

Impacts of Classroom Assessment in Professional Development in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Education reform includes professional development as a significant element in promoting change. Questions have been raised about the effectiveness of professional development and its role in educational reform. Consequently, evaluation of professional development programs is increasing and expanding to include student achievement. However the present study has conducted to identify the impacts of classroom assessment in professional development in Bangladesh, to evaluate the teaching learning activities practices in Bangladesh and to explore the assessment methods used in the classroom and type and nature of classroom feedback in Bangladesh. The study was survey and case study type. The study was conducted in Bangladesh. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from the respondents of the study areas. Secondary data were collected from books, research reports, journal, annual reports, website of Ministry of Education of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), internet etc. Students and teachers of different educational institutions were analysis units. Purposive sampling method was used for the study. Total 400 respondents were selected for the study. Respondents are teachers. Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used for data collection. Data were collected by face to face interview with the respondents. FGDs were also done with the respondents. Collected data were analyzed by using computer program Microsoft Excel. From the result it was found that teaching learning activity is the main part of a class. It is the task what teacher and student supposed to do in the class. Teachers facilitate the students in their learning process in this part. However, the overall didn't reflect on every statement in this part and there are some areas in teaching-learning activities where teachers rarely did the teaching learning activities. Assessment is not a separate rather than an integrated task in the classroom. Teachers mainly assess students throughout the class from the beginning till the end of the class. This result indicates that teachers did not done well in practicing classroom assessment activity and improvement is required. Generally, teachers provide feedback to the students on the basis of the classroom assessment results or different tasks assigned by the teachers. Feedback is mainly two types- descriptive and evaluative. In this study teachers were mainly focused on evaluative feedback. It indicates that teachers did very inappropriate in this part. Improvement is also required in classroom feedback. From the result it was found that 28% respondents replied that the teachers assessing learning outcomes which was maximum but only 8% respondents replied that teachers identify students' prior knowledge which was minimum. On the other hand 9% respondents replied that the teachers connect previous and new knowledge, 21% respondents replied that the teachers monitors students' learning, 23% respondents replied that the teachers provide feedback to students and 11% respondents replied that the teacher modify teaching. From the result it is evident that very few amounts of teachers are effective in assessing methods used in classroom. Improvement is needed in this section. From the result it was found that 33% respondents replied that the teachers are taking task-oriented classroom feedback which was maximum but only 13% respondents replied that the teachers are taking showed way to correct classroom feedback which was minimum. On the other hand 28% teachers are taking self-oriented classroom feedback and 26% teachers are taking indicated right or wrong classroom feedback. From the result it was found that 29% respondents replied that the teachers are using oral assessment method in the classroom which was maximum but only 8% respondents replied that the teachers are using group work assessment method in the classroom which was minimum. On the other hand 22% respondents replied that the teachers are using written assessment method in the classroom, 27% respondents replied that the teachers are using individual work assessment method in the classroom and 14% respondents replied that the teachers are using conversation assessment method in the classroom. From the result it was found that 26% respondents replied that the teachers are using short-answered questions in the classroom which was maximum but only 17% respondents replied that the teachers are using true or false test items used in the classroom which was minimum. On the other hand 18% respondents replied that the teachers are using MCQ test items used in the classroom, 19% respondents replied that the teachers are using completion test items used in the classroom and 20% respondents replied that the teachers are using matching test items used in the classroom.

Key words: Classroom assessment, Professional development, Practice, Feedback, Learning, Teaching learning activities, Teacher, Student, Task, Homework, Teaching method

INTRODUCTION

Professional developers also are looking more closely at research on professional development. Research on professional development has focused mostly on its shortcomings and, in some cases, proposed

solutions. Because of the variability between different educators' situations, it is difficult to know exactly what makes an effective professional development program. However, there are some guidelines. Change is both an individual and an organizational process. In planning and implementation, it is important to work for incremental change. Working in teams maintains support for change. It is necessary to include procedures for feedback on results. Continued followup, support, and pressure are necessary in professional development. Innovations presented in professional development must be integrated into existing educational frameworks. While professional development can be complex and difficult to measure in student achievement, it is possible to tailor programs to specific contexts.

Classroom assessment is a part of good teaching. Classroom assessment is defined as any planned method or strategy used in the classroom to establish the level of students' difficulties or understanding of a particular concept or idea with the purpose of helping students to succeed in learning (Ainscow, 1988). Susuwele-Banda (2005) mentioned that classroom assessment helps teachers to confirm what students already know and what they need to learn. Classroom assessment is an important part of science teaching and learning. Most assessment of science learning are carried out by teachers of science in classrooms, it is the teacher who is responsible for either initiating or implementing changes in assessment in the classroom and it is teacher who has to ultimately judge the educational worth, significance, and use of different assessment practice (Bell, 2002).

There are two types of assessment in general, formative assessment and summative assessment (Ahsan, 2009). Wiliam (2010) stated that formative and summative are two broad types' purposes of classroom assessment. When assessment is used for a formative purpose it focuses on enhancing instruction and improving learning whereas summing up learning achievements is the focus of a summative purpose. Stiggins (1991) stated that teachers use assessment in their classrooms to serve at least three different categories of purposes: (a) as a means of informing decisions (e.g., they diagnose students' needs, select students for special services, group students for instruction, and assign grades); (b) as teaching tools (e.g., to communicate achievement expectations to students, to provide practice for students, to involve students in self and peer evaluation to help them become better performers); and (c) as a classroom management or behavior control mechanism to keep students in line.

When classroom assessment is frequent and varied, teachers can learn a great deal about their students. Earl and Katz (2006) suggested that teachers can gain an understanding of students' existing beliefs and knowledge, and can identify incomplete understandings, false beliefs, and naive interpretations of concepts that may influence or distort learning. Teachers can observe and probe students' thinking over time, and can identify links between prior knowledge and new learning. Chappuis and Stiggins (2002) stated that teachers need to engage students in the process of classroom assessment and focused on enhancing learning for encouraging them to learning instead of only measuring their achievement. Brown (2004) also suggested that importance should be given on why assess along with what and how assess. The ways teachers assess students can really make a difference to how students learn. Classroom assessment's main application is to facilitate learning which can be described as assessment for learning. Assessment for learning occurs throughout the learning process. Earl and Katz (2006) stated that assessment for learning is designed to make each student's understanding visible, so that teachers can decide what they can do to help students progress. In assessment for learning, teachers use assessment as an investigative tool to find out as much as they can about what their students know and can do, and what confusions, preconceptions, or gaps they might have. So, teachers use variety of strategies to assess students in the science classroom which includes observation, questioning, exercises, projects and investigation, library and web-based research assignment, and portfolios (Hackling, 2004).

The wide variety of information that teachers collect about their students' learning processes provides the basis for determining what they need to do next to move student learning forward. So, Chappuis and Stiggins (2002) suggested that assessment for learning means more than just assessing students often, more than just providing the teacher with assessment results to change revise instruction. In assessment for learning, both teacher and student use classroom assessment information to modify teaching and learning activities. There is lots of evidence that there is lack in practice of classroom assessment in secondary level of Bangladesh. Most of the teachers are reluctant in assessing students properly. They mainly highlight on students' performance in the examination rather than emphasizing on students

learning. Teachers are not oriented with effective classroom assessment strategies and for this reason students are focused on result rather than learning.

Ahsan (2009) found that our assessment culture promotes assessment of learning and inhibits assessment for learning. Black and Wiliam (1998) mention it as "a poverty of practice" (p.2). Therefore, it is important to examine how teachers practice classroom assessment using different strategies and tools in science classes. As classroom assessment enhance students learning, the study will find out to what extent the current classroom assessment practices are useful for students learning.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the impacts of classroom assessment in professional development in Bangladesh,
2. To evaluate the teaching learning activities practices in Bangladesh and
3. To explore the assessment methods used in the classroom and type and nature of classroom feedback in Bangladesh.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Design of the study: The study was survey and case study type.

Area of the study: The study was conducted in Bangladesh.

Sources of data: Data were collected from primary and secondary sources.

Sources of primary data: Primary data were collected from the respondents of the study areas.

Sources of data: Secondary data were collected from books, research reports, journal, annual reports, website of Ministry of Education of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics(BANBEIS), internet etc.

Analysis unit: Students and teachers of different educational institutions.

Sampling method: Purposive sampling method was used for the study.

Sample size: Total 400 respondents was selected for the study. Respondents are teachers.

Tools for data collection: Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used for data collection.

Method of data collection: Data were collected by face to face interview with the respondents. FGDs were also done with the respondents.

Analysis of data: Collected data were analyzed by using computer program Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Survey has been conducted in the field level. In this chapter, field results have been discussed.

Teaching-Learning Activities

Teaching learning activity is the main part of a class. It is the task what teacher and student supposed to do in the class. Teachers facilitate the students in their learning process in this part. However, the overall didn't reflect on every statement in this part and there are some areas in teaching-learning activities where teachers rarely did the teaching learning activities.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of Teaching-learning activities used in the classroom (N=400)

Opinion	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
Teacher explained learning objectives to the students	105	98	17	109	71
Teacher discussed the topic according to the learning objectives	104	99	14	110	73
Teacher explored prior knowledge of students	97	59	15	189	40
Teacher connected students' prior knowledge with new knowledge	96	56	15	179	54
Teacher explored students' misconception / alternate conceptions of students	82	75	16	167	60
Teacher used multiple teaching methods in	62	76	14	178	70

teaching learning activities					
Teacher provided opportunity to share students' idea about the topics	73	82	12	154	79
Teacher used teaching aids in the class	104	111	14	85	86

Source: Field survey, 2019

Classroom Assessment Practices

Assessment is not a separate rather than an integrated task in the classroom. Teachers mainly assess students throughout the class from the beginning till the end of the class. This result indicates that teachers did not done well in practicing classroom assessment activity and improvement is required.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of classroom assessment practices (N=400)

Opinion	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
Teacher encouraged students to ask questions	65	69	10	150	106
Teacher asked open questions to the students	150	129	5	81	35
Teacher asked closed questions to the students	142	127	6	91	34
Teacher gave equal opportunities to all students to answer the questions	152	132	7	71	28
Teacher provided students sufficient time to answer questions	148	140	8	61	43
Teacher used self-assessment technique to assess students	151	120	10	80	39
Teacher used peer assessment technique to assess students	147	139	10	60	44
Teacher assessed students through problem solving or investigation work	146	132	9	65	48
Teacher kept active all the students in assessment	145	131	11	62	51
Teacher assessed students orally	154	142	7	71	26
Teacher assessed students written (class work)	132	110	6	100	52
Teacher assessed students' knowledge through individual work	19	81	8	125	167
Teacher assessed students' knowledge through group work	75	87	5	114	119
Teacher assessed students' lower order learning (Knowledge, understanding, application)	71	49	10	140	130
Teacher assessed students' higher order learning (Evaluation, analysis, synthesis)	62	57	12	150	119

Source: Field survey, 2019

Classroom Feedback

Generally, teachers provide feedback to the students on the basis of the classroom assessment results or different tasks assigned by the teachers. Feedback is mainly two types- descriptive and evaluative. In this study teachers were mainly focused on evaluative feedback. It indicates that teachers did very inappropriate in this part. Improvement is also required in classroom feedback.

Table 3: Feedback provided by the teachers during classroom assessment (N=400)

Opinion	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
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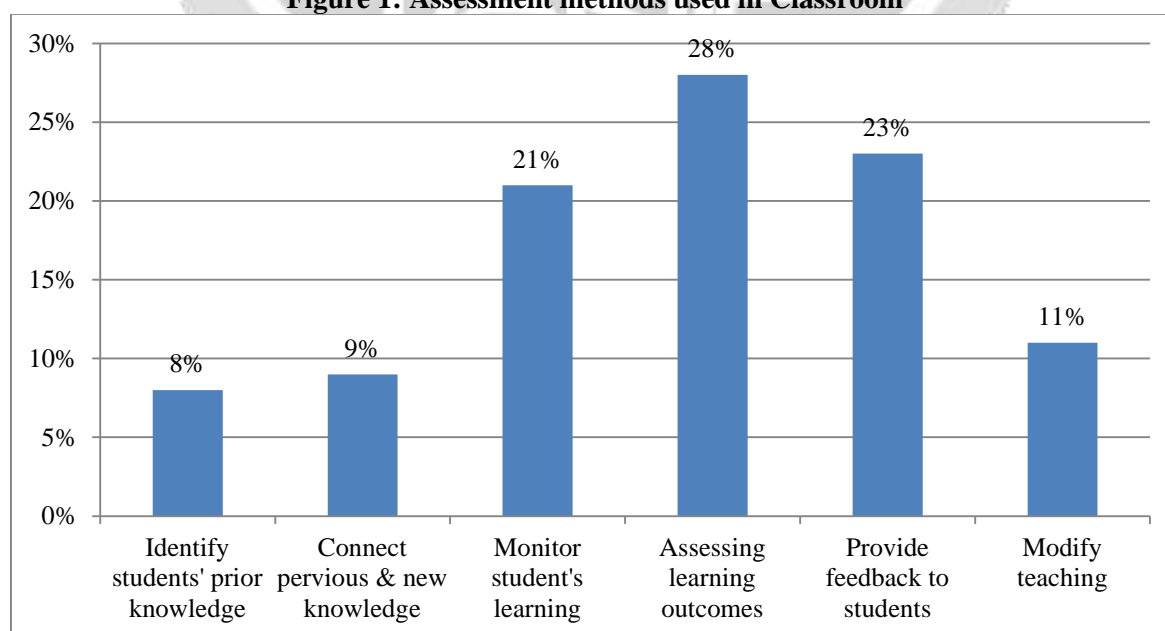
Teacher provided correct answer instead provoking/punishing students in their failure	95	100	10	101	94
Teacher provided oral descriptive feedback	151	143	11	70	25
Teacher provided oral positive evaluative feedback	150	144	7	75	24
Teacher provided oral negative evaluative feedback	54	51	4	166	125
Teacher provided written descriptive feedback	161	143	5	39	52
Teacher provided written evaluative feedback	163	139	6	39	53
Teacher provided feedback during teaching learning activity	157	152	3	39	49
Teacher provided feedback after teaching learning activity	122	126	10	87	55
Teacher provided feedback individually	57	52	4	120	167
Teacher provided feedback to whole group	121	120	8	87	64

Source: Field survey, 2019

Assessment methods used in Classroom

Assessment methods used in classroom has shown in the figure 1. From the result it was found that 28% respondents replied that the teachers assessing learning outcomes which was maximum but only 8% respondents replied that teachers identify students' prior knowledge which was minimum. On the other hand 9% respondents replied that the teachers connect previous and new knowledge, 21% respondents replied that the teachers monitors students' learning, 23% respondents replied that the teachers provide feedback to students and 11% respondents replied that the teacher modify teaching. From the result it is evident that very few amounts of teachers are effective in assessing methods used in classroom. Improvement is needed in this section.

Figure 1: Assessment methods used in Classroom

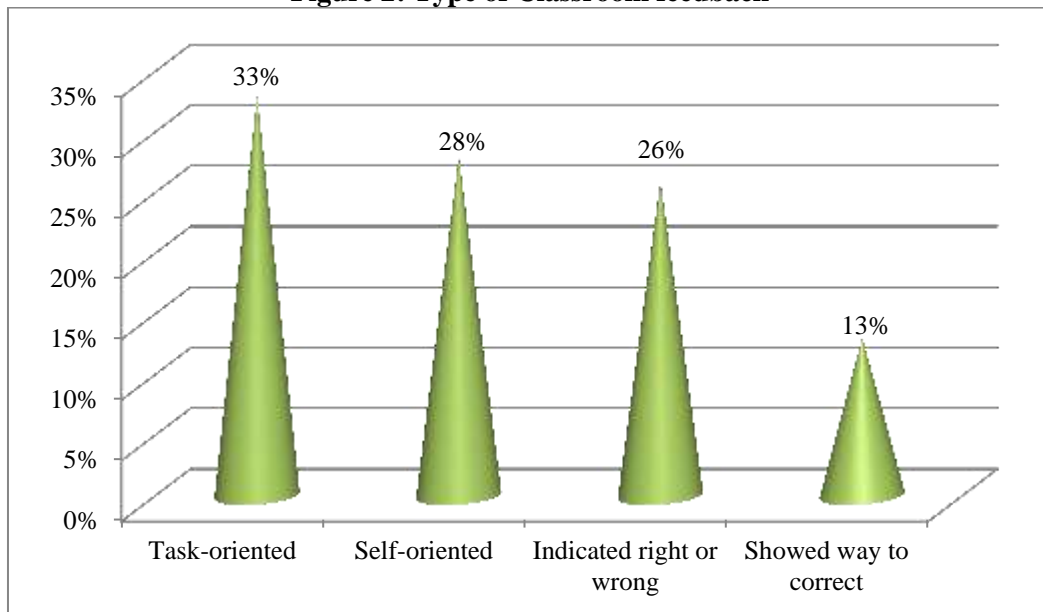


Source: Field survey, 2019

Type of Classroom feedback

Type of Classroom feedback has shown in the figure 2. From the result it was found that 33% respondents replied that the teachers are taking task-oriented classroom feedback which was maximum but only 13% respondents replied that the teachers are taking showed way to correct classroom feedback which was minimum. On the other hand 28% teachers are taking self-oriented classroom feedback and 26% teachers are taking indicated right or wrong classroom feedback.

Figure 2: Type of Classroom feedback

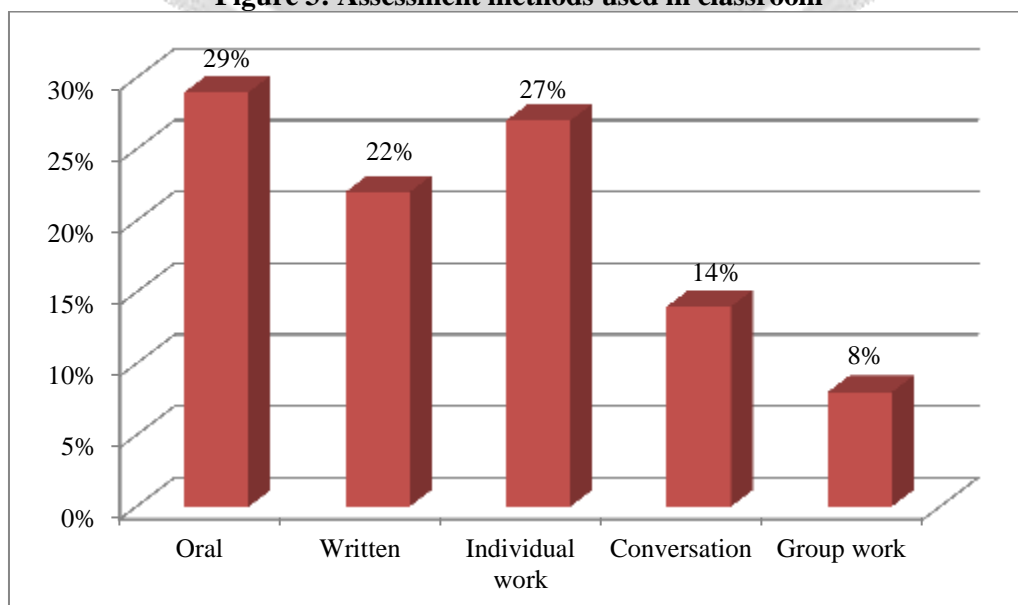


Source: Field survey, 2019

Assessment methods used in classroom

Assessment methods used in classroom has shown in the figure 3. From the result it was found that 29% respondents replied that the teachers are using oral assessment method in the classroom which was maximum but only 8% respondents replied that the teachers are using group work assessment method in the classroom which was minimum. On the other hand 22% respondents replied that the teachers are using written assessment method in the classroom, 27% respondents replied that the teachers are using individual work assessment method in the classroom and 14% respondents replied that the teachers are using conversation assessment method in the classroom.

Figure 3: Assessment methods used in classroom

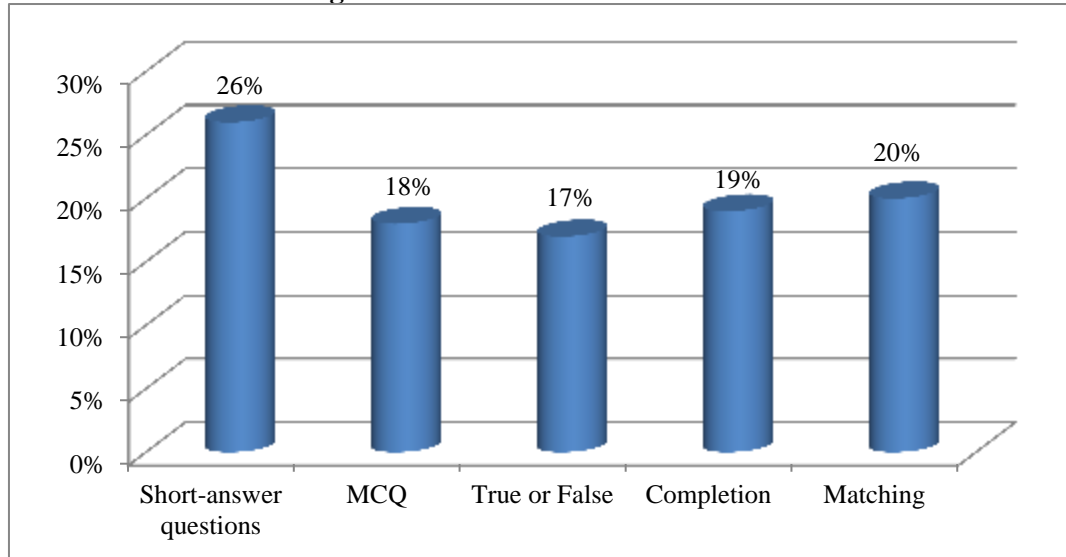


Source: Field survey, 2019

Test items used in classroom

Test items used in classroom has shown in the figure 4. From the result it was found that 26% respondents replied that the teachers are using short-answered questions in the classroom which was maximum but only 17% respondents replied that the teachers are using true or false test items used in the classroom which was minimum. On the other hand 18% respondents replied that the teachers are using MCQ test items used in the classroom, 19% respondents replied that the teachers are using completion test items used in the classroom and 20% respondents replied that the teachers are using matching test items used in the classroom.

Figure 4: Test items used in classroom



Source: Field survey, 2019

CONCLUSION

The classroom assessment of the study showed strong continued reliability on the traditional methods of assessment in student learning activities. Most of the student assessment methods are based on tests, exam or oral question based. As the teachers use the primitive method of assessment the quality of the students are not improving in asking trends. Very few teachers used or emphasized in the focus of classroom assessment but they give the home work. In some cases the teachers included multiple assessment methods throughout the class period thereby blending the traditional assessment strategies with some few alternative assessment practices. The assessment practices focuses only on the learning outcomes of the students based on the classroom discussion. Although feedback emphasized in classroom, the ways and nature of feedback are not able to meet students' requirements regarding their learning gaps. Even sometimes these types of feedback come ineffective. The findings of the study can inform the classroom teachers as well as the school administrators who are involved in maintain the quality of classroom practices so that they can make some changes in the present classroom assessment practices.

Although there is significant evidence indicating that classroom assessment is an important factor in improving student learning, this study showed that formative classroom assessment is not happening in classrooms (at least in one school in Bangladesh) and that a contributing factor is the way policies on formative classroom assessment are crafted and translated, either directly to schools and classrooms or indirectly through teacher preparation. At the national level, there are two communities of practice—the bureaucrats and the educators involved in setting policy; each group has conflicting ideas on classroom assessment. The bureaucrats focus on public examinations and “big data” to showcase the success of education system and government initiatives, while educators focus on formative classroom assessment, believing it can improve students' learning. However, as the bureaucrats possess more political power in negotiating policy formulation and reform, the final policies focus more on summative assessment, with limited information or guidance on formative classroom assessment. This one-sided policy formation is exacerbated by the use of inconsistent terminology for continuous assessment, complicating the negotiations about formative classroom assessment. What is needed is a more democratic mechanism for

negotiating and setting policy at the national level, where local teachers, parents and other stakeholders have equal power to influence discussions about classroom assessment and formative classroom assessment, as well as ensuring that the policies reflect the actual challenges on the ground in schools and classrooms of implementing and ensuring the success of formative classroom assessment for student learning.

These inadequate policies are then translated to limited and poor quality of training and practicum for teachers on formative classroom assessment in the Teacher Training College, which (within the TTC featured in this study), contributes to teachers entering classrooms without either strong theoretical or practical skills for using formative classroom assessment to gauge student progress and adapt their teaching for maximum student learning. Low motivation of trainers and student teachers, as well as limited time dedicated to formative classroom assessment in classes, adds to insufficient preparation on formative classroom assessment. Even with limited guidance from the national policies, teacher preparation about formative classroom assessment could be improved if the existing courses and trainings would focus more on practical aspects of learning formative classroom assessment connected with effective practicum with regular and intensive supervision.

The classroom assessment practice revealed in this study is very inappropriate and strongly focused to traditional methods of assessing students learning; mainly oral questioning. This information can help educational assessment community to reconsider its training module to focus on teachers particular needs. At present the government is strongly emphasizing the teachers for shifting the focus of classroom assessment to be formative but they are still using it to fulfill the summative purpose of assessment. Teachers mainly aimed to assess students' knowledge or memorization power in the classroom. Teachers may apply different assessment techniques like self-assessment, peer assessment in the classroom according to the needs of students learning. They must be facilitative to the students learning progress rather than students result. The findings of this study shed light on the teachers' different needs of classroom assessment and through professional development necessary changes can be brought. Moreover, to bring a change in science curriculum and policy making, this study can be a point of reference.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations of the study are as follows:

1. Assessment for learning should be focused greatly in classroom rather assessment of learning. Teachers should use assessment for the modification of his/her teaching so that it would fulfill the students' needs.
2. Through written tasks, alongside oral questioning, brainstorming, peer work, group work, and individual work, learning by doing students should be encouraged to develop and show understanding of the key features of what they have learned.
3. Teachers should employ different types of test items in the assessment process so that students can get the opportunities to show their learning in different ways. Teachers might employ alternative assessment techniques like peer-assessment and self-assessment to make classroom assessment productive.
4. Feedback should be formulated so that it guides improvement in learning. Teacher should provide feedback in such way that identify what has been done well and what still needs improvement and give guidance on how to make that improvement.

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