

Bibliographie choisie sur l'évaluation de l'enseignement au niveau supérieur

Select Bibliography of Evaluation of Instruction in Higher Education

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The considerable escalation in recent years of both substantiated argument and uninformed opinion concerning the evaluation of instruction in higher education suggests that this issue has finally come of age. Reaction to evaluation is varied and undeniably complex. Nonetheless, in order to construct a concise analysis of the responses to the evaluation of instruction I have adopted a tri-partite categorization developed by Patricia Cross in her assessment of a related issue. The three basic positions include: (i) the proponents of evaluation – “Reformers” – who lobby for improved teaching and propose various systems of evaluation and means of facilitating the evaluation of instruction; (ii) the “Analysts”, who assert that instruction in higher education is clearly in need of improvement but are, for the most part, pessimistic regarding the likelihood that effective innovation will be introduced; (iii) the “Educational Conservatives”, comprised for the most part of faculty members, who embrace the traditions of instruction in the university and resist pressures for change. The responses of each

Au fil des dernières années, nous avons témoigné une croissance du débat sur l'enseignement supérieur mené par des personnes bien renseignées ainsi que par d'autres qui ignorent le fond de la situation. Ce débat nous signale que nous sommes arrivés à l'heure de l'enseignement supérieur. Les réactions à l'évaluation sont variées et indéniablement complexes. Néanmoins, pour faire une analyse concise des réponses à l'évaluation de l'instruction, j'ai adopté une catégorisation tri-partite développée par Patricia Cross dans son évaluation d'une question connexe. Il s'agit: i) des défenseurs de l'évaluation – “Réformateurs” – ceux qui oeuvrent pour un enseignement amélioré et qui proposent divers systèmes d'évaluation ainsi que des moyens pour faciliter l'évaluation de l'enseignement; ii) des “Analystes”, qui affirment que l'instruction au niveau supérieur devrait s'améliorer, mais, en grande partie, ils sont pessimistes quant à la possibilité d'innovation efficace; iii) “les Conservateurs en enseignement”, surtout des membres des facultés, qui soutiennent l'enseignement traditionnel à l'université

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of these groups constitute a literature of considerable quantity, which, as may be expected, is largely comprised of the contributions of "Reformers" and "Analysts".

Despite the diversity of positions taken regarding evaluation, several themes relating to this issue recur throughout the literature and can be identified.

First, most writers agree that the primary purposes of evaluation are twofold: to diagnose the instructor's weaknesses in order to assist in the improvement of his or her professional development (formative evaluation) and to collect data which will be used in the decision-making process relative to promotion, salary increases and tenure (summative evaluation). Regardless of their perspective, virtually all writers affirm the primacy of the formative function, but, there are many who question whether the proper relation of the two functions is not, in practice, reversed. This suspicion is, to some extent, corroborated by recent research which indicates that the evaluation process has not effectively stimulated faculty development.

A second issue frequently identified in the literature relates to the initiation and operation of the evaluation process. Many commentators suggest that both functions are almost entirely undertaken by members of the educational administration with the assistance of specialists whose primary interest is the evaluation and development of instruction. Faculty participation in the formation and operation of the process is minimal. Predictably, faculty response to evaluation is, in general, negative, ranging from cautious acquiescence to outright hostility.

Of the various methods of evaluation frequently cited, the most vigorously debated is the role of student evaluations. Rumery, Rhodes and Johnson, for example, argue that students are not automatically

et résistent aux vents de changement. Les réponses de chacun de ses trois groupes constituent une documentation importante — surtout des apports des "Réformateurs" et des "Analystes".

Malgré la divergence d'opinion concernant l'évaluation, plusieurs thèmes reliés à cette question reviennent toujours dans la littérature sur le sujet et peuvent être identifiés.

Premièrement, la plupart des rédacteurs avouent qu'il existe un double objectif de base dans l'évaluation: a) diagnostiquer les faiblesses de l'enseignant pour aider celui-ci à parfaire son développement professionnel; et, b) recueillir des données qui serviront à la prise de décisions relatives aux promotions, aux augmentations de salaire et aux durées d'engagements. Peu importe leur perspective, on pourrait dire que tous les rédacteurs mettent l'accent sur a). Toutefois, bien d'entre eux se demandent si, en réalité, l'objectif visé n'est pas plutôt b). Ce soupçon est confirmé en partie par de récentes recherches indiquant que le processus d'évaluation n'a pas efficacement stimulé la mise en valeur des talents du corps enseignant.

Il existe une deuxième question qui survient fréquemment dans la documentation reliée à l'initiation et à l'exploitation du processus d'évaluation. Bien des rédacteurs suggèrent que les deux fonctions sont presque entièrement assumées par les membres de l'administration académique avec l'aide des spécialistes dont l'intérêt principal est l'évaluation et la mise en valeur de l'enseignement. La participation du corps enseignant à la mise en place ainsi qu'à la mise en valeur du processus est minimale. Ainsi, comme on peut l'imaginer, la réaction du corps enseignant à l'évaluation est, en général, négative — allant d'un acquiescement circonspect jusqu'à une hostilité sans ambages.

De toutes les méthodes d'évaluation fréquemment citées, celle dont on discute le

competent evaluators or even competent observers. Others maintain that students as consumers are primary and logical agents for evaluating instruction. Further to this issue, if the findings of Cross (1976) and Hildebrand (1972) are generalizable, this debate may be of little substance; for they report that students are "notoriously generous raters", superceded only by faculty and their benevolent assessment of each other.

Few disagree that "sound" evaluation procedures could yield significant benefits. The task at hand is to eliminate the multiple hazards of inadequately designed evaluation systems and to formulate a process which can facilitate the development of instruction and gain the confidence of the university's most essential component — the faculty.

plus vigoureusement est l'évaluation menée par des étudiants. Par exemple, Rumery, Rhodes et Johnson soutiennent que les étudiants n'ont pas nécessairement la compétence de répondre soit en tant qu'évaluateurs ou tout simplement en tant qu'observateurs. D'autres, par contre, soutiennent que les étudiants, en tant que consommateurs, sont les évaluateurs essentiels et logiques de l'enseignement. Si les résultats des recherches de Cross (1976) et de Hildebrand (1972) peuvent être généralisés, ce débat aura peu de substance. Ils concluent que les étudiants s'avèrent des "évaluateurs fort généreux" du corps enseignant. Leur générosité n'est surpassées que par les évaluations du corps enseignant à son propre égard, et par les évaluations des étudiants envers leurs confrères et consœurs.

On est presque unanime en concluant qu'un processus "sûr" d'évaluation offrirait des bénéfices significatifs. Il s'agit d'éliminer les dangers multiples des méthodes inadéquates d'évaluation et de mettre au point un processus qui faciliterait la mise en valeur de l'enseignement et qui jouirait de la confiance du composant principal de l'université — le corps enseignant.

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