

Scientific paradigm as a reference frame for the study of assessment in teaching

Znanstveni članek

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KLJUČNE BESEDE: ocenjevanje, pouk, znanstvene paradigme, referenčni okvir preučevanja ocenjevanja

POVZETEK – Članek obravnava paradigme kot referenčni okvir v aktualnem preučevanju ocenjevanja pri pouku. Po pregledani literaturi sta identificirana dva načina uporabe tega koncepta: pluralistični in tisti, v katerem se določene kategorije ocenjevanja obravnavajo s pomočjo empirično-analitične, interpretativne in kritično-teoretične znanstvene paradigme. Slednji sistem smo izpopolnili z dodatnimi kategorijami ocenjevanja, v opisu pa smo uporabili tri tipične načine ocenjevanja. Na podlagi primera rabe sklepamo, da tak referenčni okvir omogoča celotno in analitično preučevanje ocenjevanja, razumevanje pomena različnih perspektiv za ocenjevanje, preučevanje možnosti reforme ocenjevanja pri pouku in obravnavo vprašanja, kaj vse vpliva na spremembo prakse ocenjevanja v reformskem procesu. Posebnost okvira je pogled v paradigmatško ujemanje vseh didaktičnih izbir pri pouku. To je sicer pomemben didaktični problem pri iskanju izhodišča v aktualnem preučevanju ocenjevanja.

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ABSTRACT – The subject of this paper is paradigm as a frame of reference for the current study of assessment in teaching. After a review of the literature, two ways to use this concept have been identified: a pluralistic way and the one in which certain categories of assessment are examined through the empirical-analytic, interpretive and critical-theoretic scientific paradigms. The latter system has been enriched with the additional categories of assessment and applied to the description of three typical assessment practices. The examples of such an application to practice provide a basis for the conclusion that this frame of reference enables the thorough and analytical study of assessment, understanding the meaning of different perspectives on assessment, studying the reform potential of assessment in teaching, and consideration of what brings about changes in assessment practices in the reform process. The specific feature of the frame is the insight into paradigmatic congruence of all the didactic choices in teaching. It is a big didactic problem in the search for the starting point of the current study of assessment.

1. Introduction

Reforming the assessment system has become one of the main goals of the education reform in many countries over the past two decades. However, it turned out that there had been few changes in assessment practices in those countries, and they had been slow in pace. For these and many other reasons, the study of assessment has intensified. Besides being studied in didactics and docimology, it is also often a part of interdisciplinary considerations of the essence and streams of the future formal education. Bearing in mind the sudden increase of assessment concepts and the overall

scientific production on assessment, it seems that it is reasonable to talk about the *new wave* in the study of assessment today. In the context of such changes, the scientific interest in *finding the starting point* for the study and development of assessment in teaching is intensified.

The issue regarding the starting point of the study of assessment is raised at different levels. At the didactic and docimological levels, it is connected with the recent emergence of a number of didactic trends and theories, and with the influences on didactics coming from the new interdisciplinary fields built on a Postmodern foundation and developing new ways to study formal education (Pahl & Rowsell, 2007; Pinar, 2004). The question arising from the newly created didactic pluralism is what starting points didactics offers in the conditions of current methodological diversity; if assessment methods and techniques developed for different teaching models and with different views on learning and education could be combined and mixed in practice; how to reason about meanings of the individual innovations in assessment, etc. (Gojko, 2009). The issue of the starting point is also relevant in the conditions of current interactions between didactics and curriculum studies, relations between the European didactics and online education (D'Angelo, 2007), assessment in the informal virtual context, educational policies aimed at enhancing quality in education, etc.

As in other fields of pedagogy, there are attempts to use and examine the *new concepts and units of analysis* in the study of assessment – such as the concept of paradigm, concept of practice, concept of discourse, etc. In the rest of this paper, we will focus our attention on the application of the concept of paradigm to the study of assessment. We want to:

- identify and describe the way in which the concept of paradigm is used in the study of assessment, and
- further consider and examine the identified use and elaborate the opportunities of the application of this concept to the research and improvement of assessment in teaching.

2. The ways of using the concept of paradigm in the study of assessment

Reading the latest papers on assessment, it is noticeable that the term paradigm has become very frequent. We can therefore read about the “alternative assessment paradigm” as opposed to traditional assessment, about the “assessment for learning” being the new paradigm in assessment, about the “authentic assessment” being the assessment paradigm of the future or about the “psychometric paradigm” being replaced by the paradigm of “assessment of pupils’ progress”. In the current document (Gordon Commission, 2013), the reasons for shifting from the “item paradigm” to the “activity paradigm” and from the “individual paradigm” to the “social paradigm” are explained.

In the literature, there are two ways to use the concept of paradigm on assessment. *The first way.* The authors recognise that the concept of paradigm is useful for understanding the phenomenological essence of assessment, and that the essential transformation of assessment implies a paradigm shift. In order to *describe* the shift, they use *multiple paradigms*. For instance, when the Gordon Commission document advocates shifting from the “item paradigm” to the “activity paradigm”, it describes the change of the subject of assessment, and when it advocates shifting from the “individual paradigm” to the “social paradigm”, it implies the change in understanding learning and the nature of knowledge and its implications for assessment. In addition, if we deeply analyse the meaning of different paradigms in their original context, it is possible to notice that paradigms with different names often express *related meanings*. For instance, the paradigms named “assessment for learning” and “alternative assessment paradigm” advocate abandoning the assessment of educational outcomes and redirecting assessment to the centre of the teaching and learning processes, so that it serves the processes instead of being the final evaluation. This paradigmatic pluralism is typical for the postmodern tradition. Within the described way of use, paradigm is used as a symbol of the viewpoint on a possible new function of assessment, but the specified domain of assessment is *encompassed to various degrees* by it. By stating that, we bear in mind that each assessment practice is directed by the choice of goals, ways and types of assessment as well as by understanding the purpose of education, concepts of competence, knowledge, learning, teaching, etc, and that this understanding present its unavoidable part.

The second way. In the 1990s, authors (Ryan, 1988 and Black, 1997; according to: Aikenhead, 1997; Aikenhead, 1997) started to explore the possibility of applying the concept of paradigm as a philosophical-pedagogical frame of reference for the *systematic study* of assessment and evaluation. It deals with the use of the concept of scientific paradigm as defined by Kuhn. According to Kuhn (1974, p. 239), a paradigm stands for “the constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on, shared by the members of a given (scientific; M. M. & R. A.) community and [...] the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples, can serve as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles“. Therefore, a paradigm refers to a philosophical or theoretical framework which governs the future production during a particular period of time. The framework or standard accepted by a scientific community is both scientific and social in its essence. Once the paradigm was discovered in this sense, it was clarified that science had developed primarily through the revolution of scientific approach and not only through accumulation of knowledge as previously thought (Halmi, 2005). The work of Habermas (1975) also contributed to recognising the main scientific paradigms. He studied relationships between the scientific knowledge and human cognitive interests as the knowledge-constitutive elements. Today, in the spirit of his classification of the types of knowledge and interest, there is the view that three paradigms are particularly significant for pedagogy, as follows: the *empirical-analytic*, *interpretive* and *critical-theoretic* paradigms.

Following ideas of Kuhn and Habermas, the previously mentioned authors singled out a three-category system for describing assessment. Within the system, the paradigms were examined as starting points for the subjects and purpose of assessment, for the typical and best ways of assessment, characteristics of assessment and the ways to achieve validity. It turned out that these three paradigms “represent the complete domain of assessment and evaluation” (Ryan, 1988; according to: Aikenhead, 1997, p. 2). Such a starting point brings potential for educational assessment to be *fully encompassed* in a given cultural-historical context, in a series of different types of assessment, their combinations and meanings, in manifestations of educational practices, in visible and hidden national education policies. There lies the difference between the first and the second way of using the concept of paradigm in the current study of assessment.

Following the logic and data of such a system (Aikenhead, 1997), we will try to *identify typical practices* in monitoring and assessment in teaching, and describe them through *general didactic starting points* (through 7 elements) and through *subject, characteristics, organisation and purpose of assessment* (through 10 elements). What we need to mention here is that we believe that each educational practice in a given cultural and historical context is specific and unique. The following description is based on relatively *rough marking of the typical positions* in the previously mentioned elements – for further consideration of the possibility of applying the concept of scientific paradigm to the research and improvement of assessment in teaching.

3. Assessment practices directed by the empirical-analytic paradigm

These are the earliest assessment practices developed along with the institutional education and constantly searching for objective assessment – from the spontaneous search of practitioners to the efforts to establish scientific foundations under the influence of the empirical-analytic paradigm. These practices are mostly directed by the Western technical rationalism embodied in the ideas of positivism, various versions of empiricism, behaviorism, early cognitivism, etc.

General didactic starting points. In the practices of this type, the tendency is to transfer and acquire the knowledge and culture of a society. The relationship between the knowledge and skills of pupils, with the emphasis on the cognitive development of pupils, is considered particularly significant. Pupils’ cognition is explained through various scientific models. Anyway, pupils’ skills are perceived as “mental skills” for knowledge acquisition (Bruner, 2000). The best way to acquire knowledge, according to this orientation, is by teaching and learning in the didactically shaped situations. This is frequently the teachers’ professional opinion since it “ [...] offers a clear determination of what it is that is being learned and suggests standards for evaluating efficacy [...] it encouraged the impartial assessment” (Ibid., p. 67). According to the statements of the same author, this viewpoint implies that new knowledge builds on past knowledge, meaning that the knowledge itself is cumulative. It consists of explicit facts

and theories. It is considered an objective phenomenon, fixed and independent of the perspective of those who have it. It is a scientific, mostly propositional knowledge of hierarchical structure. With regard to pupils, the curricula are prescribed beforehand and determined externally. The knowledge in the curricula is structured through subjects and grades in order for knowledge systems to be built. The formative impact on pupils' competencies is expected from these mutually coordinated and correlated systems. The viewpoints on and organisation of cognitive processes in teaching occur in a scale – from the acquisition of knowledge and ideas in the spirit of gnosological empiricism and sensualism – to focusing on the systematic process of discovering the inner essence of the subject matter, which represents different opportunities for the values development cognitive process (Antonijević, 2006). Pupils' learning is understood as the individual psychological process and is explained through different learning concepts (receptive, procedural, discovering, etc.). Some concepts imply SR connections and managing behaviour in the behavioristic sense. In such practices, the teacher is considered an expert. A pupil is expected to develop functional behaviour as a response to stimulus (reinforcement) of the teaching context. If they fail, it is often interpreted as a failure of pupils' competencies.

Subject, characteristics, organisation and purpose of assessment. The subject of assessment in these practices is a measurable product of school learning – usually, memorised knowledge and learned skill. The starting point for validity is psychometric. The assessment features are: hierarchical organisation, assessment of the knowledge components mainly independently of their real use in the context. *Standardised tests* and *test batteries* measuring achievement in specific areas are considered the best outcome of these assessment practices. Such tests usually require typical answers from pupils (Gipps, 2002). Requirements are most frequently formulated by asking questions. The questions require a fixed answer or mandatory choice. In the interpretation of achievements, accurate answers are required. Along with the standardised tests, other methods of assessment are also used (other types of tests, oral examination, homework review, etc.). A teacher makes assessment in these practices. He determines: the subject of assessment, the time when assessment will take place, the assessment criteria, the way of informing a pupil of achievement. Assessment is actually set up as the final activity after the sequences of teaching and learning. It is practiced individually, in silence and as a separate activity. These are common assessment practices that we all have most experience with both as pupils and teachers. In teaching based on curricular planning, the assessment criteria, organisation of assessment and the content of feedback are more explicit for pupils than the lack of such planning. *Standards for the assessment of specific learning outcomes* are created within the current practices of this type. The standards include a list of the specific learning outcomes, a list of their assessment criteria and detailed description of conditions and ways of their review (Despotović, 2010). The purpose of assessment of practices of this type is obtaining the diploma or the adequate certificate; in that sense, it is “technical” and directed at “social control” (Aikenhead, 1997). This implies that the essence of formal education directed by the empirical-analytic paradigm is an effort to recognise and cultivate the elite pupils. As-

assessment practices directed this way are called *traditional* practices in literature. Based on empirical data from Serbia, pupils and students assessed in such practices have the experience of relativity with regard to how their achievements have been assessed; their concepts of assessment are empirical and filled with school curriculum, and the concepts of self-assessment are mainly underdeveloped (Mitrović & Aleksendrić, 2011).

4. Assessment practices directed by the interpretive paradigm

In practices directed by the interpretive paradigm, assessment has complex functions and a different position in the structure of the teaching process. Assessment is considered an *integral part* of the teaching and learning process. The emphasis is on the learning process assessment, on recognising the pupils' perspective, on enabling pupils to understand the assessment process and take part in it. From this perspective and according to the findings of the sociologists of education dating from the 1970s, it is the data on the *school itself that creates the failure* through institutionalised practices of classifying pupils and favouring one type of decontextualised and abstract knowledge that are offered instead of the positivist picture of the lack of pupils' intellectual competence (according to: Pešić, 2004).

General didactic starting points. Different conceptions have an impact on education – humanistic, hermeneutic, constructivist, including the emerging teaching and learning theory interpreted as “learning through language” (Halliday, 1993; Wells, 2006). What we may generalise regarding these impacts is the orientation based on the individual needs and characteristics of the pupils, attaching importance to emotional experiences of pupils in education, emphasising the development of personality and, for students, authentic goals of education. The common view on competencies includes the idea that the human mind has always been unique for being sensitive to everything that is cultural, for its abilities to use cultural artefacts, learn language and through language, for being in a way gifted in intersubjectivity and for interpretative features of human thought. Learning is understood as a semiotic process while “teaching and learning essentially involve dialogue” (Wells, 2006, p. 242). Knowledge is developed in discourse among people who work together. Language is considered an “essential condition of knowledge” and the use of language is a process by which experience becomes knowledge (Halliday, 1993, p. 94). Education gravitates toward understanding and mutual exchanges more than it does toward explicitness and acquiring factual knowledge. The emphasis is put on sorts and types of knowledge, on the ability to integrate knowledge and apply it to the real situations. In practices of this type, it is considered that from the start children learn by constructing their authentic conceptualisations (small “theories”) of themselves and the world, implementing them and changing them gradually into the more developmentally advanced ones as they interact with the environment. In accordance with that, different education research projects have been practiced lately. They are aimed at understanding and educational building

upon the following type of data – how pupils develop understanding of others’ intentional states, how they explicate and revise their statements in the discourse, what their thoughts about their own cognitive processes are, how they understand learning and manage their own learning, etc. (Bruner, 2000). These pupils’ constructions also include detecting essential properties of the subject of cognition (Antonijević, 2006). In practices of this type, the curricula are built on pupils’ interests. Teachers play the mentor role and the pupils’ roles also include monitoring and documenting their own learning processes.

Subject, characteristics, organisation and purpose of assessment. The subjects of assessment are pupils’ learning processes and products. The starting point for validity is pedagogical “with a focus on improving teaching and learning” (Aikenhead, 1997, p. 4). The assessment is mainly done in the context of learning with a lot of time spent for observation and other qualitative procedures. It needs to provide data on the individual learning processes and strategies and suggestions for teaching. For its incorporation in the situational teaching processes and its focusing on the real tasks, such assessment is called *authentic* in literature (Armstrong, 2008). Such assessment tends to consider the pupil’s progress in achieving individual goals. Open-ended type questions, essay questions, narrative notes, different types of reports, practical tasks, performance tasks are used in assessment. The view of some practices of this type is that it is not necessary to assess the pupils’ current progress, but it must be identified what pupils are able to do with the help of others and of various artefacts. In such practices, assessment is set up as a “*dynamic and collaborative activity*” (Gipps, 2002, p. 83). It necessarily requires the *social environment* (for instance, assessment in group work) and the *support and help of other pupils* in order to get as *good performance* of the activity in focus as possible. *Formative assessment* is considered the best outcome of these practices. In some practices of this type, it is complemented by *diagnostic assessment* which identifies learning abilities and difficulties, i.e. provides information for planning the teachers’ actions. These practices are lately characterised by the use of portfolios (textual or digital ones) through which pupils have a chance to generate their own meanings, follow the learning process and set their own goals. Different types of maps that pupils use to make their own cognitive and learning processes “visible” are also considered relatively typical. In these practices, both a teacher and pupils make assessment. Enabling pupils for self-assessment is one of the crucial goals. These practices are called *alternative* in literature.

5. Assessment practices directed by the critical-theoretic paradigm

General didactic starting points. These starting points are most directly aimed at the concepts of critical pedagogy. They are based on criticism of the education systems seen as “institutionalised in the hand of self-interest” (Bruner, 2000, p. 45) and on criticism of the academic disciplines in so far as they become a form of indoctrination

and social reproduction. Creating a more just society and development of self-realized individuals with highly developed psychosocial competencies is considered the goal of education. Teaching strives toward establishing a *critical discourse on assessment* and toward continuous *research and improvement of assessment in practice* in order for poor performance in learning to be eliminated. It is emphasised in understanding competencies that there is a necessity for the pupils' thinking to develop into a true critical activity through reflection as the way of moving toward more complex processes of understanding and change. Knowledge is understood as a product of active construction, but it is also dependent on social practice and relations incorporated in it. It is insisted on perceiving the phenomenon in the historical and socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, certain frameworks (expressed by various terms: "cultural practice", "conscience of a certain era", "textual community", etc.) are here given priority over interpretivism. The curriculum and teaching process are viewed as a kind of political text, and they develop with regard to problems and with a significant participation of pupils. Learning is understood as a social process and takes place directly in working on projects in different cooperative forms of pupils' communities (sometimes even of adults from the local community). It is considered that learning and development are the result of "transformation of engagement" in more and more complex socio-cultural activities, that they are the function of understanding the changes of roles and activities we are engaged in (Rogoff, 1994), and of a different use and creation of the cultural artefacts (Wells, 2006). In such practices, the teacher shapes the learning environment and, as a reflective practitioner and autonomous professional, he participates in changes in the school and community (Mitrović & Radulović, 2011). Pupils enter rich interactive relations with the current curriculum, other pupils and the teacher, but they also have an obligation to adjust their own understanding to the one considered a familiar and verified knowledge in a given culture.

Subject, characteristics, organisation and purpose of assessment. According to our initial source (Aikenhead, 1997), assessment strives to the *higher level of social justice* and the *emancipation of education* through elimination of everything that in the context leads to constraint, assimilation, indoctrination and reproduction of dehumanised circumstances and achievements. Developed and cultivated critical thinking of the pupils and the achievement of production through education present desired outcomes. The subjects of assessment itself are the process and product of learning and the context of teaching results. The starting point for validity is political, social and cultural (Ibid.) In practices of this type, power relations in the curriculum and during the assessment are considered in detail and selectively in the authentic dialogue between the teacher and pupils, and are called the "ecology of the classroom relations" (Kessing-Styles, 2003). The ideological character of education and assessment is revealed in the dialogue interaction through the prism of *pupils' concrete experiences*, their analyses, problematisation, and the selection of dominant and subordinate classroom discourses. According to the author's statements, the result of the exchanges is the common "creation of the new assessment". Within the process of creation, pupils create tasks, assessment criteria, supervise teaching and learning, set goals of the new lear-

ning cycle. In practices of this type, both a teacher and pupils make assessment. Pupils are often trained in self-assessment. Such training implies negotiations and agreement on the whole assessment process, from what will be considered the assessment to what nature and content the feedback will have (Bain, 2010). Self-assessment is understood as authentic assessment and as a social process in the development of pupil's identity and autonomy (King, 1996). It is the way how the *sharing of responsibilities* among pupils and teachers for the process of education through assessment is achieved. In the field of the achievement indicators format, characteristics of the pupils' activities rich in the description of how they have been done are systematically documented. Practices of this type are relatively rare in the world. However, in literature, they are considered *desirable* future assessment *practices*. In order for the multiple assessment goals for teaching and learning to be achieved, it is necessary to systematically change the context of education and assessment and there are different concrete experiences confirming that. For instance, the projection of such a change in the Gordon Commission document (Gordon Commission, 2013, p. 147) is indicated as "interactive, dialectic and transformative linking of assessment, teaching and learning". Through it all, pupils are in the position of both *subjects* and *researchers* of assessment.

6. Some possibilities of using the scientific paradigm in the study of assessment

Our descriptions have shown:

- that the categories we have started from (Aikenhead, 1997) are *applicable* in identifying different assessment practices and
- that the starting system may be *complemented* with other categories.

Such a starting point enables the *analytical* approach to assessment, thereby dividing it into a series of constitutive components (in our example:

- monitoring and assessment goals,
- subject of assessment,
- context of assessment,
- starting point for validity,
- assessment features,
- assessment methods and techniques,
- requirement format,
- achievement indicators format,
- roles of pupils and teachers,
- position of assessment in the teaching process as related to teaching and learning).

It is possible for each of these categories to be further *thoroughly divided* – which depends on the purpose the framework is applied for. When it is applied, all the data on assessment is seen as part (result) of the other didactic choices (concepts of education, knowledge, competence, learning, curriculum types, position and role of teachers and pupils in teaching and learning). In that case, we can talk about *paradigmatic compliance* – as the main effect of this starting point.

We believe that such a starting point enables different *research insights*:

- insight into assessment in practice being multivalued and into the fact that there are different perspectives on assessment,
- insight into the fact that what we consider assessment depends on the scientific perspective it is seen from,
- insight into perspectives on assessment increasing steadily and being able to get systematically evaluated for education when placed one next to the other.

Such a starting point enables the research and monitoring of *where* educational assessment *goes* and *how it changes*. For instance, how the purpose of assessment is redirected from the technical to the cultural one, or how the subject of assessment changes from the assessment of measurable products of school learning to the learning process and context of assessment, etc. We assume that, on the level of empirical research, such orientation would show assessment in the whole spectrum of perceived quality.

If we strive toward *understanding/changing* the concrete assessment practices, we will be able to follow how different contextual influences, including the teachers' educational starting points, are stacked onto the immediate character of assessment. In addition, it is possible to comprehend *what it is that* the change of an assessment practice in reform processes *depends on*, and what its *reform potential* is. The data in this text indicates that the change of the way of assessment without changing other processes and relations in teaching cannot have a character of the essential change. On the other hand, it seems that the reform potential of assessment is most directly linked with two elements – with the change of assessment in the teaching process structure (its redirecting to the centre of teaching and learning) and with the change of the pupils' position in the assessment process. It is possible that those two changes make an essential contribution to the inner reform of the formal education.

Such frame of reference is also useful for the *practitioners*. By using it, it is possible to develop more complete understanding of the meaning of the single assessment methods, to comprehend new ways and techniques of assessment in their didactic context, to precisely determine the purpose and best way of their contextual implementation. We consider introducing assessment through such frame a useful topic for the *teachers' education*, since it enables the systematic view on assessment. In the end, this frame of reference makes us face the fact that the increase of the social importance of a school grade through history has led to its instrumentalisation and to the conflicts of interests of different social groups, thus making *pupils suffer because of them* and they are the ones who should gain most from assessment.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to comprehend the way of using paradigm as a frame of reference in the current study of assessment in teaching. We have identified the use of the pluralistic character and the use which considers different categories of assessment through empirical-analytic, interpretive and critical-theoretic paradigms. We have complemented it with some more categories of assessment and by applying them, and tried to describe three typical assessment practices. Our description is reduced and it has implied rough marking of the basic choices in assessment (based on the literature). Based on that, we conclude that such a frame enables the thorough and analytical approach to assessment. The frame is convenient for the phenomenological understanding of assessment, for understanding the presence and meaning of different perspectives on assessment, for studying how educational assessment changes and toward what it strives, for understanding the reform potential of assessment in teaching and for comprehending on what the change of an assessment practice in the reform process depends. A particular advantage of this frame is paradigmatic compliance of the didactic choices of teaching.

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Znanstvene paradigme kot referenčni okvir za preučevanje ocenjevanja pri pouku

V članku obravnavamo uporabo paradigme kot referenčnega okvira za presojo ocenjevanja pri pouku. Ta uporaba je v zadnjem času relativno pogosta. Postala je del povečanega znanstvenega iskanja izhodišč pri preučevanju ocenjevanja v didaktiki in dokimologiji, študijah kurikulumov, pa tudi v širšem interdisciplinarnem premisleku o utemeljenosti formalnega izobraževanja v prihodnosti. Vprašanje izhodišč je povezano z nekaterimi znanstvenimi dognanji na področju didaktike (s povečanjem teoretičnega pluralizma, interakcijami didaktike s študijami kurikula in online izobraževanjem), je pa pomembno tudi v okviru izobraževalne politike na področju kakovosti izobraževanja in sedanje reforme izobraževalnega sistema. V zadnjih desetletjih je reforma sistema ocenjevanja postala v mnogih državah eden glavnih ciljev izobraževalne reforme, vendar pa kaže, da se v teh državah ocenjevanje dejansko le malo in počasi spreminja. To so razlogi, da se uporabljajo in preizkušajo novi koncepti in enote analize pri preučevanju ocenjevanja. S paradigmi se v članku ukvarjamo na dva načina.

Najprej smo ugotovili, kako se paradigme uporabljajo pri sedanjem preučevanju ocenjevanja. Nato smo enega izmed teh načinov poskušali uporabiti pri opisu tipične prakse ocenjevanja. Pri tem smo razmišljali o možnostih uporabe koncepta te paradigme pri preučevanju ocenjevanja.

Identificirali smo dva načina uporabe tega koncepta. Prvega smo označili kot pluralističnega in menimo, da je tipičen za postmoderno tradicijo. To je povezano s predpostavko, da temeljna preobrazba ocenjevanja v praksi pomeni spremembo paradigme. Za opis te spremembe uporabljamo paradigmo, ki simbolizira vizijo morebitne nove funkcije ocenjevanja ("paradigma alternativnega ocenjevanja," "paradigma ocenjevanja učenčevega napredka", "paradigma ocenjevanja v funkciji učenja" itd.) ali pa vrsto paradigem, ki nakazujejo spremembe v nekaterih elementih ocenjevanja in v drugih procesih, povezanih z ocenjevanjem (sprememba "predmeta paradigme" v "paradigmo dejavnosti", "posameznikove paradigme" v "socialno paradigmo" itd.).

Ob upoštevanju pomena paradigem v njihovem prvotnem smislu smo še ugotovili, da imajo različno poimenovane paradigme pogosto precej sorodne pomeni. Pri drugi metodi, ki smo jo odkrili v literaturi (Aikenhead, 1997), določene kategorije ocenjevanja gledamo preko empirično-analitične, interpretativne in kritično-teoretične znanstvene paradigme. To je trojni sistem kategorij za opis ocenjevanja, v katerem te paradigme služijo kot izhodišče: predmet in namen ocenjevanja, tipični in najboljši načini ocenjevanja, posebnosti ocenjevanja in načinov za doseganje veljavnosti.

Ne govorimo o tem, da se zelena projekcija ocenjevanja v prihodnosti opisuje in razvija z uporabo koncepta paradigme, ampak o uporabi teh treh paradigem kot referenčnega okvira, s pomočjo katerega se lahko ocenjevanje in vrednotenje v izobraževanju celovito preučuje v določenem kulturnozgodovinskem kontekstu, v vrsti različnih tipov ocenjevanja, njihovih kombinacij in pomenov, v raznih oblikah vzgojno-izobraževalnega dela, v vidnih in skritih nacionalnih izobraževalnih politikah.

V nadaljevanju našega prispevka smo v ta sistem kategorij, vzet iz literature, vključili dodatne kategorije in jih uporabili za identifikacijo in opis treh vrst ocenjevanja: z empirično-analitično, interpretativno in s kritično-teoretično paradigmo.

Vsaka vrsta prakse je opisana v 7 točkah, ki predstavljajo splošne didaktične predpostavke (koncept vzgoje in izobraževanja, znanje, spretnosti in učenje, tip izobraževalnega programa, položaj in vloga učiteljev in učencev pri poučevanju in učenju) in v 10 točkah, ki predstavljajo predmet, značilnosti, organizacijo in namen ocenjevanja (cilji spremljanja in ocenjevanja, predmet ocenjevanja, kontekst ocenjevanja, izhodiščna točka za veljavnost, funkcija ocenjevanja, postopki in tehnika ocenjevanja, oblika zahtev, oblika kazalnikov dosežkov, vloga učencev in učiteljev pri ocenjevanju, položaj ocenjevanja v strukturi izobraževalnega procesa).

Prepričani smo, da je vsako pedagoško delo v določenem kulturnem in zgodovinskem kontekstu posebno in edinstveno. V našem opisu gre za zelo ostro označevanje pozicije v teh elementih – za nadaljnje preučevanje možnosti uporabe znanstvenih paradigem.

Naši opisi so pokazali:

- da so izhodiščne kategorije (Aikenhead, 1997) uporabne za identifikacijo različnih vrst ocenjevanja;
- da se izhodiščni sistem lahko dopolni z drugimi vrstami in da je nekatere od njih lahko razčleniti (kar je odvisno od namena, za katerega se uporablja okvir);

- *da se vsi podatki o vrednotenju na eni ravni vidijo kot del drugih didaktičnih izbir;*
- *da se pedagoško-didaktično bistvo z različnimi koncepti vrednotenja lahko v celoti obravnava v kontekstu drugih elementov, ki sestavljajo njegovo uporabo;*
- *da preko podatkov o rabi lahko spremljamo, kam je usmerjeno in kako se spreminja ocenjevanje v izobraževanju.*

Na podlagi primerov tovrstne uporabe lahko sklepamo, da tak referenčni okvir omogoča celovito in analitično presojo ocenjevanja, razumevanje pomena različnih pogledov na ocenjevanje, preučitev potenciala reforme ocenjevanja v izobraževanju in razmislek o tem, od česa vsega je odvisno spreminjanje prakse ocenjevanja v procesu reforme. V zvezi z reformo ocenjevanja so podatki iz tega prispevka pokazali, da spremembe v načinu ocenjevanja brez sprememb drugih procesov in odnosov pri pouku ne morejo imeti značaja temeljnih sprememb. Specifičnost tega okvira omogoča vpogled v paradigmatško ujemanje vseh didaktičnih izbir pri pouku.

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