Sustainable assessments in teacher education in Australia

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This paper will use the empirical data gathered from a case study conducted in an Australian university in Melbourne which examined formative assessment practices of the international teacher education sector and analyzes how the concept of sustainable assessments and their features are utilized to increase the effectiveness of the formative assessments. The participants were enrolled students of either a Master of Education (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages/TESOL) or Master of Education course. They were local and international students who studied in Australia. The international students were from China, India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Spain, Pakistan, Latin America, and many other countries across the globe. Most of them were teachers of English and some were prospective teachers. The researcher is a Teacher Educator from Sri Lanka (who teaches in the English teacher-training course of a College of Education) and was an enrolled student who conducted the research on a subject of a M.Ed. (TESOL) that she enrolled in.

It further analyzes how teacher educators can employ these sustainable assessments to assist the prospective teachers at Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka whose first language is either Sinhala or Tamil to develop lifelong learning skills related to “learning-to-learn” and “learning-to-assess” which increases their effectiveness in future tasks related to teaching and learning of English as a second or additional language.

Then, the paper will suggest specific ways to improve the quality of formative assessments by adopting the features of sustainable assessments. This reveals the research findings that portray the formative assessment practices examined in the study as an exemplary situation of sustainable assessments in the context of international teacher education. It will clarify how these findings empower the practitioner in the community of practice.

It will further examine how sustainable assessments could effectively be used in a context where summative assessments play a major role in deciding the future of the learners and in a context where formative assessments are in disarray. The paper will suggest that dynamic collaboration of both formative and summative assessments provide the prospective teachers with lifelong learning skills that are essential in their future teaching, learning, and assessing tasks.

Finally, this paper will suggest that sustainable assessments have the ability to provide deep learning approaches that create learning that is longlasting and are effective in providing lifelong learning skills to the prospective teachers.