



ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN CONSTRUCTIVE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

The traditional classroom teaching which is apparently common in our schools has been bookish in nature and centred around the walls of classrooms. Traditional teaching and learning is based on "transition" of knowledge from teacher to Learners. But recent trends has changed the present scenario which adopted the Constructivist approach that focuses more on innovative activities and knowledge acquisition as constructivism is more feasible in terms of Learning as they get opportunity to engage themselves in more creative and innovative practices. In this approach learner construct their own knowledge on the basis of physical environment and their personal experiences. Students participate in exploring, explaining and expanding. The constructivist teacher acts as a facilitator who creates suitable classroom environment that help the students in problem solving and inquiry based learning where students generate their own ideas, draw conclusions and inferences. Constructivism transforms student from a passive learner to an active learner where they construct their own knowledge rather than just receiving it mechanically so it is really need to transform our traditional system of Evaluation and assessment to cope with such type of innovative class rooms. This paper discuss the assessment techniques useful for constructivist classes

Key work: *Constructivist Approach, Assessment and Evaluation, Self Assessment*



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1.0. CONSTRUCTIVIST APPRAOCH

Constructivism is an approach of learning founded on the grounds that, by thinking and reflecting on the problems around us, we construct our understanding of the world. We generate our own ideas, which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental practices to accommodate new experience. Constructivism involves the process of questioning, exploring and reflecting. This theory says that learners should construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through varied experiences. By reflecting on these experiences, students assimilate useful information and create personal knowledge. Following are the aim of constructivist approach

- To provide experience with the knowledge construction process.

- Provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives.
- Embed learning in realistic and relevant context
- Encourage the use of multiple modes of representation.

2.0. ASSESSMENT IN CONSTRUCTIVIST CLASSROOMS

There are lot of deliberations and discussions on how to assess learner's achievement in constructivist classrooms. Many of stakeholders have an opinion that it is found difficult some times for a teacher to assess a class of fifty students while applying constructivist approach in their teaching as involvement and input of teacher is more than that of tradition classes , while we are having an issue of time and the completion of course more influencing . Teacher has to maintain record of continuous assessment in the form of reflective journals, diaries and portfolios in order to assess such classrooms, which facilitate in understanding child's progress. A teacher can also use peer evaluation, group evaluation, as well as self-assessment as a means of assessment as it involves the participation of students in assessment.

The usual procedures of conducting test and examinations followed by assigning marks or grade fulfils and attains only lower level of cognitive objective in the learners. The teacher practice and make effort to measure cognitive abilities but how to assess affective and psychomotor domain that include values and skills are still another issue that has to be addressed . In order to assess affective and psychomotor domain there should be a different procedure that include day to day observation of the learner's behavior, reflections, attitudes and skills, merely not just writing exams or tests. Hence, assessment should be made qualitatively to assess ones values of truthfulness, punctuality, honesty, love and respect others, protecting environment etc. Even the skill can be observed in schools through the performance in arts, sports etc. Even the participation in co-curricular areas which can be exhibited in ones portfolios can be used as a qualitative mode of assessment. The qualitative assessment can be considered as a formative assessment as the assessment is done at the time of formation of learning. It is the process that should be included in Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation.

3.0 DOMAINS OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment includes processes of:

- Identifying what the students know and don't know
- Gathering and analyzing specific information for evaluating learning
- Finding and describing conditions that exist at a particular time

- Determining progress learners have made for getting preset objectives.

The objective of the assessment is to improve learner's performance and not merely to audit it. Assessment practices in constructivist classes must be learner centered and focused on their achievement in respect to the goals of a course. Assessment plays a central role in the instructional process for assessing what is achieved and what is remain to achievement. Following mentioned are the four Assessment Paradigms.

(1) ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

The 'assessment *of* learning' is defined as a process whereby someone attempts to describe and quantify the knowledge, attitudes or skills possessed by another. Teacher direction is paramount and the student has little involvement in the design or implementation of the assessment process in these circumstances. In this teacher designs learning and set objectives ,Teacher collects evidence as what is achieved and Teacher judges what has been learnt and what is still needed to learn.

(2) ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

The 'assessment *for* learning' involves increased level of student autonomy, but not without teacher guidance and collaboration. The assessment *for* learning is sometimes seen as being akin to 'formative assessment'. There is more emphasis towards giving useful advice to the student and less emphasis on the giving of marks and the grading function. In this ;Teacher designs learning; Teacher designs assessment with feedback to student; Teacher judges what has been learnt .

(3) ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING

The 'assessment *as* learning' is perhaps more connected with diagnostic assessment and can be constructed with more of an emphasis on peer learning. Assessment *as* learning generates opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment. Students take on increased responsibility to generate quality information about their learning and that of others. In this approach; Teacher and student co-construct learning, co-construct assessment and co-construct learning progress map. Assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning activities must be deeply embedded in teaching and learning and be the source of interactive feedback, allowing students to adjust, re-think and re-learn.

(4) ASSESSMENT IN LEARNING

The 'assessment *in* learning' places the question at the centre of teaching and learning. It reflects the teaching from its focus on a 'correct answer' to a focus on 'a fertile question'. Through enquiry students engage in processes that generates feedback about their learning, which come from multiple sources and activities. It contributes to the construction of other

learning activities, line of enquiry and the generation of other questions. in this approach ; Learners act as the center of learning; they monitors, assesses and reflects on learning, Learners initiates demonstration of learning (to self and others) and Teacher play role as coach and mentor

Teachers and Learners need to understand the purpose of each assessment strategy. The overall assessment 'package' being used by learners and teachers should accurately capture, generate and use meaningful learning information to generate deep learning and understanding.

4.0. DISTINCTION BETWEEN EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

In the field of education, there is some degree of disagreement in the distinctions often made between the terms 'evaluation' and 'assessment'. Some practitioners would consider these terms to be interchangeable, while others contend that evaluation is broader than assessment and involve making judgments. When such a distinction is made, 'assessment' is said to primarily involve characterizations- objective descriptions, while 'evaluation' is said to involve characterizations and appraisals- determination of merit and/or worth.

5.0. TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Traditional assessment is value free and neutral and focuses on assessing "surface learning" which includes rote memorization, recitation of facts and extrinsic motivation. Its relationship to learning is hierarchical, whereas Alternative Assessment is collaborative. It is based on the assumption that the student is an active learner and consistent with constructivist practitioners, students are partners with teachers in making judgments about their own learning. Alternative Assessment encourages students to engage continuously and foster a deep approach to learning. Key elements of self assessment are reflection, feedback and integration of learning and assessment. This alternative assessment has many forms, including self, peer and co-assessment; observation, portfolios and project or product assessments (McDowell, 1997; Anderson, 1998).

6.0. CONTINUOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) is an evaluation system under which all areas of student's development (scholastic and co- scholastic) are evaluated. According to CCE, students are evaluated at every phases of learning such as, the beginning of teaching, during the teaching process, at the end of each unit or step, and at the end of every session. It aims at the all-round development of student's personality which is evaluated in the areas of curricular and co-curricular aspects. It also expects every teacher to assess their students on a continuous basis in a cyclic manner Hence, studying the teacher's perspective towards CCE

is very important. Teachers have to assess their students objectively in a formative manner which also helps in resolving the learning difficulties faced by students through remedial teaching. Teachers are supposed to integrate assessment in daily classroom activities, by balancing scholastic areas with co-scholastic ones

7.0. SELF ASSESSMENT

Self Assessment is one form of Alternative Assessment that allows students to make judgments on their own learning as well as reflect upon that. Self Assessment can be defined as “The involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and students.” For Boud, Self assessment involves two clear stages: The identification of standards and criteria and making of one’s own judgments against these criteria.

This two-part process necessarily involves students reflecting on their own learning. Self Assessment is used as both a process as well as an activity. It is a practice in which to engage as well as a goal to which to aspire. It is important to make a distinction because Self Assessment is a goal of higher education which may be pursued through course design which does not involve Self Assessment exercises as such. Assessment plays an important and essential role in defining students’ attitudes towards their work, specifically, in their sense of ownership and control, their learning styles and strategies and their confidence and self esteem. All of these have impact on the quality of learning achieved. Many business courses in higher education now incorporate to varying degrees, continuous assessments. These are often carried out via tutorials, assignments and examinations. The purpose of implementing Self Assessment in the course is to increase awareness of Self Assessment as a tool for learning and reflection. Accuracy of Self Assessment can be studied in terms of quantum of deviation from teacher assessment and the direction of deviation from the teacher assessment i.e. Bias. Bias in Self Assessment is further divided into two types- positive Bias or Over Assessment and Negative Bias or Under Assessment. In case the estimated scores/grades are less than the expected scores/grades, the Bias is said to be Negative or Under Assessment. If the reverse is the case there is a Positive Bias or Over Assessment.

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