The Role of Assessment in Pedagogic Context

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discover the need of professional development of junior school teachers on evaluation and assessment skills of classroom. Although these two skills are vital part of pedagogy, but there are still some teachers who lack this important skill, or they are ignorant of this important aspect of teaching methodology. These teachers are not in competent but they are not knowledgeable, therefore they cannot make correct decision about student’s achievements. Ignorance of this important aspect makes the situation of classroom very deplorable. So it is a high time now that Education planners and designers should take some steps to curb this situation. I designed a questionnaire on a four (4) likert scale. It was consisted of ten statements on the concept of effective classroom assessment skills and administered to 20 school teachers in the Federal Capital of Pakistan. The teachers were asked to indicate whether they require professional developmental training or not. The responses were analyzed statistically using descriptive statistics. The results from the analysis of teachers “self perceived professional development needs on classroom assessment indicated that teachers still lack classroom assessments skills. This has implications for immediate professional development of junior school teachers on classroom assessment skill for effective learning and teaching.

Key Words: Evaluation, Assessment. Professional development, Training .Learning outcomes

1. Introduction

Successful teachers are those who possess a deep understanding of their subject matter, secondly they can apply proper teaching methods, and lastly they can apply different assessment strategies to evaluate learning outcomes. Therefore assessment can be considered an essential part of instructions. But many ESL teachers still do not have proper assessment skills to evaluate learners’ learning outcomes. In Learning outcomes the observation of students”, their answers to questions in class and written performance are included. Learning outcomes also give information about teachers made tests and quizzes and at the same time it gives information about the teaching methods of instructor, therefore it can be said that all proceedings of classroom whether it is assessment, instruction, decision making or classroom observation, all are the vital part of learning outcomes. Teachers with a tangible background in classroom assessment skills are well positioned, because they incorporate proper methodology with proper assessment skills. These teachers are capable of being understood and evaluated, and therefore regarded as competent and professional teachers. Professional development plays very important role in teacher’s life, it is a key determine factor for valuable teaching. But in our primary schools teachers are not competent enough in the field of evaluation and assessment. Sometimes the teachers don’t make fair and correct assessment and because of this they take wrong decisions and students suffer due to their ignorance. Teachers should know the development factors of their students and they should be aware of their outcomes and accomplishments. The purpose of assessment and evaluation is only to improve the procedure of obtained knowledge and to test out the teaching methodology. Assessment and evaluation are difficult tasks that all teachers are need to do in a better way to check the achievements of learners. All over the world it is known as the best practice but according to researchers on educational assessment. In the field of teaching assessment and evaluation is the best partner’s. Teachers should apply well planned assessment and evaluation practices in the classrooms. Stiggins, 2006 admitted that many teachers completed their education and they achieved, the highest degree but they are not fully aware of training and evaluation and at the same time it is not include in their curriculum as well. There should be some course for the un the field.
of evaluation and assessment. Many teachers in Pakistan do understand the need of assessment and evaluation because they really need to assess their students’ learning outcomes and performance. Many junior school teachers are willing to learn always classroom assessments skills. From past history it can be judged that junior secondary school teachers were lacking in classroom assessment skills to assess effectively their students learning outcomes. Junior school teachers are now willing for more training. It shows that assessment and evaluation has been an issue to teachers all over the world.

2. Literature Review

Stiggins (1999) used the term “assessment literacy”, which is a way of defining the particular kinds of assessment skills teachers needed. He noted that many teachers did not have coursework in their pre-service programs to develop these assessment skills. In many countries teachers need professional development, they should be aware of classroom assessment skills. They should be knowing techniques for successful teaching and learning. Research is required to find out the need of professional development. It improves the relationship between teachers and students. Shepard (2000) discussed the need for classroom assessment skills. He suggested that teachers ought to apply following changes in their evaluation and assessment process:

a) Teachers should do the conversations with students in this way students will develop greater understanding.
b) During discussion the student’s knowledge will be enhanced and their learning goals will be defined explicitly.
c) Teachers should do need analysis.
d) Need analysis will help teachers to gauge the prior knowledge of their students.
e) Teachers will get and plan for better understanding and comprehension.
f) Corrective feedback will enhance the process of learning.
g) Teachers will set the clear criteria for checking the performance.

To assess the performance of students is a tough job for all teachers, and all experienced teachers are always well prepared to assess and evaluate students’ learning outcomes and achievements. At the same time the teachers who have not taken the professional training they are asking for effective training course on classroom assessments skills. This is not the situation in Pakistan but it is prevailing all over the world that teachers are showing their concern about classroom evaluation and assessment. McMillan (2000) implied that instructor’s with a concrete background in classroom assessment skills are well positioned, because they incorporate proper methodology with proper assessment skills.

According to Marso & Pigge (1988), teachers lack the skills of statistical analyses of test data. It is very important for evaluation and assessment practices. Still teachers are not convinced of applying statistical tools to improve the quality of their evaluation and assessment process. As I have mentioned in the above paragraph that teachers do not perform statistical analyses of test data, that don’t know how to measure reliability and how to conduct item analysis. Mertler, (2000) also indicated that teachers followed specific steps to insure validity and reliability about half of the time or less. All over the world it is known as the best practice. Galluzzo, 2005 states that in teaching” assessment and evaluation are the best partner’s. In the same year Graham, 2005 also stressed upon that teachers should apply well planned assessment and evaluation practices in the classrooms. Stiggins, 2006 admitted that many teachers completed their education and they achieved, the highest degree but they are not fully aware of training and evaluation and at the same time it is not include in their curriculum as well. Classroom assessment engages two key types of activities: basically it is a collection of information and measurement of outcomes Measurement and assessment can be achieved in a number of ways. To measure the learning, teachers give different kinds of tests can, conduct oral questions and answer session, giving home assignment activities and, doing problem solving tasks. Teachers can measure the outcomes by counting the scores systematically. Some teachers ask the purpose of assessment. The main purpose of assessment is called summative evaluation. Its primary aim is to check student’s performance. The second important aspect is to monitor the progress. Because the purpose of this kind of assessment is to smooth the progress it is called formative.
evaluation. From the literature reviewed, it can be said that all over the world, teachers want to have professional development with regards to classroom assessment skills and techniques for effective teaching and learning outcomes. More research is needed to identify the professional development needs of teachers in relation to classroom assessments.

2.1 Research Questions
The research questions that guided the study were
Q.1 What are junior Model s school teachers” self perceived professional growth needs?
Q.2 Can Technology be used for assessment purposes at various levels in classroom?

3. Methodology
3.1 Sample Size
20 teachers were selected randomly from ten (05) junior model schools in Islamabad. All teachers were trained and currently teaching English. Ten teachers had done B.A. They had gone through a four-years teachers training program. Five teachers had taken their CT course. This course is basically for primary school teachers. Five teachers were holders of Masters degree in various subjects. The common feature among all of them was that they had undergone Junior Certificate course in teachers training. Their teaching experiences ranged from 02 to 07 years. All of them helped in completing the questionnaire.

3.2 Instrument
The questionnaire was designed in a very simple language based on daily teaching situations. It was divided into two parts: A and B. In section A, the teachers were asked about their background information, and section B consisted of ten (10) closed ended questions in statements form. As mentioned earlier these questions were in the form of statements with reference to the learners’ daily life situations and learning problems in a typical class. I have used the concept of Zhang and Burry-Stock (2003), Mertler (2003), Gronlund (2006), which discusses the role of successful learning and positive outcomes. There were ten statements for them to consider and to show their level of agreement or disagreement. For analytical purposes, the questions were rated in the degree of agreement: For example, Respondents had to show their level of agreement in the following way: Strongly agree =1, Strongly disagree =2 disagree No=3, agree and Strongly agree =4. The data were coded and fed to the SPSS database for statistical analysis. The descriptive statistics provided an overall view of the participants. The returned questionnaire was reviewed for face and content validity. For the reliability analysis, I computed Cronbach’s Alpha formula for the items in the instrument.

4. Data Analysis
The responses of the ten school teachers were analyzed applied s SPSS (version 14) for descriptive analysis to check standard deviations and means. I used one sample t-test at 0.05 alpha level the test value of 2.5. I wanted to find out the teachers self-perceived professional development requirement on classroom evaluation and assessment skills. From the responses analyzed it was perceived that all teachers wanted to have professional development. For effective learning outcomes and teaching all teachers were in the favor of learning assessment and evaluation skills. 90% teachers were in the favour of applying Spss. During discussion theses teachers were very optimistic about using it. It was their opinion that transferring your ideas into digits could be used effectively. Statistical analysis could help teachers in forecasting and predicting future programmes in a better way. The data also suggested that the best teachers and syllabus designers are those who, can understand and utilize the information efficiently.

At the same time most of the teachers were in favour of using electronic assessment tools such as computers and calculators. These teachers were in the opinion that electronic tools helped to reduce the load of assessment. These electronic tools can be used to develop effective learning. Computers in assessment provides various testing options. A broad variety of assessment techniques lead these teachers to computer based achievement. All of the teachers were in favour that using computers for
assessment is a time saving strategy and it provides a quick means of assessment and feedback to the students. All of the teachers were in the opinion that there should be harmony between formative assessment and summative assessment procedure. It should be designed to minimize the burden on students and teachers.

5. Recommendations

- In order to facilitate teachers there are a few recommendations for all teachers
- There should be seminars and workshops on effective classroom assessment and handling SPSS be organized for all teachers.
- There should be proper monitoring of classroom assessment skills by professional.
- Teachers should set up a system of sampling students’ outcomes for national monitoring because it will reduce the overall test burden and students will get immediate feedback.

6. Implications

- Administration should provide due attention and resources to create developmental criteria.
- Teachers should have access to well designed assessment skills
- Teachers should have proper understanding, which can help them to make fair judgments
- Assessment and evaluation course of actions need to be clear and open to all.
- Students should be involved in self-assessment, and they should be aware of this fact that it is ongoing process.
- Full participation is required in formative and summative assessment for enhancing quality assurance system
- Use quizzes and tests only when most appropriate, not as regular practice, because students will lose their interest.

References:

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