

Thuringian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
Curriculum for Primary Schools and Special Needs Schools following the Primary School
Program

Curriculum Ethics
2010

1. Developing Competencies in Ethics Education in Thuringian Primary Schools

In primary school ethics lessons, the focus is on the developing individual capable of making free decisions and taking responsibility. Building on early experiences of identity development in family and kindergarten, students explore their personal and social identity in ethics class. By recognizing, articulating, and critically reflecting on their needs and effects, they strengthen their personalities.

Students learn early on the importance of social bonds such as family. They become aware that they are part of various social relationships (e.g., family, school, friendships). They learn to respect others and diversity. They recognize that rules, norms, rights, and duties are essential within communities. Responsibility, mindfulness, and appreciation—for themselves and others—are developed.

Students learn to perceive and describe the moral significance of everyday and borderline situations. Based on their experiences, they assess, argue, and judge, reflecting on their own and others' behaviors.

Ethics lessons aim to address and promote the interests and inclinations of both girls and boys equally, connecting to their experiential world. Individual and collaborative learning in varied formats forms the basis of lesson design.

Lessons are designed to convey values and norms, building on prior knowledge from early childhood. Curiosity about understanding the world and developing judgment skills are fostered through environmental sensitivity and expanding cognitive knowledge.

The focus is on self-awareness and one's role in the social environment. As members of a pluralistic society, students engage with their own and other cultural spheres—gaining knowledge and developing acceptance and tolerance. They learn to adopt different perspectives in judgment formation.

The age-appropriate introduction to Kant's four questions:

- What can I know? (Epistemology)
- What should I do? (Morality and Ethics)

- What may I hope? (Religion and Social Theory)
 - What is the human being? (Anthropology)
- ...is initiated and further developed in secondary school curricula.

1.1 Learning Competencies

All subjects in primary school aim to develop learning competencies essential for managing school requirements. These include methodological, self-, and social competencies, all tailored to the respective subject and inseparable from content knowledge.

In Ethics, these are focused on personal development and engagement with life questions and values. Methodological competence includes active listening, analyzing tasks, using media, and presenting results. Self- and social competence involves self-awareness, empathy, accepting rules, resolving conflicts, and collaboration.

1.2 Subject-Specific Competencies

Ethics lessons focus on the moral development of the student's personality. They emphasize human dignity, basic rights, and values like respect and care. Competencies include perception, empathy, analysis, argumentation, ethical judgment, philosophical inquiry, and creative expression.

2. Goals of Competency Acquisition

2.1 The Student in Individuality and Personality Development

Students learn to recognize feelings and behaviors, distinguish moral actions, evaluate wishes and limits, and understand the value of time and life stages. Competencies are outlined for school entry and grades 3/4, covering factual, methodological, self-, and social competencies.

2.2 The Student in Social Relationships

Students explore family structures, roles in communities, importance of cooperation and conflict resolution. They recognize rules, expectations, and develop strategies for peaceful interaction. Competencies again address factual knowledge, methods, and social engagement.

2.3 The Student in Relation to Own and Foreign Cultures

Students reflect on their culture and others through festivals, traditions, and religious figures. They apply the Golden Rule, compare lifestyles, and develop tolerance. They analyze stories, research, and express values creatively.

2.4 The Student and the Natural Environment

Students become aware of nature's value, human impact, and environmental responsibility. They analyze conflicts, propose solutions, and express their stance through observation and creative methods.

3. Performance Assessment

3.1 Principles

Assessment includes reproduction (knowledge recall), reorganization (application in new contexts), and construction (evaluating and developing ethical responses).

3.2 Criteria

Assessment must match the specifics of each learning domain. Key criteria include reflection, empathy, reasoning, cooperation, and creativity. Each of the four main learning domains includes specific evaluative standards aligned with their competencies.