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Introduction

Wprowadzenie

Most of the articles included in the present issue of "Educatio Nova" focus on the broadly-understood problem of assessment and evaluation, which I take to be a systematic process of data collection, analysis, and verification for the sake of improving the activities that have been undertaken and, ultimately, bringing them to perfection. It will prove exceptionally valuable that the authors come from different countries and, thus, reflect on the assessment issue in their own original ways.

Some of the texts that relate directly to the Polish system of education may as well have a bearing on the role and development of higher education in other parts of the world, such as Africa, for which see Adrianasy Angelo Djistera's *Evolution and Challenges of Higher Education in Madagascar*. As it turns out, the growing availability of higher education has affected quality of education not only in Africa, because lowering university education standards is a problem in Poland as well.

An equally specific and pending issue is addressed by Keiji Sato in his *The Introduction of Reformation of Liberal Arts Education for Dental Students: A Case Example of Health Sciences University of Hokkaido*. The author claims it to be a worldwide trend that the quality of liberal arts education for medical students is marked with dropping standards. The reason for that Keiji Sato finds in the fact that the medical curriculum has not as yet been tailored to meet the changing social needs and expectations.

Poland's new law on higher education (2019), known as Act 2.0 for short, makes the Polish institutions of higher education face now a number of perils

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and challenges. It restructures the academic environment in many spheres so profoundly that one can easily see both drawbacks as much as advantages. As projected in Act 2.0, research, practice, and assessment do certainly go beyond the hitherto abiding parametrization, accreditation, or routine monitoring. Similarly, Act 2.0 attempts to specify anew the dynamicity of an individual's development as well as of the growth of whole universities. It is my conviction that in relation to the Polish system of higher education, the newly-projected evaluation scheme can safely be regarded as an enhancer of development and motivation. Yet, hardly can parametrization and evaluation be considered to be interchangeable notions, with any attempt at putting the two on the same footing being merely futile.

Let us, then, begin with the texts which expose the problem of evaluation. The title that Maria Groenwald has given to her article is quite teasing, if not provocative – *On Selected Aspects of the (In)Validity of "Evaluation" of the Reformed Higher Education*. What the author aims at is a critical analysis of the validity and plausibility of the evaluation scheme as projected in Act 2.0. Based on Samuel Messick's concept of unitary validity, the analysis shows possible effects of the new quality measurement system when applied to institutions of higher education, some of these effects having potentially a pejorative bias and, for example, aiming at disciplining, if not captivating, the researchers, or extending the space of keeping up appearances, or just academic sham.

In *Beyond the Boundaries of Parametrization*, Leszek Korporowicz claims that there is an urgent need to maintain a sharp distinction between that which has come now to be called "evaluation" in Act 2.0 and, on the other hand, "social rationality of evaluation", the latter being rarely exposed in the literature and in research practice. In order to realise how divergent these two concepts of evaluation can be, the author finds it necessary to relate to some other diagnostic means and measures of assessment which, as he argues, should never be confused with the evaluation as it is understood in Act 2.0.

That some of the German solutions can find their application to the Polish reality of higher education is put forward by Krzysztof Szewior in *Between Evaluation and Accreditation. Polish Perception of German Experience in the Context of Public Policies*. The author successfully presents key aspects of the German higher education evaluation and accreditation systems, making convincing references to when specific accreditation procedures happened to be introduced and the German national monitoring system was implemented.

Sylwia Jaskuła's *Sham Activities in Evaluation in the Area of Higher Education* is another important and expected contribution. Similarly to Krzysztof Szewior, Sylwia Jaskuła lays bare some of the activities and practices that are falsely

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considered to be of evaluative significance. These allegedly evaluative procedures include such diagnostic methods as measurement, parametrization, accreditation, audit, or assessment itself. As the author concludes, because of the mismatch between true and sham evaluation, the very notion of assessment loses its social grounding and results in forced activities on the part of researchers, which is those practices that even if they are undertaken in accordance with the contractors' intentions, they do not achieve the expected objects, and do not fulfil the assumed functions.

Equally negative is Justyna Nowotniak's opinion on the institutional dimension of the Polish system of education in her *Hidden Curricula of Evaluation in Education*. As she argues, the Polish educational system "keeps on drifting on the ocean of problem processes and phenomena, all building up the present social (dis)order".

The major focus of Magdalena Stoch's *Qualitative Evaluation in Consensual--Oriented Humanities Education* is the concept of evaluation as a key element of consensual humanistic education. For that reason, she attempts to define evaluation, describe its functions and objects, kinds of information and assessment criteria it is based on, its purposes and target groups it is supposed to serve, as well as its implementation process, including the methodology and the agents responsible for its being proceeded.

From a common-sense perspective, both assessment and evaluation involve an inherent evaluative aspect because they ultimately consist in stating one's positive and/or negative opinion. It should be remembered that in the school environment it is not only the pupil's performance that is assessed but also the teacher's commitment into the pupil's education. No wonder, then, that the issue of assessment is hotly debated and brings about numerous controversies. That many of our authors offer their new and intriguing reflections on this and related problems can only be appreciated.

And, thus, in *Evaluation in the Higher Education in the Light of Legal--Administrative Texts*, Ewa Szkudlarek-Śmiechowicz aims to answer the question of the place of didactic (teaching) assessment in the system of higher education and to identify possible causes of the difficulties that seem to appear once the new evaluation practices have been introduced into academic teaching. Three specialist terms are subject to a detailed lexical-semantic and textual analyses: "assessment" (of knowledge, skills, competencies), "verification" (of learning outcomes), and "validation" (of qualifications).

Functions of assessment on the level of higher education are discussed in Bernadeta Niesporek-Szamburska's *What is the Purpose of Assessment at the University – about the Goals and Characteristics of Assessment from the*

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Data: 16/11/2026 17:51:06

Students' Perspective. This questionnaire-based study shows that although in their responses, students do appreciate the way their summative assessment is done in the format of, for example, test exams, they also postulate the need of verification so that their assessment should as well be formative and, thus, could foster their learning outcomes.

Ilona Feld-Knapp and Alessa Weimann's *Instruments of Reflection. Creating Instruments for Reflection on University Education and Their Functions* focus specifically on the teaching presentation sheet and the class observation sheet. The authors discuss and present various ways of how these two could serve the purposes of reflection and, thus, contribute to improve university teaching standards.

The starting point in Iwona Morawska's *Assessment at School as an Interactive Communication* has to do with the claim that in educational theory and practice relatively little attention is paid to the communicative, axiological, and formative aspects of assessment. Neither is sufficient the discussion of the corresponding personal relationships that, in fact, concern and involve both teachers and students. By means of appreciating the notion of assessment as communication, the author offers some exemplary evaluation strategies, all understood in terms of interactive communication whose main purpose is to foster and stimulate student development as part of non-standard assessment practices that teachers can have at their disposal.

Yet another dimension of assessment is presented by Aleksandra Araszkiewicz in her *Assessment of Abilities of Writing Longer Works*. The author applies the notion of assessment to writing skills and emphasises the differences between the mark a pupil gets for his/her performance and the assessment he/she is subject of, which makes her indicate the importance of teenagers' self-learning.

In his *Forming Self-Assessment in Pre-School Children*, Vadym Kobylchenko presents and discusses selected features, factors, and conditions of the process of forming self-esteem in kindergarten children.

In a similar vein, Natalyya Babych and Kateryna Tychyna, in their *Forming Adequate Self-Assessment in Students as a Requirement of Their Professional Development*, begin with the claim that the modern system of higher education requires new approaches not only to the learning process, but also to the assessment process. Thus, as they conclude, on their way to mastering logodiagnostic competence, future speech therapists should be equipped with the ability to self-assess their level of knowledge and skills.

The notion of values appears also in Barbara Myrdzik's *Forming the Ability of Value Assessment Not Only in Polish Philology Education*. The author pays

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Data: 16/11/2026 17:51:06

special attention to empathy and the role it plays in both assessment and evaluation, and discusses some of the conditions which facilitate, or favour, empathy.

In *About Intuitive Interpretation in the Age of Neuroscience*, Aneta Grodecka assumes the difference between "living" and "experiencing". She first critically assesses earlier didactic approaches (Kazimierz Wóycicki, Bronisław Poletur, Wincenty Okoń, Stanisław Bortnowski, Anna Janus Sitarz), then presents her own research on intuitive reception of Bolesław Leśmian's poem ****Wyszło z boru ślepawe, zjesieniałe zmrocze…*, and finally develops an idea of intuitive interpretation based on phenomenology, neuroscience and her own teaching expertise.

Low literacy skills among adolescents and the unsatisfying status of pre- and in-service teacher training constitute the starting point for Ildikó Szabó's *Literacy in Hungary – a Short Report Based on the Results of Literacy Projects*. As the author suggests, what is required now in Hungary is a long-term solution which must result in fundamental changes not only in primary and secondary education, but also in teacher training programmes so that teachers *per se* could become literacy teachers as well.

Finally, in *Practical Evaluation. "Evaluation Standards" as a Project Supporting Tool*, Jakub Wróblewski examines some of the key regulations in the 2008 evaluation standards, and anticipates their further modifications, which, as he says, "will revive the notion of evaluation as such and will stand for its social significance, the latter having to do with the claim that evaluation exceeds the mere expectation of generating knowledge, but instead amounts to triggering reflection on new quality of relations, and, thus, potentially to effecting behaviour and attitude".

Klaudia Bednárová-Gibová