

Assessment in Inclusive Settings Key Issues for Policy and Practice

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

The Agency Assessment project began in 2005, with 23 participating countries. The goal has been to examine how assessment policy and practice can support teaching and learning in primary inclusive settings.

The project has ultimately led to a consideration of **what is meant by inclusive assessment?**

Information now available

23 Country Reports describing assessment policy and practice;

A **web database** of country information;

A **synthesis report** of key findings in 19 languages.

All of these and other project materials are available from:
www.european-agency.org/site/themes/assessment/

Inclusive Assessment

Agency project participants have defined inclusive assessment as
...

An approach to assessment in mainstream settings where policy and practice are designed to promote the learning of all pupils as far as possible. The overall goal of inclusive assessment is that all assessment policies and procedures should support and enhance the successful inclusion and participation of all pupils vulnerable to exclusion, including those with SEN.

Inclusive assessment is considered to be an important **aim for all educational policy makers and practitioners.**

A central argument of the Agency project is that **inclusive assessment practice should give a lead** to general assessment practice ...

The principles of inclusive assessment are principles that support teaching and learning with all pupils. Innovative inclusive assessment practice demonstrates good assessment practice for all pupils.

The Principles of Inclusive Assessment

Inclusive assessment explicitly **aims to prevent segregation** by avoiding (as far as possible) forms of labelling and by **focussing on learning and teaching practice that promotes inclusion** in a mainstream setting.

Inclusive assessment can only be realised within an **appropriate policy framework** and with **the appropriate organisation of schools and support to teachers** who themselves have a positive attitude towards inclusion.

This means that ...

... The needs of pupils vulnerable to exclusion, including those with SEN, are considered and accounted for within all general as well as SEN specific assessment policies;

... All pupils are entitled to be part of inclusive assessment procedures: those with SEN as well as their classmates and peers;

... All assessment methods and approaches are complementary and inform each other;

... Assessment aims to 'celebrate' diversity by identifying and valuing all pupils' progress and achievements.

The Focus of Inclusive Assessment

The purpose of inclusive assessment is to **improve learning for all pupils in mainstream settings**. All inclusive assessment

procedures, methods and tools **inform teaching and learning and support teachers** in their work.

Inclusive assessment aims to be **empowering for the pupil** concerned by providing them with **insights into their own learning** as well as a source of motivation to encourage their future learning.

Inclusive assessment involves ...

... A range of methods and strategies that all aim to gather clear evidence about pupils' learning in non-academic as well as academic subjects;

... Procedures that may fulfil other purposes in addition to informing teaching and learning (for example initial identification of SEN, or monitoring of educational standards), but that are based upon shared concepts and values for assessment and inclusion as well as the principles of participation and collaboration;

... Methods that report on the outcomes of learning, but also provide teachers with information on how to develop and improve the process of learning for an individual pupil or groups of pupils in the future;

... Decision-making based upon a range of sources that present evidence of learning collected over a period of time. This provides 'value added information' on pupil's learning progress and development, not just 'snapshot' information;

... Information that is contextualised within the educational environment taking into account any home-based or environmental factors that influence a pupil's learning;

... Assessing the factors that support inclusion for an individual pupil in order that wider school, class management and support decisions can be effectively made;

... The active involvement of class teachers, pupils, parents, class peers and others as potential assessors, or participants in the assessment process.

If you would like more information about the European Agency for
Development in Special Needs Education, go to:
www.european-agency.org