

UNICEF-UNESCO Dialogue on

Developing Curriculum and Assessment Systems for 21st Century skills

Concept Note and Agenda

Background

Trends in education reform efforts across Asia and Pacific demonstrate a drive to adapt education systems to meet the today's demands for '21st century' skills or competencies (inclusive of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values). Several factors are driving these reforms. Countries desire to upgrade their education systems to meet the expectations of young people in the 21st century. International large-scale assessments have also played a role in pushing countries to reconceptualize their education systems to make their students competitive in the global knowledge economy. Concerns have been raised regarding over-testing, especially in the countries of this region, to the point where this overtakes efforts aimed at improving the quality of education. Some countries have also demonstrated concerns for child and adolescent well-being in response to high pressure education systems.

There has been an increasing awareness that education, in general, might have over-focused on the cognitive domain.¹ In response to this, several initiatives have been set up to examine non-cognitive assessment, including UNESCO Bangkok and the Network on Education Quality Monitoring in Asia-Pacific's (NEQMAP) work in transversal competencies.²

Various frameworks on 21st century skills have been referenced by assessment programmes across the world. In particular, the OECD definitions of transformative Competencies³ and the Partnership for 21st Century Learning⁴ definitions of 21st century student outcomes are frameworks that broadly share commonalities with the UNESCO Bangkok transversal competency framework. In these frameworks, the individual skills may differ in operational definitions slightly, but there is general consensus on the theoretical definitions of the constructs that are more established in the literature (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving). These competency frameworks consistently emphasize the mobilization of knowledge,

¹ See UNESCO, 2018. The Culture of Testing.

² See UNESCO, 2016. Assessment of Transversal Competencies.

³ See OECD, 2019. Transformative Competencies for 2030.

⁴ See P21, 2009. P21 framework definitions.

attitude, skills and values through a process of reflection, anticipation and action, in order to develop the interrelated competencies needed to engage with the world. However, in none of these areas have definitive methodologies been developed to capture these skills and competencies in learning assessments.

Developing and implementing such reforms often requires significant shifts away from traditional teacher-centered systems towards competency-based teaching and learning approaches. In some cases, such shifts demand a rethinking or reconceptualization of the country's educational philosophy.

The complexities involved raise many issues among education officials:

- How to best develop curriculum frameworks to promote 21st Century skills?
- How to implement the changes in teaching and learning systems to support 21st century curricular reforms? How to engage parents, carers and the broader community in relation to understanding and supporting the changes?
- How to develop assessment frameworks to promote 21st Century Skills?
- How can examinations, including classroom based and end-of-cycle assessments, be transformed to measure 21st century skills? Have alternative summative assessments strategies other than examinations been or are being used? Has the response to COVID-19 resulted in alternative assessment strategies being used that have or are proving to be valid and reliable?
- What support is needed for teachers and schools to implement those changes?
- How to align assessment and curriculum frameworks in terms of 21st Century Skills?

Objectives

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, in collaboration with UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok and the NEQMAP Secretariat will organize a joint technical consultation with assessment and curriculum experts and stakeholders from Indonesia and Thailand working on similar challenges related to developing curriculum and assessment for 21st Century Skills.

The consultation will help education stakeholders and policy-makers strengthen their understanding of competency-based frameworks for large-scale assessments, while also referencing issues in curricula and how to better prepare and support teachers for implementing these frameworks in the classrooms.

Date: Thursday, 10 September 2020, 08:30-11:00 GMT+7

Link to join Webinar:

<https://unicef.zoom.us/j/98334333191>

Password: 10092020

Agenda

| Time | Programme |
|-------------|--|
| 08:30-08:40 | <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Akihiro Fushimi, Regional Education Specialist, UNICEF East Asia & Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) |
| 08:40-08:45 | <p>Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Wattanaporn Rangabtuk, Deputy Secretary General, the Office of Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education |
| 08:45-09:45 | <p><u>Part I – Competency-based Curriculum</u> Moderator: Dr. Akihiro Fushimi, UNICEF Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Catherine Chan, Professor of Practice, Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China Dr. Rattana Sangbuaphuen, Director of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards Bureau, Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand Q&A and Panelist commentary |
| 09:45-10:45 | <p><u>Part II – Building Competency-based Assessments</u> Moderator: Mr. Mark Manns, UNESCO Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Esther Care, Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne, Australia |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Rahmawati, Researcher & Dr. Susanti Sufyadi, Policy Analyst, Center for Assessment and Learning, Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia • Q&A and Panelist commentary |
| 10:45-10:55 | <p>Final remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Benjalug Namfa, Special Advisor to the Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand |
| 10:55-11:00 | <p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Mark Manns, Associate Programme Specialist, Section for Inclusive Quality Education & NEQMAP Secretariat, UNESCO Bangkok Regional Bureau for Asia-Pacific |

List of speakers and panelists

1. **Prof. Catherine Chan**, Professor of Practice, Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China
2. **Dr. Rattana Sangbuaphuen**, Director of Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards, Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand
3. **Dr. Esther Care**, Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne, Australia
4. **Dr. Rahmawati**, Researcher, Center for Assessment and Learning, Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia, and
5. **Dr. Susanti Sufyadi**, Policy Analyst, Center for Assessment and Learning, Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia
6. **Dr. Phil Lambert PSM**, Director, Phil Lambert Consulting Pty Ltd, Adjunct Professor, University of Sydney and National President Australian College of Educators.
7. **Dr. Claire Scoular**, Senior Research Fellow, Australian Council for Educational Research

Target Audience

The webinar is aimed at policy makers, ministry officials, curriculum developers, education assessment and evaluation administrators, teachers, teachers of teachers and academic researchers from Indonesia and Thailand. Participation will be by invitation only.