

CONTINUOUS CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT AT PRIMARY LEVEL

By

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to analyze the continuous classroom assessment at primary level in Pakistan. Findings of the study revealed that the students' achievement of single class teacher in the subject of English, General science, Urdu and mathematics were almost on average and rubric observation during continuous classroom assessment ranked single class teacher performance as fair. Overall, subject teacher students' achievement in English, General science, Urdu and Mathematics was better as compared to single class teacher. In addition to this, rubric observation during continuous classroom assessment ranked as subject teacher performance was reported very good in the area of students' instruction, writing test items on the writing board, time management, class environment, use of instructional resources and student record keeping during and after assessment. It was recommended that at primary level, there is need of subject wise teacher to teach students more effectively. It is also recommended that primary teachers should be familiar with the new curricular terms such as Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) used in curriculum 2006 and they can be trained to develop and use the new assessment tools that is, rubric in the classroom.

Keywords: Continuous Classroom Assessment, Rubric, Single Class Teacher, Subject Teacher, Primary Level.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is the organized way of collection, analysis, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving, learning and development. (Palomba, & Banta, 1999). In education, assessment is an essential element of design sensible supposition about what students know on the basis of facts resultant from monitoring, do or make in chosen situation (Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001). There are different purposes of assessment. According to Fouberg, (2004), if the aim of the assignment is to develop a finished item for utilization or implementation, then the assessment is called as 'Summative Assessment'. In school environment, during summative evaluation, the teacher gives the feedback needed to justify the grade assigned for classification or promotion to next class. But here, the teachers grade only the product and cannot find out the students learning achievement in their work. Summative assessment provides accountability and is concerning or determining the level of achievement attained by a student (Assesment).

In education not only summative evaluation is carried out, but it is also a continuous process and some time it is done at the beginning and some during the middle of the teaching learning activities. This type of assessment is known as Formative Assessment. Formative assessment helps to observe the progress towards achieving the students' learning results. Similarly, in classroom, there are some types of assessment being applied but formative evaluation is one of the most common techniques. The purpose of this method is to give feedback to teacher and students and improve quality of student progress during learning. Classroom evaluation can also offer important plan information when numerous segments of a course are taught, because the process of formative assessment show at what level the plan or program have achieved it objectives and also whether all the segments or parts of the program are completed.

Review of Related Literature

Continuous Classroom Assessment

According to Falayalo, (1986), Continuous classroom assessment is a procedure through which, during or at the

final grading of students, they are being evaluated in the area of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains as step by step or systematically takes account of all their progress during the academic period given by a school. Similarly, Airasian (1991) has also described continuous assessment as: it is the systematic approach which illustrates the full range of basic, rules, techniques and methods a teacher uses to collect, analyze and interpret information about students. Received information or data that is used to help teachers to take decision regarding their students, plan and observe teaching learning and set up an effective classroom environment which is possible through team or group performance situations.

Ainsworth and Viegut (2006) have explained assessment as a performance activity, "it requires learners to build a response or concept, produce a product, or show an expression". According to Carr and Harris, (2001), there are some objectives of assessment at classroom level. The main objective of standards-based classroom assessment is to update teaching and improve learning and it is also a compulsory element of teaching-learning process.

According to Paris et al. (1991), in school, teacher is in a place to select and analyze assessment so that they become concerned and knowledgeable in the process of teaching-learning. Through this practice, teachers would be in position to incorporate evaluation and assessment results into instructional objectives and activities. Teachers are expected to include assessment into the better learning design and scheme and may be to provide facts regarding how assessment data is used to inform and show teaching or pedagogy for individual students.

Lewis (1997) has stated that, during continuous class assessment, teachers have to place their instructions and score the assessments result and critique standards for good quality students' work with same age group and parents. In assessment for learning, the teacher will meet widespread, continuous information about a child's development and achievement through monitoring his/her performance in an appointment with the day-to-day learning activities in the classroom. Similarly, another important step in the process of continuous classroom assessment is recording the important activities of students.

Because it is useful for the teacher to use this record for ongoing event and also for future improvement not only for the students view but also the teacher can use it and record for his own feedback. Continuous assessment is also called a Cumulative Record as it involves keeping of precise records of all evaluation and measurement taken on the learner in a given school academic year. These assessment records are used to give a true and complete picture of the child at any time (National Research Council, 2002).

Ohuche (1998) has described continuous assessment as: continuous assessment is a new mode of assessment which will involve the teacher with objectivity and purposely in the assessment of their students and also generate a chance for the teacher to be more inventive, more creative and investigative in his teaching-learning process. Continuous assessment is a comprehensive process as it will review all features of learning in all the students' learning outcomes such as cognitive, affective and psychomotor using all possible techniques and procedures.

James (2003) stated the following as the guiding principles for conducting continuous Assessment,

- Ensure that assessment procedures promote and reward desired learning activities and outcomes.
- Communicate assessment requirements clearly to the students.
- Strive for providing effective feedback and comments to students on a continuous basis.

Practices of Continuous Classroom Assessment

Assessment practices involving students have salient contributions for effective practice of curriculum. For improving classroom practice with respect to assessment, Black and William (2004) have suggested the following,

- Students may be guided and facilitated to assessment work towards achieving their objectives as they started. Then they will be positioned to show their own work and become independent learners and work at their own pace.
- The criteria or rules for assessing any learning achievement must be made specific, clear and transparent to students.

According to Rueda & Garcia, (1994), "assessment is a long-term observing process that provides a suggestion of student capabilities on various types of authentic and well directed activities and is used to guide instruction and techniques used by a teacher".

Rubric as an assessment tool

A rubric is a valid and most consistent assessment tool that is used to determine the students' work. Rubric is a scoring guide that is used to evaluate a student's progress or achievement based on a full range of criteria rather than a single arithmetical or numerical attainment. A rubric is also a working channel for both students and teachers. Usually the assignments and tasks are given in order to get students to think about the process and criteria on which their work will be judged and assessed.

Teachers have always assessed student progress through traditional Methods, Teachers play an important role in improving learning by developing different achievement tests or by asking questions during their lecture. The teaching process of 21st century should be new and changed in order to support teaching-learning process.

Now a days there are some Interventional Methods that make assessment processes more interesting and creative that are experienced in a teaching process, teacher grading tests or teacher administered tests. Both play a vital role in students' assessment processes and procedures. This involves students in the formation and implementation of assessment criteria to judge themselves as well as to observe their own learning style. This leads to the successful shifting of teachers' point of teaching to their students. One of the authentic rubric methods involve, to give an opportunity to the students to participate in the development of a rational criteria of assessment and evaluation. This accelerates the momentum of learning process (Nunes, 2004).

There are many tools that are used in classroom, both for students and teachers observation. Rubric is one of the assessment tools to judge the students' knowledge and teaching skills as a strategy and it allows a teacher to measure the students' latent knowledge and skills which a teacher cannot assess directly. Rubric is also a set of standards that is consistent by probable and explains

degree of superiority. According to (Andrade. L. Ying, & Xiao lei, 2008; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), one of the major benefits of rubric methods is that it can be used both as an effective assessment and teaching tool. Rubrics are scoring guides that make a principal self-sufficient in assessment process besides providing fair and authentic results of their students. In fact, these outcomes are developed according to the objectives of the study and show specificity and reality and provide more evidences based results. Rubrics make the learning objective clear and more specific. If students know what the learning objectives are, they are in a better position to achieve it (Stiggins, 2001).

Single Class Teacher

In a primary school, especially in Pakistan context, mostly there is concept of single class teacher. Throughout the year teacher not only teaches all subjects but will be also engaged in many other out-class activities. A teacher works with one single class for throughout the year and the teacher is responsible for teaching all subjects. The teacher plans, develops and delivers lessons in his class, sets and marks assignments, works as a team-member within the school staff, communicates with parents and other relevant individuals such as educational experts, specially psychologists.

Subject Class teacher

On the other hand, subject teacher play an important role not only in developing the students' knowledge but also in creating a conducive environment in the classroom. Teachers' subject matter, knowledge may also be affected by the behavior and opportunities that their students bring to the classroom (Cohen, in press; Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985). At primary level, there is important opportunity is to get teachers to think at their own place, to enhance their subject knowledge and accept a precise approach in their teaching (Dhankar, 2003).

Objectives of the Study

Following were the objectives of the study:

- To compare the performance of a single class teacher and subject class teacher during continuous classroom assessment.

- To observe the teachers' performance during continuous classroom assessment by using rubric.

Significance of the Study

Study will be beneficial for teacher in the planning and designing of classroom assessment. The study will be useful for the test items developers. The results of the study will also be helpful for policy makers, district administrators to arrange the assessment trainings and should be based on new concepts and approaches of assessment so that primary teacher can utilize all those approaches in their classrooms to get better results. The results of the study will be useful for subject teachers to analyze their own method of assessment and teaching. The study will also be beneficial for assessing the students' achievement in different subjects.

Methodology and Procedure of the Study

Research was carried out in two public primary schools of Haripur district, KPK, Pakistan. One school was selected where a single teacher was teaching all subjects to 4th class and other school where four teachers were teaching the subjects of English, General Science, Urdu and Mathematics to 4th class. Both schools were selected on voluntary basis. Schools contained 78 students in 4th class. All these students were selected as the sample of the study. For continuous classroom assessment, test-items were developed in the subject of English, General Science, Urdu and mathematics. Items were selected from curriculum 2006 in light of Students Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These items were prepared to find out the students' achievement in the subjects of English, General Science, Urdu and Mathematics and to observe how effectively the teachers administrated these items in their classrooms.

A rubric was developed to observe the continuous classroom assessment activities in the classroom. Rubric was developed in light of teacher instructions, writing test items on the writing board, students' facilitation, and use of instructional resources, time management and record of students' 10 responses. On the basis of rubric assessment, teacher performance was ranked as very good, good and fair. Before the administration of test items in the classroom, a brief orientation session was held with the concerned teacher about the procedure of classroom assessment.

Researcher was present in the classroom to observe the teacher's performance. Rubric (Appendix-A) was used as the assessment tool as shown in Appendix A. All the data was collected with the help of rubric. Data was analyzed and presented in different tables.

Results

Table 1 indicates the test administered results of single class teacher in the subject of English (45 %), General Science (65 %), Urdu (75 %) and in Mathematics (52.5%). As a whole the test result was (59.37 %). 75% percent of students passed in Urdu which is the highest number and 45% were passed in English, which is the lowest result among the subjects being taught at 4th class level, and overall class results are 59.37%. It is concluded from Table 1 that single teachers are not enough competent to teach all the subjects in a better way and produce good results.

Table 2 indicates the test administered results of subject class teachers in the subjects of English (89.47 %), General Science (84.21 %), Urdu (94.73 %) and Mathematics (92.10 %). As a whole, the performance of test was (90.13 %). Highest result is in Urdu, which is 94.73% and lowest results are in the subject of General science which is 84.21% and overall class results is 90.13%, which showed that subject wise class teachers are competent to produce good overall results as well as students got more marks in each subject of 4th class.

Table 3 shows a Rubric assessment of single class teacher and subject class teacher. Table 3 clearly shows areas such as teacher's instructions during test item administration,

Class	Subject	Total Number of Students	Correct responses	Subject wise Pass (%)	Overall Pass (%)
4 th	English	40	18	45	59.37
	General Science	40	26	65	
	Urdu	40	30	75	
	Mathematics	40	21	52.5	

Table 1. Results of Single Class Teacher

Class	Subject	Total Number of Students	Correct responses	Subject wise Pass (%)	Overall Pass (%)
4 th	English	38	34	89.47	90.13
	General Science	38	32	84.21	
	Urdu	38	36	94.73	
	Mathematics	38	35	92.10	

Table 2. Results of Subject Class Teachers

writing test item on writing board, time management, class room environment and student record keeping. The performance of single class teacher who teaches all subjects to 4th class was ranked as fair and subjectwise teacher performance in the area of writing test items on writing board, time management and students' record keeping was ranked as very good and in the area of teacher instructions and environment/ use of instructional resources it was ranked as good.

Conclusions and Discussion

It was concluded that from Table 1, the results of 4th grade students where single class teacher was appointed to teach English, General science, Urdu and Mathematics were respectively (45%), (65%), (75%) and 52.5%). Over all test result was (59.37%). On the whole, it was concluded that single class teacher students achievement was almost average. The test results from Table 2 of 4th grade students where four subjects teachers were appointed to teach English, General Science, Urdu and Mathematics were respectively (89.47%), (84.21%), (94.13%) and (92.10%). Overall test result was (90.13%). It was concluded that subject teacher student's achievement was better as compared to single class teacher. Class of single class teacher was observed by using rubric as an assessment tool. It was concluded that, performance of single class teacher in the area of student's instructions, writing test items on writing board, time management, classroom environment, using instructional resources during assessment and how to keep students record was ranked as fair. Similarly the class of subject class teacher was observed by using rubric as an assessment tool. It was concluded that performance of subject class teacher in the area of student's instructions and classroom environment/ using instructional resources during

assessment was ranked as good and in the area of writing test items on writing board, time management and how to keep students record was ranked as very good. Conclusions and findings of some other research studies also support rubric as assessment tool. Andrade, (H. L. et al 2008, Lee & Lee, 2009 & National Research Council, 2002) concluded that rubric facilitates the whole teaching till it ends, through ongoing assistance in developing communication skills and expected focused on a continuing process of feedback. Rubric increase and develops involvement levels and motivates some students who are disabled to learn in a productive classroom learning process. (Lee & Lee, 2009).

Recommendations

On the basis of conclusions drawn from findings of the study, following recommendations are made. It was recommended that at primary level, there is need of subject wise teacher to teach students more effectively. There is need of training for primary teachers to understand the concept of continuous classroom assessment. It is recommended that, primary teachers should be familiar with the new term e.g. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) used in curriculum 2006.

Primary teachers may be trained to develop and use the new assessment tool i.e. rubric in their classroom. The professional skills of single as well as subject primary teachers should be improved in the area of student's instructions, writing test items on writing board, time management, use of instructional material and how to keep students record during continuous classroom assessment. Therefore, it is also recommended that further research can be conducted by increasing the sample of the study with other districts of the country.

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Area	Single class teacher	Subject class teacher
Teacher Instructions	Fair	Good
Writing test items on writing board	Fair	Very Good
Time Management	Fair	Very Good
Environment/Use of instructional resources	Fair	Good
Record of students' responses	Fair	Very Good

Table 3. Rubric results of classroom assessment of Single class teacher and subject class teacher

Appendix A

Rubric for Continuous Classroom Assessment

Name of Teacher: _____ Name of School: _____
 Subject: _____ Date of Evaluation: _____ Name of Evaluator: _____

S.NO	Area	Very Good	Good	Fair
1.	Writing test items on writing board	Teacher perfectly written test item/items on the writing board, all students were clear about the test items written on writing board	Teacher written test item/items on the writing board and mostly students were clear about the test items written on writing board	Teacher did not perfectly write test item/items on the writing board and mostly students were not clear about the test items written on writing board
2.	Teacher instructions	Teacher perfectly discussed about test items and their implementation at classroom level with students and all students were clear about the test items	Teacher discussed about test items and their implementation at classroom level with students and mostly students were clear about the test items	Teacher did not perfectly discuss about test items and their implementation at classroom level with students and mostly students were not clear about the test items
3	Time Management	Class teacher started his assessment on time, easily managed all the students and, marked all students test responses on time.	Class teacher on time started his assessment easily managed few students and marked their test responses	Class teacher did not start his assessment on time and not easily manage all students and also not marked all students' test responses
4.	Environment/ Use of instructional resources	There was very good environment and there was good management and all facilities and resources related to assessment were available and were perfectly used	There was good environment and there was suitable management. Some facilities and resources related to assessment were available and were used	There was no environment which reflect assessment and there was no suitable management and some facilities and resources were also missing and few were not perfectly used
5..	Record of students' responses	Class teacher perfectly recorded all students responses in his record sheet	Class teacher recorded most of the students' responses in his record sheet	Class teacher did not record all students' responses in his record sheet

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