

Healing assessment trauma: an experience of mutuality in Action Research

Reynaldo O. Cuizon

Abstract: Learning assessment is a pedagogical reality such as in teaching professional education courses with preservice education students. Assessment problems like horrifying and boring test papers must be addressed because these cause trauma to learners. Using an Action Research Method, I subjected my test materials to democratic critiquing and enhancement process, taking-into account the experiences of my learners and the viewpoints of my colleagues as my study participants. Said materials were utilized as my pedagogical action to address student assessment animosity. The results made me discern that though the contents of my test papers were aligned with the learning outcomes defined by the Commission on Higher Education, they were merely words and sentences in monotone appearance and thus, not eye-catching. Consequently, I crafted a Holistic Written Assessment Guide (HWAG) ensuring in test paper construction the pedagogical values of multiple intelligences, learning taxonomies, grammar review necessity, proper coverage and level of difficulty sequencing and marking, and time-number of items balance. Utilizing this new form and substance of my learning assessment material and engaging with it turned out to be liberating thus mutual healing to me as a transformed purveyor of education, to my students as healthy collaborators, creators and ultimate beneficiaries of learning, and to educators in the global environment as inspirers of democratic, equitable, and lifelong education. With this mutuality, this paper potentially enables leaders of nations to engage in the transformation of the pedagogical landscape.

Keywords: Healing from assessment trauma, test material enhancement, experience of mutuality, action research

Sanando el trauma de la evaluación: una experiencia de mutualidad en la Investigación Acción

Resumen: La evaluación del aprendizaje es una realidad pedagógica en contextos tales como la enseñanza de cursos de educación profesional para estudiantes de magisterio. Es importante hacer algo en relación con problemas de evaluación tales como los tests horripilantes y aburridos porque generan traumas a las personas en proceso de aprendizaje. Utilizando una metodología de Investigación Acción, expuse mis tests a un proceso de crítica democrática y mejora, considerando las experiencias tanto de las personas en proceso de aprendizaje como de mis colegas. Dichos materiales constituyeron mi acción pedagógica para gestionar la animosidad de los estudiantes ante la evaluación. Los resultados me hicieron ver que, aunque los contenidos de mis tests estaban alineados con los resultados definidos por la Comisión de Educación Superior, eran simplemente palabras y frases de apariencia monótona y, en consecuencia, no llamaban la atención. Consecuentemente, preparé una Guía Holística para la Evaluación Escrita (GHEE), asegurándome que los tests tenían en cuenta los valores ped-

agógicos de la multiplicidad de inteligencias, las taxonomías de aprendizaje, la necesidad de revisar la gramática, cobertura y nivel de dificultad adecuadas de las secuencias y puntuaciones, y el equilibrio entre el tiempo disponible y el número de ítems. Utilizar estas nuevas forma y substancia de mi material de evaluación del aprendizaje y comprometerme con ello resultó ser un proceso liberador y mutuamente curativo, tanto para mi como educador, como para mis estudiantes y colaboradores, creadores y últimos beneficiarios del aprendizaje. También puede ser liberador para educadores en el contexto global que quieran ser inspiradores de una educación a lo largo de la vida democrática e igualitaria. Con esta mutualidad, este artículo podría, potencialmente, ayudar a los líderes de distintas naciones a comprometerse en la transformación del panorama educativo.

Palabras clave: curación del trauma de la evaluación, mejora de materiales para tests, experiencia de mutualidad, Investigación Acción

Rationale

Learning can be traumatic. Conversely, trauma hinders learning. Learners, either in micro or macro classrooms, often succumb to learning assessment trauma. Neither they nor their teachers can face it alone and not even the world can impose what the curative measures are. The healing action tried out in this study was mutually experienced by the learners, the teacher, and the educators in the global learning environment radiating with the sustainable development goals for education.

This study explores on what shapes the assessment trauma in learners and what mechanism is adaptable to address it. It appreciates the insights of the teacher and students being both instigators and beneficiaries of learning emerging from their assessment trauma and sharing healing experiences. Correspondingly, their healing is imperative to the attainment of the global targets for quality education. Hence, this study does not only determine assessment trauma as a classroom problem and create a curative response to reverse its devastating effect on learners, but also attempts to spread the healing experience instigated by democratic action in a minute educational classroom to a traumatic global educational environment.

In drawing out the viewpoints and insights emerging from experiencing the problematic learning assessment, from observing how it shatters learners, and acknowledging the healing effect of Holistic Written Assessment Guide undertaken as intervention, this study applied and consequently attested the value and usefulness of so-called first, second and third person dynamism of Action Research. In this venture, the dynamics of mutuality is articulated along the processes of diagnosing the problem, action planning, taking-action, evaluating the action, and specifying learning. These processes were undertaken by 37 students as direct study participants, the teacher as the researcher, and 3 invited co-teachers as process observers.