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Review article

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE BASED ON COMPETENCIES

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Abstract

This research paper serves to support teachers, to make the assessment of students in the spirit of curriculum requirements based on competencies, based on the needs, opportunities, and learning styles of students. This paper briefly presents the changes in the student assessment system, describes some of the main concepts related to student assessment, and provides practical guidelines and instructions for the implementation of assessment in the spirit of the competency-based curriculum.

The paper also promotes an inclusive approach to all teaching factors in the school in terms of a practical assessment of curricular areas, according to the roles, tasks, and responsibilities they have in this process.

Given the issues addressed in the paper, the construction paper is in line with curricular documents, plans, and programs for the classroom, administrative instructions, and guidelines for student assessment according to the competency-based curriculum developed by MEST with support partners.

Keywords: curriculum, assessment, competencies, practical implementation, knowledge.

Introduction

Competency-based student knowledge assessment aims to help primary school teachers in school-based vocational development activities to properly understand changes in student assessment and to develop skills in planning and implementing student assessment according to the requirements of the curriculum (Professional Development of Teachers, 2019: p.3).

The framework of the Pre-University Education Curriculum of the Republic of Kosovo defines the goals, principles and types of assessment that ensure the interconnection and sustainability of the assessment system. Changes of student assessment, from a traditional approach to evaluation based on information about learning content and the limited number of instruments to assess how the students remember facts and data, towards an approach change in the competency-based assessment, where the focus is on the student, the use of a wide range of instruments to assess students' competences, skills, attitudes and values and not just their knowledge and skills, etc., is the biggest change in the system of student assessment in Kosovo.

According to the Curriculum Framework, the main purpose of assessment is to support student learning. Through the student assessment system, it is required to provide continuous information on the quality of teaching and learning, the suitability of the curriculum, and the improvement of the school. Based on this information, it is intended to make decisions and plan actions in support of students for mastery of competencies and improvement and advancement of the assessment process in general. The curriculum framework defines three types of internal assessment which are also valid for the implementation of assessment for the preparatory class and primary education

of Kosovo: (i) Continuous assessment; (ii) Final assessment; and (iii) Curriculum Assessment. Carriers of these types of assessment, assessment goals, and documentation of assessment achievements, have been described in the Core Curriculum for this level of education, and as such are reflected in the following section.

1. Key concepts related to student assessment

Describing the main concepts related to student assessment refers to the documents that regulate the student assessment system and guidelines for student assessment designed by MEST partners GIZ, USAID-BEP, EU, etc., which we will present below (MEST 2016), Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education of the Republic of Kosovo, 2016: p.49):

Assessment - Assessment is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence from students and their teachers to determine where they are, where they need to go, and how to improve their achievement (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

In general, assessment means when something is assessed (learning outcome, commitment, content, project, group work, etc.) by someone (teacher, student, parent, etc.) in a certain way (by test, exam, assignments, observation, presentation, etc.) and according to certain criteria (e.g. number of words, accuracy, design, structure, argumentation, etc.).

Competency-Based Assessment - It is a continuous activity that occurs simultaneously with the learning process, the process of gathering evidence, and the process of deciding whether competencies have been achieved. It appreciates skills, values, and attitudes and not just knowledge of facts. It is comprehensive and goes beyond a one-way process, where teachers also enable self-assessment and mutual assessment, engaging students in the process of learning and self-assessment. It is aimed at improving teaching practices.

Formative Assessment / Assessment of Learning (AoL) - Assessment through which the teacher supervises the students' progress during the learning process, provides feedback to facilitate learning, and improve teaching. Teachers together with students evaluate the work done and discuss the results to improve the work. Assessment can be done at any stage of the lesson - in the beginning, during, and at the end of the lesson. Formative assessment can be done even after a lesson to monitor the students' progress.

Summative Assessment / Assessment to Learn (AtL) - Assessment that determines the achievement at the end of a given task, chapter, learning period, or school year and to set grades/description at the end of a lesson or the end of the school year. It is also used to judge the effectiveness of teaching or curriculum.

2. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE BASED ON COMPETENCIES

One of the challenges for teachers is undoubtedly the students' assessment, given the fact that the assessment is complex and multidimensional. Teachers in the practice of their work with students, often face various dilemmas and questions, which require additional information and support. In the support of the teachers, in the following section, will be provided information and instructions for:

- key questions and principles that guide student assessment;
- teachers' competencies for student assessment;

- students' assessment planning; and
- assessment methods, techniques, and instruments.

In general, students' assessment should: respect the student's personality, boost student self-confidence and sense of progress, encourage the student to verify its knowledge, enable the student to learn independently for self-esteem and evaluation of others.

The effective evaluation depends mainly on the following principles (MEST, Administrative Instruction (AI) no. 08/2016 on Student Assessment according to the Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, 2016: p.48.): *a. Transparency, b. Validity, c. Reliability, d. Impartiality.*

a. Transparency

The assessment based on this principle ensures clear, accurate and timely notification of the student and all stakeholders involved in the evaluation process, regarding the criteria, assessment methods and procedures, as well as achieved results, and the possibilities of progress.

b. Validity

Validity indicates whether the assessment measures that have been planned, whether it is consistent with the learning outcomes and in proportion to the given volume of knowledge.

Assessment should provide valuable information about the processes, outcomes and values that students develop during the education process at different levels (MEST, The Core Curriculum for Lower Secondary Education in Kosovo (grades 6,7 8 and 9), 2016: p.111).

c. Reliability

Reliability refers to the truthfulness, consistency in repeating the assessment/measurement. Reliability ensures that judgments are consistent and based on a data system. A key component of reliability is the accuracy of evaluation with the points scored in answers (Curriculum Implementation Guide, Kosovo Pedagogical Institute, October 2016: p.69). The teacher should discuss and agree with the approaches of other assessors before starting to evaluate.

d. Impartiality

Impartial assessment means assessing a learning outcome, not being influenced by the characteristics and circumstances of each student, which include: gender, ethnicity, language, race, economic and social circumstances, location, and personality, talent, limited skills, etc. (Curriculum Implementation Guide, Kosovo Pedagogical Institute, October 2016: p. 112).

3. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE BASED ON COMPETENCIES

The changes in the development of the curriculum have also influenced the approach of student assessment, respectively to what we assess at a student. For a long time, a traditional assessment approach has been followed based on information about the content learned and a limited number of instruments to assess how well the student has memorized the facts and data learned. Now, with the competency-based assessment approach, where the focus is on the student, it is suggested to use a wide range of instruments to assess students' competencies, skills, attitudes and values and not just knowledge and recognitions. This means that competency-based assessment requires that learning competencies and learning outcomes are the basis for assessment, including specific

segments (Curriculum Implementation Guide, Kosovo Pedagogical Institute, October 2016: p. 112):

- 1) **Knowledge:** is the totality of facts, principles and information possessed (*terminology, symbols, concepts, methods, principles, codes, facts, ideas*).
- 2) **Capability:** is the power, the quality that the individual possesses to fulfill an action successfully, within a certain time (*identification, description, formulation, reasoning, application, certification, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creation*).
- 3) **Ability:** is the capacity that the individual has to achieve a certain skill level (*average, high, with limitations, not dependent*).
- 4) **Skill:** is the mode of action performed after a repetition or exercise (*measurements, constructions, sketches, solutions, use of resources, use of information, use of technology, reading of models and creation of different models*).
- 5) **Habit:** is the way of action or behavior that is done by oneself after a long and continuous repetition or exercise (*exercises, curiosity, focus on problems, taking initiatives*).
- 6) **Attitude:** is the tendency to react specifically against a situation or a value, usually accompanied by feelings and emotions (*participation in discussion, cooperation, seeking help, giving help, verification, constructive criticism*).
- 7) **Value:** is a criterion according to which the behavior of the individual is judged in relation to the group (*respect for the other's opinion, taking responsibility, attention, demonstration of will, observance of rules, fulfillment of tasks*).

The competency-based assessment focuses on what students know, do and are able to do. To master a competence, students must have: knowledge, capability, ability, skill, attitude and values which they justify through learning outcomes for the field and for the level, degree, class and learning hours.

4. The main competencies of the teacher's activity in the field of assessment

The quality of student assessment is primarily related to the competencies of teachers in this area. In the document Strategic Framework for Teacher Development in Kosovo (<https://masht.rks.gov.net/uploads/2017/04/kornize-strategjike.pdf>), are outlined the areas of teaching, standards and performance indicators. Student assessment is one of the seven teaching standards for teachers in Kosovo. Based on the performance indicators of this standard and specific requirements for teachers in student assessment, in the manual for summative assessment - the development of the designed test from MEST with the support of GIZ (Professional Development of Teachers, 2019: p.12), some important information has been provided regarding the competencies of teachers for student assessment, which guide the professional development of teachers in the field of assessment, based on their needs for professional development in the reference points reflected in the following section (Professional Development of Teachers, 2019: p.12).

4.1 Teacher competencies for student assessment (Professional Development of Teachers, 2019: p.12)

- **Assessment for learning and to learn**
 - **Competence:** Understands the goals of student assessment. Analyzes the results of assessment instruments in and out of the classroom and measures the quality and

quantity of achievements. Recognize the differences between summative and formative assessment. Use the results to better the learning of students.

- **Use of various assessment methods**
 - **Competence:** Recognizes and uses a variety of methods for assessment of learning and final assessment.
- **Use of observation processes**
 - **Competence:** Except for oral and written exams it also applies tests and student observation during group work, project work evaluation and teamwork skills, communication skills assessment, and other areas.
- **Use a variety of assessment strategies**
 - **Competence:** appropriate knowledge of various learning, monitoring, and assessment techniques.
- **Continuous monitoring of student capacity**
 - **Competence:** Monitors students continuously to identify their needs, strengths, weaknesses, interests, and individual learning progress.
- **Respecting principles**
 - **Competence:** Understands the principles and standards of evaluation and monitoring.
- **The use of assessment for learning (formative)**
 - **Competence:** Continuously improves teaching and supports the learning process, always based on assessment results.
- **Documentation**
 - **Competence:** Evaluates, keeps records of concrete cases, and reports on students' skills, needs, and individual development.
- **Ensuring transparency**
 - **Competence:** Ensures that the criteria for learning and assessment requirements are transparent to students.
- **Evaluation of processes**
 - **Competence:** Evaluates not only the results but also the learning process.

5. Teacher's activities in the field of assessment

The main teachers' problem in the field of assessment has been and in the near future will be, setting of the grade because it is a judgment on the status and progress of the student, at different time intervals.

The grade is the presentation of the results of the student's academic achievements and progress, which aims at proving the student's achievements, for his / her personal orientation, informing parents about the achievements of their children and it is the orientation of profiling. The grade is set as a result of achievements and not of disciplinary behavior: To design its own student assessment policy; To know the assessment instruments and techniques; To select and use assessment tools and techniques in accordance with the teaching decisions; To implement the procedures of setting grades; To administer, interpret and report assessment results to students, education leaders and parents;

Use assessment conclusions to make learning decisions about students and teaching; develop students' self-esteem skills; to meet the ethical and legal responsibilities related to student assessment.

6. Student assessment planning

Effective assessment requires thoughtful and careful planning. Assessment should start with assessment goals and should take into account teaching and learning methods, the context in which teaching takes place and expectations for students. Assessment plans begin with a clear articulation of the mission, goals, and learning outcomes of the program (MEST & GIZ IS, Module 5 for Teacher Training in Service: Assessment in order to develop students' competencies, 2013: p.58). Student assessment planning begins with the curriculum for learning periods, which defines the learning topics that will be developed during the respective learning period, learning outcomes for learning topics, teaching units, methodological aspects of teaching and learning, the resources that will be used, as well as evaluation is planned. In the assessment part are set, methods, techniques, instruments of student achievement assessment that are used to verify the level of student achievement and to orient the learning support of students. For example, assessment with a checklist for class engagement evidence, assessment with tests or summative assignments, assessment with files (portfolio), project assessment, evaluation with photos or albums - depending on the specifics of the learning outcomes of the subject.

The teacher, based on the planning of the assessment for the teaching period, determines the weight of the summary grade for each method or technique of assessment planned to be applied within a teaching period.

According to Ramsden (2003), planning appropriate assessment tasks is a principle of good teaching, so according to him, there are a large number of things to consider when planning how to assess your (MEST, students Guide for student assessment according to the competency-based curriculum: p.19).

6. Conclusion

Student assessment is complex and multidimensional. Teachers in the practice of their work with students, often face various challenges, dilemmas and questions, which require additional information and support. In support of teachers, information and guidance should be provided.

Researchers in the field of assessment, as well as teachers and practitioners of student assessment, very often ask and discuss three basic questions related to student assessment: Why do we assess? What do we assess and, how do we assess?. For these three questions, in the following section, some information and guidelines are given which can be used by teachers in student assessment practice.

The teacher evaluates the students for several purposes, such as: to know at what stage are, the level of curriculum mastery are the students, in order to plan for the implementation of the curriculum or a certain topic; engage students more actively in the learning process; motivate students to be active participants in the learning process; to monitor learning; to improve teaching; to inform parents about the progress of their children; to determine progress - the level of achievement; to contribute in raising the quality of school performance.

It is already known that we evaluate through a wide range of assessment methods and techniques, measuring instruments and observation instruments. A special feature of student assessment in primary education is continuous assessment through formative assessment and summative assessment.

Formative assessment is carried out through formative assessment techniques such as self-assessment and mutual assessment, etc., while summative assessment (VP1/PA1) is carried out continuously through various assessment techniques and instruments, such as a checklist for class engagement records, homework, quizzes, debates, oral presentations, essays, tests, portfolios, projects, and practical work. How a teacher evaluates his / her students depends on the learning outcomes and the requirements for the students.

Formative and summative assessment instruments may be the same but differ in purpose. The purpose of formative assessment is to orient teaching and learning, while the purpose of summative assessment is to determine the achievements at the end of a specified task, thematic unit, chapter, teaching period, or school year. For both assessments, the student should be informed and prepared in advance. Formative assessment encourages the student to continually prepare to be more successful in the summarized assessment.

When assessing students, teachers should consider the principles of assessment outlined in curricular documents, such as: validity, transparency, reliability, and impartiality. Teachers should also consider some important assessment requirements, such as: Assessment should be a support tool for students; Assessment should help students assess themselves; Assessment should be based on multiple evidence; Assessment should be appropriate to the learning outcomes and content developed with students; Assessment should include all levels of knowledge (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, assessment, synthesis), as well as the affective field (including: interests, attitudes, value, etc).

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