

AGNIESZKA SUDER

Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Kraków University  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9479-2038>  
[mrs.asuder@gmail.com](mailto:mrs.asuder@gmail.com)

# The Influence of Descriptive Assessment Accompanied by Percentage-Based Records in the Electronic Gradebook on Student Well-Being

*Wpływ oceniania opisowego wspieranego zapisem procentowym  
w dzienniku elektronicznym na dobrostan uczniów*

**Abstract:** The article analyzes the significance of descriptive assessment, which – when combined with percentage-based records in the electronic gradebook – can have a substantial impact on the well-being of students aged 6–9. During this crucial early school period, children undergo rapid cognitive, emotional, and social development, which necessitates a flexible approach to both teaching and assessment. Traditional methods based solely on numerical grades often fall short of expectations and may lead to decreased motivation and emotional difficulties. Descriptive assessment, enriched with concrete percentage data, enables a more detailed and equitable evaluation of student achievements. This, in turn, supports the development of a positive attitude toward learning, enhances the sense of agency, and encourages active engagement in the educational process. Such an approach allows teachers to closely monitor students' progress and adapt their teaching strategies to meet specific individual needs. The electronic gradebook not only facilitates communication between teachers and parents but also becomes a key tool in the educational process, fostering collaborative efforts to support the child's development. The article presents both the advantages – such as increased transparency and accessibility of information – and the challenges that may arise during implementation, including the need for teacher training, time constraints, and concerns related to the protection of students' personal data. Furthermore, reflections drawn from the practical experience of an early education teacher offer valuable insights into how modern digital tools can effectively support student development by enabling diverse and meaningful learning opportunities.

**Keywords:** descriptive assessment; percentage-based evaluation; student well-being; early childhood education; electronic gradebook; emotional development of children

**Abstrakt:** W artykule zanalizowano znaczenie oceniania opisowego, które w połączeniu z procentowym zapisem w dzienniku elektronicznym może znacząco wpłynąć na dobrostan uczniów w wieku 6–9 lat. W tym kluczowym okresie wczesnoszkolnym dzieci przeżywają intensywne zmiany w sferze poznawczej, emocjonalnej i społecznej, co

wymaga elastyczności w podejściu do nauczania i oceniania. Tradycyjne metody, oparte wyłącznie na liczbowych ocenach, często nie spełniają oczekiwań i mogą prowadzić do obniżenia motywacji oraz problemów emocjonalnych. Ocenianie opisowe wzbogacone o konkretne dane procentowe, umożliwia bardziej szczegółową i sprawiedliwą ocenę osiągnięć ucznia, co z kolei wspiera rozwój pozytywnego podejścia do nauki, zwiększa poczucie sprawczości oraz motywuje do aktywnego zaangażowania w proces edukacyjny. Takie podejście pozwala nauczycielom na precyzyjne śledzenie postępów uczniów oraz na dostosowywanie strategii nauczania do ich specyficznych potrzeb. Elektroniczny dziennik nie tylko usprawnia komunikację między nauczycielem a rodzicem, ale również staje się kluczowym narzędziem w procesie edukacyjnym, wspierając wspólne działania na rzecz rozwoju dziecka. W artykule przedstawiono zarówno zalety, takie jak zwiększona przejrzystość i dostępność informacji, jak i wyzwania, które mogą pojawić się podczas jego wdrażania, w tym potrzebę szkoleń dla nauczycieli, czasochłonność oraz kwestie związane z ochroną danych osobowych uczniów. Dodatkowo refleksje z praktyki zawodowej nauczycielki edukacji wczesnoszkolnej dostarczają cennych spostrzeżeń na temat tego, jak nowoczesne narzędzia cyfrowe mogą efektywnie wspierać rozwój ucznia, umożliwiając mu zdobywanie wiedzy w różnorodny sposób.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ocenianie opisowe; zapis procentowy; dobrostan uczniów; edukacja wczesnoszkolna; dziennik elektroniczny; rozwój emocjonalny dzieci

## INTRODUCTION

### The role of assessment in early childhood education

Assessment plays a fundamental role in the educational process, especially for children aged 6–9, where appropriate assessment methods must consider their unique developmental needs. Contemporary educational approaches, utilizing electronic gradebooks, offer new opportunities for effectively conveying information about students' progress. Descriptive assessment, combined with percentage-based evaluation, allows teachers to present children's achievements in greater detail, potentially increasing their motivation to learn. However, implementing such systems also poses challenges, such as ensuring parents' understanding of assessments and their impact on students' emotional development. This article discusses both the benefits of this approach and the potential difficulties teachers and parents may encounter. The objective is to demonstrate how modern assessment methods can support the development of children in early childhood education by adapting to their individual educational needs.

Children in early childhood education, aged 7 to 11–12, experience dynamic cognitive development, characterized by enhanced logical thinking, understanding of more complex concepts, and improved language skills (Wołoszynowa, 1986, p. 522). According to Piaget's theory, they are in the concrete operational stage, meaning their thinking becomes more systematic and logical, yet remains tied to concrete objects and situations. During this period, their planning and self-regulation skills also develop, which are essential for their continued educational progress (Wołoszynowa, 1986, p. 607).

As children in early childhood education develop their cognitive abilities, they simultaneously cultivate emotional and social skills, which are crucial for their overall development. They learn not only to collaborate with peers but also to recognize and manage their emotions, fostering the development of empathy. Group cooperation and team play have a key role in their lives, and the opinions of other children significantly impact on their self-esteem and motivation to learn (Wołoszynowa, 1986, pp. 631–632). Therefore, support from teachers and parents is fundamental for children to fully develop their emotional and social skills, which in turn contributes to their healthy future development.

### DESCRIPTIVE AND PERCENTAGE-BASED ASSESSMENT IN EARLY EDUCATION

When working with children in early childhood education, teachers take on multiple key roles that extend far beyond traditional instruction. In addition to being educators, they also serve as mentors and caregivers, responsible not only for delivering knowledge but also for nurturing students' holistic development. As Komorowska points out, the essence of the teaching profession lies in the ability to adapt to various roles depending on the dynamics of the classroom (Komorowska, 2005, p. 106). Teachers often face conflicts related to these roles, for example, the role of assessor may at times conflict with the role of supporter (Komorowska, 2005, p. 106). Children come to school with a variety of problems, which they often share with teachers. The case of Kuba, who is struggling with low grades despite his hard work, highlights the importance of teachers being attuned to their students' emotional experiences (Klusek, 2018, p. 13). In such situations, descriptive assessment can be a valuable tool, offering detailed, individualized feedback that supports teachers in their complex yet essential role.

Descriptive assessment plays a key role in the education of children in early childhood education, as it allows for a more individualized approach to each student. Through detailed information about progress and areas requiring support, teachers can better tailor their teaching methods, promoting more effective learning. This form of assessment considers not only differences in cognitive abilities but also children's emotional and social development, which is particularly important at this educational stage. Consequently, students receive constructive feedback that not only motivates them to continue working but also fosters a positive attitude toward learning and builds their self-confidence. Descriptive assessment, by avoiding labeling and focusing on effort and progress, creates a supportive environment where every child feels appreciated and motivated to achieve further educational goals (Brzezińska & Misiorna, 1998).

Descriptive assessment is distinguished not only by its individualized approach but also by the ability to create a more comprehensive picture of a student's progress.

Through detailed feedback, teachers can better understand each student's unique talents and challenges, allowing for more effective adaptation of teaching methods. Additionally, this form of assessment fosters trust between student and teacher, as students feel their efforts are noticed and appreciated. As a result, descriptive assessments not only motivate learning but also support the development of critical thinking skills and independence in learning.

Support for emotional and social development is a key element of the modern educational process, in which descriptive assessment plays a significant role. It enables teachers to closely monitor students' progress in interpersonal skills such as cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution. In addition to this, this assessment enables individual challenges faced by students to be highlighted, such as managing stress or developing empathy towards others. his holistic approach to assessment supports not only academic achievements but also prepares young people to navigate a complex world, shaping them into responsible and empathetic members of society.

Motivation to learn is a crucial component of the educational process, and descriptive assessments can play a significant role in this. Instead of merely assigning numbers that may be demotivating, teachers should provide detailed feedback that helps students understand their progress and areas for improvement. This assessment method not only increases engagement but also inspires further development and skill enhancement, which is far more valuable than merely striving for high grades. When students see concrete guidance, they feel more motivated to learn and work on themselves.

A significant limitation associated with descriptive assessment is the necessity for thorough analysis of each student's progress. Teachers must pay attention to various aspects such as skills, engagement, and attitudes, which requires not only time but also deep reflection. Consequently, this process becomes even more time-consuming, and teachers may feel overwhelmed by the workload, affecting their ability to effectively manage other educational responsibilities.

## THE ROLE OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND ELECTRONIC GRADEBOOKS

Collaboration between parents and teachers is essential for the proper development of children in early childhood education; however, a lack of clear information often leads to frustration. Parents, eager to actively participate in their children's education, encounter difficulties interpreting descriptive assessments, which do not always reflect the student's actual progress. As a result, doubts arise about how to effectively support the child in learning. In Finland, parents emphasize that traditional assessment methods, such as written grades or marking answers, are insufficient for evaluating children's actual achievements, prompting the search for more effective forms of communication and assessment of educational progress (YLE, 2020).

Descriptive assessment, which has gained popularity, has evolved from simple symbols illustrating results to more complex formative assessment systems. The introduction of colors, such as green and red dots or clouds and suns, aimed to help children understand their progress. Younger children often focus on visual symbols, making them more inclined to interpret these than analyze the content of comments. While visually appealing, this assessment system may limit deeper understanding that children could gain from more detailed feedback. Therefore, it is worth considering how to balance graphic appeal with substantive content to support students' development comprehensively (Figure 1).





|  <b>Kryteria oceniania</b><br>(kryteria sukcesu/nacobezu)  | Informacja zwrotna nauczyciela   |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|   | <br>zielony | <br>żółty | <br>czerwony |
| • czytam ze zrozumieniem wyrazy w ramce oraz zdanie;  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>   |
| • starannie rysuję swój pokój: na obrazku przedstawiam to, co znajduje się w moim pokoju – przynajmniej 4 elementy (np. <i>bed, chair, desk, computer, lamp, picture, floor, wall</i> – łóżko, krzesło, biurko, komputer, lampa, obrazek, podłoga, ściana); | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>   |
| • tytułuję mój obrazek: „ <i>My bedroom</i> ” – „Moja sypialnia”;   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>   |
| • opisuję obrazek według wzoru: <i>This is my bedroom. There is.../There are...</i> – To jest moja sypialnia. Jest w niej.../Są w niej...   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>   |
| • używam przymiotników <i>big/small, old/new</i> – duży/mały, stary/nowy, opisując pokój;   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>   |
| • zwracam uwagę na poprawność zapisu;   | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>   |
| • poprawnie wymawiam wyrazy nazywające przedmioty w domu oraz zwroty <i>There is.../There are...</i>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/>   |

Figure 1. Table for inserting feedback

Source: Material from Nowa Era publishing house for the textbook Hello Explorer 2.

Percentage-based evaluation plays a key role in the educational system, as it not only allows for precise determination of a student's knowledge level but also supports identifying areas in need of improvement. This form of assessment enables teachers to more effectively monitor learning progress and adapt teaching methods to meet individual needs. Additionally, percentage-based evaluation fosters communication between school and parents by giving them a clear picture of their children's academic performance and helping them to make informed decisions about further education. In this way, percentage grades become not only an assessment tool, but also an important element to support student development.

In early childhood education, percentage-based evaluation offers several advantages that can make a significant difference to students' understanding of their achievement. First and foremost, its clarity and transparency allows young students

to see exactly how many points they earned, which helps in self-assessing their own skills. Moreover, seeing progress in the form of percentages acts as a motivator, as students can see how close they are to mastering the subject. Percentages also offer greater precision in assessing performance, which is preferable to traditional numerical assessments. On top of that, they provide an easy way of comparing results from different tests, which is helpful in identifying a student's strengths and weaknesses and thus adapting teaching methods to their needs. Thus, percentage-based evaluation becomes a valuable tool in the learning process. For teachers, these grades serve as a critical tool to assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods and adapt them to individual student needs. As for students, they provide them with a clear picture of the requirements, which promotes better organization of learning and motivation to achieve their goals. In addition, these assessments can be perceived as more objective, since they are based on precisely defined scoring criteria, which increases the transparency of the assessment process and builds trust in the teacher-student relationship.

Despite these advantages, percentage-based evaluation also comes with drawbacks that can be especially challenging for younger children. First of all, it can cause significant stress, which leads to discouragement and a decrease in motivation to learn, especially when students receive low grades. Moreover, the focus on percentages often results in overlooking other important aspects of education, such as developing creativity, critical thinking and social skills. Furthermore, the system may foster excessive competition among students, potentially damaging classroom relationships instead of promoting collaboration and shared learning. Finally, percentage scores alone do not offer sufficient feedback for students to understand their mistakes or how they can correct them, which is crucial to their educational development.

## TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE EVALUATION SYSTEM

Combining descriptive assessment with percentage-based evaluation creates a balanced approach to student evaluation by merging meaningful qualitative feedback with precise numerical data. Descriptive assessment highlights a student's strengths and weaknesses, while the percentage-based evaluation adds a quantitative dimension, which allows for objective comparison of results. This model of assessment not only meets individual educational needs but also makes it easier to track progress for both teachers, students and their parents, which contributes to better cooperation in the educational process.

Descriptive assessment, when supported by percentage-based evaluation, brings numerous benefits, including more effective evaluations that offer a well-rounded view of student achievement, taking into account both quality and quantity of data. As a result, students and their parents receive better feedback on educational progress, which promotes better understanding and cooperation in the learning process. Addi-

tionally, the percentage-based evaluation aspect increases transparency and enables result comparisons across different time periods. However, implementing this system presents challenges, such as the need for teacher training to use both methods effectively. Furthermore, managing student data and ensuring its security, especially in the context of using electronic gradebooks, is an important aspect that requires attention and appropriate solutions.

The benefits of using an electronic gradebook are invaluable, as they greatly enhance the transparency and accessibility of information about student progress. It allows parents to monitor grades and teacher feedback in real time, giving them a clearer understanding of their children's educational needs. This immediate access to data supports more effective cooperation between school and parents and enables quicker responses to learning challenges. Additionally, electronic gradebooks improve communication between teachers and parents by offering a centralized platform for sharing detailed insights about a student's progress and needs. Features like leaving feedback or answering parent questions contributes to a more effective exchange of information, which is key to building trust and cooperation in the educational process.

As a result, the electronic gradebook becomes more than just a monitoring tool – it becomes a platform for active dialogue among all participants in education. It not only allows for long-term storage of grades and feedback, but also provides a valuable tool in the process of archiving information on student progress. This allows teachers to effectively track student development, identify areas in need of support and modify teaching methods to better meet student needs. In early childhood education, regularly collecting data on students' achievements is crucial for effective lesson planning and preparing reliable descriptive assessments at the end of a term or school year. This approach not only supports teachers, but also involves parents in the educational process, enabling them to better understand their children's progress.

The introduction of the "formative assessment" function in the Librus electronic gradebook marks a significant improvement in teaching and monitoring student progress. By allowing both individual and batch input of assessments, teachers gain a valuable tool that allows them to manage their time and resources more effectively. The assessments are immediately accessible to parents, which promotes their active participation in their children's education. The visual layout of all descriptive assessments makes it easier for both teachers and parents to track student development, especially if a teacher changes mid-year. This approach builds a solid foundation of information that is essential for evaluating students' ongoing work and progress.

However, implementing descriptive assessment within an electronic gradebook also introduces several challenges that may affect the effectiveness of the process. First, it is time-consuming – writing detailed, thoughtful feedback for each student requires significant amount of work. Teachers also need proper training to use the system efficiently and to skillfully formulate feedback that will be helpful to students. Data privacy is another crucial issue, which means that adequate security procedures



need to be implemented to ensure that students' personal information is adequately protected within the system. While these challenges may complicate the implementation of descriptive assessment, they also present opportunities for teacher development and for improving educational quality.

A practical example of analyzing student results might involve a parent coming to a teacher concerned about a low test grade. During the conversation, after a thorough analysis of the test, it turns out that the student mastered vocabulary but struggled with reading comprehension and listening tasks. This shows that a numeric assessment may not reflect a student's actual skills and that failing to identify specific strengths and weaknesses can lead to ineffective learning. If this is the case, instead of focusing solely on memorizing vocabulary words, the parent should gain a broader view of the areas that need improvement, allowing for more effective learning guidance. It is worthwhile for teachers to provide parents with detailed information about performance, so that the student can be better supported in his educational journey.

As children began receiving color-coded feedback, they started focusing more on counting green, yellow, and red boxes than on the content of the messages. Over time, instead of analyzing the feedback itself, they concentrated on the number of colors. This led to frustration when their score did not seem to reflect progress. For example, a child who lost a few points in each task might end up with only yellow boxes, which could be discouraging. Children struggling with English who received low scores often wanted to improve, but even small progress – such as moving from 4 to 14% – did not bring the expected improvement in the form of a grade. This caused disappointment and resentment, as students felt their efforts weren't rewarded. Shifting to feedback that showed only percentage-based evaluation without a traditional numeric assessment helped boost motivation, as children could see their progress more clearly, which encouraged them to continue learning.

As a teacher of early childhood education and English for grades 1–3 in a school near Kraków, I have been using an electronic gradebook for several years, and it has significantly facilitated my work. Entering descriptive assessments along with percentage-based evaluation and point-based grading allows parents to monitor their children's progress in real time and respond quickly to any difficulties. I have observed that this approach better reflects students' needs and helps me tailor teaching methods accordingly. Through ongoing communication with parents via the electronic gradebook, we build trust and improve collaboration, making our individual meetings much more constructive and productive.



|                   |  |   |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Data *            |  | 2023-11-15  |
| Nr lekcji *       |  | 1   |
| Przedział czasu * |  | od : do :   |
| Rodzaj *          |  | Sprawdzian  |
| Przedmiot         |  | Podpowiedz przedmiot  |
| Sala              |  |   |
| Opis *            |  | <p>1. znam i rozumiem słownictwo nazywające wyposażenie pokoju w języku angielskim (łóżko, krzesło, biurko, szafa, komputer, plakat, lampa, obraz, drzwi, ściana, podłoga, okno, nowy, stary);</p> <p>2. znam i rozumiem słownictwo nazywające aktywności w języku angielskim (grać w gry komputerowe, grać w szachy, grać w gry planszowe, tańczyć, rysować);</p> <p>3. znam i rozumiem słownictwo służące opowiadaniu, gdzie się coś znajduje w pokoju (on, under, next to);</p> <p>4. czytam ze zrozumieniem tekst i opisuję pokój, uzupełniając pisemnie luki wyrazami nazywającymi wyposażenie pokoju;</p> <p>5. znam i rozumiem zwroty służące opisywaniu pokoju (There is/There are, Is</p> <p>Pozostałe znaki: 4250</p> |

Figure 2. Test information displayed in the calendar of the electronic gradebook  
Source: Author's own study.

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Przedmiot  | Edukacja językowa. Język obcy nowożytny  |
| Kategoria  | Wypowiedzi pisemne   |
| Ocena      | <p>17/20 85%</p> <p>1. słownictwo nazywające wyposażenie pokoju T</p> <p>2. słownictwo nazywające aktywności w języku angielskim T</p> <p>3. słownictwo służące opowiadaniu, gdzie się coś znajduje C</p> <p>4. czytam ze zrozumieniem tekst i opisuję pokój, uzupełniając pisemnie luki</p> <p>Pozostałe znaki: 580</p> |
| Widoczność | Pokazuj ocenę w widoku ocen  |
| Data       | 2023-11-24   |

Figure 3. Descriptive assessment in the electronic gradebook  
Source: Author's own study.

In my approach to progress markers, I distinguish three categories: *T* for “I have fully mastered this topic and feel confident about it”; *C* meaning “I sometimes make mistakes in interpretation, which may stem from incomplete understanding of context or complexity”; and *N* for “I have not yet mastered this topic and need to work on understanding and applying it”.

Preparing descriptive assessments with percentage-based evaluation presents a number of challenges, including being time-consuming, which can put pressure on teachers. It requires them to spend a great deal of time creating individual feedback for each student, which is also stressful. Another issue is the limited access to technology in some families, which makes using electronic gradebooks difficult, as not all families have computers and Internet. Introducing electronic gradebooks also requires teacher training in new technologies, which may be a challenge. To effectively implement

these tools and fully harness their potential, appropriate training and workshops are essential to support teachers in adapting to modern methods of assessment.

Descriptive assessment combined with percentage-based evaluation, as used in the electronic gradebook, effectively supports the development of children in early childhood education. By integrating qualitative and quantitative assessments, this method offers a comprehensive view of student achievement, accounting for both cognitive aspects and the emotional development of children. Despite the difficulties associated with implementation, the benefits of transparency, immediate feedback, and improved collaboration between the school and parents significantly enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

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