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Rethinking Assessment with Purpose in Mind

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Overview

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3. An investigation conducted in Hong Kong: "Assessment for Learning in Hong Kong School"
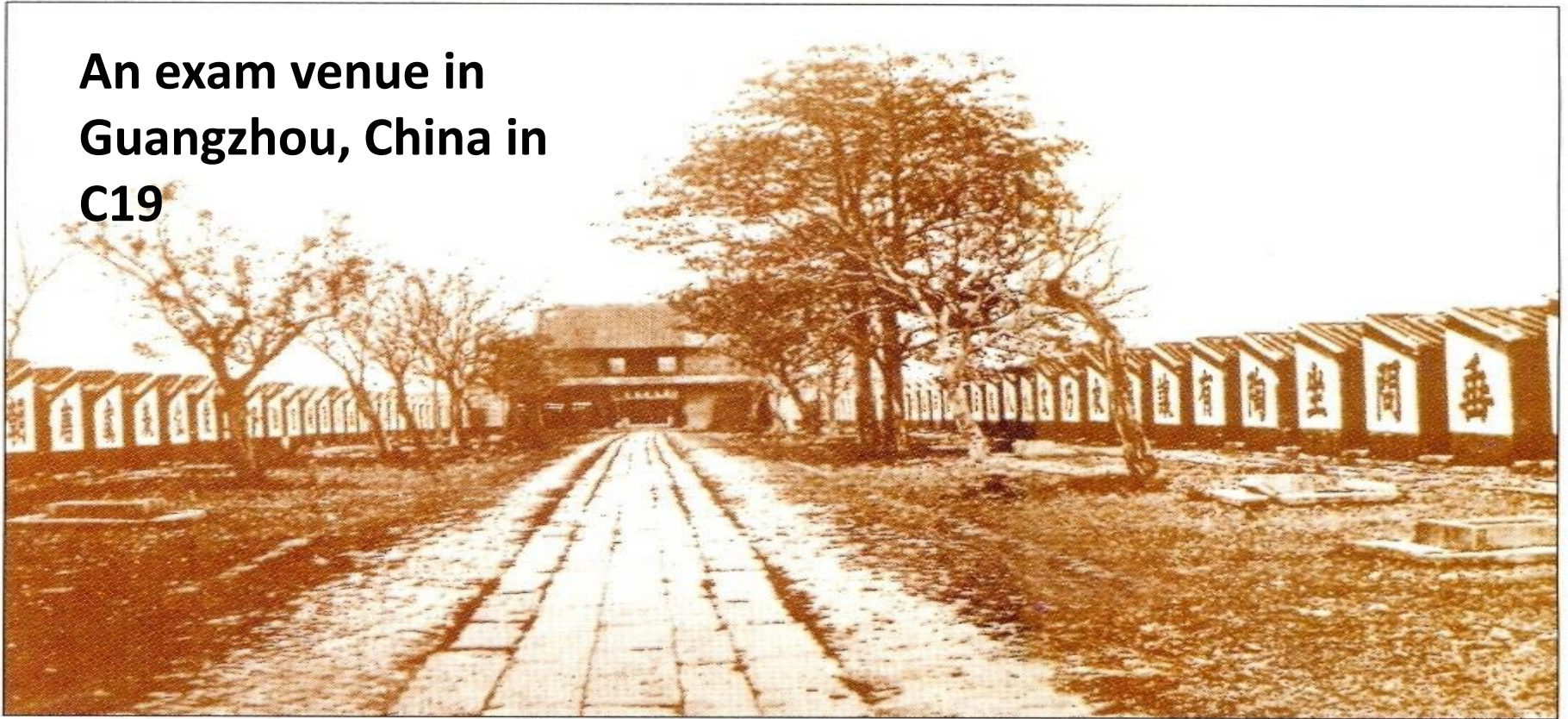
 3.1 Rationale for the investigation

 3.2 The investigation & an AfL Professional Development Programme

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1. The changing views of assessment over time

An exam venue in Guangzhou, China in C19

19世紀70年代，香港士子需前赴廣州考科舉試，圖為當時的考試場地──廣州貢院。

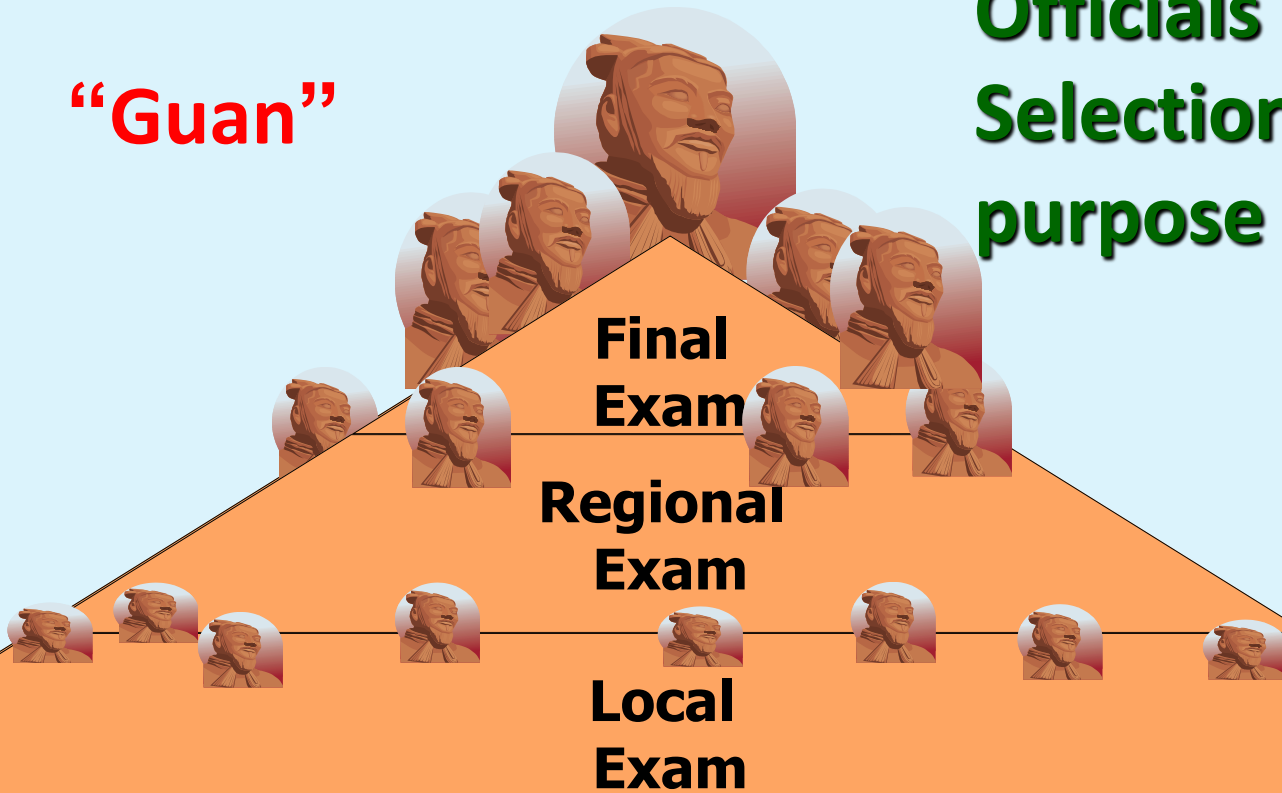# 1.1 Assessment in the eastern world in the past:

- Since the Western Zhou Dynasty in China (1027–771 BC), a regular performance examination system for selecting government officials was used by different dynasties with only a few minor interruptions in between.

- In the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1912) - three-stage selection examination system: (i) the local examination; (ii) the regional examination, and; (iii) the highest level examination organized by the central government.

- This imperial examinations had a far reaching impact on its neighbours – e.g Vietnam, South Korea, Japan.

Berry, R. (2011). Assessment reforms around the world. In R. Berry, & B. Adamson (Eds.), *Assessment Reform in Education: Policy and Practice* (pp.89-102). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Three-stage selection exam system in China in the past

"Guan"

Officials Selection purpose

Final Exam

Regional Exam

Local Exam

1.1 (continued) Assessment in the western world in the past

- C18 patronage or nomination system for hiring employees
- C19 industrial capitalist economy flourished
- An increasing need for trained workers
- Standandised examination system for streaming and selection purposes

1.1 (continued) The purpose of assessment today:

International Community	Compare standards and achievement across countries
• Society	• Select students for occupations, further study etc.
• Teachers	• ???
• Students	• ???
• System	• ???

What is the nature of this kind of assessment?
What are the impacts of this kind of assessment?

1.2 International Trends in Assessment

- An understanding of process is now seen as, at least, equally important to a knowledge of facts.
- There is an increasing use of continuous assessment and coursework to make judgement of student performance.
- A lot more attention to what the student will/can learn rather than what the teacher plans to teach. Student involvement in the assessment process is encouraged.
- Group assessment is more frequently used.
- Educational programmes, course outlines and lesson plans are written in a way that assessment is one main component in facilitating teaching and learning.
- Requirements and expectations in assessment are made clear to students so that they will know different standards of work and then set goals to achieve the quality they aim for.

1.3 Learning theories and assessment conceptions

- Behaviourism roots in assessment that aims to check whether the learners have met the requirements as set (Assessment of Learning (AoL))
- Constructivism associates with assessment that aims to understand how the learner learns, what the learners can do or cannot do, and makes some deliberations and decisions on how to help the learner learn (Assessment for Learning (AfL))
- Metacognition associates with assessment that aims to enable learners to become autonomous learners (Assessment as Learning(AaL))

Berry, R. (2008). Assessment for Learning. Hong Kong University Press. (Ch.1. p.14)

FOR

Principle 1
Aligning assessment to teaching and learning

Teacher

Student

Principle 2
Exploring multi-dimensional assessment methods

Principle 3
Selecting assessments susceptible to learning

Principle 4
Drawing on joint-efforts amongst colleagues

Principle 5
Assessing students continuously

Principle 6
Allowing students' participation in assessment process

Principle 7
Using assessment to uncover learning

Principle 8
Making marking criteria accessible

Principle 9
Providing feedback

Principle 10
Analysing & reporting results

OF

System

AS

Ten assessment principles and the AoL, AfL, AaL Framework
(The basic structure of AoL, AfL, AaL is adapted from the Blueprint for Government Schools, State of Victoria, Department of Education & Training, Australia (2002)

2. The conceptions of Assessment for Learning (AfL)
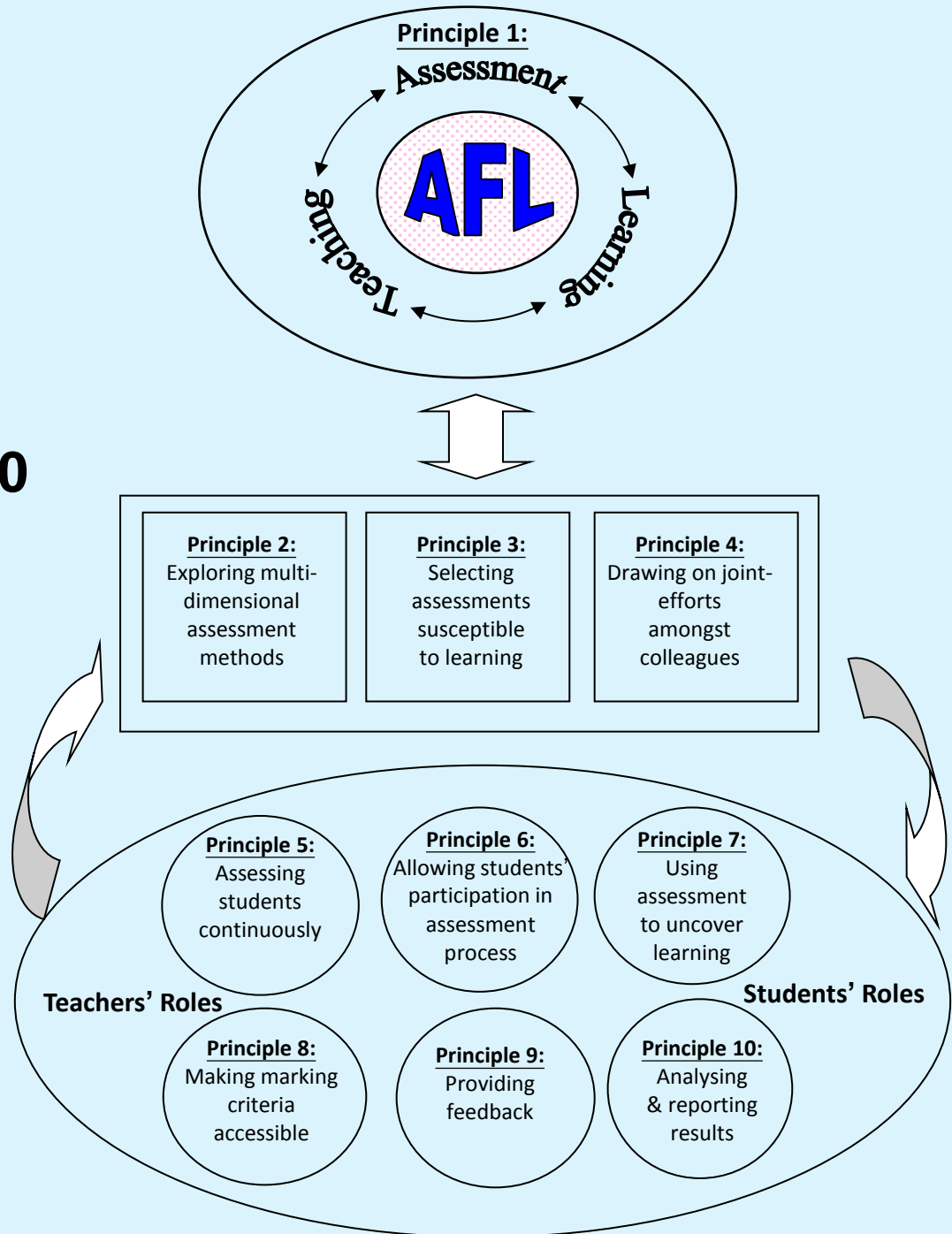
2.1 How assessment was viewed originally

2.2 Understanding Assessment for Learning

Berry (2014) "The fundamental principle of AfL is making a strong connection between assessment and learning. Being an integral part of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment cycle, assessment is used to induce, promote, and advance learning. It helps teachers to monitor student learning, identify the learning needs of the students during their learning progression, and, when the needs have been identified, provide direction or feedback to the students in the steps to be taken to enhance learning. Students' involvement in the assessment activities is taken seriously, as they are the main players of learning. The information gathered from assessment is interpreted and with the new understanding of student learning, decisions can be made on different educational levels including adjustment of teaching content and activities, modification of curriculum plans, and amendment of policies."

Berry, R. (2014, forthcoming). Assessment for Learning in Hong Kong School. Conceptions, Issues and Implications. In C. Marsh & C.K.Li (Eds.) Asia's High Performing Education Systems. Routledge.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) Implementation Framework: 10 AfL guiding principles & 50 AfL indicators

Berry, R. (2014, forthcoming). Assessment for Learning in Hong Kong School. Conceptions, Issues and Implications. In C. Marsh & C.K.Li (Eds.) Asia's High Performing Education Systems. Routledge.

Principle 1:
Assessment — AFL — Learning — Teaching

Principle 2:
Exploring multi-dimensional assessment methods

Principle 3:
Selecting assessments susceptible to learning

Principle 4:
Drawing on joint-efforts amongst colleagues

Teachers' Roles

Principle 5:
Assessing students continuously

Principle 6:
Allowing students' participation in assessment process

Principle 7:
Using assessment to uncover learning

Principle 8:
Making marking criteria accessible

Principle 9:
Providing feedback

Principle 10:
Analysing & reporting results

Students' Roles

AfL Principle 1: Aligning assessment to teaching and learning

AfL indicators 1-5:

1. The teacher aligns the assessment and teaching objectives with one another, as reflected through the curriculum.

2. The teacher uses assessment strategies / methods that match the teaching focuses of the curriculum.

3. The teacher uses assessment tasks that are related to the teaching content.

4. The teacher uses the information gathered from assessment to understand students' learning progress.

5. The teacher adjusts his/her curriculum and teaching after understanding about students' performances.

An example: a teaching plan

Objectives	Strategies / Activities	Assessment
Pupils are able to talk about their hobbies. **Pupils know the criteria for oral presentation**	**Motivation:** **1. Teacher talks about her hobby.** **Development :** **2. Pupils are invited to talk about their hobbies.** **3. Feedback from pupils' peers and the teacher. Teacher offers language help and teach the language use related to hobbies.** **4. Pupils revise the content of their own presentation** **Understanding assessment criteria:** **5. Teacher discusses with pupils about the assessment criteria for their oral presentation, for example, content, clarity, tone, voice projection, body language, interesting.** **6. Teacher asks a few pupils to talk about their hobby in front of the class.** **7. Based on the assessment criteria, teacher invites pupils to give comments. The teacher also gives feedback.** **8. In groups, pupils take turn to talk about their hobby. Pupils give peer feedback.** **Consolidation:** **9. Writing task as home assignment– My hobby** **10. Teacher assess pupils' work and re-conceptualise teaching and learning strategies.**	**- Peer assessment** **- Teacher assessment**

Principle 2: Exploring multi-dimensional assessment methods

AfL indicators 6-9:

6. The teacher uses different kinds of strategies/methods to assess students, for example, standardized paper-and-pencil tests and alternative assessment, for example, portfolio assessment, project assessment, worksheets, and observations.

7. The teacher uses various kinds of assessment strategies/methods to help student achieve different learning outcomes.

8. The teacher uses various kinds of assessment strategies/methods to cater for different learning needs.

9. The teacher uses different kinds of assessment strategies/methods to arouse students' interests in learning.

For example: Observation and oral questioning

During the English language lesson, the teacher goes to different groups to observe their work. She might ask them questions to find out how well they are responding to the exercise. She also notes down how accurately and fluently the students used English language to discuss.

Action in plan: The teacher may re-teach those parts which students felt confused. The teacher may work with students who need intensive support.

Principle 3: Selecting assessments susceptible to learning

AfL indicators 10-14:

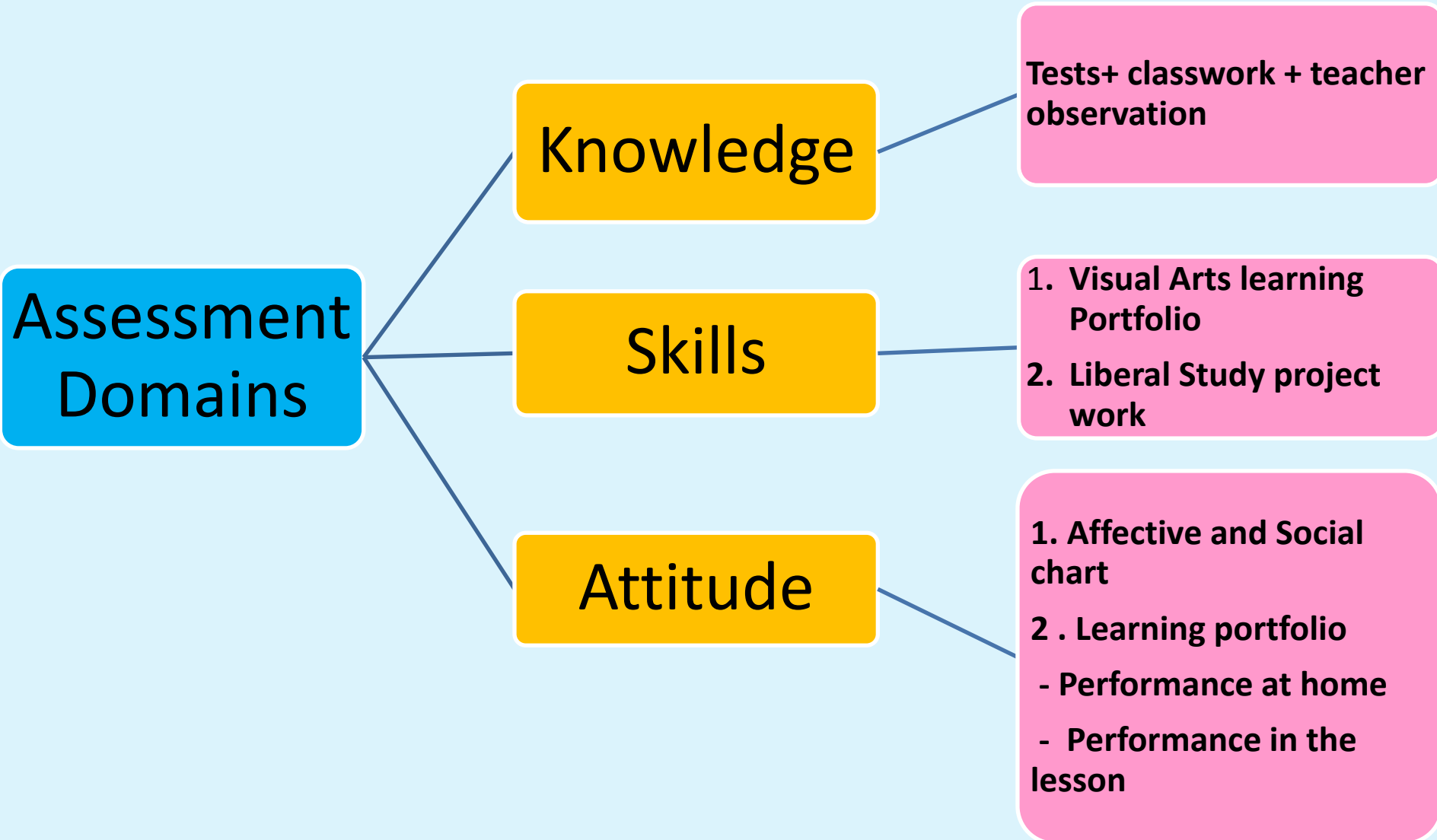| |
|---|
| 10. The teacher is aware of a variety of assessment strategies/methods. |
| 11. The teacher is aware of the differing functions of various types of assessment strategies/methods. |
| 12. The teacher is able to use various types of assessment strategies/methods for teaching. |
| 13. The teacher's selection of assessment strategies/methods provides students with a wealth of opportunities to learning. |
| 14. The teacher's selection of assessment strategies/methods provides students with multi-faceted learning. |

A School Example:

Assessment Domains

- **Knowledge** — Tests+ classwork + teacher observation

- **Skills**
  1. Visual Arts learning Portfolio
  2. Liberal Study project work

- **Attitude**
  1. Affective and Social chart
  2 . Learning portfolio
    - Performance at home
    - Performance in the lesson

Principle 4: Drawing on joint-efforts amongst colleagues

AfL indicators 15-18:

15. The teacher is involved in assessment planning activities.

16. The teacher discusses and mutually establishes assessment common standards with colleagues.

17. The teacher develops assessment activities collaboratively with colleagues.

18. The teacher regularly reviews with colleagues on the development and implementation of assessment activities in the school.

A discussion meeting

Principle 5: Assessing student continuously

AfL indicators 19-22:

19. The teacher gives students formative assessment (e.g. small assessment tasks to enable students learn progressively, periodical tests and examinations).
20. The teacher conducts observations to analyze the performance of their students during teaching.
21. After understanding students' learning progress, the teacher offers encouragements, guidance and provides students with constructive feedback.
22. The teacher gives students appropriate number of assessment activities.

An example: a unit plan

Principle 6: Allowing student's participation in assessment process

AfL indicators 23-31:

23. **The assignments the teacher designs help develop student learning.**
24. **The teacher communicates with his/her student what to be learnt and why they have to learn them.**
25. **The teacher facilitates students to work collaborative (e.g. in small groups or in pairs) in the purpose of helping them learn.**
26. **The teacher lets students check the assignments and lets them record the progress of their own learning.**
27. **The teacher allows students to reflect on and to discuss their own learning with others.**
28. **The teacher allows students to self-assess and provide feedback to their peers.**
29. **The teacher helps students understand what they have accomplished.**
30. **The teacher helps students see/understand the intended learning outcomes and get students to be involved in the assessment activities that support them to achieve these outcomes.**
31. **The teacher allows students to engage in discussing and establishing new learning goals.**

Visual Arts Portfolio

Introduction

This portfolio aims to enhance students' learning independence and their art appreciation abilities. It records students' learning progress for teachers' and parents' reference and follow-up work.

Contents

Principle 7: Using assessment to uncover learning

AfL indicators 32-35:

32. The teacher thinks that assessment can provide information which reflects what students have learnt and what are yet to be learnt.

33. The teacher is able to assess a broad range of learning outcomes.

34. The teacher uses formative assessment to provide continuous feedback as well as to plan future teaching and learning activities.

35. The teacher uses summative assessment to compare and report results, deliberate inter-class or inter-level curriculum plans.

An example: a unit plan

Principle 8: Making marking criteria accessible

AfL indicators 36-39:

36. The teacher clearly explains assessment tasks to his/her students.

37. The teacher helps students understand assessment criteria.

38. The teachers provides students with past students' work as examples, to demonstrate what is required of them in their courses.

39. The teacher asks students to present their work and take this as an opportunity to inform/show students the required standards.

Video: A lesson

Subject：__English____　Class：__Primary 4D___Date：__ 6 / 11_/2009___

Topic:	Super Mum
AfL principle:	**Making Marking Criteria Accessible**
General Objectives of the lesson:	**By the end of the lesson, students will be able to read the poem with intonation.**
Activities:	✎ **Step 1: T gives a brief introduction of this lesson.**
	✎ **Step 2: T introduces the criteria of being a good speaker and go through the assessment form with the class.**
	✎ **Step 3: T demonstrates how to read the poem with intonation. Ss read after T.**
	✎ **Step 4: Ss form in pairs and read aloud to each other. After that, they have to complete the assessment form (part A).**
	✎ **Step 5: Ss are encouraged to listen the opinions from their classmates.**
	✎ **Step 6: Ss find another partner and form pairs. Ss read aloud to each other and complete the assessment form (part B).**
	✎ **Step 7: Several Ss come out and read aloud the poem in front of the class.**
	✎ **Step 8: Ss fill in the self reflection form.**
Reflections/ Suggestions:	

Class: P.4D Name: _____

Date: _____

Criteria	Score
1. Fluently	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
2. Clearly	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
3. Pausing	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
4. Intonation	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
5. Pronunciation	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Speaking Assessment Form (Part A)

Assessed by:

_____

Criteria	Score
1. Fluently	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
2. Clearly	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
3. Pausing	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
4. Intonation	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
5. Pronunciation	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Speaking Assessment Form (Part B)

Assessed by:

_____

Principle 9: Providing feedback

AfL indicators 40-45:

40. The teacher offers compliments when students have achieved satisfying results.

41. The teacher offers specific comments on students' achievements.

42. The teacher explains why the answers are right or wrong.

43. When dealing with unsatisfactory work, the teacher gives concrete suggestions for improvement.

44. The teacher informs students of the best and of alternative methods to carry out assignments.

45. The teacher provides students with timely feedback to aid their learning.

An example of a mixed use of different kinds of feedback (written feedback)

A trip to Lamma Island

Last Saturday, ~~I and my family~~ *my family and I* went to Lamma Island for ~~holiday~~ *a day out*. We went there by ferry and it ~~was~~ took about 30 minutes to ~~go~~ *get* there. We went to a restaurant and we ate ~~many~~ seafood like fish, shrimps and oysters. It ~~is~~ *was* a delicious meal. After ~~we~~ *that* we went to ~~the~~ *a* street ~~with~~ *where we found* many shops. We saw a lot of interesting things there. Then we went to the beach to see people swim. Many people were there and the beach was very ~~crowd~~ *crowded (adj)*. We sat on the beach for a long time. We also took many photos on the beach. The view was very beautiful. Then we went back to the street to find things to eat because I *was* hungry. We went to a restaurant and we had some pizza and burgers and they are delicious. My mother bought me a t-shirt with a zebra ~~print~~ *printed* on it. I was very happy. The sun started to set and we went home by ferry. I felt very happy because I ~~have~~ *had* never been to Lamma Island before and I want to go there again in the future.

Well done, Isabella! ☺

You have described your day out to Lamma Island very clearly. To make your description more interesting, you could add a bit more details on some of the things you did or came across. For example, you went to a street with many shops. What kinds of shops were they? You may also consider presenting your ideas in a number of paragraphs.

Berry, R. (2008). *Assessment for Learning.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. (p.134)

Principle 10: Analysing & reporting results

AfL indicators 46-50:

46. The teacher analyzes quantitative data collected from the students.
47. The teacher analyzes qualitative data collected from the students.
48. The teacher determines which areas of the curriculum need modifications based on the results of the analysis.
49. The teacher uses quantitative reports to report on student performance.
50. The teacher uses narrative reports (such as attitudes) to report student performance.

An example: English speaking test (Qualitative data analysis)

English reading test (Quantitative data analysis)

Overall Results

Part	Q	A	B	C	D	Multiple Answers	Blank
1A	1	37.5%(96)	13.3%(34)	10.9%(28)	37.5% (96)	0.8%(2)	0(0)
	2	3.5%(9)	34%(87)	48.4%(124)	12.5%(32)	0.8%(2)	0.8%(2)
	3	3.5%(9)	77%(197)	16%(41)	2.7%(7)	0.4%(1)	0.4%(1)
	4	27.7%(71)	14.1%(36)	35.5% (91)	21.9%(56)	0(0)	0.8%(2)
	5	32.8%(84)	37.9% (97)	14.1%(36)	14.5%(37)	0(0)	0.8%(2)
1B	1	11.7%(30)	7.4%(19)	50.8%(130)	28.9%(74)	1.2%(3)	0(0)
	2	8.2%(21)	61.7%(158)	7%(18)	21.5%(55)	1.2%(3)	0.4%(1)
	3	10.9%(28)	6.6%(17)	20.3%(52)	59.8%(153)	2.3%(6)	0(0)
	4	3.5%(9)	16%(41)	70.7%(181)	8.2%(21)	1.2%(3)	0.4%(1)
	5	64.8%(166)	9%(23)	9%(23)	15.6%(40)	0(0)	1.6%(4)
	6	13.3%(34)	21.9%(56)	16.4%(42)	46.5%(119)	0.4%(1)	1.6%(4)
	7	23%(59)	44.5%(114)	12.9%(33)	17.6%(45)	0.8%(2)	1.2%(3)
2	1	13.3%(34)	14.5%(37)	10.5%(27)	59.8%(153)	0.4%(1)	1.6%(4)
	2	45.3%(116)	14.1%(36)	29.7%(76)	9%(23)	0.8%(2)	1.2%(3)
	3	4.7%(12)	21.9%(56)	53.1%(136)	17.2%(44)	0.4%(1)	2.7%(7)
	4	3.5%(9)	74.2%(190)	6.3%(16)	12.5%(32)	1.6%(4)	2%(5)
	5	34.8%(89)	6.6%(17)	15.6%(40)	39.1%(100)	1.6%(4)	2.3%(6)
	6	7.8%(20)	7.4%(19)	6.6%(17)	74.2%(190)	1.2%(3)	2.7%(7)
	7	27.3%(70)	8.6%(22)	53.5%(137)	7%(18)	0(0)	3.5%(9)
	8	7%(18)	23%(59)	27%(69)	37.5%(96)	0(0)	5.5%(14)
3	1	7.4%(19)	12.9%(33)	70.3%(180)	4.7%(12)	1.2%(3)	3.5%(9)
	2	32.8%(84)	45.3%(116)	12.5%(32)	5.5%(14)	0(0)	3.9%(10)
	3	52.3%(134)	17.2%(44)	10.9%(28)	12.1%(31)	1.2%(3)	6.3%(16)
	4	22.7%(58)	38.3%(98)	17.6%(45)	12.9%(33)	1.6%(4)	7%(18)
	5	9.8%(25)	13.3%(34)	15.6%(40)	52.3%(134)	0.8%(2)	8.2%(21)
	6	26.2%(67)	13.7%(35)	43.8%(112)	8.1%(21)	0(0)	8.2%(21)
	7	12.5%(32)	19.9%(51)	12.9%(33)	44.5%(114)	0.8%(2)	9.4%(24)

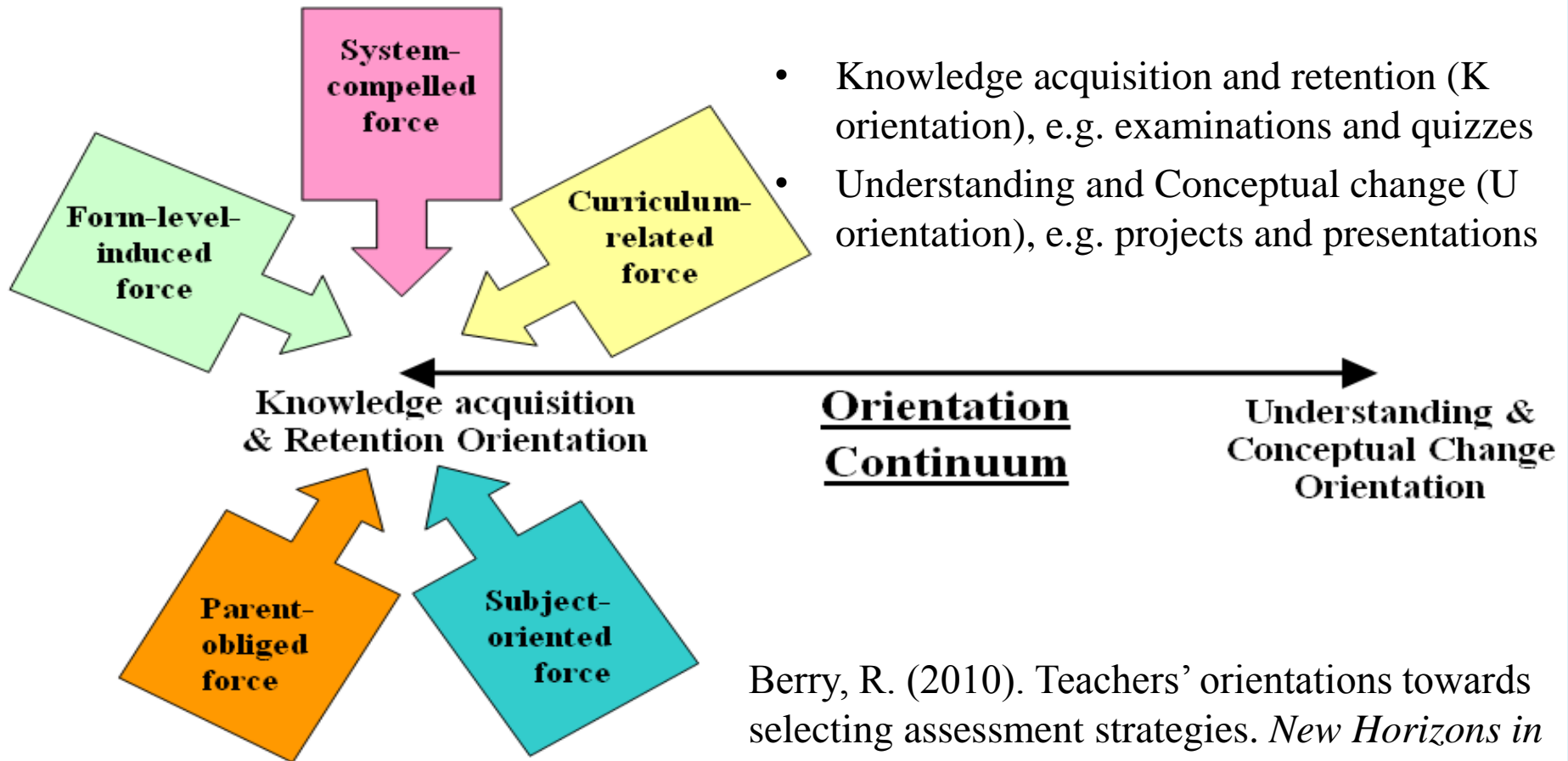# 3. An investigation conducted in Hong Kong: "Assessment for Learning in Hong Kong Schools"

3.1 Rationale for the investigation

- To improve student achievement across the curriculum, a growing body of research suggests that improving teacher quality and their capacity to use assessment as central to learning may be the most effective way to attain this goal (Black and Wiliam, 1998; the Assessment Reform Group, 1999)

- AfL entails using assessment to understand where the students are in their learning progression, to identify their learning needs and after that, provide direction to help students move forward (Berry, 2008).

- Teachers are key to reform success (Gardner et al., 2011).
- To prepare teachers to meet new educational demands, many nations organized different kinds of professional development.
  - Some organized extensive professional development programmes
  - Some mandated the number of formal professional development hours per year
  - optional professional development seminars and workshops.
- However, in general, the results were not as desirable as anticipated.
  - For example, The report, *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* (1995, p.6f), teacher training institutions yet did not produce any significant improvement in school quality
  - Nieto (2009) reports that, too often, teachers find that their professional development is both inadequate and irrelevant.

In this investigation (Berry, 2010) , it was found that:
- There were forces influencing teachers' orientations towards selecting assessment strategies
- Teachers tended to choose "K orientation" related assessment strategies

- Knowledge acquisition and retention (K orientation), e.g. examinations and quizzes
- Understanding and Conceptual change (U orientation), e.g. projects and presentations

Berry, R. (2010). Teachers' orientations towards selecting assessment strategies. *New Horizons in Education*, 58(1), 96-107.

3.2 The investigation: Assessment for Learning in Hong Kong Schools

This QEF project, jointly conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Education and Institute of Education, University of London, aims to improve teacher quality and their capacity to use assessment for learning (AfL) for classroom teaching.

Objectives:

■ to provide teachers with a school-embedded AfL professional development programme;

■ to investigate the impact of the AfL professional development programme on teaching and learning;

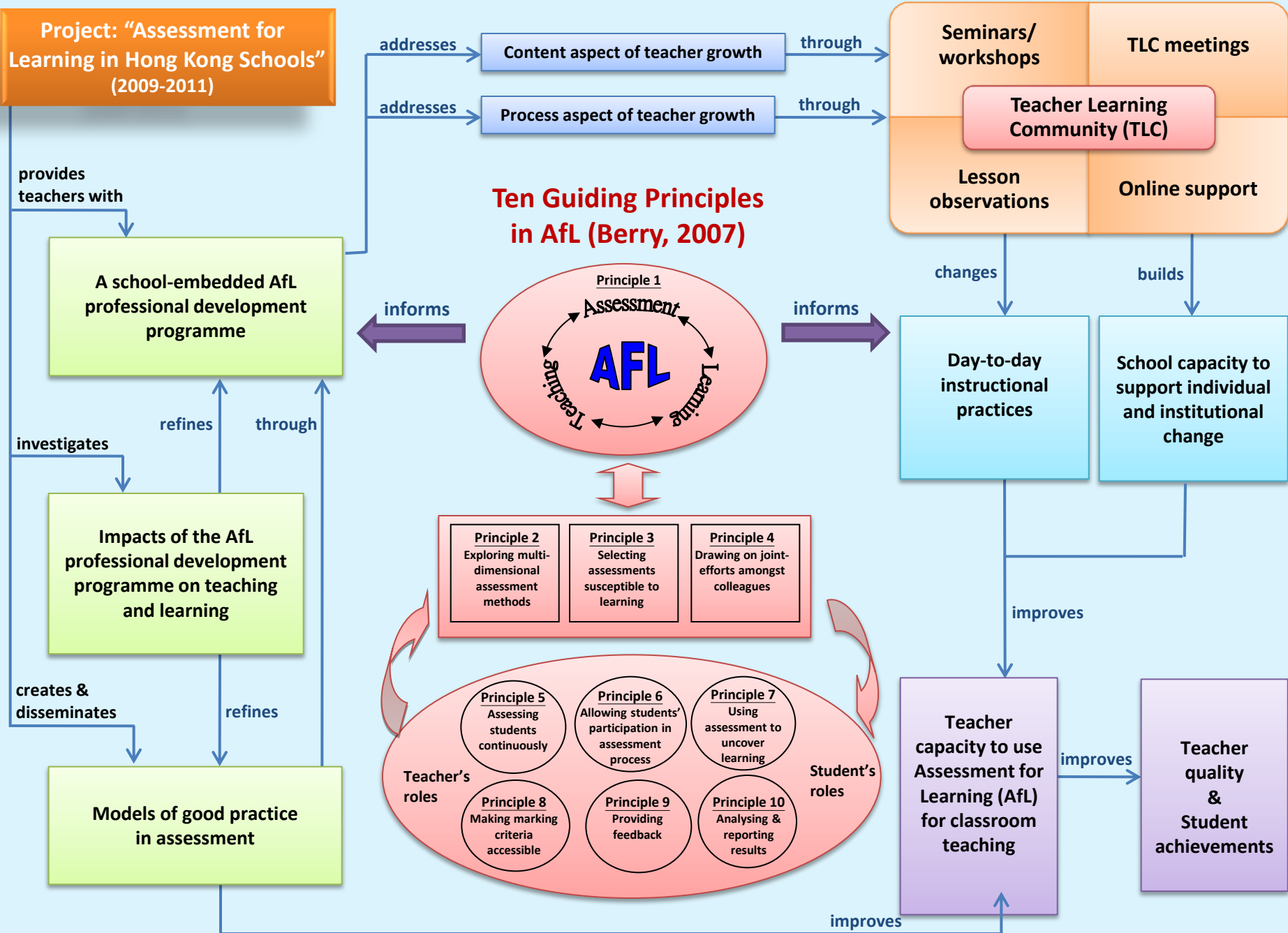■ to create and disseminate models of good practice in assessment

AfL Professional Development Programme

2 phases: **1st phase : 2009 – 2010 Academic Year**

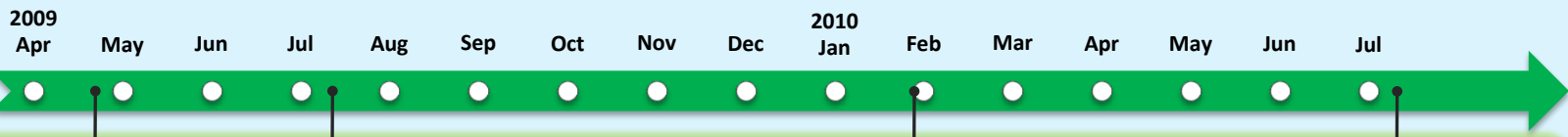   **2nd phase: 2010 – 2011 Academic Year**

- A sustained, school-embedded professional development programme focused on AfL in Hong Kong schools has been developed
- 1st phase of the project: 8 primary schools
- 2nd phase of the project: 8 other schools, including 4 secondary and 4 primary

Conceptual Framework of the Project

Project: "Assessment for Learning in Hong Kong Schools" (2009-2011)

addresses → **Content aspect of teacher growth** → through →

addresses → **Process aspect of teacher growth** → through →

Seminars/ workshops | **TLC meetings**

Teacher Learning Community (TLC)

Lesson observations | **Online support**

provides teachers with

A school-embedded AfL professional development programme

Ten Guiding Principles in AfL (Berry, 2007)

← informs

Principle 1
Assessment
AFL
Teaching — Learning

informs →

changes → **Day-to-day instructional practices**

builds → **School capacity to support individual and institutional change**

investigates

refines · through

Impacts of the AfL professional development programme on teaching and learning

creates & disseminates

refines

Models of good practice in assessment

| **Principle 2** Exploring multi-dimensional assessment methods | **Principle 3** Selecting assessments susceptible to learning | **Principle 4** Drawing on joint-efforts amongst colleagues |

Teacher's roles

Principle 5 Assessing students continuously

Principle 6 Allowing students' participation in assessment process

Principle 7 Using assessment to uncover learning

Principle 8 Making marking criteria accessible

Principle 9 Providing feedback

Principle 10 Analysing & reporting results

Student's roles

improves

Teacher capacity to use Assessment for Learning (AfL) for classroom teaching

improves → **Teacher quality & Student achievements**

improves

Assessment for Learning (AfL)
Teacher Professional Development Roadmap (1st Cohort)
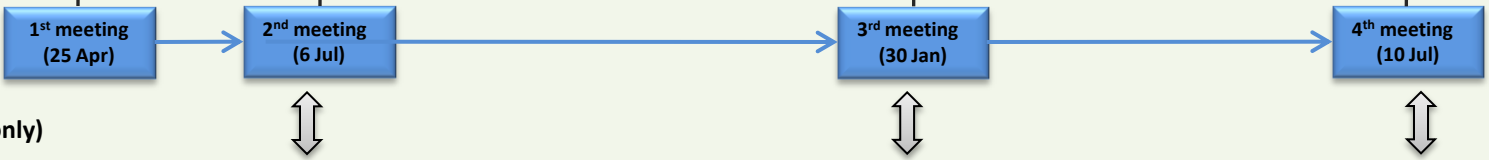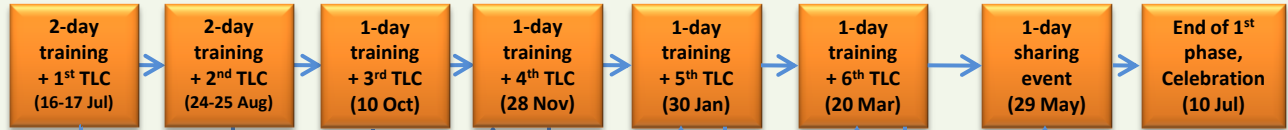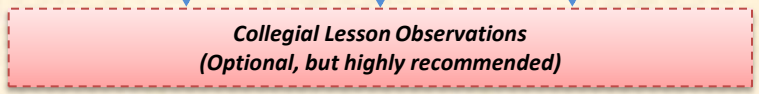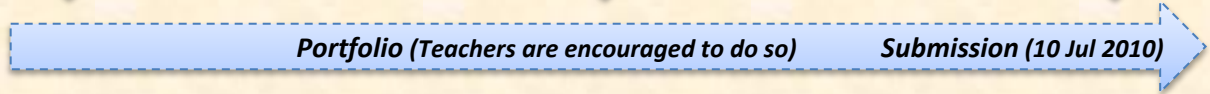
AfL Professional Development Programme

Seminars/ workshops

TLC meetings

Teacher Learning Community (TLC)

Lesson observations

Online support
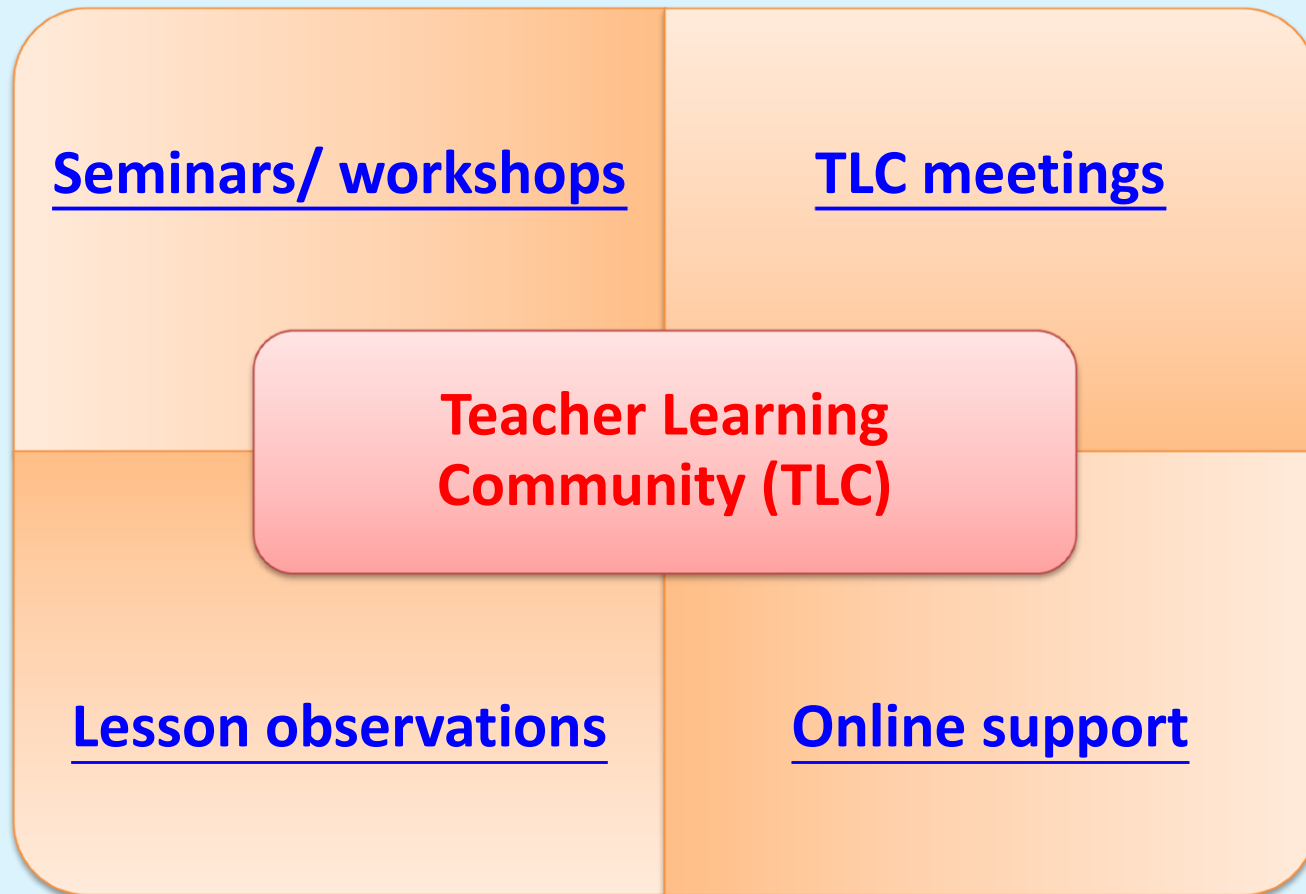
Seminars and Workshops

Purposes: All the seminars and workshops aimed to provide teachers with a basic understanding of the fundamentals of AfL and strategies/methods and to show the teachers how AfL can be incorporated into their teaching.

- A total of 8 one-day seminar/workshop sessions were held periodically in the first phase of the project (1st year).

- Real classroom examples such as questioning skills, self- and peer- assessment, giving quality feedback were given to the teachers at the seminars and workshops to help teachers link AfL theory to classroom practice.

- Activities of the AfL PDP also included a number of executive meetings for school representatives for planning, communication, and project evaluation purposes.

Teacher Learning Communities (TLC) Meetings

Purposes: to building up teacher learning communities for helping teachers understand and internalise AfL strategies.

Major agenda in the TLC meetings:

- Creation of a personal AfL action plan
- Sharing of experience in implementing teachers' own AfL action plans for teaching. The sharing will include what the teacher have done and achieved, obstacles the teachers encountered, how the teachers tried to solve the problems
- Drawing on feedback from the peers and the research team.

Lesson Observations

Purposes : to build up school-based TLCs in the schools and to draw on feedback on improving classroom implementation of AfL strategies

Two types of lesson observations:

1) **Formal Lesson Observation and School-based TLC meeting**

   • involve researchers and the three project teachers at a school

2) **Collegial Lesson Observation and Informal School-based TLC meeting**

   • involve only the three project teachers at a school

Rundown of Formal Lesson Observation

On the day of school visit,

1. In the morning, one of the researchers observes three consecutive lessons conducted by the project teachers at the school.

2. A student group interview (about 15 minutes) is conducted.

3. A school-based TLC meeting (about 45 minutes) is arranged.

4. In the 3rd Lesson Observation, individual teacher interviews (about 30 minutes each) are conducted.

A Sample Rundown

Time	Event
8:40-9:20	Mathematics Lesson
9:20-10:00	English Language Lesson
10:00-10:40	Chinese Language Lesson
10:40-11:00	Student Group Interview
11:00-12:00	School-based TLC Meeting
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:00-13:30	Teacher Interview - (CG Maths)
13:30-14:00	Teacher Interview - (EG Chinese)
14:00-14:30	Teacher Interview - (EG English)
14:30-15:00	Teacher Interview - (CG Chinese)
15:00-15:30	Teacher Interview - (EG Maths)
15:30-16:00	Teacher Interview - (CG English)

Rundown of Collegial Lesson Observation

1. The three project teachers conduct lesson observations among themselves.
2. The three project teachers conduct an informal school-based TLC meeting (about 45 minutes).

A Sample Rundown

Time	Event
8:40-9:20	Mathematics Lesson
9:20-10:00	English Language Lesson
10:00-10:40	Chinese Language Lesson
10:40-11:25	School-based TLC Meeting

Online Support

Purposes: to further the dialogues generated by the workshops and TLC meetings and enhance communication.

Major elements:

1. An online discussion forum
2. An archive of professional development materials
3. Resources of teaching materials gathered from teachers.

Location: http://elearn.ied.edu.hk

Research activities

While providing the AfL professional development programme to the schools, the project team is also responsible for investigating the impact of the programme on teaching and learning through a number of research activities.

Focused reporting:
- 1st year (school term 2009-10)
- 8 primary schools in Hong Kong
- 27 teachers teaching Chinese, English and mathematics
- 523 students
- Research methods: Pre-post tests, teacher interview, student interview, school senior personnel and external examiner's comments, researcher observation

Teachers and Students involved in the project

Teaching subjects:

- English language, Chinese Language, and Mathematics

Teachers (per school):

- 3 teachers teaching the Experimental group (EG) English Language, Chinese Language, and Mathematics
- These teachers **must not** teach the Control Group (CG)
- A parallel group - 3 teachers of CG will be interviewed at the end of the project.

Target student groups (per school):

Two classes of similar academic abilities:

- *Experimental group (EG)*: One class of Secondary 1 students or one class of Primary 4 students
- *Control group (CG)*: One class of Secondary 1 students or one class of Primary 4 students
- A total of 12 sample students (6 from EG & 6 from CG)

3.3 Findings

Impacts on Learning:

Pre- & Post-tests

- There were clear improvements between the the pre- and post-tests in the different subject areas in all schools for the experimental group students (Effect size: English language 0.3998, Chinese Language 0.4036 and Mathematics 0.2855). Given the limitations of pre- & post-tests, as mentioned previously, additional qualitative data were collected to help validate the findings revealed by the pre- and post-tests.

Interviews:

- From the senior school personnel:

Students had many opportunities to participate in the assessment activities. They enjoyed the learning that came with them. Students were very engaged in learning.

- From the project teachers:

Students became more active and were more engaged in the lessons. They were more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and would think about how they could improve their learning.

- From the external examiner of the project:

- *Hong Kong students are usually very passive in learning. But, the students of the lessons observed were very engaged in all learning activities.*

- From the students themselves:

- *We were feeling happy in the lessons. We learnt more when we felt happy. We learnt better in the new teaching mode.*

Impacts on Teaching:

Below are some of the comments directly made by the teachers:

- *Whenever we come across the word "Assessment" or "Internal Assessment", we automatically associate it with the tests and exams in our school. Grades and marks are our concern. In fact, assessment can be used to support learning. We could pay more attention to setting criteria and understanding how students learn and monitor student learning.*
- *… I think my understanding of assessment has changed a lot since I participated in the AfL PDP programme. First of all I come to understand that Assessment is not just about giving students a grade or grouping them into different levels.*
- *After joining this PDP, when I plan my lessons, I would deliberate "What" and "How" I should assess my students.*

Data analysis of the interviews of *senior school personnel* revealed that the senior personnel were very happy with their teachers' deeper understanding of AfL.

Implications

- Realignment of assessment practices, draws upon current assessment theories and tries to move Hong Kong from an examination-oriented culture to a culture of using assessment to support learning.

- A new professional development focus could be on treating change in classroom practice as a collaborative and negotiated activity, rather than the more familiar 'top-down' initiative.

- Through professional development, sustained support, and a collegiate environment, teachers would be better able to develop plans to incorporate AfL in their classrooms.

Conclusion

Past, present and future

Some of Rita's publications can be accessed via

Website: http://www.ritaberry.net/