

Identifying processes of curriculum alignment through adopting Performance-based Assessment (PBA) in the teaching and learning of literary texts

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Title of the project:

Empowering BEd (EL) students with tools of Curriculum
Alignment through adopting Performance-based
Assessment in the teaching and learning of literary texts

Overview of the session

- The introduction of the Language Arts(LA) elective modules in the New Senior Secondary (NSS) English Language Curriculum in Hong Kong
- The importance of Curriculum Alignment in curriculum innovations
- Performance-based Assessment (PBA) as a tool for curriculum alignment
- The context of the study: pre-service teachers' use of PBA as a classroom assessment strategy in the teaching and learning of literary texts
- Research questions
- Data collection and analysis
- Findings and implications

S6

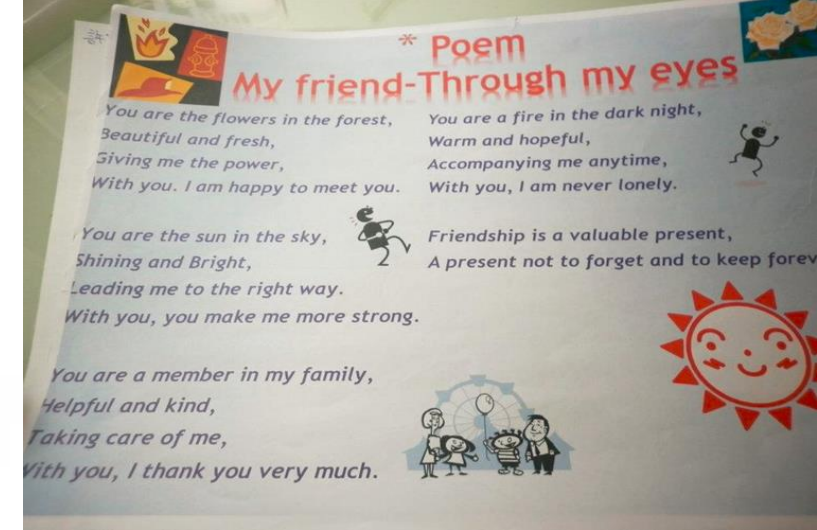
S5

S4

	Elective
Compulsory	Part

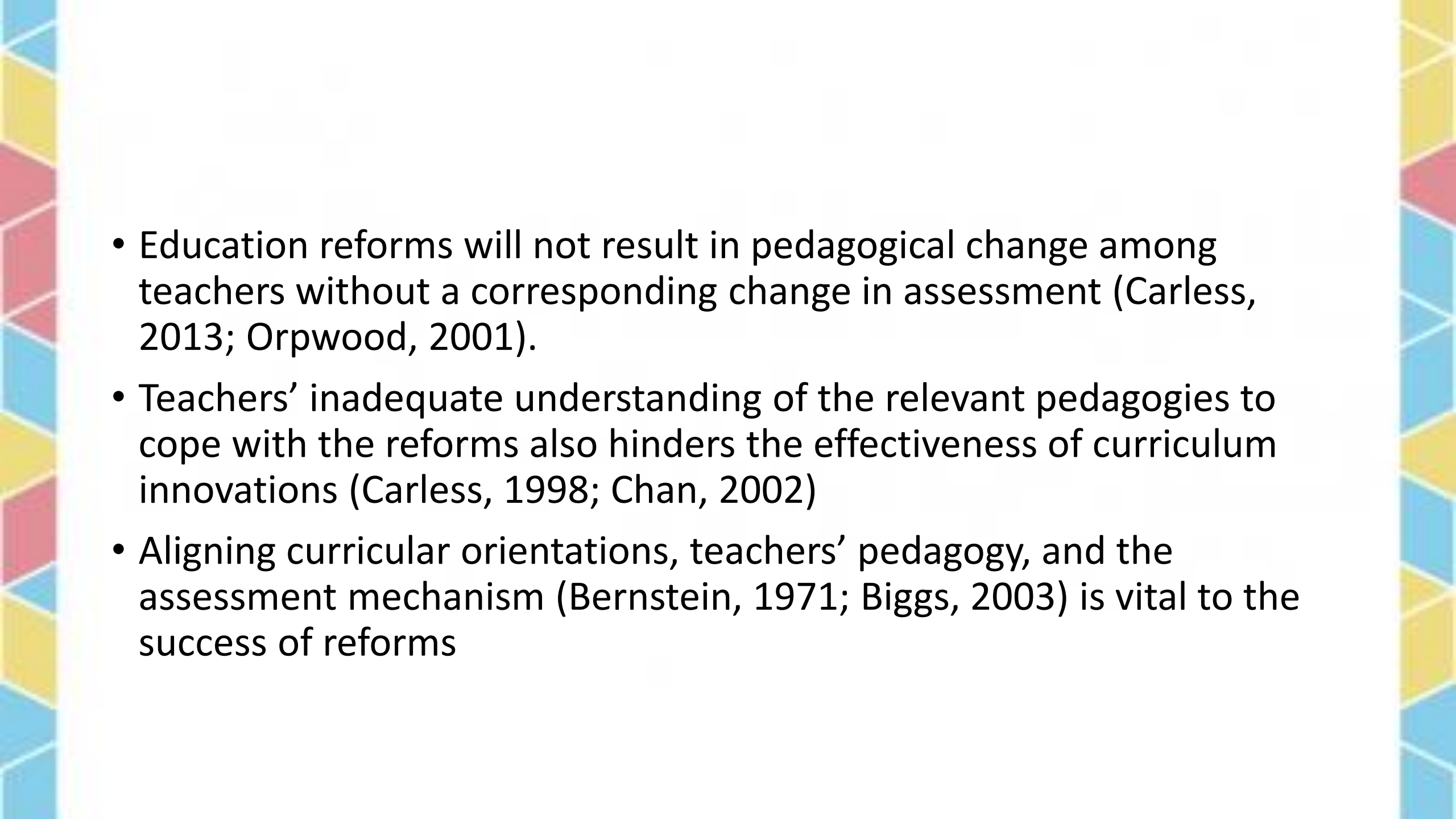
The Language Arts Electives

- Learning English **through** Poems and Songs
- Learning English **through** Drama
- Learning English **through** Short Stories
- Learning English **through** Popular Culture

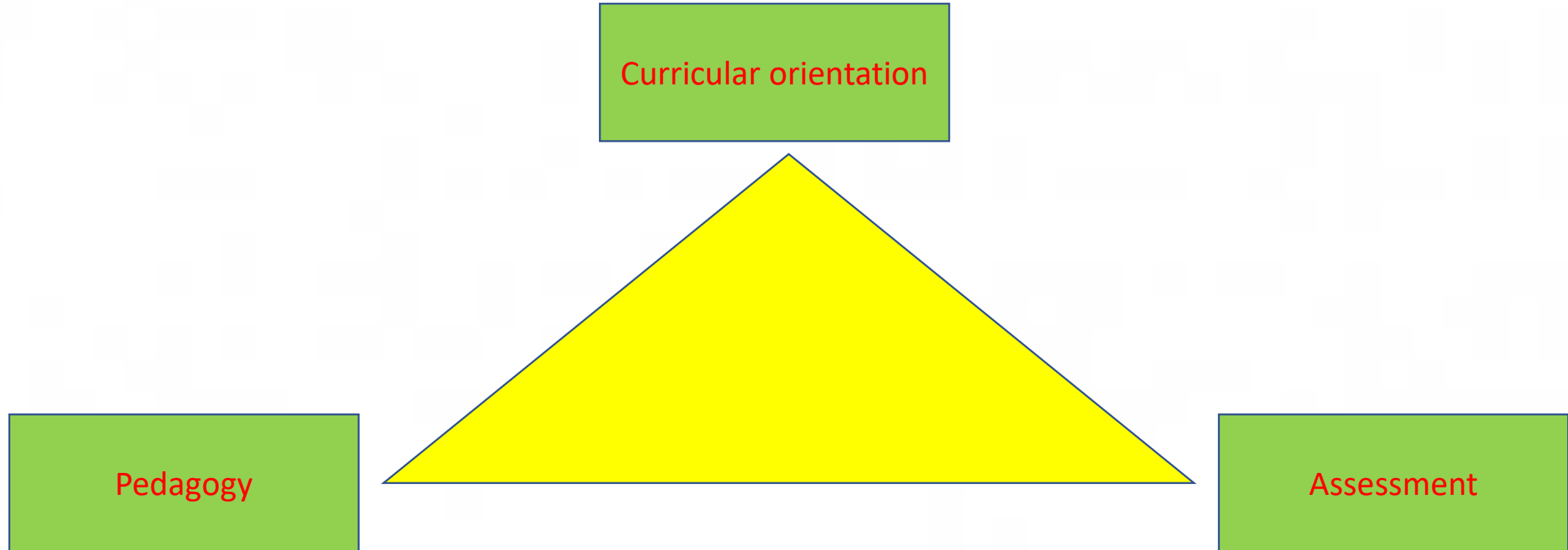


CDC & HKEAA, 2007



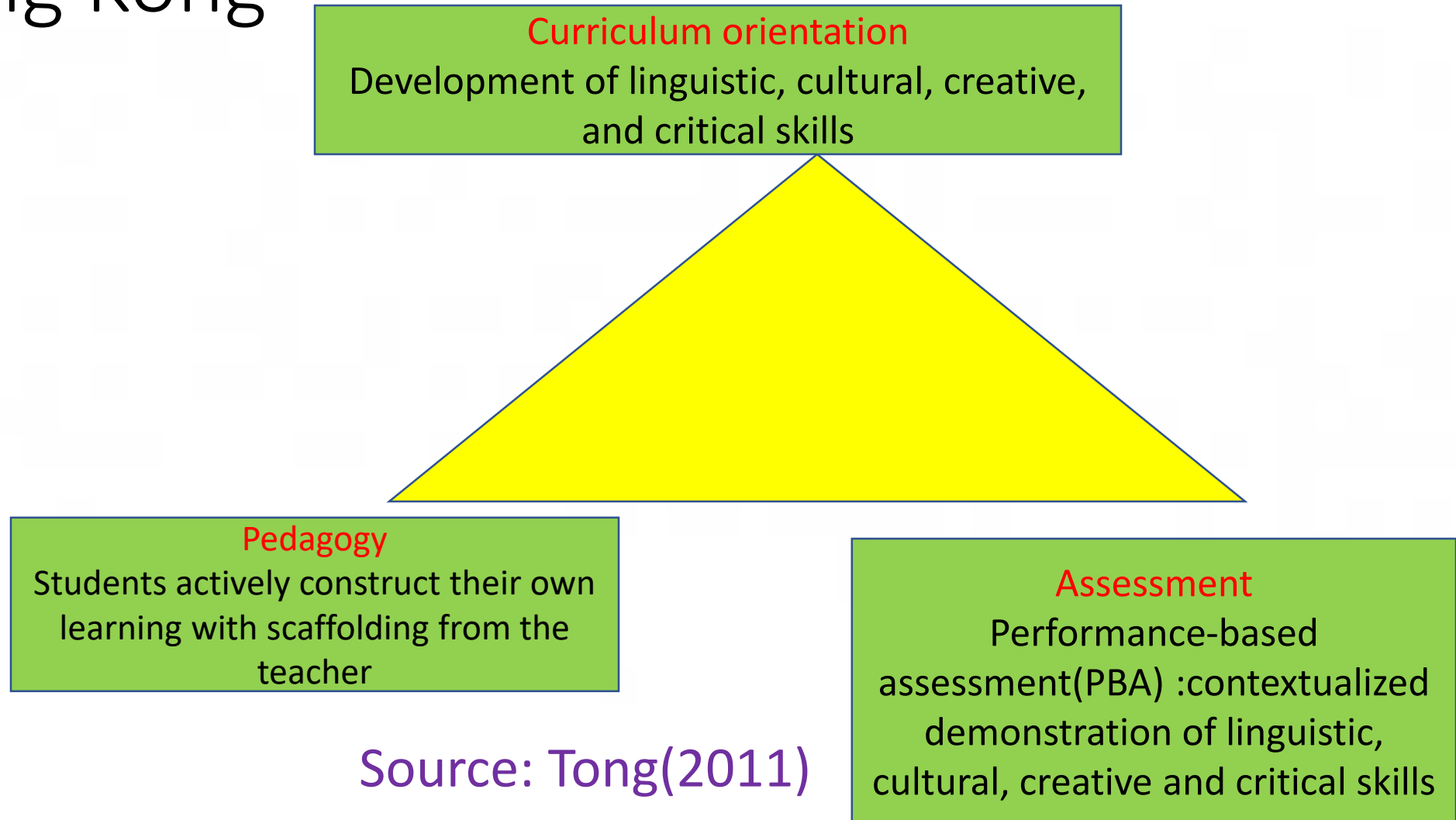
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- Education reforms will not result in pedagogical change among teachers without a corresponding change in assessment (Carless, 2013; Orpwood, 2001).
 - Teachers' inadequate understanding of the relevant pedagogies to cope with the reforms also hinders the effectiveness of curriculum innovations (Carless, 1998; Chan, 2002)
 - Aligning curricular orientations, teachers' pedagogy, and the assessment mechanism (Bernstein, 1971; Biggs, 2003) is vital to the success of reforms

Components of curriculum alignment



Bernstein, 1971; Biggs, 2003

Curriculum alignment for Language Arts in Hong Kong



Performance-based assessment

- it measures students' abilities to respond to real-life language tasks. In other words, unlike other types of tests, performance assessments can be used to approximate the conditions of a real task in a real-life situation.

Norris et al, 1998, p.15

Performance-based Assessment

- Requires students to apply knowledge and skills rather than simply to recall and recognize
- More likely to reveal students' understanding
- **Content-specific knowledge**
- Authentic assessment
- Does not yield a correct answer
- Evaluation of students' responses based on judgment

When using performance-based assessment, teachers...

- can **make their evaluative criteria explicit in advance** to serve as a focus for both instruction and evaluation;
- help their students understand that the criteria describe the desired elements of quality;
- provide **regular feedback** to students based on the identified criteria;
- allow students to revise their work based upon this feedback;
- involve students in **peer- and self-evaluation** using the criteria in order to engage students more actively in improving their performance.

Flow Chart for Developing Performance-Based Learning and Assessment Tasks and Assessment Lists

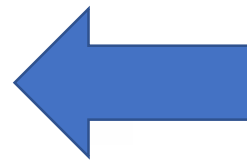
Define What Students
Should Know and Be
Able to do



Create Performance
Tasks to students



Provide Several Models of
Excellent Work



Make Assessment Lists
tailored to student needs
and instructional
objectives

Learning English through Poems and Songs

- Task: Writing a commentary on a poem

	Well done	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
The commentary has a suitable heading.			
The commentary is well structured.			
The structure of the poem is discussed clearly.			
The use of sound in the poem is discussed clearly.			
The use of imagery in the poem is discussed clearly.			
How can the commentary be improved? _____			

Classroom assessment

- Diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses
- Informing students about progress
- Offer a more **personalized** picture of student achievement
- Provide timely and **specific feedback**

The link between PBA and formative assessment(or assessment for learning)

- Seeing assessment not only as exams and tests but also part of the learning process that provides feedback to students to improve their learning (CDC, 2002)

Review of studies of classroom assessment

- Limited studies focusing on routine assessment practices connected to ordinary teaching and learning (Cumming, 2004; McNamara, 2001; Leung and Mohan, 2004)
- Lack of systematic analysis of assessment practices in language classrooms to generate enough knowledge base for pedagogical recommendations (except the observational studies by Rea-Dickins, 2001).
- Most studies have been conducted in post-secondary settings and focus on students' writing
- Studies are mostly related to quantitative conceptions of learning gains and lack of formative assessment studies conducted in normal classroom settings (Black and Wiliam, 1998)
- → More studies related to the pedagogical use of assessment in school settings

Studies of classroom assessment in Hong Kong

- Encountered resistance from parents, colleagues and school policies due to the cultural context (i.e. the “pyramid assessment system” in Hong Kong) (Berry, 2011, p.201)
- The formative assessment initiatives of previous curriculum reforms (e.g. Target-oriented curriculum) were not well received by teachers (Morris and Adamson, 2010)
- Noted the benefit of self-/peer-feedback but were stumbled by the lack of professional training, heavy workload and tight teaching schedule (Lee, 2009)
- Most had been conducted in primary school settings (Bryant and Carless, 2010; Carless, 2005) in the teaching of writing (Lee, 2009; Lee & Coniam, 2013)

Previous studies of PBA

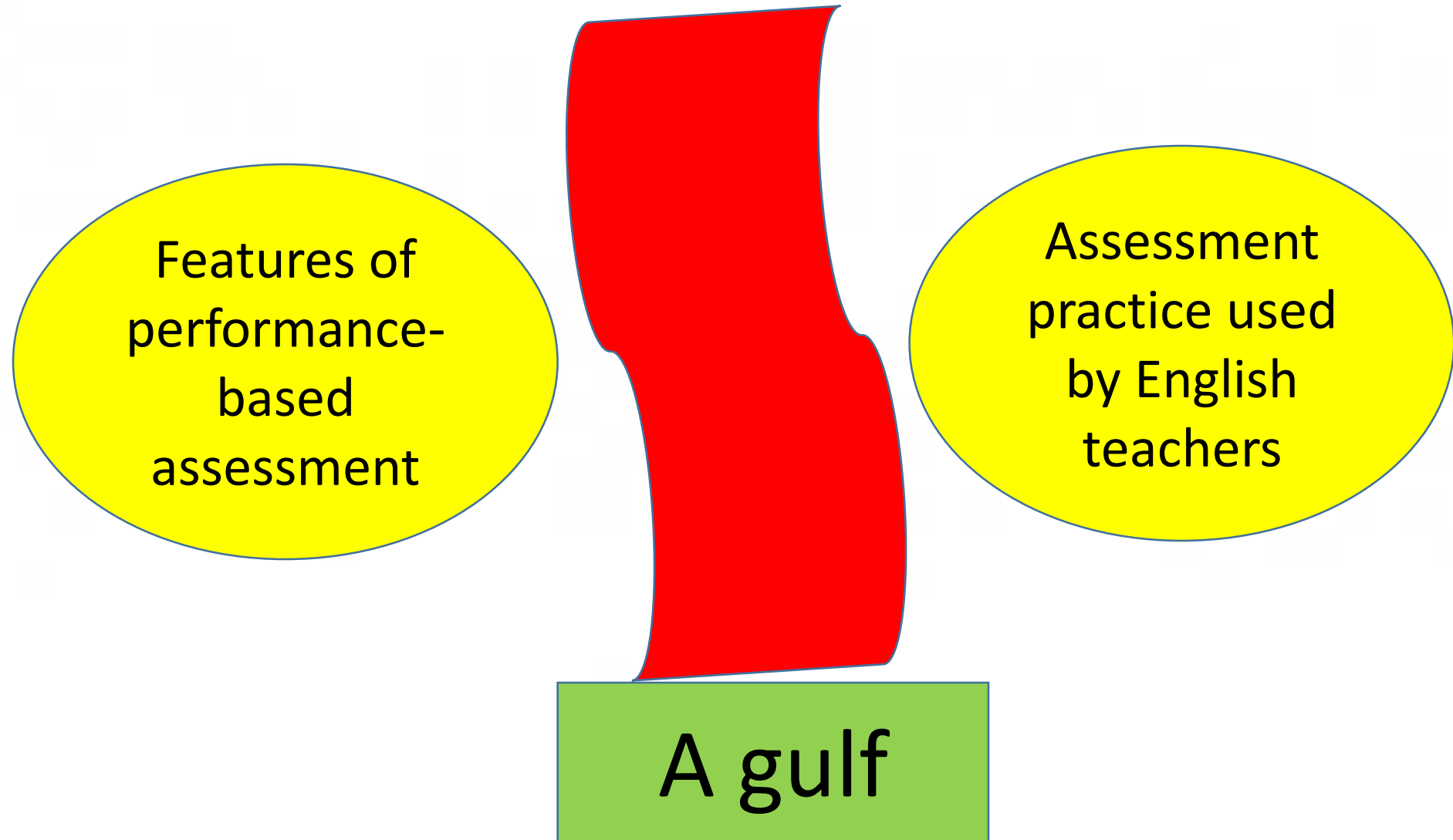
- Teachers showed empathy with the curricular orientation of LA.
- Assessment: based on quantifiable activities
- Feedback: focused on technical and linguistic aspects.

Tong, 2011

Li's (2012) findings

- *I don't conduct classroom assessment regularly, as I feel uncomfortable with any assessment that is not based on "right" or "wrong" answers. (a teacher participant)*

Li's (2012) findings



Li's(2012) findings

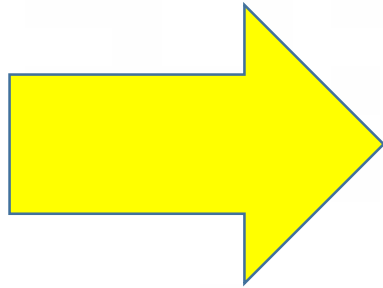
- professional development opportunities focusing on performance-based assessment need to be provided

The context of the study: pre-service teachers' use of PBA as a classroom assessment strategy in the teaching and learning of literary texts

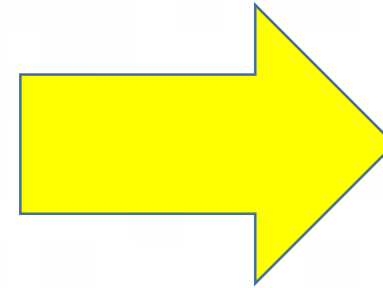
- Pre-service teachers' perception and use of PBA strategy in their teaching practicum
- *The need for more studies related to the pedagogical use of assessment*
- *Previous assessment for learning studies in Hong Kong had been conducted in primary school setting and in the area of writing*
- *Previous studies of PBA adopted a case study approach and explored the in-service teachers' use of PBA*
- *Just pointed out the implementation of PBA, without exploring the teachers' understanding of this concept and the factors which influence their pedagogy in PBA*

Phases of the project

Phase 1:
Organize three two-hour workshops to equip pre-service teachers with the necessary background knowledge and skills to apply PBA in their teaching practicum



Phase 2:
Co-planning with the pre-service teachers on the lessons in their teaching practicum which incorporates principles of PBA



Phase 3:
Visit the pre-service teachers, observe their lessons in the teaching practicum, conduct semi-structured post-lesson interviews with them and documentary analysis of the teaching and learning materials

Research Questions

- What are the pre-service teachers' understandings and use of PBA in their teaching practicum?
- What factors affect their use of PBA in the teaching practicum?

Data collection

What are the pre-service teachers' understandings and use of PBA in the teaching practicum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open-ended survey before the teaching practicum• Lesson observations• Post-lesson interviews
What factors affect their use of PBA in the teaching practicum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open-ended surveys after the workshop• Post-lesson interviews

Participants in the study would all have experienced the process, and the development of the theory might help explain practice or provide a framework for further research (Creswell, 2013 , p.82)

Data analysis: Coding
using the principles of
grounded theory

Situation:

As the Sports Day was held last week, your English teacher, Mr. Happy took many photos and you need to write some captions for the photos.

<u>CHECKLIST on the photo captions</u>	😊	😐	😞
Your partner's name: _____	3	2	1
He can use 'He' to talk about boys and 'She' to talk about girls when writing the captions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He can use the verb-to-be 'is' after the subject pronoun 'He' or 'She' when writing the captions (e.g. He is / She is).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He can change the verbs provided into -ing form (e.g. look → looking) when writing the captions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further comments: _____			

Read your partner's photos and choose one best photo you two like most

Pre-service teachers' understanding of PBA



Hinges on the notion of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Student-oriented

Assessment for learning

Pre-service teachers' understanding of PBA(1)

- Similar to the elements of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)
 - Having a context(authentic, related to students' life)
 - Having a sample (as the exemplars of task)
 - Having a checklist (to introduce the criteria of completing the task)
- Can be used at different stages of the lesson
- Concrete measure for students' task completion
 - *"PBA is using some concrete criteria to measure students' task completion. Honestly, teachers may not always give concrete instructions. Now, everything is written in the PBA checklist and if students follow the checklist, then the product will be alright. I think low achievers need this kind of guidance to complete the task properly. The checklist is also an input to complete the task so that they can refer to the items before and after the task."*

Hinges on the notion of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Pre-service teachers' understanding of PBA(2)

- Student-oriented
- *“PBA is student-centred, not teacher centred. In traditional assessment, quiz and tests are designed by the teachers. They are superficial. Even if students can answer the questions correctly, this doesn't mean that they can achieve the learning objectives. For PBA, we sometimes focus on their speaking skills. They come out to do presentation and peer assessment. It is more student-centred. Students are actively learning. The teacher talks less and the students actively comment on others' work.”*
- *“PBA is one of the ways to retrieve students' opinions. At least they are willing to express their opinions”*

Pre-service teachers' understanding of PBA(4)

- An opportunity for students learn how to conduct assessment
 - *“PBA not only provides a basis for task completion. It also provides students with the opportunity to learn how to critically evaluate others, as well as themselves. They learn how to do assessment.”*
 - *“When students are giving comments to their partners, they may think they are having the authority to comment on others. They may feel that are capable of evaluating others. This boosts their confidence in learning. When they are evaluating others, they will also reflect on whether they have done the same. This benefits both sides”*

Pre-service teachers' understanding of PBA (3)

- A tool for students' reflection and evaluation
- *"PBA is more like evaluation, judging whether they have learnt something based on the performance. It doesn't necessarily mean it is spoken. It can be creative. You may have created something. Students should be able to reflect on themselves. That would be my understanding of PBA."*
- *"Students will reflect on their learning and check their understanding in the lesson"*



Assessment for learning

Pre-service teachers' use of PBA in the teaching practicum (1)

Categories	Stages	Means
Letting students evaluate their own progress towards the learning objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● At the beginning and in the end of the lesson● Pre-task stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The self-evaluation form/checklist
Stating the requirement of the task/introducing the learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Pre-task stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Checklist
Giving students specific directions to improve their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● While-task stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The criteria presented in the checklist
Consolidating students' understanding of the target language items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● While-task (the self-assessment checklist as a reminder)● Post-task (when students were asked to check on each other's grammar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The criteria presented in the checklist

Pre-service teachers' use of PBA in the teaching practicum (2)

Assessment as learning	● Post-task	● Students giving and receiving feedback from each other (through the checklist) Students editing their work based on other's comments
Expressing their views on the task	● Post-task	● The qualitative comments on others' work (which were not listed in the criteria of the checklist)
Informing the teachers' teaching	● Throughout the lesson	● Students' response in the checklist

What factors affect their use of PBA in the teaching practicum?(1)



- Teachers' detailed explanation of the items in the checklist
- Items in the checklist are comprehensible to students
- Teachers' constant monitoring of the students' progress during the PBA tasks
- Relevance of the topic (e.g. Sports Day, something which the students can easily relate to)
- Students are intrinsically motivated to read others' work
- Focusing on their own views → students will feel better
- Multiple modes of participation in the classroom-students will walk around while reading others' work
- Task-design (having a combination of close-ended and open-ended items)

What factors affect their use of PBA in the teaching practicum?



School

Time in the
lesson

Syllabus of the
school

Students

Language
proficiency

Cognitive
understanding

Discipline
problems

What factors affect their use of PBA in the teaching practicum?(2)



- Students' language proficiency-some students can only conduct the peer assessment activity in their mother tongue
- *"They may be too weak to check the work of others, or even write a correct sentence. If students don't even know the basic things, how can they check their own work?"*
- Not enough time in the lesson

What factors affect their use of PBA in the teaching practicum?(3)



- Students' cognitive understanding
- *"One of the factors affecting the implementation of PBA is students' learning habits. It depends. Form 1 students can learn very quickly. If we do PBA now, they will understand it immediately. However, my Form 4 class has studied in this school for many years and they were taught by my supporting teacher. She hasn't done something similar or hasn't even done proper assessment, don't mention PBA. Their assessment is just giving out test papers, asking students to complete the papers and marking them. That's it. They didn't have a chance to comment on themselves or other classmates. They have never done it before."*

What factors affect their use of PBA in the teaching practicum? (4)



- Classroom management problems: some students were off-task and did not listen to their peers
- *“Very few students are paying attention when they need to comment on each other’s performance through the checklist. It is mainly because the whole classroom environment is too noisy for them to actually listen to what their classmates are talking about.”*

Implications

- Students are empowered through the process of giving and receiving feedback
- Needs to provide scaffolding and comprehensible input to students when implementing PBA
- A combination of both open-ended and close-ended tasks are desirable
- It takes time for students to learn from formative assessment habits in the classroom
- Curriculum alignment needs to hinge on the professional development of teachers and take the contextual factors into consideration



Thanks!

Comments and suggestions are welcome!

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