

**THE CURRICULUM AS A BASIS FOR THE DESCRIPTIVE ASSESSMENT IN  
PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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**Abstract:** The modern educational system is an important segment which prepares each individual to join the complex mechanism called modern society. For this reason all the educational components require a serious approach.

The assessment implies a complete treatment of the students, their developmental potentials, capacities, abilities and accomplishments in a specific area. The testing and assessment of the students in the primary education in the Republic of Macedonia is descriptive (grades I to III) and numerical (grades IV to IX).

The monitoring of the students' progress, as a prerequisite and an integral part of the assessment, is complex. All teachers should conduct assessment in an ethical way, according to their personal professional competencies. The teachers monitor the progress of the students throughout the entire school year. This is formative assessment. In this process, the teachers create the portfolios of the students. At the end of a specific period, the formative assessment leads to summative assessment.

The descriptive assessment is a verbal assessment of the accomplishments of the students of a certain age, according to the objectives listed in the given syllabus. The descriptive assessment is distinguished by the possibility to express the individual characteristics of each student separately.

**Keywords:** curriculum, assessment, description, primary school, student, teacher

*Descriptive assessment*

The educational system prepares each individual to live and work in a modern society. For this reason, a systematic approach to all structural elements of the process of instruction and learning is needed. The activities of the teachers for monitoring and assessment of the students' progress are important in this aspect.

The monitoring of the student's progress is an integral part of assessment. It requires a continuous and serious approach by the teachers. The teachers, according to their potentials

and competencies, systematically carry out this part of the instructional process. The activities related to the monitoring of the students' progress start and are carried out parallel to the instructional process, and afterwards they are used to finalize the descriptive assessment after the instruction in a specific grade is finished.

In order to make good assessment, the teachers should know each student well. The assessment presents the accomplishments of the students, i.e. their developmental potentials, capacities, abilities and accomplishments in a specific area. The testing and evaluation of the students in our educational system is descriptive (grades 1-3) and numerical (from grade 4 onwards).

The numerical assessment and the descriptive assessment should present the accomplishments of the students. The two types of assessment should have and keep the basic characteristics of the assessment. Each type of assessment has a task to inform, motivate, guide and invest in the further development of the students. *The informing* refers to the timely notifying of the students, parents and competent authorities in the school about the accomplishments of the students. *The motivational function* of the assessment refers to the influence on the active role of the students and the stimulation of their need to accomplish more. *The guidance* as a role of the assessment refers to detecting possible difficulties and shortcomings in the progress of the students and the use of adequate procedures that lead to progress. The investment in the further development of the students refers to the accentuation of the possibility and need to keep the continuity of the good assessment, as well as the striving for improving the assessment, which is not at the top of accomplishments.

The descriptive assessment should stimulate the development of the students. The descriptive assessment should influence the further development of the students and motivate them to accomplish good results in the future.

“The descriptive or analytical assessment is an assessment in textual form, and each subject is separated into parts. For each part, there is one or more indicators of the success, and an evaluation criterion is linked to each indicator that defines the accomplishment. Thus, the descriptive assessment is a sum of descriptions of the accomplishments in each of the components of the subject of assessment. The descriptive assessment should describe the accomplishments in the frame of the assessed matter. This is what makes it different from the numeric assessment, which is global, and for this reason, it is considered to be less informative. In the current reformatory flows, the descriptive assessment is considered to be more understandable for the students, parents, and other teachers because it is more

informative. Further on, the orientation on the accomplishments of the students is considered to be a positive side of this type of assessment, meaning it is expressed through positive statements. Another important aspect is that it refers to the accomplishment of the desired objectives and standards.” (1)

In the educational system of the Republic of Macedonia, the descriptive assessment is carried out in the first three grades of primary education. The teachers assess each student individually. While doing so, they engage in formative and summative assessment. The activities and the accomplishments of the students need to be continuously observed by the teacher in order to provide a realistic assessment.

Each teacher should carry out and finalize the assessment in such a way that it is a reflection of the factual situation. The teachers need to use a holistic approach for all students. They need to get to know the students entirely, because the assessment needs to be individual, but not individualized. An especially important characteristic of the descriptive assessment is the expression of the individual characteristics of each student. The stressing of the individuality, among other things, strengthens the self-confidence of the students.

The monitoring of the students results in organization of the portfolio of the student, which is important in the forming and specifying of a particular statement for each segment of the development, and at the same time it reveals the specific giftedness of each student.

#### *The curriculum and the assessment*

The descriptive assessment is an assessment of the accomplishments of students from a certain age, in accordance with the requirements set in the specific syllabus, expressed verbally. The curriculum is a basic parameter that is used to determine the accomplishments of the students regarding a specific school subject.

The curriculum contains the global and individual content which has to be covered in class. When planning their work, the teachers use the content from the specific curriculum. In class, the teachers realize the material covered by the curriculum.

Apart from the topics, the curriculum also includes objectives that should be fulfilled in the teaching process. The objectives are focused on the development of general and specific abilities of the students. The development is stimulated by adequate realization of the material.

The curriculum also includes recommendations for adequate structuring of the activities. The didactic recommendations are for the teachers and they refer to the ways in

which the teachers should act in the entire process in order for the students to acquire the knowledge.

The curriculum for some subjects have guidelines for assessment. The recommendations refer to the assessment as a process and a result, and they promote a suitable approach by the teachers in the assessment.

The diploma which is descriptive is comprised of separate, but related portions which refer to each separate school subject. Namely, for each subject there is a descriptive level of the accomplishments of the student, which is in correlation with the curriculum. Accordingly, the descriptive assessment is directly related to the requirements stated in the specific syllabus. The description of the accomplishments of the student can be carried out using the following terms: adopt, accomplish, acquire, learn, etc. Further on, the categorizing determines the level to which the material is learned. This should make the distinction among the students in terms of their individual differences.

The descriptive diploma should naturally highlight all specific abilities of each student. This is especially motivating for the future development of these abilities in the further education of the student.

The descriptive assessment provides an individual approach to each student. Practice shows that the potentials of the descriptive assessment are sometimes not used. Oftentimes, there is a generalization of a large number of students according to a determined parameter. Although, most of the students have average results, it is our duty to record all visible deviations from the average. Sometimes the practice shows that when the teachers work with large groups of students, the quality of the descriptive assessment of each student is questionable.

The following should be taken into consideration for an adequate and successful descriptive assessment which is individualized and in correlation with the curriculum:

- The statements should be the result of a continuous monitoring of the progress and accomplishments of each student;
- Assessment should take into account the principles of individual development;
- The descriptive assessment should clearly show all deviations from the average regarding the development of the abilities or the level to which certain type of knowledge is acquired;
- The statements should be clear and unambiguous;
- The affinities of the student in a given area should be mentioned;

- The opinions should be stated in such a way so as not to be offensive when lower levels of development and accomplishments are in question;
- If the need should arise, the descriptive assessment should cover the accomplishments related to inter-subject connecting of the material.

Following the rules for assessment is the basic precondition for successful assessment that will result in satisfied students and parents.

In order for the potentials of the descriptive assessment and its characteristics to come into light, the teachers need to be more invested. This primarily refers to the relation between the assessment and the curriculum at the level of the individual development of the students.

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