

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENTS IN SA: SUPPORTING LITERACY AND NUMERACY

PRESENTATION AT THE EDUCATION
RESEARCH INDABA



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DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY

A focus on the curriculum
(in its broad definition)



OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENTATION

1. What is quality? A working definition for curriculum interventions
2. What is the locus for quality improvement?
3. Improving quality of the system factors that impact on teaching and learning
4. Improving accountability to improve learner performance
5. Conclusion

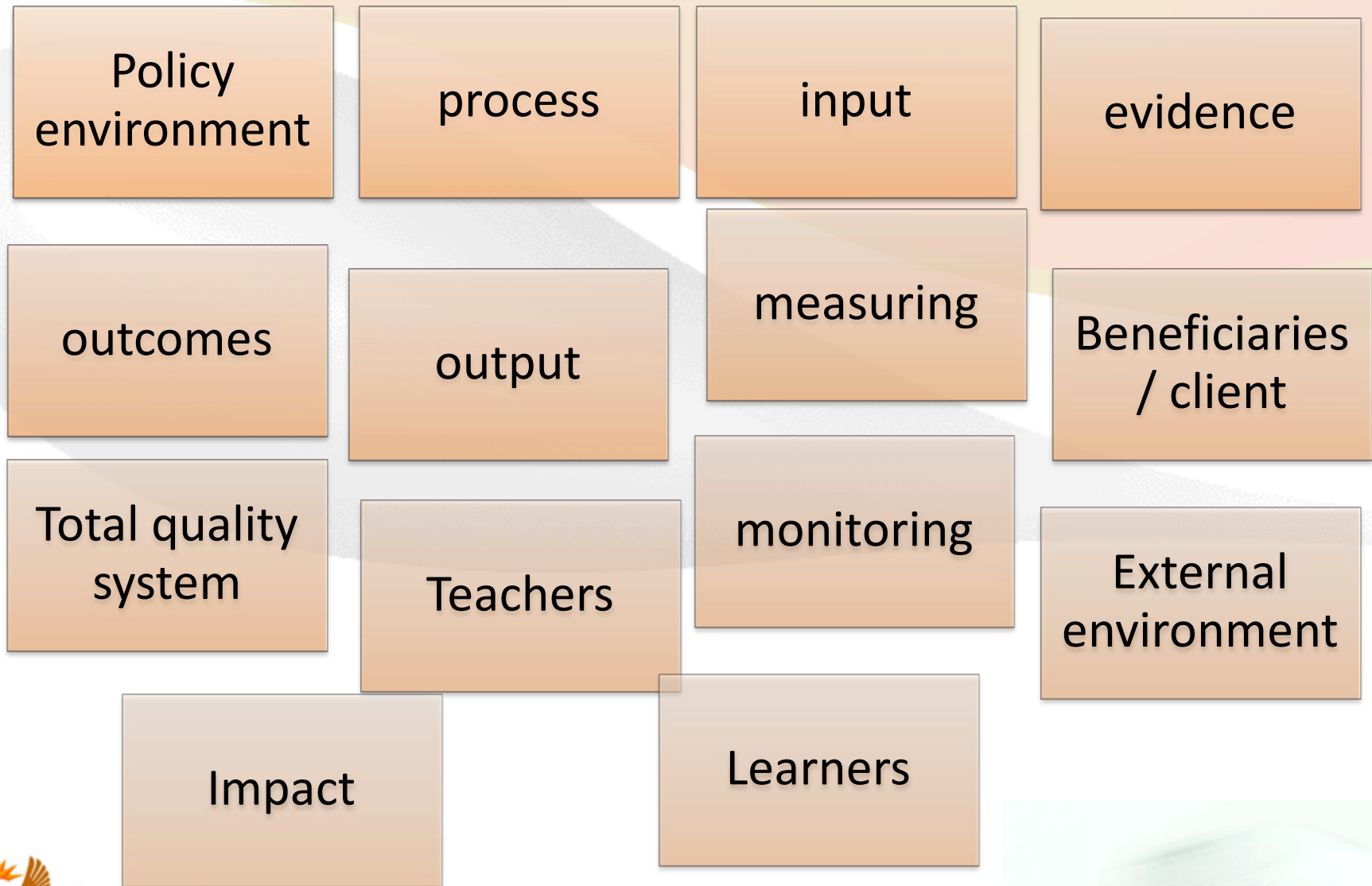


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WHAT IS QUALITY ... The “words”



CAN IT BE THAT....

- Quality is expressed in common words / phrases but very little is said about the assumptions about how quality is understood, experienced, influenced by in loco situ; etc
- Quality is influenced by experiences prevalent or created in the classroom or framed by the nature of the interventions
- Quality is targeted, and expressed qualitatively and quantitatively



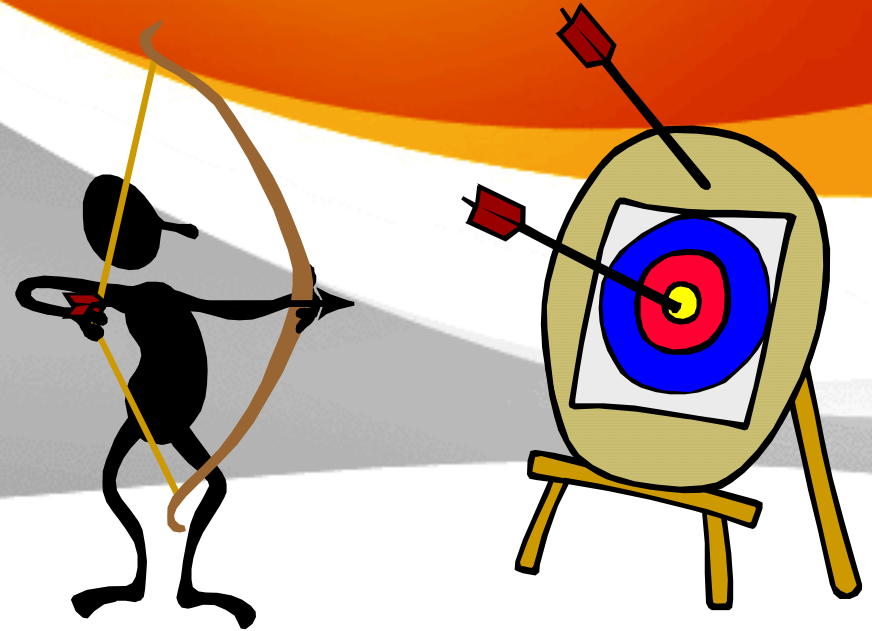
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DECIDING ON QUALITY TARGETS

- To be **sure** of hitting the target, shoot first and, whatever you hit, call it the target!



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Gemma Paine Cronin: DoE M&E October 2009



TARGETS FOR 2013

GET BAND - 55% (of learners will get above 50%)

1. Mathematics

2. Languages

This provides for :

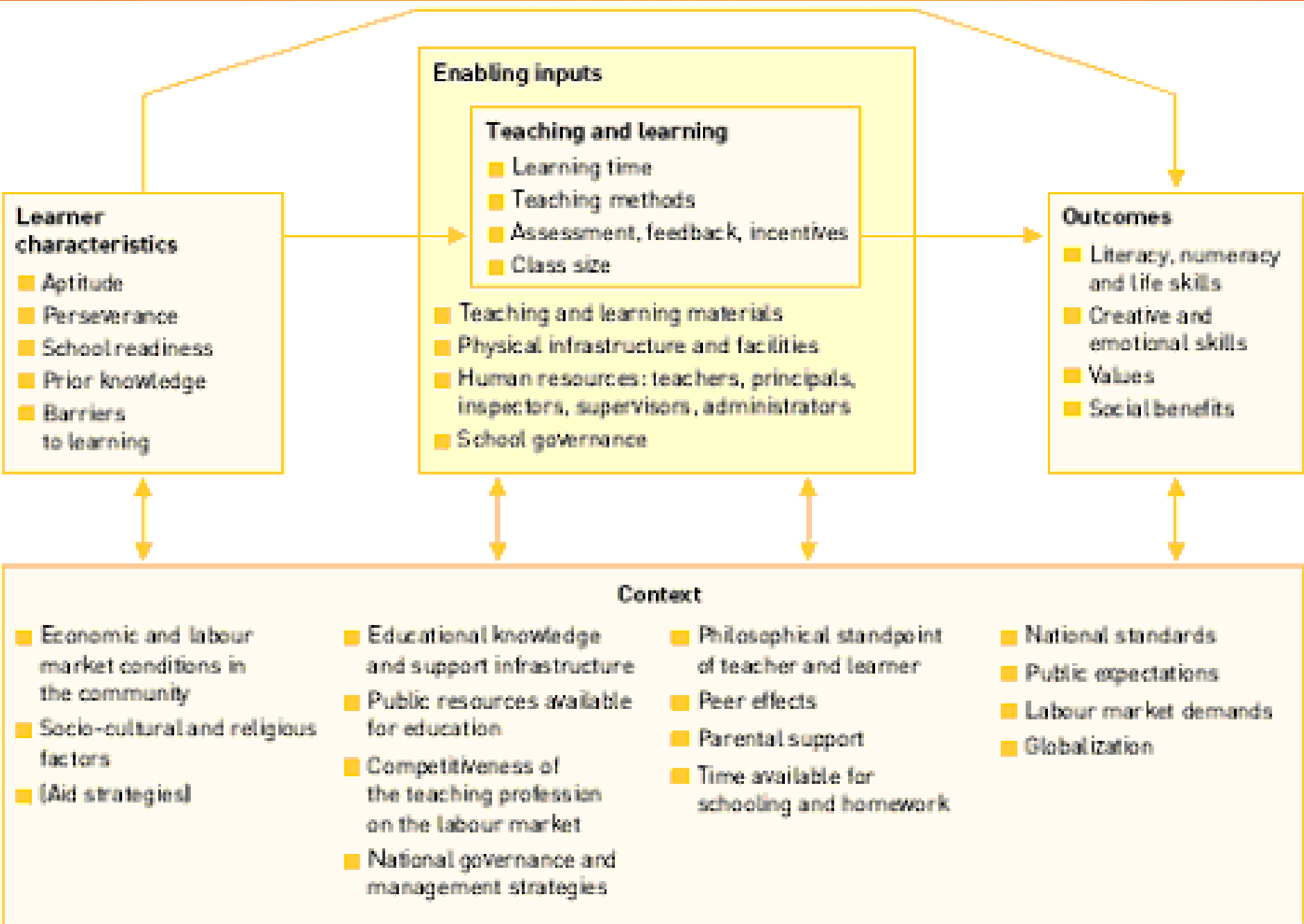
- Performance targets
- Achievement targets



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A framework for understanding education quality (UNESCO)



LOCUS OF IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY



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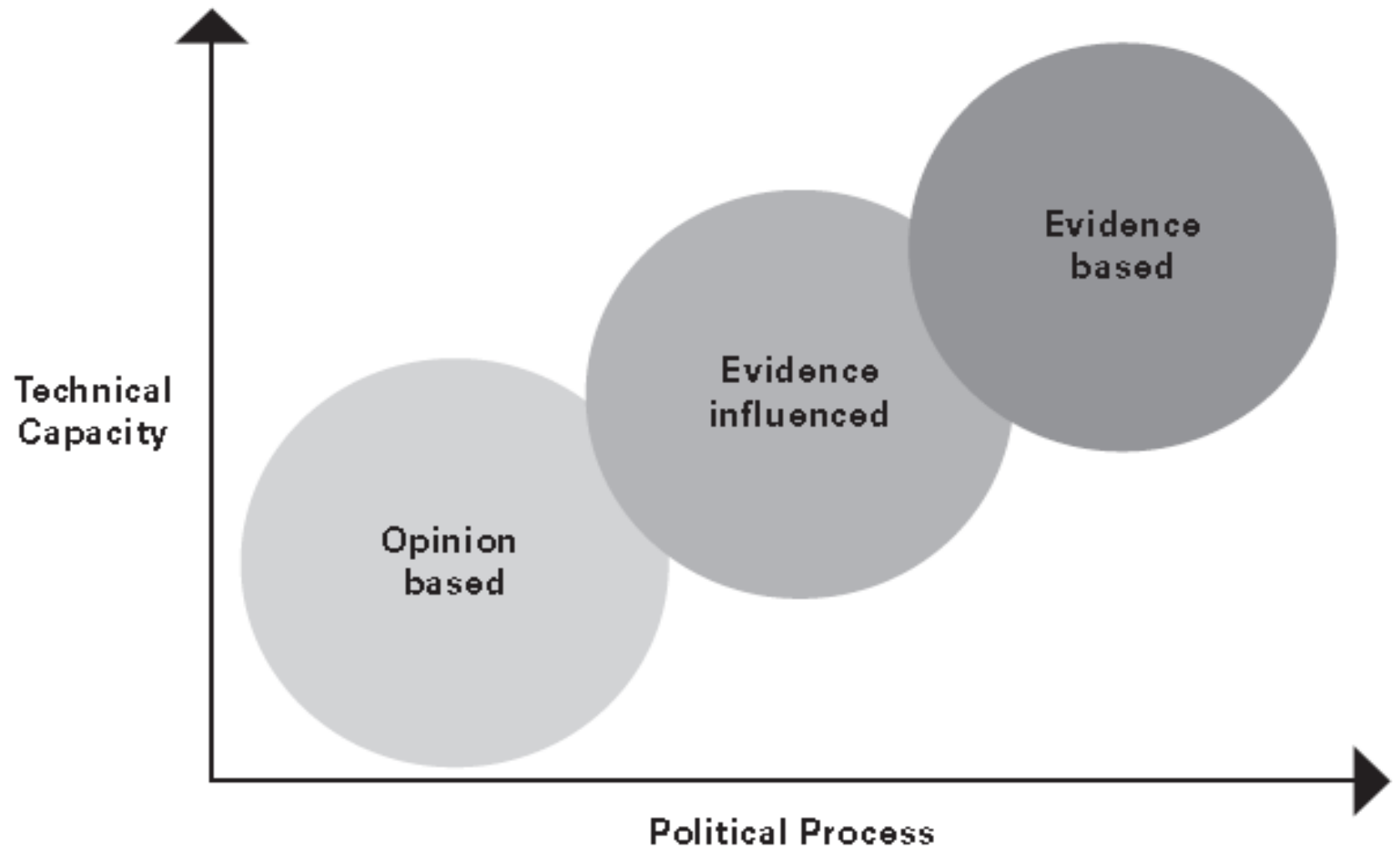


WHAT IS THAT ENVIRONMENT

- **NATIONAL:** Policy formulation, monitoring of implementation and support, system management;
- **PROVINCIAL :** policy implementation, monitoring of learner performance against national targets and (customised) support;
- **DISTRICT** implementation improvement and specific support; monitoring school performance against targets
- **SCHOOL**-based implementation, reflection and improvement; monitoring classroom performance against learner targets; learner support



Figure 3. Dynamic of policy making



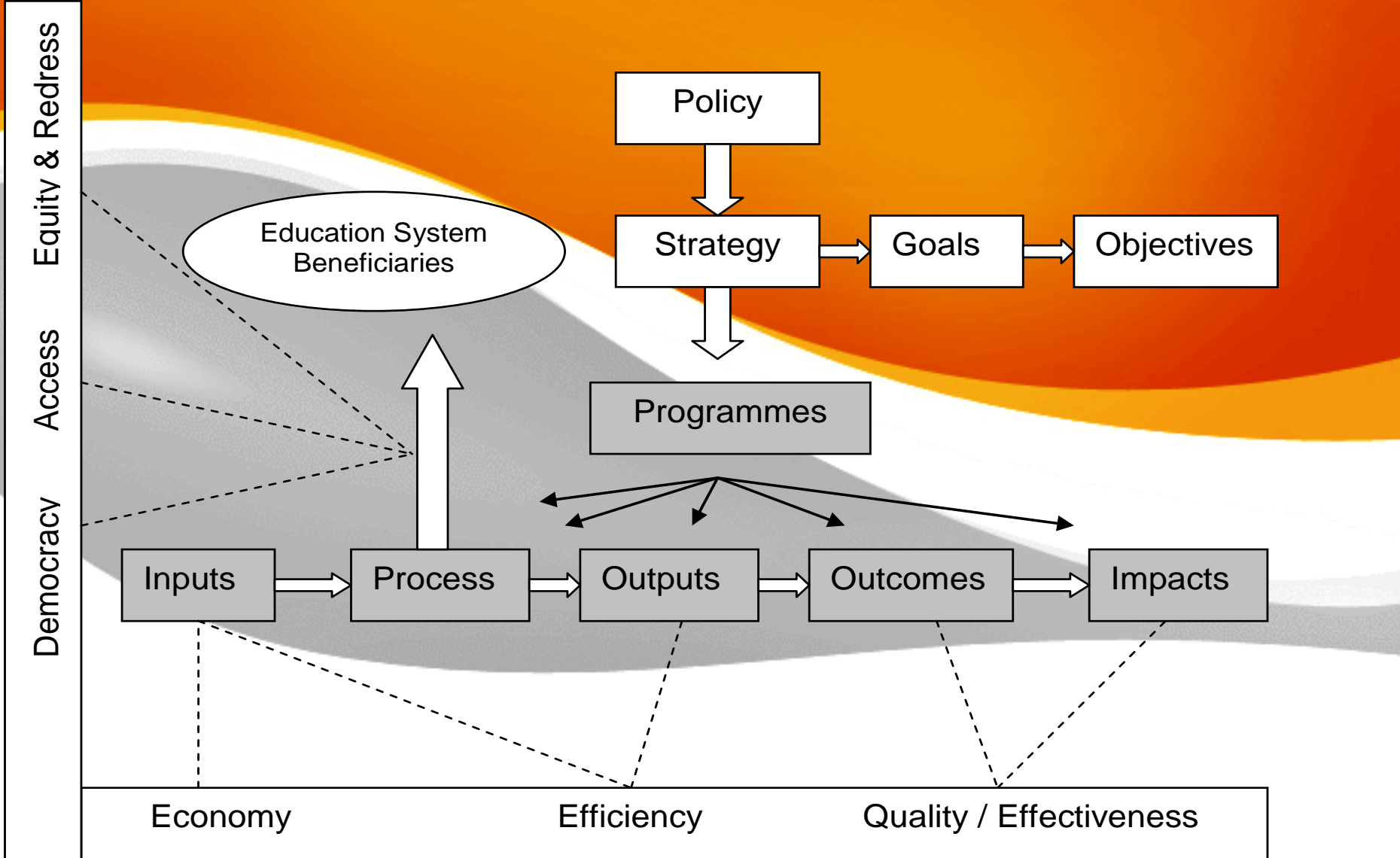
Adapted from Jerry Lee, 2004



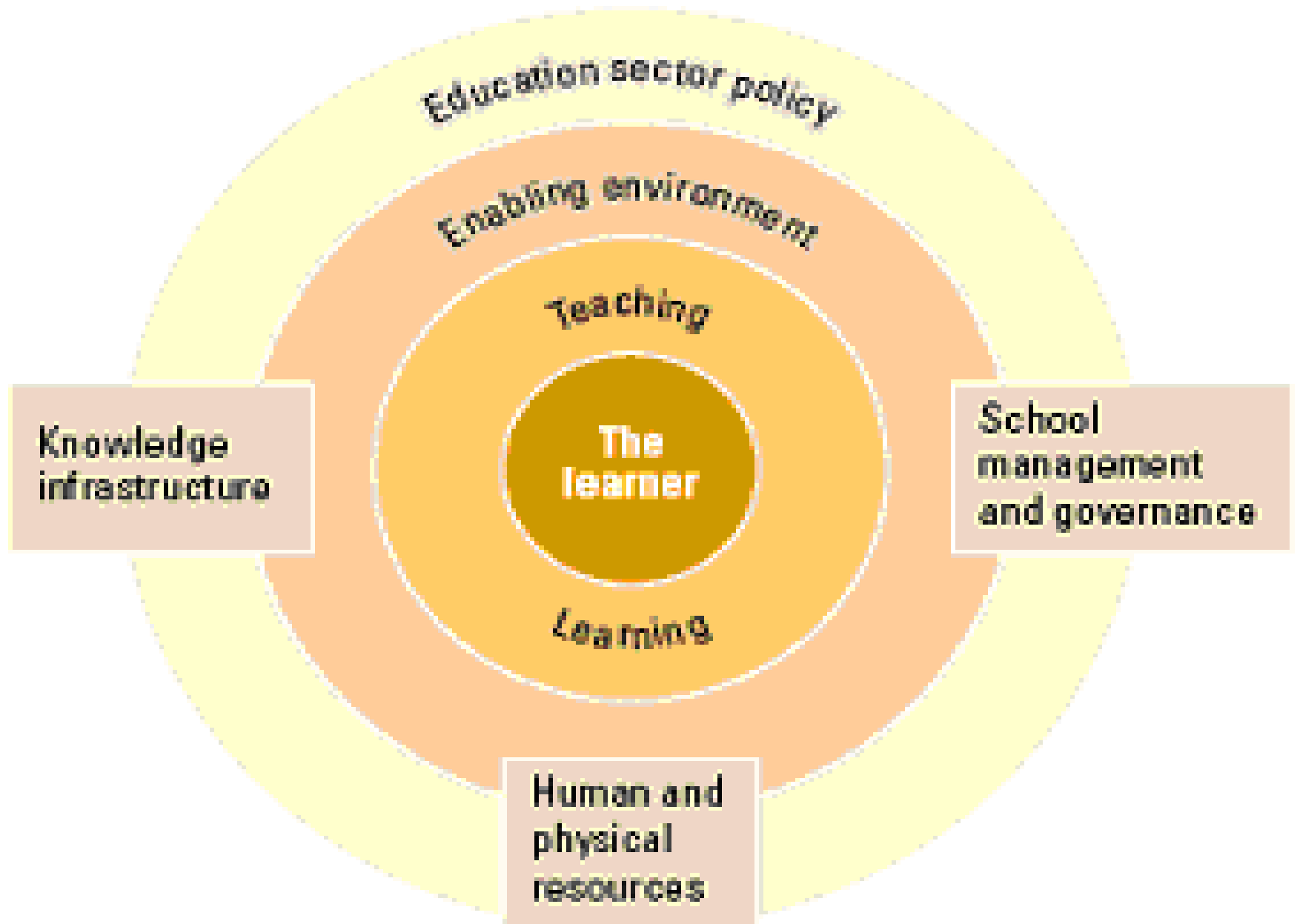
WHAT ARE THE DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY

- FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF
LEARNING OUTCOMES





Department of Education (2007), *M&E Framework for the Department of Education's Policies on Funding Norms & Standards*. V3.0, November, Pretoria



Systemic factors for improving the quality of teaching & learning (UNESCO), 2006

IMPROVING QUALITY OF INPUTS



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**INFRA-
STRUCTURE**

**WORK
BOOKS**

ANA

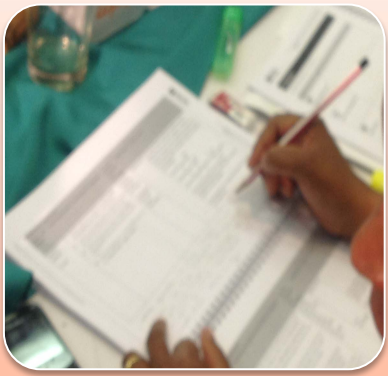
CAPS

Specified

K:&S ;

Assessment





Utilising ANA data - item analysis to strengthen learning outcomes across the system;

Implementing Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in Grades 1 to 3;

School-based assessment; reading report cards;

KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURE



- Improving teacher content knowledge and methodology;
- Orientation to CAPS;
- Strengthening Language teaching - EFAL;
- Ensuring quality teacher development and support;

CONDUCTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT



- **Appropriate provision of reading resources and monitored;**
- **Conducive learning spaces created in all schools;**
- **Emphasises learners' access to libraries**

Provincial reading programmes in all schools;

Provincial programmes for mental math;

Investigating different strategies like the use of Reading Coach and Teacher Assistant training to support teachers;

Evaluate impact of Reading programmes offered by service providers;

Structured monitoring of reading programmes

Specific teaching of writing skills, like through Ithuba Writing Project for Grades 4-9;



IMPROVING QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE



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- **EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** “standard” across the system
- **CAPACITY:** Improved capacity of district officials and teachers;
- **STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT:** principals, SMTs, classroom, and at macro level;
- **DEFINE AND DIFFERENTIATE SUPPORT:** who does what, when, to what end, and how is support managed



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IMPROVING QUALITY OF PROCESS

- **In the classroom:** focus on meaningful learning, effective teaching; good assessment; good use of resources – the minimum in CAPS
- **Roles and responsibilities** of key role players in the system spelt out; key posts filled;
- managed by reporting and accountability measures; feedback – **NSLA a comprehensive framework for reporting**
- **Accommodates extended learning opportunities** – reading support; coaches; extra reading time;



IMPROVING QUALITY OF OUTCOME

- Resultant learner performance against learning outcomes - **LEARNER SCORES IN LITNUM;**
- Reliable measuring; authentic data and in-depth analyses - **ANA, common tests, external tests, SBA;**
- Remediation and support but targeting the learner - **update of workbooks;**
- **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS** developed and managed and monitored for impact;
- About **IMPACT** (what you find consistently with what

you do);

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INFLUENCES ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES



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- Major disparities in **literacy levels within countries are often linked with poverty and other forms of disadvantage**. In seven sub-Saharan African countries with low overall adult literacy rates, the literacy gap between the poorest and wealthiest households is more than forty percentage points.

(EFA Report, 2009)



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EFA REPORT (2009): GOAL 6

- QUALITY

- Student background, the organization of the education system and the school environment explain **learning disparities** within each country. Many **essential resources** taken for granted in developed countries remain scarce in developing countries – including basic infrastructure such as electricity, seats and textbooks.



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RAISE QUALITY ...

- while expanding access by focusing on smooth progression through school and better learning outcomes,
- increasing textbook supply and quality,
- strengthening teacher training and support, and
- ensuring that class sizes are conducive to learning.



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EFA GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT: 2009

- Delivery of good-quality education is ultimately contingent on **what happens in the classroom**, and teachers are in the front line of service. To improve student outcomes, having enough teachers and reasonable pupil/teacher ratios (PTRs) is not sufficient: the teachers need to be well **trained and motivated**. The **profile of teachers**, and the governance systems through which they are recruited, trained and deployed, have a critical bearing on learning outcomes and on equity.



IMPROVING SUPPORT TO THE CLASSROOM



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Resourcing

- Workbooks
- Textbooks
- Basic requirements

Equality in instructional time

- Curriculum coverage
- Monitoring time allocation
- Reading across the curriculum

Equal assessment opportunities

- Improved school-based assessments
- Differentiated assessments
- Regular external assessments



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IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY



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- Links to teacher planning;
- Monitoring as an integrated focus in all interventions and processes
- Feed – through into improving practice and process
- Reporting to key deliverables against the same indicators



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In conclusion

- We have factors that influence quality in the system
- We have system elements that, when strengthened, will improve quality
- Dimensions? Not until we spell out clear standards indicators, will we improve total quality (and) management



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