

Can Educational Standardization Become Reality?

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Abstract

The success of unit standardization intents in the field of education depends on the professionalization level which such step would impose in Romanian educational system, in which the series of recent failures threatens its European ambitions. The aimed standards, replacing the heterogeneous multitude of normative acts, would have to be flexible to the social and economic realities and easily accessible to all persons involved in the educational process. The main task of the new standards consists in a permanent and unitary monitoring of the educational act by following-up the progress line of both students and teaching staff.

It could be achieved based on standardized virtual models which should be found in students' tests and teachers' activity assessment portfolios care, reflecting the performances and evolution of the personality of each teacher depending on the long-lasting results achieved in various conditions and leading to a specialty of individual educational skills.

The idea of formation of professional assessors also needed in case of establishing a teachers' certification system, is also promoted.

The article ends with an appeal for affirmation of a new occasional ideal, efficient and compatible with all requisites of our times.

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Educational Standardization

The need to redesign educational standards focuses on the idea of professionalization, aiming to exclude the risk of educational failure from the very beginning and to reduce to the greatest extent possible the individual phenomena that can determine a downfall whose consequences are, as can be seen today, extremely harmful and costly. The new educational standards should be based on long term social quality and efficiency, reducing tolerance towards failure and the acceptable deviations to a minimum of no more than one percentage of the desired optimum result.

Despite the fact that professional standards in the educational sphere do not have a conceptual unit and a coherent structure yet, they tend to rely increasingly on pedagogic competence and the performances achieved by each member of the teaching staff, based on their certified competences.

First of all, there is a dire need to create a unitary national system of educational standards for teaching staff and students alike. Such standards, divided per years of study and disciplines, must be renewed and improved periodically, and they can be easily accessible and well known by all participants to the teaching process, and they shall replace to the greatest possible extent the multitude of norms, programs, Minister orders, memorandums and local decisions or internal orders generating an excessive difference between the results obtained in the national education system. Such national standards equally involve the establishment of a system for the permanent monitoring of progresses registered by students, as well as the performance of virtual models within the limits of which teachers can be classified, based on algorithms reflecting the level of the performances they have met or that they could meet, which can be assessed based on the compulsory availability of an assessment portfolio of the teacher's activity. Such an assessment portfolio, which, in fact, has begun to be implemented, should be structured similar to the educational standards, divided into two essential issues.

On the one hand, firstly, the assessment of the pedagogic competences based on the testing of teaching skills and performances and on the assessment of the extent to which it is integrated in the successful performance of the teaching process directed towards groups of students, is considered, and, secondly, the requirement to assess the stability to react to new situations with the aid of which a personal progress curve can be drawn for each member of the teaching staff, is considered.

On the other hand, both the assessment portfolio and the sector standards should be directed towards the personal qualities of the teacher as well, as it is obvious that the emotional relations established between the student and the teacher play an important part and have long term consequences in the academic success, as well as in the subsequent education of the young generation. That is why the teacher's personality traits, that are found in the authority exercised in the classroom, his/her pedagogic integrity and the permissiveness he/she displays towards his/her students, can become an adequate criterion not only for the differentiation of their professional value, but also for the classification in a specific category of skills that is compatible in terms of efficiency with an adequate category of students. Students in classes vary according to their origin, their social status, the relation between the number of female and male students, the major they want to follow, and particularly their education and their psychological features. Therefore, two teachers who have the same training can obtain different results from the same class particularly due to the personal traits that set them apart, however, they can obtain results that are just as good with groups of students with whom they are individually compatible. For example, in an arts major class that consists mainly of female students who are artistically inclined, even the mathematics professor should have a caring and understanding personality and know how to encourage his or her students who show less interest in the subject, and stimulate their creativity by becoming himself or herself an example

of a beloved member of the teaching staff. However, in a vocational technical major class, dominated by male students, coming from an underprivileged social background, with disciplinary misconducts, only a strict and authoritarian teacher with limited permissiveness can obtain the same good results and also become a role model that students can look up to for his or her knowledge.

This portrayal of the members of the teaching staff, made in the portfolio, based on standard models, is particularly useful not just for school unit managers, but also for students and parents whose option concerning the selection of teachers is not yet adequately understood.

The establishment of professional educational standards also involves the opportunity to train a special category of appraising teachers aiming to facilitate the professional development of their colleagues and to contribute, in collaboration with the principals and the specialized inspectors, to the accurate drafting of the portfolio afferent to each member of the teaching staff.

Obviously, this also implies the restructuring of the initial and continuous training of professors, materialized by granting the quantification for the teaching profession. It can be carried out prior to or during the permanent teacher certification examination and should be the studied result of all training environments: university, pedagogical practical work, internship and school performance.

Thus, a new image of the status of the teaching staff could be obtained, by avoiding the absence of evenness and collaboration and, particularly, the amateur skills of certain individuals who occasionally find employment in the educational system and, later, when they no longer find it profitable, temporarily or finally leave it, by practicing what could be referred to as professional transit.

Therefore, the conclusion that modern education must undertake a new educational ideal through which it shall become the promoter of all civilization values (social and human, moral and civic, cognitive, cultural and spiritual) may also be reached, so that the neglect of any such value may lead to the unbalancing of the entire social system and may reduce the equal opportunities of the educational and social integration of children whose professional guidance, following continuous training, is the priority goal of Romanian evolution today.

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