Teacher Competency Assessment in the Classroom: Current Issues

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Abstract
Teacher competency in classroom assessment has been listed as one of the important topics in educations. The assessment occurs within the process of teaching and learning and verifies student’s position with reference to educations variables of concern. Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify the issue with regard to teacher competency assessment in the classroom. In this study, the researcher uses literature review to identify the issues in teacher competency assessment. As a result, there are four main issues discovered by the researcher, firstly about training in the mastery assessment guideline, the second standard assessment, third is a list of lacking skills among teacher in assessment and lastly narrow down to lacking skill among Islamic teachers in assessment.

Keyword: Assessment, Competency, Teacher, Learning, Classroom, Education

1 Introduction
Teacher competency and classroom assessment play a vital role in teaching and learning process. According to Popham (2008) , “assessment in educations is a formal attempt to determine the student’s status with respect to educations variables of interest” p8. While Chatterji (2003) identify the meaning of educational assessment as “Whatever exists at all existed in some amount. To know it thoroughly involves knowing its quantity as well as its quality, Wiggins (1990) mentioned;

Authentic assessment, to me, is not meant to be the charged phrase, or jargon phrase that it has come to be for a lot of people. When we first started using it fifteen years ago, we merely meant to signify authentic work that big people actually do as opposed to fill-in-the-blanks, paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice, short-answer quiz, school-based assessment. So it's authentic in the sense [that] it's real. It's realistic. If you go into the work place, they don't give you a multiple-choice test to see if you're doing your job. They have some performance assessment, as they say in business. (Pg.1).

Competency mean “an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation” Spencer and Spencer (1993, pg. 104).

2 Literature Review
Historically, teacher assessment started since 1950 after the World War II, when there are many veterans enter college educations. Affect from this event, several changes occurred in the world of assessment, like what has been described by Huba & Freed (2000)

Many universities faced financial crisis, the population of students attending college became more diverse, and concerns were raised that college graduates did not have the
skills and abilities needed in the workplace. The value of higher education came into question by the public and politicians. As a result, in 1984 and 1985 four reports were issued addressing the need for college reform, access to quality undergraduate education, integrity in the College curriculum, involvement in Learning and to reclaim a legacy. (pg.1)

As a result from this report, a learner-cantered education was applied in the higher educational system. Besides that all the faculty, learners and educational institutions have to improve their standards. A few years later, performances program where attract the funder to invest their money in educational institutions. Therefore, in order to make sure the status of high quality of institutions retained, some regional accreditation agencies and member of Institutions conduct outcomes assessment.

Besides the above scenarios, there are also other things that emerged in the assessment field, for example in 1987, the National Centre for Montessori Education [NCME], has made afford to standardize the world teacher classroom assessment. The discussions included the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the National Education Association (NEA) whereby there are among the professional associations. There are three main points discussed in the meeting which are how classroom teachers use measurement and student assessments in the classroom, what experts have said teachers need to know about measurement and student assessment, and the status of training prospective teachers in student assessment Sanders and Vogel, (1993).

Most people assume that the main job of a teacher is to teach and only few people believe that teachers are not only responsible for teaching but he or she are responsible to teach and do the assessment part. It is impossible for a teacher go to classroom without doing any assessment. It is impossible for one teacher teaching and the others do the assessment. Analogically it’s like a high quality chef boiling soup and he just do the cooking part, while for the other people will do the taster part, the chef will never test the food. It is because according to the rules the main job of chef is cooking not testing. Based on this example it shows that teacher’s job is not only teaching but also to do assessment.

In addition, there are numerous of important assessment in educations can be describe, such are helping teacher to identify student understanding, select a suitable curriculum to meet students needs, create new classroom arrangements, and in directly help teachers choose suitable teaching adds for teaching and learning process. Furthermore, there are many people did not aware that assessment in class able to help teacher monitoring student development and report to student guidance about their improvement and teaching learning-progress, Morrison (2008). Even though we can view a lists of importance of assessment, but it seem not all teacher aware about it, like what has been report by Gareis (2006), suppressing few teachers have been formally trained in basic principles of assessment, and fewer still seems to apply their limited expertise in the classroom relative to other competencies. Therefore the purpose of this paper is review the literatures related to teacher competency in assessment and identify some issues emerging in this field.

In order for teachers to prepare themselves with the proficiencies to be good assessor, there are lists of guideline needed to be followed. Teachers should make the assessment as the main professional key, and take this as part of a blueprint in teaching and learning. Moreover, one of the way to get better assessment, student learning centre theory can be apply, whereby we will focus on their ability, practice classroom learning centre, develop student ability to improve and move forward. Besides that as a good assessor, teachers should always be aware of student’s achievement after
doing assessment and acknowledge students’ success and achievement, (Associations of Independent School of the ACT Incorporated [AIS ACT], 2012).

Besides the above characteristic, there are some guidelines that teacher can identify, as listed by (AIS ACT, 2012). Teachers must have a clear understanding about the aims of assessment which is to ameliorate and meliorate learning progress. There are various way to assess level of student thinking and collect sufficient evidence to make judgments about individual students’ learning, such as giving students tasks, do activities, pop quiz, play or educational games. During the progress of this activities, student will actively be involved and enjoying the educations environment. Such this atmosphere will provide various choices to student express their information’s, knowledge, understanding and abilities that indirectly help them to identify their learning aims.

Furthermore, regarding to the topic of good result in assessment, teacher must be given sufficient and enough times to do feedback. Referring on the above explanations its shows, all the guidelines where widely provide to be a good proficiency assessor. Knowledge and understanding about assessment skills is the fundamental bases for a teacher in assessment to address students’ abilities and to seek that depth in the work of their students. (NSW DET, 2003).

Moreover, there were famous topic highlighted in the field of assessment which are development of standardize among all the teacher. According to the Sanders and Vogel (1993) by establishing standards for teacher competence in student assessment can acknowledge the necessity in teaching and learning progress. Besides issues of standardize assessment, issues assessment training also should be empathized. Training for all staff to develop the competencies covered in the standards should be an integral part of pre-service preparation. Sanders and Vogel (1993) also this standard also intend to

A guide for teacher educators as they design and approve programs for teacher preparation „self-assessment guide for teachers in identifying their needs for professional development in student assessment a guide for workshop instructors as they design professional development experiences for in-service teachers, impetus for educational measurement specialists and teacher trainers to conceptualize student assessment and teacher training in student assessment more broadly than has been the case in the past”.(pg. 14)

Now moving on to the topic of skills among the teachers in assessment, there are some basis and fundamental skills highlighted by Sanders, and Vogel, (1993) regarding to this topic. They mention, teacher have to be skillful in selecting suitable method for assessment in teaching, not only selecting but also develop for future instructions decisions. Besides that teacher should be able to administer, score, and interpret the results and deliver the assessment results to those related with the educations. Furthermore, as assessors in school, teachers should update themselves with some unethical, illegal assessment in order to avoided something unnecessary act that violate the assessment practices.

As we all know that learning assessment knowledge is a compulsory for a teacher before go to the teaching field, however there are still numbers of them misunderstood about the concept of assessment, like what has been reported by the AIS ACT Associations of Independent School of the ACT Incorporated 2012 some teacher assume that the assessment will only happen when teachers do a summative test in the end of lessons. This is some of misunderstanding among teachers about the assessment, that prove teachers nowadays still lack of assessment skills knowledge.
Furthermore, in the previous studies, research has proven that many teachers nowadays lack of skill in measurement concepts particularly in relation to normative data and standardized tests. What they should know in terms of measurement concepts is another critical question. Sanders and Vogel, (1993). The above statement also being agreed by Farr and Griffin, (1973) when they list up some lacking skills among teacher which are teachers have only minimal coursework in measurement, what should be the content of a tests and measurements course is a vital question that pre-service and in-service educators must face. There are many teachers lack about measurement concepts knowledge particularly in relation to normative data and standardized tests. This result was found through an analysis to prove the hypothesis in their studies about the limitations of measurement and assessment information’s among teacher. So as solutions he wrote that it is necessary to educate and concern over the adequacy of teacher preparation in administering, scoring, and interpreting standardized tests for that part of the vital role that teachers seem to play in testing.

As we all know that learning assessment knowledge is a compulsory for a teacher before go to the teaching field, however there are still numbers of them misunderstood about the concept of assessment, like what has been reported by the AIS ACT Associations of Independent School of the ACT Incorporated (2012) some teacher assume that the assessment will only happen when teachers do a summative test in the end of lessons. This is some of misunderstanding among teachers about the assessment, that prove teachers nowadays still lack of assessment skills knowledge.

Pertaining to the issues of training, it seems that Taylor, (1997) have put issues of training and experiences as a demand. He said that value of measurement training and experiences are in the same important because of his research its shows that the nature of the subjects and grade levels are reflected from assessment practices they teach implies that measurement training programs should be tailored to suit the differential needs of teachers working in different content areas and grade levels.

Last but not least, Fleming, (1979) pent up some issues related to teacher competency in assessment, he stated that most of teacher lack of skill in procedures for measurement of writing so future improvement are needed. Besides that he also races up issues that need to be developed and empathize such are bilingual programs in the schools, develop naturalistic methodology and developing options in criterion referenced measurement for the classroom teacher.

3 Discussions

There are four main issues that will be discussed in this section first is the importance of training in mastery assessment guideline, the second about standard assessment, third is a list of lacking skills among teacher in assessment and lastly narrow down to lacking skill among Islamic teachers in assessment. First and problem face Islamic teachers in assessment. First and foremost, as described in the literature review section, we can identify, there were plenty lists of guideline for teacher in assessment emerge in books, article and web. Mainly the guideline where talk about teacher should clearly understand about purpose of assessment, know how to conduct an assessment and measure result in assessment after that. Based on the previous report on teacher competency in assessment, it seems that in order for a teacher get high quality in assessing their students, they should have a good knowledge, understanding about this topic in deep.

However, knowledge without guidance will lost, therefore its show that training also important for a teacher to guide them in practicing major of the assessment guidance (Taylor, 1997) .In order for a teacher being competence in assessment they should be trained, “practice makes perfect”, therefore no wonders if until now many teachers still unable to practice high quality in assessment because a lack of training like what has been explained by (Gareis, 2006), suppressing
few teachers have been formally trained in the basic principles of assessment. However training by
own does mean its sufficient for a teacher but practically done and apply in the real field also needed.
As a teacher after being trained they must apply and get the real experiences in order to make sure
validity and reliability knowledge that they acquired during the training.

Next topic, as being discussed, according to the Sanders and Vogel, (1993) by establishing
standards for teacher competence in student assessment we can acknowledge the necessity in teaching
and learning progress. It shows that, it’s important for educational systems provide a blueprint or
rubric assessment for all teachers to be followed in teaching, therefore they will be no issues that
teacher will play unethical or bias level of assessment from one school with others and indirectly
avoid double standards among teachers. The standard has become an important issued because it
involves the application of diverse values about what we deem important in education, it is part of a
larger educational process by which we clarify expectations about schooling, and make improvements
in education (Hunter, 2009).

Besides that, in order to make sure the development of assessment standards where are
accordance with society demands and we can make sure it will apply continuously, here whereby not
only school and educational administrations involve but interventions of The federal government,
state policy education leaders, professional associations and, especially, licensing entities need to step
up. In additions accordance to (Stiggy, 2012) There are four key ways to ensure a foundation of
assessment,

“We need first, to be totally up front and honest with the public and policy
makers about the current state of assessment literacy affairs; second continue
developing professional standards that demand competence in
assessment, third build certification processes that accurately reflect applications
of assessment in the classroom as a basis for determining preparedness to teach
and fourth, require pre-service teacher and school leader preparation and
assessment, ensuring in-service training where needed”. (Pg. 6)

Third, is an issue about lacking some skills in assessment among the teachers. Flamingo,
(1979) emphasized on skill in finding the instruments language assessment for the support of bilingual
programs in the schools. This skills need to be develop because research has shown that students in
bilingual education have substantially lower language proficiency than other single language learners,
Jepsen (2009). However this issue may not happen in school who applying one language of
instructions, this atmosphere seems widely happen in private school or international school.

Moreover, there is research examine that teachers are lacking skill in measurement, it has
been described that most of the having unclear understand about these concepts, particularly in
relation to normative data and event in standardized tests. This issue has become more critical when
comes to measurement concepts is another critical question, many still in the positions of thinking,
what they should know in terms this?. This issue seems to happen because Farr and Griffin, (1973) list
up some lacking skills happen among teacher because they have only minimal coursework in
measurement. Exemplify from the current situations in IIUM, education student must only take one
subject related to assessment, and this is not sufficient for a teachers in reality.

Last but not least, regarding to the issues of skills in assessment, the focus problems on the
Islamic subject teacher. As we all know the Quran and Sunnah is a primary sources for a Muslim,
both of this course were written in Arabic language. Therefore, we can understand that as Islamic

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education teachers they must have a proficiency in Arabic language in order to teach the Islamic subject. However studies have proven that, the majority of Islamic education teacher has a moderate level of proficiency in Arabic and lower level in mastery Arabic vocabulary (Muhammed, 2011). Besides lack of this skill, previous research also proves that, some of Islamic subject teacher having problems in practicing their professionalism attitude in teaching (Othman, 2009). According to (Othman, 2009) the weakness occurs due to lack of training and exposure in improving the quality and professional skills in the field of teaching and learning. As the impact towards this scenario, Islamic education teacher face the difficulty to apply a good assessment to their students.

4 Conclusions

Teacher competency in classroom assessment has been listed as one of important topics in educations. The assessment occurs within the process of teaching and learning able verifies student’s position with reverence to educations variables of concern”. Therefore have to be prepared and competence to do this job. However in order to achieve high competence of the teacher in assessment is not work of the teacher alone but also need a contribution from strong national, state and local educational leadership Stingy (2012);

At the local school district level, district and building administrators need to be able to build a balanced local assessment system to support and certify learning, continue to refine achievement standards, ensure local assessment accuracy, balance local communication systems to support and certify learning, and ensure a foundation of assessment literacy among local faculty and staff. Each of these lays a foundation from which teachers can be wonderful from a classroom-assessment point of view. If these district and building conditions are not satisfied, these teachers will have difficulty functioning effectively in the domain.(pg.44)

5 References


