

Criteria-Based Assessment in Kazakhstani Mainstream Schools: Teachers' Perspectives and Experiences

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AGENDA

1. Background

2. Literature review

3. Methodology

4. Findings

5. Conclusions

6. Recommendations

Background

If used properly, **assessment can affect the process of learning as well as students' outcomes in a positive way** (Crooks, 1988; Xavier & Mehta, 2006)

In 2016, the Ministry of Education and Science started nationwide reform in Kazakhstani secondary education which included systemwide modifications in content, instruction, and assessment.

Lack of studies in this area produced a rather serious gap leading to disputes on CBA applicability to mainstream schools, which could be interpreted as a sign that further research in this field is necessary and might provide insight into the issues of CBA implementation in mainstream schools.

Research question

- Main question

What are mainstream schoolteachers' perspectives on and experiences with criteria-based assessment?

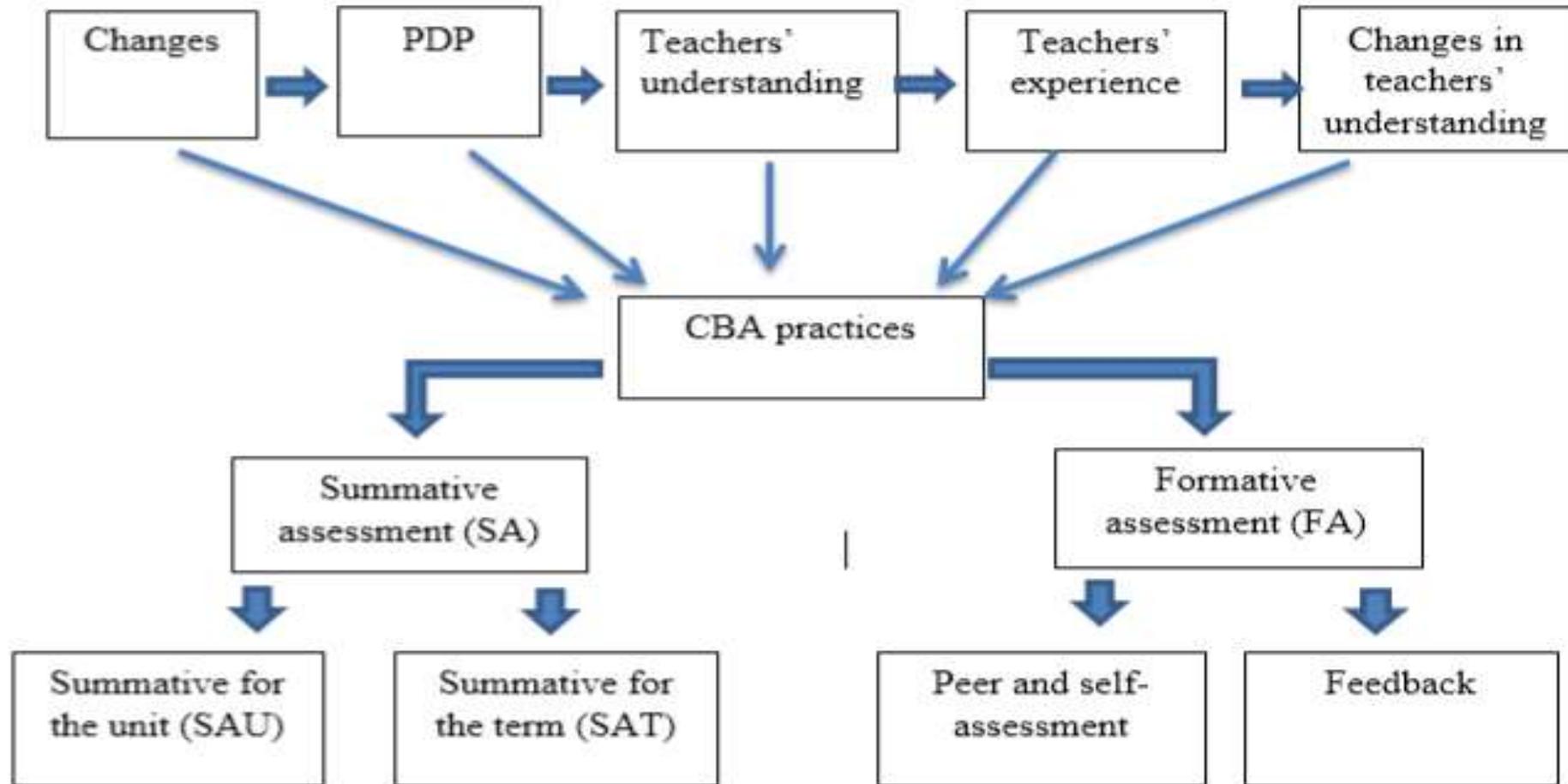
- Sub-questions:

1. What are the mainstream schoolteachers' perspectives towards changes in assessment?

2. What are the benefits and drawbacks of CBA?

3. What were the teachers' challenges and changes in teachers' assessment practices while implementing CBA?

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



Related Literature

Kazakhstani authors: Bondarenko (2019); Suyundikova (2019), Abdrakhmanova (2017); Ixanova (2018).

International research: Green (2002); Sadler (2005); Xavier & Mehta (2006); Carlson, Macdonald, Gorely, Hanrahan & Burgess-Limerick (2000); Black & William (2005); Crooks (1988); Sadler (1989).

Participant Demographic Information

No	Teacher	Gender	Teaching experience	Experience in CBA	Subject	Grades
1	Aliya	Female	28 years	4 years	Russian and Literature	3,4,7,8
2	Zarina	Female	19 years	4 years	History	5-11
3	Alma	Female	15 years	2 years	Computer science	5-11
4	Kymbat	Female	35 years	4 years	Russian in Kazakh schools	5-11
5	Azhar	Female	2.5 years	2.5 years	English	1-3
6	Aya	Female	6 years	4 years	English	8-10
7	Ardak	Female	2 years	2 years	English	1-2
8	Bakhyt	Female	31 years	4 years	Russian and Literature	4, 7, 11
9	Gulya	Female	29 years	4 years	Russian in Kazakh schools	6-7

**Teachers’
perspectives on
the rationale for
assessment
changes.**

Most teachers agree that educational changes had been inevitable.

Reasons:

- 1) process of the development of Kazakhstan as an independent country
- 2) necessity to conform to modern requirements
- 3) failure of a five-point grading system to satisfy updated needs.

“As we got our independence, we had to modernize everything. We had to introduce innovations”.

Teachers'
attitudes
towards
changes and
their role in the
reform.

- It was noticeable that teachers' viewpoints to changes in education were mostly interrelated with the period they started teaching.
- Younger teachers VS Experienced teachers

“continued to lean toward previous assessment system”

“it [transition] was a great stress for them”

Two important
factors that
affect teachers'
attitude

- Teachers' understanding of the new assessment system
- Teachers' willingness to change.

" proper understanding of CBA during the first stage of implementation could help to avoid many issues"

**Teachers’
perspectives
on
professional
development.**

All teachers mentioned PDP and collaboration as the main sources of constructing their knowledge about CBA and its development.

“After courses surely I don’t transform completely, but some part of me does”.

“First, I changed as a person, second, my attitude to children and my work has changed, and also I tried to change my colleagues because after this course we always have seminars for our teachers”.

Teacher's understanding of CBA.

- Overall, teachers distinguish two types of assessment (FA and SA) as a part of CBA.
- Teachers had a clear understanding that though having different aims, FA and SA are interrelated to each other.
- However, some teachers considered the outcomes of SA were more important to them as they show the results of their work.

Teachers'
perspectives on
advantages of
CBA

- Objectivity
- Transparency
- Focus on improving and developing students' knowledge
- Provides more freedom to learners
- Considers children's diversity allowing everyone to show his/her knowledge and skills

Major challenges

Teachers agreed that a gradual transition to CBA and its adaptation to Kazakhstani realities would have made assessment more effective.

Main challenges during the first years	Teachers' current challenges can be classified into two categories:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1) lack of understanding of CBA during the first years which led to mistakes in practices;• 2) students' attitude to the absence of daily marks during the transition from five-point grading system towards CBA;• 3) pressure from parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) understanding of some specific features of CBA: FA, feedback, self and peer-assessment;2) objective final marks.

Conclusion

- Due to the reforms in assessment and professional development programs, teachers went through the unique experiences of changing teaching practices and constructing new knowledge and skills.
- Most of the current results complement the findings of the earlier studies.
- However, there are some unexpected findings which can contribute to new knowledge in the field of CBA implementation:
 - teachers' prioritize SA as the criterion for the success of their work;
 - teachers' understanding of fairness in assessment;
 - new assessment system was more equitable as it benefited all learners (extroverts and introverts);
 - CBA had a positive effect on teaching practices and teacher-student relationships.

Recommendations for the Ministry of Education

- There should be a well-planned professional development strategy with the focus not only on developing teachers' knowledge and skills but also the attitude towards the changes.
- A large-scale reform needs time. It is better to introduce changes to education gradually .
- There should be some standards to make assessment objective and fair. Seminars and training could be helpful to work out issues with a fair assessment.

Recommendations for school administrations

- Guiding teachers and creating favourable atmosphere is critical
- Organizing seminars, training, and teacher collaboration as well as identifying topics for discussions can contribute to teachers' confidence in CBA.

Recommendations for school teachers

Teachers should be open to new knowledge and collaborative work in the period of reform implementation.

More experienced teachers should realize that they work in times of constant change which will continuously affect their teaching practices.

Also, teachers should understand the concept of fairness in assessment in order to avoid double standards while evaluating students.

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