

Implications of Assessment on Learning

EDS 113 - Principles and Methods of Assessment

Overview

We have previously discussed three important purposes that assessment serves in education. In this module, we shall explore other ways that assessments influence processes in education – perhaps deliberate, or perhaps unintentional, but significant nonetheless.

Objectives

After studying the materials and doing the activities in this module, you should be able to:

- discuss intended or unintended influences of assessment on the learners and their learning processes and outcomes*
- modify teaching plans and decisions based on an awareness of the effects of assessment on students' learning behaviors*

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Activities:

- *Read the handout. Scrutinize the guide questions and re-read the handout with a critical eye. Refer to other materials to broaden your perspectives.*
- *Try to resolve the guide questions in the discussion forum.*
- *Reflect on the discussions and make a synthesis (summary + conclusion). What insights and realizations are you able to derive from studying the module? Post these in your e-Journal.*

Handout:

*Morgan, Dunn, Parry, & O'Reilly. **The Student Assessment Handbook: New Directions in Traditional and Online Assessment**, Chapters 1-2. NY: RoutledgeFalmer.*

Guide questions

Besides the utility of assessment to judge learning outcomes, the direct future learning-teaching activities, or to be opportunities for further learning, in what other ways does assessment influence learning processes?

Specifically:

- *How do assessment tasks influence students' (deep versus surface) approaches to learning?*
- *What are the potential consequences when assessment tasks don't match the desired learning outcomes?*
- *In what various ways might assessment create "side effects" in education? Do anecdotes from your personal experiences or observations tend to validate or refute the contentions brought forth in foreign literature? Consider the following aspects in this regard:*
 - deep- vs. surface-processing
 - motivation
 - goal setting
 - persistence
 - self-esteem
 - stereotyping
 - test anxiety
 - extrinsic motivation: minimize risks, maximize rewards
 - high-stakes competition
 - pressures to meet prescribed standards (judgment)
 - assessment deviates from practical utility
 - oversimplification, overgeneralization of a multi-dimensional performance derived from a single value: "a grade"
 - inaccuracy of grades- discrepant valuations across schools & communities
- *In what ways would weakly valid and/or reliable assessments adversely affect students' learning processes? Would there be equally significant impacts on teaching as well?*
- *How can a teacher / educator put to advantage his awareness of the often covert (hidden, unintended) effects of assessment on learning and teaching processes? Specifically, how should teaching be purposely planned, designed, or altered on account of this awareness?*

In aid of reflective learning

How have various assessments (e.g., written tests, oral exams, projects, graded homework and recitation, etc) affected you? Reflect on various perspectives: positive-negative, funny- sad, encouraging-devastating, reinforcing-undermining.

Having considered the implications of educational assessment on the learner and on his learning, what can you (rather than "they, the other teachers") do proactively? Focus on doability and personal commitment.