

Teacher Self Evaluation - Indicator of Quality Management in Education

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Abstract. *Professional and social success in postmodern society focuses on self involvement, self determination, self assumption, self accountability, the role of free will being decisive. Teachers’ professional self evaluation has become a key element in educational innovation and the increase of educational management quality. School units, given the autonomy they are granted, represent institutions in which learning occurs and which generate learning. This way, they instill the need for long term autonomous learning to the members of school communities, teachers and students at the same time, by locating self assessment at the core of the teaching process. Theremore, quality management in education aims at increasing school performance based on self monitoring and self assessment of performances for a proper identification of the fields and areas that require improvement.*

Keywords: *self evaluation, professional standards, quality in education, management of quality.*

Self evaluation- terminology guidelines

Self evaluation in education, according to the Law of quality¹ must be read as internal evaluation that represents a process of measuring results, followed by the identification of improvement measures that are demanded, being thus located at the basis of any quality improvement process. Teachers` self evaluation represents the process of generating value judgment over the efficiency and knowledge they hold, products or effects, in order for them to be improved or refined. This type of self evaluation represents a formative assessment process, which is implemented by every teacher in view of developing/ improving their professional skills, a process which is observed, analysed and adapted according to one’s progress and the encountered obstacles.

Self evaluation allows therefore the assessment of one’s own merits, establishing the value of one’s activity, and it is made possible and necessary as it allows for self knowledge and for the development of self-awareness, essential aspects for lifelong learning, which call for the individual to become part not only of their own self development, but also in the act of evaluating one’s development in support of self-improvement. The role of systematic self evaluation consists in ensuring that the teaching act is permanently improved. Self assessment is conducted based on structured and organised evidence within a portfolio or eportfolio. At the same time, it

¹ Law no. 87 from April 13th 2006 for the approval of the Government’s Emergency Act no. 75/2005 regarding quality assurance in education

is essential to understand that the self evaluation endeavour, unlike didactic evaluation, is often guided not only by the level of objective-based performance, but also by the level of potential individual performance.

From the perspective of how the act of professional self evaluation is structured, there are both operational aspects (level of professional and pedagogical training, level of knowledge, abilities and skills) and personal aspects (the ideal self awareness). Moreover, professional self assessment regards evaluation from the perspective of the practical result of one’s work as well as potentialities. The former refers to assessing accomplishments and to reflecting appreciation or lack of appreciation, whereas the latter proves professional abilities, personal effort to have and use the skills necessary for socio-professional performance. An isolated treatment of self evaluation or regarding it as a mere internal self delibertaing mechanism and completely autonomous leads to serious distortions in understanding and explaining this process. The triggering, development and effects of self evaluation are inherently contextualised.² We thus consider it is essential to approach the self evaluation endeavour not only from the perspective of its internal process-like nature, but also through the filter of its external dynamics. The self evaluation process is not conducted entirely under the auspices of internal determiners, but also related to particular external contextual factors, such as: evaluation conducted by school management, or workmates’ opinion regarding value. The efficiency of any assessment process requires a doubling through self assessment.³ Self evaluation is a dimension that is also present in the evaluation process of digital portfolios, given that tracking of, validation or ongoing improvement of contents while teaching is implied.⁴

Self evaluation ensures development through self-regulation and self- correction, whose usefulness function does not imply the role of sanction. Accurate assumption of results leads to an optimisation and review of individual and group functionality, which implicitly relates to efficient management in quality of education.

² Cristian Stan, *Autoevaluarea și evaluarea didactică*, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, 2001.

³ Cristian Stan & Adriana Denisa Manea, „The Divergent Relationship between Assessment and Self-assessment,” in *Higher Education. Procedia - Social and BEhavioral Sciences*, 2015, p. 497-502.

⁴ Cristian Stan, Adriana Denisa Manea, & Constantina Catalano, (2020). „Teoria și practica evaluării educaționale - o perspectivă globală,” în I. Albulescu & H. Catalano, *Sinteze de pedagogie generală. Ghid pentru pregătirea examenelor de titularizare, definitivat, gradul II*, București, Eikon Publishing House, 2020, p. 491-499.

Numerous studies detail the benefits of self evaluation, while, at the same time. Mentioning the need to generate the suitable context for such an endeavour.⁵

Teacher self evaluation process- tools and contents

In the context of innovative changes regarding the contents of teachers' professional training that envisage a skill-based approach there are specific key concepts that must be referred to:

- self evaluation – self analysis process, consisting of self assessment and self appreciation techniques, which can be applied to any activity or professional behaviour, to indicate the strengths and weaknesses and to maximise self improvement opportunities;
- quality assurance – ongoing and progressive process (examination, monitoring, guarantee, maintenance and improvement) of quality in education;
- standards – important reference framework applied in the self evaluation of teachers' performance levels;
- evaluation criterion – basic rule according to which the level of professional competence is appreciated;
- indicator – tool that provides a measurement means in view of reaching or exceeding the targeted standards and which reflects the features of a particular standard of professional ability;
- descriptors – system of actions/deeds that define the essence of an indicator and that enable an estimation of one's level of professional ability.

Professional ability standards cover the entire teaching-learning activity and are structured on the following five primary domains of competence: didactic planning, learning environment, educational process, professional development, educational partnerships. For each competence area there are targeted standards to be reached/completed. Therefore, for the didactic planning area, the standard is the teacher projects the educational endeavour from the perspective of the curriculum theory; for the learning environment area the standard is: the teacher provides an enriching learning context; for the area called educational process the standard is that the teacher ensures a qualitative educational process; for the professional development domain the standard is: the teacher manages his/her own lifelong professional learning; for the educational partnership

⁵ Otilia Clipa, „Roles and strategies of Teacher Evaluation: Teacher perspectives,” in *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2015, p. 916-923; Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Elevi sălăuani în primele promoții ale Gimnaziului Grăniceresc Năsăudean”, in *Astra Salvensis*, II (2014), no. 3, p. 63; L. Leach, „Optional self-assessment: some tensions and dilemmas,” in *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37 (2012), no. 2, p. 137-147; M. Taras, M. „Student self-assessment: processes and consequences,” in *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15 (2010), no. 2, p. 199-209.

area the standard is: the teacher ensures collaboration and respectful relations with the family and community, by developing various partnerships.

Each standard is further developed in multiple variables, indicators that show which actions teachers should take in order to improve them. For the field of didactic planning, the following indicators are derived: designs the didactic endeavour according to the curriculum needs of the school subjects, designs the evaluation of educational process and results. The indicators that derive from the standard of the learning environment area are the following: it creates a trust, solidarity and respect climate, based on the principles of equality and tolerance, it provides class management and students' behaviour, organises and reasonably uses the physical space. The indicators corresponding to the educational process domain are: management of the class educational process, showing efficient didactic communication, stimulating motivation, autonomy and making learners accountable for their own learning, making use of time, material and human resources, evaluating and providing connections in view of increasing performance. For the professional development field the following indicators are established: edification of one's professional identity according to the roles defined by the teaching position, projection of one's professional development trajectory, monitoring of the personal and professional development process. The last domain establishes the following indicators: permanent communication with the members of the family/ legal representatives and members of the community with regards to learners; activity and educational progress, integrating family and community members in the educational process, enabling children's/ students' participation in community projects and volunteering actions.

In the context of professional competence standards, the indicator represents a characterisation of an action or a set of interconnected actions, specific to particular aspects. Indicators will be measured through descriptors, which represent a procedure description, specific to a particular aspect. Descriptors are used for measuring the qualitative manifestation of the specific indicator. Indicators represent the source of information or the proofs regarding the functionality and efficiency of the particular standard, but also the source of elaborating difference evaluation/ monitoring tools for the teacher's actions/ activities, according to the professional skill standards. There are various means and verification tests to validate whether standard requirements were met: direct observation of the activity, analysis of documents, survey/ interview of all interest factors, portfolio examination etc.

Professional skill standards for teachers in primary and secondary education are applied both by teachers in view of self evaluation of their own activity and design of their professional development trajectory and by external evaluators, in order to determine the level of quality in education, to elaborate evaluation tools and recommendations for teachers' professional upgrade.

At the same time, the institutions that are empowered to conduct initial and lifelong professional learning for teachers, to design learning plans within professional development, to elaborate the curriculum support for the specific activities are guided by the same array of professional skill standards.

The variety of approaches regarding the didactic skill issue leads to a diversity of criteria based on which teachers' activity is evaluated. Literature review indicates several typologies of the didactic skills system: professional-scientific skills (the set of necessary skills for scientific knowledge, for comprehending a school subject and being open to self improvement in the specific field of practice), psycho-pedagogical skills (capacities and abilities to estimate the level of difficulty for the learning material and to ensure that it is properly taught, to facilitate comprehension regarding learner's knowledge abilities, to enter the realm of his/her inner world; creativity and innovation in educational practice by generating learning scenarios for special needs students), psycho-social and relational skills (skills and abilities that are necessary to optimise human interactions and to take responsibilities, to make a positive influence and make proper use of power and assertive communication; management skills (skills for organising, guiding and leading the group of students, establishing a proper work environment, conflict management and decision-making process); digital skills (skills to use technology)⁶.

The self evaluation process requires teachers to fill in the self evaluation chart, which includes data referring to their own activity based on criteria such as: didactic and professional activity; research and artistic

⁶ Adriana Denisa Manea, „Trening of the competencies. An exploratory study,” in *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Psychologia-Pedagogia*, (LI) 2015, no. 2, p. 21-29; I. O. Pânişoară, *Profesorul de succes; 59 de principii de pedagogie practică*, Iaşi, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi; Adriana Denisa Manea, „Competenţele managerului şcolar,” in *Lucrările Conferinţei Ştiinţifice Internaţionale Perspectivele şi Problemele Integrării în Spaţiul European al Cercetării şi Educaţiei*, vol. 2, Cahul, Universitatea de Stat "B. P. Haşdeu", 2016, p. 122-126; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, „Elevi sălăuani la Gimnaziul Grăniceresc Năsăudean în timpul Primului Război Mondial”, in *Astra Salvensis*, IV (2016), no. 8, Salva, 2016, p. 144; Adriana Denisa Manea, „Innovation in the Management of Educational Institutions,” in *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 209 (2015), no. 12 (3), p. 310-315.

creation; validation and impact of activity. The specific instruments used in the professional self assessment process are the following:

- ✓ *observation charts* that are completed at the end of each class (consisting of lesson *planning aspects*: syllabus-based teaching, clarity and opportunity of operational objectives, correlating didactic strategies with the particular age features of learners; *class management*: ensuring there is a proper learning and teaching environment, management activities, use of time, proper optimisation of learning means, scaffolded teaching activities and tasks, the level to which students are engaged, various forms of organising activity; *content and strategies*: relation contents- operational objectives, logical presentation of taught content, knowledge systematisation, scientific value of content, use of proper and age-adequate language, creative approaches and stimulating learners' creativity, use of interdisciplinarity while teaching, practical-applicative character of taught content, capitalisation of active-participative strategies; *evaluation*: evaluation strategies, capitalisation of grading functions; *relation aspects*: suitable teaching style, student-teacher and student-student interactions. There are performance indicators for each category, each indicator being evaluated on a grading scale indicating insufficient, satisfactory, good and very good;
- ✓ *the self reflection chart*, which is completed at the end of the day, is structured according to the SWOT analysis model. It is meant to identify positive and/or negative aspects regarding the level of providing material resources, maintaining discipline, activating and motivating students, following a time schedule, identifying the causes that generated negative aspects as well as solutions for overcoming difficulties. It is important to elaborate conclusions and display them in the footer of the chart and to grasp the relevant aspects that may be used or improved;
- ✓ *the reflection chart* refers to the type and level of interactions and it concerns relations between both teachers and students and students and other students. The level of interaction can be appreciated with Likert scale indicators: not at all, a little, a lot, very much;
- ✓ *the assessment questionnaire* supports the self reflective process and it allows teachers to choose the option “yes” or “no” in items regarding time management, quality and efficiency of teaching materials, volume of input data, number of applications, relation objectives- tasks. In doing so, teachers will get an overall picture that

allows them to improve those aspects that have been appreciated with the answer “no”

- ✓ **the checklist** regarding the meeting of performance indicators may contain a set of short questions, regarding the teacher’s own activity, but also regarding learners’ activity.
- ✓ **the reflective journal** is an evaluation strategy meant to develop metacognitive abilities, consisting in having the author reflect on his/her own professional development process. The reflective journal can be focused on the following aspects: conceptual development occurred from a particular activity/ context, mental processes and developed professional skills, feelings and attitudes;
- ✓ **the logbook** consists of certain entries and records of facts, descriptions of events, without any personal comments or remarks.

The above presentation indicates that the self evaluation instrument represents a constitutive element of the method, through which the teacher becomes familiar with the self assessment duty. Critical reflection is an ongoing learning ability. Reflection over practical activities and gathered experiences allows teachers to support a proper evaluation of the professional skills they hold. Reflection charts represent forms that were created in view of researching each field, standard and group of indicators, which consist of: self evaluation criteria, measurement scales for meeting the indicators and conversion scale for how indicators were met according to the frequency of the indicator. The evaluation/ self evaluation criteria are elaborated based on the indicator or standard and are meant to unify the evaluators’ requirements. Using a measurement scale means ticking a Yes/No next to each item. Sometimes, these may facilitate the correct and holistic assessment with indicators such as: “often”, “sometimes” or “rarely”. Reflection charts exclude the possibility of guessing or randomly choosing the frequency with which a certain indicator occurs. Therefore, based on self evaluation, in the context of hybrid education contextualised at the level of the pandemic reality, doubled by technological revolutions⁷ Teachers can identify the domains of professional skills they should focus on throughout their careers, they may project the individual professional development plan and further choose various forms of development: literature review, ongoing and lifelong learning courses, exchange experience, attending scientific lectures etc.

⁷ Adriana Denisa Manea, „Features of educational activities in the contemporary society,” in *Astra Sahensis*, 6 (2018), no. 12, p. 255-260.

Another self evaluation tool is the **portfolio**. This is a necessary instrument in the process of professional development.⁸ It functions as support for accurate evaluation/ self evaluation of the teacher’s professional skills. The portfolio stores evidence for professional development: certificates, articles, methods, didactic projects, evaluation charts, reflection charts, etc. The portfolio is an instrument meant to improve the teacher’s work because: it allows the keeping and organisation of materials so that they are operational; it ensures support for qualitative activity, for professional responsibility and rigor; it generates opportunities to show initiative, creativity in completing, reorganising and updating portfolio materials; it grants a reasonable support that is necessary for decreasing levels of stress, often caused by managerial visits and evaluations; it allows the internal or external evaluator (school manager/ principal, methodologist, school inspector, school expert) to get an honest appreciation of the evaluated actions.

The eportfolio is perhaps the most widely used option of evaluating in recent times. This is “ personal digital collection of data that describes and illustrates knowledge”⁹. The eportfolio, just as its traditional variant, is a complex product, designed throughout a longer period of time. This can be made according to a particular purpose, a specific theme, a concept, based on information sources that are carefully selected and assumed, consisting of products that occurred as a result of personal experiences. An eportfolio is not a software package, but rather a combination of process (a series of activities) and product (the finite result of the eportfolio process). Presentation portfolios can be created using a variety of instruments, both static, desktop type and online¹⁰.

Developing a self evaluation capacity can be supported throughout the specific self awareness, self analysis and self assessment strategies.

Self awareness refers to one’s capacity to reunite in a holistic, integrative and non-adversarial manner the whole set of data, opinions and beliefs regarding oneself, in view of a more accurate and realistic self definition. This process entangles the collection and processing of information coming both from one’s subjectivity and one’s external world, given that the individual combines self awareness with knowing the other. We thus define self awareness as an activity that evaluates one’s self, one’s

⁸ Adriana Denisa Manea, „Coordinates of Lifelong Education,” in *Astra Salvensis*, 5 (2015), no. 10, p. 168-171.

⁹ Horațiu Catalano, *Procesul de învățământ: direcții epistemice, pragmatice și experiențiale*, Bucharest, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, p. 114.

¹⁰ H. Barrett, „Balancing the Two Faces of E-Portfolios”, 2011, available at <http://electronicportfolios.org/balance/balancingarticle2.pdf> , accessed 11. 09. 2019.

skills, actions and intentions. an activity that is individually and socially conditioned, more or less organised and systematised, but always oriented towards organising and optimising personal behaviour¹¹.

Self analysis is, just as self awareness, a process based on self observation and on comparison with others, a process that has the objective of obtaining an accurate and genuine image of one's self. In comparison to self awareness, self analysis does not refer to the whole cognitive, affective-motivational and behaviour system that students have, but only to certain aspects, which are submitted to analysis from the perspective of an imminent encounter with a particular school task. Self analysis is a fundamental component of the self awareness process.

Self assessment is a deliberative process, mainly oriented towards two essential objectives: on one hand displaying the strengths and weaknesses regarding the plan for professional skills, for abilities and attitudes, and on the other hand, placing oneself within a system of values within the comparison with others.

By pursuing a reflection period, by gathering valid evidence and having the capacity to support professional accomplishments will avoid a subjective evaluation/ self evaluation and will be able to critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats occurring within his/her professional development, drafting a real professional development plan that is built and focused on: self evaluation (gathering data about one's self); exploring opportunities (recording data referring to one's career from within and outside the organisation, taking decisions and establishing targets- on a short or long term); planning (establishing ways and means of carrying out the targeted objectives as well as identifying the actions necessary for completing these objectives); pursuit of reaching the objectives (keeping track of success and failure sequences according to the set objectives).

Conclusions

The knowledge society characterised by information overflow and technological input requires permanent adaptation and readaptation.¹² This way, it is essential that teachers become aware of the need to eliminate the imperative *must* and replace it with the verb *want*. Hence the approach regarding self involvement, understanding responsibilities they take by way of *self empowerment, self determination, self assumption*. The self evaluation process

¹¹ L. Antonesei, *Paideia. Fundamentele culturale ale educatiei*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1996.

¹² Adriana Denisa Manea, „Educational values within the scope of the technological revolution,” in *Astra Salvensis*, 7 (2018), no. 14, p. 31-37.

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becomes a necessity while seeking performance, evaluation conducted by the teacher being focused on what he/she has achieved and/or his/her behaviour.

By using the principle of subsidiarity, quality control of the pedagogical act within school units is made through evaluation instruments, being the joint responsibility of the educational leader and the staff of teachers along with a direct participation of the beneficiaries.

Teachers allocate time during educational actions in order to train students to gather self evaluation skills¹³, to encourage them to self assess by presenting the importance, the positive aspects of such endeavour. It is equally important that the teacher supports the self evaluation of his/her own teaching act, by allocating time to improve their own performance and implicitly to reach the objectives of the educational system. Therefore, teacher self evaluation represents a key element in ensuring quality and in obtaining performance.

The importance of self evaluation resides in the opportunities provided by the teacher after having identified the weaknesses of his/her own activity, its causes, and potential solutions to improve the particular issues. Self evaluation will not only impact one's activity, but it will bear an impact upon the entire school institution, as teacher self evaluation supports organisational development, this being an integrating part of strategic and operational planning, and not as a separate activity.

It must also follow the regulations in the school unit regarding quality assurance, report to national reference standards and have in view the possibility to generate competitiveness at inter institutional level. Continuous improvement of quality in secondary education services is a necessary measure that can produce important benefits for all learners and educators. To do so, clear efforts are needed in order to support and encourage participation in teacher self evaluation process.

¹³ Ioana Mudure-Iacob, „Digital Literacy: From Multi-Functional Skills to Overcoming Challenges in Teachign ESP,” in *Astra Salvensis*, 7 (2019), no. 14, p. 59-70.