



LETTER CIRCULAR

Date: 6th February, 2020 **Ref:** DCLE 02/2020
To: All Heads of College Network / College Principals; Heads of State Schools and Educators
From: Mr Stephen Cachia, Director General
Subject: **School Based Assessment in Primary (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) and Middle Schools (Years 8 and 9)**

Dear colleagues,

We would firstly like to thank you all for the hard work and commitment in implementing the various curricular changes that our educational system is aiming to bring about. These include the gradual introduction of new syllabi based on learning outcomes and the replacement of the half yearly examinations with school-based continuous assessment.

From feedback regularly received from educators, learners and parents, it is clear that it is important to continually reflect on the implementation of school-based assessment in order to maximise its full potential for the benefit of all learners.

For this reason, the following guidelines are being re-issued on the implementation of school-based assessment tasks for the guidance of all educators involved.

Guidelines for School based Assessment for Primary (Years 4, 5 and 6) and Middle Schools (Years 8 and 9)

1. Teachers should strive to view assessment as a process to enhance and promote learning. Thus, school-based assessment tasks should be **a natural part of the lesson and integrated into the teaching and learning activities carried out in class**. While they should be an opportunity for learners to show that they have achieved the desired learning outcomes, tasks should not be a series of standalone activities with the sole aim of ticking broad learning outcomes. Thus, tasks should not be presented as ‘special’ tasks to be taken in a formal setting and should thus not become an added burden of continuous stress for learners.
2. **Teachers are encouraged to assess learners through different modes of assessment**, including presentations, show and tell, book reviews, quizzes, oral and written questions, concept notes, games, learning diaries, discussions etc. **Written tests should not be the only or main format of school-based assessment and should not be used more frequently than any other assessment tool**. Using various modes of assessment is a fair way to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes by the different learners with different skills and competencies.

3. Within this context, the use of test weeks within schools should not take place since this runs counter to the scope behind the removal of the half yearly examination and the subsequent increase in teaching and learning time which this has brought about.
4. The number and type of tasks indicated by Education Officers for the various year groups and for different subjects are a guide to teachers to help them during their planning. We believe on finding a balance between having a consistent approach among all schools while recognising the professionalism of teachers to take decisions which meet the needs of the learners in their class. **Teachers know their class best and can therefore take the final decision on the number and type of tasks to be conducted within the context of their class, while ensuring that the mark is given in a professional manner, according to good assessment practice.**
5. When students are absent from a school-based assessment task for a justified reason such as sickness, teachers may use other tasks carried out during the year by the learners to assign an appropriate mark.

Some very good practice has been observed across various years and various subjects. This good practice will be demonstrated during the forthcoming CoPE sessions, so that it will be a good learning experience for all.

For any queries please do not hesitate to contact us at: dg.dcle.mede@gov.mt

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