

Foster Educational Inclusion
of Newly Arrived Migrant Children

SCALING UP PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO FOSTER THE INCLUSION OF MIGRANT CHILDREN

Contexts' Analysis

The Prior Learning Assessment Tool - the context

Migrant children experience a series of obstacles when it comes to their inclusion in the education systems and schools of the new host countries, including inappropriate grade placement, language provision that is not adapted to their mother tongue, insufficient learning support and teachers' difficulty in handling diversity. In this framework, the initial evaluation of newly arrived migrant students is a fundamental moment for entering the educational system, but difficult at the same time for teachers and school administrations: research shows that migrant students' school enrolment at a level usually lower than their real potential is one of the main reasons of increased early school leaving rates.

To address these difficulties, between 2021 and 2023 the *FEINAMC Project - Disseminating and scaling up good practices to Foster Educational Inclusion of Newly Arrived Migrant Children* tried to replicate two meaningful *best practices* implemented across Europe to handle the inclusion of migrant children in schools. Specifically, the partnership worked on an intervention previously designed under the *CIRCLE Project - InClusion of Refugee ChiLdren in Education* (2018-2020), the so-called **Prior Learning Assessment Tool**, whose aim was **to assess students' priorly acquired knowledges and socio-emotional skills through visual, colourful and playful exercises**.

The process of implementation of the diagnostic tool, which is aligned with current school curricula of primary and secondary education (Mathematics, Geometry, Geography, ICT Skills, Physics, and elements of English, but also extra-curricular competencies such as the social and communication skills) is particularly easy to apply and replicate: the developed tests, differing one each other based on the school grade, were designed in each country to be carried out at the moment in which there is a new introduction of a student, either at the beginning of the school year or during the year. The teachers responsible for receiving and welcoming students should be in charge of completing the test with the students, then to assess the results according to the different criteria.

The aim of this introduction is to show how this process was replicated and adapted in Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Austria under the guidance of KMOP - Athens, Greece, and transferred to a wider scale in different contexts, going through the changes and adaptations that each country has applied to the original tool thanks to the precious feedback that European teachers, school leaders and students have left, while explaining the processes and methodologies which were applied.





Processes and Methodologies

Processes and Methodologies

Embracing the CIRCLE principle based on which the vast majority of newly arrived migrant students may not have any knowledge, may possess a minimal level of knowledge of the language of the country of arrival or may have started their educational path under a very different didactic dynamic, the FEINAMC partnership used the same CIRCLE tool as a starting point. Based on the developed materials, each organisation worked with groups of teachers and educational centres, asking them firstly to assess it based on the educational contexts they live in, then to try it in their schools and educational centres with migrant students. The result is a set of five *different* Prior Learning Assessment tools, containing contextualised tools, approaches and revised practices for each of the countries.

In Austria, this piloting experience led to the creation of a renewed tool which involves not just the migrant student and the teacher, but the entire class group. Focusing on a more *collective* perspective, the tool became an “Exploration tool”, or a simple assessment test, allowing the class to get to know the child, with his/her abilities and competences, in a faster and funnier way. The Austrian materials are divided thematically along the “axes” of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and didactically oriented towards the concept of Global Learning/Global Citizenship Education.

In Cyprus, a system of prior learning assessment focused on language skills is already used and promoted at Ministerial level. Therefore, the tool was used as an additional help for the teachers in order to better assess and understand the prior knowledge and learning of the newly arrived migrant students and tailor their syllabus accordingly, focusing on subjects other than the Greek language, as well as on life skills and cultural competence.

In Greece, based on the results of an evaluation of assessment practices and tools used in Europe and following a review of international literature on the state-of-the-art prior learning assessment tools, two diagnostic tools were adapted and developed, specifically designed for assessing the prior learning of newly arrived migrant/refugee of primary and secondary school-age children.

In Italy, teachers and school institutions found the tool particularly useful for the very beginning of the school year (in September-October), a period in which the majority of migrant students enter the national school system for the first time. The work resulted in a tool that provides keys for the evaluation of the prior learning of newly arrived migrant students, at a curricular and at a socio-emotional level.

In Spain, the new tool offers elements helping for the evaluation of the prior learning of newly arrived migrant students, not only at curricular level but also on the socio-emotional field, being fundamental with newly arrived students facing multiple changes and challenges. Particular attention is paid on the need to assess and develop the so-called “global competences” for being global citizens able to analyse and appreciate other people’s perspectives and visions of the world, in an intercultural perspective.

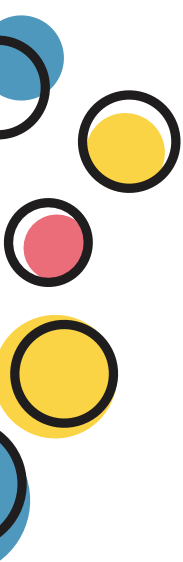


Validation record sheet of the prior learning assessment tool

Based on the very first feedback received, the FEINAMC partnership decided not to collect the records obtained from students testing the tools: this was done for several reasons including privacy and confidentiality, but above all in the attempt not to focus on the performance itself. On the contrary, the emphasis was put more on “exploration” than “assessment”.

What we collected instead are different levels of feedback from teachers who decided to assess the tool. Particularly, this validation process included two phases: in the first phases, partners distributed the CIRCLE tool and asked teachers to fill in a pre-evaluation questionnaire, in which their first impressions on the tests were requested (prior to the proper test with students). In a second phase, partners analysed the feedback received and modified the original diagnostic tool accordingly.

This document contains 2 tables: the first one collecting all feedback received in the first phase; the second one listing the changes applied by the partnership for arriving at the second version, the FEINAMC Prior Learning Assessment Tool.





**FIRST PHASE:
PRE-EVALUATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK**

CESIE	InterRed	KMOP	CARDET	Südwind
First phase questionnaires' implementation				
8 teachers of Italian secondary schools; Summer 2022.	First revision: January to September 2022, by a commission of 3 teachers ; Second version reviewed by another 4 teachers .	3 teachers; 2 educational stakeholders from Ministry of Education from September to December 2022	6 teachers from 3 different schools, but answered only from 4. February to September 2022	5 teachers and 6 educators - end of June 2022.
Knowledge of the tools and context of the use				
Few tools are known for assessing the prior knowledge on NAI, mostly available on the Internet (nothing official) and additional learning tools. Some schools reported the presence of a first literacy centre that deals with NAI, as well as a welcome protocol.	According to the principle of autonomy of educational centers, each school has its own tools/tests for the initial evaluation of newly arrived students. Likewise, the reception process in schools is completed with interviews and monitoring by the educational guidance department. In some regions guidelines or specific textbooks are available.	overall, the teachers and the educational stakeholders from Ministry, believed that the tools are higher level than expected and they don't know how they are gonna implement them especially with newly arrived children	The teachers noted down that the prior assessment tool does not help determine the skills of the student, but rather if the syllabus of the educational system he/she received matches the current educational system.	Few other tools are known, all are not compulsory and they do not help to know the child in a holistic way. Some children may score poor marks because of the language used in the tool.
First impressions on the LENGTH				
Favourable judgment, but not unanimous	Too long and at the same time they missed information	Too long and they don't know how many school hours need for the compilation of all the exercises	too long	Too long
Expression/Formulation				
Generally positive, but highlighted some problems in the use of the language	Positive, but aspects of improvement or changes were noted;	most neutral; more guidance needed	Positive	Some expressions were highlighted as controversial: "Home country"; Gender (binary); questions about "parents".
Difficulty Level				
In some cases, it was considered to be readapted;	Need to adapt the level to the national curriculum of the country. Also take into account the differences between the students.	difficult in maths and psychic	some students were unable to understand the instructions due to language barrier	Na

CESIE	InterRed	KMOP	CARDET	Südwind
Adequacy of Contents				
Overall appreciation;	Positive but need to adapt more to national curriculum. Some contents were missing, including the socio-emotional part.	overall, good but mentioned that changes needed	Generally good	Not adequate because only based on the cognitive capacities and not innovative enough
Variety of Topics				
Overall appreciation, but in one case, the judgment was negative.	It was not bad at all, but changes were proposed (gender; intercultural approach).	positive about the variety of the topics	Positive, the more information they have about the students' previous knowledge the better	Good but too subject-based
Validation Procedures				
balanced marks;	Positive, they highlighted the effort.	the validation process have very positive feedback	Positive	Need to be shortened and more specific
Additional Tips				
Simplification of the language, considering the lack of knowledge of the language (remove the gerund) Specify that there is no need to answer everything and no marks are given	Need to adapt it and to contextualise it to the national curriculum; focus the tool much more on the socio-emotional field. And develop it with intercultural, antiracist an gender approaches.	more possibilities for them to adapt the tool; shorten the exercises.	Flexibility of the exercises More oral exercises	Need to change the whole approach of the tool.



**SECOND PHASE:
CHANGES APPLIED
AT LOCAL LEVEL**

AUSTRIA

Aspects	Initial	Scaled up	Explanations
Objectives of the tool	Grading learners based on subject knowledge	The material has explicitly not been developed as an assessment test, but as an instrument to get to know the child and his/her abilities and competences as well as possible. Therefore, it consists of different tasks with different levels of difficulty and from different subject areas. The material is not divided into subjects but thematically along the "axes" of the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs, and didactically oriented towards the concept of Global Learning/Global Citizenship Education.	The original document referred very much to purely cognitive learning. Migrants and refugees in particular have a cut in their learning biography and thus too little knowledge of specific knowledge that we in Western Europe consider necessary at a certain grade level. On the other hand, they have advanced skills and knowledge that students in Western Europe may not have. The tool is intended to show these and to reflect on them together with all other students. It is as well a learning tool for the child but also for the teacher as it suggests examples of global citizenship education approach.
Title	Prior Assessment Learning Tool	My World and I - A Discovery Journey Subtitle: Getting to know the personal learning experiences of newly arrived migrant children From aged 12	Less technical title makes it more appealing to teachers – Writing from the Child's perspective.
Length	36 pages, 29 Questions + questionnaire. Feedback on the original document: Much too long and too difficult.	25 pages with the questionnaire, 23 questions Questionnaire is added at the end of the assessment tool. The style of questions make the questionnaire sound like a biographic conversation between the student and themselves.	About the questionnaire. Making the student ask themselves about themselves would make them think/reflect deeper. They can then share their findings with others.
Expression/formulation	Some problems with the use of delicate terms like "Home country" mother tongue vs. first language, Parents vs. legal guardian etc.	We have adapted the wording to the Austrian Global Citizenship Education approach and removed irrelevant questions from the questionnaire.	e.g. questions about the parents... could be challenging (not all students have parents and on top of that, the question about the schools attended by their parents would be difficult and its answer not relevant. The whole tool has been reedited.
Level of difficulty	Too difficult	The tool is a "give away". Students can take it home and also go through the exercises without the supervision of a teacher. Students can use it in Mentoring-Programm and discuss the question with a mentor. The material is not divided into subjects but thematically along the "axes" of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and didactically oriented towards the concept of Global Learning/Global Citizenship Education.	To make it a get-to-know-yourself tool, the idea being that native pupils in the whole class will also answer some of the questions in order to strengthen transpersonal exchange and empathy.



Adequacy of the contents	Strong focus on cognitively verifiable knowledge – less what content is necessary to know for future citizens of the world?	We have tried to focus on content that is relevant to the present and future of all people (environmental issues, transculturality, conflict resolution) and the strengthening of related competences. This is the aim of the exercises. Almost each exercise has a question that encourages self-reflection and sharing of opinion.	If we want the SDGs to transform the world and education, schools must also work transformatively. Purely cognitive knowledge, which is strongly Eurocentric, no longer plays a major role.
Adequacy of the pedagogical approach	grounded in traditional academic disciplines	Based on the three domains of learning - cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural.	The expected expertise of a development educational organisation like Südwind will be to work on suggesting the global citizenship education approach instead of a purely subject based one.
Structure of the tool	Structure based on subjects	Structured in topics with many subjects embedded in each of the topics. Teachers of any subject can use the tool to know the new student better.	While topics are universal, they can be approached in a variety of perspectives. All children can participate even those without previous schooling experience. Embedding subjects in the topic allows the child to better perceive the linkage between school and everyday life.
Variety of topics	Strong focus on mathematical and scientific knowledge	Thematically along the "axes" of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is People, Peace and Planet with enough elements to explore the subject based knowledge of the children.	More relevant in a changing world and more enhancing interdisciplinarity.
Procedures for validating the exercises	right and wrong answers decided the students' ranking The validation guide does not suggest any solution to the exercises in the tool	The associated "Validation Tool" provides teachers with guidance on how to assess students' responses. It also provides tips on how to work with the whole class on the questions/tasks to promote sharing, inclusion and empathy. The guide suggests solutions and answers to the exercises in the assessment tools. The guide can be translated with an online application in any language with high acuity as que questions are short and put in a simple language.	In Austria, only a few teachers work with placement tests. The Ministry of Education is also looking for alternative methods of learning and placement. It makes sense to us to present an alternative that focuses on competence orientation and reflection with the whole class.
Title of the validation guide	Validation guide	My World and I - A Discovery Journey Accompanying booklet Assessments and analysis for educational staff	The guide has been adapted to the assessment tool the pedagogical concept used: Global Citizenship education.



ITALY

Aspects	Initial	Scaled up	Explanations
Objectives of the tool	Grading the prior knowledge of the newly arrived migrant students	Additional presentation focusing on socio-emotional aspects	Need to focus less on "grading"
Title	Prior Assessment Learning Tool	"Gioca e impara"	Na
Length	36 pages 29 Questions +questionnaire	37 pages, 29 questions	New graphic layout
Expression/formulation	Some problems with the with the absence of inclusive language and a gender approach	Translation of the texts adding the schwa symbol (ə/ɐ)	Some users may feel excluded
Title of the validation guide	Validation guide	"Guida alla valutazione"	Easier to understand

SPAIN

Aspects	Initial	Scaled up	Explanations
Objectives of the tool	Grading learners based on subject knowledge	Focused on curricular aspects but with a great weight in the follow-up of the socio-emotional area.	Although schools do not have a standard prior learning assessment tool, they do have their own strategies for assessing students' cognitive knowledge. Where there are greater weaknesses is in the monitoring of the socio-emotional part of the newly arrived students, which is fundamental, for this reason the tool includes a series of guidelines to be able to integrate this area in the evaluation framework, as well as including a follow-up interview with the families and reinforcing the interview with the students. The teachers identified the reinforcement of the emotional part as very important and very useful for the schools.
Title	Prior Assessment Learning Tool	Prior Assessment Learning Tool	-
Length	36 pages 29 Questions +questionnaire	First and Second courses of ESO: 56 pages; 47 questions + 2 interviews (family + student) + socio-emotional orientations Third and fourth course of ESO: 59 pages; 47 questions + 2 interviews (family + student) + socio-emotional orientations	The teachers considered that the curricular content was of a lower level and that there were some issues that were missing, so it was necessary to complete with some exercises. The tool is now longer, but given the application methodology described in the user manual, the teachers believe it is fine. As the tool has given much more weight to the socioemotional area, the student interview was modified, another one was prepared for the families and at the same time a whole series of orientations were prepared in this area that have been included in the tool.
Expression/formulation	Some problems with the absence of inclusive language and a gender approach	Inclusive language and mainstreaming of gender, intercultural and anti-racist approach have been incorporated	In the adaptation of the tool, great importance was given to inclusive language, but also to gender, intercultural and anti-racist approaches. These approaches have been transversalized in the revision of activities, examples, images and in all the socio-emotional areas that has been included.



Level of difficulty	Some exercises difficult, others not	It was necessary to modify some contents and add others	The work at the curricular level was carried out with the revision and elaboration of new contents based on the national education curriculum. At the same time, given that the Spanish educational system receives many students from Latin America who do speak the language, it was necessary to evaluate their knowledge of the Spanish language, and this part, as explained in the validation guide, is only aimed at students who do speak Spanish.
Adequacy of the contents	Not too closely aligned with the national curriculum	The contents have been aligned with the national curriculum.	The contents have been aligned with the national curriculum so that the tool can help schools assess students' prior learning and place students in the appropriate grade according to their academic level.
Structure of the tool	Strong focus on cognitively verifiable knowledge, less focus on socio-emotional aspects and orientations	The socio-emotional component of the tool has been worked on in greater depth.	The teachers identified the socioemotional area and accompanying the students in this sense as a fundamental aspect of the initial academic year and which should also involve the families. For all these reasons, it was decided to expand this part and also to include a series of guidelines for schools focus on this area.
Adequacy of the pedagogical approach	Focus on cognitive knowledge, lack of inclusive language and gender, intercultural and anti-racist approaches	Orientations to focus on the attention of the socio-emotional part	In addition to reinforcing the socio-emotional area in all cognitive curricular activities, we tried to mainstream an intercultural, gender and anti-racist pedagogical approach.
Structure of the tool	Based on subjects	Based on subjects and the socio-emotional sphere	It was necessary to modify the curricular contents to adapt them to the national educational context.
Variety of topics	Strong focus on mathematical and scientific knowledge	The social sciences part has been included, as well as the Spanish language.	The group of teachers who reviewed the tool considered it necessary to include some social science content, as well as to include the Spanish language, considering the large group of students from Latin America who attend Spanish schools.
Procedures for validating the exercises	Right and wrong answers decided the students' ranking	Validation guides have been developed that include evaluation rubrics such as those used by teachers in the Spanish context.	The evaluation guidelines used by teachers in educational schools in Spain were used to prepare the evaluation guide for the tools.
Title of the validation guide	Validation guide	Validation guide	The new validation guide follows the format of the new assessment tool.

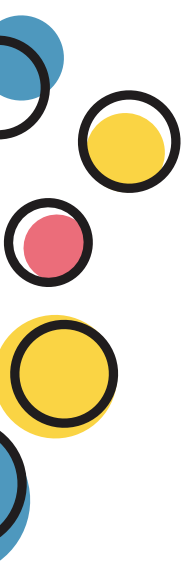


CYPRUS

Aspects	Initial	Scaled up	Explanations
Objectives of the tool	Grading the prior knowledge of the newly arrived migrant students	Focused on cultural competence, different ways of testing and evaluating the knowledge and skills of the students	Newly arrived migrant students have a compulsory test on their knowledge in Greek. This test comes from the ministry and it is a way for the teachers and the school to decide which class the students should join and if they would need assistance in language learning. However, the existing tool focuses only on language. Therefore, the new tool supports the existing tool in order for teachers to have a global picture of the educational level of each student. Additionally, the existing test focuses more on knowledge and there is no evaluation of the skills of the students.
Title	Prior Assessment Learning Tool	Prior Assessment Tool: "Discovering Journey "For newly arrived student (age 12+)	The title of the tool should have a friendly approach so that students do not feel as if it is a test
Length	36 pages 29 Questions +questionnaire	17 pages	Teachers commented that the previous version of the prior assessment tool was too long and students would get tired of completing to the point where they might lose their attention; hence compromise the results of the evaluation. Teachers suggested short exercises for students so that they also get a taste of what is expected from them.
Expression/formulation	Some problems with the with the absence of inclusive language and a gender approach	More open-ended questions and more inclusive language	By having open-ended questions, students are able to express and present what they know and not get discouraged and restricted by what is correct and what is wrong.
Level of difficulty	Some exercises too difficult, others too easy; not consistent on the level of difficulty	Maintained a fairly easy level; more consistent	The aim of the prior assessment tool is to be able and assess students if they know what is least expected. The tool is no way to challenge the students; however, to be able to tell if they have acquired the basic knowledge from the previous educational system.
Adequacy of the contents	Not aligned with the existing curriculum	Changed the content based on the needs of the students	Added more pictures, changed the type of the questions and exercises to be easily adapted be the teachers and the school



Adequacy of the pedagogical approach	Focused on knowledge rather than skills	The new tool has additional exercises which focuses on cultural competencies	Nowadays being culturally competence is a new way which can help them to adapt to the educational culture and make it easy for them to be integrated to the new system
Structure of the tool	Based on subjects	Based on topics	Topics are broader than subjects and not all schools follow the same subjects
Variety of topics	Focused on mathematics and science	Focused on other topics and in evaluating skills	There should be a balance between evaluating skills and knowledge
Procedures for validating the exercises	Right and wrong answers decided the students' ranking	Some right and wrong answers and some suggestions on what is important for the students to provide	The prior assessment tool should not feel like a test/exam. By having options and giving the main idea/goal of the exercise helps the teachers to evaluate better.
Title of the validation guide	Validation guide	Teachers' Validation Tool for the "Discovering Journey" Booklet	The new validation guide follows the format of the new assessment tool.



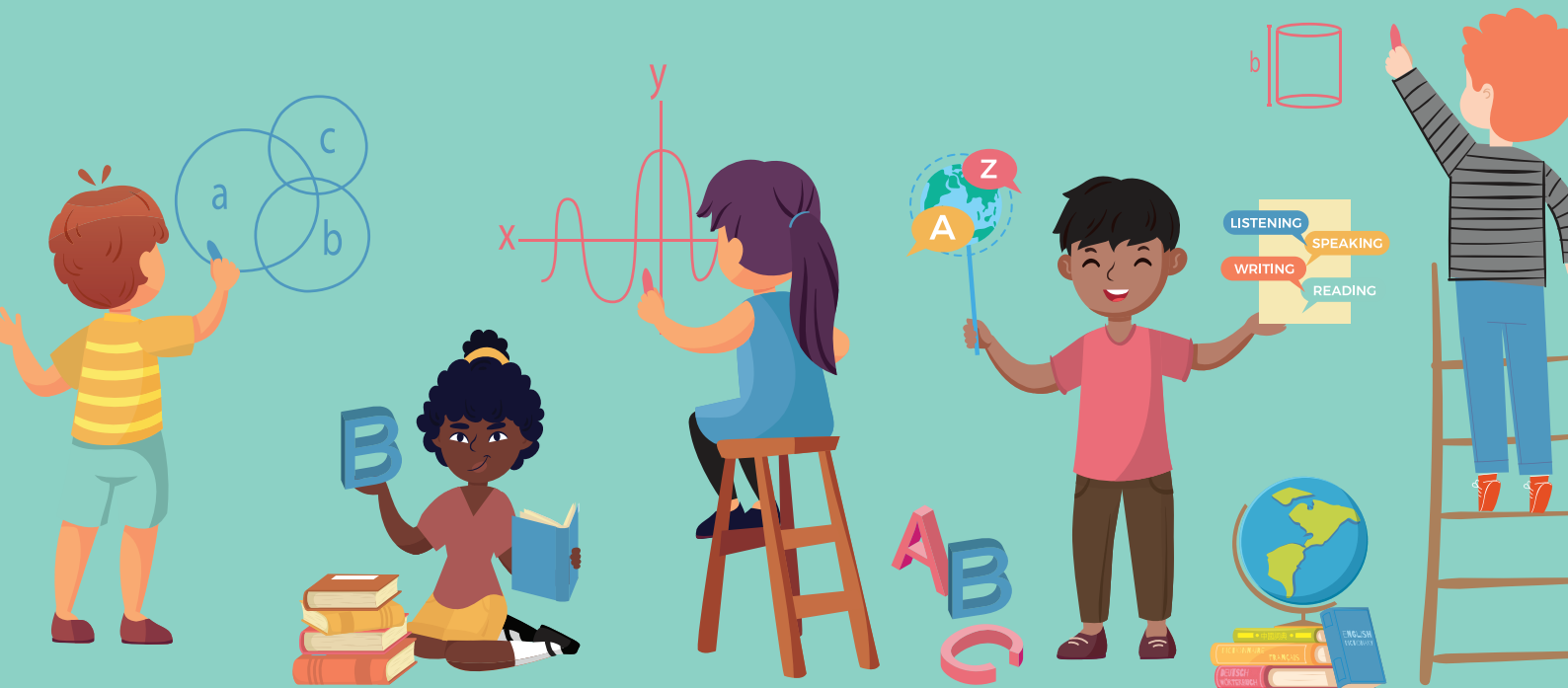
GREECE

Aspects	Initial	Scaled up	Explanations
Objectives of the tool	Grading the prior knowledge of the newly arrived migrant students	Focused on cultural competence and focusing on socio aspects, different ways of testing and evaluating the knowledge and skills of the students.	Newly arrived migrant students have a compulsory test on their knowledge in Greek. This test comes from the ministry and it is a way for the teachers and the school to decide which class the students should join and if they would need assistance in language learning. However, the existing tool focuses only on language. Therefore, the new tool supports the existing tool in order for teachers to have a global picture of the educational level of each student.
Title	Prior Assessment Learning Tool	Prior Assessment Tool: "Welcome to your new class" For newly arrived student (age 12+) Questionnaire become more as an open discussion in order to make students feel more comfortable.	N/A
Length	36 pages 29 Questions + questionnaire	18 pages	Teachers underlined that the previous version of the prior assessment tool was too extensive students and suggested shorter exercises for students.
Level of difficulty	Some exercises too difficult, others too easy; not consistent on the level of difficulty	Maintained a fairly easy level; more consistent	The aim of the prior assessment tool is to be able and assess students if they know what is least expected. The tool is no way to challenge the students; however, to be able to tell if they have acquired the basic knowledge from the previous educational system.
Adequacy of the pedagogical approach	Focused on knowledge rather than skills	The new tool has additional exercises which focuses on cultural competencies and knowledge	Nowadays when the goal is to teach newly arrived migrants about the culture and language of their new country a suitable pedagogical approach is to use a combination of visual materials, activities, and hands-on learning. For example, the teacher provide visual aids such as maps, photos, and videos demonstrating the new culture and language. They could also organize activities such as role-playing or field trips in order to give students a more immersive experience. Additionally, hands-on learning activities such as crafting traditional items or cooking traditional dishes could be used to help students develop a deeper understanding of the new culture.
Structure of the tool	Based on subjects	Based on topics	N/A
Title of the validation guide	Validation guide	Teachers' Validation Tool for the "Welcome to your new class" Booklet	The new validation guide follows the format of the new assessment tool.





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