

The Nile Egyptian schools



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I have accepted a new position in a new school. The school is new in everything; new school campus, new staff and team, new students, and last but not least a new system. The latter is what concerns me; it also interests me and is what I find challenging. I believe it is a great idea and deeply hope it works.

It is important to remember that starting an assessment of a program should not wait until the school starts. An evaluation plan should be part of the planning of the initiation of the school, and should be implemented when the teaching begins and even before once the students are accepted. And so, documentation starts from the beginning, and baseline data on students, teachers, and administration personnel can be collected before instruction begins (Fleischman & Williams, 1996).

The Nile Egyptian Schools' Mission states that:

NES will provide quality affordable education that is locally and internationally recognized and accredited. The Schools will be recognized for excellence in teaching and learning characterized by quality facilities, strong effective leadership, outstanding teachers and excellent community support. NES will prepare students for academic success and encourage them to be responsible and productive citizens with a strong Egyptian identity.

The vision of the school:

The Nile Egyptian Schools will provide Egypt with world class citizens who can serve globally as ambassadors of excellence and help position Egypt as a vibrant nation keen on achieving progress, prosperity and well-being for its citizens and the world community.

The schools' website also shows the aims and values of the school;

The NES aim to meet International education standards in terms of recognized curricula, certified teachers, qualified administrative staff and school buildings constructed and equipped to contemporary international standards. These not-for-profit schools will provide high education at affordable fees in partnership with civil society.

The curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of the individual learners in the twenty first century, whilst taking account of the aim and objectives of NES project and of Egyptian standards. The system is based on the principles of humanism, tolerance, diversity, democracy, and open-mindedness.

The Nile schools are going to be twenty-nine schools; for now, only five will open. The plan is to open one school in every governorate; which would entail a great diversity in the students and in the cultures of each school.

The students' profiles are going to be extremely diverse, from Upper Egypt in Aswan to Alexandria and Port Said. As such the students will have the same curriculum, same facilities but different teachers and different backgrounds.

My students at El-Obour branch will be assessed and compared to other students in the other schools. I find this challenging and needs to be put in consideration when I am evaluating the course and its outcomes.

Reflecting on the mission and vision of the schools, and on my new role as the head of the science department in a new school it came to mind that I would need different tools to help me evaluate the teachers in the

department, their teaching methods, their ability to interact and handle the students.

As such is the case I am attempting to research and probably find or design a tool that would help me achieve my goal.

I chose to adopt this framework and tried to adapt it to my needs. This framework, presented here includes both the process and outcome side. It also, focuses on the students and their individuality. Accordingly, I would be able to determine the effectiveness of the science program execution, also understand how the curriculum and teaching process produced this result and how the program could be upgraded to produce a better result more efficiently.

To reach the goal of assessing the program and evaluating the outcome, there are three components that should be addressed. Data should be collected and used from these perspectives.

- Students;
- Instruction;
- and
- Outcomes.

Each one is described below.

Students

This part of the evaluation tool should focus on the students' information including, for example, grade level, age, the culture where they are in is it urban or rural (according to the location of the school), socio-economic background (e. g. parent's education), skills, grades and test scores from previous schools and all through the year. This data has a great descriptive value; it is also useful for comparisons between other students in the same

school or in the other school branches. All the Nile Egyptian schools are providing the same services to all students, but students' backgrounds and cultures are going to differ according to the school location.

For this I would use these two sheets one general and one specific for each student. This data could be collected once at the beginning of the year and updated if needed. It could be distributed to the parents and filled to save time. I would need this information when reviewing the collective data; it will be also useful when comparing with other schools.

The general sheet:

Questions

How many students are in the same grade in my school (El-Obour)?

Number of students taking science in each grade.

How many students are in the same grade in all NESs?

Number of students taking science in each grade.

How many students are in the class to be observed class?

Number of students in class.

What is the students' level in language and science?

Scores on achievement tests from previous schools.

What is the students' basic scientific knowledge before?

Scores on a pre-test related to curriculum being evaluated; i. e. an MCQ test to be given on the first or second class session.

Second sheet (for individual students):

Name

Grade

Age/ Gender

Grade from previous school

Comments

Instruction (teaching and teaching materials)

I think this part is the very essence of my job. I will eventually be leading a team of science teachers asked to deliver the curriculum by the means and the facilities available. According to the school profile, state of the art facilities that are highly technological and laboratory equipment would be available.

Through monitoring and observing using an assessment tool I would be able to evaluate the process by which the outcomes or results were achieved and by what is actually taking place in the classroom, rather than what was planned to happen. This would allow us to work on the weaknesses and share the strengths with the other branches.

As such I believe my role as a monitor of the science program, whether in the classroom, the laboratory or elsewhere, like field trips inside and outside

the school is my number one task. To observe how the program is implemented, and develop teacher training activities that would help them. I would have to include instructional measurable objectives, hours of teaching, teacher characteristic, experience, and innovation in my assessment tool.

Being the instructional leader would entail not only observations and evaluations but also building rapport with the teachers and meeting with them before and after class observations, and on regular basis to share ideas and experiences.

I would like it too, if the teachers on my team would attend some of my classes; it is good for my professional development, it would also enhance the sense of team collegiality.

Pre-observation Conference

Date: _____
Teacher's Name: _____

What and when would you like to be observed? (maybe set a time frame for my visit; like in the next week)

How do you feel about the lesson?

Walk me through your lesson plan.

Why did you choose this lesson?

What do you want the students to learn by the end of the lesson?

How will you check if they got it?

What concerns you the most about this lesson?

Take me through your lesson plan

What is the teaching strategy you want to be observed in this lesson?

Classroom management, positive support, instructional monitoring, questioning, other instructional strategies

Why did you choose this behavior?

Observation instruments to be with me in the lesson while observation:

Lesson plan

Seating chart and where I would sit

Notebook

Other:

Special conditions/students

Reflect on

Learning outcome/ objectives met

Classroom management

Teaching behavior focus

Set the date for the post-conference meeting time and place:

Any questions?

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(This sheet is adapted from M. MacCormick 2006)

Post-Conference

Date: Teacher's Name: _____

How do you feel about the lesson?

My feelings

Were the learning objectives achieved?)

Teacher's comment

My comment

Discuss changes or suggestions if the lesson would be done again or differently, what would be needed?

Classroom Management

Teacher's comment

My comment

Suggestions for next classes

Teaching Behavior Focus

Teacher's comment

My comment

Discuss changes

Future training Plan

The teacher's next teaching behavior focus

Develop a training plan with the teacher

Summary

Summarize and record what was discussed

Try to put the conclusions in points

I have to remember to give encouraging statement

Questions?

Complete record of the observation cycle summary

Give an estimated time for the next class visit

(This sheet is adapted from M. MacCormick 2006)

I would like also to use this next tool to have background information of the classes and teachers. This tool also helps me to be clear and set or request from the top management the appropriate training and development programs.

Questions

Variables

1. What are the measurable objectives? Are these objectives stated clearly?

Unit or chapter goals and lesson objectives

2. What are the total hours of teaching per week?

Hours/ week

3. What is the teacher/student ratio?

Number of students/ class

4. What are the teachers' qualifications and experience)?

Teacher's previous experience

5. What is the type of training available to teachers? Are they fitting and enough?

Training and development activities

6. What are the teacher's tools, materials and instruments available? Are they suitable and used?

Materials and equipment available.

(Adapted from Hopstock, Young, and Zehler, 1993 cited in Davis (Gene), 2005)

Outcomes

This is the last part of what I feel is an effective evaluation; It deals with what to do next. The results of the Cambridge exams are going to be a very important part of the evaluation of the outcome. The top management will look at these results as the sole reflection on the educational process. On the

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other hand I would like to put into consideration the project work of the students and their portfolios. By this we can evaluate the outcome using both authentic and traditional assessment tools.

Assessment is a way we can document our progress. A systematic, ongoing cycle of setting goals or objectives, measuring the achievement of those goals, and using these results to make knowledgeable decisions vital for the department's continuous improvement (Davis (Gene), 2005).

Good assessment can enhance the quality of education by providing the necessary evidence to guide us to make the best decisions we can make in many areas: including changes in curriculum, classroom teaching methodology, support individual students, and improvement of the school culture.

In other words, we need to know where we're standing before we can go any further. In addition to the benefits I will get in my department and school, we, the NES's could use this assessment to improve as a new educational system.

With these three key purposes of assessment in mind:

- To improve – Evaluation should be formative. Assessment provides feedback to help form better programs and services.

- To inform – Assessment should show a clear image of what is really happening in a classroom or laboratory and can inform others of the effort that is done there.

- To demonstrate – A good assessment process can answer three related questions:

- What are we trying to do?

- How well are we doing it?

- How are we using what we discover to improve what we will do in the future?

The following diagram illustrates this cycle of goal setting tied to evaluations (Davis (Gene), 2005).

Analysis of data and presenting it for further use:

After collecting the data, starts the next step in the process of evaluation, data analysis and producing a report. This is important for the documentation and writing recommendations to be checked in the next cycle.

The evaluation report will include:

A description of the achievements of the program, stating and highlighting those instructional methods that were the most effective;

A description instructional elements that were unproductive, inefficient and even problematic it will also state areas that need improvement in the future; and

A description of the outcomes and the effect of the material taught and how it was delivered on the students as shown by their test scores as well as their portfolios.

Thorough observation with accurate documentation will make the data useful for and allow us to make well informed decisions to improve the curriculum and the way it is delivered. “ In other words, the evaluation report is a tool supporting decision making, program improvement, accountability, and quality control” (Davis (Gene), 2005).