

Foreword

The education reforms in Hong Kong over the past two decades have been echoing the international trends in education, which emphasises the importance of integrating competence-based education into school curricula. The tasks involved in reconstructing the model of education lead not only to pedagogical changes but also imply an innovative approach to assessment practices. Teachers have been making a tremendous effort to explore how competences and transversal skills can be accurately measured. Assessment literacy, therefore, has become a focus of concern in the education field.

When creating an assessment instrument that supports and reflects student learning in school, there are at least four essential principles to follow: First, ensuring the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment, which is the process of facilitating the interactions among course content, classroom instruction, assessment methods and intended learning outcomes. Second, developing a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum to provide a coherent set of expectations for students and educators about what to learn at a particular grade level. Third, the need to give a clear purpose to each assessment and setting questions of varying difficulty that allow students to display knowledge and skills of both high and low levels. Fourth, making use of assessment data to inform instruction and to value student and teacher efforts to improve.

Nonetheless, designing an assessment instrument by adhering to such principles is easier said than done. Based on the assessment practices observed in many different schools, teachers are found highly competent at developing curriculum and teaching activities, yet not many are conscious of assessing the discrepancies between what to teach and what to assess. Seeking compromises on assessment formats, levels of difficulty and data management, is often a challenge to them.

I wish to express sincere gratitude to the Quality Education Fund for its generous contribution, which led to the establishment of QSIP-CEAL. The project provides tailor-made school-based support services to equip teachers with professional knowledge and capacity to design practical assessments. It has brought tremendous benefits to innumerable teachers and students through on-site support and territory-wide dissemination activities in the past three years. I would also take this opportunity

to acknowledge the invaluable advice and support given by the Education Bureau, particularly the School-based Professional Support Section, in supervising our work throughout the period.

This publication showcases eight school-based teacher development projects implemented by our School Development Officers, who are eager to collaborate with schools by adhering to the philosophy of comprehensive school improvement. The positive changes described in the school cases are a result of the collective efforts of the schools which have collaborated with us over the past academic year. I am deeply grateful to the principals and teachers for their generous sharing of their school-based experiences. Their achievements in actualizing assessment for learning, and establishing a self-improving mechanism conducive to on-going school improvement as well, are highly commendable. I sincerely hope that this collection of school-based assessment examples will inspire teachers in other schools to see the process of teacher development in assessment literacy and to seek better ways to facilitate learning and assessment for students.

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