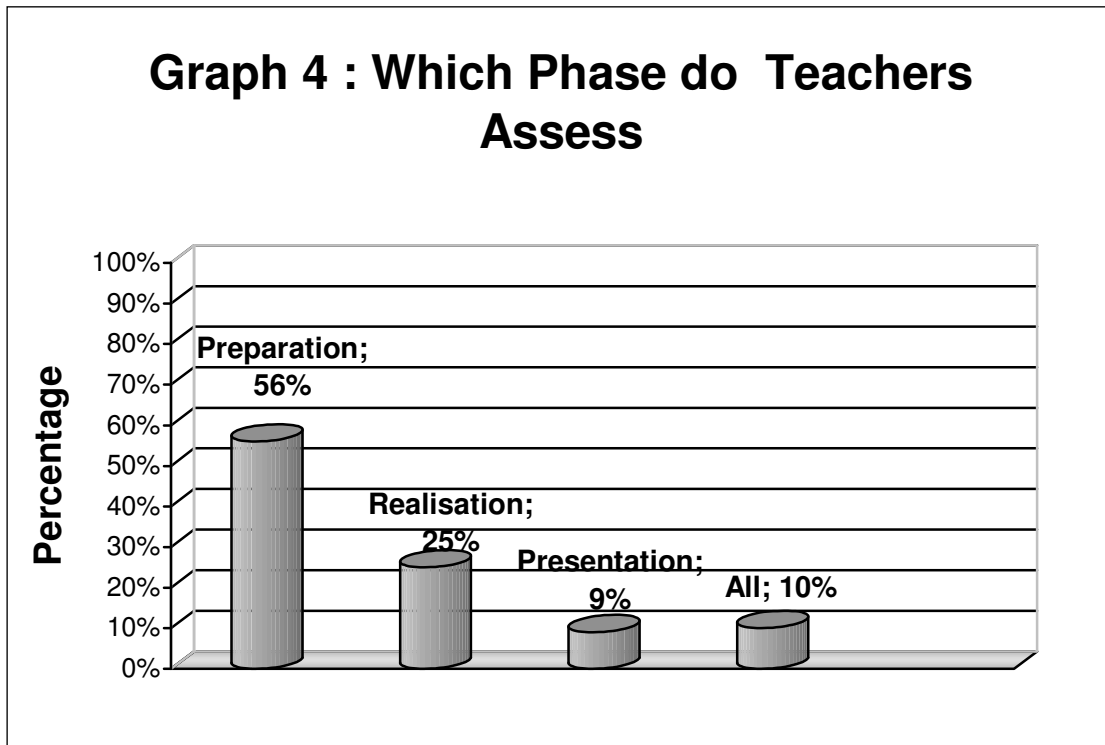
**Table 12:** The Value of Assessment

This item focused on what teachers perceived as the value of assessment within PW. The overall perceptions of the value of assessment of project work by 62% of the teachers were positive. This could help us conclude that theoretically, the majority of teachers know that the assessment which takes place in the course of the learning cycle and provides immediate feedback to both teachers and students is formative assessment. 20% of the teachers responded summative while 18% said that project work assessment should be both formative and summative.

**V-2-3- Section Three : Teachers' Actual Assessment of PW****Item 7 : Which Phase of the PW do you actually assess?****The preparation Phase .****The realization Phase .**

**The presentation phase.**

**All.**



**Why ?**

Graph 4 shows the three phases a valid assessment of PW should go through. 56% of the teachers who responded to this item assisted their pupils' PW during the preparation phase . 25% on the realisation and 10% have answered that they try them all. Only 9% responded that they assess their pupils on the presentation phase. They argue that the three hours time allotted to the English subject are far from achieving the attended objectives of PW. Moreover, the only think they can manage to do is to give pupils an idea about the project and distribute the tasks between them.

**Item 8 : During the project work assessment , do you focus on :**

**learners' progress**

**the final work**

**Why ?**

	<b>Learner's Progress</b>	<b>Final Work</b>	<b>NO Answer</b>
<b>Nber of Teachers</b>	30	100	31
<b>Percentage</b>	18%	62%	20%

**Table 13:** Teachers' Actual Assessment of PW

Linked to the objectives set in MS curriculum, PW is both process- and product-oriented (See Chapter Two) 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 through but rather give marks at the end of the project ( see Table 13).

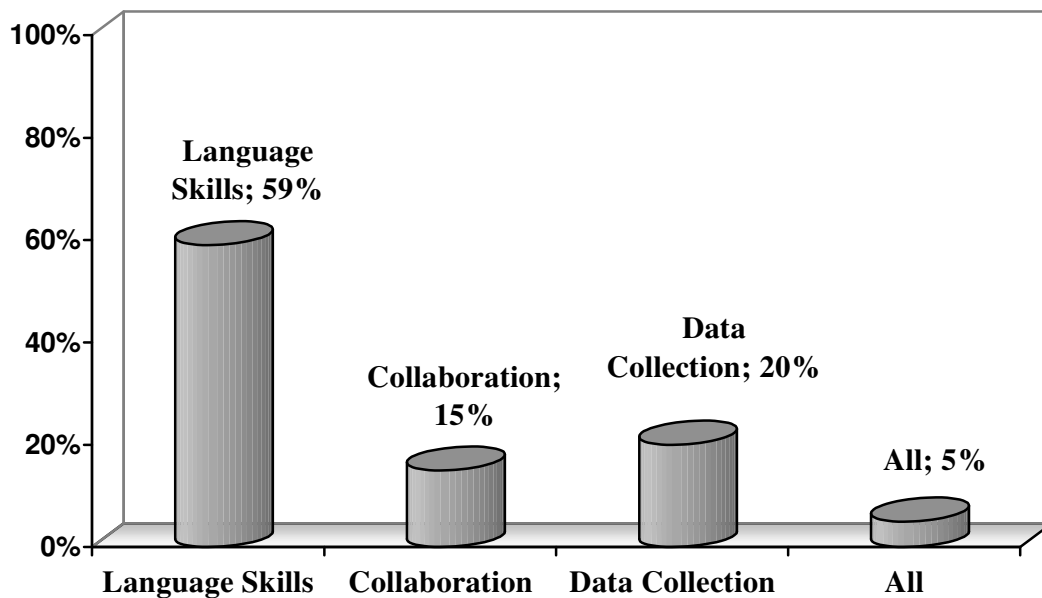
**Item 9 : Do you give a final mark based on pupils' :**

**language skills acquired**

**collaboration with their classmates**

**data collection**

**Graph 5 : Which Skill Do Teachers Actually Assess**



**all**

PW can be summarized as an approach which “focuses on content learning rather than on specific language targets”. Ideally students undertaking projects should be capitalized on the success of cooperative or collaborative learning in some manner (Marx et al., 1997). Theoretically, through PW teachers help pupils develop an array of skills including planning, reading, observing, judging, enquiring, collaborating and thinking (Haines, 1989). Unfortunately, the answers collected

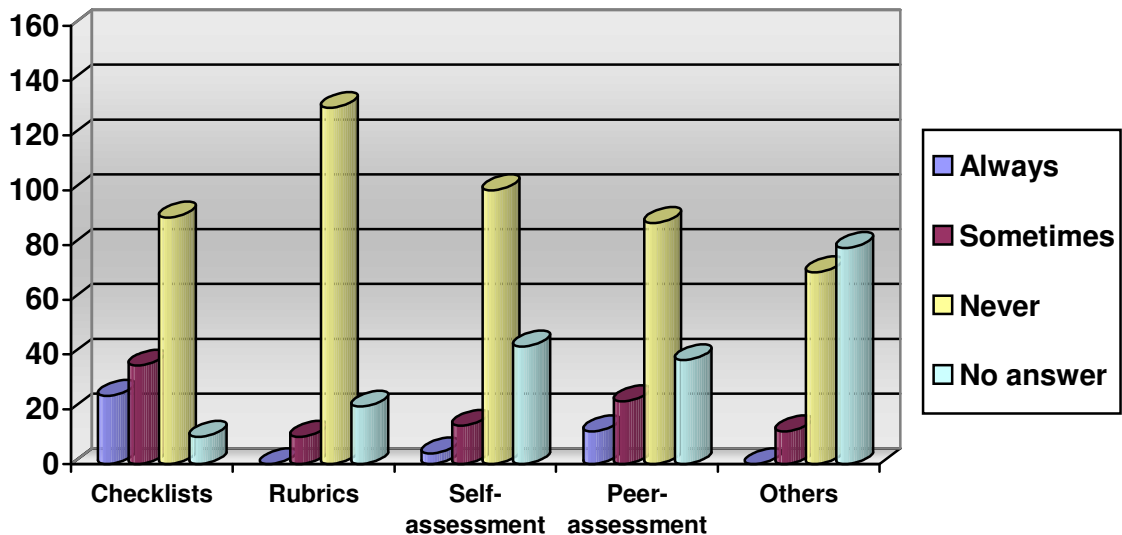
from teachers do not seem to favour what PW are meant for (see Graph 5). While PW is meant to involve collaboration between students on the one hand, and between students and teachers on the other, 15 % of the whole sample only seem to encourage pupils to work collaboratively while 59% assess the language skills and most importantly the written form only. Teachers argued that following pupils all along the project is difficult.

**Item 10 : Which of the following techniques do you use to assess your pupils' PW ? Why ?**

Techniques	always	Sometimes	Never	NO Answer
Checklists	25	36	90	10
Rubrics	00	10	130	21
Self-assessment	04	14	100	43
Peer-assessment	12	23	88	38
Others	00	12	70	79

**Table 14:** Techniques Teachers Use to Assess PW

**Graph 6 : Teachers' Choices and Use of Assessment Techniques**



Graph 6 shows the most common techniques teachers may use to assess PW.As stated in the literature(See Chapter Three ), projects are to be evaluated using pre-designed tools of assessment. The ones mentioned above may ensure a more valid assessment, which should be as reliable as possible and help teachers identify the areas of weaknesses and tell where reinforcement has to be made. However, teachers' responses to this item showed that they do not assess their pupils on a continuous basis. Among 161questionnaires, results revealed that only 36 teachers sometimes use checklists as a means of assessment .10 teachers haven't even responded to this item. The remaining teachers ( 90 ) never use these tools .To find

answers to such an attitude, the researcher reviewed teachers' training books .She concluded that they were provided with a kind of checklist on how they could assess collaborative learning on PW to adapt it and prepare theirs but a few were found to do so. When teachers were asked to list other tools rather than the ones given, 12 teachers only mentioned daily observation. Observation has been used by teachers in their classroom as a kind of 'intuitive tool' to learn and know about their students' work. The most common reason teachers provided to be behind such an attitude was their limited time, knowledge and training on new methods of assessment because little workshops and seminars were held and in our view, this is a real indication of an inadequate assessment of PW from the part of teachers. Other teachers stressed on the inappropriateness of using self-and-peer assessment in middle schools since pupils are still in the process of acquisition of English as a foreign language.

“I am worried about these tools of which we are supposed to use when we assess learners ... yes ... I agree we have to keep records of assessment because assessment cannot be separated from teaching, but ... to me it is time consuming, because you end up focusing on the syllabus and forgetting the reality of assessment.”



“It is really not easy ... uhm, ... to ... ee, ... involve all this other methods because these learners cannot ... uhm, assess each other ... at the end you end up doing it yourself.”

#### **V-2-4- Section Four : Main Factors Responsible For Such Assessments**

**Item 11 :Which of the following may have contributed to your actual assessment of PW ? (See Appendix 6 ). If others , specify.**

Throughout this question, we wanted to know if teachers experienced difficulties in assessing PW effectively. 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.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Rank</b>
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

**Table 15 : Teachers’ Percieved Reasons**

Table 15 presents teachers’ responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaire that asked them to pick out the difficulties they encountered in

assessing PW effectively. Data analysis showed that respondents' inability to use this mode in large classes was the major difficulty. The lack of sufficient time, knowledge of formative assessment techniques, among other difficulties, came second and third respectively. The fourth reason teachers were reluctant to implement formative assessment within PW resulted from insufficient training they undertook and it is the issue we will investigate latter on. The number of projects by level was also found to restrict teachers' use of formative assessment within PW .Since it involves students in a process of planning, discussion, negotiation, decision-making, etc..over an extended period of time,teachers were unable to cover the content of the syllabus if they devoted the necessary time and effort to implementing a formative type of evaluation to PW (See Appendix 4).

Finally, adapting themselves to the new role required in the new approach to teaching English seems difficult. Moreover, teachers were asked to provide us with a picture of what they are experiencing in their classes through the following open-ended question: "Throughout your experience in class, what difficulties have you encountered in assessing PW?"

Indeed, we received a huge number of 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.

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

**Table 16** : List of Difficulties and Challenges Discovered from the semi-structured Interviews

Nearly all teachers agreed on PW to be a very challenging task. Here is the analysis in details:

## **Classroom Management**

As it is displayed in the above table most of the respondents shared the same idea that there were challenges regarding the contextual factors that internal school structures could not change. Only the Ministry of Education could deal with these. Most of the respondents think that the work conditions are very important parameters that should be taken into consideration in the teaching and learning process. A class of more than 45 learners is no more a place where the teaching and learning process can occur. They claim that the out- numbered classes is a major problem that faces them and is considered as a handicap for achieving their goals as far as PW is concerned. They asserted that it is impossible to take care of 45/50and sometimes 55 learners in one class; saying that one minute for each learner is not enough consequently, the more pupils in a class, the less feedback from the part of the teacher is. Additionally, the issue of maintaining discipline was a central theme that was evidenced in the data. A teacher-dominant approach would help to minimise student talk, and therefore make it easier to maintain discipline. This is why most teachers who were interviewed assert that they avoid group work. Here are some teachers' views from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews:

“You cannot achieve the set goal in an overcrowded class; even if you try to group teach... it becomes so impossible to reach out to all learners.”

“I wish they could come and do it practical in our school, so that we can see if it is possible in a class of fifty learners.”

“Some of us have large classes. Giving anything other than a mark for such a large class is very time consuming”.

Given such unfavourable conditions, many EFL teachers in Batna 2 believe that change will not take place in their classes unless major changes in school context are brought.

### **Time Management**

The time factor has been a barrier to implementing some aspects of formative assessment. For instance; scheduling collaboration time for pupils requires administrative changes within the school. As well, teachers initially found the new demands on instructional time.

“We have so much to do, other than teaching we are required to assign test and exam papers. With the workload we have there is simply no time to give detailed formative feedback to every pupil in a way that PW would like to.”

Teachers rushing to cover the content of what they perceive as over-loaded syllabi are not in a position to devote the necessary time and effort to implementing a formative type of evaluation. This has contributed to teachers' perception of the process of teaching and learning as a 'race against time' in which as much course material as possible must be covered by the former and learned by the latter, and in which no provision is made for effective feedback and opportunities for improvement.

### **Teacher Training**

**12)** - Have you attended any training courses or seminars related to project learning ?

. Yes                       . No

- If yes , specify the number of days . .....

**13)-** Was formative assessment of PW part of this training program?

Yes                                       No

**14)-** If no , do you think that you presently lack appropriate knowledge as the tools and techniques you use to assess your pupils' PW?

Yes                                            no

If yes , what do you suggest?

.....  
 .....

To gain a thorough understanding of this problem, the researcher asked a further question to see whether teacher received any training on methods of assessment of PW. This item was measured by asking respondents, **“Have you ever attended any training course or seminar related to project learning ?”** with a choice of **“yes”** and **“no”**. For respondents answering with **“yes”** a further question asked them to specify the number of days with no guided responses. Then, a further question was asked to trace the problem well. Teachers had to answer whether formative assessment was part of their training program or not and if they presently lack appropriate knowledge as tools and techniques they use to assess their pupils’ PW. This was noted as a common difficulty that teachers faced, with 70% of the teachers who responded to this item noting their lack of sufficient in-service training to be the major obstacle in teaching. To achieve a better understanding of the current practice of EFL Middle School teachers in Batna 2, it was important to take a closer look at the knowledge base of their pre-service education and in-service training .This is what led us to conclude that this issue is worth investigating through data collected from teachers’ training books and the instruction they followed before

being teachers. Projects were implemented in the EFL curriculum 5 years ago. As showed in item 4 before, 60% of EFL teachers in middle schools followed a training at the I.T.E which did not stress on new methods of assessing students that stem from constructivism views (see Chapter Three). The last promotion dated to 1997. P.E.F teachers agreed that the one /two year pre-service training they followed in the I.T.E was not on new waves of assessment. Understandably, most of them still use the assessment methods they were familiar with. When new concepts of assessment have been implemented in MS classes, the teachers did not undergo any training on how to assess PW. So, the training they followed when they were in the I.T.E did not serve to achieve the intended outcomes. Many of them undertook training in the past, when modern approaches and methods had not reached the country yet, and were deprived of the knowledge of modern teaching methods. Although 40% of the whole sample are teachers holding B.A degrees, but it seems that they did not receive a training on formative assessment methods at the university. As stated earlier, their presence as EFL teachers in middle schools is due to deficiencies of teachers. A considerable number of these P.C.E.F teachers have been recruited in haste, without undergoing careful consideration of their skills or abilities. That university graduates (BA Holders) became teachers



overnight without adequate preparation in TEFL methodology . This problem is understandable because their undergraduate courses were often based on linguistics and Literature and dealt very little with teaching practice. On the other side , they revealed in their answers that the four-year university curriculum did not prepare them efficiently to become teachers. They said that there exists a big gap between what they saw at the university and what they really experience in the field. This question led us to have a look at the four-year university curriculum and its contents . It is only at the fourth year that a module of didactics is included with a 60 yearly time allocation , only . It comprises theoretical issues on teaching and is considered as the one which prepares students to the teaching profession (See Appendix 5) . It has not been revised and updated for years . The objectives and content of this module do not meet the requirements of the new assessment methods. As already stated in Chapter Three , the last decade has witnessed widespread change in language assessment concepts and methods, Ross (2005).

As mentioned by most teachers , the in-service training they have received were their attendance to a three-day seminar held by the inspector of education in Batna 2 and two training sessions ( 1/2 a day each ) which are not sufficient to train and prepare teachers to be familiar with methods of formative assessment within

PW . Then , it looks impossible to supply teachers with the necessary skills to undergo ongoing assessment within 4 days since the implementation of the the new educational reform.It was reflected from the semi-structured interviews that the teachers still claim that in the absence of a clear form of training , they remain unable to use adequate assessment methods to PW in their classes effectively . After getting in touch with the academy of education in Batna, the researcher got the I.T.E program the teachers followed in this institute .This is to confirm what teachers said about inadequate training at the I.T.E. From the first sight, it was apparent that the program teachers followed was outdated.

Based on discussions in the semi-structured interviews with a number of teachers, responses to this item enabled us to remark that the teachers do not have sufficient training on tools and techniques mentioned in item10 and would benefit from practical workshops on the subject.Therefore, it is not only necessary but also crucial training sessions to be conducted in the EFL context to achieve practical practice of the assessment for learning within PW.

## Teacher Development

**15)- If yes ,what have you done to reduce the intensity of these problems and change your assessment practices?.**

When project work becomes a reality ,there is a pressing need to investigate how teachers approach this challenge –a new demand in teacher’s role. 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.Clearly, the professional development of teachers is a continuous process, taking place during their whole professional lives.It should be seen, as stated in chapter four, as an essential component of their careers. Under these circumstances, it could be argued that there is a need for teachers to be up-to-date with respect to current trends.

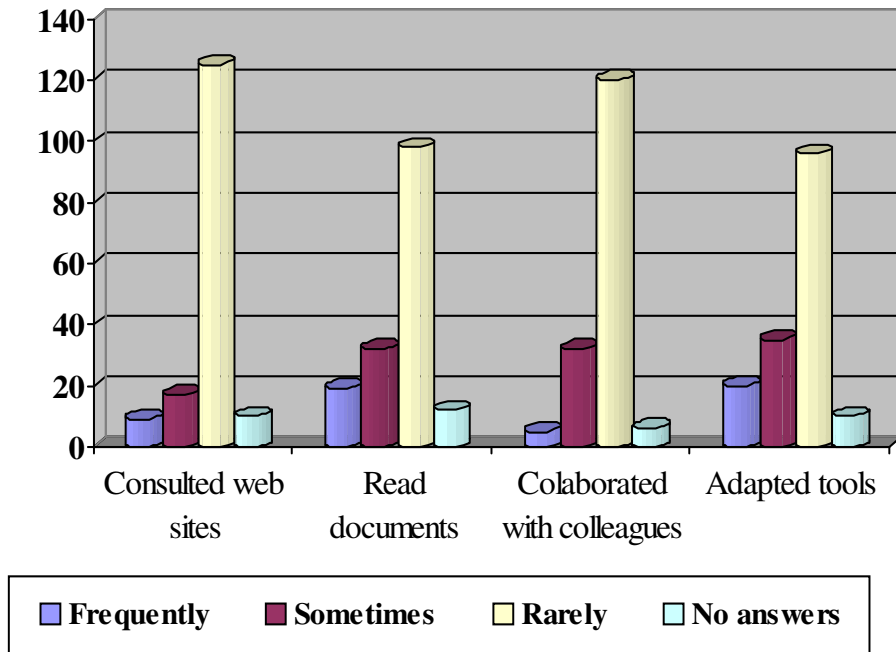
The researcher ,then, wanted to see whether the respondents are doing effort to find on their part what literature says about PW and apply or adapt it to their classes so that they could compensate the lack of training .The item provided was **“If yes ,what have you done to reduce the intensity of these 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.

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

**Table 17:** Teacher Development Activities and Resistance to Change

## Graph 7: Teacher Development and Resistance to Change



One hundred and twenty-five (125) teachers out of one hundred and fifty-one who responded to this item have mentioned that they rarely had access to internet resources .Nine teachers only said that they frequently consulted web sites to help find new techniques to use them in their classrooms.All teachers with whom we discussed the issue in the semi-structured interview raised an important point. One teacher said:

“ I do not find time to correct pupils’ written work .How can I afford time to go to cybercafés or read a book with the time table I have .”

Furthermore, various situational factors also appeared to affect the degree of teachers’ uptake to cope with the change. With regard to situational factors, time, workload and support from the school leaders appeared to be important. 120 teachers answered that they rarely collaborated with their colleagues although collaboration among teachers is an important way to promote teacher development. If the purpose of teaching through PW is to enable students to establish good human relationships with each other , then it is ironic that many EFL teachers in Batna 2 have little or insufficient communication among themselves. Analysing teachers responses provided us with substantiating evidence regarding teachers’ willingness to make gradual change .When project learning becomes an unavoidable reality, EFL teachers investigated seemed to depend on their previous academic qualifications rather than coping with this challenge through continuing professional development. 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 .

The implementation of the new assessment methodology in MS curriculum created challenges among teachers because the change process inevitably met with resistance. Those 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. The meetings held by the researcher with a number of teachers during the day of the in-service training session and semi-structured interviews demonstrated a number of teachers are not willing to try new teaching methods in the classrooms neither scheduling collaboration time with their colleagues because this requires administrative changes within the school.

**Item 16 : What would you suggest as far as assessment of project work is concerned ?**

The researcher wanted the teachers who were subjects in this study to make any suggestions or comments on the issue under investigation. Not all of them have provided us with answers but the ones who responded (50%) expressed their urgent need to be trained on the new techniques concerning formative assessment .They would like to benefit from special training about English language teaching in general and project learning in particular.They also found it necessary to invite

experts from abroad who have experienced this approach in their countries . Further more, they insisted on increasing the time for the English subject since the current three hours are far from satisfying the purposes of PW .They said that this issue should be reconsidered and revised taking into consideration the importance of the English language which continued to gain strength as a lingua franca of the world. Teachers also believed that reducing the number of pupils in the classes would help assess pupils in a more formative way.Reducing the English curricullum in Middle Schools as well as the number of projects were also mentioned by many teachers.

## **Conclusion**

By way of conclusion, we would like to put forward the following results after having analysed responses obtained through the questionnaire, the semi-structured interviews and documents.

### **Purpose and Value of Assessment within PW**

Teachers' interpretations of the purpose and value of project assessment revealed that the major purposes perceived by teachers were for helping students to improve including 'motivation', 'identifying strengths and weaknesses', 'progress' and 'understanding learning difficulties'. On the whole, most EFL teachers put a



higher rating on the purposes of assessment *for* learning. Results revealed from items 5 and 6 confirm the first part of our hypothesis that teachers do understand the purpose and value of assessment within PW (see Graph 3 and Table 11 and 12).

### **Teachers' Actual Assessment of PW**

Teachers' responses to items 7, 8, 9 and 10 showed that they do not assess their pupils on a continuous basis. The responses highlighted from these items indicated that:

- Most of them (90%) do not assess their pupils' PW through all the three phases it should go through (see Graph 4).
- 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 through but rather give marks at the end of the project ( see Table 13).
- While PW is meant to involve collaboration between students on the one hand, and between students and teachers on the other, 15 % of the whole sample only seem to encourage pupils to work collaboratively while 59% assess the language skills and most importantly the written form only (see Graph 5).

- Teachers' responses to item 10 showed that they do not use most of the tools and techniques to assess their pupils on a continuous basis. Among 161 questionnaires, results revealed that only 30 teachers sometimes use checklists as a means of assessment. 10 teachers haven't even responded to this item. The remaining teachers (90) never use these tools (see graph 6).

### **Factors that Led Teachers to Their Actual Assessment Practices**

The assessment practices of the teachers involved in this study were affected by a number of factors. The results indicated that most of these practices cannot bring out the essence of PW because teachers were not able to effectively use formative assessment. The most common reasons teachers provided to be behind such an attitude were classroom and time management, their limited knowledge and training on new methods of assessment because little workshops and seminars were held and of teachers and a need to change through professional development activities in order to cope with the new expectations in education and, in our view, these were indications of an inadequate assessment of PW from the part of teachers.

## **1- Classroom Management Takes Precedence**

The first conclusion we can draw is that the EFL teachers appeared to be concerned more about classroom management issues than teaching approaches or the learning process. Their hesitancy to adopt more formative techniques such as encouraging group discussions among students stemmed from their fear of disruption and losing control of the class. Teachers regarded classroom management as a necessary and sufficient condition for learning to occur. As Joram & Gabriele (1998) point out, such a view of teaching is consistent with a transmission model of learning and does not reflect current theories of education. One possible reason why these teachers focused so much on classroom management may be the fact that the school culture equated quiet classrooms with effective teachers and productive teaching. In fact, teachers reported that school principals do not like noise and evaluate a teacher's effectiveness based on their ability to maintain discipline among the students while PW can not fulfil its aims if pupils do not work collaboratively.

## **2- Time Management**

From the analysis of teachers' responses , we could say that most of them failed to ensure an efficient formative assessment of PW because the allocation of time for pupils for investigation and discussion and the provision of timely feedback that is constructive and authentic to the objectives of the assignment is time consuming . There is, hence, a mandate to cover the curriculum. Students might not learn much, or receive much of value from PW.

## **3- Subject Matter**

PW is greatly different from other subjects in formal curriculum. Teachers felt uneasy because they are not knowledgeable about new methods of assessment. Furthermore, teachers also find it difficult to cope with the new teaching requirements. They showed their limited knowledge and training because little workshops and seminars were held. Another problem of putting formative assessment into practice is that it is difficult for teachers to acquire the skills for assessing students. The teachers expressed concern about the difficulties they were facing. First, it was about uniformity in assessing students' performance. The

teachers who had attended 4 days training courses about PW could not reach an agreement on how to fairly assess students' performance during PW.

#### **4- Teacher training**

Both teachers with ITE certificate and BA degree found their pre-service training they undertook outdated. They can no longer depend on their previous academic qualifications for the new development in education. Teachers inexperienced in formative project assessment found it difficult to assess process and give feedback. Training for these teachers was urgently needed. In-service training should be reconsidered and revised taking into consideration the new approaches, methods and techniques using the recent developments in the international scene namely formative assessment.

#### **5- Professional development**

Pre-service education alone is not adequate to fully prepare a teacher for a lifetime teaching. Continued professional development is essential, especially when teachers have not undergone initial teacher training on assessment of PW (as was the case with the majority of teachers in this study). If teachers are to move beyond a model of teaching based on their apprenticeship of observation, and reconceptualise their

theories of language learning and teaching, they need to be made aware of alternative models and approaches and be provided with opportunities to put these into practice.

Teachers might need an advanced professional training to strengthen their professional knowledge and skill. Facing the new role of teachers, professional trainings are required to modify teachers' attitude and equip them with essential 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 learning in the classroom. The reservation of specific time for PW in the school calendar or class time-tables also allows teachers and students to balance the PW and the formal curriculum. "Professional development and in-service training have attracted increasing attention in recent years. Faced with rapid change, demands for high standards and calls for improving quality, teachers now have a need, as never before to update and improve their and improve their skills through in-service learning"(Craft,1996).

## **6-Teachers' Resistance to Change**

A change in teachers' beliefs from "assessment *of* learning" to "assessment *for* learning" is a precondition for successful formative project assessment. School policy, teachers' understanding and interpretation of the role of assessment, and teachers' professional development are also important catalysts. To implement formative assessment successfully, summative assessments and beliefs of teachers need to change in order to cope with the new expectations in education. A combination of both formative and summative assessments in project work, which

## Suggestions

On the basis of the data analyzed, the results suggest the following aspects of interest.

- Divide the crowded classes into sub-groups to encourage group discussions during PW to make learning more effective.
- Project work is a complementary learning activity to the general curriculum in middle schools. Moreover, satisfactory PW generally need an extended time period, which tends to eat into the time available for other curriculum material. To enable teachers to be involved in additional supervisory and assessment duties and offer students a means of following their own interests and be motivated to learn, adding more hours or at least one hour for PW becomes necessary.
- Balance of project work and formal curriculum. It is a challenging task to allocate time for PW. Considering students' needs and available time, reducing the number of PW can be adopted.
- Although each of the teachers who participated in this study had taken in-service course on PW, it is clear from the evidence and their own responses that this training is insufficient to prepare them for the challenges of incorporating formative



assessment. It is of utmost importance that they receive comprehensive, ongoing training in the principles underlying assessment of PW as well as serious training in creating and implementing on-going assessment methods and activities. The ministry of Education should invest in more and better training for teachers. Just as assessment must be on-going, teacher training in this area must also be continuous.

- With regard to teachers' new role, more training workshops need to be organized to equip teachers as facilitators. Teachers should be given comprehensive guidelines to help them become more familiar with all aspects of PW.
- In order to accomplish these goals, school should provide an environment that facilitates project learning. It is important that mutual understanding of PW is established among school administration, teachers and parents through meetings and seminars. Teachers vary their roles from transmitting to leading, guiding, supporting and facilitating as students become more independent in the learning process.
- Providing rubrics and exemplars to teachers as guides and sample assessment strategies for classroom use would be of great help to teachers. They will provide direction to teachers in terms of how assessment materials can be designed.

- Teachers' interactions between their colleagues would facilitate learning to occur. This may include informal conversations in the staffroom, peer collaborations such as peer coaching, action research and team teaching. Many practising teachers would also engage in learning through graduate programmes at universities.
- Teachers can arrange to meet regularly in groups in each stage to identify problems and raise concerns. These problems and concerns can be addressed, for example, in an in-service training day. Teachers can give feedback on their experiences and share good practices as well as pitfalls to avoid.
- Moreover, adjusting to a shift from provider of knowledge to a facilitator "can be difficult, even painful, because of strength of habit and history. It takes time and effort for most people to accept new ideas and to support teachers in unfamiliar practices" (Fogarty, 1996). It may be good to start with small scale project (one project per level for example) needed for teachers to equip students with essential skills before they can do three to four projects successfully. Time is a crucial factor influencing the successful implementation of project assessment, which can then lead to positive views.

- Teachers' opinions, thoughts and concerns about assessment should be heard and considered by the English Inspectorate. It is apparent that teachers are not only confused by assessment, but also frustrated by some contextual factors as already stated. Efforts must be made to listen to these teachers and address their fears and frustrations. This can be done through school meetings with the inspector of English Education in middle schools.

## • General Conclusion

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, teacher should make extensive use of formative assessments before determining students' marks. As Hirst (1981) argues, it is important 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" (Knight & Gallaro, 1984). 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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# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1**

مديرية التربية لولاية باتنة .

مفتش التربية والتعليم الاساسي

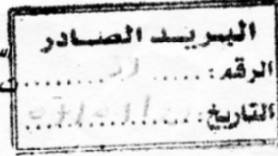
انجليزية - باتنة 2

الى

اساتذة مادة الانجليزية

ت / ا السيد (ة) مدير(ة) اكمالية

طبيب صراوى



مفتشية التربية والتعليم الاساسي

انجليزية - باتنة 2

مركز التوجيه المدرسي والمهني

05000 باتنة

رقم : 07 / 06 / 28

الموضوع : كيفية انجاز المشاريع التربوية من طرف التلاميذ .

من خلال الاطلاع على المشاريع التربوية للتلاميذ في الاقسام ، تبين ان هؤلاء لا يبذلون أي جهد تربوي لانجازها ، بل يكتفون بشرائها جاهزة من مقاهي الانترنت ( cybercafés ) مقابل مبالغ مالية . ان هذه الطريقة لا تخدم الاهداف الخاصة بالمشاريع بل تشجع على الكسل والاعتماد على الغير عكس ما نطمح اليه .  
من جهة اخرى فان هذه الطريقة تتسبب في مصاريف زائدة للاولياء اغلبيتهم لا يقدرون عليها اذا علمنا ان لكل ملف من كل مادة هناك مشروع .  
وقصد تعويد التلميذ على البحث التربوي والاعتماد على نفسه خاصة في انجاز المشاريع التربوية من جهة وقصد تجنب المصاريف الزائدة للاولياء وخاصة اولئك الذين يقطنون في المناطق النائية من جهة ثانية ، اطلب من اساتذة المقاطعة الثانية لمادة الانجليزية ما يلي :

- 1- حث التلاميذ بل اجبارهم على كتابة المشاريع باليد مهما كانت الاسباب .
- 2- عدم قبول المشاريع والصور المنجزة بطابعة الحاسوب ( imprimante ) .
- 3- يتم انجاز الصور ( في حالة وجودها ) باليد او الصاقها بعد اخذها من الصحف او المجلات .

يتم العمل بهذه التوجيهات مباشرة بعد الاطلاع عليها .

ملاحظات :

- 1- التمس من السيد(ة) مدير(ة) المؤسسة تصوير نسخة من هذه المراسلة لكل اساتذة(ة) .
- 2- يوقع الاساتذة لدى الادارة على استلام نسخة من هذه المراسلة .
- 3- يحتفظ الاساتذة بالنسخة لتقديمها للمفتش عند الحاجة .
- 4- في حالة عدم استلامهم للنسخة ( لسبب ما ) يوقع الاساتذة لدى الادارة على اطلاعهم على المراسلة .

باتنة في : 13 / 01 / 2007

مفتش التربية والتعليم الاساسي  
اللغة الانجليزية  
ح. اعجاز شريفة



## APPENDIX 2

السيدة: مواس سامية  
 أستاذة التعليم المتوسط - إنجليزية.  
 إكمالية الطيب صحراوي.  
 باتنة-

الى السيد:  
 مدير التربية لولاية باتنة .

الموضوع: طلب تسهيل مهمة الاتصال بمصلحة الموظفين.

يشرفني سيدي أن أتقدم إليكم بصفتي طالبة في جامعة بسكرة قسم لغة إنجليزية اختصاص لغة و حضارة و أقوم حاليا بتحضير رسالة ماجستير تحت إشراف الدكتورة دربوش نادية. و بما أنني في سلك التعليم فقد اخترت أن أقوم بدراسة في مجال عملي بعنوان: دراسة ميدانية حول الكيفية الحالية التي يتم بها تقويم أساتذة التعليم المتوسط في مادة الإنجليزية بباتنة لمشاريع التلاميذ و تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم واقع الأساتذة في ولاية باتنة من وجهة نظرهم بصفتهم العامل الأهم لإنجاح أي عملية تجديد تربوي.

أرجو من سيادتكم الموقرة أن توافقوا على طلبي هذا و المتمثل في السماح لي بالاتصال بمصلحة الموظفين بمديرية التربية و تقديمي التسهيلات اللازمة لإجراء هذا البحث.

و لكم مني فائق الشكر و التقدير مني و من المشرفة على البحث.

الباحثة:

سامية مواس

المشرفة على البحث:

د. نادية دربوش

باتنة 31/10/2007

السيد: مدير التربية

لولاية باتنة

31 أكتوبر 2007

Dr. N. Derbouche

عن مدير التربية وبتفويضه  
 الكاتب العام  
 ب. شرابن



## APPENDIX 3

السيدة: مواس سامية  
 أستاذة التعليم المتوسط - إنجليزية.  
 إكمالية الطيب صحراوي.  
 باتنة.

الى السيد:  
 مدير التربية لولاية باتنة .

الموضوع : طلب تسهيل مهمة الحضور و معاينة بعض اساتذة الانجليزية للتعليم المتوسط في اقسامهم

يشرفني سيدي أن أتقدم إليكم بصفتي طالبة في جامعة بسكرة قسم لغة إنجليزية اختصاص لغة و حضارة و أقوم حاليا بتحضير رسالة ماجستير تحت إشراف الدكتورة دربوش نادية. و بما أنني في سلك التعليم فقد اخترت أن أقوم بدراسة في مجال عملي بعنوان: دراسة ميدانية حول الكيفية الحالية التي يتم بها تقويم أساتذة التعليم المتوسط في مادة الإنجليزية بباتنة لمشاريع التلاميذ و تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم واقع الأساتذة في ولاية باتنة من وجهة نظرهم بصفتهم العامل الأهم لإنجاح أي عملية تجديد تربوي.

أرجو من سيادتكم الموقرة أن توافقوا على طلبي هذا و المتمثل في السماح لي بالحضور و معاينة بعض اساتذة الانجليزية للتعليم المتوسط في اقسامهم تقديمي التسهيلات اللازمة لإجراء هذا البحث.

و لكم مني فائق الشكر و التقدير مني و من المشرفة على البحث.

السيد : مدير التربية  
 المشرفة على البحث:  
 الباحثة:  
 سامية مواس

د . نادية دربوش 31 أكتوبر 2007

*Moussa*

عن مدير التربية وبتفويض منه  
 الكاتب العام  
 ب. شرابن  
 Dr. H. Boufrah



<b>Levels</b>	<b>1AM</b>	<b>2AM</b>	<b>3AM</b>	<b>4AM</b>
---------------	------------	------------	------------	------------



projects	07	05	04	06
<b>Topics</b>	-Make a tourist brochure about a country , a city , a town .....	-Write a famous person's profile : Physical description / Life / Career	-Write a contribution to a class wall sheet .	-Design and advertise a leaflet for a restaurant .
	- Make a poster.			
	-Make a game card ( jobs / instruments / families...  -Make your family profile.	-Make a language game booklet.	-Make a travel phrasebook for tourists with no knowledge of English .	-Make a profile of changes in man's capabilities .
	-Make a sport magazine .	-Make a good health guide ( good eating habits , exercising ...)  -Make a herbal guide ( vegetables , fruits , herbs...).	-Write a broadsheet magazine	-Arrange a conference .
	-Make a poster about wild , domestic animals and pets .  -Make a questionnaire about friends , school , town	-Write a story and make it into a strip cartoon .	-Make a tourist brochure .	-Make a differences poster .
	-Make a recipe book.  -Make menu for a week.	-Adapt a story / or write a play . Imagine a plot . (frame of the story )  -Set up the scenario / write the replies / perform it .		-Layout a newspaper problem page .
	-Make a children's book of inventions or a scrapbook.  -Make a civilisation profile in a form of a 'wheel of knowledge'.			

<b>DIDACTICS MODULE</b>
<b>Program</b>
I. Teaching
II. Systematic approaches to teaching.
a. Definitions.
b. Elements of the system
III. Objectives.
a. Nature and function of objectives.
b. Categories of behavioural objectives.
c. Some terminology related to objectives.
IV. Content.
V. Methods and language approaches.
a. Approach, method, and technique.
b. Language learning/ teaching approaches.

**The Didactics Module Intended to Prepare Future Teachers**

**( Fourth Year: BA English,Department of English,University of Batna ).**

**Source: Ghouar, 2003**

**APPENDIX 7****TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear colleague,

I am currently conducting a study that seeks to explore EFL middle school teachers' assessment of Project Work (PW) in Batna and to determine the reasons that led them to their actual assessment practices. I have the pleasure to benefit from your frank and clear answers to the present questionnaire because the best information comes from you. All information will be kept confidential and designed for research purposes only. May I therefore thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Please provide information about yourself by ticking the appropriate box or **relevant information** in the appropriate space.

**SECTION ONE: Background Information**

1) - Gender:    Male            Female

2) - Age:        22 -29            30-39            40-49            50 +

3) - Including the current year, how many years have you been teaching English ?

1-5                6-10                11-15                16-20                over 20

4) - What is your highest completed academic degree ?

PEF (I.T.E Certificate)

PCEF (B.A Holder)

**SECTION TWO: Purpose And Value of Assessing PW**

5) - Why do you think we should assess our students through project work?

- . (a) To evaluate students' achievement and determine marks.
- . (b) To identify the strengths and weakness of students' learning.
- . (c) To motivate students to learn.
- . (d) To provide information to improve your teaching.

- If others, specify: .....

.....

6) - According to you,assessment of PW should be:

formative

summative

Both

Explain briefly: .....

.....

.....

**SECTION THREE : Teachers' Actual Assessment of PW**

7) – Which Phase of the PW do you actually assess?

- The preparation Phase .
- The realization Phase .

The presentation phase.

All.

- Why ? .....  
 .....  
 .....

8) - During the assessment of your pupils'PW, do you focus on :

learners' progress

the final work

- Why ? .....  
 .....  
 .....

9)- Do you give a final mark based on pupils' :

Language skills acquired

collaboration with their classmates

data collection

all

10)- Which of the following techniques do you use to assess your pupils' PW?

<b>Techniques</b>	<b>always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
Checklists			
Rubrics			
Self-assessment			
Peer-assessment			

Others			
--------	--	--	--

**SECTION FOUR : Main Factors Responsible For Such Assessments**

11) – Which of the following may have contributed to your actual assessment of PW? Put numbers from **1** to **6** to rank that you see the **most important** difficulty .

<b>Difficulties</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Number of projects	
Adapt to the new role	
Lack of knowledge of formative assessment methods	
Lack of training	
Overcrowded classes	
Time management	

If others , specify.

.....

.....

12) - Have you attended any training courses or seminars related to project learning ?

. Yes                       . No

- If yes , specify the number of days . .....

**13)-** Was formative assessment of PW part of this training program?

Yes                                       No

**14)-** If no , do you think that you presently lack appropriate knowledge as the tools and techniques you use to assess your pupils' PW?

Yes                                            no                     

**15)-** If yes ,what have you done to reduce the intensity of these problems and change your assessment practices?.

Activities	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely
Consulted web sites			
Read documents			
Collaborated with colleagues			
Adapted your own assessment tools			

**16) :** What would you suggest as far as assessment of project work is concerned ? Please , feel free to add any comment you might wish to make about this issue .

.....

.....

.....

.....  
.....  
.....

.....**THANK YOU** .....

**APPENDIX 8**

**The Semi-Structured Interview Guide to Teachers**



- 1- Why do you think we should assess our students through project work?
- 2- According to you,assessment of PW should be: formative or summative? Explain why.
- 3- Which Phase of PW do you actually assess?
- 4- During the assessment of your pupils'PW, do you focus on: learners' progress or the final work ? Why ?
- 5- Do you use any techniques/tools to assess your pupils' PW ?
- 6- What are the difficulties that may have contributed to your actual assessment of PW? Explain Why.
- 7- Have you attended any training courses or seminars related to project learning ?
- 8- Was formative assessment of PW part of this training program?
- 9- If yes ,what have you done to reduce the intensity of these problems and change your assessment practices?
- 10- What would you suggest as far as assessment of project work is concerned ?  
Please , feel free to add any comment you might wish to make about this issue .

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Pilot Exercise**

1. How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?

5-10 mins

11-20 mins

21-30 mins

30 mins or above

2. Were the instructions clear?

Yes

No

3. Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous?

Yes

No

4. If so, will you say which and why?

5. Did you object to answering any of the questions?

Yes

No

6. If yes, which one?

7. Was the layout of the questionnaire well structured?

Yes

No

8. If not, do you have any suggestions?

9. What are your comments?