

## THE DILEMMA BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND STANDARDS IN LATVIA

*Zenija BerzINA<sup>1</sup>The presentations on the dynamic assessment remind me my personal experience of the primary school. At those times we had a subject in our curriculum called 'neat-writing'. My memories of the neat-writing lessons are still a nightmare. Even now after so many years I remember how much I tried to do my best to hit the stripes, the ovals, the loops and the hooks in the grid of the horizontal, vertical and oblique lines. I was one of the best students of my classroom; I got the highest marks in all subjects except neat writing. Being a very diligent student I spent hours exercising. I cried. I really thought that there was something wrong about my learning. And there really was, but it was nothing of my diligence. The problem was my short sight. Having as severe short sight as I had, it was impossible to meet the standard.*

*I had a wonderful primary teacher, who really loved us. I still remember her name, her face, her clothes, which I liked – the rosy jacket and the grey skirt. But even she was not able to overcome the perception of the standard as something above the humane. She tried to help me, she tried to comfort me saying that I still am the best student, but she assessed the result of my hours' long effort by threes, which was a very low mark.*

*Unfortunately, I should admit that there has not much been changed with respect to the assessment of the students learning in our schools in Latvia. Though we do not have the neat writing in the schools' curricula, and despite that we have introduced the non-marking assessment in primary level of education and 10-points assessment in secondary education, however the 'product' of learning and its compliance to the standard is the focus of the assessment. The process of learning is still out of the 'interest zone' of the assessment. The centralized testing of students achievements in the end of the stages of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary), as well as many in the duration of each stage, also leads to focusing on result.*

*The other even more essential reason, why there is not much change in assessment of students, that is lack of the appropriate teacher training. This is the reason why the Centre of Education Initiatives, participates in the INCLUES project – to learn ourselves, to disseminate the knowledge we get to teachers and educational administrators, and above all – to make the children's learning meaningful and joyful.*

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