Assessment Rubrics

HOW DIGNITAS MEASURES ITS IMPACT ON TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS IN KENYA
How Dignitas Measures Its Impact on Teachers and Schools in Kenya

Context
Dignitas works to improve the educational quality of schools in Nairobi, Kenya. We focus on schools in informal settlements (commonly referred to as urban slums) as these communities are significantly under-served by the public education system.

We engage schools for a three-to-five year partnership. There are four key elements to our program model:

- The Leadership Training Institute: A three-week, classroom-based training for school leaders and teachers
- Instructional Coaching: Personalized in-school mentoring
- Professional Development Workshops: Targeted group learning opportunities
- Infrastructure Support: Small grants and training on resource acquisition and maintenance

Measuring Our Impact: Developing the Assessment Rubrics

Like most organizations, we measure our impact to stay accountable to supporters and ensure the appropriate use of resources. But even more importantly, we are accountable to our partner schools, teachers, and students. We measure impact to identify successes and challenges, minimize unintended consequences, improve our model, and ensure our partnership with schools is effective and transformative.

To that end, Dignitas has developed two assessment rubrics to measure our impact on individual educators and on school communities as a whole. We developed the rubrics to reflect our unique context and the common issues our partner schools and teachers experience. The original School Assessment Rubric was adapted from external resources and learning. However in 2014, we heavily revised the outcome statements, recalibrated the levels, and further contextualized the rubric based on our growing understanding of how our schools grow and progress. The Teacher Assessment Rubric was developed to complement the school rubric and to allow us to identify, measure and track teacher progress.
Measuring Our Impact on Schools: The School Assessment Rubric

Our key tool to measure school-level impact is the School Assessment Rubric. Schools are assessed against the rubric at the beginning of their relationship with Dignitas, and then annually throughout the partnership. It assesses five domains of school quality:

**Systems and Operations**

The focus of this section is how the school develops and implements operational policies and systems that promote accountability and good governance, including information and financial management systems.

**Culture and Climate**

The second section examines leaders’ ability to set high expectations for every member of the school community and to create an enabling environment for reaching aspirational goals.

**Pedagogy and Instruction**

This area investigates the methods of teaching, quality of instruction, and teachers’ ability to promote growth and a love of learning in all students (or something like that).

**Student Support**

In this section, the school is assessed on holistic support for students’ healthy emotional, social, and intellectual development. These systems of support include counseling services, extracurricular activities, health resources, infrastructure, and security.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The final section of the rubric considers how schools work with families and the community to support student outcomes and advocate for quality education.
1. Outcome statements concisely define what achievement of this indicator looks like.

2. Each column then thoroughly defines what each level of achievement entails. This offers schools a clear pathway to progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre Novice</th>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3 Teachers use developmentally appropriate methodologies.</strong></td>
<td>Teachers do not integrate instructional methodologies that promote development of character, self-control and emotional expression, speech, language, imagination and creativity. Teachers have a minimal understanding of child/youth developmental stages and do not often differentiate methodologies according to the age of their pupils. Teachers understand students’ developmental stages and use different methodologies (e.g., story-telling for the young ones, discussions for the older ones, etc.). Teachers have a basic understanding for how to work with pupils at different developmental stages. Teachers fully understand and internalize students’ developmental stages. They effectively use different methodologies for different levels of students. Teachers succeed in engaging all students to be interested, motivated and aroused with curiosity to learn.</td>
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**Examples of Evidence**

- Basic teaching aids
- Numerous developmentally appropriate teaching aids placed at appropriate heights
- Appropriate use of instructional materials
- Teachers adapt their lesson delivery according to the age of the pupils.
- Teaching aids include a variety of materials including molding materials, charts, etc.
- Demonstration corners in classrooms
- Students’ motivation levels
- Ability/mixed ability grouping of learners

3. Specific, tangible examples of evidence are provided to assessors to assist and standardize the grading process.

**3.4 Teachers use inclusive education methodologies and implement IEPs to support learning for students with special education needs in the classroom.**

- Teachers are unaware of special learning needs and do not differentiate pedagogy to accommodate children who are struggling.
- Teachers are aware of special learning needs but do not know how to differentiate support to students with learning disabilities. There is a basic understanding of how to adapt the classroom to support children with special needs (e.g., placing child who is sight impaired at the front of the class).
- Teachers can identify different categories of special needs and learning disabilities, and use differentiated methodologies and IEPs to support students with special needs.
- Teachers create and implement IEPs effectively, working closely in partnership with the student’s parent or guardian to create a supportive learning environment at school and at home. Effective methodologies are shared among teachers as students progress through grade levels.
Measuring Our Impact on Educators: The Teacher Assessment Rubric

The Teacher Assessment Rubric is our key tool to measure our impact on individual educators. Teachers are assessed against the Rubric as coaching commences, and again after one full year of working with a Dignitas coach. The coach also uses the Rubric throughout the coaching relationship to continuously track the teacher’s progress.

The coaching relationship lasts a minimum of three school terms. If a teacher is assessed as proficient or advanced at the end of the year, they graduate as a Dignitas Fellow. Recognizing the myriad of factors that may impact an educator’s progress, Dignitas commits to continue coaching non-graduating teachers until they are proficient across all four domains.

The Teacher Assessment Rubric assesses teachers against four key domains:

**Classroom Management**
Teacher creates an environment of respect and discipline among students, establishes a culture for learning by creating classroom routines, managing student behavior and creating an inviting classroom atmosphere.

**Instruction**
Teacher demonstrates good knowledge of content of the curriculum, knowledge of students’ progress, is able to select achievable learning goals for the students, and is able to assess student learning effectively.

**Planning & Preparation for Learning**
Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to the students and uses techniques that are engaging to students in learning. Also provides feedback to students and is responsive to student needs.

**Teacher Leadership**
Teacher often reflects on their teaching and seeks feedback, maintains accurate records, communicates effectively with families, and contributes to the overall school goals by sharing ideas and participating in extra – curricular activities.

**School Leader Assessments**
We also work with School Leaders to empower them with the skills they need to successfully lead and manage their schools. We are currently reviewing our pilot of a similar School Leader Assessment Rubric to measure our impact on school leaders.
# 1. Classroom Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-novice</th>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1. Teacher sets and communicates high behavioral expectations for students and keeps them accountable.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rules exist and are written</strong>&lt;br&gt;- List of rules are EITHER very long or written in form of “do not ____”&lt;br&gt;- Poor behavior is managed appropriately rarely using humiliation or corporal punishment.&lt;br&gt;- Teacher may use alternative ways of discipline.&lt;br&gt;- Teacher is inconsistent with the punishment; i.e. same mistakes do not get same punishment&lt;br&gt;- Students are sometimes off task but teacher is able to refocus attention usually.&lt;br&gt;- Students are not always clear about the expectations of classroom discipline and require reminders.</td>
<td><strong>Developed a written discipline plan that is known and adopted by all students.</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Sets clear expectations (3-5 positive rule statements)&lt;br&gt;- Sets clear consequences if expectations not met&lt;br&gt;- Discipline plan should be accessible to the students&lt;br&gt;- Rules are developed together with students&lt;br&gt;- Uses multiple behavior modification methodologies&lt;br&gt;- Never uses humiliation or corporal punishment&lt;br&gt;- Students are focused&lt;br&gt;- Students are clear about the expectations of the classroom discipline and rarely need reminders.</td>
<td><strong>Very direct and deliberate in enforcing very high expectations and accountability in students’ behavior.</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Develops self-discipline in students and trains them to take responsibility of their actions.&lt;br&gt;- Expects the students to uphold high discipline standards even outside the classroom.&lt;br&gt;- Students are well-versed in the discipline plan and hold themselves and each other accountable to it.</td>
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| **1.2. Teacher maintains effective and positive relationships with students.** | **Communication with students is usually considerate and respectful.**<br>- Sometimes shouts at the students when they do not seem cooperative.<br>- Usually addresses students’ comments. | **Demonstrates genuine respect for individual students and the class as a whole.**<br>- Speaks gently but with a strong voice instead of shouting at the students. | **Concerned with the intellectual, physical and emotional wellbeing of each of the students.**<br>- Strongly encourages and develops an accessible process for students to share |
The Assessment Rubric Grading Levels

We have defined four levels of achievement – pre novice, novice, proficient, and advanced – for both the School Assessment Rubric and the Teacher Assessment Rubric. The table below outlines how we define achievement at each level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Assessment Rubric</th>
<th>Teacher Assessment Rubric</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre Novice</strong></td>
<td>Teachers at this level may not demonstrate even the minimum skills we deem necessary to their role. A number of our partner teachers begin at this level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school does not meet the basic minimum standard for the given outcome.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Novice</strong></td>
<td>Teachers at this level demonstrate the foundational skills and standards needed to continue on their journey to proficiency. The indicators at this level serve as interim milestones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is some evidence of outcome achievement, but there are no guiding school policies, monitoring or consistent achievement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proficient</strong></td>
<td>Teachers at this level are self-sufficient and demonstrate the capacity to progress and develop on their own. We are committed to ensuring all Dignitas Fellows reach this level and continue working with teachers until they reach this level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school can demonstrate a consistent approach to the attainment of the given outcome. There must be evidence of school wide values or policies to support the achievement of the outcome.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td>Teachers at this level demonstrate extensive (or something less permanent since we’re not saying teachers can reach “perfection” or stop improving at a certain point) mastery. The indicators at this level serve to inspire teachers to continue to improve and refine their teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has internalized attainment of an outcome as a key measure of its success. The school has a policy or structure in place to support its achievement and monitors it.</td>
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“It feels very good when we collect and analyze data from our schools and see the improvement of our teachers and schools over time.”

– Maurine Makena, Learning and Evaluation Officer
Collecting the Rubric Data

Dignitas staff members rank schools according to information provided through semi-structured interviews with school directors, head teachers, and classroom teachers. Additionally, student records, financial reports, teacher lesson plans and schemes of work are reviewed to validate and support interview findings. Dignitas coaches also undertake classroom observations that further inform the Pedagogy and Instruction section. The assessment ranks each rubric area according to how well the school can demonstrate its achievement of a given outcome.

Verification Tools

We have developed a set of verification tools to collect the data we need for the rubric assessments. These tools include:

- School Data Collection System and Handbook
- Classroom Observation Tool
- Head Teacher Questionnaire
- Teacher Questionnaire
- Records and Systems Score Card
- School Infrastructure Survey
- Teacher Assessment Data Collection Guide
- School Leader Assessment Data Collection Guide

Data Management

Dignitas uses Salesforce to manage data, track progress and report on impact. Salesforce allows us to stream multiple databases into one, better understand the relationship between inputs and outcomes, and provides multiple tools to combine and report on multiple variables.
Our Achievements

We have seen noteworthy improvements in both our partner schools and teachers, as measured by the Assessment Rubrics. The charts below highlight results from schools and teachers commencing in 2014.

**Improvement in Average Rubric Score for Schools Commencing in 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mar-14</th>
<th>Mar-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systems &amp; Operations</td>
<td>30.72</td>
<td>47.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Climate</td>
<td>28.22</td>
<td>44.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy &amp; Instruction</td>
<td>31.67</td>
<td>51.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td>30.44</td>
<td>42.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Engagement</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Improvement in Average Rubric Score for Teachers in November 2014 Cohort**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>48.49</td>
<td>59.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>49.10</td>
<td>57.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation &amp; Planning</td>
<td>42.10</td>
<td>52.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Leadership</td>
<td>56.67</td>
<td>59.49</td>
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About Dignitas

*Dignitas is a leading education development organization. We use an innovative training and coaching approach to empower schools and educators in marginalized communities to transform students’ opportunities. Based in Nairobi, Kenya, we partner with low-cost, private primary schools in informal settlements to improve education quality.*

*The DIGNITAS IN ACTION SERIES documents how we apply education innovations and best practices in Kenyan primary schools. We are dedicated to capturing lessons learnt and sharing them with like-minded organizations, educators and communities of practice. For more information, please contact info@dignitasproject.org.*