



## SICI Workshop 21-23 November 2012 – Paris/Sèvres-CIEP Teacher Performance Assessment in a Context of Change and Innovation

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Good morning all of you,

My intention through these few words is not at all to try to summarize the workshop, but more to try to react both from a French and a personal point of view to what was done and said during these three days.

I will do that in three directions:

- My first reflexion will be about what I will call the “SICI influence” in France...
- As a second point, I will re-start from what Xavier Pons said yesterday after these so exciting experiences of real inspections we shared in various classrooms, when he said “What a pity!”, referring to the quality of the exchanges and of the produced knowledge, and to the gap between this quality and its confidentiality...
- My third point intends to focus on teacher inspection in France with something that will try to be a more systemic approach, and this time I will refer to what our Dutch colleague Rick Steur explained yesterday through what he called the “Droste effect”, although I am sorry to say that in my family, as far as cocoa powder is concerned, we have always preferred Van Houten, another Dutch trademark!

### ***A) First point: about the influence of SICI in France***

I was asked by Daniel Charbonnier to say a couple of words at the conclusion of this seminar, maybe because, as I previously was more involved in SICI matters than I am now, I can have some long-term view about the influence and relationship between SICI and our French national specific education system.

And I remember Marie-Hélène Ahnborg asked the first day what had been the consequences of the Créteil seminar, held in 2008, to which Thierry Bossard also referred. So I feel I have to answer Marie-Hélène’s question...

We all know in most of our countries that governments are not waiting for the conclusions of a SICI seminar to make immediate decisions! But we all know too that hard changes need time, and that is a lesson the Scots always repeat: we perfectly know what obstacles we met after the Créteil seminar, maybe because it was not possible to introduce school assessment without changing anything in teacher assessment!

All decisions are systemic ones, and we cannot just import or adopt or even imagine by ourselves the best idea without changing the whole.

That is the reason why, four years later, we decided to ask for SICI's help a second time, not about what most of you actually do, I mean school assessment, but about a more "intimate" French tradition and practice, I mean teacher assessment.

And then I am sure you perfectly understood that yesterday morning you were introduced in the heart, in the intimacy of a French practice, that Xavier Pons described as "an intense moment"; you penetrated something like a mystery! Be it erotic or religious, the metaphor is meaningful, as between us we often call "confession" the talk between the teacher and the inspector we all witnessed yesterday. And be sure that your being there was extremely valuable for us: I can tell you that what you said, when you were in presence of the mystery, will long resonate to our ears after the seminar. About teacher assessment, when for instance Isobel McGregor remarked that in primary schools we cannot say it is an external evaluation, because the inspector not only knows the teacher well, but to some extent is his/her boss! Or when you observed how error was treated in French classes, and so on...

So let us say that if there is not any immediate SICI effect, there are SICI seeds and I am happy to see that during this seminar it appeared that French gardeners are more and more open to these seeds. Of course it will depend on us that SICI seeds circulate in the future but I am very pleased to see, from this point of view, that we have had among us and with us, in this seminar, not only national but also regional and local inspectors. This is maybe, in my opinion, one among the most important points.

***B) Second point: "What a pity!"... reflection about the knowledge produced on the occasion of teachers' inspections***

I personally never "inspect" any person or any school, but I very often meet teachers, principals, pedagogical regional inspectors, as well as regional (we say "academic") authorities in Education. And you cannot imagine how often I find myself in a position where I say to myself what Xavier Pons said yesterday: "What a pity!"

I think I can go still further as far as I often observe that this invaluable knowledge produced on the occasion of these individual inspections is too often lost and does not circulate enough. There is not enough capitalisation, very far from that. I often read the reports written down by the inspectors and I often think quality is there, as many of you thought through sharing these experiences yesterday. But this knowledge produced about teachers, teaching, learning, who benefits from it? Where does it circulate? I am sorry to say for instance that the people (we call them "directeurs académiques") who are in charge of following the "collèges", for instance, very often have no access to these reports. This knowledge does not benefit to them.

There's something like a big insurmountable wall between some categories of people who all work in the field of Education: I can still ask most principals as I did years ago, "Would you mind telling me about the state of Geography teaching and learning in your school?" and still get no answer. And ask the same questions to many directors and get the same embarrassed reaction.

***C) Third point: about teacher inspection in France and its current limits***

I will now ask myself some questions in the logic of the “Droste effect”. If we understand that according to the kind of teacher inspection we practise, we will have different teachers, and at the end produce a different Education, I just ask:

- If we want teachers to work together inside the school, and share a real leadership...
- If we want them to share a curricular conception of teaching, learning and assessing students beyond and above their evaluation in the various distinct subjects...
- If we want to put more coherence in the Educational system as a whole and to conciliate pedagogical and managerial approaches...

THEN.... is it possible to maintain only personal and so exclusively subject-oriented inspections, as ignorant of the context of each school as it is often the case, so weak as to the approach of what the students actually learn?

Of course asking is answering.

We need Educational organisations to be more distant from a Fordist model. What we saw yesterday was still much too Fordist.

Must I add students are not cars? And that we are not in Detroit?

I thank you for your attention!