

Empowering Preschools in Using Performance Indicators to Assess Children's Learning and Development

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Assessment and evaluation are essential educational practice. In December 2003, a set of Performance Indicators on the Domain of Child Development (revised edition) was published by the Education Manpower Bureau and Social Welfare Department to assist preschools in Hong Kong to evaluate young children's performance in learning and development. This paper outlines how a project conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Education has empowered 15 Hong Kong preschools using Performance Indicators to formulate strategies for self-evaluation on the Domain of Child Development. Implications for successful change of the assessment culture in the preschools are discussed.

Key words: child assessment, child development, performance indicators, school improvement

Background

Keeping up with the international trend, Hong Kong has in recent years launched the Performance Indicators (PIs) for preprimary, primary, secondary, and special schools to enhance school effectiveness and accountability (Rao, Koong, Kwong, & Wong, 2003). To enable a thorough assessment on the performance of preprimary institutions, a set of PIs covering four major domains (Management and Organization, Learning and Teaching, Support to Children, and School Ethos and Children's Development) has been developed and used by the Education Bureau (EDB), the former Education Manpower Bureau (EMB). These indicators encapsulate accepted principles of learner-focused pedagogy, which support young learners to engage in experiential and collaborative activities fostering positive attitudes, enthusiasm and motivation to learn (Corrie, 2000). They are also meant to help institutions to formulate policies and strategies for self-evaluation and school improvement (Li & Wong, 2008).

Being a tool that preprimary institutions can use to evaluate and facilitate early learning and teaching, the PIs have also brought about some difficulties that might become barriers to obtain successful outcomes. First, few guidelines are offered by the educational authority to help preprimary institutions to go through the self-evaluation and self-improvement process. Second, preprimary staff are not familiar with using the PIs to conduct self-evaluation and may lack confidence to begin the process. Third, the PIs have not been used extensively and difficulties in interpreting and implementing them have not been fully identified (Wong, Li, & Yung, 2006). Hence, research on using PIs for self-evaluation and self-improvement is essential. The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) therefore conducted two projects funded by the Quality Education Fund (QEF) in 2001 and 2003 to establish a self-evaluation and self-improvement model for the Learning and Teaching Domain. The model has proved to be instrumental for preschools to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, consequently facilitating changes and improvement in their settings.

In December 2003, a revised edition of PIs for the Child Development Domain was published by the Education Manpower Bureau and Social Welfare Department (2003). In order to investigate early childhood professionals' understanding in using PIs to assess young children and the difficulties they experienced in the assessment process, the Project Team interviewed the principals, supervisors, middle managers and teachers from 5 schools who had participated in a pilot scheme of Quality Review conducted by the EMB in 2004. Most of the respondents indicated that they encountered difficulties in using the PIs to assess child development. First, they considered themselves inadequate because their knowledge and skills in child assessment were insufficient. Second, they were not sure about the appropriateness of the assessment tools they were using for assessing the children. Further, some areas of performance (e.g., cognitive and cultural development) were perceived as difficult to understand and to measure. Apart from finding it hard to link child development and assessment with programme implementation, many respondents were concerned with the extra time needed for systematic observation and record keeping.

The above findings reflect that self-evaluation in the Child Development Domain is hard for preprimary institutions and early childhood practitioners require immense support from experts in the field. The HKIED therefore conducted a project entitled "A Curriculum-based Child Assessment Model for Quality Early Childhood Programme" funded by the QEF to assist preschools to conduct self-assessment and self-improvement with special focus on the Child Development Domain.

Theoretical Framework of the Project

The theoretical framework for this project is based on the view that assessment should be classroom-based — i.e., assessment should be linked to curriculum and should be an authentic part of ongoing classroom life (McAfee & Leong, 2002). Research shows that early

childhood educators are moving away from the use of norm-referenced assessments (Pretti-Frontczak, Kowalski, & Brown, 2002). The use of informal assessment, commonly referred to as authentic assessment, has increased significantly during the past decade in early childhood settings (Horton & Bowman, 2001). It is believed that only through knowing children's current knowledge, skills and attitude that teachers can develop curriculum which builds upon their strengths and provides experiences that support their continued development and learning (Ratcliff, 2002). Hence, the project team constructed a curriculum-based model of assessment, within the PIs framework, to help early childhood practitioners to develop an assessment system which links the curriculum with the assessment of children's learning and development.

Another major theoretical underpinning of the project is that staff development and implementation of innovations go hand in hand, and collaboration and cooperation are essential for implementing changes in schools (Fullan, 2001). Successful improvement entails learning how to implement changes, which should be supported by a variety of formal inputs, such as workshops and informal ones, like teacher-exchange. In summarizing a brief history of school improvement research in the United States, Teddlie and Stringfield (2006) highlighted the importance of ongoing teacher support. They argued that teachers were unlikely to grow if they were not provided with "ongoing professional development on topics relevant to the intersection of the reform's goals and the teacher's areas of needed growth". (p. 34)

Research has also shifted the focus of teachers' professional development from individual effort to communities of learners where staff co-construct meanings and reflect on their practice to initiate change. Teachers, like all learners, extend and expand their understanding of teaching through a variety of socially-mediated contexts (Briscoe, 1996; Fairbanks & LaGrone, 2006). Lieberman (1990) and Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995) suggested schools to establish collaborative relationship through reciprocal networks so that practitioners can help each other to achieve negotiated goals, engender

enthusiasm, share resources and create synergy to effect changes in their settings.

There has been recognition of the benefits of institutions of higher education working closely with schools to implement school improvement programmes. However, at times, problems were experienced by a one-way power dynamic that placed the institution as the holders of expert knowledge. When reflecting on the process of evaluating their Effective Early Learning Project conducted in the United Kingdom, Pascal and Bertram (1997) firmly held that a democratic approach which encourages practitioners to work in a mutually open, honest and supportive partnership was essential to effect successful school self-evaluation and improvement.

Project Design

Aims

Incorporating the parameters of the school self-assessment and improvement model established in the previous studies (Wong, Li, & Yung, 2004) and the child assessment procedures established by McAfee and Leong (2002), the project team aims to equip the practitioners with a strong theoretical foundation and develop practices that align with current trends of early childhood assessment at all levels. Subsequently, a project entitled “A Curriculum-based Child Assessment Model for Quality Early Childhood Programme” was conducted from September 2005 to September 2007 with a view to:

1. support preschools to use performance indicators to assess children’s development and to use the data for self-evaluation;
2. empower practitioners to improve their child assessment practice and sustain change by working collaboratively in a reciprocal network;
3. to construct an authentic child assessment model that can be used by preschools in Hong Kong;
4. enhance the professional development of practitioners by building on the knowledge and skills needed to integrate curriculum with

assessment to capture children's development and learning in their daily activities; and

5. work in collaboration with preschool practitioners to develop assessment instruments such as portfolios, checklists, anecdotal records and other tools appropriate for use in local early childhood settings.

Methodology

Action research can be employed as an evaluative tool, which can assist in self-evaluation whether the "self" be an individual or an institution (Johnson, 1993). Hence the methodology for this project followed Elliott's (1991) model of action research:

1. Identify and clarify the general idea
2. Describe and explain the facts of the situation
3. Construct the general plan
4. Develop the next action step: monitor effectiveness
5. Implement the next action step: monitor effectiveness

Findings from each step of the process were documented thoroughly in order to monitor the process. The model aims to provide signpost to guide preschools in assessing young children through the self-assessment and improvement process and seeks to empower practitioners to meet the diverse needs of their preschool contexts to achieve quality child assessment.

Participants

Fifteen early childhood settings, including 13 kindergartens and two child care centres were invited to participate in the project. Samples were randomly selected from 10 districts in Hong Kong. The size of the settings chosen ranged from 70 to only 8 teaching staff. Fifteen academic staff from the Department of Early Childhood

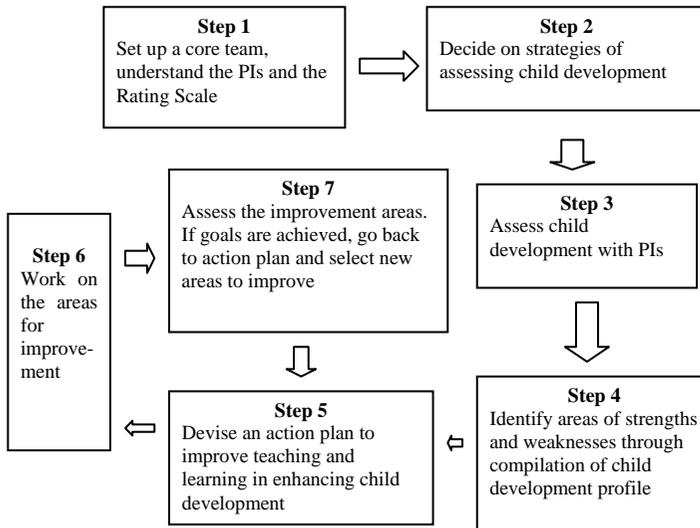
Education of the HKIEd served as consultants and each setting was assigned with one consultant. Thirty children, 10 from each grade (K1 to K3), and 4 teachers, including the three class teachers and a head teacher, were drawn from each setting to participate in this project. A total of 150 children and 60 teachers form the samples of this project.

Procedure

This project has one overarching theme: facilitating the implementation of curriculum-based child assessment of the participating settings through a self-evaluation and improvement process. Based upon the framework of school self-evaluation and improvement developed by Wong et al. (2004) while focusing on the child assessment domain, a 7-step model was used as a prototype for implementation (see Figure 1).

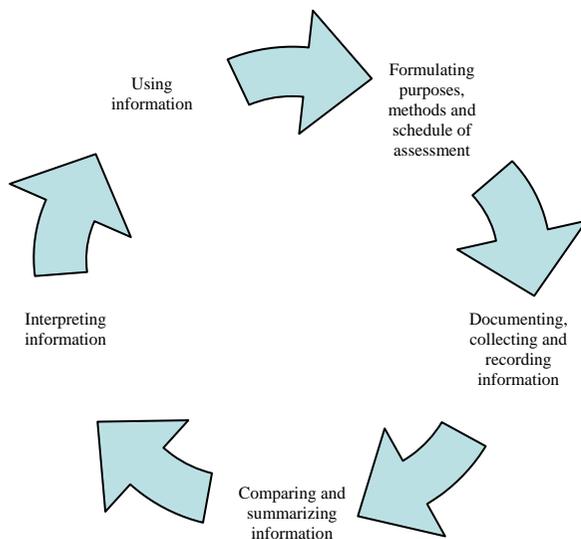
Step 1: Set up a core team and understand the Performance Indicators

Fullan (1997) holds that in order for any innovation to succeed, implementers have to gain a clear understanding of what to do and change in order to put the innovation into practice. At the outset, the 4 participants from each setting established a core team who worked closely with their consultants. Four series of training workshops were conducted for the participants from the 15 settings to co-construct understanding on young children's development and make out ways to use PIs on the Child Development Domain to assess children's learning and development. The core team leaders were then expected to arrange in-house workshops in their settings to inform all staff of the current trends in child assessment, and help them to acquire skills in conducting curriculum-based child assessment. The assigned consultant for each setting rendered due support in this connection.

Figure 1: Self-evaluation and Improvement Model

Step 2: Decide on strategies of assessing children's development

The participating settings adopted the assessment cycle adapted from McAfee and Leong (2002) which involves the following major decisions: deciding the purpose and the content of assessment, scheduling assessment, collecting and recording information, compiling and summarizing information, interpreting information, and using information. Practitioners had to plan, at the outset, how these procedures would be incorporated in their teaching and how data of children's performance could be reported (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Curriculum-based Child Assessment Model

A set of child assessment tools, entitled “Child Development Rating Scale” was developed by the HKIED Project Team (2005) earlier on. The Scale re-organised the items in the PI and assigned each item with a rating scale of three performance levels, to facilitate child observations in the classroom. In the first year, the participating schools were required to conduct child assessment specific to one area in the PIs during which they were able to explore the strategies, methods and tools for implementing authentic assessment. The rating scales were revised continuously upon receiving feedback from the participants. In the second year, the participants were required to conduct child assessment in all five areas by integrating assessment into their curriculum.

Though the participating schools were encouraged to conduct a comprehensive assessment on the children, individual school was free to select the developmental areas they wished to work on based on their available resources and the capabilities of their staff. The participating schools, with the support of the consultants, had to explore ways of observing and soliciting evidence on children's performance in the teaching and learning process.

Step 3: Assess child development using PIs

Data collection is an essential part of any evaluation process (Nevo, 1995). After identifying the ways of collecting information in Step 2 and what information to collect in Steps 3, participants started to gather data on children's performance using the Rating Scale. Both formative and summative assessments were used to provide evidence of children's developmental levels.

Step 4: Identify areas of strengths and weaknesses through compilation of child developmental profile

The collected data were compiled and analyzed to develop child development profiles at the individual, class and school levels. A workshop was conducted to familiarize project participants with using Excel to analyze information collected from child observation.

The data also provided significant evidence-based information for settings to make judgments on areas of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, instructional and assessment design which would help each setting to come up with plans for improvement.

Step 5: Devise an action plan to improve teaching

The consultants worked in partnership with the participants to go through the first four steps of the cycle. Monthly meetings were held to promote networking, sharing of good practices in child assessment and experiences in implementing the project between the participants. These

processes helped to ensure that the curriculum-based model was within the grasp of all those who worked with young children. After identifying the major strengths and weaknesses, individual schools would draft an action plan for improvement. In the later stage of the project, the participants gradually took over responsibility for the improvement process outlined in Steps 6 and 7.

Project Evaluation Method

The project was evaluated on the evidence of improvement of assessment practices in the fifteen preschools participated in the project. The PIs were used as the basis to evaluate the performance of young children's development and the evaluation methods were accorded with qualitative data analysis.

A survey on the effectiveness of the project in achieving the stated objectives was conducted at the end of the project. A self-reported questionnaire was designed to examine the changes occurred in the participating schools during and after project implementation. The design of the questionnaire sought to evaluate the impact of the professional support provided and identify difficulties and issues in the use of the PIs to assess child development (see Appendix). Sixty participants, including 15 principals and 45 teachers, were invited to participate in the survey and 50 completed questionnaires were received.

A semi-structured focus group interview was also conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the project as well as to clarify and elaborate on the information collected from the questionnaire. A total of 30 participants, two from each setting, were invited to join the interview. Respondents were divided into two groups to allow more time for reflection. The interview data were recorded, verbatim transcribed, coded and categorized into major themes and categories.

Results

The survey shows that the project has caused changes in participants' perception of assessment and consequently their assessment practices. Summary of results pertaining to the changes is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Results of Questions Related to Changes Brought about by the Project

Aspects of Change Q2-Q5 (N = 50)	Degree of change (in valid percent)			
	Substantial	Fair	Some	Not at all
Teachers' assessment practices	16.0	74.0	10.0	0.0
Teachers' understanding of PIs (Child Development Domain)	8.0	78.0	10.0	4.0
Teachers' conception of assessment	0.0	78.0	16.0	6.0
Teachers' conception of assessment of young children	4.0	74.0	14.0	6.0

Results of the survey reveal that the project has made considerable impact on the participating settings in various aspects including teachers' knowledge of child development, assessment practice, curriculum design, teaching and learning effectiveness, school development, teacher development and teacher-parent relationships.

1. Enhancing the professional development of practitioners by building on their knowledge of child development and assessment

The majority of the respondents indicated that the project has changed their perceptions of child assessment (see Table 1), especially in promoting their awareness of using evidence to support their judgment on children's performance. Many used words like "meaningful", "insightful" and "useful" when asked to express their feelings towards the Curriculum-based Assessment model. This model, which served to guide early childhood practitioners' assessment practices in various stages of the assessment cycle, had proved to be beneficial to both the practitioners and children:

Teacher L: In the past, assessment was not linked to teaching and learning. Above all else, the project has given us insights into how assessment can be embedded in the curriculum.

Teacher B & C: We used to make judgment on whether children were able to perform a certain task and that's it. But now we are aware of the importance of using the assessment information to guide us plan our teaching to meet children's needs.

Most of the respondents indicated that they were able to link assessment with their school curriculum through implementing the curriculum-based child assessment model, and would try to adapt the model to their existing assessment system.

Teacher O: The project has changed our assessment practices. We used to conduct written assessment like tests and dictations. I now find children less stressful after the curriculum-based assessment model is implemented.

Teacher M: I truly believe that authentic assessment enables us to understand children's development better.

Many of them noted that the project had enhanced their knowledge of child development and consequently their assessment practices were improved:

Teacher A: The project has enhanced our knowledge of what to observe when assessing children. In the area of cognitive development, for example, we now know that we have to look for evidence that reflect children's problem-solving capability and the development of mathematical concepts.

Teacher B: I also agree that we have become more familiar with how children understand the features of objects and the cause and effect relationship in the area of cognitive development. The revised PIs (the Rating Scale) provides concrete descriptions on the developmental characteristics of young children. This helps us make judgment on where a child is at on a developmental continuum.

Teacher D: In the past, the child assessment information we collected were not comprehensive enough to cover all the developmental domains.

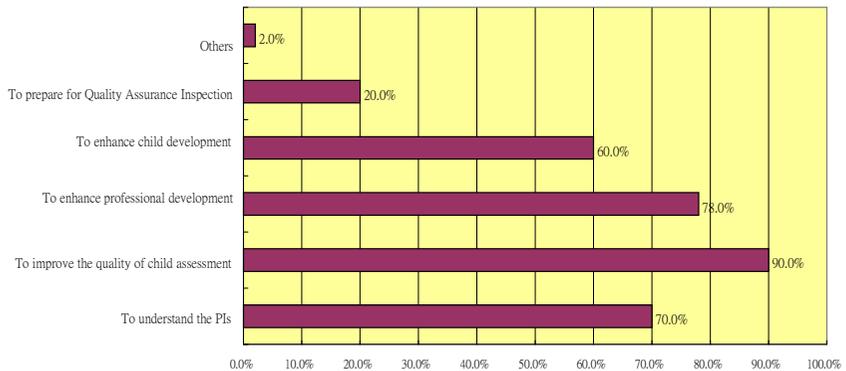
The project has helped us to fine tune our child observation strategies and skills.

The survey reveals that the project has brought cognitive changes to early childhood practitioners who are now ready to employ a more rigorous and systematic assessment strategy based upon the best knowledge they have acquired about quality child assessment.

2. *Enhancing practitioners' assessment practice*

Most of the respondents indicated that the main reason for joining was to improve the quality of child assessment (see Figure 3) and the project has helped them to achieve this end.

Figure 3: Reasons for Participating in the Project



Many interviewees reflected on the changes in the way they assess young children.

Teacher H: In the past, observations were conducted sporadically and only limited to children's social competency. The project has helped us develop a more comprehensive framework in child observation.

Teacher Q: By linking assessment to curriculum, we can plan assessment well in advance and know for sure what evidence we need to validate our judgment on children's performance.

Teacher G: In the past, we collected a bulk of data but kept them unprocessed since we did not know how to analyse the data. Now we acquire the dexterity to handle the data. We would also make use of the data to review our curriculum.

Informed by the project that assessment practices should mirror the dynamic process of constructivist learning that promotes holistic children development, practitioners now try to utilize various techniques for gathering and analyzing evidence on children's learning and development. The project shows that good assessment practice must build upon the best knowledge of the development of young children.

3. Facilitating the use of PIs to assess children's development using the data for improving teaching

In the past, many early childhood practitioners tended to use norm-referenced tasks to determine whether children passed or failed in what was taught. The PIs serves as an important reference for the practitioners to embark on an assessment method which requires observational techniques focusing on the process measures of young children's learning and development.

The set of rating scales on the five child development domains developed by the project team in collaboration with the participants (HKIEd Project Team, 2005) has proved to be helpful and user-friendly:

Teacher F: The rating scale, using PIs as framework, provides a comprehensive coverage of the developmental characteristics of children to guide our observation... It also provides us with a goal and direction to identify strengths and target skills that need strengthening... If a child is at Level 1, I'll help him achieve Level 2. Further, the descriptors pertaining to the levels of performance in the developmental continuum provide us with a wide range of vocabularies and rubrics for writing summative reports...

Teacher C & B: The PIs in the rating scale are extremely useful. They help us make judgment on which level of performance a child is at along the developmental continuum.

Teacher H: We have experienced difficulties in the first year in using the rating scale. It is difficult to make judgment on the level of achievement of children. But after practicing one year, we are familiarized with the indicators and descriptors and are able to use the instrument effectively.

In addition to improved understanding of the PIs in the Domain of Child Development, interviewees also noted that they had become more reflective in evaluating their curriculum design and pedagogical approaches:

Teacher I & K: Our assessment practices have become more systematic. We now understand how to use the assessment results to inform our teaching as we understand the strengths and weaknesses of the children.

Teacher O & N: We have learnt to challenge them (the children) with questions to extend their learning while undertaking child observations, rather than just documenting what they can or cannot do.

Teacher O: The project has helped us understand why some children do not display the desired learning outcomes and we can use the information to evaluate the appropriateness of our curriculum.

Teachers D, T, & H: We have taken this opportunity to review and reshape our curriculum.

4. Promoting school development through empowering the practitioners to effect change

The survey shows that the professional support rendered by the project team was found very helpful to the participants. Respondents' feedback pertaining to the professional support they received is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Feedback on Professional Support from the Project

Nature of support Q7- Q10(N = 50))	Perception (in valid percent)			
	Extremely helpful	Helpful	Fairly helpful	No help at all
Seminars and workshops conducted by project consultants	6.0	78.0	12.0	4.0
Monthly meetings	6.0	68.0	20.0	6.0
Seminars conducted by overseas scholars	8.0	54.0	30.0	8.0
School-based support rendered by consultants	16.0	72.0	6.0	6.0

When asked to comment on the ways the project had served to enhance their motivation to make change and improvement, the respondents placed great emphasis on the professional support they received from the project team, in particular, their own project consultant..

Teacher E: Our consultant encouraged a great deal of interaction and exchange of ideas during our contacts.

Teacher Q: At least we know who to turn to when we experienced difficulties, She (consultant) has helped us clarify our conceptions of PIs and advise us how to link curriculum to the assessment items.

It is evident that over the two-year period, the consultants had played an important role in facilitating the development of the participating schools. They had helped the staff to develop knowledge and understandings of the PIs; and explore ways to assess children's learning and development. This process had also enabled the staff to reflect on their practice and identify areas of change.

The majority of the respondents highly regarded the seminar series conducted by the consultants and the opportunities of experience sharing with peers from other settings during training workshops and regular group meetings:

Teacher R: The training workshops have helped us take a giant leap in our understanding of the theory and practice of the assessment model as well as the developmental sequence of young children...

Teacher R: The regular meetings played an important role in familiarizing us with the new assessment model. We treasure the experience of learning from and supporting one another as we all explored the same domain.

Teacher S: I'm very thankful to members of our partner schools who were so generous to share their experiences with us. The culture of sharing and helping each other should be promoted.

The networking strategy has helped the participants to know each other and understand the strengths and constraints of their diverse contexts. The project confirms that both intra- and inter-preschool collaboration through reciprocal networks increases the likelihood of facilitating school change and improvement.

5. Enhancing teacher-parent communication

Some practitioners found that information from the authentic assessment had fostered teacher-parent communication:

Teacher B: We now have a wealth of information to share with parents that will reassure them about their child's progress as a learner...

Teacher C: Parents are now more impressed by our interpretation of children's performance based on the work samples instead of just numerical score or a letter grade. Parents will then understand better the holistic development of their children.

The project reveals that narrative report is an appropriate way to summarize preschool children's progress. Curriculum-based assessment enables teachers to collect useful data to substantiate the child's progress towards major classroom goals and objectives as well as information on the child's uniqueness.

Implications

The survey has revealed the effectiveness of the project in achieving its desired objectives. There are several elements contributing to the success of the project.

1. *A clear framework to facilitate self-evaluation focusing on child assessment*

The curriculum-based child assessment model provides the practitioners with practical guidelines on key considerations to be made when organizing child assessment. In implementing the child assessment model, the participants were able to review simultaneously their curriculum design and pedagogical practice. It thus also serves as a school self-evaluation and improvement exercise. Among the 15 participating settings, quite a number of them have shown their initiatives and commitment to improve their assessment practice in the following school year, upon the completion of the project (see Table 3). It confirms that the school self-evaluation and improvement cycle developed by Wong et al. (2004) is generally applicable for implementing school change.

Table 3: Improvement Initiatives Scheduled by the 15 Participating Settings

Improvement Initiatives	Implementing the curriculum-based model of assessment	Reshaping curriculum to align with the PIs	Revising the way of record keeping & reporting	Conducting in-house staff development on child assessment	Making use of the assessment instrument developed by the project team
Number of Settings	15	11	13	12	15

2. *Acknowledging the importance of staff development*

Successful change involves learning how to do something new. As Fullan (1997) points out, staff development and implementation of innovations go hand in hand and assistance should focus on the school

level, that is, groups of teachers rather than on unlinked individuals. Early childhood practitioners need to be given the opportunity to acquire the skills needed in changing the culture of assessment. Despite the fact that teachers experienced difficulties at the beginning, they gradually developed commitment to the changes when they began to master the skills of curriculum-based assessment. As time and energy are crucial for acquiring skills for implementing any innovation, school leaders must reprioritize school goals and reschedule daily routines to make rooms for professional development.

The seminars, training workshops and monthly meetings conducted outside of the schools together with the in-house support from the consultants have proved to be effective staff development practice. Such a model not only provided practitioners with training in knowledge and skills needed to facilitate change, it also provided follow-up practice, coaching and support specific to the setting, thus facilitated the building of a critical mass of competent teachers who would be able to steer the school in the right direction.

On the other hand, during the project period, the practitioners regularly gave feedback to the project consultants on the design of the rating scale, mainly on issues pertaining to the validity and reliability of the assessment items. Through contributing to the development of the rating scale, they had become more critical and reflective on how the ratings should be determined when assessing the children.

3. Establishing school support networks

Sharing of good practices during regular group meetings was significant to the enhancement of the quality of assessment in preschools as participants were provided with opportunities to learn from each other. Feedback from partner schools engendered enthusiasm to generate change within the participating schools. It is evident that sharing of ideas and experiences with consultants and partner schools contributed significantly to the curriculum development and improvement of assessment practices. Upon completion of the project, the majority of the participating settings has not only shown keen interest in adopting the curriculum-based assessment model, but are also

prepared to serve as resource schools to support other settings in the aspect of child assessment. Schools need to be encouraged to establish school improvement networks dedicated to quality learning and teaching and effective implementation.

Conclusion

The survey has revealed that participating settings have benefited considerably from the change of assessment culture. Linking assessment to the curriculum has also led to the review and reshaping of the curriculum, and enhancement of effective teaching pedagogies. Results of the project have reinstated that assessment is a significant component of the curriculum and an indispensable constituent of the learning and teaching process. These components are not mutually exclusive and should be considered as an integral part of ongoing classroom activities.

Principals/Centre Supervisors and teachers that joined the project valued the opportunities of getting support from the consultants and other participating schools. The seminar series have provided important input for the practitioners on knowledge of child development as well as theory and practice of curriculum-based child assessment. Regular meetings conducted alternatively in schools have proved to be valuable for inter-schools sharing and exchange. Practical experiences shared by different settings have provided impetus for change and improvement of assessment practices. The consultants have empowered project participants by collating ideas and sharing experiences on how problems can be resolved. The Child Development Rating Scale, developed by the consultants building on the PIs framework, has proved to be an effective instrument in authentic child assessment for Hong Kong early childhood practitioners.

This project also reveals that authentic assessment facilitates teacher-parent communication. However, curriculum-based assessment is an alternative assessment which is foreign to many parents. To many early childhood settings, moving from letter grades to narrative report requires the understanding and support of parents. Parents should be explained the rationale of authentic assessment and the potential benefits to their children from the very beginning. The concepts on child

development and how children learn should also be explained. Promoting parental involvement in the assessment process is a feature early childhood settings need to consider when implementing change and improvement in their assessment cultures.

Change and improvement will not be achieved overnight and without effort (Fullan, 1997). It cannot be denied that implementing curriculum-based assessment is a demanding task which requires much knowledge, time, effort and energy from early childhood practitioners. However, for those who joined the project, their passion for teaching has kept them through the daunting processes of child assessment and evaluation with persistence, courage and commitment. It is hoped that the success of this project will be a source of inspiration for those who are about to embark on the self-evaluation and improvement journey.

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Appendix

Curriculum-based Child Assessment Model for Quality Early Childhood Programme Project Evaluation Survey

Please add ✓ in the appropriate box(es).

1. What does your school aim for in participating the “A Curriculum-based Model of Child Assessment for Quality Early Childhood Programme Project”? (You can choose **more than one** options for this question.)
 - to understand Performance Indicators (Preprimary Institutions) in the Domain of Child Development
 - to enhance the quality of child assessment of our programme
 - to enhance professional development of teachers
 - to facilitate growth and development of our pupils
 - to prepare for quality assurance inspection
 - others (please specify)_____

2. To what extent have your assessment practices been changed after you have participated in the project?
 - substantial
 - fair
 - some
 - not at all

3. To what extent has your understanding in the 5 main areas of the Child Development Domains of the Performance Indicators been changed after you have participated in the project?
 - substantial
 - fair
 - some
 - not at all

4. To what extent has your conception of child assessment been changed after you have participated in the project?
- substantial
 - fair
 - some
 - not at all
5. To what extent has your perception of child development been changed after you have participated in the project?
- substantial
 - fair
 - some
 - not at all
6. How would you describe about “child assessment’ after you have participated in the project? (You can choose **more than one** options for this question.)
- meaningful
 - insightful
 - difficult to understand
 - chaotic
 - interesting
 - not practical
 - difficult to handle
 - nothing novel
7. How do you think about the workshops and seminars conducted by the HKIED during the project?
- extremely useful
 - useful
 - fairly useful
 - not useful at all

8. What do you think about the monthly meetings?
- extremely useful
 - useful
 - fairly useful
 - not useful at all
9. What do you think about the seminars conducted by the overseas scholars?
- extremely useful
 - useful
 - fairly useful
 - not useful at all
10. What do you think about the project consultants' support?
- extremely useful
 - useful
 - fairly useful
 - not useful at all
11. Have you experienced difficulties during the implementation of the curriculum-based model of assessment?
- a lot
 - some
 - little
 - not at all
12. What kinds of constraints do you have during the implementation of change?
- shortage of time
 - curriculum
 - school management
 - teachers
 - resources
 - parents
 - others (please specify)_____

13. How well have you mastered the child assessment practices introduced in the project?

- extremely well
- fairly well
- not sure
- just a little
- not at all

Other comments

14. I think the following aspects of the project are most valuable:

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

15. I think the following aspects of the project need to be improved:

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

強化幼教機構運用表現指標評估兒童學習及發展

黃艾珍、容燕文、張杏冰

摘要

評估和評鑑是教育工作者不可或缺的任務。香港教統局（現稱教育局）於 2003 年 12 月編訂了表現指標（兒童發展範疇），以助幼教機構評估兒童學習和發展。本文報告一項由香港教育學院舉辦，為期兩年的學校支援計劃。是項計劃不單強化了十五所幼教機構運用表現指標評估兒童學習和發展的知識和技能，並且協助教師有效運用兒童評估資料進行自我評鑑。除此之外，本文也論述是項計劃的成果及其對學校改變兒童評估文化的啓示。

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