Educational Evaluation: Functions and Applications in Educational Contexts

Ramezan Jahanian
PhD Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran
e-mail: Ramezan.jahanian@gmail.com

Abstract

Evaluation is a process in which an educational and training procedure is compared with its predetermined goals to find out their fulfillment. On the twenty first century, Educational evaluation, as a branch of educational science, is a major contributor to the improvement of education quality. Educational evaluation is used in any educational activity and in every kind of activity for transferring, motivating and acquiring knowledge and skill. Educational evaluation is applied to find out learners’ achievements and diagnose educational outcomes, and plays a vital role in improving the education quality. It is regarded as an ongoing and ruled process of describing, guiding and making sure of the educational quality. Results showed educational evaluation has different functions and applications some of which are recognition, syllabus revision, comparison and needs analysis.

Keywords: Educational Evaluation, Educational paradigm, Education System, Educational Contexts, Application

Introduction

Educational evaluation is applied to find out learners’ achievements and diagnose educational outcomes, and plays a vital role in improving the education quality. The reason for this is that it determines to what extent the educational procedure is in line with students’ capabilities, how practical it is and how successful it has been at achieving educational goals. To fulfill their educational goals, educational contexts need to know how far the procedures are in line with their prefabricated goals. Today educational evaluations a useful tool for managers and teachers for decision making on issues such as continuing, revising or expanding educational syllabus.

Seif (2008) states that evaluation is a rule governed process for gathering and analysis of data. It is used to determine whether the educational goals are fulfilled or they are on the process of fulfillment, and to what extent. He also believes that the main goal in education is to make changes in learners’ behavior. Seif also states that education is comprised of three phases: determining goals, teaching and educational evaluation.
Staflebeem and Shingfield (1986) present a broader definition of evaluation. They see evaluation as determining and gathering descriptive and random data on the quality of goal achievement, projects and results with the aim of guiding, decision making and needs analysis of learners and a better understanding of the phenomena studied (Staflebeem & Shingfield, 1986 cited in Kianmanesh, 2006).

Evaluation consists of: generalization, lack of bias, evaluation along with the necessary training, evaluation being the means but not the goal, overtones, confidentiality, being ongoing, self-evaluation and controlling the evaluation (Hoseini, 2004).

Hadavand (2008) presents his findings on useful tips in evaluation paradigm as follows: know the importance of evaluation, analyze the evaluation function, consider evaluation applications, determine and define evaluation factors, always consider evaluation presuppositions, determine errors in assessment, follow a successful evaluator, know evaluation standards, take meticulous notes of evaluation and never forget to be open to suggestions.

**Educational Evaluation: Functions and Applications**

Educational evaluation has numerous functions and application. Esneer lists some of the most important functions and applications as follows:

- **Diagnose:** educational evaluation can be used in learning contexts; this function can help teachers to determine the factors affecting learners' learning process which in turn may eliminate learning problems.
- **Syllabus Revision:** educational evaluation can be really helpful in syllabus design and revision.
- **Comparison:** It can be used to compare syllabus, teaching methods and other aspects of education such as management.
- **Needs Analysis:** Needs analysis means gathering quantitative data to find out the needs of a certain group of learners, education employees and the people in the society (Yarmohamadian, 2007).

Bazargan (2006) enlists the most important functions and applications of educational evaluation as what follows:

1. Paying close attention to goals and what should be achieved through education procedure;
2. Supporting the determined syllabus and eliminating its flaws to achieve educational goals;
3. Emphasizing solidarity of the participants and therefore achieving educational goals;
4. Paving the way for improving system, atmosphere and expanding the appropriate human resources and therefore improving and developing the society, economy and culture within the country;
5. Feeling responsible for educational procedures and ensuring individuals and the society of these activities;
6. Announcing the educational procedures.

Bazargan (2006) also states that educational evaluation involves the reflection of activities of a unit or educational phenomenon in order to push the predetermined goals forward. He holds that educational evaluation can respond to four questions.

1. How good is the educational goal quality?
2. How good is the syllabus quality?
3. How good is the quality of procedural issues for the predetermined schedules?
4. How good is the quality of schedule functions?

In what follows we review the findings of some of the researches on educational evaluation.

Studying the descriptive evaluation and the traditional paradigm in elementary school on the basis of the class atmosphere, students' emotional characteristics and creativity, Maher et al. (2007) found that there is significant difference between descriptive evaluation and traditional paradigm with respect to the variables of class atmosphere (collaborative learning, individualism, competition, fairness in scoring, detachment from school and social support).

Haghighi (2007) in his study on the impact of educational evaluation on Tehran elementary school students' learning found that there is a significant difference between the experimental and the control group.

Aboomohamadi (2005) in a study on elementary teachers' point of view towards descriptive evaluation found that 75 percent of the teachers were in favor of the issue and pointed out its advantages such as reduction of stress, elevation of intake and improving learning quality. They also pointed out the disadvantages which were its being time consuming and families not being in line with it.

In his study on Tehran teachers' knowledge and point of view towards alternative assessment, Mohebi (2005) found that teachers have adequate information and positive attitude toward alternative assessment and only in some rare cases do they need to improve their knowledge on the matter.

In a research called the impact of evaluation on elementary students' educational improvement, it was revealed that evaluation on its own has no impact on students' educational improvement. There was no significant difference between male and female
teachers’ point of view on the issue and it was concluded that evaluation improves education quality (Esmaeilbeigui, 2005).

Kord (2003) by investigating the relationship between feedback in evaluation and educational improvement revealed that there was significant difference between educational improvement in those students who received feedback and those who did not. Also, the study showed that there is a significant difference between oral and written feedbacks, but such a difference could not be observed between written and mixed feedbacks.

Christie (2009) study named why school based assessment is not a universal feature of high stakes assessment systems? There are three reasons: 1. Contraction between psychoanalysis and evaluation functions 2. Schools’ different impacts and 3. Teachers’ judgments.

Tognolini et al. (2007) in their research about the standards based on evaluation b for extending budget and expanding in education system showed that the use of evaluation in education leads to improvement in human resources and expansion in education.

Conclusion

Evaluation is a process in which an educational and training procedure is compared with its predetermined goals to find out their fulfillment. Educational evaluation has a variety of functions and applications such as diagnosis, syllabus revision, comparison and needs analysis. The most important functions and applications of educational evaluation are paying close attention to learning goals and what should be achieved through education procedure and making decisions about them, supporting the determined syllabus and eliminating its flaws to achieve educational goals and improving the human resources, emphasizing solidarity of the participants and therefore achieving educational goals, paving the way for improving the system, atmosphere and expanding human resources and therefore improving and developing the society, economy and culture within the country, feeling responsible for educational procedures and ensuring individuals and the society of the activities and announcing the educational procedures.

References

Aboomohamadi, Khaghani (2005). Reviewing the primary school teachers’ point of view about the descriptive evaluation in Yazd Province. M.A. Thesis


Maher, F. Aghayee, A. Borjali, A. Rohani A. (2007). The comparison between the descriptive evaluation and the traditional system based on the atmosphere of the class, students' emotional characteristics and their creativity in elementary school. Journal of Knowledge and research in Educational Sciences and Curriculum. 20 (14).


