

The evaluation of teaching performance in Ecuadorian higher education

La evaluación del desempeño docente en la educación superior ecuatoriana

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ABSTRACT

The evaluation of teaching performance in Ecuadorian higher education plays a fundamental role in the search for educational excellence and continuous improvement in higher education institutions in the country. This periodic and systematic evaluation has as its main objective to ensure the quality of teaching, promote the academic training of teachers and guarantee an enriching learning environment for students. Through rigorous evaluation criteria and methods, it seeks to identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching performance, thus promoting the quality and professional development of educators. At the same time, this evaluation can also have implications for the promotion and recognition of teachers, encouraging their commitment and dedication in the search for educational excellence. In this context, it is crucial to understand the process of evaluating teacher performance in Ecuadorian higher education, as well as its impact on the quality of education and the academic growth of institutions.

Keywords: Teacher performance, higher education, educators, educational excellence, teaching quality.

RESUMEN

La evaluación del desempeño docente en la educación superior ecuatoriana desempeña un papel fundamental en la búsqueda de la excelencia educativa y la mejora continua en las instituciones de educación superior del país. Esta evaluación periódica y sistemática tiene como objetivo principal asegurar la calidad de la enseñanza, fomentar la formación académica de los docentes y garantizar un ambiente de aprendizaje enriquecedor para los estudiantes. A través de criterios y métodos de evaluación rigurosos, se busca identificar fortalezas y áreas de mejora en el desempeño docente, promoviendo así la calidad y el desarrollo profesional de los educadores. Al mismo tiempo, esta evaluación también puede tener implicaciones para la promoción y el reconocimiento de los docentes, incentivando su compromiso y dedicación en la búsqueda de la excelencia educativa. En este contexto, resulta crucial comprender el proceso de evaluación del desempeño docente en la educación superior ecuatoriana, así como su impacto en la calidad de la educación y el crecimiento académico de las instituciones.

Palabras clave: Desempeño docente, educación superior, educadores, excelencia educativa, calidad de enseñanza.

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of teaching performance in Ecuadorian higher education is an important process that seeks to ensure the quality of teaching and promote continuous improvement in higher education institutions in the country. Although specific policies and procedures may vary between different institutions, there are some common elements in the teacher performance evaluation process (Medina, 2015).

In the first place, the evaluation of teaching performance in Ecuadorian higher education is generally carried out periodically, with a frequency established by the institutions. It can be annual, biannual or at longer intervals, depending on the internal policies of each institution.

Teacher performance evaluation can include a variety of evaluation criteria and methods. These criteria usually cover different aspects of teaching work, such as the quality of teaching, academic production, participation in research activities, academic management and contribution to the educational community. Assessment methods may include classroom observation, review of teaching materials, analysis of learning outcomes, feedback from students and colleagues, and evaluation of academic and research activities (SENESCYT, 2020).

It is important to highlight that the evaluation of teacher performance in Ecuadorian higher education is not limited only to the evaluation of individual teacher results, but also considers feedback and institutional support for professional

development. It seeks to promote the growth and continuous improvement of teachers through training programs, mentoring and other professional development initiatives.

In addition, in some cases, the evaluation of teacher performance may have implications for promotion, tenure, and the allocation of financial incentives. However, the specific policies and criteria for these decisions may vary between institutions and depend on the regulatory frameworks established by the educational authorities.

Development

Models and proposals for evaluation in Ecuadorian higher education

In Ecuadorian higher education, there are several models and proposals for teacher performance evaluation that seek to guarantee the quality of teaching and promote continuous improvement. Here are some of the more common approaches:

Comprehensive Assessment Model: This approach considers multiple dimensions of teacher performance, such as teaching planning, class execution, learning assessment, academic production, and participation in outreach activities and outreach to the community. Different evaluation instruments are used, such as classroom observation, review of materials and documents, evaluation of learning outcomes, and surveys of students and colleagues.

Portfolio Model: In this model, teachers collect and present a sample of their work and achievements in a portfolio. This includes evidence of lesson planning, teaching materials, student feedback, research projects, participation in academic activities, and testimonials from colleagues. The portfolio allows for a holistic assessment and provides a broad view of teacher performance over time.

Peer evaluation: In this approach, teachers are evaluated by their peers, who conduct classroom observations, review materials, and provide constructive feedback. Peer evaluation fosters collaboration and sharing of good practice among teachers, as well as offering an internal perspective on teacher performance.

Student Evaluation: The opinion of the students is also considered essential in the evaluation of teacher performance. Surveys and questionnaires designed to collect student feedback on the quality of teaching, clarity of communication, support provided, among other things, can be used. This feedback provides direct insight into the students' learning experience and can help identify areas for improvement.

It is important to mention that these evaluation models and proposals may vary among higher education institutions in Ecuador, since each one may have its own specific policies and approaches. In addition, it is advisable to consult the institutional norms and regulations to obtain more up-to-date information on the evaluation models implemented.

The questionnaire as a privileged instrument in teacher evaluation

In teacher evaluation, the questionnaire has been widely used as a privileged instrument to collect information and opinions from students and colleagues on teacher performance. According to various studies in the field of higher education, the questionnaires allow obtaining quantitative and qualitative data that help to evaluate different aspects of teaching work, such as the quality of teaching, the clarity of communication, the organization of classes and feedback provided to students.

A study carried out by Crespo, Villavicencio and Cadena (2018) on the design of an instrument to evaluate teaching performance in higher education institutions, highlights the usefulness of the questionnaire as a tool to collect objective and systematic information on teaching work. This type of instrument makes it possible to evaluate multiple dimensions of teacher performance and collect data in a standardized manner.

In an analysis of the results of student evaluation questionnaires carried out by Ordóñez and Borja (2019) at the University of Cuenca, the importance of the questionnaires as a source of direct feedback from the students is evident. The questionnaires provide valuable information on the quality of teaching, allowing the identification of strengths and areas for improvement in teaching performance.

Likewise, García, Fuentes and Mendoza (2020) investigated teacher evaluation at the Technical University of Ambato through student satisfaction questionnaires. The results obtained from the questionnaires allowed us to analyze the teaching performance and detect aspects that require attention and development.

In summary, the questionnaire has established itself as a privileged instrument in teacher evaluation, since it provides relevant and diverse information on the performance of teachers in higher education. These tools allow obtaining a more complete vision of the quality of teaching and guide improvement actions to guarantee an education of excellence.

Criticism of the use of questionnaires for the evaluation of teacher performance

The use of questionnaires for the evaluation of teacher performance has been the subject of criticism and debate in

the academic field. Here are some critical arguments raised regarding this practice:

Limitation in the collection of information: Questionnaires, being standardized instruments, can limit the depth and richness of the information collected on teacher performance. They do not fully capture contextual issues, complex pedagogical qualities, or classroom interaction.

Response bias: The questionnaires are subject to bias in the responses of the evaluators. Students may have personal biases or be influenced by external factors when responding, which may affect the objectivity of the results.

Focus on superficial aspects: The questionnaires tend to focus on superficial and easily measurable aspects of teacher performance, such as the clarity of communication or the organization of classes, leaving aside more complex dimensions, such as creativity, motivation or the ability to adapt to different learning styles.

Lack of specific feedback: Questionnaires generally provide general information on teacher performance, but do not offer specific and detailed feedback that allows teachers to improve their pedagogical practice effectively.

Lack of context and diversity: The questionnaires may not take into account the particular context of each educational institution or the diversity of the students. The results may not adequately reflect the needs and characteristics of different groups of students and their learning experiences.

It is important to take these criticisms into account and consider other teacher evaluation methods, such as classroom observation, individual interviews, or review of teaching evidence, in order to obtain a more comprehensive and balanced evaluation of teacher performance. The combination of multiple methods can provide a more complete and fair view of the work of educators.

Proposals and alternatives for improvement in teacher performance evaluation

There are various proposals and alternatives to improve teacher performance evaluation that seek to address the limitations and challenges associated with traditional methods. Here are some of these proposals:

Class observation: Direct observation of classes by trained evaluators can provide more detailed and contextualized feedback on teacher performance. This approach allows evaluating aspects such as classroom management, interaction with students and the application of pedagogical strategies.

Teacher Portfolios: Teacher portfolios collect and present evidence of teachers' pedagogical practice, such as lesson plans, teaching materials, student work samples, and reflections on teaching. This approach allows for a more holistic and evidence-based assessment.

Peer evaluation: Peer evaluation involves teachers being evaluated by other teachers from their same subject area or educational level. This approach encourages the sharing of good practice, collaborative learning, and feedback among colleagues.

Participatory student evaluation: Instead of being limited to questionnaires, the active participation of students in the teacher evaluation process is promoted. Methods such as self-assessment, group interviews or written feedback can be used, which allow students to express their opinions and experiences more deeply.

Assessment based on learning outcomes: Approaches such as assessment based on learning outcomes seek to assess teacher performance through tangible indicators, such as students' academic progress, achievement of learning objectives or the development of specific skills.

Continuing Teacher Professional Development: Rather than focusing solely on punitive evaluation, an evaluation approach is proposed that is closely linked with continuing teacher professional development programs. This means providing training opportunities and support so that teachers can improve their pedagogical practice over time.

These proposals and alternatives seek a more comprehensive, equitable evaluation focused on teacher professional development. The combination of different methods and approaches can be adapted to the specific needs and contexts of each educational institution, allowing a more effective and meaningful evaluation of teacher performance.

The contribution of constructivism to the evaluation of teacher performance

Constructivism, as a pedagogical approach, has had a significant impact on the way in which teacher performance evaluation is conceived. Constructivism emphasizes the active construction of knowledge by the student, recognizing the importance of context, previous experiences and active participation of the student in the learning process. Below are some contributions of constructivism to the evaluation of teacher performance:

Student-centered approach: Constructivism promotes a student-centered approach, where their active participation, their ability to build knowledge, and their autonomous development are valued. In the evaluation of teacher performance,

this implies considering how teachers create an environment conducive to active learning and the construction of knowledge by students.

Formative Assessment: Constructivism advocates formative assessment, which focuses on providing ongoing, constructive feedback to improve the learning process. Instead of a summative and punitive evaluation, the evaluation is intended to be a comprehensive process that helps teachers identify strengths and areas for improvement in their pedagogical practice.

Authentic assessment: Constructivism advocates authentic assessment, which is based on real-world situations and tasks that allow students to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. In teacher performance appraisal, this involves considering how teachers design and use authentic activities and tasks that allow students to authentically demonstrate their understanding and skills.

Evidence-based assessment: Constructivism emphasizes the importance of basing assessment on tangible, concrete evidence of student achievement. This implies that teachers must collect and analyze evidence of learning, such as student work, projects, reflections, observation records, in order to evaluate their own performance and make informed decisions for continuous improvement.

Reflection and self-reflection: Constructivism encourages reflection as an integral part of the learning and assessment process. In teacher performance appraisal, this implies that teachers must reflect on their own practice, analyze the appraisal results, and take steps to improve their teaching.

In summary, constructivism has contributed to the field of teacher evaluation by focusing on a student-centered approach, promoting authentic, evidence-based, formative assessment, and fostering reflection and self-reflection. These approaches aim to create an active, meaningful and constantly developing learning environment for both students and teachers.

RESULTS

The results and benefits that can be expected from the evaluation of teacher performance in any educational context:

Identification of strengths and areas for improvement: Teacher performance evaluation can help identify teachers' strengths and areas for improvement. This allows educational institutions and teachers themselves to focus on professional development and improve the quality of teaching.

Feedback and continuous improvement: Teacher performance evaluation provides valuable feedback to teachers on their pedagogical practice. This feedback allows them to reflect on their teaching, make adjustments and improvements, and develop more effective strategies for student learning.

Promotion of educational quality: The evaluation of teaching performance can contribute to the promotion of educational quality in higher education institutions. By identifying and recognizing good teacher performance, an environment of academic excellence is fostered and teachers are encouraged to strive for continuous improvement.

Identification of training needs: Teacher performance evaluation can help to identify the training and professional development needs of teachers. This allows educational institutions to offer training and development programs that are tailored to the specific needs of teachers and promote their professional growth.

Improving the learning experience of students: An effective evaluation of teacher performance can have a positive impact on the learning experience of students. By identifying and recognizing teachers who are achieving positive results, you can improve the quality of teaching and increase student motivation and engagement.

It is important to take into account that the results of the teacher performance evaluation may vary depending on the specific context and the policies implemented in each educational institution. The most relevant results will depend on the adequate implementation and follow-up of the evaluation processes in each particular case.

Improvements in teacher performance evaluation in higher education

The improvement of teacher performance evaluation in higher education leads to various conclusions that can positively impact the quality of teaching and learning. Here are some important takeaways that can emerge from this improvement process:

Comprehensive approach: The evaluation of teacher performance must adopt a comprehensive approach, considering multiple dimensions of teaching work, such as content mastery, pedagogical skills, the relationship with students,

and educational innovation, among other relevant aspects. This holistic vision allows a more complete and balanced evaluation of teacher performance.

Use of multiple methods: The use of various evaluation methods, such as classroom observation, review of teaching evidence, teaching portfolios or peer evaluation, enriches the evaluation of teacher performance. The combination of multiple sources of information provides a more complete and accurate view of teachers' strengths and areas for improvement.

Feedback and professional development: The evaluation of teacher performance must go beyond the simple qualification or classification of teachers. It is essential to provide constructive and specific feedback that helps teachers identify their strengths and areas for improvement. In addition, professional development opportunities and support should be offered so that teachers can continuously improve their teaching practice.

Student participation: The active participation of students in the teacher performance evaluation process can be very beneficial. Students can provide valuable feedback on their learning experience, their needs and expectations. Integrating the perspective of the students in the evaluation allows greater relevance and pertinence in the improvement actions implemented.

Contextualization and flexibility: The evaluation of teaching performance must consider the specific context of each educational institution. The particular characteristics of the students, the institutional needs and the pedagogical approaches adopted must be considered in the design of the evaluation processes. The flexibility in the implementation of the evaluation allows it to be adapted to the particularities and realities of each educational context.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of teaching performance in Ecuadorian higher education is a periodic process that seeks to ensure the quality of teaching and promote continuous improvement. It includes a variety of evaluation criteria and methods, and focuses on both individual results and institutional support for professional development.

Improving teacher performance evaluation in higher education implies a comprehensive approach, the use of multiple evaluation methods, constructive feedback and professional development, student participation, and contextualization of processes. These conclusions contribute to promoting the quality of teaching and learning, as well as the professional growth of teachers.

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