

The Diagnostic Evaluation of Pupils Performance in Basic School in Zambia -Focusing on Discrimination of Performance and Educational Suggestiveness-

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Few assessments of pupils' achievements, such as SACMEQ and Zambia's National Assessment, have been conducted in Zambia to monitor and improve the quality of education. Although results from these tests expose the extremely low achievement there, it is very difficult to infer potential avenue to improve education from them because the results cannot discriminate the pupils' performance because scores are too low. To overcome this issue, we need to identify the difficulties that pupils face and that influence what pupils can do and what they cannot. This approach is called diagnostic evaluation.

Focusing on four basic arithmetic operations, I conducted a paper test survey of G3 to G7 pupils at one private and one public basic school in Zambia. Analyzing results on the process of problem solving, pupils' performance could be discriminated by the strategies they applied and by the common mistakes they made. As a result, some difficulties that pupils face were identified including for example, the transition from concrete strategies, such as country sticks to more abstract strategies, such as writing in columns as a form of positional notation.

Finally, I suggest some instructive methods for analyzing diagnostic evaluations and discuss the relationship between educational evaluation and its implications.