# **Video Talk 3: Key Points on Assessing Key Competences**

Hello. My name is Janet Looney, and I am Director of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy in Paris. In this video I’d like to introduce you to the assessment of key competences in a ‘nutshell’. I will be talking in more detail about the principles behind competence-based assessment and good practice in assessing key competences, and related challenges in Module 3.

As you’ll learn throughout this MOOC, teaching, learning and assessment of key competences involves new approaches – often through the provision of interactive learning environments, and through collaborative and multi-disciplinary learning. There is also an emphasis on transversal skills. Assessment of key competences should reflect these new ways of teaching and learning.

As countries have introduced key competences to new curricula, they have also defined new learning objectives for different stages of their education. New curricula should cover the objectives identified, and assessments measure how well students have attained these objectives. All of these elements need to be aligned. If they are misaligned, it is impossible to draw a valid conclusion about how well students have learned or to adapt teaching to better meet learner needs. This means that teachers will need to develop new approaches to assessment.

These include:

* Summative assessment – that is the tests and examinations they design in order to assign course grades, or at the end of the school year.
* Formative assessment – the kind of interactive assessment that takes place in the course of learning, where the information gathered can be used to adjust teaching and learning and better meet student needs.
* And student self-assessment of progress toward the transversal competences. These are competences that do not have a learning “standard” – such as creativity, initiative and constructive management of feelings - but where it may be important for each student to track his or her development.

An important thing to keep in mind is that assessment of key competences is very different than in courses where the focus has been on learning specific content. Assessments need to provide ways for students to demonstrate that they can use knowledge, skills and attitudes to reason, solve problems and so on. New tools such as portfolios and e-assessments will be very useful for teachers.

Secondary school teachers may face additional challenges in introducing key competences because the matriculation and university entrance examinations are not yet necessarily well aligned with new key competence approaches. So it is attempting to focus on examination content and focus on helping students to pass tests. A few studies have found that students learning in courses that emphasise the kind of higher-order skills featured in key competence curricula may outperform students who are learning in courses that emphasise content knowledge. The students in the first group also tend to retain information longer.

Classroom-based formative assessment is also very important for key competence learning. It may be useful to think of formative assessment as an integrated part of the learning process, as teachers are able to adjust and scaffold learning, based on the information gathered during classroom discussions, through observing students as they work on projects, and so on. Students may also assess their own work, or those of peers, and re-adjust their strategies as they work on projects or attempt to solve problems.

The key competences also emphasise the importance of transversal skills. These are the kinds of skills that are important for personal development, and for learning-to-learn. They are also a new challenge for assessment, as they fall beyond the subject-related learning objectives with very clear learning standards. The focus for transversal skills is more on personal improvement. Tracking tools and portfolios can help teachers and students to focus on these important skills, and support learners as they grow and mature.

We’ll explore all of these important ideas in more detail in Module 3 where we’ll be focusing on the principles behind competence-based assessment, and on good practice in assessing key competences.