

Abstract

Primary School Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment and their Assessment Practices in the Caroni Educational Division.

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Teachers' conceptions of assessment and their assessment practices were explored in language arts, mathematics and science. In addition, those factors which constrain the assessment practices of teachers, were also investigated. A mixed-methodology research design, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, was utilized in this study. A questionnaire was administered to all teachers involved with the Continuous Assessment Programme in the Caroni Educational District, Trinidad. Five teachers were subsequently selected and interviewed.

The findings of the study indicated that, teachers considered all assessment strategies as important and emphasized formative assessment. Assessment strategies, in which teachers were directly involved received the highest rating for importance, and were most frequently used. Portfolios, student journals and exhibitions, three of the newer assessment strategies, received the lowest rating for importance and teachers indicated they were least used.

Teachers, generally considered themselves as having adequate knowledge and training in assessment and assessment related matters. A number of misconceptions and a lack of consensus by teachers, about the use of some assessment strategies was however indicated.

Several constraints to effective assessment of students were also identified. These include a lack of resources, inadequate training, insufficient time for training of teachers, and assessing students in relation to an overloaded curriculum.

The findings also indicated that, teachers' conceptions of assessment are related to their assessment practices. Teachers' conceptions, however, appeared to interact with teachers' knowledge, training and contextual factors, to influence the assessment practices of teachers.