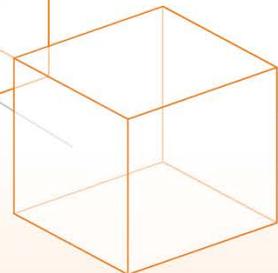
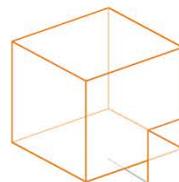
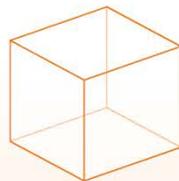
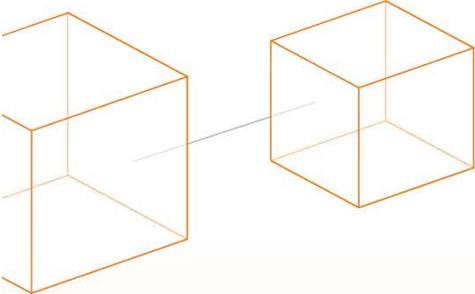
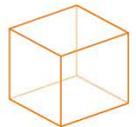
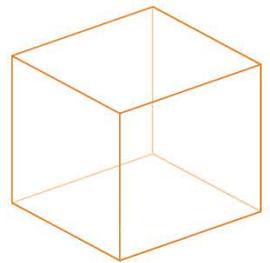
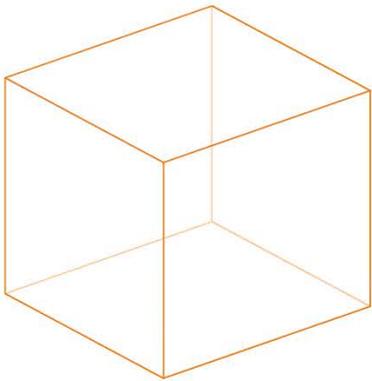
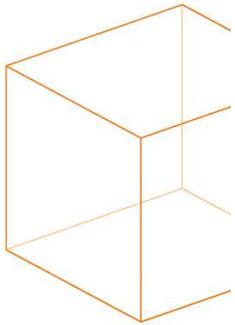
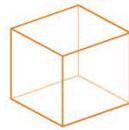


Assessment Literacy and School Assessment Policy



Booklet 4 Assessment Literacy and School Assessment Policy

This is one of the 11 booklets in the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide*. Its contents are as follows:

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4.1 Background

- For the past few decades, reforms in assessment all over the world have been influenced strongly by new understandings of learning derived from research findings. Current learning theories focus on how we come to know the process of creating knowledge, emphasising the importance of social interaction in learning. Meaningful learning occurs when students are actively involved and allowed to take charge of their own learning. As such, assessment should be able to reflect what students have achieved, and how they may progress further. Quality feedback should also be provided to facilitate metacognition, self- and peer assessment, and develop learner' competency to transfer their learning to new settings.
- Findings from regular curriculum implementation studies conducted by the Education Bureau (EDB) reflect that a number of changes in the assessment of student achievement have been witnessed since the curriculum reform at the primary and junior secondary levels started in 2001 and the curriculum and assessment reform at the senior secondary (SS) level started in 2009. Many schools have incorporated "Assessment for Learning" in their routine practices, and developed a whole-school assessment framework to guide the assessment practices at the school, Key Learning Area (KLA)/subject and classroom levels. In addition to the usual emphasis on tests and examinations, there is a growing focus on formative assessment, with an increasing number of schools introducing diversified modes of assessment, placing more emphasis on providing immediate feedback to students, and promoting student engagement in assessing their own learning.
- The development of the Hong Kong school curriculum has now advanced into a new phase of ongoing renewal and updating. Schools are encouraged to focus on new emphases to prepare students for their needs in their studies and future careers, and identify areas or accomplishments to be deepened and sustained according to their own contexts. For assessment, schools are strongly encouraged to adopt "Assessment as Learning", in addition to "Assessment for Learning", to foster students' independent learning capabilities. Promoting e-assessment also enables teachers to capitalise on the advantages brought about by technology in assessment, including the provision of immediate feedback to students and personalising assessment and instruction to meet their individual needs.

4.2 Purposes of the Booklet

- To reiterate the main ideas and principles of assessment
- To provide suggestions on how to conduct assessment in schools, including the development of a school's assessment policy to promote self-directed learning

4.3 Assessment Literacy - From Curriculum and Pedagogy to Assessment

Grievances From Teachers and Students

Are the following grievances from teachers and students familiar to you?

"I can't remember how many times I have gone through this concept with my students, but they are still unable to get it right. Again and again they make a mess of their homework assignments and tests."

"This topic should have been taught quite a number of times at the junior secondary level but most of my S4 students seem to have lost their memory. I hate spending my precious lesson time re-teaching junior secondary topics!"

"I have attended all extra lessons arranged by my subject teacher, and have tutorial classes every week on this subject after school. But I still failed all my tests and exams. What's wrong with me?"

"No matter how hard I've tried, I still can't get a pass in this type of questions. Maybe I should give up the marks allocated to this type of questions."

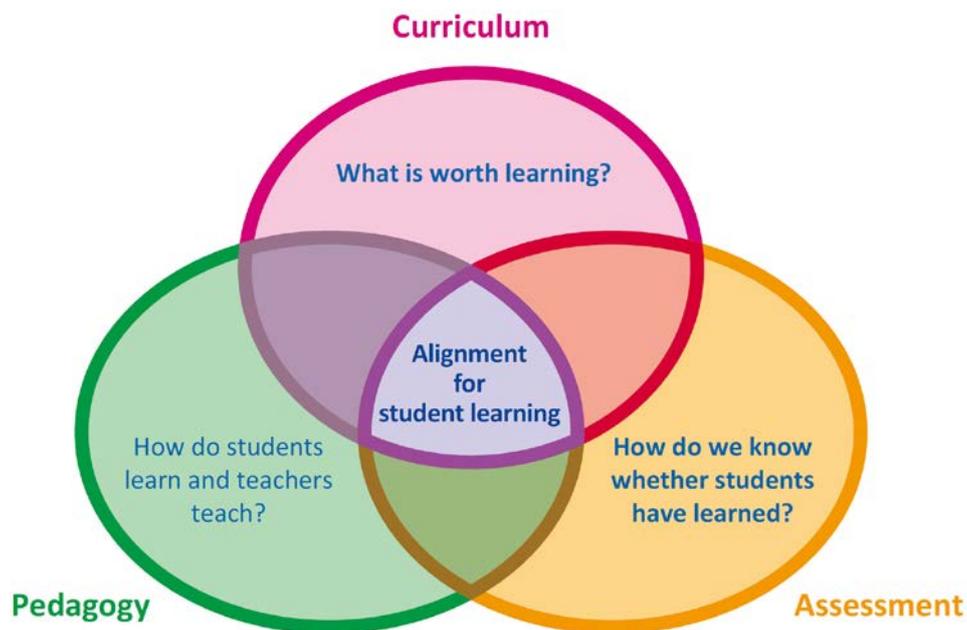
At first glance, these grievances are about different learning and teaching problems. But looking deeper into each of them may lead to the two following questions:

**Do teachers know why their students are unable to learn?
What makes students fail to learn?**

To help teachers know more about student learning, raising their awareness of the roles of assessment in learning can be of great help.

- The school curriculum sets out what students should learn in terms of learning objectives, and assessment is used to collect evidence of student learning with reference to the learning objectives set. Assessment is an integral part of the curriculum, pedagogy and feedback cycle (see Figure 4.1), with the prime purpose of **facilitating and improving student learning**. It should be so designed to find out what students are expected to learn throughout their learning journey.

Figure 4.1 Interlocking Relationships between Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment



4.3.1 Roles of Assessment

Assessment plays different roles for different stakeholders. It can be summarised as follows.

- For students to:
 - understand the objectives of their learning and their progression towards achieving these objectives;
 - understand their strengths and weaknesses in learning and how they can improve and self-regulate their work so as to move to the next stage of learning; and
 - identify their own learning needs and ways to improve their learning strategies so that they will eventually become self-directed learners.

- For teachers and schools to:
 - understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students in learning;
 - provide quality feedback to students on how to improve their learning;
 - evaluate the curriculum design and learning and teaching practices, and make appropriate adjustment to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness; and
 - understand the needs and abilities of their students in learning to better cater for diversity and to guide them towards self-directed learning.
- For parents to:
 - understand the strengths and weaknesses of their children;
 - co-operate with schools to improve the learning of their children; and
 - set reasonable expectations on their children.

4.3.2 Formative and Summative Assessment

- **Summative assessment** involves the collection of evidence to demonstrate the outcomes of learning. It is usually carried out at the end of a teaching unit/school term/school year to sum up what students have achieved. This assessment approach is often referred to as Assessment of Learning.
 - ***Assessment of Learning*** describes the level a student has attained in learning and shows what a student knows and can do. It gives an overview of the previous learning of a student, and is used to certify learning for reporting to students, parents, teachers, schools and the education system.
- **Formative assessment** serves two major purposes, namely Assessment for Learning and Assessment as Learning.
 - ***Assessment for Learning*** integrates assessment into learning and teaching. It enables students to understand what they are learning, what they have attained, and what is expected of them. It focuses more on developing, instead of only assessing, students' knowledge and understanding in an ongoing and dynamic manner. Assessment for learning also provides teachers with evidence of students' learning, enabling them to evaluate and improve their curriculum planning and teaching practices.

- Assessment for Learning usually:
 - o involves assessment activities as part of learning and informs the planning of future learning and teaching;
 - o includes clear learning objectives;
 - o provides effective feedback to motivate students and facilitate improvement; and
 - o encourages self-assessment and peer assessment as part of the regular classroom routines.
- ***Assessment as Learning*** engages students in reflecting on and monitoring their progress of learning through establishing their roles and responsibilities in relation to their learning and assessment. Students use feedback from reflection and monitoring to make adaptations and adjustments to the learning objectives and strategies.
- Assessment as Learning usually:
 - o requires students to ask questions about their learning;
 - o involves teachers and students in setting the learning objectives;
 - o paves way for students to use feedback and self-assessment to understand the next step in learning; and
 - o encourages peer assessment and self-reflection.

Example 1 : Implementing Assessment for Learning in Mathematics

- A Mathematics panel head designs the following after-lesson exercise with annotations for his junior secondary panel members to explain how Assessment for Learning could be implemented through the setting of quality assessment items.
- The exercise is set to assess students' understanding in finding the approximate value of a given number according to the required number of significant figures.
- Teachers may have a better understanding of students' concepts towards significant figures through studying the answers given by students, and identify what they have failed to learn. Concrete feedback may then be provided to students and teachers may also revise their teaching strategies accordingly.

Exercise

(a) $3624 = \underline{\quad}$ (correct to 2 sig. fig.) (Answer: 3600)

(b) $5672 = \underline{\quad}$ (correct to 1 sig. fig.) (Answer: 6000)

Answers given by Student A: (a) 3600 (b) 5000

What the student's answers tell:

The answer for (a) is correct but the answer for (b) is wrong. This may suggest that Student A knows that the digits to the left of the given number is more significant, but does not have a thorough understanding of providing an approximate value by considering the value of the digit immediately to the right of the significant digits.

(c) $3538 = \underline{\quad}$ (correct to 2 sig. fig.) (Answer: 3500)

(d) $7347 = \underline{\quad}$ (correct to 2 sig. fig.) (Answer: 7300)

Answers given by Student B: (c) 3500 (d) 7400

What the student's answers tell:

The answer for (c) is correct but the answer for (d) is wrong. This may suggest that Student B finds the approximate value through a series of rounding-off from the units digit, i.e. $7347 \rightarrow 7350 \rightarrow 7400$.

(e) $1.04325 = \underline{\quad}$ (correct to 3 sig. fig.) (Answer: 1.04)

(f) $0.03136 = \underline{\quad}$ (correct to 3 sig. fig.) (Answer: 0.0314)

Answers given by Student C: (e) 1.04 (f) 0.03

Answers given by Student D: (e) 1.043 (f) 0.0314

What the students' answers tell:

Student C's answer for (e) is correct, but the one for (f) is wrong. This may suggest that Student C wrongly considers all zeros as significant digits. The answer given by Student D for (f) can be considered as correct, but the answer for (e) may suggest that Student D has a wrong concept of regarding all zeros as insignificant.

4.3.3 Formative Use of Summative Assessment

The three key factors for the use of summative assessment formatively are as follows:

- **Timing of the assessment**
A test administered at the beginning of a unit can shed light on students' prior knowledge and skills, providing useful information on lesson planning for the whole unit. A test conducted mid-way through a unit can help reveal the gaps in student understanding and enables teachers to adjust their teaching for the remaining part of the unit to meet the needs of their students.
- **Giving students sufficient opportunities to revise their work**
Teachers can allow students to revise their incorrect responses in their assignments, and award them partial credit if they can improve their answers. Through this revision process, students can gain a deeper understanding of the learning elements the question is assessing. This practice turns an assessment into a learning opportunity.
- **Making good use of assessment data**
Teachers can carefully analyse the results of a summative assessment and use the information to revise class instructions with a view to improving students' learning outcomes, either through re-teaching those parts that students performed poorly, or by changing how those parts will be delivered in future lessons.

Reflective Questions

- ✧ What information do you collect from the assessment you have conducted?
- ✧ How do you use the assessment information collected in your lesson planning?
- ✧ How can assessment be designed to inform learning and teaching?

4.3.4 e-Assessment

- e-Assessment, in its broadest sense, is the use of information technology to assess student achievement in learning. It may involve both administering the assessment test and grading it.
- e-Assessment is a useful tool for the following reasons:
 - It facilitates **Assessment for Learning**.
 - Students can receive **instant feedback** when they are working on their tasks. Similarly, teachers can access information from students while instruction is still in progress.
 - Teachers can use assessment data more **efficiently** to examine student performance and to share information about learning progress with individual students and their parents.
 - It enables teachers to **personalise assessments and instructions**. Teachers can track individual students' performance, identify their strengths and weaknesses, provide early intervention and facilitate better learning support.
- There are some well-developed e-assessment platforms and diagnostic tools for providing instant feedback (e.g. the online Student Assessment on Basic Competency Assessments (BCA) and the Online Question Bank launched by the Hong Kong Education City Limited (HKECL) in partnership with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) (<http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/en/Introduction.html>). It is much easier to administer assessment and conduct analysis with such tools than with pen and paper tests.
- Some tools employ statistical and psychometric techniques to improve test design and facilitate understanding of student diversity (e.g. the Assessment Quality-assurance Platform (AQP) of the HKEAA (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/Schools_and_Teachers/qamas/AQP_leaflet_eng_20131108.pdf) and the SP Xpress).
- Based on the experience gained in the e-Textbook Market Development Scheme (EMADS) launched by the EDB between 2012 and 2014, it is expected that simple e-assessment will be a feature of e-textbooks for providing information on students' learning progress.
- The Assessment Task Reference (www.hkedcity.net/edb/tr) in the EDB One-stop Portal for Learning and Teaching Resources supports teachers in designing classroom assessments related to the Hong Kong Diploma for Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination. It contains

a variety of assessment questions/tasks compiled according to the curriculum framework and graded into different levels.

- The Student Assessment Repository (STAR) is an online assessment platform developed for the three core subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics. The STAR platform comprises a number of features to promote Assessment for Learning and facilitate teachers using assessment information to enhance students' learning with the use of technology. The STAR platform (<http://star.hkedcity.net/en>) can be accessed through the website of the HKECL by various computing devices including tablets, notebooks and desktops. Teachers can make use of this platform to create assessment tasks for individual students or classes, and receive student performance reports. With further enhancement of the platform in future, teachers may set various parameters to create assessment tasks with a different focus on different items for individual students or classes, as well as to receive instant feedback upon submission of completed tasks.
- When considering the adoption of e-assessment in their classes, teachers are reminded to take note of the following:
 - The success of any e-assessment tool is dependent upon the usability of the data obtained to support and enhance student learning. The quality of data is far more important than the quantity.
 - Technology should not be used just for the sake of using technology. It needs to be purposeful and should aim at enhancing student learning.
 - When technology is used in the formative assessment process, teachers need to clearly communicate the assessment requirements to students. This is even more important if students are expected to complete formative assessment outside the classroom. As there will be no teachers available for answering students' questions, e-assessment tools need to be easy to access and use.

Example 2: Maximising the Effectiveness of Assessment for Learning through e-Learning

- An interactive online learning management system, Schoology, has been set up by a local Direct Subsidy Scheme school to manage e-learning.
- The system can assist teachers in hosting and delivering the learning content and materials, monitoring the learning progress of each student (especially the completion and submission of class assignments), setting up a platform for discussing with students, as well as tracking and assessing students' learning progress and performance through online assessment tasks and quizzes.
- The system can instantly assess how well students have learnt in class (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3) and construct graphs and statistical tables to present the learning progress and performance of each student (see Figure 4.4), enabling teachers to provide immediate feedback to students and modify promptly their pedagogical strategies during the lesson in response to their students' learning.

Figure 4.2 Performance of Individual Students

The screenshot shows a Schoology interface for a quiz titled '第一次世界大戰(2) --- 成因'. The page displays a table of student performance with columns for Name, Submissions / Attempts, Latest Attempt, and Final Score (Gradebook Grade). Each row includes a 'View Attempts' link. The interface also shows navigation tabs for Questions, Settings, Preview, Results, and Comments, and a 'Next' button at the top right.

Name	Submissions / Attempts	Latest Attempt	Final Score Gradebook Grade	
Ken Chan	1/1	9/26/14 4:05pm	100/100 100/100	View Attempts
Mary Lee	1/1	9/25/14 11:01pm	90/100 90/100	View Attempts
Lam Cheng	1/1	9/26/14 7:45am	60/100 60/100	View Attempts
Ho Cheung	1/1	9/25/14 9:06pm	100/100 100/100	View Attempts
Mary Chong	1/1	9/25/14 1:58pm	90/100 90/100	View Attempts
Grace Lau	1/1	9/26/14 7:50am	90/100 90/100	View Attempts
King Chan	1/1	9/28/14 6:51pm	70/100 70/100	View Attempts
Toby Wong	1/1	9/28/14 11:48pm	70/100 70/100	View Attempts
Chloe Lee	1/1	10/06/14 1:31pm	60/100 60/100	View Attempts
Peter Leung	1/1	9/25/14 9:53pm	100/100 100/100	View Attempts
Hong-man Lam	1/1	9/24/14 4:09pm	70/100	View Attempts

Figure 4.3 Performance in Individual Questions

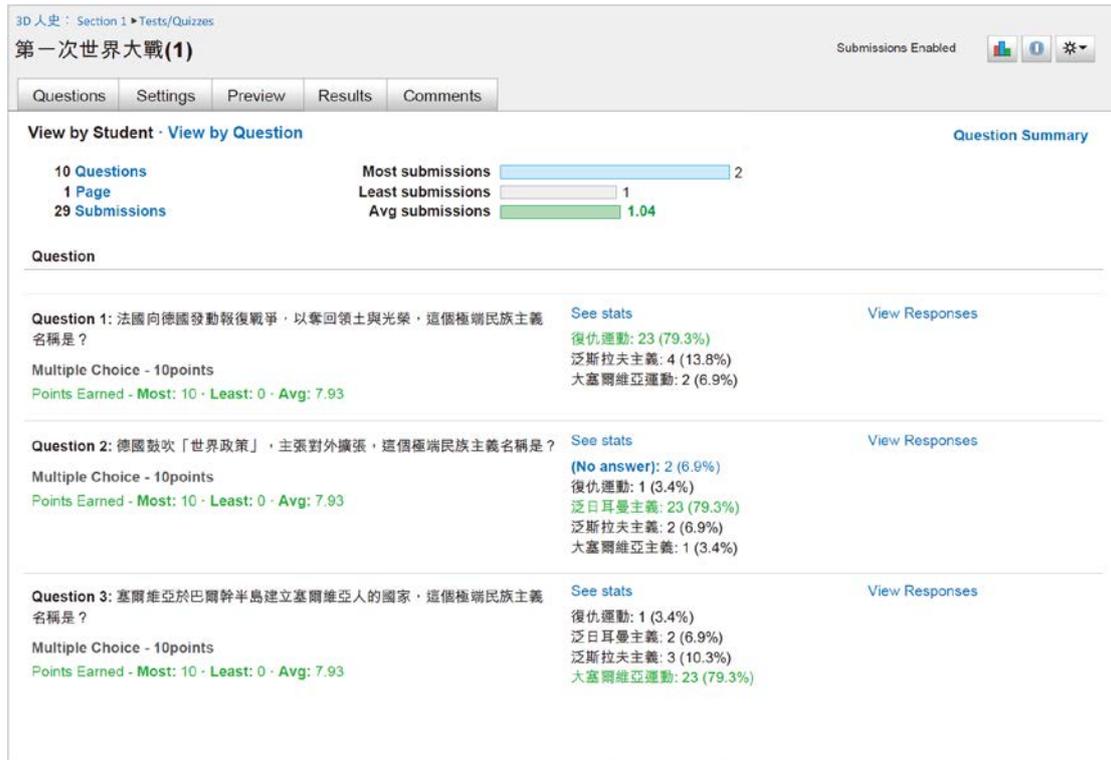
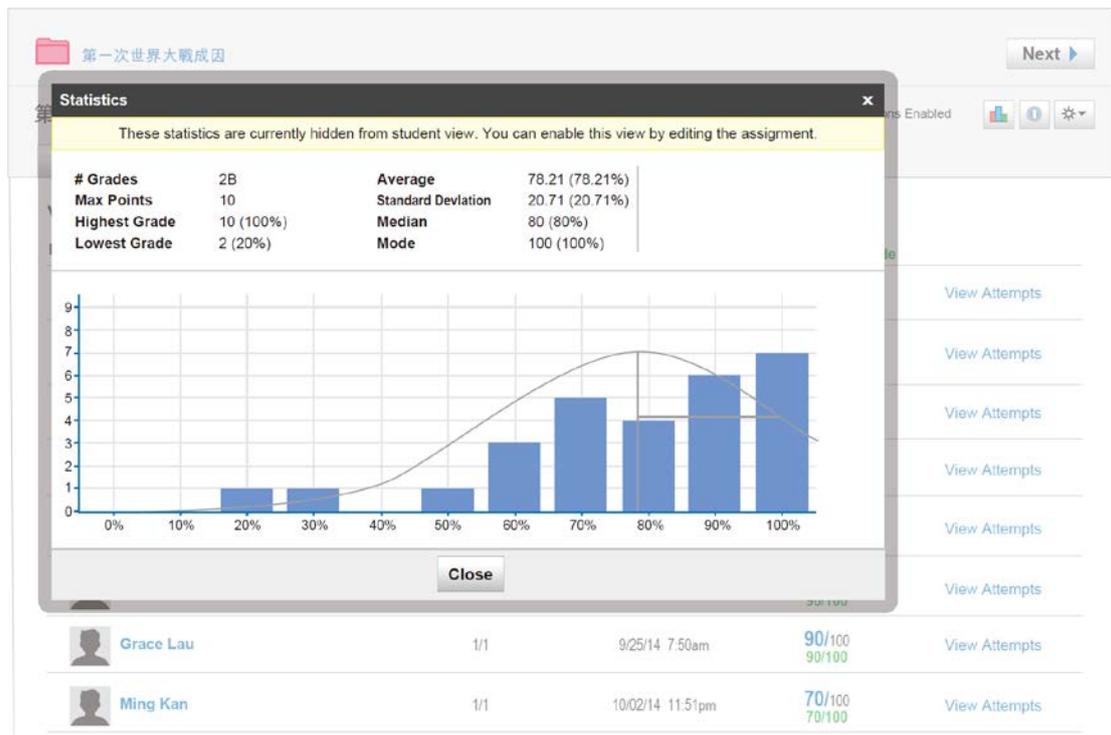


Figure 4.4 Learning Progress and Performance of Each Student



4.4 Internal Assessment

- A well-devised internal assessment policy enables the school to:
 - review and monitor the progress of student learning;
 - modify and improve teaching strategies for the needs and interests of students; and
 - ascertain that its curriculum goals are achieved.

4.4.1 Principles in Designing Internal Assessment

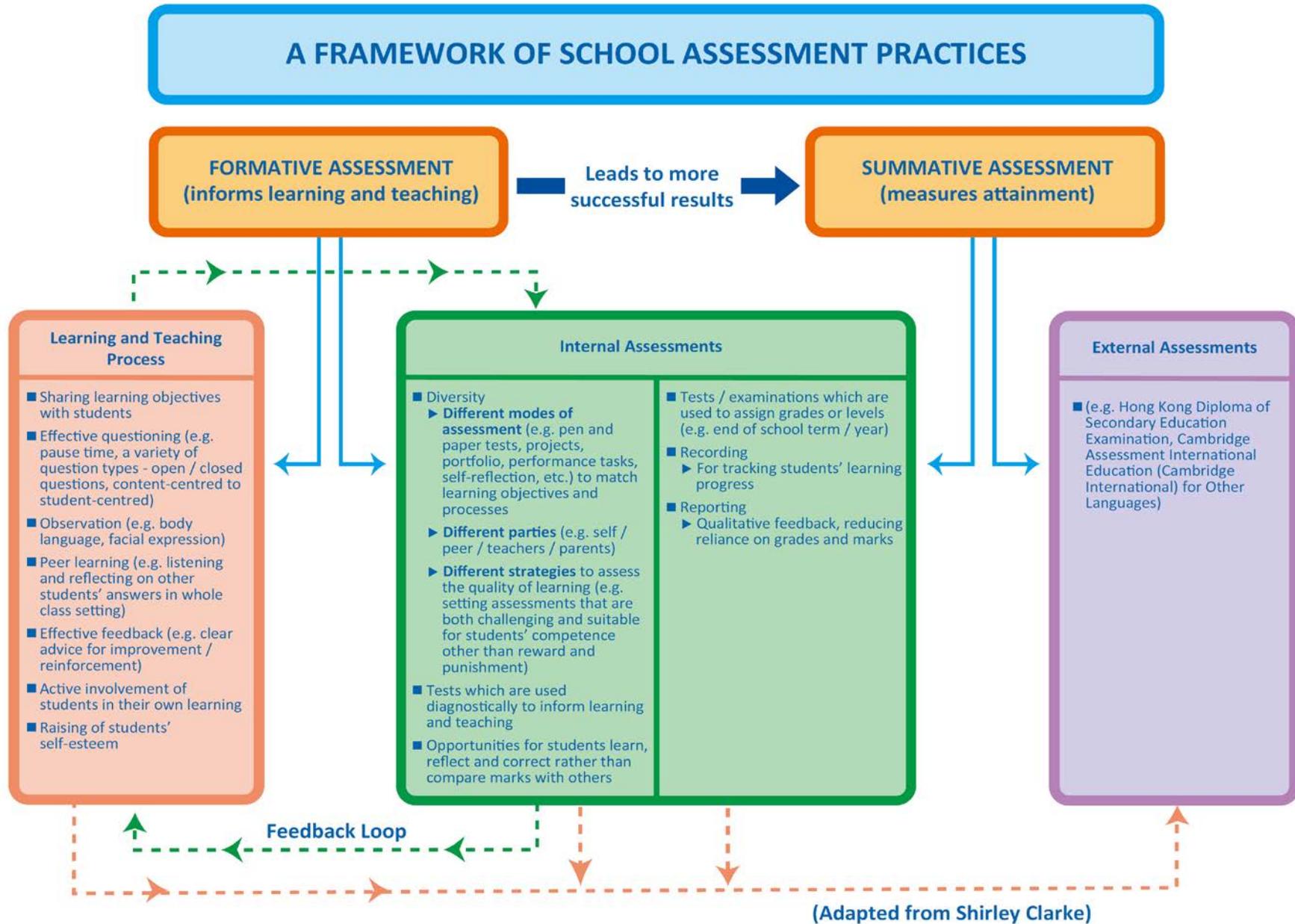
- Schools are advised to continue putting emphasis on Assessment for Learning as an integral part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle, and to cater for and fully develop the multiple intelligences and potential of individual students.
- It is necessary to align internal assessment with student learning by making reference to the curriculum aims, objectives and the intended learning outcomes.
- Internal assessment tasks have to be designed with reference to students' current progress in learning.
- Assessment practices incorporating different levels of difficulty and in diverse modes have to be used to address different levels of performance and learner diversity, as well as to provide equal opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievements.
- As internal assessment is not a one-off exercise, schools are advised to use practices that can track the learning progress over time.
- Timely and unthreatening feedback has to be provided to sustain students' momentum in learning and identify strengths and weakness for improving their future learning.

Reflective Questions

- ✧ Can your school's assessment data allow you to find out what students know and understand?
- ✧ To what extent is your assessment plan in line with your lesson planning?
- ✧ Do you believe that increasing the number of tests and examinations can help students learn? Why and why not? How can you revise your assessment strategies and practices to improve student learning?

- Figure 4.5 shows a framework for organising school assessment at the secondary level. The figure illustrates the interrelationship of formative and summative assessments in school, and the connection among learning and teaching, internal assessment and public assessment. Schools are advised to refer to this figure in developing their assessment plans.

Figure 4.5 A Framework of School Assessment Practices



4.4.2 Internal Assessment Practices

Quality Feedback

- Quality feedback is precise and concrete advice for improvement that can be easily understood by students and enables them to close the gap between their performance and the expected learning outcomes, as well as to modify their personal learning strategies. It should be:
 - **Informative in nature**
To clearly identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and point out how to make improvement explicitly
 - **Positive and constructive**
To enhance students' motivation, e.g. highlighting areas where they have shown improvement and specifying or implying a better way to accomplish what they have not yet achieved

Below are some examples of feedback that is considered not too positive and constructive:

- Feedback that is too critical.
e.g. "Your work is just terrible. You have not made any effort at all."
- Feedback that compares the performance of one student with that of others.
e.g. "Your writing is much weaker than the rest of the class. You are far behind your classmates in this subject."
- Feedback that is too vague.
e.g. "Check carefully before submitting your work to me next time."
- Feedback that focuses on the learner and not the task.
e.g. "You do not have a brain for studying science subjects."
- Feedback that does not address a defined objective.
e.g. "Complete 10 more multiple choice questions on quadratic equations."

- **Unthreatening**
To focus on the work/performance of the student rather than making a comparison with other students, facilitate the creation of a culture of success, and encourage students to take risks, not to be afraid of making mistakes and appreciate learning tasks as learning opportunities
- **Dynamic and adaptable**
To allow for exchanges of ideas, both among students and between teachers and students, so that they are adaptable to respective learning needs at the point when different suggestions are received
- **Timely**
To avoid delay in providing feedback to students, as in many cases its value for learning will be diminished, and to emphasise the value of oral feedback in the classroom

The following are some general guidelines on the timing of feedback:

- Immediate feedback:
 - is better for supporting the learning of procedural and conceptual knowledge;
 - is better when students are learning a new task; and
 - has a profound positive impact on the learning of low-achievers when they are learning new concepts or skills they find difficult.
- Avoid providing feedback to students when they are actively engaged in the task.
- When students are involved in more difficult tasks that require a lot of processes, delayed feedback may be more beneficial to student learning as it provides more opportunities for students to process the tasks.

Self-assessment

- Self-assessment involves students in examining their own learning performance using a set of explicitly stated criteria. It can take various forms, including teacher-student interviews, self-assessment checklists, reflection logs, writing conferences and group discussions among students.
- In implementing self-assessment, teachers are advised to:
 - communicate intensively with students before starting the process to ensure their thorough understanding of the rationale and procedures of the assessment;
 - create an unthreatening classroom climate, making them feel comfortable with being honest about their own performance, and ensuring that the information derived will not be used against them;
 - set out clear and explicit assessment criteria, and ensure that students understand what they are aiming for before the learning and teaching activities begin; and
 - allow sufficient time for students to revise their work and adjust their strategies.

Peer assessment

- Peer assessment involves students in evaluating the performance and quality of the work of, or the level attained by their peers based on a set of predetermined criteria. The work to be assessed can include test performance, portfolios, oral presentation and writing. Peer assessment can be done on a one-on-one basis or in small groups.
- To organise peer assessment effectively, teachers should pay attention to the following:
 - Clarify the purpose, rationale and expectations with students.
 - Involve students in developing and clarifying assessment criteria to give them a sense of ownership and reduce anxiety.
 - Match students according to their abilities. In general, aim for same-ability peer matching.
 - Provide training, examples, practice, guidelines and checklists.
 - Specify activities and timescale, making clear what needs to be done, within what time-scale, and what records, if any, need to be kept.
 - Monitor the process and coach as necessary.

- Evaluate and give feedback to students on their performance.

Reflective Questions

- ✧ Do you ask your students to mark their classmates' work? Why do you adopt/not adopt peer assessment in your classes?
- ✧ What kind and what level of support do you think will enhance the effectiveness of self- and peer assessment?

4.4.3 Meaningful Homework

- Homework is an important component of the learning and teaching process. It is a form of formative assessment as it helps teachers elicit evidence of student learning, provide feedback and modify instruction accordingly. It can also be designed to offer opportunities for students for self-assessment. Schools are advised to make reference to the EDB circular on “Guidelines on Homework and Tests in Schools – No Drilling, Effective Learning” on the measures to be taken.
- Secondary schools should draw up an overall policy on homework in consultation with stakeholders including teachers and parents to help students develop and sustain good study habits, and positive values such as self-discipline, responsibility and an interest in learning.
- Secondary schools' homework policy should aim at helping students achieve the updated seven learning goals of secondary education, which set out the qualities desired for students of the 21st century by the end of their six-year secondary education. The balanced development and healthy lifestyle of students should be the schools' major concerns in setting their homework policy. Excessive homework should be avoided so that students are provided with enough time for rest, play and leisure.
- Considerations have to be given to creating space for learning for the well-being of teenagers and help them develop confidence and passion for lifelong learning. This may work out better with parents' support and collaboration. For example, students are given specific free time at home and allowed to choose the activities and plan for their own schedule when they are engaged in extended tasks and project work. This provides opportunities for students to explore how to learn on their own, make the best use of time at home, and become independent and self-directed learners.

- Homework of the drill and practice nature may be assigned to help students acquire specific knowledge and skills. Drills for the purpose of automaticity through thoughtless repetition should be avoided as much as possible, while practice which includes feedback for the purpose of improvement could be used more frequently. Homework is about quality and not quantity. It can boost learning but assigning too much and too mechanical homework can lead to fatigue, stress and a loss of interest in learning. Motivation plays a key role in learning and how homework is related to learning during school time is important.
- Homework should be an integral part of learning and not an add-on. Through homework, students can prepare for the next stage of learning, practise what has been learnt during lesson time, review and reinforce skills, conduct extended tasks which expand on skills or concepts learnt, and analyse, synthesise or evaluate concepts and skills already learnt.
- The advances in information technology may change the mode of learning, teaching and assessment in secondary schools. Students may be assigned online tasks as homework and develop self-directed learning capabilities. Teachers have to make good use of the e-assessment platform to collect evidence of student learning, monitor their learning progress and provide timely feedback.
- Homework for secondary students may not always take the form of writing. Teachers may assign homework such as searching information on the Internet, reviewing and commenting on their classmates' work, and communicating with their teachers and classmates via the school intranet platform. They provide authentic contexts for students to develop information literacy so that they become ethical and effective users of information and information technology.
- There are controversial views about the marking of homework. If homework assignments are marked, whether due to the schools' general practice or expectations from parents and students, teachers are advised to consider the following to ensure that homework is beneficial and meaningful to both students and teachers.

Quality Marking of Assignments/Learning Tasks

- Marking methods and criteria should be in line with the focuses of the learning targets set for the homework task.
- Giving only a mark or a grade to students' homework may fail to facilitate learning as the number or letter does not help students understand what is wrong with their work and how they can make improvement. Concise explanatory comments should be provided to tell students what is good or not so good and why.
- “On-going marking” adapts conventional, summative assessment practice to achieve formative purposes. It involves dividing the marking of an assignment into several stages. Feedback is given to students after each part of the work is completed so that they know exactly what and how to make improvement.
- “Comment-only marking” is another feasible method. Teachers only give comments on: (i) what the students have done correctly; (ii) the weaknesses detected in their work; and (iii) what should be done to make improvement. This method avoids students from being distracted by the marks/grades given and not paying sufficient attention to teachers' comments on their learning.

4.4.4 Adjustment for Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- The following are some general principles for schools with students with SEN in developing appropriate school assessment policies and measures (*Please refer to Section 5.4 of Booklet 5 for further discussion on supporting students with SEN.*):
 - To assess students in an equitable situation, and avoid individual students being placed in a disadvantaged position due to their SEN
 - To ensure that there will be no unfair advantage over other students when making special examination arrangements for individual students
 - To adopt various modes of assessment in order to understand the progress of students in various aspects; and to take into account individual differences among students when deciding the difficulty levels, types and number of questions
 - To fix the number of assessments in line with the abilities of students

- To link the scoring criteria closely with the assessment objectives
- To give due consideration to the layout of question papers to avoid affecting students' performance in answering
- To train up students' test-taking skills and educate them on proper behaviour in assessment

Example 3: Assessing Students with SEN in English and Liberal Studies

- The English teachers of a local secondary school cater for the needs of students with visual impairment by using verbal question-and-answer tasks to replace the regular reading comprehension questions in written tests.
 - A Liberal Studies teacher re-designed the written exam paper to provide a detailed and structured framework to guide his dyslexic students to answer essay-type questions.
- To get a clear understanding of the purposes and requirements of different examinations and obtain the latest information on individual examinations (e.g. special examination arrangements and application procedures applicable to public examinations), schools have to make reference to the following documents:
 - The “Internal Assessment Guide for Schools”, “Whole School Approach: Principles and Strategies for Assessment (for students with special educational needs in ordinary schools)” and “Special Arrangements for Internal Examinations for Students with Special Educational Needs” published by the EDB;
 - The circular memoranda on the Territory-wide System Assessment and the Secondary School Places Allocation System issued to schools by the EDB every year; and
 - Leaflets and online information published by the HKEAA (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/Candidates/Special_Needs_Candidates/).

4.4.5 Catering for Gifted students in Assessment

- To cater for gifted students in assessment design, teachers can provide opportunities for these students to become actively involved in the assessment process, such as developing the assessment criteria or rubrics for the assessment tasks, and suggesting adjustments to the assessment design throughout the learning process.
- Alternative modes of assessment need to be provided to students who are gifted to enable them to fully demonstrate their thinking and learning. Portfolios, learning journals and individual projects can be used to differentiate the assessment process.
- Some gifted students may think faster than they can write it down. An action product, such as computer presentation, video clip or drama performance, may provide an alternative mode of assessment for these students.
- Teachers should consider the following to cater for the needs of the gifted students:
 - The assessment should be able to keep the students motivated and challenge them in their areas of strength.
 - The assessment should be capable of expanding students' way of learning.
 - The assessment should enable students to explore and use their hidden talents.
 - The assessment should create opportunities for students to learn in a deeper and more advanced way through their preferred learning style.

(Please refer to Section 5.5 of Booklet 5 for further discussion on supporting gifted students.)

Example 4: A “Bonus” Part in Examination Papers

Some schools include a “bonus” part in their examination papers so that extra marks can be awarded to students who can complete the more challenging questions. For example, a secondary school allocates 5% of the total marks in the junior secondary Science examination to an open-ended question which requires students to suggest ways to measure the distance between the earth and the sun, aiming at assessing students' science knowledge beyond textbook, as well as their creativity and problem solving skills.

4.5 External Assessment

- The implementation of the New Academic Structure (NAS) and SS curriculum has initiated a fundamental shift in education and learning in Hong Kong schools. A variety of strategies have been adopted to align the public assessment with the school curriculum and to promote the reform of the assessment culture of Hong Kong.
 - Standards-referenced reporting (SRR) has been adopted to report students' performance in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination. Students are assessed by levels of achievement rather than competitive ranking.
 - Apart from having marks awarded counting towards students' public assessment results in the HKDSE Examination, School-based Assessment (SBA) is implemented to enhance the validity of the overall assessment and provides teachers with information to understand students' progress in learning.
- The implementation studies and progress reports between 2009 and 2015 indicated that the above reform measures introduced in the public assessment had, in general, been accepted by teachers, students and other stakeholders. It is also noted that schools have gradually started to incorporate the approach adopted in the assessment reform into the design of their internal assessment.
- On the other hand, observations from school visits indicated that some teachers might over-emphasise the drilling of the public examination format and content. In some extreme cases, question types or even paper formats of the HKDSE Examination were introduced in the junior secondary internal assessment.
- While it is understandable for teachers to prepare their students for the public examinations, schools should bear in mind that too much drilling will reduce the learning and teaching time in class, unnecessarily increase teachers' workload, and put undue pressure on students.
- Moreover, as the public examination format and content are far beyond the capability of most junior secondary students, schools are advised not to adopt or replicate public assessment modes in their internal assessment practices at the junior secondary level.

- To align internal assessment practices properly with the public examinations, schools can focus more on helping students understand the learning outcomes and assessment requirements of the SS curriculum. Students with better understanding of what they are expected to learn and how their learning is assessed are more likely to attain the required standards of performance.
- Schools can also plan their assessment policy carefully throughout the six-year secondary education, so that students are charged with tasks similar to the nature and format of the public examinations, but with level of difficulty and complexity fine-tuned to suit students' ability and learning progression. With a gradual increase in the proportion of tasks in the public examination format in internal assessment practices, students are given sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and understanding of the public examination requirements in moving from the junior to the SS level.

Example 5: School-based Level Descriptors

- Some schools have started to develop school-based level descriptors for assessing different levels of performance in their internal examinations at both junior and senior secondary levels. The measure motivates students to learn by clarifying what is required to be achieved at certain levels, and in some cases has successfully helped students improve their learning through indicating clearly the standards students need to attain to proceed to the next level.

Example 6: From Fill-in-the-blank to Essay Questions

- To prepare their students to answer essay questions in the public examination, the PSHE subject teachers in a secondary school fine-tune the fill-in-the-blank questions at the junior secondary level by giving a short paragraph with blank spaces where students should provide the missing key words. The paragraph completed will be the answer to a specific question to be covered in the curriculum. In line with the learning progression of their students, more and more blank spaces are included and students are required to provide missing phrases instead of key words. At the final stage, students are required to answer an open-ended question in paragraph form.

Reflective Questions

- ◇ How is the internal assessment in your school related to the public examination?
- ◇ When will you incorporate the public examination content and format into the internal examination of your school? Why is this the appropriate time to do so?
- ◇ Will you make use of the level descriptors to help students stretch their full potential in learning? What are your reasons for adopting/not adopting such practice?

4.6 Developing School Assessment Policy

The main purpose of school assessment is to collect evidence of what students have achieved and how they may progress further. Secondary schools are strongly advised to develop an assessment policy to strengthen the effectiveness of Assessment for Learning and Assessment as Learning. Developing a school assessment policy can also help synergise efforts, and avoid duplicate or even contradictory endeavours. In doing so, the school should:

- discuss and agree on how to balance Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning;
- discuss and agree on how to balance the promotion of common assessment practices with student-centred or class-based variations;
- set out the aims of assessment in accordance with the whole-school curriculum plan;
- make reference to third-party information such as the Territory-wide System Assessment to confirm focuses of learning, teaching and assessment;
- agree on appropriate assessment criteria by and across levels/Key Learning Areas/subjects, etc.;
- agree on how evidence of student learning could be collected; and
- agree on how assessment results should be recorded and kept, and how feedback is to be provided to improve student learning.

4.6.1 Some Considerations

When developing their assessment policy, schools are advised to consider the following:

- The purposes of assessment are manifold, but in the school context, the prime **purpose of assessment** should be to facilitate learning rather than simply to measure achievement. Suitable assessment methods should be developed to collect evidence about the learning process as well as the product.
- A good school assessment policy always values the active involvement of students in the assessment process, enabling them to better understand and monitor their own learning. There are always ample opportunities for both teachers and students to review assessment data together.
- It is essential to ensure **coherence** in school assessment so that assessment practices are integral to the school curriculum as well as the learning and teaching process. Moreover, the assessment of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes should be covered in appropriate proportions. There should be a strong and clear connection between the day-to-day (e.g. classroom quizzes), periodic (e.g. term tests) and annual (e.g. end-of-year examinations) assessments so that teachers can be well informed of the learning progress of their students.
- Gaining **consensual understanding** among all stakeholders (including parents and students) is crucial to the success of the implementation of the school assessment policy. The principles and rationale behind the school assessment system and practices should be well understood and accepted by everyone involved.
- **Manageability** is critical to the effective implementation of school assessment. There is always the danger that the assessment practice can become too complicated, such as the assessment systems and paperwork being too bogged down in details, the collection and recording of assessment evidence being too unwieldy and cumbersome, and the reporting systems being too complex for teachers, students and parents to understand and make good use of.

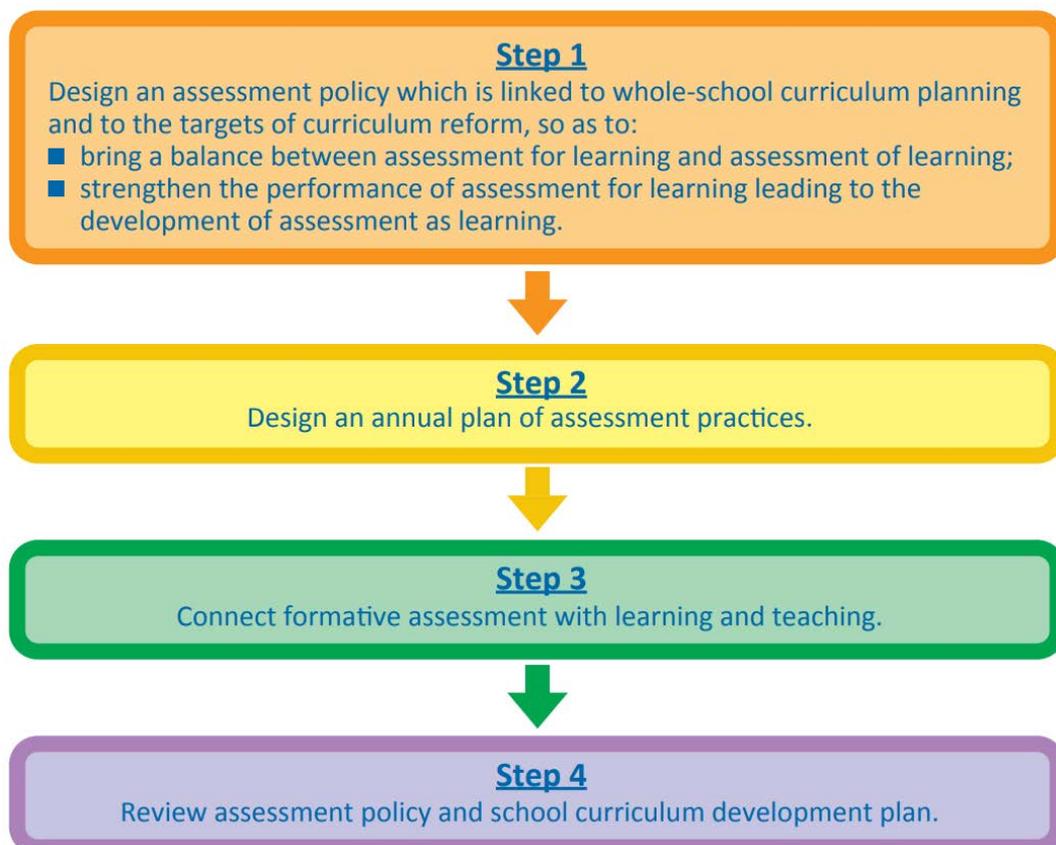
Reflective Questions

- ✧ To what extent is the assessment in your school integral to learning and teaching? How is the assessment data used to inform curriculum planning?
- ✧ Is there a significant difference in the way assessment between subjects and year groups is managed? Is the difference justifiable?
- ✧ How does your school involve different stakeholders in planning and implementing the assessment policy?

4.6.2 School Assessment Policy Planning

- A well-organised school assessment policy that brings about a better balance between assessment for and of learning needs to be planned, discussed and agreed by all teachers in schools. A corresponding assessment policy and mechanisms have to be worked out at the whole-school and classroom levels. Figure 4.6 is a flow chart showing the process of school assessment policy planning.

Figure 4.6 School Assessment Policy Planning



Reflective Questions

- ❖ To what extent is the assessment policy of your school conducive to better student learning?
- ❖ What assessment strategies may best demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of student learning in your school?
- ❖ How does your school convey assessment information to parents? Are parents involved in your school's assessment development?

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