



EVALUATION'S IMPORTANCE IN IMPROVING TEACHING

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"Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts."

-Albert Einstein

ABSTRACT

Evaluation plays a pivotal role in deciding what the learners learn and what the teachers teach. Evaluation is universally accepted as an integral part of teaching and learning. Evaluation is widely acknowledged as a powerful means of improving the quality of education. Evaluation influences the quality of teaching and learning. Evaluation is also the process of determining the extent to which the aims and objectives are being attained¹. The History of efforts at evaluation in education is characterized by many fragmented attempts in which research programs were often punctuated by conflicts over educational philosophy, psychological arguments and sharp differences of opinion over the evaluation techniques themselves. Two educational goals are looming up as of greatest importance, viz. helping each individual to make the most of himself and enabling society to make greatest progress. Both of these goals are developed by the individual's total life in home, college and community. Both are matters of learned human behavior and human relatedness. If evaluation is to be accomplished here it will have to be in large extent a matter of observed, recorded, evaluated individual and group behavior.

INTRODUCTION

A second area where we have improved perspective is in that of the role of evaluation in improving teaching. We are beginning to see difference between instruction and teaching. One can instruct another person in let us say, the use of an adding machine. After such

¹ See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_evaluation visited on 22/6/2013



instruction the one instructed has what is for him a new skill. But do not expect that he has been changed as a person, that he is necessarily a better citizen, that his general behavior has been altered. Thus, we see that we can measure the effectiveness of instruction in terms of what those instructed know and can do. The measurements are relatively simple. We have been involved with such measurements for decades.

When, however, we turn from instruction to teaching we encounter different problems. True teaching must result not only in knowledge and skills but in altered behavior. Thus, we must measure the results of teaching in terms, not so much of what students know but of what students are and are becoming and in terms of how they behave and how their behavior is changing².

TEACHING IS CREATIVE

Teaching as a profession seems to differ markedly from other professions. The engineer for example appears to succeed in terms of what he knows and does. But the teacher seems to succeed primarily in terms of what he is. It will, of course, be argued that what he knows and does plays a part in what he is but one can know and do without being. Also, it appears that what one is as a teacher plays the largest role in what one achieves in helping students to become.

We are beginning to give more attention to the creative side of teaching. Success in teaching depends more on who does it than upon what or the how. Here we encounter creative, artistic quality of teaching which probably corresponds closely to painting, musical composition and creative writing. As the distinguished artist Abraham Rattner says, "An artist creates reality out of his brain, his heart and his soul".

We have to realize that a teacher may seemingly know all he should know, do what he should do, do it in accepted fashion yet fail to reach creatively, succeeding only to instruct and perhaps even that ineffectively. Without faith, respect, humility and love, creative teaching falters and creative learning does not occur.

THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF STUDENT EVALUATION

Sound student evaluation is an essential ingredient to strong educational programs. Evaluation is probably the most common and pervasive aspect of student instruction. It is the primary tool for guiding student development, crossing all academic disciplines. Certainly, evaluations of students occur in all classrooms and regularly confront students and educators

² See www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_195801_melby.pdf visited on 1/7/2013



in a wide variety of decision situations that affect their educational development. These decisions include graduation, admissions, grading, tracking and instructional decisions for individual students, discipline and merit awards. Sound student evaluations also serve many other information needs such as employment decisions, evaluations of teachers, progress, college programs, college policies and public accountability. Also, ensuring the academic growth and well-being of students are teacher duties. The evaluations of students can provide substantial information regarding the performance of teachers.

When student evaluations are not sound, educational programs suffer. Poor student evaluations victimize and harm students. If the evaluation information is incorrect or unsound or if evaluative conclusions are unjustified, individual decisions are likely to be academically, economically and socially harmful to the student's growth. Educators need to be certain they are conducting appropriate evaluations for each student and that the results given to the student and others are accurate³.

The main purposes of evaluation are to facilitate student learning and to improve instruction. Teachers make judgments about student progress based on information gathered through a variety of assessment strategies. This information assists teachers in planning or modifying their instructional programs, which in turn helps students learn more effectively. Evaluations are also used for reporting progress to students and their parents, and for making decisions related to such things as student promotion.

Core Curriculum requires changes in the ways students have traditionally been taught and evaluated. Formerly, evaluation of student learning focused on factual content and student progress was assessed by using traditional strategies such as paper-and-pencil tests.

To evaluate learning in areas such as critical and creative thinking, independent learning and personal social values and skills, nontraditional strategies are required. More often than before, teachers will rely on strategies such as observation, conferencing, oral and written assignments and process (or performance) assessment to gather information about student progress.

Responsibility for establishing student evaluation and reporting procedures resides with the college principal and the teaching staff. However, it is the teacher who is at the forefront in determining student progress using sound evaluative practices which include careful planning, appropriate assessment strategies and most importantly, sound professional judgment.

³See www.jcsee.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/SESNeed.pdf visited on 26/6/2013



Guiding Principles

In recognition of the importance of evaluation in improving the teaching guiding principles which provide a framework would be as follows:

- ❖ Evaluation is an essential part of the teaching-learning process. It is a planned, continuous activity which is closely linked to curriculum and instruction.
- ❖ Evaluation should be guided by the intended learning outcomes of the curriculum, and a variety of assessment techniques should be used.
- ❖ Evaluation plans should be communicated in advance to students and they should have opportunities for input.
- ❖ Evaluation should be fair and equitable. It should be sensitive to family, classroom, colleges and community situations; and be free of bias. All students should be given opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge, understandings, skills, and attitudes.
- ❖ Evaluation should support students success. It should provide positive feedback and encourage students to participate actively in their own growth.

CLASSIFICATION OF EVALUATION

There are three main types of student evaluation: Formative, Summative and Diagnostic evaluation. Assessment techniques are used to gather information for each type of evaluation.

Formative evaluation is an ongoing classroom process that keeps students and educators informed of student's progress towards program learning objectives.

Summative evaluation occurs most often at the end of a unit of study. Its primary purpose is to determine what has been learned over a period of time, to summarize student progress and to report progress relative to curriculum objectives to students, parents, and educators.

Seldom are evaluations strictly formative or strictly summative. For example, summative evaluation can be used formatively to assist teachers in making decisions about changes to instructional strategies or other aspects of students' learning programs. Similarly, formative evaluation may be used to assist teachers in making summative judgments about student progress. It is important that teachers make clear to students the purpose of assessments and whether they will later be used summatively.



Diagnostic evaluation usually occurs at the beginning of the college year or before a unit of instruction. Its main purposes are to identify students who lack prerequisite knowledge, understanding, or skills, so that remedial help can be arranged; to identify gifted learners to ensure they are being sufficiently challenged; and to identify student interests.

Phases of the Evaluation Process

Evaluation can be viewed as a cyclical process including four phases: **preparation, assessment, evaluation, and reflection**⁴.

In the **preparation** phase, decisions are made which identify what is to be evaluated, the type of evaluation (formative, summative or diagnostic) to be used, the criteria against which student learning outcomes will be judged and the most appropriate assessment techniques with which to gather information on student progress. The teacher's decisions in this phase form the basis for the remaining phases.

During the **assessment phase**, the teacher identifies information-gathering techniques, constructs or selects instruments, administers them to the student and collects the information on student learning progress. The teacher continues to make decisions in this phase. The identification and elimination of bias (such as gender and culture bias) from the assessment techniques and instruments and determining where, when, and how assessments will be conducted are examples of important considerations for the teacher.

During the **evaluation phase**, the teacher interprets the assessment information and makes judgments about student progress. Based on the judgments or evaluations, teachers make decisions about student learning programs and report on progress to students, parents, and appropriate college personnel.

The **reflection phase** allows the teacher to consider the extent to which the previous phases in the evaluation process have been successful. Specifically, the teacher evaluates the utility and appropriateness of the assessment techniques used. Such reflection assists the teacher in making decisions concerning improvements or modifications to subsequent teaching and evaluation.

All four phases are included in formative, diagnostic, and summative evaluation processes.

THE IMPORTANCES OF EVALUATION IN TEACHING

⁴ See www.k12.gov.sk.ca/docs/policy/studeval/index.html visited on 29/6/2013



1. Evaluation is Important to the Teachers, Supervisors and Administrators in Directing as well as Guiding Teaching and Learning

Evaluation, to be of importance to teachers and supervisors, should be diagnostic, i.e., it should reveal the specific points of strength and weakness in teaching and learning⁵.

2. Evaluation also helps to Measure the Validity and Reliability of Instruction

The effectiveness and success of any phase of teaching technique can be demonstrated through the nature of the results obtained.

From a purely methodical point of view, the measurement of effective teaching finds its great value in the possibilities it offers for the improvement of teaching and learning.

All activities of the teacher should be evaluated in the light of their adequacy to promote the democratic way of life and on how nearly do the students realize the objectives of education.

3. Evaluation Aids in Devising more Effective Instructional Materials and Procedures of Instruction

Current educational literature is filled with enthusiastic advocacy of various co-operative researches and if worked along this line, will determine the degree of success and effectiveness of evaluation.

4. Evaluation Helps Teachers to Discover the Needs of the Students

The purpose of any program of evaluation is to discover the needs of the students being evaluated and then to design learning experiences that will satisfy these needs.

Traditionally, the results of evaluation have been used to compare one individual with another. It is an accepted fact that growth is a continuous process and that each individual grows at a rate that is unique for him.

5. Evaluation Stimulates Students to Study

A questioning teacher creates incentives for students to learn more. He sets up effective and definite goals for learning giving oral or written examination is a good incentive for the students to study harder or to do better work.

⁵ See www.publishyourarticles.net/.../what-is-the-importance-of-evaluation.ht visited on 3/7/2013



It makes the learner familiar with his own results. Likewise, he needs to understand his own high and low potential for learning but even more, he needs help in understanding the personal problems of human relations.

6. Evaluation Helps Parents to Understand Student-Growth, Interests, and Potentialities

The major responsibility of the college and teacher is to help the parents understand their children. Understanding a youth means understanding his progress in the various areas of the curriculum, his desires and motives and behavior they lead to, his potentialities for learning, as well as his achievement.

7. Evaluation can be used to Enforce External Standards upon the Individual Class or College

This method should be such as to encourage a flexible curriculum which is ever responsive to the changing needs of modern life and to the variations in local conditions. Local colleges should be free to select and develop instruments for evaluation which are appropriate for their curricula.

8. Evaluation, Likewise, Helps to Provide Objective Evidences for Effective Cooperation between Parents and Teachers

The increasing complexity of our present society has emphasized the importance of the co-operation of the college, home and the community in making significant educational progress.

9. Evaluation is Helpful in Securing Support for the College from the Government, Local or National

The people frequently complain that public colleges in this country are inadequately supported. Evaluation would help gaining a standard to the college and thereby securing financial or other support from the local or national governmental bodies.

10. Evaluation is Helpful to the Teacher

It enables him to see how he can make his contribution to the accomplishment of the total goals or aims of the college system. It helps the teacher to co-ordinate his efforts with the efforts of others who contribute to the general educational goals.

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CONCLUSION:

It can be clearly seen that a good evaluation of teaching techniques and that of the students help in improving teaching and learning process. It is through evaluation a teacher can get a clear idea about the lacunas in which he has to work and to sort out all the drawbacks in his teaching and learning process.

Further if Evaluation process done in a neutral manner can be helpful not only to the teachers but also to the students and institution at large. It is only because of evaluation process a teacher can come to know about the needs of the students and the field where improvement is to be done by him. The overall concept of 'Growing with Learning' can be obtained only by proper and basic evaluation of the students.

The role of Evaluation in improving teaching is also encouraged as Evaluation helps to Measure the Validity and Reliability of Instruction. As now the students are made to learn and not taught. The main role of Evaluation should be overall development of the student along with helping the teachers and institutions.

Thus, Evaluation process should be used as a TOOL for Quality Assurance of Students, Teachers as well as the Institutions.

“Evaluation must help us to achieve an education with a greater inspirational quality and a new dimension of power.”

-Ernest O. Melby

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