

# learners first

## Department of Education Assessment Strategy 2020–2023

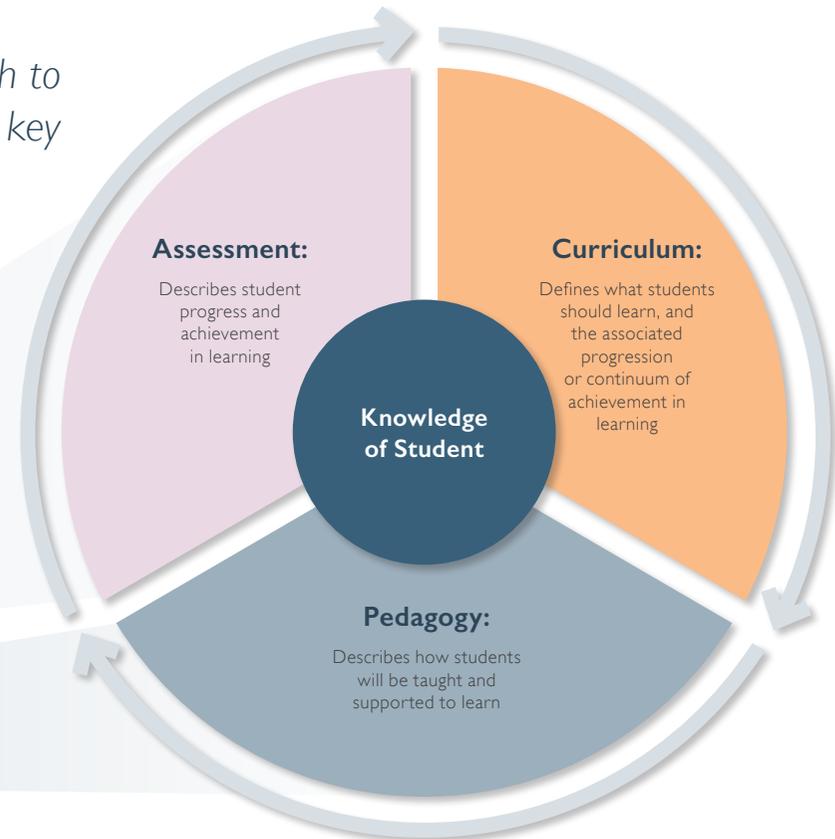
Supporting a unified, system wide and quality approach to assessment design and practice.



The Department of Education supports an integrated approach to improving curriculum, assessment and pedagogy through three key resources aligned to the National School Improvement Tool.

## National School Improvement Tool

- Domain 1 An explicit improvement agenda
- Domain 2 Analysis and discussion of data
- Domain 3 A culture that promotes learning
- Domain 4 Targeted use of school resources
- Domain 5 An expert teaching team
- Domain 6 Systematic curriculum delivery
- Domain 7 Differentiated teaching and learning
- Domain 8 Effective pedagogical practices
- Domain 9 School-community partnerships



### Systematic Curriculum Delivery: A guide for school leaders



Sets out the essential requirements for delivery of the Australian Curriculum in Tasmanian government schools, and provides guidance on curriculum planning to enable improvement against Domain 6 of the National School Improvement Tool.

### Department of Education Assessment Strategy 2020-2023



Sets out a shared understanding and principles for the design and practice of assessment in Tasmanian government schools. The Strategy comprises a series of system actions, to be phased in over four years, to strengthen the capability of teachers and school leaders to put this understanding and these principles into practice.

### Learners First: A Pedagogical Framework



Sets out shared principles to underpin teaching and learning in all Tasmanian government schools from Prep to Year 12. It outlines five key teaching practices which evidence suggests, when executed well, have the greatest impact on learning. The Framework is designed to stimulate challenging professional dialogue amongst school leaders and teachers, and support improvement against Domain 8 of the National School Improvement Tool.

# Introduction

*Assessments of all types provide evidence of learning to inform decisions. These can be decisions by a learner and teacher in the classroom about the next steps to progress learning, or decisions on a systemic level in response to trends across schools. As such, quality design and practice of assessment is critical in education at the individual learner, classroom, school and system levels.*

This strategy, and the actions it contains, will support the Tasmanian Department of Education to have a unified, system wide and quality approach to assessment design and practice. Its key purpose is to improve learning outcomes by ensuring that teachers and school leaders have the capability and dispositions to design and practise quality assessment, and use the evidence to support the growth of all learners.

Our commitment as a system is to inspire and support all learners to succeed as connected, resilient, creative and curious thinkers. This strategy, and the improvements in practice it seeks to support, is a key enabler for this commitment.

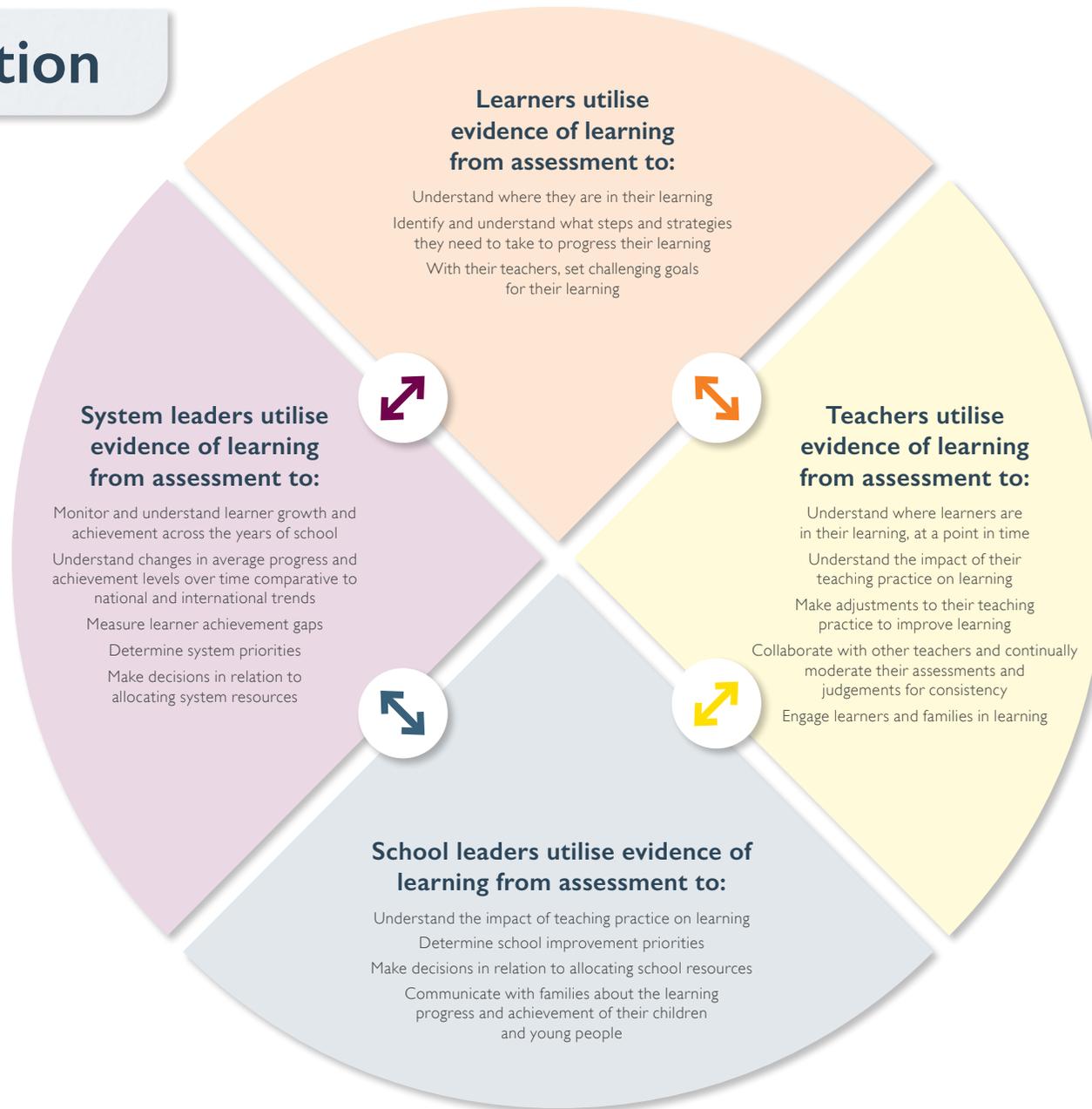
Over the last decade there have been significant advances in how we understand

- » the cognitive processes of learning
- » the conditions that support learning
- » what impactful teaching involves, and
- » the specific role of assessment in learning.

In addition, innovations in technology are transforming the practice of assessment, and the ways that families can engage in and support learning. All of these factors indicate that a system wide, contemporary approach to building the assessment capability of our education workforce is timely.

Assessment is an integral element of effective pedagogical practice. *The Department of Education Pedagogical Framework* and *Systematic Curriculum Delivery: A Guide for School Leaders* are key companions to this strategy.

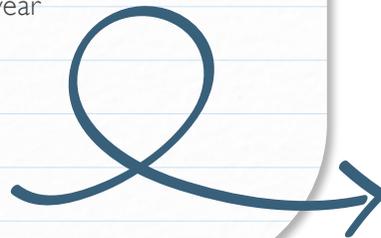
# Introduction



# Future state

## Moving away from

- a. An understanding of the purpose of assessment as judgment of achievement
- b. An understanding of assessment as formative or summative which are in opposition and require largely different approaches
- c. Assessment designed and conducted primarily by the teacher
- d. Assessment occurring primarily after learning
- e. An understanding of achievement as learning a body of specified content
- f. An understanding of evidence elicited through assessment as primarily about the learner
- g. Reporting learning achievement to learners and families at two set intervals in the school year



## Moving towards

- a. An understanding of the purpose of assessment as progressing learning and measuring growth and achievement
- b. An understanding of assessment as eliciting evidence of learning at a point in time, which can be used for a range of purposes
- c. Opportunities for co-design and practice of assessment between teachers and learners, and learners and their peers
- d. Assessment occurring as an integral element of teaching practice to progress learning
- e. An understanding of growth and achievement as developing conceptual models, deep understandings and dispositions for learning
- f. An understanding of evidence elicited through assessment as demonstrating the impact of teaching practice on learning
- g. Regular engagement with learners and families about learning progress and achievement

## Towards the future state: areas for systemic action



# Principles for the design and practice of assessment

*Assessment is the intentional process of eliciting evidence of learning at a point in time.*

Evidence of learning can be used to

- » make an inference about learning achievement, against a standard, progression, criteria, competency or intention at a point in time
- » design and enact the next steps to progress learning.

The purpose of assessment is to progress learning.

## Designing assessment tasks

- » Assessment tasks are aligned to the curriculum and undertaken using transparent, clearly articulated standards, progressions, criteria, competencies or intentions
- » Assessment tasks are equitable and inclusive
- » Assessment tasks are differentiated to enable all learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do
- » Assessment tasks clarify learner understanding of concepts and promote deeper understandings
- » Assessment tasks can be more powerful when learners are involved in their design.

## Practising assessment

- » Assessment is an integral, ongoing part of teaching and learning
- » Assessment should motivate learners to improve their learning
- » Assessment may be undertaken by the teacher, the learner themselves, by peers and may involve families

## Using evidence of learning from assessment

- » Evidence of learning enables teachers to meet all students' learning need
- » Evidence of learning from assessment is integral to improving teaching practice through collaborative inquiry and professional learning communities
- » Feedback, as a result of assessment, is timely, precise, constructive and empowers learners to plan the next steps to progress their learning
- » Measurement of learning achievement, using evidence from assessments, is supported by rigorous ongoing moderation within and across schools

### Clarity

Leaders, teachers, school and system leaders have a shared understanding of the purpose of assessment and the principles that underpin the design, practice and use of evidence from assessment



# Position on Learning Progressions in relation to achievement standards

## Background

Learning Progressions for literacy and numeracy have been developed by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. They are an integrated component of the Australian Curriculum, and support effective teaching within other curriculum frameworks including TASC courses and VET units.

## Context

The Tasmanian Department of Education is committed to ensuring that learners have the skills and confidence in literacy and numeracy to successfully participate in learning, life and work. This is one of four goals in DoE's 2018–2021 Strategic Plan, *Learner's First: Every Learner, Every Day*.

A significant action to realise this commitment is to ensure that all Tasmanian teachers

- » understand the relationship between Learning Progressions and achievement standards as outlined in this position statement
- » understand how to use Learning Progressions in their day to day practice to monitor learning, design teaching, and improve their practice
- » understand how learners can use Learning Progressions to monitor their own learning and develop agency, metacognition and self-regulation.

## Position

Learning Progressions sit within the broader framework of the curriculum. Achievement standards identify what learners need to know, understand and do at particular phases of schooling. Learning Progressions describe the observable learner behaviours, and the learning pathways along which learning typically progresses, regardless of age and year level.

Learning Progressions are an evidence informed tool that teachers and learners can use to progress learning toward meeting the Achievement Standards.

The key purpose of Learning Progressions is to help teachers and learners make informed inferences about current understandings, skills and capabilities, design immediate

next steps and adapt day to day teaching to progress learning. The evidence of learning elicited through assessment against a Learning Progression is an important source of fine grained information on the impact of teaching practice on learning.

This evidence can be used to improve teaching practice in

- » developing and using learning intentions, goals and success criteria to progress learning, for individual learners and groups
- » understanding learners' common preconceptions and misconceptions
- » providing feedback that progresses learning
- » targeting and differentiating teaching.

# System actions to support improving practice

Outcome	Action	Audience	Lead	Supported by DoE Pedagogical Framework – Key Teaching Practices
<p>Teachers and in-school leaders of learning understand the purpose of Learning Progressions.</p> <p>They and their learners can use Learning Progressions to accurately assess and develop learning intentions and goals.</p>	<p>Develop a program of spaced professional learning on the use of Learning Progressions, commencing with literacy and numeracy and expanding to other General Capabilities when available. This identify learner progress at a point in time and inform the design of next steps in learning.</p> <p><i>Action Commencing: 2021</i></p>	<p>Literacy Coaches</p> <p>Mathematics Teachers</p>	<p>Curriculum Services and Lead Literacy Coaches</p>	<p>Teachers intentionally develop <b>metacognition</b> in learners</p> <p>Teachers support learners to understand the <b>intention, goals and indicators</b> of learning</p> <p>Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning</p>
<p>All schools access and consistently utilise a range of system provided assessments, in particular tests that measure learning progress, to diagnose and develop an accurate learner profile, plan learning and monitor and measure learning progress over time.</p>	<p>Expand the use of particular system assessments to measure learner progress, at appropriate year levels, in all schools.</p> <p><i>Action Commencing: 2021</i></p> <p>Provide a course of professional learning on how to use data from system assessments to understand where learners are at, plan next steps in learning and see trends in learning progress over time.</p> <p><i>Action Commencing: 2020</i></p>	<p>School leaders and teachers (P–10)</p>	<p>Curriculum Services, Professional Learning Institute, School Improvement</p>	<p>Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning</p>



# System actions to support improving practice

Outcome	Action	Audience	Lead	Supported by DoE Pedagogical Framework – Key Teaching Practices
Teachers and school leaders understand the relevant achievement standards in the Australian Curriculum, standard elements in TASC courses or competency standards in VET units and how to use them to plan for and assess learning.	<p>Develop and implement a series of spaced professional learning opportunities to deepen understanding of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards, standard elements in TASC courses and competency standards in VET units.</p> <p><b>Action Commencing: 2020</b></p> <p>Provide universal professional learning on developing learning intentions and success criteria open to all school leaders and teachers.</p> <p><b>Action Commencing: 2020</b></p>	School leaders and teachers	Curriculum Services, and 9–12 Learning	<p>Teachers support learners to understand the <b>intention, goals and indicators</b> of learning</p> <p>Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning</p>
Teachers moderate with colleagues regularly to ensure consistent judgement against standards or criteria, and collaboratively plan next steps in learning.	<p>Review the format of time allocation for moderation, including 'moderation days'.</p> <p><b>Action Commencing: 2021</b></p> <p>Provide system level support to coordinate and support ongoing moderation within and across groups of schools both face to face and online</p> <p><b>Action Commenced</b></p>	School leaders and teachers	Curriculum Services and 9–12 Learning	<p>Teachers support learners to understand the <b>intention, goals and indicators</b> of learning</p> <p>Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning</p>
Teachers moderate using evidence informed protocols, against the achievement standards in the Australian Curriculum, standard elements in TASC courses or competency standards in VET units.	<p>Develop an online platform for moderation resources, including protocols, How To guides and snapshots of practice from schools.</p> <p><b>Development Commencing: 2021</b></p>	Teachers	Curriculum Services and 9–12 Learning	<p>Teachers support learners to understand the <b>intention, goals and indicators</b> of learning</p> <p>Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning</p>



# System actions to support improving practice

Outcome	Action	Audience	Lead	Supported by DoE Pedagogical Framework – Key Teaching Practices
Teachers understand the importance of learner agency in learning, and are able to design and practise assessments to facilitate learners' ability to collaborate, make decisions, take responsibility and understand and progress their own learning.	Professional learning offered by Early Learning, Curriculum Services, 9–12 Learning, and the Professional Learning Institute includes methods to facilitate learner voice, ownership and agency. <i>Action Commenced</i>	School leaders and teachers	Curriculum Services, Early Learning, 9–12 Learning and Professional Learning Institute	Teachers intentionally develop <b>metacognition</b> in learners Teachers support learners to understand the <b>intention, goals and indicators</b> of learning Teachers foster learners' <b>agency and collaboration</b> with peers, teachers and the community Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning
Teachers and school leaders know how to develop and use quality rubrics to co-design learning intentions, success criteria, facilitate learner self and peer assessment, and the mutual provision of feedback between teacher and learners, and learners and their peers to progress learning.	Produce a guide for teachers on the development and use of rubrics and an associated program of professional learning to support implementation. <i>Action Commencing: 2020</i>	School leaders and teachers	Curriculum Services, Early Learning, 9–12 Learning and Professional Learning Institute	Teachers intentionally develop <b>metacognition</b> in learners Teachers support learners to understand the <b>intention, goals and indicators</b> of learning Teachers foster learners' <b>agency and collaboration</b> with peers, teachers and the community Teachers enable learners to create and challenge meaning through <b>questioning</b> Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning



# System actions to support improving practice

Outcome	Action	Audience	Lead	Supported by DoE Pedagogical Framework – Key Teaching Practices
<p>Teachers consistently integrate ongoing, fine grained assessment into day to day teaching practice supported by an integrated online platform.</p> <p>This platform includes assessment tasks differentiated to need, the provision of assessment evidence to more accurately target instruction, and capacity for communication with learners and families about learning progress and achievement.</p>	<p>Develop an integrated online platform for assessment that enables school leaders and teachers dynamic engagement with learners and families, and linked reporting capabilities.</p> <p><b>Development Commencing: 2021</b></p>	School leaders and teachers	Strategic Systems Development, Education Performance and Review Curriculum Services, 9–12 Learning, Early Learning, Information Technology Services	<p>Teachers intentionally develop <b>metacognition</b> in learners</p> <p>Teachers support learners to understand the <b>intention, goals and indicators</b> of learning</p> <p>Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning</p>
<p>Teachers co-design assessment tasks to collaboratively understand the impact of their practice on learning, and make practice adjustments to more effectively differentiate and respond to the needs of all learners.</p>	<p>Co-designed and shared use of assessment tasks is integrated into professional learning and resources to build school leaders' and teachers' understanding and skill in leading collaborative inquiry.</p> <p><b>Action Commencing: 2020</b></p> <p>Provide universal professional learning on task design open to all school leaders and teachers.</p> <p><b>Action Commencing: 2020</b></p>	School leaders and teachers	Curriculum Services, Professional Learning Institute and School Improvement Team	<p>Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning</p>



# System actions to support improving practice

Outcome	Action	Audience	Lead	Supported by DoE Pedagogical Framework – Key Teaching Practices
Learners, teachers and families regularly communicate and engage with one another on learning progress and achievement.	Develop an integrated online platform for assessment that enables school leaders and teachers dynamic engagement with learners and families, and linked reporting capabilities. <i>Development Commencing: 2021</i>	Teachers, learners and families	Strategic Systems Development, Information Technology Services, Curriculum Services, 9–12 Learning, Early Learning	Teachers intentionally develop <b>metacognition</b> in learners  Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning  Teachers foster learners' <b>agency and collaboration</b> with peers, teachers and the community
Formal communication with learners and families about learning is meaningful, timely and demonstrates learning progress and achievement.	Undertake a review of reporting to families with the objective of ensuring that learners and families are provided with meaningful, timely information on learning progress and achievement. <i>Action Commencing: 2020</i>	School leaders, teachers, learners and families	Curriculum Services	Teachers intentionally develop <b>metacognition</b> in learners  Teachers facilitate the sharing of <b>feedback</b> to progress learning  Teachers foster learners' <b>agency and collaboration</b> with peers, teachers and the community

## Engagement

Learners' and families' engagement in learning and school life is facilitated through meaningful, timely feedback and communication about learning progress and achievement



# What we heard

## Clarity

It was suggested through consultation that there is significant need to commit to a shared understanding and language for assessment. Teachers are inconsistent in their understanding of terms such as summative and formative and this distracts from a focus on quality assessment practice and effective use of evidence from assessment.

We heard that there is significant need to clarify the purpose and function of Learning Progressions, their relation to achievement standards, and how teachers use them as part of effective classroom practice.

## Growth

It was evident through consultation that there is significant commitment and energy to focus assessment on eliciting evidence of learner growth and achievement.

It was suggested that there is a need for a systemic dataset that demonstrates evidence of learning progress to triangulate NAPLAN data, and current A–E ratings. It was noted that whilst DoE provides access to the Progressive Achievement Tests for all schools, which are aligned to Learning Progressions, use is not universal or consistent.

It was evident through consultation that there is a strong interest in reconsidering the use of A–E ratings. This includes both as 'marks' provided to students on classroom assessments, and within school reports.

## Achievement

Knowledge and understanding of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards was the most frequent response received when school and system leaders were asked to describe the knowledge teachers need to improve assessment, pedagogy and learning. It was strongly suggested that there is a significant need to build knowledge of the Australian Curriculum achievement standards amongst P–10 teachers and school leaders, and support them to refocus their planning and instruction on the achievement standards rather than content coverage.

## Agency

It was evident through consultation that there is strong interest in the ways assessment can be used to build the engagement and agency of learners. In particular, how learners can use Learning Progressions, and participate in the development of quality rubrics to support independence, responsibility and metacognition in learning.

We heard that feedback to learners in the form of rubrics co designed by learners is more meaningful and motivating than A–E ratings.

## Impact

It was suggested that there is a need to strengthen school leaders' and teachers' understanding that evidence of learning, elicited through assessment, is data that demonstrates the impact of teaching practice on learning. This needs to form a greater element of the information and professional learning provided to school leaders on collaborative inquiry and professional learning communities.

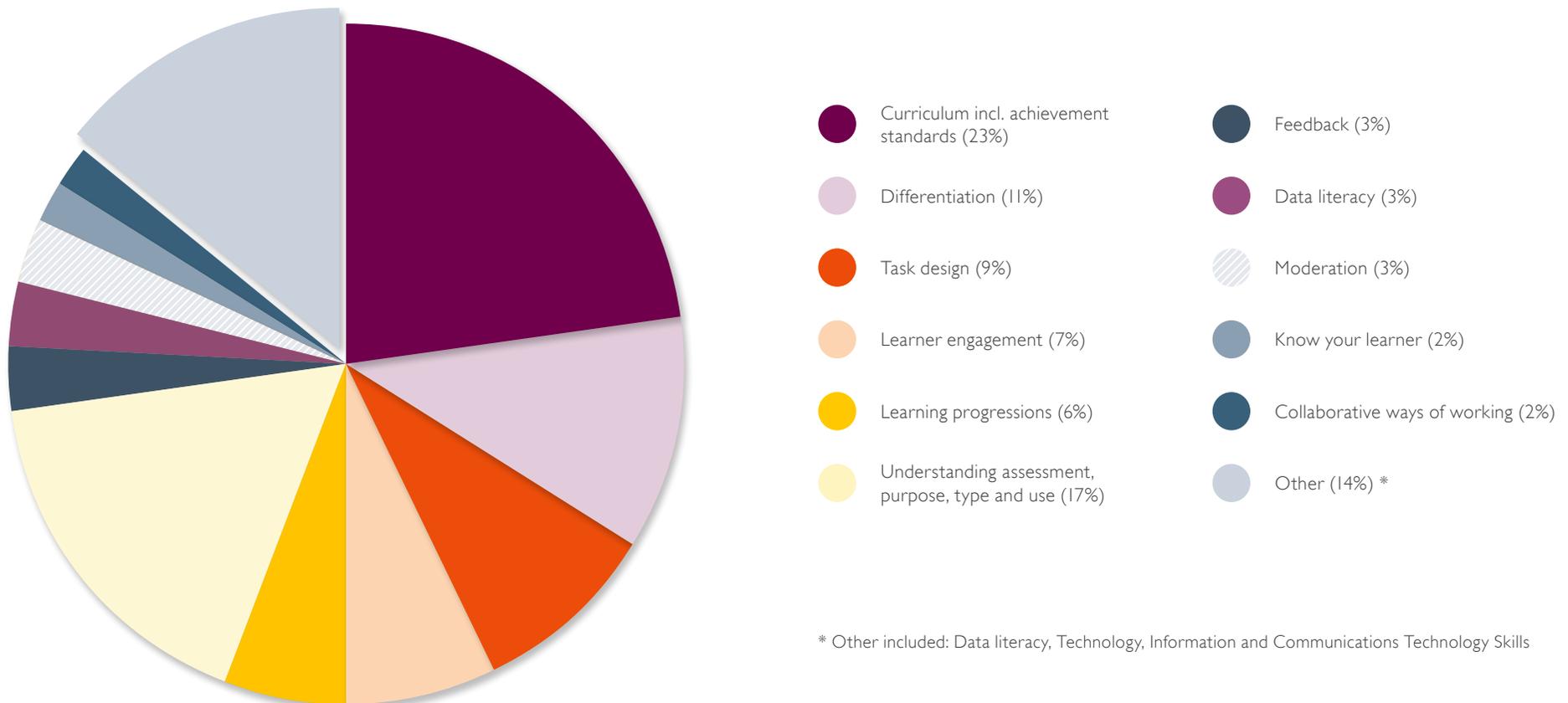
## Engagement

It was strongly suggested that the current reporting arrangements require review to ensure they meet the needs of learners, teachers, and families.

Throughout consultation the meaningfulness and utility of A–E ratings in school reports was frequently questioned, as was the regularity, frequency, form and purpose of communication with families about learning.

## What we heard

A key question to guide consultation was 'What are the knowledge, skills and understandings that teachers need to put our definition and principles of assessment into practice?' 142 separate responses were received. A breakdown of the feedback is provided below.



\* Other included: Data literacy, Technology, Information and Communications Technology Skills

# What we know

## Tasmania

In 2017 Learning First (an education consultancy) was commissioned to undertake a 'scan and assess' of formative assessment practices in Tasmanian government schools. In order to do this they undertook research in nineteen Tasmanian schools.

Their findings indicated:

- » Tasmanian teachers expressed different understandings about the distinction between summative and formative assessment. Some believe the distinction is about assessment techniques, rather than how evidence of learning from assessment is used.
- » There was significant variation in formative assessment practices within and between schools.
- » Some Tasmanian teachers associate formative assessment with particular techniques (e.g. exit tickets), rather than as a process inherent to teaching.
- » Techniques that require little preparation were more common than discipline specific techniques that elicit evidence of students' understandings in specific areas of learning.

- » Teachers reported that while formative assessment helps with learning and student engagement, they struggle to find time to collaborate with colleagues to design high-quality assessment tasks, and to use the data from these tasks to adjust instruction.

## Australia

The 'Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools' found that to improve school education outcomes in Australia, significant investment is required to build the capability of our education workforce in assessing to support both growth and achievement.

The review found that:

- » There is compelling evidence, in Australian schools and internationally, that tailored teaching based on ongoing formative assessment and feedback are the key to enabling students to progress to higher levels of achievement.
- » Reporting against year level achievement standards hides both progress and attainment for some students and does not amount to a diagnostic assessment of real learning needs which, if met, would lead to growth in learning.
- » There is strong and developing evidence of the benefit of parent engagement in children's learning.

- » There are benefits to be gained from encouraging students to be partners in their own learning habits.
- » Research and experience internationally confirms that ongoing professional development for teachers – some mandated by the school or system, and some through participation in professional learning communities – is an essential part of a teacher's workload in high-performing education systems.

This review built on extensive research undertaken over the previous decade into effective assessment and instructional practice. This includes:

- » Research that is demonstrating the brain's ability to learn throughout life, through the formation and strengthening of new pathways and neural networks.
- » Research that is revealing the active, constructed nature of human learning.
- » Accumulating evidence of the importance of attitudes and self-belief in successful learning. In particular, that successful learners tend to believe their success is the result of effort, rather than innate talent or capability.
- » Development of assessment techniques that assess a broader range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- » The potential of technology to transform assessment practices.

# Development of the strategy

The strategy seeks to strengthen the *Department of Education Literacy Plan for Action 2019-2022*, and implement recommendations from the *Family Engagement Review 2019*.

This strategy was developed through a significant literature review, jurisdictional scan of approaches in other Australian states and internationally, and internal consultation across the Department of Education with Tasmanian school leaders, teachers and learners.

## Consultation

### Assessment Strategy Working Group

- » Jen Ashton, Early Learning Leader
- » Gay Cumming, Principal Leader – Australian Curriculum
- » Ann Fedyk, Executive Director Learning
- » Deb Hutton, Principal Project Officer Literacy
- » Brett Manion, Director Curriculum Services and Professional Learning Institute
- » Dr Jonathan Moritz, Assistant Director Education Performance and Review
- » Denise Neal, Assistant Director Curriculum
- » Dr Christopher Riley, Manager Aboriginal Education Services
- » Melinda Williams, Principal Education Officer Curriculum and Standards 9–12

Regular collaboration with Craig Woodfall and Fiona Hancock (Student Support) and Kris Klasen (Strategic Systems Development).

### Principals Advisory Group

- » Brent Armitstead, Principal Latrobe High School
- » Grant Armitstead, Principal Reece High School
- » Julie Bird, Principal Ogilvie High School
- » Danielle Bresnehan, Principal Tarooma Primary School
- » Marcus Cramp, Principal Glen Dhu Primary School
- » Paul Dalla-Fontana, Principal Campania District School
- » Magella Dudley, Principal Parklands High School
- » Simon Ellaby, Principal Southern Support School
- » Benjamin Frerk, Principal Exeter High School
- » Duncan Groves, Principal Windermere Primary School
- » Dave Kilpatrick, Principal New Town High School
- » Stuart Lord, Principal New Norfolk High School
- » Glen Lutwyche, Principal Ulverstone Secondary College
- » Louise Lynch, Principal Snug Primary School
- » Angela Mieztis, Principal Brighton Primary School
- » Jerome Pape, Principal Hillcrest Primary School
- » Maree Pinnington, Principal Kings Meadows High School
- » Adam Potito, Principal New Town Primary School

- » Tracy Siedler, Principal Hobart College
- » Andrew Starick, Principal Burnie Primary School
- » Sharon Symes, Principal Mowbray Heights Primary School
- » Nichole Todd, Principal Devonport Primary School
- » Peter Walker, Principal Mount Nelson Primary School

**Teachers and school leaders involved in the Middle Years Literacy Project and Australian Curriculum Workshops: Mathematics, Science, Technologies, and Health and Physical Education.**

### The students of

- » Bridport Primary School
- » Bothwell District School
- » Burnie High School
- » Claremont College
- » Clarence High School
- » Kingston High School
- » Lansdowne Crescent Primary School
- » Penguin District School
- » Riverside Primary School
- » Trevallyn Primary School
- » Waimea Heights Primary School

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