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INSTITUTE FOR PEDAGOGY AND ANDRAGOGY**

Aleksandra Pejatović (Ed.)

**14th International Conference
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Techniques and Ethics of the Evaluation of Elementary Schoolchildren's Educational Performance in Greece in the Period 1945 - 2008

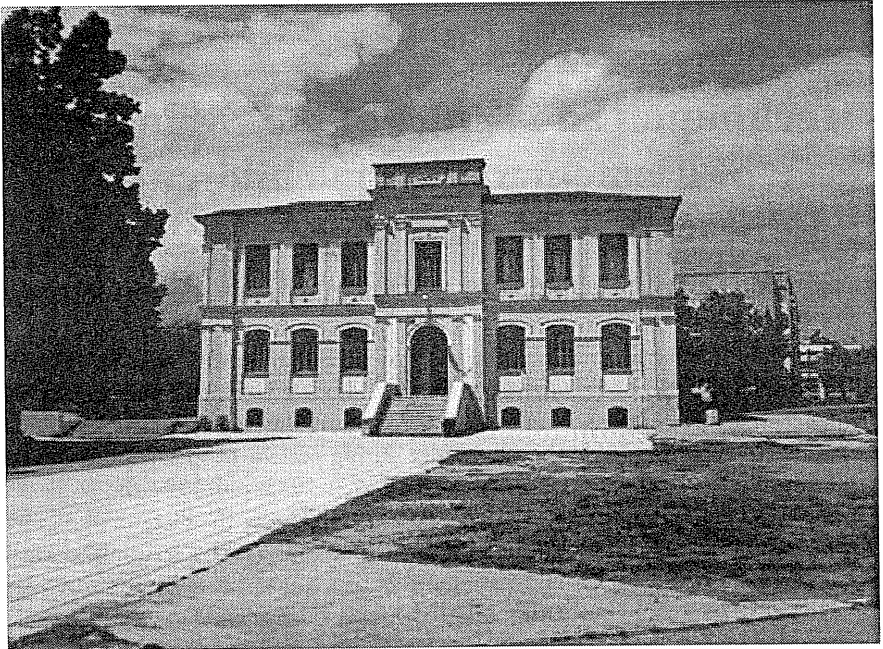
Abstract: Paper gives an analytical and critical presentation of the techniques and ethics of the evaluation of elementary schoolchildren's educational and social performance in Greece in the period 1945-2008. Among the important results of this research is the fact that student performance during periods of social upheaval was not evaluated on academic criteria alone. Between 1945 and 1974 the students' behaviour was monitored both at and outside school. Under the dictatorial regime from 1967-1974 especially, the students' behaviour was strictly scrutinized with regard to political affiliation and national identity. Since the restoration of Democracy in 1974 student evaluation is based strictly on academic criteria.

Key words: education, student evaluation, ideology.

The object of this paper is to present a critical and analytical assessment of the subject-matter, techniques and ethics of the evaluation of elementary schoolchildren's educational and social performance in Greece in the period 1945-2008. It focuses on the interaction between the institution of education and the dominant ideology of different eras.

The methodology is based mainly on research conducted between 2008 and 2010 in the voluminous school archives of two six-grade primary schools in Northern Greece, namely the 9th and the 12th Elementary School in Drama, which have occupied the same premises in the city since they opened in 1908. These schools were chosen because, barring a brief interruption, they have been in operation continuously for more than 100 years. Given that earlier records were destroyed as a consequence of World War II and particularly of the Bulgarian Occupation of the region, the paper presents data from the period 1945-2008 only. The in-depth

interviews with administrators, teachers and students (all of them adults now) of these schools were extremely helpful for our understanding and analysis of the behaviour of teachers and pupils in different eras, such as the Civil War of 1946-1949, the dictatorship of 1967-1974 and the restoration of democracy after 1974.



Picture 1: The building housing the two schools since 1908

Subject matter and techniques of student assessment

1. From the end of WWII (1944) to the restoration of democracy (1974)

In the years from 1945 when the schools re-opened (Greece was liberated from its triple German-Italian-Bulgarian Occupation in 1944) to 1976 when the ideology and the policy governing student assessment were revised, *the subject matter* of that assessment was twofold: the knowledge acquired by the child and his conduct, that is, his behaviour. What was meant by “knowledge” was ability

to memorize the material taught, not understanding of that material (“Inspection Reports for the School Years 1946-1947 and 1947-1948, Drama 2nd School District, Panagiotis Demopoulos, Inspector for the 1st, 4th and 5th Elementary Schools, Drama” and “Record of School Inspection Reports for the School Year 1958-59, Report 39 for the 9th Elementary School, Drama. Inspector: G. Georgopoulos”). Schools at that time were regularly visited by a school inspector, who assessed both the performance of the students and the professional proficiency, character and behaviour of the teachers (“Inspection Reports for the Drama 2nd School District, School Year 1953-1954”, Inspection of the 9th Elementary School, Drama).

In the period 1967-1974 the children’s “conduct”, and particularly their behaviour in relation to political and national ideology and practice, was monitored both at and outside school. Punishments were justified as helping to “correct the child’s character” (“Correspondence Register School District 12th Elementary School, Drama, 1966-1973” 11/12/1973. Entry from the D.E.N. Directorate of Drama “Concerning monitoring students’ behaviour at and outside school in national and patriotic matters”). The records of both schools show that incentives for improving performance also included rewards, but the accounts given by teachers clearly indicated that the preference at the time was for penalties rather than rewards. (“Minutes of the 9th Elementary School, Drama, 1972-73”. The subjects discussed at meetings included, among others, “Penalties and Rewards”, “The Power of Example”, “The Personality of the Teacher” and “Education, its Factors and Limits”).

During this same period the requirement of uniform school dress became generalized. Girls had to wear a blue pinafore and a white headband, and boys were obliged to keep their hair short and neat (“Correspondence Register 4th Elementary School, Drama”, 8/6/1965 and “Correspondence Register 9th Elementary School, Drama, 1963-1971”, 11/6/1965 “Concerning Students’ Dress in the Coming School Year”). All children were expected to come to school clean and properly dressed, and were closely monitored by their teachers to this end.



Picture 2: 9th Elementary School, 6th Grade, 1974, Children wearing the school uniform

The evaluation tools and techniques used were memorization of lessons and written examinations. Failure to perform adequately resulted in penalties, threats, and even corporal punishment. In written examinations, the teacher dictated questions which had to be answered within a given length of time.

The results of these evaluations were expressed in scaled arithmetical grades and a characterisation of conduct. Written examinations were held at the end of each of the two terms of the fifth year, for promotion, and at the end of the sixth year, for completion of the primary school cycle, followed by another set for admittance to the six-year secondary school programme. All these examinations were final, and there appears to have been no initial or intermediary testing.

2. Since the restoration of democracy (1974)

Assessment of performance considers both knowledge acquired and thinking processes: that is, the evaluation is extended to how knowledge is managed and applied, and includes the skills that have been acquired, and the values and attitudes that have been adopted.

The evaluation techniques include assessment by the teacher, student projects and a portfolio of the student's work ("Minutes of the College of Teachers 1988-

1989” of the 12th Elementary School, Drama, 11/9/1992, Item 7). The assessment is descriptive, with the result that students are no longer ranked according to grades achieved. The student is actively involved in the evaluation process, assessing the product as well as the procedure of learning. Arithmetical grading was abandoned for primary school classes in 1976, as were the examinations for admittance to secondary school.

To summarize, one of the chief findings of this research is that during times of social turmoil the criteria used to evaluate students’ performance are not purely academic. In the period 1945-1974 children’s behaviour both at and outside school was monitored. More specifically, during the years of the dictatorship (1967-1974), this scrutiny extended to questions of political ideology and national identity. Study of the school archives shows that in the earlier period teachers tended to punish rather than to encourage. Since the restoration of democracy in 1974 the evaluation of student performance has been based solely on academic criteria.