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Attitudes of Croatian Teachers towards the Evaluation of Elementary School Students

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KLJUČNE BESEDE: evalvacija učencev, pedagoški delavci, osnovna šola, evalvacija

POVZETEK – Ocenjevanje učencev predstavlja izziv za vse učitelje. Ocenjevanje bi moralo biti skupno in sodelovalno delo učiteljev, učencev in staršev. Cilj raziskave je bil preveriti stališča učiteljev osnovnih šol v Republiki Hrvatski do ocenjevanja učencev osnovnih šol. V raziskavi je sodelovalo 796 anketirancev. Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da mora biti porazdelitev ocen v skladu z normalno porazdelitveno krivuljo. Razlike med aritmetičnimi povprečji za trditve "Obstajajo nenehni pritiski učencev in/ali njihovih staršev na učitelje za čim boljše številčno oceno, ki nato zagotavlja vpis na zeleno srednjo šolo", "Spremljanje, vrednotenje in ocenjevanje učencev ima svoje pravo mesto v izobraževalnem procesu" in "Učenci oziroma njihovi starši se zavedajo, da so končni rezultati izobraževanja veliko širši od številčnih ocen" so statistično pomembne. Za trditev "Učitelji so v času študija pridobili dovolj znanj in veščin, ki jim omogočajo kakovostno vrednotenje dosežkov učencev" je vrednost $\chi^2 = 340,394$.

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ABSTRACT – Evaluating students is a challenge for all teachers. Evaluation should be a joint and collaborative work of teachers, students and parents. The research aimed at examining the attitudes of educational staff of elementary schools in the Republic of Croatia regarding the evaluation of elementary school students. A total of 796 respondents participated in the research. The research results indicate that the distribution of grades should be in accordance with the normal distribution curve. The difference in arithmetic means between the claims "There is constant pressure from students and/or their parents on teachers for the best possible numerical grade, which then guarantees enrolment in the desired secondary school" and "Assessment, evaluation and grading of students has its deserved place in the educational process, and students and/or their parents understand that the final outcomes of education are much broader than a numerical grade" are statistically significant. For the claim "During their studies, teachers acquired sufficient knowledge and skills to enable them to qualitatively assess and evaluate students' achievements", the χ^2 value is 340.394.

1 Introduction

The society of today tends to evaluate every activity, i.e., the work done; evaluations are therefore very important. It has always been important to students, but above all to parents, what grade they will get. Student evaluation has been defined in different ways. First and for a very long time, evaluation was only related to the student's knowledge, i.e., when talking about evaluation, it meant only and exclusively the evaluation of knowledge. Today, evaluation is defined as "attributing a numerical or descriptive value to the results of monitoring and testing student's work" (Official Gazette, 2019, para. 4). Evaluation is also any activity that judges the student's success, and it refers to the techniques of monitoring the student's progress with regard to educational outcomes, indicating the

difficulties and progress of the student, the success of the quality of the curriculum and its implementation (Marović, 2004; Lapat and Gornik, 2017). It is, therefore, an agreed way of recording the development and achievements of students in classes (Kadum, 2013). Student success is monitored and evaluated during classes; students are graded in each subject and in behaviour. Grades in subjects are determined numerically and grades regarding behaviour are determined descriptively (National Curriculum, 2017).

The most demanding role of a teacher has always been – is today and will be tomorrow – grading. The reason for this is that evaluation is a very complex and demanding procedure that affects students, parents, but also the teachers themselves (Majerčiková and Petř Puhrová, 2019). Đurinić et al. (2022) state that with changes in society, evaluation, which is an indispensable part of education, also changes. At the same time, students and their parents are very often unrealistic in assessing the level of acquired knowledge, believing that a higher grade is deserved. Landonio (2018) states that in elementary school, grading takes on problematic characteristics, as children can often be seen expressing discomfort after positive grades, which their parents consider inadequate. This is one of the reasons mentioned by Fumić et al. (2022, p. 237) that “trends point to an increasing number of “outstanding students” and excellent students, whereby the highest grade no longer becomes a reflection of knowledge, but a symbolic capital that both students in the classroom/school and parents have at their disposal in their social life. Grades have therefore become the main goal of education, on the basis of which social and cultural capital is strengthened/weakened.”

Student assessment is a two-way process in which the teacher, as examiner and evaluator, and the student, as the demonstrator of knowledge, participate (Marović, 2004). Students’ attitudes “toward learning, such as persistence, attention, creativity, initiative, curiosity and problem solving” (Kadum et al., 2021, p. 3) are significant factors in student success. If we want to establish a general definition of the term evaluation, we could first of all say that it consists of assigning value to something or someone (Domenici, 2003).

Grades are intended as an indicator of success in relation to the planned outcomes for the quality of the overall achievements of each student, but also as a reminder to students and parents that they can or should work harder (Matijević and Radovanović, 2011). Buljubašić Kuzmanović et al. (2010) state that grades indicate the degree of student achievement expressed qualitatively and quantitatively. Depending on the grades, the student continues his/her education after elementary school by enrolling in secondary school (Kolar Billege, 2012).

In other words, as pointed out by Lapat et al. (2017, p. 76), “evaluation is assigning a certain grade for the achieved results, classifying students into certain categories according to learning achievements, i.e., the achieved results according to the agreed criteria.”

2 Teacher and grades as motivation and incentive for work

We can say that a teacher is a person who teaches other people. Danişman et al. (2018) say that society thinks that the job of a teacher is simple; however, being a quality teacher means having certain competencies and qualities that cannot be found in

every person. It is understandable that as society changes, teacher competencies also change. In addition to competencies, student achievements and grades will also be affected by the teacher's characteristics. Thus, a teacher who has a good sense of humour, justice, respect, who takes care of students, works hard, is moral, has an open approach to new ideas, and has honest and open communication with students, will have a positive relationship with students, and establish a safe teaching and learning environment (Danišman et al., 2018). Teachers are required to have detailed knowledge of the legality, responsibility, correctness, systematicity, consistency and fairness of teaching (Matjašič et al., 2013). Petlák (2021) points out the importance of teachers' self-reflection, which significantly contributes to teachers' professional growth. Drljić and Kiswarday (2021) point out the importance of teacher resilience.

When talking about motivation in class, it is stated that it is a strong incentive that drives the student to try to do something in order to achieve the best possible success, i.e., the best possible grade. That is why the grade is certainly a strong motivation for learning and a very important factor, depending on the grade the student receives. Highly motivated students will get much better results, and thus grades, than unmotivated students. Biasiol-Babić (2009) emphasizes that grades enable further education, and if you get poor results in elementary school, then further education is limited. If effort and work are not rewarded, the student loses motivation for further work. Wieman (2013) points out that it is important to recognize motivation as a central element of good teaching. It is not reasonable to expect students to be motivated to learn in every class. However, when students realize that many goals can be achieved thanks to good grades, they will soon begin to fulfil their school duties, expecting to be rewarded with a good grade, i.e., the excellent grade. From the aspect of learning, student motivation is certainly a factor that should be prioritized because it can affect the performance and effectiveness of teaching (Clayton et al., 2010).

When it becomes an end in itself, the grade will lose its educational aspect, and will cease to have a positive effect on the student and his/her progress. Therefore, in practice, students should be directed towards mutual connection and cooperative learning, and as little as possible towards competing with each other (Alić, 2020). However, Brookhart (1993) states that the grade is closely related to the idea of the student's work and that students should consider it as a payment for the activities and work invested, which should be enough for them.

A study (Holcar Brunauer et al., 2013) conducted years ago showed how much the students' self-assessment positively affects their attitude towards knowledge assessment.

3 Method

The aim of the research was to examine the attitudes of teachers, professional associates and head teachers of elementary schools in the Republic of Croatia regarding the evaluation of elementary school students.

The research used a measuring instrument designed specifically for the needs of this research. It consisted of five independent and thirteen dependent variables, and

two open-ended questions where respondents were given the opportunity to express their views and thoughts regarding changes in the concept of assessing, evaluating and grading students in order to raise the quality of the researched phenomenon to a higher level. The dependent variables are based on a Likert-type rating scale, where a response scale is offered for each item.

The research sample consisted of 796 educators in elementary schools in the Republic of Croatia. There were 132 male and 664 female respondents in the sample. The largest number of research participants are employed as subject teachers. Regarding years of work experience, the largest number of them have 15 or more but less than 25 years of experience in education. Considering the location of the school, an almost equal number of respondents work in the city (399) and in a school located in the countryside (397); 672 respondents work in district schools.

In order to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the distribution of responses of research participants with regard to the independent variables “professional qualification/job” and “years of work experience”, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied (Table 1). The significance values for the mentioned independent variables are less than .05, which means that there are statistically significant differences in the normality of the response distribution.

Table 1

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality of Response Distribution with Independent Variables

	<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov*</i>			<i>Shapiro-Wilk</i>		
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Professional qualification/job	.270	796	.000	.855	796	.000
Years of work experience	.182	796	.000	.912	796	.000
* Lilliefors Significance Correction						

4 Results and discussion

The data obtained from this research were processed using the statistical package IBM SPSS 24.0 Standard Campus Edition (SPSS ID: 729357, 20 May 2016).

Grades are an important motive and factor in the school work of students of all ages. However, a student in the first and second grade of elementary school prefers to hear an assessment of his/her will and effort rather than an evaluation of what he/she actually achieved. It is only in the third, and especially in the fourth grade of elementary school, that students fully understand the meaning of evaluation and grades.

Poor grades in students lead to a loss of confidence in their own strengths, and sometimes to resistance against the teacher and the school. At the same time, confidence in one's own abilities decreases, especially when failure is repeated: experiencing failure leads to a weakening of motivation. It is therefore recommended that the teacher,

in the event that he/she cannot give the student a positive grade, evaluate the student's dedication and effort instead, and in this way encourage him/her to work harder.

In order for the grade to be an incentive for the student to work, the student must believe that he/she can achieve any grade, even the highest one. Bearing all this in mind, it is difficult to talk about applying the same criteria to all students. A student will have the opportunity to achieve any grade only if the teacher compares him/her with those students who, in terms of ability, are similar to him/her. Grades are meaningful as incentives only if they measure progress during learning; they will be stimulating if they are communicated and reasoned, hence, a grade must be public.

In relation to what was discussed, the research participants were given the first set of items to express their opinions on:

- *Item 1:* Although grades do not affect students in the same way, grades are a significant motive and factor in school work.
- *Item 2:* In order for the grade to be an incentive for work, study and effort, students should believe that they can get any grade, even the highest one.
- *Item 3:* In students, a negative grade leads to a loss of confidence in their own strengths and resistance against the school and teachers.
- *Item 4:* When it is not possible to give a positive grade to a student, then the student's commitment and effort should be evaluated in order to encourage and motivate the student to continue his/her work.
- *Item 5:* It is difficult, almost impossible, to talk about applying the same evaluation criteria to all students.

Table 2

Data and Statistical Values for the First Set of Items (N = 796)

Items	Data (in percent)					Statistical values (results)				
	<i>I completely disagree</i>	<i>I disagree</i>	<i>I neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>I agree</i>	<i>I completely agree</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	.9	3.0	6.8	53.9	35.4	4.20	.763	881.802*	4	.000
2	.4	.8	3.6	36.9	58.3	4.52	.643	1104.867*	4	.000
3	12.6	30.4	31.0	19.6	6.4	2.77	1.099	187.103*	4	.000
4	37.7	43.3	16.5	1.9	.6	1.84	.806	626.337*	4	.000
5	4.5	8.5	17.6	39.6	29.8	3.82	1.091	340.394*	4	.000
* Zero cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 159.2.										

The obtained data and calculated statistical values are shown in Table 2. It can be seen that the respondents' positive opinions are related to three (out of the five) items – item 2 ($M = 4.52$, $SD = .643$); item 1 ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .763$); item 5 ($M = 3.82$,

SD = 1.091). Furthermore, it is evident that the values of all five chi-squares are very high, which means that the responses of the research participants are statistically significantly differently distributed.

Analysis of variance examined the influence of the independent variable “professional qualification/job” on the dependent variables from the first set of items. Considering the independent variable, the respondents were divided into four groups (1 = class teacher; 2 = subject teacher; 3 = professional associate; 4 = head teacher). Statistically significant differences were found for three items from the first set: $F_2(3, 792) = 3.846$, $p = .009$; $F_3(3, 792) = 6.146$, $p = .000$; $F_4(3, 792) = 4.899$, $p = .002$. However, the actual difference between the arithmetic means of the items is very small. The magnitudes of these differences, expressed using the eta square indicator, amount to: $\eta^2_{(2)} = .01$; $\eta^2_{(3)} = .02$; $\eta^2_{(4)} = .02$. Subsequent comparisons using Tukey’s test show that the arithmetic means of item 3 ($M_3 = 2.77$, $SD_3 = 1.099$), item 4 ($M_4 = 1.84$, $SD_4 = .806$) and item 5 ($M_5 = 3.82$, $SD_5 = 1.091$) differ significantly from the arithmetic mean of item 2 ($M_2 = 4.52$, $SD_2 = .643$). On the other hand, the arithmetic mean of item 1 ($M_1 = 4.20$, $SD_1 = .763$) does not differ significantly from the arithmetic mean of item 2.

Although the acquired knowledge of students, as one of the fundamental outcomes of education, should be the basic indicator of student success, in our education system that role is very often taken over by final grades, which are of particular importance to students and their parents. Namely, the child’s further education, the choice of profession and the achievement of his/her life goals depend on them. In our education system, school success is of particular importance, because the failure of students is considered the failure of their teachers, schools, and of their parents (Olujić and Maras, 2021). Namely, from year to year we witness the inflation of excellent students, the flood of excellent grades. Thus, in the last four school years, the number of students with excellent overall success is on average 48.22 %, while the number of students with the average grade of 5.0 is 18.71 %. In the 2019/2020 school year, which was marked by the strike of educators and general online teaching due to the lockdown, there were 52.59 % of excellent students and 21.66 % of those students who achieved an average grade of 5.0. In the year of the pandemic (the 2020/21 school year), 49.22 % of students finished the class with excellent results, while 18.38 % had an average grade of 5.0 (Ministarstvo znanosti ... Školski e-rudnik, 2020/2021).

Many authors point to the problem of the flood of excellent grades and are of the opinion that it is not justified that the habit has formed of getting the grade “very good” or “excellent” in all subjects already in elementary education, among the youngest students. However, it must be pointed out that class teachers, unlike subject teachers, have enough time to get to know their students well, to provide them with everything they need for holistic development. They have the opportunity to ensure individual access to teaching content and the pace of work that suits each individual student; to recognize the student’s interests and respect their needs.

In Školski e-rudnik it can be seen that the highest number of excellent students can be found in the first grade, on average 86.43 % of them, while in the second grade their share is (on average) 78.24 %. The number of excellent students decreases in higher grades, with the lowest number of them in the seventh grade (37.22 %). A slight increase is observed in the eighth grade, where there were, on average, 40.40 % of excellent students. It should be noted that the evaluation process consists of a teacher’s personal

assessment, often on the basis of unstandardized tests, prepared by the teachers themselves.

Over the last two or three years, in connection with the reform interventions, there has been a lot of talk about the need to change the approach to student evaluation. At the same time, formative assessment and evaluation have been put in the foreground, and grading in relation to that. However, in our schools the numerical grade is still dominant, being the basic and most important criterion for the advancement of students in the education system. In relation to what was discussed, the research participants were given a second set of items to express their opinions on; it contained the following items:

- *Item 6:* It is perfectly fine, i.e., it is quite natural that very good and excellent grades prevail among elementary school students, and that the grades are not distributed in accordance with the Gaussian curve of a normal distribution.
- *Item 7:* It is completely pedagogically justified that we create a habit already in elementary education, among the youngest students, to get the grade “very good” or “excellent” in all subjects.
- *Item 8:* Reform changes related to the approach towards the assessment, evaluation and grading of educational outcomes in students are not aligned with the needs and demands of society.
- *Item 9:* The numerical grade is the dominant, fundamental and most important criterion for student advancement in the education system.
- *Item 10:* All grades “excellent” are equal, behind all of them there is an equal amount of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies.

Table 3

Data and Statistical Values of the Second Set of Items (N = 796)

Items	Data (in percent)					Statistical values (results)				
	<i>I completely disagree</i>	<i>I disagree</i>	<i>I neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>I agree</i>	<i>I completely agree</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
6	20.2	39.0	26.1	11.3	3.4	2.39	1.036	297.681*	4	.000
7	37.7	43.3	16.5	1.9	.6	1.84	.806	626.337*	4	.000
8	4.0	11.8	30.5	37.1	16.6	3.50	1.030	292.932*	4	.000
9	1.8	5.8	10.3	43.2	38.9	4.12	.932	607.719*	4	.000
10	46.6	41.3	6.8	3.4	1.9	1.73	.875	772.794*	4	.000
* Zero cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 159.2.										

The obtained data and calculated statistical values (Table 3) show that the research participants have a negative attitude towards four out of the five presented items. The respondents have a positive attitude towards item 8 (53.7% of the respondents agree

(37.1%), or completely agree (16.6%) with the item, while 30.5% neither agree nor disagree with the item) and item 9 (82.1%, of whom 43.2% agree and 30.9% completely agree with the item).

Analysis of variance examined the influence of the independent variable “years of work experience” on the dependent variables from the second set of items. With regard to the independent variable, the respondents were divided into five groups (1 = less than 5 years; 2 = 5 years or more, but less than 15 years; 3 = 15 years or more, but less than 25 years; 4 = 25 years or more, but less than 35 years; 5 = 35 or more years). Statistically significant differences were found for three items: $F_4(4, 791) = 5.488$, $p = .000$; $F_8(4, 791) = 10.938$, $p = .000$; $F_9(4, 791) = 6.029$, $p = .000$. However, the actual difference between the arithmetic means of the items is very small. The magnitudes of these differences, expressed using the eta square indicator, amount to: $\eta^2_{(6)} = .03$; $\eta^2_{(8)} = .05$; $\eta^2_{(9)} = .03$. Subsequent comparisons using Tukey’s test show that the arithmetic mean of item 7 ($M_7 = 1.84$, $SD_7 = .806$) differs significantly from the arithmetic means of item 8 ($M_8 = 3.50$, $SD_8 = 1.030$) and item 10 ($M_{10} = 1.73$, $SD_{10} = .875$), whereas the arithmetic means of item 6 ($M_6 = 2.39$, $SD_6 = 1.036$) and item 9 ($M_9 = 4.12$, $SD_9 = .932$) do not significantly differ from the arithmetic mean of item 8. Furthermore, it is evident that all five values of the chi-square are very high, which points to the conclusion that the differences in the distribution of responses of the research participants are statistically significant.

Looking at Školski e-rudnik, it is noticeable that the number of excellent students in catchment area schools is significantly higher than in district schools: in catchment area schools, there was an average of 64.14% of students with excellent overall success, while in district schools, this average was 47.68% (Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia, 2017).

Table 4

Correlation Matrix of Two Independent and Two Dependent Variables

		<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
1. Independent variable A	Pearson Correlation	1	.171**	-.063	-.075*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.075	.034
	N	796	796	796	796
2. Independent variable B	Pearson Correlation	.171**	1	.084*	.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.018	.520
	N	796	796	796	796
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

The correlation relationship between two independent variables (variable A: “I work in a school located (1) in the city, (2) in the suburbs, (3) in the countryside” and variable B: “I work in a (1) district school, (2) a catchment area school”) and two dependent variables (items 6 and 7) was analysed using Pearson’s linear correlation. The

obtained results are shown in Table 4. It can be seen that there is a correlation at the significance level of .05 between the independent variable A and dependent variable 7, and between the independent variable B and dependent variable 6.

We are faced with the fact that students and their parents exert constant pressure on teachers in order to get the best grade possible, which (for students) guarantees enrolment in the desired secondary school. Therefore, we gave the respondents the following two items to answer:

- *Item 11*: There is constant pressure from students and/or their parents on teachers for the best possible numerical grade, which then guarantees enrolment in the desired secondary school.
- *Item 12*: Assessment, evaluation and grading of students has its deserved place in the educational process, and students and/or their parents understand that the final outcomes of education are much broader than a numerical grade.

The obtained data and statistical calculations are shown in Table 5. It can be seen that 82.1% of the research participants agree (43.2%) or completely agree (38.9%) with item 11 ($M = 4.12$; $SD = .932$.) A total of 39.5% of respondents completely disagree (10.4%) or disagree (29.1%) with item 12. Almost one-third of the respondents (32.2%) could not express an opinion regarding the above-mentioned item, i.e., they neither agree nor disagree with the item. The arithmetic mean for this item is $M = 2.88$, with a standard deviation of $SD = 1.117$.

Table 5

Statistical Values with Items 11 and 12

Items	Data (in percent)					Statistical values (results)				
	<i>I completely disagree</i>	<i>I disagree</i>	<i>I neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>I agree</i>	<i>I completely agree</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
11	1.8	5.8	10.3	43.2	38.9	4.12	.932	607.719*	4	.000
12	10.4	29.1	32.2	19.3	9.0	2.88	1.117	175.646*	4	.000
* Zero cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 159.2.										

The obtained chi-square values for both items are very high, which points to the conclusion that the differences in the distribution of the responses of the research participants are statistically significant.

Although it is evident from Table 5 that the obtained arithmetic means differ with regard to their values, the t-test determined whether this difference is statistically significant or not. We obtained that the t-ratio is $t = 38.99$, at the significance level of .01. Such a high result of the t-test shows that the differences in the arithmetic means are statistically significant.

The last item on which the research participants expressed their opinion related to their ability to evaluate student achievement. During their studies, future teachers develop the competencies they need, among other things, to successfully assess students; later, during the introduction to the educational process and work in practice, these competencies are further developed and perfected. In this regard, the research participants were asked the following question:

- *Item 13:* During their studies, teachers acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to enable them to qualitatively assess and evaluate students' achievements.

Regarding this item, 69.4% of the respondents agree (39.6%) or completely agree (29.8%) with the item; 13.0% of respondents completely disagree (4.5%) or disagree (8.5%) with the item. The arithmetic mean for this item is $M = 3.82$, with $SD = 1.091$. The chi-square value obtained is $\chi^2 = 340.394$ ($df = 4$, $p < .001$), which points to the conclusion that the responses of the research participants are statistically significantly differently distributed.

5 Conclusion

The assessment of the achievement of educational outcomes is the process of teachers collecting information and making professional evaluations about student learning and learning outcomes (National Curriculum, 2017). It is an integral part of teaching and of the educational process. It is constantly present, both during testing, revision, exercise and systematization, and while introducing new teaching contents. It provides feedback to the student and the teacher. However, student evaluation is still too focused on grades and still insufficiently individualized.

The fundamental question is what is being evaluated: is it the student's performance (expression), real knowledge (understanding, connection, discussion, problematization) or reproduction of facts, usually without understanding them? Do we evaluate the progress of an individual student or his/her progress in relation to other students in the class (Kadum, 2013)?

A grade as a result of an evaluation is pedagogically justified only if it has an educational effect on the student; if it encourages the student to invest greater efforts in his/her work. The grade expresses a judgment about the quantity and quality of the knowledge acquired, the effort invested and the results achieved, depending on the personal capabilities of each individual student. At the same time, the grade must be accurate, objective, reliable and comprehensive. The accuracy of the grade is expressed in the degree of achievement of educational outcomes. It will be reliable and objective if it depends only on the achieved results and not on the applied instruments and evaluators. This means that a student should receive the same grade for the demonstrated knowledge, regardless of how the evaluation is done and who conducts the evaluation. The grade will be comprehensive if, in addition to knowledge, it also includes other components (commitment, orderliness, work responsibility and student capabilities).

Regarding solutions to testing, it is necessary to prepare students for self-assessment and self-evaluation. And for this to be possible, clear standards and guidance of students through the self-evaluation process are necessary.

It is well-known that there are teachers who are more lenient in their evaluations and assessments and those who are stricter. The reason lies in the fact that teachers do not have a single opinion about which teaching contents are more important and which are less important. The strictest teachers are those for whom everything in the curriculum is equally important; who are not able to distinguish the important contents from the less important ones.

At the beginning of the school year, teachers must familiarize students and their parents with the elements of evaluation, as well as with the methods and procedures of evaluation (Pravilnik o načinima..., paras 13–14, 2019). Students and their parents are able to understand the information provided. Knowing which knowledge corresponds to which grade, their attention will be directed towards the elements of evaluation and assessment, and students will be able to direct themselves towards their goal more easily and without straying.

We can conclude the paper with the thoughts about the unimportance of grades, as stated by Alić (2020, p. 53): “The child should be motivated from the inside, because it is simply necessary to know how to carry this knowledge through life. One should have a desire for new knowledge. It is wrong to study for the sake of competition. It is necessary to compete with yourself, not with others. Competition is a term that in itself is associated with arrogance. What is important is the individual progress of students and that they enrich their soul, their existence with knowledge, becoming aware that the most beautiful thing is to be useful to society. It is necessary to be better than your yesterday’s self.”

Dr. Sandra Kadum

Stališča hrvaških učiteljev do ocenjevanja osnovnošolcev

Ocenjevanje učencev je izziv za vse učitelje. Zahteva močno prevzemanje odgovornosti pri odkrivanju učenčevega znanja in veliko spretnosti. Vsekakor je treba doseči, da je evalvacija rezultat skupnega in sodelovalnega dela vseh, tako učiteljev, učencev kot staršev.

Če želimo sprejeti splošno definicijo pojma ocenjevanje, bi lahko najprej rekli, da gre za pripisovanje vrednosti nečemu ali nekomu (Domenici, 2003) ali, kot navajajo Lapat idr. (2017, str. 76), da je “ocenjevanje /.../ pripisovanje določene ocene za dosežene rezultate, razvrščanje učencev v določene kategorije glede na učne dosežke, to je glede na dosežene rezultate po dogovorjenih merilih”.

Landonio (2018) navaja, da se v osnovni šoli lahko zgodi, da učenci izražajo nelagodje po pozitivnih ocenah, ki jih starši ocenjujejo kot neustrezne. To je eden od razlogov, ki jih omenjajo Fumić idr. (2022, str. 237), in sicer da “trendi kažejo na vse več “super izjemnih” in odličnih učencev”, tako da najvišja ocena ni več odraz znanja,

temveč je simbolni kapital, s katerim razpolagajo učenci v razredu, šola in starši v njihovem družbenem življenju. Ocene so torej postale glavni cilj izobraževanja, na podlagi katerega se krepi/slabi socialni in kulturni kapital.

Cilj raziskave je bil preveriti stališča učiteljev, strokovnih sodelavcev in ravnateljev osnovnih šol v Republiki Hrvaški do ocenjevanja učencev osnovnih šol. Pri raziskavi je bil uporabljen merilni instrument, ki je bil zasnovan za potrebe te raziskave. Sestavljalo ga je pet neodvisnih in trinajst odvisnih spremenljivk ter dve vprašanji odprtega tipa, kjer so anketiranci imeli možnost izraziti svoje misli o spremembah koncepta spremljanja in vrednotenja učencev, da bi kakovost obravnavanega pojava dvignili na višjo raven. Raziskovalni vzorec je sestavljalo 796 učiteljev osnovnih šol v Republiki Hrvaški. Vzorec je obsegal 132 moških in 664 žensk. Največ anketirancev je zaposlenih kot predmetni učitelj. Glede na leta delovnih izkušenj v izobraževanju jih ima največ 15 ali več let izkušenj, vendar manj kot 25. Glede na lokacijo je enako število anketiranih zaposlenih v mestu (399) in na podeželnju (397); v domači šoli dela 672 anketirancev. Anketiranci so morali najprej podati mnenje o prvem nizu izjav:

- Trditev 1: Čeprav ocene ne vplivajo enako na učence, so pomemben motiv in dejavnik šolskega dela.
- Trditev 2: Da bi bila ocena spodbuda za delo, učenje in trud, mora biti učenec prepričan, da lahko dobi vsako oceno, tudi najvišjo.
- Trditev 3: Negativna ocena pri učencih vodi v izgubo zaupanja v lastne moči in odpor do šole in učiteljev.
- Trditev 4: Kadar učenca ni mogoče pozitivno oceniti, je treba njegovo zavzetost in trud ovrednotiti, da bi ga spodbudili k nadaljnjemu delu.
- Trditev 5: Težko oz. skoraj nemogoče je govoriti o uporabi enakih meril ocenjevanja za vse učence.

Anketiranci so pozitivno ocenili tri trditve (od petih): trditev 2: $M = 4,52$, $SD = 0,643$; trditev 1: $M = 4,20$, $SD = 0,763$; trditev 5: $M = 3,82$, $SD = 1,091$.

Čeprav bi moralo biti pridobljeno znanje učencev kot eden od temeljnih izidov izobraževanja osnovni pokazatelj uspeha učencev, v našem izobraževalnem sistemu to vlogo zelo pogosto prevzemajo zaključne ocene, ki so za učence in njihove starše še posebej pomembne. Od njih je namreč odvisno otrokovo nadaljnje šolanje, izbira njegovega življenjskega poklica in doseganje življenjskega cilja.

Iz leta v leto smo namreč priča "inflaciji" odličij, poplavi odličnih ocen. Tako je v zadnjih štirih šolskih letih število učencev z odličnim splošnim uspehom v povprečju 48,22-odstotno, število učencev s splošnim uspehom 5,0 pa v povprečju 18,71-odstotno. V šolskem letu 2019/20, ki sta ga zaradi zaprtja zaznamovala stavka učiteljev in splošni spletni pouk, je bilo 52,59% učencev odličnih in 21,66% učencev, ki so dosegli splošni uspeh 5,0. V letu pandemije (šolsko leto 2020/21) je 49,22% učencev končalo razred z odličnim uspehom, tistih s splošno oceno 5,0 pa je bilo 18,38% (Ministarstvo znanosti ... Školski e-rudnik, zv. 2, 2020/2021).

Vedeti je treba, da imajo učitelji razrednega pouka za razliko od predmetnih učiteljev dovolj časa, da svoje učence dobro spoznajo in jim zagotovijo vse, kar potrebujejo za celostni razvoj, ter da lahko zagotovijo individualni tempo vsakemu učencu, prepoznajo interese učencev in spoštujejo njihove potrebe. V Šolskem e-rudniku je razvidno, da je največ odličnjakov v 1. razredu, v povprečju 86,43% učencev, odličnih učencev je v

2. razredu (povprečje) 78,24%; nato se število zmanjšuje, tako da jih je najmanj v 7. razredu (37,22%), nato pa opazimo rahel porast v 8. razredu: odličnih je bilo v povprečju 40,40% učencev. V zadnjih dveh, treh letih se je v zvezi z reformnimi ukrepi veliko govorilo o nujnosti spremenjenega pristopa k vrednotenju učencev, pri tem pa se je v ospredje postavljalo formativno spremljanje in s tem povezano vrednotenje. Še vedno pa v naših šolah prevladuje številčna ocena, ki je osnovno in najpomembnejše merilo za napredovanje učencev v izobraževalnem sistemu. V zvezi z zapisanim so udeleženci raziskave dobili drugi sklop izjav, ki so jih morali ovrednotiti, vseboval pa je naslednje trditve:

- Trditev 6: Povsem v redu je, torej povsem naravno, da med osnovnošolci prevladujejo prav dobre in odlične ocene in da ocene niso porazdeljene po Gaussovi krivulji normalne porazdelitve.
- Trditev 7: Pedagoško je povsem upravičeno, da že v osnovnošolskem izobraževanju ustvarjamo navado, da imajo najmlajši učenci pri vseh predmetih oceno prav dobro ali odlično.
- Trditev 8: Spremembe glede pristopa k spremljanju, vrednotenju in vrednotenju izobraževalnih rezultatov učencev niso usklajene s potrebami in zahtevami družbe.
- Trditev 9: Številčna ocena je prevladujoč, temeljni in najpomembnejši kriterij napredovanja učenca v izobraževalnem sistemu.
- Trditev 10: Vse petice so enakovredne, za vsemi peticami stoji enaka količina pridobljenih znanj, veščin in kompetenc.

Pridobljeni podatki in izračunane statistične vrednosti kažejo, da imajo udeleženci raziskave negativen odnos do štirih od petih podanih trditev. Anketiranci imajo pozitiven odnos do trditve 8 (53,7% anketirancev se z navedeno trditvijo strinja (37,1%) ali popolnoma strinja (16,6%); 30,5% pa je tistih, ki se s trditvijo niti ne strinjajo niti strinjajo) in trditve 9 (82,1%): 43,2% se jih strinja s trditvijo in 30,9% popolnoma strinja. Ob vpogledu v Šolski e-rudnik je opazno, da je število odličnjakov v območnih šolah bistveno večje kot v domačih: v območnih šolah je bilo povprečno 64,14% učencev z odličnim splošnim uspehom, v domačih šolah je bilo povprečje 47,68% (Ministrstvo za znanost in izobraževanje, 2017).

Soočeni smo z dejstvom nenehnega pritiska učencev in njihovih staršev na učitelje, da bi dobili čim boljšo oceno, ki zagotavlja vpis v zeleno srednjo šolo. Zato smo anketirancem podali naslednji dve izjavi:

- Trditev 11: Učenci in/ali njihovi starši nenehno pritiskajo na učitelje za čim boljšo številčno oceno, ki nato zagotavlja vpis na zeleno srednjo šolo.
- Trditev 12: Spremljanje, vrednotenje in ocenjevanje učencev ima svoje pravo mesto v izobraževalnem procesu, učenci in/ali njihovi starši pa razumejo, da so končni rezultati izobraževanja veliko širši od številčne ocene.

Pridobljeni podatki kažejo, da se s trditvijo 11 82,1% anketirancev strinja (43,2%) ali se popolnoma strinja (38,9%); medtem ko je $M = 4,12$ in $SD = 0,932$. S trditvijo 12 se 39,5% anketirancev sploh ne strinja (10,4%) ali se ne strinja (29,1%). Skoraj tretjina vprašanih (32,2%) se s trditvijo niti ne strinja niti strinja. Aritmetična sredina za to trditev je $M = 2,88$ in standardni odklon $SD = 1,117$.

Zadnja trditev, pri kateri so intervjuvanci navedli svoje mnenje, se nanaša na njihovo sposobnost ocenjevanja dosežkov učencev. Bodoči učitelji med študijem razvijajo kompetence, ki jih potrebujejo, med drugim za uspešno ocenjevanje učencev; kasneje pa

te kompetence še razvijajo in izpopolnjujejo ob uvajanju v izobraževalni proces in delu v praksi. V zvezi s tem smo udeležence raziskave vprašali po strinjanju z nasledno izjavo:

- Trditev 13: Učitelji/učiteljice so v času študija pridobili dovolj didaktično-metodičnih znanj in spretnosti, ki jim omogočajo kakovostno spremljanje in vrednotenje učenčevih dosežkov.

S to trditvijo se strinja 69,4% vprašanih (39,6%), od tega se jih popolnoma strinja 29,8%; 13% vprašanih se s trditvijo nikakor ne strinja (4,5%) ali ne strinja (8,5%). Aritmetična sredina za to trditev je $M = 3,82$, $SD = 1,091$.

Končamo lahko z razmišljanji o nepomembnosti ocen avtorja Alića (2020, str. 53), ki pravi, da je "otroka treba motivirati od znotraj, saj je preprosto treba znati to znanje ponesti skozi življenje. Treba je imeti željo po novem znanju. Učenje zaradi tekmovalnosti je napačno. Tekmovati je treba sam s seboj, ne z drugimi. Tekmovalnost je izraz, ki je sam po sebi povezan z aroganco. Pomemben je individualni napredek učencev ter, da z znanjem bogatijo svojo dušo, svoj obstoj, in se zavedajo, da je najlepše biti družbeno koristen. Treba je biti boljši kot sem bil včeraj."

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