The impact of quality assessment in universities: Portuguese students' perceptions

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Abstract

Despite being one of the major reasons for the development of quality assessment, students seem relatively unaware of its potential impact. Since one of the main purposes of assessment is to provide students with information on the quality of universities, this lack of awareness brings in to question the effectiveness of assessment as a device for promoting institutional accountability. Aiming to contribute to increase knowledge in this field, the paper addresses Portuguese students' perceptions of the impact of quality assessment. Resorting to the findings of a qualitative study on this subject, it is argued that students seem to assume a rather ambiguous position vis-à-vis this impact. While seeing assessment as having only a limited capacity to produce changes, students seem reluctant about the possibility of measures being adopted to increase it.

Keywords: higher education, impact, quality assessment, perceptions, Portugal, students

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