

DIVULGING THE CLASSROOM EVALUATING PRACTICES THROUGH THE LENS OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological inquiry explored the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of teachers in implementing classroom assessment practices in Lupon West District. Division of Davao Oriental in exploring the experiences of the ten (10) participants, I employed the qualitative phenomenological study of which primary instrument of data gathering was through in depth interview. Results revealed that on the experiences of teachers in implementing classroom assessment practices. These themes were making decisions in the classroom, measuring learning outcomes of students, and gathering evidence in the classroom, Furthermore, based on their responses, the emergent themes were utilizing formative and summative assessments, intensifying performance-based assessments, and promoting integrative assessment. Finally, following a meticulous examination of the transcripts on the teachers' insights, these primary themes became evident promotion of varied assessments, engagement of teachers in professional development, and improvement of the intellectual and emotional aspects of students. Classroom assessments hold paramount importance as they serve multiple crucial educational functions. Firstly, assessments provide valuable feedback to both teachers and students, enabling instructors to gauge the effectiveness of their teaching methods and curriculum. This feedback loop allows for timely adjustments to instructional strategies, ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed. Assessments offer students a clear understanding of their progress and achievement, fostering accountability and motivation. They serve as tools for self-assessment, helping students identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Moreover, assessments are essential for monitoring and measuring learning outcomes, ensuring that educational standards are met and that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for future academic and professional success. Ultimately, the judicious use of classroom assessments empowers teachers and students alike, contributing to a dynamic and effective learning environment

Keywords: classroom assessment practices, elementary teachers, phenomenology. Davao Oriental

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Globally, the significance of classroom assessments in shaping educational outcomes has been widely recognized. Effective assessment practices are pivotal in enhancing student learning, providing valuable feedback to both teachers and students, and informing instructional strategies (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie, 2009). In the context of increasing educational demands and the rapid advancement of technology, there is an urgent need to ensure that classroom assessments are effective and aligned with educational goals (OECD, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the importance of adaptive assessment practices that can cater to diverse learning environments, whether in-person or remote (UNESCO, 2020).

Nationally, the Philippines faces significant challenges in its educational sector, including resource constraints, large class sizes, and disparities in educational quality between urban and rural areas (DepEd, 2015). The Department of Education (DepEd) has emphasized the need for teachers to develop and enhance their assessment skills to meet the diverse needs of students (DepEd, 2020). The K-12 educational reform aims to improve the quality of education by focusing on the development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and lifelong learning competencies among students (Al-Samarrai, 2016). However, the successful implementation of these reforms relies heavily on teachers' ability to conduct effective classroom assessments.

Locally, in the Lupon West District of Davao Oriental, these challenges are compounded by socio-economic factors and disparities in access to educational tools and training. Teachers in this district often face difficulties in implementing effective assessment practices due to limited resources and varying student needs. Many students come from underserved communities, where access to quality education and learning materials is limited (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997). Addressing these local challenges is crucial for improving educational outcomes and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

The urgency of this study is underscored by the growing recognition that teacher quality is the most significant in-school factor affecting student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). As educational demands and expectations continue to evolve, there is an immediate need to understand how teachers' experiences and insights influence their assessment

practices. By exploring the lived experiences of teachers in implementing classroom assessments, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of their struggles, coping mechanisms, and insights. The findings aim to inform policy and practice, contributing to the enhancement of assessment strategies that are responsive to the local context and educational needs.

This study also aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice, providing actionable recommendations that can help improve classroom assessment practices in the Lupon West District. Through a comprehensive exploration of teachers' experiences, this research seeks to highlight the importance of professional development, resource allocation, and support systems in fostering effective assessment practices. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to enhance educational quality and student engagement through effective teaching strategies, helping to bridge educational gaps and promote equity in learning opportunities (Fullan, 2001).

2. METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological research design, which is suitable for exploring the lived experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2013). The phenomenological approach focuses on understanding the essence of experiences from the participants' perspectives. Through in-depth interviews, this study aims to capture the detailed and nuanced experiences of teachers in implementing classroom assessment practices. This design allows for a rich, detailed exploration of the participants' perceptions, feelings, and insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Respondents of the Study

The study involved ten (10) elementary teachers from Lupon West District, Division of Davao Oriental. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that they had relevant experiences with classroom assessment practices. The criteria for selection included having at least three years of teaching experience and being actively involved in implementing classroom assessments. The diverse backgrounds and experiences of the participants contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The sample size, while small, is typical for phenomenological studies, allowing for an in-depth exploration of each participant's experiences.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument for data gathering was in-depth interviews. An interview guide with open-ended questions was developed to facilitate the exploration of teachers' experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights related to classroom assessments. The interview questions were designed to be flexible, allowing participants to share their experiences in their own words. This approach ensures that the data collected are rich and detailed, providing deep insights into the phenomenon under study.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in the Lupon West District, Division of Davao Oriental. This setting provided a relevant context for understanding the dynamics of classroom assessment practices within the local educational environment. The chosen environment allowed for the examination of how assessment practices are influenced by the specific challenges and opportunities present in the district. By situating the study in this specific context, the research aims to provide actionable recommendations for local educational stakeholders.

Ethical Consideration

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were maintained throughout the study. Ethical considerations were prioritized to ensure that the rights and well-being of the participants were protected. The study adhered to ethical guidelines to maintain the integrity of the research process and safeguard the interests of the respondents. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the measures taken to ensure data confidentiality.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted in a quiet and private setting to ensure the comfort and confidentiality of the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim for analysis. The data collection process was meticulously planned and executed to gather accurate and comprehensive information. The collected data were then carefully reviewed and organized for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method suitable for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis involved multiple steps: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This systematic approach ensured that the analysis was rigorous and comprehensive, capturing the key themes and patterns in the data. The findings were then interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions and provide actionable recommendations.

3. RESULTS

Experiences of Teachers in Implementing Classroom Assessment Practices

The thematic analysis revealed three primary themes regarding teachers' experiences in implementing classroom assessment practices: making decisions in the classroom, measuring learning outcomes of students, and gathering evidence in the classroom. Teachers described the complexity of making informed decisions about which assessment methods to use, considering the diverse needs of their students. They emphasized the importance of measuring learning outcomes accurately to understand student progress and identify areas needing improvement. Additionally, gathering evidence of student learning was highlighted as a critical component of the assessment process, requiring teachers to employ various strategies and tools to collect meaningful data. These experiences underscore the multifaceted nature of classroom assessments and the significant effort required from teachers to implement them effectively.

Coping Mechanisms in Implementing Classroom Assessment Practices

Based on their responses, three emergent themes were identified as coping mechanisms: utilizing formative and summative assessments, intensifying performance-based assessments, and promoting integrative assessment. Teachers reported using a mix of formative and summative assessments to continuously monitor student progress and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. They also emphasized the value of performance-based assessments in engaging students and providing a comprehensive evaluation of their skills and knowledge. Promoting integrative assessment practices, which combine various assessment methods, was seen as an effective way to address diverse learning needs and provide a holistic view of student performance. These coping mechanisms reflect teachers' adaptability and commitment to enhancing the effectiveness of their assessment practices.

Insights of Teachers on Classroom Assessment Practices

The analysis of teachers' insights revealed three primary themes: promotion of varied assessments, engagement of teachers in professional development, and improvement of the intellectual and emotional aspects of students. Teachers highlighted the need for varied assessment methods to cater to different learning styles and provide a more accurate picture of student achievement. They also stressed the importance of ongoing professional development to stay updated on best practices in assessment and improve their instructional strategies. Furthermore, teachers recognized the role of assessments in fostering both the intellectual and emotional growth of students, emphasizing the need to create supportive learning environments that encourage student well-being and academic success. These insights reflect teachers' dedication to continuous improvement and their holistic approach to education.

4. DISCUSSION

Importance of Classroom Assessment Practices- Classroom assessments hold paramount importance as they serve multiple crucial educational functions. Firstly, assessments provide valuable feedback to both teachers and students, enabling instructors to gauge the effectiveness of their teaching methods and curriculum. This feedback loop allows for timely adjustments to instructional strategies, ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed. Assessments offer students a clear understanding of their progress and achievement, fostering accountability and motivation. They serve as tools for self-assessment, helping students identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Moreover, assessments are essential for monitoring and measuring learning outcomes, ensuring that educational standards are met and that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for future academic and professional success. Ultimately, the judicious use of classroom assessments empowers teachers and students alike, contributing to a dynamic and effective learning environment.

Implications for Educational Management- The findings of this study have significant implications for educational management practices. Firstly, they highlight the need for educational leaders to support teachers in developing and implementing effective assessment practices. This can be achieved through targeted professional development programs that focus on best practices in assessment and provide opportunities for teachers to share their experiences and strategies. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of creating a supportive school culture that values continuous improvement and encourages teachers to experiment with innovative assessment methods. Educational leaders should also ensure that teachers have access to the necessary resources and tools to implement a variety of assessment practices

effectively. By prioritizing assessment literacy and supporting teachers in their efforts, educational leaders can enhance the overall quality of education and promote student success.

Recommendations for Future Research- Future research should explore other potential aspects of classroom assessments and their impact on student outcomes. For instance, studies could investigate the role of technology in enhancing assessment practices and the ways in which digital tools can support formative and summative assessments. Additionally, qualitative research could further examine the experiences and perspectives of students regarding assessment practices, providing a more comprehensive understanding of their impact on learning and motivation. Longitudinal studies could also offer valuable insights into the long-term effects of various assessment strategies on student achievement and development. By expanding the scope of research on classroom assessments, scholars and practitioners can continue to improve educational practices and outcomes.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings- This phenomenological inquiry revealed that teachers in the Lupon West District experience a range of challenges and employ various strategies in implementing classroom assessment practices. The study identified key themes related to their experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights, highlighting the complexity and importance of effective assessment practices. Teachers emphasized the need for varied assessments, ongoing professional development, and a focus on both intellectual and emotional aspects of student growth. These findings underscore the critical role of classroom assessments in supporting student learning and the need for continuous improvement in assessment practices.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that educational leaders prioritize professional development opportunities focused on assessment literacy and best practices in classroom assessments. Schools should create a supportive culture that encourages teachers to experiment with innovative assessment methods and share their experiences. Additionally, educational leaders should ensure that teachers have access to the necessary resources and tools to implement effective assessments. Future research should continue to explore the impact of assessment practices on student outcomes, including the role of technology and the perspectives of students. By addressing these recommendations, educational stakeholders can enhance the quality of education and promote student success.

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