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Theoretical Preconditions for [a] Change in the Student Assessment System: Toward Good Practices

Warunki teoretyczne dla zmiany w systemie oceniania studentów: dążąc do dobrych praktyk

Introduction

Unparalleled changes in the social, economic, ecological, and technological environment pose challenges: the future becomes uncertain and difficult to predict. To prepare for, or at least, to partially minimize both emerging and

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potential future challenges, it is important to develop curiosity, creativity, resilience, responsibility, and self-regulation in the present moment. In the future, humanity will be forced to find solutions to hitherto unprecedented problems of respect, evaluation of prospects and values, coping with setbacks and rejection, overcoming calamities, and caring about the well-being and needs of families and friends, the community, and the planet as a whole (Samin, 2019). These reflections are fundamentally changing the culture of education in a broad sense: the perception of the importance of education, as well as the very concept of learning, its content and accessibility, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for *all* and promoting lifelong learning (Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, UNESCO, 2016).

A stable, standardised education system, based on the principle of equality for all (teaching methods, normative assessment, etc.), unchanging, predictable, and oriented toward personality formation merely through mastering subject-specific knowledge, which is still inertly concerned only with *what to teach?*, is losing its relevance (Alvarado & Vargas, 2019). In the current context, the ability to accept the challenges of diversity and to constantly *change* becomes important in learning, as well as the acquisition, in addition to the subject-specific knowledge, of critical thinking, analytical, problem-solving, and other high-level cognitive and social skills. It is a mistake to think that all this can happen by itself in the educational process, e.g. through following the recommendations of international organizations or regulated programmes, or climbing up the educational stairs and overcoming certain thresholds. L. Duoblienė (2018) argues that there are no such stairs in the constant change of personality. It is important to update the question and ask *how,* rather than *what*, *to teach/learn,* placing the emphasis on the natural and individual movement, authentic for each person, in which thresholds emerge when passing from one state or level to another, not always in a clearly predictable direction, not always upwards, sometimes in different directions or even down for a while so that afterwards one would be able go up again. And all this *rhizome-type* teaching / learning movement is inextricably linked and dependent on the dominant *assessment process* in educational practice

In a period of educational change, the *student formal assessment* becomes an increasingly relevant problem area, as it is the core axis of the educational process affecting the whole teaching / learning activity, its quality, students'

own success experience, their self-esteem, the perception of self-efficacy, their status in a peer group, and their self-regulated learning (Wanner & Palmer, 2018). Today, in order to have a fully effective teaching / learning process, the assessments need to include observation, perception, decision, and action when identifying prospects as the main goal. In this permanent process, it is not the final academic outcome that is of primary importance but rather the learning process itself, its reflection, deep consideration, and feedback to all participants of the educational process (Alotaibi, 2018). The result is the learner's personal and authentic progress. Therefore, so far, the presumption that a learner of a certain age has to show results in accordance with pre-set standards and set boundaries essentially destroys the essence of the rhizome-type development of the student change: the learner is programmed with only one learning opportunity, which usually has *a grade* assigned.

Without questioning the importance of the assessment, itself in the teaching / learning process, a grade as one of the most popular methods of the student formal assessment raises doubts over its suitability amongst a significant number of scholars (Lebler, Harrison, Carey & Cain, 2014; Boud; 2018). Measuring the student's progress through grades is difficult because today the assessment objective is affected by unpredictability, subjectivity, and individual quality of student learning, which hardly fits in with the control, rationality, predictability, and quantification inherent in the assessment (Denton & McIlroy, 2017). However, measuring teaching/ learning outcomes is important in every education system. If students knew what they know there would be no need to assess them, and teachers could only record what they had taught (Wiliam, 2013). Not everyone can say what, how well, and how much they know, and therefore, the issues of the student formal assessment process are increasingly often discussed, raising the following problem questions: what are the directions for improving the student formal assessment process toward the learner's own personal progress? What are the possible ways and strategies for managing the assessment change, to implement personalised education?

The authors of the article aimed at examining the theoretical preconditions for the change in the student formal assessment system. To achieve this aim, methods of scientific literature analysis, comparative analysis, synthesis, and generalization were applied.

Perceptions of student formal assessment today

The last two decades saw a shift in the education system from the *outcome-oriented* to *covering the whole teaching / learning process* student formal assessment (Black, 2015). This encourages a greater focus not only on student achievements, but also on their individual progress and the assessment of achievements and progress. The very idea of *assessing student progress* is almost 50 years old. The idea, put forward by researchers at the time (Scriven, 1967; Bloom, 1969), that effective learning required frequent comprehension checks, combining teaching and learning to judge whether the learning had had the intended effect, highlighted the meaning of the assessment as an improvement of the learning process rather than summing up of its outcomes. There are quite a few terms in scientific literature that describe today's formal assessment of students: the *assessment of learning* (Wiliam, 2016), the *assessment for learning* (Sapire, Shalem & Reed, 2017), or the *assessment in education* (Leutner, Fleischer, Grünkorn, & Klieme, 2017). Nonetheless, despite the variety of the terms used, there is a common agreement that the essential function of the student formal assessment is making decisions about teaching / learning, intended to help the teacher and the student to more effectively achieve the intended goal.

The aforementioned process of the development of the student formal assessment is described as going through a period of crisis, as the tradition of assessing student achievements by using grades is still too strongly followed, preventing the student *progress* assessment from taking root (Conley, 2015). It is feared that the assessment, which has lost its hitherto tolerated function of *reward* and *punishment*, will no longer be able to stimulate student efforts translated into improved teaching / learning outcomes (Boud, 2018). Any ideas about the ways of inspiring teachers and learners to think about the assessment not as the indicator of school formal achievements or teaching quality, but as an important *aid to student learning*, are avoided (Stiggins, 2002). For this reason, Brown (2005) and Wiliam (2011) recommend to consider, not only individually but also collectively, what is currently being done to make the assessment practice useful instead of hindering learning and to focus not only on *what* we assess, but also *how* and *why* we do it, what are the reasons for the current situation, and how to disengage ourselves from it. *The change in the approach* to the assessment also changes the whole nature of teaching / learning.

Reasons for a change in the student formal assessment

A high trust in the *standardised system of education policy* hinders the implementation of the student progress assessment in practice even though the reliability of standards is being questioned, and the effectiveness and meaning of standards are discussed. They are analysed in terms of *whom* they are intended for, *what* they assess, and *how much* reliable the assessments used by school heads and teachers are as a feedback on student learning (OECD, 2017). Education policies set standards for student achievements and clearly define the knowledge and skills that students are expected to achieve at different stages of learning. In curricula, goals are formulated on the basis of established standards, and student assessment is oriented merely toward the achievement of those standards. The logic of the standardised system is based on the alignment of these key elements, i.e. objectives and outcomes. Collins and Halverson (2018) argue that, on a basis of this logic, it is not the individual progress of children that is diagnosed but rather the progress made by individual countries, the quality of education, and a success in achieving the goals of national strategic documents. Furthermore, the level of academic achievements is evaluated in the international context. When in the educational process we focus not only on the achievement of standards, but also on the monitoring and the assessment of students' progress, the assessment is not strongly connected with curricula and standards in general (OECD, 2017). Outcomes lose their relevance in the assessment of student teaching / learning. This situation requires an independent, creative mindset and competence in recognising signs of child's personal progress that may be not provided for by standards and can go beyond the trajectory boundaries. It calls for "breaking" old and creating new concepts of the student assessment, constantly changing and moving to new levels, discovering and integrating novelty (Duoblienė, 2018).

As acknowledged, *there is a lack of information in practice on how the student assessment process should proceed*. The assessment is often perceived only as a formal action, the diversity of assessment methods is not exploited, insufficient attention is paid to the assessment feedback, and the assessment is not identified as a continuous, uninterrupted, systematically planned, and reflected process that requires agreements between the teacher and the student, with the emphasis placed not on teaching students but on getting them interested in learning activities. The cult of knowledge transfer prevails in the process of education, and the assessment is used as means of controlling rather

than aiding learning (Jankowski, Timmer, Kinzie & Kuh, 2018). *The summative assessment as a method of assessment* still predominates in the world. In his comments on the reasons for the popularity of grading, Tomar (2019) argues that it is predetermined by the educational accounting traditions at schools and low labour and financial costs. Grades provide parents with "understandable" information about the child's achievements (compared to other children and the requirements of the curriculum), as parents had also encountered it in their childhood. The grading procedure, imperfect and incomplete from the psychological and pedagogical viewpoints (inappropriate presentation and interpretation of the information about student's achievements), provokes students' fear of assessment, as they know that their grades will be made public, commented on, and / or compared with peer grades. This testifies to grading in educational practice as being not only a didactic instrument, but also as a social phenomenon. Having started as an indicator of a level of knowledge and a stimulus for student learning, the grade became the embodiment of almost the entire student personality, announcing to the public his/her achievements and failures in schooling, a measure of performance of the teacher and the entire school, and *a mirror* of teaching quality (Amonashvili, 2016). The nature of the *summative assessment*, which dates back almost 400 years, is associated with the emergence of the prison system, whose construct in its historical development took root in military barracks and eventually reached educational institutions. For this reason, not only the tradition of grading students, but also the whole analytical pedagogy rooted in it developed. The latter scrupulously anticipates every detail (an academic subject is broken down into the simplest elements, and each phase of progress is hierarchized into smallest sections). The method of practicing, when the same task is constantly repeated, is widely applied; examinations with a threefold function (to show whether the individual has reached the required level, to ensure that their knowledge is equivalent to that of other examinees, and to differentiate each individual's abilities) are popular; and time constraints, enabling scrupulous control of the body actions and engulfing the forces of the learner being in constant subjection, are advocated (Foucault, 1995). The social purpose of the *summative assessment* was especially strengthened in education after the abolition of corporal punishment for children, which regulated the life of a minor not only at school but also outside it. The social functions of the assessment include enhancement of the impact on the child and differentiation of learners according to their abilities and knowledge. It is obvious that almost all the imperative tradition

is concentrated on the grades, which strengthens the process of exclusion and discrimination, and the process of teaching from the position of force, instilling coercion, fear, and punishment (Amonashvili, 2016). *The summative assessment* is inconsistent with the pursuit of the personal progress goal set for each student; it is rather a cunning and subconscious idea to control learners and to do so through a very confused paralysis of the educational change.

Examples of good student assessment practices

Upon giving up the *summative assessment,* teaching proceeds not from the teacher's, but from the child's position; the child becomes the subject, and the teacher the object, helping the child to improve, get to know the world and discover their true interests and goals, developing student's motivation for cognitive activities, and promoting the tradition of mutual assistance in learning. The result is an atmosphere based on mutual trust and respect (Amonashvili, 2016; Yin, 2018). Teachers avoid de-personalisation of a student, and an interest in dissociation (Benita, Butler & Shibaz, 2018), for example, when a teacher starts to focus only on student's grades and is interested not so much in student's learning as in the change in its outcomes. Of course, the teaching / learning process cannot take place without testing learners' knowledge, abilities, and skills; therefore, increasingly more alternate assessment methods emerge, such as *portfolio assessment* (Lally &Trejo, 1998, etc.) or *learning conversations* (Bourke, O'Neill & Loveridge, 2018, etc.).

The *portfolio assessment* is seen as a positive tool of an alternative assessment system, moving from the traditional teaching system based on tests and their grading to new teaching systems (Burkšaitienė, 2016). The portfolio preparation is a complex process, as it requires justification and a clear structure, as well as objectives, to ensure the reliability of the method. A portfolio is not just a collection of material. Its value is shown by the content, the principles of material selection, and the ability to present information properly. The material stapled in the portfolio covers the entire learning process, examples of all completed tasks, notes on them, reflections on problem solving, discussion essays, etc. Portfolios provide *evidence of learner's teaching / learning* to the educational process participants rather than encode the final (summary) assessment. The portfolio assessment means a set of reflections and hypotheses about individual experiences and of activities performed over a period of time. The portfolio method makes it possible to record learner's progress, to

identify the best student work in comparison with previous ones, to reveal the development of self-assessment and reflection, the level of an individual student and the pace of their work, and the scale of teacher-student cooperation (Stefani, Mason & Pegler, 2007).

To help a learner to learn, to achieve personal growth, and to personalise education through the assessment, increasingly greater attention is paid to *learning conversations*, which, according to researchers (Orsmond & Merry, 2012), establish preconditions for learners' self-assessment and decision-making regarding their own learning. According to Panadero, Jonsson, and Strijba (2016), self-assessment of their learning reveals for children the meaningfulness of the assessment process, when they are considered to be participants of the assessment who are able to reflect on the quality of their cognitive process and the desire to improve independent learning. Students' self-assessment must be based on the need for the positive self-evaluation in order to increase the level of self-esteem and strengthen the sense of self-worth (Sierra & Frodden, 2017). Although the student self-assessment is useful for improving learning outcomes and strengthening self-regulatory skills during learning, there is a debate about its reliability. Research in psychological processes (Brown & Harris, 2014) underlying individual's ability of self-assessment casts doubt on the quality of students' judgement. Beginners (students) do not have enough knowledge to properly assess their learning, and even in cases where that knowledge is sufficient, there is a lack of experience in using it. Despite these shortcomings, the Finnish practice shows that learning conversations can be successfully used as one of the main student assessment methods, motivated by the belief that understanding and skills emerge only in the process.

The Finnish education system is not fundamentally different from systems in other countries in its characteristics; however, its approach to student assessment is unique (Atjonen, Laivamaa et al., 2019). The assessment in Finnish schools is seen as encouraging the improvement of the educational process, helping every pupil at risk of exclusion, including children with special educational needs, to successfully engage and actively participate in the educational process, given each child's innate physical and mental abilities (Eerola & Eerola, 2014; Laes & Schmidt, 2016). Students are trained to set learning goals for themselves. The Finnish assessment practices include the portfolio assessment (portfolios are collected in accordance with the goals set in the curricula) and learning conversations, useful in the educational process because they create preconditions for avoiding *labelling*. In Finland, children's

subject-specific knowledge is assessed only once a year, and examinations are taken only before leaving school (Atjonen, Laivamaa et al., 2019). In various parts of the world, it is common to focus on students' literacy, numeracy, etc., yet Finland focuses on *learning* – the aim is to provide children with lifelong learning skills. The uniqueness of the Finnish education system is the prevailing *culture of trust*, i.e. the trust in highly qualified, university-educated teachers: they are assessed without equating students' learning outcomes with teachers' performance or effectiveness, and relying on teacher-chosen forms of teaching and teaching methods (Darling-Hammond, 2017). This releases teachers from a disturbing *schizoid* situation in the face of educational changes and creates positive conditions for paying special attention to the individual progress of learners (Duoblienė, 2018).

Learning conversations[5] consist of specific parts, which are assessed at three levels[6] and of a more detailed written description, setting goals twice a year and pursuing them consistently and continuously. The learning conversations involve three parties: the student, his / her parents / guardians, and the teacher. The conversations begin with providing information to the teacher (see Table 1). In Forms 1–6 (primary school), students are asked what they would like to know and learn and what interests them. In Form 7, teachers are interested in what thoughts arise upon starting secondary school, what the student expects from it, how (s)he feels in the class, whether (s)he likes it, how (s)he gets on with classmates, what things facilitate their learning, what affects them, and what they would like to influence. In Forms 8 and 9, introductory questions are expanded, given the students' age, and include relationships with classmates, the things that inspire learning and analysis, and questions about future plans and goal-setting strategies. Students of all forms, their teacher and parents / guardians discuss the student's strengths, identifying and recording them, and note the thoughts and observations as the student attends school. The issues in the second part of the learning conversation – *behaviour and performance* – are discussed regularly from Form 1 to 9 (see Table 1). This part includes adherence to common agreements, rules, and guidelines, friendliness to others, taking care of one's responsibilities at school and at home as

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[5] The information is based on the description of portfolio assessment in Forms 1 to 9 in the city of Kuopio (Finland) (see List of references).

[6] 3 stars: the child masters a skill or achieves a goal. They behave in an examplary manner and encourage others. 2 stars: the child masters a skill or achieves a goal. Using recommendations, they managed to expand their field of activity. 1 star: the child is practicing a skill or pursuing a goal. Using recommendations, they managed to expand their field of activity.

well as of one's own belongings and school property, creating a quiet work environment for others, the ability to concentrate on independent assignments and responsibility for assignment completion, as well as the ability for team work proving that the student can be trusted. The assessment of academic subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, foreign language) is also included in the learning conversation in Forms 1 to 6, with focus on identifying and recording students' strengths in the said subjects (see Table 1).

Table 1. Example of guidelines for a learning conversation. Part 1 (summarised by the authors)

Form	Part 1 Information for teacher		Part 2 Behaviour and work	Part 3 Self-assessment of academic subjects
1–2 3–4 5–6	I'd like to know/ learn…	*Child's strengths. Observations as the child attends school.*	I follow common agreements, rules and guidelines. I am friendly to others. I do my duties at school and at home. I take care of my own and school property. I let others to work in peace. I am able to concentrate on independent assignments and can be trusted to complete them. I can work in a group and can be trusted to do my share.	Learning objectives and their implementation. My strengths in academic subjects
7	What thoughts come with starting secondary school? What do you expect from a secondary school? How do you feel in your class? Do you like it? How do you get on with your classmates? What things make your learning easier? What things affect it? What would you like to influence?			
8 9	How do you like your class? How do you get on with your classmates? What things inspire you to analyse and learn? What things affect your learning? What would you like to change?			

The fourth part of the learning conversation is extended skills, which include seven groups of competences, distributed unevenly throughout the school year (see Table 2). *Thinking and learning to learn* (Group 1) dominates in Forms 1–2: curiosity to learn something new and a desire to perform more complex tasks, while in Form 7, it is the ability to plan and evaluate one's own learning, as well as to identify the most helpful ways of learning. *Culture, communication and self-expression* (Group 2) manifest themselves in Forms 1 to 2 and 7 to 8. The evaluation focuses on the ability to ask for and accept help, to wait one's turn, to experience disappointments, and the ability to ask questions and to listen. In Forms 7 to 8, skills are developed to constructively express one's opinion with respect for others, to respect cultural diversity (in terms of culture, religion, and beliefs) and accept it as a positive thing. *Self-help and daily life skills* (Group 3), Forms 7 to 8: self-evaluation of one's nutrition, rest, and physical activity, self-care and care of others.

Table 2. Example of guidelines for a learning conversation. Part 2 (summarised by the authors)

Form	Part 4 Extended skills		
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	Thinking and learning to learn	Culture, communication, and self-expression	Self-help and daily life skills
1–2	I am curious to learn new things. I want to perform more complex tasks.	I am able to ask for help and to accept it. I can wait for my turn. I am able to experience disappointment. I am able to ask questions and to listen.	
3–4			
5–6			
7	I am able to plan and evaluate my learning. I can recognise the best way for me to learn.	I am able to express my opinion with respect for others. I respect cultural diversity (in terms of culture, religion, and beliefs) and accept it as a positive thing	I eat healthy foods, I have enough sleep, and am physically active. I take care of my nutrition, rest, and physical activity. I take good care of myself and others.
8			
9			

Groups 4 and 5 dominate in Forms 3 to 6 (see Table 3). *Multiliteracy* (Group 4) includes the development of the ability to search for information in various sources, assess the reliability of the information collected, and use social media safely and responsibly. *The information and communication competence* (Group 5) means the perception of the skills needed to achieve learning objectives. In Forms 3 to 6 and 9, *professional life and entrepreneurial skills* are most developed (Group 6), enabling students to self-evaluate their abilities, to identify and name their strengths, to manage the change flexibly and creatively, to work hard and complete the tasks started. Group 7 of competences – *participation, impact, and caring for the learning environment (building a sustainable future)* – is most strongly developed in Forms 1 to 6 and 9. The learning conversation focuses on the ways the child / youth succeeds in helping others with their initiatives, in accepting situations / events, and in taking care of the school environment. In Form 9, the conversation is noticeably more mature, touching on the perception of meaning and responsibility: for one's-influenced actions to oneself, the environment, the society, the nature, and building of the future; for adherence to democratic and ethical principles; and for prioritising ecological decision-making. In Forms 1 to 6, learning conversations are concluded with agreements and goal statements based on the former (see Table 3).

As it was proven by the conducted analysis, *a learning conversation* is not a simple method of assessment; it covers not only the self-assessment of the subject-specific knowledge, but the *entire* life of the child, including the family and the school. The assessment shows the broadness of the concept of learning, oriented toward the process of personality development, and teaches how to set personal goals, acquire skills to achieve them, develop forward thinking, and act responsibly, rather than execute or obey. Learning conversations develop an active personality who, upon leaving school, will be able to take care of themselves and others to greatest extent possible. A strong sense of responsibility for one's own behaviour, choices, and decisions is also developed. Children are guided in a way enabling them to feel responsible to others and inspire a sense of confidence that they will do what they undertake, and will finish what they start. This becomes especially important in teamwork, when sharing responsibilities. Involving a child in the assessment completely changes the child's self-image at school, in the community, and in the world.

Table 3. Example of guidelines for a learning conversation. Part 3 (summarised by the authors)

Form	Part 4 Extended skills				End of the learning conversation
	Group 4 Multiliteracy	Group 5 Information and communication competence	Group 6 Professional life and entrepreneurial skills	Group 7 Participation, impact, and caring for the learning environment (building a sustainable future)	
1-2					*Agreements and goal statements, based on the conversation*
3-4	I am able to look for information in various sources. I am able to judge the reliability of the collected information. I am able to use social media safely and responsibly.	I know the skills needed to achieve my learning goals	I am able to identify my strengths. I am able to manage changes flexibly and creatively. I can work hard and complete the tasks started.	I help others with my initiatives. I am able to accept situations/ events. I care for the school environment.	
5-6					
7					
8					
9			I am able to identify my strengths. I am able to manage changes flexibly and creatively. I can work hard and complete the tasks started.	I am responsible for the self-influenced actions to myself, the environment, the society, the nature, and the building of the future. I adhere to democratic and ethical principles I prioritise ecological decisions.	

Examples of the good practice encourage the change in the orientation of the education system, moving from formal grading to alternative approaches. The Finnish example shows that in some countries alternative assessment practices can be quite successful under certain conditions, although there are also less successful examples proving that the changes in assessment, both at the national and individual levels, can cause more problems than benefits. There may be cases where problems arise due to gaps in the knowledge, competences, and practices when initiating and managing such far-reaching changes, rather than due to an insufficiently conceptually developed content of the alternative assessment (Harrison et al., 2017). The potential expression of such gaps encourages at least a fragmentary look at the assumptions and possibilities of the application of change management theories in the transition to the use of the alternative method.

Changes in the assessment system: challenges and opportunities

Educational organisations experience less changes, when compared to those in other sectors. This is predetermined by the scale of the education system, its cycles, often quite active trade unions, and legal regulations setting fairly clear boundaries of activity (Wentworth et al., 2018). However, against the background of socio-economic conditions, education funding and priorities, consumer expectations, technological innovations, changes in learner diversity, and the restructuring of educational institutions, certain changes in educational institutions are inevitable. Implementation of a change in educational organisations is in itself a huge challenge. This is confirmed by empirical research: changes are successfully implemented only in about 30% of all cases on average (Wentworth et al., 2018), and therefore, when designing changes in the assessment system, it is important to address challenges arising in the process.

Educational institutions face a problem, when the implementation of assessment alternatives even with a strong conceptual rationale is hampered by resistance to fundamental, radical changes in the assessment system (Harrison et al., 2017). The resistance to changes in the assessment system is not a unique phenomenon; weaker or stronger resistance is characteristic of changes in other areas as well. Education is no exception in this respect (Blanco-Portela et al., 2017; Harrison et al., 2017; Wentworth et al., 2018). The modern management science has come a long way in the area of management

of stakeholder resistance to the change, and some of their solutions can also be transferred to the substantial revision of the assessment system.

To achieve a required result – in our case, a revised or even substantially changed assessment system – it is important to provide an insightful evaluation of a potential change for each stakeholder interested in the change (Harrison et al., 2017). In case of changes in the assessment system, the interested parties are teachers, heads of educational institutions, students, student parents / guardians, organisations providing consulting services to educational institutions, and institutions forming educational policies. The involvement of all, or at least some, of the stakeholders in the changes to the assessment system would facilitate coherence between the stakeholders initiating the changes and those implementing them or experiencing their consequences. Harrison et al. (2017) note that the predominant practice is to involve learners only in the research into the quality of teacher performance, while the partnership with learners in selecting and making decisions about adjustments to the content of the assessment system has been insufficient. A failure to ensure learners' involvement in fundamental changes taking place in their learning environment encourages the emergence of a feeling of rejection, which has a negative impact on the learning motivation (Warwick, 2016; Harrison et al., 2017). An analysis of scientific literature proves that, in most cases, the involvement of learners in change is underestimated by actualising other factors of learning motivation, such as interest, instantaneous satisfaction (Leal et al., 2013), recognition, avoidance of punishment (Ryan et al., 2009), and parental pressure (Black & Deci, 2000).

Educational personnel, as a stakeholder interested in the change in the assessment system, are also insufficiently involved in designing changes that affect them. According to Harrison et al. (2017), although teachers are little involved in fundamental changes that directly affect their work, they are expected to apply the revised assessment system in their practice. The failure to involve teachers in the revision of the assessment system raises the risk of their anxiety as stakeholders and disappointment in the planned changes due to a possible lack of teachers as assessors of the relevance in the revised assessment system.

A Combination-Of-Perspectives (COOP) model was proposed to build a partnerships between learners, teaching staff, and initiators of the change in the assessment system (Cheang et al., 2017; Harrison et al., 2017). According to this model, the involvement of learners does not mean that they as stakeholders can have substantial control over the design of the assessment system. Naturally,

learners will probably not have the knowledge or experience to find the most suitable solutions in the search. Therefore, it is reasonable to involve learners as partners in the search for creative solutions working in cooperation with the teaching staff and the developers of alternative assessment systems.

It is generally expected that the refinement of stakeholder attitudes will make it possible to start implementation of the changes. In reality, this rarely happens. The start of the change implementation is hampered by the fact that the positions of most stakeholders are not just a set of ideas but, much more so, personal epistemologies (Harrison et al., 2017). These are intuitive but strong beliefs about the surrounding environment. Every participant in the educational process has one or another assessment experience, therefore it is natural that they also have established beliefs about what the assessment system should be. Adjusting these beliefs can become a serious challenge, even with strong, research-based evidence of the most appropriate, progressive assessment system in a given situation.

Assessment systems in national educational institutions are regulated by a certain legal framework. In Lithuania, the requirements for assessment systems are established in the *Law on Education* of the Republic of Lithuania (2011). Although individual ideas about the deformalisation of assessment systems keep emerging in the media (Spencer, 2017; Barnes, 2018; Brookhart, 2019), the suitability of the existing assessment procedure for the whole education system had not been intensively questioned at the time of preparing the present article. The authors of the article, clearly seeing the shortcomings of the existing formal assessment system, believe that the current historically established system of the student's formal summative assessment is not appropriate or sufficient to meet the challenges faced by the contemporary education system. This encourages expectations that reforms of assessment systems will be undertaken in the country. Assuming that a legal and institutional framework for the change in the assessment system will be developed, the implementation of changes will move from the national to the organisational level. In this case, for the reform to be effective, it is reasonable to structure the process of change, because the chaotic change management is a straight path to failure. Harrison et al. (2017) suggested some consistency in change management. According to the authors, first of all, it is reasonable to involve in the process all the above-mentioned stakeholders, i.e. the learners, the teaching staff, and the administration of institutions. It is important to discover the ideas and beliefs that unite the stakeholders and to develop the

new assessment system on their basis. When examining stakeholders' views on the anticipated change, it is important to anticipate the consequences of the change for each party. No further course was foreseen by Harrison et al. (2017), yet an understanding of the basic change management process proves that such steps are not sufficient. The change management process cannot end with anticipating the consequences of the change. In addition, the actions named by the authors cover only the content of change planning and ignore the organisation, the management, and the control of the change. According to Wentworth (2018), in the field of education, Kotter's model of the change management is appropriate, in accordance with which the change management includes the following consistently implemented stages: 1) identification of a need; 2) building a strong change team; 3) preparation of a vision; 4) vision communication; 5) empowering others to act in pursuit of the vision (otherwise known as eliminating resistance); 6) planning and pursuit of short-term results; 7) combining improvements and generating ideas for other changes; 8) institutionalisation of the new approaches. This model has the advantage of simplicity, clarity, an emphasis on the importance of communication, and extremely wide-ranging practical approval. In simplified settings of the study over the complex phenomenon of change, Lewin's three-stage model of change, known as Unfreeze – Change – Refreeze, is not inferior (Cummings et al., 2016).

To sum up the insights into the challenges and opportunities related to the change in the assessment system, it can be argued that the process of the change management in the education sector is quite complicated due to the possible resistance of stakeholders and their insufficient involvement in the processes of the change. To manage potential stakeholder resistance and to ensure their involvement, it seems appropriate to structure the change management process.

Conclusions

Over the last few decades, due to the questionable reliability, sufficiency, purposefulness, and nature of the student formal summative assessment, changes in the assessment have been observed from the focus exclusively on the end result to a stronger orientation on the entire educational process, giving a priority to strengthening the student's motivation and involvement in the educational process rather than to achievement of a specified result These changes

are illustrated by the Finnish good practice, where the portfolio assessment and learning conversations are used in an environment based on mutual trust and respect, without questioning the importance and need of testing learners' knowledge, abilities, and skills in the teaching / learning process.

In order to transfer examples of the good practice and adapt them to the national context, the application of theories and models of change management seems to be reasonable. Achieving the purposeful, focused, and effective change in the field of assessment requires a process-focused approach to change management. This article does not aspire to select the most appropriate change management model for the educational sector, and therefore a detailed analysis of the change management process has not been conducted. However, the authors of the article remain interested in change management modelling solutions exclusively in the education sector and in organisations operating in this sector, therefore this line of research can be realised in the authors' future work.

Abstract: Student formal assessment is the core axis of the educational process that affects the whole teaching / learning activity, its quality, students' success experience, their self-respect and self-esteem, and the perception of self-efficacy. By recognising prospects as the main learning objective and defining the outcome as personal and authentic learner progress, the assessment raises the need to pay a due attention to reflection, deep consideration, and feedback to all participants of the educational process. Against this background, doubts are started to be raised about appropriateness of the grade, currently being one of the most popular methods of the formal student assessment, leading to the scientific problem of this article. Over the last few decades, a shift in the assessment has been observed, from the focus exclusively on the end result to a stronger orientation toward the whole educational process, with an emphasis on motivating students to learn and strengthening their involvement in the educational process. These changes are illustrated by the Finnish good practice where, in an environment based on mutual trust and respect, and without questioning the importance and need for testing learners' knowledge, abilities, and skills in the teaching / learning process, alternative assessment methods: portfolio assessment and learning conversations, are successfully used. To transfer examples of the good practice and adapt them to the national context, it seems reasonable to apply theories and models of change management. Achieving a targeted and effective change in the area of the assessment requires a process-focused approach to the change management.

Keywords: student assessment, assessment changes, reflection-based assessment, change, change management

Streszczenie: Formalna ocena studentów stanowi główną oś procesu edukacji, wpływającą na całość aktywności nauczania/uczenia, jej jakość, odnoszone przez studentów sukcesy, ich szacunek do siebie samych i samoocenę, jak również na postrzeganie własnej skuteczności. Poprzez rozpoznanie perspektyw jako głównego celu uczenia się oraz zdefiniowania wyników jako osobistych i rzeczywistych postępów osoby uczącej się, ocena wymaga zwrócenia odpowiedniej uwagi na refleksję, dogłębne rozważania oraz przekazanie informacji zwrotnych wszystkim uczestnikom procesu edukacji. Na tym tle ocena jako jedna z najpopularniejszych metod oceniania studentów, zaczyna wzbudzać wątpliwości co do swojej odpowiedniości, co prowadzi do problemu naukowego rozpatrywanego w niniejszym artykule. W ciągu ostatnich kilku dekad zaobserwowano przesunięcie w ocenianiu z koncentracji wyłącznie na wyniku końcowym w kierunku większego ukierunkowania na cały proces edukacji, z naciskiem na motywowanie studentów do nauki i wzmocnienie ich zaangażowania w proces edukacji. Zmiany te ilustruje fińska dobra praktyka, gdzie z powodzeniem stosuje się inne metody oceny: ocenę portfolio oraz rozmowy kształcące, w środowisku, którego podstawą jest wzajemne zaufanie i szacunek, bez kwestionowania istotności i konieczności sprawdzenia wiedzy, zdolności i umiejętności osób uczących się w ramach procesu uczenia /nauczania. Aby przenieść przykłady dobrej praktyki i dostosować je do kontekstu krajowego, zasadnym wydaje się być zastosowanie teorii oraz modeli z zakresu zarządzania zmianą. Osiągnięcie ukierunkowanej i skutecznej zmiany w obszarze oceny wymaga podejścia do zarządzania zmianą ukierunkowanego na proces.

Słowa kluczowe: ocena studentów, zmiany w ocenianiu, ocena w oparciu o refleksję, zmiana, zarządzanie zmianą

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