

A reflection on the Funda Uphumelele National Reading Study (FUNS): National assessments

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AEA Europe 2025
5-8 November
The Hague, Netherlands



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Brief for talk

- Contextualise FUNS project within National Assessments in South Africa
- focus on the role of different assessments for teachers and the system and how this survey fits into the assessment landscape in SA that would be helpful
- Key lessons and ideas for next steps



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KEY QUESTION to keep in mind

What is that I CAN DO to enhance the use of assessment to improve LEARNING for ALL?



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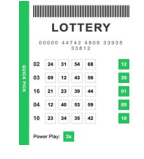





Key argument

- Despite the long history of LSAS in SA, only recent LSAS - shift towards enhancing the use of results from these studies
- Emphasis of this shift has been on greater inclusion of teachers (i.e. impact on teacher pedagogical practices)
- But there still remains substantial more work to ensure results of LSAS (and classroom assessment) can support teachers to:
 - **IMPROVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES** to allow for:
 - Identification and addressing the learning needs of **ALL LEARNERS**, especially, learners from poor and marginalised backgrounds.
- Will show how FUNS study have met some of these principles and focus on 3 of these



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For this to take place, I want to propose 6 key principles for ACTION



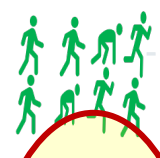



					
NO THATA MA CHANCE	ASINA (NO) DISPRIN	WALKING THE SAME ROAD	EACH ONE TEACH ONE	JUMP INTO THE POOL	REPORTING as RECIPES
Planning, preparation, Piloting and M&EL	Evidence- based decision making	COMMON understanding and Purpose	New modes of Collaboration and Support	Effective Professional Develop. Model	Reporting to promote actionable next steps

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Understanding of Pedagogy

- the observable act of teaching together with its attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, the resources and tools one needs to use, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted”
- (extended from Alexander, 2008).



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Implications for FUNS study					
					
NO THATA MA CHANCE	ASINA (NO) DISPRIN	WALKING THE SAME ROAD	EACH ONE TEACH ONE	JUMP INTO THE POOL	REPORTING as RECIPES
PROCESS - Identify gaps to address	EXTENSIVE RESEACH STUDIES Unpin Proposed Benchmarks	COMMON understanding and Purpose	HIGH LEVEL of Collaboration & Participation	Effective Professional Develop. Model	Reporting to promote actionable next steps

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First Contextualise FUNS in LSAS

- Establish the percentage of learners reaching grade-appropriate reading benchmarks;
- Determine the proportion of 10-year-olds who can read for meaning in their language of learning and teaching.
- Develop and validate a new set of benchmark-aligned reading assessments (the FUNS tools).
- Support applied research on the teaching of reading in African languages (the TRIAL component).
- Provide data to inform system-wide improvement at three levels:
 - System level: for national and provincial monitoring of reading progress.
 - District and school level: to strengthen support and accountability through language-appropriate diagnostic tools.
 - Classroom level: to help teachers conduct diagnostic assessments and provide targeted remediation


 FUNS Draft Technical report, 2025
 


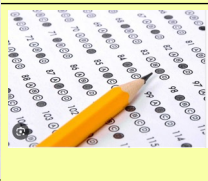
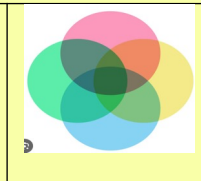
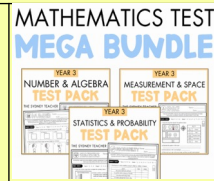
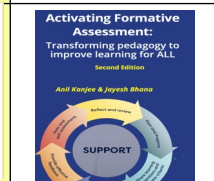

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Application and Use

NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION	SCHOOL	CLASSROOM
Establishes definition of reading proficiency	Standards and targets that school leaders can aim towards	Standard against which to measure learner skills
Clearly communicates standards and targets	Standardises assessment practices across and within schools	Identify early on learners at risk of not being able to read
Monitor progress	Identify the extent of remedial support required	Adapt instructional focus to meet learners' needs

First Brief overview of History of Assessment and Current status

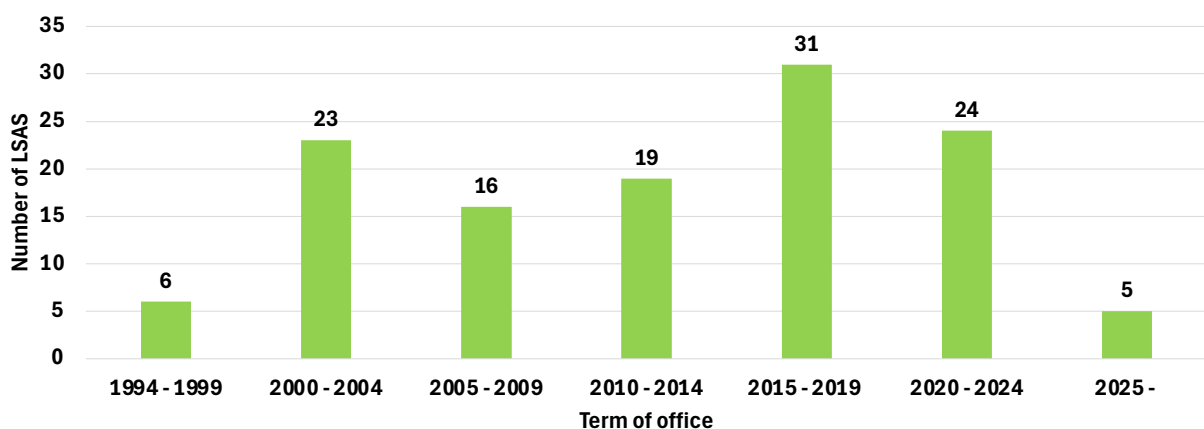
Key trends and Tensions

Performativity Driven Systems				Tensions & Challenges	
					
Prevailing Colonial (& Apartheid) - Era Impact	Assessment-focussed Measurement -Driven Policies	Multiple Overlapping Account-ability Systems	Overemphasis on Mathematics and Languages	Assessment for Learning Pedagogical Strategy	Roleplayer Challenges

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Large scale assessment post 1994 = 124

National, International, Province, NGO



Significant costs







Limited use of results

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Roleplayer Challenges Performativity Regimes

- **Decolonisation Education movement**
 - Question Eurocentric approaches
- **Role of Unions and NGOs**
 - Professional Development focussing on learning and **NOT** performance
- **New Ministry Initiatives**
 - Revise Assessment & Curriculum – non-cognitive, local focus
 - New General Education Certificate –
 - Assessment Literacy Programme for Education officials -
 - AfL Pedagogical Strategy – [based on local evidence and models](#)
- **Initial Teacher Education**
 - Comprehensive Assessment Course - [Undergraduate student teachers](#)
 - New Masters and Doctoral – [Assessment, Measurement & Learning](#)

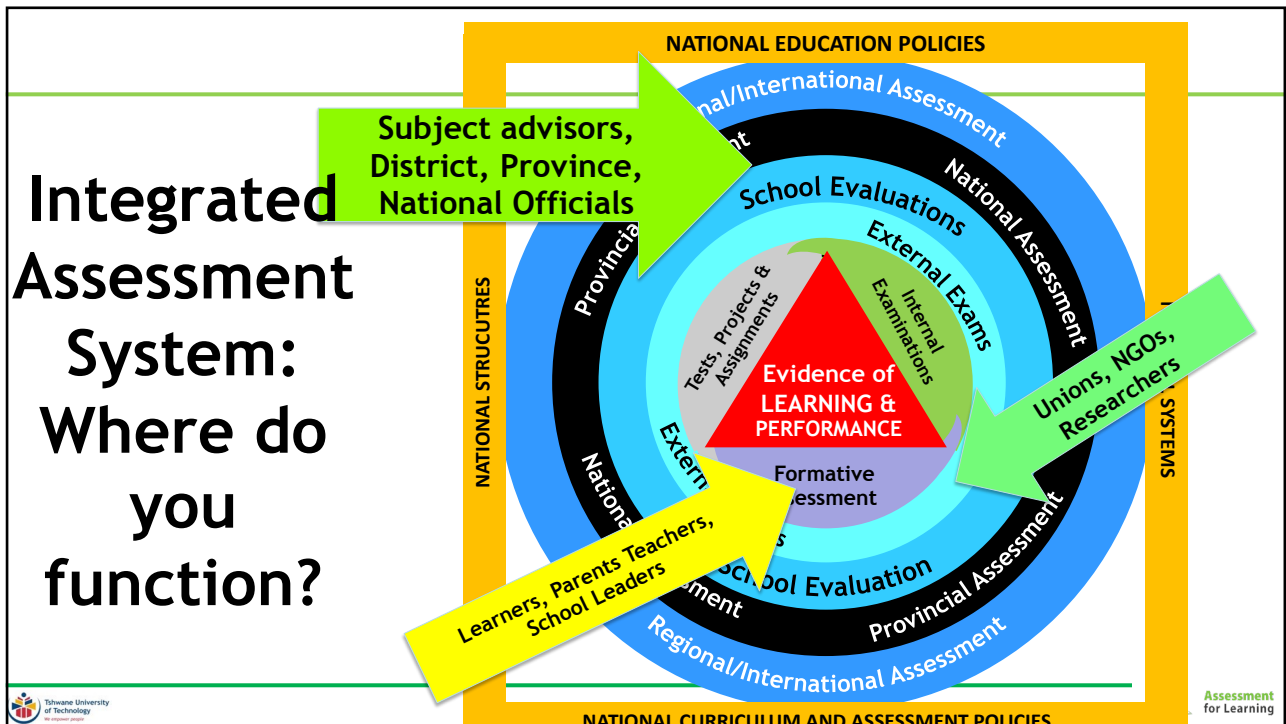
Key principles for ACTION

					
NO THATA MA CHANCE	ASINA (NO) DISPRIN	WALKING THE SAME ROAD	EACH ONE TEACH ONE	JUMP INTO THE POOL	REPORTING as RECIPES
Planning, preparation, Piloting and M&EL	Evidence- based decision making	COMMON understanding and Purpose	New modes of Collaboration and Support	Effective Professional Develop. Model	Reporting to promote actionable next steps

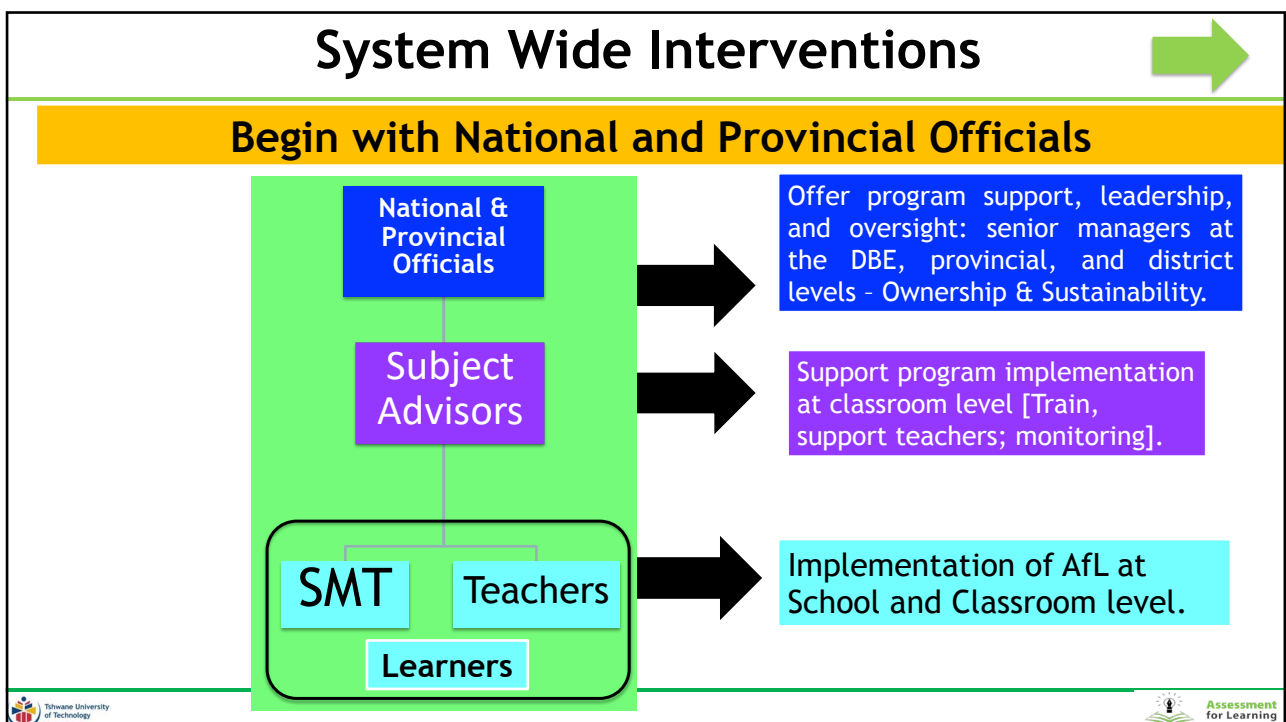
Value of Assessment

1. **IMPROVING PEDAGOGY** - key to improving learning for **ALL - EQUITY and QUALITY**
2. Key to improving pedagogy is using assessment to (i) identify and (ii) address specific learning needs of ALL learners, especially learners from poor and marginalised communities
3. Can be achieved using an Assessment for Learning approach

Learning Intentions (Objectives)	Success Criteria
1. Understand the purpose of assessment in teaching	1. I can explain the purpose of assessment.
	2. I can discuss the importance of assessment in the teaching process.
2. Understand key assessment concepts relevant to teaching and learning	3. I can distinguish between formative and summative assessment practices.
	4. I can give examples how how summative assessments can be used formatively in my subject area.



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Purpose of assessment

to gather evidence of what learners know, understand and can do

Definition - AoL or SA

“process by which (1) evidence is gathered in a (2) planned and systematic way in order to (3) draw inferences about their learners’ learning, based on their professional judgment, and to (4) report at a particular time on learners’ achievements”

(Adapted Assessment Reform Group - ARG, 2003, p. 4).

Definition - AoL/SA

- Assessment OF Learning - also known as Summative Assessment
- Conducted at the end of a programme, course or period of learning to evaluate learner performance
- Usually involves a standardised process
- Marks are recorded
- Used for progression, certification, monitoring and evaluation

A o L - Purpose

- The purpose of summative assessment is to produce a shared meaning among all users (Christodoulou, 2017).
- That is any user (lecturer, students, parent, administrators, researchers) will have the same understanding of what a specific score on a test or an assignment means.
- **EXAMPLE**
 - we all understand that a score of 30% is a low score and it means that the student performed poorly on the test as he/she was not able to correctly respond to most of the questions.
 - **REMEMBER** - it does not provide us reasons for performance

Definition - AfL

- “is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by students, their peers & lecturers to decide: **(1)** where the students are in their learning; **(2)** where they need to go; and **(3)** how best to get there”.

Assessment Reform Group (2002)



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A for L - practice

- Two types of A **FOR** L evidence lectures use to improve students' knowledge, understanding and skills
 1. During the lecture
 2. After/Before the lecture
- Evidence used during the lecture - we call it FORMATIVE Assessment
- Evidence used after/before the lecture - we call it FORMATIVE use of SUMMATIVE results

Note: Single lecture can be presented over multiple periods/sessions



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A f L - Purpose

- The purpose of assessment for learning is to produce **useful consequences for lecturers and students** that will provide information on what to do next (Christodoulou, 2017)
- That is:
 - Lecturer will know what they should do to support students improve knowledge, understanding and/or skills;
 - Students will know they need to do to improve their 'learning';
 - Involves BOTH lecturers and students;
 - Can be applied:
 - DURING the lecture session;
 - Before/after lecturers

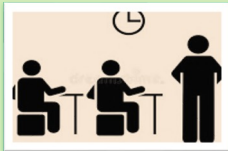

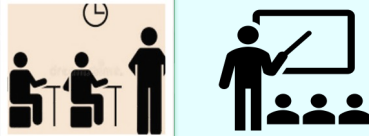
Definition - Formative Assessment

- Evidence about learner achievement that is elicited, interpreted, and used by lecturers, students, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction (Black & Wiliam, 2009)
 - Evidence obtained DURING the lesson
 - Not for marks
 - Use to support students improve knowledge, understanding and skill
 - **IF NOT ACTED UPON - it is AWT**
 - **ASSESSMENT for WASTING TIME**

Definition - Formative use of summative evidence Assessment

- Refers to the use of summative assessment results for supporting the teaching and learning process
 - Evidence obtained AFTER assessment administered
 - Usually based on secondary analysis
 - Used at lecture, department, University levels
 - **IF NOT ACTED UPON - it is AWT**
 - **ASSESSMENT for WASTING TIME**

Common Understanding of Assessment

		
Summative Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AFTER a Unit of content	FORMATIVE Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DURING Teaching & Learning Process<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No marks,• Immediate feedback	FORMATIVE Use of Summative Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of summative results:• Feedback;• Improve teaching
Purpose: SHARED meaning	Purpose: Actionable next steps	
Assessment OF learning	Assessment FOR Learning	
No Action: AWT - Assessment for waiting time		



Example - FA vs SA vs FUSA



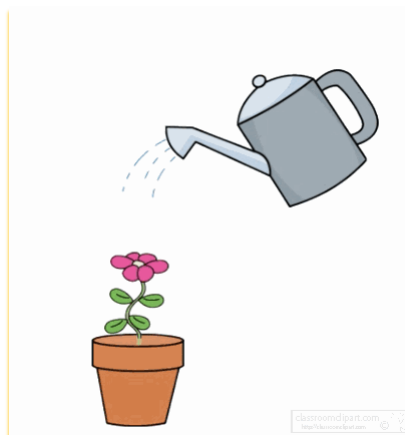
YOU are making vegetable soup for your family.

1. The minute you serve the soup, and family taste it - **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT** - family tells you that the salt is not enough, or the carrots are too hard
2. While YOUR are BUSY making the soup and YOU taste it – if salt is lacking or vegetables are too hard **AND you act on this information BEFORE** you serve the soup – i.e. add more salt or let the vegetables cook a bit longer - **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**.

REMEMBER - if you DO NOT USE the new information, it is NOT formative assessment - **AFWT Assessment for Wasting Time**)

3. NOW – after you serve your soup and you get feedback - salt was not enough or the carrots were too hard; the **NEXT time** you make soup **AND** you use this information – i.e. add enough salt or make sure the carrots are cooked – that is **FORMATIVE USE of SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Formative vs Summative Assessment

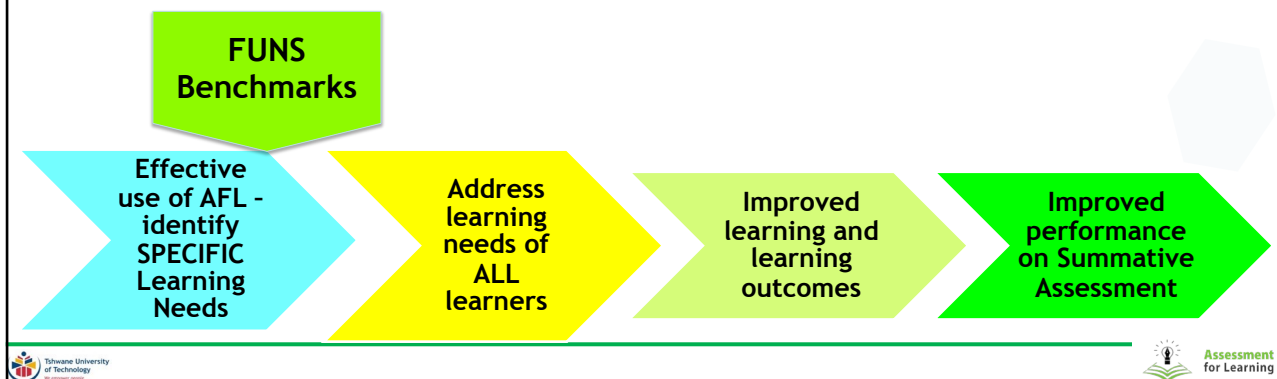


Imagine our learners as plants:

- **Summative assessment** means only measuring and monitoring the plants - **it does NOT affect growth**
- **Formative assessment** means watering and feeding the plants - **it directly affects growth**

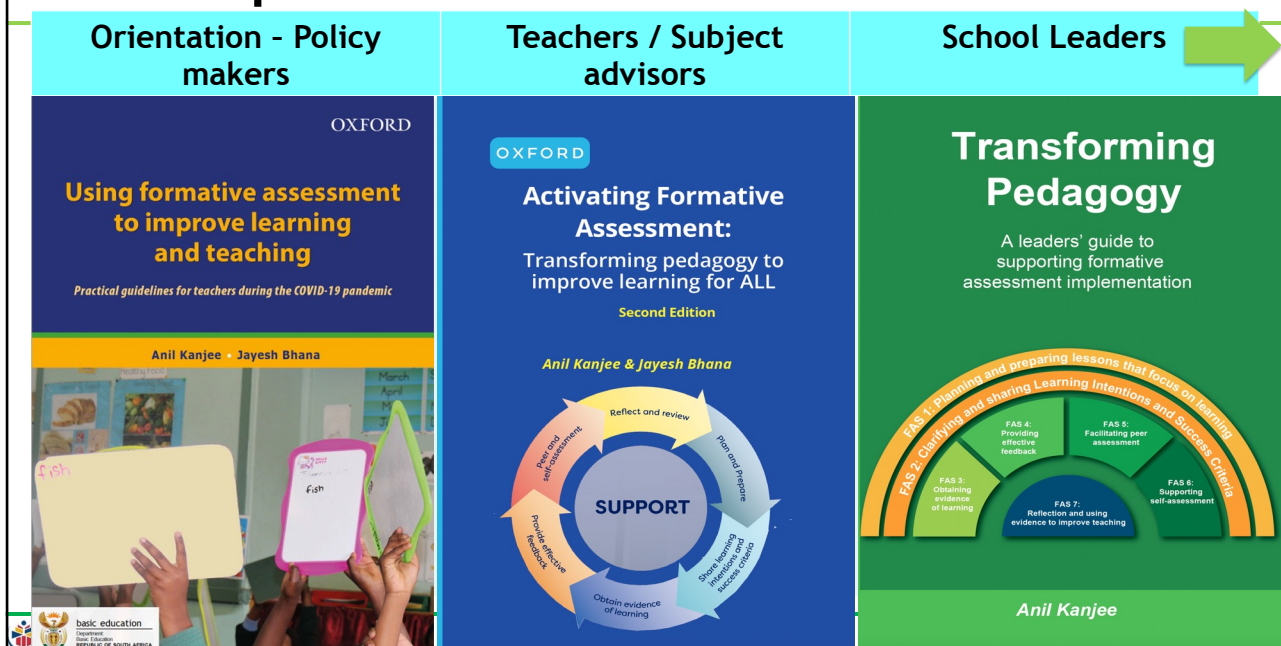
Effective use of AfL approach

- AfL approach empowers teachers to apply specific strategies and techniques to identify, and address, the learning needs of ALL learners.



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Develop our OWN material for our context



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Material content based on local Context

Relevant theory

Practical exemplars

Activating Formative Assessment: Transforming pedagogy to improve learning for ALL

Second Edition

Anil Kanjee & Jayesh Bhana



Section 4 Application of formative assessment strategies and techniques

This section introduces each of the seven formative assessment strategies, along with appropriate techniques that can be applied in the classroom. This section is intended as a brief introduction only, and includes exercises, exemplars as well as practical scenarios to demonstrate the application of the strategies and techniques.

NOTE

You will need more details and information to fully understand and effectively apply the formative assessment approach in your classroom.

4.1 FAS 1: Planning and preparing lessons that focus on learning

Using formative assessment in a classroom requires careful planning and preparation. This also applies to lessons conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, now a revised curriculum specified in the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) serves as the basis for all planning and preparation.

Learning Objectives	Assessment Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To plan and prepare effective lessons. To review the template provided to use formative assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify "the learning" listed in CAPS (ATPs). I can explain how the template should be used to plan and prepare my lesson.

Planning and preparation for any lesson will mean:

- Examining the revised ATPs to determine exactly what learners need to learn. You may need to review the CAPS document for additional information.
- Identifying the objectives and assessment criteria for the topic (this information may not always be stated).
- Specifying activities that will be used, and how these will be applied.
- Writing the higher order thinking questions that will be used in the lesson.
- Listing the resources required and how these will be applied.
- Identifying which techniques and strategies will or will not be used for the lesson.

Lesson plans in the FA approach are written with learners in mind.

Therefore, the plan must first address the question:

- What is it that learners must attain?

And only thereafter teachers ask the question:

- What must the teacher do to ensure that learners meet the lesson objectives?

To demonstrate the differences in planning and preparation for using formative assessment in the classroom we provide the two examples on the pages that follow. First, study the two exemplars in Figure 2 and Figure 3 on the next page. They show two typical lesson plans that teachers use. Next, study the template in Figure 4 on page 16 that presents a detailed lesson plan based on the formative assessment approach.

To use symbols effectively, it is important to teach learners what the symbols mean and what action is required when learners see the symbol in their work. For example:

- '...' could indicate a word missing, and learners must fill in the word.
- 'sp' could indicate a spelling error, and learners must rewrite the correct word.
- 'e' could indicate a calculation error, and the learner must correct the error.

PRACTICAL TIP

Create a chart on the wall which lists all the symbols that learners need to know.

Figure 10. Exemplar: Using symbols as feedback

This exemplar shows how symbols can be used to provide different levels of feedback.

All learners have been taught that:

(a) the 'e' means there is one error in the calculation

(b) they must find the error and

(c) they must correct the error.

$47 + 36 = (40 + 7) + (30 + 6)$ $= (40 + 30) + (7 + 6)$ $= 70 + 13$ $= 83$	$47 + 36 = (40 + 7) + (30 + 6)$ $= (40 + 30) + (7 + 6)$ $= 70 + 14$ $= 84$	$47 + 36 = (40 + 7) + (30 + 6)$ $= (40 + 30) + (7 + 6)$ $= 70 + 14$ $= 84$
--	--	--

a. Feedback showing learners

b. Feedback guiding learners

c. Feedback guiding learners

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Material content based on local Context

Lesson templates

Practical Scenarios

Reflection activities

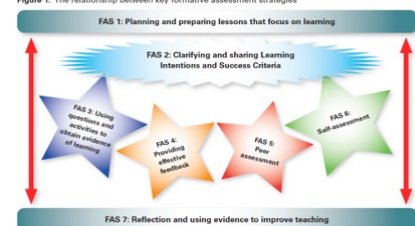
Figure 4. Template for a formative assessment lesson

Lesson planning and preparation schedule	
Subject	Duration
Grade	Date
Topic	
Concept (if applicable)	
Glossary	
What to remember from previous lessons?	
Learning Intentions	Success Criteria
What are we learning to (WALT):	What I'm looking for (WILF):
Activities that learners will be doing (e.g. worksheet, discussion, group work, etc.):	
How will I share LI and SC with learners?	How will I check if learners understand the LI and SC?
How and when will I remind my learners about the LI and SC?	How will I check if the SC have been attained before end of the lesson?
What formative assessment techniques am I going to use in this lesson?	
QUESTIONING	FEEDBACK
Higher order questions I will ask:	Provide written feedback for this lesson
	My feedback will focus on:
Learners will use the following assessment:	Self Peer Not for this lesson
	Plan regarding peer and self-assessment

Practical Scenario 1: Application of FAS 2 in practice

Teacher and learner practices/dialogue	Rationale
<p>Ms Zondo asked the class to settle down while she pasted the charts with the LI and SC on one side of the board.</p> <p>She went to the back of the classroom to check whether the LI and SC were visible and clear to the learners.</p> <p>She then went to the front of the class.</p> <p>T – Class, I want all of you to read what is on the charts, OK?</p> <p>La – Yes, Ma'am.</p> <p>T – Okay, good. Please read out the LI.</p> <p>La – All learners read out the LI.</p> <p>T – Okay, now I want all of you to read out the SC.</p> <p>La – All learners read out the SC.</p> <p>T – Okay, now read the LI and the SC again.</p> <p>La – All learners read out the LI and SC.</p> <p>T – Jeanette, please explain the LI using your own words.</p> <p>La – Ma'am, I think we are going to learn to add numbers.</p> <p>T – Please give more details, Jeanette? Read the LI again.</p> <p>La – Add 3-digit numbers to 2-digit numbers, Ma'am.</p> <p>T – ... and how are we going to do it?</p> <p>La – We are going to use the breakdown method.</p> <p>T – Good, Jeanette. Okay class, what are we learning today?</p> <p>La – Repeat the LI.</p> <p>Ms Zondo selects a name stick and puts the stick back.</p> <p>T – Zama, how many SC are there for today's lesson?</p> <p>La – Ma'am, there are five.</p> <p>T – Okay, please read the first SC out for the class.</p> <p>La – Break down 3-digit numbers into hundreds, tens and units.</p> <p>T – Zama what do we always start with when reading our SC?</p> <p>La – We must say "I can" Ma'am.</p> <p>T – Okay – now read the SC again starting with "I can".</p> <p>La – I can break down 3-digit numbers into hundreds, tens, and units.</p> <p>T – Jeanette name stick (Moloi) Please read out the second SC.</p> <p>La – I can break down the 2-digit number into tens and units.</p> <p>T – Good. Can anyone tell me the difference between the first and second SC?</p> <p>Ms Zondo selects name sticks to get other learners to read and understand the success criteria. Once T is happy that all learners know the LI and SC, she continues with the lesson.</p>	<p>T keeps the chart on the side of board for the entire lesson.</p> <p>T checks whether the LI and SC are visible to all learners in the class.</p> <p>T uses "Read-aloud" technique to get all learners to read the LI and SC.</p> <p>T repeats the process.</p> <p>Name sticks were prepared by teacher at the beginning of the year (see Section 3.2).</p> <p>T checks if learners understood the LI. If not, she gives an accurate response and T asked L to read the LI again and emphasised the matter of 3-digit and 2-digit numbers and the method used.</p> <p>T reinforces LI by asking the whole class to read the LI aloud.</p> <p>T uses name sticks to randomly select different learners to read out each SC.</p> <p>T emphasises that there are five SC.</p> <p>T ensures that Ls use "I can" before every SC to emphasise that the learners need to produce the evidence.</p> <p>T wants to ensure that the learners are aware of the different evidence required for the first and second SC.</p>

Figure 1. The relationship between key formative assessment strategies



Reflection activity

1. Based on your current understanding of the seven strategies, which ONE do YOU think is most important? Explain why.

2. Review Figure 1 and indicate how YOU think the seven strategies will impact your teaching.

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Unique set of classroom posters

Assessment for Learning Professional Development Programme

The Assessment for Learning Professional Development Programme is an initiative of the Thwane South and Thwane West districts. The primary purpose of the Programme is to support learners, teachers, school leaders and district officials to address the challenges of quality and equity in the schools. The programme is implemented in partnership with the School of Education, Thwane University of Technology (TUT). Funding for the programme has been received from the:

- Zime Foundation
- National Research Foundation

Key Objectives

- To enhance teacher knowledge and practice to the effective use of assessment for identifying and addressing specific learning needs of all learners.
- To determine the extent to which Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies and techniques are applicable to the South African context.
- To develop individual professional and development plans for teachers, school leaders and district officials to improve learning and teaching.
- To explore options for scaling up effective practice based professional development programmes.
- To monitor, evaluate, respond to the South African context (language, diversity, and culture) to implement professional development programmes.
- To conduct research within a reflective and enabling assessment system framework.

Professional Development Approach

The programme is implemented through a Professional Development Approach, which is a cyclical process of learning, reflection, and action. It involves the following steps:

1. **Learning**: Teachers and school leaders participate in professional development activities, including workshops, seminars, and peer observations.
2. **Reflection**: Teachers and school leaders reflect on their learning and practice, identifying areas for improvement.
3. **Action**: Teachers and school leaders implement changes to their practice based on their reflection.

Theory of Change

The programme is based on a Theory of Change, which outlines the path from professional development to improved learning outcomes. The path is as follows:

Professional Development → Improved Teacher Knowledge and Skills → Improved Teacher Practice → Improved Learning Outcomes

Implementation plan for that programme

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AfL Strategies

- **Self-reflection**: Teachers reflect on their own practice and identify areas for improvement.
- **Peer observation**: Teachers observe each other's practice and provide feedback.
- **Peer assessment**: Teachers assess each other's work and provide feedback.
- **Self-assessment**: Teachers assess their own work and provide feedback.
- **Formative assessment**: Teachers use assessment to identify areas for improvement.
- **Summative assessment**: Teachers use assessment to evaluate learning outcomes.

Responses to teachers

Teachers can use the following strategies to respond to their learners:

- **Thumbs Up/Down**: Learners use their thumbs to indicate their level of understanding.
- **Phone a friend**: Learners call another learner to assist them.
- **Robots cards**: Learners use robots to show their level of understanding.
- **Exit / Entrance ticket**: Learners write a response on a piece of paper and hand it to the teacher before they leave the class or before they enter class.

Formative Assessment Professional Development Programme

FA2: Clarify, share, and understand intentions and criteria for learning

LEARNING INTENTIONS (LI) tell learners what they are going to know, understand and do in the lesson

Tips for writing LI

- Focus on key concepts that learners must know, understand or do
- New concept can be learnt in ONE lesson
- Use learner friendly language
- Begin with: We Are Learning To – (WALT)

Classroom Share and Clarify

- Write LI & SC on chart or flip chart
- Ensure LI & SC are visible to all learners
- Whole class read out LI & SC
- Pair learners to read out LI & SC
- Learners write LI & SC in their notebooks
- Show learners what the SC look like

Refer to LI and SC

- Read LI and SC
- Whole class to read out LI and SC
- Check if SC achieved at the end of the lesson
- Check tasks completed by learners
- Select learners to explain their work
- Use mini-boards
- Use exit tickets

SUCCESS CRITERIA (SC) tell learners what evidence they need to show in order to know if they have achieved the learning intention

Tips for writing SC

- Ensure SC are linked to the LI
- SC must be specific to an activity
- Use learner friendly language
- Begin with: What I am looking for (WILF) or I can

FA6: Guiding learners to improve their own learning (Self-assessment)

Self-assessment is the process where a learner reviews her/his own work, using Success Criteria to identify areas of improvement

Stage 1: Define Success Criteria

- Show learners EXAMPLES of good quality work i.e. where the SC have been achieved

Stage 2: Apply Success Criteria

- Teach learners how to use SC in assessing their own work
- Let learners practice it a few times
- Model the process of Self-assessment for learners
- Schedule time for learners to assess their own work
- Encourage learners to assess independently as often as possible

Stage 3: Support learners during self-assessment to develop assessment literacy

- Provide support while learners assess their own work
- Provide effective feedback to develop assessment literacy







Stage 4: Set goals and develop action plan

- Show learners how to set individual goals and plan for improvement
- Encourage learner self-reflection

Steps for classroom application

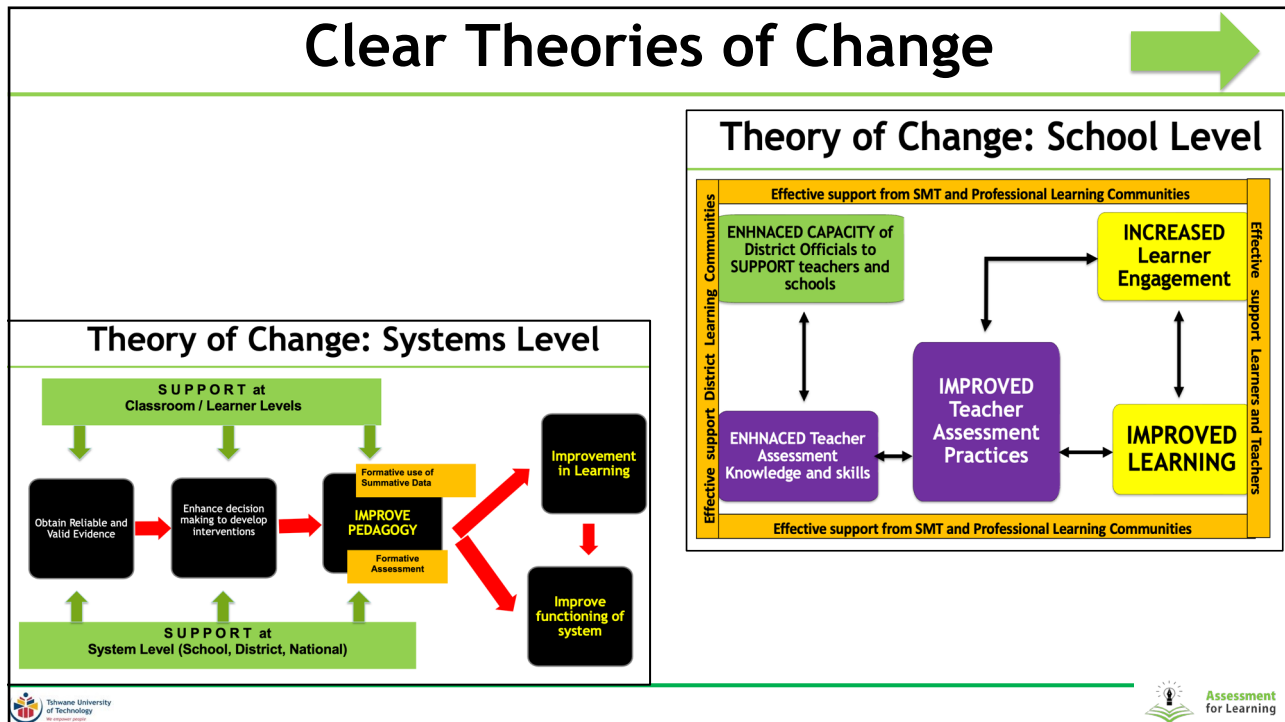
Steps	Self-assessment Examples
1. Assess level of understanding against success criteria.	Use traffic light dots (●●●) Use symbols (●●●)
2. Identify one or two successes linked to success criteria	The learner can also reflect on her or his own work and say: • Something I did well was ... • I am strong at ...
3. Learners identify a place/or places for improvement linked to success criteria	The learner also identifies one or more aspects that could be improved: • I could get some help with ... • The criteria I have missed are ...
4. Learners set a goal for improvement linked to success criteria	The learners set her or his goals for improvement: • I should consider changing ... • A next step for me could be ...

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Key principles for ACTION -					
					
NO THATA MA CHANCE	ASINA (NO) DISPRIN	WALKING THE SAME ROAD	EACH ONE TEACH ONE	JUMP INTO THE POOL	REPORTING as RECIPES
Planning, preparation, Piloting and M&EL	Evidence- based decision making	COMMON understanding and Purpose	New modes of Collaboration and Support	Effective Professional Develop. Model	Reporting to promote actionable next steps

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Clear Theories of Change



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FA Framework developed for SA context

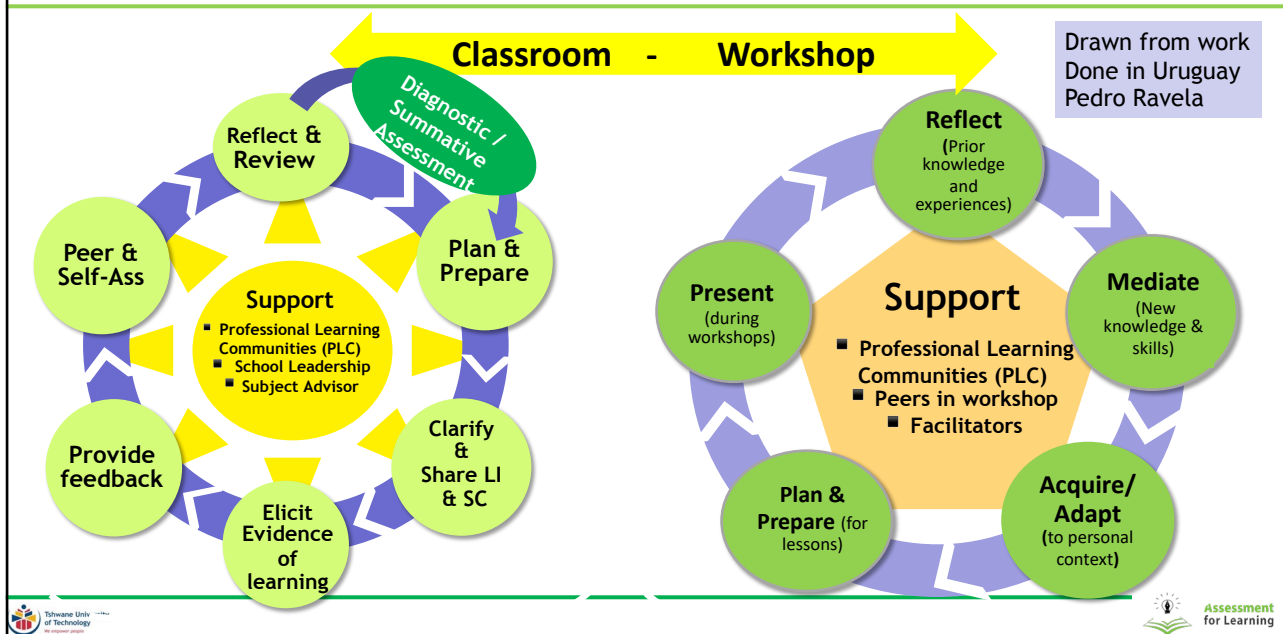
Critical pedagogical practice

	Where the learner is going?	Where the learner is?	How to get there?	What has been achieved?
Teacher	FAS2: Clarify and share learning intentions and success criteria	FAS3: Engineering effective discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning	FAS1: Planning and Preparation FAS4: Providing feedback that moves learners forward	FAS7: Reflection and Review
Peer	FAS2: Clarify and share learning intentions and success criteria	FAS5: Activating students as learning resources for one another		FAS7: Reflection and Review
Student	FAS2: Clarify and share learning intentions and success criteria	FAS6: Activating students as owners of their own learning		FAS7: Reflection and Review

Adapted from Wiliam & Thompson (2007)

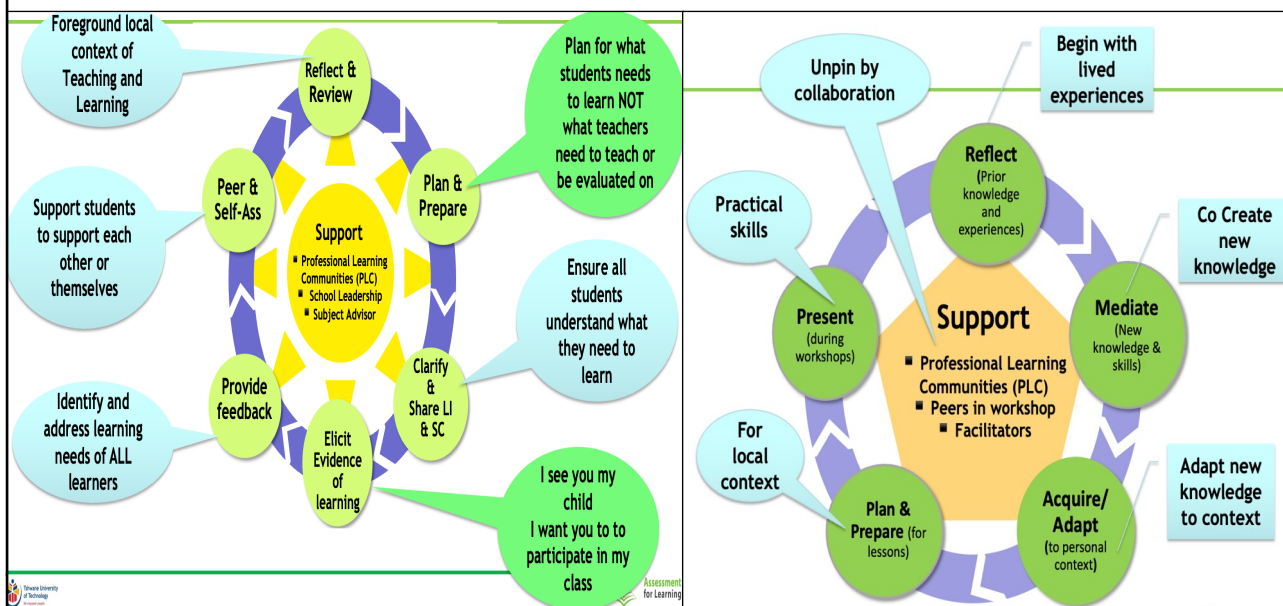
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ReMAPS Professional Development Model

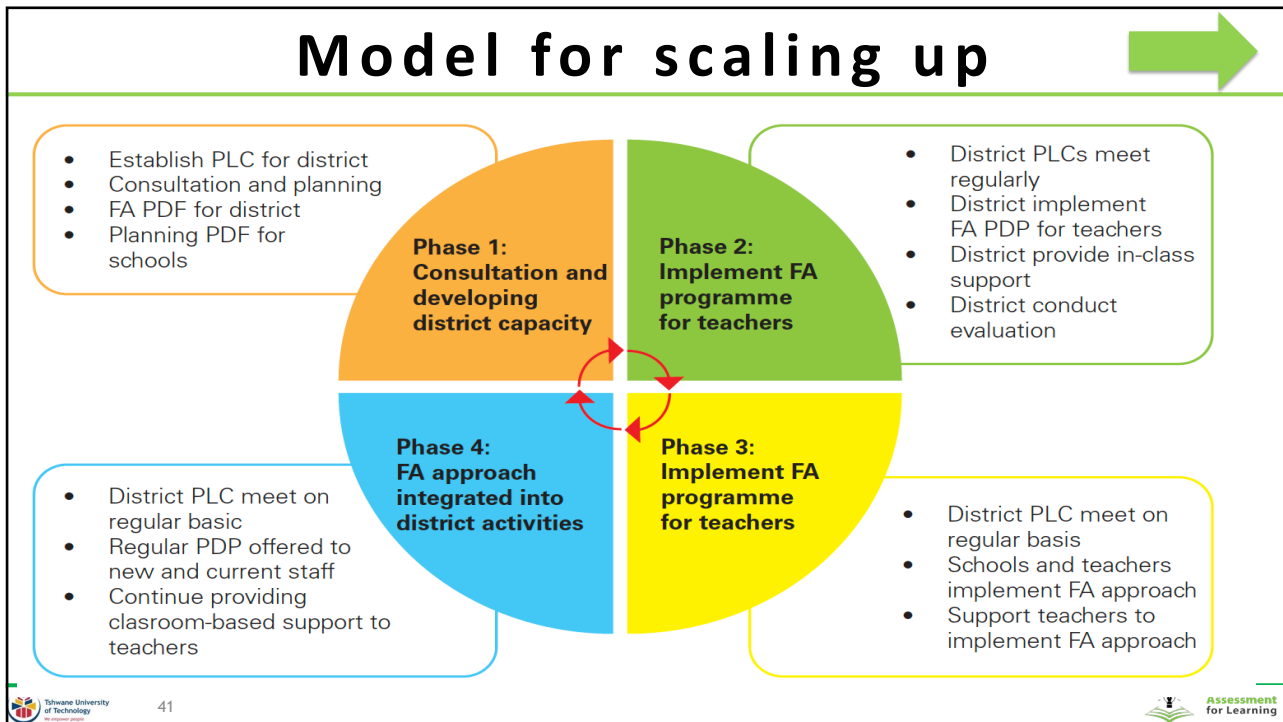


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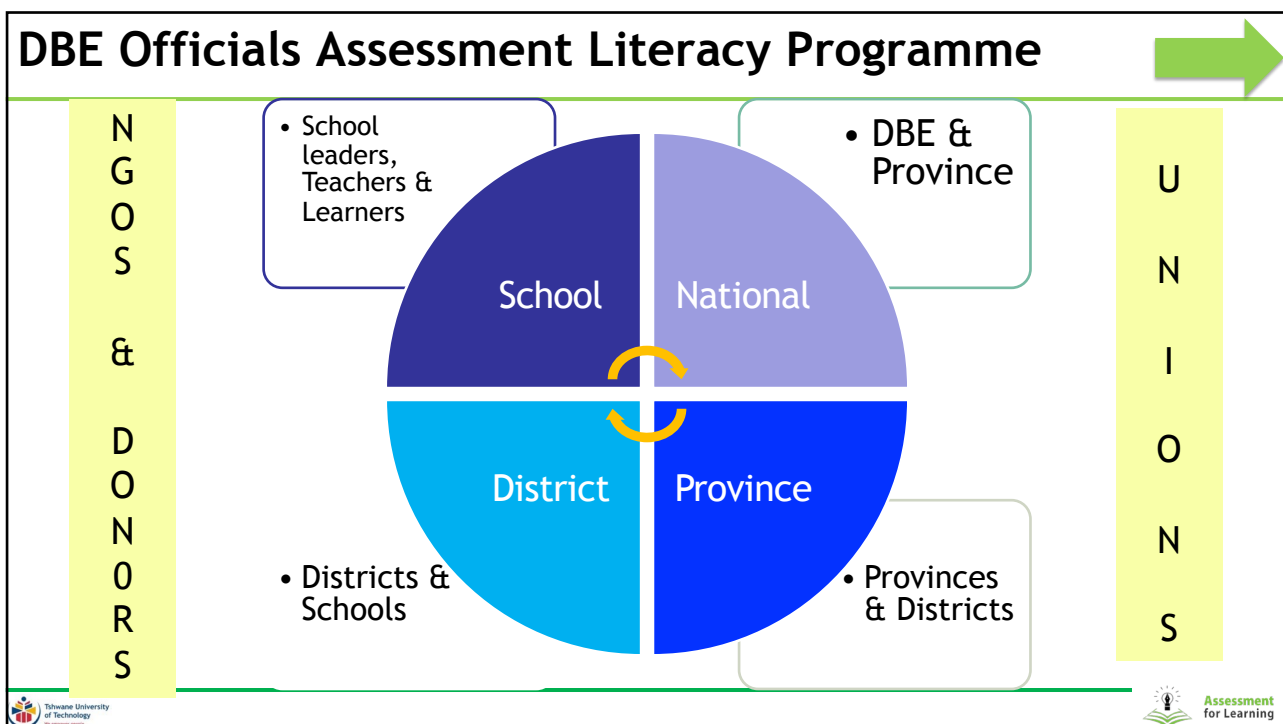
Aligning to Ubuntu principles



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Key principles for ACTION

					
NO THATA MA CHANCE	ASINA (NO) DISPRIN	WALKING THE SAME ROAD	EACH ONE TEACH ONE	JUMP INTO THE POOL	REPORTING as RECIPES
Planning, preparation, Piloting and M&EL	Evidence- based decision making	COMMON understanding and Purpose	New modes of Collaboration and Support	Effective Professional Develop. Model	Reporting to promote actionable next steps

RATING CODE	PERCENTAGE	DESCRIPTOR
Level 1	0-29	Not achieved
Level 2	30-39	Elementary achievement
Level 3	40-49	Moderate achievement
Level 4	50-59	Adequate achievement
Level 5	60-69	Substantial achievement
Level 6	70-79	Meritorious achievement
Level 7	80-100	Outstanding achievement

What does it mean if a learner is at level 3 or 4?
What is it that this learner knows and can do?

Performance Level Reporting

- Learner knowledge & Skills
- Implications for Teachers
- Implications for Learners

(Early Learning National Assessment Report (ELNA), 2024; and Systemic Evaluation Report, 2024)



Level Name	Level Definition	Implications for supporting learners	Implications for teaching
Emerging	Learners at this level are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to develop the grade-level foundational knowledge and skills collaborating with teachers and peers to construct new knowledge and skills 	Learners may benefit from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extensive guidance extensive support 	Activities and tasks should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on building foundational skills provide scaffold and detailed feedback offer ample opportunities to apply knowledge in real-world contexts
Evolving	Learners at this level are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> constructing the required grade-level knowledge and skills adapting their understanding and application of knowledge and skills through interactions with teachers and peers 	Learners may benefit from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional guidance targeted support 	Activities and tasks should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> build on existing knowledge and skills address specific areas of weakness focus on practical opportunities in applying knowledge to real-world contexts
Enhancing	Learners at this level are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrating understanding and skills required at the grade-level applying their knowledge and skills in authentic contexts moving towards independent learning 	Learners may benefit from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> moderate guidance targeted support 	Activities and tasks should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide tasks that encourage critical thinking, and problem-solving support the application of knowledge and skills in real-world contexts
Extending	Learners at this level are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrating advanced understanding of knowledge and skills applying skills in innovative and creative ways in increasingly complex contexts able to learn independently 	Learners may benefit from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited guidance limited support 	Activities and tasks should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be more challenging for independent exploration and self-assessment focus on fostering creativity to apply knowledge and skills novel and challenging contexts

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ELNA Performance Levels

Emerging	Evolving	Enhancing	Extending
A learner at this level can:	A learner at this level can, in addition to skills and knowledge in the lower PLs:	A learner at this level can, in addition to skills and knowledge in the lower PLs:	A learner at this level can, in addition to skills and knowledge in the lower PLs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify some characters in the story. Understand the basic concepts of the book. Identify pictures. Recalls some details of a story. Match some words to familiar pictures in print. Only use pictures to point at when reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the main characters in the story. Understand the concept of the book. Interpret pictures. Listen to stories read and answer questions. Recall several details of a story read Make links to their own experience when reading with the teacher. Match most words to familiar pictures in print such as word-picture puzzles. 	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss characters in the story. Understand the concept of book- cover, front, and back. Interpret pictures to make up own story. Listen to and discuss stories read. Recall details and state main idea of a story read. Make links to similar situations when reading with the teacher. Hold the book the right way up and turn pages correctly Match all words to familiar pictures in print such as word-picture puzzles. Start to make use of words rather than pictures when reading. Phonics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish aurally between different sounds especially at the beginning of words. Relate sounds to letters and words. Recognise aurally and visually some initial consonants and vowels. Recognise sounds at the beginning of all words. Distinguish aurally sounds at the beginning of some words: friends' names or names of animals. Divide multi-syllabic words into syllables: pancake (2 syllables/ 3 syllables) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and describe characters in the story. Understand the concept of book-cover, front, back, and title. Interpret pictures to make up own stories with a beginning, middle and end. Listen to and discuss stories and other texts read or told aloud Recall details and state main idea and answer a range of questions based on the story read Make links to similar situations when reading with a teacher and give own opinion Match words to unfamiliar pictures in print such as word-picture puzzles Point at words rather than pictures when reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish aurally between different initial, middle and end sounds of words. Relate sounds to all letters and words. Recognise aurally and visually all initial consonants and vowels. Build words using sounds learnt. Distinguish aurally sounds at the beginning of all words/ distinguish aurally between different initial sounds of words. Divide multi-syllabic words/ common words into syllables: crocodile (3 syllables)



Early Learning National Assessment Report (ELNA), 2024, p. 10)



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DBE Early Grade Reading Benchmark

DBE Early Grade Reading Fluency Benchmarks			
Reading Fluency outcomes expected by the end of each grade's academic year			
Home Language	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
	Letter Sound Knowledge (LSK)	Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)
Afrikaans	40 CLSPM	45 CWPM	60 CWPM
English	40 CLSPM	50 CWPM	70 CWPM
Tshivenda	40 CLSPM	35 CWPM	55 CWPM
Xitsonga	40 CLSPM	35 CWPM	55 CWPM
IsiNdebele	40 CLSPM	20 CWPM	35 CWPM
IsiZulu	40 CLSPM	20 CWPM	35 CWPM
IsiXhosa	40 CLSPM	20 CWPM	35 CWPM
Siswati	40 CLSPM	20 CWPM	35 CWPM
Sepedi	40 CLSPM	40 CWPM	60 CWPM
Sesotho	40 CLSPM	40 CWPM	60 CWPM
Setswana	40 CLSPM	40 CWPM	60 CWPM
English First Additional Language	N/A	30 CWPM	50 CWPM

FUNS Draft Technical re
2025, p.19



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Addressing Equity Goals - Focus on improvement

Level	Emerging		Evolving		Enhancing		Extending	
	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %
School	23	14	43	28	26	38	8	20
Province	11	5	48	31	23	42	18	22
Country	18	10	39	27	28	44	15	19

Equity Focus –

- Getting more learners from the Not Achieved level into the Partially Achieved
 - Get more learners from Partially Achieved into Achieved
 - Also report by School poverty levels or Urban-Rural
- Emphasis on learners who need 'most' assistance

Moving from NA to PA levels

(RED to Yellow to Green & Blue)



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WAY FORWARD

Next Steps

‘Acknowledge PD models piloted, discussions and upcoming reports’

- **Additional studies/Analysis**
 - e.g Gender gaps – analysis to identify DIF
- **Effective reporting and dissemination of assessment results**
 - Assessment Literacy Enhancement (ALITE) Programme – Officials
 - Integrate benchmarks into application of the DBE’s Assessment for Learning National Pedagogical Strategy - effective Professional Development Programmes
 - Subject advisors, School leaders,, Teachers AND Learners
- **Alignment with other National Assessment Studies –**
 - Systemic Evaluation , ELNA, Province Assessments; MTBBE Testing?, Grade 9 Testing?
- **Review and incorporate the use of AI**
 - Research study option
- **Introduce benchmarks/tools to student teachers and in ITEP**
 - University Lecturers – improve their practices AND teaching of assessment

Concluding Remark - 1

Until we **DIRECTLY** support the pedagogical practices to improve learning for ALL,
The value of these benchmarks **RISK** being the same as **MOST** of our LSAS;
Great data, lovely ideas, fantastic reports
but limited impact on **IMPROVING LEARNING**
ESPECIALLY learning for children from poor
and marginalised communities

FA Technique - Exit Ticket

Write a whatsapp to yourself

What is that I CAN DO to
enhance the use of assessment
to improve **LEARNING** for ALL?

References

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Dankie
Enkosi
Ha khensa
Re a leboga
Ro livhuha
Siyabonga
Siyathokoza
Thank you

Questions ?
Suggestions !
Comments !