Educational quality at the Algerian University, a critical study of a pedagogical process

جودة التعليم في الجامعة الجزائرية -دراسة نقدية للعملية البيداغوجية

Maata Soulef [*]

maata.soulef@univ-oran2.dz

Sociologie

University of Oran2/Algeria

****

Abstract: Talking about educational quality in the higher education sector makes us focus on the most important element of the educational process (the professor and the student), and quality, if it is deep in its meaning, it means exploiting individual skills and abilities in order to make a difference in the performance quality of the professor and the student's reception, and this whole matter can only be achieved by researching the personal experiences of the professor and student as two basic criteria in the research process, and this is only possible through researching the strengths and weaknesses in order to remedy the shortcomings, and this can only be achieved through actual critical studies as realistic indicators that help us making a difference for change and adjustment, and this is what we seek through this scientific article.

Keywords: Higher education ; Quality; University pedagogy; University professor; Scientific research

ملخص: إن الحديث عن الجودة التعليمية في قطاع التعليم العالي يجعلنا نركز على أهم عنصر في العملية التعليمية (الأستاذ والطالب)، والجودة إن كانت في عمق معناه تغني الاستغلال في المهارات والقدرات الفردية من أجل أحداث فارق في النوعية الأدائية للأستاذ والطالب، وهذا الأمر كله لا يتحقق إلا من خلال البحث في التجارب الشخصية للأستاذ والطالب كمعيارين أساسيين في عملية البحث، ولا يثني ذلك إلا من خلال البحث في مواطن القوة والضعف من أجل استدراك النقائص، ولا يتحقق ذلك إلا بالدراسات النقدية الفعلية كأمثلة واقعية تساعدنا في إحداث فارق التغيير والتعديل، وهذا فحوى هذا المقال العلمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

التعليم العالي؛ الجودة؛ البيداغوجية الجامعية؛ الأستاذ الجامعي؛ البحث العلمي.

[*] Corresponding author: maata.soulef@univ-oran2.dz

1. Introduction:

The emergence of the topic of university pedagogy in the first practice was at the conceptual level. And if the focus was initially set on pedagogical activities in the university environment (dispensing activities, and then teaching or achieving activities), it became obvious that these phenomena can't be studied from the differences between their elements, considering the great importance of the process of overlapping relations between the various phenomena and dimensions in this topic (MURDOCH J. & PAUL J.-J. 2007:p26.).

After a modest and varied work path experience, teaching at the Department of Sociology at the university of Oran, and between the interest in knowledge researching in various fields and the teaching profession on different subjects, where our positions, opinions and even professional performance conflicted.

Our pedagogical experience of nearly twenty years may seem short for those who preceded us in the profession, and there are those who see it as long, of course, for those who have recently joined.In fact, we see it as modest compared to the true, fundamental and purposeful meaning of the higher education profession, and to the university professor's place within the collective belief.In fact, we see it as modest compared to the real, essential and meaning of the profession of higher education, and the of the university professor in the collective belief.

This work is a critical study of the teaching career at the Algerian University, through which we try to provide outputs from the teaching process cycle by addressing the most important elements bearing weaknesses and strengths in order to reach the process of self-correction of professional performance on one hand, and attempt to modify some of the adopted programs in the studying axesin various subjects on the other hand, and this will make us talk about quality in the pedagogical performance process, among three indicators:

1. Curriculum quality indicators

2. Teaching quality indicators

3. Faculty quality indicators

These three indicators will ensure that we delve into researching for the following elements:

1. The university professor (as an actor) and a pivot in the teaching-learning process

2. University lecture (as performance and outline) and as (lesson scheme)

3. Program content (a model for two subjects).

2. The Problematic:

During the university academic year 2020-2021, we were assigned to teach the methodology subject to First-year master students, specializing in Sociology of Education at Oran University.

As a result of the pedagogical work, we collected many observations, and among them, I recorded the most important of which were the following:

- First-year master does not understand classical terminology in his field of specialization (sociology).

- The student is not good at understanding the axioms of the social science methodology, such as the concept of epistemological peremptory, which he should have taken at the bachelor's study period, or a lack of distinction between general knowledge and scientific knowledge.

- The student does not have the free-ability to present scientific research-papers and to clearly and coherently arranging ideas.

        The matter is interesting, because the phenomenon is almost generalized, and this will make it difficult to perform pedagogically for a university professor on one hand, and even at the level of university graduates on the other hand.

All these aforementioned points made us wonder about how the training was received by the student during the first studying phase (bachelor's degree).

Based on our experience in teaching bachelor's students for years and dealing with different subjects, we have been able to record many changes at the level of some topics in some programs, in addition to the decline in the critical intellectual spirit that both the professor and the student should enjoy, and therefore our work will be about the following question:

In order to remedy the shortcomings in the adopted programs, and in order to enable the university professor to expand the scope of his scientific learning skills, what are the correction mechanisms that enable the professor, through his personal experiences, to trigger a real situation alternatives in order to improve the quality of pedagogical performance?

3. The Aim of the topic:

The desire to contribute to pedagogical adjustments at the levels of the university professor's teaching seminar, starting with performance and researching the performance methods that enable him (her) to improve the performance skills, to the ways of dealing with the content of the programs and ways to deal with them, and adapt them according to the requirements of need during the teaching process, so that these reviews will be a base essential in addressing the issue of educational quality in the performance of the university lesson (the lecture).

4. The Importance of the topic:

Current academic development depends on the overall changes taking place in higher education sector at all levels. Therefore, societies of all stripes must pay close attention to this sector, and perhaps the most prominent issues that are subject to the mechanisms of reform and change, the professor, his position and his performance.

The upgrading of this educational system is closely related to the quality of education and training, and taking advantage of educational practices and experiences ([Ali Nasser Shetwi Al-Zahar Essalatin: p244.]).

In light of the foregoing, the efforts that will be made in developing the scientific and professional capabilities of faculty members, among those institutions in facing the challenges of change, and creating competitiveness with similar institutions in a rapidly changing era ([Previous reference: p243]).

5. Adopted Research Method:

We relied on the analytical descriptive approach based on attempts to describe the phenomenon directly in terms of living and through professional experience, so that we relied on the technique of participatory observation as being part of the field operation.

Kofman considers that the parameters of the future curriculum will focus on training students in the arts of obtaining information and teaching them different ways of thinking, including clear scientific thinking ([Previous reference: p262]).

6. University Concept:

The evolution of human societies through ages has resulted in many different aspects of life.Human beings have gathered and entered groups according to their ethnicities or races. Therefore, students and professors had the luck of gathering as a life obligation, through

which this gathering includes lot of rights and duties, and therefore the world didn't have universities before the 11th century (Thokan Abidat, Sohaila Abu Essamid,.2012: p11).

7. The emergence of universities in Europe:

In Paris, Louis VII and the Pope recognized the university in 1200, as the University of Paris became the first official university in 1200.

Then universities spread, and a papal or royal decree was issued in every university that validates its legislation, except for Oxford University, whose legislation was derived from professors' competence and fame (De Ketele J.-M: p45).

Among the early emerged European Universities (Previous reference: p12.):

- University of Oxford, United Kingdom, in 1167.

- University of Toulouse, France, in 1229.

- University of Montpelier, France, in 1289.

- University of Sevilla, Spain, in 1220.

- University of Prag, Germania, in 1347.

8. The emergence of universities in Arab world:

The first establishment of universities in the Arab world began with mosques.

Teaching appears in the Sacred Mosque of Mecca and The Prophet Mosque in Medina, the Mosque of Basra, Kufa Mosque, Fustat, and al-Aqsa, Kairouan in Tunisia and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, then Arab universities spread like (Previous reference: p12):

- Damascus University, Syria, in 1923.

- Cairo University, Egypt, in 1929.

- Amman University, Jordan, in 1962

9.The philosophy of universities:

The philosophy of universities has evolved over the years of its inception to be determined in the following points (Thokan Abidat, same as previous: p13):

1. Providing study opportunities for students in different disciplines.

2. Keeping pace with scientific and technological development.

3. Strengthening links between different universities around the world.

4. The development of a thinking person, open-minded to life and development.

5. Contributing to development plans and development of society.

6. Absorbing technological developments.

10. How to benefit from a lecture?

University teaching is mostly based on theoretical lectures, and the theoretical lecture is usually transmitted speech from the lecturer to the audience, where the role of the public is usually limited to listening, which may lead to boredom, and that is why they said the lecture is the shortest way to sleep([Thokan Abidat, same as previous: p43]) .

Therefore, every university professor in the field of his specialization adopts different methods in order to contribute to the mobility within the classroom to get out of the crisis of routine in lectures, starting with the title of the lecture, to the its basic elements, to the teaching methods and tools used during the lecture, to the way of asking questions to students In order to involve them to the path of dialogue and discussions ([PROSSER M. & TRIGWELL K..1999:p33]).

Thus, the results or personal experience data came within the field of methods of transmitting or communicating information to students with examples we provide as follows:

- The transmission of information will be transferred as it is, either by translating texts or transferring information without subjecting it to the principle of cognitive interpretation, and herein lies the defect (that is, it is not originated in the community of belonging) ([WOLFS J.-L..1991:p]).

- The delivery of information will be through analysis and explanation so that the recipient (student) can perceive the knowledge on the basis of a varying understanding and which will happen to have both perception and understanding meaning.

To illustrate more, there are many examples, as follows:

 1) As first sample, The term democracy:

The word is translated as it means democracy, and there is no direct equivalent to it in Arabic and even in various other languages, and therefore the translation here will not be associated with a word for a word, but with a word for a sentence, a paragraph, or even paragraphs and books.

2) As second sample, Habitus Term:

A term that was produced from the womb of the Arab society, which is characterized by a culture, and specificity that differs in its depth from the culture and specificity of Pierre Bourdieu, which produced this concept on the condition of flexibility, meaning that the term is translated with different meanings depending on the nature of the subject.

The term habitus in Arabic means preparations or the system of preparations, in the sense of the individual's preparations to accept social patterns in their dimensions at the moment of falling into them, It means the individual's ability to adapt to what he found in it, is a highlight of the determinants of belonging that helped in that"acquisition" expressed by Pierre Bourdieu.

For example, In the matter of marriage, there are those who accept the new societal reality with all its contradictions, and that acceptance would be kind ofa translation of experience's accumulations in social life, that helps women accept the new circumstances.

And there are those whose new circumstances in married life may be better than the aforementioned case, but they reject this reality under various arguments.

Therefore, it will be very difficult on a methodological and intellectual level to apply the term (habitus) in the sense of preparations, to make it more clear to those who translate the term (habitus) by habit and habituation.

Habit or habituation means getting used to something, that is, most of the time you try to be part of what is happening and not about accepting it. In the sense that you are trying to adapt according to the current circumstances in exchange for overtaking a part of a person's historical path makes him in return forgetting for being adapted into it.

Therefore, there are those who accept, integrate and then being prepared, and here the employment of the term "habitus" has an analytical sociological meaning according to what was mentioned in the thought of (Pierre Bourdieu), And there are those who can't get into acceptance pattern and, so has no readiness and that let him lose a lot of the values that he accepted for a while and then rejected, and here comes the use of the term "habitus" because its meaning loses its content, and this is the case of the second example.

In order to understand the term "habitus", it is possible to return to the sum of the analytical explanatory readings found on the website (www.b-sociology.com) on the sociology portal, the meaning of habitus, or get back to Pierre Bourdieu's "Capital Culturel" book, and also the concept of "habitus" for Pierre Bourdieu himself.

The Social Link:

As for the Sociology of Social Link subject, by the virtue of my teaching of this subject, and what I myself noticed:

I found that the student's understanding of the first lessons is very difficult, so I wondered? And so, I personally discovered many ambiguities, starting with naming the subject, passing through the content of the program.

I had previously taught the social psychology subject, and I involved the students in a pedagogical process by atempting to arrange the lessons according to the importance to each lesson in a systematic sequence, and through this we delved in depth into the content, among which were the following topics:

- The Individuality
- The Group
- Group dynamics
- Social relations (social processes, social relations)
- Social interaction
- Social Upbringing

And in the study of Social Relations and Social Interactions lessons, we conclude to:

1. Social Relations Concept:

Individuals in society are linked to multiple relationships and bonds, arising from the nature of their sociality and interactions,as life places us in a complex network of relationships with others (Hamad Khaled. 2015: p33), This creates overlaps between members of society within interaction of social cycle bondedto these gatherings, and this is what is called social relations.

2. Social Interactions Concept:

"Mead"focused on the importance of analyzing interaction patterns or the outcome of social actions through which human society is formed, Interaction occurs through (Hamad Khaled, previous reference: p123) social processes, between groups: such as the family, organizations, syndicates, games...

This is evidenced through the patterns of social interaction.

Social interaction patterns:

- Cooperation
- Adaptation
- Competition   **This is called social processes**
- Conflict

When social interaction patterns stabilize and take regular shapes, they transform into social relationships:

- Paternity

- Brotherhood

- Fellowship

Thus, the difference between social processes and social relations is a difference in degree and not in kind.

3. Definition of social link:

"Pierre Yves Cusset"says, in his book «The Social Link (Le lien social)»,that it means"the sum of the relations that bind us with family friends, neighbors... All the way to the collective mechanisms of solidarity, passing through norms, rules, and values... which provide us with the minimum meaning of "Collectivity" (Pierre Yves Cusset. 2011: p05.).

This is an example of just one definition versus all other definitions in the sense of social link, which means social relationship!!??

And In order to delve deeper into understanding the overlaps in labelling, the reader can go back to the guiding theoretical paths, for example, to name a few, but not limited to, among the most prominent theses that deserve to stop by, belong to each of (Khawaja Abdelaziz Ben Mohamed. 2018: starting by page 33):

- Ferdinand Tönnies

- Emile Durkheim.

- Charles Horton Cooley.

- George Simmel.

- F.Farrugio «Crise du lien social» ,1993.

- Alain Touraine «Pourrons-nous vivre ensemble égaux et

différent», 1997.

- AddiElhouari «Algerian society transformations, the family and the society link in contemporary Algeria», 1999.

Therefore, we found that the definition of social link means social relations, and we found ourselves facing a systematic defect that impedes the process of transmission and delivery of information,which is related to the definition of concepts, so the structure of the lesson will be about the meaning of social relations and social linkage.

So, we wondered why this subject was not named: Sociology of Social Processes or Sociology of Social Relations Instead of Sociology of Social Linkage.

And then we presented a definition of the social link as: the relationship that binds the members of society and forms its logic and philosophy.

The distinction between the two concepts (relation and link) depends on the field of linguistic employment defined in the field of study, as we use the term social link, when the subject of research relates to the nature of society in its religious cultural depth, customs and traditions, and these are the determinants of the anthropological aspect, or in the urban sphere (neighbourhood relations), and within the family (the family link), while social relations are in broader fields such as professional relations within industrial, administrative, and various other occupations, to name just a few.

Through the two previous examples of social link and habitus concepts and the way to deal with them at the intellectual level by educational meansand in a critical corrective method,that makes the professor and the receiving student search for correction mechanisms through deepening, understanding and criticism, and so attempting to bring about a corrective renewal process that enables the two partners in the process to find out the most important ways to enhanse the process of learning and receiving and even ways of thinking away from committing to the model of typical lecture without carving it and dealing with it as a rigid acquired knowledge, without criticism and correction, and the same issue applies to the programs content.

The issue of talking about educational quality of teaching at the university depends on the level of performance spirit (intellectual and critical) of the professor as a basic bond in the learning process and the faculty as a broad field in balancing and effective ajustment for the student to be a systemic necessity and a realistic support.

Conclusion:

It seems that the interest in the cognitive edifice and the enlightenment place of human thought seems to present controversy not on what in that at the level of the sciences and programs, but rather the problem that is being raised at the educational level is how we can convey this information and toughts that human thinking has currently reached to an audience that desires to continue searching for the truth in various sciences, and above all in our field of sociology.

And itcan be said that the development and new insights in higher education require the development of the capabilities of the faculty member and his possession of many capabilities concerned to the development of programs and university curricula, and that no change nor transformation can be made without taking into account the programs and curricula already set. It may be necessary to integrate several subjects into a subject and integrate several topics in into a topic and also integrate several specialties into a specialty (Ali Nasser Shetwi Al-Zahar Essalatin: p263.).

References:

- Ali Nasser Shetwi Al-Zahar Essalatin. (2014). " Achieving quality and excellence in higher education institutions, refereed scientific research and studies", Hamed Editions and Library for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, 1st Ed,.

- DE Ketele J.-M. (1956). «The formation of university professors» between personal logics and institutional logics». In J. Donnay& M. Romainville, teaching at university, an occupation that can be learn, Bruxelles, De Boeck..

- ENTWISTLE N. (1989). «Approaches to studying and course perceptions: The case of the disappearing relationships». Studies in Higher Education. vol. 14, n° 2,

- GALAND B. & FRENAY M.   (2005).«The approach by problems and by projects in higher education. Impact, issues and challenges». Louvain-la-Neuve: University press of Louvain.

- Hamad Khaled, (2015). Initiation to Sociology, Bridges for Publishing and distribution, El-Mohamadia, Algiers, 3rd ed.

- Khawaja Abdelaziz Ben Mohamed. (2018). Sociology of Society bond, Constructive concepts and theoretical paths, Noor Editions, Germany.

- MURDOCH J. & PAUL J.-J. (2007). "Study content and process, competences upon graduation and employment". In U. Teichler, Carreers of university graduates, Londres: Springer.

- Pierre Yves Cusset. (2011). « le lien social » Armand Colin.

- Prosser M. & Trigwell K. (1999). Understanding learning and teaching: The experience of higher education. Buckingham: Open university press.

- Roger Mucchielli, Pedagogical commuication, ……… Jackobson, Monane Mucchielli, Habermas and Al, Communication, Theories & Approaches, Translated Azzeddine Alkhatabi and Zhor Huti, Education world editions, Dar Elbayda, Morocco

- Thokan Abidat. (2012). Sohaila Abu Essamid, "University's life skills, communication, learning, thinking, research", El-fikr Editions, Amman, 1st Ed.

- Wolfs J. (1991). -L. Analyse de l'anticipation de questions comme indicateur métacognitif. Étude expérimentale effectuée à la transition entre l'enseignement secondaire et supérieur. Thèse de doctorat, sciences de l'éducation. Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgique.