EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: One of the means of transforming classroom experience is by conducting action research with students. This paper reports about the action research with university students. It has been carried out within a semester of the course "Methods of Upbringing". Its goal has been to improve evaluation of higher education teaching.

Different forms of summative and formative evaluation have been devised with an emphasis on creating critical friendship between student and professor (authors of this article). Video recordings of lessons have been utilized for realization of critical friendship. At the end of lesson students have been offered various questionnaires and evaluation sheets, and an open standardized interview has been conducted with a group of students. A workshop dedicated to evaluation of higher education teaching has been carried out as well.

This research has shown that students can actively participate in evaluation, and that their comments and suggestions should stimulate teachers to improve all stages of teaching process, including evaluation. The authors believe that evaluation of higher education teaching could be brought to a higher level by educating teachers and students about the importance of evaluation for the quality of teaching process and finding ways to include students in this process.

Keywords: evaluation, fourth generation evaluation, higher education teaching, critical friendship, action research.

1. Introduction

Evaluation of teaching practices needs to be a part of every teaching process. However, this was not the case 40 years ago when the first book on evaluation of higher education appeared in Great Britain. Hounsell (2003) reported that this topic, at that time rather controversial, was surprising, scary and insulting for many academics. Similar feelings were evident in Croatia after the introduction of the Bologna Process, which emphasizes the necessity to evaluate accredited programmes of higher education institutions in order to ensure sustainable quality in higher education.

According to Patton (1990, pp. 11-12), evaluation as a type of action research aims at providing information about someone's work and improving it, dealing with individual and social problems. So, the evaluation of instruction practices is primarily aimed at the development of teaching process, along with teacher competences. A good teacher is the one who examines their instruction practices, develops their teacher competences, and evaluates teaching process in accord with its influence on learners (Brown et al., 2003).

Feedback about teaching practices may be obtained from different *sources*. According to Hounsell (2003), data may be collected through evaluation done by students, colleagues or associates, and from self-evaluation data. Useful indicators may be: course attendance, exam success, number of students enrolled, grading criteria, students' fatigue or activity in classes, etc. Student evaluation of teaching practices may be conducted by means of evaluation sheets, questionnaires, group discussions or electronic questionnaires.

Evaluation may be *summative* or *formative*. *Summative* evaluation, according to Patton (2002, p. 218), investigates the overall efficiency of a programme, policy or a product, in order to decide on its sustainability and further implications. Summative evaluation is rarely based on qualitative research data, but qualitative approach gives summative evaluation certain depth and refines quantitative data.

Formative evaluation means that the realization of teaching is continuously assessed in order to make it richer and better. Everybody who is a part of educational process (in any way) may take part in formative evaluation, but most often teachers and students do it. Formative evaluation relies on different type of data, qualitative indicators being especially important (Patton, 2002). Scriven (1966) has shown that both kinds of evaluation are equally important in research about education.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) have distinguished among four generations of evaluation. *First generation evaluation* uses tests to measure students' achievements. This approach is based on the belief that education is supposed to teach students commonly accepted truths and general knowledge and that students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge answering questions in different exam situations. Based on that interpretation of evaluation, numerous standardized tests have been designed. The most famous is the intelligence test. In Croatia, the state graduation exam project is an example of the first generation evaluation.

Second generation evaluation puts emphasis on the *description* of teaching curriculum advantages and disadvantages related to the established educational goals. This type of evaluation is similar to formative evaluation, except that the results are visible only after the programme has been completed. Based on the analysis of collected data, curriculum is to be

improved and changed until expected results are achieved. Particular instruments developed during the first generation evaluation represent only a certain number of actions to be used during evaluation process. The system of internal education quality assurance at faculties is designed this way.

Second generation evaluation is basically descriptive; therefore there has been a need for a type of evaluation that would involve *judgement*. That is the main feature of *third generation evaluation*. Evaluators take over the role of *judges* while continuing to use evaluation procedures from previous generations. High quality judgement requires a high level of proficiency. Therefore evaluation has been reassigned to experts who do not only evaluate performance, but goals as well. An example of this type of evaluation is the external independent periodical assessment of internal education quality assurance at higher education institutions, conducted by Education and Teacher Training Agency in Croatia.

Although every new generation of evaluation has been more advanced than the previous, Guba and Lincoln (1989) have concluded that all three generations have certain disadvantages which are evident in the fact that the level of democracy is low. Therefore they have suggested the implementation of *fourth generation evaluation* with the following ideas behind it: Evaluation is a socio-political process influenced by social, cultural and political factors. Evaluation is a cooperative process which implies consulting and the right of all interested parties to express their opinion. In that process all persons involved are learners and teachers at the same time. It is a continuous, recursive and divergent process that does not encompass any eternal truths. Conclusions that result from the process of evaluation may be disproved by new information or by introducing more sophisticated evaluation procedures. It is not possible to plan evaluation in detail, because every step of the process depends on the results of the previous step. Besides, it is a process with invisible results. Evaluation is a creative process in which truth is not found, but created. This action research has been carried out to a great extent using principles of fourth generation evaluation.

We believe that it is especially important to improve and sustain the quality of studies for future teachers and educators. Higher education courses ought to be models for future teachers and educators according to which their own competences will be developed. Quality evaluation is very important for the quality of higher education or any other level of education. Unfortunately, it is still quite often conducted in a non-systematic and superficial manner.

2. Research

2.1. Choice of research approach

As the intention of this research has been to improve evaluation of our practical work, action research has been chosen as the research approach, since it is directed at changes, not simply at theoretical explanations of certain phenomena (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; McNiff & Whitehead, 2010; Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Besides, this research approach is the closest to fourth generation evaluation used in this research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 284). According to the authors of this chapter, action research is a systematic, creative and cooperative action based on: philosophical consideration of values, creative design of new procedures aimed at achieving essential changes, collection of data on the changing process, (self) critical analysis of results, and looking for ways to implement action research experiences in the culture of close and wide community.

Action research has been increasingly used in the last 20 years in Croatian pre-school, primary school and high school institutions, but not in higher education. In other countries of the world, action research is often used to improve higher education and to develop theoretical knowledge (Atweh et al., 1998; Norton 2009). We hope that other academics will be encouraged by this research to use action research more often.

2.2. Action research context

This action research has been done by the 3rd year student of philosophy and pedagogy Maja Bungić and Assistant Professor Branko Bognar as a part of the 2010/2011 summer semester course Methods of Upbringing. Teaching assistant Ružica Pažin Ilakovac participated as a teacher and critical friend. The research was done with 37 first-year-students of Pedagogy studies. Classes took place on Fridays from 8:00 till 11:15 in the so called "pedagogy classroom" at the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek. This classroom's arrangement (Picture 1) is quite different from that of other classrooms at the faculty, which are mostly suited for the traditional teacher-fronted - instruction.

Picture 1. Pedagogy classroom

2.3. Action research problem

We believe that university teaching ought to consider students' needs and interests and provide active and creative participation at all stages of the teaching process: consulting, realization and evaluation (Bognar & Matijević, 2002). Unfortunately, such practices are not common. Students claim that there is no productive interaction and cooperation during classes; instead a student is just a passive observer of a teacher's activity. Students sometimes feel that no one listens to them when they talk about problems that quite often appear in classes.

To change this situation, a quality and democratically constructed evaluation might be useful. It would allow students to openly discuss possibilities of teaching improvement with their teachers. Unfortunately, at the time when this research was done, course evaluation at our higher education institution was conducted through an anonymous student questionnaire at the end of each semester. This type of evaluation is not satisfying considering students' and teachers' needs, nor does it contribute to the improvement of teaching. We believe that academics who teach at teacher training studies should not only enhance the quality of their teaching, but the quality of teaching evaluation as well. Faced with the problem of insufficient activity of students in classes, especially in regard to the criteria for teaching evaluation, evaluation design and realization, we decided to establish cooperation in order to *improve the evaluation of teaching in higher education course Methods of Upbringing.*

2.4. Action research plan

First, an action research plan was designed. The following research goals were agreed on: *(1) to design and carry out different forms of formative and summative evaluation (2) to involve students in the design of evaluation procedures (3) to take account of students' satisfaction with teaching and especially with teaching evaluation.*

The following criteria were set for the subsequent evaluation of research goals: (1) *Formative evaluation* was conducted using various evaluation procedures; formative evaluation made it possible for all the participants of teaching process to help improve its quality. (2) *Summative evaluation* has been conducted at the end of lesson using various evaluation procedures. (3) As the ideas of fourth generation evaluation suggest, it was important to construct evaluation forms which would democratically include all the participants of teaching process, above all students. (4) Evaluation results indicate satisfaction of students with the quality of teaching in the course *Methods of Upbringing*

Activities aimed at achieving research goals were grouped according to evaluation type:

a) Formative evaluation that involved critical but friendly discussions that were to be held after classes and later by e-mail with the intention of discussing our impressions and possibilities of improvement of teaching practices in *Methods of Upbringing*. Besides, feedback was to be received about classes. Workshops were to be video recorded and photographed to be analysed and commented later on. Questionnaires and evaluation sheets were to be given to students at the end of each workshop. An open thematic interview was to be conducted with a group of students.

b) Summative evaluation was planned to be conducted as a part of the workshop at the end of semester, which would deal with evaluation of higher education. Its intention was to find out how evaluation was conducted, how satisfied students were with its quality, and how they could contribute to its improvement. Also, students were to fill in the final evaluation sheet for the course *Methods of Upbringing*.

Different forms of formative evaluation were to be conducted during the whole semester. Summative evaluation was to be conducted during 4 classes (180 minutes).

2.5. Action research implementation

At the beginning of this research it was agreed that student Maja Bungić would prepare different evaluation forms after every workshop. Different

evaluation forms, video recordings and photographs of workshops were a part of formative evaluation of teaching.

2.5.1. Evaluation of the workshop "What is a man?"

At the beginning of the workshop Assistant Professor Branko Bognar consulted students on class schedule. Also, students were divided into 6 groups, which was a prerequisite for cooperative learning. Each group presented their expectations concerning the course, colleagues and teachers, and decided on the name of the team, its features and motto. Then, the teacher presented the course curriculum and student Maja Bungić as his critical friend. Together, we presented our research plan and asked students for a written permission to video record and photograph classes. They gave us one. Then the activity "Alien encounter" followed, whose goal was to do a role-play which would introduce aliens to human species who live on Earth. Then, students were given a task to think about it and discuss why Neanderthals died out, whereas our species survived. Students also watched a movie about Neanderthals. Then they read some chapters of relevant literature (Hegel, 1966; Cassirer, 1978; McBrearty & Brooks, 2000) and answered questions, participated in a discussion and created a comic on the similarities and differences among humans (homo sapiens) and other beings, especially the extinct species of hominid - Neanderthals. A conclusion was reached that humans were self-aware, free, creative beings who create their own world.

During her first visit, student Maja watched and recorded the class (see http://bit.ly/HoTdJm). She noticed certain issues concerning activity duration, which she elaborated in her research diary: *"Certain activities might have taken up less time (e.g. "Alien encounter"), so that there is more time for the presentation of comics Differences between human and Neanderthal education at the end"* (M. Bungić, personal communication, March 7, 2011). In our conversation and e-mail correspondence, duration of the activities of the first workshop was emphasised as an important problem:

When organizing workshops, a problem which usually appears is the problem of timing. On the one hand, participants need to have enough time to think an activity through and carry it out, and on the other hand it is important to finalize and comment on the planned activities. Besides, different activities have different importance. (B. Bognar, personal communication, March 7, 2011)

This problem was partially caused by technical and organisational difficulties at the beginning of the class, which were a result of looking for an available classroom[1], preparing technical equipment, waiting for students who had been late, etc.

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[1] A problem appeared due to some timetable issues - their lecture coincided with some other obligations.

The class lasted 10 minutes longer because of that, so students became restless. It affected the final evaluation by means of an evaluation sheet I prepared. I am afraid that students completed it in a hurry without deep consideration of what went on during class (Research diary, March 7, 2011).

Outcomes of evaluation therefore may be influenced by various factors, such as organisational conditions, activity duration, lesson duration, lack of concentration, fatigue, etc. Experiences that precede evaluation may affect evaluation approach. We believe that the effect of "last experience" could be reduced by giving students a chance to evaluate activities several times during classes, especially if classes are long enough, as was the case with our lesson.

In the following 90-minute lesson there was no problem with activity duration, which is obvious from the video recording of critical, but friendly conversation (4:55). The conversation took place after the lesson (http://vimeo.com/26651463): *"Duration of activities was optimized today and there were 10 minutes left for evaluation. There was no pressure, so... they were able to think about what they would respond"* (M. Bungić, personal communication, March 11, 2011).

Picture 2. Evaluation sheet "Neanderthals"

Evaluation sheet for students at the end of the workshop contained a drawing of a Neanderthal family (Picture 2) and students needed to write down what they liked or did not like about the class, from the perspective of one of the family members. Also, they needed to write down suggestions on how to improve classes in the future. Results revealed that about half of students liked all the activities, whereas 37.5% of students highlighted the movie about Neanderthals: "Today I enjoyed cooperative learning and watching the movie". Students also liked cooperative learning, creativity and class dynamics. They did not like the fact that some of their colleague students did not behave politely during the class, that they had little time for practical activities and that the class lasted longer than usually. One student stated: "I did not like it that not all students were interested". A part of students (19%) suggested that all

classes should be like that day's class, whereas 12.5% of students suggested a more realistic duration of activities.

We noticed that students highlighted things that they liked about the class, whereas they rarely pointed out negative aspects of the class or gave suggestions for teaching improvement. This might mean that they were satisfied with teaching practices. As it was important for us to hear students' comments on both positive and negative aspects of teaching, and give suggestions for the improvement of teaching, we were not quite satisfied with the evaluation results. We think that it would be possible to stimulate students to give more detailed feedback by explaining evaluation procedure and discussing its importance.

2.5.2. Critical account of the video of the lesson

We commented on the video recordings of workshops. The teacher would prepare digital recordings which would be watched by both, the student and the teacher. The student would then write down her remarks. Most of the recordings and comments were sent to each other by e-mail, which made the communication and cooperation much easier. Here are the student's suggestions regarding the way some activities were carried out:

In the introduction students could have been stimulated to think about the first question that was asked - "What does a man have to do with this course Methods of Upbringing and why do we mention a man in this context at the beginning of this course?" Only one student expressed his opinion. I think that others should have been stimulated to take part in the discussion. That could have been done by an activity in which students would link the concepts humans and social education and reach some personal conclusions about the course; or by an activity that would reveal what makes us human; or how social education affects human beings (M. Bungić, personal communication, April 16, 2011).

The teacher accepted and further developed the student's suggestions:
I agree with you, Maja. The question I asked is very important and perhaps more time should have been spent dealing with it. I will by all means try to predict some other possible activities related to that question. Here is an idea: Students sit in the circle. The teacher reads a statement about humans (e.g. "A man is a creative being") and throws a ball to one of the students. The student is then supposed to say something about social education inspired by the statement he or she has heard from the teacher. Then this student throws the ball to another student who again

says a sentence beginning with "A man is..." What do you think about that idea? (B. Bognar, personal communication, April 17, 2011).

Except for the problems mentioned above, the student suggested some other solutions or revealed personal impressions about certain activities.

Although students are sometimes not fond of such activities, I personally like it when students have the opportunity to role-play, because it may raise their spirits and they may become more actively engaged in agreeing on the roles and scenario. Also, acting can help them conquer stage fright, which is a good starting point for their future job (M. Bungić, personal communication, April 16, 2011).

Commenting video recordings was useful for it helped us see problems from a different angle and hear some new ideas and solutions. After repeated viewing of video recordings we were able to spot some details that might have been a cause of some problems. They would have been very difficult to perceive in a regular classroom situation. During our joint commentary on video recordings, we started to understand the value of this kind of cooperation between critical friends. In one of his e-mail messages to his student, Professor B. Bognar said:

"Maja, the way we comment on teaching practices is what cooperation of teachers and school counsellors is all about. I believe that our cooperation model will be helpful in your future job as a school counsellor" (personal communication, April 17, 2011).

It is to be concluded that during the process of evaluation, students may contribute by giving comments from a perspective different than teacher's. They can stimulate a teacher to see his/her teaching practices from a different angle, and try to improve them, which is stated in the following teacher's words:

"Your comments and suggestions have made me think and have helped me see some important problems. Also, you have given me some good pieces of advice which could improve the quality of my teaching" (B. Bognar, personal communication, April 17, 2011).

It is possible to include other individuals besides action research participants in the critical and friendly discussion, even if they live outside Croatia. We prepared English subtitles[2] for YouTube videos (see

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[2] YouTube and Vimeo public services were used for video sharing

http://bit.ly/IlRHFU and http://bit.ly/Hp1Wfg). Besides, we prepared an English version of the complete report on the activities done so far, with the results of evaluation included (see http://bit.ly/IfOU1x). Discussion took place at a network cooperation system (http://pest-prog.ning.com) and at workshops for training educational experts "Pestalozzi core knowledge, skills and attitudes for all teachers", organized by the Council of Europe.

Two experts joined the discussion - one of the leaders of Pestalozzi Programme and Jack Whitehead, who advocates life-theoretical approach to action research. The leader of Pestalozzi Programme referred to the matter of emphasising positive features of humans, and not discussing negative aspects of human behaviour. She suggested that one should discuss it with students why some people become destructive. In her opinion, one cannot heal a disease if one is not aware of its causes. After these critical comments a discussion developed about various topics such as baseline values and some ideas on how to improve workshops. Both participants in the discussion said that they had been inspired to think, write and read about the topic.

Jack Whitehead commented on video recordings through the network cooperation system for Pestalozzi project members like this:

Dear Branko, the link to your report was available and I sincerely enjoyed reading it and watching video recordings. I am aware that you would like to be given some answers which might help you improve your teaching practices. The feeling that I got based on the report data is that you have already been given great critical evaluation from your students and critical friends, who have helped you to improve your teaching practices. I like it how open your evaluation conduct was. I also like the values that have been directed towards overcoming/understanding discrimination and emancipation issues[3](J. Whitehead, personal communication, April 21, 2011).

After this, an almost completely positive comment, the discussion did not continue. It is to be noticed that critical comments made the teacher think, discuss and read related literature, whereas positive comments, besides being good for his professional confidence, did not influence his deliberation, teaching practice improvement, or his need for professional learning to any great extent. We think that, although positive comments that build up professional confidence are necessary for critical friendship, honest critical comments are as important because they can initiate changes (Handal 1999). It is recommended that critical friends use both approaches, although that cannot be expected from all people. Our example shows that one critical friend

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[3] The free software DivXLand Media Subtitler was used to put subtitles on the videos (http://www.divxland.org/subtitler.php)

(Whitehead) emphasized positive aspects of teaching practices, whereas other comments were more inclined to criticism.

In any case, we may agree with Elliot (1993, p. 176) when he said that teachers can improve their teaching practices to a great extent by simply communicating with other people, especially other professionals. An important role in that process belongs to learning communities (Stoll & Fink, 2000), which may consist of people from the same professional circles (e.g. colleagues from the same faculty or department), or distributed communities of practice (Wenger et al., 2002) within a national or international project (Pestalozzi project in our case). In the case of the latter, the latest network cooperation systems are an important factor in establishing communication.

2.5.3. Interview with students

Three workshops had been observed and filmed and after that an interview was conducted. Five students were interviewed in professor Bognar's office, which was video recorded (see http://vimeo.com/26647779). The interview was conducted by student M. Bungić. The teacher was not present. Students were asked about their impressions about teaching practices in the course *Methods of Upbringing*. Their answers implied that they mostly liked the course:

"I like the way this course was taught, because it was creative and supportive.",

"I like the fact that professor Bognar was enthusiastic and that he gave us hope that some things could be changed in our education system".

Students were asked to compare teaching practices in this course with teaching practices in other courses and all of them reported noticeable differences. They stated that in most courses students were just passive observers in the class, whereas professor was the one who would lead and decide. A student said: "I don't like to sit and watch a professor talking, and then when you ask a question, he looks at you as if thinking 'And why have you asked that question?'. I like it when there is some interaction among people, when people talk to each other, when some conclusions are reached". Another student said: "In this class there are no wrong answers. Whatever you say, your opinion is valued." When asked what they thought of Professor Bognar's teaching, one student said: "I like professor's energy which is rare to find. Others find it much easier to sit down and "click" a presentation."

If they had a possibility to teach this course, all the students would choose creative approach and cooperative learning techniques. One of the students said: "I think that I would organise classes in a similar way. I would

search for new ideas, I would prepare well, and I would do a little research. I might organise some field work, too."

According to Patton (1990, p. 335-337) this interview that M. Bungić conducted is so called focus group interview. It was developed in 1950s as a part of a market research to get precise feedback from users. Interviewees need to be members of a homogenous group of people who answer questions, but they also need to listen to other interviewees' answers.

Due to the fact that the interview was recorded by a video camera, there was concern that students would not be open and that they would feel nervous. However, we did not notice any negative influence of its presence. Students opened up and answered questions about the course *Methods of Upbringing*, as well as some other courses honestly and (self) critically. Focus group interview turned out to be very effective, because students could complete each other's answers. Besides, they felt the group support which probably decreased the number of anticipated answers. The fact that a student conducted and recorded the interview is also believed to be a positive influence on students' answers, because they did not feel as if they were examined. It felt like a pleasant conversation among colleague students instead. Patton (p. 336) points out that one of the disadvantages of this type of interview is the interviewing experience it requires. In our case, the student M. Bungić seemed to be up to the task and conducted the interview successfully, making sure that all participants took part equally.

Using an interview to evaluate teaching practices is very efficient for receiving feedback from students or other teaching process participants. Interviews with students enable researchers to receive information which would be difficult to gather by other evaluation procedures, due to quite short duration of class activities.[4] A recording enables them to see details which are sometimes not possible to be said. These data can be important during qualitative analysis.

2.5.4. Evaluation sheets

Subsequent to the three workshops, students were given evaluation sheets by Professor B. Bognar. The evaluation sheet consisted of 15 statements related to students' satisfaction with activities, their management, interaction, and workshop participants' cooperation. Evaluation was based on grading these statements using grades that ranged from 1 ("I completely disagree") to 5 ("I completely agree"), or 0 for "I cannot reply". Statements referred to: the extent to which students' educational needs were met, the activity pace, the relevance and usefulness of materials and resources, the creativeness opportunities for students, the relevance of the workshop for students' future

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[4] Our experiences and considerations related to the use of interviews are available online in a video recorded immediately after the interview (http://vimeo.com/26652626).

jobs, etc. Also, there was a space provided for individual descriptions of everything students liked or disliked about the workshops, as well as their suggestions for the improvement of teaching practices.

Questionnaire results revealed that students were least satisfied with how the contents met their educational needs (3.83 out of 5). Possibility to express creatively got the highest grade (4.65 out of 5), the level of interaction (4.52) and student cooperation (4.55) followed. So, students once again confirmed that the course Methods of Upbringing was an opportunity for creative and cooperative learning. This information was obtained in the interview and during activities of the workshop "Possibilities of evaluation in higher education" where students had defined criteria of quality higher education.

Every year at our faculty students fill in the so called *student questionnaire*, an online questionnaire, which assesses students' opinions of the quality of courses and teachers. In the workshop "Possibilities of evaluation in higher education" during the discussion, some issues related to the student questionnaire were raised. One of the students said: "Names of professors are mixed up, and professors get angry when they receive the questionnaire results". One student noticed: "We are all concerned whether it is really anonymous; therefore students do not dare take the survey. Also, we are not informed enough. They just come and say: "At that time, there!" Students believe that student questionnaire is just a formality which needs to be done and that its real purpose is not teaching process improvement. The main cause why students do not have a positive questionnaire experience is, as they say it, the lack of information on its aims.

Also, they think that it is important to design the questionnaire well, because inadequate questions may lead to loss of motivation on students' behalf. It is very important to inform professors on questionnaire aims. Some students say that professors take this type of evaluation personally and feel insulted if their grade is low.

Despite all the above-mentioned problems, evaluation sheets may be a valuable instrument for data collection if students have been properly motivated for taking a part in evaluation and if they believe that the aims will really be met, in other words that they would be in position to influence teaching improvement.

It is advisable to make sure that students fill in the questionnaire anonymously, to ensure their honesty. Evaluation sheet may be used during summative and formative evaluation of teaching practices. We think that students might design their questionnaires, conduct them, review, present and interpret the results. Besides, evaluation sheets results may be an impetus for a discussion about the possibilities of teaching improvement.

2.5.5. Workshop "Possibilities of evaluation in higher education"

At the end of summer semester 2011 student M. Bungić conducted a workshop "Possibilities of evaluation in higher education" which dealt with summative type of evaluation. The aim of the workshop was to introduce students to the possibilities of evaluation in higher education, to present different types of evaluation procedures, to involve them in the evaluation process and then evaluate the course Methods of Upbringing. The workshop began with a miming task during which students needed to show how they were feeling at that time and how they would like to feel at the end of the workshop. It was an opportunity for students to bring up the issue of the early beginning of class once again, which they did not find suitable and which had been a problem for them the whole semester[5].

After an energizing activity, there was an activity which consisted of defining criteria for good quality higher education and discussing its definition. Students agreed that quality teaching practices imply a competent and expert teacher, as well as active involvement of students through cooperative and creative approach. A representative of one of the groups said: "The criteria that we find important are: student involvement, understanding of each others' needs, appreciating other people's opinions, creative activities, professor's competence and expertise, variety of contents and good cooperation". We have noticed that students are aware of the fact that teachers very often use teacher-centred methods in their classes, and that active involvement of students in teaching process is very rare. Students however recognize the importance of their involvement in the design of the teaching process and that is very often emphasized as the criteria for good quality teaching.

The next activity was a circular discussion about the ways of evaluating teaching at our faculty. Students shared their experiences, indicated problems and gave suggestions on how to solve them. It appears that students have mostly experienced summative forms of evaluation such as student questionnaires at the end of every academic year. A student said: "Some professors ask us to write down our impressions about the course, and the things that we would like to change, but I think it is just a formality." Students said that evaluation which was initiated and carried out by professors themselves was done only at Pedagogy department. Students are aware that evaluations are rare at the faculty, and that it is not easy to motivate academics to conduct evaluation. However, instead of having practical solutions for the joint initiative of academics and students to start evaluating teaching, they have shifted their attention to undefined and non-existing services that should supposedly take care of it: "I think that there is no such thing as evaluation at

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[5] Namely, Thursday is the day for late nights out for students in Osijek. Since this course Methods of Upbringing is organized on Friday mornings, some students tend to be tired in classes. Professor recognized this as a problem very early on, but he only later found out from student M. Bungić what the reason was. Also, many students referred to this problem many times during evaluation.

this faculty. Therefore services should be formed that would be in charge of it." Besides, there were ideas to reward good teachers on the one hand and to introduce some repressive methods on the other, in order to regulate academics' behaviour; "If money makes the world go round, then it might be a good incentive to give money rewards to professors who have been graded best by students." A student disagreed and said: "Why would they be given an additional reward? Those who do not perform their job well, they should be sanctioned, fired and that's it." Students agreed that their success at any course is partly a reflection of that academic's teaching practices. A student suggested that professors cooperated with each other by means of critical friendship.

Based on this discussion we may conclude that students, although they are not satisfied with evaluation at this point and its results, do not have a clear vision of how this problem might be solved. There have been just a few practical ideas which can contribute to its solution. This action research in which all the participants were both teachers and learners is an example of such a process. It is encouraging to see that students are aware of the importance of cooperation of all the participants in the teaching process. Encouraging is also the fact that they are ready to contribute to teaching improvement. We believe that students can be a source of creative ideas, but they should be given a chance to express these ideas, which is primarily an academic's duty.

The final activity in the workshop prompted students to create and conduct various evaluation procedures to evaluate the course Methods of Upbringing. A part of students designed and carried out a questionnaire. It consisted of five questions. It was copied and distributed to other students. The results of the questionnaire showed that students preferred classes that they designed and conducted (79%). Teacher's activity was mostly graded as excellent (75%), and their class activity as good (62%). Some of the ideas for course improvement were: "To have classes at some other time, not so early while everybody is still sleeping", "To encourage workshops conducted by students, this has been very positive so far", "To take into consideration students' mood and abilities before any activity is started".

A part of students designed an evaluation game, and a part of them designed an evaluation sheet. The evaluation sheet was creative and consisted of pictures which represented the level of course satisfaction and space for written description. One group designed and conducted an interview with two students and Professor Bognar. They asked questions about course satisfaction, their activity and suggestions for teaching improvement. Students recorded the interviews with their mobile phones. Teacher said in the interview and later during group presentations that he was very satisfied with the fact that students honestly expressed their opinion on the course Methods of Upbringing and other relevant matters. Open discussion and students' answers in the interview

speak in favour of that fact: "There are no wrong answers. Your opinion is appreciated…", "When a professor asks a question, it is very important to feel that you have enough space… that there is no pressure of thinking whether your words are important, correct. So, the space is important for people to feel free while talking." We believe that the feeling of liberty on behalf of all the participants in teaching process is crucial for the exertion of substantial changes. However, we would agree with Hegel (1966) that "freedom as the ideal condition of what is as yet purely immediate and natural does not itself possess an immediate and natural existence. It still has to be earned through the endless mediation of discipline acting upon the powers of cognition and will". In other words, freedom is not a gift, nor a natural condition; it must be fought for by learning and creative (co)work of the participants of teaching process.

A few students observed and made notes on the process of designing and conducting evaluation, and one group had a task to watch the shortened version of the first workshop. By being able to comment on teaching practices they were given an opportunity to become critical friends. Students however made only positive comments. After the workshop the teacher asked: "Were there any problems?", a group representative said: "Well, no. We have really tried to find some negative aspects, but there were none. We think everything was alright." This statement is in contrast with the number of issues that were stated in chapter *Evaluation of the workshop "What is a man?"* Based on this problem we might conclude that teachers should not only regard students' opinion when evaluating, but should also discuss their teaching practices with their colleagues, especially those who are acquainted with and apply modern teaching methods in their teaching organization. We also consider it important to teach students of teacher training studies to take a role of a critical friend, which is an important professional role that will help them be oriented towards change.

For the evaluation of workshop an evaluation sheet was used with possibility to circle "like" if they liked the workshop of "dislike" if not. Most of the students (86%) liked the workshop, and some of them said: "I like creativity, positive outcomes and new insights", "I like the overall atmosphere which was relaxed", "I like creativity and organized approach".

As student M. Bungić organized this workshop, she had a role of a critical friend, but she was also in a position to feel what it is like to be in charge of teaching. After the class we talked to each other and the critical friend Ružica Pažin Ilakovac about our impressions. She referred to students' activity as a proof of the workshop success:

We witnessed how they became more and more active and cheerful, and in the end, when they were given a self-guided task to come up with evaluation methods, it was obvious that they understood the subject very well and that

they were extremely successful at designing those small evaluation instruments. (R. Pažin Ilakovac, personal communication, June 3, 2011)

3. Instead of a conclusion

We believe that all the criteria for evaluation of goals have been met. Formative evaluation has been conducted using various evaluation procedures such as evaluation sheets, questionnaires, interviews, critical friendship, etc. Based on the evaluation results we have tried to continuously improve teaching quality. Summative evaluation has been conducted using various evaluation procedures designed by students at the final workshop on evaluation of higher education. Based on the data presented, the conclusion can be reached that all the characteristics of fourth generation evaluation (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p. 253-256) were present: It was discovered that evaluation is a *social and political process* during which students and teachers *agree* on the changes which should be in accord with their needs and interests. To do that, it is required that *all the participants in the teaching process learn from one another.* Dealing with the issues of evaluation of teaching we found out that it was a *continuous process which demands constant critical re-examination of practice and finding creative solutions* which may be appropriate for particular situations, but should not be regarded as universal "truths" applicable to all teaching situations.

It has been discovered that evaluation is a *developing process* which is not predictable because every new step is based on the results of previous activities. This means that it is possible to specify methodological design, research problems and procedures at the end of evaluation procedure. Evaluation cannot be reduced to collecting and analysing data; it is a *creative process* during which all the interested participants take responsibility for the quality of teaching process.

Action research usually does not result in conclusions but ideas for future projects which will enable the continuation of the process of change (Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001, p. 244). In our case, the results of action research, whose function was to improve the quality of higher education evaluation of an academic's teaching practices, was presented at the expert conference of assistants and mentors at our faculty. Workshop participants were very positive about our experiences, which is obvious in some of the comments from the workshop evaluation sheet:

(I liked) the cooperation with the student and her active role in the workshop; openness and readiness of workshop participants to cooperate and actively think about the use of a critical friend in higher education.

I would like to praise the very idea and this fresh impetus for all of us to try and improve our teaching processes to our own benefit and to our students' benefit. Well done! (workshop participants, personal communication, February 24, 2012).

The idea of critical friendship has been incorporated in the Strategy for the development of the Faculty of Philosophy from 2011 to 2015. At April 2012 meeting of head of departments it was agreed to form groups of critical friends among department members and across different departments, who would discuss possibilities of teaching improvement. This is a proof that our action research has contributed to the changes in the professional culture of our institution. In social context this means that, if there is a favourable atmosphere which accepts positive examples of change, action research experiences may become a part of the culture of close and wide community. Action research results are not generalized on a theoretical, but practical level - being an example and an impetus for the creative actions of other practitioners.

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Mogućnosti evaluacije visokoškolske nastave

Sažetak: Ovo akcijsko istraživanje ostvareno je u okviru nastave kolegija Metodika odgoja tijekom jednoga semestra. Namjera nam je bila unaprijediti evaluaciju visokoškolske nastave. Kako bi to ostvarili koristili smo se različitim oblicima sumativne i formativne evaluacije, a poseban naglasak postavili smo na kritičko prijateljstvo između studenta i profesora (suautora ovog rada). Za ostvarivanje kritičkoga prijateljstva koristili smo se videozapisima nastave.

Na kraju nastave studentima su bili ponuđeni različiti anketni upitnici i evaluacijski listići, a proveli smo i otvoreni standardizirani intervju sa skupinom studenata te radionicu koja je bila posvećena evaluaciji visokoškolske nastave.

Naše istraživanje pokazalo je kako studenti kao subjekti nastavnoga procesa mogu aktivno sudjelovati u ostvarivanju evaluacije, a njihova zapažanja i prijedlozi mogu potaknuti nastavnika na unaprjeđenje svih etapa nastavnoga procesa, pa tako i evaluacije. Smatramo kako je evaluaciju u visokoškolskoj nastavi moguće unaprijediti edukacijom profesora i studenata o njezinoj važnosti za kvalitetu nastavnoga procesa, upoznavanjem s različitim mogućnostima uključivanja studenata u taj proces, što je ostvareno na jednom od stručnih skupova koji je održan za nastavnike na Filozofskom fakultetu u Osijeku.

Ključne riječi: evaluacija, četvrta generacija evaluacije, visokoškolska nastava, kritičko prijateljstvo, akcijsko istraživanje.

Evaluation im Hochschulunterricht

Zusammenfassung: Diese Aktionsforschung wurde im Rahmen der Lehrveranstaltung Erziehungsmethodik während eines Semesters realisiert. Wir wollten die Evaluation des Hochschulunterrichts verbessern. Um dies zu erreichen, haben wir verschiedene Formen der summativen und formativen Evaluation verwendet, mit einem besonderen Augenmerk auf die kritische Freundschaft zwischen dem Studenten und dem Professor (Co-Autor dieses Beitrages). Für die Realisation der kritischen Freundschaft benutzten wir die Videoaufnahmen des Unterrichts.

Am Unterrichtsende wurden den Studenten verschiedene Fragebögen und Evaluationspapiere angeboten, und wir führten auch ein offenes standardisiertes Interview mit einer Studentengruppe, sowie einen Workshop, der sich mit der Evaluation des Hochschulunterrichts befasste.

Unsere Forschung hat gezeigt, dass die Studenten als Subjekte des Unterrichtsprozesses aktiv an der Verwirklichung der Evaluation teilnehmen können, und ihre Bemerkungen und Anregungen können den Lehrer zur Verbesserung aller Etappen des Lehrprozesses bewegen, einschließlich der Evaluation. Wir sind der Auffassung, dass die Evaluation im Hochschulunterricht verbessert werden kann, indem Lehrer und Studenten über ihre Bedeutung für die Qualität des Lehrprozesses geschult werden und die verschiedenen Möglichkeiten der Einbeziehung von Studenten in diesen Prozess kennen lernen. Dies wurde bei einer Fachtagung für Lehrer realisiert, die an der Philosophischen Fakultät in Osijek stattgefunden hat.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Evaluation, vierte Generation der Evaluation, Hochschulunterricht, kritische Freundschaft, Aktionsforschung.