

Learning results and evaluation through levels given by the results in Religious Education

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Abstract

Multilevel approach to religious education assessment entails rethinking the evaluative approach, starting from the systemic perspective on the evaluation object to religion, like regulatory reporting, to curriculum and who materialized from inductive perspective, in terms of subject assessment, the entire complexity of the student. The Assessment Tool that we proposed is an integrative one, an opportunity to see the process, be aware of the process by which it is evaluated and develop the ability to track what is happening in this process and intervene for the evaluator.

It is about a formative assessment, as long as the proposed instrument „crosses the boundaries of various learning activities”. As a school discipline, Religion is integrative one (contributing, complementing the student's general education) and integrator (harmonizing the various skills of the student's academic in progress tracked throughout the student's education unit).

Religious education provides and contributes to personal development of students and (self) empowering their formation process, exceeding the borders of a single discipline and ensuring premises skills training trans-disciplinary on the basis of specific skills, necessary for personal development of the student.

Finally, this idea of approaching religion as a subject from the perspective of education for values is very interesting and debated.

Keywords: learning outcomes, levels of evaluation, assessment matrix data through levels of learning outcomes, open, inclusive and integrative discipline

JEL classification: A2

INTRODUCTION

Religious education as a school subject is fascinating in terms of evaluation. Assessment in religious education can be understood as a measurement or assessment? What kind of results we can consider that we should expect of our students? This is the real question in this research.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The research problems of this scientific paper are about few new concepts in Religious Education: curricular architecture, receptive, effective and reflective skills in a transversal relation, learning results, levels of evaluation, evaluation papers through levels given by learning results.

When it comes to the way something is made (as a process), E. Stănciulescu says that “the new, the originality are not purposes in itself and, besides, they are incredibly relative: “*Ars inveniendi est ars combinatoria.*” (Pierre Bourdieu, 1980) any invention is, in fact, obtained by combining, in a new way, elements that are already known.

A complex system - even if it's known or explored - has several components that don't interact in a straight line (D. Şelaru, blog). Its components, no matter their size, are independent of one another which is why the most important quality is emerging, the capacity of having manifestations which do not originate from its components, but from the system as a whole. Self-organization, the appearance of new and adaptive structures can change their behaviour (meaning they can be understood) depending on external elements.

This is how the multilevel approach of evaluation in Religious Education should be perceived, a rethinking of the evaluation process, originated from the systematic perspective over the content of evaluation in Religious Education - normative reporting, to curriculum and who materialized from inductive perspective, in terms of subject assessment, the student in its entire complexity.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology included the questioning teachers, secondary school students and their parents, others involved in teaching approach, focus groups and systematic observation of student behaviour.

RESULTS

The result meant proposing an assessment instrument layered, consisting of given levels of skills acquired by students at religious education. Evaluation through levels obtained from the results achieved throughout Religious Education classes is connotation, dominated connotations with additional value, resulted from specific conditions (personal experience, different contexts) beyond denotation, with ordinary meaning.

The three levels given by learning results (basic, medium, average), and this is the contribution of this research to the field of assessment, are set from the perspective of the skills gained: receptive (what the students achieves in a formal and informal educational background), efficient (what he or she manages to express through attitude and behaviour, reflective axiological allotment system, beliefs). Therefore, a leveled approach in Religious Education is linked to the identification or the defining of certain skills connected to one another, superposed, which cannot be reduced to a single component that can be integrated (trans-curricular, cross-curricular). The way these skills are defined should be in connection to the interdisciplinary paradigm (of the transferable assets and not strictly disciplinary).

The instrument of evaluation suggested is an integrative one which can be accessed from the perspective of the user (teachers) and the recipients (students and their parents) as well, overcoming the possible distortions from the context of communication, reducing the normal biases of the subjectivity in question. It is an opportunity to observe the process and for the person who is being evaluated to become aware of this process, but there is also the possibility for the person who is evaluating to follow what's happening and to intervene when necessary.

Furthermore, it facilitates the transparency and the comparison between the levels of skills specific to Religious Education. This possibility is ensured by the critical/evaluative step over the norm (curricular architecture, studying scheme), but based on records "complex curricular architecture built on values, beliefs, expressed beliefs, manifested abilities, inter curricular approach" (Eurydice Report, The developing of key abilities in schools of Europe, page 19).

It is a formal evaluation, as long as the instrument that is being suggested "crosses the borders of different learning activities". The coherence of evaluation through levels given by learning results is achieved by the integration of several evaluated components. It minimalizes the differences of status and it brings consistency to the discipline in question, emphasizing the practical application of knowledge, making students' abilities more relevant.

Evaluation through levels given by learning results in Religious Education also raises problems/challenges from the perspective of its application as a method/means/instrument. “Changing the way people work is difficult because of traditions”, causing modifications in the culture and organisation of the whole teaching system, from the curricular level to teachers “specialized in a single academic discipline”, all the way to the managing of the class during Religious Education and, even further, to the culture and organization of the school. Such an approach of the evaluation process in Religious Education is a shared process “in which the distribution of responsibilities throughout the process must not be neglected” (Learning: The Treasure Within, the report of The International Committee for Education in the 21th century, 1996).

Religion as a discipline is an open and integrative one which creates social responsibilities (contextualization, structuring, the identification of common elements, transferring, Religious Education’s general background).

CONCLUSIONS

As a discipline, Religious Education is an integrative one (that contributes and adds to the general education of the student) and also, it is one that has the role to integrate (it adjusts the different skills that are being tracked in the scholastic progress of the student as part of the entire ensemble of the student’s education). Education and knowledge represent “the Treasure Within”, they are essential elements to the humanity of the new millennium (Learning: The Treasure Within) Report of The International Committee for Education in the 21th century, 1996) and J. Delors saw the role of education as a contribution to the encouraging of individuals to act in harmony with their traditions and beliefs, but, at the same time, appreciating the diversity, developing their mind and spirit at a universal level and to succeed in transcending their own limits.

From this perspective, of the four components of education and knowledge (learning to know, learning how to do, learning how to cohabit, learning how to live), two of them are definitive to Religion as a discipline: learning how to cohabit means learning how to cooperate, how to take part in human activities (A. Sandu, 2012), whereas learning how to live means having self-sufficiency, the ability to make decisions, authenticity, personal responsibility and the availability to accomplish a common destiny. This perspective offers an integrative approach, in which he who disciplines himself no longer has the passive role of a “vessel” that “fills” with knowledge, the process being the one emphasized in favour of content.

The orientation changes from focusing on the student who values discipline, to the dynamic interaction between the student and the teacher. In the context of this interaction appears a process of interior evolution, available both for the student and the teacher as well. Personal integration at a cognitive, emotional and behavioural level makes the participants at the process unique, in harmony with their own values and with the external reality contained between social norms and in harmony with their own and other people' lifestyles. Therefore, the participants at the process become self-responsible and responsible towards de community in which they live.

Religious Education ensures and contributes to the integral development of students and to their self-accountability, overcoming the lines of a single discipline and ensuring the premises of forming transdisciplinary skills, on the foundation of skills necessary to the personal growth of the student (M. Bocoş, 2011).

The opening that Religious Education has to offer establishes convergent relations between knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and principles that can be achieved on different levels, complementary from the perspective of educational interventions, appreciating an integrative vision.

Last but not least, the idea of approaching Religion as a discipline is captivating from the perspective of moral education - a context in which the suggested instrument of evaluation could have application and greater utility -, a discipline that could follow the finalities of education in terms of Christian values pedagogy [8]. It is known the fact that "secular education desires to make the child as much alike with the human as possible while Christian education wants him to be as similar to God as possible" (I. Miclea, 1942)

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