TEACHING FOR TESTS VS. TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Srinivasa Rao Idapalapati[i]
Assistant Professor of English,
University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia

Abstract:

A review of the opposing arguments with regard to the practices of assessment teaching/learning and the ideal of holistic teaching/learning in education leads to hypothesize that higher test scores in assessment learning also reflect the quality of learning and personalities that holistic education ideology advocates. The acquisition of holistic ideals is a qualitative phenomenon that is identifiable only through the behavior of an individual since the holistic concept involves the knowledge, skills and values required for citizens in making decisions that are responsible and democratic (Badjanova & Iliško 2015). In an effort to find out the extent to which 'scores in tests' in assessment learning reflect the quality of the behavior that holistic learning advocates, a study is taken up at an English Language Center (ELC) of a university with the participants from five different batches of students that attended English language programs of different levels and courses. A purposive sample of students that is divided into two groups, with 130 students in each, is taken up for the study. Group A contains the students that scored 70% and more in the previous summative tests and group B carries the students that scored between 50%-70% in the tests. A questionnaire that forms a Likert Scale was prepared in light of the holistic ideals delivered by Krishnamurti (1974; 1989) on education. The questionnaire was distributed to the groups of participants followed by personal interviews with them. The quantitative data analysis of the responses was done using SPSS and ANOVA soft wares to establish the study hypothesis, and a positive correlation between scores in assessment learning and holistic ideals is established.

Keywords: holistic education, learning, assessment education, value, and purpose of education

[i] Correspondence: email idasrini@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Assessment teaching or teaching for tests and holistic teaching or teaching for learning are the two views of teaching that have been under discussion for decades, and they are the views that educators and administrators are much concerned about. The assessment learning claims great practice-priority despite the early emergence and historical significance of the holistic learning as the primary type of education that has left a positive impact on the development, maintenance and in upholding the social, economic and cultural norms and values in the early ages of human civilization (Bhatta, 2009). The concept of assessment learning developed and spread faster, and has enjoyed a worldwide appreciation since its introduction in the Chinese imperial civil service, back in 2000 BCE (Miller, 2006). Holistic and assessment learning practices have various disparities in implementation and in the understanding of core values of learning. Assessment is the process of sampling large domains and processing skills that create an allowance for inference of student understanding of a part of the larger domain under exploration (Badders, 1962). Holistic learning in one way is the process of obtaining information based on a personal search for identification, meaning, and purpose in life that is achieved through the creation of connections with the communities, the natural world, and acquisition of humanitarian values such as peace and compassion. On the other way, holistic educational concept implies an effort to liberate students from the consciousness of their materialistic content and transform them into more independent and creative individuals. A holistic education system is governed by various values, virtues, and perceptions. A combination of holistic values and learning goals as they are usually set in assessment learning leads discussions worldwide on the issue of assessment criteria and standards, and on the necessity for gross-root-level changes in education.

Ausubel (1962) writes that education needs to develop the students towards learning by discovery. When learners establish objective correlation between their experiences and the new ideas that they intend to learn, the actual learning becomes meaningful and complete. The available assessment teaching learning practice has a range of implications at social, personal and administrative levels. The factors such as gender, disability, race, and age have their tacit contributions in assessment process and their practices, which necessitates a fresh understanding of the criterion referenced or norm referenced assessment practices that provide an avenue for future research in this regard (Brookhart, 2004).

Whether Assessment teaching is an improved form of holistic teaching approach, or a fast track approach of teaching to generate specific field experts that are devoid of the personality traits as they are advocated by holistic teaching philosophy, is a subject

that needs an in-depth exploration. When it is looked as an improved version of holistic-teaching approach, to what extent the educational approach incorporates the ideals of holistic philosophy becomes a question of inquiry.

2. Literature Review

2.1 History of assessments

According to Miller (2006), examinations came into practice first in 2000 BCE in the Chinese imperial civil service. The examinations were essential requirements for those in the economic or political wish list. The assessment lasted for two days, and was considered as a direct pathway to political control by the emperor. The Chinese adopted the Machiavellian system for the adult education. Machiavellianism is "a strategy of social conduct that involves manipulating others for personal gain, often against the other's self-interest (Wilson et al, 1996, p. 285)." In the 19th century, the examination was elevated to a tool processing the rewarding and elevation abilities. The issuance of leaving certificate commenced in the year 1872 in Scotland; a situation that changed significantly from the Comprehensives to Higher Still (Miller, 2006). Bloom et.al (1956) developed a framework of learning objectives to be achieved by instruction. The framework comprises cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains with each of them divided into different stages. The framework was brought forth in order to bring about uniformity in measuring the levels of achievements of the students at different universities by exchanging the test items developed by the faculties of different universities (Krathwohl, 2002). In the view of Forehand (2010), Blooms' scheme of classification of the processes of thinking and learning is the first measuring tool of thinking that teachers can use in measuring their students' achievement after a period of instruction.

According to Bloom (1967), testing is both a pride and despair. It is a pride because it provides clarity on what we know and also because it's widespread in the fields of psychology and education. Willis (2007), comments on the difference between the assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Willis holds that assessment for learning is a pedagogical practice that aims at improving learner motivation, mastery of the content to be learnt and learner autonomy while assessment of learning implies the summative grading of the learners and the ownership of the learned content that is judged based on how it is displayed in the learners' voice of the content. The assessment practice and principles discuss the scope, terminologies, and classification of the evaluation process and methods pointing out the most effective styles and approaches. The purpose of assessment is to support learning by providing all partners

with sufficient, dependable information and feedback for informed judgments, decisions and choices useful to plan and improve further leaning.

In the view of William (2013), assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning. Formative assessment is the assessment for learning, which is a powerful way of improving learner achievement. Formative assessment attracts increased interest in research, classroom practice and education policy as an assessment that has the potential for guidance in teaching and learning processes. Qualifier exams and eleven plus are examples of the latest entrant of assessment in the universities and other private schools. The core use of formative assessment is to guide teachers and students in the learning process, to acquire information related to the achievement levels of students, and to observe the learners' skills and abilities for improvising teaching practices. This shows the correlative nature of teaching and learning that displays the aspect of reciprocity with regard to the process. Diagnostic assessment is an assessment for learning style identification, the primary purpose of which is to diagnose or check the viability of the curriculum (Hammerman, 2009). Assessment of scientific inquiry capabilities can provide the teachers with a useful tool of measuring the achievement levels of learning objectives (Zachos, 2004). The assessment of scientific enquiry capabilities can be done by structured enquiry that facilitates the students with direct interaction with the natural phenomenon being observed and learned.

Montgomery & Connolly (1987) write about the norm-referenced and criterion referenced assessment tests. They mention that norm referenced tests are designed to measure the performances of individuals in relation to their counterparts in a group while the criterion referenced tests are designed to measure the individual performance of a student in relation to a specific set of skills or in relation to a specific domain of information. The criterion-referenced tests are linked to instructional objectives and are designed to assess continual improvement in the performances of individuals. The primary use of criterion-referenced tests is to measure the mastery levels of specific skills with the test items usually created based on known objectives that are associated with the tasks of interest. Norm-referenced tests are usually the standardized tests that aim at differentiating high and low level achievers and award a grade or percentile that refers to the overall achievement level in comparison with the other students in a group. To put it in brief the criterion-referenced tests are more akin to formative tests and norm-referenced tests are closer to summative tests.

Achievement tests and standardized tests become incomplete for two reasons (Koretz, 2008). One reason is that they measure only a subset of skills and goals of education. Some important educational goals such as the motivation to keep learning, tendency to team work, application of theoretical knowledge in the relevant real-time situations, ability to critical thinking and problem solving are not compliant with

standardized tests. The second reason is that the tests, as samples of behaviors for analyzing and measuring the mastery of skills and knowledge, proves to be very small when compared to the immensity of the domains of knowledge and skills. The latest developments with regard to teachers' accountability to their students' learning achievements caused the educational shift from compliance-based accountability systems towards results-based accountability systems that are described as the value-added models (VAM) of teacher assessment (Murphy, 2012). As the VAMs are completely based on standardized tests and students' scores in assessing teacher effectiveness, prominence to standardize achievement tests relatively increased, and some educators started arguing that VAMs are completely disregard the holistic ideals and give preference to only scores.

2.2 Values in holistic education

Underhill (2006), points out that there are two primary schools of thought with regard to the process of learning. On the one hand, the behaviorist school of thought holds that learning is a process of conditioning. The learners are conditioned to particular behavioral patterns and responses by consistently being subjected to some kind of stimulus to which they keep responding for some kind of reward. On the other hand, the cognitive school of thought views learning as a process of observation of the environment, categorization of the observed, and formulation of generalizations for future actions

Krishnamurthy (1989) provides an interesting version of education. For him education is freedom from fear. People in every society are all afraid of many things. They are afraid of being isolated, losing jobs, losing friends and families etc. People are someway or other programmed and conditioned by cultures, societal norms and rules that imply the fear of losing them. All the people keep acting under such fear and confinement. Once people can break out of those confinements, they start thinking about the reality of their existence. The objective of education must be to help the students become fearless, free of all kinds of conditionings and the psychological programming. It's only when they become fearless they are able to think about the reality of life, they are able to understand the process of life and become integrated and holistic personalities that can live in peace. Krishnamurthy (ibid) further states that learning happens through observation of life. Learning doesn't necessarily happen under a particular teacher, philosopher, or guru. Learning can happen through anything viz. a dead leaf, a bird on flight, a tear, the smile of a woman etc. Life itself is a great teacher.

Krishnamurthy (1974) emphasizes that the present education system all over the world is busy in producing the citizens that can fit well into the world of patterns of

values. The patterns of values are all about money, position, prestige and power. Schools, religious institutes, parents and society norms drive the students towards being conditioned to become a suitable personality that can fit into the frame work of the values. Education is to learn how to look at what the books say. It is about how to listen and find the truth in what the books say. The real education is not just to pass or score high in exams and settle in a high pay jobs. It is in creating a new culture in which there is no greed, envy, jealous or ambition. The real education is about carrying oneself away from the stream of social, religious, cultural and economic activity. To be sucked into that stream is destructive and putting oneself into the existent world of chaos and disorder that is due to the greed, ambition, jealousy, enviousness etc. The goal of education must be to help the students to get away from this chaotic stream, find the truth of their existence, observe the processes of life and create a culture that is free of all the chaotic conditions where order prevails with all the fearless and totally independent people.

Nielsen (2006) summarizes Steiner's (1997) concept of imaginative teaching, which in their view is a key to the holistic development of children. Imaginative teaching is the pedagogical transaction of imagination that can be achieved by triggering the imagination of the learners in different means viz. dramatization, routinization, story creation and narration, managing discussions and exploration of the content of teaching etc. According to Steiner (ibid), imaginative teaching unravels the inner potential of the students and steers them towards understanding the purpose and meaning of their existence in the world. To put it in brief, imaginative teaching bridges the gap between the students' consciousness of the materialistic world that they are living in and their other world where they can see themselves as individuals.

Holistic education cultivates on the rules of morality having an aspect of wholeness in the religious humanity impetus. The minds behind the mechanistic utilitarian rationality that lead to the development of smart gadgets are holistic despite their attention is drawn much towards the uncontrollable technical and economic growth. Holistic education qualities include wisdom, insight, scientific thinking, intuition and appreciation of beauty (Forbes, 2004). The holistic learning develops mentally depending on the environment of learning. The holistic learning is described as having the qualities of spiritual ultimacy and sagacious competence.

The aim of ancient Indian education system was to ensure the fitness of students in terms of their usefulness to the society and life as whole, and to develop them into pious society members. The essence of education is not to lead a self-centered life, but about being consistently aware of their obligations to the society. The purpose of education is to build up great character, practice righteousness and enlighten the other members of the society towards their duties to keep their societies peaceful and

meaningful. Built on the most important governance idea of perfection, the development of the soul and mind was paramount. The ultimate objective of education is to help individuals grow in the harmony of certain large universal qualities that could build a higher type of manhood. The most essential human values obtained from the ancient Indian holistic education are trust, courtesy, dignity, respect, and honesty (Bhatta, 2009). As an outcome of the theory of Indian knowledge of life and death that form the whole truth of life, the goal of education is to understand the values of life that clearly differentiates the "*material and the mortal, the physical and the spiritual, and the perishable and the permanent*" (Mookerji, 1989). p. XXii). Education in India stared in the Vedic period and has been in two systemic forms. One is Brahminical system of education that is regulated by religious values, and the other one is the Buddhist form of education that is secular in nature (Choudhary, 2009). Higher education in ancient India was considered as an important agency of social change and transformation.

3. Research Methodology

Retracing the past online bibliography records for having access to works, major reports, large research projects and units relevant to holistic and assessment learning helps in creating the questionnaire required. Administering questionnaire to both assessment and holistic education experts, within the given area of the study under consideration, followed by face-to-face interviews provides the data for analysis. Extensive use of internet for searching the relevant materials on the assessment and holistic learning methods with the aim of making a track of the references provided in the bibliographies, and helping in the acquisition of e-learning materials and other internet based sources. Make the summaries of each of the relevant articles that help in comparing the assessment and holistic learning ideals easier. Carrying of survey is also considered as a data collection method used to obtain accurate and unbiased information from respondents in the learning sector in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses of the obtained information were carried out through ANOVA and SPSS application to come up with a clear display of information under analysis A stratified random sampling was used since there are various schools in the area with some teaching elementary level English language, some more teaching intermediate level while others are dealing with advanced levels of English courses. This sampling approach involved creating groups known as strata. The targeted population in this study was all English language students from different levels from which the final two groups were taken off based on their scores in the previous standardized tests.

The data collection process uses qualitative data collection techniques. These techniques facilitate the collection of different sets of data depending on the variability

of the data attributes. The primary data collection method is the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises 15 Likert items with five choices; strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly disagree. All the responses carry the points based on the choice of the response on a 1-5 scale. The questionnaire was used in the interviews followed by the distribution of the questionnaire. The pros of the method are that the questionnaire directs the people being interviewed to certain qualitative issues that are important in the study while the quantitative part of the study is done by the analysis of the data collected. Hiding the respondents' identities reduces the biased responses as it avoids the possibility of developing biases due to the discussions on the questions with the known participants.

4. Data Quality Control

The use of methods that guarantee the quality and precision of data from a given source is known as quality control. The credibility of the data collected was improved by keeping the collected materials in archives for further review. Data quality control is a concept usually applied in the product manufacturing field where the best strategy to prevent data contamination is to get the data independently keyed by two data entry operators that would be verified by computer (Edwards, 1998). Adopting the concept of the data quality control, the reliability and validity of the information is this study is ensured by checking multiple research works available online.

4.1 Quantitative or Qualitative data analysis

Since the error margin of the confidence interval has an effect on the sample size, large sample size is important because it minimizes the error when making conclusions about the study. Large sample size increases the level of confidence and hence the validity and reliability of the data. The area of the study has about ten faculties with about 100 students in each and the questionnaire was distributed to anyone randomly. To get the correct number of the sample, the best method of calculating sample size is necessary. The 95% of the confidence level is appropriate. At this confidence interval Z_α (0.05) =1.96. Minimum margin error selected is therefore 1.96, which ensures that the survey carried out gives the accurate information about the study. From the information selected, it is easy to calculate the needed sample size.

To ensure the accuracy of the data, 95% confidence level was considered. This value dictates the sample size needed to represent the target population. 95% CI implies that the marginal error equals 1.96.

$E = \sqrt{(p(1-p))}/n$ the value of n can be generated (n refers to sample size used in the survey.)

$$ME = Z\sqrt{\frac{p(1-P)}{n}}$$

Where, p is the prior judgment of the right value of p, while n is the sample size. The analysis is based on two-tail Z test thus marginal error equals to 0.025. This value gives Z=1.96. The value of p = 0.3. Making the sample size n the subject of the formulae, we get:

0.025 = 1.96($\sqrt{(0.3*0.7)}$/n)

(0.021/n) = (0.025/1.96)^2

Therefore n = 1291

Thus, the sample size needed is about 1300 respondents. Thus in order to make the ideal for the statistical purpose the sample size 130 is multiplied for 10 times and taken the sample as 1300 in each group.

4.2 Quantitative data analysis

After collecting the data in the form of the responses to the questionnaire that is provided in the appendix below, the statistical data was recorded in, excel spreadsheet before being transferred to the SPSS for analysis. The means of the holistic ideal acquisition rate of Group A and Group B are recorded as 61.5 and 58.433 respectively.

The acquisition rate depicted a range of 3.07 marks. The deviation between the two groups was 15.9778 and 16. 6024 for Group B and Group A respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group-B (scores between 50%-70%)	1300	27.00	90.00	58.4333	15.97775
Valid N (list wise)	1300				

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Group-A (scores above 70%)	1300	40.00	98.00	61.5000	16.60235
Valid N (list wise)	1300				

After carrying out the ANOVA analysis, the F-statistics was equal to 5.8129, which leads to rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between scores that

differentiate high and low achievers and the acquisition of holistic ideals in education. Therefore, the analysis leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis- there is a significant difference in the acquisition of ideals of holistic ideals between high scoring and low scoring students. It shows that high scoring students in general acquire the holistic ideals also much better than their low scoring counterparts.

Table 3: ANOVA

Group B

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	285667547	670	426369.47	5.8129	.899
Within Groups	45475600	620	73347.74		
Total	340143147	1290			

4.3 Qualitative data analysis

The results obtained after carrying out the SPSS and ANOVA tests lead to a clear description of the rejection of the null hypothesis and upholding of the alternative hypothesis. Statistical analysis of the data has shown that acquisition of holistic education ideals in assessment learning educational set up is to some extent reflected in the scores of the students in standardized tests. The results imply that the students that score high in standardized tests tend to acquire holistic education ideals also much better than those that score low. A range of 3.07 marks is worth noticing considering the other factors held constant such as the ethnic composition of the student population, environmental location and conditions around the school and the possibility of physically challenged students within the student population. The holistic ideals acquisition rate of Group A has a standard deviation of about 0.7 points; a variation that shows a clear correlation between the implications of scores in standardized tests as an indicating factor holding all others factors constant. The significance difference of 0.899 at a 95% confidence level is a clear indication of nullification of the entire null hypothesis through a considerable degree of confirmation that is above the margins of doubt or biased probability. The study results made a direct implication that most educational institutions have absorbed the test for learning criterion of education through performance evaluation as the primary means of reaching the academic goals. Out of 300 respondents, only 50 considered the importance of holistic learning as a separate and different learning faculty while the rest settled for the most acclaimed method of performance and assessment learning. Although many respondents in interviews mention about the importance of holistic education ideals, none of them are quiet certain about what the definitiveness of the holistic education concept as well as about how to cultivate and foster the concept.

5. Conclusion

Holistic learning and assessment learning methods of education are said to be the two most important in the educational environment. Each of the two learning strategies has a significant role in influencing knowledge required in any society. Assessment leads to the establishment of a comprehensive and robust research, through the provision of sound and logical principles and theories; a goal that can be achieved in various means of research in assessment (Miller, 2006). Despite being incomplete and unsatisfactory regarding human behavior and life traits, exploration confirmed that assessment is a thorough way of accomplishing academic perfection and prosperity holding other human values constant making the bulk of realities behind of assessment burden. Holistic learning on the other end has created management structures that have successfully fostered healthy, happy and responsive organizations. Holistic schools are sufficiently flexible, mixed age and abilities and small in capacity creating a pathway for class transfer at different times, which is an economic merit since the level of knowledge is gauged by the degree of intelligence reflected in performance and provision of the life-related solution and not just in assessments such as examination. Holistic education schemes have great proclamation for respect due to its uniqueness in encouraging individual non-conformist thinking and decrying hierarchy (Bhatta, 2009). *"If you now begin to think, to observe, to learn, not from books, but learn for yourself by watching, listening to everything that is happening around you, you will grow up to be a different human being (Krishnamurthy, 1974. p.16)"*.

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Appendix: Questionnaire/Likert Scale for Holistic Educational Behavior

Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Neutral (N)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)

1. When I'm in studies, I focus much on learning not on scoring more.

2. I'm learning English to obtain better employment opportunities after my studies.

3. When I score low in tests, I feel that I'm inferior to others.

4. When learning something I always think whether I can use the knowledge to improve my career.

5. I love and respect all life in the world and I support every living thing in leading its life in its own way.

6. I know that we all eventually die and we need to live in integrity and peace, and support each other to live in peace and to know the truth about our life and existence.

7. I don't compare my achievements and scores with others, and keep doing what I can do and score for myself.

8. I always think that I'm the most important and keep working towards projecting myself greater.

9. I understand my responsibilities towards the society; the environment and my fellow members of the society that I live in and I wish all of them have a completely independent life.

10. I love, encourage and support the freedom, creativity and peace of all the human beings in the world irrespective of the religion, race, complexion, region and nationality.

11. We all would like to become experts in some field so that we can utilize the expertize for earning more money.

12. I'm aware that I'm conditioned by my parents and by the norms of the society that I live in, in order to become an employee with higher payment and an obliging citizen who doesn't think beyond the norms of the society.

13. I know that I'm different from all others, and so I think that I have a different way of life that is completely different from what the people around me advocate me.

14. The world is in complete disorder with hatred, wars, intolerance, greed, enviousness, exploitation and so on. I believe in the ideal that people all over the world need to be enlightened about the ephemerality of life and their achievements and carry them towards freedom and peace.

15. I believe in the imminence of human death and as a responsible human being I keep cultivating and fostering peace and happiness in the human world, leaving pursuit to materialistic possessions.