

The competence approach in Luxemburg

1) Primary school

In 2009 the law of primary school dating from 1912 was reformed. The law introduces the competence approach within the first 4 cycles (8 years). Children join school at the age of 4.

Assessment is assured by evaluating a number of competences in each branch. Students don't obtain a grade anymore. A big continuous formation program has been (since 4 years) and is offered to the teachers to help them to change methods and approaches. The formation offer wasn't really accepted by the teachers the years preceding the reform so that the implementation of the competence approach presented a lot of work for them, the reform once voted. As the reform requires a lot of supplementary administrative work, many teachers in "fundamental" school are for the moment overflowed.

Teachers have to invite parents at the end of each trimester to present the results of the child's progress. At the end of the cycle a balance sheet certifies the acquired competences and declares the child's graduation to the next cycle.

Two cycles can be prolonged a year if the child doesn't reach the competences required. To do this, the teacher has to contact and to write a report to the CIS (commission of scholar inclusion) made up by the school inspector, a psychologist, experts of different disabilities, ...) who advises the teacher and organizes individual help for students with special needs.

Actually, the running of the CIS located outside the schools, is difficult and administration ~~and~~ takes too much time.

Teachers have to work in a team within a cycle. They are obliged to organize two support lessons a week for one, a part or all of their pupils. These support lessons can explicitly be used to do some inclusive work.

Schools are organized by a teacher committee and its president. Their main pedagogical task is the elaboration of a PRS (plan of scholar success) for the school in collaboration with the parents and the local authorities. The PRS could be an excellent tool to promote inclusion. The plans elaborated until now promote (if they talk of inclusion) first of all the inclusion of immigrant children, which is indeed a very hard and important job as the number of immigrant students ~~lies~~ is around 50 %.

2) Secondary school

The secondary school law is to be reformed in 2013. Actually, pilot schools are testing the competence approach and the CNP (commissions of national curricula) are trying to elaborate curricula based on the competence approach. It has been decided that students will continue to be graded with marks between 0 and 60. Criteria of assessment based on the descriptors of

competences will guide the teacher when he or she elaborates an evaluation situation. The work itself will be graded.

Assessment is one of the main discussion points in Luxemburg. A good example to illustrate this is an “inclusive” law voted last year. Students with special needs are allowed to use special aids or to have special conditions during evaluation sessions (computer, more time, special materials, etc.). Discussions continue after the vote whether these special aids have to be marked on the report or the evaluation sheet or not. It is quite puzzling that there exists now a law talking of the evaluation of special needs students, but there is no law talking of the daily inclusive work in ordinary schools.