RESEARCH ARTICLE

Beyond the Score: Exploring the Education Students' Journeys Through their Classroom Performance Tasks

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Abstract

Classroom performance tasks are increasingly recognized as effective tools for fostering deep learning and practical skill development. This study delves into the experiences of college education students as they engage with these tasks. The aim of the study is to explore the journeys of education students through their classroom performance tasks at Indiana Aerospace University, focusing on the Application of Knowledge, Skills Development, and Assessments. A quantitative research approach was used to analyze the study. This systematic approach enables researchers to measure students' experiences and challenges, resulting in a more objective understanding of their journeys. The participants of the study are education students. The data were analyzed with weighted mean, ranking, and a simple rate formula to quantify students' challenges. Structured survey questionnaires were administered to the 38 education students. The study found that respondents, consisting of male and female education students aged 19 to 44, in second to fourth year levels, strongly agree with the value of performance tasks. They emphasized the importance of applying knowledge, developing skills for future careers, and using assessments to track progress. The students recognize that performance tasks foster critical thinking and skill development and provide valuable insights for improving learning and guiding educational goals. The results reveal that education students strongly agree on exploring their journeys through classroom performance tasks. To address the problems encountered, an action plan was proposed as a study output.

Introduction

Performance-based assessment has gained increasing prominence in higher education as institutions seek more meaningful ways to evaluate student learning. Unlike traditional assessment methods such as multiple-choice tests, performance tasks require students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through authentic applications. A study conducted in the United States by McTighe (2024) emphasizes that performance tasks provide richer evidence of learning by situating assessment within real-world contexts. These approaches allow educators to evaluate not only what students know, but also how effectively they can apply that knowledge in practical and complex situations.

Similarly, research conducted in the Philippine context by Ernst (2013) highlights the value of hands-on learning experiences in preparing students to address contemporary challenges across academic and professional fields. Engaging learners in active, task-based experiences promotes relevance, adaptability, and problem-solving skills. Together, these studies underscore the growing global emphasis on instructional and assessment practices that bridge theory and practice, particularly within higher education environments that aim to prepare students for dynamic professional demands.

At Indiana Aerospace University, classroom performance tasks are widely used to assess students' academic understanding and practical competencies. Exploring students' educational journeys through these assessments offers insight into how performance tasks foster deeper learning and skill development. This focus is especially significant as institutions increasingly adopt performance-based assessments to align learning outcomes with workforce expectations. Understanding how these assessments function in practice can inform improvements in instructional design and assessment strategies at both institutional and individual levels.

The theoretical foundations of this study are anchored in Authentic Learning Theory and Bloom's Taxonomy. Authentic Learning

Theory, proposed by Jonassen (1999), emphasizes the importance of real-world relevance in educational tasks, advocating for learning experiences that mirror the complexities of professional practice. Performance-based assessments embody this principle by engaging students in tasks that simulate real-life challenges. Complementing this perspective, Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) provides a hierarchical framework for cognitive learning objectives, supporting the design of tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and creation.

Despite the pedagogical benefits of performance-based assessments, college students at Indiana Aerospace University encounter significant challenges when completing classroom performance tasks. Many students struggle due to insufficient preparation, limited access to resources, and high performance expectations. Concerns regarding the fairness and objectivity of assessment practices also emerge, particularly when criteria are unclear or inconsistently applied. Additionally, students may experience difficulty demonstrating their true capabilities, as performance tasks may not fully capture the breadth of their knowledge and skills.

The emotional demands associated with performance tasks further complicate the learning experience. High levels of stress and anxiety suggest that these assessments may not always support student well-being. When performance tasks are perceived as overwhelming or unfair, they can negatively affect students' confidence and motivation. Recognizing these challenges is essential for developing more equitable, supportive, and effective assessment practices that accurately reflect student learning and development.

The purpose of this study is to examine how tasks influence students' academic growth, self-confidence, and perceptions of learning relevance. It aims to identify the challenges students encounter, the strategies they use to address them, and the role of instructors in providing guidance and support. By analyzing these experiences, the study intends to generate recommendations that enhance performance-based assessment practices and improve educational outcomes in teacher education programs.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the education students' journeys through their classroom performance tasks at Indiana Aerospace University for the academic year 2023-2024 and to propose an action plan. Specifically, this study will seek to answer the following sub-problems:

1. Determine the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, and year level.
2. Explore the education students' journeys through their classroom performance tasks in terms of:
    2.1. application of knowledge;
    2.2. skills development; and
    2.3. assessments.
3. Rank the problems encountered by the education students.
4. Propose an action plan based on the results of the study.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine college education students' journeys through classroom performance tasks in terms of knowledge application, skills development, and assessment practices. The descriptive approach was used to systematically capture students' experiences and perceived challenges associated with performance-based assessments. Quantitative methods allowed for the collection and analysis of numerical data through structured instruments, enabling objective measurement and comparison of students' perceptions across key variables.

The use of a quantitative approach enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings by applying standardized measurement and statistical analysis. Through the administration of survey questionnaires, the study was able to generate measurable indicators of students' learning experiences, providing a comprehensive and generalizable understanding of how performance tasks influence educational outcomes among college students.

Respondents

The respondents of the study consisted of 38 college students from Indiana Aerospace University. Participants were selected to represent a cross-section of the education student population with diverse academic experiences and perspectives. The sample included 13 second-year, 14 third-year, and 11 fourth-year students, excluding first-year students to ensure that all respondents had completed at least one year of coursework involving classroom performance tasks.

Out of the total population of 120 education students, the 38 respondents represented approximately half of the eligible population after excluding 44 first-year students. This sampling ensured that the data collected reflected informed experiences with performance-based assessments. Individual survey responses were gathered to allow for an in-depth examination of students' perceptions and challenges related to classroom performance tasks.

Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire. The instrument consisted of three parts. The first part gathered demographic information, including respondents' gender, age, and year level. The second part focused on students' journeys through classroom performance tasks in terms of knowledge application, skills development, and assessment practices.

This section utilized a five-point Likert scale with the following response options: 5 – Strongly Agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 2 – Disagree, and 1 – Strongly Disagree. Descriptive equivalents were used to interpret the results and determine the effectiveness and perceived impact of performance tasks. The third part of the questionnaire identified the problems encountered by students, allowing respondents to select multiple challenges they had experienced.

Procedure

Data collection was conducted through the administration of structured survey questionnaires to the selected respondents. The questionnaires were distributed to 38 college education students at Indiana Aerospace University. The survey items were designed to capture quantitative data on students' application of knowledge and skills, assessment experiences, and challenges encountered in completing classroom performance tasks.

The use of structured questions ensured consistency and comparability of responses across participants. This approach enabled the researchers to obtain measurable data while allowing students to reflect on and report their experiences with performance-based assessments. The completed questionnaires were collected, reviewed, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Responses from the five-point Likert scale were assigned numerical values and analyzed using weighted mean, ranking, and simple frequency counts. Descriptive equivalents were applied to interpret the computed means and determine students' levels of agreement with various statements related to classroom performance tasks.

These statistical treatments provided a clear summary of students' perceptions and experiences, supporting the study's objective of exploring college education students' journeys through performance-based assessments.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and scope prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by ensuring that no identifying information was associated with individual responses. All data collected were used solely for academic research purposes and were reported objectively. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines of Indiana Aerospace University and respected the rights, privacy, and dignity of all participants.

Results and Discussion

The study explores students' educational journeys through classroom performance tasks, presented and analyzed in terms of knowledge application, skill development, and assessment. The respondents of the study were education students aged 19 to 44 years old, both male and female, from the second to fourth year levels.

Application of Knowledge

Application of knowledge refers to the practice of applying acquired information, skills, values, and experiences in real-world situations. This involves the integration of educational knowledge, practical experiences, and practice to solve a given problem or make a certain decision or to enhance performance. In terms of classroom performance tasks, this is evident when students apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts, such as conducting experiments and creating projects that reflect their understanding of the subject. One of them is when students apply what they have learned to develop their lesson plans or when they engage in teaching demonstrations.

For students in education programs, knowledge application is significant in the achievement of the gap between learning and teaching. Activities such as teaching demonstrations and internships provide students the opportunities to put their knowledge into practice. This approach aligns with Jonassen's Authentic Learning theory, which highlights the importance of real-world relevance in educational experiences. This enables students to develop into effective teachers who can meet the needs of the students they will teach in the future.

Table 1 presents an exploration of students' educational journeys through their classroom performance tasks, focusing on the application of knowledge.

Table 1. *Application of Knowledge N=38*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description
1. Application of knowledge challenges students to think critically and adapt to new situations.	4.55	Strongly Agree
2. Students use their understanding by effectively applying knowledge to real-world situations.	4.47	Strongly Agree
3. Knowledge application allows students to connect learning with practical outcomes.	4.47	Strongly Agree
4. Knowledge application is essential for integrating theory with practice.	4.34	Strongly Agree
5. Students creatively apply knowledge, showing deeper comprehension.	4.21	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.41	Strongly Agree

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41 - 4.20 Agree, 2.61 - 3.40 Neutral, 1.81 - 2.60 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Skills Development

Skills development is the process of acquiring and enhancing the abilities necessary for effective performance, especially in educational institutions. Skills development in classroom performance tasks is demonstrated when students complete group projects or problem-solving assignments that further their skills. Group activities and lesson planning enhance students' interpersonal skills so vital for their future working experience.

For education students, skills development is crucial in preparing them for diverse classroom environments. This enables students to practice what they learn and build confidence and flexibility in relevant factual situations. This approach aligns with Bloom's Taxonomy, which emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills. Encouraging education students to engage in practical experiences fosters the development of the necessary skills for effective classroom management and instruction.

Table 2 presents an exploration of students' educational journeys through classroom performance tasks, focusing on skills development.

Table 2. *Skills Development N=38*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description
1. Skills development prepares students for future professional challenges.	4.76	Strongly Agree
2. Classroom performance tasks are important for contributing to a student's skill development.	4.68	Strongly Agree
3. Classroom performance tasks help students to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills.	4.63	Strongly Agree
4. These tasks allow students to gain practical experience relevant to real-world situations.	4.5	Strongly Agree
5. Classroom performance tasks foster students' development for both cognitive and practical skills.	4.45	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.60	Strongly Agree

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41 - 4.20 Agree, 2.61 - 3.40 Neutral, 1.81 - 2.60 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Assessments

Assessments are built into the educational process as tools for measuring learners' knowledge, abilities, and accomplishments. It includes formative and summative assessments, where formative assessments are used in the learning process, and summative assessments are used to assess learning at the end of an instructional period. Assessments test students' retention and comprehension, and foster critical thinking and practical application of the concepts.

These assessments are critical tools for identifying what can be done best and advancing students' learning. Various assessments help students become aware of their performance. This approach aligns with Bloom's Taxonomy, which provides a systematic framework for evaluating students' learning across various cognitive levels, from basic recall of information to more complex higher-order thinking. Such an approach to assessment promotes deeper understanding and would help prepare students to become effective teachers who can assess students' learning and facilitate their improvement in future classrooms.

Table 3 presents an exploration of students' educational journeys through their classroom performance tasks, focusing on assessments.

Table 3. *Assessments N=38*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description
1. Assessment allows teachers to see how well students understand the content.	4.66	Strongly Agree
2. Teachers use exams to identify areas where students want additional assistance.	4.61	Strongly Agree
3. Performance tasks in the classroom demonstrate how students can apply their knowledge in practical situations.	4.61	Strongly Agree
4. Regular assessments let students track their academic progress.	4.26	Strongly Agree
5. Classroom assignments enable students to apply what they've learned in real-world situations.	4.13	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.45	Strongly Agree

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41 - 4.20 Agree, 2.61 - 3.40 Neutral, 1.81 - 2.60 Disagree, 1.00 - 1.80 Strongly Disagree

Problems Encountered

The problems encountered by education students include a lack of confidence and motivation to practice on performance tasks and the inability to fulfill the expectations of performance tasks. Most students face many difficulties and challenges in making sense of their learning during studies, thereby hampering their overall performance. Further, there is often a lack of guidance on how to seek help, leading to feelings of frustration and disconnection from their educational journey.

Table 4 contains the following problems encountered by education students.

Table 4. *Problems Encountered (Multiple Responses)*

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Lack of confidence or motivation to participate in performance tasks.	26	1
Students may not understand how skills development can benefit them in their future careers.	24	2
Students struggle to meet the expectations or requirements of performance tasks.	23	3.5
Students struggle with identifying relevant real-world connections for their learning.	23	3.5

Students may not be aware of the opportunity to seek additional assistance.	19	5
Students may not have been taught or encouraged to think critically in their learning.	18	6
Students struggle to interpret or understand their assessment results.	16	7
Lack of creativity or imagination in the application of knowledge.	15	8
Students may not understand how their learning can be applied in the real world.	13	9.5
Difficulty in adapting to new situations or solving problems creatively.	13	9.5

Five ranked problems of education students were: (a) lack of confidence or motivation to participate in performance tasks, (b) students may not understand how skills development can benefit them in their future careers, (c) students struggle to meet the expectations or requirements of performance task, (d) students struggle with identifying relevant real-world connections for their learning, (e) students may not be aware of the opportunity to seek additional assistance.

The most frequent problem was a lack of confidence, with a frequency of 26. Many students hinder their full engagement in performance tasks due to low self-confidence. Focusing on these issues would require enhancing the learning environment to support academic success and personal development.

The second-ranked problem encountered was that students may not understand how skills development can benefit them in their future careers, with a frequency of 24. It can lead to missed opportunities for individual and career development, since students do not appreciate the necessity of developing certain skills. Thus, this can result in a marked gap between academic life and future employment details, making students unsuitable for the tasks they will encounter in their future occupations.

The third-ranked problem encountered was that students struggle to meet the expectations or requirements of performance tasks, with a frequency of 23. This can cause significant stress, as students feel pressured to meet the criteria. Lack of clear guidelines and inconsistent feedback can contribute to their difficulties, making it hard for them to gauge their progress and performance.

The fourth-ranked problem was that students struggle to identify relevant real-world connections for their learning, with a frequency of 23. This challenges students to apply theories in practice. As a result, students may lose interest in the subject and fail to find an application for this content outside the classroom.

The fifth-ranked problem was that students may not be aware of the opportunity to seek additional assistance, with a frequency of 19. This means students often miss opportunities that could help their learning. Students would find it hard to handle challenges on their own.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that students at Indiana Aerospace University strongly recognize the value of classroom performance tasks in shaping their educational journeys. These tasks support the application of knowledge, the development of essential skills, and meaningful assessment of learning outcomes. Performance-based assessments were found to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and practical understanding, while also providing constructive feedback that benefits both students and instructors. As such, performance tasks serve as effective tools for promoting deeper and more authentic learning experiences.

Despite these benefits, the study reveals that some students experience challenges related to confidence and motivation when engaging in performance tasks. Creating supportive learning environments through small-group discussions allows students to share experiences, reduce anxiety, and build peer connections. Positive reinforcement, along with constructive feedback, can encourage student participation and persistence. Team-building activities further strengthen collaboration and foster a sense of belonging, which is essential for sustaining student engagement in performance-based learning.

Another significant challenge identified is students' difficulty in meeting task expectations and recognizing the relevance of skill development to their future careers. Providing clear and accessible rubrics, breaking tasks into manageable components, and establishing checkpoints can help students better navigate performance requirements. Additionally, integrating career-related discussions, real-world applications, and alumni success stories enables students to understand how the skills they develop through performance tasks align with professional opportunities beyond the classroom.

Finally, the study highlights the importance of guiding students in making real-world connections and increasing awareness of available academic support services. Incorporating real-life examples, reflective activities, and multimedia resources into instruction helps students connect theoretical concepts to everyday experiences. Regular reminders about support services and encouraging help-seeking behaviors within the classroom contribute to a culture of academic support. Overall, addressing these challenges through intentional instructional and institutional strategies can enhance the effectiveness of performance-based assessments and promote more inclusive, supportive, and meaningful learning outcomes in higher education.

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