

THE EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL PROGRESS IN THE OUTLOOK AND THE PRACTICE OF THE TEACHING STAFF FROM THE PREUNIVERSITARY EDUCATION¹⁰

E. Balaş

Evelina BALAŞ,
Ph.D., univ. lecturer
“Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad

Abstract: The evaluation represents a means of forming and changing of the pupils' attitudes towards their school activity. By using an arsenal of actions that are specific to the evaluating act we determine for the pupils attitudes that have a major role for the level of their school performances. Starting from these premises we are presenting here an ascertained micro research realized within two elementary schools from Arad county. The research was based on the way the current evaluation is perceived, conceived and implemented by the teaching staff from those schools. The method of collecting the necessary data for this research was the questionnaire, applied to all the teachers, independent of their length of service and their level of studying.

Key words: evaluation, attitudes, school performances, questionnaire

Introduction

The concept of evaluation is transforming both on a macro-structural and on a micro-structural level. As far as the level of the teaching process is concerned we are interested not only in the development of the didactic evaluation but also by the development of the pupils' ability to evaluate themselves. Thus, the educational desiderate compounds a new register of competences, unlike the traditional attributions that are centered on transmitting information and the evaluation of appropriation of the transmitted information.

¹⁰ Paper presented to the International Socio Plus conference *Strategies and Ways to Develop University Curricula in the Area of Social Work Education*, 10-11nov.2015, Arad

The evaluation is conditioning the dynamic of the class in such a manner that we can say that *there is no efficient learning without evaluation*. It is acting within the class using instruments that are specific to the analysis of the pupils' progress both as a group and as individuals. Extending itself on the components of the teaching system it is aiming at their description and their analysis for showing their efficiency, for appreciating the degree of realizing its objectives and also for detecting the different effects foreseen or not. The evaluation is not only being limited to the instructing activity but it is also part of a general concern that regards the way the institutions that deal with the efficient realization of school curriculum and school projects are functioning.

Offering a special attention to the appreciations made on the students and knowing the fact that these are tending to become what they are expected of, by confirming the expectations, facilitates the stimulation of the pupils and the outlining of a positive image on his/her own person. As a result, the appreciation is also extended within personal relationships.

The relation between the procedures of the evaluation and the school efficiency is manifested in the transformation of the external motivation, of the appreciations coming from the teachers and other persons, into an internal motivation, as a refreshing factor that is making the activity of the pupils more dynamic. The pupils' degree of motivation for studying represents a sustained effort and intense activities which determine the internalization of the external requirements as to become propelling forces of learning that are determining from inside the student's behavior.

The research method

The problem to be researched aimed to the following aspects:

- the conception of the teaching staff regarding the role that the evaluation is playing in the schooling activity
- the types of alternative evaluation instruments frequently used to encourage the students' learning efforts
- the perception of the teaching staff towards the motivating effect of the evaluative actions for the students' learning progress
- *The objectives of the research* have been formulated as follows:
 - the identification of the way of planning the evaluation on the practical and applicative level
 - the identification of the changes that occurred because of the requirements of the reform of the evaluation concerning the mentality of the teaching staff

The hypothesis of the research was formulated like this:

If the teachers aren't fully informed about the changes that are introduced in the field of the evaluation of the school results and about the role it plays on the pupils' schooling progress, the students' performances at school remain in the dimension of informational quantity.

The sample of subjects was made up of 50 teachers from 2 schools from Arad.

In order to process and interpret the data offered by the answers to the questionnaires the method of the descriptive analysis of contents was used.

Both open questions and multiple choice questions as well as argumentative questions have been used to elaborate the questionnaires. Our purpose was to obtain much richer information.

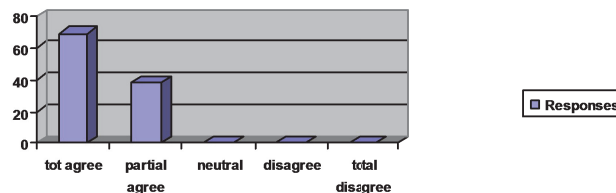
The answers to the questionnaires will be presented and interpreted on groups of questions.

The analysis and the interpretation of the results have been as follows:

The teachers' point of view regarding the evaluation and the relationship with the teaching and learning act

Item 1: The evaluation is an activity that is integrated in the teaching-learning process

68% of the teaching staff is in total agreement with the fact that the evaluation is an integrated part of the teaching-learning process and 32% agree with that idea. No answer has been registered for any of the remaining two options.

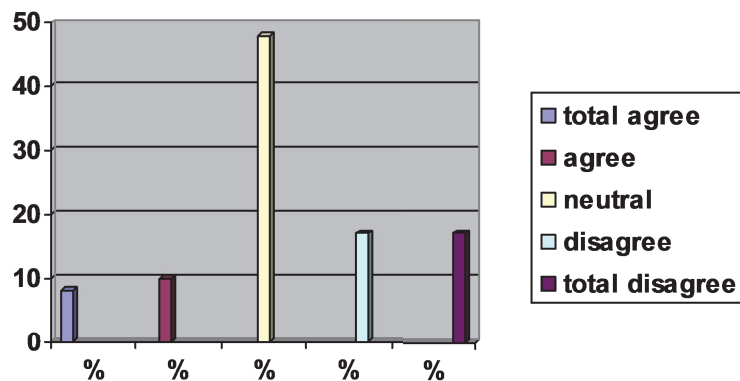


The relationship evaluation-teaching-learning

Item 2: Any evaluation is finalized by a grade that is registered

The varied answers of the teaching staff for this item are: 48% of them are showing a neutral attitude towards this aspect and 34% are either in disagreement or in total disagreement with this fact. The

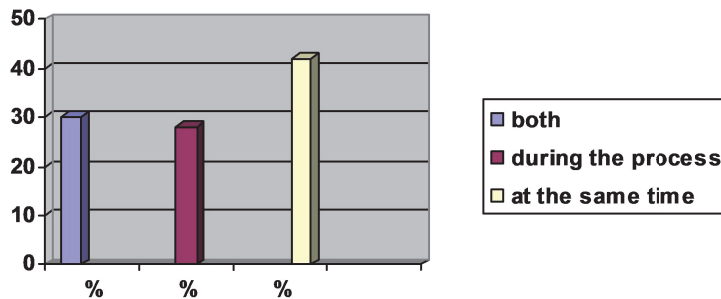
18% of the teachers who agree with this aspect think that otherwise the students wouldn't be stimulated to learn, to mark the students' progress or lack of progress to establish a measure of assimilating the notions that had been taught. The ones who disagree or remain neutral towards this aspect consider that the grade doesn't always reflect the reality and that the appreciations, the verbal encouragements, the praises and so on constitute modalities that allow a better knowledge/acquaintance of the student and an opportunity to encourage him/her to do his/her best to accomplish the tasks provided.



Finalizing the evaluation by a grade

Item 3: It is necessary to have the evaluation projected at the same time as the didactic approach or is it better to be done along the way?

30% of the ones involved in this micro-research agree with the fact that the evaluation must be projected at the same time as the didactic approach because the strategy of evaluation is established together with the setting of the objectives and the ways of achieving them and that allows very well acknowledged action by the teacher and the student both having known right from the beginning what it is to be followed. The 28% of the people who declared that it is more useful to project the evaluation along the way consider that this way they know very clearly what it is to be evaluated, they can early adopt to the situation and also to the level of the class. 42% consider that the projection of the evaluation is done together with the didactic approach but at the same time it could also be reconsidered along the way so as to be able to make realistic and pertinent appreciations.

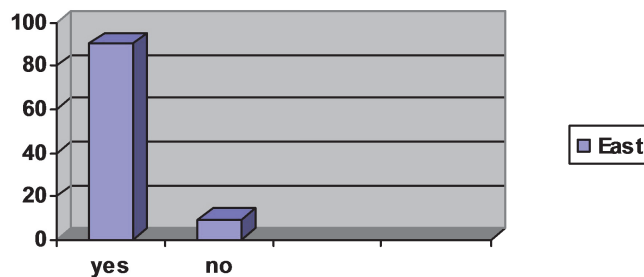


The projection of evaluation

The teachers' attitude and perception about the motivating effects of the evaluation in the educational process

Item 4: Do you communicate the evaluation/appreciation criteria to your students or you do not find it necessary because they can be read between the lines?

90.32% of the ones interviewed consider it is very useful to communicate the evaluation criteria to their students because they allow a better self evaluation, they provide a good means of understanding the tasks, they reduce the doubts that occur during the evaluation period to get them mobilized to make them aware about what they are working for, to acknowledge how much they know or how much do they have to know. The 9.68% left consider that it isn't necessarily useful to specify them because they can be contextually understood.



Communication of the evaluation criteria

Item 5: When you evaluate do you follow the progress made by the student at that moment or/and the progress that the student is capable of?

35% stated that the moment they evaluate they keep in mind the progress registered by the student at a certain time because they can thus

correct the missing points and they can improve their knowledge and 65% of them consider both variants because they think that like this they can respect every child's own rhythm, they can encourage him/her, they can motivate him/her for his/her progress and performance, they can stimulate his/her interest and they lead the student to as high competences as possible according to each child's rhythm and possibilities.

Item 6: Describe three modalities of evaluation used in the class which you consider motivating for the students' efforts and progress

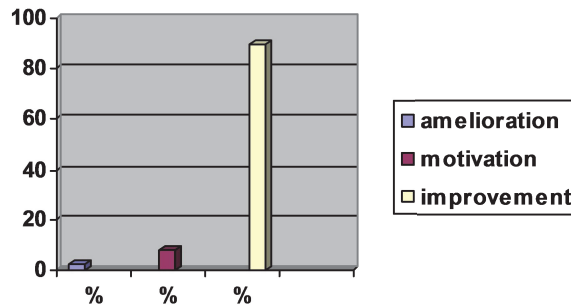
The modalities of evaluation most widely used are the written ones like the tests, the test papers, the multiple choice tests or secondly positioned the self assessment cards, oral assessments, verbal discussions and only afterwards come the independent work and the games. The teachers consider that these ones are chosen according to the class and to the student, according to the previously established objectives. For the primary classes it was seen that independent work and role plays are most commonly used because they combine the work with the games and the learning. Projects or portfolios are rarely used although they are said to allow a complex evaluation as they also check the way in which students cooperate, share tasks, search and discover new information as well as elements of character like punctuality, perseverance, honesty, responsibility for the group and for the result.

The role played by the evaluation in the didactic act

Item 7: According to you, what is the role played by the evaluation in the didactic process? Establish a hierarchy of those in order of importance

This is the way this hierarchy is set: the first is the amelioration of the teaching – learning process, the second is the students' motivation, the third place is occupied by the improvement of the results the students get, the hierarchic differentiation of the pupils is the fourth and the sanctioning of the results is on the last position.

90% of the teaching staff considers that the most important role played by the evaluation is the one to make a contribution to the improvement of the teaching-learning process and the improvement of their results and the least important one is the sanctioning of results.



The role played by the evaluation

Item 8: Do you consider that the results obtained after the evaluation of the students offer information about:

- The students learning activity
- The teacher's didactic activity
- Both

95% consider that the results obtained after the evaluation of the students offer information both about the students' learning activity and the teacher's teaching activity. 5 % consider that the evaluation offers information about the students' learning activity.

4. Frequently alternative evaluation instruments used and their role in the efficient evaluation and the motivation of the students

Item 9: Do you think that the use of alternative evaluation instruments is efficient or not?

a. Yes. Why?

b. No. Why?

97 % consider that the use of complementary evaluation instruments is efficient because they allow a more nuanced evaluation, the students like them more, they are about the results obtained over a longer period of time, they offer the students the possibility to discover different abilities they have, they give teachers the opportunity to see the changes that occur when it comes to pupils' interests and attitudes, they make pattern and monotony disappear, they develop cooperation, they contribute to the improvement of learning and they activate it. 3 % don't consider the use of these instruments as being efficient because they "don't offer relevant information about the students' level of knowledge"

Item 10: Check the frequently used instrument and cross out the one that is not used:

- 1.the investigation
- 2.the project
- 3.self assessment
- 4.the portfolio
- 5.class work

77% of them frequently use self assessment techniques. Class work is used by 80% and 45% don't use very often the portfolio and the investigation.

Item 11: Which is your students' attitude towards the use of the alternative evaluation instruments?

80% consider that the students have a positive attitude towards the use of the alternative evaluation instruments because "it offers them the possibility to get better grades than following the classic tasks", "it offers them more opportunities to stand out in front of their teachers and classmates", "they find themselves involved in different learning situations that help them understand what they can do with the things they know or guess". 20% consider that the students have a negative attitude "because they consider that some of them take too much of their time and that's why they accept them just formally"



Students' attitude

Item 12: What modifications would you propose for the present system of evaluation?

This item being an open answer one there was a great variety of answers. 25% of them didn't respond to our solicitation. The other 75% made proposals concerning the lowering of the minimal standards in evaluation and moving the accent from the quantity of information that need to be assimilated to occasions that would offer to the student the opportunity to think.

Conclusions

The processing of data is highlighting the fact that the manner of conceiving and the manner of using the evaluation when it comes to motivating students' school progress, have to become a priority besides marking because it allows a better way of getting to know your students and an essential source of improving their future activities.

The questionnaire that was applied during the micro-research regarding the impact that the evaluation has on school practice: the teachers that were interviewed confirm the idea of understanding and practicing quite a personalized way of the evaluation. Another poorer aspect shown by the analysis of the results from the questionnaire regards the use of complementary methods of evaluation. The investigation, the portfolio or the project must be regarded as a real support in the current evaluation not as an optional method. According to the objectives of the instruction, to the characteristics of the school subject, to the type of content and to the age particularities of the pupils, the teacher must choose the most suitable of the traditional and complementary methods of evaluation. The use of complementary methods of evaluation is useful both for the pupils and for the teachers: the pupils have the possibility to discover and demonstrate new interests, hidden abilities and the teacher gets an extra information regarding competences that the student cannot demonstrate by oral, written or practical tasks (for example relational competences).

References:

- Lisievi, P, (2002), *Evaluarea în învățământ. Teorie, practică, instrumente*, Editura Aramis, București
- Manolescu, M., (2002), *Evaluarea școlară – un contract pedagogic*, Editura Fundației D. Bolintineanu, București
- Roman, A., Balaș, E., (2014), *Proiectarea situațiilor de învățare școlară*, Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca
- Ungureanu, D., (2001), *Teroarea creionului roșu. Evaluare educațională*, Editura Univ. De Vest, Timișoara