The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency

Assessment and Assessment Literacy

Report on

2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

Student-oriented, Start Afresh

Concerted Efforts, Gather Strength

Education Bureau
December 2016

Contents

Summary			**2**
Chapter 1.	**Background and Objectives**		**25**
Chapter 2.	**Specific Arrangements for the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)**		**32**
	(I)	Improving Assessment Papers and Question Design	**32**
	(II)	Enhancing School Reports	**34**
	(III)	Strengthening Diversified Professional Support Measures	**36**
	(IV)	Including a Questionnaire Survey on Students' Learning Attitude and Motivation	**40**
Chapter 3.	**Progress and Preliminary Evaluation of the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)**		**42**
	(I)	Improving Assessment Papers and Question Design	**42**
	(II)	Enhancing School Reports	**45**
	(III)	Strengthening Diversified Professional Support Measures	**47**
	(IV)	Including a Questionnaire Survey on Students' Learning Attitude and Motivation	**49**
Chapter 4.	**Vision and Recommendations on the Development of Basic Competency Assessments**		**51**
	(I)	Serving the function of "assessment for learning" to promote quality education	**51**
	(II)	Recommendations	**53**
Annex			**63**

Summary

Background and Objectives

1. In February 2016, the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (Committee) submitted the report[1] on the overall review of the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA). The Committee considers that the review of TSA should be premised on the promotion of quality education and the following core values:

- learning needs of students;
- professionalism; and
- mutual trust among stakeholders.

2. The report reaffirmed the intent and value of the establishment of TSA and recognised the functional use of TSA data to provide feedback to learning and teaching. In response to public concerns about drilling, various stakeholders' perception of the stakes involved as well as the provision of support for students and schools, a series of short, medium and long-term recommendations has been made (see Chapter 6 of the review report for details).

3. Among them, regarding short-term recommendations, to reflect more clearly the intent of Basic Competency Assessments, the Committee considers that the assessment papers and questions should be adjusted, and that the reports distributed to schools could adopt different formats. Such initiatives should be implemented as a tryout arrangement in 2016, of which the outcomes would inform the 2017 territory-wide implementation.

4. The Committee recommends that the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) (Tryout Study) should have the following objectives:

(i) to validate whether the revamped papers and item design proposed by the relevant working group would uphold the reliability and validity of assessment while aligning with the requirements of basic competencies of Primary 3 students to tie in with the curriculum and student learning;

(ii) to try out different reporting formats to meet the needs of individual schools;

(iii) to strengthen the provision of professional support measures for schools on homework policy, assessment literacy, enhancement of

[1] Report on Review of the Territory-wide System Assessment by the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (February 2016) (www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/tsa/fullreport.pdf)

learning and teaching (e.g. via the promotion of reading) as well as TSA in the course of the tryout. Public education would also need to be strengthened so as to enhance stakeholders' awareness of the TSA as part of the concept of "assessment for learning" with a view to enhancing quality education;

(iv) at the territory-wide level, to keep track on the attainment of basic competencies of all students and to provide continuous data for other related studies; and to demonstrate in good faith the low-stakes nature of TSA that it would not exert pressure on school sponsoring bodies, schools and parents; and

(v) to foster mutual trust through participation, sharing and collaboration in promoting quality education with a view to facilitating effective and pleasurable student learning.

5. More than 50 primary schools of different types participated in the Tryout Study (about 10% of the total number of primary schools in the territory). Participating schools are from different regions (Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories East and New Territories West), of various types (government, subsidised, Direct Subsidy Scheme and private schools), and school sizes. The number, distribution and proportion of participating schools closely align with the design. For the handling of data, the distribution and proportion of participating schools are taken into account, and statistical methodologies are adopted to process and analyse the related data.

Specific Arrangements for the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

6. In line with the Committee's recommendations, the Tryout Study covers four major initiatives as below:

(i) Improving assessment papers and question design;
(ii) Enhancing school reports;
(iii) Strengthening professional support measures; and
(iv) Including a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation.

7. The above basket of initiatives is intended to eliminate the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA; provide targeted service to enhance the overall effectiveness of the cycle of Learning-Teaching-Assessment as an integral part to benefit students; and improve communication and deepen mutual trust between schools and parents.

(I) Improving Assessment Papers and Question Design

8. In improving assessment papers and question design, the main directions are to uphold the reliability and validity of TSA, align with the requirements of Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students, tie in with the spirit of the curriculum, and address students' learning needs.

9. The Working Group on Papers and Question Design under the Committee has, from a professional perspective, reviewed the assessment papers and question design and put forward views and recommendations. In the light of the proposed review directions and principles and the specific suggestions, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has modified the assessment papers and question design for Primary 3 TSA, and strengthened the item setting and moderation work through different working groups (e.g. item development and moderation working groups and paper review focus groups) and rigorous mechanisms.

10. The major modifications for the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics at Primary 3 level are as follows:

(i) Primary 3 Chinese Language

- The number of texts in the reading assessment is adjusted from three to two; the total number of words per sub-paper is limited to not more than 1 200 and the number of items does not exceed 20; and practical writing is only included in one of the sub-papers to avoid giving undue weight to practical writing;
- In the writing assessment, certain information required for practical writing is provided, such as salutation, complimentary close, greetings and date of a letter; the marking criteria on the format of practical writing are adjusted; and student exemplars demonstrating the attainment of Basic Competency are provided; and
- "Five-options-choose-two" items, items requiring "reverse thinking" and so forth in each paper are reviewed and adjusted.

(ii) Primary 3 English Language

- The number of parts in the reading assessment is reduced from four to three. The number of words per reading task is limited to not more than 150 and the number of words of the whole paper is capped at 400;
- To help students manage the assessment time for the reading and writing papers, invigilators announce the time twice during the examination, i.e. 15 minutes and 5 minutes before the end of the examination;
- Items expecting answers in the past tense in the writing

assessment are scrapped, such as writing a recount; and
- Assessment items on basic book concepts are avoided.

(iii) Primary 3 Mathematics
- The number of items is reduced, with an immediate cut of around 20%;
- Only one Basic Competency is assessed in each item; and
- Items requiring solving linking problems are minimised.

11. The oral assessments and written assessments under the Tryout Study were completed in May and June 2016 respectively. In order for the public and schools to timely grasp and understand the rationale of question design for Primary 3 TSA under the Tryout Study, instead of following the usual practice of uploading relevant question papers upon the release of TSA results, HKEAA has, right after the completion of Primary 3 assessment, uploaded to the website on Basic Competency Assessments (www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk) the question papers of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics, suggested answers together with the information on item design (e.g. the corresponding key learning objective, Basic Competency and question intent), as well as the marking schemes.

(II) Enhancing School Reports

12. On enhancing the format of school reports, in order to enable schools to make better use of TSA data to benefit learning and teaching, the Working Group on Administration and Reporting under the Committee recommends that four types of reports with different coverage should be made available for schools' selection to meet the needs of individual schools.

13. The four types of assessment reports are as follows:
(i) Existing version;
(ii) Simplified version, which only provides data of an individual school without the overall data for reference purposes;
(iii) Integrated version, which is a consolidated report on Basic Competencies by item groups and provides exemplars on students' overall performance; and
(iv) Information analysis report, which provides the corresponding key learning objective, Basic Competency and question intent of each item, as well as an analysis of options of multiple-choice items.

14. Schools participating in the Tryout Study may, in the light of school-based needs and on a subject basis (Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics), choose the reports that they consider appropriate in helping them analyse the performance of students. They are able to grasp the learning progress of students by

referring to the data provided in the report and the descriptions and exemplars of students' performance in the 2016 Territory-wide System Assessment Report (Chapters 6 to 8) on the HKEAA website.

(III) Strengthening Diversified Professional Support Measures

15. Regarding professional support measures, schools participating in the Tryout Study may, in the light of school-based needs, opt for one or more of the following professional support measures:

(i) Workshops on better use of assessment strategies and enhancement of learning and teaching

Part 1:

- Understanding what Basic Competencies are and the importance of progressive learning
- Designing quality assessment tasks/items
- Adopting diversified assessment strategies/approaches to help students achieve different learning outcomes
- Formulating school-based assessment/homework policies and measures

Part 2:

- Making optimal use of assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching

(ii) School-based support services

- Application by schools on a need basis
- Analysing TSA school reports provided under the Tryout Study (on-site services)

(iii) Developing teaching and assessment materials in collaboration with tertiary institutions

- Developing teaching and assessment materials and designing learning activities in collaboration with tertiary institutions and schools participating in the Tryout Study
- Trying out Web-based Learning and Teaching Support (WLTS) materials and Student Assessment Repository (STAR)

(iv) Parent education

- parent education activities are co-organised by the Education Bureau (EDB) and schools participating in the Tryout Study. The forms of activities are determined in the light of the needs of individual schools.

(IV) Including a Questionnaire Survey on Students' Learning Attitude and Motivation

16. In line with the Committee's recommendations, a questionnaire survey is

included in the Tryout Study to collect students' non-academic data (e.g. time spent on extra-curricular activities, learning interests, learning habits and other relevant data) so as to gain a better understanding of the factors affecting learning performance and to provide further assistance for student learning. The questionnaire survey also collects the views of schools and parents on homework load. Following the Government's established procurement procedures, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) was commissioned through an invitation of quotation by EDB to design and conduct the questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation.

17. Under the Tryout Study, CUHK invited schools participating in the Tryout Study to take part in the questionnaire survey and prior consent was obtained from related parties. The survey respondents were schools, parents and students (including Chinese speaking and non-Chinese speaking students). Eventually, more than 50 primary schools participated in the survey and more than 4 000 questionnaires were received from Primary 3 students and their parents. The questionnaire was designed with reference to international studies on the same nature, and the questions were meant to get a picture of the learning situation in Hong Kong.

Progress and Preliminary Evaluation of the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

18. To review the four major initiatives (namely improving assessment papers and question design; enhancing school reports; strengthening professional support measures; and including a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation) of the Tryout Study, the Committee collected views and suggestions in the following ways with regard to implementation of the four major initiatives of the Tryout Study, with a view to providing feedback and facilitating the review of related measures:

(i) Quantitative approach
- Questionnaire surveys/opinion surveys: The targets are principals, curriculum leaders, teachers (including invigilators who are teachers from participating schools and markers), students and parents. The main purpose is to collect stakeholders' views and suggestions on assessment items, reports, various support measures and stakes involved.

(ii) Qualitative approach
- Focus groups/interviews: The targets are principals, curriculum leaders, teachers (including invigilators who are teachers from participating schools and markers), students, parents, councils and other relevant groups. The main purpose is to collect stakeholders' views and suggestions on assessment items, reports, various support measures and stakes involved.
- Case studies: Four schools are invited to participate in the case

studies, which aim to take a more in-depth look at the support measures and stakes involved, in a bid to grasp how schools effectively use the various support measures to enhance the assessment literacy and examine the effectiveness and limitations of the implementation of the Tryout Study at schools, and look into the solutions or views and suggestions.

(I) Improving Assessment Papers and Question Design

19. TSA is an objective assessment tool with reliability and validity in assessing students' overall Basic Competencies in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics upon completing the stages of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 education. To maintain the standards set, HKEAA conducts a research test to maintain the stability and consistency of the standards. Meanwhile, the improved assessment papers and items are implemented in accordance with the Basic Competency standards set in 2004, including standard setting, standard maintenance and estimation of students' ability indices.

20. On 9 November 2016, HKEAA submitted the 2016 Territory-wide System Assessment Report, which indicated that the territory-wide attainment rates of Primary 3 students in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics remained steady. The overall performance and territory-wide attainment rates of Primary 3 students are indicative of the reliability and validity of the improved assessment papers and question design which are applicable to assess if students have attained Basic Competency.

21. For the purpose of reviewing the improved assessment papers and question design, EDB and HKEAA organised 15 focus group meetings for teachers, three sharing sessions for principals of schools participating in the Tryout Study, three seminars, 18 focus groups for parents and a focus group for principals of all primary schools respectively to collect views of different stakeholders. Some parents from the participating schools whose elder children had participated in previous Primary 3 and Primary 6 TSA indicated that they did not feel the papers difficult. Meanwhile, parents generally agreed the questions of this year's TSA were easier than before, which helped boost students' confidence.

22. According to the feedback collected from the aforementioned channels, the improved assessment papers and question design could align with the requirements of Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students, tie in with the spirit of the curriculum and address students' learning needs. As such, students are able to acquire Basic Competencies in their daily learning without the need of extra preparation or over-drilling specifically for TSA. In this connection, the improved assessment papers and question design has effectively eliminated the incentives for over-drilling

induced by TSA.

(II) Enhancing School Reports

23. Over 96% of schools participating in the Tryout Study chose to receive the existing version, integrated version and information analysis report with regard to their school-based needs, while two schools selected the simplified version.

24. EDB and HKEAA organised three seminars on the analysis of TSA reports, three focus group meetings for teachers, two sharing sessions for principals of schools participating in the Tryout Study, 18 focus groups for parents and a focus group for principals of all primary schools respectively to collect views of different stakeholders on the enhanced school reports.

25. HKEAA also conducted questionnaire surveys at the seminars to collect the views of the schools participating in the Tryout Study and other schools on the enhanced school reports. HKEAA, through the questionnaire surveys, sought to understand if the enhanced school reports could provide more data to provide feedback to learning and teaching and comprehensive data to facilitate communication between schools and various stakeholders through questionnaire surveys. The survey data reflects schools' general acceptance of the enhanced school reports.

26. According to the choices made by participating schools on the different types of assessment reports and the feedback collected through the above channels, schools generally considered that assessment data which was too simple or limited was not conducive to providing feedback to learning and teaching. Most of the schools appreciated and welcomed the information analysis report. They viewed that the corresponding key learning objective, Basic Competency and question intent of each item provided in this report could facilitate teachers' understanding of the rationale of the paper design as well as the connection between Basic Competencies and curriculum, which enabled the provision of feedback to curriculum planning and the adjustment of teaching strategies. The enhanced school reports could meet the needs of different schools on the whole. Schools and teachers might, on a subject basis, flexibly select appropriate assessment reports to serve different purposes (including reviewing the design of school-based assessments, facilitating curriculum planning, adjusting teaching strategies and rendering learning support, etc.). Under the Tryout Study, different reports and information provided to schools have helped enhance teachers' assessment capability and alleviate their workload of analysing TSA data. Meanwhile, the arrangement of schools choosing different versions of reports according to the school-based needs can help alleviate schools' concerns about the possible stakes of TSA data.

27. Many parents agreed that the school reports provided teachers with a good source of reference for adjusting teaching practices. At the same time, some parents thought that TSA needs to be held on a continuous basis. Data provided might help schools better understand their students' level in the territory as well as enabling teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. It was also noted that according to some parents, schools have communicated with them on the homework and assessment policies through seminars for parents. They trusted the schools and supported their professional decisions.

(III) Strengthening Diversified Professional Support Measures

28. Regarding workshops on better use of assessment strategies and enhancement of learning and teaching (see paragraph 15 (i) above), EDB has conducted Part 1 of the workshops in May and June 2016, which aimed to share with teachers on how to make use of assessment strategies to facilitate learning and teaching. Over 140 teachers participated in the workshops and 116 feedback forms were received, which showed that the response was positive. Teachers expressed that the workshops were conducive to their work, facilitate schools to reflect on their overall assessment policies and review daily assignments and setting of assessment papers. Part 2 of the workshops was held in December 2016, focusing on how to make optimal use of assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching. In the light of the needs of individual schools participating in the Tryout Study, support services are also provided to analyse with schools the TSA school reports provided under the Tryout Study. Furthermore, the Curriculum Development Institute will continue to enhance the assessment literacy of teachers through professional development courses on curriculum leadership and related subjects.

29. Regarding school-based support services (see paragraph 15 (ii) above), on-site support is provided by EDB to schools participating in the Tryout Study in the light of their school-based needs. Over 80% of the participating schools selected school-based support services that could address their specific needs. Support officers have helped schools to conduct a holistic review of their school-based curricula. TSA data and students' performance in schools are analysed and pre-tests are used to diagnose students' learning needs and set the development focuses with schools. Learning evidence gathered from lesson observation, lesson studies, student interviews, etc. is used to adjust teaching plans and strategies. As shown in school questionnaires, all schools consider that professional support has deepened their understanding of how to use the data in the assessment reports and integrate them with internal assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching. With respect to students' strengths and weaknesses identified, schools have further conducted a holistic review of their curriculum planning, learning and teaching, and formulated relevant follow up measures. For instance, some schools will focus more on improving students' reading and writing abilities in Chinese Language and

English Language. In Mathematics, different schools will adjust their teaching and assessment strategies based on students' performance in individual dimensions, such as "measurement", to enhance learning effectiveness. At school level, professional leadership is enhanced through direct participation of principals, middle managers and teachers in planning the whole school curriculum and assessment. These show that this support measure is well-received by schools and is conducive to enhancing assessment literacy.

30. Regarding the development of teaching and assessment materials and the design of learning activities in collaboration with tertiary institutions and schools participating in the Tryout Study (see paragraph 15 (iii) above), 15% of the participating schools were involved and 20% tried out the WLTS materials and STAR. Under this support measure, teachers of the participating schools can develop with tertiary institutions and EDB the learning, teaching and assessment materials which tie in with the school-based curriculum. In this way, teachers are able to have a better grasp of the design concept of teaching materials and techniques, so as to design quality teaching materials and develop school-based curriculum to meet students' learning needs. Participating schools reflected that the materials designed could meet the schools' needs, and are conducive to designing school-based curriculum and teaching materials in the future. Some schools hoped EDB could continue to introduce similar programmes in the coming year.

31. Among schools which show an interest in co-organising parent education activities with EDB (see paragraph 15 (iv) above), 80% of schools have already started the preparations, and EDB has approached them to co-organise the seminars. It is expected that this kind of collaboration and activities can enhance parents' understanding of assessment literacy.

(IV) Including a Questionnaire Survey on Students' Learning Attitude and Motivation

32. Under the Tryout Study, EDB has commissioned the Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation. The reports cover an analysis using both TSA and non-academic data. Each participating school receives an independent analysis report on its school data, including students' learning motivation, the relationship between students' socio-economic status and their academic results, etc. Principals and teachers can identify the factors affecting students' learning attitude and motivation by making reference to the data of the questionnaire survey to improve learning and teaching.

33. EDB collected, through respective focus groups, views of principals of schools participating in the Tryout Study and parents on the questionnaire survey on non-academic data. Principals attended the focus groups gave positive comments on

the questionnaire survey on non-academic data. They considered that such a survey could enable schools to know more about students' learning from multiple perspectives and identify major factors affecting their academic performance. In this way, schools were able to render support in connection with students' learning, and thus enhance learning and teaching and promote students' development. Meanwhile, the questionnaire survey and related research findings could raise parents' awareness of factors affecting their children's learning. Parents attended the focus groups expressed no objection to participating in the questionnaire survey in a voluntary manner, suggesting that the survey could help schools understand the factors affecting students' learning.

34. It is worth-noting that based on the observation of the questionnaire survey, even students studying at the same level in the same school with similar homework and assessment arrangements, students and their parents may have very diversified views regarding the homework load. This shows that the perception of the load of exercises and homework involves multiple factors.

35. The problem of over-drilling has been a concern of the community. Based on the findings of the questionnaire survey, the Committee is aware that there is no direct relationship between the homework load and the academic performance of junior primary students. The quality of homework is more important than the quantity, and over-drilling would affect learning motivation.

36. According to the views collected in focus groups for parents from schools participating in the Tryout Study, it is revealed that in the same school, parents might have very diversified views regarding school policy, homework arrangements, purchase of exercises and extra lessons. Some parents pointed out that since there was no drilling nor additional exercises on TSA in schools, they were unaware that their children had already taken TSA. Some parents expressed that daily learning in class was already sufficient for students to handle TSA, they hence had not purchased additional supplementary exercises for their children. Parents also understood that no individual result would be provided under TSA, so students were at ease and did not feel any pressure arising from TSA.

Vision and Recommendations on the Development of Basic Competency Assessments

(I) Serving the function of "assessment for learning" to promote quality education

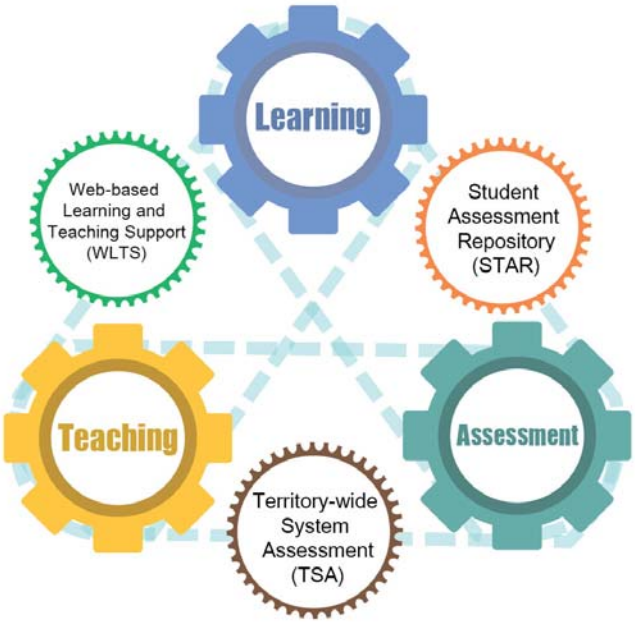
Basic Competency Assessments Programme

37. In 'assessment for learning', assessment is an integral part of the curriculum and

an integral part of the Learning-Teaching-Assessment cycle. Its main function is to help schools understand students' learning, progress and needs, as well as their strengths and weaknesses for planning the curriculum, designing teaching and developing school-based assessment in order to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching, with a view to helping students learn more effectively.

38. The Education Commission issued "Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong" which sets out detailed proposals for Basic Competency Assessments in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. Basic Competency Assessments Programme comprises three components, including Student Assessment Repository (STAR) (formerly Student Assessment (SA)), Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) and Web-based Learning and Teaching Support (WLTS) with a view to carrying out the concept of "assessment for learning" in everyday teaching. Schools can use the assessment information (including TSA and STAR information) to understand whether students have attained Basic Competencies in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. This enables schools to integrate assessment data and schools' development needs, make reference to various resources (such as WLTS) and formulate learning and teaching strategies with a view to enhancing learning and teaching.

Diagram 1 Concept map of Basic Competency Assessments Programme



39. Under the Tryout Study, EDB organised 15 focus group meetings (more than 250 teachers participated), four sharing sessions (more than 160 principals / middle managers participated, including schools not participating in the Tryout Study), 18 focus groups for parents (more than 100 parents of schools participating in the Tryout Study participated), three seminars on subjects (more than 400 teachers of participating and non-participating schools participated) and collected more than 400 questionnaires (including about 80% from schools not participating in the Tryout Study). Concluding various feedback gathered from qualitative and quantitative methods, the four major initiatives (improving the assessment papers and question design; enhancing school reports; strengthening professional support measures; and including a questionnaire survey to collect students' non-academic data) under the Tryout Study enable the implementation of TSA to revert to the right track, reflect the original intent of TSA to serve the prime objective of providing feedback to learning and teaching and the low-stakes nature of TSA as an assessment tool.

(II) Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Handling the problem of over-drilling – removing the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA

Design of assessment papers and items

40. Views collected through the aforementioned various channels indicated that the improved assessment papers and question design under the Tryout Study could align with the requirements of Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students, tie in with the spirit of the curriculum and students' learning needs. As such, students are able to acquire Basic Competencies in their daily learning without the need of extra preparation or over-drilling specifically for TSA. In this connection, the improved assessment papers and question design has effectively eliminated the incentives for over-drilling. The Committee **recommends** that the improved assessment papers and item design under the Tryout Study should be extended to the TSA thereafter.

Meaningful assignments

41. The aforementioned measures have eliminated the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA, hence addressed the public concerns about TSA. However, the Committee continues to be mindful of the over-drilling culture in individual schools. Over-drilling would affect learning motivation. The Committee **recommends** that EDB continue to communicate with the education sector with a view to dealing with the situation of over-drilling.

42. The questionnaire survey on "enhancing assessment literacy"[2] showed that more than 98% of schools have formulated school-based homework and assessment policies. Most schools communicated with parents through notices, talks and web pages. The Committee **recommends** that EDB continue to make use of different channels and approaches, such as teacher training programmes, school development visits, school curriculum visits and focus inspections, to see how the various recommendations set out in EDB Circular No. 18/2015, particularly those pertaining to over-drilling, are implemented in schools, and to reiterate that the quality of homework is more important than the quantity. The modes and contents of homework should cater for the learning needs and abilities of students, and teachers need to help students consolidate and extend their learning based on their established foundation. Mechanical drills, repetitive copying and rote learning should be avoided. Schools should also consider more comprehensively and fully the diversity of learning, such as age, gender, physical development/condition, social development, learning ability and needs, interests, family background and expectations, community and cultural contexts of students at different learning stages (including kindergarten) to design diversified and appropriate assignments so that students can have spare time to relax after completing assignments and revising to ensure a balanced physical and psychological development.

43. EDB should continue urging schools to strengthen communication with parents. Schools should formulate and coordinate appropriate school-based homework and assessment policies by planning holistically, synthesising the objectives in the three aspects of learning, teaching and assessment, and communicate with parents. Yearly review should be conducted in a timely manner, including whether it is necessary to purchase supplementary exercises, and should seek parents' views on relevant issues through parent-teacher associations in order to reach a consensus and secure parents' co-operation in not arranging their children to have mechanical drills for TSA at external institutions. Also, teachers should use their professional knowledge and make more use of qualitative methods to analyse students' work to provide feedback to learning and teaching with reference to the learning difficulties encountered by students, such as enhancing classroom learning and teaching strategies, learning materials and assessment designs, and design differentiated assignments that are close to students' daily experiences, interesting and progressive, focusing on the cultivation of students' generic skills, such as creativity and problem-solving skills.

---

[2] To plan the professional activities in the coming year, EDB issued questionnaires on "enhancing assessment literacy" to all primary schools in early December to collect information, among others, about school-based assignment and assessment policies.

44. EDB has always attached importance to students' whole-person development. Apart from learning, students also need to have leisure time for doing physical exercises, cultivating personal interests and participating in healthy social life or extracurricular activities, and have enough time for rest and sleep. The Committee understands that schools will provide professionally remedial teaching and appropriate group learning activities based on school contexts to address the needs of individual students (such as non-Chinese speaking students) in helping them to tackle their learning difficulties. However, the Committee considers it is inappropriate for schools to treat drilling and supplementary lessons before and after classes as additional lesson time and make it compulsory for all students to attend. Mechanical drilling is also inappropriate as this enhances students' learning pressure and undermines their learning interests. Therefore, the Committee **recommends** that schools should pay attention to the arrangements of supplementary lessons so as to avoid affecting the healthy growth and whole-person development of students.

Recommendation 2 Removing stakes

Removing stakes and fostering mutual trust

45. In fact, the Committee has made concrete recommendations in the review report submitted in February 2016 (please see paragraph 1 above) to address various public concerns. EDB has been actively following up the related recommendations, including enhancing various stakeholders' (including school sponsoring bodies, school managers, parents, etc.) understanding of "assessment for learning" to ensure the proper and effective use of TSA data. Therefore, the feedback from schools participating in the Tryout Study and views from various stakeholders (including schools and teachers not participating in the Tryout Study, parents, district parent-teacher associations, parent concern groups, etc.) collected through various channels and methods generally showed that the measures are effective in eliminating the stakes involved, reflecting the low-stakes nature of TSA and deepening the mutual trust among stakeholders.

46. As recommended by the Committee in February 2016, EDB has stepped up public education and enhanced training for teaching staff at different stages (including training for prospective teachers, pre-service training for appointed teachers, and in-service training for serving teachers) and the response is positive. The Committee **recommends** that EDB continue to organise these training programmes to enhance the assessment literacy of various sectors, and encourage better use of assessment information or data to provide feedback to learning and teaching and develop and refine the school-based curriculum and learning activities. EDB should continue to work with various stakeholders in their various roles to ensure appropriate use of TSA data in the promotion of quality education which addresses students' learning needs, embodies professionalism and is founded on

mutual trust among stakeholders, hence serving the functions of Basic Competency Assessments to the fullest extent.

47. To further remove the stakes of TSA and deepen mutual trust, the Committee **recommends** that EDB strengthen internal guidelines to provide clear guidelines on the use of TSA data and information by various sections of EDB.

Recommendation 3 Enhancing communication and deepening mutual trust

The Government and school sponsoring bodies

48. Meanwhile, as a principal partner in school management, the Committee **recommends** that EDB maintain communication with school sponsoring bodies and school managers, strengthen professional training and deepen mutual trust, ensuring that TSA data is used properly to achieve the objective of enhancing the school-based curriculum and teaching practices.

Parents and schools

49. As parents are one of the major stakeholders of schools, the Committee considers that enhanced communication between parents and schools on education issues facilitates parents' understanding of the concept of "assessment for learning" and the implementation of TSA. Meanwhile, admitting that parents are major stakeholders in education, the Committee **recommends** that EDB and schools continue to enhance parents' understanding of education issues through various channels.

Allocation of resources

50. Besides, the Committee **recommends** that the Quality Education Fund can consider including promoting parents' understanding of "assessment for learning" in the priority themes and activities to encourage schools, tertiary institutions, research organisations and non-governmental organisations, etc. to enhance parents' understanding of "assessment for learning", and making use of existing resources to design different types of activities to enhance the assessment literacy of the education sector and parents. Meanwhile, related successful experiences can be shared through the Quality Education Fund Thematic Networks.

Recommendation 4 Enhancing assessment literacy

Providing support for schools and students

51. Four types of reports are made available under the Tryout Study for schools'

selection to meet their needs. Over 96% of schools participating in the Tryout Study opted for the existing version and the integrated version, while only two schools selected the simplified version (without territory-wide data). It reflects that data at the territory-wide level are of reference value to schools. In general, schools make use of students' results in internal assessments (such as tests and examinations) together with TSA data to understand the standards of students in relation to that of the territory-wide. Meanwhile, the questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation provides abundant data and information for schools to grasp the factors affecting students' learning. Under the Tryout Study, the analysis of non-academic data enables schools to see the relationship between non-academic factors and students' academic performance from multiple perspectives. This arrangement can be found in some international assessments, such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), that similar kinds of survey are included to understand students' learning. Therefore, the Committee **recommends** that the survey on non-academic data conducted by an independent organisation should be continued, and the sample size of the survey should be expanded to enhance the reference value of the data and information to provide more useful information to schools to provide feedback to learning and teaching. The questionnaire survey on learning attitude and motivation includes schools, students and parents. The Committee **recommends** that the use of questionnaire survey could be further explored to understand the views of schools and parents on homework arrangements and pressure.

52. The Committee recognises that targeted support measures contribute significantly to the better use of assessments by schools to facilitate learning. At school level, professional leadership is enhanced through direct participation of principals, middle managers and teachers in planning the whole school curriculum and assessment. The professional support measures implemented under the Tryout Study, including workshops, seminars and school-based support services are well-received by schools. The Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to strengthen various support measures to schools to promote "assessment for learning" and enhance assessment literacy. The Committee notices that in the 2014/15 school year, more than 70% (about 370) of primary schools in the territory were provided with the school-based support services, among which about 280 primary schools were provided with support services in relation to the subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. The Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to provide diversified professional support services to schools to cater for the different needs of schools and teachers.

53. Besides, the Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to develop and encourage schools and parents to use the Web-based Learning and Teaching Support (WLTS) website. At present, more than 730 sets of learning and teaching resources on the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics are available on the website for teachers' use. Such learning and teaching resources are developed according to the learning of Basic Competencies, including lesson plans, suggested learning activities, presentations on teaching practices, worksheets, assessment tasks, etc. Teachers can make use of these resources to help students acquire the Basic Competencies in an effective manner and overcome learning difficulties. The Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to optimise the Student Assessment Repository (STAR) and continue to encourage teachers to use the resources to optimise learning, teaching and assessment as well as promoting the concept of assessment for learning.

Recommendation 5 Development strategies for continuously enhancing the effectiveness and value of TSA

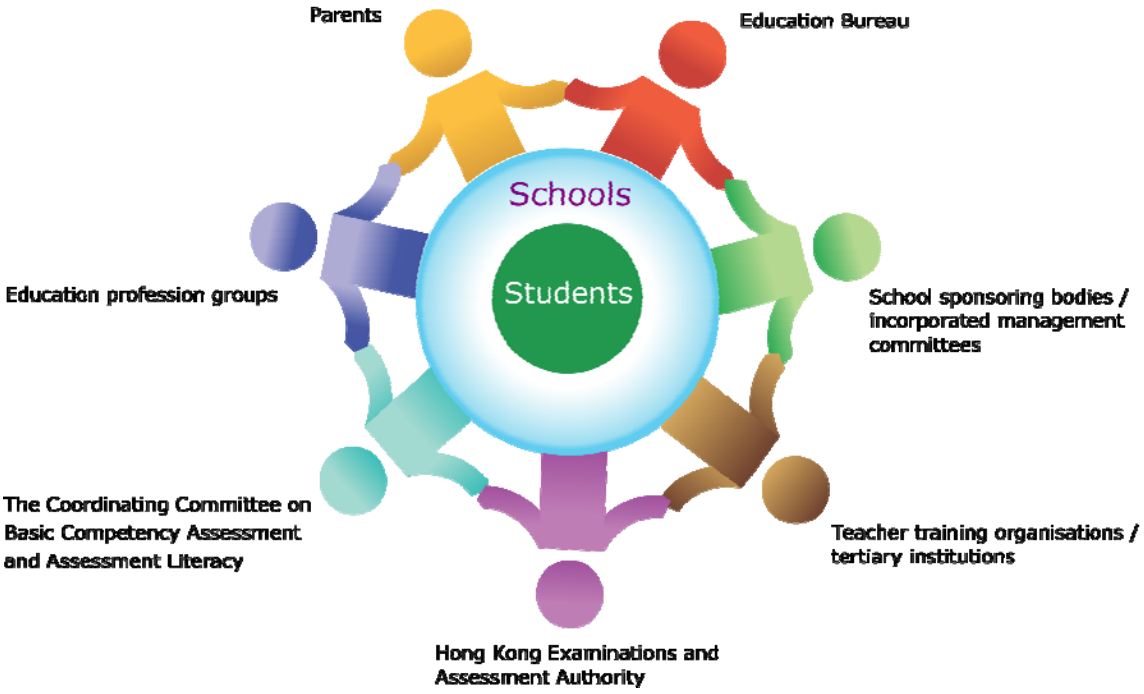
54. In the review process of the Tryout Study, the Committee recognises the importance of the roles of various stakeholders in promoting quality education. Therefore, the Committee **recommends** the following framework, which highlights the principles, strategies and respective roles of participation, for participation of various stakeholders. It is hoped that through concerted efforts of all sectors, we can gather strength to serve the function of "assessment for learning".

55. Development strategies:

Strategies

- accumulate experience
- drive concerted efforts
- gather strength

Diagram 2 Roles of participating sectors in promoting "assessment for learning"



56. Roles of participating sectors in promoting "assessment for learning":

Education Bureau	– maintaining close communication with various stakeholders on an ongoing basis to gather views and recommendations to serve as reference for the development of TSA; – making good use of assessment data to grasp the overall Basic Competency levels of students in Hong Kong in order to review education policies, determine the directions of professional training, provide learning and teaching resources, and conduct a further data analysis to understand the learning needs of students at different stages; – providing schools with various support measures, including professional development activities for promoting assessment literacy, the provision of school-based support services, the enhancement of the WLTS and assessment bank, etc.; – enhancing school professional leadership and capacity (including aspiring principals, newly-appointed principals, prospective teachers, appointed teachers, serving teachers, newly-appointed school managers, etc.) to promote

	whole-person development and a balanced curriculum; – strengthening internal guidelines to enhance public understanding of how EDB will use the TSA information to refine the curriculum development, and enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching; and – removing TSA from the "Performance Indicators" to put emphasis on "assessment for learning".
School sponsoring bodies / incorporated management committees	– encouraging schools to develop the school-based curriculum and assessment policies based on professional decisions in the light of school culture and students' learning needs to support the varied pace of development among different schools; and – assisting schools in consolidating and making optimal use of different assessment data, and analysing and adjusting teaching strategies by incorporating information on students and school backgrounds to facilitate effective student learning.
Schools (principals / panel chairpersons / teachers)	– formulating and implementing school-based homework and assessment policies having regard to school context, students' learning needs and schools' professional decisions; and promoting home-school communication; and – making use of various assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching, enhancing the curriculum and facilitating student learning.
Teacher training organisations / tertiary institutions	– collaborating with EDB to deepen the concept of "assessment for learning" in various training programmes and courses for principals (aspiring principals and newly-appointed principals), teachers (prospective teachers, appointed teachers and serving teachers) and newly-appointed school managers; and – conducting partnership research programmes/projects to support the Government in making good use of assessment data for tracking studies to serve as reference for education policies and school practices.
Parents	– grasping and understanding the concepts, strategies and arrangements of the school-based homework and assessment policies; and – communicating and collaborating with schools to facilitate

	students' learning and healthy development.
Parent-teacher associations and regional federation of parent-teacher associations	– assisting schools in gathering parents' views and understanding their concerns, and helping parents grasp schools' homework and assessment policies, as well as the objectives, implementation and functions of assessment; and – organising various activities with different groups to deepen parents' understanding of the concept of "assessment for learning".
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority	– ensuring and maintaining the reliability and validity of Basic Competency Assessments, including maintaining the stringent process of item setting and moderation, improving the papers and question design, enhancing TSA school reports, etc.; and – assisting the Government in promoting the culture of "assessment for learning" in the education sector.
Education profession groups	– taking forward public education activities to encourage and guide the public and the education sector to make use of assessment data with a right and positive attitude to serve the function of "assessment for learning"; and – drawing on different educational resources to form learning communities to share successful experiences in making good use of assessment to benefit learning and teaching.
The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy	– advising the Government on the overall direction for enhancing assessment literacy (including the use of quantitative and qualitative assessment data and the optimal use of information technology to facilitate learning and teaching); and – reviewing and monitoring the development, implementation and effectiveness of TSA on an on-going basis, and offering professional advice and recommendations on the development, implementation and effectiveness of TSA.

<u>Recommendations on TSA 2017 and thereafter</u>

The arrangement of 2017

57. The experience of the 2016 Tryout Study shows that the improved assessment papers and question design as well as the enhanced school reports would not exert pressure on school sponsoring bodies, schools, students and parents, and can

effectively eliminate the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA and reflect the low-stakes nature of TSA. In addition, according to the feedback from the stakeholders on professional support measures and the questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation, schools treasure and value school level data, which not only provide feedback to learning and teaching, but also facilitate students' learning, thereby reaffirming the intent and value of the establishment of TSA.

58. In considering the arrangements for the 2017 TSA, the Committee has taken into consideration the pros and cons of different proposals (such as conducting TSA on a sampling or voluntary basis). TSA, with a number of new elements under the Tryout Study, received favourable and positive feedback which is different from that of the past. The Committee considers that various new initiatives under the Tryout Study should be promoted. The Committee notes that about 90% of primary schools have not tried out the initiatives with new elements under the 2016 Tryout Study. Since assessment is the core of Learning-Teaching-Assessment, schools need to continue to enhance the curriculum as well as learning and teaching through assessment. As such, the Committee **recommends** that professional enhancement arrangements under the Tryout Study (i.e. improving the assessment papers and question design, enhancing school reports, strengthening diversified professional support measures, and including a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation) should be extended to all primary schools in 2017, with a view to enabling more schools to understand the new initiatives of the Tryout Study through participation and the Committee and EDB to gather more comprehensive feedback, so as to continue to review and enhance the arrangements of TSA.

59. Although the improved assessment papers and question design has eliminated the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA, the Committee understands that the community is still concerned about the drilling culture and the problem of over-drilling induced by other factors. Therefore, EDB should continue to follow up the aforementioned recommendations relating to the handling of over-drilling and the management of stakes made by the Committee, and to provide schools and students with support measures, and encourage various stakeholders to collaborate to ensure TSA data can be put to full and comprehensive use to enhance teaching arrangements and serve the function of enhancing student learning.

Long-term recommendations

60. Meanwhile, the Committee acknowledges that the advancement of information technology enables assessment tools to render more instant, effective, in-depth and interactive analysis and feedback. The Committee considers that in the medium and long run, a study could be conducted to explore how to carry out assessments with the aid of computers and interactive tools to enhance the function of providing feedback

to schools. The Committee **recommends** exploring how the existing web-based central assessment item bank for "Student Assessment Repository" (STAR) could be expanded and strengthened to cater for daily learning and teaching as well as assessment. The Committee will continue to study the development of STAR and expects a preliminary recommendation could be available in 2018.

Chapter 1 Background and Objectives

Education Reform and the Introduction of TSA

1.1 In 2000, the Education Commission proposed to introduce Basic Competency Assessments in its report entitled *"Learning for Life. Learning through Life"* to better enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching. The main objectives of the Basic Competency Assessments are:

(i) to provide the Government and the school management with territory-wide information on schools' standards in key learning areas;

(ii) to underpin the Government's efforts to provide support for schools in need of assistance; and

(iii) to enable teachers and parents to understand students' learning problems and needs so as to facilitate timely and targeted assistance through appropriate teaching practices.

1.2 TSA is one of the components of Basic Competency Assessments. Other than TSA, Basic Competency Assessments also cover Student Assessment and WLTS. Student Assessment is an online assessment item bank, capable of assessing through a computer system the performance of participating students, and generating instant assessment reports for teachers' reference. As for WLTS, it is an online platform for the development of students' Basic Competencies, providing ready-made learning activities and materials developed to address learning difficulties for teachers' reference and use.

1.3 Basic Competencies are the essential knowledge and skills acquired by students in relation to the learning targets and objectives set out in the curriculum for each key stage, in order to learn effectively at next stage. TSA is an assessment on students' Basic Competencies in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics upon completion of the three key learning stages (i.e. Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 levels). Basic Competencies form part of the curriculum. Students are expected to acquire the Basic Competencies in the three subjects in order to proceed effectively to the next key learning stage.

1.4 TSA is a low-stakes assessment. At the student level, TSA does not provide assessment results of individual students, it is by no means a tool for grading students, determining their advancement in studies or allocating school places for admission to Secondary 1. At the school level, EDB does not use TSA results to assess the

performance of schools. Since 2014, EDB has removed TSA from "Key Performance Measures" to put emphasis on "assessment for learning" with a view to alleviating schools' concerns about the stakes involved in the use of assessment data.

Functions of TSA

1.5 Implementation of TSA serves the function of promoting "assessment for learning" through the use of assessment data for provision of feedback to inform learning and teaching. The feedback includes information at the territory-wide and school levels, each serving different functions. The ensuing paragraphs elaborate on how information at the territory-wide and school levels serves the functions of enhancing teaching arrangements and facilitating students' learning.

Territory-wide Level

1.6 On the territory-wide level, TSA data helps the Government review education policies, provide resources and set directions of support measures and professional training, etc. Details are as follows:

Facilitating the review of education policies

1.7 TSA data reflects the overall performance of Hong Kong students and its trends of changes in the subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. EDB takes into account students' overall performance in TSA and different Basic Competencies in formulating the directions and priorities of education policies.

1.8 Through TSA data, EDB gauged the ability of lower and upper primary students in comprehending and summarising the main ideas of a passage. Therefore, EDB encourages schools to enhance the strategies for teaching of reading, and has set "reading to learn" as one of the four key tasks of the curriculum reform. For strengthening "reading to learn", a series of online resources has also been developed for primary and secondary schools' reference.

Setting directions and priorities of professional training

1.9 EDB analyses TSA data to better understand the learning progress and teaching needs of Hong Kong students in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics, with a view to determining directions and priorities for

professional training.

1.10 With the aim of improving language education at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, EDB has, by making reference to TSA data, sought an injection into the Language Fund to strengthen support for teachers and students at pre-primary and primary levels[3].

Providing learning and teaching resources

1.11 In the light of the learning difficulties reflected by students' performance in TSA, EDB conducts case studies and collects views of teachers through focus group meetings. The WLTS, an online learning and teaching platform, was developed in 2003 to provide ready-made learning and teaching resource packages for teachers' use or reference. Relevant resources, including teaching plans, suggested learning activities, presentations on teaching practices, worksheets and assessment tasks, etc., enable teachers to help students acquire Basic Competencies in an effective manner. At present, there are more than 730 sets of learning and teaching resources for Primary 1 to Secondary 3 levels, covering nearly 70% of Basic Competencies for the three learning stages. It is expected that resource packages covering all Basic Competencies will be available by 2019 for teachers' reference and use.

Planning school-based support services

1.12 Curriculum, learning and teaching, and assessment are interrelated. EDB has been providing school-based support services to schools. Based on the needs of individual participating school, support officers would help schools make use of the assessment data, such as student assignments, test and examination results and performance in TSA to understand the learning progress of students, and collaborate with schools' teaching staff to plan the curriculum, design appropriate teaching strategies and use various assessment methods through lesson preparation

---

[3] Details are set out in LC Paper No. FCR2004-05(44). Support measures for teachers include:

(i) sponsoring local serving teachers of the English Language subject at primary schools to attend overseas immersion courses lasting four to eight weeks or more;

(ii) sponsoring primary school teachers to attend intensive courses focused on specific aspects of the learning and teaching of the language subjects, such as grammar/phonics in context; and

(iii) providing professional development programmes for pre-primary school teachers.

meetings and the Evaluation-Planning-Implementation-Evaluation (EPIE) process, in order to provide effective feedback for students. In the 2014/15 school year, more than 70% of primary schools in the territory (about 370 primary schools) were provided with the school-based support services, among which about 280 primary schools were provided with support services in relation to the subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. Schools can consider their school-based development needs in applying for individual support services.

Reviewing the curriculum

1.13 TSA data is a source of reference for curriculum review. Take the Basic Competency of 'using "gram" (g) or "kilogram" (kg) as the unit to measure or compare the weight of objects and using "hour" and "minute", "minute" and "second" or "second" to measure the time used in activities' in Mathematics as an example. Taking into account the average TSA performance of students in this aspect as well as the views of frontline teachers collected in focus group interviews on reasons for students not being able to grasp the content, EDB and the Curriculum Development Council Committee on Mathematics Education propose an adjustment in the sequence of related topics when reviewing the Mathematics curriculum at primary levels, suggesting that students could be exposed to this topic after accumulating more related learning experience. The related recommendation has been included in the latest proposed revisions to the Mathematics Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 6). Subject to the approval of the Curriculum Development Council, the Guide is expected to be published in 2017.

Using related data for further analysis

1.14 HKEAA reports on the research findings of the cohort study for the same group of students in the annual TSA report. HKEAA also conducts further analysis on students' performance to identify areas of unsatisfactory performance by students, with a view to formulating and providing further support proposals.

School Level

1.15 At the school level, TSA school reports are provided. On top of the overall students' attainment rates of a school in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics (starting from 2014, individual primary schools are no longer provided

with the attainment rates), the school reports provide item analysis and other supplementary data, including the percentage of students who have answered each item correctly and the performance of students in questions related to the respective Basic Competency.

1.16 Related information helps teachers identify the strengths and weaknesses of overall students and formulate plans to improve the effectiveness of learning and teaching with reference to the assessment data and their schools' development needs. After analysing students' performance in TSA, schools will generally follow up through various measures, such as adjusting the teaching content, improving the design of assignments/assessments, arranging after-school remedial programmes to cater for learner diversity, etc. Related follow-up measures addressing the competencies of students participating in TSA can be implemented after students are promoted to another level, and can address the learning needs of students of different classes with a view to building a solid foundation for the students' grasp of Basic Competencies in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics.

Enhancement and Review of TSA

1.17 Since the introduction of TSA in 2004 (Primary 3, Primary 6[4] and Secondary 3 TSA was implemented since 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively), EDB has maintained close communication with various stakeholders (including schools, teachers, parents, primary and secondary schools councils, the Committee on Home-School Co-operation, TSA Concern Group, etc.) to understand the progress of implementation.

1.18 In 2014, the EDB launched a number of enhancement measures (including not disclosing attainment rates to individual primary schools, removing TSA from the Key Performance Measures for primary schools, continuing administering Primary 6 TSA in alternate years and enhancing TSA's reporting functions in stages), with a view to striking a balance between preserving the core functions of TSA and lessening the pressure on students and teachers. Details have been set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)284/13-14(03).

1.19 As part of the continuous improvement of the implementation arrangements of TSA, the Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the operation and various

[4] Since 2014, the P.6 TSA has been implemented in odd-numbered years (i.e. 2015, 2017, etc.).

implementation arrangements of TSA in late 2015. In February 2016, the Committee submitted the review report[5] which put forward that the review of TSA should be premised on the promotion of quality education and the following core values:

- learning needs of students;
- professionalism; and
- mutual trust among stakeholders.

1.20 The report reaffirmed the intent and value of the establishment of TSA and recognised the functional use of TSA data to provide feedback to learning and teaching. Meanwhile, in response to public concerns about the over-drilling problem, various stakeholders' perception of the stakes involved as well as the provision of support for students and schools, various short, medium and long-term recommendations have been made (please see Chapter 6 of the report for details).

1.21 Among them, regarding short-term reocmmendations, to reflect more clearly the intent of Basic Competency Assessments, the Committee considers that the assessment papers and questions should be adjusted, and that the reports distributed to schools could adopt different formats. Such initiatives should be implemented as a tryout arrangement in 2016, of which the outcomes would inform the 2017 territory-wide implementation.

1.22 The Committee recommends that the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) (Tryout Study) should have the following objectives:

(i) to validate whether the revamped papers and item design proposed by the relevant working group would uphold the reliability and validity of assessment while aligning with the requirements of Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students to tie in with the curriculum and student learning;

(ii) to try out different reporting formats to meet the needs of individual schools;

(iii) to strengthen the provision of professional support measures for schools on homework policy, assessment literacy, enhancement of learning and teaching (e.g. via the promotion of reading) as well as TSA in the course of the tryout. Public education would also need to be strengthened so as to enhance stakeholders' awareness of the TSA as part of the concept of

[5] Report on Review of the Territory-wide System Assessment by the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (February 2016)

(www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/tsa/fullreport.pdf)

"assessment for learning" with a view to enhancing quality education;

(iv) at the territory-wide level, to keep track on the attainment of basic competencies of all students and to provide continuous data for other related studies; and to demonstrate in good faith the low-stakes nature of TSA that it would not exert pressure on school sponsoring bodies, schools and parents; and

(v) to foster mutual trust through participation, sharing and collaboration in promoting quality education with a view to facilitating effective and pleasurable student learning.

1.23 Under the Tryout Study, a total of more than 50 primary schools of different types participated (about 10% of the total number of primary schools in the territory). Participating schools are from different districts (Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories East and New Territories West), of various types (government, subsidised, Direct Subsidy Scheme and private schools), and school sizes. The number, distributions and proportions of participating schools closely align with the design. For the handling of data, the distributions and proportions of participating schools are taken into account, and statistical methodologies are adopted to process and analyse the related data.

Chapter 2 Specific Arrangements for the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

2.1 In line with the Committee's recommendations, the Tryout Study covers four major initiatives as below:

(i) Improving assessment papers and question design;
(ii) Enhancing school reports;
(iii) Strengthening diversified professional support measures; and
(iv) Including a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation.

2.2 The above basket of initiatives is intended to eliminate the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA; provide targeted service to enhance the overall effectiveness of the cycle of Learning-Teaching-Assessment as an integral part to benefit students; and improve communication and deepen mutual trust between schools and parents.

(I) Improving Assessment Papers and Question Design

2.3 On improving assessment papers and question design, the major directions as stated in the report submitted by the Committee in February 2016 are maintaining the reliability and validity of TSA, ensuring the modifications serve to lessen students' burden of learning, aligning with the spirit of the curriculum and reflecting students' basic competencies. The principles of modification are:

- learning needs of students;
- alleviating the learning burden on students;
- aligning with the spirit of curriculum; and
- adopting appropriate choice of words and phrases in assessment materials.

2.4 The Working Group on Papers and Question Design under the Committee has, from a professional perspective, reviewed the assessment papers and question design and put forward views and recommendations. In the light of the proposed review directions and principles and the specific suggestions, HKEAA has modified the assessment papers and question design for Primary 3 TSA, and strengthened the item setting and moderation work through different working groups (e.g. item development and moderation working groups and paper review focus groups) and rigorous mechanisms.

2.5 The major modifications for the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics at Primary 3 level are as follows:

(i) Primary 3 Chinese Language

- The number of texts in the reading assessment is adjusted from

three to two; the total number of words per sub-paper is limited to not more than 1 200 and the number of items does not exceed 20; and practical writing is only included in one of the sub-papers to avoid giving undue weight to practical writing;

- In the writing assessment, certain information required for practical writing is provided, such as salutation, complimentary close, greetings and date of a letter; the marking criteria on the format of practical writing are adjusted; and student exemplars demonstrating the attainment of Basic Competency are provided; and
- "Five-options-choose-two" items, items requiring "reverse thinking" and so forth in each paper are reviewed and adjusted.

(ii) Primary 3 English Language

- The number of parts in the reading assessment is reduced from four to three. The number of words per reading task is limited to not more than 150 and the number of words of the whole paper is capped at 400;
- To help students manage the assessment time for the reading and writing papers, invigilators announce the time twice during the examination, i.e. 15 minutes and 5 minutes before the end of the examination;
- Items expecting answers in the past tense in the writing assessment are scrapped, such as writing a recount; and
- Assessment items on basic book concepts are avoided.

(iii) Primary 3 Mathematics

- The number of items is reduced, with an immediate cut of around 20%;
- Only one Basic Competency is assessed in each item; and
- Items requiring solving linking problems are minimised.

2.6 Under the Tryout Study, the oral assessments and written assessments were completed on 3 and 4 May, 14 and 15 June 2016 respectively. A total of more than 50 primary schools participated. Participating schools are from different regions (Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories East and New Territories West), of various types (government, subsidised, Direct Subsidy Scheme and private schools), and school sizes. The number, distributions and proportions of participating schools closely align with the design.

2.7 For the handling of data, the distributions and proportions of participating schools are taken into account, and statistical methodologies are adopted to process and analyse the related data to ensure the representativeness of the result.

2.8 TSA is an objective assessment tool with reliability and validity in assessing students' overall Basic Competencies in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics upon completing the stages of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 education. To maintain the standards set, HKEAA conducts a research test to maintain the stability and consistency of the standards. Meanwhile, the improved assessment papers and items, are implemented in accordance with the Basic Competency standards set in 2004, including standard setting, standard maintenance and estimation of students' ability indices.

2.9 In order for the public and schools to promptly grasp and understand the rationale of question design for Primary 3 TSA under the Tryout Study, instead of following the usual practice of uploading relevant materials upon the release of TSA results, HKEAA has, right after the completion of Primary 3 assessment, uploaded to the website on Basic Competency Assessments (www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk) the question papers of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics, suggested answers together with the information on item design (e.g. the corresponding key learning objective, Basic Competency and question intent), as well as the marking schemes.

2.10 All the Markers and Assistant Examiners were qualified serving teachers. Markers' Meetings were conducted by HKEAA in July to familiarise Markers with the modified marking schemes and related principles. All script marking and preliminary data processing were completed in July and August respectively. Data analysis and report writing were completed by the end of October, and school-level data was released to schools on 9 November to provide feedback to and improve learning and teaching.

2.11 After the release of the results, seminars on students' performance in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics were organised on 14 and 15 November. In addition to deliberating the overall performance of students, various exemplars were also used to illustrate in detail the strengths and weaknesses of students, with the aim of facilitating the understanding of teachers of both participating and non-participating schools in the Tryout Study to understand students' performance to facilitate the concept of "assessment for learning".

(II) Enhancing School Reports

2.12 On enhancing the format of school reports, in order to enable schools to make better use of TSA data to benefit learning and teaching, the Working Group on Administration and Reporting under the Committee recommends that four types of reports with different coverage should be made available for schools' selection to meet the needs of individual schools.

2.13 The four types of assessment reports are as follows: (Using Primary 3 Mathematics as an example)

(i) Existing version

Basic Competency	Item no.	Option	School percentage	Territory-wide percentage
Perform mixed operations of: (a) Addition and subtraction (with numbers up to 3 digits, involving small brackets); (b) Multiplication and addition; (c) Multiplication and subtraction.	Q08	A	54.6%	73.6%
		B	15.8%	6.9%
		C	20.5%	5.8%
		D	9.1%	13.7%

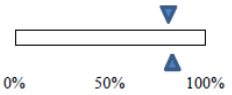
(ii) Simplified version

only provides data of an individual school without the overall data for reference purposes

Basic Competency	Item no.	Option	School percentage	Territory-wide percentage
Perform mixed operations of: (a) Addition and subtraction (with numbers up to 3 digits, involving small brackets); (b) Multiplication and addition; (c) Multiplication and subtraction.	Q08	A	54.6%	N.A.
		B	15.8%	N.A.
		C	20.5%	N.A.
		D	9.1%	N.A.

(iii) Integrated version

a consolidated report on Basic Competencies by item groups and provides exemplars on students' overall performance

Learning unit	Average of percentage of students answering items correctly
Mixed Operations	School  All schools participating in the Tryout Study

(iv) Information analysis report

provides the corresponding key learning objective, Basic Competency and question intent of each item, as well as an analysis of options of multiple-choice items

Basic Competency	Item no.	Option (Information Analysis)	School percentage	Territory-wide percentage
Perform mixed operations of: (a) Addition and subtraction (with numbers up to 3 digits,	Q08	A. Correct Answer	54.6%	73.6%
		B. Forgot decomposition	15.8%	6.9%
		C. Performed the subtraction only	20.5%	5.8%
		D. Not able to master the rule of		

	involving small brackets); (b) Multiplication and addition; (c) Multiplication and subtraction.		'multiplication before subtraction'	9.1%	13.7%

2.14 Schools participating in the Tryout Study may, in the light of school-based needs and on a subject basis (Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics), choose the reports that they consider appropriate in helping them analyse the performance of students. They are able to grasp the learning progress of students by comparing the data provided in the report with the descriptions and exemplars of students' performance in the 2016 Territory-wide System Assessment Report (Chapters 6 to 8) on the HKEAA website.

2.15 The types of reports chosen by schools are as follows:

	Type of report	**Chinese Language**	**English Language**	**Mathematics**
i	Existing version	About 90%	About 90%	About 90%
ii	Simplified version	About 3%	About 3%	About 3%
iii	Integrated version	About 90%	About 90%	About 90%
iv	* Information analysis report	100%	100%	100%

** All schools participating in the Tryout Study received the information analysis report.*

(III) Strengthening Diversified Professional Support Measures

2.16 Regarding professional support measures, under the Tryout Study, schools participating in the Tryout Study may, in the light of school-based needs, opt for one or more of the following professional support measures:

(i) Workshops on better use of assessment strategies and enhancement of learning and teaching

Part 1:

- Understanding what Basic Competencies are and the importance of progressive learning
- Designing quality assessment tasks/items
- Adopting diversified assessment strategies/approaches to help students achieve different learning outcomes
- Formulating school-based assessment/homework policies and measures

Part 2:

- Making optimal use of assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching

(ii) School-based support services
- Application by schools on a need basis
- Analysing TSA school reports provided under the Tryout Study (on-site services)

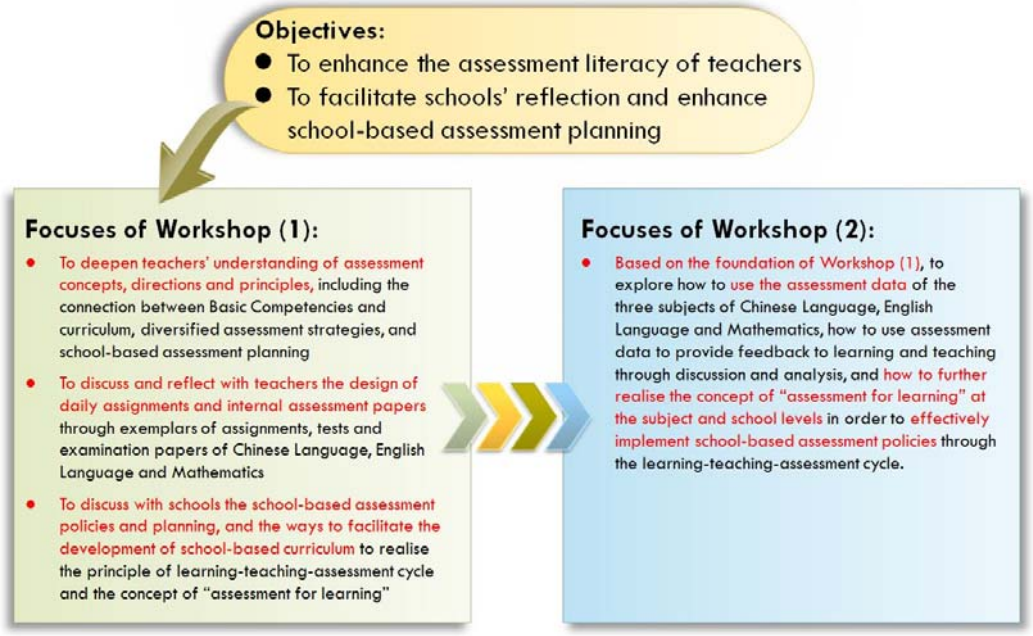
(iii) Developing teaching and assessment materials in collaboration with tertiary institutions
- Developing teaching and assessment materials and designing learning activities in collaboration with tertiary institutions and schools participating in the Tryout Study
- Trying out Web-based Learning and Teaching Support (WLTS) materials and Student Assessment Repository (STAR)

(iv) Parent education
- parent education activities are co-organised by EDB and schools participating in the Tryout Study. The forms of activities are determined in the light of the needs of individual schools.

(i) <u>Workshops on better use of assessment strategies and enhancement of learning and teaching</u>

2.17 Four Regional Seminars on Enhancing School Homework Policy were organised by EDB in February and March 2016 targeting primary school principals, vice principals, curriculum leaders and teachers responsible for homework policy at school. Four primary schools were invited to share their successful experiences and implementation strategies regarding homework policy in the seminars. Ways to devise an appropriate homework policy based on school backgrounds and students' learning needs were also discussed with primary school leaders. It is hoped that home-school cooperation can be promoted through exchanges among schools in the seminars to alleviate students' pressure derived from handling homework, allowing enough time for students to rest and participate in activities beneficial to their physical and psychological development so as to achieve the target of whole-person development.

Diagram 3 Workshops on better use of assessment strategies and enhancement of learning and teaching



(ii) <u>School-based support services</u>

2.18 Regarding school-based support services, on-site support is provided by EDB to schools participating in the Tryout Study in the light of their school-based needs. Over 80% of the participating schools selected school-based support services that could address their specific needs. Support officers collaborate with schools to determine development focuses by analysing TSA data and students' performance in schools and using pre-tests to diagnose students' learning needs. Lesson observation, lesson studies, student interviews, etc. are conducted to assess and analyse students' learning outcomes with the aim of adjusting teaching plans and strategies. See Diagram 4 for details of areas of support.

Diagram 4

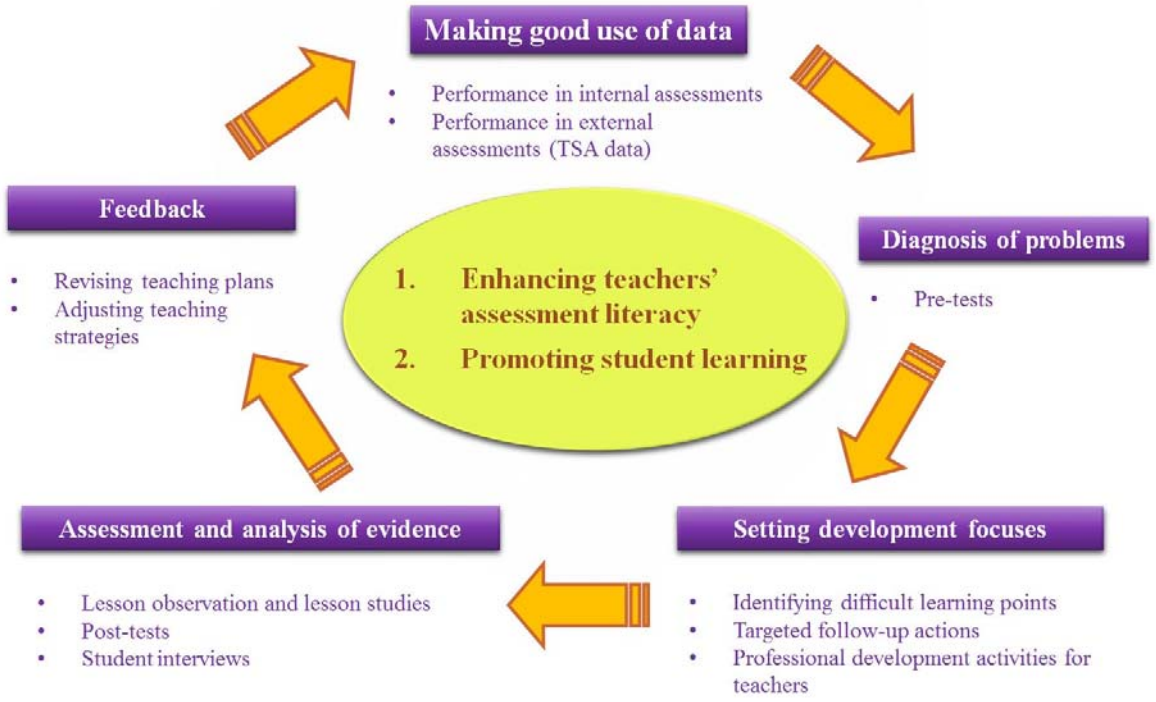
	Areas of Support				
	Chinese Language	English Language	Mathematics	General Studies	Others*
% of schools participating in the Tryout Study*	43%	29%	24%	10%	10%

* including self-directed learning, gifted education, catering for learner diversity, etc.

#Some schools receive more than one support services

2.19 The framework of school-based support services in enhancing assessment literacy is shown in Diagram 5.

Diagram 5



(iii) <u>Developing teaching and assessment materials in collaboration with tertiary institutions</u>

2.20 This support measure allows schools participating in the Tryout Study and tertiary institutions to jointly develop teaching and assessment materials and design teaching activities. The major implementation framework is shown in Diagrams 6 and 7, with adjustments and modifications made by individual subjects based on school-based needs.

Diagram 6

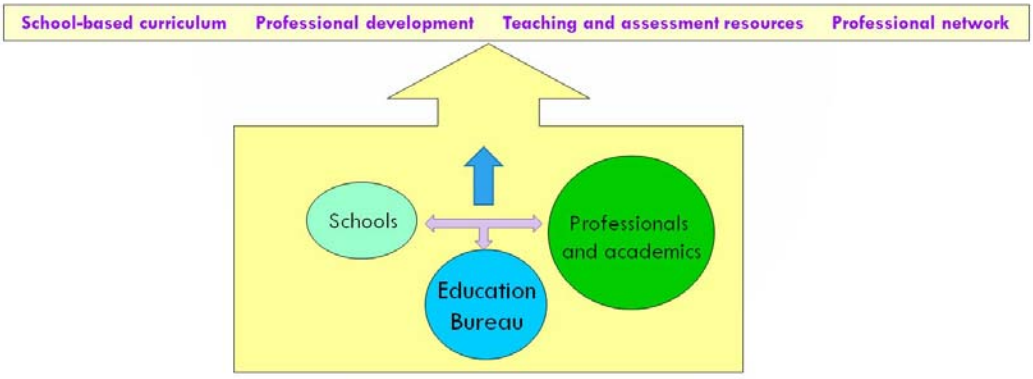
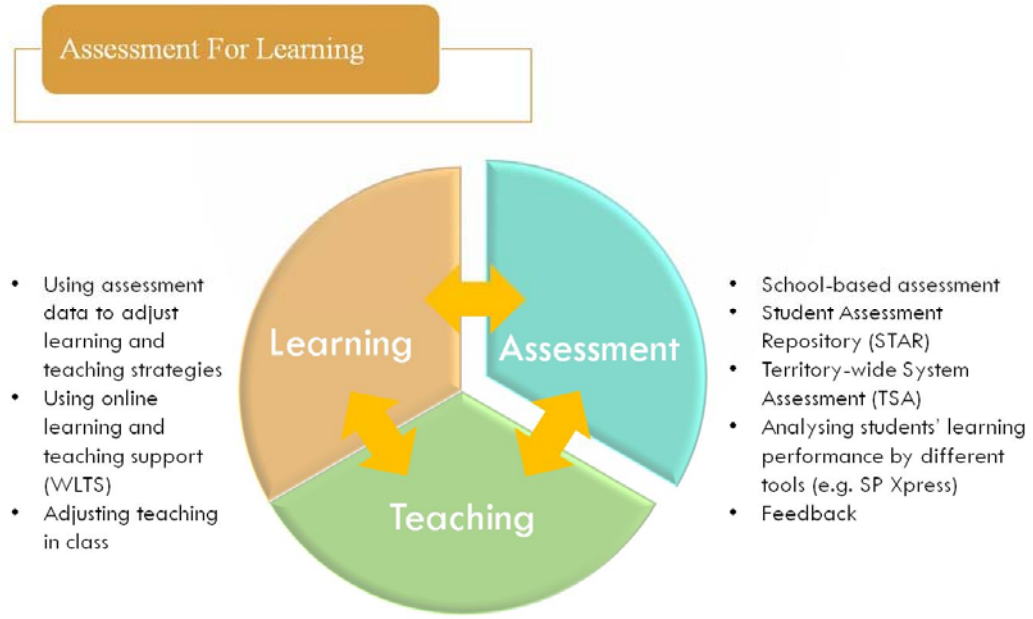


Diagram 7



(iv) Parent education

2.21 Under the Tryout Study, participating schools will work with EDB to prepare parent education programmes. The topics will include fostering assessment literacy and promoting students' self-directed learning, etc.

(IV) Including a Questionnaire Survey on Students' Learning Attitude and Motivation

2.22 In line with the Committee's recommendations, a questionnaire survey is included under the Tryout Study to collect students' non-academic data (e.g. time spent on extra-curricular activities, learning interests, learning habits and other

relevant data) so as to gain a better understanding of the factors affecting learning performance and to provide further assistance for student learning. The questionnaire survey also collects the views of schools and parents on homework load. Following the Government's established procurement procedures, upon an open tender exercise, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) was commissioned by EDB to design and conduct the questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation.

2.23 Under the Tryout Study, CUHK invited schools participating in the Tryout Study to take part in the questionnaire survey and prior consent was obtained from related parties. The survey respondents were schools, parents and students (including Chinese speaking students and non-Chinese speaking students). Eventually, more than 50 primary schools participated in the survey and more than 4 000 questionnaires were received from Primary 3 students and their parents. The questionnaire was designed with reference to international studies on the same issue, and the questions were meant to get a picture of the learning situation in Hong Kong.

Chapter 3 Specific Arrangements of the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

3.1 To review the four major initiatives (namely improving the assessment papers and question design; enhancing school reports; strengthening diversified professional support measures; and including a questionnaire survey to collect students' non-academic data) of the Tryout Study, the Committee collected views and suggestions in the following ways with regard to implementation of the four major initiatives of the Tryout Study, with a view to providing feedback and facilitating the review of related measures:

(i) Quantitative approach

- Questionnaire surveys/opinion surveys: The targets are principals, curriculum leaders, teachers (including invigilators who are teachers from participating schools and markers), students and parents. The main purpose is to collect stakeholders' views and suggestions on assessment items, reports, various support measures and stakes involved.

(ii) Qualitative approach

- Focus groups/interviews: The targets are principals, curriculum leaders, teachers (including invigilators who are teachers from participating schools and markers), students, parents, councils and other relevant groups. The main purpose is to collect stakeholders' views and suggestions on assessment items, reports, various support measures and stakes involved. ***Please see Annexes for related arrangements.***
- Case studies: Four schools are invited to participate in the case studies, which aim to take a more in-depth look at the support measures and stakes involved, in a bid to grasp how schools effectively use the various support measures to enhance assessment literacy and examine the effectiveness and limitations of the implementation of the Tryout Study at schools, and look into the solutions, views and suggestions.

(I) Improving the Assessment Papers and Question Design

3.2 TSA is an objective assessment tool with reliability and validity in assessing students' overall Basic Competencies in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics upon completing the stages of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 education. To maintain the standards set, HKEAA conducts a research test to maintain the stability and consistency of the standards. Meanwhile, the improved assessment papers and items are implemented in accordance with the Basic Competency standards set in 2004, including standard setting, standard maintenance and estimation of students' ability indices.

3.3 Regarding the percentage of students who have answered each item correctly

and the attainment rate, HKEAA submitted on 9 November 2016 the 2016 Territory-wide System Assessment Report, which indicated that the territory-wide attainment rates of Primary 3 students in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics remained steady. Meanwhile, more than 90% of students have answered more than 70% of the questions in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language correctly, and their performance was satisfactory. The overall performance and territory-wide attainment rates of Primary 3 students are indicative of the reliability and validity of the improved assessment papers and question design which are applicable to assess if students have attained Basic Competency.

3.4 For the purpose of reviewing the improved assessment papers and question design, EDB and HKEAA organised (nine focus group meetings for teachers, three meetings for markers, three sharing sessions for principals of schools participating in the Tryout Study, three seminars, 18 focus groups for parents and a focus group for principals of all primary schools to collect views of different stakeholders. EDB and HKEAA organised focus groups for subjects and sharing sessions respectively. Details are as follows:

(i) On 6 June 2016, a professional sharing session with principals was organised. A total of 12 school representatives participated. (please see **Annex 1** for meeting notes);

(ii) In mid-June 2016, nine focus group meetings were organised (three meetings for each subject). Teachers of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics from over 30 participating schools participated. Committee members, representatives of EDB and HKEAA were also present. (please see **Annex 2** for meeting notes);

(iii) In mid-July 2016, three focus group meetings for markers' were organised. A total of 39 markers participated, including Chief Examiners, Assistant Examiners and Markers. (please see **Annex 2** for meeting notes);

(iv) On 14 September 2016, a professional sharing session with principals of participating schools was organised. Principals from a total of 25 schools participated. (please see **Annex 3** for summary of views);

(v) On 13 October 2016, a professional sharing session with principals of participating and non-participating schools was organised. A total of 136 school representatives participated. (please see **Annex 4** for summary of views);

(vi) On 14 and 15 November 2016, seminars on the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics at Primary 3. A total of

454 questionnaires were collected. (please see **Annex 11** for summary of views);

(vii) In late November and early December 2016, sharing sessions with parents of 18 participating schools were organised. (please see **Annex 10** for summary of views); and

(viii) On 8 December 2016, a focus group meeting for principals of all primary schools was organised. A total of 30 school representatives participated. (please see **Annex 9** for meeting notes).

3.5 As a whole, schools have responded positively to the item design of the Tryout Study, believing that the items are close to the students' life experience and that the students can complete without additional drilling. The main views of schools on the items of each subject are as follows:

- Chinese Language: Items met the students' ability at Key Stage 1. The degree of difficulty was moderate and the items were direct. Hinting words were clear, which could assess students' Basic Competency. Items requiring "reverse thinking" were fewer than before and "five-options-choose-two" items were cancelled to alleviate students' pressure.
- English Language: The reading assessment contained various genres, covering the Primary 3 curriculum. It suited the level of Primary 3 students, and students answered the questions full of confidence. The length of each reading passage was appropriate. Teachers believed that students could complete with ease.
- Mathematics: The proportion of different types of topics in each sub-paper was appropriate, allowing Primary 3 students to answer different types of items more actively. There were no "too tricky" and follow-through items.

3.6 HKEAA also conducted questionnaire surveys at the seminars to collect the views of the schools participating in the Tryout Study and other schools on the assessment papers and item design. HKEAA found out if the improved assessment papers and question design could align with the requirements of Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students, tie in with the spirit of the curriculum and address students' learning needs through questionnaire surveys. The survey data reflects schools' general acceptance of the enhanced school reports.

3.7 Some parents from the participating schools whose elder children had participated in previous Primary 3 and Primary 6 TSA indicated in the focus groups that they did not feel the papers difficult. Meanwhile, parents generally agreed the questions of this year's TSA were easier than before, which helped boost students' confidence.

3.8 Concluding from the feedback collected from the aforementioned channels, Primary 3 students' overall performance and territory-wide attainment rates, the improved assessment papers and question design could align with the requirements of Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students, tie in with the spirit of the curriculum and address students' learning needs. As such, students are able to acquire Basic Competencies in their daily learning without the need of extra preparation or over-drilling specifically for TSA. In this connection, the improved assessment papers and question design has effectively eliminated the incentives for over-drilling.

(II) Enhancing school reports

3.9 Over 96% of schools participating in the Tryout Study opted for the existing version, integrated version and information analysis report with regard to their school-based needs, while two schools selected the simplified version. Details of the types of schools and reports chosen are set out in Chapter 2.

3.10 EDB and HKEAA organised the following sharing sessions, focus groups and workshops to collect stakeholders' views on the enhanced school reports:

(i) a professional sharing session with principals of participating schools on 14 September 2016. Principals from a total of 25 schools participated. (please see **Annex 3** for summary of views);

(ii) a professional sharing session with principals of participating and non-participating schools on 13 October 2016. A total of 136 school representatives participated. (please see **Annex 4** for summary of views);

(iii) thematic seminars on the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics at Primary 3 on 14 and 15 November 2016. A total of 454 questionnaires were collected. (please see **Annex 11** for overall data analysis); and

(iv) three focus group meetings for teachers on 24, 25 and 28 November 2016. (please see **Annexes 6-8** for meeting minutes); and

(v) On 8 December 2016, a focus group meeting for principals of all primary school was organised. A total of 30 school representatives participated. (please see **Annex 9** for meeting notes).

3.11 The main views of the schools are as follows:

- Each type of report can provide schools with useful data for feedback;
- They welcome the newly introduced integrated version of the report and information analysis report;

- The integrated version of the report facilitates principals, curriculum leaders and panel chairpersons to understand the overall situation of students in various Basic Competencies. At the same time, teachers expect the school and the territory-wide attainment rates can be included for easy reference.
- The information analysis report can provide analysis of the distractors in multiple-choice items, which enables front-line teachers to provide feedback to learning and teaching. At the same time, the teachers expect the report to provide explanation of correct answers and timely diagnostic data for non-multiple choice items.
- Different reports and information have helped enhance teachers' assessment capability and alleviate their workload of analysing TSA data.

3.12 HKEAA also conducted questionnaire surveys at the seminars to collect the views of the schools participating in the Tryout Study and other schools on the assessment papers and item design. HKEAA found out if the enhanced school reports could provide more data to provide feedback to learning and teaching and comprehensive data to facilitate communication between schools and various stakeholders through questionnaire surveys. The survey data reflects schools' general acceptance of the enhanced school reports.

3.13 Summarising from the choices made by participating schools on the different types of assessment reports and the feedback collected through the above channels, schools generally considered that assessment data which was too simple or limited was not conducive to providing feedback to learning and teaching. Most of the schools appreciated and welcomed the information analysis report. They viewed that the corresponding key learning objective, Basic Competency and question intent of each item provided in this report could facilitate teachers' understanding of the rationale of the paper design as well as the connection between Basic Competencies and curriculum, which enabled the provision of feedback to curriculum planning and the adjustment of teaching strategies. The enhanced school reports could meet the needs of different schools on the whole. Schools and teachers might, on a subject basis, flexibly select appropriate assessment reports to serve different purposes (including reviewing the design of school-based assessments, facilitating curriculum planning, adjusting teaching strategies and rendering learning support, etc.). Under the Tryout Study, different reports and information provided to schools have helped enhance teachers' assessment capability and alleviate their workload of analysing

TSA data. Meanwhile, the arrangement of schools choosing different versions of reports according to the school-based needs can help alleviate schools' concerns about the possible stakes of TSA data.

3.14 Many parents agreed that the school reports provided teachers with a good source of reference for adjusting teaching practices. At the same time, some parents thought that TSA needs to be held on a continuous basis. Data provided might help schools better understand their students' level in the territory as well as enabling teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. It was also noted that according to some parents, schools have communicated with them on the homework and assessment policies through seminars for parents. They trusted the schools and supported their professional decisions.

(III) Strengthening Diversified Professional Support Measures

(i) Workshops on better use of assessment strategies and enhancement of learning and teaching

3.15 Regarding workshops on better use of assessment strategies and enhancement of learning and teaching (see paragraph 2.16 (i) above), EDB has conducted Part 1 of the workshops in May and June 2016, which aimed to share with teachers on how to make use of assessment strategies to facilitate learning and teaching. Over 140 teachers participated in the workshops and 116 feedback forms were received, which showed that the response was positive. Teachers expressed that the workshops are conducive to their work, facilitate schools to reflect on their overall assessment policies and review daily assignments and setting of assessment papers. Part 2 of the workshops will be held in December 2016, which will focus on how to make optimal use of assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching. In the light of the needs of individual schools participating in the Tryout Study, support services are also provided to analyse with schools the TSA school reports provided under the Tryout Study. Furthermore, the Curriculum Development Institute will continue to enhance the assessment literacy of teachers through professional development courses on curriculum leadership and related subjects.

(ii) School-based support services

3.16 Regarding school-based support services (see paragraph 2.16 (ii) above), on-site support is provided by EDB to schools participating in the Tryout Study in the light of their school-based needs. Over 80% of the participating schools selected school-based support services that could address their specific needs. Support officers have helped schools to conduct a holistic review of their school-based

curricula. TSA data and students' performance in schools are analysed and pre-tests are used to diagnose students' learning needs and set the development focuses with schools. Learning evidence gathered from lesson observation, lesson studies, student interviews, etc. is used to adjust teaching plans and strategies. As shown in school questionnaires, all schools consider that professional support has deepened their understanding of how to use the data in the assessment reports and integrate them with internal assessment data to provide feedback to learning and teaching. With respect to students' strengths and weaknesses identified, schools have further conducted a holistic review of their curriculum planning, learning and teaching, and formulated relevant follow up measures. For instance, some schools will focus more on improving students' reading and writing abilities in Chinese Language and English Language. In Mathematics, different schools will adjust their teaching and assessment strategies based on students' performance in individual areas, such as "measurement", to enhance learning effectiveness. At school level, professional leadership is enhanced through direct participation of principals, middle managers and teachers in planning the whole school curriculum and assessment. These show that this support measure is well-received by schools and is conducive to enhancing assessment literacy.

(iii) Developing teaching and assessment materials in collaboration with tertiary institutions

3.17 Regarding the development of teaching and assessment materials and the design of learning activities in collaboration with tertiary institutions and schools participating in the Tryout Study (see paragraph 2.16 (iii) above), 15% of the participating schools were involved and 20% tried out the WLTS materials and STAR. Under this support measure, teachers of the participating schools can develop with tertiary institutions and EDB the learning, teaching and assessment materials which tie in with the school-based curriculum. In this way, teachers are able to have a better grasp of the design concept of teaching materials and techniques, so as to design quality teaching materials and develop school-based curriculum to meet students' learning needs. Participating schools reflect that the materials designed can meet the schools' needs, and are conducive to designing school-based curriculum and teaching materials in the future. Some schools hope EDB could continue to introduce similar programmes in the coming year.

(iv) Parent education

3.18 Among schools which show an interest in co-organising parent education seminars with EDB (see paragraph 2.16 (iv) above), 80% of schools have already started the preparations, and EDB has approached them to co-organise the seminars. Such a mode of collaboration and activities should be able to enhance parents' understanding of assessment literacy.

(IV) Including a Questionnaire Survey on Learning Attitude and Motivation

3.19 Under the Tryout Study, EDB has commissioned CUHK to conduct a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation. The report generated will include an analysis using both TSA and non-academic data. Each participating school receives an analysis report on its school data, including students' learning motivation, the relationship between students' socio-economic status and their academic results, etc. Principals and teachers can identify the factors affecting students' learning attitude and motivation by making reference to the data of the questionnaire survey to improve learning and teaching.

3.20 EDB collected, through respective focus groups, views of principals of schools participating in the Tryout Study and parents on the questionnaire survey on non-academic data. Principals attended the focus groups have a positive response to the questionnaire survey on non-academic data, considering that such a survey enables schools to know more about students' learning from multiple perspectives and identify major factors affecting their academic performance. In this way, schools are able to render support in connection with students' learning, and thus enhance learning and teaching and promote students' development. Meanwhile, the questionnaire survey and related research findings can heighten parents' concern about their children's learning. Parents attended the focus groups expressed no objection to participating in the questionnaire survey in a voluntary manner, suggesting that the survey could help schools understand the factors affecting students' learning. Therefore, the Committee recommends that EDB should continue commissioning an independent organisation to conduct the questionnaire survey on non-academic data, and extend the scope of survey to all schools in the territory, with a view to expanding the sample size to enhance the reference value of data and information. This will help schools map out appropriate strategies to support students' learning and development.

3.21 It is worth-noting that based on the observation of the questionnaire survey, even students studying at the same level in the same school with similar homework and assessment arrangements, their parents may have very diversified views regarding the homework load. This shows that the perception of the load of exercises and homework involves multiple factors.

3.22 The problem of over-drilling has been a concern of the community. Based on the findings of the questionnaire survey, the Committee is aware that there is no direct relationship between the homework load and the academic performance of junior primary students. The quality of homework is more important than the quantity, and over-drilling would affect learning motivation.

3.23 According to the views collected in focus groups for parents from schools participating in the Tryout Study, it is revealed that in the same school, parents might have very diversified views regarding school policy, homework arrangements, purchase of exercises and extra lessons. Some parents pointed out that since there was no drilling nor additional exercises on TSA in schools, they were unaware that their children had already taken TSA. Some parents expressed that daily learning in class was already sufficient for students to handle TSA, they hence had not purchased additional supplementary exercises for their children. Parents also understood that no individual result would be provided under TSA, so students were at ease and did not feel any pressure arising from TSA.

Chapter 4 Vision and Recommendations on the Development of Basic Competency Assessments

(I) Serving the function of "assessment for learning" to promote quality education

Basic Competency Assessments Programme

4.1 In "assessment for learning", assessment is an integral part of the curriculum and an integral part of the Learning-Teaching-Assessment cycle. Its main function is to help schools understand students' learning, progress and needs, as well as their strengths and weaknesses for planning the curriculum, designing teaching and developing school-based assessment in order to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching so as to help students learn more effectively.

4.2 The Education Commission issued "Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong" which sets out detailed proposals for Basic Competency Assessments in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. Basic Competency Assessments Programme comprises three components: Student Assessment Repository (STAR) (formerly Student Assessment (SA)), Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) and Web-based Learning and Teaching Support (WLTS) with a view to carrying out "assessment for learning" in everyday teaching. Schools can use the assessment information (including TSA and STAR information) to understand whether students have attained Basic Competencies in the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics to promote the use of assessment data and schools' development needs and make reference to various resources (such as WLTS) to formulate learning and teaching strategies to enhance learning and teaching.

Diagram 8 Concept map of Basic Competency Assessments Programme

4.3 The Committee is pleased to see that the feedback of the Tryout Study has reaffirmed the core value of promoting quality education raised in the review report submitted in February 2016. Therefore, the Committee **recommends** using the core values as mentioned in paragraph 1.19 as the major principles of enhancing TSA in the future.

4.4 Under the Tryout Study, EDB organised 15 focus group meetings (more than 250 teachers participated), four sharing sessions (more than 160 principals / middle managers participated, including schools not participating in the Tryout Study), 18 focus groups for parents (more than 100 parents of schools participating in the Tryout Study participated), three seminars on subjects (more than 400 teachers from participating and non-participating schools participated) and collected more than 400 questionnaires (including about 80% from schools not participating in the Tryout Study). Concluding various feedback gathered from qualitative and quantitative methods mentioned in Chapter 3, the four major initiatives (improving the assessment papers and question design; enhancing school reports; strengthening professional support measures; and including a questionnaire survey to collect students' non-academic data) under the Tryout Study can effectively direct TSA back on the right track, reflect the original intent of TSA to serve the prime objective of providing feedback to learning and teaching and the low-stakes nature of TSA as an assessment tool.

(II) Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Handling the problem of over-drilling – removing the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA

Design of assessment papers and items

4.5 Views collected through the aforementioned various channels indicated that the improved assessment papers and question design under the Tryout Study could align with the requirements of Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students, tie in with the spirit of the curriculum and students' learning needs. As such, students are able to acquire Basic Competencies in their daily learning without the need of extra preparation or over-drilling specifically for TSA. In this connection, the improved assessment papers and question design has effectively eliminated the incentives for over-drilling. The Committee **recommends** that the improved assessment papers and item design under the Tryout Study should be extended to the TSA thereafter.

Meaningful assignments

4.6 The aforementioned measures have eliminated the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA, hence addressed the public concerns about TSA. However, the Committee continues to be mindful of the over-drilling culture in individual schools. Over-drilling would affect learning motivation. The Committee **recommends** that EDB continue to communicate with the education sector with a view to dealing with the situation of over-drilling.

4.7 The questionnaire survey on "enhancing assessment literacy"[6] showed that more than 98% of schools have formulated school-based homework and assessment policies. Most schools communicated with parents through notices, talks and web pages. The Committee **recommends** that EDB continue to make use of different channels and approaches, such as teacher training programmes, school development visits, school curriculum visits and focus inspections, to see how the various recommendations set out in EDB Circular No. 18/2015, particularly those pertaining to over-drilling, are implemented in schools, and to reiterate that the quality of homework is more important than the quantity. The modes and contents of homework should cater for the learning needs and abilities of students, and teachers need to help students consolidate and extend their learning based on their established foundation. Mechanical drills, repetitive copying and rote learning should be

---

[6] To prepare for professional activities in the coming year, EDB sends questionnaires on "enhancing assessment literacy" to all primary schools in early December to collect information about school-based assignment and assessment policies.

avoided. Schools should also consider more comprehensively and fully the diversity of learning, such as age, gender, physical development/condition, social development, learning ability and needs, interests, family background and expectations, community and cultural contexts of students at different learning stages (including kindergarten) to design diversified and appropriate assignments so that students can have spare time to relax after completing assignments and revising to ensure a balanced physical and psychological development.

4.8 EDB should continue urging schools to strengthen communication with parents. Schools should formulate and coordinate appropriate school-based homework and assessment policies by planning holistically, synthesising the objectives in the three aspects of learning, teaching and assessment, and communicate with parents. Yearly review should be conducted in a timely manner, including whether it is necessary to purchase supplementary exercises, and should seek parents' views on relevant issues through parent-teacher associations in order to reach a consensus and secure parents' co-operation in not arranging their children to have mechanical drills for TSA at external institutions. Also, teachers should use their professional knowledge and make more use of qualitative methods to analyse students' work to provide feedback to learning and teaching with reference to the learning difficulties encountered by students, such as enhancing classroom learning and teaching strategies, learning materials and assessment designs, and design differentiated assignments that are close to students' daily experiences, interesting and progressive, focusing on the cultivation of students' generic skills, such as creativity and problem-solving skills.

4.9 EDB has always attached importance to students' whole-person development. Apart from learning, students also need to have leisure time for doing physical exercises, cultivating personal interests and participating in healthy social life or extracurricular activities, and have enough time for rest and sleep. The Committee understands that schools will provide professionally remedial teaching and appropriate group learning activities based on school contexts to address the needs of individual students (such as non-Chinese speaking students) in helping them to tackle their learning difficulties. However, the Committee considers it is inappropriate for schools to treat drilling and supplementary lessons before and after classes as additional lesson time and make it compulsory for all students to attend. Mechanical drilling is also inappropriate as this enhances students' learning pressure and undermines their learning interests. Therefore, the Committee **recommends** that schools should pay attention to the arrangements of supplementary lessons so as to avoid affecting the healthy growth and whole-person development of students.

Recommendation 2 Removing stakes

Removing stakes and fostering mutual trust

4.10 In fact, the Committee has made concrete recommendations in the review report submitted in February 2016 (please see paragraph 4.4 above) to address various public concerns. EDB has been actively following up the related recommendations, including enhancing various stakeholders' (including school sponsoring bodies, school managers, parents, etc.) understanding of "assessment for learning" to ensure the proper and effective use of TSA data. Therefore, the feedback from schools participating in the Tryout Study and views from various stakeholders (including schools and teachers not participating in the Tryout Study, parents, district parent-teacher associations, parent concern groups, etc.) collected through various channels and methods generally showed that the measures are effective in eliminating the stakes involved, reflecting the low-stakes nature of TSA and deepening the mutual trust among stakeholders.

4.11 As recommended by the Committee in February 2016, EDB has stepped up public education and enhanced training for teaching staff at different stages (including training for prospective teachers, pre-service training for appointed teachers, and in-service training for serving teachers) and the response is positive. The Committee **recommends** that EDB continue to organise these training programmes to enhance the assessment literacy of various sectors, and encourage better use of assessment information or data to provide feedback to learning and teaching and develop and refine the school-based curriculum and learning activities. EDB should continue to work with various stakeholders in their various roles to ensure appropriate use of TSA data in the promotion of quality education which addresses students' learning needs, embodies professionalism and is founded on mutual trust among stakeholders, hence serving the functions of Basic Competency Assessments to the fullest extent.

4.12 To further remove the stakes of TSA and deepen mutual trust, the Committee **recommends** that EDB strengthen internal guidelines to provide clear guidelines on the use of TSA data and information from various sections of EDB.

Recommendation 3 Enhancing communication and deepening mutual trust

The Government and school sponsoring bodies

4.13 Meanwhile, as a principal partner in school management, the Committee **recommends** that EDB maintain communication with school sponsoring bodies and school managers, strengthen professional training and deepen mutual trust, ensuring that TSA data is used properly to achieve the objective of enhancing the school-based curriculum and teaching practices.

Parents and schools

4.14 As parents are one of the major stakeholders of schools, the Committee considers that enhanced communication between parents and schools on education issues facilitates parents' understanding of the concept of "assessment for learning" and the implementation of TSA. Meanwhile, admitting that parents are major stakeholders in education, the Committee **recommends** that EDB and schools continue to enhance parents' understanding of education issues through various channels.

Allocation of resources

4.15 Besides, the Committee **recommends** that the Quality Education Fund can consider including promoting parents' understanding of "assessment for learning" in the priority themes and activities to encourage schools, tertiary institutions, research organisations and non-governmental organisations, etc. to enhance parents' understanding of "assessment for learning", and making use of existing resources to design different types of activities to enhance the assessment literacy of the education sector and parents. Meanwhile, related successful experiences can be shared through the Quality Education Fund Thematic Networks.

Recommendation 4 Enhancing assessment literacy

Providing support for schools and students

4.16 Four types of reports are made available under the Tryout Study for schools' selection to meet their needs. Over 96% of schools participating in the Tryout Study opted for the existing version and the integrated version, while only two schools selected the simplified version (without territory-wide data). It reflects that data at the territory-wide level are of reference value to schools. In general, schools make use of students' results in internal assessments (such as tests and examinations) together with TSA data to understand the standards of students in relation to that of

the territory-wide. Meanwhile, the questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation provides abundant data and information for schools to grasp the factors affecting students' learning. Under the Tryout Study, the analysis of non-academic data enables schools to see the relationship between non-academic factors and students' academic performance from multiple perspectives. This arrangement can be found in some international assessments, such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), that similar kinds of survey are included to understand students' learning. Therefore, the Committee **recommends** that the survey on non-academic data conducted by an independent organisation should be continued, and the sample size of the survey should be expanded to enhance the reference value of the data and information to provide more useful information to schools to provide feedback to learning and teaching. The questionnaire survey on learning attitude and motivation includes schools, students and parents. The Committee **recommends** that the use of questionnaire survey could be further explored to understand the views of schools and parents on homework arrangements and pressure.

4.17 The Committee recognises that targeted support measures contribute significantly to the better use of assessments by schools to facilitate learning. Under the Tryout Study, including workshops, seminars and school-based support services are well-received by schools. The Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to strengthen various support measures to schools to promote "assessment for learning" and enhance assessment literacy. The Committee notices that in the 2014/15 school year, more than 70% (about 370) of primary schools in the territory were provided with the school-based support services, among which about 280 primary schools were provided with support services in relation to the subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. The Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to provide diversified professional support services to schools to cater for the different needs of schools and teachers.

4.18 Besides, the Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to develop and encourage schools and parents to use the Web-based Learning and Teaching Support (WLTS) website. At present, more than 730 sets of learning and teaching resources on the three subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics are available on the website for teachers' use. Such learning and teaching resources are developed according to the learning of Basic Competencies, including lesson plans, suggested learning activities, presentations on teaching practices, worksheets, assessment tasks, etc. Teachers can make use of these resources to help students acquire the Basic Competencies in an effective manner and overcome learning difficulties. The Committee **recommends** that EDB should continue to optimise the Student Assessment Repository (STAR) and continue to encourage teachers to use the resources to optimise learning, teaching and assessment

as well as promoting the concept of assessment for learning.

Recommendation 5 Continuously enhancing the effectiveness and value of TSA

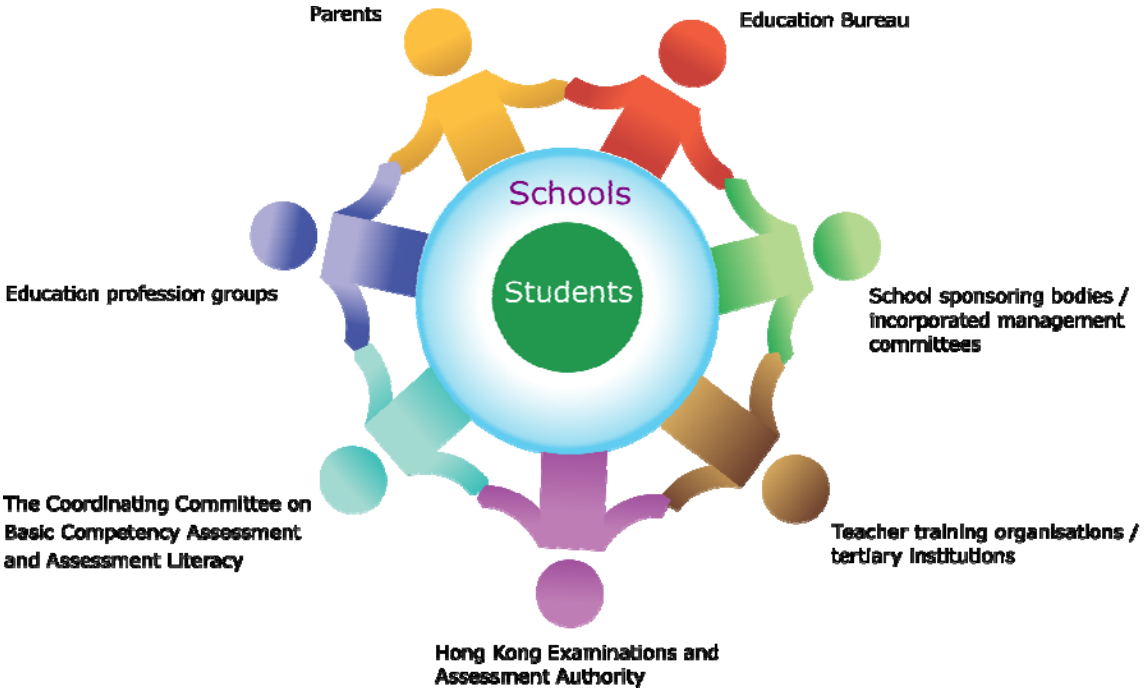
4.19 In the review process of the Tryout Study, the Committee recognises the importance of the roles of various stakeholders in promoting quality education. Therefore, the Committee **recommends** the following framework, which highlights the principles, strategies and respective roles of participation, for participation of various stakeholders. It is hoped that through concerted efforts of all sectors, we can gather strength to serve the function of "assessment for learning".

4.20 Development strategies:

Strategies

- accumulate experience
- drive concerted efforts
- gather strength

Diagram 9 Roles of participating sectors in promoting "assessment for learning"



4.21 Roles of participating sectors in promoting "assessment for learning":

Education Bureau	– maintaining close communication with various stakeholders on an ongoing basis to gather views and recommendations to

	serve as reference for the development of TSA; – making good use of assessment data to grasp the overall Basic Competency levels of students in Hong Kong in order to review education policies, determine the directions of professional training, provide learning and teaching resources, and conduct a further data analysis to understand the learning needs of students at different stages; – providing schools with various support measures, including professional development activities for promoting assessment literacy, the provision of school-based support services, the enhancement of the WLTS and assessment bank, etc.; – enhancing school professional leadership and capacity (including aspiring principals, newly-appointed principals, prospective teachers, appointed teachers, serving teachers, newly-appointed school managers, etc.) to promote whole-person development and a balanced curriculum; – strengthening internal guidelines to enhance public understanding of how EDB will use the TSA information to refine the curriculum development, and enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching; and – removing TSA from the "Performance Indicators" to put emphasis on "assessment for learning".
School sponsoring bodies / incorporated management committees	– encouraging schools to develop the school-based curriculum and assessment policies based on professional decisions in the light of school culture and students' learning needs to support the varied pace of development among different schools; and – assisting schools in consolidating and making optimal use of different assessment data, and analysing and adjusting teaching strategies by incorporating information on students and school backgrounds to facilitate effective student learning.
Schools (principals / panel chairpersons / teachers)	– formulating and implementing school-based homework and assessment policies having regard to school context, students' learning needs and schools' professional decisions; and promoting home-school communication; and – making use of various assessment data to provide feedback

	to learning and teaching, enhancing the curriculum and facilitating student learning.
Teacher training organisations / tertiary institutions	– collaborating with EDB to deepen the concept of "assessment for learning" in various training programmes and courses for principals (aspiring principals and newly-appointed principals), teachers (prospective teachers, appointed teachers and serving teachers) and newly-appointed school managers; and – conducting partnership research programmes/projects to support the Government in making good use of assessment data for tracking studies to serve as reference for education policies and school practices.
Parents	– grasping and understanding the concepts, strategies and arrangements of the school-based homework and assessment policies; and – communicating and collaborating with schools to facilitate students' learning and healthy development.
Parent-teacher associations and regional federation of parent-teacher associations	– assisting schools in gathering parents' views and understanding their concerns, and helping parents grasp schools' homework and assessment policies, as well as the objectives, implementation and functions of assessment; and – organising various activities with different groups to deepen parents' understanding of the concept of "assessment for learning".
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority	– ensuring and maintaining the reliability and validity of Basic Competency Assessments, including maintaining the stringent process of item setting and moderation, improving the papers and question design, enhancing TSA school reports, etc.; and – assisting the Government in promoting the culture of "assessment for learning" in the education sector.
Education profession groups	– taking forward public education activities to encourage and guide the public and the education sector to make use of assessment data with a right and positive attitude to serve the function of "assessment for learning"; and – drawing on different educational resources to form learning communities to share successful experiences in making good use of assessment to benefit learning and teaching.

The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy	– advising the Government on the overall direction for enhancing assessment literacy (including the use of quantitative and qualitative assessment data and the optimal use of information technology to facilitate learning and teaching); and – reviewing and monitoring the development, implementation and effectiveness of TSA on an on-going basis, and offering professional advice and recommendations on the development, implementation and effectiveness of TSA.

Recommendations on TSA 2017 and thereafter

The arrangement of 2017

4.22 The experience of the 2016 Tryout Study shows that the improved assessment papers and question design as well as the enhanced school reports would not exert pressure on school sponsoring bodies, schools, students and parents, and can effectively eliminate the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA and reflect the low-stakes nature of TSA. In addition, according to the feedback from the stakeholders on professional support measures and the questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation, schools treasure and value school level data, which not only provide feedback to learning and teaching, but also facilitate students' learning, thereby reaffirming the intent and value of the establishment of TSA.

4.23 In considering the arrangements for the 2017 TSA, the Committee has taken into consideration the pros and cons of different proposals (such as conducting TSA on a sampling or voluntary basis). TSA, with a number of new elements under the Tryout Study, received favourable and positive feedback which is different from that of the past. The Committee considers that various new initiatives under the Tryout Study should be promoted. The Committee notes that about 90% of primary schools have not tried out the initiatives with new elements under the 2016 Tryout Study. Since assessment is the core of Learning-Teaching-Assessment, schools need to continue to enhance the curriculum as well as learning and teaching through assessment. As such, the Committee **recommends** that professional enhancement arrangements under the Tryout Study (i.e. improving the assessment papers and question design, enhancing school reports, strengthening diversified professional support measures, and including a questionnaire survey on students' learning attitude and motivation) should be extended to all primary schools in 2017, with a view to enabling more schools to understand the new initiatives of the Tryout Study through participation and the Committee and EDB to gather more comprehensive feedback, so as to continue to review and enhance the arrangements of TSA.

4.24 Although the improved assessment papers and question design has eliminated the incentives for over-drilling induced by TSA, the Committee understands that the community is still concerned about the drilling culture and the problem of over-drilling induced by other factors. Therefore, EDB should continue to follow up the aforementioned recommendations relating to the handling of over-drilling and the management of stakes made by the Committee, and to provide schools and students with support measures, and encourage various stakeholders to collaborate to ensure TSA data can be put to full and comprehensive use to enhance teaching arrangements and serve the function of enhancing student learning.

Long-term recommendations

4.25 Meanwhile, the Committee acknowledges that the advancement of information technology enables assessment tools to render more instant, effective, in-depth and interactive analysis and feedback. The Committee considers that in the medium and long run, a study could be conducted to explore how to carry out assessments with the aid of computers and interactive tools to enhance the function of providing feedback to schools. The Committee **recommends** exploring how the existing web-based central assessment item bank for "Student Assessment Repository" (STAR) could be expanded and strengthened to cater for daily learning and teaching as well as assessment. The Committee will continue to study the development of STAR and expects a preliminary recommendation could be available in 2018.

Annexes

Review on the Territory-wide System Assessment ─Tryout Study

List of Groups and Organisations Met

I. Consultation sessions or seminars:

	Activity	Date	Summary
1.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – Professional Sharing Session with Principals	6 June 2016	Annex 1
2.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meetings on Subjects (Chinese Language)	15, 16 & 18 June 2016	Annex 2
3.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meetings on Subjects (English Language)	16 – 18 June 2016	Annex 2
4.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meetings on Subjects (Mathematics)	16 – 18 June 2016	Annex 2
5.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meeting for Markers (Mathematics)	18 July 2016	Annex 2
6.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meeting for Markers (English Language)	19 July 2016	Annex 2
7	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meeting for Markers (Chinese Language)	20 July 2016	Annex 2
8.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – Professional Sharing Session with Principals	14 September 2016	Annex 3
9.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meeting for Principals of Hong Kong Primary Schools	13 October 2016	Annex 4
10.	Meeting with TSA Concern Group	10 November 2016	Annex 5
11.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meeting on School Reports (Chinese Language)	24 November 2016	Annex 6
12.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meeting on School Reports (English Language)	25 November 2016	Annex 7
13.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – HKEAA Focus Group Meeting on School Reports (Mathematics)	28 November 2016	Annex 8
14.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – Focus Group Meeting with Principals	8 December 2016	Annex 9
15.	2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) – Focus Group for Parents	30 November – 9 December 2016	Annex 10

16	Thematic Seminar on “Assessment for Learning – 2016 Tryout Study”	14 and 15 November 2016	Annex 11

II. Briefings on the progress of TSA review (by invitation):

	Activity	Date
1.	Meeting of the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council	22 March 2016
2.	Meeting of the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council	12 December 2016

Annex 1

2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Professional Sharing Session with Principals

Date:	6 June 2016 (Monday)
Time:	4:00-6:00 pm
Venue:	EP12, East Block, EDB Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong
Participants:	Principals (9), Curriculum leaders (1), Subject panel heads (3), EDB representatives (7), HKEAA representatives (4), CUHK representative (1)
Organiser:	Education Bureau

Summary

Item 1: Chinese speaking and audio-visual (CAV) assessments of 2016 Primary 3 TSA

1. **Representatives of EDB** invited views about the arrangements for 2016 Primary 3 TSA speaking and CAV assessments.

   With regard to students' performance, major views of **participants** are as follows:

   - No students are put under pressure because of TSA.
   - Some students are excited about being selected to take part in the speaking assessment.

   With regard to schools, major views of **participants** are as follows:

   - Schools have the responsibility to carry out TSA to provide data as feedback to the Government for formulating education policies.

   With regard to the level of difficulty, major views of **participants** are as follows:

   - The level of difficulty of the items is appropriate, aligning with the standards of Primary 3 students.
   - It seems that there is a discrepancy between speaking items of the two days of assessment in terms of the level of difficulty. **Representatives of HKEAA** responded that the items are basically the same in terms of the level of difficulty upon adjustments. **A participant added** that as HKEAA would adjust the scores by statistical methods, the difference in the level of difficulty should not affect students' performance.

   With regard to the operation of assessment, major views of **participants** are as follows:

   - The operation mode of this year's TSA is consistent with that of the past

years, and the assessment is conducted smoothly.

- Since some invigilators are required to invigilate at schools in remote areas, there is a suggestion that HKEAA should arrange teachers to invigilate in nearby schools. **HKEAA representatives** responded that as there are fewer schools participating in TSA this year, some teachers are required to invigilate at schools in remote areas.

Item 2: Different versions of school reports for 2016 Primary 3 TSA

1. **EDB representatives** briefly introduced the design rationale of different versions of school reports for the 2016 tryout study (Primary 3).
   - The existing version
   - The simplified version (with the correct response rates of items as well as the correct response rates on a territory-wide basis)
     - The correct response rates of the territory are removed.
     - The correct response rates of the territory are only announced at the seminar.
   - The integrated version
     - The overall correct response rates and the performance of students in the territory of each Basic Competency are reported with a qualitative approach, and exemplars are provided.
   - Information analysis report
     - A report on item analysis (in sequence of paper numbers) – a sub-paper of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematic as exemplars.
     - The Basic Competency and assessment focus of each item are set out. An analysis of distractors/learning difficulties of each assessment item is also provided.

2. HKEAA would arrange a briefing session on 9 July giving details about the versions of school reports. Schools participating in the Tryout Study may, in the light of their school-based needs, choose one or more of the four versions mentioned above. HKEAA would conduct focus group meetings to collect schools' views on the reports.

   Participants' views on <u>the existing version</u> are as follows:
   - Since TSA is an assessment for learning, a school should only make internal comparisons. As such, it is not necessary for the existing version to provide the territory-wide percentages. However, there is a contrasting view that the provision of territory-wide percentages can help schools understand their positions in the territory, and such data should be retained.
   - For school reports under the Tryout Study, there is a need to specify that "territory-wide percentages" refer to all schools participating in the Tryout Study to avoid misunderstanding.

   Participants' views on <u>the integrated version</u> are as follows:
   - The integrated version is more concise, enabling parents and school managers to better understand schools' performance.
   - The arrangement of keeping TSA school reports confidential is appropriate,

and this is not the right moment for parents to learn about schools' performance.

- A comparison between schools' performance and the average performance on a territory-wide basis over the past few years should be provided. HKEAA representatives responded that the current online interactive item analysis report has already provided a comparison of schools' performance over the past three years for schools' reference.

Participants' views on information analysis report are as follows:

- Some schools have already conducted, on their own, an in-depth analysis of some TSA items to grasp students' learning performance. The provision of information analysis report enables schools to have a better understanding of students' performance.
- The information analysis report helps provide feedback to learning and teaching and enhance teachers' assessment literacy.
- The analysis of distractors/learning difficulties can be conducted from students' perspective instead of the perspective of item setting. A focus group of students should be set up to find out the reasons of giving wrong answers from students' perspective.

3. Some **participants** expressed their views on not providing primary schools with the attainment rates:
   - There is a need to reconsider providing the overall attainment rates of students in the school reports. EDB should allow flexibility for schools to choose.
   - The attainment rates should be provided. The most important thing is to help school managers and teachers understand how to use the data correctly. EDB representatives responded that public education work would be continued so that different stakeholders could learn how to use the data.
   - It is not possible to maintain consistency among schools if schools can choose whether to obtain the attainment rates.

Item 3: Arrangements for written assessment of 2016 Primary 3 TSA

1. For the arrangements of the Tryout Study (Primary 3) this year, **EDB representatives** consulted participants on the release of assessment items, such as early releasing items with basic competency descriptors and assessment focuses so that different stakeholders could have sufficient time to express their views on item design. **EDB representatives** said that in the past, assessment papers and territory-wide reports together with the student response and performance analysis are all provided in October/November each year so that schools and the public may have information on students' performance for interpreting the assessment items.

2. **Participants'** views are as follows:
   - Items should be released as early as possible so that schools may make the analysis and preparations early.
   - Reference can be made to the practice of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination to upload items immediately upon completion of the assessment.

- The arrangement of the early release of items should not be confined to this year. Rather, it should be implemented as a long-term practice.
- The suggestion on early release of items is supported.

Item 4: Arrangements for collecting non-academic data

1. **Representatives of the institution conducting the survey** shared with participants, taking the relationship between two types of non-academic data (i.e. "breakfast" and "motivation") and the academic data (TSA) as an example, the preliminary findings of the 2015 questionnaire survey while pointing out the importance of collecting non-academic data to grasp the learning performance of students.

2. **EDB representatives** indicated that the CUHK was commissioned to conduct the 2016 questionnaire survey for the Tryout Study, and that more than 50 participating schools would later receive from CUHK the questionnaires for students, parents and schools. Related administrative arrangements are set out in the letter to schools.

3. A **principal** enquired whether EDB will keep the personal data confidential. In response, **EDB representatives** said that the survey is anonymous. It will be conducted by CUHK independently and EDB will not obtain any personal data of students or parents.

4. A **principal** enquired if a parental consent form will be attached to the questionnaire. **CUHK and EDB representatives** responded that this point has been taken into account in designing the questionnaire. As such, the questionnaire will first ask parents if they agree to complete the questionnaire. If they do not agree, they only need to return the blank questionnaire, and their children do not have to fill out the questionnaire.

Annex 2

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Focus Group Meetings
Assessment Design and Question Papers
Summary Report

Background

According to the plan for the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) (Tryout Study) as recommended by the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (Committee) in February 2016, more than 50 primary schools of different types would take part. Modification of the assessment design in the three subjects, Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics was made for the Tryout Study according to the Committee's recommendations. To evaluate the relevant design issues, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) organised a series of focus group meetings as requested by the Education Bureau (EDB) on assessment design and question papers for both marking personnel and non-marking personnel from tryout schools. Views were also collected on other issues, such as school preparation, support required by schools on curriculum planning and assessment literacy and future TSA.

Focus group opinions were summarised in this report and have been forwarded to EDB. It is hoped that the views collected will enable us to identify the needs and difficulties faced by the students and schools during the Tryout Study. Thus, a solid foundation can be built for the medium and long term proposals set by the Committee.

Target Groups

The Education Assessment Services Division (EASD) of the HKEAA organised a total of 12 Focus Group Meetings (FGMs) in mid-June 2016 for marking and non-marking personnel, immediately after the assessment. All tryout schools were invited and a total of 93 teachers of CEM from 32 schools attended the meetings. Other attendees included members of the Committee, representatives from the EDB and the HKEAA. Table 1 shows the number of attendees per subject (non-marking personnel). A total of 39 teachers attended the FGMs conducted on-screen marking in mid-July. This included 36 marking personnel from 27 tryout schools. Markers were drawn from tryout schools and appointed according to their order of merit in terms of the points system[1] for marker selection. Table 2 shows the number of marking personnel attending the FGM per subject.

Table 1. No. of attendees of 9 FGMs for non-marking personnel per subject

Attendee	Chinese Language	English Language	Mathematics
Teachers	29	30	34
Committee Members	3	3	3
EDB Representatives	6	6	4

[1] This system takes the applicant's academic qualifications and relevant teaching and marking experience into account.

HKEAA Representatives	9	8	7
Total	47	47	48

Table 2. No. of attendees of 3 FGMs for marking personnel per subject

Attendee	Chinese Language	English Language	Mathematics
Markers	14	4	12
Assistant Examiners	3	2	1
Chief Examiners	1	1	1
Total	18	7	14

Mode and Focus of Meeting

The FGMs consisted of 2 hours of semi-structured questions and responses. The focus of the meetings was as follows:

1. Assessment design
2. Item suitability
3. School preparation
4. Provision of support measures by the EDB
5. Future TSA

Overview

An overview of the FG meetings where major issues were discussed and views from the school representatives (both marking and non-marking personnel) were as follows:

1. Primary 3 Chinese Language

The assessment design for the Chinese Language Assessment of the Tryout Study was based on the Committee's recommendations.

1.1 Modified Assessment Design of Primary3 Chinese Language

a) Primary 3 Chinese Reading

- The number of texts in the reading assessment had been adjusted from three to two.
- The total number of words per sub-paper had been limited to 1,200 and the number of items had been limited to 20.
- Practical writing was only included in one of the sub-papers of reading to avoid giving undue weight to practical writing.

b) Primary 3 Chinese Writing

- In the writing assessment, certain information required for practical writing was provided, such as salutation, complimentary close, greetings and date of a letter, etc.
- The marking criteria on the format of practical writing had been adjusted.
- Student exemplars demonstrating the attainment of Basic Competency were provided as needed.

c) Primary 3 Chinese Language – Overall

- A review of 'five-options-choose-two' items had been conducted.

1.2 Views on Primary 3 Chinese Language Assessment Design

a) Primary 3 Chinese Reading Assessment

- Teachers were satisfied with the overall design of the reading assessment.
- The number of texts in the reading assessment was properly adjusted from three to two. This adjustment was appropriate and students were able to complete the assessment within the given time. Students had ample time to read the passages in detail and thus the 'reading load' stress on students was reduced.
- A variety of text types, e.g. leaflets (單張), posters (海報) in practical writing (實用文) was found. Most teachers welcomed this approach and agreed that students needed more exposure to a variety of text types so as to widen their cognitive domain. However, a few teachers stated concerns that it would take time to teach various text types and some 'weak' students might find it difficult to cope with a wider variety of text types.
- Reading components with stories 'in series' (with two parts of the same theme) were welcome by most teachers. However, a few teachers mentioned that some 'weak' students might have difficulty in reading parts of the same theme. Some teachers felt that students found it easier to comprehend and answer questions when reading two independent stories rather than reading a story 'in series'.
- Individual teachers pointed out that the vocabulary used in Sub-paper 1 was easier than that in Sub-paper 2. The passage length of Sub-paper 2 was also longer.

b) Primary 3 Chinese Writing Assessment

- Part of the format for the invitation card was given. However, some students thought that the box given was used for signature or writing their own name rather than the date as was actually the case. The format provided to students for practical writing needed improvement.
- Individual teachers observed that the time given for writing seemed not sufficient. A few teachers pointed out that some 'weak' students had difficulty completing a piece of practical writing and a short text within the 40 minutes allotted. It was suggested an extra 5 minutes be allotted to the Chinese writing assessment.
- The graphic illustrations given in the task for 'Picture writing' were abundant. It was felt that this would arouse students' interest in writing and enable them to write a piece of writing with adequate content. However, a few teachers were concerned that if students had no

experience in the context of the picture, they might find it difficult to express themselves.

- A few teachers suggested supplying vocabulary items needed for writing short texts. This could enable weaker students to write properly.
- The marking criteria amended from 4 levels to 3 levels in practical writing was welcome by teachers. The reduction in marking criteria for the 'content' and 'structure' in short text writing from 5 levels to 4 levels was welcome.

c) Primary 3 Chinese Listening Assessment

- The topics used in the listening assessment were interesting and suitable for students at Primary 3 levels.
- The reading aloud of questions after the main text had been played was useful. This helped 'weak' students to a certain extent.

1.3 Views on Primary 3 Chinese Language Item Suitability

a) Primary 3 Chinese Reading Items

- The reading items were of appropriate level for assessing the Basic Competencies of Primary 3 students. The word prompts provided were also clear. Items on the whole were straightforward and easy for students.
- The number of items requiring reverse thinking had been reduced and 'five-option-choose-two' items were removed. This arrangement reduced the stress felt by students.
- Some items were better designed than others. Students had to comprehend the passage first in order to answer the questions (avoiding direct lifting questions). Specific paragraphs were 'hinted' to students as sources for answers, e.g. answers for items designed to assess the use of vocabulary.

b) Primary 3 Chinese Writing Items

- The topics and level of difficulty of practical writing and short text writing were suitable for students at Primary 3 level.
- It was observed that the two writing tasks were related. Students could make use of the information from an invitation (to a carnival) to facilitate their writing for a short text (a description about children's carnival).

c) Primary 3 Chinese Listening Items

- The listening items were suitable for students in general.
- Most teachers found that items on understanding the meaning of intonation were suitable for Primary 3 students. However, a few teachers stated that such items were difficult for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students.

- A few teachers commented that the answer options were quite wordy. 'Weak' students might have difficulty discriminating between correct and incorrect answer options.
- A few teachers suggested that before doing the listening tasks, extra time should be allotted for reading the listening questions.

d) Primary 3 Chinese Speaking Items

- The topics used in the individual story-telling and group interactions were suitable for students at Primary 3 level. However, the speaking assessment was difficult to NCS students in general.
- The quantity of pictorial cues given for story-telling varied among assessment tasks. Some topics in individual story-telling were perceived easier for students to come up with more ideas than the other topics.
- A few teachers stated that 'group interaction' items would be difficult for lower primary students. The content of the conversation was mostly superficial. It was suggested that assessing only individual story-telling was already sufficient to reflect students' speaking ability.

e) Primary 3 Chinese Audio-visual Items

- The topics used were suitable for students at Primary 3 level.
- The level of difficulty for audio-visual items was suitable for students at Primary 3 level. The voice of the video clip was clear.

2. Primary 3 English Language

2.1 Modified Assessment Design of Primary 3 English Language

The assessment design for the English Language Assessment of the Tryout Study was based on the Committee's recommendations.

Primary 3 English Reading and Writing

- The number of parts in the reading assessment had been reduced from four to three.
- The length of each reading task limited to 150 words and the length of the whole paper had been properly capped at 400 words.
- To help students manage the assessment time for the reading and writing paper, invigilators should announce the time twice during the examination, i.e. 15 minutes and 5 minutes before the end of examination.
- Items expecting answers in the past tense in the writing assessment had been scrapped (i.e. writing a recount).
- Assessment items on basic book concepts were to be avoided.

2.2 Views on Primary 3 English Language Assessment Design

a) Primary 3 English Listening Assessment

- The listening tasks, which were related to students' daily life experiences, and as such, were authentic and interesting. They were found to be suitable for Primary 3 students.

b) Primary 3 English Reading Assessment

- The reading tasks covered a variety of text types within the Primary 3 curriculum and were suitable for students at Primary 3 level. The coverage in the assessment papers was found to be adequate. Students were felt to be confident in doing the assessment.
- The topics in the reading tasks were familiar to Primary 3 students as they were related to students' daily life experiences. However, the topic of one story (about a dancer) in one sub-paper was less familiar to students.
- Teachers opined that the total assessment time for each reading and writing paper (i.e. 30 minutes) was appropriate. They suggested that 15 minutes be allotted to reading was found to be suitable for students. Students had enough time to complete the assessment.
- The reading load for each paper was found to be suitable. The reading load of each part of the paper progressively increased from about 50 words to about 130 words. Teachers found this arrangement appropriate. With the decrease in the number of parts in each paper, teachers found that the students were able to complete the assessment papers with ease.
- The total number of reading items (about 20) in each paper was appropriate for Primary 3 students. Moreover, the total number of reading items (about 5-7) in each part was appropriate for Primary 3 students.
- Teachers also found that it was appropriate to put 'line numbers' on the left along the reading text and the options of the multiple choice questions (AB and CD) parallel to each other.
- Teachers considered that items related to book concept should not be removed from the assessment because students were familiar with these items.

c) Primary 3 English Writing Assessment

- The topics of the writing tasks were related to students' daily life experiences. The word prompts or questions prompts given in the writing tasks were found to be useful and appropriate. The increased number of word prompts in storytelling helped students to write. The pictures in the picture-aided storytelling were clear.
- One teacher raised her concern that the instructions in the picture-aided storytelling (i.e. write the story in about 30 words) might be misleading to students. Some of them might stop writing when they had written 30 words although they had the time and ability to write further.

- It was suggested that the two writing tasks for the first two sub-papers should differ so that the majority of students taking the assessment could be exposed to a wider variety of writing tasks.

d) Primary 3 English Speaking Assessment

- The topics of the speaking papers were familiar to students and some students would find the tasks easy. However, teachers found some students were still nervous during the assessment.
- The topics of the speaking papers were easy for students.

2.3 Views on Primary 3 English Language Item Suitability

a) Primary 3 English Listening Items

- The listening items were of appropriate level for Primary 3 students. The listening tasks were suitable for Primary 3 students in terms of difficulty level. Items were straightforward and easy for students.
- The length of the listening papers (17-20 minutes) was appropriate for Primary 3 students.
- The artwork in the listening tasks was clear to students. However, it was felt that an item showing the facial expression of a girl expressing fear might not be clear enough to students.
- The vocabulary used in both the listening tapescripts and the items was familiar to Primary 3 students. The distractors built in the spoken texts were found to be appropriate.
- It was a good arrangement to have the story divided into parts so that it would be easy for students to follow the development of the story.

b) Primary 3 English Reading Items

- The reading tasks were of appropriate level to Primary 3 students. The vocabulary used was easy and the items were straightforward. No 'tricky items' were found. Students were attentive when doing the assessments and some students expressed that they enjoyed the reading tasks.
- The reading tasks were authentic and the length of the reading texts was of appropriate length for Primary 3 students.
- The layout of the reading texts was clear and easy to read. The pictures of the items were very clear to the students. It was suggested that the story could be spilt into two parts with relevant questions inserted after each part. This would improve the layout of the story and the relevant reading items,
- The use of past tense in the reading text was a concern of the teachers as they thought it might have impact on the difficulty level of the reading assessments.

- The items set on pronoun references were good. However, it was suggested that the pronoun should be put closer to the subject it referred.

3. Primary 3 Mathematics

The assessment design for the Mathematics Assessment of the Primary 3 Tryout Study was based on the Committee's recommendations.

3.1 Modified Assessment Design of Primary 3 Mathematics

- The number of items had been reduced, with an immediate cut of around 20%.
- Only one Basic Competency was assessed in each item.
- Items requiring solving linking problems had been minimised.

3.2 Views on Primary 3 Mathematics Assessment Design

- The amended number of items per each sub-paper was appropriate. There were fewer questions in each sub-paper of the Tryout Study and the total score per each sub-paper was about 20% smaller than that in TSA 2015. It was suggested that the number of items per each sub-paper should be the same or less in the future.
- The proportion of various item types in each sub-paper was appropriate. The design of various item types was suitable for motivating Primary 3 students. There were only 1 or 2 questions requiring 'show working' per each sub-paper.
- Students this year had more time for checking their answers after finishing all items as a result of the reduction in the number of items.
- Some diagrams could be simplified, for instance, the number of lines in Q29/3M2 could be reduced for easier identification of lines.
- Use of real-life objects should be done cautiously since there could be ambiguity in the identification of 3-D shapes, e.g. Q25/3M1.
- Some items on 'Measure' dimension were more suitable for assessment in 'practical' mode rather than 'paper and pen' mode, for instance, Q21/3M4.

3.3 Views on Primary 3 Mathematics Item Suitability

- The Mathematics items of 2016 Tryout Study were easy and straightforward. The level of difficulty of all items was appropriate for Primary 3 students. All items were suitable for assessing the basic competencies of Primary 3 students and no items were beyond BC level. The level of difficulty of items with the north direction not pointing upward was acceptable, for instance, Q31/3M4.
- There were no 'overly tricky questions' and 'follow-through' questions in the Maths papers.

- All students finished within 30 to 35 minutes on average. For SEN students, they could finish within 40 minutes, i.e. the official assessment time.
- The number of pictures drawn by the students in a pictogram could be reduced, for instance, Q33/3M2.

4. Views on School Preparation

4.1 Primary 3 Chinese Language

- A Chinese Language teacher shared the situation of her school. She was worried that the implementation of the Tryout Study was not sufficient to reduce drilling in school. Teachers still had to give focused training to students on writing. Primary 3 students still had difficulty completing writing tasks.
- Some Chinese Language teachers mentioned that drilling on writing started from Primary 1 or Primary 2. They commented that students at higher primary levels lost interest in writing because they had been 'over-drilled' in lower primary levels. They therefore recommended that EDB should pay attention to the situation of drilling at lower primary levels.
- Some teachers mentioned that their schools did not urge their students to do supplementary exercises though supplementary exercises had been purchased. This was because of the 'noise' from the public regarding TSA drilling.
- Some Chinese Language teachers stated that doing supplementary exercises was still necessary because students needed practice in basic reading strategies and familiarisation with the format of the assessments.
- Some schools made use of past TSA items for students to practise. However, a few schools insisted exercises be tailor-made for their students by teachers instead of buying exercises.

4.2 Primary 3 English Language

- English teachers stated that there were no 'extra' lessons for the TSA preparation in their schools. However, they did provide some mock TSA practice to students to get them familiarised with TSA format and assessment procedures. Their students could do supplementary exercises on TSA to the same end. However, they were not sure if their schools would order supplementary exercises on TSA in the coming academic year.
- There was a discussion on why there was drilling at schools. In order to avoid drilling at school, the possibility of reducing the content of the assessment should be explored.

4.3 Primary 3 Mathematics

- In some schools, students had already bought one Mathematics supplementary exercise book at the beginning of 2015/16 academic year. Therefore, they were asked to do some exercises for revision only. Only supplementary exercises for enrichment in certain topics would be bought for Primary 1 to Primary 3 students.
- Some teachers held that supplementary exercises matching the topics of Primary 3 Mathematics (not for TSA) were provided to students. Some teachers mentioned that they just gave school-based handouts and worksheets for self-revision by the students. Some teachers stated that only the mock papers and TSA past papers would be done before the assessment each year.
- Some teachers mentioned that no preparation should be necessary because all items were aimed at BC level and basic competency was a foundation of the curriculum.
- Some schools stopped extra tutorials and supplementary exercises for Maths in the second term. Only revision of Primary 1 to Primary 2 topics was conducted in some schools and no extra tutorials were arranged. However, some schools arranged remedial classes for students at or below the average standard and a few schools arranged extra lessons for all students on 1 or 2 days per week.
- Some teachers mentioned that they preferred students not be required to buy any TSA supplementary exercises in 2016/17 academic year and would compile past TSA paper by topic for revision.

5. Views on Provision of Support Measures by EDB

- Teachers expressed that what they needed most was support service from the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) on curriculum planning. They also considered that workshops on the interpretation of assessment data and assessment quality would be useful to them in providing feedback on learning and teaching.
- Teachers also expressed that the professional development programmes such as ‘school-based item setting’ workshops were helpful for them. Assessment literacy courses were useful to school teachers without formal training in Mathematics.
- School-based support scheme was useful and web-based learning and teaching support (WLTS), particularly English Mathematics resources for schools using English as medium of instruction (MOI) was necessary.
- EDB could provide workshops for parents on how to cultivate their children’s learning habits and get more information about their children’s learning and performance.

6. Views on Future TSA

6.1 Assessment Design and Question Papers

- Teachers agreed that the tryout version could reduce pressure on them and future TSA should follow the assessment design of this tryout.
- Some teachers saw the value of TSA since TSA could prepare students for their learning and development. TSA should be treated in a positive manner.
- Teachers opined that the setting of TSA papers in future should be of more or less the same level as those items in this year's tryout version as the item difficulty level was suitable for Primary 3 students.
- A few Chinese Language teachers asked if a separate assessment could be designed for students with special needs.
- Most teachers did not notice that the assessment papers of the tryout had been uploaded to the HKEAA website immediately after the assessment had been completed. They opined that there was no need for the papers to be uploaded so quickly since most of the schools would do the paper analysis after the release of results. However, a few teachers expressed that this practice could alleviate the stress of media inquiries on schools.

6.2 Implementation of TSA

- Some teachers stated that there was a need to implement TSA every year as TSA would provide data to enhance learning and teaching.
- It was suggested that the assessment dates of TSA written assessment should be postponed one week to avoid the clash with school examinations in mid-June.

6.3 Reporting

- Teachers opined that TSA data were useful for learning and teaching purposes. However, they could use their professional judgment in designing teaching notes and exercises to suit the needs of individual students.
- The school reports should show the strengths and weaknesses of student performances in each dimension or learning unit. They could highlight those areas which are worthy of attention by providing relevant student exemplars for each school.
- Qualitative reporting could provide some entry points to strengthen learning and teaching.
- It was suggested that the bar charts showing 'three years' performance' should be downloadable from the school reports and saved for easy reference.
- A new hierarchy of the data and charts for analysis was suggested as follows: dimension → learning unit → BC → item.

7. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations made by school representatives (both marking personnel and non-marking personnel). It is hoped that on one hand these recommendations would enable modifications/improvements in future TSA and on the other hand, allow a solid foundation for the medium and long term proposals set by the Committee.

7.1 Acceptance of the Modified Assessment Design

- According to the feedback from markers and non-marking personnel of the tryout schools, the modified assessment design of the three subjects was well accepted on the whole and could reduce the stress felt by students.
- Teachers mentioned that item difficulty of the three subjects was well gauged at the BC level of Primary 3 students. Students in general were able to complete the assessment within the given time.
- The coverage of topics and text types of as well as the total number of words for each language sub-paper was found appropriate. The spread of BC assessed in each Mathematics sub-paper was adequate and suitable.
- Teachers recommended the modified assessment design should be adopted for future TSA. Moreover, since the item level difficulty was suitable for Primary 3 students, the setting of future TSA papers should be of more or less the same level as the items in this year's tryout version.

7.2 Reporting

- The school reports should show the strengths and weaknesses of students' performance in each dimension, learning unit or question intent by using student samples to illustrate common mistakes.
- Online item analysis reports and 'three years' performance' charts should be further enhanced.
- Qualitative reporting can also be an entry point to enhance learning and teaching.

7.3 Teacher Professional Development

- Regarding the difficulties encountered by teachers, teacher professional development on assessment literacy is highly recommended. The areas include item setting, interpretation and analysis of TSA data, designing quality assessment paper, and devising curriculum plan and teaching strategies according to the TSA results.

Annex 3

2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Professional Sharing Session with Principals

Date:	14 September 2016 (Wednesday)
Time:	4:00-6:00 pm
Venue:	WP01, West Block, EDB Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong
Participants:	Principals (18), Vice-principals (2), Curriculum leaders (2), Subject panel heads (3), EDB representatives (7), HKEAA representatives (2), HKEdCity representative (1)
Organiser:	Education Bureau

Summary

Item 1: 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

1. **Representatives of HKEAA** reported on the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3):
   - TSA at Primary 3 level was conducted, and the marking of which was completed in July;
   - Views collected from invigilators, participating schools and markers reflect that the revamped assessment design is appropriate and the items are fittingly set;
   - The types of reports made available by HKEAA for schools' selection are existing version, simplified version and integrated version, and most schools choose the existing and integrated versions;
   - The information analysis report is distributed to every participating school and can be viewed on the system of Online Item Analysis.

2. **Representatives of EDB** added that the analysis of the distractors in multiple-choice items in the information analysis report could enable schools to have a better understanding of students' learning performance.

Item 2: The 'Student Assessment Repository' (STAR) Platform

3. **Representatives of HKEdCity** introduced the new STAR platform.
   - The new STAR platform would be launched on 30 September to replace the Student Assessment system of HKEAA;
   - Four seminars on the STAR platform would be conducted on 14, 15, 21 and 22 October respectively.

4. **Representatives of EDB** added that the new platform has a number of optimised features, such as setting the number of tasks for each Basic Competency in assessment papers, the function of bookmarking and the accessibility by different computer devices.

Item 3: Arrangements for 2017 Primary 3 TSA

5. A **school representative** enquired if Primary 3 TSA would resume for the current school year. **EDB representatives** responded that no final decision has been made because views from various sectors on the Tryout Study are still being collated for deliberation by the Committee.

6. A **school representative** enquired if there is a deadline for deciding whether to conduct Primary 3 TSA as scheduled for the current school year. **EDB representatives** responded that the decision will not be made too late because HKEAA needs time to make preparations if Primary 3 TSA is to be conducted.

7. A **school representative** said that the Primary 3 TSA issue has been politicised and there are concerns that EDB may postpone or even hold back its implementation. **EDB representatives** affirmed TSA's feedback to learning and teaching and undertook to explore, in a professional manner, the feasibility and implementation modes of Primary 3 TSA for the current school year. EDB would maintain communication with the education sector and inform schools of the decision as soon as possible.

Annex 4

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Focus Group Meeting for Principals of Hong Kong Primary Schools

Date:	13 October 2016 (Thursday)
Time:	9:30 am-12:00 noon
Venue:	Room 102, San Po Kong Office, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Participants:	School representatives (136), Members of the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (4), EDB representatives (6) and HKEAA representatives (4)
Organiser:	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Summary

Development of Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA)

- EDB representatives pointed out that the Tryout Study was still in progress, including report formats, support measures and questionnaire survey, etc. so the schedule was tight. The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (Committee) was still reviewing relevant issues discussed and would consider the plan without any presuppositions. According to the experience and feedback gained from the Tryout Study, the Committee would announce the arrangements as soon as possible.

Question design

- A principal expressed that the whole school supports TSA. Students and teachers reflected that the items were easier and students had enough time to answer the questions. If using easy items could still achieve the purpose of the assessment, this approach should continue.
- A principal stated that as long as the items aligned with Basic Competencies, students did not need to practise.
- A principal said that students could handle TSA with a little preparation beforehand.
- A principal mentioned that 'diagnostic information' be considered when items were developed. The information should list on the rationale of proposed answer and options for multiple choice items.

- A principal admitted the professionalism of HKEAA and EDB in evaluating the items.

- A participant wished to know if the 2017 TSA papers had been prepared and pointed out giving thoughts on the appropriateness of the level of difficulty when setting question items. HKEAA responded that the comments are still being collected and would take into account the recommendations.

School reports

- EDB representatives stated that TSA results and reports were usually released in November and the Tryout Study will follow this schedule.

- A principal expressed their strong support for TSA and appreciated the "diagnostic report" and the school-based support services provided by EDB.

- A principal cum Committee member indicated that schools participating in the Tryout Study could select different types of reports. The diagnostic report not only reveals analysis of the wrong answers, but also the right answers, in great details.

- A principal did not mind when schools could receive reports. The most important thing was whether the contents of the report can help students.

- A principal commented that schools should not be allowed to choose report formats because this would result in variations. Making choice would bring pressure to schools because schools had to communicate with various stakeholders, e.g. school supervisor, parents before making the choice.

- A school representative thought that the simplified version has little effect.

- HKEAA representative responded that schools can select the appropriate report according to the school context. Moreover, HKEAA representative also pointed out that the response rate is not equal to the Basic Competency attainment rate.

Use of data

- One principal raised the suggestion that school reports could be ‘blurred’ so as to deter school management board putting pressure on schools for better TSA results. Actually, the pressure felt by schools was not from the data but from the way how EDB used the data. It was suggested that the data should only be given to schools, not to EDB.

- Another principal was concerned about which ‘ranks’ and which ‘divisions’ with the EDB could obtain TSA data.

- Yet another principal stated that the EDB should handle and use the TSA data properly. He also agreed that the more data that schools received, the better it was.

- A principal said that TSA is student-oriented and will not put pressure on students. The most important thing is to let students know the level of students.

- A principal was concerned about the part describing students' performance in Chinese, English and Mathematics in the ESR report. He wondered what the ESR team would base their views on judging students' performance if they did not have the TSA data for reference.

- A principal mentioned that in school year 2004/2005 when he was the school head at the time, the ESR (External School Review) put pressure to the school.

Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) / Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students

- A school representative stated that the Chinese proficiency level of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students did not enable them to take TSA. The Chinese proficiency level of the Secondary 3 NCS students in his school was equivalent to Chinese speaking students at Primary 3 level. Thus, he felt that they should not take part in the assessment.

- A principal from a special school mentioned that the TSA data could identify their students' strengths and weaknesses objectively.

- EDB representatives indicated that there were two supplementary reports in which data of NCS and SEN were removed.

- HKEAA representatives supplemented that starting from 2015, schools with 5 or more than 5 NCS students taking the Chinese Assessment would receive a report. The report shows the performance of NCS students in the school and that of the NCS Cohort territory-wide.

School-based support measures

- A representative from a non-tryout school mentioned that many schools were attracted to the Tryout Study because of the extra support measures provided to tryout schools. The tryout schools got priority in terms of support services. Other schools found this unfair. Moreover, if the Tryout Study is good in itself, it is not necessary to solicit schools to take part by offering them extra support.

- A principal cum Committee member pointed out that extra provision of school-based support was given to the tryout schools. Therefore, this would not affect the support to non-tryout schools.

Directions and arrangements of 2017 TSA

- A principal cum Committee member opined that the views from Committee's members were very professional. The direction of 2017 was not yet announced up till today because varied views were found within the Committee. According to the findings from the questionnaire completed in the tryout schools, about 90% of stakeholders were positive about the Tryout Study.

- A principal mentioned that 2017 was a critical year and the future implementation should be announced as soon as possible. Otherwise, if the tryout mode in 2016 was adopted for the full cohort, provision of support services could not be that intensive.

- A principal pointed out that suspension could be considered in 2017. This allowed EDB to review the content and experience learned from the 2016 Tryout

Study and to properly handle the matter of 2017 TSA.

- A principal opined that tracking studies must be continuous, it is necessary to conduct the assessment every year. In addition, conducting it in alternate years might cause dissatisfaction from parents of participating schools.

Others

1. Views from participating principals and school representatives:

- Supported TSA and suggested considering the method used by PISA. It is conducted on a sampling basis and not all students will take the assessment. Items are not released and the results are only disclosed to EDB.
- There was no problem having TSA assessed every year. The greatest pressure felt by the schools was from Pre S1 Attainment Test.
- Hoped EDB could openly clarify objectives of TSA.
- TSA might not be able to enable schools to understand students' inadequacy. This was because there were different students in each year and that the problems encountered by students this year might not occur the following year.
- A school received unanimous agreement and support from the Parent-Teacher Association, School Management Committee and all teachers in joining the Tryout Study.
- Schools are supported by public money and so the government has the responsibility to know the learning status of the schools. EDB is required to consider how TSA has been developed.
- It was normal that pressure was felt in learning or implementing a policy. We should not give up under pressure.
- It was suggested that the dates for TSA be postponed for two weeks since the current dates crashed with the internal school examination.
- It was proposed to replace TSA with internal school examination and then do analysis. It was also pointed out that parents' academic qualifications and support constitute 30% of students' academic results.
- Student Assessment (SA) was very useful and expected that the STAR platform would be even better.
- HKEAA is only responsible for devising questions and conducting the assessment and that the allegations against HKEAA are inappropriate
- Consideration had to be taken into whether the resources have addressed the issue, and has TSA addressed learning diversity.

2. Response from EDB representatives:

- On the whole the stakeholders from the Education sector agreed with the direction of 'assessment for learning'.
- TSA is a low-stakes assessment. There are no individual students' results and

therefore students would not have great pressure from it. Schools can contact EDB for support services based on their needs. EDB would also enhance the support measures.

- Regarding the use of 'students' non-academic data', schools were required to obtain parents' consent in order to arrange their students to complete the questionnaire. The findings of the questionnaire enabled schools to understand their students' habits so that schools could find out why students could do / could not do in learning.

Annex 5

Meeting with TSA Concern Group

Date:	10 November 2016 (Thursday)
Time:	6:00-8:00 pm
Venue:	W425, West Block, EDB Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong
Participants:	Representatives of TSA Concern Group (7), EDB representatives (3), Representative of Committee on Home-School Co-operation (1)
Organiser:	Education Bureau

Summary

Item 1: Issues of concerns of TSA Concern Group (Concern Group)

- Report on Review of the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) to be released in December;
- Arrangements of 2017 TSA;
- The final report of the Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides.

Item 2: Over-drilling and pressure brought by TSA

1. **Representatives of Concern Group** opined TSA is too difficult for students so it brings about drilling and exerts tremendous pressure on them. This affects the time for rest and extra-curricular activities; and thus their health. It is proposed to abolish TSA.

2. Response from **Education Bureau (EDB) representatives**
   - A series of improvement measures have been implemented under the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) (Tryout Study), such as refining TSA papers, reducing the number of items, modifying reporting formats, etc. so as to eliminate the incentives of drilling;
   - Basic Competencies assessed in TSA are part of the curriculum, drilling will not be necessary;
   - EDB has always been opposed to mechanical drills;
   - Parents are encouraged to strengthen their communication with schools in order to understand their homework and assessment policies and to make use of different channels, including parent managers and parent-teacher association.

3. **Representative of Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC)** expressed they noticed news earlier reporting that drilling for TSA has been reduced.

4. Response from **Concern Group representatives**

- In the last school year, there was a decrease in drilling because there was no TSA;
- Some schools have recently issued a notice calling on Primary 3 and Primary 6 students to take extra lessons. It seems to be drilling to prepare for TSA;
- Although EDB has indicated to schools that TSA data will not be used to assess schools, there are schools using TSA data for comparisons between subjects or between schools. Therefore, EDB's improvement measures have not relieved pressure on schools. Such pressure has become the pressure for teachers and students;
- A parent representative revealed that she indicated to the school or parent-teacher association that she did not agree with drilling but did not receive a positive response, and transferring to another school is often not feasible.

Item 3: Impacts of TSA on Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

1. **EDB representatives** pointed out there are special arrangements such as fewer assessment items for students with SEN attending TSA.

2. Response from **Concern Group representatives**
   - Some students with SEN are not good at Chinese, English and Mathematics but possess other expertise. Since schools indulge in the atmosphere of TSA, students with SEN do not get the recognition of what they deserve.
   - TSA's impact on students with SEN is not due to TSA itself, but rather from drilling and extra lessons which make students with SEN more difficult to tackle.

Item 4: Use of TSA data

1. Issues put forward by **Concern Group representatives**
   - If EDB wants to understand the overall student performance of the territory, the Tryout Study has proved conducting TSA on a sampling basis is adequate;
   - Many participating schools in the Tryout Study did not participate voluntarily and this reflects schools do not perceive the importance of TSA data on providing feedback to learning and teaching.

2. Response from **EDB representatives**
   - At the territory-wide level, TSA data helps the Government review education policies, provide resources and set directions of support measures and professional training, etc., including facilitating the review of education policies, setting directions and priorities of professional training, providing learning and teaching resources, planning school-based support services, reviewing the curriculum and using related data for further analysis;
   - At the school level, TSA school reports are provided. Related information helps teachers identify the strengths and weaknesses of overall students and formulate plans to improve the effectiveness of learning and teaching with reference to the assessment data and their schools' development needs. Schools can use TSA data to complement internal data for generating useful

information to provide feedback to learning and teaching;

- Feedback from the two levels is equally important. EDB always encourages the use of assessment data to serve the function of "assessment for learning". If sampling is adopted, some schools will not have relevant school reports for a long time and will lose valuable reference information to provide feedback to learning and teaching.

Item 5: Recommendations

1. EDB, school sponsoring bodies and parent representatives are invited to sign a charter for building up mutual trust and supporting schools not to drill for TSA and abuse the use of TSA data.

2. Suggestions from **Concern Group representatives**
   - The questionnaire survey of parents and teachers of the territory should be conducted by an independent institution. The scope should cover the amount of homework, the extent of extra lessons and drilling, and perception of TSA, etc. so as to truly grasp the source of pressure;
   - All information related to the Tryout Study and the arrangements of 2017 TSA should be as transparent as possible in order to minimise parental worries;
   - If TSA will be conducted in 2017, the sampling size should be small and schools' participation should be on a voluntary basis.

Item 6: Concluding note

EDB representatives summarised this meeting:

- It is a frank and constructive meeting. Suggestions by Concern Group will be passed to the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy for discussion, including the issue of over-drilling. It is hoped to be able to work out positive tackling strategies;
- Both sides admit TSA's positive role;
- It is agreed that consultation on the arrangements of 2017 TSA should be as transparent as possible.

Annex 6

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Education Assessment Services Division
2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Notes of Focus Group Meeting (Primary 3 Chinese)

Date:	24 November 2016 (Thursday)
Time:	3:00-5:00 pm
Venue:	Room 502, Tseuk Luk Street, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Participants:	Chinese subject teachers (4), Chinese Panel Heads (31), HKEAA representatives (2)
Organiser:	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Summary

(1) Enhanced Report Formats

- The information given in the "Basic Competence Reports by Item Groups" and "Information Analysis Reports" was welcome by teachers.
- Teachers expressed that the "Information Analysis Reports" could provide detailed explanation to each distractor of multiple-choice (MC) items. This kind of analysis (including the analysis of items, reading passages and students' learning difficulties) was done by teachers themselves in the past. However, the "Information Analysis Reports" provided in this year could facilitate teachers' better understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses. This report could also reduce the workload of teachers and provide effective feedback on learning and teaching.
- Teachers found that both "Basic Competence Reports by Item Groups" and "Information Analysis Reports" have their own functions. "Basic Competence Reports by Item Groups" enabled principals, PSM(CD) and subject panels to understand the overall performance of their students on each BC. Moreover, the "Information Analysis Reports" could help subject teachers identify students' learning difficulties.
- Individual teachers suggested providing an explanation to each correct answer and the reports should cover all sub-papers.
- Individual teachers expressed that they had not yet accessed the TSA reports (viewing of TSA reports requires access rights given by the school head). Therefore, they found it hard to do follow-ups for their students' learning difficulties. They recommended that more promotional seminars on the

purpose and rationale of TSA should be held for principals. These seminars could also help to remind principals to deliver the reports to their teachers as well as to create user accounts for teachers to login to the online item analysis report. As a result, teachers were able to analyse the data so that they could reformulate the 'learning and teaching' programmes.

(2) Others

- Teachers found that TSA is a systematic, transparent and low-stakes assessment. It provides comprehensive data and detailed reports which enable schools to have a better understanding of students' performance on CEM subjects. TSA can also help promote "assessment for learning" so as to give feedback on learning and teaching. However, some teachers expressed that Hong Kong Pre-Secondary 1 Attainment Test is not transparent enough and there is not much information provided to primary schools. Teachers did not know that there had been changes in the Pre-S Secondary 1 assessment design. They only knew the changes after their students had taken the test and told the school about these changes. Moreover, since Pre-Secondary 1 is a high-stakes assessment which is related to SSPA, schools can only get limited information about it and they thought that having little information about the Pre-S Secondary 1 may have exerted much pressure on them.
- Some teachers said that some parents did not fully understand what TSA was and would not allow their children to participate in the TSA. Or they would tell their children to take the assessment in an erratic manner. Teachers were worried that this might affect the reliability and validity of the TSA. They suggested that EDB should enhance the communication with parents and promote the purpose and functions of TSA.
- Some teachers hoped that they could receive two sets of data from the oral assessment, one set of data where Putonghua (PTH) was assessed and the other set where Cantonese was assessed. This helped facilitate schools' analysis and comparison of students' performance. The HKEAA representative responded that oral assessment assesses students' spoken ability. Thus, no matter whether students used PTH or Cantonese to take the assessment, they should be rated according to the same marking scheme.
- Some teachers said that students could only listen to the script once in the existing listening assessment. They asked if it would be possible for students to read the questions before listening to the dialogue. The HKEAA representative responded that since the listening assessment had been developed according to the BC requirements, (e.g. to memorise the

content, to comprehend the cohesive relationship between dialogues and to identify the tone of the speakers), these requirements were applicable to students' daily use. Students would not have an outline beforehand in their daily use and they needed to respond naturally in a given language environment. Despite this, the HKEAA representative mentioned that they would be well aware of the difficulty and suitability of items when developing listening items.

Annex 7

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Education Assessment Services Division
2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Notes of Focus Group Meeting (Primary 3 English)

Date:	25 November 2016 (Friday)
Time:	3:00-4:30 pm
Venue:	Rooms 2 & 3, Stelux House, San Po Kong, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Participants:	English subject teachers (11), English Panel Heads (24), PSMCD (1), HKEAA representatives (2)
Organiser:	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Summary

Feedback on School Report, Item Analysis Report (sorted by Basic Competency (BC) and by sub-papers)

- For the existing version of the reports, teachers found them useful as the reports provided information on the performances of students. The data in the Item Analysis Report (sorted by BC) was especially useful to teachers since the performances of students under each Question Intent were shown. This helped teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students in listening and reading papers.
- Removal of the BC attainment rates from the school reports helped to release pressure on schools and teachers.
- For the simplified version of the reports, some teachers commented that they would prefer keeping the territory percentages. They thought the data was useful to schools as it would provide information about how their students performed in comparison with those of the territory. They would use the data for reference only. They did not feel much pressure if the data was given to them.
- One teacher suggested putting the data of last year in the reports for easy reference.

Feedback on Online Item Analysis (OIA) Reports

- The OIA Reports were very user-friendly to teachers, in particular to subject panels. They would use the excel files to compile data to facilitate their analysis of students' performances in different skills.
- The bar charts showing the performances of students in the recent three years in the reports were very useful to teachers. This helped facilitate the planning of teaching and learning in the second term as well as the whole curriculum for next year.
- The writing exemplars provided in the reports were also very useful to teachers. The exemplars could help teachers' understanding of the requirements of the writing tasks, thus enhancing learning and teaching at schools.

Feedback on Basic Competency Report by Item Groups

- In this report, teachers found it difficult to interpret the information with the triangles given on the performance scale. It was suggested that school percentages as well as those of the tryout schools should be marked with the triangles so that it would help to interpret the performances of students.
- One teacher commented that the 'lower triangles' which indicated the performances of students of tryout schools were not useful as this would encourage comparison of performances among schools.
- The exemplars and the quantitative feedback given in the reports provided detailed information about how students performed in different aspects (e.g. use of cohesive devices). Teachers would then sort out the type of items which students did not do well and plan for remedial teaching. This would facilitate effective learning and teaching.
- Teachers suggested that this report should be given to all schools in future.
- One teacher suggested that information about school types should be given in the report (e.g. aided, direct subsidy, government).

Feedback on Information Analysis Report

- The qualitative feedback in the Information Analysis Report was very useful to teachers. It provided teachers with information about the possible problems in students' learning. The information would best benefit teachers with less teaching experience.

- The presentation of the diagnostic information in each option was very clear and useful. The wordings were easy to understand. No additional information was needed for the correct answer.
- Panel teachers would make use of both the qualitative feedback and the data given in the report to analyse students' performances in the assessment and share the findings with other subject colleagues. They would then plan their teaching ahead so as to help students improve.
- Some teachers suggested that the diagnostic information should be provided for all the papers in future.
- In order to facilitate teachers' analysis of the information given in this report, it was suggested that the items should be presented in two groups:
  - items showing good performances of students; and
  - items showing weak performances of students.
- Teachers found that it would be even more useful for their analysis if the data of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) could be provided separately in another column in the report.
- The tapescripts of each listening task should be put in the report for easy reference.

Annex 8

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Education Assessment Services Division
2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Notes of Focus Group Meeting (Primary 3 Mathematics)

Date:	28 November 2016 (Monday)
Time:	3:00-5:00 pm
Venue:	Room 502, Tseuk Luk Street, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Participants:	Mathematics subject teachers (12), Mathematics Panel Heads (26), HKEAA representatives (4)
Organiser:	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Summary

Newly added assessment reports

- The current report format (with school and territory-wide percentages) and the new report formats (simplified version with school percentage only, integrated version and the information analysis report), could provide feedback to enhance teaching and learning for primary schools.

- Teachers agreed that the new report formats can reduce the incentives for drilling. However, the provision of school-based examples in the integrated version would be more helpful to individual schools.

- The information analysis report could provide an analysis of options of multiple-choice items, which facilitated teachers' analysis of students' common mistakes to provide feedback to learning and teaching. In addition, timely diagnostic information for non-MC items was also requested to teachers.

- The four types of reports provided effective and sufficient information. Most teachers agreed that the inclusion of both school and territory-wide percentages of students answering the questions correctly in the integrated report for teachers' reference would be desirable.

- Teachers recommended that the questions of TSA be screened in the interactive reporting platform based on Basic Competencies, units or areas of learning

- A “PRINT” button could be added to the 3-year bar chart.

Others

- Teachers suggested that students could use the Student Assessment mode so that students could select the assessment topics of previous years as exercises.

- Teachers have requested school-based curriculum development and teaching support in May 2016. They hoped that there would be more support in assessment literacy. For example, one of the teachers mentioned that the AQP platform of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority could serve as a tool for question analysis. Other teachers hoped free software for school use would be provided.

- Teachers believed that the difficulty of 2016 Mathematics was appropriate, and could provide useful feedback data to schools.

Annex 9

2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)
Professional Sharing Session with Principals

Date:	8 December 2016 (Thursday)
Time:	4:00-6:00 pm
Venue:	Conference Room 6, G/F, Central Government Offices
Participants:	Principals (23), Vice Principals (5), Middle managers (2), EDB representatives (5), HKEAA representatives (2)
Organiser:	Education Bureau

Summary

Item 1: Participants' views on 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)

1. The new school reports are clear and easy to understand. Schools' assessment data are analysed in a more detailed manner which is helpful for subject evaluation.

2. The improved assessment papers are of appropriate level of difficulty and they are more aligned with Basic Competency.

3. System assessment is common in foreign countries and the use of assessment to serve the function of "assessment for learning" is obvious.

4. Assessment data enables schools to know the school level in the territory so as to improve learning and teaching.

5. School-based support services under the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) are very helpful for the professional development of schools.

Item 2: Participants' recommendations on TSA

1. A more detailed analysis of the writing assessment papers of the language subjects in the school reports can be considered. Individual students' performance can be added to allow teachers to address individual students' needs more easily by offering help.

EDB representatives responded that there are no individual students' results in order not to turn the assessment a high-stakes one. Teachers can use Student Assessment Repository to publish assessments to obtain individual student's performance. EDB will continue modifying this platform and the Web-based Learning and Teaching Support.

2. Parents of schools participating in the Tryout Study supported TSA, while parents of schools not participating in the Tryout Study opposed to TSA owing to misunderstanding, even without a strong reason. It is recommended that EDB strengthen communication with them so that they understand the benefits of TSA and the good partnership between EDB and schools.
   EDB agreed to communicate more with parents. Apart from exchange seminars for parents, media on public transport and social media will be used to disseminate positive messages about TSA.

3. If all schools participate in TSA next year, schools will be relieved from the pressure of making choice. Meanwhile, it is concerned if EDB can provide related support services for schools in the territory.
   EDB responded that more than 70% of primary schools in the territory have already been provided with school-based support services, so it is believed appropriate arrangements can be made to meet schools' needs in the future.

4. It is suggested to remove NCS students and students with SEN from school reports.
   HKEAA representatives responded that there are supplementary reports in which NCS students and students with SEN have been removed. Schools with 5 NCS students or more will be provided with supplementary reports.

5. EDB should monitor the supplementary exercises with the title of TSA but beyond TSA standard.

6. It is recommended that school reports in Excel format be made available to schools so that they can easily extract information for analysis.
   HKEAA representatives responded that an online evaluation report has been provided to facilitate schools to extract information for further analysis

7. It is suggested that the chief examiner of TSA Speaking Assessment with relevant experience does not have to attend the HKEAA workshop.

HKEAA representatives responded that there is a related arrangement. Experienced chief examiners of Speaking Assessments only need to take part in online training.

Annex 10

Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA)
2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3) (Tryout Study)
Focus Groups for Parents

Target group and arrangements

In late November and early December, EDB organised 18 focus groups for parents from schools participating in the Tryout Study. A total of 119 parents participated, whose views and recommendations on assessment items, reports and various support measures and stakes involved were collected. Each focus group lasted about one to two hours, including question and answer time.

Major views

Major views of parent representatives are as follows:

1. Providing feedback to learning and teaching
    - Parents generally considered that it was necessary to continue conducting TSA because it could provide school and territory-wide data to facilitate schools' understanding of students' levels.
    - Parents agreed that the contents of TSA enabled schools to review the school-based curriculum to provide a clearer direction for teaching.
    - Parents pointed out that talks were conducted by schools to communicate with them and explain the school-based assessment and homework policies.
    - Parents agreed that school reports provided valuable reference for teachers in adjusting teaching strategies.
    - Parents trusted schools and supported their professional decisions.

2. Feedback to measures under the Tryout Study
    - There was a general view that the questions of this year's TSA were easier than before, which helped boost students' confidence.
    - Some parents indicated that their elder children, who participated in the Primary 6 and Secondary 3 TSAs before the Tryout Study, reflected that the questions were not difficult.
    - They did not object that parents participated in questionnaire surveys on a voluntary basis to further schools' understanding of the factors affecting students' learning.
    - They supported the professional support measures provided by EDB. They believed allowing schools in need to participate facilitated schools to make good use of assessment data to enhance learning and teaching.
    - Parents agreed that the enhanced school reports under the Tryout Study

could enhance schools' use of assessment data to facilitate learning and teaching. They believed that the information analysis report, which provided an analysis of the corresponding key learning objective, Basic Competency and question intent of each item, as well as an analysis of options of multiple-choice items, could help reduce the workload of schools and teachers to focus on teaching.

3. Drilling and stakes
    - Since there were no drilling and excessive supplementary exercises for TSA at school, parents were even unaware that their children had already taken TSA.
    - As parents knew that no individual result was provided, they were at ease with TSA and there was no pressure on students.
    - Some parents expressed that the questions of TSA were easier than internal assessment, and their children reflected they were capable in handling it even without special drilling.
    - As learning contents of everyday lessons were sufficient for students to handle TSA, parents did not need to purchase additional exercises for their children.
    - Some parents regarded the Basic Competencies of TSA as part of the school curriculum, so the arrangement of providing assignments in everyday lessons to help students grasp the formats and contents of TSA was deemed reasonable.
    - Even at the same school, parents had diversified views on school policy, homework arrangements, purchase of exercises and supplementary lessons.
    - The importance of home-school cooperation/parent education/training for principals:
        - School clearly explained to parents the concept of TSA, school-based assessment and homework policy arrangements to effectively foster mutual trust between parents and schools so as to relieve parents of the concerns of excessive blind drills.
        - They recommended that public education should be stepped up to avoid public misconceptions and concerns due to insufficient understanding.

Annex 11

Thematic Seminar
Assessment for Learning – 2016 Tryout Study
Primary 3 Chinese Language
Results of Questionnaire Survey

A total of 154 questionnaires collected

Questions		Average score (out of 5)
1.	**The modified assessment papers and question design aligned with the requirements of basic competencies of Primary 3 students.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計能對準小三基本能力的要求。**	**3.90**
2.	**The modified assessment papers and question design met the spirit of the curriculum.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計符合課程精神。**	**3.91**
3.	**The modified assessment papers and question design met students' learning needs.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計配合學生的學習需要。**	**3.89**
4.	**The reports in Tryout Study can provide more information in analyzing students' strengths and weaknesses to enhance learning and teaching.** **試行研究計劃的學校報告能提供更多資料以分析學生強弱項，回饋學與教。**	**3.95**
5.	**The reports in Tryout Study provide comprehensive information to facilitate communication with different stakeholders.** **試行研究計劃的學校報告提供綜合資料有助與不同持分者溝通。**	**3.89**

Thematic Seminar
Assessment for Learning – 2016 Tryout Study
Primary 3 English Language
Results of Questionnaire Survey

A total of 151 questionnaires collected

Questions		Average score (out of 5)
1.	**The modified assessment papers and question design aligned with the requirements of basic competencies of Primary 3 students.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計能對準小三基本能力的要求。**	**3.87**
2.	**The modified assessment papers and question design met the spirit of the curriculum.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計符合課程精神。**	**3.79**
3.	**The modified assessment papers and question design met students' learning needs.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計配合學生的學習需要。**	**3.72**
4.	**The reports in Tryout Study can provide more information in analyzing students' strengths and weaknesses to enhance learning and teaching.** **試行研究計劃的學校報告能提供更多資料以分析學生強弱項，回饋學與教。**	**3.70**
5.	**The reports in Tryout Study provide comprehensive information to facilitate communication with different stakeholders.** **試行研究計劃的學校報告提供綜合資料有助與不同持分者溝通。**	**3.61**

Thematic Seminar
Assessment for Learning – 2016 Tryout Study
Primary 3 Mathematics
Results of Questionnaire Survey

A total of 149 questionnaires collected

Questions		Average score (out of 5)
1.	**The modified assessment papers and question design aligned with the requirements of basic competencies of Primary 3 students.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計能對準小三基本能力的要求。**	**3.84**
2.	**The modified assessment papers and question design met the spirit of the curriculum.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計符合課程精神。**	**3.87**
3.	**The modified assessment papers and question design met students' learning needs.** **修訂後的試卷及題目設計配合學生的學習需要。**	**3.83**
4.	**The reports in Tryout Study can provide more information in analyzing students' strengths and weaknesses to enhance learning and teaching.** **試行研究計劃的學校報告能提供更多資料以分析學生強弱項，回饋學與教。**	**3.81**
5.	**The reports in Tryout Study provide comprehensive information to facilitate communication with different stakeholders.** **試行研究計劃的學校報告提供綜合資料有助與不同持分者溝通。**	**3.66**