

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDIES CONDUCTED IN PRE SERVICE AND IN SERVICE TEACHERS ASSESSMENT LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

In the present scenario, when different educational policies are framed around the world to address the issue of equality and equity in teaching learning process, it's time to rethink that does these policies are making any positive effect on the learning outcome of students. Good assessment is a key to efficient teaching learning process. The National Education policy 2020 also stresses on reinvention of assessment practices (NEP 2020). Every child is distinct and competent in some way, but the current assessment practices only measure scores and do not focus on holistic development and individual differences of children. Therefore, there is a need to upgrade the assessment literacy of in service and pre service teachers. This paper aims to analyze the studies conducted in the field of pre service and in service teachers' assessment literacy. A review of researches on teacher assessment literacy from 2010 to March 2022 will present the current status of teachers knowledge of assessment practices and the recommended reforms to associate educational assessment with continuous professional development of in service and pre service teachers. In view of current pandemic situation of COVID some light has been shed on digital assessment literacy as well. Afflerbach (2007) in his book on 'Understanding and Using Reading assessment, K-12' remarked that there is very little research done on the status of teacher's assessment literacy. The more we know about our student's progress, the better we can help them in achieving their respective goals.

Keywords: assessment practices, assessment literacy, pre service teachers, in service teachers, teachers' professional development.

INTRODUCTION

There are many factors that contribute to effective teaching learning process. Among them educational assessment practices also plays a key role. Good assessment process is a key to efficient teaching learning process. Since independence several reforms have been framed in India to shift assessment pattern from rote memorization of course content to more competency and performance based assessment. As mentioned in National Education Policy (2020), the assessments should promote the overall development of students. In order to transform the assessment practices, a 360 degree report card has been recommended which will present the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of students. In order to implement the recommended modifications in assessment practices, there is a need to upgrade teachers assessment knowledge and skills. The type of assessment methods used in classroom defines the achievement of instructional and educational goals. This requires teachers' ability, skill and knowledge to assess the learning outcome of every individual child by analyzing the evidence of learning. Besides this, the teachers should also be clear with the concepts of reliability, validity and accountability.(Popham 2012) Every child is distinct and competent in some way, but the present assessment practices only measure the scores and do not focus on holistic development and individual differences of child. The national education policy 2020 also stresses on reinvention of assessment practices (NEP 2020).According to Popham (2011), assessment literacy is knowledge and understanding of basic concepts, practices and methods that affect classroom decisions. This definition stresses on implementation part of assessment literacy, as most of the teachers are aware of assessments methods but they are not proficient in its implementation in classroom. In the past few years there has been an ongoing debate regarding the importance of assessment for learning and assessment of learning. A teacher should be expert in administering both types of assessments in class. Therefore, in the present scenario when different educational policies are framed around the world to address the issue of equality and equity in teaching learning process, it's time to rethink that does these policies have any positive effect on the learning outcome of students. Several steps are being taken to revamp the education system.

Research Questions

1. What is the assessment literacy level of in service teachers?
2. What is the assessment literacy level pre service teachers?

Studies on assessment literacy of in-service teachers

Fulcher (2012) in his work on assessment literacy for language classroom stated that assessment literacy has three aspects. The first is knowledge, skills and ability to design classroom based tests, second is familiarity with test processes and last is to understand the role of evaluation. Seigel and Gottheiner (2012) in their study on assessment literacy of science teachers presented a model of assessment literacy with three main aspects: view of learning, assessment principles and four areas of knowledge i.e. knowledge of assessment, knowledge of strategies, knowledge of data interpretation and action taking and knowledge of what to assess. To assess students learning outcome is one of the major skills that teachers must develop. Alkharusi et. al (2011) suggested that the teacher education content should be linked with field experience to increase the understanding of assessments methods. It must be noted that developing only theoretical aspect won't bring any change in teaching learning process therefore it is a pre requisite that teachers must be given competency based practical knowledge. Baird (2021), in a qualitative study to assess teachers perceptions on assessment literacy found that most of the teachers believe assessment to be a reflective process. Yes, a teacher must reflect on assessment parameters before making any decision related to student's achievement. Elshawa, Hong, Abdullah, Rashid (2016), in a review article on Teachers assessment literacy have recognized deleterious effects of being assessment illiterate in education system. While relating to the term washback effect, which means benefits and drawbacks of assessment in teaching learning process, the researchers identified that by using more practical approach assessments can bring positivity in classroom instructions and students learning outcome. Yantum and Wongwanich (2013) conducted a study on primary school teachers and reported that teachers do not possess required skills to assess learning outcomes of students. Bandele and Oluwatayo (2013) in a study investigated assessment literacy of science teachers and concluded that low level of assessment literacy is exhibited by most of the science teachers which is detrimental to the quality of science teaching in schools. De Luca and Klinger (2010) while conducting a study on assessment education at one pre- service teacher education program found that there is a lack of understanding of formative and summative assessments in teachers. He stressed that on campus training can help to promote knowledge of assessment and help in development of assessment literacy. Yasar (2020), while conducting a case study of 12 chemistry teachers found that teachers possess little knowledge regarding preparation, implementation and interpretation of formative assessments. They mostly focus on achievement parameter of students. Hudson (2017), examined the relationship between teachers own comprehension towards assessment literacy and classroom assessment practices. The results based on self reporting questionnaire and analysis of teachers lesson plans indicates the gap between knowledge of assessment and its implementation in classroom. Perry (2013), in a survey found that assessment literacy of School Principals is lower than that of teachers. This is the matter of serious concern, as if the Principals are not themselves competent in teaching and assessment practices, they will not be able to recognize the gap and insist teachers for change. It is the duty of administration to take charge of professional development of teachers. Stiggins (2014), in an article on improving assessment literacy outside schools wrote that segregation in teaching and assessment in educational policies is the root cause of teachers lagging in assessment literacy. Clark, Nash, Burnes, Karvonen (2019), noticed that teachers are confused with diagnostic assessment as well. While implementing and reporting diagnostic assessment, most of the teachers use traditional methods of assessments.

Studies on assessment literacy of Pre service Teachers

To figure out the assessment literacy of pre service teachers is essential, as it is the beginning of teaching profession for teachers. Teachers are curious at this stage and want to learn new teaching and assessment methodologies. Bustamante (2022), in a qualitative study on English language assessment literacy of teachers in middle school revealed that pre service training of teachers is focused on traditional methods of assessment and the teachers didn't had any exposure to alternative assessment practices. The participants of the study showed eagerness to learn non traditional methods of assessments. Poth (2013), reviewed the course content of assessment programs and found that summative assessments are still the focal point in assessment curriculums of teacher education programs. Howerton (2016), while conducting a qualitative study on pre service teachers experiences during formative assessments, noticed that participants are confused with students engagement with learning. They presume that when students are engaged in some non verbal activity that means they have learned the concept. They did not gather more evidence of learning. The teachers also seemed focused in assessing content knowledge. Bekiroglu and Suzuk (2014), in a mixed method study on future teachers assessment literacy found a disparity between theoretical and actionable aspect. The teachers were well acquainted with assessment concepts but were unable to implement in actual classroom setting.

Digital assessment literacy

Digital assessment is a platform to evaluate students learning outcome by using technological framework, which can be software, hardware or networking. Fan, Wang and Wang (2011), conducted a study to relate the effect of web based assessment and test analysis model on teachers assessment literacy. The results of post test indicated the increase in teachers assessment knowledge. Husain (2021), conducted a study to relate and explore the need of training in online assessment literacy. The results indicate that teachers lag in creating and administration of online assessments and are willing to receive training on strategies of online assessments. The results also revealed great differences in student's performance in paper pencil tests and online assessments. This gap in student performance shows paucity in professional training of teachers. Eyal (2012), in a review article on digital assessment literacy mentioned that web based digital assessment is also a part of alternative assessment practices and the teachers of 21st century have desire to learn digital assessment skills.

Critical Examination of in service and pre service teachers' assessment literacy

Alkharusi, Kazem and Musawai (2011), in a survey related to differences in assessment knowledge of pre service and in service teachers found that pre service teachers have better understanding of assessment concepts and required skills as compared to in service teachers. The study clearly indicates that, having teaching experience does not mean proficiency in assessment literacy. Such studies clearly point towards the need of up skilling of teachers in assessment strategies. An ongoing professional development of in service teachers and providing opportunities for real classroom practice will certainly bring a sustained reform in assessment practices. Schools should organize systematic training programs that could bring improvement in quality of instruction and students learning outcome. Kruse, Impellizeri, Witherel, Sondergeld (2020), found that training in assessment courses has helped to augment the metacognitive skills of teachers and helped to increase their confidence. Howerton (2016) recommended that it's time to shift focus from knowledge of assessment to its execution in actual classroom setting. In a review article on K 12 assessments by National Council on Teacher Quality, Washington (2012), it is mentioned that teacher education programs must be able to inculcate three skills in prospective teachers (1) knowledge of assessment taxonomy (2) analytical skills (3) instructional decision making. This objective can only be achieved when teachers are given ample opportunities to practice in actual classroom setting. Pae, Freeman and Wash (2014), in a pilot study on pre service teachers assessment preparation recommended that prospective teachers must be taught according to changing curriculum. Murphy Odo (2016) recommended that personalized tutoring and debriefing by peers can bring some advancement in pre service teachers assessment literacy. Guskey (2020), recommended that teaching should not be assessment oriented. Too much focus on assessments makes teaching narrow, which will not bear any positive impact on education system. In order to avoid blame for poor performance of students, the teachers now teach them to prepare for examination only.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight the status of assessment literacy of pre service and in service teachers and to find a uniform strategy to equip them for the same. No doubt that assessment is an iterative process. Assessment in any form has no value until the gathered information regarding students learning outcome is further used for their betterment. It should not be used as a tool for grading and comparing students, but to support them in learning as per their needs. The previous studies clearly present the status of teachers' assessment literacy. A review of 20 studies suggests that most of the teachers are good in assessment knowledge but struggle with implementation, interpretation of information and making positive instructional decisions. The overall condition of teachers' assessment literacy is unsatisfactory.

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