

Conceptions and practices of classroom assessment by primary school English language subject teachers in Tanzania

Innocent Buberwa Rugambuka

PhD (education)

University of Dar es Salaam, School of Education, 2019

The study reports the findings about teachers' conceptions and practices of classroom assessment from the perspective of primary school English language subjects teachers. The fundamental arguments of this study is that teachers' conceptions and practices of classroom assessment are interrelated aspects with multifaceted foundation. The objectives of the study were to examine teachers' conception and classroom assessment. A mixed methods research approach (MMRA) was subsequently used based on a pragmatic paradigm. The study used a survey and case study design to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The methods used for data collection were questionnaire, interview, observation and documentary review. The sample for the study was 72 teachers for quantitative and 10 teachers for qualitative phase respectively. The descriptive statistics suggested that, primarily, classroom assessment was conceived by teachers as a tool for improving teaching and learning and secondly as a tool for accountability. The teachers held both conceptions through the improvement conception surpassed the accountability conceptions. The inferential statistics suggested that among the selected demographic characteristic, there was a statistically significant association between teachers' teaching experience in terms of years of teaching, teaching level of the teacher and in-service classroom assessment training shaped teachers' conceptions. Furthermore, the findings indicated that conventional assessment practices were mostly employed regardless disparities in teachers' conceptions of classroom in teachers' conception. On the other hand, the findings indicated that the foundation for teachers' conceptions of classroom assessment is rooted in cultural aspects, education system role modeling, collegial effect and attitude. Thus teachers' conceptions of classroom assessment are mostly function of contextual factors. The study recommends that teachers' conception of classroom assessment must be treated as core component in assessment. If a country's education system aspires for meaningful classroom assessment. Moreover teacher-training colleges should integrate highly classroom assessment courses in the conventional

teacher programmes. By doing so, Teacher Training College may produce well-informed teachers about classroom assessment ethos, consequently the teachers may become conceptions change agents, and role models for subsequent novice teachers. Further, it is important to retain teachers in the teaching profession for a long time for them to acquire the practical details of classroom assessment. Finally, it is recommended that professional development programmes for teachers especially in classroom assessment should be made mandatory to all teachers practicing classroom assessment