

Section 6: Assessment Mechanism

(1) Basic Competency Assessments

Target

Basic Competency Assessments (BCA) are comprised of the Student Assessment and the System Assessment. In line with the curriculum reform, the Student Assessment provides an effective tool for use at the discretion of schools in combination with other internal assessment methods. It will help teachers understand the learning needs and problems of students, so that timely assistance can be provided to enhance their learning effectiveness. The System Assessment will provide the Government and school management with useful information on students' standards in Chinese, English and Mathematics at the levels of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 on a territory-wide basis.

Last Year's Progress

- (i) Based on the curriculum, the relevant committees under the Curriculum Development Council initially mapped out a set of proposed 'Basic Competencies' which Primary 3 students should attain in Chinese, English and Mathematics. In parallel, the Curriculum Development Institute is developing the remedial packages.
- (ii) The Hong Kong Examinations Authority is developing a computer system as well as the assessment items in the learning areas of Chinese, English and Mathematics at the Primary 3 level.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- (i) The Curriculum Development Council will consult the education sector on the tryout version of the proposed "Basic Competencies" for Primary 3 students in the areas of Chinese, English and Mathematics.
- (ii) The pilot run of the Prototype of the Student Assessment at the Primary 3 level will be conducted in a number of schools in mid-2002. It will be extended gradually to more schools and the scope of the Prototype will be expanded to pave the way for the full launch of the Student Assessment at Primary 3 to 6 levels in June 2003.

(2) Public Examination Reforms

Public examinations provide a fair and objective assessment mechanism for certification and selection purposes. However, they do have limitations as they do not assess the abilities and performance of students in a comprehensive and continuous manner. Therefore, the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (HKEA) strives to improve the public examination system with a view to making it more flexible and more comprehensive so as to tie in with the curriculum reform.

Last Year's Progress

(i) Extension of the Teacher Assessment Scheme (TAS)

Preparatory work for extending the Teacher Assessment Scheme to more HKALE subjects (including Physics, Engineering Science & Art) in 2004 is now underway.

(ii) HKCEE Core-competence Initiative

The HKEA and the CDI are currently preparing for the implementation of the core-competence approach in the HKCEE English Language examination. The implementation of this approach for other subjects, including Chinese Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, is still being considered.

(iii) Allowing S6 Students to Sit the HKALE

The HKEA has decided to allow S5 students who perform well to take the HKALE in S6 as private candidates. It is now considering how to apply this scheme to those subjects having a TAS component (such as the Chinese Language and Culture subject) in order to enhance its effectiveness. The implementation details are being worked out. It is estimated that the proposal will be implemented in the 2003 HKALE at the earliest.

(iv) Abolition of Fine Grades in HKCEE and HKALE

The HKEA has announced that fine grades [i.e. the approach of sub-dividing students' Grade A to F results into 12 fine grades from A(01) to F(12)] would be abolished with effect from the 2002 HKCEE and HKALE.

(v) Mounting an Independent English Language Proficiency Test

The HKEA will work out the implementation details for mounting an English language proficiency test which is independent of the HKCEE and HKALE English language examinations and can meet the needs of society. This test will specify different levels of grading according to clear criteria for assessing candidates' English language proficiency. The test will be open to all members of the public, including students, who wish to obtain certification for their English language proficiency for employment or study purposes.

(vi) Conducting the HKCE CEM Examinations Twice a Year

After careful consideration, the HKEA has decided not to implement this proposal at the present stage as the benefits it could bring to students are limited. The HKEA will focus its resources on other projects which are expected to exert a more significant and positive impact on teaching and learning.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- (i) To implement good practices for setting questions in order to support the curriculum reform:

The HKEA will enhance the relevance of the examination questions to the daily life experiences of students. The format of the questions will also be improved to provide more room for students to demonstrate their creativity and critical thinking, rather than encouraging them to learn by rote. Markers will be encouraged to exercise their professional judgement to accept logical and relevant answers, instead of taking marking schemes as absolute.

- (ii) To work closely with the CDI in developing combined curriculum and assessment guides.
- (iii) To continue implementing the various reforms of public examinations.