

9. CONCLUSION

Accomplishments in TSA 2013

Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) is a large-scale standardized assessment centrally administered in a defined time period. Centralized marking has been adopted to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment data in the three core subjects, Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. The provision of valid and reliable data helps facilitate learning and teaching in schools. Over the years, with schools' cooperation and growing expertise in assessment administration, the TSA has been smoothly conducted. The 2013 TSA was no exception; it was also smoothly run with the assistance and support of schools.

A total of 162,158 students participated in the written assessments of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics at P.3, P.6 and S.3 levels in June 2013. In addition, there were altogether 63,425 students sampled for the oral assessments held in mid-April at S.3 level and early May at P.3 and P.6 levels.

The students' overall performance is steady, demonstrating slight improvement in general. The overall Basic Competency (BC) attainment rates of P.3 students in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics are 86.6%, 80.4% and 87.5% respectively. When compared with the previous year's performances, the attainment rates in the three subjects have increased: 0.5% in Chinese Language, 0.7% in English Language and 0.2% in Mathematics. Regarding P.6, the attainment rates are: Chinese Language 78.1%, English Language 72.4% and Mathematics 84.2%. Due to the suspension of the P.6 TSA in 2012, no territory-wide data was provided for that year. Hence, when comparing the attainment rates of P.6 students with those in 2011, Chinese Language and English Language have respectively increased 0.9% and 0.7% and Mathematics has increased 0.1%. For S.3, the attainment rates are: Chinese Language 77.1%, English Language 69.5% and Mathematics 79.7%. When compared with the previous year's performances, the attainment rates in the two language subjects have increased: 0.2% in Chinese Language, 0.4% in English Language and the attainment rate in Mathematics has dropped 0.1%.

In responding to the requests from schools and catering for the varied needs of students, the HKEAA has continued to implement new measures to facilitate students' participation in the assessment. These new measures included the following:

1. Braille scripts were provided for students with visual disabilities. Also, schools with visually disabled students could use screen readers which read aloud the Chinese and English listening and writing papers as the students took the assessments.
2. Starting from 2010, the HKEAA has continuously implemented various measures to encourage Non-Chinese Speaking Students (NCS) to take part in the Chinese Language assessment. Last year, an instruction sheet with information specifying the answering requirements for reading assessment was given to the invigilators. They were requested to read these guidelines aloud to students before the assessment started. This enabled students to better understand the answering requirements. This measure was extended to P.6 and S.3 this year. The satisfaction index on post-TSA surveys collected from both primary and secondary participating schools showing an average of 3.8 (5 as the maximum) was obtained. This showed that the new facilitation measure for NCS was well accepted.

The 2013 TSA results were released in early November 2013. Schools can download their school reports and various 'Item Analysis Reports' via the BCA website using secure login passwords. This year, to enable the schools to utilize and edit their own data, the HKEAA has enhanced the formats of the reports. The schools can download the Item Analysis Reports in the standard PDF format and the newly introduced EXCEL format which facilitate schools' processing and analysis of TSA data.

A series of TSA seminars will be held around the end of November and early December. Managers and senior officers of relevant subject levels of the HKEAA will explain in detail students' strengths and weaknesses in answering TSA items. Also, students' performances across years and interpretation of data will be presented to teachers in the seminars. The information delivered will enhance teachers' understanding of their students' performances and interpretation of assessment data, so that they can adjust their teaching plans accordingly.

The HKEAA also assists teachers in understanding and interpreting assessment data through various means. Over the previous year, about 20 seminars and workshops were conducted. The purpose of the seminars and workshops was to introduce the web-based item bank of Student Assessment (SA) developed by the HKEAA and the Web-based Learning and Teaching Support (WLTS) developed by the Education Bureau. The SA is an assessment tool to help teachers identify students' strengths and weaknesses where the WLTS can provide teachers with various learning and teaching resources to follow up students' learning.

The Way Forward

The large-scale system-level assessment provides the Government with objective data on students' standards in key learning areas, which informs policy review and the provision of support to schools. Moreover, the data and information collected from the assessment enables schools to have a thorough understanding of students' learning and thus help students learn better.

With a view to improving the implementation of TSA, the HKEAA will closely collaborate with the EDB to collect views from schools and other relevant stakeholders via different channels in this academic year 2013-14. We hope that the effectiveness of assessment in facilitating learning and teaching can be further enhanced.

At the same time, the HKEAA will continue to organize various seminars and workshops to strengthen the communication with schools, introduce the characteristics of the SA system and ways to incorporate the SA into their learning and teaching resources. Thus, schools will realize that assessment is an integral part of curriculum and cannot be separated from learning.