

CURRENT EVALUATION TENDENCIES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The paper approaches an important stage in the educational process, namely the evaluation of the primary school focusing on physical-education discipline. After the theoretical approach of the evaluation with everything it involves and the evaluation forms, the paper proposes an alternative to the evaluation tests present in the curriculum. It is about more accessible motor tests, with evaluation items concerned not on achieving performance, but oriented towards the technical execution of the motor skills, team work, cooperation and achievement of results as a team. Also a SWOT analysis is realized, in which there are presented the weaknesses and strengths of the proposed tests and the expected opportunities and threats.*

Key words: *evaluation, measurement, alternative evaluation tests.*

1. Introduction

Theoretical and practical trend in teaching is oriented, primarily, towards the formation of students' competences, according to certain profiles of formation. The reconstruction of education from a cognitive perspective inevitably leads to redesigning assessment to shift from assessing operational objectives in assessing school skills. This transition has caused the change of the "objective" of assessment. "Observable and measurable behaviours" – as an object of evaluation specific to PPO (Pedagogy through objectives that interpretate the evaluation in raport with educational objectives) – gave away their place to the "competences formed through learning". The pedagogy of skills is considered today as an integrating model of design, implementation and evaluation of educational activities. Time is the one which will tell about the correctness of these goals Manolescu (2011, p. 184).

Evaluation in physical education area is a complex action involving the existence of a system of concepts relating to the measurement and assessment of the results, both in the physical development process, in the educational activity, and in the competitive activity.

Depending on the angle of which evaluation is seen in our field, it performs several functions that we want to identify:

- establishment, after an intense activity, of the subject or the group of subjects' level, related to the established objective in the educational process to achieve specific competence;
- information, regarding the state of development of the subject compared to the school's population «model» of the same age and gender;

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- diagnosis, of the causes that led to good or poor training and measures required to improve the situation;
- prognostic, of future availability of subjects, both for school physical education and for sports orientation towards a particular sports branch;
- pedagogical, in the perspective to form the personality of the subjects and their socialization, through the practice of physical exercises in various forms.

Measurement in physical education is defined by Tudor (2005, p.17) as an action which “expresses the unity between quantity and quality, designating the boundaries between which the variations of the quantitative determinations of a process involve qualitative modifications”.

Measurement in physical education is defined by Tudor (2005, p.16-18) as an action “to determine a size, the quantity being always measurable”: the same author assigns the following roles to measurement:

- comparison;
- classification;
- assigns quantitative values;

Therefore, measurement is extended to all operations of quantitative determination aimed at establishing a hierarchy.

The efficiency of the physical education and sport activity is certified by an assessment, both of the teacher’s activity work and the skills acquired by students. Evaluation of physical education class is a necessity determined by checking the validity of the educational process, by creating a modern didactic projection that centres student’s potential.

Regarding evaluation’s complexity Meyer (2000, p.11), considers that each teacher:

- “defines what he wants, or needs to evaluate at his students;
- invents or chooses significant tests, which will allow to follow what he decided to evaluate;
- confronts what he observes (each student performances) with what he wanted (expected performance or model);
- communicates through instruments (grades, marks, points, etc.), the result of this measurement, or the difference between the expected and the achieved performance”.

According to Cerghit (2002, p.28), “the operations of assessment aim the steps to be taken in the evaluative process until the moment or stage of issue of a judgement of value on the performance of the student. These operations are the following:

- measurement;
- assessment;
- decision.

Measurement is the operation that provides the objective basis of assessment. Through it, information is collected by the evaluator “on the properties or characteristics of the recorded results, about the characteristics of the process, the action or the given educational phenomenon”.

The action of evaluation is defined by the following elements:

- any educational process (in physical education or sports) must have a certain form of evaluation, which regularly used gives safety in the achievement of the established objectives;
- evaluation methods are means of control of the activity, with role in directing the training process, depending on its particularities and of the subjects that participate at

the action;

- evaluation procedures maintain a maximum efficiency at that stage, also having the role of feed-back, of our practical activity.

Evaluation should be understood as an ongoing process, which includes specific techniques for measuring, evaluating and assessing the results of a subject, or groups of subjects, in physical education and sport activity, a process that will lead and coordinate the entire educational process.

The conditions necessary for an accurate assessment are:

- knowing exactly the specific skills to be achieved by the act of teaching physical education and sport;
- collection by measurement of accurate information about the progress of achieving the established objectives according to the complexity of skills;
- using the collected information and making decisions to optimize (improve) that activity.

The results of measurement should be evaluated by comparison, following certain criteria; of which the most important are the competences formed and applied under changed conditions with minimal effort and high precision (models on classes and educational levels, which represent reference elements for evaluation process); also, the data collected by measurement approach offer the possibility to elaborate a rigorous curriculum projection, which will represent the scientific basis of reference by which runs the educational process.

The need of measurement in physical education is given by the efficiency of management of the complex preparation process, the directing and the coordination „on the go”, the elaboration of programs differentiated on groups of subjects (differential treatment) according to the particularities of subjects, their integration into unitary groups corresponding to their potential, the physical development, the level of mastery of motor skills and abilities etc.

The data collected through measurement represents a support base for the action of evaluation and assessment. Thus, Dragnea, Șerbănoiu, and Tudor (2000) say that “evaluation becomes a judgement of value when comparing the result with a criterion or standard, to place the result in a frame of reference” (p.166).

2. Methods and Procedures of Evaluation

Measurement and evaluation for the curricular area – physical education, must be performed as a control of the accumulation of knowledge, abilities and motor skills, of the development of motor qualities, as well as a control of the adequacy of the contents to the educational objectives established to form the competences stipulated in the curriculum.

According to Dumitru-Colibaba and Bota (1998, p. 298), “measurement is always objective if we succeed to express the evaluated facts (availabilities, capacities, objectives) in measurable units, which involves the formation of habit to operate permanently with computer systems and mathematical analysis”.

Through its content evaluation aims to determine the manner in which specific competences are performed in practice. Since this takes time, usually within a well-defined stage, of a semester, school year, the evaluation is performed sequentially or at the end of the activity.

Formative evaluation (continuous) is performed to optimize the educational process, aiming at finding the problems that limit the performances and at taking measures to counteract them. This assessment is very important because it captures exactly the weaknesses in training subjects.

Cumulative evaluation (accumulative) refers to the performance of some final judgements expressed through marks, grades, scores, at the end of the preparatory stage, after which occurs the assessment of the results in accordance with the established objectives. This determines cooperation relations between subjects and teacher, which will lead to boost training and to the formation of the self-evaluation capacity, because it is based on specific operational objectives.

In most specialty papers there are listed as unitary and objective, the following methods and procedures of verification – evaluation of the results obtained by students in physical education activities and school sports.

2.1. Methods of Verification

- a) Passing some control exams, tests that aim the assimilation of specialized knowledge, skills and motor skills, or of the level of development of motor skills. Control exams can be determined by the physical-education teacher or taken from the National Evaluation System in Physical Education and Sport.
- b) Performing of motor skills and competences specific to practicing tests and sport branches or of these in conditions of competition, contest;
- c) Recording performance of students in specific objectives given by the teacher and which are organizational, teaching and methodical.

2.2. Methods of Assessment and Marking

- Verbal assessment and marking with grades.
- Assessment of motor performance after passing some tests (evaluation can be made on the basis of value tables).
- Assessment and marking of individual progress, statistically calculated.
- Assessment of the results of a student through comparison with the ones obtained by other students (Todea, 2006, p. 249- 250).

Results' assessment can be true if it reflects real data:

- assessment of the motor performance obtained by subjects on the basis of control tests, according to a predetermined standard value, after which ranking is made, especially at high school students;
- assessment of individual progress registered from one stage to another, which can be performed both for establishing the phenomenon of growth and development and for the dynamic of the development of motor capacity and for skills accumulation, especially at primary and gymnasium cycle;
- assessment of a group activity – of the manner of application of rules, cooperation between team mates, creativity to apply the acquired skills, especially at students in primary cycle.

In order to obtain a measurement as accurate as possible Radu (1981) proposes the standardization of tests, that can be grouped in:

- normalized tests (for our area the ones in the National System of Evaluation)
- tests elaborated by the teacher (we suggest alternative activities to the National System of Evaluation, individually or in group).

Thus, we consider appropriate to apply standard evaluation tests and exams (the ones from the National System of Evaluation), but also tests and exams of evaluation designed by the teacher according to the capacities of students (see Tables 1, 2).

These two tests categories should not be competitive, but complementary.

The results of these tests can be compared to each other (for the subjects of the same age and gender), or with a predetermined *standard* after which either the hierarchy or the evaluation of subjects is performed.

3. Discussions Regarding School Evaluation for Physical Education – Primary Level

Considering the heterogeneous motor development inherited it is required in physical education a flexible evaluation according to the capacity of development of the motor potential.

The abilities required by the curriculum refer precisely to this, unfortunately neglected lately. It is aimed that students to obtain significant results compared to those who practice sports performance ... but what about the mass of students that must participate in mass sport.

Very important are the teaching strategies that create opportunity for students to express themselves freely, to put into value their motor potential and skills acquired in group activities, not only for sports games.

This can be done when enables students to develop a group project ... to develop in physical education in a team, in a group of two, three, four students and they can provide a noticeable performance.

Classroom should be perceived as a heterogeneous entity, students being able to build a group in which to evolve creatively. Therefore, there is the necessity of discussions referring to the benefits of group evaluation, in strengthening the relationship between children, but also in the prevention of abandonment, in not attending physical education class by purchasing medical exemptions.

Games' role in evaluation ensures the formation and development of individual's personality from primary school and this is widely acknowledged by all professionals in our area.

Hahn (1996) shows that "the game is a free, enjoyable activity in which the ideas of the game are stable, the contents are realistic, and the social roles are well-defined." (p. 23). Also, the same author (p. 23) quotes Scheuerl (1974) who relates about phenomenology – related to the game, which highlights "the free mobility within a well-defined space and the ambivalence of a «back and forth» movement in stable equilibrium".

Dragnea and Bota (1999) think that "the game implicates numerous analitic, comparative, abstract and sintezied operations in which the person skills are involved ... structured in action systems on which depends the succes or failure of the game." (p. 91).

Viewed from a praxiological point of view, the action of training is presented as a procedural relationship of transformation of the human being, and its development occurs in specific circumstances where teacher's intervention, directed towards obtaining a

change in the formation of the subject, is greeted by his own action of learning. Therefore, what the teacher develops, as an external action, it is not automatically reflected on the development of the individual, but becomes a condition of a modification only if it manages to involve the student in an intellectual effort, in an emotional feeling and in a volitional manifestation.

Therefore, the evaluation we propose has a special significance to motivate the student in training.

Model of system of evaluation for grade IV, semester I

Table 1

No. Crt.	Evaluation tests	Very well	Well	Sufficient	Insufficient
1	Long jump from the place Or 3 consecutive jumps from one circle to another, they being situated at a distance of 60 cm from each other.	G = 150 cm B = 160 cm Jumps' optimal technical execution cursive and fast	G = 130 cm B = 140 cm Good technical execution of jumps, cursive, without rhythm	G = 120cm B = 130 cm Slow technical execution, with interruptions	Incapable of execution
2	Speed run 20 m Or relay race. - there are organized teams of 3 children, each one runs 20 m after they hand over the relay, it is performed as a competition in series of 4-6 teams	G = 6"2 B = 6"1 Optimal execution of the relay race with corresponding involvement and classification on the first and second place in series	G = 6"4 B = 6"3 Optimal execution of the relay race with corresponding involvement and classification on the third place in series	G = 6"6 B = 6"5 Abrupt execution of the race with dropping the relay and lack of team cooperation	Incapable of execution
3	Throwing the oina ball Or Throwing the ball at target. The target has 3 zones, according to how central the cast is a score is received Each one has the right of 3 throws, the best throw is marked.	G = 12 m B = 18 m 10 points for optimal technical throw and for aiming the centre of the target	G = 10 m B = 14 m 8 points for good technical throw and for aiming the intermediate zone of the target	G = 8 m B = 10 cm 6 points for faulty technical throw and for aiming the external zone of the target.	Incapable of execution

Model of system of evaluation for grade IV, semester II

Table 2

Crt. No.	Evaluation tests	Very well	Well	Sufficient	Insufficient
1	Binding elements of acrobatic gymnastics and aerobics or binding artistic elements (twists, turns, arches and waves of arms or body, pirouettes combined with modern dance steps or sports dance steps	Execution of binding elements individually composed, on musical background or composed on teams or formations of 3, 4, 6 or 8 students according to preference or after draw	Executions with small errors, bending knees, small imbalances	More errors	Incapable of execution
2	Force (genuflections, extensions, flexions, semi-push-ups) Or At choice practical route composed of: tractions on the gym bench, weights transport (1 kg ball), climb-descent Jumps from one side to another of the gym bench with support on arms.	G = 25×, 15×, 20×, 15×. B = 30×, 20×, 25×, 20×. Executes correctly all the skills	G = 20×, 10×, 15×, 10×. B = 25×, 15×, 20×, 15×. Executes correctly all the skills with small imbalances	G = 15×, 8×, 10×, 8×. B = 20×, 12×, 15×, 10×. Executes difficultly the practical route	Incapable of execution
3	Sports game Or Bilateral game of 2 or 3 team mates at one basketball backboard aiming to score 5 points to win the game Or the execution of a structure with specific sports game elements (dribbling through 3 poles, passing and catching the ball on the run, throwing at the backboard or at the gate.	Correct execution of the attack and defence elements by respecting the imposed rules	Execution with small errors, but respecting the imposed rules	Execution with errors and disregarding some of the imposed rules	Failure to comply with collective game and inability to collaborate with partners.

The data comprised in the evaluation program have been critically approached through the filter provided by the SWOT analysis. This offers us the possibility to identify the most viable teaching strategies of evaluation of abilities stipulated by the curriculum and to creatively develop the individual motor potential.

SWOT ANALYSIS

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The tests we propose are – oriented on technical execution of movement, on competitiveness in the advantage of cooperation and team work; ➤ Do not focus on performance by achieving stiff objective parameters, so we believe they are more accessible, having into consideration the individual motor potential; ➤ The tests principally focus on harmony, fairness in movement, fluency, rhythm and have an element of attraction by organizing students in pairs or teams. ➤ Increased school performance in formation of abilities specific to our area; 	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If the tests are not designed according to the level of training of the students we risk to have an incorrect evaluation ➤ The tests that aim the development of motor skills in which students must meet a rigid standard (like seconds/tenths) are not welcomed by the students that have a low genetic motor potential.
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These assessment tests reflect the degree of achievement of educational objectives, level of socialization of subjects, their ability to exploit the motor potential in different actions, with creativity; ➤ They allow the possibility of taking decisions within the team that can provide both a good or very good mark; ➤ Tests as races or group activities do not induce negative emotions or abandonment like the case of tests that focus on quantified performance on time like seconds/tenths. ➤ The proposed alternative evaluation highlights the development of general motor capacity, increased physical training parameters and multilateral physical development parameters ➤ Formation of the capacity of creative use of the achieved abilities. 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluation may be incorrect if the tests are not prepared for the purpose of use of skills

4. Conclusions

Considering the Education Reform, practical physical education activity should empower students with knowledge, skills and motor skills that will be used in future activity of subjects through their creativity, leading to the skills required by the curriculum.

Through an efficient educational process is necessary to know the options for students regarding the methods of evaluation, after having first been presented both ways: tests from the Unitary System of evaluation and the alternative ones proposed by the teacher.

The International Association of Psychology considers that "the test is a determined exam, which involves a task to perform, identical for all the subjects examined, on the basis of a specific technique, in order to assess the success or failure or the numerical marking of success. The task can be relative either to the acquired knowledge or to the sensor-motor or mental functions" (Pieron, as cited in Epuran, 2005).

Also the author Epuran (2005, p. 181) says that "the test comprised in the exam is a task that can be considered as a stimulus or situation stimulus and requiring a response from the subject. This task can be psychiatric, psycho-motor, motor and requires answers that reflect sensorial acuity, mental skills in very different directions (attention, memory, operational thinking, effective balance), psychomotor or motor skills (coordination, balance, power, strength, speed), adaptive psychosocial skills."

Also, the author believes that, in the corporal activities area, even though we count the executions of a subject in a test of strength the number of repetitions reflects about the investigated quality, and some somatic features of subjects can influence the results, just as, the results can influence then the subjects' attitude towards that trial - interest, motivation, effort.

The development of students' options in the physical education activity will result in active and aware participation of them to the lesson, the positive effect being highlighted in the evaluation of motor acquisitions creatively applied.

In conclusion we consider that:

- Given the ethical sphere, the game helps eliminate antisocial behaviour (hate, cowardice, revenge, deception etc.) cultivating relations of friendship and friendliness that is way group assessment provides a stronger motivation for training, the student considering that its motor potential can contribute to a good result of the team to which he belongs.
- We do not deny the value of athletic performance, but at school age is more important to evaluate how to exploit the individual motor potential in different motor activities, individually or in groups, because we take into consideration the formation of skills to ensure pupil's integration in social life.

5. Proposals

The proposals that aim for the change in student evaluation more precise at the motrical tests and items on wich depends the noting and apreciation of the tests, we propose: an evaluation orientated on the students class, with marking of the possible performances but also the aplications of the specific skills, this being in concordance with the tendences of modern pedagogy .

Păun (2017, p. 211) thinks that three dilemmas may be encountered when analysing the issue of student evaluation:

- *To measure or to interpret?* Evaluation is still based on quantitative indicators, the purpose followed being to ensure a maximum objectivity, which is absolutely unattainable.
- *To judge or to inform?* Evaluation functions between two paradigms: the paradigm of decision-making of criteria and comparative evaluation, which implies to measure, to

judge and to decide; informational paradigm, which involves providing useful information to the student to facilitate and support his activity of learning. Essentially it is formative evaluation: informing the student to help him.

• *To evaluate or to action?* The current tendency is to shift from the evaluation itself (as a moment of stop) to educative action based on the results of the evaluation. Switching from pedagogy evaluation itself, to the pedagogy of action for the benefit of students and learning.

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