

Section V: Evaluation of learning procedures and orientation

Members of the Section

Section coordinator

Mr. Joan Mateo i Andrés. Chair in Investigation methods and investigation analysis, UB

Technical Team

Mr. Manuel Álvarez i González. Professor, UB

Mr. Jordi Casanova i Maturana. Professor, UB

Mr. Joan Carles Hernando i Mercadé. Lecturer, UB

Mr. Antonio Sans i Martí. Professor, UB

Mr. Antonio Latorre i Beltrán. Support to the technical team

Mrs. Eva Fita i Lladó. Support to the technical team

Participative Team

Mrs. Elvira Borrell i Closa. Inspection

Mr. David Fernández i Marí. Students

Mr. Carles Lázaro i Hernando. Assembly of primary education school heads

Mrs. M. Rosa Vergés Tubau. Assembly of secondary education school heads

Objectives, methodology and activities

Around June 2000, Section 5 drew a plan divided in 4 stages and a specific objective for each of them, as follows:

- *Descriptive stage*: awareness of the situation
- *Analytic-diagnostic stage*: detection of needs of improvement
- *Prediction stage*: collection of proposals for the solution of the needs found in the two previous stages
- *Public stage*: information on the results of the work of the Section to the Public Administration and the educational community.

Throughout these stages, the Section has developed actions with the aim of achieving the objectives mentioned and which are herewith described in a more detailed way.

The main objective during the *descriptive stage* was to try and capture the reality through the incision in three fronts.

In first place, with the Forums published in the Section's website, which allowed a dialogue with the educational community to collect their concerns in matters related to the themes of the Section. A total of five forums were opened, with around 100 contributions.

In second place, two questionnaires were published in the Section's website. One of them raised questions about the evaluation of learning and the other one focused on orientation and the educational tutorship. Therefore, we had two questionnaires published on the web during six months addressed to teaching professionals in order to get to know the real situation of the mentioned educational practices. We can consider that the sample had an excellent reception, with 560 replies from education professionals to the questionnaire on evaluation and 293 replies to the one on orientation and tutorship.

The structure of these questionnaires had the following elements:

- a. *Questionnaire addressed to education professionals on the assessment of the teaching and learning process*: description of participants, assessment process (initial assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment incidence of the assessment in the teaching and learning process), knowledge and participation in the assessment processes, communication to students, to families (written or verbal reports, individual and/or in group) and periodicity, satisfaction of the agents involved (students, families and teachers) and concept of assessment.
- b. *Questionnaire addressed to education professionals on orientation and tutorial action*: description of participants, the tutorial organisation and the centre's attitude towards the tutorship, practice of the tutorial orientation (subjects developed, importance given and contributions obtained), training of tutors and appraisal of the tutorial action.

Finally, during the second half of the first semester 2001, *in-depth interviews* on the assessment and orientation practices were carried out in different groups of eight schools from around *Catalunya*, chosen trying to respect the territorial diversity.

The structure of the *interviews on the assessment of learning* presented almost the same elements of the corresponding questionnaire, selected by groups and taking into consideration the two education stages (primary and secondary):

- To families: means and level of information about the evaluation process, awareness of the criteria, participation, equity, repercussion, level of agreement and suggestions.
- To the heads of studies or pedagogical coordinators, heads of department, tutor and/or cycle coordinator and special education professionals (special education teachers in primary education and the educational psychology or teacher of therapeutic pedagogy in secondary education): description of participants, the assessment process, knowledge and participation in the assessment processes, communication to students, to families and periodicity, satisfaction of the agents involved and concept of assessment.
- To students: opinion about the group, knowledge and participation in the elaboration of criteria, equity, repercussion and means and level of information about the process and, finally, suggestions.

The structure of the *interviews on orientation and tutorship* also presented the elements of the corresponding questionnaire, diversified by groups and taking into consideration the two education stages (primary and secondary):

- To families: perception of the disposition of the centre towards the tutorship, the programme, the responsibilities and the time dedicated, activities carried out during the tutorial orientation, opinion on the training of tutors and evaluation of the orientation and the tutorial action.
- To the heads of studies or pedagogical coordinators, heads of department, tutor and/or cycle coordinator and special education professionals (special education teachers in primary education and the educational psychology counsellor or teacher of therapeutic pedagogy in secondary education): tutorial organisation (disposition of the centre, programme, responsibilities and time dedicated), practice of tutorial orientation, training of tutors and evaluation of the tutorship.
- To secondary education students (primary education students were not interviewed): perception of the disposition of the tutors towards the orientation and tutorship, the planning and programme, the shared responsibility in the process, the time dedicated, thematic areas worked in practice, opinion on the training of tutors and evaluation of orientation and tutorial action.

During the *analytic stage* reports were analysed, interpreted and elaborated using the information obtained from the forums, the questionnaires and the interviews of the previous stage.

Throughout 2001 and in parallel to the previous actions, some round tables were held and, on the other hand, we participated in various events organised by other professionals in different areas of *Catalunya*.

As far as the round tables are concerned, we can outline the one celebrated in May at the University of Vic; in July at the Summer school of the *Col·legi de Doctors i Llicenciats*; in October in Lleida and, in November at *Museu de la Ciència*, Barcelona. In January 2002, a round table was held in *Mataró*. There was an attendance of around 300 persons.

On the other hand, information was collected from the activities of other professional groups. During 2001, the lecture offered by professor David Nevo, Tel-Aviv University, in March; the FAPAES (Federation of parents' associations of Secondary Education Students) congress in *Sabadell* in May and the Assembly of Primary education school heads and Board of Inspectors in December. During 2002 we attended conferences organised by the Assembly of school heads of Secondary education, the AMPA (parents' associations), the EAP (educational psychology assessment and orientation team) conference and the Presidents and Heads of ICES conference in February (together with CNE's sections I and II) and, finally, the meeting of the *Moviment de Renovació Pedagògica* in March.

These actions enabled us to collect the opinions and suggestions of the different groups of the educational community regarding the real problems faced when evaluating learning and carrying out the orientation and tutorship.

Following the collection of information in the descriptive stage (forums, questionnaires and interviews) and in the analytic stage (round tables, activities with experts and forums), the next step was a first crossed analysis of the information with the objective of reaching specific proposals of improvement. It is what has been named as *prediction stage*. The last stage, the *public stage*, is the one we are beginning now with the presentation of the results of the Section's work.

Appraisal and conclusions

The evaluation of learning: analysis of the information, conclusions and evaluation

The evaluation of learning constitutes a key element to justify the quality of education. Nowadays, everybody accepts the feedback character of the instruction and education processes and their main role in the management of the improvement of the activity of students, teachers and the school.

The acceptance of this function of vertebrate axis of quality implies the achievement of big changes in the idea of evaluation, in its discourse and, most of all, in the assessment practices carried out in the school context.

The LOGSE represented an important change in the thinking and assessment culture of our teachers, in a way that, in our investigation, we have found facts as the following:

- Teachers give a big importance to the assessment of learning of students and dedicate a large part of the effort to this task and to their own training in the subject.
- Teachers know, mostly, the assessment discourse and they assume it intellectually.
- The extension of the assessment modalities is a common fact in the teachers' activity. The initial or diagnostic assessment constitutes a very common practice together with the summative assessment. It is not the same with the formative assessment.
- The assessment boards play now a very important role in the framework of the assessment activity of the centres.
- Most teachers design and use their own systems to collect information of great importance for assessment purposes, although they do not always adjust to sufficiently defined scientific or systematic criteria.
- Most centres have assessment criteria agreed upon by consensus. It is normally established at cycle level in primary centres and at department level in secondary centres.
- The written information systems for parents and students have been enriched in the past years with the inclusion of more information, with more variety and quality.

Despite all this, the reality we found was marked by the following aspects:

- Absence of a global assessment model of students.
- A non-explicit and clearly linked assessment to the learning objectives previously established.
- An assessment lacking reflection and explicitness regarding the elaboration and selection process of the tools used to collect information.
- An assessment exclusively controlled by teachers without, practically, any type of participation of students or any other agents involved.
- An assessment conceived as an individual task of each of the teachers without any type of cooperation action model.
- An assessment deficiently regulated regarding the rights and obligations of students and teachers.
- An assessment not linked to the processes of quality management of teaching and the centre.
- An assessment hardly compromised with the processes for the development of the essential multidisciplinary abilities in order to favour the personal balance and the social integration of students.
- An assessment not oriented to the analysis and creation of the necessary basic competencies to solve real life problems.
- An assessment far away from the principles that inform the catering for the diversity of students.
- An assessment transmitted and expressed to families in a way that does not provide the most adequate type of information to intervene appropriately in the education of their sons and daughters and that does not help them either to make decisions to improve.

The orientation and tutorial action: analysis of the information, conclusions and evaluation.

In the present social context, the orientation and tutorship have become core elements of the educational task. The mission of the school cannot be conceived in basically instructive terms; the diversity and complexity of the social environment and the more and more accused family limitations require varied and flexible solutions to situations that are becoming each day more difficult to redirect. Undoubtedly, we must build founded and sustained replies from the base of global education principles as inherent responsibility of the school.

If the school wishes to become a space with a minimum protection from the tensions of the system, it has to generate complicities among all the agents operating in the education framework and the social environment and avoid the dramatic elements of the fractions often found in society, which, when occurring in the school sphere, impede, sometimes in a violent way, any sustained and sustainable education action.

Orientation implies a joint, global and integrated action of the educational system and the educational community. It consists of an essential educational process to assist students, with the concretion of its guidelines in the *Tutorial Action Plan* covering all aspects of its development.

We have been able to confirm through our approach to the reality of the centres and the educational services, perceptions and practices such as:

- Centres and teachers consider the orientation and tutorial task very necessary.
- Most centres have the corresponding tutorial action plan in writing.
- Centres normally incorporate the figures of the special education teacher in primary education and the educational psychologist in secondary education.
- All the class groups have at least one tutor assigned.
- In order to develop their task, they basically have one hour for the group tutorial and another one for the personal tutorial.
- Educational Psychology advice teams exist, throughout the territory, in charge of developing diagnostic tasks, therapy to students and counselling to centres.
- The management teams are fully convinced of the importance of tutorship.
- Most centres use tutorship to deal with multidisciplinary subjects at group level.
- They all value very positively the tutorial action for the solution of conflicts and for the academic and professional orientation.

In contrast, we have also been able to observe:

- The bureaucratic character of many tutorial action plans.
- The precariousness of the tutors selection system.
- The lack of time and resources for the development of the tutorship.
- The non-existence of Orientation departments at the centres that give dynamism to tutorship at all levels of the system.
- The lack of coordination between the different bodies that operate in the tutorial action.
- The lack of implication of teachers not directly involved in tutorship.

- The absence of elements of tutorial action in the curriculum.
- The separation of the families in the tutorial processes.
- The internal dissatisfaction of the members of educational psychology teams regarding the nature of their function, regarding their structure and regarding the resources they have.
- The dissatisfaction of the centres regarding the services they receive from the mentioned pedagogical advice teams.
- The feeling of a lack of specific training shown by tutors when facing their task.
- The lack of legal cover from the community services to articulate assistance actions to centres and students.
- The lack of knowledge and coordination among tutors and the mentioned services, which impede effective and efficient actions with the students.

Proposals

All of this and following the corresponding debate with the different groups and also the own reflections of the technical and participative teams, have led us to the following proposals:

Proposals to improve the evaluation of learning

1. To understand evaluation as a global and integrating process that has to foresee different action moments: initial, formative and summative.

Teachers should be trained in the design of formative assessments and in their use in order to influence the improvement of the learning process of students.

2. To make clear to the centres the (standard) evaluation criteria for each of the subjects and the global criteria for their integral treatment, as well as their levels of achievement.

When establishing the criteria and levels of achievement, the general nature of each cycle and the specific nature of the different subjects must be taken into consideration.

3. To regulate, within the education practice of each of the subjects, the corresponding feedback of the teaching and learning processes from the analysis of the evaluation results. It is a part of the teacher's task to make a joint reflection with students in order to orientate them adequately.
4. To orientate the feedback of students with views to improve their performance, their personal development and the stimulation of autonomous learning processes. The essential role of assessment has to be to encourage the capacity and the wish to learn and has to contribute basic elements of development and enrichment of one's own personality. Teachers are those most responsible of the development of this objective.

5. To achieve that the exchange of information of students' assessment constitutes a perfectly established action in the practice of the tutorial action among the tutors involved, at the moment of changing the academic year, especially when there is a change of cycle, teaching or centre. The tutorial action plan will have to establish the nature of this exchange and the governing and coordination bodies, its compliance.
6. To constitute evaluation boards as a space for reflection and collegial decision regarding all and each of the elements of the assessment and their consequences.

The Public Administration and centres will have to regulate their work plan so that they can achieve the objectives indicated in an appropriate way.

Teachers will have to learn to work, in a collegial way, in the framework offered by the board. The latter should have a marked dynamic character to serve as a catalyst element of the processes of change of the evaluation culture of the centre in its whole and its teachers in particular.

7. To encourage the participation of students and families in the evaluation of learning as a key element to activate the empowerment processes.

The empowerment or appropriation makes reference, in this context, to the need that students (and the family) carry out their own assessment processes, understanding they constitute the most powerful tools they have to orientate their learning capacity in an adequate way.

Tutors and teachers and parents associations should encourage this type of process.

8. To endeavour to train teachers in the conceptual and technical elements related to assessment and encourage it.

Modern assessment constitutes a very complex activity aiming at finding answers to very sophisticated realities. It implies deep knowledge of the set of conceptual and technical contents that require wide reflection and study.

The Public Administration will have to encourage teacher training in the framework of the centre and in accordance with its more specific needs. This training can be complemented with other external activities and a good selection of study materials and abundant exemplifications.

9. To promote, from the Public Administration, the creation and development of evaluation materials as elements for the use of teachers and as exemplifications to enrich the reflection and evaluation task.

The most advanced training models, in themes related to the creation of assessment materials; use exemplification as an ideal formula for teacher training.

Notwithstanding, the complexity of the task requires a very strong bet from the Public Administration for the selection of teams to create materials, the control of their quality and their diffusion linked to other training materials that guarantee a correct use.

10. To encourage the exchange of experiences and good assessment practices between the teachers and the centre or from different centres (*benchmarking*).

More and more each time, there is an interest in the exchange of experiences, materials, etc between centres and teachers trying to share the so-called good practices. The creation of common improvement spaces contributes, in a most empiric way, to the definition of educative quality.

The CRPs (Resource centres) could play an essential role in the promotion of this type of initiatives.

11. To introduce and regulate the personalised follow-up of the improvement processes derived from the evaluation in the framework of the tutorial action.

One of the key elements of contact between evaluation and tutorship is found in the framework of the personalised follow-up of the student as a result of the assessment.

The tutor will try to assist the student in the personal reflection process resulting from the assessment results and will orientate the action towards fostering the student's learning capacity and his/her personal growth.

It is probably in this area where most part of the assessment and training of the attitudes and values of students should be placed.

This activity will have to be reflected in the tutorial action plan, where the intervention systems and the type of responsibility of teachers on the subject must be established.

12. To establish, at institutional level, the connection between the assessment processes and the catering for diversity in the context of the centre's orientation action.

The assessment information must have an essential role when establishing the models of intervention for students with specific educational needs. Assessment enables objective and rationalised decision-making.

The centres will have to create the necessary conditions to collect and systemise the most convenient assessment information for this group of students and direct its use in decision-making.

13. To improve the communication systematic process of the assessment information so that it is relevant, understandable and orientated to decision making. To maintain all the significant agents and those involved in the educational community duly informed.

The centres will have to regulate systems and information calendars for all the agents involved in the assessment (parents, tutors, teachers, heads of studies, etc) in order to make the maximum use possible of the assessment information.

The information should have a different approach depending on the group affected so that it is useful for the corresponding decision-making, evidently orientated towards improvement.

14. To try to make sure, from the Public Administration and the centres, the existence and good use of regulations governing the rights and obligations of the whole community regarding assessment.

Assessment must be a technically correct process, but also, a transparent and fair process. It must have a non-appeal, ethical character. The Public Administration and the centres will have to invest the necessary legal and operative means to guarantee this option. The tool to regulate this process must be publicly known.

15. To duly insert the learning assessment in the framework of the centre's internal and external evaluation processes and the strategic plans.

The assessment of learning must not be conceived as an element separated from the other actions orientated to the quality management of centres. Only if it is duly inserted in the other quality processes, we will be able to develop its potential in an adequate way.

Proposals to improve the orientation and the tutorial action

16. To clarify and develop the organisation and functional model of orientation and tutorial action at the education centres (pre-primary, primary and secondary education).

In order to cover the new needs of orientation and the tutorial action, the Education Authorities have to develop an organisation and functional model of the educational orientation based on three intervention levels:

- The tutorial action
- The Orientation department as an internal service of each of the centres
- The external support teams located in the community

The Orientation departments should not assume the tasks of the tutor, specifically regarding the direct intervention with the students and the same could be said of the teams with regards to the department. Those would intervene in the centre following the latter's explicit request, as a consequence of the impossibility to assume some of the tasks or the need of specific counselling.

The golden rule is that whatever can be done from the closest level to the starting point of the need should not be done from a more distant level.

An effective coordination between the three levels of intervention and between them and the other education services (Inspectorate, pedagogical resources centres, etc) should be encouraged in order to have an operative use of the resources and present a unitary, coherent and complementary offer to the users.

17. To restructure the external support teams (EAP).

A period of reflection with the EAPs must be initiated, trying to analyse and restructure their functions. The following observations are a clear result from our investigation with those interested agents and the users:

- The need for a bigger degree of specialisation of the members of these teams, a fact that would require specific training plans.
- Educational psychology assessment of the students with specific needs.
- Collaboration and counselling to tutors and educational psychology counsellors of the centres.
- Coordination of the educational resources existing in the area, which are useful for the educational psychology action.
- Coordination with the other existing services in the community framework and maximum interest for the development of the orientation action (social, health, legal, social-community, justice, work, etc).
- Collaboration in the training plans of tutors and educational psychology counsellors.
- Their tasks must not be simply conceived as precise or therapeutic, but also as proactive with clearly preventive and understanding approaches.

18. To create the centre Orientation departments.

The Orientation departments must constitute interdisciplinary teams of the centre and are called to form the basic organisation units from which all the tutorial and orientation actions must be activated. Their essential functions would be the following:

- To give support to the organisation and management of the centre.
- To provide academic and professional orientation. Assistance and counselling in the academic transition processes (education itineraries) and work transition processes (social-work itineraries), through activities to be developed in the tutorial action plan (PAT) and the curriculum through information, direct intervention and collaboration with the education teams.
- To collaborate in the design and elaboration of the PAT, to coordinate and evaluate it.
- To collaborate with the different management and coordination bodies of the centre and to coordinate with the education and external orientation services.

19. To define the functions and links between the different agents involved in the orientation and the tutorial action.

The functions and areas of action of the different agents involved in the orientation and the tutorial action must be clearly defined. In fact, the different legal regulations indicate them to a certain extent, as far as the classical agents are concerned. Notwithstanding, they should be developed with more precision and an additional effort should be made to specify the responsibilities of the other agents which, from the modern perspective of the tutorial action, should also be clearly involved, such as the management teams, the remaining teachers, families, social agents, etc.

20. To dignify the tutor's task.

The Public Administration and the centres should make an important effort to recognise the essential role the tutors must play at the school as activators of the education process.

It is urgent to reflect this recognition in specific facts and actions, such as:

- Sufficient time to prepare and carry out the tutorial session.
- Adequate initial and in-service training.
- Internal and external support.
- Opportunities to work in a team.
- Material and teaching resources.
- Reduction of the teaching hours.
- Economic incentives.
- Appraisal for promotion and the teaching career.

21. To regulate the criteria to be used in the selection of tutors.

The Public Administration and the centres have to regulate the personal and professional criteria by which they select the teachers who will carry out the tutorial action. Some points of these criteria are:

- To show an interest and motivation to be a tutor.
- To have a set of personal characteristics that favour communication, personal relationships and understanding.
- To have been enough time at the centre and to be a class group teacher.
- To be the group's tutor for at least two years.

22. To design plans for the training of tutors.

The fostering of the tutorial action requires, among other matters, an adequate training. This training must be based on the reality and must simultaneously foresee the needs of personal development and those of the centre.

We could establish four big areas, from a standard point of view:

- Attitude training area. Development of positive attitudes to face the tutorial function.
- Theoretical-scientific training area, to provide the base of the tutorial practice.
- Theoretical-practical training area, to provide the necessary resources to solve the real problems.
- Training area for evaluation and reflection, to contribute with reflection about one's own practice through the research applied.

23. To integrate the orientation and tutorial action in the curriculum.

The new education paradigms consider the tutorial action as integrated in the curriculum. The tutorial action is not exclusive of the tutor-teacher; it has to be shared by all teachers. It must constitute an inherent task of teaching and it must be integrated in the curriculum. The tutorial action is the training and professional dimension of the curriculum.

The tutorial process must be strongly united to the educational process: the orientation functions and objectives must be assumed by those of education.

Considering all this, the teaching team becomes the natural agent of orientation. The programme of studies constitutes the natural way by which the objectives of orientation are faced.

24. To integrate the evaluation and tutorial action in the work of the teaching teams.

The tutor is the key figure to integrate the evaluation results and the tutorial intervention. The evaluation sessions must be specially prepared by the tutors so as to involve all the teaching team in the decision-making and the follow-up of the recovery and improvement processes of all students.

25. To elaborate a transversal design for the tutorial thematic areas.

The orientation and tutorial interventions should be centred around four big thematic areas:

- Orientation for personal, academic and professional development.
- Orientation in the learning and teaching processes (learning strategies).
- Orientation for prevention (development of social abilities, life abilities, conflict resolution, emotional education, personal project, self-concept and self-esteem, etc).
- Catering for diversity (attention to special education needs).

26. To rationally structure the tutorial programme.

The centre in general, and the tutors team and the Orientation department in particular, must plan the tutorial action programmes in an adequate way:

- Vertically, indicating the thematic areas to be treated in each of the education levels.
- Horizontally, establishing an appropriate coordination between the different class groups of a same academic year.

27. To create and exchange specific materials for the tutorial action.

It is very important for the Public Administration to promote the creation and diffusion of specific materials for the tutorial action. Tutors need the collaboration of other specialists who can provide them with a large variety of materials.

The CRPs should collaborate in the research and evaluation of these materials and ease the exchange between the existing ones elaborated by different centres and teachers.

28. To promote the implication of families in the tutorial action of their sons and daughters.

The centres and parents associations should promote the implication in the children's tutorial action.

Among other actions, the following could be considered:

- To foster the collaboration of parents who can act as mediators with others more or less biased towards it.
- To involve parents, as much as possible, in support, teaching and orientation tasks of children.
- To inform, assess and orientate parents in matters related to the education of their children.

All these could be activated with the creation (from the collaboration of the Public Administration, parents associations and centres) of parent's schools, as the vehicle for lifelong learning of the family training activity.

29. To promote the institutional and educational community involvement in the tutorial action.

The tutorial action cannot be carried out in an appropriate way without the involvement of all the institution and educational community. All this requires:

- A better clarification, recognition and institutional support to orientation and the tutorial action.
- The assumption of the tutorial action by the whole centre and the community.
- To guarantee a sufficient and adequate educational psychology lifelong training for the teacher-tutor, through training projects adjusted to the needs of each centre and their teachers.
- To create the necessary infrastructures to consolidate the teams of tutors.

- To have real assistance of orientation specialists and other professionals from the community that favour the implantation of the tutorial action in the centres.

30. To coordinate the different services acting in the context of the community.

The Public Administration should develop the corresponding standard agreements to establish an appropriate level of involvement and coordination among the different services that operate in the community, whose action is necessary in the context of the tutorial action (education, social, health, legal, work services, etc).

31. To regard the tutorial function as a cooperative task in which a very important group of agents of the centre (internal and external) must collaborate with different degrees of involvement (management teams, teacher teams, orientation specialists, tutors, EAP, parents, family planning services, social-work services, etc) and which we have been indicating throughout our text of proposals.