Analysis on Necessity and Rationality of College Student Evaluation of Teaching

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ABSTRACT

The necessity and rationality of college student evaluation are elaborated through analyzing the evaluation grades of a school of University of Jinan, and the caused problems and malpractices are pointed out. We think that student evaluation basically reflects the teaching level of teachers, at least the ranking of their teaching ability, and is deserved to be extended.

Introduction

In recent years, evaluation of teaching is introduced to the universities of China from abroad to judge teaching level of teachers. Student evaluation of teaching takes off the fig leaf on the heads of teachers, and thus causes a great debate among teachers. As opinions vary, no unanimous conclusion can be drawn all the time. Recently, Xiong[1] deeply analyzed the reasons of failure of students’ evaluation, and came down to the following reasons: the degree granting system, incomplete point system, shortage of counterpart evaluation, and limited autonomous space of students, etc. As a frontline teacher with 27-year teaching experience of higher school, I am all through judged and commented from head to feet by students every year, and carefully analyzed and deeply thought the evaluation grades for me. I cannot agree with Xiong, instead, I think that student evaluation basically embodies the teaching level of a teacher and the problems arising in student evaluation are induced by incomplete technical details, questionnaire setting and organization, rather than by student evaluation itself. According to the results of students’ rating of teaching for teachers of a school of the University of Jinan in the recent five years, we statistically analyze the rating results to prove the rationality of students’ rating, and point out the existing problems.

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The necessity of student evaluation

The aim of student evaluation is to objectively judge the teaching level of teachers, and to promote the quality of teaching rather than to insult anybody. However, student evaluation makes the knowledge level, teaching level and teaching attitude of a teacher expose to all, which irritates the sensitive and fragile nerves of some people and causes their antipathy. In our opinion, there's no point in making a big fuss about it. The technical level of a worker is embodied by the quality of product he produced, the skill of a farmer by his harvest of crops, the medical level of a doctor by his/her ability of curing diseases, the abilities of all the above employee can be embodied by visible effects. As one of the professions, teacher’s work object are students, in a sense, students are teachers’ product. Whether or not their product is to be qualified and to be a useful reflects the school running level, apparently with nothing to do with a teacher’s level.

In fact, only when each teacher’s level is upgraded can the running level of the school be promoted. In that way, how to characterize the teaching level of a teacher? Obviously, student evaluation is the most appropriate method. Nowadays, in higher schools of China, the ability to research of a teacher is weighed by his published papers and research funding, however, there are no objective indices to express his/her teaching ability. So it is undoubtedly logical to quantify the teaching level of a teacher, and there no need to excessively criticize student evaluation. As I know, many students attach importance to the evaluation, they think that it is their right to participate in the teaching process. Before rating, they can hold a consultation about the matter in dormitories. They are serious! So long as we pay attention to the problems arisen and continuously optimize the rating indices, student evaluation will become more scientific and reasonable.

Analysis of rationality of student evaluation

Since 2010, student evaluation has been carried out in our university, one time per term. Every student must grade his/her teachers who teach them each term, only after he/she rates can he/she read his/her exam grades. At the same time, they are required to give a description in words on the teaching problems for his/her teachers. Student evaluation is fed back to teachers at the end of each year. Students’ rating is not boundless but well-founded. The executive branch of our school drafts a series of evaluation’s indices and students judge their teachers according to these indices. The evaluation indices for theoretical courses of the University of Jinan are listed in table 1. From table 1 we can see that most of indices are practical except one or two, and cover all aspects of teaching, such as teaching preparation, classroom interaction, teacher explanation, homework, and so on. According to the indices, every teacher is graded by the students who he/she teaches at the end of each term.

Taking for example the rating results of a school in the University of Jinan in the recent five years, a total of 50 teachers who have five rating results, we analyzed their ranking change in the five years. As the teachers ranked in top 30% will be awarded at the end of each year, so we divide all teachers into three groups, that is, top 30% (top 15), middle 40% (middle 30) and bottom 30% (bottom 15), and analyze their rating results in the five years. Through analysis, we found that there are nine teachers always
in the top 15 and 14 teachers’ rank changes back and forth in the top 15 and in the middle 30. None of top 15 drops into the bottom 15 and person in the last 15 seldom jumps into the top 15. As students rate anonymously, they needn’t worry that teachers know who lowly rate them. So, we think students’ judgment really represents in their minds and objectively reflects the teaching level of each teacher, at least the ranking of their teaching ability. As for the student evaluation to me, without exception, my advantages and disadvantages are all commented and student evaluation coincides with my self-appraisal.

From above analyses, we think that student evaluation basically embodies the real teaching level of a teacher or his/her ranking among teachers even though it has some flaws or other. To some extent, students are teacher’s consumers, so their evaluation is of great concern to a teacher.

Table 1. Indices of student evaluation of University of Jinan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Indices</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
<th>Choice A (100)</th>
<th>Choice B (80)</th>
<th>Choice C (60)</th>
<th>Choice D (40)</th>
<th>Choice E (20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Whether or not explicitly introduce program objective, requirement and exam method</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Highly detailed</td>
<td>More detailed</td>
<td>introduced</td>
<td>Incompletely introduced</td>
<td>Not introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Enlightening, encouraging students to participate in class activities and making them interested.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Highly enlightening and making me very interested</td>
<td>more enlightening and making me more interested</td>
<td>Commonly enlightening and making me interested</td>
<td>A little enlightening, a little interest</td>
<td>No enlightening, no interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Whether or not assignment is helpful and is timely correct and fed back?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Very helpful and give feedback very timely</td>
<td>helpful and give feedback timely</td>
<td>Commonly helpful and occasional feedback</td>
<td>A little helpful and no feedback</td>
<td>No help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Exchange after class (face to face, or via network)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Frequently exchange and works very well</td>
<td>Exchange and works well</td>
<td>Exchange but generally satisfactory</td>
<td>Occasionally exchange</td>
<td>No exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learned more than expected and deepened interest on profession</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Much more and deepened interest on profession</td>
<td>Much more, and deepened my interest on profession</td>
<td>Almost the same as expected</td>
<td>Less than expected</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I master the main contents, basic ideas of this course, and can discuss and exchange about it with others.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Deeply understand and can discuss and exchange with others</td>
<td>understand and can discuss and exchange with others</td>
<td>basically understand and can discuss and exchange a little.</td>
<td>basically understand but difficult to discuss and exchange</td>
<td>Don’t understand and can’t discuss and exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Respect and care for students and nurture students by one’s behaviors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Do very well and let me benefit much</td>
<td>Do well and let me benefit a little</td>
<td>Do a general job</td>
<td>Do a not good job</td>
<td>It’s a bad job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>As a whole, are you satisfied with the teacher’s class?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Feel generally</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problems caused by student evaluation

Student evaluation objectively reflects the teaching ability of teachers, and provides a reference for further promotion for them. Some problems still arise in the process of student evaluation, mainly in the following aspects: (1) As the student evaluation is linked to teacher’s income, professional title assessment and personal reputation, some teachers relax demands on students in order to get higher evaluation grades from students, which results in a decrease in teaching quality and class management; Some teachers even distribute red packets to students for a higher evaluation grade, which drags down the moral climate of teachers. (2) Some students judge unseriously and randomly, which causes evaluation lack fidelity. (3) The differences among courses, such as compulsory vs. selective, professional vs. common, theoretical vs. experimental, first-year classes vs. senior classes, may result in different evaluation grades even for the same teacher. Hence, for a higher evaluation grade, some teachers would rather choose easy courses to teach than complicated, bringing about chaos in teaching arrangement. (4) Some indices are not easy to be operated, by which students are difficult to rate, resulting in rating errors.

Conclusions

In order to decrease the errors of students’ rating, our school begin to launch ratings by instructional supervisors and counterparts this year. The final results of each teacher are consisted of three parts, in which students’ rating takes up 70%, supervisors’ rating 15%, and counterparts’ rating 15%. For that reason, a committee of supervisors which is responsible for rating is especially established. Each supervisor can enter any classroom in our school to attend a lecture, and give his/her rating on the lecturer, which will be reckoned in the lecturer’s final results. As for counterpart’s rating, it is all so unnecessary in my opinion, because counterparts are very familiar with each other, it is very difficult to give a fair evaluation to his colleagues. We think that students’ evaluation can definitely reflect the real teaching level of a teacher and be helpful for promoting his/her teaching level, as long as we continuously optimize the rating indices and elaborately organize and correctly guide students to rate.

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REFERENCES