

Formative Evaluation and Summative Evaluation

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Origin of the Terms

- The terms “*formative evaluation*” and “*summative evaluation*” were first introduced by **Michael Scriven**, a prominent philosopher of science, in his book “*The Methodology of Evaluation*” published in 1967.
- Scriven used the term “*formative evaluation*” to refer to evaluation activities that are conducted during the development process of a programme or product, with the aim of improving its quality, and the term “*summative evaluation*” was used to refer to the evaluation of the programme or product at the end of the development process, with the aim of determining its overall effectiveness.

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- Since then, the terms have been widely used in various fields, including education, psychology, public health, and business, to describe the two types of evaluation methods.
- Today, formative evaluation and summative evaluation are recognized as an important components of the evaluation process, and they are used to assess the effectiveness of programmes, products, or services and to inform decision-making.

Meaning of Formative Evaluation

- Formative evaluation is a process of gathering and analyzing feedback during the development or implementation of a programme, project, or product. It aims to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, allowing adjustments to enhance quality and effectiveness.
- By providing valuable insights early on, formative evaluation saves time, resources, and money. It fosters continuous improvement and ensures that the end product meets the needs of its intended audience.
- Additionally, in education, formative assessment involves teachers providing feedback to students during the learning process to modify teaching and improve student attainment.

Purpose of Formative Evaluation

- **Provide Feedback:** Formative evaluation is focused on providing feedback to programme stakeholders, including programme developers, staff, and funders, in order to inform ongoing programme development and improvement.
- **Identify Problems:** Formative evaluation is used to identify problems and areas for improvement in programme design, implementation, and delivery, so that they can be addressed in a timely and effective manner.
- **Monitor Progress:** Formative evaluation is used to monitor programme progress and outcomes throughout the development and implementation process, in order to ensure that the programme is on track to meet its intended goals.

Goals of Formative Evaluation

- **Improve Programme Design:** Formative evaluation is used to improve programme design by identifying strengths and weaknesses in programme components, such as programme content, delivery, and staffing.
- **Enhance Programme Implementation:** Formative evaluation is used to enhance programme implementation by identifying areas where programme staff may need additional training or support, or where programme delivery may need to be modified.
- **Optimize Programme Outcomes:** Formative evaluation is used to optimize programme outcomes by identifying strategies for improving programme effectiveness, such as by modifying programme components or delivery methods

Benefits of Formative Evaluation

- **Early Identification of Strengths and Weaknesses:** Formative evaluation helps to identify both the strong points and areas for improvement early on, allowing timely adjustments.
- **Improved Effectiveness and Efficiency:** By gathering feedback and making necessary changes, formative evaluation enhances the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the programme or product.
- **Enhanced Quality:** Continuous feedback ensures higher quality outcomes by addressing issues promptly.
- **Increased Stakeholder Engagement:** Involving stakeholders fosters collaboration and ensures their needs are met.

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- **Better Decision-Making:** Data from formative evaluation informs informed decision-making throughout the process.
- **Improved Learning Outcomes:** Adjustments based on feedback lead to better learning experiences and outcomes.
- **Increased Innovation:** Regular assessment encourages innovation and adaptation.

Remember, formative evaluation is a valuable tool for continuous improvement.

Types of Formative Evaluation

- **Needs Assessment:** Needs assessment is a type of formative evaluation that focuses on **identifying the needs and priorities of stakeholders**. This type of evaluation is often conducted at the beginning of a programme or project, and is designed to help programme developers to **identify areas of need and develop programmes that are responsive to those needs**.
- **Process Evaluation:** Process evaluation is a type of formative evaluation that focuses on **assessing the quality and effectiveness of programme implementation**. This type of evaluation is often conducted during the development and implementation of a programme or project, and is designed to **identify areas where improvements can be made in programme delivery**.

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- **Formative Assessment:** Formative assessment is a type of formative evaluation that focuses on **assessing student learning during the course of a programme or project**. This type of evaluation is often conducted by educators, and is designed to **provide ongoing feedback to students and teachers to support learning**.
- **Participatory Evaluation:** Participatory evaluation is a type of formative evaluation that involves stakeholders in the evaluation process. This type of evaluation is often conducted with the goal of **increasing stakeholder engagement and ownership of the programme or project being evaluated**.

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- **Rapid Evaluation:** Rapid evaluation is a type of formative evaluation that is conducted quickly, often in response to changing circumstances or unexpected events. This type of evaluation is often used to identify immediate improvements that can be made to a programme or project.

Meaning of Summative Evaluation

- Summative evaluation is a type of assessment conducted at the end of a programme or project to evaluate its overall effectiveness.
- Its primary focus is to determine whether the programme or project achieved its goals and objectives.
- Summative evaluation helps to inform decisions about future development and implementation, assess programme delivery, and promote accountability and transparency. Stakeholders can ensure effective resource utilization and intended outcomes through evaluation

Purpose of Summative Evaluation

- **Assess Effectiveness:** Summative evaluation is focused on assessing the overall effectiveness of a programme or project in achieving its intended goals and objectives.
- **Determine Impact:** Summative evaluation is used to determine the impact of a programme or project on its intended audience or stakeholders, as well as on the broader community or environment.
- **Inform Decision-Making:** Summative evaluation is used to inform decision-making about future programme or project development, as well as resource allocation.

Goals of Summative Evaluation

- **Measure Programme Outcomes:** Summative evaluation is used to measure programme outcomes, including the extent to which the programme achieved its intended goals and objectives, and the impact of the programme on its intended audience or stakeholders.
- **Assess Programme Effectiveness:** Summative evaluation is used to assess the overall effectiveness of a programme, by comparing programme outcomes to its intended goals and objectives, as well as to similar programmes or initiatives.
- **Inform Programme Improvement:** Summative evaluation is used to inform programme improvement by identifying areas where the programme could be modified or improved in order to enhance its effectiveness.

Benefits of Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation is an important tool for assessing the overall effectiveness of a programme or project. Here are some of the benefits of conducting summative evaluation –

- **Provides a Comprehensive Assessment:** Summative evaluation provides a comprehensive assessment of the overall effectiveness of a programme or project, which can help to inform decisions about future development and implementation.
- **Identifies Areas for Improvement:** Summative evaluation can help to identify areas where improvements can be made in programme delivery, such as in programme design or implementation.

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- **Promotes Accountability and Transparency:** Summative evaluation can help to promote accountability and transparency in programme or project implementation, by ensuring that resources are being used effectively and that the programme or project is achieving its intended outcomes.
- **Supports Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Summative evaluation provides evidence-based data and insights that can inform decisions about future development and implementation.

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- **Demonstrates Impact:** Summative evaluation can help to demonstrate the impact of a programme or project, which can be useful for securing funding or support for future initiatives.
- **Increases Stakeholder Engagement:** Summative evaluation can increase stakeholder engagement and ownership of the programme or project being evaluated, by involving stakeholders in the evaluation process and soliciting their feedback.

Types of Summative Evaluation

There are different types of summative evaluation that can be used to assess the overall effectiveness of a programme or project. Here are some of the most common types of summative evaluation –

- **Outcome Evaluation:** This type of evaluation focuses on the outcomes or results of the programme or project, such as changes in behaviour, knowledge, or attitudes. Outcome evaluation is often used to determine the effectiveness of an intervention or programme in achieving its intended outcomes.

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- **Impact Evaluation:** This type of evaluation focuses on the broader impact of the program or project, such as changes in the community or society. Impact evaluation is often used to **assess the overall impact of a programme or project on the target population or community.**
- **Cost-Benefit Evaluation:** This type of evaluation focuses on the costs and benefits of the programme or project, and is often used to determine whether the programme or project is a worthwhile investment. Cost-benefit evaluation can help to **determine whether the benefits of the programme or project outweigh the costs.**

Difference Between Formative and Summative Evaluation

Formative and summative evaluation differ in the following ways –

- **Difference-1: Purpose:** The purpose of formative assessments is to improve learning, while the purpose of summative assessments is to gain a measure of attainment (e.g. a final grade).
- **Difference-2: Frequency:** Formative assessment occurs regularly throughout every lesson. Summative assessments occur at the end of a teaching-learning cycle or at the end of class.

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- **Difference-3: Type of Assessment:** Formative assessments are likely to be low-stakes and summative assessments are likely to be high-stakes.
- **Difference-4: Outcome:** Teachers provide feedback to improve learning following formative assessments. The outcome of a summative assessment is a final grade or score that is used as a measure of attainment.

Formative vs. Summative Assessment Comparison Chart

Formative

Help students to learn and practice

When

Throughout the course

Why

Identify gaps and improve learning

How

Via approaches that support specific student needs

Summative

Assess student performance

When

At the end of the instructional period

Why

Collect evidence of student knowledge, skill or proficiency

How

Via exit learning products or a cumulative assessment

Thank You