



NEQMAP Research Study: School-Based Assessment: Policies and Practices in the Asia Pacific

Concept Note

Assessment is a core part of the learning and teaching process. While the negative impact of high stake exams they may have on the student learning has increasingly been highlighted, some studies suggest that there is a positive relationship between continuous assessment at classroom level and academic performance. In particular, there has been an embrace of formative assessments such as school-based assessment (SBA) as a tool to equip teachers and students with knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of student learning in a wide array of countries/jurisdictions ranging from Hong Kong, Canada and Italy. In many contexts, SBA seeks to serve the dual purpose of both formative and summative assessment.

With SBA practiced in various countries/jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region and with sparse research on the development of SBA within the region, comparative research on SBA implementation in the region at different levels of education will be useful in analyzing its impact and highlighting the challenges in its implementation.

Thus, UNESCO Bangkok is launching a comparative study on SBA under the banner of the Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia Pacific (NEQMAP) at UNESCO Bangkok, a regional platform established in 2013 with an aim to improve the quality of learning in the Asia-Pacific region by enhancing the use of student learning assessment to strengthen education systems. The network supports countries/jurisdictions in the region through capacity development, research and knowledge sharing activities in the area of learning assessment.

The study, by focusing on several countries/jurisdictions in the Asia Pacific region as case studies, aims to look into the policy environment in relation to SBA, gather information on different practices as well as its usage in improving quality of teaching and learning, identify relevant issues and challenges and provide recommendations for future directions in this area.

The research framework and tools of this study are developed around the key principles of SBA as below.

Key Principles of School – Based Assessment:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment is the purposeful, systematic and ongoing collection of information about student learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SBA encompasses both formative and Summative assessment strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers design continuous school-based assessment programs and make judgments about the standards achieved for each student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking

○ Student work is marked against criteria and standards
• Moderation among teachers and schools
○ To ensure consistency of teachers' judgments, examples of student work is moderated with other teachers within the school and across schools
• Feedback to learners
○ Teachers and peers provide timely, focused, relevant and developmental feedback to students
○ Teachers use feedback to celebrate success with their students and to identify areas in need of improvement
○ Feedback includes oral and written processes
○ Feedback is aligned to the curriculum and criteria used for marking
• Use of data
○ Teachers use the data from formative and summative assessments to adapt instruction to meet the learning needs of all students
○ This data can be used by individual students to set goals for their learning and to reflect on their learning
○ Formative and summative assessment data supplements other forms of data about student learning outcomes (e.g. testing)
• Alignment
○ The curriculum for teaching and learning, assessment and reporting are aligned
○ Clear and specific content and standards for achievement are included in the curriculum framework (syllabuses and guidelines) for each year level
○ SBA encompasses both formative and summative assessment strategies
• Professional Development of staff
○ An expectation that all teachers are provided with professional development programs based on the principles of SBA
○ Teachers are given strategies that support the implementation of the SBA principles.

Using the aforementioned research framework and tools developed by an international expert, participating countries/ jurisdictions will conduct a national study and produce a national report. The international expert will then produce a regional synthesis report which will be published by UNESCO Bangkok.

The timeline for the study is as follows:

	Activities	Proposed dates
1	Finalize draft version of the research framework and tools	9 January 2016
2	Identification and confirmation of country researchers	5 February 2016
3	Send research framework and tools to country researchers for review and feedback	Week of 8 February 2016
4	Orientation meeting (in Bangkok)	18-19 February 2016 (To be confirmed)
5	Second round feedback from country researchers	1 March 2016

6	Finalization of research framework/tools and send to country researchers	15 March 2016
7	Field research by country researcher	March – June 2016
8	Submission of draft country reports	15 June 2016
9	Review and provide feedback on country reports	1 July 2016
10	Submission of final country reports	1 August 2016
11	Produce and submit final draft of regional synthesis	1 September 2016
12	Publication (review, design, printing)	Mid October 2016

Researchers or institutions from countries/jurisdictions which wish to participate in the study should contact the NEQMAP Secretariat at UNESCO Bangkok as soon as possible, via e-mail at neqmap@unesco.org with 'School-Based Assessment' in the subject line. It is desirable if the researcher or institution meets the following requirements:

1. Specialized in or familiar with area of learning assessment, ideally with some expertise on school-based assessment
2. 5-10 years of experience in conducting research in the area of education
3. Solid and established contacts with relevant departments of the Ministry of Education and other institutions which are involved in assessment