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**THE IMPACT OF EVALUATION ON LEARNING PROCESS –  
TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS**

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***Abstract***

**Problem Statement:** The evaluation process is an important part of didactic process in classroom and in entire system of education. **Purpose of Study:** The main objectives of the paper are to investigate the methods and standards of evaluation process of students. **Research Methods:** The investigative part is done through the survey about some aspects of the educational process in classroom. The sample comprises 96 teachers from Nord-East part of Romania. **Findings:** The teachers consider the evaluation process is depending on some factors (educational level, program of study and performance) and influencing learning process. In terms of the gained results we have described the perception of teachers about the educational process and specific methods of evaluating. **Conclusions:** The results obtained after the quantitative and qualitative analysis help to figure out more clearly the evaluation process in school. The final data helps to build a better system for teaching for the optimizing the quality of the evaluation process.

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**Keywords:** Teacher's methods of evaluation, learning process, perceptions of students.



## 1. Introduction

The evaluation involves measurements, comparisons, assessments, value judgments on which certain decisions can be adapted to optimize and activate the areas under evaluation. The evaluation is a systematic review of the value or characteristics of a process, an action plan (program) or an object. Evaluation is part of a decision-making process (Meyer, 2000). It includes issuing an opinion on value by systematically collecting and analysing information about it in relation to certain criteria. Constantin Cucuș (1998, p. 8) considers that „*the meaning of the concept of evaluation is different according to educational realities. And thus, so we are talking about an evaluation of the system, an evaluation of the educational institution, an evaluation of the programs and methodologies authorized, a teacher's evaluation and, last but not least, an assessment of the students*”.

The fundamental operational component of the learning process is evaluation, together with teaching and learning activities. It is the evaluation that gives details of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies and methods, the correctness of the setting of the operational objectives, as far as they are found in the obtained results.

Starting from these premises, the present study aims to analyse the role of didactic evaluation in the learning process and the relationship with the other components of the educational instructive process: teaching and learning, and also to highlight its effects on the teaching process, but also the teachers' attitude in front of the evaluation. There is often the question "whether an assessment is needed, how? when? who? does so and what should be the student / teacher's attitude towards the evaluation /examination" (Clipa, 2017, p. 5).

Evaluation in school checks, measures, and appreciates the pupils' school results over a specified period of time. Didactic evaluation is considered to be a complex psycho-pedagogical method, which aims to establish the values of some processes, behaviors, performances, by referring them to a set of predetermined criteria, of "standard" value.

The evaluation can take several forms and thus from the applicability point of view, we can discuss at the level of the educational activity about an evaluation of pupils' school performance, an evaluation of teachers' didactic activity, another evaluation of the educational programs and last but not least, the evaluation of educational institutions and the evaluation of the educational system itself.

Education orbits around three components - teaching-learning-evaluation - and assessment is considered to be a "sensitive subject in any educational system" because the effects of evaluative actions are felt not only inside the educational system but also outside it, respectively on a cultural, social and even political level.

When making an assessment, it should be taken into account that it should be conceived not only as a control of knowledge or as an objective measure, but also as a way of improvement, which implies a global strategy of training. The evaluation operation is not an over dated or overlapped stage of the learning process but it is an integrated act for pedagogical activity.

The terms in literature are: *assessment* și *evaluation* (eng.), *évaluation* și *estimation* (fr.), *schätzung*și*einschätzung* (germ.), *clasificación* și *evaluación*(spanish), *valutazione* (it) (Clipa, 2008). Since the beginning we must draw the line between evaluation and assessment.

As Hattie shows (2014), assessment is the process of objectively understanding the state or condition of a thing, by observation and measurement. Assessment of teaching means taking a measure of its effectiveness. “Formative” assessment is measurement for the purpose of improving it. “Summative” assessment is what we normally call “evaluation”. Also, evaluation is the process of observing and measuring a thing for the purpose of judging it and of determining its “value,” either by comparison to similar things, or to a standard. Evaluation of teaching means passing judgment on it as part of an administrative process.

Ideally, a fair and comprehensive plan to evaluate teaching would incorporate many data points drawn from a broad array of teaching dimensions. Such a plan would include not only student surveys, but also self-assessments, documentation of instructional planning and design, evidence of scholarly activity to improve teaching, and most importantly, evidence of student learning outcomes.

But that is not all. A comprehensive evaluation of teaching would necessarily include various types of peer assessment, more commonly referred to as “peer observation.”

The verbs *to assess* and *to evaluate* are closely related to be used in defining each other. Between educational assessment and the process of evaluation there are some important differences. Assessment is defined as a process of appraising something or someone, i.e. the act of gauging the quality, value or importance. Evaluation focuses on making a judgment about values, numbers or performance of someone or something. Assessment is made to identify the level of performance of an individual, whereas evaluation is performed to determine the degree to which goals are attained. Surgenor (2010) states that assessment methods and requirements probably have a greater influence on how and what students learn than any other factor. This influence may well be of greater importance than the impact of teaching materials. He continues and remarks that assessment plays a number of roles in the life of a student, some of which they may be more aware of than others. It’s widely accepted that students’ learning patterns, educational focus, and allocation of time will be directly influenced by assessment.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The evaluation has several definitions; starting from its broad meaning, it can be said that evaluation is an activity that takes into account all those processes and products that reflect both the nature and the level of achievements achieved by pupils in learning; it highlights the degree of consistency of learning outcomes with the proposed educational objectives; it provides the information needed to make the best educational decisions.

In a changing educational system, the evaluation (firstly regarded in a global way) and examination (designating both the selection and certification function) represent a true geometric place of the various tendencies, decisions, force – ideas, surface or deep movements. The evaluation in school, accompanied by examination at different moments of the educational path, has a stake which costs and impact have become increasingly visible and important with the decision-making of education policy specific to the real reform in progress in Romania for the last recent years.

Obviously, the place (as well as the multiple roles of evaluation) in a system along the reform is a critical one, by recognition of this reality by all those who are involved, depending both on the success and on the future self-regulation of the system as a whole.

Thus, the evaluation, generically viewed, fulfills a set of functions and roles that need to be known and assumed, being an effective mean of linking the formation of students with the needs of the society at a certain point in their evolution; a crucial way to control the impact of financial and possibly other kinds of investment that society makes in the education system; the most accessible mechanism for self-control, achieving a transparent knowledge of the system state, as well as describing, in terms of educational policy, the feedback effect and its impact; the education subsystem is credited with the major role of activating and implementing complex relationships between school managers, educators (generically), pupils and parents (Ramos, 2012).

The synthesis of evaluation interpretations highlights a plurality of terms that can designate integrated activities in the evaluation process. Thus, to evaluate means:

- ✓ to check what has been learned, understood, retained; to check acquisitions as part of a progress.
- ✓ to judge the pupil's activity or his / her efforts according to certain recommendations; to judge the student's level of training in relation to certain pre-established rules;
- ✓ to estimate the level of student's competences;
- ✓ to place the student in relation to his / her possibilities or to the others; to place the student's product in relation to the general level;
- ✓ to represent, by a number (mark) or grade, the degree of success of a student's production according to various criteria;
- ✓ to reach to a verdict on the knowledge or abilities of a pupil;
- ✓ to establish/ determine the value of a student's performance, etc.

The deontology of the evaluation process is in an inseparable relationship with the deontological code of the profession of teacher. Who else is leading the evaluation? Of course, the teacher is the one who proposes goals for a certain content, thinks the didactic strategy of teaching those notions, consolidates them, taking into account the objectives of evaluation, chooses the methods for verification, the evaluation tool, draws up the correction and scoring scales, applies the class test, interprets the results obtained and intervenes in the didactic process where he/she considers to be necessary to optimize the results, to rethink the didactic approach. In other words, it does the feed-back.

The teacher should be like a doctor: he applies a treatment to the patient, but if he notices that the signs of healing are late, then he rethinks the prescribed treatment, sees what was good, or what did not correspond the patient's needs, and applies something else. Ideally, it should be given the right treatment right from the start. In this way, it would save time and the expected results would already appear after the first "dose" of treatment.

Within the 'deontology of assessment', a defining role for the teacher is '*objectivity*'. "*The spirit of righteousness*" was considered by Isocrates himself to be "*one of the virtues of the highest value*" that transforms man into a "*vertical being*". The teacher can remain a "*vertical being*," only when he "*nourishes*" with the "*bread of the spirit*" considered by Mihai Eminescu to be the justice, that power which is directed by consciousness, that "*eye of reason*" as it was thought by JJ Rousseau. The true sense of duty belongs to the one who taught "*self-assertion*", that is, "*to respect oneself*". Only by respecting will we be respected! To respect is to be as objective as possible. It is known, however, that human nature is characterized by subjectivity. This explains some errors that may appear in the evaluation, such as the halo effect,

stereotyping, or personal equation. Among the errors encountered in the evaluation there can also be mentioned the contrast effect and the proximity error. If the "halo effect" and "stereotypes" manifested through a certain constancy of assessment, irrespective of the real-world changes of the subject of assessment, the contrast and proximity effects act in the sense that the results of the evaluation change without this to assume a real change in the subject of the evaluation. Thus, the same performance is marked differently according to the position occupied in the sequence of evaluations performed on a group of students. Along with the subjective appreciation phenomena mentioned so far there are the personal equation and the similarity effect. These relate to the teacher's personality, his / her conception and attitude towards the assessment act. The personal equation is the factor that makes the assessment to be different from one teacher to another, depending on the examiner's needs. Thus, there are no recent errors of appreciation, but only proportional differences of the scale of appreciation from one teacher to another. Thus, if that wave of subjectivism were eliminated, the errors of evaluation would disappear or diminish. Here's how objectivity appears again as a regulator of the evaluation process. It would be dishonest to say that someone is fully objective. Human nature does not allow that, but that does not prevent the teacher, however, from trying to be as objective as possible. The ideal is hardly to be touched, but it is advisable to get closer to it, to strive to touch it.

There is even a teacher's code of ethics. It is based on the following principles: commitment to students, commitment to the teaching profession, ethical behavior towards colleagues and commitment to the school and social community. These principles define practically the notion of "didactic deontology". As the physician avoids as much as possible leaving a scar on the patient, so the evaluator tries not to harm the soul of the one who is being evaluated giving a mark/grade that does not illustrate the true value of the child's work.

It should not be forgotten that the evaluation is closely related to teaching. Indeed, the assessment can show if he/she taught well, but who guarantees that he/she have properly assessed? It is the student's fault for some small marks/low grades in a test, assessors', too, by failing to meet the proposed requirements, by lacking ownership of concepts, by overcoming the average level of accessibility, by ignoring differences between students or circumventing preferences for a particular exercise or the fact that for the students it was maybe one of the many tests of that day, and their concentration power could not "work" at maximum odds.

It would be advisable to "*look in our garden*" when we want to find out whose fault it was. It is easier to be guilty of the other, but the profession of teacher obliges us to be objective, to keep the "*judicial spirit*" in our minds. It would be helpful to take into account the student not only when the teacher evaluates him through a grade, but also when teaching, consolidating for verification, thinking about evaluation objectives according to what he/she has worked on, building items similar to those practiced to consolidate, and then he/she just try to evaluate it as accurately as possible through a mark about the results of his/her work.

From the above, one might conclude that the whole evaluation process should be rethought in order to obtain a more objective assessment. The formulation of the evaluation objectives, the elaboration of the test and the elaboration of the correction and grading scale have an essential role in establishing a mark/grade that best reflects the student's real ability. Not only has the teacher depended on a mark/grade

as convincing as possible. He himself would like to find levers for a more transparent evaluation process (Stoica, 2001).

*Assessment does more than allocate a grade or degree classification to students – it plays an important role in focusing their attention and, as Sainsbury & Walker (2007) observe, actually drives their learning.*

Gibbs and Simpson (2003) states that assessment has 6 main functions:

1. Capturing student time and attention
2. Generating appropriate student learning activity
3. Providing timely feedback which students pay attention to
4. Helping students to internalise the discipline's standards and notions of equality
5. Generating marks or grades which distinguish between students or enable pass/fail decisions

to be made

6. Providing evidence for other outside the course to enable them to judge the appropriateness of standards on the course.

Synthesizing what it has been said so far, highlights the idea that objective assessment really remains an ideal of any teacher! However, it must be recognized that, no matter how competent and correct an evaluator, there is a possibility that he may be wrong because he does not only correct himself with the mind, but with all his being. The personal equation will therefore imprint its mark, if only in a partial sense.

There is no doubt that if one of the central issues of the school assessment is that of its objective character, then it is necessary to look at things from the other direction of the subjective factor and to try to establish how, in what way and in what sense, the objectivity of evaluation is affected by the intervention of subjective factors. Most of the debates and disputes are placed precisely in the area of the influences that the evaluator, viewed as a concrete personality, exercises them in the act of evaluation and these influences are most often considered as being virtual sources of distortion of the evaluation results.

Viewed in its general aspects, the issue of distortions of subjective origin is fully justified. In fact, any act of evaluation, even when very well-used techniques are used, involves an assessor, a man who conceives or only applies assessment methods and tools. If we consider that school assessment is most often a "face-to face" assessment, in which both the evaluator and the person who is evaluated know each other, where the relation of evaluation has the character of an interpersonal relationship with psychosocial implications, then it is obvious that the subjective contribution becomes substantial. In this case, the problem is not to minimize or exaggerate the contribution of the subjective factor, but to analyze the limits, the meaning and the way the subject or subjects involved in the evaluation influence the correctness of the evaluation.

A purely objective, impersonal, indifferent, and absolutely neutral assessment, i.e. a subjectless assessment, is not only impossible, but also less significant, less relevant and, ultimately, less objective than an evaluation that explicitly engages subjectivity, values, attitudes, including, or especially, the personal view of the person who evaluates or / or to the one being evaluated.

Education is an excellent interaction between subjectivity; it is transfer and assimilation of experience that engages all the personalities involved, teachers or students.

The problem is not to eliminate the intervention of the subjective factor, but to control this intervention. For clarification some questions and related answers would be needed:

➤ what are the limits in which the intervention of the subjective factor, be it a teacher, a student or another influential person, can deviate, in addition or in minus, from what would it could be a correct assessment? The answer could be: The intervention of the subjective factor cannot exceed certain limits of the deviation from the correct level of assessment, even when this level is the one of "common sense". A student's performance, whose level is seven, cannot be quoted by either ten or four, even if the evaluator intentionally seeks to overestimate or underestimate this student. Exceptions, if they appear, only confirm the rule, because subjectivism becomes evident in this case, and discussions must be directed elsewhere. But if we give up the presumption of intentionality, then it is certain that the deviations of the subjective origin cannot exceed - and do not exceed the real - certain limits. It is precisely these limits that have to be considered in the delimitation of the intervention space, by special methods of evaluation, in the sense of diminishing the subjective contribution to the distortion of the evaluation. Any excess of substitution of the personality of the evaluator and the evaluator through impersonal and rigorous objective techniques - as far as they are possible - can have at least two negative effects: it diminishes the significance of the evaluation, reducing it to the measurement of "physical" characteristics; it removes from the scope of evaluation the complex qualitative aspects that can only be noticed through observation, through a direct relationship between the evaluator and the evaluated, between the teacher and the student (Danielson, 2002).

➤ Which are the proportions in which the influence of the subjective factor can be distributed to the two main agents: the teacher and the student? - Frequently, the teacher's subjectivism is particularly stressed, ignoring the fact that in the school assessment the pupil contributes, in one way or another, to the subjective conditioning of the evaluation. Student's conception about evaluation, the own criteria, the motivations, his/her attitudes are at least as influential as the teacher's. In fact, experiences of using self-assessment or student assessment techniques for pupils have highlighted the same subjective evaluation effects. The most important subjective factor is undoubtedly the student's attitude to the school assessment system and, in particular, to the scoring. Therefore, knowing pupils' attitudes and taking into account the improvement of the evaluation act is an important condition for the general improvement of the school assessment system.

➤ To what extent the influence of the subjective factor is exerted in the sense of non-objectivity? Or, conversely, asked the question: To what extent is the objectivity diminished by the subjective contribution of the persons involved in the evaluation factor? This question brings into discussion the existential status of the subject, the subjectivity in the process of knowing the action, with implications that go beyond the strict framework of the evaluation, engaging the epistemological problems of the object-subject relation in the socio-human field. While maintaining the discourse in the sphere of evaluation, we believe that the problem addressed here has two significant aspects:

❖ One refers to the relationship between the subjective influence and the objective character of the evaluation and can be rephrased as follows: "Is the subjective influence an influence that necessarily undermines the objective character of the evaluation?" and the answer is given in terms of how, and under what conditions, this influence is exercised.

❖ The other aspect relates to the relationship between the objective / subjective nature of the evaluation on the one hand and the correctness of the assessment on the other hand. This aspect of the problem can be expressed in two ways: "A strictly objective assessment is necessarily and fair?"; "Does the

subjective intervention act in the sense of the evaluation's inaccuracy?" Of course, a response will presuppose, as a prerequisite, a well-defined concept of correctness in the evaluation. At this level of analysis, it is thought that the unexplained hypothesis is that no strict association can be established between objectively correct, subjective and inappropriate pairs, and that perhaps the correctness of the evaluation is ensured by an optimal combination of the objective of the subject in the evaluation.

### **3. Research Questions**

Following a research carried out at several educational establishments in the Dorohoi area, Botosani County, by applying a questionnaire we can draw some conclusions:

- The measurement of the evaluation process is done with the mark or grade, considered as main forms;
- The evaluator has the task of interpreting the results, and the tools and criteria on which the evaluation is conducted are specific to the target. In order for the interpretation to be able to make decisions as to ensure the progress of the evaluated student or to eliminate certain dysfunctions found during the evaluation, particular importance should be attached both to the quality of the tools used and to the way they are used.

School assessment has socio-moral implications widely spread. It addresses parents, the social community, the relationships between teachers and the interest the society has towards the results of the evaluation process.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the research was to investigate factors influencing the evaluation, and the respondents were asked to fill in this questionnaire, which assesses aspects of the evaluation modalities.

### **5. Research Methods**

The research was attended by a total of 96 teachers, 18 were men and 78 women. Among the 96 respondents, 73 came from urban areas and 23 from rural areas. The 96 teachers teach in different school units, 14 are high school teachers and 82 are teachers teaching at secondary schools. The level of teacher education is different, so there are: 21 respondents who have completed high school, 11 have postgraduate studies, and 64 have faculty. Another criterion for differentiating the teaching staff involved in the research was the age: between 25-45 years we had 30 people and between 46- 65years 66 people.

### **6. Findings**

The research aims to highlight the fact that evaluation, through its effects, can have consequences on the student's behavior, on the teacher's and last but not least on the parents'. The way in which education takes place has a major influence on education itself. Evaluation is a process in continuous dynamics. Starting from the question "*what results do we want to achieve following the evaluation?*" and from the analysis of the negative consequences of the curriculum evaluation and training activities, we are trying to "re-invent / design" the evaluation (Danielson, 2002). The evaluation extends from the traditional



verification of the results to the assessment of the process, of the strategy that led to certain results; not only is the student evaluated but also the content, methods, objectives of the learning situation and the teacher him/herself.

## 7. Conclusion

The evaluation also extends over the other indicators, not only to cognitive activities but also to student's behavior, personality, attitude, degree of incorporation of values. The evaluation is centered on positive results and seeks to avoid permanent sanctioning of the negative ones. The student becomes an authentic partner of the teacher by involving him in self-evaluation, inter-assessment or controlled assessment. The assessment must be presented to the student as a natural task and not as a punishment or sanction. Thus, the evaluation will only be done when it really reflects the students' training. Assessment is considered as a way of improving teaching, learning, eliminating failure, and achieving a steady progress in preparing each student.

School assessment must be dynamic, centered on the mental processes of the pupil, to form self-regulation, self-reflection, to replace that static reflection, based on control, examination, sanction. In this way you can get to assisted learning evaluation. From a modern perspective, "assessing" means doing it activity that accompanies step-by-step teaching and learning (Clipa, 2015). As such, evaluation is no longer regarded as an action of "Routine" used only for the purpose of "knowing" the results but is called to "sanction" positively or negatively, through a judgment of value, the level reached by students in their preparation, or to achieve it selection. It is also the assessment that provides information about the quality of teaching and learning, achieving orientation and stimulation this process, making it more productive. Therefore, the role of the evaluation is that of fulfilling, in the whole of the instructive-educational activities, that one formative and stimulating role. From the student's perspective, the assessment guides and directs learning, forming motivation towards learning, it is an effective means of learning ensuring success etc .From the teacher's perspective, assessment is needed because it allows to gather information, it recommends ways to improve didactic methods and it identifies students' difficulties.

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