WHAT A CLASSIC RESOURCE CAN TELL US ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ASSESSMENT LITERACY

Overview

Sue Brookhart
September 14, 2017
Assessment Literacy Defined

Assessment is the process of gathering information about student learning to inform education-related decisions. Assessments can reflect a wide variety of learning targets using a range of methods serving many important users and uses at a variety of levels from the classroom to the boardroom. In this sense, assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process.

Our assessments work best in contexts of strong assessment literacy, and they fail us when assessment literacy is lacking. One becomes assessment literate by mastering basic principles of sound assessment practice, coming to believe strongly in their consistent, high-quality application in order to meet the diverse needs of all students, and acting assertively based on those values. The specific nature of those applications vary with one’s role in the educational process.

--National Task Force on Assessment Education for Teachers, 2016
Classic Resource
Purposes of the Session

• To show that historically, NCME has included scholars and practitioners who have been interested in classroom assessment.
• To use the case of *Educational Assessment of Students*, especially changes in its design and content, to illustrate changing conceptions of assessment literacy.
• To speculate about changing assessment literacy needs in the future.
WHAT A CLASSIC RESOURCE CAN TELL US ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ASSESSMENT LITERACY

Assessment Literacy

Sue Brookhart
September 14, 2017
The Existential Beginning
What these revelations said about my own assessment literacy as a teacher

• Basic quantitative reasoning
• Seeing assessment as a grade and a grade as a rating
• The importance of defining the construct – or even that there is a construct
• Seeing assessment as something done at the end of instruction
• Understanding the difference between norm- and criterion-referencing
Co-author of EAS from 5th ed.
Changes from 5th to 8th edition that speak to changing Assessment Literacy needs

- Formative assessment
- Feedback
- Reliability and validity for classroom assessment
- State standards
- Accommodations and modifications
- Technology
- Changes in the large-scale assessment landscape
- Removed the AFT/NCME/NEA 1990 Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students
Assessment Literacy research

Xu & Brown (2016)

100 studies, 3 themes

- **Knowledge and skills within AL** – establishing the knowledge base, measuring teacher assessment literacy

- **Assessment education and its relationships with various mediating factors** – preservice and inservice, studies of course content and effectiveness – “The underpinning assumption is that teacher AL would improve if pre- and in-service programs prepare teachers sufficiently and, if not, there must be some mediating factors that inhibit its effectiveness” (p. 19)

- **Contextual considerations in AL** – policies, structural conditions (e.g., power in institutions), teacher communities of practice
Formative Assessment (literacy) in teacher education
Brookhart (2017)

• International literature review, Pre-service and in-service
  “Many teachers, trained in teaching practices derived from transmission-based understandings of learning, have not made the switch themselves to an understanding that students need to actively construct learning... Skillfully implementing effective formative assessment practices requires a sea change in educators’ thinking, from ‘What am I going to teach?’ to ‘What will students try to learn?’.” (p. 929).

• Pre-service studies of courses and in field work/student teaching

• In-service studies of PD training, school-based projects, or assessment practices and beliefs

• Mixed results – Proofs of concept exist but are rare

• Changes in learning and assessment theories-in-use are needed – the “sea change”
Observations from my own work with teachers that speak to AL needs

- Learning theory and beliefs – from transmissionist to constructivist
- Repertoire of skills – knowledge is one thing, being skilled at applying it in practice is another
- The concept of evidence (student work as evidence of learning as opposed to compliance)
- The concept of criteria (learning criteria as opposed to following directions) and specifying criteria
- Basic quantitative reasoning (especially as applied to scoring)
- Basic verbal/qualitative reasoning (especially as applied to constructing assessments that yield evidence of student thinking)