Diagnostic Assessment at Standard III

A Novel Child-Centred Approach to Assessment

Johannesburg  April 2015
• First piloted in 2008
• Implemented in 2009
Background of project

- A number of children who enter Std I reach Std VI without having acquired the basic literacy and numeracy skills

- Lack of a mechanism to identify children at risk
Underlying principle

Mitigate the adverse effect of the present system
Purpose

- Take stock of how much learning has occurred during Stds 1 & 2
  strengths and weaknesses

- Feedback to feed forward
  remediation and consolidation

- Teachers can plan their lesson accordingly
Diagnostic Assessment

- Not an examination nor a class test
  Administered at the beginning of the year
- Not meant to compare pupils, to give them marks, grades nor to rank them
- Not meant to judge teachers
Main objective of the Diagnostic Assessment

- Support teachers and pupils
- Identify learning difficulties early enough
- Take appropriate measures to attend to these difficulties
- Key skills of literacy and numeracy

“L’enfant n’apprend pas pour être évalué. Il est évalué pour mieux apprendre. Et pour que l’enseignant puisse mieux enseigner”
Instruments

- 2 pupil’s workbooks (English and Mathematics)
- 1 teacher’s handbook
- 1 booklet (Guidance for the installation of software and analysis of results)
Teacher’s handbook

- Detailed instructions for the administration of the assessment
- It must be administered in the same way in all schools (whatever be the region, the level and status of the school)
- Ensure that all children understand what is required
• Instructions for marking

• Instructions for the recording of results

• Methodology for the analysis of results
  for each pupil
  for the class
Pupil’s workbooks

- No instructions
- Reading load reduced
- Teacher gives the instructions
- Teacher gives examples on the board
- Teacher takes pupils through the different questions and items
Pupil friendly assessment

- Pupils not alone in front of a test paper
- Items are not the reproduction of textbook items
- Items are attractive, interesting, challenging
- Pupils have the impression of playing
- Assessment conducted in short sessions (20 mins)
Characteristics of the assessment

- Competency and skill based
- Not content based
- One competency broken down into sub-competencies
- One competency tested through 3-4 items
- Specific difficulty can be identified
<table>
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<th><strong>MATHEMATICS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Topic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Skills and Competencies</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tasks/Activities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Exercise</strong></th>
<th><strong>Items</strong></th>
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</table>
| **Number & Number Sense** | Count, read and write numbers up to 100 | § Write dictated numbers.  
§ Continue a sequence of numbers  
§ Count a given number of objects  
§ Represent a given number using objects | § 8  
§ 3  
§ 1  
§ 2 | 28 – 31  
5 – 7  
1, 2  
3, 4 |
| | Order numbers | § Compare numbers  
§ Situate numbers | § 4  
§ 5 | 8 – 15  
16 – 18 |
| | Do simple calculations | § Mental calculations (Addition)  
§ Addition  
§ Subtraction | § 6  
§ 7  
§ 9 | 19 – 22  
23 – 27  
32 – 37 |
<p>| <strong>Space and Shapes</strong> | Identify geometrical shapes | § Identify square, circle, rectangle, triangle | § 10 | 38 – 41 |
| <strong>Measures</strong> | Compare lengths | § Distinguish the longer (shorter) objects given two or more objects | § 12 | 45, 46 |
| | Compare masses | § Distinguish the heavier (lighter) objects between two given objects | § 11 | 42 – 44 |
| | Work with notes and coins | § Decompose a given amount of money | § 13, 14 | 47, 48 |</p>
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<td>Breaking written (or heard) words into their smallest constituents</td>
<td>Distinguish different phonemes</td>
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<td>Identifying words (direct/indirect way)</td>
<td>Identify the mismatch between the visual representation of a word and its spelling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify a word in a set of words which are visually related</td>
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<td>Identify a word in a set where 2 words are phonetically identical</td>
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<td>1 - 4</td>
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<td>Structuring available vocabulary</td>
<td>Find the definition of a common word</td>
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<td>Identify the odd one out in a lexical category</td>
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<td>Identify to which lexical category a set of words belongs</td>
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<td>Dealing with the organisation of a sentence or a short text</td>
<td>Choose the right word to complete a text</td>
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<td>Find the sentence which makes sense out of three propositions</td>
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<td>Choose the picture which corresponds to a given sentence using syntactic clues</td>
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<td>Retrieving information</td>
<td>Retrieve specific information from a text read by the pupil</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
<td>Copying a given sentence and abiding by the spelling of the given words</td>
<td>Copy a sentence without making any spelling mistake</td>
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<td>Writing while respecting the rules of coding</td>
<td>Writing dictated words, a dictated phrase and a dictated sentence</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36 - 38</td>
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Identifying words

3 sub competencies are assessed

• Identify mismatch between visual representation of a word and its spelling
• Identify a word in a set of words which are visually related
• Identify a word in a set where 2 words are phonetically related
Comprehension

- Not only comprehension of words
- But comprehension of text/sentence using syntactic clues
Dealing with the Organisation of a Sentence or a Short Text

- Choose the right word to complete a text
- Find the sentence which makes sense out of three propositions
- Choose the picture which corresponds to a given sentence using syntactic clues
The boys are playing.
Copying a given sentence

5 sub competencies are assessed

- all the words are written
- all the letters are properly shaped
- no letter is missing
- the capital letter and the full stop are present
- the word is clearly legible
Analysis of Results

- Analysis grid to record the results for each pupil, for each question/item and in the order of the items

- Computer software for the input of data
• Generates an analysis of the results for
  the class
  the school

• Information about the needs of pupils at
  the beginning of the year

• In a better position to organise the
  teaching
Follow up actions

- Setting up of specialised teams to provide the pedagogical support required at the level of the school
- Provision of training
- Putting into place a system of individualised support to children with serious learning difficulties
- Initiatives undertaken in the context of the Remedial Education Strategy
Reports

- Reports not released publicly
- Submitted to Ministry
- Used by Teachers, Inspectors and Directors