MAPPING ASSESSMENT IN ITALIAN SCHOOLS: ARE INNOVATIONS IN PRACTICES TAKING PLACE?

Giorgia Slaviero[1], Beatrice Doria[1] and Valentina Grion[2]

[1]University of Padua
[2]Online University Pegaso

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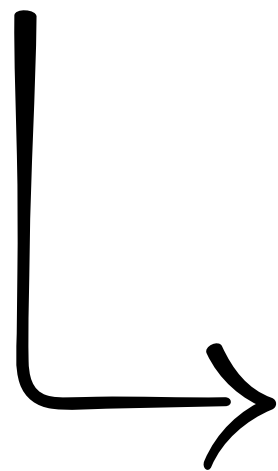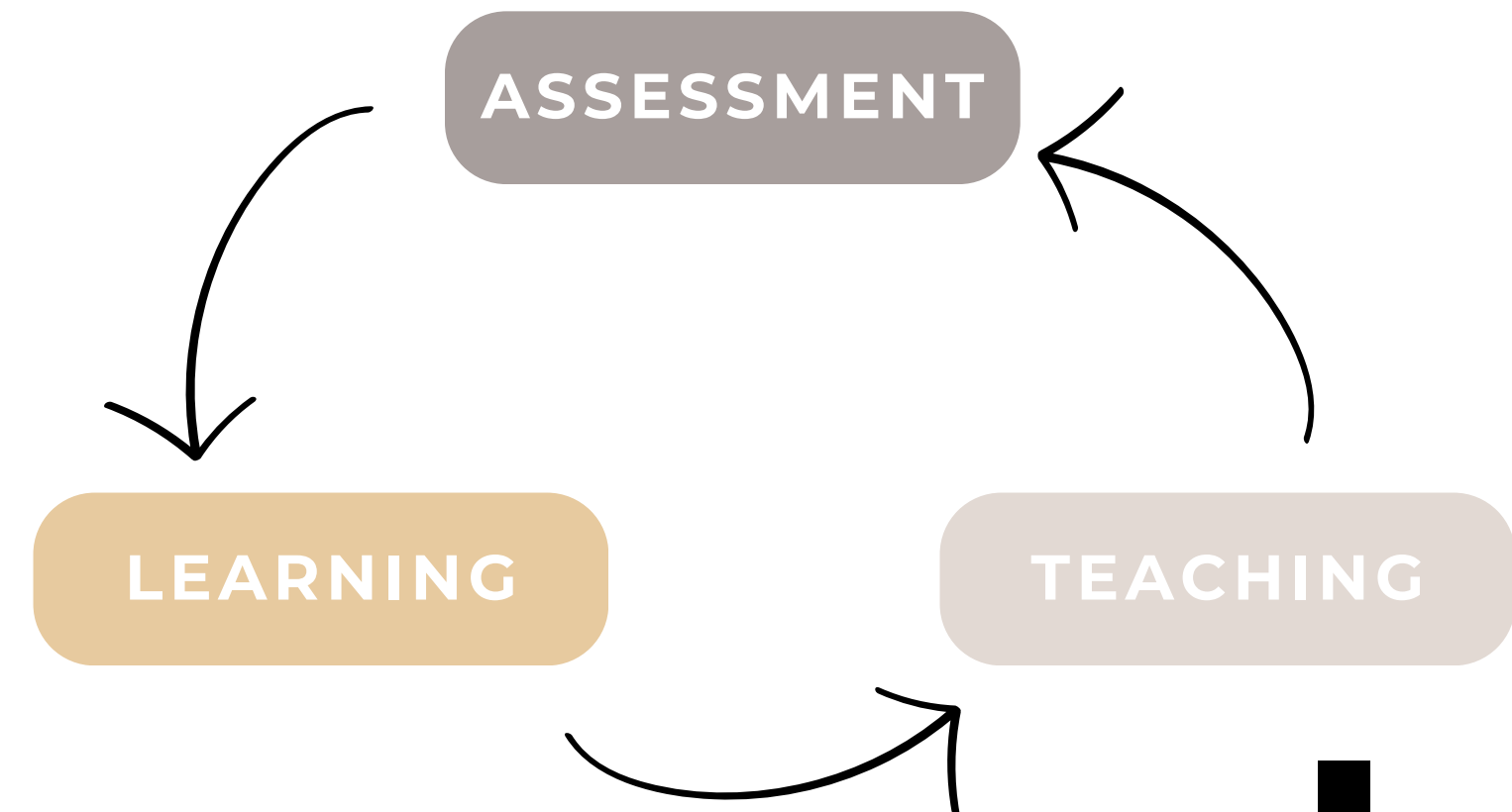The Future of Education - 15th Edition International Conference

WHY TALK ABOUT

ASSESSMENT

ETYMOLOGY

"Provide value to something or someone"

Continuous process that underlies all good teaching and learning

Gronlund, 1971

ASSESSMENT

LEARNING

TEACHING

Grion, Serbati & Cecchinato, 2022

ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

SUSTAINABLE ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

	PURPOSE	ACTORS	PRACTICES
SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	measure performance, profit at the end of a course, is only intended to produce a final judgement	teachers	grades, scores or rating scales
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	monitors the effectiveness of his or her teaching action	teachers	formative feedback
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING	provides for sharing learning goals with learners, involves students in self-assessment processes	teachers & students	peer feedback, self assessment
SUSTAINABLE ASSESSMENT	effective not only in the present, but also and above all in the future, students will be equipped to be lifelong assessors	teachers & students	peer feedback, peer-assessment and self-assessment

(Grion, Restiglian & Slaviero, 2025)

FEEDBACK DIFFERENT TYPES

MAJOR GRADING METHODS

1. Letter grades
2. Plus and Minus letter grades
3. Percentage grades
4. Pass/fail grading
5. Narratives feedback

Guskey & Bailey, 2001
Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006
Grion 2023
Grion, Serbati, Doria & Nicol, 2021

ARE GRADES AN EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK IN ASSESSMENT PROCESSES?

Offer an overall appraisal of students' current level of performance

Facilitate the interpretation

Serve summative and formative assessment

Don't provide detail information to students

Don't provide guidance and directions for improving

Negative effect on students' motivation and quality of thinking

Guskey, 2022; Grion 2023; Khon, 2011

NARRATIVES

Information, provided by an agent, about the gap between the actual level and the reference level. It's part of the assessment process and it's useful for improving learning.
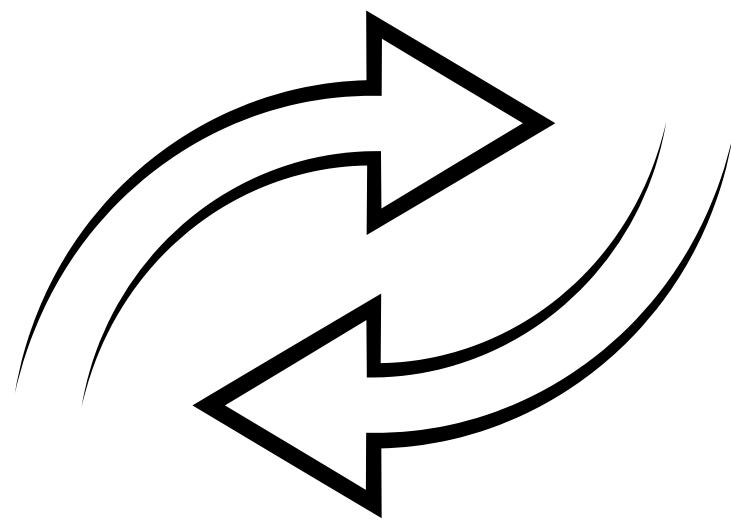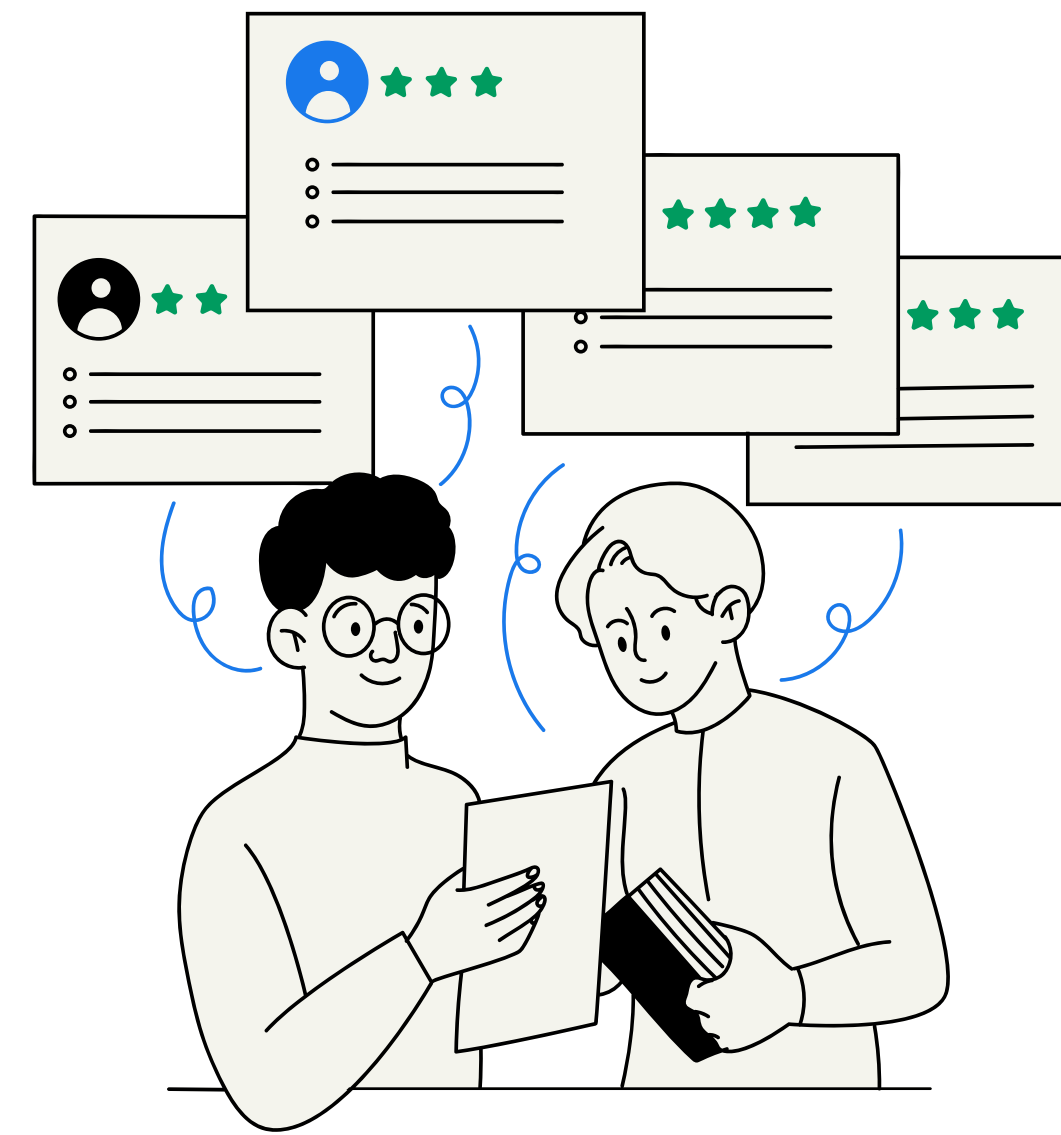
a dialogic process whereby the student actively constructs, monitors and evaluates his or her own learning

(Grion, Serbati, Doria, & Nicol, 2021, p. 208)

Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler 1989; Hattie e Timperley 2007; Serbati, Grion & Fanti, 2019

NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOLS

LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

NATIONAL INDICATIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM FOR PRE-SCHOOL AND FIRST CYCLE EDUCATION

Assessment precedes, accompanies and follows the curricular paths [...], it assumes a pre-eminent **FORMATIVE FUNCTION**, accompanying the learning processes and stimulating continuous improvement.

LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 62 of 13 April 2017

The periodic and final assessment of the pupils' learning [...] for each of the study subjects envisaged by the National Curriculum Indications, is expressed with **MARKS IN TENTHS** indicating different levels of learning.

HIGH SCHOOL

DECREE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC of 22 June 2009, No 122

The periodic and final assessment of learning is carried out by the class council [...].
The periodic and final assessment of pupils' behaviour is expressed in **TENTHS** pursuant to Article 2 of the decree-law. The numerical mark is also given in letters in the assessment document.

LEGISLATIVE DECREE No. 62 of 13 April 2017

Assessment [...] has a **FORMATIVE** and **EDUCATIONAL** purpose and contributes to the improvement of learning and to the educational success of the same, documents the development of personal identity and promotes the self-assessment of each individual in relation to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences.

AfL and SA are the approaches that have the greatest impact on students' learning processes, also from a life-long learning perspective

The national guidelines for assessment indicate the formative function of assessment processes

How can the research improve the **assessment culture** from a 'summativa-formative' view to an educational view, in which assessment becomes learning?
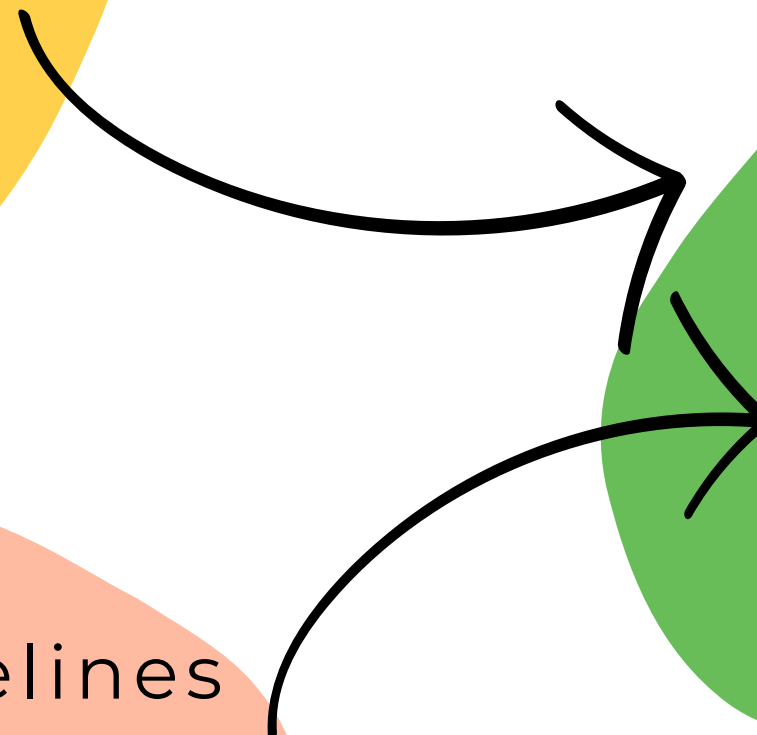
RESEARCH

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

Exploring and analysing assessment approaches and practices used in secondary schools in the Italian context.

This contribution is part of a broader PhD project.
Specifically, what is presented here is the second core area of research.

Main research question

WHAT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES DO TEACHERS IMPLEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ITALIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS?

What conceptualizations, tools, and assessment practices emerge from schools' statements?

How do these relate to the current theoretical models proposed in educational research?

REPRESENTATIVE STRATIFIED SAMPLE OF ITALIAN SCHOOLS

MIM
Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito

Downloaded files related to:
- Italian state schools
- Autonomous provincial schools of Aosta, Trento and Bolzano equivalent to state schools from the *2024/2025* school year

MIDDLE SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL

Through an analysis, **middle schools** and **high schools** were kept in the file, subdivided by their **regions**.

STRATIFIED SAMPLING

First, the population was stratified into subpopulations (20 regions), then each subpopulation was randomly selected from the percentage that was decided to be analysed (5% of the total) in order to make the sample representative.

4904 MIDDLE SCHOOLS
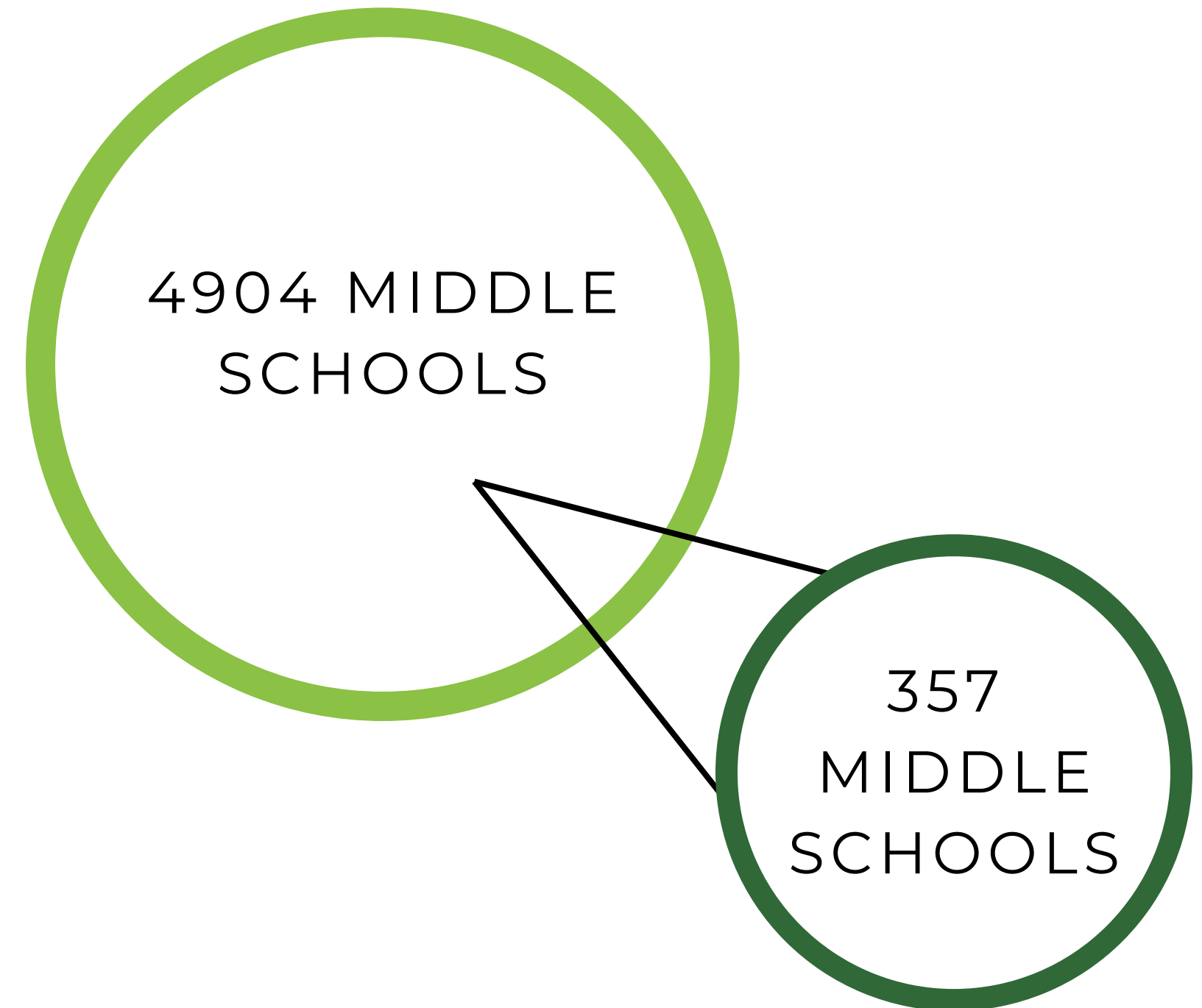
357 MIDDLE SCHOOLS

HIGH SCHOOL

It was not possible to categorise the schools only by region (as was done for the middle schools).

High schools were also categorised by the following "**types of school**":

ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE (CPIA)

PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND LYCEUM

LYCEUM

PROFESSIONAL AND LYCEUM

PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE, TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, LYCEUM

STRATIFIED SAMPLING

In the calculation of the representative and stratified sample, some types of schools in various regions would not have had any representatives.
It was therefore decided to add 1 school in each category which, according to the initial calculation, should have had 0 cases in the representative sample.
This increased the sample by 30 units.

2853 HIGH SCHOOLS

339 HIGH SCHOOLS

30 HIGH SCHOOLS
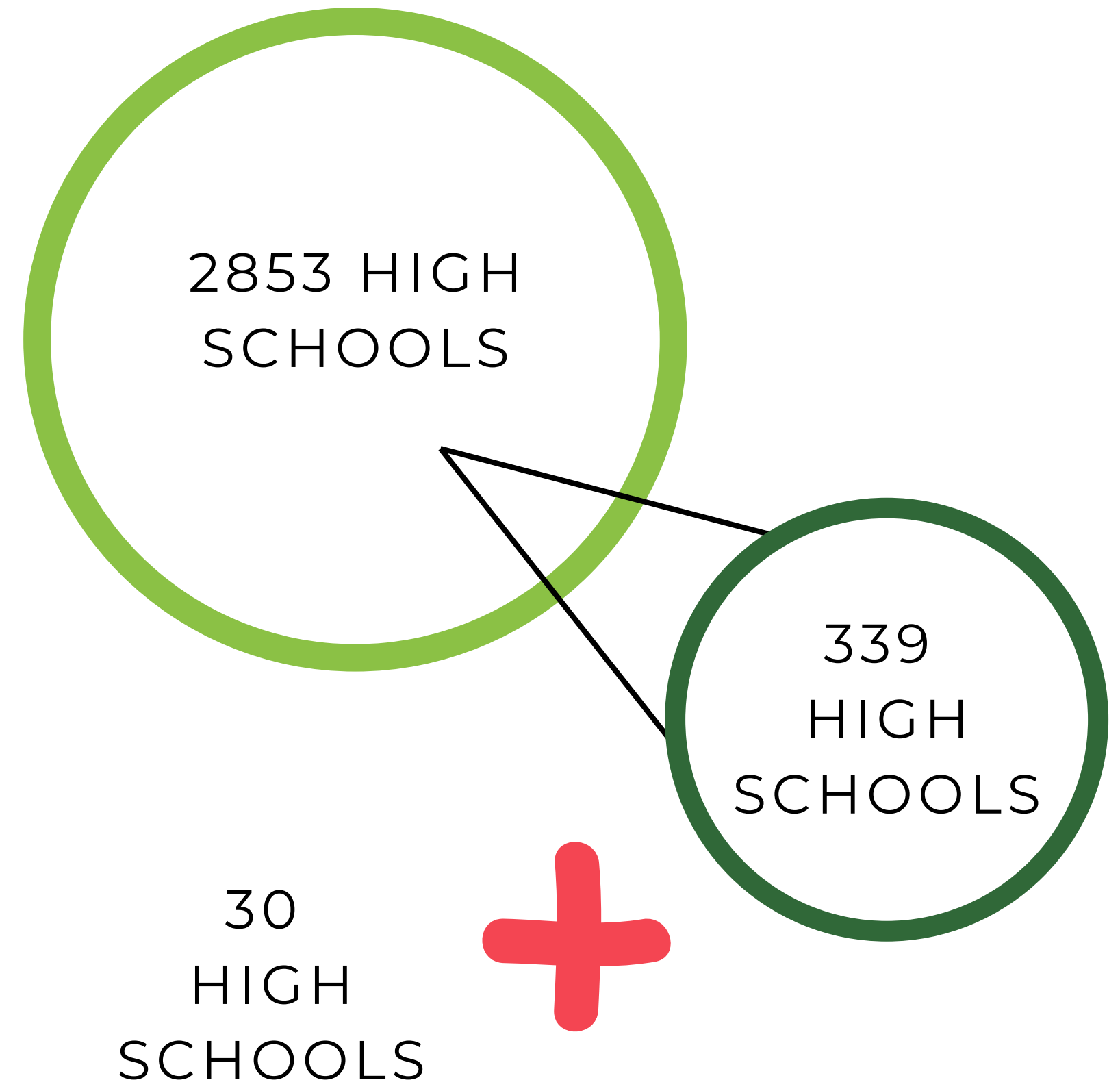
SCHOOLS' DOCUMENTS: PTOF AND RAV

For each school, the following documents were downloaded via the Ministry of Education and Merit's Unica website:

- Three-Year Education Offer Plans (PTOF)
- Self-evaluation report (RAV)

In these documents, the pages corresponding to the paragraphs were extracted:

- Assessment of learning (in the PTOF)
- Curriculum, planning and assessment (in the RAV)

P.T.O.F.

THREE-YEAR EDUCATION OFFER PLANS

Ministero dell'Istruzione
Piano Triennale Offerta Formativa
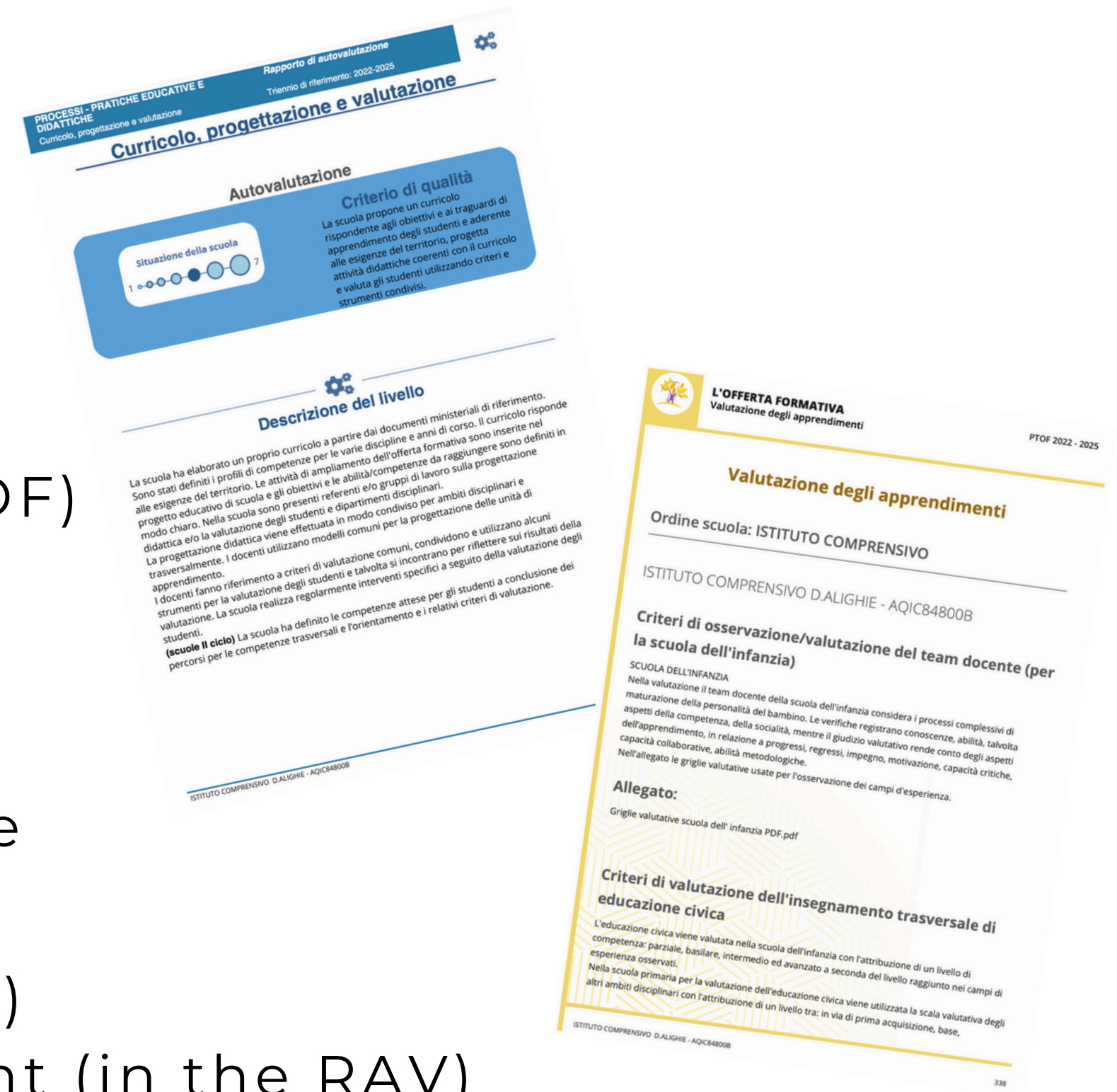
IC VICENZA 5
VIIC870009

Triennio di riferimento: 2022 - 2025

The plan is the fundamental document that establishes the cultural and educational identity of educational institutions and sets out the curricular, extracurricular, educational and organisational plans that individual schools adopt within the scope of their autonomy.

(Article 14, Law No. 107 of 13 July 2015)

Schools describe themselves in the following four areas

THE SCHOOL AND ITS CONTEXT

EDUCATIONAL OFFER

STRATEGIC CHOICES

ORGANISATION

R.A.V.

SELF - EVALUATION REPORT

Self-assessment of educational institutions is carried out through:

1) analysis and verification of their own services based on data made available by the Ministry's information system [...]

2) preparation of a self-assessment report in electronic format, according to a reference framework prepared by Invalsi, and formulation of an improvement plan;

Decree of the president of the republic 28 march 2013, no. 80; Article 6

DATA ANALYSIS

Construction of a codebook through the bottom-up method

The analysis process was conducted through a **qualitative content analysis**, supported by the ATLAS.ti 24 software, and carried out by two independent judges with a bottom-up approach, inspired by the thematic analysis model of Braun and Clarke (2012) and divided into the phases described below.

The initial analysis phase involved the independent creation of reading codes by the two researchers, who worked in parallel, highlighting key words, expressions and nuclei of meaning recurring in the texts. Subsequently, a process of comparison and collaborative negotiation was started, aimed at discussing the meanings attributed to the codes and building a shared basis of interpretation. This comparison allowed us to refine the coding criteria and reach a common sensitivity with respect to the emerging categories, leading to the creation of analysis codes.

DATA ANALYSIS

To ensure consistent application of shared meanings, the analytical process was initially established collectively, followed by individual analyses. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) and ANOVA two-factor analysis (Koo & Li, 2016).

Afterward, the judges continued their analyses independently, then reviewed the sample and results together at the end.
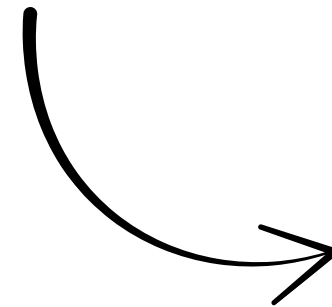
ICC and Inter-rater Reliability = **0.888**

7 groups of codes:

Assessment practices and tools: methods and tools used to observe, measure and interpret student learning in a formative and summative way.

How do I communicate the assessment? that is, the way in which results and assessment are communicated with students and families to promote transparency.

Where do I communicate the assessment? that is, the places where assessment is communicated: interviews, electronic registers, rubrics, digital tools, documents used with students and families.

Conceptualizations of assessment that is, the definition of assessment in its different meanings.

Assessment as a shared process that is, assessment as a shared process implies the active involvement of students, teachers and other actors in defining criteria, tools and reflections on the results.

Tools for teachers Assessment tools are concrete instruments, such as tests, rubrics, observations, and portfolios, used to detect and document learning.

Assessment timing for example, final assesssment or "in itinere"

MIDDLE SCHOOL

RESULTS

5442 total occurrences
150 codes
7 code groups

Assessment as a shared process
8.3%

How do I communicate the assessment?
15.6%

Assessment timing
11.3%

Conceptualisations of assessment
19.4%

Assessment practices and tools
19.8%

Where do I communicate the assessment?
5.3%

Tools for teachers
19.8%

MIDDLE SCHOOL

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF ASSESSMENT

Conceptualization	Count
formative	314
collegial	169
for learning	95
summative	92
certification	71
diagnostic	53
educational	51
transparent	38
oriented	21
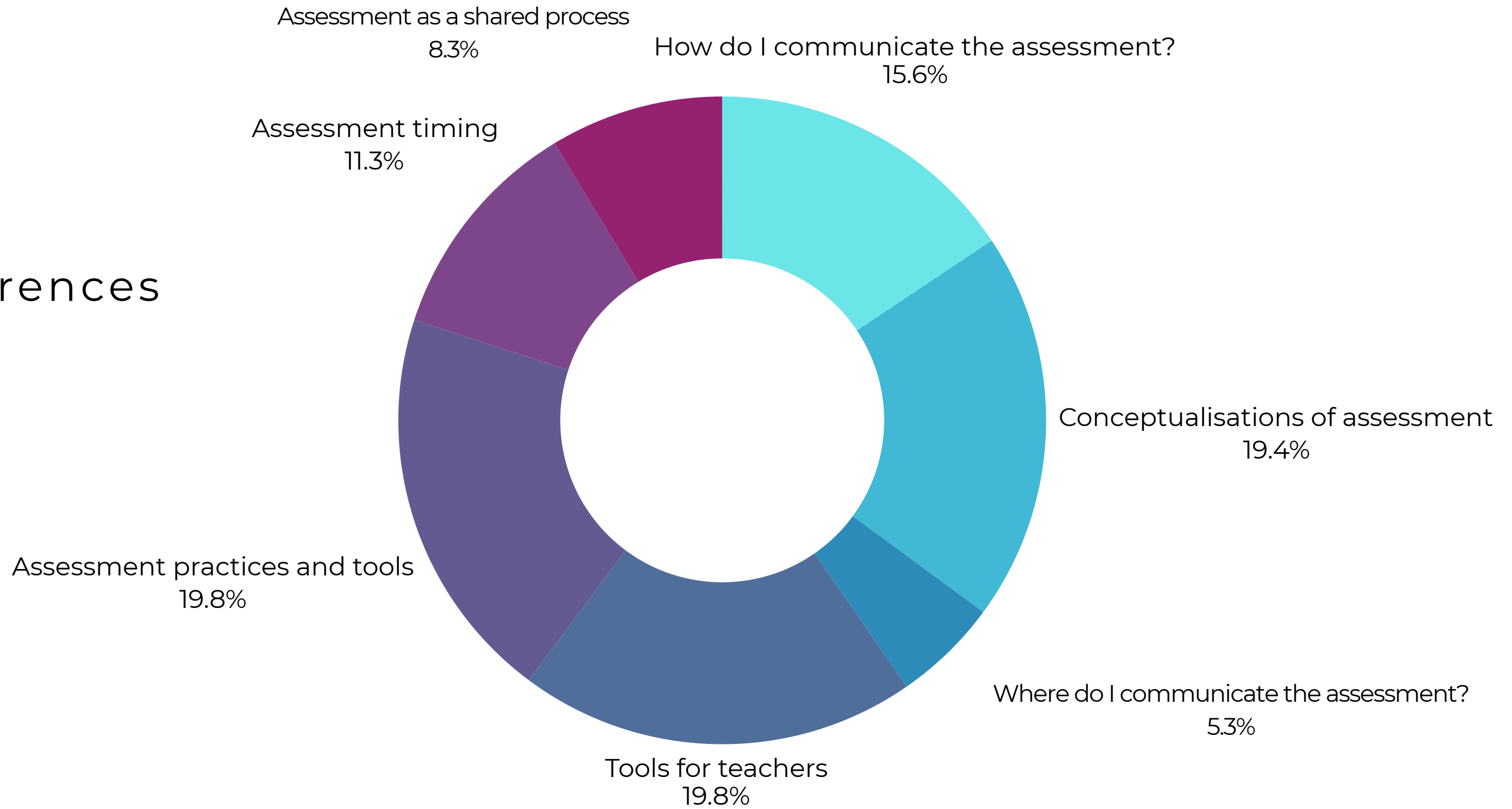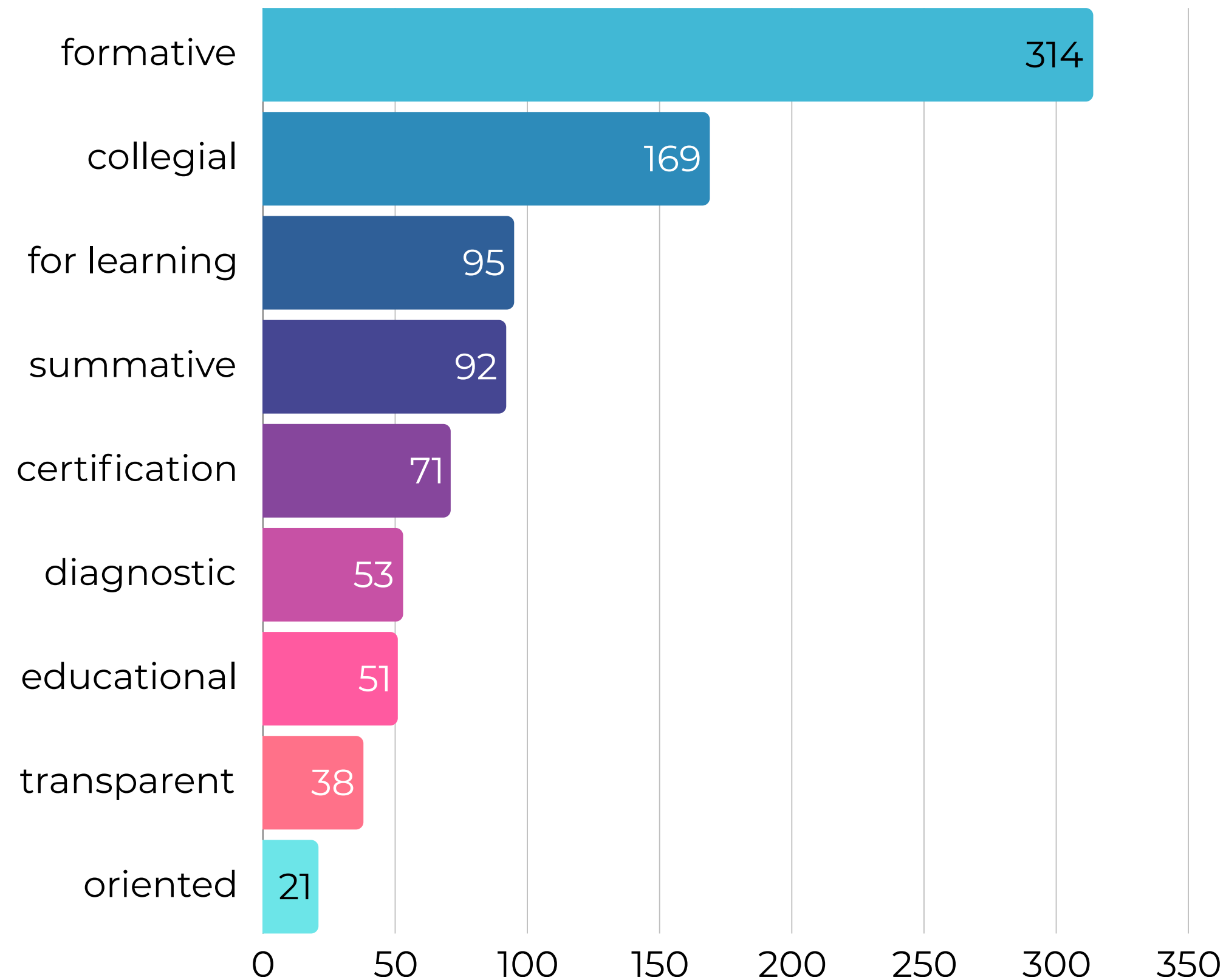
The codes shown in the chart represent 85.4% of the total codes in the 'Assessment practices and tools' group.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND TOOLS

Category	Value
test	138
self-assessment	118
oral exam	99
evaluation test	92
individual/group project	87
written exam	81
systematic observation	66
observation	60
practical exam	53
structured and semi-structured tests	45
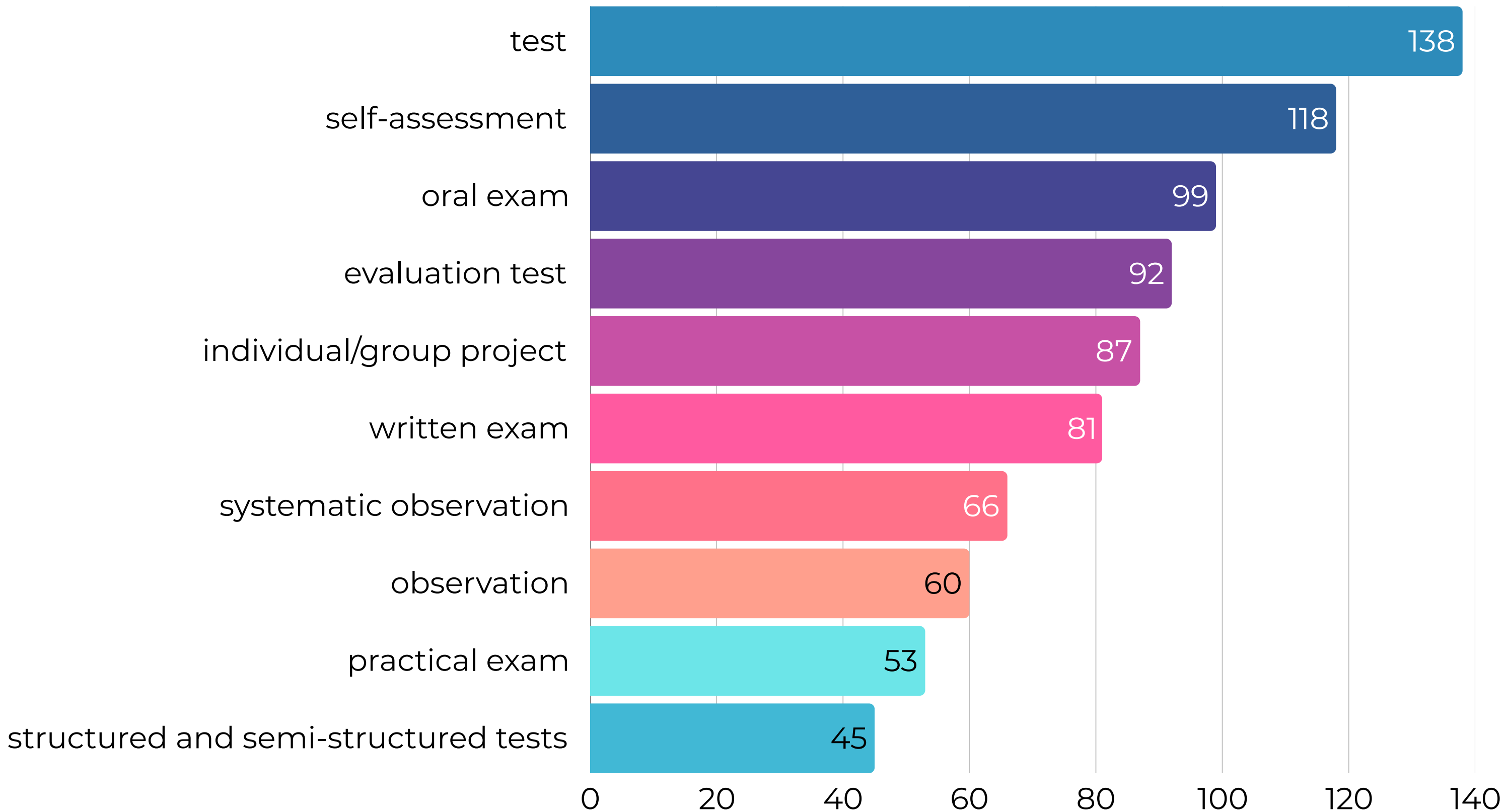
The codes shown in the chart represent 95.3% of the total codes in the "Assessment practices and tools" group.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Some EXAMPLES from other groups

Assessment as a shared process

criteria agreed upon by teachers (33,06%)

communication with families (15,86%)

sharing with families (9,41%)

Tools for teachers

criteria (38,68%)

assessment indicators (14,75%)

assessment descriptors (9,55%)

grids (7,42%)

How do I communicate the assessment?
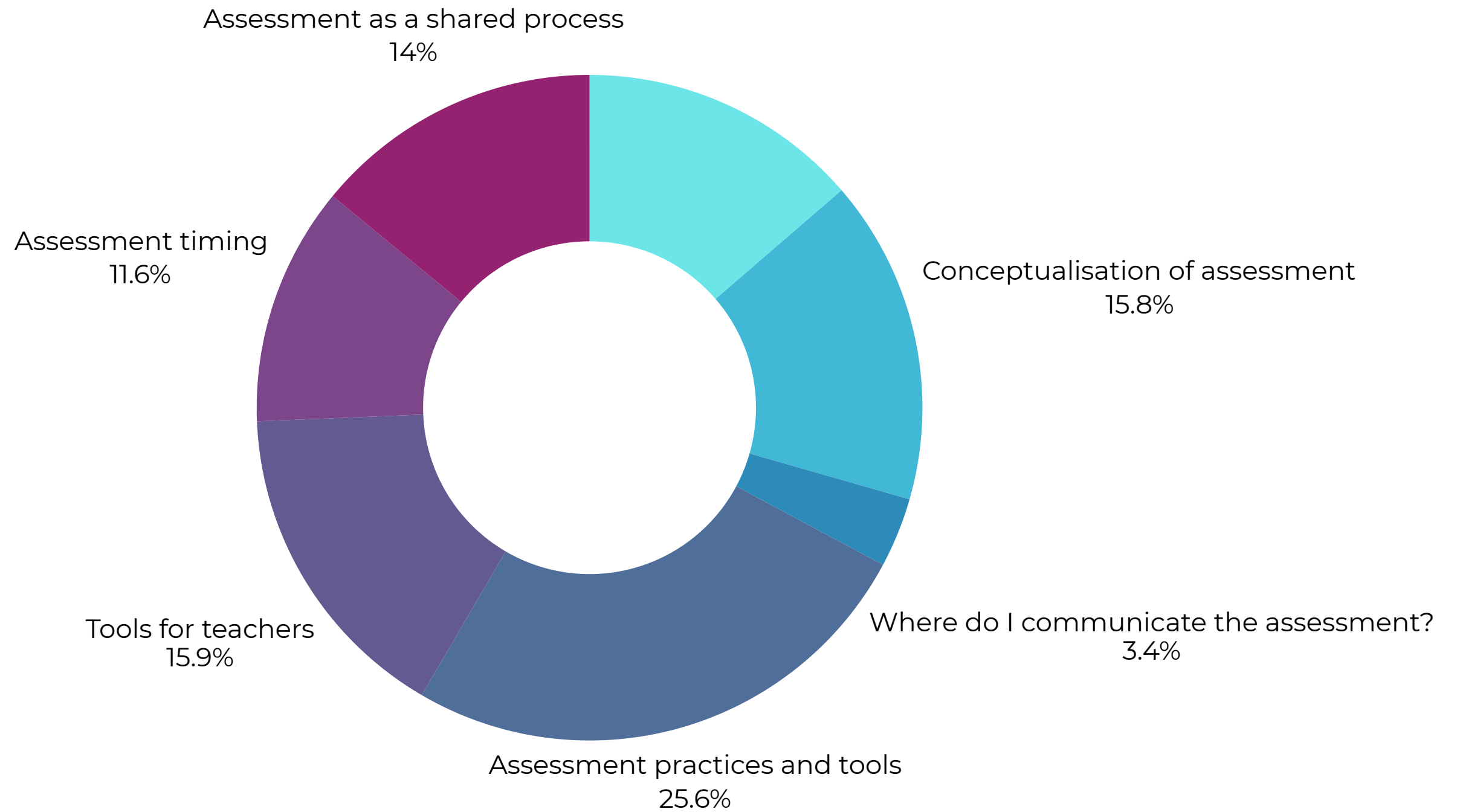
grades (46,42%)

synthetic judgement (30,25%)

descriptive judgement (5,51%)

HIGH SCHOOL

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF ASSESSMENT

Category	Value
formative	186
summative	138
transparent	94
consistent	60
diagnostic	52
timely	42
homogeneous	36
educational	33
absent/no reference	30
comprehensive	24
fair	23
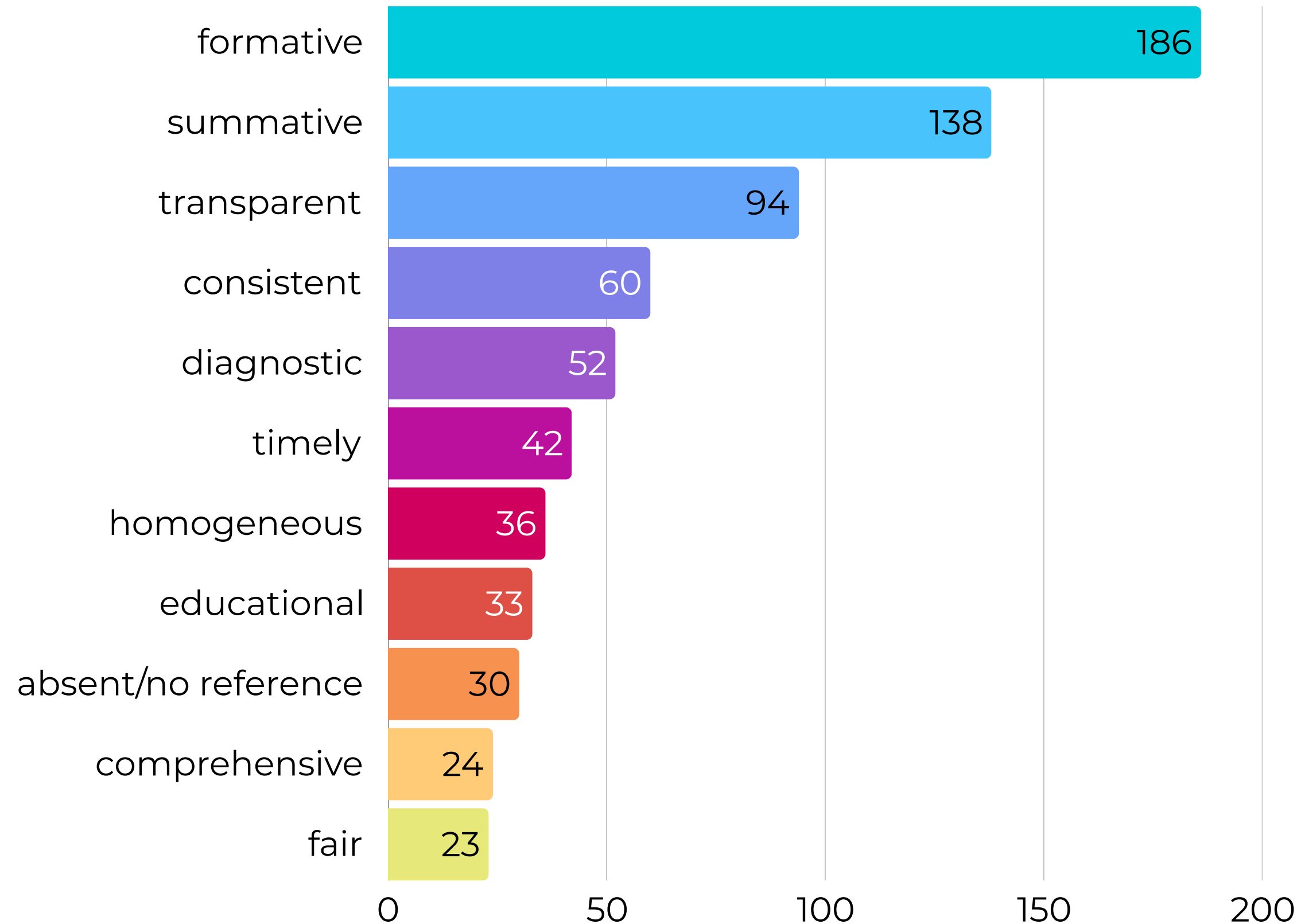
The codes shown in the chart represent 86.2% of the total codes in the 'Assessment practices and tools' group.

HIGH SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND TOOLS

Category	Value
oral exam	203
"assessment test"	202
written exam	190
evaluation test	126
individual/group projects	97
practical test	85
student self-assessment	78
structured, semi-structured or unstructured test	68
test	50
observation	36
common test	34
real-life/authentic task	27
systematic observation	18
documentation	12
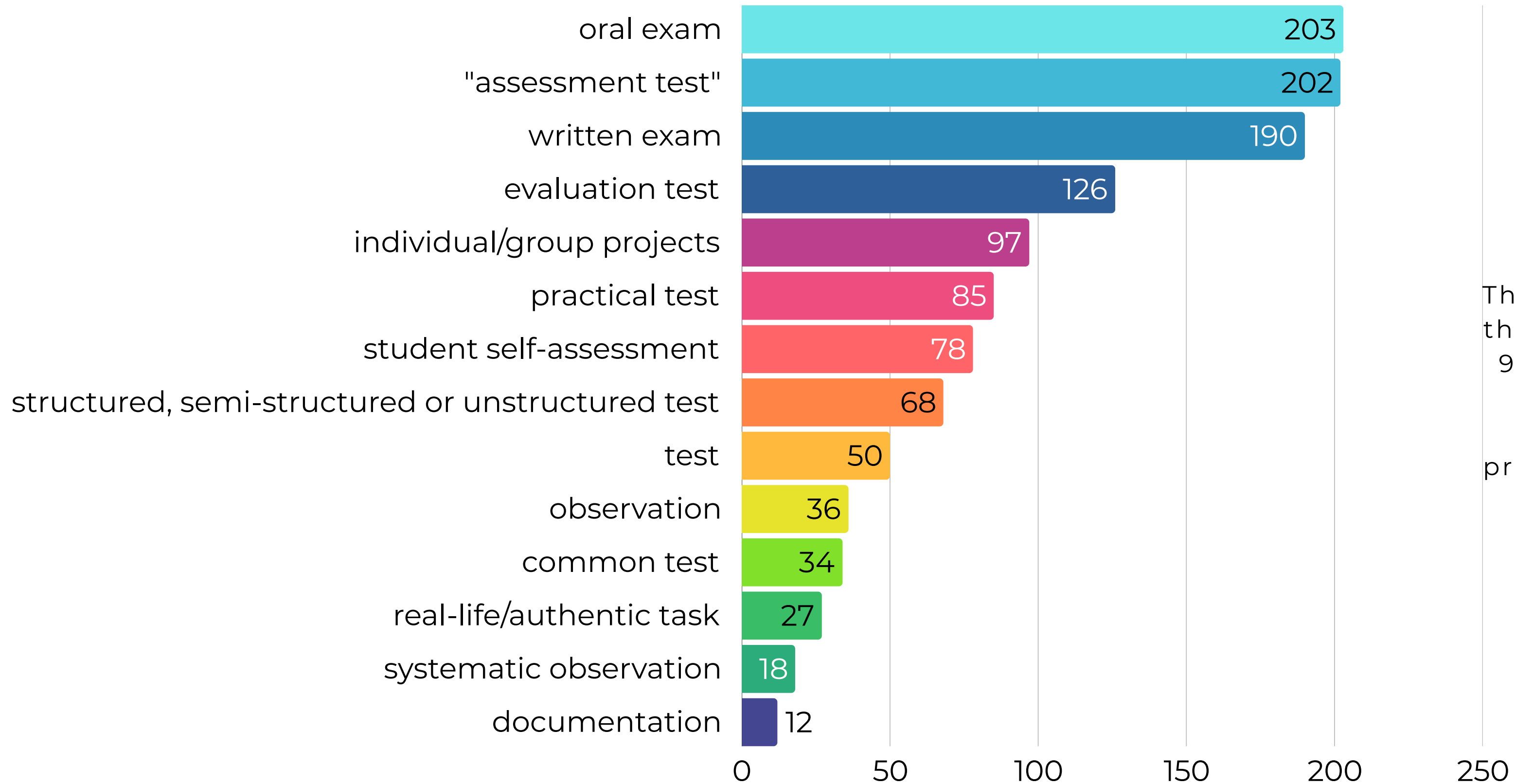
The codes shown in the chart represent 99.2% of the total codes in the 'Assessment practices and tools' group.

Some EXAMPLES from other groups

Assessment as a shared process

criteria agreed upon by teachers (27,880%)

assessment grid agreed upon by teachers (17,54%)

assessment carried out jointly by teachers (14,84%)

Tools for teachers

criteria (27,08%)

grids (23,87%)

assessment indicators (19,12%)

assessment descriptors (10,57%)

How do I communicate the assessment?

grades (81,86%)

judgement (12,74%)

arithmetic mean (1,80%)

RAV

Over 80% of the RAVs analysed have the same formulation:

⚙ Descrizione del livello

La scuola ha elaborato un proprio curricolo a partire dai documenti ministeriali di riferimento. Sono stati definiti i profili di competenze per le varie discipline e anni di corso. Il curricolo risponde alle esigenze del territorio. Le attività di ampliamento dell'offerta formativa sono inserite nel progetto educativo di scuola e gli obiettivi e le abilità/competenze da raggiungere sono definiti in modo chiaro. Nella scuola sono presenti referenti e/o gruppi di lavoro sulla progettazione didattica e/o la valutazione degli studenti e dipartimenti disciplinari.
La progettazione didattica viene effettuata in modo condiviso per ambiti disciplinari e trasversalmente. I docenti utilizzano modelli comuni per la progettazione delle unità di apprendimento.
I docenti fanno riferimento a criteri di valutazione comuni, condividono e utilizzano alcuni strumenti per la valutazione degli studenti e talvolta si incontrano per riflettere sui risultati della valutazione. La scuola realizza regolarmente interventi specifici a seguito della valutazione degli studenti.
(scuole II ciclo) La scuola ha definito le competenze attese per gli studenti a conclusione dei percorsi per le competenze trasversali e l'orientamento e i relativi criteri di valutazione.

In the school there are contact persons and/or working groups on educational planning and/or student assessment and disciplinary departments.
[...]
Teachers refer to common assessment criteria, share and use some tools for student assessment and sometimes meet to reflect on assessment results. The school regularly implements specific interventions following the students' assessment.
(middle schools) The school has defined the competences expected of students at the end of the transversal skills and guidance pathways and the related assessment criteria.

QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

Following what has been analysed in the PTOFs and RAVs, we intend to proceed with the administration of a questionnaire and a request for availability for an interview in order to survey the realities of daily assessment practices.
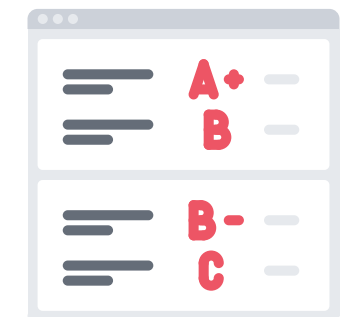
DISCUSSION

Assessment is a **continuous and integrated process**, but it is carried out by the teacher to monitor and certify learning

Strong adherence to **formative** and **summative** assessment models, which rarely involve the active participation of students
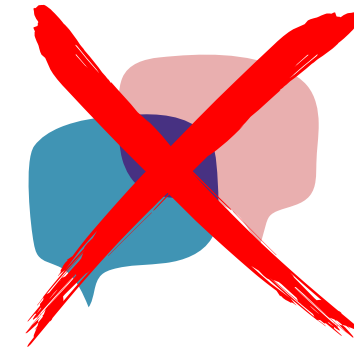
Only 23 occurences (out of a total of 10,724 occurrences in all Italian schools analysed) to the concept of **feedback** was found, a concept that is fundamental for implementing "assessment for learning" and "sustainable assessment"

In contrast, terms such as '**level**,' '**grades**,' '**tests**,' '**knowledge**,' and/or '**final**' are widely used

REFERENCES

Thank you for your attention

26 June 2025

Giorgia Slaviero - giorgia.slaviero.1@phd.unipd.it