For Whom Does the Educational Evaluation Exist? A Study for Improving Mathematic Educational Evaluation System in South Korea Based on Eisner's Evaluation Theory[1]

KIM, Rina∗

Mogun Elementary School, 235 Mokdong-dong-ro, Yangcheon-gu,
Seoul 07996, Korea; Email: rina98@naver.com

ALBERT, Lillie R.

Lynch School of Education, Boston College, 140 Commonwealth Avenue,
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, USA; Email: albertli@bc.edu

An accurate evaluation of educational process is a promise for the progress of education, because evaluation provides a meticulous idea of what has actually been achieved as a result of education. However, for all its significance in the educational fields, there are not many discussions about evaluation in South Korea. We believe that in order to overcome this discrepancy, diverse evaluation theories along with a discussion about the merits or demerits or each theory should be introduced in South Korea. We propose that Eisner's educational evaluation model may suggest alternative ways of perceiving evaluation. Eisner's educational evaluation model, named educational connoisseurship and criticism, emerged as an approach to educational evaluation from the methods used in art and literary criticism.

INTRODUCTION

An accurate evaluation of educational process is a promise for the progress of educa-

---

[1] A draft version of the article was presented at the 2015 KSME International Conference on Mathematics Education held at Seoul National University, Seoul 08826, Korea; November 6–8, 2015 (*cf.* Kim & Albert, 2015).

∗ Corresponding author

tion, because evaluation provides a meticulous idea of what has actually been achieved as a result of education. However, for all its significance in the educational fields, there are not many discussions about evaluation in South Korea. Since the Korean War in 1950, South Korea has been focusing on economic development. Also, during this same time, the educational fields' attention has been focusing on the social atmosphere, concentrating how to effectively and efficiently achieve educational goals. Particularly, Tyler's (1950) goal achievement model has had a huge affect on developing the national curriculum, and it has had a great deal of influence on every aspect of education in South Korea (Park, 2005; Park, 2008). That is, attaining educational goals is the standard for deciding the success or failure of education, regardless of its educational values. By emphasizing Tyler's evaluation model, South Korea succeeds in promoting students' academic achievement. Diverse international academic assessments, such as Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) prove this success (Fieischman, Hopstock, Pelczar, & Shelley, 2010; Provanik, Gonzales, & Miller, 2009). However, there is a notable inconsistency between student academic achievement and student satisfaction about education in school; a recent study reveals that South Korean students are the least happy among the developing countries despite their high academic achievement (An, 2001).

We believe that in order to overcome these discrepancy diverse evaluation theories along with a discussion about the merits or demerits of each theory should be introduced in South Korea. We propose that Eisner's (cf. Eisner, 1971; 1974; 1976; 1985; 1991; 1995; 2005) educational evaluation model offers alternative ways of perceiving evaluation. Eisner's educational evaluation model, named educational connoisseurship and criticism, emerged as an approach to educational evaluation from the methods used in art and literary criticism. Eisner (1976) proposes this framework as a supplemental approach to evaluation, acknowledging the inadequacy of the scientific approach to educational evaluation. In this paper, we attempt to adapt Eisner's evaluation theory to the educational fields in South Korea by analyzing it with diverse dimensions, such as the values of education and its purposes, objects, and methods of educational evaluation.

VALUES OF EDUCATION

In order to develop evaluation theories or models, a precondition is answering the question, *What are the values of education*? Education theories or models might differ from each other based on how the values of education is understood and conceptualized. If education is regarded as a mean of achieving goals, evaluation may focus on whether or not the goals are attained. On the other hand, if education is assumed as a process, con-

taining values, then evaluation needs to pay attention the different ways of interpreting the meanings of educational process. Understanding the values of education in the evaluation model is pivotal to understanding evaluation theories.

Eisner critiques traditional evaluation models, which pursue extrinsic values of education because Eisner believes in the importance of intrinsic values of education. Eisner (1994) states that there are chances for evaluators to ignore side effects in the traditional evaluation model, such as the goal attainment model; the goal attainment evaluation always sets up the goals first and then evaluates the education system based on them. Eisner points out that there is an inherent problem with this model because the scientific assumptions and their resulting methods "do not exhaust the ways in which men come to know. Their exclusive use has led to a limited and parochial conception of how educational evaluation can proceed (Eisner, 2005, p. 57). In addition, the means of education are justified when they are acknowledged for achieving goals set by the evaluators. This blurs the line between education and indoctrination. In this case, it may be difficult to separate education from propaganda or indoctrination, because it only concentrates on extrinsic aspects of education.

Eisner (1994) suggests that authentic education occurs only when students learn by realizing the educational values while they are participating in the process. In this case, the means of education is acceptable only when they contain educational values (Eisner, 1985). Also, the participants' satisfaction in education programs may be the primary measure in which to evaluate education programs, because the participants need to recognize the inherent values in it. This offers a specific basis for embracing participants' opinions in educational evaluation.

From this point of view, setting a goal before students participate in an educational program could be meaningless because attaining a goal might not assure students' development of intrinsic values. Therefore, in the process of education, teachers and students may pursue the educational goals while teaching and learning (Eisner, 1994). Thus, Eisner (1991) shows a fluid stance regarding educational goals by asserting that educational goals may be ambiguous and changeable.

Eisner's point of view on educational values is very suggestive to South Korean's educational evaluation system. So far, education in South Korea has been heavily focused on extrinsic values. As a result, South Korean students do not appreciate the intrinsic values of education and may feel unhappy despite their high academic achievement. Obviously, we should not overlook the successes in academic achievements of South Korea education system in South Korea. However, discussions about educational values should be continued, and the evaluation system in South Korea should pay attention to the inherent values of education, which have gone unnoticed. We expect that Eisner's evaluation model to provoke conversations about what educational values should be covered in South

Korea.

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION

The purpose of educational evaluation may fuel the process of evaluation and in turn, directly affect components of evaluation, such as stakeholders, objects, methods and standards. Moreover, having a clearly defined purpose may provide guidance for the directions of evaluation. Therefore, examining the purpose of Eisner's educational evaluation model may reveal ways to improve the educational evaluation system in South Korea.

Eisner (1971) claims that the authentic purpose of educational evaluation is to improve the quality of students' educational lives. Eisner also proposes that the results of educational evaluation should raise the standards of education. For example, Eisner (1976) explains that the role of critiques for educational evaluation is to "adumbrate, suggest, imply, connote, render, rather than attempt to translate" (Eisner, 1976, p. 41). This shows that the role of evaluation is not only to describe or judge current educational phenomena, but also to find meaningful implications of how to use it for improving the educational process.

Eisner's interpretation of the purpose of educational evaluation may provide meaningful implications in South Korea. The goal attainment model, which is the dominant evaluation methods in South Korea, is used mainly to justify the results of education by showing students' academic achievement scores. South Korean students who adapted to this educational climate showed a hostile perception toward evaluation and participated in evaluation reluctantly.

Eisner's (1976; 1977; 1991) evaluation model might be an alternative to overcome the limitations of the goal attainment model. The role of "connoisseur" in Eisner's evaluation model is not the one who judges or exposures the results of education programs, but an assistant who leads improvement of it. Eisner also suggests that education connoisseurs may be those individuals, teachers or students, who are able to differentiate the details among the varieties of teaching and learning experiences. Connoisseurs express their appreciation of these experiences through means of awareness and understanding of what has been experienced. We expect that Eisner's evaluation model may open the way for South Korean students to change their perception of educational evaluation; evaluation is not something that students want to deny or avoid; however, it is a necessary complement to a harmonious educational progress.

THE OBJECTS OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION

The characteristics of educational evaluation may be diversified based on the responses to the following questions: What are the intended objects of educational evaluation, education itself or something related to education? How can we define the range of educational evaluation; is it limited to measurable behaviors or can it include something more? What is the form of the objectives; are they viewed as a finalized shape or as an ongoing progress? Subsequently, how does Eisner define the objects of educational evaluation?

Although Eisner (1974) conceives education as a process, he assumes that there is no rigorous distinction between education inside and outside of school. Particularly, Eisner (1977) offers the following questions for educational evaluation; how much do students understand what teachers teach as a result of education? Are the ideas and skills valuable enough to teach or to learn? What is the relationship among subjects, which students should learn? These questions illustrate that the objectives of Eisner's evaluation model are beyond academic achievement. This also may show that Eisner sets up wide-range criteria for objects of educational evaluation. For instance, every aspect of education, such as student academic achievement, instruction, teaching methods, and relationship among students and the teacher in the classroom, is an object in Eisner's evaluation model (Eisner, 1985).

If Eisner had assumed that the objects of educational evaluation as a completed form such as achievement scores, then Eisner would not have differentiated himself from the traditional evaluation theorists, such as Tyler.. The notable merit of Eisner's evaluation model is that educational values cannot be evaluated without discussing who the participants are and how they learn in the process of education. We believe that the process of education should deliver its values to students. Although educational evaluators acquire satisfactory results such as high student academic achievement, we believe that it is an educational failure if students do not appreciate and value their learning. Therefore, evaluation models should support the improvement of the educational process, so that students may experience its educational values. In addition, Eisner's definition of the objects of educational evaluation provides meaningful implications for the educational field in South Korea. Until now, South Korean students have been subjected to a rigorous academic evaluation system without having any reasons for or knowing the values of studying. If the educational filed of South Korea applies Eisner's evaluation model, they may have an opportunity to prevent the problems of the current academic evaluation system.

THE METHODS OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION

The methods of educational evaluation may answer the question, *how do we evaluate education?* Subsequently, what kind of methods do the traditional evaluation model use in pursing its objectives in order to demonstrate student achievement through overt behaviors? In the case of Tyler (1934), he includes the process of setting the testing conditions based on the educational goals that students must achieve. The testing conditions indicate the environment where students may demonstrate their achievement status. The major drawback of this approach is a setup of an artificial situation that differentiates the process of learning and teaching. In this approach, the evaluator provides extra stimulations in order to make sense of students' understanding after they have engaged in learning activities. Inherently, it seems mendacious and unnatural to evaluate students in unusual circumstances. This may lead evaluators to appraise just for evaluation itself. More directly, students may have a chance to study testing conditions in order to achieve high scores. If evaluators only pay attention to the exam results, then there is the possibility that students will only focus on results, and try to attain the results the evaluators are anticipating.

Eisner (1995) claims that connoisseurship has a key position in the classroom, which includes observing students' uneasiness about what they are learning. The connoisseur, and in this case the teacher, needs to be ready to differentiate between stimulation and reaction. For example, if a student shows an interest in one of the diverse stimuli, such as content, then, the stimulation or motivation might be the subject matter that is of educational value for the student. In this case, the stimulation needs to be a valuable evaluation for both evaluators and students. To seek the right stimulation, evaluators should venture into the process of education. Specifically, Eisner (1995) asserts that teachers may evaluate students' learning by observing students in classrooms based on their connoisseurship. In this case, teachers may evaluate students' understanding more precisely, since they would make judgments based on diverse educational situations to illustrate student performance.

Eisner (1985) also suggests that the term 'data collecting for evaluation' is a misnomer. Data for evaluation is not something that exists outside of the evaluator. As a constructivist, Eisner perceives evaluators as connoisseurs who have the ability to observe, interpret and analyze data in diverse ways. However, this does not imply that Eisner's (1995) methods of educational evaluation only rely on the teacher as a connoisseur. Eisner attempts to include students in the evaluation process by emphasizing various ways to support students' participation in the process of evaluation through contributions, such as self-report scales or group deliberations.

The educational evaluation of South Korea relies heavily on scientific and objective methods. Consequently, students, as well as teachers, have been regarded as the objects of education rather than the subjects, which generates scepticism about their autonomy in education. What is worse, this perspective may increase the needs of scientific and objective evaluation methods, creating a vicious cycle. We believe that the introduction of Eisner's evaluation model in South Korea would be helpful in recovering the autonomy of educational subjects. Eisner's evaluation model will be beneficial for acknowledging teachers' professionalism, increasing students' autonomy, and building trust among teachers and students, which is currently not the case under the goal attainment model.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined Eisner's evaluation model as an alternative way to overcome problems of the current educational evaluation system in South Korea. Eisner's evaluation model helps educators to develop new perspectives toward educational evaluation. The fact that Eisner pays attention to the intrinsic values and the process of education is worthy of notice. Eisner's model sets up educational goals in order to improve the quality of education based on meaningful phenomena, which are extracted from students' school lives.

In addition, Eisner asserts that educational phenomena can be interpreted by the evaluators' connoisseurship and criticism. Eisner's educational evaluation model relies on the evaluator's own judgment; paradoxically, it highlights the evaluators' professionalism and education. In the goal attainment model, which is widely used in the educational evaluation field in South Korea, the evaluators are solely means of collecting data for scientific analysis of students' academic achievement. Therefore, the status of evaluators is losing importance, and stakeholders are paying more attention to the objective results, such as students' academics scores. Consequently, there is a lack of evaluators who evaluate the process of education expertly in South Korea. In order to improve South Korean student satisfaction regarding education, more discussion must occur in regard to the role of evaluators and their professionalism. Therefore, recovering the evaluator's professionalism is required prior to improving the educational process.

Another notable aspect of Eisner's evaluation model is the involvement of the educational subjects, such as students and teachers in the evaluation of educational process. From Eisner's point of view, they are not passive bystanders. They evaluate their educational process and provide ideas about how to improve it. Extending the range of evaluators may be helpful in accumulating various opinions about educational processes and in diversifying the standards for educational evaluation. Based on this diversification, it is

expected that educational subjects recover their autonomy in their education and will increase their satisfaction of the educational process.

For all the advantages and implications of Eisner's evaluation model, there is a certain restriction in this model; it only focuses on evaluation of education in schools. Therefore, Eisner's model is still insufficient to evaluate education in society. Education in society is different from insides a school, because it emerges as various phenomena in diverse circumstances in the real world. An exhaustive educational evaluation model should provide the framework for analyzing educational phenomena that occurs outside of school. Therefore, further discussion is needed about how Eisner's model can be applied to different educational situations.

Although there are certain restraints, we still believe that Eisner's evaluation model can help improve education in South Korea. As noted above, Eisner's model may provide meaningful implications for student satisfaction regarding education in South Korea, and it may be helpful in reducing the discrepancy between student satisfaction and academic achievement. Eisner's evaluation model may be useful in remedying some of the shortcomings of the evaluation system in South Korea in various ways, but wisdom is needed to overcome the problems of the current evaluation system.

REFERENCES

An, S. (2001). Global Citizenship and Global Solidarity through Study Abroad: An Exploratory Case Study of South Korean Students. *Journal of International Social Studies* **1(2)**, 21–34.

Eisner, E. W. (1971). *Confronting Curriculum Reform* (In German). Boston, MA, USA: Little, Brown and Company.

_____ (1974). *Conflicting Conception of Curriculum*. Berkeley, CA, USA: McCutchen Publ. Corp.

_____ (1976). Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism: Their form and functions in educational evaluation. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* **10(3)**, 135–150.

_____ (1977). Use of educational connoisseurship and criticism for evaluating classroom life. *Teacher College Record* **78(3)**, 345–358.

_____ (1985). *The Art of Educational Evaluation: A Personal View*. London, UK: Falmer Press.

_____ (1991). *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*. New York, USA: Macmillan.

_____ (1994). *Cognition and Curriculum: A Basis for Deciding What to Teach*. New York, USA: Logman.

_____ (1995). *Educating Artistic Vision*. New York, USA: Macmillan.

_____ (2005). *Reimagining schools: The selected works of Elliot W. Eisner*. New York, USA:

Routledge.

Fieischman, H. L.; Hopstock, P. J.; Pelczar, M. P. & Shelley, B. E. (2010). *Highlight from PISA 2009: Performance of U.S. 15-Year-Old Students in Reading, Mathematics, and Science Literacy in an International Context*. Washington, DC, USA: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Available from:
http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011004.pdf

_____ (2005). The Nature and Limitation of Evaluation for Scholastic Ability Implied in Curriculum Theory by R. W. Tyler (In Korean). *J. of Elementary Education* **18(2)**, 23–42.

Kim R. & Albert, L. R. (2015). For whom does the Educational Evaluation Exist? A Study for Improving Mathematic Educational Evaluation System in South Korea Based on Eisner's Evaluation Theory. In: O. N. Kwon, Y. H. Choe, H. K. Ko, and S. Han (Eds.), The International Perspective on Curriculum and Evaluation of Mathematics: the Proceedings of the KSME 2015 International Conference on Mathematics Education held at Seoul National University, Seoul 08826, Korea; November 6–8, 2015, Vol. 2 (pp. 206–214). Seoul: Korean Society of Mathematical Education.

Park, C. H. (2008). Appeals and Pitfalls of Tyler Rationale into Curriculum Development (In Korean). *J. of Moral Education (도덕교육연구)* **20(1)**. 27–48.

Provanik, S.; Gonzales, P. & Miller, D. (2009). U. S. Performance Across International Assessments of Student Achievement: Special Supplement to the Condition of Education 2009. Washington, DC, USA: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Available from:
http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009083.pdf

Tyler, R. W. (1934). *Constructing Achievement Tests*. Columbus, OH, USA: Ohio State University Press.