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TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: GOOD TEACHING THROUGH STUDENTS' LENS

Abstract:

Effective or quality teaching is considered as essential for student learning, academic attainment, and contribution to society. Much of the research on university teaching has been devoted to investigating faculty views of regarding quality teaching, outstanding teachers and students' satisfaction. In order to translate findings regarding student satisfaction to actions for advancing quality teaching, it is crucial to learn about students' perceptions of quality teaching. In other words, issues related to major components of quality teaching and thinks that teachers should do in order to excel still to be addressed.

□An internet survey was forwarded during the year 2014 to students in all higher education institutions in Israel. The sample included 2475 participants who are distributed by gender, age, type of higher education institution, field of study, type of degree and year of study.

A two-part internet survey was used. The first part included questions concerning students' personal and academic background variables (gender, age, higher education institution, field of study, degree, and year of study). The second part included 29 items referring to six dimensions of quality teaching: intellectually challenging teaching, advancing non-academic skills, fostering creative thinking, constructive relations with students, clear instruction, and valid and reliable assessment. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) are .61-.82.

Students perceive clear and well-organized teaching and valid and reliable assessment methods as most important dimensions of quality teaching ($M=4.45$ and $M=4.40$; respectively). The perceived importance of the other dimensions in descending order: Advancing students' creative thinking ($M=4.26$); advancing constructive relations with students ($M=4.18$); Provoking intellectual challenge ($M=4.09$); and advancing non-academic skills ($M=3.79$).

Results from MANOVA revealed significant gender differences whereby women perceived all dimensions as more important than men do. Furthermore, students in humanities ascribe significantly greater importance to five of the six dimensions of teaching quality, compared to their peers in other fields of study. Students from all fields of study assign similar [low] importance to advancing non-academic skills. The effects of the other personal and academic variables were less prominent.

The findings from the current study suggest that students do not always concur on their perceptions regarding the components of good teaching. The fact that gender and field of study affect students' perception of quality teaching can be interpreted as providing evidence against a uniform policy model for advancement of teaching quality in higher education institutions in Israel, and maybe worldwide.

Keywords:

Good teaching, higher education, students' perceptions, teaching dimensions