

The Leuven scales, or more accurately *A process-oriented child monitoring system for young children* are used by a number of the LAs in England.

Extracts from:

A process-oriented child monitoring system for young children (“The Leuven scales”) by Dr. F. Laevers, E. Vandenbussche, M. Kog, L. Depondt

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Introduction

Towards the end of the 1980s, the term “student monitoring system” began to emerge. In contrast with the more established observation scales and tests, this concept was primarily aimed at accentuating the idea of continuity: the term “monitoring system” suggests that you try not to lose sight of the child. In addition to this, it suggests that the opinion of the teacher – who can follow the child every day and in the most diverse situations – plays an essential part.

Various observations lists have been drawn up to help the teacher gain a better insight into the children’s development. In most lists the following question took up a central position: *how far* did the child progress in the various developmental areas and fields of study? And following on from this: *how much progress* did the child make in comparison with previous “measurements”?

The child monitoring system presented in this publication [*A process-oriented child monitoring system for young children*] starts from a different question: can we deduce from observation of an actual activity *that* this child *is developing at all?* Our approach is based on the experiential view on “good” education: more specifically the interpretation of “care width”.

The process variables of “well-being” and” involvement”

The key question in experiential education theory is: how, in a practically attainable and at the same time reliable way, can we gain insight into the quality of education and, more specifically, assess our efforts to help children reach their full developmental potential?

From the innovative Experiential Education (EXE) Project, two strong indicators of quality emerge: “well-being” and “involvement”. They tell us the process children are going through, and about the things which our approach and the pedagogical and didactic environment which we create bring about in them, here and now (and not in the long term).

By “well-being” we mean “feeling at home”, “being oneself” and/or “feeling happy”. “Involvement” refers to the intensity of the activity, the amount of concentration, the extent to which one is “absorbed”, and the ability to give oneself completely, to be enthusiastic, to find pleasure in exploration; all of which allow the child to further his development.

If there is a lack of “well-being” and/or “involvement”, the chances are that a child’s development may be threatened (socially/emotionally and/or with regard to important developmental areas.) Therefore the higher the level of well-being and involvement you help to bring about, the more you can add to the child’s general development.

Taking the variables of “well-being” and “involvement” as guidelines, has proved extremely useful in practice. They allow us to focus on two aspects when discussing the quality of education. Moreover they are “process variables” which means that they can be assessed in the course of the educational procedure. Whether younger children or older pupils are involved, whether at the opening of the day or in the playground, whether you focus on written language or a role play in the home corner, you can always be aware of the same two variables. As a result, the teacher can take instant action and make successful short term adjustments to improve well-being and involvement, while increasing his/her professional ability simultaneously.

