

# DOCIMOMOLOGY AND AFTER

## A note regarding the assessment of visual arts acquisitions

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Even if it surprises some, we will start by saying that the reflections of order “*docimological*”<sup>1</sup> are both simple and old.

They are simple because they are ultimately understood as the place of a very clear change of direction (or philosophy): the passage or shift in the *notation* of an object product for the *evaluation* of skills actually acquired.

They are already historic because they take us back two centuries. In indeed, as early as 1805, an essay on *The Teaching of Mathematics*<sup>2</sup> explicitly denounced the error in targeting exams: “Since it is not an effort of memory which characterizes true knowledge in mathematics, it is therefore wrong to use an oral and rote exam to ensure the capacity of young people who engage in the study of science.” This item castigated the time wasted “rehashing”, the illusion of “knowledge acquired only to parade for a single day” and the absurdity of teaching organized with the sole aim of obtaining a good grade on the exam. We notice that everything has already been said.

Some time later, in England from 1888 (Edgeworth) or Valentine (1932), in Switzerland from 1914 (Bovet), in the U.S.A. (Starch, 1913-24), numerous contributions demonstrated the existence discrepancies in the ratings of different examiners.

In France, these are the studies of Laugier and Piéron undertaken on the notes of the Certificate of Studies in 1922 then on the Baccalaureate in 1932 which in turn highlighted the considerable gaps in judgment which affected the grading of the copies... In addition to the questions of severity and use of the grade scale, docimology had succeeded in isolating from multiple determinants of *disparities in judgments* between correctors (unfaithfulness over time, order effects, contrast effects, effects of information on students known a priori, various effects of "halo") and showed that the "truth" of the note could only be a myth (127 correctors to stabilize a philosophy grade, we calculated in 1936 !<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> From the Greek *dokimé* (test). In France, the word was coined by H. Piéron in 1922 to name the study of exams : test - δοκιμάζω / examine – εξετάζω.

<sup>2</sup> F. Lacroix, in the context of the creation of the main examinations and recruitment competitions by Napoleon in 1808, cited by H. Piéron(1963), *Examens et docimologie*, Paris, PUF, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Laugier & Weinberg, in H. Piéron (1963), *op. cit.*, p..23.

The resumption of this research in the seventies<sup>4</sup> completely confirmed the observations from the beginning of the century. However, the note has lost neither its credibility nor its usefulness, especially less than it is eagerly awaited by the institution in order to allow additions and averages. We are talking about docimology here.

Let's come to "assessment". If the word is old (1361), the literature concerning problems in measuring educational results tells us that it is only after the years 1930-40 in the USA that we gradually moved from the *Testing period* (Tyler, 1934) or *Measurement period* towards a new path called *Evaluation period*.

The term is vague (doesn't the French dictionary juxtapose the synonyms 'calculation' and 'approximation'?) but it is based on the broadening of the aims highlighted by the work on the objectives and which restore the student as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

What differentiates evaluation (qualitative) from measurement (quantitative) is judgment valuable. For P. Perrenoud (in Allal, 1979), "there is evaluation as soon as it is formed in the mind of the teacher a value judgment on the competence of a student, his intelligence, his personality, his conduct" (C. Rogers was more radical: "to teach is to evaluate; to evaluate, it's teaching"<sup>6</sup>). Therefore, the docimological model as a study of examinations, while remaining the essential prerequisite, turns out to be a false lead. From then on, it is no longer a question of compare a performance to a standard but to appreciate a process of constructing the person. However, the problem of evaluation is clearly revealed without necessarily be resolved: we only have access to productions or behaviors while we let us target their author, or, to use the clarification provided by Chomsky in 1968, beyond the facts (immediate performance), we seek *competence* (assessment of potential of the student, of his capacities for lasting initiatives), we will come back to this later.

Turning now to the visual arts, nothing in these first studies relating to the scoring did not concern our discipline and very few moreover approached the field of expression (like French composition). As for the visual arts teacher, he was faced with two options: either he wanted to record know-how, which implied the schooling of plastic activities and their reduction to mastery exercises; be it tried to judge the qualities of a work, at the risk of relying, for lack of instructions, on a completely intuitive evaluation practice.

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<sup>4</sup> G. Noizet & J.P. Caverni (1978), *Psychologie de l'évaluation scolaire*, Paris, P.U.F., p. 77-117 and J.J. Bonniol (1981), *Déterminants et mécanismes des comportements d'évaluation d'épreuves scolaires*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Bordeaux, p. 75-110.

<sup>5</sup> H. Greene & G. Jorgenstein (1962), *Measurement and Evaluation in the Modern School*, New York, McMillan.

<sup>6</sup> C. Rogers (1972), *Liberté pour apprendre ?*, Paris, Dunod, p. 172.

The research that we carried out at the beginning of the 1980s<sup>7</sup> and relating on the rating of school plastic productions revealed the existence of disparities in judgment *as strong* as in other disciplines of expression, although it is easier to simultaneously compare works offered with regard to successively reading written copies. The grade differences corresponded to those noted in the general context, the maximum being 12 in visual arts for a rescoring of baccalaureate tests, for an average of 3 points. This study established that we are dependent on expectations produced by taking into account *a priori information* relating to producers, that we are also sensitive to the effects of *contrast by contiguity*, but above all, in line with the research of Berlyne, Bernard and Francès<sup>8</sup>, that we are subject to hedonic considerations relating to *plastic dimensions or visual images* of the objects to be evaluated. Colors and complexity had been tested significantly, this which authorized thinking by *validating extension*: the degree of realism, originality as well as the relation to any referential plastic ideology, this naturally understood when these variables do not have to function as evaluation criteria<sup>9</sup>.

Thus, our assessment, even guided by the clarification of criteria previously elucidated, is it disturbed by the *perceptual significance of irrelevant clues*, of made of a particular receptivity of the evaluator towards them. In order to moderate these distortions, nothing helps, nor the establishment of finely weighted scales (it would rather be worse, as docimology had already shown<sup>10</sup>), nor even the transposition of evaluations in terms of rank (Gal's law proposed by Baret<sup>11</sup>), knowing that an art teacher ranks rather his works in order of quality.

The negative observations of this period contributed to proscribing any solitary notation for the benefit of a *collective evaluation* (notably at the baccalaureate; this was already practiced for competitions), and to identify as clearly as possible the *benchmarks for success* in focusing particularly on higher objectives, including what we we call “the expanded school field”: What is the student likely to do alone outside the educational institution and how what has been done can attest to the development of an interest and the construction of skills truly acquired “for life”?

Indeed, such observations could only discredit the note as intended unique and invite us to focus on what we really wanted to appreciate in the operation, in other words, they pushed

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<sup>7</sup> B.A. Gaillot (1987), *Evaluer en arts plastiques*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Lyon.

<sup>8</sup> D.E. Berlyne (1966), Les mesures de la préférence esthétique, *Sciences de l'art*, n°3, p. 9-22 ; Y. Bernard (1973), *Psycho-sociologie du goût en matière de peinture*, Paris, éd. du CNRS ; R. Francès (1968), *Psychologie de l'esthétique*, Paris, P.U.F., p. 118-132 especially, highlighting the factors most often designated as determining factors: realism, originality, technique, subject, color-light, expressiveness, subjective personal reason.

<sup>9</sup> B.A. Gaillot (1987), *op.cit.*, p. 95-177, all statistically significant studies.

<sup>10</sup> G. de Landsheere (1971), *Evaluation continue et examens*, Bruxelles, Paris, Labor, Nathan, p. 150.

<sup>11</sup> M. Baret (1984), "Du bon usage de la notation", in *Ateliers lyonnais de pédagogie*, n° spécial de février, p. 200-208.

us to reflect on the *function of evaluation* in school context. Let us note with regard to the visual arts in France that, if the ministerial instructions (of December 14, 1964, for example) provided at their time clear advice on grading, this aspect completely disappeared from the concerns for thirty years, as if evaluating was “self-evident”. We had to wait for the programs for the 6th grade written in 1996 so that an “evaluation” chapter could be reintroduced, promoting finally in updated terms the ambitions of our discipline<sup>12</sup>.

The situation being general, we will understand that research in Sciences of Education focused on the definition of objectives, formative evaluation, verification of skills and everything that contributes to the construction of the person.

The transition from grading to evaluation in the full sense of the term has its roots in the exploitation of three American researches:

We must first mention the work of Bloom and his collaborators (1956-1972) on the taxonomies (classifications) of objectives<sup>13</sup> which provided two observations of the highest importance: 1) - stating training objectives cannot be limited to the *cognitive* sector (this must bring together instruction and education, there is also the procedural and the emotional); 2) – formulate an objective implies that we are concerned with the *degree of requirement* (and therefore performance): this is not the same thing to aim for a simple restitution as to seek that a student can fend for themselves (autonomous expression). From there also comes the separation between knowledge and skills. With reference to this research, G. and V. De Landsheere (1976) prioritized expectations into three degrees (“mastery – transfer – expression”<sup>14</sup>) in combining the “*principle of reduction*” regarding the objectives of autonomous expression: “repeating a creative process is no longer creation”, in other words when it comes to of plastic expression, which can be, plastically speaking, a great initiative associated with a significant risk-taking for young students may become in higher classes only the simple restitution mechanics of a pre-acquired knowledge.

On the subject of expressive goals, another Chicago researcher, Eisner (1969), showed that these only create an *exploratory situation* where the theme is only one *support*, so that the result can only be a *surprise* both for the student and for the professor and thus the evaluation can only be based on *what has been produced*<sup>15</sup>. This essential discovery explains the paradox which works the evaluation mission of the visual arts teacher: the greater the ambition (objective of autonomous expression) the less it is possible to operationalize the acquisition

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<sup>12</sup> This was detailed in B.A. Gaillot (1997), *Arts plastiques, éléments d'une didactique-critique*, Paris, PUF, p.177-196.

<sup>13</sup> Bloom B.-S., Hastings J.-T., Madaus G. (1971), *Handbook on formative and summative evaluation of student learning*, New-York, McGraw-Hill.

<sup>14</sup> G. & V. de Landsheere (1976), *Définir les objectifs de l'éducation*, Paris, PUF, p. 235.

<sup>15</sup> E.W. Eisner (1969), Instructional and Expressive Educational Objectives, in J. Popham, *Instructional Objectives*, Chicago, AERA, p. 14.

objectives, that is to say to state by anticipation of observable behavior and the criteria that will allow it to be assessed. Thus, we can only evaluate and learn from the “*fait accompli*”<sup>16</sup>.

Correlatively, Scriven<sup>17</sup> introduced the decisive distinction in 1967, taken up by Bloom in 1971. While summative evaluation is limited to taking stock of what has been acquired and what remains to be worked on, the concept of *formative evaluation* first presents it as a regulatory instrument (Allal, 1978) and highlights evaluation in didactic architecture as a central element of the training around which it is organized the “strategic construction of educational action”<sup>18</sup>.

Considering evaluation as a regulatory instrument after Scriven is just as much designate and count what has just been understood and remedy the dysfunctions of Lesson. It is also, in a learning context, questioning the meaning of the note that we just put. It also means preparing to face the risks of misunderstandings: the pervasiveness of plastic ideologies linked to technical mastery, whether it is perceived as certified competence, or it is rejected because it is too outdated; the naive credit granted to an unintended effect; the screen of speech which replaces itself, that of the teacher like that of the pupil ; credulity linked to understanding: since it has been said or done, it is definitely acquired...

If in the past the grade in visual arts weighed visual know-how, for use the formula of French Inspector General Pélissier during the St Denis conference on “artistic” in 1994, “*what matters to us is not so much what the students do as what that they learn through what they do.*”<sup>19</sup>

It is therefore a question of knowing how to differentiate plastic production and real acquisition(s) of the student at the end of the sequence, in other words being clear about the definition of terms such as: - *knowledge - knowledge - performance - capacity - competence.*

Direct daughter of taxonomies, behaviorist pedagogy (in terms behaviorists, behavior is the response to a stimulus) counting only fragmentary successes, quickly aroused multiple reluctance arguing that it was hasty to stick to the appearance of simple immediate performances and that it would rather be welcome to question the skills actually acquired for the long term. To USA, McClelland<sup>20</sup> quickly introduced (1968) the difference between

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<sup>16</sup> The formula is from D. Chateau (1994) in *La question de la question de l'art*, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, p. 73.

<sup>17</sup> G. M. Scriven (1967), *The Methodology of Evaluation*, in *Perspectives of Curriculum Evaluation*, AERA Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation, n°1, Chicago, Rand Mc Nally, pp. 39-83, and also B.S. Bloom (1971) *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> P. Dominicé (1979), *La formation, enjeu de l'évaluation*, Berne, P. Lang, p. 184.

<sup>19</sup> *L'artistique. Arts plastiques et enseignement* (1997), Créteil, éditions du CRDP, p. 133.

<sup>20</sup> D.C. McClelland (1968), *Measuring Behavioral Objective*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University.

behavior *responding* (to a stimulus) and *operant* behavior (i.e. being able to act of one's own own initiative and over time): this completely coincides with the difference Aristotelian between *poiein* and *prattein* (doing and acting) to which we are so attached in art.

Let's move forward with our definitions. If we refer to Kant, knowledge is what is universal and transmissible: it is the information supposed to be objective installed in the directory cognitive of the student (which can be learned and restored). But, in visual arts, the knowledge is generally empirical and relative...

There is no difference in English between academic knowledge and knowledge (what we know). For educational sciences, **knowledge** refers to references and information constituted (what Chevallard calls in mathematics “scientific knowledge”<sup>21</sup>) or else the knowledge prepared by the educational institution (simplified, hierarchical, codified, transposed by the disciplinary didactics) to be teachable. In the visual arts, there is objective knowledge which can be learned: specific vocabulary, works, artists, movements... On the other hand, if there is technical knowledge (knowledge how to do/use a material or tool, sometimes called skill), this remains dead if it is not reincarnated in the idiosyncrasy of a individual.

Therefore, knowledge is the information that a subject acquires following a process of discovery or inculcation. In the *social constructivist* perspective which is the closer to the visual arts, in distant reference to Bachelard<sup>22</sup>, “it is in terms of obstacles that we must pose the problem of scientific knowledge [...] access to science means accepting a sudden mutation which must contradict a past.” Said differently – and it seems that this is valid for the arts – the student approaches new information at the same time light of his knowledge already there. “*Whatever this prior knowledge may be, it is they who, in the first place, will question [new] knowledge. It is with the help of these previous knowledge that they will decode it, put it in relation with other knowledge that they already have*”<sup>23</sup>. In the visual arts more than in certain others disciplines, the “*cognitive conflict*”<sup>24</sup> can be particularly brutal, it is then up to the teacher to generate “*social interactions*” within the class to confront representations initials of the students through the “*verbalization*” of the “*plurality of points of view*”. We are on familiar ground here. Thus, in the visual arts, the *character constructs*

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<sup>21</sup> Y. Chevallard (1985), *La transposition didactique du savoir savant au savoir enseigné*, Grenoble, La pensée sauvage, p. 49 à 63.

<sup>22</sup> G. Bachelard (1938), *La formation scientifique. Contribution à une psychanalyse de la connaissance objective*, Paris, Vrin, p. 14-16

<sup>23</sup> P. Jonnaert, C. Vander Borgh, R. Defise.(1999), *Créer des conditions d'apprentissage. Un cadre de référence socioconstructiviste pour une formation didactique des enseignants*, Bruxelles, De Boeck, p. 111

<sup>24</sup> In reference to Piaget : Read A.N. Perret-Clermont (1979), *La construction de l'intelligence dans l'interaction sociale*, Berne, Peter Lang.

*knowledge* internalized by the student is, if we can say so, doubly ontological because it is moreover dependent on the singularity and the impossible reiteration of any event artistic (there is no truth in art or even, paradoxically, in the field of visual communication).

Then, the student must be able to use what he knows. The **ability** translates the ability to do and succeed in something and we have said that in the disciplines of expression this cannot be limited to repeating but must involve initiative and understanding. In theory (Gillet, 1991), the capacity to initiate action generates performance intended to operationalize a skill.

**Performance** is therefore what this capacity associated with an object or content produced: *it is what has just been (more or less) done*. It remains to be seen what it reveals: is it a success ? punctual, immediate, fleeting? On the contrary, is it definitely a question of know-how ? Acquired skills of which the student already masters the potential and the issues linked to it and which we can name competence? This is the question of the predictive value of behaviors observed...

Some definitions are ambiguous. Thus, the French *Bordas Pedagogy Dictionary* (2000) certainly indicates that “evaluating students’ skills consists of measuring the performance achieved”, but adding that “the performance testifies to the existence of the competence” and that it “is the proof provided that one knows or knows how to do something”. At the very least it would be necessary to specify: positive performance, because there are “counter-performances” ! Or say: is the proof provided “of knowledge *or* of an absence of know ”.

Indeed, depending on the sectors concerned, performance and skills overlap more or less completely. Let’s take the example of a difficult university exam in English: hearing a candidate who speaks English *perfectly* (vocabulary, syntax, fluency, accent) is the right candidate irrefutable proof of his linguistic competence, to the point that there is no need academic to decide, any native speaker contacted in UK could judge; unlike that, succeeding perfectly in the big problem of a mathematics test cannot certify without risk of being mistaken that it is a general and definitive skill acquired. The opposite of this comparison is even more explicit (the fact of missing...).

This anecdote is not superfluous because it particularly concerns the teaching of the visual arts where performance and skill no longer overlap since our aims exceed the mastery of techniques.

**Competence (skill)**, beyond the definitions mentioned below, calls first to our eyes to enter the name of Noam Chomsky<sup>25</sup> who, in his numerous writings on language, underlines

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<sup>25</sup> N. Chomsky (1969), *La linguistique cartésienne*, Paris, Seuil, as well as : (1969) *Structures syntaxiques*, Paris, Seuil.

the *creative* nature of linguistic competence as soon as the child frees himself repetitive words conditioned to have integrated a *system of rules* which allows then to construct – *create* – new sentences. It is therefore the application to good are aware of these rules in new situations (you must therefore fend for yourself by taking initiatives from what has been internalized), and this can only interest us from the point from the point of view of the visual arts.

Curiously, in terms of taxonomies of objectives, despite Hainaut or Hameline, the The term competence is in fairly recent common use among French teachers (Gillet, 1991)<sup>26</sup>. It is a terminal and lasting disposition (a set of knowledge and know-how) which designates the fact of dominating all questions linked to a specific sector (a plumber, a baker, a competent minister). This is, as the previous example suggests, a quality that is more or less identifiable depending on the sector, vague and relative, which should be manifest through multiple “indicator behaviors” that we hope to be able to observe. But, unlike plastered knowledge that is simply learned and restored, it is indeed this which ultimately matters, in the visual arts as elsewhere!

According to Hameline (1979), competence is simply “know-how allowing immediate implementation from a repertoire of available gestures.” According to Gillet 1991), it is defined rather as “a system of conceptual knowledge and procedural procedures organized into operating diagrams and which allow the resolution of a problem task through effective action (performance) ”.

More recently, the Canadian school (Brien, Cauchy, Scallon 2001) insists on several characteristics: the notion of integration (the same in Europe for Roegiers 2000) which presupposes stabilized assimilation and the ability to immediately mobilize wisely; the notions of transfer and complexity which guarantee the ability to face difficulties new and extreme.

For Scallon, taking up Roegiers<sup>27</sup> (“competence is the possibility of mobilizing internalized way an integrated set of resources with a view to resolving a family of problem situations”), if the skill exists in a potential state in an individual (“possibility”), the important thing is to be able to “***mobilize your resources***” (this word is taken from D’Hainaut, 1977) in order to deal with “any situation of the same family”, which brings these general considerations closer to the field of the arts where the competence is never the simple

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<sup>26</sup> Naturally, the shift in teaching content towards the statement of skills to be developed would send us back to the middle of the 20th century and even more to the tremendous profusion of writings on objectives during the seventies (De Landsheere 1976, D’Hainaut 1977, Hameline 1979...).

One of the most explicit summaries for teachers is probably that produced by CEPEC de Lyon under the direction of P. Gillet (1991): *Construire la formation*, Paris, ESF, read in particular pages 67 to 77-111.

<sup>27</sup> Here we evoke too quickly the writings of X. Roegiers (2000), *Une pédagogie de l’intégration. Compétences et intégration des acquis dans l’enseignement*, Bruxelles, De Boeck, as well as : G. Scallon (2004), *L’évaluation des apprentissages dans une approche par compétences*, Bruxelles, De Boeck. And read my text : *The skills-based approach in the visual arts*, online : <https://gaillotdidartplast.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/APC-24.pdf>



reiteration of a previously successful act but always a new part associated with the inevitable **risk-taking** associated with it.

These remarks on the potential state emphasize the fact that a skill is not proven only if it is perceptible through observable behavior (this famous performance) and authentic (the student decided alone and not at random). This point again reminds the question of the “*predictive value*” of an observation: can we, in light of what comes to be “done” by the student, to be assured that the student has understood the challenges of a work? Or did it only produce one successful object, for example? Outside of the arts, Piaget<sup>28</sup> had already highlighted that “succeeding” did not necessarily mean “understanding”. What we need to evaluate is the student as an individual with potential, on the path towards autonomy, on a field, that of the visual arts, which does not tolerate any reference model.

It emerges from this that even if these resources exist beforehand<sup>29</sup>, the real skill is that which knows how to improvise from these to produce a behavior adapted to an unprecedented situation. A skill can therefore only be described a posteriori, when the problem has been successfully resolved. It depends on the observation and its generalization is established by observers as the number of successes. It is difficult to describe a priori a competence<sup>30</sup> otherwise through hypothetical expected behaviors.

Thus, the competence, always to follow Scallon, is to be identified from indicator behaviors which should allow us to identify which resources the student is able to mobilize:

- memorized knowledge;
- skills (know-how, know-how to use, pre-cedural knowledge, etc.);
- strategies (freely chosen way of doing things; spirit of method);
- attitudes (a favorable posture of mind; perseverance, curiosity, etc.).

Naturally, the last two categories are significantly more difficult to infer.

Paradoxically, the “vagueness” of competence [unlike the school of performance – the famous PbO, pedagogy by objectives, heir to Mager (1962) – which does not focus only on the result, the “expected product” (Bonniol, 1981) as proof of success] is an asset in that it forces the teacher to overcome this handicap by searching for clues multiple which will be able to attest to the progress and expected gains, whether it is, of course, product skills (terminal) but also process skills, in other words oriented towards the process (methodological<sup>31</sup>).

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<sup>28</sup> J. Piaget (1974), *Réussir et comprendre*, Paris, P.U.F.

<sup>29</sup> P. Perrenoud (1997), *Construire des compétences dès l'école*, Paris, ESF, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> P. Jonnaert & al. (1999), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>31</sup> J.L. Wolfs (1998), *Méthodes de travail et stratégies d'apprentissage*, Bruxelles, De Boeck, pp. 21-23.

When it comes to the teaching of visual arts in France, it is clear that recognize that the clear statement of objectives in the programs dates from the drafting for middle school between 1995 and 1998, we still have to wait for the text to be written for the class of 3ème in 1998 to explicitly read the association of the two terms “knowledge” and "skills".

In visual arts, the ambitions of the discipline are very diverse. In France, the editors high school programs (2000) wanted to strive to increase these expectations (without we might as well aim for a “skills framework” as it is written), but at the risk of certain qualifiers: it is thus a question of *artistic, cultural, technical skills, methodological and behavioral*. At the very least, we must on a daily basis attach ourselves to identify the expected disciplinary capacities on two axes: skills linked to practical ; reflective, *conceptual* skills, linked to theoretical perspective taking. On the condition, of course, of remembering that in visual arts practice is *praxis*, an “acting reflexive” and not just a manufacturing gesture.

Concretely, echoing the programs and the operationalization of the objectives of a visual arts sequence, we can also suggest classifying more precisely the disciplinary acquisitions expected on several registers (without this appears as a model):

In terms of **knowledge**, cognitive psychology seems to agree today to distinguish three main categories of knowledge: *declarative* (theoretical knowledge), *procedural* (knowing how to do) and conditional<sup>32</sup> (knowing when to act). We propose that the first two categories related to the visual arts be shared among look at more specific entries that relate to the **technical** aspect (knowledge born from exploratory experience, which is also called skill), **theoretical** (for small classes especially vocabulary, for older children quotes relating to older children writings on art), or **cultural** (artists, works).

Beyond constructed knowledge, there is (or not) the internalization of these discoveries and the hoped-for ability “to stand on our own two feet”, which is ultimately a convenient expression to name the skill (subject to the reservations set out above). The **skills** expected in relation to these three axes could be, keeping the same inputs, **technical** (being able to associate and master plastic means to serve of intentions – form and meaning), **theoretical** (being capable of a reflective step back regarding one's approach, as for the practice of others, to analyze any work of art in the same way) and **cultural** (being capable of situating and understanding a work in terms of the various issues of its time and its country).

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<sup>32</sup> With particular reference to J. Tardif (1992), *Pour un enseignement stratégique. L'apport de la psychologie cognitive*, Montréal, Les Editions Logiques, p.47 and following.

To these disciplinary skills, it is appropriate to add, as stated above, which relates to the *process*, and the *methodology* (knowing how to organize yourself with rigor, fluidity of mind, reacting to the unexpected, etc...) unless we consider that these aspects, as suggested the demanding definition of Scallon, are already in articulation with the disciplinary aspect (by example to clarify, a recognized visual artist skill in terms of the choice of materials best suited to a project *ipso facto* implies a fund of methods just as than a divergent mind).

Finally, while in 1960 the only question was: “was this drawing successful?”<sup>33</sup>, all sequence<sup>33</sup> of visual arts should allow the teacher to point out a set of questions regarding each student:

- *What else can he do?*
- *What new information was discovered, understood, learned, memorized?*
- *Is he capable, on his own initiative, of developing and carrying out a process of plastic creation?*
- *Is he capable of analyzing works and making a reasoned judgment?*
- *Is he now able to “stand on his own two feet”; does he like it more who is made and discovered in visual arts?*
- *Has he developed abilities and revealed interesting skills for his future Professional orientation ?*

In France, program texts now clearly designate knowledge and skills, including transversal skills. Transversal skills also appear in numerous repositories abroad. For example, the *Program of training of the Quebec school* sets out the general structure of the first cycle of secondary education by means of several concentric circles from the most general to the more specific<sup>34</sup>:

Three training aims / five general areas / nine transversal skills / five areas of learning divided into twenty disciplinary programs (including that of arts including visual arts, music, drama and dance).

The nine transversal skills are stated as follows: - exploit information – solve problems – exercise critical judgment – implement one’s creative thinking – adopt effective working methods – exploit ICT – update its potential – cooperate – communicate appropriately. In arts programs plastics, the “relations with transversal skills” are explained point by point before

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<sup>33</sup> A “sequence” is a teaching unit. Do not confuse the sequence (didactic time) and the session (administrative time).

<sup>34</sup> Government of Quebec (2002), *Quebec school training program. Secondary education, first cycle. Quebec*: Ministry of Education, notably p. 401 to 410. Quebec research in visual arts is particularly active, both in terms of the designation of knowledge and skills to be built following a socio-constructivist mode, as well as for the interest in the relationship to other areas of learning, as for what concerns the project situation, personal creation in relation to the local context as well as cultural heritage in the broad sense.

In this regard, read the summary written by F. Gagnon-Bourget and F. Loyal (2000), *Teaching the visual arts: research, theories and practices*, Canadian Society for Education through Art, University of Western Ontario.

the three disciplinary skills to be worked on are announced: creating images personal / create media images (visual communication) / appreciate the works of art and cultural heritage objects.

When reading these items taken as concrete examples, it appears obvious that capacities built in parallel in several sectors can only be consolidated mutually. However, the question is less that of transversality than that of transfer total: For F.-V. Tochon, “*transdiscipline is a didactic category [...] The student achieves transdisciplinary functioning when it does not give in to automatisms and when it thinks independently. It does not then respond to something learned previously, but it innovates. [There is no prior criterion.] For this reason, the evaluation of the transdisciplinary level can only be metacognitive, personal, internal to the student*”<sup>35</sup>.

Because the term competence leads to the question of its scope of action. This can be disciplinary, inter-disciplinary or downright trans-disciplinary. (*transverse*). A skill is said to be transversal when it is cultivated in several disciplinary fields or that it transcends these divisions. The best example is that of “mastery of the language” emphasized in all French programs. It is therefore naturally quite general skills which do not stop at the outlines of different school subjects, let us cite for example (but the list would be long) those which refer to the ability to plan one's work, to use digital media, to do demonstrate creativity, exercise critical thinking, infer meaning from documents, express yourself in a clear and reasoned manner, and so on.

It is therefore appropriate here to make a broad parenthesis about two related data but not superimposable: the transfer of skills and so-called transversal skills. Highlighted by many as particularly important in a perspective education, the notion of transversality should not be automatically confused with the question of the transferability of methodological knowledge. A skill can be recognized as transversal (it is worked in several contexts) but nothing says that, worked in a discipline – example knowing how to argue in relation to an experimental protocol in sciences – it will bear fruit elsewhere – argue your approach in visual arts (or the opposite). According to several researchers (Rey, Vygotsky), this transferability would not be certain beyond a certain threshold<sup>36</sup>. Seeking to reconcile the “methodologists” (those who value the learning of methods) and “didacticians” (those who favor contents), Meirieu and

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<sup>35</sup> F.V. Tochon (1990), *Didactique du français*, Paris, ESF, p. 141.

<sup>36</sup> D. Hameline (1979) in *Les objectifs pédagogiques en formation initiale et formation continue* (Paris, ESF, p. 86) speaks of “knowing how to transfer” as a necessary component of learning.

See also L.S. Vygotski (1935, reissue 1985), *Pensée et langage*, Paris, Messidor-Éditions sociales. Regarding the doubts expressed, you should mainly consult: B. Rey & M. Develay (1996), *Les compétences transversales en questions*, Paris, ESF.

Develay<sup>37</sup> propose a “third-year educational objective type”: real competence would be achieved when the student not only mastered a tool or a concept but can also recognize “the characteristics of situations in which we can mobilize them”, what they call the ability to *recontextualize*. On the field of visual arts, a strong indicator of acquisition is therefore also undoubtedly the spontaneous resurgence in the long term and wisely.

Teachers of all disciplines often regret that their students do not use not in their subject what they learned in another. We sometimes hear, during a council class comments of this type: “*Student complain, behaves positively in visual arts, he listens to the teacher and is able to devote time to developing a project; he knows how to demonstrate tenacity in effort to bring it to fruition; he knows how to speak to explain clearly to the class what were his intentions...*” And it sometimes happens that the response of colleagues falls short without appeal: “*In the visual arts, perhaps. But elsewhere, things are completely different!* »

An interesting testimony regarding the development of skills or of transdisciplinary attitudes is the synthesis written in 1988 about the first experiments in France relating to the empowerment of students<sup>38</sup> and which ends by drawing up a list “effects of the situation of autonomy in the visual arts”. These effects, spotted at the time on twenty fields and over a long period of observation in college, were very numerous; Let us take up here only what relates to the students:

- *improvement in general behavior whether at school or not,*
- *increase in the student's personal motivations and motivations collective classes,*
- *change in attitude towards work,*
- *change in attitude towards partners,*
- *resolution of blocking or failure situations.*

Overall, the visual arts have systematically been linked with “life”, that is to say engaging multidisciplinary references, systematically aiming for acquisitions that go beyond the confines of the classroom, are broad skills developed there that will be likely, tomorrow, to underpin on all occasions the taking of initiatives and all types of so-called “autonomous” behaviors, or is a skill only established relative to a specific situation?

*A priori*, so-called transversal skills are very general provisions which ignore or go beyond disciplinary divisions (as we have said of “mastery of language”, but is it the same for “critical judgment” or “mastery of the tool computer science”?) According to certain researchers<sup>39</sup>, this transdisciplinarity also results from “*transfer, from one disciplinary field to*

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<sup>37</sup> P. Meirieu & M. Develay (1992), *Emile, reviens vite... ils sont devenus fous*, Paris, ESF, p. 159-167.

<sup>38</sup> *Arts plastiques au collège, enseignement en situation d'autonomie* (1988), editorial team: Magali Chanteux, Patrick Ducler, Gilbert Pélissier, Claude Roux, publication MEN-CNDP, CRDP of Lyon.

<sup>39</sup> A. Maingain, B. Dufour, G. Fourez (dir. de, 2002), *Approches didactiques de l'interdisciplinarité*, Bruxelles, De Boeck, p. 173.

*another, of concepts, theoretical models, approaches, analytical instruments, cognitive schemes, techniques, skills (...) Transferable data therefore takes on a transversal character".*

The complete transfer, for its part, assumes that acquisitions made in a specific sector can be used to overcome new obstacles relating to a other sector. Assuming that they exist occasionally, the skills mobilized do not are not necessarily transversal. We can read for a long time at D'Hainaut<sup>40</sup> the interest sparked by the transferability of skills, the ultimate degree or "full transfer" corresponding to the fact that an appropriate action can be taken in response to any unprecedented circumstance. For Bernard Rey (1996, p. 57-58) who is quite doubtful about transfers of skills given the fact that school is a place where we do not act "for real", transversality "*is not what would be common to several disciplines, but what each goes beyond them and could be used beyond the walls of the school.*" Other researchers also remain reserved. Thus Jean-Claude Parisot<sup>41</sup> who, evoking the perspective of transversal capacities, speaks of "hypothetical categories".

Some skills are described as "general" in that they are useful in multiple contexts, including outside of school (knowing how to take notes, use a dictionary, compare two quantities, know how to manage your time, etc.) and often at the same time "transversal". Maingain, Dufour and Fourez (2002, p. 169-172) cite several categories of skills general purpose: *logical* skills (mental operations such as deducing, compare...), *cognitive* (learning approaches), *methodological* (organization of sound work), *communicational* (knowing how to express oneself), *metacognitive* (reflective posture regarding his work), *epistemological* (critical perspective favoring appropriate use of his knowledge) *relational* and *socio-affective*. The authors regret that these skills are very rarely the subject of modeling or specific learning<sup>42</sup>.

Concerning in particular the development of initiative in visual arts classes in the French system and which ends with the student's personal "project" in class 3th, it is therefore important, following Jacques Tardif<sup>43</sup>, that we make a big effort to promote transfer operations in order to show how they are constructive of the autonomy of each person. In principle, this is not new for art teachers if we consider relates to the times of "creativity" and in particular to the "*synectics*" of William Gordon and George Prince<sup>44</sup> based on "*analogue*" approaches. For Xavier Roegiers (2000, p.16), this intellectual and emotional tools for adaptation to any new situation comes "from a education in audacity" that must be cultivated.

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<sup>40</sup> L. D'Hainaut (1977), *Des objectifs aux fins de l'éducation*, Paris, Nathan, p. 238-239.

<sup>41</sup> In P. Gillet, CEPEC (1991), *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>42</sup> We should also be able to return here, after L. D'Hainaut (1977), to the contributions of P. Gillet (1991), of X. Roegiers (2000) and G. Scallon, (2004).

<sup>43</sup> J. Tardif (1999), *Le transfert des apprentissages*, Montréal, Les Editions Logiques.

<sup>44</sup> W.J.J. Gordon (1965), *La stimulation des facultés créatrices par la méthode synectique*, Paris, Hommes et Techniques.

This awareness of transdisciplinary knowledge is inseparable from the practice of student self-assessment in that it promotes *metacognition* and develops skills *methodological* and *analytical* rigor in the visual arts. Studies have shown that in family environments where the child is used to reasoning about his behavior “*the practice of reformulation [is quite] essential in the construction of intelligence: in specifying what he means, seeking to explain his intentions, his projects, his actions, the child does not just acquire a more extensive vocabulary, he structures his own thinking*”<sup>45</sup>.

Indeed, the interest focused on the student and on achieving the noble objectives which will ensure its autonomy reveals two other factors to be favored: firstly, the capacity to **self-evaluate**. As early as 1972 (p. 14), C. Rogers affirmed that “each person’s evaluation of what he has learned (provides) the means for responsible learning”. On this point, there is unanimity researchers, G. de Landsheere (“learning self-evaluation is essential” : 1976, p.307) to P. Dominicé (1979, p.156) drawing a parallel with J. Piaget (“decentering”) who had shown that “self-regulation”<sup>46</sup>, essential in life, is both the process that accompanies the formation of personality and which contributes to the construction of knowledge and operational structures necessary for the functioning of intelligence. The virtues of self-evaluation in the visual arts have been remarkably well explained in several texts from trainee teachers in our IUFM summary on assessment of prior learning<sup>47</sup>.

All of these elements underpin “constructivist” theories of learning. to which we now refer in visual arts. Remember that this chain logic is very old since it refers to “active methods” (Ferrière, 1920 but also Dewey, 1896!) and that from 1935, Piaget, in an article for the *French Encyclopedia*<sup>48</sup>, had written of intelligence that “its activity is a continuous construction” (hence, then, the famous “operations” of transformation structures).

Secondly, what Piaget called “decentering” favors the neighboring operation what is “**metacognition**”<sup>49</sup>. Being able to judge the result is already understanding what was at stake, but it is also having control over the process which led to this result. Develop the metacognitive faculty is today designated as a major objective of all training, therefore of the evaluation. For M. Grangeat<sup>50</sup>, metacognition serves “- to construct knowledge and skills with

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<sup>45</sup> P. Meirieu & M. Develay (1992), *op. cit.*, p. 140.

<sup>46</sup> He refers to J. Piaget et B. Inhelder (1978), *La psychologie de l'enfant*, Paris, PUF, p. 101-103 et 125.

<sup>47</sup> As a reminder, refer to our publication: *Arts plastiques, l'évaluation des acquis* (2002), downloadable online from : [PDF-EVAL-1004ko \(gaillotdidartsplast.com\)](http://PDF-EVAL-1004ko.gaillotdidartsplast.com)

<sup>48</sup> J. Piaget (1969), *Psychologie et pédagogie*, Paris, Denoël, p. 47-50 and 230-232

<sup>49</sup> In reference to the American J.H. Flavell who created the term in 1976 in an article on cognitive development: it is a question of exercising feedback reflective on one's own learning process. Read in particular B. Noël, *La métacognition*, Brussels, De Boeck, 1991, p. 19-21.

<sup>50</sup> M. Grangeat & P. Meirieu (dir. 1997), *La métacognition, une aide au travail des élèves*, Paris, ESF, p.27.

greater chances of success and transferability; - has learn problem-solving strategies; - to be more autonomous in management tasks and in learning.

If we admit that a large part of visual expertise is built by experience, we will consider extensively that there is metacognition in the visual arts each once the student is able not to describe his approach but to explain it, that is to say to link through a logical and critical operation the choice of one's means to one's intentions of expression and thus to become aware of the procedural dynamics that he initiated to carry out his idea. In teaching French, let us also note that the aim of the levels higher taxonomic studies often involves education in self-assessment and awareness metacognitive<sup>51</sup>. The models of *analysis of practices* (G. Ferry, 1983) situate the theory in the back and forth with practice or to formalize the experience by broadening the field of representations, or with the aim of acquiring *know-how to analyze* by decentering which must ultimately enable the learner to have critical control over the progress of their research. Here we are very close to the logic that inspires learning methods in visual arts.

We should also point out that Quebec research on the creative process and which presents this process as the succession of three phases (inspiration, elaboration, distancing) recommends a didactic approach that is “*metacognitive* in the sense that it aims understanding by the student of the process he goes through to generate images<sup>52</sup>”.

Concerning the 1998 programs in France, it should be added that the function metacognitive (understanding how we understood and acted, therefore) is particularly active in 3rd class as part of the project approach? Whenever it comes to planning an activity, writes B. Noël, and therefore “*faced with a new situation, the subject is led to discuss processes or concepts that they have used previously in difficult situations different*”<sup>53</sup>. In some cases, this recovery is effective, in others it is a “abusive generation” which leads to failure. The third case that we will add is that where the student, aware of both similarities and differences, spontaneously modifies certain behaviors, partly improvises, fumbles, in order to produce a response adapted: we see here how an operational metacognitive awareness contributes to the expansion of initial competence. Moreover, for Grangeat (1997, p. 125-127), there is success of a learning when a student is sufficiently experienced to distance himself, reinvest, transfer, to emancipate oneself from the teacher and also to detach oneself from their frames of thought usual, which means that he has gained autonomy.

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<sup>51</sup> As a reminder: F.V. Tochon (1990), *op.cit.*, p. 141 and 156.

<sup>52</sup> P. Gosselin (1999), « développement de la conscience du processus créateur en classe d'arts plastiques au secondaire », *Actes du colloque 1998 sur la recherche en enseignement des arts visuels*, Sherbrooke, CREA éditions, p.15-21.

<sup>53</sup> B. Noël, *La métacognition* (second expanded edition, 1997), p.183.



If we take the evolution of our discipline in France in the light of these considerations, that is to say the enormous change which consisted of abandoning the exercise of execution in favor of the “**proposed course**”, in a period of time between 1972 and 1985, the objective no longer being the mastery of a single manual (or “plastic”) know-how but also a “**beyond the practice**”<sup>54</sup> that we could call the discovery and understanding of things art, three consequences are essential, born from the inversion of the didactic schema.

The first is that, situating ourselves in an *expression* system where the student's production will be a *surprise* for the teacher (Eisner, 1969), we can only learn from what has just been produced. Confirmation. Evaluation (the assessment) is therefore one of the privileged moments of teaching<sup>55</sup>, “*intrinsically linked to the course*” (to use the French formulation from 1996).

Then, we cannot prepare our evaluation on completely defined *a priori* criteria (which would bring us back to the “expected product”) but only prepare to identify *indicators of success and understanding*<sup>56</sup>. If I ask 6th grade students to paint “the fastest sardine in the world”, the task of evaluating the (predictable) result is easy; on the other hand, if I propose in 3rd grade or in high school “praise of speed”, I have no idea what my students will produce (which leads to knowing how to take into account the difference between *criterion, indicator, index*<sup>57</sup>).

The third consequence is now well known, at least since college programs very explicitly underlined its terms. If the objective is always to acquire the skills necessary for personal plastic expression, it is also, with regard to a practical situation, to “*raise awareness of what is discovered and understood*” in particular “*what is artistic creation and giving meaning to their work.*” Even if it means putting the note indented (teachers sometimes wonder: “do we always have to put a note?”). Reminder that the rating is not an end in itself but can also offer material, through the appreciative debate carried out about the approaches of one and the other (the choices made) to verbalize on what was at stake and therefore to stabilize the vocabulary and understanding. If at the start of the 4th grade, in order to evaluate acquired knowledge in terms of pictorial expression, I offer the students in groups of two in one hour on a large format the “competition for the most attractive non-figurative painting”, the aim of the “game” is not really (even if we do it to satisfy the students) about drawing up a list of achievements but about making people verbalize and reflect on all the parameters that the pictorial act has reactivated and brought back to memory.

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<sup>54</sup> B.A. Gaillot (1998), in *Pratiques et arts plastiques*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires, p. 187.

<sup>55</sup> B.A. Gaillot (1991), « Enseigner les arts plastiques par l'évaluation », in *Cahiers Pédagogiques*, n° 294, mai 91, p.24-25.

<sup>56</sup> That is to say, identifying “sign behaviors”, to use the formula of A. Bonboir (1972) in *La docimologie*, Paris, PUF, p. 99.

<sup>57</sup> Read also J.J. Bonniol & M. Vial (1997), *Les modèles de l'évaluation*, Bruxelles, De Boeck, p. 145.

Therefore, oral is not always enough, it is a question of equipping oneself with the tools which will allow, beyond the plastic production and the events experienced in class, to control these understandings, what remains of it. more or less long term. Today, more and more French teachers are accompanying their lessons with project sheets, various questionnaires, keyword searches, quick games (these are not written questions!) where the student answers with a few words or by checking boxes or linking items. Summary documents are also frequently distributed, sometimes with vignettes of some of the work of students in the class and the works of art encountered on this occasion. Faced with this scrupulous concern to “learn lessons”, it is not surprising that several trainee teacher memoirs are entitled “*What remains of our lessons?*”. A healthy concern, but which only makes sense if we force ourselves to think it through to the end of its logic: there is no real acquisition unless it has been memorized lastingly but, even more, only if it gave rise to spontaneous restitution, subsequently and wisely.

And this is where we find the question of the **notebook** (rather that of “work practices”, which accompanies the lessons of most disciplines). But these notebooks keep only trace of cognitive elements so we think that this one benefits from being thought as a “**logbook**”, as a “**diary**” accompanying the student and able to collect the memory of various experiences carried out by the class and by the student in particular (research, sketches, photos of the work carried out, vocabulary, artistic references, etc.), accompaniment which can today take digital form: IT is currently considered as a self-training tool in training centers. documentation or self-service in the classroom (a search application by notions immediately compares key words, quotes, student achievements, works of artists) and as an individual memory (the student keeps the digital trace of his work over four years of college, possibly some other work from classmates with a view, here too, to what gave material for a “lesson”, beyond the practice time and which was synthesized by the teacher). “**Digital notebook**”, therefore: today, young people teachers are trained for this.

The idea is not new (the “personal research file”) and presents a very advanced character in Canadian research, for example, under the name “**portfolio**”. According to Scallon (2000), “the portfolio is a collection of works or productions [allowing] each student to report on their accompanied achievements evaluating what he has done (self-evaluation) and reporting on his progress<sup>58</sup>.”

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<sup>58</sup> Scallon G. (2000). Le portfolio ou dossier d'apprentissage. *Dossiers de l'Université de Laval*. Online : <http://www.fse.ulaval.ca/gerard.scallon/fascicules/portfolio>

In most descriptions (notably : France, MEN-Educnet, 2005), the portfolio is the place where the student collects his work<sup>59</sup>. The first operation is therefore that of the *selection* if not everything is systematically archived, which means mastery of the *evaluation* criteria associated with the various productions. Then, this work is *organized* in a presentation, either simply ordered, or classified by categories or arranged in a tree structure. Essential element, the productions are commented on by the student, which implies *feedback reflective* on what has been (more or less well) done. Finally, are often associated with work traces of research and the main scientific references relating to the subject treaty.

Thus, the interests in terms of training and evaluation are multiple: feedback, firstly, on the main questions studied, *appropriation of learning* and implementation perspective of these, development of *metacognitive awareness* (one of the key notions currently) through self-evaluation (a better understanding of one's successes and difficulties) and, overall, development of *critical thinking*. The presentation develops a better understanding of the *meaning of discoveries* made within the disciplinary field but just as much, when it comes to presenting them to others (notably parents), in relationship with the context of daily life. Finally, we must not underestimate the character *highlighting* the manufacturing and presentation of this object as well as the technicalities transversal computer scientists perfected on this occasion. All these aspects go into the same sense of *student empowerment* (“helping the learner to situate themselves and become autonomous”, MEN, Educnet, 2005). In addition, the portfolio is also the history of a *process learning*, the means of structuring a work and discovery space, it also allows, thanks to hyperlinks, to connect class work with the world of knowledge present in especially on the Internet.

Our Canadian colleagues have adapted tools for Quebec to meet the needs in art named according to the levels: notebooks of new words, project notebook, journal of edge, discovery notebook, portfolio. From their point of view, “*being primarily responsible for management of their learning, the student must create a learning file of the type portfolio (formative and training assessments) demonstrating different types of knowledge, more precisely declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge, in order to arrive at to an evaluation file that highlights their strengths and challenges throughout the year. During his work, the student learns to name what he has learned, what he is capable of doing and how he does it. Everything is noted on a sheet which constitutes the assessment of acquired knowledge. At the end of the stage, a descriptive report is drawn up jointly by the student and the teacher. This evaluation focuses on the approach by favoring analysis, organization, communication and objectification. It also targets knowledge, skills and attitudes. She applies to each subject, to*

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<sup>59</sup> M.E.N. (2005). *Portfolio numérique*. Paris, Dossiers Educnet, online : <http://eduscol.education.fr/numerique/dossier/archives/portfolionumerique>

*education in values and to projects where there is integration of subjects and transdisciplinarity*"<sup>60</sup>.

An interesting university study testing the contribution of the portfolio in teaching secondary school artistic project has just been carried out in Quebec (Dussault, 2003). Its content appears all the more valuable as it associates the portfolio with the project situation.

This study first emphasizes the major interest of the portfolio which consists of helping the student to take ownership of the learning and involve them in the evaluation of their acquired knowledge. He poses essential questions such as: - should we standardize portfolios; should we put everything or who selects the contents; should we present the drafts or only the achievements finals? Concerning the electronic version, he notes that this makes it possible to "reinvent the notion portfolio" and offers the opportunity to have a wider audience, it also highlights the interest of hypertextual links and the enormous gains in space, transport and accessibility. The study of Dussault takes up the various benefits already presented in the general context and linked to a socio-constructivist vision of learning associated with the development of judgment critical<sup>61</sup>.

The idea of the portfolio is to ensure that the student pays better attention to his acquisitions, that he can think of himself in a process (a duration) of experiences and discoveries, it is in a certain way to give substance to what has been constructed and, in visual arts, preserve the traces of what has been developed. But we must associate "journal" and "selection": imperatively not to compile/accumulate but to organize/dominate.

This type of system thus places a double emphasis on *process skills* and refers to notions repeatedly valued in this issue: *self-assessment* and *metacognition*. Many authors<sup>62</sup> recommend elements of commentary to which we are already used to it, in particular:

- *say why I liked this experience (why I chose to select it here);*
- *say how I went about carrying out this work;*
- *say what I learned on this occasion.*

The portfolio is thus both a training instrument as has just been said but also of evaluation in that it contains pieces which are witnesses of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired but also, by the way in which the elements are presented, the

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<sup>60</sup> F. Monière, "La voie artistique, un projet pédagogique intégrateur" in F. Gagnon-Bourget & F. Joyal (2000), *op. cit.*, page 115.

<sup>61</sup> Dussault S. (2003), *Le portfolio médiatique comme artefact et outil de réflexion critique en pédagogie du projet artistique au secondaire*. Montréal : Mémoire de maîtrise, université du Québec (UQAM). Online : [Le portfolio médiatique comme artefact ou outil de réflexion critique en pédagogie du projet artistique au secondaire - Maîtrise en arts visuels et médiatiques \(uqam.ca\)](http://www.uqam.ca/~artsvisuels/mediatique/mediatique.htm)

<sup>62</sup> S.G. Paris & L.R. Ayres (2000), *Réfléchir et devenir. Apprendre en autonomie. Des outils pour l'enseignant et l'apprenant*, Bruxelles, De Boeck, p. 94 as well as L.M. Bélair (1999), *L'évaluation dans l'école*, Paris, ESF.

perception that the student has of it (we can for example ask the student to indicate which new project he now wishes to tackle).

In this regard, the opportunity to present one's case to an audience can only be a reinforcing factor...provided you do not see it as just a pretext for writing the quarterly report ! Naturally, it is necessary to plan for the integration of this type of support into the educational system in the classroom and, when possible, in work at home: How much time to devote to it; When ? Exchanges between students? Exhibition at the media library? Online consultation? Parent meetings<sup>63</sup> or open days?

In short, digital or not, this avenue is undoubtedly worth exploring for what concerns our discipline at college. We will also notice that the idea of the portfolio has already widely made headway in France, whether it concerns the production of students during “discovery itineraries” in 4th grade or “supervised personal work” in high school and, even more, the new baccalaureate rules where the visual arts test is replaced by the presentation of a work file since 2003 (taking into account the ambitions of our discipline, plastic production in limited time and format had revealed for many years its difficulty in demonstrating a wide range of skills such as which is now detailed in the final year program). French files *Educnet* appearing online also encourages moving in this direction.

Ultimately, it has only been a very few years (the mid-eighties ten, we will say) that the effort of reflection and training of visual arts teachers, notably at the Aix-Marseille University, focused on two points which today prove essential: **the practice of self-assessment and capitalization of acquired knowledge**. In our eyes, give credibility teaching the arts goes through this, so we will insist here on the absolute necessity of work in this direction. A survey by the French Ministry of Education (INRP) on the assessment of acquired knowledge in 3rd year was carried out the echo<sup>64</sup> already a few years ago, noting that if the students generally had acquired the experience of a diversified and updated practice, which involved reflective hindsight and of understanding the issues, at least put into words by the specific vocabulary, was significantly less satisfactory. Hence the interest attributed to our training in Aix-en-Provence to work on “**teaching tools**” (and, moreover, many visual arts colleagues use it regularly).

Let us add that the control of acquired knowledge is not incompatible with the project situation personal in 3rd grade: both the teacher and the student, to note progress, can keep it up to date a double-entry grid, providing knowledge and skills as you go truly internalized by taking as a guide the benchmark of acquisitions hoped for at the end of 3th and developed in the program accompanying notebook. But without whether it becomes a system or a routine,

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<sup>63</sup> Paris & Ayres (*op. cit.*, p. 86) recommend “portfolio days” for parents.

<sup>64</sup> INRP (1997), *Connaissances en arts plastiques. Bilan du premier cycle*, Paris, éditions de l'INRP, p. 189-197.

because no content score will be worth or can replace the awakening of a curiosity or a desire, however fragile they may be. In this regard, let us think of the warning of C. Delorme (1987): “*The temptation to want everything evaluating awaits the apprentice-evaluator [...] apart from the danger of putting on the same level information of unequal value [this would suggest] that the more we multiply the analysis, the more rigorous will be the evaluation*<sup>65</sup>”.

The work of the internship days on the assessment in visual arts conducted by the University of Aix as part of the continuing training of staff in 2002 were a great moment of sharing of teaching practices made it possible to share this same concern to support the student in his progress and in its future.

With regard to artistic teaching and the evaluation of the acquisitions that we can expect, what is inevitably raised is the **question of meaning**, we cannot not not emphasize this point when concluding.

Beyond the practice, beyond the obvious interest of giving the student the taste and the means of engaging in a dynamic of creative expression, we must remain aware that for the student, in class as well as at the time of their schooling assessment, the benefits must be readable: to be better able to grasp the questions of one's environment and one's time, to be able to develop personal reflection and take initiatives, be informed of its strong points (rather than its weak points, we speak of a "positive" evaluation) from which he can build a professional future in society.

So that, if our imperatives are first and foremost to take an interest in stabilized disciplinary acquisitions – these are the designated knowledge and skills explicitly by the texts – and to control them, our concerns are also to broaden our investigations in two directions:

- *what concerns the construction of the adult person: what about acquisitions developed transversal skills (mastery of the language in 6th grade, rigor of reasoning, spirit criticism, building and carrying out a project to completion, civic thinking); curiosity and desire regarding art, for example?*
- *what relates to self-esteem and life profile: how what was experienced in the visual arts can it help to open up future prospects for students?*<sup>66</sup>

The task is difficult, no one will dispute that. But either way, evaluate the fruits of a teaching for which we received “mission”, that’s it, it’s going well until this term. And it is also this necessity which will continue to justify the place of the “visual arts” within the French education system.

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<sup>65</sup> C. Delorme (1987), *L'évaluation en questions*, Paris, ESF, p. 29.

<sup>66</sup> To learn more about the skills, read “the competency-based approach in visual arts”, in English, online : <https://gailotdidartplast.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CBA-UK24.pdf>

Because even more broadly, to evaluate is first of all to exchange, it is to share a quest for future without there being any imposed level or target to be achieved set in advance (the exams, very occasionally, are done for this).

For the rest, that is to say the essential (which has nothing to do with making people believe that everything is successful), to evaluate is to open up to the unexpected (a word that is dear to us) to seek being there, it is an operation that must immediately be considered complex and permanent.

**To evaluate, we will say to conclude, is to help the progress of others.**

*Updated and translated in July 2005,  
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