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Editorial
BERTA BUSTORFF-SILVA
Head* – European School Culham

The present issue of Panorama was organised by the European School Culham. This justifies the Introduction in which detailed information is given about the school. The European School system is evolving. Evaluation, the theme of this issue, is critical in all processes of change.

I see evaluation first and foremost as a reflexive attitude driven by the search for excellence. It is characteristic of humans to try and do better. Maybe some will say that has to do with basic instincts and natural selection processes, some will say it is a market oriented drive. There are as many possible explanations as there are scientific, philosophical, religious, historical, societal interpretations of human action. It doesn’t matter, really. What matters is that it is or should be a constant in the life of a school. Evaluation concerns us all. Evaluation targets every single aspect of what we do. Most of the time, when we say evaluation in a school environment, pupils and their performance pops into mind. Not only that but how the teacher rates their work, how the exams judge them. That is part of the question, but only a very limited part of it.

Probably the post-modern paradigm has to be considered when discussing evaluation too. Evaluation these days needs to integrate a variety of perceptions, a plurality of voices, an enormous amount of listening and negotiating the interpretation of data. The balance of quantitative and qualitative approaches needs to be drawn. The leaders and the led participate, those who pay and those who spend, the specialists and the lay, the professionals and the others, the teachers and the pupils, the schools and the central administrations. The league tables and the imponderable and discreet developments that happen in the real people count, the conclusions of academic research or the outcomes of informal reflexive conversations count, how you see things and how others see the same things, count, how international organisations see things counts. Self-evaluation and external evaluation, audits, inspections, exams, assessment, comparative studies, in-depth analyses, cross-cultural studies, global comparative studies, quality assurance verifications, everything plays a role in the search for the Holy Grail of excellence.

But, let’s not forget the big picture, let’s not “not see the forest because of the trees”. Evaluation remains at the service of people, it cannot have a real effect at individual level and at the more general level of development of school if it not seen from a systemic and strategic view of the reality of school and its improvement. Besides, as the old adage says “One cannot increase one’s height by constantly measuring oneself” Evaluation needs to be fostered as an approach to education and school life. It has to integrate “the eyes of the beholders”, i.e. how people perceive reality. All the more so in a multicultural and multilingual environment like the European Schools. You don’t need to follow the latest fashions in educational jargon or the latest trends in school improvement agendas to understand this: you only need to stay people-centred and values-oriented. Even for evaluation purposes.

A last word: we gather and store an enormous amount of relevant information about pupils and their learning, teachers and their teaching, every single day. This information should be used to the maximum benefit possible. A good management information system needs to be created that can really be operated at the click of a mouse to produce the information needed for inspections, self-evaluations and other analysis needed to plan improvements. That’s the only way to avoid the unnecessary bureaucratic burden caused by requests from many and varied sources.

We thank all the contributors for their articles. The organisation was not easy, given the interest and pertinence of all views. The content of the articles is, of course, the responsibility of the authors.

* From 1 March 2007, Head of Brussels IV
The European School Culham

The European School Culham is the only European School in the United Kingdom. It is situated in the small Thames-side village of Culham about 2Km from the ancient market town of Abingdon, and about 12 Km south of Oxford.

The buildings are owned and maintained by the Department of Education & Science. The majority of the school’s buildings were inherited from Culham College, a former Church of England teacher training institution, but in 1984 new buildings to house the lower Primary classes were opened, followed in 1992 by the splendid sports hall from where many basketball teams have gone on to achieve great success. Adapting some of these old buildings into classrooms has been difficult, even challenging, and the ‘temporary’ classrooms which the Department for Education and Science supplied in 1982 are still in use today.

The school opened with 51 pupils on Monday 18 September 1978. It was set up at the request of the European Communities to provide education for the children of staff working on the JET (Joint European Torus) project. In January 2000 the operation of the JET machine was taken over by EFDA (European Fusion Development Agreement). Unfortunately this lead to a considerable drop in the school’s Category I population as many of the former seconded JET staff transferred to Brussels, or, if they were British, lost their Category I status. EFDA has recently signed an international agreement to build the next stage of the project in Cadarache, France. This will, in 2016, lead to the final closure of the JET facility at Culham. During the next 10 years the school will continue to be important to EFDA to support the secondment of staff to the site as scientists will be sent here for training, before the new project is finished.

The school currently has five language sections: German, English, French, Italian and Dutch. However in 2004 the Board of Governors took the decision to phase out the Italian and Dutch sections of the school. This process started in September 2004. The school has now closed one Nursery, while the profile of the pupils in Year 1 of the former English/Italian nursery is now non-English speaking. It is foreseen that the phasing-out will be completed in five years’ time. We are a small community (62 seconded teachers, 45 locally-recruited and 24 administrative staff) but this makes the school a friendly and welcoming place to work and learn.

Culham's main buildings are over 150 years old – full of character, but not ideal for a modern educational environment.
The majority (81.50%) of our pupils are from Category III. The school continues to try to develop the number of Category II contracts, but these do not add significantly to the pupil population. Pupil numbers have decreased slightly over the years - in 1996/97 we had 933 pupils, compared with 834 in 2006/07 – but there is still a strong demand for places from families who value the high-quality multi-lingual education offered by the European School. The European School Culham is the only ‘international’ school in the UK outside London, and the only school to offer Language 1 tuition in French, German and, to some degree, Italian and Dutch, to pupils from Nursery to Baccalaureate.

In addition to the sports hall and Primary 1/2 classrooms the school has a well-stocked library, a gymnasium, three new dedicated computer rooms for Secondary and one for Primary, art and music blocks, drama studio, laboratories, hall, canteen and a Chapel. We also have a large sports field. There is at least one computer in every class room and we are gradually installing interactive whiteboards and projectors around the school. The Primary school has a resource centre where parents can borrow books, tapes, DVDs and games either to support their child’s first or second language.

The staff, the co-ordinators, the ICT technician and the Management of the school have invested considerable time and effort in moving from paper to electronic co-operation, administration and communication. In a number of areas this has been completed, in others work is still in progress. Some projects will have to await changes in the European Schools Administrative system; others will be delayed because the ICT budget does not allow the school to replace old computers at the pace required.

Previously-printed documents such as booklists and teachers’ and parents’ handbooks have been put on the School website and forms are gradually being added, while much information is sent to teachers by e-mail only.

In Secondary, pupils’ reports are now produced using ELEE, while the Class Server is being used by a number of teachers to make materials available to their pupils and for assessments. The use of the Learning Gateway is increasing, with teachers now using it for recording their forward planning as well as for storing banks of materials for use during teacher absences.

The school has many links both with the local and the wider world. In sport, our teams regularly compete on a local, regional and, in Basketball, national level. Our students participate in the “Vale of the White Horse Youth Forum”. Representatives from the local Secondary schools meet with the local Council on a regular basis to discuss local matters which affect young people, and to develop ideas which would improve facilities. Small groups of A-level students from local schools regularly spend a day in our school following an immersion programme in either French or German, prior to their oral examinations.

The school is also a popular destination for student teachers who come and spend up to three months practising and observing lessons in a multi-lingual environment. We are also a popular establishment, both at Masters and PhD level, for students and researchers who wish to investigate bi- and multi-lingual backgrounds and teaching.

Statistics show the excellent success that the European School Culham achieves at Baccalaureate. For many years we have achieved 100% pass rates (2006 was a particular exception) and often have the greatest number of high marks. This is of course mainly down to the hard work by our students but their success would not be possible without the commitment and support of their teachers. The majority of our Baccalaureate
students (approx 80%), regardless of their nationality, continue their studies in the UK – destinations include Oxford, Cambridge, London School of Economics, Bristol, Bath, Manchester and other well-regarded Universities.

The school benefits from a hard-working and supportive Parents’ Association – CESPA (Culham European School Parents’ Association). They organise two major events each year to raise funds to provide additional equipment and to assist towards the costs of activities such as travel to Eurosport and the MEC.

Five years ago CESPA set up a Futures Working Group to work with local and national politicians, companies, Oxford Universities, local councils and employers for support and recognition of the fact that the school serves an essential purpose on a local, regional and national level. In February 2004 the group organised a round table discussion to bring together all those who support an assured future for the school. This was followed by a second high-level meeting in October 2006 in the form of a symposium on the demand for European education in the UK. The outcome of the symposium was that there is clearly a huge and continued demand in this area for multi-lingual, multi-cultural education within the context of a broad European curriculum.

The recent publishing of the Van Dijk Report on the European Schools of Bergen, Culham, Karlsruhe and Mol was, for Culham, particularly disappointing in that it clearly put forward the recommendation that the school should close by 2016, with phasing-out starting in 2010, because the school would loose its ‘raison d’être’ when JET/EFDA closes. Whilst at the time of writing no decision has been taken on any of the recommendations put forward in the Van Dijk Report, clearly there is a question mark over the future our school. There are currently other working groups looking at different options for the future of the European School system. It is to be hoped that sufficient time will be given for these options to be considered for Culham. The school community hopes that a solution may be found that would enable the high-quality multi-lingual European education to continue to be offered to the international community of Oxfordshire and its surrounding area.

In the meantime, the school is working to stay focused and provide the usual level of good quality education and moving into the 21st Century.
Evaluer, c’est quoi?

OLIVIER SAUSSEY
European School Culham

**Evaluer, c’est quoi?**


**Evaluer quoi ?**

Si le professeur a du mal à définir l’objet de l’évaluation, que dire de l’élève ? Quel professeur n’a jamais entendu cet élève, effondré sur sa «mauvaise» copie, se lamenter en répétant inlassablement «mais pourtant je la savais par cœur ma leçon ! ». Et c’est certainement vrai. Il savait sûrement la leçon sur le bout des doigts. Oui mais voilà, le professeur, lui, il a demandé autre chose. Pourtant, lorsqu’il commence sa correction, il accable le malheureux d’un ton péremptoire : «mais enfin, c’était écrit noir sur blanc dans ton cahier !!!»

Qui a tort, qui a raison ? Les deux mon capitaine. L’élève a bien appris ce qui était noir sur blanc, et le professeur a bien posé des questions «logiques» compte tenu du cours qu’il a fait.

Le plus coupable des deux ne me semble pourtant pas être l’élève ! Le professeur doit comprendre que la logique d’une leçon n’est pas forcément claire pour un élève. Il ne sait pas forcément sur quoi porter l’attention, quels sont les points essentiels de la leçon ou quelles explications retenir. Alors il «apprend» tout, et souvent mal. En fait, il ne sait pas sur QUOI il va être évalué !

Dans ma pratique pédagogique, je me suis souvent demandé comment aider les élèves à apprendre, quels «outils» leur donner pour réussir les évaluations. Je ne prétends pas être le seul à mener ce genre de réflexions, ni encore moins être celui qui a trouvé la panacée. Mais je me suis rendu compte que les résultats des évaluations étaient très sensiblement améliorés lorsque l’on fournissait aux élèves des méthodes de révision. Dans cette optique, j’ai conçu des «fiches de révision» très simples d’utilisation et adaptables à tous les niveaux du collège et du lycée (voir exemple en annexe 1). Elles sont toujours sur le même modèle :

- des définitions: l’élève y trouve les «mots-clefs» des leçons, les notions qu’il doit maîtriser.
  Exemple: «polythéiste»
- des éléments de connaissance: il ne s’agit plus de définitions strictes mais de connaissances plus larges.
  Exemple: je connais l’empereur Justinien.
- des éléments à expliquer: ni définitions ni connaissances, il s’agit maintenant de pouvoir faire des liens et donner des explications simples d’un point du cours (ce qui signifie que le «par cœur» n’est plus d’aucun secours…)
  Exemple: je sais expliquer pourquoi l’atmosphère est indispensable à la vie sur Terre.
- des repères spatiaux et/ou chronologiques: quelles sont les dates à retenir, ou les éléments à savoir situer sur une carte.

Ces fiches sont conçues pour être utilisées de deux manières:

en autonomie complète, pour un élève qui ne peut (ou ne veut) pas disposer d’une aide extérieure. Il «apprend» sa leçon, puis évalue (sic) son travail grâce à la fiche: il regarde s’il sait répondre aux différents points de la fiche.

avec un partenaire (ami ou famille): le processus reste le même, mais «l’interrogation» est menée par le partenaire.

A l’aide de cet outil, les élèves se sentent bien mieux préparés, car ils savent sur quoi ils seront vraiment évalués. On se rendra aisément compte aussi du bénéfice pour le professeur: les évaluations...
sont bien plus faciles à préparer lorsque l’on a rédigé sa propre fiche car, soi même, on sait ce que l’on veut voir acquis.

**Des connaissances, des savoir-faire : est-ce tout ?**

Lorsque nous enseignons dans nos systèmes nationaux, nous tenons évidemment compte de la qualité de l’expression écrite. En Histoire-Géographie le défi est encore plus grand dans les Ecoles Européennes puisque la matière enseignée l’est aussi en Langue 2. Il devient parfois très difficile d’évaluer le travail de l’élève car il n’est pas possible de dissocier les deux. Pour autant, il ne semble pas non plus possible de donner la même importance à l’évaluation de la langue que du contenu. En effet, tel élève se verrait d’emblée pénalisé si son niveau de langue n’est pas satisfaisant alors même que le contenu historique ou géographique est excellent.

En France, j’avais l’habitude d’attribuer environ 2 points à l’expression écrite générale (qualité de la graphie et de la syntaxe) afin de tenir compte des éléments littéraires sans pour autant «punir deux fois» les élèves moins bons en français. Ce système est-il applicable dans notre système européen ? Je vois là une piste de réflexion que j’aimerais mener avec nos collègues de langue.

Ne serait-il pas possible, d’ailleurs, d’organiser un stage associant les professeurs des deux domaines concernés (Langue / Histoire-Géographie) ?

**Évaluer l’évaluation ?**

Maman ! J’ai eu 7,5 en Histoire !!!!
Mais c’est très bien ! Tu es fier de toi j’espère !
Mais ..... c’est la plus mauvaise note de la classe maman !!!!

Maman ! J’ai eu 7,5 en Histoire !!!
Quoi ??? Mais tu te moques du monde !!
Monte dans ta chambre immédiatement !
Mais ---- c’est la meilleure note de la classe maman !!!

Les exemples pourraient être multipliés à l’infini. Mais cette scène se passe pourtant très fréquemment dans les familles. Une note, ça ne suffit pas toujours.

Évaluer, ce ne doit pas être le domaine réservé du professeur. Si lui sait ce que signifie la note attribuée, l’élève ou sa famille, eux, peuvent en avoir une appréciation fort différente.

**Évaluer autrement ?**

L’année dernière, avec ma collègue Catherine Sprinski, de l’Ecole Européenne de Luxembourg, nous avons choisi de jumeler nos deux classes de 1ère année française sur deux ans.
Au cours de l’année, nous avons effectué plusieurs travaux en parallèle et des activités communes (pour ceux que le travail par projet intéresse, nous tenons à disposition un CD regroupant les différents aspects de ce jumelage, les photos, les fiches-bilan des activités…etc).

Ayant choisi de privilégier l’aspect ludique, nous en sommes venus à nous questionner sur l’évaluation. Pour finir cet exposé, voici quelques pistes de réflexions que nous espérons utiles. Elles l’ont été pour nous en tous les cas.

**Évaluer par l’erreur ?**

Lorsque nous avons travaillé les diagrammes climatiques, l’école de Luxembourg a fourni aux élèves de Culham une série de diagrammes tous aussi faux les uns que les autres (le piège : un seul était bon…)! A charge pour nous, évidemment, de retrouver les erreurs et de les expliquer.

Ce type d’évaluation a surtout surpris les élèves de Luxembourg ! Ils ont eu beaucoup de mal à accepter de faire des erreurs ! Évaluer, pour eux, ce ne PEUT pas être «faire des erreurs» ! Même si pour cela ils devaient parfaITEMENT connaître la technique du diagramme….Et ils ont été excellents dans leurs productions de faux ! Annexe 2

**Évaluer le groupe dans plusieurs domaines ?**

Lors de nos différentes visites, nous tenions absolument à évaluer, d’une manière ou d’une autre, le travail et l’implication des élèves. Mais très vite nous nous sommes demandés comment le faire et sur quoi nous baser !

Nous avions certes des questionnaires, et il était facile de «juger» de la justesse de la réponse ou non, mais nous voulions également prendre en compte d’autres facteurs (généralement oubliés dans nos évaluations «classiques» : le sérieux de l’implication, la «débrouillardise», le comportement sur le site, la relation aux autres, les connaissances linguistiques (beaucoup de panneaux étaient en anglais), les compétences artistiques….etc.

A l’issue de cette évaluation peu classique, une «note» qui l’était aussi peu : un cadeau.

Ce système a permis à de nombreux élèves d’être revalorisés par rapport aux autres. Soit car ils étaient moins «scolaires», soit car ils ont alors pu faire montre de connaissances et/ou de compétences passées sous silence le reste du temps. Par exemple, lors de notre marche dans Londres, chaque groupe était équipé d’un appareil photo, à charge pour lui de trouver des éléments «anglais» et d’autres «non spécifiquement anglais». Nous avons été très agréablement surpris par la qualité de l’observation et la pertinence des choix de certains groupes. Et ce n’étaient pas forcément les «bons» élèves qui avaient fait les meilleurs choix.

Ayant prévu des cadeaux pour chaque questionnaire, nous avions un peu peur de voir un groupe rafler toutes les médailles grâce à la présence de tel ou tel élève (le cauchemar du travail de groupe non ?). A notre plus grande surprise (et pour notre plus grande joie) chaque groupe a été une seule fois numéro un ! (Annexe 3) Notre évaluation n’avait donc pas pris en compte les mêmes éléments à chaque fois, et cela nous est apparu comme un grand succès.

**L’évaluation par le défi-lecture ?**

Nous avons organisé un défi-lecture autour d’un roman historique de jeunesse (Le premier dessin du monde). Au cours de l’année, nous avons réalisé un travail identique sur le livre afin d’en vérifier la compréhension par les élèves et d’en tirer des éléments pour le cours d’Histoire. Nous avons aussi, chacun de notre côté, produit une série de questions qui seraient posées lors de la venue du groupe à Culham.

Ce faisant, nous avons évalué la lecture du livre d’une manière nouvelle pour nous : il ne s’agissait plus de répondre à une batterie de QCM mais de produire soi-même trois questions : l’une jugée «facile», l’autre «moyenne», l’autre «difficile». Mais pour cela il fallait évidemment avoir lu le livre et l’avoir compris. Si les bons élèves ont généralement réussi cette activité, ce ne sont pas toujours eux qui ont produit les meilleures questions ! Et ils ont eu parfois plus de mal que les autres à déterminer le degré de difficulté de la question : cela mérite réflexion !
Mais une fois à la maison, voici ce que l’on peut faire :

Annexe 1

Fiche de révision : Qu’est-ce que l’Histoire ?

I. Je sais définir
Histoire et Préhistoire
Source historique primaire et secondaire
Millénaire, siècle, décennie
Un manuscrit
Une fresque
La chronologie

II. Je connais
Le nom des deux périodes de la Préhistoire
Les 4 grandes périodes de l’Histoire (avec dates de début et fin…)
Les chiffres romains de 1 à 100, plus 500 et 1000

III. Je sais expliquer
A quoi correspondent les dates des différentes périodes de l’Histoire
Pourquoi il n’y a pas d’année « zéro ».
Comment se déroulent des fouilles archéologiques.

IV. Je sais dater ou situer sur une carte
Pas de date précise pour ce cours mais je sais calculer un siècle à partir d’une date.

Conseils pour apprendre les leçons

Il faut d’abord savoir qu’on retient mieux une leçon quand on a écouté en cours. Si en plus on a participé aux cours (en répondant aux questions par exemple), cela est encore plus facile !

Je regarde avant de réviser (point très important) si je sais faire ce qui est sur la fiche de révision (ex : une x devant ce que je sais, un ? devant ce que je ne sais pas).

Je lis et j’essaie de retenir le cours sur le cahier

Je repère et retiens les mots importants (ce sont des « mots-clé »)

Je regarde les documents du cours et j’essaie de me rappeler pourquoi (et quand) on les a utilisés : cela m’aidera à me rappeler de la leçon.

Je demande à quelqu’un de me poser des questions.

J’essaie, chaque soir, de « dire ce que j’ai appris aujourd’hui » à une oreille attentive…
Lors du défi lui-même, nous avons décidé de pratiquer une évaluation individuelle et de groupe à la fois. Pour cela chaque élève répondait seul à une question dont il choisissait le degré de difficulté. En cas de doute il pouvait demander l’aide de son groupe… mais perdait des points. Il était très intéressant d’observer les stratégies mises en place : «Non, tu ne réponds que si tu es sûr!», «Allez, essaie de répondre ça même si c’est pas vrai»… etc.

Plus pédagogiques encore nous sont apparues les réflexions des élèves sur la qualité des réponses :

Mais M’sieur c’est pas vraiment ça la réponse ! Eh ! La réponse est trop vague !!
Ah non, la réponse n’est pas complète !

Alors si elle n’est pas complète on ne compte que la moitié des points.

En les faisant participer activement à l’évaluation, ils ont donc compris eux-mêmes ce que nous avons essayé de leur apprendre toute l’année : il faut donner une réponse la plus complète possible et la plus précise possible.

Mais au-delà du comique de leur bataille, on peut effectivement s’interroger sur la difficulté pour nous (mais encore plus pour «eux») à définir ce qui est une «bonne réponse».

Et pourtant, au final, c’est tout de même cela qu’on évalue le plus souvent.

Annexe 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groupe</th>
<th>British Museum</th>
<th>Rues de Londres</th>
<th>Ecole de Culham</th>
<th>Stonehenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 : Camille, Enora, Lucie, Laura, Enir, James, Matthias, Olivier, Jules, Sofian, Cédric.</td>
<td>Vainqueur 80 pts</td>
<td>N°4 9 (photos)+1 (originalité)</td>
<td>N°2 ex æquo 13/16 + 2 (temps, attitude)</td>
<td>N°4 38,5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 : Marie, Amelie, Chloé, Giulia, Raphael, Goya, Louis, Damien, Ralph, Alexis</td>
<td>N°3 75 pts</td>
<td>Vainqueur 26 (photos)+4 (originalité)</td>
<td>N°2 ex æquo 13/16 + 1 (temps, attitude)</td>
<td>N°2 33,5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 : Gwendal, Basile, Romain, Anne-Lo, Lea, Anaïs, Ségolène, Léa, Katherine, Nolwenn</td>
<td>N°2 78 pts</td>
<td>N°3 12 (photos)+1 (originalité)</td>
<td>N°4 12/16 + 3 (temps, attitude)</td>
<td>Vainqueur 38 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 : Alex, Valentin, Marco, Emilia, Sarah, Paloma, Léonie, Elisa, Laura, Ann-Eva</td>
<td>N°4 58 pts</td>
<td>N°2 20 (photos)+2 (originalité)</td>
<td>Vainqueur 14/16 +2 (temps, attitude)</td>
<td>N°3 29 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality Assurance and self-evaluation in the European Schools – from an inspectorial viewpoint

RUDOLPH J ENSING
Chair of the ‘General Inspection Framework and Joint Inspections’ Working Group of the Board of Inspectors (Secondary), October 2006

Many professionals work in the European Schools and in many cases a school’s management and the inspectors responsible have every reason to be pleased with the quality of the learning process and the individual teacher who gives it shape and content. And they are not alone.

It is extremely important for a school and a system to give the individual teacher free rein, within an agreed framework, to demonstrate his or her expertise. At the end of the day, it is always the classroom teacher, the man or woman at the chalk face, who makes the difference and who determines the quality of education. However, a good teacher is only professional if he constantly asks himself whether he can be an even better one and adapts his pedagogical and didactic practice so that it fits within the framework of the school as a whole, consulting properly with as many colleagues as possible and showing a willingness to communicate openly with all the parties involved in education. And it is always possible to be better, bearing in mind that standing still means going backwards.

In the European Schools there are opportunities aplenty to test one’s own practice. Working on the quality of education from 25 different perspectives is bound, almost by definition, to produce a dynamic educational system and lively communication on the subject. The concept of a ‘dynamic educational system’ seems a *contradictio in terminis* – a system always tends to become static and for that reason it is better to talk about an educational model rather than a system.

In order to define the quality of education, it first needs to be agreed what everyone involved understands ‘quality’ to mean. As will be known by now, the two Boards of Inspectors are in the process of developing a General Inspection Framework and of making arrangements to conduct Joint Inspections or Team Inspections. Just to be perfectly clear: these joint inspections are completely unrelated to evaluation of the quality of the classroom performance of the individual teacher as such. That task is a matter for the national inspector, in cooperation with the school’s management.

The purpose of joint inspections is to enable a team of inspectors to express an opinion on the quality of education as a whole, on the basis of a common appraisal framework. However, a common appraisal framework is not just of relevance to inspectors: it is important for everyone involved in education to have a reference framework which, via self-evaluation, makes reflection on existing practice possible and which can point the way forward, indicating the direction in which new developments should or must go. For that reason the reference framework ought not to be a matter for the inspectorate alone but should be a reflection of what everyone involved in education understands good education to mean. And that framework should not become set in stone but should be a means of engaging in discussion with one another about good education. In other words: the General Inspection Framework must not become a system either, but should be a model. A model which is evaluated from time to time and which can be adapted on the basis of changing and changed views. Why not?

In all the Member States and beyond, the subject of evaluation of the quality of education is a top priority. This is also the case in the European Schools to some extent but moves in that direction need to be given fresh impetus. The development of an inspection framework and a common approach to be adopted by the inspectors is, therefore, of the utmost importance. It is vital that the inspectorate inspects the quality of education and not just the quality of a section by evaluating the performance of individual teachers. And, moreover, the inspectorate should encourage self-evaluation by the schools as...
much as possible. The outcomes of self-evaluations, management inspections, examination results and complaints should lead to a proportional approach in the organisation of school inspections.

This approach is in line with what is already laid down in the European Schools Convention. Article 17 of the Convention concerning the Inspectors of the European Schools refers to their common responsibility for joint inspections as a form of evaluation. According to the tenor of this article, the functions of the Board of Inspectors are “to assure quality by setting up team and group inspections to supplement the work of individual inspectors, and by using the evaluation produced to improve the quality of teaching and standards of pupils’ attainments’, ‘to ensure effective coordination and supervision of studies in all areas of the curriculum by providing appropriate specialist advice’ and ‘to use the inspectors’ knowledge of the schools gained through inspection to spread good practice and promote harmonisation between sections’.

Article 18 of the Convention also mentions ‘joint visits, team or group visits to inspect the teaching of a given subject or aspects of the work of the school’ and indicates that ‘inspection also serves the purpose of promoting the self-evaluation of teachers and schools’.

For all these reasons, both Boards of Inspectors have reached a stage where they are engaging in separate and, where possible and advisable, combined activities which are designed to make joint inspections regular practice. The Board of Primary Inspectors is accustomed by now to conducting team inspections and the Board of Secondary Inspectors has decided in the past year to develop earlier occasional experiments with the genre so that it becomes common practice.

For the purposes of development of the General Inspection Framework for Secondary Education, various national inspection frameworks were compared, from which it emerged that they share many common features. Special attention was given to the relationship between external and internal evaluation, the steering towards and influence of the inspection on a model of self-evaluation by the school and, vice versa, on a model or system of supervision. The Scottish framework ‘How good is our school?’ was explicitly taken into account.

The working group of inspectors took due note of this analysis and decided for reasons of continuity to base the construction of an inspection framework on the matrix of criteria and indicators as set out in document 2000-D-264: ‘Quality Assurance and Development in the European Schools’, approved by the Board of Governors back in 2000. The working group also constructed instruments for school visits to be used for the analysis of relevant school documents, lesson observations, and interviews with management, teachers, students and parents.

Experience with joint inspections so far has proved very positive in the inspectors’ judgement and cooperation with the managers and the teachers of the schools concerned is considered to be completely open and constructive. Good cooperation is a conditio sine qua non for this type of investigation to be successful: for a healthy debate on the quality of education to take place, the people involved need to recognise one another’s professionalism, they need to accept that in addition to strengths, weaknesses in educational provision are bound to be identified, that there is no need to be on the defensive because ‘no one is a master of all weapons’, that there is little point in discussing dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s and that it is more productive to devote all one’s energies to establishing good cooperation, with a view to enhancing quality and thus driving up educational standards.

Experience shows, moreover, that in most cases the outcome of inspections comes as no surprise to the schools and that is a good sign, because it shows that the school is aware to a greater or lesser extent of the strong and weak aspects of the education provided. Consequently, it is obviously a question of what action is taken, once armed with this knowledge.

The overall aim is to have a Common Inspection Framework ready in 2007 and to put it on the Learning Gateway in order to give the schools the opportunity to use it for their self-evaluation and to
promote debate about the ever-changing quality of education. To bring this about, the inspectors hope for continuation of the constructive cooperation which already exists with all the professionals who in their everyday work and practice endeavour to deliver high quality education and to raise standards. With input from 25 countries and their national perspectives, the European Schools can be dynamic centres of innovation, preserving everything good which has already been achieved but showing all the openness and energy required to ensure that the whole can be more than the sum of its parts.
School self-evaluation: its purpose and European context

"Not everything that counts can be counted. And not everything that can be counted, counts." - Albert Einstein

PAVLA POLECHOVÁ,
Head of Delegation, Czech Republic

Purpose of self-evaluation
There are being considered two main purposes of self-evaluation: self-evaluation for accountability and self-evaluation for improvement.

(Self) evaluation for accountability
This purpose of evaluation leads to summative evaluation at the end of an evaluation period or at the moment of evaluation. Usually it includes evaluation of students’ learning outcomes. There are pitfalls of evaluation of learning outcomes for accountability. For instance, if there is among schools an unbalanced distribution of students with special educational needs, or, more widely, students with additional support needs (this may be students that are new to school, students from single-parent families, students from divorcing families, students coming too late to school before their EB, SWALS students (hence students from countries that are, for any reason, poorly represented in European schools), the results of the schools cannot be compared on equal basis.

If they are, it is unjust to the schools with more students with additional support needs.
If they are not, it is motivating the schools to deflect more students from the main stream under “protection of label of having special educational needs” – in other words, it may lead to exclusive practices.

Therefore, an inseparable part of accountability should be monitoring not only of outcomes but of their differences for different groups. This enables us to measure equity. One of the signals about (in)equity are differences between girls and boys.

Some countries that have big differences between girls and boys exhibit differences in other divisions of students into groups (the evidence can be found in PISA 2000, PISA 2003). The biggest issue is the rate in which outcomes of students depend on their socio-economic background, or even on the background of their classmates. This is probably not the issue in European schools but we cannot be actually sure.

In “Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament (Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems)” No. (SEC(2006) 1096) it reads: “The Member States should develop a culture of evaluation. They should develop policies for the whole lifelong learning continuum which take full account of efficiency and equity in combination and in the long term, and which complement policies in related fields.” – The Commission argues that efficiency does not have to come at the expense of equity; these are not mutually exclusive objectives.

Self-evaluation for improvement
Evaluation to the second purpose is formative, being a part of a process on a spiral:

An essential component of sound self-evaluation for improvement is an attitude that it is not the students that do not fit the school, the quality of which is taken for granted – but it is the school that should constantly question and improve its preparedness to serve the students’ population in its greatest possible scope of diversity.

Thus self-evaluation for improvement is directly related to the inclusiveness of the school, while evaluation for accountability can lead to exclusive tendencies, if it does not monitor equity at the same time.

External support of self-evaluation, ESSE project
An indicator of quality of external support to self-evaluation was developed as a part of outcomes of the ESSE (Effective School Self-Evaluation) project, carried out in 2001 – 2003 under the Socrates

1 For instance, students with dyslexia should not have worse results in mathematics when comparing their average results to the average results of their peers without this learning difficulty
2 http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
programme by SICI (Standing International Conference of Central and General Inspectorates of Education). The components of this indicator were identified through the research and the school visits, and are as follows:

- provision of statistical data for comparison and benchmarking
- (existence of) a set of quality standards/indicators
- training and staff development in self-evaluation methods
- regular independent external inspection or moderation of self-evaluation
- a legislative framework

Using this indicator, the ESSE project showed that the quality of school self-evaluation was higher in countries that provided a strong support to self-evaluation than in countries that provided weak or almost no support to it. This statement is based on whether it was possible to find examples of good practice of good self-evaluation. The inspectorates were using the knowledge of the system, so their reports on existence or absence of such examples were fairly reliable.

The project developed indicators of quality of school self-evaluation, i.e. meta-evaluation indicators. It did not look at schools’ attainment and achievement, learning, teaching, the curriculum and support to children’s learning but at quality of assessment and evaluation itself. The publication on ESSE project (see website)\(^3\) can serve as a resource for further learning.

\(^3\) http://sici.org.uk/ESSE/
The European Baccalaureate

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9 September 2006 the Financial Times published an article titled “Smarter tests for braininess” on the background of the discussion in the UK about whether the International Baccalaureate is better suited to predict University qualifications than the English A-levels. The article states that the IB for practical purposes is the only alternative to A-levels and continues:

"The exception to this is if you happen to be a Eurocrat, eligible to send your child to one of the 13 European Schools which are allowed to teach the European Baccalaureate. The UK has one such school, in Culham, Oxfordshire. The EB is said to be very difficult and its holders prized by Universities. But most of us will not have that option".

Lavish praise indeed, which supports what is the universally held view within the European School system itself (and apparently also one held by the European Commission and the European Parliament) that the EB is a highly valued exam that gives excellent qualifications for continued education at Universities and other places of higher learning. This is remarkable for a school and exam system that is more than 50 years old and has remained relatively unchanged. The more so because it was created in order to serve as University entrance exam in several different countries. No mean feat by the godmothers of 50 years ago.

A school system and an exam system should not be carved in stone, no matter how good it is or has been. It needs always to look at ways of improvement and to adapt to changing conditions. A system that was created for one school and a small student body from 6 countries is not necessarily the best system for 13 schools with a much bigger and heterogeneous student population from 25 countries. In more ways than one the organisation of the EB functions as if it still serves a small group of pupils and relies on the familiarity of teachers with each other and with the organisational unit.

The question is whether the present system is professional enough to maintain the reliability and general quality of the Baccalaureate, let alone allow it to be exported to schools that are not members of the European School family. What are the problems then?

1. Production of written BAC questions
The present mode of production of BAC questions for the written EB is based on the obligation of teachers in the European Schools on a rota to manufacture questions if they teach classes in the Baccalaureate year. Translations into other languages must be forwarded as well. The proposals from the group of the schools chosen for this task are then studied by a group of experts who select the questions for the coming BAC by picking from different sets of proposals.

The quality of the BAC questions is therefore to a great extent dependent on the quality of the proposals, the quality of the translation of the proposals from a particular year’s teachers in S7 and quality of the committee of experts. As it is, the questions submitted are sometimes off or only marginally within the syllabus and even so there are examples of these becoming part of the final exam paper. Feedback is not always given to the teachers who make the proposals so that improvements can be made. Some of the questions submitted are edited by the experts but sometimes insufficient care is taken to ensure that the edited version is correct and this applies even more to the translations. For each subject there is a responsible inspector but s/he does not necessarily have a background in the subject and may therefore be severely limited in his/her role.

The problems with this way of producing BAC questions may be seen every year at the beginning of the written BAC exams. The questions are handed out to the relevant teachers in each school for them to check for errors shortly before the start of the exam. They are also expected to point out typographical errors and differences between the texts and/or illustrations in the different language
versions. If there are mistakes, these are faxed, e-mailed or telephoned to the responsible inspector who must approve changes. Unfortunately, there are frequent mistakes in the question texts in one or several language versions, sometimes due to the translation, sometimes not. It can be difficult to get into contact with the responsible inspector and there seems to be differing policies followed by the individual inspectors whether to allow changes or not. Furthermore, the decision about a change is sometimes made so late that the exam has started before it arrives. This means that the exam starts too late, that corrections are handed out after the beginning of the exam or that errors are not corrected. In all cases this creates tension and does not present the pupils or the teachers with a picture of a professional organisation of the Baccalaureate.

Two changes would improve and professionalize the exam system:

A. A central examination authority should be created within the Brussels Bureau with overall responsibility for:
   - the preparation of the exams;
   - the production of exam questions;
   - the printing of the questions;
   - the transportation to and from the schools of the questions and the pupil answers;
   - the appointment and meetings of external examiners;
   - the correction of the pupil answers and
   - the follow-up of the exams, including an evaluation with relevant statistics.

The central examination authority would work in close co-operation with the inspectors.

B. The task of producing the questions for the written Baccalaureate questions should be entrusted teams of subject experts, some of whom with previous experience of the European Schools. They would make sure the questions were within the syllabus, that there would be a greater variety in the questions than today so that different aspects were tested and that there were no errors in any language version of the questions. They would also ensure that the level of difficulty did not vary much from year to year; e.g. it is well-known that in subjects such as Mathematics there are “good” years and “bad” years. There would be co-ordination between the teams of language experts to ensure that the level of difficulty between e.g. the various L1 exams would not be so great. All sets of questions would be accompanied by guidelines and mark schemes to harmonise marking.

2. Marking

Reliable marking presupposes clear objectives and much excellent work has been carried out in recent years to improve the syllabi for the various subjects to achieve this goal. As far as the written Bac is concerned the correctors are provided with evaluation criteria for marking and in many cases also suggested solutions to the questions. But no such system exists for the oral exams or for the preliminary marks which together count for 64 per cent of the Baccalaureate. A general description of the marking system and the individual marks exist but it is questionable whether this is sufficiently precise to form a secure basis for marking by teachers in the case of the preliminary mark and by the teacher and the external examiner in the case of the oral exams. There are examples of inconsistent marking and a perception that certain subjects and/or teachers provide better opportunities for higher scores than others. There is also a perception that there is a difference in marks across the language sections. This may or may not be true but a serious study of the exam results is required to identify such problems and to bring in a greater coherence and fairness to the system. Marking will never be an exact science and the flaws that exist in the European School system are paralleled in the national systems.

Two changes would improve the reliability of the system:

A. A more detailed set of descriptors should be developed for the marks for each subject and it should be considered whether a system of moderation for the preliminary marks should be introduced along the lines of that which exists in the IB for coursework.

B. At the moment the preliminary marks count for 40 per cent, the written exams for 36 per cent and
the oral exams for 24 per cent of the total Baccalaureate result. No mark in the Bac is given that the pupil’s teacher does not have an influence on. For the preliminary mark only the teacher is involved and for the written and oral exams s/he has a 50 per cent influence on the mark given. (There is one exception to this: a third examiner gives the final mark for the written exam if the marks of the teacher and external examiner differ by more than two marks). The teacher therefore has much the greatest influence on the marks and the final result of a pupil.

It is easily arguable that this is an unsatisfactory situation both for the pupil and for teacher – and also for the reliability and validity of the exam system. As is the case in a number of national systems, there should be a body of marks over which the teacher has no influence. This can be achieved by having more written exams which are examined by two external examiners only. This would also contribute to the harmonisation of the marking of pupils across the European Schools.

At the moment there are 5 written exams and 4 oral exams but the number of written exams could be increased if the oral exams were reserved for the languages. This would mean that the weight of the written exams could be increased to at least 50 per cent.

3. Modernisation of the exams

The types of exams taken have remained more or less unchanged within the European School system as have the conditions under which the exams are taken. The national systems, on the other hand, have moved ahead in many directions and now present the pupils with other challenges and conditions that in some instances prepare the pupils better for their further studies.

Two changes would modernise the exam system:

A. The use of computers at the written exams should be permitted. Computers are a natural tool for most pupils when they work at home and increasingly in school and will be later on during their University studies. It disadvantages pupils at their exams that they cannot use working methods that they are used to. Many national systems have allowed computers at exams for a number of years after previous experimentation which showed that it is possible to set questions and to evaluate pupil answers taking the use of computers into consideration and still have reliable marking. There are logistical problems and there is a risk of unauthorised use of third person material when computers are used but the national systems have managed to find solutions to these problems.

B. The writing of essays is normal and common practice at Universities and as most of the European school graduates continue at Universities, they should acquire a better preparation for this in the European Schools as they do in many national systems. In order to train pupils better for more independent work they should be required during the 6th or 7th year to write an extended essay in a subject of their own choice and under the guidance of a teacher which should be evaluated by external examiners and count as part of their Baccalaureate exam.

The European Baccalaureate has many excellent characteristics. It is basically a good system that in one sense has stood the test of time but in another not quite. Most national systems have moved on whereas the European School system has remained more or less unchanged. We should not and could not take over lock, stock and barrel from any national system, but we should be prepared to profit from good practice in other systems, be they national or international. There is much good to build on and many of those connected with the European Schools: inspectors, teachers, examiners, administrators and governing bodies have made invaluable contributions to it over the years. However, there is little doubt that a systematic overhaul of the system could lead to improvements that would ensure another fifty years of good preparation of our pupils for their future studies and the continued recognition of the European Baccalaureate as one of the best of its kind.

* From 1 March 2007
Acting Head of Culham
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We have a choice in the European system – either to retrench individually within our parochial nationalist frameworks and do things our way; or to enter into dialogue with our colleagues and the wider world to construct an educational programme that draws on best practice from all the different systems that we have been exposed to in our pasts.

The International Baccalaureate is a highly regarded system of education that seeks to prepare students for entry into University worldwide. In many ways it seeks to provide the same quality and breadth of education to students as the European Baccalaureate does, albeit from an International rather than European perspective.

In this article I wish to describe the process of assessment within the IB. I will leave it to the reader to reflect on whether there are elements within this process that we can learn from.

The structure of the programme

The IB Diploma course is a two-year programme of studies. Each student chooses six subjects, three of which are followed at a higher level and three at a standard level. These subjects are designed to give the students a broad and balanced education while allowing them flexibility to specialise in their area of interest. They must choose one subject from each of the following six groups:

1) Their first language
2) A second language at an appropriate level or a second ‘first’ language.
3) Mathematics
4) Science
5) Society (Geography, History, Economics, Philosophy etc)
6) Arts or a second subject from one of the first five groups.

In addition to the above each student must follow a course in the Theory of Knowledge where they reflect on the value and truth status of the academic disciplines; they must also write a 4000 word thesis representing original research in a subject of their choice; and they must involve themselves in Community Service.

Each of the main subjects is assessed on a seven point scale, with 7 being the highest grade and 1 the lowest. The extra elements are awarded three points between them giving a total score for the Diploma of 45.

Assessment principles

Validity and reliability are the two watchwords of a good assessment scheme.

To safeguard validity the IB uses a variety of assessment instruments based upon the nature of the discipline and the published objectives of the course.

All subjects have an element of coursework, which is assessed according to published criteria. Science students, for example, will, at the end of the two years, have to produce their practical book to show that they have mastered certain experimental skills and data analysis techniques. Theatre Studies and Music students will have to take part in a performance that will be recorded for later review. Mathematics students have to do an extensive investigation. And Art students will maintain a ‘diary’ showing the development of their ideas over the two years. Similarly literature students have to complete certain lengthy assignments as part of their coursework, while second language students will be recorded being interviewed by their teacher.

All subjects, though, have a final exam, which tests the knowledge and skills accrued during the whole of the two-year course. In Art this takes the form of putting on an exhibition, which an examiner visits and discusses with the examinees. But in the other subjects the final exam is written and designed to test a range of skills. There are three Physics papers, for example. Paper 1 is a Multiple Choice paper and is designed to test the students’ ability to think quickly, estimate without the use of a calculator, and have intelligent and educated hunches. Paper 2 has structured questions with broad syllabus coverage and containing questions
demanding various levels of operation from ‘recall’ to ‘complex analysis’. It always includes a data analysis question, but otherwise the questions are unpredictable ensuring that the students need to revise the complete course to achieve a high grade. Paper 3 tests Option Topics in a way that necessitates great rigour and depth of study.

In order to ensure reliability the IB uses strict criteria combined with moderation and subsequent feedback. The first marker will mark the paper or coursework using published criteria or a detailed mark scheme. They will normally receive training in how to do this effectively, and are encouraged to write comments on the scripts to justify their judgements. The IB organisation will then select a random sample of these scripts for second marking. Depending upon the deviation between the first and second mark, so all the marks of the relevant students will be adjusted. This process of moderation will be done by an experienced moderator who will then give relevant feedback to the first examiner.

In the case of coursework the ‘first examiner’ is the teacher, but for all written examinations it is an external examiner. It should be stressed that the IB would regard it as highly unethical for a teacher to be able to award a mark – or a part mark – to one of his own students. Universities need to be able to trust the terminal assessment as objective and independent.

The Process of Assessment

The syllabus

Assessment starts with a syllabus. These subject-specific documents are revisited on a regular basis – usually every eight years. Each syllabus is highly detailed and gives the background philosophy of the IB from which it interprets the particular aims and learning objectives for the particular subject. In this way pedagogical uniformity is ensured across the disciplines; from the students’ point of view they will know that graphical skills they learn in economics will correspond to and reinforce those learnt in physics, for example; and that their mathematics will provide them with the necessary tools to deal with the sciences.

The learning objectives are spelt out in great detail so there is no ambiguity about what could possibly appear in the final examination. In the sciences, for example, each is introduced by an action verb (‘explain’, ‘define’, ‘recall’, ‘compare’ etc) that clearly indicates not only the item of knowledge but also its cognitive level.

The immediate purpose of the syllabus is to inform the teacher of what needs to be learnt. But it is also written in a student friendly form and is usually given to the students for revision guidance.

The examination team

The examinations are delivered and managed by a team of about six examiners for each subject. This team is lead by a Chief Examiner who will typically have University-level grounding in the subject as well as IB experience. The team will be responsible for: the writing of the papers; their translation into the three IB languages (French, English and Spanish); the construction of the mark schemes; the supervision and moderation of the ‘first markers’; providing feedback to teachers, examiners and schools; defining the grade boundaries; marking problem scripts; and producing the examination report, complete with detailed advice to teachers and a full statistical analysis.

In a short article such as this it is not possible to fully describe all the above, but let me outline a few salient facts of possible interest to those working within the European Schools.

The mark scheme

Teachers inevitably have an individual style when marking their students’ work. IB assistant examiners are, for the most part, teachers who wish to earn a bit of extra holiday money. There may be up to fifty of them operating from different parts of the world and in any of three different languages. In order to standardise their marking, each paper is accompanied by a mark scheme that has been written by the original writer of the paper and refined by the examination team after they have seen an initial selection of scripts. This mark scheme defines precisely what the student has to do in order to gain
each mark and assistant examiners are required to follow it (even if they disagree with it). Where there may be doubts they write directly on the script to justify their allocation of marks. In this way the moderator is able to understand the way the assistant examiner is thinking and give effective feedback – as well as make the necessary adjustments to the raw scores.

**Fixing the grade boundaries**

As has been mentioned the students are awarded a grade for each paper – not a percentage. It is recognised that it is impossible to write two identical papers, and therefore inevitable that 80% in 2004 may have a very different meaning to 80% in 2006 on a different paper.

When all the students’ scripts have been marked, moderated and sent by courier to Cardiff from all over the world, the examination team assemble for a three-day meeting. This Grades Award meeting decides which papers merit a ‘7’ and which a ‘4’, etc. It also ties up any other loose ends – from teacher complaints that a particular item was not in the syllabus, to allegations of collusion between students.

The IB believes in criterion referencing. This means that a particular grade is awarded for a defined standard of work. For reasons already stated it believes that giving the students a raw percentage score is unfair to the students as well as lacking in clarity for use in University entrance. Similarly, setting grade boundaries according to a norm-referenced percentile of the score is potentially unfair inasmuch as cohorts of students will differ from year to year.

So each subject has a detailed description of the performance that corresponds to each grade (on the seven point scale). The examination team inspect numerous scripts until they agree that a particular mark corresponds to the description of, say, a ‘7’. In this process they may well retrieve past scripts from the archives to ensure historical consistency. Eventually the grade boundaries will be set and each student will be awarded a grade. In physics the highest grade ‘7’ will be typically awarded for a score greater than 85%, but this may vary by up to 5 percentage points depending upon the facility of the paper. The ‘pass’ grade of ‘4’ will be awarded to a paper that achieves around the 45% mark.

These marks may seem rather low to the average European School teacher but it must be remembered that the students are being tested on a two-year course and that the exams they have will be predictable only to the extent that they will test syllabus items. Moreover the mark schemes are very rigorously defined.

Students who achieve an overall score of 24 or over are awarded a Diploma. The maximum score is 45, with any grade above 40 opening doors to the very best Universities worldwide.

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Writing marking guidelines – a practical approach

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In Alan Philips’ excellent article on Evaluating Students’ Language Performances in the 21st century, he touched on the need to discuss and write a range of marking guidelines, in which the full range of possible student responses is clearly described. I would like to outline here one possible way in which this could be achieved, and present for discussion – and mauling - a set of guidelines that I have written and used in years 4 and 5, English second language.

If the object of assessing a piece of work is to be as objective and consistent, and therefore fair to the student as possible, then a teacher must have a tool with which he can ensure that he has considered all aspects he is looking for, and measured performance consistently. The first step then is to consider what he is looking for when marking. He must then identify and describe different levels of attainment of this particular aspect, and then match this level with a mark.

This, of course, is only the beginning; the really interesting part of the exercise is to discuss with colleagues, and to reach agreement on what we are looking for when we are marking, and how we award a mark for it. The next step is for colleagues from one language section, having agreed upon a set of marking guidelines, to talk to those from other language sections; the ideal situation would be a set of marking guidelines for a particular type of task, for each year, accompanied if possible by an example script; this would then be agreed upon by all L2 colleagues, and translated into the “langues vehiculaires” – and implemented.

A set of marking guidelines, discussed, agreed upon and translated, exists for L2 in the Baccalaureate; I suggest that it is now time for us to do the same for each year level throughout each school.

Discussion and preparation of the guidelines could be carried out in the following way:

• In each school, colleagues in each language section decide upon an example task for each year group: e.g. writing about themselves in year one: writing about a very good or very bad day in year two; writing an article about an activity that they would love to do in year three, etc. etc.

• Colleagues then decide on what aspects they are looking for: language accuracy, range and accuracy of vocabulary, interesting content, punctuation, spelling, organisation of ideas, paragraphing etc. Expectations would, of course, be adjusted to the year level.

• Discussion is then focused on where the cut-off point is, i.e. what, for each of the aspects identified above, would be below a 6, what above?

• A rough draft of marking guidelines would then be written, adjusting requirements to grades.

• All L2 colleagues across the language sections would then discuss these draft guidelines, and attempt to achieve agreement.

• An attempt should then be made to agree on a set of guidelines to be used throughout the system.

Writing guidelines is not easy, and the more time spent thinking about how to express the differences in level, the more difficult it becomes. It is also easy to question them; how, for instance, do you make the difference between “only a few minor mistakes” and “few minor errors”? Practise has shown, however, that it is possible to come up with usable wording; inspiration can be found in the marking guidelines of any of the important international language testing institutions.

I present below, for illustration and discussion purposes, marking guidelines which I wrote, and use for marking writing tasks in years 4 and 5.

The discussion process described in this article would of course take time; I believe that it is vital that time should be made available to teachers to create this very useful tool.
MARKING GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN WORK IN FOURTH AND FIFTH YEAR ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE

10 Extremely well organized (paragraphing, sequencing); suitable register; wide range of expressions and fluent control of grammatical structures; no mistakes, or only very few minor ones; focused and informed content; presentation faultless; a pleasure to read.

9 Generally well organised (clear paragraphing, sequencing generally well thought out); language suitable to task, with relatively varied expression; only a few minor mistakes; a convincing piece of work; presentation good.

8 Line of argument can be followed, although organisational conventions not always followed (paragraphing, etc.). Mostly suitable language for the task, with some errors in expression, or occasional unsuitable style; few minor errors; generally clear argument. Occasional faults in punctuation, spelling.

7 Argument can be followed, although little attention to paragraphing, ordering etc. Grammatically correct but stylistically too informal for the task; some errors, perhaps a few basic ones; perhaps only just long enough. Perhaps room for improvement in handwriting, layout, punctuation.

6 Despite numerous language errors, some of which may be basic, and faulty expressions, the message can be understood; little obvious attempt at organisation but points are made; simple, perhaps repetitive vocabulary.

5 Errors basic and numerous, so that the message cannot always be understood; although sometimes difficult to follow, a patient reader can understand. Evidence of clear thinking, but perhaps less experience with the language.
An evaluation of the use of Class Server

D McDonald
Culham

I undertook some initial training in the use of Class Server in November 2005 on a one day induction course organised by the European School, Culham. I teach Economics and have subsequently introduced Class Server as a teaching aid in Years 6 and 7. I believe that it has worked well, though I do have some reservations. My students appeared to enjoy using it but, in order to evaluate this in more detail I recently asked them to complete a questionnaire and the results are given below.

For teachers unfamiliar with Class Server, it is a Microsoft piece of educational software which allows teachers to make notes and assignments available to their students via the Internet. I currently use a Culham school based version but it is available to all teachers through a central site in Brussels. It is intended primarily for use as a ‘distance learning’ tool but can also be used to complement school based teaching. There are three main services provided by Class Server which can enhance the teaching experience.

1. Class notes including PowerPoint presentations can be made available to students who can access the site either on a school based computer or an Internet linked computer at home. This is potentially useful if students need to revise topics or if they have been absent for a lesson. If you produce your own notes on computer for class room use and/or make use of PowerPoint presentations this service is invaluable.

2. Assignments can be set which have to be completed within a set time limit. These assignments can take different forms. The main types of Assignments which can be set in Class Server are:
   a. Short Answers based on a piece of text or data
   b. True / False statements
   c. Multiple Choice questions with pre-set answers
   d. Essay style questions which can be forwarded as a Word Document

The Class Server ‘Question Wizard’ allows the teacher to choose the style of assessment. There are eight different types of assignments. Some of these, such as ‘Multiple Choice’ and ‘Fill in the Blank’ will be appropriate only for certain types of courses. The Wizard is very simple to use.
3. Reminder messages (‘Class News’) and Links to Websites can be sent to the students for directed research. This appears on the students’ own Class Server home page which can be accessed by them using their personal password which is allocated to them by the school Class Server administrator. This is an effective way of encouraging the students to do additional research at home and directs them to useful subject based sites.

**Evaluation and general observations**

Initially, I experienced some problems setting up Class Server on my home computer. “Active X Controls” seem to prevent the downloading of the necessary software. This can be overcome by using a disk to load the software and all schools should have copies of this. After using Class Server for nine weeks I can make the following observations:

- From a teaching point of view, I have been very impressed with the ease of use of Class Server - it is intuitive, the layout is clear and teachers are guided at all stages.

- I particularly like having the ability to send copies of class notes to absent students and having copies of all their completed assignments. The assignments remain available until the resource is deleted from Class Server.

- My classes in Year 6 and 7 have eight pupils in them. This is quite manageable but I would be reluctant to send assignments to large groups which are more typical of lower secondary school classes. I believe that the upper limit for effective use of Class Server and, in particular, the use of Assignments, is probably about 15 students.

- Resources and Assignments can be ‘exported’ from Class Server when no longer needed. They can be saved in a document file and then be ‘imported’ again as required. This means that resources can be recycled in future which should reduce the teacher’s workload in subsequent years.

- So far, the system has been very stable. We all know that computer systems can be unreliable and have a habit of letting us down at the wrong moment. I have not yet experienced any problems accessing or using Class Server either in school or on my home computer.
Results of a Student Questionnaire on the Use of Class Server

To evaluate Class Server, my students were asked to complete a short questionnaire. It has to be stressed that the results that follow are based on a small sample of Year 6 and Year 7 students. A copy of the Questionnaire is appended to this report.

Question 1
When asked to rate the use of Class Server using a scale of 1 (very unsatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) 50% graded it 7 or above, with 18% giving it a grade of 9 or 10. The lowest grading was 5 from 12% of the students. Interestingly, these students were generally the ones who had failed to meet deadlines for assignments and who perhaps felt that the strict time limits imposed by Class Server, put them under additional pressure.

Question 2
64% of the students graded all types of assignments as 7 or above using the same criteria as question 1. However, the least popular type of assignment was the ‘Short Answer’. 24% of the students graded this below a mark of 5 and one gave it a zero! The common explanation for this was that there is insufficient space given in which to type their answer. I encourage my students to overcome this by typing their answer initially in Word and copying and pasting it into Class Server and this appears to provide a solution.

Question 3
68% of the students claimed to have viewed Power Point presentations on Class Server. Of these, 1 had done so because he had been absent for the lesson; the others had wished to ‘reinforce their understanding of the lesson’. If true, this is gratifying!

Question 4
There was no clear consensus about how much use the students make of the ‘notices’ which I send to their home page. One student was honest enough to admit that she was unaware that such notices existed!

Question 5
The lowest ‘score’ for ease of use was 7 out of ten. The average score was 8.7 which reinforces my own perception that Class Server is user friendly.

Question 6
However, 82% of the students had experienced a ‘technical problem’ when logging on. Of these, 39% had been able to resolve the problem within the same day. (Question 8) The irresolvable problems were mainly due to a failure of the school’s server on one particular day. Although this was a temporary fault, it nevertheless inconvenienced the students who were trying to submit work.

Questions 9 and 10
Due to the problem highlighted above, the most common reason for failing to meet a deadline (42%) was being ‘unable to log on to Class Server’. Of course it may be that this is a convenient excuse for failing to do homework since the ‘dog has eaten it’ no longer applies! Nevertheless, I now try to ensure that there is sufficient time given for the submission of assignments and I encourage students not to leave it till the last evening in case there is a genuine technical problem.

Question 11
This asked students to state their preferred way of doing a short written assignment. The majority (73%) selected the option to ‘Type it in Word’ and only 16% preferred to type it straight into Class Server. Just one student preferred to hand write it. It is true that Class Server will further diminish the use of hand written assessments.

Question 12
There was almost 100% agreement that I ‘usually’ provided sufficient feedback when returning completed assignments. One student made the
valid point that he “gets more feedback when written work is returned in class” because that allows a dialogue between teacher and student. I have resolved to spend more time discussing the completed assignments with the students after they have been returned.

Other general comments included a request to “submit work late occasionally” (but with some sort of penalty) while another student believed that it “motivates students to complete work on time”. It is certainly true that it motivates the teacher to return work on time!

On balance, the response from my students is positive but not uncritically so. There is still a novelty element in its use - at least one student summed it up as “cool!” - and I will probably carry out a further survey with my students at the end of the school year. I do feel able to recommend it to teachers who are at ease using computers and who want to introduce a new element to their teaching and assessment.
Questionnaire on the use of Class Server

Please answer all the questions

1. Please rate from 1-10 how satisfied you are with the use of Class Server, 10 being very satisfied and 1 being very unsatisfied.

2. Please rate each of the following types of Assignments according to the same criteria as Question 1:
   - Short Answer Data Response Questions
   - Multiple Choice Questions
   - Longer answer questions (submitted as an attached Word Document)

3. Have you ever viewed Power Point Presentations of previous lessons on Class server?
   - Yes
   - No

4. If ‘Yes’, which of the following explain why you viewed a Power Point Presentation? (You may tick more than one box)
   - I had missed a lesson due to absence
   - I had not understood one or more of the slides in class
   - I wanted to reinforce my understanding of the topic
   - Other (Please state)

5. When using Class Server, do you notice and read the ‘Class News’ items on the home page…
   - Always
   - Frequently
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never

6. Please rate the ‘ease of use’ of Class Server from 1 ‘Very Easy’ to 10 ‘Very Difficult’

7. When logging on to Class Server, have you ever had a technical problem preventing you from using it?
   - Yes
   - No

8. If the answer to Q7 was ‘Yes’, were you able to fix the problem and access Class Server on the same day?
   - Yes
   - No

9. Have you ever missed a deadline for an assignment?
   - Yes
   - No

10. If the answer to Q9 was ‘Yes’, which of the following reason(s) caused you to miss the deadline?
I was aware of the assignment but forgot to do the work
I was unaware of the date for the Assignment
I knew I had to do it but was too busy doing other work
I knew I had the Assignment but had no access to a computer
I knew I had the Assignment but was unable to log on to Class Server

Other Reason - please state

11. If you had to do a short written assignment (approximately 200 words), would you prefer to. (tick one box)
   Hand Write it
   Type it in Word
   Do it on Class Server
   I have no real preference

12. When you receive marked written assignments back on Class Server, is there sufficient feedback/ correction on it?

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Please use this space to make any other comments, positive or negative, about Class Server
Listening to parents: a piece of “evaluation research” in the European School Culham

BERTA BUSTORFF-SILVA
Head – European School Culham

This article is a brief presentation of a whole-school survey to parents of the European School Culham launched in 2005 as a follow-up of other surveys launched in 2002 for Secondary and 2003 for Nursery/Primary. It is an abridged version in which special attention was given to data protection issues.

Introduction

When we speak of school today we speak of a learning organization in the development of which every single member of the community has a role to play. From an institution with a limited number of voices taken into consideration in the decision-making process, we face now an organization where different voices collaborate in the effort to make sense of the process of education.

When I was first appointed Head to the European School Culham in September 2001 I came from a context where little is known about the European School system and the way it operates. I had visited the school some months before, I had read everything I got hold of about it and listened to anyone who could tell me anything about it.

Being a great believer in people and in building community, what I had read and understood about it was not enough to form the basis for my action as a Head. I needed more specific information, if possible collected in a systematic way, which could tell me something about the expectations, levels of satisfaction, and opinions of the different groups that form the school community. As not every group of stakeholders could be taken at the same time, I thought we should start with the parents.

The cultural perspectives of different individuals can vary according to their nationality, also in Europe. Education and schooling are dealt with in slightly different ways in different countries. Besides, and very important while discussing parents’ variation of perspective, the media in the various countries can treat the issues of education at varied levels of visibility, approaches, weight and with different founding visions. It was hoped that the analysis of the data would give some insight into this problematic.

What does the research say?

The routine of consulting with the parents on issues that concern what the school offers, from ethos to facilities, is part of a leadership option that takes into consideration relevant research and emergent theories of educational leadership. We share the view that classroom, school and community form a ‘three nested system’ where teachers, students and parents exist in a ‘cycle of mutual influence’ (Senge, 2000, p. 10-12).

The research background supports the idea that the parents as stakeholders need to be listened to, their opinions are to be taken on board, and they have to be brought into the “collaborative dialogue” (Beairsto 2003) that should be ongoing in the school community. It also takes for granted that there is distributed leadership and every stakeholder should have a voice. From the cultural point of view, it seems possible to assume that education is culture bound, different countries having different traditions in classroom practice and management and leadership styles and even curriculum design and content.

The study

The purpose of this piece of “evaluation research” (Robson, 2002, pgs 204-15), mainly characterized by its intention to use the findings to improve or change the object under evaluation, was to collect information that would help the management of the school assess how successfully the school is responding to the expectations of the families, how successfully it is fulfilling the mission, which aspects need to be maintained, reinforced or improved. The research tool chosen was a questionnaire. Some of the questions related directly to the mission of the school, some to the vision the European School system has of multicultural education. Others
related to issues that have been raised by parents, some of them have been prioritized in the action plan already; some of them are under discussion with the authorities. All of the questions were aimed at answering the research question – how happy are the parents with the school.

The questionnaire was kept to a very simple format, posing very simple questions, using simple language, avoiding leading or hypothetical questions, as well as questions with presumptions. It was distributed only in English. Ideally, the parents in the other four language sections would receive the questionnaire in the languages of the sections: French, German, Italian and Dutch, apart from English. Not doing so while trying to have parents’ opinions and perceptions can create difficulties for those who are not native speakers of English. It is established that expressing opinions, speaking your mind and conveying feelings is best done in your mother tongue; and concepts are culture bound and specifically in the field of education you tend to read the meaning of things in the context of your previous experience. In order to minimize that aspect of communication, the respondents were presented with twenty simple statements in relation to which they had to indicate their level of agreement by ticking a box. An open space for complementary information and opinions was provided at the end of the questionnaire. Only one parent commented on the fact that different languages were not used.

It is well known that the questionnaire has limitations: the meaning of the questions can present difficulties, the structure of the answers can limit the responses, a lot of possible complementary information may be lost. But the advantages in the present case clearly outweighed the disadvantages: the questionnaire saves time, it does not allow for inconvenient variation in the presentation, the respondent can consult with others, it is anonymous, allowing for a considerable freedom of opinion.

223 respondents representing 42% of a total population of 550 families answered the questionnaire. The distribution of responses by language section shows that the English section had the most respondents and the Italian section the least. These results are in line with the population where the larger section is the English one, followed by the French, the German, the Italian and the Dutch sections. In the school year 2005-06, they have a weight of 34.6%, 28.7%, 22.8%, 6.9% and 6.9% respectively.

As for the distribution of the respondents across school levels, we can say again that the sample corresponds fairly well to the population. In September 2005 there was a total of 856 pupils, 79 in Nursery (9.2%), 341 in Primary (39.8%) and 436 in Secondary (50.9%)

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents across language sections in the sample

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents across year groups in the sample

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the sample by school level (1 is Nursery, 2 is Primary and 3 is Secondary) showing a distribution that corresponds to the population.

The statistical analysis will keep the views and possible interpretations of the researcher away. Only for the open questions more subjectivity could be
present if the researcher didn’t recognize the possibility in order to avoid its effects. At the same time, the fact that the researcher is part of the institution allows for a better approach to inferential statistics, namely the judgment of possible correlations hypotheses.

This possibility of the researcher being part of the researched and of correcting while implementing is very characteristic of action research. Controversial as it is because of its anthropological, existential approach to research, action research is totally absent from the less ambitious present case in which we are simply discussing a questionnaire to survey parents opinions on a limited number of issues concerning the school giving rise to a quantitative approach in the treatment of the data collected. In any case, we assume that we are dealing with “real world research” the outcomes of which are useful and applicable to routine practice. It seems to be a very adequate form of research to be led by a practitioner/researcher.

Data collection

The questionnaire was brought home by the children themselves before Christmas and was to be returned during the first week of term, between the 9th and 13th January 2006. It was accompanied by a letter of explanation of what the aims of the questionnaire were and how the results of the analyses are to be used.

The coding system was fairly straightforward: each respondent was given a number and each of the questions made correspond to a variable in the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The respondents occupied the vertical axe and the variables the horizontal one.

Variables 1, 2 and 3 were demographic: language section, school level and gender respectively, and variables 4 to 23 were the following in this order: school met expectations, child likes school, good progress, European spirit, cultural identity, multicultural added value, teaching good, high expectations, homework is right, link between homework and learning, parents well informed, comfortable approaching school, happy complaints, parents evenings good, communication good, school secure, parents understand, facilities good, good SWALS (students without a language section) integration, end of year report useful.

The final open question was given a different treatment. From the 223 respondents, not all accepted the invitation to add comments. However 180 respondents took the opportunity to make further comments. These were all transcribed and listed. They tended to fall into categories:

- clarification of the reasons for the other answers
- comments on the questionnaire itself
- new issues

Because of the low incidence of the answers within the categories, the information was not coded and not introduced in the electronic program. It was used as a complement in the analyses undertaken. The type of analysis aimed at had to do with the frequency and incidence of the opinions. It would be interesting to be able to perceive the distribution of opinions by language section. They may prove difficult because of the small number of respondents in each section.

This piece of research explored the variables and the factors indicating how parents view the European School Culham through a study of their responses to 20 issues related to the performance and characteristics of the school. The data was subject to a statistical analysis, both variable and factor analysis. To enable the opinions of the parents to be better understood and classified into subsets, the agreement scores were subject to factor analysis. A factor is a linear combination of the original variables. Factor analysis is used to establish differences and similarities between the different groups. On the basis of the factor loadings, the seven resulting factors were interpreted as exemplified here by factor 1 and factor 2:

Factor 1: The issues that loaded most heavily on this factor include “My child is making good progress”, “The multicultural context of the school is added value to the children’s education”, “Teaching is good”, “Staff expect my child to work hard and do his/her best”. This suggests that this factor is associated with issues related to the mission of the school. This factor accounts for 20% of the total variance.
Factor 2: The issues that loaded most heavily on this factor were “The school has met my expectations”, “My child likes school”, “The school helps develop a European spirit”, “The school helps develop the child’s sense of cultural identity” and “I’m kept well informed about my child’s progress”. This suggests that this factor was associated with culture and feelings. This factor accounts for 8.8% of the total variance.

Subsequent analyses were conducted in order to determine whether there were similarities and differences between the groups. As seen before, the groups are “Language”, “Gender” and “Year”. The factors were scored in order to allow for the conduct of discriminant analyses. In the case of “Language”, Table 1 shows the variation of values for the different language sections in relation to the seven factors.

Table 1: Similarities and differences between the groups “Language”

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The results suggest that the parents’ views are moderated by the language section and the year the children are in, as well as by the gender of their children. We can say that in some cases, the views are group specific. Given the School’s mission, policies should remain group specific in many respects: the double task of fostering a European spirit and maintaining the national culture will be more effective if we understand where people are coming from and what their expectations are. We need to develop common, negotiated approaches to questions that can be perceived differently. There are some indications that the differences can be dictated by differences in national and/or cultural background, as well as by the gender of the children and the school year they are in. Parents of children in Nursery and Primary see problems differently from parents of children in the upper Secondary. The specific question of homework falls into that category and needs to continue to be discussed and addressed. It is a question of some importance across the sections and at specific points of transition: the parents probably need to be more informed about homework. The current use of electronic sharing of information may help in this area (Kirkland Rowell Marketing, 2002, 2003).
The picture of the school that resulted from the survey was extremely positive and this was enough to silence the rare protests dictated by some reservations against listening to the parents in that way.

The school needs to be happy because the levels of satisfaction of the parents are high. The school has good practices that give satisfaction to parents. Those should be kept and monitored. Some aspects show room for improvement and were/will be taken on board as part of the short to medium term strategy of the school. The priorities of the school as stated in the yearly plan seem appropriate (European School Culham, 2005).

Conclusion

From the variable and factor analyses we can draw the conclusion that, in the sample, the differences between the groups “language”, “year” and “gender” could be verified. They may not be statistically significant but they occurred. As stated above, the research wanted to investigate the case of the European School Culham in order to use the outcomes of the specific research about parental levels of satisfaction with the school as feedback to the system, with an impact on future planning and action. It didn’t aim at finding generalizable truths that would apply to the whole system of the European Schools.

This piece of research has explored the variables and the factors indicating how parents view the European School Culham through a study of their responses to 20 issues related to the performance and characteristics of the school. Subsequent analyses were conducted in order to determine whether there were similarities and differences between the groups. The results suggest that the parents’ views are moderated by the language section and the year the children are in, as well as by the gender of their children. We can say that in some cases, the views are group specific. Taking that into consideration, and given the specificity of the School’s mission, policies should remain group specific in many respects.

In a previous section, this piece of research was presented as “evaluation research”, with the corresponding practical implications. That means that the conclusions will have to be practical, too: from the findings, what action is required. Apparently, in many respects, the school needs to reinforce what it is doing already to the satisfaction of parents. Some aspects, though, show room for improvement and need to be taken on board as part of the short to medium term strategy of the school.

The priorities of the school as stated in the yearly plan seem appropriate (European School Culham, 2005).

Other aspects of the findings reinforce the notion that the school should remain a people-centred and values-laden educational alternative. Within the rules and mission of the school, all aspects of the ethos and educational approach should continue to be reinforced. More efforts need to be put into improving security in the school, especially for younger pupils, and the existing premises in general. It seems that is one of the questions that is sensitive in relation to communication with management, so probably the school needs to show more receptivity to the opinions of parents in that specific field.

We run the risk today of being inundated by data that we can hardly make good use of. Data can easily be collected but to analyze it and to use the outcome of the analyses as feedback for improvement is a different matter. But questionnaires can be a useful tool that allows you to have the opinion of a large sample of the population it is addressed to at a specific moment in time. It makes the analyses easier if it is kept to a simple format and it facilitates the comparability of the data collected. There are computer programs that make it very easy to prepare the questionnaire, as well as circulate it and get the answers back and analyse them. For more sophisticated analyses you find more sophisticated computer programs.

Other times you may find it more convenient to outsource the study. That’s what we did in 2002 for Secondary and 2003 for Nursery/Primary. That’s what we did again this year in relation to teachers. Following this article is a summary of the outcome of a questionnaire to teachers to evaluate their levels of satisfaction.
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November 2006 by Kirkland Rowell Marketing

SUMMARY

Introduction

The report measured the levels of satisfaction among the staff for a range of criteria which were selected by the school, as well as a range of criteria which were important to the parents of the school. It measured the relative importance of the criteria surveyed, as well as providing results tables that identify the perceived strengths and weakness of the school in the year to November 2006. The report also measured performance with regard to overall satisfaction and improvement.

The results were analysed to produce graphical presentations of each criterion and subject for both performance and importance. Criteria were also analysed between teaching staff and support staff; criteria that produced a significant result for this test were included in the report in graphical form – not presented here due to lack of space.

Methodology

The sampled surveyed was taken from the staff of the school. Questionnaires were distributed to all staff with a letter of explanation requesting help. The questionnaire asked staff to give a score of between 1 and 5 for each of the areas under investigation, as well as for a list of identified parent priorities. Staff were then asked to choose the ten most important criteria from the list of 20 identified priorities. Staff also estimated the time they spent working outside school hours, whether they thought they would still be working at the school in two years’ time, and were invited to comment on the overall performance of the School, as well as making specific suggestions regarding possible improvements.

Results

54 completed questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 36.7%. The survey produced an acceptable overall response from the staff, who gave good performance scores for
most of the core areas and the chosen performance criteria. The response meant that statistically-reliable data could be drawn for most criteria.

For assessment purposes, questions receiving a score of 60% or over were considered a success (compared to 70% for parental surveys – the difference being due to teachers’ higher levels of expectation). Scores of 55% or less indicated significant room for improvement. Staff expectations were almost always higher than those of parents. Scores may also be lowered across the board if staff were very unhappy with a single issue which they felt was vital. Where either of these situations applied, the benchmark of success may be lowered to 55%. This was not the case for the European School Culham. Staff gave a very good overall performance score of 73%. 33% said the school had improved over the last year, while only 17% thought the school's performance was worse.

Summary
The survey results revealed that the European School Culham had reason to be happy with most of its activities. In ‘Core Areas’, staff were most happy with pupils’ attitudes to learning, their respect for staff/others, and staff morale. Staff were least happy with professional development opportunities, the appearance of the school and target-setting for staff.

With regard to parent priority areas, staff were most happy with the delivery of school discipline, exam results and happiness of the child. Staff were least happy with the delivery of school facilities, social health education and school communication. The staff’s top priority for improvement was school facilities.

The survey achieved a good benchmark of performance against which future academic years might be compared.
Evaluation as a challenge for discussion

SPIER TEN DOESSCHATE (Consultant – APS)
TEJA VAN DER MEER (Consultant – APS)
BERTA BUSTORFF-SILVA (Head – European School Culham)

For its annual pedagogical day, the European School at Culham invited a keynote speaker to talk about evaluation. Spier ten Doesschate of APS, APS International Ltd, a branch of APS, National Institute for School Improvement in Utrecht, The Netherlands (see: www.apsinternational.nl) spent the morning working with the team at the School. She interpreted evaluation as a challenge for discussion. A hundred teachers participated in the APS service training the day after the school holiday, when the building was still rather empty.

As a warm-up to the evaluation theme, Mrs Ten Doesschate asked the teachers to assess the auditorium where the in-service training was being held, first individually and then through group discussion. The auditorium was ‘abuzz’. Significant differences in terms of evaluation emerged, ranging from room temperature, to quality of the interior and comfort of the chairs. Group discussions revealed that everyone had a different opinion based on the various criteria.

Evaluation as a challenge for school improvement

Mrs ten Doesschate clearly indicated that evaluation is related to a school vision of what you are as a school and what you wish to become. This means that school management and teachers create this vision in discussion and give direction to collecting evaluation data. This demands curiosity about the needs of the school management and teachers as well as student performance. The combination of the vision discussion and curiosity promotes a ‘habit of inquiry’ (Earl and Katz 2006).

After her introduction, Mrs ten Doesschate invited the team to form groups to choose a theme it wished to explore and evaluate. The method used is to prepare a mind-map that unfolds into related topics. Examples of themes include: Playground situation, Communication (3X), School identity, Working together, Testing (3X), Well-being at a time of change, European dimension, Staff induction and Self-esteem. Five important evaluation questions were added to the mindmaps.

Mrs ten Doesschate then invited the school management to reflect on the various mind-maps. The most significant reflection was that many of the mind-maps dealt with internal and external communication.

---

1 Lit.
How do we keep morale high for school community at a time of insecurity?

Where should investment be directed? (money/energy/creativity)

How can we ensure that all stakeholders have genuine involvement in the implementation of change?

How can communication be better structured?
The groups then got to work with an APS evaluation toolkit. This toolkit includes a choice of various research methods such as: interview; questionnaire; discussion circle; stop, look and listen.

Using the toolkit, the groups discovered that it is important not to place all one’s trust in a single source of data, but to use numerous sources to answer the evaluation questions.

Mrs ten Doesschate reflected on these group results based on the ‘data literacy’ concept. With data literacy, all sorts of monitor data and research data can be examined, understood and interpreted. This does not mean that teachers and school managers have to become researchers, but that they should see the importance of using various methods and sources. The second aspect of data literacy is that you can interpret this evaluation, deal with ambiguity in the data, and the data can provide significance from the school vision.

Spier ten Doesschate cited an example from one of her Dutch schools. The school interpreted test data exclusively at the individual student level, which gave the impression that ‘all of its students’ functioned at a low performance level. She invited the team members to look at these same data, but from another vantage point: What do these individual student test data teach us about the policy we want to implement as a school? Using this form of evaluation, the school discovered diversity in performance levels among students as a group: while some students functioned well, other students functioned less well. There were indeed some students who simply functioned poorly. The school team became aware that the whole-class teaching approach was inadequate for the diverse group of students. Therefore, the school decided to introduce ‘layered instruction’.

As a result of the day, the European School Culham decided to complete the various flysheets and distribute them among the teachers. It was also decided to examine the questionnaires that had been taken by the parents and teachers to learn about what the results could teach the school about future communication toward the parents and among the teachers.

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L’évaluation critériée ... ... ou la fin des mystères

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L’évaluation a le même âge que l’école elle-même. Le maître a toujours voulu vérifier si l’élève avait compris, appris. Au fil du temps, trois composantes ont évolué :

- La responsabilité : longtemps sur le dos exclusif de l’élève - capable et travailleur -, celle-ci a peu à peu évolué vers un partage des responsabilités de l’échec ou de la réussite entre l’enseignant, la famille et l’élève. Maintenant, ce sont les enseignants qui devraient avoir peur le jour du test …

- La finalité : que ce soit pour passer de classe ou obtenir un diplôme, l’évaluation a longtemps été certificative. Les pays, pour gommer les a priori locaux et établir des niveaux-seuils, ont instauré des évaluations externes. Cela peut hélas stériliser la créativité pédagogique de l’enseignant jusqu’à transformer des années scolaires entières en bachotage où l’on organise des examens blancs. Plus le nombre de testés est grand, plus le délai de correction est court, moins les formes de questionnement sont variées, ouvertes, propices à faire apparaître la personnalité. Malgré les éclairages de la docimologie, on doit bien admettre les imperfections d’une notation. En testant la capacité à résoudre des situations-problèmes ... sur papier, PISA ouvre des horizons mais on finira bien par publier des recueils de «Pisatage»...

- Le moment : lors du glissement de l’enseignement par le maître vers l’apprentissage par l’élève, l’évaluation a été reconnue comme partie intégrante de l’apprentissage. On est passé des décimales aux entiers, des points aux lettres, des lettres aux croix derrière des batteries de compétences. Une multitude d’épithètes s’y sont ainsi accolées : prédictive / diagnostique, sommative et certificative / continue et formative, ... Vue sous cet angle, l’évaluation servirait aussi à mieux programmer, à enseigner «plus juste».

«Épithètes», me direz-vous, et voilà que vous nous en proposez encore une nouvelle ! L’évaluation «critériée» va-t-elle permettre :

- de responsabiliser l’apprenant, voire le réconcilier avec l’école ? oui
- de supprimer l’arbitraire, le besoin croissant de justification ? oui
- d’observer l’élève à travers ce qu’il peut faire de mieux ? oui
- de transformer des connaissances en compétences ? oui
- de gérer la différenciation : vitesse, niveau, ambition ? oui
- d’ouvrir les pistes de remédiation, de dépassement ? oui

A l’heure où des diplômés Bac + 4 disent vivre encore chez leurs parents parce que leurs jobs à moins de 1000 ? par mois ne leur permettent pas l’autonomie, à l’heure où les jeunes Français défilent dans la rue contre le Contrat de Première Embauche qui voulait réduire le hiatus entre «l’école» et «la vie active», il est grand temps que les étudiants puissent faire état, voire étalage de leurs savoir-faire comme le préconise le Conseil de l’Europe, notamment avec son Portfolio des Langues.

Vers une approche par les productions

L’image du Portfolio des Langues, outil d’autoévaluation conçu en réponse à la problématique de l’emploi et au besoin de formation permanente, se réduit souvent au carnet où l’apprenant se situe par rapport à une série de compétences de compréhension et de production. On oublie souvent le portefeuille, style pressbook d’artiste, qui fait partie intégrante de l’ensemble. L’étudiant doit pouvoir montrer des travaux aboutis
qui sont autant de preuves de ce qu’il a déjà réalisé et est donc capable de refaire dans la « vie active », dans chaque langue et dans chaque domaine, que ce soit le résultat de son travail scolaire, d’apprentissages périscolaires, de hobbies ou de tranches de vie.

Cette conception peut être étendue à toutes les disciplines. Concevoir sous Excel une feuille de calcul automatique de répartition des charges entre les copropriétaires de l’immeuble imaginé par la classe en simulation globale constitue la preuve d’une série de compétences en mathématique et en informatique que l’on peut lister.

A chaque étape de leur Tour de France, les artisans du Moyen Age devaient couronner leur apprentissage chez un patron par un chef-d’œuvre qui attestait du degré atteint dans leur formation, dans leur métier. Nouvelle ville, nouveau patron, nouveau défi.

Vu l’hétérogénéité des classes qui nous sont confiées, la grande variété dans les styles d’apprentissage et dans l’appétit des apprenants, l’obligation de moyens qui nous est faite pour l’école de la réussite que l’on préconise, l’approche par les productions vous permet :

- de ne pas incarner les exigences, celles-ci étant dictées par la production ;
- de vous placer du côté de l’élève pour l’aider face à ces exigences externes ;
- de dégager avec la classe une série de critères de qualité liés au produit ;
- d’organiser ces critères en une grille standard (voir exemple ci-après) ;
- d’encourager chacun à utiliser cette liste pour une autocorrection initiale ;
- de permettre à chacun de cerner ses difficultés et de demander de l’aide ;
- de regrouper des élèves ayant une même lacune en groupe de besoin ;
- d’utiliser la grille pour une évaluation collective d’un travail sur transparent ;
- d’inviter à un échange de travaux pour une 2e évaluation par un pair ;
- d’avoir des élèves qui savent si leur travail est terminé, abouti, réussi ;
- de noter le travail en comptant le nombre de critères rencontrés : …/20 ;
- de proposer diverses présentations pour la mise en page du produit réussi ;
- de proposer des critères supplémentaires pour les élèves les plus rapides ;
- de placer enfin cette pièce d’œuvre dans le portfolio de l’élève ;
- de lister les productions par année et d’établir une progression verticale ;
- de transférer cette capacité de production à une langue seconde.

L’exemple ci-après se situe au niveau d’une classe de 5e primaire qui, en langue 1, est invitée à créer un répertoire de règlements de jeux pour les récréations pluvieuses. Elle peut convenir pour le même défi en langue 2 au niveau d’une 2e année secondaire.
Grille composée avec les élèves en observant plusieurs modèles en langue 1. Ils ont aussi repéré les différentes parties dans des traductions sur un même document puis dans des versions isolées écrites dans des langues inconnues de la classe.

## Règlement

### Contenu du texte
- met en évidence le but du jeu (en quoi il consiste)
- explique comment on commence une partie
- explique le déroulement de la partie
- envisage toutes les possibilités
- définit clairement qui sera le vainqueur

### Présentation du document
- décrit d’abord l’organisation du matériel
- distingue clairement début, déroulement et fin
- présente les actions dans l’ordre chronologique
- présente les règles générales puis particulières
- facilite le repérage des règles particulières

### Grammaire du texte
- utilise un vocabulaire clair et précis
- définit bien le joueur qui commence, qui gagne, ...
- exprime les consignes à l’impératif ou à l’infinitif
- articule bien situation et règle
- précise ce qui est permis, toléré, interdit

### Grammaire de la phrase
- utilise les déterminants avec clarté
- exprime la situation en tête de phrase
- utilise bien les modulateurs de sens pour la négation
- évite les répétitions : mots de substitution
- réussit les terminaisons verbales
Evaluation Strategies in English Second Language Teaching in the European Schools: Perspectives and Prospects

OLIVER BRENNA N
Luxembourg I

1. Historical Overview

In the venerable tradition of western European education, the acquisition of a second language has always been placed in high regard. The Ancient Roman educationalist Quintilian argued for the early introduction of Latin-speaking pupils to Greek so that "when (they) have begun to attend to both tongues with equal care, neither will impede the other."1 The pedagogues and early humanists Erasmus of Rotterdam and Johann Amos Comenius shared a similar appreciation for the importance of languages in the cultivation of a spirit of vigorous intellectual inquiry and cultural understanding in the young. Rousseau was probably the most significant dissenter from this harmonious consensus, opining sceptically "que je compte l'étude des langues au nombre des inutilités de l'éducation"2. More recently, nonetheless, the educationalists and linguists Vygotsky, Krashen and Chomsky have written at length of the intellectual, social and academic benefits of second language acquisition.

2. Current Research

Indeed modern education research strongly supports the traditionally ascribed benefits of second language acquisition in formal education. A 2004 study by psychologists at the University of York in conjunction with researchers at Nova Scotia and Toronto concluded that bilingual speakers are better able to deal with distractions in task performance than monolinguals and that this may offset age-related declines in mental performance (Bialystok, 20043). At a 2004 interdisciplinary conference at Harvard University entitled "Bilingual Benefits" Professor Dorris Sommor suggested that: "The very fact that you can think in more than one code makes you more flexible intellectually, more stable emotionally, more cautious politically."4

The range and number of such studies and findings are legion. Let it suffice to observe that the weight of cultural-historical, philosophical and scientific-empirical evidence indicates that second language acquisition offers a broad spectrum of benefits to students.

3. Evaluation

From the macrocosmic overview to the microcosmic classroom perspective, this article will now seek to examine the specific theme of evaluation in English second language (EL2) teaching. This will be accomplished by offering a brief synopsis of current practice in both European Schools in Luxembourg (I & II), followed by an analysis of the results of a minor study into EL2 evaluation strategies conducted in both schools. The article will conclude with a general review of the results of the study and some comments on best practice in this field and the various theoretical frameworks in which such practice is situated.

What then of evaluation strategies for EL2 in the European School System? Are the current approaches - standardised in 13 European Schools in 10 cities across 7 countries - adequate to cater for the complex series of interwoven factors and variables which inform and affect EL2 teaching? Is there a need for a review of the EL2 evaluation sheet in the Carnet Scolaire with its series of language competences? Are these "competences" appropriate tools for evaluating the involved process which is the formal acquisition of a second language? Are they broad ranging enough to effectively offer parents and guardians a transparent, consistent and clear barometer of their child’s progress in the second language classroom? These are some of the issues which this article hopes to highlight and assess.

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1 The Ideal Education. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus. C. 90 A.D.
2 Emile. Jean Jacques Rousseau.
3 reference
4. The European Schools\(^5\) in Luxembourg

The European School of Luxembourg was founded in 1953. In 2004 it was virtually divided to form two schools, viz Luxembourg I and Luxembourg II, both of which currently share the same campus. In 2005 this virtual division was extended to the teaching of second language. In July 2006 there were in total 742 pupils studying English as a second language at the European Primary Schools Luxembourg.

Figure 1: The number of EL2 students at the EPS Luxembourg for the school year 2005/6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Luxembourg I</th>
<th>Luxembourg II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Class</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Class</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Class</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Class</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Class</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EL2 classes in Luxembourg I are taught by 12 teachers, of whom 7 are détachés and 5 are Chargés de Cours. EL2 classes in Luxembourg II are taught by 11 teachers, of whom 5 are détachés and 6 are Chargés de Cours.

Figure 2: The number of EL2 Students in the E.P.S. Luxembourg in 2002 and 2006 respectively, indicating a net increase of 24.5% in just 4 years.

In year 1 and 2 students attend daily EL2 classes of 30 minutes duration. From year 3 onwards these daily classes are of 45 minutes duration. EL2 classes commence in September from year 2 upwards\(^6\).

Current Evaluation Procedures

Pupils in the EPS are evaluated twice annually in the Second Language Evaluation Sheet of the Carnet Scolaire, firstly in February and once again in July. While the general format of the Evaluation Sheet for each year group is similar, each sheet differs significantly in the nature and range of the language skills which it outlines and evaluates. From first to fifth year, each evaluation sheet contains a progressively more challenging series of language skills described as “competences” in relation to which the child’s EL2 progress and performance are appraised. Furthermore, each sheet has two blank comment boxes (one for February and one for July) in which teachers write a brief written, general evaluation. The language competences are broadly subdivided under the headings Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Teachers evaluate pupils on each outlined competence by placing an ‘x’ in one of four possible boxes entitled, respectively, “Not

\(^5\) All references to the “European Schools” refer specifically to the European Primary Schools of Luxembourg (EPS). Figures quoted for the EPS may be understood to refer to the combined data for both Luxembourg I and Luxembourg II. All figures quoted are as accurate as is possible within the context of ever-fluctuating school data and date from July 2006. This data was collated by the EL2 coordinators of the EPS.

\(^6\) EL2 classes for first year students are slightly delayed, beginning after the October mid term break.
Acquired”, “Partially Acquired” “Sufficiently Acquired” or “Excellently Acquired”.

Not all competences are evaluated in February. EL2 teachers meet collectively each September and determine which language competences will be evaluated in February and which will be evaluated in July. In July teachers have the option of indicating progress in regard to a particular competence placing an arrow (→) in the next available box to the right of the ‘x’. Conversely, regression in relation to a particular competence may be indicated by placing an arrow (←) in the next available box to the left of the ‘x’. The absence of an arrow indicates no change in regard to a language competence since the previous evaluation.

5. Questionnaire and Results

In June 2006 questionnaires were distributed to 22 EL2 teachers in the E.P.S. The questionnaire sought to inquire into their views of the effectiveness of current EL2 evaluation procedures. 16 completed sheets were returned indicating a response rate of 73%.

When asked “How would you rate the evaluation procedures for EL2 in the European School?” 25% described them as “Ineffective” and 75% rated them “Effective”. No respondent rated them “Highly Effective”.

When asked “How would you characterise the arrangements for parent-EL2 teacher contact in the European School?” 75% of respondents choose to characterise them as “Adequate” (50%), “Very Good” or “Excellent”. 18.75% characterised them as “Inadequate”, with one teacher adding the unsolicited comment that such arrangements were “very much on an ad hoc basis”. 6.25% of those surveyed expressed no opinion.

The last two questions in the study were open ended, namely, “What is your view of the system of language competences in the evaluation of EL2?” and “Please add any other comments you have regarding the evaluation of English second language in the European School”. The range of responses to these two questions was mixed and covered the whole gambit of topics related to EL2 teaching and evaluation.

The evaluation sheets for the younger classes were critically reviewed with teachers suggesting that they were “difficult to complete for first years” and that “a comment only would be adequate for first years” and that “the competences for Second Year should be rephrased”.

In relation to the evaluation sheets of the more senior classes some respondents articulated the view that the competences were in some cases unclear, poorly phrased and difficult to interpret accurately or objectively. Respondents suggested, variously, that they were “too vague” or that they
should be “phrased in easy to understand English – without misspelling”.

Others expressed the following comments regarding the evaluation sheets and the difficulties experienced in assessing the competences in a standardised objective way:

“Not very practical, difficult to understand properly and therefore interpreted and evaluated in different ways by all teachers”

“Evaluation seems too subjective”

“I am not sure that we all attach the same interpretation to the competences”

“They do not tell the full story….how does one judge accuracy?”

A number of teachers suggested that there were too many competences:

“In the present report there are sometimes too many competences specified…….Fewer competences might make the assessment clearer”.

“The third year sheet is overlong, containing unnecessary details”

“Some are incomprehensible and difficult to assess…..you get discrepancies between evaluations”

“some of the competences seem to have been chosen arbitrarily”.

Specific competences were singled out for criticism for being either too ambiguous or of little value:

“‘using the class library’ is not a good indicator as to whether a child reads widely outside class time”

“How many people….understand the true meaning of ‘genre’ “

“recognises the context of particular communications’ strikes me as ambiguous and poorly constructed-like a poor quality translation from French”

One quarter of respondents recommended that there should be a broader range of response options on the EL2 evaluation sheet. 20% of these specifically suggested adding a fifth response option to extend the current four restrictive options of “Insufficiently Acquired”, “Partially Acquired” “Sufficiently Acquired” and “Excellently Acquired”.

On a more positive note other participants in the study suggested that the language competences “broadly cover the range of skills required”, that they were “Fine”, “Ok” and “Adequate in terms of reporting back to parents” or even that they are “an invaluable tool for the formulation of learning objectives and the differentiated planning required…..”. One teacher responded: “I think they give enough for the teachers to aim at and parents to understand without becoming too complicated from a summative (sic) point of view”. Another teacher, referring to the EL2 report suggested that “if the procedure is fully understood and abided by (it) gives a fair overall evaluation of each child”.

6. Conclusion

It would of course be imprudent to extrapolate from a minor study of this kind, conclusions which could be applied more generally across the European School System. A research project of this type is hampered by obvious limitations (narrowness of research focus, limitations of resources and time, size of target group, level of response etc.). Nonetheless it does highlight some obvious weaknesses within the currently administered system of EL2 evaluation in the European Schools.

Clearly there is a need for greater clarity in the definition of language competences. There is a strong case to be made for deleting from the Evaluation Sheet competences which are irrelevant or vague or poorly constructed. Furthermore the issue of standardised evaluation needs to be addressed, perhaps by the issuing of official guidelines for L2 teachers on the evaluation of second language competences in the Carnet Scolaire. It is clear also from the study that the four available options in EL2 evaluation are rigid and constrictive and compel teachers to pigeon-hole pupils by choosing between the limited options of “Insufficiently Acquired”, “Partially Acquired” “Sufficiently Acquired” and “Excellently Acquired”.

Despite the fact that most participants in the study expressed satisfaction with current EL2 teacher-
parent contact it could be argued that a pivotal relationship like this should be placed on a more formalised structure. The current model is somewhat arbitrary and ad hoc with EL2 teachers arranging meetings only in response to a particular problem.

On a more academic note there is an argument to be made for situating the Evaluation Sheet in a more fixed theoretical framework by taking cognisance of modern research theories in the areas of linguistics and second language acquisition. This could be achieved by adding new competences which reflect accepted best practice in the field of L2 acquisition research. According to Vygotsky (1978)7 a vital component of language learning involves the awakening of a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is in the action of interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Why then is there no competence to evaluate how a child interacts with the other children in his/her EL2 group? Why is there no means of specifically evaluating his/her general attitude and sociability in the EL2 class when contemporary research places great stress on this competence in language acquisition?

Furthermore, according to Krashen's (1987) input hypothesis8, language acquisition takes place during human interaction in an environment of the foreign language when the learner receives language ‘input’ that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. This theory would render dubious the current evaluation procedure which allows teachers to evaluate pupils as having “Excellently acquired” certain language goals as Krashen postulates that effective EL2 teaching can only be effected by constantly raising the bar of language goals slightly beyond the pupil's current EL2 level.

The EL2 evaluation sheets make no allowance for the broadly accepted linguistic theory of Interlanguage. First proposed by Selinker (1972)9 it is defined as an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of a second language who has not yet become fully proficient, but is only approximating the target language, preserving some features of their first language in speaking or writing the target language. Certainly the evaluation sheet’s references to “correct structures”, “appropriate structures” “(using) negative and interrogative forms accurately” can scarcely be reconciled with a theory which encourages language teachers to exercise leniency and tolerance towards grammatical and syntactic error in classroom practice.

In conclusion it may be stated that current EL2 evaluation procedures in the European Primary Schools are adequate in most respects but can certainly be improved. These improvements can be most effectively achieved by taking account of the legitimate concerns and recommendations of EL2 teachers and by forging a more coherent link between the EL2 Evaluation Sheet and internationally accepted linguistic theories.

Only by rooting evaluation procedures in a legitimate theoretical paradigm can they enjoy pedagogic validity and academic merit. It is certainly in the best interest of teachers, students and parents that they do so.

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Evaluating Students’ Language Ability in the 21st Century

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Brussels II

Many times a year almost all European Schools’ language teachers, whether they are the teachers of L2, L3 or L4, formally evaluate their students’ language abilities. What methods do they use to arrive at an accurate measurement of these abilities? Could these methods be improved? If so, how?

Methods used to evaluate language ability seem to differ between language sections, and even between teachers in the same language section in the same school. Due to this chaotic situation, it would seem to be extremely important for language teachers in the European Schools to have the opportunity as a high priority to discuss their views on the nature of language testing. This discussion would hopefully lead to an agreement among teachers as to which fundamental principles (sadly missing at present) should indeed guide the construction of language tests (including the Baccalaureate) in all sections in all Schools. It is hard to believe that for a prestigious network of schools in the 21st century such an agreement has not yet been reached, or even seriously addressed.

Although each section should have the right to translate these fundamental principles in their own way into the guidelines for test construction, and subsequently to translate these guidelines into the tests they give their students, these guidelines and these tests could still develop in all language sections from these agreed-upon fundamental principles. It is the aim of this article to make a proposal of a set of fundamental principles and guidelines, as well as a battery of tests based upon these guidelines. Hopefully, this proposal could serve as a starting point for discussions among teachers.

To begin with, how do we decide upon a set of fundamental principles? To find an answer, one question is central: what do we understand by a good test?

It seems sensible to suggest that a good test is – firstly – one that evaluates what we intend it to evaluate; such a test would have high test validity. Secondly, a good test is one which accurately reflects the true ability of the student; such a test would have high test reliability. Other characteristics of a good test might be its authenticity, interactiveness, impact, washback, and practicality. This article, however, will concentrate on the usefulness of the two principles of validity and reliability, which are the two most important language testing principles in the document “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment”, published by the Council of Europe (www.coe.int).

To begin with test validity: ‘validity’ is an all-encompassing term which is related to questions about what the test is actually assessing. A test is valid if it tests what it is intended to test. What we intend it to test is what the syllabus wants the student to know or be able to do. Therefore, to ensure that we construct a test that is as valid as possible, the following guidelines could be taken into consideration:

• The European Schools’ language syllabus requires that students are taught the four basic language skills: listening and speaking, reading and writing. This seems a sensible syllabus, because in the world for which the student is being prepared, a student is likely to need all these language skills. A valid test (or battery of tests) should therefore evaluate the student’s ability to communicate in speech, to understand written text, and to communicate in writing.

• The syllabus also requires that students are taught to understand and to produce written and spoken language of different kinds (literary, philosophical, technical, scientific, journalistic, etc), using different functions (agreeing, disagreeing, persuading, narrating, apologising, expressing an opinion, etc), and in different registers from formal through neutral to informal. This also seems sensible, as in the world outside school a student must feel confident communicating in many kinds of language, using a wide range of different functions, and...
expressing himself in formal and less formal registers. A valid test should therefore evaluate the student’s ability in as much of the language required by the syllabus as possible, without overburdening the student.

- The syllabus also requires that students study recent culture expressed in the written and spoken word. A valid test could therefore evaluate the student’s knowledge of recent culture, most especially through the media of non-fiction, journalism, fiction, and film.

With regard to test reliability, the reliability of a test is an estimate of the consistency of its marks. A **reliable** test is one which accurately reflects the true ability of a student. If a test is perfectly reliable, two or more examiners using this test will give the student exactly the same mark. This is because, with a perfectly reliable test, a student always achieves his “true score”. To ensure that we construct a test that is as reliable as possible, the following **guidelines** could be taken into consideration:

- **Define clearly what we intend to test.** In this way we can ensure that the test or the battery of sub-tests (as in the Baccalaureate) examines exactly what we have defined.

- **Pre-test on other students.** This method is a way to measure and then improve the reliability of a test. Pre-testing is indeed a basic requirement of all internationally respected test-writing bodies. Pre-testing of our short classroom tests or even B-tests is not generally possible, but could be considered as essential for the Baccalaureate language exam. Indeed, the Baccalaureate exam will never be considered as a serious exam, unless there is some form of pre-testing.

- **Write a set of discrete sub-tests for each skill to be evaluated.** If we wish to evaluate one language skill, but at the same time we require from the student a high level of ability in a second skill in order for him to perform well in the first, the mark for the first skill will be distorted, and the test will lose reliability. A reliable battery of tests could therefore consist – as far as possible – of discrete sub-tests, where each of the skills is tested in isolation. It follows, therefore, that a reliable test is marked only in terms of what the test intends to evaluate. For example, if we construct a test of reading, the answers should be marked only for content and not for language, because this test is not intended as a test of writing.

- **Construct a battery of tests that takes as many samples as possible of the student’s ability.** If we only evaluate reading ability with one test, there is no way of knowing if the score from this test is the “true score” or not. But if we give the student two or more sub-tests, and take the average of the scores from these sub-tests, then we can expect that this average is much closer to the student’s true score. Therefore, by giving a student more than one sub-test of each skill, the overall test is more reliable. Or rather, expressed in a different way: only one sample of a student’s ability in a particular skill is unlikely to give us a reliable indication of that student’s ability.

- **Ensure all questions have one clear answer.** To evaluate language reception skills (reading and listening) we could ensure that all the questions have one clear answer, so that it is very clear to the markers what mark a student deserves on each answer. The more open-ended a question is, the more unreliable the mark is. That is why marks from multiple choice questions are so reliable, why marks from one-word or short-answer questions are almost as reliable, but why marks from long-answer questions are much less reliable; in fact, the longer the answers we require, the more unreliable are the marks we give for the answers.

- **Write a set of descriptors.** To evaluate language production skills (speaking or writing) we ensure that the full range of possible student responses is clearly described, so that it is clear to the markers exactly what mark each student deserves. This can be done (and in fact to a large extent is already being done in the Baccalaureate language exams) by means of a set of descriptors.

One word about the **harmonisation** of tests within and between sections. While it is quite right that there should be harmonisation, this cannot be
achieved by constructing two tests that ‘look’ similar. Two tests of reading, each with a text of the same length and each with the same number of questions, can in fact be quite different in terms of difficulty. It is after all not the appearance of two tests that counts, but the essence. That is to say, true harmonisation can only be achieved by having two tests with a similar level of difficulty and with a similar approach to the marking of the students’ answers. In this context, it is worth noting that the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institut and the Cambridge University exam boards have all agreed to harmonise, but do not do so in terms of the format of their exams, but rather in terms of the degree of difficulty of the questions and the way the answers are marked.

Of course, to harmonise according to the length of text and the number of questions is quite easy, because mechanical, but unfortunately invalid. To harmonise according to the degree of difficulty and the method of marking is more difficult but essential. To do so will require a special set of criteria: another theme for discussion.

How different language sections, indeed how different teachers, translate these principles (and guidelines) into the tests they hand to their students, is up to the language section or teacher concerned. However, it could be useful to outline what kind of tests might be constructed.

One way to evaluate a student’s reading skill with high validity is by including within a battery of tests or within an exam two or more texts of a different type. Depending on the students’ ability level, these could range from an extract from a newspaper leader column to a news article, from an extract from an autobiography to an email to a friend, from a report in a scientific journal to the script for a speech. By including more than one text of a different type, more of the syllabus – which requires teaching different kinds of texts – is covered. Further, a number of different question types could be used. This makes good sense, since in real life reading, readers typically respond to texts in a variety of different ways.

Another way to achieve high reliability in a test of reading is by writing questions so that only one answer is possible. In this way, markers will invariably all give the same mark. There are many kinds of questions that help to make a test highly reliable. Here are some: multiple-choice questions, sentence completion; notes/summary/diagram/flow chart/table completion; choosing from a ‘heading bank’ for identified paragraphs/sections of the text; identification of writer’s view/attitudes/claims; classification; matching lists; matching phrases; and finally of course, questions requiring short answers. Questions requiring longer answers, however, seem to lead to greater unreliability. This is, firstly, because the student’s writing skills are bound to have an effect on his answers, thus distorting an evaluation of the student’s reading skills. This is, secondly, because even experienced teachers have difficulty arriving at the same mark for a long answer.

To evaluate a student’s writing skill with a high degree of reliability could be achieved if markers mark each text according to several categories, such as accuracy, style, structure, content, and if for each category markers refer to a detailed set of descriptors that clearly describe what standard the student must achieve to obtain a certain mark in each category. A high degree of validity can be achieved by ensuring that within a year’s battery of tests or within an exam two or more texts of a different type are required. Depending on the students’ ability level, these could range from a postcard to the analysis of a theme or a novel, from a report with proposals for change to an extract from a film script, from a report based on a table of figures to a business email.

The syllabus requires students to be able to communicate orally for a variety of purposes, using a variety of functions, as well as with a full range of registers. So to construct a test of oral communication with high validity, a series of oral communication sub-tests could be included in the year’s syllabus, or in an oral examination. These could include student-teacher or student-student role-play, discussion, and interview.

To achieve high reliability in a test of oral communication, firstly, markers could mark each student’s performance according to several categories, such as fluency, accent, accuracy, register, range, structure, and content, each
category having its detailed set of descriptors. Secondly, test constructors could ensure that only the oral communication is tested; this means that if the test constructor provides a stimulus for communication, this stimulus should not become in itself a test of the student’s reading skills. On the other hand, the stimulus need not be a long text, but instead it could be a photograph, a cartoon, an advertisement, a DVD extract, a quotation, or a table of data.

The European Baccalaureate language exams, as well as the series of class tests and exams set to students before their 7th year, were a state-of-the-art battery of language tests when the Schools were created well over 30 years ago. However, the world is a quite different place now, and today’s world sets quite different challenges and requirements to students entering it. Just as importantly, ideas about what makes a good test have also progressed considerably. What was considered a good test 30 years ago is no longer considered so highly. The European Schools’ exams, by and large, do not seem to have kept pace with the changing world and changing ideas on evaluating language ability. Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that some teachers and others are arguing that the European Schools’ language exams need to be reviewed, and urgently.

In such a review, whatever fundamental principles are finally chosen to base our exams upon, whether we choose to base our exams on the fundamental principles of validity and reliability, or on some others, it seems very sensible – if not essential – to have such principles. However these principles are developed into guidelines for test construction, and however these guidelines are translated into the exams and tests that are given to students, these guidelines need to be formulated. Finally, however the exams are harmonised between teachers, schools and sections, a valid method of harmonisation needs to be agreed upon.

This article has suggested that the way European School students’ language ability is evaluated is urgently in need of a thorough revision. The article has made a proposal as to what could be the fundamental principles for language exams and tests in the European Schools. It has expanded these principles into guidelines for test construction. Finally, it has proposed some of the wide range of tests and subtests available to today’s language teachers in the European Schools. Now all it remains to do is to accept that we are no longer in the 1970s, that change is necessary ... and that we must start talking.
The Economics Grid Project and assessment in the European Schools

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Introduction

Do European School (ES) students know what ‘sufficient’ means? What do different teachers mean by ‘very good’? Is the European Baccalureate (EB) assessment system norm or criteria referenced? What does it mean to get a 9 in the Economics EB paper? What does it mean to get 0.3 for a Mathematics A-mark? Why are examination questions harmonised when the assessment isn’t? Do the internal and external examiners have the vaguest idea about the bases of each other’s assessment?

As I reached the end of my eighth year in Luxembourg I realised that I didn’t know the answers to any of these questions, and wondered if even the best pupils knew either. A student survey\(^1\) revealed that an accommodation with despair is reached in the school, the analgesic of general success blanking out the pain of trying (without official guidance) to escape ‘insufficiency’ or to achieve that elusive higher grade to reach a University offer.

In truth, there is some guidance; History 4-period orals and LII written exams in year 7 issue grids showing criteria that at least let students take responsibility for their own learning, seek feedback, set targets, and self-evaluate. Assuming, that is, that the grids are issued well before the Bac.

I determined to use my experiences and frustrations to design an assessment template for my own subject, Economics, and was encouraged by senior management and the inspector to widen the scope. I was granted a tenth year extension to trial the documents discussed in this report in Luxembourg, introduce them in 2007 to all the ES assessors (internal and external) at a stage/INSET, and set up a working party to adjust and agree on the details for future ES use.

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The Student Survey’s Aims and The Three Wise Men’s (3WM’s) Reply (September 2004)

In seeking both a context and inspiration I began by inviting three bright students to reflect on their years at the ES in Luxembourg, asking them to answer some very open questions about assessment. The respondents (the ‘Three Wise Men’, or 3WM) would, in years 6 and 7, have been in classes with over 30 different teachers across the sections, and observed the experiences of over 200 different pupils with whom they would have had varying degrees of empathy and communication. The 3WM (two girls and one boy) took their Bacs in 2003 and 2004. They averaged nearly 9.5 for their written Economics Bac examinations (one receiving 9.9 from an external examiner). Their six parents brought them up to speak a range of Spanish, Greek, French, German, and Luxembourgish, but they studied Economics at the ES in English. Two pupils were in the German section, one in the French. All are now studying Economics at University in the UK; two at the LSE, one at Cambridge.

The 3WM’s answers had to be re-arranged quite carefully into themes, as they entangled many issues. They recorded memories regarding all subjects and all years, but they made these relevant to the projected production of an Economics grid for B-mark assessment in years 6/7 by showing how their ultimate position lay at the base of a funnel fed by experiences going back to the beginning of their secondary schooling.

The Results of the Survey in Brief

1 INTRODUCTION The 3WM start by outlining the confused mixture of negative marking, proportional marking, and simple norm-referencing faced by pupils throughout their secondary years.

2 A They assert that there is a lack of clarity about what a pass or ‘sufficient’ (the basic 6) actually means or entails.

3 B They are absolutely clear that the current systems fail the weakest pupils most; these were surprisingly long answers, although it is
unlikely that any of these three were ever in a failing position in their seven years at secondary school.

4 C Perhaps this comes from their perception that strong pupils are also hampered by the system as they blindly try to improve their marks to meet challenging University offers.

5 D They are equally certain that marks are not equitably awarded between different languages, different sections, and even different teachers in the same language section.

6 E There is real confusion over the range of subject-specific and general skills required, even whether there are any skills other than knowledge in some subjects.

7 F They believe there is an almost total absence of means of development of self-assessment, and the rather despairing shortness of this section is most striking, and to modern pedagogical eyes almost shocking.

8 G The 3WM do, however, appreciate the attempts made through grids in L2 and History to lighten their load; they would recommend a grid in Economics as soon as possible.

9 H They would also like to see the uncertainty involved in compositions and pre-Bac assessment addressed.

10 CONCLUSION Students welcome the proposed grid as an improvement in several elements of the range of assessment evidence indicators (the Year 6 compositions, the Pre-Bac, and the Bac written/oral exams). But they are, at the end, still realistic about the global impact this project will have; the assessment targets and grading criteria will be interdependent with the quality of the question papers (a separate issue). The grid will also do nothing to address the parallel problem of the A-mark, which requires a further project to modernise the core skills entitlement of ES pupils (particularly that of ‘responsibility for own learning”).

The Following Needs Were Revealed by the 3WM

a. There are currently no harmonised assessment objectives for Year 6/7 Economics compositions, pre-Bacs, Bac orals, or Bac written exams.

b. There are currently no harmonised level indicators for same.

c. There are currently no harmonised criteria statements for same.

d. There is currently no harmonised student assessment plan for same.

e. There is currently no formal internal verification of assessors of same.

f. There is currently a limited, opaque, external verification system (for the Year 7 written Bac exam only).

g. There is currently no school-wide system of core skills for improving own learning and performance in Year 6/7.

h. There is currently no school-wide system of assessor training for Year 6/7 compositions, pre-Bacs, Bac orals, or Bac written exams.

i. There is currently no formal communication between subject experts, inspectors, internal, and external assessors.

j. There is currently perceived to be a very limited range of assessment activities and evidence indicators in the Year 6 B-mark and the formal Year 7 Bac system.

k. There is a need for a coursework element in the Year 6/7 B-mark to promote pupil entitlement to problem-solving, improving pupils’ own learning, and to accelerate the introduction of formal, open, internal and external verification of assessors.

The Crete Document and the Entitlement Shortfall

There are disturbing gaps between what students might expect to experience and what actually occurs in ES assessment, judging from the 3WM survey and the May 2000 Board of Governors’ Crete document (Quality Assurance and
Development in the European Schools, ref. 2000-D-264). In fact the latter implies that students and their parents should not merely hope for but are entitled to quality in assessment that is currently lacking.

The Crete document focuses on self-evaluation as the means to progress, and is relevant to this project in several of its ten sections, as the following excerpts show (there is a variety of American English and UK English used);

Section I – School Ethos/Philosophy
Criterion: Encouragement of all pupils to reach their full potential.
Indicators: Appropriate standards of achievement of individuals and groups. The existence and implementation of a school policy for equal opportunities for all pupils......

Section II - School Climate
Indicators: Frequent opportunities for pupils to exercise a degree of initiative and responsibility in lessons......

Section III – Curriculum and Organisation
Indicators: Curricula and assessment are harmonised within language sections Curricula and assessment are harmonised across language sections

Section IV – Management and Administration
Indicators: There is effective coordination in each language section and between sections, and in secondary in each subject.
School wide data such as .....Baccalaureate + harmonised evaluation results..... are regularly collected and scrutinized in order to determine specific needs and enable the establishment of strategies......

Section V - Teaching
Indicators: Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how to improve their own learning Teachers explain to pupils the criteria to be used in assessing any assignment
Teachers give pupils helpful oral and written guidance on how to improve their work

Section VI. Achievement/Learning
Criterion: Pupils develop skills ..... which promote success in and beyond school.
Indicators: Pupils learn how to learn ...... solving problems, applying what has been learned to unfamiliar situations, evaluating the work that has been done.
In lessons pupils are increasingly responsible for aspects of their own learning.

Section VII. - Professional Development
Indicators: In service training encourages cooperation and coordination within and between sections, subjects and cycles.

Section X - Evaluation
Criterion: There is a school wide consensus on the policy and practice to be followed when assessing pupils’ work
Indicators: There is harmonization of assessment within and between language sections, demonstrated in comparable (not identical) ranges of tasks and marks.
Pupils increasingly develop the ability to assess their own work.

Criterion: There is continual self-evaluation of the school’s success in achieving its aims.
Indicators: Different models of evaluation, including peer evaluation, are used; teachers and pupils assess their own work accurately

It is questionable how many of the ES staff, let alone the pupils, are aware of these commitments. There might be astonishment at some of the above items. Certainly within Luxembourg I Economics the 2004 pupil perception of assessment fell far short of the ideals espoused on May 18th 2000 in Crete by the Board of Governors.
An Action Plan for the EGP

A Hobbesian pragmatist might argue that notwithstanding the criticism of the 3WM and the ideals espoused in Crete the current system works and gets people into University without many complaints; in modern parlance, ‘if it ain’t broke, why fix it?’ There are several reasons.

Assessment methods elsewhere have moved on, and in UK terms our system is on a par with the A-Level system circa 1989; ES-leavers have now come to realise this and feel badly-prepared compared to their competitors in terms of planning, target-setting, monitoring, and problem-solving skills. We are currently 15 years behind, but if we delay this project any longer we will be 20 years behind.

A second point is the poor performance of our best pupils in interview, particularly at the highest levels such as Oxbridge. Marks may go up, but 10 is the limit, and the day will eventually come when, unless action is taken, we may award pupils an average of 10 (via the unspecified criteria by which we are currently judging) but the ‘perfect’ pupils will be rejected by even second-tier Universities because they do not display the skills required to prosper in modern further education.

A third reason is an unhealthy inertia that haunts those who currently lack confidence. There is a feeling that the Bac is a system of assessment based on a two-tailed normal distribution, scaled each year whereby the same annual quota of weak pupils is discussed. These pupils, knowing they cannot overtake the pupils perceived to be ‘above’ them, feel they can never get out of a failing situation. The knock-on effect is that they do not ask how they can improve in a constructive way, or by what criteria they might be judged to have improved. Since these are never properly established the cycle continues.

From the 3WM survey in the autumn of 2004 it seemed clear that the following documents for Year 6/7 Economics needed to be drawn up to improve the current haphazard situation:

i. A list of assessment objectives (with definitions).

ii. A hierarchy of level indicators (with definitions).

iii. A grid or matrix synthesising the assessment objectives, grading criteria, level indicators, and ES marking notation.

iv. A policy statement for confident candidates and pupils currently judged ‘insufficient’.

v. A policy for the skill of improving own learning and performance.

vi. A student assessment feedback plan.

vii. Guidelines for use of the documents by students and assessors.

viii. A schedule for a stage/INSET for internal and external assessor induction re the grid.

ix. An evaluation questionnaire for participants for the stage/INSET.

CONCLUSIONS, OR A NEW BEGINNING?

This was duly done between November 2004 and February 2005 and the documents that were the result can be applied for from the author. They will form the basis for a future stage/INSET and working party on ES year 6/7 Economics assessment.

Self-evaluation of the Economics Grid Project (focussing on sections IV, V, VI, VII, and X of the Crete document) will itself hopefully promote development in the students’ evaluation of completed tasks, student distinction between diagnoses and plans of action, and the development of students’ capacity to evaluate work. There is plenty to ponder on – and this is only an optional subject...
El Examen Como instrumento de aprendizaje para alumnos y profesores

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RESUMEN

Soy partidaria de los exámenes como sistema objetivo (aunque no único) de evaluación de resultados de aprendizaje. Habría que presentar los exámenes como la constatación de lo aprendido mediante el trabajo en clase y el estudio previo. El alumno debería saberlo todo sobre el examen con anticipación. El primero que debe hacer bien el examen es el profesor. El examen tendría que consistir, sobre todo, en un ejercicio de aprendizaje y reflexión para alumnos y profesores.

ABSTRACT

I think that a good test is the first (but not the only) system to make an evaluation of learning. The test is useful in order to verify the results of learning after lessons and work. Pupils must know, in advance, everything about their examination. Teachers might prepare tests accurately. Tests must be, first of all, an exercise of learning and thought for teachers and pupils.

Lo primero que debo decir es que soy partidaria de los exámenes como sistema objetivo de evaluación de resultados de aprendizaje. No como el único sistema posible ni solo con esa función, pero sí como uno de los más importantes. En su condición de tal, sabemos el valor que los exámenes, en forma de composiciones, pre-Bacs y Bacs, tienen en nuestras Escuelas Europeas. De ahí la oportunidad de hacer una reflexión sobre ellos.

Es un tópico que la mayoría de los alumnos experimentan temor ante los exámenes, y por ello suelen intentar averiguar qué se les va a preguntar o cómo se va a desarrollar tan temida prueba. Algunos incluso se resienten en su salud o sus nervios: insomnios, malestar, pérdidas de concentración, etc. Para contrarrestar ese problema, habría que presentar los exámenes no como pruebas que hay que superar, sino como la constatación de que la prueba ya ha sido superada mediante el trabajo en clase y el estudio previo.

Un examen bien planteado y claramente explicado de antemano no tiene por qué aterrorizar al alumno: es más bien un instrumento de ayuda para verificar cómo va su aprendizaje, qué sabe hacer y en qué falla, a fin de felicitar por los buenos resultados (lo cual siempre motiva) y corregir los errores o los vacíos de información.

A veces los exámenes (sobre todo en el último ciclo de las Escuelas Europeas) son preparatorios para otros posteriores, como los del BAC. Parece evidente que el profesor debe orientar esa prueba repitiendo modelos de años anteriores u otros elaborados por él, para familiarizar al alumno y hacerle perder el miedo y la inseguridad que pudiera sentir.

Después de muchos años de enseñanza, los últimos nueve en una Escuela Europea, he llegado a la conclusión de que el mejor examen es el que mejor sale, es decir, aquel en el que los alumnos obtienen mejores resultados, lo que significa que van bien preparados y que lo que se les pide está a su alcance. El examen debe comprender lo más importante de la materia, despreciando lo anecdótico, lo circunstancial o lo secundario, que puede ser objeto de otro tipo de trabajos o discusiones, pero no debería entrar más que muy tangencialmente en un examen.

Un buen examen debería constituir una revisión de lo esencial, lo más importante. No sé si siempre es así. A veces los alumnos se quejan de que no les han preguntado aquello que llevaban preparado. Eso indica que, o bien no se han estudiado lo que verdaderamente se exigía para el examen, o bien la materia es tan amplia que es preciso seleccionar (lo cual podría ser lícito, siempre que el profesor así lo advierta) o bien hay algún otro tipo de desfase que debe verificarse.

La puntuación de un examen ha de ser objetiva, pero no totalmente rígida. Algunos profesores de mi Escuela Europea practican en sus exámenes lo que se llama el “bonus”, una cuestión de valor variable,
que nunca excedería de un punto sobre diez, la cual puede ayudar al buen alumno a sacar la nota máxima a despecho de algún pequeño error que pudiera cometer, así como también contribuir a que el alumno con dificultades consiga llegar al aprobado. Usado con moderación, el “bonus” constituye un buen acicate para el alumno y un estímulo a la hora de preparar el examen.

Nunca he sido partidaria de aquellos profesores que presumen de “duros” y exigentes; por el contrario, creo que la exigencia se debe aplicar a otros territorios del trabajo docente más que a la calificación de las pruebas. Tampoco habrá que caer en el extremo opuesto, la benevolencia excesiva, ni menos aún dejarse llevar por las reclamaciones de los alumnos, muchas veces injustificadas. Cuando el examen ha sido correctamente diseñado y corregido, es muy difícil que se pueda reclamar puntuación. Otra cosa es que los alumnos tengan derecho a revisarlo, pues ello debería formar parte de la evaluación en su más amplio sentido, y además en esa revisión se pueden detectar errores (en la suma de las puntuaciones parciales, por ejemplo), ya que nadie es infalible.

Un profesor seguro de sí y de su trabajo no ha de tener las observaciones de los alumnos sobre los exámenes: si son improcedentes, las cortará sin contemplaciones, y si son oportunas, las considerará sin molestia ni apuro alguno.

Todo ello nos lleva a ver que preparar un examen no es cosa ligera, sino que debe hacerse con tiempo y espacio suficientes. Se trata de una tarea dura y minuciosa, pero, si se lleva a cabo correctamente, resulta rentable y agradecida. Porque no solo los alumnos deben hacer bien los exámenes: el primero que debe hacerlos bien es el profesor. A veces me llegan modelos de exámenes y me digo (y así lo he sugerido en reuniones de trabajo) que dichos modelos tendrían que ir acompañados de un solucionario. El que nosotros, los profesores, respondamos las preguntas del examen antes que el alumno puede ayudar muchísimo, tanto a su corrección y puntuación como a la comprobación del grado exacto de dificultad de cada cuestión, el tiempo estimado que puede llevar contestarla y si el planteamiento de la cuestión resulta claro y comprensible.

En mi opinión, el alumno tiene derecho a saberlo todo sobre el examen: su estructura, puntuación, contenidos exactos que se van a pedir, normas de presentación y cualquier otra referencia que el profesor estime. Soy totalmente contraria a los exámenes “sorpresa”, tanto a aquellos que se improvisan debido a un enfado del profesor por una cuestión de disciplina como a aquellos otros que piden al alumno ejercicios o reflexiones que no se han practicado previamente en clase.

En el primer caso, corremos el riesgo de que el alumno identifique el examen con una forma de puniación, y esto me parece un grave error, ya que el examen jamás debería ser visto como un castigo, sino como una parte natural del proceso de aprendizaje. En el segundo caso, si se trata solamente de estimular la creatividad del alumno, su capacidad de improvisación o cualquier otra cualidad, no hablamos de un examen en toda la extensión de la palabra, sino de ejercicios, los cuales pueden ser tan variados y tener tantos objetivos como la imaginación y la capacidad de cada profesor alcance.

Lo mejor es informar a los alumnos, antes de efectuar un examen, sobre cómo va a ser exactamente dicho examen. Por poner algún ejemplo de mi materia (Literatura), si se trata de un comentario de texto, casi se podrían dictar las cuestiones que deberán trabajar, a falta solo del texto; si han de redactar un texto siguiendo ciertos criterios, se ha de procurar que se entrenen primero.

Un buen profesor no debe hacer de sus exámenes un misterio, ni resistirse a que los alumnos los puedan revisar, ni dilatar el periodo de corrección más allá de lo razonable hasta acabar con la paciencia del grupo discente. Un buen profesor debe comunicar al alumno todos aquellos datos bibliográficos y todas aquellas referencias que servirían para mejorar preparar la prueba, así como proporcionarle todo el material de que disponga, exceptuando únicamente aquel que reserve para confeccionar su examen. Si lo hace así, su trabajo será apreciado y no tendrá problemas con alumnos ni con padres.

Conocer de antemano lo que queremos exigir a los alumnos parece indispensable. "Evaluación" rima
con “objetivos” (no fonética, pero sí semánticamente). Preparar los exámenes antes de comenzar las clases es trabajo previo que ayuda extraordinariamente, no solo evitando los apuros y precipitaciones de última hora en la confección de pruebas, sino sobre todo poniéndonos delante lo que realmente queremos exigir a los alumnos y la forma en que deseamos que lo expongán.

A lo largo de estas líneas, he procurado insistir en cuestiones que parecen muy obvias pero que a veces se olvidan, debido a una excesiva confianza en la rutina de la mucha experiencia o a todo lo contrario: a la poca experiencia. En ese sentido, recuerdo que, cuando yo empecé a trabajar en la enseñanza, no tenía tan clara cuál era la finalidad del examen. En aquella época, lo consideraba más un instrumento práctico e inevitable para poner nota que un ejercicio de alcances didácticos mucho mayores, el cual concierne tanto al alumno como al profesor: pues también el profesor puede y debe, a través de los resultados, evaluar su propio trabajo.

Mi conclusión sería que, olvidando viejos traumas y preparándolo con responsabilidad por ambas partes, el examen tendría que consistir, principalmente, en un ejercicio de aprendizaje y reflexión para alumnos y profesores, que lleve a todos ellos a mejorar y progresar en sus conocimientos y formación.
Predicting Final Grades at the Baccalaureate

JOHN BULWER AND ALAN MALONE
European School Brussels I

When European School teachers write references for applicants to UK Universities, a prediction of the final Baccalaureate score is required, along with predicted grades in certain key subjects. We have found that there is a close correlation between the average of the C marks given at the end of the 6th year and the final Baccalaureate score.

We have always checked the prediction given on the UCAS form with the final result and found that our predictions have always been pretty accurate. However, when we examined them more closely and with proper statistical tools we found that the general accuracy we had been used to was in fact closer than we had thought, especially when the 6th year average mark was included in the calculation.

Candidates from all language sections apply to UK Universities. They have to apply centrally through UCAS (see: www.ucas.com) choosing six courses at six Universities. Each candidate has to write a personal statement, a letter of motivation, which explains what their background is, what their interests and achievements are, why they have chosen the UK and the particular course. There is also a reference or report written in consultation with all the candidate’s teachers by an English-speaker, which assesses the candidate’s chances of succeeding at the chosen course and gives a prediction of their final score at the Baccalaureate.

A careful process of guidance and advice has been followed by the school with the candidate to ensure the he or she is not applying unrealistically, that is to say at too competitive a University which would require entry scores beyond their capability. If the guidance process has worked well then the candidate will be applying for courses suitable for their level of attainment. In this case, as the reference has to state objectively whether a candidate is likely to achieve the required grades, the reference will fully support the candidate’s application. An accurate prediction is important here, as the offer of a place is very likely to depend on the content and tone of the reference and most importantly the predicted grade. If the candidate goes against the advice given and applies unrealistically (usually too high) then the reference will still have to give an accurate prediction, which may result in rejection. This is not the only reason for a University to reject a candidate; it may simply receive too many applications for a particular course and so simply reject some of them even though they could achieve the necessary grades.

For all these reasons it is important to get the prediction right. These figures show how accurate we have found them to be. These tables show the results for 2005-6 for one school. Graphs from other years and from other schools show very similar results.

The first graph plots the Bac result against the estimate given in the UCAS reference: the second the Bac result against the 6th year mark. Close correlation brings them close to the central diagonal; dots which are further from the central diagonal show a disparity between the two marks or estimates. As can be seen there is a close concentration towards the diagonal with a few standing apart from it. There is often a good reason for this disparity (see below).

Averages:

- Average year 6 grade = 8.1
- Average UCAS estimate = 8.2
- Average Bac grade = 8.1

80% of our Bac results are within 3% of their year 6 result. Another 10% are within 5%.

70% of our UCAS estimates are within range. The others are equally split between over and under estimates. We continue to have a tendency to slightly underestimate students heading towards a mark of 90%+

The correlation coefficient of Year 6 against Bac is 0.92 which is very high. The corresponding coefficient of UCAS estimate against Bac is 0.94 which is very high again.
Uccle 2006 results

UCAS estimate vs BAC result

Year 6 grade vs BAC grade
The regression line of Year 6 to Bac is \( y = 1.033x - 0.2089 \)
The regression line of UCAS to Bac is \( y = 1.193x - 1.642 \)

Teachers may well conclude from this that the 6th year is extremely important for the future University career of the student. It is optimistic to claim (as some students do) that they can improve their marks considerably in the 7th year by working hard then, having neglected their 6th year studies. Reference writers can be confident that their predictions for the Baccalaureate will be generally accurate if they base them on the 6th year marks. Even if we do not reveal the actual prediction given in the UCAS reference, with this information students will be aware of what it will be. If referees advise them to look closely at their 6th year mark, they and their parents will get a pretty accurate picture of what their final result is likely to be. In addition it will do no harm at all to make students aware of these findings and demonstrate to them that their 6th year performance has a direct effect on their final Baccalaureate result and that work for the Baccalaureate begins on day one of their 6th year.

We should perhaps remember that there is a story behind each of these sets of figures and there may be a rational explanation for any discrepancy between the three pieces of data.

Students A and B are examples of how close the correlation often is between the three pieces of data. Student C is an example of what can happen at the top end of the scale where exceptionally good students can run on in the final examinations to score very well, particularly in the orals where four 10s are not unknown. A prediction of over 90% is not essential even for Cambridge although this kind of performance does occur once or twice each year in a year group of about 200 candidates. Student D came down in the final examinations and did not match up to the prediction. This student had a good sixth year but appeared to peak there and found the seventh year more difficult. The last example (student E) was an entrant from one of the new accession countries and had to enter the English-language section, with only mother tongue lessons in support. As his English was at good second language level on his arrival he faced challenges in his sixth year and achieved a creditable 7.3 as an average. We felt we couldn’t predict more than 73-78% in his UCAS reference in October/November, but he made very good progress throughout the rest of the year and achieved a very good 82% in the final examinations getting him into a good University to study Law. The distance between the 6th year mark and the final Bac mark in this case is therefore explainable and in fact conceals a considerable success story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>6th year mark</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
<th>Baccalaureate result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>80-85</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>80-85</td>
<td>81.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>85-90</td>
<td>93.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>78-83</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>73-78</td>
<td>82.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
La liaison entre les classes et l'enseignement des langues étrangères

LARS DAMKJÆR
Inspecteur Secondaire du Danemark

Dans l’enseignement des langues dans les Écoles européennes, on parle souvent des problèmes de transition entre l’enseignement primaire et l’enseignement secondaire. La raison en est, dit-on, que les buts et la didactique dans les deux niveaux ne sont pas tout à fait les mêmes. Il est indiscutable que le but est toujours d’enseigner la langue en question aux élèves. Et il y a certainement aussi une différence fondamentale de didactique dans l’enseignement des langues au primaire et au secondaire.

Pourquoi donc parle-t-on de problèmes ? Grâce à ces différences, le passage d’un système à l’autre peut être bénéfique parce que les élèves ont l’occasion de devenir conscients des nouvelles demandes et conditions devant lesquelles ils se trouvent au secondaire. Bien sûr, les professeurs doivent connaître la didactique de la matière qu’ils enseignent dans les deux niveaux pour pouvoir comprendre pourquoi certains élèves ont des difficultés au début du secondaire. De nombreux professeurs font déjà un grand effort pour surmonter ce problème. Les Écoles européennes offrent un avantage évident puisque les deux niveaux ne sont pas situés dans des établissements différents mais dans une même école et les professeurs peuvent se parler quotidiennement.

Mais certaines différences sont rédhibitoires. Il faut que les buts dans l’enseignement d’une discipline dans les deux niveaux aient la même finalité. Il ne faut pas que l’enseignement au primaire et au secondaire change trop d’objectifs et il faut qu’on apprécie sans tarder les compétences et les capacités que les élèves ont déjà acquises. Il ne faut pas que les objectifs partiels vacillent et zigzaguent en perdant de vue l’objectif final.

Il est donc nécessaire d’élaborer un programme cohérent pour l’enseignement d’une même discipline dans les deux niveaux. La difficulté est évidemment de trouver les étapes dans l’enseignement d’une langue qui sont aptes à jalonner le parcours des élèves du tout début jusqu’au baccalauréat. Et si l’enseignement des langues avait les mêmes buts supérieurs et visait les mêmes compétences, ce serait une grand avantage pour les élèves et pour les langues. C’est ce problème qu’aborde cet article.


Dans un rapport publié par le Ministère de l’Éducation danois (Fremtidens Sprogfag, Le Futur de l’enseignement des langues, 2003), cette liste de compétences a été utilisée en vue d’élaborer un système cohérent d’objectifs linguistiques, un schéma avec toutes les compétences et les
capacités dans l’enseignement d’une langue du début du primaire au baccalauréat. Ce schéma est présenté ci-dessous.

L’intention du modèle suivant est d’assurer une cohésion entre les buts de l’enseignement des langues dès le primaire jusqu’à la fin du secondaire. En même temps, il faut assurer une progression claire pour que chaque niveau ait la responsabilité d’objectifs bien définis.

Il est non seulement important de bien cibler l’enseignement mais également de préciser les compétences partielles des langues dont chaque niveau a la charge. Pour ce faire, il est capital de clarifier les domaines de la progression.

Le modèle est présenté sur les quatre colonnes suivantes, chacune contenant une progression :

a) Les compétences : On parle ici des compétences du Cadre Commun nommées ci-dessus. La liste donne les priorités:
   1) la compréhension orale en inter-activité (dialogue),
   2) l’expression en communication orale (dialogue),
   3) la compréhension écrite (lecture d’un texte),
   4) l’expression orale (exposé, présentation),
   5) l’expression écrite.

b) Les stratégies: On parle ici des stratégies d’apprentissage, c’est-à-dire une conscience chez les élèves de la méthode que l’élève utilise pour s’approprier la compétence:
   1) stratégie d’écoute (deviner, comprendre une situation),
   2) stratégies communicatives,
   3) stratégies de lecture (lecture «orientée», connaissance des genres, du lexique),
   4) présentation orale, se focalisant sur la structure, les sujets, le lexique,
   5) activités d’écriture se focalisant sur le processus.

c) Les connaissances linguistiques et grammaticales: on parle ici de l’acquisition de l’élève qui prend le point de départ dans des éléments plus globaux pour ensuite se concentrer sur les détails. Traditionnellement la grammaire joue un grand rôle dès le début de l’acquisition d’une langue. Cependant les chercheurs en acquisition des langues proposent ce procédé afin de rendre plus efficace l’apprentissage des connaissances linguistiques communicatives:
   1) pratique du vocabulaire, connaissance des éléments constitutifs d’une conversation et de scénarios,
   2) connaissance des éléments constitutifs d’une conversation, des expressions propres à la conversation et des scénarios,
   3) connaissance des structures textuelles, (avec référence à divers genres) de la structure du paragraphe à la structure de la phrase,
   4) connaissance de la morphologie et de la syntaxe élémentaires,
   5) structure de la langue, morphologie, syntaxe.

d) Le contenu: celui-ci comprend les sujets que l’élève rencontre dans sa vie quotidienne, les sujets de la civilisation, les sujets culturels et esthétiques:
   1) sujets relatifs à la personne,
   2) sujets proches de l’élève, relatifs à la culture et à la société,
   3) sujets connus relatifs à la culture et à la société,
   4) sujets relatifs à la littérature, à la culture et à la société,
   5) toutes sortes de textes, littéraires et non-littéraires.

Le modèle décrit toute la matière d’une langue. L’avantage d’un tel modèle réside dans le fait qu’avec celui-ci, il n’est pas nécessaire de changer l’objectif du niveau supérieur quand on passe d’un niveau d’enseignement à un autre. On peut décider, qu’à un niveau élémentaire, le but est d’enseigner les éléments fondamentaux de la langue, à savoir la compréhension orale en inter-activité mentionnée ci-dessus ainsi que les autres éléments qui en découlent: les stratégies d’écoute, la pratique du vocabulaire et les sujets relatifs à la personne. Un autre niveau d’enseignement peut suivre directement en se fondant sur l’enseignement du premier niveau, tout en se focalisant sur le niveau relatif à ce deuxième niveau. L’essentiel est d’avoir les mêmes finalités dans l’enseignement des langues à quelque niveau d’enseignement que ce soit.
Modèle de progression:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compétences</th>
<th>Stratégies</th>
<th>Connaissances grammaticales /linguistiques</th>
<th>Contenu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Expression écrite: Compétence en écriture</td>
<td>Activités d’écriture, se focalisant sur le processus</td>
<td>Structure de la langue, morphologie, syntaxe</td>
<td>Toutes sortes de textes, littéraires et non-littéraires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Expression orale: Présentation orale</td>
<td>Présentation orale, se focalisant sur la structure, les sujets, le lexique</td>
<td>Connaissance de la morphologie et de la syntaxe élémentaires</td>
<td>Sujets relatifs à la littérature, à la culture et à la société</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Compréhension écrite: Compétence en lecture (comprendre un texte)</td>
<td>Stratégies de lecture (lecture «orientée», connaissance des genres, du lexique)</td>
<td>Connaissance de structures textuelles, (avec référence à divers genres) de la structure du paragraphe à la structure de la phrase</td>
<td>Sujets connus relatifs à la culture et à la société</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Expression orale en inter-activité: Compétence en communication orale (dialogue)</td>
<td>Stratégies communicatives</td>
<td>Connaissance des éléments constitutifs d’une conversation, des expressions propres à la conversation et des scénarios</td>
<td>Sujets proches de l’élève, relatifs à la culture et à la société</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Compréhension orale en inter-activité: Compétence en écoute et de compréhension de la langue parlée (dialogue)</td>
<td>Stratégies en écoute (deviner, comprendre une situation)</td>
<td>Pratique de vocabulaire, connaissance des éléments constitutifs d’une conversation et de scénarios</td>
<td>Sujets relatifs à la personne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cependant les objectifs doivent varier selon les niveaux d’enseignement. A un niveau plus bas, il faudra se concentrer sur les compétences élémentaires du modèle alors qu’à un niveau plus élevé les professeurs doivent se focaliser sur les compétences plus élevées tout en rebrassant de temps en temps les acquis fondamentaux afin que les élèves ne les oublient pas.

Pour ce faire, il faut utiliser les termes suivants:

a) **Domaine d’apprentissage principal**: Un enseignement qui est bien défini et dont l’objectif doit impérativement être atteint.

b) **Domaine d’apprentissage de soutien**: Un enseignement qui renforce les acquis du premier mais qui n’a pas d’objectif propre.

c) **Domaine d’apprentissage non obligatoire**: Un enseignement qui ne vise pas l’objectif de l’enseignement et du niveau en question.

A titre d’exemple on peut prendre le niveau primaire de L II. Comme mentionné au début de l’article l’un des problèmes est la transition entre l’enseignement primaire et secondaire. On peut donc décrire le but pour L II au primaire comme suit dans le modèle présenté ci-dessous:
Le domaine d’apprentissage principal dont le primaire aurait la responsabilité serait les échelons (écrits dans le modèle en caractères gras) : les compétences en écoute, en communication et en lecture, les stratégies d’écoute, communicatives et de lecture, ensuite les connaissances linguistiques et le contenu des deux premiers échelons. Ce sont donc ces éléments-ci qui pourraient être au centre de l’enseignement primaire.

Le **Domaine d’apprentissage de soutien** du primaire serait les échelons (écrits dans le modèle en italique) : la présentation orale et la compétence en écriture, la stratégie de la présentation orale et quelques échelons des connaissances linguistiques et du contenu. Ces échelons ne sont donc pas au centre de l’enseignement du niveau en question.

Le **domaine d’apprentissage non obligatoire** du primaire serait ainsi les compétences (écrits dans le modèle en caractères normaux). On parle ici des échelons restants que l’enseignement de ce niveau ne doit pas contenir.

Pour le niveau des 6ième et 7ième classes les domaines d’apprentissage changent. À ce niveau qui mène au baccalauréat, le domaine de l’apprentissage principal se trouve dans le haut du tableau, à savoir les trois échelons les plus hauts de chaque colonne.

L’avantage de ce modèle est que l’on parle des mêmes capacités dans la matière. On change seulement de poids dans la progression. On peut également utiliser le système d’évaluation du **Cadre commun** qui s’appelle DIALANG. Ce barème se compose de 6 niveaux allant de A1 pour le plus élémentaire à C2 pour le plus professionnel. Ce système est déjà utilisé dans beaucoup de CV pour décrire les niveaux de compétences. Il serait utile de s’en servir également pour nommer les niveaux de langues que les élèves obtiennent au baccalauréat dans les Écoles européennes. Mais on peut les employer aussi dans la transition pour désigner les niveaux intermédiaires. Ainsi on peut demander le niveau A2 dans la compétence d’écoute et de compréhension de la langue parlée à la fin du primaire.

Le modèle proposé peut également résoudre le problème de l’harmonisation dans les exigences à l’examen. Il est absolument nécessaire que les demandes à l’examen soient les mêmes dans toutes les langues. Il faut éviter une situation où les élèves sont soumis à des épreuves inégalles et à des niveaux différents, par exemple en L II. Un modèle commun avec les mêmes buts supérieurs dans les langues est ainsi en mesure d’assurer l’égalité dans les exigences à l’examen.

Avec l’instauration d’un tel modèle dans les programmes de langues des Écoles européennes, on peut obtenir plusieurs avantages :

- résoudre le problème de transition dans l’enseignement d’une langue en établissant un système cohérent,
- obtenir un plus grande conformité didactique entre les deux niveaux,
- atteindre des objectifs plus élevés dans les compétences linguistiques, c’est-à-dire les mêmes exigences à l’examen dans les langues
- donner aux élèves la sensation d’un enseignement cohérent des langues.

Et au moment où presque tous les systèmes d’éducation nationaux des pays de l’Union Européenne ont appliqué le **Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues** dans l’enseignement des langues il est peut-être aussi temps de le faire de façon convaincante dans les Écoles européennes.
**Modèle de progression pour l’enseignement primaire :**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compréhension orale en inter-activité: Compétence en communication orale (dialogue)</th>
<th>Stratégies communicatives</th>
<th>Connaissance des éléments constitutifs d’une conversation, des expressions propres à la conversation et des scénarios</th>
<th>Sujets proches de l’élève, relatifs à la culture et à la société</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sujets relatifs à la personne</td>
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<tr>
<th>Compréhension orale: Compétence en lecture (comprendre un texte)</th>
<th>Stratégies de lecture (lecture «orientée», connaissance des genres, du lexique)</th>
<th>Connaissance de structures textuelles, (avec référence à divers genres) de la structure du paragraphe à la structure de la phrase</th>
<th>Sujets connus relatifs à la culture et à la société</th>
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<td>Sujets relatifs à la littérature, à la culture et à la société</td>
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<tr>
<th>Expression orale: Présentation orale</th>
<th>Présentation orale, se focalisant sur la structure, les sujets, le lexique</th>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Expression écrite: Compétence en écriture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A l’Ecole européenne de Luxembourg, une approche positive et enrichissante du monde du travail: le Stage en entreprise.

JEAN-PIERRE COIBION pour le Groupe «Stage en entreprise» de l’Ecole européenne de Luxembourg


Un stage en entreprise
Ce programme consiste à confronter concrètement les étudiants au monde du travail. Il s’agit d’une activité pédagogique qui vient compléter le travail de sensibilisation et de réflexion du programme officiel d’orientation scolaire et professionnelle.

Trouver son entreprise
Dans un premier temps, et sous la supervision de leur tuteur (un professeur bénévole), les étudiants ont recherché une activité de stage, en rapport ou non avec leurs options scolaires ou leurs intentions professionnelles futures. Certains se sont livrés eux-mêmes à cette recherche et ont contacté directement des entreprises. Signalons que, pour permettre un tutorat aisé de ces activités, les entreprises doivent être localisées au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg.

On imagine que pour des étudiants, il n’est pas toujours facile de trouver eux-mêmes les contacts indispensables. C’est pourquoi certains d’entre eux ont eu recours à une liste établie par l’école.

Quoi qu’il en soit, le 27 juin, après signature des «conventions de stage» nécessaires, tous les candidats intéressés par le projet étaient au travail!

Il s’agit d’une expérience nouvelle pour les élèves. Certains n’ont pas encore eu l’occasion de travailler en entreprise, et ils ont surtout été amenés à se remettre en question. Ils ont donc apprécié d’être consacrés à la réalisation d’une tâche spécifique, d’être pris au sérieux et d’avoir un rôle précis à jouer dans l’entreprise.

Quelles entreprises

Suivi du stage
Au cours de leurs deux semaines de stage, les étudiants ont reçu la visite de leur tuteur qui s’est informé sur la manière dont ils remplissaient leur contrat et dont ils s’intégraient dans leur milieu de travail (entretien avec l’élève et avec son référent dans l’entreprise).

A la fin de son stage, l’élève a rédigé un rapport de stage (parfois très complet, conjuguant texte et photos) qu’il a remis au responsable du programme dans les premiers jours de la rentrée scolaire. Parallèlement, une grille d’évaluation a été complétée par son référent dans l’entreprise.

Voici quelques extraits significatifs de ces rapports:
– «Ce stage a été une bonne expérience, qui m’a donné l’opportunité de connaître le monde du travail…Ce stage m’a aussi appris le travail en équipe…et m’a permis de faire la différence entre l’école et le monde du travail. J’aimerais remercier toute l’équipe et les directeurs de m’avoir donné l’occasion de vivre cette expérience.» Brussée Caméo 5Fr.
– “It was a very interesting and profitable experience for me, and I believe that more students of the European School should be encouraged to participate in such projects.” Giannakouris Evangelia 5El.
– “Im Allgemeinen war es eine schöne und nützliche Erfahrung.” Koener Steven 5Fr.
– “…Die Schüler, die keine Praktikumstelle finden, werden so unterstützt. Zusätzlich ist es hilfreich, dass jedem Schüler ein konkreter Lehrer
Ces Stages en entreprise sont profitables pour nos étudiants qui non seulement découvrent le monde du travail mais peuvent ainsi mener de façon beaucoup plus concrète, structurée et efficace, une réflexion sur leur avenir professionnel.
Latinitas or Europa: from present to past, from past to present

JOHN BULWER
Brussels I

At Brussels 1 (Uccle) we have been engaged, with a number of other schools from many different European countries, on a Comenius project on Latin and Europe. The participating institutions were the following:

- Liceo Majorana-Corner – Mirano (Italy) (Coordinating Institution)
- IES Vicente Blasco Ibanez – Valencia (Spain);
- Lise Meitner Realgymnasium – Wien (Austria);
- Liceum Sefana Zeromskiega – Zawiercie (Poland);
- Gymnasium Mathiase Lercha Brno – Brno (Czech Republic);
- SOU Bratia Petar I Ivan Kanazirevi – Razlog (Bulgaria);
- Liceo Scientifico Morin – Mestre (Italy);
- Associated partners: Punto CLE Decima Regio – Treviso (Italy);
- Fondazione Cassamarca – Treviso (Italy);
- Arcadia – Archeologia Ambiente Didattica – Padova (Italy).

The themes for exploration within the project were the following:

- Latin;
- History and traditions;
- Arts and archaeology;
- European literatures;
- Foreign languages;
- Ethics and Religions;
- Natural Sciences;
- Mathematics and Physics;
- Cultural heritage;

European citizenship and regional identity.

The results of the project can be seen on the website: [http://latinitas.altervista.org](http://latinitas.altervista.org)

This project brought together teachers and students from the participating countries in a way which is familiar to us as teachers from the European Schools. However, this kind of experience of working with colleagues who come from a different culture and background and who speak different languages was entirely new to most of the colleagues we met. It was a reminder of what it was like to come to the European School for the first time. Though based on Latin and *Latinitas* it did not exclusively involve Classics teachers. Among the colleagues were modern linguists, mother tongue teachers, science and ICT specialists as well as Latinists. This choice of topic was a rich one, because everyone in each country could find a topic or area of interest to the teachers and their students which could make an individual contribution to the project as a whole. Thus work on the Roman Landscape area involved historical and geographical work of the individual school's local area in relation to the Roman background, as well as school trips to places of historical and scientific interest. Over the project it began to emerge that some aspects of this topic engaged more than one school on similar lines and interesting parallels became apparent. One school, for example, began a project on Latin pronunciation and collected examples from different contributors. On the website you can now hear the same passages read by different voices from several countries to give a fascinating comparison of styles.

In this way Latin provided a focal point for the activities and provided a welcome alternative to the often now conventional topics for inter-school Comenius projects such as the environment, European citizenship, culture and identity and so on. Even the non-specialists found things to interest their classes and some even broke new ground by introducing the study of the Classical heritage to their schools where no such tradition had existed for many years. They and their pupils were able to rediscover things in their own cultures which had been passed over in recent history. One Czech school performed their own theatre piece (in Latin) based on the work of Comenius: his *Orbis Pictus* (see image below). This was an excellent way of reinforcing the common background of European culture and heritage for our pupils, but in a real way...
rather than resorting to the vague exhortations of our politicians.

The students came away from their work on this project having achieved for themselves some work which shared in a background common to all the other collaborating schools. The work they did which was individual to their own country they could compare to the similar, yet distinctive, things done by other students from faraway places. The unifying aspect of the common culture of all European countries to the Roman world could not be clearer. The final show put on by the co-ordinating school (Liceo Majorana-Corner, Mirano) exemplified this. The students performed and recited a sequence of love poetry, beginning with Sappho (in Greek) and Catullus (in Latin) and proceeding through Emily Dickinson, Christian Morgenstern, Jacques Prévert, Pablo Neruda (each in their original language) and a selection of Italian writers up to the present. Nothing could better demonstrate the common basis of European culture, while at the same time indicating its diversity, originality and ability to innovate.

There was considerable emphasis on the performance tradition of European drama in this project. The spectacles already mentioned were supplemented at the final meeting in April 2006 by a thoroughly rehearsed and creatively directed version of Plautus’s *Miles Gloriosus* by the liceo classico Cagnazzi from Altamura in southern Italy (see image below). The fact that the version was by Pier Paolo Pasolini in an impenetrable Sicilian dialect didn’t seem to matter much as the force and energy of the young actors projected the meaning across the language barrier. Brussels 1 made its own contribution to this drama festival with its production of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The transformation of Ovid’s story of Pyramus and Thisbe (Metamorphoses 4, 55-166) into the mechanicals’ comic show in Act 5 was the basis for its inclusion in the project about the continuity of the Latin tradition in later literature. The project teachers saw this show in rehearsal in Brussels and then later a recording of part of the final performance was shown at the final meeting. Other schools worked on literary, historical and cultural topics, such as the use of Latin in University ceremonies, the continuity of Latin language in modern expression, the use made of classical themes in their own poetry and the vestiges of Roman civilization in their local landscape and

*A scene from Miles Gloriosus by Plautus*
surroundings. Pupils in the schools produced their artistic and creative responses to these challenges, many of which were reproduced and presented to the final meeting. Brussels 1 contributed here with visual responses to the Latin scientific texts of Newton and Copernicus, and with some investigations and experiments in Roman cooking following the original recipes of Apicius.

Another of the major contributions of Brussels 1 was a questionnaire on Latin in schools distributed to all participating institutions with an analysis of the replies. These seemed to show overall that pupils were on the whole pleased with their lessons of Latin. They wished for rather more in the lessons than grammatical content, and liked the wider study of Roman civilisation and culture when it was combined with language work. The full results of this survey can be found on the website and in the final products of the project.

The images are taken from two of the dramatic productions mounted for the final meeting. The version of a Roman comedy from Altamura, and a dramatic version by the Brno school of the first illustrated book in Europe by the Czech author who gives his name to the project: Jan Amos Comenius.

With thanks to colleagues Giovanna Baghin and Karine Baldan (former pupil of the European School, Uccle) of the coordinating institution Liceo Majorana-Corner – Mirano (Italy) and to Norbert Micke, Antonio Ienco and Giancarlo Marcheggiano.
„Von Katzen und Mäusen“

SABINE KAROß & EDDA RUTHENBERG
European School Luxembourg 1

Projekte bedeuten nicht nur Abwechslung im Schulalltag, sie bieten auch und gerade andere Lernformen, erlauben Inhalte, die im regulären Schulalltag kaum oder gar nicht vorkommen und ermöglichen neue Erfahrungen.


Die Schüler haben ihre Arbeit mit einem Projektheft begleitet, in das sie ihre Liedtexte eingeklebt, Bilder gemalt, Wortsammlungen erstellt und Kommentare geschrieben haben.

Je näher das Ende der Woche und die Aufführungen rückten, desto aufgeregter wurden die Schüler, nicht zuletzt auch, weil sie diesmal geschminkt werden sollten.


Vor, während und im Anschluss an die Projektwoche haben wir, die Projektleitung, unser Tun ständig „evaluiert“. Begreifen wir Evaluation sehr weit als die Auswertung einer Erfahrung durch eine oder mehrere Personen, dann ist dies im Hinblick auf verschiedene Aspekte ein selbstverständlicher Teil unserer Arbeit:

Da sind zunächst die Rahmenbedingungen: Wir haben von Projekt zu Projekt (das oben beschriebene war unser drittes Vorhaben in Lux.) gelernt, was es bedeutet ein solches Vorhaben an einer so großen Institution wie der Europäischen Schule Luxembourg I durchzuführen.

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Von Jahr zu Jahr wussten wir genauer, was wir z. B. bei der Organisation zu berücksichtigen hatten, um einen störungsfreien Unterricht (Raumbelegung) in der Projektzeit zu gewährleisten. Ebenso lernten wir den zeitlichen und inhaltlichen Umfang unserer Vorhaben besser in die gegebenen Stundenpläne der Schüler (Fremdsprachenunterricht, Religion) einzupassen, da Raumwechsel in der Schule immer mit laangangigen Wegen und damit Zeit verbunden sind. Auch die Unterstützung beim Bau von Kulissen durch die schuleigenen Ateliers oder andere Schulklassen will gut vorbereitet sein. Hier gilt es auch, langfristig zu planen und die Machbarkeit im Vorhinein zu prüfen.

In der llaufenden Projektarbeit mit den Schülern konnten wir unsere Arbeit u. a. anhand der Projektstagebücher der Schüler evaluieren. Eine Form der Evaluation, die wir nicht in jedem Projekt gewählt haben, mit der wir dieses Mal aber gute Erfahrungen gemacht haben. Die Eintragungen der Schüler zeigten uns in entwicklungsgerinniger Form, was ihnen bei der gemeinsamen Arbeit besonders wichtig bzw. bedeutend war.


Eine Evaluation im engeren Sinne, die in Anlehnung an Jost Reischmann, Androloge an der Universität Bamberg, als das Erfassen und Bewerten von Prozessen und Ergebnissen zur Wirkungskontrolle, Steuerung und Reflexion von Unterricht mit wissenschaftlichen Mitteln verstanden werden kann, wäre eine sinnvolle Ergänzung.

Hier wäre es wünschenswert, wenn die Europäische Schule als Institution diese anstößt, auch um zu zeigen, dass sie den Wert ihrer Bildungsarbeit nach außen dokumentieren möchte.


Réflexions d’une prof polonaise

ANNE FRANÇOIS-KOS
EE Luxembourg

Lorsqu’un étudiant venu de Pologne prend ses quartiers à l’Ecole européenne de Luxembourg, le moins que l’on puisse dire est qu’il se sent quelque peu dépaysé. D’abord le gigantisme de l’établissement: des milliers d’élèves, des kilomètres de couloirs, des dizaines et des dizaines de classes: il y a de quoi attraper le tournis ! Ensuite, il y a la barrière de la langue. Les étudiants polonais sont encore trop peu nombreux pour pouvoir bénéficier d’une section à eux. Ils doivent donc choisir parmi les sections existantes pour la plupart des cours. Beaucoup choisissent l’anglais. Mais, pour bon nombre, la difficulté reste importante car, en Pologne, la connaissance des langues étrangères demeure très aléatoire. Heureusement, ces jeunes se retrouvent dans nos classes polonaises lesquelles, j’ai pu le constater depuis deux ans, font réellement office de refuge. Même en dehors des cours, nos étudiants polonais aiment se retrouver dans ma classe. Car j’ai le privilège de disposer d’un local fixe, que j’ai pu agencer et orner à ma guise, avec beaucoup de photos et des cartes, à la manière polonaise.

En outre j’ai réussi, grâce à l’aide du Ministère polonais de l’Education nationale et à la Fondation Semper Polonia, à constituer gratuitement une bibliothèque très complète et comportant notamment tous les dictionnaires indispensables pour l’exercice des cours.

Ces jeunes viennent régulièrement me demander des conseils pour les aider à régler des problèmes de tout genre: un cours qu’ils n’ont pas bien compris, une démarche administrative qui les perturbe. J’ai parfois l’impression d’être non seulement leur prof mais aussi leur maman. Cela ne m’ennuie pas, bien au contraire. A noter cependant que j’ai pu vérifier qu’avec le temps, le dépaysement des étudiants polonais s’estompe. Surtout grâce aux contacts qu’ils établissent avec leurs condisciples et singulièrement lors des épreuves sportives. Au foot, il n’y a plus de barrières, A vrai dire, pour les professeurs aussi l’adaptation n’est pas toujours aisée, le gigantisme joue pour eux également. Malgré la solidarité que manifestent spontanément les autres profs, et l’aide qui, de leur part, ne fait jamais défaut, on a parfois le sentiment d’être isolée. De plus, on ne connaît pas vraiment, géographiquement, son école. Ainsi, il a fallu que je sois amenée à piloter une équipe de la TV polonaise qui effectuait un reportage sur nos étudiants pour que je découvre, non sans tâtonnements, nos salles de sports par exemple, ainsi que les magnifiques salles de l’école primaire et de l’école maternelle. Ne serait-il pas utile que tous les nouveaux profs consacrent, au moment de leur arrivée, une journée entière s’il le faut, à visiter l’ensemble de l’établissement, fut-ce pour en connaître toutes les possibilités?

Adaptation difficile aussi en ce qui concerne les cours. Ainsi, en Pologne, les études secondaires sont divisées en deux sections: la section inférieure ou le gymnase et la section supérieure ou le lycée; la littérature est enseignée de manière thématique au gymnase et de manière chronologique au lycée. Dans les écoles européennes, le système est différent et l’on commence, dès après les primaires, par l’enseignement de la littérature de manière chronologique. Je ne veux pas ici me prononcer sur le bien fondé de l’une ou de l’autre méthode. Pour le prof, concrètement, cela suppose une adaptation car on ne s’adresse pas aux élèves de première secondaire comme à ceux qui sont dans les classes supérieures.

Une des plus importantes difficultés rencontrées fut certes la préparation des questions du bac. En Pologne et dans d’autres pays d’ailleurs, ces questions sont préparées par un collectif de spécialistes. Ce n’est pas le cas dans les Ecoles européennes; de sorte que j’ai du me débrouiller seule, grâce cependant à l’aide des experts du «bac» polonais et aussi grâce aux enseignements que j’ai pu retirer d’un stage spécialement organisé à cet effet, en Pologne, à l’initiative de Mme Mazur, l’inspectrice polonaise déléguée aux Ecoles européennes. Tout cela est évidemment un problème d’adaptation et l’adaptation est le propre de l’homme! Et de la femme cela va de soi!

D’ailleurs, cette adaptation est d’autant plus aisée que les moyens mis à disposition des profs sont...
vraiment extraordinaires lorsqu’on les compare avec ceux dont on dispose généralement dans d’autres établissements scolaires.

Cette adaptation est également facilitée grâce au développement des relations sociales au sein de l’école. J’ai vécu personnellement le cas d’une jeune étudiante polonaise qui a perdu sa maman alors même qu’elle était déjà orpheline de son père. L’élan de solidarité qui s’est manifestée à cette occasion, de la part de tous ses profs, fut absolument remarquable. Certains lui ont proposé de l’héberger, d’autres de l’aider à régler ses problèmes de successions, d’autres encore l’ont épaulée pour lui trouver une bourse d’études universitaires en Grande-Bretagne. Malgré le malheur qui venait de la frapper si durement, elle a réussi brillamment son baccalauréat!

Relations sociales aussi, entre profs, lors des différentes fêtes nationales; bien que n’étant qu’une toute petite sous-section, j’ai tenu à m’inscrire dans ce mouvement et j’ai amené les parents de mes élèves à y participer. Par ailleurs, je viens de réussir, pour la deuxième année consécutive, à célébrer chez nous la «journée des professeurs» qui est une tradition polonaise depuis que, le 14 octobre 1773, la Pologne s’est dotée, pour la première fois en Europe et au monde, d’un ministère chargé spécifiquement de l’éducation des jeunes et de l’enseignement. Chaque année donc, à cette date, les profs sont à la fête: fleurs, bonbons, chocolats et autres confiseries. Dieu sait, cela pourrait peut-être devenir un jour une tradition dans les Ecoles européennes. Je l’espère en tous cas car, de nos jours, les profs ont bien besoin d’être parfois à la fête !

Puisque nous sommes dans une école européenne, je me dois de vous dire enfin où j’ai le mieux senti l’esprit de l’école, le souffle européen: c’est lors de la remise des prix aux baccalauréats. Tous ces jeunes, venus des quatre coins d’Europe qui, appelés à la tribune pour recevoir leur diplôme, se faisaient acclamer par tous leurs condisciples. C’est là que l’on a senti que l’Ecole ne formait qu’un et l’on n’a pas pu s’empêcher de frissonner lors de l’exécution de l’hymne européen. Alors là, l’Ecole vibrait. Et l’Europe avec elle. Ce sont de tels moments qu’il faudrait multiplier à l’échelle populaire, afin de rendre à l’Union européenne, le cœur, l’esprit et l’espoir qui la portaient lors de sa création. L’Europe doit vibrer et faire vibrer les Européens.

A ce propos, une petite suggestion: lors de cette remise des prix, on a vu certains étudiants affublés de la casquette des baccalauréats scandinaves; d’autres portant la traditionnelle coiffe américaine. Pourquoi pas une coiffe conçue spécialement pour les élèves des écoles européennes et qu’ils seraient fiers de pouvoir porter? Un détail peut-être mais c’est par tous ces détails que se crée l’esprit européen.
“Where trees come true” – a cross-curricular project across three language sections in Culham

VELIA CIMINO
European School Culham

Working together across Primary Sections is a well established habit in Culham, a way of emphasizing the European dimension of our teaching, which has steadily grown in the last ten years. The small size of the School has certainly facilitated the process, and we are well aware at Culham of the added value this gives to the quality of education we can provide.

In the last two years, since the phasing out of the small Sections has started, this way of working has become a necessity for the Dutch, Italian and English Primary Sections. To facilitate a smooth transition of the Dutch and Italian year 5 pupils into the English Section in Secondary a whole set of common activities has been planned throughout the school year, which involves from four to six periods a week of working together in mixed groups, covering different subjects, namely Maths, Physical Education, Discovery of the World, Art, L1/L2.

As the D/E/IPS Project -as we call it- has proven very successful, we decided to extend it down to Year 4, for a single project over a school year. We were so lucky to be able to use the expertise of the two founders of the Italian group ‘Filo’, that has been active in Lombardia for the last fifteen years, working in Nursery, Primary and junior Secondary Schools leading special projects to introduce children to “The magic world of books”.

Here follow some pictures of the book created and a summary of our project, as planned by the teachers and as recalled by the pupils involved.
Aim of the project: To create a giant pop-up book
Classes involved: English, Dutch, and Italian Year 4 Primary
Subjects covered: Art, Discovery of the World, Music, L1/L2 (and more)
Materials and resources: Cardboard, paper, acrylic paint, china ink, chalk, oil pastel, glue, ink pen, brush, sponge, straws, scissors. Guitar, song "Per fare un albero ci vuole un fiore".
Contents and Skills:
Art
Painting Exploring different painting media
Getting to know basic pop-up techniques for making books
Drama Concentration/imagination skills
"Close your eyes and imagine walking in the woods…look at a tree, smelling it, touching it…"
Discovery of the World
Biological Woods: A habitat, exchange of gases, levels of vegetation in a forest, deciduous trees, conifers, the conservation of natural environment
Geographical Climate factors
The effect of climate on landscape and agriculture
The effort to reduce environmental damage
Music
Singing together a song on the theme
L1/L2 Learning a son in a different language/mother tongue.
Sharing impressions and ideas in L1/L2
Translating from mother tongue to English and vice versa

Experts Rosanna Mezzana, Maria Grazia Sbrilli del Gruppo di Animazione ‘Filo’, Rezzato Brescia
Outcome “Where trees come true” pop-up book

We hebben twee bezoekers ontmoet, die kwamen uit Italie.

Ze hadden ons een liedje geleerd dat heel mooi was. Toen moesten we onze ogen dicht doen, en een boom in ons hoofd maken, met fantasie!!! Toen gingen we naar de klas van Miss McCarthey (Ep4). Daar gingen we onze bomen tekenen en verven. Op het einde waren er ongeveer 64 bomen! Ongelooflijk, he?

We hadden geleerd hoe je pop-ups in een boek kunt maken. Toen moesten we de bomen inleveren bij die twee juffen. We mochten ook de achtergrond helpen verven en daar deden we onze bomen in, en nu zijn ze in dit boek.

Door: Ntima, Fien, Hanne, Thomas, Peter, Laurens, en Jay.
In dit magische boek,  
Gaan de bomen nooit zoek.  
In magische kleuren,  
En magische geuren,  
Onstaan alle bomen,  
Die nooit gaan ontkomen!  
In een wereld,  
niet ver weg,  
Komen bomen,  
Mooi of niet,  
Zoals u ziet,  
Is dit een wonderbos.  
Er woont geen vos,  
Of muis of rat,  
Want alle bomen,  
Waren het zat,  
Ze gingen weg,  
Van onze wereld,  
En nu zijn ze,  
In dit bos.

L’anno scorso, siccome studiavamo le piante, abbiamo deciso di fare un piccolo lavoro di arte, sugli alberi.  
La maestra ha incontrato delle sue amiche streghe, in Italia, che ha invitato in Inghilterra per farci immaginare un bosco e dipingere gli alberi che abbiamo trovato dentro di noi nel nostro bosco immaginario. Ci hanno insegnato una canzone intitolata ‘Per fare un albero ci vuole fiore’ che parla di come con un fiore puoi costruire tutto.  
Così’ insieme alle sezioni inglese e olandese, ci siamo messi daccordo per fare un libro con tutti i nostri alberi immaginari.  
Quel giorno abbiamo lavorato tutto il giorno per fare gli alberi.  
Abbiamo cercato i giusti strumenti, materiali e colori per i nostri alberi, perciò sono venuti molto bene.  
Quando tutti gli alberi erano finiti abbiamo dipinto dei fogli, A3, con diversi colori; poi abbiamo incollato gli alberi più o meno dello stesso colore. Alla fine e’ venuto il momento di decidere il titolo del libro; dopo tanta discussione abbiamo scelto ‘Where trees come true’ (Dove gli alberi nascono).  
Alla fine di quello sforzo, abbiamo firmato la copertina del libro e appicicato il titolo decorato.  
Riccardo e Francesca IP5

Friends of Velia’s came to school for a day. EP4, IP54 and NP4 gathered together in the Drama Studio. There, we sang a song in Italian and we talked about trees. When necessary, the children in the Italian section translated for us.  
We were asked to think about trees. Then, to think of an “inner tree” - something that might live inside of ourselves - our own personal tree - something unique, something no one else could see and something we would not tell anyone about.  
Afterwards, we had to draw the tree and to colour it using crayons, chalk pastels and oil pastels. Later we added inks to bring out the details. We blew at the ink, through straws, to create the branches and twigs. It was very effective.  
The individual trees were then cut out. Working in small groups we stuck the trees onto pages in such a way as to create this “pop-up” book. We called the book “Where Trees Come True”.  
The end result is a wonderful book for us all to share.  
It was really, really fun.  
EP5

80 ➤ || panorama