

Level: Master 1 (Didactics)

Module: Methodology in Assessment and Testing

TESTS

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Testing

Testing refers to the process of measuring the learners' abilities and performance through the use of examinations and tests. It is sometimes synonymous with assessment. However, these two concepts can have a different meaning.

Testing

Testing can take place during the teaching programme. In this case, it is called formative testing. When it takes place at the end of the teaching programme, it is called summative testing. Formative testing is also referred to as assessment for learning while summative testing is called assessment of learning. Testing is objective if the scorer does not give his/her opinion and awards marks according to an established marking scale. If the scoring is based on the scorer's judgement, the testing process is subjective.

Assessment

Assessment refers to the process of gathering information about students from various sources. It takes place when a test is administered to learners. This means that a test is an assessment tool that enables to get data about the learner's performance. Sometimes, assessment can have a different meaning from testing. There can be an assessment of the learners' abilities without a test when the teacher observes the behaviour of the learners in the classroom from their way of participating and doing the exercises.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of drawing conclusions about the learners and the learning situation from the data collected about them. When information about the learners is elicited through tests, the evaluation process is taking place in the form of assessment or testing. Evaluation can have a wider sense than assessment and testing when it is concerned with gathering information about the syllabi, the textbooks, the teaching materials and the teaching methods. In this case, tools such as observation and questionnaires are used instead of testing.

The Purposes of Assessment

Assessment can have several purposes such as selection, diagnosis and the evaluation of the teaching process. It helps to the select individuals for educational opportunities or careers. It enables the testers to get data about the students' achievement. It also helps to evaluate the teaching process. It leads to know the type of deficiencies linked to the teaching situation.

Types of Tests

There are various types of tests. Achievement tests, also called attainment tests, aim at assessing the extent of the learners' mastery of what has been taught to them. Proficiency tests measure the learners' capacity to utilize the language in a specific context. Performance tests attempt to provide information about how well the learners are going to perform and if they are able to express themselves in a present situation which is similar to real life. Diagnostic tests help to elicit the learners' strengths and weaknesses. Aptitude tests assess the learners' amount of knowledge and linguistic skills.

Test Characteristics

A good test should possess a set of characteristics including validity, reliability and discrimination. Validity is linked to the content of the test and its suitability to the testing situation. Reliability refers to the stability of the test results. It means that approximately the same results are obtained by the learners when tested several times and under different circumstances. Discrimination means that the test has to show the differences which exist between the learners.

The Different Steps of the Test Construction

Carroll (1980) claims that test construction involves three phases referred to as design, development and operation. Design deals with the specification of the content of the test according to the objectives wanted to be achieved from it. In the phase of development, the tester writes the test and analyses its different items. The test operation involves the administration of the test which is put into practice to get information about the learners.

Tests

A test can be used as an evaluation tool. It can also be employed as a research instrument to collect quantitative data and provide more evidence. It has to be carefully designed in order to be valid and reliable.

References

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