Suggested Reference

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Purpose and practices of assessment under conditions of reform: Understand Indian secondary school teachers’ & leaders’ attitudes and beliefs
Research Consortium: The University of Auckland; IIT-Delhi; EduExcellence; & ACER-India
Funded by the New Zealand India Research Institute grant to Associate Professor Gavin Brown

Context

- Assessment and evaluation reforms were introduced in the 2005 National Curriculum Framework and have been progressively implemented in Indian schools but discussed since....?
  - Example: Continuous & Comprehensive Evaluation
- The purpose seems to have been to broaden curricular attention to a wider spectrum of valuable outcomes than simply performance on examinations of academic subjects
  - Discuss: Are there other goals for CCE?
Importance of Teacher Beliefs

- Teacher beliefs about the purposes of assessment partly influence the evaluative practices they implement and value
- School-based assessment requires teachers to participate actively in assessment
- Assessment has multiple and conflicting purposes
  - Assessment is used to evaluate students, teachers, and schools
  - Assessment is supposed to inform improvement in what teachers and students do
- Accountability consequences tend to elicit compliance rather than improvement

Previous Studies

A. New Zealand Primary

B. Hong Kong
Purpose of study

• To determine if there were differences in teachers’ self-reported attitudes towards and practices of assessment according to whether the assessments they were thinking of were low-stakes or high-stakes.
  
  • Discuss:
  
  *Are there any low-stakes assessments in Indian schools?*

Questionnaire Prompts

**Low-stakes**

- The term “assessment” used in the following statements refers to any act of collecting and interpreting evidence of student learning in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes **USE BY THE TEACHER WITHIN THE CLASSROOM.**

  *Discuss: are the assessment reforms (e.g., CCE) low-stakes or high-stakes?*

**High-stakes**

- The term “assessment” used in the following statements refers to any act of collecting and interpreting evidence of student learning in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes **BY EXTERNAL EXAMINATION AUTHORITIES OR BOARDS (e.g., CBSE).**
Methodology

- Face-to-face interview completion of a standardised questionnaire
  - 424 schools * 4 teachers
  - Wide-spread collection
  - Random assignment to ½ Low-stakes and ½ High-stakes
  - All Class 9 to 12
  - Part A: beliefs about the purposes of assessment
  - Part B: practices or uses of assessment
Analysis

- Using advanced causal-correlational statistical techniques
  - factor analysis
  - structural equation modeling
  - invariance testing
  - analysis of variance
- **Expectation:** Low-stakes prompt would elicit more improvement oriented beliefs and practices than High-stakes prompts

Purposes of Assessment Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement (8 items)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment feeds back to students their learning needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment is a way to determine how much students have learned from teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control (5 items)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment ensures teachers teach to the defined examination standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment controls the content of teachers’ classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irrelevant (7 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment results are filed &amp; ignored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers conduct assessments but make little use of the results</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Quality (6 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment is a good way to evaluate a school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment is an accurate indicator of a school’s quality</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Practices of Assessment Factors

**Diagnostic (5 items)**
- I use assessment to establish what students have learnt.
- I use assessment to determine how much students have learnt from teaching

**Teach for Examinations (12 items)**
- I always set tests and examinations with reference to public examinations
- I teach my students examination skills from time to time

**Ignore Exams (4 items)**
- The priority of my work is to complete the curriculum
- The priority of my work is to help students to pass their examinations.

**School Quality (5 items)**
- My school uses assessment results to determine if students meet standards.
- My school uses assessment results to show how well it is doing.

Beliefs Align with Practices

No statistically significant difference in paths and parameters between Low and High-stakes prompts
Mean Score Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Improve</th>
<th>Ignore</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>School Quality</th>
<th>Diagnose</th>
<th>School Quality</th>
<th>Teach 4 Exams</th>
<th>Ignore Exams</th>
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</table>

Comparison (High vs. Low)

- \( F = 17.275 \)
- \( p < .001 \)
- \( R^2_{(ADJ)} = 0.01 \)
- \( d = -0.20 \)

Only 4 scales have differences beyond chance, but these explain very little of the difference. Hence, Low- vs. High-stakes were considered the same.

Summary

- Low- and High-stakes prompts produced equivalent responding with little meaningful difference between conditions.
- However
  - Belief in an assessment purpose tended to positively predict a parallel use of assessment.
  - Improving student learning is achieved by teaching for exams is reasonably widely accepted.
  - Emphasis on Improvement rather than evaluative role of assessment should increase Diagnostic practices (i.e., changing teaching because of what we learned about students from the assessment).
Take home message?

**Formative**
- Teacher discovers 'bad' news
- Shares safely with colleagues & leaders to discover new solutions
- Lead instruction & learning
- Collegial relationships

**Assess**

**Teach**

**Change Teaching**

Why the same?

- Our prompt for Low and High-stakes conditions did not sufficiently trigger differences in opinions
- In practice there is no real difference in how low- (by the teacher within the classroom) and high-stakes (by external examination authorities or boards (e.g., CBSE) assessments are conducted in Indian schools
- Discussion: What does this mean to you?