HOW TO DEVELOP

FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

→ **Pak Alliance for Maths and Science**

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BACKGROUND

This document serves as a proposed outline for developing a Foundational Learning Assessment Framework, offering provincial education departments in Pakistan a structured approach to design systems that monitor and support student learning in early grades.

Organized around key guiding questions - why, what, how, when, and for whom to assess - it outlines the essential elements needed to build an effective assessment framework. At its core, the framework promotes the idea that assessments should be used to inform instruction and drive improvements in teaching and learning, rather than serving as tools for certification or selection. It emphasizes the importance of aligning curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment to ensure that children acquire foundational skills in literacy and numeracy during the early years of schooling.

The development of Foundational Learning Assessment Framework(s) in Pakistan offers an opportunity to strengthen how student learning is understood and supported across the education system. As provincial school education department(s) move forward with the implementation of their Foundational Learning Policy, configuring FL assessments that are clearly aligned with policy priorities allows for better integration between classroom practice, system planning, and the broader learning agenda.

A well-designed framework can guide the consistent collection, use, and communication of assessment data in ways that support both students and teachers.

INTRODUCTION

This section should state the purpose of the FL Assessment Framework; which is to be a guiding document for the respective assessment body of the School Education Department; and provide an overview of the document. The FL framework should be organized along the key questions of the assessment: why are we measuring (purpose).

WHY ARE WE MEASURING FL

This chapter should state the context and motivation for creating an FL assessment Framework within the provinces. Key topics to address are:

What is the current situation about children's learning in Pakistan overall and in your province? How many children lack FL skills at the end of primary education? What is the magnitude of the problem?

Ensure alignment of the FL skills to be measured with the FL Policy and the notified curriculum. It must be noticed that the intent of the FL Assessment Framework is to measure against FL competencies only; and not the entire curriculum

Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment are three key pillars to support teaching and learning. All three should be closely aligned, creating synergies. With the notified curriculum and the FL policy, there is a need to revamp pedagogical and assessment procedures and to train teachers so that they can bring the prioritised FL SLOs to life in the classrooms. The assessment framework is a tool to support this effort.

The philosophy supporting the measurement of FL is that of assessment for monitoring and supporting learning. A clear diagnosis of the actual learning levels of children is needed, together with the achievement gap existing between actual learning and expected learning (SLO). Then, targeted instruction is required to boost learning. That is, instruction that takes into account the actual learning level of the students, building on the learning that already exists.

This assessment approach is consistent with formative classroom assessments that emphasize assessment for learning and assessments as learning. On the other hand, the approach departs from the uses of assessments for certification, selection, making decisions about promotion, or using the information as means of reprimanding teacher. These practices would need to be reviewed if the FL assessment is to be taken seriously in the country.

WHAT ARE WE MEASURING

A clear definition of FL as per the notified FL Policy needs to be reflected in this chapter, along with guiding principles of assessment: fairness, reliability, validity, transparency, usefulness, technical soundness, and ethical considerations

This chapter should build on linking the FL competency benchmarks, including knowledge, skills and application, to the **minimum proficiency levels,** as identified by the SDG 4.1.1a[1], while ensuring alignment with national and provincial curricula. This would ensure alignment with international norms (and eventually access to international funds through grants).

The framework should include clear guidelines on what SLO to measure and track for each grade, including guidelines and examples of tasks, items, or protocols on how to measure them, along the same lines of UNESCO's Global Proficiency Framework

[1] UNESCO' Sustainable Development Goal 4.1.1 for Target 4.1 is the "proportion of children and young people in Grade 2 or 3 (4.1.1a), at the end of primary education (4.1.1b), and at the end of lower secondary education (4.1.1c) who achieve at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics".

HOW TO MEASURE FL

Below are the essential components of this chapter

01.

What do we mean by FL assessment? For instance, FL assessment can be conceived as the process of gathering evidence about where students are in their FL trajectory, and using the evidence collected to make decisions about the next steps in instruction. See an example of a learning trajectory in the Annex.

02.

How is learning currently being measured? How do current practices reflect or not the principles of FL assessment?

03.

Tools and approaches for measuring FL. Description of collecting evidence on children with FL using different types of assessments:
- System-wide largescale assessments
- Classroom level assessments (i.e., including diagnostics and formative
- summative examinations
- Classroom observations

WHO TO MEASURE

This chapter should cover which students would be tested to monitor if they acquired the FL?

- Identify and finalise the grade of students to be assessed
- Finalise representative sample size
- Lock the stratification of the sampling at the design stage

WHEN TO MEASURE FL

Provinces should monitor FL once or twice a year, for instance, at the beginning and end of the school year.

Teachers should regularly monitor FL in their students, especially in those who are still struggling to acquire it.

WHO TO REPORT FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

It is Important to identify different purposes and audiences when communicating FL assessment results: communicate results at the national or provincial level to inform policy and practice, communicate to all attached/affiliated departments to ensure action on improving learning of students; communicate to schools so that they can facilitate the implementation of targeted instruction (e.g. grouping by learning levels, remedial education); communicate to teachers so that they are aware of the different learning needs of students and can implement targeted instruction; and communicate to parents how to support learning at home.

Because of their importance, you may consider including a special section regarding student report cards. This may need to be reviewed to align with the FL assessment approach

Report the percentage of students who are reaching different learning levels. See example in Annex A.2

Communicate results to at the national level to inform SDG 4.1.1, and to access additional funding and resources.

HOW TO USE RESULTS FROM FL ASSESSMENTS

This section should state how assessment results should be used to improve learning in classrooms. The focus should be on how to use results to improve teaching practices in the classrooms, targeting or adapting instruction to the learning needs of the students. Other uses to highlight are:

Pre and in-service teacher training on FL assessment and pedagogical uses of the results

Review of curriculum and textbooks

Input for deciding on educational resources needed, including activity sheets, digital learning games, availability of books at schools and public libraries, among others

Remedial education, with special attention to in-person tutoring or other practices more relevant to local context (at the school level)

HOW TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTAION OF THE FL ASSESSEMENT FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains a broad checklist to ensure the FL Assessment Framework is action-oriented and informs policy decisions. Below is a checklist for your reference:

☐ Is this aligned with provincial Foundational Learning Policy?

☐ Does the FL assessment provide direction for policy level changes?

☐ Are the attached departments involved in the design of the FL assessment?

☐ What needs to happen at the school and classroom levels?

☐ What needs to happen at the community level?

☐ Will the results inform clear action for the allied/attached departments?

ANNEX A.1

Learning trajectory in reading

Example Learning trajectory in reading

Advanced Level
These students can make simple deductions

High Level
These students can retrieve explicit information from the text

Medium Level
These students can read words and short sentences

Low Level
These students can recognize letters and syllables

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