

Evaluation Strategy

The key to evaluation is to remember its purpose. Evaluations are the final step of a three part process meant to determine the effectiveness of a curriculum. The first step is measurement, where objective information is gathered. The second step is assessment, where the data collected is analyzed. Finally we have evaluation, where a judgment is made, ultimately affecting a final decision (Chiarelott, 2006, p. 43). As the fractions unit is critiqued, it is important to keep in mind the measurement, assessment, and evaluation aspects of the curriculum.

As our society easily has access to more and more technology at their fingertips, it is imperative that our students learn how to be independent thinkers. Technology is a valuable resource and I don't doubt its effectiveness, but at the same time we need to educate our students to become confident learners. To do this, the curriculum we implement in classrooms across the nation must be effective. To determine the effectiveness of the curriculum design unit on fifth grade fractions, both formative and summative assessments will be implemented throughout the unit.

For formative assessments, students will be given a pre-test at the beginning of each subunit. This will be used to determine how much time to spend on each topic in the subunit. For example, if every students understands that fractions represent division, it can be taught and students move on. If the pre-test shows students have no prior knowledge of fractions as division, then more time will be spent on this topic. Students will take the same pre-test at the end of the subunit and compare their new score with the original. This piece is essential because even if a student does not receive a perfect score, you would expect each student to at least answer one more question correctly. This will help build confidence as students will be able to physically see their growth through the comparison. Other formative assessments include quick

checks, or short quizzes given throughout the unit, daily homework assignments, and observing the students as they work with hands on models. Each of these can be used to check on the student's progress as the unit advances.

In terms of summative assessments, the main type would be a cumulative test at the end of each subunit. After the time has been spent focusing on the contextualized learning of fractions, students will be given the opportunity to show what they know. Teachers should not look for perfection, but rather for growth. If we expect our students to reach perfection, many changes in education would be necessary. As educators, we can focus on our role in the classrooms to help students gain as much knowledge as possible, not to be perfect. As another summative assessment, students could fill out a survey on what they felt was implemented best during the subunit, what topics they struggled with, and what improvements or suggestions they have for the future of the curriculum. Since the students are the receivers of the knowledge, they know how they learn it best.

In addition to the formative and summative assessments in the classroom, the collection of data from various outlets will give the best well-rounded picture of whether or not the curriculum was successful. Not only should student data be analyzed, but the teacher can speak with administration (who can observe one or more lessons and provide input as an outsider), colleagues who teach the same content (who can share what worked or didn't work for their students), and parents (who work with the students outside of the classroom and see their successes or struggles in a different light). If students can show even 1% growth, we know they are learning. With this as our main goal in education, we need to use as many measurement, assessment, and evaluation techniques as possible to ensure the best learning environment for our

students. To create non-technology dependent, confident learners, we need to encourage them to be honest in their evaluation of the curriculum.

References

Chiarelott, L. (2006). *Curriculum in context*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.