The Classroom Teacher’s Role in Digital Assessment

Testing is very much a part of educational history. Assessment has its roots in antiquity, going back to such educators as Confucius (Cummins, 1983). Modern-day standardized tests, however, have their origins in the work of Alfred Binet who sought to understand “the nature of intelligence as a single well-defined construct” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 363). Influenced by Binet’s work, Lewis Terman developed the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test in the early 1900s (Gallagher, 1985). In the ensuing years, tests became standardized. Popham (2011) defined a standardized test as a “test designed to yield either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced inferences, that is administered, scored, and interpreted in a standard, predetermined manner” (p. 308). Tipps, Johnson, and Kennedy (2011) noted that although standardized testing has been a part of schools for many years, the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 placed more emphasis on standardized test scores than had previously been the case. With the introduction of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative in 2009, 44 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Activity (DoDEA) have adopted the CCSS (National Governors Association and Council of Chief School Officers, 2014). With this initiative comes the requirement that the method of assessment must match technological skills needed by students in the 21st century; therefore, states that have adopted the CCSS have committed to using computers to administer the standardized tests by the 2014 – 2015 school year (Schaffhauser, 2011). As technology advances, the interaction and adaptation made possible through digital environments will directly influence how tests are designed (Mislevy, Behrens, DiCerbo, Frezzo, & West, 2012). Because assessment design is compatible with game design (Mislevy, et al., 2012), the tests will have the look and feel of playing a computer game. Tucker (2009) posited that technology-enabled assessments “present complex, multistep problems for students to solve, and they collect detailed information about an individual student’s approach to problem solving” (p. 49). Thus, educators will be able to assess students’ ability to apply critical thinking to complex situations (Tucker, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

This descriptive research study aims to explore teacher perceptions and teacher preparation for online standardized testing as required by the Common Core State Standards.

Research Questions

How do teachers perceive the implementation of online testing for the Common Core Standards? Are teachers adequately prepared to administer digital standardized tests?

Methodology
Participants will be given a qualitative survey at the beginning of the 2014 – 2015 school year, before the implementation of online testing. The survey will explore teacher perceptions and teacher preparation for online testing of Common Core State Standards. A follow-up survey will be administered to the same teachers in the spring of 2015 to determine if there have been any changes in their perceptions of online testing. The follow-up survey will also allow teachers to consider whether they were adequately prepared for online testing. They will also be asked whether or not their students possessed sufficient computer skills to be successful testing in the online environment. As qualitative research is emergent in design, in the second survey, teachers will be asked to note any other issues related to online testing that were not covered in the initial survey. Data will be organized according to like themes (Creswell, 2012).

Results

As this study is ongoing, the results are yet to be determined.

Implications

As this school year will be the first year that students in Georgia will be assessed according to Common Core State Standards via online testing, this study will add to the literature regarding the teacher’s role in online assessment.

Recommendations/Conclusions

Recommendations and conclusions will be determined at the end of the study.

References


