



THE DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY

STARTING IN 2009

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A new opportunity: diagnostic assessment

- From 2009, the Basque Country will assess the acquisition of the Key Objectives once a year in all the pupils in the 4th year of Primary Education and the 2nd year of Compulsory Secondary Education.
- Article 36 of the Basque Curriculum Decree establishes that Diagnostic Assessment “Will not have academic but rather formative and guidance effects for the schools and information effects for the families and the educational community as a whole”.

Key Competences

- The OCDE in its DeSeCo project (OECD 2005, page 4) defined the Competences as “A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context”.
- Focusing on assessing what the pupils are capable of doing and not solely on the curriculum represents a qualitative step on its own.
- On its part, the European Commission defines the Key Competences as (European Commission, 2004, page 6): ***“Key competences represent a transferable, multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory schooling or training, and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning”.***

The Decree 175/2007 describes and defines the Key Competences

(<http://www.euskadi.net/bopv2/datos/2007/11/0706182a.pdf>) :

1. Competency in science, technology and health
 2. Competency for learning to learn
 3. Mathematical competency
 4. Competency in linguistic communication
 5. Competency in information treatment and digital competency
 6. Social and citizenship competency
 7. Competency in humanistic and artistic culture
 8. Competency for personal autonomy and initiative
- The inclusion in the Competency in linguistic communication of a specific objective to be reached at the end of the Primary and Secondary stages is particularly novel. Pupils should reach the MCER B2 level at the end of Compulsory Secondary education and the B1 level at the end of Primary Education in both the Basque language and Spanish language.
 - The objective of this diagnostic assessment is therefore to improve the basic competences of the pupils. For this reason, they are carried out two years before the end of the stage and should enable the educational agents to correct the existing problems in time for the pupil to reach the objectives marked by these competences.

The assessment model

- As it is a curricular assessment and is carried out in two levels (4th year of Primary education and 2nd year of Secondary Education), it allows for a longitudinal monitoring of the pupils, and also for establishing a complete map of all the system's educational centers and their year-to-year evolution.
- The assessment model is very important. There are several countries and Communities that carry out Assessments that we could call diagnostic assessments: France, Andalusia... However, there are at least two assessment models:
- **1. Internal with common tests: given, corrected and interpreted by the teachers, who normally have the results of a sample assessment carried out at the same time by the Administration as a reference.**
 - a. Advantages: The job is carried out by the teachers, who do not feel supervised.
 - b. Disadvantages: the results are not comparable from school to school, as there is no controlled application and correction. The tests become public and cannot be repeated, and therefore it is not possible to see if there are any improvements or not.
- **2. Standardized external: given, corrected and interpreted by an external team on schools with tests that are not public.**
 - a. Advantages: the results are reliable, comparable and allow for the centers to know their situation with regards to schools with the same socio-economic status, for example. The results can also be compared from year to year. In this way, the distribution of resources is carried out on an objective basis and improvement can be observed longitudinally. They allow for delivering individual reports that offer reliable results to the pupil and their families, which is motivating.
 - b. Disadvantages: they are costly and complicated, some teachers may feel supervised, and if no measures are taken, they may give rise to unfair rankings (that do not bear in mind the type of pupils or setting) of schools in the press, etc.

The Basque Country has chosen a double model and a global involvement:

- 1. Send **test models to the educational centers for them to voluntarily carry out internal assessments.**
- 2. And also **carry out external tests once a year that provide it with reliable and comparable data on the degree of acquisition of the key competences. Another important characteristic: individual reports will be handed out to locate and personalize problems.**

Finally, in addition to the ISEI-IVEI, the Inspección Técnica and Servicios de Apoyo (pedagogical consultants) will also be involved, for each educational centre to establish and carry out an improvement plan.

All this will be carried out bearing in mind that the regulations prohibit making centre rankings and measures will be taken to guarantee this. Each centre will receive its reports and comparisons on socio-economic status. Only the centre itself and the area inspector and consultant will see its results.

The amount of pupils to be assessed each year is relatively small, compared to other countries, but assessing 35,000 pupils a year signifies a big challenge for us.

What competences will be assessed each year? There will be three constants: Mathematical Competency and Competences in Linguistic Communication (Basque and Spanish languages) and one will be changed each year in order to assess the 8 competences. Competency in Scientific culture will be assessed in the first year. The rest will be assessed afterwards.