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The influence of different variables in evaluation within the building degree in the Polytechnic University of Madrid

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Abstract

In this paper we have analyzed different factors that affect the subject “Prevention and Safety I” evaluation, within the Building Degree from the Polytechnic University of Madrid and its influence in its students’ learning, in order to establish guidelines for improvement in the evaluation. This paper reflects the influence in the evaluation of the base the students already have, the student’s perception of the evaluation and the kind of evaluation made. With the results obtained, we have reviewed the teaching planning for the next year, in order to improve the learning objectives fulfilment.

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1. Introduction

The adaptation of the university studies in Spain to the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter EHEA), has involved a change in the way of guiding the teaching, starting from broad and specific objectives, which allow to train professionals, from broad and specific skills which the student has to be able to develop and some learning results which the student must demonstrate. In the EHEA is foreseen, inter alia, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System application, whose purpose consists in establishing a credit system in order to promote the comparison among studies and the students and graduates' mobility. This system involves that the teaching objectives consist, not only in knowledge acquirements, as traditionally, but also in the development of a range of competences, that is, capacities and skills (Delgado & Oliver, 2006).

One of the most important issues of teaching is assessment (Hannan & Silver, 2005). Reviewing and qualifying are very important aspects in teaching and they affect in the process of helping and encouraging students to learn and understand their progress in their learning. For us, the teachers, they help us to find our weaknesses, in order to find the best way to teach. What would be ideal is that reviewing and qualifying interlock, benefiting learning and being related with the planned objectives and the obtained results (Ames & Ames, 1991).

The assessment type determines the number of approved, but not always the level of knowledge acquired. That is why it is important to study the influence of different methods of assessment, in order to determine which one reflects better the learning. In assessment also affects, as the assessment method, the human factor, what is to say, what the student thinks about the adequacy or inadequacy of the assessment system (Bain, 2004).

Taking into account the previous premises, the aim of this paper is to analyze the different factors which affect assessment in the technical subjects and its influence in the students' learning, through the analysis of the assessment made in the subject "Prevention and Safety I" from the Building Degree from the Polytechnic University of Madrid, during the year 2013-2014, in order to establish guidelines to improve assessment. This subject is taught in the third year and the analysis has been made with students who have studied this subject in the continuous assessment mode.

2. Approach to work

2.1. Stages of the research

"Prevention and Safety I" is a compulsory subject of third year (sixth semester) of 6 ECTS credits and of type II. The continuous assessment done in the subjects during the year 2013-2014 has been chosen by the 99% of the students. This assessment has been divided into three large parts:

- Three individual practices, made during the semester, concerning particular parts of the contents. Each one calculates the 10% of the global mark. Each test involves a particular part of the contents different from the other tests'.
- A group practice, which calculates the 10% of the global mark.
- A global test, made at the end of the semester, which calculates the 60% of the global mark. In this test, which is global and concurrent to all students, regardless of their group, all the contents of the subject are included and it is necessary to obtain a minimum mark of 5 out of 10 in order to pass the subject.

To analyze the type of assessment and respond to the aim of this research, we are going to study assessment from different points of view. First, we are going to analyze directly the marks. Then, we are going to study assessment from the students' point of view, relating their perception of the subject to the results. Finally, we will analyze the influence of the different methods of assessment in the marks.

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