



## External report on Module A:

**Evaluation and assessment of transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (Strasbourg, France - 20-23/10/2015)**

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## Introduction

Module A, *Evaluation and assessment of transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge*, (EVAL), was organized by the Pestalozzi Programme of the Council of Europe and gathered pre- and in-service teacher trainers, teachers and administrators involved at different levels of European education systems as well as members of NGOs working in the field of education. 38 education professionals from over 29 countries participated in this course.



Central to the module was the presentation of the tool “TASKs for democracy – 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs)”<sup>1</sup>.

The module focused on competences for sustainable democratic societies and how they can be developed and assessed in formal and non-formal educational settings. For this, the group, under the guidance of the team of facilitators, was led to explore and identify what type of assessment practices they were engaged in today, and what possibilities for further development they could pursue in the future. The specific challenge of this module lies in the fact that when teachers start to include new assessment practices, such as the assessment of *transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge*, (TASKs), **this actually puts into movement their entire assessment practice**: in matters of assessment, if you move one cog the whole system moves!



"What is expected from us when it comes to assessment and how do we feel about it?"

### Expected outcomes of the module: participants will

- become aware of the importance of the development and evaluation and assessment of transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs) with regard to key values of the CoE and Pestalozzi programme with regard to education;
- be able to work with TASKs as outcomes of their activities;
- know and understand a wide variety of methods of assessment and evaluation: self-assessment; peer-assessment, participative assessment, formative assessment;
- be willing and prepared to develop and pilot training materials and assessment tools in their contexts;
- be ready to develop networking and stay involved in the Pestalozzi community of practice and its online environment.

<sup>1</sup> Mompoint-Gaillard P., Lazâr I., (2015) “TASKs for democracy – 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs)”, Pestalozzi series N°4, republished, CoE Publishing – available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/Source/Documentation/Pestalozzi4\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/Source/Documentation/Pestalozzi4_EN.pdf)

## 1. Setting the stage

### 1.1. Appraisal of context... and surprises:

Participants started by considering their present practices in assessment in their local professional contexts. The first finding is that the same issues are encountered in many different locales. Namely, we noted a general overuse of summative assessment, and a certain lack of participative and formative assessment. Here many of the groups stated that **professional inquiry over the issue of assessment** was insufficient in their contexts and especially the question of understanding the purpose of assessment “*Assessment and then what?*” and “*Assessment... what for?*”

The second main finding was that participants identified a certain **lack of skills** for distinctive, or pioneering, types of assessment and that there is an aspiration to learn more about methods that allow to break free from the unending focus on knowledge in assessment practices. Methods such as self-assessment skills, peer-assessment skills were cited as possible avenues to diversify practices. In short the finding was of a *lack of diverse tools*, as well as a *lack of diversity in what we are assessing*.

Groups observed that certain methods and “measurement tools” originating from the non-formal education sector could be acceptable for and adaptable to formal education but that these tools lacked standardisation, and were not common in teacher practices. Finally, one group expressed that **parents’ expectations also shape assessment practices**. The question of whether in some cases practitioners would be ‘too inclusive’ or ‘inclusive enough’ was raised: parent strategies, (such as demanding special treatment for children, within disposition geared towards children with special needs), are not always warranted or “deserved”(sic).

When discussing the purpose of education some interesting ideas were presented:

*Education must provide equal opportunities for everyone to develop to their full potential.*

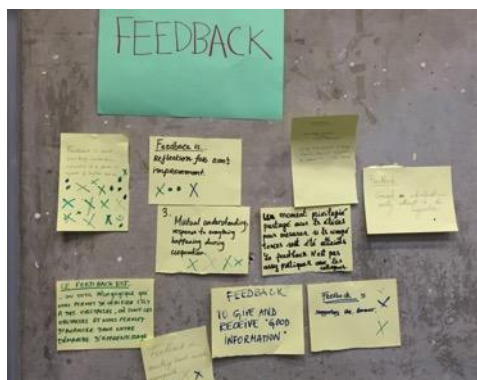
*The aim of education is lifelong personal development, and to learn to live and participate locally and globally with others.*

### 1.2. Concepts:

Groups were asked to produce definitions of: evaluation, assessment, feedback and learning. A vote for the ‘best definition for us’ was organized.

*This was a very difficult TASK for us to do and a very challenging one too! (Personal communication A.C.)*

*That was the one workshop that put our brains in overdrive. Good work everybody! (Personal communication N.B.)*



Some of the “winning” definitions were:

**Evaluation** => process of recognizing strengths and weaknesses, which helps to go ahead;

**Assessment** => judging the level of achievement, at one point in time, with a set of pre-established criteria;

**Feedback** => providing constructive information to a person regarding his/her action.

**Learning** => lifelong process of acquiring attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding

### Critique:

- In literature, the distinctions between the two concepts are wide-ranging and often blurred. Evaluation is often presented as relating to a macro level and assessment as relating to the individual level. Sometimes, it is the exact opposite.
- Language poses an extra challenge, for example in French ‘evaluation’ is the only term available for both evaluation and assessment; the Polish participant stated that in her context, people consider that “improvement means new foreign words”! The group agreed that it will be hard to define in a simple way these complex concepts and the important issue in this module will be to define a common understanding of concepts to set the stage for our common work.
- What do we mean by ‘constructive’? Groups agreed that by “constructive” one means manageable, concrete and ‘positive enough’ so that the receiver can do something with it.

### Our common definition:

**Assessment** => information about the achievements of individual learners; Activities are not necessarily learner-centred; they are most often based on external criteria such as rubrics or grids, are not anonymous and are usually graded.

**Summative assessment** of learning => scores, percentages and grades for comparisons; happens after a certain period of time or topic. Results with one grade/mark about a number of different elements.

**Formative assessment** as/for learning => portfolios, self-assessment, learning diary, gamification, narrative reports, etc. to support learning, planning and instruction.

**Evaluation** => information about the strengths and weaknesses of courses, workshops, programmes, schools, etc., providing information for improvement and further planning - judgements of programme or organisational effectiveness.

## 2. How to develop and assess TASKs?

The team of facilitators used a multi-layered approach to model different schemes fit for the development and assessment of TASKs. For example, in structures like the base groups, participants are invited to assess “where they are at” regarding specific components: how did they fare with their group? Did they contribute to fairness and cooperation? Did they discover anything about themselves in their interactions? Etc.

### 2.1. Base groups and cooperative principles



The *base group* is a response to the need for participants to start processing the day’s courses, to focus on their own learning, as well as their peers’. Here, participants learn together and become comfortable applying the different techniques of working together cooperatively.

Every day, base groups meet to reflect individually, discuss what they have learned during the day and set new learning goals for the following days.





The group formed 12 base groups of 3 participants (and one pair).

## 2.2. Debriefing and writing a diary

At the end each session, the debriefing activities offered a space of inquiry and metacognition: what did participants feel? Why was the activity organised in this particular way? Furthermore, participants were offered a space to reflect on their learning by writing in their learning diary. Guiding questions were offered to enrich this process of reflection and self-evaluation.

Most meaningful learning activities represent an opportunity to assess and develop TASKs. Even an icebreaker can reveal a lot: for example, participants may ‘cheat’ and chose to speak during a ‘silent activity’, thus demonstrating a preference for ‘winning’ over learning – a behaviour usually displayed in learning environments in which grading plays a prominent part.

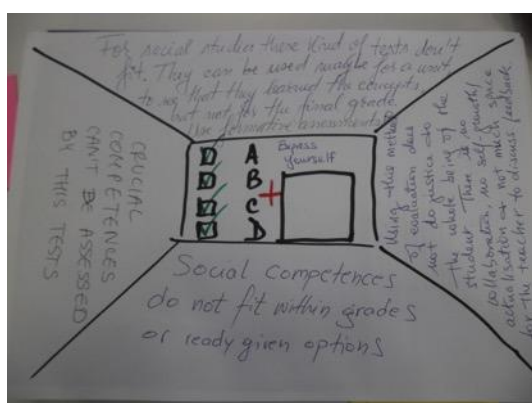
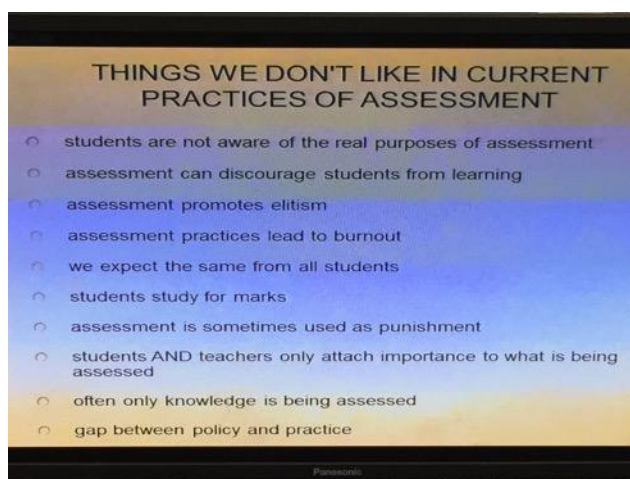
*“The diary is great! I will use it with my students (Personal communication, G.G.)”.*

*“I would have liked to have more time to write in my diary.” (Personal communication, evaluation session)*



### 2.3. Formative assessment practices and tools... A process of exploration of the purpose of education (challenges and possibilities)

Diverse methods of formative assessment and feedback techniques were explored. Some were new to participants, others not. However, learning new methods may not be the most important approach to changing our practices. This is why participants were invited to (re)-assess their values and revise their practices in light of these values. This is very challenging and many participants expressed their difficulty to transform their practices.



Many participants stated that their values were best served through formative assessment practices but did not feel empowered to implement them. As one participant put it: 'Well... in the end, I have to grade!'

Developing the TASK into our daily practice requires some **re-definition of teacher/trainer roles** which might be experienced by participants as threatening and provoke negative reactions.

Special attention should be given to the importance of **formative assessment practices in the context of democratic teaching**, democratically minded assessment and especially to 'developing constructive formative language'.

In this respect, the **observable behaviours** of people who develop **the components of TASKs can be seen as what should be developed and not as indicators of mastery**. The discussion brought us good questioning: how can TASKs be seen as not additional but integrated in teaching and included in every step of the learning process? How can we circumvent restrictions by curricula, subject related requirements? How can we persuade other professionals, our colleagues and school leaders that a shift is needed for education to fulfill its purpose of personal development and preparing for a life as an active democratic citizen?

### 2.4. Ethical elements: Do we evaluate what we value?

Ethical matters surrounding assessment and evaluation were investigated through case studies. **Unethical but frequent practices were flagged:**

- Statements about **inequity** of feedback were stressed repeatedly: students 'who get it wrong' get more feedback than those 'who get it right'.



### 3.1. Blogging and joining the community of practice (CoP)



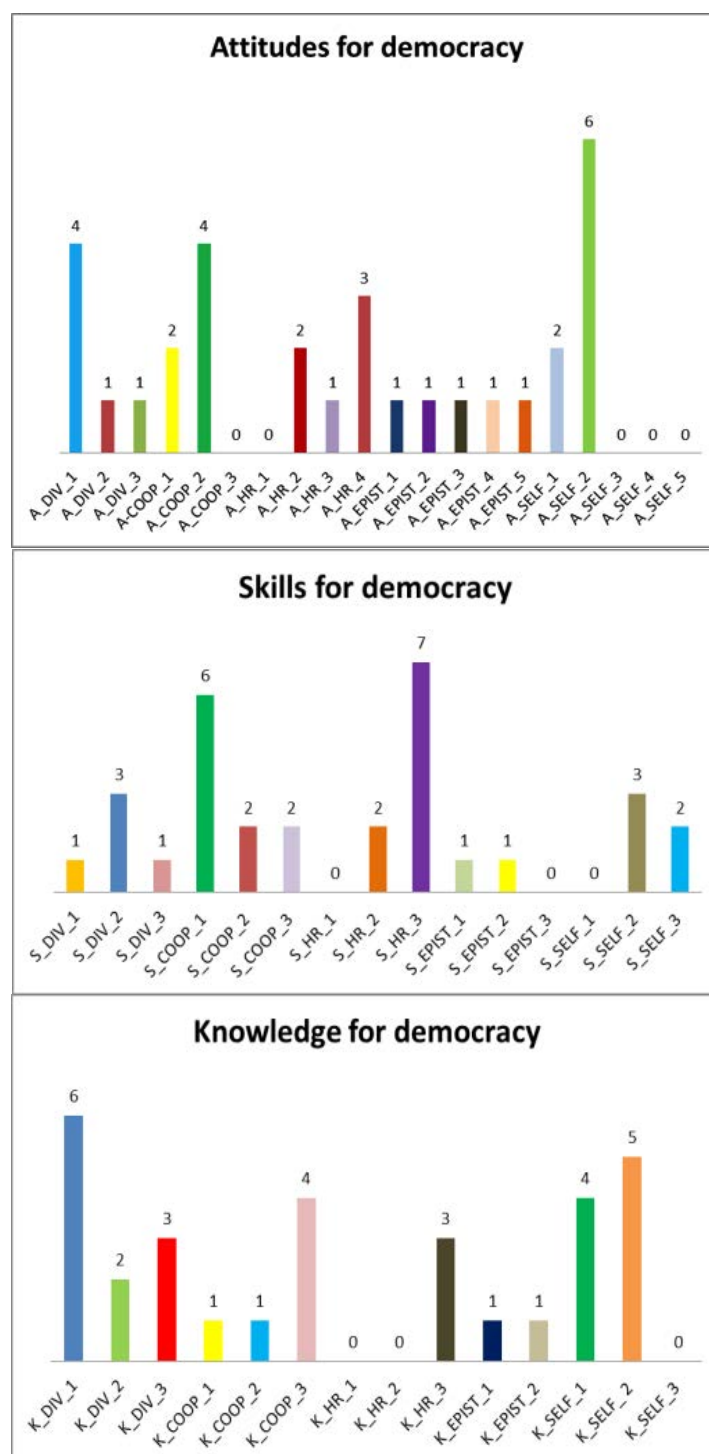
Participants will find ample resources for their work on the online platform therefore they need to become familiar with it. One session was devoted to writing blogs on the topic of the module. Special suggestions were given to participants to propose thought-provoking texts that would spark interest and responses on the online platform.

Through video conferencing, the **stewards of the CoP** addressed the plenary, welcomed participants to the online space and encouraged them to stay involved, and ask for support for their work when needed.

### 3.2. Choosing our TASKs

In the session ‘Choosing your combo’, participants went back to their reflection on concepts, values, practices, challenges... from previous days to **choose 3 components** of the TASKs that they wish to focus their training unit on. (See appendix 1 for the list of components and their codes).





*“I want to try to see how cooperative learning contributes to social competences and how precisely they can be assessed.”*

*“Actually, I have 3 more TASKs, which I would combine (as one would be the main, and the other - supporting). The main reasons is that I see a great need to work together with teachers on their personal development, as I believe that this is the core thing for any educator. You should practice what you preach, and remember, that you always will be a role model, even if you don't really want it.) Therefore, if we want teachers to help youngsters to be better persons, we should learn to be better persons ourselves.) (World peace!).”*

*“Ce sont les valeurs de base pour l'individu!”*

*“It’s what I have been interested in for a long time and what I would like to specialize in the years to come in an international context.”*

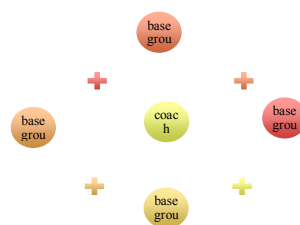
*“Because working in an environment that is filled with prejudice and fixed beliefs is challenging to my work!”*

### 3.3. How to write teaching and training materials?

Through an exercise involving the review of a training activity by participants in previous modules, participants were engaged in recognizing what needed to be improved so that the learning sequence would be effective and understandable for a reader interested in implementing the activity. Results of this review provided substantial **orientations and suggestions for participants to design and write** their materials.

### 3.4 Peer feedback and coaching

Participants were divided in 3 coaching groups in order to get support for their work between the modules A and B. The coaching groups were composed of 4 base groups, around one coach (facilitator), in order to **strengthen the online cooperation between peers** in the next phases of the work.



## 4. Evaluation

Through different methods of evaluation the team got continuous feedback that allowed for adjustments in the programme, shifting the pace of activities, choosing alternatives, sequencing the activities and reducing multi-tasking during activities. The blob tree, the traffic lights of learning, the 4 corners were techniques, used diversely every day for evaluation of the training module.

In the final evaluation, participants were quite positive about their experience. The vast majority - but one - expressed having learned many new possibilities on how to change their assessment and evaluation practices, and how to develop and assess TASKs. The majority also expressed readiness and motivation to pursue the tasks at hand, namely to design and write their materials and pilot them in training sessions with trainee or student teachers.



*“Everything is not completely ready but we feel we are in the right place to experiment with the TASKs.”*

*“Not all was new, but it gave me new perspectives”*

*“Of course I am not sure and there will be challenges... but I feel ready to go home and do some good training on evaluation and assessment of TASKs!”*



## Appendix 1

Coding	
	<b>ATTITUDES</b>
A_DIV_1	Acceptance of diversity as a positive value for the environment and the survival of humankind
A_DIV_2	Disposition to be empathic to enhance living and acting together within society
A_DIV_3	Willingness to acknowledge other people's feelings
A-COOP_1	Readiness to be open-minded and curious
A_COOP_2	Willingness to work together with others and become actively involved
A_COOP_3	Readiness to take responsibility and to be accountable for my actions and choices
A_HR_1	Acceptance that Human rights are for all human beings without any exceptions
A_HR_2	Readiness to adopt the values of human rights, and democratic citizenship as the foundations of living and acting together
A_HR_3	Acceptance of the fact that all human beings are equal
A_HR_4	Willingness to act and encourage others to act against discrimination, prejudices, stereotypes and injustices
A_EPIST_1	Acceptance of the fact that every individual constructs knowledge differently
A_EPIST_2	Recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning in a lifelong perspective
A_EPIST_3	Inclination to see things from different perspectives
A_EPIST_4	Readiness to question my own and others' views, beliefs and theories.
A_EPIST_5	Recognition of the importance of handling controversial issues and acceptance of the associated risks.
A_SELF_1	Readiness to examine my behaviour, language use and body language
A_SELF_2	Acceptance of the fact that my actions can reflect my personal values and beliefs more authentically than words
A_SELF_3	Willingness to identify and accept my own and other people's strengths and weaknesses
A_SELF_4	Readiness to learn from challenges
A_SELF_5	Readiness to strive for mutual understanding and meaningful dialogue
	<b>SKILLS</b>
S_DIV_1	Ability to communicate across all types of borders and to negotiate meaning
S_DIV_2	Ability to discover facts about other people's beliefs and practices
S_DIV_3	Aptitude to elicit and respond to others' beliefs, values and feelings and behaviours
S_COOP_1	Ability to learn in a variety of ways from participation in groups
S_COOP_2	Ability to draw on other's diverse expertise and experience for the benefit of the group's work
S_COOP_3	Aptitude to evaluate situations and issues to look for solutions with all parties involved
S_HR_1	Ability to promote convivencia
S_HR_2	Capacity to prevent the marginalisation of any individual or group.
S_HR_3	Ability to act against discrimination, stereotypes, injustices
S_EPIST_1	Aptitude to cope with complex issues and to avoid one-dimensional answers
S_EPIST_2	Aptitude to search for information through different channels and from diverse sources
S_EPIST_3	Aptitude to evaluate sources and recognize in these any prejudice, bias and reliability issues
S_SELF_1	Capacity to face the challenge of doubt and uncertainties
S_SELF_2	Ability to use a variety of languages and registers to express oneself with nuance
S_SELF_3	Ability to use intuitive and lateral thinking
	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>
K_DIV_1	Understanding of the main concepts related to diversity (culture, identity, equality, empathy, prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, racism, citizenship, global interdependence, sustainability...)
K_DIV_2	Understanding the changing nature of identities and cultures
K_DIV_3	Understanding of the nature of empathy and have knowledge about how to develop it
K_COOP_1	Understanding of the roles and functions of social and political actors
K_COOP_2	Understanding that every group has a power structure
K_COOP_3	Understanding of how cooperation can support the prevention of conflict and discrimination and violence
K_HR_1	Knowledge of international frameworks and declarations of Human Rights and the rule of law
K_HR_2	Understanding of social and economic and political processes, power relations and conflicts
K_HR_3	Knowledge about the different forms of discrimination and violence
K_EPIST_1	Understanding the relativity of knowledge, that theories are social constructs that remain incomplete and unfinished



<b>K_EPIST_2</b>	Understanding the ways in which meanings of concepts are influenced by contexts and power relations
<b>K_SELF_1</b>	Self-knowledge and introspection
<b>K_SELF_2</b>	Understanding of the subjective nature of all knowledge of self and others
<b>K_SELF_3</b>	Knowledge about the relationship of self and group

## Appendix 2

### Useful websites links:

[Council of Europe Internet Website](#)

[Pestalozzi Programme Internet Website](#)

[Pestalozzi Programme Platform - Community of Practice](#)

## Appendix 3: Attendees

**SECRETARIAT:** M. Josef HUBER (Head of the Pestalozzi Programme, Ms. Bogdana BUZARNESCU (Assistant), Didier Fauchez (Assitant)

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**EXPERTS:** Višnja RAJIĆ, Ildikò LÁZÁR , Eusébio André MACHADO

### PARTICIPANTS

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Tony	BURNER	Jacinta	SANTOS
Cecile	CATHELIN	Nataša	SEVER
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Sofia	DERIA	Christina	STAVROU
Mareks	DOMBROVSKIS	Veton	SYLHASI
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Renata	KALIVOD	Imre	SALGA
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Olga	KUKHARENKO	Irida	SINA
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