

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSESSMENT – PART OF THE TEACHERS' EVALUATION

Robert Gabriel DRAGOMIR*, Lecturer Ph.D. student
Daliana Ecaterina TASCOVICI*, Assistant lecturer Ph.D. student
*The Faculty of Finance and Accounting, Campulung
Spiru Haret University

Abstract

The present paper is part of an ample research on a teacher assessment model in the pre university education system. The purpose was to establish the theoretical aspects of the assessment object taken into consideration. Thus, I have presented and described the assessment object, which involves the teacher's performance, the content and the result of the teacher's activity, which is materialized in the pupil's knowledge

Key-words: *assessment, teacher, object of the evaluation, competences, attitudinal aspects*

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Introduction

The present paper is part of an ample research on a teacher assessment model in the pre university education system. The purpose was to establish the theoretical aspects of the assessment object taken into consideration. Thus, we presented and described the assessment object, which comprises the teacher's performance, the content of the taught subject and the result of the teacher's activity, a result materialized in the students' competences. The work presents the main ideas concerning the assessment object; there is a long way up to the establishment of the object concept content; there were also a sum of theories and research directions in this field. We note that any position, point of view and personal opinion of the researchers and trends in pedagogy represented a contribution.

Literature review

The object of the assessment was studied by many authors, but for the relevance of our paper, we mention the most representative ones. Thus: H. Bernard [2] and L.A. Branskamp brought the aspects included in the teachers' evaluation in high education as a new element [3, p. 65-70].

J.G. Donald stressed the criteria for university teaching [5, p. 74-88].

K.A. Feldman remarked the link between student ratings of specific instructional dimensions and student achievement as a part of a correct evaluation [6, p. 583-645].

P.W. Musgrave analyzed the teacher as an object of the system of learning sociology [13, p. 136-140].

Therefore, being studied and improved by each and every of the outstanding researchers which brought new points of view, the assessment object comprises the following three major and representative components which shall be presented below: *the teacher's performance, the content of the taught school subject and the result of the teacher's activity, a result materialized in the students' competences.*

The assessment object

a. The specific literature deals with the teacher's performance. There are a lot of studies and authors who tried to identify the efficiency factors of this process. Thus, Hildebrand in 1971, Kulik and McKeachie in 1975, Feldman in 1976, Centra in 1979, Marsh in 1981, [15, p. 71; 7, p. 14] asked the students to list the characteristics of the best teachers. The obtained results were grouped in the following categories: the capacity of analysis/synthesis, the course organization/ clarity and the interaction between teacher/student, the teacher's dynamism and enthusiasm.

b. The content of the taught school subject is another aspect connected to the quality of the teacher's activity. Research was conducted by L.A. Braskamp [4, p. 45-54], G. French-Lazovic [7, p. 73-89], and other pedagogues. Their studies focused on two aspects of the content evaluation: the course planning and the subject knowledge. The obtained efficiency and evaluation criteria factors are the following: for the course planning: objectivity, content, teaching methods, evaluation means, bibliography; for the subject knowledge – the subject content and the bibliography. The evaluation criteria for the course planning concretized into: clarity, precision, pertinence and coherence. The evaluation criteria for the subject knowledge were: exactness and elucidation.

In order to transmit proper knowledge, the teachers must have a deep knowledge of the school subject and show intellectual mobility, in order to help students create "cognitive maps" and operate connections among different ideas.

Shulman [17, p. 4-14] introduced the collocation *the pedagogical content knowledge*. Thus, the teachers have to master two types of knowledge:

- * of the content, named also the profound knowledge of the subject;
- * of the curricular development.

The content knowledge is very important and it refers to the teaching process, including the most useful ways of representing and transmitting the content to be taught as well as the ways of transmitting efficiently the specific concepts of a lesson or of a subject.

Following the same line of pedagogical view and developing it, Glatthorn is another specialist who underlines the representation of the ideas using new analogies or metaphors. This is called the new comprehension, within which the pedagogical acts are carefully thought and reasonable; the teacher gains a new type of the comprehension of the scopes, the taught subjects, the students and the pedagogical mechanism generally speaking. Other researchers stress the idea that the didactic process in conformity with the audience supposes the understanding of

the difference which could take place because of the different cultural profile, personal experiences, the cultivation of the native intelligence in different ways.

c. The result of the teacher's activity, seen in the students' performances is the third aspect of the teacher's evaluation. There were studies conducted by G. Leinhard [9, p. 165-179]. He identifies the teachers' efficiency by taking into account the annual success during at least three years of study.

Another specialist who analyzed this aspect is E. Ropo, [16, p. 18-27]. He remarks a series of doubts referring to G. Leinhard theory: good teachers can receive weak groups of students; the efficiency can be influenced by the students' anxiety during the examinations, the tests can have drawbacks, the teachers can offer help during the examinations and so on. There are also other shortcomings: the teacher is not the only person responsible for what the students learn. The skills, the motivation, the interests of the students are also important factors which contribute to the teaching process. The efficiency tests at the class level are considered to be inefficient and tend to support the skills at lower levels. Another difficulty in the usage of the progress realized by students as a criterion is that we cannot exclude totally the concurrent or initial influences of different factors not related to the teacher.

Detailed analyses of the teacher – student interactions were conducted by many specialists. In their study, M. Miclea and D. Oprea [11] present the following factors which reflect the quality of the teacher's activity: the courses preparation and organization, the knowledge of the taught subject, communicative abilities, passion for the taught subject, availability and the relations with the students, the quality of the students' examinations.

V. Pavelcu [14, p. 14] thinks we can affirm without doubt, that by controlling the students' level of knowledge, the teacher controls his own didactic methods.

C. Platon [15, p. 73-76] considers that the phenomenon of teachers' evaluation is more complex and subtle, going beyond what one can notice during the class activity. Thus, the author speaks about the concept of competence. She identifies four variables of it. The model includes four areas:

- the area of the academic knowledge (initial training);
- the area of specialized knowledge (psycho-pedagogical training);
- the area of the specific abilities (specific to the pre university/university system of learning);
- the area of the personal characteristics (proper to each and every teacher).

The area of the academic knowledge determines the amplitude of the initial academic training and identifies the space for the required knowledge to each and every teacher. The importance of mastering the taught school object is a basic condition for the professional competence. This area is a statistic variable that can be quantified.

The area of the specialized knowledge is also a statistic variable measured by the institution.

Unlike the two above-mentioned areas, where we can meet variations at the variable level, the area of the specific abilities is stable. These abilities have to be demonstrated by any teacher.

The last area refers to attitudes and personal qualities. This field requires individual investigations.

The teacher's competence, summed up by the four areas can be defined as the ownership of a repertoire of knowledge, abilities and professional attitudes considered to be necessary for an efficient activity.

V. Belous [1, p. 99] also makes references to the concept of competence, defining it as the ability or capacity of fulfilling the purposes of the education. The teacher's competence within the educational actions means the ability of his behaviour in a specific way in a pedagogical situation. Thus, the competence represents the possible behaviour, while the performance shows the real behaviour.

N. Mitrofan [12, 1988] presents in detail the teacher's competences. He says that the competence is conditioned by information. The teacher's behaviour is reduced to a dimension, such as the normative activity. That is why this type of behaviour refers exactly to: the purpose of the minded action, the time of the action, the place of the action, the concrete means of action, the obtained performance of the students.

Being under the influences of all these competences, the teacher can be characterized by a so called "pedagogical style", a fairly constant way of working with the students, depending on his personality, his culture, passion, gained experience, different pedagogical situations.

Another interesting observation is made by M.F. Leconte-Beauport [8, p. 3-6]. He discusses the attitudinal aspect, which is usually marginalized. It is shown that there are many factors leading to this marginalization: the confusion in understanding the affective objectives, the opinions conditioning the individual attitudes, the lack of the obvious difference between the cognitive and the affective aspects.

Within the educative relation, the three aspects – knowledge, abilities and attitudes – are in a permanent interaction. Knowledge has a determinant role and gives a specific power to the abilities and attitudes. The abilities represent a concretization of the knowledge and attitudes. The attitudes personalize, give a sense to the knowledge and abilities and transform them. So, for an accurate evaluation of the teacher's activity, we have to take into consideration all the three mentioned aspects.

P. Lisievici [10, p. 242-248] speaks about the correlation of the initial training with the further professional evolution. The forming of the teacher seems to be characterized by the diversity and the incongruence of the professional competences which must be developed on one hand and by the ambiguity of the roles, on the other hand.

This situation makes the option between the principle positions regarding the teacher's training more difficult. The option can be situated between two extreme variants:

a) the initial complete and sufficient training, seen as covering all the professional career;

b) the professional training consisting of a "first aid kit", useful for the first professional years; further professional programs and specific assistance bring the necessary corrections.

Conclusions

All the presented points of view suggest the following action directions:

– the conception of the initial training as a first stage in a process of continuous forming; also taking into consideration the professional development; the chance of opportunities for professional development, courses for professional improvement, programs for the training improvement, finalized with certified documents;

– the idea of linking the initial training with the practice, not in the sense of learning a theory which can be further applied, but mainly as an option for the preponderancy of the courses centred on problems;

– the participation of some active teachers to the initial training of the teachers. It is interesting to note that these teachers have a special status, as they shall spend a great part of their working time in school and other part in the forming institution;

– the usage of a strategy based on the competence development. This orientation in the initial teacher training seems to have appeared as a reaction against the exclusive theoretic training, which is remote from the classes realities and at the same time less relevant for the future teachers' needs.

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