

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH
EXAMINATION AND ACCREDITATION BODIES

**Improving the quality of public education in the
commonwealth: assessment, accreditation and
evaluation**

**Pretoria, South Africa
March 9th to 14th, 2008**

*Organised by
UMALUSI, Council for Quality Assurance
in General and Further Education and Training*

WELCOME

Dear Participant

The executive committee of the Association of Commonwealth Examination and Accreditation Bodies; Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training; and the Conference Organizing Committee cordially welcome you to the fifth international conference of the Association of Commonwealth Examination and Accreditation Bodies in Pretoria, South Africa.

Your host for this year's conference is Umalusi. The conference will be held over five days from 10th to 14th March 2008, at the Innovation Hub in Pretoria. There is an official welcome for international delegates on the Sunday 9th March before the conference, at the Menlo Park Town Lodge. We welcome all delegates to the social events organized around the conference—the details for which can be seen in the conference programme.

The conference theme is *Improving the quality of public education in the Commonwealth: assessment, accreditation, and evaluation*. Sub themes this year are:

- Systemic development for relevant, effective, and accountable systems
- Accreditation models of quality assurance
- Quality assurance for teacher education: Commonwealth information session
- Improving the quality of assessments and evaluations
- Continuous assessment: challenges and strategies
- Assessment: further challenges and strategies
- Lessons from interventions

About 100 delegates from a wide range of Commonwealth countries will be attending the meeting. In this booklet you will find a list of Association of Commonwealth Examination and Accreditation Bodies executive committee members; Umalusi Council members; sponsors of this conference; a conference programme and the abstracts of the papers that will be presented, together with contact details for the presenters.

We wish you a pleasant stay in South Africa!

ACEAB Executive Committee
Umalusi Council
Umalusi Conference Organizing Committee

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ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH EXAMINATION AND ACCREDITATION BODIES

The Association is a voluntary, pan-Commonwealth, educational, networking association for persons and institutions engaged in and concerned with the development and conduct of examinations and other forms of assessment at the primary, secondary and advanced levels, where the focus is on the needs of small states.

The principal aims of the Association are to:

- provide a forum for exchange of information and views on examinations and accreditation among members, through such mechanisms as newsletters, networking arrangements and meetings
- promote ethical standards in examination and assessment systems
- facilitate the training and professional development of personnel working in examination and accreditation systems
- promote the highest possible standards in examination processes and accreditation in Commonwealth countries
- encourage the development of Commonwealth standards for certification which are universally recognised in order to facilitate the movement of students at all levels between Commonwealth countries
- facilitate research in assessment and examination procedures in order to encourage excellent practice
- facilitate the development of software systems that can be used in processing examinations in Commonwealth countries, in order to enable small states to make use of systems that they would not have individual capacity to develop

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EXAMINATION AND ACCREDITATION BODIES 2006 – 2008**

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The conference is hosted by Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, 8th – 14th March 2008, at the Innovation Hub, Pretoria, South Africa.

Sunday 9th March

There is a reception for international and out-of-town South African delegates from 17h00-18h00, at the Menlo Park Town Lodge Hotel. Registration for international delegates and out-of-town South African delegates will take place from 17h00-18h00 at the Menlopark Town Lodge Hotel.

Day one: Monday 10th March

Time	Session	Speakers
07:30	<i>Registration and tea</i>	
09:00	<i>Opening session</i>	<i>Greeting:</i> Representative of ACEAB <i>Invocation</i> <i>Keynote address:</i> Professor Mary Metcalfe <i>Opening presentation:</i> Dr Peliwe Lolwana, Umalusi
11:00	Tea	
11:30	<i>Session 1: Systemic development for relevant, effective, and accountable systems</i>	Mr Chaile Makaleng (Umalusi, South Africa): <i>(De)centralization: the South African pendulum swings on</i> Mr Simon Kisasa (Uganda): <i>Improving the quality of public education in commonwealth countries in relation to examinations: the Uganda experience</i>
	Chair: Mr Jolly Chembe, Zambia	
13:00	Group photograph	
13:30	Lunch	
14:30	<i>Session 2: Accreditation models of quality assurance</i>	Ms Paulette Dunn-Smith (Caribbean): <i>Regional quality assurance systems for workplace assessments in the Caribbean: rhetoric or reality?</i>

Time	Session	Speakers
	Chair: Mr Kwame Dattey, Ghana	Ms Mary-Louise Madalane (Umalusi, South Africa): <i>Is public Adult Education and Training provisioning a benchmark for private Adult Education and Training?</i>
16:00	Tea	
16:30	<i>Session 3: Quality assurance for teacher education: Commonwealth information session on teacher qualifications and professional status</i>	Dr James Keevy (SAQA, South Africa): <i>A transnational qualifications framework for the Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth: implications for the quality assurance of teacher qualifications</i>
	Chair: Dr John Izard, Australia	Dr. Marcia Stewart (Jamaica): <i>Developing quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms for teacher education in the English-speaking Caribbean</i>
18:00	Official opening cocktail function with Mrs G.M. Pandor, MP, the Minister of Education, at the Innovation Hub, Pretoria	

Day Two: Tuesday 11th March

Time	Session	Speakers
08:30	<i>Session 4: Improving the quality of assessments and evaluations (Paper presentation followed by workshop)</i>	Dr John Izard, Australia: <i>Improving the quality of assessments and evaluations (paper); Important features of assessment for learning; linking assessment results (workshop)</i>
	Chair: Mr Joshua Baku, Ghana	
10:00	Tea	
10:30	<i>Session 5: Assessment systems</i>	Dr Uhila-moe-Langi Fasi (Fiji): <i>Using assessment to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Pacific</i>
	Chair: Mr Vijayen Naidoo, South Africa	Mr Michael Hartwig (Botswana): <i>Thoughts related to the controversy between normative and reference based assessment systems</i>

Time	Session	Speakers
		Mr Delroy Alleyne and Ms Carol Watson (Cayman Islands): <i>Quality assurance in assessment: a technology-driven approach</i>
		Dr Newman Burdett and Dr Kevin Stannard (United Kingdom): <i>Assessment in bilingual contexts: case studies of context and language integrated learning in national systems</i>
12:30	Lunch	
13:30	<i>Session 6: Continuous assessment: challenges and strategies</i>	Professor Servaas van der Berg and Ms Debra Shepherd (South Africa): <i>Signaling performance: an analysis of continuous assessment and matriculation examination marks for South Africa</i>
	Chair: Dr Ronel Blom, South Africa	
		Professor Godswill Obioma and Dr Kate Nwifo (Nigeria): <i>A survey of continuous assessment practices in Nigerian primary and junior secondary schools</i>
		Mr Godson Gatcha (Botswana): <i>Assessment of secondary school courses delivered through open and distance learning in remote settlements of Botswana</i>
15:00	Tea	
15:30	<i>Session 7: Assessment: further challenges and strategies (1)</i>	Professor Dibu Ojerinde, Professor Albert Ayodele, and Dr Yusuf Lawal (Nigeria): <i>Improving the quality of public examinations in JAMB: practical experience</i>
	Chair: Ms Stella Nti, Ghana	
		Dr Heidi Bolton (South Africa): <i>Formative assessment: scaffold to high learner achievement across social class contexts</i>
		Mr Toliwe Chehore (South Africa and Zimbabwe): <i>Challenges in the implementation of formative assessment for in-service and pre-service teachers</i>

Time	Session	Speakers
		Ms Frances Kerr-Phillips (South Africa): <i>Quality assurance in the absence of an external examination: Life Orientation in the new South African Senior Certificate</i>
17:30	Dinner and evening activity: trip to a cultural village. Buses depart from Innovation Hub at 17h30	

Day Three: Wednesday 12th March

Time	Session	Speakers
08:30	Social history outing. Buses depart from Innovation Hub and Menlo Park Town Lodge at 8:30; and travel via an interesting local craft market for brief shopping, to the history-filled Freedom Park and Constitutional Hill, where delegates can walk around and experience exciting tours. Lunch will be provided by a local school; an early supper is also included in the form of a typical South African braai. Drinks will be on sale. Buses return to Menlo Park Town Lodge by 20h00	

Day Four: Thursday 13th March

Time	Session	Speakers
08:30	<i>Session 8: Assessment: further challenges and strategies (2)</i>	Dr Betty McDonald: <i>Self-assessment and student-centred learning</i>
	Chair: Professor David Ojerinde, Nigeria	Dr Jacob Mwanza (Malawi): <i>Reliability of marking of English comprehension: Malawi School Certificate Examinations (MSCE)</i>
		Mr Joshua Baku (Ghana): <i>Managing examination irregularities in the Ghana national office of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC)</i>
		Dr Sarah Banislal (South Africa): <i>Assessing the validity of the Grade 9 Mathematics Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs)</i>
11:00	Tea	
11:30	<i>Session 9: Lessons from interventions</i>	Mr Jolly Chembe and Ms Angel Kaliminwa (Zambia): <i>Evaluation of the Primary Reading Programme in Basic Schools in Zambia: lessons of best practice in curriculum reform</i>
	Chair: Dr Burdett Newman, United Kingdom	

Time	Session	Speakers
		Ms. Elizabeth Burroughs (Umalusi, South Africa): <i>Language as cognitive opportunity</i>
		Ms Estelle Nel (IEB, South Africa): <i>Can a core skills test at Grade 6 level improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schooling, and so assist in preparing students more effectively for middle schooling?</i>
13:00	Lunch	
14:00	Business meeting, followed by shopping at Menlyn Mall, combis to the mall after the business meeting	
14:00	Shopping and free time for delegates not attending the business meeting. Buses depart from the Innovation Hub at 15:00, take delegates back to the Menlo Park City Lodge 17:00	
19:00	Gala dinner and party with Mr M.E. Surty, MP, Deputy-Minister of Education, at Diep-in-die-berg, Pretoria (Buses depart Menlo Park Town Lodge Hotel at 18:30)	

Day Five: Friday 14th March

Time	Session	Speakers
08:30	<i>Session 10: Lessons from interventions (2); defining and assessing quality</i>	Ms Narjis Abbas (Pakistan): <i>School and college responses to the establishment of a private examination board: a sample of change in practice</i>
	Chair: Dr Makhapa Makhafola, South Africa	Ms Anne Oberholzer (IEB, South Africa): <i>I recognize 'quality' when I see it!</i>
		Dr Abdulmahmoud Ibrahim (Sudan): <i>Assessing the quality of the Sudan School Certificate English Examinations: 2004 to 2007</i>
		Mr Nkosinathi Sishi (South Africa): <i>Negotiation of subjectivities in the implementation of curriculum and examinations policy in South Africa</i>
10:30	Tea	
11:00	Closing session	Dr Peliwe Lolwana, South Africa Representative from ACEAB
	Chair: Dr Peliwe Lolwana, South Africa	Certificate ceremony Choir, Closing address
12:00	Light lunch and departure	
13:00	Shopping at Menlyn Mall for those who wish to do extra shopping. Combis depart the Innovation Hub at 14h00 and return to Menlo park Town Lodge at 17h00	

ABSTRACTS

ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF SUDAN SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ENGLISH EXAMINATIONS, 2004 - 2007

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Examinations, among other tools, are used to measure the quality of education--so tests are the tools for assessing the quality of:

1. The curriculum that we teach.
2. The teaching method we use in our classrooms.
3. The educational goals that we aspire to attain as educational objectives.

A good test can tell us all about that. A good test has the following characteristics:

1. Reliable: That means it gives consistent results if repeated under the same conditions and surroundings.
2. Valid: It tests exactly what it is intended to test. If it is grammar, then it will test only grammar at a time.
3. Practical & Scoreable: It does not cost much efforts, time or money.
4. Comprehensive: It covers most of the syllabus, course or unit.
5. Backwash: A good test must have a positive backwash which is the effect of test on teaching and learning.

This paper is intended to explore these elements in the Sudan School Certificate English Examinations. The researcher set out to investigate the topic through a questionnaire which he designed for this purpose. After thorough investigations and analysis the researcher had come to the following findings:

1. The Sudan School Certificate English Examination in its recent form is not a Standardized Achievement Test and hence, it does not reflect the truth about the Sudanese Students' Performance in English.
2. The (SSC) English Examination in its recent form from 2004 to 2007 is not Comprehensive, because it does not cover the material which was taught in the final level. Many of the exam items are often extracted from other sources rather than the students' textbooks.
3. The (SSC) examination in its recent form does not cater for the cultural, gender, geographical and psychological differences of the young Sudanese learners. Therefore, the topics of the exam lack Content Validity.
4. The (SSC) English examination in its recent form is impractical to score because it needs much efforts, time and money.
5. The (SSC) examination in its recent form is highly subjective because most judgments depend on the personal opinion of the marker. We need more Objective tests.

Then the researcher recommended some changes to be taken in the form and content of the (SSC) English Examinations. The researcher also suggested some ideas for further investigations in the field of English teaching and English Examinations in the Sudan.

I RECOGNIZE QUALITY WHEN I SEE IT!

Ms Anne Oberholzer
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“I recognise ‘quality’ when I see it!”

In this paper I intend to explore the notion of “quality in education” by investigating the following:

- How to define the concept;
- How to recognize it;
- How it relates to societal values;
- How it appears in different contexts;
- What it means in a society of extremes, such as South Africa.

Such a discussion includes observations about quality indicators, local and international, and current attempts to measure these within a system. Issues in respect of the reliability and validity of such measurements naturally point to the dangers associated with directing a system’s resources on measuring indicators of this nature. This approach is exacerbated by a policy decision that separates the society on criteria unrelated to “quality” as evidenced in any form, into different sectors, and then to require only some sectors to be assessed for “quality”.

The diversity evident in the South African education system and the limited resources available are key considerations in this discussion.

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The emphasis on being customer focused in industry may have translated itself to being student focused in education. Student-centred learning (SCL) places the learner at the centre of the learning process, giving him autonomy and responsibility for his own learning. The teacher acts as facilitator, resource person and fellow learner. In this environment emphasis on a kind of assessment that is student centred seems reasonable. This paper illustrates how self assessment defined as *the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards* facilitates SCL and fills a gap in the literature. It is hoped that readers will use the ideas offered to improve their practice.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ASSESSMENT: A TECHNOLOGY - DRIVEN APPROACH

Ms Carol Watson

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Dr Delroy Alleyne

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This paper will present a cost effective, technology driven, scalable approach which can be implemented so as to achieve high quality assessment processes.

Quality control or quality assurance is seen as a set of measures taken to ensure that defective products or services are not produced, and that the design meets performance specifications. In manufacturing, quality is the concept of making products fit for the purpose and with fewest defects. In educational assessment, quality is the accuracy with which an assessment process measures the level of knowledge and cognitive skills attained for stated learning objectives. Quality assurance is the guarantee that this process accurately measures these skills and not extraneous variables.

What is a high quality assessment product? Generally a quality product will deliver all design requirements without failure. How does this related to assessment? A high quality assessment product must be reliable, valid and appropriate. The process must guarantee that the data generated accurately represents the body of knowledge acquired by each student.

What is involved in the development of such a product? Quality control begins with the definition of the nature and purpose of the assessment, which informs the design, construction, development, piloting and implementation phases of the assessment process. Rigorous checks and balances at each of these phases ensure compliance with the assessment purpose and stated standards.

Is this quality control achievable? Despite the limited resources of many territories, technology makes this control achievable. Much of the expert knowledge required is now encapsulated in software products. Specialist function, form registration for analysis and reporting, can now be performed using commercially available software. Companies such as DPK can facilitate the development of high quality assessment in territories which, until now, would have found this difficult, if not impossible, for various reasons.

DE(CENTRALISATION): THE SOUTH AFRICAN PENDULUM SWINGS ON.

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This paper takes as its point of departure, the influence of a political discourse of decentralisation on education policy in South Africa. The paper traces this discourse to a negotiated settlement which preceded the national elections in 1994. An assertion is made in the paper that the discourse was embraced by the negotiating parties, mainly the democratic/progressive movement and the then National Party for different rationales.

The main contention made in the paper is that the discourse of decentralisation, which permeates education policy, inadvertently perpetuates the entrenched historical inequalities in this country. The paper further contends that the emergence and impact of quality assurance does not seem to have the desired effect on, in particular, historically disadvantaged schools in that there is no indication that they have the requisite capacity to improve their provision of quality education.

In an effort to situate its main argument, the paper highlights the apparent crisis of learner achievement, which is adequately exemplified by the performance of South African learners in national and international tests.

The paper concludes by focusing on some of the intervention strategies which may help to mitigate the unintended negative impact of the discourse of decentralisation.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS IN JAMB: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

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As a public examination body, the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board performs her main functions of conduct of matriculation examinations and placement of suitably qualified candidates into Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.

Towards this end, a lot of efforts are always put in place to ensure very high quality and standard of tests development, production, administration and scoring in order to achieve positive results, especially in the face of a large number of candidates who take the examinations as against the very limited number of vacancies available in the institutions.

This paper tries to assess the contributions of all factors (variable and invariable), and the methodologies adopted to ensure the delivery of qualitative, standard and fair examinations.

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Outcomes-based forms of defining the learning that is to be achieved in subjects results, in a subject such as English, in a focus on language-associated skills (*'The learner is able to read and view for understanding...'*). While such a focus is not of itself a bad thing, such an approach suggests that the skills are all that there are to learning a language. In such a situation, unhelpfully, everything can be regarded as grist to the language-learning process, or that nothing is. Either way, the impression is that a subject such as English is devoid of content in the way that Biology or Mathematics is not. The view of language embodied in an outcomes-based system is thus primarily a utilitarian one, where language is learned largely in terms of practical purposes.

Such a view of language is not however the only one possible. One could, for example, regard the learning of language as a means of acquiring a set of intellectual capacities—ones which have developed over time, and which form a part of the intellectual inheritance associated with a particular cultural milieu. Education potentially provides a means for learners to recapitulate that cognitive development through the learning process. Egan (1997), in *The Educated Mind: How cognitive tools shape our understanding*, identifies and describes five distinctive kinds of understanding, which he argues, result from the development of certain intellectual tools which help to shape the kind of sense we make of the world. The progressive acquisition of these different forms of understanding, Egan argues, should form the basis of a developmentally sound educational curriculum, providing not only an indication of content but also pointers as to how such a curriculum would optimally be taught.

This paper compares, on the one hand, some of the curricular implications for the teaching and learning of language emerging from Egan's proposal, to those that can be drawn from the current South African language curriculum documents on the other. The paper concludes by drawing out some of the implications of these differences.

CAN A CORE SKILLS TEST AT GRADE 6 LEVEL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLING AND SO ASSIST IN PREPARING STUDENTS MORE EFFECTIVELY FOR THE RIGOURS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLING

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The IEB Grade 6 Core Skills Test provides a benchmarking moment in the learning pathway. It determines whether year 6 students have attained sufficient cognitive academic proficiency to engage with the demands of the following years.

The Test is non-curriculum-based. It assesses the level of achievement generally expected of students at this age in key generic skills, particularly those thinking skills that should be developed through a well-delivered curriculum, but which are not specifically articulated or assessed in the current curriculum in South Africa. In short, the focus is on the skills required for effective operation in life and society. These relevant skills are located in the fields of literacy (including visual literacy) and numeracy (including relevant aspects of mathematical literacy).

The entire pen and paper test is based in a real-life context that is appropriate for grade 6 learners and through which they are required to demonstrate their abilities. It is designed and the students are assessed using a four level taxonomy of cognitive ability.

The results are reported using a question by question analysis of individual student performance. This provides a profile of the cognitive level of ability of each student in the various skill areas that are tested. The profile thus identifies strengths and weaknesses of learner performance in relation to these skills and provides valuable diagnostic information that can be used to inform future curriculum planning and delivery.

In its second year of implementation, the positive impact of the test on whole school curriculum planning, the attitudes of teachers and students towards learning, teaching methodologies and assessment practices is already evident.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE ABSENCE OF AN EXTERNAL EXAMINATION: LIFE ORIENTATION IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICAN SENIOR CERTIFICATE

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This paper begins with an analysis of the nature and purpose of the compulsory subject, Life Orientation. The IEB Subject Assessment Guidelines for Life Orientation are discussed in terms of what is to be presented in each learner's portfolio of evidence at the end of Grade 12. The problems that are being encountered in the delivery of the National Curriculum Statement for Life Orientation in schools assessed by the IEB are then explored. Strategies that the IEB has put in place to ensure quality in both teachers' and learners' Life Orientation portfolios are discussed. The validity of the subject as part of the National Senior Certificate is thus shown.

ASSESSMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES DELIVERED THROUGH OPEN LEARNING IN REMOTE SETTLEMENTS OF BOTSWANA

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Secondary school courses delivered through Open and Distance Learning mode in Botswana are examined in exactly the same manner like in conventional schools. The questions that arise are; what measures or strategies are used to subject remote distance learners to continuous assessment comparable to conventional schools? How have remote distance learners who have previously went to conventional schools perceived and experienced the continuous assessment that they are subjected to?

A qualitative case study approach was used given the focus of the above mentioned questions. Remote distance learners selected to participate in this study were those that were enrolled for the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) and had an experience of over a year learning at a distance. Their remoteness from their regional centre was another criteria for their selection. The focus was on their perceptions and experiences of continuous assessment in 4 courses. Official records were also used to assess the impact of continuous assessment on final public examinations at BGCSE level from 2003 to 2006.

The findings of this study when it came to perceptions and experiences were mixed and included the following amongst many; that the continuous assessment was very good, difficulty, easy and inadequate. Others made observations that it had not been reviewed since 2001. The delay in assessment feedback was experienced by all learners in the remote sites that were selected. Issues of monitoring and evaluation were also cited as being inadequate and as such learning support through assignment assessment was viewed as being inadequate. Hopelessness and fear of failure characterised most participants in all the sites. However the official records of pass rates in the 4 courses indicate that something is working despite the distance learner perceptions. Suggestions on effective learning support through continuous assessment of secondary school courses delivered through ODL are made in this paper.

A SURVEY OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN NIGERIAN PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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One major innovation of our educational system in Nigeria is the introduction of Continuous Assessment as an important component of evaluation. In all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, continuous assessment accounts for 30% of a student performance in each subject. Since Continuous Assessment was institutionalised in Nigeria schools. No major national survey has been conducted to determine the status and the practice of this very important component of students' assessment. A study was therefore carried out in all Nigerian primary and junior secondary schools. Data analysed showed among others that 85% of the teachers had basic misconception of CA (to them it was continuous testing). 80% did not know about the availability of the CA Guidelines that the continuous assessment instrument now in use in Nigerian Schools is of poor quality and that teachers carry out Continuous Assessment in an inefficient way. One of the major recommendations made is the development of a new standardized instrument. Workshop and seminar must be conducted to show teachers how to use the instrument for better improvement and implementation of quality educational assessment.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: SCAFFOLD TO HIGH LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT ACROSS SOCIAL CLASS CONTEXTS

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Formative assessment is defined in different ways: in this study it is taken to comprise all teacher and teacher-supervised peer feedback on work in progress.

This paper draws on a doctoral study into achievement in art by learners in differing socio-economic contexts (Bolton 2005). The larger study of which this paper is part, examines the achievement patterns of over 750 learners in relation to various contextual features. It establishes that of all the contextual features considered, achievement in art is most closely associated with social class. The study then tracks the achievement patterns of four cohorts of matric (final-year) art learners, at six schools, over four consecutive years. The school classes were specifically chosen so that two school classes had learners with high social class; two had learners with moderate social class, and two, learners with low social class. In other words, achievement patterns were only compared between school classes deemed to be similar with respect to social class.

Because attempts were made to control for social class, and the average percentage grades of one set of classes in each compared pair were significantly higher those in the other class, it was thought that pedagogic practice was intervening to preserve the identified achievement patterns. Further, the school classes could be ranked on the basis of average percentage grades over the four years. The two top-achieving schools had learners with the highest and lowest social class respectively, again suggesting that pedagogy was having an effect on the ranking.

Pedagogy in the art classrooms at the six schools was analyzed qualitatively at the level of speech as well as non-verbal communication between the teachers and individual learners. It emerged that specific pedagogic features were associated with the top-achieving schools at each of the social class levels. These features included certain selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge, and making evaluation criteria explicit. These findings closely overlap those found in related research into science (for example, Morais et al 1992). Further, all of these features operated via formative assessment.

This paper attempts to show how the selection, sequencing, and pacing of knowledge, and the explication of evaluation criteria linked to high achievement, is conveyed via formative assessment

RELIABILITY OF MARKING OF THE ENGLISH COMPREHENSION – MALAWI SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS (MSCE)

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The Malawi National examinations Board and of course, all examining Bodies must ensure that their examinations are marked reliably. To this end a series of measures are followed to make marking reliable. These measures include training of markers, standardization of mark schemes and monitoring of examiners by Senior Examiners.

In spite of these measures, higher marker reliability remains illusive in some subjects at the Malawi School Certificate level. The ex-post-facto analysis of the 2006 English Paper III described here serves as an example.

This analysis centers on two indices, the facility index and the discrimination index. The facility index measures the easiness of an item while the discrimination index describes the quality of the item in separating more able from less able candidates.

The results of the analysis showed that marker reliability was the possible cause of poor performance in two items and the other two items seemed too hard for the level of candidates. The paper also describes efforts by the Malawi National Examinations to improve inter-marker reliability, including the introduction of the “conveyor” system of marking.

A TRANSNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR THE VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY OF SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

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Since 2005 the South African Qualifications Authority has actively participated in qualifications-related developments in the Commonwealth, including research on the recognition of teacher qualifications and professional status (Commonwealth Secretariat & SAQA 2006) and most recently, collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning on the development of a transnational qualifications framework for the Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth (COL & SAQA 2007). This paper critically compares the approach to quality assurance being proposed in the transnational qualifications framework with the development of the teacher qualifications comparability table being developed to facilitate the recognition of teacher qualifications. Based on the comparison, the paper considers implications for quality assurance of teacher qualifications within the Commonwealth context.

**IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS:
STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF CHANGE AND DATA:
A LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

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Assessments need to be of high quality in order to provide relevant evidence for evaluating educational progress as required by the curriculum intentions of an education authority. This study uses Partial Credit Rasch analysis to study a complex data set of student responses to survey items about understanding of chance and data collected from 1993 to 2003 in the Australian state of Tasmania. The purpose of the analysis is to consider average cohort change over time, individual longitudinal change, and trends in performance during the first 10 years after the curriculum was introduced in Tasmania. Data were collected from a total of 5514 individual students across Grades 3 to 11 over the decade, with 896 of these students providing longitudinal data at least once. Students completed a core of items that allowed Rasch analysis to be performed and all students were subsequently placed on the same scale for comparison. Comparisons are made of average group performance and of kidmaps for individual performance of selected students with longitudinal data. Implications for the education system and curriculum implementation are considered.

EVALUATION OF THE PRIMARY READING PROGRAMME IN BASIC SCHOOLS IN ZAMBIA: LESSONS OF BEST PRACTICES IN CURRICULUM REFORM

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Assessment and Curriculum are intertwined elements in the education system. Assessment results inform the education system on the effectiveness of its curriculum in yielding the desired learning outcomes. From the assessment results as evidenced by poor examination results during the late 1990s, it was concluded that literacy levels were very low in primary schools. The Ministry of Education (MoE) in Zambia therefore introduced an innovative teaching methodology called the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) in 1999. After three years of pilot implementation, the programme was subjected to a series of formative evaluations among them the National Assessment Programme. The PRP was scaled up in 2005.

This paper discusses the comparative performance between the Primary Reading Programme pilot schools and ordinary schools using the results from National Assessment Survey of 2003 and the Grade seven examination results of 2006. Lastly the paper outlines the recommendations made from the evaluations of the programme.

MANAGING EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES IN THE GHANA NATIONAL OFFICE OF THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATION COUNCIL (WAEC)

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Examination malpractices (irregularities) have serious consequences for the reliability of any examinations. Thus WAEC, a quality-oriented examining body, takes action to prevent such occurrences. Yet, cases of irregularity persist. Further, new dimensions of irregularities have been introduced by the advent of information communication and technological improvements.

Sources of irregularity include students/ candidates, invigilators, supervisors, staff of council, and others such as the printers of question papers. The Council may take any of several decisions regarding cases of irregularity including the cancellation of entire sets of results; cancellation of the results of particular subjects, and barring candidates from future examinations administered by the Council. If those committing the irregularities are teachers or examiners, they are first blacklisted and thereafter reported to their employers for disciplinary action.

This paper examines in detail, examination irregularities in their various forms, the frequency of occurrence of different forms of irregularity, and the detection and management of these irregularities by committees of Council—for guaranteeing the reliability of the assessment system and deterring future irregularity. Importantly, the paper offers some suggestions for reducing the rate of irregularities to the barest minimum.

DEVELOPING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION MECHANISMS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN

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Quality assurance at the tertiary level has become a matter of increasing national, regional and international importance given the rapid internationalization and marketization of higher education. In this context accreditation is increasingly becoming the modality of choice of quality assurance for both policy makers and publics across the world.

Within the higher education accreditation/quality maintenance bodies that apply specialized professional accreditation to determine if specific units/programmes within universities, professional schools, and colleges protect the public by meeting the profession's and the public's expectations in preparing an individual to practice the profession in question. In the context of education, quality assurance bodies such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) of the USA and the Initial Teacher Training Division of the Training and Development Agency for Teachers (TDA) of England have been established in the respective countries, in recognition of the impact that the teacher education sector has on the quality of the delivery of education and as a move towards the professionalization of teaching.

Parallels of this profession-focused quality assurance movement in the Caribbean region are evidenced in the already established mechanisms for the legal, medical and nursing professions. With regard to the teaching profession, the COSHOD meeting of October 2004, agreed in principle that the CARICOM (Caribbean Common Market) Secretariat should move to establish a Teacher Education Quality Assurance Mechanism within the framework of the CARICOM Accreditation Agency.

Within the region there has been robust activity in education as CARICOM Member States endeavour to upgrade their education system to be better able to prepare their population for the 21st. century. There has been the recognition that a fundamental component of success in these endeavours are teaching quality and consequently the preparation of teachers.

This paper therefore describes historical and existing provisions for quality maintenance and accreditation of teacher education and CARICOM initiatives in the region. Looking at some of the imperatives that drive developments in this area, it analyses where the Caribbean is at this stage and makes recommendations for completing the process of the establishment of a region mechanism for teacher education.

IS PUBLIC AET PROVISIONING A BENCHMARK FOR PRIVATE AET PROVISIONING?

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Umalusi is legally mandated to accredit private institutions of learning and assessment bodies and to ensure that public institutions satisfy its accreditation criteria. In response to this mandate, Umalusi has developed criteria for accreditation of Private Adult Education and Training Providers. Public Adult Education and Training centres by their deemed accredited status need to be fully compliant with these criteria.

The general perception regarding quality assurance approaches of the private providers is that their standard should be benchmarked against a particular standard. The question is who sets the standard and what is that standard?

The accreditation of institutions of learning, which attests to the institutions' ability to effectively manage teaching, learning and assessment, is the first step in a quality assurance cycle which involves quality assurance at different levels and at different times. Umalusi's Evaluation and Accreditation Unit has granted provisional accreditation to a number of private AET providers based on their desk top evaluation, and undertook further quality assurance steps by site visiting these institutions. The findings made at these sites give a picture that warrants further discussions on accreditation as a means of quality assurance for the private AET providers and the deemed accredited status of the public AET centres.

This paper will draw on a number of studies undertaken by Adult Education experts, learners in the field, Umalusi and other regulatory bodies, and on the data collected for the monitoring of private AET providers. The critiques against accreditation of private AET providers as a quality assurance mechanism, claiming that the quality assurance model as used is more suitable for industry and not for educational institutions adds to the need for these discussions. Umalusi's current provisional accreditation criteria address, in the main, compliance, in order to establish a baseline in relation to the development and implementation of appropriate policies, procedures and systems. Private AET provisioning takes place anywhere any time under different circumstance. The providers are setting their own standards and decide on their own criteria, these are not benchmarked against a said standard.

The focus of this paper is to interrogate whether the perception that quality assurance of private AET providers is largely a bureaucratic procedure, with minimal impact on quality, is correct and necessary.

- Whether the criteria as put in place by Act 52 of 2000 (ABET ACT) is appropriate to the AET sector in practice?
- Whether the Umalusi criterion is relevant and appropriate to the private AET provisioning in its current form?
- Whether there is a benchmark or not for this type of provisioning?

In addition, the paper will start to explore whether quality assurance (accreditation of private AET providers) as currently understood and undertaken, should be continued or adjusted, to become a systemic tool for the evaluation of the system.

THOUGHTS RELATED TO THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN NORMATIVE AND REFERENCE BASED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

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There has been a larger debate about whether traditional assessment instruments awarding grades to the learner are still well suited to support new outcomes based teaching methodologies. In some cases reference based and non grading assessment schemes have therefore replaced old systems in place.

The following paper is aimed at demonstrating the willingness to do a more thorough study of the advantages and disadvantages of different assessment principles within the specifics of the Southern African region based on personal experiences. It is also aimed at informing decision makers and senior management staff members about common misunderstandings related to reference, normative, grading and non grading assessment schemes hindering the introduction of regulatory actions necessary to improve existing educational systems and programs.

SCHOOLS' AND COLLEGES' RESPONSES TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRIVATE EXAMINATION BOARD: A SAMPLE OF CHANGE IN PRACTICE

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The establishment of the Aga Khan University Examination Board, a private board for SSC and HSC took place through the ordinance CXIV of 2002 by the president of Pakistan with a mission to improve the quality of education in school by offering SSC and HSC exams based on higher level of cognitive domains besides knowledge. The intention is to move students away from the habit of rote learning.

The Board had examination syllabuses developed. National aims and objectives of a National Curriculum policy 2000 were further presented in the form of specific learning objective beside each topic of a subject. Syllabuses are provided to teachers in every affiliated school. Syllabuses are to help teachers in making their teaching more purposeful besides helping them in the formative assessment. Although formative and summative assessments seem independent but AKU-EB is offering a link between on-going assessment in schools and the final assessment by the external body.

The paper seeks to examine the change in the classroom environment of schools since their affiliation with Aga Khan Examination Board and other examination boards in Pakistan. It tries to highlight the issues which offer obstacles in improvement in the quality of education in Pakistan.

This study aims for an in-depth look in the classroom environment of the schools affiliated with the Aga Khan Examination Board; it aims to

- examine the use of examination syllabuses by the teachers in the classroom
- examine the new ways of assessment adopted by the teachers
- examine the impact of teachers attitudes on students learning
- critically appraise change in teachers attitudes since affiliation with the AKUEB

This study will document the classroom environment and attitude of teachers towards assessment. This will present a report of the ground realities and based on the results; suggestions and recommendations will be made. Remedial measures that need to be taken to make the on going assessment (assessment for learning) more effective, are mentioned.

ASSESSMENT IN BILINGUAL CONTEXTS – CASE STUDIES OF CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING IN NATIONAL SYSTEMS

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The teaching and assessment of students in the medium of a second language poses a host of problems, but it also brings exciting opportunities. In many Commonwealth countries, this situation is a long-standing fact of life, but increasingly, globalisation, the need to promote national and transnational social cohesion in an ethnically diverse world and the need to protect and promote minority languages has led to active movements to introduce and expand Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), whereby part of the curriculum is delivered and possibly assessed in the medium of a language other than the student's mother tongue.

There is a growing literature dealing with the challenges of teaching and learning in a bilingual environment, and increasing evidence that students taught in such an environment perform better overall. There is increasing discussion about the relationship between the teaching of English and teaching in English (the former being the traditional preserve of teachers of English as a foreign language; the latter the domain of CLIL).

In assessment terms, there are two issues: first, the how, what and when of assessing and reporting student performance in a bilingual programme; and second, how to ensure comparability across national systems.

The first issue focuses on the means of identifying competence in subject knowledge, understanding and skills expressed through a second language – giving due cognizance to the bilingual component of a student's portfolio of achievement. There is an argument that for many students in an increasing number of countries, the intensive teaching of English as a foreign language has largely achieved its objectives by the end of the primary stage, and that thereafter a significant part of the curriculum can be taught in English (or in some regions another second language). However, there is less agreement on how progress in that second stage should be evaluated and achievement recorded. In many cases student achievement is under-reported, because tests continue to be focused on language, or because bilingual students still have to take the required tests in the mother tongue across all subjects.

The second issue points toward the need for assessments that have a wide applicability and currency. This is rendered problematic by the wide range of assessment models adopted, and the different forms of bilingual curriculum. However, increasingly schools and systems are looking to assessments which have an international currency, such as IGCSE, A Level and IB.

This presentation will discuss the general issues facing assessment in a bilingual context, and will use case studies from around the world to show how they are being addressed in different contexts. Perspectives differ, sometimes radically, but problems tend to be very similar, and increasingly solutions are tending to converge. Examples will be taken from India, Argentina, Spain, Italy, Sweden, the USA and Bosnia.

NEGOTIATION OF SUBJECTIVITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM AND EXAMINATIONS POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Educational change only becomes reality once it is implemented at school level, but research in this area is limited. This paper argues that teachers are key role players in the implementation phase, and that more often than not teachers are the silent voices in the policy process, ignored and often discounted. The paper argues that teachers teach in the way they do, not just because of the skills they have or have not learned, but are also grounded in their backgrounds, biographies, hopes, aspirations, collegial relations, and status, and the reward systems and leadership conditions under which they work.

The paper will argue that teachers are not passive and malleable in the light of policy pronouncements, but are social agents who engage in a range of tactics including accommodation and refusal. The concept of subjectivity represents a dynamic never-ending process and not an already accomplished fact. In other words, subjectivity is socially constructed, is never complete, and is always in process. Subjectivity in this paper is discussed as a matter of becoming.

The subjectivities of teachers are produced in a whole range of discursive practices - economic, political, and social, the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power. Schools can be seen as sites of the production of teachers' subjectivity and their pedagogical identity. The paper recommends that policy makers and education managers consider the reality of these subjectivities negotiated in the classroom against what policy demands teachers do.

REGIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS FOR WORKFORCE ASSESSMENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN: RHETORIC OR REALITY?

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With the onset of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, concerns have been expressed by many that assuring quality assessment for certification in training organizations across the small states in the region will prove extremely challenging to implement, maintain and sustain. Many questions have been posed. Are the requisite systems in place? Are the physical, human, capital and technological resources adequate? Can the internal systems in countries withstand the rigour, the scrutiny and detail required? Should some flexibility be allowed? If so, to what extent, if at all? Can regional quality assurance systems assure quality and maintain credibility? Is it all rhetoric or reality?

This paper looks at the measures taken to develop, maintain and sustain a quality assurance system for work-force assessment and certification in the small states of the English-speaking Caribbean, the challenges experienced and lessons learned.

THE SUM TOTAL IS GREATER THAN THE WHOLE: QUALITY MAKING INGREDIENTS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

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This paper briefly explores the development and importance of public education in society. Further, the role of quality controlling mechanisms in public education is raised. The reason for this is that quality assurance apparatus is very diverse and individuals and organizations seldom cover the spectrum of all the quality making functions. This paper ends with an outline of elements that ought to be considered in the quality making apparatus as key ingredients for ensuring quality. It is argued here that quality is a product of the sum total of these elements instead of a single event

ASSESSING THE VALIDITY OF THE GRADE 9 MATHEMATICS COMMON TASKS FOR ASSESSMENT (CTA).

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The Common Tasks for Assessment has been used for six years as an external assessment tool at the Grade 9 level. Each year, a common “real life” context is selected and all the assessment activities are then set around the chosen context. The study reported in this article involved a qualitative analysis of the responses of learners (from two classes) to a set of test items drawn from the 2003 CTA. One of the purposes of the CTA is to act as a validating tool of the internal continuous assessment scores achieved by the learners. In this article I argue that the validity, reliability and fairness of the CTA itself, may be compromised by its heavy reliance on a “real life” context.

SIGNALING PERFORMANCE: ANALYSIS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND MATRICULATION EXAMINATION MARKS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING

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Continuous assessment (CASS) is formally becoming an increasingly important part of the evaluation of South African students at matriculation level, with the weight attached to CASS in the final matriculation mark being increased. More importantly, perhaps, CASS is the form in which students get feedback on their performance during the matric year, and this feedback is likely to have an important impact on their preparation and effort for the matriculation examination. It is thus clear that weak assessment ability in the school system could mean that students are getting the wrong signals. This may have important consequences for the way they approach the final examination. Moreover, if such wrong signals have also been common earlier in their school careers, it may also have had an important influence on their subject choice and career planning.

To evaluate the quality of the school-based CASS, compared to the externally moderated matriculation examination (which is for present purposes regarded as the “correct” assessment of student performance), this study analysis data on CASS and matric exams for three years for a number of subjects. The study is based on work undertaken for Umalusi with data provided by them. The results are presented in a format where the extent of “weak” CASS can be evaluated and analysed. There are two dimensions to weak assessments in terms of signalling: On the one hand, an inflated CASS can give students a false sense of security that they are likely to do well in the matric exams, thereby leading to unrealistic expectations and diminished effort. Secondly, where there is a weak correlation between the mark obtained in CASS and the exam, this could also mean that the signalling to students is weak in another dimension: Relatively good students may get relatively (compared to classmates) low CASS marks, whilst the opposite happens to relatively weak students. We analyse the extent of each of these two dimensions of the problem of weak signalling and attempt to present it in a format that allows an overview of the magnitude of these problems amongst South African schools, by subject area, higher or standard grade subject, province, and socio-economic background of schools, and whether schools are private or public schools. The analysis draws conclusions with some disturbing policy implications for a relatively large part of the school system.

¹ *This paper is based on a draft report to Umalusi, October 2007. The authors wish to thank Derek Yu for assistance with the data, and various members of Umalusi’s Research Committee for useful comments on the draft report.*

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES IN RELATION TO EXAMINATIONS – THE UGANDA EXPERIENCE

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Countries continuously make efforts to improve the quality of their education systems. Education policy review commissions have been set up and have made recommendations for reforms. Uganda is no exception. Subsequently governments have committed themselves to implementing some or all the reforms, Public education has been considered and implemented in some Commonwealth countries with similar and different approaches specific to each country.

External public examinations continue to be conducted for public education at national and local levels to assess the curriculums and learners achievements. Valid and reliable examinations results are released at the end of each training cycle by education assessment bodies. Examinations results release reports give statistics, findings and recommendation. Achievements and shortfalls greatly emphasised. The accurate interpretations of the examinations results backed by further studies can result in more meaningful recommendations to specific stakeholders and can bring about quality improvement in public education.

Education assessment bodies in an effort to contribute to improvement in quality of public education, face a lot of challenges from stakeholders. The way assessment bodies take on and address these challenges is critical to maintaining trust in the assessment outcome and entire country's education system.

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Standards are statements that describe that which is considered to be important, worthwhile and of value. They provide criteria for judging quality. Quality determines the essential characteristics that are required to attain high standards. Assessments provide feedback on the extent to which the standards are being achieved. Assessment can either be formal or informal, formative or summative. The educational priority of every nation is to achieve high standards and the problem faced by the majority of countries is to find where to focus, so that most, if not all, learners receive quality education. The response to this problem can simply be, in the classroom. The classroom is the engine room for any education system. In the input-process-output model, the processor for any education system is in the classroom. The problem still remains on the way the engine should be run or the processes should occur.

This paper is about professional development of pre-service teachers focusing on one process, formative assessment in the classroom. Research has shown that formative assessment can raise the quality of education by raising the achievement of those referred to as low-achievers. These are in the majority in most education systems. This paper looked at the challenges in formative assessment being faced by in-service teachers in South Africa and whether these were being addressed by training institutions so that pre-service teachers do not face similar problems in service. A survey was carried out on in-service teachers using interviews and questionnaires. The instruments focused on their understanding, interpretation and implementation of learning outcomes assessment standards and formative assessment. A parallel survey was carried out on educator training institutions focusing on the content of their educational assessment courses. Data from the two surveys was then compared.

USING ASSESSMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE PACIFIC

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SPBEA has for many years been endeavouring to use assessment as an additional tool for use by students and teachers in their effort to secure demonstrable levels of learning. In the early years the emphasis lay on the inclusion of assessment methods that fell outside the conventional examination format, thereby allowing a range of skills to be assessed that would otherwise be overlooked. This was then married with an emphasis on formative assessment programmes within the classroom, designed to ensure that structured feedback to students resulted in improved levels of understanding.

Over the past three years SPBEA has been attempting to develop recognition of the value of assessment in the monitoring and promoting of standards, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy, in a number of Pacific Island Countries.

The monitoring of standards has been achieved by the development of National benchmarks for both Literacy and Numeracy. In the last two years, SPBEA with UNESCO and UNICEF developed regional benchmarks for literacy, numeracy and life skills. These benchmarks are learning outcome statements pitched at the primary years 2, 4, 6, 8, and are derived from the curriculum documents for their respective subjects. These have then been used to develop standardized tests, which have principally been administered at Year 4 and at Year 6 level for Literacy and Numeracy. In several cases Literacy includes papers written for monitoring English competency and Vernacular competency.

The administering of the standardized tests has shown that there is a gap between the learning outcomes stated in the curriculum documents, and the realized performance of a large percentage of the pupils.

Acknowledging that learning outcomes are end statements to a process of learning, it was decided to describe a pathway towards each learning outcome by constructing a set of achievement levels. It was then possible to see to what extent a group of pupils had moved towards the mastery of a learning outcome.

It was recognized that the principles involved in establishing achievement levels for determining mastery of learning outcomes by school, or national cohorts, also offered a strategy for teachers in the classroom; that being to recognize the probable achievement path that leads to mastery of defined learning outcomes. This recognition led to the production of a module for teachers with the aim of improving teacher competency in the use of classroom assessment. This module is based upon the fact that teachers and pupils with a clear vision of learning outcomes to be mastered are far more likely to achieve the outcome than those for whom the target of learning is a vague aspiration.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the ways that SPBEA is currently attempting to combine three separate but related assessment approaches. The monitoring of national literacy and numeracy standards; the establishment of paths towards achievement by providing teachers with sets of well defined learning outcomes; and monitoring changes in strategy adopted by teachers, each contributing towards the goal of realizing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.