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## **Changing cultures and school in France**

In France schooling is based on two principles : the desire for a democratization of education and the will to integrate individuals into modernity. Throughout the XXth century, schooling has historically been concerned with making education more democratic by endeavouring to base selection uniquely on criteria of merit and by attempting to turn individuals into full citizens. Today, these two principles are still considered as fundamental aims. But their meaning has changed and the school has to resolve problems of another nature. The democratization of the system no longer refers to the access of all pupils to secondary education (an aim which has practically been fulfilled). Rather it entails the administration and management of an extremely diverse population - both from the point of view of its educational level and of its relationship to schooling and knowledge. Integration no longer raises only the question of citizenship. It also raises questions regarding the recognition of the individual and his or her subjectivity. It is no longer simply a question of transmitting the universal values which help to mould individuals. On the contrary, the question today is how to preserve the specificity of each individual of each in order to protect him or her from a system which, in many respects, appears to brutalize them.

Today, changes in French schools result not so much from structural reforms, as from transformations in society's relationship to the school system and in expectations regarding education. Presently school has become part of everyday life and debates over education are in fact discussions about society itself. Discussions about violence or immigration in schools, (in the case, for example, of the Muslim girls wearing 'headscarfs'), convey both the decline of the school as an institution and the need for it to face social problems. In this paper, I shall first present the organisation of the school system. Then I shall go on to discuss three major topics which reflect the challenges facing the school system : democratisation and the question of mass education ; competitiveness at school in the present situation of widespread unemployment ; the socialisation of young people in the context of the decline of the institutions.

### ***1. Recent developments in the French school system***

In France, the history of schooling can be regarded as a quest to achieve uniformisation. As in many other countries, school was initially divided into several distinct educational units. The vast majority of pupils left school at the end of the primary cycle. Only the most "deserving"

continued on to secondary school. Depending on which social class one belonged to, there was, however, an enormous difference in one's probable school career. Middle class children attended the primary classes in the *lycées*. This assured that they would get into secondary school. Working class children were educated in the primary schools. Access to secondary schooling depended on passing an examination. Middle class children went on to the university, whereas working class children left school during early adolescence. Thus, educational success, measured here in terms of length of schooling, was not so much due to the pupil's capacities as to the circumstances of his birth.

The successive reforms implemented throughout the XXth century were aimed at unifying the system to enable all pupils to extend their studies further than primary schooling, regardless of their place of birth or social origins. The issue at stake was mainly the *collège*, that is to say the intermediate level between primary school and the *lycée*. The question was to know which form it should take. Should it be an extension of primary school and be concerned mainly with pupils' needs, regardless of the gap between scientific knowledge and popular culture? This orientation was at the forefront of a new form of humanism, based more on technical knowledge and less on elitism. By adapting to the pupils, the idea was also to modernise the school by legitimating technical culture. Or, should the *collège*, on the contrary, resemble the *lycée* and give preference to classical culture and to the form of excellence which is based on the humanities? The question was not settled directly. To begin with, several different models of *collège* co-existed. Some, like the CES (*collège d'enseignement secondaire*), offered classical streams, as well as the so-called modern streams which did not include Latin and Greek. The others [the CEG (*collège d'enseignement général*)] did not have classical streams. Later there was to be only one type of *collège* the CES (*Collège d'enseignement secondaire*), comprising different streams. It is not until the 1970's that the various streams disappeared and that the *collèges* offered the same type of education to all pupils. With the creation of the *collège unique* the school system was said to be unified. The French school system is therefore a three tiered structure composed of the primary schools, the *collège* and finally the *lycée*, with the latter including three types of education - classical, technical and vocational.

In form and structure, the *collège* is closer to the *lycée* than to the primary school, because it is primarily the gateway to the latter. On the one hand its teaching lays the basis for a broad general culture by means of a common core syllabus. The knowledge acquired in primary school is reviewed and explored in greater depth. On the other hand, it plays a decisive role in the orientation of pupils which presently takes place at the end of *troisième*. Sometimes these two functions are incompatible because orientation (tracking) has now become one of the priorities of the *collège* since almost all pupils go on to further study. As in the past streaming has appeared once again, but by way of optional courses (rare or prestigious languages such as German, which are chosen in order to have the best chances of succeeding. In theory however, the classes remain undifferentiated. Moreover, orientation implies a degree of competition between schools, because some *collèges* are more efficient than others and, as a result, give the pupils a better chance of reaching general secondary schooling than others.

The creation of the *collège unique* was partly a response to the problem of introducing more democracy into schooling, since it made it possible for all pupils to continue their education after primary school in a common structure offering the same type of teaching to all. However, the reform of the school system has not solved all the problems. Paradoxically, it provoked what

is today referred to as the 'crisis' of the school system. Now that all the pupils are accepted in the *collège* and the *lycée*, in particular those who previously would have been sent to specific structures (such as apprenticeship programs) or who would have dropped out all together, schools are faced with new challenges. These are of at least two types. The first is selection, and the second concerns mass education. Selection is a new challenge because now it is an integral part of the school system. As long as the school was organised as a separate educational entity, selection took place prior to entry into the school system. Now that a whole age group attends *collège*, selection takes place within the system itself. The school previously perceived as a fair institution in contrast to a society regarded as unfair, is now criticised for being a source of injustice. The more opaque the rules and the arguments for selection, the greater the distance between the school and society. The highly selective nature of the school system is one of the causes for the malaise amongst teachers who feel that their mission is no longer to transmit knowledge but rather to select pupils.

The second challenge is that of mass education ; this is not simply due to the considerable rise in numbers, but also to the arrival of pupils with very different social and educational backgrounds from the main stream. Nowadays the school has to manage a heterogeneous and previously ignored population. This heterogeneity appears through social and educational differences, diversity in degrees of aspirations, and through variations in attitudes and expectations concerning schooling. It means that the school, and more precisely the teachers, are faced with difficulties which they do not know how to resolve. On one the hand the school must deal with an unfamiliar population, and on the other it continues to apply an educational model which is ill suited to this new public. The advent of mass education stresses the need to introduce difference as a means of taking into account the specificities of each pupil without having this lead to an unequal treatment of pupils. It is therefore a question of diversifying without excluding which was not the case with streaming. The advent of mass education meant that the creation of the *collège unique* had to be revised for until then, the principle was that to ensure equality of opportunity all that was needed was to ensure equality in the educational offer. In order to respond to the problems posed by heterogeneity, the school system had to embark on a huge reform based on the autonomy of each school and on a policy which encouraged every school to have its own plan. Since the schools welcomed specific populations, they were given the opportunity to implement specific actions in response to the problems which they themselves had identified (Cousin, 1998). This policy was part of the larger trend towards decentralisation, which began in 1982. This represents a genuine change in French society, i.e. the recognition that to achieve a common goal the initiatives of local actors must be encouraged. One of the pillars of this policy was the designation of educational priority areas (ZEP - Zones d'éducation prioritaire), setting the way for positive discrimination of socially deprived schools.

## ***II. Democracy and the school system***

To a large extent sociological studies done in the 1960's and 1970's cast doubt on the idea on the link between a democratic school system and meritocracy (Baudelot and Establet, 1971, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964 1970, I.N.E.D., 1970). These analyses were carried out before the creation of the *collège unique*. What has happened since then? An overview reveals the extent to which the school has changed. After primary schooling, all children enter the *collège* and most of them continue on further. Almost 70% of an age group obtains the *baccalauréat*, and 60% of

young people over the age of 20 are in further education. As a result of the opening up of the system the democratisation of education has become a reality. The fact that streaming no longer takes place in the *collège* has enabled a large majority (89%) of working class children who entered the *sixième* in 1989 to complete the whole cycle. Nine years before (1980 panel), only 58% of working class children succeeded in so doing. Democratisation is primarily demonstrated by the narrowing gap between working-class children and middle-class children. In 1980, 96% of the middle-class children who entered *sixième* finished *collège*, as compared with 58% of working class children. In 1989 there was only a 10 points difference (99% and 89% respectively). Access to the *lycée* has also become widespread and, amongst the pupils who began *sixième* in 1989, 22% of the working class children enter the general or technological final year without having repeated a year, as compared with 60% of middle class children.

Unfortunately however, the opening up of the school system cannot conceal persistent differences. Democratisation is only relative and numerous forms of inequality are still to be found. The educational careers of working class children are not the same as those of middle class children. The former repeat classes more frequently and are much more often found in the technological and vocational *lycées*. Moreover, if they do get into the general education *lycée*, they are always under-represented in the most prestigious options. This shows that pupils have different strategies depending on their social origins. It also indicated that the workings of the educational system are also a function of the type of population being dealt with. Thus the options demanded by and offered to equally successful pupils will depend on their social origin. For example, working class children who obtain average results will tend to underestimate their capacities and their chances of succeeding, and will therefore be less likely to request entry into a higher class or into a selective stream. This tendency of pupils and their families to underachieve will be communicated by the actors in the school system who will also minimise such pupils capacities, therefore preventing them from entering the best courses. For middle-class children, however, the situation is reversed. These pupils make 'bolder' demands and the teachers encourage them to do so, anticipating the likelihood of their chances of succeeding.

The same remarks apply to the educational achievement of girls. Generally speaking, they do better than boys; this is true at all levels of the school system. They also gain access to the general education more frequently. However, girls do not have the same opportunities as boys. They are subject to discrimination which is revealed in orientation. The scientific and technological courses remain fairly inaccessible, and in order to gain entry into them they have to get better average results than the boys. They tend to practice self-selection in their choices of orientation. Girls are less likely than boys with the same qualifications to request admission into a selective course. By so doing, they conform to the gender stereotype according to which girls are considered less ambitious than boys. The school does nothing to reverse this situation. The educational institutions perpetuate the dominant social models, reinforcing the social role of girls by over-selecting them and maintaining them in "women's" sections.

The question of the democratisation of the school system has therefore become more complex. Inequality persists but has been displaced. The main issue is no longer access to the *lycée*, or to the *baccalauréat* or to the university, since they have become part of mass education. Now the issue is one of the type of course followed, the type of school or university attended, the type of *baccalauréat* obtained. Inequality is now to be found in the choice of options and courses. The unification of the school system has resulted in the introduction of forms of differentiation

within the school itself. Previously, the difference was between those who continued their studies and those who did not. Today the difference is between those who have access to the selective streams and the others.

These new forms of inequality change the relationship between society and the school. The school is now the object of special attention by families who hope that the school will not only teach something, but who also expect the school to deliver a diploma which will give access to the job market. In a system which aims to get "80% of an age-group up to *baccalaureate* level", the issue is no longer access to the *lycée*, but rather the choice of a "good" *lycée* and of a "good" course, ensuring the best possible chances of success. Complex strategies are developed and the pupils and their families behave like consumers managing their best interest. Schooling has not actually become a market, since attendance of a given school is subject to strict rules and schools are grouped in catchment areas. Nevertheless there are pressures and real competition between schools (Ballion, 1982, Ball and van Zanten, 1998). Well-to-do families want their children to attend the schools with the best reputation in order to increase their chances of success as well as to avoid bad company. Sometimes schools themselves create fast track courses to attract the best pupils. Thus one of the effects of the democratisation of schooling, in a context of mass unemployment, is to introduce new forms of behaviour. While in theory all schools are the same, in practice there are considerable differences. In the long run, this may lead to an increase in social and ethnic segregation and to further inequality between the deprived social categories and the middle classes in access to schooling. Working class schools situated in educational priority areas (ZEP) or the peripheral suburbs are the main victims of this reality. There is a real risk of developing a dual system with schools for the middle classes and schools for the peripheral suburbs. (Payet, 1995).

### ***III. School, employment and the economy***

Since the beginning of the 1990's, French society has faced mass unemployment affecting approximately 13% of the active population. Young people are over-represented amongst the unemployed (25%). The rate is even higher if one counts all those in precarious economic situations, for instance those who can only find part-time or temporary employment, or those who are no longer considered as officially unemployed but who depend entirely on social welfare payments. However, the length of time spent in education is rising steadily as is the number of people with qualifications. There is a strong and positive link between levels of qualification and economic integration. The higher one's level of qualification, the less one risks being unemployed and the shorter the period of unemployment. Those who leave the school system with no qualifications have little chance of finding a job. They make up the majority of the long-term unemployed. This highlights the contradictory relationship between the school and the employment market.

The obsession with success at school, and with the search for the best courses and the best schools, are not so much indications of a concern for modernisation of the economy as they are of the desire to curb unemployment. While the target of bringing "80% of an age-group up to *baccalaureate* level" may have been chosen with a view towards improving productivity in firms and in order to face the challenge of international competition with countries such as Japan, it

was mainly understood as the best protection against unemployment. Both pupils and parents expect the school to be efficient. Their relationship to knowledge is strictly instrumental (Charlot et al., 1992, Dubet, 1991). It is not so much the content of the subject which matters as its utility for the pupil's future educational career. The same is true for the choice of languages. German, for example, is considered more efficient than other languages. This choice ensures that the pupil will be in a good class and represents a better guarantee for entry into the selective streams. The choice of scientific streams in the *lycée* is made on the same basis. Pupils do not wish to continue in this path but they know that a scientific baccalaureate leads to the best options. Pupils' choice of orientation, their relationship to studies and the modes of selection do not reflect economic and vocational perspective as much as the concern with unemployment. This leads a great many pupils to have absolutely no illusions about school. While the actors in the school system try to keep the myth of free knowledge being and learning as pleasure alive, the pupils stress efficiency. They appear as cynical consumers who are uniquely interested in the utility of their studies.

Does this concern with success and the utility of one's studies pay off? Unemployment among young people does seem to suggest that this is the correct perspective, since qualifications are a protection against exclusion from the employment market. One form of inequality does however persist, since girls are more likely to be unemployed than boys with the same educational qualifications, except after the baccalaureate. On the other hand, if the relationship between school and social mobility is examined, the answer is more complicated. In France, as elsewhere, there is no direct link between the level of qualification and the social standing of individuals. Compared to their parents, schoolchildren today stay in school longer, go further in their studies and, generally, have a better level of education (Baudelot and Establet, 1989). However, an overall rise in the educational level and a net increase in the number of qualified people does not necessarily mean greater social mobility. The two structures are independent of one another and are only indirectly linked (Boudon, 1973). The employment market has not undergone the same evolution as the school. It has not opened up to the newly qualified. Therefore they cannot directly convert their qualifications into jobs (Baudelot and Establet, 2000). Between 1960 and 1980, for example, the share of managers in the active population rose from 5 to 8%, whereas the proportion of young people leaving school with the baccalaureate rose from 10 to 30%. The structure of employment has therefore not followed the rise in education. Thus in 1993, 160,000 young people left the educational system with a level of qualification at least equivalent to a first university degree, whereas, in the same year, the number of employees in management under the age of 28, did not exceed 77,000 (Duru-Bellat and van Zanten, 1999).

As a result of the overall increase in qualification, we therefore witness a relative devaluation of educational attainment. While to invest in an extra year is always financially advantageous, this bonus has decreased constantly since the 1970's. The gap is closing between those who leave the educational system with the baccalaureate and those who obtain a qualification after two years of further study. This drop in status reinforces disillusionment with the educational system leaving young people to feel trapped. They know that qualifications are a protection against unemployment but they do not always give access to the most desired jobs. Above all, the rise in qualification levels induces tension and competition between the different streams. The University Institutes for Technology (I.U.T. - Instituts Universitaires de Technologie) are an example of this. They are highly rated because they deliver qualifications as technicians after two years of study and because the failure rates are relatively low as compared with the Universities. They were originally set up to deal with the students who had a technical

baccalaureate. In reality now numerous courses and in particular the most sought after are attended by students with a general education baccalaureate. This phenomenon, which concerns many streams, reinforces the dominant position of the general education baccalaureate, in particular the scientific options, at the expense of the other types of baccalaureate which have absorbed the main brunt of qualifications for all.

The fragile and complex link between qualification, unemployment and social status intensifies the instrumental relationship to studies. The vast majority of pupils - those who are only average students and who do not have the symbolic resources of Bourdieu's "heirs" at their disposal - experience school as something of an obstacle race in which they are more likely to lose (repeat classes, negative forms of orientation) than to win. In such a context, efficiency is more important than interest in studies, even for "good" pupils. Above all, the system appears to be opaque and the pupils are never sure of the validity of their choices or of being able to control their destinies. The pupils in technical education are undoubtedly the worst off. Their sections are socially devalued. What will become of them in educational terms is uncertain.

#### ***IV Socialisation by default***

The vocation of the school is not restricted to the distribution of places. It also aims at socialising individuals. Its duty is to transmit norms and values which will ensure social cohesion and the formation of autonomous individuals. School became compulsory at the end of last century not so much for reasons of education as to ensure national unification which was still fragile at the time. School was considered to be an institution concerned with socialization of the individual. This was achieved through self-imposed discipline and conformity with rules. Such a necessary constraint enabled the individual to become autonomous (Durkheim, 1958, 1990). This vision of the school was strongly challenged by the critical sociology of the 1970's, who departed from such an "enchanted" vision and denounced the social domination which it exerted. According to this critique the school does not make way for the construction of autonomous beings but only gives the impression of so doing (Baudelot and Establet, 1971, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964, 1970). Later, the effect of mass education on the system was to make way for another image of the school. It no longer appeared as a system, but rather as a fragmented universe comprising several forms of action. From one perspective the school is a place for learning which, as we have seen, ranks individuals hierarchically. It is therefore a place of intense competition where failure is experienced as a permanent threat. From a second perspective school is a social organisation, with its rules and its codes, in which pupils develop a juvenile form of sociability and enjoy considerable autonomy. Finally, from a third perspective the school is the place in which individuals are moulded. In their relationship to knowledge and the school culture, pupils become individuals and construct their personalities as individual beings (Dubet 1991, Dubet and Martuccelli, 1996).

These three spheres of activity are not necessarily compatible. This is particularly true of the *collège* or the *lycée*. Pupils must be at one and the same time, good pupils, with competent strategies, good friends, integrated into their peer groups, and autonomous beings. Any one sphere of activity may conflict with the other two. For example, peer pressure, or the push toward conformity, conflicts with the need to be competitive at school which stresses difference. Moreover, conforming to the group weighs heavily on the construction of the individual



personality which demands authenticity. Conflict between various spheres of activity is not specific to schools, but what is specific is that the educational institution itself no longer has a guiding principle. It hesitates, for example, between striving for efficiency in its preoccupation with selection of elites and economic integration, and a desire to give preference to the relationship with young people and the development of their personalities (Derouet, 1992).

These conflicts between various spheres of activity has changed the role of the school in the process of socialisation. The school no longer has the means to impose itself on individuals; it is no longer the model for social roles. On the contrary, socialisation has become an activity by default. It is the pupils who try to articulate the various dimensions of the experience of schooling. They attempt to construct themselves as autonomous individuals by giving a meaning to their actions. Socialisation then becomes a sort of individual process which varies with the social and educational position of each person and the type of school. In reality, instead of the world of the school imposing itself on the pupils, it tends to adapt to them (??). For middle class children who attend schools who maintain a good reputation, the experience of school tends to be highly integrated. By in large the pupils have an instrumental relationship to their studies. Utility rules over interest, and some behave like consumers investing in their future. Usually, these schools do not have any particular problems and have a low degree of control over their pupils. A juvenile form of sociability develops without provoking a clash between adolescent culture and the culture of the school. The autonomy and freedom which is permitted rather than given to the pupils may in this case be perceived as a compensation for pressures suffered at school. The pupils play the game because they hope that today's investment will pay off tomorrow. They defer gratification and accept sacrifices. The situation of pupils who experience problems is more awkward. They do not always fit in to this type of school, and their educational status marginalizes them in the eyes of the juvenile community. In order to save face, some of them resort to stereotyped forms of behaviour thus reinforcing their marginality.

In the *collèges* and *lycées* situated in deprived catchment areas the experience is more fragmented and often dominated by tension between the world of school and that of the juvenile community. The attitude towards studying is conditioned by the constant threat of failure at school. Schooling resembles an obstacle race whose rules the pupils do not always understand. Selection appears to be brutal, sometimes unfair and almost always, negative. In this context, the weakest pupils feel that they are defined uniquely in terms of failure. This stigma gives them a sense of being both bad pupils and bad individuals. In order to construct a more positive image of themselves, some of them choose to take refuge in a juvenile culture and identify only with their peer group. They construct an identity for themselves which clashes with what the school expects. They adopt ostentatious forms of behaviour, challenging the authority of the school, through the use of provocative and sometimes outrageous vocabulary. The world of school stands for civic-mindedness to which they oppose the use of force. They adopt the appearance of rebels (Lepoutre, 1997). Thus, for a great many pupils who experience school failure, far from helping them to become autonomous individuals, the school seems to be a blind and brutal machine which destroys them.

Educational institutions have lost their leading role and this contributes to the school's heightened vulnerability. On the one hand, it no longer has the monopoly of knowledge and the distribution of culture. The school now has to compete with other worlds, particularly since one of the characteristics of its adolescent population is the high degree of autonomy of their juvenile

lives. This is another feature of their socialisation by default. References in the world of adolescents are often totally foreign to the world of the school. Nowadays, the school is characterised by the development of two parallel cultures which tend to overlap and ignore each other. The school has little control over adolescents beyond the relationship of teacher and pupil. In this respect, it is liberal in the same way as society is towards adolescent culture and the habits of individuals. For adolescents, school is as much a world in which the cohesion of the peer group and juvenile sociability is at work as it is a place for learning. These two instances almost never meet. In most cases they are juxtaposed. There is therefore no continuity, on the contrary, there are sometimes conflicts. Generally speaking, the coexistence of the world of school and the world of juvenile culture is not a problem. But it can generate conflicts in some schools when the experience of school is dominated by failure.

On the other hand, those who represent school feel invaded and threatened by the local environment, particularly in working class areas and in the suburbs. They are no longer successful in marking the boundary between the school and the surrounding area and in keeping practices which they do not tolerate outside the school. In some schools violence has become a major issue, dominating the whole question of education. The school spontaneously rejects responsibility for the causes of violence and attributes this phenomenon to the outside world of the social and urban crisis, or accuses the parents of being incompetent. But violence also emerges when the pupils are too frequently faced with educational failure. They experience their situation as an indication of the lack of respect for them. They attack the school because they are rejected (Debarbieux, 1996). School is no longer a sphere for construction of the self, but rather becomes an institution which excludes and stigmatizes the weakest. This situation is made all the more unbearable since any form of failure is synonymous with future unemployment.

Finally, as its power declines, the school allows for practices which are contrary to its principles, as indicated by problems relating to ethnic discrimination. While in its general approach and its ways of selecting pupils the school does not discriminate against pupils of immigrant origin (Vallet and Caille, 1996), at the local level some schools practice an emerging form of segregation. These start with the ways in which classes are formed. Their composition is not a question of chance and the end result is that pupils are grouped together by ethnic origin on the basis of the optional subjects available (Payet, 1995). Segregation is rarely intended. It is sometimes the consequence of a project which aims at the contrary. This is the case of *collèges* in the working-class suburbs which attempt to attract good pupils but who isolate them from the others. In some schools in the working-class suburbs, the question of immigration has become a problem in itself and policies aimed at the integration of immigrant children are set up. This is illustrated by increasing use of 'mediators', themselves often of immigrant origin, and who, as a result, are better placed to support the young people and to help them to become pupils. In doing so, the schools often classify these pupils into categories in which they do not necessarily recognise themselves since they are defined uniquely by their ethnic origin. There is a risk of racialisation of social relations (Bouveau and al., 1999).

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The image of the French school system is often one of paradox and contrasts. It has been through a sea of change. Although it has demonstrated that it was capable of adaptation it is very frequently presented as a very unwieldy administration, impossible to reform. On the whole, the

school system has succeeded in absorbing mass education and, objectively, the school is more democratic. However, it is on the subjective side that difficulties emerge. Failure, which was very widespread, is now more marginal, but it has also become more unbearable. The consequences are no longer the same. Now, young people are marginalized by educational failure and the school is made to feel guilty about it because it is held responsible for the situation. Moreover, by extending schooling at secondary level to all the children from the same age group, the school does not only welcome pupil, it also receives adolescents. The focus on success in schooling and the division of labour within schools are not conducive to assuming this responsibility. The school seems to be a divided world in which the organisation of education and the social and cultural world of adolescence never meet. The breadth of the gap between the two worlds varies. It becomes a problem when it creates a feeling of self-destruction in the pupil, that is to say when he or she cannot merge the two worlds. This is one of the challenges facing the school if it wishes to mould individuals.

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#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Collège: The term *collège* refers to the type of state secondary school French children attend between the ages of 11 and 15 (ie after "*école primaire*" and before "*lycée*"). *Collège* covers the school years referred to as "*sixième*", "*cinquième*", "*quatrième*" and "*troisième*". At the end of "*troisième*", pupils take the examination known as the "*brevet des colleges*".

Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel : general and vocational college

Lycée: the state secondary schools where pupils study for their "baccalauréat" after leaving the "*collège*". The *lycée* covers the school years known as "*seconde*" (15 - 16 year-olds), "*première*" (16-17 year-olds) and "*terminale*" (up to leaving age at 18). The term *lycée professionnel* refers to a *lycée* which provides vocational training as well as the more traditional core subjects.

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