



[About the
Modules](#)

[Preface](#)

[General
Introduction](#)

[Contents](#)

[Introductory
Module](#)

[Module One](#)

[Module Two](#)

[Module Three](#)

[Module Four](#)

[Module Five](#)

[Module Six](#)

[Module Seven](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Home](#)

[Visit our
website](#)

MODULE FOUR

UNIT SIX

Examinations, Testing and Record-Keeping

Introduction

Pupils would not benefit much from a system of education unless there was some form of evaluation aimed at determining pupil performance levels at different stages in their school career. If such assessment did not take place one of the purposes for which schools exist would be defeated. In this unit we review various aspects of the evaluation of pupil performance levels through examinations, testing and record-keeping.

Although examinations, testing and record-keeping are three distinct activities, they are mutually interdependent. Without the presence of each the whole process would be invalidated.

Examinations and testing provide one objective measurement of pupil attainment.

Qualities other than academic performance must also be developed in each pupil and assessed.

Without a well maintained system of record-keeping for pupil examination and test performance there would be nothing to build on; examinations/testing would take place in a vacuum and efforts to provide for effective teaching and learning would be frustrated. Records provide a long term profile of achievement for each pupil.

Individual study time: 3 hours

Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit you should be able:

- differentiate between the purposes of examinations and tests
- identify other ways of assessing the all-round capabilities of pupils
- understand the conditions necessary to maintain validity and reliability in examination and test scores at the school level
- devise ways of keeping records of the levels of attainment of each pupil
- present and interpret pupil records for the benefit of pupils, parents and employers.

Principles and constraints of assessment procedures

Activity 6.1

(1) You have decided to explain to parents at the next meeting of the PTA the main principles upon which exams, tests and records are based. Identify these.

(2) At the same time you want to explain to them some of the constraints under which you, your staff and your pupils operate to provide a completely fair and comprehensive system of assessment.

30 minutes

Comments

Some of the principles you may have identified might be as follows:

- 1 Any form of assessment must be pupil-centred and discriminative.
- 2 Examinations should be syllabus guided.
- 3 Pupil records should be up-to-date and as comprehensive as possible.
- 4 All efforts must be made to create satisfactory conditions for examinations. An invigilators' manual with guidelines for standard procedures should be available.
- 5 All internal tests and examinations should contain a diagnostic component to reveal the learning needs of the pupils.
- 6 Tests, where possible, should be standardised and given under similar conditions of invigilation, time and venue, to all the pupils concerned.

Constraints

Some of the constraints you may have identified might be:

- 1 It is very difficult, if not impossible, to reproduce similar conditions for school examinations and tests across a year group in terms, for example, of time, nature of invigilation, distractions and noise level, unless the whole group sits the examination at the same time in the same room.
- 2 Pupil environmental differences, for example, deprivation in early childhood, home conditions, family size, income level, and variables in previous experience and practice, affect school performance.
- 3 The atmosphere of an examination room affects pupils differently, for example, into conditions of overstimulation or fear. For many pupils examinations are written under duress.
- 4 There may be a lack of adequate and secure storage space for pupil assessment records.
- 5 Teacher skills and knowledge in examination and test setting and marking, and in record-keeping may be inadequate.

Examinations and tests

Differences

Activity 6.2

- (1) This activity should help you to differentiate between examinations and tests. Which of the factors listed in Fig 10 would apply to examinations, to tests or to both?
- (2) In your own words provide an explanation which differentiates between examinations and tests.

20 minutes

Fig 10 Differences between examinations and tests

	Examinations	Tests	Both
1 Set by an individual teacher for: - his/her own pupils - other pupils 2 Taken by the whole year group at the same time 3 Set as a departmental exercise 4 Subject to formal supervision 5 Moderated by external personnel 6 Assesses performance over the whole syllabus 7 Pupil results are often on a synthesis of practical work projects and written work 8 Correct answers are provided immediately by the teacher on completion 9 Used to reinforce acquired skills 10 Provides immediate feedback to pupils 11 Facilitates progression from one stage of learning to the next			

Add further factors that occur to you.

Comments

Tests provide a means for pupils and teachers to take a regular measure of the extent to which understanding and skills are being achieved and a means of diagnosing problems both in the learning and teaching which may then be given additional attention. Exams provide a much more formal and public means of measuring the level of achievement of each pupil in respect of the objectives of a course of study available to everyone within a system. By providing a common 'currency' the abilities and qualities of each pupil may be described. We need to distinguish between internal, school examinations and external, public examinations.

Reasons for internal school examinations

Activity 6.3

Identify at least six reasons for holding internal school examinations.

20 minutes

Comments

Check whether your responses included the following reasons for holding examinations:

- to check the learning progress of each pupil in order to report to parents, teachers and the school managers
- to describe the performance of pupils preparing for certification, through public examinations
- to diagnose any learning difficulties so that appropriate remedial actions can be taken by the teachers
- to provide feedback for pupils about their performance and thereby motivate them to improve
- to identify pupils with the abilities and interests for specialised subjects or courses
- where appropriate, to have informed instructional-decision making and planning by the teachers, for example, on where to begin teaching a topic for a teacher new to a class
- to assess the mastery of a topic, unit or course by a class of pupils
- to provide data for the pupil record of attainment.

The validity of a test or examination

Activity 6.4

Identify ways in which the effectiveness or reliability of examinations across classes in the school may be compromised.

10 minutes

Comments

Did you identify any factors other than :

- having different lengths of time for the same paper given to different classes
- giving different test-taking instructions
- having different tests on the same topic in the same subject?

Administration of external examinations

Activity 6.5

The administration of external examinations always has to be undertaken efficiently.

In what chronological order would you implement each of the activities in Fig 11?

10 minutes

Fig 11 Administration of external examinations

- Ensure invigilators thoroughly instruct pupils on the correct way of recording answers on the answer sheets.
- Return corrected school entry lists in accordance with the time scale laid down by the examination authorities.
- Send off all answer scripts to the Examination Board.
- Return pupils' entry forms to the Examination Board promptly.

- Check that the school adheres to the prescribed examination administration procedures.
- Appoint a Chief invigilator from your staff.
- Make sure that school invigilators are fully aware of external regulations and comply with them.
- Follow exactly the security arrangements as laid down by the examination authority.

Comments

In this case we have not included an answer. You may check your answer against the guidelines for examiners you should already have in your school. If you don't have any guidelines, then your answer could provide a basis for a discussion with your senior staff as to what actions need to be included and in what order.

Influence of external examinations on teaching

Activity 6.6

Identify some of the ways in which examinations can affect both adversely and positively the nature and quality of teaching in your school.

20 minutes

Comments

There is no doubt that external examinations have a direct and considerable influence on curricula and teaching methods because of the importance of such examinations to the careers and lives of the school's pupils, and the competition for places at higher levels.

For example, in many countries there are three such examinations, namely:

Primary School Leaving Certificate: necessary for entry into junior schools.

Junior Certificate of Education: a sufficiently high pass is needed to enter senior secondary school.

School Certificate: the quality of results determines successful entrance to tertiary education.

In other countries specific examination systems may be different but the principles remain the same.

Schools cannot risk failure, therefore teaching tends to rehearse pupils for these examinations with strict concentration on syllabi and set books, with teaching methods based on formal expositions, dictated notes, memorisation, rote learning and reproduction. Examination pressure intensifies the tendency to concentrate on the interests of the abler pupils and forget the rest.

On the other hand, examinations do help to concentrate the minds of both pupils and teachers towards meeting the curricula objectives.

Pupil assessment records

Keeping up-to-date records of all pupil test and examination scores is important but other related records are equally valuable. The overall objective of the school is to have as complete a record of the growth and progress of each pupil as an individual as possible. For this purpose continuous assessment records, non-academic appointments, termly class reports, special incident accounts and the normal data found in the pupil's file all contribute significantly.

The most compact way to present such information, facilitating access and updating, is usually as a form or chart.

Consider the form shown in Fig 12. It is used in Botswana to present pre-reading, writing and number activities in Setswana for reception class pupils in their first 4-5 weeks in school.

Fig 12 Criteria of assessment

- A Can see similarities and differences in size
- B Can pick one name from others
- C Can see and remember
- D Can pick a different item given five
- E Can sort for kind
- F Can sort number dots and remember symbols
- G Can sort pictures
- H Can sort pictures and words

Name	Sight				Sorting			
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1 Moeng Kwena								
2 Kehano Kgaka								
3 More Bonang								
4 Mphang Weni								
5 Nabo Nae								

This chart is capable of producing diagnostic information. A tick means success, a blank means no success.

Activity 6.7

- (1) Can you suggest ways in which you could improve the chart?
- (2) Design a form or charts for one of the following:

- assessment marks for each pupil for the duration of a course;
- a termly report for parents showing test marks, non-academic achievements, general behaviour, and other areas you think appropriate;
- marks, averages or medians for each pupil in a class as required by local regulations;
- character and behaviour assessment for each pupil to be updated at regular intervals during his/her school career;
- record special incidents of good/bad behaviour or non-academic achievement;
- to present a testimonial/reference/school leaving certificate which will be derived from the above records.

20 minutes

Filing pupil records

Activity 6.8

- (1) Do you have a filing system in your school which gives immediate access to each pupil's record?
- (2) Who is assigned responsibility for maintaining the records?
- (3) Who enters information?
- (4) Where are pupil records kept?
- (5) Who has access?
- (6) How is that access accomplished?

15 minutes

Comments

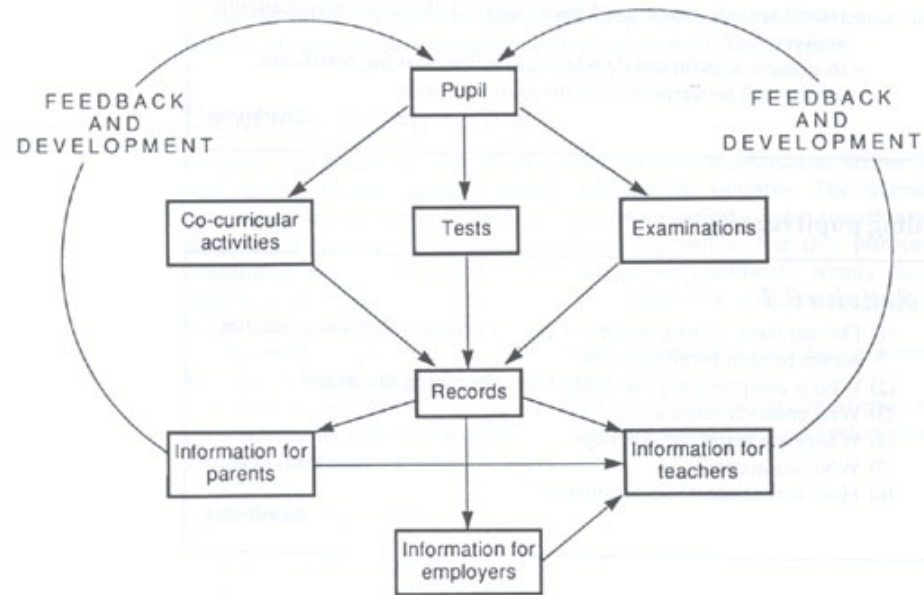
It is very important to have a clear, well managed system of keeping pupil records. First, you need to check that you have the right type of record books and documents on which to record information about each pupil. You may need to design and produce suitable material. Second, you need to assign duties to each member of staff so that they know very clearly what information is required, by whom and when. Third, you need to have secure places for keeping the records which should be confidential. Last, as school head you will need to manage the system, ensuring everyone is doing the work well and reviewing procedures to find ways for improvement.

Summary

Although examinations and tests serve different purposes, both are important professionally within the school and should therefore be organised and managed responsibly. The school head must appreciate the need for good arrangements and tight security in local and external examinations. She must, however, be aware that such examinations form only part of the assessment of the innate abilities of his/her pupils, and must recognise the need for a comprehensive system of record-keeping which will benefit pupil, teacher and parents in giving a full profile of each child.

Fig 13 summarises the functions of examinations, tests and records.

Fig 13 Functions of examinations, tests and records.



Next

 Top