

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT - THE STUDENTS' VOICE

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ABSTRACT

In the context of Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs for aspiring teachers, an important category of competences to be trained/developed is assessment competences. In this regard, looking beyond the general and specific functions of assessment, the assessment practices of university teachers who provide training for the teaching profession are likely to become axiological benchmarks, role models for students/trainees. For this reason, being aware of the immense responsibility that we assume as trainers of future trainers/teachers, we considered it necessary to carry out an investigative approach focused on the academic assessment process carried out within the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs, „seen” through the „eyes” of the students/trainees.

One of the specific objectives of the investigative approach described in the present study was to identify students' perceptions on the assessment system related to the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs. The research target group consisted of 256 students/trainees following the Psycho-pedagogical Training Program, Level I or Level II. The main research method was a questionnaire survey. The items covered several aspects circumscribed to the assessment system implemented in the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs. These included: the perception of assessment, in general; the degree of agreement/disagreement expressed about various teacher actions circumscribed to the assessment approach; the perception of the objectivity of the assessment process in the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs; the extent to which evaluation is related to certain criteria, announced in advance; the perception of the relevance of assessment, about both the learning process and its outcomes etc.

Keywords: *academic assessment, assessment criteria, feedback, progress, students' perceptions.*

INTRODUCTION

In a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, whose social architecture seems increasingly fragile, higher education has the mission to build solid, sustainable, relevant milestones for its students, those who will shape tomorrow's society, demonstrating vision, enthusiasm, courage, those who are critical thinkers, problem solvers, creative and resilient.

Beyond the academic, cognitive skills, a set of other skills, such as digital, socio-emotional, intercultural, as well as a range of personal qualities and values - responsibility, commitment, respect for otherness, empathy, positive attitude to learning, work, etc. - are now proving to be necessary to achieve not only academic success, but also social and professional success.

The employers` requirements in almost every field of activity increasingly refer to such skills, attitudes and personal values, which sometimes prevail over professional competences.

In such a context, summarized above, it is natural to ask ourselves, *when assessing students, what are we actually assessing? What kinds of learning outcomes do we focus on in our academic assessment approach?*

Furthermore, we can build an analytical approach with a focus on assessment, adding the following questions: *How do we ensure that we carry out an assessment that is not only objective, accurate, and complete, but also relevant in terms of students' learning needs and the specific demands of the labor market? What assessment methods and tools do we use, so that the assessment strategy designed and implemented allows for a mapping of both the learning outcomes and the process that generated them? What are the relevant criteria for an evaluation process with an impact on teaching and learning activities? Do we manage to optimally articulate teaching, learning and assessment procedures? What is the role of students/trainees in the evaluation process?*

These are just some of the questions that open up directions for analysis, exploration and reflection on academic assessment.

The assessment process is organically integrated into the teaching process, regardless of the level or stage of schooling to which we refer. C. Cuciuc states that the life of the school is characterized by value and valorization (2008, p. 15), and therefore evaluation. Without assessment, we cannot estimate the real "measure" of teaching and learning, we cannot identify what has worked and what has not, we cannot regulate teaching activity, we cannot make students aware and responsible for their active role in their own training process.

The researchers from the field of educational sciences are drawing attention to the need to improve teaching-learning-assessment strategies, an important variable in the university education ecosystem. In a recent European Commission report - *The European Higher Education Area in 2024: Bologna Process Implementation Report* - student-centered education is associated with several issues such as: learning outcomes, flexible learning modalities/pathways adapted to the specificities and learning needs of students, active involvement and participation of students in the learning process, innovative, high quality teaching and appropriate assessment methods (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2024, p. 166).

Each of the aspects mentioned above, circumscribed to a student-centered educational process, is conditioned, to an important extent, by the evaluative act. Thus, assessment is an intrinsic component of university education, it is the lever we constantly use to ensure the quality of the educational process, taking the appropriate decisions to eliminate dysfunctions and improve the educational work of teachers and the learning activity of students/trainees.

In the context of *Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs* for aspiring teachers, an important category of competences to be trained/developed is assessment competences. In this regard, looking beyond the general (constatative, diagnostic and prognostic) and specific (motivational, adjusting, counseling) functions of assessment (Radu, 2000), the evaluative practices of university teachers who provide training for the teaching profession are likely to become axiological benchmarks, role models for students/trainees.

For this reason, being aware of the huge responsibility we take as trainers of future trainers/teachers, we considered necessary an investigative approach focused on the academic assessment process carried out within the *Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs*, „seen” through the „eyes” of the students/trainees. We appreciate that such an approach „feeds” the reflective practice - so necessary - of the teacher (Stăncescu, Drăghicescu, Petrescu, 2018b), which, in this case, is focused on the conscious, assumed and responsible analysis of the assessment act, followed by the adoption of informed decisions regarding its adjustment and improvement.

1. ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT - NECESSARY GUIDELINES

Academic assessment is a central and at the same time a sensitive/critical dimension of university education, as Potolea, Borzea, Mironov (2011) justify. The two characteristics mentioned are explained by the dual impact of assessment approaches: on one hand, on the university education system, with all its components (from aspects related to the training of university teachers, the training of students' professional and transversal competences, curriculum design, instructional strategies, etc.), but also, indirectly, on the pre-university education system (given the role of universities, through faculties and departments with a teaching profile, in teacher training), and on the other hand, the impact on the economic, social, cultural, political level.

As a constituent part of university education, assessment is a multifaceted process with diverse functions and roles. Referring strictly to the academic environment, the assessment measures and appreciates the efficiency and quality of a university institution's services, the quality of teaching processes, the quality of the educational work of university teaching staff, as well as its effects, its impact on learning practices and students' academic results (Clipa, 2008, p. 32).

Although it is a truism, we reiterate the idea that assessment cannot be dissociated from teaching and learning activities, with which they are closely linked. In practical terms, the assessment is naturally complementing the other two activities, teaching and learning (Stăncescu, Drăghicescu, 2017). The specialized literature is replete with of studies, articles, reports, etc. that emphasize the interrelationship between these sub-processes of the learning process. Often, however, the meaning associated with assessment is that of the „old” definitions, which equated assessment with the measurement of learning outcomes (assessment = measurement). In the present study, we try to refer to the „new”, current, modern definitions, which conceive assessment as appreciation, as the making of valuable judgments about what and how the students have learned, based on precise, predetermined criteria (assessment = making valuable judgments) (Potolea, Borzea, Mironov, 2011).

As one of the important indicators influencing students' educational pathways (Schirmer, 2024, p. 87), academic performance is shaped by each of the fundamental activities circumscribed to the university education process: teaching, learning, and assessment, respectively.

Thus, the need to make university education student-centered requires the creation of an instructional environment characterized by interactivity, stimulating students' engagement and active participation in their own learning process, inviting them to reflect, debate, argue, to a process of constructing their own knowledge. In this kind of educational context, teaching, learning and assessment somehow merge in such a way that, "immersed"

in a genuine process of training and information/knowledge, students not only have the chance to make lasting acquisitions of knowledge, skills and know-how, but also develop a series of qualities and attitudes that have a positive impact on their progress in one subject or another, and on academic performance in general.

In corroboration, all of these outcomes of the university education process will subsequently impact their attitudes to the workplace, as well as their professional success.

However, proposing to demonstrate, first and foremost, the role of assessment in shaping learning practices, concretized in solid, consistent results, based on which academic performance positioned at higher levels can be profiled, we „cut” some arguments from the specialized literature.

Learning is related to assessment practices, how a student relates to learning determines how they approach assessment tasks. However, the reciprocal is also true: his or her experience about assessment and the assessment process itself determines how the student engages in learning (Struyven, Dochy, Janssens, 2005, p. 331).

As trainers of trainers, we realize that assessment should be a process put at the service of learning, and is often used to promote learning (Nieminen, Lahdenperä, 2021), but we cannot ignore an easily observable aspect of current educational practice: assessments can influence student learning and motivation in positive and negative ways (Jönsson, 2022, p. 1). Thus, when the teacher perceives the evaluative approach, primarily from the perspective of his or her specific motivational and advisory functions, he or she will outline a clear and comprehensive framework of it, helping students to understand the purpose of assessment, the assessment objectives set, to become aware of the relevance and usefulness of the content being assessed, to internalize the criteria against which their learning performance will be judged, etc.

As for assessment criteria, in higher education these tend to be vague and expressed in academic jargon (Glazzard, Stones, 2019, p. 49), difficult for students to decrypt, most of the time. Positively influencing student learning in this case involves contextualizing the criteria with appropriate exemplifications for particular assessment tasks (Glazzard, Stones, 2019, p. 49) so that students understand exactly what they need to do to achieve the standard associated with a particular grade. In the absence of this teacher behavior and, implicitly, if assessment is not associated with the motivational and counseling functions, the influence on motivation and learning can be negative. In this situation, the sense of ownership of performance associated with assessment tasks, the transparency of assessment criteria and a well-articulated assessment program, which are considered important aspects of what self-regulated learning is all about (Schellekens, Van der Schaaf, Baartman, Van der Vleuten, Kremer & Bok, 2024, p. 13), are not ensured by the teacher in his or her approach to the design and implementation of the evaluative act.

A frequently used tool in academic assessment is feedback, which also has an effect in the area of teaching-learning. The development of the students' responsibility for their own learning process, the ability to practice quality autonomous learning and to regulate this process becomes possible only through continuous feedback from teachers (Drăghicescu, Stăncescu, 2023). By facilitating reflection not only on learning outcomes but also on the learning process, formative feedback fosters students' authentic participation and engagement in a process that combines assessment with learning (Jankowski, Teitelbaum, 2020, p. 25).

Students perceive evaluative feedback as a tool that helps them optimize their academic performance, especially when it is personalized and delivered promptly (Metu,

Agu, Eleje, 2024, p. 33). Feedback creates relevant contexts for students' academic development, providing them with the opportunity to clarify their understanding, to ask questions (Glazzard, Stones, 2019, p. 49), to receive the support and guidance needed for further learning and, more importantly, to crystallize a self-regulated learning approach based on intrinsic motivation, autonomy, self-control and self-direction (Stăncescu, Drăghicescu, Petrescu, 2018a).

The co-responsibilization of the learner, as a basic idea of the modernization of assessment (Manolescu, 2022) and as a corollary of the aforementioned ideas, is thus a secondary objective of our investigative study. Students' „voice” is always an important benchmark for improving the quality of university education, so they need to know that they have a „voice” and that is „listened to”, so it is their responsibility to express their agreement or disagreement with everything that happens in the academic environment.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The investigative approach described in the present study was carried out within the framework of the Internal Research Grant of the "I.T Radu" Center for Research and Innovation in Educational Science - "Valahia" University of Targoviste, with the title *Assessment System in the Context of Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs. Perceptions of teachers and students.*

The general objective of the research was to determine the functionality of the assessment system implemented within the *Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs*, from the perspective of teachers and students.

One of the specific objectives of the research is to identify students' perceptions of the assessment system implemented in the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs.

3. TARGET-GROUP

The target group of the research consisted of 256 students/trainees attending the Psycho-pedagogical training program, Level I or Level II, in parallel with the bachelor's/master's degree or postgraduate studies, within the Teacher Training Department – „Valahia” University of Targoviste, from all specializations.

All conditions were respected in terms of research ethics, the participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of this research, the way of processing the answers provided (with respect for confidentiality) and personal data, following the *E.U. Regulation 679/2016 on the protection of individuals about the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.*

Table no. 1. Data on target-group

	Criterion		Percentage
1.	Gender	female	69,5%
		male	30,5%
2.	Medium of origin	urban	51,6%
		rural	48,4%
3.	Level/year of study	Level I – bachelor, year I	12,5%
		Level I – bachelor, year II	39,1%
		Level I – bachelor, year III	4,7%
		Level I - postgraduate	12,9%
		Level II – master, year I	14,5%

Level II – master, year II	6,3%
Level II - postgraduate	10 %

Source: Personal authors` conception

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main method used was a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was administered online through the Google Forms application (in 2023) and contains both closed and open-ended items.

The items focused on several issues circumscribed to the assessment system implemented within the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs. Among these we mention: *perceptions of assessment in general; degree of agreement/disagreement on actions circumscribed to the assessment approach (presentation of subject specific competences and objectives set, harmonization of traditional and alternative assessment methods, specification of assessment criteria, provision, solicitation and use of feedback, etc.); the perception of the objectivity of the evaluation process within the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs; the extent to which the evaluation is related to certain criteria, announced in advance; the proportions of formative and summative assessment; the characteristics of the feedback provided by teachers; the perception of the relevance of evaluation, about both the learning process and its outcomes, etc..*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

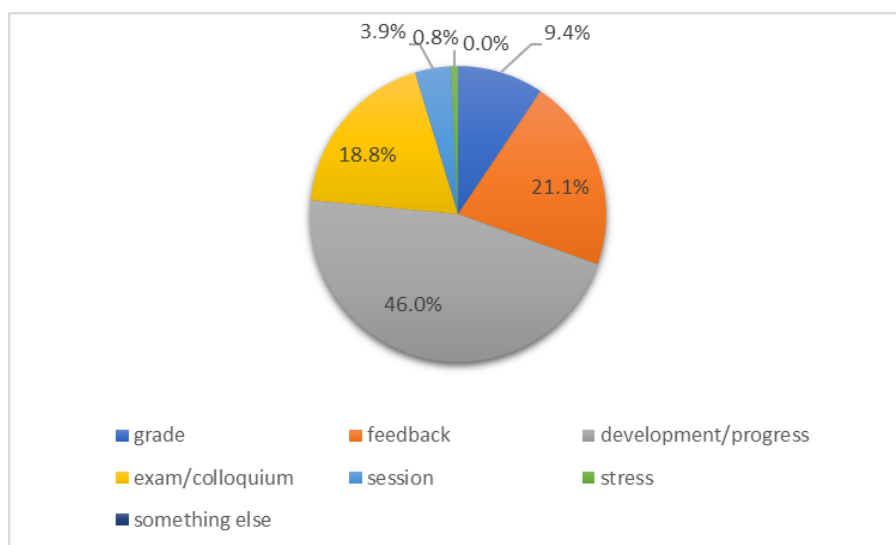


Figure no. 1. Association academic assessment - relevant key concepts

Source: Personal authors` conception

The first question of the questionnaire asked students/trainees to associate academic assessment with one of the mentioned concepts (grade, feedback, development/progress, exam/colloquium, session, stress or something else).

As it can be seen from the diagram in Figure no. 1, most of the respondents (46%) associate academic assessment with the idea of development/progress, which suggests that they understand the role of assessment in their academic paths as a regulating, optimizing,

facilitating progress. Comparing the perception of the students/trainees included in the sample of the present research with that of another group of students/trainees questioned on the same issue in the academic year 2007-2008, we can easily notice the paradigm shift, first of all at the level of teachers, who are responsible for designing and implementing the assessment act, but also at the level of the trainees.

The answers collected in the above-mentioned research (2007-2008) are distributed as follows: 48,97% of the respondents perceive evaluation as a process that is summarized as measuring and assessing the level of knowledge, having a constative role/function, while only 6,12% of them associate evaluation with the progress made by each student/trainee (Drăghicescu, Petrescu, Stăncescu, 2007, p. 96).

21% of the respondents interviewed in the context of the present research associate assessment with feedback, demonstrating an awareness that evaluative feedback supports motivation for learning and is a valuable form of support for learning and personal development, although harnessing this tool in courses with large numbers of students/trainees is not straightforward (Glazzard, Stones, 2019).

Summing up the rest of the recorded results, we can see that there is still an appreciable percentage of respondents (about 33%), who associate the evaluative approach with notions such as grade, exam, session, etc., which requires further investigation focused on identifying the reasons behind these choices.

Another item in the questionnaire asked respondents to express their agreement/disagreement with a number of statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

Table no. 2. Percentage distribution of responses on the degree of agreement/disagreement in relation to important actions in the assessment process

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
1. The teacher presents, at the beginning of the semester, the way of assessing of the specific competences of the coordinated subject.	1,56%	1,56%	3,52%	10,16%	83,2%
2. The teacher designs assessment approaches based on the harmonization of traditional assessment methods (oral, written, practical tests) with modern / alternative ones (reports, portfolios, projects, self-evaluation, etc.)	1,56%	2,35%	6,64%	11,72%	77,73%
3. The teacher clearly specifies the assessment criteria	1,95%	0,78%	1,95%	7,42%	87,90%
4. The teacher presents, for course and seminar activities, the weight they will have in the final grade, the assessment methods used	1,95%	0%	2,35%	8,98%	86,72%
5. The teacher provides students/trainees a relevant, constructive feedback	1,56%	2,35%	1,17%	12,90%	82,02%
6. Teacher requests feedback from	1,95%	1,17%	3,12%	18,36%	75,4%

students/trainees						
7. The teacher values the feedback provided by students/trainees	3,52%	1,17%	4,68%	13,28%	77,35%	
8. The teacher encourages students/trainees' self-assessment.	3,12%	3,12%	4,3%	14,86%	74,6%	

Source: Personal authors` conception

The statements refer to extremely important aspects of the assessment act, which give it the character of objectivity, fairness and, at the same time, emphasize its regulatory, formative and formative values. In this regard, the presentation, from the beginning of the semester, of the way of assessing the specific competences of the coordinated subject; the design of assessment approaches based on the harmonization of traditional assessment methods (tests, oral, written, practical) with modern / alternative ones (reports, portfolios, projects, self-assessment, etc..), clearly specifying the assessment criteria, presenting, for the course and seminar activities, the weight that the way of assessment used will have in the final grade; providing relevant, constructive feedback, the requirement of feedback from students/trainees and making the most of it, encouraging students/trainees to self-assess are actions that teachers must carry out in order to ensure, in addition to objectivity and fairness of academic assessment, the transparency of this activity. Moreover, all these approaches are specific to a participatory culture, which promotes the role of the student/trainee as an active agent in the assessment process and develops his/her reflective skills, metacognitive competences, the competences of knowing their own cognitive processes and regulating them (Stăncescu, 2017) and, specifically, those of self-evaluation.

As it can be seen in Table 2, the high percentages obtained on this item are at the upper end of the scale (strongly agree and agree) for all eight statements for which students/trainees were asked to express agreement or disagreement.

At the same time, analyzing the recorded data (Table no. 2), we can observe that the highest percentages of respondents opted for *strongly agree* are, in order, the statements related to the clear specification of the assessment criteria (87,90%), the presentation of the weight of the final grade of the assessment methods used for the course and seminar activities (86,72%) and the presentation, at the beginning of the semester, of the way of assessing of the specific competences of the coordinated subject (83,2%). Therefore, we can conclude that it is a priority for students/trainees to know, from the beginning of the semester, the evaluation criteria, the evaluation methods and their weight in the final grade, as well as the competences that they have to form/develop and that will be evaluated, which are extremely important aspects for an evaluation process that is directly linked to the learning activity of students/trainees and is intended to guide, regulate and optimize it.

The next item asked the respondents to give their opinion about the objectivity, fairness of the assessment carried out within the subjects related to the *Psycho-pedagogical Training Program*.

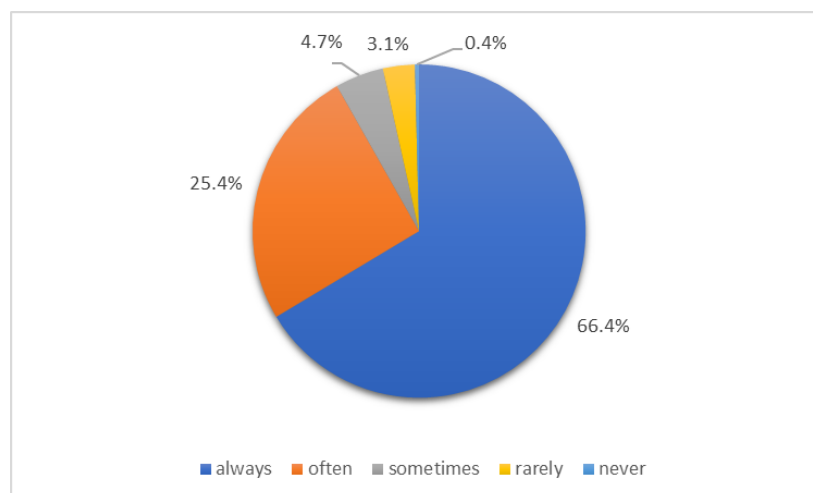


Figure no. 2. Students' / trainees' perception on the objectivity and fairness of assessment related to the *Psycho-pedagogical training program*

Source: Personal authors' conception

As it can be seen in the diagram above (Fig. 2), most of the students/trainees consider that the assessment carried out within the *Psycho-pedagogical Training Program* is objective, fair always (66,4%) and often (25,4%). The consistent percentage of over 90% of respondents who expressed such options is a confirmation that the assessment system of the *Psycho-pedagogical training program* is designed and implemented to meet the needs of students/trainees, in full accordance with the modern paradigm of assessment for learning.

The extent to which the assessment process in *Psycho-pedagogical Training Program* related subjects is related to certain criteria, announced in advance to the students in order to give transparency and clarity to the process, was the content of a second item of the questionnaire (Table no. 3).

Table no. 3. Students`trainees` perception on assessment criteria valued in *Psycho-pedagogical Training Program* related subjects

Criteria	to a very small extent	to a small extent	to a moderate extent	to a large extent	to a very large extent
1. the quality of the answers provided in the course and seminar activities	3,12%	3,52%	15,23%	27,73%	50,4%
2. the quality of the answers provided in the exam/colloquium	1,95%	1,17%	13,68%	31,64%	51,56%
3. participation in course and seminar activities	1,56%	3,12%	13,32%	34%	48%
4. involvement in course and seminar activities	0,40%	3,52%	11,32%	33,6%	51,16%
5. the quality of the prepared/developed materials	1,17%	2,35%	12,10%	28,52%	55,86%
6. originality, creativity	0,78%	3,52%	9,76%	23,04%	62,90%

Source: Personal authors' conception

As it can be seen in Table no. 3, the students'/trainees` answers are mostly in the upper part of the scale - to a very large extent and to a large extent - for all the six criteria specified: quality of answers provided in the course and seminar activities, quality of answers provided in the exam/colloquium, participation in the course and seminar activities, involvement in the course and seminar activities, quality of the materials prepared/developed, originality, creativity.

The criteria that recorded the highest percentages, for the *very large extent* of the scale, were: originality, creativity (62,90%), quality of the materials prepared/developed (55,86%), quality of the answers provided in the exam/colloquium (51,56%) and involvement in course and seminar activities (51,16%).

Thus, in the perception of the respondents, there are clear and relevant criteria that are used in the assessment process in Psycho-pedagogical training program subjects, which teachers communicate and refer to when actually carrying out the assessment.

Beyond these encouraging responses, however, we appreciate, in unison with Glazzard and Stones, that academic assessment needs to be reconceptualized so that students/trainees are active partners in the design of assessment criteria, assessment tasks, and the process of applying assessment criteria (2019, p. 49).

Another item of the questionnaire aimed at the expression of opinion on the extent to which the assessment activity allows for an objective and comprehensive grading, both in terms of the learning process and the concrete learning outcomes.

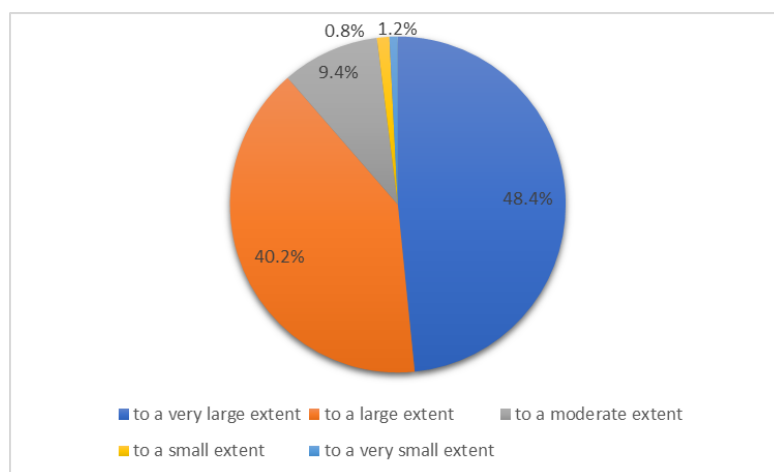


Figure no. 3. Students'/trainees' perception on the extent to which assessment activity relates to both the learning process and learning outcomes
Source: Personal authors` conception

Figure no. 3 illustrates the perception of the surveyed students/trainees, who appreciate that the assessment activity carried out by the teachers of the subjects integrated in the Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs allows an objective and complete grading, related both to the learning process and to its concrete results, to a very high extent (48,4%) and to a high extent (40,2%).

It is worth noting that the respondents - students/trainees aspiring to the status of teacher - realize that an adequate assessment is one that is able to capture the various facets of the learning process (Stoica, 2006, p. 33), without merely focusing on learning outcomes. Moreover, a comprehensive assessment, which takes the form of objective grading, must

„see” beyond academic results, focusing on the learning process, on specific aspects of trainees' development and well-being (European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Looney, Kelly, 2023).

To authentically represent a robust form of learning support, assessment needs to subsume relevant criteria, tasks, methods, techniques and tools from the perspective of what constitutes deep, thorough learning that results in lasting acquisitions stored in long-term memory (Coimbra Group, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

Given that the higher education graduation rate in Romania remains the lowest of all EU countries (23,3% in 2021, compared to 41,2% - EU average), with no visible improvement in the last ten years and with a long-term stagnation trend (Ministry of Education, 2023, European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024a), but throughout the European Union, with small exceptions (including Romania), there has been a continuous expansion of tertiary education in the last decade (European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024b), it is natural to be concerned with promoting an academic culture whose axis is the decision to continuously optimize university education.

Universities are the "engines" of the knowledge-centered society, if an educational process defined by outstanding quality and performance takes place within them, indicators whose assurance requires a good knowledge and understanding of the educational ecosystem, as well as its careful monitoring (Dima, Argatu, Rădoi, 2024). *How could we realize and where could we start this monitoring process?* The answer appears natural: *through and from assessment.*

Given the major impact of the assessment act on the teaching-learning process, it is necessary that the academic assessment system itself be subject of constant reflection by university teachers, as well as to a process of critical „examination” based on the „voice” of the students/trainees. This is what we have attempted in the present study, involving a substantial percentage of the students/trainees enrolled in the *Psycho-pedagogical Training Programs* in an investigative approach whose results confirm that the assessment system implemented within the Teacher Training Department is, to a large extent, in line with their expectations.

Thus, on the basis of the collected data, we can highlight the following ideas with conclusive value:

- ✓ most of the respondents (46%) associate academic assessment with the notion of *development/progress*, respectively 21% of them with the notion of *feedback*, which could „translate” into a proper understanding of the role of assessment, placing it in the modern paradigm of assessment for learning;
- ✓ a number of major aspects of the assessment process which are „responsible” for its objectivity, fairness and transparency, such as: establishing and announcing the assessment criteria in advance, specifying the ways of assessment and their weight in the final grade, providing feedback, etc., are, in the opinion of students/trainees, actions taken by most teachers;
- ✓ assessment criteria - an important component element of the assessment approach - are seen as clear and relevant, guiding, orienting and supporting the learning process;

- ✓ the greatest gain, in our opinion, from the perspective of students/trainees - future teachers, is that almost 90% of them state that they have benefited from an objective, comprehensive evaluation, focusing on both the learning process and the results of this process.

Of course, if we look at the results of this investigative study also through the „lens” of the respondents, although in a rather small percentage, who expressed a lower degree of satisfaction with the assessment system used in the disciplines integrated in the *Psychopedagogical Training Programs*, one of the limitations to be mentioned is that it was necessary to add focus group as a research method, which would have allowed us to obtain more relevant feedback and to identify more accurately the dysfunctions, weak points or less successful elements of our assessment practices.

In addition, in analyzing and interpreting the results, we could not refer to a number of other factors that may influence students`/trainees' attitudes towards the assessment act, such as: differences in economic status, cultural status, structural factors within the higher education institution, etc., which should be taken into account (Mustaq, Siraj, Akhtar, Ismaeel, 2024).

To summarize, we believe that improving assessment practices used in higher education requires the commitment of both teachers and students/trainees, especially if they aspire to practice the teaching profession and want to implement an assessment system that:

- ✓ supports motivation for learning;
- ✓ positively influences the way learning is approached;
- ✓ reduces the risk of their future learners disconnecting from learning;
- ✓ generates relevant feedback that is used to optimize teaching-learning activities and learning outcomes;
- ✓ develops learners' self-assessment and self-regulation skills;
- ✓ stimulates commitment to the teaching approach on the part of both educational actors;
- ✓ supports personal development.

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