

Tikrit University
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Testing, measurement and evaluation

Types of Assessment and Tests

(2)

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Types of Assessment

1- Informal and Formal Assessment

Informal assessment can take a number of forms starting with incidental, unplanned comments and responses, along with coaching and other impromptu feedback to the student. Examples including saying "Nice job" "Good work". A good deal of a teacher's informal assessment is embedded in classroom tasks designed to elicit performance without recording results and making fixed conclusions about a student's competence. Informal assessment is virtually always nonjudgmental, in that you as a teacher are not making ultimate decisions about the student's performance; you are simply trying to be good coach. Examples; marginal comments on papers, responding to a draft of an essay...

Formal assessment are exercises or procedures specifically designed to tap into a storehouse of skills and knowledge. They are systematic, planned sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of students achievement.

Is formal assessment the same as a test?

All tests are formal assessment ,but not all formal assessment is testing.

2-Formative and Summative Assessment

Most of our classroom assessment is **formative assessment**: evaluating students in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process. All kinds of informal assessment are formative. They have as their primary focus the ongoing development of the learner's language.

So when you give a student a comment or a suggestion, or call attention to an error, that feedback is offered to improve the learner's language ability.

Summative assessment aims to measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction. A summation of what a student has learned implies looking back and taking stock of how well that student has accomplished objectives, but it does not necessarily point the way to future progress. Final exams in a course and general proficiency exams are examples of summative assessment. Summative assessment often, but not always involves evaluation (decision making). Many research studies found that formative assessment was superior to summative assessment in providing crucial information to classroom teachers (all tests are summative)

3-Norm-Referenced and Criterion-Referenced Tests

In norm-referenced tests, each test-taker's score is interpreted in relation to a mean (average score), median (middle score), standard deviation (extent of variance in scores), and/or percentile rank. The purpose of such tests is to place test-takers along a mathematical continuum in rank order. Such tests must have fixed, predetermined responses in a format that can be scored mechanically at minimum expense. Cost, and efficiency are primary concerns in these tests.

Criterion-referenced tests are designed to give test-taker feedback, usually in the form of grades on specific course or lesson objectives. Classroom tests involving students in only one course, and connected to curriculum, are typically of criterion-referenced testing. A good deal of time and effort on the part of the teacher (test administrator) is sometimes required to deliver useful, appropriate feedback to students. Criterion-

referenced testing is of more prominent interest than norm-referenced testing.

Types of Tests

-Achievement test

The most frequent purpose for which a classroom teacher will use a test is to measure learners' ability within a classroom lesson, unit, or total curriculum. Commonly called achievement tests, they are (or should be) limited to particular material addressed in a curriculum within a particular time frame and are offered after a course has focused on the objectives in question. Achievement tests can also serve the diagnostic role of indicating what a student needs to continue to work on in the future, but the primary role of an achievement test is to determine whether course objectives have been met and appropriate knowledge and skills acquired by the end of a given period of instruction.

Achievement tests are often summative because they are administered at the end of a lesson, unit or term of study. They also play an important formative role because an effective achievement test will offer feedback about the quality of a learner's performance in subsets of the unit or course. The specifications for an achievement test should be determined by

- the objectives of the lesson ,unit or course being assessed.
- the relative importance (or weight) assigned to each objective
- the tasks employed in classroom lessons during the unit of time
- the time frame for the test and turnaround time
- its potential for formative feedback

Achievement tests range from 5 or 10 minute quizzes to three hour final examinations, with an almost infinite variety of item types and formats.

-Diagnostic test

The purpose of a diagnostic test is to diagnose aspects of a language that a student needs to develop or that a course should include. A test in pronunciation for example, might diagnose the phonological features of English that are difficult for learners and should therefore become part of a curriculum. Usually such tests offer a checklist of features for the administrator (the teacher) to use in pinpointing difficulties. A writing diagnostic would elicit a writing sample from students that would allow the teacher to identify those rhetorical and linguistic features on which the course needs to focus special attention.

The distinction between a diagnostic test and an achievement test. **Achievement tests** analyze the extent to which students have acquired language features that have already been taught; diagnostic tests should elicit information on what students need to work on in the future. Therefore, a diagnostic test will typically offer more detailed, subcategorized information on the learner. In a curriculum that has a grammatical form-focused phase, for example, diagnostic test might offer information about a learner's acquisition of verb tenses, modal auxiliaries, definite articles, relative clauses, and the like.

-Placement test

Some achievement tests and proficiency tests can act as placement test, the purpose of which is to place a student into a particular level, or section of a language curriculum or school. A placement test usually but not always includes a sampling of the material to be covered in the various courses in a curriculum; a student's performance on the test should indicate the point at which the students will find material neither too easy nor too difficult but appropriately challenging. The ultimate objective of a placement test is to correctly place a student into a course, or level, a very useful secondary benefit is diagnostic information on a student's performance, which in turn gives teachers a head start on assessing their students' abilities.

-Proficiency test

If your aim is to test global competence in a language, then you are, in conventional terminology, testing proficiency. A proficiency test is not limited to any one course, curriculum, or single skill in the language, rather it tests overall ability. Proficiency tests have traditionally consisted of standardized multiple-choice items on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and aural comprehension. Many commercial produced proficiency tests, the Test of English as a Foreign Language.(TOEFL Test). For example include a sample of writing as well as oral production performance. Proficiency tests are almost always summative and norm-referenced.

-Aptitude test

Aptitude test is designed to measured capacity or general ability to learn a foreign language a prior (before taking a course) and ultimate predicted success in that undertaking. Language aptitude tests were ostensibly designed to apply the classroom learning of any language. Any test that claims to predict success in learning a language is undoubtedly flawed, because we know that with appropriate self-knowledge, active strategic involvement in learning, and or strategies-based instruction, virtually everyone can eventually succeed. To pigeon hole learners a prior, before they have even attempted to learn a language, is to presuppose failure or success without substantial cause.

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