

FRANCE [5] - 2012

COMPETENCES AND SELF ESTEEM

A. BASIC INFORMATION

Country:	France
Title of initiative:	[FR] <i>Compétences et estime de soi</i> [EN] Competences and self esteem
Coordinator/ Organization:	M. Joyet , head teacher Mme M.H. Pierre, teacher Collège L. Drouyn 1 tour de Vérac 33 240 Vérac (N : 44.991846, E : -0.339468)
Key competences addressed:	The key competences addressed are those of the <i>socle commun des connaissances et des compétences</i> (core curriculum of knowledge and competences): [FR] <i>maîtrise de la langue française</i> [EN] command of the French language; [FR] <i>pratique d'une langue vivante étrangère</i> [EN] use of a foreign language; [FR] <i>compétence de base en mathématiques et culture scientifique et technique</i> [EN] basic competence in mathematics, science and technology; [FR] <i>maîtrise des techniques usuelles des TIC</i> [EN] command of common techniques in ICT; [FR] <i>culture humaniste</i> [EN] humanistic culture; [FR] <i>compétences sociales et civiques</i> [EN] social and civic competence; [FR] <i>autonomie et initiative</i> [EN] autonomy and initiative;
Type of initiative and channels used for implementation (e.g. curriculum reform introduced through legislation etc.)	Local initiative launched in 2009 and linked to the implementation of the core curriculum of knowledge and competences.
Partners:	The <i>Rectorat</i> of Bordeaux and national body in charge of the follow up of innovations and pedagogical pilot projects
Scope: (student/teacher/school level; local/regional/national)	Local level project concerning all students, the pedagogical community of the <i>Collège</i> and parents

Learning context: (formal or non-formal)	Formal and informal
School education level/s: (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	Lower secondary school, Students from <i>Sixième</i> [first year of <i>Collège</i> , age 11-12] to <i>Troisième</i> [final year of <i>Collège</i> , age 14-15]
Target groups:	All students of the <i>Collège</i>
Time frame: (start and end date)	2009—on-going
Relevant links:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· VÉRAC: http://verac.tuxfamily.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php· School website: http://clgdrouyn.fr

B. SUMMARY

The *L. Drouyn Collège* in *Vérac* has been implementing a pedagogical project on competence-based teaching and evaluation. The pedagogical team has carried out an analysis of competences to implement and certify the acquisition of the core curriculum of knowledge and competences. They have developed an IT tool adjusted to the evaluation of disciplinary or cross-curricular competences; a tool that permits the follow up of all students' progress. In parallel they have also introduced non-numerical evaluations to reinforce students' self-esteem and involvement in their studies.

This initiative, launched in 2009, has already resulted in a change in students' attitude towards their studies, has had a positive influence on students' achievement, on the involvement of students and their families and on the image of the school.

C. IN DEPTH INFORMATION

Rationale/contextual background/motivation for introducing the initiative/reform:

In 2008 the pedagogical team noted a gap between the satisfactory behaviour of students in class and their general lack of motivation to work. This observation was reinforced by the analysis of some indicators of achievement (the pass rate of the Brevet [exam at the end of compulsory education], the rate of pupils entering upper-secondary schools, etc.) which showed results lower than expected from the school population (even though 50% of the students were from deprived families). The school team wanted to create something new in order to, in particular, increase the attractiveness of the school.

Objectives:

Initial objectives:

- To restore students' confidence, particularly the most vulnerable students, through the development of a positive evaluation of the skills and knowledge already acquired.
- To help each student to acquire a maximum level of knowledge and skills.
- To motivate students by setting precise and realistic objectives, highlighting their strengths and taking their progress into consideration.
- To target each student's difficulties more accurately in order to establish earlier, better adapted and more efficient remediation and also to underline strengths to provide tailored support.
- To develop students' autonomy and academic ambition

Dimensions targeted by the initiative/reform (e.g. student curriculum, assessment, initial/in-service teacher education, school autonomy etc.):

The project is built around 2 closely linked dimensions: Building students' self-esteem through new non numerical evaluation practises which are linked to the implementation of key competences.

Overall approach (e.g. holistic – existence of an overarching strategy, or targeted approach focusing on a specific dimension etc.):

This initiative is based on a systematic approach since it applies to all the competences of the core curriculum of knowledge and competences and favours a global approach to students' school education.

Detailed explanation of the key competence/s concerned:

All elements of the core curriculum of knowledge and competences are concerned

Specific subjects concerned or cross-curricular approach:

There has been both disciplinary and cross-curricular work and as a result all teachers have examined the nature of evaluation, the competences students need to acquire and the role of different evaluators (teachers + other school staff).

How the initiative/reform is being implemented (e.g. process followed, political commitment, consultation with stakeholders and their respective roles, incentives for stakeholders, dedicated funding, teaching material, definition of goals and standards, assessment and evaluation mechanisms, impact on teacher training/professional development and school practices/leadership, scaling-up approach, based on research/evidence? etc.):

To restore the long term self-confidence of students, to ensure their progress is recognized and to better identify their strengths and weaknesses and thus offer them tailored support, the teachers have implemented an alternative approach to evaluation in all the disciplines, based on the level of acquisition of knowledge and skills, without using numerical marks.

1. Pedagogical cooperation : analysis of the concepts of evaluation/competences

First, a group of volunteer teachers met teams of teachers of nearby schools already using competence-based evaluation (Collège Clithène in Bordeaux and Collège Jacques Prévert in Bourg sur Gironde) to benefit from their experience. Following this a teacher of the Vêrac Collège, also working as a teacher trainer in an IUFM (teacher training centre) held pedagogical meetings to confirm the concepts of evaluation and to clarify the idea of competences.

This teamwork resulted in the identification of 3 types of competences: cross-curricular non-disciplinary competences, cross-curricular multidisciplinary competences and strictly disciplinary competences.

The teachers selected 4 stages of acquisition and for each competence drew up an accompanying document to inform students about what was expected from them. It was also meant as a methodological document to explain evaluation criteria to students.

Pedagogical meetings were held to harmonise and agree upon those evaluations and to provide the students with the same reference points and help them understand the issues of that new way of learning and evaluating.

Moreover, after attending a lecture by André Antibé, several teachers of the team decided to adopt his EPCC (evaluation by “contract of confidence”). These teachers soon saw positive effects on the students who crave this type of evaluation because it helps them learn and gain new confidence in their abilities. In the framework of EPCC students are well informed about planned summative evaluations and their contents. They can later ask for a second evaluation of the items in which they think they can improve test results.

Abandoning numerical marks and replacing them with competence-based evaluation has permitted the implementation of re-evaluation during classes or pedagogical support periods. Those periods are also used for remediation activities based on the data provided by

the VÉRAC web interface and selected by students. Students are aware that an evaluation is merely an indicator at a given date and that they can still progress afterwards. The results of assessments are not expressed by a numerical mark but give information on the level reached so that any further progress is taken into account as it replaces the previous evaluation result. Students are thus given time for learning, for trial and error, preventing discouragement and encouraging them to make more effort.

2. Creation of a common tool

To ensure the success of the project the pedagogical team wanted to develop a usable, flexible and stable ICT tool, to compile all the evaluations by all the actors of the school (teachers and librarian, staff of the school life office, administrative staff), in order to organise and present a synthesis of all results in school reports. A math teacher created the software VÉRAC (Vers une Évaluation Réussie Avec les Compétences - Towards a Successful Competence-Based Evaluation). This software was first developed to meet the needs of the pedagogical team to share evaluations but then evolved into a much broader tool with which they could define profiles of students needing tailored support and also follow up the evolution of the acquisition of the core curriculum of knowledge and competences. VÉRAC's internet interface provides students, their parents and teachers with real-time monitoring of achievements.

Present stage/phase of implementation:

From a formal view point: since September 2009 the Collège has been involved in this innovative competence-based evaluation project and has abandoned the use of numerical marks. The project was first implemented in two Sixième classes [1st year of Collège]. In September 2012 all Sixième, Cinquième and Quatrième classes [1st to 3rd year of Collège] and two Troisième classes [4th and final year of Collège] were included, (i.e. a total of 21 classes). The three remaining Troisième classes that do not directly participate in the project benefit from what the teachers have learned from it and for those students recognition of acquisition of the core curriculum is to be competence based. Since all subjects (including study periods in the library, school life and pedagogical support) are competence evaluated the entire Collège (643 students and over 40 teachers) are involved in this pilot project, which aims to restore students' appetite for learning and thus improve their self-esteem.

From an informal view point: Twenty or so clubs or workshops are open to students (choir practice, Science and Technology workshop, counselling, common room, etc.). During lunch breaks or after school until 6.30pm students can, if they wish, take part in different activities and discover qualities that are hidden or unused in class but which contribute to the acquisition of knowledge and competences.

Pedagogical issues (issues related to how key competences are being taught to students and how are teachers being prepared to teach them):

- Work on the concept of competences to identify which are disciplinary and which are cross-curricular.
- Work on the development of non-numerical evaluation
- Organisation of teamwork and “drop-in days” during which experienced teachers are available to help their colleagues with the concept of competences
- Elaboration of content of the software that serves as the support for teachers' work has led to the analysis of the components of competence-based evaluation carried out in the school (including the structuring of items for end of term reports).

What works well (to identify enablers):

- The work by all the members of the pedagogical team on competences in teaching and evaluation was facilitated by the development of the ICT tool.
- Teamwork among colleagues, including those who were initially somewhat opposed to the project when it was launched and/or those who could not conceive how a competence-based or non-numerical evaluation could be implemented.

Challenges and how these are being addressed (to identify obstacles and solutions):

- The first challenge was implementing the project (including non-numerical evaluation) and applying changes to the curriculum at the same time.
- More than adopting competence-based evaluation the second challenge for some colleagues was to abandon numerical marks.
- There was also the challenge of managing the critical mass due to the large number of classes and students concerned by the initiative. This entailed numerous work meetings and the structuring of tools for sharing experience acquired with colleagues new to the initiative.

Monitoring & evaluation so far/planned, and which methods are being used (e.g. internal/external quality assurance, inspection, national assessments, international tests, self-evaluation, formative or summative evaluations):

The follow up and evaluation of the initiative are carried out:

At the local level by the team with an assessment every six months, a questionnaire about teachers' expectations and a satisfaction survey for parents

At the institutional level it is assessed by:

- the inspection bodies of the Académie [local education authority]
- the Académie and national departments in charge of the follow up of pedagogical innovation and pilot projects.

Impact (e.g. any planned impact assessment?):

Impact on students:

- An increase in the pass rate of exams and in the number of students entering upper-secondary school
- An increase in student demand for school work (including tasks for the re-evaluation of their competences) and a better understanding of the stages of the learning process
- Satisfaction concerning the recognition of their efforts
- Reduced fear of evaluation and assessment
- Development of student autonomy and involvement in personal projects

Impact on the pedagogical team:

- Development of expertise in the fields of competences and evaluation
- Project brings together almost all the school staff
- Work on school dropout rates out using the Coopersmith inventory

Impact on the school:

- Staff involvement in the project
- Better involvement of parents
- Improved image of the school

Communication of the initiative/dissemination of outputs and activities:

In the first year of the project it was presented during school hours to students by their form tutors and, after school on the same day, to the parents by the whole team. Since then, at the beginning of every school year, the parents of Sixième students are given information on how the project works.

The accompanying leaflet describing what is expected for each competence evaluated in the end of term reports is handed out to parents and to teachers new to the project.

A school report detailing each evaluated competence (cross-curricular, multi-disciplinary or disciplinary competence) is given to the parents at half term and at the end of term. At the end of term this is done during an individual meeting to ensure there is enough time to explain and comment on the different evaluations. This way the school gets feedback on the impact of the project from the families.

The web interface of the VÉRAC application enables all parents to consult the follow up of evaluations, something they do more and more often.

Next steps/follow-up:

- Extending the initiative to all students in the school
- Pursuing work on competences in order to fine-tune the software according to teachers' pedagogical practices
- Reinforce parents' accessibility to the whole project, notably via the VÉRAC software

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