

Pedagogical & Didactical Innovations Evaluation and Assessment of Students Learning

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Abstract: *“The primary purpose of classroom assessment is to inform teaching and improve learning, not to sort and select students or to justify a grade.” --Jay McTighe*

In this paper I intend to discuss

- types of assessment (criterion referenced assessment, Formative, Summative, Diagnostic)
- importance of feedback in Assessment
- students’ Involvement
- link between Specific objectives which are being assessed and Set criteria
- how to check the validity, reliability, impact and practicality of assessment
- students Evaluation and a Rationale
- means of Evaluation (Questionnaire, Checklist etc as an evidence)
- use of rubrics (holistic rubrics, Analytic rubrics) to evaluate the accurate learning of pupils.
- Kirk’s Cycle (Do, Review, Learn, Apply)

Evaluation is a method of acquiring and processing the evidence needed to improve the student’s learning. It is, therefore, important that you select your evaluative criteria carefully before teaching. According to John, P (1994:80) some suggested questions for evaluation are:

- Did you achieve the overall objectives? If not where were the weaknesses? (validity of the assessment)
- How productive was the assessment in relation to your objectives? (Impact of assessment on pupils)
- How well-timed were the segments and questions? (practicality of assessment)
- Did you consider the abilities and interests of your pupils in the assessment? (Differentiation)
- Were your objectives in the assessment attainable? How clear and concise were they? (Validity of the assessment)

As a matter of routine we take assessments in our class but never tried to categorize it. In addition, we know formative assessments help the teacher to know about students understanding through written feedback. As *Black & William*, (1998:55) analyze that: “Formative assessment can enhance learning when it provides students with feedback about specific qualities of their work, and about how to improve.”

Moreover, in class formative and summative assessments are equally important. Students involvement in their own learning plays a vital role According to (*Gipps, 1999*) Self-assessment increases students’ responsibility for their own learning and makes the student-teacher relationship more collaborative.”

To assess formative and summative assessment we need to evaluate it according to set criteria. Usually we design rubrics to evaluate the given assessment but as matter of fact criteria and rubrics are two different concepts and should not be taken as one thought. We know reflective teaching leads to professional development. Evaluation is an integral part of reflective teaching. This information supports teachers in planning and modifying their teaching strategies.

Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted. Albert Einstein

Keywords: Evaluation, Criteria, Objectives, Assessment, Differentiation, formative, Summative, Diagnostic, feedback, rubrics

1. Introduction:

Assessment is an essential part of learning process. This is the method to check the existing knowledge of pupils and suggest new ways for improvement. Usually teachers use different types of assessments to check the understanding of pupils at that particular point. The purpose of assessment is to identify the needs of students and propose new strategies. Assessment is where a learner confirms what he or she knows, comprehends or can do. His or her achievements are measured against the set criteria or other norms. Evaluation of students is very significant to make results accurate and authenticated. To endorse this process criteria impart crucial role in planning and assessment.

2. Formative Assessment

Usually teachers plan formative assessments during the learning session. The purpose of assessment is to know the level of understanding of students and identify different ability groups in the classroom. At the same time the reason of taking formative assessment is to provide feedback to students for future improvement. In addition, it is important to know this type of assessment is about only getting better. Formative assessment has information which supports the conclusions made from the test.

Formative assessments help the teacher to know about students understanding through written feedback. As Harris and McCann (1994:55) analyze that: "Short and regular assessment tasks spread the test marking load over the whole term. This not only

avoids stress and exhaustion on your part, but it should also mean that you will be able to mark more accurately and reliably."

Another advantage of formative assessment is to mark students' strengths and weaknesses to move one step ahead in their learning process. Moreover formative type can help teachers to plan some remedial or extension work depending upon the need of students. As Sadler cited by Gipps (1994:125) conceptualizes that:

"Formative assessment as being concerned with how judgments about the quality of students' responses can be used to shape and improve their competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and error learning."

3. Summative Assessment

Generally educators devise this type of assessment to know what students have attained in a year or semester to promote them for next class after measuring their level of understanding. This type of assessment has proper criteria and grading pattern to justify students' results. Summative assessment can be independent of the learning process or can be related to the curriculum.

In order to judge what student know and what *they do not know summative assessment plays* an integral role. In contrast to formative assessment, it is assessment of learning during the semester or a year.

Sometimes tutors need to give differentiated instructions to different ability groups in the classroom. For that reason formative assessment can be designed in such a way to point out those areas where students need additional support. In this type of assessment teachers define more clear and explicit criteria.

As Bennett and Dunne (1992:109) comment that: "When all children were on the same tasks it is easier for the teacher to predict the kind of problem that will emerge and to concentrate on their solution."

4. Diagnostic Assessment

5. Importance of Feedback in Assessment

After the assessment feedback is most effective when it confirms that pupils are on the right track and it

provides correction or improvement in a piece of work.

As Black, P. et al (2003:42) suggests that an essential part of formative assessment is feedback to the learner, both to assess their current achievement and to indicate what the next steps in their learning trajectory should be.

In teacher student learning process teachers give occasional feedback to students and mostly it is brief and as a whole. After conducting the assessment it is important to give individual feedback to student to foster their learning. One of the key mechanisms of engaging students in the assessment of their own learning is providing them with feedback as they learn. As Gipps (1994:129) indicates that:

“Feedback contributes directly to progress in learning through the process of formative assessment, and indirectly through its effect on pupils’ academic self-esteem.” Feedback is most important instructional approach to move students forward in their learning.

6. STUDENTS’ INVOLVEMENT

Once we engage students in their own learning process it enhances their interest in studies. As Gipps (1994:134) comments that: “Motivation is, of course, one of the links between self-concept/ self-esteem and learning behavior, and achievement motivation is the theory most commonly used to explain the effect of teacher feedback on children’s performance.”

In order to move one step forward teachers need to give feedback with the strong area in their assessment and after that discuss their weaknesses. As Black et al advocate (2003:46) that: “Feedback which focuses on what needs to be done can encourage all to believe that they can improve.”

Once we involve students in assessment process, they feel valued and pay more concentration. As Garrison and Ehringhaus [online] advocate that: “Another distinction that underpins formative assessment is student involvement. If students are not involved in the assessment process, formative assessment is not practiced or implemented to its full effectiveness.”

7.CONNECTION BETWEEN OBJECTIVES AND SET CRITERIA

Before preparing any assessment, it’s very important to take clear objectives against which students are

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being assessed. Before the assessment it is equally important for pupils to be informed about those specific objectives and set criteria.

As Gipps and Stobart (1993:19) advocate that: “Before developing a test, or exam, the developer must define the curriculum, syllabus or range of activities from which, or against which, the test items or exam questions are to be developed.”

In classrooms pupils belong to different ability groups. Teachers must find different ways to cope depending on the resources available and the situation in which they teach. Gipps (1994:127) emphasises that: “Skills and knowledge are now understood to be dependent on the context in which they are learnt and practised; facts cannot be learned in isolation and then used in any context.”

Criteria of any assessment should be directly linked to the defined objectives which deal with all ability groups in the classroom. A checklist can be used to define the criteria. As Navarete et al explain [online] that:

“Checklists specify student behaviors or products expected during progression through the curriculum. The items on the checklist may be content area objectives.”

8.CRITERIA OF GOOD ASSESSMENT

Validity of the Assessment:

Once a teacher makes an assessment, it is his or her task to make sure whether assessment is valid in terms of understanding the instructions as well concepts. In the subject like PDS (Personnel Development Skills), skills are more important to understand rather than the English language. In assessment process criteria should be skills not English language. This very crucial aspect should be considered to make assessment more valid.

Reliability of the Assessment

To make assessment more effective, reliability plays a vital role. Teacher has to prepare it in such a way that it always gives same results if solved in different timings or checked by different teachers. Again same results depend on the selected criteria for the assessment which is correlated with the objectives.

As Gipps and Stobart (1993:22) comments that: “Reliability is if the test were given on a number of occasions to the same child, or was marked by different people, we would get the same score.”

Impact on student's learning

To leave positive impact on students learning, it is again important to make it practical and based on real life experiences. After giving assessment students must gain knowledge and should be able to solve it without any confusion. As Clarke (2005:16) points out that: "We need to think not only about the learning, but the situation in which the learning takes place and the influence of those factors in promoting or demoting motivation and effective learning."

Practicality of the Assessment

While designing any assessment, it is teacher tasks to consider time allocated for that assessment. It shouldn't be very lengthy or brief. Marking criteria, rubrics and answer key should be very apparent. If some other teacher is checking it, she shouldn't face any problem. . As Gipps (1994:13) advocates that: "A good test is one that has high reliability, validity and efficiency and whose assessor remains a neutral observer."

9.STUDENTS EVALUATION BY USING DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUES

To check the VIRP (validity, reliability, impact and practicality) teachers need to formulate the criteria to evaluate the assessment. After defining the criteria a teacher requires to attain evidence for successful learning/teaching. Some data gathering methods to record the evidences are:

Questionnaire: In order to know the impact of assessment questionnaire checklist can be used as a mean of evaluation because it is a self-report assessment device on which students can provide information about areas of interest to the teacher .This questionnaire also helps teachers to find out the validity of the assessment.

Moderation method Another method to evaluate the validity of assessment is moderation method to further authenticate assessment. In this method other teachers or friends can sit in the class during the assessment to record the responses of students. If assessment has clear instruction and according to the taught objectives, then of course they will not ask any question but if assessment is not practical there can be ambiguity. These responses can be recorded by using moderation method.

Field Notes: Keeping field notes is a way of reporting observations, reflections and reactions to the problems which occurred during the assessment procedure.

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If students face any problem or a teacher feel there is some problem in that, it is helpful to record it at that time. This method can help to indentify the core problem in teaching and some issues of making assessments.

10.Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

In order to evaluate students learning pre defined criteria is important. Teachers need to inform students about those criteria before time. Educators really need to maintain planning sheets in evaluation process. Teachers should record his or her planning sheet to attain evidences for evaluation process.

This concept is also supported by Kyriacou (1998:119) that:

"In order to help ensure that teachers are honest in using this list of statements, they are told that it is for their own personal use, simply to help them think about which areas of their classroom teaching might like to focus on as part of the self evaluation or teacher appraisal process."

Assessment Plan and Evaluation Checklist

I have considered:

The strategies I will use to gauge student readiness for the unit.

- The product or performance that will engage my students and best demonstrate my intended learning goals and targeted thinking skills.
- What quality work will look like and how I will involve students in understanding the project expectations, learning goals, and criteria?
- How I will address and assess higher-order thinking and 21st Century skills in this unit?
- The reporting and monitoring strategies that will encourage student self-management and progress during independent and group work and the monitoring and reporting instruments I will need to create.
- How I will monitor student understanding, identify misconceptions, and adjust if necessary?
- How I will determine if knowledge is being applied in new situations?
- How I will foster peer feedback?

*Adopted from Intel Teach
Program
(<https://teachonline.intel.com/pk/login/index.php>)*

which are not accomplished. Teaching strategy must be flexible and congruent to set objectives.

Most noteworthy part of it, when we apply new knowledge it provides spiral foundation. Unquestionably in evaluation set criteria helps a lot to improve existing strategies for further succession. According to Kirk's cycle it is not only crucial in teaching to simply teach students but also review the teaching strategies. As a teacher it is important to see whether teaching and learning styles appropriate for students or not. The aim to review the teaching techniques is to see what are the tasks or segments which are not accomplished. Teaching strategy must be flexible and congruent to set objectives.

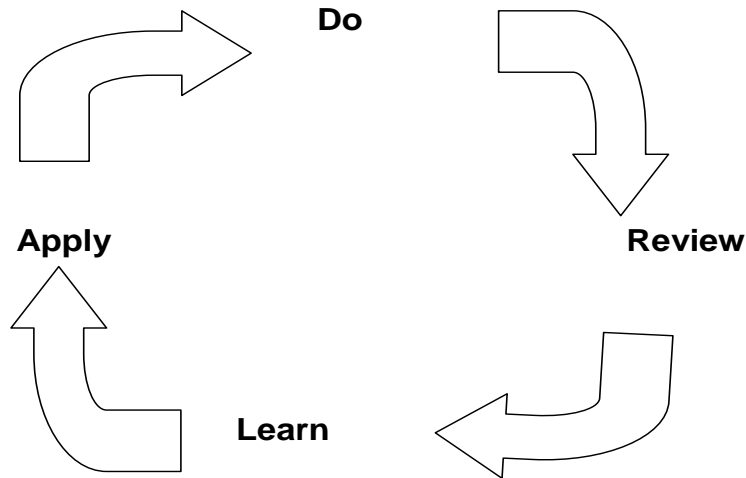
Most noteworthy part of it, when we apply new knowledge it provides spiral foundation. Unquestionably in evaluation set criteria helps a lot to improve existing strategies for further succession.

In order to evaluate teaching strategies again criteria is important. For this purpose teacher can mention strong area of teaching and at the same time can suggest ways of improvement. Critical friend or self evaluation can play imperative role. As Hopkins (1993:37) suggests that: "When teachers enter classrooms bring with them perspectives derived from academic disciplines."

According to Kirk's cycle it is not only crucial in teaching to simply teach students but also review the teaching strategies. As a teacher it is important to see whether teaching and learning styles appropriate for students or not. The aim to review the teaching techniques is to see what are the tasks or segments

activities. Sometimes we need to judge the concept as a whole and sometimes

Kirk's Evaluation Cycle



Adapted from The Professional Learning Cycle
(Kirk 1987)

11.Role of Rubrics in Evaluation

Rubrics are a rating scale to measure the degree of learning of students. As Mertler (2001) [online] comments that: “Rubrics are rating scales-as opposed to checklists-that are used with performance assessments.”

As a teacher it should be clear that criteria and rubrics are two different concepts and should not be taken as one thought. After giving the result teachers should have defined rubrics to give reasons to the students. As Mertler (2001) [online] suggests that: “Rubrics are typically the specific form of scoring instrument used when evaluating student performances or products resulting from a performance task.”

To make results more accurate instructors should not be stick with one particular type of rubrics for all the

as separate parts from the beginning to end. As Allen (2004) [online] comments that:

“Once a rubric is created, it can be used for a variety of activities, reviewing, reconceptualizing, and revisiting the same concepts from different angles improves understanding of the lesson for students.”

At the same time before designing any assessment teacher should consider the point that which type of assessment would facilitate pupils learning. As Airasian (2001:205) points out that: “Prior to designing a specific rubric, a teacher must decide whether the performance or product will be scored holistically or analytically.”

Furthermore teacher should be clear about the types of rubrics to use it according to the need of subject

and content. Holistic rubrics can be formulated to check the overall concept.

Montgomery (2001:21) suggests that it is important to note that one type of rubric is not inherently better than the other-you must find a format that works best for your purposes.

Holistic rubrics are most likely more suitable when performance tasks require students to create some kind of response and where there is no right answer. As Nitko (2001:75) describes that: "A holistic rubric requires the teacher to score the overall process or product as a whole, without judging the component parts separately."

Other type of rubrics is analytical to see the detailed view of taught concept. As Harris and McCann (1994:56) state that: "The advantage of analytical rating is that raters may find it easier to assign a certain level using simplified and discrete scales."

Usually in analytical rubrics creativity is not required and student's responses are clear to teachers. As Nitko (2001:76) advocates that:

"Analytic rubrics are usually preferred when a fairly focused type of response is required that is, for performance tasks in which there may be one or two acceptable responses and creativity is not an essential feature of the students' responses."

Rubrics is very helpful instrument to measure the accurate degree of learning as Andrade [online] suggests that: "rubrics reduce the amount of time teachers spend evaluating student work. Teachers tend to find that by the time a piece has been self- and peer-assessed according to a rubric; they have little left to say about it."

12.CONCLUSION

This paper is to highlight the importance of assessment during and at the end of the session. Moreover assessment is not a simple process it encompasses all important aspects i.e clearly defined objectives, criteria and differentiated instructions. While devising any type of assessment it is important to consider VIRP (validity, impact, reliability, practicality) to get clear picture of students learning and understanding.

To design authentic assessment objectives should be embedded with the set criteria. It is therefore imperative that teachers plan evaluative criteria carefully before teaching. In evaluation process criteria helps to achieve the overall objectives.

After that reflective evaluation helps educators to improve the organizational and teaching skills. For future progression teachers need evidence for judgments which can be provided through holistic or analytical rubrics.

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