

## EVOLUTION OF THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT CONCEPT

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The main problem in contemporary modern education is the evaluation, and generally speaking the formative assessment. This type of assessment has passed over many steps to win the right of the theoretical existence, but its practical value is confirmed too being compared with other types of assessment. It is very difficult for teacher to analyze its theoretical sources. Nowadays the evaluation has developed a consistent terminology in contents and varied in the number of notions, and according to WJ Popham it is a real jungle "jungle" [13 p.149] School assessment from the theoretical point of view according to the Assessment School Concept from 2006, approved by the Ministry of Education of Moldova requires from the teachers the application of the following types of assessment, according to different criteria: [3 p 19-21]

1. According to the **purpose**: - *normative* (control); - *formative* (realized from the subject) and- *forming* (realized from the subject trainer)
2. According to the **evaluated subject** - *internal evaluation*, conducted by the same person/ institution that is directly involved and managed the learning activity - *external assessment* conducted by a person / institution - other than that one which provided teaching and learning performance - *self-evaluation*, made by the subject himself.
3. According to the **evaluated object**:- *uniform / multicultural – learning assessment: performance evaluation*, realized individually, in groups or by the group.
4. According to the **dominant task achieved**: - *to ascertain and check the results*; – *of classification*; - *results communication*; -*certification*; - *selection*; - *educational and vocational guidance*; - *diagnostic*; - *predictive*.
5. According to the **manner of realization**: - *oral / written / practical*; - *direct / indirect*; *participative*; -*dialogued/consensual*; - *motionless / dynamic*;- *inclusive / differentiated / versatile*.
- 6 According to the **way of the evaluation involvement** in the teaching and educational process - *initial assessment*; - *current assessment* ;- *summative assessment and final assessment*
7. According to the **evaluated situation** –*evaluation realized in ordinary circumstances*; - *specific evaluation*.
8. According to the **science applied**: -*mainly pedagogical evaluation*; *psychological evaluation*.
9. According to the **stress which emphasizes the process or the system**: -*process evaluation*; - *system evaluation*;
10. According to the **domain**: - *psycho-motion evaluation*; *socio-emotional*; *cognitive*.
11. According to the **quality and quantity of the results**: -*quantitative assessment, qualitative assessment*.
12. According to the **character of the evaluation**: -*traditional assessment/modern assessment*.

Nowadays in the scientific literature from Moldova and also in foreign countries, the formative assessment is highly appreciated and the main role in teaching is focused on competences. "For a better assessment and the most appropriate it would be very good if the teacher uses methods / tools focused on the evaluation of the process (formative evaluation) - we are concerned not only what the student has achieved (the final result), but especially how it was realized, how the student has attained this performance". [4 p.107]

One of the weaknesses of the modern assessment can be considered the formative assessment that generates a series of debates. The deep motivation in searching represents the snapshot analysis in the problem concerned, formative assessment approach is seen only from the perspective of a one researcher and the main problem is not taken into consideration which represents one chain in the research assessment. In this context we decided to follow the development of the formative assessment so far, to form a general vision that would allow building theoretical and methodological approach.

From the perspective of the development analysis of the *formative assessment* definition we can distinguish three important stages:

Stage I - a period of primary research of the formative assessment in 1967, the appearance of the formative assessment concept until 1970 (M. Scriven, Taylor). The concept of formative assessment was provided for the first time to adult learning in the U.S., in the first journal of the cognitive psychology, establishing a correlation with summative evaluation. J.-M. Barbier stated (1985) it is the period where bipolar assessment is emphasized (formative evaluation and normative assessment). This theoretical presentation of the concept underlined a series of questions that were grouped in three main problems of the formative assessment for this period of time.

-the difference between these two concepts (formative and summative assessments) is theoretical and non-operative.

- distinction between the two concepts is primarily temporary

- the whole is not equal to sum of the parts. (Heb. Sum. ≠ Ev. Form. + Ev. Form. + ...)

Stage II - a period of intriguing research (Bloom, Landsheere, Tousignant, Scallon, etc.), a complex period in terms of design and development of the assessment concepts (final, normative, formative), covering 1970-1990.

B.-S. Bloom outlines the concept of formative assessment in relation with final and diagnostic evaluations. These differences were maintained by Landsheere, and the concept of the normative assessment was introduced which led to the revision of the features of the formative assessment. Tousignant (1982) insists on distinguishing between normative assessment and criterial evaluation, noting that criterial formative assessment can be considered as a self-evaluation. The point of view of these authors regarding formative assessment is concentrated in Table 1. [1, 5, 12]

Table 1. *Synthesis of the formative assessment concept*

<b>B.-S. Bloom</b>	<b>Landsheere</b>	<b>Tousignant</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment takes place during an educational itinerary.</li> <li>• Allows student to correct errors and deficiencies immediately after their appearance before the acquiring process.</li> <li>• It is Based on the Retroactive function and comprises the needed information for teachers and students to determine if the proposed objectives were achieved and allow further pedagogical approach to more complex objectives.</li> <li>• Do not judge and rank student.</li> <li>• Compare his performance with the previous fixed success.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One task, a course or one unit is subdivided into small units and for each unit a measure is proposed that can help students to pass the difficulty.</li> <li>•The only purpose of the formative evaluation it is to identify the difficult situations for students, to analyze it, and to inform the student.</li> <li>-Marks and fewer goals are not required at this type of evaluation.</li> <li>• It is a feedback for the student and teacher.</li> <li>• Formative assessment is diagnostic in nature requiring a corrective action and without which there is no true education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it represents a sequence of periodic interventions to verify the effectiveness of teaching methods;</li> <li>• it informs students about progress and support them in their efforts to achieve objectives;</li> <li>• formative assessment is made at the beginning of learning, to summarize previously acquired knowledge and to help the teacher choose appropriate activities used: during learning, able to suggest new activities to remedy the faced difficulties-in this case it is called diagnostic evaluation or continuous assessment at the end of learning - summative (final) evaluation;</li> <li>• its privileged instrumentation is criterial evaluation, targeting criteria to provide students a clear message about what they need to know to do.</li> </ul>

A significant role in this period belongs to the studies of G. Scallon (1988), where the differences between summative evaluation and formative evaluation are emphasized, but our interest is suitable to present the differences between process and product. [10] According to J. Ardonio and G. Berger (1989) the division between the control and evaluation is important and their influence on formative assessment. Summary of studies in this period allows us to make the following findings regarding formative assessment: the appearance of new concepts in evaluation from one hand, the formative assessment

features framework was allowed, from the other hand, the flow of concepts maintains a doubtful distinction (formative assessment / normative evaluation; formative assessment / summative evaluation; normative assessment / summative evaluation; formative evaluation / self-assessment) which allows to formulate some problems. A clear formulation of formative evaluation functions and its individual tool is failed.

Stage III - *Application over concrete steps for implementing of the formative assessment*, overcoming the problems identified in many studies to date (since 2000 till now). [2, 6, 7, 8, 9]

Unfortunately one of the problems with obvious repercussions in education in Moldova remains as a doubt identified from the first part of the development of the concept of formative assessment and namely: *the distinguish between the two concepts (formative evaluation and normative assessment)* is primarily temporary, vaguely perceived by the practitioners. Therefore it is an obstacle in the perception process-product ratio in undergraduate education focused on skills. Although, theoretically and practically the problem of distinction between the two concepts (formative, normative) was solved by Meyer, (Table 2) [6] in the theory and practice of the local education, directed towards the modernization assessment, education researchers can be seen in Moldova: Raileanu A., Hadîrcă M., Botgros I., Bolbocianu A. etc., they altogether emphasis on formative assessment and its determinative role in the assessment of competence in higher education, and the study of the following authors Gutu V, Cabac V., A. Platon C. etc. aim the formative assessment in higher education [8, 9]

Formative assessment is carried out in **learning process** (mental activity), at all stages of teaching process *helps students learn*, but normative assessment - evaluation **performed after learning** (mental activity) and is intended to *verify acquired competences*. To elucidate the distinction between the two concepts is important to score the moments and formative and normative assessment functions.

Table 2. Formative / normative assessment after Meyer

<b>Features</b>	<b>Formative</b>	<b>Normative</b>
<b>Function</b>	Helps students to learn	Checks what was assimilated
<b>Theoretical definitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal</li> <li>- multi-refference</li> <li>- temporary process which provide meaning effects</li> <li>- meaning creator</li> <li>- dynamic</li> <li>- communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- External</li> <li>- mono-refference</li> <li>- compliance report</li> <li>- identity with existing outside feature</li> <li>- static (motionless)</li> <li>- informative</li> </ul>
<b>Actors</b>	Student	Professor\Student
<b>Instruments</b>	All instruments discovered by learning theories, and allowing stimulation, elicitation, cognitive development	Relative (marks, grades) Binary (appropriated / unappropriated; yes /no)
<b>Objects</b>	Processes and cognitive resources that allow realization of the noticeable products	Products: results of some non-noticeable directly skills.
<b>Decision</b>	Rebalance	Select

A step forward in stating the place he place for the conceptual formative assessment and control evaluation is provided by French literature, during the last decade as a terminology solution in evaluation, outlines two main areas of evaluation (Table 3):

- the area fully covered to be checked (summative evaluation);
- the field that proposes obtaining information (formative assessment and self-evaluation).

Ranking the areas of evaluation after Christine Tagliante folds perfectly competence assessment. Between the two areas there is a correlation, although undergoing different steps:

- Control (summative assessments, regulatory assessments) - social values;
- Information obtaining (formative assessment, self) - formative values.

Between these two (control and obtaining information) cannot identify a prerogative evaluative area because, *de iure* school outcome depends on this balance, the characteristics and the influence it has on society, *de facto*, summative assessments / normative are dominant in higher education in Moldova.

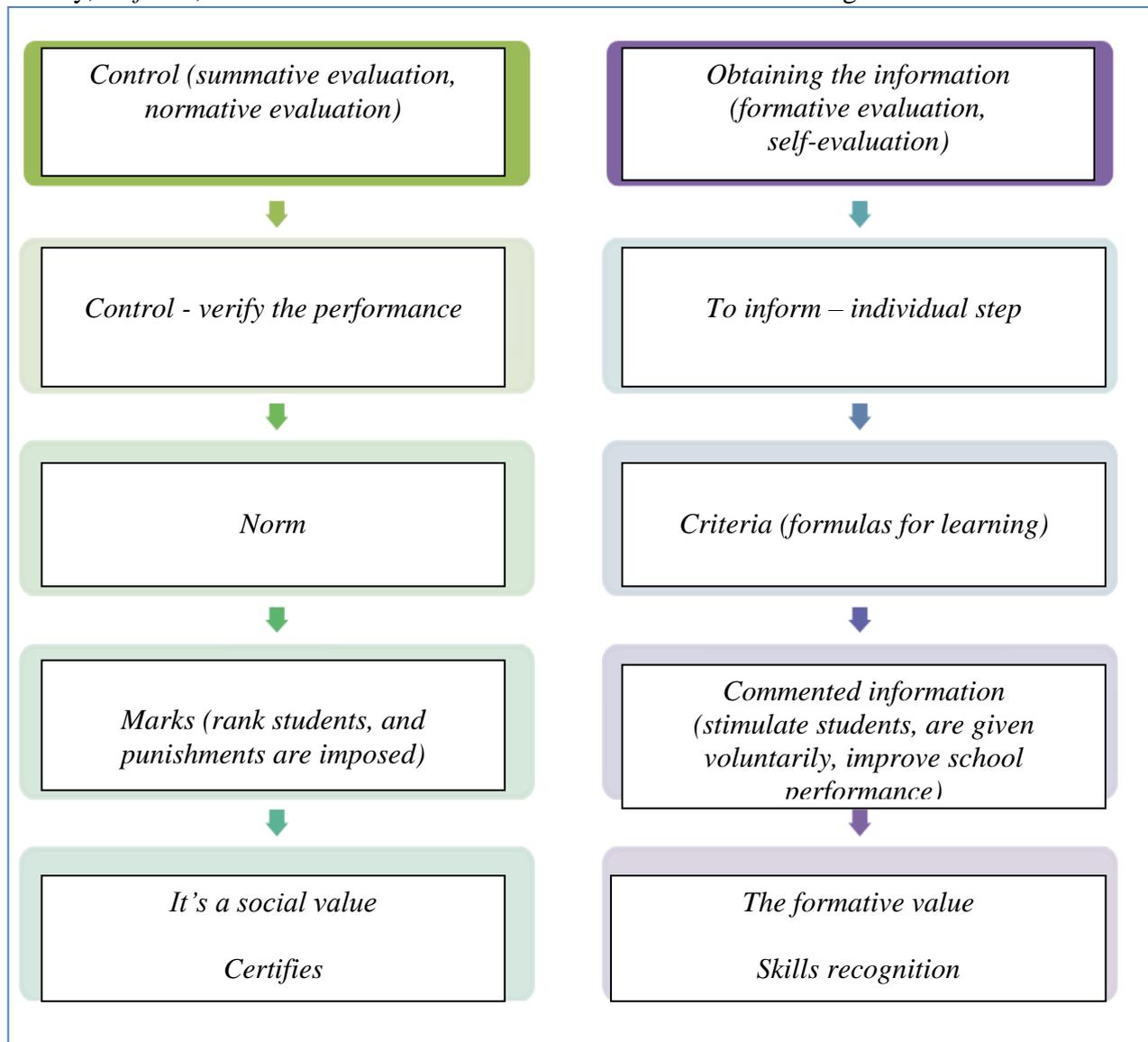


Table 3. Areas of evaluation, after Christine Tagliante [, 11 P. 10]

The table represents a comparison of areas of evaluation, summarized by keywords. The first part is devoted to *field control*, summative assessments and normative evaluations. *Control* is a check of compliance of the learner / of the according to some features, and for that are used: calibrated tests, exercises, examinations that lead us to *mark*. Summative assessment / normative assessment required by binding and used to rank each student. Mark is the only information about the outcome and involves sanction. The priority of the control is leading to certification mark that has social value. The second part reflects the route of obtaining information (formative evaluation, criteria and self-evaluation). The information you require is important both for the student and the teacher. Through this area the opportunity of assessing whether the aims set are met according to criteria set by the teacher. For this, the following evaluation activities are used self-esteem sheets, check exercises, which give rise to *information commented*. This area of assessment is agreed and provides information about acquired competences at the

moment and what remains to be checked; it is a (in) formative assessment. It leads to recognition of skills and has a formative value.

The study directs us to the following conclusions:

Formative assessment has undergone a complex evolutionary path, from which it succeeded to place with other types of assessment, by its own definition and clear determination of the function and the theoretical tools.

The importance of the formative assessment derives from the need of assessment process for learning centered skills that prioritize the student and his needs, seeking to obtain information on skills recognition.

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