

**Effects of School Based Assessment in Achieving the Objectives of  
Intended English Language Curriculum at Grades VI to VIII**

a thesis submitted in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of  
**Master of Philosophy**  
**(English Language Education)**

**GIFT**

By

**Kh. Atikur Rahman**

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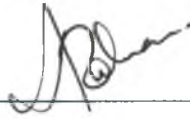
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**Master of Philosophy**  
**(English Language Education)**

**Submitted By**



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**Statement of Original Authorship**

This thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.



**Kh. Atikur Rahman**

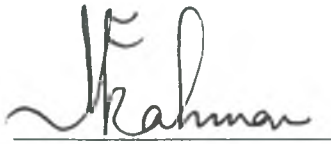
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**Declaration**



It is to certify that I have supervised the research work and the thesis that Kh. Atikur Rahman has produced and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy (English Language Education).

To the best of my knowledge, it is his own work and it has not been submitted anywhere for a degree or diploma.



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**Dedication**

My Wife

**Nafisa Anjum Jenus**

&

My Sweet Daughter

**Atkia Anjum Labeeba**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the use of School Based Assessment (SBA) in English courses at grades VI to VIII, its link to the learning outcomes and the corresponding influences on achieving the objectives of intended English language curriculum.

For selecting sample schools, purposive sampling procedure was applied. Within the schools, the selection of teachers and schools were also done following purposive sampling. A sample of 12 schools was selected from Dhaka, Gazipur and Laxmipur districts. A total of 12 English teachers and 12 head teachers were selected for the study. Moreover, 8 students for focused group discussions (FGD) from each school were chosen which made a total of 96. In order to observe assessment and classroom activities in the classrooms, one class of each English teacher of each school was chosen. Thus, the instruments used for collecting required data are a) Classroom Observation, b) Teacher Questionnaire, c) Teacher interviews, d) Head teacher interviews and e) FGDs with Students. Moreover, field notes and document analysis also provided valuable data. A descriptive study was chosen to allow a qualitative and quantitative description of the relevant features of the data collected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003).

The qualitative data were analyzed both inductively and deductively to identify the main themes that emerged based on the research questions posed in this study. On the other hand, data from questionnaire and classroom observation checklists were analyzed quantitatively and presented in both quantitative and narrative form. The simple most statistical techniques were employed for analyzing quantitative data.

The study found that most teachers and head teachers are not quite familiar with the present English language curriculum and assessment system including SBA. They, however, know that the objective of teaching English is to develop the four language skills of the learners. And they allocate 70% marks for terminal examinations (summative assessment) and 30% for SBA (formative assessment).

concerned, either they give all students average marks or give a proportional marks in proportion to marks they get in terminal examinations. Some teachers adopt even greater malpractice by giving good marks to those who attend his private tuition class. Classroom assessment is practice mostly through asking closed questions to students. Although effective 'questioning is key to active and meaningful learning' (Chin, 2004; Millar and Hames, 2002), closed questions asked in the classroom can hardly play any role in developing speaking skill of the learners. On the other hand, feedback given by the teachers also fail to impact on the development of language skills of the learners, because while giving feedback mostly teachers simply tell learners whether their answers are right or wrong, or simply provide evaluative feedback in the form of grades and short, non-specific comments of praise or censure. Besides, although the respondents informed that all the four skills are being practiced and assessed in the classroom, the way these are done are hardly effective in developing the language skills of the learners.

The teachers and head teachers candidly confessed that because of a number of challenges, they are not practicing SBA in their schools. These are: teachers' negative attitude towards SBA, their heavy workloads, large student population, large contents of syllabus, no reflection of the marks of SBA in public examinations like JSC and SSC examinations, lack of honesty and fairness in teachers, lack of validity and reliability of SBA as an assessment, poor socio-economic conditions of teachers, absence of monitoring and supervision by concerned authority like NCTB, education boards etc. Most of them, however, believe that if SBA can be practiced effectively, it will play a great role in fulfilling the learning outcomes of the English language curriculum.

The study recommends that change in teachers' perceptions is needed to be brought through sufficient training in formative assessment and communicative language teaching approach. Besides, strong monitoring and enough support must be ensured. The government should also work towards lessening the work load of teacher.

# **Chapter 01**

## **Perspective of the Problem**

## 1.1 Introduction

Assessment plays a crucial role in the education process (Rahman, Babu & Ashrafuzzaman, 2011; Shikhhak Nirdeshika, 2006; OECD, 2008; Stiggins, 1991). It determines much of the work students undertake (possibly all in the case of the most strategic student), affects their approach to learning and, it can be argued, is an indication of which aspects of the course are valued most highly (Rust, 2002).

Since raising the standards of learning that are achieved through schooling is an important national priority, in recent years, governments throughout the world have been more and more vigorous in making changes in pursuit of this aim (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The government of Bangladesh is no exception in this regard.

In Bangladesh, till 2006, the role of teachers in relation to classroom assessment used to go something like this: teachers graded their students according to whether or not they had passed or failed, and such information was recorded first in teachers; markbooks and then in the students' reports. Teacher's role was one in which they made judgments about their students' achievements and, on the basis of those judgments, essentially divided their classes into winners and losers. The basis for those judgments was sometimes difficult to pin down. Somehow we 'knew', if we were experienced, when a performance was satisfactory and when it was not.

The giving of marks and the grading function are overemphasized, while the giving of useful advice and the learning function are underemphasized. (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Now, in an era in which curriculum documents describe specific 'standards' – and national testing programs expect ostensibly to evaluate student performance against those standards – the teachers' role is one in which they are asked to make sure that increasingly greater numbers of their students are able to demonstrate the ability to meet those standards, but a "focus on standards and accountability that ignores the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms will not provide the direction that teachers need in their quest to improve" (Stigler & Hiebert, 1997).

*Then, how is this to be done?*

The answer lies, to a significant extent, in changing the way in which teachers regard and use assessment in the classroom, because learning is driven by what teachers and pupils do in classrooms (Black & Wiliam, 1998). To do so it is necessary to go for formative assessment along with summative one since this type of classroom assessment is good for both teachers and students (Steadman, 1998). As a feedback strategy that provides teachers with data on teaching effectiveness and student comprehension, formative/classroom assessment involves students in active mental processing of new information and makes them more aware of themselves as learners (Steadman, 1998).

Classroom Assessment (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Cross & Angelo, 1988) is an educational innovation that unites efforts to improve both teaching and learning. In Bangladesh it is termed as School Based Assessment. It does more than just measure learning. What teachers assess, how they assess, and how they communicate the results send a clear message to students about what is worth learning, how it should be learned, and how well they expect them to perform. For this, teaching and learning must be interactive. Teachers need to know about their pupils' progress and difficulties with learning so that they can adapt their own work to meet pupils' needs -- needs that are often unpredictable and that vary from one pupil to another. Teachers can find out what they need to know in a variety of ways, including observation and discussion in the classroom and the reading of pupils' written work.

SBA is an assessment which is managed by schools from the assessment table in the course syllabus. It includes tests, essays, examinations, reports, exhibitions, performances, demonstrations, and other works including various forms of product or performance (Assessment Advice Paper: SBA, 2008). Thus it incorporates the elements of assessment for which assessment is learner friendly, emphasizes individual learner's progress and takes care of all students' learning (Ahsan, 2007). The experience of USA and other commonwealth countries shows that SBA has achieved the faith and authority of the public. (Gatherer, 1990 cited in Begum & Mullick, 2005). In our country, it is in vogue since 2007.

In this study an attempt has been made to explore how this form of assessment is playing role in achieving the objectives of English language curriculum.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

While in line with the title of the study, the main objective of the study is to investigate the use of SBA in English courses at grades VI to VIII, their link to the learning outcomes and the corresponding influences on achieving the objectives of intended English language curriculum, the specific objectives are

- to explore the current status of SBA at schools
- to explore the perceptions of teachers and students towards the effectiveness of SBA in learning English language.
- to explore the role and influences of SBA in achieving the objectives of English language curriculum i.e. development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills at grades VI to VIII.

## 1.3 Research Questions

The study aims at finding out the answers to the following key questions.

- What are the major features of the current SBA approach used in English classrooms at junior secondary levels?
- How are the assessment-indicators of SBA followed and practiced by teachers in English classrooms?
- What kinds of language skills are emphasized while using SBA in English classrooms?
- How do students respond to the current assessment practice?
- What are the perceptions of teachers and students towards the effectiveness of SBA in English classrooms?

## 1.4 Rationale of the Study

In all education systems, it is assessment that dominates curriculum. If a model of assessment is restrictive, it will narrow the learning experiences of students. It cannot be over-emphasised that the mode of assessment dictates the nature of the educational experience and the quality of the relationship between teacher and pupils. Assessment is not something separate — a tool — by which education may be evaluated; it acts upon the educational system so as to shape it in accordance with what the assessment demands. We cannot have, at one and the same time, education for personal growth and a totally impersonal system of assessment. Assessment should be a bond between teachers and taught, not something which threatens and antagonises. To humanise assessment, then, we have to make of schooling a more cooperative enterprise between teachers and pupils, and an opportunity to develop the whole range of human competencies, leading up to informative profiles. This should be the pattern of things for the immediate future; it is the way to shed the dreary, and often unjust, grading techniques of traditional education (Hemming, 1980, p. 113–14). To get rid of this traditional system of assessment different countries around the world including Bangladesh have change or modified the assessment system and opted for formative assessment/ school based assessment system.

Several countries such as Finland, New Zealand, Australia, and Hong Kong have implemented school-based assessment. Despite their years of experiences in implementing the school-based assessment, several researches are carried out from time to time in order to investigate relevant aspects of the school-based assessment. This fact is made obvious by the substantial amount of documented research in the literature (Board of Studies, 1998; Choi, 1999; Daugherty, 1995; Hill *et al*, 1997; James and Corner, 1993; Yung, 2001).

Since 2007, SBA is in practice in Bangladesh, yet there is hardly any study that looked into the implementation of SBA and its effect in achieving the objectives of intended English curriculum at junior secondary level. This is why, in the context of Bangladesh,

studies which focus on the implementation and effects of school-based assessment in English teaching learning need to be carried out. Therefore, a study has been conducted to investigate the implementation and effects of school-based assessment in English teaching-learning at secondary schools. Such a study is deemed timely and crucial as it could provide a relevant picture for scholars, practitioners and policy makers in relation to testing and assessment.

### 1.5 Limitations of the Study

Like most other educational studies conducted around the world, this study has some limitations.

One of the main limitations of the study is that prospective sample of different categories of respondents who are related to this study could not be included due to some practical inconveniences. As such, a small sample size has been selected compared to the required size for the study. Data have been collected from only 12 schools of three districts of Bangladesh.

Secondly, there were inhibitions on the part of the respondents in exposing sensitive data. Some of the teachers were not courageous enough to express the truth due to job threat.

Thirdly, data was collected at a time when the academic sessions had just started. As result, teachers and students were in a sporty mood with the upcoming annual sport competition.

Fourthly, insufficient time and skill did not allow the researcher to look into the issues in detail.



# *Chapter 02*

## *Literature Reviews*

## 2.1 Defining Assessment

The term assessment, in its widest meaning, denotes a process of collecting and interpreting information about learning and achievement of students that are used (1) to provide information to students and their parents about the progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes, (2) to provide support to teachers to modify their instruction and the learning activities of their students, and (3) to provide information to other stakeholders that make decisions about educational policy related to students (for example, decisions about promotion of students, decisions about students involvement in particular educational programs etc.) (Stiggins, 2001; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Boston, 2002; Gronlund, 2006).

Barbara E. Walvoord in his book, *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments and General Education*, defines assessment as “*the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decision about how to improve learning.*”

A process that involves 1) establishing goals for student learning, 2) gathering qualitative and quantitative evidence for how well students meet those goals, and 3) using the information to improve. (Walvoord, 2004; p. 2-3.)

The document, *Assessing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness: Understanding Middle States Expectations*, by MSCHE, USA, defines assessment a bit tautologically, but sees it as part of an overall “*planning-assessment cycle*”: “*defining... institutional and unit-level goals; implementing strategies to achieve those goals; assessing achievement of those goals; and using the results of the assessments to improve programs and services and inform planning and resource allocation decisions* (Philadelphia, PA, 2005: p. 3).”

## 2.2 Purposes of Assessment

Research in assessment found that it is used for many different reasons. Such as:

### Part of the learning process:

Assessment activities can guide individuals to learn and relearn subject matter. (James, 1994)

### Inform and guide teaching and learning

A good classroom assessment plan gathers evidence of student learning that informs teachers' instructional decisions. It provides teachers with information about what students know and can do. To plan effective instruction, teachers also need to know what the student misunderstands and where the misconceptions lie. In addition to helping teachers formulate the next teaching steps, a good classroom assessment plan provides a road map for students. Students should, at all times, have access to the assessment so they can use it to inform and guide their learning. (James, 1994; Evans, A. (2008).

### Help Students set learning goals:

Students need frequent opportunities to reflect on where their learning is at and what needs to be done to achieve their learning goals. When students are actively involved in assessing their own next learning steps and creating goals to accomplish them, they make major advances in directing their learning and what they understand about themselves as learners. (James, 1994; Evans, A. (2008).

### Grading:

Assessment may be used to translate achievement into a point on an arbitrary scale and to measure the students' preparedness for professional accreditation (Harris et al, 2007)

### Motivate Students:

Research (Davies 2004; Stiggins et al. 2004) has shown that students will be motivated and confident learners when they experience progress and achievement, rather than the failure and defeat associated with being compared to more successful peers.

The key is to understand the relationship between assessment and student motivation. In the past, we built assessment systems to help us dole out rewards and punishment. And while that can work sometimes, it causes a lot of students to see themselves as failures. If that goes on long enough, they lose confidence and stop trying. When students are involved in the assessment process, though, they can come to see themselves as competent learners. (Sparks, 1999)

## 2.3 Types of Classroom Assessment

Making assessment an integral part of daily instruction is a challenge. It requires planning specific ways to use assignments and discussions to discover what students do and do not understand. It also requires teachers to be prepared to deal with students' responses. Merely spotting when students are incorrect is relatively easy compared with understanding the reasons behind their errors. The latter demands careful attention and a deep knowledge of the mathematics concepts and principles that students are learning... The insights we gain by making assessment a regular part of instruction enable us to meet the needs of the students who are eager for more challenges and to provide intervention for those who are struggling. (Burns 2005, p. 31)

Assessment is integral to the teaching–learning process, facilitating student learning and improving instruction, and can take a variety of forms. It is generally divided into three types: assessment *for* learning, assessment *of* learning and assessment *as* learning.

## 2.4 Assessment *as* Learning

Assessment *as* learning develops and supports students' metacognitive skills. This form of assessment is crucial in helping students become lifelong learners. As students engage in peer and self-assessment, they learn to make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge and use it for new learning. Students develop a sense of ownership and efficacy when they use teacher, peer and self-assessment feedback to make adjustments, improvements and changes to what they understand.

Assessment *as* learning focuses on students and emphasizes assessment as a process of metacognition (knowledge of one's own thought processes) for students. Assessment *as* learning emerges from the idea that learning is not just a matter of transferring ideas from someone who is knowledgeable to someone who is not, but is an active process of cognitive restructuring that occurs when individuals interact with new ideas. Within this view of learning, students are the critical connectors between assessment and learning. For students to be actively engaged in creating their own understanding, they must learn to be critical assessors who make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. This is the regulatory process in metacognition; that is, students become adept at personally monitoring what they are learning, and use what they discover from the monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations, and even

major changes in their thinking. (*Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*, WNCP, 2006, p. 29)

Assessment *as learning* is based in research about how learning happens, and is characterized by students reflecting on their own learning and making adjustments so that they achieve deeper understanding. P. Afflerbach (2002) notes (in the context of reading assessment):

Too many students have reading assessment done *to* them, or *for* them. Only reading assessment that is done *with* students and eventually *by* students can foster true independence and success in reading. Accomplished readers are flexible in their routines of metacognition and comprehension monitoring, as demanded by the particular act of reading. The ability to self-assess is multifaceted, and good readers apply their self-assessment strategies on demand (p. 99, emphasis added).

Although Afflerbach's comment is specifically about reading, it is applicable to many other areas of learning as well. Students become productive learners when they see that the results of their work are part of critical and constructive decision-making. If young people are to engage in continuous learning in environments where knowledge is always changing, they need to internalize the needing-to know and challenging-of-assumptions as habits of mind.

The ultimate goal in assessment *as learning* is for students to acquire the skills and the habits of mind to be metacognitively aware with increasing independence. Assessment *as learning* focusses on the explicit fostering of students' capacity over time to be their own best assessors, but teachers need to start by presenting and modelling external, structured opportunities for students to assess themselves.

## 2.5 Assessment *for* Learning (Formative Assessment)

The philosophy behind assessment for learning is that assessment and teaching should be integrated into a whole. The power of such an assessment doesn't come from intricate technology or from using a specific assessment instrument. It comes from recognizing how much learning is taking place in the common tasks of the school day – and how much insight into student learning teachers can mine from this material. (McNamee and Chen 2005, p. 76)

Assessment *for* learning occurs throughout the learning process. It is designed to make each student's understanding visible, so that teachers can decide what they can do to help students progress. Students learn in individual and idiosyncratic ways, yet, at the same time, there are predictable patterns of connections and preconceptions that some students may experience as they move along the continuum from emergent to proficient. In assessment *for* learning, teachers use assessment as an investigative tool to find out as much as they can about what their students know and can do, and what confusions, preconceptions, or gaps they might have.

Assessment *for* learning is ongoing assessment that allows teachers to monitor students on a day-to-day basis and modify their teaching based on what the students need to be successful. This assessment provides students with the timely, specific feedback that they need to make adjustments to their learning. In other words, Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. (Assessment Reform Group, 2002)

The wide variety of information that teachers collect about their students' learning processes provides the basis for determining what they need to do next to move student learning forward. It provides the basis for providing descriptive feedback for students and deciding on groupings, instructional strategies, and resources.

After teaching a lesson, we need to determine whether the lesson was accessible to all students while still challenging to the more capable; what the students learned and still need to know; how we can improve the lesson to make it more effective; and, if necessary, what other lesson we might offer as a better alternative. This continual evaluation of instructional choices is at the heart of improving our teaching practice. (Burns 2005, p. 26)

## 2.6 Teachers' Roles in Assessment *for Learning*

Assessment *for learning* occurs throughout the learning process. It is interactive, with teachers

- aligning instruction with the targeted outcomes
- identifying particular learning needs of students or groups
- selecting and adapting materials and resources
- creating differentiated teaching strategies and learning opportunities for helping individual students move forward in their learning
- providing immediate feedback and direction to students

Teachers also use assessment *for learning* to enhance students' motivation and commitment to learning. When teachers commit to learning as the focus of assessment, they change the classroom culture to one of student success. They make visible what students believe to be true, and use that information to help students move forward in manageable, efficient, and respectful ways. (WNCP, 2006, p. 29)



## 2.7 Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment)

Assessment of learning is the snapshot in time that lets the teacher, students and their parents know how well each student has completed the learning tasks and activities. It provides information about student achievement. While it provides useful reporting information, it often has little effect on learning.

Table 1: Different types of Assessment

	Assessment FOR Learning	Assessment AS Learning	Assessment OF Learning
Why Assess?	to enable teachers to determine next steps in advancing student learning	to guide & provide opportunity for each student to monitor & critically reflect on his/her learning & identify next steps	to certify or inform parents or others of student's proficiency in relation to learning outcomes
Assess What?	each student's progress and learning needs in relation to the curricular outcomes	each student's thinking about his or her learning, what strategies he or she uses to support or challenge that learning, and the mechanisms he or she uses to adjust and advance his or her learning	the extent to which students can apply the key concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the curriculum outcomes
What Methods?	a range of methods in different modes that make students' skills and understanding visible	a range of methods in different modes that elicit students' learning and meta-cognitive processes	a range of methods in different modes that assess both product and process

Ensuring Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ accuracy and consistency of observation &amp; interpretations of student learning</li> <li>○ clear, detailed learning expectations</li> <li>○ accurate, detailed notes for descriptive feedback to student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ accuracy and consistency of student's self-reflection, self-monitoring, &amp; self-adjustment</li> <li>○ engagement of student in considering &amp; challenging his/her thinking</li> <li>○ Ss record their own learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ accuracy, consistency, and fairness of judgments based on high-quality information</li> <li>○ clear, detailed learning expectations</li> <li>○ fair and accurate summative reporting</li> </ul>
Using the Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ provide each student with accurate descriptive feedback to further his/her learning</li> <li>○ differentiate instruction by continually checking where each student is in relation to the curricular outcomes</li> <li>○ provide parents/guardians with descriptive feedback about student learning and ideas for support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ provide each student with descriptive feedback to develop independent learning habits</li> <li>○ have each student focus on task and his or her learning (not on getting the right ans)</li> <li>○ provide each student with ideas for adjusting, rethinking, &amp; articulating his/her learning</li> <li>○ provide conditions for teacher student to discuss alternatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ indicate each student's level of learning</li> <li>○ provide the foundation for discussions on placement or promotion</li> <li>○ report fair, accurate, and detailed information that can be used to decide the next steps in a student's learning</li> </ul>

Source: *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*, WNCP, 2006, p. 85

Summative assessment, the logic goes, will provide the focus to improve student achievement, give everyone the information they need to improve student achievement, and apply the pressure needed to motivate teachers to work harder to teach and learn.

In the classroom, assessment OF learning is grading. It is not, however, that assessment OF learning is inappropriate, it is just that it's insufficient to maximize student learning. The problem with this scenario is that there is virtually no evidence that our layer upon layer of large-scale summative assessments have these intended impacts. Bob Linn, a long-time, highly regarded measurement specialist put it this way:

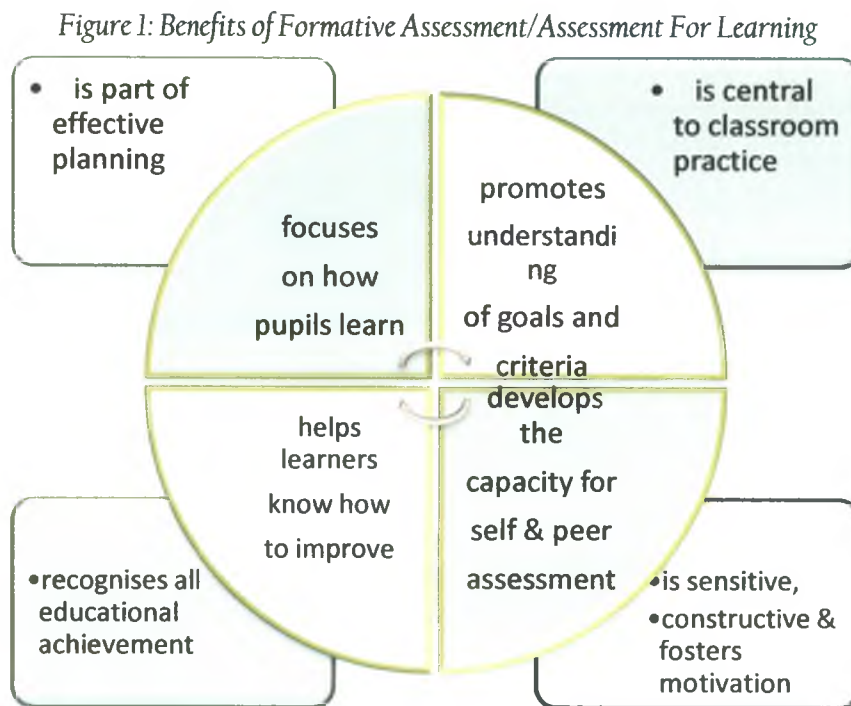
*"As someone who has spent his entire career doing research, writing and thinking about educational testing and assessment issues, I would like to conclude by summarizing a compelling case showing that the major uses of tests for student and school accountability during the past 50 years have improved education and student learning in dramatic ways. Unfortunately, that is not my conclusion." (Linn, 2000; p.4)*

Today, there is sufficient research and literature (Frederiksen, 1984; Cunningham, 1998; Dietel, Herman & Knuth, 1991; Borich & Tombari, 2004: 270) that has shown the shortcomings of one centralised summative examination. Such assessment mechanisms often influence what schools teach and it encourages the use of instructional methods that resemble tests. Besides that, teachers often neglect what external tests exclude. Therefore, there is a global move to decentralise assessments and this has seen the introduction of authentic alternative forms of assessments that are continuous and formative in nature.

Compared to assessment OF learning, Assessment FOR learning, on the other hand, is roughly equivalent to formative assessment— assessment intended to promote further improvement of student learning during the learning process.

Formative assessment is not a new idea to us as educators. Formative assessment, the term was initially used by Scriven (1967) to apply to a program evaluation approach, and was contrasted with summative evaluation. The concept was attached to assessment, apparently, first by Bloom (1968), who saw a relationship between formative assessment and mastery learning. Typically, “assessments become formative when the information is used to adapt teaching and learning to meet students’ needs” (Boston, 2002, p. 2).

Educators have traditionally relied on assessment that compares students with more successful peers as a means to motivate students to learn, but recent research suggests students will likely be motivated and confident learners when they experience progress and achievement, rather than the failure and defeat associated with being compared to more successful peers (Stiggins, 2001).



(Source: DCSF, 2008, p. 5)

In this evolving conception, formative assessment is more than testing frequently, although frequent information is important. Formative assessment also involves actually adjusting teaching to take account of these frequent assessment results. But, formative assessment is even more than using information to plan next steps. Formative assessment seems to be most effective when students are involved in their own assessment and goal setting.

Student involvement is anything you do that helps students:

- Understand learning targets
- Engage in self-assessment
- Watch themselves grow
- Talk about their growth
- Plan next steps for learning.

Many researchers and advocates for formative assessment argue that its primary benefit is in allowing students to control and improve their own learning (e.g., Stiggins, 2002). Another benefit of assessment identified is that “the present learning status of the pupils in terms of the objectives” (Skager, 1974, p. 48) can be determined.

In an often-cited article describing how formative assessment improves achievement, Sadler (1989) concludes that it hinges on developing students’ capacity to monitor the quality of their own work during production:

*The indispensable conditions for improvement are that the student comes to hold a concept of quality roughly similar to that held by the teacher, is able to monitor continuously the quality of what is being produced during the act of production itself, and has a repertoire of alternative moves or strategies from which to draw at any given point. (p. 121)*

“Assessment for Learning”—formative assessment practices are designed to meet students’ information needs to maximize both motivation and achievement, by involving students from the start in their own learning (Stiggins, et al, 2004).

<p><u>Teachers</u> Use formative feedback to adjust instructional strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For teachers to verify that students are keeping pace with concepts and skills (Chase, 1999).</li> <li>○ Examples of formative feedback emphasize teacher observations of students during learning, sometimes without the students’ awareness (Cangelosi, 2000).</li> <li>○ “[P]rovides feedback to guide instruction” (Ward &amp; Murray-Ward, 1999, p. 60).</li> <li>○ Occurs during instruction to determine whether instruction is successful so teachers can adjust instruction if necessary (Taylor &amp; Nolen, 2005).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Teachers</u> Use formative feedback to adjust instructional strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning (Black &amp; Wiliam, 1998).</li> <li>○ To monitor and improve instruction and student learning (McMillan, 2000).</li> <li>○ Used to support student learning; students evaluate their own work; increases student responsibility for their own learning. Consistent with constructivist learning models (Shepard, 2000).</li> </ul>

Students  
Use formative feedback to adjust learning behaviors

Table 2: Perspectives on the purpose of formative assessment

## 2.8 Key Elements of Formative Assessment

Researches done in the area of formative assessment indicate following key elements:

*Element 1: Establishment of a classroom culture that encourages interaction and the use of assessment tools:* The concept of formative assessment was first introduced in 1971 by Bloom, Hastings and Maddaus. They formally introduced the idea that assessment need not be used solely to make summative evaluations of student performance, arguing that teachers should include episodes of formative assessment following phases of teaching. During these episodes teachers should provide students with feedback and correction as a way to remediate student work. Most experts now consider formative assessment as an ongoing part of the teaching and learning process. Research also highlights the importance of focusing students' attention on mastering tasks, rather than on competition with peers, and in developing emotional competencies. Emotional competencies, such as self-awareness, self-control, compassion, co-operation, flexibility, and the ability to make judgments on the value of information serve students well in school and throughout their lives (OECD, 2002, p. 58).

*Element 2: Establishment of learning goals, and tracking of individual student progress toward those goals:* Several OECD countries have established general standards for student achievement, and monitor students' progress toward those standards. International research supports the idea that tracking a student's progress toward objective learning goals is more effective than is comparison with peers' progress (Cameron and Pierce, 1994; Kluger and DeNisi, 1996; Heckhausen, 1989; and Rheinberg and Krug, 1999). In situations of comparison, weaker students absorb the idea that they lack ability, and thus lose motivation and confidence. Ames (1992) notes that teachers' beliefs about the

importance of effort, rather than ability, also play an important role in students' beliefs about themselves. Appropriate reference to an individual student's progress and opportunities to improve work based on feedback can help counter the negative impact of social comparisons.

Mischo and Rheinberg (1995) and Köller (2001) also found positive effects in several experimental and field studies where teachers referred to student progress over time.

Positive effects were identified for students':

- \_ Intrinsic motivation.
- \_ Self-esteem.
- \_ Academic self-concept.
- \_ Causal attributions.
- \_ Learning (see particularly Krampen, 1987).

The establishment of learning goals and tracking of student progress toward those goals makes the learning process much more transparent; students do not need to guess what they need to do to perform well. Teachers also help students to track their own progress and to build confidence.

*Element 3: Use of varied instruction methods to meet diverse student needs:* Social and cognitive psychologists, anthropologists and other social scientists have increasingly recognised that the knowledge and experiences children bring to school shape their learning experiences (Bruner, 1996; Bransford et al., 1999). Such prior knowledge is shaped, in part, by learners' ethnicity, culture, socio-economic class, and/or gender. Teachers can help students learn new concepts and ideas in ways that connect to their prior understandings and ways of looking at the world. Teachers who are attuned to variations in cultural communication patterns and sensitive to individual ways of communicating are more likely to draw out what children understand, and how they



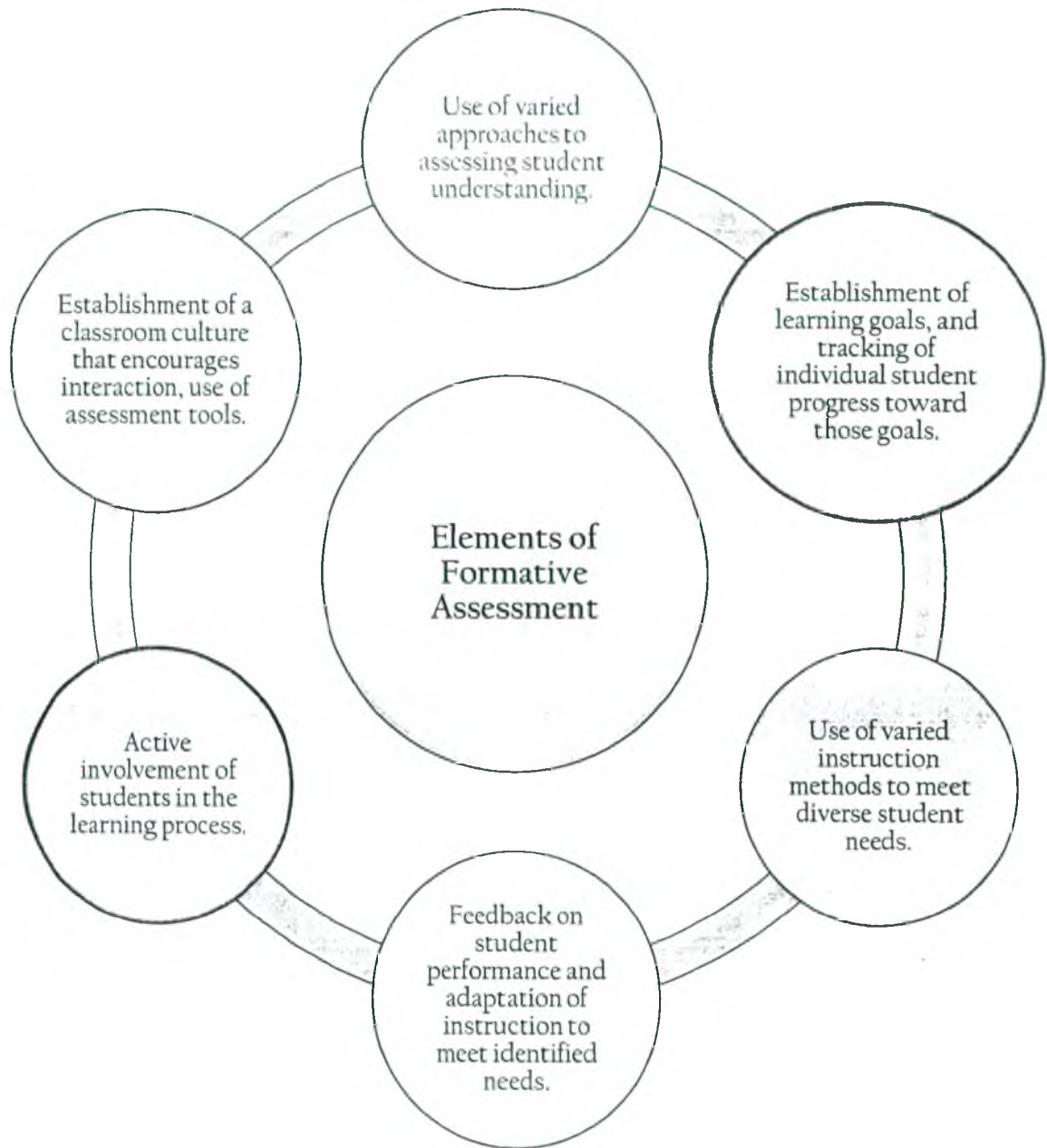
develop their understanding of new ideas (Bishop and Glynn, 1999). Research has found that parents can play an important role here, too, because they share their children's life experiences, are well acquainted with their abilities and interests, and can help their children make connections between ideas (Bransford et al., 1999).

Swiss education scholar Philippe Perrenoud proposes that:

*"... [t]o the extent that pupils do not have the same abilities, nor the same needs or the same way of working, an optimal situation for one pupil will not be optimal for another .... One can write a simple equation: diversity in people + appropriate treatment for each = diversity in approach".*  
(Perrenoud, 1998, p. 93-94)

Early research findings suggest that there is a need for a fundamental re-thinking of approaches to reaching equitable student outcomes. But there is also a need for more refined research on the impact of formative assessment methods for different students. Such research might address whether and how formative assessment can address the needs of students based on individual differences, such as emotional style, or ethnicity, culture, socio-economic class, and/or gender.

Figure 2: The six key elements of formative assessment



*Element 4: Use of varied approaches to assessing student understanding:* Teachers can use varied approaches to assessing individual student progress over time, in realistic settings, and in a variety of contexts. Students who may not perform well in certain tasks have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in others. Such varied assessments also draw out information on students' ability to transfer learning to new situations – a skill emphasised as important to learning to learn – and on how student understanding might be corrected or deepened. These varied assessments may include tests and other summative forms of assessment, so long as the information on student performance gathered in the tests is used to inform further learning. Summative results, when embedded in the wider teaching and learning environment, are more likely to be used formatively. They also help to lower the stress of tests, which can have a negative impact on the self-esteem of lower achieving students (See for example, a study conducted by the EPPI – Centre at the Institute of Education, University of London, June 2002).

*Element 5: Feedback on student performance and adaptation of instruction to meet identified needs:* Feedback is vital to formative assessment, but not all feedback is effective. Feedback needs to be timely and specific, and include suggestions for ways to improve future performance. Good feedback is also tied to explicit criteria regarding expectations for student performance, making the learning process more transparent, and modelling “learning to learn” skills for students.

In their review of the English-language literature, Black and Wiliam (1998) identified a number of studies, conducted under ecologically valid circumstances (that is, controlled experiments conducted in the student's usual classroom setting and with their usual teacher) to support this point of view. For example, “ego-involving” feedback (even in the form of praise) rather than feedback on the task at hand appears to have a negative impact on performance (Boulet et al., 1990). Students also obtain better results when

they are working toward process goals rather than product goals, and when tracking progress toward overall goals of learning (Schunk, 1996). Grades may actually undermine the positive help of specific feedback on tasks (Butler, 1995).

Teachers also benefit from the feedback process. When providing feedback, teachers pay closer attention to what students do and do not understand well, and are better able to adjust teaching strategies to meet identified student needs.

*Element 6: Active involvement of students in the learning process:* Ultimately, the goal of formative assessment is to guide students toward the development of their own “learning to learn” skills (also sometimes referred to as “metacognitive” strategies). Students are thus equipped with their own language and tools for learning and are more likely to transfer and apply these skills for problem solving into daily life; they strengthen their ability to find answers or develop strategies for addressing problems with which they are not familiar. In other words, they develop strong “control” strategies for their own learning.

“Metacognition” involves awareness of how one goes about learning and thinking about new subject matter and is sometimes referred to as “thinking about thinking”. The student who has an awareness of how he or she learns is better able to set goals, develop a variety of learning strategies, and control and evaluate his or her own learning process. As evidence of this, PISA 2000 found that:

*“... Within each country, students who use... [metacognitive and control strategies] more frequently tend to perform better on the combined PISA reading literacy scale than those who do not (although whether the learning strategies cause the better results cannot be established). ... [T]he strategies are essential for effective self-regulation of learning because they help students to adapt their learning to particular features of the task on which they are working. Schools may need to give more explicit attention to allowing students to manage and control their learning in order to help them all to develop effective strategies, not only to support their learning at school but also to help them with the tools to manage their learning later in life” (OECD, 2001, p. 110).*

Importantly, PISA also found that students are unlikely to use control strategies if they lack motivation or self-confidence (OECD, 2003). Students' personal judgments about their ability to carry out a task ("self-efficacy") also significantly influence task performance (Pajares, 1996). Thus, a key role for teachers is to help children build confidence, and develop a variety of learning strategies.

Teachers can model such learning behaviour, teach self-assessment skills and help students to analyse of how well different learning strategies have worked for them in the past. Such teaching approaches may be particularly important for children who do not have extra support for learning at home (OECD, 2003; Bransford et al., 1999).

## 2.9 Reliability and Validity in Assessment

Validity and reliability of assessment methods are considered the two most important characteristics of a well-designed assessment procedure.

Validity refers to the degree to which a method assesses what it intends to assess (Carmines & Zeller, 1987). The different types of validity include:

*Content*: the assessment method matches the content of the work.

*Criterion*: relates to whether the assessment method is explicit in terms of procedures correlating with particular behaviours.

*Construct*: relates to whether scores reflect the items being tested. (Evans, 2008; Illott & Murphy, 1999).

Reliability refers to the extent to which an assessment method or instrument measures consistently the performance of the student (Carmines & Zeller, 1987). Assessments are usually expected to produce comparable outcomes, with consistent standards over time and between different learners and examiners.

However, the following factors impede both the validity and reliability of assessment practices in workplace settings:

- inconsistent nature of people
- reliance on assessors to make judgements without bias
- changing contexts/conditions
- evidence of achievement arising spontaneously or incidentally. (Gronlund, 2006; Ilott & Murphy, 1999).

Explicit performance criteria enhance both the validity and reliability of the assessment process. Clear, usable assessment criteria contribute to the openness and accountability of the whole process. The context, tasks and behaviours desired are specified so that assessment can be repeated and used for different individuals. Explicit criteria also counter criticisms of subjectivity. (Ilott & Murphy, 1999).

## 2.10 Classroom Assessment and its Effects on Students' Achievement

There is considerable evidence that assessment is a powerful process for enhancing learning. In the UK, Professors Black and Wiliam examined the main findings of 250 assessment articles (covering nine years of international research) and as a result published *Assessment and Classroom Learning* (1998), later summarized as *Inside the Black Box*. This article both clarified and confirmed the powerful role played by classroom assessment in helping to raise standards and improve student learning and achievement.

They argued that the use of formative assessment in the classroom could be proven to lead to improved student performance. They compared the use of formative assessment with other educational innovations and concluded, from their research, that it achieved an effect size of 0.4 – 0.7%.

For research purposes, learning gains are measured by comparing the average improvements in the test scores of pupils involved in an innovation with the range of scores that are found for typical groups of pupils on these same tests. The ratio of the former divided by the latter is known as the effect size. Typical effect sizes of the formative assessment experiments were between 0.4 and 0.7. These effect sizes are larger than most of those found for educational interventions. (Black & Wiliam, 1998)

Translated into layman's terms, this effectively means, for example, that the consistent use of formative assessment practices could improve performances of students in the last two years of schooling by between one and two grades.

These findings have been confirmed by subsequent researches – Meisels, Atkins-Burnett, Xue and Bickel (2003), Rodriguez (2005), OECD (2005). Perhaps of most significance has been the discovery that the use of formative assessment practices leads, in particular, to increased improvement for low-achieving students. For administrators, at school and system level, who are keen to improve statistics denoting achievement, this is important information. Schools which use formative assessment show not only general gains in academic achievement, but also particularly high gains for previously underachieving students. Attendance and retention of learning are also improved, as well as the quality of students' work. (OECD, Policy Brief, November 2005)

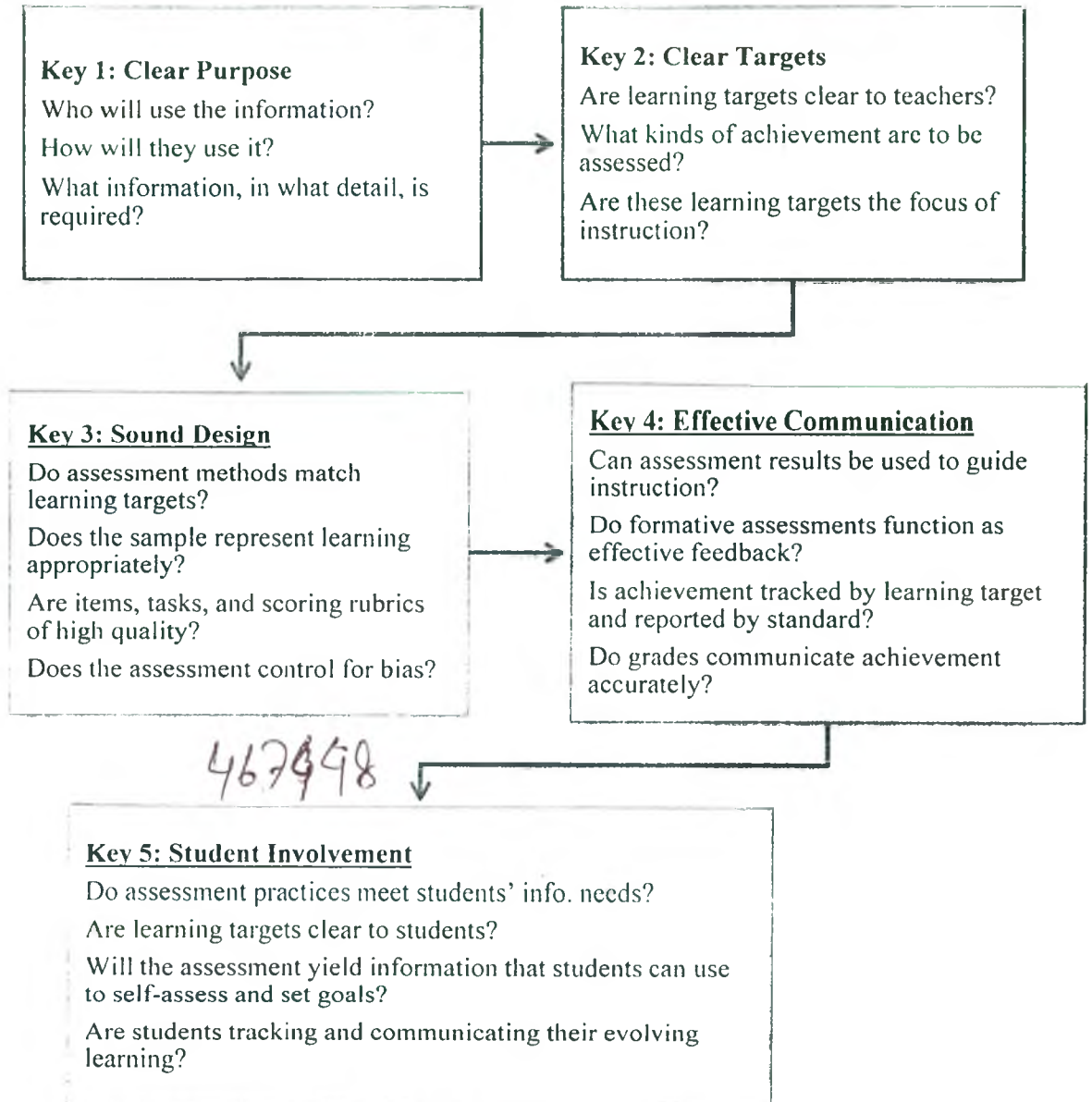
## 2.11 Keys to Quality Classroom Assessment

All of the pieces contributing to sound classroom assessment instruments and practices are built on a foundation of the following keys to quality:

1. They are designed to serve the *specific information needs of intended user(s)*.
2. They are based on clearly articulated and appropriate *achievement targets*.
3. They *accurately measure* student achievement.

4. They yield results that are *effectively communicated* to their intended users.
5. They *involve students* in self-assessment, goal setting, tracking, reflecting on, and sharing their learning. (Stiggins et al, 2004)

Figure 3: Keys to Quality Classroom Assessment



ঢাকা  
 বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
 গ্রন্থাগার



## 2.12 The Assessment FOR Learning Strategies

The research (Black and Wiliam, 1998, 1999) has identified the following strategies as ones which, when implemented in the classroom in a consistent manner, can lead to improved student performance.

*The sharing of learning intentions and success criteria:* This strategy asks teachers to tell students what it is they are expected to learn (the learning intention) and to share with them the criteria that will, if met by the students, demonstrate that learning has taken place.

*Strategic questioning:* This refers to the careful and deliberate use of questioning in order to elicit information from students about what it is that they know and can do, and the formative use of that information to shape future teaching and learning.

*Effective feedback:* Feedback which is effective is based on learning intentions and success criteria and provides students with information not only about what they have done well and where they need to improve, but also information about how they can improve their performance. Effective feedback avoids comparison with other students' performances, and can come not only from the teacher, but also from peers.

*Student self-assessment:* This focuses on encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, to be aware of how they learn, to set learning targets, to act on feedback and to be able to make judgments about the quality of their work in relation to success criteria.

*Making formative use of summative assessment:* Summative assessment activities or tasks not only provide evaluative information about the student but can also provide information that can be used in a formative way. This strategy encourages teachers to be aware of the formative possibilities of summative assessment – before, after and during the assessment.

### 2.13 Questioning as a Form of Assessment

Questioning is essential to both assessment for learning and to language learning. It is one of the key assessment for learning strategies discussed in the literature with the use of questioning referring to those questions asked by both teachers and pupils. Van Zee *et al.* (2001) identified that “questioning is a frequent component of classroom talk” (p. 160).

The importance of questioning was evident within a number of articles and fell into two broad categories – articles which explained how to use questioning in the classrooms and articles which reported on research/case studies of questioning in use. Articles concerned with questioning tended to discuss the use of:

- effective questions
- open questions
- questioning to find out about pupil misconceptions
- questioning to form part of feedback to prompt further learning

A number of articles also considered the development of a classroom climate to promote questioning. Black and Harrison (2004) identify that teacher questioning can be used for a variety of purposes - including: to encourage comparison; categorising, grouping and recognising exceptions; predicting – and that they have a range of roles within the classroom. They state that ‘to exploit formative opportunities it is necessary to move away from the routine of limited factual questions and to refocus attention on the quality and the different functions of classroom questions’ (p. 6).

Although teachers do sometimes need to ask closed questions in order to check pupils’ knowledge, it is often the case that questioning should ask the pupils to ‘delve deep into their learning’ (p. 6) and to ask ‘rich’ questions. Black and Harrison describe these as

questions which 'cannot be answered immediately but rather requires the learner to work on a series of smaller questions and activities before they return to have a stab at answering it' (p. 7).

Black and Harrison explain that through questioning teachers are able to collect evidence about pupils' understanding with the aim of finding out what they do know, what they don't know and what they partly know. This then provides the starting point for the teaching allowing for the pupils' knowledge and understanding to be moved on.

Several articles revealed that questioning and the resultant answers can be a useful tool for diagnosing misconceptions. Khwaja and Saxton (2001) report on the importance of asking suitably focused questions. They point out the need for clarity in the questions being asked in order to obtain the right level of detail from the responder.

Millar and Hames (2002) indicate that questioning can be used to support and improve teaching. In their research into the use of diagnostic assessment to improve teaching, they report on how children could be encouraged to carry out investigations in order to find their own answers. Related to this is the use of 'big questions' which Black and Harrison (2001a) describe as being used to set the scene for the whole lesson with the subsequent development of smaller questions being introduced to help answer it.

Harlen (2006c) also discusses the usefulness of displaying a question and then reviewing it over the course of the lesson(s), thus allowing for the teacher and the pupils to monitor their developing understanding.

Macro and McFall (2004) note that whilst teachers can plan their initial questioning it is often the children's responses which determine what the next question should be thus indicating the flexible and responsive nature of questioning. As well as questioning

referring to those questions asked by teachers, Harlen (2006c, 2006d) identifies the importance of pupils asking questions.

Harlen (2006c) explains that children's questions show the 'cutting edge' of their understanding because they will ask questions about things that they do not know or understand. By asking their own questions, children are able to reveal their speaking skills as the question will show the limit of their understanding and the nature of their own ideas. When given the opportunity to investigate their own questions in order to find things out for themselves pupils gain satisfaction and motivation for learning.

Chin (2004) identifies that 'questioning is key to active and meaningful learning.' (p. 107) and supports Harlen's stance that questions should come from both the teacher and the pupils. When posed by the teacher, Chin states that they can help pupils to 'explore and scaffold ideas, steer thinking ... advance students' understanding of concepts and phenomena' (p. 107) whilst questions posed by pupils can help them to 'fill recognised knowledge gaps and solve problems' (p. 107).

Chin comments that in a typical classroom pupils are much more likely to be asked than to ask and suggests that this pattern should be reversed. She suggests a number of ways that this can be achieved, such as asking for pupils to suggest questions at the start of a new topic, to demonstrate how a 'big question' can be broken down into smaller questions and encouraging pupils to pose questions before doing an activity in order to direct their own enquiry.

Chin also proposes that teachers should model the formation of good questions and provide stimulus materials which will provoke such questions. She refers to a number of different question types and suggests that pupils should be made aware of them in order that they can think about answering them in different ways. She also references

'productive questions' (p. 110) which are designed to 'stimulate productive physical or mental activity and reasoning and take them forward in their thinking' (p. 110) and which are particularly useful in a classroom context. Chin recognises that some teachers may feel overwhelmed by pupils who ask large numbers of questions, particularly if they may not know the answer, but suggests that this provides an opportunity for teachers to teach pupils about how and where, beyond the teacher, they might find answers and suggest that they offer answers and explanations to their own and each other's questions.

Chin (2006) reports on a study which looked at teacher questioning and feedback. Chin explains that questioning is constructivist based with the teacher's intention being to elicit what pupils think, to elaborate on previous answers and to construct conceptual knowledge. Questioning is seen as a way to diagnose and extend pupils' ideas and to scaffold their thinking. This study involved secondary aged pupils in Singapore and, as such, is outside the desired remit of this literature review, but it is interesting that Chin identifies that questioning is seen as a significant part of teaching. When teachers paraphrase a pupil's response, Chin states that this can allow pupils the opportunity to co-construct a response with their teacher and peers. Chin also points out the possibility of giving corrective feedback which can be overt or implicit. Implicit feedback may provide a constructive challenge if the teacher asks further challenging questions or recasts the questions. Questioning can also be used to help pupils with sequencing using a variety of cognitive processes such as comparing, hypothesising, predicting, explaining and interpreting and can also help to move students on with their thinking. Chin also found, much like Macro and

McFall (2004), that it was important for teachers to be able to adjust their questioning to accommodate a range of pupil responses, to respond to pupils' thinking and to guide them through inquiry-based discussions.

Many articles discussed the importance of 'wait time' – allowing sufficient time for pupils to consider the question and their response, rather than rushing to answer immediately. Research (e.g. Budd Rowe, 1974) indicates that allowing a period of up to 8-9 seconds or more can encourage longer and more thoughtful responses which go beyond factual recall. Black and Harrison (2001a) identify that the practice of 'wait time' can be difficult to adopt initially and that waiting for several seconds can seem 'painful', but the benefits outweigh these difficulties as students become accustomed to having their ideas challenged. Alongside the 'wait time' technique, the strategy of 'no hands up' is also usefully employed as it implies that everyone is expected to have an answer and that thought rather than speed is valued. Harlen (2006d) further indicates that it is important to avoid rephrasing a question if it is not readily answered because it 'inevitably makes it more closed and less useful' (p. 65). This can lead children to expect that if they wait, the question will always be rephrased and made simpler. She also suggests that paired or small group discussion can encourage responses, a view supported by Macro and McFall (2004) who found that children are more confident at answering a question when working in a small group.

Van Zee *et al.* (2001) carried out a study to investigate student and teacher questioning during classroom talk. The study, based in the United States, involved students across a range of ages including primary, upper elementary and high school. Van Zee *et al.* discovered that students would ask questions if they were provided with opportunities to do so. Use of structures such as a KWHL chart, where a student identifies what they

Know and Wonder about a topic and identifies How they can find out and decide what they have Learned, helps teachers to ask appropriate questions of their students.

Brainstorming a topic and asking students questions during a discussion also helped elicit knowledge and prompt student questioning. Van Zee *et al.* discovered that students were able to ask questions that were grounded in their own observations and where they felt comfortable to discuss ideas with their peers in order to try and understand one another's thinking. Finally, Van Zee *et al.* identified that student questions occurred where there were small groups of students who were collaborating with one another. This mirrors the findings of Harlen (2006d) and of Macro and McFall (2004).

The research of van Zee *et al.* also looked at teacher questioning and they concluded that questioning could be used to develop conceptual understanding. Questioning could also be used to encourage pupils to elucidate their meanings and to explore a variety of points of view. The use of 'quietness' and reflective questioning was also investigated whereby 'wait time' and the provision of information on a 'need to know' basis was used to encourage student thinking.

Van Zee *et al.* concluded that it was possible for students to formulate their own questions and will do so if given appropriate opportunities. As this area of research shows, questioning is a crucial part of teaching-learning and, used appropriately, is an extremely useful AfL tool as it allows opportunities to find out what pupils know, to identify pupils' misconceptions and to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning.

## 2.14 Feedback in Assessment

Scholars have conducted many reviews of the research on classroom assessment. Some of the more comprehensive reviews are those by Natriello (1987); Fuchs and Fuchs (1986); Crooks (1988); Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, and Kulik (1991); Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, and Morgan (1991); Kluger and DeNisi (1996); and Black and Wiliam (1998).

The reviews lead to many conclusions that provide insights into effective classroom assessment; however, four generalizations are particularly germane to our study:

- Feedback from classroom assessments should give students a clear picture of their progress on learning goals and how they might improve.
- Feedback on classroom assessments should encourage students to improve.
- Classroom assessment should be formative in nature.
- Formative classroom assessments should be frequent.

At a basic level, classroom assessment is a form of feedback to students regarding their progress, and it stands to reason that feedback will enhance learning. Indeed, as a result of reviewing almost 8,000 studies, researcher John Hattie (1992) made the following comment: “The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. The simplest prescription for improving education must be ‘dollops of feedback’” (p. 9).

As compelling as Hattie’s comments are, all forms of feedback are not equally effective. In fact, some forms of feedback might work against learning. To illustrate, consider the research findings depicted in the figure below.



The figure presents findings from two major meta-analytic studies—one by Robert Bangert-Drowns, Chen-Lin Kulik, James Kulik, and Mary Teresa Morgan (1991), which reviewed 40 studies on classroom assessment; and one by Lynn Fuchs and Douglas Fuchs (1986), which reviewed 21 studies of assessment. The findings from these two synthesis studies as depicted in the figure below help one understand this first principle of effective classroom assessment.

Table 4. Findings on the Effects of Different Types of Feedback

Source	Characteristics of Feedback from Classroom Assessment	Number of Studies	Effect Size	Percentile Gain or Loss in Student Achievement
Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan (1991)	Right/wrong	6	-.08	-3
	Provide correct answer	39	0.22	8.5
	Criteria understood by students vs. not understood	30	0.41	16
	Explain	9	0.53	20
	Repeat until correct	4	0.53	20
Fuchs & Fuchs (1986)	Displaying results graphically	89	0.70	26
	Evaluation (interpretation) by rule	49	0.91	32

Consider the first five rows of the Figure, from the Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, and Morgan synthesis. Row 1 indicates that when students receive feedback on a classroom assessment that simply tells them whether their answers are correct or incorrect, learning is negatively influenced.

This finding is illustrated by the loss of 3 percentile points. However, when students are provided with the correct answer, learning is influenced in a positive direction. This

practice is associated with a gain of 8.5 percentile points in student achievement, as shown in Row 2.

Row 3 of the Figure addresses whether students are clear about the criteria used to judge their responses. Clarity regarding scoring criteria is associated with a gain of 16 percentile points in student achievement. Row 4 reports a particularly interesting finding—providing students with explanations as to why their responses are correct or incorrect is associated with a gain of 20 percentile points in student achievement.

Finally, Row 5 indicates that asking students to continue responding to an assessment until they correctly answer the items is associated with a gain of 20 percentile points. Rows 6 and 7 of the Figure are from the Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) study. Row 6 shows the effect of graphically displaying student results. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, displaying assessment results graphically can go a long way to helping students take control of their own learning. However, this practice can also help teachers more accurately judge students' levels of understanding and skill, and it is associated with a gain of 26 percentile points in student achievement.

Presumably, seeing a graphic representation of students' scores provides teachers with a more precise and specific frame of reference for making decisions about next instructional steps. Finally, Row 7 addresses the manner in which the teacher interprets assessment results. If the interpretation is done by a set of "rules," student achievement is enhanced by 32 percentile points.

Black and Harrison (2004) identify that there are two types of feedback which are 'essential to formative assessment: the first is from student to teacher, the second from teacher to student. Learning is affected by alternation between these, in which each contribution responds to the other' (p. 3). They also explain that effective feedback arises

from 'learning experiences that provide rich evidence so that judgements about the next step in learning can be made' (p. 5) and this provides the link to other areas of assessment for learning such as the provision of challenging activities to promote thinking and discussion, the use of rich questions, provision of strategies to support learners in revealing their ideas and opportunities for peer-discussion and larger group discussion to encourage open dialogue.

Harlen (2006b) also identifies that feedback is a two-way process. She comments that it is important for pupils to give feedback to teachers in terms of allowing the teacher to see where the children are and what would be the appropriate next steps. Similarly, the children obtain feedback directly from self-assessment or from the teacher or other children. Harlen usefully points out some of the key features of feedback if it is to be useful, such as the need for non-judgemental comments and to show where improvements can be made. She highlights the need to allow time for pupils to react to and act upon the feedback they have been given in order to 'convey the message that responding to the comments is part of their learning' (p. 178). She further suggests that in valuing the comments in this way, pupils can incorporate them when giving their own feedback as part of peer-assessment.

Harrison *et al.* (2001) make the link between learning objectives and feedback and demonstrate feedback as a two-way process in their research into formative assessment. They refer to teachers developing self-assessment strategies which not only helped pupils but formed an 'important feedback mechanism from the pupil to the teacher regarding the pupil's confidence in their current work' (p. 19). This was achieved by asking pupils to rate their understanding of a learning objective on a scale of 1-3. This visual response, with fingers held up to indicate where they fell on the scale, allowed the teacher to see who needed help with particular concepts thus providing immediate

feedback on what further teaching was required. The teacher involved also identified that the sharing of learning objectives provided a useful reference point for any written feedback as it has 'an immediate term of reference' (p. 20). The research indicated that because children knew what the learning objective was that they knew what the marking criteria would be based on. It was also felt that the task was 'intrinsically more worthwhile' (p. 21).

Related to the giving of feedback is the notion that learning objectives must be clear, after all, assessment should be to see if the learning objectives and projected outcomes have been achieved. Leakey (2001) reported on her own experiences of sharing learning objectives with children of a range of ages and abilities and found it to improve her teaching mainly because it gives children 'ownership of their own learning' (p. 68).

Leakey suggests that it is only through having an understanding of the learning objectives, and thus what will be assessed, that children are able to make sense of any feedback that they receive. Leakey describes the need to provide constructive feedback during discussions and practical tasks as well as on written exercises. These can be given in the form of prompts aimed at moving the learning forward. In terms of written work she suggests that questions to prompt more accurate and appropriate answers are required but also suggests that simply writing comments is not sufficient – dialogue with the pupils based on the written feedback is required in order to encourage the pupils to take the next step forwards.

Whilst it is clear that it is important to provide feedback, what is vital is that the feedback given is effective in moving the learners on. Black and Harrison (2004) explore the features of effective feedback and these can be summarised as follows:

Effective feedback is that which:

- should initiate thinking enabling the learner 'to discuss his or her thoughts with the teacher or a peer' (p. 12) in order to instigate improvement
- prompts immediate action
- 'relates back to the success criteria' (p. 13)
- allows learners to match their own judgement of quality against that of the teacher or peer
- may direct learners 'where to go for help and what they can do to improve' (p. 13) their work.

In order to set some of the findings in this area in context, it is worth summarizing some of the influential research of Butler. Although the actual research of Butler (1987, 1988) falls outside the remit/timeframe of this review, it has influenced much of the research which is discussed in the area of feedback. Butler compared the effects of providing different types of marking where feedback was given in different ways. Pupils in one group were given only marks or grades, pupils in another group received grades and comments and a third group of pupils received only comments. Butler concluded that comment-only marking tended to result in the greatest learning gain when compared with children who received just marks or marks and comments.

References to comment-only marking are relatively frequent in the literature relating to feedback. Many of the references to feedback in the articles in this area concern feedback to written work produced in the secondary school context. For example, Black and Harrison (2001a) report on research carried out to look at feedback given by secondary teachers of . They report on the use of 'comment only' marking in which teachers write comments on pupils' work rather than giving a grade or mark and this built upon the work of Butler (1998).

In their own research, Black and Harrison (2001a) note that the teacher needs to pay close attention to the comments that they give in order to ensure that they are pertinent and relevant. Whilst it was found that this resulted in the marking process taking much longer, teachers reported that they were soon able to identify what was an effective comment which would prompt pupils to move on and develop their thinking and learning. The teachers involved in the study reported that the use of comment-only marking resulted in a much more personalised response and that comments were honed to the recipient, often with references to previous pieces of work. One teacher actively encouraged the pupils to respond to the feedback through the use of a comment sheet where the pupil responded to teacher comments with their own thoughts and evidence of the changes they had made.

Gioka (2006) also looks at the work of teachers teaching to 11-18 year olds and concluded that feedback only fulfils a formative function when it provides information to help 'close the gap' and that teachers who give feedback also need to allow time for pupils to respond to the comments made. As part of the feedback, it is suggested that questions can be a useful tool for challenging responses and encouraging further thinking.

These ideas are further explored in the research of Markwick *et al.* (2003) who investigated the alternative ways of marking work with an emphasis on AfL techniques. Like Gioka, their work was based on teaching in a secondary school with comparisons being made across key stages 3 and 4. The study took place over a two year period with the first year being used as a 'control' year in which assessments were carried out in a summative style. In the second year, formative styles of assessment, which included 'open ended questions and comments to guide deeper thinking' (p. 51), were used with the same groups. Although teachers reported making use of summative results to help

plan future teaching, the results of end-of unit tests were rarely used by the pupils themselves to set targets.

The results of the study, which involved regular interviews between teachers and pupils, indicated a big increase in the percentage of pupils (from 35 per cent to 85 per cent) who said that they acted upon comments made by teachers between the first and second years of the study. Some pupils indicated that they would also like to receive oral feedback on their work.

As in the research of Black and Harrison (2001a), Markwick *et al.* (2003) report that teachers involved in the study found that formative marking took considerably longer to do but felt that it was worth it. Advantages of such marking included being able to provide pupils with higher quality information and being able to differentiate work more effectively. A second strand of this study was the introduction of interviews in which students talked about their work with their teacher. Pupils reported that this gave them 'a clearer idea about where they were in terms of their potential and how they could continue to improve' (p. 53). Perhaps most important was the fact that several students commented that the interviews 'made them feel as if their work was very important' (p. 53). Markwick *et al.* do point out that this study was relatively small scale and that the pupils were excited to be involved and that 'a more rigorous study would be required to improve confidence in this interpretation' (p. 54) but, nevertheless, the study did show that the changes in the methods of providing feedback 'dramatically affected the way students became involved in their own learning' (p. 54).

In her study of classroom interaction in secondary schools in Singapore, Chin (2006) discussed the inter-relationship of questioning and feedback and proposed four different ways of providing feedback designed to develop pupils' learning. In the first, teacher affirms the response given by the pupil and carries on to reinforce the response and

provide further teaching. In the second, the teacher accepts the response given by the pupil but then goes on to ask a series of related questions to 'probe or extend conceptual thinking' (p. 1326).

In the case of an incorrect answer being given, Chin identifies two methods of response. In the first, she suggests that explicit correction is required and a reinforcement of the teaching points. In the other method, Chin suggests that an evaluative or neutral comment is made followed by a 'reformulation of the question or challenge via another question' (p. 1326). She suggests that in this way a constructive challenge is provided which 'forces the student to reflect on and reconsider her answer' (p. 1334).

In addition to having a range of response methods, Chin also suggests that when providing teacher feedback in the form of paraphrasing a pupil's response, it can help to verbalise the pupil's thoughts and provide the opportunity to co-construct a response with the teacher and their peers. This can be helpful for pupils with weaker language skills and can help to provide conceptual and linguistic scaffolding which can 'adjust the cognitive and linguistic loads of students' (p. 1336).

Feedback forms a crucial part of the assessment for learning model providing pupils with information about where they are and where they need to go to next with their learning. There is a clear link between questioning and feedback with the role of feedback in developing pupils' thinking and learning being vital.



## 2.15 Defining School-Based Assessment (SBA)

It cannot be over-emphasised that the mode of assessment dictates the nature of the educational experience and the quality of the relationship between teacher and pupils. Assessment is not something separate — a tool — by which education may be evaluated; it acts upon the educational system so as to shape it in accordance with what the assessment demands. You cannot have, at one and the same time, education for personal growth and a totally impersonal system of assessment. Assessment should be a bond between teachers and taught, not something which threatens and antagonises. To humanise assessment, then, we have to make of schooling a more cooperative enterprise between teachers and pupils, and an opportunity to develop the whole range of human competencies, leading up to informative profiles. This should be the pattern of things for the immediate future; it is the way to shed the dreary, and often unjust, grading techniques of traditional education. *Hemming (1980, p. 113–14)*

School-Based Assessment (SBA) is a process of measuring students' performance and improvement that is planned, designed, developed, organized and executed in the schools, by the respective school teachers within the curricular framework. It indicates multiple evaluation techniques which verify students' knowledge, comprehension, and skills. It is obviously occurred under the control of classroom teachers in a school. (Webber, 1995, cited in Begum and Mullick, 2005). Learners in schools are made to acquire generic competencies such as retrieving, analysing, creating and constructing in the domains of information-processing, problem-solving and communication. Therefore, learning is not just viewed as providing students with opportunities and increasing their chances of individual success, but as an integrated system in a holistic education (Torrance, H. and Pryor, J. 1998: 1).

## 2.16 SBA Around the World

In the United States, the focus of student learning and assessment seems to have greater inclination toward 'authentic' approaches. 'Authenticity' in learning is attributed when students get involved in self-learning and meaningful activities, such as exercises of performing or producing (Thimmappa, & Sharma, 2003). In the United Kingdom, with the establishment of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), the focus moved towards extended and open forms of learning and assessment – demanding tasks of investigation, problem-solving, report writing and so forth.

“The examinations, which GCSE replaced, made varying, though steadily increasing; use of coursework but it was to become one of the defining features of the new examination. As expressed in *Better schools* (DES/ WO, 1985a) the changes in assessment practice were very clear: 'by comparison with existing examinations, the [GCSE] national criteria place a new emphasis on oral and practical skills and coursework' (p.30).

Syllabuses across all subjects, with few exceptions, were required to make provision for a minimum 20 per cent of the credit available to students to come from work done during the course and assessed by the students' own teachers...In some subjects, notably English, syllabuses with 100 per cent coursework assessment were devised, approved and widely used by schools". (Daugherty, 1994: 102).

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has recently moved from norm-referenced to standards-referenced assessment, including the incorporation of a substantial school-based summative oral assessment component into the compulsory English language subject in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education

Examination (HKCEE), a high-stakes examination for all Form 4–5 (F4–5) students. In school-based assessment (SBA), assessment for both formative and summative purposes is integrated into the teaching and learning process, with teachers involved at all stages of the assessment cycle, from planning the assessment programme, to identifying and/or developing appropriate assessment tasks right through to making the final judgments (see SBA Consultancy Team, 2005, for a detailed description of the activities). As assessments are conducted by the students' own teacher in their own classroom, students are meant to play an active role in the assessment process, particularly through the use of self- and/or peer assessment used in conjunction with formative teacher feedback.

This high-profile assessment initiative, led by a team of researchers at the Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, in partnership with the HKEAA, marks a significant shift in policy as well as in practice for the HKEAA. The initiative aims to align assessment more closely with the current English language teaching syllabus (Curriculum Development Council, 1999) as well as the new outcomes-based Senior Secondary curriculum, to assess learners' achievement in areas that cannot be easily assessed by public examinations and at the same time enhance student self-evaluation and lifelong learning. Although this is in line with the Education and Manpower Bureau's general move to align assessment with curriculum reform (Curriculum Development Institute, 2002), in the initial process of implementing the SBA initiative a number of challenges arose.

Studies of the impact of earlier changes in the Hong Kong external examination system in English language (e.g., Andrews, 1994; Andrews, Fullilove, & Wong, 2002; Cheng, 1998, 2005) found that changes to summative assessment did not automatically lead to improvement in learning, as the teacher and school mediated the nature of the change.

Studies of the implementation of the Target-Oriented Curriculum in Hong Kong primary schools (e.g., Adamson & Davison, 2003; Carless, 2004; Cheung & Ng, 2000) also found assessment innovation to be severely constrained by traditional school culture and by teacher, parent, and student expectations. Studies of SBA in other subject areas in Hong Kong, such as the Teacher Assessment Scheme (Yung, 2001), also suggest that there may be wide variation in teachers' interpretations of student performance and of their role in the assessment process.

Although SBA as an integral component of the formal senior secondary examination system is established practice in a number of educational systems internationally, including Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (Black, 2001; Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003; Black & Wiliam, 2001; Sadler, 1989; Wiliam, 2001), as well as in some developing countries (Chisholm et al., 2000; Pryor & Akwesi, 1998; Pryor & Lubisi, 2002), there has been little specific research into the large-scale use of SBA in English as a second or additional language.

In Asia there are embryonic attempts to develop SBA in **Singapore and Malaysia** as a complement to external examinations at the senior secondary level but virtually no research into the issue. In **Australia**, several studies of the use of large-scale criterion-referenced English as a Second Language assessment frameworks in schools (Breen et al., 1997; Davison & Williams, 2002) have revealed a great diversity in teachers' approaches to assessment, influenced by the teachers' prior experiences and professional development, by the assessment frameworks and scales they used, and by the reporting requirements placed on them by schools and systems. Concerns have been raised about mechanistic criterion-based approaches to SBA, which are often implemented in such a way that they undermine rather than support teachers' classroom-embedded assessment

processes (Arkoudis & O'Loughlin, 2004; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Davison, 2004; Leung, 2004b).

Research into SBA internationally is further complicated by the considerable uncertainty and disagreement around the concept and by its intrinsically teacher-mediated, co-constructed, and context-dependent nature (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brookhart, 2003; McMillan, 2003; McNamara, 1997; Stiggins, 2001). Traditional conceptions of validity and reliability associated with the still-dominant psychometric tradition of testing are themselves a potential threat to the development of the necessarily highly contextualized and dialogic practices of SBA (Hamp-yons, 2006; Rea-Dickins, 2006). In a traditional exam-dominated culture, formative and summative assessment are seen as distinctly different in both form and function, and teacher and assessor roles are clearly demarcated, but in the new SBA component of the HKCEE English Language, summative assessments of the students' speaking skills are meant to be used formatively to give constructive student feedback and improve learning. Hence, the implementation of the HKEAA English SBA initiative has both theoretical importance and significant practical implications at the local and international level.

The HKCEE English Language SBA component: its content, structure, and processes The SBA component, worth 15% of the total HKCEE English mark, involves the assessment of English oral language skills based on topics and texts drawn from a programme of independent extensive reading/viewing ("texts" encompass print, video/film, fiction, and nonfiction material). At the time the SBA was introduced, students were required to choose at least four texts to read or view over the course of 2 years; keep brief notes in a logbook; and undertake a number of activities in and out of class to develop their independent reading, speaking, and thinking skills. For assessment it was suggested they to participate in several interactions with classmates on a particular aspect of the

text they have read/viewed, leading up to making a more formal group interaction or an individual presentation on a specific text and responding to questions from their audience.

In terms of assessment, an important distinction is made between the two kinds of oral activities—*presentation* and *interaction*—which are characterized by distinctly different organizational and communicative strategies. An individual presentation may be quite informal, depending on task and audience, but requires comparatively long turns, hence a more explicit structure and an ability to hold the attention of the audience. In contrast, an interaction, an exchange of short turns between two or more speakers, requires less explicit structuring but more attention to turn-taking skills and planning how to initiate, maintain, and control the interaction through suggestions, questions, and expansion of ideas.

Both activities, or *text-types*, also require the students to speak intelligibly with suitable intonation, volume, and stress, using pauses and body language such as eye contact appropriately and effectively, and to draw on a range of varied vocabulary and language patterns.

A variety of assessment tasks can be used to elicit the required kinds of oral language from students, including teacher-made tasks adapted from one of the exemplars collected from F4 and F5 teachers as part of the trial of the assessment initiative (see Appendix A for an example of one of these assessment tasks).

Assessment tasks can vary in length and complexity according to a number of factors, including the *communicative function*, the *number of people* involved, the *position and status* of the people interacting, and the *nature of the response required*. This diversity of assessment tasks aims to ensure schools can provide students with appropriate, multiple, and varied

opportunities to demonstrate their oral language abilities individually tailored to students' language level and interests.

For instance, in an individual presentation, the more orally proficient students can be challenged by being asked to persuade the whole class to read a particular book, whereas the less orally proficient students can be asked to describe the physical appearance of a particular character to a friend. In terms of group interaction, where each student has read different texts, the more orally proficient students can be challenged by being grouped into four and being asked to agree on which book should be set as a class reader, and the less orally proficient students can be placed in pairs and asked to find the three most important differences between their texts. Students in the same school, even the same class, may do different tasks or view different texts, so long as they all have the opportunity to produce the required type of oral language.

To ensure that the oral language produced is the student's "best" own work, and not the result of memorisation without understanding, there are several mandatory assessment conditions (SBA Consultancy Team, 2005, pp. 7–8). First, students must be assessed by their usual English teacher, in the presence of one or more classmate(s). Second, students must be familiar with the type of task used for assessment and given sufficient opportunity to produce enough oral language to be confidently assessed. To facilitate this process, teachers are allowed to ask the students questions as appropriate to prompt or extend the range of oral language produced and/or to verify the students' understanding of what they are saying. Third, students are not permitted to refer to extended notes nor take any notes during the assessment activity.

Students are assessed according to a set of *assessment criteria*, consisting of a set of descriptors at each of six levels across four *domains*, which were developed and trialled by

teachers and students from a wide range of Hong Kong schools. The domains are briefly described next.

*Domain 1: Pronunciation and Delivery*

Pronunciation comprises phonology and intonation. Phonology includes the articulation of individual sounds and sound clusters, whereas intonation refers to the flow of words with appropriate stress and rise/fall across the sentence(s). Delivery is made up of two important sub-aspects: voice projection and fluency. Fluency refers to the naturalness and the intelligibility of a person's speech.

*Domain 2: Communication Strategies*

Communicative strategies involve body language, timing, and asking and answering appropriate kinds of questions. Body language includes gaze, facial expressions, head movement, and body direction—the more students rely on notes or memorized material, the weaker their body language is likely to be.

Timing is important; if student takes too long for an individual presentation the audience may get bored; if the student is too brief, she or he will not be able to give enough ideas or support.

*Domain 3: Vocabulary and Language Patterns*

The vocabulary and language patterns domain consists of three important areas: vocabulary and language patterns (including the quantity, range, accuracy, and appropriateness), and self-correction/reformulation.

*Domain 4: Ideas and Organisation*

The ideas and organisation domain consists of the expression of information and ideas, the elaboration of appropriate aspects of the topic, organisation, and questioning and responding to questions. Organisation works differently in individual presentations and



in group interactions. In a group interaction students share the responsibility for providing enough ideas and information to carry the dialogue forward. They need to stay focused on the topic and say something at the right time to move the conversation forward by elaborating on a point another group member has made or by bringing up a new but relevant point. This kind of organizing is much harder to do in spoken than in written language, so in F4 and F5 group interactions it is not emphasised very much. However, in an individual presentation the speaker has sole responsibility for planning what she or he will say and how, and each student is expected to have thought how to organise what he or she will say.

Within each domain each feature needs to be weighed against the others holistically to reach an overall judgment. In the same way, the levels are conceptualized not as discrete entities but rather as a continuum of development, thus it is possible to talk of a “strong 5” or a “weak 3.” An *assessment record* is used to provide a record of the key features of the assessment activity and help standardize the assessment process. In addition, teachers are encouraged to video- or audio-record a range of student assessments to assist with standardization and feedback, involving the students as much as possible (e.g., asking students to collect a portfolio of their oral language assessments, both formative and summative, using an MP3 player or by videorecording each other). During the class assessments, which might span a number of weeks, individual teachers at the same level (i.e., F4 or F5) are encouraged to meet informally to compare their assessments and make adjustments to their own scores as necessary. Such informal interactions give teachers the opportunity to share opinions on how to score performances and how to interpret the assessment criteria.

Near the end of the school year, there is a formal meeting of all the English teachers at each level, chaired by the SBA Coordinator in each school, to review performance

samples and standardise scores. Such meetings are critical for developing agreement about what a standard means (i.e., *validity*, consistency in and between teacher-assessors; *reliability*, public accountability, and professional collaboration/support). The adjusted marks for each student are then listed on a class record. At the end of each year there is a district-level meeting for professional sharing and further standardisation. Each SBA Coordinator is encouraged to take a range of typical and atypical individual assessment records (and the video- or audio-recordings) and the class records for sharing.

Once any necessary changes are made, the performance samples are archived and the scores are submitted to the HKEAA for review. Video and audio records can be compiled on a CD-ROM for storage. Maintaining notes of all standardisation meetings and any follow up action is also encouraged so schools can show parents and the public that it has applied the SBA consistently and fairly. The HKEAA then undertakes a process of statistical moderation to ensure the comparability of scores across the whole Hong Kong school system.

In the Pacific, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) is one of the premier institutions to take a lead in this regard. In the early 1970s, the International Baccalaureate organization established international schools in Fiji in corroboration with an association of business people and parents in Suva and Nadi. The assessment in these institutions is school-based (Thimmappa, & Sharma, 2003).

Table 5: School-based assessment in the Middle Years Academic Programme

Group	Subjects	Activities
Group 1	Language A (English)	essay writing, poster, argumentative writing, poetry analysis, performance, poetry, expository writing, tests, creative writing
Group 2	Language B (French, Japanese)	writing, speaking, role play, listening quiz, reading, comprehension, end of unit tests
Group 3	History & Geography	report writing, research, essay, quizzes, exam
Group 4	Sciences	project, practical test, posters, design and conduct experiment, essays, brochures, modeling, data analysis, topic tests
Group 5	Maths	tests each term, investigation, formative tests at end of each topic, written assignment
Group 6	Arts	public performance, research project, creative project
Group 7	Physical Education	theory test, skills application mastery, inter-house athletics competition, inter-house swimming competition
Group 8	Technology	practical project, research project, topic tests

With Australian assistance (AusAID), the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), in its member countries, such as Kiribati, Samoa and Nauru, has introduced the concept of 'assessment for learning', refocusing attention on the use of assessment to improve learning rather than promote ranking for selection. The project is the SPBEA's most recent venture to empower teachers and students to improve teaching as well as student learning. With high-stake examinations likely to remain a crucial part of the assessment framework of each country (Pongi 2004), the proposed assessment system allows free-choice use of assessment procedures by the teachers. Currently, there is 50-50 weighting allocation for SBA and external examination at each level.

In Queensland of Australia, before the 1970s, Queensland's students were assessed at the end of their school studies by a single high-stakes examination that consisted primarily of a pen-and-paper test. The examination was set and marked by authorities external to schools, and certificates were issued by central authorities. But the events of the late 1960s set in motion a series of changes that led to the abolition of Queensland's Senior Public Examination — and the start of externally moderated school-based assessment in 1972 (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010). Queensland assessment system relies entirely on school-based assessment, a system in which:

- teachers are responsible for the assessment of student achievement using standards descriptors, making judgments of students' work against these standards
- review panels of trained teachers undertake external moderation.

Its focus has been to integrate teaching and learning with assessment to create what is known as “authentic pedagogy”. After almost 40 years' experience, the evidence shows that this system:

- builds teacher professionalism
- caters to the range of students' learning styles
- prepares students for situations they will face in further education and work
- encourages students' higher-order thinking skills
- is fair and reliable (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010).

The essential ingredients for it to work effectively are:

- syllabuses that clearly describe content and achievement standards
- contextualised exemplar assessment instruments
- samples of student work annotated to explain how they represent different standards

- consensus through teacher discussions on the quality of the assessment instruments and the standards of student work
- professional development of teachers
- an organisational infrastructure encompassing an independent authority and schools to oversee the system.

Assessment Bank: The Assessment Bank is an online collection of assessment instruments and resources that are linked to the Essential Learnings and Standards, and demonstrates the alignment of assessment, curriculum and reporting guidelines. Teachers have access to a range of assessment instruments and resources in all key learning areas (KLAs) and year levels across Years 1–9. By engaging with and contributing to the Assessment Bank, teachers have the opportunity to enhance their understanding of the alignment of curriculum, assessment and reporting. Assessment packages include:

- a student booklet — the assessment as presented to students
- a guide to making judgments — states what is valued in the assessment and gives descriptions of the expected qualities of demonstrated student learning
- teacher guidelines — task-specific information about the Essential Learnings being assessed, preparation, implementation and feedback
- an indicative A response — an example of an A-standard model response
- assessment-related resources (where applicable) — audio and/or visual stimulus required to complete the assessment
- sample responses (where available) — student responses annotated to clarify how the samples match the task-specific descriptors in the guide to making judgments.

Resources are presented as professional resources or classroom resources. Professional resources provide information and links to articles of professional interest to teachers, e.g. readings, presentations, QSA publications and professional development materials. Classroom resources are designed for teachers to use or adapt for teaching and learning, e.g. planning, teaching, assessing and reporting resources. All assessment instruments and resources undergo quality-assurance processes, including internal and external panelling, editing and, where possible, field trialling.

Each complete assessment package models five processes to be considered when developing quality units of work and everyday assessment instruments:

- identifying curriculum — selecting the Essential Learnings, school priorities and the context for learning
- sequencing learning — planning learning experiences and teaching strategies to respond to the needs and interests of learners
- developing assessment — planning a variety of assessments to collect comprehensive and meaningful evidence of learning
- making judgments — considering how judgments will be made about the quality of learning, using the evidence in student responses
- using feedback — considering how and when to provide feedback to students (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010).

The Assessment Bank also includes an online forum for informal teacher collaboration and discussion about assessment. This forum provides opportunities for professional discussion, which helps to improve consistency of teacher judgments and build a shared understanding of standards. Schools can also contribute to the development of the sample responses by providing student work samples.

There are certain important features of this form of assessment. These include:

- Teaching, learning, assessment and reporting is aligned so that what is taught informs what is assessed, and what is assessed forms the basis of what is reported.
- Teachers design school-based assessment programs and make judgments about standards achieved by their students, including summative judgments for reporting purposes.
- Clear and specific content and achievement standards are included in syllabuses, Essential Learnings and guidelines.
- Consistency of teachers' judgments is promoted when teachers engage in professional dialogue to discuss and analyse the connections between standards and student work.
- Teachers work in partnership with the QSA to develop high-quality assessment tasks, a process supported by the development of exemplar assessment instruments and annotated samples of student responses (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010).

The key benefits of the Queensland School-Based Assessment system:

Students are able to show the full extent of their knowledge and abilities: Students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do over a period of time, in situations similar to those they will encounter in further education, training and employment.

Students receive frequent and detailed feedback: Continuous assessment provides more opportunities for teachers to give timely and comprehensive feedback to students about how they might improve their performance. Formative assessment at particular points indicates the standards achieved by students and provides meaningful reports to parents/carers on students' achievements. It helps students achieve the highest standards they can within their own capabilities. From this, students learn that in any assessment instrument they should be made aware of the task, the conditions and the

criteria and standards against which they will be assessed. They experience a total engagement with the assessment process and learn to think creatively about problems.

Teachers may choose from a range of assessment techniques: Teachers can use a range of assessment techniques, including group work, oral presentations, practical responses, assignments and supervised examinations, to cater for varied learning styles.

Teachers constantly improve their assessment abilities: Teachers improve their knowledge of assessment and their assessment practices, thus improving their own teaching.

Teachers receive specialist training and professional development: Teacher panellists receive training by the QSA in how to make comparable judgments on student achievement. They also receive valuable professional development by discussing assessment issues with their peers as members of the QSA's moderation panels.

Teachers can tailor assessment to local needs: Teachers can write work programs (i.e. an outline of how the school intends to implement a syllabus) that reflect the school's clientele in terms of interests and issues, and that make best use of school and local facilities.

Teachers receive external advice: Teachers in schools are provided with advice about:

- the extent to which assessment instruments provide opportunities for students to meet the syllabus standards
- how well school judgments of the qualities of student work match the syllabus standards
- the school's level of achievement decisions (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010).



This system meets the criteria for an ideal assessment model, as defined by international assessment expert Dylan Wiliam (2008). Wiliam advocates a system that is:

- Distributed, so that evidence is not collected entirely at the end of the course of study. The Queensland system does this.
- Synoptic, so that learning has to accumulate. It does in the Queensland system.
- Extensive, so that all important aspects are covered, breadth as well as depth. The Queensland system is based on results that are fullest, because they accumulate over two years, as well as latest.
- Manageable, so that costs are proportionate to benefits. The dollar cost of the Queensland system is significantly less than budgets for end-of-year external examinations, but the benefits for professional development of our teachers far outweigh budget savings.
- Trusted, so that stakeholders have faith in the outcomes. The Queensland system is accepted by parents, teachers, students, the government and the wider community.

In New South Wales of Australia, the Board of Studies introduced a greater measure of SBA in 1990 to provide students, parents and employers with more detail concerning achievement. SBA has been an ongoing practice in Australia for more than 30 years (Broadfoot, 1994).

In Malaysia, a study was conducted by Fook & Shidhu (2010) to investigate the knowledge and best practices of Malaysian ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers conducting the SBA. Descriptive research design was employed to examine the level of knowledge and best practices of ESL teachers in SBA. The study indicated that most of the respondents had acquired adequate knowledge in constructing their own tests, but one third of the respondents admitted that they often applied “cut and paste” method

and they did worry about the validity and reliability of the tests constructed. This indicates that there are a number of existing problems in SBA that have to be addressed as soon as possible.

Teachers in this study were aware of the pros and cons of SBA. They were articulate as to the benefits of SBA stressing that it helps to provide them with information and insights needed to improve teaching effectiveness and learning quality. Teachers were also very aware that SBA encouraged classroom assessment to be an ongoing process. As such they felt learning is more meaningful to students as they can obtain immediate feedback on their performance. Approximately 80% of the respondents admitted to using test scores for further enhancement of the teaching and learning process. But, the study also indicated that ESL teachers possessed limited knowledge in a number of aspects such as interpreting test scores, conducting item analysis and forming a test bank. Teachers admitted that though they were familiar in calculating the mean, other calculations and terms like standard deviation, z-score and t-score were beyond their means. The situations of lack of training and lack of positive responses to training in Malaysia are found quite common. Even though teachers were aware of the positive effects of SBA they cited time constraints and a heavy teaching load as the main culprits in its effective implementation. Issues of reliability and validity of school-based tests were also raised. A number of the teachers cited time constraints, the rush to complete the syllabus, heavy teaching load and administrative duties that hindered them from using SBA results to enhance student learning.

According to Faizah A Majid (2011), the Malaysian government has proposed to implement school-based assessment in public schools in the attempt to replace the current public examinations. However, as school-based assessment has yet to be in full swing, relatively little is known about the concerns of the teachers who would directly

be involved in the implementation system. She conducted a survey on 40 English teachers who are currently teaching in Malaysian public schools. The items in the questionnaire elicited information on the stages of concerns of the respondents' concern regarding the adoption or implementation of any educational innovation. The constructs are; Indifference, Informational-Personal, Management, Consequence-Collaboration, and Refocusing. It is from these identified constructs that the categories for the questions were built. Findings from the study indicated that the respondents were concern about the innovation and that their concerns were multidimensional regardless of their experience in the innovation. The study found it quite alarming that (as reported by Hamzah and Sinnasamy (2009) based on a preliminary study they conducted) the oral school-based assessment was not implemented according to guidelines and objectives provided by the Malaysian Examination Syndicate.;

## 2.18 SBA in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, SBA is in vogue for quite a long time (since 2007) (Begum and Farooqui, 2008). For introducing it the Ministry of Education has decided to start functioning it in grades 6-8 from 2004, in grade 9 from 2005 and grade 10 from 2006. It decided to count 30% marks as SBA (formative assessment) and 70% marks as terminal/final examinations. The Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) funded jointly by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) initiated the process in 2004. In 49 high schools, teachers were trained (both at home and abroad) who developed some Shikkhak Nirdeshika. These teachers and some subject specialists of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) compiled a single 'Generic Guide' under the auspices of SESIP on the matter. A trial was held at grades 9-10 in those 49 schools. In the same year NCTB and Directorate of Secondary and Higher

Education (DSHE) had applied SBA in 60 secondary schools experimentally. (Ahsan, 2007; NCTB-Shikhoner Jonno SBA, 2006)

According to TQI-SEP module, SBA is the assessment of students according to class teaching-learning and co-curricular activities done by class teachers (Habib et al, 2007). According to Shikkhak Nirdeshika (2006), the main aim of SBA is to assess the improvement of learning of students on the basis of class and home course related work. Shikkhak Nirdeshika (Teachers' Guide) for SBA published by NCTB (2006) says "SBA VI-IX is being introduced to raise the standards of secondary education to international standards and to ensure overall assessment in respect of the school behavior and personal and social values of students" (p.ii).

The ADB Report on Secondary Education Sector Development Program (2006) says, 'to facilitate student's learning in class, assessments that directly inform classroom teaching (or formative assessments) are required. An SBA system has been prepared, which is premised on the assumptions that (i) not all curriculum goals can be assessed by written testing; and (ii) teachers who are given responsibility in the terminal assessment of their students will get more involved in the assessment process, and will be more responsible for ensuring fair and valid assessments. SBA applies formative assessment methodologies by teachers to achieve timely corrective actions, and encourages the use of a wider range of learning activities aimed at more objectives within the curricula' (p. 9).

Regarding the public dissemination of this change in assessment system, the report says, 'Extensive, timely, and carefully developed and presented public dissemination of any changes to student assessment and examinations is needed. Confidence building measures are needed before SBA is introduced. This starts with gaining an appreciation that SBA is more than adding co-curricular activities to the school report, and that SBA

increases assessment validity, thereby improving teaching by guiding teachers to teach more than factual content' (p. 29).

#### The Criteria of SBA:

According to the Government Order, 2006 (cited in Shikhhak Nirdeshika, 2006), the criteria through which subject-based learning of every student will be assessed for the entire academic year are:

- a. Attendance in class and interest in learning
- b. Assessment (class wise)
- c. Assignments (individual/in group)
- d. Behaviour, values and honesty
- e. Presentation of speech/individual and group discussions
- f. Leadership qualities
- g. Discipline
- h. Participation in cultural activities
- i. Performance in sports and games
- j. Practical classes in science subjects (NCTB, 2006, p. VI)

With SBA, student assessment at classes will include the following three areas

- Students' coursework-the school work they do in the classroom and at home during the year. Six different areas of student course work have been identified. The areas are class tests, class work, home work, assignments, oral presentations and group work. Each of these areas will contribute to the students' overall course work mark.
- Students' personal development-their behaviour within the school, their development of personal and social values and their participation in co-curricular activities of the school.
- Students' performance in end-of-year examinations.

### Area of Course work in SBA:

For SBA in grades 6 to 8, students' course work has been identified in six areas which will help assess higher order logical reasoning of students. These are:

Table 6: Area of Course work in SBA

Area of Course Work	Frequency	Marks
Class test	2/term	5
Class work	1/term	5
Home work	2/term	5
Group work	3/term	5
Oral Presentation	3/term	5
Assignment	1/term	5

Each class teacher is expected to arrange, each term, a meeting of all subject teachers of his/her class to discuss and agree upon a mark for school behaviour for each student. It is considered important that teachers keep good record of students' performance on SBA. The Head teacher must make sure that teachers keep good records. Teachers can help one another in planning their assessment and in planning their record keeping.

### Six higher order logical Skills/Competencies

Subject based criteria have been into 6 competencies which are shown by the effectiveness of work. These are:

Table 7: Six higher order logical Skills

Teaching Area	Competency/Skills	Class test	Class work	Home work	Group work	Oral Presentation	Assignment
Area-1	Thinking	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
	Problem Solving						Yes
Area-2	Personal		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
	Oral Communication					Yes	
Area-3	Co-operative		Yes		Yes		
	Social Value				Yes		

Source: Amjad, 2007; Shikhhak Nirdeshika, 2006

Recoding Marks of SBA:

NCTB (2006) has provided a Mark Book for recording marks of SBA. The table below shows this.

Recording Student Performance Within SBA VI-IX: Teacher's Mark Book for (Subject Name) Course Work, Team 1

Table 8. Teacher's Mark book

Students' Names	1. Class Test	2. Class Work and Practical Work	3. Home work	4. Assignment	5. Oral Presentation	6. Group Work	Total in Course work

Source: NCTB, (2006)

Since its inception, a number of studies have been conducted. In 2008, Begum and Farooqui conducted a study to explore the attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the implementation of the new assessment system called SBA. In this research, data were collected from four SBA trainers and 18 secondary teachers- seven from sub urban and 11 from urban areas. All the teachers were selected purposively from urban, Dhaka and Savar, a semi urban area. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through interview survey, semi-structured interviews and document analysis in this research. Two separate questionnaires of open ended questions were made for the teachers and the trainers. Semi-structured interviews were taken with eight of the teachers. The trainers were also asked about their view about the potentiality and steps taken for successful implementation of the new assessment system in Bangladesh. The findings show that trainers are very optimistic about changing the assessment system

successfully. The teachers are divided into their opinions regarding the positive impact of SBA system on current education system. The findings show that although the government has already implemented the new assessment system, most of the teachers have not got the training necessary for implementing such a project. Untrained teachers will have a poor understanding of the ideas which will lead them to their inability to distribute the marks effectively. If these teachers try to implement such a new system, the system will collapse. If the SBA is implemented without providing adequate training to the teachers, a huge gap will be created between ministerial style and classroom reality. Although teachers and trainers are quite optimistic about bringing a positive change in education through SBA, there is a widespread apprehension that teachers will misuse this to give high numbers to the students who take private tuition (Begum & Farooqui, 2008).

Khan (2009) conducted a study (as part of her M.Ed thesis) on the implementation procedure of SBA in General Science subject at secondary level. To collect both qualitative and quantitative data for the study, she used classroom observation checklist, survey questionnaire with students and teachers, semi-structured interviews with teachers and SBA specialists and document analysis. The study found that teacher hardly appropriately practiced SBA. They paid more attention to marking/grading than practicing it for students' effective learning in classroom as they have no clear idea about SBA. They did not record their marks according to the indicators in the record list. Students claimed that teachers were not fair in giving marks in SBA. In majority of schools, proper feedback was not given by teachers. School administration was not aware of including SBA component properly in the school syllabi. The study recommended that teachers should change their attitude and for this proper training on SBA must be provided to them. The government should take necessary steps to monitor the implementation of the assessment system.



## 2.19 Communicative Language Teaching

Since its inception in the early 1970s, Communicative language teaching (CLT) has been defined, described, and used by various educators and practitioners in many different ways. However, it is possible to identify the common essentials of CLT as proposed by the main scholars in the field.

CLT starts from a theory of language as communication. Richards and Rodgers (1986) indicate that “the goal of teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as communicative competence” (p. 69). Since then, there has been a growing interest in communicative language teaching both in second and in foreign language contexts (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Savignon, 1991).

However, CLT is based on the work of sociolinguists, particularly that of Hymes (1972). Arguing against Chomsky (1957), Hymes proposed that knowing a language involves more than knowing a set of grammatical, lexical, and phonological rules. In order to use the language effectively, Hymes posited, learners need to develop communicative competence—the ability to use the language they are learning appropriately in a given social encounter. Hymes’ notion of communicative competence was examined by a number of practice-oriented language educators. This examination culminated in 1980 with Canale and Swain’s elaborate definition of the term (later refined by Canale in 1983). According to these researchers, communicative competence comprises grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to linguistic competence—the knowledge of syntactical, phonological, and lexicological systems. Sociolinguistic competence deals with the social rules of language use, which involves an understanding of the social context where communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared knowledge of the participants, and the communicative purpose of their interaction. Discourse competence

is the ability to understand an individual message and how its meaning is represented in relation to the entire text and discourse. Strategic competence entails the strategies employed for successful communication, such as how to initiate, terminate, maintain and repair a dialogue.

In light of subsequent arguments and practices, it should be noted that Canale and Swain's definition of communicative competence specifically includes grammar. However, it places grammatical competence within a more broadly defined communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980, 14) make it clear that, although "there seem to be no strong theoretical reasons for emphasizing getting one's message across over grammatical accuracy at the early stages of second language learning...some combination of emphasis on grammatical accuracy and emphasis on meaningful communication from the very start of second language study is suggested."

## 2.20 Characteristics of CLT

Richards and Rodgers (1986) synthesize all characteristics of CLT and state that the characteristics common to all versions of CLT is a theory of language teaching that "starts from a communicative model of language and language use, and that seeks to translate this into a design for an instructional system, for materials, for teacher, and learner roles and behaviors, and for classroom activities and techniques" (p. 69).

The most common characteristics of CLT are as follows: First, in CLT, meaning is the most important function for communication. Second, contextualization is the basic premise of CLT. According to Larsen-Freeman (1986), the most obvious characteristic of CLT is that "almost everything is done with a communicative intent" (p.132).

In essence, CLT theory holds that learning takes place through genuine communication. However, determining how to create genuine communication within the classroom

setting presents challenges to teachers. Some ELT authors have proposed general principles and practices to help do this. For example, Nunan (1989, 194) suggests the use of “activities [that] involve oral communication, carrying out meaningful tasks, and using language which is meaningful to the learner” as well as the use of “materials [that] promote communicative language use...[and] are task-based and authentic.” Brown (1994, 81) proposes that communication is likely to occur in the classroom when: (1) a significant amount of pair work and group work is conducted; (2) authentic language input in real life context is provided; (3) students are encouraged to produce language for genuine, meaningful communication; and (4) classroom tasks are conducted to prepare students for actual language use outside the classroom.

Students use language a great deal through communicative activities (e.g., games, role playing, and problem-solving tasks). The problems faced by the learners in their daily lives are the source of content for a problem-solving program (Crawford-Lange, 1987).

Larsen-Freeman (2000, 65) also notes that it is important “to facilitate small group and paired activities in which students have opportunities to interact. The activities themselves often engage students in communicative tasks such as filling information gaps using authentic materials.”

Another characteristic of CLT is the introduction of authentic materials (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Long & Crookes, 1992; Nunan, 1991). In CLT, it is considered “desirable to give learners the opportunity to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic situations so that they develop strategies for understanding language as actually used by native speakers” (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 132).

Also, activities in the communicative approach are often carried out by students in small groups as Larsen-Freeman (1986, p.132) states. Students are expected to interact with one another, either through group work or in their writings. CLT favors interaction

among small numbers of students in order to maximize the time each student has to learn through meaning negotiation.

Thus, based on the above characteristics, teachers are to select learning activities according to how well they engage the students in meaningful and authentic language use rather than in the merely mechanical practice of language patterns. Last, a “learner-centered and experience-based view of second language teaching” is also a crucial criterion (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.69).

According to CLT theory, individual learners possess unique interests, styles, needs, and goals that should be reflected in the design of instructional methods (Savignon, 1991). Therefore, teachers are to develop materials based on the needs of a particular class. Students are made to feel secure, unthreatened, and non-defensive in a CLT classroom, so teachers using CLT should avoid adopting a teacher-centered, authoritarian posture (Taylor, 1983).

Doughty and Long (2003) give a list of guidelines for implementing communicative language teaching (CLT) practices. These are

Principle 1: Use Tasks as an Organizational Principle

Principle 2: Promote Learning by Doing

Principle 3: Input Needs to Be Rich

Corollary 1: Materials need to be authentic to reflect real-life situations and demands.

Corollary 2: The teacher needs to maximize the use of the target language.

Principle 4: Input Needs to Be Meaningful, Comprehensible, and Elaborated

Principle 5: Promote Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

Principle 6: Focus on Form

Principle 7: Provide Error Corrective Feedback

Principle 8: Recognize and Respect Affective Factors of Learning

## 2.21 Communicative Curriculum

Breen and Candlin (1980) set out the essentials of a communicative curriculum, the impact of which is still apparent today. They proposed that curriculum should encompass five aspects: (1) content is focused on language knowledge that is personally significant to learners; (2) sequencing is cyclical, rather than step by step; (3) content is subdivided into activities and tasks in which there is interaction, rather than broken down into structures; (4) continuity resides within and between activities, tasks, and themes; (5) choosing directions involves negotiation between learners and learners, learners and teachers, and learners and text—there is no predetermined route. In a radical development, Breen and Candlin (cited in Sullivan 2000, 129–30) asserted that *the classroom...can serve as a focal point of the learning-teaching process... [It] no longer needs to be seen as a pale representation of some outside communicative reality. It can become the meeting place for realistically motivated communication-as-learning, communication about learning, and metacommunication. A communicative methodology will therefore exploit the classroom as a resource with its own communicative potentials.*

Drawing on the implications of Canale and Swain's definition of communicative competence, elaborated upon for more than a decade, Savignon (1991, 2002) emphasized that CLT puts the focus on the learner: "Learner communicative needs provide a framework for elaborating program goals in terms of functional competence" (1991, 266). To support the theoretical and practical foundations of CLT, Savignon identified and described the following five components of a communicative curriculum:

- (1) language arts (which includes those elements teachers often do best and which may be all they have been taught to do) include exercises used in mother tongue programs to focus attention on formal accuracy.

- (2) language for a purpose is the use of language for real communication goals.
- (3) personal English language use relates to the learners' emerging identity in English.
- (4) theatre arts provide learners with the tools they need to act in a new language, such as by interpreting, expressing, and negotiating meaning.
- (5) beyond the classroom refers to the need to prepare learners to use the language they learn outside the classroom.

Authors discussed above offer various views of CLT—within the theoretical framework of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain—however, they agree on the need for meaningful communication to support learning and agree that classroom activities should focus on learners' genuine communicative needs.

While communicative activities are considered a means to develop learners' communicative competence in the second language, these activities cannot take place in the absence of control of grammar. Where researchers differ is in how this grammar is to be discovered. Some favor the more traditional presentation of a rule followed by practice. Others believe grammatical awareness will emerge naturally from practice in communicative interaction that has meaning. In either case, teachers still need to know what communication means for classroom practices. The answer is, largely, that teachers need to work that out for themselves. As Richards and Rogers (1986, 83) put it:

Communicative Language Teaching is best considered an approach rather than a method. Thus although a reasonable degree of theoretical consistency can be discerned at the levels of language and learning theory, at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variation than most methods permit.

## 2.22 Present English Language Curriculum

Introducing English at the earliest grade possible (since 1991, Yasmin, 2005) and 'going *communicative*' (since 1997, Hamid, 2005; Rahman & Rahman, 2012) were two recent English language teaching (ELT) policy initiatives to develop Bangladeshi human capital.

The communicative approach was set as corrective intervention since despite years of schooling, 'our students are very weak in English and as a result they cannot apply English in their practical life successfully' (NCTB, 2003, p. 3). The innovation was jointly funded by the British Department for International Development (DfID) and the Government of Bangladesh. The bilateral venture gave birth to the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP Bangladesh) which had two specific objectives: 1) to produce CLT-based English textbooks for Grades 9–10 at the secondary level and Grades 11–12 at the higher secondary cycle, and 2) to train school teachers and empower them to teach communicative English (Paul, 2004; Hamid, 2005; NCTB, 2001, 2003; Rahman, 2007). Accordingly, CLT based textbooks for junior secondary (grade 6-8) and secondary level were introduced in the classroom in 1997 (NCTB, 2010).

The main aims of these textbooks are to:

1. introduce effective communicative techniques, integrated with existing well-tried traditional methods.
2. provide adequate practice in language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
3. include adequate elements of communicative grammar.
4. integrate such grammatical elements with language skills so as to make the grammar genuinely functional.
5. suggest a clear teaching methodology within the framework of actual lessons.

6. create more opportunities for interaction (between teachers and students, and students and students).
7. adapt the existing topics so as to make them both more interesting and acceptable.
8. introduce an integrated 'workbook' element in order to develop writing skills at an appropriate pace (NCTB, 2010).

The present English curriculum produced by NCTB (1995) inscribes that English is not like most other subjects specified in the curriculum. For unlike them, English is not content-based subject but a skill based subject. English is not about any particular topic but rather it is about practicing something—listening, speaking, reading and writing. Of course when people listen, speak, read or write, they do not carry out these activities in a vacuum. They listen to or speak, read or write about something. Topics, therefore, are included in the communicative language curriculum but they are not important in themselves (NCTB, 1995; Rahman, Babu & Ashrafuzzaman, 2011).

The curriculum says, English is about practicing language skill. The English language classroom should, above all else, be an interactive one. English needs to be recognized as an essential work-oriented skill. English should, therefore, be taught as something to be used. The students should practice English with the teacher, the teacher with the students, and, most important of all, the students with each other. That is what communicative English language teaching and learning is about: the acquisition of language through constant and regular practice. To implement this syllabus, suitable communicative materials and appropriate examinations that test language skills are required (NCTB, 1995; Rahman, Babu & Ashrafuzzaman, 2011).

The curriculum also asserts, English language syllabus aims to focus on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as learner-centered activities within



communicative contexts. ... The aim at junior secondary level is to ensure that students enjoy acquiring English and are able to use it effectively in real life situations outside the classroom (NCTB, 1995, Kamaluddin cited in Foster, 2009, Rahman, Babu & Ashrafuzzaman, 2011).

Learning outcomes of Class 6-8 [as mentioned in NCTB Curriculum (NCTB, 1995)]

Notes:

- a) The specific objectives of teaching and learning English are spelt out in terms of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- b) For convenience in defining learning outcomes the four skills are considered separately. In practice, however, classroom activities should be planned so as to fully integrate these skills, as happens, in real life.
- c) By defining learning outcomes in terms of skills, the syllabus aims to facilitate a teaching methodology that encourages learners to acquire communicative competency through regular practice of these skills in the classroom. Such a methodology is learner-centered and is characterized by lively student participation, especially in pairs and groups.

Class-wise Competencies for Class 6

Listening

Students should be able to:

- a) Understand instructions and commands.
- b) Participate in short and simple conversations.
- c) Understand texts of (appropriate length and) varied type:
  - I. Narrative,

II. Descriptive

III. Simple poetry

- d) Listen to a simple passage (i) for gist, (ii) for specific information, (iii) in order to take a simple dictation.
- e) Distinguish between the different sounds of English and recognize intonation patterns of statements and questions within appropriate communicative contexts.

### Speaking

Students should be able to:

- a) Give instructions and commands
- b) Participate in short and simple conversations
- c) Recount a series of events
- d) Describe people, objects etc.
- e) Recite simple poetry with understanding.
- f) Speak intelligibly in clear, correct English appropriate to the situation

### Reading

All the following objectives refer to silent reading. Students should be able to distinguish between silent reading and reading aloud.

Students should be able to:

- a) Understand (i) written instructions, (ii) narrative texts, (iii) descriptive texts and (iv) simple poems
- b) Look up words in simple dictionaries
- c) Infer the meaning of words from their contexts
- d) Begin extensive reading, using their 'Supplementary Reader'
- e) Recognize the functions of different punctuation marks

### Writing

Students should be able to:

- a) Write simple (i) instructions, (ii) narrative, (iii) descriptions and (iv) informal letters.
- b) Plan, and organize the above tasks adequately.
- c) Take simple notes and dictations.
- d) Use linking words and reference words appropriately
- e) Use different punctuations and graphological device appropriately.

### Class-wise Competencies for Class 7

#### Listening

Students should be able to:

- a) Understand instructions and commands.
- b) Participate in short and simple conversations.
- c) Understand texts of (appropriate length and) varied type:
  - i. Narrative,
  - ii. Descriptive
  - iii. Simple poetry
- d) Listen to a simple passage (i) for gist, (ii) for specific information, (iii) in order to take a simple dictation.
- e) Distinguish between the different sounds of English and recognize intonation patterns of statements and questions within appropriate communicative contexts.

### Speaking

Students should be able to:

- a) Give instructions and commands
- b) Participate in short and simple conversations
- c) Recount a series of events
- d) Describe people, objects etc.
- e) Recite simple poetry with understanding.
- f) Speak intelligibly in clear, correct English appropriate to the situation

### Reading

All the following objectives refer to silent reading. Students should be able to distinguish between silent reading and reading aloud.

Students should be able to:

- a) Understand (i) written instructions, (ii) narrative texts, (iii) descriptive texts and (iv) simple poems
- b) Look up words in simple dictionaries
- c) Infer the meaning of words from their contexts
- d) Continue extensive reading, using their 'Supplementary Reader'
- e) Recognize the functions of different punctuation marks

### Writing

Students should be able to:

- a) Write simple (i) instructions, (ii) narrative, (iii) descriptions and (iv) informal letters.
- b) Plan, and organize the above tasks adequately.

- c) Take simple notes and dictations.
- d) Use linking words and reference words appropriately
- e) Use different punctuations and graphological device appropriately.

### Class-wise Competencies for Class 8

#### Listening

Students should be able to:

- a) Understand instructions and commands.
- b) Participate in short and simple conversations.
- c) Understand texts of (appropriate length and) varied type:
  - i. Narrative,
  - ii. Descriptive
  - iii. Simple poetry
- d) Listen to a simple passage (i) for gist, (ii) for specific information, (iii) in order to take a simple dictation.
- e) Distinguish between the different sounds of English and recognize intonation patterns of statements and questions within appropriate communicative contexts.

#### Speaking

Students should be able to:

- a) Give instructions and commands
- b) Participate in short and simple conversations
- c) Recount a series of events
- d) Describe people, objects etc.
- e) Recite simple poetry with understanding.

- f) Speak intelligibly in clear, correct English appropriate to the situation

### Reading

All the following objectives refer to silent reading. Students should be able to distinguish between silent reading and reading aloud.

Students should be able to:

- a) Understand (i) written instructions, (ii) narrative texts, (iii) descriptive texts (iv) simple authentic texts taken from newspapers and brochures, dialogue and (vi) simple poems
- b) Use such simple written reference sources as (i) indexes, (ii) tables of contents and (iii) dictionaries.
- c) Read extensively with appropriate speed.
- d) (i) skim for gist, (ii) scan for specific information, (iii) infer the meaning of words from their contexts, (iv) recognize topic sentences and (v) recognize such cohesive devices as linking words and reference words.
- e) Recognize the functions of different punctuation marks

### Writing

Students should be able to:

- a) Write simple (i) instructions, (ii) narrative, (iii) descriptions and (iv) informal letters.
- b) Plan, and organize the above tasks adequately.
- c) Take simple notes and dictations.
- d) Use linking words and reference words appropriately
- e) Use different punctuations and graphological device appropriately.

### 3.1 Nature of the Study

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study i.e. exploring the current status of SBA at junior secondary schools, the perceptions of teachers and students towards the effectiveness of SBA, and the role and influences of SBA in achieving the objectives of English language curriculum, the researcher opted for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data for the study. It is a mixed method research study. Henceforth, a descriptive study was chosen to allow a qualitative and quantitative description of the relevant features of the data collected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003).

Data and evidence were gathered from a range of sources using a combination of different data generating instruments and strategies. Only primary were elicited for the study.

### 3.2 Geographical Area of the Study

The study was basically confined to three districts of Bangladesh. These were Dhaka, Gazipur and Laxmipur. It included two categories of main-stream secondary schools: government and non-government. All these schools were under the intervention of English-in-Action (which is working for English language teacher development at primary and secondary schools of Bangladesh)

### 3.3 The Sampling Design

For selecting sample schools, purposive sampling procedure was applied. Within the schools, the selection of teachers and schools were also done following purposive sampling.

A sample of 12 schools was selected from Dhaka, Gazipur and Laxmipur districts. A total of 12 English teachers and 12 head teachers were selected for the study. Moreover, 8 students for focused group discussions (FGD) from each school were chosen which made a total of 96.

In order to observe assessment and classroom activities in the classrooms, one class of each English teacher of each school was chosen.

### 3.4 Sample Population

To carry out the study, data were collected and analyzed in some specific areas. The respondents for the required data were

- English Teachers
- Head teachers
- Students
- Classrooms
- Documents on SBA

*Teachers:* A total of 12 English teachers who were teaching in class 6/7/8 were chosen purposively for interviews and questionnaire.

*Head teachers:* 12 Head teachers (or Assistant Head teachers in absence of Head teachers) of all 12 schools were interviewed.

*Students:* 8 students from each school comprising 96 students were chosen purposively for FGDs. All 12 groups of these students were those students whose English classes were observed in the same day.

*Classrooms:* A total of 12 English classes of 6/7/8 of 12 English teachers were observed to get the real picture of what was happening in the classrooms.

*Documents on SBA:* Documents on SBA in Bangladesh and around the world were analyzed. These include documents produced by NCTB, SESDP, DHSE, ADB project on SBA, training manuals, articles published in various journals and websites related to SBA.

### 3.5 Tools of Data Collections

In order to collect required data for the study and to maintain the validity of data, administering of 5 different tools of data collection and analysis of documents on SBA was done. The following sources provided required data. These are



1. Classroom Observation
2. Teacher Questionnaire
3. Teacher interviews
4. Head teacher interviews
5. FGDs with Students
6. Field notes and Document Analysis

### Classroom Observation Schedule

Classroom interaction process had been observed to get a scenario of the assessment practice within the classroom settings. The focus of observation was how assessment process had been integrated in the teaching learning activities, how students got involved in assessment process, what kind of assessment modes were used, what were the contents of assessment items, what were the nature of responses given by the students and so on. A structured observation schedule (see appendix section) was used to record the activities.

### Questionnaire

To know teachers' views, belief and practice of SBA, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed and administered with each of the 12 English teachers. The questionnaire consisted of both close and open-ended questions that were used to obtain data both in quantitative and qualitative forms.

### Interview Schedule

Two separate semi-structured interview schedules (see appendix section) were developed to be administered with English teachers and head teachers of all 12 schools. Each English teacher and head teacher was interviewed by the researcher individually.

The interview schedule focused on their understanding about the present English curriculum, its goals and objectives, their understanding about the present assessment system including SBA, their assessment and feedback practice in the classrooms, assessment of English language skills in the classrooms, the challenges of implementing SBA in English subjects etc.

### Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

Since students are engaged with assessment system directly and the direct beneficiaries of it, the research considered them one of the most important sources of data for the study. Consequently, each group of students comprising of 8 students from each school was involved in an FGD with the researcher which focused on the students' reasons, likings, and learning of English, the activities they do in the classroom, their understanding about SBA, the way they are assessed in the classroom, the skills they are assessed, the feedback they receive from their teachers etc.

Sources of Data	Techniques/Instruments Used
English Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire</li> <li>• Semi-structured interview schedule</li> </ul>
Head teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured interview schedule</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused Group Discussion (FGD)</li> </ul>
Assessment and teaching-learning activities in the classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom Observation Schedule</li> </ul>

### **3.6 Techniques of Data Analysis**

The study applied both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. As a result, both types of data were generated. These data were analyzed following both quantitative and qualitative approach to data analysis.

#### Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data was collected using field note approach from classroom observation. Beside, detailed notes were taken for data obtained from semi-structured interviews and focused group discussion. This qualitative data were analyzed both inductively and deductively to identify the main themes that emerged based on the research questions posed in this study. School syllabus and teacher mark record book were also analyzed in descriptive form. Narrative data were analyzed using the mode of content analysis.

### Quantitative Analysis

Data from questionnaire and classroom observation checklists were analyzed quantitatively and presented in both quantitative and narrative form. The simple most statistical techniques were employed for analyzing quantitative data. These data have been shown in table, graphs or pie charts.

### 3.7 Ethical Consideration

While conducting the study the researcher was conscious about the ethical issues considered in educational research.

*'[A]ll social research involves consent, access and associated ethical issues, since it is based on data from people'* (Punch, 2000; p. 75). Interviews of participants met the general protocols and procedures for interviewing and oral history (Douglas, Roberts & Thompson, 1988). The researcher sought prior permission and consent from the respondents while collecting data. Full information about the research including the reasons they have been chosen to participate was disclosed to the participants. They were assured fully that their privacy, confidentiality and anonymity would be guaranteed at all costs. In the school the researcher always abode by the rules and regulations of the schools and valued the position, time, beliefs and practices of the respondents and school authorities.

# **Chapter-04**

## **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

#### 4.1 Learning English: Liking and Reasons

With a view to exploring the students' perspective about learning English and use of SBA in their English lessons, one Focus Group Discussion (FGD) had been administered in each of the twelve schools. Each FGD had eight students where four were male students and four were female. In the FGDs they were asked about their views of learning English and their English teachers' use of assessment techniques in English classrooms which have been presented below.

The discussion with each group of students started with asking a question whether they like to learn English. Except two students, all others of the twelve groups informed that they like to learn English. While the two students mentioned that English appeared to be a difficult subject and a hard nut to crack, others mentioned a wide range of reasons (12) for their liking or learning English (which actually echo the goals and objectives of present CLT based English curriculum). These are

- a) English is an international language and people all over the world can understand this language.
- b) English is necessary for communicating with foreigners at home or when they will go abroad.
- c) If they learn English, they will be able to communicate with persons who visit their school from other part of the world. The visitors will be happy to know that the students of their school can speak English.
- d) For getting good jobs, they will need English.
- e) They need English for higher studies.
- f) There is pleasure in learning English.
- g) To some of them English appears to be 'an interesting subject'.

- h) Some of them feel proud to learn this language, because if they can speak English, everybody will respect them.
- i) Some of them want to be doctor in future. They think that they will need English to study medicine.
- j) Some of them think that learning English will help them use mobile-phones, send SMS.
- k) Others think that English is important for using internet.
- l) Some of them like to learn English because it is necessary for watching cartoon in the television while others more candidly mentioned that they need to pass in the examination.

## 4.2 English Curriculum: Its goals and objectives

### 4.2.1 Head-teachers' view

The Head-teacher interview schedule started with a question of sharing head-teachers' idea about English curriculum (formulated by NCTB) of junior secondary level and its objectives.

Of the 12 Head-teachers, 2 Head-teachers (16.7%) did not read/see English curriculum at all, while other 3 Head-teachers (25%) have hazy idea about it although what they shared about it and its objectives are in line with what has been written in the curriculum (See Secondary School Curriculum, pp.126-155). The following quotes furnish their opinions.

*I did not see everything. But I think it is attractive and useful for students. The guidance is for communicative English teaching. It is up to date. It will develop students' fluency and will make higher studies easier.*

I didn't study the curriculum in details. I am a new head master of this school and may be there is a curriculum in school but till I didn't get it.

I am actually a teacher of Science and Mathematics. I do not have clear idea about the present NCTB English curriculum. But I know it follows Communicative approach. But if you ask my opinion, I think that Grammar-Translation method (GTM) is appropriate for teaching/learning English, but one thing is good with this approach, it emphasizes on making students speak in English.

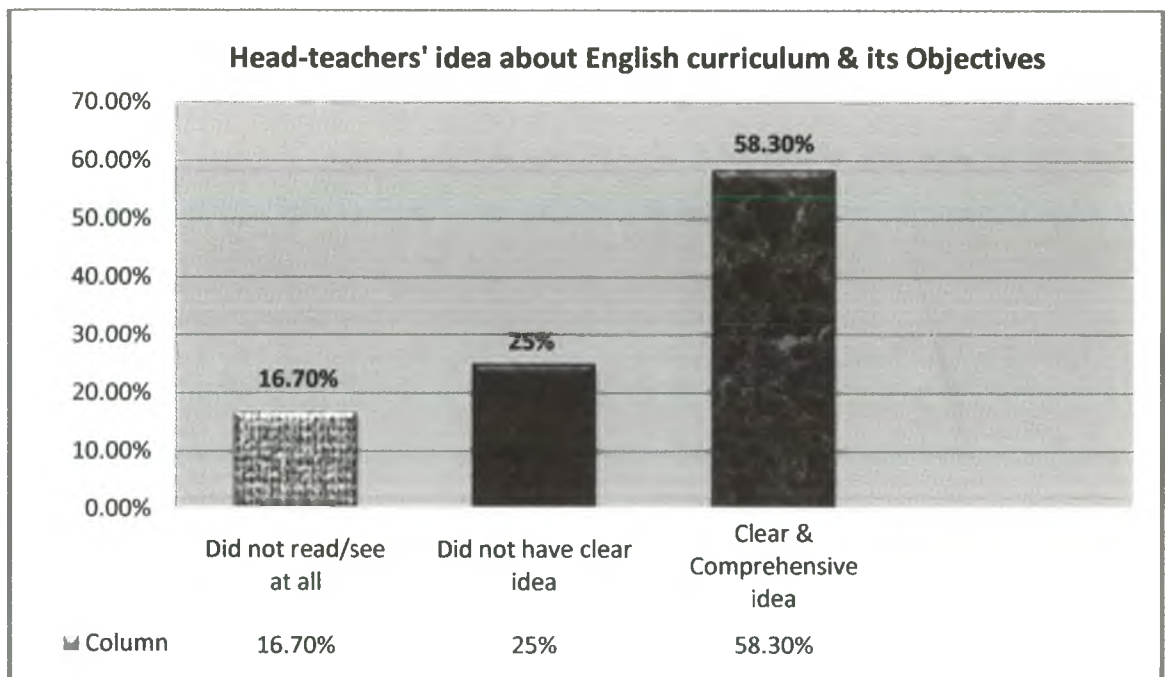


Table 9: Head-teachers' Understanding English Curriculum: Its goals and objectives

The rest (7) of the head-teachers (58%), however, have a clear and comprehensive idea about the curriculum and its objectives and support it although they also prefer inclusion of grammatical tasks more. According to them,

*In the present context, English curriculum formulated by the NCTB is very good, lively, updated and consistent with the needs of present age. Besides teaching and testing of reading and writing skills, here speaking skill is also given importance. But in the past curriculum emphasis was given on memorisation. The teachers and the students are happy with the curriculum nowadays. The students don't need to memorise, so it is helpful for the weak students also. Here importance is given on conversation and communication. In this curriculum, there is clear directions on how to assess the students, what will be the nature of teacher-student and student-student conversation, how to teach, how to organise group work etc.*

*The NCTB formulated 'English Curriculum' emphasizes four skills of language. The curriculum will be more effective if it includes more grammatical items, because to be good in writing proficiency on grammar is required. There are some instructions in the English curriculum for the teacher on teaching English. But most of the instructions are not in detail. It will be more effective if the instruction provided in detail.*

*English Curriculum formulated by the NCTB gives emphasis on Communicative language teaching. In this curriculum, grammar-translation method is not included. As a result, the students cannot express themselves. They can speak in Bangla, but cannot translate it in English while speaking. Our teachers try to teach according to the CLT approach but the students cannot participate effectively.*

#### **4.2.2 English teachers' view**

Teacher interview schedule started with a question of sharing head-teachers' idea about English curriculum (formulated by NCTB) of junior secondary level and its objectives.



Of the 12 English-teachers, 3 teachers (25%) did not read/see English curriculum at all, while the other 5 teachers (41.7%) lack clear idea about it, although what they shared about it and its objectives are in line with what has been written in the curriculum (See Secondary School Curriculum, pp.126-155). The following quotes furnish their opinions.

*At present a communicative curriculum is on the vogue. From different trainings I got the idea. We have TG. I don't know whether a curriculum is available in my school or not. I didn't get enough opportunity to study the goals and objectives of curriculum but I know the communicative system expects that Students will be able to speak English and also be able to write English.*

*I do not have clear idea about the present 'English Curriculum'. But I know the question patterns and the way questions are set in present CLT based syllabus. This communicative curriculum expects that our students will be able to develop reading, writing and speaking.*

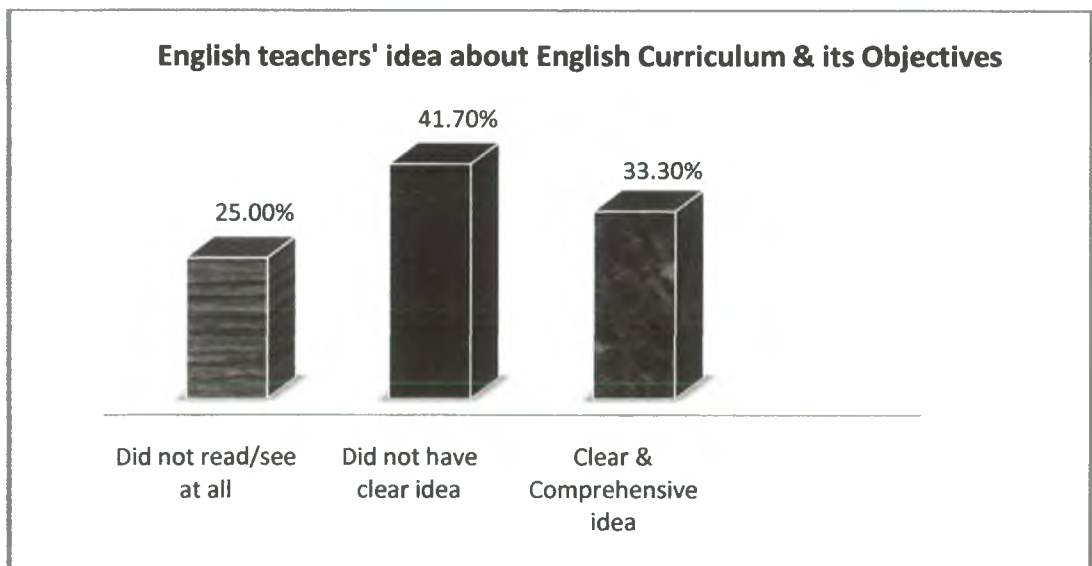


Table 10: Teachers' Understanding English Curriculum: Its goals and objectives

The rest (4) of the English teachers (33.33%), however, have a clear and comprehensive idea about the curriculum and its objectives and support it. According to them,

*The present English curriculum is giving importance on communicative language teaching. Traditional method was for teaching in past but following the present curriculum, the teachers are teaching following the communicative approach where they have to use different teaching materials. Here, students are encouraged to discuss with teachers in classroom which is developing their speaking skill. Development of four language skills is the goal of present curriculum. In past, there was the opportunity to develop their writing and reading skill only but in the present curriculum, there is opportunity of developing all the four skills.*

*English curriculum is for communicative language teaching. If it is followed successfully students will be benefited. Educated persons of our country do not get good job or wages or fall in problem as they cannot communicate in English. To solve this problem if the present curriculum is followed, these people will be able to contribute in the national economy.*

*I think that goals and objectives of English Language Curriculum is learning English not only for passing the exams but also for using English in real life situation.*

### 4.3 Present Assessment System

#### 4.3.1 Teachers' understanding about present assessment system

Among the 12 teachers only 3 teachers (25%) have sufficient idea about the present assessment system. Rest of them (75%) follows the school syllabus and

question formats of education boards, which hardly give comprehensive idea about the present assessment system.

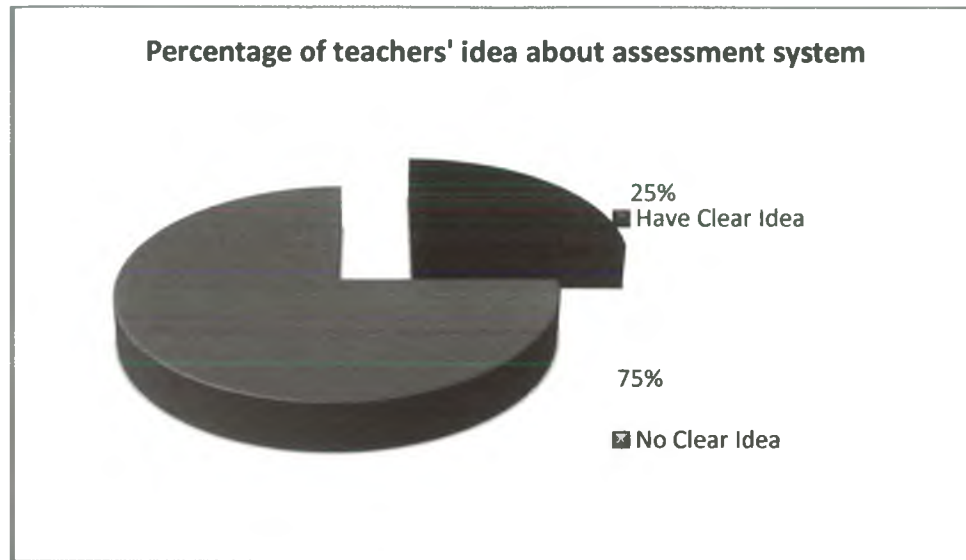


Table 11: Percentage of teachers' idea about assessment system

Two teachers (16.67%) consider the present assessment process appropriate for evaluating the learning outcomes and achieving the objectives of English curriculum. According to them,

*I think through the current assessment system it is possible to evaluate students learning on English language if the system is followed properly.*

*Yes, I think present assessment system is appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language. For example, SBA is capable of assessing speaking skill.*

One teacher (8.33%) has a mixed feeling about the current assessment system. He thinks,

*This assessment system is more appropriate than the previous systems, because now*

English class is more fruitful than earlier. Students feel free to communicate with us which wouldn't happen earlier. They have the scope for having fun also. However, if there is a mandatory monthly exam (structured) then it would be better for students.

9 teachers (75%) out of 12, on the contrary, are of the opinion that the present assessment process is not appropriate for evaluating the learning outcomes and achieving the objectives of English curriculum.

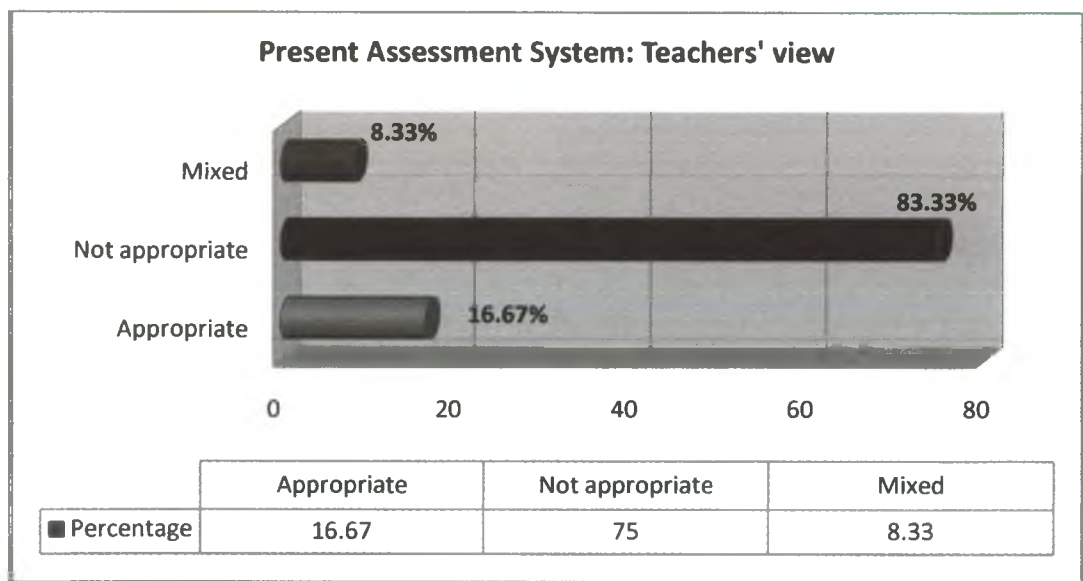


Table 12: Teachers' view about present assessment system

Here are some of their opinions regarding the present assessment system.

*I think that present assessment system isn't appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language. In the current system students learn only for passing examination, not for communicative language learning. It does not asses all skills. It gives emphasis on writing. There is mismatch between current classroom practice of communicative language learning and assessment system.*

This is not fully appropriate because we are saying about a student through marks which cannot describe his or her actual achievement in different skills. And at the end of the year we are taking a written test where we can assess only reading and writing skills. Rests of the two skills are not assessed.

No, the present assessment system is not appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language. I think something more is needed. For example, in SBA some marks can be allocated to test the speaking skill. As there is no such allocation of marks, they do not take any preparation.

#### 4.3.2 Head-teachers' understanding about present assessment system

Head teachers have mixed opinions about present assessment system. Their opinions and understandings can be classified into three categories. One group of head teachers (25%) finds the present assessment system appropriate, the second group of them (50%) considers it not appropriate at all, while the rest (25%) think that if it is properly followed, it will be proved appropriate.

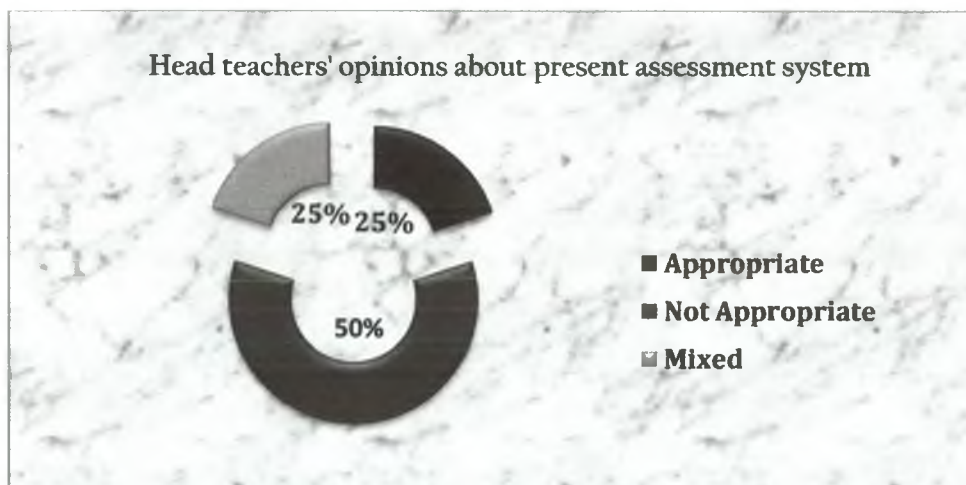


Table 13: Head-teachers' understanding about present assessment system

*This is appropriate in the sense that in the terminal examination students are assessed in reading and writing; and in the SBA system listening and speaking can be tested. I mean the combination of SBA and terminal examination is appropriate for evaluating the students' learning outcome.*

*There is a gap between teaching and assessment system. In the exam we are testing only reading and writing but not listening and speaking. To recover this situation SBA is induced but it is not followed accordingly as it is not included in JSC and SSC exam.*

*The present assessment system isn't so appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of the English language. If the mark of SBA is added with the marks of public exam like SSC or JSC, it would be better. Moreover, listening and speaking test should be taken in the classroom as a part of SBA.*

#### 4.4 Assessment Practice in English Class: Why, How, When, What?

Students, teachers and head-teachers of all the 12 schools informed that they follow two types of assessments. These are summative assessment and formative assessment. Three terminal examinations take the form of summative assessment and 70% marks are allocated for this type of assessment, while 30% marks are allocated for formative assessment (which is commonly termed and written as SBA/School Based Assessment in the registers of marks entry in the schools studied) and these marks are supposed to be given on the term-round performance of the students.

This MPhil thesis has made an attempt to explore the implementation of SBA and its effect in achieving the objectives of English curriculum.

#### 4.4.1 Data from FGD with Students

All the twelve groups informed that they had to sit for three terminal examinations. Besides these, they had to sit for class-tests. But there are variations in the number of class-tests that they had to sit for each term. Eight groups informed that they had to appear at the class-tests weekly while remaining four groups sat for monthly tests. It is, however, interesting to note that 'weekly tests' do not have literal meaning here. The number of these tests has great variety. The table below shows it more legibly.

School	Class-test/term	Terminal Exam/year
A	3	3
B	3	3
C	4	3
D	2	3
E	2	3
F	4	3
G	3	3
H	3	3
I	3	3
J	4	3
K	3	3
L	3	3

Table 14: Class-tests & Terminal Exams taken at different schools

We see from the above table that 3 (25%) out of 12 schools arrange 4 class-tests per term, while 7 schools (58.3%) arrange 3 class-tests and the students of the rest of the 2 schools (16.7%) sit for 2 class-tests a term.

Besides the above tests, as a part of continuous assessment, students informed that they were assessed during the class-hour in a daily basis. They were involved in responding orally to questions individually or in chorus. Sometimes teachers wrote down questions on the blackboards and asked students to answer orally or in writing. At times teachers assessed them by engaging them in pair/group-works. Most of the time teachers assessed them in the middle of the class. Some teachers assessed previous day's lesson at the beginning of the following day. All teachers gave home-works at the end of almost every lesson.

*In our English class, teacher asks us questions on the lesson. Teacher normally asks/writes questions on the blackboard during the class. We answer. Teacher assigns us home work and in the next day he checks our learning on that. Sometimes teacher involves us in writing. After completing a chapter teacher takes test. We participate in one test weakly/monthly. But it is not fixed.*

*Teacher gives us home work as an individual task, asks question to individuals, and takes class test per week to check whatever we have learnt throughout the week. After teaching something teacher tests us how much we have learned. We sit for class-tests weekly, sometimes twice in a month.*

*Teacher asks questions to us and we try to give answers to those questions. Sometimes we ask questions to one another in pairs and in groups. Sometimes teacher asks question to individual student. After finishing reading the teacher usually asks questions but sometimes he asks questions at the beginning of the class to check our prior knowledge. While the lesson is going on, he also asks questions. Teacher asks questions everyday to assess us but class tests are taken weekly after finishing 3 or 4 lessons.*

*We are assessed through individual task, question-answer session, reading test, writing test*



on board, quiz test etc... After finishing a lesson the teacher asks questions, generally she asks question at the middle and end of the class. Teacher asks questions every day, sometimes after one or two days. Some examinations are taken like class test on Thursday, model test for preparations before terminal exams and the terminal examinations.

#### 4.4.2 Data from teachers' & head-teachers' Interviews

During interviews all 12 head-teachers and 12 English teachers informed that they assess students in the classrooms. During classroom observation also all 12 teachers were found to assess students in different ways.

All teachers (100%) strongly believe that assessing students in the classrooms has positive impact on their learning of English (Source: TQ).

In response to the question on the objectives and purposes of assessing students in the classroom, teachers mentioned wide yet similar reasons. These include:

- a) observing the actual performance of the students,
- b) evaluating students' progress
- c) giving feedbacks on students' learning,
- d) helping students overcome their difficulties in different areas of language,
- e) removing their weakness in English, and hesitation about speaking in English,
- f) increasing their motivation and participation in the class,
- g) developing speaking skill of the students,
- h) increasing students' practice in the classroom,
- i) fulfillment of lesson objectives,
- j) helping lessening the gap of knowledge between the advanced and

weak students and

- k) above all altering or modifying teacher's own teaching techniques to suit learners' needs.

Here are some of the quotes from teachers' mouth.

*Yes. It's useful, because, if it is not done in the class, we cannot evaluate students' progress, whether they all understand the lesson or not. (Teacher Interview)*

*Yes. It's useful. Because, if after teaching a particular lesson, I ask them questions in the class, they try to answer these. They feel motivated. As a result, they learn effectively. (Teacher Interview)*

*I let my students talk in pairs in the classroom and I can assess their speaking and listening skill. (Teacher Interview)*

*Yes, I think students should be assessed in classroom. Through assessment I can understand to what extent students have received the lesson delivered by me. If I assess them in classroom their shyness removes. They become encouraged and inspired. Their interest for learning increases. If students are assessed they get involved into a competition of doing better. (Teacher Interview)*

*Students should be assessed in the classroom because the students have to answer instantly, they can't take help from the book. So the actual performance of the students we can observe. (Head-teacher Interview)*

*Yes, students should be assessed in the classroom to know the actual development of the students. (Head-teacher Interview)*

In reply to the question, (how and when do you assess students in the class?)

teachers informed that they assess their students while or after presenting a lesson. They informed that they assess them in different ways in different times. Among others, the most common means they shared and were observed (during classroom observation) is asking different questions to individual students or to whole class. Besides this, they involve students in pair, group or individual activities. They involve them in reading to assess their pronunciation and reading skill. Students are also engaged in written tasks.

*I asked them different questions for assessing. After completing the chapter I take a class test. I also involve students in group work. Sometimes I assess them through some activities. I give them clues for solving problems and then encourage them to use the clues. (Teacher Interview)*

*I involve my students in group work. In a group I mix both meritorious and weak students as a result the weak students can learn from the meritorious students. I found that after group work if I ask a question to a meritorious student they can answer also the weak students can answer the question but the meritorious students can answer better. Other than these I also involve my students in some reading and writing tasks also. I involve them in reading for assessing their pronunciation and English reading skill. Through writing I involve them to write short answers to questions. I also ask them short verbal questions. (Teacher Interview)*

*After teaching lesson I ask questions in different ways. To test their prior knowledge I ask some questions, which they can answer from their own experience. While involving students in group work and pair work, I instruct my students to ask questions to each other. Sometimes, after doing group work, a leader of each group presents what they have discussed. Quiz game is also played. Thus I try to assess them. (Teacher Interview)*

Students should be assessed. They learn through mistakes. I give them some instant activities, ask questions, and try to go to the weak students more. If they unable to reply, I try to make understand them again and again. I give them written task, ask questions.  
(Teacher Interview)

#### 4.5 Assessment of Language Skills in the Classroom

With a major focus on developing learner ability to use language appropriately in context, the English language curriculum at secondary level (6-10) aims at focusing on all four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing as learner-centered activities within communicative contexts (NCTB, 1995). Class observation data show that teachers attempt to assess different skills in their classrooms.

Teachers	Skills tested	Number of Skills tested
A	Reading, Speaking	2
B	Listening, Speaking	2
C	Reading, Speaking, Listening	3
D	Speaking, Writing	2
E	Reading, Listening, Writing	3
F	Speaking, Listening	2
G	Speaking, Listening	2
H	Writing	1
I	Reading, Writing, Speaking	3
J	Reading, Writing	2
K	Reading, Writing	2
L	Reading, Speaking, Listening	3

Table 15: teachers attempt to assess different skills

In case of listening skill assessment generally teachers read the text loudly and instruct students to listen to the teachers carefully. Sometimes teacher translates the English text into Bangla. After completing the reading teacher asks some questions to the students from that reading text. In case of reading skill assessment teacher instructs the students to read some text individually from the English book and then teacher involves them in question-answer session or sometimes asks them to fill in the blanks from the text. In case of speaking skill assessment teacher involves all the students in choral dialogue practice.

Sometimes teachers invite a pair of students in front of the class and involve them in speaking with each other in English. One common thing for pair speaking practice was that students read out the dialogue only from the textbook. Teachers involve students writing the answers of the questions from textbook, true or false statements and fill in the blanks as writing practice. Teachers never involve students in any creative writing.

Data from all 12 FGDs with students indicate that their teachers assessed their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

*Our teacher assesses all four language skills. But most of the time he assesses reading and writing.*

From the discussion with them, however, it was found that they did not have any ideas about listening skill assessment. When they were explained about listening skill they reported that teacher read out the text and instructed them to listen carefully and after that teacher asked them questions. In that way teachers assessed their listening skill.

#### 4.6 Feedback Practice in English Class: How, When, Why

According to Jonassen (1988) feedback is an important aspect that assists learners in monitoring their understanding. Hattie & Timperley (2007) argue that feedback has one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement. A more recent study (Akter, 2010) has proved that giving feedback to learners on their performance is an important aspect of effective teaching. Feedback can either be positive or negative and may serve learners not only to know how well they have performed but also to motivate them and build a supportive classroom climate.

All 12 groups of students informed that their teachers give them feedback on their works, but these are usually verbal ones, although sometimes written feedbacks are also given.

Teachers think that if students are given feedback, it will help them understand mistakes and they can overcome their mistakes. Not only that it helps inspire students to do better and increase their confidence, especially when they get complement in the form of feedback from teachers.

*Students need to be given feedback, because they can realize their mistakes and make correction. Therefore they get motivation to do well if they get feedback after their work. (Teacher Interview)*

*We should give feedback on their works. Because by the feedback they can know about their attainment in learning and they get correction of their mistakes from the teacher. It helps them in learning. (Teacher Interview)*

*Students must be given feedback. They will be able to learn better if teacher gives feedback*

*Students must be given feedback. They will be able to learn better if teacher gives feedback by showing their mistakes by involving them in the process. (Teacher Interview)*

One teacher pointed out a unique aspect of providing feedback, the social-interpersonal aspect of feedback. He thinks that a close and good relationship develops between teacher and students.

*Of course, feedback is important for students. I think if feedback is given then both students and teacher become benefited. If feedback is given, children become very happy and learn the lesson very nicely the next day. Even if a student can partially answer any question, I thank him as a result I find next day the student learns the lesson fully and nicely. Students get inspiration and a good relationship builds up between the teacher and students. (Teacher Interview)*

Keeping trust in the importance of giving feedback on students' work, teachers extensively practice the culture of providing feedback to students. They seek for peer-feedback; give feedback to individual students and to whole class. Peer feedback is given in the form when a student gives incorrect answer to any question, teacher asks another student to answer the question. If he answers correctly, teacher asks the whole class to tell which answer is right. On the other hand, in this process none can answer correctly, and then teacher himself provides the correct answer. One teacher describes his process of providing feedback to his students.

*In case of giving feedback in the classroom, if anybody makes mistakes, then I ask the same question to some other students. I ask them to say why the answer is correct or why the answer is not correct. The student, who can give the correct answer, is told to describe the answer to the whole class and the students who don't know the answer, listen to him and learn the answer. Sometimes, I tell them to discuss among themselves about the*

*correct answer. If they cannot understand yet, I clarify it to them. In case of group work, I makes group with mixed types of students and utilizes the advanced students to give feedback to the weaker ones. In case of terminal exams, I point out their mistakes in their answer-scripts and while showing those scripts I discuss what were their mistakes, why they got less marks, what can be done to get more marks in future etc. (Teacher Interview)*

While giving verbal feedback sometimes teachers involve students in clapping when someone performs well. For verbal feedback most of them use some terms like “thank you, thanks a lot, excellent, very good, you are right etc.” After finishing the examination and publishing the result they give some feedback to the students for their future improvement.

*After taking class-test, I discuss with my students about their mistakes, they also ask questions to me and I clarify. I try to give feedback in a positive manner. I involve my students in giving feedback. When I assess answer scripts of terminal exams, I point out the mistakes that students did and after that I show those scripts to them. Then I ask if they need any clarification, if they require so, I discusses with them. (Teacher Interview)*

Teachers give feedback on their students’ writing, reading, speaking and pronunciation.

*I make correction in their writing. I make correction in their pronunciation during speaking. If they make mistake in reading, I ask them to read the sentence again correctly.*

All 12 groups of students also confirm that they are given adequate feedback on their performance by their teachers.

*Yes, when we cannot answer correctly, teacher corrects us. If we make wrong pronunciation /spelling, teacher corrects us. Again, when we make mistakes in writing, teacher corrects them.*



*Teacher gives us feedback in the English class. He thanks us if we give right answer. If we make mistake in answer then teacher makes correction. If anyone can't perform well in the examination, teacher inspires him to perform better in future.*

*When any student fails to understand the lesson, teacher helps understand him and for the whole class also.*

Classroom observation data also show teachers are providing feedbacks to their students. During class observation it was found that teachers gave feedback to the whole class sometimes and to individual students other times.

To individual students:

*Example 1:*

*T: What is called a noun? (to whole class)*

*S: The name of anything (a girl replied)*

*T: Thank you. (Feedback)*

*Example 2:*

*Students were not responding to the teacher. Then teacher told here is an easy English word which is not yet uttered by you. Teacher wrote "Rahman is a meritorious student" on the blackboard. Then he asked the whole class.*

*T: Is there any adjective in the sentence?*

*Ss: Yes*

*T: Which one is adjective?*

*S: meritorious (a girl replied)*

*T: Yes, you know the answer. This answer has come from you. Thank you. (Feedback)*

Example 3:

T: *Bright is an adjective, can you tell another adjective?*

S: *dark (a male student replied)*

T: *Thank you thank you thank you (teacher uttered those words with great excitement)*  
(Feedback)

To whole class:

Example 1:

Teacher wrote "Labeeba is a sweet girl" on the blackboard and asked the whole class,

T: *Which one is adjective?*

Ss: *Sweet.*

T: *you can answer only when I write on the board and without this you can't answer for a single time. (Feedback)*

Example 2: Teacher wrote on the blackboard "Rony is an intelligent boy"

T: *which one is adjective? (to whole class)*

Ss: *intelligent*

T: *virtue or fault?*

Ss: *virtue*

T: *so, you can answer if I write*

Ss: *they smile*

T: *you will be able to answer, you must be able (Feedback)*

Example 3:

T: *what is called when some words sit together and create a meaning?*

Ss: *Sentence*

T: *Sentence, beautiful (Feedback)*

## 4.7 School Based Assessment (SBA)

### 4.7.1 Students' Perspective about SBA

During the FGD with students it has been found that they are familiar with the term SBA and they know that 30% marks are allocated for SBA (formative assessment). But they are not quite familiar with the 6 components based on which 30% marks should be given. While some of them have no idea about these components at all, others have provided a wide range of components which fail to match with the 6 components (i.e. Class-test, Class-work, Home-work, Group-work, Assignment and Oral presentation) mentioned in the *Shikkhak Nirdeshika* (2006).

Different groups of students count as many as 16 different components altogether against 6 components. These include:

Components mentioned by different groups of students	Components mentioned in <i>Shikkhak Nirdeshika</i> (2006)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Home tasks</li> <li>2. Maintaining cleanliness</li> <li>3. Maintaining discipline</li> <li>4. Maintaining dress code</li> <li>5. Maintaining good behavior</li> <li>6. Attendance in class</li> <li>7. Attendance in assembly</li> <li>8. Handwriting</li> <li>9. Learning</li> <li>10. Class work</li> <li>11. Class performance</li> <li>12. Attentiveness in the class</li> <li>13. Class test</li> <li>14. Preparing daily lessons</li> <li>15. Obeying teachers</li> <li>16. Presentation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Class-test,</li> <li>2. Class-work,</li> <li>3. Home-work,</li> <li>4. Group-work,</li> <li>5. Assignment,</li> <li>6. Oral presentation</li> </ol> <p>[N.B. Each component bears 5 marks. Thus, 5x6=30 marks]</p>

Table 16: SBA Components mentioned by different groups of students

One group of students, however, has informed that they have to sit for a class test every month. Results of these class tests are counted as SBA marks.

#### 4.7.2 SBA: English teachers' View & Practice

Data from teacher interviews show that teachers allocate 30% marks for SBA as per the direction of Ministry of Education. But they do not have clear and comprehensive idea about SBA system although several years have gone since its inception (in 2006).

One of the teachers confessed, *"We do not follow SBA in our school. I did not get any training on it either. My idea is not clear about that."*

Another teacher says, *"We only need writing and reading, who has spoken well in the class, has got no value. There is SBA but it is an 'eye-wash'."*

In response to the question, *'how do you divide these marks (30% SBA marks) for different components of SBA?' teachers have mentioned, like their students, dozens of components for SBA whereas it has fixed six components as mentioned in Shikhhak Nordeshika (2006).*

Different components mentioned by different teachers are:

Components mentioned by different teachers	Components mentioned in <i>Shikkhak Nirdeshika</i> (2006)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Home tasks</li> <li>2. Maintaining cleanliness</li> <li>3. Maintaining discipline</li> <li>4. Maintaining good behavior</li> <li>5. Attendance in class</li> <li>6. Class work</li> <li>7. Group work</li> <li>8. Class performance</li> <li>9. Attentiveness in the class</li> <li>10. Class test</li> <li>11. Preparing daily lessons</li> <li>12. Assignment</li> <li>13. Presentation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Class-test,</li> <li>2. Class-work,</li> <li>3. Home-work,</li> <li>4. Group-work,</li> <li>5. Assignment,</li> <li>6. Oral presentation</li> </ol> <p>[N.B. Each component bears 5 marks. Thus, 5x6=30 marks]</p>

Table 17: SBA Components mentioned by different teachers

During interviews when they have been informed about the fixed six components of SBA mentioned in the *Shikkhak Nirdeshika* (2006), they candidly confessed that they provide 30% marks for SBA but they do not actually follow division of marks for the components. They however, have mentioned that they try to assess students based on the components. Data from classroom observations and teacher questionnaire show how these components are practiced by these teachers.

<i>Components</i>	<i>No. of Teachers Practicing</i>	<i>Frequency of Practicing</i>	<i>Frequency mentioned in Revised Announcement from MoE</i>	<i>Marks Recorded by teacher in the Register</i>
Class tests	12	2-4/term	2	Yes
Class works	12	Almost everyday	1	No
Group works	12	Almost everyday	3	No
Home works	12	Twice/week	2	No
Assignment	1	Twice/term	1	Yes
Oral Presentation	0	0	3	N/A

Table 17: SBA Components practiced by different teachers

Data from classroom observation and teacher questionnaire show that although most schools involve their students in class tests, class works, group works, home works, and oral presentation, it is not done in the way it is supposed to be done. Especially class-works, group works, home works, and oral presentation are not practiced and considered a part of formative assessment. Rather they are done casually in the sense that they do these as routine tasks in the classroom and these tasks go unrecorded and unmarked.

As teachers do not practice SBA according to the instructions given in the *Shikkhak Nirdeshika* (2006), and do not record marks for class-work, home-work, group-work, assignment, oral presentation, they have been asked how marks are given in SBA. In response to this question, different teachers have provided different strategies they adopt in giving marks for SBA. Some teachers treat class tests as SBA and eventually, they record the marks of these tests as marks for SBA. Some other teachers give more or less average marks to all students in SBA. On the other hand, another group of teachers give a proportional marks in SBA considering individual students marks in terminal examinations.

In response to similar question on teacher's providing marks on SBA, students

have given some more information where they mentioned that teachers have been found to provide good marks (on SBA) to those students who attend private tuition to teachers. Similarly, majority of the head teachers are fishy about the honesty of teachers. They think that there is great chance of corruption in SBA marking.

*Without any doubt, SBA is good. It should be included in JSC or SSC. But as in SBA there are some marks in teacher's hand, it has a chance of corruption. But it would be better to include it with the final exam. (Head teacher Interview)*

*Teachers usually give pass marks in SBA without thinking. Actually the teachers are not aware of the importance of SBA. ... If the students cannot perform well, then the teachers give more marks in SBA, so that the students can pass in the terminal examinations. So, in the remote schools like ours, SBA is not so effective. (Head teacher Interview)*

Some teachers possess contradictory views about SBA. For example,

*No, we are not doing it (practicing SBA). We have no speaking test at the same time our student cannot speak. We have to create an English speaking environment and we have to assess the speaking skill as well. We cannot do it through SBA; we can do it by a practical examination on speaking skill.*

*Yes, I think present assessment system is appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language... SBA is capable of assessing speaking skill.*

#### 4.7.3 Head teachers' View about SBA

According to Zaltman *et al* (1973), change process may be analyzed at two levels; individual and organizational. Hall and Hord (2001) concur that in attempting or

monitoring change, “leaders of organizational change need to devise ways to anticipate and facilitate change at the individual level” (2001, p. 7). This is why it is important to know how head teachers views SBA.

Similar to their opinions regarding present assessment system, head teachers have mixed opinions about School Based Assessment (SBA). After all, SBA is a part of the present assessment system. Their opinions and understandings can be classified into three categories. One group of head teachers (66.7%) regards SBA as effective means of formative assessment; the second group of them (25%) considers it not effective, while only one of them (8.3%) has a mixed opinion.

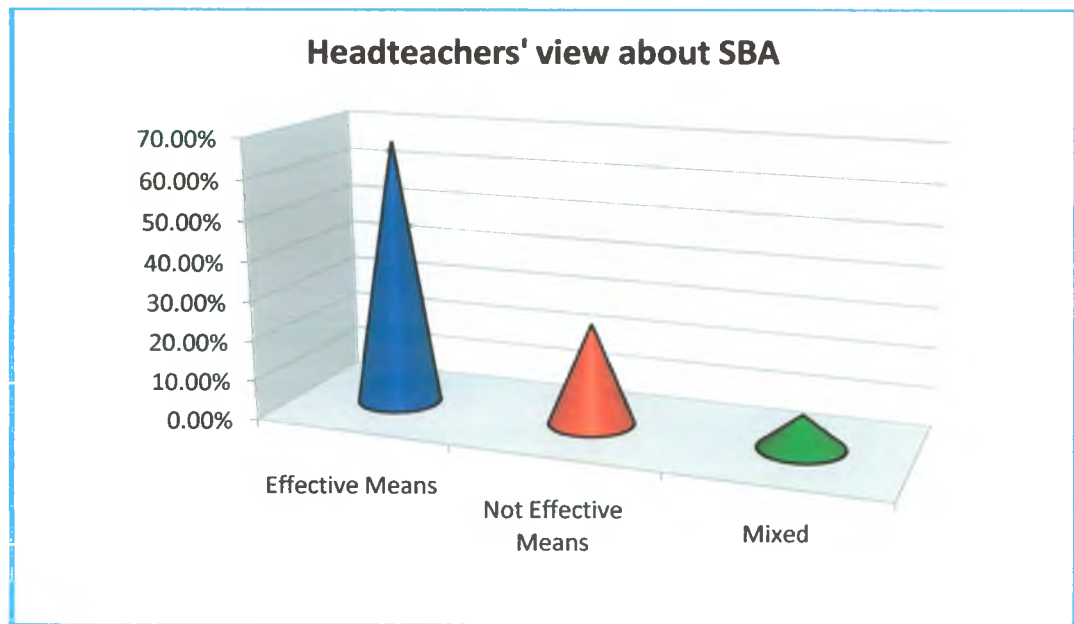


Table 18: Head teachers' View about SBA

Here are some of their opinions.

*Students should be assessed in the classroom because there are some activities in the textbook which are not important for the examination but very important for students'*



skill development. So, such activities should be assessed in the classroom through SBA.

By SBA students' oral presentation skill, creativity could be assessed besides other skills. This assessment system helps students to develop creativity, presentation skill. Therefore it removes fear or hesitation from students about speaking in English.

Year-ending examinations are more effective than SBA. Because teachers are not interested to follow SBA system as it demands more time and industry besides the regular classroom activities. Another bad side of SBA is that, here is a scope for doing partiality by the teachers who practice private tuitions. They are accused to give more numbers or points to those students who take private tuitions from teachers. On the other hand the year-ending exams are more effective as the students can be assessed who are good or slow learners and who need more care etc. And it is easy to evaluate. If oral exam could be introduced with the year-ending exams, it would be better for English language assessment.

Though we follow year-ending exam, I think SBA is more effective. We are observing our students for five years. So, it would be more fruitful to make judgment by us. But as the board authority does not make us bound to follow SBA, we do not follow it.

#### 4.7.4 Challenges in Implementing SBA: Teachers & Head teachers' Opinions

Research interest in the area of teacher assessments seems to have gathered momentum during the past decade. The research focus of several researchers has been on the feasibility and implementation of different methods of assessment, their strengths, weaknesses and successes. Two major ones are the researches of Aschbacher (1993) and Brindley (1998).

Aschbacher (1993) conducted a major action research for the National Centre for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing with the purpose of better understanding the process, barriers to innovation, and facilitators of change. This large-scale project focused on exploring fundamental questions of assessment implementation in a variety of school contexts. The study found the following barriers that teachers and administrators faced in developing and implementing alternative assessments:

- teachers focused on assessing learning activities rather than student outcomes;
- they experienced difficulties in specifying criteria for judging student work;
- they experienced assessment anxiety in terms of lack of time to learn, plan, practice, use and reflect on assessment procedures;
- they needed training and ongoing support;
- they were reluctant to change; and
- they lacked long range implementation plans.
- teachers' commitment to innovative assessment and instruction;
- lack of team membership; and
- lack of sustained administrative and technical assistance.
- negatively in the amount of time and externally-provided professional development efforts; lack of assessment supporting instruction; and much ever-wanted ready-made recipes rather than ideas: "they wanted innovations made easy and simple, not elaborate and time-consuming".
- lack of teachers' reflections on their teaching practices, professional interactions around educational goals and methods, students' multiple modes of expression

On the other hand, Brindley (1998), in a wide-ranging study of the issues arising in the implementation of outcomes-based assessment and reporting in language learning programmes in the 1990s, identified three common types of issues and problems: what he called *political/socio-cultural* issues, to do with the purposes and intended use of the assessment; *technical* issues, primarily to do with validity and reliability; and *practical* issues, to do with the means by which the assessment was put into practice.

The present study has found many issues (behind not implementing SBA in schools) which are very identical to the finding of those of the two researchers mentioned above. It discovers that SBA appeared to the teachers as a 'top down approach' (Wilhelm and Chen Pei, 2008). As a result, English teachers consider the practice of SBA 'an eye-wash', and the head teachers regard it as 'official formality'.

*SBA would be effective if it were included in the JSC and SSC exam. As it is not practiced, SBA is done just for showing the official formality. (Teacher Interview)*

*There is SBA but it is an 'eye-wash' because the SBA marks is given relatively to written marks. (Head teacher Interview)*

Teachers think that since the traditional role of assessment in the classrooms of Bangladesh (as opposed to *classroom-based* assessment) has been exam preparation and the marks given in SBA bears no 'reflection' in public examinations like JSC, SSC, neither teachers nor students find the importance of such practice and consequently, they hardly show interest in it.

*"Teachers are giving much importance on SBA but it seems less important to the students. Because there is no reflection of SBA in the certificate exams like SSC, JSC etc. SBA has*

*no value to the students when they are going to get admitted into college.” (Head teacher Interview)*

*The present assessment system is not appropriate for evaluating students’ learning outcome of English language. I think something more is needed. For example, in SBA some marks can be allocated to test the speaking skill of the students. As there no such allocation of marks, they do not take any preparation. (Teacher Interview)*

As mentioned above some students including a number of head teachers are doubtful about the honesty and fairness in providing marks in SBA to students. They think that those students who take private tuition to the English teachers are blessed with full/good marks in SBA by the respective teachers.

*Another seamy side of SBA is that, there is a scope of doing partiality by the teachers who practice private tuitions. They may give more numbers or point to their private tuition students.*

*... But as in SBA there are some marks in teacher’s hand, it has a chance of corruption.*

The problem of reliability and validity with this method of alternative assessment is further echoed by the following statement.

*Again some teachers are used to giving more marks to some specific students according to their own choice. The teacher can give marks without following any rule, as there is no proof on the basis of which category the teacher is giving more marks to those students.*

Teachers’ major concern with SBA was their perception that it was the last of too many new initiatives that they had to juggle, along with their busy schedules and heavy workload. Data from teacher questionnaire and field notes show that an

English teacher has to take at least 6-7 classes in a day at a school. As a result, they hardly have time to work on SBA. Head teachers share,

*Teachers are not interested to follow the SBA system as it demands more time and industry besides the regular classroom activities.*

*SBA is creating extra pressure for the teachers. I think traditional system is better than SBA.*

They also pointed out that their schools have large student population. Some of the classrooms have even as many as 93 students. In such large classes they found it hardly possible to practice multifaceted assessment tools.

*Year-ending exams are more effective than the SBA system. Because teachers are not interested to follow the SBA system as it demands more time and industry besides the regular classroom activities.*

*The number of students in our schools is large. So, we can't implement the SBA. But it should be followed in English.*

*Though we follow year-ending exam, SBA is also effective. But as we have huge students I cannot apply it.*

Some teachers think that the contents of the syllabus are very big. So if they are engaged in several types of assessment all the year round, they will fail cover the entire syllabus in the stipulated time.

*We do not follow SBA. So, students' performance like speaking cannot be measured. We did not get curriculum. The prescribed method cannot be followed as students' involvement is not so much and the number of lessons is too much in the book to finish it in time.*

Head teachers were also concerned that their teachers were not adequately prepared to implement SBA under the present socio-economic condition of the teachers. As most teachers are financial insolvent and the salary they receive is insufficient, they have to engage in other jobs besides teaching. So it is hardly possible for them to provide extra time for the extra work they have to do for SBA.

*SBA is an effective means of assessment but because of socio-economic conditions of teachers and heavy work-load of teachers, it can be applied truly and effectively.*

Effective implementation of any new policy requires effective monitoring and feedback. Interview sessions with respondents indicated that there was hardly any monitoring and supervision with regards to SBA. Monitoring in any assessment for English and all other subjects' teachers is usually conducted by head teachers. According to teachers, there is no monitoring from NCTB or education boards.

*Although we follow year-ending exam only, I think SBA is more effective. We are looking our students for five years. So, it would be more fruitful to make judgment by us. But as board authority does not make monitor it and make us bound to follow SBA, we do not follow it. (Head teacher Interview)*

#### 4.7.5 Practice of Giving Marks in SBA

Most teachers practice some forms of SBA but there is hardly any teacher found who records marks against any component. The following table shows it well.

Indicators	Number of teachers	Percentage	Frequency	Record Kept
Class-tests	12	100	2-4 times/term	Yes
Class-works	12	100	Almost everyday	No
Home-works	12	100	Almost everyday	No
Group-works	12	100	Twice/week	No
Assignment	1	8	Twice/term	Yes
Oral Presentation	0	0	N/A	N/A

Table 19: Keeping records of marks for different components of SBA

Head teachers are of the opinion that since SBA is not being practiced in their schools and consequently marks are not allocated in the way as it has been mentioned in the *Shikkhak Nirdeshika* (2006). In fact, some of them (as we have seen from their words above) and some students during FGD pointed out the 'chance of corruption' and malpractice in giving marks in SBA. Another head teacher told that '*teachers usually give marks in SBA without thinking.*' One head teacher expressed his dissatisfaction in the following ways,

*Some teachers are used to giving more marks to some specific students according to their own choice. Teacher can give marks without following any rule, as there is no proof on the basis of which category they are giving more marks to those students.*

On the other hand, teachers also admitted that they do not practice SBA, they do not allocate marks in SBA in the way as it has been mentioned in the *Shikkhak Nirdeshika* (2006).

Data from interviews with teachers and field notes show that teacher follow different practices in this regard. Some of the teachers give an average marks in SBA to all students, while others give a proportional marks to individual students based on his/her marks in terminal examinations. The following table shows how

the 12 teachers give marks of SBA.

Teacher	Averagely	Proportionately	To give passing/ increase grade	Class tests' marks as SBA
A	Y		Y	
B	Y		Y	
C		Y	Y	
D	Y		Y	
E		Y	Y	
F				Y
G	Y		Y	
H	Y		Y	
I		Y	Y	
J	Y		Y	
K				Y
L		Y	Y	

Table 20: how marks of SBA given

From the table we see that most teachers (50%) give an average marks in SBA to all students, while others (33.3%) give a proportional marks to individual students based on his/her marks in terminal examinations. Another notable point is that majority of the teachers (83%) intentionally give more marks to weak students to ensure a passing grade, and to some preferred students to increase their grade.



শ্রেণী	শাখা	প্রত্যেক বিষয়ের পূর্ণমান	প্রত্যেক বিষয়ের পাশ নম্বর	রোল নং	ছাত্র/ছাত্রীর নাম	মাতৃ, পিতৃ, ঠিকানা	পরীক্ষার নাম	১ম সাময়িক	২য় সাময়িক	বার্ষিক	স্বল্প ১৫ পয়েন্ট (সি)	স্বল্প ১৫ পয়েন্ট (সি)	S.B.A - ০০	সর্বমোট গ্রেড	১ম সাময়িক	২য় সাময়িক	বার্ষিক	স্বল্প ১৫ পয়েন্ট (সি)	স্বল্প ১৫ পয়েন্ট (সি)	S.B.A - ০০	সর্বমোট গ্রেড	
২০	৫	১০০	০০				১ম সাময়িক															
২২	২	১০০	০০				১ম সাময়িক															
২৬	৬	১০০	০০				১ম সাময়িক															
৪	৩	১০০	০০				১ম সাময়িক															

Table 21: Average marks given in SBA (taken from a teacher's Marks Script)

Some of them (16.7%), on the other hand, count monthly/weekly class tests' marks as SBA marks.

*There are three exams in our school. Besides this we take some subject-wise model tests in monthly basis. The monthly exam is treated as SBA.*

Most teachers apply another malpractice in this regard. They are found to give more marks in SBA to help poor students earn a passing grade and to some other increase their grades.

*Teachers usually give pass marks in SBA without thinking. Actually teachers are not aware of the importance of SBA. ... If the students cannot perform well, then the teachers give more marks in SBA, so that the students can pass in the terminal examinations. So, in the remote schools like ours, SBA is not so effective.*

Grade sheets of some other teachers show that they give abundance of marks in SBA to all students.

প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম : ৬  
 শ্রেণী- ১  
 শাখা- A

ক্রমিক	বিষয়ের পূর্ণনাম	ক্রমিক	বিষয়ের পূর্ণ নম্বর	পরীক্ষার											
				১ম	২য়	৩য়	৪য়	৫য়	৬য়	৭য়	৮য়	৯য়	১০য়	১১য়	১২য়
সংখ্যা	ছাত্র/ছাত্রীর নাম	আই. ডি. নং	বর্গ	১ম	২য়	৩য়	৪য়	৫য়	৬য়	৭য়	৮য়	৯য়	১০য়	১১য়	১২য়
১	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০
২	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০
৩	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০
৪	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০
৫	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০	১০০

Table 22: Abundance of marks in SBA (taken from a teacher's Marks Script)

# **Chapter-05**

## **Findings and Discussion**

## 5.1 Major Findings

The study comes up with the following major findings.

1. Despite the present English Language Curriculum (developed and provided by NCTB, 1995) has been in vogue for more than a decade, most of the English teachers and head teachers do not possess clear idea about it and its goals and objectives. They, however, think that present curriculum emphasizes the development of four language skills of the students, (which they have heard while they attended different trainings) that certainly are in line with what has been mentioned as aim of the curriculum (see NCTB Curriculum, 1995).
2. Since most of the teachers do not have clear and comprehensive idea about the English curriculum, it is not surprising that they similarly have no clear idea about the present assessment system, although majority of them think that present assessment system is not appropriate for achieving the objectives of English curriculum.
3. Since they are not quite familiar with the present assessment system, especially with SBA as a means of alternative and continuous assessment, it is again not surprising that they cannot realize the importance and utility of SBA in achieving the objectives of English curriculum. Consequently, most teachers along with head teacher consider SBA inappropriate and useless.
4. Similar to their teachers, students of the schools studied are only familiar with the term SBA and the marks (30%) allocated for SBA (formative assessment). But they are not quite familiar with the 6 components based on which 30% marks are to be given. While some of them have no idea about these components at all, others have provided a wide range of components (as much as 16) which go much beyond the 6 components.

5. All the schools, however, follow two types of assessments. These are summative assessment and formative assessment. Three terminal examinations take the form of summative assessment and 70% marks are allocated for this type of assessment, while 30% marks are allocated for formative assessment (which is commonly termed and written as SBA).
6. Besides class tests, as a part of continuous assessment, students informed that they were assessed during the class-hour in a daily basis. They were involved in responding orally to questions individually or in chorus. Sometimes teachers wrote down questions on the blackboards and asked students to answer orally or in writing. At times teachers assessed them by engaging them in pair/group-works. Most of the time teachers assessed them in the middle of the class. Some teachers assessed previous day's lesson at the beginning of the following day. All teachers gave home-works at the end of almost every lesson.
7. Teachers generally preferred to ask questions to the whole class, that is, to all students in general and waited for the students to show their willingness to answer by raising their hands. Teachers also tend to ask questions directly to individual students. Students' FGD and classroom observation data reveal that teachers tend to ask question to good students than the weak ones. And with regard to position, teachers preferred to ask questions to the front benchers. They hardly reached to back benchers.
8. Teachers asked mostly such type of questions that demanded memorization. There were only very few questions asked by the teachers which involved students to reply based on their own thinking or real life experience. Almost all the questions asked by the teachers were closed questions. Only very few

questions gave clues to students to understand and answer previous questions or to motivate them towards learning.

9. The questions asked by the teachers in the classroom were mostly from the knowledge sub-domain of the cognitive domain. Only a very few number of questions which covered other sub-domain/higher domain of the cognitive domain like application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation were asked. Thus the used questions were related to measure lower order of learning.
10. The practiced classroom assessment (only through oral questioning and class tests) is competitive, straightforward and content related rather than goal oriented and its feedback is evaluative rather than descriptive. As a result, the nature of classroom assessment indicates mostly to 'assessment of learning' than 'assessment for learning'.
11. The study found that teachers give feedback to their students on their works, but these are usually verbal ones, although sometimes written feedbacks are also given. In case of giving feedback mostly teachers simply tell learners whether their answers are right or wrong, or simply provide evaluative feedback in the form of grades and short, non-specific comments of praise or censure.
12. Although they strongly believe that assessing students in the classroom and giving them feedback are important for improving the performance and achievement of the students, as they are not quite familiar with SBA, it escapes their eyes that the role of SBA is what they believe in (i.e. classroom assessment and providing feedback)
13. As a result, although they practice some form of assessment and give feedback in the classroom, they are reluctant to practice SBA.

14. Although most schools involve their students in class tests, class works, group works, home works, and oral presentation, it is not done in the way it is supposed to be done. Especially class-works, group works, home works, and oral presentation are not practiced and considered a part of formative assessment. Rather they are done casually in the sense that they do these as routine tasks in the classroom and these tasks go unrecorded and unmarked.
15. Consequently, although teachers have been directed to assess every student through class tests, class-works, group works, assignment and oral presentation and record their performance in a record list, no school was found to do so.
16. As a result, although their students have to sit for class tests weekly/monthly, have to do class work, have to be engaged in group works, have to submit home works, these hardly take the form of SBA as it has been mentioned in *Shikkhak Nirdeshika* (2006), and play any role in identifying the weakness of the students, giving them remedial measures to overcome the weaknesses, and eventually improve their learning and achievement.
17. Although teachers and students informed that all the four language skills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing) are being practiced and assessed in the classrooms, classroom observation data show that listening and speaking skills are not practiced and assessed in the real term. Speaking skill practice is done only in the form that teachers ask questions to students and they reply to these. Moreover, students were found to give one-word answer to the questions. In the same way, listening skill practice is done only in the form that teachers ask questions and students reply or teachers engage students in

reading a passage aloud and other students listen to it. No planned and real-time speaking or listening practiced is found in any classroom.

18. Since for the most part only questioning in the classroom is the only form of assessment and this is verbal (except two or three written class-tests), neither teachers nor students can keep a note on the strong or weak points of the students because it is hardly possible to keep all these points in memory both for teachers and students.
19. Similarly, the feedbacks given on the performance of the students are mostly verbal; students can hardly remember these and use these in removing their weaknesses and improving further.
20. In some schools the marks of the class tests are considered SBA marks. Some teachers give more or less average marks to all students in SBA. On the other hand, another group of teachers give a proportional marks in SBA considering individual students' marks in terminal examinations. Some students mentioned that teachers have been found to provide good marks (on SBA) to those students who attend private tuition to teachers. Some teachers are found to give more marks in SBA to help poor students earn a passing grade and to some other increase their grades.
21. Grade sheets of some other teachers show that they give abundance of marks in SBA to all students. Similarly, majority of the head teachers are fishy about the honesty of teachers. They think that there is great chance of corruption in SBA marking.
22. Thus, no school in reality practices SBA as form of formative assessment. Both head teachers and English teachers candidly confessed that they are not



practicing SBA in their schools.

23. The study, however, also discovers the reasons behind teachers' failure in implementing SBA in their English classrooms. These are: teachers' negative attitude towards SBA, their heavy workloads, large student population, large contents of syllabus, no reflection of the marks of SBA in public examinations like JSC and SSC examinations, lack of honesty and fairness in teachers, lack of validity and reliability of SBA as an assessment, poor socio-economic conditions of teachers, absence of monitoring and supervision by concerned authority like NCTB, education boards etc.
24. The main objective of the study is to investigate the use of SBA in English courses at grades VI to VIII, their link to the learning outcomes and the corresponding influences on achieving the objectives of intended English language curriculum. The study clearly indicates that since SBA is not being practiced at all in any school, it can hardly play any role in achieving the objectives of intended English language curriculum. Most teachers and head teachers, however, think that if SBA could be implemented in the classrooms, it would surely help students to achieve the objectives.

## 5.2 Discussion

Like many locations around the world, learning English has the objective of learners' gaining access to technical, educational, or professional opportunities (Canagarajah, 2002, 2005). Responses from the students to the questions on their reasons and liking of learning English echo the same, which are basically in line with the goals and objectives that are mentioned in the present English curriculum (NCTB, 1995).

But it is regretful to explore that although the present English Language Curriculum (developed and provided by NCTB) has been introduced for more than a decade, most of the English teachers and head teachers do not possess clear idea about it and its goals and objectives. Likewise, they have no clear idea about the present assessment system, although majority of them think that present assessment system is not appropriate for achieving the objectives of English curriculum. Furthermore, since they are not quite familiar with the present assessment system, especially with SBA as a means of alternative and continuous assessment, it is not surprising, although absolutely unexpected that they cannot realize the importance and utility of SBA in achieving the objectives of English curriculum. Teachers' reluctance, absence of reading habits and lack of training (Habib et al, 2007) can be held responsible for such ignorance.

In most schools very few subject teachers got training on English curriculum and assessment system including SBA. In fact, our teachers have historically received little or no training or support after they enter into teaching profession (Herman & Dorr-Bremme, 1984). The formal assessment training teachers do receive often focuses on large-scale test administration and standardized test score interpretation, rather than on the test construction strategies or item-writing rules that teachers need to create their own tests (Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985).

Whatever may be the reasons, it is hardly difficult to say that if teachers themselves lack sufficient exposure to anything, they cannot implement this and eventually achieving the goals and objectives will not be possible. Because without a foundation of what teacher educators call '*classroom assessment literacy*' (WNCP, 2006), few if any of these change initiatives will lead to the improvements we want for our students. Assessment-literate educators understand that assessments can serve a variety of important users and fulfill

purposes in both supporting and verifying learning. They know that quality assessments arise from *crystal-clear achievement targets* and are designed and built to satisfy specific *assessment quality control* criteria. Those steeped in the principles of sound assessment understand that assessment results must be *delivered into the hands of the intended user* in a timely and understandable form. Finally, they are keenly aware of the fact that assessment can no longer be seen merely as something adults do to students. Rather, students are constantly assessing their own achievement and acting on the inferences they draw about themselves. Assessment-literate educators know how to *engage students in productive self-assessments* that will support their learning success (WNCP, 2006). But as the findings of the study show that our teachers have minimal classroom assessment literacy, they possess negative attitude towards SBA and consider it inappropriate.

In this study teachers opined that they use assessment for a variety of purposes. The purpose of assessment is primarily to evaluate students' performance in learning. They also identified purposes like identifying mistakes, weaknesses of students, gaining information for improvement of students' learning etc. But in practice, they were different from their views. Actually they used the method of teacher made assessment, not self or peer assessment. Eventually, the formation of teachers' beliefs about the purposes of assessment tended them to choose their assessment strategy which affects the mode and extent of students' learning (Islam, 2009).

Schmidt (2001) and Ramoroka (2007) argued that teachers should employ a variety of assessment strategies to capture varied learning (which is actually prescribed by NCTB in SBA). No single strategy can be useful to all the students at the same time for the same purpose. The teachers during the interview in this

study also opined that they used different assessment strategies. But classroom observations show that teachers used 'oral questioning to students' as the most common form of assessment, although they occasionally also allowed students to write down answers to the questions and then read out selected few, engaged students in group works, class works etc. These findings are similar to the previous studies exploring assessment practice in the classrooms of Bangladeshi secondary schools (e.g. Ahsan, 2007; Begum et al, 2007). Such assessment practice cannot provide teachers the opportunity of assessing the development of students' language skills. This type of assessment practice ignores the idea of diagnosing students' weakness.

Moreover, this particular type of classroom assessment is often unproductive (Islam, 2009), because response to such questions actually checks student's extent of absorbing content of the lesson rather than encouraging him/her to use language as a means of communication. Besides, usually teachers asked questions directly from the lesson for assessing but not for motivating learners to use language or ensure any reinforcement. Furthermore, these questions were mostly closed and students replied to these in one or two words, which fail to assess their language skills. Besides, these questions were asked to assess the 'knowledge', sub-domain of cognitive domain of students. Only a few questions were asked to assess 'comprehension' or 'application'. Such type of assessment in effect limits the learning experience of learners and eventually the objectives of communicative language curriculum remains unfulfilled.

Providing effective feedback to students is an instinctive characteristic of SBA (Begum, 2005). Feedback for learning provides evidence that confirms or challenges an idea that a student holds. It gives recognition for achievement and growth, and it includes clear directions for improvement. It encourages students

to think about, and respond to, the suggestions. And it focusses on both quality and learning (Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, and Kulik (1991); Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, and Morgan (1991); Kluger and DeNisi (1996); and Black and Wiliam (1998).). Previous studies done on classroom assessment practice in Bangladesh (Ahsan, 2007; Begum et al, 2007, Islam, 2009) show that teachers generally provide evaluative feedback to their students and they used feedback as a means of only correcting the incorrect answers of the students. In the study teachers gave feedback both orally and with occasional written comments. Although teacher feedback can be observed in almost every classroom, its use does not always serve as an effective classroom assessment tool. “There are clearly recorded examples . . . in which teachers have, quite unconsciously, responded in ways that would inhibit the future learning of a pupil. What the examples have in common is that the teacher is looking for a particular response and lacks the flexibility or the confidence to deal with the unexpected. So the teacher tries to direct the pupil toward giving the expected answer” (Black & William 1998, 143).

Moreover, the present study shows that the quality and amount of feedback was insufficient. These feedbacks, however, let students know only whether their answers/responses are ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’. Besides, teachers provided comments on written works in the classroom as well as on home work scripts. But these comments only allowed students know whether they are right or wrong, or how well they have done. These feedback do not identify areas where and what changes were needed to improve. Moreover, students’ opportunity to respond to the feedback in order to minimize the gap was totally absent. These feedbacks let students know only accuracy of their work. Thus teachers’ feedback fails to give any further input for the students. And we know that language

learning develops when extra input is added beyond the existing level of competence (see Krashen's 'Monitor Model Theory, 1985. p. 3).

Record-keeping is an important part of ensuring quality in assessment *for* learning. Teachers keep detailed notes, not for making comparative judgements among the students, but to provide each student with individualized descriptive feedback that will help further that student's learning. Good record-keeping shows whether the student work is on track and, when it is not, raise questions about the instruction and ways it could be adjusted. The focus of record-keeping in assessment *for* learning is on documenting individual student learning and annotating it in relation to the continuum of learning. The focus is also on identifying groups of students with similar learning patterns so that instruction can be efficiently differentiated (WNCP, 2006). But unfortunately our teachers can not avail of these advantages as not a single teacher in the study was found to give marks on classroom assessment and keep record of those marks.

Badger and Wilkinson (1998) observe that language teaching and assessment are inextricably linked and work well together when teachers provide opportunities for learners to try out their literacy competence. To ensure this the present C.I.T based English curriculum (NCTB, 1995) suggests that besides assessing reading and writing skills of the students, their speaking and listening skills should also be assessed. In this regard, practice of SBA provides teachers with opportunity to assess these latter two skills especially through class work, oral presentation, and group work (Rahman and Rahman, 2012; Nunan, 1991 ). Yet, although teachers and students informed that all the four language skills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing) are being practiced and assessed in the classrooms, classroom observation data show that listening and speaking skills are not practiced and assessed in the real term. Speaking skill practice is done only in the

form that teachers ask questions to students and they reply to these. Moreover, students were found to give one-word answer to the questions. In the same way, listening skill practice is done only in the form that teachers ask questions and students reply or teachers engage students in reading a passage aloud and other students listen to it. No planned and real-time speaking or listening practiced is found in any classroom. As a result, a central problem in such type of practice of assessing students is validity (Spolsky, 1975) which is concerned with whether a test measures what it is intended to measure (Weir, 1990).

If it is important to know if a person can speak a second language, then it should be important to test that person's speaking ability directly (Jones, 1977). For this reason, assessing oral proficiency has become one of the most important issues in language testing since the role of speaking ability has become more central in language teaching with the advent of communicative language teaching (Hartley and Spring, 1999; Nakamura, 1993). In such case oral presentation could be a great means of assessing oral proficiency, if teachers would practice SBA.

A number of teachers and head teachers regretted that as there is no separate marks for speaking skills, students do not feel motivated to try speaking skills and they do not engage them either. If these teachers had practiced SBA properly, they could easily use components like oral presentation and group work (as tests for speaking skill and allocate 10 marks for speaking). Group work has the feature of cooperative or collaborative learning which has long been recognized as a strong facilitator of learning (e.g., see Kagan 1989). In such an approach, in the classrooms students work together in small cooperative teams, such as groups or pairs, to complete activities. In second language learning environments, students work cooperatively on a language-learning task or collaboratively by achieving the goal through communicative use of the target language. Particularly in the latter

case, if the learning tasks are designed to require active and true communicative interaction among students in the target language, they have numerous benefits on attainment. In fact, the rationale for the employment of communicative tasks is based on contemporary theories of language learning and acquisition, which claim that language use is the driving force for language development (Long 1989; Prabhu 1987). For example, advocates of such theories (see Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun 1993) suggest that, as Norris et al. (1998) put it, *“the best way to learn and teach a language is through social interactions. [. . . they] allow students to work toward a clear goal, share information and opinions, negotiate meaning, get the interlocutor’s help in comprehending input, and receive feedback on their language production. In the process, learners not only use their interlanguage, but also modify it, which in turn promotes acquisition”* (p. 31).

Moreover, since teachers are not practicing SBA, integrated L2 (second language, here, English) instruction and assessment were also found missing. Based on their experience many L2 teachers and curriculum designers believe that integrated FL/L2 instruction and assessment can increase learners’ opportunities for L2 purposeful communication, interaction, real-life language use, and diverse types of contextualized discourse and linguistic features, all of which have the goal of developing students’ language proficiency and skills (for detailed discussion, see, e.g., Ellis, 2003; Fotos, 2001, 2002; Snow, 2005).

Besides, the study found that the classroom assessment environment in junior secondary school centered around two facts: harsh-oriented and public-oriented which fall under the category of normative-oriented rather than learning-oriented (Ames, 1992; Mcmillan and Workman, 1998 cited in Hussain, 2007). The learning-oriented assessment environment focused on classroom assessment practices that enhance students’ learning, involve students in assessment process and give them opportunities to improve their performance and provide them with informative



assessment feedback. The harsh-oriented classroom environment focuses on harshness of assessment and grading or comparing by providing students and criteria. The public oriented assessment environment emphasizes the importance of grades rather than learning and focuses on public rather than private evaluation and recognition practices by normatively comparing and socially recognizing students' performance. The findings of the study allude to the factor of normative-oriented assessment environment that has been bifurcated into two dimensions: harsh-oriented and public oriented assessment environment.

Teachers, however, should not be held solely responsible for not implementing SBA. Previous studies have stated that school and classroom culture occupies an influential place in forming and confining how teachers think and act (Kamen, 1996; Griesdorn & Edelson, 2002; Putnan & Borko, 2000 cited in Wang, 2004). Their actions are often modified because of perceived external circumstances and they often have to stay within the expectation of culture inside and outside of schools (Keys et al, 2001; Tobin, 1990, Wang, 2004). Tobin (1990) states, 'When teachers act in the classroom, they do what makes sense to them in their circumstances'. This study also supports this statement. Unusually large classrooms, a very limited length (35-40 minutes) and number of class period, intellectually diversified students, no reflection of the marks of SBA in public examinations like JSC and SSC examinations, lack of support and monitoring, and administrative interference resist teachers to welcome such innovation in assessment practice. Eventually, the innovation is far from being a successful one because teachers' perceptions are a crucial factor in the ultimate success or failure of any educational innovation (Kelly, 1998). According to Wilhelm and Chen Pei (2008),

... ELT curricular reform efforts in Asia are impressive but have taken, for the most part, a top-down approach. Long-lasting change will depend upon the beliefs, responses, and efforts put forth by participants as they strive to meet the challenges of change (p. 80).'

Their claim is further supported by Hamzah and Sinnasamy (2009) who quoted Tan Sri Dr Murad Mohammad Nor, the former Education Director General as claiming, '...The most important part in the implementation of any plan, is the teachers. However good the plan, it will be of no use if the teachers do not implement it well (p. 14).'

As claimed by Derek (2001), and Hall *et al*'s (1977), Stages of Concern Model is probably the most cited individual-oriented model in research on the concerns of teachers when implementing changes. According to Hall *et al*, concern is "the composite representation of feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task" (p.5).

The concerns have been categorized into 7 distinct stages.

Stage 1(Awareness): Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.

Stage 2(Informational): A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about herself/himself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirement for use.

Stage 3(Personal): Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, her/his inadequacy to meet those demands; and her/his role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision making, and consideration of potential conflicts with

existing structure and personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.

Stage 4(Management): Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.

Stage 5(Consequence): Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on students in her/his immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.

Stage 6(Collaboration): The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.

Stage 7(Refocusing): The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation. (Derek, 2001,p. 106-7)

The present study discovered the English teachers at stages 1 and 3. Firstly, they are little concerned about and have little involvement with the innovation (Stage- 1: Awareness). Secondly, they are uncertain about the demands of the innovation, and their role with the innovation. This includes analysis of their role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision making, and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structure and personal commitment (Stage- 3: Personal).

However, because of all the above mentioned factors School Based Assessment is hardly playing any role in achieving the objectives of the intended English language curriculum at grades 6-8.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Several implications could be derived based on the findings. There were indications that because of several reasons they are not practicing it. They, however, were uncertain and not aware about the importance of SBA in achieving the learning objectives.

For this reason, since teachers' commitment to implement alternative assessments for better learning needs continued support on a long-term basis, and demands for overarching changes in their curricular transactions and pedagogies, there is a great need to develop appropriate data bases in the areas of assessment knowledge and skills. Since a majority of teachers are found to tend to remain largely passive and reactive 'technicians' rather than active and pro-active 'professionals' towards this educational innovation and implementation (Yung 2002:113), they remain calcified. This could be because of the lack of serious organizational efforts to bring in teacher awareness and exposure to professional knowledge. There is an urgent need to bring about a change in these areas.

The curricular reviews undertaken in Bangladesh and common assessment tasks introduced in schools seem to have ignored these human inputs. The way forward in this regard could be definitely teachers' professional training and development. As Anderson and Michener (1994) indicate, the potential for improving the quality of teachers and of education lays not so much with the pre-service teacher education as with the professional development of in-service teachers and their practice.

At this juncture, it is obvious that in-service trainings are much needed in order to address this urgency. As claimed by Ferguson-Patrick (2009), "... Most staff

*development and school improvement activities continue to leave teachers' knowledge and skills essentially untouched (p. 2)*". In this instance, there is evidence that the teachers' knowledge and skills in implementing school-based assessment is still quite poor despite the guidelines and objectives provided by the Ministry of Education.

Moreover, respondents in this study who had gone for training in SBA lamented on the fact that the course and exposure offered by the ministry of Education was insufficient. Many felt that providing them with a booklet of the new format did not give a good idea of what was expected. As such interpretations varied from one teacher to another and from one school to another. It is needed to be understood the fact that any change in policy requires effective training to be provided to all parties concerned. Hence, the crux of the issues of teacher readiness and on-the-job training for a variety of assessment skills remain to be prioritised and appropriately addressed (Thimmappa & Sharma, 2003).

More frequent briefings and workshops for teachers to get hands-on training and exposure to SBA should be arranged. Furthermore, more hands-on sessions such as workshops and open discussions on the challenges and issues in implementing the assessment need to be carried out. The feedbacks gathered from the teachers as well as the students should be able to provide relevant information to the Ministry in their attempt to decide on the necessary changes and modifications to the existing assessment's policies and guidelines.

It is worth noting that the teachers involved in the study also indicated their concerns in terms of the management of the assessment. One area they claimed critical is time management. As claimed by Hamzah and Sinnasamy (2009) who quoted Weir (1994), teachers have negative feelings towards school-based assessment due to two common reasons; it was imposed on them and time-constraint.

Steps must be taken to ensure school top management especially the school head teachers, assistant head teachers and the senior assistants teachers be trained to monitor and supervise teachers with regards to SBA. According to Zaltman *et al* (1973), change process may be analyzed at two levels; individual and organizational. Hall and Hord concur that in attempting or monitoring change, “leaders of organizational change need to devise ways to anticipate and facilitate change at the individual level” (2001, p. 7).

Head teachers of the schools as instructional leaders in the school must play their role to take effective monitoring and supervision measures. More importantly, effective support mechanisms must be provided for teachers who need help. Effective leadership in schools should ensure that the necessary policies are in place to encourage and endorse a focus on rethinking classroom assessment with purpose in mind. School and district leaders can do much to support teachers’ continued development of their classroom assessment practices.

Schools also must implement assessment systems that are not only aligned and integrated with the curricula, instructional practices and professional development strategies, but also contribute to the goal of increasing student achievement based on rigorous content standards. This is complex, demanding work that can last several years. Yet, it must be rigorously implemented at school level.

In the light of recent changes in education and a move towards formative SBA, there is a need for a review of the implementation of SBA. Effective implementation of SBA requires a set of procedures which applies minimum professional requirements to each level of personnel involved in the process of SBA. Furthermore, schools should also move toward the establishment of a network of professional personnel with various levels of responsibility in each

school. In line with the continuous and formative training at school level, school administrators must ensure regular SBA coordination meetings are held to monitor and evaluate SBA practices.

Yung (2001, 2002) observed teachers' classroom practices in the implementation of a Teacher Assessment Scheme (TAS) in Hong Kong. One of his concluding remarks is:

*"...assessment innovation is a necessary but not a sufficient, mechanism for changes with our educational system. The role of the teacher is challenged by the new assessment scheme — the co-existence of assessment and learning requires a significant change in the teachers' pedagogy. For teachers to implement the new programme, their existing understanding and beliefs concerning assessment must be challenged and opportunities provided for them to come to terms with the philosophy of the new assessment scheme. Most importantly, the teachers themselves must undertake such a learning process."*

Deep learning and its application in practice requires more than just attending training, workshops and courses. Teachers themselves have a responsibility of acquiring pedagogical knowledge and disseminating it to others through networking, because 'change requires change in self' (Thimmappa and Sharma, 2003).

Moreover, several findings cited above indicate that perhaps the time has come for the authorities concerned to look into teachers' workload. A reduction in workload and a decrease in the number of student enrolment may be steps in the right direction to ensure effective implementation of SBA. Regarding the increase in paper and administrative work such as filling in forms, cards and report books, a large majority of the respondents felt schools should be provided with more office personnel to help reduce their workload.

As the current research trends are in favor of developing reflective, inquiring, and researching teachers, the responsibility of in-service teachers' professional development rests with supportive leadership and empathetic managements. In this regard, there is a need for balanced and flexible blending of networking organisations in the country and for research and development, focusing on teachers' personal attitudes and approaches.

High-quality record-keeping is critical for ensuring quality in classroom assessment. The records that teachers and students keep are the evidence that support the decisions that are made about students' learning (WNCP, 2006). Teachers should practice SBA and give marks for every component and keep record of these. The records should include detailed and descriptive information about the nature of the expected learning as well as evidence of students' learning, and should be collected from a range of assessments.

Feedback for learning is part of the teaching process. It is the vital link between the teacher's assessment of a student's learning and the action following that assessment. Our teachers should give descriptive feedback, because it is the key to successful assessment *for* learning. Students learn from assessment when the teacher provides specific, detailed feedback and direction to each student to guide his or her learning. To be successful, feedback needs to be immediate and identify the way forward. It should not simply tell learners whether their answers are right or wrong, or simply provide evaluative feedback in the form of grades and short, non-specific comments of praise or censure. This latter kind of feedback affects students' senses of themselves and tells them how they stand in relation to others, but it offers very little direction for moving forward (WNCP, 2006).

As far as communicative language teaching is concerned our teachers needs more orientation to it. They have to understand that with CLT began a movement away



from traditional lesson formats where the focus was on mastery of different items of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as memorization of dialogs and drills, and toward the use of pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work (Richards, 2006). They also need to understand that the type of classroom activities proposed in CLT also implied new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners. Learners now had to participate in classroom activities that were based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students had to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair work tasks, rather than relying on the teacher for a model. They were expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning (Jacobs and Farrell, 2003; Richards, 2006). And teachers now had to assume the role of facilitator and monitor (Jacobs and Farrell, 2003; Richards, 2006). Rather than being a model for correct speech and writing and one with the primary responsibility of making students produce plenty of error-free sentences, the teacher had to develop a different view of learners' errors and of her/his own role in facilitating language learning.

To ensure all these, teachers have to resort to new forms of assessment to replace traditional multiple-choice and other items that test lower-order skills. Multiple forms of assessment should be used to build a comprehensive picture of what students can do in a second language (Jacobs and Farrell, 2003)

## 5.4 Conclusion

Good assessments are those that focus on students and their learning. Mitchell (1992) in her book "Testing for Learning" argued for new methods of assessing performance, and asserted that the use of SBA can have a significant impact on teaching style and student achievement. Rather than just the traditional written tests, teachers will need a number of different ways for assessing both the product and process of student learning especially in the teaching of the English language. Good knowledge acquired by the teachers and their best practices will definitely enhance the teaching and learning of English language as subject and will help achieve the objectives of language learning.

In line with that the SBA initiative is a major assessment reform in Bangladesh that entails substantial change in school culture and structures as well as in pedagogic expectations among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the wider community. It requires the development of content- and context-appropriate assessment activities, instruments, and procedures that are explicitly linked to high-quality teaching and learning and English language teachers who are not only confident and skilled at making highly contextualized, consistent and trustworthy assessment decisions but also effective at involving students in the assessment process. These are major challenges on both a theoretical and practical level. Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasise that although it is clear that Assessment for Learning can lead to improved student learning and achievement, its implementation by teachers in the classroom is not a 'simple matter' and 'there is no quick fix that can alter existing practice by promising rapid rewards'.

Henceforth, there is a need for the Ministry of Education to ensure that sufficient in-depth exposure courses are provided to English teachers. Teachers need hands-

on experience in testing and assessment in order to ensure best practices are shared and carried out. Furthermore, English teachers are challenged with a new paradigm shift in the current EFL classroom. Teachers have to be innovative and creative to practice latest means of assessment. In such a situation continuous on-going formative assessment seem to be the call of the day. Only then can one expect to witness the achievement of the objectives of the English language curriculum at schools, an improvement in students' performance and teacher instruction.

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# **Appendix**

**Classroom Observation Checklist for MPhil Study on  
Effects of School Based Assessment (SBA) in  
Achieving the Objectives of Intended English Curriculum at Grades 6 to 8**

Name of the School: ..... Upazila: .....  
 Name of the Teacher: ..... Years of Teaching experience: .....  
 Grade: ..... Total number of students: .....  
 Lesson(s): ..... Duration: ..... (mins) Observation Date: ...../...../.....

<b>1. Learning Objectives (please put a ✓ mark)</b>		
Content		Comments/examples (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made clear statement of the purpose of the lesson</li> </ul>		
Objectives of the lesson (from the teacher):		
<b>2. Methods and techniques used in the classroom (please put a ✓ mark)</b>		
Content		Comments/examples (if any)
• Lecture		
• Question-answer		
• Demonstration		
• Pair work		
• Group work		
• Classwork		
• Home Work		
• Brain storming		
• Individual task		
Others (if any):		

<b>3. Teaching aids/ materials used in the classroom (please put a ✓ mark)</b>		
Content		Comments/examples (if any)
• picture/ image		
• chart		
• chalkboard		
• model		
• Audio device		
Others (if any):		

4. Formative Assessment techniques (please put a ✓ mark)		
Content		Comments/examples (if any)
<b>• Questioning style</b>		
○ Objective questions (MCQ)		
○ Open-ended questions		
○ Close-ended question		
○ Questions to individual students		
○ Questions to the whole class		
○ Others		

<b>• Written task</b>		
○ Paragraph		
○ Composition		
○ Letter		
○ Fill in the blanks		
○ Grammar		
○ Vocabulary		
○ Assignment		

**5. Feedback techniques:**  
 Whole class:  
  
 Individual students:

6. Skills Assessed in the class		
Content		Comments/exam ples (if any)
<b>Specific skills</b>		
• Reading		
• Listening		
• Speaking/Oral Presentation		
• Writing		
<b>Other Generic skills developed</b>		
• Managing self-learning		
• Using information technology		
• Problem solving		
• Demonstrating autonomy and initiative		
• Collaborative working skill		
• Time management		
• Reflecting and responding to feedback		
Others:		

**Teacher Questionnaire for MPhil Study on  
Effects of School Based Assessment (SBA) in  
Achieving the Objectives of Intended English Curriculum at Grades 6 to 8**

Name of the School: ..... Upazila: .....  
Name of the Teacher: ..... Years of Teaching experience: .....  
Grade: ..... Total number of students: .....

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1. How long are you teaching English? \_\_\_\_\_ years
2. I think that learning English language means achieving \_\_\_\_\_ skills. (you can tick more than one)
  - a) listening
  - b) speaking
  - c) reading
  - d) writing
3. Assessing students in the classrooms has positive impact on their learning of English?
  - a) agree
  - b) agree strongly
  - c) disagree
  - d) disagree strongly
4. How many classes/lessons do you have to take each day? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many students are there in your English classes? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the duration of your English lessons? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you think that this duration is enough for implementing SBA?
  - a) yes,
  - b) no
8. How many marks do you allocate for SBA in English subject? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How do you divide these marks for the sub-division of SBA? Please write down below \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many class-tests do you take in one term/semester? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do your students need to prepare assignments for every term/semester?
  - a) yes,
  - b) no
12. If yes, how many assignments do they need to prepare for each term? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you involve your students in oral presentation?
  - a) yes,
  - b) no
14. How often do you assign and evaluate class works?
  - a) Almost every day,
  - b) occasionally,
  - c) once a week
  - d) once a term
15. How often do you assign and evaluate Homeworks?
  - a) almost every day,
  - b) occasionally,
  - c) once a week
  - d) twice a term

16. How often do you record the marks of homeworks and classworks?  
a) occasionally      b) once a week,      c) once a month      d) once a term
17. Do you think that SBA can be properly implemented in English subject?  
a) yes,      b) no
18. Do you think that launching SBA has changed your way of teaching English/practice?  
a) yes,      b) no
19. Do you think that use of SBA helps foster English language learning of your students?  
a) yes,      b) no
20. I think that use of SBA \_\_\_\_\_ the preparation of my students for their terminal/final examinations?  
a) hinders greatly,      b) hinders moderately      c) does not hinder at all
21. I think that class-tests help increase the \_\_\_\_\_ skill(s) of my students? (you can tick more than one)  
a) Listening,      b) Speaking      c) Reading      d) Writing
22. I think that class-works help increase the \_\_\_\_\_ skill(s) of my students? (you can tick more than one)  
a) Listening,      b) Speaking      c) Reading      d) Writing
23. I think that home-works help increase the \_\_\_\_\_ skill(s) of my students? (you can tick more than one)  
a) Listening,      b) Speaking      c) Reading      d) Writing
24. I think that groupworks help increase the \_\_\_\_\_ skill(s) of my students? (you can tick more than one)  
a) Listening,      b) Speaking      c) Reading      d) Writing
25. I think that assignments help increase the \_\_\_\_\_ skill(s) of my students? (you can tick more than one)  
a) Listening,      b) Speaking      c) Reading      d) Writing
26. I think that oral-presentations help increase the \_\_\_\_\_ skill(s) of my students? (you can tick more than one)  
a) Listening,      b) Speaking      c) Reading      d) Writing
27. I think that the objectives of English curriculum can \_\_\_\_\_ be achieved through applying SBA as a part of assessment process.  
a) absolutely,      b) moderately,      c) only slightly,      d) never
28. Are you engaged in private tuition?  
a) yes,      b) no.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Thank you very much for your time* \_\_\_\_\_



**Head Teacher Interview for MPhil Study on**  
**Effects of School Based Assessment (SBA) in**  
**Achieving the Objectives of Intended English Curriculum at Grades 6 to 8**

Name of the School: ..... Upazila: .....  
Name of the Teacher: ..... Years of Teaching experience: .....  
Grade: ..... Total number of students: .....

- 1) Could share your idea about the English curriculum of junior secondary level (grade 6-8)?  
What are the objectives of this curriculum?
- 2) Do you take any other examination in English except the terminal/semester examinations?  
If so, could you share what are those?
- 3) How would you define School-Based Assessment (SBA)? Do you have any training on  
SBA? If no, where have you got the idea of SBA from?
- 4) How many marks do you allocate for SBA in English? How do you divide those marks?
- 5) How many classes do you take everyday? On average, how many students do you have in  
your English classes?
- 6) Do you assess students in the classrooms? What are the objectives of this assessment?
- 7) Do you assess students through SBA? If so, how?
- 8) Do you think that the objectives of English language curriculum can be achieved through  
SBA? If yes, how?
- 9) We know that Learning a language refers to developing four skills (e.g Listening, speaking,  
reading and writing). Do you think that through SBA, these four skills can be developed? If  
yes, how?
- 10) Does SBA have any positive or negative effect on the terminal/semester examinations, final  
examinations and public examinations (like JSC)? If so, please elaborate.
- 11) Do you think SBA is being practised properly? Do your teacher face any challenge in  
implementing SBA? What are the reasons for these?
- 12) What are your suggestions to the proper implementation of SBA in English?

**Teacher Interview for MPhil Study on**  
**Effects of School Based Assessment (SBA) in**  
**Achieving the Objectives of Intended English Curriculum at Grades 6 to 8**

Name of the School: ..... Upazila: .....  
Name of the Teacher: ..... Years of Teaching experience: .....  
Grade: ..... Total number of students: .....

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- 1) Could share your idea about the English curriculum of junior secondary level (grade 6-8)? What are the objectives of this curriculum?
- 2) Do you take any other examination in English except the terminal/semester examinations? If so, could you share what are those?
- 3) How would you define School-Based Assessment (SBA)? Do you have any training on SBA? If no, where have you got the idea of SBA from?
- 4) How many marks do you allocate for SBA in English? How do you divide those marks?
- 5) How many classes do you take everyday? On average, how many students do you have in your English classes?
- 6) Do you assess them in the classrooms? What are the objectives of this assessment?
- 7) Do you think that your teaching practice has changed because of introducing SBA? Please elaborate.
- 8) Does this change have any effect on your students' learning of English?
- 9) Do you assess students through SBA? If so, how?
- 10) Do you think that the objectives of English language curriculum can be achieved through SBA? If yes, how?
- 11) We know that Learning a language refers to developing four skills (e.g Listening, speaking, reading and writing). Do you think that through SBA, these four skills can be developed? If yes, how?
- 12) Do you take class-tests in every term/semester? When, how and how many times do you do this?
- 13) Does this have any effect on students' learning of English?
- 14) Do your students have to submit home-works to you? If yes, can you give a few examples of the type of home-works you give? Do you get sufficient time to provide feedback to you?
- 15) Do your students have to prepare assignments? If so, when and how frequently?
- 16) Do you think that by doing home-works and assignments students can develop any language skill? If so, how?
- 17) Do your students require to do oral-presentations? Do you give any number for it?
- 18) Do your students get sufficient time and opportunities to do class-works and group-works? How do you make them do these?
- 19) What skills do you think your students develop by practicing oral-presentations, class-works, and group-works? How?
- 20) Does SBA have any positive or negative effect on the terminal/semester examinations, final examinations and public examinations (like JSC)? If so, please elaborate.
- 21) Do you think SBA is being practised properly? Do you face any challenge in implementing SBA? What are the reasons for these?
- 22) What are your suggestions to the proper implementation of SBA in English?

**Focused Group Discussion (FGD) with Students for MPhil Study on**  
**Effects of School Based Assessment (SBA) in**  
**Achieving the Objectives of Intended English Curriculum at Grades 6 to 8**

Name of the School: ..... Upazila: .....  
Grade: ..... Total number of students: .....

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- 1) Do you have to attend English class everyday?
- 2) Do you like learning English? Do you know the objectives of learning English?
- 3) Do you sit for any other examination in English except the terminal/semester examinations?  
If so, could you share what are those?
- 4) Do you know what School-Based Assessment (SBA) is?
- 5) Do you know how many marks are allocated for SBA in English? How do your teacher divide those marks?
- 6) Do you think that the objectives of English language curriculum can be achieved through SBA? If yes, how?
- 7) We know that learning a language refers to developing four skills (e.g listening, speaking, reading & writing). Do you think through SBA, these four skills can be developed? If yes, how?
- 8) Does your teacher take class-tests in every term/semester? When, how and how many times does he do this?
- 9) Does this have any effect on your learning of English?
- 10) Do you have to submit home-works to your teacher? If yes, can you give a few examples of the type of home-works you give? Does your teacher give feedback on them?
- 11) Does this have any effect on your learning of English?
- 12) Do your students have to prepare assignments? If so, when and how frequently?
- 13) Do you think that by doing home-works and assignments you can develop any language skill? If so, how?
- 14) Do you need to do oral-presentations? Does your teacher give any number for it?
- 15) What skills do you think your students develop by practicing oral-presentations, class-works, and group-works? How?
- 16) Does SBA have any positive or negative effect on the terminal/semester examinations, final examinations and public examinations (like JSC)? If so, please elaborate.