Scales of Competency Levels

EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH A PROFOUND INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT

4
3
2
1

Québec

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Foreword

According to the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning* (MEQ, 2003), evaluation is the 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.

Evaluation, when used to support learning, allows teachers to adjust their pedagogical actions based on the progress made by students. However, when used to recognize competencies, the judgments made by teachers must report the level of development attained for all of a student's competencies. It is important for the process to be applied in a rigorous way, because to prepare a record of learning, the teacher must consider all the observations gathered in a number of different learning and evaluation situations before making a judgment.

To help teachers interpret their observations and support the decisions they make, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) provides teachers with scales of competency levels linked to the evaluation criteria for the competencies of the Education Program for Students With a Profound Intellectual Impairment. These scales provide a common point of reference for all the teachers involved.

Part I: Introduction

Introduction

The scales of competency levels have been drawn up in accordance with the characteristics of students with a profound intellectual impairment and the competencies of the Education Program for Students With a Profound Intellectual Impairment. They set out indicators to guide the judgments that must be made about competency development. They are not intended to define learning objectives.

For each competency, a four-level scale has been developed. It is important to note that **each level constitutes a comprehensive assessment of the student concerned, rather than a list of elements to be checked individually**. Table 1 shows the structure of the scales of competency levels.

Table 1 – Structure of the scales of competency levels

LEVEL	COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT	COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT
4	THOROUGH	Is obvious / mobilizes all observable elements
3	INTERMEDIATE	Is quite strong / mobilizes most observable elements
2	MODERATE	Is quite weak / mobilizes a few observable elements
1	EMERGENT	Is emergent / mobilizes few observable elements

Inclusive nature of levels

It is important to note that the levels are inclusive. Any aspect of a competency that is considered to be acquired at a given level is implicit in the description for the higher levels.

Table 2 – Inclusive nature of scale levels

4   *...is still present at this level*

3   *What has been acquired at this level...*

2

1
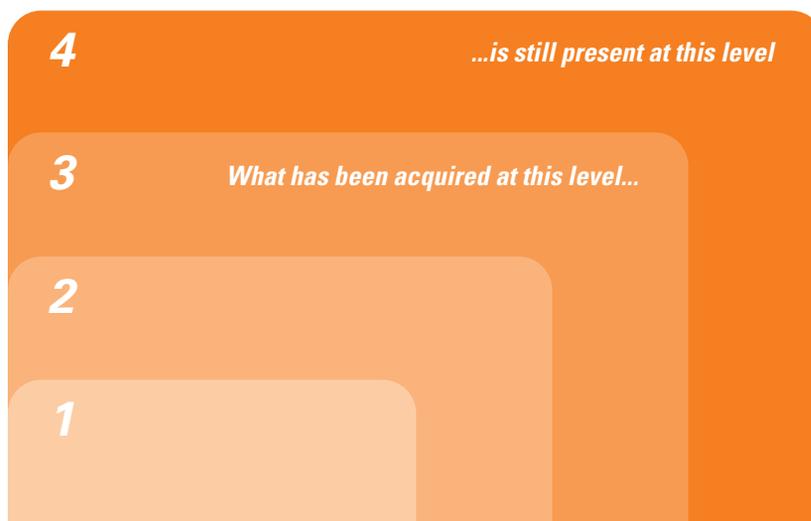
Development of the scales

To ensure the validity and reliability of the scales of competency levels, they were developed using a method based on a consensus decision by a group of experts recognized for their expertise by the school community. The group was made up of teachers, professionals and a school principal with in-depth knowledge of students with a profound intellectual impairment.

First, a subgroup of the expert committee identified for each evaluation criterion connected with each program competency the observable behaviours that related to the competency's development. Each observable behaviour was presented in the form of a statement describing an action that may be observed when students carry out a task or activity and that may show that the student has reached a certain level in the development of the competency.

Next, the observable behaviours were ranked by relevance to describe each of the four levels of competency development (Emergent, Moderate, Intermediate and Thorough). The resulting table was called the "spectrum of observable behaviours."

At the second stage, the "spectrum of observable behaviours" was submitted to the other members of the expert group, who made an individual judgment concerning the place of each observable behaviour in the levels and the degree to which it was representative of the evaluation criterion and competency concerned.

Last, the members of the expert group reached a consensus about the observable behaviours to be used for each of the four levels for each competency. The result constitutes the scales of competency levels as presented in this document.
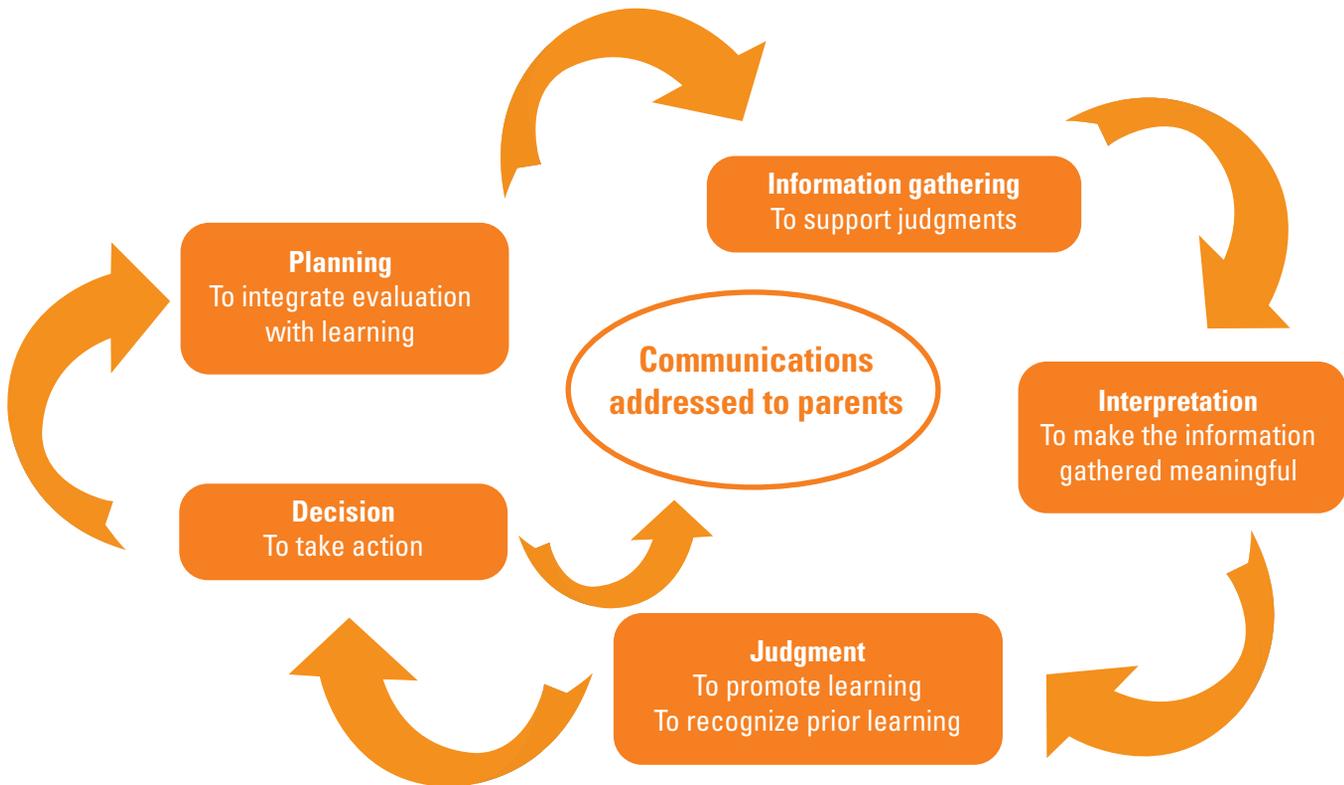
Use of the scales

Competencies are developed and evaluated during learning and evaluation situations. It is difficult to make a judgment concerning a student's competencies unless learning and evaluation situations are at the heart of the pedagogical practices applied. The teachers who plan, supervise and evaluate student learning have the primary responsibility for making a judgment.

Various reporting tools are needed to gather specific and complete information about the relevant observable behaviours reflecting the competency level reached by the student. The Education Program for Students With a Profound Intellectual Impairment makes suggestions concerning tools, including the observation checklist, the portfolio, the teacher's logbook and anecdotal records. The information gathered provides the information used by the teacher to situate the student on the scales of competency levels and prepare a record of learning. The scales are the official references for judgments made about the level of a student's competency development.

A record of learning is prepared at predetermined times during the student's schooling corresponding to the student's chronological age and key points in the schooling process. They occur during: the first years of schooling from age 5 to age 8; the transition to secondary education at age 12; during adolescence, when the student's needs change, at age 15; during the planning of the transition to adult life, at age 18; and, finally, at the end of the student' schooling and the start of his or her adult life, at age 21.

Teachers cannot make a judgment about the level of a student's competency development without first setting up a rigorous evaluation process, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Evaluation process

Conclusion

The scales of competency levels are reference tools to be used by teachers when making a judgment about a student's level of competency development and communicating their judgment.

An accurate assessment of the competencies developed by a student enables meaningful and authentic learning and evaluation situations to be designed to promote student learning. In addition, this assessment is useful as a tool for communications between the various partners and facilitates, through the individualized education plan, planning of the transition to adult life, when students will be able to realize their potential in terms of autonomy and greater social participation.

Part II: The Scales of Competency Levels

Performs sensorimotor actions effectively

Throughout the student's schooling, body awareness increases. The student discovers his or her body's capabilities by having diverse sensory experiences in different contexts and by experimenting with a variety of actions requiring gross or fine motor skills.

By the end of the student's schooling, he or she is a young adult utilizing his or her full sensory and physical potential. The student has mastered a range of actions involving gross or fine motor skills. This mastery enables the student to act effectively in various situations of daily living, thereby contributing to personal health and well-being.

4 Thorough competency development

Organizes his/her reaction to stimuli. Uses a varied repertoire of actions. Performs reasonably precise actions, gestures and movements. Modifies or synchronizes actions in response to the sensory information received from moving objects. Modifies actions to avoid danger.

3 Intermediate competency development

Seeks the source of stimulation. Presents a range of reactions to different stimuli. Coordinates several movements. Performs one or more protective gestures in a dangerous situation.

2 Moderate competency development

Directs movements without organizing them in the direction of the stimulus. Produces a few different reactions to different stimuli. Acts by trial and error or by imitation when performing actions. Coordinates two movements. Stays still in a dangerous situation.

1 Emergent competency development

Presents a reflex to a specific stimulation. Presents one or more protective reflexes. Presents a single reaction (facial movement, change of posture, sound, etc.) generally the same, to every stimulus. Performs movements in an unorganized way.

Expresses needs and emotions adequately

Throughout the student's schooling, he or she experiences a range of needs and emotions in various school settings, and learns to express them appropriately. The student discovers the existence of other people and learns to differentiate himself or herself from others, recognizing what belongs to him or to her and what he or she is feeling. In addition, the student learns to recognize and diversify his or her areas of interest and to make choices based on his or her personal tastes and preferences.

By the end of the student's schooling, he or she expresses his or her needs, emotions and personal tastes more often, in a broader range of situations and more adequately. He or she is better able to assert his or her individuality.

4 — Thorough competency development

Uses specific behaviours to demonstrate needs, emotions, interests and preferences connected with the situation. Makes himself/herself understood by all the people he/she meets regularly when demonstrating needs, interests, emotions and preferences. Expresses emotions with an intensity and duration appropriate to the situation.

3 — Intermediate competency development

Uses different means to demonstrate some needs and emotions. Uses some means in a specific manner to demonstrate a given need or emotion. When demonstrating needs or emotions, makes himself/herself understood by familiar people and by some unfamiliar people. Expresses emotions with an intensity and duration that are sometimes appropriate to the situation.

2 — Moderate competency development

Uses a few means to demonstrate all his/her needs and emotions. Reuses a specific behaviour to demonstrate an emotion or need. Is understood by one or more familiar people when expressing needs and emotions.

1 — Emergent competency development

Uses a single means to demonstrate needs and emotions. Is seldom able to make himself/herself understood, even by a familiar person, when demonstrating needs and emotions. Demonstrates pleasure, displeasure, comfort and discomfort.

Interacts with others

Throughout the student's schooling, he or she learns to accept the presence of others, create interpersonal relationships, and behave in a socially acceptable manner. The student increasingly adapts his or her behaviours to situations, and respects established rules more when participating in social activities.

By the end of his or her schooling, the student is better able to accept the presence of others and engages more frequently in interactions more consistent with what is expected of a young adult.

4 *Thorough competency development*

Applies several social conventions in relationships with others. Shares materials for a game or activity. Engages in and continues an activity with adults or fellow students. Complies with group rules. Takes the initiative of establishing contact with adults or fellow students.

3 *Intermediate competency development*

Seeks the presence or proximity of adults or fellow students. Performs a few actions with others. Applies some group rules. Reproduces the actions of others. Responds to the actions of others.

2 *Moderate competency development*

Turns toward or looks at the other person during an interaction. Reacts differently in the presence of a person with whom he/she has a meaningful connection, or based on the level of familiarity. Tolerates the presence or proximity of others. Performs actions close to others.

1 *Emergent competency development*

Reacts to the presence of others. Tolerates the presence and proximity of familiar people.

Communicates effectively with others

Throughout the student's schooling, he or she develops the ability to pay attention to messages directed at him or her, to understand these messages, and to formulate short messages in return. The student builds a repertoire of communication skills, and increasingly comes to enjoy communicating with others.

By the end of his or her schooling, the student is able to understand a greater number of messages and produces more intelligible messages using his/her own functional mode of communication.

4 *Thorough competency development*

Communicates with several different people. Uses a verbal or nonverbal code understood by familiar people and some unfamiliar people in an extended environment. Tries another way to be understood when the means used to communicate is not effective. Maintains a contact established with another person. Gives answers that take into account the verbal information received. Replies with combinations of words or symbols. Performs instructions with more than one element.

3 *Intermediate competency development*

Seeks the attention of the person with whom he/she wants to communicate. Uses means of communication based on a gestural, graphic or oral code. Repeats a message or action if he/she is not understood or does not have the attention of the other person. Presents responses to verbal information in conjunction with visual supports, natural gestures or certain coded gestures. Responds to a simple instruction with directed actions. Engages in exchanges requiring some interaction with the other person. Makes himself/herself understood by familiar people and certain unfamiliar people in his/her immediate environment.

2 *Moderate competency development*

Looks, turns toward, listens to or approaches the person communicating with him/her. Reacts to verbal information in conjunction with voice intensity or intonation, body attitudes, natural gestures or the presentation of concrete objects. Responds with natural gestures and some directed actions when a person speaks to him/her. Looks at or approaches a person with whom he/she wishes to communicate. Uses communication behaviours that are generally connected with his/her intention and understood by familiar people.

1 *Emergent competency development*

Uses facial expressions, changes of posture or sounds when a person communicates with him/her. Demonstrates communication behaviours not directed at another person. Uses communication behaviours that are seldom understood, even by familiar people. Uses communication behaviours that are seldom connected with his/her intention.

Adapts to his/her environment

Throughout his or her schooling, the student becomes more aware of the physical and human environment via the senses, which he or she learns to use to observe and explore his or her surroundings. The student learns how to react to appropriate stimuli, manipulate objects, and try out various elements in his or her environment. Acquisition of these skills enables the student to understand his or her environment and progressively acquire a certain degree of autonomy in carrying out tasks requiring the mobilization of more than one skill at a time.

By the end of his or her schooling, the student has greater self-awareness as well as more awareness of the physical and human environment. The student's knowledge and conception of the world are better organized. This improves the student's ability to use the full range of available resources for carrying out the tasks that he or she is assigned.

4 — Thorough competency development

Takes an interest in several objects, games and activities. Uses several objects in a functional manner. Sorts objects by conceptual category. Uses a set of clues to understand or anticipate a situation. Finds a way or a strategy to overcome a difficulty. Performs procedures connected with a situation. Makes choices between different elements and maintains them.

3 — Intermediate competency development

Takes an interest in objects, people and graphic representations. Reproduces movements, gestures, sounds, words, facial expressions and postures from the environment. Performs actions that affect people or objects. Uses a few everyday objects in a functional manner. Maintains his/her choices. Reacts to an object that does not match a set of other identical objects. Coordinates movements on the basis of the sensory information received. Follows a routine as part of an everyday activity.

2 — Moderate competency development

Takes an interest in more than one object or person. Reacts to stimuli in a variety of ways. Reproduces several movements when interested by the stimulus. Moves around and moves objects around. Takes pleasure in observing the impact he/she produces on objects or people. Makes choices between two elements. Reacts when a significant element is added to or taken away from the environment. Shows signs that he/she recognizes familiar people, places, objects or words. Acts on objects by trial and error.

1 — Emergent competency development

Goes from being passive to being alert. Presents recurrent reflexes. Reacts to stimuli in an undifferentiated way. Uses the senses to explore objects, but without a precise goal. Shows interest in a particular object or person. Shows signs that he/she knows a few people, places or objects. Uses unorganized ways and attains goals by chance.

Engages in activities in his/her community

Throughout his or her schooling, the student acquires a variety of sensorimotor, social, affective, cognitive and communication skills. Gradually, the student uses his or her knowledge and strategies in other places and situations in his/her daily life.

By the end of his or her schooling, the student is able, up to a point, to adapt to his or her environment, perform certain tasks and engage in certain activities, allowing him or her to be better adapted and more active within the school, family or community.

4

Thorough competency development

Performs a joint task, game or activity as part of a small group without becoming distracted. Uses a timetable. Follows the steps in a task. Uses the most common tools, objects and equipment in his/her environment. Takes care of materials. Accepts changes to routines, tasks and activities. Asks for help when in difficulty. Adopts safe behaviour when moving about in a routine situation or in connection with certain familiar objects and places.

3

Intermediate competency development

Begins and ends a task, game or activity. Performs a task, game or simple activity close to other people. Performs a task, game or activity with another person. Accepts supervision. Anticipates an event or situation based on cues. Agrees to wait before participating in a task, game or activity. Participates in the routines of daily life. Moves to or asks to be moved to a familiar place for a specific purpose. Stops when in difficulty.

2

Moderate competency development

Uses various games or objects. Shows an interest in activities or games. Ceases a behaviour when asked. Agrees to a short delay before participating in a task, game or activity. Associates places with the activities that occur there.

1

Emergent competency development

Explores objects, games or places. Temporarily ceases a behaviour when asked. Pays attention to the physical and human environment. Watches an activity with other people.