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Taking wellbeing and involvement in working on quality and as points of reference in the guidance of professionals makes it possible to respect the level at which the practitioner is functioning. For both concepts, a five-point scale – the Leuven Scale – has been developed. The scale contains a range of applications for (self-)evaluation, monitoring of children and scientific research using different tools like SICS (the Self-evaluation-Instrument for Care Settings) and POMS (process-monitoring system for Early Years). In this symposium we focus on 3 different applications of the Leuven scales: quality monitoring and improvement on county level in the UK, impact on professional development in Portuguese teacher training and quality improvement in Japanese preschools. With tools like SICS and POMS we can make practitioners and preschool settings more effective and strong enough to meet the challenge of education. It is developing competences in progress.

Developing and adapting POMS to the portuguese context of evaluation in early childhood education

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In Portuguese context there is a significant distance between official guidelines for evaluation and reality of assessment practices in the field of early childhood education. Considering this reality, a project was developed in the context of the supervised pedagogic practice of the License Degree in Early Childhood Education. While scaffolding professional development of students, the idea was to build an instrument to support the pedagogic practice, ease the relation between observation, assessment and curriculum development practices and assure an ‘authentic’ assessment. Based on the experiential approach in education, this instrument was built around the principle that assessment should be process-based and should enable the development of practices not only oriented towards results (learning and development) but also towards the improvement of the educational context. Inspired by the Process Oriented Monitoring System for Young Children (POMS) (Laevers, Vandebussche, Kog and Depondt 1997), the instrument was adapted to the Portuguese reality, throughout 3 academic years, involving 13 kindergartens, 24 early childhood teachers and about 40 students, in each school year. Respect for well-being and consent information of participants were assured. The instrument offers possibilities for ‘authentic’ assessment, complying with the official guidelines and scientific consensus on educational quality and has an important impact on students’ professional development. The concrete result was SAC (Sistema de Acompanhamento das Crianças) supporting early childhood teachers practices (Portugal & Laevers, 2010). Reflections concerning what could be learned from the process of implementation, the impact and the type of interventions in practice will be described.

Keywords: experiential education - well-being and involvement; teacher-training; process oriented monitoring system