

CALL FOR A FAIRER ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS AND STUDENTS

As a result of preconceptions based on the ranking of individuals, assessment systems often appear as a skimming device. They usually follow the three tier rule: a “bad” tier, a “middle” tier and a “good” tier, even when the goals have been reached by most students. This phenomenon, referred to as the “Macabre Constant” manifests more or less at different stages of the educational system with a few exception (i.e. in professional education).

Furthermore, uncommonly low average grades for assessment, even in classes of a high standard, are problematic and cannot be solely acknowledged. The same goes for the overwhelming failure rate of some exams.

Therefore, under the pressure of society, teachers often end up being the assessor against their will when their true mission lies in teaching. They may even sometimes contribute to the discouraging of a whole generation of student whom, despite their work and level, belong to the “bad” tier.

A situation such as this one isn't set in stone. It is possible to change course, quickly, to benefit all parties. It requires an acknowledgement of the malfunction and a clear resolution to eradicate it. Simple and effective solutions already exist, and have already been tested. They are based on a clearer and more precise wording (at the national scale) of what is expected from the students and most importantly a trusting relationship between pupil and teacher. In particular, the content of an assessment and its length must correspond to a ‘contract’ established clearly by the educator, without any catches. In these conditions, the supposed failure of a student ceases to feel like an injustice.

In all debates relating to schools, this major assessment issue has been mostly overlooked.

All parties in agreement of this diagnosis seek to call for a larger debate in order to remedy this educational flaw rapidly; they demand for this question to be integrated into educators' initial and continued training.

Movement against the ‘Macabre Constant’ (<http://MCLCM.fr>)