

---

## **Dynamics and Practices of Self-Assessment in School Organizations**

**Teresa Santos, Maria Palmira Alves**

*Instituto de Educação, Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal*

---

### **ABSTRACT**

The evaluation of schools results from the European Union orientations and became an obligation to improve the quality of schools. The evaluation process (external and self-evaluation) aims to create conditions that include the sharing of norms and values, the centrality of student learning, professional development of teachers, sharing of experiences, the demand for empirical evidence, collaborative relationships and consensual decisions.

A qualitative study was carried out, in a school organization, located in northern Portugal, in order to understand its dynamics and practices of self-evaluation. Data was collected using three focus group interviews, near pupils, teachers and parents. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and data was analyzed using content analysis.

The main results highlight the incapacity of the school to face school failure, to find flexible alternative curricular paths, to establish real practices of formative assessment to improve either motivation for the study or the development of skills.

**Keywords:** Educational Policies; School organization; self-assessment; evaluation

---

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

The importance assigned to the institutional evaluation is increasing, such as the studies by different bodies have been performed, in particular, OECD and UNESCO, as well as the abundant national and international literature. With the challenges imposed by globalization and the new economy principles founded on knowledge, the Europeanization of educational politics, becomes important due to the increasing adoption of common objectives and concrete actions by the states, leading in a progressive form, to an “increasingly narrow, precise and irreversible framework by decisions made at the European level” (Cytermann, 2005, p.17). School guidelines are decreasingly decided by national states, which seem to have abdicated of their power of decision, now done by transnational organizations, especially in economic and financial terms. Supranational policies support the internationalization of education, legitimized by quality assurance, opening a new field of understanding, in terms of certain ideas and arguments, such as, efficiency and performance (Meuret, 2007). Evaluation occurs “from trends that mark most European countries, namely: the decentralization of means and the setting of national goals and school level of results” (Azevedo, 2007, p.18) and “the growing role of the evaluation in the educational policies (...) as it does not give the assessment only a political dimension” (Lima, 2011, p.72) as it highlights the importance of the regulation in the recovery process of the state’s role and changing its governance modes of intervention.

In the OECD countries, the interest for internal evaluation (self-evaluation) has increased in non-higher education institutions. Fialho (2009, p.99) states that the “ineffectiveness of inspections, (...), led, in the 80’s, “some countries, namely, England, Denmark, France, Sweden and Canada, to increase self-

---

*\*Address for correspondence:*

tjcps@sapo.pt

evaluation processes in their schools”, making the evaluation an unquestionable need that emerges from the policies of “decentration and decentralization”, followed by many States, as well as the pressure to improve the quality and demand of the accountability.

In Portugal, the external evaluation program of schools has been carried out in accordance with the competencies defined by the Ministry of Education to the General Inspection of Education (GIE), the entity with responsibilities which guarantee the quality of the schools, in promoting improvement, efficiency and effectiveness, responsibility and accountability, participation and demand, as well as the qualified information to support decision making “accountability acts”. In Schedler’s perspective (1999, quoted by Afonso, 2009, pg.60) “accountability acts are actions or procedures which concern in only some dimensions of accountability or responsibility”, the publicizing of the external evaluation reports and contradictory, can be considered the phase of public accountability. School results, translated into success/failure statistics, are centralized in the teachers’ accountability to the various hierarchical instances, also including, other members of the educational community, parents, tutors and also the students themselves.

Internally, there are principals and self-evaluation procedures, in accordance with the guidelines defined by the Law n.º 31/2002, the responsibility of schools groups or schools that are not grouped, which allows to assess the national educational system’s performance, with mandatory character, a process which in which schools show the difficulties of self-evaluation sustained practices. The GIE began to support and integrate on its internet website, documents which can constitute as support instruments for the implementation of the process.

Figari (2008, pp. 42-44) specifies three different aspects which justify the fact that the evaluation does not constitute as a reality integrated into piloting a school: the difficulty in defining the object “School”, which will always refer to the point of view of those who would seek to, disrupt “the element bond which is isolated with other elements of the same set, in which the point of view chosen makes it impossible to study”; the doubt in which a new legitimacy of the school, in which “the interpretations from the system are substituted by an upscaling of what the local community produces”: and the difficulty in defining school as a concrete object, with peculiarities that distinguish it from other organizations or as an abstract object, unique with specificities in terms of climate, philosophy, and efficiency.

The critical external support to schools, made available by the GIE, doesn’t have as an objective to “teach schools in being creative and innovative, but in accomplishing a teaching process from what they produce” (Ferreira, 2010, p.56). This structuring dimension of institutional evaluations should “be critically confronted with complementary forms of external evaluations” (Afonso, 2010, p.358) and be “supported by interdisciplinary teams”.

According to Rodríguez and Becerra, (2001, p. 83), self-evaluation is “understood as a mechanism from which the institutions enter in a process of reflection and auto-analysis, and converts to an educational process of the own institution and of its members”, to promote its auto-transformation and adapt to its social, economic and legislation requirements.

Self-evaluation is, hence, a cyclical, creative and a analysis refresher, interpretation and synthesis of the dimensions in which a school is defined, it is a continuous process through which the school collects information about its own reality, searching to understand the results of the set of activities to improve the educational quality. For that, information is systematized, results are analyzed together, organization, administration and action forms are questioned, identifying the weaknesses, strengths and strategies in how to overcome problems. Having as a main objective the improvement of the school, it should be a

joint process in which students, teachers and parents “should be involved, however much possible, in each of the phases of the process” (Meuret, Schartz, Jakobsen, & MacBeath 2005, p. 178) constituting the actors in a perfect triangle.

In synthesis, evaluating the school assumes, meeting the movements and relations of the school organization, as the pedagogical sense of evaluation does not limit itself to the final result as objectively measured, but remains rooted in the interdependent and intersubjective mechanisms, which are produced in all areas of the school organization continuously. The school has as its biggest purpose, the improvement of the students learning and the educational success. The improvement concept is linked to the efficiency, where the improvement movement of effectiveness emerges which points, exactly, to the “school effect” as decisive for success. Thus, efficiency is the performance achieved by a school and improvement is the process of change orientated to better results, which implies evaluating and reflecting about the learning results, internal process to the school level and of the relationships with the community level.

To promote the evaluation, there are necessary conditions which include the sharing of norms and values, student learning centralization and the professional development of teachers, the experience sharing, the search for empirical evidence, the existence of collaboration relationships and consensual decisions. In fact, it is not possible to start a self-evaluation process if, most of the teachers and leaders do not compromise in improving the school. This implies having a clear focus, collecting data about the level of goal achievements and focusing on teaching and learning strategies.

## **METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN**

The methodology allows the researcher a set of tools to choose the methods and the most adequate techniques for the research. The qualitative investigation is based on an inductive method, in which its natural environments constitutes a direct source of data, as the researcher is the key elements, as it “consists of investigation ideas, finding the meaning of individual actions and social intentions, from the involved actors’ point of view of the process” (Coutinho, 2011, p. 26). In this study, a qualitative nature of methodology was chosen, using a group interview (Focus Group), as this a qualitative technique in which, a group discussion can be controlled, inspired in non-direct interviews. It has economic advantages, it provides a quantity and diversity of information and it also stimulated the participants. (Aires, 2011).

### **Objectives**

Identify self-evaluation practices in a school organizations and the dynamics that result from it, in other words, the influence of this process in the educational success, consequently, the teaching/learning practices are the main goal of the research.

### **Context and Study Participants**

This study was implemented in a Group of Schools, located in Northern Portugal, in which its educational territory covers three pre-school educational establishments, and six basic education schools<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese Education System is organized in different levels of education, training and learning: pre-school education, primary school education, high school education and tertiary education. Pre-school education is optional and is intended for children between the ages of 3 and the age of entry to primary school. The school education develops into three levels: basic education – comprises three sequential cycles, being the first of four years, the second of two years and the third of three years; Secondary education – includes a three-year cycle (10th, 11th and 12th years of schooling); Tertiary education – includes university and institute of technology education.

(1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stage). 1050 students attend the group of schools, distributed in the following way: pre-school educations – 81; 1<sup>st</sup> stage – 374, 2<sup>nd</sup> stage – 240; 3<sup>rd</sup> stage 355. 98 teachers teach, being that most of them are between the ages of 41 and 50. 100% of these teachers have been teaching for ten or more years in the group of schools, and they have significant professional experience.

This study covers students from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of school (N=969) and the teachers of these stages of school (N=92).

7 teachers intervened in the study, which constituted group 1 (G1), 8 students (G2), and 5 tutors (G3), making a total of 20 participants. The teachers were selected according to the following criteria: cover the 3 stages of school, having intermediate leadership roles and not having any position. As for this, 3 teachers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage participated (1 department coordinator, 1 class director and 1 teacher without a leadership role); 2 teachers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage (both with leadership positions); 2 teachers from the 1<sup>st</sup> stage (1 stage coordinator and 1 teacher without a position).

The students, with ages between 9 and 16, 2 students attended 1<sup>st</sup> stage, 2 students attended 2<sup>nd</sup> stage and 4 students attended 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, these being, by the age group, the best that point out the educational success issues and teaching learning practices.

From the 5 tutors that participated, 2 represented the 1st stage (1 belonged to the Parent Association), 3 represented the 2nd and 3rd stages (1 belonged to the Parent Association).

Interviews were conducted in focus groups, with the three groups. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and the data was analyzed, using a content analysis, in which consists of “classification operation of constituted elements of a differentiation group, and followed by a regrouping according to type (analogy)” (Bardin, 2008, p.45).

The interviewee’s discussion, in relation to self-evaluation, was analyzed according to the categories and subcategories that are presented in table 1.

**Table1.** *Dimension / categories / subcategories*

Dimension	Categories	Subcategories
Self-Evaluation	A- Educational Success	1.a) the school and the learning 1.b) Behavior 1. c) Educational Community
	B- Teaching and Learning Practices	1.a) Curricular Articulation 1.b) Monitoring 1.c) Evaluation

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

The collected data is presented, in a structured form, for each of the categories and subcategories in analysis, exemplifying, as it is a type of interview in which the interaction between participants is important, with the units of registry.

### **The Perspective of the 7 Teachers 1st Group (G1)**

#### **Category A – Educational Success**

This first category, according to the discussion of the interviewees, was divided in 3 subcategories; the school and the learning, behavior and the educational community (Table 2).

In relation to the subcategory, **the school and the learning**, the interviewed teachers highlight that there are no cases of school drop-outs, nor are the severe problems in terms of assiduity, as the schooling is an obligation. They mention, negative aspects, the high number of students in each class, the heterogeneity of the students, with very different characteristics, and with divergent interests; the difficulty in concentration that students show, the little strength that they do to study, as well as the low participation in projects and activities. It is also mentioned that a lot of projects and activities are elaborated frequently.

These initiatives are important to stimulate and support the students and also to stimulate collaborative work, to boost management and development in diverse curricular activities, just as it is stressed out by Afonso (2010).

In the teachers’ opinion, **the students’ behavior** in the classroom is undisciplined, stressing that they do not respects the teachers’ orders inside the classroom, and that they also add that the students face the school as an institution where code of conduct is not necessary, making them even more undisciplined and not obedient, which makes motivation, study and the teachers job more difficult.

In terms of the **educational community** subcategory, the students’ involvement in the library is a positive aspect which is referred to, by the teachers. Teachers state that the tutors participate in school life and are present in the education and in the life of their children during the first years of school. As students advance in their schooling years, participation and school intervention starts to decrease. This is the case, certainly, where tutors want to attribute more autonomy and responsibility, as the students are advancing their schooling years. (Table 2)

**Table2.** *Subcategories – the school and the learning, behavior and the educational community.*

Subcategory	Analysis Units
School learning	“There are no school drop-outs”. “The large number of students per class”. “Students aren’t motivated enough, have lack of concentration, little enthusiasm, lack of strength to study (...). Without a doubt, it makes the teacher’s job more difficult, forcing them to a higher professional wear”. “We frequently participate in many projects and activities and students don’t always participate with great enthusiasm”,
Behavior	“In terms of the school environment, there is constant heckling which breaks the work rhythm (some” “students increasingly see the school as an institution where it is not necessary to have a code of conduct, making them more undisciplined and not obedient”.
Educational Community	“the library works well and all of the students have a good return of it”. “tutors participate in school life and are present in the education and in the life of their children during the first years of school. As students advance in their schooling years, participation and school intervention starts to decrease”.

**Category B – Teaching and Learning Practices**

In terms of the teaching and learning practices the teachers’ discussion was subdivided into three categories (curricular articulation, monitoring and evaluation) the units of analysis were indexed, just as it can be seen in table 3.

The curricular articulation (vertical and horizontal) tends to be implemented in every school stage. However, teachers from the 1<sup>st</sup> stage make reference that there is only a reunion of vertical articulation in the beginning of the year, with Year 4. In terms of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, horizontal articulation is more visible, because, as Afonso (2010) refers, the collaborative word between pedagogical teams seem real, which guarantee that the procedure and evaluation instruments are uniform.

There is transparency in the practices developed by the teachers, in terms of evaluation criteria, in terms of the information that is distributed to teachers/tutors in the beginning of the school year by the class director and to the students in the classroom.

Teachers also make reference that in terms of intermediate leadership, there is a lot of information, but not always does it reach the teachers. Another relevant aspect which was pointed out by the teacher is the role of the Class Director, in communicating, via telephone, school diary or e-mail about subjects related to each student, in the sense that it contributes to a mutual aid and study incentive.

Teachers make reference to the existence of educational support, for all students, and add, that even though it is not mandatory in the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, the school provides students with the support. However, they

point out that the students that have a lower performance, use this method to take up doubts, as “the ones with most difficulties are the ones who never see the support”. These results are in accordance to Rodríguez e Becerra, (2001)’s perspective, to who self-evaluation is “understood as a mechanism in which the institutions enter a reflection and auto-analysis process”, in terms of improving school organization.

The performance evaluation was a factor which came to change, in a negative aspect, the personal relationships between teachers, with reflexes, certainly in the professional development and student learning.

**Table3.** *Subcategories – curricular articulation, monitoring and evaluation*

<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Analysis Units</b>
Curricular Articulation	“Articulation between the 1st stage and 2nd stage is made with only one meeting in the beginning of the year with all the teachers” “Groups/disciplinary areas which follow the plans of the teaching and learning process, making them adequate to the characteristics of the group/class. The goal is to guarantee that the procedures and instruments are uniform.” “There is a collaboration spirit within the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> stage teachers, which has been improving. The evaluation criteria are the same in the group/area. In relation to the tests, we try to do, I mean, we try to make the structure more or less the same”. “Project and Protocol Support... In the Case of Y”.
Monitoring	“There is a lot of information in terms of the intermediate position, but there’s not a common thread to all teachers”. “Students should take more advantage of the education support. The ones that need it the most are the one who never come”. “The class directors regularly inform parents/tutors through school diary, telephones and e-mail”,
Evaluation	“It’s important to do a self-evaluation, it’s a good instrument which should serve as a reflection with the objective to improve the entire school”. “The Performance Evaluation came to worsen the personal relationships between the teachers”.

**The Perspective of the 8 Students 2nd Group (G2)**

**Category A - Educational Success**

This first category, according to the discussion of the interviewees, was divided in 3 subcategories; the school and the learning, behavior and the educational community, just as it is synthesized in Table 4.

Students show different perspectives in relation to the relationship between the school and learning: some like to be at school, make friends and learn; for others, school is an obligation, they have to come to school, whether they like it or not. They don’t like the classes and have a lack of attention/concentration.

The students’ favorable positions have been recorded in terms of the resources that are used to support the curricular development, namely, information and communication technologies, as they say, “I learn better, for example, if teachers use PowerPoint”.

For the students, the teachers have a lot of influence in their liking of the different subjects, thus, the relational dynamics, which has been installed in the teaching/learning process and in the evaluation, developed by teachers so that students learn, are fundamental for an educational success. Some students who have alternative school routes, have been object to retentions, they do not like the school’s environment, they feel difficulties in learning, they believe that it is becoming harder to study, which makes them want to quit working, being it during the classes or at home.

In terms of behavior, the students consider that they make noise, scream in the corridors, and misbehave in the classrooms, if no-one is taking care of them. Their behavioral attitudes, such as, breaking the

classroom rules, lack of attention, concentration or effort, conflicts between colleagues, affect negatively their work at school and, consequently their school performance.

Students value family support, the interest and family incentive, as decisive factors of in structure of educational success. They consider that parents should be held more accountable for their children’s attitudes, to obtain success at school. Parents and tutors are called to solve problems. The class director contacts the parents if the problematics students with some frequency. They also consider that they have been heard more, when it comes to what they like least at school, and they are also heard about the behavior.

**Table4.** *Subcategories – Relationship between the school and learning; behavior; Educational Community*

Subcategories	Analysis Units
The school and the learning	“I like to come to school because here I can learn, find friends and it has a school library”. “I don’t skip school. Skipping school to be alone? Only when I’m sick, I arrive to the classroom on time [...]”. “I can’t stay focused in class, especially in the 90 min classroom, I’ve been repeated twice”. “We don’t have to like the school (...) we have to come, it’s an obligation”. “Same students don’t like this school’s environment, they have a lot of repeaters and they make a lot of noise in the corridor”. “I was never focused in the class, I would say jokes, I didn’t want the school” . “I learn better, for example, if the teachers use PowerPoint”. “Teachers have a lot of influence in what students like in the different subjects, (...)”. “Teachers, most of the time, are responsible, if students like or not a certain subject”.
Behavior	“There are some colleagues that make a lot of noise in the classroom and scream in the corridor”. “Colleagues get distracted [...] and I also get distracted, by throwing papers, calling the other students, throwing pens... [...]”. “Sometime they are alone in the classroom and there is no-one taking care of them, naturally the misbehavior happens. “...they also don’t like it when the teacher <i>scream</i> with the students.” “(...) students that misbehave should be reprimanded and parents should be more responsible for their children’s attitude”.
Education Community	“The class director communicates with our parents when we misbehave”. “We have more punctual conversations about behavior and what we like the lease at school”

**Category B - Teaching and Learning Practices**

The subcategory of curricular articulation, was divided into the following subcategories: curricular articulation, monitoring and evaluation, according to the interviewee’s discussion (table 5).

Students state that there is a lack of end of period activities, namely, end of period festivities, such as, football games, proms and inter class tournaments. If the information given by the teachers is crosses, divergent opinions are crossed, so being, teacher state that “student don’t always adhere to activities with enthusiasm”, in which can be seen that students do not have an active role in the organization and dynamics of certain activities.

Another important aspect, which is stated by the students, is that the communication between the class director with parents/tutors, is about the learning evaluations.

In terms of the evaluation, students assume that they are informed about the evaluation criteria at the beginning of the school year. However, in Santos (2010) “it is not enough to inform students about the evaluation criteria, so that, immediately, these can be owned by the students. It is in the continuous work of the criteria that they fully understand the criteria”. Students only complete their self-evaluation at the end of each period, and they mention an excessive amount of worksheets and the importance that teachers give to the tests, so that, the weight the worksheets have at the end of each period’s classification.

**Table5.** Subcategories – curricular articulation and evaluation.

Subcategories	Analysis Units
Curricular Articulation	“There is a lack of end of period festivities, like we had in the previous years, such as, football games, proms and inter class tournaments”, “The class director speaks to our parents various times about our evaluations.” “The class director communicates to our parents when we go to the support classes”.
Monitoring	“I don’t always come to the support, because we are at school for a long time, and this way we have more time to ourselves”.
Evaluation	“We are informed about the evaluation criteria, at the beginning of the school year”. “(...) apart from that they think that students cannot change anything as they don’t have the power to do anything”. “Teachers give a lot of importance to the tests (...), but the evaluation is also important to see our own progress to see if we know or not”. “We have a self-evaluation of every subject at the end of each period”.

### The Perspective of the 5 Tutors - 3rd Group (G3)

#### Category A - Educational Success

In this category, according to the discussion of the interviewees, was divided in 3 subcategories; the school and the learning, behavior and the educational community, just as it is synthesized in Table 6.

Parents highlight the importance of there not being any drop-out students in the school group. They show some worries in terms of some student classes which take alternative routes, as there is a negative connotation towards these students. They consider these routes as a success fabrication, but which hide the inequalities in student opportunities, thus, the school influences students to attend these classes.

In terms of behavior, they notice that there are not any serious and generalized cases of misbehavior. The school is concerned with alluring parents, the articulation of activities developed with various partnerships are an example of this. They give credit to the work developed by the Children and Youth Protection Commission in which they support the children’s rights, to avoid or put to an end susceptible situation that can affect the safety, health training, education and integral development of the child, although they consider fragile human and material resources that exist for these necessities.

**Table6.** Subcategories – The School and The Learning, Behavior and Educational Community

Subcategory	Analysis Units
The School and the Learning	“There’s a negative connotation in relation to the students that are in alternative route classes, the school influences students to attend these classes”.
Behavior	“in disciplinary terms there has been no great difficulty, being recognized that the few cases which have been registered were guided by values of equality, justice and fairness”.
Educational Community	“shows satisfaction with the functioning of the different areas of the school group.” “The school is concerned in alluring parents and the whole educational community. An example of this is the initiative developed within the parish, the Parent Association, and partnerships and end of year activities”. “I note the work developed by CPCJ, even though, there isn’t an output flow for so many cases. The funds have been decreased and it is not possible to have success with so little funds.

#### Category B - Teaching and Learning Practices

This category was divided into the following subcategories: curricular articulation, monitoring and evaluation, according to the interviewee’s discussion (table 7).

About how the students are informed about the evaluation criteria, the majority of the tutors state that this happens in the beginning of the year, by the class director.

They also state that the class director, incentives participations and regularly informs through telephone or the school diary, about subject related to their children. They highlight the increasing action in terms

of joint activities throughout the school year and the existence of collaborative relationships and consensual decisions related to the school group and vice-versa, as it is also done with activities organized in partnership.

It is essential to stress the importance of family support, interest and family encouragement, while supporting factors and support school life. This group mentions the constraints in the majority of parents and tutors not having the capacity to support their children in school tasks, given their low level of schooling.

Lastly, a negative aspect, the interviewee addressed the physical conditions of the school and the lack of a psychologist, which is fundamental in terms of motivation for learning.

**Table 7.** *Curricular Articulation, monitoring e evaluation*

<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Analysis Units</b>
Curricular Articulation	“Incentives and participation pass through the class director”. “Preoccupation from the school group and community and the other way can be noticed, an example of this are the activities held in the school group”. “The role of the tutors is important. It is fundamental. Its action has increased, in a sustained, positive, form, I believe that it has fortified the activity plan of the school, it has fortified with the educational community’s experience”.
Monitoring	“We’re informed about the evaluation criteria in the first reunion, in September”. “I’m informed through the school diary or telephone by the class director”. “In terms of the tutor support with their students, the surroundings, are not favorable, as parents don’t have the competencies to do so. There are many doing training courses, but the cultural differences are not visible yet.”.
Evaluation	“The physical conditions also need to be evaluates. The pavilions are very hot or very cold”. “The lack of a psychologist, as it is necessary to evaluate, to be able to give some type of answer, to do some work with the student. As most of the cases are not cognitive problems, but emotional problems, by which these problems have to be solved with the objective of having educational gains for the students”.

## **CONCLUSION**

Self-evaluation practices are fundamental to find the collective key of a school, in particular, the dynamics that lead to learning improvement. In this group of schools, the educational success is a concern for teachers, students and tutors. The teachers consider that the students’ behavior have implications to the motivation in learning and in the positive taste for study. The relationships with the tutors should be incentivized as the students consider that their families have a fundamental role in their school journey. The evaluation practices continue to be stuck to a traditional measurement of knowledge (Alves, 2004), being that students consider that tests have an excessive weighting. Although, they know the evaluation criteria, its elaboration is the teachers’ responsibility.

Parents consider that, the majority, do not have the cognitive capacities to support their children, as they have a low schooling level.

Students that are integrated into alternative curricular routes, have weak school performance and do not feel motivated to study and the tutors consider that these routes are a fabrication of success results, thus, a way of improving the results that the school obtains from an external evaluation not a real preoccupation in the learning of these students.

As this study is very focused on one school group, results cannot be generalized. However, they are aligned with other studies about the Portuguese reality, in these stages of schooling, being highlighted that the school has an incapacity of dealing with the school dealing failure, finding alternative curricular routes which are flexible and adapted to each student, establish real training evaluation practices, which help in school motivation and development of competencies.

It is suggested that the school establish cooperative working methods, not only in elaborating tests, but also in the dissemination of best practices through pair supervision.

The teachers' professional development is compromised if the dynamics of self-evaluation don't result in improvement strategies, because of the success of the students is their success.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Afonso, N. (2000). Autonomia, Avaliação e Gestão Estratégica das Escolas Públicas. In, J. Adelino Costa, A. Neto Mendes e Alexandre Ventura (Orgs.). *Liderança e Estratégia nas Organizações Escolares*. Aveiro: Edições Universidade de Aveiro.
- [2] Alves, M.P. (2004). *Currículo e avaliação: uma perspetiva integrada*. Porto: Porto Editora.
- [3] Afonso, A. (2010). Gestão, autonomia e accountability na escola portuguesa: breve diacronia. *Revista Brasileira de Política e Administração da Educação*, vol. 26, nº1, 13-30.
- [4] Aires, L. (2011). *Paradigma Qualitativo e Práticas de investigação educacional*. Lisboa: Universidade Aberta.
- [5] Azevedo, J. (2007). Avaliação das Escolas: Fundamental Modelos e Operacionalizar Processos. In M. Miguéns (dir.). *Avaliação das Escolas – Modelos e Processos*. Lisboa: CNE.
- [6] Bardin, L. (2008). *Análise de Conteúdo*. Lisboa: Edições 70
- [7] Cytermann, J-R. (2005). Le processus de Lisbonne et la convergence des systèmes éducatifs européens. *Revue de l'Association Française des Administrateurs de l'Éducation*, 2, 17-28.
- [8] Coutinho, C. (2011). *Metodologia de Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas: Teoria e Prática*. Coimbra: Edições Almedina
- [9] Ferreira, F. (2010). O Estado avaliador e as formas de apoio externo às escolas: ensinar e controlar as escolas ou escutar e aprender com elas? *Revista ELO* 17. pp 51-57. Guimarães: Centro de Formação Francisco de Holanda.
- [10] Fialho, I. (2009). A qualidade do ensino e a avaliação das escolas em Portugal. Contributos para a sua história recente. *Educação. Temas e problemas – Avaliação, qualidade e formação*, 7 (4), 99-116
- [11] Figari, G. (2008). A avaliação de escola: questões, tendências e modelos. In M. P. Alves, & E. Machado, (2008). *Avaliação com sentido(s): Contributos e Questionamentos*. (pp.41-72) Santo Tirso: De Facto Editores.
- [12] Meuret, D., Schratz, M., Jakobsen, L. & Macbeath, J. (2005). *A história de serena. Viajando Rumo a uma Escola Melhor*. Porto: Edições ASA.
- [13] Rodríguez R. & C. Becerra, I. (2001). Los grupos de discusión para el análisis de calidad de las instituciones educativas. In L. N Cubero; C. Pérez; R. Cruz Díaz; C. Faraco; F. Noguero; L. Baizán & J. Delgado (eds.). *Evaluación de Políticas Educativas VIII Congreso Nacional de Teoría de la Educación*. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, pp. 83-85.
- [14] Santos, L. (2010). (org.). *Avaliar para aprender. Relatos de experiências de sala de aula do pré-escolar ao ensino secundário*. Porto: Porto Editora.

## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



**Teresa Santos**, is PhD in Education. She is a Basic Education teacher and a researcher at RESEARCH CENTRE ON CHILD STUDIES I University of Minho Her mais interest areas are: Evaluation, School Organisation, Educational and Curricular Policies. She is author of many papers and articles concerning these areas.