What Practices for a Better Democratization of School Aids?

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Abstract: A recent strong thesis questioned actors in the field (teachers, college principals, teaching assistants, students, senior education advisors) on the question of aid as a means of democratization of the school, success of more destitute. Four positions emerged with institutional, pedagogical and family recommendations. They all express practices whose aims are the fight against failure, school dropout and inequalities. The theoretical framework is part of the work of Bautier and Rochex, (1997), Broccholichi (1995), and Meirieu (2013). The methodology consists of thirty-nine semi-structured interviews and the treatment is a thematic analysis of content. The originality of the study is the reflection at better conditions for useful aids outside the classroom.

Thus, through a deductive approach, we have drawn some conditions for the help to be useful to students outside the classroom: to improve the diagnosis of school difficulty; target aid; put coherence in the actions; promote student volunteering with complementary modules based on a skills framework; reform the tasks. The success of aids also depends on changes to be made outside the classroom; reorganize the personalized help; focus on fundamental learning and diversify teaching methods: set up complementary modules with a reference system of skills; avoid the multiplication of aids; change the structure of the aid; integrate help into the teaching profession; train the actors of the helpers; change school rhythms, really involve families; evaluate the aid Strengthen the partnership between the aid and external actors.

Keywords: *practices; democratization; conditions; help; actors.*

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1. Introduction

A recent thesis supported interviewed field actors from seven colleges classified priority education in the suburbs of Lyons (teachers, college principals, teaching assistants, students, senior education advisers) on the question of aid as a means the democratization of the school, the success of the poor. Four positions emerged with institutional, pedagogical and family recommendations. They all express practices whose aims are the fight against failure, school dropout and inequalities. The methodology consists of thirty-nine semi-structured interviews and the treatment is a categorical thematic analysis of content. It is also made of observation. A reflection on the diversity of out-of-class pedagogical actions from the point of view of a reorganization of the teaching profession and is based on observations, consultation of documents, interviews, etc. We hypothesize that the difficulties of colleges in priority education are so great that the aid is not enough to create democratization. The aim is to think about better practices for a democratization of the helpers, a success for children from the middle class.

1.1 *The theoretical framework*

In their analyses of *democratization*, Bautier and Rochex (1997) chose the term *massification* rather than the notion of *democratization* because it raises oppositions, explanations, discordant observations. It symbolizes an ambiguous concept and contains many different meanings and questions. Democratization is analysed in relation to the *massification* of the school system and the variation, the differences in the level of schooling of the social components.

The first is interested in the evolution of the access rates of each social group to different levels of training and diploma, knowledge and skills; it would mean that there has been a democratization of secondary education since a growing proportion of children of popular origin now have access to levels of education that their parents, or even their elders, did not have. (...) In fact, the debate on this issue is dominated by the second, which focuses on the study of gaps and inequalities in schooling between social groups (Bautier & Rochex, 1997: 26).

Brocholichi (1995) demonstrates through the choice of orientation and the organization of affluence and school map, secondary schools failing to retain third-level students. This secondary sorting operation does not coincide with a reform of the learning conditions and academic and

intellectual achievements of the student's concerned Bautier and Rochex (1997).

Meirieu (2013) warns of democratization by the setting up of help outside the class.

It would be a shame to suggest that the democratization of education is simply to allow the most deprived to benefit for free from the private lessons that help the most advantaged get by: such an approach would reproduce the error of the 60s, when it was thought that it was enough to democratize access to college to democratize the college (Meirieu, 2013: 2).

1.1.1 Methodology

The methodology consists of thirty-nine semi-structured interviews and the treatment is a thematic content analysis Bardin (2001). The 39 interviews with professors, college principals, assistants, students, senior education advisors were gathered in a 162-page work corpus. They are responsible actors or actors in aid schemes. The originality of the study is the reflection at better conditions for useful aids outside the classroom. It is also observational, inspired by the work of Kherroubi (2004) in his analysis of out-of-class teaching activities in the secondary school of Marcel. Teaching practices outside the classroom. It reflects on the diversity of out-of-class teaching actions from the point of view of a reorganization of the teaching profession and is based on observations, consultation of documents, interviews, etc.

1.1.2 Results

First point.

• For a first group of teachers, help in priority education is a means of democratization of the college. (Fifteen answers).

This position is justified by many arguments. Democratization involves work to compensate for the family assistance deficit. Popular families have great difficulty in providing home schooling. This explains the important presence of children in the helpers. Through the activities consolidate the fundamental learning. The academic difficulty is felt in the basic disciplines. The aid prevents a progression of the stall with some success cases, results are mixed. An opinion shared by the principal of a college:

When I say ideally: it means that you need profitability, these devices are expensive. If we look at the results of the patent, the college stays around 70% and 75% success is still 10 points less than the academy, the academic average is 84%, but it is 10 more than what we were doing a few years ago, so that means we finally found, with these aids, something that proves its effectiveness. (L1027-L1035).

Aids are essential in the life of the college even if the results are not important with some progress. Other actors view aid as a democratization in the logic of free school by reducing inequalities. Pupils from the working class come to do their homework at school while students from well-to-do families benefit from home help and favourable working conditions.

The aid facilitates an extension of schooling for students in difficulty. This support for apprenticeships hangs them up and keeps them as long as possible in the education system. Without these devices, it is clear that many students would drop out of school.

At the academic level, the aid represents an institutional policy in REP + for access to the knowledge of the most disadvantaged students. With the new reforms, educational support will disappear in non-priority areas to remain solely in the fold of colleges classified REP + in an effort to optimize the resources allocated to the most troubled institutions.

The helpers also meet a need for democratization of the school; they create different relationships with students, promoting proximity, emotional relationship, mobilization. In this wake, actors formulate proposals to strengthen actions, reorganize activities according to the needs of students, with reference skills to acquire. This better meets the needs of students and avoids coercive help while engaging the child in a path of skill acquisition. Stakeholders noted that often the supports do not meet the needs of some students. An example is the case of personalized support: not all students need this time while other students need more hours.

Second point

• For a second group of teachers, help in priority education is not part of a democratization of the college. (Eight answers)

This much shared position is a criticism of the helpers. For some actors, the aid is an additional asset, an advantage but without a solid contribution.

Critics revolve around a lack of critical learning. Students tend to embrace their teachers' ideas, lack of judgment, personal opinion, intellectual levity, or lack of constructive reasoning. At school level, the lack of practical

application of new pedagogies is criticized. These new teaching methods work on children's interests, on their learning pleasure. Magisterial pedagogy is criticized, considered routine and passive.

On the institutional level, the teachers call for a change of vision of the National Education. Small ministerial reforms are deemed unnecessary and do not match the problems of the school. Thus, teachers express doubts about the ability of devices to transform the school system because school difficulties are not resolved. The school system is criticized for its significant academic failure, unlike other countries. A figure of one hundred and twenty thousand pupils who leave the system each year is advanced, while states like Finland are more successful in their education system.

For other protagonists, the aid as it stands today is an illusion in the face of the postulate of inequality of departure and the difference of cultures, lack of autonomy, loss of meaning and difficulties of comprehension. To be clearer, helpers cannot erase all culture differences and create equality within the school.

Democratization is not a reality and it is illusory at this time for the most pessimistic who think that the results are negative. A lack of massive involvement of families in the school monitoring of their children is noted and a lack of global reflection that undermines the organization of the college.

Third point

• For a third category of teachers, the contributions of the helpers in the democratization of the college in priority education are derisory. (Four answers)

This minority current of animators criticizes the school for its difficulties in fulfilling its roles, reducing inequalities and promoting bad features like the Open School. A doubt about the results arises, which is why professors see aid as a goal. For the partisans of this current, the democratization passes by a control of the common base, essential element for any obligatory and complete schooling.

In addition, they highlight the lack of resources in some institutions sometimes differently appreciated. A criticism is expressed about a deplorable absence of teachers in the helpers who prefer to take other paths and refuse to work overtime, unlike the assistants who are very present in the helpers, enlisted in the educational teams and sometimes even working in a network in primary schools. An empowerment of families in their educational functions is desired. In the same way, a reflection is necessary on

the contents, the training of the teachers, and the assessment by competences, to reinforce the school action. This analysis questions the programs to be taught, the place of the citizen in society.

The recent heated debate over the content of school curricula in the fifth year has raised criticism, tensions over the place of Islam, religions, the place of the Greek language. Oppositions and tensions show the importance of school in society. Teacher training is another important area of reflection but neglected. Initial training has lost its value with the reform on the *masterisation* of education. This means allows teachers to adapt to digital, pedagogical and didactic evolution over time. Skills Assessment is a new college-based project, a project that is taking shape and relevance while being experienced in elementary schools.

Academic success remains a wish, a goal that teachers help to share. It is a commitment on the part of the stakeholders who are struggling for students to succeed. A feeling of self-satisfaction animates some of them to have helped the students. However, they are aware of the limits of their actions, the limited time of help that is not enough to fill the gaps of students. They also deplore the lack of recovery at home by children who are content with this hour of help, the lack of family monitoring.

Fourth point

• A fourth group of teachers judges aid in the democratization of the college in priority education insufficient. (Eleven answers)

A majority of teachers think that the aid is insufficient in the process of democratization of the school and are considered marginal. The results seem to be absent. Teachers are often disappointed on the return of a student who has been released for a few weeks internally.

At the school level, there is a lack of time to remedy, motivate and make students succeed. The constraints of the program to be completed and the limited time of class hours handicap the teaching action. Personalized help and other devices are not enough to bring success. This anecdote of a teacher is illustrative:

The principal said: it is terrible because we can multiply these aids, there is no solution, and it does not pay. Yes, sometimes it works ... What is horrible, for a kid who has difficulties, it is when we cannot pin down the difficulty, and we can multiply the help, sometimes it does not work. (L3298-L3301).

For others, this overlap of aid, with the many names of actions following ministerial reforms, creates confusion. Activities overlap without real definition. Other grievances are the low level and the lack of a strong student foundation in learning; the passages in the upper class of students who are dragging deep gaps weakening the actions of help.

For greater democratization, many changes are needed. Stakeholders want more concrete learning because the lessons seem too abstract for students from the popular milieu and are far removed from their experience. Students do not perceive the meaning, the usefulness of learning. An increase in working hours is mentioned in the hourly time of disciplines and aids. The heaviness of the programs, the need to help students in difficulty, means that the time allocated to help is often limited to one hour. Creating a link in the activities is necessary to make sense. A better explanation in class is also necessary to create a good understanding to take into account the heterogeneity within the class, students with disabilities (dyslexia, dyspraxia, slowness, etc.) and to promote different paths for students.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the primary goal of aids is academic achievement and teachers help to share it. This story of a teacher shows the commitment and affection of the participants in the activities:

I organized the springboard device to calm my anxieties. I know it did not work well; this buddy system, when it works, it's wonderful. Me last year, I watched them work, it made me balm to the heart and it also breaks the image that we have students: "They do not work, they do nothing, etc. (L5662-L5669).

Some actors consider the helpers as a hope to participate in the democratization of the school. Aids, as methodological learning, framework and incentive to work, just allow students to benefit from working conditions. These teachers are not convinced that the helpers bring success but recognize the aid contributions in terms of curiosity, questioning.

At the school level, fourth- and third-graders show real difficulties in learning and also lack school culture to build themselves. This school culture, which is lacking for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, is found in upper class children, who are closer to school success, according to the sociology of Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964).

For the faculty, the lack of fun to learn from students is blatant by a lack of investment in their schooling. At the institutional level, there is a fear of the disappearance of key referent staff when the college passes in REP + may result in a reduction of staff in the aid. The revision of the primary and secondary links is relevant to encourage more concrete learning. School

programs are unsuitable for schoolchildren with a general education deficit, disappointing student results, lack of personal work, dropout. To democratize the aid, a modification of the school map is mandatory to create more social mix and emulation. Suburban colleges built at the bottom of HLM buildings are frequented by the same populations and constitute a risk of creating *social reproduction* Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964).

For a category of stakeholders, the solution is to favour a different orientation that challenges the single college. They call to favour an orient.

1.1.3. Discussion

The positions of actors on aid as a means of democratization are different. Criticisms are formulated and solutions outlined.

In logic of evaluation of devices, it is recommended to diagnose and give reliable tools. The work measures a panel of students over time in order to better evaluate the effects of the helpers. The school institution seems to be improvising in the creation of aids and does not fit in time to measure the benefits of the actions. Other actors propose to assess the progress of students and to adapt the offer to needs by increasing the resources allocated to the school. The key is to achieve greater strength, relevance, success. With this in mind, greater flexibility is required for personalized support.

The recommended solutions are multiple. The idea is to bring families closer to school. Others consider it necessary to initiate a new reform to grant more resources to disadvantaged schools in order to make actions more positive, especially in priority education. At the school level, a call is made for a reflection on the school rhythms whose relief is desired. More teacher organization to meet the challenges of school is needed. But for another category of actors, the solution is a recovery in hand of students to instill in them the pleasure of learning and to solve the various shortcomings in their schooling. Finally, the ideal remains, for some, an integration of aid in the teaching profession.

At the institutional level, more help in priority education is desired because of a concentration of educational and school problems. On the family level, parents do not assume their responsibilities in the school supervision of their children. The teachers want more involvement from them but they also notice parents very anxious about their children's academic success.

Another point invoked is to give meaning to the success that involves mobilizing students in learning, diversify activities and methods, value success, evaluate differently to create a dynamic of success. Other tracks are also advanced such as: rewarding success, effort in the work,

perseverance to show the value of work as a factor of merit and progress. Another designated task is to promote the talents and academic successes that come with encouraging emulation, a surge of success. The mobilization of students in learning is reflected in an awareness of academic progress, to become aware of their *student job*. Another recommendation is to promote homework that is close to students 'everyday life in the students' areas of interest. Other activities are cited as encouraging classroom work, group work and also fostering a more learning-friendly relationship and harmonizing aid policy, well-coordinated class action and outside work, combating the many devices.

Other protagonists argue for a reduction of the school curriculum and the implementation of modules for a resumption of fundamental learning. An invitation to participate is launched in the direction of the actors of the popular education to work for the success of the most deprived and a responsibility of the families is also evoked; use digital technology to better individualize and respond to technological innovations.

1.2. Conclusion

As noted the democratization of aid remains a subject of contention between the various protagonists. It tends towards a process, an objective but is not yet something concrete because the results of the actions are very mixed. The positions are unanimous to emphasize pedagogical, institutional changes, etc.

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