Assessing Assessment Texts: Where is Planning?

Review of the Literature: Knowledge of Assessment

Despite the wealth of research on assessment, less is known about the guidelines or strategies for assessment planning recommended by textbook authors for preservice teachers. To address this gap, we engaged in a content analysis of Classroom Assessment textbooks to identify common recommendations for assessment planning. Preservice & practicing teachers seem most knowledgeable on issues related to administering, scoring, and interpreting test results and least knowledgeable on how to communicate results or develop valid grading procedures (Impara & Fager, 1993; Mertler, 2004). Much of this practical preparation is left in the hands of cooperating teachers who may not be well-versed in the conceptual bases of classroom assessment (Black et al, 2010). Thus, these novice teachers may need to rely on assessment texts for key information.

What is Assessment Planning?

Sample: 27 texts about K-12 general classroom assessment directed to preservice teachers.

Analysis: Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Step 1: Initial conceptualization and text preview
Step 2: In-depth Analysis of Assessment Planning Chapters (9 texts)
Step 3: Code reduction, theme generation and description

How is assessment planning addressed?

Method of Inquiry

Analysis: Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Step 4: Analysis and review of texts without planning chapters (IRR 64% agreement); each instance coded as mentioned, elaborated, or how to.
Step 5: Analysis and review of non-planning chapters in textbooks with planning chapters
Calculation of Frequencies, Percentages, and Data Displays

Findings

Assessment Planning Themes: 9 Planning Chapters

1. Alignment
2. Assessment purpose & type
3. Reliability and validity
4. Writing goals and objectives
5. Planning specific assignments
6. Unpacking
7. Overall assessment plan
8. Other

Assessment Planning Themes: 27 Texts Depth of Coverage

Most Used Themes - Depth of Coverage
Least Used Themes - Depth of Coverage

Discussion

Assessment Texts seem to...
- Lack a clear focus on Assessment Planning
- Demonstrate variation in depth of coverage with little focus on “how to”
- Lack theoretical connections to the type of practices that are addressed

Limitations

- Text selection, omitted potentially informative texts...
- Our conception of Assessment Planning was developed based on 9 Chapters. Another approach to answering this question could have yielded different results.

Implications

We identified 8 Themes related to Assessment Planning that can be targeted for instruction and elaboration. Further the lack of how to explanation in texts suggests that teacher educators must make up for this in their instruction.