PIDP 3230 Evaluation of Learning

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October 7, 2016
After reading Chapters 1 and 2 from *The Art of Evaluation* and Chapter 1 from *Classroom Assessment Techniques*, reflect of ONE (1) of the following:

a. The Nine Purposes of Evaluation

b. The Principles of Authentic Evaluation

c. The Four Traps of Evaluation

d. Brookfield’s ‘Characteristics of Helpful Evaluation’

e. The Seven Basic Assumptions of Classroom Assessment

f. The Roles that Validity and Reliability plan in Evaluation.

**Objective**

“Assessment is the process of objectively understanding the state or condition of a thing, by observation and measurement. Assessment of teaching means taking a measure of its effectiveness. “Formative” assessment is measurement for the purpose of improving it. “Summative” assessment is what we normally call “evaluation.”

Evaluation is the process of observing and measuring a thing for the purpose of judging it and of determining its “value,” either by comparison to similar things, or to a standard. Evaluation of teaching means passing judgment on it as part of an administrative process.” (ITLAL, 2016)

I found the descriptions of assessment and evaluation very useful. I knew they were separate terms but I was using them interchangeably in my teaching. Now I can see a clearer difference. To attempt to put the difference into my own words, assessment is ongoing throughout the learning process. I pre-assess my learners to see what they already know so I can build on that experience. I assess learning during
the class by looking over shoulders during activities and making myself available for questions. It is amazing how few questions you receive in a full class setting but you receive so many more questions taking a lap of the class during activities. These constant interactions allow me to assess the actual learning that is taking place in the classroom and adapt my class to recap a topic or move onto a more complex subject.

Evaluation is a more formal activity. I want learners to show that they met the learning goals of the course and can perform activities that demonstrate this learning.

Reflective

I am currently struggling to reach one of my students. She is so afraid to make mistakes that she is freezing up during her projects. The result is a massive time commitment on her part to achieve the high standards she is setting for herself without making any mistakes, if possible. This approach is not sustainable for the year or for her future career. A better balance of speed and high standards is required. Our program evaluates students based on projects that are complete individually or in teams. This evaluation structure does mirror the workplace but I am concerned that it is causing a high level of stress for this individual.

“Stephen Brookfield (1990) emphasizes the threat of evaluation to adults’ fragile egos, and the responsibility of the evaluator to be sensitive to adult learners’ feelings.” (Fenwick and Parsons, 2009)

It appears my student is suffering from a threat to their ego. They are afraid to make mistakes and this is impacting their capacity to learn. Brookfield’s “Characteristics
of Helpful Evaluation" look like a great place for me to start. Perhaps I can break down the issues my student is facing, using these characteristics.

*Interpretive*

Let’s take a snapshot of how my evaluation is currently setup based on Brookfield’s 10 characteristics. This reflection will allow me to target certain characteristics to improve the learning experience of my student.

**Clarity.** Each assignment and quiz currently has a description of the requirements. I strive for simple language in my descriptions to avoid any misunderstanding.

**Immediacy.** I aim to give feedback as soon as possible. This is not always as prompt as I wish, due to workload and teaching commitments. In some cases, I get students to peer review other students work. Once they receive their feedback, they give themselves a grade based on the criteria in the handout and mark sheet. This is reviewed by the instructor to ensure accurate feedback and grading.

**Regularity.** I currently include many projects and quizzes throughout the program. The maximum value of a graded evaluation is around 25%. This allows students to track their progress.

**Accessibility.** I have an hour of office hours every day and my office is attached to the classroom. My door is always open (literally) and I will answer any questions from students during this time. I am often in my office after my office hour to prepare for the next week or mark assignments. Students take advantage of this access to seek feedback on evaluations.
**Individualized.** Some of my quizzes are conducted through an online Learning Management System (LMS). This allows for quicker marking and automatic feedback for some quizzes. I will circulate through the class while these quizzes are underway. I review the results of the quizzes and provide feedback comments to each user. Each project is marked with around 5 things to work on. I have found this is a reasonable amount of information for the student to absorb and apply to the next activity.

**Affirming.** Many of our projects build to presentations in front of the class. Each presentation finishes with a peer feedback session to the team. I explain that this feedback must take the form of either “I liked…” or “I wish…”. There must be an equal number of each. I will follow up this group feedback with an instructor feedback session with the group. This format allows students to have the quality of their achievement recognized.

**Future-Oriented.** This is carried out informally but I don’t believe I am covering this characteristic in a comprehensive way.

**Justifiable.** I would boil this down to the sometimes annoying “Why do we need to know this?” I have started to encourage this question lately. Everything I teach should be applicable to the workplace after completion of the program.

**Educative.** My feedback comments are quite precise in their description of good work or shortcomings. I have had to work on adding some warmth to my feedback.

**Selective.** In the past, I have overwhelmed students with feedback. I would give comments for everything needed to achieve an excellent project. Learners took one look at the long list and shoulders drooped immediately. The long list made them feel
like their work was terrible. This is why I aim for around 5 comments for students to work on when providing feedback.

**Decisional**

Here is a list of actions I will continue to take or start to add to my teaching.

**Clarity.** In future assignments, I will show a minimum of three examples of past students work. I will provide a commentary on what they did well and what could be improved.

**Immediacy.** I will set a rule for returning feedback within 3 working days maximum. The students will be able to hold me accountable to this rule in the same way I hold them accountable for their deadlines. This should lead to a more equal relationship between adult learners and an adult educator.

**Regularity.** I will continue to spread the out evaluation activities with a low value placed on multiple evaluation units.

**Accessibility.** I will continue to be accessible to the learners.

**Individualized.** I will start to mark assignments with the students for some of my projects. This will allow learners to fully understand the individualized feedback.

**Affirming.** In my feedback on projects, I will provide a minimum of 3 affirming comments on the work. It is easy to point out mistakes but I will take the time to point out the positives of the work.

**Future-Oriented.** What a great characteristic. In future feedback, I will link every comment to what the student can do to improve in future assignments.
Justifiable. I explain why students need to know about a topic while I am teaching but I don’t link my feedback to why very often. In future feedback I will link comments to a reason why this is important in the future.

Educative. I will continue to work for a better balance between my educative comments and bringing the warmth of my personality to the feedback. I recently received feedback on a project with a recorded voice. This was a great experience for feedback. The tone of voice in the recorded feedback made the feedback much easier to understand (and harder to resent). I will use recorded voice feedback on future projects.

Selective. I will continue to balance the amount of feedback to a few areas learners can work on.

So how will this help my student? I think the future-oriented characteristic will prove the most helpful. I will provide feedback that will allow her to manage future projects in a different way and balance her education commitments with a healthy amount of downtime. I will check in with her regularly to see how this works out.
References

