

Student Ratings of Faculty Performance in Polish Higher Schools: A Brief Note

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ABSTRACT

This article briefly examines the use of learner ratings of faculty performance in Polish higher institutions. It is concluded that other sources of information besides student's evaluations should be employed when evaluating teaching, such as: administrator and peer appraisals. The theoretical framework for this brief note is provided by the general idea of the school as an organization and social institution.

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Purpose of the Article

The purpose of this brief article is to consider the use of student ratings of faculty performance in Polish higher institutions, and it is advisable to now because of the new challenges that educators are facing in terms of quality control as a result of Poland's recent (April, 2004) entry into the European Union (EU)

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this article is supplied by the general notion of the school as an organization and social institution.

Higher Schooling in Poland

Poles have been interested in higher learning activities for many years. The Jagiellonian University (1364), where Copernicus once studied, is their oldest university (Liwicka, 1959, 10). Higher education is carried out in various types of state (public) and non-state institutions such as universities, technical universities and higher pedagogical schools and is regulated by the 2005 Bill on Schools of Higher Education. Besides, a number of ministries (for example, education, agriculture and transport) are involved in the administration of higher education.

Polish higher schools are now subject to accreditation. Consequently, better equivalence of degree arrangements can be made with EU countries because there is an assurance of higher quality education. Earlier ones appear to be based on "comparable study organization procedures and student exchange programs (Edmondson, 1998, 90).

Student Evaluations of Faculty Performance in Polish Institutions of Higher Education and Learning

Learner evaluations of instruction are 'subjective by nature', so we ought to keep this in mind when making use of them (Adams). They might be influenced by grades received. Furthermore, Polish higher school students might not be objective in their evaluations as their counterparts in other countries for linguistic reasons. In the English language, for example, teaching and learning are considered to be two very different activities¹ whereas in Polish there is 'a faint connotation ' that learning occurs as a result of another persons efforts. (Jankowicz, 2001, 86).²

Are higher school students qualified to evaluate instruction? It has been suggested that evaluations are a 'measure of student satisfaction', which is an aspect of faculty performance (Adams). Because formal learning is now a lifelong process (due to rapid advances in technology), it is therefore important for learners to be satisfied with their teacher's performance so that they will have a liking for education. Nevertheless, good teaching should not be sacrificed at the expense of pleasing students (Adams). Learners ought to be thought of as patients in need of assistance and not as customers waiting to be pleased.

Concluding Remarks

Other sources of information besides students ratings should be employed when evaluating instruction, such as: administrator and peer appraisals and 'faculty self-reports' (<http://www.wky.edu/ir/dsi/tce/tce7016.html>)

It should be noted that Polish higher school students are difficult to teach because they do not appreciate their schooling. They are not required to pay for their studies.

Notes

1. The same can be said for French (*enseigner-apprendre*) and German (*lehren-lernen*).
2. In Polish *uczyc* means to teach and *uczyc sie* means to learn.
3. Special Note: Special appreciation is extended to Dr. Kimberly Grantham Griffith and Dr. William Allan Kritsonis for their assistance in getting this brief article published in the United States of America.

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