

DEVELOPING A COMPETENT CLASSROOM ASSESSOR: A CASE STUDY OF AN EXCELLENT PRINCIPAL

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Abstract

Classroom assessment is a current trend of assessment. It helps the teachers to understand students learning process. In order to make the classroom assessment has its high reliability and validity, the classroom assessor must be competent. For this development process, school leader needs to play a crucial role. This study aimed to investigate on how an excellent principal develop their teachers to be a competent classroom assessor. Data were collected via semi structured interview and through analyzing documents related to the teacher's development program and analyzed thematically. The data collected can capture the stages taken by this excellent principal to develop teachers in order to make them to become competent. There are four main stages done by this principal to make sure all the teachers are managed to conduct classroom assessment. The four stages are, pre observation, gap analysis, instructional coaching and post observation. Previously all these stages are well explained in conducting instructional program, but through this study, researcher managed to identify all these stages specifically in developing classroom assessor. Since this study is only focusing on a task done by one excellent principal, it is suggested that in future research should be conducted in teacher's perspective. It will give more clearer picture on how classroom assessment process going on in Malaysian context.

Keywords: *Competent, Classroom Assessor, Principal, Assessment, Learning Process*

INTRODUCTION

Classroom assessment is a current trend of assessment that has been introduced widely. It is due to the need of on-going assessment and to enhance students learning. Most of the countries the world looking into the students learning process rather than seeing their end result. It is because the global need is more towards in developing students' character. Introduction to classroom-based assessment is mainly due to some lacking in traditional assessment method. Traditional assessment seems to compare students rather than looking into individual capability (Black & Wiliam, 2018). The main aim of traditional assessment is for grading purpose and compare student's achievement. In this current trend of education, students are having different ability and capability. In that case, traditional assessment is no more suitable to evaluate students learning progression.

The introduction to classroom assessment is more on developing student's knowledge based on progression. The assessment needs to be planned and done in a proper way to avoid any bias and looking into each student's capability (Wilson, 20180). For the purpose of this needs, many countries have come out with task force team in order to make sure the validity and reliability of classroom assessment are full filling the stake holders need. Many parties need to play their role in order to make sure students are evaluated according to the criteria given.

Malaysia also takes all these into consideration and well planned to implement classroom assessment concept. In year 2010 Ministry of Education has come out with newly designed curriculum named Standard Curriculum for both primary and secondary education. The introduction is mainly aimed to cater global needs where students need balanced development. Classroom assessment is not something new as teachers have been conducting many on-going while they are teaching. However, in current situation teachers need to master the method of doing assessment and developing learning evidence. This is because, classroom assessment needs proper assessment evidence followed by professional judgement to identify the student's achievement. Teachers need all input about student's progression in order to improve their teaching skills too.

Even though teachers are involved directly, but the role of school principal are seemed to be important too. Principal as an instructional leader must develop teacher's capacity especially in their teaching skills. With the introduction of classroom assessment, teacher's role is not only to develop teaching skills but to improve their assessment skills. In conducting classroom assessment teachers need to understand deeply the techniques of assessment (DeLuca, Coombs & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019). This will allow them to align the assessment method with the lesson. Principals' role seemed to be an important aspect in developing teachers' capacity in conducting classroom assessment. Teachers need on-going training and support in developing their knowledge and capability especially during the change in system (Liu & Hallinger, 2018). This research aimed to explore in depth on how an excellent principal are developing their teachers' skills in conducting classroom assessment as it is newly implemented. Furthermore, principal has to play a crucial role to make sure teachers' capacity are well developed in order to achieve students learning.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Teachers' development program is a part of educational development program. This is introduced in the system as teachers need to have a deep understanding of the current needs and changes in education system (Rathbun, Leatherman & Jensen, 2017). Recently many researches have been conducted into teacher's development program in Malaysia such as developing teachers' capacity in conducting English Oral Test, Use of technology in education, Standard Curriculum Knowledge Development and Models of Instructions. However, none of the research has been conducted into teacher's development program in classroom assessment area.

Classroom assessment is a new trend of assessment widely introduced together with the Standard Curriculum since 2010. In these 10 years, many improvements have been done by the stake holders based on teacher's voice on how they are implementing it. Through the standard document given, many information's regarding the suitable strategies that can be used has been mentioned. However, there is no data reported on the strategies used by teachers in conducting classroom assessment. Many teachers are still assuming classroom assessment as a test and they intend to use summative assessment method while conducting classroom assessment (Arumugham, 2020). This is due to the low level of understanding of classroom assessment concept.

Training only has been provided at the early stage of curriculum introduction and there is no on-going training provided for teachers. However, here come the principal role in developing teachers. As an instructional leader, principal need to observe, monitor and develop the teachers and make them align together with the current trend of national education policy. In these 10 years many new teachers came into system and no specific training giving to them. Failure in conducting proper classroom assessment will give a deep impact for students learning as strategies are very important in classroom assessment implementation (Tabuena, 2020).

Even though it has been past 10 years classroom assessment has been introduced in Malaysia, there is no research has been done especially on how a principal are developing the teachers to become a proficient assessor. Since there is no on-going training and many novice teachers, principal need to play their role in order to develop the teachers to become a classroom assessor. Principals are more depending towards training provided by stake holders rather than planning a training program (Szeto & Cheng, 2018). This raise a question to researcher on how teachers are being trained in school context in order to improve teacher's capacity to be a proficient assessor.

For the purpose of understanding on how a principal is developing a teacher, researcher chooses an excellent principal as a participant of this study. This is due to excellent principal must have their unique leadership in management school before they are promoted as an excellent principal. Due to this aspect, researcher chooses an excellent principal and intend to explore in depth on how this excellent principal is developing her teachers to become a proficient classroom assessor.

OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to:

1. Explore in depth the process of developing classroom assessor
2. Investigate the teacher's development program conducted to improve assessing capacity

METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to explore in depth on how this excellent principal is developing teachers to become a proficient assessor. For the purpose of deep understanding researcher used qualitative method. Qualitative method is mainly to explore in depth on the issues that the researcher is researching (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Furthermore, researcher need to be an instrument of the study as first-hand information needed from the participant. To gain first-hand information researcher need to conduct interview with the participant. For the purpose of getting deep information, researcher has conducted three times semi structured interview. Additionally, researcher also has examined some documents related to training program for the purpose of data validation.

Since there is only one excellent principal in this area, researcher made her as the one and only participant in this research. Qualitative research is more on exploring data rather than looking at number of participants. For this research one participant is enough as the participant can provide all information's needed to meet the research objective. Number of participants doesn't

indicate the meaning of research but the data reported is more prior as data will give the clear picture about the research (Pak, Desimone & Parsons, 2020). Furthermore, data that researcher gained from the semi structured interview has provided sufficient information how on she as an excellent principal has develop the teachers to be a classroom assessor. Number of the participant is not an issue as the data had saturated. For the purpose of secrecy, researcher did not reveal the real identity of this Excellent Principal and she was identified as Mrs. Benny for the purpose of this research.

Data that has been collected through interview and document analysis has been analyzed manually. Researcher has developed the themes based on the data and reported the finding according to the themes revealed. For the purpose of data saturation, researcher has interviewed for three times as it can enhance the validity of the data reported by the participants. Interviewing process is an important in qualitative research as it allows the researcher to dig the information thoroughly (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this research, researcher has the opportunity to interview the participants for three time and this allow the researcher to gain quality data.

Data were reported according to the themes. Researcher has look into some literature on teacher's development and some of the data revealed from this study looks similar to the previous findings. Comparison has been done and the final themes were identified and reported. The process of developing themes is very complicated and researcher need to study and understand their data followed by comparing the data to the previous study (Creswell, 2017).

FINDINGS

From the data collected there are four stages of developing the classroom has revealed. There are pre observation, gap analysis, instructional coaching and post observation. All these data were gathered via semi structured interview and through analyzing documents that related to teacher's development program especially in making them to become a proficient assessor.

Pre-Observation

Pre observation has been done to identify some early data regarding on how the teachers are conducting classroom assessment. At this stage, Mrs. Benny has been using an instrument provided by the stake holders to do classroom observation. There is a part in this instrument that indicates the quality of teachers conducting classroom assessment. There are six aspects stated in this instrument that is on planning, controlling, encouraging, enhancing, assessor and students as an active learner. This instrument also indicates deeply about all these aspects and the school administrators can look thoroughly on all these aspects in order to developing the teachers.

I will use SKPMg2 instrument to evaluate teachers and how they are conducting assessment in classroom. It is because, the 4.5 aspects clearly stated the need on how to become a proficient assessor. At the first stage I need to identify which aspects they need to be improved.

The purpose of this pre observation is to identify the area that teacher's need to be developed.

In this instrument, the 4.5 aspects are allocated for the school admin to look thoroughly on few items, such as the assessment strategies used by the teachers, students enhancing activity, enrichment activity, teaching reflection and assessing students' task. Teachers need to be

proficient in all these aspect in order for them to be a quality assessor. This is not only for developing the teachers' capacity in conducting classroom assessment but students benefit too. Through this instrument Mrs. Benny will do observation and identify the area that she needs to develop.

Sometimes, I just simply use the 4.5 aspect only. This is because, in this current situation my aim is more towards in developing teachers in classroom assessment method. So, when I enter the class, I will use this instrument to identify all the six main aspects stated in 4.5

Mrs. Benny aimed to improve teacher's competency in assessing students. Due to time constrain and Mrs. Benny focusing on 4.5 aspect as it is more relevant to develop classroom assessor. There are five actions that teachers need to take in order to meet a quality assessor criterion such as variety of assessment method, enrichment activity, homework, reflection and evaluation on the task. When doing pre observation, Mrs. Benny try to identify which area that teachers need to be improved. For the further action, she will do the gap analysis.

I need to identify, out of these five criteria, which area that they need for improvement. For that particular process I will analysis the classroom observation instrument so I can focus on the particular area.

The process of pre observation is mainly on identifying the area that needed to be improve. Based on the observation instrument provided by Ministry of Education (MOE), Mrs. Benny able deeply look into the gap that need to fill.

Gap Analysis

Based on data collected through pre observations, Mrs. Benny will look into all the aspects in the instrument and will analyze the area that need to be improved. As stated, all the five aspects will be her focus and among the five aspects and identify the action that must be taken for the improvement purpose. The analysis process is more on to identify the lack of classroom implementation process as this will allow teachers to upskill their capability to become a good assessor.

Out of these five aspects, I will identify which are I can help the teachers. Most of the teachers, I can identify that they are lack of skills mainly in using variety strategies in conducting classroom assessment and on how to do reflection based on the previous lesson. This data helps me to identify the need and plan an instructional program to help teachers to develop their assessing skills.

Mrs. Benny will do the analysis based on the aspects in the instrument. This will allow her to thoroughly identify the gap that making a teacher not to be a competent assessor. Based on the pre observation data, she will look into how many teachers are not competent in certain aspects and she will identify the most needed aspects that need to be improve. Through this process, she can plan for a quality instructional program that can improve teachers to conduct classroom assessment.

The main reason why I am doing this gap analysis is for me to plan the right instructional program. This is because, without knowing the need I am not able to provide proper training for teachers to enhance their classroom assessment skills. From this gap analysis, I can identify that teachers need for two mains are that is improvement for assessment strategies and doing

reflection towards their previous lesson.

From the gap analysis, Mrs. Benny manage to identify the major problem that is facing by teachers in order to conduct classroom assessment. Based on this, she will plan for a specify instructional program for teachers to upskill their knowledge in order to develop their strategies that they use to conduct classroom assessment and on how to do further action on improving students learning.

For me basically, teachers need to be advance in using variety of strategies to make sure they can evaluate students learning progress. For that purpose, teachers must have the capability to use many assessment strategies. They need to collect data, for teaching improvement and students learning process. For all these, teachers must have wide understanding on how to conduct classroom assessment.

From this process, Mrs. Benny manage to identify the gap that needed to close in order to develop a competent classroom assessor. Based on all these data, then she will develop the instructional coaching to make sure teachers are able to gain more info and develop their assessing skills. For her, this is the most important part to develop teacher's competency to become a proficient classroom assessor. The other two process that she had done is more on collecting data to identifying the area that she needs to develop teachers and the action that she needs to take for conducting instructional coaching. It is because, she prefers to develop assessing skill based on the competency that teachers need to develop. This process allows her to develop the particular competency.

Instructional Coaching

The data collected via classroom observation, will be used by Mrs. Benny to develop instructional coaching process. This is because, she needs data on which aspects that teachers need to be improved. In this part we will look on how she had done her instructional coaching to develop teachers assessing skills.

After I found the gap, I need to take further action to improve teachers' skills. This will make them to improve on that particular aspect. For this purpose, I will plan a program such as teachers development program. I created a WhatsApp group among teachers that have a same problem. Through this group I will share as much as strategies that they can use to conduct classroom assessment.

Mrs. Benny is using WhatsApp as a medium of communication to share information among teachers that she feels need additional coaching. Through this medium, she will share many classroom assessment strategies that she will gain through reading and online materials. By doing this she is sharing information to develop teacher's knowledge on the particular aspect as through gap analysis she knew already the aspect that teachers needed to be developed.

Besides, sharing materials I also will do individual coaching. This will help me to explain to the teacher about her strength and weakness. This will allow them to have better understanding about classroom assessment. For, this purpose I will always look at the assessment strategies used by teachers which stated in their daily lesson plan.

From the lesson plan, Mrs. Benny can identify the strategies used by teachers to conduct classroom assessment. This is because, in their daily lesson plan, teachers need to plan on how they are going to conduct classroom assessment. Through the lesson, Mrs. Benny can identify

how creatively teachers can manage their classroom assessment. This lesson plan is also a data for Mrs. Benny to look into the consistency of teachers using variety of assessment method in classroom. Through this data, Mrs. Benny manage to do personal coaching for teachers to develop their knowledge on variety of assessment strategies.

During, personal coaching I will explain to teachers how they should plan their classroom assessment. The first point is, they must look into their learning objective. The assessment strategies that they plan to use must be align with the learning objectives. Then, I will explain to them assessment strategies also must be align with the teaching methodology. I will coach them through their lesson plan.

Mrs. Benny coaching process is mainly on how teachers can align their learning objective with assessment strategies and teaching methodology. This is because, when teachers fail to have deep understanding on this aspect, they did not manage to conduct proper classroom assessment. Furthermore, this can cause low validity in the assessment data that they will reported. Mrs. Benny aim is more to make sure the classroom assessment has a high validity and reliability. Students need to gain what they deserve to get.

From time to time, I will have a coffee chat with my teachers to help me to get clearer picture on classroom scenario. I will ask them to share information regarding how they are conducting classroom assessment and they strategies that they are using. This sharing session helps me to gain the real classroom scenario. Apart from, that I can realize that teachers are also having problem on taking further improvement for students. For this purpose, I will look into students work book or portfolio.

Through the gap analysis, Mr. Benny identify that teachers also having problem in doing further improvement for students learning process. What is happening in the current scenario is if students did not perform well in any topics, teachers did not manage to do enrichment activity.

For this purpose, Mrs. Benny will do a observation towards students work book or portfolio to identify the enrichment process that done by teachers.

From the students work book, I can identify the level of enrichment activity done by teachers. For classroom assessment, if students are not able to achieve the minimum level, teachers need to plan for enrichment for the purpose of improvement. For this purpose, I will coach teachers to design the task according to the student's level.

Mrs. Benny also will coach teachers to design task for classroom assessment. She will guide them to develop assessment task according to level of students. Mostly, there are three different level of students such as weak, intermediate and advance. In this way, teachers can assess students according to their level. Additionally, teachers also can plan for the improvement activity for students. This is an important task as in conducting classroom assessment teachers must be competent in using accurate task to assess students. Through this coaching process, Mrs. Benny able develop teacher's competency in developing proper task for assessing students.

Post- Observation

The final stage of Mrs. Benny action towards teachers is to do classroom observation. The previous observation data was compared in order to see the improvement. After the coaching process, Mr. Benny did classroom observation. From this process, she can identify the

improvement from the teachers as she need to look into the two aspects that she coaches them. I will do classroom observation based on the instrument provided. Through this I can see the improvement done by teachers especially on the strategies done by them followed by on how they are doing learning improvement for students. These are the two aspects that I need to look deeper.

For the progression purpose, Mrs. Benny also will compare the data that she gathered during her pre observation. This is moreover to see the improvement process in two aspects that she feels like teachers are still having lack knowledge. During this process, she also observes on the strategies that she introduced followed by on how teachers are aligning with their teaching methodology and the learning objective.

Since guidance has been given, I can see the drastic changes on how teachers are conducting classroom assessment. They started to use many strategies and they can even align their learning objective together with assessment strategies. This process only can be done after I did my coaching.

Mrs. Benny can see the improvement done by teachers especially on how they are using variety of assessment strategies. When she compared the previous observation instrument, there is a tremendous change in the way teachers are conducting assessment. Teachers are more competent in conducting classroom assessment as they know how to validate the data they gathered from the assessment. Furthermore, they are able to take an action on how to do improvement for better learning process.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the data collected through Mrs. Benny, the process of developing teachers to be a competent assessor seems to the same process done by Abdulrahman, Nurulsari, Maulina, Rahman, Umam and Jermisittiparsert (2019) where school leader needs to play a crucial role. School leaders need to identify the area that teachers need to be develop. This is what done by Mrs. Benny where she finds out the gap in the instrument through analysis. From the analysis, she managed to find in details the competency that teachers need to be developed. After she find out the gap, then only she plans for the teacher's development program. The failure of teachers' development program is because the leader fails to find out the area for improvement. In this study, Mrs. Benny had done this part so that she is aware on what aspects teachers need for improvement.

Teachers' development program must be focusing in a small group as the issue for each teacher are different (Abeles, Weiss-Tornatore & Powell, 2021). This idea critically used by Mrs. Benny. When she was doing her coaching, she tried to tackle teachers personally. This is because, when she can tackle teachers personally, she knows what aspect that teachers need to improve. Even though she knows that, two main areas are assessment strategies and students learning improvement process, but for this particular aspect these teachers also need specification guidance. For this purpose, Mrs. Benny have checked their lesson plan and students' task so that she can give personal coaching for the teachers to make them to become competent classroom assessor.

The steps taken by Mrs. Benny shows that she is aware to improve teacher's competency in assessing students. Apart from giving information regarding improvement process, the best part that she played is in doing coaching. School leaders should couch the teachers as an instructional leader, school leaders need to provide instructional coaching for teachers to make sure they are competent. In this case, even though, Mrs. Benny is focusing on developing competent assessor, but it is still a part of instructional process. School leader's awareness is very important as this awareness will lead them to plan for essential teacher's development program (Prachagool & Nuangchalerm, 2019). Ideally, Mrs. Benny played an important role as an instructional leader to develop teacher's capacity in conducting classroom assessment.

This study revealed an important aspect on how to develop teacher's competency as a classroom assessor. However, there is a need to focus on teacher's perception too as this competency development process involved both parties. When both parties played their role then only the aim of the policy of program will be achieved. Due to time constrain, researcher only focus on how an excellent principal done her part as an instructional leader to develop teacher's competency to become a competent classroom assessor. It is suggested that, there is a need to explore teachers voice too to find out in details about their perception on developing their self to be a competent assessor.

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