THE QUALITY OF ASSESSING IN THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF LEARNING

Daliana Ecaterina TASCOVICI, Robert Gabriel DRAGOMIR, Eliza Consuela ISBĂŞOIU
Spiru Haret University, Faculty of Accounting and Finance, 115100 Campulung Muscel, Romania
dalianatascovici@yahoo.com, robert73d@yahoo.com, prof_vesel74@yahoo.com

Abstract: The present paper' aim is to present several aspects connected to the quality of the assessing in the university system of learning. First of all, we spoke about the assessing in general in the educative act. Then, we restricted the sphere to the formative assessing and its specifications. Within the second part of the paper, we exposed and described our contributions to the field. First of all, we presented the flux scheme in the process of the formative assessing, with its specific actions: the defining requirements of the formative assessing, the modalities and criteria for the formative assessing, the elaboration the necessary materials for assessing, the validation of the elaborated materials, starting participants' selection, the participants selection and validation, the organizing and taking the formative evaluation, the archiving the documents, the analysing the formative assessing process and improving the process. The identification data sheet of the formative assessing process contains the process code, the process name, the process scope and the responsible person. The entrance in the process is another aspect we depicted. Here are its specific issues: the entrance code, the entrances in the process and the targets. The fourth aspect presented speaks about the intern and extern risks. The process outputs contain the output code, the process outputs and the performing indices. The last aspect presented is the scheme of its interfacing with other processes, comprising the upstream and the downstream involved processes. In the end we drew the conclusions and presented a plan of improvement the quality of the formative assessing process. The plan contains a few categories, namely: the problem description, in brief, the cause analysis, the corrective actions or the preventive actions proposed, the deadline and the responsible person, the implied resources, the measuring or the monitoring required method.

Keywords: university system of learning, process, assessing, formative assessing, students, quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of assessing is a complex one, with multiple aspects and connotations. [3] If we generalize the theoretic approaches, the assessing can be conceived as a general modality of measuring, administration and sense or interpretation, manifested into products, procedures and processes. [2] Thus, the measure results or products are identified into pieces of knowledge, abilities and attitudes of the learners. In the case of the assessing seen as administration, the accent lies on the procedures, translated into strategies, instruments, steps. All these lead to the product elaboration, because the procedures are those which regulate the assessing. Assessing as a sense is the one which reintroduces the subjectivity within the objectivity of the evaluative act, with the help of the attitudes, the values, the opinions of the teachers and students. It is well known the fact that these are developed in a different way, depending on the representations the actors of the educative act make. [5]

If we want to define the assessing phenomenon, we can say that the assessing theory and practice in education register a great variety of ways of approaching and understanding of the assessing actions sense. [4]

II. THE PROCESS OF THE FORMATIVE ASSESSING

By using the modern devices in evaluation, [1] one can observe and respect several steps and actions. Their presentation and description are realized below, in the figure no. 1 The realization and the presentation as well the content of the below figure belong to us.
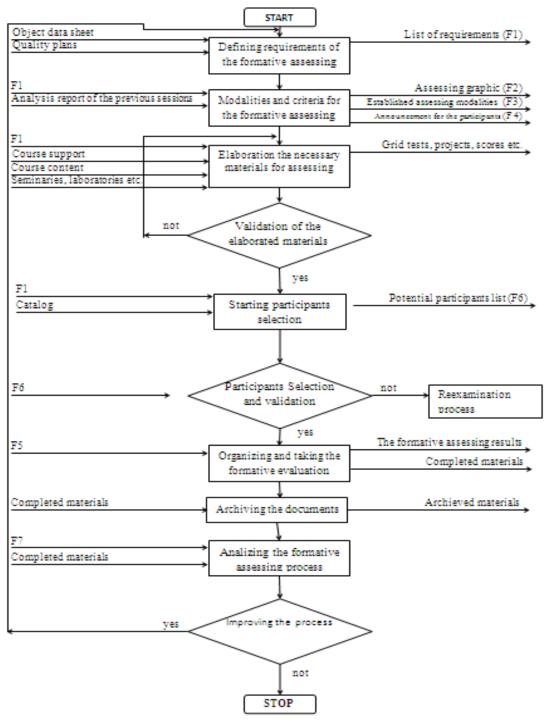
Figure 1. The flux scheme in the process of the formative assessing

In order to define the requirements of the formative assessing, the inputs are represented by the following two documents: object data sheet and the quality plans. The output of this stage is represented by a list of requirements (F1).

The inputs for the second stage, modalities and criteria for the formative assessing are the above mentioned list of requirements (F1) and of much help is the analysis report of the previous sessions, for the weak and the strong points.

The outputs are materialized in a few lists: an assessing graphic (F2), the list with the established assessing modalities (F3) and the announcement toward participants (F4). The elaboration of the necessary materials for the assessing needs a few entrances: course support, course content, seminaries, laboratories, and so on. The exits of this activity are grid tests, projects, scores.

The next stage is the validation of the elaborated materials. This can be done by the specific department. If the validation fails, then the previous stage is resumed. If the validation is confirmed, then we can pass the next stage, entitled starting selection of the participants. Here we need the sheet F1 and the catalogue. After analyzing both of them, we obtain a list of potential participants (F6).

The stage named participants selection and validation, with the help of the form F6, selects the students which are allowed to participate the examination.

The students who did not fulfilled the requirements and are not allowed to take the examination, have to be re-examined in a special session. The students who can take the examination form the list F5.

After the examination, we obtain the list F7, which comprises the results of the formative assessing and also the students' completed materials: essays, projects, commentaries, analyses, translations and so on. The stage Archived documents transforms the completed materials into archived materials. After this stage, the teachers have to analyze the formative assessing process. Here, the entrances are represented by the F7 form, which are the results of the formative assessing and the completed materials during the examination.

If the resolution of this stage requires the process improvement, then the whole process has to be reconstructed, beginning with the first stage – the defining of the formative evaluation requirements. In addition to the above mentioned issues, we deep the research and analyze the identification data sheet of the formative assessing process.

Thus, the categories are the process code, named by us P1; the process name; the process scope; the responsible person, as it is presented in the table number 1.

Table 1. Identification data sheet of the formative assessing process

Process code	Process name	Process scope	Responsible person
P1	Formative evaluation	Knowledge assessing Feedback Students mobilizing	The teacher

The entrance codes, the entrances in the process and the target (Upi) are to be seen in the table no.2, presented below. The first entrance in the process is the number of students to be evaluated. We supposed there are 50 students. The numbers of validated students which can participate at the formative assessing are no more than 45; there are different situations, as we presented in the figure no.1, at the stage named participants selection and validation, with the list F6. We also have to take into consideration the number of halls for taking the examination, the number of computers, the number of assistants. The last two entrance components, namely the quality of the assessing support materials and the security of the assessing support material are to be qualified into three categories of value: very good (VG), good (G) and acceptable (ACC).

Table 2 – Entrances in the process

Entrance code	Entrances in the process	Target Upi

U1	Number of students to be evaluated	Up1 - 50
U2	Number of validated students which can participate at the formative assessing	Up2 - 45
U3	Hall numbers	Up3 - 1
U4	Computer numbers	Up4 - 25
U5	Assistant numbers	Up5 - 2
U6	The quality of the assessing support materials	Up6 – VG/G/ACC
U7	The security of the assessing support materials	Up7 – VG/G/ACC

Another aspect which has to be taken into consideration is represented by risks. Thus, we identified a number of five categories of risks: one is extern – the students' availability to take the examination – and the other four are internal risks: halls availability, assistants' availability, subjects' security and technical equipment malfunctioning. All of them are to be seen in the table no.3.

Table 3. Risks

Risks	Intern	Extern
R1		Students availability
R2	Halls availability	
R3	Assistants availability	
R4	Subjects security	
R5	Technical equipments malfunction	

We mentioned the inputs in the process, but there are also outputs in the process of assessing. Thus, we identified three categories of outputs. They are presented in the table no. 4. The first is the number of evaluated students. The performing index is given by the proportion between the total number of students and the number of validated students for the examination. The second criterion is the graduation. Here is, again the proportion between the numbers of graduated students from the total number of students. The third aspect is represented by the graduation percent from the number of the validated students. The performing index is represented by the number of graduated students from the number of validated students.

Table 4. The process outputs

Output code	The Yi process outputs	Performing indices Ipi = Yi/Ui
Y1	Number of evaluated students	Ip1 = Total number of students / Number of validated students
Y2	Graduation	Ip2 = Number of graduated students / Total number of students
Y3	Graduation percent from the number of the validated students	Ip1 = Number of graduated students / Number of validated students

Figure no. 2 presents the interfacing of the formative assessing process with the other processes implied in evaluation. We established three processes as being upstream processes: the methodology elaboration; the instruction and the resources allocation. As downstream processes, we have: the final evaluation; the monitoring of the students satisfaction; the process analyzing and improvement; the completion of the matriculation register.
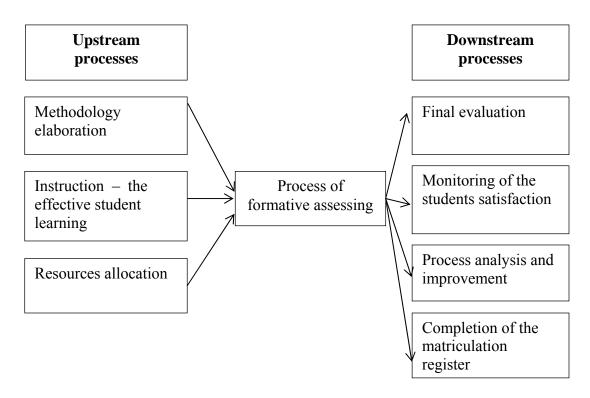
```
┌─────────────────┐                          ┌─────────────────┐
│   Upstream      │                          │  Downstream     │
│   processes     │                          │  processes      │
└─────────────────┘                          └─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────┐                          ┌─────────────────┐
│  Methodology    │                          │ Final evaluation│
│  elaboration    │ ─┐                    ┌─ │                 │
└─────────────────┘  │                    │  └─────────────────┘
                     │                    │
┌─────────────────┐  │  ┌─────────────┐   │  ┌─────────────────┐
│ Instruction – the│ ─┼─→│ Process of  │ ─┼─→│ Monitoring of the│
│ effective student│  │  │ formative   │   │  │ students        │
│ learning        │  │  │ assessing   │   │  │ satisfaction    │
└─────────────────┘  │  └─────────────┘   │  └─────────────────┘
                     │                    │
┌─────────────────┐  │                    │  ┌─────────────────┐
│ Resources       │ ─┘                    ├─ │ Process analysis │
│ allocation      │                       │  │ and improvement │
│                 │                       │  └─────────────────┘
└─────────────────┘                       │
                                          │  ┌─────────────────┐
                                          └─ │ Completion of the│
                                             │ matriculation   │
                                             │ register        │
                                             └─────────────────┘
```

Figure 2. Scheme of interfacing with other processes

III. CONCLUSIONS

The final part of the paper presents a plan for improving the quality of the formative assessing process. Thus we conceived a number of five issues. For each problem we mentioned the cause analysis, the corrective actions or the preventive actions proposed, the deadline and the responsible person, the implied resources and the measuring or monitoring method. All these aspects are to be seen in the table no.5, presented below.

The first problem we identified is the halls unavailability. The major cause of this problem is the faulty programming or the insufficient material base for taking examinations. We consider the responsible person for this action is the secretary; she has to analyse the list with the halls allocation.

The second problem is the unavailability of the assistant teachers for the examinations. This can occur due to the malfunction program. We propose the analysis of the lists as concern the assistants' availability.

The next problem can occur is the students' unavailability. The corrective action can be the consulting with the students for the assessing program.

The fourth aspect taken into account is the subjects' security. This can happen due to the teachers or secretary negligence. We recommend the awareness for the responsible persons.

The last identified problem is represented by technical malfunctions. This can be corrected by personal instruction.

Our present work spoke about the e-content of learning. We focused on different problems which can occur during one important step of the instructional process, namely the formative assessing. Thus, we mentioned the other processes or steps which take place before or after the formative evaluation and which can alter it.

Table 5. Plan for the quality improvement of the formative assessing process

No	The problem description	Cause analysis	AC/AP proposed	Deadline / Responsible person	Resource	Measuring / monitoring method
1	Halls unavailability	Faulty programming	AC – The analysis of the proposal as concern the halls allocation	3 days before the beginning of the formative assessing period / Secretary	Time	Proposals list
		Insufficient material base	AC – Additional spaces	Permanent	Financial resources according to the contracts	Contract for the space
2	Unavailability assistants	Malfunction program	AP – The analysis of the proposals as concern the assistants availability	3 days before the beginning of the formative assessing period / Secretary	Time	Proposal list
3	Students unavailability	Malfunction proposal	AC – The consulting with the students for the assessing program	3 days before the beginning of the formative assessing period / Secretary	Time	The increase of the number of students who participate at the formative assessing
4	Subject security	Negligence	AC – Awareness for the responsible persons	Permanent / Department director	Time	The minutes
5	Technical malfunctions	Inappropriate exploitation	AP – Personal instruction	Periodically / IT Specialist	Time Halls for instruction Financial	Instruction presence list

Note: AC = corrective actions; AP = preventive actions

References

[1] Dragomir Robert, Tascovici Daliana, *Modern Techniques for Students' Assessing through the Use of Exam View and Blackboard Soft*, The second International Conference on "Business and Information Technologies.New approaches", Spiru Haret University, Faculty of Financial Management Accounting, Craiova, nov.2008.

[2] Platon Carolina, *Evaluarea calităţii în învăţământul universitar*, Chişinău, 2005, 274p

[3] Dragomir Robert, Tascovici Daliana, *Considerations On The Educational Platform Blackboard*, „Carol I" National Defence University, Advanced Distributed Learning Department, eLSE 2010, The 6th International Scientific Conference „eLearning and Software for Education", Editor Prof. Ion Roceanu, University P.H., Bucharest, 2010.

[4] Standarde ale instruirii statutate de National Board for Professional Standards http://www.nbpts.org/ (last seen on the 15.02.2009) p.13-16

[5] www.see_educoop.net/education_in/pdf/working-group-report_rmn.htm(last seen on 4.07.2008)