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ROLE OF TESTING IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Annotation — The article deals with the advantages and disadvantages of testing as a tool for assessing knowledge in higher education, and the most common problems associated with the analysis of test tasks. The relevance of this issue is shown in connection with the transition to third-generation educational standards that implement a competency-based approach to learning.

Keywords — advantages of testing, assessment of knowledge, drawbacks of testing, functions of testing, testing systems.

Control and assessment of students' knowledge, skills and competencies is an integral structural component of the educational process. On the one hand it is the final component of mastering a certain content block, and on the other hand it's a kind of link in the system of educational activity of the individual.

If the educational process is organised correctly, control contributes to the development of students' memory and thinking, organizes their knowledge, timely exposes the defects in the educational process and serves to prevent them. Properly organized knowledge control helps to make the educational process more democratic, intensive and considerably in shape, and enables the teacher to obtain objective information about the course of students' educational and cognitive activity.

A variety of testing systems are now widely used to perform knowledge control. They are computer-based and can be used to control the knowledge of both full-time and e-learning students. Tests can be used for direct knowledge testing, for consolidating subject materials, and for self-testing as well. Testing systems can be both official and non-official (for your own use).

In any case, they help to improve the quality of knowledge and the intellectual level of students and teachers.

Knowledge assessment is a systematic process that involves determining the extent to which existing knowledge and skills match the ones that have been previously planned. As the definition implies, the first essential prerequisite for assessment is to plan the educational goals, without it one cannot judge the results achieved. Another condition is establishing the actual level of knowledge and comparing it with the set one.

The main disadvantages of traditionally exercised control are the following: a) reproductive nature (does not allow to test the ability to consciously use the knowledge acquired in practice); b) it is impossible to determine the amount of knowledge and skills that have fallen into long-term memory at this stage of training; c) traditional control is subjective in the evaluation of educational and cognitive activity.

Introduction of test control of students' knowledge helps to overcome these drawbacks, to some extent. In the pedagogical literature, the didactic test means a complex of tasks, prepared according to certain requirements, which are used to determine qualitative indicators, which allow to identify the required competencies for the test participants, and the results of which are subject to certain evaluation according to pre-established criteria.

Test control differs from other methods of control (oral and written exams, reit papers, review works, etc.) as it is a specially prepared control set of tasks, which allows to assess students' knowledge reliably using statistical methods.

Recently, test technologies have become increasingly widespread in education. Many universities have put testing into practice as one of the main means of conducting midpoint and final control of students' knowledge.

Testing in pedagogy performs three main interrelated functions: diagnostic, educational and disciplinary.

The diagnostic function consists in identifying the level of knowledge and skills of the students. This is the main and most obvious function of testing. Testing surpasses the rest of all forms of pedagogical control in objectivity, breadth and speed of diagnosis.

The educational function of testing consists in motivating students to intensify the work on mastering educational materials. To enhance the educational function of the test, additional incentives can be used, such as handing out a sample list of questions for self-study, a joint analysis of the test results.

The disciplinary function manifests itself in the periodicity and inevitability of test control. It disciplines, organizes and directs the activities of students, helps to identify and eliminate knowledge gaps, forms the desire to develop their abilities.

Compared with other forms of knowledge control testing has its advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages.

- Testing is a more qualitative and objective means of assessment. Its objectivity is achieved by standardizing the procedure of carrying out, verification of quality indicators of tasks and tests as a whole. In addition, availability of a predefined answer (answers) will invariably lead to the same result.
- Testing is a more fair-minded method, it puts all students on an equal footing, in both the control and the assessment process, virtually eliminating the subjectivity of the teacher.
- Tests are a more volumetric tool because testing can include assignments on all topics of the course, whereas oral exams usually take 2-4 topics and written ones take 3-5. This allows students to gain knowledge of the entire course, eliminating

the element of chance when choosing an examination card. Testing allows to establish students' level of knowledge both in the subject as a whole and in its separate sections.

- Testing is more cost effective. The main costs of testing are the development of quality tools, i.e, they are born only once. The cost of the test is much lower than in the written or oral control. Testing and monitoring results in a group of 30 people takes from one and a half to two hours, and an oral or written examination takes at least four hours.
- Testing puts all students on a level playing field as the same procedure and common assessment criteria are used, which leads to a reduction in pre-exam nerve tension and is therefore considered more humane.
- Testing provides the opportunity to automate the assessment of students' knowledge. Not only does the use of computers in test control facilitate the work of the teacher during the test checkoff, but it also increases the motivation of students' learning activities while reducing their emotional tensions during the test.
- Test knowledge control can be used in distance learning systems.
- It is possible to organize automated self-control of knowledge.

Some scientists argue that the main advantage of the tasks in the test form in comparison with traditional tasks and questions is the clarity of the logical structure of the control material, as well as the operational efficiency of obtaining the control result.

Disadvantages.

- Developing quality test tools is a long, time-consuming and costly process.
- Data obtained as a result of the test, although they include information about knowledge gaps in specific sections, but do not allow the teacher to judge the reasons for these gaps.
- Tests do not allow to check and evaluate high, productive levels of knowledge related to creativity, that is, probabilistic, abstract and methodological knowledge.

- The breadth of topics covered in testing has a reverse side. Students do not have enough time for any in-depth analysis of the topic as they would have had during an oral or written examination.
- To ensure that the test is objective and fair the developers must take special measures to make the test tasks confidential. When reapplying the test, it is advisable to make changes to the tasks.
- There is an element of randomness in testing. For example, a student who did not answer a simple question may answer a more difficult question correctly. Certainly he or she could have made a chance mistake while answering the first question or could have guessed the answer answering the second one. This distorts the results of the test and requires to account for the component of probability in their analysis.

The main problems with the use of test technologies include the need to meet the existing requirements for the development of tests, in particular: a) taking into account the impact of the purpose of the test on the choice of its structure and content, as well as the algorithm for processing results; b) adherence to the procedures for determining the quality of the test as a whole and for individual test tasks, including the use of control groups and adjusting the tests taking into account the quality indicators; c) selection of scoring methods for correct answers, etc.

There is another big problem in testing: if we can apply the results of testing that are correct “on average” to every individual test-taker, how can we determine the confidence intervals of the results obtained.

Testing is one of the most difficult elements of the educational system. Feedback in the teaching process is an indispensable part of the educational environment, and assessment of results is one of the most important in learning processes. A well-designed test, even a multiple-choice test, provides the necessary information for the teacher about the degree to which the students have learned the material. If the feedback is fast enough, then testing can be a necessary tool for students to be used to evaluate their work and determine their future activities.

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