

Angie's ANAs lack valid value proposition

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Using ANA information available via mainstream media, I employed several models to test the validity of the programme's value proposition and came to the conclusion that: ANAs have no valid value proposition.

"ANAs (Annual National Assessments) are not serving their intended purpose of measuring and tracking the literacy and numeracy skills of learners in Grade 1 to 9 - with the aim of diagnosing areas of weakness and providing the Department of Basic Education and teachers with insights that could be used to craft remedial interventions", declared SADTU General Secretary Mugwena Maluleke who also says that unions will resist the government's intentions to go ahead with Annual National Assessments, the same way they fought against apartheid.

Does the DBE have a valid ANA value proposition? Did they engage all the relevant stakeholders (parents, teacher and learners) to get buy-in? Is the programme logic model accessible to the general public for scrutiny?

This article focuses solely on the formulation of the ANA's value proposition.

For any programme to be successful it is paramount that a substantive value proposition be crafted and effectively communicated to all stakeholders for optimal adoption. Education is an industry that has many players and this contributes to the complexity of problem solution especially when it comes to intervention programmes thus agreement on modus operandi is not expected. This should not stop policy makers from effectively selling programmes to important players in the education ecosystem.

The ANAs might be what the country needs but without a compelling value proposition it is difficult to understand the reasoning behind the assessments. With all due respect to the hard working individuals in the DBE, it is sad that all the background work and research done in coming up with this programme is being trivialised in the media and other platforms because of the fact that the idea was not well articulated to parents, teachers and learners. Reading most of the articles on ANAs, one is prone to relegating the programme as a waste of time and taxpayers' money.

A value proposition is a promise of value to be delivered. It's the primary reason a stakeholder should adopt your programme. The value proposition is a clear statement that:

- Explains how your programme solves stakeholders' problems or improves their situation - Relevancy.
- Delivers specific benefits - Quantified value.
- Tells the stakeholders why this programme is the best of all available - Unique Differentiation.

I believe in the competence of the team that crafted this programme and am convinced that they followed a structured method in coming to the conclusion that the country's education system could benefit the most from ANAs than any other intervention. However it would be naïve of me to simply accept their conclusion as a result of my belief in them thus I have questions for them that arose whilst using Michael Skok's value proposition model as contributed on forbes.com

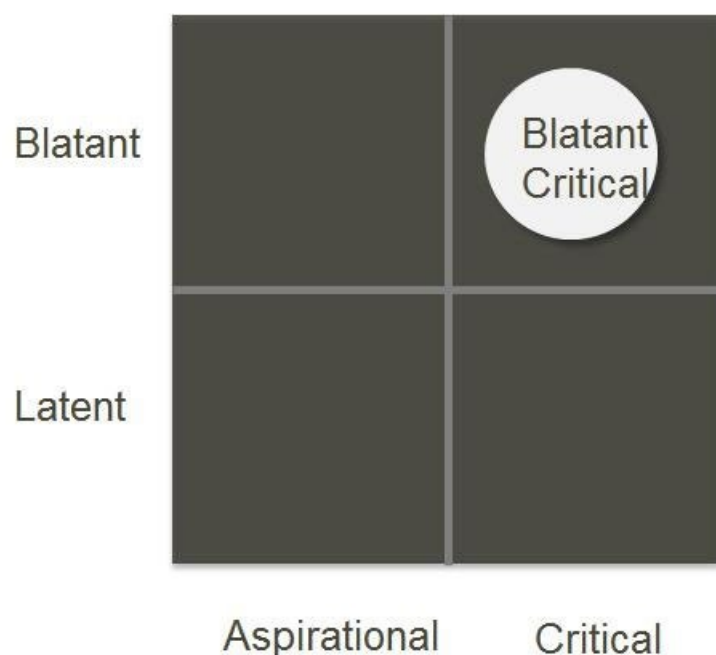
In coming up with ANA value proposition, did the team follow these four steps?

1. Define the problem set and ascertain whether the chosen problem is worth solving.
2. Evaluate whether the solution is unique and compelling.
3. Measure potential stakeholder adoption using the Gain/Pain ratio.
4. Build the Value Proposition.

Solving the correct problem is one of the most difficult tasks that organisations face that is why McKinsey & Co. and other management consultancy companies have made billions helping organisations identify the correct problems to solve. If mathematical thinking was taught in schools then maybe this problem might be drastically reduced. I used Michael Skok's 4Us model to test how compelling the ANA value proposition is and the results are as below: (If the DBE team can prove that my 'NO' answers are actually 'YES' then I am willing to change my stance.)

Question	Explanation	My Test Result
Is the problem Unworkable?	Do ANAs fix an existing diagnostic process where there are real, measurable consequences to inaction?	NO - ANAs are not fixing an existing education diagnostic process but adding more complexity.
Is fixing the problem Unavoidable?	Are ANAs driven by the DBE mandate to provide quality education in South Africa?	YES - ANAs were intended to be a diagnostic tool so that the DBE may have standardised data for gap analysis.
Is the problem Urgent?	Are ANAs at the top of the list for fixing the education system?	No - Many countries have worse off reporting and diagnostic systems but teaching and learning is of high quality.
Is the problem Undeserved?	Is there a conspicuous absence of diagnostic solutions to the problem ANAs are trying to solve?	No - there is plethora of solutions that are being used or can be used with existing processes at a fraction of the cost.

In defining the problem did the team take time and properly qualify it? Is it "Blac and White"?
Is it BLAC (Blatant, Latent, Aspirational, and Critical) and does it address a WHITE space in the education ecosystem, allowing the department to capitalize on an open area of opportunity to improve learner performance?



It is important that the DBE addresses problems that are blatant and critical. Blatant and critical problems stand in the way

of quality education delivery. Latent problems are unacknowledged and Aspirational problems are optional. My tests reveal that the ANAs are not solving any Blatant and Critical problems. The ANAs mechanism for delivering value is not well-suited for the target stakeholders to capture the value.

Did the team evaluate their choice of problem to solve and were the ANAs a unique and compelling method to deliver this novel solution? Are ANAs simplifying the education delivery process or adding more complexity? Are the questions in the ANAs any different from the ones in the day to day syllabus? How different are ANA assessments to normal day to day assessments? Can't the department get more insight from the portfolio activities rather than an annual examination? Do ANAs offer transformative benefits over the status quo by offering a solution not currently being implemented? Is there evidence that more testing will eventually lead to better performance for learners? What is the value proposition to teachers and learners to fully adopt this extra burden?

I am of the strong belief that the introduction of the ANAs was with good intentions but the communication was not great in selling the idea, it is crucial that Minister Angie and her team sit down and see how best to solve the problems with the biggest wins and before implementing make sure that all stakeholders understand the motives behind an intervention and what is in it for the them.

These are my opinions and anyone is free to give feedback whether in agreement or otherwise

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