

THE TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL-PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCIES REGARDING THE EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

Teachers play a key role in providing a quality, student-centered education that will prepare every student to achieve their highest potential for life and work in a modern society. Modern trends in education call for changes in teacher preparation, teaching abilities and skills, teaching competencies, and teacher behavior. Teachers in a quality school are faced with more complex and subtle problems and tasks. The teacher takes on a new professional role, that of a modern teacher who advocates for, motivates, stimulates, and assumes responsibility for improving the learning process and enhancing the school's work. In the modern school, teachers need to have knowledge and understanding of a wide range of teaching, including how to personalize learning and provide opportunities for all students to achieve their learning potential. The quality of competence plays an important role in creating and establishing the quality of the learning process among students and shows the level of professionalism of teachers according to their field. The teacher's competencies for teaching and student learning are the core competencies that form the foundation of the teaching profession. Since teaching and assessment are mutually conditioned and cyclical processes, it follows that the teacher's professional-pedagogical competencies are very important with regard to student assessment. The goal of our theoretical paper is to analyze the professional competencies of teachers regarding the assessment of student achievements, based on contemporary literature and professional teaching standards, which are only part of the competencies that today's teacher must possess, but also constantly develop and refine.

Keywords: Professional-pedagogical competencies, assessment, teacher, student, success, school.

1. Introduction

*„Assessment is a powerful tool for improving success.
You have the key.
Use it the right way!”*

Поповски (1998)

Today's world is characterized by numerous changes. To keep pace with these new demands, changes are necessary not only in the level but also in the structure of education as one of the key factors in achieving the set objectives.

In the modern school, the directions and tendencies of contemporary education are realized. At the same time, the teacher is the main driving force and initiator of the modernization of teaching in the modern school. His role is indispensable. Therefore, the teacher must continually educate and develop himself in order to meet the new demands that the modern school places upon him. Namely, as that process gradually becomes more substantial, more intensive and of higher quality, it is increasingly and more emphatically highlighted, and it is also more clearly understood

and accepted that the teacher plays a central role in it. It is already clear that the first prerequisite for the success of the changes is precisely their acceptance by the teacher – the one who will implement them. No changes will occur if the teacher is not prepared and motivated for them – adds Popovski, K. (1998: 7)

The quality of the teacher, determines the quality of teaching as an educational process. Therefore, a teacher cannot do a good job if they are not professionally and pedagogically well prepared for their calling. The constant repetition of poor results on the one hand and good results on the other are hallmarks of the quality of a teacher's work. (Zenuni-Idrizi., V., 2020: 109)

It is necessary to reach a common understanding of the knowledge, skills and values that a teacher in the 21st century should possess. The anticipated new role of the teacher in innovative educational processes, particularly the attainment of the teacher's professional-pedagogical competencies in relation to pupil assessment, will undoubtedly bring a genuine revitalization of the teaching profession's authority and a significant improvement in its overall status in society. It is precisely this that requires constant monitoring and appropriate evaluation of the teacher's new role, their continuous progress, and thus the movement towards the goal: a higher-quality education.

2. The teacher's professional-pedagogical competencies regarding the assessment of students

Competency frameworks usually present the characteristics of quality teaching for the 21st century, including subject knowledge, pedagogical professionalism, ethical values, and many other issues related to its professionalism, explicitly describing the complex values on which the quality of teaching is based. This can simultaneously improve the perception of teaching in the eyes of the general public as a profession that is „learned“ (Donaldson, G., et al. 2013: 17)

The teacher's overall role is based on his competencies. In other words, the teacher is expected to be professional in carrying out his work. To be professional in a given field means to be competent and to have deep knowledge and understanding of that field.

A teacher's professional competence has a direct impact on the quality of educational work. According to Zenuni-Idrizi, V. (2020), *professionalism and the professional competence of a teacher* are understood as a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills, competencies, and creative attitudes, which can encourage students to learn intensively, to have creative behavior, and productive expression, in life and work. (Zenuni-Idrizi, V., 2020: 110) We note that here the emphasis on professionalism is placed on the range of knowledge and skills that influence students' preparation for active and creative learning and behavior. Professional competence implies the readiness and ability to tackle tasks and problems in a purposeful, professional, and methodical manner, based on professional knowledge and skills.

The teacher's professional competencies, together with their pedagogical competencies, represent the character and inner determination of their work in the elementary school.

When defining a teacher's competencies, we must start from the assumption of what he is expected to work on, what he is competent and obligated to do, and the types of activities he must carry out. The activities that a teacher must undertake as part of his professional activity are considered a system of processes, procedures, and actions. They are planned and implemented in accordance with the objectives and tasks set forth in the lesson plan and curriculum, but taking into account specific conditions and circumstances. The importance of the teacher's professional competencies for the teaching process stems from the need to acquire systematically organized scientific knowledge during the learning process.

Contemporary trends in education call for changes in teacher preparation, teaching skills and competencies, and teacher behavior. The teacher's pedagogical competencies, in their complex content, include the implementation of teaching as a necessary and essential component. Therefore, consequently, in the formulation and functioning of pedagogical competencies, knowledge, skills, and habits from the field of pedagogical sciences play a key role. Alongside this, according to Nikodinovska-Bančotovska (2008), knowledge from psychology, sociology, and philosophy, as well as metacognitive knowledge and skills, are also important for pedagogical competencies. (Никодиновска-Банчотовска, С., 2008: 84)

Pedagogical competencies include all tasks and activities, regardless of their nature, that a teacher must plan and carry out to successfully fulfill his profession. One of the teacher's most important professional-pedagogical competencies is assessment as a process carried out by the teacher. The fundamental characteristic of competency-based assessment relates to the roles of the student and the teacher and the use of various methods and instruments to assess student achievements.

The assessment that the teacher carries out in his daily educational work involves tracking, monitoring, and measuring students' activities and achievements. This is a complex activity that must be conducted continuously, alongside the activities planned for each day. It is important that the teacher, when assessing students' engagement in activities, be convinced that they are actively involved at a level where learning and development can occur in the best possible way. This means that the teacher must pay attention to the environment and materials the student prefers, who they want to work with, where they show the greatest mental activity and desire to explore, where their zone of proximal development is, how much help they need and how long they can stay on a topic. It is also important to understand that students' level of engagement in an activity can vary, and for this reason students need their activities to be changed more often. This type of assessment allows teachers to plan activities for the whole group, for smaller groups, and for individual learning activities.

Grading is defined as the evaluation of a student's work and achievements using grades. Teaching and assessment are interdependent, cyclical processes. Teachers base the planning of the teaching and learning process on the formative assessment of each student and simultaneously set high expectations for them. (Donaldson, G., et al., 2013: 30) The assessment implemented by the teacher should be objective and complex. Within the scope of their competence, the teacher should evaluate and assess several different, yet interconnected components of the student's intellectual and motor activity. According to Vilotijević (1992), these are the following components:

- » **Knowledge** - the quality of knowledge is measured.
- » **Motivation** - the assessment of needs, desires, and interests is important because they represent the internal forces that drive activity.
- » **Skills** - skills are formed and developed during the teaching process and its effects on learning. These are perceptual skills, practical skills, and intellectual skills. Meanwhile, here the assessment reveals the positive and negative aspects of the teaching process in skill development.
- » **Work habits** - the practical applicability of specific knowledge is assessed. It is evaluated how many individual activities, through practice, become habits that the student performs regularly.
- » **Subjective possibilities** - the student's general and specific abilities (mathematical, musical, etc.) and the student's specific difficulties that affect learning (stuttering, poor vision, etc.).

- » **Objective circumstances** - the family environment, material resources, use of cultural institutions, etc. (Vilotijević, M., 1992: 200–202)

To determine the quality of a student's work, a teacher most often uses assessment and evaluates it with a grade. Assessment and grading should not be equated. The grade is the result of the assessment. Thus, the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and habits, the outcomes of that process, as well as the student's attitude and relationship to learning, are evaluated.

Assessment, as a pedagogical competence, is carried out by the teacher in relation to the student.

The basic professional competencies of a teacher in the field of student assessment are also defined in the *Law on Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools of 2015*, respectively in the *Regulation on Basic Professional Competencies in Primary and Secondary Schools*. In fact, they are specified in Article 4, which states: *The teacher's core professional competencies in the field of assessing student achievement relate to the knowledge of various methods of assessment, the assessment and grading of students, their opportunities and limitations, as well as the recognition of the standards established for formative and summative assessment.* (Закон за наставници во основните и средните училишта, 2015: 2).

This legal provision defines certain teacher competencies regarding the process of evaluating and grading students. Here we will present only the specific competencies of the educator regarding the assessment and grading of student achievements, respectively, the professional skills and competencies that the teacher must possess when carrying out the assessment and grading of the student's overall achievement, and these are:

- » to have high expectations for students' development and achievements;
- » to systematically monitor students' progress and provide them with quality feedback;
- » to select and apply assessment strategies appropriate to the objectives;
- » to involve students in assessment and to create a positive climate in which they can demonstrate their achievements;
- » to form valid and objective summative grades, and to present and justify them;
- » to analyze and interpret assessment data and use it to plan students' further learning;
- » to inform parents about their child's progress in a regular and thorough manner;
- » to measure the achievement of educational objectives for students through formative and summative assessment;
- » to conduct diagnostic and formative assessment in a timely and appropriate manner;
- » to adhere to national assessment standards. (Правилник за основните професионални компетенции на наставниците во основните и средните училишта по подрачја, 2015: 8)

Teachers should also be aware of the limitations of any assessment tool or method, such as progress checks of achievements, and use various formative assessment documents to gather any missing information about the student. Other tools for formative assessment include portfolios or samples of students' work, such as: written and drawn assignments, audio recordings of their readings and dictations, narrated texts, recordings of group projects, notes from conversations with students, photographs, video recordings, etc. Teachers can also add their comments to students' work, noting the key points students have achieved in their development and learning, and the same can be done by the children or their families. (USAID, 2011: 7) Teachers take a step forward in their work when they begin creating their own assessment tools and using them to better understand the achievements of different students.

When the teacher uses systematic observation and various instruments to carry out formative assessment, which influence the learning process and outcomes, then the children:

- » they develop self-esteem because they are seen as individuals.
- » they develop and progress more rapidly, because their teachers know exactly when new concepts and skills can be introduced and plan activities that allow for support for their skills and knowledge.
- » they are prepared to take risks when learning new things. (USAID, 2011: 7)

The taxonomic determination of elementary school teachers' competencies is important because it provides a comprehensive overview of the classification of activities and tasks of the teaching profession, especially with regard to student assessment.

For the professional competence of the teacher, specifically for the competence of the teacher in relation to the assessment of the students, and for the problem that is specifically discussed in this article, the competence is presented in the book Nikodinovska–Baņotovska, with title „*Професионалните компетенции на наставниците*” (2008), are also very important. In the following, we will present the professional competencies of teachers, with special emphasis on pedagogical competencies in connection with the assessment of students, in the form of a taxonomic category.

- » Monitors the student's work continuously;
- » Analyses the student's activities;
- » Increases the student's awareness of taking responsibility for their school duties;
- » Carries out assessment throughout the entire school year for all types of student activities;
- » Assesses a student's progress and achievements based on long-term monitoring from multiple perspectives;
- » Develops differentiated assessment criteria based on the developmental level of each individual student;
- » Ensures students are confident that assessment is for their development;
- » Encourages awareness among students to study not for grades, but for knowledge.
- » Allows students to take part in the formation of their own and their classmates' grades;
- » Strives to be objective in assessment;
- » Strives to minimise subjectivity in assessment;

The above-mentioned competencies can be more clearly illustrated through a tabular representation below:

Table 1: Taxonomic classification of teacher competencies in assessment

Competence	Description of the competency	Activities related to the competency
Continuous monitoring of the student	Monitors the student's work continuously	Keeping regular notes, regular observation
Analysis of the student's activities	Analyses the student's activities;	Analysis of tasks and participation in activities
Raising awareness among students	Increases the student's awareness of taking responsibility for their school duties;	Conversation, feedback, discussion

Continuous assessment of student activities	Carries out assessment throughout the entire school year for all types of student activities;	Tests, projects, activities
Assessment of students based on long-term monitoring	Assesses a student's progress and achievements based on long-term monitoring from multiple perspectives;	Assesses knowledge, skills, and attitudes
Adjusting individualized criteria	Develops differentiated assessment criteria based on the developmental level of each individual student;	Differentiated tasks for each student individually
Assessing students based on their development	Ensures students are confident that assessment is for their development;	Formative feedback
Raising students' awareness of the importance of learning.	Encourages awareness among students to study not for grades, but for knowledge.	Motivation, encouragement, guidance
Student participation in assessing their own knowledge and the knowledge of their classmates.	Allows students to take part in the formation of their own and their classmates' grades;	Self-assessment, peer assessment of students
Objectivity in evaluation	Strives to be objective in assessment;	Clear criteria in advance
Reducing subjectivity in evaluation	Strives to minimise subjectivity in assessment;	Standardized assessment instruments

As can be seen in the table, the teacher's competencies in the process of assessing student achievement encompass various aspects related to continuous, or formative, monitoring of students, analysis of their activities, and the application of acquired knowledge and achievements. These competencies are interrelated and closely tied to student success and their holistic development.

This taxonomic classification of the teacher's competencies regarding the assessment of student achievements indicates that assessment is not just a final phase in the teaching process, but rather it is a continuous activity that should be carried out every hour as an integral part of the lesson, which has a developmental, motivational, and pedagogical function.

3. Analysis and discussion

A review of the literature shows that the proper and successful functioning of the educational process in the modern school depends on a number of factors, among which the teacher holds a significant place, and assessment should not be understood solely as the process of giving grades by the teacher, but as an important component of the teaching process that influences learning and the overall development of students. In this sense, the teacher's role is broader and includes not only measuring results but also supporting and assisting the student throughout the learning process.

The teacher is the person responsible for the student's complete development in the process of upbringing and education. He teaches students, guides them, advises them, encourages them to

acquire knowledge independently, and activates their creative potentials. He plans, organizes, stimulates, implements, and evaluates the teaching process.

According to Nikodinovska-Bančotovska (2008), *the professional competencies of a teacher refer to the activities, duties, rights, and obligations of the teacher within their profession. Competencies stem from the characteristics of the teaching profession, relate to the teacher's actions, with the goal of achieving: the multifaceted development of the student, the improvement of the educational process, and the personal development and professional growth of the teacher.* (Никодиновска-Банчотовска, С., 2008: 33). The teacher's professional competencies in assessment encompass several interconnected aspects, such as continuously monitoring students' work, analyzing their activities, using various assessment methods, and ensuring objectivity when assigning grades. These competencies contribute to creating a more comprehensive and fairer assessment process. These approaches indicate a shift away from the traditional model of assessment toward a contemporary and comprehensive conception of assessment.

From the analysis of various theoretical approaches, it can be noted that ***assessment should be directed toward improving learning and be an integrated part of the teaching process.***

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Considering the fact that formal education can barely keep up with the pace and dynamics of the necessary changes, as well as the rapid obsolescence of the knowledge acquired during formal schooling, The need for continuous professional development of teachers is evident, with special emphasis on assessing students' achievements as a process carried out primarily by teachers. Efficiency and quality depend on the teacher's professionalism, therefore, we say that he must possess a wide range of competencies in order to be able to perform his duties and responsibilities at school in a quality and efficient manner.

For the proper functioning of a teacher's pedagogical competencies, their general characteristics and personal qualities play a cardinal role.

The teacher should know and use a variety of teaching methods and strategies that will enable students to be actively involved in the learning process, to explore, experiment and come to their own interpretation of the learned material through social interaction, as well as to use different sources of knowledge. By planning an integrated curriculum using a multidisciplinary perspective, the teacher should ensure meaningful learning and application of the learned material. In addition, he should encourage students to be independent in their learning. (Donaldson, G., et al., 2013: 30)

Since assessing students' achievements is one of a teacher's most important competencies, it should not be seen merely as the process of assigning a numerical grade, but as an essential part of the learning process. which encompasses the formative, motivational, and developmental dimensions of the student. Therefore, developing competencies in assessing students' achievements and success requires ongoing commitment from teachers, as well as support from educational institutions. These competencies are essential for implementing a quality assessment process, which directly impacts student development and improves teaching practices. Only in this way can a quality, objective, fair, and developmentally focused assessment be achieved.

From everything we have discussed and presented above, we can conclude that the continuous development of teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies regarding student assessment is not an option but a necessity. Teachers are key factors in ensuring high-quality education. Therefore, we conclude that ***teachers must continuously improve throughout their***

careers, because, as Murati, Xh. (2005: 132) points out, the quality of teaching and its modernization run parallel to the teacher's professional development or change. In fact, ***the more the teacher changes in his work and in his behavior, the more the teaching changes as well.***

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