

EVALUATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION

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Abstracts

This paper explores the concept of evaluation in education and its implications, emphasizing the importance of a well-rounded and comprehensive evaluation program. Through evaluation, various aspects of a student's development, including intellectual ability, subject-matter achievement, and behavioural changes, are assessed. The objective of this write-up is to delve into evaluation by examining its definition, techniques, testing instruments, guidelines for classroom testing, and interpretation and utilization of data. The study highlights that when selecting an evaluation technique for a student, teachers should consider principles such as objectivity, validity, time efficiency, and the simplicity of data interpretation. It emphasizes the significance of testing instruments such as essay tests, multiple-choice tests, matching tests, true-false tests, and comprehension tests in evaluating a student's intellectual ability and subject-matter achievements. Additionally, standardized testing instruments, like academic aptitude tests, proficiency tests, diagnostic tests, and achievement tests, are primarily employed to compare the achievements of specific student groups. One of the major implications of this study is that evaluation provides valuable feedback to teachers, parents, and students regarding their progress. Furthermore, it assists teachers in identifying persistent learning difficulties among their students, enabling targeted interventions to address those challenges.

Keywords: Evaluation, testing instruments, standardized tests, evaluation technique, objectivity, validity.

Introduction:

Education facilitators, particularly teachers, need to possess a deep understanding of evaluation in order to excel in their roles. When conducting evaluations, teachers should not only focus on measuring the changes that education brings about in students but also on assessing the desirability and sufficiency of those changes. Evaluation impacts both the teaching methods employed by the teacher and the curriculum content. It is crucial to recognize that the types of tests administered by a school and how they are utilized largely indicate what is being taught and how it is being taught.

During evaluation, the evaluator should make a deliberate effort to consider not only the scores achieved in subject matter mastery tests but also the observable transformations in less quantifiable aspects, such as attitude development, growth of interest, and emotional adjustment adequacy.

Unfortunately, our current education system has significant shortcomings. Tests and examinations primarily serve as a means of assigning grades in some schools and institutions. Consequently, a student's success or failure is often determined by their ability to recall factual information. Consequently, teachers continue to prioritize rote memorization, while students perceive the recollection of facts as the most crucial aspect of their educational pursuits. However, scholarly articles have demonstrated that enduring learning outcomes encompass social attitudes developed by students, their proficiency in utilizing library resources, and their skills in interpreting data, analysing issues, drawing conclusions, and mastering communication techniques. Hence, it is imperative for aspiring teachers to dedicate equal attention to these objectives alongside acquiring factual knowledge.

An evaluation program should yield comprehensive data that provides a holistic view of students' progress. Such a program can help schools assess the effectiveness of their programs and identify the successes and challenges students face throughout their educational journey. It should serve as a basis for communicating students' growth to parents and informing the public about the school's achievements. To meet the growing demand for student information, traditional testing procedures have been enhanced, and new evaluation methods have been developed. In many advanced countries, evaluation incorporates anecdotal records, diagnostic techniques, standardized achievement tests, interest inventories, cumulative records, controlled observation of student behaviour, graphic rating scales, and an array of standardized tests that shed light on students' personality development and attitudes in their classes.

The Concept of Evaluation

Many individuals and educators misunderstand the concept of evaluation, perceiving it solely as a measurement tool and standardized tests, rather than recognizing its value in assessing students' growth across various aspects of personal development and identifying both successes and challenges in that process. Anyanwu, P. (2002, 260) emphasizes that evaluation aims to recognize and clarify the impact and effectiveness of teaching. According to James Quillen et al (1961, 2-3), evaluation entails making judgements about individuals, objects, episodes, or situations. These judgements can be positive or negative, significant or trivial, planned or incidental.

Regardless of the nature or quality of the judgement, the act itself falls within the realm of evaluation. Evaluation can also involve gathering and interpreting evidence regarding changes in students' behaviour as they progress through their education. Onwuka, U. (1984, 153) asserts that evaluation serves as a method for obtaining and processing evidence necessary to enhance students' learning and teaching. This suggests that evaluation is an ongoing process.

Furthermore, Gronlund, N. E. (1981, 107) defines evaluation as a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by students. This implies that evaluation encompasses more than just tests and measurements. Sax, as quoted by Egereonu, states that evaluation is a process through which value judgements or decisions are made based on various observations and the background and expertise of evaluators. This implies that all aspects of evaluation, including the evaluator's interpretation of results and determination of appropriate actions to support the individual being evaluated, must be valid.

According to Blooms, L. et al (1980, 78) evaluation involves the systematic collection of evidence to ascertain whether desired changes are occurring in learners and to measure the magnitude and degree of change in individual students. Meanwhile, Wiley, as quoted by Egereonu, A. C. (2009, 11) defines evaluation as the collection and utilization of information to make decisions regarding educational programs.

Additionally, Offorma, cited in Anyawu, P. et al (2002, 260) asserts that evaluation should be continuous, cumulative, systematic, comprehensive, and guidance-oriented. Evaluation is cumulative because it considers students' overall performance when computing their final results. It is systematic because it is planned and agreed upon by all parties involved, determining specific outcomes indicative of satisfactory performance. The assessment intervals are also agreed upon. Evaluation is comprehensive as it encompasses all aspects of learners' behaviours, including cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor outcomes, employing appropriate and adequate instruments such as tests, assignments, projects, sociometric devices, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. From the above discussion, it becomes evident that evaluation is a systematic process of assessing the value, desirability,

effectiveness, or adequacy of something based on specific criteria and objectives. It is also concerned with making judgements about changes in behaviour. Evaluation plays an integral role in the educational system, serving not only to guide teachers in supporting their students by providing a cumulative record of their progress but also to measure intellectual capabilities and achievement in subject areas, as well as identify evidence of change and development across all aspects of student behaviour.

Selection of an Evaluation Technique

Some techniques hold greater importance and value when gathering evidence on student behaviour. It is crucial to avoid confusing a student's attitudes with their knowledge or information about a subject, their interest in a topic with their ability, or their knowledge with their interest. Consequently, teachers should be aware of which techniques to employ when evaluating a student's performance or behaviour. Gronlung presents the following techniques as a guide for evaluation:

1. Objectivity: The technique should be objective, ensuring that multiple individuals can assess the same behaviour and reach consistent conclusions. This means that the evaluator's personality should not influence the student's performance or behaviour. For example, an objective test that can be scored by different people and still yield the same result.
2. Validity: The chosen technique or test should accurately evaluate the intended aspects of the student. The validity of an instrument, such as a test or questionnaire, depends on the validity of its individual items. The more diverse the items, the more valid the instrument becomes. A technique or test may be valid for one group of people but not for another. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to select a test or instrument that aligns with their objectives.
3. Reliability: Reliability refers to the degree of confidence placed in the evidence gathered from an evaluation instrument. It relies on consistent results when the instrument is repeatedly administered under similar conditions. This means that the evaluation's outcomes can be successfully replicated or reproduced.
4. Time efficiency: A test or questionnaire should not be excessively long or complicated, as this may lead to mental and physical exhaustion.
5. Interpret-ability of data: The value of many evaluation techniques depends on whether teachers can easily interpret and utilize the evidence they yield. Complex

evaluation instruments that can only be interpreted by statisticians hold little value for classroom teachers who require data to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses and assess progress. Therefore, the data used for evaluation should be easy to interpret and understand.

6. **Comprehensiveness:** Evaluation should cover the entire program, rather than focusing on one or two aspects. Therefore, objectives need to be appraised to determine if they are clearly stated, significant, feasible, attainable, and comprehensive.

7. **Practicality and usability:** Evaluation instruments should be relatively easy to administer, score, and affordable. They should be user-friendly and accessible for practical implementation.

Testing Instruments

A teacher has a variety of tools at their disposal. Anyanwu suggests that these tools can be categorized into two classes: subjective and objective. The subjective instruments present a greater challenge when it comes to evaluating the correctness of answers, whereas the objective instruments are less affected by this limitation. Within these two broad categories, there are several types of tests available, such as essay tests, multiple-choice tests, matching tests, true-false tests, and comprehension tests.

Standardized Tests

According to Anyanwu, P. et al (2002, 229) a standardized test is a predetermined set of tasks or situations that have been proven to measure an individual's abilities to some extent. Its purpose is to allow teachers to compare the performance of a specific group of students with that of a large number of comparable students who have also taken the test. However, a significant drawback of this type of test is that it tends to shift the teacher's focus towards preparing students solely for the test itself once they are aware it will be administered.

There are currently various standardized instruments available to teachers, each serving a specific purpose. These instruments include achievement tests, proficiency tests, academic aptitude tests, specialized aptitude tests, and diagnostic tests. The

selection of an appropriate instrument depends on the intended objective of the assessment.

Guidelines for Classroom Testing

The school has specific objectives that a particular class aims to achieve. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to design tests in a way that assesses how well these objectives are being met. Here are some guidelines to help the teacher prepare tests in accordance with the stated or implied objectives:

- The classroom test should be based on the curriculum content. This ensures that students can answer questions related to the topics covered in the subject.
- A test should be one of the evaluation methods for students. There are other forms of assessment, such as term papers, reports, projects, and student behaviour, which the test should complement. The teacher should only test when necessary, without it becoming too frequent and hindering learning. However, tests should also not be too infrequent, as this could undermine their effectiveness and create unnecessary stress.
- Tests should be up-to-date and kept confidential. The test should reflect the current curriculum. It would be unwise for a teacher to rely on a test they created, say, twenty years ago. A test that remains unchanged for about five years is unlikely to be current. It is important to regularly review test items, considering the current conditions and context.
- Instructions should be clear, simple, and concise. Clarity is crucial for ensuring the validity of any test. It may be beneficial to read the instructions to the students when administering the test and address any questions they may have. The students should also be informed in advance about the type and timing of the test. This practice creates a positive environment for taking the test, making the students feel more relaxed and better prepared.
- Both subjective and objective questions should be included in the test. Including a variety of question types helps stimulate different response patterns from students. Additionally, the language used in constructing the questions should be straightforward, avoiding any ambiguity.

The Interpretation and Use of Data

The data provided by an evaluation program may not hold much value unless they are carefully and thoughtfully interpreted. It is important to consider a student's

achievements in one area alongside their challenges and failures in another area. In other words, we should not view the student's personality as fragmented. It is well-known that all learning is interconnected, so progress in one aspect of behaviour affects the overall behavioural pattern of the individual. For instance, attitudes impact understanding, while interests can either hinder or facilitate the acquisition of skills. Therefore, it is essential to consider information gathered from various sources in relation to all available data.

Although test data alone do not reveal causation, they should still be used as a basis for revising the curriculum, providing individual and group guidance and counselling, and formulating hypotheses about causes and solutions. The main objective of an evaluation program is to gain a clear understanding of the individual student's progress, Anyanwu, P. et al., (2002, 258). Furthermore, if the curriculum aims to meet the personal and social needs of each student and offer relevant experiences for their growth and development based on their abilities and interests, these factors must be carefully assessed.

Undoubtedly, teachers will face numerous challenges in guiding students intelligently without objective and systematic evaluation of their progress. If a teacher genuinely cares about the well-being and development of their students, they require an evaluation tool that can indicate the student's difficulties, needs, and problems. Tests conducted solely for the purpose of assigning grades are insufficient.

The Implications of Evaluation in Education

The main objective of evaluation is to provide an accurate assessment of the student's progress and development. This information is valuable for teachers as it helps them identify their students' vocational interests and aptitudes, and enables them to create progress reports for the students and their parents. It is essential for parents to be informed about their children's progress in school, and typically, this information is regularly shared with them. In Nigeria, the common practice is to send report cards home at the end of each term, and occasionally, parents are notified if a student's performance is noticeably weak. Reporting to parents is a crucial aspect of the school's program.

The following points form the basis for effective student evaluation:

- * Evaluation provides feedback to teachers, parents, and students, informing them about their current status in school.
- * It informs students about their progress, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses.
- * It fosters closer cooperation between the school and parents, particularly in supporting the children and assisting the school.
- * It serves as a basis for determining class promotion.
- * Evaluation contributes to gathering data for the students' permanent records.
- * It enables teachers to identify their students' vocational interests or aptitudes.
- * It helps teachers recognize individual differences among students, allowing them to plan appropriate teaching strategies-Groulung, N.E. (1981, 112).

It is important to note that the report card is the most common means of reporting to parents. The report card typically includes the student's grades in various subjects and indicates their class standing. It plays a crucial role in the teacher's relationship with both students and parents. Therefore, it is crucial to accurately record students' marks. In many cases, promotion or failure in a term's test or annual examination is indicated on the report card based on the marks achieved in class.

Conclusion

Our education system requires an educational evaluation process similar to quality control in manufacturing agencies. This evaluation would provide insights into the effectiveness of ongoing educational programs and identify any existing shortcomings, allowing schools to review their operations, identify difficulties, and make necessary improvements.

Currently, the changing composition of the labour force and the increasing complexity of society are placing greater demands on the education system. Therefore, the primary purpose of educational evaluation should be to inform policy-makers and the general public about the educational achievements of different segments of the population. This information would serve as a basis for understanding the progress being made and the problems that need to be addressed in schools. Unfortunately, due to a lack of reliable data, public opinion about schools is often shaped by personal

views, distorted reports, and journalistic impressions, without sufficient evidence to support either criticism or defence.

A comprehensive evaluation program should provide evidence of students' cognitive development, their cultivation of diverse interests, the formation of positive attitudes, and the acquisition of productive work, study, and recreational habits in line with Doff, A. (1995, 215). Given the current situation, educational evaluation methods should not be limited to traditional paper-and-pencil tests. They should incorporate observations, interviews, examinations of student work, and other means of obtaining valid evidence regarding students' attainment of all the important educational objectives of the school.

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