

EVALUATING THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT

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The main mission of universities is provisioning of higher education, that is knowledge and skills necessary for individual for better and successful performance of his/her job. Hence the issue of provisioning of quality education nowadays is of great importance. Universities should be concerned in increasing the quality of education and are obliged to guarantee diplomas with relevant knowledge and skills. There are many criteria which could determine the quality of higher education provided by universities, for example, the high level of the faculty, adequate provision of the university with proper infrastructure, use of the advanced technique and technologies, adequate provision with all required training appliances and textbooks etc. As another criterion of successful performance of the mission of the universities in provisioning of quality education should be considered a quality assessment system and methodologies applied in the universities.

Assessment is an integral part of an education process, as by means of it a teaching staff, trainers have an opportunity to get a true account on effectiveness of learning and on how much professionally a teaching staff impart their knowledge to learners. Hence, one of the most important tasks of teaching staff, trainers in education institutions should be a formation of the criteria and methodologies of quality assessment, which favorably contributes to the process of learning. The criteria of the quality assessment are based on the fact of how efficiently it helps both the teaching staff and learners to get the most of the education process.

What is the quality of assessment? First of all I would like to point ten principles of assessment that emerged from the work of an Assessment Issues Group organized by the Open Learning Foundation:

1. The purposes of assessment need to be clear
2. Assessment need to be an integral part of course design, not something to be bolted afterwards
3. Assessment methodology needs to be valid
4. Assessment processes and instruments need to be reliable
5. Assessment methodology needs to be feasible
6. Assessment need to be transparent to students, staff and employers
7. Assessment needs to be a means of delivering feedback
8. The overall assessment strategy needs to employ a wide range of techniques and processes
9. The amount of assessment should be appropriate
10. Assessment should be free of bias

The given list of principles could not be comprehensive and could not be a strict rule for conducting a quality assessment, but by abiding by these principles we can *evaluate the level of quality assessment* conducted in universities. Observance and application of these principles could contribute to making assessment a part of successful and quality learning process.

Assessment is necessary for the student to ensure successful learning of all studied courses. Student should know and understand purposes of assessment. The purpose of assessment is not only in grading the student learning but also in assisting student to be more seriously concerned with his studies.

Instead of summative assessment, which is generally carried out at the end of a course or project and typically used to assign students a course grade universities should start to introduce the method of formative assessment, which is carried out throughout a course or project. Formative assessment refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by the students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessments become formative when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet the needs.

Key elements of formative assessment include:

1. The identification by teachers and learners of learning goals, intentions or outcomes and criteria for achieving these.
2. Rich conversations between teachers and students that continually build and go deeper.
3. The provision of effective, timely feedback to enable students to advance their learning.
4. The active involvement of students in their own learning.
5. Teachers responding to identified learning needs and strengths by modifying their teaching approaches.

As an integral part of the education process assessment should be conducted during all the process of learning of the course. Instructors in advance should inform students on assessment scheme thereby promoting students to manage their learning process. On every stage of grading a teacher should provide a detailed feedback on work of students not just on their scores so they can learn from mistakes and develop continuously to achieve better results. A quality assessment should be valid and reliable. A Valid assessment measures what it is intended to measure, that is expected skill and knowledge that a student will acquire at the end of the course. A reliable assessment is consistent and fair to all learners that is assessment is administered and scored in a consistent way for all the students who take the assessment.

The used assessment methodology in universities should allow a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of studies of students in learning main program of higher education and contribute to learning. An introduction of a rating system in assessment students learning instead of current five point- system of assessment of learning in most higher education institutions in Azerbaijan when a student gets mark for the course in taking only one exam would serve this purpose. Complexity in differentiating students by their abilities, conventionality, and low objectivity are the main drawbacks of the five points grading system. The rating system of assessment affords equal opportunities to all students, provides maximal objectivity of assessment, ensures competition as a leading factor of stimulating study of students, emphasizes priority of independent works and allows ranking students by the degree of results showing the student the right level in the class. Tests, essays, presentations, classroom assignments, midterm and final examination are the instruments and techniques that ought to be used assessing students learning.

Instructors should provide students with a detailed grading scheme showing how many marks go to each element of students work. For example, a 100 point grading scheme stimulates students for quality study during a semester by inducing them to be prepared to pass all intermediate tests and allowing them to get bonus points for extra works. At the same time grading scheme must be developed in such a way that it would be impossible for the student to get more than 65 points without taking an intermediate exam and to get a highest points a student has to take an intermediate exams.

The process of accumulation of the total grade is open to the student and makes the student to study harder to increase his mark and quality of his learning.

Assessment strategies used in any course influence both how lecturers structure their teaching, and how students approach their learning. So by evaluating the quality of assessment we are able to discern the methods of assessment that better serves the purpose of increasing both the quality of teaching and quality of learning. As stated above quality assessment criteria should be clear, free of bias and understood by teachers and learners. The teaching staff needs to understand that the objective of a quality assessment is not only to assess the knowledge of the learners but also to lead to an improvement of learning. Continuous development and evaluation of efficient techniques of assessment is essential for the achievement of this purpose and it should be a permanent concern of teachers.

References:

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