

Introduction

Assessment is not something that happens in isolation. It has a relation with the things that are taught (the curriculum) and how these are taught (teaching practices). In this essay the relation between these three elements are examined. This will be done by looking at each of the different combinations of these three elements.

Assessment and curriculum

The link between assessment and the curriculum is a clear one. Assessment practices should primarily focus in the content of the curriculum. However, this does not only include the formal curriculum but also the informal and hidden one. For the subject I teach (physics in high school) this means I have the expectation my students can perform certain calculations, even though I am not a math teacher. Nevertheless, my main focus is on the content of the specific content area when I develop a test.

Assessment and teaching

Although the direct link between teaching and assessment might be less direct than the other two relations discussed here, it is an important one. As I teacher I assess what I teach. I do not think it would be fair towards my students if I put a question in a test about something I did not thought them. This does however not mean I only test factual knowledge or that I teach to the test. The difference between my approach and testing only factual knowledge is that I ask questions related to the principles that were covered in the courses I teach. Teaching to the test is the opposite of what I do. Instead of letting a test dictate what I have to teach, I make my own tests based on my teaching (the use of standardised test is something that is only used very infrequently in the Netherlands).

Curriculum and teaching

As a teacher the curriculum is something extremely important. Not only is it your primary job to educate others (children, youngsters or adults), it is to learn them specific things. These elements of teaching are described (explicit or implicit, written or as part of a system of beliefs) in the various representations of the curriculum (formal, informal and hidden). Depending on the educational system a teacher operates in he/she has the ability to influence these levels. In a more centralized system teachers will have less influence than in a decentralized system.

Conclusion

In this essay the links between assessment, curriculum and teaching have been explored. Clear links were found between these three elements. In my opinion, only content that is in the curriculum can be assessed. However, this does not necessary have to be in the formal curriculum but can also be in the

informal or hidden curriculum. With regard to teaching and assessment one has to be cautious of teaching to the test as this limits the value of what has to be learned (luckily I do not have this problem as not standardized tests are used here). The final link between curriculum and teaching is also very obvious as teaching both shapes the curriculum but is also being dictated by it.