

Student Teachers' Feedback – An Effective Tool in Teacher Educators' Evaluation System

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Evaluation is an integral part in teaching learning process. There are various methods of teachers' evaluation which include student feedback, peer observation, viewing a is considered as the most effective and reliable method. **Materials and Methods:** This study evaluates the effectiveness of the students' feedback in teachers' evaluation of B.Sc.B.Ed integrated course in a Education department of a University. A feedback of professional teacher educators was obtained from the third semester student teachers. This feedback was obtained through a proforma which was validated through peer review. Based on the feedback, the teacher educators were informed about their strengths and weaknesses in a confidential manner. A uniform opportunity was then provided to these teacher educators for three months to improve their teaching skills. At the end of the period, again a questionnaire was administered to both the students and the teachers to assess the effectiveness of the feedback system. **Results:** More than two-third of the student teachers and teacher educators agreed that the students teachers' feedback is an effective tool for the faculty development. Most of the teacher educators were satisfied with the present format of the feedback system and agreed that it sensitized them toward the student teachers need. **Conclusion:** Students teachers' feedback is an effective tool for teacher educators' evaluation resulting in faculty development. Other methods such as peer observation, attending workshops, conferences, resource persons and active contribution in the field of research may also be utilised for the overall assessment of teachers.

Key Words: Student teachers feedback, teacher educators evaluation, teaching and learning

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is an integral part in teaching learning process. Teachers' evaluation has been accepted globally as a very useful input to improve the quality of the teaching. These systems for evaluating teaching and course quality in teacher education has long been established in the western countries but not very effectively in our country.

In recent times there has been a growth of interest in this area from a range of different perspectives driven both internally by institutions themselves and externally by national quality initiatives.

In today's world, all institutes hire teachers with an expectation of good performance to ensure great results and to build upon the institute's rapport among competitors. Thus, institutes are willing to use all tools available to continuously monitor and improve their teachers' performance.

NAAC in a report on Student Feedback and Participation (2007) mentioned that students are believed to be the most important part of higher education system. Students play a major role in internal and external quality assurance. Every institution should make sure that their students play decisive role in formulating learning and teaching practices. Their decision should be considered in evaluating quality of teaching and learning.

There are a large number of possible sources of feedback and evaluation data on teaching. The most preferred and reliable source of input for teaching evaluation is feedback from students. In fact, student ratings is a necessary source of evidence of teaching effectiveness and obtaining student's feedback is a routine practice in most of the institutions.

Especially, in teacher training institutions student teachers are trained in various skills of teaching through practice using micro, mini and macro teacher training techniques by adopting peer observation, feedback given by peer as well as their supervisors, and by reflecting. This study was undertaken with the aim to improve the quality of teaching by adapting to new learning environment by introducing student’s feedback as a teacher educators’ evaluation system and also contributing in the overall faculty development.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out on the effectiveness of student feedback for teacher educator’s evaluation in the B.Sc.B.Ed integrated course from a Education department of a University. A feedback form for the teacher’s evaluation(Table 1) was developed and validated through peer review. It was then distributed to the B.Sc. B.Ed intergrated course students who were in first, third, fifth and seventh semester student teachers after getting clearance from the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the University. Teacher educators were also sensitized about the importance of students teachers’ feedback through a formal meeting before starting the study. Students were allowed to fill the proforma anonymously. A code name was assigned to each teacher in the department to maintain the confidentiality. The students were made aware of the codes so that they can identify the teacher educators .

Table -1
Student teachers’ feedback proforma

Department -----
 Code -----
 Semester -----
 Course -----
 Year -----
 Batch -----

Rate each attribute of the teacher by rating 1- 5 in the table according to your assessment of the teacher’s performance on a five point scale given below. 5:Excellent; 4:Good; 3:Average;2:Poor; 1:Very Poor

S.No.	Attributes	TE 1	TE 2	TE 3	TE 4	TE 5	TE 6	TE 7	TE 8	TE 9	TE 10	TE 11	TE 12	TE 13	TE 14	TE 15
1.	Organisation and preparedness of the classes															
2	Promptness of conducting classes															
3.	Appropriate use of different teaching aids(ppt,chalkboard,etc.)															
4.	Clarity in presentation															
5	Communicates effectively															
6	Recommends additional learning resources (books , journals, websites etc..)															
7	Provides timely feedback on student’s performance															
8	Creates comfortable learning environment for the students															
9	Encourages extracurricular activities															

	(cultural, sports, social activities)																		
10	Provides assistance and counseling on the subject and is available for after class consultation																		
11	Interact and encourages students to ask question/participation																		
12	Gives adequate time in completing the records and assignments																		
13	Gives proper guidance in preparing the records innovatively																		
14	Gives adequate demonstration classes in the pedagogical contents																		
15	Gives adequate training sessions for teaching practice																		
16	Maintains discipline in the class																		
17	As a role model																		

*TE-Teacher Educator

The feedback was then analysed by a three member committee using the same codes without disclosing the identity of the teacher educators to them. After the analysis, the strength and weaknesses of the teacher educators were summarized and then the report was sealed within the envelope mentioning the code. This was handed over to the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the University, which in turn gave the sealed envelope to the concerned teacher educator as per their code. This maintained the confidentiality and only the concerned teacher educator could know about his or her strengths and weaknesses. For three months all the teacher educators were given equal opportunity to teach and interact with the student teachers. Again after three months a questionnaire was given to both the student teachers and faculty to assess any improvement in the teaching skills and its impact on the students.

Observations and Results

A total number of 80 student teachers filled the feedback proforma. Most of the teacher educators as mentioned by the student teachers were regular, prepared their classes well, used adequate audio-visual aids, and communicated effectively. Most of them were approachable and also encouraged student teachers to participate in various academic and extracurricular activities. All the teacher educators were good in counselling regarding their career goals and future plans.

However, many of them were lacking in providing the regular feedback about their performance in the particular subject. Only few of the teacher educators were good as a role model.

Faculty Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to the 15 teacher educators after they have been told about their performance. Twelve of them returned the complete questionnaire with some suggestions. (Table -2)

1. Suggest any other method of teacher evaluation system

Nine (60%) of the teacher educators suggested self-evaluation, while four teachers suggested peer evaluation as an alternative method. All 15 teacher educators suggested that it should be multisource feedback.

2. Other factor as mentioned by the teachers which may affect the student's feedback

- Students residing in hostel may give different feedback from the day scholars (mentioned by 2 teacher).
- Students who belong to other than southern part of India may give different feedback due to language and cultural differences.
- Teacher educators looking after administrative posts tend to get a good feedback (mentioned by 3 teachers)
- Teacher educators designation may have impact on students feedback.
- Recently taken lectures were usually given good feedback (mentioned by 4 teachers)
- Number of lectures taken by each faculty is not equal especially when the feed is taken (mentioned by 3 teachers)

Student teachers questionnaire

All the eighty student teachers who have filled the feedback pro forma were given the questionnaire. Seventy four student teachers returned the questionnaire (Table-3).

Students mentioned the following points when asked for any other method of teacher evaluation system

- Evaluation by the administration (Mentioned by 3 students)
- Feedback should not be taken (Mentioned by 8 students)

Discussion

Teaching evaluation processes concentrate on the core activity of teaching covering areas such as planning and preparation, the classroom environment, instruction of teaching and training the teaching skills through practice sessions in teacher education. The primary

purpose of such feedback is to help the faculty to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and evaluation methods.⁽¹⁻³⁾

Various other ways of assessing teachers' effectiveness include student achievement measures, on-the-job evaluation, performance measures and use of portfolios.⁽⁴⁾ The method of students' feedback as an evaluation test for teachers can be considered as one method of the on the job evaluation. Other common sources of information may be peers, administrators, and teachers self-evaluation.⁽⁵⁾ In this paper it has been tried to find the effectiveness of student teachers feedback as an evaluation tool.

Table 2:
Questionnaire regarding students feedback after knowing the feedback from the students on a 5-point Likert scale

S No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Students feedback is an effective tool for faculty development	0	9(60)	6(40)	0	0
2.	In am satisfied with the present format of teaching evaluation system	0	8(53.3)	4(26.66)	3(20)	0
3.	Feedback should be taken after every semester	0	0	0	9(60)	6(40)
4.	Feedback should be taken after the end semester	0	0	0	8(53.3)	7(46.66)
5.	Students do not fill the form seriously	0	9(60)	3(20)	3(20)	0
6.	Designation of the teacher influences the students response	0	8(53.33)	4(26.66)	3(20)	0
7.	Gender of the teacher influences the students response	0	0	3(20)	12(80)	0
8.	A strict teacher may get poor response as compared to lenient teacher	5(33.33)	8(53.33)	2(13.33)	0	0
9.	A strict teacher may get poor response as compared to lenient teacher	0	0	0	3(20)	12(80)
10.	Teacher evaluation system should not be used at all	0	3(20)	7(46.66)	5(33.33)	0
11.	Students feedback as a teacher evaluation system makes you uncomfortable	0	8(53.33)	3(20)	4(26.66)	0
12.	Teacher's evaluation system helped you to overcome your Evaluation system made you more aware toward students' need	5(33.33)	10(66.66)	0	0	0

Table 3:
Questionnaire regarding students feedback as a faculty development tool on a 5-point Likert scale

S.No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree
1.	Students feedback enhance the overall performance of the teachers	6(7.5)	62 (77.5)	67.5	67.5	0

2	It helped the teachers to improve their teaching skills	8 (10)	60(75)	7(8.75)	5(6.25)	0
3	Feedback should be taken after every semester	0	64(80)	2(2.5)	14(17.5)	0
4	Feedback should be taken after the end semester	0	8(10)	0	72(90)	0
5	The feedback should be filled by all the batches	46(57.5)	23(28.75)	0	11(13.75)	0
6	Designation of the teacher influences the students response	0	9(11.25)	0	71(88.75)	0
7	Students are not mature enough to judge the teachers	0	26(32.5)	0	45(56.25)	9(11.25)
8	Teacher's performance has helped you in your learning in the class	0	58(72.5)	14(17.5)	8(10)	0

Peer evaluation, self-evaluation and administrator observation have questionable reliability due to small number of raters. This is probably one of the reason which has led to the institutions using student evaluation of teaching.⁽⁶⁾

Students evaluation of teaching is generally found to be reliable. Research has shown that certain teacher variables (such as gender, age, level, grade, average, personality), course variables(class, size, time of day of class), and administrative variables (time of module during the term) generally do not impact upon the evaluations given by students on teaching quality.⁽⁷⁾ In our study, most of the teachers mentioned designation as an important variable affecting the students response. They have also mentioned that the allotment of number of lectures, topic, and the timing of lectures plays an important role in students response.

Literature exploring the validity of student evaluations found that this tend to correlate highly with lecturers' self-ratings, with the ratings of lecturers' colleagues and with students' actual grades.[7] One of the key issues in the student evaluation of teacher is the question of how competent students are to make judgments on teaching and course quality. It should be remembered that students are not competent enough to evaluate teaching roles such as those involving course design (objectives, content, methods, and assessment), or grading practice in assessment.

However, in terms of "the quality of the delivery of lecture or instruction," it is generally agreed that only students are in a position to provide a good feedback.[8] Although all the teachers agreed that students feedback made them more aware of the students need and helped them to improve their skills but still feedback make them uncomfortable even after sensitization. The limitation of this study is that it was done only on B.Sc.B.Ed student teachers to know the effectiveness and acceptability of student teachers' feedback as a teacher educator evaluation system in a department of Education in a University. This now can be implemented to all the incoming batches and can be extended to other departments as well, as it will help the faculty to further improve their skills and academic performance ultimately leading to overall faculty development.

Conclusions

Feedback is a way of learning more about ourselves and the effect our behaviour has on others. It plays a significant role in improving teachers' effectiveness, amending their behaviour, understanding students' point of view, strengthening student teacher relationship and evaluating their subject matter expertise which in turn helps them to grow both professionally and personally. Students' feedback of their teacher has become the most commonly used source of information to evaluate teachers as it is akin to getting feedback about the food from the people who actually eat it. Although students' feedback might not be a solution to all the problems in teaching but it surely plays a significant role in improving instructional effectiveness.

Student teachers' feedback is an important and effective tool for the teacher educators evaluation but other sources of feedback may also be utilized for the overall assessment of a teacher.

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