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- Author (s):** Fhulufhelo Patrick Muedi<sup>1</sup>, Zwidohwi Philip Kutame<sup>1</sup>, Thelma Z Ngidi<sup>1</sup>, Chinaza Uleanya<sup>2</sup>
- Affiliation (s):** <sup>1</sup>University of Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa  
<sup>2</sup>University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa
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## Managing Assessments for Supporting Progressed Learners in Vhembe District, Limpopo, South Africa

Fhulufhelo Patrick Muedi<sup>1</sup>, Azwidohwi Philip Kutame<sup>1</sup>, Thelma Z Ngidi<sup>1</sup> and Chinaza Uleanya<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

<sup>2</sup>University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

### Abstract

Assessment has been a significant component of teaching and learning process. However, it is very important to know that how assessment is being managed, as it is capable of contributing to both, the success or the failure of learners. Meanwhile, management of assessment becomes more crucial in the case of the “qualified to be progressed” (QP) learners. Hence, the current study investigates that how assessment of QP learners are managed by using 10 purposively selected secondary schools in the Vhumbedzi Circuit, Limpopo, South Africa. Respondents are the teachers and participants from School Management Team (SMT) who were randomly and conveniently selected, respectively. Mixed-methods was employed for this particular study and data was collected through the use of two important tools, 1) questionnaire filled by 165 selected teachers, and 2) interviews conducted with 10 SMTs. The analyzed data were coded into themes. The findings of the study showed that the assessment of QP learners was managed at all grades through the utilization of examination timetables. Besides, the question papers of previous examinations were also taken in as a part of the preparation for forth coming examinations. While, the current research found that homework timetables and moderation of peer assessment tasks were not properly assessed and practiced. Hence, the current study recommends that the need for the exploration of the use of moderation of peer assessment tasks, and homework timetables.

**Keywords:** assessment management, Limpopo, qualified progressed (QP) learners, South Africa

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\* Corresponding Author: [chinazamoses90@gmail.com](mailto:chinazamoses90@gmail.com)

## Introduction

The policy of progressing learners has been significant to the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which ensures that the issues of high failure and dropout rate in South Africa have been curbed (Department of Basic Education, [2017](#)). However, implementation of this policy faces various challenges based on different factors. These factors include; communication issue, overcrowded classrooms, attitude of teachers, financial constraints, lack of knowledge and support. Further, availability of desired infrastructures, monitoring, and manpower, amongst others (Mogale & Modipane, [2021](#)). So, without the effective implementation of progressing learning and provision of required facilities and infrastructure, this policy will not help for reducing dropout or failure rate.

Inversely, the assessment process is mainly significant for teaching and learning activities (Stăncescu & Drăghicescu, [2017](#); Tosuncuoglu, [2018](#)). It further has a notion to be followed by the feedback which is necessary for students' success (Uleanya, [2021](#)). However, assessment is expected to contribute maximally to the learning abilities of QP learners, which eventually leads to academic success. Review of the works (Adie & Klenowski, [2016](#); Huber & Helm, [2020](#); Charles Sturt University, [2021](#)) show that assessment can be performed in various ways, such as self and peer moderation tasks, home-works, and class-works, amongst others. Meanwhile, following a proper timetable with punctuality is the most appropriate way for students to succeed academically.

Thus, following a proper timetable enables them to identify that when and how to take out time for their homework, and other forms of assessments. However, time management remains a subject of challenge for the students and it also affects their learning abilities as well as their academic performances in different ways (Adams & Blair, [2019](#); Ahmad et al., [2019](#); Alyami et al. [2021](#); Das & Bera, [2021](#)). Reporting the work of Denise Pope, Strauss ([2020](#)) stated that homework is an important practice for the learners, if certain factors mentioned below are put into the consideration. These factors include ensuring the following: that students understand the reason and value of the assignment, they are able to independently perform their task, the assignment has been scrutinized to be

better performed as homework than as class activity, the appropriate expected time to complete an assignment, feedback for the homework would be taken into cognizance. In the current study, homework pays a pure contribution to the assessment which is further supporting the QR learners in their learning process.

Additionally, extant literature like Andersson (2015), has shown that preparing a proper timetable for examination is a useful mechanism, which enables the learners to enhance their academic performances. This is expected to help learners in planning and preparing well and also avoiding issues related to the subject overlaps and spread outs. Meanwhile, from the view of Linnell-Olsen (2021), preparing timetables for handling the home works is considered as a paramount activity and plays a crucial role in enhancing the learning abilities of the learners. Consequently, this practice helps in enhancing the academic performances of the QP learners.

According to Strauss (2020), home works play the most important role in improving the learning capabilities and academic performances of the QP learners. From a different perspective, the Cornell University Centre for Teaching Innovation (2021) and Double et al. (2020), hold the view that ‘peer assessment and feedback’ is a crucial area that needs to be considered to enable the learning abilities of the learners. Double et al. (2020) go further to indicate that peer assessment is so important that it has been entrenched into the schools’ instructional practices.

Furthermore, 3RC Educate, Motivate and Inspire (2020) and du Boulay (2009) holds the view that the use of past question papers plays paramount role during exam preparations in enhancing the learning abilities of QP learners. It also helps in assessing good time management and ensuring the desired academic success. From the foregoing, it is evident that several factors play crucial role in supporting QP learners, to achieve success academically as they desire. Thus, in this particular study, the assessment support management of QP learners in the selected education district in Limpopo, South Africa are investigated.

### **Methodology**

Mixed-methods approach was adopted for the current study. According to Creswell (2014) and Kumar (2019), qualitative and quantitative methods

can be adopted in a single study in the form of mixed method approach. In this particular study, quantitative and qualitative data were collected for triangulation purpose. The study sample comprised 145 participants, 135 teachers, and 10 SMT members, from 10 secondary schools. The sample size was decided in order to meet the purpose of getting different opinions from various levels of management. The teachers and principals for this focused study were randomly and conveniently selected in a respective sequence. While quantitative data was collected from the selected teachers through questionnaires, interviews were conducted from the SMTs to collect qualitative data. The quantitative data was analysed by using percentage, while the qualitative data was coded and thematically analysed. The quantitative and qualitative results are presented and discussed below in the table by using various themes.

## Results

**Table 1**

*Respondents' Personal Information*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	70	51.9
Female	65	48.1
<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
25-35	14	10.4
50-65	31	31.0
<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
M+2	1	0.7
M+3	26	19.3
M+4	84	62.2
M+5	24	17.8
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0-5 Years	22	16.3
6-20 Years	50	59.3
21-36 Years	33	24.4
<b>Position Held</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Principal	8	5.9

Deputy Principal	5	3.7
HOD	26	19.3
PL 1 Educator	96	71.1

Table 1, shows that 51.9% of the respondents were male, while 48.1% were female. The table shows that 66.6% were teachers in the age range of 36–49. However, 10.4% teachers were between 25 and 35 years and those between the ages of 50 and 65 were approximately 31%. Furthermore, for the qualitative data collection, from the 10 interviewed SMTs, one principal with the age of 48 was a female, while others were all male within the age of 48-55.

Table 1, also shows that 80% of the respondents who offered subjects in the FET phase had qualifications above Grade 12, along with three years in an institution of higher learning. This indicated that majority of the sampled teachers who used teach in this phase had relevant subject content knowledge. Meanwhile, one respondent had Grade 12 certificate plus two-year teacher training qualification. Table 1, also presents the experience of respondents and participants of the current study. Table 1, shows that 59.3% of the respondents had a teaching experience in between 6 to 20 years. This result suggested that the majority of the sampled teachers were somewhat experienced to manage the teaching and assessment activities in a class of learners with different cognitive levels. In the mean-time, by following the analysed data presented in table 1, those with experience of 0 to 5 years were 16.3%. Teachers in this category would need a lot of support from the SMTs based on their limited experience to teach at the FET phase. This would further manage the teaching and assessment activities of the “qualified to be progressed” (QR), learners effectively. Respondents with the long-term teaching experience of 21 and 36 years made up 24.4% of the entire sampled population. Teachers with their long-term experiences in this category are highly supporting the less experienced teachers, in managing their teaching and assessment activities to produce quality teaching and learning outcomes.

Table 1, further shows that 71.1% of the respondents were teachers of post level one. It should be noted that 19.3% of the HODs were members of the SMT which offers subjects in Grade 12. While, 5.9% and 3.7%

respectively were deputy principals and principals, who also teach Grade 12 learners.

The findings of the current study are presented through the following various identified themes derived from the analysed data. Thus, this section of the present study deals with the ‘management of assessment’ of both ‘progressed’ and ‘promoted’ learners. The responses of respondents on the rate at which assessment is being manage are presented below in the table.

Theme 1: Assessment of Learners during Lessons

**Table 2**

*The Rate at which Teachers assess Learners while Teaching*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Never	2	1.5
Sometimes	19	14.1
Often	53	39.3
Always	61	45.1
Total	135	100

Table 2, shows that 1.5% of the respondents assess learners while they are teaching. Conversely, the respondents in the percentages of 14.1% sometimes, 39.3% often, and 45.1% always assess learners, respectively. This suggests that almost 84.4% of the teachers often assess learners while they teach.

During the interviews, the principals supported this view that learners should be assessed right after teachers present each lesson. Principal B made the following remarks in this regard,

“Normally, we do have what we call assessment plans, wherein we assess learners during lessons. If a teacher is allocated two periods a day, one period is for teaching and the other is for assessment, which is used for either class test or weekly test”

Principal C mentioned that,

“The way in which our teachers assess learners when they teach differs from subject to subject. Some start by giving

learners an assessment task before they teach, while others first teach and then assess later. Teachers engage in these different forms of assessment to check where the learners are in terms of content retention”.

Additionally, Principal H claimed that,

“Different subject policies are the same when it comes to learner assessment. All teachers resolved and agreed that they should give learners class excises while teaching. Towards the end of the lesson, they give short tests”.

Furthermore, data in Table 2 indicates that 14.1% of the respondents sometimes assess learners while teaching. On the other hand, Principal D remarked that,

“The assessment is done continuously throughout the whole lesson. Depending on the subject, assessment is sometimes done before or after lessons. Written assessment is sometimes done at the end of each lesson”.

Thus, Principal A admitted that,

“We do not always give written exercises during lesson presentation. Our teachers normally give oral questions during lessons as an assessment technique, and written tasks are given after the lesson”.

The effective usage of any strategy and its outcomes can differ from one person to the other, depending on the relevant teacher’s orientation. It can be expected that if a strategy is effective with one teacher, it can turn to be ineffective with the other teacher. Based on the objectives one and two, these respondents’ comments reveal that learners are assessed in all schools. Teachers in this circuit apply different approaches while assessing the learners during their lessons. That is, some do not incorporate with the aspects of formative assessment (1.5%). It is imperative for teachers in their respective subjects to evaluate the effectiveness of their assessment strategies.



## Theme 2: Homework Timetable

Table 3 shows that how schools address the homework timetable issue.

**Table 3**

*The Rate at which Schools Provide the Homework Timetable to Learners*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Never	38	28.1
Seldom	15	11.1
Sometimes	16	11.9
Often	34	25.2
Always	32	23.7
Total	135	100

Homework is a vital part of child's education. It provides learners with the opportunities regarding their further understanding of work they have covered in class. It also enables them to develop important skills, like a) the ability to study, and b) work independently. In table 3, 23.7% of the respondents always assign homework and provide timetables to their learners. This is in line with Strauss (2020), who claims that learner's abilities and academic performance enhances by assigning them with the appropriate and quality homework., One of the principals, Principal F acknowledged that,

“We give all the grades homework timetables. We always encourage our teachers to follow the homework timetable when giving homework to avoid a situation where learners have a lot of homework to do without having enough time to read”.

About 25.2% of the respondents indicated that they often had homework timetables for different grades. Roughly 48.9% of the respondents had home-work timetables at their schools, while 28.1% of them never give learners homework timetables. To this effect, principal H confirmed thus,

“We do not have homework timetables for different grades. Teachers give homework at their own time. However, what is given as homework to the QP learners is done after school

during study time where they are supervised by teachers as they do their work”.

Furthermore, roughly 11.1% of the respondents indicated that they seldom had home-work timetables at school, while 11.9% of them sometimes provided home-work timetables to the learners.

### Theme 3: Home-work

Table 4 shows that how teachers assign home-work to the learners.

**Table 4**

*The Rate at which Teachers Assign Homework at School*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Never	1	0.7
Seldom	6	4.4
Sometimes	33	24.5
Often	46	34.1
Always	49	36.3
Total	135	100

Results in table 4, show that 36.3% and 34.1% respectively of the respondents always and often assign learners with home-work right after each lesson they teach of their respective subjects. Meanwhile, 24.5% sometimes, and 4.4% seldom assign learners with homework after each lesson they teach, however 0.7% respondents never assigned learners with the home-work.

Similarly, Principal Estates that:

“We always encourage each other to give learners some work to do at home after school. Every day, we make sure that our QP learners are given some projects or assignments to do at home. We do so to make sure that they catch-up with the promoted learners”.

Principal F agreed that they have home-work timetables for their QP learners. That is, after each lesson, they are assigned with short home-work, where the same lesson that was taught in the previous class is repeated.

Principal I pointed out that,

“At our school, we target the QP learners for extra work to do at home. We designed a special homework timetable for all learners who are not doing well in certain subjects such as Mathematics and Life Sciences. The homework timetable is also given to parents who also sign the written work to confirm that indeed the homework was done under her/his supervision”.

About 34.1% of the respondents often assign home-work after they deliver each lesson of their subjects. In total, these two percentages make 70.4% of the teachers who assign home-work after each lesson. Principal F reiterated that,

“We do not normally give learners work to do at home as homework. What is supposed to be done at home is done in class. For an example, if the teacher has two periods per subject, he/she uses the first part of the lesson to teach and the second one is used by the learners to do what is supposed to be done at home. This is done to monitor how learners respond to questions on their own”.

The further analysis of data revealed that 24.5% of the respondents sometimes assign home-work after each lesson they deliver. A very small percentage 0.7% of the respondents never assigns home-work after each lesson, whereas 4.4% of them seldom assign it. The respondents’ comments above suggest that there is a general view that home-work is vital to the QP learners as it keeps them busy after school. The belief is that education is a societal issue; therefore, parents should assist their children while they work on their assignments at home. The above analysis gives an understanding that the learners’ performance improves if they are given extra work to do at home.

#### Theme 4: School Assessment Plan

Table 5, shows that how the School Assessment Plan is implemented at school level.

**Table 5**

*The Rate at which Teachers Assess Learners at School*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Seldom	2	1.5
Sometimes	13	9.6
Often	37	27.4
Always	83	61.5
Total	135	100

In table 5, majority of the respondents (61.5%) always assess their learners according to the SAP, 27.4% often, 9.6% sometimes and 1.5% seldom do so. This analyzation suggests that 88.9% of the schools often/always use the SAP.

Meanwhile, by following the conducted interviews, Principal B emphasized that,

“To avoid clashes on the writing of weekly or monthly tests in different subjects, we drew an assessment plan for the whole year which specifies dates and time for each assessment”.

Principal C acknowledged that,

“At the beginning of the year, the Department of Education in the district, through its curriculum section, distributes assessment plans to all schools. These assessment plans come in the form of assignments or projects in certain subjects, and they are mainly for School Based Assessment (SBA) marks”.

About 9.6% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes use the SAP to assess learners, whereas 1.5% of them indicated that they seldom use it to assess learners. This was confirmed by Principal F who said that,

“We developed our own SAP which we hardly follow, though. We depend on the assessment plan from the curriculum section. We rarely follow our assessment plan”.

Given the concerns raised by some of the respondents here, only few teachers receive assessment plans from their departments. However, since they appreciate the Curriculum Section's efforts in this matter, they are not comfortable about the implementation of this organized plan, and this has ultimately caused the clashes with their own internal SAP. The SAP from the district does not have any assessment plans for the QP learners. It is clear that in some schools, teachers and the SMTs are keen to draw their own assessment plans that would have distinct assessment strategies for the QP learners. This means that all schools assess learners according to their own particular plan, either the one drawn by the school or that from the district.

#### Theme 5: Moderation of Tests by HODs

**Table 6**

*The Rate at Which the HODS Moderate Tests before they are given to Learners*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Never	3	2.2
Seldom	3	2.2
Sometimes	24	17.8
Often	24	17.8
Always	81	60.0
Total	135	100

Table 6, shows that how tests are moderated before they are given to the learners. The majority of the HODs in different schools seem to moderate tests before they are given to the learners. This is revealed in table 6, where 60.0% of the respondents indicated that their HODs always moderate their tests before they are given to the learners, 17.8%, 17.8%, and 2.2% of the respondents signify that their HODs often, sometimes and seldom respectively moderate their tests. This suggests that almost 97.8% of the teachers' tests are somewhat moderated before they are given to the learners. However, 2.2% of the respondents indicated that their tests are never moderated by the HODs.

Meanwhile, all the principals who were interviewed, they confirmed that the HODs moderate tests to ensure that they are up to standard. Principal C pointed out that,

“When teachers set weekly or monthly tests at school level, they are moderated before they are given to learners to write. This is done to check if they are up to the required standard”.

Principal G added that,

“HODs moderate question papers to verify if questions set are inclusive of learners with different cognitive levels. We try to accommodate both the promoted and QP learners. We even check if questions are according to Bloom’s Taxonomy”.

It is clear that from these remarks that teachers set tests for learners with different cognitive levels in a mixed class. Moderation is performed to check if the standard of a paper is suitable for both the QP and promoted learners. Looking at the high failure rate among the QP learners, it is evident that some of the assessment tools are given to the learners without moderation. The ‘management of assessment’ is complex, especially in classes where learners with different cognitive levels are assessed together. Therefore, it is a responsibility of the department to train their teachers on how to set the categories of standardised tests for all the learners.

#### Theme 6: Feedback Provision

Table 7 is for feedback and how it is provided after assessment.

**Table 7**

*The Rate at which Teachers give Feedback to Learners after an Assessment*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Seldom	1	0.7
Sometimes	18	13.4
Often	35	25.9
Always	81	60.0
Total	135	100

Table 7, shows that 60% of the respondents always give feedback after all assessments assigned to the learners. Approximately 25.9% of the respondents indicated that they often give feedback after all assessments have been assigned to the learners, 13.4% sometimes, and 0.7% seldom give feedback.

Principal G thus, commented over this issue:

“After marking exercises, tests or examinations, we do revise with learners. Sometimes learners revise in groups on their own. We use this strategy to encourage them to work independently without any assistance from teachers because children learn better when they discover some of the issues on their own”.

Principal E admitted that,

“After writing a test, a teacher photocopies the feedback memorandum and gives it to the QP learners. This has each and every question, showing them how they should have responded to them. Then, learners do revision by re-writing in their exercise books”.

Principal J conceded that,

“Feedback is done in the midst of remedial work. In sections where the learners did not get the right answers, teachers give them the correct ones in the form of remedial work or corrections”.

The interviewees indicated that they give feedback to all the learners after every assessment. It should also be noted that the teachers use different approaches when they are giving feedback. Also, the QP learners are encouraged to identify those sections which are seemed difficult after assessment so that teachers could draw a special time-table for their extra lessons.

#### Theme 7: Utilisation of Past Papers for Exam Preparation

Table 8, shows that how frequent past papers are used for exam preparation.

**Table 8**

*The Rate at which Teachers use Past Question Papers to Prepare for Final Exams*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Never	1	0.7
Seldom	1	0.7
Sometimes	11	8.3
Often	30	22.2
Always	92	68.1
Total	135	100

The results in table 8, show that 68.1% of the respondents always use the past question papers to prepare for their final examinations. In addition to it, the 22.2% of those who indicated that they often use previous question papers, almost 90.3% of the teachers use past question papers to prepare their students for the final exams.

There are some teachers who do not use previous question papers, as it was confirmed by 0.7% of the respondents. Another 0.7% indicated that they seldom use past question papers to prepare learners for their final exams, while 8.3% said that they sometimes use such question papers.

**Theme 8: Academic Performance Improvement Plan**

Table 9, presents that the learners’ performance analysis that assists in developing a plan for their academic improvement.

**Table 9**

*The Rate at which Teachers Analyze Learners’ Performance and APIP’s Development*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Never	2	1.5
Seldom	4	3.0
Sometimes	21	15.5
Often	44	32.6
Always	64	47.4
Total	135	100



Results in table 9, shows that while 1.5% of the respondents never analyse learners' performance during every term, thus, fail to assist in the development of the APIP, 3.0% seldom and 15.5% sometimes do so. Meanwhile, 32.6% and 47.4% of the respondents often and always respectively analyse learners' performance during every term and assist in the development of the APIP.

The interviewees generally agreed that the APIP is helpful for the schools in improving their learners' performance. All of the ten principals indicated that APIP assists teachers to organise their work properly and plan well for the QP learners who lag behind. Principal D pointed out that,

“All teachers contribute in the development of APIP because each of them is expected to set targets regarding the overall learner performance he/she wants to achieve in his/her subject”.

However, with 32.6% of the respondents indicating that they often analyse learners' performance during every term, it should be noted that almost 80% of the teachers analyse results during every term and this contributes to the APIP's development. Teachers who do not analyse results during every term are not many as indicated by the 1.5% figure. This is consistent with what principal B said,

“We no longer develop APIP because the department wants us to develop these documents for compliance. We develop APIP for our subjects' improvement in each term. It is just unfortunate that the department does not even give us feedback on what to correct or improve in the plan or whether the plan meets their expectations or not”.

The majority of the respondents view the plan as a record of the activities that needs to be followed by the teachers in order to improve learners' results, especially if feedback is regularly given on the issues raised. We can conclude that the plan is useful even though certain respondents claimed that they develop it for compliance's sake.

### Theme 9: Peer Moderation

Table 10, shows that peer moderation of tasks before they are given to learners.

**Table 10**

*The Rate at which Teacher's Peer Moderate Assessment Tasks*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Never	16	11.9
Seldom	10	7.4
Sometimes	35	25.9
Often	32	23.7
Always	42	31.1
Total	135	100

Table 10, reveals that 31.1% of the respondents always peer moderate all assessment tasks before they are assigned to the learners. Almost 54.8% of them do peer moderation if we also take into account the 23.7% of the respondents who indicated that they often do peer moderate all assessment tasks before they are assigned to learners. Nevertheless, 25.9% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes peer moderate all assessments before they are written. About 11.9% said that they never peer moderate assessments, while 7.4% indicated that they seldom have peer moderation.

### Theme 10: Control of Exercises for Feedback

Table 11, shows that how exercise books are marked for the feedback purposes.

**Table 11**

*The Rate at which Teachers Mark Exercise Books to give Feedback*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Seldom	7	5.2
Sometimes	19	14.1
Often	30	22.2
Always	79	58.5
Total	135	100

In table 11, results show that 58.5% of the respondents always mark the learners' exercise books and give feedback timeously. In doing so, these teachers are able to identify knowledge gaps that need special attention. About 22.2% of the respondents often mark the learners' exercises books and give feedback. This figure, when combined with 58.5% means that 80.7% of the teachers mark the learners' exercise books and give them feedback timeously. About 5.2% seldom mark the learners' exercise books, while 14.1% sometimes do so and give feedback timeously.

#### Theme 11: Passing Requirements and the Assessment Policy

Table 12, shows that how passing requirements are explained to learners based on the assessment policy.

**Table 12**

*The Rate at which Teachers Explain the Passing Requirements to their Learners*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
Never	2	1.5
Seldom	1	0.7
Sometimes	16	11.9
Often	40	29.6
Always	76	56.3
Total	135	100

The results presented in table 12, show that while 1.5% of teachers never explain the passing requirements to their learners, only 0.7% seldom do that, 11.9% sometimes, 29.6% often, and 56.3% always explain the passing requirements to their learners. This shows that majority of the teachers in the selected secondary schools explain passing requirements to learners.

#### Theme 12: Examination Time-table

Table 13, indicates that how schools handle the examination time-table.

**Table 13**

*The Rate at which Schools Develop Exam Time-Tables for all the Grades*

Scale	Frequency	Percent
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Sometimes	4	3.0
Often	22	16.3
Always	109	80.7
Total	135	100

Table 13, indicates that 80.7% of the respondents always and 16.3% often receive examination time-tables for all the grades during every term. This is an indication that about 97% of the schools receive the examination time-tables for all grades, and 3% do not have them.

**Table 14**

*Assessment Management at a Glance*

Management of Assessment Items	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
D1 I assess learners when I present each and every lesson	4.27	4.00	0.81
D2 My school has homework timetables for different grades	3.05	3.00	1.57
D3 I give homework after each lesson in my subject	4.01	4.00	0.93
D4 I assess my learners according to the School Assessment Plan	4.49	5.00	0.73
D5 My HOD moderates my tests before they are given to the learners to write	4.31	5.00	0.99
D6 I give feedback to learners after all assessment given to learners	4.45	5.00	0.75
D7 I use previous question papers to prepare learners for the final examination	4.56	5.00	0.74
D8 I analyse learner performance every Term and assist in the development of Academic Performance Improvement Plan	4.21	4.00	0.92

D9	There is peer moderation of all assessment tasks before given to the learners	3.55	4.00	1.32
D10	I control learners exercises books and give feedback timeously	4.34	5.00	0.91
D11	I explain pass requirements to learners as per assessment policy	4.39	5.00	0.84
D12	My school has examination time-table for all the grades	4.78	5.00	0.48

Results in table 14, show that the assessment is managed through ‘examination time-tables’ for all grades ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $MD = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ), the use of ‘past question papers’ to prepare learners for the final examination ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $MD = 5.00$ ,  $SD = .74$ ), and the ‘assessment of learners’ according to the SAP ( $M = 4.49$ ,  $MD = 5.00$ ,  $SD = .73$ ). Moreover, the table discloses that home-work timetables ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $MD = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ), and peer moderation of assessment tasks ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $MD = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ), are least used to manage the assessment of the QP learners.

### Discussion

Findings from theme 1, shows that to conduct assessment of learners right after delivering their lessons, is a common practice of majority of the respondents (teachers), from the selected secondary schools. This finding is in alignment with the presentation of the Department of Basic Education (2016), that formative feedback is a diagnostic information given before the work. Furthermore, this work is completed in order to help the learners to revise and improve their performances. Meanwhile, formative feedback cannot be given without formative assessment and a part of which is expected to be conducted during lessons. Also, in the findings of the current study, themes 2 and 3 showed that majority of the respondents agreed on this point that home-work and its time-table are considered the most important practices. Moreover, it helps in achieving good learning by the learners of the secondary schools. The finding agrees with the work of Strauss (2020) who holds the view that homework is relevant and effect the students’ work capacity. On the contrary, findings of the current study showed that the designed timetables for home- works are not usually put

to use where it exists. Meanwhile, following the submission of Linnell-Olsen (2021), if home-work timetable is not under the appropriate usage of the learners then it is envisaged to badly affect learners in completing their home-works.

Findings the following theme 4, which was focused on ‘school assessment plan’ being implemented in secondary schools showed that it is a common occurrence in many of the selected schools. The findings of the current study showed that majority of the teachers assess learners by using the ‘school assessment plan’. The findings from theme 5, showed that moderation of tests by HODs before they are administered to learners is a common occurrence. This finding agrees with the Department of Education (2008), which reports that HODs ensure that assessments are moderated for every grade. Theme 6, following the findings of the current study showed that the feedback is regularly given to learners after assessment by majority of the teachers in the selected secondary schools. This finding corroborates the work of Black and William (1998) who maintain that to give feedback to learners, right after conducting their assessments has a powerful influence on their learning ability and performance. However, the works of Cornell University Center for Teaching Innovation (2021) as well as Double et al. (2020), show that ‘peer assessment’ is critical as it enhances feedback from one learner to another. Moreover, learners are considered to learn their lessons faster from their peers. Thus, the work of Double et al. (2020), shows that the quest for the need of ‘peer assessment’ to be integrated as a part of instructional practices in schools is critical. Additionally, the findings show by following theme 7, that in attempt to prepare learners for their exams, previous examination question papers are put to use. This aligns with the work of 3RC Educate, Motivate & Inspire (2020) and du Boulay (2009), which hold the view that the use of past question papers in preparation for examinations is paramount. Moreover, it also aids in good time management and to achieve the desired academic success.

Additionally, following theme 8, findings of the current study show that SMTs and teachers realise that they should no longer develop Academic Performance Improvement Plans (APIP) as a document for compliance in the department. While, it should be produced as a document

to track the learner's performance against their already set targets in different subjects. Some respondents were aware that the department would not bother to quality assure APIP. The respondents noted that APIPs are meant to strategize around concepts and topics that are somehow challenging to the QP learners. This aligns with the work of Leepo (2015), who contends that APIPs are developed to identify the learners who experience serious challenges, and such learners could be assisted through the development of intervention strategies. The present study also showed that teachers always analyse their learners' performances in every term and assist them in the development of the APIP. This is in line with the narration of Leepo (2015), which states that the APIP indicates the school's performance targets in different subjects, the overall benchmark the school is to achieve, specific challenges in different subjects, intervention strategies to improve learners' performance, and the time-frame in which all the challenges should be resolved. The Academic Performance Improvement Plan (APIP) is developed to improve learners' in their academic performance.

Also, theme 9, from the findings of the current study show that many teachers allow their colleagues to moderate their assessments before administering such to their learners. This agrees with the submission of the Department of Education (2008), which supports doing internal moderations right before conducting the assessments among the learners. Theme 10, shows that many of the teachers mark the books of their learners frequently and give feedbacks regularly to them after each lesson. This agrees with the work of Uleanya (2021), who opines that teachers' feedback to learners is crucial. Furthermore, theme 11, from the findings of the present study show that the majority of the teachers explain the passing requirements to learners. Following the report of Wicks and Child (2017), there is a need for learners to have an understanding of the passing requirements by considering the misconception such may pose. Following the findings of the present study from theme 12, it is apparent that assessments at all grades in selected secondary schools of the education district is managed through the use of timetables, which are planned during the examination periods. This is in alignment with the work of Andersson (2015), who holds the view that examination timetabling helps to ensure

that there are no overlaps and subjects are spread out. Further, exam timetables possibly assist learners to design their plans for exam and prepare them well. Such practices are envisaged to boost the academic performances of learners.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The research paper investigated that how assessments conducted in supporting progressed learners of selected education district in Limpopo, South Africa is managed. Mixed-methods approach was adopted for the current study. While, questionnaires were administered to selected teachers who were respondents of this particular research, interviews were conducted for SMT members who were participants in this study. The focused study showed that ‘management of assessment’ is done through the use of examination time-tables as well as past question papers, while preparing learners for their final exams regardless of the grade concerns. Meanwhile, homework timetables and moderation of the ‘peer assessment tasks’ are not duly utilized. The following recommendations are made sequel to the findings of the current study:

- The utilization of moderation for peer assessment tasks should be considered. This would enable the learners more interactive in their learning process, so that they can easily learn from one another. Moreover, learners tend to learn better from their peers.
- Homework timetables should be encouraged by the teachers, parents, DBE and other relevant stakeholders. This can be practiced as per the need and importance of study to motivate learners to learn at home for their exam preparation.
- Timetables for extra lessons specially organised for QP learners should be considered and duly upheld. This would teach and help QP learners to make them understand their lesson and uphold the value of time management while learning at the same time.

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