
Research Papers



“Innovative Strategies for Examination Reforms”

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Abstract

We use written examinations in all the fields. In written examination papers, generally we can find short answer type questions [SATQ], objective type questions [OTQ] and essay type questions [ETQ]. There is a less possibility of subjectivity in evaluation of answer of SATQ & more possibility of subjectivity in evaluation of answer of ETQ. Now the questions arise to us are; how can we decrease the subjectivity in evaluation of answer of ETQ? Which strategies can help us reduce the amount of subjectivity in evaluation of answer of ETQ? In this paper, some strategies like standardization of marking scheme, training for examiners, and re-evaluation of answer scripts are discussed to decrease subjectivity in evaluation of answer of ETQ.

Key Terms: Innovation, Examination Reforms, Evaluation

Introduction

Evaluation plays a very important role in educational process. Evaluation is used to determine the extent to which educational objectives have been achieved after the teaching learning process. The evaluation system maintains its standards along with the progress of education. University Education Commission (1948) took a very serious view of examination system in India and stated in its report “If we were to suggest a single reform in education system, it would be of examination.” This was the scenario of evaluation system in higher education in India in 1945 and till today a remarkable improvement has not been observed.

We use written examination in all the fields. In written examination we are used to use the types of questions.

- (a) Short Answer type question [SATQ]
- (b) Objective type question [OTQ]
- (c) Essay type question [ETQ]

There is a little chance of subjectivity in SATQ. But in ETQ, a great chance of diversification to subjectivity is observed. Here, researcher has tried to explain certain points to increase the reliability and validity of evaluation capacity of ETQ.

Marking Scheme

The process of preparing a marking scheme starts along with the process of preparing questions of the question paper. In fact, it has been a common experience that the teachers can prepare questions very fast but when they are asked to think of the answer to the question they have prepared, they start fumbling and eventually discover mistakes in the question itself. Therefore, it is essential to prepare the marking scheme for essay type, short answer and very short answer type questions simultaneously with the framing of questions. The format of the marking scheme for essay type question is given below with one example.

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Table 1
Marking Scheme

Question	Expected Outline of Answer	Value Points	Total Marks
Explain the effect of pressure and temperature on states of matters.	(A)Effect of pressure on solid and liquid matters is very less, but high on gaseous matters. Generally solid and liquid matters cannot pressurize, while the gaseous matters can pressurize.	1	• 4
	(B)Solid matters are converted in to liquid due to effect of temperature, because the distance between molecules in solid are increase with temperature.	1	
	(C)Also liquid matters convert into gaseous mater due to effect of temperature, here distance between the molecules is highly increase.	1	
	(D)In gaseous matters, distance between molecules is highly increased with increase of temperature and the volume of gaseous matter is increase.	1	

The marking scheme indicates the serial number of the question, expected outline of answer, value points carried by each point in the answer and the total marks.

The number of points asked in question as answer is limited and the question has many more points as answers, all the relevant points to the answer should be given in the marking scheme. The student should be given freedom to choose a limited number of them in the answer. In the marking scheme it may be indicated that any of the points given by the student may be taken as correct.

In case of questions based on unseen comprehension passage in a language question paper, it is necessary to mention that the focus is on comprehension alone and not on expression. So no marks may be deducted for grammatical or spelling mistakes. This guideline needs to be given in the marking scheme where the answers for the questions on the comprehension passage are given.

For questions on paragraph writing, essay writing, note writing or letter writing, marking guidelines needed to be given in the marking scheme in order to standardize marking. For example, the breakup of marks for different components may be shown for a letter to be marked out of 10 marks in table 2.

Table 2
Marking for letter writing

	Components	Marks
1	Layout (in case of a letter and a note)	2 Marks
2	Content relevance	4 Marks
3	Presentation of ideas in a logical sequence	2 Marks
4	Language aspect (i.e. use of appropriate structure, spelling and punctuation.)	2 Marks
	Total	10 Marks

While preparing marking scheme for mathematics question paper, it is necessary to mention that marks may be given for both process and product and not just for product alone. It will be better if clear indication is given as to what percentage is stated for process.

In subjects like sciences and social sciences, it has been observed very often that teachers deduct marks for mistakes in spelling. It should be made clear while preparing the marking scheme in sciences and social sciences that concepts are more important than the spelling. Therefore, no marks should be deducted for such mistakes.

For standardizing marking scheme at school level, it is suggested that the teachers teaching different sections of a class should get together and discuss the marking scheme prepared by the paper setter before starting the evaluation of scripts. This will help in not only making the marking scheme more comprehensive but also standardizing the marking to a certain extent. Moreover, problems like the following will also be solved after discussion.

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Standardization of Marking Scheme

The marking scheme prepared by the paper setter should be subjected to a lengthy discussion by the evaluators. For this, a meeting of 8-10 evaluators should be organized by the Examination Board or Examination controller of university wherein the 3-5 answer scripts should be given to the evaluators for marking on the basis of the marking scheme. After this trial of the marking scheme, discussion should take place and the marking scheme should be modified for final use in the actual evaluation work.

Selection of Examiners

Selection of examiners is important for carrying out reliable evaluation of answer scripts. The teachers selected for evaluation work should be teaching the subject for at least 4-5 years in an affiliated school or college. If possible, the Board or university should arrange a short test of competence in marking followed by an interview. In the test, two or three answer scripts can be given to the candidate for evaluation along with a marking scheme. It can then be ensured how far the teacher (candidate) is able to follow the marking scheme in evaluating the scripts.

Training for Examiners

Training should be provided by the Board or higher authority to all the new examiners before allowing them to mark examination papers. In this training the evaluators should be made aware of the attitudes that the traditional evaluators have towards marking for ages. Some of these attitudes which hold well even today are:

- a. Full marks are not being awarded in any answer especially in languages, social sciences and sciences.
- b. Full marks in mathematics questions can be awarded when the answer is correct; otherwise no marks are to be given.
- c. Marking of long answer question by looking at the length of the answer and the handwriting.
- d. Good marks to be given to those answers which adhere to the bookish knowledge and bookish language.

It should be made clear during the training that in order to be fair and just in marking the above attitudes should not come into play. The following points may be emphasized.

- a. The marking should take into cognizance the whole range of marks for a question, i.e. even full marks may be awarded if the answer is well written in subjects like languages, social sciences and sciences.
- b. In mathematics, apart from the product, process should also be taken into cognizance while awarding marks.
- c. The answer should be read fully and then only the evaluator may decide how much marks the student deserves. The judgment should not be based on factors like handwriting and length of the answer.
- d. Originality of thinking and expressing should be rewarded in language and social science papers.
- e. In social sciences, the evaluators should not judge the worth of an answer with his own bias in mind. If the student gives appropriate arguments for his point of view, displays critical thinking and comes to an appropriate conclusion, marks may be awarded even if his point of view differs from that of the evaluator. In this way, it should be brought home to the trainees that the approach of evaluation should be learner centered. The student should be awarded marks for what he knows and not punished for what he doesn't know.

The training should not be limited to only lectures on skills of marking but should consist of a practical involving marking of various kinds of scripts under the supervision of an experienced examiner. For this exercise, papers from a previous examination may be used with all the original marks removed. The trainees may then be graded for their marking skills. Those with higher grades may be allowed to take up the actual marking.

Re-evaluation of Answer Sheets

Related to the evaluation of answer scripts is the issue of re-evaluation. Most of the Boards and Universities in our country do not allow for re-evaluation of answer scripts after the results have been declared. Only re-totaling of scripts wherein the checked scripts are seen again and the awarded marks are re-totaled to check the calculation mistakes. This kind of practice does not allow transparency in the

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system. The scripts of terminal examinations are not shown to the students, with the result that students are left guessing as to where they committed mistakes and why they got lesser marks than expected. Thus, a large number of students and their parents are left dissatisfied with the scoring in examinations. In all type of examinations, students should be shown their answer sheets and if the student is not satisfied than re-evaluation of such answer sheets must be made by examiners.

Conclusion

Unlike OTQ, the evaluation of ETQ is difficult and subjective. In other words, the evaluation is not full proof and that why there is a kind of dissatisfaction among students for evaluation system. If this situation won't be overcome, the dissatisfaction will be increased. To heal this situation as an evaluator one has to think about all the fixed schemes and examination techniques for ETQ. So, the marking scheme should be standardized to reduce subjectivity of examiners. At University level, essay type questions are very much useful for evaluation of the various skills of students. To maintain faith of students, one must consider these strategies while evaluating ETQ.

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