

PSCD SPECIALISTS'S GUIDE FOR THE PERSONAL SOCIAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT (PSCD) LEARNING OUTCOMES SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION

This document is aimed at PSCD specialists in the classroom and presents the Learning Outcomes Syllabus and Assessments Procedures for PSCD.

The National Curriculum Framework for all (2012) proposed a Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF) as the keystone for learning and assessment throughout the years of compulsory schooling. The aim of the PSCD Learning Outcomes Syllabus (LOS) is to guide teachers to develop lessons that help students acquire knowledge and information, develop the necessary skills and competencies and reflect on their attitudes about the different areas of studies. The LOS are developmental and cyclical in nature so as to better address the learning needs of the learners during their different years of schooling.

The LOS encompasses a set of subject related learning outcomes that set out what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do as a result of a process of learning. These learning outcomes are designed to be used in a range of delivery contexts and taught using different methods. They state the end result rather than describe the learning process or the learning activities.

The LO are written in a way that informs pedagogy and, in conjunction with the assessment strategies related to each outcome, set a clear assessment expectation. This document sets down good practice teaching and assessment guidelines which PSCD specialists may wish to take on board and adapt to meet the needs of their learners.

SUBJECT FOCI

PSCD has three subject foci:

Subject Focus: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Awareness

This area of study focuses on different aspects of self-awareness, self-esteem, understanding and managing feelings, empathy and social skills – including communication, assertiveness, collaboration and dialogue – in various contexts. These competencies help learners consciously choose behaviours which lead to positive social interactions and understand their abilities so they could cope with the normal stresses of schooling and life.

Subject Focus: Career exploration and Planning

This area of study helps learners to gain better awareness of their personal abilities, skills and interests. It also helps learners develop skills and competencies on how to interact and work cooperatively in teams or in groups. With the help of this subject focus learners will begin to understand the importance of planning and decision making and the importance of locating, evaluating and interpreting career information. All this will help learners manage their learning and career paths at and beyond school.

Subject Focus: Health, Safety and Well Being

This area of study focuses on the ability to stay healthy by making informed and responsible choices which ultimately are of benefit to both self and others. It allows learners to reflect about various issues which are related to their emotional, psychological and social well being. It deals with issues of relationships and sexuality, internet use and misuse, substance use and other issues that are relevant to all learners

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES AND CONCEPTS

PSCD specialists need to keep up-to-date with the latest pedagogical strategies and concepts in order to be able to better understand and respond to learners' needs. Europe's Education and Training 2020 strategy puts special emphasis on the teachers' role in the lives of their learners. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding their learners towards their goals and shaping their perceptions (European Commission, 2015).

PSCD aims at empowering students on a personal level and within the context of a community by emphasizing the need for active participation, responsible behaviour, dialogue and reflection. The Maltese PSCD pedagogical is based on two pillars: the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984) and processing. The PSCD sessions are therefore held in groups of not more than 17 learners (statutory) in order to ensure that students are provided with the environment to truly learn experientially. Classrooms are arranged in a circle/horseshoe formation so that learners can view each other and the PSCD specialists can implement equity in time and attention to individual participants allowing the PSCD specialists to listen more to students, discuss, process experiences and allow for students' contribution.

Successful PSCD sessions, therefore, involve the use of different teaching strategies and methodologies like role play, case studies, brainstorming, value continuum exercises and other collaborative activities from which outcomes can be elicited through processing, evaluation and closure. Processing allows learners to reflect, analyse and act upon their participation during the activity. It also allows them to integrate and internalise what they have experienced during that exercise, and hence will be able to transfer learning taking place in the class to other social contexts. PSCD specialists need to use different skills like, communication skills, discussion-provoking skills, probing and paraphrasing, as well as

other presentation skills to encourage dialogue and elicit answers from the learners themselves.

During processing of activities, PSCD specialists should provide opportunities and time so learners learn to express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and emotions and how to listen to others' opinions and negotiation skills.

AIMS OF PERSONAL SOCIAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- To provide a safe and supportive learning environment where learners can develop the confidence to ask questions, challenge the information they are offered, draw on their own experience, express their views and opinions, and put what they have learned into practice in their own lives.
- To encourage learners to reflect on their learning and the progress they have made, and to transfer what they have learned to say and to do from one school subject to another, and from school to their lives in the wider community.
- To enable learners to cope confidently with change and become independent and responsible members within the school and the community, by providing opportunities for sharing and working together.
- To help learners understand their identity, their rights and their social responsibilities within the local and international community.
- To provide learners with opportunities to develop good communication skills, build healthy relationships and reflect on choices and decisions they have to make in relation to their health and sexuality, drugs, and the environment.
- To provide learners with the opportunity to explore knowledge, discuss and clarify values and attitudes on various topics and themes.
- To enable learners to improve their motivation, raise their aspirations and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to plan and make informed decisions about education, training and career choices.
- To prepare learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life through the development of skills related to problem solving, critical and reflective analysis and conflict resolution.

ASSESSMENT

PSCD education can be devalued because it is not formally assessed like the other academic subjects. The purpose of assessment is that of providing feedback for learners on the teaching and learning taking place on a day-to-day basis at classroom and school level. This evidence describes what the learner has achieved in terms of learning outcomes, and enables PSCD specialists to adjust the learning programme accordingly in order to improve the quality of learning.

Assessment tasks and procedures should be consistent with the aims of each subject focus and of the shared learning outcome presented in class. The activities selected and carried out in class should allow learners to understand and acquire the shared learning outcome of the lesson. Assessment is therefore a vital and integral part of the learning process and programme. PSCD specialists need to think of assessment tasks that give evidence of what the learners know, what has been learnt, what needs further prompting, the next step in learning for the learner, as well as self-evaluation and self-monitoring.

PSCD aims to assess the following components:

- Knowledge, i.e. the cognitive aims which deal with the acquisition of the correct information.
- Skills and competencies, i.e. an ability acquired through practice and effort to carry out complex activities, so as to make and implement a sequence of choices to achieve a desired objective.

The following are some of the assessment tools which may be used to assess PSCD knowledge, skills and attitudes:

Baseline assessment

- Brainstorming
- Questioning techniques including open ended questions
- Graphic Organisation of Information (GOIs)
- Evaluation and feedback
- Others

Formative or/and Summative assessment:

- Recapitulation
- Questioning techniques including open-ended questions
- Diagnostic questionnaires
- Peer assessment
- Educational Games
- Case studies
- Role plays
- Continuum exercise

- Compass chart
- Quiz
- Processing
- Group work post-test
- Self-reflection
- Career Exposure Experience Reflective Logbook
- Reflective Workbook
- Written/Printed exercises

PSCD specialists should look to gather a range of quality pieces of evidence to show progression in learning from both ongoing formative assessment opportunities and periodic, summative assessments. Learners should be involved in the selection of evidence. The evidence should show that the learner has understood a significant body of knowledge, has responded consistently well to challenging learning experiences and has acquired the necessary skills and competencies expected of him or her.

References:

Camilleri, S., & Bezzina, A. (2021). Learning in a Circle-Apparent Simplicity. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-18.

Camilleri, S., Caruana, A., Falzon, R., & Muscat, M. (2012). The promotion of emotional literacy through personal and social development: The Maltese experience. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 30(1), 19-37.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice., 2015. *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions, and Policies*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

Ministry for Education and Employment., 2012. *A National Curriculum Framework for All*. [pdf] Available at: [Accessed 20 June 2015].