

Summative, Formative & Diagnostic Evaluation

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Specifically there are three types of evaluation used in the classroom. These are summative evaluation, formative evaluation and diagnostic evaluation.

Summative Evaluation

Summative Evaluation is the commonly known type of evaluation. It comes at the end of the term, course or programme of teaching. It involves a formal testing of pupils' achievement. Annual examinations and half yearly examinations in schools, public examinations are the example of such evaluation. The purpose of this kind of evaluation is to grade, rank, classify, compare and promote the pupils. It is also used for the purpose of certification. Summative evaluation is also used for selecting students for scholarships or for admission to particular courses. Prediction regarding the success of students in their future endeavours can also be made on its basis.

Formative Evaluation

Formative Evaluation, on the other hand, is inbuilt with the process of teaching and learning. It is done during the course of instruction with a view to improving students' learning. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide feedback regarding the students' progress, by finding out the learning gaps and the weak points. The teacher can then organize remedial programmes for them.

Formative evaluation also provides the teacher feedback regarding the efficiency of the teaching methods, so that the teaching can be improved. It can also provide clues to the effectiveness of the course content and teaching materials. For example, after teaching and testing a unit, the teachers can evaluate whether the content taught was appropriate for that level and whether the text book had dealt with that content in an appropriate manner which

the students could understand easily. Thus, the main purpose of formative evaluation is improvement in learning.

Formative evaluation is done continuously throughout the course period. It can be done by means of unit tests which can be given after teaching each unit, informal class tests, assignments and other class room activities. Unlike summative evaluation which is formal in nature, formative evaluation is informal and can be undertaken by using multiple techniques like observation, oral tests, written tests, etc.

Diagnostic Evaluation

Diagnostic Evaluation is another kind of evaluation which is more closely related to formative than the summative evaluation. In fact it is to be carried out along with formative evaluation in the class. Sometimes, even the summative evaluation may be used for diagnostic purpose.

The main purpose of diagnostic evaluation is to find out the underlying cause of weaknesses in a student's learning, but it is also needed even prior to instruction in order to place the student properly by looking at higher level of achievement. Thus, diagnostic evaluation provides a starting point to carry out the instruction. Diagnostic evaluation is important for classroom teaching for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is relevant to know the entry behaviour of the students i.e, whether they are ready to learn or they have the basic skills and information required for continuing the new learning. Secondly, it helps in knowing the level to which the students already have learnt a particular unit. After knowing the level, the teacher can decide whether the instruction he is going to impart will turn out to be mere repetition, or will be an advance in knowledge. It is important to know this as advanced learning may prove to be interesting for the students whereas repetition may distract them, causing indiscipline in class. Thirdly, diagnosis helps the teacher classify students according to their level of mastery and this in turn will help him to work out a remedial instruction programme for the low achievers and slow learners. Moreover, there may be causes other than instructional methods or materials for the weaknesses of the children. There may be physical,

emotional or social reasons working as impediments to learning. Diagnosis can pinpoint the symptoms of the learning disorders arising because of these problems.

The End