Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Review Of Research Journal

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ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT USE AS A TOOL FOR EVALUATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT :

*A*ssessment is the importance part for students' academic achievement. Alternative assessment is an importance for promoting student's achievement. There have various form of alternative assessment which is helped to student's achievement. These are Essay, Portfolios, Presentation and Authentic Assessment. Alternative assessment is also providing in general education, distance education, special education programmed. On the other hand, student achievement refers to a student's performance in reading, language, arts, mathematics, science and social science as measured by achievement tests. Students achievement also influence by social, personal and economical condition of the students and their family. School environment and psychosocial perspective of school has also depended on student's achievement. This paper focuses on concept of alternative assessment and it is used as a tool for student's achievement.

KEYWORDS : academic achievement , general education, distance education, special education programmed.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

"Assess," the root word of assessment, comes from the Latin word "assidere," which means to sit beside, to observe, talk with, and learn from one another (Conrad, 1995). Traditionally, the word "assessment" has referred to the way teachers assign letter grades on tests and quizzes. Assessment has also been used as a way to discuss teaching effectiveness (Garfield, 1994).

Needham (2004) & Maclellan (2004) defines alternative assessment as "assessment which evidences thinking and problem solving skills rather than discrete knowledge, directly informs instruction, and represents meaningful, significant and worthwhile forms of human endeavor and accomplishment". Alternative assessment makes use of non-standardized methods such as documentation, checklists, interviews and portfolios to grade students' performance. These methods may be used together with standardized tests to offer a more holistic approach of students' academic performance (Sáurez & Daniels, 2009).

FORMS OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT ARE:

a) Essays: If a student has difficulty with standardized verbal assessments, writing an essay may be a better way for her to exhibit her comprehension and skills. An essay can also show how a student thinks about a certain subject in more detail than multiple-choice or short-answer questions.

b)Portfolios: Most often used as replacements for end-of-course testing, portfolios exhibit the progression of a student's learning over time. A teacher may create a portfolio compiling student essays, lab reports, or other assignments to demonstrate learning that is not possible in a standardized test. Portfolios are typically attached

to specific learning objectives and include a reflective piece by the student. Students can create and post portfolios online to share with other students and their teachers.

c)Presentations/Demonstrations: These activities allow a teacher to observe his students performing when she/he is teaching. A science fair is one type of alternative assessment, as are choral performances. A math teacher may ask his students to design a bridge based on hypothetical dimensions he has provided.

d)Authentic Assessments: This method attempts to create a real-world environment for students to exhibit their skills and knowledge. A biology teacher may have her students identify the different pollutants in a local stream to report to the local environmental protection agency as an authentic assessment.

When evaluating an alternative assessment, educators need methods to assess fairly and objectively. Often, they may use rubrics. A rubric is a scoring guide for non-quantified assessments such as portfolios and presentations.

Use of Alternative Assessment in Various Types of Education
• Alternative Assessment in General Education

In general education, alternative assessment is viewed in difference ways in which educators can collect information to the many ways so that every learner can respond in the classroom teaching process. Mueller (2003) also gives the view that alternative assessment is a way to complement traditional assessment, adding that this type of assessment allows for students "to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills". It usually used for learner learning outcomes. Alternative assessment is necessary in general education because the knowledge which students bring or construct in to the classroom is often not measurable through the use of conventional assessment tools (Stears & Gopal, 2010).

• Alternative Assessment in Special Education

Special educators recognize alternative assessment because it is an essential for cognitive and physical impairment learners. Sáurez and Daniels (2009) hold that alternative assessment is especially needed in this field of education for multiple purposes.

ADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS
• It provides assessing valued skills that cannot be happened with traditional tests.
• It provides a more realistic setting for student performance than traditional tests.
• It focuses on student performance and the quality of work performed by students.
• It can be easily associated with established learning outcomes.

DISADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS
• Process can be costly in terms of time, effort, equipment, materials, facilities, or funds.
• Rating process is sometimes more subjective than traditional exams.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Students achievement means acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will prepare them to lead a happy and successful life. Student achievement refers to a student's performance in reading, language, arts, mathematics, science and social science as measured by achievement tests. These include statewide exams, or National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores.

There have three primary dimensions for student achievement.
1. Personal
2. Social
3. Economical

REVIEW FROM OF STUDENT'S ACHIEVEMENT
Parental Education

Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or field help that often comes at the expense of keeping children in school (Carron & Chau, 1996). Healthy children with positive early learning experiences and socio-economic status of parents and parental education are thus most likely to succeed in student achievement.

Learning Environment

Learning outcome is depended on the positive learning environment. It depends on some elements like physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

The Physical Elements are related to the school building facility, class size, adequate infrastructure and textbook facilities etc. "Extant empirical evidence is inconclusive as to whether the condition of school buildings is related to higher student achievement after taking into account student's background" (Fuller, 1999). In this case, the quality of the learning environment was strongly correlated with pupils' achievement in Hindi and mathematics (Carron & Chau, 1996).

The Psychosocial Elements are Peaceful, safe environments, especially for girls   so non-discriminatory climate is critical to creating a quality learning environment and Effective school discipline policies, Inclusive environments are also to students achievement. Constructive discipline and reinforcement of positive behavior communicate a seriousness of purpose to students (Craig, Kraft & du Plessis, 1998).

The Service Delivery Elements related to the provision of health service .Provision of health services and education can contribute to learning first by reducing absenteeism and inattention. Sick children cannot attend school, and evidence from China, Guinea, India and Mexico shows that children's illness is a primary cause for absenteeism (Carron & Chau, 1996). School-based health interventions are improving academic performance of students.

Alternative Assessment Use as a Tool for Evaluating Student Achievement
Alternative Assessment Tools:

According to Simonson et al., there are three approaches in alternative assessment: authentic assessment, performance-based assessment, and constructivist assessment.

Reeves (2000) suggested three main strategies to integrate alternative assessment into online learning settings: 1. cognitive assessment, 2. performance assessment, 3. portfolio assessment. Researchers and educators use the term performance-based, alternative, and authentic assessment interchangeably. As Wangsatorntanakhun (1997) states the term, performance-based assessment, embraces both alternative and authentic assessment. Therefore, throughout this article, performance assessment is used to refer to alternative assessment.

Alternative assessment strategies include open-ended questions, exhibits, demonstrations, hands-on execution of experiments, computer simulations, and portfolios (Dietel et al., 1991). The two common alternative assessment techniques, portfolios and projects, are discussed below.

Portfolios:

Portfolios consist of student work that displays mastery of skill of the task and expression (Kulieke et al., 1990). Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer (in Bailey, 1998) define portfolios as "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection". Because of their cumulative nature, portfolios require a lot of input and responsibility of from the student. Moreover, they demand a great deal of time commitment from the teachers, which yields a practicality problem in assessment (Bailey, 1998).

The benefits of portfolios are pointed out by Arter (1995). Students will:
a) Get a broader, more in-depth look at what students know and can do.
b) Portfolio Based assessment on a more 'authentic' work.
c) It is a supplement or alternative to report cards and standardized tests.
d) It is a better way to communicate student progress to parents (online document).

Alternative assessments, on the other hand, assess higher-order thinking skills. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned. This type of assessment tools focus on the growth and the performance of the student. More authentic assessment tools, such as portfolios, independent projects, journals and so on, let learners express their knowledge on the material in their own ways using various intelligences (Brualdi, 1996). As Law and Ecke (1995) mention, alternative assessments can be laborious in terms of time and energy spent by the teacher. For example, the diversity of products in portfolios, which is viewed as one of the most important strengths, can lead problems for the teacher in terms of practicality (Bailey, 1998). They might be harder to score and quite time consuming to evaluate the learner's performance (Simonson et al., 2000).

Reeves (2000) highlighted the distinct nature of assessment in traditional classes compared to its embedded nature in online environments. In traditional learning environments students are usually assessed after they completed certain number of classes in a semester, i.e. mid-term exams and finals in essay, short answer or/and multiple choice formats. In online learning environments, on the other hand, assessment and instruction are integrated through interactive media simulations. For example, in a web-based simulation program, learners can encounter several problems where the program provides them with feedback. Here, while the computer finds out the improvement in the student performance, it provides the instructor with performance assessment data as well.

CONCLUSION

Alternate assessments provide a format for students to holistic achievement .alternative assessment provide some tools which are helped to the students for development their skill, knowledge and various perspective to achieved learning outcomes. It also evaluated a large number of students in distance mode. It gives opportunity in various ways to participate in class room instruction. Alternative assessments measure performance of the large number of students in forms other than traditional paper-and-pencil tests, short answer tests. Alternative assessment includes open-ended questions, exhibits, demonstrations, hands-on execution of experiments, computer simulations, and portfolios.

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