Need for a pedagogy of large groups in Congo -Kinshasa

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Abstract
This article starts from a constant according to which the classes of Kinshasa have become bloated because of the mismatch between the rhythm of the evolution of the school demand and the capacity of reception and possibility of supervision. An inadequacy justified by the state of the economies, especially the budgets allocated to education in the countries located south of the Sahara in which the Democratic Republic of Congo is located.

In order to solve this large group problem in classrooms, a purely pedagogical solution is proposed in this work. This is group pedagogy. Teachers should therefore be trained in the pedagogy of large groups during retraining to enable them to take charge of these classes.

Keywords: class, overcrowded class, pedagogy of large groups

Résumé
Cet article part d'un constant selon lequel les classes de Kinshasa sont devenues pléthoriques à cause de l'inadéquation entre le rythme de l'évolution de la demande scolaire et la capacité d'accueil et de possibilité d'encadrement. Une inadéquation justifiée par l'état des économies, surtout des budgets alloués à l'éducation dans les pays situés au Sud du Sahara dans lequel la République Démocratique du Congo se situe.

Dans le but de résoudre ce problème de grand groupe dans les classes, une solution purement pédagogique est proposée dans ce travail. Il s'agit de la pédagogie des groupes. Il faudrait donc former les enseignants à la pédagogie des grands groupes pendant les recyclages pour leur permettre de prendre en charge ces classes.

Mots-clés : classe, classe pléthorique, pédagogie des grands groupes

I. Introduction

The multiple problems of the Congolese education system are almost known to everyone and have already been the subject of several conferences, workshops, meetings... However, the recommendations that have often been made do not take into account the reality of the country.

This is the case now with the school boom problem. Indeed, the authors who have reflected on this question in the case of our country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, are not failing, but they often end up with unrealistic recommendations, which do not match the socio-economic realities of the country.

To achieve our aim we should consult the scientific works written in academic the institutions for this purpose and which must guide or help the government. This article addresses the same problem but from another angle. It does not support the policy of education at a lower cost, but simply tries to demonstrate how it is possible to obtain acceptable results in the education sector, during a period of crisis.

II. Background

Classes in Kinshasa have become overcrowded due to the mismatch between the pace of the evolution of school demand and the capacity for reception and the possibility of supervision. An inadequacy justified by the state of the economies, especially the budgets allocated to education in the countries located south of the Sahara in which the Democratic Republic of Congo is located.

These large groups in the classes, a logical consequence of this mismatch, pose enormous problems in the organization with respect to teaching or learning. The results of recent studies (Ngonzo, 2013; Tingu and Ngonzo, 2013) show that students, the reason for all educational projects, do not learn with the expositive methods and techniques used by Congolese teachers, for lack of something better.

The appropriate solution to this reality requires the construction of new schools and new commitment. However, the meager budget allocated to the education sector in our country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, has the main objective of making effective free primary education through the regular payment of teachers' salaries. And even if that is the case, this budget does not allow the recruitment of other teachers and the building of schools apart from those that already exist within a period of time. Thus, the pedagogy of large groups becomes in these circumstances a temporary but sizeable solution.

II. The management of a large class at the time of the pedagogy of large groups
The evolution of overcrowded classes has evolved enormously according to the various research and surveys carried out on the size of the class and the advent of the Pedagogy of Large Groups.

Research findings demonstrate that class size has little or no influence on academic achievement contrary to common opinion about fears of teachers and education officials. There are other factors that come into play: the quality of the learners, their motivation, the educational objectives, the resources involved, but above all the factors related to the teacher himself.

Large group pedagogy therefore seeks to organize teaching in such a way that many students in a class under the guidance of a teacher can learn something during their stay at school. In other words, it seeks to transform the large group constraint into resources so that each child can benefit from learning activities.

After reviewing the issue and relying on the theoretical foundations of teaching/learning situations and the work of Comenius, Pestalozzi and André Belle (quoted by Nomaye, 2006), several meetings of specialized institutions of the French-speaking world, in particular the Conference of Ministers of National Education of countries having in common the use of French (CONFEMEN) and the Association of French Teachers in Africa (APFA), were devoted to the problems posed by large groups in the classrooms. Pathways to solutions ranging from institutional measures such as double-flow classes (one room, two cohorts, and one teacher) to various teaching practices, i.e. the application of a pedagogy adapted to classes with large groups, have been suggested.

The substantial contribution of De Peretti that Renard cites (2003) through his work on large groups and pedagogy has made it possible to better understand the phenomenon and find a solution to it. Based on the work of De Peretti, the Conference of Ministers of National Education of countries having in common the use of French (CONFEMEN) has compiled a methodological directory on the techniques of organizing teaching in large groups. It is in a way a practical response to the concerns of member states.

A few experiments carried out in Chad, Mali, etc. on the problem of large-group classes in the context of teacher training, as well as the findings of teachers in classroom situations, have shown that it is possible to teach effectively in large-group classes. effective. There are therefore techniques for the pedagogical management of large groups in primary and secondary school classes which make it possible to temporarily solve the problem of the increase in school demand.

The Institute of Sahel in Bamako (1996) has published a collection of techniques and practices of active pedagogy with a view to strengthening the skills of teachers within the framework of the Training Program for the Environment. The proposed techniques apply to the Pedagogy of Large Groups. We have for example:

2.1. The collective search for ideas

It is a collective idea-seeking technique where participants must put together, as quickly and as uncritically as possible, all the ideas that a problem inspires in them. It is based on the imagination of the productions. It can be used in all disciplines where learners are faced with a situational problem and must formulate a hypothesis.

The pedagogical interest is to involve learners, encourage their participation and encourage creativity and oral expression. The implementation procedure takes place in three phases.

a. The subject analysis phase: should allow all the students to clearly identify the nature of the subject and the objectives to be achieved, then the facilitator presents the procedure.

b. The phase of collecting ideas: the leader goes over one by one the instructions he has developed, ordered, so that the students can express all the ideas that come to their mind either in the class group or in the subgroups. This is the real phase of the collective search for ideas. The ideas put forward are noted by the reporter(s).

c. The classification and selection phase: it allows to restore order in the proposal and to introduce a logical link preparing the exploitation. The role of the reporter is important because he presents the list of ideas selected to the whole class.

It is recommended that the teacher who applies this technique choose simple, stimulating problem situations, adapted to the level of the class and reflecting the realities of the environment; to give clear and precise instructions to avoid any ambiguity in the interpretation; Avoid intervening in learner responses for fear of breaking their relative momentum. To avoid the monopoly of speech; to ensure that everyone expresses themselves by encouraging the most timid; to avoid assessments likely to block; finally, to help assess the difficulty of formulating their ideas.

To illustrate this technique which is presented as useful for the teaching of French, observation sciences, mathematics, an example is given for a class of 80 students.

The chosen theme is my region: agriculture and fishing. At the end of the lesson, the student should be able to name the most common crops in their region, the most numerous animal species, giver the ranking of the top four circles in their region in terms of the three activities studied.

With 80 students, the teacher forms 8 sub-groups of 10 students. An evaluation phase makes it possible to control the memorization of the circles and their specialization elements. The whole exercise has an expected duration of 40 minutes.

2.2. The debate lesson
It is the technique by which pupils formed in sub-groups work on the resolution of a problem exposed in French, in mathematics or in an activity of awakening. Each student reflects individually on the subject; then the exchanges take place within the sub-groups. A reporter is appointed in each sub-group and is responsible for reporting on the work carried out. The various sub-groups meet to discuss and exchange information on the subject. The sharing work is directed by the teacher. The pedagogical interest is twofold: it prepares the student to expressing himself and to seeking ideas personally.

Personal work must be part of team work, the teacher must prepare and distribute appropriate documentation. The work, based on the teacher's instructions, is carried out in several successive stages of analysis and synthesis: student, sub-group, group-class. This technique can be applied to almost any lesson.

The debate lesson technique was used during a written expression lesson in a CM1 class at the Farcha primary school in N'Djamena in 1991. Which was divided into 8 groups of 11 students? The situational problem represented by three images is placed on the board. Each student in the group reflects personally on this situational problem for a few minutes.

Then, the group discusses writing a collective text. The student designated reporter for each group reads the final production of his group to the whole class. After discussion, the teacher asks the whole class to choose the best production. And this best production will be that of the whole class.

2.3. Coat of arms
It is a technique that consists of students in a situation of individual or sub-group work filling in the boxes of a table in order to identify the essentials of a given theme. Suggested educational uses include:

☐ the study of a character;

☐ the analysis of a theme of history or geography;

☐ the analysis of a problem;

☐ the evaluation of an activity.

An example of panels of the coat of arms technique given for a history subject in 1st year secondary; Roman civilization. Three sub-themes are proposed: the foundation, the apogee and the decline. This technique has the following advantages:

☐ encourage the effort of reflection and the writing of dense and precise answers;

☐ facilitate reciprocal perception of individuals in a sub-group;

☐ help with group cohesion.

2.4. The flicker
In a Large Group, pooling can be a source of weariness. Indeed, the successive reading of the reports of many sub-groups is often boring and without much profit. Hence the need for a variation in the terms of pooling. This is done by a succession of short (1 to 3 minutes) and dense messages on the most specific aspects of the work of each sub-group. The pedagogical interests of this technique are multiple: it allows the learning of conciseness (short messages of 1 to 3 minutes) accompanied or not by comments from the group which cannot exceed 5 minutes, the attention is more sustained and the synthesis is obtained faster.

2.5. The photo language
Choose one or more images from as many disparate as possible, in order to then express in an exchange with the members of the other sub-groups, his appreciations, his ideas, his vision of things; the collection of images can be done according to a specific theme or randomly. Even pictures from newspapers that you have on hand can be used. The educational interests are:

☐ facilitate in a Large Group, the expression of everyone through a concrete support on a theme, a subject;

☐ Develop a sense of observation, comparison of cultures and civilizations;

☐ Aim for the presentation or study of a character.

This technique can be used at the elementary level, in the first and second cycles of secondary school.

2.6. The activity project
This technique which allows precise planning and organization of teaching by which learning situations can be exploited by drawing on various disciplines. The students formed into different sub-groups will work on the realization of different and complementary tasks that will have been identified and negotiated. Example: investigation of the origin of the populations of a village. Reception discipline: history in 2nd secondary Groups: 5 to 10 students. Groups can be formed by affinity or by automatic designation of the teacher.

Instructions: go to the elders of the village to gather the desired information. Record this information on a sheet in summary form.

Back in class, the work of the different groups will be used for a synthesis on the origin of the populations of the village studied.

2.7. The progressive elaboration technique

The so-called progressive elaboration technique was used in a mathematics lesson in a 1st C.O class in Chad. This class was divided into 8 groups of 11 students. The problem was resolved gradually. First, the problem posed on the board is read by the teacher and a few students. Second, each student thinks about it personally. Then, each group gets to work to find the solution together. In a fourth step, the groups get together in pairs (i.e. four groups) to solve the problem. Each group brings its solution, discussions begin and each defends the validity of its answer; the groups together reach a solution. The four solutions are put on the board and the whole class appreciates and chooses the most correct solution.

2.8. The laboratory

The laboratory is a technique that places learners in the position of researchers to study, under the control of the teacher, an object or a phenomenon in order to determine its causes, effects or properties through manipulation and experimentation.

The laboratory is also an individualized technique, motivation for learners and which has several advantages: it helps to acquire learning methods and to stimulate autonomy in learning, it promotes the development of the scientific spirit by passing through the stages which are observation, formulation and verification of hypotheses, recording, analysis and interpretation of data. It develops the sense of observation and the spirit of analysis of the learner.

The approach in this technique consists in presenting the support, that is to say the object of the lesson; explain the working method; communicate and clarify the instructions and the objective; form sub-groups, if necessary, perform (observation, manipulation, experimentation); present and put on the board the results of the working groups; synthesize. An additional report of the teaching can be done if necessary.

For the application of this technique, it is recommended that the support be stimulating, adapted to the level of the class and related to the realities of the environment. It is necessary to draw up clear and precise instructions to avoid any ambiguity of interpretation, to set up a system appropriate to the nature and objectives of the activity, to facilitate the mobility of learners while ensuring that the order and time allowed are respected, invite them to use with care and maintain the equipment used, ensure compliance with basic precautions when handling certain products or objects. The laboratory is a technique that can be applied in science, geography, technology...

2.9. The site visit

The technique of site visit or Exploration class, Green class or even Walk class consists in leading the pupils out of the classroom in order to lead them to observe and note the elements of nature. This technique has the advantage of promoting knowledge of the environment, developing a sense of observation and analysis, acquiring the spirit of organization, methods and syntheses, allowing the constitution of a bank of environmental study subjects.

The recommended approach may be as follows: the teacher must first set the objectives of the site visit; it will determine what the pupils will have to acquire in terms of knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills.

With the pupils, the teacher will negotiate the objectives, that is to say the simple and concrete presentation of what is going to be done, in order to obtain their understanding, their adhesion and their motivation in the accomplishment of the activity.

During the actual visit phase, the activities will focus on observation and individual note-taking by the pupils, exchanges within the groups, the interview, if necessary, and the collection of information by questionnaire, intervention, photos, measuring instruments, etc. The operation phase of the visit can take place in two stages:

a. The restitution of the results of the visit which will consist in the development of notes taken individually. The pooling of information gathered within the groups, the preliminary total or partial synthesis of the groups and the presentation of the productions (syntheses) of the different groups;

b. General discussions and synthesis. Under the guidance of the teacher or a student, it is a question here of crossing the information to detect the interrelations, the contradictions, to bring precisions and clarifications, to release a synthesis, and finally to lead to a decision-making.

As the site visit is a cross-disciplinary activity, it is recommended that the teacher make time groupings to have a sufficient time slot to carry out this activity. For an objective and easier reading, the teacher will develop with the help of the students a reading grid according to the objectives of the visit.

For the smooth running of the groups and the acquisition of information during the site visit, the teacher will step back and play the role of facilitator. He will pay particular attention to safety and hygiene measures. The technique of the visit can be applied in the disciplines of awakening, sciences, history, geography, study of the environment, etc.

2.10. Role-playing simulation
Role-playing simulation is a technique that places students in a controlled learning situation where they can interpret roles and characters. This technique frees the mind, overcomes shyness, develops creativity, interpersonal communication, the spirit of synthesis and the artistic abilities of students. It also helps with space management and introduces the very young to this management.

The approach consists of presenting and understanding the communication situation (theme, place, characters, sets, etc.), establishing a scenario and distributing the roles, together with the students, leaving them free to choose the distribution. It is therefore recommended to clarify the roles, to insist on the identification of the characters and their characters to bring the pupils to enter well into the "shoes of the character", to discreetly point out the insufficiencies and to really make the remedial progress to arrive to an expressive simulation, to help and support students in difficulty without wasting too much time.

This technique can find its field of application in the teaching of languages (reading, oral expression, etc.), in that of mathematics and in the study of the environment/learning *disciplines.*

2.11. Separate activities
This technique was used at the CHOUADA School in N'Djamena in 1988-1989. The teacher divides the students according to their level (strong, average and weak). For example in reading, the teacher has a group of weak students repeat the syllables under his guidance. During this time, the rest of the class divided into 6 groups of students, each working under the guidance of a monitor. The role of the monitor is to have people rehearse individually a reading text previously written on a giant slate. This is the monitoring technique. From time to time, the teacher circulates between the groups and ensures the correct pronunciation of the words.

Here, the pedagogical principle is the alternation of activities according to the pace of learning among students. For stronger students, the teacher offers activities corresponding to their level, for weaker students, reinforcement activities.

2.12. Inter-school correspondence and exchanges
It is a school practice which connects, by means of correspondence or exchanges of documents, objects, products, experiences, pupils of the same class, of two or more schools of the same locality or different localities, of the same country or different countries.

This technique has the educational advantages of improving learners' ability to communicate in writing (letter, fax, etc.) and orally (audio cassette, for example) while offering them lively and attractive activities, improving field of traditional reading which confines the child, school books, to cultivate a taste for writing, to promote the spirit of exchange and mutual sharing, to produce ripple effects.

The explanation of text becomes an interesting game by the fact that the child, through the texts and the information received by correspondence, seeks with interest to understand. This technique familiarizes the child with several types of correspondence. The procedure to be used could be the following:

□ The teacher makes direct contact with a school that wishes to correspond with his. This contact can be made by correspondence if the interest relates to a country;

□ He provokes a debate on the need to leave his school environment, presents the school and the correspondents. He organizes the children into thematic groups, evaluates with them the means to be implemented. He informs the parents' association (APE) of the advantages of the company and asks for its membership. He informs the administrative authorities.

To develop the file, that is to say the writing, the teacher divides the students into groups, communicates the themes, and subdivides the theme and consfie a sub-theme to each of these groups. It puts the students into activity (production of text, drawing, collection of objects, etc.), corrects the results of the groups in the general assembly (GA). It pools productions and objects during an A.G in order to improve them with the contributions of other groups. It makes a final evaluation and a final rewrite if it is a match.

If it is a received letter, it will be processed during a working session. The teacher first learns knowledge, then he programs and organizes the class for its use. He reads it, and then he organizes the discussions in such a way as to guide the pupils, to identify the activities to be carried out to respond to this letter, he plans these activities.

For the application of this technique, it is recommended to adapt the activities to the mental and physical ages of the children, to use the time slots judiciously to avoid school vagrancy, to supervise the realization of each activity without directivity.

The technique of inter-school correspondence and exchanges applies to history, geography, science, environmental studies, mathematics, drawing, language...

III. The professional training of teachers in question

The DRC has a large number of qualified teachers at the EPSP level, thanks to its UPN, its ISPs, its FPSEs as well as its aggregation departments. However, the problem of managing a large class is not limited only in terms of training or the simple qualification of the teacher. It mainly affects the content of this professional teacher training. In other words, it is not enough only to have a qualified teacher, therefore trained to say that he will manage a large class well, it is rather a teacher whose professional training content also puts the focus on large group issue. The content of the training that takes this aspect into account therefore becomes an important element that can never be neglected in the professional training of the teacher.

This content should therefore enable the teacher to have a certain number of qualities, including (De Peretti quoted by Nomaye, 1994):

□ the ability to organize the group-class into a variety of subgroups or teams, permanent and mobile, brought together for well-determined tasks;

□ the ability to vary the learning activities according to the target groups;

□ the ability to determine the duration, the teaching sequences according to the objective to be achieved;

□ the ability to use class resources by assigning roles to students;

□ the ability to vary the modes of assessment according to the size of the class and the nature of the learning activity.

It is our regret to note that these aspects are not yet taken into account in the current training content of the Congolese teacher, despite being faced with the problem of a large group in his class. This constitutes the

major obstacle in the implementation of this pedagogy. But, an obstacle that can easily be pruned by adapting the content of the training to the reality on the ground.

IV. Conclusion

For more than a decade, the Congolese education sector has been going through a great crisis. While it is true that the appropriate solution to the problem of the school boom experienced by the Congolese education system requires financial means, it is also accepted that the pedagogy of large groups helps to circumvent this difficulty. It is a significant alternative in the case of our country insofar as it makes it possible to achieve the objectives but at a lower cost.

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