

Classroom Assessment Case Book

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Preface

The motivation for writing this book came from our experiences working with preservice teachers enrolled in assessment courses. These students have had to face many challenges on their road to becoming teachers; many of them cite assessment as one of those challenges We have worked with these students in developing and selecting appropriate assessment tools for use in their pre-internship, internship, and ultimately their own classroom. Whether you are a student in an assessment class, an experienced teacher, or teaching an assessment class, you are likely to find yourself in a few situations that call for some knowledge or skill in assessment.

We have written this casebook to help generate a discussion of some of the more prevalent assessment issues facing teachers. We believe this book will serve as a valuable supplement to an educational psychology or assessment textbook. Specifically, the cases in this book will help generate active discussion of critical assessment issues, extending the foundational knowledge gained from an introductory textbook. An overview of the books' organization and key features follows.

Special Features and Organization

Brief Cases. The cases in this book are just a few pages long. This allows students to read (or re-read) them in class before discussion of the case takes place. It also affords the instructor flexibility to use cases as inclass readings in addition to assigned take-home readings.

Variety of Assessment Concepts. The cases in this book are organized under four primary areas: (1) foundations of assessment, (2) informal assessment, (3) formal assessment, and (4) communication and ethical guidelines. The first section, foundations of assessment, contains eight cases focusing on issues such as construct definition, learning targets, and the purpose of assessment. The second section pertaining to informal assessment includes nine cases regarding knowledge and use of questioning skills, group work, homework, and affective assessment. In the third section, nine cases address issues related to formal assessment apsuch as traditional assessment methods, performance assessment, and standardized tests. The final section includes nine cases written to address issues that involve communication or ethical situations regarding students, parents, and colleagues.

Case Questions. Questions are included for each case to help facilitate discussion and analysis of cases. These questions focus on the issues

emerging from the case and require students to think about the events of the case as well as their experiences in an assessment class or as a teacher. Student responses to these questions will serve as a basis for group discussion and analysis of each case. We invite you (as the student or instructor) to supplement these questions with others that require reflection on the critical assessment issues.

Assignments. Following each case and questions, we have included an assignment. These assignments are similar to ones we have used with our students and are intended to help extend the discussion and further engage students in the process of reflection about issues they will face as teachers. Again, you may think of other assignments that fit the case and your course. We would love to hear from you regarding how our assignments worked and learn more about others you have used.

Acknowledgments

First of all, we would like to acknowledge the students in our classes over the years. We recognize that the assessment class is not always the favorite course in a student's course of study, and we appreciate all their efforts. These students have been extremely helpful in the creation of the cases in this book as they have reviewed drafts and provided comments that were very helpful in improving them. We especially would like to recognize the efforts of Shu-Ching Wang, a doctoral student in educational psychology, as she spent countless hours helping to edit many versions of this book.

Second, we would like to acknowledge teachers. Some were teachers we had when we were students, while many were graduate students, colleagues, and friends. Others were teachers that participated in research studies that have helped us (the profession) to better understand the ways in which they use assessment in their classrooms, the knowledge and skills they possess, and the challenges they face.

Finally, we would like to give special recognition to Kevin Davis at Merrill Education/Prentice Hall, for helping to shape this project from the beginning. He and his editorial staff's efforts and recommendations were invaluable, have greatly improved the quality of the project, and helped us turn the raw scattered manuscript pages into a book.

Contact Information

As you read and discuss these cases, we encourage you to jot down comments. Your feedback is invaluable to us. The cases in this book represent many assessment issues facing educators, but there are many others. We expect that other questions or issues will emerge as you work through a particular case. As you think of these, we would like to hear from you so that future editions can more validly reflect the assessment

issues of importance to you and other professionals. We invite you to use the Case Review Form on pages vii—viii to gather feedback on the cases. Ask students from the class to select different cases to review using the form, and then send us your feedback and comments. Please feel free to contact us—and send us your comments and feedback results—by telephone or e-mail:

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Case Review Form

Which case did you review? Case #											
Please indicate the extent to which you statements regarding this case by checking				e following							
Rating Key:											
SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree	$\mathbf{A} = A$	$\mathbf{A} = Agree \mathbf{S}\mathbf{A} = Strongly A$									
	SD	D	A	SA							
The case described a realistic situation.											
The case highlighted an assessment issue facing teachers											
The case helped to frame an issue(s) for discussion.											
The case provided sufficient information about the actors (teachers, students, etc.).											
The case provided sufficient information about the context (school, grade level, subject, etc.).											
The case generated a possibility for more than one solution.											
The case afforded me an opportunity to think about ways to address the issue(s).											
When thinking of possible solutions, I reflected upon my experiences as a student or teacher.											
When analyzing the case, I was able to relate what I know about the professional body of knowledge that helps prepare teachers prepare for these situations.											
I was able to identify issues that											

	SD	D	A	SA					
I was able to prioritize these issues.									
I was able to generate realistic courses of action.									
I was able to think about these issues and solutions from more than one perspective.									
I was able to think about the consequences of each course of action and make a decision about which solution would be best.									
Describe what you feel are the greatest str	engths o	f this case	ı.						
Please offer suggestions for how this case could be improved.									

Please offer ideas for related cases.

Introduction

Teachers encounter assessment issues every day in their classrooms. Research has demonstrated that one third to one half of a teacher's time is spent on assessment-related activities (Stiggins & Conklin, 1992) with most of this time spent on informal assessment such as questioning, homework, and observation of students to monitor ongoing progress rather than formal assessment activities (Oosterhof, 1995). Teachers must know how to select and construct appropriate assessment tools, use them in their classrooms, interpret results from teacher-made and standardized tests, and communicate with other colleagues, students, parents, and the community. Further evidence regarding the importance of assessment lies in the creation of the Standards for Teacher Competence in the Educational Assessment of Students by three prominent national organizations: American Federation of Teachers, National Council for Measurement in Education, and the National Education Association (1990). Increasing emphasis is also being placed on assessment from national teacher education accreditation agencies (NCATE, 2000).

Many assessment skills such as assessment planning and selection, interpretation and application of assessment results, and feedback and grading are considered essential by measurement experts (Gullickson, 1993; 1986; Schafer, 1991; Stiggins, 1991) and practicing teachers (Borg, 1986; Wise et al., 1991). National studies of teachers have indicated that teachers generally have a positive view regarding the role that classroom assessment plays in enhancing instruction, but have a less favorable view regarding the role of standardized tests (Impara et al., 1993). On a national test, teachers performed well when tested in the areas of administering, scoring, and interpreting test results, but poorly in communicating test results (Plake et al., 1993), while a more recent study of teachers' self-ratings regarding assessment revealed that they found interpreting standardized tests most difficult (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003).

Unfortunately, national surveys of teacher education programs over the past 50 years have consistently revealed that many critical assessment concepts and skills are not being fully addressed in teacher education curricula (Gullickson, 1993; Gullickson & Hopkins, 1987; Marso & Pigge, 1993; Noll, 1955; O'Sullivan & Chalnick, 1991; Roeder, 1973; Schafer, 1993; Schafer & Lissitz, 1987; Stiggins, 1999; Wise et al., 1991). The majority of teacher education curricula require a course in educational psychology, part of which is focused on issues of assess-

ment. Unfortunately, an entire course is rarely dedicated to classroom assessment. We believe this book will serve as a valuable supplement to existing textbooks in educational psychology and assessment.

Specifically, this book offers a series of cases that illustrate many of the issues facing teachers; these issues require assessment knowledge and skills. The use of the case method in teacher education provides another opportunity to narrow the gap between theory and practice. The voice of the practitioner is too often excluded in teacher education. The case method brings the voice of the practitioner (classroom teacher) to students in teacher preparation programs. Students in our teacher preparation programs often have limited opportunities, both in number and diversity, as the surrounding school districts and internship placement divisions are limited in the number of diverse experiences they can offer our students. Cases can help expand students' experience.

The case method has been well developed in the areas of business (Christensen, 1987; McNair, 1954) and law (Stevens, 1983) for some time and has become increasingly widespread and successful in teacher education (Colbert et al., 1996; Kleinfeld, 1991, 1998; Merseth, 1991; Shulman & Colbert, 1987, 1988; Wasserman, 1994). One of the primary purposes of cases is to provide an opportunity for teachers (or preservice teachers) to practice decision making and problem solving, or "think like a teacher." (Merseth, 1996; Wasserman, 1994). Although the amount of research on the use of cases is limited, the emerging studies offer support for their use as a pedagogical tool. A recent study (Doebler et al., 1998) revealed that as preservice teachers complete their professional coursework and methods courses, they are able to identify the most pertinent issues from cases and offer appropriate solutions that demonstrate their ability to integrate theory with practice. Furthermore, in a review of the most widely used educational psychology textbooks, Block (1996) found the use of case-based materials to enhance the transfer of knowledge to application.

The cases in this book are relatively brief, focusing on pertinent assessment issues. Each case is written to focus on a limited number of issues while inviting extended discussion of other related issues. Each case is followed by questions to help facilitate a discussion in the class. These questions focus primarily on one major area of assessment (e.g., foundational issues or informal assessment) but integrate issues from other broad areas. For example, a case might focus on a foundational issue such as construct definition, but the questions will also require students to think about issues regarding the construction or selection of appropriate informal or formal assessments and communication issues.

The remainder of this introduction focuses on using cases as a supplement to other instructional resources and offering guidelines for effectively using the cases in this book. Specifically, we will explore preparation and planning, case writing and selection, case presentation and facilitation, and case analysis, emphasizing the pedagogical techniques and case analysis. For a more detailed discussion of these critical components of case-based teaching, see Sudzina (1999a).

Preparation and Planning

Cases add a valuable dimension to the classroom, as they portray realistic situations, present the reader with a dilemma that requires attention, and invite a variety of possible solutions to be considered and discussed. Consistent with sound pedagogy, teaching with cases requires a lot of preparation. Before using a case, the instructor needs to be familiar with not only the facts, but also the nuances, and must have plans for helping students analyze the case and frame their responses for class discussion and evaluation. We suggest that the instructor prepare a case outline that details, point-by-point, a summary of who was involved, what happened, and what issues are left to be resolved.

The instructor should also assess other factors that will influence the effectiveness of the case-based approach. These factors, discussed by Mostert and Sudzina (1996), include class information such as class size, time, and physical setting of the classroom. Cases tend to work better with smaller groups of students arranged so that they can see each other and address each member by name, with enough time to analyze the case and generate a useful discussion of the critical issues. In larger classes, we suggest that students work through cases in smaller groups followed, by a large group discussion.

Case Writing and Selection

There are several sources for cases. This book offers one such source for cases tailored to assessment issues facing teachers. You can also write your own cases or have students think of ideas for cases and write them. Other sources would include excerpts from novels, films and other media. These cases were written based on our experiences teaching assessment, our students' experiences, and findings from the research literature identifying the types of assessment knowledge and skill that are essential and of concern to teachers.

When selecting a case for use in your class, it is important to consider the same factors you would when selecting other instructional materials, making sure that the case is a good fit with your curriculum.

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Where does this fit within your course goals and objectives? Does the case illustrate the issues that you intend to discuss with your class? Is there enough time to fully address the issues emerging from the case? We have prepared short cases that can be used effectively as an in-class or homework activity. We have also provided a Case Selection Matrix on pages xviii—xix that describes the types of issues addressed in each case to help with your case selection.

Case Presentation and Facilitation

Before introducing a case, it is important for students to know what is expected from them in regard to each case and where the case fits within the content of the course. Once students understand your expectations and the specific learning targets they are aiming for, it is time to introduce the case, have them read it, and facilitate the discussion of case issues. We suggest that students be assigned a case ahead of time and asked to prepare notes regarding the case, responses to questions, and other concerns they have that might be included in a group or class discussion.

As with other teaching approaches and most jokes, delivery is critical. As the instructor, you introduce the case, provide an overview and context, and facilitate the discussion within groups or the entire class. The discussion should flow from the content of the case and the questions posed to the class. Try not to spend all your time recounting the details and facts of the case. Rather, engage students in a discussion of issues and possible solutions, drawing upon their experiences as teachers and students as well as other content from the course.

Case Analysis

Case analysis is perhaps the most complex component for students, especially if they are not accustomed to reflection or to using the case method. One framework for case analysis is that illustrated by Sudzina (1999b, 2000). This framework includes (a) identification of issues, (b) consideration of different perspectives, (c) identification of professional knowledge, (d) discussion of action to be taken, and (e) consideration of likely consequences of such action.

Identification of issues. First, ask students to identify the issues that emerge from the case. This might result in a long list of issues. After they identify these issues, they should prioritize them in terms of which ones need the most immediate attention. Finally, they need to think of ways to address the issues.

Different perspectives. Initially, it might be difficult for students to consider the issues from multiple perspectives, as they will likely feel most comfortable thinking about them from the perspective of the student, or perhaps of the teacher. Try to get them to think about the same issues from the perspective of a parent or administrator. In addition, help them think about solutions that might work in different situations or from different perspectives, moving them beyond black and white solutions. The use of role-play or invited guests (e.g., teachers, parents, or administrators) is typically very helpful.

Professional knowledge. It is important for students not only to understand the issues and think of possible solutions but also to be aware that there is a professional body of knowledge that helps prepare teachers to be effective in these situations. Encourage—perhaps require—students to back up their responses with evidence. This evidence can be drawn from the class textbook and a review of the literature.

Action to be taken. As students think of possible actions to be taken, it is important that they be realistic. As you consider each action with the group/class, be sure to play it through. Think through the details of how you would implement the course of action. If role-playing, have students communicate to each other from the different perspectives represented in the case. What would the teacher say next and how? What would the student say? This offers them a great opportunity to practice communication (both verbal and nonverbal) with others such as colleagues, students, and parents.

Consideration of consequences. Finally, it is important to consider carefully what would be likely to happen if their action plans were implemented. Arriving at the "best solution" requires a good bit of negotiation and compromise. In other words, what is best for the teacher in the case may be the worst solution for the student or parent. Working toward the solution calls for the inclusion of all perspectives. As solutions are considered and evaluated, negotiation should take place to work toward what will prove to be the most satisfactory solution for the case.

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Case Selection Matrix

CASE NUMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Setting:															
ALL	•	•													
Elementary School						•		•			-				
Middle School				•	•						•				•
High School			•				•		•	•		•	•	•	
Skills:															
Selecting Assessments	•														
Developing Assessments	•				•				•	•					
Interpreting Assessments		•		•		•	•	•							
Assessment in Planning			•	•	•				•						
Developing Procedures	•		•			•				•	•				
Communicating Results							•	•				•	•		
Recognizing Ethical Issues															
Topics:															
Construct Definition	•	•													
Learning Targets			•	•	•										
Purpose of Assessment						•	•	•							
Questioning Skills									•	•	•				
Homework												•	•	•	
Affective Assessment															•
Traditional Assessment															
Performance Assessment															
Standardized Assessment															
Student Communication							33					1.5			
Parent Communication													7		
Colleague Communica- tion															

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