INTEGRATED EVALUATION OF COMPETENCES

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Abstract: *The article discusses the issue of pupils` evaluation of competences in terms of difficulty awareness that this approach implies for all actors involved: pupils-teachers-parents. The integrated approach of evaluation of pupils in the 2nd, 4th and 6th grade is regarded as an initiative of reforming the national evaluation system. Pupils face situations of integrated knowledge, abilities and attitudes but the evaluation doesn`t facilitate experiences of learning integration at a curricular level. In this context, we are in the situation of wanting to change evaluation methods before we prepare the form and change the learning methods.*

Keywords: *change, evaluation strategy, competences, integrated evaluation*

Introduction

Most of the current educational systems are oriented towards competence development. This orientation brings about the curricular reform of Romanian education. A reshaping of the quality of education and teaching staff is necessary; therefore teachers should get used to integrated teaching strategies, the increase and awareness of cognitive process in learning and with the modernization of the evaluation process.

It is necessary to reshape the quality of education and of teacher training according to alternative teaching methods, with the increase and awareness of the weight of cognitive processes in learning and the upgrading of the evaluation process. From this perspective, the upgrading of teachers` evaluation skills can be analysed on two levels (Ketele, J.-M., 1992, pag.28-29): as strategy for change and as a manner of applying and perceiving evaluation and self-evaluation.

In either case, any strategy for change affects the organisation and the people in charge with it, only if its aim is to change the methods that skip coding. These new methods can only change the meaning of rules, namely their interpretation and emphasis; therefore we cannot address to teachers ignoring the interests of organizational power. On the other hand, we cannot hope convincing teachers to change their methods in a manner that would emphasize tension associated to organisation rules.

A reform of formal evaluation rules may have only limited effect on practice, taking into account the interpretation margin left to the teacher. If teachers know how to keep their habits in spite test changes, they would interpret the new rules consequently and would betray their spirit. Any strategy for change in evaluation can

face only reluctance if it ignores the polyvalence of current practices and their real functions both for teachers and for different levels of organisation.

A strategy for change should make harmonization between learning and evaluation easier. Thus, evaluation shouldn`t conflict with the organization of work and the teacher`s didactic approach.

Any strategy for change should take into account the subjective coherence that teachers aim for. This coherence occurs as the result of their global image about children and the level of excellence assigned by the evaluation procedures. Formal evaluation brings these levels closer, but if it is not properly understood, it can bring about severe dissonances.

The practices are different; any strategy to change them, which ignores this diversity and its fundaments, is subjected to failure because different attitudes and practices cannot assign the same meaning and consequences to a unique message.

- *traditionally*, as internal factor, intraclass; evaluation expresses a sort of absolute power that the teacher has on children and internal self-evaluation is placed on the same level with the premises of self-reflection associated with the power of judgement; (Vogler, J., 2000, pag. 31) the teacher`s evaluation is beyond any doubt and self-evaluation is therefore pointless.

▪ As external factor, intraclass; school is a institution which functions in an ideal environment.

▪ As internal factor, interclasses, evaluation reflects the human quality of pupils in terms of: potential, peculiarities and learning diligence.

▪ As external factor, interclasses school used to be a differentiated institution according to the children`s socio-economic-cultural background.

- *modern*, as internal factor, intraclass; evaluation is connected to the pupil`s achievement of educational objectives. Self-evaluation targets sporadic exercises of paper self-correction. (Kelemen G., 2014, pag 190);

▪ As external factor, intraclass, evaluation involves measuring school performance by comparing the students` answers.

▪ As internal factor, interclasses; evaluation of school performance according to the characteristics of Gaussian curvature.

▪ As external factor interclasses; evaluation of school performance by relating it to final exams (national exams, baccalaureate).

- *contempory*, as internal factor, inter and intraclass; evaluation and self-evaluation involve a formative action by means of which pupils but also teachers have to be actively involved in the process.

▪As external factor, inter and intraclass; school has to become a differentiated institution at the level of the microsystem (to develop each pupil`s abilities and specific skills) and to function in a socio-cultural environment which is beneficial to the process of adjustment and social integration.

In conclusion, changing the evaluation and self-evaluation methods involves firstly a change in the significance of the evaluation concept and secondly a unitary change of rules which are a direct consequence of the evaluation system.

Thus, any reshape at the level of the microsystem should begin with the reshaping of perception, of initial training, of evaluation and self-evaluation at the level of educational microsystem. Reshaping all these elements is a Sisyphean labour because any initial training of evaluation and self-evaluation ability faces diachronically the primate of acronicity. Therefore, along with the development of perspectives on teaching and learning, one should constantly upgrade the evaluation and self-evaluation skills by teachers` continuous training of teachers.

Strategies of competence development

Formative evaluation [formatrice] is another interesting concept which describes a notion close to formative evaluation. It shows the fact that it is used to designate not only mere evaluation of the « finite product » but also the pupil`s mental operations which are involved in the learning process. They suggest:

- Training understanding as a clear representation of goals;

- Training understanding as the elaboration of a planned project in collaboration with the teacher;

- Training understanding as self-evaluation. (ibidem)

Reflexive evaluation is a manner of evaluation which involves self-evaluation and self-correction and is a summary of activities of previous understanding. The objective is to make the pupil to internalize knowledge and rules by:

- Discovering their own errors,

- Understanding the origin of errors,

- Error correction.

Formative evaluation or strongly personalized formative evaluation (Bonnioll, J.,J., Nunziati, G., 1990, cited by Ungureanu, D., 2001, p. 301-303) suggests a technological model of training that is based on pupils` and teachers` anticipation of methods and means used to achieve goals and objectives. It means that pupils can set their own evaluation criteria (which do not necessarily involve self-evaluation). Pupils intuit that teachers use them; consequently pupils can search for appropriate methods, manners and learning strategies which describe and prescribe formative aspects of this evaluation.

Whatever would be the manners of comprehending, perceiving and apperceiving evaluation, they are described by the evaluation methods. If applied unitary, they are reduced to evaluating in a punctual manner the learning process. They also involve balanced evaluation and try not to involve the pupil in this activity, but to train him/her partly or to develop mechanisms of using evaluation and self-evaluation for a real optimization of the instructional-educational process

However, *only by formative evaluation is the preparation of self-evaluation* a frequent process because by its means "The child acquires the knowledge of

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appreciation criteria taken into consideration, which allows him to evaluate his own results". (Cardinet, J., 1994, p.19)

Formative evaluation has in common with criteria evaluation the fact that both evaluate pupils` skills by using reference standards. Unlike criteria evaluation which aims for a minimal competence, namely a minimally accepted performance standard, formative evaluation aims to reach more complex standards and the development of polyvalent skills. Therefore, in formative assessment, standards are grouped in "sets of standards" which are accepted and revised to detect the skills of the evaluated pupil asked to solve a task. (Wolf., A., 1995, according to Ungureanu, D., pag.266)

In conclusion, it is necessary to reconsider the methods used in formative assessment, given that we observe certain delays or gaps between formative education and formative evaluation, to the detriment of the later. (Ungureanu, D., 2001, pag. 267)

There are various definitions of competence, but under procedural aspect they share functional terms, which grasp: „a set of resources" – cognitive, motor, affective and others. They are linked to knowledge, self-knowledge, attitudes and abilities, action schemes and habits which "mobilize" integrative and dynamic to „be able to face" various problem situations in learning, problem-solving, projects that students respond positively to. (Le Boterf, Paquay, Rey, Wittorsky etc.).

Being competent is generally understood as being able to mobilize an integrated set of resourced in order to solve problem situations. Competence involves contextualization of acquisitions and is characterized by three essential dimensions: (Bosman, Gerard şi Roegiers, 2000): originality, efficiency and integration. „The pupil is no longer motivated to use almost automatically one single register of his knowledge: he can solve the situation, namely be competent, only by interacting everything he has learnt so as to build an original and also efficient solution." (Gerard, F. M., Pacearcă, Ş., Evaluation of competences. Practical guide, 2012, pag. 52).

Models can be generated to build competences as consequence of learning activities and learning situations which students are exposed to. A learning situation favours the development of pupils` competences and involves sequential, gradual involvement in ten types of activities:

1. Cope with problem-situations (new and challenging);
2. Exploring resources (made available through learning);
3. Acting internally or externally
4. Interacting (for research, confrontation, analysis, understanding, etc.)
5. Reflexive attitudes, activities
6. Co-evaluative activities
7. Structuring new acquisitions
8. Integration to inter or transdiciplinary systems and contexts (to fix new long-term acquisitions)
9. Activities of building meaning and
10. Preparing transfer possibilities.

In order to evaluate competences by assignments which involve complex problem solving with practical and/or social significance, we ask our pupils to integrate something without previously teaching them how. „An evaluation situation determines the students` acquisition level of a competence (of integration) by mobilizing their

knowledge and/or skills, referring to some well-set criteria, so that the results would lead to proper decision making."(F. M. Gerard, Ş. Pacearcă, Evaluation of competences. Practical guide, 2012, pag. 61). This requires students to be confronted regularly with problem situations that can be solved only by mobilizing all previously learned acquisitions.

Conclusions

The evaluation of acquisition integration can be done only after learning integration. Therefore, evaluations at 2nd, 4th and 6th grades are only a rough guide which determines a reshaping of curriculum and organizational structure of the educational process. Thus, it could offer pupils enough opportunities to learn how to integrate knowledge, skills, contextual attitudes, life situations, significant problems and how to improve teacher training in competence-based curriculum.

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