

Test Design and Assessment

What is a Test?

A test is a formal, structured activity or tool designed to measure a learner's knowledge, skills, abilities, or performance in a specific domain. Tests are usually **time-bound** and aim to **assess specific learning** outcomes

What is an Assessment?

An assessment is a broader process of collecting, interpreting, and using information to improve learning. Unlike tests, assessments may be formal or informal and can include quizzes, projects, observations, and discussions and it is an ongoing process.

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is a process that includes measurement and possibly testing but it also contains the notion of value judgment.

Evaluation is more comprehensive, it gives value and judgment. If a teacher administers a test to a class and computes the percentage of correct responses, it is said that measurement and testing have taken place.

What are the Characteristics of Evaluation?

- **Judgment:** Evaluation typically involves making value judgments based on evidence.
- **Summative:** Often done at the end of a learning program.
- **Systematic:** Follows a structured methodology for collecting data.
- **Criteria-based:** Based on specific standards or criteria for success.
- **It is remedial:** This is because by evaluation we can rectify things, making them better. Students, teachers, staff (enhance, remedy) maybe by checking the methods already in use.
- It can reflect the effectiveness of teaching methods.

Purpose/Importance of Evaluation

- It is diagnostic: Getting view of the students' strengths and weaknesses.
- It is remedial.
- It provides guidance.
- It is helpful in the improvement of the teaching-learning process.

Basic Principles of Evaluation

- **Continuity:** It's a continuous process, applied continuously.
- **Objectives:** Some objectives are unrealistic, as a teacher, modify, or even change them, this is evaluation.
- **Broadness:** Broad enough to reflect students, cover all the aspects of or near to life.
- **Validity:** Evaluation should measure what it is intended to measure
- **Reliability:** Results should be consistent over time.
- **Fairness:** Evaluation should be unbiased and equitable.
- **Utility:** The information generated should be useful for decision-making.
- **Ethicality:** Evaluation should be conducted ethically, respecting the rights of participants.

The differences between assessment and evaluation can be outlined as follows:

Purpose:

Assessment: Its main goal is to improve the learning process. It provides ongoing feedback to both learners and instructors about progress and areas for improvement.

Evaluation: The goal is to determine the effectiveness or value of a program, course, or learner performance, often at the end of a learning cycle. It's judgmental and usually focuses on overall outcomes.

Nature:

Assessment: Formative in nature. It is often ongoing and integrated into the learning process.

Evaluation: Summative in nature. It is typically conducted at the conclusion of a program or course to measure achievement against a set of standards or objectives.

Focus

Assessment: Focuses on identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in the learning process.

Evaluation: Focuses on the overall success or failure of the learner, program, or instructional method.

Feedback

Assessment: Offers constructive feedback that helps learners improve their future performance.

Evaluation: Provides a final judgment or decision, which could result in grades, certifications, or the revision of a course or program.

Scope

Assessment: Can be informal or formal and often involves multiple tools such as quizzes, observations, or portfolios.

Evaluation: More formal and standardized, often culminating in tests, final grades, or overall program reviews

Timing

Assessment: Ongoing throughout the learning period. It helps in shaping teaching methods and student learning dynamically.

Evaluation: Typically occurs at the end of a learning period, focusing on the final results or outcomes.

Outcome

Assessment: The outcome is used to guide improvement in future learning and teaching strategies.

Evaluation: The outcome is used to make decisions about grading, promotion, or curriculum effectiveness.

Orientation

Assessment: Learning-oriented. It is used as a tool for personal and academic development.

Evaluation: Judgment-oriented. It measures how well learners or programs meet the predefined goals and standards.

These distinctions emphasize that assessment is a process for **improvement and development**, while evaluation focuses on **summarizing and judging performance or program effectiveness**.