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### The Effect of Weekly Quizzes on EFL College students' Achievement, Engagement, and Attendance

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#### **Abstract**

This study aims at investigating the effect of weekly quizzes on EFL college students' achievement, engagement, and attendance. To achieve the aim of the study, three null hypotheses have been tested as follows: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control in students' attendance; there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control in students' achievement, and there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control group in students' engagement. To verify a hypothesis, a sample of sixty students is chosen randomly from the third year, department of English, Imam Al Kadhum University College. Two main instruments are used in this study. The first one is an observation checklist; the second is an achievement test that is used to collect data needed. Results show that using weekly quizzes has positive impact on students' achievement, engagement, and attendance. In the light of these results, a Conclusion and some recommendations are putting forward.

**Keywords:** Weekly quizzes, Achievement, Engagement, Attendance.

#### **1. Introduction**

Improving students learning is so important. It is proved that using frequent quizzes are very useful tools to enhance learning and support what have been taught in the class. In this context, Brown (2004: 29) states that weekly quiz is "the information that washes back to students in the form of useful diagnoses of strengths and weaknesses. This influence of the test on the classroom can be either beneficial or harmful. In one of the few published studies of frequent quizzing".

Geist and Soehren (1997) report that frequent quizzes have a beneficial and significant influence on learners' performance. They also found that the positive effects can be seen on performance of the learners. Thus they consider that quizzes as a matter for academic performance and that teaching process have an influential autonomous on learning and learners at one time. Online quizzes have become very important tool nowadays and can be beneficial in a number of ways. First, they supply motivation for students to attend online classes and engage with other students and participate in dictions the lectures.

Al Today (2004: 135) defines a formal lectures and testing as a completed school teaching and learning through it in light of a pre- designed plan, which contains the direction and instructions that each teachers and learners follow. During the classes learners should learner how to equip with computers and accessories that enable the learner to learn.

Using weekly quizzes have strong motivational powers because they make the language learning process understandable and meaningful. In this context, "taking into consideration the kinds of nation-wide and high-stakes tests, learners are required to take frequent quizzes in order to be prepared for much important exams (Johnson and Kiviniemi, 2009)". In addition, there are many studies have demonstrated that weekly quizzes can increase students' classroom attendance (Clump, Bauer, and Alex, 2003). Zarei (2008) comments that "there is another view that getting good grades on quizzes that motivates learners which has a circular effect in that learners prepare more for the quizzes since the test itself is a good source of motivation. Another reason why frequent testing is beneficial to students' learning is that frequent testing covers small amounts of materials".

In general, using weekly quizzes are useful tools to consolidate and enhance what students have taken in classes. Brown (2004: 29) asserts that quizzes can be useful in a number of ways. First, they can offer motivation for learners to attend the real and online classes. Another reason behind using quizzes is that cover small amounts of materials. Teachers can make sure that students are doing the required materials and assignments in the class through these frequent quizzes (Weinstein and Wu, 2009). Marcell (2008) adds that quizzes make students come to the class with more preparation and may raise variety of questions and make more comments. Finally, the use of them can help the teacher specifically in large classes to know the scientific level of the students as stated by Al-Obaydi and Al-Bahadli (2017) that large classes correlate negatively with students' performance.

Kling et al., (2005) mentioned that "some define frequent quizzes as a kind of examination which is carried out weekly, others as a kind of assessment which is performed on a daily basis, while their researchers define it on a monthly basis". Johnson and Kiviniemi (2009:123) add that "On the one hand, frequent quizzes help students to retain the material for longer periods of time or make them ready for high-stakes exams".

On the other hand, Marshall (2007) demonstrates that using too much quizzes do not lead to fruitful and learning because the focus teachers would be only on the tests and how teach to the test, providing their learners only with some information learners need them to do well on the tests. Daniel and Broida (2004) explained that "different methods may vary in effectiveness. For example, use of randomly administered quizzes (i.e., neither completely surprise nor scheduled for a particular date) results in higher levels of reading compliance, and selection of subsets of questions from large question banks reduces the likelihood that students will simply memorize response options without learning the material".

In general, weekly quizzes provide beneficial feedback separately after the student answers each question that includes information about the accuracy and the additional information as stated by Brothen and Wambach (2001). Different studies show that weekly quizzes can improve exams performance if students follow effective strategy of using these quizzes in order to test knowledge of the material, rather than trying to use these quizzes to learn the material (ibid). Studies also show that the use of weekly quizzes can impact on students' attendance specifically in online learning since learners online attendance can be recorded during the period given. In addition, there are different types of online activities that enhance the students' engagement, for instance file folder activities, discussion forum activities, quizzes, assignments ... etc. Finally we can measure students' achievement that can be received at the end of the course (Jover, J. and Ramirez, J. 2018:387).

Put the discussion above in mind, this study investigates the use of weekly quizzes in relation to students' achievement, attendance, and engagement.

preferences, performance and lecture attendance. Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, vol.24(1), pp.10, 2008.

### 1.2 Aim of the study

The study aims at identifying the effect of weekly quizzes on students' achievement, engagement and attendance.

### 1.3 Value of the study

The present study is intended to be valuable to:

- a. exploring students' attitudes toward using of weekly quizzes .
- b. helping students to pass the final exam successfully.
- c. helping students to participate in classroom activities and allowing them to make their own discoveries about the language making the students more responsible managers of their own learning.
- d. encouraging students to attend the lectures and participate in the activities of each lecture.

### 1.4 Limits of the study

This study is limited to college students at the third year in Iraq during the academic year 2018-2019.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises the college students of English at Imam Al Kadhum University College. The total number of students has been 350 who belongs to third year students..

### 3.2 Instruments

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the researcher has used "the pre- posttest control group design". This design takes the following form:

**Table 1**

**The Experimental Design**

Experimental group	Pre-test	Independent variable (Weekly Quizzes)	Post –test
Control group	Pre-test	-----	Post –test

### 2.3 The Sample of the Study

To achieve the aims of this study, the researcher has randomly chosen (60) students (30 students for each group), English department, Imam Al Kadhum University College to represent the main sample of this study.

### 2.4 Equivalence of the Sample:

In order to increase the sensitivity of the experiment, the researcher has equated the subjects on the basis of three variables.

1. The age of the students.
2. The level of fathers' education.
3. The level of mothers' education.

### 2.4.1 Age of the subjects

The researcher has used the *t*-test formula for two independent samples to determine whether there is any significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the age factor measured in years.

The mean score of the experimental group is 20.83 and that of the control group is 21.33. The computed *t* - value is 0.576 while the table *t* - value is 2 under 58 degrees of freedom and at (0.05) level of significance. The comparison has indicated that there are no significant differences between the ages of the two groups.

**Table 2**

*The Mean, Standard Deviation and t- Value of the Students' Age*

Groups	No. of Subjects	(M)	(S.D)	(df)	"t" value		Significance at 0.05 Level
					Computed t-Value	Table t-Value	
Experimental	30	20.83	3.030	58	0.576	2	Not Significant
Control	30	21.33	3.661				

### 2.4.2 Fathers' Level of Education

In order to find out whether there is any significant difference between the two groups in the level of their fathers' education, chi-square formula has been used.

The result shows that the value of the computed chi-square for the fathers' education is 4.873 which is less than the table value of chi-square (7.82) under 3 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in this variable (see Table 3).

**Table 3**

*The Frequencies and the Chi-square Value for the Level of Fathers' Education*

Stages of Education	Frequency		Total	Degree of Freedom	Chi- square value	
	Exp.	Con.			Computed	Table
Primary	3	10	13	3	4.873	7.82
Intermediate	13	9	22			
Preparatory	8	6	14			

<b>B.A.</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>			

### 2.4.3 Mothers' Level of Education

Both groups are found to be equal in this variable. The computed chi-square value is 2.064 which is less than the table value of chi-square (7.82) under 3 degrees of freedom and at (0.05) level of significance. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in this variable (see Table4).

**Table 4**

**The Frequencies and the Chi- square Value for the Level of Mothers' Education**

Stages of Education	Frequency		Total	Degree of Freedom	Chi- square value	
	Exp.	Con.			Computed	Table
<b>Primary</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.064</b>	<b>7.82</b>
<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>			
<b>Preparatory</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>			
<b>B.A.</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>			

## 2.5 The Experimental Application

The experiment of the study starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2019 and lasted for six weeks to end up on 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2019. The lectures have been arranged on Mondays for both groups. The subject of the lectures is

Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language and the researcher is the instructor herself.

## **2.6 The Experimental Group**

Weekly Quizzes are used for the experimental group only. Side by side, these Weekly Quizzes are come with the normal materials given to the students in their class.

## **4.7 The Control Group**

The control group of this study has been taught the material given in students' book and without weekly quizzes.

## **2.8 Instruments**

In order to achieve the aim of the study, achievement test and observational checklist have been used to be the main instruments used in the present study, see appendix 1.

### **2.8.1 Achievement Test**

The first tool is achievement test which is used to the progress of the students at the end of the experiment. The test that has been used covers all units by using twenty multiple choice items. For face validity, the test and the scoring scheme have been exposed to a list of jury members in the fields of English language at the Iraqi universities. The jurors agree on the test and the scoring scheme as being seen appropriate for measuring the achievement of students.

### **2.8.2 Observation Checklist**

In order to evaluate students' engagement and attendance in class as the effect using the weekly quizzes, an observation checklist is used. This checklist consists of twelve items each of which represents an aspect that supposed to measure students' engagement.

## **3. Results**

The results related to the three hypotheses that are used in this study revealed as follows:

### **3.1 Results Related to the First Hypothesis**

The first hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control in students' achievement.

The result reveals that the mean score of the experimental group is 3.43 and that of the control group is 1.80. The computed  $t$ -value 8.494 is higher than the table  $t$ -value (2) at (0.05) level of significance and under 58 degrees of freedom.

This result shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in achievement, in favor of the experimental group. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected.

### **3.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis**

The second hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control in students' engagement.

The result reveals that the mean score of the experimental group is 3.07 and that of the control group is 1.93. The computed  $t$ -value 4.943 is higher than the table  $t$ -value (2) at (0.05) level of significance and under 58

degrees of freedom. This result shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in engagement, in favor of the experimental group. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected.

### 3.3 Results Related to the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis states that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group and that of the control attendance.

The result reveals that the mean score of the experimental group is 2.87 and that of the control group is 1.83. The computed  $t$ -value 4.614 is higher than the table  $t$ -value (2) at (0.05) level of significance and under 58 degrees of freedom. This result shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in attendance, in favor of the experimental group. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the present study show that the use of the weekly quizzes has a positive effect on students' achievement, engagement and attendance. Using such quizzes help student to comprehend the material and pass the exam successfully as well as encourage students to attend the lesson class and engage with other students and with the teacher in meaningful situations.

From the results of this study, the researcher observes developing sort of creativity in students' writing and speaking.

Quizzes are highly recommended for instructors who teach large classes in size as it can compensate the lack of engagement of students in their classes. Learners appear to benefit from using such frequent quizzes as they become more active to engage in the course material and to study with others throughout the given course.

Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Provide students with suitable and immediate feedback.
- Allow to master the material. It may be helpful to limit the number of quiz attempts to three.
  - Placing time limits to the quizzes that can encourage students to read the material ahead of time and then take the quiz.
  - Automatic, computerized grading and entry of each student's highest quiz grades into the course and this will generate more and more significant time that can provide the students with good and useful feedback.
  - Encourage the students to engage in both long-term and short-term learning.
- Students' achievement, engagement and attendance are effected positively as a result of using technology in class as stated by Al-Obaydi (2017). So technology is an important dimension that can help to increase students' attitudes towards weekly quizzes.

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## Appendix 1 Student's Checklist



Items	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Weighted average	Weight Percent
1. Quizzes give me more time to enrolled in learning activities	13	8	15	4	0	3.75	75%
2. Having quizzes help us to pass final exam successfully	13	11	12	4	0	3.82	76%
3. Quizzes force you to attend the class.	18	9	11	1	1	4.05	81%
4. I feel online quizzes reflect students' cognitive and mental processes.	17	13	8	2	0	4.12	82%
5. I find frequent quizzes easy to be used.	15	13	12	0	0	4.07	81%
6. Feel positively as make me engaged with the course material.	23	17	0	0	0	4.57	91%
7. Frequent Quizzes promote better exam preparation.	17	10	9	2	2	3.95	79%
8. Such exam shows my strength and weakness of the given material.	19	9	8	3	1	4.05	81%
9. Quizzes can develop my creativity	24	7	8	1	0	4.35	87%
10. Weekly quizzes encourage me to participate in the classroom group discussions.	22	5	13	0	0	4.22	84%
11. Quizzes encourage to help week students who do not understand the material.	25	11	4	0	0	4.52	90%
12. Using weekly quizzes are time consuming.	25	3	8	4	0	4.22	84%