Accountability and evaluation: challenge to democracy

Antonio Portela

University of Murcia

Abstract

Accountability and evaluation have become an integral part of education systems and the day-to-day practice of educators in many countries around the world. The purpose of this presentation is to share an exploration of the links among evaluation, accountability and democracy which draws on the work of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière. It will be argued that evaluation and accountability intertwine not just as a condition for democracy and its improvement but also as a challenge for democracy. Firstly, the notion of evaluation and its relevance to accountability will be outlined. A more detailed outline of accountability will follow in order to present evaluation and accountability as ‘explanatory scheme’ (Rancière, 2010); that is, a structure that primarily serves to explain and provide justification. To conclude, connections between accountability and democracy will be discussed and challenges posed by the former one to the latter one are explored.

Key words: evaluation, accountability, democracy