# ON QUALITY IN THE PREUNIVERSITY EDUCATION - A PREREQUISITE FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

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*Abstract*
*Regarding „Quality in education", respectively about ARACIP a lot of misconceptions are circulating: that entangles the educational process, that is „form without substance", „it buries us in papers" (opinions of teachers, school managers and, sometimes, local representatives). It is often overlooked the fact that the institution mentioned above does not claims from schools any documents, just checks compliance and enforcement of the current legislation, by measuring in the same time the satisfaction of direct and indirect beneficiaries of education.*
*Quality in education (whit its complex principles and practices crossing the entire educational environment) it is mainly oriented towards achieving results, reference to standards and meeting the needs and the expectations of education beneficiaries. Thus, quality in education represents a desideratum, necessary not only for alignment to national and European standards, but also to provide a fair start in life for young student, contributing to the increase of the quality of life of our future generations.*

*Keywords: education, future generation, schools, quality.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There have been many discussions about "Quality in education" and about ARACIP (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education), that it tangles the education process, that it is a form without substance, that it buries us in papers (teachers' opinions, school heads, and sometimes representatives of community). It is omitted that the above-mentioned institution does not "require from schools" papers; it only checks the observance and enforcement of the legislation in force, while measuring the degree of satisfaction of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of education. Quality in education is a complex of principles, practices and protocols that run across the educational environment, with the ultimate application of results to standards. "Quality School" represents the school climate, the curriculum, the physical environment, the relations between teachers, pupils and the community as compared to standards. The quality school indicators are reflected in each lesson, auxiliary material, methodical activity, meeting with parents, aspect of a recreation, discussion in the staff office between teachers, meeting between the director and the local authorities; These indicators can also be found in the process of organizing a teaching council or in any informal discussion between teachers and pupils on the school halls.

The "quality school" cannot be represented by mere factors such as a lesson, a program, a class or a teacher, but a set of factors. School, as a provider of education, represents all the characteristics of a provider and its program that meet the expectations of the beneficiaries and the quality standards. Regarding this aspect, the "beneficiaries' expectations" that differ from one educational unit to the other (the subjective part of a defined school as a provider of education) and the "quality standards" that are the same for both state education units, as well as those in the private environment (the objective side). The unitary concept of quality is designed / judged according to the values promoted in society (at the macro level) and at the level of the school organization (micro level). Thus, there is a need for a unitary understanding of the quality of education, the existing situation being defined by contextual and situational factors at national, regional and local level. In the field of quality, Edward Deming is the one who introduced the concept of "product design cycle" – PDCA cycle type (plan-do-check-act) and which permanently ensures the quality improvement by adding or creating value to the system (Todorescu, 2009).

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS
This paper is based on the personal experience gained during visits to various schools, as an ARACIP (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education) evaluator and on the study of the specialized literature, as presented in the Reference chapter.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
By going through the quality circle, for individual and organizational development, the representatives of a school must take into account the following milestones of this circle and integrate them autonomously at each school level. Through planning, implementation, verification and actions, one can go to a quality school where the education is centered on the student, the student not being treated as an object of the training but as a subject in which he actively participates. In each individual case, we will always consider improving the situation and ensuring educational success for each student.

The benchmark Plan of the PDCA cycle represents the initial and perhaps the most important moment of the system, given that through this stage the objectives and the path to be followed steps are determined. The objectives of this point must be SMART (specific, measurable, accessible, relevant and clear over time).  At the same time, this benchmark implies an efficient management of teaching time and concern for quality teaching and objective evaluation.  The teacher is not just a provider of information, but a learning creator that needs to adopt a bilateral teacher-student communication relationship. The correct formulation of objectives and good management of learning methods lead to the identification of the activities, the necessary resources and the expected results. Achieving (or the benchmark do) is the actual execution of each course to be achieved by updating knowledge and scientific rigor, carefully prepared, with the appropriateness of the content to be taught to the educational objectives, with its uniform dosing, by setting the expectations related to the capacities and the real learning potential of students. At this time of the educational act, teachers should show a real interest in the quality of teaching and encouraging students to education. The rhythm of teaching new information needs to be adapted to the class level so that well-structured exposures increase interest in retaining new information.

The interesting ways of presenting the course, the effective learning strategies and techniques, the encouragement and training students for self-learning, learning through both individual work and co-operation will lead to better outcomes and to the achievement of educational goals (Dinu et al., 2007; Vaideanu, 1988). Perceiving the teacher as a help is done by providing students with the support for projects, encouraging group discussions, using effective communication strategies, encouraging expression of opinions and active involvement, and expressing the availability of teachers to provide counseling to students outside class hours. The check benchmark is the evaluation of the results obtained after the previous steps and the assessment of the achievement of the indicators proposed at the objectives set in the planning stage. Thus, one can evaluate its own didactic activity, but also the final product expressed through educational quality. In this way, the effectiveness of the teaching activity can be assessed by reference to the process of student assessment and the results obtained by them (Todorescu, 2007). In the final stage of the process, act is the moment of improvement for a new cycle where, based on the experience gained in the other three steps, appropriate improvement measures can be proposed to improve the situation and a new cycle to deliver better results.

Considering that the educational system is represented by two main actors - the educator, the teacher and the one to be formed, the student, in order to obtain quality in education, the PDCA cycle must be fulfilled also by the pupil. The student's timing is the preoccupation for knowing and identifying his / her own needs. He / she needs to identify a learning style, set up a study program and interest in a particular career path. He achieves this by taking notes at courses, learning the new notions, seriously preparing the themes and the tasks received, assuming the role of active participant in the courses. The interest in establishing a relationship with the teaching staff and other colleagues, participation in individual and group projects, interest in optional subjects, efficient time management, dynamism, are guarantees for the accomplishment of the PDCA cycle by the teacher.

The moment of action in the PDCA cycle of the student is the moment when he presents concerns to improve his own performance. Verification and improvement can be accomplished with the help of the teacher, so the pupil contributes to the achievement of education centered on one's own needs. The educational offer involves the teachers, a strategy of education and training as well as institutional material resources. The education and training strategy involves a set of national targets that have to be aligned with those at the European level. In this context, the quality of the teaching process is only a mechanism in the assurance of quality in education. Educational offer includes levels and forms of education, school curriculum, school infrastructure (laboratories, cabinets, information and documentation centers, library, accommodation and meals etc.), curriculum, extracurricular activities, educational support services (speech therapy services, school counseling, support services for children with school adaptation difficulties etc.). Educational offers should take into account the student's education during both the study program and the extra program.

This should not be narrowly understood, focusing only on aspects related to courses, but must take into account both optional courses / programs as well as other educational opportunities for pupils.

The educational service, as an integral part of a quality school, can be approached on design, implementation / implementation, evaluation and review / improvement dimensions.

In order to have a quality school, the human resource is the most important link. A school must produce and offer the market what is actually required; to orientate their activity to the expectations of consumers (Nicola, 2003; Voiculescu, 2004).

The improvement of the quality of the educational process must be adapted to the local specificity by increasing the interest towards the current problems of the Romanian society through professional development in order to achieve the performances demanded by the society, continuous and long-lasting professional progress, stimulation of the teachers' and students' interest for education and development. However, standardization is utopian in education. It is only possible at the level of environment, resources, mandatory content and guidelines for teacher training reform. Each student or teacher is unique and the education system as a final product must be of high quality. Each human individual is a unique set of features that makes standardization to some extent, in contrast to the individualization of learning. At both national and European level, a unitary set of values should be established to ground a common concept of "quality of education".

Thus, in the declaration of principles of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education (ARACIP) is proposed a list of principles that should base the "quality" education: *Quality education is centered on clients and beneficiaries of educational services; Quality education is provided by responsible institutions; Quality education is result-oriented; Quality education respects individual autonomy and is based on institutional autonomy; Quality education is promoted by educational leaders; Quality education ensures the participation of educational actors and valorization of human resources; Quality education is done through dialogue and partnership; Quality education is based on innovation and diversification; Quality education addresses the unitary educational process on a systematic basis; Quality education aims to continuously improve performance; Quality education relies on the interdependence between providers and beneficiaries involved in the education offer (\*\*\*ARACIP, 2017).*

Research on quality assurance in education has shown that each school system will have to find its own point of equilibrium for every "continuum" of possible options, leaving each education system to opt for a specific solution (Aspin et al., 1994).

Thus, in the Romanian education system, strategic options would be opting for opportunities creation, uniform provision of educational services throughout the country or for establishing high levels of performance? Opportunity for uniform provision of educational services across the country or for differentiated educational services? Opting for individualization as the primary target of education or socialization? The management and quality assurance system comes in response to these questions and helps to standardize the system and maintain standards. The implementation of quality management in school aims at the following aspects: establishment of a Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance Committee, developing a program of educational objectives, drawing up an action plan for quality assurance at school and department level, developing procedures for evaluation and quality assurance of school activity, improving teachers in the field of quality, drafting internal monitoring reports and external evaluation reports, making a SWOT analysis within each department and at school level to identify weaknesses in teaching activity, achievement of the quality improvement plan depending on the weaknesses identified.

Constructive actions aimed at ensuring the quality of education and training services imply improving behavior, motivation and presence of students, reducing absenteeism and school dropout, close collaboration between students and teachers, improving partnerships between school and family, numerical and qualitative growth of partnerships with local economic agents, as well as improving formative assessment through the use of a wider range of assessment methods and tools.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the involvement of the human resource and the positive organizational climate, manifested through understanding, trust, collaboration based on work and responsibility, valorization of knowledge, experience and initiative, will mobilize, drive, stimulate creative availability and participatory leadership, and lead to the quality of implementation of the educational offer of the school. Each human individual is a unique set of features that makes standardization to some extent, in contrast to the individualization of learning.

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