Assessment in the LMD system: characteristics and importance

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Abstract

The development of communities requires a substantial investment in human capital through academic and educational initiatives. The university, as a fundamental driver of intellectual and scientific activity, plays a pivotal role in accomplishing this goal. It acts as a space for growth and economic competition, especially in light of current global changes and the specific challenges facing Algerian society. And in response to these challenges, the university has undergone several alterations and advancements, with the implementation of the LMD system representing a significant progress. This system promotes innovation within a dynamic partnership between the university, scientific research, and institutions. To fully realize its potential, effective assessment processes must be relied upon to produce constructive outputs for society in the scientific field.

Key words: educational assessment, educational outcomes, university, LMD system, Pedagogy, student, professor.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental step towards progress, transformation, and enlightenment. It leads society through thought, knowledge, and scientific research, striving to achieve holistic development across various aspects of life while aiming to advance communities. However, in our current reality, the pursuit of education is no longer for the sake of enlightenment but rather for credentials to secure employment and seek economic and social advancement. As a result, education has become associated with exams and certifications rather than life skills, emptying it of substance and value. Higher education, in particular, is considered an important center for individual education, but universities have undergone significant changes in their educational programs and assessment methods, especially with the new measures that have impacted the LMD system. The higher education movement in Algeria has gone through several stages shaped by the country's political, economic, and social orientation and its effect on the formation of educational institutions based on these objectives. The university is a fundamental hub for cognitive and scientific activity, not only organizing and acquiring knowledge but also a space that cares about achieving development and economic competitiveness. It has witnessed several changes and developments that have led to the evolution of its function, consistent with the changes and determinants of society in its various dimensions. The LMD system represents a new leap that both the university and society are experiencing, thanks to the introduction of new pedagogical practices and innovative approaches in the construction of higher education and scientific research programs and their applications. It aims to activate a new pedagogical approach between the student, teacher, and administration, placing the student at the heart of the training system, and teaching is the engine that cares about activating the

process of introducing training and scientific research programs and designing and renewing them under the supervision and responsibility of the university. Furthermore, the LMD system aims to link economic growth and social development, focusing on reinstating the value of education beyond credentials.

Part One: what is educational assessment?

I.   Definition of assessment
II.   the term assessment takes its
III.   roots from the Latin word 'assidere' which means to sit
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a.   The term assessment takes its roots from the Latin word 'assidere' which means to sit beside to make calculations.
b.   The notion of assessment exhibits varying meanings contingent on the assessor. Some regard educational assessment as a mere evaluative examination administered to a learner in a particular discipline to gauge their proficiency level in that subject. Such a perception represents a narrow perspective of the assessment concept. A broader interpretation of assessment encompasses rendering a verdict on the student or learner's performance, accounting for their predisposition for the study material, cognitive processes engaged during learning, inclinations, attitudes, educational aspirations, and other variables that influence their level and academic achievements. One of these descriptions is encapsulated as follows: "In the field of education, assessment is defined as the process by which a value judgment is made on the success of the educational process in achieving its intended objectives in all its elements". (Suhaila Mohsen Kazem Al-Fatlawi, 2006, p. 588).

Assessment is a qualitative and descriptive process of gaging an individual's performance reflected in a qualitative estimation of the degree attained. This judgment helps determine the individual's level and suggest suitable actions. (Suhaila Mohsen Kazem Al-Fatlawi, 2006, p. 588).

Bloom defined assessment as an evaluation aimed at judging ideas, practices, solutions, teaching methods, materials, and other educational matters. This evaluation uses criteria, levels, or standards to gage accuracy, effectiveness, and feasibility of these matters (Suhaila Mohsen Kazem Al-Fatlawi, 2006, p. 588). Assessment identifies the extent to which desired objectives have been achieved in education, and identifies strengths and weaknesses by diagnosing obstacles hindering achievement of objectives. Based on this diagnosis, proposals can be made to correct the educational process and achieve desired objectives. (Damas Mustafa Namir, 2008, p. 12).

Assessment and Related Concepts

Measurement

In its broadest sense, measurement refers to quantification, which means collecting information and observations about the subject to be measured. This information can be used to determine numerical values for the subject, which are more precise and significant than words. Measurement has been defined by numerous researchers, including Stephen and Camille, among others. Stephen defines measurement as "the assignment of numbers to objects

or events in accordance with a rule". Camille defines measurement as "the process of assigning numbers to objects or events in a way that represents their properties".

Lee Cronbach defined measurement as "a specific methodological process through which one can identify the quantity of a measured object's characteristic or property". (Aziz Samara et al., 1989, p. 13).

Measurement and assessment are two closely interrelated processes that are indispensable for effective decision making. Measurement refers to the procedure of assigning numerical values to objects or events in a manner that represents their characteristics. Assessment refers to the procedure of gathering and interpreting information to make judgments about the worth of something.

Measurement is a necessary yet insufficient condition for assessment. In other words, it is impossible to assess something without first measuring it. However, measurement is not the only thing required for assessment. It also necessitates the ability to interpret the meaning of the measurements and to make judgments about their value.

Assessment is more comprehensive than measurement because it includes both quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative information refers to numerical data that can be used to describe the amount or extent of something. Qualitative information refers to non-numerical data that can be used to describe the quality or nature of something.

By understanding the relationship between measurement and assessment, we can make better decisions about the things that matter most to us.

Analysis

Analyzing data is the preliminary step that comes before making a judgment, after obtaining the results of the measurement process. The analysis process involves comparing quantitative results with standard data to see how closely it matches or deviates from expected educational outcomes. This requires a thorough analysis of the data. Analyzing data is a complex and challenging process that requires a thorough understanding of the data and the ability to use statistical methods. It is also important to be able to communicate the results of the analysis in a clear and concise way. (Abdullatif al-Farabi et al., 1994, p. 11).

Analyzing data can be used to improve educational outcomes by identifying areas where students are struggling and providing them with the support they need to succeed. It can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs and make changes to improve them. By understanding the importance of analyzing data, we can make better decisions about how to improve our educational system.

Testing

Kamil Al-Zubaidi defined a test as "a set of questions that are presented to an individual, and based on the individual's answers, we obtain a measure of a property of that individual." In other words, a test is a tool for collecting information about an individual's knowledge, skills, or abilities. For example, it can be used to make decisions about whether the person is qualified for a job or a school program or not. (Haitham Kamil al-Zoubaidi, p. 11).

Tests are organized processes for measuring a sample of behavior. This means that they are not perfect measures of an individual's overall ability. However, they can be a useful tool for collecting information when used appropriately.

Here are some additional details about tests:

- Tests can be used for a variety of purposes, such as selection, placement, diagnosis, and evaluation.
- There are many different types of tests, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.
- It is important to choose the right test for the specific purpose at hand.
- It is also important to administer and interpret tests correctly.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the ongoing and continuous process of gathering information about learners' performance, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and making adjustments to instruction as needed. Evaluation should be fair and equitable, and it should be used to improve learning.

Characteristics of educational assessment

The characteristics of educational assessment can be summarized as follows: (Naji Tammar et al., 1993,p p. 199,200).

Alignment with Clear Objectives:

Assessments should be criterion-referenced, meaning that they should be aligned with specific and measurable learning objectives. For example, if an objective is for learners to be able to solve quadratic equations, then the assessment should be a test of quadratic equation solving skills.

Inclusiveness:

Inclusive assessment is an approach to assessment that seeks to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning, regardless of their background, abilities, or experiences, taking into account the personal aspects of learners, such as their language proficiency, ethnicity, and learning styles. This means that assessments should be fair and equitable, and that they should be designed to measure all of the learning objectives that are included in the educational curriculum.

Facilitation of Self-Assessment and Guidance:

Effective assessments are designed to facilitate self-assessment and guidance for both teachers and learners. They can be used to track progress, identify areas where improvement is needed, and provide feedback and guidance. By following these principles, educators can create assessments that are effective in promoting student learning.

Improvement of Teaching and Learning:

Education is more than just acquiring knowledge and information. It is also about developing the skills and attitudes necessary to succeed in life. This includes progressive behavioral changes, shaping a positive attitude towards learning, and applying the knowledge and skills they learn in school to real-life situations by providing them with opportunities to practice what they have learned.

Humaneness and Fairness:

Assessments should be humane and fair, taking into account all factors that can affect the results and make their observation challenging, such as environmental, psychological, and social factors.

Scientific Methods and Tools:

By adhering to the scientific method and an objective approach, both in collecting and analyzing information, we can obtain clear evidence and logical reasoning. This allows us to make informed decisions about the world around us and to develop new knowledge. For example, if the assessment is a multiple-choice test, then the questions should be written in a way that is free from ambiguity.

Types of assessment

Educational assessment can be categorized into the following types: (Shehata Mohamed Abdel Moneim, 2003,p. 55).

Diagnostic assessment

Pre-assessment, also known as diagnostic assessment or pre-evaluation, occurs before the start of the learning process and prior to teaching the content and subject matter of the lesson. It typically involves short written or oral questions aimed at determining the students' level and abilities before engaging in the teaching process. The purpose of pre-assessment is to gather information about students' prior knowledge, skills, and readiness to guide instructional planning and differentiate instruction according to their needs. It helps teachers identify any knowledge gaps, tailor their instruction to meet individual student needs, and establish a baseline for measuring progress and growth throughout the learning journey.

Formative assessment

Also known as ongoing assessment, refers to the assessment that takes place throughout the teaching process, starting from the beginning until the end. Its purpose is to monitor the extent to which learning objectives are being achieved and to track the progress of students towards those objectives. It provides students with timely and constructive feedback on their performance and learning outcomes, as well as insights into their strengths and weaknesses. Continuous formative assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning cycle, allowing educators to make adjustments and adaptations to instruction based on students' ongoing needs and progress. It helps guide instructional decisions, promote student engagement, and support overall learning improvement.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is a type of assessment that is conducted at the end of an instructional unit or course. It is used to measure student learning and achievement, and to make decisions about student progress, placement, or graduation. Summative assessments are typically high-stakes, meaning that they have a significant impact on student grades or other outcomes.

Continuous assessment

Continuous assessment is a type of assessment that takes place throughout the teaching and learning process, from the beginning of a lesson to the end of a unit. It is used to verify the mastery of learning competencies and address areas of weakness through feedback. Continuous assessment can be conducted in a variety of ways, including formal assessments, informal assessments, and self-assessments.

Importance of educational assessment

The importance of educational assessment can be summarized in several elements:

- Assessment itself is an educational experience for both teachers and students. It helps improve teaching methods and enhances students' learning strategies and recall techniques.
- Assessment assists teachers in identifying instructional levels and individual or collective difficulties among learners, whether they are related to academic achievement or behavior. It also helps in determining strategies to overcome these difficulties and planning preventive measures.
- Assessment contributes to evaluating students' progress toward learning goals with the aim of improving and correcting the educational process.
- Assessment focuses on identifying and addressing any deviations or challenges within the classroom and addressing various obstacles that impede students' learning during the teaching process. (Mahfouz and al., 2005,p. 409).

Part Two: University educational assessment
University teaching assessment

University teaching is a dynamic and advancing procedure during which all teaching skills and competencies are deployed with the aim of guaranteeing the achievement of the instructing method and accomplishing institutional and societal goals set by pertinent authorities. It is indispensable for faculty members to be knowledgeable about diverse instructing methods, strategies, and instructing competencies to be able to effectively execute them within the university educational environment.

Modern education incorporates a variety of innovative teaching strategies, methods, and assessment tools. Among these, university teaching assessment stands out as a crucial educational process (Muhammad Ahmed Murshid al-Qawas, 2016,).. It encompasses a range of essential components, such as student evaluation, assessing the teaching competencies of professors, evaluating teaching plans, assessing educational resources, and evaluating the learning environment. To ensure the effectiveness of this process, it is necessary to focus on improving teaching through modifying teaching objectives, content, and implementing effective strategies that address the educational environment in terms of curriculum, infrastructure, and competence. Additionally, attention should be given to the process of professional development within the context of technology and globalization.

University professor assessment

University professor assessment is a vital component in achieving the university's objectives, despite diverse educational philosophies worldwide. Effective assessment is crucial for the university's success. The professor, as the driving force behind the institution, possesses knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes.(Ammar Hamed, 1995,pp120,121)

Professors are not only experts in their field, but also dedicated scholars who actively seek knowledge and employ various methods to acquire and apply it. They contribute to personal and societal progress, both now and in the future. They actively engage with colleagues, students, and administration through lectures, supervision, and guidance. They participate in scientific seminars, conferences, and exhibit leadership qualities, serving as role models for their students. Their passion, mastery, and willingness to take responsibility reflect their commitment to academic and social issues. Additionally, professors participate in cultural, sports, and social activities while embodying positive communication, noble values, and knowledge-driven behavior.

University student assessment

The effectiveness of university teaching cannot be proven without assessing student performance. This process is necessary for the continuous development of students, faculty, curriculum, and all other means employed to achieve the university's goals and mission. (Ibrahim Huda Ahmed, Al-Badawi Khaled, 2014)

Providing learners with conditions to grasp knowledge within curricula by activating effective methods and strategies is crucial in modern education. Evaluation methods identify students' strengths, weaknesses, and achievement levels objectively. These methods inform alternative solutions and adjustments to enhance academic performance.

Under the LMD system, continuous evaluation plays an essential role through guided practice, assignments, projects, observations, interviews, presentations, self-assessment, and peer assessment. This system's assessment has transitioned from traditional methods to linking assessment with real-world tasks and students' professional readiness. This is shown through internships during students' final year.

It is worth noting that the influence of the classical system on academic performance is still evident in many disciplines within the university reality. The use of traditional methods, such as exams (paper and pen), remains prevalent, especially in evaluating the student's academic achievement in lectures. Similar methods are also employed in guided assignments, with the inclusion of other indicators such as the student's attendance, interaction in the classroom, and participation in research projects.

It is worth noting that the LMD system (License - Master - Doctorate) is a responsive system designed to meet the demands of knowledge globalization by improving the quality of higher education in order to achieve the following objectives 1:

- Organizing training programs into various pathways that provide students with guidance and mentoring from their supervising professors.
- Enhancing pedagogical quality, information dissemination, guidance, and student support.
- Developing professional skills in postgraduate studies.
- Promoting the acquisition of transferable skills, such as proficiency in foreign languages and the use of information technology and the internet.
- Facilitating international exchanges and the recognition of qualifications through equivalences and certifications.

The principles of the LMD system include:

- National degrees are awarded for the Bachelor's and Master's levels based on credit accumulation.
- The Bachelor's degree is obtained after accumulating 180 credits, at a rate of 30 credits per semester.
- The Master's degree is obtained after accumulating 120 credits, at a rate of 30 credits per semester, following the Bachelor's degree.
- The Doctorate degree is obtained after three years of research, following the completion of a Master's degree by research.

Conclusion

The teaching strategies and their goals have a significant impact on the methods and tools of evaluation. There is a clear contrast between traditional assessment strategies that focus on memorization and recall of stored information by the student, and modern assessment strategies aimed at developing an integrated and balanced personality for the student through the integration of thinking skills, multiple intelligences, inquiry-based learning, and other contemporary approaches.

Considering evaluation as a vital component in the educational process, traditional assessment strategies are no longer able to keep pace with the knowledge explosion and advancements in information and communication technology.

Therefore, the implementation of modern assessment strategies represents a dynamic and progressive movement driven by the changes and developments in various fields, particularly in the realms of knowledge and research. Consequently, delivering quality educational services to meet diverse societal needs, especially in the context of globalization, technology, and global competition, has become a scientific and methodological necessity that requires the activation of objective evaluation to ensure the continuity, growth, and development of universities.

Universities require effective measurement and evaluation mechanisms to enhance both their quantitative and qualitative performance and achieve the objectives of higher education.

Thus, it is essential to establish an assessment framework in their policies and objectives, enabling the provision of quality educational services to various individuals and segments of society.

Recommendations

- Emphasize the establishment of institutes and centers for evaluation, training, and educational development to assess the teaching practices of faculty members and work on developing their teaching competencies.
- Establish and implement training programs for faculty members to develop their skills and use continuous assessment methods and feedback to improve their teaching.
- Call on university officials to develop and implement policies and procedures that support the use of advanced and modern assessment methods for performance evaluation and academic achievement.
- Stay up-to-date on modern teaching methods in the context of globalization and technology.

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