

IMPROVING TEACHER EVALUATION PRACTICES: ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS' COMPETENCE TO IDENTIFY PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Aim. In the paper the authors present results of piloting the tools for assessment of a teacher's competence to identify psychological and social aspects of learners, which is one of ten key competences to which they developed sets of evaluation tools. Among the designed tools were: observation *Assessment Sheets* for the evaluators, *Self-Assessment Sheets* for the observed teachers, and *Record Sheets* to carry out subsequent *Post Observation Interviews*. The aim of the piloting was to answer two research questions: RQ1: *Are teachers aware of and do they reflect on psychological and social aspects of learner(s) learning?* RQ2: *Does the self-reflective assessment of teachers differ from the assessment carried out by observers? If yes, then to what extent?*

Methods. The pilot research sample consisted of 62 observed teachers and 62 observers from various types of schools in different cities in Slovakia. To answer the two research questions, the authors analysed research data collected from the assessment tools for the stated competence from this research sample.

Results. Results of the piloting showed that teachers are good at pedagogical communication, have a relatively good overview of psychological, and to some extent also social aspects influencing the teaching process. In self-assessment sheets of teachers, verbal comments were most commonly focused on respecting the learners' personality traits, individual working pace, positive classroom climate and forms of praise.

Conclusion. Based on the above-mentioned findings, the authors point out applicability of the created assessment tools for evaluation teachers' competence to identify psychological and social aspects of learners.

Keywords: teacher, competence, evaluation, assessment tool, learner

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of teacher competencies consists of different elements, and it should be based on a set of particular activities. The stated means that if is, or should be, a very complex process, which includes assessment of different factors of a teacher's performance. Moreover, evaluation is a very personal, emotionally sensitive matter, especially if evaluating teaching activities and behaviour of teachers are a part of it. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009) points out that the success of teacher evaluation system depends to large extent on thorough preparation and training of observers. Observers should be teachers with theoretical knowledge and awareness of educational evaluation methodologies, concepts and practices in ensuring the quality of education. They should also be aware of the psychological aspects of assessment, have experience with quantitative assessment ratings and be skilled in evaluation communication and feedback provision.

Contrary to approaches used in most of (West) European countries, having already a long-term tradition of official evaluation of teacher competencies, in Slovakia such evaluation has not been used to be done with focus on some specific situations. Usually, it is done as a global evaluation of teachers' personality, i.e. as a global assessment of their competence to be "a good teacher" (Auzina, 2018; Kobylarek, 2019; Lomnický et al., 2017; Magová et al., 2016). That was the reason why within the frame of the project *Evaluation of teacher competences*, a group of experts in subjects' didactics at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (Slovakia) started to deal with the stated issue and started to develop a new model of teacher evaluation. The new model has been based on a stratified approach to the teacher competence phenomenon (Gadušová et al., 2018). For this purpose, as the most significant competencies of a teacher competence profile the following competencies were identified (Gadušová & Hašková, 2017; Hašková et al., 2016):

- ability to identify learners' developmental and individual characteristics;
- ability to identify psychological and social aspects of learner's learning;
- ability to develop learners' personality and their competences;
- ability to create and maintain positive atmosphere in the class;
- ability to plan and implement teacher's own professional development;
- subject related professionalism of teachers;
- ability to plan and manage educational process;
- ability to use the variety of teaching aids in educational process;
- ability to choose and use relevant teaching approaches, methods, techniques and forms;
- ability to evaluate learners learning achievements.

Subsequently, the team of the experts designed and developed three instruments for observation and evaluation of each of the ten identified key competences. Among the designed tools were: observation sheets for observers (evaluators) – so called *Assessment Sheets*, observation sheets for the observed teachers – so called *Self-Assessment Sheets*, and *Record Sheets* to carry out subsequent *Post-Observation Interviews* (Gadušová, et al., 2020; Gadušová et al., 2019). The paper presents main results of a pilot school application of the *Assessment sheets* and *Self-Assessment Sheets* developed for the second of the above stated ten key competencies of a teacher, i.e. the competency related to teacher ability to identify psychological and social aspects of learner's learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of teacher competencies and the requirements related to their competence profile, or to their professional preparation and performance, has received a significant attention in the Central European context since the 1990s (Baumert

& Kunter, 2006; Belz & Siegrist, 2015; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2002; Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Garet et al., 2001; Grossman, 1990; Hagevik et al., 2010; Hrmo & Turek, 2003; Kasáčová & Kosová, 2007; Kasáčová et al., 2006; Kleickmann et al., 2013; Veal & MaKinster, 1999; and others). However, within this context, questions regarding the development of assessment tools have only received marginal attention. The situation changed after the creation of the European Qualifications Framework (European Commission, 2006; European Commission, 2008), which defined key competencies for lifelong learning. In line with the key competencies for lifelong learning, the member states of the European Union have focused not only on the competencies of teachers themselves but also on the methods and procedures for their assessment. Research has begun to focus on the development and standardisation of assessment tools for teacher competencies (Gadušová et al., 2017; Gold & Holodynski, 2015; Lukas et al., 2014; Moreno-Murcia et al., 2015; Pavlov, 2013; Šarníková, 2012), or on the professional evaluation of teachers through training (Commission of the European Communities, 2000; De Wever et al., 2016; European Commission, 2012; Kuhn, et al., 2016; Schleicher, 2012; and others), as well as on measuring the quality and effectiveness of their educational programs (Blömeke et al., 2011; Kleickmann et al., 2013; Scheerens & Blömeke, 2016; Šarníková, 2010;). Nevertheless, issue of teacher competencies with focus on their evaluation still does not belong to preferred areas of the educational research, and besides general observation sheets used in frame of a common official teaching observation, there is a lack of specifically on purpose created tools for assessing the quality and outcomes of teachers' educational activities. We perceive this fact as a significant weakness of the educational environments in international context, as an objective, correctly carried assessment of teachers' can to a great extent support their performance, pedagogical success and good teaching achievements (reflected in learning results achieved by their pupils or students). A unique contribution to this issue is the monograph "Assessment of Teacher Competencies in European and Slovak Contexts" (Magová et al., 2016), in which the authors point out the differences in national education policies regarding the identification of competencies teachers should possess. The variability of opinions concerns primarily the description of teacher competencies in terms of their definition, political regulation, function, the implementation and use of assessment tools. Educational systems in European countries differ, for example, in the extent of the description of the required teacher competencies, as well as whether these competencies should be developed in pre-service teacher education or whether their increase and improvement is the issue to be tackled in continuous professional development of teachers, i.e. in their life-long learning (Sokolová, 2014). Results of research studies show that the most significant motivation factors, for which usually teachers are willing to participate in professional development courses, can be grouped in three dimensions. The first of them is the dimension of the teacher's own personality

(teacher's personal interest in the topics to be taught, his/her personal interest or desire to be acquainted with new knowledge, ways of planning and organising his/her teaching practices, desire for practical enhancement of his/her instructional skills, interest in getting a support for innovation, or redesigning the ways of his/her teaching, teacher's expectations related to his/her desire for social contacts with colleagues and achieving certain stimulation from them, and last but not least teacher's ambition to be professionally promoted) (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; Bicaj & Berisha, 2013; Fütterer et al., 2023; Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014; Kao et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2019; Rzejak et al., 2014), social contact, social stimulation, and external expectation (Kao et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2019; Rzejak et al., 2014). The second dimension is related to the school policy of the school management, and the level on which the leaders of the concerned school are supporting this kind of teachers' activities, mainly with respect to the level of the offered individualised support (Grochalska, 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). And finally, the third dimension reflects the features of offered kinds of further education (of the CPD courses), and the level on which participation in it is somehow „comfortable” for teachers. This dimension takes into consideration such aspects as are the organisation form of the course (online versus face to face forms, location and timing of the offered courses, and acceptability of its costs for teachers). At the same time there can be found also some other interesting findings. One of them is, e.g., that teachers working at schools located either in suburban or rural areas attend continuing professional development events less often than those working in urban schools (Wei et al., 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2022). Another one is that teachers seeking practical enhancement are participating in CPD courses focused rather on pedagogical skills training than on subject knowledge or school management content. Those whose who prefer courses on school management are rather teachers focused on their occupational promotion. And as regards the teachers preferring face-to-face organisation of the CPD courses to their online forms, these are teachers who are motivated to take part in further education because of the social interaction aspects of this education (Richter, E. et al., 2022, 2024; Szkolak-Stępień, 2017).

Specifically issue of teachers' competence to assess learners' psychological and social needs according to their characteristics is a topic which e. g. Charly Pinalas-Abaton and Ninfa Osias (2025), Abdul Wahid, Siti Asiah, Miftahul Huda, Arkam Lahiya and Najamuddin Petta Solong (2023), or Neil John Bogo and Maico Demi Aperocho (2023) deal with. While John Morgan (Morgan, 2019) deals with psychological factors in frame of general education, Martin Mulder and Judith Gulikers (2011) do it in frame of vocational or professional education (Mulder & Gulikers, 2011).

In general, this kind of competences represents a key part of the teacher's competence profile, as the success of the teaching process depends on his ability to decide which method of the given subject matter explanation would be

the best for the learners, based on his knowing their psychological characteristics. Results of their research confirms that there is quite a lot of teachers who do not understand the psychological characteristic of learners what subsequently causes that the pupils or students do not take the learning process seriously or they are bored, fatigued and weak in perceiving and understanding the presented subject matter.

Teachers' Competence to Identify Psychological and Social Aspects of Learners

To assess teacher competence does not mean only to „measure” scope to which a teacher masters the subject matter, he/she is teaching. It means also to encourage his self-development, as it is above discussed (Wilkerson & Lang, 2007). At the same time, teacher competence is a multi-dimensional construct (Baumert & Kunter, 2006; Carreker & Boulware, 2015; Redding, 2014), so to assess teacher competence means to determine carefully the focus of the assessment, as it is e.g. in our case, the competence to identify psychological and social aspects of learners. The data collected in frame of a teacher assessment should serve as a platform for creation of his/her further professional development and training program (Silberman, 2006).

Teachers' Competence to Identify Psychological and Social Aspects of Learners

Teachers' awareness of psychological and social aspects influencing learning belongs the competencies that have a significant impact on the effectiveness of pedagogical communication and instruction, on teacher-student interaction, thus directly contributing to the success or failure of the educational process. Key aspects of this competence were incorporated into the *Assessment Sheet* for observers (school managers) and in similar form also into *Self-Assessment Sheet* for the observed teachers. The structure of the *Assessment Sheet* for observers includes two main components formulated as questions:

- *To what extent did the teacher respect psychological aspects related to learners learning?*
- *To what extent did the teacher respect the social aspects related to learners' learning?*

Psychological aspects were the subject of 15 scaled questions, primarily aimed at assessing the teacher's ability to apply them in practice:

- the most important principles of learning (motivation, feedback, transfer, revision);
- relevant pedagogical communication (accuracy of asking questions, clarity of explanation, respect for learners' psychological characteristics, pedagogical tact, empathy);

- effective use of teaching methods and organisational forms of work (varying methods, employing innovative approaches and procedures);
- development of the teacher's diagnostic competence (understanding and respecting different learning styles and strategies of learners);
- develop learners' creativity and critical thinking.

Social aspects of learning were the subject of 9 questions focusing mainly on:

- teacher's attitude towards student(s) (authoritative, accommodating, indifferent, other);
- understanding of social interactions in the classroom and teacher's ability to positively influence group dynamics (ways of addressing learners, awareness of learner(s)' social status, ways of engaging learners in activities, potential (personal) preferences of the teacher in pedagogical communication with learners);
- ways how the teacher reacts to positive and negative learner behaviour;
- appropriacy of non-verbal behaviour of the teacher in the process of social interaction.

Self-Assessment Sheet for teachers was designed with the similar content aimed at identical problem areas related to psychological and social aspects of learning as in the *Assessment Sheet*. The only difference was that the questions were formulated introspectively. In both sheets, most questions were scaled numerically from 1 to 4 (1 = yes; 2 = mostly yes; 3 = mostly no; 4 = no). At the end of the scale, there was also an option "N/A" in case the observed behaviour did not occur during the lesson. Answers to questions where a numerical scale couldn't be applied were to be marked with an x sign by both observers and the observed. Some questions were open-ended, and both observers and the observed were asked to briefly express their thoughts verbally. The last question in both types of assessment sheets had a summarising character and prompted the observer and the observed to briefly comment on the overall course of the lesson in the context of the assessed competence. At the end of the teacher's *Self-Assessment Sheet*, the observer had to state whether they agreed with the teacher's self-reflective assessment and provide suggestions or recommendations for improving the observed competence. The observed teacher also had to express their agreement or disagreement with the observer's conclusions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the presented research was to answer the following two research questions RQ1 and RQ2:

- RQ1: *Are teachers aware of and do they reflect on psychological and social aspects of learner(s) learning?*
- RQ2: *Does the self-reflective assessment of teachers differ from the assessment carried out by observers? If yes, then to what extent?*

To answer the first question (RQ1), the data from *Assessment Sheets* for observers were analysed and interpreted. The second question (RQ2) was answered based on the comparison of the collected data from *Assessment Sheets* for observers and *Self-Assessment Sheet* for teachers. Both sheets are presented in the Appendixes A and B.

To verify applicability of all of the developed tools for evaluation of teacher competence related to the identified 10 teacher's key competences, in frame of their pilot application all of these tools were distributed to all types of schools (primary, lower and upper secondary) all over Slovakia. This means that the head teachers of the schools obtained the sets of *Assessment Sheets*, *Self-Assessment Sheets*, as well as *Record Sheets* for the subsequent *Post-Observation Interviews*, to evaluate the above stated ten key competences of teacher competence profile. The head teachers could decide which competence tools they will use for piloting in their school.

Piloting the tools for the competence, "Identification of psychological and social aspects of learners", was chosen by a total number of 62 observers from various types of schools in different cities in Slovakia. The subsequent analysis and interpretation of the collected data from the assessment tools for this competence from 62 observed teachers and 62 observers was the basis for answering the two research questions.

Out of the total of 62 observed teachers, 51 were women and 11 were men. Among the evaluated teachers, 11 were novice teachers with less than 4 years of teaching experience, while 51 belonged to the group of experienced teachers with a range of 8 to 36 years of teaching experience. In terms of school type, 31 of the observed teachers worked in primary and lower secondary schools, 21 in various upper secondary vocational schools, 8 in grammar schools, and two did not specify their workplace.

For the data obtained by the questionnaire method, we first verified their reliability, i.e. we determined the reliability, which describes the influence of random errors on the test result and also whether the result is reproducible. In our case, for the accuracy or reliability of the data, we calculated the reliability using Cronbach's alpha, which is clearly a determination of reliability (as an internal principle of the test) and is defined by the relationship:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k \text{var}(Y_j)}{\text{var}(Y)} \right)$$

where k is the number of items in the test (questions), $\text{var}(Y_j)$ is the variance of the points of the j -th item (question), and $\text{var}(Y)$ is the variance of the raw test scores. Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1. The calculated coefficient values, close to 1, indicate a strong linear dependence and thus the influence of random errors on the test result is smaller. In our case, we calculated the Cronbach's alpha value of 0.914 in the STATISTICA program, which indicates a very high reliability of the data obtained by the questionnaire method.

Then we calculated the average values of the answers to all questionnaire items (Fig.1).

The statistical significance of the differences between the *self-reflective assessment of teachers and the assessment carried out by observers* in the answers to the particular questionnaire items was verified using selected statistical methods.

Since the assumption of a normal distribution of the observed features was not met, we used the non-parametric method Wilcoxon two-sample test (Markechová et al., 2011) to verify the research hypothesis Q2. The Wilcoxon two-sample test (In the literature and in some statistical programs, the Wilcoxon two-sample test can also be found under the name Mann–Whitney test) is a non-parametric analogue of the parametric *t*-test.

In our case, the first sample set is the results obtained by the self-reflective evaluation of teachers and the second is the evaluation carried out by observers. The results of the selected area of the questionnaire (total score) of both groups of respondents represent the implementation of two mutually independent random selections from continuous distributions. We implemented the Wilcoxon two-sample test in the STATISTICA program. After entering the input data, we received the following results in the computer output: the value of the test criterion *Z* of the Wilcoxon two-sample test and the probability value *p* for each of the monitored areas of the questionnaire.

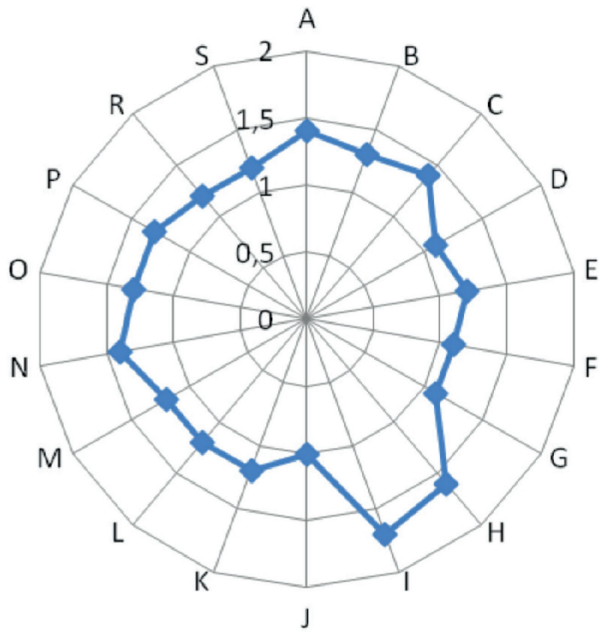
We evaluated the test for each question in the questionnaire using the *p*-value (*p* is the probability of making an error when rejecting the hypothesis being tested). If the calculated probability value *p* is small enough ($p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$), we reject the hypothesis being tested (at the significance level of 0.05 or 0.01). Since the calculated probability value *p* is a large number, we cannot reject the hypothesis being tested.

RESULTS

Analysis and Discussion of the Data Collected from the Assessment Sheets (RQ1)

The data analysis from the sheets for observers showed that the observers did not encounter even a single case on the side of the observed teachers which would identify such drawback in reflecting psychological and social aspects that would lead to overall negative assessment of a teacher. In all the scaled questions, the worst rating was a 3 (rather no). The results obtained after averaging the scaled questions separately for the observed teachers' mastery of reflecting psychological and social aspects of learners are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Analysis of Teachers' Respect for Psychological and Social Aspects of Learners (Observer's Assessment)



Note. Psychological aspects of learners learning: A – Was the teacher able to motivate learners sufficiently? B – Did the teacher pay enough attention to revision and fixation of the subject material? C – Was the teacher able to explain to learners the purpose of the presented material and what was expected from them? D – Did the teacher show enough patience? Was he/she willing, for example, to explain the material once again, answer learners' questions? E – Was the teacher able to formulate adequately demanding and unambiguous questions? F – Was the teacher able to instruct learners understandably, were the tasks appropriate to their age, the topic being covered, and the learners' intellectual level? G – Were the learners given enough time to complete the tasks, to think about their answers during testing? H – Did the teacher avoid interrupting learners' answers? I – Did the teacher use a variety of teaching methods? J – Did the teacher innovate and alternate organisational forms of work? K – Did the teacher approach learners with pedagogical tact? L – Was the teacher talk engaging for learners? M – Was the teacher able to empathise with the learners? N – Did the teacher develop creativity and critical thinking of learners in the process of presenting new material as well as in the process of practicing it? *Social aspects of learners learning:* O – Did the teacher understand social interactions in the class and was he/she able to work with them relevantly and meaningfully? P – Did the teacher address the learners using their names? R – Did the teacher involve all the learners in activities evenly? S – Did the teacher use adequate non-verbal communication in the teacher-student communication process?

Source. Own research.

From the graphic summarisation of the results presented in Figure 1, it follows that the evaluated teachers have the ability to approach learners adequately. The highest rating (lowest average values) was achieved in terms of pedagogical tact, the ability to clearly formulate tasks appropriate to the age, intellectual level of learners, and the topic covered. Learners are provided with sufficient space to complete tasks and assignments, or to think about the answer during the oral examination. The teachers can engage learners with their talk, they can be empathetic and try to develop creativity and critical thinking in their learners. If we were to compile a hierarchical list of teacher characteristics that observers rated most positively and most frequently, we would get the following order:

- patience;
- respect for learners work pace;
- creating a positive classroom atmosphere;
- willingness to repeat questions;
- empathy;
- objective assessment;
- pedagogical tact;
- differentiated (individual) approach to students;
- encouragement through praise;
- adequate language use.

Less frequent were the statements, preferring in the evaluation the fact that the teacher is not autocratic, does not ridicule lower achievers, positively affects the cohesion of the learners, supports healthy competition, does not raise their voice, does not show subjective moods, respects the diversity of learners' opinions, has natural authority, and does not interfere with learners to answer. In the verbal comments of respondents, observers also mentioned specific pedagogical situations and their solutions. As an illustration, we present two in which the teacher reacts to the learner's unpreparedness due to absence from the previous lesson: "The student was unable to grasp the subject matter. The teacher calmly assessed the situation – it was a student who was absent. He briefly repeated the subject matter so that this learner could also continue." "The teacher tolerated the fact that the learner forgot to apologise before the lesson started and gave him the opportunity to catch up and be tested in the next class."

In one evaluation, the observer also mentioned a specific way in which the teacher fixed the covered material. We find it very inspiring: "The teacher gave space for learners—the most skilled ones—to review the material from previous lessons in the role of a teacher."

On average, they scored worse in the variability of the application of teaching methods (1.6) and in the use and dynamics of alternation of innovative

forms of work (1.7). Due to the low representation of evaluated novice teachers compared to evaluated teachers with several years of experience, it was not possible statistically compare the evaluation of these two groups. Nevertheless, part of the evaluation sheets document that a direct ratio does not always apply—the longer the practice, the better the teaching. It is confirmed that some teachers with many years of experience are more inclined to slip into routine forms of working with students, apply only “classical”, proven teaching methods and do not sufficiently use the didactic potential resulting from the variability of their use. In this context, we consider the assessment sheets of one observer, who evaluated two teachers with diametrically different lengths of experience (a novice teacher with one year of experience and a teacher with 35 years of experience), from a lower secondary school to be symptomatic. In the parameters mapping the approach to the learner, the novice teacher was on a scale of 1 = yes—2 = rather yes, the rating 2 figured primarily in questions focused on sufficient patience and providing adequate space for the learner to answer. In the area of using different teaching methods, the novice teacher was evaluated exclusively with the highest level of score of 1 = yes. A teacher with many years of experience was evaluated exactly the opposite: their approach to learners—exclusively 1 = yes and in the area of application of different teaching methods and procedures and in innovative forms of work 3 = rather no. In this case, the differences in the positives and negatives of the length of school practice can be documented. A novice teacher (in this case, actually a fresh graduate) is still aware of diverse teaching methods, knows innovative forms of work and eagerly tries to apply them in practice, but is not always patient enough and, as a rule, still lacks the experience to be able to reliably estimate individual work pace of learners. On the contrary, a teacher with many years of experience (mainly in lower secondary school) is stocked with patience, knows and respects the learners work pace, but usually does not show enough desire for experimentation and sticks to teaching methods that have been proven over the years. The questions, conceived as a possibility to choose from several variants, were aimed at respecting the attitudes of learners and their learning styles according to the sensory preferences of the learner and taking into account the internal strategy of the learner when applying learning styles in the field of psychological factors. The data collected for answering the 2 research questions and their processing showed that 21% of teachers take into consideration auditory, 29% visual and 18% audiovisual learning style. A total of 30% of teachers take into account the combination of several learning styles, out of which 16% combine two styles, 8% combine three styles and 5% reflect all styles. 5% of observers were unable to evaluate the two questions. Either they didn't comment on them at all, or they marked the answer N/A, i.e. cannot assess and stated in their verbal comment that they were unable to evaluate these parameters within one hour. When considering the learner's internal strategy

while applying learning styles, the evaluators stated that 71% of learners had an in-depth strategy, 15% a strategic one, 5% a kinetic one, and 4% a combined strategy. 5% of the evaluators were unable to evaluate what internal strategy the teacher takes into account.

In the area of quantifiable parameters for the social factors of learning, the teachers achieved comparable scores to some psychological parameters, but from the verbal comments it follows that the evaluators were not always able to evaluate this parameter objectively on the basis of one observed lesson (in this sub-competency the most evaluations of the type N/A). At the same time, for the awareness of social interactions in the classroom, there were the most evaluations of 2 = rather yes and 3 = rather no. In several assessment sheets, we observed a discrepancy between the numerical and overall evaluation. The numerical evaluation was 1 = yes, but in the comment the evaluator stated: the teacher is aware of social interactions in the class, but s/he does not apply this awareness in the pedagogical process. It is difficult to imagine how the observer found out that the teacher is aware of the social dynamics in the class, if they did not make use of them during the lesson at all. Overall, it seems that teachers have greater reserves and more problems to take social aspects into account in the class than taking psychological aspects into account. For the area of social aspects in learning, the assessment sheets featured some items in which the observers had a choice of several options. Such questions included the dominant relationship of the teacher in relation to the learner. After statistical data processing, we can say that up to 79% of the observers marked the teacher's attitude to learners as welcoming and accommodating, 14% identified it as authoritative and 3% as indifferent. 4% of the observers supplemented the presented options with two other characteristics (helpful and democratic), which, although outside the professional classifications of types of teachers, probably characterized the teacher's attitude the best in these specific pedagogical situations.

The way in which the teacher addresses the learner corresponds to the overall attitude of the teacher towards the learner. Absolute majority of observers (87%) stated that teachers addressed students by their first name, 10% addressed them by their last name, and 3% choose a "depersonalized" personal pronoun. The fact that teachers from lower secondary schools had the largest representation among the types of schools (as stated in our assessment sheets) is probably responsible for the high percentage of addressing learners by their first names. The numerically scaled answers included the question on whether the teacher involved the learners in the activity evenly. Its concretisation is a more detailed description of whether and which groups of learners the teacher prefers to engage in different activities. The statistical data processing showed that 44% of teachers engage primarily those students who raise their hands to answer teacher's questions, 8% of teachers prefer involving the so-called class leaders, 15% of teachers activate pas-

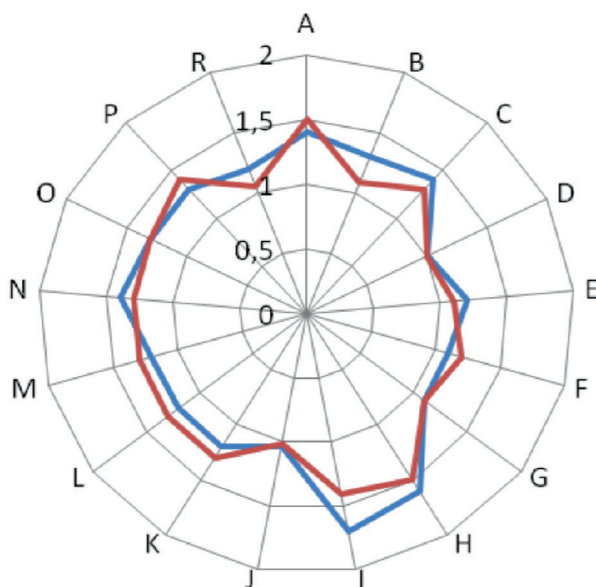
sive pupils and 4% of teachers interact mainly with learners at the front desks. Other observers stated that teachers did not prefer any group of students (8%), or considered all students equally active (2%), and in one case, the teacher paid the most attention to an integrated student. In a somewhat surprising manner, 19% of observers either ignored this question or marked it as N/A, though in this case, a simple observation would suffice for an answer. We consider answers to the last two questions as a very important part of the assessment: In what way the teacher positively appreciates learner behaviour? and In what way the teacher reacts to negative learner behaviour? From the aspect of forms of positive assessment, the statistical analysis shows that 61% of teachers use oral praise, 21% follow up on the learner's idea, and 17% use the learner's example or suggestion. One of the observers used the column differently and stated that the teacher rewarded the student's positive behaviour with applause. There was also one teacher who simply ignored the student's positive behaviour. The teachers reacted to the negative learner behaviour in different ways. Statistically, the most frequently represented were warnings (28%), ignoring misbehaviour (24%), immediate punishment of the learner (10%) and punishment with a delay (4%). A relatively large number of observers (18%) stated that negative learner behaviour did not occur in the lesson, and 13% did not give any answer. Sporadically (3%), other forms of reaction to the learner's negative behaviour occurred in the evaluations: the teacher asked what the problem was, talked to the learner after the lesson, or did not punish the learner at all.

Comparison and Discussion of the Data Collected from the Assessment Sheets and Self-Assessments Sheets (RQ2)

In the context of the second research question (RQ2), it was necessary first to map how teachers assessed themselves (data from the Self-Assessment Sheets of teachers) and then compare the extent to which their self-assessment corresponds to the assessment of the teacher who observed them during the lesson (Assessment Sheet filled in by the observer), or whether they tend to have a stricter attitude towards their own work, or vice versa, whether teachers subjectively see the results of their pedagogical activities in a better light than their observers. If differences were identified in the assessment of the observer and the observed teacher, we were interested in which parameters the teacher evaluated their performance better than the observer. For better clarity, the results of the comparison (percentage expression of averages from both assessment perspectives) are graphically presented in parallel in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Comparison of the Analysis of the Teacher Self-Reflection on the Respect of the Psychological and Social Aspects of the Learner's Learning and their Evaluation Carried by the Observer (i.e. Self-Assessment vs. Observer's Assessment)



Note. Blue line: Evaluation by observers; Red line: Self-assessment of the observed teachers. The items A – S are essentially identical to those in Figure 1 (evaluation by observers), but in the case of self-assessment, their formulation was modified: *Psychological aspects of learners learning*: A – Was I able to motivate learners sufficiently? B – Did I pay enough attention to revision and fixation of the presented material? C – Was I able to explain the purpose of the taught material and what I expected from the learners? D – Did I show enough patience? Was I, for example, willing to explain the material once again, answer learners' questions? E – Was I able to formulate adequately demanding and unambiguous questions? F – Was I able to instruct learners understandably, were the tasks appropriate to their age, the topic being covered, and the learners' intellectual level? G – Did I provide learners with enough time to complete the tasks, to think about their answers during testing? H – Did I avoid interrupting learners' answers? I – Did I use a variety of teaching methods? J – Did I innovate and alternate organisational forms of work? K – Did I approach learners with pedagogical tact? L – Was my talk engaging for learners? M – Was I able to empathise with the learners? N – Did I develop learners' creativity and critical thinking in the process of presenting new material as well as in the process of practicing it? *Social aspects of learners learning*: O – Did I recognise social interactions in the class and was I able to work with them relevantly and meaningfully? P – Did I address learners using their names? R – Did I involve all learners in activities evenly?

Source. Own research.

Figure 2 illustrates that in most parameters, the evaluations of the teacher by the observer and their self-assessment differ. Out of the total number of numerically evaluable questions in psychological and social aspects (17), in 15 questions, i.e. in 88%, the averages score values differ, either in the observer's more critical view of the evaluated teacher or in the more tolerant view of the evaluated one towards their own pedagogical work compared to the average from the observer's assessment sheets. If we separately compare the evaluations and self-evaluations concerning psychological factors, the differences show 92% and social factors—75%. However, the comparison is much more interesting if it is done from the point of view of comparison of more critical vs. more tolerant evaluation in both evaluated areas. Overall, in psychological and social aspects, observers evaluated the teacher more critically than their self-assessment was in 6 out of 16 items, which represents 38%. The teacher's self-assessments were more tolerant compared to the observers in 10 items, which represents 62%. In two items, i.e. 12%, the assessment averages matched. In psychological aspects, teachers were more tolerant towards themselves in 7 out of 13 items, which is rounded up to 54%, and in social aspects, in 3 out of 4 items, which makes up 75%. The more positive self-assessment of teachers in terms of the number of items (differences in scores of different items are not dramatically different and range from 0.94 to 3 points) is somewhat surprising because from a psychological point of view, self-evaluations tend to judge their own work more strictly. From the data comparison in assessment and parallel self-assessment sheets, we selected the total number of different evaluations in each of the addressed items, regardless of whether the difference in evaluation was in favor or against the evaluated one. Subsequently, we determined the percentage share of such evaluations in which teachers self-assessed themselves better than they were assessed by the observers. Here, we only briefly state the percentage share of more positive self-assessments in each of the individual questions, separately for psychological and social aspects of learner learning. We do not list wording of the questions in full, only list the number of the relevant item:

- Psychological aspects: 1 – 33%, 2 – 67%, 3 – 55%, 4 – 44%, 5 – 53%, 6 – 43%, 7 – match, 8 – 53%, 9 – 64%, 10 – 51%, 11 – 35%, 12 – 43%, 13 – 37%;
- Social aspects: 1 – 62%, 2 – match, 3 – 57%, 4 – 75%.

The most significant differences in the evaluation of psychological aspects were evident in question No. 2 (in assessment sheets) / B (in Fig. 1 and 2): *“Did I pay enough attention to revision and fixation of the subject material?”* It is interesting that the issue of the subject material revision and fixation was often stated as a critical comment in the observers' recommendations. However, in the verbal comments in the self-assessment sheets, teachers did not mention this phase of the teaching process at all, and very often indicated the rating 1 = yes in the numerical evaluation scales. We observed a relatively large discrepancy between the observers and the observed in question No. 9 (in assessment sheets) / J (in Fig. 1 and 2): *“Did I innovate and alternate*

organisational forms of work?” The dynamics of alternating organisational forms of work also appeared several times in the observers’ recommendations as the aspect in which teachers still have reserves. Positive evaluations also occur more frequently in the observers’ comments, while they occur only very sporadically in the verbal comments of the evaluated teachers. As an illustration, however, we include a comment from one of the self-assessment sheets, which not only documents functional alternation of activities but also provides inspiring reflection of socio-psychological aspects in teaching:

I primarily consider psychological and social aspects in learner learning, especially when assigning various tasks during classes. Hyperactive learners often solve tasks at an interactive whiteboard, where they have to use motor skills, while introverted learners often work independently on additional tasks or in teams as ideas initiators. Extroverted learners often present in front of the class. In the given class, there are also many Roma learners, whose cognitive abilities – often conditioned by their social environment at home, I take into account. I assign for them such tasks in which they can experience a sense of success.

CONCLUSIONS

If we briefly summarise the results of the assessment of the teacher competence ability to identify psychological and social aspects of a learner’s learning, we can conclude that teachers are good at pedagogical communication, have a relatively good overview of psychological and to some extent also social aspects influencing the teaching process. This is evidenced in many of the observers’ conclusions, such as: “A positive classroom climate prevailed during the lesson, the learners worked joyfully and with healthy competitiveness. The teacher often used praise as a motivational tool, allowing students to experience the joy of their work. It can be stated that the teacher understands and fully respects the psychological and social aspects of learning in the educational process. Positive communication and a pleasant classroom climate prevail in the classroom. Well-chosen motivation, diverse, attractive methods, and forms of work support learners’ interest in solving the set tasks. The pedagogical mastery and tact of the teacher motivate learners to improve their personal performance.” or

The teacher accentuates learners’ abilities, does not allow mutual invectives among learners, does not immediately punish minor behavioural deviations, does not show subjective moods, learners feel empathy, belief in their capabilities, individuality. The teacher can control themselves.

Certain reserves, as we have already mentioned, resulted only from insufficient use of the variability of teaching methods, and an alternation of different forms of work with pupils. However, many observers paid little attention to writing recommendations to the observed teachers, which would help them improve their pedagogical activities.

From the recommendations listed in the assessment sheets, we select the most frequent comments of the observers:

Didactic approach: take into consideration different learning styles, alternate activities because of learners quick fatigue; provide more space for learners' self-realisation when practicing the subject material at the end of the lesson; allocate more time for feedback at the end of the lesson; use time for final revision more effectively; apply more activation forms for the development of critical thinking; use group-work more often, as in group-work individual types of perception and learning styles of learners can best be expressed; accurately formulate lesson objectives; spend less time for material presentation and more for active work; stimulate creativity; incorporate more ICT use into teaching practices.

Psychological-social approach: observe senior colleagues; involve lower achievers more in the teaching process; pay more attention also to less gifted learners; pay attention also to the group of learners considered to be outsiders; make more use of learners' ideas, encourage them to seek answers to unclear questions more often; motivate and positively evaluate passive learners more often; address behavioural deviations promptly; focus on higher motivation; take an interest in and discuss the psychological and social aspects of learners with the class teacher; in cooperation with the class teacher and colleagues who teach more lessons in the class, identify which students have learning difficulties (demonstrate special educational needs in their behaviour).

In self-assessment sheets of teachers, verbal comments were most commonly focused on respecting the learners' personality traits, individual working pace, positive classroom climate, forms of praise, and others. For example: "The learner had time to think about the task, he was praised for solving it correctly. I guided learners with incorrect solutions, the SEN learner was respected, I answered the learner's questions" or

When I saw that a learner could answer my question but needed some time to think, I gave it to them. When, for example, they didn't say everything correctly, I helped them and guided them to come up with the right answer. When I noticed that some learners were sneering I encouraged to pick up where we left off and to join the lesson. In the lesson, I consider it very important to create a pleasant atmosphere, to motivate learners sufficiently – through praise, grades for good learning. I promote good relationships in the class, which influences a positive classroom climate. These factors have a very positive impact on learner learning. I constantly try to understand individual learning style of each learner and educate them in the subject using relevant teaching methods and forms of work while respecting and adhering to the social aspects of student learning. I respected the personality of each learner, gave them space for their self-development, was patient, open, and friendly. I have known the learners for two years, working with them is very demanding, sometimes you have to draw deeply into patience and imagination to get them interested.

Several self-assessment sheets featured the sentence: "If I am aware of psychological and social aspects of learners, I take them into account". In our opinion,

the conditioning approach is not appropriate here, if the teacher is interested in developing and improving the quality of the teaching process. After all, there are plenty of possibilities, means and resources available where the teacher can learn more about their learners.

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