A Study of the Use of Classroom Assessment for Learning in Secondary Schools in Nairobi Province

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ABSTRACT

Learning and assessment are inseparable and the need for assessment that aids learning herein referred to as the assessment for learning cannot be over emphasized. Assessment for learning, which is “the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to identify where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there” elicits important data on the progress made by learners and could be instrumental in the development of effective assessment systems. This study purposed to establish the purposes for which teachers administer classroom tests beyond the theoretical, determine the frequency of testing and the extent to which it appropriately matches the use of the resulting data in the process of assessment for learning, describe how feedback is used to facilitate student learning and ascertain factors that may affect teachers’ use of classroom assessment for learning.

This was done by use of a survey questionnaire administered to a sample of teachers in secondary schools in Nairobi Province in mathematics, science and humanities. The results of the study were discussed in the light of principles of assessment for learning. Teachers were found to assess students mainly for the purpose of diagnosing students’ problems and the frequency of testing did not match the purpose of testing as well as the appropriate use of resulting data. The results reveal a lack of school administrative policies that support assessment for learning, inadequate training of teachers in aspects of assessment for learning especially in the appropriate use of assessment results and feedback to students, availability of time and teaching workload as the factors that affect teachers’ use of assessment for learning. The methods used to assess learning outcomes in students were also found to be deficient of a number of desirable qualities coupled with a lack of established evaluation programme that would ensure sustainable change in learning.