



ROMANIA
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION
THE PISA 2009 NATIONAL CENTER

Recent Developments in Assessment and Examinations in Romania

Input for
The Regional Seminar

"Assessment and Evaluation in South Eastern Europe versus Future Challenges"

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ISSUES:

- A. Latest changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation
- B. Challenges on short term and on long term
- C. Conclusions



A. Latest Changes and Recent Developments in Romanian Evaluation

New normative regulation for the Baccalaureate Examination (18.y.o. high school leaving certification exam)

- ➔ A Government Decision (followed by MO, no. 5507/06.10.2009 referring to *The Methodology...*):
 - ☞ Reduction of the range of subjects to be chosen by the candidate
 - ☞ Assessment of linguistic competences in mother tongue and in foreign languages – done during the second semester of grade XII (not during ordinary exam sessions) – **Tests A, B, C**
 - ☞ The operationalisation of linguistic competences both in foreign languages, and in mother tongue - following closely the CEFR
 - ☞ Assessment of digital competences - done during the second semester of grade XII (not during ordinary exam sessions) – **Test D**
 - ☞ Fewer exams for this cohort – disappearance of **Test F**
 - ☞ For the competence tests (**A, B, C, and D**) the students receive competence certificates and not grades
 - ☞ **Tests A, B, C, D** are marked at school level, by a commission including student's teacher (internal, school-based assessment); **Tests E a) and b)** are externally marked, in evaluation centres



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

1. The New Bacalaureate structure in 2010 (approx. 250.000 candidates):

- ☛ **Test A** – Romanian language – oral communication competence, stimuli-texts entirely functional, not literature-based; 20 min.; models published on Oct.2009 on public website
- ☛ **Test B** – Mother tongue oral communication competence, similar with test A
- ☛ **Test C** – Linguistic competences in a foreign language studied, comprising three parts:
 - written part – 90 minutes
 - oral part – 15 minutes
 - listening comprehension – 20 minutes
- ☛ **Test D** – Digital competences – 60 minutes
- ☛ **Test E** - a) written test, according to profile, choice between Mathematics and History
 - b) written test, choice between:
 - Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Informatics
 - Economics, Geography, Logic, Psychology, Philosophy



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

1. Bacalaureate

Comments:

- ☞ The decision to focus on linguistic and digital competences was possible based on the revised National Curriculum
- ☞ The NC is now constructed around the concept of competence (*knowledge, skills and attitudes*)
- ☞ There is a conceptual coherence between the eight domains of key competences and the curricular areas in the NC
- ☞ The teachers still need training for understanding the process of competence development and assessment
- ☞ A national training programme (DeCeE) for evaluators was accredited by NCCAPE in 2007 for a period of 4 years, aiming at training all evaluators for national examinations



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

1. Bacalaureate

■ **Comments:**

The Romanian Bacalureate is a high-stake examination, with a long tradition, the interest in increasing its quality and value being nation-wide

- **two ordinary sessions, taking place in June-July and August-September**

☞ **implications for the assessment of linguistic and digital competences!**

- **a special session for students participating in contests and international Olympiads , taking place in May**

☞ **implications for maintaining paralelism & standards!**



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

Comments:

- The Bacalaureate Diploma

- Has national recognition
- Allows access to tertiary education (with/ without exam)
- Starting with 2010 will include certificates of linguistic competence and of digital competence actually describing the competences according to CEFR, not only “bare” grades / averages

- For the written tests student performance is described using grades from 10 to 1 (passing grade per subject is 5, average per BAC should not be less than 6)

- The Certificate of professional competence, level III advanced, for the qualifications acquired via the technological route



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

1. Bacalaureate

The “test models” for the New Bacalaureate have been posted on:

<http://subiecte2010.edu.ro/bacalaureat/index.html>



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

2. The National Evaluation Grade 8

In 2009 the politics converged with the educational policies!

1. The political discourse is informed by the OECD programme PISA results in Romania!
2. A top-down decision was taken in September 2009:

Starting with the school year 2009-2010 the National Evaluation at the end of grade VIII will administer tests created following "the model of international standardised tests"



1. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

2. The National Evaluation grade 8

Background of change

- 1. In 2008, for the first time, the PISA 2006 National report published has been referred to by both politicians, and policy makers**
- 2. PISA released items were analysed by the National Commissions on core subjects, as well as by the working groups for the national examinations**
- 3. Some of the recommendations made for revising the National Curriculum for lower secondary education (gymnasium) are based on the PISA frameworks (2000 and 2006)**
- 4. The item writers for the Grade 8 National Evaluation have served as markers in PISA 2009 exercise (field trial and main study)**



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

2. The Grade 8 National Evaluation

Aspects of "the top-down effect":

- ☞ The new legislative package to be adopted (the "Law of National Education") contains references to "**the model of international tests**"
- ☞ Yet, no medium and long term strategy of participation to the international comparative studies can be secured during economic crisis !



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

2. The Grade 8 National Evaluation

The “test models” for the new Grade 8 National Evaluation have been posted on:

http://subiecte2010.edu.ro/Evaluare_Nationala/index.html



A. Latest Changes and recent developments in Romanian Evaluation

3. Institutional changes:

- ☞ The NCCAPE becomes NCAE (*Government Decision No. 1401 from 18.11.2009*)
 - ☞ The new *National Center for Assessments and Examinations* will be responsible for all external evaluations
 - ☞ The National Curriculum will be maintained by The Institute for Educational Sciences
 - ☞ The methodologies for devising textbooks → The IES
 - ☞ The national evaluation of the new textbooks → The NCAE
- New mechanisms of cooperation needed!**



B. Challenges on short term and on long term

- ☞ **Organising pretesting of the new exams:**
 - ☞ **Tests C and D in the Bacalaureate**
 - ☞ **New tests in Grade 8 National Evaluation in Mother tongue and Mathematics**
- ☞ **Designing balanced specification matrices for each exam (what proportion is “new”, what proportion is “old”?)**
- ☞ **Designing the assessment schemes for both exams**
- ☞ **Constructing “valuable” certificates of competence for the Bacalaureate Exam**



B. Challenges on short term and on long term

Pressures:

☞ A new methodology for the recognition of already acquired certificates of competences (ECDL, IELTS, Cambridge, TOEFL, DELF / DALF, Deutsche Diploma, Spanish Language Diploma etc.) is placing a high pressure on the Romanian diplomas & certificates!

☞ Although the Bacalaureate Exam is a high-stake exam, we cannot afford yet further analyses of its results (using IRT for example) in order to establish trends over time or the relationship between subjects, due to logistic reasons:

- ➔ collection of item-level results
- ➔ country coverage
- ➔ large databases



B. Challenges on short term and on long term

Pressures:

In the case of *Grade 8 National Evaluation* the challenges are:

- ☞ On the National Curriculum coverage
- ☞ On the proportion between “old” and “new” elements of the test
- ☞ On pre-testing & piloting design



C. Conclusions

- ☞ The delayed paradigm change from educational inputs to the real outputs is under stakeholder's attention in Romania
- ☞ Although in terms of National Curriculum development the issue of competences has been "sorted out", evaluation is still lagging behind
- ☞ Although "the document called National Curriculum" is established, accessible, mandatory, the true process is left entirely on teachers shoulders




C. Conclusions

☞ The true shift from “assessment of learning” to “assessment for learning” is still an objective to be achieved

☞ The true dimensions of the backwash effect of high stakes examinations on implemented curriculum are estimated as being significant, but no further research is currently conducted yet



C. Conclusions

 Regional cooperation on technical issues like:

- exploring databases of international comparative studies (OECD-PISA, IEA-TIMSS, IEA-PIRLS etc.)

- conducting secondary analyses on common interest problems

→ A way of sharing expertise and of making best use of resources!



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Information regarding

National assessments and examinations in ROMANIA is available on:

www.edu.ro

and

www.cnceip.ro

THANK YOU!

www.cnceip.ro