DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Assessment Practices at University Level: A Case Study of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan

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Abstract

The study was design to explore the assessment practices at university level. Objectives of the study were to explore the assessment practices at university level, to inquire the rubric assessment practices at university level and to investigate the effectiveness of assessment practices in enhancing students higher order thinking skills at university level. The study was qualitative. All of the teachers (450) and students (16500) from the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan make up the study's population. Ten professors (five from the scientific department and five from the arts department) and ten students (five from the science department and five from the arts department) made up the research people, which was sampled with purpose. The method for gathering data was a semi-structured interview guide that the researcher had created on his own. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data that had been gathered. Based on findings it was concluded that Majority of the respondents (students) stated that there is no actual interview and practice of diagnosing students learning difficulties. All the respondents stated that learning progress are assessed through assignment, asking questions during and after class, quizzes, presentations, attendance, open book assignments, homework, and tests. Most of the respondents elaborated that at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan the papers for semester/annual system are constructed through conventional approach.
Keywords: Assessment, Rubrics, Lower order thinking, higher order thinking.

Introduction

Assessment is the most important part of education. It is a scientific procedure for gathering data about the performance of students that is used to make suggestion, decision or replacement. It is accumulating facts, gauge outlines, students, awareness, capacities, abilities and other good expectations. Assessment provides the effectiveness and drawbacks to teacher about teaching and students about their upgrading or

degrading in class. Assessment needs academic skills and a high-level impartiality of teacher". The examiners and researchers have tinted several ways to assess the individual's strength and weaknesses and benefits of assessment (Chen et al., 2008).

Assessment is a scientific process in which we measure the strength and weaknesses of a learner, teacher or a system through test, observation or examination. Assessments provide us data regarding learner skills, knowledge and attitude   Assessment provides us numerical data about students' performance to improve the system and student's awareness. Learning and assessment are interrelated with each other. Likewise, it joins course content and teacher. Curriculum plays a vital role in the achievement of student. Similarly continues observation helps teacher to find out the weaknesses of a learner. Assessment also creates a sense of progress in students, and they learn how to respond teacher instructions. Thus, an assessment consists of all duties of teacher which help to judge learners and try to develop teaching learning process (Baer et al., 2004).

The function of assessment is to check the real and actual knowledge and skills of students. On the bases of this information a teacher provides feedback, decision regarding the need of learners and modification in instruction. Here we want to discuss major four types of assessment that should be used at university level: formative assessment, diagnostic assessment, summative assessment and rubric assessment (Chappuis,2005).

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of education is to bring positive change in the behavior of learner. Change may be in the behavior or in actions. There are various ways to check the changes which are called assessment techniques. Formative assessment is to check the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Summative assessment is to create test, academic report and qualifications which are socially very high valued. Diagnostic assessment informs teachers as well as students regarding the current abilities and future needs. The rubrics can teach as well as evaluate In the present time the importance of assessment increases due to its vast scope in the field of education and learning, therefore the researcher intends to conduct research on the assessment practices in the field of higher education. Assessment is the most important source to judge the outcomes of the education system. The present study was designed to explore the assessment practices at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the assessment practices at university level.
2. To inquire the rubric assessment practices at university level.
3. To investigate the effectiveness of assessment practices in enhancing students higher order thinking skills at university level.

Research Questions

1. How are assessment procedures carried out at the university level?
2. Whether rubric assessment carried out at university level?
3. How assessment practices build up student's higher order thinking skills at university level?

Significance of the study

The study is significant to dig out the effectiveness of assessment in enhancing the ability of individual at tertiary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to diagnose the view of university teachers and students regarding the role assessment in learning. It's may prove helpful for the teachers, students, administrators and policy makers.

Delimitation of the study

The study was delimited to social science department teacher and students at the university due to certain time, financial and other resources constraints.

Review of Related Literature

Gardner eta al. (2010) investigated on-High School English Teachers' and Students' Perceptions, Attitudes, and Actual Practices of Continuous Assessment. It was discovered that the participating English teachers did not properly practice continuous assessment in their schools. Lastly, it was suggested that in order to effectively implement continuous assessment in schools, instructors should receive on-the-job training in this area.

De Lisle (2015) found that programme planners' formative goal was frequently not satisfied in Trinidad and Tobago using a mixed methods research design study titled The Promise and Reality of Formative Assessment Practice in a Continuous Assessment Scheme. Rather than using the data, teachers frequently entered assessment marks. There was proof that instructors' educational techniques and ideas were at odds with formative assessment practices. The researcher went on to say that while the architecture of CA programmes implies that formative and summative goals may work in tandem, in practice this ideal was rarely realized in Trinidad and Tobago's unique circumstances.

Balinas (2016) discovered that 48 junior high school English instructors from Indonesia and the Philippines utilised a mixed method design and that "assessment for learning" was the main objective of assessment in both cases. English Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices was the title of the study. The majority of junior high school English instructors in the Philippines "prepared and made their own assessment," in contrast to Indonesian teachers who "used items from published textbooks" as their primary source for producing assessment items. In both Indonesia and the Philippines, junior high school English teachers primarily gave written feedback to their students.

Green (2017) through a study called, A Critical Analysis of the Design and Implementation of Formative Assessment, critically analyzed the impact of formative and summative assessment in an informal secondary school environment. The

researcher advocated the preference for formative assessment throughout the article whilst simultaneously exploring the shortfalls and disapproval of summative assessment. Further, recommendations were made to schools and policymakers on recognizing the importance of both formative and summative assessment as a route to progression and development in subject learning.

In order to integrate formative assessment for learning with summative assessment of learning, Houston and Thompson (2017) rebalanced assessment relationships in a capstone paramedic subject. The study was titled Blending Formative and Summative Assessment in a Capstone Subject: It's Not Your Tools, its How You Use Them. Rich feedback was provided along with the assessment of students' performance through a range of regular assessment events. Information about learning tailored to the individual needs of every student was provided by each assessment event. By connecting assessment events, tests were able to simultaneously communicate formative information to students and summative outcome information to other parties. The formative-summative split vanished, and all evaluations were integrated into discussions about learning.

Ozdemir et al. (2017) study on English language instructors' classroom assessment practices found that there was consistency in the instructors' practices when it came to formative assessment; however, more research was needed to determine how much of this consistency was accounted for. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study also suggested that pre-service and in-service teachers needed this kind of training, which covers both the academic and practical facets of classroom evaluation.

Ozan (2018) found that the experimental group of a secondary school in Erzurum where formative assessment practices were implemented had significantly higher academic achievement levels and better attitudes towards the class than the students in the control group. The study, The Effects of Formative Assessment on Academic Achievement, Attitudes towards the Lesson, and Self-Regulation Skills, examined these relationships with the aid of a mixed method. Additionally, the qualitative data showed that students and teachers generally had a very high opinion of the use of formative assessment.

Acar-Erdol and Yildizli (2018) found that teachers had embraced an approach of assessment for learning for the goal of making the assessment based on their study, Classroom Assessment Practices of Teachers in Turkey, which used a survey and observation of 288 teachers. They also claimed that the teachers' evaluation procedures in the classroom were primarily based on traditional methods of assessment. Teachers found that student characteristics were the primary element impacting assessment processes in the classroom, but their actions did not appear to reflect this reality.

To ascertain the true effects of implementing these strategies in the classroom, researchers have long been interested in how English teachers evaluate their pupils (Cleeg et al., 2004). The researchers focused on a variety of aspects of the English language assessment perspective in light of the global circumstances at the time.

A qualitative study was created by Edelenbos and Kubanek (2004) to investigate the assessment methods used by English language teachers in the Netherlands. The researcher used the observational method to identify the research problem. He went to ten different schools and watched 25 English teachers deliver formal English language classes. The study's findings showed that the researcher's observations of English teachers' assessment methods included traditional testing, observation, and informal inquiry.

Hsu (2005) carried out a qualitative investigation to learn about Taiwanese English instructors' language instruction methods. He chose nine English instructors to serve as the study's sample. To examine instructors' evaluation processes, an organised formal interview, observation, and study of their assessment profiles were conducted. The study's findings revealed that educators employed various methods for their students' evaluations. The following procedures were recorded in the documentation: conferences, task-based evaluations, music, role-playing, oral exams, traditional tests, portfolio, peer, and self-assessments.

According to Qazi et al. (2012), there was no appreciable variation in the perception of assessments between Pakistani teachers who had received training and those who had not.

Gouleta (2015) studied educational policies and practices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, and discovered that provincial policies had an impact on students' assessments because the students came from a variety of linguistic backgrounds in the region. He discovered numerous irregularities, political interference, and ethnicity in the province-level assessment process.

Hussain et al. (2019) investigated the use of oral and objective tests by teachers. He found that there was a shortage of classroom assessment practice training for teachers. They conducted their assessments in the classroom using standard methods and did not employ any other techniques. He discovered that teachers struggled with managing their time, coping with packed classrooms, and having insufficient supplies.

Based on pertinent research, it can be concluded that there is global research being done on English language assessment beliefs, perceptions, practices, types, and paradigms.

Research Methodology

The present study was qualitative. All of the teachers (450) and students (16500) from the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan make up the study's population: (https://awkum.edu.pk/). All teachers, students, and researchers in the social science departments of the Abdul Wali Khan university Mardan constituted the target population. A purposive sample technique was employed to identify potential participants for the qualitative interviews, taking into consideration the assessment practices of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Ten professors (five from the scientific department and five from the arts department) and ten students (five from the science department and five from the arts department) made up the research people, which was sampled with purpose. These individuals were questioned for the study. Five to twenty-

five research participants for the interviews were a good sample size for qualitative research, according to Creswell (2015). The method for gathering data was a semi-structured interview guide that the researcher had created on his own. The interviewer prepared a list of questions, although these are merely meant to serve as a guide. Deviations from the list are frequently welcomed rather than perceived as an issue (Silverman, 2013). Data was collected from 10 teachers (05 Science & 05 Social Science) teachers and 10 students (05 Science & 05 Social Science) students of the Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the researcher personally visited all relevant departments and speak with faculty members and students in order to collect data. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data that had been gathered. Using both explicit and implicit concepts related to the data, the most popular qualitative analysis technique is thematic analysis. By finding, examining, and summarising patterns in the data, it aims to address the research questions. The six steps of the thematic analysis were as follows:

Step 1: Get acquainted with the data by reading and rereading the transcripts.

Step 2: Generate initial codes. In this stage, the data is arranged in an orderly fashion. The codes are arranged according to more general topics in

Step 3: Search for themes. Relevant explanations of the data are given. Review topics (Step 4). At this point, themes that have been found are changed. Themes-based collection of pertinent data is conducted.

Step 5: Identify themes. In this stage, subthemes and themes are connected to the primary theme.

Step 6: Writing-up: This is the thematic analysis reporting stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analysis of Data

Table 1:Themes and sub themes generated from teachers' responses

RQ1	Themes	Sub Theme
How assessment practices are carried out at university level	Diagnostic Assessment	• Screening test • Academic score • Interview
	Formative Assessment	• Assignments • Homework • Quizzes • Presentations • Asking Questions • Tests • Open book assignment • Attendance
	Summative	• Mid-term papers (40:60)

	Assessment	• Final term papers (40:60) • Annual papers (40:60)

Assessment is carried out at different universities in several forms. The teachers argued that three forms of assessment i.e diagnostic, formative and summative assessment are used to assess students' performance. In diagnostic assessment, the institution conducts a screening test to shortlist candidates for admission. The successful candidates in screening test appeared before an interview panel to assess their knowledge depth and breadth. Some of the respondents stated that there is no practice of diagnosing students learning difficulties. The respondents stated that learning progress of students are assessed through formative assessment. In formative assessment, teachers assessed student's academic progress through assignment, asking questions during and after class, quizzes, presentations, attendance, open book assignments, homework and tests. The subjects of the study also described that in order to assess students' academic achievement summative assessment is used. In summative assessment students' academic performance is assessed through midterm, final term examination in semester and annual examination in annual system. The question papers of midterm cover 40% of course while 60% course is covered in question papers of final term. 40% of the mid and final paper are composed of objective type question and 60% portion of the paper is composed of subjective type questions. In annual system the whole course is covered.

One of the respondents during the interview argued that "University students are evaluated using a variety of assessment methods. Regarding myself, the researcher asks questions throughout class, either vocally or in writing on occasion. The researcher has a two-way conversation about the issue, and when necessary, I provide feedback".

"Exams, such as midterm and final exams, are another way that teachers evaluate their pupils' progress and move them up to higher classes. We complete two tests, presentations, and tasks. The results are announced based only on merit".

"Regretfully, diagnostic assessment is not given the adequate attention it deserves, despite the fact that programmed performance greatly depends on participants' understanding of prior knowledge".

Table 2: Themes and sub themes generated from students' responses

RQ1	Themes	Sub Theme
How are assessment practices carried out at university level?	Diagnostic Assessment	• Screening test • Academic score • Interview • No procedure to diagnosing students learning difficulties
	Formative Assessment	• Assignments • Quizzes • Presentations

		• Asking Questions • Discussion • Tests
	Summative Assessment	• Mid-term papers (40:60) • Final term papers (40:60)

Assessment is carried out at different universities in several forms. The students argued that three forms of assessment i.e diagnostic, formative and summative assessment are used to assess students' performance. In diagnostic assessment, the institution conducts a screening test to shortlist candidates for admission. The successful candidates in screening test appeared before an interview panel to assess their knowledge depth and breadth. Most of the respondents stated that there is no practice of diagnosing students learning difficulties. The respondents stated that learning progress of students are assessed through formative assessment. In formative assessment, teachers assessed students' academic progress through assignment, asking questions during and after class, quizzes, presentations, discussion, and tests. The subjects of the study also described that to assess students' academic achievement summative assessment is used. In summative assessment students' academic performance is assessed through midterm, final term examination in semester system. The question papers of midterm cover 40% of course while 60% course is covered in question papers of final term. 40% of the mid and final paper are composed of objective type question and 60% portion of the paper is composed of subjective type questions.

A participants argued that "our teachers assess us through presentations, quiz and general discussions. Our teacher involves us in discussions. During instructions, they make clear about the topic. In exam they did not allow any sort of cheating. The paper come in a specific pattern made by the authority, during admission proper tests are conducted and selection of students is done through merit".

A subject told that "there are no diagnostic exams available for troublesome or exceptional students".

Table 3: Themes and sub themes generated from teachers' responses

RQ2	Themes	Sub Theme
How rubric carried out at university level?	Increase Objectivity	• Decrease subjectivity. • Irregularity can be control. • Save the time.
	Reduces discrimination	• Paper checking simple & quick. • Lessen prejudice. • Personal preferences • No use of rubrics
	Use of rubrics	
	Conventional approach	

The teachers' responses described that at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan the papers for semester/annual system are constructed through conventional approach. There is no concept of rubrics. The respondents argued that papers having rubrics reduced subjectivity, control irregularity, save time, and improve objectivity. The respondent stated that paper with rubrics can be checked easily and quickly. Rubrics lessen prejudice and personal preferences. The teachers have no headache to answer the students queries regarding paper marking because every point is clear. It also reduced the like and dislikes on the part of teachers.

A respondent said that the "conventional approach is used to check the papers, assignments, and presentations instead of using a rubric. Indeed, a rubric helps to reduce subjectivity and promote objectivity. Using a rubric will make paper checking simple and quick, saving you time and headaches. Rubrics, of course, lessen prejudice. Everybody will be evaluated using the same criteria and will receive a grade for each attempt".

Table 4:Themes and sub themes generated from students' responses

RQ2	Themes	Sub Theme
How rubric carried out at university level?	Increase objectivity	• Decrease subjectivity. • Irregularity can be control. • Beneficial for poor and anonymous students Improve objectivity
	Reduces discrimination	• Paper checking simple & quick. • Lessen prejudice.
	Use of rubrics	• No headache • Personal preferences
	Conventional approach	• Teacher like and dislike • Rote memorization
	Rubric recommendations	• Discourage discrimination

The students' responses clarified that at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan the papers for semester/annual system are constructed through conventional approach. There is no concept of rubrics. The respondents argued that papers having rubrics reduced subjectivity, control irregularity, save time, and improve objectivity. The respondent stated that paper with rubrics can be checked easily and quickly. Rubrics lessen prejudice and personal preferences, rote memorization. It also reduced the like and dislikes on the part of teachers. The students also argued that through rubric rote memorization and discrimination are reduced.

A subject said that "no there is no rubric. I heard this word for the first time. Our teachers check papers by traditional method. It depends on their own mind, like

and dislikes that how they want answer of satisfaction. According to your explanation about rubric their functions and levels of rubric are very essential for both teachers and students because it discourage discrimination. I recommend rubric".

Table 5: Themes and sub themes generated from teachers' responses

RQ3	Themes	Sub Theme
How assessment practices build up student's higher order thinking skills at university level?	Higher order thinking skills (Analyzing, evaluating, creating)	- Restricted response questions - Extended response questions - Traditional approach - Modern assessment tool - Using own words and ideas - General questions - Rewards

The teachers argued that assessment practices at AWKUM build students higher order thinking skill up to some extent. The assessment practices are traditional, and it cannot build students higher order thinking skills properly. The subjects gave stress on using modern assessment tool to enable students to think critically and creatively. The teachers said that they construct restricted and extended response questions in midterm and final term examinations to inculcate analyzing, evaluating, and creating abilities. The teachers also said that they give good marks or rewards to the students who attempt their paper using own ideas.

One of the respondents said that *"I also ask the kind of questions that force pupils to think critically. I suggest giving high points to pupils who wrote independently without paraphrasing from a guide. I have a general question so that I come to know that how my students attempt it. That question cam attempts those students who have the power to think".*

Table 6: Themes and sub themes generated from students' responses

RQ3	Themes	Sub Theme
How assessment practices build up student's higher order thinking skills at university level?	Analyzing Evaluating Creating	- Traditional approach - One night study - Selected topics - Theory based curriculum. - Rote memorization - No creativity 10% of learners can analyze, evaluate and create.

		• Construction of questions paper in the light bloom's taxonomy levels.

The students argued that assessment practices at AWKUM did not build students higher order thinking skill. The assessment practices are traditional, and students rote selected topic which cannot develop higher order thinking skills properly. The subjects said that we only study on exam night. The subjects gave stress on using modern assessment tools to enable students to think critically and creatively. The students said that papers in examination are not fulfilling the criteria of Bloom's taxonomy levels. The respondents argued that theory-based curriculum compels students for cramming. Only 10% of the students can analyze and evaluate. Creativity cannot be built through current assessment practices.

A subject said that "our exam system does not increase students' higher level. There is only rote memorization system creativity is not developing here. I am a mathematics student, and I don't know where it is used in practical life. We can we apply only simple arithmetic's in our daily life".

One subject told that "no, not all educators are able to create something new. We only read and memorize for paper. For my opinion only 10% of students have the ability to respond successfully in regards of HOTs. Some teachers are very sensitive about this problem and try to force students on self-ideas, but all are not".

Conclusions
The following conclusions were drawn in the light of findings and statistical analysis.
Majority of the respondents (students) stated that there is no actual interview and practice of diagnosing students learning difficulties. So, it is recommended that a proper test and interview may be schedule and teacher may use diagnostic assessment in class. All the respondents stated that learning progress are assessed through assignment, asking questions during and after class, quizzes, presentations, attendance, open book assignments, homework, and tests. Most of the respondents elaborated that at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan the papers for semester/annual system are constructed through conventional approach.
Majority argued that, that there is no concept of rubrics in assessment process. Many participants viewed that questions papers having rubrics reduced subjectivity, control irregularity, save time, and improve objectivity. Most students also argued that through rubric rote memorization and discrimination are reduced. Most teachers argued that assessment practices at AWKUM build students higher order thinking skill up to some extent.
Maximum participants stated that assessment practices are traditional, and it cannot build students higher order thinking skills properly. The subjects gave stress on using modern assessment tool to enable students to think critically and creatively. Most of the

students said that papers in examination are not fulfilling the criteria of Bloom's taxonomy levels.

Recommendations

Based on findings the following recommendations were made.

1. All the respondents stated that learning progress are assessed through assignment, asking questions during and after class, quizzes, presentations, attendance, open book assignments, homework, and tests.
2. Majority argued that there is no concept of rubrics in assessment process. Majority of the interviewers believed Rubrics reduced subjectivity, control irregularity, save time, and improve objectivity, Lessen prejudice and personal preferences. So, it is recommended that the university authority may keep vigilant eyes on these practices as it is essentials for both the teacher and students.
3. Maximum participants stated that assessment practices are traditional, and it cannot build students higher order thinking skills properly. Most of the students said that papers in examination are not fulfilling the criteria of Bloom's taxonomy levels. so, it is recommended that paper may be constructed in such a way that develop students analyzing, evaluating, and creating abilities.
4. The students argued that female get good grades as compared to male students. The students also said that due to ethnic/race, personal preferences, political influence, own family member influence, nepotism and students' family background impartiality in assessment process is impossible. Most of the subjects (students) argued that in most of cases gender biases are reflected more frequently in assessment process. So, it is recommended that high ups of the university may keep proper check on such personnel of the university in order to control gender discrimination

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