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Exploring Assessment Literacy among English Teachers at Middle School Level

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Abstract- The study explored the middle-level private and public-school English teachers' assessment literacy in Rawalpindi city. A total of 188 teachers participated in the survey, comprised of questionnaire. For each group i.e., public and private school teachers in Rawalpindi, 94 participants were randomly selected. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Results showed that most middle level teachers of both private and public-school teachers did not report having a good understanding of using and developing assessments. It is also indicated in the survey that private school teachers have comparatively better assessment knowledge, assessment practice and assessment communication.

Key words: Assessment Literacy, English Teachers, Middle School Level

I. INTRODUCTION

Students' assessment is one of the most crucial jobs of a teacher. According to Plake, 1997), conducting quality assessments in class room is imperative for teachers. In fact, teachers who are successful in their field, give almost 50% of their time to the activities that are related to assessment.

There is a great need in the 21st century for teachers to be competent enough to use a range of techniques and methods when assessing their students. Teachers should be skilled so that they fulfill the students' need of broader comprehension and skills, whether the assessments are conducted for summative or formative purposes (Bloom, 1971; Griffin, 2012; Heritage, 2013; Shute, 2008; Scriven, 1967 & William, 1998).

The term" Assessment Literacy" is described as the knowledge and skills of teachers so that they can plan, manage, infer and relate the outcome of assessments precisely and efficiently (Boyles, 2005; Malone, 2008; Stiggins, 1999 & Taylor, 2009). According to Fletcher (2012), original efforts to characterize assessment literacy for teachers was primed by the American Federation of Teachers in 1990 and it incorporated competencies in "selecting and developing assessments for the classroom,

administering and scoring tests, using scores to aid in instructional decisions, communicating results to stakeholders, and being aware of inappropriate and unethical uses of tests" (Fletcher, 2012, p. 115). However, the existing research on classroom assessment reveals that teachers obtain little training in this area, depend on conventional paper-and-pencil tests, and are deficient in the level of skills required to design effective assessments (Guskey, 2003; Stiggins, 2012; Webber & Luppart, 2011; Waugh & Gronund, 2012;). Research also shows teachers usually conduct assessments for summative purposes using inadequately designed, objective paper and pencil tests (e.g., multiple-choice tests) that merely assess students‟ one-dimensional knowledge and skills (Bol & Strage,1992; Greenstein, 2004; Marso & Pigge, 1993; Oescher & Kirby, 1990). It has also been acknowledged that such badly planned tests can lead to exterior learning, consequently creating a disparity between assessment applications and teaching and learning objectives (Binkley et al., 2012; Griffin et al., 2012; Heritage, 2013; Rea-Dickins, 2007). Teachers have little knowledge about assessment and live in the" blissful ignorance" (Pophum,2014).

In Pakistan, like other parts of the world, there has been little research in the field of assessment literacy. Moreover, people are of the view that teaching does not require any expertise (Akhtar, 2013). Assessment has been a debatable issue in Pakistan for some time now (Bhatti, 1987; Greaney & Hasan 1998; Mirza, 1999; Naqvi, 2002; Rehmani, 2003). In Pakistani educational system, failure is regarded as disgrace which makes the promotion to next class, the only goal of education rather than acquiring any real knowledge (Erfan, 2000).

it is established by World Population Foundation (2009) that the educational policies that exist in the public sector of Pakistan are of poor quality in a way that the teachers are very firm, focusing on general content only and their lessons are deficient in student-centered activities. Commonly used teaching methodologies insist on rote learning (Elaine, 2005).

Assessment methodologies used in Pakistan are incapable of evaluating the real capabilities of the students. A study undertaken by UNESCO (2007) criticized the prevailing assessment system in Pakistan claiming that it is incapable of achieving its main objective, i.e., teaching children the basic skills. This is due to the fact that teachers are not properly trained and because of poor management and administration. There, however, is little research in this area in Pakistan. Despite the fact that this study has been undertaken at a specific educational level, the findings will contribute to the general understanding of classroom assessment literacy in educational set up. It can also make a contribution to the improvement in classroom practices.

Objectives of the Study

To measure the assessment literacy level of private and public school English teachers working at Middle schools of Rawalpindi city using first two standards, out of seven Standards, devised by American Federation of Teachers in 1990 to find out the Teachers' Competence in the Educational Assessment of Students. These seven standards are as followed:

1. Teachers need to be expert in choosing appropriate techniques of assessment.

2. Teachers need to be expert in developing suitable assessment techniques for making decisions related to instructions.

3. Teachers need to be expert in administering, scoring and interpreting the results of assessment.

4. Teachers should know how to use results of assessment while they are making decisions about students, teaching plans, curriculum formation and school progress'.

5. Teachers need to know how to develop sound grading measures during assessment'.

6. Teachers should know how to communicate the result of assessment with students, parents and other teachers.

7. Teachers should be expert in recognizing inappropriate, illegal and unethical methods of assessment'

Research Question and methodology

This study sought to answer the following question.

1. What is the assessment literacy level of English teachers teaching at Middle schools according to first two standards devised by American federation?

This research mainly used quantitative research method to explore the assessment literacy level among English teachers' assessment literacy.

The sample of this research was English teachers working in middle schools of both private and public sector in Rawalpindi city. Sample was collected through purposive sampling. Sample consisted of 94 private and 94 public school teachers. Both male and female English teachers were included in the study. Survey method was used to collect data. The questionnaire used in the survey had six demographic questions, asking teachers for information about themselves and the training that they attended, and fourteen selected response questions. Data were analyzed using SPSS. In order to find out the assessment literacy level of teachers, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The difference between private and public teachers' assessment literacy was explored using t-test.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study explores the assessment knowledge of the middle level English teachers at both private and public schools of Rawalpindi city. To investigate this question, the researcher used Instrument entitled Assessment Literacy Inventory for Classroom Educators (A.L.I.C.E) which is aligned with seven standards, devised by American Federation of Teachers in 1990.

II. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

This research explores middle level English teachers' assessment literacy level with the help of the instrument named "Assessment Literacy Inventory for Classroom Educators. The tool was created by Gutierrez (2014). Consent to use and modify the tool was taken from the author via email. The instrument comprises of 14 items (from 7 to 20) exploring teachers understanding and practice of assessment. This tool is aligned with the seven Standards for Teacher Competence in the Educational Assessment of Students (AFT, NCME, & NEA, 1990). These seven standards offer an insight into the skills that teachers require.

2.1 Data Analysis

Once the administration of the survey was done, the collected data was made ready to be analyzed. The collected data was then entered in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22) for analysis. Responses were coded numerically. Each response was coded to numerically represent the response provided, logged on a spreadsheet, and then transferred into SPSS 22 statistical software used for the analysis. According to Lareau (2000), quantitative research "adds to our knowledge in a critical way" (p. 229). For the descriptive analysis of quantitative data, frequency, percentage and mean were used. Categories of responses and generated themes were developed to analyze open-ended questions. To answer the question of the research, data is analyzed based on frequency, total n and mean.

2.2 Analysis of Teachers' Assessment Literacy

The analysis of teachers' assessment literacy level is done with the help of the data that has been collected using the instrument, which is based on the seven standards of assessment literacy. Results are graded according to total n, percentage and mean, using descriptive statistics. Separate tables are used to recapitulate data, to show the assessment literacy of both public and private teachers (aligned with each of the seven standards). Table 4.1 shows the alignment of the items of the scale with that of Standards for Teacher Competency in the Educational Assessment of Students.

2.3 Analysis of Choice and Understanding of Assessment Concepts

According to standard 1, teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions. Survey item 7 addresses the frequency with which teachers utilize a given assessment strategy (see Tables, 1.1 & 1.2). Likert scale from "1 to 5" where "1" stands for "A few times each year", "2" stands for "about once a month", "3" stands for "about once every two weeks", "4" stands for "about once a week", and "5" stands for "multiple times each week", has been used. The analysis of the data collected for Standard 1 is analyzed in the following table.

Table 1.1
Public School Teachers' Use of Assessment Strategies

	A few Times Each year N(%)	About once a month N(%)	About once every two Weeks N(%)	About once a week N(%)	Multiple times each week N(%)	N/A N(%)	Mean
Oral response	8(8.5)	6(6.4)	9(9.6)	12(12.8)	57(60.6)	1(1.1)	4.09
Textbook Provided items	2(2.1)	9(9.6)	10(10.6)	35(37.2)	29(30.9)	3(3.2)	3.81
Paper and pencil test	3(3.2)	16(17.0)	11(11.7)	27(28.7)	33(35.1)	3(3.2)	3.67
Written essays	5(5.3)	18(19.1)	17(18.1)	31(33.0)	22(23.4)	1(1.1)	3.47
Spontaneous-Performance Assessment	11(11.7)	16(17.0)	16(17.0)	22(23.4)	24(25.5)	3(3.2)	3.25
Self-developed assessment	6(6.4)	24(25.5)	16(17.0)	21(22.3)	22(23.4)	3(3.2)	3.22
Structured-Performance	11(11.7)	12(12.8)	17(18.1)	19(20.2)	23(24.5)	9(9.6)	3.04

Assessment							
-Graded Homework	5(5.3)	12(12.8)	14(14.9)	17(18.1)	22(23.4)	23(24.5)	2.68
Rubric or rating scale(s) (teacher observed)	7(7.4)	23(24.5)	13(13.8)	13(13.8)	19(20.2)	18(19.1)	2.57
-Assessment borrowed from a colleague or your department	34(36.2)	20(21.3)	7(7.4)	10(10.6)	9(9.6)	13(13.8)	1.94
-Rubric or rating scale(s) (peer or self-assessment)	11(11.7)	21(22.3)	15(16.0)	8(8.5)	7(7.4)	29(30.9)	1.81
Projects	25(26.6)	16(17.0)	11(11.7)	11(11.7)	4(4.3)	26(27.7)	1.66
Publisher developed assessments	21(22.3)	15(16.0)	15(16.0)	3(3.2)	8(8.5)	31(33.0)	1.59
Portfolio	28(29.8)	16(17.0)	8(8.5)	8(8.5)	4(4.3)	29(30.9)	1.46
Online assessments	6(6.4)	2(2.1)	8(8.5)	2(2.1)	3(3.2)	72(76.6)	.61

In the table presented above, "oral response" (M = 4.09), "textbook provided items" (M = 3.81) and "paper and pencil test" (M = 3.67), are the items having highest usage frequency for public school teacher. Ranked at the bottom of the list are "publisher developed assessments" (M = 1.59), "portfolio" (M = 1.46) and "online assessments" (M = 0.61). Similarly, previously used Likert scale from "1" to "5" for public school teacher's assessment strategies is also used for private school teachers. Table given below expresses the frequency by which private school teachers reported the use of assessment strategies in their classroom.

Table 1.2

Private Teachers' Usage of Assessment Strategies

	A Few Times Each year	About once a month	About once every two Weeks	About once a week	Multiple times each week	N/A	Mean
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	
Oral response	4(4.3)	1(1.1)	5(5.3)	12(12.8)	72(76.6)	(00.0)	4.56
Textbook Provided items	2(2.1)	10(10.6)	10(10.6)	29(30.0)	38(40.4)	4(4.3)	3.85
Paper and pencil Tests	1(1.1)	10(10.6)	18(19.1)	35(37.2)	38 (28.7)	1(1.1)	3.80
structured Performance Assessment	3(3.2)	10(10.6)	21(22.3)	35(37.2)	24(25.5)	1(1.1)	3.68
spontaneous Performance Assessment	8(8.5)	10(10.6)	12(12.8)	39(41.5)	25(26.6)	0(0.0)	3.67
Written essays	6(6.4)	13(13.8)	26(27.7)	34(36.2)	11(11.7)	2(2.1)	3.27
Self-developed Assessment	8(8.5)	21(22.3)	15(16.8)	37(39.4)	12(12.8)	1(1.1)	3.22
Graded home-	7(7.4)	11(11.7	13(13.8)	28(29.8)	23(24.5)	11(11.7)	3.17

Work						
Rubric (Teacher observed	7(7.4)	29(30.9)	10(10.6)	18(19.1)	24(25.5)	4(4.3)	3.12
Rubric (Peer or self Assessment)	15(16.0)	18(19.1)	20(21.3)	21(22.3)	9(9.6)	9.(9.6)	2.61
Portfolio	14(14.9)	29(30.9)	10(10.6)	16(17.0)	11(11.7)	13(13.8)	2.38
Projects	21(22.3)	28(29.8)	15(16.0)	10(10.6)	7(7.4)	9(9.6)	2.19
Assessments bor- Rowed from Colleagues	15(16.0)	18(9.1)	19(20.2)	11(11.7)	10(10.6)	21(22.3	2.15
Publisher-Developed Assessments	17(18.1)	21(22.3)	13(13.8)	9(9.6)	13(13.8)	20(21.3)	2.14
Online assessment	14(14.9)	13(13.8)	7(7.4)	7(7.4)	5(5.3)	47(50.5)	1.23

The responses of public-school teachers discussed before table no 1.1, are similar to some extent with responses of private school teachers (see table No 1.2). In case of private school teachers, "oral response" (M = 4.56), "textbook provided items" (M = 3.85) and "paper and pencil test" (M = 3.80) are the items having highest usage frequency. Ranked at the bottom of the list are "assessments borrowed from colleagues" (M = 2.15), "publisher developed assessments" (M = 2.14) and "online assessments" (M = 1.23), which means that both public and private school English teachers still use traditional methods more often than the innovative or alternative methods.

Survey item 12 (see Appendix-A) addresses the teachers' understanding of assessment concepts (see table 1.3 for public school teachers and table 1.3 for private school teachers). For this item, Likert scale has been modified, i.e. "1" stands for" no real understanding", "2" stands for "little understanding "3" stands for "fair understanding", "4" stands for" good understanding" and "5" stands for" highly proficient understanding. Table given below reports the public-school teachers' understanding of assessment concepts. These findings are presented as reported by the participants themselves.

Table 1.3

Public Teachers' Understanding of Assessment Concepts

	No Real Under-Standing N(%)	Little Under-Standing N(%)	Fair Under-Standing N(%)	Good Under-Standing N(%)	Highly Proficient Under-standing N(%)	Mean N(%)
Measures of central tendency	5(5.3)	22(23.4)	35(37.2)	19(20.2)	12(12.8)	3.12
Reliability	8(8.5)	13(13.8)	36(38.3)	34.(36.2)	2(2.1)	3.10
Standard scores	7(7.4)	22(23.4)	30(31.9)	26(27.7)	7(7.4)	3.04
Grade equivalent	11(11.7)	13(13.8)	36(38.3)	29(30.9)	4(4.3)	3.02
Performance assessment rubrics	9(9.6)	21(22.3)	35(37.2)	15(16.0)	11(11.7)	2.98
Errors of measurement	14(14.9)	21(22.3)	31(33.0)	17(18.1)	11(11.7)	2.89
Percentile ranks	14(14.9)	21(22.3)	22(23.4)	32(34.0)	3(3.2)	2.88
Grade level cut scores	11(11.7)	22(23.4)	34(34.0)	24(25.5)	4(4.3)	2.87
Dispersion	15(16.0)	25(26.6)	19(20.2)	24(25.5)	8(8.5)	2.84

In the above table, regarding understanding of public-school teachers' assessment concepts, the overall means for any of the items do not reveal a highly proficient understanding. "measures of central tendency" (M = 3.12) and "reliability" (M = 3.10), are the assessment concepts for which public teachers

feel most proficient. Ranking at the bottom of the list are, "grade level cut scores" (M = 2.87) and "dispersion" (M = 2.84).

Similar to the reported understanding of assessment strategies by public-school teachers, the reported understanding of private school teachers' is presented in the table given below.

Table 1.4

Private Teachers' Understanding of Assessment Concepts

	No Real Under-Standing N(%)	Little under-Standing N(%)	fair under-Standing N(%)	Good under-standing N(%)	Highly proficient under-Standing N(%)	Mean
Grade equivalent	7(7.4)	13(13.8)	31(33.0)	30(31.9)	8(8.5)	3.21
Standard scores	8(8.5)	19(20.2)	23(24.5)	32(34.0)	9(9.6)	3.16
Reliability	12(12.8)	10(10.6)	30(31.9)	31(33.0)	9(9.6)	3.16
Performance assessment rubric	5(5.3)	19(20.2)	34(36.2)	28(29.8)	6(6.4)	3.12
Measure of Central tendency	14(14.9)	23(24.5)	13(13.8)	32(34.0)	11(11.7)	3.03
Errors of Measurement	16(17.0)	14(14.9)	29(30.9)	23(24.5)	10(10.6)	2.97
Dispersion	16(17.0)	13(13.8)	34(36.2)	24(25.5)	6(6.4)	2.90
Percentile Ranks	13(13.8)	20(21.3)	30(31.9)	24(25.5)	6(6.4)	2.89
Grade level Cut scores	9(9.6)	25(26.6)	31(33.0)	23(24.5)	5(5.3)	2.89

Discussing the above-mentioned data, the "grade equivalent" (M = 3.21) and "standard scores" (M = 3.16) are the assessment concepts for which private teachers feel most proficient. Ranking at the bottom of the list are, "percentile ranks" (M = 2.89) and "grade level cut scores" (M = 2.89). Hence, looking at both tables, we can observe certain trends appearing. The items reported at the bottom, i.e. least used and understood, are quite similar in both public as well as private school teachers. The lack of discussion, standardization and understanding of strategies is quite apparent in both public and private school teachers regarding assessment methods.

2.4 Analysis of Teachers Skills of Developing Assessments

According to standard 2, 'Teachers should be skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions. Survey item 8 (see Appendix- A) addresses teachers' relative understanding of assessment development (See Table 1.5 for public school teachers and Table 1.6 for private school teachers). In the Likert scale "1" stands for "no real understanding", "2" stands for "little understanding "3", "stands for "fair understanding", "4" stands for "good understanding" and "5" stands for" highly proficient understanding".

The table given below presents the data regarding public school teachers' understandings of assessment development.

Table 1.5

Public Teachers' Understanding of Assessment Development

	Little Under-Standing N(%)	Moderate Under-standing N(%)	Good Under-Standing N(%)	v. good under-standing N(%)	Excellent Under-Standing N(%)	N/A N(%)	Mean N(%)
Teacher observation (s	1(1.1)	7(7.4)	34(36.2)	26(27.7)	22(23.4)	2(2.1)	3.60
-Paper-and-	5(5.3)	10(10.6)	35(37.2)	25(26.6)	16(17.0)	1(1.1)	3.37

pencil tests)							
-Self-developed assessment(s)	4(4.3)	16(17.0)	36(38.3)	13(13.8)	22(23.4)	2(2.1)	3.29
-Written essay	4(4.3)	16(17.0)	37(39.4)	20(21.3)	15(16.0)	2(2.1)	3.21
-Graded homework	3(3.2)	19(20.2)	27(8.7)	20(21.3)	17(18.1)	6(6.4)	3.12
-Spontaneous performance assessment	6(6.4)	20(21.3)	29(30.9)	28(29.8)	6(6.4)	0(0.0)	3.09
-Structured Performance assessment	11(11.7)	16(17.0)	33(35.1)	19(20.2)	13(13.8)	1(1.1)	3.04
-Project(s)	4(4.3)	12(12.8)	31(33.0)	25(26.6)	9(9.6)	11(11.7)	2.89
-Oral response(s)	15(16.0)	13(13.8)	45(47.9)	11(11.7)	9(9.6)	0(0.0)	2.85
-Rating Scale(s) (teacher observed)	8(8.5)	18(19.1)	32(34.0)	16(17.0)	10(10.6)	8(8.5)	2.76
-Rating scale(s) (peer or self-assessment	10(10.6)	18(19.1)	27(28.7)	14(14.9)	12(12.8)	10(10.6)	2.71
-Modify an assessment(s) borrowed from a colleague or your department	12(12.8)	15(16.0)	35(37.2)	13(13.8)	10(10.6)	9(9.6)	2.65
-Portfolios	4(4.3)	29(30.9)	24(25.5)	18(19.1)	3(3.2)	14(14.9)	2.40

In the above presented table "teacher observation" (M = 3.60), "paper and pencil tests" (M = 3.37) and "self-developed assessment" (M = 3.29) are the highest in frequency for public teachers. Ranking at the bottom are, "rating scale" (peer or self-assessment) (M = 2.71), "assessment(s) borrowed from a colleague or your department" (M = 2.65) and "portfolio" (M = 2.40). The items ranked low such as "borrowing" and "peer assessment" show lack of mutual sharing and discussion of assessment knowledge, which, if used correctly, can be quite beneficial for teachers.

Similar to the data presented above in table 1.5, the table given below takes into account the private school teachers understanding regarding development of assessment methods.

Table 1.6
Private Teachers' Understanding of Assessment Development

	Little Under-Standing N(%)	Moderate Under-standing N(%)	Good Under-Standing N(%)	v.good under-standing N(%)	Excellent Under-Standing N(%)	N/A N(%)	Mean N(%)
Paper and pencil test	4(4.3)	10(10.6)	22(23.4)	25(26.6)	30(31.9)	3(3.2)	3.62
Teacher observation	6(6.4)	7(7.4)	32(34.0)	21(22.3)	27(28.7)	0(0.0)	3.60
Oral questioning	3(3.2)	7(7.4)	34(36.2)	28(29.8)	21(22.3)	1(1.1)	3.57
Self-developed assessments	4(4.3)	14(14.9)	20(21.3)	33(35.1)	22(23.4)	1(1.1)	3.55
Spontaneous Performance	2(2.1)	14(14.9)	30(31.9)	27(28.7)	20(21.3)	0(0.0)	3.53

assessment							
Projects	5(5.3)	13(13.8)	25(26.6)	26(27.7)	22(23.4)	2(2.1)	3.44
Structured Performance assessment	4(4.3)	15(16.0)	31(33.0)	22(23.4)	20(21.3)	0(0.0)	3.42
Written essays	4(4.3)	20(21.3)	19(20.3)	29(30.9)	20(21.3)	1(1.1)	3.41
Graded homework	2(2.1)	17(18.1)	25(26.6)	22(23.4)	24(25.5)	4(4.3)	3.39
Rubric (teacher observed)	6(6.4)	17(18.1)	30(31.9)	25(26.6)	13(13.8)	2(2.1)	3.17
Rubric (Peer or self Assessment)	6(6.4)	12(12.8)	33(35.1)	23(24.5)	14(14.9)	5(5.3)	3.13
Portfolio	8(8.5)	17(18.1)	34(36.2)	22(23.4)	9(9.6)	4(4.3)	2.95
Modify assessments Borrowed from colleagues	6(6.4)	19(20.2)	30(31.9)	14(14.9)	17(18.1)	8(8.5)	2.93

In the above presented table, "paper and pencil tests" (M = 3.62), "teacher observation" (M = 3.60), and "self-developed assessment" (M = 3.55) are the highest in frequency for private teachers. Ranking at the bottom are, "rating scale" (peer or self-assessment) (M = 3.13), "portfolio" (M = 2.95) and "modify assessments borrowed from colleagues" (M = 2.93). The results show that more focus is given to the personal judgment of teachers as compared to standards of assessment. Thus we may assume from the results that public school teachers as well as private school teachers, focus more on paper and pencil tests, observations and oral tests. They both seem to ignore the peer assessment, rubrics and portfolios.

III. Findings and Conclusion

The rationale of this study was to observe the existing assessment practices of middle level private and public-school English teachers in Rawalpindi city and to find out whether any difference exists between private and public-school teachers' assessment knowledge, assessment practices, and assessment communication. This was done by creating an alignment between teachers' reported assessment practices and the Standards for Teacher Competence in the Educational Assessment of Students (1990). A good deal of the research on assessment, preceding this study, was done from students' point of view, but less research is done on teachers' assessment knowledge and their practices. This study tries to fill this gap and describe the assessment literacy of middle level English teachers regarding their own daily practices.

IV. Discussion

This study adds to the body of research, by exploring teachers' assessment practices as reported by themselves. This study seems to verify the studies conducted by Guskey (2003), Waugh, Gronund and Stiggins (2012) teachers mostly use traditional methods like paper-and-pencil tests, text book provided items etc. and that they lack necessary skills that are required to develop useful assessments. My study also affirms Guskey (2003), Waugh and Gronund (2012) and Stiggins (2012), that there is a great need for well programmed teacher trainings to increase knowledge of assessment. This also confirms the result of Bol, Stephenson, and Nunnery (1998), Shepard (2000), and Stiggins and Chappuis (2011), that increasing teacher's assessment knowledge should be a continuing learning process for them. This study also affirms Phye's (1997) results, there are approximately as many grading systems in middle schools as there are teachers. This study supports the viewpoint of Greenstein (2004) and Sun and Cheng (2013) that teachers consider not only academic achievement factors but also non- achievement factors like students' self-esteem, motivation and effort in determining the course grades and in giving these grades. Earlier research has pointed out that teachers mostly have difficulty in inferring standardized test results (Impara et al., 1991), that they have insufficient understanding in defining and scoring performance measures

(Stiggins & Conkin, 1992), and that they are not skilled in communicating assessment results (Plake, 1993). This study also supports the findings of Guskey (2012) and Shulman (1980) that most teachers use assessment results mainly to allocate grades and communicate success of students to major stakeholders (parents/guardians) and to offer students information for their self-evaluation although there is a need for use of constant formative assessments to test students' understanding.

V. Recommendations for Future Research

Although there are few limitations of this study like firstly, it is a self-reported survey secondly, the sample has been collected from one city only, thirdly, the sample of participants is small which can affect its generalizability, however it provides a useful glimpse into the assessment practices of private and public-school systems. In future, researchers can explore the assessment literacy of teachers in other cities of Pakistan. They can also draw a comparison between rural and urban schools of Pakistan to see what differences may exist there. Researchers may also wish to explore the assessment literacy of teachers in other educational levels like secondary and primary levels. Researcher can also pursue this study with a detailed qualitative portion to probe deeper into teachers' reasons for using different grading practices and to find out their problems for not incorporating performance assessment more frequently into their daily classroom routine. Future researchers can use several methods of data collection like analysis of teacher-made tests, classroom observation and teachers' grade books to authenticate teachers' self-reports.

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