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Adapting to the Ethics of Differentiated Learning Assessment: Analysis of Foreign-trained Teachers' Experiences in Quebec

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Résumé de l'article

Dans la dernière décennie, l'école québécoise a accueilli un nombre important d'enseignants formés à l'étranger (MEES, 2018). Les recherches sur leur savoir-évaluer montrent que, pour les enseignants qui s'habituent aux normes et aux valeurs de la culture de l'évaluation pour la sanction dans leur pays d'origine, la prise en compte des conventions du travail de leur milieu d'accueil est un enjeu névralgique de leur intégration socioprofessionnelle (Morrissette & Demazière, 2018a). Inspirée de l'approche théorique de la justice sociale de Rawls (1971), une recherche collaborative s'est intéressée à un groupe de six enseignants formés à l'étranger et provenant de milieux méritocratiques, pour étudier leur adaptation à l'éthique de la différenciation en évaluation. Les analyses documentent une adhésion qui se conjugue au rythme d'un processus de conversion identitaire, négociée au travers d'une socialisation de la débrouille en quatre phases : la négation, la découverte, l'apprentissage et l'implication.

Adapting to the Ethics of Differentiated Learning Assessment: Analysis of Foreign-trained Teachers' Experiences in Quebec [1]

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Dans la dernière décennie, l'école québécoise a accueilli un nombre important d'enseignants formés à l'étranger (MEES, 2018). Les recherches sur leur savoir-évaluer montrent que, pour les enseignants qui s'habituent aux normes et aux valeurs de la culture de l'évaluation pour la sanction dans leur pays d'origine, la prise en compte des conventions du travail de leur milieu d'accueil est un enjeu névralgique de leur intégration socioprofessionnelle (Morrissette & Demazière, 2018a). Inspirée de l'approche théorique de la justice sociale de Rawls (1971), une recherche collaborative s'est intéressée à un groupe de six enseignants formés à l'étranger et provenant de milieux méritocratiques, pour étudier leur adaptation à l'éthique de la différenciation en évaluation. Les analyses documentent une adhésion qui se conjugue au rythme d'un processus de conversion identitaire, négociée au travers d'une socialisation de la débrouille en quatre phases : la négation, la découverte, l'apprentissage et l'implication.

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Key words: collaborative research, ethics of differentiated assessment, foreign- trained teachers, social justice theory, socialization of resourcefulness.

In the last decade, due to the lack of teachers in Quebec, the province has welcomed a significant number of foreign-trained teachers (MEES, 2018). Research on their learning assessment skills shows that, for those teachers who get used to the standards and values of the culture of assessment for sanction in their native countries, taking into account the professionnal conventions in their host environment is a major issue to their socio-professional integration (Morrissette & Demazière, 2018a). Drawing on the theoretical approach of the social justice of Rawls (1971), we conducted a collaborative research with a group of six teachers trained in foreign countries from "meritocratic" backgrounds, to shed light on their adaptation to the ethics of differentiated assessment. The analyzes suggest a consentement that developed under the rhythm of negotiated identity conversion process through a socialization of resourcefulness in four phases: negation, discovery, learning, involvement.

Palavras-chave: ética da diferenciação na avaliação, investigação colaborativa, professores formados no estrangeiro, socialização do desenrasque, teoria da justiça social.

Na última década, as escolas quebequenses receberam um número significativo de professores formados no estrangeiro (MEES, 2018). As investigações sobre o seu saber-avaliar mostram que, para os professores que se habituam às normas e aos valores de uma cultura de avaliação sancionatória no seu país de origem, a tomada de consciência das convenções de trabalho no seu ambiente de acolhimento é uma questão fundamental para sua integração socioprofissional (Morrissette & Demazière, 2018a). Inspirado pela abordagem teórica da justiça social de Rawls (1971), uma investigação colaborativa debruçou-se sobre um grupo de seis professores formados no estrangeiro e oriundos de círculos meritocráticos, para estudar sua adaptação à ética da diferenciação em avaliação. As análises documentam uma adesão que se combina com o ritmo de um processo de conversão de identidade, negociado através de uma socialização do desenrasque em quatro fases: negação, descoberta, aprendizagem e envolvimento.

Introduction

The socio-professional integration of foreign-trained teachers (FTT) is an invaluable observatory for educational research. The process is a crucible of data about the intercultural transfer of experiential knowledge (Duchesne, 2017; Morrissette & Demazière, 2018a; Provencher et al., 2016), and more specifically, about learning assessment (Diédhiou, 2018). Most recent reviews of the literature about FTTs reveal an abundance of information about their socio-professional integration (Charara & Morrissette, 2018; Morrissette et al., 2014; Niyubahwe et al., 2013b, 2014; Niyubahwe et al., 2018; Provencher, 2020) and feature lengthy discussion about the challenges they experience.

Increasing reflection over the last five years has focused on FTTs' experience of the transfer of knowledge and skills in learning assessment (Tochon, 2011). Blurred lines between norms and recommendations specific to the field of learning assessment and the values underlying assessment promoted by colleagues in their country of adoption (Morrissette & Demazière, 2018a; Morrissette & Diédhiou, 2017) have also been observed. The importance of this educational practice was initially set out in the third orientation of Quebec's *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning* which suggests that "evaluation of learning must respect differences" (MEQ, 2003, p.14) and that differentiated assessment takes into account the value of equity, particularly when accommodating students with difficulties.

Assessment of learning and how it is applied to students with difficulties depends on how their activities are designed to respect their individualized education plan. These plans feature specific arrangements adapted to a student's particular needs. Stringent compliance with these recommended arrangements depends on the fundamental values of justice and equality. These values, which are the pillars of learning assessment, are the guidelines for what this article refers to as the "ethics of difference". Taking differences into account when assessing learning provides leverage for students' success. When assessment takes each student's individual

characteristics into account, it allows them to demonstrate the development of their competencies (Perrenoud, 2008). This is ethical practice, in other words, practice based on values of justice (Wormeli, 2006). As outlined in the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*, "there can be no justice in learning assessment unless equality and equity are ensured." (MEQ, 2003, p.7).

This study drew on work by Rawls (1971) and his theory of social justice to shed light on how FTTs adopt the ethics of difference when assessing learning. His concept of intuitive social justice seems particularly interesting for fully understanding the complexity of learning assessment for students with characteristics that require special learning activities. However, for teachers from a meritocratic culture, applying the concept of social justice to differentiated assessment for students with particular needs requires significant adaptation. As Duru-Bellat (2006) points out, such merit-based cultures are suspicious of positive discrimination. In their case, competition is positive and social justice is based on merit.

Research into FTTs' experiential knowledge (Morrissette & Diédhiou, 2017) has suggested that incorporating difference when assessing students requires the person to engage in identity change. According to Dubar (2002), identity change is the transformation of professional identity that stems from the capacity to manage complex professional situations and demonstrate a sense of belonging to a professional ecosystem. This study shows that such identity change requires adjustment at two levels: (a) envisaging and practicing differentiated assessment for students with difficulties, and (b) adhering to norms and social conventions that give meaning and pertinence to respecting differences when assessing learning.

The problem

Discussion over recent years has addressed increased labor migration to explain the case of qualified professionals who, for various reasons, leave the country where they acquired and developed their professional competencies (Boudarbat & Grenier, 2014; OECD, 2013; Reitz, 2012). For example, the issue of FTTs' socio-professional integration has been extensively addressed in scholarly literature in Quebec (Jabouin, 2018; Morrissette et al., 2020; Morrissette et al., 2014; Provencher, 2020), and around the world (OECD, 2013).

The subject has been widely studied in Canada and Quebec, but more recently interest in the relationship between FTTs' experiential knowledge and the norms in the work context of their host country has increased (Morrissette et al., 2014). Good examples of the Canadian context include research by Jabouin et al. (2018, 2012), Niyumbahwe et al. (2013a, 2013b, 2014), Morrissette et al. (2014), and Provencher et al. (2016), to name just a few. Some research has featured certain stakeholders' representations of the issue of labor migration and their impact at various levels, depending on whether they have an institutional or informal mandate to facilitate FTT integration (Charara & Morrissette, 2018; Morrissette et al., 2016). Clearly, issues about integrating immigrants in the workplace are a priority for Canada and the Quebec school system.

Despite all the attention given to this vital social issue (Duchesne, 2017; Morrissette & Demazière, 2018a), incomprehension and confusion abound, particularly due to excessive media attention about problems experienced by FTTs (Morrissette et al., 2014) and their contribution to Quebec's school system. The most frequent concepts found when researching FTTs in databases such as Érudit, Repères, and Sofia are "problems", "difficulties", "challenges", "marginalization", "discrimination", and "tension". Integration of FTTs into the workplace is difficult (Jabouin, 2018; Jabouin & Duchesne, 2018, 2012; Larochelle-Audet, 2017; Liu, 2021; Provencher, 2020). Nonetheless, they engage in self-reflection, to varying degrees depending on shared values considered central to their professional ecosystem (Morrissette & Demazière, 2018b; Morrissette & Diédhiou, 2017).

As mentioned above, despite extensive research into the problem of socio-professional integration of FTTs in Europe and North America, including in Canada and Quebec (Morrissette et al., 2014; Niyubahwe, 2015; Niyubahwe et al., 2013b, 2014), there is less work on the values that drive the reconstruction of these teachers' experience in their new professional ecosystem (Morrissette & Demazière, 2018b; Morrissette & Diédhiou, 2017). For example, how their methods and approach to learning assessment are often in conflict with shared representations of democratizing success, at least how it is perceived by their Quebecois colleagues (Diédhiou, 2018). As a result, it is important to study the values underlying their practices and how they adjust to assertions by their colleagues in Quebec schools about the ideal fundamentals of learning assessment.

The purpose of this research is to fill that gap by shedding light on FTTs' adhesion to ethics of differentiated assessment, particularly for assessing students with difficulties in Quebec. More specifically, our study investigated the transition for FTTs from an approach to assessment based on merit and social selection to Quebec's more democratic approach that recognizes differences. We asked the following question: How do FTTs develop and adhere to the ethics of differentiated assessment in Quebec's schools? This question is vital given that differentiation is an issue for the practice and representation of assessment. The concept is also closely linked to Rawl's (1971) intuitive social justice and his difference principle in light of the ethics of justice in a social institution, in other words, equity.

Theoretical framework

A theoretical approach inspired by Rawls' theory of social justice (1971)

An examination of Rawls (1971) theory of social justice is important here. Since the publication of his famous *Theory of Justice* in 1971, the founding work of this American philosopher has been the source of many reflections on social justice. Rawls rejects how utilitarian theories of justice in social institutions legitimize sacrificing some members of the community for the benefit of others. He proposes a more modern theory of the social contract with his "difference principle". It states that the well-being of some should not be sacrificed for that of others. According to Rawls, a society organized according to this principle would benefit from appreciating the differences between its members and from recognizing that each person deserves respect. The difference principle positions the ethics of justice in a social institution: each member of a community must be able to benefit from all the advantages of cooperation. We drew on this source, taking inspiration from Rawls' (1971) theory of social justice, to develop our conception of the ethics of difference in learning assessment.

When Rawls (1971) developed the principle of justice he called the "difference principle", one of his motivations was to overcome the inequality prevalent in modern societies, despite being based on democracy and equal rights. For Rawls, justice is the most important virtue of a social institution. He considers that if social order – such as in a school – is an institution, it is essential to establish rules of justice for compliance

by community members. The difference principle is therefore key to the conceptualization of justice and to what is just for the democratic establishment of rules for all and not just some members of the community.

Applied to schools, this conception of justice goes hand in hand with a humanist approach to assessment. It also implies that ethics have their place in the implementation of learning assessment to ensure students' individual characteristics are respected and that assessment practices ensure success for the majority (MEQ, 2003). According to Hadji (2017), the humanist approach to assessment includes the need to consider students' diversity and posits a humanist approach to success i.e. that individual progress does not hinder the progress of others. In this approach, assessment is "a learning process that develops students' autonomy" (Blanvillain & Travnjak, 2017, p. 10), contrary to the concept of merit-based success which is like winning a competition. Ethics in assessment refers to how certain values are applied to assessment practices at school (Hadji, 1997), which have close and complex relations with justice and equity[2] (Rey, 2008, 2011; Weinstock, 2007; Zuniga, 2001). Note that the formative aim of assessment (Allal, 2007) incorporates regulation and difference, with an implicit ethic (Rey, 2008; 2011), particularly when applied to increase the chances of success of all students (Dubet, 2004). Or as Rey (2011) stated: "there is always an ethical aspect to assessment, because it draws, either implicitly or explicitly, on values" (p. 99).

Taking this further, the ethics of differentiated assessment requires teachers to apply the assessment rules and standards recognized in their work context and to make corrections according to what is considered suitable (Audard, 2001; Rey, 2011; Weinstock, 2007; Zuniga, 2001). More specifically in Quebec, applying ethics to assessment involves decisions and actions set out in the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*:

> Evaluation that shows regard for ethical standards gives students the appropriate attention and monitors their learning progress, does not discriminate and respects confidentiality in assessment practices, justifies decisions to students and to the parents of students who are minors, and so forth. This type of evaluation ensures, among other things, that individuals being evaluated are not put at a disadvantage. (MEQ, 2003, p.19).

2. According to *The Policy on the Evaluation of Learning* (MEQ, 2003) equity, equality and justice are the fundamental values underpinning the principles that guide learning evaluation in Quebec which is also based on three instrumental values: coherence, rigor and openness.

Applying this ethic in daily practices is the opposite to merit-based approaches and practices where success is only for the most gifted students. Rawls' difference principle applied to FTT assessment is an ethical requirement that optimizes learning and all students' chances of success, including the less privileged who have learning difficulties that require very specific support.

Hence, our conception of the ethics of difference in learning assessment is based on systems of shared values and beliefs in a professional ecosystem. These values and beliefs represent social arrangements that help members interpret situations, criticize, contest, justify, and validate ways to assess learning. How do FTTs develop and adhere to the ethic of difference in learning assessment in Quebec schools? Our aim was not to resolve the debate on possible interpretations of the expression "ethics of difference" based on language subtleties. We chose a definition that suits grid analysis of FTT practices and how they apply the difference principle in learning assessment. For the purposes of this study, differentiation as an expertise or a practical skill is based on socially accepted and applied practices with flexible guidelines adapted to everyday situations in the classroom. They include practices such as reformulating an instruction with appropriate vocabulary or checking what a student has understood. This definition requires that the process integrates three concepts: ethics, difference, and learning assessment, according to Rawls' model. Therefore, professionals must take into account these guiding concepts to ensure their consistency with practices. Morrissette and Demazière (2018b) highlight that integrating these guiding concepts can trigger identity change.

Methodology

This research contributes to scholarly discussion about the relationship between the reconstruction of FTTs' assessment expertise and social cohesion in Quebec. The discussion addresses the transfer of FTTs' assessment expertise and analyzes their processes of adherence to Quebec's shared values and democratic approach to success.

For this research, we recruited FTTs from countries with a meritocratic cultur[3]. We presented them with the project and invited them to participate. People interested in participating joined the principal investigator for

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3. In accordance with recommendations by the CIEREH ethics committee, recruitment of participants was delegated to the research assistant who contacted the FTTs via Facebook and associations they belonged to.

a 10-minute phone interview and presentation of the ethical and practical conditions for participation in the study.

After the interviews, we recruited six FTTs who volunteered to talk about their experiences, their concerns, and reflections about differentiated learning assessment in Quebec. The six FTTs recruited also met two other criteria: (a) teacher in a primary or secondary school in Quebec for just under five years; and (b) taught classes with students with special needs for support during the first years of their socio-professional integration. The data was collected from these six FTTs who were trained abroad in education systems where differentiation was not a standard recommendation in learning assessment.

Research participants

The six foreign-trained teachers (FTT) in our research (three women and three men) came from four regions of the world: Central Africa, North Africa, West Africa and Eastern Europe. Of the six, three were primary teachers and three were secondary teachers. They all had three to five years of experience in Quebec's public schools. Table 1 shows the teachers' profiles. We gave them fictitious names to respect their privacy.

Table 1
Six FTT participants

	Ficti- tious names	Region of origin	Official education and qualifications	Current position in Quebec school system	Experience outside Quebec	Experience in Quebec
P R I M A R Y	*Bakar*	Central Africa	Master's in French didactics	Tenure contract 6th year of primary	15 years in secondary	5 years
	Bianca	Eastern Europe	Bachelor of French literature	Tenure contract Welcome class in primary	11 years in secondary	5 years
	Fatima	Western Africa	Bachelor of primary education	2nd contract for 5th year of primary	3 years in preschool and 5 years in primary	3 years

Table 1
Six FTT participants

	Ficti-tious names	Region of origin	Official education and qualifications	Current position in Quebec school system	Experience outside Quebec	Experience in Quebec
SECONDARY	*Alpha*	Western Africa	Baccalaureate in teaching French	Contract: French 4th and 5th year of secondary	6 years in secondary	4 years
	Bilal	Northern Africa	Master's in French didactics	Contract: Maths 3rd and 4th year of secondary	12 years in secondary	3 years
	Nadia	Northern Africa	Master's in linguistics	Contract: English 2nd and 4th year of secondary	6 years in secondary	3 years

Collaborative research method

After receiving approval from the research ethics board in accordance with current laws and regulations, we collected data in two stages. First, each FTT participated in a biographical interview (Demazière, 2011) of approximately 90 minutes. The purpose of this interview was to collect the participants' first experiences of differentiated assessment. The interview guide focused on the theme of assessment during their schooling, training and teaching experience. Using the guide, we collated the significant events from their experience of learning assessment, spanning from their country of origin to their more recent experiences in Quebec.

We then conducted group analysis with the FTTs, using the explication and critical distance approach (Falzon & Mollo, 2009; Mollo & Nascimento, 2017). Critical incidents such as shocks, mishaps, misunderstandings, conflicts, tensions, and concerns reported by the FTTs during their biographical interviews were analyzed by the group. The FTTs explained that these experiences inspired them to change the way they assess learning. The group analysis was conducted in five interviews of around 180 minutes. The interpretive potential and similarities between the critical incidents were explored. This article focuses on the data collected from the group analysis.

Given the need for active involvement of the researcher in the group analysis, the complexity of the subject, and the relative value of the experiences provided by the participants, we used the complementary expertise

principle (Morrissette & Diédhiou, 2015). The participants were asked to report their first experiences of differentiated assessment, particularly during the initial stages when they had to respond to students' needs for special arrangements. The group was then asked to analyze their experiences together, in light of what they considered ethical and fair about their representation of democratizing success for all students.[4] The experiences reported by each participant about their specific approach to assessment and the values they draw on in the workplace were discussed with the theory of social justice (Rawls, 1971) to understand how they develop and adhere to the ethics of difference inspired by Rawls.

Data collection method

The interview guide for the group work was developed gradually from initial analysis of the individual biographical interviews conducted with each FTT. The following questions were used in the individual interviews to address differentiation in learning assessment: How would you describe your first experiences of differentiated assessment in Quebec? What struck you about assessing learning of students with difficulties?

We developed the group interview guide (Ec)[5] using the themes of the critical incidents reported during the biographical interviews. The following themes emerged from grouping the critical incidents (tensions, misunderstandings, mistakes): differentiation; formative learning assessment; the role of assessment in coordinating teaching-learning situations; the role of values such as compassion in assessment practices that respect the child's well-being. In the group, the FTTs examined the themes underlying the principle of democratizing success applied in Quebec which was contrary to their own representations and practices of assessment as a sanction. Analyzing the differences between assessment cultures together, we explored the interactions and adaptations which influence the intercultural transfer of assessment expertise in FTTs.

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4. This issue is only one aspect of the general purpose of the research and is not fully developed in this article.
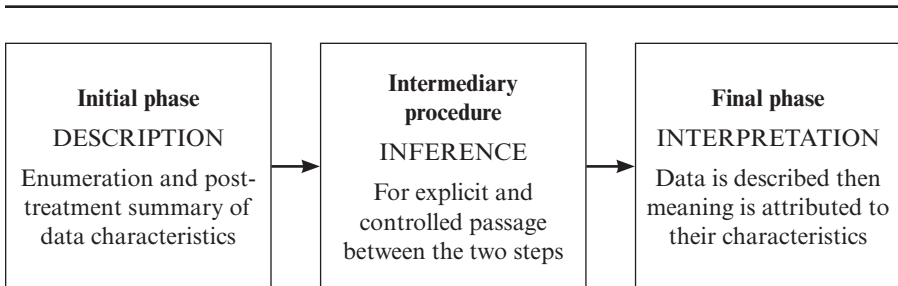5. The results are presented as follows: *Ec* = group interview, *Ec1* = Group interview 1, *Ec2* = Group interview 2, *Ec3* = Group interview 3, etc.

Data processing using analytic induction

For the purposes of this article, we paid particular attention to the incidents that provoked the most reflection in FTTs. These cases also provided interesting insight into the process for adhering to the ethics of difference.

The collected data was subjected to analytic induction following the methodology proposed by Glaser and Strauss (2017). Using full transcriptions of the interviews, we searched for examples of critical incidents. Critical incidents are significant experiences of assessment in the country of origin that contrast with the recommended approach in Quebec schools. From the first reading, we identified 76 cases of incidents that represented change in the FTTs' assessment practices.

Cases were grouped according to similarities and contrasts between assessment experiences in the country of origin and Quebec. Our strategy for developing the explication was inspired by Dany's (2016) model of the content analysis process. The diagram below presents the main phases for segmenting and assimilating data to clarify the subject of analysis (Dany, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 2003). Using this process, we developed empirical categories from the data that reflect the four phases of the identity change process: negation, discovery, learning, and involvement.

Initial phase DESCRIPTION Enumeration and post-treatment summary of data characteristics	**Intermediary procedure** INFERENCE For explicit and controlled passage between the two steps	**Final phase** INTERPRETATION Data is described then meaning is attributed to their characteristics

Figure 1. Dany's content analysis process (2016, p. 23)

Results

Adhering to the ethics of differentiated assessment in a four-stage identity change process

The results highlighted a four-stage adhesion process for FTTs to the ethics of differentiated assessment which, when combined, are the beginning of the identity change process.

The negation phase: from ignorance to resistance

The FTTs who had teaching experience in their country of origin before arriving in Quebec had never been formally requested to differentiate when assessing learning. Before their arrival in Quebec, none of the FTT participants had ever heard of "special measures for learning assessment" (Bakar, Ec1). Due to their conception of equity between students, it appeared unjust to them: "It seemed unfair to me; […] how is it possible to make a correct assessment using different rules for students in the same class?" (Nadia, Ec1). The FTTs' ideas about learning assessment were based on their experiences in their country of origin, before working in Quebec schools.

According to the conventions of the FTTs' countries of origin, rigorous assessment was the sign of a "good teacher" (Bilal, Ec 1). They would never consider manipulating assessment or its conditions to accommodate a student as it would seriously undermine their representation of equal opportunity for students. Their logic was based on competition, rewarding students for performance, and ranking them according to assessment. This explains Alpha's questions when one of his colleagues in Quebec explained to him that he would have to accommodate certain students during assessments, for example allowing them more time for a task: "[…] why do I have to give them extra time and not the others? How will I explain it if they get a better mark than the others?" (Alpha, Ec1)

Alpha's concerns, echoed by other FTTs, express resistance to aligning with values shared in the Quebec education system. For FTTs, assessment was a "fixed and invariable practice", and they were intolerant of differentiated assessment and applying special conditions for individual students. Their refusal to engage in such practices was based on the feeling they should be "fair to all the students by putting them on the same footing for assessment" (Bilal, Ec1). Most FTTs had trouble considering assessment fair and rigorous when the conditions vary from student to student from the outset. Fatima expressed this as follows:

You can't pretend to give an assessment and judge that you respect a principle of equality between students if you give some more time than others; […] in my country, the students themselves would criticize it and call it favoritism; […] I saw it like that too; […] if I do it for a girl, boys could see it as a feminist stance; […] if I do it for a boy, others could also interpret it in a negative way; […] that's to say, thinking I have feelings for him or someone in his family; […] it's even more serious when a male teacher grants such favors to a girl in an assessment; […]students would talk about him in the schoolyard at recess time and the rumor would go beyond the walls of the school; […] assessment is too important and you could just lose your "good reputation"; (Fatima, Ec1)

This extract is a compelling testimonial of the social conventions underlying assessment in the FTTs' countries of origin where assessment is applied on the basis of merit and never deviates. It is therefore with this vision of assessment that many FTTs arrive in Quebec from meritocratic countries. Note that initial exchanges with colleagues with a little more experience in the schools did not convince them to consider changing their practices. A transversal observation of the FTTs' experiences before working in Quebec schools also indicates that their conceptions of assessment may be factors of resistance to change. But do these representations withstand in the workplace where differentiated assessment is non-negotiable?

The discovery phase: between shock and awareness of an important and complex problem

The experience of working with students with different characteristics increases awareness of the complexity of assessment and makes considerable inroads to reducing resistance to change. According to the FTTs, this phase was undoubtedly decisive in the transformation of their assessment practices. It was an inflection point in the expertise transposition process, as one of the participants reported:

You really find yourself on the borderline of what you know how to do regarding assessment; there are students in front of you, even if they are a little different; you have to evaluate their learning; but you cannot evaluate them the way you did; and you're blocked; and you discover your limits; it's a rude shock; […] it's hard when you're not new to the profession; […] when you discover that you're rubbish at what you knew how to do in your country of origin; when you think you've been entrusted with this class because of your competencies, you're a bit ashamed. (Nadia, Ec 1).

This extract provides information about how FTTs consider expertise as a habit and how such an obstacle triggers deep deliberation. This pertinent description of the experience – described as a shock – demonstrates how the FTTs' representation of assessment was tested. Several of them thought they had mastered assessment in the distant past (Diédhiou, 2018), in their training and experience in their country of origin. Comforted by their experience, they considered it an ordinary, "easy" activity which they did not think would require "either work or extra effort" (Alpha) in their new work environment and a predictable and "routine" (Bianca) practice. New situations required them to rethink what they knew about learning assessment (e.g., the same rules for all students). They realized how they approach and practice assessment only works with a certain category of students.

> My first shock was all these students with differences; some didn't even know how to write a straight line; others couldn't work if they weren't given their computer; […] they are different and have different problems; so I wondered how I was going to evaluate them. (Nadia, Ec 1)

Note this extract cites a hypothesis of incapacity to handle a routine situation which in turn gives rise to the idea that there are alternative actions. Such shocks in their new work context provoked a sense of incompetency in the FTTs, shaking their complacency about being able to passively accept what happens to them. They had to propose concrete solutions to situations that clearly required alternative learning assessment methods. During the group interviews, they indicated that it would be ideal to experience these situations as early as possible when integrating Quebec schools. The sooner shocks occur in the integration process, the easier it would be for FTTs to measure the complexity of assessment. The shocks triggered important discoveries, and the resulting social interaction informed them of norms and conventions shared in the workplace which alleviated feelings of resistance. The relative importance of the shock varied from one FTT to another, but they all reported feeling a sense of loss, an epistemological rupture with their experience and the idea of assessment they had imported from their country of origin.

Social interaction: key to a laborious learning phase

As pointed out by Morrissette and Diédhiou (2017) and Diédhiou (2018), many FTTs have limited knowledge about what is expected from them regarding assessment, including differentiating between students with varied characteristics, before joining Quebec schools. Many discover

the different practices the hard way - in the classroom. This is summarized by these exchanges with FTTs whose discovery of assessment practices of students with specific learning needs was guided by support personnel in their schools:

> When I was confronted with these students, my first question was how I will evaluate them; (…) then I wondered, if we evaluate them the way the principal told me, how do we do it? (…) all I could see was that it was going to be complicated; (…) so, the principal put me in touch with a Special Education Instructor (SEI); (…) I learnt a lot with the SEI, both how to teach and how to evaluate these students; (…) first, as a teacher, you need to be patient and understanding; you apply formative assessment; (…) I tried to do as I was told for the first few weeks, without reflecting too much, because it's far from easy when you arrive from elsewhere; (…).(Bianca)

> The first few days assessing these students, you try to repeat, to apply what people who know about it told you to do; it may seem strange, but you don't have time to ask yourself too many questions or think too much; you see that when you do it, it works, so you keep doing it; (Ec 2). (Bakar)

These extracts provide valuable insight into learning differentiated assessment practices with students with different characteristics in a new work context. The FTTs began by simply reproducing mechanical gestures without necessarily associating the required practice with advocated values.

The FTTs central role obliged them to apply shared conventions to assessment. When FTTs' first experienced these conventions in Quebec schools, they experienced a conflict of interest with their habitual paradigm of assessment. Being obliged to take action in a professional context without understanding the fundamental values explains why FTTs suffered from their first experience of differentiating in assessment. Their reports of their experiences and their own analyses of their experiences showed this alternative norm contradicts with their existing representation and practices of assessment. However, the FTTs said they quickly realized that complying was the best way to avoid problems with students' parents.

The FTTs adjusted by attributing value to the shared norms and by avoiding possible sanctions due to complaints about how they attended to student well-being. As a result of these "fundamental lessons", as Bilal called them, the FTTs revised their representations of assessment to integrate an ethical posture of benevolence and professional rigor in daily assessment practices:

You must always be careful that your assessment practices do not deviate from requirements in terms of difference and the support parents expect for their child; at the same time, when assessing errors, you have to fight the temptation to make a comment that demoralizes the student (Bakar, Ec 3).

This extract reflects that the FTTs had to adjust and understand both official recommendations and their colleagues' priorities for learning assessment. This adjustment, necessary to avoid problems with important stakeholders, required them to gradually change how they consider students' mistakes and support their learning. Bakar and other FTTs said that understanding the instructions in the student's individualized education plan is definitely the basis for differentiation.

Our analyses showed that the FTTs' learning process was largely inspired by the way the Quebec education system is organized: teachers work in a team and with special education instructors and orthopedagogy experts. All the FTTs stated that support from these professionals for teaching and assessing students with special needs was invaluable. As Nadia said: "I learnt with the special education instructor, the SEI, how I should evaluate learning; (...) with her, you learn all the modalities that you need to put in place to accommodate the students; but it's not easy" (Ec 1). The last words in Nadia's statement reflect that the inevitable learning phase following the revelation of the importance of differentiating is unavoidably laborious. This was echoed by other FTTs: "We really suffered from applying differentiating in assessment in class (laughs); (...) I must admit that it sometimes gave me headaches" (Bianca, Ec1).

In summary, interactions with co-workers were important for the FTTs' learning process which was difficult and sometimes laborious as several mentioned. But learning also included a rupture with their assessing habits and experimentation with addressing genuine special needs in teaching and assessing. This also raised awareness that assessing learning involves supporting students according to their needs and from their point in their personal progress to help them become more autonomous. Faced with vastly different learning needs, FTTs also learnt their role is not to sanction students through assessment, but to "use it as leverage to help all students and ensure that even students with difficulties can have the chance to succeed" (Bakar, Ec 2).

Note that differentiating required FTTs to learn to read individualized education plans and discuss them with specialized professionals. They also learnt to problematize and interpret the conduct of students with certain learning disabilities: "They're not lazy". Differentiating also requires planning adapted learning and assessment situations to ensure all students are successful. This new approach to assessment was largely developed in response to destabilizing situations that provoked introspection in FTTs. As Fatima told:

> I think back to my experience in my country, to the students who could have succeeded if we thought of assessment like we do here; I think if I went back there to teach, I would change how I evaluate, to save students (Ec 1).

This extract revealing appreciation for the values underlying differentiated assessment suggests an identity change has begun.

The involvement phase: identity change is underway

The learning process was the start of an adjustment at two levels for FTTs. In the first stage, they began to abandon their usual assessment practices and consider new methods, especially with consideration for practices in schools that sometimes contradict official recommendations: "I'm happy now because I know how to differentiate, but it was really very complicated at first; I suffered a lot" (Alpha, Ec 1).

When they discovered this different approach to assessment, the FTTs reported feeling a certain degree of shame about their past practices. Yet, they were simply complying with the local culture in their country of origin and applying their knowledge of assessment at the time. It is, however, important to understand the moral connotation underlying FTTs' representation of assessment, and the implication and openness they demonstrated for democratizing success for all students. They considered it to be the vital application of universal educability with respect for all students' abilities and differences.

The experiences reported by the FTTs reflect the types of (inter)cultural interpretations that underpin learning assessment and the social interactions that structured and impacted their identity change. The process included gradual detachment from the values underlying assessment in their country of origin, which had become seemingly foreign and inappropriate. The FTTs realized the importance of recognizing students' individual needs and pace, of adapting their teaching, and explaining differently

to reach all students to sustain their motivation. This quote demonstrates what they had to forgo and then learn quickly to adapt to their new work context:

> Here, you quickly see you cannot go at the pace you want, but advance at the students' pace; you're not guided by the pressure from trying to cover the program by the end of the year and time ticking, but your students' learning pace over the sessions; have they assimilated what you just presented seen? have you diversified your strategies to reach all students who are struggling? That's where assessment serves me; (…) that's where I see the relevance of my formative assessment; (…) I mean my work of regulating or differentiating; (…) (Fatima).

> It's not a race against time; I slow my progress; I check with the students by asking certain questions; I validate my observations with these questions; I propose different ways of doing things; (…) for me, this all had to be integrated; (…) you don't have an eye on the program to be covered but on the way your students learn; that's the big difference with what I did before; (…) (Alpha).

> Sometimes I stop on a notion; I give or ask students for examples; I let them explain; I reformulate; I make things more complex gradually; (...) that's the approach I learnt quickly and integrated into how I evaluate. (Ec3) (Bakar).

These testimonials indicate that the FTTs sought to engage students in action and give them opportunities to demonstrate their competencies. This required them to diversify their teaching strategies. Apparently, the first important lessons during the FTTs' identity change were changes in their approach to assessment and seeing it as leverage for learning: "To give an image, I would say that here, understanding that assessment is seeking a balance, that's the most significant change for me" (Fatima, Ec 2).

The FTTs working with students with learning difficulties felt failed by their experiential knowledge. They realized that using assessment to promote learning in Quebec also means finding a balance between motivating students and ensuring their learning progress. This is reflected in Bakar's description of a new element of power in assessment, with parents asking to ensure the well-being of their children, and management expecting decent grades and student progress: "The challenge of assessment is to be able to use both student motivation and learning progress as leverage at the same time" (Ec2).

Apparently, combining learning with student motivation is another operative representation of assessment that FTTs have to assimilate as an important professional norm in the Quebec education system. FTTs said they gradually identified the requirements of differentiated assessment through experiencing complex and diverse situations. They ultimately recognized that differentiated assessment is legitimate because each student is unique. Furthermore, it is ethical to actively support them by adapting assessment according to the institutional principles recommended for each category of student. Bilal's quote reflects this:

> I could not remain insensitive; (…) something had to be done; (…) after all, it was not assessing their understanding of the instruction; (…) so I applied the flexible pedagogy; (…) it was important; (…) I found it fairer like that (Ec 1).

This positive approach to supporting students is part of an inclusion and equity project that recommends magnifying difference with a humanist approach to assessment. This is the case for Bianca who stated: "For me now, it's a question of ethics; applying differentiation in my assessments is a matter of justice for students" (Ec 1). The extracts presented in this section indicate the very early stages of the two adjustments in FTTs' identity change: prescriptive orientation focusing on the objects, norms and conditions of assessment, and ethical orientation focusing on social justice.

Discussion and conclusion

Identity change driven by resourceful socialization

Our study into FTTs' adherence to the ethics of differentiated assessment shows issues at two levels: in their attitude to differentiation and in contrasting cultural attitudes to assessment. Both the standards underlying the quality of assessment and the social norms that give assessment practices meaning and relevance in the context contributed to FTTs' conception and application of differentiation. Analysis of their experiences revealed that this is part of an identity change process. According to Laghzaoui (2011), identity change is an extremely social process that requires reflection on the reasons and methods for change.

In this case, resourceful socialization (Navarre, 2019) guided the FTTs' identity change which was also influenced by learning through social interaction. This socialization featured a complex double adjustment, both in FTTs' representation of assessment and their practices. Their

misunderstanding of problems due to students' specific difficulties initially triggered resistance to change and to adopting different assessment methods. However, the expertise learnt in their country of origin was no longer relevant given the context and social interactions with work colleagues. This interaction with well-informed colleagues helped the FTTs adapt to socially acceptable assessment methods. Learning through experience in this new context led to the reconstruction of their assessment practices in a significant social world. Acceptable and unacceptable norms and values and unspoken conventions with informal controls encouraged them to adjust.

According to our analysis of the FTTs' experiences, their identity change led them to adopt practices deemed better suited to the context and students. Analys of their experiences showed that the identity change affected the FTTs' ability to forsake their existing experiential knowledge and to adapt their assessment methods to the norms of their new work environment.

The experiences of identity change we analyzed also show that the FTTs gradually reached an ultimate level of understanding of the challenges of differentiated assessment by distancing themselves from their usual practices. As a result of this process, they were able to align how they evaluate with the norms and values of the new work context. As a result of accepted daily involvement with students with different learning needs, FTTs developed a more understanding and humanistic attitude to assessment. Their readjustments were promoted by work situations, taken as opportunities for introspection and deep learning.

Moreover, as the analysis of individual experiences showed, the FTTs identity change to the ethics of differentiated assessment was not linear. It was negotiated and constructed via multiple inflections due to the complexity of the processes that contribute to work situations. This was accentuated by the fact that the FTTs' attitude to learning assessment evolved and was often influenced by socializing experiences. As Kaufmann (2004) notes, "The individual is not external to the socialization process. They internalize patterns of thought and action. At that moment, this fragment of internalized society is at the core of their most personal definition" (p. 223).

The purpose of this study was to learn more about FTTs' process of adhering to the ethics of differentiated learning assessment. The methodology chosen was group analysis of experiences reported by FTTs from

various regions of the world. Our analyses showed that both the social and cultural environment and the values and requirements in the new work context shaped their experiences.

Analysis of the experiences reported by the FTTs also revealed that the role requires a laborious socialization process. This has also been shown in prior research (Duchesne, 2017; Jabouin, 2018; Liu, 2021; Prophète, 2020). Our research showed particular adaptation to social norms and governing differentiated assessment and their application. This process, which involves "acting urgently, [and] deciding without certainty" (Perrenoud, 1996) includes continuous negotiation, or according to Périer (2012), a way of overcoming the school order in the everyday professional ecosystem. For the FTTs who participated in our research, it was a crucial step in their identity change, especially for developing the necessary competencies required by a complex profession like in Quebec.

Finally, one of the important limitations of this research was to consider the ethics of differentiated assessment from the perspective of compliance with the prevailing norms of co-workers. However, as Dancause (2018) demonstrated, there is often a significant gap between the vision of those in the field and official policy recommendations. Future research would benefit from analyzing FTTs' reflective and self-assessment practices and processes on social values that shape assessment after the critical period of socio-professional integration.

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