

Chapter 2

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Why do we use assessment? What happens if we don't assess? What does assessment mean for education, decision makers, stakeholders, teachers, and students? How do objectives and learning outcomes guide evaluation? Objectives and learning outcomes are classified by taxonomies by Bloom, Anderson, and Krathwohl. Do these taxonomies also guide the assessment? How does it work? How to measure learning outcomes in the cognitive domain? What are the assessment tools and evaluation methods that are effective in assessment high level cognitive skills? What measuring tools can be used to measure the affective domain? What are the methods of effective measurement in the psychomotor field? How are skills measured? What should be considered in the measurement of objectives and learning outcomes? How can educators benefit from classical and alternative measurement methods? What are the benefits of using multiple assessment? What are the effects of focusing on what learners can do, not how much they cannot do? This chapter explores the assessment of learning outcomes.

As mentioned in the “Objectives and Learning Outcomes” section of this book, education is the entirety of activities conducted in a planned and scheduled manner, not in an unintentional way. Involving large investments from governments, education must be an accountable and transparent system. In this sense, the following questions need to be answered in relation with a curriculum: Has the country succeeded in the enculturation of individuals as it previously intended? Has the country effectively

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used the human resources it possessed? Have individuals gained the benefit they demanded from the education they received? Speaking more specifically, have doctors, engineers, teachers been trained to the desired level of competence? Here, assessment in education comes to the stage as an important instrument so as to provide an answer to such questions.

Evaluation will provide information for policy makers and decision makers in the field of education to see whether or not the objectives of educational activities have been attained. Evaluation is essential in identifying the phenomena that are not going well, in taking measures before it is too late and in modifying policies when necessary. Evaluation is an important feedback tool showing whether or not educators assigned as instructors in the system have performed educational activities in line with the objectives and to what extent they could help learners to transform these objectives into behaviors. For learners, assessment will enable finding answers to the questions “How can I learn in the most effective way?”, “What have I learned to what extent?” and “What measures can I take before it is too late (formative assessment)?”

2.1. THE RELATION BETWEEN LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

The basic guide for assessment in education is objectives and learning outcomes. For this reason, objectives and learning outcomes are to be written very well in technical terms. Technically well-expressed objectives and learning outcomes will also enable assessment to be done more properly.

2.1.1. Approaches, Methods and Techniques Used in Measurement and Assessment

There are numerous assessment approaches, methods and techniques to rate student outcomes in class and at the end of a learning process. Many authors in the literature have explained these approaches, methods and techniques (Haladyna, 1997; Kubiszyn & Borich, 2013; McMillan, 2014; Marzano, 2006; Nitko & Brookhart, 2010; Russell & Airasian, 2012; Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2012).

Some of the most commonly used basic assessment methods and techniques are briefly explained below.

Short-Answer Items: These are items that can be answered with a word, a symbol or at most a few words. This type of questions can be prepared in the form of filling in the space, writing on a picture-figure-graph, or a brief descriptive or analytical response to a piece material. These types of items are more suitable to

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