Science of Teaching

Assessment-Informed Instruction: Guiding Principles Checklist

This document offers a set of guidelines in the form of a checklist to aid governments, implementing partners, and other stakeholders in evaluating their assessment systems and assessment-informed instruction. It is intended as a companion to the How-to Guide on Assessment-Informed Instruction: Classroom Level and System Level. The checklist is divided into two parts: Part 1 focuses on classroom-level assessment, while Part 2 focuses on system-level assessment.

PART 1: Classroom-Level Assessment

Classroom-level assessment is necessary for improving the quality of teaching, increasing accountability for student learning, and ensuring more equitable improvements in performance. Assessment can tell us how well and how broadly the intended learning outcomes are being met. It provides time-sensitive information on student progress and promotes equity when used to identify and address gaps in students' learning. When used constructively, assessment results serve to inform refinements to teachers' instructional approaches to improve learning outcomes and offer effective remediation to those in need.

KEY TERMS

KEY TERM	EXPLANATION
Formative assessment	Assessment for the purpose of gauging student learning progress and, consequently, adapting instruction (or content, materials, training, support, etc.) in order to meet students' needs. More information on formative assessment can be found here.
Continuous (formative) assessment	Ongoing, often informal, formative assessment that takes place on a regular basis (daily, weekly, monthly), is directly linked to the instructional focus of a specific class, and is embedded into the instructional activities. It can take many forms as the teacher monitors students' understanding of a topic and mastery of target skills.
Summative assessment / Assessment *of* learning	End-of-unit assessment conducted at fixed points in the academic program for the purpose of evaluating what students have learned against the curricular learning goals for the given period.
Assessment *for* learning	The process of using assessment data to evaluate and improve teaching and learning. While the data come primarily from formative assessment, data from summative assessments can also be used to inform next steps or system improvements.
Universal design for learning (UDL)	A framework intended to optimize teaching and learning for children of all needs and abilities, especially children with disabilities. Guidance on how to incorporate UDL principles into early grade reading programs can be found here.

Classroom-Level Assessment Checklist

What kind of national assessment framework or policy guides assessment in schools?	
	There is a national assessment framework or policy that addresses both formative and summative assessment.
	There is alignment between assessments at different levels.
	The policy has clear pathways and procedures for using assessment data to improve learning (assessment for learning).
What kind of summative assessments (assessment *of* learning) are present?	
	Summative assessments are conducted at regular intervals in all grade levels.
	Summative assessments are directly aligned to curriculum content and standards and measure the degree of final achievement of those standards at the end of regular periods.
	All students (including poorer-performing ones) take the summative assessments.
	Summative assessments and administration practices are gender sensitive and inclusive.
What kind of formative assessment practices (assessment *for* learning) are present?	
	Teachers regularly conduct formative assessment in a variety of ways in each subject matter that they teach.
	Formative assessment tasks are directly aligned to curriculum content and standards, and they measure the ongoing progress toward achievement of those standards.
	The assessments and administration practices are gender sensitive and inclusive.
What kind of resources are there for teachers to conduct formative assessment?	
	Context-appropriate formative assessment and remediation activities are embedded in the teaching and learning materials and are directly tied to the learning objectives.
	Adequate time is allocated in the daily and weekly schedule for formative assessment and remediation.
	Teachers are given training and guidance on a variety of appropriate formative assessment techniques that are simple, feasible, and efficient, with careful consideration given to the preparation and time required to implement them. (Sample techniques can be found in the How-to Guide pages 8–9.)
	Teachers are given training and guidance on how to track formative assessment results in a simple and efficient way that does not impose an undue burden on them, ideally using technology. (See the How-to Guide pages 12–13, as well as Annex 1 at the end of this checklist.)
	Teachers are given training and guidance for incorporating UDL principles into assessment.
	Teachers have adequate time, skill, and support to carry out formative assessment activities regularly and effectively.

	Teachers are given training and guidance on how to interpret the results of various formative assessment tasks and translate them directly into next steps.
	Teachers are given training and guidance on a variety of simple, effective, and feasible remediation techniques.
	Teachers are given training and guidance on how to effectively manage differentiated remediation, including for large class sizes.
	The level of formative assessment that teachers are expected to implement is tailored to their capacity/readiness and the available resources in their context.
	The pre-service teacher education program adequately trains teachers on classroom assessment. (See the How-to Guide page 14.)
	Teachers are given practical training and opportunities to practice and improve their use of formative assessment during in-service training sessions. (See the How-to Guide pages 14–15.)
	Coaches (and teacher communities of practice) regularly discuss assessment techniques and results with teachers and provide guidance on how to remediate students in response to the results. (See the How-to Guide page 15.)

PART 2: System-Level Assessment

System-level assessment is a valuable tool for schools, governments, and other stakeholders to gauge the effectiveness of student learning and pinpoint areas for enhancement. A well-structured system assessment is closely aligned with curriculum standards and benchmarks and offers critical insights into where gaps in learning outcomes exist, where targeted support would be most beneficial, and how instruction can be improved.

KEY TERMS

KEY TERM	EXPLANATION
System-level assessment	An assessment that provides information about all students, or a representative sample of students, regarding their performance in a certain subject.
Community-based assessment	Assessment conducted at the household level by community volunteers. Usually quick and easy to administer, community-based assessments capture foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes for both in- and out-of-school children of a wide age range. Examples include Uwezo and Aser.
Content standards	Expectations of what students should be taught at a given grade level.
Performance standards	Descriptions of what students should be able to do at a given grade level.
Benchmark	A specific assessment score that shows that a standard has been met. For example, "at the end of grade 3, students should read at least 65 correct words per minute." Examples can be found here.
Summative assessment	End-of-unit assessment conducted at fixed points in the academic program for the purpose of evaluating what students have learned against the curricular learning goals for the given period.

System-Level Assessment Checklist

What kind of system-level assessments are present within the education system?	
	There is a comprehensive national assessment framework that defines the purpose and parameters of the assessments present at all levels.
	There are national, system-level assessments that can be used to assess the quality of the education system in general.
	There are national, system-level assessments that can be used to assess the quality of early grade reading and math education.
	There are community-based assessments for foundational literacy and numeracy for both in- and out-of-school populations.
	Coaches regularly incorporate "temperature check" spot assessments into their school visits and make use of the data, at a minimum by discussing it with the teacher.
	All system-level assessments are embedded in the education system. (See the How-to Guide page 10).
What standards, benchmarks, and targets are present within the education system?	
	There are well-defined content and performance standards in the curriculum.
	There are well-defined benchmarks for foundational skills in reading and math.
	There are well-defined and realistic targets for reaching the benchmarks.
How are the system-level assessments aligned with the education system?	
	There is alignment between the assessments and the curriculum and content and performance standards.
	There is alignment between the assessments and benchmarks.
	There is alignment between the assessments and the teaching and learning materials and classroom instruction.
	The assessments at different levels are aligned with one another.
How are assessment results disseminated?	
	Education stakeholders at all levels, including teachers, have access to the assessment results relevant to their roles in a concise, user-friendly format, such as a report card or dashboard. (See a sample dashboard here.)
	Education stakeholders are able to access assessment data in a timely manner sufficient for them to take relevant action.
	Schools regularly share the results of school-level assessments with parents and the community.
	Inspectors and coaches discuss assessments results with and give actionable feedback to teachers and/or school administrators during school visits.
	Relevant education stakeholders, including teachers, receive item-level breakdowns of assessment results in order to enable them to adjust their instruction accordingly. (See example in the How-to Guide page 15.)
	The data are disaggregated by student gender, class size, language spoken at home, language of instruction, repetition of grade, and gender of teacher.
	Student assessment data are integrated into the Ministry of Education's EMIS system.

	How are the assessment results used?
	Assessment results are systematically used to inform policy and curriculum.
	Assessment results are systematically used to identify regions/schools with greater need for targeted support.
	Assessment results are systematically incorporated into the design of teacher training workshops or ongoing teacher support agendas (e.g., for coaching or communities of practice).
	There are clear guidelines on how to analyze the data and identify areas for improvement.
	There are incentives (rather than punishment) to help schools and teachers improve.
	How are the assessments designed?
	High-stakes assessments cover the breadth of the curriculum, including higher-order skills.
	Assessments focus on high-priority skills.
	Assessments have construct validity and measure the skills they are intended to measure.
	Assessments are leveled appropriately to the grade-level expectations of the students.
	Assessments are of a reasonable length and contain only enough items to fulfill the purpose of the assessment.
	Assessments designed with UDL principles in mind. (See the How-to Guide page 12.)
	Assessments are piloted and refined before general deployment.
	Assessments allow for comparisons over time and across regions.
	How are assessments embedded in the education system for long-term sustainability?
	There is a budget to cover the regular administration of the assessments, including the development of the assessments; assessor recruitment, training, and deployment; data analysis; and post-assessment data management and dissemination.

ANNEX 1: Example of Student Performance Tracker by Class

In this example, the school year consists of four periods and an end-of-grade assessment. For each period, the teacher uses the tracker to monitor how students are doing on certain key reading tasks. The tracker also indicates whether students speak the language of instruction at home. It records three scores: weak, average, and good.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE TRACKER
GRADE 1

School name: Section: Teacher's name: Language of instruction (Lol):

Province: District: EMIS code:

No.	Student name	Gender	L1 = LoI? (yes/no)	Period 1			Period 2			Period 3					Period 4					End of grade				
				Sounds	Letters and their sounds	Words	Sounds	Letters and their sounds	Words	Sounds	Letters and their sounds	Words	Text reading	Reading comprehension	Sounds	Letters and their sounds	Words	Text reading	Reading comprehension	Sounds	Letters and their sounds	Words	Text reading	Reading comprehension
1																								
2																								
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4																								
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...																								
Number of weak students (W)																								
Number average students (A)																								
Number of good students (G)																								