



HSSRC RESEARCH COUNCIL

5035

Assessment System for Learning Improvement: Going beyond ARBs

Presentation to IEP 8th Inter-Provincial Meeting
O.R. Tambo International, 21 May 2007

Matthews Makgamatha & Anil Kanjee

Sobuzi ekomwe hlatimpha a conqanwe



HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

National Education Quality Initiative

Background:

- HSRC (NEQI), JET, EPUS & PRAESA research partnership (consortium)
- Consortium agenda: ± five-year research on improving education quality in South African schools with specific reference to literacy and numeracy skills
- Consortium is funded by the Royal Netherlands Government (RNE)
- Research initiative is supported by National Department of Education

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council



HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

National Education Quality Initiative

Background (cont.):

- The Assessment System for Learning Improvement (ASLI) is a portfolio of HSRC (NEQI) projects under the RNE sponsored initiative and it consists of the following three projects:
 - Classroom Assessment Resources for Learning Improvement
 - National Assessment of Learner Achievement
 - Assessment Policies and Structures to Improve Learning

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council



HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

National Education Quality Initiative

<p>Goal</p>	<p>To improve the quality of education in South Africa to enable all learners to lead meaningful and valued lives.</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To contribute to decision-making that enhances teaching and learning in South African schools through evidence-based policy efforts.</p>
<p>Objective</p>	<p>To facilitate the implementation of an effective and integrated assessment system that provides relevant and timely information to all roleplayers so as to enhance learning in schools.</p>
<p>Aims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a assessment resources for use at the learner and classroom levels to improve learning and teaching • To design and implement a Grade 9 national assessment study leading to a framework for monitoring the functioning of education system at the end of the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phases. • To review current assessment policies (legislation, regulation), practices and structures at all levels of the system (classrooms, schools, districts, provinces and nationally)

National Education Quality Initiative

Previous work

NEQI builds on previous work conducted at the HSRC on assessment and quality including the:

- Quality Learning Project,
- Classroom Assessment Resource Banks,
- National Assessment for Learning Achievement study,
- 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS 2003),
- Grades 3 and 6 Systemic Evaluations (national assessments),
- Monitoring Learning Achievement Project,
- Child Friendly Schools Indicators project,
- District-wide Reading Assessment Program, and the
- Computer Administered Testing System.

National Education Quality Initiative

Assumptions

- Enhancing learning and learner performance is the fundamental goal and the primary responsibility of all education officials as well as teachers and principals.
- The primary aim of developing an effective assessment system is to provide timely, relevant, and useful information to all roleplayers for use in enhancing learner performance.
- The availability of timely and relevant information as an outcome of an effective assessment system enables key decision makers in the systems (learners, parents, teachers, education officials, community members, donors, academics) to make informed choices to create a conducive environment to enhance learning.
- Teachers are the most critical roleplayers in enhancing student learning and must be supported through training programmes, materials development and provision of appropriate tools.
- Improved learner-teacher interactions, in particular, relevant feedback provided to learners within the classroom is essential for enhancing learning and learner performance.
- A systems approach that takes into account that key policy goals of access, equity and efficiency for monitoring the functioning of the education system is essential to improving education quality and enhancing learning.
- Local ownership and participation is critical to the success of any intervention programs.
- Sustainability of any intervention depends on adequate capacity at all levels of the system.
- An effective assessment system is sustainable, cost-effective, easy to use, provides timely and relevant information, and is the outcome of robust and rigorous evidence.

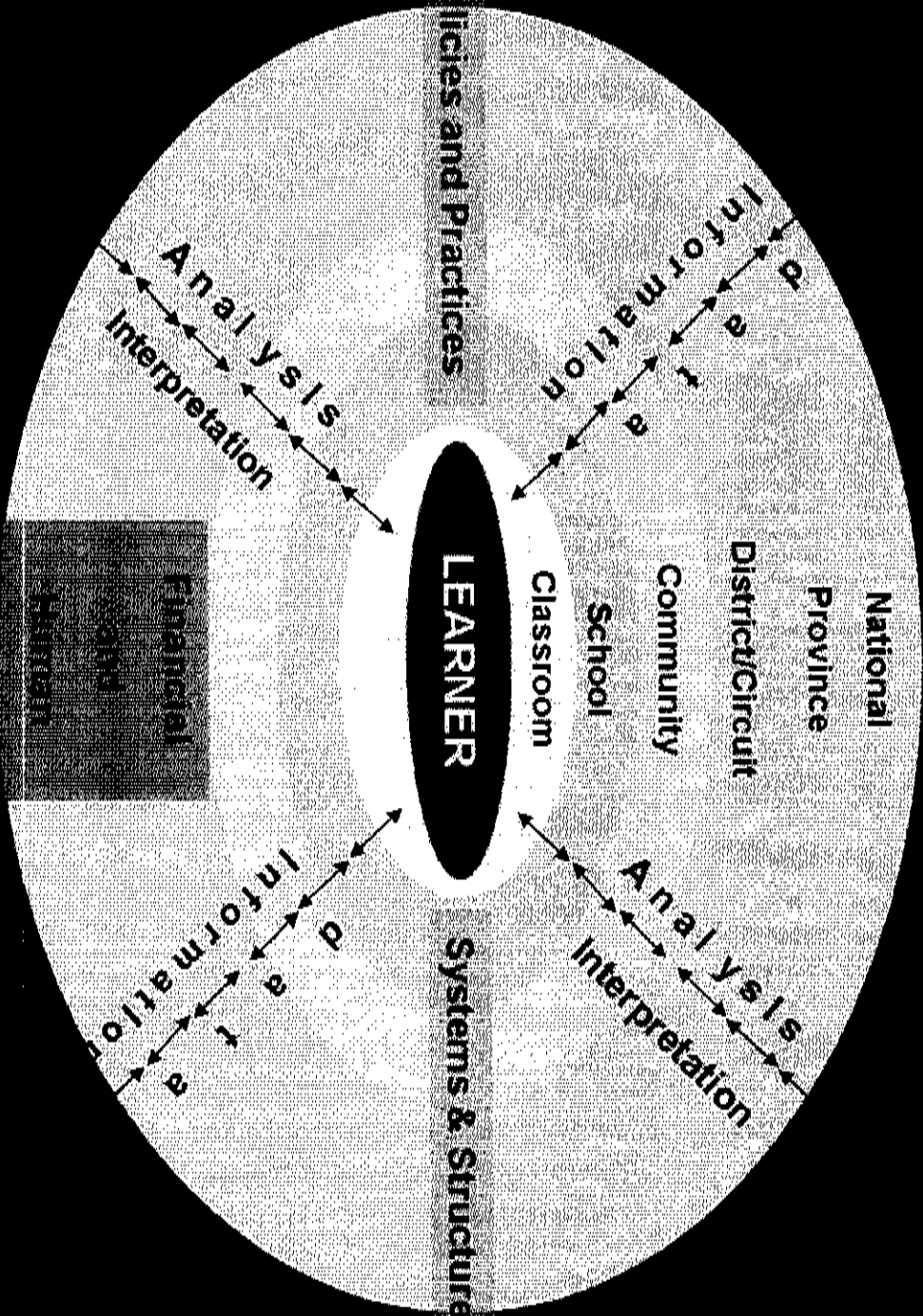
National Education Quality Initiative

Approach

- a systems approach that recognises the inextricable links between the technical, cultural and political factors in determining the effectiveness of programs and policies for improving education quality in South Africa;
- an evidence-informed policy dialogue approach to maximise consensus amongst key national and international stakeholders on strategies for improving the quality of education in South Africa
- Foreground gender and class issues in our research practices (i.e. gender mainstreaming)

National Education Quality Initiative

“Ideal” – Integrated, effective Assessment System



National Education Quality Initiative

Example

- Single database of items linked to national assessment (SE) to be used by provinces, districts, schools and teachers for enhancing learning in schools
- Distinguished by frequency of assessments
 - Classrooms – weekly/monthly
 - Schools – quarterly
 - Districts – annually
 - Provinces – every 2 years
 - National – every 4 to 6 years

National Education Quality Initiative

Classroom Assessment Resources for Learning Improvement (CARLI)

- **48 to 54 months**
- **Audit of teacher assessment needs and practices (to extend to parents, principals and education dept officials) - 2007**
- **Characteristics of a classroom, school, district, provincial, national assessment system to provide relevant feedback to enhance learning – 2007**
- **Reporting and feedback practices of teachers, parents, principals and education department officials - 2007**
- **Linking Grade 4, 5, & 6 assessment items (Maths & English) to national curriculum statements - 2007**
- **Developing standards of performance for Grades 9, 6 and 3 in Mathematics, English (and Science) – 2008-10**
- **Develop and pilot computerised test development and reporting system - 2007-2009**
- **Determine impact of a classroom (computerised) assessment system on teaching practices and learner performance – 2010**
- **Develop and cost set of policy options**

National Education Quality Initiative

National Assessment of Learning Achievement (NALA)

- **24 - 30 Months**
- **Review of international experience in conducting NA** - **2007**
- **Developing core indicators –conceptually, theoretically and empirically - for use at the different levels of the system to monitor the functioning of schools – 2007 - 2008**
- **Identify depth and scope (i.e. outcomes and assessment standards) of curriculum coverage to comprehensively assess Grade 9 learners in English (2nd language), Mathematics and Natural Science - 2007**
- **Conduct national assessment pilot (2007) and main study (2008)**
- **Develop standards of performance at the end of the General Education and Training Phase for identifying what learners know and can do - 2009**
- **Report on:**
 - **current performance levels of Grade 9 learners.**
 - **trends in Grade 9 learner performance 1996, 2002 & 2008**
 - **factors affecting learner performance - 2009**

National Education Quality Initiative

Assessment Policies and Structures to Improve Learning (APSIL)

- **12 – 18 Months**
- **Assessment systems in other countries [1] - 2007**
- **Critical review of the evolution of assessment policy since 1994 in South Africa - 2007**
- **Identify implementation mechanisms, structures and procedures established at the different levels of the education system to implement assessment policies in South African schools - 2007**
- **Determine how assessment policy is implemented in schools and the classroom - 2007**
- [1] **Linked to MONITEQ Study 1**

National Education Quality Initiative

Intended Outputs

- **Set of policy options**
 - **Costed**
 - **Demonstrated impact (RET)**
- **Assessment tools to obtain information for use at classroom and system level to enhance learning and teaching**
- **Set of indicators for monitoring performance of schools**
- **Education quality gateway**
- **Publications**
 - **Policy briefs**
 - **Working paper series**
 - **articles, books/chapters**
- **“What works” manual - specific issues**

National Education Quality Initiative

Thank you

Social Science and Humanities Research Council



HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council