Holistic Assessment (HA) in Primary Schools

- PERI Committee's Recommendations
- Overview of PERI HA Implementation
- Key Learnings from HA Prototyping
- Going Forward...

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“Our children should grow up to be confident persons, adept at working in teams and able to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively. They should be self-directed learners who view education as a life-long process. They should also be innovative and enterprising individuals, able to cope with ambiguity and adapt well to change. At the same time, Singapore needs citizens who are morally upright, have a strong sense of civic responsibility and who will contribute actively to society. These skills and dispositions should be inculcated in the formative years of primary education”.

Source: Report of the Primary Education Review and Implementation Committee, March 2009 p3

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Recommendations of PERI's Committee

~ Confident Children, Independent Learners, Caring Citizens ~

Build on the strengths of current system, seek to raise primary education to a new level.

• **Balancing knowledge with skills and values**
  – Use engaging pedagogies to teach skills and values
  – Emphasise non-academic programmes within curriculum
  – **More holistic assessment to support learning**

• **Providing more resources for a quality primary education**
  – Investing in a quality teaching force
    • Provide additional manpower
    • Recruit passionate, quality educators
    • Ensure continuous professional development of teachers
  – Enhancing infrastructure
    • Move all primary schools towards single-session
    • Design new generation primary school facilities

Summary of PERI Recommendations for Holistic Assessment

**Holistic Assessment to Support Learning & Development**

• Explore the use of ‘bite-sized’ forms of assessment in P1 and P2 to help **build confidence and desire to learn.**

• Place less emphasis on single-point assessment such as semestral examinations in P1 to smoothen transition to primary school.

• Equip teachers with skills to provide pupils with richer and more holistic feedback on their development and skills acquisition to **enable more meaningful learning.**

• Provide parents with a more comprehensive “Holistic Development Profile” which captures **a fuller picture of their child’s progress and learning throughout the year.**

• Continue to provide clear guidelines on the learning outcomes for each subject at the end of every level, to facilitate teachers’ design of appropriate assessment tasks and ensure students’ **continued mastery of foundational skills.**
Government Accepts Recommendations on Primary Education - Changes to be implemented progressively over the next few years

Holistic Assessment to Support Learning and Development

Schools are institutions for learning... the focus of schools should be on engaging students in learning. To better support the holistic development of pupils, MOE will work with schools ... enable schools to track the learning progress of pupils, and provide richer feedback to parents and pupils. ... provide schools with training and resources to develop expertise in new teaching and assessment methods, and to ensure that robust assessment frameworks are put in place. MOE will monitor the implementation of these new teaching and assessment methods ... We anticipate that schools will take the next few years to build capacity ...

Implementing Holistic Assessment in Primary Schools

2009 – 2011 (Prototype Phase)
Partner 16 prototype schools to develop quality school assessment resources and practices to be shared with all schools

2011 - 2013 (Phase 1 – Phase 3)
Reach out to all schools to build understanding of holistic assessment and ensure implementation of core features of holistic assessment

2013 - 2016
Enhance teachers' competency and raise quality of assessment practices in tandem with pedagogy training

MOE 3 + 3 Implementation Plan
Objectives of Prototype

- Co-develop different models of assessment aligned to the spirit of PERI
- Glean useful learning points to refine assessment practices in schools
- Facilitate systematisation of effective assessment practices across all primary schools

Core Features of Holistic Assessment Implementation

1. Whole School (Systemic) approach, Level-wide (Sustainable) implementation

2. Emphasise Assessment for Learning

3. Strengthen Assessment of Learning
   (Black & Wiliam, 1998; ARG, 2007; Stiggins, 2008)

4. Go beyond pen-and paper testing and adopt appropriate assessment methods and modes

5. Use assessment information to improve pupils’ learning

6. Use assessment information to improve teaching
   (Guskey, 2003; DuFour, 2007; Popham, 2008; Hattie, 2009; Reeves, 2010)

7. Adopt holistic reporting and communication
   - Portfolio (progress, development and achievement)
   - Qualitative feedback (formative)
   - Grades/marks and comments (summative)
   (Guskey & Bailey, 2001; O’Connor, 2009)

8. Review and refine assessment systems & structures
Key Learnings from HA Prototyping

- Teachers, key to quality classroom assessment. What matters most is what teachers do in the classrooms.

- Reality (end 2009): 
  Low Assessment Literacy & Competency

Holistic Assessment

...refers to the ongoing gathering of information on different facets of a child from various sources, with the aim of providing quantitative and qualitative feedback to support and guide the child's development.

Math Curriculum Framework

“Assessment is the process of gathering information about pupil learning and achievement in relation to defined learning outcomes.”

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Holistic Assessment

Four key aspects:

Focusing on the development of the whole child

Striking a balance between AoL and AfL practices

Guiding teachers in the design and delivery of their practices

Using appropriate methods and modes of assessment

“Assessment is the process of gathering information about pupil learning and achievement in relation to defined learning outcomes.”

Re: Pedagogy & Assessment Guide (revised)

Holistic Assessment

Striking a Balance between AoL and AfL practices

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

- to measure pupil achievement and report evidence of learning
- for accountability purposes – grading, ranking and certification.
- tends to be **summative** in nature
- carried out at the end of a unit, semester or year.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

- to support classroom learning and teaching and improve pupil learning.
- to redirect learning in ways that help pupils master learning goals.
- **formative** in nature,
- takes place all the time in the classroom, *a process that is embedded in instruction.*

Why Assess? (Clarity of Purpose)

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Whole-School (Systemic) Approach

Leverage PLC, adopt the “Learning in Learning Team” Approach.
(DuFour, 2004; Wiliam, 2007)

The Assessment-Feedback-Learning Cycle

Planning for Learning

- Identify pupils’ profile and learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, values, dispositions)
- Select and design teaching strategies and assessment tasks
- Share learning outcomes and expectations
- Engage pupils through reflective pedagogy
- Gather information about pupil progress in learning
- Reflect and improve learning and teaching
- Interpret evidence and give timely feedback that moves pupils forward

Supporting Learning

Evaluating Learning

Judge & Reporter...

Holistic Assessment Resources and References

- Pedagogy and Assessment Guide & Lesson Exemplars
- Co-developed HA Comms & Subject-based Training Videos
- HA Communication Package (for Parents)
- Good Stories from Prototype Schools (aHA! Stories)
- School Readings & Reference Materials (Books, CD & DVD)
- PERI Holistic Assessment Website
(http://peri-ha.edumall.sg)
1. Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching.

2. We need to educate teachers, parents and students on the purpose of assessment and ensure balanced use of summative and formative assessment to provide information on mastery and attainment as well as information to improve learning and teaching.

3. Holistic assessment is not about removing exams but it is about using a range of assessment methods and modes for different purposes.

4. Holistic assessment extends beyond the lower primary school years into the upper primary school years.

5. It is consistent to have both holistic assessment and PSLE, the former does not negate the need for the latter.
“As we expected, different teachers found different techniques useful; what worked for some did not work for others. This confirmed for us that there could be no one-size-fits-all package. However, we did find a set of five broad strategies to be equally powerful for teachers of all content areas and at all grade levels:

- Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success.
- Engineering effective classroom discussions, questions, and learning tasks.
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward.
- Activating students as the owners of their own learning.
- Activating students as instructional resources for one another.

We think of these strategies as nonnegotiable in that they define the territory of assessment for learning. More important, we know from the research and from our work with teachers that these strategies are desirable things to do in any classroom.”

(Source: Classroom Assessment: Minute by Minute, Day by Day. Leahy, Lyon, Thompson & Wiliam 2005)