

# From Evidence to Action: Enhancing learner performance by utilizing assessment data in South Africa



**NOKHANYISO MANTSHONGO**

**PHD: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

**SUPERVISOR: PROF. SJ HOWIE**

**CO-SUPERVISOR: DR. C. LONG**

# Presentation outline



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Problem statement

- Consistent under-performance of SA learners in national and international assessment studies despite availability of data from these studies.
- Validity of classroom assessments: Crawford (2008); Supovitz & Klein (2003), Spillane (2000) and Singh (2004)
- Contribution of continuous / classroom assessment to the final /progression mark in the Foundation Phase (FP) (National Protocol on Assessment, 1998; 2011).
- Assessment policy is not clear on formative assessment (Murphy & Lubisi, 2002).
- Quality assurance of assessment in the GET band by an approved quality-assurance body is non-existent as Umalusi focuses on FET band only.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.2 Rationale and significance of the study

- Understand teacher classroom assessment practices and how teachers use assessment data.
- Improving teacher formative assessment practices thus enhance learner performance.
- Implementation of formative assessment will also close the gap in performance between low and high performing learners.
- Develop assessment guidelines.
- Close gap in literature as most studies in SA focus on policy rather than practice.
- Contribute to policy decisions.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.3 Research question and sub-questions



### **Main research question:**

- How can primary school teachers' use of assessment data to inform practice be enhanced?

### **Sub-questions:**

- How do primary school teachers currently conduct classroom assessments?
- How can primary school teachers be supported to improve their knowledge and skills to develop valid assessments and use assessment data to inform classroom practice?

# Context of the study

- South African education system post apartheid – unitary.
- Three governance levels: national, provincial and districts (Constitution, 1996)
- Three bands of education system: GET, FET and HET (NEPA, 1996)
- Public and independent schools, variations between the public schools is also reflected in learner performance (SACMEQ, 2011).
- Curriculum revision: C2005, NCS, CAPS.

# Context of the study



- The absence of Teacher Development Policy from 1994 - 2011 has compromised provision of standardized quality teacher development.
- Consistent under-performance of learners in standardized studies (SE 2001, 2004, 2007; ANA 2010, 2011; PIRLS, 2011; TIMSS 1999, 2003, 2011).
- Continuous assessment contributes 100% to final mark in GET (National Protocol on Assessment, 1998, 2011)

## Literature review

Definition and comparison between formative and summative assessment	Black (1998); Perie, Marion and Gong (2009:6), Black and Wiliam (2009), Stiggins (2002), Bernett (2011) and Brookhart (2007)
Impact of formative assessment / use of assessment data on learner performance.	Kellaghan & Greany (1992); Popham, (2002); Means (2005); Goert, Olah and Riggan (2009); Black & Wiliam, (1998); Popham, (2002); Timperely (2007); Datnow (2008)
Lack of assessment literacy and poor preparation during initial teacher development	Stiggins (1995)



# Literature review

Importance of teacher professional development	Batra (2009), Gulston, (2010), Darling and Harmond (2000), Passos (2009)
Professional learning communities	Elmore (2004); Griffin (2009), McLaughlin & Talbert (2006); Timperely & Robertson (2001); Hawley & Valli (1999); Fullan (2009); Preskill and Torres (2000); Christie (2009)

# Conceptual framework



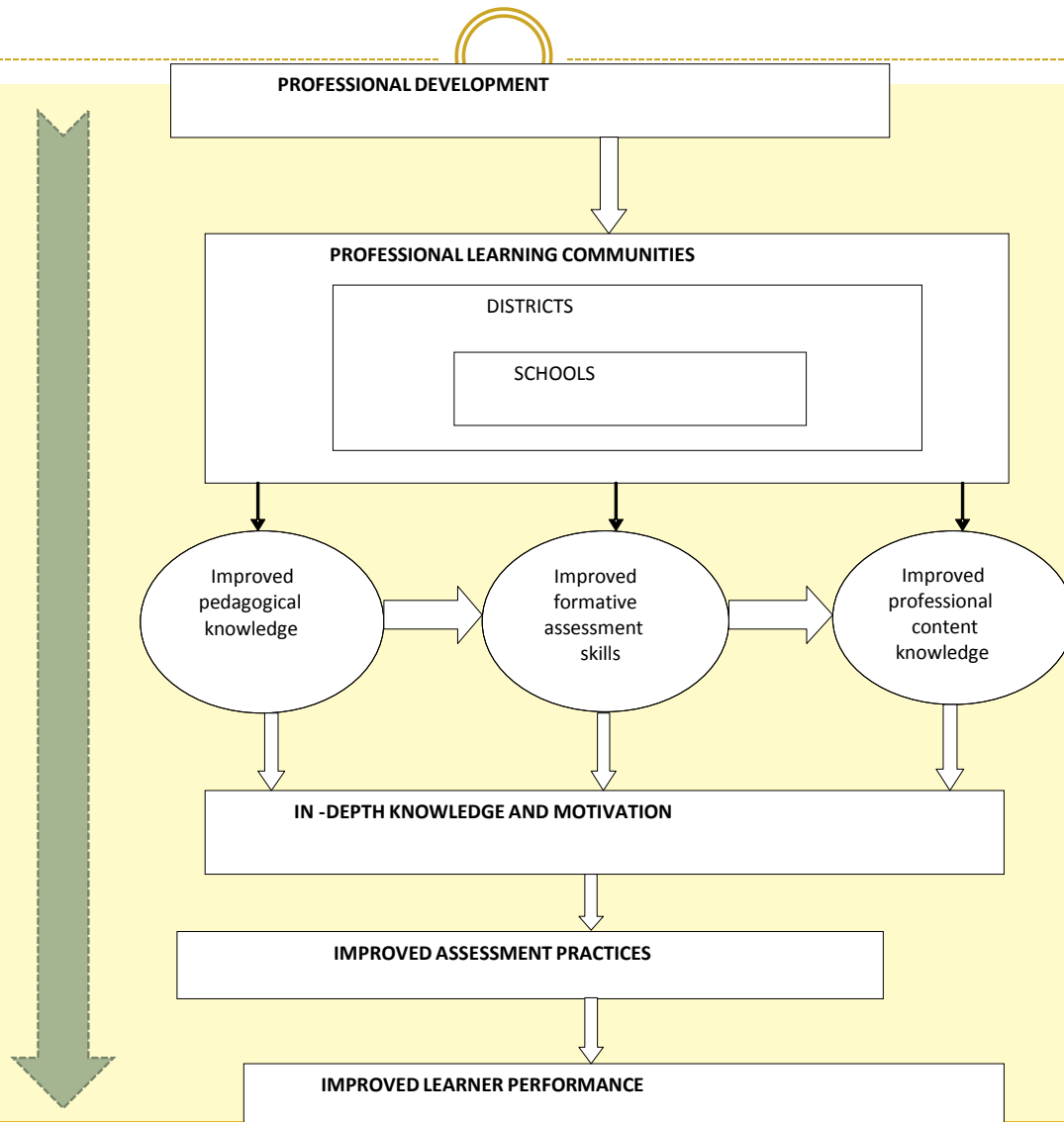
- Fullan (2006): Theory of action
- Alwin (2002): Capacity building leading to intrinsic change.
- Lachat & Smith (2005) and Elmore (2004): Sustained change.
- Wholstetter (2008): Bottom-up approach, buy- in and contextualization.
- Bennet (2010): Inputs, processes/activities and outputs.

# Conceptual framework

INPUT

PROCESS

OUTPUT



# Methodology: Design research

- Why design research?
- Design research- methodology can be used to improve educational practices through collaborative reviews, analysis, design, development and implementation by teams of researchers and practitioners in real contexts (Nieveen (2007); van den Akker (1999) .
- Design research: offers opportunities to learn, yields practical lessons that can be employed as well as engage researchers in the direct improvement of the educational practice (Edelson 2002) .

# Methodological norms



- Qualitative Data-Transferability, member checks and Audit trails, rich thick descriptions
- Team participation to mitigate authorship bias
- Collaboration nature of the research will alleviate power relations
- Triangulation of different sources

# Ethics



- Ethical clearance from the university
- Gaining access – permission from DBE and GDE
- Written consent & voluntary participation
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Maintaining & assuring participants of role as researcher