Competency in Assessment of Selected DepEd Teachers in National Capital Region

Joan D. Rural
Polytechnic University of the Philippines
Email: joan_rural@yahoo.com

Abstract

Assessment is considered a major responsibility of a teacher and incompetence in educational assessment will definitely not yield a desirable learning outcome for students. Using a descriptive survey research design, the present study determined the assessment competencies of selected teachers from Department of Education-National Capital Region guided by DepEd Order Number 42, Series of 2017 or the Philippine Professional Standard for Teachers (PPST). The study utilized survey questionnaire derived from the five strands of Domain Number 5, Assessment and Reporting of PPST. Respondents were 97 elementary and secondary teachers from the different public schools of National Capital Region using random sampling. Teachers showed moderate competency in the first, third, and fourth strands. Results indicated meaningful diverseness between elementary and secondary teachers' competence in assessment as well as between those who have more and less exposure to assessment trainings in terms of the second and fifth strands. Result of this study may be utilized by DepEd in designing professional development programs related to assessment for the teachers to be fully compliant with PPST's requirement and to become quality and effective teachers in the Philippines.

Keywords: Competency, Assessment, Competency in Assessment, DepEd Teachers, PPST

Introduction

Various reforms invoked by local, national, and international frameworks including globalization, ASEAN integration, the K to 12 Curriculum, and different changing characteristics of learners in the 21st century, needs refinement, advancement, and adaptability of education (PPST, 2017). This also calls for redefining and reexamining the current teacher standards.

A classroom teacher plays a significant role in attaining an improved quality of teaching-learning process, and in building a nation. It was mentioned in DepEd Order No. 36, series 0f 2013 that Philippine educational system can surely hone learners who are holistically developed imbued with good values, possesses the skills necessary in the 21st century, and able to push progress and improvement of the country through quality teachers (Department of Education, 2013). This department order is symmetrical with DepEd's dream to yield Filipinos who loved the country passionately, with skills and values that will allow full reflections on their capability, and help significantly in nation building. Great teachers are important in elevating student achievement that's why enhancing quality teachers ranks most importantly in the various reforms in educational process toward quality education.

One very significant element in teaching and learning process of education, is classroom assessment. It provides multiple good intentions such as giving information about the students' progress and learning, the quality of teaching, and accountability of program and institution. It is a procedure utilized in the class routine used by teachers for them to gather data or information about

the students' performance in the different assessment duties, given individually or through collaborations. By utilizing different methods and techniques in assessment, determining the full capability learners needed to achieve as well as the target instructional outcomes will be easier. Assessment is very necessary in curriculum implementation. This is highly emphasized in DepEd's policy in classroom assessment for basic education program. In the said policy, teachers are permitted to monitor the progress of learners and to modify their instructions consequently that's why assessment is also viewed to be one of those highly crucial phases of teacher's job.

The very aim of assessment is to improve learners in their learning that's why accurate assessment is always necessary. However, research validated weakness of teachers' assessment skills/competencies. In the preliminary report on what teacher preparation programs teach regarding assessment in K-12 released by the NCTQ dated March, 2012, it indicated the unpreparedness of teachers in using assessment effectively and make data-driven decisions (Doherty & Jacobs, 2015). Stiggins (2001) stated also that teachers and school administrator' literacy in assessment is low and this resulted to inaccuracy in assessing students' learning, thus preventing learners in reaching their full capability. Many teachers feel that they are inadequately prepared in meeting the assessment challenges and they are appealing for more seminars and trainings because they believed they're not that prepared in assessing learners.

Teachers have a very important and crucial function on assessment because of their responsibility in recording and reporting accurate and fair student learning, based on the variety of evidences from different contexts and applications. The development and validation of PPST in 2017 complemented actions on reform of quality of teachers. This policy (DO 42, s. 2017) enunciates what comprises quality of teachers with clearly stated domains, supported with strands, and concrete indicators which give specific means for suitable practice, productive engagement, and professional learning all throughout the career stages of a teacher.

PPST (2017) has seven domains for every career stages of a teacher. "Assessment and Reporting" is the fifth domain which consists of five (5) specific supporting strands. The first strand focuses on designing, selecting, organizing, and utilizing different strategies in assessment. Second strand is about the process on how teachers monitor and evaluate achievement and progress of learners. The third is about giving feedback to improve learning. This pertains to the process on how teachers provide learners' needed feedback on their learning outcomes. Fourth strand concentrates on how teachers communicate achievement, needs, and progress of learners to primary stakeholders. The last strand is about utilizing data on assessment for the improvement of practices and programs in teaching and learning.

Draganidis and Mentzas (2006) defined "competencies" as skills, knowledge, characteristics, mindsets, and the like which may result to a successful performance. The capability of a teacher to do classroom assessment is vital to have a good practice of quality assessment (Looney et al., 2018). It is a known fact that teachers' competency in assessment has a major task/function to successful school system's reforms and in adopting novel ideas in their instruction. In order for teachers to be highly competent in educational assessment, assessment should be regarded by teachers as their professional key, and always take this as part of a plan in teaching and learning. All teachers should always be mindful of the achievement of their students every after assessment. Always acknowledge their great works.

As mentioned by Barrios (2018) the interest in assessing and evaluating programs for teachers is increasing because of many reasons. One of these is the great reforms of curriculum and assessment in their country, and to be able to implement those, training is needed. Another reason is an increasing task/function given to teachers in assessing and grading the performance of learners. The evaluation that will be given to the students may affect their learning and even their future.

Lastly, in the context of the Philippines, education has an economic value because of its goal to contribute to the Economic Community of ASEAN countries and also to the growth of the country as a developing nation.

There has been a concern in our country about the unsatisfactory results in standardized national achievement test (NAT) and international assessments like the Programme for International Student Assessment or PISA. PISA measures ability in science, mathematics, and reading related to real-life challenges of 15 year-old students. In PISA 2018, Philippines ranked 2nd to the last in Science and Mathematics and ranked last in Reading. The result indicated the low quality of learning outcomes attained by students. The result of the National Achievement Test (NAT) for Fourth Year in School Year 2014-2015 with a passing rate of 49.48% although shows an improvement from the past years is still alarming. The Philippine Development Plan Target (PDP) is 65%. Further reforms involving assessment are needed in order to achieve higher achievement results of students in the NAT.

A good performance of a student academically is regarded necessary for a country to keep abreast in the developing economy of other countries. Measuring and assessing competency of teachers in assessment have been the main concentration for more than two decades (DeLuca et al., 2016). A quest for ways in refining competencies of teachers in assessment is being promoted for our country to be international and globally competitive.

Corollary to these, there is a compelling need for researcher to collect data from selected elementary and secondary teachers about their competency in assessment as well as the resulting comparisons among the variables. Results of this quantitative study It is highly anticipated that findings of this study will support for an in-depth understanding on teachers' competency in assessment and for the success of educational system

Methodology

This research utilized comparative descriptive technique to analyze meaningful contrast in the assessment competency of teachers. Using probability sampling, respondents of this research were the 97 randomly chosen teachers of elementary and secondary schools of DepEd-NCR. Thirty-one (31) respondents are teaching in elementary (Grades 1-6) while sixty-six (66) are handling secondary students (Grades 7-12). The questionnaire used contains the profile of the respondents and the adopted assessment competency tool based on the five strands of the fifth domain of PPST of DepEd. These strands include the following: designing, selecting, organizing, and utilizing different strategies in assessing; monitoring and evaluating achievement and progress of learners; giving feedback for the improvement of learning; communicating needs, achievement, and progress of learners to key stakeholders; and using assessment data for the improvement of practices and programs in teaching and learning.

After securing needed permission, the respondents were asked about their assessment competency through a five-point scale:

5   Very Competent
4   Competent
3   Somewhat Competent
2   A Little Competent, and
1   Not at all Competent

After one month, almost 90% only of the questionnaires were retrieved. This may be due in part to adherence to DO no. 9, s. 2005 reiterating increase engaged time-on-task measures of teach-

ers in the classroom, and the teachers were very busy in accomplishing different forms since school year will soon end. Confidentiality of teachers' responses is treated with utmost care.

Descriptive statistics were utilized for treatment and analysis of data. Mean and standard deviations were computed for the subscales of the assessment competency tool. Mean is the statistical tool used to determine the level of assessment competency. When respondents are grouped in terms of grade level and assessment trainings attended, t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to find out if significant difference existed.

Results and Discussions

This study aimed to determine competency in assessment of the selected DepEd teachers in National Capital Region based on PPST. Specifically, this study compared the competency level in educational assessment of DepEd teachers based on grade-level handled and exposure to assessment trainings. The data gathered were from ninety-seven (97) randomly selected elementary and secondary teachers of DepEd-NCR. Descriptive comparative technique was used which lead to the following results:

Table 1. Competency Level in Assessment of the Respondents

Assessment Strands	Elementary Teachers			Secondary Teachers		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Competency Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	Competency Level
1	3.48	.499	Somewhat Competent	3.43	.837	Somewhat Competent
2	3.38	.605	Somewhat Competent	3.54	.721	Competent
3	3.03	.470	Somewhat Competent	3.16	.538	Somewhat Competent
4	2.74	.566	Somewhat Competent	2.66	.635	Somewhat Competent
5	2.38	.548	A Little Competent	2.77	.622	Somewhat Competent

The assessment competency of teachers in elementary and secondary schools based on the first, third, and fourth strands are all verbally interpreted "somewhat competent". Teachers showed moderate competency in their process of designing, selecting, organizing, and utilizing assessment strategies. Similarly, they are moderately competent in feed-backing for the improvement of learning and communicating the achievement, progress and needs of learners to central stakeholders.

Meanwhile, on the second strand, elementary teachers acquired 3.38 mean, with a verbal interpretation "somewhat competent" while secondary teachers got a higher mean which is 3.58 and with verbal interpretation "competent". Teachers in secondary level are more competent than elementary teachers in terms of monitoring as well as evaluating accomplishments and growth of learners.

Moreover, there's a better competency level for the secondary teachers over elementary teachers on the last strand with 2.77 mean and verbal interpretation "somewhat competent" and 2.38 verbally interpreted "a little competent" respectively. Thus, secondary teachers are also more com-

petent in utilizing assessment data for the betterment of practices and programs pertaining to teaching and learning.

Findings of this study is similar to Mertler's (2003) result where he found that in terms of administration, scoring, and interpretation of assessment results, teachers were performing well. Similar results were found in the competency in assessment of teachers in United States (Plake, Impara, & Fager, 1993, cited in Mertler, 2003). However, these teachers are not performing well in communicating assessment results.

The result of this study is in contrast with the findings of Yeworiew (2017) where secondary school teachers were not successful in showing competence in doing educational assessment for students. Specifically, the said teachers have limitations in choosing, developing, administering, using and communicating appropriate classroom assessment. Generally, the findings pointed out that teachers do not have adequate knowledge in classroom assessment which could negatively constrain the quality of education in the region. A study of Lake (2014) also indicated a very disappointing poor teachers' competence in the educational assessment of student learning.

Stiggins (2014) pointed out that if we envision quality assessment with functional teachers at any instructional level, assessment utilization should be for the purpose of learning and as a means of effective learning which are both necessary but not similar. Teacher's failure to effectively perform both would find it hard to become effective in the classroom.

Table 2. Comparison in Assessment Competency of the Respondents based on Exposure to Assessment Training

Assessment Strands	P-value	Decision	Remarks
1	0.675	Do Not Reject Ho	Not Significant
2	0.014	Reject Ho	Significant
3	0.895	Do Not Reject Ho	Not Significant
4	0.616	Do Not Reject Ho	Not Significant
5	0.039	Reject Ho	Significant

The first, third, and fourth strands obtained a p-value of 0.675, 0.895, and 0.616 respectively. These p-values are higher than the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$), and failed to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, a significant difference in assessment competency of the teachers in terms of assessment training exposure was not evident. Similarly, the processes on how teachers design, select, organize, and utilize assessment strategies were not significantly different. Competency level in giving feedback and in communicating progress and needs of learners to stakeholders are also incomparable.

This is in contradiction to the study of (Yeworiew, 2017) where those who took measurement course and at the same time attending trainings obtained a significantly higher score compare to those who didn't.

On other hand, since the second and third strand both obtained a p-value (0.014 and 0.039) lesser than significance level ($\alpha=0.05$), null hypothesis was not accepted. Competency in assessment specifically on how teachers monitor and evaluate growth and accomplishments of learners and on how teachers utilize data in assessment for the enhancement of teaching-learning practices and programs is significantly different for those who have more exposure to assessment trainings than those

who are less exposed. Teachers who underwent more assessment trainings are perceived to be more competent in educational assessment than teachers with less or no training at all.

This result support findings in the study of Zhang & Burry-Stock in 2003 where teachers who are more exposed to trainings reported a high skill in assessment particularly in conducting standardized tests, utilizing varied achievement measures, revising tests, communicating assessment results and in improving instruction.

Teacher competency in classroom assessment has been listed as one of important topics in education and it occurs in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, there's a need for teachers to be prepared and competent when doing this job (Siti Salwa Md. Sawari, 2013). To be able to achieve high competence in assessment is not only the work of teacher alone according to Stiggins (2014) There's also a need to contribute from strong national, state and local educational leadership.

Table 3. Significant Difference in Assessment Competency of the Respondents Based on Level Handled

Assessment Strands	P-value	Decision	Remarks
1	0.275	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
2	0.03	Reject Ho	Significant Difference
3	0.242	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
4	0.579	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
5	0.004	Reject Ho	Significant Difference

As depicted on the table, the first, third, and fourth strands has p-values (0.275, 0.242, and 0.579) greater than the level of significance ($\alpha=0.05$). Consequently, it failed to reject Ho which means that whatever grade or level teachers are handling, their competency in assessment are incomparable.

Meanwhile, second and fifth strands of the assessment competency obtained p-values (0.03 and 0,004) less than the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. When respondents are grouped in terms of level handled, the competency level is significantly different particularly on how teachers monitor and evaluate progress and achievements of learners and on how they use data in assessment for the improvement of programs and practices in teaching and learning.

Stiggins and Conklin (1992) reported in their study that in terms of classroom assessment quality, concerns of teachers were different by grade levels. More focus was given on how to improve objective tests which were made by teachers in higher grade level.

Similarly, in Adams and Hsu (1998) study, teachers in higher grades gave more value in giving homework and teacher-made tests than the teachers in lower grade.

No new study has specifically examined DepEd teachers' competency in assessment utilizing the PPST Assessment and Reposting Domains specifically with comparison on Grade level handled.

Conclusion/Recommendation

Findings of this study implied that competency of teachers in educational assessment should be given focus and be analyzed seriously. This may provide information to teachers, schools, education offices, and teacher training institutions for the improvement and betterment of the teachers' skills in doing assessment.

In addition, results of this research may also inform teachers to improve their student assessment competence through lifelong learning. Schools and education offices may use the results as resources to plan a continuous professional development program if the goals of educational system such as quality education for all are to be achieved.

Elementary teachers need to undergo more trainings in monitoring and evaluating process to be updated always on learners' achievement and progress. There's also a need to check skills of the elementary teachers in using assessment data for the enhancement of their skills and practices in instruction and assessment.

Organize and expose teachers to various capability building programs, seminars, trainings, workshops and focused group discussion in educational assessment that could be attended by teachers regardless of their level handled and exposure to assessment training at least twice a year to have a venue to reflect on their competencies, share practices and get feedback for them to become more effective assessor of students learning. Teachers in every classroom should know the what, why, when and how of assessment that is of quality and be able to do effective communication of results.

Teacher training institutions may also consider reviewing their teacher education curricula to put emphasis on trainees' competence in educational assessment. Policy makers may also use this as resource for giving attention to student assessment skills in pre-service training. Moreover, the study may serve as a foundation for further consecutive studies in the area.

There is a need to conduct another study with a wider scope and more respondents that could further explain the status of the assessment competency of both public and private basic education teachers.

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