Effective Classroom-based Evaluation on English

For Specific Purposes Teaching in China

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Abstract

There is often no simple or single way to interpret assessment results or to make instructional decisions based on results. Thus, This research found that classroom –based evaluation calls for a great deal of judgment, which can be enhanced if the logic of evaluation is understood. This consists of comparisons between observed or actual states of affairs and desired states of affaire. When there is a mismatch, change is call for that will reduce the mismatch.   The key is that how to deal with the difference between personal and professional decision-making. The latter one must be systematic, explicit, and well documented.

Keywords: Classroom –based evaluation, Planning evaluation, Result

1. Effective classroom-based evaluation requires correct usage of many mechanisms

1.1 Understanding of the role of evaluation in planning and delivering instruction

Evaluation is a purposive activity that includes the collection of relevant information, interpretation of that information, and making decisions about teaching and learning. In the past, discussions about second language evaluation, particularly when testing involved, have often focused on making decisions about students- their placement, promotion, advancement, and certification. Certainly, these are important reasons for doing second language evaluation, but they are not the only ones. In fact, the majority of decisions teachers make concern instruction-decisions about how and when to teach particular objectives; about the instructional needs of individuals or groups of students; about the appropriateness of instructional objectives and plans; and so on. Even decisions about students often call for choices regarding instruction.   For example, decisions to admit particular students to a class or to promote students to the next level affect the composition of the classroom and may alter instruction plans for that class.

1.2 The collection and interpretation of a wide range of information.

Much discussion about evaluation has also focused on assessment of student achievement. This makes sense if the primary reason for evaluation is to make choices regarding students. Decisions about instruction, however, require more than data on student achievement. They require information about students' needs, goals, preferences, and attitudes towards school and learning. They often draw on students previous linguistic experiences, educational history, and cultural background. They utilize information about the coherence of instructional objectives and plans, the feasibility of instructional plans given an instructor's qualifications and the resources available in the classroom or school. They require knowledge of current research and thinking about second language teaching and learning.

1.3 Familiarity with a variety of different methods of assessment and for competence in using these methods creatively.

The range of information needed to make the many decisions that crop up in second language classroom cannot be obtained from any single assessment procedure. A variety of methods for collecting assessment information are needed. Disillusionment with the shortcomings of tests has led to great deal of discussion about alternative methods of assessment. It is certainly true that test alone is not sufficient. This is not to say that they can't be useful, but rather that additional methods of assessment are also important. In fact, no single method of assessment would be sufficient to provide all the information teachers need to plan effective instruction. Teachers need a repertoire of assessment methods. Different methods of assessment provide many different kinds of information, depending on how they are used, whereas others provide very limited data. Some provide information about student achievement along with learning strategies, but others do not. Some provide information about students' views, attitudes, and motivations, whereas

others do not. Some engage students actively in the process of self-assessment and thereby encourage student ownership of and responsibility for evaluation and ultimately learning; others do not. The nature of the information you need will determine the method or combination of methods of assessment you select.

1.4 Effective evaluation reflects important features of classroom instructional purposes, plans, and practices and lead to improvements in second language teaching and learning.

The chief shortcoming of standardized tests and, indeed, of many classroom tests, is their failure to mesh with instructional objectives, plans, and practices. If tests and other methods of assessment are to be instructional on improving second language teaching and learning, they must reflect important aspects of teaching and learning in your classroom. As we noted that classroom –based evaluation is like a feedback loop-assessment activities are motivated and shaped by instructional purposes, plans and practices in the classroom, and the decisions that arise from the results of these activities, in turn, lead to reshaping of these instructional purposes, plans, and practices.

1.5 Careful and systematic record keeping and judgment

There is often no simple or single way to interpret assessment results or to make instructional decisions based on these results. Thus, classroom-based evaluation calls for a great deal of judgment, which can be enhanced if the logic of evaluation is understood. This consists of comparisons between observed or actual states of affairs and desired states of affairs. There is a mismatch, change is called for that will reduce the mismatch. This is not as complex as it sounds- we do this when we make everyday decisions. The difference between personal and professional decision- making is that the latter must be systematic, explicit, and well documented.

In many cases, teachers need to demonstrate to others- parents, other educators, and students themselves- what information they have collected, how they have collected it, and how they have used this information to make choices. Teachers must also keep records of this process for themselves, so that modifications to instructional purposes, plans, and practices that are indicated by their evaluations are made. Otherwise, important information will be forgotten and needed changes will not be made.

1.6 Teachers to become agents of change in their classrooms actively using the results of assessment to modify and improve the learning environments they create.

All too often, classroom tests are given, the results reported to students, and instruction proceeds unchanged. In such instances, the results of assessment are not used to improve instruction; rather, they are used only as indicators of student achievement. As a result, student learning becomes disconnected from the learning environment in which it occurs. Effective classroom-based evaluation is part of a process of continuously monitoring and modifying instruction to enhance second language learning. This calls for teachers to take charge of and responsibility for their instructional purposes, plans, and practices.

2. Planning evaluation

Preliminary to planning for evaluation, it is important to understand the capabilities and uses of alternative methods of assessment. Collectively, the methods we have discussed are useful for a variety of purposes:

(1) To monitor students' language proficiency in and outside class, the methods could be observation; objective-referenced tests; conferences; journals; portfolios and standardized tests.

(2) To understand students' learning styles and strategies, the methods could be observation; conferences; journals; portfolios.

(3) To know students' interests and attitudes about learning, the methods could be observation; conferences; journals; questionnaires; interviews

(4) To know students' background experiences (linguistic, educational, cultural, and medical) that can influence their learning in the classroom. The methods could be questionnaires; interviews; conferences and journal

(5) To ascertain students understanding and perceptions of classroom activities, The methods might be used journals; questionnaires; observation and conferences

(6) Develop students' self-assessment skills, might thorough the methods of portfolios; conferences; journals and questionnaires;

(7) Promote student responsibility and ownership of evaluation, the methods might be used like portfolios; conferences journals

(8) Involve students in identifying instructional goals and planning instructional activities, might be carried on through portfolios, conferences and journals.

Effective second language evaluation must consider variety factors like if the process that improves decision making in the classroom; focusing on improving second language instruction,

Specific methods of assessment that can aid in accomplishing each of these purposes are shown on the next page. We have placed an asterisk next to the methods we think are generally most useful for accomplishing these purposes. These are general opinions; individual readers must decide which method of information collection would be most helpful for their particular purposes.

The mere use of each of these methods will not necessarily achieve these purposes. Special care must be given during the planning and implementation of them to ensure that they serve these purposes effectively. Moreover, these suggestions do not exhaust all possibilities. With creative adaptation, other possibilities are also possible; for example, tests could be included under (6), develop students' self- assessment skills, if teachers were to include students in the construction, scoring, and interpretation of test results.

It should now be evident that (1) different methods of collecting information lend themselves to different purposes, (2) assessment activities can do more than monitor student achievement, and (3) by planning evaluation you can take maximum advantage of the variety of purpose that different methods of assessment afford.

Having a repertoire of assessment methods and an understanding of their specific uses, you can now elaborate a plan for evaluation. In what follows, we have identified the kinds of decisions that might be made before, during, and after instruction, and then we have indicated the kinds of information that could assist in making those decisions and the methods of assessment that would be appropriate for collecting this information. We have included information and methods of assessment not discussed here, such as checking up school records, examining curriculum documents, and consulting with instructional teachers and other teachers.

The synopsis is that individual readers may be able to think of additional sorts of information or methods of data collection of each kind or type of decision. Nor is this synopsis applicable without modifications to any group of learners or classroom setting. It would need to be adapted to be appropriate for particular classroom settings. It serves only to illustrate very generally how to put together much we have discussed into a plan for evaluation in your classroom. Individual readers need to elaborate their own plan, using this for reference. Once again, we have identified with asterisks the kinds of information we believe to be generally useful for making each type of decision. We have not done this for methods of information collection since deciding on these depends critically on the classroom context and, therefore, cannot be done without more information. Only individual teacher can make those choices.

3. Conclusion

Effective second language evaluation may have several themes. We think it may be useful to mention them explicitly here. The first, many scholars call the "no right way" idea. Teaching and evaluating are very complex enterprises. It is misguided to think that we have discovered the best of all possible ways to undertake those enterprises. The second theme is to compare the actual with the ideal. Evaluation calls for action when an actual state of affairs does not correspond with the state you want. Assessment is guided, therefore by what you aim for, what you need, or what you expected. These are the details of a second language course.   The third theme is related with the above mentioned, is needed to plan evaluation. Without a plan for evaluation, you will find that all too often opportunities have passed you by.   The fourth theme is the need to multiply and vary in your methods of assessment. All assessment procedures give you error together with accurate information. Therefore, you want to multiply your assessment. Sound decisions are much more likely to be made when a variety of assessment methods produce the same set of facts.

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