Review Article

Evaluation in the social sciences, a student perspective

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Abstract

Learning assessment has been widely addressed by theorists and researchers; however, most of them have focused their attention on the relationship between teaching and assessment, leaving student participation behind. Therefore, the objective of this research is precisely to interpret the perceptions that students have regarding the assessment of their learning in the area of social sciences. The research is of a mixed type, not experimental, with a descriptive and narrative design in the qualitative area. The results in the perception of assessment indicate that 1.7% consider it adequate, 95.4% not very adequate and 2.9% inadequate; in the cognitive dimension 4.6% adequate, 92.5% not very adequate and 2.9% inadequate; in the procedural dimension 1.2% adequate, 82.1% not very adequate and 16.7% inadequate, and in the attitudinal dimension 12.4% adequate, 83.9% inadequate and 3.7% inadequate. These students' perceptions are conclusive, so therefore, their role, opinion and perception about evaluation should be taken into consideration, since they are the main actors in the education system. In this sense, teachers should reflect on and improve their form of assessment and place emphasis on ensuring that students understand how they will be assessed and change their perception of assessment. Finally, students should actively participate in planning and modifying pedagogical documents in order to meet their needs and contribute to strengthening the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Secondary school student, Perception, Strengthening, Learning process

Introduction

When we talk about evaluation, some still think that it is the final result achieved by the students as a result of their whole learning process. Students think of evaluation as a situation in which passing of failing is determined, or as a sanctioning act as the case may be, and they see the acquisition of a set of knowledge as its main objective. Notwithstanding, evaluation is not limited to all the aforementioned characteristics, but rather embraces the entire learning process carried out by the students (Zabala, 1995). That is why, we consider assessment to be an essential part for improving teaching and learning. Actually, several experts such as (Jorba and Sanmartí, 1994; Castillo and Cabrerizo, 2003) have agreed on its definition as the dissemination of a value judgment on some aspect to be improved (Jorba and Sanmartí, 1994; Castillo and Cabrerizo, 2003); to achieve this, it is necessary to follow a process that consists of three moments: collecting information, analyzing the information and assessment; finally, making decisions.

On the other hand, for some teachers the traditional conception of education still prevails; they think that they should not change their way of assessing, even if they change their teaching practice or innovate. It should be noted that formative assessment is closely linked to teaching-learning processes. It is necessary to clarify that few teachers carry out formative assessment activities, and those who do, take them as teaching-learning activities that are part of the class, and not as a continuous and permanent process (De Pinto and Mejía, 2017; Alfageme-Gonzáles & Monteagudo, 2014). Thus, from this perspective, education should not be perceived by students as to get good grades without understanding why they are learning something or why it is sometimes forgotten half an hour later, because it is not made sense or useful. We cannot continue to give more weight to grades than to deep learning if we want citizens capable of responding to the challenges of today's life (Ravela & Loureiro, 2017).

It is important to bear in mind that evaluation has the power both to encourage and to hinder progress in education. In other words, it is what drives the entire education system. It is worth asking why students study, have we ever asked them? Most students answer: to pass (Casanova, 2011). Therefore, assessment should be seen as an integral process that demands agreed guidelines, relevant tests, learning activities and guiding principles duly established, with students learning through action in a range of relevant contexts. Thus, it should be planned and carried out throughout the development of teaching and learning, and not only at the end of that process or using only one assessment instrument (Ávila and Paredes, 2015; Brown, 2015).

In fact, the true evaluation of learning is that which communicates, which does not hide, sanctions, or seeks to give a qualification to experiences that are not within the reach of students, or which have not been put into practice in advance. In short, this evaluation is at the service of learning (Hernando, 2015). It should be borne in mind that assessment demands planning and a prior outline that ensures the achievement of the proposed objectives. The regularity and duration of assessment should be equivalent to that of teaching, in such a way that an ideal scenario is given, where there is a coincidence and harmony between what is taught, assessed and what is learned (Arredondo & Cañizal, 2010).

Thus, many of us agree with the notion that a well-managed assessment could be a stimulus to foster meaningful learning and, conversely, poor assessment practice may be an impediment that slows down the eagerness to learn the planned content (Moreno, 2016). What is indisputable today is that evaluation as a discipline has continued to evolve, so that today we have very attractive approaches and proposals that can serve as a guide to improve our evaluation practices. The usefulness of evaluation tools not only helps us to grade and measure, but also to advise throughout the learning process (Moreno, 2016 and Hernando, 2015).

It should be noted that the new ideas about assessment affirm that knowledge is not only the accumulation of content, but that it is a means of learning to do and learning to be; therefore, it requires the

teacher's criteria to permanently readjust their assessment practices, so that they contribute to making assessment a process to promote and guide learning according to the needs of today's world, and that better, taking into account the students' perception of assessment. Therefore, it is necessary that teaching strategies and techniques go hand in hand with assessment (Chaviano et al., 2016; Pereira, 2015). This new perspective is the realization of formative evaluation or assessment for learning, which is in charge of regulating learning, constituted in the same process, which takes into account the one who learns along the whole journey, which sets the platform to advance and which drives and motivates from the beginning to the end to reach the goals. It has been demonstrated that students who have received a formative evaluation obtain better results than those who have received a traditional evaluation (López, 2017; Alcalá, 2015; Hortigüela & Abella, 2014).

Finally, evaluation is seen as a complicated procedure that, when put into practice, depends fundamentally on ensuring that each student appreciates with sufficient transparency how their academic training and their development as an integral human being is going, and from this, recommendations, support, accompaniment and a space where they can reflect are proposed, so that every day the basic competencies are improved and strengthened (Tobón 2010). In addition to the above, the opinion of the students should be considered and reconsidered with respect to the form of evaluation they receive, so that changes are proposed to improve the teaching-learning processes, that is, it is necessary to know the ideas of the teachers and students about evaluation, since it determines their professional practice in the teachers, and in the students their significant learning (Hidalgo and Murillo, 2017; Molina and Trigueros, 2014). For all these reasons, the formulation of the problem leads us to ask ourselves: What is the perception that students have regarding the evaluation of their learning in the area of social sciences?

Method

It is a mixed type of research, non-experimental, with a descriptive design; for which data was collected through a survey, where the characteristics of the variables are evident, the results of the variable and its dimensions are quantified and shown with precision (Hernández and Mendoza, 2018). As for the qualitative area, we used a narrative design; where we aspire to interpret the perception that students have about the evaluation. For this purpose we conducted interviews with guided questions to students and experts in the field in order to reach the proposed objective (Hernández and Baptista, 2014).

The subjects to be investigated were 347 fourth and fifth grade secondary school students in the Province of Canta, with the whole being the unit of analysis, that is, it will cover the entire population, which means taking a census, or census-type study, from which we will obtain the necessary information to reach conclusions (Palella and Martins, 2012). The data collection technique was also the survey, whose instrument used was the questionnaire, the purpose of which is to specify the level or form that the people surveyed have about certain variables or concepts, revealing points of view, beliefs, behaviour, characteristics, abilities, etc. (Cerón and Cerâon, 2006).

As for the validity of the measurement instrument, it is said to be valid when it measures that for which it is intended (Bernal, 2010). In this case, the technique of expert judgement was used, with ten experts giving their approval for the applicability of the questionnaire. Likewise, with regard to the reliability of the questionnaire, it refers to the consistency of the scores obtained by the same subjects, when they are examined on several occasions with the same questionnaire (Bernal, 2010). In this case, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the

reliability of the instrument, obtaining 0.854 as a result, which means that it has an acceptable reliability.

For the collection of information from the qualitative study, the interview was used, where it is defined as a particular form of social intercommunication, which aims at gathering information for an inquiry. The researcher poses questions to the people who will provide him with the necessary information, thus establishing a very particular dialogue, where one of them seeks to collect information and the other is the one who provides it (Behar, 2008). In our case, we interviewed experts and students who provided us with the necessary information to carry out the triangulation of the data.

Results

Below are the data from the quantitative analysis of the students' perception of the assessment and its dimensions.

Table 1 shows the consolidated results of students' perceptions of assessment, indicating that 1.7% of students consider it adequate, 95.4% not very adequate and 2.9% inadequate; in the cognitive dimension 4.6% adequate, 92.5% not very adequate and 2.9% inadequate; in the procedural dimension 1.2% adequate, 82.1% not very adequate and 16.7% inadequate; in the attitudinal dimension 12.4% adequate, 83.9% inadequate and 3.7% inadequate. In short, it can be seen that the majority of students perceive that the evaluation they receive is inadequate.

With regard to the qualitative analysis, a certain number of students were interviewed about the perception of the evaluation, ten questions were asked: the first question was, how do the teachers evaluate you? Most of them answered that they are evaluated by written exams. The second question was Is there an initial assessment and in what way? Most of them were evaluated by written exams. The third question was Is there continuous evaluation and in what way? All students answered that they were evaluated by written exams and graded practices. The fourth question Is there a final evaluation and in what way? All were evaluated by written examinations. The fifth question Does the teacher leave personal, group work? How does he or she evaluate it? All answered yes and were evaluated according to the work submitted. The sixth question deals with direct observation of the student, group observation, systematic observation, analysis of audio or video recordings. How do you evaluate them? All responded that the teacher records the grade in his or her log directly. The seventh question: How do you evaluate yourself? Most of them answered that they do not perform self-evaluation. The eighth question: How is the co-evaluation carried out? Most of them indicated that they do not conduct the co-evaluation. The ninth question: How do you conduct a hetero-assessment? Yes, through written exams. The tenth question Is feedback given after the evaluation instrument has been handed out? Most of them answered no.

In addition, experts in the field were interviewed and asked three questions: the first question was How does the assessment of learning

Table 1: Perception of evaluation and its dimensions

Scale	Perception of evaluation		Cognitive		Procedural		Attitudinal	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Adequate	6	1.7	16	4.6	4	1.2	43	12.4
Not very adequate	331	95.4	321	92.5	285	82.1	291	83.9
Inadequate	10	2.9	10	2.9	58	16.7	13	3.7
Total	347	100.0	347	100.0	347	100.0	347	100.0

take place in secondary school students? Today, assessment has become much more comprehensive. It evaluates the competencies developed by students during their learning process, through their performance, sensitizing, regulating, and self-managing their learning. The second question was: What are the instruments used to assess students and how are they graded? There are still tests, practices, and something that is fashionable are rubrics, because of their ease, because the grades are made simpler, because the achievements and deficiencies of the students are made more observable. The third question is: How do you correct exams, assignments throughout the assessment? Virtual tools make test marking no longer a cumbersome job, but developmental work such as essays or monographs needs to be evaluated sheet by sheet, using a rubric.

Discussion and conclusions

According to the data obtained in this research with respect to the perception that students have of the evaluation, where 95.4% consider it to be not very adequate, 2.9% consider it to be inadequate and only 1.7% consider it to be adequate. In short, it can be seen that the majority of students perceive that the evaluation they receive is inadequate. In this case, it is necessary to mention (Moreno, 2016) who states that a well-managed assessment could be a stimulus to foster significant learning and, conversely, poor assessment practice can be an impediment that slows down the eagerness to learn the planned content. We can then corroborate that good assessment practice is not being carried out, since students state that the only ways in which they are assessed are through examinations and graded practice. It is worth noting the research done by (Avila and Paredes, 2015; Brown, 2015, Hernández et al., 2019) who state that assessment should be seen as a comprehensive process that demands agreed-upon guidelines, relevant tests, learning activities and guiding principles duly established with students who learn through action in a range of relevant contexts. It should therefore be planned and carried out throughout the development of teaching and learning and not just at the end of that process or using an assessment instrument alone. Likewise, the experts believe that today evaluation has become much more comprehensive, where the competencies developed by the student during his or her learning process are assessed through their performance, making them aware to regulate and self-manage their learning.

In the cognitive dimension of evaluation, students perceive that 92.5% is not very adequate, 2.9% considers it to be inadequate, and only 4.6% considers it to be adequate. In this sense, it is necessary to take into account (Arredondo and Cañizal, 2010) those who state that assessment demands planning and prior sketching to ensure the achievement of the proposed objectives. The regularity and duration of the evaluation should be equivalent to that of teaching, in such a way that an ideal scenario is given, where there is a coincidence and harmony between what is taught, evaluated and what is learned. Definitely the results show that he is not evaluating as it should be, since the students say that their work is evaluated according to the criteria of the teacher who records the grade directly in his record. In this regard, research conducted by (De Pinto and Mejía, 2017; Alfageme- Gonzáles and Monteagudo, 2014) states that some teachers still have a traditional conception of education, they think they should not change their way of evaluating, even if they change their teaching practice or innovate. It should be noted that formative assessment is closely linked to teaching-learning processes. For this reason, it is necessary to clarify that few teachers carry out formative assessment activities, and those who do, take them as teaching-learning activities that are part of the class, and not as a continuous and permanent process.

In the procedural dimension of assessment, students perceive that 82.1% is not very adequate, 16.7% is inadequate, and only 1.2%

considers it to be adequate. For this reason, Hernando (2015) mentions that the true evaluation of learning is the one that communicates, that does not hide, that does not sanction, that does not seek to give a qualification to experiences that are not within the reach of students, or have not been put into practice in advance. In short, this evaluation is at the service of learning. With regard to the types of assessment such as self-assessment, co-assessment and hetero-assessment, unfortunately, most students state that the first two are not carried out, and in the case of hetero-assessment they are carried out only by means of written exams; and with regard to the feedback after handing in the assessment instrument, most students state that it is not carried out. We must take into account the research of (Chaviano and Gutiérrez, 2016; Pereira, 2015) where they highlight that the new ideas on assessment affirm that knowledge is not only the accumulation of content, but that it is a means of learning to do and learning to be; Therefore, it requires the criteria of teachers to permanently readjust their assessment practices in such a way that they contribute to making assessment a process to promote and guide learning according to the needs of today's world, and that better, taking into account the perception that students have of assessment. Therefore, it is necessary that teaching strategies and techniques go hand in hand with assessment. Thus, experts say that examinations, practices, and practices are still in place. Therefore, it is necessary that teaching strategies and techniques go hand in hand with evaluation. Thus, experts say that tests and practices are still in place, but today rubrics are becoming the main assessment instrument, they are being widely used because they are easier, because the grades are becoming simpler, and because the achievements and shortcomings of students are becoming more observable.

In the attitudinal dimension of assessment, students perceive 83.9% as not very adequate 3.7% see it as inadequate, and 12.4% consider it as adequate. In this sense, it is necessary to consider the authors (Moreno, 2016 and Hernando, 2015) who affirm that what is indisputable today is that evaluation as a discipline has continued to evolve, so that today we have very attractive approaches and proposals that can serve as a guide to improve our evaluation practices. The usefulness of evaluation tools not only helps us to grade and measure, but also to offer advise throughout the learning process. That is why experts state that virtual tools make evaluators no longer feel test grading as a burdensome task, but in works in development such as essays or monographs, you need to evaluate sheet by sheet, using a rubric.

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