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A Study of Classroom Assessment Practices: Challenges and Issues in the Context of Public Secondary Schools of Karachi Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study presents the conceptualized analysis understanding about the current assessment practices and the authentic assessment practices in education and integration of real-world task in classroom assessment. The main focal point of this research is to identify the challenges and issues of classroom assessment practices in the context of public secondary schools of Karachi Pakistan. The research was conducted in Karachi East District. The samples of 100 were gathered randomly from the Government Girls Secondary School Gulshan-e-Iqbal block 6 near NIPA, Government Girls Secondary School University Campus adjacent to Karachi University, Government Boys Secondary school no. 2 near Nursery Flyover, Ghausia Colony, Karachi. The survey questionnaire was developed on current assessment practices. The findings of the study highlight that current assessment practices follow the traditional settings and there is need to integrate different types of activities and feedback trends to make students competent.

Keywords: Assessment, Feedback, Authentic Assessment, Competency, Bloom Taxonomy

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INTRODUCTION

This is the fact that human needs testing to improve their achievement and that necessity was the cause of birth the process of assessment. Ghaicha (2016) acknowledged that assessment is a powerful lever that can either boost or undermine students learning. Kulkarni C. et al. (2015) stressed on peer and self assessment that these elements offer an opportunity to scale both assessment and learning to global classrooms. Actually assessment is a path between teacher's instruction and student's learning. According to Aggarwal (1997), the concept of assessment involves a test of knowledge acquired, or more generally, a means of assessing intellectual capacity or ability. Assessment has an importance like a ladder, which provides chance to the students to know about learning, upgrade their level and get success in their future. Valerie (2014) indicated that, often it happens in the classroom and other high-stakes assessments are used for purposes of grading, promotion, and placement, but not to enhance learning. The most important function of the assessment is to verify the level of achievement of individual students and to choose students for the next stage of the education system. The assessment of the students within an educational program is to recognize the changes with reference to their information, skills and attitudes to identify necessary standard. Jabbarifar (2009) give another aspect of assessment, it is not only gather information about student's leaning but also teacher get inform about their teaching instruction. There are different type of strategies of classroom assessment which can be used to improving different types of learning and skills. Summative assessment is of the one major type of assessment. Thomas (2012) stated that summative assessments are emphasized grading students by the teacher in the end of the educational course. This sort of assessment pressurize to students to practice their prior knowledge and get good grades. Often the other type of assessment which is called formative

assessment is recommended globally to improve learning. Azim and Khan (2012) defines that authentic assessment is a new notion which provides an alternative to traditional assessment practices. Practice based learning is a corner stone of education. Life is a continuous chain of experiences, these experiences good or bad but both help live more educated and productive life. Authentic assessment reflects the real-world task or enhances learning by doing activities. Education and experiences allow the individual to build respect from other people, its make life more important and meaningful. John Dewey (1938) emphasizes the concept of experimental education in his book "Experience and Education" that educators must recognize and understand the connection between education and personal experience. Dewey believes that any new education must be committed to some form of empirical and experimental philosophy, and to

know the meaning of empiricism, one must understand what experience is. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, current assessment system, which is started at primary level onwards in education, still encourages memorization and mechanical replication of texts. Its only focuses on supplies the pass/fail information and does not portray the competencies that have been achieved by the students at a definite stage. It also does not help in improving the worth of education at large. Helmick (1974) analyzed deeply the system of examination in Pakistan and pointed out some observations regarding the National Education Commission 1959. He stated that the complex system of examination in Pakistan has generated many complicated issues. It failed to create conducive environment to boost up the students' ability, creativity, and critical thinking. Similarly Kiani (2011) stated that Graduates in Pakistan lack the motivation to think critically, and reflective responses are not encouraged. Common issues such as outdated curriculum, practice of cramming a selected contents, and unprofessional behavior in the examination have made the examination system defective and

ineffective. Consequently, the system of examination in Pakistan failed badly to achieve the aims and goals. Educational assessment policies should not be made only for close rooms and do not hide to the stakeholders. Kamrani (2010) rightly states that, Objective of assessment is the development of student's competences therefore every stakeholder must be aware of educational assessment practices. The authentic assessment is suggested for improving learning. This is necessary for making effective assessment, design a curriculum according to student's caliber and develop basic learning content which caters knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Khattak (2012). Qurush (2005) rightly said, for achieving the level of competency of students, the classroom assessment should be taken frequently. Regular assessment practices can be helpful in increasing level of achievement. When students search and formulate on the bases of their own thinking, it will be reliable rather than memorization, according to Khan (2006), student's

comprehension level cannot be judged by the use of traditional assessment techniques, and questions must be asked related to contextual information which enhance student's creativity and

problem solving skills. Helping someone improve their thinking skills isn't easy, but we can use

Bloom's Taxonomy to help us reach our goal. The current education system does not provide a foundation to explore, analyze and be critical about the situations and creative about solutions. The system is geared to automatic memorizing without challenging the views being taught. In addition, theoretical learning is not translated to practical training. Our assessment practices emphasize knowledge, it is extremely mind oriented such as knowledge and information is taught to be more important than experience, teachers appreciate this tradition because of lack of training assessment practices in Pakistan, and other reason is, no coherence between

curriculum objective and assessment practices and it is not aligning according to BLOOM'S TAXONOMY. The purpose of the current study was to identify the challenges and issues in the context of public secondary schools of Karachi Pakistan, for this purpose the survey questionnaire was developed on current

assessment practices. The 10 samples were gathered randomly from the secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem: A study of classroom assessment practices: challenges and issues in the context of public secondary schools of Karachi Pakistan

Objectives of the Study

- To find out needs and purposes of assessment practices in global perspective
- To identify major factors that lead to the failure of current assessment practices in Secondary Schools in Karachi Pakistan
- To examine the perception of administrative staff of Secondary schools of Karachi Pakistan regarding the effectiveness of current assessment practices
- To explore the ways for making effective assessment policy for secondary schools in Pakistan

Hypothesis of the Study:

Hypothesis of the study are given below:

Alternative Hypothesis:

H1: classroom assessment practices of secondary schools of Karachi Pakistan are used effectively to increase students' learning.

Null Hypothesis:

Ho: classroom assessment practices of secondary schools of Karachi Pakistan are not used effectively to increase students' learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Design:

This research was carried out in quantitative paradigm wherein Descriptive research approach was used to find the challenges and issues of classroom assessment practices, in

the context of public secondary schools of Karachi Pakistan.

Population:

The populations of the study were students of Government Secondary School Gulshan-e-Iqbal block 6 near NIPA, Government Secondary School University Campus adjacent to Karachi University, Government Boys Secondary school no. 2 near Nursery Flyover, Ghausia Colony, Karachi. The sample of the study comprises of Grade 10th students of secondary public school Karachi Pakistan.

Sampling Method:

The sample of the study selected through purposive sampling. The students' ages range from 15 to 18 years. Total number of students were 100, 50 boys and 50. Most of the students use Urdu as a second language and English as a third language. All students belong to middle class society.

Instrument of the Study:

Survey method was used to collect data. For sampling questionnaire instruments was developed on 5 point likert scale, it consists of closed-ended questions.

Instrument for Data Analysis:

Table was used for data analysis and pie chart representation was used to elaborate respondents' answer. The formula used for taking percentage of every question's response used percentage formula:

$$\text{Frequency in \%} = \frac{\text{Calculated Value}}{\text{Total Value}} \times 100$$

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS:

Analyses of the responses on statements are given below.

- Is assessment system of Pakistan focuses on textbooks rather than experience? 30% agree, 60% people strongly agree, 10% neutral on this statement, hence the assessment system of Pakistan focuses on text books.
- Does teacher provide effective feedback after assessment? 10% agree, 40% disagree, 30%

disagree, 20% neutral, hence in Pakistan mostly teachers do not provide feedback properly.

- Does examination paper item cover all the aspects of curriculum objectives? 60% disagree and 40% strongly disagree, hence examination papers are not made to fulfillment of curriculum objectives, it just makes for testing content knowledge.

- Are teachers well aware and trained about assessment techniques? 40% disagree, 40% strongly disagree and 20% neutral, hence in Pakistan teachers are not trained about classroom assessment techniques.

- Are teachers able to diagnose students' weaknesses and their abilities by using assessment?

30% disagree, 50% strongly disagree, 20% neutral, hence most of the teachers cannot use assessment for diagnose student's skills.

- Due to rote learning students become passive recipients of prescribed content knowledge of the textbooks.

50% agree, 30% strongly agree, 10% disagree, 20% neutral, hence students have content knowledge rather than skills due to rote learning.

- In assessment Comprehension questions are useful for checking students' understanding. 80% agree, 10% strongly agree, 10% disagree, hence in assessment should check comprehension level rather than memorize knowledge.

- Should student's performance be checked by annual examination? 20% agree, 60% disagree, 20% strongly disagree, and hence student performance cannot

be checked properly in the end of the year in 3 hours paper.

- Self assessment chance is given to the students by the teachers. 10% agree, 60% disagree, and 20% strongly disagree, 10% neutral, hence teachers do not provide self assessment chance to students.

- Are task-based activities more effective than paper and- pencil tests? 50% agree, 30%

strongly disagree, 20% neutral, hence task based assessment more effective than paper-pencil test.

- Teacher applies alternative approaches to assess learning outcomes. 50% agree, 30% strongly agree, 10% disagree, and 10% neutral, hence alternative assessment should be taken.
- Teacher Assess the quality of student learning in a class at the end of an instruction. 30% agree and 70% disagree, hence teachers do not take assessment after instruction of every class.
- Allow students to discuss assessment difficulties in class. 30% agree, 50 disagree, 20% neutral, hence the chances are not given to the students to discuss the assessment problems in the class.
- Does experience based learning develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. 30% agree, 70% strongly agree on that experiences based learning develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- No coherence between curriculum objective and assessment practices and it is not aligning according to BLOOM'S TAXONOMY. 90% disagree, 10% neutral, hence no coherence between curriculum objective and assessment practices and it is not aligning according to BLOOM'S TAXONOMY.

Summary and Discussion

In the light of findings it is found that efficiency of education system depends on the assessment system, but text book is used as a central part of education system in Pakistan and assessment system moves around this central axis. Teachers are not trained in order to prepare to develop assessment items, even they do not know about the importance of assessment and its role in education system that is way teachers make assessment items which do not covers the curriculum objectives and this is the main reason which is developing a huge gap between curriculum objectives and the assessment practices. In higher secondary level teachers copy test items that is why students buy 5 year papers and easily guess the paper. Due to lack

professional development of teachers in Pakistan do not know about the importance of feedback importance that feedback.

In Pakistan the pass/fail concept and the grade system create competition and neglect the level of competency, promote rote learning and do not analysis students' works. High level educational authorities find easy way to take summative assessment in which performance is checked by the end of the year only in 3 hours, due to this sort of assessment practices student's fear of failure is getting increased. The authentic assessment technique is not used, which is more useful to develop student's learning, student have no chance to analysis their learning process because the different types of activities are not included such as portfolio, reflection, project, self and peer assessment, which develop team work skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills. The assessment system of Pakistan on secondary and higher secondary level does not make students active learners, there is no concentration to getting desire outcome of curriculum objectives, real world activities are not appreciated which develop student's understanding and build decision making skills but there is not doing efforts to overcome of that deficiency. Government should take step for betterment of this situation, Pakistan has better polices of assessment but there is need to be implemented in current system of education.

Conclusion

In Pakistan assessment system of secondary and higher secondary level focuses on testing knowledge only. The whole personality, affective and psychomotor domains are ignored in assessment process. Students' learning is measured in the assumption of memorization and rote learning. The examination system revolves around the marks and grade that is why students use unfair mean for passing examination and parents are also involved in this unethical behavior. Only 3 hours are given to assess the whole year performance. Innovative ideas are not appreciated on answer sheet

rather bookish material is valuable for getting good grades. Due to the lack of teacher training, teachers are not aware of the different types of assessment techniques. No constructive feedback is provided. High order thinking, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills are not measured properly and table of specification is not followed due to the lack of classroom assessment skills in teachers.

Recommendation:

In the light of above discussion it is recommended that

- Government should take immediate action regarding provides standardized assessment system of the examination boards.
- Teachers should be skilled in choosing and developing assessment methods, administering and scoring tests, interpreting and communicating assessment results, grading, and meeting ethical standards in assessment.
- Trained teachers should be appointed. □ The professional development workshop should be conducted time to time, especially the classroom assessment techniques should be introduced time to time which are being used globally.
- Teacher should be restricted that to provide constructive feedback to the students.
- One textbook should not be recommended in the school, due to remove the centralize position of the text book.
- Contextualized learning should be focused in the place of memorization text book content.
- Bloom taxonomy should be used as an assessment framework to develop critical thinking and analyzing teacher's instructions.
- Activities should be developed in curriculum which can be used as an assessment tools and these activities must be reflect the real world experiences.
- Schools should not focus on teaching merely, but focus on development of student's competency.

- Assessment process should be continued throughout the year
- Assessment items should be aligned with curriculum objectives.
- Teachers should use the revised Bloom's Taxonomy in planning and developing instruction.

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ANNEXURES**UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI DEPARTMENT F TEACHER EDUCATION****A Study of Classroom Assessment Practices: Challenges and Issues in the Context of Public
Secondary Schools of Karachi Pakistan**

PRINT NAME: _____

DATE: _____

DESIGNATION: _____

DEPARTMENT: _____

I=agree, SA=strongly disagree, D=disagree, SD=strongly disagree, N=neutral

	A	SA	D	SD	N
1. In Pakistan assessment consist of textbooks items rather than performance based assessment on specific skills.					
2. After assessment teachers provide effective feedback which helps to improve student's skills.					
3. An examination papers item covers all the aspects in terms curriculum objectives.					
4. Teachers are well aware and train of assessment techniques.					
5. Teachers are able to diagnose students' weaknesses and their abilities by using assessment.					
6. Due to rote learning students become passive recipients of prescribed content knowledge of the textbooks.					
7. In assessment Comprehension questions are useful for checking students' understanding.					
8. Examination fears getting increase due the grade system.					
9. Language of examination papers is difficult to understand.					
10. Behavior of teacher also impact on student performance in assessment.					
11. Student performance should be checked by annual examination.					
12. Students always have clear criteria of assessment.					
13. Students have chance to assess their own performance in class.					
14. Task-based activities effective more than paper and- pencil tests.					
15. Teacher applies alternative approaches to assess learning outcomes.					
16. Teacher Assess the quality of student learning in a class at the end of an instruction.					
17. Allow students to discuss assessment difficulties in class.					
18. Provide feedback to students in order to improve their learning process.					
19. Teachers diagnose flaws in assessment and work for improvement.					
20. Summative assessment is more effective than formative.					

TABLE: 1

QUESTION	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral
QUESTION 1	30	60	0	0	10
QUESTION 2	10	0	40	30	20
QUESTION 3	0	0	60	40	0
QUESTION 4	0	0	40	40	20
QUESTION 5	0	0	30	40	20
QUESTION 6	50	30	10	0	10
QUESTION 7	80	10	10	0	0
QUESTION 8	20	0	60	20	0
QUESTION 9	10	0	60	20	10
QUESTION 10	50	30	0	0	20
QUESTION 11	10	0	50	30	10
QUESTION 12	30	0	70	0	0
QUESTION 13	20	0	40	20	20
QUESTION 14	30	0	70	0	0
QUESTION 15	0	0	90	0	10
QUESTION 16	20	0	50	0	30
QUESTION 17	20	0	40	20	20
QUESTION 18	30	0	70	0	0
QUESTION 19	0	20	30	30	20
QUESTION 20	10	0	50	40	30

