

an eight-year stint in setting Grade 12 Physical Science question papers for a province. His passion for assessment and use of evidence to inform planning in education saw him take up a leading position in national and international assessments at the national level in education in South Africa.

In addition to managing national assessments, Qetelo is also the National Research Coordinator (NRC) for South Africa who represents South Africa in the regional (Africa) benchmarking studies conducted under the auspices of the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). Qetelo's interest lies in seeing provision of quality education to all children and using credible assessment information to inform teaching and learning and thus give every child a fair opportunity to learn optimally.

### 13. BEST PRACTICE IN THE DESIGN OF NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS: A FEW MYTHS AND TRADE-OFFS

*Author: Martin Gustafsson, Researcher with the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University and Advisor for the Department of Basic Education*

The presentation draws from the available literature and handbooks in identifying what options are more and less feasible in the South African context when it comes to national assessments such as ANA. One point of emphasis is that context matters: different contexts require different solutions. A fairly comprehensive range of topics is covered: governance of the national assessment, sampling approaches, test design, scoring methods, migration to census-like universal assessments, improving accountability through just information, accountability based on sanctions and rewards linked to the assessments, linkages between assessing and supporting. Myths addressed include the following: that governance should always be broad-based (and the converse myth that a centralised technicist approach will always succeed), that standardisation always means everyone writes the same test, that the 'just information' approach to accountability always succeeds, that one always needs strong support before one can begin assessing, that rewards are always associated with cheating. Myths typically (archetypically?) held by people with a range of ideological and professional backgrounds are thus addressed.

#### **Biography**

Martin is a researcher with the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University, from which he obtained his Masters degree in 2006. Currently he is completing a PhD on assessing the role of education in economic development. Martin is a part of the ReSEP team, but is based in Pretoria, where he works as an advisor for the Department of Basic Education. His areas of specialisation include the use of economics in education planning, the design of school funding policies, the economics of teacher pay, the demographics of schooling systems and cross-country comparisons of educational policy and performance.

# PROGRAMME

## EDUCATION RESEARCH INDABA: PHASE 2

### NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA: SUPPORTING LITERACY AND NUMERACY IMPROVEMENTS

16-17 April 2013



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## DAY 1: 16 April 2013

CHAIRPERSON: MR SG PADAYACHEE: DEPUTY DIRECTOR – GENERAL: PLANNING, INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENTS

No	Item	Time	Responsible	Organisation
<b>Tea and Registration</b>		<b>08H30</b>		
1	<b>Welcome</b>	08h55	Chairperson	Basic Education
2	<b>Opening Address</b> Reflections on quality of education provisioning and key interventions	09h00	Mr PB Soobrayan Director- General	Basic Education
3	<b>Panel Presentation: National and International Assessments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment and educational quality: reflections on policy and practice in post-apartheid South Africa</li> <li>South Africa's participation in TIMSS, SACMEQ, PIRLS &amp; ANA: implications for quality</li> <li>Highlights from TIMSS 2011 South Africa: perspectives on improving education in South Africa</li> </ul>	09h30	Dr Anil Kanjee  Dr Stephen Taylor  Dr Cas Prinsloo	Tshwane University of Technology  Basic Education  Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
4	Response to panel presentation	10h40	Dr Thabo Mabogoane	DPME
5	Panel discussion	11h00	All	
<b>Tea</b>		<b>11H30</b>		
6	<b>Panel Presentation: Teachers And Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers' use of formative assessment in the teaching of reading comprehension in Grade 3</li> <li>Testing in bilingual education projects: lessons learnt from the ABLE project</li> <li>Can educators use the common assessments like the Annual National Assessment effectively to improve their teaching practices?</li> </ul>	12h00	Ms Hellen Mkhwanazi  Prof Elize Koch  Ms Roeline Herholdt	Mpumalanga Department of Education  Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University JET Education Services
7	Response to panel presentation	13h00	Dr Thabo Mabogoane	DPME
8	Panel discussion	13h15	All	
9	Closing remarks	13h45	Chairperson	Basic Education
<b>Lunch</b>		<b>14H00</b>		

## Biography

*Nokhanyiso (Khanyi) Mantshongo was born in Umzimkulu in KwaZulu Natal, did all her schooling in the Eastern Cape.*

*She worked at Ngangelizwe High School as an Assistant Teacher and later as a Head of Division from 1984 – 1994; as a Subject Advisor from 1994 – 2001; as Teacher Development Specialist for SADTU from 2002 – 2007; as an Education Specialist with the Department of Education from 2008 to date. She is involved in the administration of National Assessments (PIRLS, TIMSS, SACMEQ & ANA).*

## 12. WHETHER NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS? : THE NEXUS OF POLICY INTENTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

*Author: Meshack Qetelo Moloi, Director for National Assessments, Department of Basic Education*

There has been exponential increase in the number of countries that either conduct large-scale national assessments of learner performance or participate in international benchmarking assessments in the last twenty years. The two resolutions taken by the international community with regard to Education for All (EFA) in Thailand and Dakar in 2000 and 2005, respectively, seem to have given significant impetus to international assessments in particular. South Africa has weighed in not only into international assessments but has also conceptualised and implemented a unique approach to national assessments. The uniqueness of the South African approach lies in both the scale to which the assessments are taken and the purpose for which the results are meant to be used.

This paper is a literature review to explore the large-scale assessment terrain in terms of how the assessments have been conceived, conducted and their results used across a spectrum of developed to developing countries. Are there common reasons shared by countries that conduct large-scale assessments? What distinguishes education systems that have realised sustained and successful large-scale assessments from those that did not? To what can the successful implementation of large-scale assessments in some countries be ascribed? The literature review focuses on real and potential conflicts that often characterise the nexus of policy intentions and policy implementation, with a view to making proposals for enhancing the benefits that South Africa, in her unique context, stands to reap out of national assessments.

Key words:

Large-scale assessments= assessment of all or representative samples of learners in particular grades carried out, theoretically, for non-examination low-stakes purposes.

## Biography

Meshack Qetelo Moloi is the Director in charge of National Assessments in the Department of Basic Education in South Africa. His educational background is in teaching mathematics and physical science in schools. He later shifted to training teachers of science and mathematics at the erstwhile Transkei College of Education (TCE). Part of his professional growth and growth in the area of assessment involved

## Biography

*Brahm Fleisch is Professor of Education Policy and Head of the Division of Education Leadership and Policy Studies at the Wits School of Education. Brahm did his graduate studies at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York and was research associate at Bank Street College of Education. After moving back to South Africa in 1990, he has lectured in education at the University of the Witwatersrand and served as a district director in the newly formed Gauteng Department of Education. His recent books include: Primary Education in Crisis: Why South African Schoolchildren Underachieve in Reading and Mathematics (Juta, 2008) and (co-authored with Stu Woolman) The Constitution in the Classroom: Law and Education in South Africa, 1994-2008. His current research focuses on successful system-wide reform in developing countries. Since 2010, Brahm has served as the advisor of the Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy.*

## 11. FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION: ENHANCING LEARNER PERFORMANCE BY USING ASSESSMENT DATA IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Author: Ms Nokhanyiso Manshongo, Education Specialist, Department of Basic Education*

The aim of the research is to investigate and understand teachers' classroom assessment practices and how assessment data from school assessments as well as systemic studies such as the provincial / district common assessments is currently used to enhance learner performance. The study will culminate by proposing Assessment Guidelines that can be used to enhance assessment practices and thus improve learner performance.

The study will focus on classroom assessment in Mathematics at the Foundation Phase. Participants will be purposefully sampled and selected per phase during the research process according to knowledge and expertise needed at that particular phase Purposeful samples of teachers, District officials involved in assessment from Tshwane North and South Districts, researchers from Higher Education Institutions will form the sample.

The sample will be comprised of Foundation Phase teachers from three schools from each of the two districts Tshwane North and South from Gauteng Province, Learning Area Facilitators from the districts; Curriculum officials from the Gauteng Province as well as external experts.

Assessment Guidelines will be developed through Design Research. Design Research is used to improve educational practices through collaborative reviews, analysis, design, development and implementation by teams of researchers and practitioners in real contexts. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) from curriculum, teacher development, assessment specialists and teachers at the participating schools will develop the prototypes, refine them employing formative assessment, with teachers linking to their own teaching and testing the links using evidence in the PLCs finally developing high-quality product Through iterative cycles the model will be developed, trialed and finalized thus reflecting the school context.

DAY 2: 17 April 2013

CHAIRPERSON: MR M MWELI ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR – GENERAL: CURRICULUM POLICY, SUPPORT AND MONITORING

No	Item	Time	Responsible	Organisation
<b>Tea</b>		<b>08H00</b>		
1	<b>Welcome</b>	08H25	Chairperson	Basic Education
2	<b>Panel presentation: quality and assessments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dimensions of quality focusing on literacy and numeracy</li> <li>• Getting in and staying there: exclusion and inclusion in South African schools</li> <li>• Improving teaching and learning through the South African ANA: Challenges, possibilities and solutions</li> <li>• Making better use of ANA results for learning: an urgent imperative</li> </ul>	08h30	Ms JD Kinnear Prof Shireen Motala Dr George Frempong Mr Deva Govender	Basic Education University of Johannesburg Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Limpopo Department of Education
3	Response to panel presentation	10h00		Basic Education
4	Panel discussion	10h15	All	
<b>Tea</b>		<b>10H45</b>		
5	<b>Panel presentation: implications of assessments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System reform and primary literacy: implications for education leadership</li> <li>• From evidence to action: enhancing learner performance by using assessment data in South Africa</li> <li>• Whither national assessments: the nexus of policy intentions and implications</li> <li>• Best practice in the design of national assessments: A few myths and trade-offs</li> </ul>	11h15	Prof Brahm Fleisch Ms Nokhanyiso Mantshongo Mr Meshack Qetelo Molo Mr Martin Gustafsson	University of the Witwatersrand Basic Education Basic Education Stellenbosch University
6	Response to panel presentations	12h45	Prof Shireen Motala	University of Johannesburg
7	Panel discussion	13h00	All	
8	Way forward and closure	13h30	Chairperson	Basic Education
<b>Lunch</b>		<b>13H45</b>		

## ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES OF PRESENTERS

### 1. SOUTH AFRICA'S PARTICIPATION IN TIMSS, PIRLS, SACMEQ AND ANA

*Author: Dr Stephen Taylor, Researcher and Policy Advisor, Department of Basic Education*

South Africa participates in three international assessments of school performance: the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality surveys (SACMEQ). These surveys typically test nationally representative samples of children in key subject areas in a particular grade and administer detailed background questionnaires to children, teachers and school principals.

This paper considers the main benefits of participating in these surveys. These include policy lessons through comparison with other education systems, monitoring system performance over time, obtaining important information about learners, obtaining important information about the teacher force, obtaining important information about school resources and organisational features, and conducting analysis of the determinants of educational outcomes. The point is made that sample-based surveys such as these, which are conducted so as to represent the broader population often produce more useful information than more expensive information systems that aim to measure an entire population of schools. The paper then reviews some of the main lessons that have emerged from South Africa's participation in TIMSS, PIRLS and SACMEQ.

Finally, the existing and potential benefits of our own Annual National Assessments (ANA) are considered. While the ANA have some purposes similar to those of TIMSS, PIRLS and SACMEQ, there are some benefits of these international assessments that ANA cannot provide but also several important benefits of ANA that international assessments do not have. These ANA-specific benefits include the possibility of providing learner and school performance information to all schools in the system and to parents, to increase the academic emphasis in schools, to improve school-based assessment practices, and to promote accountability throughout the system. These potential benefits of the ANA have clear implications for the design and implementation of ANA going forward. Coherent and strategic planning is crucial not only in the light of the potential benefits of ANA but also because there are very real risks associated with a poorly implemented ANA.

#### **Biography**

*Stephen Taylor has been working in the Department of Basic Education as a researcher and policy advisor since 2011. Prior to that he worked in the Economics Department at the University of Stellenbosch where he completed a PHD focusing on the educational outcomes of poor South African children and how these outcomes relate to economic development within the country. During this time, Stephen also did consulting work for the National Planning Commission, the World Bank, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the Ministry of Education in Botswana and JET Education Services.*

International research shows that education systems, particularly at the school and district level, lack the capacity to make effective use of assessment information and other related data sets to decide on appropriate interventions to improve learning outcomes especially in language and mathematics.

With the recent introduction of curriculum standards in CAPS (2012) and ANA (2009), the need for better evidence-based planning and practice to raise learner performance in language and mathematics has become an urgent imperative.

The research project uses one district of the Limpopo Province for a qualitative case study to investigate three questions: namely, (a) how are ANA results used in the district to improve learning outcomes? ;(b) what is the link between ANA results and district interventions to improve learner performance in language and mathematics? And (c) what are current practices to build the capacity of district officials in data use, including ANA results?

The paper reports on a study that is part of a broader research programme that investigates the use of ANA results by districts and their capacity to make use of data in decision making. Based on research findings and a review of relevant literature, a model is proposed to make better use of ANA results for decisions on district interventions to improve learner performance.

#### **Biography**

Qualified as a mathematics and science teacher at the University of Durban-Westville in 1973. Thereafter completed the B Com, B Ed (Educational Management) and M Ed. Served as a teacher, HOD (Sciences) and deputy principal for 22 years. Joined the Gauteng Dept of Education in 1996 as a Chief Education Specialist responsible for teacher appraisal and evaluation. Worked on four projects during 2000-2007 as project manager: District Development and Support Programme (KZN), Quality Learning Project (KZN), Integrated Education Programme (KZN, NC, EC and LP) and Khanyisa Transformation Programme (Limpopo). All projects had the goal of improving learner achievement in language and mathematics. Joined the DoE in 2007 as Director for QIDS-UP a programme that was introduced to resource the poorest schools to improve literacy and numeracy in grades 1-3. Took up current position as General Manager (Chief Director) in Quality Assurance.

### 10. SYSTEM REFORM AND PRIMARY LITERACY: IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

*Prof Brahm Fleisch, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand*

The paper begins by summarizing the current crisis in primary schooling in South Africa, and how this crisis is manifest in the bimodal pattern of underachievement in literacy and mathematics achievement. Extending prior work (Fleisch, 2008), we focus specifically on the relationship between instructional practices and underperformance. In the paper we suggest that how understanding contemporary instructional practices and their relationship to underachievement is central to institutionalise system reform of instruction.

Development Programmes (ANA\_PD). A culture of formative assessment involves beliefs and practices where findings from the analysis of data are consistently used to inform schooling improvement decisions. So far, as one would expect, the ANA processes seem to emphasise the integrity of the data collection processes. We argue for ANA processes that provide opportunities for teachers to develop an understanding of how assessment data can be used to improve teaching and learning. We contend that a professional development programme integrated in the ANA processes could help develop a culture of formative assessment practices and would potentially help sustain interest in ANA. We envision this professional development programme to include online courses that teachers and other education stakeholders could access throughout the academic year so that school and classroom activities will not be disrupted because of the programme. We further recommend that these courses be accredited to encourage broader participation of teachers.

### **Biography**

Dr George Frempong is an African Research Fellow and a chief research specialist in the Education and Skills Development programme. He holds an MA in Mathematics Education and PhD in Curriculum Studies from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Before joining the HSRC in April 2008, he worked as university professor at the University of New Brunswick and York University in Canada where he taught courses in mathematics, mathematics education, educational statistics and quantitative research methods. He has also worked with the Canadian Research Institute of Social Policy (CRISP) at the University of New Brunswick. His areas of research interest include: mathematics education, school effectiveness, assessment and evaluation, and complex data analysis involving multilevel modelling and Item Response Theory (IRT). Dr Frempong has presented papers in a number of international conferences and has published in a number of international journals. He was the leader of the HSRC team that conducted the analysis and wrote the report for the 2011 verification ANA.

## **9. MAKING BETTER USE OF ANA RESULTS FOR LEARNING – AN URGENT IMPERATIVE**

*Author: Devadasan Angamuthu Govender, Chief Director for Quality Assurance, Limpopo Department of Education*

Since 2009 South Africa joined countries which regularly conduct national standardized surveys to assess the competence of primary school learners in language and mathematics. The decision to use annual census surveys requires additional financial investment and new systems in the DBE and provinces to assess about 6.8 million learners in grades 1-6 and 9.

Apart from using annual national assessments (ANA) to benchmark learner competence against standards in the CAPS and evaluating the system in meeting targets set in the *Action Plan to 2014*, the greater utility value of the ANA lies in its use to (a) improve learning by strengthening school based assessment and (b) to inform district support interventions at schools.

*Some of the main topics that Stephen has produced work on recently include: the impact of socio-economic status on educational outcomes; the performance of the independent schools sector; identifying indicators of effective school management; trends in education system performance in Southern and East Africa since 2000.*

Stephen has worked extensively with large sample surveys of educational achievement. These surveys include the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality surveys (SACMEQ), the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) as well as other Stats SA household surveys and DBE data such as Matric and ANA.

## **2. HIGHLIGHTS FROM TIMSS 2011 SOUTH AFRICA: PERSPECTIVES ON IMPROVING EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

*Author: Dr Cas Prinsloo, Chief Research Specialist, Education and Skills Development Programme, Human Sciences Research Council*

The Mathematics and Science achievement of South African Grade 9 learners improved from 2002 to 2011. After giving some background on the value of participation in TIMSS, key overall findings are highlighted. Learner achievement and change are then briefly compared between provinces. Findings on how contextual factors may be related to learner achievement are overviewed next. These relate to resources at school and home, the curriculum and teacher proficiencies and practices. On the basis of these, indications are derived about where to target efforts to improve education in South Africa. Special attention is paid in the process to the importance of language for learner achievement. Some concluding synthesis and indications end the presentation.

### **Biography**

*Cas (CH) Prinsloo is a Chief Research Specialist in the Education and Skills Development (ESD) Research Programme of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). He formerly acted as Director of the Education and School Improvement Directorate in the Education, Science and Skills Development (ESSD) Research Programme for almost two years, and also headed the Methodology, Modelling and Analysis unit of the Assessment Technology and Education Evaluation (ATEE) Research Programme. Current involvement, as project leader mostly, has been including studies on educator leave in the South African public schooling system, the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, and evaluating the Public Employment Service of South Africa. He recently led the following projects: an Evaluation of Literacy Teaching in Limpopo schools for the Limpopo Department of Education with funding from Irish Aid; the so-called PlusTime project on the effect of after-school tuition in English and Mathematics on the performance of Grade 8 learners in the Metropole South District of the Western Cape Education Department with funding from the Shuttleworth Foundation; and (after a mid-term evaluation in 2006) the final impact evaluation in 2008 of the Mveledzandivho school-support programme funded by BHP Billiton through JET Education Services. Work completed before that involved being project leader of a Grade 8 learner assessment for the Western Cape Education Department.*

*He is involved mainly in the evaluation of programmes aimed at improving teaching and learning in the education system. He was involved earlier also in the first two years (as project leader) of a four-year longitudinal assessment project of the impact of The Molteno Project on literacy improvement in the Foundation Phase, and was project manager of the evaluation project of the impact of the Quality Learning Project (a joint, five-year school-improvement programme of the Department of Education, JET Education Services and the Business Trust). For the latter, he has initially been responsible mainly for the contextual questionnaires, the coordination of the survey and learner assessment parts of the data collection, and co-authoring the relevant parts of the report. The final set of reports appeared in 2005. He also previously acted as Research Director (psychological assessment instrument development) for 14 months.*

*He is registered as a Research Psychologist with the Health Professions Council of S.A. He obtained a D Litt et Phil degree in Psychology (UNISA; 2004).*

*Past experience includes work in the areas of personality assessment (e.g., the 16PF, SA92 edition) and educational assessment research; questionnaire development; science policy and systems research (including work on the implementation of research findings) at the former Centre for Science Development; and corporate assignments with regard to performance and project management (total of 23 years).*

### **3. ASSESSMENT AND EDUCATION QUALITY: REFLECTIONS ON POLICY AND PRACTICE IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA**

*Author: Dr Anil Kanjee, Research professor and Coordinator of the Postgraduate Program in the Department of Educational Studies, Tshwane University of Technology*

The development of assessment systems for monitoring school performance and improving education quality has become a key priority in education development. At the World Education forum in Dakar in 2000, one of the key EFA goals was “improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills”. Since Dakar there has been a significant increase in the number of countries that have established assessment systems to improve quality. Discussion about the post 2015 education agenda at the recent Global Education meeting in Dakar in March 2013 also identified “equitable quality lifelong education and learning” as the overarching priority for the new development framework.

Within this context, this presentation considers quality learning and assessment in South African context. It begins with a review of the different meanings and understanding of the concept of education quality placing teaching and learning at the heart of quality. Next, a framework for reviewing the nature and status of education assessment systems is presented, followed by a critical review of how selected countries have implemented assessment systems to address the imperative of equitable quality. Following this, attention is turned to assessment policies and practice in the post-apartheid era, noting key achievements and limitations. The presentation concludes by highlighting challenges to the implementation of an effective national assessment system for improving education quality for all in South Africa.

### **Biography**

Professor Shireen Motala held the position of the Director of the Education Policy Unit, Wits University from 1999 to February 2010. Her academic qualifications are BA(UDW), B Social Science Honours (UCT), MA (University of Warwick), PGCE (University of London) and PhD (Wits). In March 2010, she was appointed as Director of the Postgraduate Research Centre: Research and Innovation at the University of Johannesburg and Professor in the Faculty of Education. Her responsibilities include leading the university wide strategy for improving enrolment at a postgraduate level, providing research support for postgraduate students and ensuring that throughput improves in the institution. She sits on the Board of a number of policy research organisations including the Centre for Education Policy Development and the South African Institution for Distance Education. She was Chairperson of the Education Policy Consortium which brings together policy research entities nationally from 2006 to 2010. She was also the Chairperson of the UNESCO South African Commission from 2002 to 2006. In 2010 she was appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training to serve on the Council of Higher Education. She has worked extensively in research and has provided leadership for regional and international partnerships which have led to collaborations with universities across Africa and with northern partners. These include providing leadership to the Consortium on Transition, Equity and Access in Education, a multi-year research programme with the universities in Sussex, India, Bangladesh and Ghana. Her research record is substantial and includes books, editorship of local and international journals and chapters in books. Her research interests and expertise have been in the areas of education financing and school reform, access and equity and education quality. She currently serves on the University Research Committee and the Senate Higher Degrees Committee at the University of Johannesburg.

### **8. IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH THE SOUTH AFRICAN ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT: CHALLENGES, POSSIBILITIES AND SOLUTIONS**

*Author: Dr George Frempong, African Research Fellow and Chief Research Specialist, Education and Skills Development Programme, Human Sciences Research Council*

Current policy to improve the quality of education provision in South Africa is outlined in the document, *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling in 2025*, published by the Department of Basic Education (DBE 2010). The document includes an Annual National Assessment (ANA) of literacy and numeracy levels by means of standardised tests administered to all learners from Grade 1 to Grade 6. The main objective of the ANA is to identify the weaknesses in literacy and numeracy development in South African schools. The underlying assumption is that ANA data on learners' achievement levels and background characteristics would be available for analyses that should provide information to inform schooling improvement strategies. The success of ANA therefore depends largely on the belief in the use of large-scale assessment practices to improve learning. The paper argues for a policy direction to develop a culture of formative assessment through what we term ANA Professional

should be used by the Department of Basic Education to improve upon its in-service teacher development initiatives.

### **Biography**

*Ms. Herholdt has BA Hons (Cognitive and Clinical Psychology), B.ED Hons (Special Educational Needs), B.EDHons (Educational Psychology and school counselling). Originally a Foundation Phase teacher, Roelien later qualified as a remedial teacher and psychometrist. She worked for 9 years in a LSEN school, first as a teacher, later as Head of Department of the Remedial Unit and a psychometrist. Roelien worked at the Gauteng Department of Education as a senior educational specialist where she managed the Foundation Phase Literacy Learning Area, trained teachers and supported them in Literacy teaching as well as monitoring work done in the district with reference to Literacy and Language development. She has lectured in her private capacity at university level on assessment, inclusive education, educational testing, remedial practice and literacy teaching. She joined JET in 2008 as a Junior Research Manager and has subsequently been promoted to Senior Research Manager to head up the Assessment Unit in the Education Evaluation and Research Division where she specialises in doing research on literacy and numeracy teaching, curriculum implementation across the phases, learner and teaching assessments in the GET band as test development. Ms. Herholdt is currently seconded to the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development (NICPD) to head up the national teacher testing programme for the Department of Basic Education.*

## **7. GETTING IN AND STAYING THERE: EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

*Author: Prof Shireen Motala, Research and Innovation Division and Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg*

The paper provides a reflective account of the research carried out in South African schools focusing on physical access and learning. The paper argues that while physical access is not a major education problem in South Africa, meaningful learning, including the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills, remains an elusive goal for many, particularly the marginalised and the poor, notwithstanding the numerous education policies enacted since 1994. It argues further that there are many reasons for this, including how learners are taught, the bifurcated class-divided nature of South African schooling and the lack of crucial and active parental involvement in schooling. Against this backdrop the paper reviews numerous policies and strategies advocated in the South African context for restructuring the education system. It argues that whilst they are persuasive and appealing, they fall short in providing a holistic and coherent approach to education transformation. The paper concludes that what is needed is a far more explicit, proactive and equity-driven approach that prioritises the neediest and the most marginalised, in particular in terms of access to meaningful learning.

Key words: exclusion, policy, inclusion, meaningful learning, quality, access

### **Biography**

*Anil Kanjee obtained his doctorate in Research and Evaluation Methods from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and is currently a Research Professor and coordinator of the Postgraduate Program in the Department of Educational Studies, Tshwane University of Technology.*

*Previously, he was an Executive Director at the Human Sciences Research Council, where he headed the Centre for Education Quality Improvement and the Research Program on Assessment Technology and Education Evaluation. During this time, he served as the South African representative to the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (IEA) General Assembly and was responsible for the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) and national assessment studies conducted in South Africa.*

*He has extensive experience in national and international studies, has worked as a consultant to education ministries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and has served as a technical advisor to a number of national and international organizations including UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank.*

*His research focuses on the use of assessment for improving learning, models for effective teacher professional development, the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national assessment systems, the application of ICT for improving learning and teaching, and the use of Item Response Theory for analysing and reporting test scores.*

*Currently he is working on three projects that focuses on the development of a:*

- (i) model for implementing 'assessment for learning' in- and pre-service capacity development programs in developing nations;*
- (ii) framework for reporting and using scores from large-scale assessment surveys, and*
- (iii) computerised system for supporting teachers improve their content knowledge and teaching practice.*

## **4. TEACHERS' USE OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION IN GRADE 3.**

*Author: Hellen Ntombifuthi Mkhwanazi, Systemic Evaluation, Mpumalanga Department of Education*

South African learners often experience reading comprehension problems (Grade 3 Systemic Evaluation Study, 2001; PILRS, 2006; ANA, 2008, 2009, 2011). These problems generally arise from various factors which include teachers' instructional practices (PIRLS, 2006). By instructional practices, I refer to all the activities undertaken by the teacher and the learners to enhance learners' performance. These include teachers' use of formative assessment to support the teaching of reading

comprehension. The important facts about formative assessment activities are that they all revolve on teachers' feedback and focus on supporting learners' performance (Harlen in Gardener, 2006).

The potential of formative assessment in enhancing teaching and supporting learners' performance is highly recognized in various educational institutions around the world. It resulted from the work of Assessment Reform Group and Black and William's (1998) analysis of 250 research studies which confirmed that when teachers use formative assessment to guide their instructions, learners made significant gains (Taras, 2009; Stobart, 2008:147; Brown *et al*, 2009:347). Formative assessment measures are also highly emphasized in the assessment of reading comprehension (Paris, 2004; Risko & Walker- Dalhouse, 2010; Williamson, 2004:2). Marcotee and Hintze (2007:2) view that the use of formative assessment in reading comprehension should help teachers to design instructions accordingly.

This study followed a qualitative approach as it seeks to explore teachers in their natural environment (classroom) with the view of understanding their practices. A multiple-case study of 8 teachers in 4 schools was conducted. Data was collected through semi-structured interview, documents analysis and lesson observations. Engestrom' activity system theory (1987) was used to interpret the findings.

### Biography

Hellen Ntombifuthi Mkhwanazi works for the Mpumalanga Department of Education, in Systemic Evaluation sub-directorate. Her job includes the following: co-ordinating of Annual National Assessment in Mpumalanga. The analysis of the ANA results in Mpumalanga; collection of contextual data; and the identification of factors that affect learners' performance. She has 5 years teaching experience as the Foundation Phase teacher; 2 years as education specialist; 4 years as a Foundation Phase Subject Advisor. She is enrolled with the University of Pretoria.

## 5. TESTING IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROJECTS: LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE ABLE PROJECT

*Author: Dr Elize Koch, Centre for Community Schools, Education Faculty, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University*

This paper discusses the topic of tests, bilingual tests, and the role played by the language of tests in home-language-based bilingual education projects such as the Additive BiLingual Education (ABLE) project. More specifically, we highlight how national, macro-contextual issues have impacted on the project team's decision to move away from an experimental approach in the research, necessitating the use of tests, to a more participatory action research approach. The implications of these macro-contextual factors for projects of a similar nature, and suggestions for engagement, are given. In addition to discussing the impact of discrepancies between the additive bilingual language in education policy of the DoE of SA (LIEP) and practices around the language of tests such as in the Annual National Assessments (ANA), the paper also engages with the concept of bilingual educational tests, what the concept means in practice, and how we dealt with it in the project. An argument in support of a consistent

approach to bi-or multilingual tests is provided. Some practical issues related to tests in general, such as validity, and bilingual tests specifically, such as equivalence, are discussed. Research on the equivalence of bilingual tests used in the ABLE project is synthesised, and the implications of the results presented. It is argued that bilingual tests could contribute to a radical new way of approaching language in education in the context of post-colonial South Africa.

### Biography

*Elize Koch has a D Phil (Research Psychology) in multilingual testing. She worked in an additive bilingual education project in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape (ABLE – English and isiXhosa) for 9 years, taught testing and research methodology at third year, honors and masters levels over a period of 15 years at the NMMU and UWC, and was the main researcher on a project evaluating a language test that was adapted from English into isiXhosa. Six masters students graduated with theses from this project. Currently she is involved in community based research in a Centre for Community Schools at the NMMU and also does independent research on literacy assessment.*

## 6. CAN EDUCATORS USE THE COMMON ASSESSMENTS LIKE THE ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT EFFECTIVELY TO IMPROVE THEIR TEACHING PRACTICES?

*Author: Roelien Herholdt, Senior Research Manager, Assessment Unit in the Education Evaluation and Research Division, JET Education Services*

Assessment for learning in education is based on the idea that significant improvements in learning can take place when teachers and learners are able to obtain and use relevant information to help them establish where learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to close any gaps. The success of this process depends on the effective gathering, use and flow of information, or *feedback*. Although effective feedback loops are often difficult to create, when formative feedback is effectively used within a system, educationists tend to agree that it leads to positive changes in learner achievement. However, can educators use the common assessments (like the Annual National Assessment (ANA)) effectively? In this context, JET carried out a pilot project in the Eastern Cape to determine whether grade 1 teachers could analyse and use common task assessment data such as the ANA, leading them to adapt their teaching strategies to improve their learners' achievement. This study demonstrated that teachers struggle to link specific items in an assessment to a detailed understanding of the skill being tested and to how they fit into the sequence of skills described in the CAPS and majority of cases cannot come up with alternative teaching strategies to address gaps in learner competency. Such teachers are not able to use common task assessment data in a formative way: feedback is not taking place successfully. This also provides a clue as to why teachers generally teach at a specific difficulty level and not beyond. The study also revealed that teachers find the analysis and interpretation of the ANA results difficult and are not able use for enhancing their teaching and HODs do not know what do with the data to develop school improvement plans. The results