Resource sheet
Evaluative competence
Section E/Training module

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This fact sheet will highlight the indicators and some of the tools that can serve as a guide and help in developing and consolidating the evaluation competence, which should be considered as a fundamental part of the didactic and pedagogical competence needed to identify and respond to the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs.

The objectives of the fact sheet :

1. Understanding what is meant by evaluation competence and how fundamental it is in the professional competence of each teacher
2. Deepening the concept of formative evaluation
3. Knowing the normative sources that regulate the evaluation of pupils with SEN
4. Recognizing the importance of self-regulation and self-assessment as critical moments in the evaluation process
5. Knowing how "competence" is constructed.
6. Knowing how to plan and evaluate skills
7. Knowing the concept of authentic evaluation.

Evaluative competence
In Italy, the subject of the verification of prior learning and the assessment of pupils with SEN is dealt with in the legislation in force (Law 170/2010 and Ministerial Decree of 12 July 2011 n.5669) which stipulates that:
1. The periodic and final school evaluation of pupils and students with SEN must be consistent with the pedagogical-didactical interventions mentioned in the previous articles.
2. School institutions adopt assessment methods that enable the pupil or student with SEN to effectively demonstrate the level of learning achieved, by applying measures that determine the optimal conditions for the performance to evaluate - in relation to the execution time and the methods for structuring the tests - paying particular attention to the mastery of the disciplinary content, whatever the aspects related to the deficit competence.
3. State examination commissions, at the end of the first and second cycles of education, take into account the specific subjective situations, pedagogical modalities and forms of evaluation identified in individualized and personalized pedagogical paths. On the basis of a specific disorder, they may reserve candidates longer test periods than for others, even for state examinations. The same Commissions also guarantee the use of appropriate compensatory tools and adopt evaluation criteria that are particularly attentive to content rather than form, both in the written tests and in the national INVALSI tests (Instituto Nazionale per the

Valutazione del Sistema dell'Instruzione or National Proof) required for state examinations, as well as in the interview phases.

4. School institutions implement all possible educational strategies in order to enable pupils and students with SEN to learn foreign languages. To this end, they improve the ways in which the learner can best express his/her skills, by promoting oral expression, and by using the most appropriate compensatory tools and dispensing measures. Written tests in a foreign language are designed, presented and evaluated in a way that is compatible with SEN difficulties.

Key words to remember: adequate, consistent, respectful of time and methods, optimal with the ultimate goal of developing an assessment centered on the pupil and his/her progress.

"Evaluation must therefore take the form of a practice that concretely explains the modalities of differentiation according to the discipline and the type of task, distinguishing between what is a direct expression of the disorder and what expresses the pupil's commitment and the knowledge actually acquired."(Guidelines, p.28).

The Individualized and Personalized Pathway (PDP in Italian) is the tool that aims at defining, monitoring and documenting the most appropriate intervention strategies and assessment criteria for SEN pupils' learning.

Evaluation must consider a series of elements that go beyond simply checking the content, by evaluating the way of study, the behavior, the commitment, the capacity to apply solutions to his/her difficulties.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a fundamental part of the training action, because through the assessment tests, the teacher will not only know what the student has learned, but also how he/she did it and it is on the basis of this knowledge that the teacher can plan the next steps.

Evaluation is a process that accompanies the pupil throughout his/her training course, with the aim of contributing to improving the quality of learning.
Its purpose is to verify the achievement or not of all the objectives set by the training action: it is therefore a real observation of what each pupil has acquired (completely, partly or not at all).

Assessment is a means of understanding what knowledge, skills and competences the pupil possesses and is able to master: it is on this basis that a possible catch-up can be planned.

Last but not least, it provides the teacher with very important information to step back from his or her own teaching action.

But evaluation is a complex and relevant act within the educational pathway. In this regard, Visalberghi (1955) introduces a reflection on the relationship of interdependence between the teaching process and the learning process. From this point of view, evaluation becomes a dynamic process because it does not only concern the performance or skills acquired by the pupil, but also the cognitive processes and work styles adopted by the pupil. The assessment processes also aim at developing an ever greater responsibility for the pupil in relation to the established objectives (art.1, OM 92/2007) and therefore, more than the definition of an assessment, the evaluation must lead to a detailed understanding, by the pupil, of the strengths of his/her work and the elements to be improved, in order to be able to exploit them through a continuous and reciprocal pupil-teacher / teacher-pupil feedback.

A correct evaluation during the school path must therefore be able to offer frequent tests which make it possible to follow the training action from the pupils' point of view, to make them aware of the level reached and, for the teachers, to bring necessary changes to proposed training methods if they do not prove to be effective.

Moreover, these same evaluations, if they are frequent, offer a good basis for the final, summative or certificative evaluation.

Evaluation also has deep roots in the way teachers think about learning, about how to conduct teaching, how to relate to pupils and in worrying about their motivation.

Thinking about the renewal of school evaluation does not only mean introducing different pedagogical practices, but offering a new vision of the learning process, identifying inclusive forms of accompaniment, trusting the possibility of involving self-assessment by pupils, by using tools and forms that take into account the motivation generated by the feedback on learning.

How to perform an assessment for a pupil with lexical access difficulties
A pupil with special educational needs often has difficulty remembering the lexicon specific to a subject. To remedy this problem, it is appropriate to organize the terms specific to a discipline in a thematic glossary, a tool available to the pupil even during the controls, as well as a mental map that provides not only indications under the form of images, but also the key terms that recall the concepts and, consequently, the content.

For a pupil with lexical access difficulties, a card that is only accompanied by images, a support for oral presentation, does not really help, because of the difficulty to remember the specific terms evoked by these images but not associated. Often, in the presence of a significant difficulty of lexical access, it is necessary that the mental map contains at the same time the terms which relate to the key concepts and the logical connectors.

Nevertheless, in order to verify knowledge and skills, it is important to ensure that the process of reflection can in no way be hindered by a difficult research, the vocabulary, a word: the provided support, be it a template, a map, a list or a thematic glossary must be able to provide, in a simple and accessible way, the terms, dates, names of the characters (especially if they are not Italian).

The best control method is that, following the teacher's advice, pupils participate in the construction of presentations of learning topics through multimedia languages that allow customization according to their preferences and needs: to apply this method, teachers must have specific skills, user's experience and technical means offered by the school. If it is not possible to implement the pedagogy of the Flipped Classroom, by going beyond the concept of frontal verification or linear questioning, it is necessary to rethink the structure of the interrogations.

For example, a pupil can be asked for a comment on a video shown by the teacher or found among other materials on the web: this activity allows him/her to use the acquired knowledges by exposing them through the video itself, interacting with the whole class group and triggering reflections and ideas in their comrades too.

Another help, originally designed for SEN pupils, but useful for all, is the use of lexicalized mental maps of the subject to be checked, built in class with pupils during an explanation phase or prepared by pupils.

These presentation materials must be linear and accessible, written in a clear, visible and orderly way in order to quickly find specific terms and causal links, stimulating the organization of the presentation.

The following task is to compare the presentation guides built independently by the different pupils, stimulating reflection on the differences, in order to start a metacognition work.

The use of the presentation guide during the control is an inclusive practice that should be offered to all pupils, without differentiation according to educational needs, because, as a support for the organization of the content, it is not in itself a facilitation but an opportunity to reflect on how to organize an oral presentation.

Mistakes to avoid during oral questioning are as follows:

- Asking pressing questions,
- Not leaving enough time to organize the answer,
- Asking other pupils to answer the questions about which the questioned pupil hesitates
- Interrupting the questioned pupil at the risk of making him/her lose the thread of the speech, not allowing the interviewee to have the guides and the glossaries in front of him/her.
- Believing that, as teachers, it is possible to replace the materials described above during the interview, by suggesting that the child does not remember them or not interrupting the pupil's presentation to guide its organization. The visual support that the pupil knows and masters can not be replaced by other modalities, much less by a help that uses other sensory channels (oral instead of visual).

As a conclusion, in the evaluation, one will have to observe either the level of knowledge of the subject, through the presentation of his/her own materials, or the level of competence achieved through their use. Some slowness in lexical research will have to be taken into account (even with the use of thematic glossaries), but one will take into consideration the capacity of personal elaboration, the capacity of synthesis, the capacity to motivate the choices of presentation and the modalities of self-correction.

How to perform an assessment for a dyslexic pupil

The written verification test will have the same general characteristics, while retaining the specificities of the taught subject. Thematic glossaries are essential in this case, as well as clear lists of topics to master: during the study phase, these tools should be given to the pupil with specific references to the manual pages where they are located. The main thing is to use maps or tables that contain specific and emblematic vocabulary signs: the presence of disciplinary terminology, dates and logical connections will be linked to the difficulty of lexical access or storage specific to each pupil. Controls should be structured in a clear and linear way, avoid visual confusion or overpopulation, and provide documents with short, easy-to-understand sentences. Multiple choice questions are more accessible than open questions.
However, some criteria are to be respected for the construction of multiple choice tests:
- possible answers should not be too long
- the words used must be well differentiated
- avoiding double negation
- avoiding dates close to each other
- offering a digital format compatible with speech synthesis

Open-ended questions are an appropriate tool for certain subjects and for subjects where it is not the recognition of the correct content that is required, but the argumentative competence. In this case too, the test should be offered in digital format accessible by speech synthesis. The use of the computer is essential both as a support for written production and for access to the assessment's questions, whether open-ended or with multiple choice. Speech synthesis makes it possible to check the spelling, the textual consistency and the linguistic structure used and allows a real assessment of the student's abilities by compensating for his specific difficulties. Tests proposed to a pupil with SEN without adequate compensatory tools do not allow the assessment of actual skills and therefore have no evaluation value.

Types of custom review and evaluation

The assessment can take place by:

- Scheduled interrogations that do not overlap;
- Tests with clear and non-multiple evaluation objectives;
- Oral questioning with guided questions;

- Tests with more time or shorter tests in order to evaluate a single skill;
- Compensation with oral tests if the written test has not produced an adequate result;
- Using educational supports during written and oral tests (concept maps, mental maps, diagrams, data tables ...)
- Using compensatory technological and computer tools;
- Computer tests;
- Individualized tests (with fewer requests, closed questions, true / false, grids)
- Tests with several solutions, which can correspond to different skill levels

The evaluation through written and oral tests must enable the pupil to show his/her skills in a way adapted to the type of problem he/she presents.

Follow-up by teachers is required to evaluate the effectiveness of the compensatory adaptations adopted and the achievement of objectives.

The importance of strategies for oral repetition

Pupils often rely on their great ability to understand, without implementing a strategy of oral repetition of the subjects studied.

This results in a poor fluidity of speech during interrogations / exams. The interrogation / examination moment is related to the oral exposure skills in which the paraphrase intervenes, that is to say the production of sentences that have a meaning equivalent to the original, but which do not faithfully reproduce the lexicon and the syntax of the text: only in this way can it be proved that the understanding has been acquired.

The production of an oral expression can be programmed, using a plan and other tools (mental maps, diagrams and visual aids for learning), prepared in advance, in order to present the subject in an orderly manner and to keep control over the oralization of speech.

Mental maps and visual aids for knowledge as tools to support learning are not only useful for SEN pupils but for all, as we can read in the National Guidelines for the Program of nursery school and primary school (MIUR, ie Ministry of Education, University and Research, 2012, pp. 32,33).

Mental maps as tools for inclusion

Mental maps are tools that can support the learning of every pupil and can be easily used by teachers in teaching and evaluation of the whole class.

It is precisely because of their connotation, structure and logic (the theory of meaningful learning) that they are well adapted to an inclusive and meaningful pedagogy through which we can lead pupils to ask questions, make assumptions , analyze, establish connections, conceptualize, verify hypotheses.

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