T E S T S

A test is a tool of evaluation. It is defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as “an examination of somebody’s knowledge or ability, consisting of questions…to answer or activities…to perform.” Moreover, a test can be used as a research instrument. “In tests, researchers have at their disposal a powerful method of data collection, an impressive array of tests for gathering data of a numerical rather than verbal kind” (Cohen et al., 2007: 414).

General guidelines:

When constructing a test, the researcher should take into consideration the following elements:

- The purposes of the test

- The content of the test

- The format of the test

- The validity and reliability of the test

- The timing of the test.

- The scoring of the test.

Advantages:

- Tests provide information about learners’ knowledge.

- The results of tests help the researcher to make a comparison between different groups of learners.

- Tests are more reliable.

Disadvantages:

- Tests may be expensive.

- They may not be flexible.

- Tests can be subjective.

References:

- Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, and Morrison, Keith (2007). Research Methods in Education. New York: Routledge.

- Perry, Fred. (2005). Research in Applied Linguistics: Becoming a Discerning Consumer. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.