

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE COSTS OF EVALUATION

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Abstract

The present paper presents at first ideas about how evaluation can play a key role in the educational reform. Thus, a great variety of data sources, new social power relations and changed ways of thinking about evaluation are required. The new directions for the teachers' evaluation utter that a good evaluation has to assure the audience and also offer a main source of reward and recognition for teachers. It also pretends both the teachers' participation and control. An important issue the pedagogues consider at present is the cost of evaluation: there are different evaluation costs: evaluation costs in terms of money, in terms of time, in terms of materials and morale costs. In its second part, the paper presents several types of data source for teacher evaluation: the pupil reports, teacher tests, documentation of professional activity, systematic observation, dossier assembly and the specific cost for each and every presented approach in the American society and for comparison the costs – as they are seen – in the Romanian system of learning.

Keywords: *evaluation, teachers, costs, system of learning*

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Introduction

Let us begin with the question: why should teachers want a good evaluation? The formal and most common answer is for improvement: of themselves and of the system of learning. The specialists utter that the research demonstrates that improved practice as a result of evaluation is nonexistent. Instead, other reasons for increasing the teachers' evaluation are the following: teachers' security, audience assurance, the development of ideas for improved practice for the profession, new pieces of information for teacher training and education and the research stimulation [1, p. 3].

New directions for teacher evaluation

Instead of the current practices that are inaccurate and not useful, teacher evaluation can be made to work. A correct evaluation has to assure teachers that they do good works, offer security and an appropriate status to well functioning teachers, disseminate the new education concepts and ideas and convince the public society that teachers really contribute to the society.

The changes in evaluation practice require a gradual introduction and also institutional changes over a period of several years.

The specialists in education say that the educators should adopt and accept the new directions; otherwise they continue to have the evaluation not taken seriously. As concern the political situation, the situation shows that the society became greatly consumer oriented. Citizens require credible information on how the public resources are used and what is the final result.

The new directions and tendencies want to offer response to questions such as: what is the nature of a good teacher evaluation? What techniques are the most appropriate and needed? What are the costs of all aspects and forms: direct, indirect, transition?

The new conception proposed by K. Peterson [1, p. 4-12] refers to the following twelve aspects; these are to improve evaluation, to offer better results to all categories implied in evaluation process:

1. Emphasize the function of teacher evaluation to document and acknowledge the good teaching that already exists. The civil society need to get information about the quality of teachers' performance. Thus, if the teachers interest in evaluation increases, due to positive payoffs, other functions of the evaluation will be enhanced.

2. Use good reasons to evaluate. Recognition of good teaching practices represents good examples for colleagues. The author proposes new uses for teachers' evaluation data, such as teacher leadership decisions, promoting and public relations information.

3. Place the teacher at the centre of evaluation activity. The hint is to make evaluation a task conducted by the teacher himself. He has to be aware of and responsible for data assembly, judgments and the use of evaluation results. More than that, the teachers can be involved in evaluating their colleagues.

4. Use more than one person to judge teacher quality and performance. Judgments about the quality of teaching should be made by using panels that comprise extensive evidence of teachers' performance, activity and situation. The above mentioned panels should be fulfilled by different types of actors implied in evaluation. We know there are questions easy to be answered at and also there are questions that require judgment from a broader perspective.

5. Limit administrator judgment role in teacher evaluation. The author considers the administrators can monitor for only minimal performance. Their judgments are required, necessary and pertinent when quick judgments are needed: to stop abusive or acute problems teacher practices. Their role is to see the teacher overall activity in relation to parents, school boards, local and national education

policy. The author makes pertinent observations on the basic role conflict of interest when the administrators fulfil both roles: summative judges and educational leaders.

6. Use multiple data sources to inform judgments about teacher quality. Good teaching is a very complex set of activities and has to rely on documents and recognition in a varied number of ways. These can comprise data sources such as: student and parent surveys, peer review, pupil gain data, teacher tests and other unique pieces of evidence.

7. When possible, include actual pupil achievement data. Defensible data on pupils achievements require the teachers' choice, agreement on what is to be measured, good tests and gain data.

8. Use variable data sources to inform judgments. Good teachers are good for different reasons. What makes one teacher good cannot function for another one. Teacher can make teaching function in many different ways.

9. Spend the time and other resources needed to recognize good teaching. Serious and at the same time comprehensive evaluation require teachers to take individual time to consider their own situation, position and data gathering.

10. Use research on teacher evaluation correctly. Generally the research studies in the literature are not taken into consideration. For example, the research on inaccuracy of principal reports did not eliminate them in practice. New practices, such as including artefacts of teaching are used in a timid way.

11. Attend to the sociology of teacher evaluation. The sociology of the working place represents an important barrier in changing and improving teachers' evaluation. Generally, the system does not recognize the sociological forces. According to the sociologists, current school environments are the most reward scarce settings for any professional work.

12. Use the results of teacher evaluation to encourage personal professional dossiers, publicize aggregated results and support teacher promotion systems. Teachers personal professional dossier tell the teachers story. They offer security and files about value, merit and worth. They also show that a good teaching activity requires much preparation and individual initiative.

To sum up the new tendencies and directions presented above, we can say that they represent big changes and challenges for educators. Teachers locked into the old system seem to consider all these actions as being too ambitious or unnecessary. This position is dangerous and unconstructive. The changes in evaluation practice require a gradual introduction. However, the research literature clearly utter that the educators should quickly adopt these directions; otherwise they keep on having a not taken into consideration evaluation.

Different types of data sources for teacher evaluation in terms of costs

As we said above, there are different data sources for realizing teacher evaluation. One of them is *the pupil reports*. The pupil report data have a large number of possible usages. The costs for the pupil surveys include the duplication

of the forms and time for administration and scoring them. The Peterson study [2, p. 30-34] found a cost of 8.50 \$ per teacher in the American schools.

Teacher tests are other method used in evaluation. Their costs include the testing fees and personnel costs for monitoring tests. The same study mentioned above affirms that the estimate cost for teacher tests is 2.35 \$ per teacher per year.

Documentation of professional activity summarizes important preparation and credentials for teaching, the efforts to keep and also update the professional skills and knowledge. For the most part of the teacher, this activity represents a concrete and satisfactory affirmation of their activity. For others it should be a time of reflection and consideration for increasing their professional involvement. The same author estimated a time cost of 1 hour per year to maintain and update the professional activity records: 2.00 \$ per year.

Systematic observation is popular with teachers. The great majority of the teachers comprise this activity in their evaluation. Systematic observation is an expensive data source. Peterson [1, p. 30-36] estimated for this activity a general cost of 85 \$ per teacher.

Dossier assembly is also one technique taken into consideration. The dossiers are to be not longer than 15 pages; they have to contain several data sources. As concern the dossier assembly costs, one of its area is represented by the personnel time. Teachers need time to plan, talk and also research and maintain the records. The evaluators at their turn need time to file, review and audit the dossiers. Another dossier cost is for production. This includes the paper duplication. Computer storage of the teacher data may be an additional expense. The specialists [2] say that the sociological value of these types of activities far exceeds the monetary value.

The costs of teacher evaluation

Specialists in education – Scriven [3], Thomson [4] and many others – took into consideration the cost of evaluation in their works. The current practice shows that the system acts as if the teacher evaluation has no expense; this activity represents a normal and included part of the schools' responsibilities. The expenses connected to teacher evaluation include data gathering, decision making and personnel usage. So, there are different evaluation costs: evaluation costs in terms of money, in terms of time, in terms of materials and morale costs. We must not forget about expenses of initializing and installing the evaluation systems and costs connected with not doing other actions or activities restricted by the evaluation process.

The teacher evaluation must be seen and understood in relation to the appropriate costs it implies. The discussions and the decisions about the new adopted policies and specific techniques required by evaluation are to be done in the light of explicit and specific cost and benefit analyses.

Ideas connected with cost – benefit analyses were referred to by great pedagogue specialists: Levin, Glass and Meister [5]. The specialist deal with evaluation have to estimate and monitor costs as one of the fundamental activities.

These costs must be seen in the terms of payoffs. After serious studies, Peterson established an approximately general cost of 45 \$ per teacher per year [1, p.329].

As concern the Romanian system of learning, a very elaborated and scrupulous calculation was made and presented in a Government Law [6], including the standards with costs per pupil for the teachers continuous training and evaluation, costs for the pupils periodical and intern evaluation, material costs and costs for services and also costs with the current maintenance. Thus, the calculation is not separated in its components; it is seen on the whole. A fragment of the table is presented below, in Table 1.

Table 1

Standard cost per pupil

Romanian currency RON								
Criterion 1: Thresholds	Criterion 2: Types of schools	Criterion 3: Place Urban/ Rural	Standard cost per pupil, in conformity with the temperature area					
			Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6
0-150 pupils	Kindergarten	Urban	268	270	276	284	292	300
		Rural	228	230	235	241	248	255
	School I-IV	Urban	252	254	259	267	274	282
		Rural	212	214	218	225	231	237
	School I-VIII	Urban	256	259	264	271	279	287
		Rural	216	218	223	229	236	242
	School V-VIII	Urban	267	270	275	283	291	299
		Rural	227	229	234	241	248	254
	School Group	Urban	264	267	272	280	288	296
		Rural	224	227	231	238	245	251
	High School	Urban	285	288	294	303	311	320
		Rural	246	248	253	260	268	275
	College	Urban	293	296	301	310	319	328
		Rural	253	255	260	268	276	283

Source: [7] <http://legestart.ro/Hotararea-1274-2011>

Conclusions

There is no more important work in the society than the education and care of the young people. Teachers dedicated their activity and working lives to this purpose.

Specialists gained general consensus on what teacher should be doing: that is enabling students/pupils to learn important subjects that consists of information, skills and attitudes. But there is less agreement about the manner the teacher should perform other important task of their job: teachers are expected to help students recognize their competencies, feel more confident about themselves, become rational and active citizens, develop their responsibility, increase their ability of problem-solving, prepare them for accept the work and moral values, think critically, collaborate with others of different nationalities, sex etc. When these important goals of education are taken into consideration, it becomes more difficult to specify and measure the teachers' activity in a narrow way.

Having in mind all these above mentioned considerations and teachers roles, it is difficult to establish fixed rate of costs. These costs need to be analyzed in terms of payoffs. There is good evaluation idea that should be supported because of the cost-benefit justification; other ideas should be discarded because of their great costs. Money spent on teacher evaluation is taken from other supports and materials which could improve teaching.

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