

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

The following principles are to be followed in assessment at each grade level.

Assessment is fair and equal

Assessment at every grade level is based on the fair and equal treatment of every pupil. In grades 1-8, the assessment grades given on the school year report, and at the end of 9th grade the final assessment grades on the certificate of the completion of basic education, are to be based on the objectives and criteria defined in the National Core Curriculum and described in more detail in the local curriculum. Every pupil is entitled to know in advance what the objectives of learning in a certain subject are, and how the learning process, competence, working skills and behaviour are to be assessed. The final grades are formulated according to the national final criteria.

Assessment requires openness, cooperation and involvement

The purpose of assessment is to help the pupils perceive the progress of their own learning process. This requires interaction between the teacher and each student, giving individual feedback to enhance the pupil's possibility to reach the set objectives. The realization of assessment includes enabling the pupil's involvement, identifying the pupil's strengths and giving the pupil encouragement.

The realization of assessment requires cooperation between the school and homes. The aim of this cooperation is to clarify the principles and practices of assessment to the guardians. The pupil and the guardians are to gain an adequate understanding of the pupil's learning process, competence, working skills and behaviour. (Basic Education Decree, section10). The pupil and the guardian are entitled to know the principles of assessment and their application in the assessment of the pupil (Basic Education Decree, section13).

Assessment is structured and consistent

The practices of assessment are to be structured into consistent entities that coincide with the school's general assessment principles. Assessment is carried out both during and at the end of the school year. Assessment is only to be based on the objectives defined in the local curriculum. The teacher makes the assessment according to the pupil's performances and demonstrations of learning.

Pupil's achievements are not compared to each other. The target of assessment is not the pupil's personality, temperament or other personal characteristics.

Assessment outcomes help the teachers redirect their instruction according to the pupils' needs. Assessment also functions as an important tool in identifying a pupil's possible needs for learning support. The teachers' cooperation within the school is vital to ensure consistency in assessment.

Assessment is versatile

Pupils' learning process, competence, working skills and behaviour are variously assessed (Basic Education Act, section 22). Versatile assessment is based on a showcase of different means of demonstration. The teacher chooses the methods of assessment according to the purpose of assessment and what is meaningful for the subject in question. Pupils' are to be offered the possibility to show their skills in various and meaningful ways that support the objectives of learning. A single assessment method alone is not adequate for assessing all the learning objectives of a subject.

Assessment is based on objectives and criteria

The assessment of the learning process, competence and working skills is based on the learning objectives of each subject as defined in the National Core Curriculum and described in more detail in the local curriculum for each grade level. Behaviour is assessed according to the objectives defined in the local curriculum.

In assessing a pupil's competence, the assessment criteria for the objectives of each subject according to the National Core Curriculum are applied. The assessment criteria have been drafted for the completion of each grade level and for the final assessment for the completion of basic education. The criteria are not learning objectives for pupils, but rather define the level of competence required for each assessment grade.

If a pupil in special support studies according to the general syllabus of a subject, the pupil's assessment in that subject will be according to the general objectives of the subject using the aforementioned criteria.

The assessment of an individualized syllabus of a subject will be according to the individual learning objectives defined in a pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP). In this case, the general criteria for competence, mentioned above, are not applied. The syllabus of a subject can be individualized if, even provided with support, a pupil is not able to achieve the competence criteria for the assessment grade of acceptable (5).

If a pupil is studying by activity areas, the assessment of the pupil's progress is made in proportion to the objectives and contents specified for the pupil in the IEP by activity area.

If a pupil has studied according to a syllabus emphasising a certain subject or special task, the final assessment will be made in proportion to the general syllabus, applying the assessment criteria defined in the National Core Curriculum.

Assessment accounts for the age and capabilities of pupils

Assessment is to take into account a pupil's health related issues and special needs. Needs for learning support and any reason that might hinder the pupil's capability to demonstrate learning must be taken into consideration in assessment practices by enabling special arrangements and alternative ways for the pupil to demonstrate learning and competence.

In the assessment of pupils with an immigrant background or pupils who speak a foreign language as their mother tongue, the pupils' language skills and level in the language of instruction at school and in the specific language of a field of knowledge are to be taken into consideration.