A Study about Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 155: Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Student Learning

Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

POLICY/PROGRAM MEMORANDUM 155

On January 7, 2013, Ontario’s Ministry of Education issued Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 155: Diagnostic Assessment In Support of Student Learning. The purpose of the PPM, as stated in its first sentence, was to “outline how diagnostic assessment tools may be used effectively to inform teaching and learning practices in the classroom in support of student learning and achievement.”

The PPM was issued in fulfillment of a commitment made six months earlier, in the July 5, 2012 Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA):

The following language shall be incorporated into every collective agreement:

1. The Ministry of Education will release a Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) with respect to the effective use of diagnostic assessments.
2. Boards shall provide a list of pre-approved assessment tools consistent with their Board improvement plan for student achievement and the Ministry PPM.
3. Teachers shall use their professional judgment to determine which assessment and/or evaluation tool(s) from the Board list of preapproved assessment tools is applicable, for which student(s), as well as the frequency and timing of the tool. In order to inform their instruction, teachers must utilize diagnostic assessment during the school year.

Diagnostic assessment tools are defined in the PPM by referencing the definition in the Ministry’s 2010 document, Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, & Reporting in Ontario Schools: “Assessment that is used to identify a student’s needs and abilities and the student’s readiness to acquire the knowledge and skills outlined in the curriculum expectations” (p. 146). The PPM specifies that “This memorandum applies to the use of formal diagnostic assessment tools,” although what is meant by formal is not defined. The PPM explicitly excludes special education assessments and large-scale assessments from its definition of diagnostic assessment.

CONTEXT

Diagnostic Assessment Tools

To understand the PPM, it is important to understand how diagnostic assessment tools had come to be used in Ontario before the PPM. An April 2004 document, Building the Ontario Education Advantage: Student Achievement, outlined a new plan to improve elementary
students’ achievement in reading, writing, and math. Part of that plan was the creation of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) and a commitment that

“For the first time, every elementary school will have a specially trained lead teacher in JK to Grade 6 literacy and numeracy, skilled in the best practices and most effective techniques. Elementary teachers across Ontario will have access to training materials and opportunities, training sessions, teaching guides and diagnostic tools to help them with effective reading, writing and math strategies.”

The initial focus was on training lead teachers for literacy and providing funds for boards to purchase diagnostic assessment tools for reading. Not surprisingly, there was a rapid increase in the use of diagnostic assessment tools in Ontario’s elementary schools.

Data Management Systems

Starting in 2002, the Ministry assigned a unique Ontario Education Number (OEN) to each student attending elementary or secondary school in Ontario. In 2005, the Ministry established the Ontario Student Information System (OnSIS) to facilitate web-enabled collection of data from the district school boards. Also in 2005, the Ministry announced its “Managing Information for Student Achievement” (MISA) Initiative:

“For the first time, the government will track student movement, achievement and success. Key indicators have been developed to support the following system improvements:

1) Early secondary school identification of students struggling with the curriculum (Credit accumulation in Grade 9 and 10, Success on compulsory courses taken in Grade 9 and 10)

2) Development of baseline data to measure the success of Ministry of Education initiatives — in the past, there was not a mechanism that could be considered a baseline

3) Individual school and board accountability to parents by tracking the key indicators year by year

4) The use of the key indicator data as the trigger for school improvement planning

MISA is the framework system that will allow boards and the Ministry of Education to collect, share and integrate data. In the past, most boards operated as data silos with little integration possible.”

Through MISA, the Ministry provided funds to district school boards to support them in purchasing or developing data management systems and developing local capacity in data management and data use, in part to facilitate the boards’ preparation of data for delivery to OnSIS. Each board appointed a MISA lead. The Ministry also established seven regional Professional Network Centres (PNCs) to facilitate cooperation among boards in developing local capacity.
In a December 2006 “Letter to Directors,” the Ministry’s Deputy Minister described the role of OnSIS and of MISA:

“All of us are aware of the importance of reliable, timely data to support our planning and decision making. Many boards are doing exciting work in the area of effective use of data to support school planning. At the provincial level, new information systems for Ontario education are badly needed but are also a very large undertaking that I know is putting pressure on boards even as we recognize its importance. The long-term benefits are clear, however. OnSIS is already providing us with data that used to be collected through separate processes requiring additional work by boards. For example, data on student success that currently requires a separate data-gathering process will come through OnSIS starting next year. Also, MISA will provide boards with access to information collected through OnSIS, so that schools and boards have better information for decision making.”

School and Board Improvement Plans for Student Achievement

Boards are required to submit an annual Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) to the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (before the creation of the LNS, schools and boards submitted plans to the Education Quality and Accountability Office, EQAO). The 2013 version of School Effectiveness Framework: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success outlines the requirements for SIPSA and BIPSA preparation and includes references to “how qualitative and quantitative classroom data inform school planning” (p. 6). Many boards have interpreted this to suggest that the results of diagnostic assessment tools should be used for improvement planning. As a result, many boards incorporated into the design of their data management systems (supported by MISA funds, as described above) ways to collect these results from teachers for use in school and board planning.

Beyond Ontario

The types of assessments that are called diagnostic assessments in Ontario are sometimes referred to by other names. In the United States, the terms benchmark assessments, predictive assessments, and formative assessments are sometimes used, though interim assessments, suggested by Perie, Marion, and Gong (2007), is increasingly preferred. Perie et al., in proposing that term, seek to distinguish this type of formal assessment from “large-scale assessment,” which is typically no more than once a year, and from the ongoing and less formal classroom assessment that is typically labeled “formative assessment.” While noting that “A good district-level assessment can be an integral part of a state’s comprehensive assessment system, used in conjunction with classroom formative assessments and summative end-of-year assessments” (p. 1), they are critical of test publishing companies for referring to research about the benefits of teacher-developed formative assessments when marketing their products.

Researchers in the United States have begun to study the implementation of interim assessments. For example, Henderson, Petrosino, Guckenbug, and Hamilton (2007) compared the school-level results on Massachusetts’s Grade 8 mathematics assessment for 22 schools that

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1 We cannot say with certainty that all boards have this interpretation or have taken this approach.
had used interim assessments in mathematics four times per year in both Grades 7 and 8, compared with 44 similar schools that had not. They did not find any significant differences between the schools with and without interim assessments, but cautioned that the number of schools was quite small.

In 2009 and 2010, two important education journals devoted special issues to the increase in interim assessment in the United States. *Peabody Journal of Education*’s April 2010 issue on “Benchmarks for Success? Interim Assessments as a Strategy for Educational Improvement” included articles on the growing use of interim assessments, but also articles on the role of data management systems in supporting the use of interim assessment and articles on how interim assessment results were being used by teachers and principals. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*’s September 2009 issue on “Validity of Formative and Interim Assessment” provided a set of articles suggesting how states and districts can critically examine the role and effects of interim assessments in supporting teaching and learning.

More recently, Konstantopoulos, Miller, and Ploeg (2013) studied the state of Indiana’s adoption of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and a mathematics assessment, both teacher-administered, for Kindergarten to Grade 2 and computer-administered reading and mathematics assessments for Grades 3 to 8. The assessments for Grades 3 to 8 are administered seven times a year: four administrations focus on providing detailed results to teachers about students’ learning and three administrations focus on predicting how the students will perform on the annual state-wide large-scale assessment. Because the new system was introduced gradually across the state, the researchers were able to assign, from those schools that volunteered to begin implementation in 2009 and had not used this type of testing before, some schools to begin implementation and other schools to delay implementation. They studied 31 schools in the treatment (implementation) group and 18 schools in the control (delay) group, comparing their results on the state-wide large-scale assessments administered at the end of the school year. The researchers found that Grade 3 and 4 students in schools that used the interim assessments performed better in reading than those in schools without the assessments; Grade 5 and 6 students in these schools performed better in mathematics. No significant differences were found for Kindergarten to Grade 2. As Konstantopoulos and his colleagues observe, the growing body of research on the effects of interim assessments on students’ achievement remains inconclusive.

**THIS STUDY**

**Purpose**

In the Fall of 2013, the Ministry requested a study of the implementation and effects of PPM 155. In the Terms of Reference, the Ministry described the purpose of the study:

Questions and concerns have been raised by boards and Federations regarding the implementation of PPM 155. Developing a clearer understanding of the emerging impact of the memorandum, on the level of understanding and consistency in current implementation practices, on student achievement, and on classroom based assessment practices as stated in the Growing Success policy document, is in the best interests of the students and parents we serve.
The review will also explore any changes to boards’ and principals’ ability to collect data and methods of collecting data for board and school improvement plans. How teachers are using diagnostic assessment as a key tool to plan instruction and set appropriate learning goals as a result of the implementation of PPM 155 will also be explored.

The Ministry further identified three goals of the study:

- investigate changes to board and school formal diagnostic assessment data collection and teacher diagnostic assessment practices resulting from the implementation of PPM 155;
- identify any barriers to effective implementation of PPM 155 and how these might be ameliorated or eliminated based on the research;
- identify models of successful implementation where boards, principals and teachers are successfully collaborating in using formal diagnostic tools to improve student outcomes.

Advisory Committee

In late December 2013 and early January 2014, the Ministry invited the Directors of Education, Supervisory Officers, Principals Associations, Teacher Federations and Trustee Associations to nominate representatives to an Advisory Committee for the study. The Ministry also invited ten other professionals from district school boards to join the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee met three times: on January 17, 2014 to discuss the design of the study; on March 6 to discuss preliminary findings; and on April 29 to discuss the draft of the final report.

Ontario Educators

As we will describe in the following chapters, we spoke with or received online responses from many Ontario educators in the course of this study. They were incredibly generous with their time and insights.

Study Team

The study was conducted by Ruth A. Childs, an associate professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, in consultation with the Advisory Committee and with assistance from Monique Herbert, an experienced educational researcher with a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology and Education from OISE; Madison Aitken, a Ph.D. candidate at OISE; and Marie-Claire Coupèrier, who worked for many years developing educational materials for l’Office des télécommunications éducatives de langue française de l’Ontario (OTÉLFO) and is currently studying e-learning at the University of Toronto.
CASE STUDY DESIGN

Because PPM 155 was intended to be implemented within boards and affected not only the use of diagnostic assessment tools by teachers, but also collection of diagnostic assessment data from teachers by school administrators and board administrators, we chose a multiple case study approach, with a sample of boards as the cases and seeking perspectives from teachers and administrators in each board. The cases are intended to provide snapshots of the use of diagnostic assessment tools (as defined in the PPM) in these boards as of Winter of 2014.

SELECTION OF CASES

In Ontario, local education is the responsibility of 72 publicly-funded district school boards. Under the Education Act, these boards are required to, in part, “promote student achievement and well-being,” “ensure effective stewardship of the board’s resources,” “deliver effective and appropriate education programs to its pupils,” and “monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies … in achieving the board’s goals and the efficiency of the implementation of those policies” (169.1 (1)).

The boards vary widely in size and location, as well as language (French or English) and affiliation (Public or Catholic). Based on the advice of the Advisory Committee at the January 17 meeting, we selected a sample of eight boards to represent:

- all six regions of the province
- Public (4 boards) and Catholic (4 boards)
- English (6 boards – one in each region) and French (2 boards – southern and northern, Public and Catholic)
- small, medium, and large
- urban, suburban, and rural

It is important to note that these boards are not intended to be representative of all boards in Ontario in the sense of suggesting the percentages of other boards with particular practices. Instead, these boards were deliberately selected to reflect the range of types and sizes of boards in the hope of capturing a range of practices.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort was made to keep the identities of the boards and of the individuals within the boards confidential, including from the Ministry. We asked members of the Advisory Committee
for help in contacting relevant members of their associations. In doing so, we provided each person with only the names of the selected boards that included members of their associations.

**INTERVIEWS/ONLINE RESPONSES**

In order to understand the implementation of PPM 155 within each of the eight selected boards, we sought to interview or receive online responses from:

- 4 teachers (2 federation representatives and 2 additional teachers suggested by the federations)\(^2\)
- 2 principals (1 elementary, 1 secondary)
- 1 board-level administrator
- 1 trustee
- 1 Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) board leader

We also received responses from the 7 MISA Professional Network Centres (PNC) Executive Leads.

We received 53 responses (14 interviews and 39 online responses) across the eight boards, plus an additional 6 responses (2 interviews and 4 online responses) from MISA PNC Executive Leads (the seventh MISA PNC Executive Lead is also the MISA board leader in one of the selected boards, so is counted among the 53 responses). The 53 responses are distributed across the cases as shown in the following figure (because some respondents filled two roles, such as board-level administrator and MISA board leader, or union representative for both elementary and secondary teachers, the number of shaded cells is 56, not 53).

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\(^2\) We originally sought six teachers, hoping to include two teachers recommended by their principals, but found that principals were reluctant to recommend teachers.
Figure 1. *Distribution of responses across cases.*

All communication with the two selected French boards was conducted in French.

**INTERVIEW/ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS**

To understand the experiences of and perspectives on implementation of PPM 155, we developed a set of questions to be used in both the interviews and the online surveys. The questions as they appeared in the online survey are in Appendix A (English) and Appendix B (French). Below, the same questions are listed by topic (the questions listed here are the version for teachers; parallel questions were asked of administrators; both versions appear in the appendices):

**Use**

- What diagnostic assessments have you used, this year and in past years?
- When do you administer the diagnostic assessments?
- Do you administer the same diagnostic assessments to all students? If not, what are the differences?
- Thinking about this year, has the use of diagnostic assessments changed? If so, how?

**Communication of Results**

- Are you asked to report diagnostic assessment results to the principal or board?
- Does your board have a computer system into which teachers are asked to enter diagnostic assessment results?
- Are there opportunities to discuss diagnostic assessment with other teachers, with your principal, or with others in your board? If yes, what kinds of discussions have you had?
Who Decides

- How do you decide which diagnostic assessments to use?
- Do you know if your board has an assessment policy? If yes, what does it say about diagnostic assessment?
- Does your board have a list of approved diagnostic assessments?

Purposes

- How have you used diagnostic assessments, this year and in the past – for example, to support students’ learning, to plan instruction, to communicate with students and/or parents?
- Do you know if your school and/or board uses diagnostic assessment for improvement planning? If yes, how?
- Do you know what other data your school and/or board uses for improvement planning? If yes, what?

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- Do you know if the Policy/Program Memorandum about diagnostic assessment has affected the use of diagnostic assessment in your school or board? If so, how?
- Has your school or board had discussions or provided information about this Policy/Program Memorandum?

Suggestions for Change

- If you could change one or two things about how diagnostic assessment is used in your school or board, what would you change?
- What role would you like to see diagnostic assessment play in your school?

Analysis

We had two purposes in analyzing the responses: (1) to provide a description of how diagnostic assessment was conducted and used before and after the introduction of PPM 155, and (2) to illuminate differences of perspective or interpretation among teachers and administrators within each case. The factual descriptions both illustrate the variability of practice before and after the introduction of PPM 155, and provide context for the differences of perspective or interpretation.

For the analysis, the responses to the above questions were organized in a spreadsheet by case, respondent’s role (i.e., teacher, principal, board-level administrator, MISA board leader, or trustee), and question. Each member of the study team read all of the responses and one member took responsibility for preparing the first draft of each case study description; the other members then read and edited the description.
After the case descriptions had been drafted, the cases were reread for what each case most clearly illustrated and added to an overall understanding of the implementation of PPM 155. While all cases were complex, we sought to choose a quote or summary statement from each case that captured that case’s unique contribution. These contributions were then divided into two groups: differences of perspective and details of implementation. The cases were renumbered so that cases 1 to 5 correspond to differences of perspective and cases 6 to 8 correspond to details of implementation.

We also reviewed the responses from the MISA PNC Executive Leads. We had originally intended to interview the MISA PNC Executive Leads asking them about their observations across boards, instead of about their own boards. Unfortunately, most of the MISA PNC Executive Leads chose to answer the questions online and answered them in relation to their own boards, which were not among the cases. While these responses assured us that what we had seen in the eight cases was echoed in other boards, they did not provide information that could be incorporated into the cases.

**WHAT WE LEFT OUT**

In summarizing the cases, we wrestled with how to reflect the frustration expressed by many of the respondents. Those in administrative roles had developed procedures for school and board improvement planning that depended on data from teachers’ periodic administration of diagnostic assessment tools to all students in their classes. They had also come to rely on these data to make decisions about resource distribution across schools.

In writing this report, we have deliberately avoided discussing the relationship of PPM 155 to labour relations in Ontario, aside from referencing in the Introduction the July 2012 Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association. Workload, in particular, is beyond the scope of this study: The Ministry has commissioned studies, being conducted at the same time as this study, that focus on teacher workload and principal workload.

Finally, the Terms of Reference for this study specify that “the purpose of the study is not to come up with recommendations or changes to the PPM.” Because the study is not an evaluation of the PPM itself, we have avoided making recommendations about the future of the PPM.
DIFFERENCES OF PERSPECTIVE:
CASE STUDIES 1 TO 5

The five cases discussed in this chapter are presented as a group because they illustrate differences in perspective about diagnostic assessment within boards. Bear in mind as you read the descriptions of these cases that they are intended as snapshots of the use of diagnostic assessment tools (as defined in the PPM) in these boards as of Winter of 2014.

CASE 1: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT?

Case 1 is a medium-sized board in southern Ontario. The case description is based on interviews with or surveys completed by a trustee, a board-level administrator, the MISA lead, a union local leader, an elementary principal and an elementary teacher. Since PPM 155, this board no longer requires elementary teachers to administer and enter data from board-mandated diagnostic assessment tools; however, a list of board-approved assessments has not yet been developed. In addition, the board and the union disagree about whether the board’s diagnostic assessment for Kindergarten students is included in PPM 155.

Before PPM 155, the board required teachers to administer PM Benchmarks Reading Assessments to all students in Grades 1 to 6 (or until students reached the highest PM Benchmark level) and to enter the results into a central data management system [the principal mentioned the beginning, middle, and end of the year, but others did not specify how often PM Benchmarks was required]. Since PPM 155, administration of PM Benchmarks is no longer required. The board and the union are discussing a possible list of board-approved assessments, but have not yet agreed.

Junior and Senior Kindergarten teachers are still required to administer early speech and language assessments. The union has filed a grievance contending that this is diagnostic assessment and so cannot be mandated. The board contends that the assessment of Kindergarten children is screening for special education needs and so is not covered by PPM 155.

This case highlights an important difference of perspective. The elementary principal wrote that diagnostic assessment “should track student progress from year to year and act as a baseline and a mid year and end of year check.” This view was also reflected in the responses of the board administrator and the trustee, who described the use of the diagnostic assessment data in school and board improvement planning. The elementary teacher had a very different view:
“Diagnostic testing should be used only on students who are struggling in order to determine the cause of their difficulties and to plan strategies to help them. The remaining funds could then be used to hire more support staff (resource teachers, Educational Assistants, psychologists, social workers, speech and OT therapists) to help students in need of these extra supports.”

CASE 2: THE “VALUE AND USE OF DATA”

Case 2 is a large board in southern Ontario. The case is based on interviews with or surveys completed by a trustee, MISA lead, a union local leader, an elementary principal, and a secondary principal. Since PPM 155, teachers are no longer being required to administer and enter data from board-mandated diagnostic assessment tools; however, a list of board-approved assessments is not yet available.

Before PPM 155, teachers were required to administer the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) at the primary and junior levels (senior kindergarten to Grade 6, with the exception of students in French immersion), GB+ (for French Immersion). These assessments were typically administered to all students in the Fall and Spring. A board-developed assessment of mathematics reasoning was administered to all Grade 8 students in the Fall. Some teachers administered teacher-developed assessments at the start of a new unit or semester.

There is a board-level data management system into which teachers have been expected to enter the results of the DRA and GB+. As one elementary principal explained, since PPM 155, the choice is left to teachers to decide whether or not to enter results in the data management system:

“[O]ur DRA results are entered by the teacher (if they choose to do so) into a computerized system. The results are then calculated centrally and sent out to the schools when completed. There has been resistance in the past couple of years by some teachers to do DRA. Some have done the DRA for their own purposes and refused to submit the results on the computer program and this is a direct result I believe of the PPM.”

The MISA lead confirmed that data were not being received by the board and worried not only about the current loss of data, but also about the possible effects on future awareness of the value of data:

“Approximately half of the teachers have not submitted the results centrally through the electronic system. For the most part we do not know whether they have done the assessments on some or all of their students. There have been several outright refusals to administer the math assessment…. Not only has data been lost that is valuable in discussions about evidence informed practice but it has set back many years the gains made in terms of creating an awareness, sense of value and use of data and information. The impression has been created that data such as this is not important, does not have a role and can be easily discarded. Such a LOSS!”
CASE 3: “THEY DIDN’T KNOW WHAT WE DID WITH THE DATA”

Case 3 is a small northern board, including both urban and rural areas. The case is based on interviews with or surveys completed by a trustee, a board-level administrator and MISA lead, a union local leader, a secondary principal and both elementary and secondary teachers. Since PPM 155, teachers are no longer required to administer and enter data from board-mandated diagnostic assessment tools. The board has provided a list of approved diagnostic assessment tools to teachers.

Before PPM 155, the board required teachers to administer the Web-based Teaching Tool (WBTT) for the early years; the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Professional Resources and Instruction for Mathematics Educators (PRIME) for students in elementary grades, plus GB+ and « Évaluation rapide de la compréhension en lecture » for students in French Immersion. Teachers administered the assessments to all students in the fall and to struggling students later in the year. In Grade 9, teachers were required to administer a board-developed diagnostic assessment related to the OSSLT. (Commercial diagnostic assessment tools for secondary grades had been investigated a few years ago and judged to be inadequate or too expensive, so diagnostic assessment tools for secondary grades have been developed by individual teachers.)

Before PPM 155, teachers were required to enter the data from these assessments into a central data management system. One of the secondary teachers reported having to email results from the OSSLT-related diagnostic assessment to the vice principal every two weeks.

Since PPM 155, the board has unsuccessfully requested elementary teachers to, if they do administer the DRA, enter the results into the data management system. In an effort to convince teachers of the usefulness of recording data in the data management system, the board has now redesigned the data management system so that teachers are now able to see a child’s data from previous years. Because of the PPM, the board is also encouraging elementary principals to ask teachers to bring any data they want with them to Professional Learning Community (PLC) discussions and is providing funds for release time for teachers to attend these discussions (an elementary teacher confirmed, “I have not been asked to drop [enter into the data management system] data, but I have been asked to share findings, and bring data to MISA [Managing Information for Student Achievement], SIPSA [School Improvement Planning for Student Achievement] and other student achievement meetings to demonstrate student learning and growth, but I was not directed what to bring”). As the board administrator noted, PPM 155 has spurred the board to make data more available to teachers and to make the collection and use of student data by schools and the board more transparent; as she explained, “Before, [teachers] told us that they didn't know what we did with the data; they felt like they were being judged.”

As required by the PPM, the board provided an approved list of assessments last September; this list is described as consisting of the previously-required assessments. It is worth noting that the only assessment on the list for the secondary grades is the OSSLT-related assessment.

The board administration worked in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 with a subcommittee of the Joint Professional Development Committee, including elementary and secondary teachers, to
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develop the list. The subcommittee agreed to classify the pre-screening assessment in senior kindergarten as necessary for identification of special needs and so not covered by PPM 155. While the board administrator described work with the subcommittee as a successful collaboration, a teacher member of the subcommittee described the meetings as “one sided” and “not encouraging teacher input.”

The teachers who responded emphasized that teachers are still doing diagnostic assessment, although they are not entering the data into the data management system. An elementary teacher described how her use of diagnostic assessment tools has changed with PPM 155:

“I continue to use teacher created diagnostic assessments at the beginning of units, after which I use that evidence to decide what tool to use for particular students based on what the student work is telling me. I am able to focus on the diagnostic assessment better, I have more time to read it, evaluate it, moderate with others because I may have 6 rather than 30. The diagnostic assessments are more targeted in greater depth and provide more insight because I am able to devote significant attention to them rather than plow through a class set.”

The PPM is described by the secondary teachers and principal as having had little influence at the secondary level: Except for the OSSLT-related assessment, the diagnostic assessment in secondary schools was and continues to be teacher-developed.

CASE 4: “PPM 155 HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED ON OUR ABILITY TO HOLD TEACHERS ACCOUNTABLE”

Case 4 is a large southern board. The case is based on interviews with or surveys completed by two elementary teachers, an elementary and a secondary principal, a board-level administrator, a trustee and the MISA lead. Since PPM 155, teachers are no longer required to administer and enter data from board-mandated diagnostic assessment tools. The board has provided a list of approved diagnostic assessment tools to teachers.

Before PPM 155, all teachers were required to administer the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) at the Primary level and the Comprehension Attitude Strategies Interests (CASI) assessment at the Junior level twice during the year, in Fall and Spring. The results from these assessments were entered into a board-level data management system that produced graphs and charts for teachers, principals and superintendents.

Since the implementation of PPM 155, the use of diagnostic assessment has varied from school to school. The board has issued a list of assessments from which teachers can select. Teachers therefore “decide what tools to use based on professional judgment as defined in Growing Success and by using the Board-approved list of tools” (Board-level administrator). The elementary principal said that expectations for diagnostic assessment, following the list, were outlined “at the June staff meeting and again at the first staff meeting of the year.”

Since PPM 155, teachers are no longer expected to enter the results of diagnostic assessment tools into the data management system and it is not mandatory to report the results to the principal. However, if teachers want to discuss a student with the school team it is expected that they use one of the approved board assessments:
“In the past, teachers were expected to record results online twice a year. Currently the results are shared when requested during an IST [In-School Support Team], SST [School Support Team] or by the principal.” (Elementary Teacher)

“We don’t have to input the results anymore but if we want to bring a student to school team, we have to use certain prescribed assessments.” (Elementary Principal)

An elementary teacher also described conversations she has had with other teachers about how they might share data informally when students move from one grade to the next.

This board based its decisions about resource allocation to schools in part on these board-wide diagnostic assessment results. While administrators and trustees in many of the cases expressed frustration about PPM 155, this case was unique in the level of concern expressed about the effect of PPM 155 on teacher accountability. For example, the Trustee emphasized that, in his view, school boards, not teachers, are the only ones legally responsible for the interests of the students. An elementary principal wrote that,

“PPM 155 has negatively impacted on our ability to hold teachers accountable. The good teachers will continue to perform assessment effectively, the poor or unmotivated teacher now has less accountability”

CASE 5: “WE READ PPM 155 DIFFERENTLY THAN THE BOARD DOES”

Case 5 is a small rural board in northern Ontario. The case is based on interviews with or surveys completed by a trustee, union local leader (elementary and secondary), an elementary teacher, an elementary principal, and a board-level administrator. Since PPM 155, this board has begun discussing the development of a list of board-approved diagnostic assessment tools, but has made no other changes.

Before PPM 155, teachers were required to administer several diagnostic assessment tools: Running Records, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Comprehension Attitude Strategies Interests (CASI), a senior Kindergarten screen, Professional Resources and Instruction for Mathematics Educators (PRIME), Ontario Numeracy Assessment Package (ONAP), and Leaps and Bounds (mathematics). There were also optional tests at the primary level to assess sight words, hearing and recording sounds, and concepts about print, and also teacher-created assessment tasks. These assessments were administered at the beginning, middle and end of the school year or at the beginning and end. Depending on the grade level, assessments occurred more or less frequently, as noted by the board-level administrator, “the frequency is greater with the primary grade assessments as students advance much more quickly through levels in those grades.”

The results of these assessments were entered by teachers into a board-operated data management system, which organizes the data in a way that allows teachers to identify struggling students, to display achievement data graphically, and compare the results of the diagnostic assessment with results from other assessments.
The board has an assessment plan, which was developed with teachers from various grades, administrators and system coordinators. The literacy assessment plan had a list of several assessments that was used to direct teachers to what assessment to use and when to administer it at the elementary level. However, it seems the board moved away from this plan and opted for fewer assessments being administered more frequently through the years, especially for students who are identified as at risk. Current practice seems to have shifted to choosing the assessment that best suits the situation; for example, one elementary teacher reports using “Running Records with oral discussions to assess for comprehension throughout the year with DRA administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year” and with the Math strand the assessment that provides the “truest picture of the student’s abilities and any areas of concern” is used. This account of current practices was also echoed by the elementary principal: “Instead of using a consistent tool, schools are able to use running records combined with comprehension, fluency and accuracy data as a diagnostic assessment tool.”

The details of implementation of PPM 155 are still being discussed within the board. The elementary union local leader noted that a team of teachers is working on developing a list of assessments and that the frequency of the mandated assessments is an ongoing discussion with the board. She is aware that some teachers are being told they must continue as before to do assessments and enter the data into the system. As she noted, “We read PPM 155 differently than the board does.” Indeed, a board-level administrator wrote that

“We have mandated that we are consistent across a school and across the Board. Now … the union is advising teachers that they need not conduct the same assessments as others in their school or their grade level and whenever the teacher so chooses. This is proving difficult to truly monitor the progress of students and to ensure that students are receiving the grade appropriate instruction and support, especially in reading and writing. … [T]here is now push back as to what assessments will be used and when.”

While at the board level there is concern about the lack of consistency, the elementary teacher sees the introduction of PPM 155 as showing that teachers’ professional judgment should be respected, “something that has been ignored because of the data driven needs of the board.” The teacher noted, however, that beginning teachers may need support in developing confidence in their professional judgement about which diagnostic assessment tools to use and when to use them.
DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION:
CASE STUDIES 6 TO 8

The three cases discussed in this chapter are presented as a group because these cases were characterized less by differences of perspective about diagnostic assessment and more by difficulties with details of implementation of PPM 155. Bear in mind as you read the descriptions of these cases that they are intended as snapshots of the use of diagnostic assessment tools (as defined in the PPM) in these boards as of Winter of 2014.

CASE 6: “CAN WE ADD OR REMOVE TOOLS FROM THE INITIAL LIST?”

Case 6 is a small, but geographically dispersed southern board. The case is based on interviews with or surveys completed by a board-level administrator and MISA lead, a union local leader, and both elementary and secondary principals and teachers. Since PPM 155, teachers are no longer being required to administer and enter data from board-mandated diagnostic assessment tools; however, a list of board-approved assessments is not yet available.

Before PPM 155, elementary teachers were required to use « Un bon départ » to assess students at the beginning of October. This was supported by a data management system into which the teachers had to enter the data. Since the PPM, teachers have not been required to enter data into the data management system. Other diagnostic assessment tools, including GB+, « À pas de Géant » for Junior mathematics, and « Évaluation diagnostique, Aménagement linguistique » for Grades 7 to 10, were available, but not required.

An elementary principal described how diagnostic assessment contributes to school improvement planning:

« Oui, la direction est courant de la plupart des évaluations diagnostiques. Les enseignants montrent les travaux des élèves, écrivent un rapport qu'ils expliquent à la direction dans une réunion. Suite à ces réunions, la direction peut dresser le profil de son école et avec l'équipe de la réussite, on peut écrire le plan d'amélioration de l'école. Pour les élèves particuliers l'enseignante ressource tient un registre des évaluations diagnostiques en lecture. »

[Translation: Yes, school administrators know about most diagnostic assessments. Teachers show students’ work and write a report to present at a meeting with school administrators. Following these meetings, school administrators can establish the school profile and write the school improvement plan with the school success team. For specific students, the resource teacher keeps a record of diagnostic assessments in reading.]
For the board improvement plans, as in other boards, EQAO data are also used.

The board administrator reports that the board has created a list of approved assessments, but is discussing it with other boards before communicating it to the teachers. The administrator notes that the requirements for the list are unclear:

« La NPP entraîne des points nébuleux entourant la préparation, et la diffusion d'une liste d'outils existe avec la NPP 155 : peut-on ajouter ou retirer des outils à la liste initiale? À quels moments et à quelles fréquences ces actions sont-elles possibles? »

[Translation: The PPM involves nebulous points regarding the preparation and dissemination of a list of tools available with PPM 155: can we add or remove tools from the initial list? When and how often are these actions possible?]

A representative of the union also noted the difficulty in creating a list:

« Et la problématique aussi est que … ces outils de diagnostiques, selon notre compréhension à l'époque, sont surtout pour le niveau primaire et ça va être difficile d’élaborer une liste pour le niveau secondaire. Et ce sont surtout des outils professionnels en littératie et numératie et ça a non plus ce n’est pas compris. »

[Translation: And the problem is also that ... based on our understanding at the time these diagnostic tools were mainly for the elementary level and it will be difficult to develop a list for the secondary level. And there are mainly professional tools in literacy and numeracy and that was also not understood.]

CASE 7: “WE’D REALLY LIKE TO HAVE IT TWICE A YEAR”

Case 7 is a large southern board. The case is based on interviews with or surveys completed by a trustee, MISA lead, a board-level administrator, an elementary principal, and a secondary principal. Since PPM 155, teachers are no longer required to administer and enter data from board-mandated diagnostic assessment tools. The board has provided a list of approved diagnostic assessment tools to teachers.

In this board, prior to and since the implementation of PPM 155 teachers have and still administer Conventions of Print at the Kindergarten level, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Running Records at the Primary level, the Comprehension Attitude Strategies Interests (CASI) assessment at the Junior/Intermediate level, and GB+ for those students in French Immersion. DRA and/or Running Records is the only mandatory diagnostic assessment required at the elementary level by the board and is administered in the Spring with training being provided in the Fall to encourage teachers to administer the assessment early and frequently. The board-level administrator pointed out that one drawback to collecting primary reading assessments in the Spring is that “it is too late to be used by those teachers but can be used the following year.” However, teachers in this board are also encouraged to use these assessments and other assessment tools throughout the year. At the secondary level, the principal reported that although some diagnostic assessment tools are administered at the beginning of a unit this was at the teacher’s discretion and no formal assessments are required.
Teachers use their professional judgment in choosing which diagnostic assessment to use but the board does offer some guidelines (e.g., Conventions of Print for those not achieving at Level 3, DRA or Running Record for Grade 1 to 3 students). The board also provided workshops on the suggested assessment tools “so they can decide which tools will be most effective for students” (Board-level administrator).

Only the results from mandatory assessments administered in the Spring need to be reported to the principal or board by teachers. These results are entered at the school into an electronic data management system, often by the principal. If principals are unfamiliar with the system the results can be entered centrally; however, the board-level administrator noted that requests for data entry assistance has decreased.

The implementation of the PPM 155 has not had a great impact on the administration and use of diagnostic assessment tools in this board as several of the practices seemed to already align with the PPM 155. However, the trustee expressed frustration that the PPM only requires diagnostic assessment once a year: “we'd really like to have it twice a year, at the beginning and end of the year.”

**CASE 8: “A VALIDATION PROCESS”**

Case 8 is a small northern board, with both urban and rural areas. The case is based on interviews with or surveys completed by a board-level administrator, MISA lead, two union local leaders, and both elementary and secondary principals and teachers. Since, PPM 155, a list of board-approved assessments is being developed for use next year; however, there does not seem to have been any change in expectations about when teachers will administer diagnostic assessment tools and whether they must enter the data into the data management system. The focus seems to be on offering teachers the option of developing or proposing alternative diagnostic assessment tools if they are pre-approved by the board.

Before PPM 155, teachers were required to administer board-specified diagnostic assessment tools in September and additional “anchor tasks” in February to measure progress. The board has developed assessments for Grades 1 to 10: Literacy for almost all grades, plus writing and mathematics in Grades 3, 6, 9, and 10, to correspond to the EQAO testing. GB+ is used to track reading. Monthly small tasks to measure progress on school-chosen objectives are also administered.

Teachers were required to enter diagnostic assessment data into a data management system. A feature of the software is that it allows teachers to view results for individual students across years. Whether this is useful for teachers was questioned by the union representative, who said:

« Dans l’apprentissage et ce que enseignants en font, j’ai eu des commentaires que ce sont des données vides. On les entre dans le coffre puis on ne les voit plus. Je ne pense pas qu’ils (enseignants) voient le lien avec le cursus d’apprentissage »

[translation: In terms of learning and what teachers do with it, I've had comments that these are ‘empty’ data. They are entered in the database and then nobody uses them again. I do not think they (teachers) see the link with the learning curriculum.]
Because of PPM 155, the board is giving teachers the option of substituting their own diagnostic assessment tools for the board-specified assessments. As the MISA lead described it,

« Nous avons créé un tableau conseil contenant les outils diagnostiques systémiques, avec les intentions et le processus pour que l'enseignant puisse utiliser sa propre tâche équivalente à celle systémique »

[Translation: We have created a reference table that lists the system-wide diagnostic tools with the purpose and the procedures so the teacher can use his or her own task similar to the system-wide one].

However, as the union representative noted, the board is interpreting PPM 155 as requiring teacher-developed assessments to be pre-approved by the board. The MISA lead also noted the board’s requirement that teachers follow a validation process:

« L'an prochain, ceux qui ne veulent pas utiliser la tâche systémique du conseil, pourront, en suivant un processus de validation, utiliser leur propres outils »

[Translation: Next year, those who don’t want to use the system-wide task from the school board would be able to use their own tools if they go through a validation process].
ACROSS-CASE SUMMARY

The eight cases were selected to reflect the six regions of the province; Public and Catholic; English and French; small, medium, and large sizes; and urban, suburban, and rural populations. The cases are not intended to be representative of all boards in Ontario in the sense of suggesting the percentages of other boards with particular practices. Rather, our goal was to capture a range of experiences and practices. Indeed, within the eight cases, we found differences in

- previous use of diagnostic assessment tools,
- current use of diagnostic assessment tools,
- capabilities of the data management systems, and
- perspectives on diagnostic assessment and on PPM 155.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss both the differences and the commonalities across cases.

**FORMAL DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

In the Introduction, we noted that PPM 155 refers to *formal* diagnostic assessment tools, but that *formal* is not defined. Is it possible to tell how the respondents in the case studies understand the term? We did not ask respondents for a definition, but the term was used in several responses. For example, an elementary teacher in Case 5, when asked how her use of diagnostic assessments had changed this year, responded:

“Using observation more in my assessments. Questioning as they work on a rich task allows for more precise assessment. Still using the more formal reading assessments which were required by the board.”

A union representative in Case 2 commented that “I believe that the teacher can make their professional judgment WITHOUT the use of a formal diagnostic in many situations after they get to know their students.”

One possibility in both these quotes is that *formal* is being used to mean *purchased*, as opposed to teacher-developed, assessment tools. However, it is also possible that it is being used to mean *board-mandated*. Most of the board-mandated diagnostic assessment tools have in fact been purchased. However, the latter interpretation would also allow the inclusion of board-developed assessment tools. That respondents in some of the cases, although they did not use the word *formal*, nevertheless included board-developed assessment tools when discussing the effects of PPM 155, suggests to us that *board-mandated* may be a closer definition.
PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

Another term that is important to the interpretation of PPM 155 is *professional judgement*. The PPM quotes the definition from the Ministry’s 2010 document, *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, & Reporting in Ontario Schools*:

> “Judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction.” (p. 152)

In the responses, *professional* was emphasized in some of the responses from teachers. For example, a teachers’ union representative in Case 7 reported that “Our Board has over the last number of years developed a relationship with its teachers which is respectful of teachers’ professional judgment and working collaboratively for the goal of student success” and further that “Respect for teachers as educators and professionals cannot be over emphasized!” A union representative in Case 3 referred to *professional autonomy*, reporting that there is “More professional autonomy now and not all need be tested.”

In contrast, *judgement* was the focus of some of the responses from administrators. For example, a secondary principal in Case 7 asserted that “Professional judgement shouldn’t mean that a teacher’s judgement can’t be questioned.” A board administrator in Case 1 suggested that principals should be able to ask teachers, “What are you basing your professional judgment on?”

COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS

In trying to represent the use of diagnostic assessment tools and the communication of results within boards, we found it helpful to begin with the following simplified graphic of the parts of the education system.
Figure 2. *The student within classroom, school, board, and province.*

Figure 3 shows how diagnostic assessment results were communicated within the eight cases immediately before PPM 155. As we described in the Introduction, the Ministry of Education had provided funding to boards, beginning in 2005, to support the creation and use of data management systems. In each of the eight cases, before PPM 155, teachers were required to administer specific diagnostic assessment tools and to enter the data into their board’s data management system, although the specific grade levels (though usually elementary), diagnostic assessment tools, and frequency varied across boards. The school and board administrators were able to obtain the diagnostic assessment results from the data management system for use in school and board improvement planning. Whether teachers were also able to view results in the data management system varied across boards, however.

Figure 3. *Communication of diagnostic assessment results before PPM 155.*
Since PPM 155, the communication of diagnostic assessment results has become much more varied. As we heard from respondents in six of the cases, teachers in those boards are no longer required to enter diagnostic assessment data into the board’s data management system. In one of these cases, the principal is now entering the data. In the remaining two cases it is unclear if or when data entry requirements will change.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Cases 1 to 5 highlighted differences in perspectives, especially related to whether PPM 155 should be implemented. Cases 6 to 8 addressed difficulties with details of implementation, that is, how PPM 155 should be implemented. This leads us to a question: Is there a consensus on what it means to implement PPM 155? In our final meeting with the advisory committee, we discussed what full implementation would look like. PPM 155 requires boards to “establish and provide a list of approved diagnostic assessment tools that are consistent with their board plans for improving student learning and achievement.” It requires teachers to “use their professional judgement, as defined in Growing Success, when selecting and using diagnostic assessment tools” and to “utilize diagnostic assessment during the school year, selecting tools from the board’s approved list”; it further states that “In order to inform their instruction, teachers must utilize diagnostic assessment during the school year.” Principals will, “[t]hrough the use of a variety of tools to support and monitor student progress,” “continue to provide leadership when working in collaboration with teachers to gather information about student learning in support of school and board improvement plans for student achievement.”

The principal change we found in the eight cases was that three of them had developed lists of diagnostic assessment tools and distributed those lists to teachers. The remaining boards were either still developing lists (four boards) or still reviewing a list before releasing it (one board). In addition, as noted above, in six of the boards, teachers are no longer required to enter data into the data management system (it is unclear in the other two boards if or when data entry requirements will change).

In the boards that have lists, are all teachers administering a diagnostic assessment tool from their board’s list? Are all principals working with teachers to “gather information about student learning”? These parts of implementation are much harder to observe, making it very difficult to say with certainty whether PPM 155 is being fully implemented in these boards. Further complicating things is the question of whether and how the board lists apply in secondary schools and what they mean for secondary teachers and principals.

Returning to the question, Is there a consensus on what it means to implement PPM 155?, we have to conclude that there is not.
POSTSCRIPT … COMMON GROUND

In conducting this study, we have often found ourselves wondering, What is the common ground – what Ontario educators agree on in relation to diagnostic assessment? Although beyond the requirements of this study, we offer a few reflections on this question.

While not conclusive, it is suggestive that, from all the respondents across the eight cases, no one disputed these two points: (1) school boards need data for planning and (2) diagnostic assessment tools can help teachers to understand students’ learning and to plan instruction. This may be common ground.

What is not commonly agreed upon, however, is whether and how these two points relate to each other. It is easy to understand how funding for boards to purchase diagnostic assessment tools, coinciding with funding for boards to develop data management systems, and with requirements for school and board improvement plans that are based on data, can lead to a conclusion that data from diagnostic assessments should be used for board improvement planning. It is also easy to understand how boards might conclude that, if diagnostic assessment tools can be helpful to teachers, then using them more often will be even more helpful. Whether these conclusions are inevitable, or even anticipated by the Ministry, is not clear.

That there is common ground is encouraging. This could provide a starting place from which to discuss the difficult question of whether results from the classroom administration of diagnostic assessment tools are the appropriate or best data to inform improvement planning.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY (ENGLISH)

Study about Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 155: Diagnostic Assessment In Support of Student Learning

At the request of Ontario's Ministry of Education, a research team at OISE led by Professor Ruth Childs is studying the implementation and effects of Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 155: Diagnostic Assessment In Support of Student Learning (for a copy of the PPM, see http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm.html).

In the study's Terms of Reference, the Ministry of Education described its purpose as follows:

Questions and concerns have been raised by boards and Federations regarding the implementation of PPM 155. Developing a clearer understanding of the emerging impact of the memorandum, on the level of understanding and consistency in current implementation practices, on student achievement, and on classroom based assessment practices as stated in the Growing Success policy document, is in the best interests of the students and parents we serve.

The review will also explore any changes to boards’ and principals’ ability to collect data and methods of collecting data for board and school improvement plans. How teachers are using diagnostic assessment as a key tool to plan instruction and set appropriate learning goals as a result of the implementation of PPM 155 will also be explored.

Professor Childs has selected a sample of eight boards across the province as case studies and will be conducting telephone interviews with teachers, principals, supervisory officers, MISA leads, and trustees in each of these boards. The identity of the boards and of the individuals within the boards will be kept confidential.

The interview questions are provided here for participants who prefer to respond on-line.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Professor Childs at ruth childs@utoronto.ca.
There are two sets of questions on this page: (1) Questions for Teachers and (2) Questions for Other Educators.

**Diagnostic assessment** is defined in the *Growing Success* document as "Assessment that is used to identify a student’s needs and abilities and the student’s readiness to acquire the knowledge and skills outlined in the curriculum expectations."

(1) **Questions for Teachers** (If you are not a teacher, please scroll down to the second set of questions)

- How long have you been a teacher?
- How long have you been at your current school?
- What subject areas have you taught?

Please tell us a little about your students this year. For example, what grade(s) are you teaching and how many students are in your class(es)?

What diagnostic assessments have you used, this year and in past years?

How do you decide which diagnostic assessments to use?
When do you administer the diagnostic assessments?

Do you administer the same diagnostic assessments to all students? If not, why and what are the differences?

Are you asked to report diagnostic assessment results to your principal or board?

Does your board have a computer system into which teachers are asked to enter diagnostic assessment results?
How have you used diagnostic assessments, this year and in the past – for example, to support students’ learning, to plan instruction, to communicate with students and/or parents?

Thinking about this year, has your use of diagnostic assessments changed? If so, how?

Do you know if the Policy/Program Memorandum about diagnostic assessment has affected the use of diagnostic assessment in your school or board? If so, how?

Has your school or board had discussions or provided information about this Policy/Program Memorandum?
Do you know if your board has an assessment policy? If yes, what does it say about diagnostic assessment?

Does your board have a list of approved diagnostic assessments?

If you could change one or two things about how diagnostic assessment is used in your school or board, what would you change?

What role would you like to see diagnostic assessment play in your school?
Are there opportunities to discuss diagnostic assessment with other teachers, with your principal, or with others in your board? If yes, what kinds of discussions have you had?

Do you know if your school and/or board uses diagnostic assessment for improvement planning? If yes, how?

Do you know what other data your school and/or board uses for improvement planning? If yes, what?

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

**Important:** Please scroll to the bottom of the screen for additional information.
(2) Questions for Other Educators

What is your current position?

How long have you been in that position?

What other roles have you had in Ontario education?

Please tell us a little about your school or board. For example, in what ways is your school or board similar to or different from other schools or boards?

What diagnostic assessments have been used in your school or board, this year and in past years?

How do teachers in your school or board decide which diagnostic assessments to use?
When are diagnostic assessments administered?

Are the same diagnostic assessments administered to all students? If not, why and what are the differences?

Are teachers asked to report diagnostic assessment results to their principal or board?

Does your board have a computer system into which teachers are asked to enter diagnostic assessment results?
How have diagnostic assessments been used in your school or board, this year and in the past – for example, to support students’ learning, to plan instruction, to communicate with students and/or parents?

Thinking about this year, has the use of diagnostic assessments changed? If so, how?

Do you know if the Policy/Program Memorandum about diagnostic assessment has affected the use of diagnostic assessment in your school or board? If so, how?

Has your school or board had discussions or provided information about this Policy/Program Memorandum?
Do you know if your board has an assessment policy? If yes, what does it say about diagnostic assessment?

Does your board have a list of approved diagnostic assessments?

If you could change one or two things about how diagnostic assessment is used in your school or board, what would you change?

What role would you like to see diagnostic assessment play in your school?
Are there opportunities to discuss diagnostic assessment with others in your board? If yes, what kinds of discussions have you had?

Do you know if your school and/or board uses diagnostic assessment for improvement planning? If yes, how?

Do you know what other data your school and/or board uses for improvement planning? If yes, what?

Is there anything else you would like us to know?
IMPORTANT: For Teachers and Other Educators

To help us connect your response with the appropriate board case study, we need to know your board. We are committed to keeping the identity of the boards and of the individuals within the board confidential. We will not identify any individual, school, or board in our final report about the study.

Board: 

School (optional):

We may want to better understand your comments. If you are willing to also talk with us confidentially, please provide your name and email address.

Thank you for taking the time to help us better understand what is happening in diagnostic assessment in your board.

If you have any comments or questions about this study, please contact Professor Childs at ruth.childs@utoronto.ca.
Étude sur la Note Politique/Programmes (NPP) 155:
L’Évaluation diagnostique en appui à l’apprentissage des élèves


Le Cadre de référence fourni par le ministère de l’Éducation décrit ainsi le but de l’étude :

Des questions et des préoccupations ont été soulevées par les conseils et les fédérations relativement à la mise en œuvre de la Note 155. Il est dans l’intérêt des élèves et des parents que nous desservons de comprendre avec plus de précision l’impact émergent de la note, au niveau de la compréhension et de la cohérence des pratiques de mise en œuvre actuelles, sur le rendement des élèves et les pratiques d’évaluation en classe, tel que décrit dans le document d’orientation Faire croître le succès.

Dans le cadre de l’étude, on se penchera aussi sur tout changement apporté à la capacité des conseils et des directions d’école de recueillir des données et aux méthodes de collecte de données pour les plans d’amélioration du rendement des élèves des écoles et des conseils. On étudiera également la façon dont le personnel enseignant se sert de l’évaluation diagnostique comme outil clé pour planifier l’enseignement et fixer des objectifs d’apprentissage appropriés dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la Note no 155.

La professeure Childs a sélectionné un échantillon de huit conseils scolaires à travers la province qui serviront d’études de cas. Des chercheurs mèneront des entrevues téléphoniques avec les enseignantes et enseignants, les directrices et directeurs d’écoles, les agents et agents de supervision, la direction du GIARE et les membres de chaque conseil scolaire. L’identité des conseils scolaires et des individus participants à cette étude restera strictement confidentielle.

Les questions de l’entrevue sont disponibles sur la page suivante pour ceux et celles qui préfèrent répondre en ligne.

Nous vous prions de contacter la professeure Childs à ruth.childs@utoronto.ca si vous avez des questions au sujet de l’étude.

Veuillez continuer
Vous trouverez ci-dessous deux séries de questions :

1. Questions pour enseignantes et enseignants;
2. Questions pour les autres éducatrices et éducateurs.

Le document d’orientation intitulé Faire croître le succès définit l’évaluation diagnostique comme un « [T]ype d’évaluation qui sert à identifier les points forts, les besoins et le niveau de préparation d’un élève en fonction des attentes et des contenus d’apprentissage du curriculum. »

(1) Questions pour enseignantes et enseignants (Si vous n’êtes pas enseignante ou enseignant, veuillez svp faire défiler la page vers le bas jusqu’à la deuxième série de questions.)

Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous enseignant(e)?

Depuis combien de temps enseignez-vous dans votre école actuelle?

Quels sujets avez-vous enseignés?

Pourriez-vous nous en dire plus sur vos élèves actuels? Par exemple, quelles années enseignez-vous et combien d’élèves y a-t-il dans votre/vos classe(s)?

Quels outils diagnostiques avez-vous utilisés cette année scolaire et au cours des années précédentes?
Comment décidez-vous des outils diagnostiques que vous allez utiliser?

Quand administrez-vous les évaluations diagnostiques?

Administrez-vous les mêmes outils diagnostiques à tous les élèves? Si non, pourquoi et quelles sont les différences?

Vous a-t-on demandé de rendre compte des résultats des évaluations diagnostiques à votre directrice ou directeur d’école ou à votre conseil scolaire?
Votre conseil scolaire utilise-t-il un système électronique dans lequel on a demandé aux enseignantes et enseignants d'entrer les résultats des évaluations diagnostiques ?

Comment avez-vous utilisé les évaluations diagnostiques cette année scolaire et au cours des années précédentes ? Par exemple, à l’appui à l’apprentissage des élèves, dans la planification de l’enseignement, pour communiquer avec les élèves et/ou leurs parents ?

Est-ce qu’il y a eu des changements cette année scolaire par rapport à la manière dont vous utilisez les outils diagnostiques ? Si oui, quels sont ces changements ?

Savez-vous si la Note Politique/Programmes No 155 au sujet des évaluations diagnostiques a changé les pratiques d’évaluation diagnostique dans votre école ou conseil scolaire ? Si oui, comment ?
Votre école ou votre conseil scolaire vous a-t-il fourni des renseignements ou a-t-il mené des discussions sur cette Note Politique/Programmes?

Savez-vous s’il existe une politique d’évaluation dans votre conseil scolaire? Si oui, que dit-elle au sujet des évaluations diagnostiques?

Votre conseil scolaire a-t-il établi une liste approuvée d’outils diagnostiques?

Si vous pouviez changer la manière dont l’évaluation diagnostique est utilisée dans votre école ou conseil scolaire, que changeriez-vous?
Comment aimeriez-vous que l'évaluation diagnostique soit utilisée dans votre école?

Avez-vous eu l'occasion de discuter de l'évaluation diagnostique avec d'autres enseignantes et enseignants, avec le directeur ou la directrice de votre école, ou avec d'autre personnel de votre conseil scolaire? Si oui, quelles sortes de discussions avez-vous eu?

Savez-vous si votre école et/ou conseil scolaire se sert de l'évaluation diagnostique pour améliorer le rendement des élèves? Si oui, comment?

Savez-vous de quelles autres données votre école et/ou conseil scolaire se sert pour améliorer le rendement des élèves? Si oui, lesquelles?
Avez-vous d'autres points que vous aimeriez ajouter?

**Important :** Veuillez svp faire défiler la page vers le bas pour des renseignements supplémentaires.

(2) Questions pour les autres éducateurs et éducatrices

Quel est votre poste actuel?

Depuis combien de temps occupez-vous ce poste?

Quels autres postes avez-vous occupé en éducation en Ontario?

Pourriez-vous nous en dire plus sur votre école ou conseil scolaire actuel? Par exemple, quelles sont les différences entre votre école ou conseil scolaire actuel de ceux que vous avez connu précédemment?

Quels outils diagnostiques ont été utilisés dans votre école ou conseil scolaire cette année scolaire et les années précédentes?
Comment les enseignantes et enseignants de votre école ou conseil scolaire choisissent-ils des outils diagnostiques à utiliser?

Quand est-ce que les évaluations diagnostiques sont-elles administrées?

Les mêmes outils diagnostiques sont-ils administrés à tous les élèves? Si non, pourquoi et quelles sont les différences?

A-t-on demandé aux enseignantes et enseignants de rendre compte des résultats des évaluations diagnostiques au directeur ou directrice de l’école ou du conseil scolaire?
Votre conseil scolaire utilise-t-il un système électronique dans lequel on a demandé aux enseignantes et enseignants d'entrer les résultats des évaluations diagnostiques?

Est-ce qu’il y a eu des changements cette année scolaire par rapport à la manière dont vous utilisez les outils diagnostiques? Si oui, quels sont ces changements?

Comment les évaluations diagnostiques sont-elles utilisées dans votre école ou conseil cette année scolaire et au cours des années précédentes? Par exemple, à l’appui à l’apprentissage des élèves, dans la planification de l’enseignement, pour communiquer avec les élèves et/ou leurs parents?

Savez-vous si la Note Politique/Programmes N° 155 au sujet des évaluations diagnostiques a changé les pratiques d’évaluation diagnostique dans votre école ou conseil scolaire? Si oui, comment?
Votre école ou conseil scolaire a-t-elle ou a-t-il mené des discussions ou fourni des renseignements sur cette note Politique/Programmes?

Savez-vous s’il existe une politique d’évaluation dans votre conseil scolaire? Si oui, que dit-elle au sujet des évaluations diagnostiques?

Votre conseil scolaire a-t-il établi une liste approuvée d’outils diagnostiques?

Si vous pouviez changer la manière dont l’évaluation diagnostique est utilisée dans votre école ou conseil scolaire, que changeriez-vous?
Comment aimeriez-vous que l'évaluation diagnostique soit utilisée dans votre école?

Y a-t-il des occasions de discuter de l'évaluation diagnostique avec d'autres membres du personnel du conseil scolaire? Si oui, quelles sortes de discussions avez-vous eu?

Savez-vous si votre école et/ou conseil scolaire se sert de l'évaluation diagnostique pour améliorer le rendement des élèves? Si oui, comment?

Savez-vous de quelles autres données votre école et/ou conseil scolaire utilisent pour améliorer le rendement des élèves? Si oui, lesquelles?
Avez-vous d'autres points que vous aimeriez ajouter?

**IMPORTANT: Pour enseignantes, enseignants, et autres éducatrices et éducateurs**

Pour nous permettre de lier vos réponses avec l'étude de cas qui correspond, il nous faut le nom de votre conseil scolaire. **Nous nous engageons à garder confidentiel l'identité des conseils scolaires et des individus qui en font partie. Aucun individu ni école ni conseil scolaire ne seront identifiés lors de notre compte-rendu de l'étude.**

Conseil scolaire:

École:

Pour mieux comprendre vos réponses, et si besoin est, seriez-vous d'accord pour nous parler de manière confidentielle et de nous fournir votre nom et adresse courriel:

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de nous aider à mieux comprendre l'état de l'évaluation diagnostique dans votre conseil scolaire.

Nous vous prions de contacter la professeure Childs **ruth.childs@utoronto.ca** si vous avez des questions au sujet de l'étude.