



Final

Formative and Summative Assessment Mechanisms

at primary level Balochistan

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School Education Department
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**Formative and Summative Assessment
Mechanisms
at primary level Balochistan**

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Content

<u>1</u>	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>STRUCTURE AND SCOPE</u>	<u>4</u>
3.1	KEY FEATURES OF THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT MECHANISM	4
3.1.1	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS ON PRIORITIZED SLOS	5
3.1.2	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT WEIGHTAGE	5
3.1.3	HOMEWORK	5
3.1.4	STUDENTS' PORTFOLIO/ACTIVITIES RECORD	5
3.1.5	STANDARDISED ITEM BANKS TO BE DEVELOPED BY BAEC	6
3.2	SPECIFICS FOR GRADES 1 TO 3	7
3.3	SPECIFICS FOR GRADES 4 AND 5	9
3.4	CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND	9
<u>4</u>	<u>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</u>	<u>11</u>
4.1	THE OVERALL MECHANICS	12
4.2	MONITORING	13
4.2.1	RECORDING BY TEACHERS	13
4.2.2	MONTHLY VISIT AND RECORDING BY RTSM	13
4.2.3	BI-MONTHLY REVIEW BY ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS	13
4.2.4	QUARTERLY REVIEW BY DEPUTY DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER (OR PRINCIPAL/HEAD TEACHER)	14
4.2.5	BI-ANNUAL REVIEW BY DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER	14
4.2.6	THREE YEAR EVALUATION: BUREAU OF CURRICULUM	15
4.3	FOLLOW UP ACTIONS	15
4.4	SUMMARY OF THE MONITORING MODEL	16
4.5	SUGGESTED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	17
<u>5</u>	<u>SYSTEM WIDE DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS</u>	<u>19</u>
5.1	DISSEMINATION AND FOLLOW UP	19
5.2	QUALITY, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF TOOLS	20
<u>6</u>	<u>TRAININGS</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS</u>	<u>22</u>
7.1	ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES	23
<u>8</u>	<u>KEY STEPS AND TIMELINES</u>	<u>24</u>
	<u>REFERENCES</u>	<u>A</u>

LIST OF BOXES

BOX 1: TEACHER AND TEACHING	3
BOX 2: STRUCTURE OF STUDENT PORTFOLIO	6
BOX 3: DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION	7
BOX 4: THE CHALLENGE OF PORTFOLIO MAINTENANCE	8
BOX 5: GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENTS	11
BOX 6: DIGITIZING ASSESSMENT DATA	12

List of Tables

TABLE 1: MINIMUM BENCHMARKS FOR REMEDIAL LEARNING	10
TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF THE MONITORING MODEL	16
TABLE 3: LIST OF SUGGESTED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	17
TABLE 4: KEY STEPS AND TIMELINES	24

List of Annex

ANNEX 1: DEFINING ASSESSMENTS	II
ANNEX 2: GUIDELINES FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	IV
ANNEX 3: GUIDELINES FOR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS	IX

ACRONYMS

Acronyms Full Form

ADEOs	Assistance District Education Officers
AfL	Assessment for Learning
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
BAEC	Balochistan Assessment and Examinations Commission
BESP	Balochistan Education Sector Plan
BFLP	Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy – 2024
BOC	Bureau of Curriculum
BTBB	Balochistan Textbook Board
DA	Diagnostic Assessment
DDEO	Deputy District Education Officer
DEG	District Education Group
DEOs	District Education Officers
DOE	Directorate of Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FA	Formative Assessment
FLN	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LEG	Local Education Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCQs	Multiple Choice Questions
PITE	Provincial Institute of Teacher Education, Balochistan
PPIU	Policy Planning and Implementing Unit, School Education Department
PRP	Pakistan Reading Programme
RTSM	Real Time School Monitoring
SA	Summative Assessment
SCSPEB	Society for Community Strengthening and Promotion of Education, Balochistan
SED	School Education Department
SLOs	Student Learning Outcomes
TaRL	Teach at the Right Level
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank

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This joint effort reflects a shared vision to enhance learning outcomes for every child in Balochistan through effective assessment practices. We look forward to continuing synergized efforts for successful implementation of the Framework.

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1 Introduction

Repetitive results from various sources expose poor literacy and numeracy outcomes for students in early grades. The latest assessment by Balochistan Assessment and Examinations Commission (BAEC) confirm the situation earlier highlighted in various iterations of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and the Balochistan Education Sector Analysis 2018. The results, among other reforms initiated, became the trigger for development of Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024. The Policy recommends various strategies for improvement of foundational learning in English, Urdu and mathematics. The Policy also calls for finalization of an assessment framework to support improvement of outcomes in foundational learning in 2025. This framework or mechanism has been prepared in response to the requirement identified in the policy. It suggests interventions that will improve the routine in the classrooms while at the same time support the additional remedial work proposed in the Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024. Many parts of the framework can also be extended for use into post primary classrooms.

The framework has been constructed on the field findings on the situation of assessments in the classrooms, requirements of the curriculum and (as stated above) the structured interventions proposed in BFLP 2024. The framework considers the limitations of teaching practices and competence as assessed through various tools, including, classroom observations. Therefore, while it prescribes training for teachers and all other important players that impact the teaching process in the classroom, the framework also identifies the challenges posed by curriculum itself. The curriculum remains inconsistent with the realities of the classroom and students in Balochistan. Furthermore, the textbooks, without keeping in mind the contextual realities accentuate the difficulty levels for students and teachers.

The framework lays out the roles of each organisation in line with the prescription of BFLP 2024 with some additional detailing with reference to assessments. It guides Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission (BAEC) on development of item banks for diagnostic, formative and summative assessments, explains in detail assessment types and weightages for different classes at the primary level, prescribes a structured monitoring and evaluation framework, identifies key actors that require training and also includes a table on key steps to be taken for implementation of the framework, with timelines. A set of key performance indicators has been added towards the end of chapter 4 on monitoring and evaluation. These can be further elaborated and honed into specifics once the item banks and the final structure of assessments on ground is in place.

2 Summary of the Situation

Concerns on the quality of assessment, both formative and assessments, have been raised in multiple documents and analysis of education in the province. These include the last two sector plans, capacity development plans prepared in 2014 and the Capacity Development Report on BAEC 2024-28. The recognition is explicit in some of the reforms designed for the rectification of the situation. These include Provincial Assessment for Student Learning (PASL), Manual on Pedagogy and Assessment 2024, Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024 and Academic Supervision and Mentoring Programme.

The Situation Analysis carried for preparation of this framework confirmed the findings from the above mentioned documents. The methodology employed was a combination of review of literature, data analysis of learning outcomes, interviews with key informants and classroom observations at the primary level in 320 schools of 8 districts. The findings target the issues in assessment structures and practices within the overall governance of education, as well as the rigid and ambitious curricular requirements not suited to the local context of Balochistan. Poor quality of textbooks further exacerbates the teaching and learning challenges. Other problems include multigrade classroom and weak teacher capacity and trainings.

The situation analysis show that typically, as per design, assessments at the primary level are structured into formative and summative. The latter are, as per design, conducted at the end of six months and annually. In some cases, quarterly assessments were also reported.

Actual practices in schools differ from the design. Many schools only conduct summative assessments – in some cases limited to annual examinations. The primary use of assessments is testing (and promotion) of students. It has none to a limited impact on the teaching-learning practices.

Poor assessment practices do not exist in a vacuum. They are a subset of an overall weak pedagogical design. Teachers do not prepare lesson plans. The small minority who prepare plans do not follow any structured, prescribed, format. The absence of plans eliminates structure from the teaching process. The other weak teaching practice observed was limited inclusion of students in the classroom. In many cases students were silent impassive attendants in the classroom. All this contributes majorly to poor learning for the students. Within this set of teaching practices that impede learning, weak practices of formative assessments were also observed.

Formative assessments were not universally present and mostly without any standardised approach. Even where formative practices, as part of the lessons, were

seen teachers were seen to be engaged with only a small percentage of students. A majority remained excluded.

Summative assessments, though conducted more regularly, were seen to be of poor quality. A very small number of teachers stated to have received training in assessments. The test items were found to be not aligned with the SLOs in the curriculum.

The problem is exacerbated with the issues in textbooks. Many teachers utilise the test items given at the end of a lesson in the textbooks for assessments. As per feedback from senior educationists in the province, the test items do not align with the student learning outcomes given in the curriculum. This brings into question the reliability and validity of all assessments in schools.

Students portfolios were absent in all classes visited. There is no practice of maintenance of these essential tools for ongoing review of the teaching-learning practices and progress.

Poor teaching observed in the classrooms and supported by interviews and FGDs revealed that it is not a product of teacher competence, or lack of it, alone (See Box 1). A number of inputs and practices contribute to the end product. An important gap is the weak monitoring mechanism.

Monitoring mechanisms in place do not capture the gaps in assessments summarised above. Both, the frequency and quality of assessment is not monitored. Monitoring processes whether implemented by the RTSM or the teams of the regular education field officers do not cover assessments. In the past indicators on conduct of assessments were included in the work of the former but these have since been in disuse. District Education Officers (DEOs) and their teams upto tehsil level (and also heads of schools) do not monitor either the regularity or quality of assessments.

Box 1: Teacher and Teaching

Teaching in the classroom is impacted by multiple actors, including, the teacher. The degree of influence of each actor depends on the rigidity or flexibility allowed to the teacher, intrinsic competence of the teacher, the mentoring, supervision and accountability models and the compatibility of the learning design (scheme of studies, curricula and textbooks) with the realities of the classroom. The premise being that poor teaching is not always an outcome of low teacher competence. Similarly, improvements in teaching and learning in the classroom (of which assessments are a key component) cannot be improved through enhancement of teacher competence alone. The role of the entire value chain of supervision and mentoring, community and developers of content needs to align and converge onto better learning outcomes for the child in the classroom.

3 Structure and Scope

Assessments are central to the teaching-learning process. In order for the teaching and learning processes to run smoothly and efficiently it is important that assessments are well aligned with objectives and methods for teaching. The alignment of the curricular objectives, instructional techniques and assessment practices will consequently ensure better learning outcomes. Furthermore, during the early years of education, it is incumbent to capitalize on the psycho-social development and cultural and linguistic endowments of learners to provide a contextualized experience in early years. Content and teaching have to capitalize on the child's endowments. Flexibility in academic operations and building on the home advantage of the child are essential elements to be considered for a wholesome teaching and learning experience. However, effective application of the above principles in the classroom requires well trained teachers on a scale and more aligned efforts by various stakeholders in the education to ensure convergence towards a child centred approach. This is not the case in Balochistan and extraneous inputs like curricula and textbooks impede the potential for flexibility and adaption to the child's need in the local context. These challenges have been detailed in section 6. Within these limitations the assessment mechanism provides a way forward to improve assessment practices and their outcomes at the primary level in Balochistan with a focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. The mechanism identifies key elements for consideration while practicing assessments and provides a road map for its implementation. The scope has been split into three categories:

- i. Grades 1 to 3
- ii. Grades 4 and 5
- iii. Children left behind after grade 2

The framework lays a heavy emphasis on formative assessments (formal and informal), especially, in the first three grades. Summative assessment has been suggested for grades 4 and 5 but with the proviso that formative assessments should be given a higher weightage in measurement of a child's progress.

3.1 Key Features of the Formative Assessment Mechanism

Formative assessments are used for improvement of the teaching-learning process on an ongoing basis. These can include formal processes as well as informal ones (See Annex 2). The framework suggests the following key features for formative assessments.

- i. Use of prioritised SLOs
- ii. Employment of oral assessment options in early years.
- iii. Higher weightage for formative assessments
- iv. Homework as part of formative assessments
- v. Regular updating and maintenance of student portfolios.
- vi. Development of standardised item banks.

3.1.1 Formative Assessments on prioritized SLOs

The framework recognises the high difficulty level of the curriculum, a recognition which is already included in the FLN work concluded by other professionals. It therefore re-affirms that formative assessments both formal and informal will be conducted on prioritized SLOs as identified by UNICEF.

3.1.2 Formative Assessment Weightage

Formative assessments will be taken of all subjects from Grades 1-3. There will be no formal internal examinations or summative assessments from Grade 1-3 with regard to all subjects. Summative assessments will be included from Grade 4 onwards. Formative assessments, however, will continue from Grade 4 onwards with a particular weightage. It is proposed that the weightage of formative assessment should be 60% in one academic year from Grade 4-8. Summative assessments can be given more weightage from Grade 8 onwards with a weightage of 60%, while formative assessments can make the other 40%. However, this is beyond the scope of the framework and will require consent of the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) and a major adjustment for which the school system may not yet be prepared.

3.1.3 Homework

Homework forms part of formative assessments or learning. It will be tracked regularly. Students' notebooks will be scrutinized by head teachers and academic supervisors to check the quality of homework assignments and feedback. A feedback box should be placed in the notebook which will be dually filled by the teacher for comments and suggestions. Parts of homework or selected work should also become part of the student portfolio (explained below).

3.1.4 Students' portfolio/activities record

The Framework recommends introduction of portfolios in primary (and also early childhood education classrooms) classes. These can initially be introduced in select districts and then expanded over time.

In the long run, over three years, students' portfolios (which can be digitalized with time) will be made in every school. The portfolio will contain a record of students' academic progress over time. To begin with the concept of student portfolio, a simple pre-printed register can be used to record students' basic learning progress. A portfolio can include the following:

- Examples of students' work with feedback about quality – multiple drafts with revisions
- Students' self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Student reflections on their growth as learners
- Teachers' comments on student progress and suggestions for improvement

The register can then be handed over to the next grade's teacher upon completion of a particular grade. Box 2, below, provides an example of the contents of a typical portfolio

with explanations on use of each section. This can be adapted over a period of 3 to 5 years. In the initial years only some details may be included.

Box 2: Structure of Student Portfolio

- **Cover page**
 - Name of the student
 - Grade level
 - Teacher's name
 - Parent's name
- **Introduction to the portfolio**
 - **Purpose**

The purpose of the portfolio is to trace learner progress over a period of time. The purpose for the learners, teachers and parents is to see the academic progression and areas for improvement per grade.
 - **Structure**

The portfolio contains samples of student work. For example, in a term 3 samples of student's formative assessment, 3 samples of informal formative assessments should become part of the portfolio per subject area. Also, mid and final term summative assessments per subject area should also become part of the portfolio.
 - **Method to use**

The portfolios are essential guides to track student progress. They should be the referring point to take key decisions regarding remedial teaching and any other key decisions for students. Portfolios are essential reference points at parent-teacher meetings as well.
- **Table of contents**

Entries of student work with page numbers
- **Entries with dates**

All student work should be entered with dates. These include outcomes of formative assessments. The latest work should be filed first. Entries should be made subject wise.
- **Artefacts** (samples of student work, awards and certificates, self and peer assessments, photos, images, etc.)
- **Reflections**

The teacher will answer the following questions per portfolio:

 - Has the student improved with time?
 - What are the areas for improvement per subject?
 - What is the action plan for improvement?

3.1.5 Standardised Item Banks to be developed by BAEC

Establishment of Balochistan Assessment and Examinations Commission (BAEC) has been an important addition through the reform efforts over the last few years. It fills an important vacuum of an overall low capacity in assessments, especially, among teachers. The Framework, therefore, recommends that item banks will be developed by BAEC on the basis of diagnostic assessments. Diagnostic assessment is a form of pre-

assessment where teachers can evaluate students' strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills before the start of the academic process. A diagnostic assessment allows the teachers to take a contextual approach towards teaching and learning and adjust the curriculum, resources and methodology to meet students' needs. It enables the teachers to practice differentiated instruction and assessment to suit the needs of learners. Ideally these diagnostic assessments should be conducted by teachers but in the absence of capacity, as mentioned above, the item banks for these diagnostic assessments will also have to be prepared by BAEC. This will limit the ability to cater to all types of learners but will help cover some degree of differentiation and allow teachers to adjust instruction as per the learner requirement to an extent.

Box 3: Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is a way of teaching that tailors instruction to meet all students' learning needs. Instead of teaching the entire class at one level of difficulty or using a single instructional or assessment strategy, teachers can practice differentiation to give students options to internalise concepts at their own pace and give assessments according to their level. For example, different lists of vocabulary words based on student readiness can be used. The students can be tested on the same. Similarly, varied reading texts can be used for different ability students and assessments can be designed according to the reading levels as determined by the teachers.

Item banks beyond diagnostic assessments will also be developed by BAEC. These will be rolled out to schools, initially, in a paper format but in the long run digitally. The latter will require availability of tablets or equivalent equipment with teachers. Item bank developed by BAEC will cover all relevant formative assessments from grade 1 to 5 and the summative assessments for grades 4 and 5. The item banks for foundational literacy and numeracy will be developed on specialised models for the purpose. These will include items that can be utilised for oral assessment. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) is the recommended option. EGRA has already been used in the province by the USAID's Pakistan Reading Programme (PRP).

3.2 Specifics For Grades 1 to 3

At this stage children are still exploring the world of learning and reach school from diverse experiences in pre-school years. The learning process of these children is best assessed through observation of demonstrated behaviour and learning in the classroom or through 'authentic assessments'. As children begin to move along a learning curve the assessments can shift towards a more 'formal' mode of formative assessments but without, ideally, creation of pressure of a test environment. Tasks assigned as routine of classroom teaching can be effective tools for formative assessments. The assessment mechanism recommends three forms of formative assessments at this stage:

- i. Ongoing assessment of child's development of foundational skills to be entered into a portfolio on a weekly basis. This will include progress on homework (to be assigned after grade 1).
- ii. Monthly tests (after 6 months of grade 1) designed as tasks of the teaching-learning process.
- iii. Quarterly revision sessions with random tasks assigned from the item banks developed.

Both number (ii) and (iii) will also be entered into the portfolio of the child.

All students (in case of large classes at least 10% from the satisfactory and 10% from the high achievers) will give monthly tests. Differentiated tests may be designed, keeping in mind the learning levels. As mentioned above, given the current teacher capacity these tests will be based on item banks developed by BAEC. The latter will have to develop differentiated item banks to allow teachers the flexibility to use these as per the learning levels of children in their classrooms.

Specialised assessment tools meant to focus on literacy and numeracy should be employed. The Framework, as mentioned above, specifically recommend Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessments (EGMA) as effective tools for measuring progress on foundational literacy and numeracy.

Box 4: The Challenge of Portfolio Maintenance

Portfolio maintenance is a complex task. Firstly, teachers will have to be trained in observation based (or authentic) assessment techniques. Secondly, in the initial years the portfolio will have to be limited to essentials, taking into account the current teacher competence and workload.

Ideally, portfolios should be prepared from the pre-primary early childhood education stage. This has been recommended in the Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024 and the assessment framework assumes that over time portfolios from a scaled up ECE programme will be transferred to primary level teachers. This will provide the base structure on which learning paths and assessments can be designed by teachers.

For years 1 to 3 no summative assessments will be conducted. Children's progress will be assessed through formative assessments only. All children will be sent to the next class even if they do not fulfil the learning expectations of the curriculum¹. These children will be moved into the remedial sessions recommended in the Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024 and assessed as per the mechanism prescribed in section 3.4.

¹ A certain number will continue to remain behind the expectations of the curriculum for some years to come, given the multiple reasons for poor learning outcomes that cannot be addressed through reform of assessments alone. Also, all reform is expected to become fully functional over a given gestation period.

3.3 Specifics for Grades 4 and 5

The requirements of learning by grades 4 and 5 (on literacy and numeracy) shift from a foundational skill to basic and towards fluency where ‘automaticity’² is achieved. This means a child does not have to make an effort to decode the symbol before comprehending its sound and (in the case of a word) its meaning and similarly for comprehending meanings of sentences.

The requirements of formative and summative assessments shift towards measurement of the ability to learn through reading (rather reading itself only) and comprehending the purport of arithmetic or mathematical operations. At this stage the mechanism proposes:

- i. Informal formative assessments (Refer to Annex 2)
- ii. Formal formative assessments through monthly tests (again for large classes 10% of the best and 10% of the weakest learners will be selected).
- iii. Six monthly summative assessments.
- iv. Annual summative examinations.

The mechanism proposes a 60 percent weightage to formative assessments. Also the six monthly and annual examinations should give greater weightage to lessons taught in the last quarter – prior to the examinations. At least 70% questions should be from that period of learning.

Note: To reduce the impact of fear of examinations as a dissuading factor to learning and also resultant, potentially, inaccurate assessments of student competence weightage of formative assessments should be included to the final annual examinations.

3.4 Children Left Behind

According to the World Development Report 2018, children who cannot develop foundational skills by end of grade 2 are permanently left behind. The Report attributes the inability to recover the losses to a filled in school programme where specialised remedial sessions for these children are not possible. However, additional resources, including time can remedy the losses. Specialised programmes for children through Teach at the Right Level (TaRL) have already been initiated in Balochistan via its Foundational Learning Policy.

The Policy recommends an additional hour of remedial work, on select SLOs, in mathematics, Urdu and English. This will be reflected in a rectified scheme of studies to be issued by the Directorate of Education.

² At Grade 4 and 5 levels, learners are expected to develop stronger comprehension and fluency in communication, application and analysis skill, build upon foundational knowledge and progress towards more complex understanding and problem-solving.

The assessment items will again be developed by BAEC, including oral skills. These remedial sessions will assess children through formative assessments only. The benchmarks identified for remedial learning by the Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024 will be used in the assessments (See Table 1).

Table 1: Minimum Benchmarks for Remedial Learning

Demonstrate an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes) and associated sounds with common spellings	صوتیات کی پہچان اور استعمال کر سکیں [آوازوں کی مدد سے ارکان اور الفاظ سازی، ایک ہی آواز سے شروع یا ختم ہونے والے الفاظ کے ہجے، چھوٹی اور بڑی آوازوں کو پہچاننا]	Add and subtract numbers including 4-digit numbers with 1, 2, 3 and 4-digit numbers
Read common high-frequency words by sight at an appropriate grade-level	الفاظ کے ہجوں کی پہچان کر سکیں [کثیر الاستعمال الفاظ]	Estimate the answer to an addition and subtraction question (using various approaches)
Read simple books from a range e.g. story, poetry, information books	کم از کم ۲۰۰ الفاظ پر مبنی عبارت درست طریقے سے پڑھ سکیں	Multiply 2-digit numbers by 1-digit numbers and 3-digit numbers by 1-digit numbers
Identify the main purpose of a text		Divide 2-digit numbers by 1-digit number and 3-digit numbers with 1-digit numbers (with and without remainder)

The above benchmarks are derived from the National Curriculum of Pakistan of each subject, considering the learning progression till Grade 3 level covering benchmark pertaining to reading and comprehensive (in languages) and numbers and operations (in mathematics)

Source: Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024

Specialised item banks for these remedial learning sessions will also be developed by BAEC. Similar to other stages, it will begin with paper based roll out and later used in the digital format by teachers. BAEC will digitise all item banks for its own use and transfer to teachers and monitors as and when possible.

4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the assessment framework will be conducted on the ground by a set of actors delineated in this section. In addition, digitisation of item banks, results of formative assessments and monitoring reports will help in further strengthening of the monitoring systems as better quality reports and analytics can be developed in electronic formats. Initially, as stated above, expectations of digitised entries by teachers will be unrealistic. However, the monitors can use tablets and digitised media for their work.

Item banks will be developed for formative assessment which will be made available in schools, initially physically on paper and eventually through EMIS³. Moreover, the application of formative assessments will be tracked through a dashboard to be developed within EMIS. All progress on monitoring by various actors (detailed below) will be entered into the software and tracked in the dashboard. A generic set of guidelines have been provided in Box 5 below.

Box 5: Guidelines for Developing a Monitoring Framework for Assessments

1. Define Clear Objectives and Indicators for monitoring:

For Formative Assessment:

- Monthly checks on ongoing learning and improvement.
- Identifying learning gaps
- Providing timely feedback on the basis of assessment reports

Person in charge: Head of section/principal

Frequency: Quarterly

For Summative Assessment:

- Participation in activities and understanding of concepts
- Track student performance on assessments, grades, and overall learning outcomes.
- Exam results analysis (mid-term final)

Person in charge: Head of section/principal

Frequency: bi-annual

2. Data Collection Methods:

- **Formative Assessments:** Keep track of observations of students, formative test items and student self-reflection, peer feedback
- **Summative Assessments:** Use standardized assessments to evaluate learning outcomes. For example, exam results, projects and portfolios

3. Data Analysis and Reporting:

- **Regularly Analyze Data:** Use data to identify trends, patterns, and areas for improvement.
- **Provide Timely Feedback:** Provide students with feedback on their performance and learning progress.
- **Share Data with Stakeholders:** Communicate findings to students, teachers, and all educational administrators in districts.
- **Use Data to Inform Instruction:** Use data to make adjustments to teaching and learning strategies.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle:

- **Plan:** Define objectives, indicators, and data collection methods to begin the M&E cycle.
- **Implement:** Collect data and monitor progress on a quarterly basis.
- **Analyze:** Analyze data and identify trends and patterns on a quarterly basis
- **Report:** Share findings with stakeholders biannually.
- **Reflect:** Use findings to inform future curriculum planning and implementation.

³ In the medium to long term a customized learning management system should be developed for all users: teachers, supervisors, monitors, students and parents.

4.1 The Overall Mechanics

The regularity and quality of assessments will be monitored through multiple paths while ensuring that the work does not overwhelm the teacher. Monitoring will be conducted for improvements and, where needed, identification of training needs. It will not be used for punitive actions against teachers. Monitors will review the following:

- i. Formative and summative assessments are implemented as designed (regularity, sequencing of SLOs as prioritised for testing's).
- ii. Portfolios of students' progress are prepared.
- iii. The item banks developed are employed effectively in the classroom for teaching and learning. Process
- iv. There is a learning impact on children as a result of the assessment mechanism.
- v. Reporting and feedback.

In addition, a detailed evaluation, to be completed at the end of three years of implementation of the assessment framework has also been prescribed.

To ensure that data and information generated by the monitoring process is easily available for analysis, monitors (of all levels) will be provided tablets and a digitised software for entering their observations. This will be undertaken even for schools in areas where internet facilities are not available. The data will be linked up to the relevant dashboard in EMIS from the nearest point where internet is available.

Box 6: Digitizing Assessment Data

Recording and archiving of data in digital format will require development of a software that will upload information to a dashboard. The latter will have to be prepared in a consultative process including all stakeholders: Directorate of Education, Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Services, Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission, Policy Planning and Implementation Unit, Balochistan Textbook Board and RTSM. The requirements of the dashboard will define the details of the software and the structure of information gathering in the tablets provided to monitors. Item banks prepared by BAEC will be included in the software.

4.2 Monitoring

Monitoring combines review of implementation of the design and an assessment of the quality of the processes and outcomes. The assessment framework will utilise the existing structures for monitoring while an additional area of evaluation through the Bureau of Curriculum has also been added. The following personnel/organizations will be involved in monitoring:

- i. Teachers
- ii. Real Time School Monitoring (RTSM)
- iii. Academic Supervisors
- iv. Deputy District Education Officers (principals and heads of schools where relevant)
- v. District Education Officers

Each level will add value to the work of the other. Some degree of overlap is unavoidable but it has been kept to the minimum in the structure proposed below. Reporting of the findings, for remedial actions, will include those immediately addressable at the school and cluster levels and others that will require interventions by organisations like PITE, BOC etc. All data will be digitised.

4.2.1 Recording by Teachers

As a first step teachers will self regulate the teaching learning process. Work on formative assessments will be recorded and utilised by teachers for internal review of progress and adjustment of the teaching-learning process. Teachers will also be responsible for communicating the outcomes of learning with parents. In the initial years, as mentioned earlier, this will be in manual formats like portfolios or diaries. Digitisation can be initiated in some schools and then extended as infrastructure improves.

4.2.2 Monthly Visit and Recording by RTSM

Monitors of RTSM are the most regular visitors to schools. They complete one visit per month. In the past indicators on assessment were included in their checklist but has since gone into disuse. This option can again be revived. Their scope will be limited to checking for inputs like regularity of formative assessments as designed, availability of item banks and maintenance of portfolios. They will not assess the quality of the process and outcomes.

4.2.3 Bi-Monthly review by academic supervisors

Academic supervisors selected and trained recently are in the field. While they are not available in all districts the process of recruitment has not stopped. At the primary level three academic supervisors work at the cluster level: one each for Urdu, English and Mathematics. They have been trained in mentoring of academic work of teachers. This makes them suitable for monitoring beyond inputs. Therefore their scope will be greater as the first layer of monitors.

Academic Supervisors will review the following:

- i. Formative assessments as designed are being implemented and documented by teachers. Which means:
 - a. Where relevant monthly tests are taken and feedback provided to students
 - b. Portfolios are maintained and teachers' reflective notes are included in the portfolios.
 - c. Homework is given and followed up (where relevant)
- ii. Learning outcomes expected are achieved (a 5% class sample assessed orally in the grade 1 and combined oral and written assessment in grades 2, 3, 4 and 5)⁴.
- iii. Recording of reasons for deficiencies in the above.

Academic supervisors will have discussions with teachers on the deficiencies and identify the causes to the teacher or other authorities like BAEC etc. for rectification. Any positive innovation or practice used by a teacher will also be recorded.

4.2.4 Quarterly Review by Deputy District Education Officer (or Principal/Head Teacher)

In primary sections of middle and high schools the function will be performed by head teachers and principals. DDEOs will perform this function for all standalone primary schools. In the following lines, and the next section, reference to DDEOs includes head teachers and principals of middle and primary schools.

DDEOs will complete a quarterly review of data collected by the academic supervisor. The DDEO will visit the best 10 percent and the lowest 10 percent schools⁵. In addition, another 10 percent will be selected randomly. DDEOs will first hold meetings with respective academic supervisors to receive their feedback. This will be followed by a field plan for school visits. In each school visit the DDEO will:

- i. Confirm the observations of the academic supervisor.
- ii. Check portfolios maintained and teachers' reflective notes.
- iii. Hold a session with teachers to discuss the report of the visit by the academic supervisors and their own observations.
- iv. Hold an open session with parents.
- v. Prepare a report for each school visited.

4.2.5 Bi-Annual Review by District Education Officer

Deputy District Education Officers (or principals/head teachers) will submit their reports to the DEO on a quarterly basis, while the latter will also have access to documents and

⁴ These will be based on pre-included item banks in the tablets that will require multiple choice responses. Assessments where students actually have to write are not practicable in monitoring systems where frequency of visits is high.

⁵ Head teachers and principals will complete this exercise for their own schools only.

data submitted by the academic supervisors through the digital dashboard. The DEO will conduct bi-annual school visits and will cover, at least, 10% of the primary schools in the districts in each visit. At least half of these have to be low performing schools as per the report of the Deputy District Education Officer. The remaining will be randomly selected.

The District Education Officer will perform the following tasks in the visits:

- i. Confirm the observations of the academic supervisor and Deputy DEOs.
- ii. Check portfolios maintained and teachers' reflective notes.
- iii. Hold a session with the teacher(s) and where relevant, head teacher, on issues faced in assessments.
- iv. Learning outcomes expected are achieved (a 5% class sample assessed orally in the grade 1 and combined oral and written assessment in grades 2, 3, 4 and 5).
- v. Hold an open session with parents.
- vi. Prepare a report for each school visited.
- vii. Send reports and recommendations to relevant organisations like PITE, BTBB, BAEC and BOC.

4.2.6 Three Year Evaluation: Bureau of Curriculum

The work of the Bureau of Curriculum is central to all learning. The BOC needs to monitor implementation of the curriculum, including the assessment framework as designed. This monitoring will help the Bureau in advising teachers, PITE, BTBB, DOE and its own officers on improvements.

To undertake this task the BOC will lead an evaluation of implementation of the assessment framework, which should overlap with an evaluation of the Balochistan Foundational Learning Policy 2024. The evaluation should take a 360° review of the design, implementation and impact. An evaluation tool will be prepared by BOC in consultation with the Directorate of Education. The regular reports prepared by the academic supervisors, the DDEOs and DEOs will form part of the evaluation process.

Additionally, a representative sample of schools will be selected for visits and interviews of district education officers, deputy district education officers and academic supervisors will also be conducted. Also, the system wide diagnostic assessments conducted by BAEC will be an input into the evaluation.

The evaluation report will be submitted to the Secretary School Education Department. However, prior to final submission the findings will be discussed in a meeting of the Local Education Group (LEG).

4.3 Follow up Actions

Monitoring will identify the gaps in implementation of the assessment mechanism as well as the causes of these gaps. It is expected that the discussions held by the

academic supervisors, DDEOs and DEOs will highlight a range of issues. It will not be possible to address all of these in the short run. In a given year the actions will mostly be limited to more targeted teacher mentoring and training in low performing schools and where relevant provision of missing inputs like textbooks, assessment items and guidelines etc.

Other actions like structured teacher training, revision of textbooks, review of the curriculum and changes in the assessment items will require a longer period. These should ideally await the three year evaluation which will be fed by the monitoring reports but also include analysis based on additional inputs.

4.4 Summary of the Monitoring Model

Table 2 summarises the monitoring model in terms of responsibilities, frequency and rationale for each level. It does not exhaust the complete model as other important actors, who will use the results of the monitoring, include PITE, BOC, DOE, BTBB, PPIU and School Education Department (SED).

Table 2: Summary of the Monitoring Model

Level	Role	Frequency	Comments
Teacher	Ensure implementation of the design and use it for improvement of the teaching learning process	Ongoing	Self regulation by teachers should be strongest link in the model and that is where the maximum effort should be directed.
RTSM	Monitor basic inputs without assessing quality	Monthly	
Academic Supervisors	Monitor the basic inputs as well as the quality of the process (e.g use of portfolios) and outcomes.	Bi-Monthly	In districts where academic supervisors have not yet been recruited the task will have to be undertaken by DDEOs
Deputy District Education Officers	Confirm and build on the work of the academic supervisors and have more	Quarterly	

	focused engagement with parents and teachers.		
District Education Officers	Confirm the work of the lower tiers and engage with them on issues identified. Also engage with parents.	Twice a year	The DEOs will report issues identified to relevant organisations for rectification and reform.

4.5 Suggested Key Performance Indicators

The narrative above in sections 4.2 identifies areas for the monitors and evaluators. In this section a set of key performance indicators has been suggested at the inputs, process, output and outcome levels. These indicators (especially the outcome levels) will be calculated separately for boys and girls as well as the overall number. These flow from the lists in section 4.2 and can be elaborated further as the item banks and other details of the mechanism are finalised. Baselines mentioned for scores in literacy and numeracy will be calculated from the diagnostic assessments for each class. Overall outcomes will be based on the scores in BAEC's system wide diagnostics tests (explained in the next section) and the data entered in EMIS. These indicators will at some point be included in the digital dashboard.

Table 3: List of Suggested Key Performance Indicators

Inputs	Process	Output	Outcome
1. Regular practice of formative assessments as designed: a) Portfolio available and maintained b) Regular monthly tests (where relevant) c) Homework assigned regularly	1. Feedback to students documented in the portfolio. 2. Teachers reflections are recorded in the portfolio clearly. 3. Homework is reviewed with clear feedback from teacher. 4. Monthly tests are checked and feedback provided to students 5. Students' progress is regularly discussed with parents.	1. Percentage improvement in foundational literacy in English (from baseline). 2. Percentage improvement in foundational literacy in Urdu (from baseline). 3. Percentage improvement in foundational numeracy (from baseline). 4. Percentage of students in remedial programmes catch up with the curriculum.	1. Improved learning outcomes in all subjects in grade- 5 2. Percentage reduction in school dropouts at the primary level. 3. Increase in primary to middle transition rates for

2. Item banks for monthly tests available 3. Regular summative assessments in grades 4 and 5 are held. 4. Item banks for summative assessments are available.	6. Item banks are used in the formative assessments 7. Summative assessment items used are as per the SLOs 8. 70% of the test questions from SLOs covered in the last quarter 9. Item banks are used in the summative assessments	5. Results are used for differentiated instruction (where required) 6. Percentage improvement in English from baseline for the year (4 or 5 as the case may be). 7. Percentage improvement in Urdu from the baseline for the year (4 or 5 as the case may be) 8. Percentage improvement in Mathematics from the baseline for the year (4 or 5 as the case may be)	
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5 System Wide Diagnostic Assessments

The scope of work of Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission (BAEC) is, apparently, wider than the requirements of an assessment framework. Yet, technically it has to be part of the Framework as, both, the central body that will develop item banks for the summative and formative assessments and as an organisation that conducts system wide diagnostic assessments its work is at the heart of the Assessment Framework. The systemic diagnostics will, as seen in the previous chapter, provide information on a critical outcome indicator.

To improve the value of BAEC's critical work and enhance its effectiveness for the education sector there are two aspects that are important and relevant to the Assessment Framework:

- i. Effective dissemination of its findings which will, as mentioned above, be a critical part of the evaluation of implementation of the Assessment Framework.
- ii. Ensure reliability and validity of the tools it develops for system wide diagnosis and the item banks for the specified usage in the Assessment Framework.

5.1 Dissemination and Follow Up

The reports prepared by BAEC are not disseminated beyond some workshops. There is no systemic method to employ it as a vital input for end users that include the Provincial Institution of Teacher Education (PITE), the Bureau of Curriculum, the district field officers of the Directorate of Education and Real Time School Management (RTSM).

As part of the Assessment Framework the system wide diagnostic assessment will be used more effectively. A more central position will be given to the exercise in identification of problems and remedial actions. The following key steps will be used:

A plan for review and feedback by users: Results will be disseminated to users through multiple paths. These will include online availability of report and analysis of the assessments, provincial workshops, meetings with officers of respective organisations and dissemination sessions in districts. The dissemination will not be mere reporting of results. The sessions will be interactive with officers providing feedback on the findings.

Open Sessions with Teachers: Feedback of a sample of teachers on the results will also be a regular feature. This feedback will be qualitative where causes for the results will be discussed with teachers in open sessions.

Documentation of the feedback: by users will be completed by BAEC and added to the results and analysis of the assessments.

Action Plan will be prepared by each user based on the review and feedback sessions for improvement of assessments and other inputs within the scope of their mandates.

- Documentation of the feedback.
- Action plan based on the feedback.

5.2 Quality, Reliability and Validity of Tools

The item banks for the Assessment Framework and the tools for system wide diagnostics will be tested for reliability and validity. For the system wide diagnosis, an **annual review of tools** with clearly identified objectives for the diagnosis will be undertaken.

BAEC will develop tools for its sample based diagnostic assessments aligned to the formative assessments carried out in classes 1 to 3. The diagnostic will include testing of foundational literacy and numeracy and a questionnaire correlating the results with background issues. All test items, irrespective of eventual use, will be tested for validity and reliability before finalisation.

6 Trainings

For the successful implementation of formative assessments in classrooms, it is important that all major stakeholders including teachers, academic supervisors, master trainers, head teachers and district education officials are adequately trained to conduct formative assessments. All stakeholders should receive at least 5 days of comprehensive training in conducting different types of assessments and, where relevant, monitoring. BAEC can take a lead role in building capacity and preparing manuals for training in consultation with PITE.

Trainings on assessments, both, generic and specific to the item banks and their usage development in the framework will be conducted. Trainings will not be limited to teachers. The entire value chain from teacher trainers to officers responsible for monitoring will be trained. The training design will have one common component (the assessment concepts and design) and one specific to the needs of the group being trained. The trainings will be as follows:

1. Training of trainers from PITE
2. At least 10 trainers per district to train teachers at the cluster levels.
3. Training of teachers
4. Training of academic supervisors on monitoring of assessments as designed.
5. Training of DEOs and DDEOs (principals/head teachers) on monitoring of assessments as designed.

The training content can focus on the following:

1. Examining curriculum, pedagogy and assessment link
2. Differentiation among various types of assessments
3. Formal and informal assessments
4. Formative and Summative assessment tools construction of item banks
5. Checklists and rubrics for assessments
6. Importance of feedback in assessment
7. Using assessment for remedial teaching and learning
8. Differentiated/Inclusive Assessments
9. Quality assurance in assessments
10. Portfolio development and maintenance
11. Monitoring and reporting (based on the final set of tools and item banks developed).
12. Use of digital media (where relevant)
13. Analysis of assessment data
14. Development of analytical reports (for monitors)

7 Challenges and Limitations

Effective implementation of the assessment framework will be constrained by a number of challenges and limitations. Some of these, like capacity, will be addressed, albeit over time, as part of implementation of the Framework while others will remain. Limitations imposed by structural issues beyond the remit of the Assessment Framework will be the higher risk limitation. Two primary ones are the number of multigrade schools, and a learning design (scheme of studies, curriculum, and textbooks) not aligned to the natural endowments of children in Balochistan.

The problems in fundamentals of the learning design will limit the impact of any assessment framework. A rigid and ambitious curriculum not relevant to the realities of Balochistan functions is the most limiting obstacle to quality teaching and learning. The expectations of early acquisition of literacy in English through high difficulty SLOs (including on grammar from grade 1) for students whose mother tongue, or home language, is mostly Balochi, Brahvi and Pashto is unrealistic. Parental illiteracy and non-existence of any proficiency in English in their home environment makes the design even more irrelevant to the children of Balochistan, especially, in the early years.

Language is not the only barrier to effective teaching and learning. The difficulty level of the numeracy curriculum has also been increased without an assessment of the requirement of children and capacity of teachers. In a province where years of longitudinal data exposes consistent low achievements in foundational numeracy concepts on geometry (measurement) and shapes have been introduced. This adds pressure on the child and the teacher.

Urdu has also been introduced in early grades at a more difficult level than warranted in the province given that the language endowments of children in early years primarily consist of the mother tongues as mentioned above.

Teachers who have to teach multigrade classrooms (82% of all primary schools in the province) cannot handle a curriculum whose ambition exceeds the possibilities (given the ground realities) of a monograde classroom. The multigrade situation is an exacerbating factor for a curriculum already irrelevant to the requirements of children studying in early grades in Balochistan.

Expectations of completion of syllabi as against actual learning also constrain the teacher's capacity to adopt to the requirements of the child and the local context.

Other important limitations are shortage of teachers and the incomplete process of recruitment of academic supervisors. Implementation cannot await for these gaps to be filled and should commence as soon as possible with the expectation that the resource situation will continue to improve.

7.1 Addressing Key Issues

To improve teaching and learning – including assessments – changes will be required in curriculum and textbooks to adjust to the realities, and requirements, of children in Balochistan. This can be completed differently for the short to medium term than the long term.

In the short term there can only be rationalisation of the SLOs, of the given curriculum, to reduce them to the bare essential. This exercise has already been completed. The second step required to develop easy readers, as an alternative to the dense textbooks for years 1 to 3. The work completed under the Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) can be utilised for the purpose – either for adoption or a modified adaption. These readers can also be used for the remedial sessions for children left behind.

To change the fundamentals of the curriculum and revise them according the requirements of Balochistan a workshop, or a series of them, are required to review the linguistics and other learning expectations of the current learning design consisting of curriculum, textbooks and the scheme of studies to align them with the ground realities of the child in Balochistan. This should be followed up with an exercise of revision of the curriculum and textbooks that is grounded in the realities of the child and the classroom in the province – catering to its diversity. The latter includes development of specialised material for multigrade classrooms.

8 Key Steps and Timelines

The framework will require a detailed workplan for implementation. Table 4 marks some of the key actions with proposed timelines and indicated responsibility. The final workplan will be developed in consultation with all key organisations.

Table 4: Key Steps and Timelines

	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
1	Approval of Assessment Framework	May 2025	Directorate of Education
2	Development of Item banks for Diagnostic Assessments	June 2025	BAEC
3	Development of item banks for formative assessments grades 1-3	August-September 2025	BAEC
4	Roll out to schools	Nov 2025-March 2026	Directorate of Schools
5	Development of item banks for summative assessments grades 4-5	August-September 2025	BAEC
6	Roll out to schools	Nov 2025-March 2026	Directorate of Schools
7	Development of structure of portfolios	May-June 2025	DOE/BOC/BAEC
8	Finalisation of KPIs for monitoring (Outcome level)	December 2025	BAEC/BOC
9	Training of Master Trainers	October 2025	PITE/BAEC
10	Training of Trainers	September-Nov 2025	PITE/BAEC
11	Teacher Trainings	December 2025-June 2026	PITE/BAEC
12	Training of Monitors	January 2025	BAEC/DOE
13	Preliminary Meeting on Development of dashboard	May 2025	DOE/EMIS
14	Initial structure of the dashboard	May 2025	DOE/EMIS
15	Review Meeting	June 2025	DOE/EMIS
16	Final Structure of the dashboard	July 2025	DOE/EMIS
17	Development of software	August 2025	DOE/EMIS
18	Purchase of tablets	July-Sep 2025	DOE
19	Uploading of software on tablets.	Sep-Oct 2025	EMIS
20	Initiation of first cycle of monitoring	October 2026*	DOE

*Monitoring can begin after the initial roll out of item banks for diagnosis and grades 1 to 3

Annex 1: Defining Assessments

Assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students. Assessment is used in education to accomplish the objectives and targets set by the curriculum. The purpose of assessment is to:

- learn more about the competencies and deficiencies of the individual being tested
- identify specific problem areas and/or needs
- evaluate the individual's performance in relation to others
- evaluate the individual's performance in relation to a set of standards or goals
- provide teachers with feedback on effectiveness of instruction
- evaluate the impact of psychological abnormalities on learning and behaviour
- predict an individual's aptitude or future capabilities

Defining Types of Assessment

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers and by the students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Formative assessment also known as assessment for learning (AfL) focuses on classroom strategies and techniques that are associated with classroom learning (Black and William 1998). The purpose of formative assessment is therefore to give feedback to students about their performance for the contribution in their learning; help teachers in continually monitoring their own understanding of students' needs; and adopt relevant instructional techniques (Greenstein, 2010) to suit learner needs. Formative assessments, therefore, help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, and point at the target areas that need to be addressed. They also help teachers recognize students' problem areas and aid in addressing them with a targeted approach.

General Principles for Formative Assessment:

1. Develop rubrics or guidelines for assessment.
2. Provide constructive feedback that encourages students to reflect on their work and abilities
3. Use a variety of formative assessment techniques (MCQs, short question/answers, presentations, in class activities etc.) for student engagement
4. Ensure assessments are culturally and contextually relevant to the students

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment gathers and analyzes students' academic performance at the conclusion of a course and to determine whether students have achieved the identified goals. The purpose is to measure progress toward long-term goals and to measure the effectiveness of the larger learning system. It helps to provide an efficient and reliable estimate of a student's overall performance in a subject area relative to Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that enable reliable and valid interpretations of student achievement and progress. Its goal is mainly to characterize the performances of the students or systems. Its major goal is to gain measurement of attainment to be utilized in making key decisions regarding teaching and learning processes and targets.

Achieving Quality in Assessments

In order for assessments to be sound, they must be free of bias and distortion. Reliability and validity are two concepts that are important for defining and measuring bias and distortion. In order to ensure validity, it is important that the test measures what it is designed to measure. The tests must also demonstrate reliability. This means that it consistently produces similar results when administered under comparable conditions. Reliability in the assessment of student learning is therefore about accuracy and consistency. Moreover, the tests also should be objective, meaning that they should ensure that the scoring and evaluation process is fair and impartial and free from bias. Also, clarity and comprehensiveness in test questions are important to reduce vagueness and ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are adequately covered. Additionally, a good test should be practical with regards to its administration, time factor and resources. It should provide an appropriate balance between assessing the depth of knowledge and practicability within educational contexts.

Annex 2: Guidelines for Formative Assessments

While developing the formative and summative assessment mechanism, the following will become the focus:

1. Pre-Assessment Learning Domain Mapping

Assessment effectively fulfils the objectives of a curriculum. It demonstrates whether the SLOs (mainly based on Bloom's taxonomy) have been met or not. A pre-assessment exercise marks and identifies the SLOs along the three domains of learning: cognitive, affective and psychomotor against which assessments are carried out. The following table enlists the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning against which SLOs can be developed and subsequently assessments carried out. The cognitive domain is further bifurcated into cognitive and knowledge dimensions:

Cognitive Domain	Affective Domain	Psychomotor Domain
Cognitive dimensions Remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, create	receiving, responding, valuing, organising, and characterising	perception, set, guided response, mechanism, complex overt response, adaptation, and origination
Knowledge dimensions Factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive		

Table 1: Domains of Learning

The following table gives an example of how the domains of learning are connected with assessment to ensure the link between domains of learning and assessments:

Cognitive Domain				
Cognitive Dimension	The Knowledge Dimension			
	Factual <i>The basic elements a student must know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems in it</i>	Conceptual <i>The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function together.</i>	Procedural <i>How to do something, methods of inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods</i>	Metacognitive <i>Knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition</i>

Remember <i>Recall or retrieve previous learned information from long term memory</i>	List parts of a plant.	Recognize action words in a story	Recall how to perform a task based on the four procedural operations. (given above)	Identify strategies for retaining information
Key Words (Verbs) to be used in SLOs	labels, lists, names, outlines, states	defines, describes, identifies, knows,	recalls, recognizes, matches,	reproduces, selects,
Sample Assessment	Summarize features of a plant.	Explain in simple words the meanings of underlined action words from the story	Find the best route on the map to reach from Point A to Point B	Predict one's response to a performance
Affective Domain				
Dimension	Example	Verbs	Sample Assessment	
Receiving <i>The lowest level. Awareness of feelings, emotions, ideas, material and phenomenon etc. Passively paying attention.</i>	Demonstrates a willingness to participate in the activity	asks, chooses, describes, follows, gives, holds, identifies, locates, names, points to, selects, replies, uses	Listening exercise: Listen for and remember the name of newly introduced classmates.	
Psychomotor Domain				
Dimension	Example	Verbs	Sample assessment	
Perception (awareness) <i>The ability to use sensory cues to guide motor activity. This ranges from sensory stimulation, through cue selection, to translation.</i>	Detects non-verbal communication cues. Estimate where a ball will land after it is thrown and then moving to the correct location to catch the ball.	chooses, describes, detects, differentiates, distinguishes, identifies, isolates, relates, selects	▪ Playing a game of dodgeball; ▪ Making expressions while reading	

Table 2: Link between domains of learning and assessments

This above framework of clearly establishes a strong link between the curricular expectations and assessments. Fulfilment of the above makes it a comprehensive learning system which works in close cohesion for effective learning outcomes.

1. Diagnostic assessment

Tracking of students' progress along with categorization of them into cognitive levels starts with diagnostic assessment at the time of placement in schools. Diagnostic assessment is therefore a pre-instruction evaluation used to classify learners' strengths, weaknesses, and knowledge gaps, which ultimately guides the instruction and curriculum planning process. This also helps in mitigating the risk of learners dropping out of school. Diagnostic assessments thus help benchmark student progress. The results of diagnostic assessments can lead to the development of an academic learning support system and aid in the categorization of students at different ability levels. The exercise can help in teaching students at the right level. It can also help in tracking students' progress while building formative test items at the right level.

The following structure can be used for diagnostic assessment:

1. Time of assessment: at the start of the academic year
2. Frequency: one time as pre-test or two (pre-test and post-test)
3. Assessment: SLO focused as per the National Curriculum of Pakistan
4. Focus of assessment for early years: Foundational literacy: language, literacy and numeracy
5. Duration of assessment: 30 minutes
6. Structure of diagnostic assessment:

Language:

- Follow simple instructions.
- Answer simple questions.
- Identify sounds.
- Describe objects

Literacy:

- Recognize/name letters.
- Identify sounds.
- Read and understand simple words/sentences.

Numeracy:

- Count objects.
- Recognize numbers.
- Comparing numbers
- Solve simple problems.

Reasoning and analytical thinking

- explaining their thinking
- providing an insight into their conceptual understanding
- using appropriate words to give a point of view/explaining ideas

Table 3: Structure of Diagnostic Assessment**2. Key Principles for Item development for Assessments**

It is highly important to align test items with learning outcomes. Items should directly assess specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Each item must measure the intended knowledge or skill. While developing items, the following principles should be kept in focus:

- **Clarity and Simplicity:** Language used in items should be clear, concise, and appropriate for the target grade level. Complex or unclear wording must be avoided as it may confuse students.
- **Clear Instructions:** instructions or guidelines for each test item and sets of items must be clear to avoid ambiguity
- **One Focus per Item:** Each item should focus on one skill or concept to ensure accurate measurement.
- **Cognitive Level:** the test items must align with the appropriate cognitive levels based on Bloom's Taxonomy
- **Content Validity:** The test items must cover relevant content aligned with the curriculum
- **Avoid Bias and Sensitivity:** Items should be free from cultural, gender, or socio-economic biases that could disadvantage any group of students
- **Review Process:** the test items must be reviewed internally before use to check for SLO alignment, bias and errors

Types and Methods of Formative Assessment

Note: The results of formative assessments will identify the strengths and weaknesses of learners and help in teaching at the right level. This may be more beneficial for learners rather than teaching them with a 'one size fits all' approach.

The following test items can be used as formal formative assessments:

- **Selected Response-Multiple Choice** (Objective Test item)
Example: Which animal is known as the 'Ship of the Desert?' A. Lion B. Cat C. Camel D. Dog
True/false, Fill in the blanks, short answers, labelling
- **Constructed Response –Descriptive Questions** (Subjective Test Item)
Examples: short quizzes, essays, art projects, personal communication, visual representation
- **Performance based assessment:** oral questioning, presentation, poem recitation

3. Informal Formative Assessments

Teachers will conduct informal formative assessment (not marked) and will keep a note of them in their planners, lesson plans or diaries. Informal formative assessment can range from discussions, oral question/answers, group or pair work to small classroom activities.

Examples:

- Informal observation
- Questioning
- Student responses to questions
- Think-pair-share
- One Minute Papers: Students can work individually or in groups here. They must answer a brief question in writing. Typical questions posed by teachers should center around:
 - Main point
 - Most surprising concept
 - Questions not answered
 - Most confusing area of topic

Annex 3: Guidelines for Summative Assessments

Summative assessments should evaluate student learning, knowledge, proficiency, or success at the conclusion of an instructional period, like a unit, term, or class. Summative assessments are almost always formally graded.

Examples:

- Teacher created exams
- Standardized tests
- Essays
- Final projects
- Final presentations

Guidelines for designing summative assessments

As summative assessments are usually high-stakes than formative assessments, it is especially important to ensure that the assessment aligns with the goals and expected outcomes of the instruction. The following guidelines can be used to ensure quality of summative assessments

- **Develop a Rubric or Table of Specifications** – Teachers should use a rubric to lay out expected performance criteria for a range of grades. Rubrics should be shared well before the administration of the tests and it will define what an ideal assignment looks like and summarize expected performance. It will also help teachers to objectively assess student learning.
- **Design Clear and Effective Questions:** The language of the questions should be clear, concise and meaningful. Questions should align with the SLOs and meet the defined criteria
- **Feasibility and Scalability:** The assessment should be practical to administer and grade, considering time constraints and resources. Also, it should be able to be used with a large number of students
- **Validity:** The assessment should measure what it intends to measure.
- **Reliability:** The assessment should consistently provide similar results when administered under similar conditions
- **Clear Parameters:** When approaching a final assessment, instructors can ensure that all expectations are well defined (length of assessment, depth of response, time and date, grading standards); knowledge assessed is related to the content covered in a syllabus; and students with special needs are provided required space and support.
- **Reporting Assessment Results:** Ensure the assessment results are reported in a clear and accessible manner.

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