Uses of ICT Tools in Assessment

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Abstract

ICTs stand for information and communication technologies and are defined, for the purposes of this primer, as a "diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information." These technologies include computers, the Internet, broadcasting ... Ict tools are devices or objects used in information and communication technology ex;- computer ,cell phones ,cell phone towers, video conferencing, software, radio, television , laptop etc. The use of ICT can help teachers by storing and recording information about how students are developing understanding of new material; and by taking over some of the role of assessing and providing feedback to students so that teachers can focus on other aspects of supporting learning. Assessment as learning focusses on students and emphasizes assessment as a process of metacognition. Assessment as learning comes from the constructivist idea that learning is an active process that occurs when students interact with new ideas. It is based on research about how learning occurs and is characterized by students reflecting on their own learning and making adaptations, adjustments, and changes to their thinking. Examples of 21st Century assessment as learning tools include self-assessments, peer assessments, student- teacher conferences, teacher observations with feedback and interim product analysis.
Keywords : ICT, teaching-learning, higher education, qualitative research

Current assessment tools

In schools, teachers generate criteria based on learning outcomes for the subject and grade and on expected levels of performance. In the early years, performance scales and written reports outline progress in relation to expected development of students in similar age ranges. In grades 4-12, letter grades indicate performance in relation to learning outcomes. Teachers may use performance standards which describe expected levels of achievement in reading, writing, numeracy and social responsibility.Assessment methods and tools recommended up until the present have included observation, student self-assessments, daily practice assignments, quizzes, samples of student work, pencil-and-paper tests, holistic rating scales, projects, oral and written reports, reviews of performance and portfolios. Evaluation is based on criteria which is based on learning outcomes. Norm-referenced evaluation (basic skills tests, diagnostic tests) is also permitted to be used for large-scale system assessments.

Goals of 21st century assessments

Today's students need to collaborate with educators and make use of technology to get immediate feedback in order to improve outcomes. Technology allows educators to assess a student's progress far more regularly than is possible with traditional classroom assessments and to identify and address each student's challenges as they arise. This is in contrast to a system where assessment through tests and exams measures what a student learned at the end of an instructional unit, by which time it is often too late to address shortcomings. Having said that, measurement and assessment must not only be a

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tool to help the student learn but also to measure achievement for those outside the system, be it post-secondary education institutions or potential employers. However, what gets measured will impact upon both teaching and learning. Some of the skills discussed earlier are difficult to measure so it is important that a balance be struck that ensures a student's progress is properly measured and yet does not stifle, or discourage some of the creativity and courage we are trying to engender in our students. The climate of assessment moves from exams and toward smaller more regular assessments. Data accessible to learners informs progress, with standards acting as anchors to learning. Rather than focusing on product based evaluations, performance and self knowledge are refined over time. Students are assessed before and during learning so that feedback may be provided that can be used to improve work and deepen understanding. In addition to quizzes, tests and worksheets, conferences, notes, self-reflection, journals and rubrics and checklists are used. Students are encouraged to assess themselves and their peers to enhance engagement and awareness of their own learning. Assessment is part of the learning process so that teachers and students are working together to monitor progress.

Assessment t for, as, and of learning

There are three distinct but inter-related purposes for classroom assessment: assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning.

Assessment for Learning

In assessment for learning, teachers use assessment as a research tool to find out as much as they can about what their students know and are able to do, as well what presumptions and misunderstandings they may have. Teachers also use assessment for learning to boost student's motivation and commitment to learning. Examples of 21st century assessment for learning tools, which include both diagnostic tests and formative assessments, are eportfolios, teacher observations, class discussions, and works in progress with comments, think-pair-share, journals, observation checklists, concept maps, and rubrics.

Assessment as Learning

Assessment as learning focusses on students and emphasizes assessment as a process of metacognition. Assessment as learning comes from the constructivist idea that learning is an active process that occurs when students interact with new ideas. It is based on research about how learning occurs and is characterized by students reflecting on their own learning and making adaptations, adjustments, and changes to their thinking. Examples of 21st Century assessment as learning tools include self-assessments, peer assessments, student-teacher conferences, teacher observations with feedback and interim product analysis.

Assessment of Learning

Assessment of learning refers to strategies intended to corroborate what students know, show whether or not they have met curriculum outcomes or the goals of their individualized programs, or to confirm ability and make decisions about student's future programs or placements. It is intended to show evidence of achievement to other educators, parents, students themselves, and sometimes outside groups (e.g., educational institutions). [5]. Examples of 21st Century Assessment of Learning tools are eportfolios, with "best piece" samples to show progress, open- ended response questions, descriptions of observations in Science experiments, historical role- playing arguments about the impact of decisions on current life, the writing process applied to poetry, long-term projects and problem-based reports.

Current or traditional assessment practices are teacher focused, done with tests, quizzes and worksheets, completed outside of the learning and teaching activities and are done at the end of the learning activity for grading purposes. [8] Most of these tools would be considered as

Assessment "of" learning. 21st Century assessment tools will emphasize assessment "as" and assessment "for" learning tools.

Assessment directions in B.C.

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Framework Advisory Group of British Columbia, formed in November 2011, all assessment activities should support ongoing learning and focus

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on five cross-curricular learning competencies (communication, critical thinking, creative thinking and innovation, personal responsibility and well-being and social responsibility) along with learning standards for the age and subject (under development). Assessment materials should allow multiple ways to both assess and show learning, with opportunities for student self- assessment and assessment for learning. The group suggested developmental continua be developed for cross-curricular competencies, with performance standards in use changing to match the change in focus.

- There should be provincial assessments at the elementary and secondary levels.

- Provincial assessments should be used to provide feedback for learning

- Provincial assessments should allow multiple formats, including performance tasks, inquiries and class-based assessments

- Literacy and numeracy should be stressed at the elementary level

- Competencies and key learning areas should be emphasized at the secondary level

Reporting

The language of "reporting" should be shifted to "communicating student learning" according to the advisory group. Teachers are encouraged to report at "key times of the year" (p.7) about cross-curricular competencies and key learning, using performance scales. Self-assessment is encouraged, as well as using diverse measures of performance, such as portfolios, work samples and other evidence.

Conversations are continuing in regional meetings at present to determine the appropriate use of letter grades, cross-curricular competencies, aboriginal perspectives on learning, curriculum and how to assess personalized learning.

The Question of Support for Educators

According to the British Columbia Teachers Federation, school districts and teacher education programs will need to provide systemic supports to educators if the transition to 21st century learning is to be successful. They include formative assessment for learning supports in a climate where large scale testing is not supported.

Conclusion

Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools contribute to high quality lessons since they have potential to increase students' motivation, connect students to many information sources, support active in class and out class learning outcomes learning environment and instructors to allocate more time for facilitation. Therefore use ICT tools in teaching and learning process becomes a great area of research of many educators. These technologies increases students motivation, self-confidence and self esteem to learn. Current or traditional assessment practices are teacher focused, done with tests, quizzes and worksheets, completed outside of the learning and teaching activities and are done at the end of the learning activity for grading purposes. Most of these tools would be considered as Assessment "of" learning. 21st Century assessment tools will emphasize assessment "as" and assessment "for" learning tools.

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