

## **Adapting educational tests to different age levels and socio-cultural contexts**

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In order to adopt educational strategies based on continuous evaluation, teachers need assessment techniques which are scientifically valid and suitable to give information to be used in real school situations.

Such techniques, however, need to be applied in a context of “subjective significance”, so that the objective results can be compared and correlated with the general and specific characteristics of each subject to be evaluated.

Under such conditions, an educational test becomes a sophisticated evaluation tool, which offers useful information leading to the definition and evaluation of the educational program. The awareness of tests usefulness, and the ability to use the instruments in a more appropriate way represent a very relevant aspect of the school operator's professional profile. Among the problems often intervening in the evaluation process, particularly relevant is the possibility to adapt tools - created for pupils of a certain age level – also to pupils of other ages; moreover it is important to adapt assessment instruments to subjects belonging to socially deprived contexts.

In the present paper, we report a few analyses on validity, reliability and functionality of three educational tests (Learning Strategies Questionnaire; Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire; Learning to Study Questionnaire). Those three tests were originally developed for adolescents: we now aim to verify their validity also on middle school pupils. Attention was focused especially on the first phase of assessment tools experimental control. Our basic assumption is that, in order to reach good achievement levels, students need to acquire skills to regulate their cognitive, motivational, volitional and affective processes; therefore, teachers need reliable instruments to evaluate pupils' initial situation in such fields. The research sample was made of 200 middle school pupils, coming from 15 classes (6 pupils from the first year of school and 9 from the second year). The socio-economical conditions of families were prevalently low. Foreign pupils were included in the classes, in order to detect differences between Italian and foreign pupils.

Results showed that, thanks to such tests, it is possible to obtain very useful information to define meta-cognitive competencies consolidated in behaviors and mental processes of younger and socially disadvantaged students.

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