

FORMS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

This paper presents the most important forms of evaluation. To improve the system of evaluation we need to create a better bound between students and professors, the most important questions which must take into account by the teachers are numerous such as: What do we evaluate?, With what purpose we evaluate?, Who do we evaluate?, How do we evaluate?, When do we evaluate? and the most important is WITH WHAT DO WE EVALUATE? The evaluation represents a managerial action its own social human systems that require the reporting of the obtained results into a certain activity to a specific criteria set of the domain in making the optimal decision. The evaluation is the process aimed at measuring and to the value results of the education system or part of it, the effectiveness of resources, conditions and operations used in the activity in order to improve the decision-making of the activities. The main idea of this article is that professors must find the most effective solutions in the evaluation process of students. Students must receive explanations regarding the role that they have in today's society, what can they do for a better society and to create new bridges crossing a heavy stage of their lives that is adult stage.

Keywords: evaluation, complementary methods, errors in didactical evaluation.

Rezumat

Această lucrare prezintă cele mai importante forme de evaluare. Pentru a îmbunătăți sistemul de evaluare avem nevoie să stabilim o mai bună legătură între studenți și profesori. Cele mai importante întrebări care trebuie să însoțească cadrele didactice sunt numeroase: Ce evaluăm?, Cu ce scop evaluăm?, Pe cine evaluăm?, Cum evaluăm?, Când evaluăm? și cea mai importantă este: Cu ce evaluăm? Evaluarea reprezintă o activitate de conducere a propriilor sisteme social-umane, care necesită raportarea rezultatelor obținute într-o anumită activitate, după anumite criterii stabilite de domeniul în luarea deciziei optime. Evaluarea este procesul care vizează măsurarea și la rezultatele de valoare ale sistemului de învățământ sau la o parte din ea, eficacitatea resurselor, condițiile și operațiunile utilizate cu scopul de a

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îmbunătățește procesul decizional al activităților. Ideea principală a acestui articol este că profesorii trebuie să găsească cele mai eficiente soluții în procesul de evaluare a elevilor. Elevii trebuie să primească explicații cu privire la rolul pe care îl au în societatea de astăzi, ceea ce pot face ei pentru o societate mai bună și pentru a crea noi punți de trecere într-o etapă grea a vieții lor, care este stadiul adult.

Cuvinte-cheie: *evaluare, metode complementare, erori în evaluare didactică.*

1. Evaluation by oral examinations

It consists in making a conversation through which the teacher aims to identify the volume and quality of knowledge, skills of students according to study programs. The conversation can be individual, formal or combined. Oral evaluation can be accomplished in a current form (which occurs at any time of the training activity, with frontal achievement) or final (at certain moments – the end of the chapter, module and course – with the methodological possibilities for the different versions of exams and colloquies).

The place, time as well as the way of conducting oral evaluation is determined by the pedagogical objectives, the specific goal of education, type of institution, the psycho-individual particularities of those that learn and didactical logic. The oral tests can be varied from simple questions (for reproducing – recognition) up to sets of two – more complex topics of synthesis (which calls for intellectual elaborations, comparisons and analysis). In principle the oral tests are used to evaluate especially cognitive capacities (and possibly the affective dimension of personality those that learn). The advantages are that it provides a full communication between teachers and groups of subjects, and the feedback is much faster. The method fosters students' examination capacity. Remarkable disadvantages of this type of evaluation are: hard controllable scales, subjectivity, sometimes generates inhibition/intimidation, takes time. The oral examination objectivity is jeopardized, thanks to the intervention and its own pace is more objective (requires grilles, scales and scores relatively rigorous); the value depends on the nature and content of the test (number and manner of evaluation).

1.1. The written evaluation

By written – thesis, control papers, extemporal, written works of any kind) – allows the evaluated and also to compile the answers, to work independently and at their own pace; is more objective (requires grilles, scales and scores relatively rigorous); the value depends on the nature and content of the test (number and manner of editing the topics).

1.2. Evaluation based on written tests includes various forms

From the examination by written tests (often with a selective character) until the current evaluations by types of survey tests, of short duration. The written tests are quite difficult to classify thanks to their variety. They can be administered frontal, group, individual, even may have variable duration (from several minutes to several hours); can be administered within the hours or can constitute tasks of independent activity, outside the „school times” can be individual or be grouped (when they contain resolvable duties through cooperation – the collaboration of many individuals); the content of written tests (including the modality of formulating the topics/ problems) depends upon the nature the discipline (subject matter), the objectives of the evaluation, the evaluated group, the concrete context in which the activity is carried the activity of topics – problems, topics that require creation, topics that require certain capabilities or the circumscribed thinking (analysis – synthesis, comparison, generalization, abstraction, customization); can be tests with single or multiple topics (from two to fifteen/ twenty items/ issues); systematized by some criteria and organized in sets, the multiple topics can constitute verification tests of knowledge, even docimological tests. (Coco , 2002, pp. 45-47). It is necessary a wider explanation for the docimologic test which is a complex sample consisting of an assembly of work tasks (items), that enables determination of the degree of assimilation of knowledge by the students or the development level of some capacities based on measurements and rigorous assessments

The written evaluation can be accomplished in three operational versions: The first written evaluation can be accomplished by written works/ test papers, applied during a teaching activity to verify the degree of achievement of some concrete pedagogical objectives.

The second evaluation It is given by the applied Theses in certain disciplines to verify the level of understanding and capitalization of some knowledge and skills acquired during the hours properly organized to the specific objectives of some chapters or subchapters.

And the third one is given by the written works of synthesis, applied at the end of chapter, year in the form of papers or research themes, that require crossing a considerable bibliography, capitalized in a creative manner according to the student’s cognitive and psychosocial function – in this category includes also the graduation papers, license, dissertation, PhD, recycling and so one, incurred in the context of school exams, postschool, undergraduate, postgraduate, training and so one.

The written tests can be managed differently: they can be „unique” (for the whole evaluated group), obligatory or „tests with choosing topics”; can be „common” to all evaluated individuals or distinguished on the subgroups of the evaluated collective.

I will enumerate two major advantages of the written tests which are both in favour of the teacher „checking a large number of individuals within a period determined of time” and also in favour of the some shy students

The Disadvantages in the written tests involves a weaker feedback (some errors or failures cannot implies a low feed-back, some errors or failures cannot be operatively eliminated by the teacher). A very important disadvantage in the written test is that the teachers have the responsibility that students not to copy. The practical evaluation (by practical tests) in the laboratory, workshop, specialized office, in the field and so one, is differentiated according to the nature and content of the discipline/ educational objective; tests that depend on the specific educational objectives also aims the evaluation of the achieved level especially in forming practical skills, abilities and the specific actionable capabilities. The performance evaluation by practical tests – the verification tests can be currently (within the formative evaluation) and/ or final. The content of this type of tests is establish by the objectives of each disciplines, the profile and the specialization of teaching.

Methods and techniques of practical training evaluation are common to all disciplines all that form practical – actionable capacities. It is important that tests used for the evaluation to assume situations very close from those that characterizes the action and profession of the real framework. (Coco , 2002, pp. 48-53)

The examination by practical tests can be achieved to a series of specific disciplines and aims to identify the practical application of the acquired knowledge, the level of incorporation of certain skills and abilities, concretized in certain objection holders or material activities. Students can be encouraged to learn through practical work, conditions offered to them in order to achieve certain activities. Those activities could consist in working at the companies associated with profile studied by them. A specific type of practical test is represented by experimental activities within the context of disciplines with practical – applicative character.

The evaluative samples by practical order can have two perspectives: one in which the students must execute some products starting from a model and

another based on the students achievement of some actions starting from an action project. Now we can specify that the practical tests as far as they are properly designed, ratifying in the most eloquently which students know and can do. It remains the task of dimensioning perspective in some tests which in a decisive manner, can figure out what they are or what can they achieve the candidates in training. (*Methodological Guide*, 2005, p. 383)

2. Complementary methods of evaluation

Besides the methods that became classical to the evaluation, can still be identify a number of new methods, called complementary or alternative. The complementary character implies that they complement traditional arsenal of tools (oral, written and practical methods) and that can be used simultaneously in the evaluative process. The alternative character implies a quasi-total replacement of classical and modern methods, which is not appropriate and it cannot be generalized. The practice of docimology from us and elsewhere demonstrates that we cannot give up the current practices of evaluation. We are counting more on a functional blending, on a complementary fruitful optimized between the two methodological trends, and not on a unilateral, exclusive and competitive use of them.

It seems that the complementary methods of evaluation are much simpler and allows the teacher to structure points of reference and to gather information on the conduct of its work, by using instruments that are more appropriate to the specific instructive – educative situations. A certain difficulty occurs because the data evaluation methods are not standardized, the planning and implementation mode depending on in each case, from teacher to teacher. I will briefly present each of the Complementary methods of evaluation:

The first method of evaluation is **The essay**. This tool enables a nuanced appreciation of learning and the identification of some individual performance elements of the student that have their origin in his motivation for the performed activity. It can differentiate two types of essays: One in which the independent scientific investigation essay is based on the on the description approach of a activity conducted within the class and the analysis of the obtained results. And a bibliographical essay based on documentary information, bibliographic.

- The essential characteristics of the essay are multiple starting with an pronounced formative and creative character, managing to incorporate large areas of content;
- A deeply integrating character, both for previous learning processes, disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, and for the methodology of

information and scientific research, being in such a very suggestive evaluation way, precise, intuitive and predictive;

- Allows the approach of new areas which represents extensions of the content, to the extent that the proposed theme is interesting, didactical justified and there are resources in approaching;
- It can be made connections with other educational objects and ways of trans-disciplinary investigation;
- It has an summative character, engaging knowledge, diverse skills and attitudes, edified throughout a longer period of learning;
- Reveals the intrinsic motivation for learning or documentation of students compared to most students who are preparing on the basis of their external factors.

It can be exercised in an organized manner independent bibliographic research activity that is useful in further training and education. The Essay can be used in teaching approach for both summative evaluation in a module, or within an folder (portfolio) or independent.

The second method is ***The investigation***. The investigation is presented as a tool that facilitates the appliances in a creative way of knowledge and operation of new situations or very lightly similar to the previous experience. The investigation is an activity that can take place during the course of an hour or a sequence of classes, during which the students demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and applications.

Students receive a theme with specific tasks, well-circumscribed. It may also be made under a form of homework, but the finalization will be done in class by commenting on the conclusions.

The third method is ***The project*** that presents „the visiting card” of the student that can follow the progress – in a cognitive plan, attitudinal and behavioural – at a certain academic discipline within a period of time (semester/ year). Represents a pact between student and teacher. The teacher discusses with the student about what must he know and to do in his process of learning. The project consists in required and optional materials selected by the student and/ or teacher and that refer at various objectives and cognitive strategies. The Evaluation of the project involves identifying the learning objectives and time of their accomplishment; specifying the products that must contain the project, achieving the learning objectives. The evaluation of these products is made multi-criteria. For example, the conformity criterion with the taught theory

can be complemented by that of innovation and originality. Each product included in the project can be evaluated in terms of quantity (number of pages), but mostly qualitative: the creativity individually or collectively product, new elements, strong points, and so on. In addition the project will be submitted for the effects it had on professional development, of the self-evaluation capacity and the skills of intercommunication. (*Methodological Guide*, 2005, p. 384)

3. Evaluation by exams

Represents a way of appreciation in schools efficiency, institutionalized at the level of educational system. The criticism of exams aims the fact that they „often reduces to a verification of knowledge assimilation, not only leaving unexplored the most important aspects of the intellect as well as personality traits almost all understood that education must cultivate”. This critique concerns, the practice of „the exams with an selective character” inspired by the cultural conditions of the nineteenth century, related to „the development of a highly ranked bureaucracy”. (De Landshure, GilBert, 1975)

The curricular perspective of design a new way of organizing he exams that employs the direct responsibility of each teacher, evaluated in terms of pedagogical management at the relationship between invested resources in entering the system – the quality of educational process – products obtained at the exit of the system.

The Exams can be oral, written or practical. The Exam is a evaluation test for concluding a unit of curriculum (courses, seminars, laboratory). Evaluation test (set of evaluation tests), that gives access to a cycle of studies or after its completion, to a degree. The exams have the purpose to test the level of knowledge and the capacity to apply them, as well as to explore the student’s performance at a certain stage of the university training.

The oral exam takes the form of exposure (conversation) orally on the topics included in the program of evaluation.

The written exam is a form of evaluation in which the student is required to draw up written answers to a certain number of questions or to complete a number of written exercises or grill tests into a limited period of time. The mark – a mark is any numerical measure or grade within a well defined scale, used to describe the evaluation results in a course.

The education plan (curriculum) – a set of disciplines and activities scheduled

for instruction and evaluation, brought together in a single concept in terms of the formative content and the deployment in time, for training and forming a specialist who has a recognized degree in a specific area.

Examination session – the period of evaluation/ examination either at the end of the modules, or the end of each semester or in the holidays period for the repeated support, determined by each institution of higher education in the educational plans.

Amount of work – includes all activities of study for acquisition of the finalities by the study (lectures, seminars, laboratories, the recovery of information's, private individual study, guided individual study and so on).

4. Evaluation by scales of appreciation

This evaluation offers the possibility to supply the results or the answers between different values of ranges, located between a lower limit and an upper limit (Nicula, 1996, p. 406).

The quality appreciation of the scale depends on two essential elements: The way of ordering and ranking of the value ranges (very good – good – average – sufficient – insufficient).

The way for the reporting value ranges of to the concrete training situations. „In contrast with the traditional methods – Ion T. Radu which carries out that the evaluation of the obtained academic results on a limited time and with an area greater or less than the content, but anyway defined – as alternative methods of evaluation are presented at least in two characteristics:

- a. On one hand the accomplishment of evaluating the results in close connection with the training – learning, many times simultaneously with it;
- b. On the other hand, results that are obtained for a longer period of time targeting the development of some capacities, acquisition of skills and especially changes in terms of interests, attitudes, correlated with the learning activity.” (Radu, 1999, pp. 223-224)

5. Errors in didactical evaluation

The ideal of objectivity in marking is affected by certain circumstances that may induce significant changes, relevant either to the same examiner at different times or in different examiners. The most circumstances by generating the errors and fluctuations in marking the activity of the teacher. I will briefly

analyze the most commonly encountered situations and degrading effects: The „halo” effect. The appreciation is done by extending of some qualities detected sequentially to the whole didactical conduct of the student, his appreciation to a certain domain, is made according to the obtained situation in other disciplines. The effect has a psychological based on the fact that the partial impression radiates, is hereby extended over the whole personality of the student. The most exposed students of this effect are either leading or the weakest students. Professors do not observed some shortcomings of the good students, as they are not willing to establish some processes of the weakest students. In order to reduce negative consequences, presumed by this effect can appeal to more practical ways. The use of external exams is an initial strategy. To these exams are attracted the professors from other institutions that provide the anonymity of those appreciated. In evaluating the conduct can be identified two types of the „halo” effect. A first aspect is constituted of the „gentle” effect, characterized by the tendency to appreciate with leniency the known persons compared with those unknowns. A second embodiment is given by the error of generosity. This occurs when the teacher has specific reasons to show some indulgence:

- a tendency to show a reality in a superlative way, the desire to mask a reprehensible state of affairs;
- The effect of Pygmalion. The appreciation results obtained by a student is influenced by the opinion that the teacher has made an about its capabilities. The teachers predictions not only anticipates, but also facilitates the invoked behaviours;
- The personal equation of the examiner. Each professor structures his own criteria of appreciation. Some teachers are more generous, others are more exigent/ demanding. A number of teachers use the mark as a way of encouragement, of stimulating, others use the marks in order to measure objectively or to constrain the student to submit an additional effort;
- The effect of contrast. Appears by emphasizing of two contrasting features that occur immediately in time and space. Here the teachers tend to operate a comparison and hierarchy of the students;
- The effect of order. Because of certain inertial phenomena, the professor maintains about the same level of appreciation for a series of responses that are presenting certain qualifiers differences. The examiner tends to mark identically several papers different but consecutive.

Logical error. It consists in substituting the objectives and key parameters of the evaluation through certain results, degree of conscientiously and so on. The deviation is justified sometimes, but must not become a rule. Some

errors are facilitated by the specific field of discipline at which the evaluation is achieved. Rigorous educational objectives, accurate is suitable for a pre-evaluation more objective putting to appreciation the subjectivity of the teacher. The effects of involvement and personality factors, both those related to the teacher, as well as those falling within the students. The state of time, exhaustion and accidental factors can influence the appearance of errors in the evaluation.

Conclusion

The evaluation of a student should be done on the basis of an annual report which contains all the activities carried out by him as well as his interests both within the academic environment and beyond. The student activities should be more diverse to gather more knowledge and useful information that could be used in the future work. Evaluation is the appreciated activity by examination results and their report to the chances of achieving. The fulfilment of the students regarding the objectives of the study programs are carried out in a specific context. Here you can formulate the following recommendations:

- Generating a policy document on educational evaluation at the faculty level, document containing also concrete guidance on the modalities in which the policies are to be implemented;
- Development and improvement of the document at the department level, before its presentation for the approval of the Professoral Board;
- Establishment and management of a database regarding the results obtained by students in all tasks assigned;
- The use of the database to formulate the appreciations regarding quality of educational evaluation carried out by teachers.

Organizing professional development courses and exchange of experiences to optimize the educational evaluation of teachers. Ioan Jinga defines: Evaluation is like a complex process of instructional and educational activity results with planned objectives, with the used resources or with the previous results. The evaluation aims to estimate the contribution of these factors in conducting teaching activities and obtaining the results.

Academic evaluation has known significant evolutions especially after The Bologna Declaration. In the path of this process, known in Europe buy the name of „The Bologna Process”, has introduced new meanings and connotations of the Academic Evaluation. Higher education is a step in the educational system that provides the level of vocational training, determined by the state standards, conducted within the formal educational process,

completed with a final evaluation that confirms the academic title awarded. State and public control over the higher education system has the basic mission evaluating the training programs offered by higher education institutions, their compatibility with the training programs offered in other European states. Not accidentally I. Jinga writes: „To evaluate means to measure, compare, and to appreciate. It is important that this appreciation is objective and to realize properly without leaving any negative traces on the personality”.

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