OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment
Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

Embracing a holistic approach to evaluation and assessment

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Outline of Presentation

1. Key Features of the Review
2. Key Themes
1. Key Features of the Review
OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

• **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

1. **Governance**: Striking the right balance between central efforts and local initiative and between accountability and development

2. **Procedures**: 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**: Organising evaluative information in such a way that it facilitates effective use by stakeholders; avoiding ‘misuse’ of E&A results
2. Key themes
1 – Fostering synergies within the E&A framework

Issue:

Most countries do not have an integrated E&A framework but instead a series of components operating at different levels that developed independently of each other over time. Potential for generating complementarities; avoiding duplication; and preventing inconsistency of objectives.

Challenges and options:

– Integrate the E&A framework – develop a strategy document conceptualising a coherent E&A framework
– Clarify responsibilities across the framework
– Establish articulations within the E&A framework
  • Within specific components of the overall E&A framework
e.g. teacher appraisal and teacher professional development; self- and external school evaluation
  • Between specific components of the overall E&A framework
e.g. teacher appraisal, school evaluation and school development; school evaluation and system evaluation; school evaluation and the appraisal of school principals
  • Processes to ensure the consistency of E&A procedures
e.g. moderation processes for teacher appraisal and teacher-based assessment
2 – Aligning evaluation and assessment with student learning goals

Issue:

A critical aspect is the alignment of the E&A framework with educational goals and student learning objectives

Challenges:

– If systems are poorly aligned, it is impossible to draw valid conclusions from E&A results
– Misalignment can have consequences on instruction and learning
– No system can achieve perfect alignment – complexity of education systems

Options:

– E&A procedures to align with main principles embedded in student learning goals (e.g. student-centre learning, collaborative work)
– E&A procedures require direct alignment with student learning objectives (e.g. fit for purpose assessments)
– School agents to have a clear understanding of student learning goals (e.g. clear articulation of goals; criteria and guidelines for assessment; teacher capacity; collaboration among teachers)
– Essential to evaluate the impact of E&A on the quality of teaching and learning (e.g. unintended effects)
3 - Focussing on the improvement of classroom practices and building on teacher professionalism

**Issue:**

There is often focus on structures, programmes and resources in a top-down approach and less reflection on establishing the channels which foster improvement in the classroom.

**Challenges:**

- **E&A have no value if they do not lead to the improvement of classroom practice and student learning.**
- **Improvement function accomplished more at a local level – difficult for policy to reach classroom.**
- **Risks that E&A procedures do not place adequate focus on teaching and learning.**

**Options:**

- **Design the E&A framework in order to facilitate impact on classroom practices, need clear role for local structures (developmental function more at the local level).**
- **Promote the regular use of E&A results for improvement in the classroom – emphasis on developmental function.**
- **Ensure that the evaluation of T&L quality is central to evaluation procedures.**
- **Build on teacher professionalism – teachers as the central agent in linking E&A to classroom.**
Issue:

Growing prominence of accountability as a purpose of evaluation (public reporting of school results; rewards and sanctions on the basis of E&A results): creation of incentives for improved performance – opportunity to recognise and rewards; and information for parents and society.

Challenges:

– Range of potential detrimental effects (e.g. “teaching-to-the-test”, “narrowing of curriculum”)
– Accountability function of evaluation not to hinder the improvement function
– Conveys a “control”, “compliance”, “measurement” concept of evaluation
– It might constrain the ownership of E&A by school agents

Options:

– Communicate purposes of E&A
– Build on a range of E&A components achieving a variety of functions – e.g. accountability, certification, development, diagnostic
– Publication of quantitative data to be perceived as fair by schools and set in a wider set of evidence
– Avoid overemphasis on student standardised tests as an accountability instrument
Issue:

A desirable principle in the design of the E&A framework is to place the student at the centre since the fundamental purpose of E&A is to improve the learning of the students.

Challenges:

– Teaching, learning and assessment may still take place in a somewhat ‘traditional’ setting with a more passive role for students in their learning.

– More limited attention to student motivation and developing skills for “learning to learn”.

– Collecting views and perspectives of parents and students is not a general practice.

Options:

– Teaching, learning and assessment approaches which focus on students’ authentic learning.

– E&A to focus on improving student learning outcomes.

– Students to be fully engaged in their learning (contributing to planning, learning expectations communicated, assessing their learning, benefitting from individualised support and differentiated learning).

– Student feedback to be used for formative teacher appraisal.

– Community and parental involvement (learning as a shared responsibility).

– Reduction of grade repetition in some countries.
6 – Going beyond measurement in educational evaluation

Issue:
Growing emphasis on measuring student outcomes; the proliferation of education indicators; and the establishment of education targets.

Provides potential for placing student outcomes as the focal point for analysis; monitoring key student learning outcomes; holding stakeholders accountable.

Challenges:
– Ensuring breadth of performance measures
– Securing fair and meaningful comparisons
– Avoiding detrimental effects of uses for accountability
– Preventing dominance of the quantitative over the qualitative

Options:
– Ensure policy making is informed by high quality data, but not driven by their availability
– Give a prominent role to qualitative analysis and research
– Ensure a broad approach to national monitoring
– Clarity of purposes for the uses of standardised tests results
7 - Building capacity for evaluation and assessment

**Issue:**

E&A policies often introduced with no due attention to capacity development

Capacity building offers potential for reinforcing the effectiveness of E&A procedures; engaging students as active learners; and strengthening teacher professionalism

**Challenges:**

Legitimacy of evaluators and accountability procedures; skills to benefit from E&A

**Examples of areas for capacity development:** standardised test development; formative assessment; assessment against standards; running systems of externally-based student examinations; analytical capacity in education agencies to use system level information; data handling skills of school agents; formal evaluators of individual school agents; competencies for classroom observation.

**Options:**

– Sustain efforts to improve student and teacher capacity for E&A
– Strengthen school leaders’ capacity for school development and instructional leadership
– Ensure support from educational authorities and identification of best practice
– Need for a strong capability at the national level to steer evaluation and to promote use of results for improvement
Knowledge management

- Need for coherent information management systems (standard framework for reporting; data information systems; public information)
- **Challenge:** organising the data and information produced through E&A activities in such a way it facilitates their use by the different stakeholders in the system
- **Challenge:** Creating systematic processes to identify best practices within the E&A framework and ensuring that they are spread and shared across the education system

Evidence-based policy

- Systematic use of evidence for policy development
- Involvement of the research community
- Research units within national agencies, including the promotion of independent research and analysis
- Strategic approach to research, analysis and evaluation
9 – Balancing national consistency with meeting local needs

Issue:

A certain degree of national consistency of approaches to E&A is desirable. However, there is also a need to meet local needs.

Challenges

– Nationally consistency of E&A procedures might jeopardise ability to respond to local needs
– E&A procedures defined at the local level provide fewer guarantees that they are aligned with national student learning objectives and that students, teachers, school leaders and schools receive equal treatment

Options:

– Need to find the right balance between national consistency and local diversity
– Agree general principles at the national level and allow flexibility of approach within the agreed parameters to better meet local needs
– Principles agreed should come along with clear goals, a range of tools and guidelines for implementation
– Encourage the different actors to co-operate, share and spread good practice
10 – Implementing evaluation and assessment policy successfully

Issue:
Moving from design to successful implementation

Challenges

– Implementing evaluation policies is complex, involves a wide range of stakeholders with distinct interests, and requires informed debates and capacity building

– A variety of factors may make implementation difficult: lack of consensus; lack of evaluation culture; insufficient information and guidance; limited involvement of professionals; inadequate competencies; narrow resources; poor leadership.

Options:

– Evaluation and assessment policy to be based on informed policy diagnosis, drawn on best practice, backed by research evidence and consistent (intrinsically and with other education policies)

– Build consensus and involve education practitioners

– Use pilots and policy experimentation; offer opportunities for feedback by practitioners as policies are implemented

– Develop expertise and capacity; reduce excessive bureaucratic demands; ensure sufficient resources
Thank you for your attention!

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