

9. CONCLUSION

What has been accomplished in TSA 2008?

In order to help teachers better understand the rationale and the effective use of TSA data in teaching and learning, seminars were conducted after the TSA 2007 results were released. Materials for these seminars were posted on the internet for downloading from the TSA website. In response to requests from schools, two additional results reports were provided to schools, entitled 'Supplementary Reports'. One excludes students with mild intellectual disabilities and the other excludes students with special educational needs (SEN) and/or different learning needs. The Supplementary Reports help schools to better understand their students' levels of performance and to take appropriate steps in planning their teaching programmes. A survey of the usefulness of TSA reports was also conducted in 2008 to collect data on how teachers make use of the TSA data and whether or not the TSA reports were of assistance in supporting teaching and learning. Details of the results of the survey are outlined in a later part of this chapter.

Regarding oral assessment, the method of online training and mandatory training workshops for oral assessors was improved. Participants were organised into groups of 30 so as to enhance the standardization of scoring. The mean satisfaction index of the training workshops was 3.6 and 4.0 (out of 5) for Chinese Language and English Language respectively.

Assessment literacy training for teachers was 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.

In order to improve the quality of marking, on-screen marking for all TSA subjects was adopted in 2008. This new technology was welcomed by the markers. A majority of the markers indicated that the marking progress was more efficient than traditional methods of marking; the working environment was also highly commended and marker reliability was enhanced.

Experience gained from TSA 2008

What has been learnt from TSA 2008? The results of TSA 2008 provide data about the performance of a fifth cohort of Primary 3 students, a fourth cohort of Primary 6 students and a third cohort of Secondary 3 students.

The overall pattern of performance of P.3 students in 2008 was almost identical to that observed in 2007. 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 (79%), for which almost one in five students were performing below the minimum standards set for basic competency in this subject. The same pattern was observed in the cases of P.6 and S.3 students who performed best in Mathematics (84% and 80%), followed by Chinese Language (76% and 77%) and then English Language (72% and 69%).

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.

A plateau effect is now evident in the scores for all three subjects. Any significant improvement in the percentages achieving basic competency beyond those achieved in the first 2-3 consecutive of the programme would require greater incentives for improved performance or the introduction of programs that are effective in improving the quality of teaching in the relevant subjects and levels of schooling.

For both schools and the system, the most useful information provided by TSA 2008 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.

Survey results of the usefulness of TSA reports

During 2008, HKEAA conducted a survey on the usefulness of Territory-wide System (TSA) reports in improving teaching and learning. A questionnaire was sent to 1081 schools, i.e. 624 primary schools and 457 secondary schools in mid-May 2008. 727 schools (432 from primary schools, 293 from secondary, 2 from schools with both primary and secondary) responded. The response rate was 67.3%.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part I was about the TSA Reports which provide territory-wide data. Part II was on the reports at school level. These two parts were to investigate whether or not the Report clearly described the student performances. Part III was on how teachers used the TSA data in their teaching and learning. Part IV focused on overall evaluation and suggestions. In total, there were 7 items. Amongst

these seven items, five contained sub-items. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale.

The result of the survey indicated that schools, in general, were satisfied with the presentation of TSA Reports and that TSA Reports were an important source of data for the support of teaching and learning. The majority of the respondents (92.6%) regarded the chapter on ‘Subject Results and Student Performances’ as the most valuable part of the TSA Reports. 421 (97%) and 275 (94%) of primary and secondary school teachers respectively indicated that they adjusted their teaching planning after making reference to the TSA data. Moreover, 115 respondents (15.8%) requested HKEAA to provide more information such as individual student reports, suggested teaching and learning strategies, etc. Amongst these 115 responses, there were 26 (2.8%) requests to have individual student reports. Some schools (4.4%) wished to know more about the performance of other schools in the same district region or banding. Data illustrated that primary schools were slightly more satisfied with the presentation of TSA Reports than the secondary schools.

The findings of each item were illustrated in the following graphs:

Chart 9.1 Q.1 The Territory-wide TSA Reports clearly describe the student performances at Basic Competency levels in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics. (5=Totally Agree, 1=Totally Disagree)

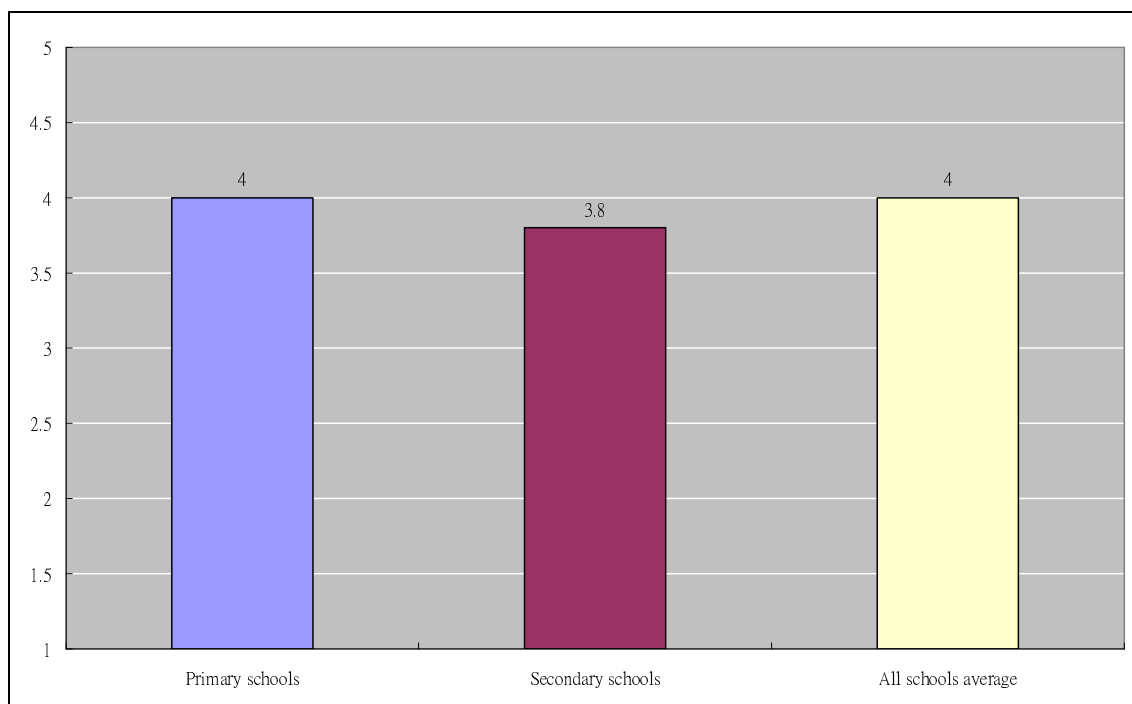


Chart 9.2 Q.2 The most valuable part(s) of the Territory-wide TSA Reports (may select more than one item)

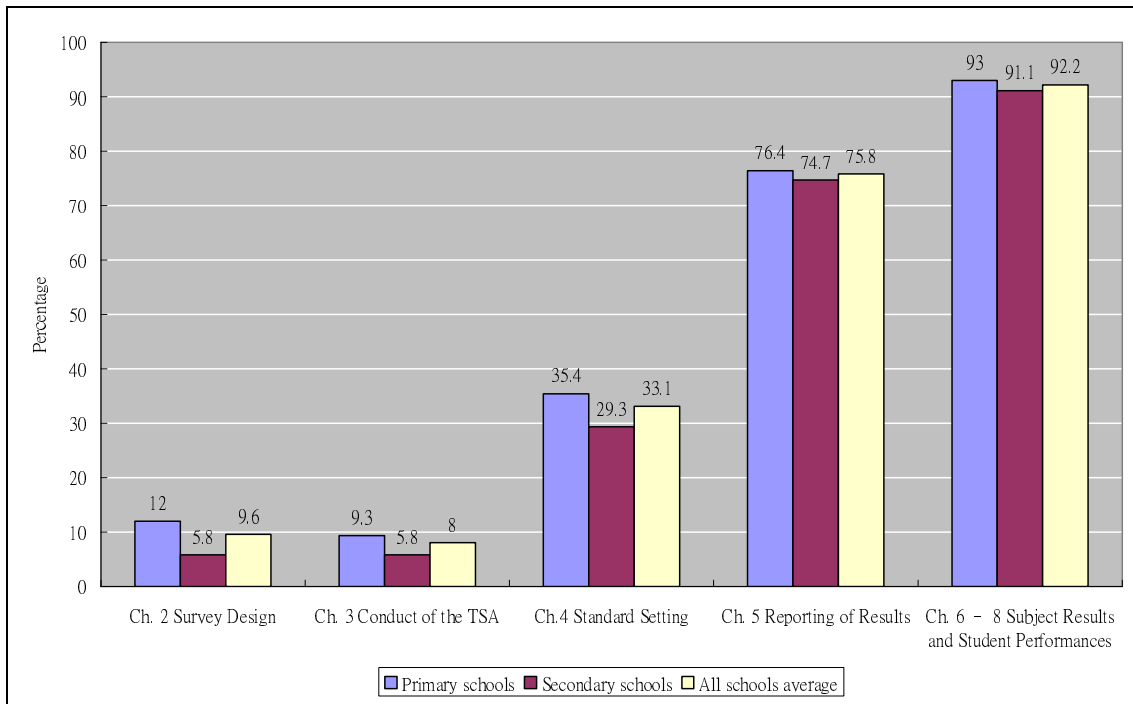


Chart 9.3 Q.3 The data on the school level reports are useful. (5=Totally Agree, 1=Totally Disagree)

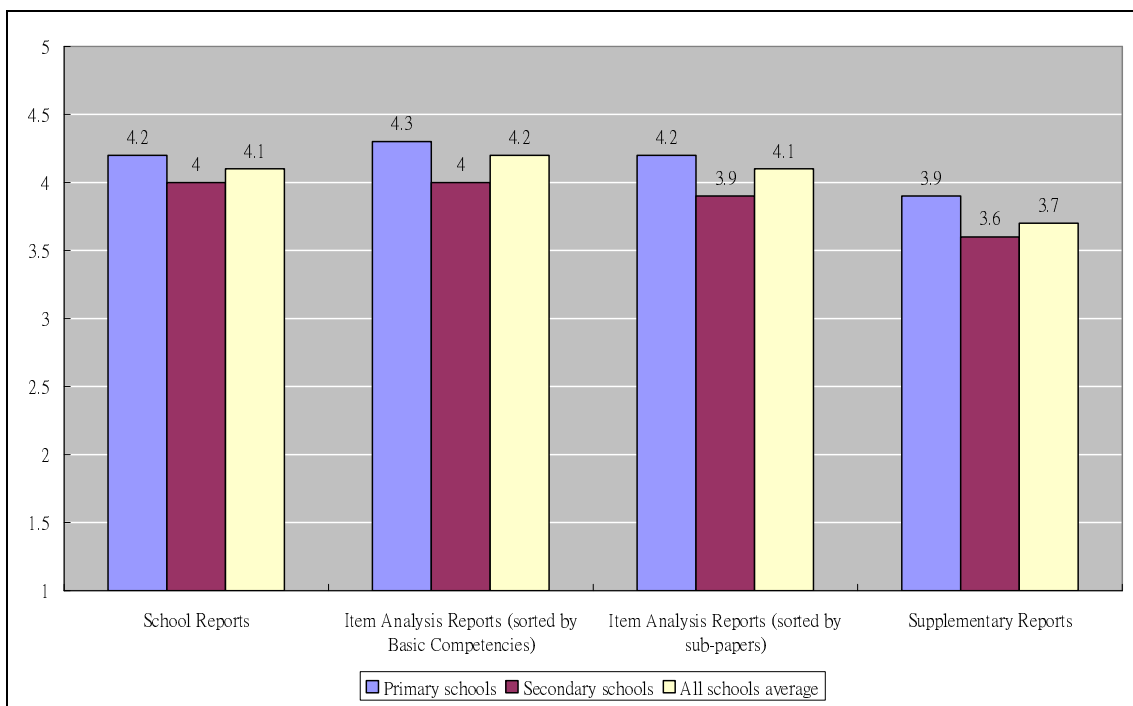


Chart 9.4 Q.4 Did your teachers adjust their teaching after making reference to the TSA data?

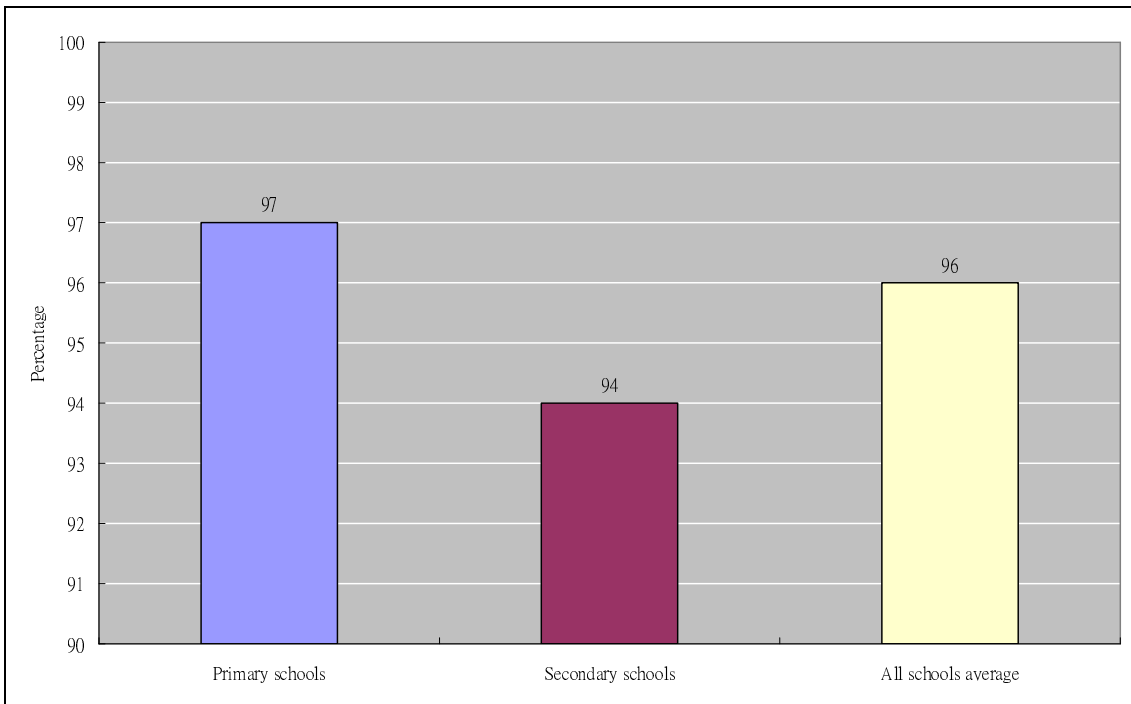


Chart 9.5 Q.5 Which of the following teaching aspect(s) was/were adjusted after your teachers had made reference to the TSA data? (may select more than one item)

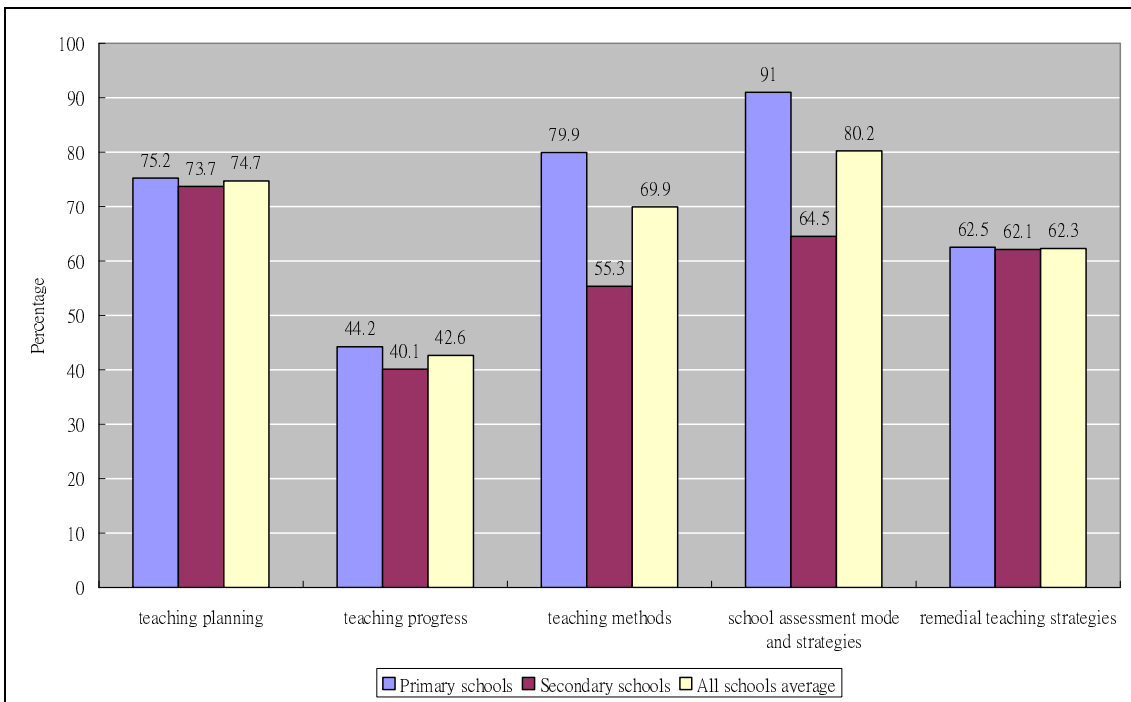


Chart 9.6 Q.6 After your teachers had made reference to the TSA data to adjust their teaching over the previous school years, the students showed improvement in Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics (may select more than one item)

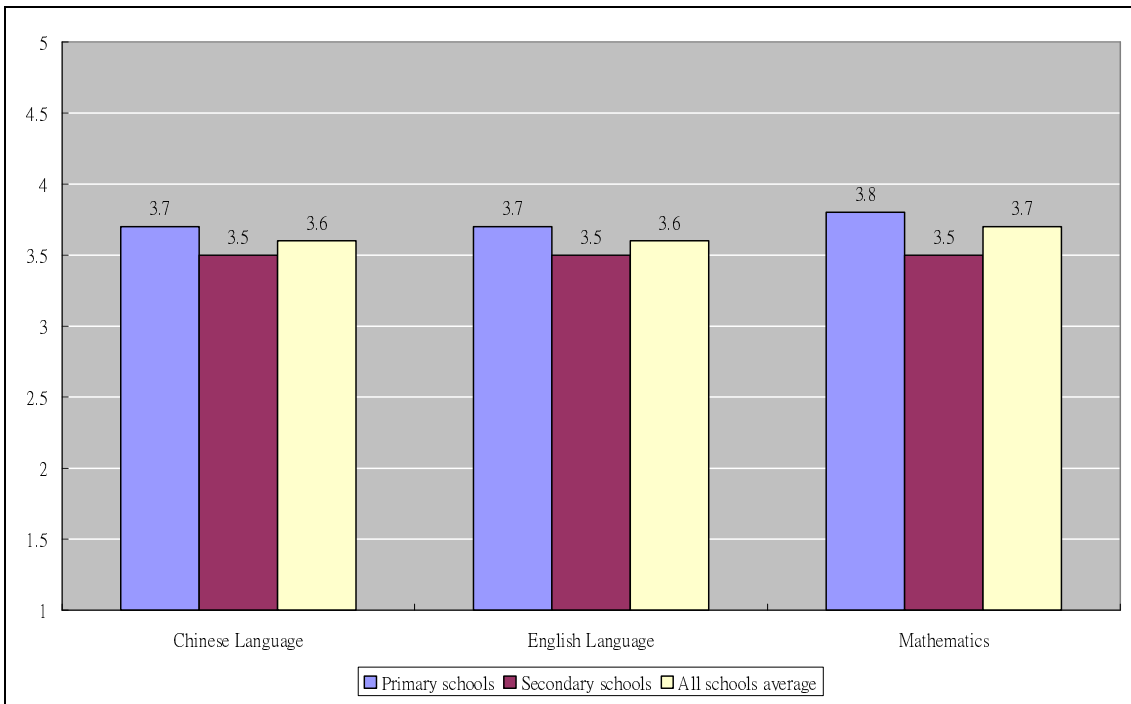
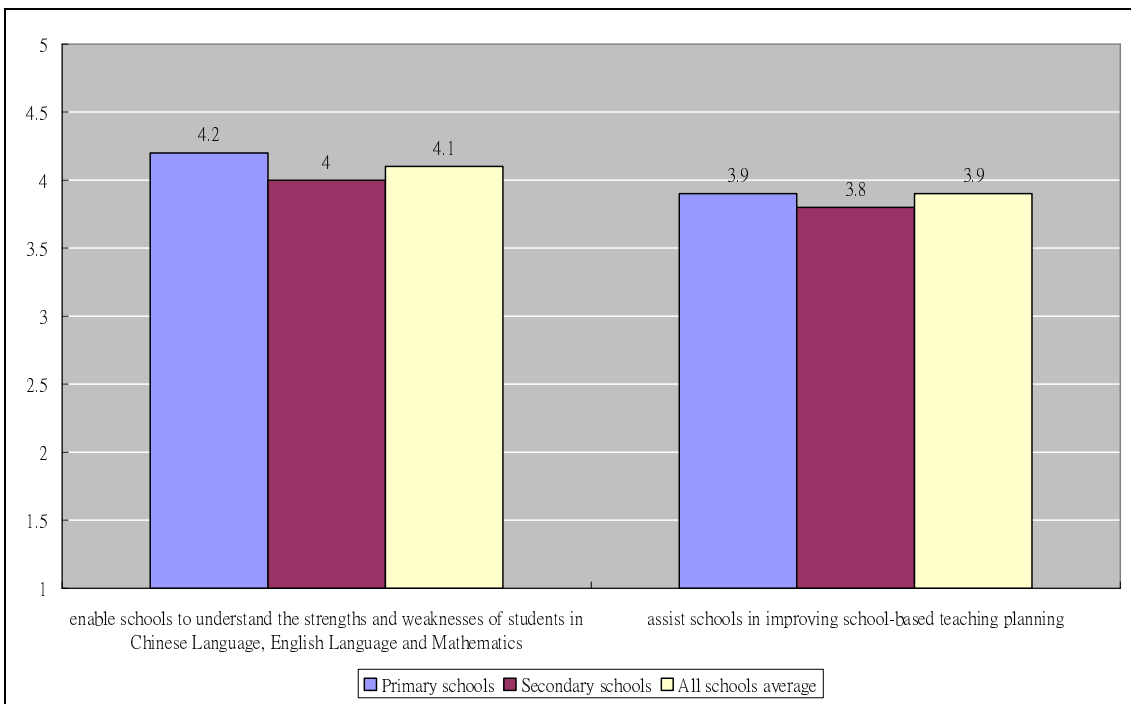


Chart 9.7 Q.7 On the whole, the TSA data can (5=Totally Agree, 1=Totally Disagree)



Responses indicated that TSA data enables schools and teachers to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students in the three subjects and that they use TSA data as the basis for improving their teaching plans.

The Way Forward

New initiatives for 2009 and beyond include Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT), which will be introduced for Mathematics during the academic year 2008 to 2009. Intermediate level courses on Assessment Literacy will be offered in 2009. In response to school request, HKEAA will allow schools to select Putonghua for Oral Assessment on a class basis. It is hoped that these new initiatives will better cater for the needs of different stakeholders and benefit student learning outcomes.