

PANEL DISCUSSION: Classroom Assessment: New Norms of Student Assessments and Assessment-Related Research During COVID-19

Josephine Freni Affrin^{a*}, Heidi Andrade^b, Siti Eshah Mokshein^c

^a Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Sungai Long, 43000 Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia

^b School of Education, University at Albany, State University of New York, 1400 Washington Ave Albany, NY 12222, USA

^c Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University, 35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia

Editor:
Zahari Suppian

Received date:
15 August 2021

Accepted date:
15 September 2021

Published date:
28 October 2021

Abstract

This panel discussion was one of the sessions in International Multidisciplinary Prospective Research in Education and Social Sciences (IMPRESS21) conference that took place on 7-9 September 2021. This discussion was about assessments and the panel members were Professor Heidi Andrade (University at Albany, State University of New York, USA) whose work focuses on the relationships between learning and assessment, with an emphasis on student self-assessment and self-control learning, and Professor Dr. Siti Eshah Mokshein (Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia), who gives focus on Educational Statistics, Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Assessments and Program Evaluation, among her other research interests. The panel gives an overview of classroom assessments, assessment-related research, and research prospects in the evolving environment. The aim of this discussion is to provide suggestions on how instructors may assess their students' work in the face of the pandemic, as well as, how researchers can conduct assessment-related studies that will be beneficial to academicians in the new norms.

Keywords: Assessment; Covid-19; new norms; assessment-related research

1. Background

Assessment is essential for encouraging higher-level learning both in and out of the classroom (Earl, 2013). Teachers use assessments to acquire data and make judgments about their students' development and learning. The data obtained is required in order to make decisions concerning kids' academic performance and conduct. It also enables teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers will then be able to make classroom adjustments to meet students' learning requirements or recommend pupils for outside assistance (Murukutla, 2019).

While communities adopt physical distancing in public spaces and schools modify teaching techniques to accommodate virtual or hybrid learning, Covid-19 has a significant influence on assessment systems, which must be modified to guarantee that the objectives are satisfied.

The majority of assessment-related research is conducted in a classroom environment, which is no longer relevant in the present pandemic. Students' performance evaluations take on a fresh appearance and approach employing technology via online platforms in the middle of this unforeseen scenario. Researchers will have a tough time watching students' behaviour and interactions throughout study

implementations if they do not have access to a classroom. Thus, in this new norm, in assuring that the study's objectives are achieved, researchers must look for a relevant approach to conduct students' assessments.

In a related study, Tartavulea et al. (2020) believed that switching to online teaching has a moderately favourable influence on the educational process, despite the fact that the overall efficacy of the online educational experience is rated lower than that of face-to-face instruction. They also discovered that institutional support, confidence in the online system, and perceived formative assessment efficacy are all characteristics that are positively related to the impact and success of online education.

The panel members gave the following views in an effort to continue the discussion regarding the emerging standards of student assessments and assessment-related research:

1.1 Assessment

Assessment-related research is mainly conducted in a classroom that is no longer applicable to the current pandemic. Without a classroom, researchers have difficulty observing student behaviour and interactions during research

*  : josephine@utar.edu.my

implementation. It is indeed a challenge in conducting assessments during or after the pandemic. Researchers are encouraged to link research to new assessment strategies and to broaden the perspective of student and teacher assessment to parents and the community. Assessment needs to be examined from multiple perspectives for a better understanding of the demands and problems in assessment. In addition, researchers have a great responsibility to make their findings more accessible to the public from different backgrounds. Researchers need to explain or highlight the results in relation to the content of the study to ensure that the messages or impact of the study are shared among all. Researchers can review research contributions to stakeholders to ensure that their research becomes a high impacted contribution in the field.

1.2 Opportunities from the evolving environment

The development and handling of technologies during the pandemic is seen as an essential contribution to research and practice. Technology has been a driving force for researchers to share and connect with people for their research purposes. The exchange of research data helps to study the same phenomenon from different cultural perspectives. Networking helps researchers to create platforms for the exchange of skills and knowledge in data analysis and publication of their research results. The network can help researchers without strong statistical background to gain support from other researchers for data analysis which can lead to new insights, further findings, and knowledge dissemination.

1.3 Recommendations for future challenges

The following are the suggestions made by the panel members:

- Firstly, the researchers in the assessment are required to be vigilant of the current and ongoing scenario. The researchers must be knowledgeable of the particular investigation area with the latest trends. It is suggested that they need to be observant of the environment and to identify the needs and demands presented for assessments. This is to ensure that their suggestions and efforts will benefit the community. The largest transition from summative to formative evaluations is one of the current trends. New and alternative assessments are increasingly being utilised in place of traditional paper and pencil examinations.
- Next, the researchers must determine the difficulties they encountered while performing their research. This involves determining how they may collaborate with other scholars on intellectual engagements. Early-career researchers and novice researchers benefit from the sharing of information, data, and skills because it allows them to flourish in their chosen

fields of study. Being a part of the network is also important for supporting one another's publications and professional advancement. Collaborations would be useful in learning how to work together with limited resources and complement one another in order to become long-term researchers.

- Finally, the researchers should become more daring in their approach to the topics they are studying. By offering novel study ideas and analyses, venturing into new and foreseeing difficulties in the domain of evaluations might be crucial. They also need to familiarise themselves with the current literature on the subject and are ready to discover new and innovative research methods. Getting into real-life circumstances and determining the requirements for a certain research are important for improving the existing condition. In this profession, flexible researchers who are ready to learn and update themselves as the subject evolves will remain relevant and recognised.

2. Conclusion

Several new norms for student assessments and assessment-related research were discussed and recommended during the panel discussion at IMPRESS21. Based on the similar matter, Ahmed Elzainy et al. (2020) asserted that the WHO's announcement of the COVID-19 pandemic emphasises the benefits of a shift toward e-learning and online assessment in support of current assessment techniques. In an effective digital learning environment, student and staff satisfaction, accomplishment, and growth of technology educational abilities were all recognised.

To summarise the panel discussion, it is widely agreed that developing and using technology during a pandemic is an important contribution to research and practise. For researchers, technology has been a driving factor in sharing and connecting with individuals for research objectives. The sharing of research data allows researchers to look at the same phenomena from many cultural viewpoints. Researchers may use networking to build platforms for the sharing of skills and information in data analysis and publishing their findings. The network can assist other novice researchers in obtaining cooperation from other academics for data analysis, resulting in new ideas, and information sharing.

Last but not least, it is anticipated that a panel discussion like this would inspire new academics to courageously move forward and participate in research, offering fresh findings, novel techniques, and insights relevant to student assessments at all levels.

References

- Ahmed Elzainy, Abir El Sadik, Waleed Al Abdulmonem (2020). Experience of e-learning

- and online assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic at the College of Medicine, Qassim University. *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences*, 15(6), 456-462. ISSN 1658-3612. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtumed.2020.09.005>
- Earl, L.M. (2013). Assessment for learning; assessment as learning: Changing practices means changing beliefs. *Assessment*, 80, 63-71.
- Murukutla, M. (2019). *The effects of background, classroom assessment competence, self-efficacy, and self-perceived assessment skills on classroom assessment practices of teachers in India*. University of Nevada, Las Vegas. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019. 27671130.
- Tartavulea, C.V., Albu, C.N., Albu, N, Dieaconescu, R.I., & Petre, S. (2020). Online teaching practices and the effectiveness of the educational process in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 22(55), 920-936. <https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2020/55/920>

Citation

- Affrin, J. F., Andrade, H., & Mokshein, S. E. (2021). Classroom Assessment: New Norms of Student Assessments and Assessment-Related Research During COVID-19. *Evaluation Studies in Social Sciences*, 10, 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.37134/esss.vol2.sp.1.2021>