

BUILDING CORRECTIVE EVALUATION WITHIN THE CURRICULUM OF OUR SCHOOLS

Dr. William Dele Arigbede

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on evaluation as an integral part of the process of curriculum and a product, the article gives a brief but well documented and accurate definition of evaluation. It also planning. Discussing evaluation as both a process treats in detail the four essential phases of evaluation - prepare, conduct, evaluate and correct.

Evaluation is seen contributing immensely to the systems model of curriculum planning, and also as constituting the major basis of curriculum improvement as a continuum.

In conclusion, the article gives an eight point guideline to be set so that evaluation can serve as a corrective tool.

INTRODUCTION:

Concept of Evaluation

Evaluation which is generally regarded as a process of gathering information to be used in making decisions, is an integral part of the process of curriculum improvement. Schools and educators experiment to try out procedures, content, or organisation of the curriculum. When the improvement process is genuinely experimental, systematic evaluation is a part of it. Taba (1965), stated that evaluation is far broader than measuring, counting, or determining what proportion of learners achieved beyond a certain score.

Teachers were asked to indicate the particular changes that have taken place in the curriculum of their schools in the past six years. The same applies to changes in staff patterns; a new social studies programme, a new textbook adoption and in course offerings. They were asked to determine the bases used to affect the changes and whether the changes were effective or not.

The majority of responses from these teachers showed that a non extensive use of evaluation data was used in making decision for changes asked for above. For educational leadership to exist, Krug, (1957), Taba (1962), and Wittrock (1970), stated that, broad based evaluation systems are to be used continuously to furnish input for the curriculum change process.

Supporting the contention of the three authors with regard to the continuous use of broad based evaluation systems in furnishing input for the curriculum change process, Anderson (1965) further stated that:

Evaluation should go on continuously as a part of the curriculum improvement process. It is never an isolated process nor a mere end point, something to be done only when one finishes testing out a new aspect of the curriculum. Rather, it is cumulative.

It has always been the responsibility of the State school system to provide the best possible curricular programmes for the learners they serve. In the past, changes have been affected through the use of achievement test data. The achievement test data which focuses on learners in the middle range and above are generally examined in a cursory manner. Non-achievers are labeled slow learners (underachievers). While introducing a new programme say in social studies, then, achievement data are used as a product measure. Data are used for purposes of logistic decision alone, while other curriculum planning implications are ignored. Evaluation is being used as a statistical measurement and always terminal.

GUIDELINES FOR CORRECTIVE EVALUATION

There is indeed more to be said about evaluation both as a process and product. Very simply, evaluation is the measuring of the degree to which an individual or group has accomplished one or more defined objectives. One must always see evaluation as a continuum. That is, as one progresses towards a goal, one must often evaluate such progress so as to determine whether action taken has been pertinent to

the goal, and which step are to be taken next. Evaluation also ought to be seen as a joint action with input from all those who are working towards the goal or who will be affected by the results of teaching it. Taba (1962) also claimed that, the process of evaluation must be similarly seen as comprehensive, including a systematic look at all factors which are involved in a given situation.

Taking the next step, and applying this concept to the reality of our institutions of learning, shortcomings become apparent. In most, if not in all cases, evaluation is not seen as a continuum, but takes place sporadically within parts of a school, and only at the end of a given situation. It has not been cooperative since participants are usually the sacred realm of administrators or teachers with no regard for learners or laymen input. It has not been comprehensive for only obvious outcomes are considered with little or no regard for objectives or process. On the whole, evaluation has been a matter of expediency rather than an integral part of the school programme. It cannot be disputed that, evaluation is the unwanted child of education, and therefore, the lack of valid reasons for what we do is inevitable.

In addition, there is a need to define the means for evaluation. High marks on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination, (SSSCE) and standardised tests are not valid criteria for the success of a programme which philosophically aims toward something like the common entrance examination to Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) in Nigeria, or the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) entrance examination into Nigerian universities, nor is obvious student happiness with a programme enough to validate skill development within it.

Beame (1970), claimed that, the means for evaluating anything must be implied in the statement of objectives. For example, one could best determine whether or not a learner has developed planning skills if, after various learning experiences in that sense, he is able to approach a given problem and design a feasible plan of notion for solving it. In this example, evaluation is in terms of student behaviour in a situation which is compatible with the objective. The example is also essential in that it relies on behaviour as a means, rather than something as superficial as a paper-pencil test or as vague as statement of philosophy. One is not saying that the latter are always undesirable, but rather the behaviour is observable and therefore more reliably evaluated.

Evaluation Phases

Bearing in mind the importance of evaluation, educators should be able to look at the teaching-learning situations both descriptively and prescriptively. The four important phases of the teaching-learning situations are closely related to the phases of evaluation. The pre-assessment stage is the first of the phases in the teaching-learning situations. It is expected that some type of testing programme has to be built and applied to determine the programme entry level of the learners. At the second phase, the real teaching-learning situation takes place, bearing in mind the specific objectives. The next is the post-test phase that reveals whether or

not the objectives have actually been achieved. The last and particularly critical phase of the teaching-learning situation, and the one that is often ignored is the re-teaching phase. Others call it the prescriptive phase.

Many educators ignore this all-important phase in evaluations. Bradfield (1957), stated that, a lot of useful data from evaluation could furnish a basis for prescriptive teaching for formulating hypotheses; and for pointing out alternative objectives. If educators want evaluation to take place, then evaluative data have to be put to some logical productive use. Also, an attempt must be made to achieve the objectives which have not previously been achieved. The evaluation material should supply decision makers with pertinent and timely information for making decisions as to how a programme should be varied so as to meet the needs prescribed in the programme objectives. More relevant objectives may need to be supplied.

It is important to note that, one of the important purposes of an evaluation programme should be to aid in planning and re-planning the teaching-learning programme (teaching-learning process). Evaluation of process seems to have many similarities to the principles of diagnostic teaching. Evaluation must facilitate the teaching-learning situations (teaching, learning and re-teaching).

Having prepared all the evaluative data, the educator should be in a position to know how to proceed next. The same holds true in programme evaluation. After collecting all the necessary data related to

the programmes, the programme planner (educator), should be in a position to indicate how to correct the programme to meet the needs and concerns of the programme (the process), and the learning of the learners involve (the product). Rothney (1960), stated that evaluation should serve not only diagnostic purposes for the educator, but the learner should also know better where he stands and how to progress. Learners should see diagnostic teaching as an aid to them as they plan for their future learning too. From the above, the educator can see evaluation serving both the teacher and the taught.

Evaluation as a Continuum:

Many a time, evaluation is done on a yearly basis. This runs counter to the definition of evaluation as indicated in the first two pages of this article. To stop the shortcoming of annual evaluation of programmes, constraints must be written into the programmes whereby evaluation may take place at more frequent intervals. A year is a long time in the life of a learner to be subjected to a mistake in the teaching-learning situations. Tyler (1951), stated that, a time line should be set up for periodic evaluation to take place. This type of evaluation may be done by product measurement devices. It may be done by process measure devices, or it be accomplished by some sort of professional observation team. Possibly, a combination of all three of these devices would provide for a most suitable form of evaluation to take place while a particular project is in process.

Based upon all of these inputs, a need assessment should take place with regard to the progress of the programme. It might be necessary to make changes all because the desired products and processes are not being achieved. Some definite procedure for making changes should be built into the system. Such a change ought to be in form of an alternative plan. Sometimes, people blame the lack of change on the fact that nothing is written into the system to facilitate change. One can indicate at this juncture that the entire evaluation procedure in Nigerian public education demands a new and a broader perspective.

