

Unit 6: Assessment and Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Assessment and Evaluation are central to the process of effective teaching and learning. They have become a greater part of teachers' professional activity. According to Sutton (1991), "assessment can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set, and pupils' progress charted and expressed." It can produce a basis for planning the next educational steps in response to children's needs." It therefore, helps teachers to review their strategies for curriculum delivery.

Therefore, assessment and evaluation of school effectiveness aim at encouraging teachers and learners to achieve high standards of education. Furthermore, they help to provide feedback on the performance of the curriculum to determine the extent to which it is meeting the objective of promoting learners' intellectual, physical, and personal development as well as statutory requirements in terms of educational provisions. Assessment and evaluation are instruments that provide feedback to curriculum planners to improve or reform the curriculum.

Education is a universal right. It is, therefore, important for any education system regularly to reflect on its performance and compare itself to how other education systems in the world are performing. Assessment and evaluation are critical in accessing this information.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, inspectors will be able to:

- use lesson observation to assess the quality of the teaching and learning processes
- use examination results as an assessment instrument
- use the different assessment techniques to establish the standards of teaching, and the attainment level of the learners
- use assessment as an instrument of feedback to the system.
- use record-keeping to assess how well the teacher is doing.

LESSON OBSERVATION

Lesson/Classroom observation is central to inspectors' responsibilities because it provides feedback on the teaching and learning process. It is, therefore, important that when conducting lesson or classroom observation, inspectors clearly define the aims, objectives and the focus of the observation.

However, lesson observation is about faith in the observable, making it a rational, objective and scientific approach. It reveals what actually happens during interactions between the teacher and the learner, or amongst the learners themselves. It should be noted, however, that since lesson observation can reflect what the observer thinks is happening, it cannot be entirely accurate and free from bias. Any observation conducted should be measured against external criteria of some sort and those observed should have faith that the systematic observation will lead to changes in their classroom behaviour.

Classroom learning is, therefore, a social activity which requires more than simply studying the events in the classroom without looking at the social interaction.

5. Teacher Observation Form

1. Name of School _____ 2. Name of Teacher _____ 3. Class _____ 4. Subject _____ Date: _____

Pre-lesson Conference				
1. Subject of Lesson				
2. Preparation (Comment On..) Notes/Diagrams/Charts Apparatus/Audio Visual Materials Questions to be Asked Tasks/Problems/Tests			6. Teaching Aids Quality of How Relevant How Used	
3. Presentation of Lesson Introductory Stage/Development Conclusion/Evaluation Nature and Degree of Student Involvement			7. Relations with Students Use of Names/Encouragement Response of Students Fairness to Students	
4. Questioning Frequency/Sampling By Teacher/Student			8. Manner/Voice Confidence/Enthusiasm Use of Voice/Command of Lang.	
5. Types of Activities Group/Pair Work/Oral/Written Work			9. Evaluation Procedures Types of Effectiveness	
10. Strengths and Weaknesses				
Post-lesson Conference				
General Comment				

Source: Ministry of Education and Manpower Development, Lesotho

Activity 6a

You have been invited to a school to observe a lesson in the subject area of your choice.

- a) Decide what sort of activity you plan to focus on.
- b) Decide what sort of processes you would go through.

NB The process should include among others

- the interaction between individuals
- the nature of contributions made by individual learners

The different steps involved in classroom observation may include among others:

- setting up a schedule of classroom observations
- discussing the nature of the observation with the head
- meeting the classroom teacher before and after the lesson observation
- informing the school about how feedback will be provided, stating both the oral and written approaches.

Activity 6b

Attached is a teacher observation form. Now that you have done your lesson observation assignment, compare your observation from the previous activity to the process suggested in the attached sample of a teacher observation form.

COMMENT

It is hoped that your observations were comprehensive enough and compared favourably with the process as described in the sub-unit. In the event that some aspects that you came up with are not on the sample form, remember that any instrument designed to be used for the purpose of observation, should not be viewed as the final arbiter on a lesson. Inspectors should use their own judgements in each situation.

OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES

There are generally two types of lesson/classroom observation that inspectors can conduct. However, it should be noted that even with these observation approaches, inspectors should realise that their physical presence in the classroom while someone is teaching makes the situation abnormal. The classroom is a very complex organisation, the time available to inspectors is limited and precludes learning much about it although extensive knowledge is essential to make reliable judgements. The two types used for lesson observation are:

- narrative
- structured

Narrative

There are two approaches that one can use within the narrative. These are:

- the passive approach where every event and activity that occurs in the classroom is recorded. It is descriptive in nature and involves categorising material into pedagogical and social skills of learners and teachers. However, the passive approach

tends to be impractical because of the limited time available for an inspector to conduct observation.

- the active approach, which entails responding to events/activities by recording the aspects that are regarded as significant. However, the observer is in danger of being subjective when deciding what he/she considers to be significant.

Structured

As in the narrative, the structured observation has two approaches. These are:

- observing behaviour where an observer's attention is limited to a pre-determined set of behaviours listed on a recording instrument. Observations are noted according to time scale. However, even in this approach, it is still difficult to establish the relationship between the teacher's behaviour and that of the learner.
- using an in-class rating scale where the observer records what is seen and heard by rating performance or achievements of teachers and learners in areas such as subject content, knowledge, teacher's command of language, variety and success of activities and how well organised the teacher is.

Activity 6c

Reflecting on your own experience as an inspector:

Use the attached example of the teacher's observation form, (Department of Secondary Education Teacher Observation: Botswana) to compare and add any other information you feel may be necessary for effective classroom observation.

COMMENT

Whilst observation is a method which may have drawbacks, it is a good method for providing reliable information on what actually happens in the learning and teaching interactions between the teacher and learners.

Inspectors, who from time to time observe teachers, are reminded that though an observation instrument may have been developed to be used by inspectors during lesson presentations, such an instrument requires considerable practice before being applied consistently, and may not be appropriate in all situations.

EXAMINATIONS

Examinations are key instruments used to assess what learners know, understand and are able to do in order to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. It is important for inspectors to analyse examination results in order to be able to assess the extent to which the national standards are being achieved through learners' attainments as well as the comprehensive coverage of the curriculum, and the quality of teaching and learning.

Activity 6d

What do you understand as your role when being an inspector in the examination process?

**DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
TEACHER OBSERVATION (BOTSWANA)**

SCHOOL:	TEACHER:	UTS NO
SUBJECT:	CLASS:	SIZE:
Date:		
TOPIC:		

GRADES: U = Unacceptable W = Weak S = Satisfactory G = Good O = Outstanding

LESSON OBSERVATION	COMMENT	GRADING				
		U	W	S	G	O
1. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION Including appearance, punctuality and voice.						
2. PREPARATION Appropriate objectives, materials and resources.						
3. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON Introduction, development, consolidation and conclusion.						
4. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF SUBJECT Accuracy, level & relevancy of material						
5. VARIETY AND APPROPRIATENESS OF ACTIVITIES Questioning, individual, group and whole class activities, use of subject specific techniques.						
6. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT Teacher/student rapport, student display of interest, sustained purposeful activity.						
7. ATTENTION TO INDIVIDUALS Sensitive to the unique needs of each student, allows time for individual attention.						
8. RESOURCES Nature, variety and effective use including those prepared by the teacher and the students						
9. CLASS MANAGEMENT Teacher in effective control						
10. STANDARDS OF STUDENTS' WORK Evidence of regular class and homework, involving an appropriate range and level of skills with each student achieving their potential.						
11. EVIDENCE THAT THE LESSON IS WITHIN A PLANNED PROGRAMME Attention to syllabus, schemes and records						

COMMENT

Inspectors are key to ensuring that examinations are carried out successfully. Inspectors are, therefore, responsible for, among others:

- the integrity of the examination process
- the storage and safe keeping of examination scripts
- the administration of the examination
- invigilation, and
- monitoring registration and entries.

ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

Assessment techniques are used as an overall measure of attainment and progress made by the learners, indicating their strengths and weaknesses in the different competencies in different subjects. When inspectors carry out assessment, they should determine the factors that account for effective and ineffective teaching as well as the learning of all learners, paying particular attention to any learner in the class who may still need additional help.

Activity 6e

List any assessment techniques you know and have used.

How effective are the techniques in assessing the teaching and learning?

COMMENT

Assessment is a vital process in measuring educational outcomes. It is a method that illuminates the uniqueness of the child. It provides advice as well as feedback, so that all the recipients of the information can take effective decisions about future action.

Assessment can be classified into two main categories which are:

- Formative Assessment
- Summative Assessment

As Sutton (1991) puts it, "Promoting children's learning is a principal aim of schools. Assessment lies at the heart of this process. It can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set, and pupils' progress is charted and expressed. It can yield a basis for planning the next educational steps in response to children's needs. By facilitating dialogue between teachers, it can enhance professional skills and help the school as a whole to strengthen learning across the curriculum and throughout its age range."

The two categories should therefore be seen in the light of providing a framework in which educational principles and objectives are achieved by focusing on learners and learning achievement.

Formative assessment is an ongoing process, conducted both formally and informally. It is used to identify and remedy problems during the teaching and learning process. It is a way through which evidence about a child's learning is absorbed, and used to plan the next step through a given task.

Summative assessment is mainly concerned with assessing the work or merit of academic progress by the end of a given learning period. However, inspectors should be aware that measuring something does not necessarily make it grow. Assessment that does not suggest areas of improvement will not assist the teacher or learner to improve.

Activity 6f

Only two forms of assessment have been referred to in this unit. What other approaches to assessment are you familiar with?

In your experience as an inspector, which of the two assessment procedures have you found useful to the teacher, learner and parents?

Justify your answers.

COMMENT

Assessment techniques are of great significance in the day to day activities of the teachers. They suggest, direct and help teachers to focus their teaching, and also direct learners in terms of whether or not the objectives and competencies of the lesson or topic are being achieved. Inspectors should be aware of the value of these approaches in order to reassure parents of the progress of their children.

RECORD KEEPING

The main purpose of record keeping is to help teachers to monitor individual learner's next learning steps. Sutton (1991) has referred to this as a formative purpose, indicating that these formative records are summarised periodically to provide information to such stakeholders as parents. In addition, records may be kept for the purpose of showing that such statutory responsibilities as delivery of the National Curriculum are being undertaken.

Records can be kept by teachers to pass on information about learners to the next school, or from one teacher in the same school to the next. Records can also be kept to serve as an entry profile, describing the children's learning and development as they begin the National Curriculum.

The information recorded can be drawn directly from evidence collected through classroom observation as well as some discussion with parents. This entry profile will provide essential information from the school to the parents at an early stage in the learner's schooling. This will also enable teachers to discuss the significance of a learner's National Curriculum progression throughout all of the learning stages.

Activity 6g

What records do you keep as inspectors?

List at least four types of records you keep as an inspector.

State their significance and who the users are.

COMMENT

The purpose of record keeping is to, among other things, provide significant information compiled during classroom observation and discussion with parents. The records kept

will enable both parents and teachers to discuss the learner's progress. Record keeping is, in a way, a form of stock-taking exercise and can be a way of illustrating a pattern which has developed over a period of time.

FEEDBACK

Throughout this unit, including the unit on report writing, we have noted that inspectors undertake inspection as an audit of the education system. Emphasis has been on the fact that such an audit should aim at facilitating the improvement of the learning and teaching in the classroom, as well as how to improve the education system as a whole.

For such inspection reports to be of value, it was mentioned that they have to be of substance, concise, informative and containing advice that will lead to further action. This whole process of providing information after undertaking investigation, or any activity that requires a report back, is referred to as feedback.

The information obtained through summative or formative assessment assists in focusing the teacher's response to the learners' needs, and helps the system as a whole in terms of determining overall performance.

SUMMARY

This unit should have enabled you to become conversant with the importance of assessing and evaluating teaching and learning experiences. It is also aimed at exposing you to various techniques of assessment like formative and summative evaluation.

Furthermore it has pinpointed the importance of record-keeping in relation to the assessment of pupils' performance.

REFLECTION

Having gone through this unit, take a moment to reflect on the content and usefulness of the information. In your reflection, try and think about how the unit will assist you in your efforts to facilitate educational assessment and evaluation activities.

REFERENCES

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- Sutton, R. (1991) *Assessment: A Frameworks for Teachers*, Routledge, London