

Challenges Related to the Practice of Formative Assessment in the Context of the Competency-Based Approach in Quebec

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Abstract – This article focuses on the implementation of the vision of formative assessment advocated in the 2003 Learning Assessment Policy in Quebec. It reports on the partial results of research aimed at understanding how secondary school teachers' formative assessment practices are carried out and what challenges are encountered. The snowball method was used to select a sample of ten teachers based on the criterion of seniority in the profession, namely having started teaching before the implementation of this policy. The results show a variety of challenges related to the practice of the formative assessment policy.

Keywords – Formative Assessment, Learning Support, Assessment Policy, Regulation, Feedback.

I. INTRODUCTION

Formative assessment is seen as one of the most important pedagogical innovations. Its meaning in the objective-based approach has been completely renewed with the advent of the approach that aimed to develop skills, in which the student is the main actor. Previously practiced for helping students to master knowledge, formative assessment is seen now as a means to help the student, in the process of learning, to progress and develop the targeted skills in order to succeed. In the wake of the reforms undertaken to ensure the success of the greatest number of students, the Quebec Ministry of Education has adopted this new vision, which it states and clarifies in the Learning Assessment Policy (MEQ, 2003). However even today, the issue of implementing pedagogical renewal still raises strong reactions and tensions (Laveault, Dionne, Lafontaine, Tessaro & Allal, 2014). The question then arises as to what challenges may impede the effective integration of formative assessment into the learning process. The purpose of the research presented in this article was to analyze the formative evaluation practices of Montreal high school teachers in the competency-based approach and the challenges this raises. The article first describes the context of the research before describing the perceptions and characteristics of formative assessment identified in the literature. It then discusses the methodology used to collect and analyze the data. Finally, it presents and discusses the challenges revealed in the results.

II. BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

The implementation of the Learning Assessment Policy in 2003 follows the new training programs adopted in Quebec in the 2000s which focused on the development of competencies. These programs, based on constructivism and socio constructivism, put the student at the center of his learning, since it is the student who learns (Hadji, 2012). Their adoption in many countries followed a decline in performance and massive academic failures in education systems, as was the case in Quebec (Durand & Chouinard, 2012). The adoption of this policy is a response to the need for an evaluation in accordance with the competency-based approach but is mainly aimed at ensuring the success of the greatest number of students (MEQ, 2003). In its orientations, the

Quebec Ministry of Education (MEQ, 2003) advocates, among other things, an evaluation that serves the student, the integration of evaluation into the dynamics of learning, regulation, the teacher's professional judgment and the student's active role in evaluation activities during learning. Thus, while the MEQ advocates student accountability, it reiterates the teacher's responsibility to make professional judgments. According to the MEQ, "in a learning support situation, the judgment is often an informal assessment and the resulting decision leads to an action to regulate the teaching or learning process" (MEQ, 2003, p. 34).

However, having to make a judgment, whether in a learning support situation or in a situation of sanctioning acquired knowledge, presupposes a clear and precise understanding of the object on which this judgment is to be based. This seems though to be a challenge for many teachers, considering the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of identifying in the different definitions how competence develops (Louis, 2008). As a learning object, it appears very complex, thus making judgment situations much more delicate, in addition to the difficulty related to the design of adequate tasks (Scallon, 2015). We can therefore deduce that making a judgment on the development of such an object can be problematic for a teacher used to assessing knowledge. However, some researchers (Hadji, 2012; Scallon, 2015), for example, have provided insights that could help teachers improve their practices. Nevertheless, studies carried out in this context show a certain discrepancy between the formative assessment advocated in the current pedagogical approach and classroom practices. For example, the results of a study commissioned by the Quebec Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport (MELS, 2007) reveal the prevalence and survival of old evaluation practices. This study examined the effect of evaluation approaches on school engagement and retention in the context of the transition from elementary to secondary school. The results also indicate that, although the new evaluation practices are certainly based on solid theoretical foundations, their real efficiency and the conditions for their effectiveness remain poorly known. At the end of his literature review of more than 4,000 studies, Popham (2011) reiterates the capacity of formative evaluation to improve learning if the actors understood it and carried it out more as a process involving the use of evaluation data to adjust their work than as a type of test. Based on these findings, the question is: What are the formative assessment practices of Montreal high school teachers in the era of the competency-based approach and the related challenges?

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual framework is built around these key concepts: formative assessment, regulation and formative assessment practice. An operational definition of these concepts is provided in order to better define them.

3.1. *Formative Assessment*

According to Scallon (2000), Bloom, Madaus & Hastings (1971) borrowed the term "formative evaluation" from Scriven (1967) and transposed it into the field of the evaluation of school learning. Since formative evaluation practices are closely linked to the design of learning (Talbot, 2009), it would be interesting, in order to better understand formative evaluation, to understand it through these two different conceptions: the objective-based approach and the competency-based approach.

3.1.1. *Formative Assessment in the Objective-Based Approach*

In the objective-based approach, formative evaluation is defined as an,

Assessment that takes place, in principle at the end of each learning task and seeking to inform the student and teacher of the degree of mastery achieved and, possibly, to find out where and in what way a student is experiencing learning difficulties, in order to offer or help him discover strategies that will allow him to progress (De Landsheere, 1992, cited in Rey & al., 2003, p. 38).

This definition shows that formative assessment is carried out to verify the level of achievement of educational objectives and remains therefore more focused on the learning product. Indeed, it is the performances achieved which above all enable the teacher to determine the student's level of achievement in relation to the objectives and to provide him with the necessary assistance to achieve them.

Its regulatory function is carried out through remediation or actions undertaken by the teacher in order to achieve the objectives during this process (Laveault, 2007). Such a conception of formative assessment thus gives a more decisive role to the teacher than to the student in the teaching-learning process. This behaviorist conception is clearly explained in the pedagogical model set out by Bloom & al. (1971), namely mastery pedagogy.

Researchers such as Hadji (2012), for example, find that formative assessment is closely associated with differentiated pedagogy, goal-based pedagogy and mastery pedagogy. In this pedagogy, indications of whether or not progress or overall mastery of the objectives by the pupil are derived from a comparison between the number of correct answers achieved on mastery tests or quizzes and a threshold of success chosen as an index of mastery, usually estimated at 80%. Then, the means of regulation offered to students who have not reached the threshold of success, better known as remediation, is limited to corrective instruction (Scallon, 2000). The student is thus regularly informed about his progress towards the goal through formative assessment (de Landsheere, 1992, cited in Hadji, 2012), but he only plays a passive role in learning. With the adoption of the competency-based approach, this conception of learning and formative assessment has taken on a whole new form.

3.1.2. *Formative Assessment in the Competency-Based Approach*

Based on a review of the various definitions proposed in the literature in recent years, Wiliam (2010) argues that:

Assessment is formative to the extent that the information it provides about student achievement is elicited, interpreted and used by teachers, students or their peers to make decisions about next steps that may be better or more informed than those they would have made in the absence of these data (p. 157).

This definition by Wiliam (2010), unlike that of De Landsheere (1992, cited in Rey & al., 2003), places more emphasis on the active role of the student alongside that of the teacher to improve learning. It is clear that formative evaluation allows the different actors involved in the pedagogical relationship to make the necessary decisions to improve learning. The regulation that appears in the background is taken care of not only by the teacher, but also by the individual student or the students in pairs or collectively, thus referring to the following concepts of self-regulation, co-regulation and socially shared regulation (Hadwin and Oshige, 2011, cited in Allal, 2020). They define each of these concepts as follows : 1) self-regulation entails active monitoring and regulating of one's own learning; 2) co-regulation is a transitional process in the learner's appropriation of self-regulation strategies through interaction with a more capable other (teacher, more advanced peer) ; 3) socially s-

-hared regulation refers to collective, co-constructed regulation by multiple participants (of equivalent status) who assure the progression of their shared activity.

Like the teacher, students also play an active role in advancing their learning. This view of formative assessment is consistent with constructivism and socioconstructivism which focus on the cognitive changes that take place during learning and which elicit new and more elaborate responses (Hadji, 2012). In the extension of constructivism, socioconstructivism takes into account the social dimension in the construction of knowledge through interactions. Thus, the child would learn best in the zone of proximal development where he could more easily achieve what he would not be able to do if he were left to himself (Vygotsky, 1982-1984, cited by Ivic, 1994). It appears from these two definitions and the perceptions underlying them that the primary function of formative evaluation is to regulate learning.

3.2. Regulation and its Different Forms

The analysis of formative evaluation practices is also often approached from the perspective of the regulation of learning because of their intrinsic link (Allal, 2016; Hadji, 2012; Panadero et al., 2019). Hadji (2012) speaks of evaluation-regulation while Gerard (2013) assimilates it to medical practice insofar as it consists of diagnosing the difficulties faced by the student before undertaking regulatory action. This view is consistent with that of Rey & al. (2003) who considers all assessment to be diagnostic insofar as its objective is to establish a diagnosis of the student's skills or processes in the various areas of learning. Moreover, assessment only makes sense if it provides the learner with relevant information that allows him to regulate learning. According to Laveault & Allal (2016), Regulation involves four main processes: goal setting, monitoring progress toward the goal, interpretation of feedback derived from monitoring, and adjustment of goal-directed actions and/or of the definition of the goal itself. It would take place in two main areas of action, namely the student, as a learner and the learning situation (Hadji, 2012). This relates to these types of regulations that Allal (2007) refers to: external regulations and internal regulations. External regulation would include retroactive regulation and interactive regulation. Retroactive regulation would mean feedback or corrective activities to remediate difficulties revealed after a formative assessment used to identify the objectives a student did not master during a prior phase of instruction. Proactive regulation occurs when information from assessment is used to plan and prepare new instructional activities, rather than focusing on the remediation of learning difficulties. Interactive regulation takes place during interactions of the student with the teacher, with peers, and with instructional materials and assessment tools, during ongoing instructional activities, allowing the progression of learning (Allal, 1988, cited in Allal, 2020). This would thus promote learning and lead students to assume greater responsibilities for their own learning (Morrisette, 2009). Internal regulations, instead refer to the notion of self-regulation which is linked to self-generated representations, feelings and actions that are continuously planned and adapted to achieve personal objectives (Zimmerman, 2000, cited in Laveault, 2007). However, Allal (2007) points out that self-regulation cannot function outside of the social context, since it is likely to be triggered by other sources of regulation linked to the context. In addition, so-called proactive regulation occurs when the information obtained from the assessment is used to prepare new activities aimed at implementing pedagogical differentiation (Allal, 2010). Regulation thus appears to be a crucial element in the practice of formative assessment and therefore in learning.

3.3. The Practice of Formative Assessment and its Characteristics

Researchers also analyze practices according to their theoretical conception of formative assessment. Allal & Laveault (2009) and Burns (2008), for example, consider an assessment to be formative when the information derived from it is used by students and teachers to support learning. According to Stobart (2011), assessment for learning, which he considers to be another name for formative evaluation, corresponds to specific pedagogical practices that must explain what is taught and specify the definition of successful performance (Stobart, 2011). Wiliam (2010, p.143) provides these five strategies that come into play in formative assessment practice:

- Clarify, communicate and understand learning intentions and success criteria.
- Design classroom activities that produce data on achievement.
- Provide feedback that helps learners to progress.
- Encourage students to become resources for each other.
- Encourage students to take ownership of their learning.

These strategies described by Wiliam (2010) fit right from the start into the competency-based approach. Placed at the center of the formative assessment process, the student is invited to participate actively, unlike his passive role in the objective-based approach.

Scallon (2015) notes the centrality of the notion of progression in identifying the contours of a formative assessment practice. While Hadji (2012) argues that these four words: observe, understand, adjust and optimize summarize a formative assessment approach that can support learning progression. It consists of successive steps consisting of observing the evolution of learning in order to collect information relevant to its regulation, understand this information to be able to carry out this regulation effectively, and adjust one's intervention according to what has been understood in order to finally optimize learning (p. 50). Thus, as advocated by some researchers, formative assessment can no longer be dissociated from the teaching-learning process, but should rather be integrated into it (Morrissette, 2009; Scallon, 2000; Panadero, 2019; Wiliam, 2010).

IV. METHODOLOGY

This research is part of the interpretive paradigm because it aims to understand and describe the formative assessment practices of Montreal high school teachers as they exist (Fortin & Gagnon, 2016). It therefore favors qualitative research, an appropriate approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that these teachers attribute to their practices (Creswell, 2014). In the following, the sampling technique as well as the data collection and analysis methods will be described.

4.1. Sampling

The target population in this research is made up of secondary school teachers in the greater Montreal area. The sample was selected independently of the subject taught, based on the criterion of seniority in the profession. The participants therefore had to be already in office before the implementation of the Learning Assessment Policy in 2003 in order to be able to comment on their practices before and after. The difficulty in finding the number of participants who met the seniority criterion in a single school and at the same time the search for representativeness of points of view (Savoie-Zajc, 2007) guided the choice of the snowball sampling technique. This resulted in a sample of ten (10) participants including eight (8) men and two (2) women who

teach mathematics (6) and French (4), who were directly solicited to preserve the free and voluntary nature of their participation.

4.2. *Data Collection and Analysis Method*

Data are collected through the semi-structured interview allowing the participant to express his feelings and opinions about formative assessment practices in high school (Fortin & Gagnon, 2016). In addition to their vision of formative evaluation and how they practice it before and after the implementation of the *Politique d'évaluation des apprentissages* (Learning evaluation policy), the respondents indicated the challenges they encountered. The data analysis was conducted according to the emerging thematic content analysis approach proposed by Gaudreau (2011).

4.3. *Results of the Analysis*

At the end of the analysis, the results reveal, among other things, various challenges faced by secondary school teachers in the practice of formative assessment as advocated in the Learning Assessment Policy. These challenges are first presented and illustrated by excerpts from respondents' verbatim (R1, R2, etc.) then followed by a few suggestions for strategies to meet them.

4.3.1. *The Teacher's Posture*

Resistance to change remains the first challenge observed. Overall, formative assessment practices have apparently not changed much. At the individual level, some respondents say they do not notice much difference between what was done before and what is done in the current approach. Respondents also provided evidence of what they noticed among their colleagues. Their comments indicate that, mostly, the requirements set out in the new policy are not widely followed by teachers. Some, for example, said that they continue to operate as before because they have always practiced summative evaluation and that the introduction of formative evaluation in its current form is therefore only disturbing and destabilizing. Consequently, the reluctance this creates is said to result from the fact that they are sometimes not well prepared or do not have the necessary information and documentation. The following comments are quite revealing.

For my part, I haven't changed anything. So if we are talking about appropriation, I haven't changed anything because even if we are talking about competence, we are still talking about reading, writing and speaking, so it's still the same three components. I haven't changed anything in my way of doing things (...). I have kept the same strategies, the same ways of doing things and then I have the same successes (...), so for me, there are no advantages. (...) there is nothing implemented so, I haven't encountered any challenges. And then, I think the only way to manage is to look at what the results are (R 5).

But there are still some who, they are not numerous, but there are a few who hope by saying maybe that it will go well, but they are quickly caught up by the environment. (...). I know that the teachers to whom we entrust students for the internship, they do it because they know that we come to see the students and then the students are evaluated on that. And a skill, we rely a lot on that; there they have no choice (R 10).

4.3.2. *Understanding the Current Vision*

Another major challenge is understanding the advocated vision. The new vision of formative assessment does not seem to be well understood by teachers or at least the way it is conceived is quite diverse, as evidenced by t-

-hese comments:

Well, there were several challenges. First of all, at the level of understanding because it is not guaranteed that everyone has the same understanding of the reform. The other thing is that at times, we are only in the reform in a theoretical way because when you are in your class, when you are evaluating, if you remain in the old system too, there is no way to verify (R 4).

In addition, in the following comments, this respondent believes that the discrepancy between the logic of learning advocated in the new approach and the logic of success that prevails in the system does not make things easier.

For me, the challenges that I see most in this is, you know, formative assessment in my opinion is still very much focused on giving feedback to support learning, therefore being more concerned. (...). Then what is not clear in the new reform is whether the logic is still a logic of learning. (...). We are much in the logic of success there. And that, both teachers and students, they have that. (...). That makes me ; this is something which is not clear in what the ministry is asking, which is also a challenge for many people (R10).

This difficulty in assimilating the new vision would also appear on the part of both the student and the parents. For example, it appears in the following excerpts that it is sometimes the student who feels a little lost in relation to his learning habits or the parent who does not understand the way in which his child's learning is appreciated.

That is to say, there will be some students who will have a lot of difficulties understanding where we are going with this (R8).

The disadvantages are that sometimes these marks are always misunderstood because you see students who have 5 out of 5; 10 out of 10. When the big evaluation comes, they fall. And this big evaluation, which is the summative evaluation in terms of weighting, is much more important. And often, parents say: But he always had 100% (...). He got 100% and now he's back at 40%, how come? So maybe it's these aspects. It should be better explained (R 1).

On the other hand, the difficulties in understanding the new vision of formative assessment are sometimes exacerbated by difficulties in understanding the pedagogical approach itself. The following comments demonstrate a certain misunderstanding of what the pedagogical reform is really aiming at by advocating learner-centered learning.

When we say that learning should be learner-centered, we must let the learner, the student decide what is important to learn, that doesn't work. The student (...) cannot be left to decide what is important for him, to know (...). Well, that's a drawback that I did not formalize because I did not integrate it (R 5).

4.3.3. *Time*

Some respondents also identified time as a barrier to the practice of formative assessment. They see it as a constraint that often prevents the teacher from stopping to do formative assessment. Believing that in the objective-based approach they were not obliged to practice it, some teachers said they did little and thus saved more time when faced with the requirement to complete the program. As a result, they find that doing formative assessment on a regular basis would be time-consuming. The following statements from these respondents illus-

-trate this point.

The workload is huge and that constitutes in itself a challenge that rubs off on the formative assessment or the time that should be spent on it. (...). In teaching, the load is so enormous that sometimes we do not have enough time to devote to formative assessment (R4).

So, it's a long process. In terms of correction, it takes a long time to assess an evaluation and learning situation because they are all processes, and each process is going to be very different from one student to another. It's not like doing a multiple-choice correction where you go through it. It's really something that is going to take time, you really have to take the time to see each step (R8).

4.3.4. *Student Engagement*

Another challenge is the issue of student engagement. Some teachers wonder how to make students feel responsible for their learning. According to them, the main problem is linked to the lack of commitment of the learners, which could destroy their actions. At least that's what some respondents say.

In most of the schools I've been to, often the basic problem is learner engagement. So, no matter what the teacher does, no matter how much he explains the concept, no matter how many different exercises he offers, if the learner himself does not feel 80 or more percent committed, it will be useless (R2).

The student plays an important role because I think that he is at the center of this assessment. So, he must be in a position to motivate himself even if it is a formative evaluation. But the student also needs; in any case the teacher must make sure that the student understands the reason for this evaluation. Because if the student does not understand it, the student does not really get involved as he should (R4).

4.3.5. *The Predominance of the Grade*

The predominance of the grade is an additional and no less important challenge. This seems to be a major obstacle to giving formative evaluation the important place it deserves in teaching practice. In the opinion of some teachers, this stems from the fact that all the actors ultimately emphasize the grade. The comments made by these respondents illustrate this perfectly.

The problem is that people are often interested in the results. But you can have 90% without having mastered the contents. Here, people, whether it's parents, students or the administration, everyone talks about numbers. That's the tragedy, it's the quantity when we should care more about quality. What have they learned? (R2).

So, when the student has to use an assessment context, they make a greater effort because even though these assessments mattered quite a bit, I didn't tell the students. (...) I still made them think that it was very important so that they would put in the effort that they needed to (R5).

(...). And then better advocate interest in learning as such, which is intrinsic motivation, and formative evaluation can contribute a lot to this (...). But not just knowing that it will give 100%. But that's really preaching in the wilderness sometimes, because it's always the same thing when you know something, ah it counts, it doesn't count. We are so caught up in this. (...). But that's because it's just the system (R10).

4.3.6. *Differentiation*

In addition, difficulties related to differentiation were also noticed. The main problem is how to provide stud-

-ents with differentiated support, how to take into account the different forms of intelligence in order to meet the needs of each student. The desire to carry out individualized formative evaluation is therefore perceived as very demanding both in terms of student support and critical reflection on the teaching given. Alongside this problem, the issue of knowledge acquisition in the context of learning and assessment situations is also raised. This is what emerges, for example, from the following comments.

So even the problem as it is, it must be differentiated. Maybe some people are more visual [than] others, so these are the difficulties. How to adapt the subject itself so that it can meet the student's need? (R9).

It can be heavy, like I say, it's very demanding. If you want to do individualized formative assessment, it's huge, it's a lot. So, it's very demanding in terms of student support, but also in terms of re-examining, at least critically reflecting on your teaching as such. It's like a challenge, not everyone will do it. Some people, they like it when they have something that works, they stay in their comfort zone (R10).

4.3.7. *Class Size*

Some respondents also point to the problem of overcrowding, which is increasingly noticed in the classes. It is considered an obstacle that does not favor the individual follow-up of the students, as perceived in the words of this respondent.

The other problem is the number of students. So, in terms of school organization, if we manage to limit the number of students; if the number of students is too high, the teacher will not be able to offer a variety of exercises. And then, formative evaluation sometimes, it is necessary to follow each student, for example to identify the gaps and to find remedies. So, if the number of students is too high, it is certain that this will limit the teacher's action, and this too is a challenge that must be resolved (R2).

4.3.8. *The Complexity of Formative Assessment*

Like the challenges outlined above, the complexity of formative assessment is also seen as another barrier that makes its practice difficult. The formative assessment process is thus described in the following excerpt as extremely long, complex and very demanding.

It's much more complex. (...). It is a long, arduous, constant task. (...). I think the challenge would be one day at a time. That is, you can't change a way of teaching everything in one year. I think we have to go about it in a modest way (...), build up our bank of activities that we will do for these formative evaluations, also keeping an open mind that our clientele is changing, will change in interest and that we have to move with them too (R8).

In short, the implementation of the Learning Assessment Policy reveals major challenges regarding formative assessment. However, faced with these multiple challenges, respondents reflect on the actions to be taken to meet them. At the individual level, the recommended strategy is the teacher's personal commitment to professional development. From a pedagogical point of view, some respondents suggest giving priority to the learning logic instead of the grade to better motivate the student or to make the learning more meaningful and more attractive. Likewise, the use of new technologies is seen as a way to solve the time issue. At the administrative level, the solution would be better support through the provision of logistics and training. These comments are quite illustrative.

So, in order to adapt to that, well, you have to keep getting trained, professional development is important. (...). So, there should be a commitment on the part of the teacher, already to complete his training at all times and also to question himself through discussions of this kind among colleagues (R9).

At the individual level, I believe that the teacher has to be trained, to go towards the information, to work thoroughly now to be able to integrate this new system of evaluation in his learning. Now, at the administrative level too, think about putting in the means, the references that are needed, the material that is needed and also the necessary support so that everything is perfect to move towards this type of evaluation which, perhaps, represents many advantages (R7).

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main question raised in this research is to know what formative evaluation practices are used in the competency-based approach and the related challenges. To answer this question, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers in the Montreal region to gather information about their formative evaluation practices before and after the implementation of the Learning Assessment Policy. The qualitative analysis approach used, provided data on various aspects of current formative assessment practices. This section reviews the main results of this research in relation to its objectives and links them to the reflections contained in the research problem and the conceptual framework. These data first reveal the pedagogical designs that support formative assessment practices in the objective-based approach and in the competency-based approach. It emerges that, from the point of view of the teachers interviewed, the objectives-based approach was focused on teaching. Formative evaluation was essentially used to check the mastery of knowledge and subsequently to regulate learning or teaching in order to achieve the pedagogical objectives. It also served, in most cases, to prepare for the summative evaluation. It was therefore often formal and planned. In this context, formative assessment strategies revolved around in-class remediation and out-of-class recovery. The competency-based approach, on the other hand, focuses on learning which no longer consists of acquiring knowledge, but rather of developing abilities and skills. In this new approach, formative assessment is certainly seen as a means of checking intellectual and social abilities and skills, but it seems that it continues to serve more as a means of checking what has been learned in order to provide the necessary remedies. This verification is certainly necessary, because it makes it possible to know where the student stands in relation to his learning, but we cannot stop there. The results obtained would benefit from being better exploited to advance learning, by helping the student to self-regulate. With regard to the time when formative evaluation takes place, the results of this research show that it is still more likely to be carried out at the beginning or end of the sequence. The formative assessment thus remains an essentially formal assessment, planned to be carried out at a scheduled time, as was the case in the objectives-based approach. Consequently, the feedback provided after this assessment is more proactive and consists of guiding future activities or retroactive by providing the necessary remedies. This therefore leads us to consider that the interactive feedback favored in the competency-based approach is not yet very present in current practices. Although proactive and retroactive regulations are very useful, interactive regulations provide students with immediate feedback and are therefore more likely to help them progress in their learning.

In fact, the proper implementation of the formative assessment perception set out in the Quebec evaluation policy seems to be hampered by the various challenges associated with the implementation of this policy. One

of the most important is the posture of teachers towards the desired change. The resistance to change highlighted by the respondents confirms the difficulties and reluctance of teachers with regard to the implementation of formative assessment as stated by some authors (CERI, 2008; Hadji, 2012; Laveault, 2016). In addition, difficulties relating to the understanding of the learning assessment policy guidelines, the complexity of formative assessment, the preponderance of the mark, the exercise of differentiation, and student engagement were also pointed out. Furthermore, misunderstanding of formative assessment and its confusion with testing found in this research overlaps with the findings of the MELS (2007) and Popham (2011) studies. These multiple challenges seem to be a serious obstacle to the implementation of the policy on the evaluation of learning, with regard to formative evaluation. In this vein, Laveault (2016) reports that the implementation of assessment for learning as a mandatory assessment practice has been met with varying degrees of success. They also point out new challenges that have emerged in terms of policy implementation, implications for teacher professional development and classroom practice, as well as coordination with other assessment policies such as accountability based on large-scale testing.

We argue that the unfavorable posture of teachers could be improved if they were better informed, trained and made aware of the formative assessment process and its impact on learning progress. This would also help to overcome most of the challenges presented. Regarding the time to be devoted to formative assessment, in principle, this should not be a difficulty if each teacher were aware that formative assessment is an integral part of learning in the competency-based approach. Also, as some respondents mentioned, placing particular emphasis on strategies that can foster intrinsic motivation and the pleasure of learning in students would probably help overcome the prevalence of the grade. However, faced with these multiple challenges, respondents do not give up thinking about solutions. This is evidenced by the relevant suggestions they provided to address the challenges. At the individual level, the strategy recommended for dealing with the challenges associated with the practice of formative evaluation is the teacher's personal commitment to professional development. From a pedagogical point of view, giving priority to the logic of learning rather than to marks in order to better motivate pupils, and making learning more meaningful and attractive are seen as actions to be taken. Similarly, the use of new technologies is seen as a way of dealing with the issue of time. In administrative terms, better support by making logistics and training resources available is also seen as a solution. It would therefore be appropriate to take into account these suggestions, which focus essentially on the teacher's personal commitment to professional development, better administrative and pedagogical support, as well as student accountability.

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