

The Role of University Lecturer in Development of Higher Education - Evaluating University Education

Dr. Hany Youssef Hassan

Assistant Professor of Animal Medicine Faculty of Vet. Med.
Menoufia University

Abstract

This paper has attempted to highlight course evaluation and to focus on student evaluation. Course evaluation is an area, which is often taken for granted or completely neglected. It has been suggested that university courses be in danger of decaying and falling out of step with the needs of society because of the lack of evaluation. The first part focused on course evaluation and discusses:

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| 1= The scope of course evaluation. | 2= Course design. |
| 3= Course outlines. | 4= Teaching materials. |
| 5= Teaching and learning methods. | 6= Course monitoring and quality control. |

The second part focused on student evaluation and examines:

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| 1= The purpose of testing. | 2= Assessing student performance. |
| 3= Construction test items. | |

Finally both course evaluation and students evaluation are underdeveloped. We need to have to clear idea of what good education is, and how best to assess our students. Therefore, in addition to research in your field, you should also be taking a greater interest in analyzing the educational needs of your students.

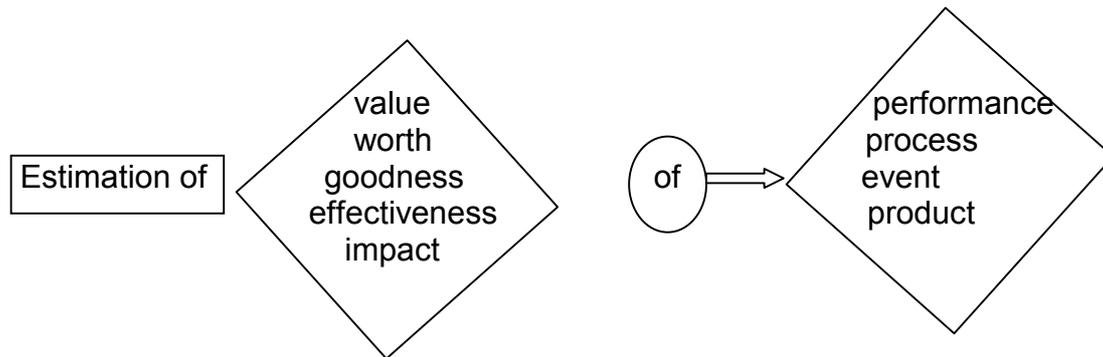
University education the world over is controlled by special legislative acts and chapters, which confer unlimited powers on the universities to carry the following functions with minimal direct influence from outside:

- Design and develop curricula.
- Determine when and how to implement the curricula.
- Control the quality of the curricula.
- Determine student performance.

Literature has a rich variety of definitions of evaluation; we should be familiar with many of these. The evaluation of university education means review and quality control of university courses, on the one hand, and determination of student performance and achievement on the other.

The first hand of university evaluation includes course evaluation:

The scope of course evaluation



Forms of evaluation:

There are three types of evaluation:

- Internal evaluation.
- External evaluation.
- Participatory evaluation.

The form of evaluation can depend on “who conducts evaluation?” and “When evaluation done?”

According to who conducts evaluation the evaluation can be classified into:

Internal evaluation: - conducted by internal evaluators, university’s administrators and / or academics. They are suited to evaluate their programme because they know about the course context and students characteristics.

External evaluation: - conducted by external evaluators, the evaluators are from outside the university and they must be:

- Professionally well trained for the job.
- Have wide experience gained by evaluating other projects.
- Have no interests or weaknesses to protect.

But they lack knowledge of the university environment and internal processes.

Participatory evaluation: - conducted by both internal and external evaluators closely with all staff and students. In this case course participants are involved in deciding what should be evaluated and how the evaluation should be done.

When evaluation done?

Formative evaluation: - The critical points when evaluation should be conducted are at the beginning of the course or during the life of a programme. This type of evaluation refers to course review and mid- course examination of students.

Summative evaluation: - The evaluation conducted at the end of the course and refers to end-term research and terminal assessment.

An evaluation problem may be formulated because a course seems to be doing badly (Students appear to avoid a whole course or parts of it, students may be finding a course difficult).

Evaluation methods and instruments

The common instruments used in course evaluation are:

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| 1- Expert judgement. | 2- Library search. |
| 3- Questionnaires. | 4- Interviews. |
| 5- Observation schedules. | 6- Tests. |

1- Expert judgement: Many aspects of course evaluation as course design, course objectives, learning methods, instructional materials and student assessment are best reviewed by teaching technology specialist, psychologists and test experts.

2- Library search: Library search is important in the preparation for all forms of investigation, including evaluation. A great deal of the actual evaluation investigation in course design, course outlines and content review is normally based on documentary sources which form part of a library search.

3- Questionnaires: are useful in evaluation studies involve collecting information from many respondents over a large area as students and employers. The questions should be short, clear, written by simple language and the answers of it by one word.

4- Interviews: are either based on structured interview schedules or on free discussion around a few issues. The discussion either formal (Table discussion) or informal one.

5- Observation schedules: it is usually difficult to observe university courses during teaching, unless the lecturer allows the evaluator to sit in his classes. However, you can take note of your classes, especially practical work, group discussion, individual work and reactions to tests and examinations.

6- Tests: tests and examinations provide information that can be used to evaluate the course design, teaching process and student performance.

Evaluation of course design

University courses are in many ways very conservative and unresponsive to changes taking place in the world outside the institution. A curriculum can easily get out of step with the needs of the consumer community if course evaluation is not regularly conducted or if it is not sufficiently accurate. However, the need to make a fresh start, or to make drastic curriculum changes arises from time to time in both old, well established universities as well as newer ones because:

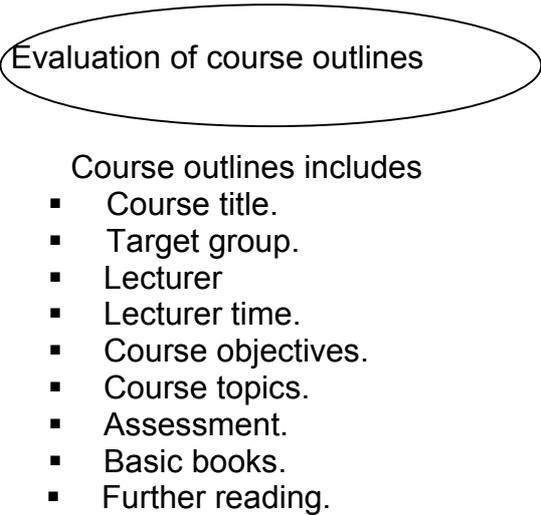
- The government may request universities to increase their student intake in response to population increase and other developments in the country.
- There may be need to create new areas of learning, leading to new career openings.
- Available resources may be shrinking, making it imperative to cut back existing courses.

Sources of information for course design evaluation:

- ❑ Course outlines from other universities.
- ❑ Course materials (textbooks, research papers, and journal articles).
- ❑ Colleagues in your department and other departments.
- ❑ External examiners.
- ❑ Experienced teachers in the field and in related fields.
- ❑ Educational and economic planners.
- ❑ Employers of your graduates and the general public.

Methods and instruments for course design evaluation:

- ☞ Expert judgements to elicit information from specialists as subject specialists, university administrators, educational and economic planners.
- ☞ Library search to elicit information from course materials, national development records, literature from other universities, research papers and professional journals.
- ☞ Questionnaires for current and former students, professionals in the field, employers and members of the public.
- ☞ Interviews with subject and curriculum specialists.



Evaluation of course outlines

Course outlines includes

- Course title.
- Target group.
- Lecturer
- Lecturer time.
- Course objectives.
- Course topics.
- Assessment.
- Basic books.
- Further reading.

Sources of information for course outlines evaluation: -

- Subjects specialists.
- Psychologists.
- Administrators.
- Curriculum developers.
- Educational planners.

Methods and instruments for course outlines evaluation:

- 1- Expert judgements.
- 2- Library search.
- 3- Questionnaires.
- 4- Interviews.

Evaluation of teaching materials

Since the university is more specialized, they are expected to buy, develop and use a wider range of teaching materials such as:

Textbook.	Filmstrips.	Slides.
Pre- recorded tapes.	Chart.	Maps.
Diagrams.	Self-instructional books.	Journal articles.
High quality papers.	Pictures.	Real objects.

All these teaching materials to increase interest and to reinforce learning. Our students' tendency to depend on lecture notes and avoid using the libraries, lack of interest to build personal libraries by buying books may be partly due to the lecturers' style and completely to financial reasons. Dictation encourages students to copy lecturers' notes and regurgitate them in term examinations.

Sources of information for teaching evaluation:

Evaluation of teaching materials should generate the following information from lecturers, students and specialists in the use of teaching media:

- Suitability of the materials.
- Frequency of use of different teaching materials.
- Effectiveness of the materials.
- Cost of materials.
- The variety of teaching materials used.

Methods and instruments for evaluating teaching materials:

- Review by media specialists and subject specialists.
- Review of catalogues of materials in the department or university "teaching resources bank".
- Interviewing colleagues on availability and suitability of existing materials.
- Obtaining a feedback from students.

Evaluation of teaching methods

Teaching at university level tends to be plain and monotonous when compared by teaching at school level. With the growing size of classes in our universities, teaching methods need to be modified to make the learning process richer and more interesting.

Sources of evaluation information for teaching methods:

The main sources of information on teaching methods are:

- Subject.
- Management training specialists.
- Students and their feeling on the use of different teaching methods.

Methods and instruments for evaluating teaching:

- Expert judgements: subject specialists, teacher trainers and management trainers can give suggestions on teaching methods.
- Observation: where appropriate, you can observe your colleagues teaching.
- Questionnaires: to elicit more detailed information from colleagues and students without them having to identify themselves.
- 4- Interviews: to find out if your teaching methods are appropriate.



Course monitoring and quality control

With the increase number of university graduates and the simultaneous decline in employment opportunities, employers will begin to look more closely at the abilities of graduates of different universities. Graduates without professional degrees will face even more difficulties. Therefore the universities courses has to be inspected and updated regularly to maintain the required academic standards.

The course monitoring involve the following questions:

- Are subject objectives being met?
- Is the course relevant to the needs of students and employers?
- Are there gaps in the topics covered?
- Is the material covered suitable and adequate for this level?
- Is course content up-to-date?
- Is there any evidence of course deterioration, or does student performance show unexpected variations?

Sources of information for monitoring and quality control:

- Lecturers who teach the course.
- The students and former students.
- Employers or the graduates.
- External examiners.
- Subject specialists and researchers in the area of study.

Methods and instruments for monitoring and quality control:

- Questionnaires and interviews regularly administered to students.
- Inspection of student performance in test.
- Taking stock of the teaching materials available.
- Noting students' reactions to different content areas.

The scope on student evaluation

Determination of student performance and achievement are the other of the university duty. This can be done through testing.

Purpose of testing

Testing is used to determine knowledge, ability, competence and experience in and outside the formal learning settings. These range of informal questioning of students during lectures to formal assessment such as quizzes, term papers, mid-term papers, practical work, continuous assessment tests, project work, terminal examinations and social research items used to assess skills, knowledge, attitudes and experiences. The students are an important source of course evaluation information. Student's scores tell us as much about student achievement and ability as they do about the quality of the course outline and the process of teaching.

What do tests show?

Tests can show the following points:

- Students' ability to learn.
- Recall of the subject matter (superficial understanding).
- Depth of understanding of a subject.
- Ability to apply what has been learned.
- Long-term use of the subject matter.

Assessing student performance

University tests are depends on essay type questions. Most test questions are build around a limited number of key word such as Mention, Describe, Enumerate, Explain, and Discuss. Over a period of time, the student becomes familiar with all possible questions on a topic, and, therefore, develops model answer for the few test options available in the area of study.

As an alternative to the essay type test, we wish to suggest that short answer test items:

- Allow a wider range of test techniques and possibilities.
- Provide more through coverage of the syllabus.
- Encourage testing of varied abilities in students.
- Give opportunities for detailed accurate and feed-back to students.
- Discourage students from concentrating their efforts on selected areas, which are thought to be 'examinable'.

Short answer tests are easier to adapt for scoring by computer, and opening up the possibility of your giving feedback to a large class students number within a week or less.

Construction test items

Suggestions that putted in mind when designing and constructing test items are:

- Define the content area to be tested.
- State the objectives of the test.
- Clarify the levels of understanding to be tested.
- Use enough items to maximize the reliability of the test.
- Decide on the length of the test.
- Arrange the items in logical sequence.
- Use formal language and correct grammar.
- Give specific and complete directions.

In addition, you should:

- Avoid using difficult language.
- Avoid testing unimportant details.
- Avoid using vague qualitative terms as 'few', 'much', 'most' and 'seldom'.
- Avoid using absolute terms as 'always', 'never' and 'all'.
- Avoid construction of questions that do not have a clear answer, which may be answered by two answers.