

Inservice Units to Support the Implementation of the
Primary Reform Curriculum

**Unit 7:
Assessing and Reporting Achievement
of Outcomes**

**Module 4: Implication for
Practice**

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Name: File N°:.....

Date commenced: Date completed:.....

I have sighted this study guide as evidence of completion of agreed tasks by

.....(insert name)

Assessor: Date:

Module 4: Implications for practice

Module introduction

Welcome to *Module 4: Implications for practice*.

For this module, you don't need any of the resource documents. Sections from the relevant resource documents are copied here. We strongly recommend that you do *Module 2: Are we accurately assessing student learning?* and *Module 3: Are we accurately interpreting, recording and reporting learning?* before starting this module.

We begin this module by looking at your role in implementing the reform curriculum, particularly in the context of assessing student learning and reporting this in meaningful ways to students, parents and community members. Assessment is integral to teaching and learning.

In this module, you study what can be done in your work place to enhance student learning through assessment, and how such information can be passed on to students, parents and other community members.

The *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, is key to understanding DoE's expectations of teachers and schools. The relevant parts of the Policy are copied in this module.

Make sure you complete the *self-assessment* in the *Unit Introduction* before you start this module.

As you work through keep a record of those places in the module where you can identify evidence for particular unit outcomes. You can record this in your *Learning Contract*.

Module learning outcomes

When you have worked through this module, you, the learner, can (are able to):

1. identify your current practices in assessing, recording and reporting students' achievement information in relation to the *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*
2. identify the depth and breadth of changes, if any, that you need to make to your current practices
3. develop an action plan to apply your learning in your work place.

Section 1: Your Role



If you are a classroom teacher, you are a very important person because you will be implementing the reform curriculum. To do this well, you should first critically review your current practices in assessing and reporting. Think about your practices that are compatible with what you have read in this unit so far and those that are not. For example, if you now assess in a range of ways, over time, in relation to the outcomes of the syllabuses, then this fits in well with the new approach. If you use assessment information in a diagnostic way, this also fits in well with the new approach. If you plan for the bilingual education and bridging to English approaches as and when required, you are doing well. On the other hand, if you are assessing students by scoring tests; and pen-and-paper tests are the only strategy you use, then this does not fit in well with the advice in these syllabuses and teachers guides. The *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, identifies, in Section 6.2, your particular assessment and reporting responsibilities as a classroom teacher.

If you are a *senior teacher or assessment coordinator*, you are responsible for helping the head teacher and assistant teachers to implement reform. You may have to approve plans and programs, assessment methods, tasks and frequency of assessment developed by teachers, for consistency within the school and also with reform curriculum. You may have a school policy on assessment and reporting; this policy may or may not be consistent with the *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*. You may have teachers who need professional help to plan assessment methods, tasks and criteria, interpret assessment information and report it to parents and community members in meaningful ways. In all of these areas, you give curriculum and administrative leadership to teachers, and advice and support to the head teacher. The *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, identifies, in Section 6.3, your particular assessment and reporting responsibilities.

If you are a *head teacher*, you are responsible for implementing the reform curriculum in your school. You may have to support and advise teachers on the new approaches to assessing identified in the syllabuses. If your school has multi-grade classes, these create implications for assessing and reporting. The *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, identifies, in Section 6.4, your particular assessment and reporting responsibilities as a head teacher. Your understanding of an outcomes-based curriculum is critical for effective implementation of the new syllabuses and new policies of DoE, in your school.

If you are an *inspector*, your advisory role and monitoring and assessment role, means that you should have a working knowledge of all the subject syllabuses, multi-grade teaching, bilingual education, bridging to English, new approaches to planning, programming and assessing, and other aspects of the reform agenda. You are expected to critically review your current practices as an inspector, in the light of the assessment advice provided in the syllabuses and teachers guides. The *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, identifies, in Section 6.8, your particular assessment and reporting responsibilities as an inspector.

If you are a *provincial education officer* or a *district education officer*, you have province wide responsibilities for different aspects of the reform curriculum including an outcomes orientation to the curriculum. The *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, identifies, in Section 6.7, your particular assessment and reporting responsibilities, if you are a curriculum officer. You work with all of the groups mentioned above and others and interact and intersect with them in different ways.

The common and specific roles and responsibilities of these groups are described on pages 7-11, in the *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*).

The *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, states that *assessment at Upper Primary should:*

- *be flexible and use a range of assessment methods;*
- *be continuous and show the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in all school subjects;*
- *use local cultural approaches to assess and report students' achievement where appropriate;*
- *be mainly internal but may include external assessment at the end of Grade 8, use criterion referencing and learning outcomes as the basis of the external assessment at the end of Grade 8; and*
- *result in the issue of national certificates of basic education approved by the Board of Studies reporting academic achievement, attitudes, values and other relevant achievements. (Section 7.3)*

The policy also states that *assessment at Lower Primary should:*

- *be predominantly integrated into teaching and learning activities as students bridge from vernacular to English*
- *use a range of assessment methods*
- *use local culture approaches to assess and report students' achievement where appropriate; and*
- *be used for diagnostic purposes only. (Section 7.2)*

The first step in the process is self-reflection to look critically at your current practices and identify those practices that are compatible with reform and those that are not. Being clear about which are your good practices, in the reform context, allows you to build on them and move forward.

Opening the discussion about assessment and reporting



Gather a group of colleagues. Ask them to answer the following questions, individually:

- What is assessment?
- Why do you assess?

- How do we do it?
- What if we changed the way we do it?



Share your responses with others. Compare responses.

- Do the responses show a common understanding between you and your colleagues?
Comment.

Part 1.1: Getting to know models and methods



In the next activity, you explore ideas and current practices in more detail. First, think about:

- What concepts and models underpin assessment, evaluation and reporting practices?
- What purposes do they serve?
- What methods are available?

Now do the following activities to help you focus on models and methods.



Think about the steps you normally do to plan and carry out your assessment of student performance and achievement. Answer these questions.

- Do you rely on particular routines, that is, set ways of assessing that have become habits?
- What different strategies do you use in your classroom?

- How well do they work?



Brainstorm, as a group, a list of terms related to assessing that come up often in discussion. List them here.

- Is there agreement about what they mean?
- With a colleague or in a small group, swap ideas about the different methods of assessment that you are using in your classrooms
- What kinds of methods do teachers prefer?
- Are there some assessment and reporting methods that you and your colleagues prefer?
- Are there some that you have avoided? If yes, why?



Record your next lot of responses in this table on page 7.

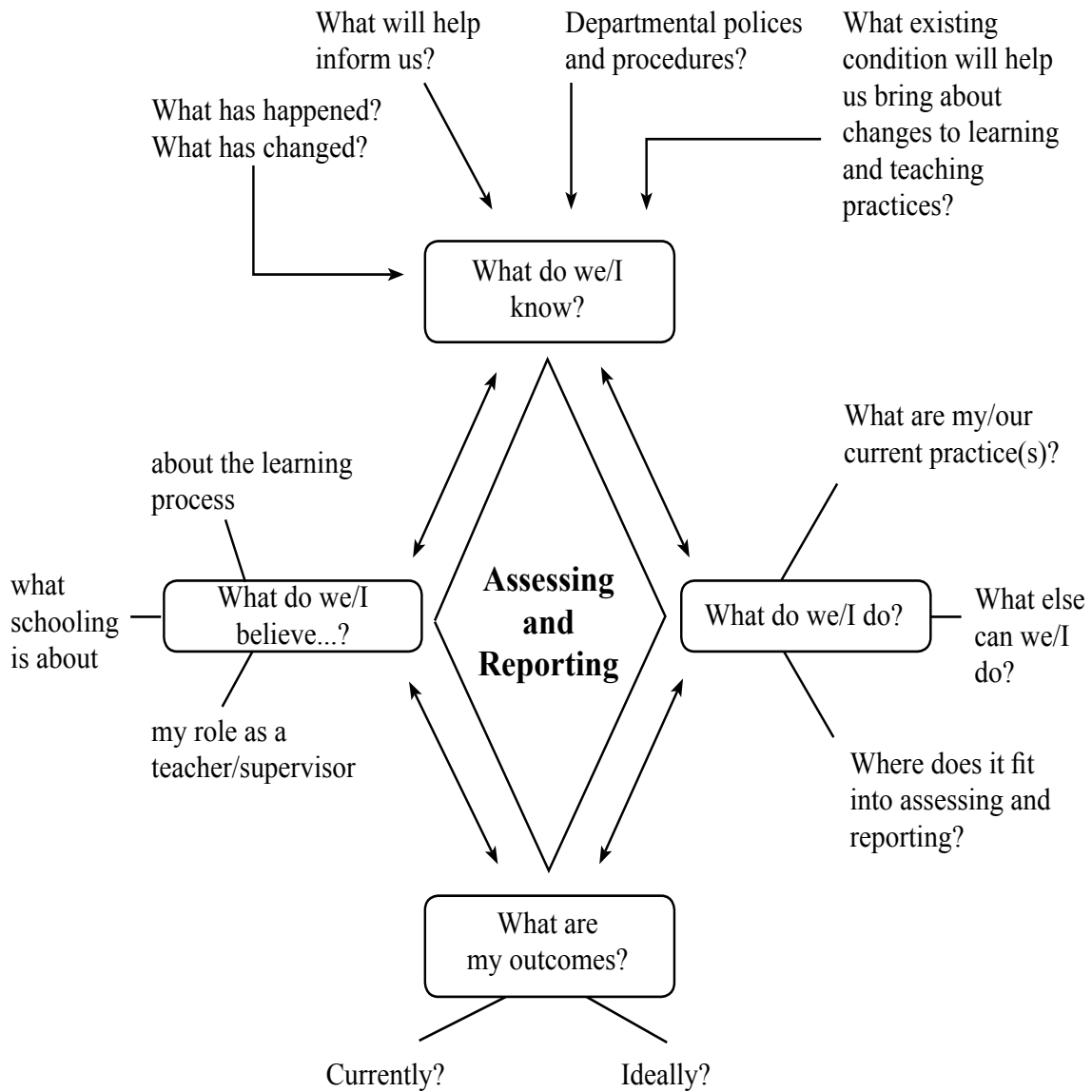
What methods seem to work best for particular purposes such as:

Purposes	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">teaching and learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">assessing individual performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">assessing group performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">assessing diagnostic needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">evaluating the success of your program	

Part 1. 2: A model for reflection



Reflect on what you have learned from exploring the assessment and reporting practices in your school with a group of colleagues. The diagram may help you to locate yourself and your school in terms of current practices.



Section 2: What would you do?

How well do you think you currently carry out the role described for your current position in the previous section?



Below is a 7-step approach to exploring what is happening now in your school, or in a school that you advise or supervise. (If you are a teacher or senior teacher work with the head teacher; if you are a head teacher, work with your inspector; if you are an office-based person, work with a teacher or head teacher.)

The Seven Steps are:

1. Think about the assessment and reporting system your school uses now
2. Reflect on any changing assessment and reporting practices
3. Consider the current assessment and recording methods
4. Consider ways you report on student performance and achievement
5. Consider student participation in assessment and reporting
6. Consider how you communicate student assessment and reporting
7. Consider any emerging assessment and reporting issues.

This approach is an extension of the model you reflected upon on the previous page.

Use the information you gathered from your colleagues in the previous section to explore the situation further. Identify a small group of three or four colleagues to lead the exploration. It is only an exploration at this stage, so keep it small and manageable.

The plan here is to help you develop a timeline and an action plan to review your present policy on assessment and reporting to meet the reform requirements.

If your school or the school you supervise does not have a policy on assessment and reporting, the plan helps you develop a timeline and action plan to begin to develop a school policy.

If you are a teacher, look at the 8-point plan from your perspective; if you are a senior teacher or head teacher look at it from the school's perspective; if you are an office-based person work with a school.



1. Think about the assessment and reporting system your school uses now.

- What is working well?
- Are any needs not being met?

- Survey a few of the stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, other community groups) to find out what they think about the school's current assessment reporting system.
 - Are they generally happy with the current system?
 - What additional information, if any, would they like to know, and for what purpose?
 - What suggestions do they have for improving things?

Based on the survey findings propose some achievable refinements or changes, and include a method to monitor the effectiveness of these changes.

Change	How to monitor



2. Reflect on any changing assessment and reporting practices.

- Starting with your thoughts, evaluate what teachers are doing now. Record your group's reflections here.
- What changes have we made in responding to recent developments in the school or the system (for example, the reform curriculum, the *National Assessment and Reporting Policy*)?

- What are our school's goals and beliefs in teaching?
- How well do our assessment and reporting practices and routines work now?
- What changes and developments have we made recently? Why? Are they getting the results we need? What have we lost or gained in the process?



Discuss your findings with colleagues. Ask them for critical feedback, and talk about possible ways to improve or work together in your approaches. You may, for example, want to:

- integrate approaches that work well now more fully into your routine
- share ideas with trusted colleagues to agree on effective methods and build collaborative ways of assessing and reporting.

Record your ideas here.



3. Consider the current assessment and recording methods

- Identify the range of methods used in your school and evaluate how effective they are for implementing an outcomes approach.
- List how you record your data now.

4. Consider ways you report on student performance and achievement

- Review how your school usually approaches the task of reporting student performance

- What are your overall aims?

- Do your methods help you achieve these aims?

- Identify any area(s) of the process that needs to be:
 - developed?

 - rethought?

 - boosted?

 - emphasised less?

 - removed altogether?

- Ask colleagues to help develop ideas to improve and streamline what you do.
Record ideas here.

5. Consider student participation in assessment and reporting

Think about how much your students know, or need to know, about the methods and approaches you use to assess them.

- Survey your students to discover
 - what kind of feedback they prefer

 - what helps them to learn.

- Ask them to debate/discuss the pros and cons of different kinds of practices and methods. Record some significant findings here.

- Use this debate to identify how to develop more comprehensive self-assessment and peer assessment tasks. Write down your thoughts here.

- Identify (and trial) some ways in which your students can communicate or report their achievements to the wider school community.
List your ideas here.

- If you have trialled any of them, write down some evaluative comments here.

6. Consider how you communicate student assessment and reporting with the community

- What mechanisms have you put in place to inform and involve the school community?

- Do you ask for feedback?

- What do you do with it?

7. Consider any emerging assessment and reporting issue

- Identify an issue or problem your school is facing, if any
- Develop some strategies to explore the nature of the problem in greater depth.



Summarise the seven steps using a mind map or another structure.



Having considered the seven-steps approach to exploring the current status of assessing and reporting in your school or in a school that you supervise or advise, you are in a position to develop an action plan.

A template is provided on the next page to assist with the process. (Section 3)

Section 3: Developing an action plan

You have now considered the seven-steps approach to reviewing a school's policy on assessment and reporting or to begin to develop a new policy. Develop a plan of action to make the changes happen, either on your own or with a group of people.

An understanding of the *National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003*, the assessment advice contained in the syllabuses and teachers guides and the contents of this inservice unit are essential for developing this action plan.

Here is a sample template you can use. Each box has an example to get you started. In other phases, you should include collecting information, planning your action plan, consultation, trialling the action plan, review and revision, and anything else you think will be important to the task.

The given template may not suit how you plan to proceed. If this is the case, then develop a template of your own to do the action plan.

(Note: remember you are only planning an action plan. You might like to carry out your action plan at a later stage; but that is beyond the scope of this unit.)

Suggested template for an action plan

Phase 1	When?	Purpose	Outcomes	Strategies/Activities	Who'll be involved?	Resources	Comments
Phase 1 Preparation	Term 3 4 weeks	To inform and seek support from school community about the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School community is involved Some members are able to support the review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a committee of teachers, parents and students representatives Design a questionnaire to gather views Organise a forum to discuss.... 	Head teacher (add)	Current School or provincial policy The <i>National Assessment and reporting policy, 2003</i> Module 4, In-service Unit 7 (add) other materials and models of change	
Phase 3							
Phase 2 and so on.....							

**Reflect on the process you have used so far to develop your action plan.**

- How can you use this idea?
- What does this mean to you as a teacher?
- What opportunities and possibilities does this offer you?
- What do you now understand about yourself and your role as a teacher?
- What does this do to your concept of the teaching-learning-assessment process?
- Does this fit into your personal beliefs about people and how they learn?
- What meaning do you bring to this?
- What shared meaning do your colleagues and school bring to this?
- What else have you learned from this activity?
- How might you adopt these to your context?
- What considerations do you need to keep in mind?

Module Summary

Gutpela! You have reached the end of this module as well as the end of the unit! By now you should have developed some knowledge, understandings, insights and skills relating to assessment strategies, tasks, collection, interpretation, recording and reporting assessment information and evidence.

In this module, you drew what you learned into a cohesive action plan to explore how you could improve the learning outcomes for your students.

These activities will help you to be clear about the assessment expectations of the reform curriculum and can help you to sharpen the focus of your teaching.

Now that you have finished the module, how do you rate yourself in relation to the module outcomes?

Can you:	Yes/No/ Not sure
1. identify your current practices in assessing, recording and reporting students' achievement information in relation to the <i>National Assessment and Reporting Policy, 2003</i> ?	
2. identify the depth and breadth of changes, if any, that you need to make to your current practices?	
3. develop an action plan to apply your learning in your workplace?	

If you answered 'Yes' to all of them, then you have done very well. Think about what kinds of evidence will support your achievement of each of the outcomes. If you have said 'No' or 'Not sure' to some, then it may be a good idea to go over these sections again and have another go at the tasks, and/or reflect on the bits that gave you trouble and seek help.

Remember that achieving these module outcomes helps you to achieve the outcomes of the unit as a whole. Go back to the outcomes of the unit (in the *Unit Introduction*), and reflect on where you are now in relation to those outcomes.

In the introduction to this module, we advised you to keep a running record of any evidence you may have for particular unit outcomes. If you haven't been doing this, go back over the module now and jot down, in your *Learning Contract*, some evidence for the unit outcomes for which you agreed to provide evidence.

Additional space for your notes

Additional space for your notes