About issue no. 48

Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ries/808>

DOI: 10.4000/ries.808

ISSN: 2261-4265

Publisher

Centre international d'études pédagogiques

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 September 2008

ISBN: 978-2-85420-573-2

ISSN: 1254-4590

Electronic reference

"About issue no. 48", *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres* [Online], 48 | septembre 2008, Online since 01 July 2011, connection on 26 April 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ries/808> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/ries.808>

This text was automatically generated on 26 April 2021.

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- 1 Many educational systems seem to be viewed with growing distrust today and schools will consequently be increasingly regulated and subject to more stringent requirements in terms of results.
- 2 The notion of 'control', which for some decades has been considered an archaic concept, is now back in force in more up-to-date forms to meet new challenges, on both a national and worldwide scale . We are witnessing changes in its role and a redefinition of its relationship with 'assessment' practices, which have also seen considerable development over the last fifteen years to become an important part of public policies aimed at improving the quality of education.
- 3 The *Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres* chose to conduct a survey of this question in England, Chile, China, France, Poland, the Basque Country in Spain and Switzerland, looking at seven educational systems that differ in terms of geographical situation, political heritage, organisation and experience of assessment and control. Two European comparisons complete this overview.
- 4 What one notices first of all is the increased number and greater diversity of assessment and control activities, the results of which are increasingly made public. The number of people involved has also increased, as has the influence of various networks and national and international standards.
- 5 In this new context, surveys such as PISA have become necessary benchmarks. Growing use is made of control mechanisms centred on results. Teachers in some countries even have to present accounts.
- 6 This development raises important questions: is the need for accurate data to appraise pupils' performance being used to sidestep debate on the purpose and objectives of compulsory education? Are we moving towards international accreditation systems for assessors, a phenomenon already emerging for higher education and quality? What is the present and future role of inspection in countries like France, and in Europe as a whole?
- 7 School control is becoming a many-pronged process, consisting of cross-referenced assessments involving many players. This is a major change: the State now acts as a 'regulator'; relations between central and local levels are changing; pupils and their

families, elected representatives, local managers and community leaders all wish to play a greater role.

- 8 It is this situation that has led to the emergence of a new method of governance, with the school at the heart of the assessment and control system.