

# National Assessment and International Cooperation

*Learning about ourselves and about others*

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**Development of Instruments in Croatian National Assessment  
Zagreb, April 2008**



now you know

# National Assessment?

## Monitoring the Learning Outcomes of Education Systems



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# National Assessment is to answer questions

- What do schools try to teach their pupils?
- What do the pupils actually learn in education?
- Which changes have taken place during the years?
- How can we improve education?



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# Choices to make in National Assessment

- What to assess?
- Who to assess (Which grade(s), which learners?)
- When to assess (Moment of administration)?
- Frequency
- Testing time
- Format of the tests
- Sampling or whole population

# What to assess?

- Political & technical considerations (costs, logistical requirements)
- Type of information:
  - Cognitive outcomes of instruction
    - language (mother tongue, second language)
    - Mathematics, science
    - Art, music
    - Social studies
  - Affective outcomes, e.g. reading attitudes
  - Background variables, e.g. socio-economic status, gender, etc



# Characteristics of National Assessment

- Learner attainment as an indicator about the quality of the educational system
- Results related to relevant characteristics of schools and pupils
- *NOT* focused on individual pupils and schools.
- *RATHER:* How well is the system doing in reaching outcomes for pupils that participate in that system?

# Outcomes of National Assessment

- Overview of aspects (per domain) of educational supply (curricula, time invested, methods used...)
- Breakdown by background variables (age, gender, socio-economic status, planned track...)
- Description of ability distributions in (sub)population(s), where ability is related to accurately defined and didactically meaningful units, preferably small.



# International Assessment

used for national assessment

## Advantages

- Comparative framework in assessing student achievement
- Gives some indication where students stand relative to students in other countries
- Shows to some extent to which the treatment of common curriculum areas differ across countries
- Attracts political and media attention  
→ impact changes budgetary support
- Can contribute to development of local capacity in conducting research and national assessment



now you know

# International Assessment

used for national assessment

## Disadvantages

- Valid comparisons can be problematic because of difference in opportunity to learn, availability of schools and materials, class size etc.
- Probably impossible to develop a test equally valid for all countries
- International test is common denominator of curricula in participating countries → Relative weight of learning areas between test and national curriculum can differ



now you know

# Cito Organisation

- Based in The Netherlands, agencies in Europe and USA
- Ca 600 employees + 2,000 freelancers
- Founded in 1968 by the Dutch government
- Fully privatised in 1999
- Founding member of IAEA, ATP-Europe and AEA-Europe



now you know

# Cito Tasks

- Develop instruments for objective evaluation of students' achievement
- Contribute to the implementation of the national educational innovation policy
- Expand knowledge and understanding of educational assessment through research



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# Cito Products

- Programmes for *summative* assessment of performance of individual students (e.g. national examinations)
- Programmes for *formative* assessment to support the educational process (student monitoring system)
- Evaluation of the output of educational *systems* (national sample-base assessment)
- Training programmes for national and international educationalists
- International assessment: PISA, EILC (language indicator)



now you know

# Learning about ourselves and about others

**now you know**



now you know