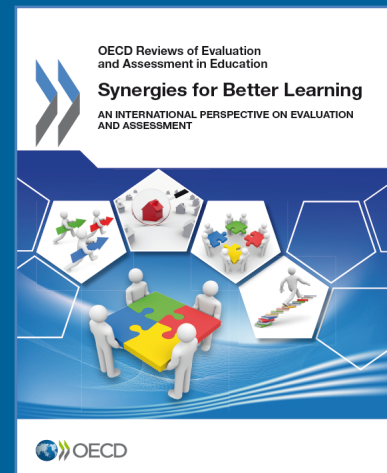




# OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

## Student Assessment: Putting the learner at the centre



Assessment Conference, Dublin, 24 April 2015  
Organised by National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)



## Outline of Presentation

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1. Key Features of the Review
2. Focus on student assessment
3. Governance
4. Procedures
5. Capacity
6. Reporting and Use of Results



# 1. Key Features of the Review



# OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

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- **Purpose:** To explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education.
- **Focus:** A Review of national approaches to evaluation and assessment in school education (primary and secondary schools)
- **Comprehensive approach:** The Review looks at the various components of assessment and evaluation such as:
  - Student assessment;
  - Teacher appraisal;
  - School evaluation;
  - The appraisal of school leaders;
  - Education system evaluation.

Investigation of each component **individually**, as well as the coherence of the framework **as a whole** (including the links between the different components).



# OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks: **Key areas for analysis**

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- 1. Governance:** Setting of objectives, distribution of responsibilities, articulations.  
Striking the right balance between central efforts and local initiative and between accountability and development
- 2. Procedures:** Reference standards, evaluation and assessment criteria, instruments  
Designing the right instruments to ensure evaluation and assessment contribute to improvement of teaching and learning
- 3. Capacity:** Developing competencies for evaluation and for using feedback at all levels of the education system
- 4. Use of results:** Formative and summative uses of results  
Organising evaluative information in such a way that it facilitates effective use by stakeholders; avoiding 'misuse' of E&A results



# OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks: **Methodology**

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## **Analytical strand**

- Reviewing the literature and evidence on the impact of evaluation and assessment procedures
- Gathering data on countries' policies and practices

## **Country Review strand**

- Country Reviews provide specific advice to individual countries.
- OECD-led Review Team

## **Synthesis report**

- Comparative report to analyse policy options and highlight good practices across countries.

## ***A wide range of groups involved***

- National co-ordinators and informal groups within countries to produce CBRs
- 30 external reviewers involved in OECD-led Review teams
- About 90 schools visited and over 2 800 persons interviewed
- Links with other international organisations and key stakeholder groups (BIAC, TUAC, EC, Eurydice, the World Bank, SICI, UNESCO)
- Collaboration with other OECD units (PISA, TALIS, CERI's projects, Education Indicators)



# OECD Review of Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks: **What the Review accomplished**

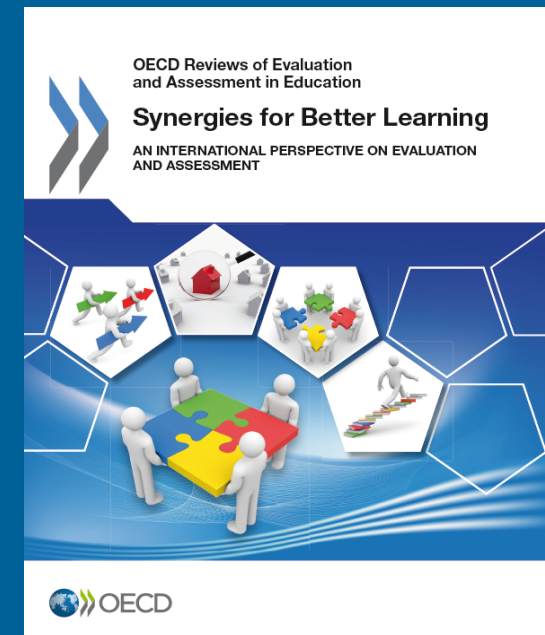
## Analytical phase:

**11 literature reviews**

**26 country background reports**

**29 Country questionnaire responses**

*All outputs available at:  
[www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy)*





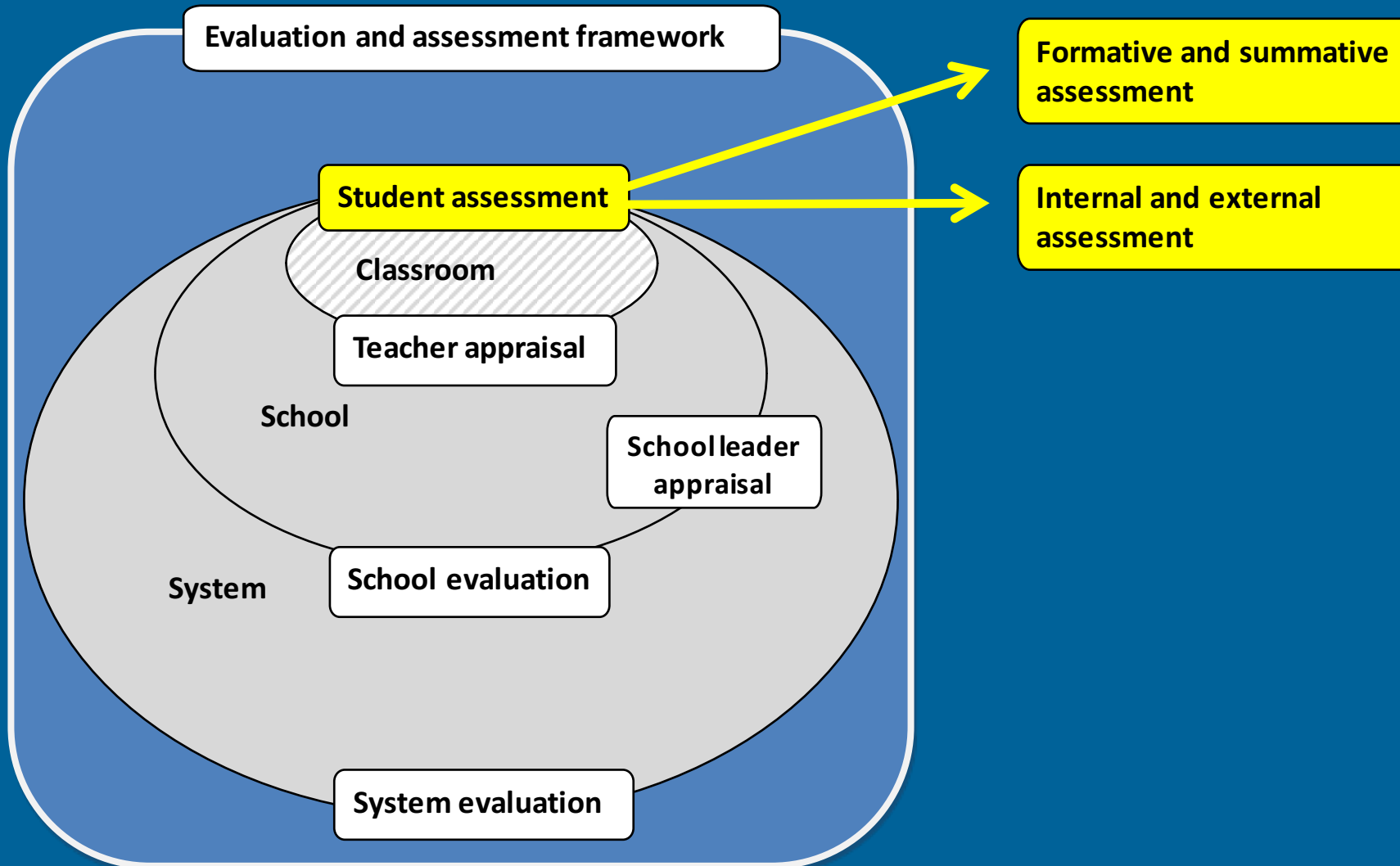
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## 2. Focus on Student Assessment





# Student Assessment





# Student Assessment: Definitions

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## *Summative / formative assessment*

- **Student summative assessment**, or assessment *of* learning, aims to summarise learning that has taken place, in order to record, grade or certify achievements.
- **Student formative assessment**, or assessment *for* learning, aims to identify aspects of learning as it is developing in order to deepen and shape subsequent learning.

## *External / internal assessment*

- **Internal assessment, or classroom-based assessment**, is designed and marked by the students' own teachers, implemented as part of regular classroom instruction, within lessons or at the end of teaching unit, year level or educational cycle.
- **External assessment, or standardised assessment**, is designed and marked outside individual schools so as to ensure that the questions, conditions for administering, scoring procedures, and interpretations are consistent and comparable among students (Popham, 1991).



# Student Assessment: Challenges

## The challenges of student assessment

- **Governance:** Lack of alignment between central curricula, standards and assessment approaches; lack of clarity of purposes; tensions between summative and formative functions
- **Procedures:** Assessment formats tend to remain more traditional than curriculum goals; national assessments focus mostly on literacy and numeracy and predominantly use multiple choice and written tasks; limited use of ICT
- **Capacity:** Limited focus on students' own assessment competencies; inadequacies in teachers' and school leaders' preparation and training
- **Use of results:** Parental concerns about inadequate reporting information; lack of transparency when using assessment results for high stakes decisions



# 3. Governance



# Governance: policy options (1)

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## Establish a coherent framework for student assessment

- The need to achieve the different functions of student assessment
- The purposes of different assessments are clearly set and complement each other
- Assessments to be designed in line with their specific purpose – risks of using a single test for too many purposes
- Coherent assessment frameworks should aim to align curriculum, teaching and assessment around key learning goals

## Develop clear goals and learning progressions to guide student assessment

- The need for clear external reference points in terms of expected levels of student performance at different levels of education
- Clear and visible guidance concerning valued learning outcomes in the central curriculum and standards
- Illustrations of the type of learning that should be achieved / clear descriptions and exemplars of expected learning



## Governance: **policy options (2)**

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### Ensure a good **balance** between formative and summative assessment

- While the attention to results and data is a positive feature of education systems, an over-emphasis on these may have a negative impact, and undermine the formative role of teachers and assessment often so highly valued in policy goals.
- Should involve a strategic approach to professional learning in assessment and concrete support for teachers and schools.



## Governance: policy options (3)

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### Share responsibilities for the governance and implementation of assessment frameworks

- Important to invest in leadership and collaboration around a joint assessment strategy
- A balanced combination of teacher-based and external assessments most suitable to leverage both central expertise and teacher ownership and to ensure maximum validity and reliability
- Complex competencies to be assessed through continuous teacher-based assessment
- Central support of teacher-based assessment:
  - Scoring guides, scoring criteria, external benchmarks, teacher training, multiple judgments, external moderation, assessment tools



# 4. Procedures





# Procedures: **policy options (1)**

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## Draw on a **variety** of assessment types to obtain a rounded picture of student learning

- Assessment framework uses a range of assessment instruments, formats and methods so that it captures the key outcomes formulated in national learning goals
- Multiple opportunities and formats for student assessment can increase both the validity and reliability of student assessment
- Ensure all subject areas and objectives are given certain forms of attention
- Promote assessment formats that capture valued key competencies

### Externally-based assessments

- Multiple-choice assessments
- Adaptive assessments
- Performance assessments
- Computer-based performance assessments

### Teacher-based assessments

Written and oral tests; written essays; laboratory reports; role plays, presentations; portfolios.

### Summative vs formative assessments



## Procedures: policy options (2)

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### Support effective formative assessment processes

- The challenge is to ensure that teachers move beyond surface techniques for formative assessment (such as “summative assessment done more often” or feedback that is unspecific or ego-involving) in order to adopt effective assessment for learning approaches.
- Tools that may help schools developing systematic approaches, e.g. individual development plans, guidelines, online tools.
- Professional learning opportunities.

### Clarify and illustrate criteria to judge performance in relation to national goals

- Develop support materials such as scoring rubrics (listing criteria for rating different aspects of performance) and exemplars illustrating student performance at different levels of achievement.
- Teachers to acquire skills to develop their own specific objectives and criteria aligned with national learning goals.



## Procedures: **policy options (3)**

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### Ensure the **consistency** of assessment and marking across schools

- Central specifications regarding summative assessment and marking are important to help a consistent application of assessment criteria across schools.
- Moderation processes are key to increase the reliability of teacher-based assessment. (e.g. teachers cross-marking each other's assessments or discussing student performance in groups, or a competent external organisation systematically checking school-based marking)

### Ensure that student assessment is **inclusive** and responsive to different learner needs

- Making assessment free of bias (e.g. by socio-economic background, immigrant or minority status, gender)
- Providing accommodations to specific student groups (e.g. special education students)
- Improving equity through multiple assessment opportunities and a variety of assessment formats



# 5. Capacity



# Capacity: policy options (1)

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## Put the learner at the centre and build students' capacity to engage in their own assessment

In recent years, there has been increasing focus on the role of the learner in assessment, not only as an active participant, but also as the critical connector between assessment and learning

- Self- and peer-assessment are powerful processes that aim to enhance the role of learners in their own assessment.
- To help students monitor their own learning, it is essential that they understand the learning goals and what they need to do in order to reach them.
- Teachers themselves also need to learn how to develop learner-centred teaching and assessment and how to introduce self-assessment practices into regular classroom activities.



## Capacity: policy options (2)

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### Maintain the centrality of teacher-based assessment and promote teacher professionalism

The major advantage of external standardised assessment is its high reliability but it is often criticised for having lower-validity than teacher-based assessment

Teacher-based assessment has higher potential to cover the full range of student learning objectives but this depends on the assessment opportunities provided by teachers. It is also perceived as less reliable than external assessment.

- Teacher professionalism to be at the heart of effective assessment  
Measures a wider variety of competencies; embedded in regular coursework; more authentic; and more potential for subsequent improvement
- Invest in teacher learning in assessment
- Moderation a powerful process of gaining capacity for assessment



## Capacity: policy options (3)

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### Identify assessment priority areas for teacher initial education and professional development

- Increase focus on student assessment within initial teacher education
- Increase offer of professional development courses on student assessment
- Identify priority areas for development: e.g. use of a variety of assessments; make judgments against educational standards; apply marking criteria to different types of evidence of student learning; formative assessment; sensitivity to cultural and linguistic aspects of learning and assessment.



# 6. Reporting and Use of Results





# Reporting and Use of Results: **policy options** (1)

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## Develop **clear reporting guidelines**

- Clarify the purposes of reporting
- Ensure reporting produces high quality information
- Need transparency and consistency in the ways in which marks and report cards are constructed
- Clear central reporting guidelines can help build a common understanding around the meaning of marks and the criteria used to establish student performance
- Keep other aspects such as student behaviour, effort and motivation separate

## Engage **parents in education through adequate reporting and communication**

- Reporting to convey quality information to facilitate parents' involvement in supporting their children's learning
- Reporting to be clear and easy to understand
- Consider developing template for reporting student achievement
- Useful information, beyond simple marks, would include details about student progress, strengths, areas of concern, identified needs and recommendations for further learning



# Reporting and Use of Results: **policy options** (2)

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## Ensure transparency and fairness when using assessment results for **high stakes decisions**

- Results of summative assessment can be used for a range of purposes:  
Decisions on school admission and transfer; year repetition; tracking and ability grouping; graduation and certification; entry to higher education.
- Ensure fair use of summative assessment
- Avoid undesired effects as repeated practice tests, surface learning techniques
- Students should have multiple opportunities to show their learning

## Promote the regular use of assessment results **for improvement**

- Assessment to feed forward into new teaching and learning strategies
- Individual development plans
- Regular development talks



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***Thank you for your attention!***

***[www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy)***

***PDF of the final synthesis report is available from:  
[www.oecd.org/edu/school/Evaluation\\_and\\_Assessment\\_Synthesis\\_Report.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/Evaluation_and_Assessment_Synthesis_Report.pdf)***