

Competencies Assessment: An Interactive Approach in Adaptive Learning Systems

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Abstract— In this paper, we present a solution based on the competency-based approach to assess the level of proficiency in the skills of learners as part of a training provided by an adaptive hypermedia system. More precisely, it concerns the implementation of an original solution enabling the learner to be in conditions conducive to the personal acquisition of knowledge and their integration in an isomorphic context to that of work in order to transform his acquired knowledge into real skills. In this context, an approach is proposed to evaluate the acquisition of learners' skills, either by integrating situations adaptable to learners' profiles to motivate them to acquire new knowledge, or by means of an evaluation where no help is given to learners.

Index Terms—Competencies Assessment; Integration Situation; Adaptive Hypermedia; Certification Assessment

1 INTRODUCTION

Learner assessment is a problem that has not yet been adequately addressed. Evaluation has not yet been given priority in e-learning environments and is not one of their priorities. The majority of e-Learning research has focused more on improving the way knowledge is communicated than on evaluating it, while evaluation is at the heart of the teaching / learning process. Assessments can be of various kinds depending on the purpose and may appear at different learning points. A learner may need to be assessed before a learning process (diagnostic assessment), during (formative evaluation) and after (summative evaluation).

Most of the time, platforms offer only simple tools for managing questionnaires for the assessment of prior learning. However, it is always difficult to assess the level of development of a competency based solely on MCQs. We can take the example of UML where it is necessary for the learner to solve a real problem presented in the form of a case study taken from the professional environment to qualify him to enter the employment market.

Indeed, some works have been proposed in the literature, Abernot, [Abernot, 2002] which proposed an adapted evaluation device that puts the six levels of the taxonomy of BLOOM in correspondence with adapted tools. X. Roegiers who presents an approach based on integration situations to measure the degree of mastery of skills [1]. Sebanwa [3] examines the efficiency of using complex situations in the teaching of science and technology in primary education.

This paper is presented as follows, first, after the introduc-

tion, we present our pedagogical taxonomy to implement the competency approach, then we present the management of learning and evaluations within the proposed solution, then, the evaluation results obtained and the proposal of possible remediation paths are discussed and a conclusion is reached.

2 PROCEDURE FOR PAPER SUBMISSION

The first brick of our contributions [6], was to propose a so-called enveloping pedagogical taxonomy. This taxonomy consists of two phases: the acquisition phase of the resources, facilitating the realization of one-on-one learning and the problem-solving phase, which encourages the development of skills. This taxonomy encompasses the six levels of BLOOM and the four categories of Paquette, the following table (table 1) highlights the levels of taxonomy proposed and their relationship with those of Paquette and Bloom.

This taxonomy [6] is established on the basis of the complementarity of the two approaches in order to develop the skills of the learners in a gradual way. Let us start with the installation of skills resources to achieve the objectives of low-level capacities and then to solve problems for the exercise of high-level taxonomic capacities. The latter are exercised by special problems situations called: integration situations. They are also called complex situations, and involve significant and complex problems related to the learner's daily life. Situations of integration compel the learner to mobilize his knowledge, know-how and know-how to solve them. In other words, they are used to exercise or to assess competencies following an approach integrating the following phases: (i) analyze a problem, (ii) organize the steps of the resolution, (iii) critically assess each step.

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TABLE 1
ENVELOPING TAXONOMY

Level of capacity	Bloom's Taxonomy	Paquette's Taxonomy	Enveloping Taxonomy	pedagogical Approach	Type of capacity
1	Memorizing	Reception	Acquisition of resources	By objectives	low level
2	Comprehension	Reproduction			
3	Application				
4	Analysis	Production	Problems solving	By skills	High level
5	Synthesis				
6	Evaluation	Self management			

Consequently, two steps are necessary for the development of a competence according to the proposed taxonomy:

Step 1: It is a step that allows the learner to install new resources (knowledge, skills and know-how) by adopting the objective-based approach, such that the intentions formulated can be atomic (Objectives operational) or composite (Operational Competencies). This formulation is done by applying a low-level capability to a content (Memorization, Understanding or Application) [7]

Achieving a higher-level objective implies achieving a lower-level objective. Thus the application of a capacity on a content requires the application of that of the lower level. The following figure illustrates the characteristics of an operational objective.

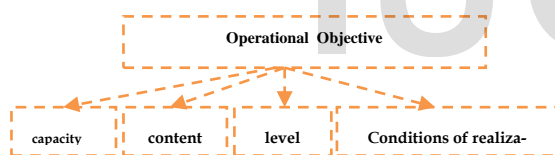


Fig. 1. the elements of the operational objective

Capacity: represents an action verb belonging to one of the three lower levels of the BLOOM taxonomy.

Content: knowledge of the subject area (concept, procedure, principle or fact).

Level: represents the threshold of performance or success (satisfaction criteria).

Conditions of realization: the conditions under which the objective must be achieved.

Step 2: This is a step allowing the learner to solve problems integration problems by mobilizing the necessary resources supposedly acquired. It allows him to exercise alongside the competency and high-level skills, also called soft skills (analysis, synthesis and evaluation).

Skills should be formulated as a high-level taxonomic objective. The difficulty for the learner lies in the identification of the internal and external resources required to solve the problems. He learns to do analysis, synthesis and evaluation;

What is more important to us is the skill assessment phase before, during and after the installation phase of the resources

3 MANAGEMENT OF APPRENTICESHIPS AND EVALUATIONS: PROPOSED APPROACH

Learning is a concern for every human being since birth, and human beings always need to learn in their everyday lives as well as in their student or professional life. Today, although learning resources are diversified and teaching methods are much more developed to keep learners' individual differences, learners still find it difficult to acquire new knowledge and skills and feel demotivated and misled. Therefore, it would be better to propose to them a solution enabling them to draw the pedagogical path to follow, for each one according to his preferences and objectives, in order to facilitate the learning of the new concepts.

The solution we have proposed is to reassure learners and respect their individual needs in terms of learning preferences. The proposed approach aims to address the different learners' concerns: customized resource set-up, resource assessment and integration of a competency's resources.

3.1 Custom Installation Of A Skill's Resources

The installation of resources is the first phase of the learning process, which consists in acquiring the knowledge, skills and know-how necessary for the development of a competence, whereas personalized means that the learner benefits from a path which is in full agreement with his cognitive state and preferences in terms of learning. The installation of resources can be done according to the training to which the learner is enrolled (guided or free) and according to his / her intention. Guided or formal training is a mode that favors both fully remote training and integrated self-training. For fully remotely organized training, the learner is called upon to acquire the resources of each skill by adapting to the requirements imposed by the system. That is to say, it is the system which proposes to the learner the path to follow in carrying out a pedagogical learning scenario preconceived by the designers of the training and offers him a learning adapted to his pace and to his profile. While in an integrated self-training, the learner can enroll in a support training that works alternately with the face-to-face to develop one or more skills that are complementary to the face-to-face. It is the face-to-face that feeds on the non-face-to-face. On the other hand, free or

informal training gives the learner the possibility of choosing his or her own intentions in order to complement what happens in the classroom through class activities (projects,

reports, mini-research, etc.).) or to perfect certain concepts, without following scenarios previously conceived by the system.

For both types of training, the installation of the resources is done in a customized way according to the cognitive state of the learners and their preferences.

3.2 Knowledge Assessment

As part of the proposed solution, two evaluation tools, Multiple Choice Questions to assess resources (levels 1, 2 and 3) and problem situations are used to evaluate their integration in a formative or certification context (levels 4, 5 and 6).

The first level of evaluation concerns the installation of the resources of a competence; it concerns the following four types of evaluation:

3.2.1 Diagnostic Evaluation

This is a pre-test that represents a condition to start a new learning session requiring prerequisites. This input test presents itself to the learner in the form of one or more hypermedia evaluation units suggested by the system, in a so-called evaluation course. The objective of this evaluation is to ensure the level required for each phase of personalized learning based on the actual level of the learner.

3.2.2 Formative Evaluation

This evaluation is used both to evaluate the achievement of operational objectives after the completion of a learning unit and to evaluate the acquisition of an operational competence after the consumption of a course chapter. For the evaluation of an objective, a single hypermedia evaluation unit is used, whereas for the case of an operational competence, a unit paths or a synthesis test is used if it exists. In this paper we adopted the formative evaluation also in the phase of the integration of resources. The value of this type of assessment lies in the diagnosis of the difficulties that can occur to the learner during his / her learning process. This allows the system to analyze and interpret the results in order to identify the probable causes of these difficulties and to adapt or regulate the learner's path accordingly, emphasizing the parts that will overcome the difficulties encountered, it is the phase of "remediation".

The formative evaluation can therefore be characterized by a cycle of "observation of difficulties-interpretation-remediation".

3.2.3 Summative Evaluation

The summative evaluation, for its part, aims to take a decision that arrives at the end of a learning sequence or at the end of a course and is consistent with the formative evaluation and which, in a way, sanctions the learning of learners by awarding a grade that reflects the degree of mastery of the

resources of the assessed competencies. This type of evaluation is adopted as part of our solution to evaluate the resources of a level of competence in the case where the learner is in training mode focused on the acquisition of the objectives, this would make it possible to evaluate the degree control of the resources of a level before chaining the resources of the following levels. However, where the mode of training is centered on the development of competences, this evaluation is done to certify a skill level, which leads to a decision of acceptance or refusal at a higher level. This evaluation, called certification, takes place through integration situations.

3.2.4 Evaluation In The Context Of Differentiated Pedagogy

Differentiated pedagogy refers to all the different methods and actions to meet the individual needs of each learner. It allows him to follow a learning path adapted to his needs and motivation. So the objective of evaluation in this pedagogy is no longer to "judge" or "sanction" the learner, but rather to help him "progress" in his learning. Even the right to make mistakes is recognized within the framework of this pedagogy: "We have changed from a negative conception giving rise to sanction to another, where errors are more likely to be an indication of the learning process and as witnesses to identify students' difficulties.

The evaluation generally has two objectives:

- Improve the efficiency of training (adaptation of strategies, adaptation of resources, etc.)
- Remedy the difficulties of each learner.

3.3 Integrating a Competence Level Resources

In this phase, the system puts the learner in problem situations to be solved in order to develop the skill set while exercising high-level taxonomic capacities (analysis, synthesis and evaluation). The development and evaluation of competence is done by putting the learner in conditions conducive to the integration of a significant set of knowledge in an isomorphic context to a real context of work in order to transform his acquired knowledge into real skills. The integration process spans two main phases: (a) training phase and (b) certification evaluation phase.

3.3.1 Training phases

This phase is reserved for learning integration and allows the learner to manage his learning and self-evaluate his product in a formative context, and it takes place over six stages:



Fig. 2. Different stages of training

- ✓ *Understanding*: in this period the learner benefits from the help of a human and / or software tutor to understand the integration situation (reactive and / or proactive tutoring). The tutor communicates to the learner the characteristics of the expected product and provides him with additional resources when needed.
- ✓ *Production*: in this period the learner mobilizes his or her achievements in order to solve the integration situation in question.
- ✓ *Trainer evaluation*: it is a period when the learner takes a reflexive and critical look at his product based on a check grid communicated by the tutor.
- ✓ *Improvement*: during this period the learner enhances his product and makes a deliverable available to his tutor for evaluation.
- ✓ *Formative evaluation*: during this period the tutor uses a checklist to evaluate the learner's deliverability in order to identify the difficulties he has encountered. And this, with the intention of proposing remedial activities to him. If the learner reaches the required level of control, he / she will proceed to the certification phase to close the current level.
- ✓ *Remediation*: this period is reserved for learners in difficulty. The latter benefit from hypermedia units adapted to correct their weaknesses. After remediation, the system offers learners other integration situations to re-do the training phase in order to continue their learning.

3.3.2 A certificational evaluation phase

This phase is reserved for the evaluation of the degree of mastery of a skill level (beginner, intermediate, advanced or master) in a certification context. In this phase the learner does not receive any help from the tutor during problem solving and this evaluation takes place on two stages:

- ✓ *Production*: at this stage, the learner mobilizes resources to solve the integration situation in question. This situation must be new for the learner.
- ✓ *Correction*: At this point, the correction is made by the teacher in charge. It analyzes the learner's errors and identifies the difficulties he has encountered with a view to suggesting remedial options. If the learner reaches the required threshold, he / she will proceed to the next step and an update of his / her model is possible (the update concerns his skills and deliverables), otherwise he will resume the training phase.

This evaluation is carried out by an integration situation, the figure of which, by way of example, shows its main characteristics. It is an integration situation used in the context of certification to assess the competence of Moroccan trainee teachers [4].

TABLE 2
CRITERIA AND INDICATORS OF ASSESSMENT OF THE PREVIOUS INTEGRATION SITUATION.

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>indicators</i>
<i>Relevance:</i> <i>(6 points)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Adequacy of the didactic sequence in relation to the following elements: adapted content, choices relevant to the age of the students, the study plan and the program ...</i> ➤ <i>The planning includes the following links: links with other units, link between theory and practice ...</i> ➤ <i>Adequacy of the evaluation in relation to the objectives</i>
<i>Coherence:</i> <i>(6 points)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Cohesion of the elements constituting the didactic sequence;</i> ➤ <i>Cohesion of the presentation: coherence of the links established between the different elements of the presented task, internal logic of the whole of the produced task and the argumentation, absence of contradictions ...</i> ➤ <i>Adequacy between practical examples and theoretical elements;</i>
<i>Correct use of resources:</i> <i>(6 points)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>The skill is formulated correctly</i> ➤ <i>The lens is formulated correctly</i> ➤ <i>The planning stages are well respected</i>
<i>Quality of the deliverable:</i> <i>(2 points)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>The file contains all requested documents</i> ➤ <i>The structure of the file is in line with the one requested</i>

TABLE 3
EXAMPLE OF AN INTEGRATION SITUATION TAKEN FROM THE TRAINING
SYSTEM FOR TRAINEE TEACHERS IN MOROCCO (COMPUTER SCI-
ENCE SPECIALTY)

identifier	C0021
Level	Level 4 (Mastery)
Title of the situation	<i>Planning of a course for students of the core curriculum of qualifying secondary education;</i>
Context	<i>class support</i>
Success factor	<i>66%</i>
duration	<i>4 hours</i>
brackets	<i>The curriculum of the core curriculum of qualifying secondary education; pedagogical orientations specific to computer science;</i>
Resources to mobilize	<i>A list of supposed operational objectives</i>
contents	<p>Based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The curriculum of the core curriculum of qualifying secondary education; - pedagogical orientations specific to computer science; - didactics of computer science; <p>To elaborate, for a given unit, a didactic sequence which includes all the phases of the learning process including the evaluation of the acquired knowledge and the remediation. This sequence must be presented in the form of a file comprising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- The description of the context of the class; 2- The objectives and expected competence; 3- The planning of learning including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - links with other units; - the links between theory and practice; - elements of reflection related to evaluation and differentiation. 4- The detailed description of the planned teaching-learning sequences 5- The assessment and remediation tool (s) 6- The productions or documents illustrating student learning.

Note also that each situation of integration is characterized by a factor of success (table 3), which depends on its degree of complexity, proposed by its author. To measure the degree of mastery of a competency, several criteria and indicators are taken into account. A criterion is a quality that is considered to be an appreciation. An evaluation criterion is a point of view in which one takes place to evaluate and make a decision. Moreover, an indicator is an observable sign that makes it

possible to operationalize a criterion and can be qualitative (a quality to possess) or quantitative (a threshold to be reached). We clarify this by an example of those considered to evaluate the integration situation presented earlier.

The list of criteria and indicators presented below is not exhaustive, other criteria and indicators may be added depending on the specificities of the material and the expected product. In addition, the system generates two verification grid versions based on criteria and indicators formulated by the author of the integration situation. One for the learner and the other for the tutor teacher. Below is an example of a checking grid:

Verification Grid: Learner Version	
A- Relevance	
When making my sequence:	
- I respected the school curriculum	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- I took into consideration the level of my students	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- I created links with previous units	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- I have created links between theory and practice	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- I did a formative evaluation	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- I prepared remediation activities	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
B- Consistency	
- The proposed objectives favor the development of the targeted competence	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- The course that I proposed makes it possible to satisfy the objectives	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- The proposed evaluation measures the desired objectives	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- The remediation activities proposed make it possible to correct the weaknesses of the learners	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
C- Correct use of resources	
- I have formulated the targeted skill (s)	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- I formulated the operational objective (s)	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- I followed the steps of planning a course	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
D- Quality of the deliverable	
- My file contains all the following documents:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> planning sheet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> course <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exercises
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> formative evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> remediation activities
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> illustration documents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> description of the context of the class
- The structure of my file is in line with the one requested:	
	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>

Fig. 4. Learner self-assessment grid

Grille de vérification : Version du tuteur	
Learner identification	
	Code :/6
Relevance	
When performing the sequence the learner has:	
- respected the school curriculum	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- taken into consideration the level of learners	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>

no <input type="radio"/>	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>
- created links with previous units _____	
no <input type="radio"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>
- created links between theory and practice _____	
no <input type="radio"/>	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>
- carried out a formative evaluation _____	
no <input type="radio"/>	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
- prepared remediation activities _____	
<input type="radio"/>	
Consistency/6
- The proposed objectives favor the development of the targeted competence <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/> - The proposed course makes it possible to satisfy the objectives <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/> - The proposed evaluation measures the desired objectives <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/> - The proposed remediation activities help to correct the weaknesses of the learners <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/>	
Correct use of resources/6
- He has formulated the skill or skills <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/> - It has formulated the operational objective (s) targeted <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/> - He followed the steps of planning a course <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/>	
Quality of the deliverable/6
- His file contains all the following documents: planning sheet <input type="checkbox"/> course <input type="checkbox"/> exercises <input type="checkbox"/> formative evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> remediation activities <input type="checkbox"/> illustration documents <input type="checkbox"/> description of the context of the class <input type="checkbox"/> - The structure of his file is in line with that requested: <i>yes</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <i>no</i> <input type="radio"/>	

Fig. 5. Tutor Version Evaluation Grid

4 EVALUATION RESULTS AND REMEDIATION

The result of the verification grid is used by the system to target the criteria concerned by the remediation. A criterion is considered satisfied if its degree of control is greater than or equal to its success factor. We present below an example of a correction grid.

TABLE 4
THE RESULT OF AN EVALUATION GRID

Criteria	Success factor	Results indicators		
A- Relevance	80%	6/6	4/6	2/6
B- Consistency	75%	6/6	4/6	2/6
C- Correct use of resources	65%	5/6	6/6	4/6
D- Quality of the deliverable	25%	2/2	1/2	0/2
Success factor of the situation	65%			

After calculating the proficiency level of the competency, if it is greater than or equal to the success factor, the system val-

idates the level of the competency assessed or redirects the learner to a remediation phase if necessary. To clarify this calculation a little more, we present in the figure below the elements taken into account to calculate the degree of control of an evaluation criterion. The degree of mastery of an evaluation criterion is the sum of the scores of its indicators divided by the sum of their weights.

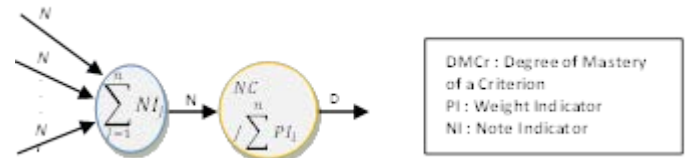


Fig. 6. Calculation of the degree of mastery of an evaluation criterion

A criterion is considered successful if the learner has a degree of mastery greater than or equal to his success factor. The success factor for each criterion is fixed by the author of the integration situation (professor). In addition, and since each criterion has its own success factor, the proficiency level of a skill level is equal to the sum of the scores obtained for each criterion divided by the sum of their weights. We use the formula shown in the figure below to calculate the proficiency level of a skill level.

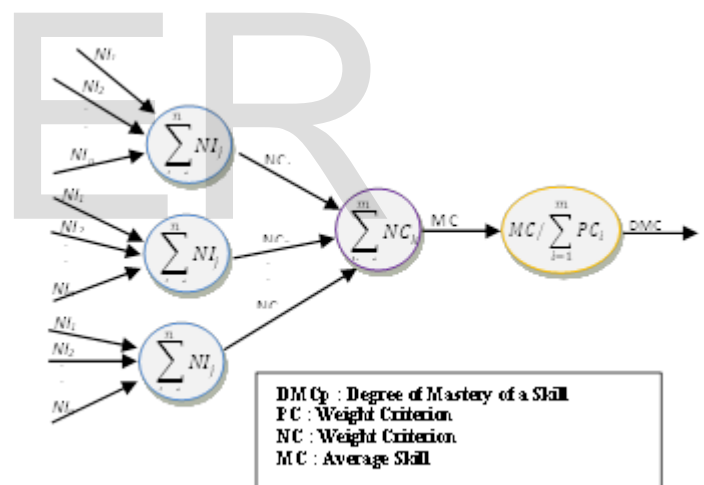


Fig. 7. Calculation of the degree of proficiency of a level of competence

We present in the following table an example of calculation, with of course the final result of the certification evaluation and the decision for each criterion. If the degree of mastery of a criterion is lower than its success factor, the learner is directed to a remediation session, otherwise the criterion is considered successful. In this example, we consider that the criteria have the same success factor as that of the integration situation.

TABLE 5
EXAMPLE OF CALCULATING THE DEGREE OF MASTERY OF A COMPETENCE LEVEL

Scale specified by the teacher				Notes obtained by the learner		Intermediate calculations					Decision made by the system		
criteria		indicators		Success factor	indicators		criteria			Competency		Decision on a criterion	Final decision
ID	Weigh t	ID	Weigh t		ID	Note	ID	Note	Degree M	avg	Degree M		
C1	6	I1C1	2		I1C1	1,25	C1	4,5	0,75	16	0,8	successful	
		I2C1	2		I2C1	1,5							
		I3C1	2		I3C1	1,75							
C2	3	I1C2	1,75		I1C2	1	C2	1,75	0,58			Need for remedia- tion	
		I2C2	1,25		I2C2	0,75							
C3	7	I1C3	1,5		I1C3	1,25	C3	6,5	0,92			successful	
		I2C3	2	I2C3	2								
		I3C3	1,25	I3C3	1,25								
		I4C3	2,5	I4C3	2								
C4	4	I1C4	1,5	I1C4	1,5	C4	3,25	0,81	successful				
		I2C4	1,25	I2C4	1								
		I3C4	1,25	I3C4	0,75								

5 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we presented an approach that complements our solution for implementing the competency-based approach. This is an approach to assess the skills of learners whether it is in the context of a professional or academic certification. The approach has been based on an enveloping taxonomy that merges goals and skills and leverages the benefits of Adaptive Educational Hypermedia Systems to build a competency-based intelligent learning system. This approach consists of more concrete, active and sustainable learning that emphasizes the learner's ability to actually use, what he has learned, in more or less complex situations from his or her everyday life professional. It is more interested in evaluating the way in which the learner uses his acquired knowledge: he must learn to reinvest his knowledge in an integrated way in order to solve significant problem situations. As perspectives of this work, we aim to experiment the solution in a real context in order to improve the solution and to integrate the Datamining technologies for the profiling of the learners to improve the control of the knowledge during the phase of integration of the resources.

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