

## 9. CONCLUSION

### ***What has been accomplished in TSA 2007?***

Since 2006, all students at P.3, P.6 and S.3 have taken part in the TSA. To help teachers to better understand the TSA, seminars were organised earlier in the year to discuss both the content of the assessments and administration arrangements. Materials for these seminars can be downloaded from the TSA and EDB's websites.

For the first time, in 2007 an audio-visual component was included in the calculation of the cut score for Chinese Language at the S.3 level.

After the release of 2006 TSA results, training sessions for teachers were jointly organised with EDB. The aims of the training were to enable teachers to gain a broader perspective of assessment for learning and to enable them to understand the key processes involved in making effective use of TSA results to enhance learning and teaching.

Also in 2007, online training was provided for oral assessors. Experienced oral assessors were invited to engage in online training and to take a recruitment test. Those not successful in passing this test were required to attend mandatory training workshops in order to be qualified for appointment as assessors.

In response to requests from schools, three TSA 'Supplementary Reports' will be made available to schools in 2007. Two exclude the performance of students with mild intellectual disabilities and students with special educational needs (SEN) and/or different learning needs. The third provides results for those students in P.6 in 2007 who also sat for the TSA in the same school in P.3 in 2004. The Supplementary Reports help schools to better understand their students' levels of performance and to take appropriate steps in planning their teaching programmes.

## ***Experience gained from TSA 2007***

What has been learnt from TSA 2007? The results of TSA 2007 provide data about the performance of a fourth cohort of Primary 3 students, a third cohort of Primary 6 students and a second cohort of Secondary 3 students.

The overall pattern of performance of P.3 students in 2007 was similar to that observed in 2004 – 2006. Hong Kong P.3 students performed best in Mathematics (87%) and at a slightly lower level in Chinese Language (85%). The subject with the lowest proportion of students not meeting the standards was English Language (80%). Four out of five students were performing at or above the minimum standards set for basic competency in this subject. The same pattern was observed for P.6 and S.3 students, who performed best in Mathematics (84% and 80%), followed by Chinese Language (77% and 76%) and then English Language (71% and 69%).

In 2006, there was a small increase in percentages of students achieving basic competency at the primary levels for the three subjects. In 2007, the results were similar to those for 2006.

The percentages of S.3 students in all three subjects achieving the basic competency in 2007 were slightly higher than in 2006. A smaller proportion of S.3 students compared to P.3 and P.6 students achieved basic competency, but this is a predictable result. It reflects the universally observed tendency for a growing achievement gap between high and low performing students over successive years of schooling.

With four years of data at the P.3 level, it is possible to discern a general trend towards an increase in the proportion of students achieving basic competency in the first two years of implementing the TSA, followed by a leveling off in attainment of basic competency. It would seem likely that any significant improvement in the percentages achieving basic competency beyond those achieved in the first 2-3 years would require greater incentives for improved performance or the strengthening of programmes that are effective in improving the quality of teaching in the relevant subjects and levels of schooling.

2007 was the first year in which it was possible to track the performance of students between P.3 and P.6. Focusing on those students who were in the same school in 2004 and 2007, it was found that the proportions of students achieving basic competency in both P.3 and P.6 were only 3-4 percentage points below the percentages of all P.6 students achieving basic competency in 2007. This indicates the importance of getting

off to a good start, since those who do well early on tend to do well in later years. Catching up with one's peers is harder than falling further behind.

For both schools and the system, the most useful information provided by TSA 2007 is the detailed information provided in chapters 6 – 8 of this report on competencies in specific skills or dimensions. These analyses point to areas that are either not being addressed adequately in classes or where better support is needed.

### ***The Way Forward***

Since the introduction of the TSA in 2004, schools have had access to information on the proportion of their students who are performing at or below the minimum level required for completing a key stage. In addition, the system has had information on overall standards and on areas in which support is needed.

A number of new initiatives are planned for 2008. A small-scale pilot of onscreen marking (OSM) was conducted in June 2007 to test the feasibility of implementing OSM in TSA 2008. A full-scale pilot of OSM will be scheduled for December 2007. It is envisaged that the new technology will improve efficiency, enhance marker reliability and better safeguard students' scripts. Assessment literacy training for teachers will be provided in order to facilitate a better understanding of assessment generally as well as to provide specific advice on using the TSA data to inform learning and teaching.