

Stay@School
Second Workshop on Module 4 “Evaluation”
Liège (Belgium), 6 March 2013

Minutes

Participants

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Minutes

This workshop aimed to conclude the experiment of Module 4, dedicated to “Educational Evaluation and Early School Leaving Prevention”.

Here are the topics that were successively addressed, in accordance with the workshop agenda.



Presentation of the participants

First the participants shortly introduced themselves. They all have different backgrounds (secondary and higher education, school mediation services, youth aid services, training centres, public authorities...).

Experimentation of the Training Course

During the previous workshop, INFOREF introduced **Module 4: "Evaluation"**.

The participants were invited to further discover it and confront it to their own experience trying to answer the following questions:

- 1) Does this module echo in your personal experience and how?
- 2) What could (or should) be added to it?

They were asked to think about those questions and give answers before the transnational meeting dedicated to Module 4.

They were also asked to intervene in the Forum about Module 4 and in the transnational meeting scheduled on the 27th of February 2013 insofar as possible.

During the second workshop, INFOREF summarized the discussions of the Belgian working group, the discussions of the Forum and also the transnational discussion (virtual meeting) about Module 4.

Conclusions of the Belgian working group about Module 4

1. GENERAL COMMENTS

When they are asked about evaluation, teachers do not seem to be particularly trained to evaluation practices nor in reflections on how to make them more adequate, although they admit the importance of evaluation at all the levels of the educational process.

Like our colleagues of Datini say, there do not seem to be a proper "culture of evaluation" in schools. Yet evaluation is certainly a key element to make practices evolve, as indicated by several project partners.

Regarding Module 4, the participants regret the too general and theoretical aspect of the module. They wonder how it could help teachers who face early school leaving. The module gives almost no concrete example and practical tools, although this is precisely what teachers expect!

2. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Chapters 2 and 3: Evaluation Kinds and Forms

The distinctions between evaluation "kinds" and "forms" seem a bit arbitrary. Globally, the participants know and use those various evaluation "strategies". We use the word "strategies" to include all the different kinds, forms, models ... evoked in the module.

The participants consider that strategies need to be varied according to the learning “moments” and according to the “object” of the evaluation (teaching techniques and methods, learners’ satisfaction, knowledge and skills acquired, changes in the learners’ behaviour ...).

In tackling early school leaving, they prefer “**positive reinforcement**”: starting from what the learner can do, recognising him/her as a person able to do something, giving him/her a better self-image, rather than punishing the negative aspects.

For that purpose, the participants emphasise the importance of “individual interviews” rather than an evaluation of the class-group.

The working group also stresses the **importance of meetings with parents during activities that are not directly related to school** (such as festivities). These are appropriate moments to discuss with parents and solve their children’s problems.

Chapter 6: Evaluation Techniques

The evaluation techniques proposed are interesting but some of them (such as audio or video recording) seem difficult to carry out at school.

Observation techniques might require the intervention of an “external observer” in the classroom or on the field. It is difficult for a teacher to be at the same time actor and observer of the teaching process.

Chapter 7: Metacognitive Evaluation

Regarding metacognitive evaluation, there is in Belgium, France and some other European countries a teaching approach called “mental management” that precisely aims to help learners be aware of their mental process and thus better master it. Many teachers, speech therapists, social workers, parents ... are trained at this approach that radically changes the point of view on the learner and on the relation maintained with him/her in any teaching process. See the project “Co-nai-sens”: <http://www.conaisens.org/>

Chapter 8: Developing Skills

All the participants agree that it is important to develop students’ “social skills” but they do not always know how to do so and how to evaluate these skills that strongly interact in any learning activity. The module does not really offer any concrete idea in this regard.

The type of grid proposed in the module to evaluate students’ “social skills” prompts strong reactions in the working group: most participants refuse to categorise students with this kind of questionnaire.

“We end up with tick boxes about human behaviour” said a participant.

The educational process starts in “primary school”!

The working group reminds that evaluation and early school leaving prevention strategies must be developed from that moment.

Our working group includes the headmaster of a primary school, who is also the president of an important association of primary education headmasters in our area. He calls attention to the fact that school leaving starts early, as soon as the first years at school, even in nursery school.

Problematic behaviours start to settle in at this early stage (irregular presence at school, mutual misunderstanding between cultures – including on the role of school and of parents in education – aggressiveness between children, between parents, between parents and headmasters/teachers...).

Yet few devices are proposed at this level and there are few means in primary schools, deprived of educators and mediators, to manage this kind of problem. Most headmasters do not even have a secretary.

Primary education wishes its specific needs were taken into account at the level of education policies (at the regional, national and European levels).

