Modern Teaching Assessment and Implications of Learning Motivation

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Modern Teaching Assessment and Implications of Learning Motivation

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Abstract: Evaluation of the teaching context is identified as an integral part of the training process that uses specific teaching strategies necessary to measure the students’ competences. In education, the evaluation process is dynamic and is carried out in compliance with the principles and conditions governing professional ethics. In this framework, the research aims to analyze the role of modern evaluation strategies used by teachers in order to increase motivation for learning. The specific objectives of the research are: the identification of the level of students’ perception of the importance of subjective factors and objective assessment in their learning motivation (SO1); identification of the level of seriousness perceived by students of the impact assessment in stimulating learning motivation (SO2). We have considered the following hypothesis: the working teacher evaluator importance in assessing using the objective factors alone increases students' motivation towards learning (H1); subjective factors are influencing negative assessment students' motivation towards learning (H2); if the teacher assessor uses modern strategies for assessing, so students' learning motivation is increased (H3). Research is quantitative. Research results have led to the following conclusion: contemporary strategies for assessing increases individual success for each student. This is justified in the context of the use of modern methods, assessment, enabling the transition from assessment of learning products to the assessment of student's cognitive processes during learning.

Keywords: learning, teaching, assessment, motivation, strategy assessment.

1. Introduction

The last two decades have given greater importance to an education based on shaping and developing the students’ cognitive and functional actional skills. In the context of the core issue of skill – central concept organizing the curriculum - one can note that shaping and developing professional and transversal skills on the university education level is the core goal of the education for sustainable development, of the education

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based on knowledge. We are actually discussing about a learning context based on objective knowledge and reflection in relation to the acquisitions of education. Today's society requires an education guiding learning to a pragmatic, valid storage of knowledge which necessary for the individual functioning in the social area. As Erickson (2002) appreciates: "Trying to teach in the 21st century without using a conceptual scheme is like trying to build a house without a design. Where will you put the bricks? It is inappropriate to leave the learning of the concepts for later. Learning the concepts is a long-term process. Understanding the concepts calls for a high-level integrative thinking that needs to be trained systematically throughout all the stages of the school period." Skill is explained in relation to the efficiency of the action undertaken by the individual in order to attain a certain goal and obtain the foreseen results. The explanation of the concept can be situated in the sense of the aspects related to the individual's ability, science, knowledge regarding how to manage correctly different individual or collective contexts in order to meet a need or solve problems. At the same time, skill can be associated to performance in relation to the results of the undertaken action: to know, to be an expert, to be talented, to be able in a certain domain or in several domains. At the level of the educational process, in Romania, in Art. 4 of the National Education Law it is mentioned that: "The main aim of education is to shape skills, defined as "a multifunctional and transferrable set of knowledge, habits /abilities and aptitudes that are necessary in different situations." On the level of tertiary education it comes into focus the need to shape and develop professional and transversal skills which are able to assure a successful professional and social integration. According to the model recommended by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF – Cadrul European al calificărilor pentru învățarea de-a lungul vieții), and the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework, one can identify two categories of skills: a) professional skills (cognitive skills and functional-actional skills) and transversal skills (role skills and personal and professional development skills). Transversal skills are described in the context of the development of social skills, emotional intelligence, crisis situations management, team work skills, oral and written communication skills, respect for professional values and ethics, IT use, problem solving and decision making, recognition and respect of diversity and multiculturality, learning autonomy, initiative and entrepreneurship, openness to lifelong learning. Professional skills are described in relation to the following processes: knowledge, understanding and using the specialized language specific for a profession/ professional qualification, explaining and interpreting specific professional facts, transfer application and problem solving in the context of qualification, critical and constructive reflection in
relation to professional facts, creativity and innovation in the specialty domain. In this framework, tertiary education brings into discussion the need to accomplish an evaluation process that is able to measure objectively the students' skills. The evaluation based on skills measurement triggers a reconsideration of the evaluation process. It is appreciated that "skills evaluation has a strong impact on rethinking the relation between education and training" (Manolescu, 2015, p. 98). The evaluation on the level of the education process continues to spur the interest of the actants in the education domain who contemplate the need to shift the accent from an estimative evaluation (evaluation by measurement) to an appreciative evaluation, orientated mainly to the quality of the learning acquisitions, the values acquired by learning. This new paradigmatic orientation is justified in the context of the need to train specialists playing high-quality professional roles, assuring balance, performance and social development. Evaluation as a process is focused on the aspects related to value and turning to good value. The theory of evaluation explains the evaluation process (Manolescu, 2003, p. 122) in the context of several paradigms: a) the paradigm of pragmatic intuition; b) the docimological paradigm c) the paradigm of the goal-centered evaluation; d) the paradigm of formative evaluation and differentiated learning; e) the paradigm of skills pedagogy and of qualitative evaluation.

2. The relation motivation - school evaluation - school success

Motivation is "the set of dynamic factors determining an individual's conduct" (Sălăvăstru, 2004, p. 69). The learning process does not always take place on an intrinsically positive motivational background. Often, it can be faced with obstacles that can block or diminish learning. Both in the case of successful students and in the case of those who do not record permanent success, there are situations that can influence progress. These situations are the object of personal, social, interpersonal or didactic reasons. Motivation becomes the spring that can influence one's behavior towards learning (Ionescu & Chiș, 2009, p. 122). The specialists and practitioners who have approached the issue of motivation totally agree that one cannot talk about just one type of motivation for learning, but learning in the university or non-university area takes place under the influence of some ample sets of reasons that support, kindle and intensify, or on the contrary, diminish, block or interrupt it. Pertinent analyses made on the high number of factors involved in motivational structures delimit various groups of potentially motivating factors. One of the frequently accepted classifications is the one
dividing the reasons of education into two categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Neacșu, 2015, p. 74).

Intrinsic motivation is characterized by the fact that it is triggered on the level of the intimate structure of the person and supports learning from within. Thus, intrinsic motivation is a feature of the state of learning. Extrinsic motivation is met mainly in the learning situations based on excessive authority relying on constraint or rigid appreciation systems. This type of motivation is accompanied by negative emotional states, by fear of failure or punishment, or, rarely, by positive emotions such as: waiting for a material reward or congratulations (Sălăvăstru, 2004, p. 85). In the framework of the instructive-educative process one can note that the learning activity can be motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. There are situations when extrinsic motivation can lead to intrinsic motivation. Along with these two types of motivation there has been proposed the situation of absence of any form of motivation. There are situations that are the object of: severe depressions, emotional troubles, presence of psychic disorders, personality disorders, severe intellectual disorders etc. Different studies have demonstrated that a positive intrinsic motivation has a positive influence on learning. The cognitive impulse relies on the need to know and understand, to be able to master knowledge and solve and formulate problems. This impulse is totally turned to the teaching task and is fulfilled by accomplishing it. The need for affirmation of the self is turned to attaining a high school output, since this assures a certain prestige. The acquiescence coming from the teaching staff meets the need for affirmation of the self in its quality of component of the motivation of the educative activity. The research made on school motivation has demonstrated that motivation amplification based on self-affirmation - when exaggerated - leads to anxiety. It gives the individual fear in front of an eventual failure that could lead to losing the school position and prestige acquired by effort. To the same extent, an excess of motivation can lead to deeply unrealistic professional and school aspirations that can gradually be followed by: a collapse of one's self-respect, failures or non-meeting the teaching tasks (when the aspirations are unrealistically low). The need for affiliation pursues the integration of the individual in a group he identifies himself with, in order to depend on it (Sălăvăstru, 2004, p. 85).
3. The paradigm of the qualitative evaluation/ the pedagogy of skills evaluation

On the process level, evaluation is described in the context of the relation between the learning process and the results obtained as a result of learning or of the relation between referent and the object of the evaluation. Evaluation is defined as the process measuring the value attributed to a situation or product at a certain moment, by comparison to the previously designed model. Evaluation is the process by which the evaluator situates "the product" to be evaluated/ "the obtained results" by the people evaluated on a scale of values and attributes a value to them. Teaching evaluation is described in the context of the relation between the evaluator’s expectations in relation to the performances of the people evaluated. Evaluation involves putting to the test the judgments of value (Manolescu, 2003) emitted by the evaluator in relation to the object of the evaluation, by reference to a standard. In university education, the evaluation of the professional skills is accomplished by referring to referential systems that are specific for the study object. The referential is "a structured system of criteria, of landmarks or indicators based on which one circumscribes, in reality, the dimensions, components and content of a certain type of formulation, of a curriculum, of an educational program or of a profession” (Voiculescu, 2001, p. 131). Evaluation as process is not the same as appreciation.

4. Objective evaluation vs. subjective evaluation

The discourse on teaching evaluation refers to the objectiveness/ subjectivity of the evaluator who is involved in the evaluation process. Objective evaluation is described within the consideration context of the evaluation’s objective factors, namely: structural elements of the evaluation process, evaluation conditions, evaluation criteria, measurement instruments. All these elements are manipulated by the evaluators who can influence the evaluated results. When the evaluator does not modify the evaluation framework, one can appreciate that we are dealing with an objective evaluation. If the evaluator manipulates and controls in a special manner the evaluation framework and conditions, we can appreciate that the evaluation process can be influenced. Within the subjective factors category, we can enumerate: individual factors that we can identify on the level of the person evaluated or being evaluated, yet also on the level of the evaluator (the emotional states of the professor and student, agitation, anxiety, depression, irritability, fatigue, stress, certain somatic disorders), the development conditions of
the evaluation process/external factors (features related to space, time, form of evaluation, evaluation tools), aspects related to the professor's teaching skill in evaluation (the professor's capacity to correctly design the evaluation tools, the design of the evaluation standards allowing to measure the results), correct application of the tools and correct interpretation of the evaluation results. Often, in education, the evaluation face to face runs the risk of subjective contamination of the evaluator but also of the evaluated person. Frequently, the mismanagement of the negative emotions by the student influences the quality of the answers’ elaboration. This fact can be explained either by an emotionally affected background or by the lack of knowledge of the information being evaluated or by certain aspects related to the social integration on the group level. For this last aspect, there are no few situations when the individual’s position at the group level influences his behaviors in the group. Actually, the problem we are dealing with is that of the aspects related to the measurement of the school results. The process involves the attribution of exact symbols to those component acquired and which are by excellence qualitative. The measurement process supposes an objective evaluation/weighing of the learning acquisitions in the absence of the formulation of some value judgments. This calls for an approach of the evaluation by the evaluator from an objective perspective outside the subjective factors. This explains the fact that within the framework of this process, the relation in evaluation between professor and student acquires a strongly mechanical character. The problem is whether the evaluator has in view the elimination of the influence of the subjective factors of the evaluation. Are there situations when the evaluation process can be influenced by subjective factors that come both from the evaluator and from the evaluated? Is it necessary to also consider the "subjectivity" dimension in the evaluation? There appears the question: what are the limits of the evaluation’s subjective factors? How can one interpret the dimension of subjectivity in evaluation? Is the objective evaluation the only one that can correctly measure the learning products? We have considered the following causes that are influencing subjectively the evaluation and are producing modifications in evaluation (Voiculescu, 2001, p. 48): insufficient primary information based on which the evaluation is accomplished; wrong choice of the evaluation method and strategies in relation to the evaluation object (what is evaluated) or with the evaluation objectives (what is desired to be attained); some particularities of the relation between professor and students, with its affective-attitudinal components; direct influences of the psychosocial environment in which the evaluation is made (status of the student’s family, pressures of the teaching team, of the school leadership...
etc.); direct influences of the pedagogical context in which the evaluation takes place (class general level, school policy regarding evaluation, safeguarding the school “image” etc.).

5. Research methodology

Evaluation in the teaching context is identified as part and parcel of the training process, turning to specific teaching strategies which are necessary for measuring students’ skills. In education, the evaluation process is dynamic and accomplished in accordance with the principles of professional ethics and deontology. In this framework, this research aims to analyze the role of the modern evaluation strategies used by the professors in order to increase the motivation for learning. The specific objectives of this research are: identifying the importance level perceived by the students concerning the place of the evaluation subjective and objective factors in stimulating learning (SO1); identifying the importance level perceived by the students about the implications of the distinctive features of modern evaluation on stimulating the motivation for learning (SO2). We have considered the following working hypotheses: the more the evaluator professor gives importance only to the objective factors, the more the students’ motivation towards learning increases (H1); the subjective evaluation factors have a negative influence on the motivation for learning (H2); if the evaluator turns to modern evaluation strategies, then the students’ motivation for learning is higher (H3). The research is quantitative and was made on a lot of 64 second year students, from humanities, students who have over 75% frequency at courses and seminaries and are therefore eligible for filling the semestrial evaluation regarding the quality of the didactic activity for the second year courses. The selected group is of intentionality (Fig. 1):

![Fig. 1. Distribution of students on specializations](image-url)
The quantitative research was made using questionnaire inquiry, made of closed type questions. The items structuring was made considering the two types of evaluation factors: subjective and objective. The results’ analysis and interpretation has been made by the hypothesis delineation method. The following objective evaluation factors have been considered: evaluation tools measuring specific skills (projection of some specification matrix), professor’s correctness in measuring the results (transparency in establishing the points), evaluation of the education formative objectives (individual sheets observing the learning trajectory), evaluation of the student’s conduct during the teaching activities (interventions at courses and seminars). The distribution of the answers in accordance with the students’ perception regarding the importance of the objective factors in evaluation was thus (Fig. 2):

![Fig. 2 Perception of the evaluation’s objective factors](image)

This fact demonstrates that all students consider as being very important to clearly specify the points assigned to the evaluation instruments descriptors. An ever increased importance also has the need to evaluate the instrumental applicative skills. Less important is considered the continuous evaluation, a fact which determines us to also consider the fact that evaluation based on frequency at courses and seminars is considered subjective and is thus less appreciated by the students. The measurement of the evaluation’s subjective factors was made with a Likert type scale on five steps. We considered the following evaluation subjective factors: certain emotional states both on the students’ level, the student’s social, economic and medical status, personal events or incidents reported by the student during the evaluation. The answers’ distribution was (Fig. 3):
Fig. 3. Perception of the subjective factors in evaluation

According to SO1 - "identifying the level of importance perceived by the students for the place of the evaluation’s subjective and objective factors in stimulating learning” – subsequently to the survey based on questionnaire, we have drawn the following conclusions: the students appreciate the fact that in the category of the objective factors of the evaluation must prevail the evaluation based on the correct measurement of the skills shaped within that discipline. This naturally entails the design of evaluation tools that are adequate for measuring the specific of the evaluated skill. At the same time, the opinion is that formative evaluation should prevail in academic evaluation. This entails the design of specific performance descriptors and of individual evaluation sheets for each student in turn. Out of the interviews made with the students, it has been noticed that within the context of a formative evaluation, the student becomes more aware of his own academic performance, which stimulates the motivation related to his own academic improvement. This fact is correlated to the "modern" dimension of evaluation and corresponds to the specific objective SO2 of the research: "identifying the level of importance perceived by the students on the implications of the distinctive features of modern evaluation in stimulating the learning motivation”. The conclusion to be drawn is: a formative evaluation is preferable, necessary and useful for a consistent academic performance and professional training. This aspect also confirms the research hypothesis according to which "the more the evaluator professor gives high importance in the evaluation only to the objective factors, the higher the students’ motivation for learning is” (H1). At the same time, it has been noticed that academic evaluation needs to correspond to the standards of content and remove all relative standards. It has been appreciated that summative evaluation is also necessary, the results obtained
via partial verifications permitting the classification of academic performance in relation to learning. The systematic verifications throughout the program, on smaller sequences, are appreciated as necessary throughout the academic path and have the role to improve performance. This fact also confirms the research hypothesis, according to which “if the evaluator professor turns to a modern evaluation, then the students’ motivation for learning is higher” (H3) and the hypothesis “the subjective evaluation factors have a negative influence on the motivation for learning” (H2) doesn’t confirm. Regarding the perception about the evaluation’s subjective factors, the results of the research confirm the fact that empathy must be identified as the professor’s capacity to answer each student’s personal problems, yet it must not represent a factor influencing the evaluation of the students’ skills. The respondents appreciate that in the framework of academic evaluation, the weight of the subjective factors in the evaluation must be minimal, certain personal aspects of the student being the object of other educational contexts (counseling and orientation offices, for instance).

**Conclusions**

Objective evaluation in teaching is a premise for a successful professional training. The objective factors of evaluation must be carefully analyzed and considered in each context of the academic evaluation. The evaluation tools for academic performance must be specific and adequate for measuring the shaped professional skills.

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I declare, on my own responsibility, that the research respected the ethical standards of the research, participants. The participants of the research gave their consent for participating in the research.

**References**


