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Using formative assessment to improve learning and teaching

Practical guidelines for teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic

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NOTE

The guidelines provided in this document are meant for teachers across all grades and subjects. However, due to space limitations the exemplars are focused on the primary school level.

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Section 1

Purpose and Approach

This booklet is intended to serve as a practical and user-friendly introduction to support teachers in implementing the new Department of Basic Education guidelines (DBE, 2020) regarding the use of **formative assessment during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic**. It will support teachers' use formative assessment to:

- improve their lesson planning, preparation and presentation
- identify what learners know, understand and can do
- better support ALL learners to address their learning needs.

NOTE
This booklet is only intended to serve as an introductory guide. While teachers will develop new understanding and skills when using this text, we also recognise that it is not possible to fully understand or master the strategies and techniques presented. For this, you will need more time and practice. Furthermore, teachers must possess the requisite subject area content knowledge to effectively use the strategies and techniques introduced in this booklet.

The content presented in this booklet has been tried and tested in the District-wide Assessment for Learning Professional Development Programme and the Assessment for Learning in Africa Project, with subject advisors, teachers and learners in schools across all poverty quintiles. The content includes **basic theoretical knowledge, curriculum-based exemplars, reflection exercises, practical scenarios and practice activities**. In addition, we have also included **ideas from teachers and subject advisors regarding classroom practices during the COVID-19 pandemic**.

Section 2 discusses relevant definitions and clarifies terminology regarding the purpose and uses of assessment within the South African context.
Section 3 provides an introduction to the formative assessment strategies and techniques.
Section 4 outlines practical steps on how the different formative assessment strategies and techniques can be implemented during lessons.
Section 5 contains a template for developing materials for the learner activity packs.
Section 6 lists key references and additional readings on assessment in South Africa.

To fully benefit from this booklet

- You can work on your own, or better still plan your own workshops in your Professional Learning Committee or Subject groups
- Read ALL the sections, **complete** all exercises, **review** the exemplars, and **study** the practical scenarios.
- Begin by learning and **implementing ONE strategy at a time.**
- Similarly, learn and implement **ONE technique** at a time.
- **Always support each** other as you improve your pedagogical practices.

REMEMBER: You need time and practice to develop and improve your formative assessment knowledge, understanding and skills.

See Appendix A for information on how workshops can be facilitated

Section 2 Reviewing the purpose and use of assessment

In this section, we review some of the key concepts relating to assessment. We provide relevant definitions and clarify the terminology so that we all have a common understanding and interpretation of the content presented in this booklet. To begin, here are the learning objectives and assessment criteria for this section.

Learning Objectives	Assessment Criteria
▪ To understand the purpose of assessment in education. ▪ To understand how classroom assessment fits into the National Assessment System. ▪ To determine how assessment impacts on learning and teaching. ▪ To understand the primary uses of assessment in my teaching.	▪ I can explain the purpose of assessment. ▪ I can explain the four components that make up a National Assessment System. ▪ I can discuss the importance of assessment in the teaching process. ▪ I can discuss the three primary uses of assessment. ▪ I can describe how summative assessments can be used formatively.

In any **classroom context**, it is important to note that AfL forms an important aspect of the teaching and learning process, that is assessment is integrated into teachers pedagogical practice. The primary purpose for conducting any assessment is to obtain evidence about learning. Teachers need evidence on what learners know, understand and can do, in order to adjust their teaching to better support learners or to make decisions regarding learners' mastery of the content covered.

Appendix D locates CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT within the National Education Assessment System

In practice, there are three primary uses of assessment:

- Assessment **OF** Learning
- Assessment **FOR** Learning
- Assessment **AS** Learning

Assessment is integrated into teachers pedagogical practice.

2.1 Assessment OF Learning

Assessment OF Learning (AoL) is also referred to as summative assessment. We define AoL (or summative assessment) as the:

The primary purpose of assessment is to obtain evidence of learning.

"process by which teachers gather evidence in a planned and systematic way in order to draw inferences about their students' learning, based on their professional judgment, and to report at a particular time on their students' achievements" (Assessment Reform Group - ARG, 2002, p. 4).

Summative assessments are conducted AFTER a lesson or unit of work is completed. It includes oral, practical and written activities in the Foundation Phase; tests, examinations, assignments and projects in other phases. Most summative assessments are conducted under standardised conditions so that the assessment instruments and conditions are the same for every learner. In practice, this requires the application of a formal process, hence AoL is sometimes referred to as *formal assessment*.

Christodoulou (2017) notes that the purpose of summative assessment is to produce a shared meaning among all users. In other words, teachers, learners, parents and school leaders will have the same understanding of what a specific score on a test or an assignment means. For example, we all understand that a score of 70% is a high score and that the learner performed well on the

test. It also means that this learner knows most of the work on which they were tested.
Within the context of schools, the results from summative assessments can be used to:

- determine what learners know, understand and can do
- monitor progress of learners
- report on learners' achievement
- select learners for progression purposes or awards
- identify content areas that need to be revised or retaught.

The primary purpose of summative assessment is to produce a SHARED UNDERSTANDING.

2.2 Assessment FOR Learning

Research on Assessment for Learning (AfL) clearly shows that teachers who effectively use this approach see considerable learning gains among all learners, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds (Kalinec-Craig 2017). However, teachers require high levels of expertise, experience, and appropriate content knowledge to successfully apply AfL in the classroom.

Assessment FOR Learning (AfL) is defined as:

> "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (Assessment Reform Group 2002, p. 2).

In the context of classrooms, AfL is implemented in two ways:

(i) as formative assessment
(ii) as the formative use of summative assessments.

Assessment FOR Learning =
(a) formative assessment +
(b) formative use of summative assessment

2.2.1 What is formative assessment?

Formative assessment refers to all assessments undertaken by learners and teachers during the lesson to: (i) identify what learners know and can do, and (ii) to take appropriate steps to support learners improve their knowledge, understanding or skills.

The primary purpose of formative assessment is **to produce a consequence for teachers and learners** (Christodoulou, 2017). That is, formative assessment information must lead to actionable steps to improve what learners know, understand or can do.

The characteristics that define formative assessment are that it:

a. involves BOTH learners and teachers
b. is conducted DURING the lesson
c. is based on INFORMAL EVIDENCE, which is obtained using planned and/or spontaneous activities
d. requires the teacher to provide FEEDBACK that learners can apply
e. leads to specific ACTIONS tha address learners' learning needs**.**

The purpose of formative assessment is to produce ACTIONABLE next steps for learners AND teachers.

In practice, formative assessment is mainly based on teacher judgement. This process may be different for each lesson, and also different for each learner, depending on their needs. Hence formative assessment is also sometimes referred to as *informal assessment***.**

NOTE

When using formative assessment, teachers should NOT:

- award any marks to learners, nor
- use the evidence for a summative reporting purpose.

However, teachers can make personal notes as reminders or for their own reflection. For example, notes on what to change in the next lesson, or which learners need more help. These notes can also be used to explain levels of mastery and characterise developmental stages of the learner.

2.2.2 What is the formative use of summative assessments?

The formative use of summative assessments refers to the use of summative assessment results to improve the teaching and learning process. In practice, this can only occur after the summative assessment results are available. For example, after marking a class test, the final exams or even a project, a teacher analyses the results to identify areas in which learners performed well or poorly and then uses this evidence to:
(i) identify what steps to take to improve their teaching, and
(ii) to take specific action to improve on learners' knowledge, understanding and skills

2.3 Assessment AS Learning

Assessment as Learning (AaL) refers to the process where learners monitor their own learning to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. In practice, AaL is related to formative assessment. The main difference is that learners take greater responsibility of their OWN learning. With the support of the teacher, learners determine for themselves where their strengths and weaknesses lie, plan for, and implement actionable steps to address any gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

During this process, teachers support learners by:

- creating opportunities to review their work
- providing appropriate and specific feedback
- offering ideas and options to consider
- ensuring learners focus on the lesson objectives.

Assessment AS Learning is where learners take primary responsibility to monitor and improve their OWN learning.

2.4 Quick recap

The purpose of assessment is to obtain evidence of learning.

Summative assessment and AoL refer to the same thing. The purpose is to obtain evidence of what learners' know, understand and can do AFTER a lesson or a unit of work has been completed.

AfL implies TWO uses: Firstly, formative assessment; secondly, the formative use of summative assessment results. Both these uses are intended to take specific action to improve learners' knowledge, understanding and skills.

NOTE

Review Appendix C for a practical example on the difference between Formative Assessment AND Formative use of summative evidence

REMEMBER

In the classroom context, all types of assessment should be seen as complementary.

- We use formative assessment to support the learning process during lessons.
- We use summative assessment to determine the extent to which learning has taken place.
- Enhanced and effective use of formative assessment can lead to improved performance on summative assessments.

Imagine our learners as plants:

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

Reflection activity

Reflecting on your experience as a teacher to date, discuss:

i. what new understanding you gained?
ii. how this will impact your teaching practices?

Have I attained the Assessment Criteria?

Assessment Criteria	Did I achieve this? Yes/No	What do I need help in?
I can explain the purpose of assessment.		
I can discuss the importance of assessment in the teaching process.		
I can define the three uses of assessment.		
I can highlight the difference between formative and summative assessment.		
I can describe how summative assessments can be used formatively.		

Now what do I do next?

Section 3 Introduction to formative assessment

In this section we will learn about the key **strategies** and **techniques** involved in the use of formative assessment during lessons.

3.1 Formative assessment strategies

Let us now start by listing the learning objectives and assessment criteria.

Learning Objectives	Assessment Criteria
▪ To learn about the different formative assessment strategies. ▪ To understand how formative assessment strategies can be used during lessons.	▪ I can name the seven formative assessment strategies. ▪ I can explain how the strategies can be used during lessons.

The primary function of formative assessment is to obtain AND use evidence of learners' learning in order to improve teaching practices that better support learners address their learning needs. Wiliam and Thompson (2007) note that the use of formative assessment is based on answering three key questions:

1. Where are learners in their learning? – Teachers get this evidence during lessons.
2. Where are learners going? – Teachers get this information from CAPS/ATPs.
3. What should be done to get learners there? – Teachers facilitate and support learning.

To implement formative assessment during the lesson, we propose the use of the following formative assessment strategies[1] that teachers must know and be able to apply to better support learners improve learning:

FAS 1: Planning and preparing lessons that focus on learning.
FAS 2: Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and success criteria.
FAS 3: Using questions, discussions and activities to obtain evidence of learning.
FAS 4: Providing effective feedback to improve learning.
FAS 5: Guiding learners to support each other's learning (peer assessment).
FAS 6: Guiding learners to improve their own learning (self-assessment).
FAS 7: Using assessment evidence to improve teaching.

Figure 1 on the next page displays the relationship between each of the formative assessment strategies. The effective use of formative assessment begins with FAS 1 – the planning and preparation strategy.

FAS 2: *Sharing and understanding learning intentions and success criteria*, comprises the basis for all lessons. All questions and discussions (FAS 3), all feedback provided to learners (FAS 4), as well as the process of undertaking peer assessment (FAS 5) and self-assessment (FAS 6), should be linked to the learning intentions and success criteria. In addition, the evidence teachers obtain during the lesson can also be used to reflect on their own teaching practices, and to improve their future planning and preparation of lessons (FAS 7).

[1] FAS 2 to FAS 6 obtained from Wiliam and Thompson (2007)

Figure 1. The relationship between key formative assessment strategies

Reflection activity

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

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

3.2 Formative assessment techniques

In this section, we introduce two formative assessment techniques that teachers can try out immediately during lessons. In practice, is important to remember that each technique discussed is associated with the specific Formative Assessment Strategy.

Learning Objectives	Assessment Criteria

▪ How to use formative assessment techniques during lessons.	▪ I can explain two techniques that can:
	  ▪ improve the participation of ALL my learners
	  ▪ be used to collect evidence of learning.
	▪ I can use name sticks during my lessons.
	▪ I can use exit tickets during my lessons.

Formative assessment techniques refer to lesson-based actions used by teachers to interact with or direct learners.

Two techniques are described below.

Technique 1: Name sticks to improve learner participation

- Introduce a "No-hands-up" approach. At the start of a lesson, inform learners that they should NOT put their hands up when you ask a question. Inform learners that the only time they can raise their hands is if they want to ask you a question.
- Write the name of each learner on an ice-cream stick or piece of cardboard and place these in a container.
- Whenever you ask a question, **randomly** pull out a stick. The learner whose name is selected is asked to provide a response. (You could even ask a learner to select a stick.)
- Once a name stick has been used, place it back into the container.
- The process can be repeated anytime you need to select a learner during a lesson.

Technique 2: Exit tickets – to check what learners have understood/learnt

- At the end of the lesson, give each learner a small, blank slip of paper.
- Ask learners to answer one question using a few words only –
  - e.g. *What did the teacher want you to learn today*?
  - Younger learners could be asked to draw something related to the lesson.
- Collect the slips and analyse each response. Usually you collect slips as learners leave the classroom (e.g. before break).

However, **during the COVID pandemic period**, teachers can use mini boards or ask learners to leave the slips on the desk or to pin the slips on the board.

Try out these techniques and observe the change in your classroom learning environment.

NOTE

Figure 8 on page 26 provides an explanation on how to make the resources used for the techniques, while additional techniques are also introduced in Table 1 on page 24.

Exercise

1. After trying the name sticks, indicate your learners' reactions.

2. Use the exit tickets and complete the questions below after analysing learner responses.

Question	Number
a. What is the total number of learners present during the lesson?	
b. How many learners had the correct response?	
c. How many learners had a different response?	
What does this tell me about my learners' understanding of my lesson?	
What should my next steps be to improve my teaching?	

Complete the following sum using the breakdown method: 56 + 333 =	Write one sentence on what you were supposed to learn today:
Example 1: Exit/Entrance Ticket	**Example 2:** Exit/Entrance Ticket

Have I attained the Assessment Criteria?

After trying out the strategies please complete the following table:

Assessment Criteria	Did I achieve this? Yes/No	What do I need help in?
Formative Assessment Strategies		
I can name the seven formative assessment strategies.		
I can explain how the strategies can be used during lessons.		
Formative Assessment Techniques		
I can explain the "no-hands-up" approach.		
I can use name sticks during my lesson.		
I can use exit tickets during my lesson.		

Think about other techniques you can use to encourage learner participation in your lessons, especially for those learners who are afraid to get involved.

Example: Learners holding up mini boards
(see page 24)

Example: Teacher using name sticks

REMINDER:
Please email YOUR ideas and suggestions which we can share with other teachers.
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Section 4

Application of formative assessment strategies and techniques

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

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

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

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

Learning Objectives	Assessment Criteria
▪ To plan and prepare effective lessons. ▪ To review the template provided to use formative assessment.	▪ I can identify "the learning" listed in CAPS /ATPs. ▪ I can explain how the template should be used to plan and prepare my lesson.

Planning and preparation for any lesson will mean:

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

Lesson plans in the FA approach are written with learners in mind. Therefore, the plan must first address the question:

- What it is that learners must attain?

And only thereafter teachers ask the question:

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

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

Figure 2. Grade 3 Mathematics (page 389 in CAPS)

Lesson Topic	Addition and subtraction
Concept (if applicable)	Adding 3-digit numbers using the breakdown method
Lesson Objectives	Learners need to know how to: ▪ Add a 3-digit number to a 2-digit number by using the breakdown method.
Assessment Criteria	Learners should be able to: ▪ Add a 3-digit number to a 2-digit number by breaking down one number. ▪ Add a 3-digit number to a 2-digit number by breaking down both numbers.
Lesson Activity	Learners will complete calculations in their workbooks.

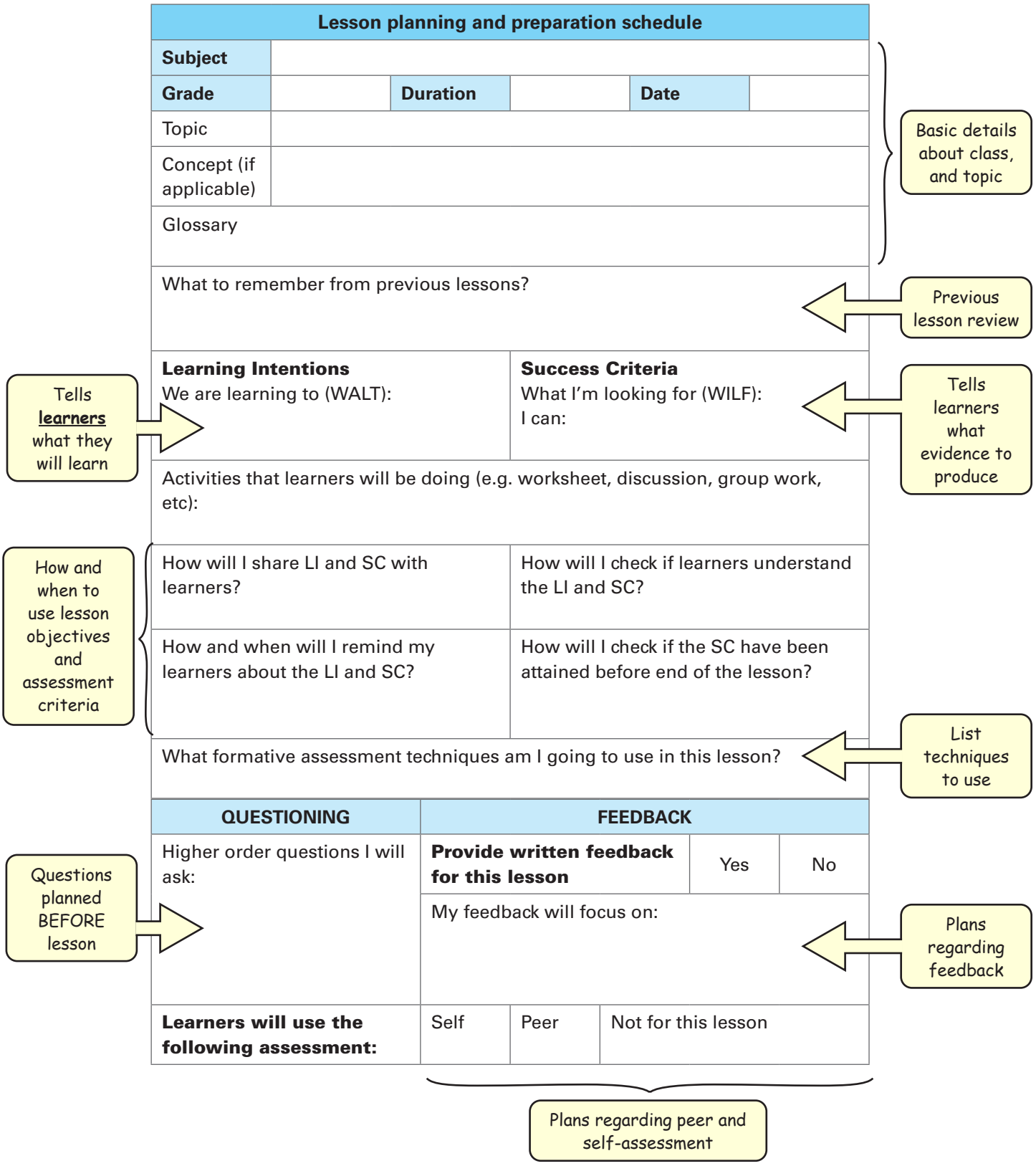
Figure 3. Grade 6 Social Science (page 44 in CAPS)

Lesson Topic	Democracy and citizenship
Concept (if applicable)	National Symbols since 1994
Lesson Objectives	Learner need to know: ▪ The Coat of Arms. ▪ The National Flag. ▪ The National Anthem.
Assessment Criteria	Learner should be able to: ▪ Explain what *National Symbols* mean. ▪ Identify features of the Coat of Arms. ▪ Identify the National Flag. ▪ List the colours of the National Flag. ▪ Recite/sing the words of the National Anthem.
Lesson Activity	Worksheet with Coat of Arms, graphic of National Flag and words of National Anthem. Learners will: ▪ Label Coat of Arms and write meanings of its features. ▪ Colour in the National Flag correctly. ▪ Recite/sing the words of the National Anthem.

Figure 4 on the next page provides an example of a lesson plan template to support teachers to plan and prepare for the use of formative assessment in their lesson. This template is very different to the templates that most teachers will be familiar with. For now, review the new sections in this template. We will provide additional details and explanations in the sections that follow.

NOTE
You can easily revise your own lesson plans to include relevant sections from this template.

Figure 4. Template for a formative assessment lesson



4.2 FAS 2: Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and success criteria

As noted from Figure 1 on page 10, FAS 2 is central to the effective use of the formative assessment approach as this strategy serves as the basis for any good lesson. Strategy 2 requires lots of time, and in-depth content knowledge to fully understand and properly apply in practice.

Read the learning intentions and success criteria for FAS 2.

Learning Intentions (LI)	Success Criteria (SC)
We are learning to (WALT)	**I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can:**
Understand how to use formative assessment strategy 2 (FAS2) in our lessons - i.e. clarifying and sharing learning intentions.	▪ State FAS 2. ▪ Define learning intentions. ▪ Define success criteria. ▪ Write learning intentions. ▪ Write success criteria. ▪ Use the LI and SC in my lessons.

Notice that we have used the words *Learning Intentions* (LI) and *Success Criteria* (SC) in the box above. These are similar to the lesson objectives and assessment criteria that you normally use. In the formative assessment approach we use LI because they indicate what is intended for learners to learn during the lesson, as it is possible that this intention may not always be attained at the end of the lesson. We also use SC, because these criteria inform teachers and learners what evidence learners need to produce.

LI are used to inform learners what they need to learn in a lesson. In practice:

- LI are obtained from the curriculum/ATPs.
- LI focus on knowledge, understanding and skills covered in a lesson.
- LI must be introduced using learner-friendly language.
- LI are introduced using *We are learning to* (WALT).

Learning Intentions (LI) describe what learners should know, understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson.

NOTE
Use the acronym WALT once learners understand what it means.

Examples of learning intentions:

- *We are learning to understand how the COVID-19 virus is spread.*
- *We are learning to draw 2D shapes.*

NOTE
Separate learning intentions are defined for each lesson. However, REMEMBER that one lesson may take more than a class period to complete.

SC provide information on the evidence learners must provide to demonstrate to the teacher, and to themselves, that they have achieved the LI. In practice:

- All SC MUST BE linked to the LI.
- SC can be derived from the assessment criteria (if available).
- Where assessment criteria are not given, think about what evidence learners need to show to know if they have learnt the new concept and/or skill.
- SC are written in learner-friendly language.
- SC are introduced using: *I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can …* When learners understand this, it can be shortened to *I can.*
- One learning intention can have several SC.

Examples of success criteria**:**
I know I have achieved the LI when I can:

- *List five foods that are unhealthy.*
- *Label the x and y axes of a graph.*

Success criteria (SC) indicate the evidence a learner must provide to demonstrate successful achievement of the **learning intention (LI)**.

Figure 5. Examples of LI and SC based on the CAPS document

Topic	Addition and subtraction
Concept (if applicable)	Adding 3-digit numbers using the breakdown method
Learning Intentions	We are learning to (WALT): add 3-digit to 2-digit numbers by using the breakdown method.
Success Criteria	I have achieved the learning intention when I can: ▪ Break down the 3-digit number into hundreds, tens and units. ▪ Break down the 2-digit number into tens and units. ▪ Add the tens together. ▪ Add the units together. ▪ Add the hundreds to the sum of the tens and units.
Lesson Activity	Learners will complete calculations in their workbooks.

Example 1: Grade 3 Mathematics page 389 in CAPS

Topic	Democracy and citizenship
Concept (if applicable)	National Symbols since 1994
Learning Intentions	We are learning to (WALT): understand the national symbols of South Africa.
Success Criteria	I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can: ▪ List the different symbols on the Coat of Arms. ▪ State the meanings of the symbols on the Coat of Arms. ▪ Identify the South African flag. ▪ Colour in the South African flag. ▪ Recite/sing the words of the National Anthem.
Lesson Activity	▪ Worksheet to label and explain Coat of Arms and to colour flag; learners learn words of anthem.

Example 2: Grade 6 Social Science page 44 in CAPS

Exercise

1. After reviewing the examples in Figure 5, compare Examples 1 and 2 to Figures 2 and 3 on page 15, and note any differences. Then complete the table below using any topic.

Lesson Topic	
Concept (if applicable)	
Learning Intentions	
Success Criteria	

Learning intentions (LI) and success criteria (SC) serve as the basis for ALL classroom questions, discussions and activities, for providing feedback, and for effectively using peer and self-assessment.

How do I share the LI and SC with my learners?

This is another critical step after you have written your LI and SC, which takes place when teachers present a lesson. To ensure that ALL learners understand what they are going to learn, teachers must follow these steps:

1. **The LI and SC are always be visible to learners throughout the lesson.**
   This can be achieved using any of these ideas:
   - Write the LI and SC on the board.
   - Make a poster of the LI and SC.
   - Print the LI and SC on a worksheet to hand out.
   - Present on smartboard/projector if available.
   - You may want learners to write them in their books (but this takes up time).

2. **Ensure that all learners understand the LI and SC.**
   - Read the LI and SC out loud and ask the class to repeat them.
   - Explain each LI and each SC.
   - Select one or two learners to read them aloud (use name sticks).
   - Select one or two learners to explain what they understand about the LI and SC.

3. **Regularly refer to the LI and SC during the lesson.**
   - Always remind learners what the lesson focuses on.
   - Ask learners to check the SC when they are busy with class activities.

4. **Check if the if LI and SC have been understood at the end of the lesson.**
   - Go over all the LI and SC to check what has been understood during the lesson.
   - Use this time to remind learners about work to be completed at home.

   During the COVID-19 period, clearly-stated SC are important to assist learners and parents at home in determining if they have correctly completed any homework activities assigned.

NOTE
You can use the formative assessment techniques when introducing the LI and SC. (Read the Practical Scenario 1.)

Remember
It will take time for YOU and YOUR LEARNERS to get used to the new approach. Be patient. Keep on explaining the process to learners until they are familiar with the LI and SC.

Practical Scenario 1: Application of FAS 2 in practice

(T – teacher; L – learner; Ls – learners)

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

BEFORE PROCEEDING

Please write and use the LI and SC for several lessons.

Exercise

1. Once you have used the LI and SC for several lessons and your learners are familiar with this new approach, discuss with them what they like or don't like about this approach. Ask for ideas about what you should do differently. Summarise your discussion and decisions below.

Have I attained the SC?

Success Criteria: I can	Did I achieve this? Yes/No	What do I need help with?
State FAS 2.		
Define LI.		
De! ne SC.		
Write LI.		
Write SC.		
Introduce the LI and SC in my lessons.		

Now what do I do next?

4.3 FAS 3: Using questions, discussions and activities to obtain evidence of learning

This strategy focuses on supporting teachers to collect evidence on what learners understand and can do DURING the lesson so as to decide how best to present their lesson.

Read the LI and SC for FAS 3.

Learning Intentions (LI)	Success Criteria (SC)
We are learning to (WALT)	**I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can:**
Understand how to use formative assessment strategy 3 (FAS 3) - i.e. using questions, discussions and activities to obtain evidence of learning.	▪ State FAS 3. ▪ Engage all learners to participate in my lessons. ▪ Prepare higher order thinking questions before lessons. ▪ Use the higher order thinking questions during lessons. ▪ Collect evidence of learning using different techniques.

Learner engagement and collecting evidence of learning

During any lesson, teachers use both spontaneous and planned activities to improve learner participation as a means of collecting evidence on what learners know, understand and can do. Spontaneous activities include informal questions or discussions while planned activities include all activities and questions prepared before the lessons, e.g. higher order thinking questions. To obtain reliable evidence from learners, there are several techniques that the teacher can use (see Table 1 on page 24). However, it is important for teachers to create a positive learning environment where learners feel confident about participating in lessons.

Figure 6. TIPS on creating a positive learning environment

- Acknowledge and respect ALL learner contributions, e.g. a positive comment or simple "thank you".
- Implement a rule where all learners must be given an opportunity to talk while other learners listen. Thus, learners should not be allowed to shout out responses.
- Pay attention and include quieter learners, who may want to contribute, but may not be confident to do so.
- Treat incorrect responses as learning moments.
- Involve more than one learner to respond to a question.
- Ask other learners to comment on responses of peers.

- Do NOT focus exclusively on learners who raise their hands, or learners who are always vocal in the class.
- Do NOT assume that if ONE learner provides a correct response, then all other learners have the same understanding.

Writing and using higher order thinking questions

Using higher order thinking questions during the lesson is critical to challenge learners to improve their knowledge and understanding of the new concepts that they are learning. High cognitive demand questions are questions that require learners to provide detailed descriptions/explanations in their response, and are NOT one-word or yes or no responses. Thus teachers should always begin questions with words such as *explain*, *compare*, *describe*.

NOTE
Teachers should prepare these questions BEFORE each lesson (see Figure 7 on the next page).

Techniques to write higher order questions

The following five techniques proposed by Clark (2008) will help teachers to change low cognitive demand questions (i.e. recall questions) into high cognitive demand questions that require higher order thinking skills.

Figure 7. Techniques for converting low cognitive demand questions into higher cognitive demand questions

Questioning Technique 1: Give a range of answers

Provide learners with a range of different answers that require learners to think about the most appropriate answer and to explain why they selected that answer.

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
What is 4 x 4?	Which is the correct answer if you multiply 4x4? 8, 16 or 24? Explain your answer.

Questioning Technique 2: Convert questions into statements

Convert questions into statements and ask learners to provide their views on the statement.

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
Who are the people that help us in our communities?	Communities need more policemen than nurses. Do you agree or disagree and say why?

Questioning Technique 3: Present opposite options and ask for reasons

Presenting learners with opposite sides of an issue and asking them to decide which is right and which is wrong challenges learners cognitively.

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
List the clothing that people wear during winter.	Explain why people wear the following types of clothing in winter and in summer: gloves, shorts, thick jacket, t-shirt, sandals, a woollen cap.

Questioning Technique 4: Learners explain how answer was obtained

Provide learners with answers to the questions and offer an explanation.

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
What did Thando do in the story?	Thando was very brave in the story we just read. Explain your answer.

Questioning Technique 5: Ask questions from an opposing viewpoint

Asking questions from an opposing viewpoint can challenge learners to think about different positions on an issue.

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
Why do people recycle goods?	Do you think recycling goods is a waste of time and money? Explain your answer.

Exercise

For each of the questioning technique below, rewrite the recall question into a higher order thinking question.

Questioning Technique 1: Give a range of answers

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
Which types of food are important for the human body?	

Questioning Technique 2: Convert questions into statements

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
What is a firefighter?	

Questioning Technique 3: Present opposite options and ask for reasons

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
What is the difference between a farm and a city?	

Questioning Technique 4: Learners explain how answer was obtained

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
345 + 39 = ?	

Questioning Technique 5: Ask questions from an opposing viewpoint

Low cognitive demand question	High cognitive demand question
Which number is bigger? 81 or 35?	

See Appendix D for possible responses

Formative assessment techniques to improve learning participation

The techniques for improving learner participation and collecting evidence of learners' understanding, knowledge and skills are numerous. A few common techniques are discussed in the table below. We have selected those that will ensure social distancing in the classroom. Also refer to Figure 8 on page 26 for tips on how you can develop these resources.

Table 1. Formative assessment techniques to use during lessons

Technique	How to use	Collecting evidence of learning
Name sticks: To randomly select learners during a lesson	Emphasise that learners should NOT put up their hands to answer questions. First ask the question then randomly select name sticks to get learners to answer it. Place name stick back in the container once a response has been obtained.	Make mental notes about who understands the concepts and who has challenges. Using this information, decide if and how much re-teaching is required.
Think or wait time: To give learners time to think before responding	Allow learners a few seconds to think before providing a response. Do not rush learners to respond. Depending on the type of question the wait time can vary from a minimum of 5 seconds upwards.	Some learners take time while others think quickly. Knowing this helps you to frame more effective questions that allow for differentiated instruction.
Phone-a-friend: To provide learners with a chance to get help	When learners are not able to provide a response, they can phone-a-friend for assistance. The learners can pretend to phone another learner to assist with responding to the question.	You discover which learners understand the concepts. Make mental/written notes for your own reflection and planning.
Thumbs up or thumbs down: To allow learners to indicate their level of understanding	For this technique learners indicate how much they understand by using their thumbs. Thumbs up means they understand; thumb sideways means they are uncertain; and thumbs down means they don't understand.	By checking on the position of the thumbs you immediately get to know how well learners understand the concepts. Your teaching can be instantly adjusted.
Mini response boards: To check if the lesson should continue or reteach what has been covered	This technique is useful for short answers and calculations. When a question is asked, learners write the answer on the board, and hold up the board. Remind learners to write their own answers. Give learners a reasonable amount of think time depending on the type of question asked.	By scanning the responses, check how many learners understood the concept, you can decide how to adjust the lesson, i.e. re-teach the concept, or to focus on the learners who need help or continue with lesson.
Exit or entrance tickets: To obtain information about learner understanding when teaching a concept	At the end of the lesson ask learners to answer a question which should require a short answer, i.e. one sentence or one sum only. The teacher can either collect the exit tickets as learners leave the class, hence exit tickets; or learners can bring the tickets back the next day before they enter the class - entrance tickets.	On checking the tickets you will get a good idea about whether the concepts were understood or not, so you can plan your next teaching steps. Learners should NOT write their names on the exit/entrance tickets.
Think, pair & share (not COVID-19 friendly)	The teacher gives pairs of learners an opportunity to share their ideas and thoughts with each other before responding to a question or task.	After listening to the response of the paired learners, you can establish their understanding and decide whether to adjust your teaching or not.

Practical Scenario 2: Application of FAS 3 in practice

Teacher and learner practices/dialogue	Rationale
Ms Zondo wanted to encourage learners to think a bit more when answering a question. Previously the learners raised their hands and often shouted out answers without thinking about the question.	The think time technique is used to give learners time to think about their response to teacher questions.
T – Class, as you know, I've been using name sticks to select learners to answer questions or to explain something. I have told you before that it does not matter if you get the answer wrong. However, some of you still need a little time to think. Remember our no-hands-up rule.	T introduces the idea that learners must take some time to think about the question or task before responding.
▪ Ms Zondo asks a question to the whole class, and then pulls out a name stick. T – Tebogo, can you break down the number 348, please? ▪ Teacher waits a few seconds. L – Three hundreds, four tens and eight units. T – Thank you, Tebogo. ▪ Teachers pulls out a different name stick to select another learner. ▪ Lesson continues.	▪ T asks question so that whole class can think about the answer. ▪ T then uses a name stick to randomly select a learner. ▪ T gives learners a few seconds to think about the answer. T can ask the same question to check for understanding or ask another question.
▪ Ms Zondo hands out a discarded A4 sheet of paper which is blank on one side, to each learner. T – Please take out a black, blue or green crayon. T – I am going to give you a sum to complete. Write your answer on the blank side of the paper. Your writing must be big so the whole class can see it. T – Okay, class, I want you to add 267 to 49. Please do your own work. T – Who is still busy? T – I see that you have all completed the sum. Please raise your papers high so I can see your answers. ▪ Teacher selects a name stick. T – Okay, Ismail, explain how you did your sum. ▪ Learner explains how he did the sum.	▪ T uses recycled paper due to limited resources to make or purchase mini response boards. ▪ Dark coloured crayons are used to make writing visible to the whole class. ▪ Ensure learners work individually. ▪ T gives wait time. ▪ T can now quickly check which learners have grasped the concept. ▪ T selects learner at random. ▪ T checks for understanding. ▪ T can ask more learners the same question and depending on the responses, decide whether further clari! cation is required or not.
▪ At the end of the lesson teacher gives each learner a small piece of paper. T – Listen carefully class. On this piece of paper I want you to write 492 + 53. Write the calculations and the answer on the paper and bring it to class tomorrow.	▪ Teacher uses entrance ticket technique to check learners' understanding of the lesson.

Exercise

1. Try out these techniques and write your reflections below on how learners responded

Have I attained the SC?

Success Criteria: I can	Achieved Yes/No	What help do I still need?
State FAS 3.		
Engage all learners during the lesson.		
Prepare higher order thinking questions before lessons.		
Use higher order thinking questions during lessons.		
Collect evidence of learning using different techniques.		

Now what do I do next?

Figure 8. Making your own resources for the FA techniques

Name sticks	Described in previous section
Phone-a-friend	Use an old phone or a picture of a phone can be cut out on cardboard and laminated
Mini boards	▪ Use the blank side of used paper printed on one side. ▪ Place a white/light coloured cardboard into a plastic sleeve. ▪ Laminate a white/light coloured cardboard. ▪ Paint chalkboard paint onto Masonite board or other light weight material. ▪ Purchase ready-made boards from stationery supplier. ▪ Each learner will need a non-permanent board pen, chalk or crayon. ▪ Each learner will need a cloth for cleaning the board.
Exit/entrance tickets	Small slips of paper which can be cut from used paper or old blank paper, etc.

4.4 FAS 4: Providing feedback that improves learning

In this section we would like you to think about: (i the kind of feedback you give to learners when you are commenting on their work, either orally or in writing; and (ii whether your comments are useful to learners to improve their work.

Read the LI and SC for FAS 4.

Learning Intentions (LI)	Success Criteria (SC)
We are learning to (WALT)	**I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can:**
Understand how to use formative assessment strategy 4 (FAS 4), i.e. providing effective feedback that improves learning.	▪ State FAS 4. ▪ Explain procedural, evaluative and descriptive feedback. ▪ Use descriptive feedback orally and in writing to improve learning.

How does feedback affect learners?

Research has shown that feedback has the most powerful influence to learning and learner achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Similarly, Smith (2014) notes that feedback is the lifeblood for learning. However, how feedback will impact learners depends on the form, format and timing of the feedback.

Purpose and types of feedback

The primary purpose of providing feedback is to support learners in improving their knowledge, understanding and skills regarding the topic of the lesson. In practice, teachers use oral feedback when they speak to the learners about their work and how to improve it; and written feedback in the form of comments on work that learners submit, also clearly indicating how to improve it. Remember, both oral and written feedback must focus on the task and NOT be a judgement of the learner.

Descriptive feedback means learners are given a RECIPE they can follow to improve their work.

FAS 4 is about providing feedback that improves learning. Therefore, **procedural** comments such as *incomplete, not again,* or *pull up your socks* are NOT useful. Similarly, **evaluative** comments that are negative, for example, *untidy, when will you learn?,* or *poor work* only tend to demotivate learners. However, while evaluative comments such as *good* or *excellent* often help to motivate learners, these comments still do NOT provide any information on what learners need to do to improve their work.

The most useful type of feedback for learners is descriptive feedback. Descriptive feedback refers to oral conversations or written comments that support learners to take specific steps in order to improve their work. In practice, descriptive feedback can be used to:

- explicitly show learners how to improve their work, for learners who need more support
- guide learners on how to improve their work, for learners with a better understanding.

See Table 2 on the next page.

Remember, ALL learners have the potential to learn, and your role as a teacher is to use feedback positively to improve the way all learners learn.

Table 2. Summary of the different types of feedback

Type of feedback	Procedural	Evaluative	Descriptive
Focus of feedback	Learner's work or learner	Learner's work or learner	Learner's work
Purpose of feedback	To indicate routine aspects of learners' work	To judge the performance of learners	To ***show*** or ***guide*** learners how to improve their work.
Nature of feedback	Neither positive nor negative.	Positive or negative	Positive
Format of feedback	Text or symbols	Text or symbols	Text or symbols
Example 1	*No answer*? *Incomplete*	80%; 24/30; Excellent ☺ ☹	▪ **Showing:** Use this formula to ! rst divide by 2: then multiply by 5. ▪ **Guiding:** Redo the problem using the correct formula.
Example 2	*???* *Seen* *Date?*	*Untidy work* *Well done* *Your work is improving*	▪ **Showing:** Insert full stops at the end of the sentence and capitalize words at the beginning of a sentence. ▪ **Guiding:** Redo the exercise and correct the 3 punctuation errors.

Figure 9. Tips on providing descriptive feedback

- Descriptive feedback MUST be based on the success criteria.
- Timing is important – provide feedback as soon as possible.
- Create opportunities for learners to respond to your feedback (in class or at home).
- First comment on a positive aspect of a learner's work and then indicate an area that the learner could improve upon.
- Use symbols that indicate what learners need to do next.
- Do NOT use a red pen (this has negative connotations for learners).

NOTE
Helping learners improve their knowledge, understanding and skills TAKE TIME. Be patient and plan for success over the schooling year.

Using symbols for descriptive feedback

Using symbols that learners understand, and which communicate the next steps learners must take to improve their work reduces teachers' marking workload and is also a very useful and efficient way of providing feedback. However, currently, the most common symbols that teachers use are ticks (✓), crosses (✗) and question marks (?), usually written in red pen. While the meanings of these symbols are understood by all learners, these symbols do not tell learners what they need to do to improve their work, and therefore are of limited use to improve learning. Some teachers also cross out work and rewrite it, which, while helpful for some learners who need this type of assistance usually takes up a lot of time. Worse still: in this case, the teacher is doing "all the work", instead of the learner.

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

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

PRACTICAL TIP

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

Figure 10. Exemplar: Using symbols as feedback

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

All learners have been taught that:

(i) the ● means there is one error in the calculation
(ii) they must find the error and
(iii) they must correct the error.

47 + 36 = (40 + 7) + (30 + 6) = (40 + 30) + (7 + 6) = 70 + 14 = 74	47 + 36 = (40 + 7) + (30 + 6) = (40 + 30) + (7 + 6) = 70 + 14 ● = 74 ●	47 + 36 = (40 + 7) + (30 + 6) = (40 + 30) + (7 + 6) = 70 + 14 ●● = 74
a. Feedback **showing** learners	**b.** Feedback **guiding** learners (less challenging)	**c.** Feedback **guiding** learners (more challenging)

The nature and format includes:

a. The circle ( ) shows the incorrect calculation. The learner must correct the error.
b. The dot ● only shows the step that contains the error, but not the incorrect calculation. The learner must first find the error and then correct it.
c. The two dots ●● at the bottom indicate that two errors have been made. The learner must first find the step(s) in which the errors were made, find the incorrect calculations, and then make corrections.

Read the following scenario regarding feedback and answer the questions that follow.

- ***WALT:*** *Write a paragraph.*
- ***I can:*** *Write a paragraph about the picture.*
  Write the first sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about.
  Write a paragraph of four sentences.

After introducing the LI and SC and making sure the learners understand the LI and SC, Mrs Mokgosi asks learners to cut out one picture from their magazine. She then asks them to write a paragraph based on what they see in the picture.

While learners are cutting out their picture, Mrs Mokgosi notices that Zama has cut 3 pictures, and says, "Wow, you have 3 pictures. Now you can select the best one to write your paragraph." Other learners hear this and now pick up their scissors again and start looking through the magazine for other pictures to cut out.

A few minutes later, Mrs Mokgosi praises Qetelo as follows: "Very neat handwriting, Qetelo. I am glad that you are taking your time". Some learners now begin to rewrite the paragraph, and to write slowly to ensure that their handwriting is also neat.

The learners realise that the LI and SC are not important. Learners now ignore the SC and begin to focus on what they hear the teacher is saying.

Explain what advice you will give Mrs Mokgosi to improve her oral feedback.

Improving oral feedback

The feedback provided by the teacher could have been improved had Mrs Mokgosi focused on the LI and SC, as demonstrated in the exemplar below.

Mrs Mokgosi notices that Zama has cut out three pictures. She reminds Zama to read the LI and SC written on the board again. Then she very quietly tells Zama that it is good to have a few pictures because she can choose the best one that will give her ideas to write a good paragraph.

Mrs Mokgosi sees that Qetelo has almost completed his work and says, "Well done, Qetelo, I see that the first sentence tells the reader what the paragraph is about. Now focus on what happened next in your story." She then whispers to Qetelo that she likes his neat work.

At this point, the class knows that the LI and SC are what the teacher is actually looking for. The teacher has made this clear by focusing her oral comments on the SC.

Exercise

First, try using the written feedback symbols in your class. Thereafter, answer the following questions below:

1. How did the use of symbols impact on your marking?
2. How did learners respond to this new way of receiving feedback?

Have I attained the SC?

Success Criteria: I can	Did I achieve this? Yes/No	What help do I need?
State FAS 4.		
Define oral feedback.		
Define written feedback.		
Use oral feedback to improve learning.		
Use written feedback to improve learning.		

Now what do I do next?

Symbol	Meaning
•	There is one error which you need to ! nd and correct.
^	There is some information missing, which you need to add.
sp	Find and correct the spelling error.
p	Find and correct the punctuation error.
	You need to get support from your partner or parent.
	You may need more time to understand this work.

Example: Feedback symbol sheet used by teachers

4.5 FAS 5: Guiding learners to support each other's learning (peer assessment)

This section focuses on how teachers can use peer assessment to support learners in assisting each other to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills during the lesson.

Read the LI and SC for FAS 5.

Learning Intentions (LI)	Success Criteria (SC)
We are learning to (WALT)	**I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can:**
Understand how to use formative assessment strategy 5 (FAS 5): Helping learners become sources of support for each other (peer assessment).	▪ State FAS 5. ▪ Explain what peer assessment is. ▪ Describe the purpose of peer assessment. ▪ Explain the steps for using peer assessment in the classroom. ▪ Teach learners to use the SC to review work of partners. ▪ Support learners to provide effective feedback to partners. ▪ Monitor and support learners to use peer assessment effectively.

The purpose of peer assessment is to obtain evidence that can be used to provide feedback to a partner for improving their knowledge, understanding and skills. Peer assessment is MORE THAN just asking learners to mark each other's books. It requires learners to engage in deep thinking about the work and to explain to each other which aspects were done well and which aspects need to be improved. However, teachers must:

- guide learners on how to apply this process for providing descriptive feedback
- create opportunities during lessons for learners to undertake peer assessment

> Peer assessment is the process where learners review each other's work to obtain evidence for providing descriptive feedback that will lead to improvement in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

In using the peer assessment strategy, teachers should apply the following steps:

Step 1: Select specific lessons that are appropriate for peer assessment. Not all lessons are suitable for this strategy.
Step 2: Indicate which learners are paired together (pair learners with similar ability.
Step 3: Ensure that ALL learners understand the success criteria. (Provide learners with exemplars of what "good" and "not there yet" quality work looks like.
Step 4: Peers must use the SC to review each other's work to identify work that has been done well and work that can be improved.
Step 5: Peers will first explain and discuss aspects of the work that have been done well.
Step 6: Peers will then explain and discuss aspects of the work that can be improved.
Step 7: The peers will then discuss the goal/s that they need to set to improve the work.
Step 8: Teachers must monitor and support learners as they undertake the process to reinforce what learners had done well, and provide guidance on what could be improved.

Figure 11. Code of conduct for peer assessment

Before peer assessment can be applied, teachers must familiarise learners with an appropriate code of conduct to be applied. Remind learner of the following guidelines:

- Respect your partner's work.
- Remember your feedback must be linked to the SC.
- Tell your partner what is good about their work.
- Listen carefully to your partner's explanations and suggestions.
- Look for a way to help your partner improve their work.
- Make your suggestions as clear as possible.
- Be fair to your partner.
- Do not discuss your partner's work with other learners.

Peer assessment under COVID-19 conditions

Peer assessment presents challenges when teaching under COVID-19 because it involves close interaction between learners. Due to the current physical distancing regulations, restrictions of learner movement, and limitations on exchange of materials in the classroom during the pandemic, the following ideas have been proposed by teachers and subject advisors on how to undertake peer assessment safely:

1. As desks have already been placed at a safe distance, those learners sitting closer to each other can become partners.
2. No material should be exchanged between learners.
3. Teachers can ask learners to complete short exercises that must be written on mini-boards (see section on FAS 2 for this technique), large enough for their partners to see. Learners then review each other's work, and – using their inside voices – provide feedback as per the peer assessment steps proposed.

Exercise

1. Try out this strategy and reflect on how it affected your lesson and how learners responded

REMINDER:
Please email ideas and suggestions which we can share with other teachers.
KanjeeA@tut.ac.za and jayesh@humanfirst.co.za

4.6 FAS 6: Guiding learners to improve their own learning (self-assessment)

Self-assessment is used by learners to assess their own work, create a plan and implement next steps for improving their work. **It is COVID-friendly and can be used in class and at home.**

Read the LI and SC for FAS 6.

Learning Intentions (LI)	Success Criteria (SC)
We are learning to (WALT)	**I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can;**
Understand how to use formative assessment strategy FAS 6: Helping learners become independent and self-regulating (self-assessment)	▪ State FAS 6. ▪ Explain what self-assessment is. ▪ Describe the purpose of self-assessment. ▪ Explain the self-assessment steps that can be used. ▪ Teach learners how to apply the self-assessment. ▪ Monitor and support learners' use of self-assessment.

The purpose of self-assessment is to obtain evidence which learners can use to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills with regards to the learning intentions. Before self-assessment can be applied, teachers must ensure that learners are fully familiar with the process to be followed. In addition, teachers must provide opportunities during lessons to facilitate the self-assessment process.

Self-assessment is NOT ONLY about learners marking and correcting their work.

> Self-assessment is the process where learners review their own work to obtain relevant evidence to improve their own knowledge, understanding and skills.

NOTE
Teachers MUST demonstrate for learners how to conduct self-assessment (see Table 3 on the next page).

Remind learners that they need to use the SC to set their OWN goals and for improvement of their OWN work. Thus learners should read the SC out to themselves to be clear about what needs to be assessed and use these for setting the next steps. It is also important for teachers to monitor and support learners as they assess themselves.

Under COVID-19 conditions, learners may not attend school every day due to the rotational timetable. Therefore they would need to apply the self-assessment process at home. At the end of each task teachers may provide a detailed memorandum listing the correct solution or answers (see Section 5 for more information).

Table 3: Steps for using self-assessment (adapted from ODoE, 2010)

Steps	Self-assessment techniques
1. Assess level of understanding against success criteria.	**Use symbols that learners are familiar with to provide feedback.** Learners can also use traf! c dots: green dots indicate what was done well; yellow dots indicate that by changing certain aspects the work would improve; red dots mean the work needs to be substantially improved.
2. Identify one or two successes linked to SC.	**The learner can also reflect on the work and say:** ▪ *This section is good because …* ▪ *I like how this section …*
3. Learners identify places for improvement linked to SC.	**The learner also identifies one or two aspects that could be improved:** ▪ *I need more help with …* ▪ *I could improve at …* ▪ *The criteria I did not achieve are …*
4. Learners set a goal for improvement linked to SC.	**The learner sets their goals for improvement:** ▪ *My next step is to …* ▪ *This can be done better by …*

Have I attained the SC?

Success Criteria: I can	Did I achieve this? Yes/No	What help do I need?
State FAS 6.		
Explain what self-assessment is.		
Describe the importance of self-assessment.		
Explain the self-assessment strategies that can be used in my classroom.		
Teach learners how to use the SC to review their own work.		
Monitor and support learners to use self-assessment effectively.		

Now what do I do next?

4.7 FAS 7: Using assessment evidence to improve teaching

This strategy requires that teachers regularly review and rethink their lesson planning, preparation, and presentations in order to improve their own teaching practices.

Read the LI and SC for FAS 7.

Learning Intentions (LI)	Success Criteria (SC)
We are learning to (WALT)	**I know I have achieved the learning intention when I can:**
Understand how reflection leads to improved teaching practice.	▪ Explain what YOU understand by the term "Reflection in Teaching". ▪ List the value of reflection for teachers. ▪ Complete my own reflection template to monitor my learnng.

Value of reflection for teachers

Information on which teachers base their reflections can be obtained from learners' oral and written responses to class work, as well as from learner questions and discussions. Reflection helps teachers to understand **why they do what they do**, as they become more aware of their actions. That is, reflection:

- helps the teacher to rethink their teaching and learning practices
- improves teacher's own practice
- builds teacher's self-esteem
- encourages teachers to be lifelong learners.

Ideas for reflecting on your work

There are various ways of expressing reflections. For instance, we may informally talk to colleagues about our experiences after a lesson or training session. We also engage in a formal reflection when we use various tools to record our learning experiences. Examples of common tools used include evaluation forms, diaries, journals, and reflection logs. Participation in professional learning communities is an effective way to reflect on and share experiences to improve your own teaching.

The effective implementation of this strategy requires that teachers reflect on:

- their lesson planning, preparation and presentation
- how to improve their use of the formative assessment strategies
- how learners are learning, focussing on what feedback learners require
- methods and techniques for improving learner involvement in all lessons.

Exercise

An example of a reflection template is given. After looking at the example, complete the blank template for a lesson that you recently taught.

Example

WHAT… Did I learn during this lesson?	SO, WHAT… Does this teach me?	NOW WHAT… Do I need to do next?
▪ The learners struggled to understand how to use the success criteria to check their work. ▪ I spent too little time on the LIs and SC.	▪ I need to find a way to make it easier for learners to understand how to use the SC.	▪ I will rewrite the SC and ask a colleague to review them. ▪ I will provide learners with an exemplar. ▪ I will spend more time explaining the LIs and SC.

1. Complete this template after you have presented a lesson.

WHAT… Did I learn during this lesson?	SO, WHAT… Does this teach me?	NOW WHAT… Do I need to do next?

Have I attained the SC?

Success Criteria: I can	Did I achieve this? Yes/No	What help do I need?
Define reflection in teaching using my own words.		
List the value of reflection for teachers.		
Complete my own reflection template to monitor my teaching.		

Final reflection

What did I learn about formative assessment and what am I going to do next?

Section 5

Using formative assessment strategies for learner activity packs*

*Section relevant to South African Teachers using rotational timetabling

In the schooling model under COVID-19, most learners attend schools on alternative days, alternative weeks or even every two weeks, while a number of learners are being schooled at home. Thus, as per the DBE regulations, teachers are required to plan, prepare and present lessons that allow for substantially more learning to occur at home, i.e. learner activity packs. In this context, the materials that learners have access to become the primary source of learning. In the figure below we offer a template to develop materials to better support learners, and their parents (or a knowledgeable other) in the home environment.

Figure 12. Template for developing Learner Activity Packs

Section 1: Subject, topic, LI and SC

Topic		**Grade**		**Date**	
We are learning to (WALT):			What I'm looking for (WILF) I can:		

Section 2: Activity that learners will complete

1. Provide an exemplar to show learners what needs to be done.
2. List the activity that learners must complete, e.g. complete worksheet, complete exercise in the DBE workbook, draw something, complete sums, etc.

Section 3: High cognitive demand question(s)

List one or two higher order thinking questions that learners must answer.

Section 4: Reflection on work

List the evidence that learners need to show in order to know that their work is correct, e.g. memo or list of answers.

Section 5: Check if all SC have been attained

List SC against which learners must check their progress, and also indicate what help is needed.

Success Criteria (SC)	**Did I achieve this? Yes/No**	**What help do I need?**
SC 1		
SC 2		

Section 6: Input from parents

Add space to allow parents to comment or provide input.

Figure 13. Exemplar of learner materials to be used at home (2 pages; see also next page)

Topic		Grade		Date	
Concept	Adding 3-digit numbers using the breakdown method.				

We are learning to (WALT): Add 3-digit to 2-digit numbers by using the breakdown method.	**What I'm looking for (WILF)** **I can:** ▪ Break down the 3-digit number into hundreds, tens and units. ▪ Break down the 2-digit number into tens and units. ▪ Add the tens together. ▪ Add the units together. ▪ Add the hundreds to the sum of the tens and units.

Complete the following sums after looking at the example.

Example

$367 + 42 = \square$

$367 + 42 = (300 + 60 + 7) + (40 + 2)$
$= 300 + (60 + 40) + (7 + 2)$
$= (300 + 100) + 9$
$= 400 + 9$
$= 409$

1. $265 + 34 = \square$	2. $423 + 57 = \square$
3. $573 + 24 = \square$	4. $824 + 72 = \square$

When you have done all your sums, turn the page over for the answers.

Use the answers below to check your work.

1. 265 + 34 = ☐	2. 423 + 57 = ☐
= (200 + 60 + 5) + (30 + 4)	= (400 + 20 + 3) + (50 + 7)
= 200 + (60 + 30) + (5 + 4)	= 400 + (20 + 50) + (3 + 7)
= 200 + 90 + 9	= 400 + 70 + 10
= 299	= 400 + 80
	= 480
3. 573 + 24 = ☐	4. 824 + 72 = ☐
= (500 + 70 + 3) + (20 + 4)	= (800 + 20 + 4) + (70 + 2)
= 500 + (70 + 20) + (3 + 4)	= 800 + (20 + 70) + (4 + 2)
= 500 + 90 + 7	= 800 + 90 + 6
= 597	= 896

Additional activities
NOTE: Teacher can list additional activities to complete in the DBE Workbook or any textbook that the school uses.

Check if you have attained the SC. You can do this with the help of someone in your home.

Success Criteria: I can	Did I achieve this? Yes/No	What help do I need?
Break down the 3-digit number into hundreds, tens and units.		
Break down the 2-digit number into tens and units.		
Add the tens together.		
Add the units together.		
Add the hundreds to the sum of the tens and units.		

Comments from parents:

REMINDER:
Please email ideas and suggestions which we can share with other teachers.
KanjeeA@tut.ac.za and jayesh@human! rst.co.za

Section 6

References and additional readings

This section lists the references used, as well as additional readings on assessment.

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Section 7

Monitoring my progress

In this section, we provide a template for YOU to review and monitor your progress as you go through this booklet, and to identify areas of strength and areas where you need assistance and support

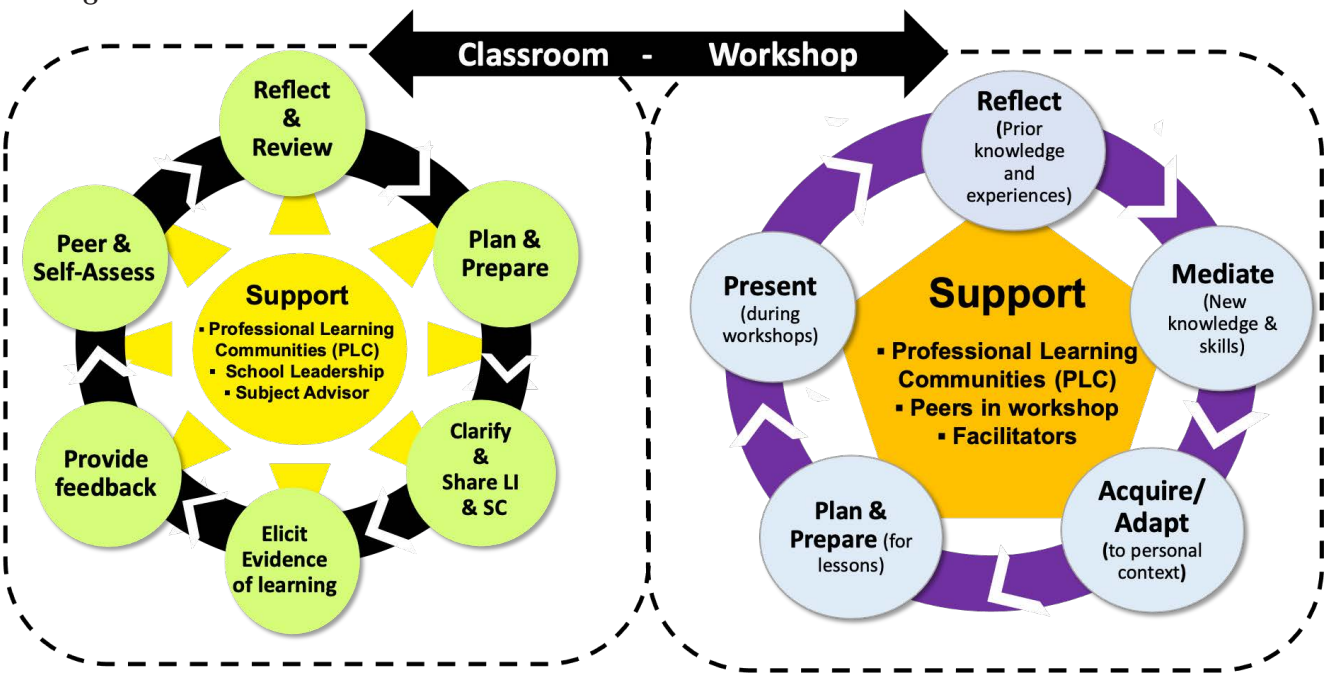
Sections in the Booklet	How do I rate my understanding and skills? What do I need to do next?
Section 2. Reviewing the purpose and use of assessment	
2.1 Assessment OF Learning (AoL)	
2.2 Assessment FOR Learning (AfL)	
2.2.1 What is formative assessment?	
2.2.2 What is the formative use of summative assessments?	
2.3 Assessment AS Learning (AaL)	
Section 3. Introduction to formative assessment	
3.1 Formative assessment strategies	
3.2 Formative assessment techniques	
Section 4. Application of formative assessment strategies and techniques	
4.1 FAS 1: Planning and preparing lessons that focus on learning	
4.2 FAS 2: Clarifying and sharing learning intentions (LI) and success criteria (SC)	
4.3 FAS 3: Using questions, discussions and activities to obtain evidence of learning	
4.4 FAS 4: Providing feedback that improves learning	
4.5 FAS 5: Guiding learners to support each other's learning (peer assessment)	
4.6 FAS 6: Guiding learners to improve their own learning (self-assessment)	
4.7 FAS 7: Using assessment evidence to improve teaching	
Section 5. Using formative assessment strategies for learner activity packs (LAPs)	
5.1 Revising my learner activity packs using the FA approach	

Section 8

Appendix A: ReMAP³S Framework

The facilitation of all workshops will be based on the **ReMAP³S** framework which was developed and applied specifically for use in the South African context. This framework involves a cyclical approach to facilitate teacher learning over sustained time periods in which new knowledge, understanding and skills are improved through **workshop participation**, **classroom implementation** and **support** from peers and the SMT (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: ReMAP³S framework



In practice, this cyclical approach involves the following stages:

- **Reflection** and Review of current understandings and skills;
- **Mediation** for introducing and facilitating new knowledge, understanding and skills;
- Participants **Acquire and Adapt** their new knowledge, understanding and skills to their own specific schooling and classroom contexts;
- Participants **Plan and Prepare** for implementation between workshop sessions;
- Participants **Present** in workshops and **Present** (teach) in their classrooms;
- **Support** from colleagues, facilitators, SMT and subject advisors.

Simply put, teachers reflect before and after engaging with the various aspects of not only the professional development programme but also after implementing what they have learned during the workshop. The ReMAP³S framework is based on constructivism as it allows participants to scaffold their knowledge, reflect and share, and build upon what they already know, understanding this new theoretical knowledge, applying it in a lesson, then reflecting on the implementation. Note that reflection in Professional Learning Communities is also important.

Appendix B: Professional Learning Communities

A professional learning community (PLCs) can be described as a group of teachers meeting regularly as professionals to reflect meaningfully about the way they teach, to resolve classroom challenges and to share ideas with the intention of improving teaching and learning (Servage, 2008). PLCs can greatly enhance the implementation of formative assessment in lessons.

Improving teaching formative assessment expertise through PLCs

PLCs provide an active process of knowledge creation for developing teacher expertise:

- The teacher-as-local-expert model means that staff use their own knowledge and experience to develop each other using professional judgment.
- PLCs should be embedded and sustained allowing change to occur developmentally.
- PLCs should be non-threatening where teachers feel free to ask for support for the challenges they face.
- PLCs allow for the day-to-day realities of the classrooms to be expressed, and the real-life stories could provide solutions for teachers in similar situations.
- PLCs provide a forum to support teachers in converting Formative Assessment strategies and techniques into practice (Wiliam & Thompson, 2007).

Core beliefs

For PLCs to be effective teachers must believe that:

- Staff development is critical to improve learning.
- Professional development is most effective if it is collaborative and collegial
- Collaboration should involve inquiry and problem solving in an authentic context of daily teaching practices. (Servage, 2008)

Types of PLCS

- Phase-based e.g. Foundation Phase
- Subject-based e.g. Home Language
- Grade-based e.g. Grade Six

While PLCs can exist and meet in these discrete groups, it is important that valuable learnings about formative assessment are regularly shared in a larger school-based PLC or meeting.

Implementing and sustaining effective PLCs

For PLCs to achieve the goal of improving learning and teaching, the following is important:

- The SMT must commit to supporting teachers' PLCs and provide resources.
- The SMT must ensure that PLC meetings are held regularly.
- Meetings should be planned timeously. A good idea is to schedule the PLC meetings in the annual timetable.
- Resources should be arranged in advance – e.g. equipment, chart paper, invited speakers.
- Clear ground rules should be established collectively and adhered to, e.g. punctuality, respect, paying attention, agreeing to disagree, time management, etc.
- Each teacher and SMT member should participate in the PLC meeting as a learner.
- The PLC facilitator should allow for democratic and effective participation.

(Wiliam & Thompson, 2007)

Appendix C: Summative Assessment; Formative Assessment and Formative use of summative evidence

Read the TWO scenarios below and indicate which Driver you would prefer to travel with. Explain why you selected the Driver 1 or 2?

Scenario A: Driver 1	Scenario B: Driver 2
▪ Imagine YOU need to go to Durban by bus. ▪ You get onto the bus and the driver begins driving north towards Durban ▪ As soon as the trip starts, the driver provides information and rules about the trip ▪ During the trip, the driver regularly checks if passengers are ok. ▪ But the driver does not check any road signs for directions, nor the dashboard for the oil, water and temperature light, nor the tyres. ▪ The bus reaches the end of the journey, and the driver requires all passengers to leave the bus. ▪ The driven then goes to check the engine, the tyres, oil, water, etc. before the next trip. ▪ YOU discover you arrived in Kimberley! But now – YOU must make your OWN way. ▪ The Driver completes and submits the trip log to the supervisor. ▪ Worst case – what if while driving, the bus gets an oil leak, which the driver does not notice and the engine stalls, leaving you stranded on the road.	▪ Imagine YOU need to go to Durban by bus. ▪ You get onto the bus and the driver begins driving towards Durban ▪ As soon as the trip starts, drivers provides information and rules about the trip ▪ During the trip, the driver regularly checks if passengers are ok. ▪ The driver regularly checks the road signs, and even had to make a detour when discovering that she took the wrong offramp. ▪ The driver also regularly checks the dashboard and had to stop twice: once to refill the oil after noticing the oil light was on, and the second time to refill air after one tyre was a little flat. ▪ The bus reaches its destination, and you are required to leave the bus. ▪ The driven then goes to check the engine, tyres, oil, water, etc. before the next trip. ▪ YOU discover you in arrived at the correct destination. ▪ The Driver completes and submits the trip log to the supervisor ▪ The Driver also fills up oil, water etc depending on what was found during the check up.

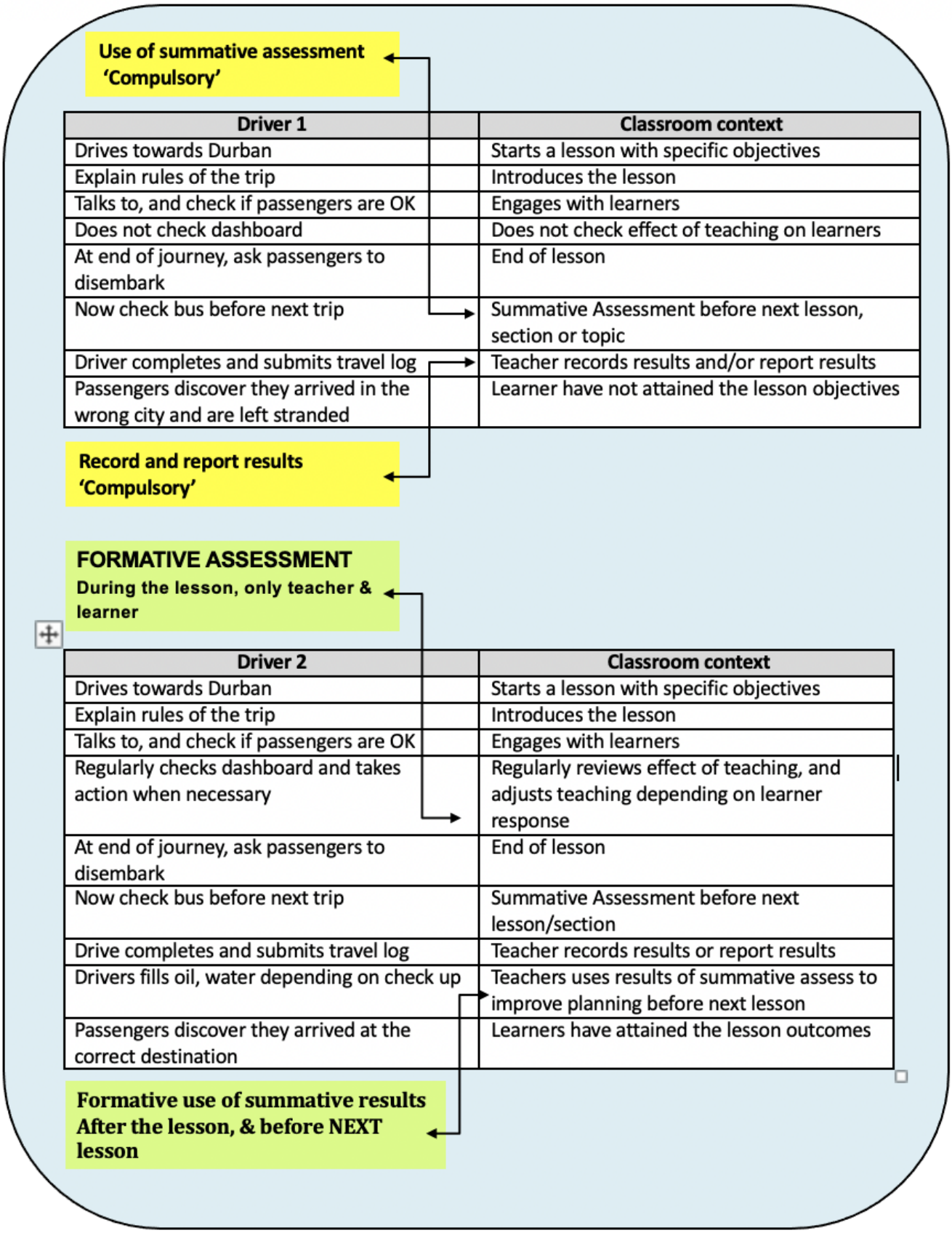


Figure C1: Classroom application of Driver Scenario

Appendix D: Framework of a National Assessment System

Definition of a National Assessment System

An assessment system can be defined as a group of interrelated or interdependent policies, practices, structures and processes implemented for obtaining and applying evidence about learner performance by stakeholders at the different levels of the education system for purposes of certifying or improving learning (Kanjee, 2008). In practice, Kanjee (2008) argues that most assessment systems comprise four components: (i) classroom assessment, (ii) examinations, (iii) assessment surveys and (iv) school evaluations (See Figure D1). Each of these components address specific assessment issues and has a different impact on learners, teachers, parents and education officials. Furthermore, the structures and processes, policies, curriculum, and supporting institutions that define the education sector and the socio-economic and cultural context in which learning and teaching take places within the sector also impacts on the assessment system.

Figure D1: Components of a National Assessment System (Kanjee,2008)

(i) Classroom Assessment

Classroom assessment refers to the process of obtaining evidence on the knowledge, understanding and skills of learners that can be used by teachers to improve learning and teaching, and by learners to improve their own learning. The primary purpose of classroom assessment is to improve learning. Typically, assessment activities are conducted by the teacher in the classroom that comprise class tests, classwork, homework, peer- and self-assessment, assignments, projects, questioning, and observations. An integral aspect of ALL classroom assessments is feedback, which is used to improve both learning and teaching.

(ii) Examinations

Examinations refer to the process undertaken for determining a learners' mastery of relevant knowledge and skills assessed. Examinations are generally the most common and most established component of the assessment system. The purpose of examinations is selection, usually based on specific, predetermined criteria. By definition, the function of examinations is to discriminate learners who are deemed to have or have not mastered the content being examined. Within the education sector, two types of examinations are usually conducted: internal and external. Internal examinations are conducted by the school, are usually developed and administered by teachers, and are conducted on a quarterly, half-yearly and/or annual basis. In addition, many countries also conduct school-based assessments (SBA) for obtaining learner scores that are used in calculating the final grade for specific external examinations (for example the Matric exams). In practice, SBA may include similar tasks as those used for internal exams and classroom assessments. The key difference, however, is that these results contribute to calculating the final grade of an external examination.

(iii) Assessment Surveys

Assessment surveys refer to the process of obtaining evidence from an education system (or part thereof) on the performance of learners and other role-players (such as teachers, principals, education officials, parents) as well as on the functioning of structures and programmes within that system (Kanjee, 2007).

The primary purpose of assessment surveys is to obtain information to evaluate various aspects of the education system; to make decisions about the need for interventions and for resource allocation; for enhancing public awareness and for accountability purposes (Braun & Kanjee, 2006). Kanjee (2007) notes that assessment surveys are generally conducted at the provincial, national, regional or international level and comprises the administration of standardised tests and questionnaires to learners and/or teachers, and may include questionnaires, site visits and interviews with key education officials including the school principal, ministry officials and other role-players in education. These assessments are usually conducted on samples of schools and learners. However, a number of countries have also conducted census-based national assessments. In this instance, all learners within a particular grade level are assessed in selected subject areas, thus information on performance levels is available to every single learner tested.

Examples of national assessment surveys include the ANAs (census based), the Grade 3 and 6 Systemic Evaluations and the provincial assessment conducted in Western Cape. Regional assessments that are currently being conducted include the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (Laboratory), Program for the Analysis of Educational Systems of the CONFEMEN Countries (PASEC), and the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality SACMEQ. International surveys that some developing countries have participated in include the Monitoring Learning Achievement survey (MLA), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

(iv) School evaluations

School evaluations refer to the process of gathering evidence about the effectiveness and efficiency of a school (Kanjee, 2008). School evaluations are based on on-site visits conducted to review school polices, practices, problems as well as the performance of learners, teachers, school management and where available, school governing bodies. While acknowledging that school evaluations per se are not a direct assessment activity (that is where students undergo some form of testing or examination), within the context of most education systems, school evaluation activities can have a critical impact on whether and how assessments are implemented, what gets assessed, who is involved in the assessments, and even the amount of funding available for key activities that determine how learning and teaching takes place, including the nature, content and target audience of training and support within schools, In essence, the school evaluations as currently implemented can serve as a key lever for enhancing assessment systems and practices within the education system.

Appendix E: Responses to Exercise on Questioning Techniques

Questioning Technique 1: Give a range of answers

Recall question	Revised question
Which types of food are important for the human body?	*Which of the following types of food are important for the human body: proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates, fats? Give reasons for your answer.*

Questioning Technique 2: Convert questions into statements

Recall question	Revised question
What is a firefighter?	*Explain how firefighters help our community?*

Questioning Technique 3: Present opposite options and ask for reasons

Recall question	Revised question
What is the difference between a farm and a city?	*Is living in the city better than living on farm? Explain your choice.*

Questioning Technique 4: Learners explain how answer was obtained

Recall question	Revised question
345 + 39 = ?	*345 + 39 = 384 Explain the answer using the breakdown method.*

Questioning Technique 5: Ask questions from an opposing viewpoint

Recall question	Revised question
Which number is bigger? 81 or 35?	Is 81 less or more than 35? Explain your answer.

MY Notes and Comments

Using formative assessment to improve learning and teaching

Practical guidelines for teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic

This booklet is intended to serve as a practical and user-friendly introduction to support teachers implement the Department of Education guidelines (Circular S2 of 2020) regarding the use of **formative assessment during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic**. It will support teachers to enhance their use of formative assessment to:

- improve their lesson planning, preparation and presentation;
- identify what learners know, understand and can do, and
- better support ALL learners to address their learning needs.

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