

**Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
Liberal Studies
Structured Enquiry Approach
Independent Enquiry Study Report**

Covering Page

Enquiry Question: Should the TSA assessment for Primary 3 students be abolished in HongKong ?

Year of Examination: 2017

Name of Student:

Class/ Group:

Class Number:

Name of advisor:

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Notes:

1. Written reports should not exceed 4 500 words. The reading time for non-written reports should not exceed 22 minutes and the short written texts accompanying non-written reports should not exceed 1 100 words. The word count for written reports and the short written texts does not include the covering page, the table of contents, titles, graphs, tables, captions and headings of photos, punctuation marks, footnotes, endnotes, references, bibliography and appendices.
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A. Problem Definition

TSA is a territory-wide assessment, which is annually conducted at Primary 3 , Primary 6 and Secondary 3 levels. At Primary 6 level, the test is conducted in alternative years; in the “gap” years schools can opt-in voluntarily. According to the website of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, TSAs aim at helping schools and teachers to improve teaching based on information about students’ strengths and weaknesses¹, also helping the Government to formulate related policies and measures, such as developing appropriate learning and teaching resources to cater for learner diversity².

The original set-up intention of TSA is positive, stating that neither preparing or exercises are required³, however, the process of carrying out the assessment system ,such as setting up extra remedial classes and giving excessive amount of TSA-related exercises as homework to Primary 3 students, has brought much negative effects to school teachers, parents and primary students. The phenomenon of over-drilling not only increases the pressure of Primary 3 students and teachers, but also sparks up the anger of their parents ⁴,such strong opposition led to the publish of a full-page advertisement in a Chinese-language filed by more than 40,000 parents and teachers, appealing to the education chief Eddie Ng-Hak-Kim that the tests should be cancelled for Primary 3 students. The Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union has also conducted surveys three times, revealing that TSA had already strayed away from its original purpose⁵, which is only supposed to assess students’ basic learning competencies ⁶, or in other words, the essential knowledge and skills (such as

¹ Using *Territory-wide System Assessment* (TSA) data to improve curriculum planning
http://cd1.edb.hkedcity.net/cd/languagesupport/publications/compendium/downloads/0607/0607_teachingalbum_assessment.pdf

² Implementation of *Territory-wide System Assessment*
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/ed/papers/ed20151129cb4-266-1-e.pdf>

³ <http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/TSA/en/Faq.html>

⁴ Parents anger over continue drilling for TSA exams
<http://www.educationpost.com.hk/zh-hk/resources/education/160620-education-news-parents-anger-over-continued-drilling-for-tsa-exams>

⁵ TSA straying away from its original purpose
<https://www2.hkptu.org/ptunews/651/651eng.pdf>

⁶ Civil service newsletter
http://www.csb.gov.hk/hkgcsb/csn/csn95/95e/features_1.html

comprehensive, writing and listening skills) of students without extra amount of drilling exercises.

Even though the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority had provided guidelines for schools that schools should not change their teaching and assessment methods because of the TSA and make amendments to the TSA system as over-drilling is unnecessary as the test should not require extra tuition⁷, however, surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, 70 percent of the teachers surveyed said an average of two hours of additional remedial classes each week for TSA preparation has to be conducted.⁸

Moreover, the Education Bureau has carried out enhancement measures (the Tryout scheme) in order to calm the angry parents⁹, the academic pressure on Primary 1-3 students was still as heavy as before, parents and teachers continued to ask for the abolishment of the unnecessary assessment as pressure has been exerted on students, parents and teachers; the practice of over-drilling exercises and remedial classes were said to be affecting the daily life of primary students , and also continued deviating TSA's original intent of assessing the basic competencies of students.¹⁰ Scholars pointed out that the problem was not majorly related to the difficulty of the assessment, but the mindset of schools which wanted to gain a higher academic reputation through the assessment. The problem could hardly be solved as the enhancement measures do not directly tackle the root of the problem¹¹, only the abolishment of the assessment for Primary 3 students could help relieve their academic pressure and stop schools from over-drilling them with TSA-related exercises.

⁷ TSA leaflet by HKEAA

http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/TSA/zh/pdf/tsa_hkeaa_leaflet_preview_chi.pdf

⁸ Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union survey **additional remedial classes for TSA**

<https://www2.hkptu.org/education/books/TSA-report-2015.pdf>

⁹ Enhancement measures by the Education Bureau

<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201404/11/P201404110467.htm>

¹⁰ Serious morbid change in the Territory-wide System Assessment

http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/counmtg/motion/m_papers/cm20151125cb3-138-e.pdf

¹¹ http://news.mingpao.com/pns/dailynews/web_tc/article/20160615/s00002/1465927955901

Therefore, whether to retain or abolish the territory-wide assessment for primary 3 students in Hong Kong is a controversial issue as there was still unsatisfactory voice of parents, teachers and students after the carrying out of enhancement policies and Primary 3 students are still burdened with the problem of over-drilling.

The aim of this report is to evaluate whether the Territory Wide Assessment should be abolished for Primary three students by analysing the impacts that the TSA has brought towards primary students, teachers and parents, the effectiveness of the enhancement measures carried out by the government, the alternatives that could replace TSA through interviewing a Primary school teacher and a parent of a Primary 2 student and finding some second-hand information.

B. Relevant Concept and Knowledge/Facts/Data

Incentive of implementing the Territory-wide System Assessment

According to the Education Bureau, the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) helps both the government and schools to understand more about their students' performances in three core subjects (Chinese language, English language and Mathematics) through data collected in the assessment.¹² With deeper understanding of students ability, it facilitates the Education Bureau in reviewing their policies , helps the government to allocate resources and support to schools and helps both schools and teachers to improve their teaching plans.

TSA supporting materials provided by the Education Bureau

The Education Bureau provides a variety of supporting services to schools every year such as consultancy services, professional development networks and collaborative programmes.¹³ Furthermore, the Education Bureau has set up a website named “ Web-based Learning and Teaching Support” for teachers which provides interactive learning materials and suggestions.¹⁴

Basic Competency

Basic Competency is the minimal requirement that students should have without any extra learning support. It is a standard set which would be benchmarked against the international standards.¹⁵

Enhancement Measure of the TSA

In 2016, the Education Bureau has set up the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy in order to conduct a more comprehensive review on TSA. The committee then claimed that certain adjustments

¹² Introduction of TSA by HKEAA

<http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/TSA/en/Introduction.html>

¹³ Support and Resources for TSA

[http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/news003/TSA_\(for%20schools\)_Eng.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/news003/TSA_(for%20schools)_Eng.pdf)

¹⁴ [http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/news003/TSA_\(for%20schools\)_Eng.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/news003/TSA_(for%20schools)_Eng.pdf)

¹⁵ What is Basic Competency (BC) ?

[http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/news003/TSA_\(for%20schools\)_Eng.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/news003/TSA_(for%20schools)_Eng.pdf)

could be made on the assessment papers and question design, and there should be more provision of professional support measures for schools on TSA-related homework policy.¹⁶ The Tryout TSA policy has 50 participating primary schools, while other schools are encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis.¹⁷

Study-life balance

Study-life balance is a concept of proper prioritizing both academic and personal lifestyle¹⁸ (such as health, pleasure, leisure, family, social aspects).

Such concept is essential in this issue as one of the major concern of teachers and parents is the study-life balance of Primary 3 students, the over-drilling of TSA exercises and extra remedial classes take away a significant portion of students' time for rest or extra-curricular activities and makes study-life balance for Primary 3 students hard to achieve.

Academic pressure

For a lot of Hong Kong students, academic pressure is a significant source of stress. It is a mental distress and frustration due to academic associated problems such as academic failure or demands¹⁹. The Territory-wide System Assessment for Primary 3 students was said to be giving the Primary 1-3 students humongous pressure, overloaded with TSA-drilling exercises²⁰. Having the Primary students suffering from academic pressure is one of the main controversial point in this issue.

Situation of stress among primary students

According to a survey conducted by the children council in Hong Kong, most Hong Kong students are under great pressure because of academic results. Among the interviewees, 440 were secondary and primary school students of which over 90% of them have mentioned that they have experienced pressure from their studies.²¹ These pressure can be resulted from large amount of homework assignments, the competitive

¹⁶ TSA tryout

<http://applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBCM/EDBCM16029E.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBCM/EDBCM16029E.pdf>

¹⁸ Study-life balance

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/study-life-balance.html>

¹⁹ American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences - academic stress

<http://iasir.net/AIJRHASSpapers/AIJRHASS14-150.pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.inmediahk.net/node/1035369>

²¹ Children council

http://www.childrenouncil.org.hk/app/webroot/files/cms/5th_Motion1.pdf

atmosphere among Hong Kong students and lack of relief measures from the government.

The effects of academic pressure on Primary students

When compared with other Asian countries or cities, Hong Kong has always been one of the well-known cities with intense academic competition. Academic pressure can result in sleeping deprivation, eating disorders, loss of interest in study and anxiety.²² All these above mentioned are negative consequences that might harm the Primary student's mental health and personal development.

In this case, the TSA assessment was said to be increasing the academic pressure on Primary students, such that the effects are bothering the children, instead of finding out which part the students are strong at and weaknesses, the overloaded amount of drilling exercises were said to be taking away the students' happy and healthy children by making them lose interest in learning.²³

²² The effects of academic pressure on children
<http://motherhood.modernmom.com/effects-academic-parental-pressure-kids-10380.html>

²³ <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2015/10/29/parents-teachers-urge-education-minister-to-scrap-controversial-primary-3-tsa-tests/>

C. In-depths Explanation of the Issue

Opinions support the abolition of Primary 3 TSAs

Stakeholders : A Primary school teacher (teaching Primary 1,2,3 and 5 students Mathematics) , Parent of a Primary Student (B) , a Primary 2 student (C)

1. Hindering learning progress

Even though the Education Bureau has stressed that extra remedial classes or drilling of TSA exercises are unnecessary, since the assessment aims to assess students' fundamental academic ability, a lot of school wishes to enhance their students' academic ability by giving them more exercises on TSA , in which most of the exercises are done in lesson time.

According to another interview done by myself in early March, by asking a primary school teacher and parent of a primary student that how much lesson time is spent on teaching TSA-related materials, it is found that a minimum of 20 minutes or a maximum of 35 minutes (1 whole lesson) can be spent on teaching skills that tackles the problems in TSA, more amount of time is spent on teaching TSA-related skills, the normal lesson progress was postponed because of it, in the interview, the teacher had stated that normally 35 minutes, half a chapter of school materials can be taught, but only a few TSA skills can be taught and most of the time is just repeating to ensure students do not forget the skills for tackling TSA question types.

With the TSA-related materials, the original teaching schedule can be behind of what the teachers planned. In the interview, the Primary teacher mentioned that about 3 to 4 lesson schedules can be postponed because of the TSA, the lesson schedules are changed easily with students' performance on TSA drilling exercises and past years of TSA results.

2. The level of difficulty of the TSA assessment does not suit Primary 3 students even the Education Bureau has carried out TSA enhancement measures

With an assessment that surpasses the ability of Primary 3 students, this is the root cause of extra remedial classes and more amount of TSA drilling exercises. Even though the TSA Committee claims that both the assessment paper and question design could be adjusted ²⁴, the level of difficulty was still found to be unsuitable for Primary 3 students, that they could not handle the questions and led to a large amount of drilling exercises, thus leading to humongous burden of the students and teachers because of the heavy workload.

Chart on the level of difficulty of the TSA²⁵

	同意	中立	不同意
小三 TSA 試卷的難度超越普遍小三學生可應付的程度	51%	29%	20%

According to the Education Bureau, the TSA assessment was set only to However, according to the chart on the level of difficulty of the TSA, more than half of the teachers have agreed that it is far more than what the Primary 3 students can handle. Therefore, with the school and teachers wishing their students to perform better in the TSA, extra amount of work are given to the students so as to equip them to perform better in the TSA assessment.

²⁴ The Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/tsa/fullreport.pdf>.

²⁵ Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union TSA report (Page 9)
<https://www2.hkptu.org/education/books/TSA-report-2015.pdf>

Chart on the necessity of drilling TSA exercises²⁶



As shown, more than 70% of the teachers agree that Primary 3 students generally are not prepared without any drilling exercises. This shows the necessity of drilling TSA and the plan was not as what the Education Bureau proposed, Primary 3 students are not equipped well for the TSA if they were not drilled. And this explains why schools lag behind their original teaching schedule due to the necessity to prepare Primary 3 students for their TSA.

Furthermore, the above surveys were conducted after the adjustment made by the education bureau, however still, the level of difficulty has shown it does not suit the level of Primary 3 students, even if more adjustments are made, schools will still try to push their students to a higher level of standard so as to have a better banding.

²⁶ Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union TSA report (Page 9)
<https://www2.hkptu.org/education/books/TSA-report-2015.pdf>

3. The drilling of TSA exercises and remedial classes causes large amount of burden and stress to both the student and teachers

With more time needed on preparing TSA materials, doing TSA exercises as homework, teachers and students' time to rest or to have other leisure activities is certainly deprived, not only does the drilling of TSA exercises and remedial classes causes burden to the teachers and students, but it also affects their balance between study and rest , or work and rest.

Chart on the whether the teachers have after school remedial classes for their students²⁷

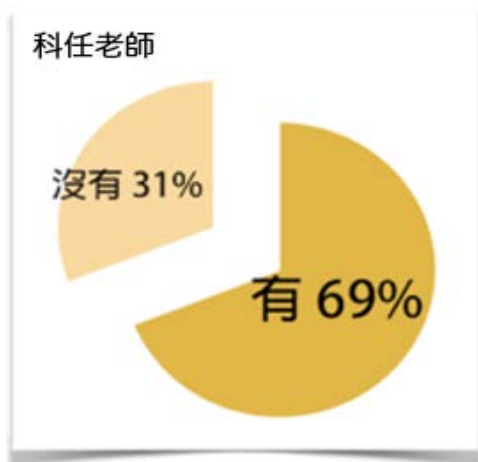
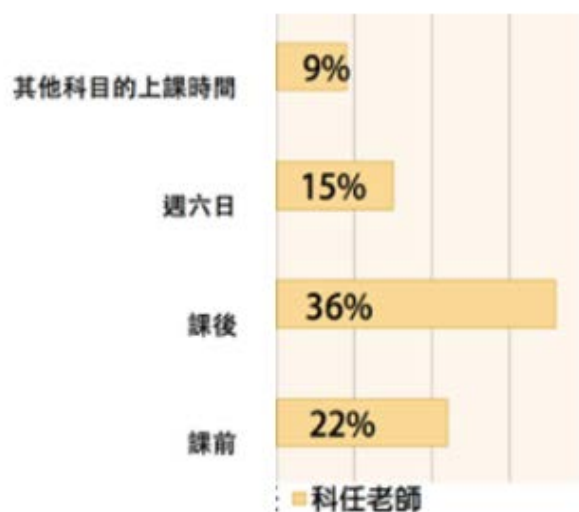


Chart on the distribution of time that has to be spent on TSA remedial classes²⁸



²⁷ Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union TSA report (Page 10)
<https://www2.hkptu.org/education/books/TSA-report-2015.pdf>

²⁸ Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union TSA report (Page 11)
<https://www2.hkptu.org/education/books/TSA-report-2015.pdf>

Chart on the stress level of teachers and students²⁹

	0-3 分	4-6 分	7-10 分	10 分	平均分
教師壓力	1%	19%	80%	14%	7.6 分
學生壓力	3%	24%	73%	9%	7.1 分

According to the interview conducted by myself with a Primary school teacher, it is found that whenever members of the Education Bureau hold meetings with the corresponding school, some officials would give out reminders to teachers such as “Your Primary 3 students could have done better in certain subjects.” These reminders pressurize not only the school principal, but also the school teachers that they would have to make some extra TSA related learning aids (for example, powerpoints related to TSA question-answering skills), these learning aids or other TSA worksheets were specially designed by the school teachers that the preparation work could take up 3-4 nights and the teachers had to hold meetings before and after the TSA related learning materials were set.

Furthermore, according to the chart above, before and after lessons, and even in weekends, remedial classes are arranged for the primary students, in which the percentage of after school remedial classes have the largest share. With more after class remedial classes on TSAs, the students have fewer time to participate in extra-curricular classes, fewer time to spend on their hobbies or with their friends, while the teachers have fewer time to rest or to spend time with their family and friends, study-life and work-life balance of the students and teachers are affected.

Also, according to the interview I did with the primary school teacher, it is found that the marking of TSA past papers not only takes up a lot of her time, but the time spent on preparing how to explain the questions to her students also gives her a lot of stress, as the time of 1 normal lesson is not enough for the explanation, remedial classes are therefore arranged. Before the appeal of the parents to the Education Bureau, the classes

²⁹ Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union TSA report (Page 14)
<https://www2.hkptu.org/education/books/TSA-report-2015.pdf>

were arranged after school, after the complaints were filed, they take up the normal lesson time, but still the teachers have to prepare TSA related materials, and the tight teaching schedule even further increased their stress and burden.

While the students have heavy workload for TSA, the teachers also have to mark a large pile of TSA-exercises or even have to spend time on the explanation.

Opinions support the keeping of Primary 3 TSAs

1. Helping to keep track on students' academic ability

The TSA assessment serves as a guide for schools and teachers, it also clearly shows that which aspect of their student are relatively weak, so that teachers can help to adjust their teaching method, or to help train those students weaker in a certain aspect (e.g comprehension, listening, writing), Most teachers found the school reports useful and agreed that the TSA could provide an objective system context for schools.³⁰

Furthermore, the data collected in the TSA assessment helps the government to assess the effectiveness of the education policies.³¹ With most schools canceling the Secondary School Entrance Examination, the Education Bureau would not have a standardized assessment and data to evaluate the overall Hong Kong Primary students' academic level without the TSA assessment.³²

Through understanding the performances of Hong Kong students in the three major core subjects, resources and fundings could be allocated to different grades from different schools so as to enhance the general performances of Hong Kong students and facilitate Primary students into Secondary School education level.

2. Similar assessments also take place in other countries

Assessments of similar nature for students are conducted in a number of countries, e.g. Australia, Canada, the US, and even in Singapore, abolishing the TSA in Hong Kong would be unbeneficial to Hong Kong's educational system as it symbolises that we are lagging behind. In the United Kingdom, several key learning stages are set, that the children will take national tests to test their skills in English reading, English grammar and Mathematics.³³

³⁰ TSA for learning, not drilling

http://www.news.gov.hk/en/record/html/2015/06/20150625_192145.shtml

³¹ Frequently Asked Questions for TSA

<http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/TSA/en/Faq.html>

³² <https://theinitium.com/article/20151006-parenting-TSA-03/>

³³ National curriculum of UK

<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/key-stage-1-and-2>

According to the UNESCO, using results of national assessments have great significance in educational achievements, for example, the data collected helps policy makers or educational planners to decide what topics to be addressed in teacher education programs.³⁴ Furthermore, in the United Kingdom, the government would monitor policy changes and interventions to see if the assessment has affected student learning instead of abolishing the assessment. In the United States, every state was compelled to develop mandatory assessments for all students in certain grade levels in order to receive federal school funding, 40% of American students took three to five assessments a year.³⁵

If other foreign countries could also gain education achievements with national assessments, why should Hong Kong students make an exemption? The TSA assessments is the only way to have the government get full understanding of the academic performances of Primary school students and education achievements could be achieved with adjustments in education policies by using the data collected in the TSA assessment system.

3. Amendments could be made in the current system instead of just abolishing it directly

With the current system of letting schools decide whether or not they want to join the TSA assessment, a lot of teachers and students' burden have been greatly relieved. Schools can have the option to choose whether or not they want to join the TSA assessment according to the general academic ability of students at their school. The Education Bureau can also give out clearer guidelines to students and teachers that no extra drilling exercises should be given as the system aims to test students' basic academic ability and stress that one of the principles when using the TSA data is that comparison in performances among schools should not be made.³⁶

Former Education Commission chief Anthony Leung also support that TSA should not be scrapped, but instead, the marking scheme can be changed from a numerical scale to

³⁴ Using the Results of a National Assessment of Educational Achievement
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1222888444288/National_assessment_Vol2.pdf

³⁵ <https://linepost.hk/?uid=4716...>

³⁶ What are the principles when using the TSA data ?
<http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/TSA/en/Faq.html>

a simple pass-fail distinction.³⁷ He mentioned that if the results were made public, the nature of the assessment should be altered in order to lessen the tense competition between schools and alleviate the pressure on teachers and students. The pass-fail distinction system helps teachers to understand how many % of their students are not up to standard and also do help in formulating special learning aids and find out their students' weaknesses by revealing the % of failing students in certain subject aspects.

³⁷ TSA exam marks should be simple pass or fail

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1885078/hong-kongs-tsa-exam-marks-should-be-simple-pass>

D. Judgement and Justification

I support the abolishment of the Primary 3 TSA assessment or need to adjust the current TSA arrangement. The reasons are as followed:

1. The current TSA system greatly violates its original set-up intention

Originally, the TSA assessment is set up as a low-stake assessment, such that performance of individual students' performance will not be shown,³⁸ it was also claimed to only assess students' attainment of basic competencies, that the questions set in the assessment will not be excessively difficult. However, just as the data included in Part C, even the teachers agree with that the level of difficulty does not suit a Primary student, and that the drilling starts as young as Primary 1, without drilling, the students might not be able to finish the TSA assessment, thus leading to schools and teachers asking students to buy tons of TSA-related exercises, arranging TSA remedial classes before or after class and weekends, and giving out piles of TSA exercises as homework during holidays. If the TSA was said to be only examining students' basic knowledge and skills on Chinese, English and Mathematics, then drilling and remedial classes shall not appear. In an article published by the Savantas Policy Institute, "In theory, TSA should be classified as a formative assessment, or assessment for learning. In reality, many students are spoon-fed with exam techniques."³⁹

Even though the government has conducted enhancement measures, trying to Make the current TSA assessment system sticking to its original set-up intention, however, without specifying the performance of individual students, teachers at school will still continue to give pressure and drill the whole grade of students if data shows any of the students are still below standard, any enhancement policies would not be able to fix this problem as the teachers would not know which student is lagging behind. Though the Educational Bureau

³⁸What kind of information is provided by the TSA reports?

<http://www.bca.hkeaa.edu.hk/web/TSA/en/Faq.html>

³⁹Why we should rethink TSA

<http://www.ejinsight.com/20150829-why-we-should-rethink-tsa/>

2. The Primary 3 TSA assessment is unnecessary⁴⁰

The Education Bureau claims that the TSA helps to standardize the performance of all the Hong Kong students, however, is installing TSA at Primary 3 level necessary, if schools wishes to know their students' weakness and strength, can't the problem be seen in school tests and exams, which even reflects individual performance that efficiently helps teachers to help that particular student. Instead of reflecting the general weakness of the whole form, and blindly ask the students to drill. Furthermore, if the Education Bureau wishes to know the standard of each primary school, the Primary 6 TSA also serves this intention.

According to an interview conducted by myself with a primary school teacher, she also points out the fallacy in the TSA assessment, that the Primary 6 TSA can be retained for reference information of the school and the Education Bureau, whereas the Primary 3 TSA assessment serves as nothing but a torture to all Primary 1 to 3 students. If the government wishes to have a clearer vision of what policies to carry out, TSA is not the only way out. With more parents and teachers complaining and the government claiming that certain adjustments on the level of difficulty will be made on TSA, this shows that the TSA assessment is not a standardized test for Hong Kong Students as it changes accordingly to complaints. Different students from different schools have divergent academic levels, instead of setting one assessment to assess all Primary schools in Hong Kong, in the interview conducted, the Primary school teacher mentioned that there should be different assessments set for different bandings of schools, such that the government could take better control of students' academic results from different schools and the data could be more precise and accurate.

3. The mindset of schools wanting for a higher ranking could not be changed

It is normal for schools wanting to strive for a higher ranking of their own within the whole Hong Kong territory, so as to gain a higher reputation and attract more students in the next scholastic year. Even if the scope and level of difficulty or the marking system is adjusted, schools will still keep on drill their students as they are unsure of the

⁴⁰ Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union TSA report
<https://www2.hkptu.org/education/books/TSA-report-2015.pdf>

students' performance on the TSA until they have conducted their first TSA assessment in Primary 3 level, the drilling on Primary 1 and 2 students could not be stopped. Moreover, if the marking system is changed to a pass-fail scheme, schools will not understand clearly the students' academic abilities but to drill the whole grade blindly if any students are below the standard average. No matter what the adjustments are, keen competition remains among schools in the TSA assessment system as schools consider the assessment as a way to reflect on the banding of themselves.

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Attachment 1- Interview with a Primary school teacher of school X teaching Primary 1,2,3 and 5 students Mathematics (P)

Q: How frequent do you give out TSA exercises to students ? Take this Easter holiday as an example, how many TSA exercises do your students have to finish?

P: There are a lot of Multiple Choices for students to finish this holiday, and as far as I know, other subjects would require students to do some fill in the blank questions. For Primary 5 and 6 students, they would have to finish few pages of exercises for every subject. However, for Primary 2 students, they would have to finish 1 whole TSA related exercise as it's their first time taking TSA in Primary 3 level and we want them to perform better.

Q: Have any parents or students filed any complaints on the amount of homework or drilling given on TSA ?

P: No really for parents, but a lot of time we do hear students complaining about the amount of TSA related homework given. Take Chinese subject as an example, they have to do a lot of compositions and for 1 year there are 4 topics, students have a lot of past paper to finish up and have a lot of TSA composition to finish which consumes a lot of their time.

Q: Are there any skills in tackling the TSA assessment?

P: It's usually just drilling and drilling and we teachers would explain the question to them. Primary 3 students have to do a lot of past papers, 10 years of TSA past papers are printed out.

Q: Then how many lessons does it usually take to teach any skills to your students?

P: Before it takes up 35 mins per subject per week, which is about 1-2 lessons each week. But now lessons related to TSA are usually arranged afterschool as it takes up more time than we expected to explain to our students.

Q: Do you think TSA has helped you to know more about your students' strength and weaknesses?

P: I would say not much. As the assessment is not really difficult but students need to spend a lot of time to do drilling and past papers.

Q: Do you think the TSA is a good way to rank out the school's ranking among the Hong Kong territory? Why

P: No. As those schools which did more drilling will have better performances, but the scope of the assessment is very limited. A lot of skills like creative skills or those not learnt in textbooks cannot be tested in the assessment. I think the assessment is actually of low efficiency that it wastes a lot of our effort and time but do not help our students much. As a Primary School teacher, I think that the Primary 3 is unnecessary. We do not really need to assess students' academic ability in this level. If the Education Bureau wants to know more about HK students, the assessment for Primary 6 actually already do helps a lot. We don't need extra burden on Primary 1-3 students and teachers.

Attachment 2- Interview with a parent of a Primary 2 student from school Y(P)

Q: How many exercise book does your daughter have for TSA drilling.

P: About 6-7.

Q: How frequent does your daughter receive TSA exercises as homework? Take this Easter holiday as an example, how many TSA exercises does she has to finish?

P: 1 whole TSA exercise for every subject.

Q: Are you satisfied with the amount of TSA homework?

P: Definitely Not.

Q:Have you filed any complaints or has your daughter complained on the amount of homework or drilling given to your child on TSA?

P: No, but I have heard a lot of my child's classmates complaining about it, students at their age do not like TSA at all because of the amount of homework given.

Q:Do you think the TSA-related exercises homework deprives your child's time to enjoy other activities?

P: Of course,take this coming summer for example, she has to finish 4 whole exercise books.

Q: Do you think the TSA drilling at school or the exercises given as homework gives any burden to your child?

P: As the amount of TSA drilling homework is too much, my daughter would often complain and tells me that she hates learning. I think children might not be aware of what is burden, but this excessive amount of TSA drilling, TSA remedial classes makes any children hate learning.

Q:Do you think the TSA should be abolished?Why?

P: Yes, I do not think that it does improves any of my child's learning ability and even deprives their lesson time, when a normal lesson (35 minutes), the teacher most often use up 20 minutes to do TSA drilling with them, but sometimes they do not check the answers with the children, time is wasted and the students could not learn anything.

Title	Marks*		Comments
Should the TSA assessment for Primary 3 students be abolished in Hong Kong?	AB	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The candidate provided a clear and detailed explanation of the controversy of TSA in Primary 3 and the significance of the study. ● S/he was able to identify several entry points for assessing the abolishment: the impact on the stakeholders (such as students, teachers and parents), the feasibility of the enhancement proposal from the government, alternative measures. These might be regarded as a set of criteria for the abolishment but should have been clearly articulated. ● S/he offered a rich and focused explanation of related concepts, making a connection with the enquiry study. ● However, more elaboration on the methodology would have been better. ● In Part C, the views supporting and opposing TSA in Primary 3 were stated and appropriately categorised and supported with evidence. ● S/he was able to analyse the issue from various key perspectives, with the implementation aspect as the focus. More high level perspectives such as the ultimate goal of learning, and the role of teachers should have been considered. ● S/he drew conclusions based on the analysis of the information gathered, producing well-justified arguments. However, more conceptualisation and elaboration was needed for some of the arguments. For instance, in Part D, No. 2: “Primary 3 TSA is unnecessary”; the reasons why it is unnecessary should have been explained more clearly. ● The structure of the report was clear and easy to follow. The use of footnotes contributed to the clear and effective acknowledgement of the sources. However, some of the tables and graphs were not completely translated in English, undermining the language consistency.
	CD	8	
	PO	7	

***AB: Problem Definition and Identification of Concepts/Knowledge (Parts A & B)**

CD: Explanation and Justification (Parts C & D)

PO: Presentation and Organisation (the whole report)