NEW TRENDS IN FORMATIVE-SUMMATIVE EVALUATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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Abstract: The aim of this article was to review the different evaluation approaches for adult learners and the effect on promoting the quality of teaching and learning. This study aimed to identify new trends in adult education formative-summative evaluations.

Keywords: adult learner, adult student evaluation, distance learning evaluation, formative-summative evaluation

Introduction and Background

The adult education system has changed dramatically since Malcolm Knowles introduced his theory and definition of adult education, and the boundaries of "adult education" are broad and difficult to delineate. The term "adult learners" now includes individuals who, following a break in study after leaving compulsory or regular university education, become involved in a diverse range of formal, informal, and non-formal education that results in acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and well-being. The "adult student" category is often limited to those aged 25 and over. There is some overlap between the categories of "nontraditional student" and "adult student." The "adult student" is first defined as a student who pursues any program leading to a vocational certificate, degree, or training; second, his or her goal for education is to gain additional or enhance existing work skills; third, he or she considers himself/herself primarily as a worker, not a student; and, finally, is likely to be enrolled in distance education because of his or her numerous responsibilities and multiple life roles. Adult education involves adults engaging in sustained, systematic, self-educating activities to gain values, knowledge, attitudes, and new skills.

Adult Education Evaluations

"Evaluation" and "assessment" are often used synonymously to refer to the process of judging and assigning value to an item. However, the term "assessment" is technically used to judge work, learning, or performance (formally or informally), while the term "evaluation" is used to measure all other aspects of academic endeavors

During an education program, evaluations are conducted at several stages to determine the value of certain aspects according to a set of guidelines with specific criteria. According to Jones, both assessment and evaluation procedures identify what is being assessed, addressing the nature of assessment and the collection of appropriate evidences. Both assessors and evaluators must be clear about what they are assessing.

To summarize, assessment is defined as a continuous process to measure, monitor, and improve learning, degree of achievements, outcomes, and decide how much objectives are accomplished. On the contrary, evaluation validates and judge the performance or outcome quality degree and level for decision making. Thus, the key difference between the two is that assessment is directed toward learning progression, evaluation is aimed to outcome. Assessment is continuous systematic measures to review and assess the learner improvements, weakness and strength using the obtained data and information for academic support.

Differences Between Assessment and Evaluation

Yambi stated that the main differences between assessment and evaluation, they are as follows:

Assessment is the process of collecting and examining the data to improve the current and future performance. Evaluation is a judgmental process using standardized criteria to evaluate final grades or scores.

Assessment is investigative diagnostic, as it identifies weak areas to improve. Whereas Evaluation is judgmental since it provides the learner with the overall score.

Assessment serves as a feedback on learning to enhance the performance. In contrast, Evaluation determines if the criteria are fulfilled or not.

Assessment goal is formative or assessment for learning, that is, to improve the performance during the process but evaluation is summative since it is preformed after the program has been completed to judge the quality.

Assessment targets the process, whereas evaluation is aimed to the outcome.

Assessment feedback relies on reflections of strong and weak points. In evaluation, it depends on the level of outcome against predetermined criteria.

The association between assessor and the person to be assessed is student-centered and depends on perception, standards internally and jointly defined. On the contrary, in evaluation the evaluator shares a perspective association with the person to be evaluated against predetermined measures defined by the evaluator.

Formative assessment, targets student's learning improvement and advancement. Thus, meaningful feedback is required. While summative assessment is aimed to assess student's accomplishments.

Formative assessment is conducted multiple times during the process, whereas the summative is held after concluding part or course.

Summative assessment includes the full topic or course when assessing. Thus, summative assessment is considered to be more of a "product assessment."

Formative assessment considers evaluation as a continuous regular process.

Effective Formative Assessment

The effective formative assessment is designed to attain the desired learning objectives and focuses on daily needs and practices. It is aimed to monitor student achievement and progress in achieving the desired goals, thus must be precise, clear, quantifiable, and based on Bloom's Taxonomy. It should be able to assess individual and group performance and consistent without changing everyday practice to fit the exam. One of the advantages of formative assessment or assessment for learning is to give feedback and directions to adjust teaching strategies to guide and lead students to achievements and success.

Conclusion

After revising the ideas above, it would be obvious that evaluation and assessment are totally dissimilar. Whereas evaluation includes creating decisions, assessment is concerned with correcting the deficits and weakness in the performance. Though, they play an essential part in investigating and purifying the performance of a person and outcome.

This article examined new trends in the use of formative-summative evaluations in adult education. An examination of these new trends provides implications for evaluating adult students within the classroom setting. Namely, as adult learners tend to be more responsible for their learning than younger students and bring more experience to the classroom, adult educators have more freedom and flexibility in assisting their students. Therefore, the adult learning environment is perfectly suited for formative evaluation. Finally,

these trends parallel those related to the increase in high-stakes standardized testing, which is not always available in adult education scenarios.

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