

ABSTRACT

SELF ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Self assessment (SA) was defined as 'the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgements about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards' (Boud, 1986). A candidate's performance in the 2001 Caribbean Examinations Council examinations measured academic achievement. This study attempted to determine whether students trained in SA skills performed better academically than untrained students.

The sample comprised 515 students, representing over a quarter of the year cohort in Barbados in the West Indies. An experimental group (256 participants) received formal training in SA skills for three terms of an academic year. Treatment groups were selected by tossing an unbiased coin. Records of student performance in identical teacher made tests in the previous four years indicated non systematic selection of superior classes.

A sample of ten high school teachers represented top, middle and bottom levels of academic achievement in national examinations. The researcher trained teachers to train their students in how to develop SA skills using twelve modules. This information was shielded from teachers working with control groups for experimental integrity protection. SA profile 1 was the covariate in a posttest only control group experimental research design within a randomised block design. SA profile 2 attempted to measure SA skills of the treatment groups.

An anti intellectual disposition and a social and family commitment component comprised SA. A ten point SA profile was identified. There was a significant difference in academic achievement of treatment groups, favouring the experimental group. A mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative analysis) showed that SA may better be assessed by observation techniques through authentic, performance and portfolio assessment rather than through pencil-and-paper tests. Recommendations arising from results of the present study were proposed and relevant areas for future research identified.

Keywords: Self assessment, anti intellectual disposition, social and family commitment, self assessment modules, academic achievement.