Republic of Seychelles

Ministry of Education

The National Assessment Framework

"Supporting a new vision for learning"

2013

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

FOREWORD

The National Assessment Framework for Primary and Secondary schools – *"Supporting a New Vision for Learning",* is the result of much research, collaborative work and consultation by our officers and all partners concerned with educating our children. Therefore, I would like to unreservedly thank them all for their invaluable contribution; they should feel proud and privileged to be associated with such an important educational document.

The framework is consistent with the prescription for assessment in Education Act (2004) and our policy document *"Education for a Learning Society"* and epitomizes the Ministry's continuing push towards better quality education for our children. Together with the National Curriculum Framework, it will be the cornerstone in achieving one of the Ministry's main Education Reform (2009/10) initiatives which is that of catering for the diverse educational needs of our children and the national economy.

In this new vision for learning, in which the learner takes centre stage, the framework focuses on a multi-dimensional approach to assessment to ensure the holistic development of our children by supporting them acquire the knowledge and competencies and attitudes needed to succeed in the world of today and tomorrow, as provided for in the national curriculum. Therefore, the concepts of assessment for learning, assessment of learning and assessment as learning in the form of formative assessment, examinations and the development of meta-cognitive abilities in our children throughout the specified key stages of our education system become all important.

Overall, the framework provides the basis and parameters from which schools can frame their own assessment policy documents for the consistent application of assessment requirements and imperatives within and across schools. As such, teachers will also have a guide in which to plan and deliver their own assessments.

It should be borne in mind that the delivery of quality education does not stop with the provision of a framework. The collaborative efforts, commitment and support of all stakeholders are needed for the effective implementation of the framework. This is imperative to ensure that our children develop their full potential according to their individual abilities and interests, taking into account that they too have an important role to play in their own development.

Macsuzy Mondon
Minister for Education

Abbreviations

CCATS   Centre for Curriculum, Assessment and Teacher Support

EFA   Education for All

EMIS   Education Management Information System

NAF   National Assessment Framework

NCF   National Curriculum Framework

NQF   National Qualifications Framework

RoA   Records of Achievements

SQA   Seychelles Qualifications Authority

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific,and Cultural Organisation

Glossary

Assessment

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analysing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

Auditing

Auditing within the context of this framework, refers to a systematic and documented process for obtaining evidence to determine whether assessment tasks and related students' outcomes comply with curriculum standards.

Benchmark

A benchmark is a point of reference or criterion against which something can be measured and evaluated. In the context of assessment, benchmarks are specific points of reference related to performance or outcomes against which students' work are monitored and measured.

Competencies

Include skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that interact in ways that lead to specific actions, and they are linked to all the learning areas of the curriculum.

Construct

A construct is a human attibute such as attitude, emotion or intelligence. It cannot be observed directly and assessment tries to gather data and make inferences and decisions about such constructs.

Criterion Reference

Criterion reference refers to when students' performance is assessed against an agreed set of criteria.

Double Marking

Double marking occurs when student work is independently assessed by more than one marker. This is necessary to ensure that the marking scheme is applied consistently and fairly and to minimise or eliminate marking anomalies.

Evaluation is an assessment of the worth of a programme or a project. It is about whether a programme or project has met the objectives for which is was designed for.

Grade

A letter grade is assigned to bands of marks to reflect how well assessment criteria have been met. Grades can also be used in the award of certificates to indicate the level of achievement across a programme or study.

Mark scheme

A detailed framework for assigning marks to an assessment task.

Meta Cognition

Metacognition refers to when students take control of their own learning. It involves planning how to approach a learning task, monitoring comprehension and evaluating progress towards the successful completion of the task assigned. Students' demonstrate metacognitive skills when they show awareness of their own learning process, define their learning goals and strategies and give due consideration to the resources required for the task.

Moderation

A process intended to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of assessment criteria. Moderation can include re – marking by another experienced examiner and re – checking of borderline cases.

Norm Reference

Norm reference refers to when a student's performance is compared to other students. The students can be peers or a reference group.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the end products of a learning process. The outcomes are stated at the beginning of a learning activity or course of study and should clearly indicate what students should be able to demonstrate at the end of the process. Assessment information is used to make judgements against these outcomes.

Test

Test by itself is not an assessment. Assessment is about making decisions on learning based on evidence for which a test can be one of many means of collecting this evidence.

Tracking

Tracking, as used in this document, refers to the process of collecting and using assessment data to monitor students' learning and growth over time, at different key points and against educational standards. Its primary purpose is to help improve learning.

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Introduction

This document has been produced in response to the 2009 – 2010 Education Reform agenda where it was recognised that assessment strategies should be developed to better assist teaching and learning. One of the primary roles of educational reform is to drive standards and quality to a higher level and to design appropriate instruments to measure their attainment. One of the aims of this framework is to assist in fulfiling this role.

There is broad international consensus on the need to have a new vision of learning and assessment. This broad consensus emphasises that real learning occurs when the learner takes centre stage and has a knowledge base that can be used with fluency to make sense of the world, solve problems and make decisions[1]. This new vision of learning recognises not only intellectual abilities but also affective skills and learning to learn skills. It also recognises the multi-dimensional nature of intelligence and that learning is about finding solutions to real life problems[2].

Consequently, this new vision of learning calls for new approaches to the assessment of learner performance and achievement. Assessment has long been acknowledged as being fundamental and an integral part of the teaching and learning process[3] and this framework is proposed with this new vision of learning in mind. In other words, it calls for a multi-dimensional approach to assessment; assessments that will improve the individual holistically; for school improvement, and for the development of competent and responsible citizens for the 21st century[4].

Together with the revised National Curriculum Framework, the two frameworks should provide a basis for

- effective curriculum planning and delivery,
- good assessment practices,
- challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities, and
- improved transparency and accountability

The implementation of the two frameworks should eventually lead to students demonstrating the competencies described in the National Qualifications Framework so that they reach and realise their highest potentials, for personal and national development.

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[1] Kulieke et. al., 1990; Gordon Commission, 2013
[2] Dietel et. al., 1991
[3] OECD, 2005; University of Queensland, 2004
[4] NSW Public schools, 2011

1   Policy Context

The Ministry of Education recognises and acknowledges the dynamic and fundamental role played by assessment in every teacher-learner interaction. This is especially important when such interactions are grounded in sound and developmentally appropriate curriculum design, implementation and evaluation which address competencies and processes.

Such an acknowledgement comes in response to the stipulation made in **Education Act 2004**, **Section 79**, in that,

> *Assessments shall be conducted in accordance with regulations at the end of each key stage of primary and secondary schooling to evaluate the performance of students in relation to the targets of the national curriculum.*
>
> *(*Page 402)

This policy framework developed with the intention of bringing about an improvement in learning outcomes, will assist in creating the enabling conditions necessary to accomplish the Ministry's mission[5] which is to:

> *build a coherent and comprehensive system of quality education and training, reflecting shared universal and national values, which promote the integrated development of the person and empower him/her to participate fully in social and economic development.*

In addition, the sixth goal of UNESCO's global education agenda, Education for All (EFA) has much relevance for this policy framework in that vital role that educational assessment plays in monitoring the achievements of educational objectives and in providing quality for all has been duly recognised.

Why a National Assessment Framework

The usefulness of assessment data as a means to document school effectiveness has been well recognised. However, while the importance of assessment is clear, there seems to be an information gap between the desired student outcomes and how one intends to get there. Often, this gap impedes the development of effective assessment plans that have the potential to generate quality data at the level of the student, classroom, and school.

This Framework aims to

- assist in bridging this information gap by promoting an assessment vocabulary to be shared by all

- help establish a systematic way of using assessment data to improve instructional and schools' effectiveness

- inculcate a sense of responsibility from a very early stage by providing developmentally appropriate and challenging expectations to all students

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[5] Education For A Learning Society: *Policy Statement of the Ministry of Education*, January 2000, p1.

- promote diligence, perseverance and honesty among students,

- promote a common understanding of assessment

- assist schools in the development of their own assessment policies and procedures

2. Principles of assessment

Assessments provide a basis for planning, developing and implementing a variety of school programmes and classroom activities, and for evaluation. The primary aims of assessment are to collect and interpret information on student achievements and progress and to make decisions about how to improve outcomes by constantly adjusting the teaching and learning environment. Assessment, therefore, will be guided by the following principles:

Inclusion and Equity

Assessment practices throughout primary and secondary education will as far as possible be inclusive and promote equity principles. Assessments should cater for both individual and group diversity, at the same time recognising the limitations of assessment methods being used. In acknowledging that assessments have a capacity to disadvantage certain groups of students, every effort must be made that assessments use multiple sources of evidence gathered over time.

The assessment methods should emphasise repeated and systematic observations, documentations and other criteria that will accommodate all students. The assessment tasks must be accessible to all students including those with special needs. Inclusive language will be used, to avoid gender and other bias.

Ethics

Ethical principles will guide all assessment practices. Students will not be denied opportunities or remedial services where applicable, and decisions will not be made on the basis of a single assessment, such as decision about allocating students to ability groups for teaching and learning purposes. Sound ethical principals should also lead to the recognition of students as individuals who develop at different paces. Every opportunity must be given to students to demonstrate achievement.

Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are two of the most important qualities of an assessment system. Validity refers to the ability of an assessment to measure the construct it intends to measure. Validity requires that the measurement is aligned with learning outcomes. A valid test should also be a fair test i.e. it does not disadvantage any group. Reliability is the extent to which the scores of every individual are consistent over repeated applications of the measurement procedure. That is, the scores are dependable and repeatable.

Assessments are used in ways consistent with the purposes for which they are designed. Every effort will be made for assessment instruments to be reliable and inferences made are valid, in compliance with acceptable professional standards of quality. While it is also recognised that human judgement will remain a significant component in indicating levels of achievements, moderation procedures must be established (including external moderation where appropriate). These should be applied to task setting and to marking or rating with the view of improving validity and reliability of all assessment processes.

Appropriateness

Assessments are designed and validated for use, taking into consideration students' age, background experience and other characteristics. This calls for proper planning, starting with a clear definition of purpose and focusing on clear and important educational goals.

Significance

What is assessed should be developmentally and educationally significant. Assessment practices should be sufficiently diverse and include a comprehensive set of goals rather than a narrow set of skills or unrealistic contexts. Assessment activities should place the student at the centre with the intention of promoting student-centred learning, self-esteem, and learning to learn skills.

Fitting the Purpose

The primary purpose of the assessment is to improve student outcomes. Assessment practices should incorporate strategies that are embedded on well planned and structured teaching and learning activities. These strategies must give a sense of students' progress and achievement by identifying strengths and areas of need. Assessment should inform future teaching and learning through continuous feedback and help build students' confidence. Three main purposes are presented in this framework and they are:

(a)   Assessment f*or* learning

This is more commonly known as formative or diagnostic assessment. It is ongoing and assessment tasks or activities for this purpose are used to determine students' progress as teachers plan and adjust instruction based on their needs. In such instances, assessments involve both teacher and student in a continuous process of planning, reflecting and reviewing.

(b)   Assessment a*s* learning

Assessment *as* learning is based on the idea that learning is not merely a transfer of knowledge or ideas from teacher to student. It provides opportunities for students to monitor and critically reflect on their learning by actively re-adjusting the cognitive process that happens when new ideas emerge. Assessment *as* learning can promote meta-cognitive skills (i.e. knowledge about one's own learning) and provide

opportunities for students to be self-reflective and to set meaningful goals for their learning.

(c) Assessment *of* learning

Assessment *of* learning is summative and occurs at the end of a programme of study, a course or a key stage. At school level, such assessments can be designed and administered by a teacher or by a group of teachers. Nationally, this can be designed and coordinated centrally. Assessment tasks or activities can be based on performance indicators or outcomes (criterion referenced). They can also be used to compare a learner's performance against his or her peers (norm-referenced). Information on learner performances can be shared with parents or guardians, schools and also nationally. Such information can also be useful for curriculum planning, development, and review.

Communication and Reporting

The expectations of the assessment task and the criteria and standards by which performance is to be judged, should be made clear to students from the outset. Furthermore, in reporting on achievements, this should have the same meaning for different teachers, parents and students. That is, assessment and reporting should be interpretable, communicable and transparent. This framework recognises that learner achievement and progress can be reported by:

a. measuring such achievement and progress against established curriculum standards and indicators of performance,
b. comparing prior and later achievements (for example, as students move from one key stage to another), and
c. comparing a learner's achievement with those of his or her peers.

A good communication and reporting strategy means that schools and the Ministry provide appropriate and timely feedback to students and parents leading to improvements in learning. Similarly, a good reporting system should also provide information about how well the curriculum is being implemented. Effective reporting practices should help with accountability purposes as schools need to take into consideration not only parental expectations but also those of the wider community. Information about students' achievements should be clear, detailed, and comprehensible.

Feedback on achievement should reflect both qualitative and quantitative aspects of assessment (marks, grades, descriptive statements). If marks are to be used for reporting purposes, then it must be ensured that

- mark schemes are carefully constructed and consistently applied
- there is a possibility for double-marking
- there is a moderation procedure in place
- procedures are in place to check marking anomalies

When grades are used as a means of reporting achievement, the grade scale used should be able to provide a summary of the standard or quality typified by each grade. The scale should address the depth and breadth of the knowledge and understanding, and the range of skills, as described at each grade.

The use of grades has also the added benefit in that teachers become familiar with standards as they

- read and understand the description for each grade
- review work samples that display the level and quality of students at each grade
- discuss with their colleagues and clarify their own understanding of standards

When descriptive statements are used it must be ensured that such statements

- are written clearly
- provide a basis for further development and learning by highlighting strengths and areas for improvement
- provide information about students' attitude and commitment to learning.

Learner Involvement

Students should be given the opportunity to participate in the assessment process, through such means as

- discussions of appropriate methods
- negotiating criteria for success and failure
- self – and peer assessment activities
- making informed and responsible choices among the different methods of assessment.
- reporting – by reflecting on, clarifying, and defending the quality and nature of their own learning.

Examination as an assessment technique

An appropriate educational rationale for adopting examinations as a form of assessment must be provided. In all cases, the preceding guiding principles must be applied. With the continued use of examinations, it is imperative that:

- consideration is given to the investments needed in terms of the resources required for the conduct of examinations. Examinations should be cost-effective as far as possible.
- the points of reference against which students work are assessed in the examination must be made clear. If the examination entails criteria referencing, students must receive explicit statements about the criteria/standards to be met. If it is norm-referenced, students should be informed that the performance of others is used.
- students need to be informed about and involved in such matters as the content, competencies and skills to be assessed in the examination, the duration and the weighting (if any).

Promoting learner responsibility and cultivating good work habits

At both national and schools levels, assessment policies and practices

- develop within students a strong sense of responsibility for their own learning. Students demonstrate this when, for examples, they complete assessment tasks and submit assigned work in a timely manner and when they take responsibility for their own behaviour and understand consequences;

- help students develop sound time management and organisational skills. They do this when, for example, they are able to devise their own or are guided to follow a work plan;

- inculcate a strong sense of honesty and integrity. They do this when, for example, they understand that assessment tasks they complete, present or submit should be their own and that there is a zero tolerance for cheating or plagiarism.

- provide opportunities for students to show initiatives towards their own learning. They do this when, for examples, they look for new ideas in problem solving and decision making and they approach new situations with curiosity, interest, and perseverance.

3.   Assessment Requirements

National Assessment at the end of Key Stages

The National Curriculum Framework of 2013 makes provisions for national testing to take place at the end of each key stage. The Ministry of Education shall have the overall responsibility for development of national tests and tasks and schools shall play a key role in their administration, marking of scripts and dissemination of results. National assessments will take place in:

- Key Stage 1
- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 3
- Key Stage 4
- Key Stage 5

National Assessments in the Early Childhood years – Key Stage 1

Assessment pratices in this foundational stage should connect observations with assessments based on curriculum standards. Assessments should be thoughtfully prepared with the holistic development of the child in mind. They should provide meaningful learning experiences, be appropriate to the age of the children and cater for their individual needs. Assessment practices should establish the level of readiness of each child in literacy and numeracy and should be well documented,

shared, and used as a basis for further planning. Assessments in Key Stage 1 should

(a) be based on observation of performance during learning activities

(b) focus on what students can do and give a sense of progress they have made

(c) provide multiple occasions for observations in a variety of activities on which to base decisions

(d) provide parents, guardians and teachers with a means of monitoring and documenting individual growth

(e) engage parents, guardians and teachers in continuous dialogue about how best to support students' overall development at home and at school.

(f) be appropriate, realistic, and easy to implement

(g) provide feedback and inform instructional decisions.

National Assessments in Primary years – Key Stages 2 and 3

Key Stages 2 and 3 cover primary education and national assessments at the end of these stages should cover literacy, numeracy and core life skills. Assessments should

(a) promote the determination of performance levels in literacy, numeracy, science and core life skills,

(b) be developed in such a way that learner weaknesses and strengths can be easily diagnosed and identified, with a clear plan for remediation. Particular emphasis will be put in the design of the instruments, scoring of responses and reporting of results,

(c) assist and facilitate the setting of individual, class and school learning targets and measure growth over time,

(d) be used as a tool for monitoring the quality of learning achievements, providing vital information about how well learning and performance standards nationally are attained and identifying areas where improvements are needed.

(e) be used as a comparing mechanism, by comparing different groups of students on similar tests and tasks either across or between year groups.

(f) be used as a valid indicator and measure of instructional and curriculum effectiveness.

(g) lead to national certificate at Level 1 on the NQF in Key Stage 3.

National assessments in the Secondary Years – Key Stages 4 and 5

Assessment practices in Key Stages 4 and 5 should consolidate what have been achieved in the previous key stages. Assessment activities should provide scope and depth and capture growth in students' overall conceptual understanding.

Key Stage 4

National assessments at the end of Key Stage 4 play an important role, in that, the results are used to help make more informed decisions on subject options that students want to pursue in the next stage at secondary level. Assessment at this stage should cover the following learning areas:

- Art and Design
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Technical and Vocational Education
- Personal, Social and Citizenship Education
- Information Communication Technology

Key Stage 5

Assessment in Key Stage 5 should reflect the principle of diversity of needs. Assessment should be designed with the different profiles of students at this stage and its primary purpose is for certification. As this stage marks the end of compulsory schooling, assessment for the purpose of certification plays an important role and can involve both internal and external components and should cover the full range of subject options available to students. Assessments at this stage should lead to national qualifications at Level 2 on the National Qualifications Framework.

To cater for diversity of student needs, it is expected that the Ministry of Education, Seychelles Qualifications Authority, training providers and employers build on existing partnerships to clarify and understand each one's role and responsibility in the context of assessment in this key stage. This should lead to

- shared understanding of educational standards and expectations,
- planning of students' progression through appropriate pathways using sound professional judgements,
- better articulation between learning and training programmes in Key Stage 5 and beyond.

This policy framework also recognises the critical role parents need to play to support and guide their children at this important transition point. Schools should

meet regularly with parents to discuss subject options and the choice of different pathways based on students' strengths and preferences.

4.   Classroom and School-based Assessment

The primary purpose of classroom or school based assessment is to improve students' learning. It is expected that the core principles described Section 2 above will guide teachers and school leaders in collecting information that is meaningful, rich, and valuable for making decisions about learning, instruction practices, monitoring and support. Classroom and school-based assessment will serve primarily formative purposes. These assessments should

> a. be fair, transparent and equitable for all students
>
> b. support all students, including those with special education needs
>
> c. be carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
>
> d. be communicated clearly to students and parents and guardians[6] at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
>
> e. be ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
>
> f. provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
>
> g. develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

Model for developing a whole-school assessment scheme

When the purposes and functions are aligned to educational goals and the tools selected are appropriate for the assessment tasks, the inferences that can be drawn should be of high standard. There are three interconnected domains in the assessment process, at the core of which is the development of students' competencies. Figure 1 below show these three interconnected domains.

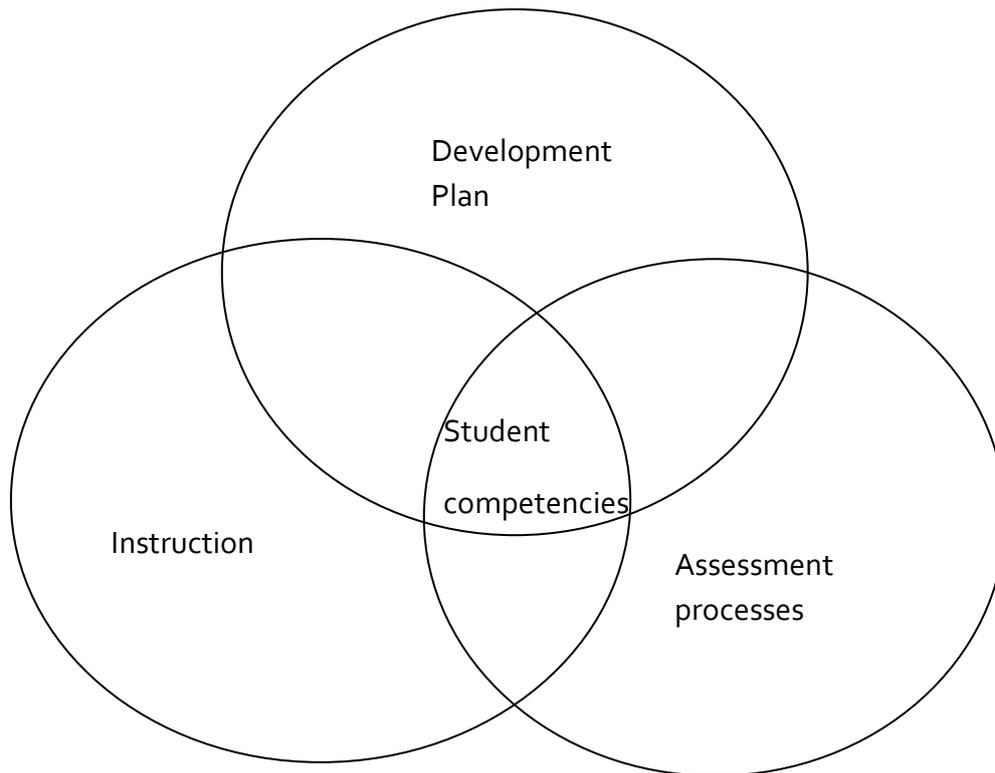[6] Parent and guardian mean any one taking care of the child

Figure 1: A three dimensional model for the development of school-based assessments

Development planning is an important tool used for school improvement. The new vision of assessment makes it necessary for schools to integrate assessment processes in this plan hence aligning these to development goals and vision, contemporary theories on how students learn, and best instructional practices. The three dimensional model shown above illustrates this alignment.

5.   Assessment Types and Forms

Assessment in education is the process by which inferences are made about students' learning based on observation of what they say, do or make in a variety of contexts and situations. Assessments are not random events. They should be embedded in instruction in order to support and enhance learning. Assessment practices and types may be of the forms listed below (the list is not exhaustive).

- **Performance assessment**
  This form of assessment involves observing a student perform on an assessment task and evaluating the end product, for example, when a student show form and movement in a dance routine.

- **Anecdotal records**
  This form of assessment involves the teacher observing and recording the student actions and work during the day. The recording is based on notes or comments and may be an entry into a journal. It is a good way to record and monitor a student's development.

- **Portfolio**
  Portfolios are designed to document a student effort, progress, and achievement by a systematic collection of work collected over time. Portfolios may contain work artefacts, assessment scores, essays, student's journal or notes and products. Portfolios may be in written or electronic form and can assist in measuring growth by looking at work done by the student at different time periods.

- **Rating scales**
  A rating scale is used for the assessment of various tasks. The tasks may include a performance, demonstration of competencies, application of procedures, processes, qualities or quantities. The scale used can indicate the range of achievement and it may be descriptive or numeric.

- **Checklist**
  A checklist is an assessment tool used to verify presence or absence of conceptual knowledge, skills and behaviours. A checklist can be used by the teacher to observe whether the right sequence is being followed while a student is completing a task or may be given to a student to follow when completing a procedure.

- **Survey**
  Motivated and interested students are more likely to succeed at school. Surveys can be a useful and effective tool for the assessment of students' attitudes. A survey consists of a set of questions designed to elicit students'

opinions about school conditions, the learning environment and other characteristics.

- Examination
An examination is an assessment method used to determine whether a student meets established criteria usually set by an external agent. Before competency is ascertained, the student must reach a minimum level of achievement. Examinations are summative and can lead to the award of certificates.

6.   Records of Achievement as an assessment system

Records of Achievement (RoA) were introduced to produce cumulative evidence on students' achievements as they exit schooling at the end of Key Stage 5. As part of the 2009-2010 Education Reform, the RoA system was further extended to include Key Stage 4.

RoA Assessment Model

RoA, being a system of recording of achievements is based on several underlying broad principles. These are:

1. Students must be given the opportunity to develop multi-dimensionally;
2. Users of RoA must obtain a broad view of the child as a person;
3. Students must get the opportunity to become active participants in the assessment of their own progress;
4. Students must be given the opportunity to reflect and build on their own experiences;
5. All students can achieve something.
6. Availability of a reporting system which provides open channels of communication between parents and the school.

Based on those principles, assessment under the RoA should contribute towards:

I.   Maximising learning opportunities of students, both in scope and depth;
II.   Maximising teaching time and interactions with the students;
III.   Positioning students at the centre of any teaching initiative
IV.   Providing students with the opportunity to reflect on their own learning;
V.   Catering for the diversity of learning needs.

Quality continuous assessment should be central under the RoA system in order to gauge learning on a continuous basis as well as ensuring full learner engagement with the curriculum thus creating the basis to strategise improvement and achievement of students.

7. Safeguarding Quality in Assessment

An effective quality assurance and moderation system should be the hallmark of all assessment processes at school and national levels. The quality of assessment activities should be reviewed to ensure that they are valid and reliable and that results derived can be used with confidence. An effective quality assurance system should also promote a culture of self-evaluation, consistent monitoring, openness, transparency, and sharing of best practice. Strategies to be used to ensure that an assessment is of high quality are outlined below.

Planning for an assessment

An assessment plan includes the learning objectives to be assessed; when the assessment will take place; how the assessment will occur; the methods to be used and explicitly laid out instructions for the students. This plan can be developed singly by a teacher, by a team of teachers in a particular key stage or by the whole school. Nationally, such a plan will be developed by the section responsible for national assessment. When planning it is important to

- define the purpose of the assessment
- identify the objectives or outcomes to be assessed, including possible clusters or groups of objectives/outcomes
- identify and record the context in which the assessment will take place including who will assess, how, where and when
- determine the evidence required to show that the learner has achieved the objective or outcome and document it in the plan
- determine and document the evidence gathering techniques
- involve the learner, where appropriate.

Assessment procedures

An assessment system is often designed by a series of carefully ordered steps to ensure that decisions made adhere to the principles of inclusion, validity, reliability and consistency. Assessment procedures are essential links between policy and practice. These should be well documented and shared so that users of the system understand their roles and responsibilities and how the functions are to be carried out.

Gathering evidence

Assessments should provide opportunities for the learner to demonstrate attainment of outcomes or objectives. Evidence of achievements should be valid, in that, assessment task should be based on the outcome or objective being assessed. The evidence should be drawn from multiple sources and on multiple occasions.

Auditing

Auditing and quality assurance procedures should also be included in schools' assessment strategies. These should provide opportunities for continuous improvement, identification of areas for support, professional development, and training. When conducting audits, considerations should be given to resources, time and the personnel involved.

Professional Judgements and Moderation

As part of the teaching and learning process, teachers are constantly gathering evidence about students' achievement. They use this information to determine the next steps in teaching and learning and to provide further support. While this is done as part of the formative assessment process, the same information may be used summatively for reporting and reviewing progress. This requires professional judgements and these must be valid, reliable and applied consistently.

Moderation is an essential component of assessment both at school and national level and should be part of the quality assurance process. Moderation is a process that can assist in improving consistency in teacher judgement and in the comparability in the reporting of results. Moderation involves groups of teachers discussing assessment criteria by reviewing samples of students work. Moderation should lead to a common understanding of the curriculum, about the assessment process, and determining levels of achievement.

8. Monitoring of Standards of Achievement and Management of Assessment Information

Monitoring of standards in students' achievements should be one of the cornerstones for providing quality education to all. Monitoring of standards encompasses systematic and professional planning for effective implementation of the curriculum and sound assessment and evaluation practices. Monitoring of standards should promote not only the students' cognitive development but also their creative and emotional development.

Under this policy framework educational standard will be monitored at different levels. At one level, monitoring standards over time will be carried out as part of the end of each Key Stage assessments. The focus will be on literacy, numeracy, and core life skills in the early key stages and to include other subjects as students move on. At another level, the expectation is that Seychelles will continue to participate in regional and international educational surveys. This should also provide valuable information about trends in achievements and for benchmarking against international standards.

Moderation

Moderation is a process that can assist in improving consistency in teacher judgement and in the comparability in the reporting of results. Moderation involves groups of teachers discussing assessment criteria by reviewing samples of students work. Moderation should lead to a common understanding of the curriculum, about the assessment process, and determining levels of achievement.

Management of Information

Assessment systems generate a large volume of information. An efficient information management system is critical at school and national levels in order to facilitate

- planning and administration
- processing of results, and
- tracking of learner attainment at key transition points.

The section responsible for assessment in the Ministry should work collaboratively with the Education Management Information System, relevant divisions, and national and international partners to develop and deploy a

- Student Information Management System in all state schools. This system should include an e-portfolio component to facilitate transfer of student and school level data as students progress from one key stage to another,
- Ministry-level information management system to facilitate tracking, dissemination, planning and sector –wide policy formulation.

9.   Special Provisions

All students should be given the opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do. Schools and teachers should ensure that all students participate in assessments and are given the opportunity to showcase the full extent to which they meet learning outcomes. Special provisions should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. They should reflect and promote differentiation but should not compensate for what a student does not know or cannot do.

Who should be considered?

Special provision should be considered for any student with a specific educational need. Strategies for special provisions should be considered in cases where students capacity to participate in an assessment can be affected. These include students

- with a disability
- who are suffering from an illness
- with impairment

- who are affected by a bereavement, and other personal circumstances
- who are gifted or talented

For school based assessments, the school shall have the overall responsibility for establishing eligibility, approval and implementation. For external assessments, the school, on behalf of the students affected, will apply to the Principal Secretary, in writing, for special provisions considerations. Schools, in collaboration with parents or guardians, should provide the necessary supporting evidence to inform decisions.

Types of special considerations

Special considerations in assessment may include

- modification in the way an assessment is presented – for example, enlargement of font type for those with impaired vision
- change in time provision – allowing more time for a student to complete the assessment
- an alternative or replacement assessment.
- use of special devices (e.g. a computer for word processing)
- alternative locations to where the assessment officially takes place.

10. Successful Implementation of the Framework

The National Assessment Framework calls for a new vision of learning based on sound curriculum and assessment planning. This new vision puts the learner at centre of all learning and teaching endeavours and aims to produce independent, responsible, and life-long learners who can find solutions to real life problems. The successful implementation of this framework will require the collective effort of all. The roles of key stakeholders are outlined below and the list is not exhaustive.

Students

Students should be fully engaged in their own learning. Through self assessment, they review and adjust their own learning. They should be given opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do through a range of evidence gathered by a variety of assessment methods. Judgements about their achievements should be based on multiple sources and gathered on multiple occasions. Students should persevere, show diligence, and practice honesty when engaging in all assessment tasks.

Parents

Parents should be actively involved in their children's learning by providing the necessary support and encouragement. They do this by sharing, on a regular basis, assessment information about their children's strengths, needs, progress, and ambitions and by discussing ways in which they can provide help.

Teachers

Teachers should recognise the supporting role played by assessment in students' learning. They plan and implement assessment strategies as part of the learning and teaching process and also plan periodic assessments to provide summative evidence as appropriate. Teachers should work with colleagues to develop approaches to monitor, to network, and discuss understanding of educational standards and expectations. They use evidence from assessment to communicate and report on students' achievements and progress.

Schools

Schools should ensure that they develop their own policy on assessment based on the NAF. They have procedures and arrangements in place to support assessment practices with a view to improve learning and teaching. They make sure that assessment information is used to support self evaluation that encourages and challenges teachers to reflect on their own classroom practices. Schools should ensure that they have a a plan for continuous professional development for assessment and identify and prioritise areas of needs. They should ensure that teachers have the opportunity to participate in marking and moderation activities when appropriate.

CCATS

One of the primary goals of CCATS is to ensure that the curriculum and assessment systems cater for students' and society's needs. CCATS is responsible for the implementation of this policy framework and also to provide support through advice and guidelines and facilitating continuous professional development related to assessment. It should provide opportunities for its staff and teachers to discuss and share understanding on assessment principles and practices. It should ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to support tracking of students' progress across the key stages so that assessment information is used to support this new vision of learning.

National Curriculum Advisory Committee (NCAC)

The National Curriculum Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Education has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the NCF and NAF. The Committee will:

- Ensure the strategic focus and direction for the implementation of the NCF and NAF

- Determine strategic priorities in the implementation of the NCF and NAF and guide the development of appropriate and related policies and guidelines.

- Advocate for an adequate budget for and necessary investments in curriculum and assessment implementation

- Enlist the support of other stakeholders and ensure effective communication on progress of the implementation of NCF and NAF

- Address implementation challenges and obstacles

- Establish sub-committees to assist with its work.

Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA)

The primary purpose of the SQA is to develop and implement a National Qualifications Framework to provide nationally recognised standards, qualifications and credit for all learning of knowledge and skills. Its mandate is to ensure all students from primary to higher education benefit from a standard of education and training that is relevant, of a high standard, and internationally comparable. SQA should provide external quality assurance for national qualifications (Levels 1 and 2) to help achieve high quality, validity and reliability in assessment judgements at school and national levels.

Inspectorate

One of the main aims of the Inspectorate Unit is to ensure that the quality and standard of education is maintained within a framework of continuous improvements. The Inspectorate Unit reports on students' experiences and successes using schools' self evaluation evidence and data on achievement. The Unit should help schools improve assessment practices by comparing against quality indicators. The Unit should ensure that evidence gathered from its inspection activities are discussed and shared with a view to improve practices and learning.

Policy Planning and Research

The Policy Planning and Research division is responsible for policy formulation and direction. The division should ensure that assessment information derived from national, regional and international surveys is used to provide a measure of the quality of education against national and internal benchmarks. Such information should also be used as a basis for improvements in learning and teaching. It should also ensure, through its Education Management Information System (EMIS), that there are effective mechanisms in place for data exchange between the various partners.

Policy Review

In consultation with all other stakeholders, the CCATS will develop a strategic action plan for the implementation of the NAF and other necessary guidelines. The NAF will be reviewed every six years, in addition to on-going review through the normal process of monitoring and evaluation.

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