

PROJET
Accompagnement-Recherche-Formation
pour la mise en oeuvre du Programme de
formation de l'école québécoise

ACCOMPANIMENT OF THE EVALUATION OF LEARNING

To support learning and to recognize competencies

Booklet 5: The Accompaniment of Cycle-teams for
the Evaluation of Development of Competencies

Louise Lafortune, author

Direction de l'accompagnement-recherche
Département des sciences de l'éducation
Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

Sylvie Turcotte¹

Ministerial Coordination
Direction de la formation et
de la titularisation du personnel scolaire (DFTPS)

2008

Partnership between the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
DFTPS – DGFJ – DR and the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

In collaboration with

Avril Aitken, Kathleen Bélanger, Nicole Boisvert, Bernard Cotnoir, Grant Hawley,
Carine Lachapelle, Nathalie Lafranchise, Reinelde Landry, Carrole Lebel,
Chantale Lepage, Franca Persechino, France Plouffe, and Gilbert Smith

With the participation of

Karine Boisvert-Grenier and Bérénice Fiset

Translated by Avril Aitken, Jean Fillatre and Nathalie Girardin

<http://www.uqtr.ca/accompagnement-recherche>

¹ Sylvie Turcotte was the director of the Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire when this publication was being produced (2002-2008).

Acknowledgements

The Accompaniment-Research-Training Project for the Implementation of the Quebec Education Program is a large-scale undertaking spread over six years (2002-2008) that recognizes a major change in education. This project required significant financial support and the collaboration of many people. I would like to thank the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport for its financial support and for allowing several people from the education sector to act as accompanists to groups across the province. My thanks to Robert Bisailon, Assistant Deputy Minister at the outset of this project, and Pierre Bergevin, his successor, for allowing it to be put into practice. My thanks also to Sylvie Turcotte and Margaret Rioux-Dolan, Ministerial Representatives, for their support and unfailing encouragement. Special thanks to the staff of *la Direction de la formation et de la titularisation des personnels scolaires* and to its director, Sylvie Turcotte, for making essential resources available to the project team, for her consistent involvement at meetings and for her invariably relevant remarks. I would also like to thank the *Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières* for having encouraged this partnership and for having put at our disposal human and material resources necessary for the smooth completion of the project.

Accompanying Evaluation of Learning in Quebec Schools (in six booklets), as part of the Accompaniment-Research-Training Project for the Implementation of the Quebec Education Program, was made possible by the participation of many people. I would like to thank the members of my accompaniment team: Avril Aitken, Nicole Boisvert, Grant Hawley, Carole Lebel, Franca Persechino, France Plouffe, and Gilbert Smith who saw this project through to completion and who provided constructive criticism and comments about certain versions of the content. Their contributions proved to be essential to the execution of the project. Thanks go also to Simone Bettinger, Bernard Cotnoir, Ginette Dubé, Jean-Marc Jean, Reinelde Landry, and Doris Simard, the other accompanists who contributed to our reflections.

Thanks are also due to the professionals, research assistants and auxiliaries who contributed regularly to the Accompaniment-Research-Training project: Kathleen Bélanger, Karine Boisvert-Grenier, Bérénice Fiset, Sylvie Fréchette, Carine Lachapelle, Nathalie Lafranchise, and Chantale Lepage; or occasionally: Karine Benoît, Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe, Marie-Pier Boucher, Marie-Ève Cotton, Élise Girard, Lysanne Grimard-Léveillé, Marie-Claude Héroux, David Lafortune, Bernard Massé, Vicki Massicotte, Geneviève Milot, Jean Paul Ndoreraho, Andrée Robertson, and Caroline Turgeon.

Many more people participated in the production of these booklets. Their contributions have furthered the concept of accompaniment of evaluation and have helped to clarify certain ideas, select information, add and reorganise content and, finally, they have led to a new layout for the document that makes it a better tool for the education community. Our sincere thanks to:

- the team of professionals and specialists in Education Science from the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport who participated in a discussion meeting:
 - Jacqueline Charbonneau, Lorraine Desmarais, Donald Guertin, Lise Ouellet, Blozaire Paul, Christian Rousseau, and Denis Watters from the *Direction générale de formation des jeunes*;
 - Camille Marchand from *Vie pédagogique*;
- the accompaniment team from the *Commission scolaire des Portages-de-l'Outaouais*: Isabelle Asselin, Paule Bellehumeur, Marc Gauvreau, Francine Hausselman, Kim Mellor, Richard Painchaud, and Violette Routhier who used and discussed an earlier version of this document;
- the team of Professor Linda Allal, from the University of Geneva: Céline Buchs, Katia Lehraus, Lucie Mottier Lopez, Edith Wegmuller, and Walther Tessaro as well as the teacher training team (*SEDEV*) in Geneva: Filippo Cattafi, Véronique Claret, Ariene Favre Darnev, Jean-Marc Hohl, Christiane Jeame, and Bernard Riedweg who reviewed an earlier version of this document.

Special thanks to Carine Lachapelle for organising the launch of the *Accompanying Evaluation of Learning* booklets in September 2006 in Montreal and in October 2006 in Quebec City and for making those events a success in every way.

Throughout this project I took great pleasure in working with those people from the education community (administrators, consultants, teachers...) who were involved in the process of co-construction which, among other things, allowed us to create these booklets. In sharing their expertise, all of these people prompted me to reflect and to clarify my thoughts and contributed to the advancement of the provincial accompaniment team. This project would not have been possible without their participation and commitment and I thank them warmly.

Louise Lafortune

List of Booklets

Booklet 1

Relevance and Need for Accompaniment for the Evaluation of Learning

Booklet 2

Reflective-Interactive Methods for the Accompaniment of Evaluation and of Elaboration of Learning and Evaluation Situations

Booklet 3

The Exercise and Development of Professional Judgement

Booklet 4

A Perspective of Socio-pedagogical Equity for the Accompaniment of Evaluation

Booklet 5

Accompaniment of Cycle-teams for the Evaluation of Development of Competencies (**in this document**)

Booklet 6

Reflective Practice for the Evaluation of Competencies

The series of six booklets that make up the document *Accompaniment of the Evaluation of Learning: To Support Learning and to Recognize Competencies* is part of the Accompaniment-Research-Training Project for the Implementation of the Quebec Education Program. This series of booklets is meant as a tool for reflection and intervention for the education community. It serves to further the understanding of certain concepts relating to the Quebec Education Program, to the evaluation of competencies, and to the development of coherent practices to accompany evaluation as a support for learning and recognition of competencies.

Note : We welcome your comments at the following address:
accompagnement@uqtr.ca

Table of contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS FOR EVALUATION..... | 8 |
| 2. A FEW DEFINITIONS | 9 |
| <i>Evaluation</i> | 9 |
| <i>Team</i> | 9 |
| <i>Cycle</i> | 10 |
| <i>Cycle-team</i> | 10 |
| <i>Cycle-team Work</i> | 11 |
| 3. CYCLE-TEAM EVALUATION | 12 |
| 4. FROM PRINCIPLES TO ACTION..... | 13 |
| 5. FOR ACCOMPANIMENT: GETTING READY TO EVALUATE..... | 15 |
| 6. TIMES FOR EVALUATION..... | 18 |
| 7. A REVIEW OF THE EVALUATIVE PRACTICES OF EVALUATION..... | 19 |
| 7.1. INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION, TEAM EVALUATION..... | 19 |
| 7.2. HOMEWORK | 20 |
| 7.3. EVALUATION IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS | 20 |
| 7.4. ASSESSING EVALUATION PRACTICES | 22 |
| 8. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CYCLE-TEAM EVALUATION..... | 23 |
| 8.1. ADVANTAGES..... | 24 |
| 8.2. DISADVANTAGES | 25 |
| <i>Time</i> | 25 |
| <i>Training</i> | 25 |
| <i>Autonomy</i> | 25 |
| CONCLUSION | 26 |
| REFERENCES..... | 27 |
| APPENDIX..... | 28 |

Booklet 5

Accompaniment of Cycle-teams for the Evaluation of Development of Competencies¹

This booklet addresses accompaniment to support the development of evaluation practices which are developed, applied, discussed and analysed by cycle-teams. These cycle-teams are comprised of teachers and others who are involved with the students. The goal is to establish ties between the role of accompanists (educational consultants, school administrations, resource teachers...) and the work of school staff involved with the students. This booklet also includes the main parameters for work in cycle-teams to better understand the stakes involved in the proposed accompaniment.

Questions for reflection

- **How can we link cycle-team work and evaluation of learning?**
- **How is the implementation of cycle-teams useful in the current context of changes in evaluation?**

The current educational reform recommends the implementation of cycles. This presupposes some consultation and a degree of collaboration in cycle-teams, particularly in the field of evaluation, as the following statement attests: “Evaluation of learning must involve the collaboration of all stakeholders, while taking into account their respective responsibilities” (MEQ, 2003, p.17). Some teachers are ready to participate in the evaluation process; others are more hesitant (Lafortune, 2004). Evaluation has been and often is considered an individual task that is a matter of individual responsibility. Even though a team of teachers might have already designed evaluation tools, generally there has not been any real discussion on the use of these tools; nor has there been a collective analysis of their usefulness, relevance and effectiveness. The true work of a cycle-team on evaluation goes beyond an exchange of tools. This is evident in the context where evaluation serves as a support for learning, for recognition of competencies, and for the assessment of learning. Accompaniment seems useful, even necessary, for members of a cycle-team to assist them to reach the stage where they discuss their evaluation practices and beliefs (conceptions and convictions), discuss their evaluation methods, analyse their evaluation practices, and discuss evaluation decisions regarding students (Lafortune, 2004). Such an accompaniment is intended to take into account intellectual dimensions as

¹ Several statements in this chapter are based on, or derived from a project on cycle-team work which took place in the education community from (2001-2004) (Lafortune, 2004). They were enriched by the questioning, reflections and results that stem from PARF.

well as emotional issues. It encourages the cycle-team to take responsibility for evaluation and for any difficulties those who practice it may encounter. Such difficulties might include worrying about losing some autonomy or fear of being judged about their evaluation practices or to the way in which certain evaluation decisions are made.

Defining the context in which accompaniment takes place is important. Indeed, the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning (MEQ, 2003), emphasizes that professionals, parents of underage students, as well as businesses and organisations – in some cases for secondary schools – are also called upon to work in partnership with teaching staff to evaluate students' learning (MEQ, 2003). Along the same lines, the framework for the evaluation of learning in secondary schools (MELS, 2006) underlines that there should be “clear, shared pedagogical intention” (p.25), that it is important to “ensure cooperation between all teachers involved with students” (p.29). Even if the teacher is primarily responsible for the evaluation of students in his classroom (see the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning), it is “along with other teachers and complementary services personnel” (p.29) that he suggests interventions for particular students.

This booklet begins with a brief introduction to the elements of the reference documents for evaluation, as well as the meaning given to “team” and “cycle-team”. We will look into some principles of team work that ensure the development of the team and of its members, and will describe how these principles can be implemented in cycle-team work. Subsequently, we will address the conditions necessary to support the implementation of a cycle team approach of evaluation of student competencies. These conditions are clarified within the context of evaluation as a support for learning, while taking into account that teams must also recognize the progress of competencies and carry out the assessment of learning. To this end, we will first present the principles that guide the evaluation of student competencies by a cycle-team, and then we will introduce the advantages of working in this manner. Throughout this booklet, the role of professional judgement and reflective practice in connection with evaluation discussions carried out in cycle teams are stressed (see booklets 3 and 7 which focus on professional judgement and reflective practice, respectively). The approach we favour is that of accompaniment of the cycle-team by one or two people, (in the school or in another location). This approach is taken into account throughout this booklet. A cycle-team that cannot be accompanied on a regular basis, however, can use the content of this document to more effectively carry out the evaluation of the development of student competencies. We maintain that it is difficult to deal separately with the subjects of accompaniment of evaluation, the nature of cycle-team work, and the accompaniment of the cycle-team. Within the framework of the current educational reform, evaluation cannot be considered as isolated from other activities and steps are intended to support student development and learning. Throughout this booklet, questions are suggested for personal reflection on this concept and its accompaniment; the reflection questions increase personal strategies to foster reflection in those being accompanied.

1. Reference Documents for Evaluation

Questions for reflection

- **In what way do the orientations and values of the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning imply the formation of cycle-teams for the evaluation of student competencies?**
- **In what way do the frameworks for Evaluation of Learning in elementary and secondary schools imply the formation of cycle-teams for the evaluation of student competencies?**

The Policy on the Evaluation of Learning specifies that the teacher is responsible for evaluation with regard to “planning an overall strategy [that] means the cycle-team and the school team will have to agree on when and how [...] to account for student learning acquired during and at the end of cycle” (MEQ, 2003, p.35) Several important ideas come out of this statement. First and foremost, evaluation must account for the learning that has taken place during a complete cycle. The process therefore extends over more than one year. If only for this reason, the cycle-team plays a crucial role in evaluation. There are other reasons that contribute to the idea that the cycle-team supports the evaluation of learning. The remainder of this document explores the important contributions of cycle-teams to the practice of evaluation for the support of learning and for the recognition of competencies.

In the evaluation process, the role of the school administration is twofold. In addition to “approv[ing] the standards and procedures for the evaluation of learning proposed by teachers, and inform[ing] the governing board of the approved proposals” (MEQ, 2003, p. 17), they are called upon to “act as facilitator for these [teams...], in particular with regard to the evaluation of learning” (MEQ, 2003, p.17). In their role as facilitators, they can be assisted by professionals that help “teachers determine the most appropriate pedagogical actions to support students in their learning” (MEQ, 2003, p.18). The content of this document is intended to help those (school administrations or professionals), who want to accompany cycle-teams in the exploration of approaches that support the evaluation of students’ competency development.

Additionally, parents are invited to become involved in their children’s evaluation; their observations are “a supplementary source of information that they, along with educators, can use to take appropriate actions” (MEQ, 2003b, p.18).

Questions for reflection

- **What are the advantages of evaluating students in cycle-teams?**
- **What are the disadvantages of evaluating students in cycle-teams?**

We suggest making a collective list of the advantages and the disadvantages. During the accompaniment process, the list can be reviewed and the following questions addressed:

- **What changes or modifications might be made to each list?**
- **What would cause these changes to occur?**

2. A Few Definitions

The following questions are intended to draw out prior knowledge and foster cognitive involvement while reading the definitions, below.

Questions for reflection

- **What is evaluation?**
- **What is a team?**
- **What is a cycle?**
- **What is a cycle-team?**

Evaluation

In the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning, the Ministère de l'éducation (2003, p.4) defines evaluation as a “process whereby a judgment is made on a student’s learning on the basis of information gathered, analyzed, and interpreted, for the purpose of making pedagogical and administrative decisions”. Drawing on the Ministère de l'éducation (2003), Legendre (2005, p. 630) defines evaluation as an “approach which enables judgments, based on established criteria or norms, regarding the value of a situation, a process or a given element, for administrative or educational decisions”. Referring to the writings of Hadji (1997), Legendre adds that an evaluation is a “process of comparison, establishing relationships between expectations and reality”; it is a “systemic process to find information regarding the students’ learning and to formulate an opinion on their progress” (Linn and Grönlund, 1995, referred to in Legendre, 2005, p. 630). Within the context of the current educational reform, evaluation serves to support learning and to recognize competencies (MEQ, 2003).

Team

Before defining cycle-team, cycle and cycle-team work, we must determine what comprises a team.

Questions for reflection

- **What is a team?**
- **What role can consensus play in a team?**
- **In what way is reaching a consensus useful?**
- **In what way does searching for a consensus foster discussion and actions?**
- **In what way can searching for a consensus hinder discussion and actions?**

A team “is a dynamic psychosocial entity comprised of a group of individuals whose unity results from a certain shared collective outcome and the interdependence of individual outcomes. These individuals, deliberately connected or not, are aware of each other, interact, and directly influence each other” (Leclerc 1999, p. 30). This “dynamic psychosocial entity” presupposes that the team is not just a group of people that are reunited to listen to a presentation or to be told what to do; they are together to interact and develop. Contrary to other definitions, this definition does not presume that a team

works to reach a consensus, which often requires several concessions on the part of team members. In such a case, consensus then becomes a decision that is external to each member of the group, making it difficult to implement collective decisions. Each team member's interpretation of these collective decisions may differ significantly from one person to another, leading one to wonder if the team members participated in the same discussion. A more effective approach is to aim at a true sharing of ideas, beliefs or practices and then attempt to coherently apply these to collective decisions. Thus, each person feels more comfortable about adapting the decisions and sharing the experience without the fear of being judged. In this case, the team is considered as a place for debate where ideas are discussed and even challenged so that they might be questioned.

In this description, teamwork is not considered a source of tension and confrontation from which members leave disappointed, maintaining their original positions and not wanting to repeat the experience. Nor is it a place where everything is accepted as valid, a context that is often perceived as a waste of time spent sharing what has been accomplished without any discussion. In order to succeed as a team, the members must develop strategies to respect each other, as well as ways to carry out teamwork that leads to action arising from their collective discussions. Such a team is made of reflective practitioners. Even though accompaniment is not necessarily required, it is recommended as a means to initiate team work, especially in a context where the team is obliged to collaborate, as is the case for cycle-teams (Lafortune, 2004).

The following definitions were collectively constructed with members of the education community (Lafortune, 2004). They can be called into question, given the evolution of the current educational reform and what can be referred to as a "curriculum in progress" (Jonnaert and Ettayebi, forthcoming).

Questions for reflection

- **What is a cycle?**
- **What is a cycle-team?**
- **What does working in a cycle-team mean?**
- **What role can the cycle-team play in evaluating student competencies?**
- **In what way can it be useful to reach a consensus?**

Cycle

A cycle "is a flexible multi-year structure that guides the continuous development and progress of competencies in students of different ages. A cycle ends with an end of cycle assessment of learning and competency development of each student" (Lafortune 2004, p.290).

Cycle-team

Concepts of team and cycle are linked to that of cycle-team, which "is a group of individuals that work with students in a cycle and assume collective responsibility for the discussions and actions that are required to support the development of these students' competencies" (Lafortune, 2004, p. 291). The level of responsibility of the cycle-team,

with regard to the evaluation of students' competencies, remains to be discussed. It should be noted that the cycle-team is not only a group where exchanges take place regarding the work that has been, or needs to be carried out; a cycle-team can also take on collective responsibilities such as taking action with students, evaluation, as well as reflection. The very existence of the cycle-team ought to be called into question if the team has not given itself such roles and responsibilities.

Cycle-team Work

The role of the cycle-team involves working together “to draw on and coordinate its efforts to support the competency development of students of the same cycle, and to collectively be in control of the decisions to be made and the actions to be taken” (Lafortune, 2004, p. 298). Interventions and evaluation can be carried out individually or in teams, but it is the cycle-team which helps smaller groups and individuals to act. The cycle-team's existence is continuous; it is not formed for a period of only one or two years. Even if its composition changes, the team continues to take action. It would therefore be advantageous for a team to provide itself with a record of its progress. The cycle-team's purpose is also to allow its members to develop, and to learn through their participation on the team. The team therefore forms a learning community, which means that “the training of cycle-team members [can] take place in such forms as peer-training (training by members) or a co-training (training together to develop the competencies the team lacks), wherein each member conveys knowledge, skills and competencies that could help the team accomplish certain tasks or enrich the "educational culture" of its members” (Lafortune 2004, p. 88). To enrich the educational culture, training must not be limited to learning basic skills and knowledge.

According to this perspective, the accompaniment of a cycle-team would prove to be useful, even essential, particularly if the school staff is not accustomed to working in teams with their colleagues to develop and evaluate student competencies. In addition, accompaniment significantly contributes to providing an outside perspective on the team's work and organization, which the members of the team would not have the time to carry out in addition to their daily tasks. The accompanist can also help the novice team understand the difficulties they may encounter. The purpose of accompaniment is to foster reflection on beliefs and practices, and on the coherence between the two. Accompaniment also aims to call into question evaluative practices, done so from the point of view of evaluation as a support for learning and for the recognition of competencies. However, this accompaniment must be carefully thought out so that the connection between the accompanist and the team becomes, in time, progressively diminished, without necessarily breaking completely. Eventually, the accompanist can be invited to address unforeseen problems that might have arisen. (Lafortune, 2004).

Questions for reflection

- **What should be retained regarding the definitions of team, cycle-team, and cycle-team work in connection with the evaluation of student competencies?**
- **What links can be made with the Quebec Education Program: Preschool Education, Elementary Education?**
- **What links can be made with the Quebec Education Program: Secondary School**

| |
|------------------------------|
| Education, Cycle One? |
|------------------------------|

3. Cycle-team Evaluation

It should come as no surprise to read that, according to one teacher, evaluation “is the subject that is the most troubling” (Lafortune, 2004, p.155) in the implementation of the educational reform. The topic of evaluation has possibly been the one most addressed by the media in connection with implementation of the reform (marks or rankings, the format of report cards...). Evaluation is no longer an evaluation of knowledge; it has become an evaluation of learning progress and a recognition of competencies. It also serves as a support for learning, a function that is often forgotten but that is very important in furthering various aspects of competencies. Evaluators must, therefore, themselves develop the competencies necessary for carrying out evaluation.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, the cycle-team cannot shirk its responsibility towards evaluation, particularly since the evaluation of learning is seen as the result of a process carried out over several years and during which a considerable number of people play a role with the same students (professional and teaching staff, specialists...). The role and the contribution of each cycle-team member cannot be carried out without a little, or even a lot of openness to the comments of others regarding evaluation tools as well as decisions about certain students. This implies being open and revealing oneself to the team, which requires intellectual and cognitive interaction during which emotional issues may arise. As a result, it is necessary to create new ways of working with colleagues and new ways of evaluation that are part of the context where “evaluation of learning must reflect the ethical standards by the various stakeholders” (MEQ, 2003, p. 19).

For each member, cycle-team work requires overcoming fears to create evaluation procedures that meet the requirements of the foundations of the educational reform (QEP, policy, framework...). Two conditions can foster changes in teachers’ evaluative practices: 1) implementing a cycle-team approach - with a perspective of changing practices so that they take into account the relationship between evaluation as a support for learning and evaluation to recognize competency; 2) acknowledging that evaluation of competencies is a complex and innovative process in a context of educational reform – requiring therefore the creation of new tools and new methods, their subsequent application, analysis of their relevance and usefulness, all with the ultimate goal of adjusting practices. Accompaniment thus plays a significant role in helping cycle-teams in their experimentation, for example, by helping them develop methods to evaluate the development of competencies, and more importantly, to help them assess the steps they are taking in connection with evaluation.

4. From Principles to Action

Questions for reflection

- **What principles can guide the members of a cycle-team in their collective work?**
- **What principles can guide the members of a cycle-team in their work to evaluate the development of student competency?**

Several principles can guide the members of a cycle-team in their work and with their intentions: A cycle-team can look into student competency development, into the ways of developing such competencies and ways of evaluating in accordance with the different purposes of evaluation. In this work, the cycle-team members can help each other with the responsibility of the evaluation of competency development. Members of a team can benefit from the ideas of others, from their feedback regarding various evaluation methods or decisions, and from their support when making decisions that involve the future of students. The combination of the team's competencies surpasses the sum of each member's competencies. Cycle-team work leads to the emergence of collective competencies that can make up for some of the shortcomings of individual members as well as take advantage of their expertise (Le Boterf, 2004). A cycle-team is in a position to assume the roles that were required of teachers who usually worked individually. This can help lessen the burden or the stress linked to certain tasks (meeting with parent for reporting purposes, making difficult decisions regarding the evaluation of certain students' progress...). A cycle-team develops a global, but also specific, vision of the running of a classroom for which one or more of its members may be responsible; a cycle-team can contribute to understanding students' motivation and the development of their competencies as individuals but also as members of a learning community formed by the class-group. The exchange of viewpoints, questioning certain evaluation practices, and the adaptation of practices that ensue are understood to help the development and the evaluation of student competencies. All the students in the same cycle can benefit from the ideas of several teachers to help them in their learning.

A cycle-team is not static; it is constantly growing and its ideas evolve. The challenges it meets are not always the same; adjustments are necessary for collective work to be possible and to allow for adaptations in the face of obstacles and successes. As previously emphasized, a cycle-team takes advantage of its meetings to analyse the actions it takes around evaluation; this may support changes in an individual's understanding and, indirectly, that of the team. Moreover, staff changes lead to the integration of new members in the existing team. The arrival of new people can result in two consequences: 1) having to explain to these new members where the team is; these explanations and verbalisations of past and anticipated actions give rise to new awareness and, often, to clarifications; 2) having to answer questions from these new members fosters reflection on the team's past actions, leads to new ways of seeing and doing, and also contributes to the renewal of the team's ideas and actions (Lafortune, 2004).

To stay on course and ensure continuity, a cycle-team benefits from a structured procedure that allows for a certain amount of flexibility. The team gives itself the means to keep track of the structures required for the evaluation of competency (What to

evaluate? Why evaluate? How to evaluate? What to do with the results of the evaluation? etc.). This type of procedure allows the team to remain aware of the connections between, on one hand, pedagogical and evaluation practices, on the other hand, the development and recognition of competencies for which the cycle-team is responsible.

Several approaches ensure rigorous teamwork while allowing for individual growth of team members.

- The first approach consists in assuring team members have ongoing training guided either externally or by team members who have a particular expertise or who have participated in training outside the school.
- The second approach requires that the cycle-team engage in a process similar to action-research: planning, anticipating repercussions, carrying out analysis, and reinvesting the result of analysis in future planning.
- The third approach requires that the cycle-team learns to detach itself from secondary or even anecdotal¹ elements in its discussions so that the team may focus on fundamentals, and not on peripheral aspects.
- Finally, the fourth approach presupposes that the cycle-team gives each of its members or sub-groups the freedom to experiment, with the idea that what is attempted and any results will be discussed in plenary meetings, without value judgments.

More precisely, the cycle-team develops its ability, and the ability of its members, to become involved in a process of reflective practice.

Accompaniment by an outside person is sometimes necessary for the team to progress in the direction it intends. The accompanist helps the team specify its intentions, manage its own development, evaluate the results of its actions, and can also bring elements that enrich member's educational culture. The accompanist sees to the teachers' collective construction of their own model, or approach, particularly in connection with evaluation. The role of the accompanist is not to provide methods that can be used without adaptation, but to facilitate the construction of an approach that leads team members to develop their competencies with regard to the evaluation process, so that they – themselves - can construct evaluation tools. The role of the accompanist diminishes over time, as the team becomes increasingly autonomous. Nevertheless, the accompanist can become involved in specific situations, for example, to help the team to meet complex challenges or to assist the team to evolve if it is in a period of stagnation.

¹ An anecdote allows a person to express his thoughts on a subject; the context is described and subsequently, what was expressed is analyzed. An analysis is never based on the sum of a dozen anecdotes.

5. Accompaniment: Getting Ready to Evaluate

Questions for reflection

- **What does evaluation mean to you?**
- **Why evaluate?**
- **How was evaluation done prior to the publication of the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning, (2003)?**
- **How can it be done, to support the competency-based approach of the QEP?**
- **How can a cycle-team be accompanied in their evaluation of learning, to support the evaluation of the development of competencies?**

Members of a cycle-team have different beliefs (conceptions and convictions) and different practices regarding evaluation. It is important to bring these beliefs to the forefront, to share and to discuss them and to ask those who have such beliefs to justify them, and then summarize them. The different ways of thinking that emerge can be categorized into similarities and differences. From a socio-constructivist perspective and for the purposes of coherence, the team that cannot reach a consensus can nevertheless understand the complementary viewpoints, despite the differences. The intent is to provide team members with the opportunity to understand the thoughts of others and to become aware of one's own resistance. To do so, each team member can present a description of his evaluation methods. Questions such as the following can be used to generate discussion: What does evaluation mean to you? Why evaluate? How was evaluation done before? How can it be done, according to the development of competencies? Interpretations of the scales of competency levels can lead to discussions that could help to clarify them in order to use them. Such exchanges can encourage the development of an introspective look on the arguments and justifications given by those being accompanied and by accompanists during their interaction. At the same time they can acknowledge, encourage and support cognitive and emotional commitment with regard to the evaluation.

The accompanist plays an important role in these exchanges. When members of a team start to work together, they are not necessarily comfortable with discussing subjects that bring out certain emotions. For example, some people who have been using the same evaluation methods for ten, twenty or thirty years may become aware that their practices hardly respect the foundations of the educational reform. This awareness can limit one's interest or inclination to share one's practices. It may be necessary to take a moment to step back and reflect. Silence is not necessarily a sign of resistance.

Questions for reflection

- **What role does emotion play in cycle-team evaluation?**
- **What links can be made between theory and practice that help one to move forward in the process of evaluation of student competency?**
- **How can co-evaluation be used in cycle-teams (collective evaluation of the same student work)?**
- **What role can peer-evaluation or co-evaluation play in the evaluation of student competencies?**
- **What role can self-evaluation play in the development of student competencies?**

Theory-practice integration in discussions serves to justify practice by theory, and to enrich theory based on discoveries emerging from practice. Thus, to evaluate what students have learnt, co-evaluation of student work – two or more people individually evaluate the same work and discuss evaluation judgments – helps to understand different evaluation approaches and to improve one’s own. For students, this ensures rigor, transparency and coherence (see the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning, booklet 1 on the relevance of evaluation accompaniment, and booklet 3 on professional judgment). In addition, a discussion on the value given to students’ self-evaluations can be productive. For example, by asking (yourself) the following questions: What is your understanding of self-evaluation? Why use self-evaluation? What methods are already used to support self-evaluation? What methods do you wish to develop and experiment within a cycle-team? (Adapted from Lafortune, 2004).

With time, the team starts to feel more confident and possible practices for the evaluation of learning in a cycle-team can then emerge. Support and reservations may surface; one must learn to recognize and accept them with open-mindedness without preventing those with reservations to explore a path that appears fruitful. This balance is delicate: for example, two sub-groups might each explore theoretical or practical approaches to evaluation or two divergent paths, and then return to the team to analyze the conclusions. A cycle-team could determine the method through which practices are selected, or through which those choices are reviewed; they may also select methods to evaluate their practices at appropriate points in the process.

Questions for reflection

- **Why is it useful for the cycle-team to keep a record of its discussions and actions?**
- **How can a cycle-team keep a record of its discussions and actions?**

The team also learns to keep records of its discussions and actions. For example, minutes of a meeting or a collective journal that reports “theoretical” and “practical” discussions permits the team to review decisions in order to extend the discussion or make modifications. Such records include the evaluation practices which were proposed, then decided upon. If they are not written down it becomes difficult to know “what was planned”, “what changed on the way” and “what was actually achieved”. For more comprehensive evaluations, where students carry out a project over a period of several weeks, the team could produce a cycle-team portfolio to include: relevant student work, a description of planned evaluation methods, documents produced, evaluation tools used, an analysis of the results of the experience and suggestions for modifications for the future. The creation of such a portfolio, allows for taking stock of the cycle-team’s evaluation process, but also permits the team to understand some of the difficulties students face in such a process (adapted from Lafortune, 2004).

Individual members of a cycle-team can create their own portfolio or journal to record their professional, intellectual and emotional discoveries; the challenges they faced; as well as the fears they experienced. These records also provide additional information to support individual and collective reflections about these discoveries. Taking into account the relationships between team members, the accompanist can

suggest combining these individual observations. In addition, if the team decides to take on more responsibility and autonomy it may decide to set reflection as a goal. These actions help to keep the team focused on effectiveness and relevance regarding the evaluation of student competency. Reflection is often assisted by writing, because thoughts are generally more organized when they are written. Further, it is easier for others to understand what is written, to think about it, and return to it during later discussions. In this sense, a relevant activity consists of preparing documents for the students to explain the goals, and the evaluation methods that will be used to support learning and to recognize competencies. Then it is necessary to state why one evaluates and how one wants to evaluate. Such an exercise can bring to light omissions or inconsistencies in what was planned. Another activity could involve identifying a way to inform parents. This can consist in developing a summary for the parents to describe what was planned for the students. At the same time it serves to clarify one's thoughts. Parents' questions and reactions can then be brought back to the cycle-team to improve the document, as well as, assist those concerned.

Keeping records also allows a person who joins the cycle-team to understand the team's evolution, including the present situation and future plans; to share with a cycle-team in the same school or from another school; or eventually to serve as a starting point for a paper in a professional journal, such as, *Vie pédagogique*. Having accomplished an interesting initiative, it is important and relevant to share it with others so they may be inspired to develop and share future innovative actions.

Questions for reflection

- **How can a cycle-team learn from the expertise of its members?**
- **What can co-training (training each other within a team) and peer-training (training members of one's team) contribute to the cycle-team's work for the evaluation of student competencies?**

Cycle-team members and the accompanist cannot have all the knowledge and competencies necessary to answer the questions asked of them. To nurture a good educational culture it is important to plan training sessions for members on specific subjects. These sessions can take place outside the group (for example university classes or training offered to school staff during pedagogical days). They can also be organized inside the team through a process of co-training that consists in "training together to develop the competencies that the team lacks" (Lafortune, 2004, p.88) or peer-training that consists in "training team members" (Lafortune 2004, p.88) on a team member's subject of expertise. Whatever the form chosen, the objective is for each team member to learn from another member's expertise. This expertise can be practical (for example, using a software program) or theoretical (for example, explaining socio-constructivism). Another training method could include critically reviewing the literature that pertains to the QEP, while using it in a process of evaluation. Such a critical review is based on criteria and is submitted for discussion. Its conclusions are recorded and updated following experimentation.

6. Times for Evaluation

In the spirit of various ministerial documents, evaluation is presented as a continuous process that is integrated into student learning. There are appropriate times to begin formal evaluation. The cycle-team, assisted in the beginning by an accompanist, should therefore plan and implement evaluation methods.

Questions for reflection

- **How, in a cycle-team, can the time for planning a learning and evaluation situation be used to improve various evaluation methods?**
- **Which evaluation times should be favored?**
- **Which evaluation method(s) should be favored for each of these evaluation times?**

If the cycle-team decides to develop a learning and evaluation situation (LES) for the students, the evaluation process can be planned concurrently during the planning process. Such planning would include:

- methods of evaluation as a support for learning
- methods of evaluating the development of student competencies (while the LES is being implemented, to better understand their learning progress)
- methods of informing the students about their progress
- a means to collectively evaluate the situation (depending on whether the work is individual or group),
- consideration of the role of self-evaluation, co-evaluation (student-teacher), and peer-evaluation (student-students).

Another opportunity the team can use to investigate evaluation is the preparation of report cards. This consists in questioning for what purpose and for who the report card is used (students, parents, teachers, school administration...). Answers to these questions can help support the information to be included in the report card, to prepare reports for students, for parents, and for team-members. Such a discussion can also guide the team-student relationship with regard to the kind of feedback they required, to provide support for learning and to recognize competencies. One may wonder about student rights in this field: What information should they receive? How can they play a part in the evaluation of their knowledge, and the development of their competencies before, during and after an evaluation report?

The recognition of competencies and the end-of-cycle assessment exerts an important influence over the students' progress, as well as over their future-adult life. Therefore, it is necessary to gather information over the entire cycle for evaluation purposes. This information should come from different sources and make the most of the cycle-team's members' expertise. How can this be done? How can professional judgment be exercised (see Booklet 3 on professional judgment)? Even if repeating a grade is not suggested as a solution, in reality, it is used. Questions can be asked regarding such a situation (see Doudin and Lafortune, 2006): "What does repeating a grade mean? Why use this option? What are the advantages and disadvantages of repeating a year for

students, for teachers?” (Lafortune, 2004, p.160). The last question is rarely asked, however it is very useful to provoke reflection upon one’s conception of repeating a grade.

7. Review of Evaluation Practices

Other elements concerning evaluation might be considered, such as reflection on individual and team practices, homework, practices in elementary and secondary levels, and the assessment of one’s evaluation practices.

7.1. Individual Evaluation, Team Evaluation

Questions for reflection

- **What differences might there be between the results of an individual evaluation and a cycle-team evaluation?**
- **What similarities might there be between the results of an individual evaluation and a cycle-team evaluation?**

Evaluation of learning and of the development of student competencies cannot always be the responsibility of an entire team. Actions may take place individually, in small groups or within the entire cycle-team, however, each member acts as a member of the team. Therefore it is important to develop a climate of mutual trust where it is accepted that the team exists to ensure evaluation rigor, transparency and coherence out of consideration for the students. To reach a fair and equitable evaluation, a discussion could take place regarding comments or the grade to be given to the portfolio, or the work of a team-members’ unidentified students. While it is true that such a discussion would mean justifying one’s decisions which would lead to exchanges that could be more or less risky, complicated, and delicate, this is important to ensure that the decisions made are rigorous and coherent. It is not necessary to do this for each piece of student work, for every student and for every classroom. However, it is useful to do it regularly for some samples of student work. This leads to finding ways to help students progress in their competencies; and to adjust one’s judgment. As we know, judgment can be influenced by some students’ attitudes or behaviors and these are not relevant to the level of development of their competencies. For example, one might be tempted to under-evaluate a student because of his poor behavior or to over-evaluate another student for his efforts or because he pays attention in class. This is not always a question of competency development (see booklet 4 on socio-pedagogical equity).

7.2. Homework

Questions for reflection

- **How can homework contribute to the evaluation of learning?**
- **What role can parents play in the implementation of the QEP and in the cycle-team's work in preschool and elementary school student evaluation?**
- **What role can parents play in the implementation of the QEP and in the cycle-team's work in secondary school student evaluation?**

If work in cycle-teams or with colleagues can ensure more rigor to evaluation through relevant observations or information, then the team can also benefit from the contribution of parents through their observations, the support of their children, or their personal resources, which can also contribute to the development of their child's competencies. This is true especially since part of students' work is done outside the school, as homework. For parents to participate actively in the evaluation of their children's learning, and to give them ways to help out, they can be told what is expected of their children, and what would contribute to their children's learning progress and to the development of their competencies. Parents can participate in their child's work in ways other than supervising or assisting them to meet the requirements. "Reflective - interactive tasks done at home" can help parents understand and contribute to the educational renewal (see the appendix for examples associated with learning mathematical concepts) (Lafortune 2004, p.170-178). With this in mind, it is important to adopt a parental perspective, in other words to keep in mind that what is done in school can be the beginning of what will be done at home. The ideas provided in the appendix are simply prompts for cycle-team discussions on "homework" that is currently given to students, with the idea that changes to current practices could be made, by making use of – reflective-interactive tasks to be completed at home.

What purpose do these at-home interactive-reflective tasks have within the framework of the evaluation of learning? Firstly, evaluation of learning is not limited to the recognition of competencies, but is greatly linked to the support for learning. Redoing at home what was previously done in class is hardly stimulating. Parents are not teachers and cannot make up for difficulties at school. What is accomplished at home can be an opportunity for parent-child communication, an opportunity to understand the child's progress regarding his learning and therefore, can provide complementary information to what is gathered in the classroom.

7.3. Evaluation in Elementary and Secondary Levels

Questions for reflection

- **What is the difference between evaluation carried out at the elementary level and evaluation carried out at the secondary level?**
- **How can an evaluation be carried out in a cycle-team at the elementary level?**
- **How can an evaluation be carried out in a cycle-team at the secondary level?**

An evaluation process cannot be quite the same in elementary school as in secondary school due to differences that include: school structure, number of people in the cycle-teams, number of students to be evaluated. It is therefore difficult to suggest evaluation methods and tools that can be used in any situation. Agreement in a cycle-team becomes more difficult as the number of members in the same cycle increases. Research on accompaniment of cycle-team work at the elementary level demonstrates that when there are more than 8 to 10 people, it is important to have a flexible and efficient organizational structure in mind (Lafortune, 2004). This might include: various time slots for meetings; having two groups for the same cycle; or finding ways to consult each other and keep records that encourage sharing and feedback. In secondary schools, the situation is different; the cycle-teams are often composed of a great number of members. Setting up such teams must be carefully thought out. For example, to begin, there could be cycle-teams according to an area of learning or to the types of projects outlined. To develop “cycle thinking”, it is necessary for these teams to include educators from each grade in the same cycle. As a result, the more valid experiences would be the most comprehensive, that is, those that apply to all students in a cycle and that include all the cycle’s educators.

It has been observed that as members of a cycle-team begin to work together, the activities they plan are associated with the organization of an outing for students in the same cycle, or the organization of an activity associated with a special event. Later on, it becomes important to reach the point of including disciplinary learning and the development of competencies in cycle activities. This second step requires dialogue and mutual trust. At this point students from different classrooms in the same cycle may form teams to accomplish a project, or teachers from the same cycle may participate in a colleague’s classroom. Such experiences are very useful for the evaluation of same-cycle students. One can get to know a colleague’s students; observe certain students at a team-member’s request; contribute to the evaluation reflection (when the time comes to give feedback to students); meet with parents; and write comments in report cards or in end-of-cycle assessments.

Such steps can take place in secondary schools, although they differ from what actually does take place in these schools. Given the way evaluation is carried out, it is rather unusual to group several teachers from the same discipline and even more so from different disciplines. Furthermore, secondary schools usually have more students and staff than elementary schools which make consensus and collegiality more difficult to achieve. The idea of working in cycle-teams is actually very recent, except in rare occasions. For all these reasons it is beneficial to offer accompaniment wherein teams are invited, with assistance, to implement innovative evaluation methods pertaining to support for learning, recognition of competencies and the end-of-cycle assessment.

Rather than aiming at the development of evaluation projects for same-level students (horizontal models), vertical models that offer interactions between same-cycle or same-discipline students, (or even different or closely related disciplines), could be considered. It is not a matter of standardizing evaluations, but rather designing new evaluation models and disciplinary or interdisciplinary actions. By using vertical models,

the tasks, complex situations or projects could be carried over to the second year of the cycle using what the students and the student groups have already accomplished. Students could be asked to modify what was done in the first year by taking into account new knowledge and abilities developed in the following year, with the goal of furthering their work. For example, students could progress from a theatre scene to an act, or connect a biology experiment and its application to a physical education activity. Here again, the work of the group of teachers is essential to ensure continuity and coherence in their actions, with respect to the purpose of the evaluation and the pertinence of the actions taken.

Therefore the aim of the accompanist's work is to: 1) make the teachers aware of the possibility of working in cycle-teams; 2) help create teams or sub-teams in the same cycle; 3) accompany the teams and sub-teams in the carrying out and analyzing collective actions; and 4) evaluate students, taking into account comments of colleagues when exercising and developing professional judgment.

7.4. Assessing Evaluation Practices

Significant attention must be paid to reflection on, and analysis of evaluation practices. A reflective practice approach regarding evaluation can be done in cycle-teams. Questions such as the following could be addressed:

Questions for reflection

- **What evaluation practices have been used?**
- **What was their role?**
- **What was their usefulness?**
- **How can they be useful in a perspective of support for learning?**
- **How can they be useful for the recognition of competencies?**

One could also investigate the evaluation practices to be implemented in order to foster learning and the development of competencies.

Questions for reflection

- **Considering the competencies of the QEP:**
 - **What are the methods used to evaluate these competencies?**
 - **In what way do evaluation practices foster the development of these competencies?**
 - **In what way do these practices allow you to evaluate these competencies?**
 - **How can these methods be used as a support for learning?**
 - **How can these methods be used for the recognition of competencies?**
 - **How can these methods be used for the end-of-cycle assessment?**
 - **In what way do cycle-team, school-team and colleague-team discussions foster the evaluation of student competencies in the spirit of the QEP?**
 - **In what way is the evaluation coherent with the competencies developed by students?**
 - **What is the usefulness of these tools for the evaluation of competencies?**

The cycle team establishes the times and the methods through which evaluation practices reviewed; this process should be planned. The plan could include methods to be used; ways to carry out observations in class while these methods are used; questions to be addressed in the cycle-team to carry out the analysis; records to be kept to facilitate team review, and so on. If a cycle portfolio has been planned, the result of the discussions could be added to it. Should records not be kept, it becomes difficult to ensure a retrospective reflection on the process, and it becomes difficult to move beyond intuition and to be aware of the various adjustments that took place. Without records, one might come to believe that “nothing changes”.

Reflection and analysis of evaluation practices contribute to increasing rigor, coherence and transparency, and equity in evaluation of students. This results in movement towards evaluation where prejudices and preconceived ideas are limited. There may also be recognition that some tools do not allow you to evaluate what you want to evaluate or what should be evaluated. As well, it may be discovered that students do not have the resources needed to achieve the task that is evaluated or that the tools are not closely related to the evaluation of the QEP competencies. It is also an opportunity to refine methods of communicating with students and parents, and to question the complementary links between evaluation as a support for learning and for the recognition of competencies.

The accompanist can help create methods to analyze evaluation practices. He can also help the team by reminding it of its commitments and most significantly, by reminding the team of what is to be evaluated, namely the QEP competencies. As for the team, it may decide to deepen its theoretical knowledge before proceeding to an evaluation process of the student’s work; doing so may be more or less long term as it constitutes an important support for the actions to be achieved.

8. Advantages and Disadvantages of Cycle-team Evaluation

The intention of this document is to support the accompaniment process of evaluation in cycle-teams. However, in a perspective where evaluation is integrated into learning, it is very difficult to separate the work of cycle-teams from the evaluation of student learning. In a previous project about accompaniment and implementation of cycle-teams, some advantages and disadvantages surfaced (Lafortune, 2004a). They are mentioned here in connection to the evaluation of learning.

The advantages will be stated as more specific to cycle-team evaluation, while identifying the disadvantages reported by teachers in connection with cycle-team work and its role in evaluation.

8.1. Advantages

Several methods suggested to accompany evaluation approaches or to carry out such evaluation extend beyond the evaluation framework, in that they contribute significantly to the exercise and development of professional judgment (see booklet 3 on professional judgment):

- Fostering reflective interaction ;
- Allowing confrontation of viewpoints;
- Encouraging justification of evaluation decisions;
- Prompting comparison of methods;
- Bringing about re-examination of evaluative practices;
- Bringing about awareness and recognition of one's attitudes and beliefs (conceptions and convictions), as well as those of others.
- Allowing an important place for self-observation, peer-evaluation, co-evaluation, and co-responsibility in ongoing training;
- Providing a series of tools that allow team members to improve on their role as members, and allow the team to be more functional and dynamic.

When accompanying reflection on evaluation practices, or a change in these practices, underlining the advantages or assisting individual to discover them, helps to support change and develop attitudes in cycle-team work.

There is a logical connection between work in cycle-teams with adult colleagues and work in student teams. Cycle-teams learn to work together, to solve problems encountered by the team, and to face difficulties. This can better prepare teaching staff to help and form student teams. For example, if the cycle-team uses the portfolio, it will understand the difficulties students meet when doing the same.

Evaluation in cycle-teams fosters the exercise and, most significantly, the development of professional judgment. This means that evaluation can become more “objective” even though complete objectivity is not possible even with quantitative data (see booklet 3 on professional judgment). However, it is necessary to be wary of subjectivity. As highlighted in the text, the team plays an important role in making evaluation more rigorous, reasoned and equitable. In the accompaniment of cycle-teams, an accompanist provides an outside look; this can assist the team to ensure that they avoid overlooking criteria associated with justice and equity. The accompanist then helps the team in a process of reflective practice (see booklet 7 on reflective practice) which helps them evaluate in a way that corresponds to the instrumental and fundamental values of the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning (MEQ, 2003).

Cycle-team evaluation also helps to justify and develop a reasoned position with other school staff and mostly parents; the point is not to “win” during a discussion, but to act in coherence with the Policy on the Evaluation of Learning (2003) and the orientations of the QEP. One develops the ability to defend a position, whether one is in

favor or not of certain evaluation methods, and according to the objectives pursued: support for learning, recognition of competencies, or assessment of learning. Evaluation can, therefore, be complete, coherent and adequate in connection with the teaching methods used; the competencies to be developed; and the evaluation methods used throughout learning, and leading up to the competency report.

Developing the capacity to explain, clarify, justify, and defend one's position logically is useful among colleagues engaged in teamwork. Furthermore, these abilities support the evaluation of student understanding, and guide effective communication with parents.

8.2. Disadvantages

Several people have objections to cycle-team work. The following reasons come up most often: 1) the time taken by this work takes time away from other tasks that are more, or just as, necessary and productive; 2) the people who are asked to work in cycle-teams have not been trained, and 3) the teachers forfeit their autonomy for the benefit of the team.

Time

The problem of time is multi-faceted: “meetings take up time which would be better spent carrying out “more productive” steps, it is difficult to coordinate everyone’s schedule to arrange for meetings; team members *do not necessarily want to give a lot of time outside the class*” (Lafortune, 2004, p. 80). It might be claimed that the problem is not lack of time, but rather lack of energy, lack of interest, or due to painful past experiences. The role of the accompanist is precisely to bring the participants to find the energy and the means to become involved. The team and the accompanist can thus benefit from the results of the teamwork to understand its importance, especially when certain steps are fruitful and the results would have been impossible to reach individually.

Training

Even though training to work in teams is not always available, the team could participate in its own training. This is not a chicken and egg situation; where there cannot be a team if its members are not previously trained to work in teams and there cannot be training without a team. Training does not appear on its own, first a team must be created which will take charge of its training, even if it means asking for help.

Autonomy

The problem of the team member’s professional autonomy is more complex than the two previous ones. Added to reservations based on personal motives, are reservations based on principle. Among personal objections expressed are the following:

- We do not feel ready or able to open up to others in a manner that is sufficient for the work to be efficient;
- We do not know how we will personally react to the questioning that will surface at some time or other in the cycle-team work;

- We worry about the fact that some people are not committed enough, which would work against the team and therefore create true problems of time lost;
- We are also afraid of being “swallowed up or exploited” by the group (Lafortune, 2004, p.80).

By adapting to what its members are willing to do, and with the help provided by the accompanist, a group can sometimes make greater headway than what its members thought possible. Few people like to be coerced into certain steps, but either through patient explanations, or because we are carried away by the action, we sometimes realize we can surpass what we believed to be our limits. The other type of reservation can be summed up as follows: for certain people, the teacher has a single requirement which is to bring the students to meet criteria fixed externally through means specific to the person. In other words the teacher chooses the textbooks, the homework, and the evaluation methods. One might wonder about the place of such an attitude in elementary or secondary teaching. The following may provide a partial answer: the team is a means to come to grips and better understand standards and procedures. The presence of several people offers an opportunity to explain what is not understood as well as the relevance and use of standards and procedures. Should applying these standards and procedures prove to be difficult, the team that has developed its ability to reflect and to discuss logically is more apt to suggest needed changes to staff involved in the situation.

Conclusion

This document addresses cycle-team work in connection with evaluation as a support for learning, recognition of competencies and competency reporting. Therefore, it seemed necessary not only to define the concepts of cycle, of cycle-team, and of work within a cycle-team, but also to give an idea of what could be accomplished in a cycle-team with regard to evaluation. Accompaniment for the implementation of cycle-teams and for the evaluation of learning is part of the backbone of this booklet, from which the following conclusions are drawn:

- Cycle-team work is necessary, even essential, to develop a “cycle spirit” and complete an end-of-cycle assessment.
- Cycle team work is necessary for reflection on evaluation practices and changes in these practices.
- Cycle-team work fosters coherence, transparency and rigor for equitable evaluations.
- Cycle-team work is necessary for the exercise and most importantly, the development of professional judgment.
- The time invested in cycle-team work helps to: 1) prepare evaluation methods and make adjustments in the wake of experiences; 2) reduce tensions associated with decision-making regarding certain students; 3) prepare reports for students and parents.
- Work in cycle-teams favors an evaluation that takes into account support for learning, recognition of competencies, and the end-of-cycle competency reporting.

- Keeping records of the cycle-team's progress is useful to review the process and to facilitate the integration of new staff.
- School administration plays a crucial role in the implementation of cycle-teams.
- Accompaniment in the implementation of cycle-teams should be considered for reflection, discussion, training, and collaborative construction.

References

- Doudin, P.A. and L. Lafortune (dir.) (2006). *Intervenir auprès d'élèves ayant des besoins particuliers. Quelle formation à l'enseignement?*, Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Hadji, C. (1997-1999). *L'évaluation démystifiée*, Paris, ESF.
- Jonnaert, P. and M. Ettayebi (forthcoming). "Le curriculum en développement", in L. Lafortune, M. Ettayebi and P. Joannert, *Observer les réformes en éducation. Tome I: Des pratiques aux fondements, des fondements aux pratiques*, Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Lafortune, L. in collaboration with S. Cyr and B. Massé and the participation of G. Milot and K. Benoît (2004). *Travailler en équipe-cycle. Entre collègues d'une école*, Sainte-Foy, Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Le Boterf, G. (2001). *Construire les compétences individuelles et collectives*, Paris, Éditions d'Organisation.
- Leclerc, C. (1999) *Comprendre et construire les groupes*, Quebec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Legendre, R. (2005). *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*, 3^e édition, Montreal, Guérin.
- Linn, R.L. and N.E. Grönlund (2000). *Measurement and Assessment in Teaching*, 8th Edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ, Prentice-Hall.
- Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2006). *L'évaluation des apprentissages au secondaire. Cadre de référence. Version préliminaire*, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec.
- Ministère de l'Éducation (2004). *Programme de formation de l'école québécoise. Enseignement secondaire, 1er cycle*, Quebec, Gouvernement du Québec.
- Ministère de l'éducation (2003). *Politique d'évaluation des apprentissages : être évalué pour mieux apprendre*, Quebec, Gouvernement du Québec.

Appendix

Following are some ideas for reflective - interactive tasks that can be done at home. Examples given are in connection with learning mathematics, but can be transferred to other disciplines.

- 1) *Mathematics in everyday life.* Students could be asked to find five mathematical notions or situations in the street, in newspapers, in television... Finding these five notions allows them to see mathematics outside arithmetic.
- 2) *Representing mathematics.* Students could be asked to represent mathematics. This could mean creating a cover page for a book or a poster for a mathematics conference or to advertise a math week or a math day. This could take the form of a class or school contest. They could then prepare a short interview to gather ideas outside the school in order to produce their poster. This drawing could serve as a cover page for the portfolio. Parents could also make a drawing which could be used as a back page for the portfolio.
- 3) *A world without mathematics.* Students could be asked to imagine a world without mathematics. This reflection could be done by questioning friends and family. Where is math around us? Can we live in a world without math? What would a world without math be like?
- 4) *Comparing tasks.* At home, students could be asked to compare the search for a solution in math to other tasks such as practicing a sport, creating a work of art or writing a poem.
- 5) *Sorting problems according to difficulty, from simple to complicated.* When students have solved a series of problems, they rarely re-examine at home what they did in a perspective of self-evaluation. By asking students to classify the problems they just solved according to their degree of difficulty, they learn to know themselves better and to better evaluate the difficulty of the task in a later situation.
- 6) *Schedule.* With his child, the parent must calculate the time allotted to watching television and to homework by making a list based on the seven days of the week. Two columns are needed, one for television and one for schoolwork. At the end of the week, try to make a graph to compare the activities in each column. While listening to television, make a table that shows how many minutes or hours are given to commercials compared to the length of the program. With the child, it is possible to write down how his time is spent during 24 hours. The time spent in various occupations could be represented in a circular diagram.
- 7) *Mathematics in board games.* With their parents, children could be asked to explore the mathematical aspects of different board games they have at home. It is also possible to see how math is present when playing board games with children.
- 8) *Mathematics during trips.* It is possible to explore different ways of doing math during trips with children, in relation to distances, speed and mileage.
- 9) *Mathematics when shopping.* During a shopping trip, the child could be asked to make different calculations (specific or approximate) in connection with the change the cashier has to give back...
- 10) *Mathematics in hobbies.* In different hobbies (beading, sewing, construction, arts and craft...), math is important. Different ways of doing math in association with different hobbies could be suggested. Successions of beads, sewing patterns, construction plans, space in artwork, assessment of size...
- 11) *An investigation.* Students could be asked to investigate the people in their family to find out the place math has in their life. Questions could resemble the following: "Do you consider that you use math in your everyday life, in your work?" or "What math do you use in your everyday life?" or "How might you use math in your everyday life?"
- 12) *Upside down problem.* Students could be asked to do a problem upside down. All they have are answers. This makes the search for an answer obsolete. To do this, they are given different types of answers (numeric, graphic, geometric, as equations, as texts) and are asked to draw up a problem that gives this answer. They must then go beyond arithmetic. They are asked to draw up these problems with family members. They could also ask different people to each draw up a problem that gives the same answer.
- 13) *Mathematics in the media.* Students can be asked to search newspapers, television, and other places math is used, with their family.

- 14) *A description of their room.* Students could be asked to describe their room in such a way that another person could rebuild it. Students can choose the method they want to produce this description (scale model, geometry and measures, plan, descriptive text...). They validate their description by presenting it to a family member in order to note changes that need to be made to their description, to make it comprehensible. In class, the discussion can concern the description, as well as, the reactions of others to the description or the adjustments made to the description according to the incomprehension of others.
- 15) *Solutions regarding errors.* At home, students could be asked to examine solutions that contain errors. Discussion with parents could consist in finding errors, but mostly in questioning why they could have been made. The reasons are brought up in class.
- 16) *Exploring the history of mathematics.* The history of mathematics (history of its famous people...) is not only linked to the evolution of discoveries, but also to famous people who had exceptional lives. A way to make this discipline more human is to explore the history of math with family members, through discoveries or the famous people who made its history.
- 16) *Trades and mathematics.* Interviews of different categories of people in different trades serve to better understand the ties between their work and math (architecture, carpentry, electricity, hairdressing, plumbing, sewing, and cooking...) Family members can be interviewed.