Applied Social Sciences
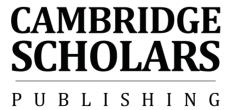
Applied Social Sciences:
Education Sciences

Edited by

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**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

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FOREWORD

The book **Applied Social Sciences: Education Sciences** contains five chapters centred on general educational issues, early childhood, elementary school, high school, and higher education.

 Chapter One, **"General Issues"**, begins with a *historical and anthropological perspective upon ancient education* written by Mariana BALACI and Atalia ONIȚIU. The authors describe the ancient educational system and compare it to the modern one focussing on similarities and differences between the public and the private school systems of Roman education, using the analogical method of written texts and comparing them with other sources. The authors state that Roman society (and Roman education) was a male-dominated elitist and pragmatic society. The focus of Amalia DIACONU's research, *Formative Assessment: Implicit and Explicit Principles*, shows that formative assessment has significant learning gains and should cover areas of interest as well as targets. However, it seems that, in the Romanian Education System, there is a discrepancy between the need to modernize the assessment practice and the political declarations in the field. Elizabeth-Anne ERICHSEN presents, in her paper, three practices toward an embodied philosophy for transformative learning – learning mindfully, communicating mindfully, and re-scripting mindfully: her conclusion is that we can build our awareness and learning in relationship through these basic practices, for ourselves and together for change. Silvia LUCICA's research is an attempt to explain the relationship between education and media culture. The higher educational system has to face a tremendous problem: using human resources with maximum efficiency. Traditional education is too expensive, and demands from higher education are steadily increasing. Alternative solutions like "virtual classroom", "virtual campus" or "invisible universities" are becoming more influential in the new era. The research carried out by Narcisa-Maria NADOLU focuses *on the didactic perspective of gender stereotypes in the Romanian educational system*. The author states that educational institutions have a vital role in the generation, restructuring and consolidation of social construction stereotypes in connection with social genders. Research results indicate that girls are appreciated as being more competitive, more creative and more critical than their peers. Vesna PRODANOVSKA and Elizabeta

MITREVA examine *incorporation, authorization and encouragement of employees to improve the quality of the educational process*. The authors argue that socio-political, economic and cultural changes affect both educational institutions and educational process. The new concept of quality changes people's mind, attitude and working style. Educational institutions could adapt these new changes and meet the new demands if the quality of learning processes improved. Ileana ROTARU tackles, in her study, the impact of mediatisation on social life, particularly on the education system, which is subjected to both quantitative and qualitative constraints. In the paper titled *A Review of the Literature on Pedagogical Approaches to Native American/African Indian Literatures* by Kelly SASSI, the author claims that native peoples remain fraught with potential missteps, re-stereotyping, or even oppression. The majority White teaching force lacks the training needed to successfully teach proponents of culturally relevant pedagogy. The article is trying to reconcile the understanding gaps that non-Native teachers and (non-Native) students experience when reading Native texts. A research written by Mihaela TILINCĂ and Valentina MUREŞAN concludes that *teacher training team is the key to successful training sessions*. The research examines the difference between theories in applied linguistics and the practice of teacher training. The researchers consider that linguistic analysis of teacher training dialogues can bring clarifications and add value to both areas of study. In order to successfully train, developing teacher training and learning are essential elements.

Chapter Two contains two papers on **"Early Childhood"**. The first one, focusing on *discipline in early childhood and valorisation of the minuscule*, pertains to Liliana STAN. The content of the study encompasses the before pre-school age (the period between 3 and 7 years), the most momentous period in childhood. The discipline of early-age children is derived from the child's relationship with his/her environment and children's attitudes and behaviours are shaped at this stage. For these reasons, teaching staff training and parent/counselling education are particularly useful. Finally, Mona VINTILĂ suggests using reflective seminar as a learning method at midway between everyday language and academic expose.

Chapter Three focuses on **"Elementary School"**. Claudia BORCA debates, in her paper, the relationship between metacognition and learning in visually impaired children, concluding that cognitive skills may be developing by use of mediated learning criteria. Another paper presents *Classroom Environment, Attributional Style and Science Achievement in Early Adolescence*. Loredana-Ruxandra GHERASIM and Simona

BUTNARU emphasize that achievement is moderated by both individual and learning environment characteristics. The paper explores how attributions and classroom environment interact in predicting the achievement in sciences during early adolescence. The researchers found out that attributional style and teacher support predict achievement. Marian ILIE, Marius-Lupşa MATICHESCU, Alexandra PETCU, Gheorghe MANDA and Adrian MARCU carry out an investigation on the *Dynamics of Curriculum Design Options* in the Romanian primary school system. Students believe optional and elective disciplines are useful and helpful; however, teaching elective subjects remains a limited practice. The research on how electives are used by each curricular area revealed a more frequent use of the time slots to deepen or broaden the compulsory core subjects than to introduce new disciplines.

Chapter Four is dedicated to **"High School"**. The research on *Leadership Styles of High School Students* by Hasan ARSLAN examines the leadership styles of public high school students based on Bolman and Deal's theory of leadership frames. The author attempts to answer the questions "What kind of leadership styles are adopted by high school students?", "Is there a significant difference between leadership styles of female and male high school students?", and "Is there a significant difference between leadership styles of high school students in terms of grade level?" The findings indicate that leadership styles of high school students differ in terms of gender and grade level. The paper *Role of Modern Methods on Performance Evaluation of Secondary Education Pupils* by Otilia-Sanda BERSAN draws attention upon the influence of modern methods of assessing performance of secondary education. The researcher's analysis relies on the teachers' opinions and beliefs regarding the necessity, the usefulness and the impact of alternative methods on scholastic performance of pupils in secondary school. Results indicate that alternative methods of learning assessment have a higher level of effectiveness because they allow pupils' results to be gauged and assessed with greater accuracy and objectivity. The article titled *Truancy: A Stringent Problem in Education* by Elena-Liliana DANCIU deals with children's emotional problems that cause truancy. The author underlines that modern life is extremely complex and generates many social, psychological and economic problems. Children are impacted by peer pressure, scholastic overburdening, temptation to do drug, lack of educational activities. Because of these reasons, school absenteeism becomes a kind of rebellion and a method of overcoming the fear of helplessness. Students feel that school atmosphere is not longer pleasing to them. The author claims that school absenteeism leads in the short run to

social absenteeism. Daniela DUMITRU suggests, in her paper, that a
community of practice can be an educational asset by putting the teenagers
in the situation to use their ability and skills to make friends online in
order to increase their knowledge in their field of work. Oana-Roxana
IVAN's article tries to make a connection between argumentation and the
teaching experience. The author conducted a descriptive study and asked
unstructured questions to 20 students regarding the issue of argumentation
in school. The author claims that building a proper argumentative essay
requires knowing the rules underlying the construction of an
argumentation and having the ability to joggle with these skills. A further
analysis of Ionuț-Dorin STANCU, Mușata BOCOȘ and Daniel-Cosmin
ANDRONACHE focuses on *Contextual and Individual Moderators in the
Self-regulation of Learning.* The researchers try to find the relationship
between intra-contextual learning and inter-contextual learning while
focusing on age and learning context. Research results indicate that the
self-regulation of learning strategies has a positive influence on thinking,
emotion, and behaviour. Using the self-regulation of learning strategies,
students may accomplish certain individual goals.

   Chapter Five deals with **"Higher Education"**. Gabriela
DOMILESCU's article tackles the issue of *Quality of Pre-service Teacher
Training.* After analysing the reforms of Romanian pre-service teacher
training, the author claims that providing quality in pre-service teacher
training means meeting the needs of the beneficiaries (enrolled students,
teacher educators, pupils, schools, and parents). A socio-pedagogical
questionnaire was applied to 593 people and focussed on the objective of
the research: outlining a concept of quality of pre-service teaching training
in the opinion of all those involved in this type of training. Another article
is dealing with how Romanian students spend their time. Ioan-Valentin
FULGER conducted his research in the University of Petroşani as a case
study. The author asked the students to assess their daily schedule from the
perspective of the activities they have to accomplish, in general, including
activities outside the university. The main results range within national
averages starting with didactic activities, continuing with individual study,
and ending with the effort made per day strictly on the academic activities.
Gabriela GROSSECK and Carmen HOLOTESCU examine the issue of
Scholarly Digital Curation in 140 Characters. The authors reconsider the
concept of digital curation by correctly applying it to the tools used by
educational actors. They claim that digital curation has a strong impact on
the learning profession and performance. Digital curation is a way to
discover and to filter the vast information on the web in some functional
way to bring to the users' activity streams data. Laura-Ioana LEON's

study underlines the importance of *Communication Skills in English for the Medical Practitioner.* The author describes that communication skills are essential in establishing strong relationships between doctors and patients. Therefore, communication skills should be systematically taught in all medical education. Medical students confronted with both linguistic and cultural barriers should become aware of the need to possess these communication skills in general, but also to get some cross-cultural communication skills early in their career. Another research, carried out by Laura MALIȚA, tries to answer the question "*Should Teachers and Students be Friends on Facebook*?" The author takes the case of social sciences Facebook teachers and students from the West University of Timişoara, Romania. They claim that academics should find a proper solution for using this tremendous potential tool for educational purposes. Facebook becomes a vital educational resource for all academic actors: students, teachers and academic institutions. The focus of Lavinia-Maria NIȚULESCU's research is on *Training and Development of Teachers' Professional Competence.* The author reviews the literature related to the achievement and the development of the teachers' professional competence and tries to improve the training of the future teachers. The comparative analysis of the results of control and experimental group indicates that there are significant differences between pre-test and post-tests. Georgeta RAȚĂ's article on *Teaching Vocabulary at Tertiary Level* focuses on making the teaching/learning of the English language as easy, enjoyable, and permanent as possible using cheap, available visual aids from the internet. The researcher claims that the choice of a visual aid is influenced by learning situation-connected factors, by lesson aim-connected factors, or by lesson strategy-connected factors. The researcher compared two groups of students totalling 224 respondents. The research results were compared between control group and experimental group. The comparison of the results of the two groups suggests that, as far as architecture is concerned, teaching the English of architecture should be done, maybe more than any other type of English for special purposes, with visual support for higher effectiveness. Florin SĂLĂJAN and Sorina CHIPER underline, in their study, the positive effects of ERASMUS programmes on Romanian students having spent some time abroad and having strived to represent their country in a positive light. The study *Initial Teacher Training from the Perspective of a Genuine Approach to Cultural Diversity in Education*, written by Nadia-Laura SERDENCIUC, focuses on the importance of teacher training in relation with cultural diversity in education. The author used a questionnaire regarding the response to cultural diversity. The students evaluated 18 items. Research

results indicate that intercultural training programs conduct to increased openness regarding perception toward cultural diversity in the academic environment sustained by an increased willingness to respond of the subjects tested. Acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity are influenced by the individual's learning experiences in the academic environment. *Facilitation in the Educational Process: Perspectives and Approaches at University Level* is an article by Carmen-Maria ȚÎRU, which discusses the process of the conceptualization of facilitation in education. The author's objectives are to reveal the characteristics of university teachers, to establish differentiating aspects regards the facilitation approach in the teaching activity, to identify the significant differences between course titular and seminary titular, and to formulate suggestions of optimization of the educational facilitation in the educational process in higher education. The findings suggest that teachers largely approach facilitating teaching in the educational process in higher education.

Hasan Arslan

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ISSUES

HISTORICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE UPON ANCIENT EDUCATION

MARIANA BALACI AND ATALIA ONIŢIU

Introduction

In Ancient Rome, as today, education, as an institution, was a key activity certified by the various artefacts (writing instruments, wax tablets, etc.) and epigraphic, monumental and literary sources (La Penna 1990). The authors will encounter in their endeavour the beginning of today's educational system and techniques and, due to ethnoarchaeological methods and archaeological anthropology systems, will get a holistic image using written texts analogy and comparison with other sources. Roman society and Roman education were a male-dominated elitist and pragmatic society. Elitism was, in fact, a form of aristocracy government because they allowed primary school only to all classes, and a male-dominated one because girls did not attend secondary school on a regular basis and higher schools only if they belonged to high aristocracy. Pragmatism was dominant because realism was the first device in mind when instructing youths.

The Roman Educational System

The Romans had a tripartite cycle (primary, secondary and high school) imported from Ancient Greece and similar to today's one. The primary school mastered by a *Primus Magister* was attended by children aged between 7 and 11-12 years old and was dedicated to the learning of reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. The secondary school was mastered by a *Grammaticus* who taught the children (aged from 11-12 to 16-17) syntax, vocabulary, Roman religion, and classical texts in Latin and Greek. The higher school was mastered by a *Rhetor* or an *Orator* who taught the students (until they were 20 years old) rhetoric and philosophy. This last cycle was dedicated to more than one speciality (medical, engineering and law).

The term **pedagogy** comes from the Latin *pedagogus*, the slave who, in wealthy houses, was teaching and educating children from the age of 7, in good manners and social functioning (Wilkins 1905). The term **school** also comes from Roman times, from *schola*, when it referred to the practice of teaching since the school as an institution was called *ludus*.

The school in Roman times was mainly on the ground floor of a public building, with direct access from the street from at least two sides; the teacher would sit on a chair with a rounded back (*cathedra*) and at a desk (*pulpitum*). The students would sit on small chairs and hold writing tablets on their knees; they would stand up when answering or reciting. On the walls, there were clay or marble teaching materials (with historic or mythological scenes). Maps (as geography) were used only in late Antiquity (*Ibid*). Corporal punishment, very widespread, was allowed as a punitive method (Bonner 1984).

The vast majority of children attended only the basic level of education and only wealthy families would support their children in the next levels of studies.

In Roman times, schools were available only in cities, usually in the forum or in the near vicinity.

Knowing how to read and write was crucial in Roman society; therefore, in every town there was at least one public school until the 4th century A.D. (Marrou 1997). In Dacia, the situation was similar: schools were available in all Roman cities of this Roman province.

The social status of a teacher was not a respected one. In Ancient Roman, teaching in primary schools was not highly regarded: it was left to slaves, liberated slaves and poor condition citizens (*Ibid*). According to the edict (301 AD) of Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus Augustus (Roman Emperor from 284 to 305), the salary of a *Magister* was 50 *denarii* per pupil per month, but only if there were 30 students in a class would the magister get a monthly payment equivalent to that of a mason or a carpenter, but such groups of students were highly unusual at the time (*Ibid.*). A *Grammaticus* would get 200 *denarii* per student per month, payment equivalent to the salary of a qualified hand for four days of work (*Ibid.*), and a *Rhetor* would get 250 *denarii* per student per month (*Ibid.*). Their social status was higher, especially that of a *Rhetor* or *Orator*, who were respected figures.

The Roman school system was as mentioned above, a copy of the Greek one; due to the Romanization process, it covered a vast area (almost the entire Empire).

Analysing the works of ancient authors from the beginnings of Rome, especially Roman historian Titus Livius Patavinus (59 BC-17 AD), we

find that, before the contact with the Greek forms of education (during the 3rd century B.C., when it seems that the Romans realized their intellectual inferiority – cf. Poynton 1934), the education of the Romans took place at home, the main purpose of education being to make young Romans noble Romans. Physical education did not intend to ensure the strength of the body, but to make them into manageable fighters for their country. Roman education remained remarkably practical: thus, what children learnt was limited to the simple bare necessities (little arithmetic, a bit of law, and some history). Education referred to civil aspects and to discipline.

Bowen asserted that the complete Roman education of boys and young men was composed of four stages and not three, adding to the above mentioned cycles the military service as the fourth stage between secondary school and higher school (Bowen 1976). His opinion is supported by archaeological evidence: for example, in Roman Dacia the largest source of writing instruments (*stili*) is the military service environment.

The writing instruments used in Roman times were *stili*, *theca calamaria* (inkpot), pens and brushes and, for inorganic materials, *signalula* (a kind of stamp). The support used for actual writing varied from wax tablets, papyrus, parchment, bone, ceramic, clay, stone, metals, and wall plaster.

The most common writing instrument was the *stilus*: used primarily for writing on wax tablets, it was made primarily from iron. It had one sharpened point, and one flattened side. The sharp point was used for actual writing and the flattened end was used for erasing objectionable content. Sometimes the *stilus* was beautifully decorated with various ornaments according to the social status of the user.

Several outstanding pieces from Roman Dacia are a *stilus* from Porolissum (8 km from Zalău, Sălaj County, Romania) with a golden decoration (possibly gold) discovered near the Amphitheatre (Bajusz 2004) and a remarkably similar piece discovered at Buciumi (Sălaj County, Romania) (*Ibid.*).

In all Roman Dacian cities, archaeologists discovered *stili* in significant numbers and scarce in rural settlements. Remarkably high numbers of *stili* were discovered in *castrae* (Roman military forts). Such concentration leads to the conclusion that some form of training in writing also took place for soldiers in military service (Bowen's claim must have some truth in it). Probably, because all soldiers were required to know how to read and write in Latin, some of them took reading and writing lessons after entering military life, especially soldiers in auxiliary units (*cohors*, *alae*, *numeri*) who were not yet Roman citizens.

Inkpots (*atramentarium*) made from glass, metal or ceramic and pens were used to write on papyrus, parchment or even wood. Some inkpots were discovered in Roman Dacia at Porolissum (Sălaj County, Romania), Potaissa (Cluj County, Romania), Romita (Sălaj County, Romania) and Buciumi (Sălaj County, Romania) (*Ibid.*).

Wax tablets were commonly used as a base for writing, particularly by pupils in primary school and formal business writings. The most common design was made from two wooden frames filled with wax and tied together with a lace. In commercial activities, the wooden frame supported also writing with paint and brushes; two recently discovered wooden tablets from Alburnus Major (Alba County, Romania) have painted writing on a wood frame with economic and legal information (Volosciuc 2007).

Over 3,500 inscriptions were discovered in Dacia, and most of them are carefully written in proper Latin with capital letters (*Ibid.*). Some of them still have a lined margin for precise alignment.

Some of these writings are made in fresh clay, maybe with a stilus, maybe with a simple stick, and information is generally informal, sometimes just grammatical exercises or news about the potterer or brick maker and/or the proprietor.

 Another relevant source of information about education in Roman times is funerary monuments: though the monuments depicting educational activities are relatively rare, some critical information can be obtained using them. The most common representation is that of young boys with *stili* in their hands, assisted by their parents at home; there is no representation of a young girl holding a *stilus* for Dacia (Balaci-Crînguș & Ştefănescu 2006). More common are representations of men holding *volumen* (16); the symbolic load of those representations is quite clear: men who are literate and proud of being literate (of being members of an intellectual elite) (Balaci- Crînguș 2008).

Clear evidence regarding the educational system supports the hypothesis that Roman Dacia was fully integrated in the Roman cultural life and lifestyle habits and that the newly-arrived colonists imposed their culture on the local population.

The Roman educational system and teaching processes are remarkably well known due to ancient literary writings, many of them being teachers concerned, just like their modern counterparts, by the most advanced and effective methods of learning and teaching.

The Roman educational system is extremely well known due to ancient author writings, some of them being teachers or leaders of higher or rhetorical schools such as Roman rhetorician Marcus Fabius Quintilian

(35-100) or Roman philosopher, statesman, lawyer, orator, political theorist, Roman consul and constitutionalist Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) whose primary concern was to use better and more effective methods and techniques for learning and teaching.

Institutiones oratoriae of Quintilianus is a remarkable work due to the modernity of his ideas, underlining both the formative and the educational value of education, realizing the supreme importance of education in the raising and development of children. The ancient author emphasizes the importance of education during the first years of life, the meaning of games, the need to take into account the uniqueness of each child, including their age and the importance of the psycho-pedagogic qualities of the educator (Stan 2002).

Conclusions

Analysing the ancient educational system and comparing it to the modern one we can observe, very quickly, more than one similarity; for example, the desire of self-perfection of the teachers, the concern in spreading their knowledge to the students for better future social integration of the youths. Another similarity is government intervention and function in the public and private educational system, a role copied only in the 20th century by modern states. Similarly, in Roman times there was a clear competition between the public educational system and the private one: they used public examination in front of the notabilities of the city to choose teachers for government schools (Quintilian argues exceptionally well the necessity of a public school system, instead of private education at home). Thus, the ancient writer mentions the advantages for the pupil and the teacher: competitiveness between pupils, friendship ties during school time (hence the socialization role of the school), need, for teachers, to continuously improve themselves (a private teacher rather capping himself – cf. Poynton 1934); prize rewarding the most merited master (Marrou 1997); and, last but not least, the presence of *curriculum* and the tendency to keep modernising the teaching and learning processes (Ipola 2007). In the context of a highly dynamic and changing educational system, it is appropriate to have an insight into the history of previous human communities that can provide some solutions, if not for the current educational reform, at least for a deeper understanding of its origins.

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FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:
IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT PRINCIPLES

AMALIA DIACONU

Introduction

In the postmodern context of approaching the trainee as a partner in an individualized educational process aimed at gaining formative autonomy and self autonomy in general, the sphere of questioning formative assessment turns into a field of ideas and of certain decisions of educational policy with a major impact on the educational practice. Educational assessment scenarios and evaluation techniques used in the class can promote cognitive and attitudinal-affective evolutions towards learning, towards one's personal development, and can turn the student into the monitor and trainer of his/her own self-generative competences. The acquisition, by the pupils, of the tools necessary to process information at a high level, the awareness and control of their own learning mechanisms and techniques, the management of mental processes, promoting a metacognitive behaviour constitute as many goals of the postmodern school, which can be reached provided that appropriate pedagogical scenarios are created, where teachers capitalize to the utmost the resources of formative assessment.

Analysis and Proposals

The idea that evaluation can support learning is not a new one. In the 1990s, several studies explored the idea that approaching evaluation as an integrant part of the education process can lead to learning enhancement and, at the same time, attempts were made to correlate classroom practice and research findings especially regarding feedback, motivation, assignment and self adjustment of learning. Thus, studies concerning formative assessment indicated significant learning gains when the former was used, regardless of content, types of knowledge and aptitudes aimed at, as well as of levels of education where it was capitalized. The

evaluation interpreted and applied as facilitator of the cognitive development of the student who gradually acquires the science of learning how to learn, contextualizes learning and enables each student to build up themselves within the area of independent and assumed becoming. Despite the numerous reports on the successful implementation of formative assessment in schools, its capitalization at a large scale still remains a challenge. The prospects of putting formative assessment into practice seem even more discouraging in various international contexts, where informative teaching and summative evaluation have dominant characteristics. Black & William (2009) noticed that, when teachers use formative assessment strategies in their own practice, they seem to be blocked between the new commitment to perform the assessment for learning and the often conflicting demands of the external testing system. Despite the evidence brought in by Western research regarding the formative evaluation effect of stimulating learning and increasing the efficiency of the instructive-educative processes, the current evaluative practice in Romanian pre-university education tends to be primarily oriented towards more and more precise and rigorous procedures of classifying and selecting pupils, be it external, national tests and examinations or procedures created and daily put into practice by teachers in the class. From the teachers' point of view, the strategies of the formative assessment are time-consuming and difficult to use in classes with larger numbers of students. Also, designing and implementing these strategies require high pedagogical and theoretical grounding in the field. Obviously, the teachers' decisions as to practising formative evaluation are also influenced by their own perception of the pupils' abilities and of the curriculum by the school setting in which they operate and by their professional experience (more than by their educational experience), by their views on learning, level of pedagogical knowledge, shared evaluative culture. We therefore think that teachers need to reflect on their own evaluative practice and explore the challenges and benefits of using the formative assessment in the class, particularly in the context in which, "building up an evaluative culture is one of the less aimed at and achieved objectives in schools." (Cucoş 2008) The current approach proposes an interpretation of the explicit and implicit principles that support the approaches in the field of educational policies as well as of the evaluative practice within Romania's pre-university education system, reiterating the belief that any pedagogical innovation, as important as it might be, remains a potential value as long as it is not integrated into the teachers' views and methodological repertory. A pertinent reading of the principles that explain at a certain moment the educational practice imposes the

examination, *ab initio*, of the educational paradigms shared at that time, which, in their turn, are the objectification of the social-cultural paradigms. Thus, the student's docility, the conformism practised within an educational environment strongly rationalized, rigorously planned and stuck into intervention units that have already proven their maximum efficiency, the strict assessment practice oriented towards outward manifestations as marks of cognitive excellence are all landmarks of modernism which produces excellence, which denies the student's oneness and compels him/her to simulate the performance in order to "fit" into the standards that guarantee success. On the contrary, the postmodern paradigm outlines an area of educational intervention where emphasis is laid on continuing learning, flexibility, receptivity and access to information and multiple meanings, on the concern for the individual's performances referred to his own potential, on completing both theoretical and theoretical knowledge through experiments and direct personal experience. A second level of substantiation and interpretation of the principles that govern educational practice at a particular time is represented by the shared theoretical standpoints. Thus, the reflexive registers of the cognitive science and constructivism imposed a review of curriculum design, instructive design, learning and teaching strategies, evaluation approaches. Although it was quite a way of interpretation, a philosophy, a theory of knowledge, constructivism generated numerous applicative solutions for instruction, learning and assessment, particularly used in the American and Canadian educational area considered an academic (epistemological) reference frame for the educational field. Nevertheless, constructivist theories are not capitalized, at least in the Romanian educational field, but through "punctual, random, marginal measures" (Joiţa 2008: 34), as the teachers still do not have a repertory of constructivist learning practice or of assessing constructivist learning, built up and consolidated during the initial or continuing professional training. Bringing out the characteristics of the assessment practice from the constructivist approach should be preceded by an outline of the appropriate aspects and of the principles which govern the pedagogical interventions of a constructivist type (OECD 2007), principles that equally refer to the student's nature (the importance of his background and culture), to the student's responsibility for learning as he builds up his own understanding, to the teacher's role as a facilitator who maintains a continuing dialogue and evaluative feedback with the pupils, to approaching assessment as integrant part of the learning process. On the ground of these principles, a possible inventory of some descriptors of the teachers' evaluative behaviours in the constructivist class where "the

pupils give up the futile effort to comply with the teacher's expectations and look for the best ways of learning" (Clarke 2011: 12), might include:

- Accepting and encouraging pupils' autonomy, who build their own questions and look for their own answers, by evaluating, not the mere agreement of the answers with the questions, but the ways of identifying and structuring possible answers;
- The assessment of the way in which, given the contexts of research and discovery created by the teacher, the pupils search for evidence and connect the basic data given by the real life situations which they personally experience;
- Encouraging pupils to express their own ideas and to reflect on the ideas of others, in order to build the new understanding starting from the previous one, by negotiating the new meanings and significances in the process of knowledge;
- Involving pupils in learning experiences that could deny their initial hypotheses and which encourage them to consider for explanations, clarifications and sharing meanings;
- Creating opportunities for divergent thinking, in a situation which should not make the pupils feel uncomfortable if they are wrong, but eager to experience the fault as a way, a step towards knowledge;
- Involving the pupils in self-evaluating approaches;
- Inserting moments of reflection on their own mental processes, in a stimulating context of the metacognitive abilities to consciously achieve the learning tasks (Nicolescu & Cucoradă 2002).

The key principles and characteristics that define the formative assessment practice have been approached in several academic or practical standpoints, in discourses built either from a comprehensive (which aims at the meaning of the formative assessment practice), a descriptive (the description, analysis of this practice) or a prescriptive perspective (suggesting ways of improvement). Many countries are promoting formative assessment as a fundamental approach to the reformation of education. In 2005, OECD studied the use of formative assessment in eight education systems: Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, Italy, New Zealand and Scotland. The study also gathered commentaries covering the literature in the field, in English, French, and German. In order to identify the existing barriers to formative assessment and encourage its use as a current evaluation practice, OECD (2005) presented the results of the survey and policy principles. Achievements and formative assessment are described as "among the biggest ever reported