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HKCEE ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT:  
ITS IMPLEMENTATION AT THE FRONTLINE

EDD THESIS

2012

# **HKCEE English Language school-based assessment: Its implementation at the frontline**

Fok Wai Kei

## **Abstract**

Although school-based assessment (SBA) is a well established assessment practice in many countries, its use has been limited in Hong Kong until recently. When the scheme was extended to HKCEE English Language, it was faced with strong opposition. Many teachers felt that they did not understand the scheme and were negative about its use and increased workload.

With a view that any change in education is a process that involves people and thus its success depends largely on the perception, readiness and implementation of the people who actually carry out the change, a study is proposed to examine teachers' perception, readiness and uses of the SBA scheme.

A total of ninety-five Hong Kong teachers who taught HKCEE English Language from twenty-one schools were invited to complete a questionnaire based on a revised Stages of Concerns Questionnaire (SoCQ) and among them, eight teachers were selected to participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview to explore their perceptions, uses and evaluations of the scheme and to gauge their Levels of Use (LoU) in the innovation.

The findings indicate that the teachers did not give the scheme a high priority in their teaching work although many had quite strong opinions to offer. In general, they had high early concerns (informational, personal and management concerns) and the concerns profile was similar to that of nonusers and early users. The in-depth interviews show that the majority of the interviewees had proceeded beyond routine use, including two teachers who had run the scheme for only one year. It also finds considerable variations on the way the SBA scheme was operated and a few practices were in violation of the SBA criteria set by the authorities. Implications for teachers, policy-makers and researchers on school innovations arising from findings are discussed.

**HKCEE English Language school-based assessment:**

**Its implementation at the frontline**

by

Fok Wai Kei

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Education

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## List of Abbreviations

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| A/AS  | Advanced/Advanced Supplementary                 |
| ANOVA | Analysis of Variance                            |
| CBAM  | Concerns-based Adoption Model                   |
| CDC   | Curriculum Development Council                  |
| CE    | Certificate Examinations                        |
| CMI   | Chinese as the Medium of Instruction            |
| ECA   | Extra-curricular Activities                     |
| EDB   | Education Bureau                                |
| EMI   | English as the Medium of Instruction            |
| ERS   | Extensive Reading Scheme                        |
| GCE   | General Certificate of Education                |
| HKAAT | Hong Kong Academic Aptitude Test                |
| HKALE | Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations           |
| HKBU  | Hong Kong Baptist University                    |
| HKCEE | Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations |
| HKEA  | Hong Kong Examinations Authority                |
| HKEAA | Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority |
| HKPTU | Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union          |
| IC    | Innovation Configurations                       |
| LoU   | Level of Use                                    |
| MOI   | Medium of Instruction                           |
| NET   | Native English Teacher                          |
| SBA   | School-based Assessment                         |
| SoC   | Stages of Concern                               |
| SoCQ  | Stages of Concern Questionnaire                 |
| TAS   | Teacher Assessment Scheme                       |

## **Declaration & Statement of Copyright**

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## Chapter 1 Contextual Background

### *1.1 The emergence of school-based assessment in Hong Kong*

School-based assessment (SBA) has been a well-established assessment practice in many countries, including Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Canada and South Africa, to complement or even to substitute external assessments in their public examinations systems (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Davison, 2005; SBA Consultancy Team, 2006). However, until recently, its use has been particularly limited in Hong Kong. In 1996, of over forty subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations (HKCEE) and the Hong Kong Advance Level Examinations (HKALE)<sup>1</sup> each, only two and seven syllabuses respectively included an SBA component (HKEAA, 2009a). School-based assessment, which was then called Teacher Assessment Scheme (TAS), was initially developed to replace practical examinations in HKALE Chemistry in 1978 and was later extended to include individual project work in some subjects with a small enrolment number such as HKCEE Design and Technology or HKALE Government and Public Affairs. Without an SBA component, students' achievement in most subjects was determined by only a single examination held at the end of a two-year study period. This heavy dependence on external examinations, together with the intense pressure erected upon students and the negative washback effects it brought, had long been criticized by educators, parents and the community at large.

In 1997, Education Commission, a non-statutory body responsible for advising the government on the overall development of education, published its seventh report

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<sup>1</sup> HKCEE is taken by students in Hong Kong at the end of their five-year secondary education whereas HKALE is sat after a post-HKCEE two-year matriculation study. A grade C or above in most HKCEE subjects and a grade E or above in HKALE are recognized as equivalent to a pass in GCE (O Level) and GCE (A and AS Level) respectively



and recommended the expansion of SBA to more HKCEE and HKALE subjects so that students' abilities are assessed on a continuous basis and "that their academic standard will not be determined by a single examination" (Section 7.16). In the same year, Hong Kong Examinations and Authority (HKEA, now Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, HKEAA) in conjunction with Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) conducted a full review of the public examination system in Hong Kong, with one of the main objectives of collecting the public's view on the expansion of SBA and suggesting the best mode of SBA to be adopted in its public examination. Submissions received from the public revealed a strong support for the expansion. Most respondents shared the view that SBA would allow the assessment of a broader range of attainments and abilities, reduce student stress and improve learning motivation. Some also indicated SBA's potential in pedagogic changes and promotion of higher-order thinking skills (HKEAA & HKBU, 1998). The expansion was later included, along with many other major initiatives, in a large-scale education reform proposal in Hong Kong (Education Commission, 2000) and was further taken up by Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and HKEAA for implementation, with the goal that the scheme "be extended to all subjects at both A/AS and CE level subjects, where appropriate, within a timeframe so teacher assessments can take place within three years" (IBM Corporation, 2003, p.5).

### ***1.2 The opposition to SBA in HKCEE English Language***

SBA was gradually extended to a number of HKCEE and HKALE subjects such as Information Technology, Ceramics and Integrated Humanities in subsequent years and little resistance was met. However, in late 2005, when HKEAA released its 2007

examination syllabuses and revealed that SBA would be extended to HKCEE English Language, it immediately sparked heated discussions among teachers.

In HKEAA's plan, students sitting for the subject would have to read two pieces of English and view two English films, participate in related in-class English language learning activities, produce learning logs which contain comments and critiques on the "texts", and finally hold assessable discussions and presentations based on the materials produced. Unlike SBA in other subjects which are mostly separate project work or a report of teachers' overall assessment on students' performance and attitudes on the subject, this SBA reading and speaking scheme is integrated in everyday teaching and requires considerable class time. HKEAA hoped that this SBA activity would better align the public examination with the 1999 CDC Secondary 1-5 English language syllabus by including an assessment component in the experience dimension and also that it would bring positive 'washback' to the teaching of English language in secondary schools (Lee, 2008), which is often criticized for too much examination drilling.

Despite the good intentions, initial reactions to the scheme were overwhelmingly negative. Since the release of the new examination syllabus, oppositions to the scheme have been repeatedly reported in the news. Many teachers questioned about its rationales and particularly complained about the increased workload and stress, amid other problems such as the issue of fairness and impartiality, the lack of expertise and resources, and the absence of practical guidelines on how to implement the scheme in the classroom (e.g., Clem, 2005; Clem, 2006a, 2006b; Hui, 2006; 'Jiaoxie niban jiaoshi gongtou', 2006; Pang, 2006; Xin yingwen huikao kecheng', 2006). The Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union

(HKPTU), in its 2006 January newsletter, accused the authority of holding “an ostrich’s view of the whole issue” (para 5) and “hav[ing] turned a deaf ear of frontline teachers reflecting their plight” (para 6) on the HKCEE English language SBA scheme. The negative reception of the SBA scheme, coupled with teachers’ dissatisfaction towards the many policies brought by the new education reform, finally could not be contained and led to a mass demonstration of teachers on 22 January 2006. On 27 February 2006, a few days before another mass gathering of teachers called upon by HKPTU to fight against teachers’ stress, the government finally gave in and agreed on some modifications to the SBA requirements, among many other policies to lower teachers’ workload and stress.

### ***1.3 Modifications to HKCEE English Language SBA***

One significant change to the SBA scheme is the reduction of number of minimum assessment from the previous four to two; the minimum number of texts read or viewed was also reduced from four to three (please refer to Figure 1.1 for details). Another change is the abandonment of the HKEAA approved book/movie list. Under the new scheme, schools are free to choose any texts that they find suitable and may even allow students to choose their own texts for the assessment tasks. One more change is the introduction of a three-year phase-in implementation of SBA. Schools which were ready could join the SBA scheme as planned whereas schools which felt that they would need time to plan and try out the scheme could join the scheme later (please refer to Figure 1.2 for details). To help schools establish a system to monitor the operation of the SBA scheme and to moderate SBA marks among teachers and among schools, an SBA Coordinator was also appointed in each

school to manage the scheme, to hold the within-school standardization meetings and to attend inter-school meetings and professional sharing.

**Figure 1.1 Modifications of the SBA requirements**

| Requirements  | Original scheme                             |   |  | Revised scheme      |                     |   |
|---|---|---|--|---------------------|---------------------|---|
|   | S4  | S5  | Total  | S4                  | S5                  | Total   |
| <b>Number and type of texts to be read/viewed</b>       | Two texts                                   | Two texts   | Four texts, one each from four categories <sup>2</sup> ; two must be from the HKEAA list | One or two texts    | One or two texts    | Three texts, one each from three of the four categories                     |
| <b>Number of timing of assessment tasks to be taken</b> | Minimum of two group interaction tasks      | Minimum of one group interaction and one individual presentation      | Minimum of four tasks, three group interactions and one individual presentation          | Minimum of one task | Minimum of one Task | Minimum of two tasks, one group interaction and one individual presentation |
| <b>Number, % and timing of the marks to be reported</b> | Best mark out of the two tasks, 5% in total | Best marks for the interaction and for the presentation, 10% in total | Three marks, 15% of total English marks  | One mark reported   | One mark reported   | Two marks, 15% of total English marks                                       |

**Figure 1.2 Three-year phase-in implementation of the SBA scheme**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>2007</b> | Each school is to select one of the following options:<br>1. Submit SBA marks for feedback and include the marks in the subject result.<br>2. Submit SBA marks for feedback only but marks not included in the subject result.<br>3. Do not submit SBA marks. |
| <b>2008</b> | Each school is to select one of the following options:<br>1. Submit SBA marks for feedback and include the marks in the subject result.<br>2. Submit SBA marks for feedback only but marks not included in the subject result.                                |
| <b>2009</b> | All school must:<br>1. Submit SBA marks for feedback and include the marks in the SBA result.   |

If schools opt for choice 2 or 3, the weighting of the public examination component will be adjusted from 85% to 100%.

(HKEAA, 2006a, p.6)

The modifications to the SBA scheme, coupled with the high-profile approach the government took in addressing teachers' concerns towards education reforms, seemed to have settled the disputes between teachers and the authority and

<sup>2</sup> The four categories are: (a) print fiction, (b) print non-fiction, (c) non-print fiction and (d) non-print non-fiction

calmed the events down. Opposition to the SBA scheme has not since then hit the news front page and it is felt that teachers and schools generally accept the revised scheme. In HKCEE English Language 2007, respectively 34% and 22% of schools implemented and tried the SBA scheme. The percentage of schools implementing the scheme increased to 51% in 2008 and finally 100% in 2009.

**Figure 1.3 Participation of schools in the SBA scheme**

| Choice  | 2007 | 2008                 | 2009                 |
|---|------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Option 1</b><br><i>Full implementation</i> | 34%  | 51%                  | 100%                 |
| <b>Option 2</b><br><i>Trial</i>               | 22%  | 49%                  | Option not available |
| <b>Option 3</b><br><i>No participation</i>    | 44%  | Option not available | Option not available |

(Sources: Lee, 2008; HKEAA, 2008; HKEAA, 2009b)

### ***1.4 The need to study teachers***

The HKCEE English Language SBA scheme might well be an example of how curriculum policy makers often fail to understand and incorporate teachers' perspectives when implementing innovations. They spend most of their effort on the inputs: curriculum documents, training workshops, additional funding and resources, but very little attention is paid on the receiving ends of curriculum implementation: the teachers. The authority may have devoted every effort in devising and preparing an innovation but in the end it is the teachers who decide what is going to happen in the classroom. When it is faced with strong teacher opposition, the innovation is certainly going to fail. However, even when teachers indicate no opposition and report that they are implementing the innovation, there is no guarantee that it is implemented as mandated in the classroom.

They [Teachers] can filter policies, reinterpret them or even ignore them, and there is considerable amount of literature that indicates they do all them of these things. In this sense, teachers are active policy-makers themselves, adding meaning and value to centrally developed policies so that they more adequately represent teachers' values and beliefs.

(Kennedy, 2005, p.119)

The success of the HKCEE English Language SBA scheme depends very much on how the teachers understand and adapt the scheme in their classroom teaching, which is influenced by their values and beliefs on English Language teaching, learning and assessment. A study which focuses on the teachers in the implementation and looks at the innovation from the teachers' point of view, is therefore of paramount importance if one wishes to gauge the success of the HKCEE English Language SBA Scheme.

### ***1.5 Organization of the research report***

This is a report of a research study on the implementation of the HKCEE English Language SBA Scheme, which aims to investigate how teachers perceive, receive and implement this innovation in their classrooms. To allow readers to know in advance what is included in this report and to jump and sample around, a brief description of each chapter is offered as follows:

#### ***Chapter Two     Examining HKCEE English Language and the School-based Assessment Scheme***

Before one can examine and analyze how the teachers perceive and understand the SBA scheme, one will need to know what the innovation entails and signifies in its originality. This chapter first describes in detail the specifications of the HKCEE English Language assessment and also the SBA scheme. It then discusses the rationales behind, which shape the way the scheme is run. The focus of

the latter part of the chapter then shifts to the teachers and discusses what the scheme demands of them and it ends with an examination on how the new expectations and changing roles of teachers transform into the re-professionalization of teachers, which holds the key to the success of the innovation.

### ***Chapter Three Educational Change and Concern-based Adoption Model***

This chapter aims at introducing the Concern-based Adoption Model, which is a key theoretical building block of the present research study. The chapter first reviews the literature on educational change and innovations and in the second section describes the structure and the key components of the model: (a) Stages of Concern, (b) Levels of Use and (c) Innovation Configurations. The development of the component concepts and the accompanying measurement tools are detailed and supporting research studies are briefly reported as well. The last section deals with the criticisms and limitations of Concern-based Adoption Model and ends by drawing implications from the problems raised in the discussion.

### ***Chapter Four The Present Study in Detail***

Chapter Four gives details on the research methods employed in the present study. It starts by outlining the aims of the study and states the finer subsidiary research questions derived. The chapter then goes on to describe the two main data collection methods used: (a) questionnaire survey and (b) in-depth interview. Their respective operation procedures, theoretical basis and data analysis processes are explained in this section as well. Finally, the chapter considers emerging ethical issues in the present study and says how they were resolved.

## ***Chapter Five      Preliminary Findings and Analyses***

Chapter Five aims at reporting the preliminary findings and further seeks to organize and analyze the findings to pave the road for the answers and discussion in Chapter Six. It first focuses on the findings of the questionnaire survey and provides information such as item descriptive statistics and internal consistency scores. It then proceeds to give the general Stages of Concern profiles of teachers who participated in the survey based on the converted percentile scores using a stratified sample collected by the Concerns-based adoption model research team as the baseline control group and afterwards compares the percentile scores and the Stages of Concerns profiles of teachers grouped under a variety of teacher and school factors. Next it also examines the qualitative answers to the open-ended questions in the survey and consolidates them into a summary. The second half of the chapter centres mainly on the data collected in the in-depth interviews. Case summaries, with individual Stages of Concern and Level of Use profiles included, are first presented and the chapter also reviews the different SBA practices adopted by the interviewees and their schools and closes by giving an interim summary of the findings.

## ***Chapter Six      Answers and Discussion***

This chapter is an extension of the previous chapter which reports and analyzes the preliminary findings and it attempts to answer the six subsidiary research questions posted in Chapter Four. The answers and their associated discussion are supported by the findings obtained in both the questionnaire survey and the in-depth interview. The statistical data, Stages of Concern and Levels of Use profiles and quotes from the answers in the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and from the teachers' comments in the in-depth interviewed are



provided as necessary. References are also made to the contextual background of the SBA scheme and relevant literature on educational innovations to discuss the implementation of the SBA scheme in a wider perspective.

### ***Chapter Seven   Conclusions***

Chapter Seven is the last chapter in the research report and closes the report by reiterating key findings of the present study, discussing their implications and giving recommendations for both improvement of the implementation of the SBA scheme and for further research in the area of innovation implementation. The researcher's observations on the discussion and research on the SBA scheme in the public and academic domains are also offered as closing remarks to the report.

## Chapter 2      Examining HKCEE English Language and the School-based Assessment Scheme

### 2.1 *The English Language Curriculum*

The HKCEE English Language assessment is based on the CDC's (1999) *Syllabus for English Language (Secondary 1 - 5)*. The syllabus adopts the framework and approach of a Target Oriented Curriculum with the following subject target:

To develop an ever-improving capability to use English

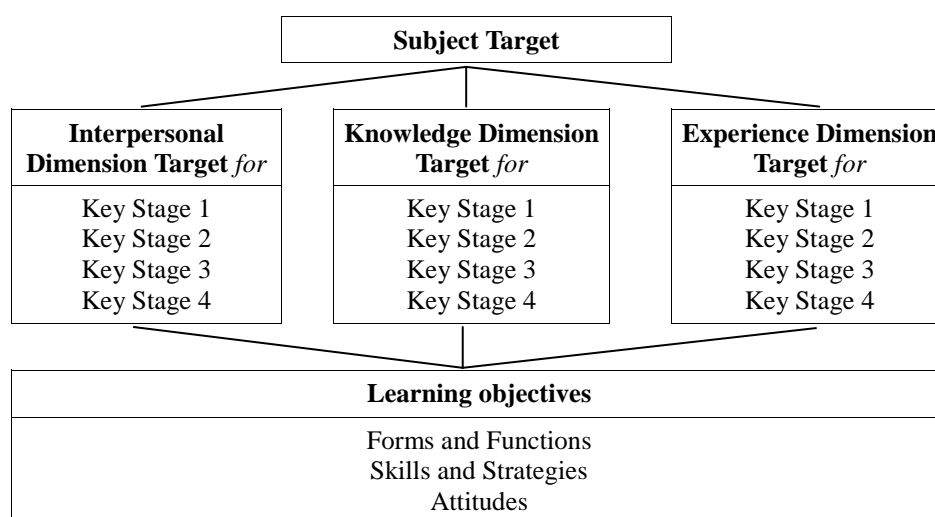
- to think and communicate;
- to acquire, develop and apply knowledge;
- to respond and give expression to experience;

and within these contexts, to develop and apply an ever-increasing understanding of how language is organized, used and learned.

(p.8)

The subject target is further divided into three dimension targets, namely interpersonal, knowledge and experience. These subject targets are supported by learning objectives at the lowest level which form the content of learning including language forms and functions, the four language skills, language learning strategies and attitude to be cultivated.

**Figure 2.1      A hierarchy of targets and objectives for English Language**



(p.7)

The following table outlines the dimension targets of the English Language curriculum and lists the learning targets for Key Stage 4 (Secondary 4 - 5) under the three dimensions:

**Figure 2.2 The three dimension targets and their respective learning targets**

| Interpersonal Dimension (ID)  | Knowledge Dimension (KD)  | Experience Dimension (ED)   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Dimension targets</b><br>To develop an ever-improving to use English:  |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to establish and maintain relationships;</li> <li>to exchange ideas and information; and</li> <li>to get things done.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to provide or find out, interpret and use information;</li> <li>to explore, express and apply ideas; and</li> <li>to solve problems.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To respond and give expression to real and imaginative experience.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Learning targets for Key Stage 4</b>   |   |   |
| a) to establish and maintain relationships and routines in school, community and work situations<br>b) to converse, compare, argue and justify points of view about feelings, interests, preferences, ideas, experiences and plans<br>c) to produce or exchange a range of more complex messages both oral and written<br>d) to participate with others in planning, organizing and carrying out more complex and extended events;<br>e) to obtain and provide objects, services and information in a wider and more complex range of real and simulated situations | a) to provide or find out, select, analyze, organize and present information on familiar and unfamiliar topics<br>b) to interpret and use more extensive and complex information through processes or activities such as ordering, describing, classifying, comparing, explaining, justifying, predicting, inferring, summarizing, synthesizing and drawing conclusions<br>c) to identify and discuss ideas in spoken and written texts, make connections, refine or generate ideas, express or apply them<br>d) to identify and define more complex problems from given information, consider related factors, explore options, solve the problems, explain and justify the solutions<br>e) to develop and refine ideas by making appropriate revisions to own written texts independently and collaboratively<br>f) to understand how the English Language works in a wide range of contexts and how more complex texts are organized and expressed; and apply this understanding to one's learning and use of the language | a) to develop a response to a wider range of imaginative literature through activities such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participating in the presentation of texts</li> <li>identifying and interpreting themes</li> <li>appreciating the use of language including rhythm and rhyme, other sound patterns and rhetorical devices</li> </ul> b) to respond to characters, events, issues and themes in imaginative and other narrative texts through oral, written and performative means such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making predications and inferences</li> <li>analyzing the actions and motivations of characters and the significance of events</li> <li>relating to one's experiences</li> <li>putting oneself in the imaginary roles and situations in the story</li> <li>participating in dramatic presentations and reflecting on the way in which authors use language to create effects</li> </ul> c) to give expression to imaginative ideas through oral, written and performative means such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writing stories with a clear awareness of purpose and some develop of plot and character</li> <li>providing oral and written descriptions interpreting a situation, object or character</li> <li>creating short dramatic episodes</li> </ul> d) to give expression to one's experience through activities such as providing oral and written descriptions of feelings and events, incorporating where appropriate reflections on their significance |

The syllabus advocates the use of the Communicative Approach and seeks to develop students' communicative competence through learner-centred language tasks and projects which integrate (a) the three dimensions, (b) the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing, (c) the major communicative functions and language forms (such as grammar, genres, vocabulary, etc.) and (d) language development strategies and attitudes. Memorization of language items is discouraged and classroom teaching should aim at stimulating students' use of English language through learning activities which give rise to the expression of ideas, feelings and experience.

## ***2.2 Assessment specifications***

The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations (HKCEE), a Hong Kong government endorsed secondary school qualification through standardized external exit examinations, take place after five years of secondary schooling. The English Language assessment in HKCEE consists of four public examination papers and a school-based assessment component which is optional in 2007 and 2008 but mandatory after the initial trial periods. The following table outlines the assessment scheme. Details on the assessment specifications of the four public examination papers can be found in Appendix A.

**Figure 2.3 The components of the HKCEE English Language assessment**

| Component               |          |                                 | Weighting  |               | Duration   |
|-------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|
|                         |          |                                 | (with SBA) | (without SBA) |            |
| Public examination      | Paper 1A | Reading                         | 20%        | 23.5%         | 1 hour     |
|                         | Paper 1B | Writing                         | 20%        | 23.5%         | 1.5 hours  |
|                         | Paper 2  | Listening and Integrated Skills | 30%        | 35.3%         | 2 hours    |
|                         | Paper 3  | Speaking                        | 15%        | 17.7%         | 12 minutes |
| School-based assessment |          |                                 | 15%        | Nil           | N/A        |

As explained in Chapter 1, the SBA scheme, after the modification, consists of a reading/viewing programme of at least three texts and at least two oral assessments during the period the students study Secondary 4 and 5 at schools. HKEAA (2006a) has made it very clear that the SBA will assess students' oral performance but will NOT assess:

- the students' attitude or efforts
- the number of texts the students have read/viewed (beyond the minimum requirements)
- the students' ability to provide highly specific factual details about what they have read/viewed
- the student's ability to conduct literary analysis of the texts
- the student's drama skills

(p.6)

There are in general two types of assessment tasks: individual presentation and group interaction. Teachers are required to include at least one of each within the two years of study. As for the actual design of the assessment tasks, however, there is a great deal of flexibility. Teachers are asked to design assessment tasks according to students' level of English and interests which enable them to demonstrate their full oral language abilities. Teachers are free to adjust the task in length and complexity to suit individual needs and design different tasks for different students in the same class (see Figure 2.4) as long as they meet the mandatory assessment conditions (Figure 2.5). For more sample assessment tasks, please see Appendix B.

#### **Figure 2.4 Adjustment of assessment tasks based on student needs**

Example 1: An oral presentation

- More orally proficient students can be challenged by being asked to persuade the whole class to read a particular book.
- Less orally proficient students can be asked to describe the physical appearance of a particular character to a friend.

Example 2: A group interaction where each student has read different texts

- More orally proficient students can be challenged by being grouped into four and being asked to agree on which book should be set as a class reader.
- Less orally proficient students can be placed in pairs and asked to find the three most important differences between their texts.

(HKEAA, 2006a, p.8)

**Figure 2.5 Mandatory assessment conditions**

- The type of task (i.e. communicative purpose, grouping arrangement etc.) and the type of text used for assessment must have previously been used for learning and teaching purposes, so that it is familiar to students, i.e. the planned assessment task should not be the first time the students are asked to discuss their specific text or do a particular task.
- The task must not expect students to take on the role of an unfamiliar character or act out a role in a story or play, i.e. specific background knowledge and skills in drama are not to be included in the assessment. However, such activities are very useful learning and teaching activities, e.g. to develop intonation and voice projection.
- The task must be undertaken with the student's English teacher as the assessor and in the presence of at least one fellow student. The other student(s) can take part in the interaction or be the audience for a presentation.
- Tasks used to elicit an individual presentation must provide students with the opportunity to make an extended individual presentation (about 2-3 minutes). Note this is a guide only, as some students may take longer than others.
- Tasks used to elicit interaction must provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate appropriate interaction skills and make a balanced contribution without either dominating the discussion or being too reticent. Again some students may need time than others and/or may need to be prompted by the teacher to demonstrate their best.
- Students must not read aloud or take notes during the assessment activity. Students are only permitted to refer to brief notes or prompts during the assessment activity (maximum of one 4x6 note card) or PowerPoint in point form only during an individual presentation. These notes or PowerPoints are not part of the formal assessment and should not be taken into account in making a judgement about students' oral language levels.
- Individual students can be given more than the minimum number of assessments, especially if it results in an improvement in their oral standards, but they are not permitted to repeat (i.e. retake) the same assessment task without any change in input, nor should they engage in extensive rehearsal for any task inside or outside school as this may undermine the authenticity of their oral language use.
- In any task the teacher-assessor may, if they wish, interact individually with a student at any time to ask specific question(s) to clarify and/or extend the student's ideas, to help promote the range of their oral language skills. This will be particularly important in the case of students who are very shy or lacking confidence or whose oral skills are very weak. The teacher-assessor needs to take into account the amount and nature of teacher support required and the specific contextual conditions of the assessment task when making their assessment. The contextual information needs to be clearly recorded and communicated to the student and fellow teacher-assessors.

(HKEAA, 2006b, pp.1-2)

Marking is based on four domains: (a) pronunciation and delivery, (b) communication strategies, (c) vocabulary and language patterns and (d) ideas and organization, which carry equal weighting. Criterion-referenced marking is adopted and teachers should match students' performances against the descriptors<sup>1</sup> and give a score from zero to six for each domain. The scores are then added up to give a

1 While the four domains are universal for both group interaction and individual presentation types of assessments, there are slight differences in the descriptors. The assessment marking descriptors are included in Appendix C. Teachers are encouraged to discuss the marking criteria and descriptors with students and allow students to conduct self and peer assessments so that they can fully understand the standards expected for each score.

maximum of 24 points and are recorded in a standard assessment record with the students' declaration, teachers' qualitative comments and teachers' authentication. The actual scores students receive should also be reported back to the students. Assessment may be audio- or video-taped for record keeping, moderation and teacher training but is not mandatory. HKEAA requires only nine performances (three top, three average and three bottom) of one class to be recorded and archived, together with the score records, into a Class Record every year and be submitted for review and moderation.

Initial training of twelve hours on conducting the SBA scheme is provided to English language teachers and only those who have completed the training are allowed to be SBA assessors. A school SBA coordinator is also nominated by each school to be the liaison person between HKEAA and the school. The coordinator is also responsible for coordinating the school SBA procedures including the selection of texts, developing SBA learning tasks and assessment tasks and plan the assessment schedule, and facilitate the moderation, standardization and reporting of markings of the school. The coordinator is required to hold at least one formal within-school standardization meeting with all Secondary 4 teachers every year to confirm the scores near the end of the school year and is invited to attend district level inter-school SBA meetings for professional sharing and informal review. A district level group coordinator is also appointed by HKEAA to facilitate the sharing at the meeting. A summary of the year-round SBA teaching and assessment process is included in Appendix D for reference.

As in all public examination subjects with an SBA component in Hong Kong, the SBA scores submitted to HKEAA will be moderated statistically. Nevertheless, a

slight deviation is found in the statistical moderation of HKCEE English Language compared to that in other subjects. Traditionally, the HKEAA uses “the public examination results of the student under the same teacher ... as the reference point” (HKEAA, 2006c, p.4) when doing statistical moderation; in the case of HKCEE English Language, however, the moderation is based on the results of all students in the same school (Lee, 2008). The statistical moderation model employed will retain the internal rank order of the SBA scores but may add or deduct marks based on the difference of mean and the spread of the group and those of all students in Hong Kong in the SBA component and the public examination papers (HKEAA, 2006d). Figure 2.6 shows the impact of statistical moderation on students who have participated in the SBA assessment in 2007 and 2008 examinations.

**Figure 2.6    Moderation effects on students**

| Mark adjustment <sup>2</sup>  | Percentage of students (%) |         |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
|                               | 2007                       | 2008    |
| +/- 0 mark                    | 17                         | 17      |
| +/- 1 – 3 marks               | 62                         | 65      |
| +/- 4 – 6 marks               | 20                         | 16      |
| +/- 7 – 9 marks               | 1                          | 2       |
| <b>Total no. of students:</b> | 31, 875                    | 46, 652 |

(Lee, 2008; Lee & Chan, 2008)

After each examination cycle, HKEAA will provide feedback on the SBA scores to each school based on the adjustments made after the moderation. The information includes the statistics of the submitted and moderated scores (e.g. mean and standard deviation) and comments on the school overall mean and standard

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<sup>2</sup> based on a total score of 48



deviation. The following table is a summary of the moderation results reported back to the schools which participated in SBA fully in 2007 and 2008 examinations:

**Figure 2.7 Moderation results of the SBA scores submitted by participating schools**

|   | Percentage of schools (%) |      |
|---|---------------------------|------|
|   | 2007                      | 2008 |
| <b>The mean of the SBA scores is</b>              |                           |      |
| a) much lower than expected                       | 0                         | 0    |
| b) lower than expected                            | 1.5                       | 1.4  |
| c) slightly lower than expected                   | 10.6                      | 11.3 |
| d) within the range                               | 72.4                      | 71.5 |
| e) slightly higher than expected                  | 14.6                      | 12.7 |
| f) higher than expected                           | 1                         | 2.5  |
| g) much higher than expected                      | 0                         | 0.7  |
| <b>The standard deviation of the SBA score is</b> |                           |      |
| a) much narrower than expected                    | 0.5                       | 0    |
| b) narrower than expected                         | 4.5                       | 1.1  |
| c) slightly narrower than expected                | 5.9                       | 5.6  |
| d) as expected                                    | 89.9                      | 93.3 |
| e) slightly wider than expected                   | 0                         | 0    |
| f) wider than expected                            | 0                         | 0    |
| g) much wider than expected                       | 0                         | 0    |
| <b>Total no. of participating schools:</b>        | 199                       | 282  |

(Lee, 2008; Lee & Chan, 2008)

### 2.3 Rationales behind the SBA scheme

The HKCEE English Language SBA scheme is a large-scale innovation in assessment initiated by EDB and HKEAA. Its implementation involves not only the two authorities concerned but all secondary schools, English language teachers and senior secondary students. The amount of work and resources devoted is huge. In defence of the scheme, HKEAA argues that:

- it provides a more balanced and trustworthy assessment system, increasing the range and diversity of assessment collection points, task types and assessors;
- it will improve the validity of oral language assessment in particular by including aspects that cannot be assessed in public exam settings;
- it will improve the reliability of oral language assessment because judgements will be based on many observations of the student over an extended period of time;
- there will be beneficial washback on teaching and learning, particular in relation to the development of speaking and extensive reading skills, but also on teaching and assessment practices more generally;

- e) it empowers teachers to become part of the assessment process and enhances collaboration and sharing of expertise within and across schools;
- f) it has a professional development function, building up practical skills in teacher assessment which can then be transferred to other areas of the curriculum.

(HKEAA, 2006e, p.8)

While (a) - (c) are concerned with the concepts of accuracy and consistency of measurement, constructs traditionally referred to as validity and reliability in summative assessments, (d) - (f) indicate that the authority hopes that the scheme can bring positive educational changes to the system and benefit students and teachers.

### ***2.3.1 Assessment validity***

Assessment validity is often regarded as the most important single attribute in assessments (Bachman, 1990; Layman, 1998; Linn & Gronlund, 2000; Lissitz, 2009) and can be defined as “the extent to which a test measures what it was designed to measure” (Gipps, 1994, p.58). While this definition seems simple and straightforward enough, it is paradoxically very difficult to pinpoint what precisely a test was designed to measure. In the case of HKCEE English Language SBA, its validity may denote how good it is in measuring students’ English language speaking ability in everyday speech situations, how well the assessment covers all the skills and contexts as specified in the syllabus, how good it is compared to the externally assessed Speaking Paper, or how predictable the marks are in determining future success in A-Level, university and job successes in the use of oral English. These are traditionally referred to as construct validity, content validity, concurrent validity and predictive validity (Black, 1998) and may be measured separately. By incorporating SBA into HKCEE English Language, the authority seeks to enhance the construct validity of the assessment. The SBA scheme allows students to share contemplated

ideas and feelings on materials read or viewed to friends they know – a speaking activity commonly found in everyday life. Its design is a big contrast to the existing external Speaking Paper in which students have to hold a discussion on a given topic with three other students who are total strangers after a short preparation of five minutes, which however hard it tries to simulate, lacks the flavour of authentic ideas sharing found in everyday life. Yet, as the scheme gives considerate flexibility to individual teachers in designing their own assessment tasks, this claim that SBA enhances validity of HKCEE English Language assessment depends very much on the teachers' understanding of the scheme and their actual implementation.

### ***2.3.2 Assessment reliability***

Another important attribute of assessments is reliability, which is synonymous to “dependability, stability, consistency, predictability, [and] accuracy” (Kerlinger, 1986, p.404). A perfectly reliable assessment score, though never achieved, should be a true indicator of the students' capability on what it is measuring and be free of errors: those to do with the examiners (marking errors), those to do with the students (performance fluctuations over time) and those to do with the test itself (question sampling errors) (Black, 1998; Black and Wiliam, 2006). SBA, due to its continuous nature, may help eliminate errors from the student performance fluctuations and question sampling. Nevertheless, the freedom it allocates to teachers at the same time heightens the risk of marking errors.

Unlike the HKCEE English Language Speaking Paper where only a restricted number of experienced and trained examiners are employed, the SBA requires all Form Four and Five English teachers to be examiners, all of whom are new to the scheme and many have never worked as external examiners before. The SBA is not

double-marked, nor is the awarding of marks closely scrutinized as in the Speaking Paper. Familiarity between the examiners and examinees, which is duly avoided in the Speaking Paper<sup>3</sup>, may also allow personal bias to appear in the marking of the SBA.

To overcome this threat of low marking reliability, HKEAA has incorporated a number of moderation mechanisms. First of all, the SBA scores are statistically moderated to the marks of external papers. The group<sup>4</sup> mean and the spread may be adjusted to match the characteristics of the external marks while the internal rank order is maintained (HKEAA, 2006c). While it is public perception that marks moderation is necessary due to the big difference of student ability among schools caused by the banding system<sup>5</sup> (HKEA & HKBU, 1998), the employment of a statistical moderation model means that SBA scores are high only if the students perform well in the external papers. This may result in a low priority of the SBA components among teachers who believe their main task is to enhance public exam results. In fact, research on the AL Biology TAS scheme (Yip & Cheung, 2005) reveals that “many teachers view teacher assessment as additional work imposed on them by the authorities” (p.160) and some “even suggested reverting back to a

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<sup>3</sup> The examination centre clerks will check the records and ensure that the examiner’s group contains no students from his or her serving school. Examiners are also required to report to the HKEAA if they know an examinee personally.

<sup>4</sup> The group here refers to the students in the same school. The moderation mechanism is slightly different from that in other subjects which uses “the public examination results of the students under the same teacher ... as the reference point” (HKEAA, 2006d, p.4).

<sup>5</sup> Secondary school places allocation is done by banding students into 3 equal groups, based on their moderated internal school results in primary schools. Choices of students in the highest attainment group are honoured first before the second band and the third band. Although schools are not banded in Hong Kong, a combination of prestige and parental choice leads to students of similar bandings arriving at the same schools, contributing to substantial gaps of student abilities among schools which receive students from different bandings.

practical examination instead of assessment by teachers” (p.159) despite its being implemented for more than ten years.

A consensus moderation mechanism with inspection is also developed by HKEAA. Within each school, an SBA coordinator is appointed and responsible to call meetings (a) before the start of the school year to familiarize all concerned teachers with the specifications of the SBA tasks and plan how to integrate SBA into their teaching, (b) before the first actual assessment to ensure that all teachers understand the assessment standard and criteria, and (c) at the end of the school year where teachers review recordings and adjust their scores if necessary. Each school must in the end produce an archive of nine performance samples (three with the highest scores, three with the lowest scores and three at the mid-point) and submit it to HKEAA for inspection.

On a district level, all the appointed SBA coordinators meet once per year before the annual marks submission. In the meetings, they will review recordings and share experience and good practices. If an SBA coordinator feels that the original marks are too high or too low after the meeting, adjustments may be made with the consensus of the class English teachers concerned. However, such an adjustment is merely an option, not compulsory, as there is already a statistical moderation mechanism taking care of the systematic marking variations (HKEAA, 2006e).

According to HKEAA (2006a), a complete agreement is not necessary, not even within each individual school: in fact, complete agreement is not the key to reliability (Davison, 2005). HKEAA (2006a) believes that “trustworthiness comes

more from the process of seeking agreement, justifying options and so on than from absolute agreement” (p.21) and once the SBA becomes part of the school’s internal culture, the within-the-school understanding and consensus will grow, which fosters assessment reliability.

### **2.3.3 *Positive washback***

“There is extensive evidence that ‘high-stakes’ testing constrains both teachers and pupils to align their learning to meeting the demands of test” (Black, 1998, p.45). This phenomenon is known as “teaching and learning to the test”, or more technically, “washback effects” (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Students or teachers may focus on only the materials and skills which are needed for the test and disregard other meaningful aspects of the curriculum (Biggs, 1995). One example was the Hong Kong Academic Aptitude Test (HKAAT) used to moderate internal school scores of primary school students for Secondary School Places Allocation in 1978-2000, which the researcher had first-hand experience on when he was a primary school student. The test consisted of two multiple choice papers which assessed (Chinese) verbal reasoning and numeric reasoning skills. As scores in the test were the only means to determine students’ banding, which was related to students’ chances in being placed in their desired secondary schools, curriculum in the final two years of primary school were significantly distorted. Not only were students given HKAAT drilling exercises in Chinese and Mathematics lessons and at home as homework, the researcher’s school also held extra drilling lessons before or after school and sacrificed students’ participation in extra-curricular activities. In fact, the school even took to the extreme of cancelling lessons of non-academic subjects such as Physical Education and Arts and Crafts to allow time for more drilling for HKAAT.

Washback, however, may not necessarily be negative. As Morris (1972) noted, examinations are needed to ensure that the intended curriculum is actualized. If well designed, they could encourage teaching and learning behaviour which are conducive to the aims of the curriculum. This is exactly what HKEAA aims to achieve – through SBA, teachers and students may pay more attention to the long-neglected part of the English Language curriculum – the capacity to use English to respond and give expression to experience through immersion in an extensive reading and viewing programme and sharing of feelings and ideas generated in the programme. The SBA scheme, in this respect, seeks to bring about changes in teaching methodology, which are more difficult to achieve by top-down assessment innovations than changes in the teaching content (Andrews, Fullilove & Wong, 2002).

#### ***2.3.4 Empowerment and professional development of teachers***

Before the introduction of SBA, teachers' involvement in HKCEE English Language was mainly restricted to two activities: (a) preparing students for the examination and (b) marking public examination papers based on the marking schemes provided by HKEAA. The design of the examination format, questions items and marking schemes was totally in the hands of the subject team of HKEAA, which consists of HKEAA staff and experts on the subject from tertiary institutes in Hong Kong. Teachers had only a marginal role in the process. SBA brings a change to this tight control, and to a certain degree, allows teachers to design their own assessments which suit the background, the need and the level of their students (HKEAA, 2006e). While teachers do have their share of autonomy in designing internal school assessments for their students, it was observed that the design of exam papers in most schools are often the same to those found in the external public

examinations. While no direct evidence has been published, general understandings are that teachers are expected to study the trend of the question items prevalent in the public examinations in the past few years and include items that are similar in nature in the internal exam. Sometimes teachers do not even devise their own question items, but choose them amongst the ready-made assessment practices produced by textbook and exercise book publishers. The SBA scheme, therefore, can be said to be the first instance many English Language teachers have to develop assessments from scratch and to have the chance to be involved in the design of a component of the public examination. In fact, in the SBA scheme, “teachers are involved at all stages of the assessment cycle, from planning the assessment programme to identifying and developing appropriate formative and summative assessment activities right through to making the final judgments” (Davison & Leung, 2009, p. 401). This could be a challenge but at the same time well be a tool to empower teachers to think about and discuss how they could improve teaching and learning of English Language in their schools.

Teacher involvement, however, does not equate with teacher empowerment. An empowered teacher not only participates in decision-making, but also is self-motivated and exercises their professional responsibility and judgement in the decision-making. They also have to see and believe that their thoughts and feelings are valuable in order to strive for improvements in their work (Wilson & Coolican, 1996). It would be interesting to see whether the involvement of teachers in the SBA scheme, in the context of Hong Kong schools, can bring about empowerment among English Language teachers.



In addition to teacher empowerment, HKEAA hopes that the introduction of SBA in HKCEE English Language could develop teachers' practical skills in teacher assessments. They include skills such as designing assessment which aligns with curriculum objectives, matching students' performances to standards of achievement, providing feedbacks to students to improve learning and evaluating instruction based on students' performances in the assessment, skills that relate to both summative and formative assessment procedures (HKEAA, 2006e).

## ***2.4 The changing assessment and the changing roles of teachers***

The innovation does not only mean changes in the assessment system, it also translates into new roles and requirements of English Language teachers. One obvious change is that teachers are now given the task to be the assessor of their own students' English Language performance and award marks which contribute to the external public exam. To many teachers, this new role could be a bit overwhelming. In addition to the worries over increase in workload and unfamiliarity of the principles and assessment format of SBA mentioned earlier, uniformity in assessment is a major issue teachers struggle with (Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, 2006).

In a highly competitive examination-driven school system such as Hong Kong's, fairness has traditionally been seen as treating everyone equally, giving them the same task with the same input under the same conditions for the same length of time.

(Davison, 2007, p.46).

The HKCEE English Language SBA scheme, however, asks teachers not to treat students uniformly—different schools and teachers may design assessment tasks of different natures and levels of difficulty to suit the needs of their students. Text lengths and assessment lengths can be different and in the case of students with

lower levels of English, pre-tasks and intermediate tasks could also be used to guide students to perform the final assessment tasks. With such large possibilities and variations, many teachers do worry whether they will be doing the right thing. In fact, even the public have great concerns over this variability and do fear that this may turn out to be excuses for collaborative cheating among teachers and students ('Jiaoping shiti', 2006).

The new demands and the change of role of teachers in public examination assessment require more than familiarization of the assessment specifications and techniques in assessment from teachers. It denotes significant cultural and attitudinal changes. The success of the assessment reform depends very much on whether the scheme could trigger teachers to embrace the change with enthusiasm and with a desire to be reprofessionalized. Otherwise, it will be another change in education which comes and goes, creating nothing but anxiety and increase in workload.

## **Chapter 3      Educational Change and Concerns-based Adoption Model**

### ***3.1    Research on educational change***

While there has always been change and innovations in education ever since education was institutionalized, there had not been much careful study on the educational change process until the 1950s when many large-scale curriculum innovations driven by the promotion of an inquiry-oriented and student-centred instruction swept the education sector. Before this period, change was basically thought to be equated to “adoption”—“a formal and rational decision to change” (Hord et al., 1987, p.23). This is to say, the most critical element in the implementation of an innovation is in convincing the users. After that, things will just take care of themselves. Change, under this framework, is a mere mechanical, semi-automatic event.

In the 1950s, there was more interest in the process of change associated with educational innovations and it was generally understood as a natural “diffusion” spread of understanding and use. If an innovation is good and useful enough, it will spread from users to users, and eventually, the whole population will adopt it. The innovation will usually be first taken up by the innovators (2.5% of population) who are often obsessed with change, then early adopters (13.5%) who are usually seen as role models for the majority of users, and early and late majorities (34% each) representing respectively the average members of a system who usually follow with deliberate willingness and who are more cautious and sceptical in approaching innovations. Finally, the laggards (last 16%), who are generally resistant to change and are near isolates in the social system, will join in the adoption (Rogers, 1962).

The only question, however, is how long the process will take. Mort of Columbia University's Teachers College, who completed much of the early work in educational diffusion studies, concluded that the process would take approximately fifty years if no assistance was provided (Mort, 1953) and later found that, contrary to the previous assumption, many good innovations were in fact abandoned in the diffusion process before they had had a chance to prove their effectiveness (Mort, 1960).

The failure of these many good innovations that were well prepared and developed led researchers to recognize the need to plan, support and execute the change strategically rather than relying on a wholly natural diffusion. To achieve this, seminars and workshops have begun to be offered to teachers to increase the awareness and foster the utilization of the innovation. Linking agents, middlemen between developers and teachers, such as the National Diffusion Network (NDN) and the Research and Development Exchange (RDX) in the United States, have also been established to market educational innovations (Hord, 1987).

However, the inadequacy of the above theories of adoption, diffusion and dissemination of innovations lies in their inability to articulate what happens when and after the innovation is taken up by an individual. In fact, the decision to implement change is often not a matter of mere rational thinking and surely not a single one-off incident. As noted by Marris (1975), all change entails loss, anxiety and struggle—and they all play a key part in the adoption process. To study how an educational innovation is implemented, one needs to look at how the scheme is perceived, interpreted, experienced and perhaps struggled by the participating teachers and one also needs a theoretical framework which strives to understand both

the affective and behavioural sides of the implementation and one which captures the complexity of the various activities, decisions and feelings involved.

### **3.2 *Concerns-based Adoption Model***

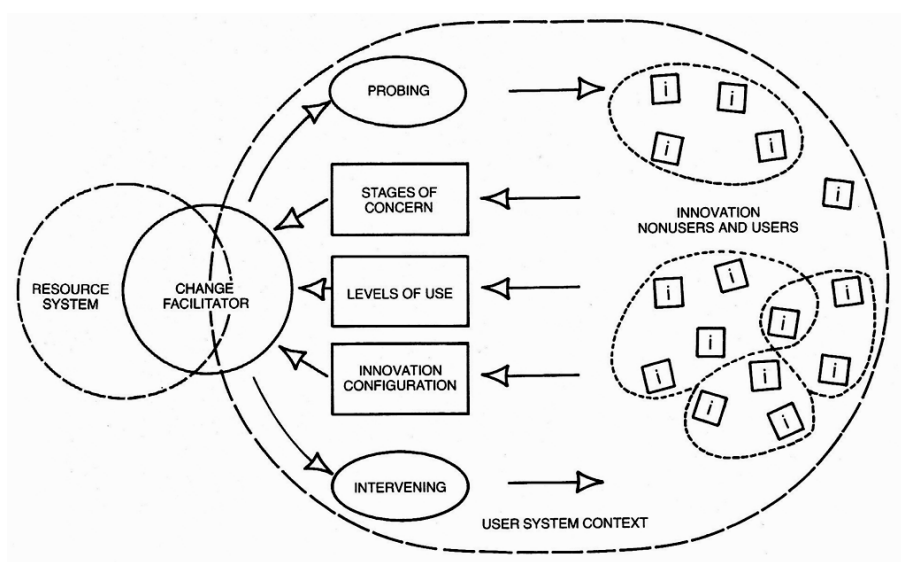
The concerns-based adoption model (CBAM), developed by the University of Texas Research and Development Centre for Teacher Education, is one such framework. The model was first proposed by Hall, Wallace and Dossett (1973) when they undertook a three-and-a-half-year study on how change took place when individuals in educational institutions were presented with innovations or new policies. It was found that while many innovations may not be fully implemented and were regarded as unsuccessful—adoption in different degrees did always take place. The CBAM framework was thereby constructed as “a basis for empirical investigation of the [complex] adoption process” and “for the purpose of assisting others who engage in the process of innovation adoption.” (p. 5).

The CBAM model theorizes the presence of two primary systems: a user system, which consists of the adopters of the innovation, each of whom may have different concerns, questions, expertises, agendas or needs concerning the innovation; and a resource system, which denotes the institution which is expert in the innovation and which has the capacity to provide help to the adopters. The resource system, depending on the context, can be an individual within the user system, although in most cases it is an external organization which is linked to the user system.

The model also considers a third system: the collaborative system which is formed to facilitate the adoption process, usually temporarily until the user system

achieves full independence and its individuals become as knowledgeable in the use of the innovation as those in the resource system. The collaborative system is also known as the change facilitator in the later literature on CBAM.

**Figure 3.1** A graphic representation of the Concerns-based Adoption Model



(Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 12)

Unlike the linking agent who focuses only on the marketing of innovations in the dissemination model, the collaborative system is a lot more involved in the implementation of the innovation by providing “continual reciprocal feedback processes between the user and resource system” (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, 1973, p. 9). The processes can be broadly divided into two classes: information and action. In terms of information, the collaborative system acts as a complex sensor system which collects information such as the user’s needs, capabilities, concerns and usage to the innovation. The information will then be analyzed and interpreted to direct actions to probe for concerns or intervene to resolve the user’s concerns and to provide orientation, training and consultation to help them to implement strategies to achieve higher levels of use in the innovation.

CBAM is essentially about the process of change and is built on the following major assumptions:

1. Change is a process, not an event;
2. Change is accomplished by individuals;
3. Change is a highly personal experience;
4. Change involves developmental growth in feelings and skills;  
and
5. Change can be facilitated by interventions directed towards the individuals, innovation, and contexts involved.

(Anderson, 1997, p. 333)

The model makes use of three dimensions to conceptualize change during the process of an innovation being implemented: (i) Stages of Concern (SoC), (ii) Level of Use (LoU) and (iii) Innovation Configurations (IC). These concepts also help assist the change facilitator in the collaborative system in the collection, analysis and interpretation of information concerning the adoption of the innovation in the user system. In addition, the research team has developed diagnostic tools to provide measurements to each dimension of change.

### ***3.2.1 Stages of Concern (SoC)***

The concept of Stages of Concern is based on Fuller's studies on teachers' concerns and problems of their teaching in the 1960s. As a teacher educator, Fuller taught an educational psychology course in a professional teacher education programme. In a pilot study, Fuller (1969) interviewed one hundred students in the course on how they thought the course might have benefited them in preparing them to teach. Ninety-seven found the course of little value and irrelevant whereas the remaining three students were articulately enthusiastic about the course. In reviewing the factors leading to the discrepancy of results between the two groups of students, Fuller found that the ninety-seven were all young undergraduates who had no previous teaching experience but the three who considered the course useful were all

middle-aged, with considerable experience in teaching or similar activities. These more mature and experienced teachers, according to Fuller, had different “concerns” from their less mature, more inexperienced counterparts. This led Fuller to undertake more studies on the clusters of concerns that are related to teachers in their relative different stages of teaching career. After conducting many counselling seminars and surveys with beginning and experienced teachers, Fuller and her associates (Fuller, 1969; Fuller, Parsons and Watkins, 1973) identified three main phases of concerns (namely non-concern, concern with self and concern with pupils) which form a continuum, very much parallel to the career stage of the teacher (pre-teaching, early teaching and late teaching). The model was later modified to encompass four clusters: unrelated concerns, self concerns, task concerns and impact concerns and seven stages: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration and refocusing to address teachers’ readiness towards the involvement of a particular innovation they may be encountering (Hall, 1974; George, 1978; Hall & Hord, 1987; George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

**Figure 3.2      Phases, clusters and stages of concerns**

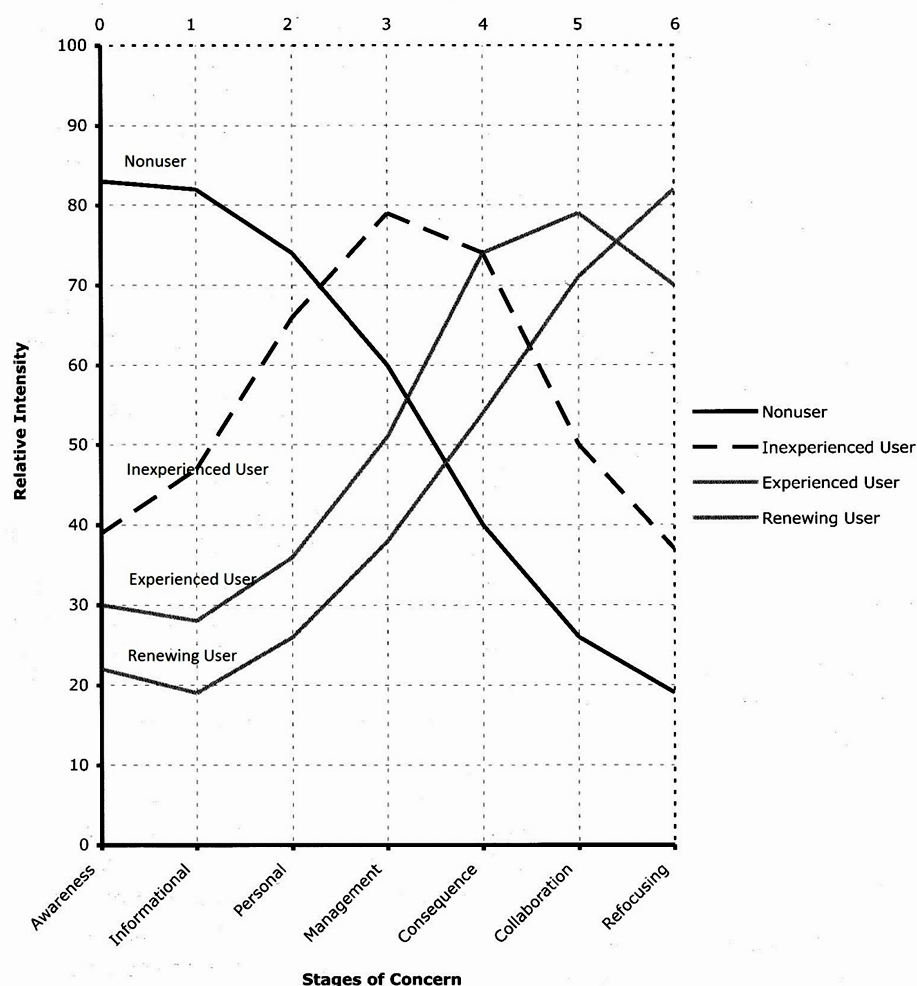
| Phases of concerns     | Clusters of concerns | Stages of concerns |               |  |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|--|
| Concerns with students | Impact Concerns      | 6                  | Refocusing    | The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including possibility of major changes or replacement with a more power alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.                |
|                        |                      | 5                  | Collaboration | The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.  |
|                        |                      | 4                  | Consequence   | Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on student in his/her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies and changes needed to increase student outcomes. |
|                        | Task concerns        | 3                  | Management    | Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information  |



|                    |                    |   |               |   |
|--------------------|--------------------|---|---------------|---|
|                    |                    |   |               | and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling and time demands are utmost.  |
| Concerns with self | Self-concerns      | 2 | Personal      | Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision making and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures of personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the programme for self and colleagues may also be reflected. |
|                    |                    | 1 | Informational | A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about himself/herself in relation of the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects and requirements for use.   |
| Non-concern        | Unrelated concerns | 0 | Awareness     | Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.   |

(modified from Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 60)

As defined by Hall, George and Rutherford (1979), concern is “the composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought and consideration given to a particular issue or task” (p. 5). It may induce mental activities such as “questioning, analyzing and re-analyzing, considering alternative actions and reactions, and anticipating consequences” (p. 5). A person may experience different types of concerns about an innovation at the same time but certain aspects of the innovation may appear more important than others and thus heighten a higher degree of concern. Similar to Fuller’s work with teachers’ concern about their own teaching, the Stages of Concern about an innovation also assumes a developmental continuum, in which earlier concerns such as information, personal and management concerns must be resolved before the emergence of later concerns such as consequence, collaboration and refocusing (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006). The following graph shows some hypothesized profiles of teachers engaged at different levels in the use of an innovation which illustrates the development in their Stages of Concern.

**Figure 3.3 Hypothesized development of Stages of Concern**

(George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 36)

As shown in the above diagram, CBAM hypothesizes that the user of a certain innovation may undergo a progression from a nonuser to a renewing user if an ideal innovation facilitating environment is provided.

This progression takes the form of a 'wave motion' of intensity that begins with self concerns being more intense prior to first use of the innovation. Then, as implementation begins, task concerns become more intense, and there is a gradual reduction in self concern. With time (three to five years), impact concerns can increase in intensity as the self and task concerns decrease.

(Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 65)

One, however, needs to be reminded that this idealized evolution is not always guaranteed. Many factors may affect, and in many cases, suffocate the progression of concern into higher stages. In fact, it is not uncommon to find that

teachers are forced into sustained self and/or task concerns as the implementation of many innovations are taken as a one-off event rather a process which needs to be facilitated continuously. Also, it is possible that when an innovation has been routinized, the teachers involved will experience an overall drop of concerns in all stages as some other tasks or other new innovations may have drawn their attention (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

To assess Stages of Concern of teachers engaged in innovations, the CBAM research team has developed three tools: (a) One-legged Interview, (b) Open-ended Statements of Concern and (c) Stages of Concern Questionnaire.

The One-legged Interview technique originated from Simon's (1972) idea of value clarification conferences. The change facilitator takes advantage of every opportunity to conduct many short, one- to two- minute, informal chats with teachers at the hallway, after a lesson in a classroom, at the teachers' lounge, etc. to assess concerns by asking questions such as, "How's it going with the new ... programme?" or "What use do you think about the ... scheme?" By asking such open-ended questions, "the teacher is given the opportunity to describe his or her concerns, the emphasis of the concern-based approach" (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 64). Afterwards, the facilitator "can probe to clarify the Stages of Concern and then analyze the teachers' responses in terms of the Stages of Concern definitions, [and] then intervene to address those concerns" (p. 65).

Open-ended Statements of Concern are another technique for finding out the stages of concern an individual has for a particular innovation. The informants are asked to provide a written response in complete sentences to the prompt "When you

think about (the innovation), what are you concerned about? Do not say what you think others are concerned about, but only what concerns you now.” The response is then analysed by a trained analyst in CBAM, who will first read through the complete statements to gain “a general feel for the affect, motivation and needs that the writer has reflected” (Newlove & Hall, 1976, p. 25) and try to relate them to self-, task- or impact-oriented concerns. Afterwards, the analyst will focus on the substance of individual sentence, break the concerns statements according to their contents and score the content units according to their Stages of Concern. The numerical picture resulted can help the change facilitator to get a perspective of the informant’s overall concerns and how focused or diffused they are. The following are some examples of sentences indicating the various Stages of Concern and a scored example of an actual statement provided in the training manual:

**Figure 3.4 Sample sentences expressing different Stages of Concern**

| Stage of Concern        | Sample sentences   |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>6. Refocusing</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ I am interested in helping produce competent professionals and the innovation is good, but not good enough. I’m familiar with several approaches that might be better.</li> <li>♦ As a team member, I am concerned about working cooperatively with others but I’m concerned because I think the innovation would be more effective if it is revised or replaced with a combination of ...</li> </ul> |
| <b>5. Collaboration</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ I am concerned about coordinating the use of the innovation across the entire department.</li> <li>♦ I am concerned with the overall faculty and staff’s conceptualization of the programme and college-wide cooperation in making the innovation work best in our situation.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4. Consequence</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ I think I can change the innovation to help students more with this experience.</li> <li>♦ I am interested in obtaining and utilizing feedback from students about the innovation in order to evaluate my teaching.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3. Management</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ I am concerned with getting enough materials for the large groups I have.</li> <li>♦ I am distressed about the time it takes to make sure materials and instruction are high quality.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2. Personal</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ I worry about unknowingly saying or doing something that will jeopardize my working relationships when we begin to use it.</li> <li>♦ I am concerned about the change in teaching procedures which this new approach will require of me.</li> </ul>   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Informational</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Being a new faculty member, there is still a lot I don't yet know about how I'll use the innovation, but I'm reading and asking questions.</li> <li>♦ I'm very interested in the innovation and I'm looking for any help available because I am not as knowledgeable about it as I want to be.</li> </ul> |
| <b>0. Awareness</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ I am not aware of what the innovation is about or what it requires.</li> <li>♦ I don't really know what the innovation involves.</li> </ul>   |

(Newlove & Hall, 1976, pp. 41-49)

**Figure 3.5 A scored sample of an open-ended statement**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>(I don't have enough time to organize myself each day.)</b>   | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>(I'm concerned about not having enough planning and preparation time.) (I'm swamped.)</b>   | <b>3, 3</b> |
| <b>(I find the materials are too fragile for individual use. They are too often broken or end up in somebody's pocket.)</b>  | <b>3</b>    |
| <i>These statements are clearly Stage 3 Management concerns. The focus of all statements is on issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, and time demands.</i> |             |

(Newlove & Hall, 1976, p. 30)

As both One-legged Interview and Open-ended Statements of Concern make use of an open-ended format, one clear disadvantage is reliability. Different analysts may hear or see the same words but interpret them very differently, even for trained personnel. This is particularly the case in One-legged Interview which is incidental and spontaneous.

To address the reliability problem and allow Stages of Concern assessment for systematic study, the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) was developed. The questionnaire consists of 35 statements representing concerns for the seven stages in a shuffled order, which participants are asked to rate on a 0-7 Likert scale (0 being irrelevant and 7 very true of me now). This gives a total raw score of 35 for each Stage of Concern. The scores can then be converted to percentile scores based on a carefully stratified sample of 830 individuals collected by the research team and finally a Stages of Concern profile consisting of seven percentile numbers can be constructed for each individual, which informs the researcher of the informant's

most intense Stage of Concern and the type of user he or she is, according to the hypothesized development of Stages of Concern illustrated in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.6 Statements on the Stages of Concern Questionnaire arranged to Stage**

| Item           | Statement   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Stage 0</b> |   |
| 3              | I am more concerned about another innovation.   |
| 12             | I am not concerned about this innovation at this time.  |
| 21             | I am preoccupied with things other than this innovation.  |
| 23             | I spend little time thinking about this innovation.   |
| 30             | Currently, other priorities prevent me from focusing my attention on this innovation.                         |
| <b>Stage 1</b> |   |
| 6              | I have very limited knowledge of the innovation.  |
| 14             | I would like to discuss the possibility of using this innovation.   |
| 15             | I would like to know what resources are available if we decide to adopt this innovation.                      |
| 26             | I would like to know what the use of innovation will require in the immediate future.                         |
| 35             | I would like to know how this innovation is better than what we have now.                                     |
| <b>Stage 2</b> |   |
| 7              | I would like to know the effect of the innovation on my professional status.                                  |
| 13             | I would like to know who will make the decision in the new system.  |
| 17             | I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change.                                 |
| 28             | I would like to know more information on time and energy commitments required by this innovation.             |
| 33             | I would like to know how my role will change when I am using the innovation.                                  |
| <b>Stage 3</b> |   |
| 4              | I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day.                                      |
| 8              | I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities.                                   |
| 16             | I am concerned about my inability to manage all the innovation requires.                                      |
| 25             | I am concerned about time spent working with non-academic problems related to this innovation.                |
| 34             | Coordination of tasks and people is taking too much of my time.   |
| <b>Stage 4</b> |   |
| 1              | I am concerned about students' attitudes towards this innovation.   |
| 11             | I am concerned about how the innovation affects students.   |
| 19             | I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students.  |
| 24             | I would like to excite my students about their part in this approach.   |
| 32             | I would like to use feedback from students to change the programme.   |
| <b>Stage 5</b> |   |
| 5              | I would like to help other faculty in their use of the innovation.  |
| 10             | I would like to develop working relationship with both our faculty and outside faculty using this innovation. |
| 18             | I would like to familiarize other departments or people with the progress of this new approach.               |
| 27             | I would like to coordinate my effort with others to maximize the innovation's effects.                        |
| 29             | I would like to know what other faculty are doing in this area.   |
| <b>Stage 6</b> |   |
| 2              | I now know of some other approaches that might work better.   |
| 9              | I am concerned about revising my use of the innovation.   |
| 20             | I would like to revise the innovation's instruction approach.   |
| 22             | I would like to modify our use of the innovation based on the experiences of our students.                    |
| 31             | I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance, or replace the innovation.                              |

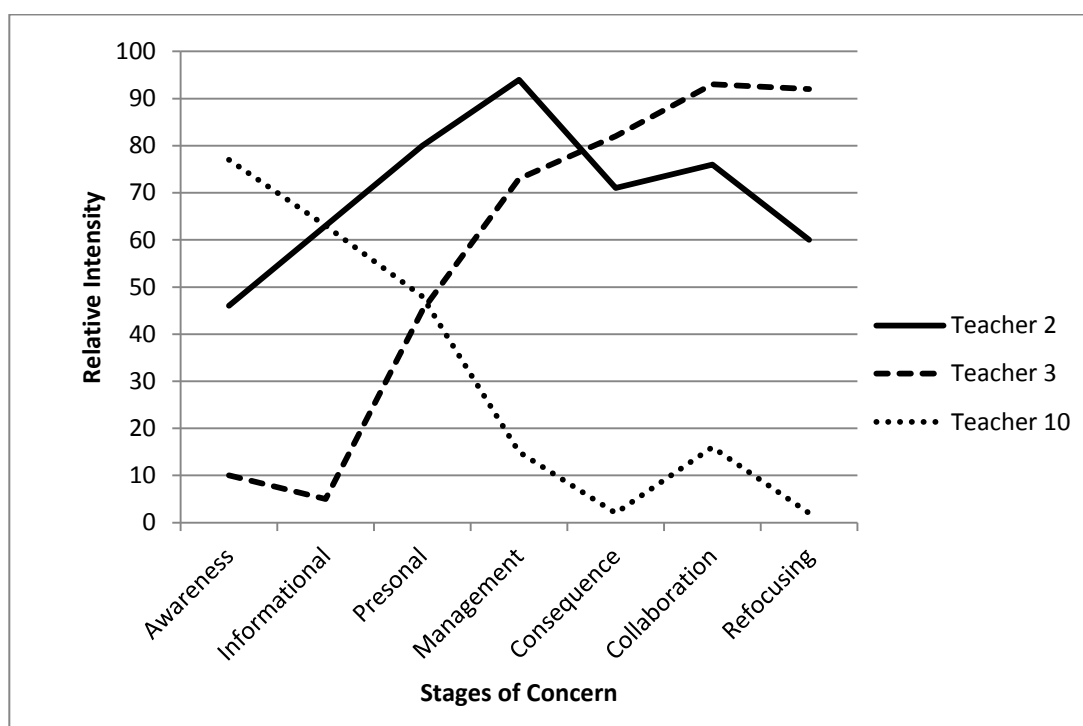
(George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006, pp. 27-28)

**Figure 3.7** Sample individual Stages of Concern percentile scores profiles

| Teacher | Stages of Concern Percentile Scores |      |    |      |      |      |      |
|---------|-------------------------------------|------|----|------|------|------|------|
|         | 0                                   | 1    | 2  | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    |
| 1       | 10                                  | 5    | 41 | 47   | (86) | 80   | 65   |
| 2       | 46                                  | 63   | 80 | (94) | 71   | 76   | 60   |
| 3       | 10                                  | 5    | 45 | 73   | 82   | (93) | (92) |
| 4       | 53                                  | 5    | 14 | (90) | 13   | 10   | 30   |
| 5       | 31                                  | 55   | 51 | 54   | 73   | (77) | 63   |
| 6       | 11                                  | 42   | 15 | 6    | 30   | (87) | 12   |
| 7       | 37                                  | 4    | 4  | 25   | 78   | 39   | (87) |
| 8       | 43                                  | 19   | 54 | 57   | (83) | 69   | 81   |
| 9       | (99)                                | 96   | 92 | 92   | 90   | 64   | 26   |
| 10      | (77)                                | 63   | 48 | 15   | 2    | 16   | 2    |
| 11      | (97)                                | (99) | 87 | 83   | 13   | 16   | 3    |
| 12      | 37                                  | (91) | 35 | 2    | 9    | 72   | 11   |
| 13      | 81                                  | (97) | 59 | 27   | 33   | 55   | 34   |
| 14      | (99)                                | (99) | 96 | 85   | 86   | 72   | 52   |
| 15      | (98)                                | (99) | 85 | 97   | 63   | 52   | 84   |
| 16      | 10                                  | 30   | 5  | 47   | 66   | (95) | 34   |
| Average | 0                                   | 1    | 2  | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    |
|         | 52                                  | 54   | 51 | 56   | 55   | 61   | 46   |

\* These are actual SoCQ profiles of concerns reported by teachers adopting a new science curriculum. You will note that some teachers have two scores circled. These represent what is essentially a tie (a difference of only 1 or 2 points) for the person's most intense Stage of Concern.

(George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 32)

**Figure 3.8** Sample graphic representations of some individual Stages of Concern profiles taken from Figure 3.7

For example, in the above graphic representations, Teacher 10 shows a clear non-user pattern – concerns peak at Stage 0 and are relatively high in Stages 1 and 2 but lowest on Stages 4, 5, and 6, which indicates that while the individual is not fully aware of the innovation, he or she may be slightly interested in knowing more about it, judging from the relatively higher Stages 1 and 2 scores. Teacher 3, with the relatively high scores in Stages 3-6, however, can be a typical renewed user, who could be quite frustrated with the management aspect of the innovation but has strong ideas about how it could be improved (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006). Appendix E has more information on how different high and low scores for Stages of Concern can be interpreted, taken from the SoCQ Manuel (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

SoCQ was the result of three years' development of the CBAM research team at University of Texas on creating a quick-scoring measure of the seven Stages of Concern. It was selected from 544 potential statements selected from the Open-ended Statements of Concern data collected in earlier studies and from a pool of statements purposely written by the project team. Using the definitions from the original CBAM paper (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, 1973), the statements were categorized according to the seven stages and one more “unacceptable” category. The “acceptable” sentences were subsequently edited and reworded, which finally gave 195 statements, excluding those for Stage 0<sup>1</sup>, for a pilot instrument.

In the pilot study of the instrument, a total of 363 responses were collected. A correlation analysis showed that 83% of the statements correlated more highly with

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<sup>1</sup> At the time the pilot instrument was constructed, there was disagreement among the CBAM staff and outside consultants on whether Stage 0 (Unconcerned) was relevant to the CBAM theory (Hall, George & Rutherford, 1977). In the end, it was decided the instrument includes only statements for Stages 1-6.



their respective assigned Stages of Concern than with the overall score, and 73% more highly than with scale scores of any other stages, which suggest that statements assigned to the same stage tend to yield similar responses (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006). Forty-five less correlated statements were later deleted and the responses on the remaining 150 statements were put to a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. Ten principal components factors with eigenvalues over 1.0 were identified and after examining the factor structure, three factors were considered uninterpretable due to a lack of statements with primary loadings. Six other factors denoting the six Stages of Concerns were also identified, with one extra factor—most of its associated statements were in fact about a lack of information or awareness of the innovation from the original Stage 1 subset—identified to be representative of Stage 0 concerns. (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

**Figure 3.9      Correlations between Varimax Factor Scores and Raw Scale Scores on the pilot Stages of Concern Questionnaire (150 items, 363 respondents)**

| SoC Stage | Varimax Factor Scores |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|-----------|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|           | 7                     | 1          | 6          | 3          | 4          | 2          | 5          |
| 0         | <u>.83</u>            | -.36       | .41        | .04        | .05        | -.04       | -.09       |
| 1         | .46                   | <u>.67</u> | -.40       | -.10       | .22        | -.35       | .01        |
| 2         | -.41                  | .49        | <u>.72</u> | .36        | .04        | -.14       | .26        |
| 3         | .10                   | -.04       | -.34       | <u>.91</u> | .10        | .12        | -.12       |
| 4         | -.41                  | -.19       | .00        | .12        | <u>.96</u> | -.02       | -.07       |
| 5         | .10                   | .37        | .11        | -.11       | .11        | <u>.82</u> | -.34       |
| 6         | .16                   | -.05       | -.17       | -.02       | .07        | .40        | <u>.88</u> |

(George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 15)

Figure 3.9 is the result of an analysis of the totalled raw scores for each Stage of Concern and the Varimax Factor Scores. The surprising convergence of the two sets of scores also supports the conclusion that the seven factors are linked to

independent constructs representing the seven Stages of Concern in the CBAM framework.

In September 1974, a 35-statement SocQ was constructed and put into use after reduction of statements based on their correlations to scale scores and content analysis. Validity of the questionnaire was tested in several subsequent studies conducted by CBAM staff by comparing the highest Stage of Concern yielded by the questionnaire and the investigators' rating of concerns from individual interviews. In general, analysis showed that the two ratings were correlated with a reliability coefficient between .41 and .85 (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006). The SoCQ Manual also reported high coefficients of internal reliability of the questionnaire items in many later studies, both in the United States and overseas, which used the questionnaire as their investigation inventory. The reliability coefficients are summarised in Figure 3.10.

**Figure 3.10 Coefficients of internal reliability for each stage of SoCQ**

| Authors  | Sample Size | Stages of Concern |     |     |     |              |     |              |
|--|-------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-----|--------------|
|  |             | 0                 | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4            | 5   | 6            |
| Hall, George & Rutherford, 1979  | 830         | .64               | .78 | .83 | .75 | .76          | .82 | .71          |
| Van den Berg & Vandenberghe, 1981  | 1585        | .77               | .79 | .86 | .80 | .84          | .80 | .76/<br>.73* |
| Kolb, 1983   | 718         | .75               | .87 | .72 | .84 | .79          | .81 | .82          |
| Barucky, 1984  | 614         | .60               | .74 | .81 | .79 | .81          | .79 | .72          |
| Jordan-Marsh, 1985   | 214         | .50               | .78 | .77 | .82 | .77          | .81 | .65          |
| Martin, 1989   | 388         | .78               | .78 | .73 | .65 | .71/<br>.78* | .83 | .76          |
| Hall et al., 1991  | 750         | .63               | .86 | .65 | .73 | .74          | .79 | .81          |
| <i>*In these studies, the authors proposed two subscales in place of the original SoC scale.</i> |             |                   |     |     |     |              |     |              |

(George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 21)

The Stages of Concern are a very important concept for change facilitators in the collaborative system to monitor the implementation process of a given innovation. Besides helping the change facilitators to understand the general stages the population or a subset is located in and thus harnessing corresponding resources to support the teachers and adjust the implementation, by collecting concerns profiles at different points in time, a motion picture of the evolution of the implantation can also be drawn, further indicating any complicated turns and unexpected events in the implementation process.

### 3.2.2 Levels of Use (LoU)

If Stages of Concern is said to focus on the affective domain of an innovation, then Levels of Use can be regarded as a measure on the behavioural dimension, describing how people are acting with respect to the innovation. CBAM contends that there are observable behavioural differences among individuals who are at different LoU of an innovation and these levels represent a general developmental pattern that the users may proceed, from Level 0 to Level IVA, and occasionally, to Levels IVB, V and VI:

**Figure 3.11 Levels of Use of the innovation with decision points**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>0</b>  | <b><u>Non-use:</u></b> State in which the user has little or no knowledge of the innovation, has no involvement with the innovation, and is doing nothing towards being involved.   |
| <b><i>Decision Point A: Takes action to learn more detailed information about the innovation.</i></b>   |   |
| <b>I</b>  | <b><u>Orientation:</u></b> State in which the user has acquired or is acquiring information about the innovation and/or has explored or is exploring its value orientation and its demands upon the user and the user system. |
| <b><i>Decision Point B: Makes a decision to use the innovation by establishing a time to begin.</i></b> |   |
| <b>II</b>   | <b><u>Preparation:</u></b> State in which the user is preparing for first use of the innovation.  |
| <b><i>Decision Point C: Makes user-oriented changes.</i></b>  |   |
| <b>III</b>  | <b><u>Mechanical Use:</u></b> State in which the user focuses more effort on the short-term, day-to-day   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | user of the innovation with little time for reflection. Changes in use are made more to meet user needs than client needs. The user is primarily engaged in a stepwise attempt to master the tasks required to use the innovation, often resulting in disjointed and superficial use.              |
| <b><i>Decision Point D-1: Establishes a routine pattern of use</i></b>  |  |
| <b>IVA</b>  | <b><u>Routine</u></b> : Use of the innovation is stabilized. Few if any changes are being made in ongoing use. Little preparation or thought is being given to improving innovation use or its consequences.   |
| <b><i>Decision Point D-2: Changes use of the innovation in order to increase client outcomes, based on formal or informal evaluation.</i></b>                   |  |
| <b>IVB</b>  | <b><u>Refinement</u></b> : State in which the user varies the use of the innovation to increase the impact on clients within immediate sphere of influence. Variations are based on knowledge of both short- and long-term consequences for clients.   |
| <b><i>Decision Point E: Initiates changes in use of the innovation for the benefit of clients, based on input from and in coordination with colleagues.</i></b> |  |
| <b>V</b>  | <b><u>Integration</u></b> : State in which the user is combining own efforts to use the innovation with the related activities of colleagues to achieve a collective effect on clients within their common sphere of influence.  |
| <b><i>Decision Point F: Begins exploring alternatives or major modifications to the innovation presently in use.</i></b>  |  |
| <b>VI</b>   | <b><u>Renewal</u></b> : State in which the user re-evaluates the quality of use of the innovation, seeks major modifications or alternatives to present innovation to achieve increased impact on clients, examines new developments in the field, and explores new goals for self and the system. |

(Hall, Dirksen & George, 2006, p. 7)

Traditionally, the use of an innovation has been seen as dichotomous: the teacher either uses it or does not. LoU, however, breaks this into eight levels, each operationally defined by a set of actions concerning the innovation, with intervening decision points served as primary behaviour indicators contrasting adjacent levels. The current model is a revision of Hall, Wallace and Dossett's (1973) which included only seven levels without the branching of LoU IV (named 'Independent' in the 1973 model) into IVA Routine and IVB Refinement, as a result of verification studies which found a number of users beyond LoU III Mechanical Use but not yet making clients-oriented change (Hall, Dirksen & George, 2006). Some levels have also been relabelled to better reflect the nature of the usage state.

While developing a measurement tool for LoU, the CBAM team noted that the behaviours associated with LoU are not limited to what happens during the operation in the classroom. What the teacher does outside the classroom, e.g. planning for the next lesson, studying the instructor's guide, getting the materials ready, or reviewing the lesson conducted – are all behavioural indicators to a teachers' LoU of the innovation as well. The research team then compiled and agreed on a list of over eight hundred indicators related to the eight different levels which could be used to inform the investigator of the teacher's LoU. These indicators were later condensed and grouped under seven categories: (a) knowledge<sup>2</sup>, (b) acquiring information, (c) sharing, (d) assessing, (e) planning, (f) status reporting and (g) performing, which provide seven subpoints for the LoU measurement and allow inter-subpoint reliability analysis. Each category can be independently assessed and an overall rating of LoU can be determined by reviewing the seven subratings and their associated behaviours.

**Figure 3.12 Levels of Use categories**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | Concerns what the user knows about characteristics of the innovation, how to use it, and the consequences of its use. This is cognitive knowledge related to using the innovation, not feelings or attitudes.                   |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | Solicits information about the innovation in a variety of ways, including questioning resource persons, correspondence with resource agencies, reviewing printed materials, and making visits.                                  |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | Discusses the innovation with others. Shares plans, ideas, resources, outcomes, and problems related to its use.  |
| <b>Assessing</b>             | Examines the potential or actual use of the innovation or some aspects of it. This can be a mental assessment or can involve actual collection and analysis of data.  |
| <b>Planning</b>              | Designs and outlines short- and/or long-range steps to be taken during the process of innovation adoption; i.e., aligns resources, schedules activities, meets with others to organize and/or coordinate use of the innovation. |

<sup>2</sup> The Knowledge Category is the only category in the LoU framework not concerned with observable behaviour. It is about an individual's understanding of the innovation, how it is used and its effects. One's knowledge schema is expected to increase in complexity along with the progress in LoU.

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Status Reporting</b> | Describes personal stand at the present time in relation to use of the innovation.  |
| <b>Performing</b>       | Carries out the actions and activities entailed in operationalizing the innovation. |

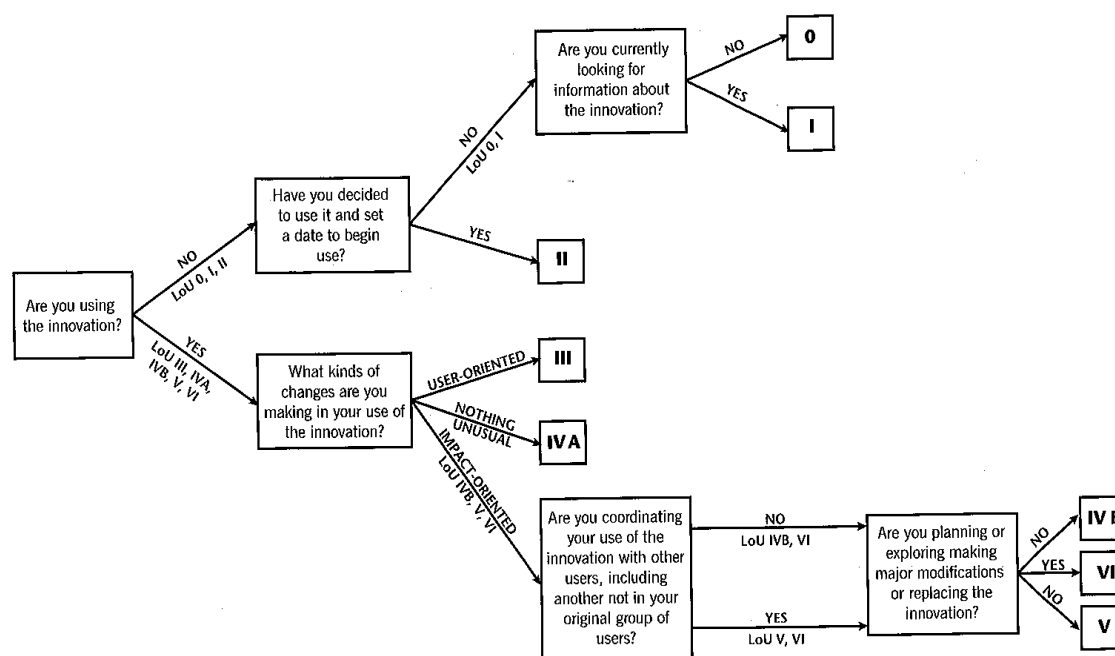
(Hall & Hord, 2001, p.90)

The level descriptors, the intervening Decision Points and the seven categories form a comprehensive operational definition of Levels of Use. These are combined into “The LoU Chart” and constitute the basis of the LoU assessment procedures which will be detailed in the following paragraphs. The complete LoU Chart can be found in Appendix F.

Unlike SoC which can be easily measured with a pen-and-paper survey, this does not work for LoU since a self-reporting inventory would require the informant to have a good understanding of the levels and be able to distinguish among them. A different type of instrument which can document behaviours is therefore needed. The simplest, but certainly not the easiest way is to adopt an intensive observational approach—but as most of the indicators in the LoU categories are out-of-classroom behaviours, the investigator will have to follow the teacher the whole day, perhaps even after school to collect information, a procedure too expensive and not practical for the purpose of change facilitator intervention and for most research studies. This led the CBAM research team to develop an alternative strategy based on Foster and Nixon’s (1975) ideas of “focused interviews”—interviews which are started off open-ended but proceeded through a series of prompts which close in on a particular topic. The LoU focused interview makes use of a branching technique. The interviewer will follow up and choose questions from a particular branch based on the informant’s response to the basic branching questions derived from the seven

Decision Points from the LoU Chart. A graphic representation of the LoU Interviewing protocol is shown below.

**Figure 3.13 The LoU focused interview protocol**



(Hall, Dirksen & George, 2006, p. 18)

To prove that the focused interview is an accurate tool in the assessment of LoU, the CBAM team took great pains to conduct intensive ethnographic observations on the usage of the Intermediate Science Curriculum Improvement Study (ISCS) among a group of science teachers:

A validity study of the LoU Interview procedure was conducted using an ethnographic methodology. This approach was selected since it would provide a broad base of qualitative data collection during both in-class and out-of-class time. Forty-five junior high school teachers in two school systems were interviewed in relation to their use/non-use of the Intermediate Science Curriculum Improvement Study (ISCS). Based on the LoU Interview ratings, seventeen teachers representing a stratified sample including all LoU Levels were selected for ethnographic observation. Ethnographers spent one full day with each teacher, from the time the teacher arrived at school to the time s/he departed. Using the operational definitions of the LoU as guidelines, the ethnographers took extensive notes on the in-class and out-of-class behaviours and interactions of the teachers in relation to their science teaching. At

the end of the day, the ethnographers assigned an LoU rating to the teachers and developed a set of written protocols.

... The ethnographer's LoU was compared with the consensus LoU Interview rating.... The correlation coefficient determined ... was .98, clearly indicating that, for this sample, the focused interview ratings were consistent with a full day's direct observation of the teachers' use/non-use of the innovation of ISCS.

(Hall & Loucks, 1977, pp. 267-268)

Besides the validation study mentioned above, many other studies have also been conducted using the LoU focused interview in their design, validating the instrument and the concept of LoU in innovation studies:

**Figure 3.14 A summary of some selected LoU validation studies**

| Study                              | Sample | Design             | Innovation                                     | Findings  |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|--|---|
| George & Rutherford (1978)         | n=146  | Correlational      | Team Teaching                                  | There is a significant relationship between change in overall LoU and time, $p < 0.5$ .   |
| George & Rutherford (1978)         | n=117  | Correlational      | Modules  | There is a significant relationship between change in overall LoU and time, $p < 0.5$ .   |
| Rutherford & Loucks (1979)         | n=42   | Correlational      | Glasser's Reality Therapy                      | Those who became nonusers or who remained nonusers had high awareness concerns.   |
| Dominguez, Tunmer & Jackson (1980) | n=34   | Ethnographic       | ESL/Spanish Reading/ Spanish/ Math/ Culture    | CBAM provides a useful system of instruments (SoC, LoU and IC Maps) and procedures for building a prescriptive programme to facilitate the adoption of bilingual programmes.  |
| Rutherford (1981)                  | n=411  | Descriptive        | Team Teaching                                  | Levels of Use do exist.   |
| Cantor (1982)                      | n=17   | Descriptive        | Auto Mechanics Curriculum Projects             | LoU is viable in vocational education.  |
| Marsh (1984)                       | n=59   | Descriptive        | Geography Curriculum                           | LoU provides meaningful data for people involved in curriculum development and implementation activities.   |
| Stedman (1984)                     | n=25   | Causal Comparative | Competency-based High School Diploma Programme | A multiple regression analysis indicated that Stages of Concern are significantly associated with LoU. All subscales of the Stages of Concern, except for consequence, had a significant effect on LoU, $p < .05$ . |
| Mitchell (1988a)                   | n=7    | Descriptive        | Timliner                                       | Those with intense individual concerns had low Levels of Use of the software.   |



| Study             | Sample | Design             | Innovation                                      | Findings  |
|-------------------|--------|--------------------|---|---|
| Mitchell (1988b)  | n=118  | Correlational      | Evaluation Data                                 | Although high-achieving schools used evaluation data at a higher LoU, no significant difference was found between LoU and achievement scores. |
| Savage (1992)     | n=30   | Causal Comparative | Third-grade District Curriculum Guides          | No significant relationships were found ( $p>.05$ ) between the use of the innovation and other factors.                                      |
| Marcais (1995)    | n=25   | Causal Comparative | Innovation and Teaching and Learning Fellowship | Teaching styles and personality had no effect on LoU.   |
| Steele (1995)     | n=13   | Correlational      | Functional Skills Curriculum                    | All subjects were users of the innovation.  |
| Falkenberg (2002) | n=23   | Correlational      | A Science Innovation                            | LoU and creativity served to better differentiate the teachers' skills.   |

(Hall, Dirksen & George, 2006, pp. 30-31)

As noted in many studies which involve both LoU and SoC, the two concepts are found to be corresponded in some sense. Analysis using large databases from cross-sectional studies indicates that the two dimensions converge at the extremes: Non-users tend to have more intense self concerns whereas impact concerns tend to be most pronounced among Integration and Renewal users. However, the middle LoU are not found to be in any direct relationship with SoC as many different possible SoC profiles have been found in these cases (Mitchell, 1988a; Savage, 1992; Hall & Hord, 2001).

LoU and its accompany instrument are invaluable because they provide a means to collect and analyse data on the process of innovation implementation that is congruous with both the quantitative and the qualitative paradigms. Researchers and change facilitators can use this tool to assess the extent of implementation of an innovation and differentiate innovation users/non-users at different levels, thereby intervening appropriately. One point to note is that while CBAM predicts a general progression of LoU, the development is not automatic and can even be reversal at

times (Hall, 1977). Many factors such as the institution, leadership, the individual teacher and the use of evaluation may affect LoU (Hall, Dirksen & George, 2006). Research (e.g. Dirksen, 2002; Dirksen & Tharp, 1997, 1999; Graber, 2006) has also indicated that most teachers require two to three years to progress beyond LoU III Mechanical Use and the implementation of an innovation to the point of institutionalization (i.e. most teachers beyond LoU III) would require three to five years (Hall & Hord, 1987).

### **3.2.3 *Innovation Configurations (IC)***

The third dimension of the CBAM is called Innovation Configurations. While the first two dimensions deal with participants in an innovation, IC is concerned directly with the innovation itself—“what constitutes the ideal in terms of the new innovation, strategy or programme and ... the variety and diversity of individuals may implement it” (Hord et al., 2006, p. 4).

When CBAM was first created, there were only two dimensions: SoC and LoU, which address respectively the affective and behavioural aspects of individuals faced with innovations. The concept of IC emerged when the research team was conducting two early studies on “team teaching” and “use of an instructional module” to establish reliable and valid procedures for assessing LoU and finding out whether these levels do exist in real life.

In the teaming study, researchers from the Research and Development Centre for Teacher Education interviewed teachers in Texas, Nebraska and Massachusetts to determine their Levels of Use of team teaching. Many teachers were quick to say, “Yes, I am team teaching”; however, when we [the research team] asked them to describe how they were teaming, the answers varied. For example:

- ♦ Teachers in one school described their team as consisting of three teachers and two parent aides, 150 students, an open

classroom with a great deal of open space, and constant reorganization of students for instruction in reading, mathematics and language arts.

- ♦ Teachers in a second school consisted of two teachers in the same grade level, both of whom had self-contained classrooms, who met once a month to example lesson plans. They kept their students in the same groups and exchanged few teaching responsibilities.
- ♦ Of course, the infamous “turn teaching”, where teachers took turns teaching the whole group, was found too.

This variety of descriptions of teaming led to the basic question: “What is teaming?” Although the four hundred teachers claimed to be using the innovation, what some teams did was significantly different from what the other teams do. ***The name of the innovation may have been the same, but the operational forms had different components and variations.***

(Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 108; emphasis added)

A similar phenomenon was also found in the instructional module study (Hall & Loucks, 1978). These differences in the operation forms of the same innovation led the CBAM team to look for ways to incorporate the many realizations of an innovation in its definition. The result is the birth of the concept of Innovation Configurations and a tool called Innovation Configurations Map, which displays the components of an innovation and the different ways each component may be carried out.

Figure 3.15 is a sample IC Map for a “Cooperative Learning” innovation. It lists vertically four main components of the innovation: (1) Structure groups; (2) Develop group skills; (3) Promotes positive interdependence; and (4) Develops groups’ skills in analysis and assessment. In each component, there are four or five variations which indicate how teachers may actually use the component. Depending on the complexity of the innovation and the amount of details needed, the number of components listed may vary. The IC Map shown is one created for teachers and it is

possible to create IC Maps to show what other parties such as students, principals or parents should be doing when implementing an innovation.

**Figure 3.15 A sample IC Map**

| Cooperative Learning Map  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Teacher _____   |  |  |  |  |
| Component 1: Structures groups  |  |  |  |  |
| a   | b  | c  | d  |  |
| Assigns students to four-member groups  | Assigns students to groups larger than four  | Assigns students to work with only one partner   | Does not assign students to groups                                   |  |
| Component 2: Develops group skills  |  |  |  |  |
| a   | b  | c  | d  |  |
| Explicitly states, monitors, or rewards groups for social skills expected during the task   | States and monitors group for social skills expected to be exhibited                             | States expected group for social skills but does not monitor or reward                             | Does not state, monitor, or reward group for social skills           |  |
| Component 3: Promotes positive interdependence  |  |  |  |  |
| a   | b  | c  | d  |  |
| Consistently organizes tasks so that group members must depend on one another to complete the task  | Frequently organizes tasks so that group members must depend on one another to complete the task | Occasionally organizes tasks so that group members must depend on one another to complete the task | Organizes tasks that permit group members to complete the task alone |  |
| Component 4: Develops groups' skills in analysis and assessment   |  |  |  |  |
| a   | b  | c  | d  | e  |
| Provides students the time and procedures to analyze how well their groups are functioning and how well they are using the necessary social skills; uses activities that enhance these skills | Provides students with activities that enhance analysis and assessment skills                    | Monitors the students' development of group process analysis and assessment                        | Allows students to analyze and assess how their group functions      | Does not give attention to analysis and assessment of group processing |

(Hord et al., 2006, p. 27)

With the help of an IC Map, programmer developers, researchers, change facilitators, schools, teachers and other participants may see the whole array of possibilities offered by the innovation. While it is possible that all the different

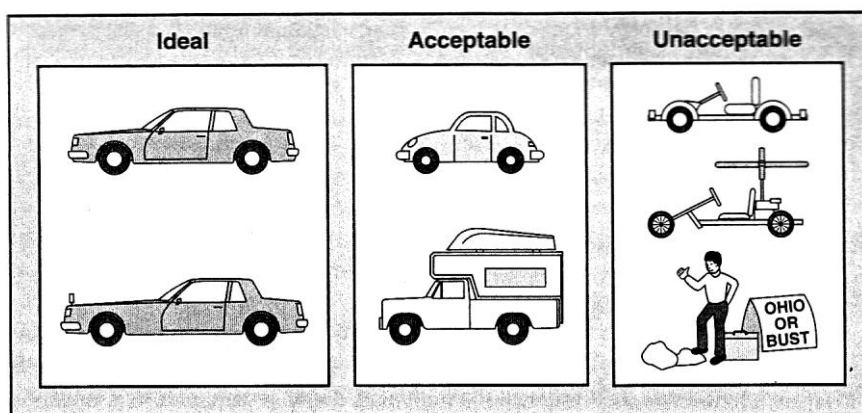
possibilities are perfectly acceptable, experience shows that in many cases, some options are less convergent with how the innovation was originally intended to be run and some may be so different that they are considered unacceptable.

For example, consider cars as the innovation. As [Figure 3.16] illustrates, and as any parking lot confirms, a car can be and has been significantly adapted from the initial conception of a two-door sedan. A whole range of “configurations” can be observed ranging from changes in colour, to the addition of mag wheels, to rebuilding as a race car, to some forms that some might claim are cars that the rest of us would say, “No, those are not cars”

The same continuum of configurations exists for educational innovations, only determining what is and is not the innovation is more difficult than with the car example. All too frequently the developers of an education innovation have not thought clearly about what the use of their change will really entail. They have thought more about what is needed to support its implementation, such as training and materials. In addition, because teachers, like the rest of us, are always short on time, they will tend to reduce the amount of change and effort they have to invest whenever they can. If there is limited training and support for the change, it is likely that it will not be fully implemented. Although the teachers may genuinely believe that they are using the innovation, an expert observing their classroom may conclude, “Hmm, is that the way it should be done?”

(Hall & Hord, 2001, pp. 39-40)

**Figure 3.16 A continuum of Innovation Configurations for a car**

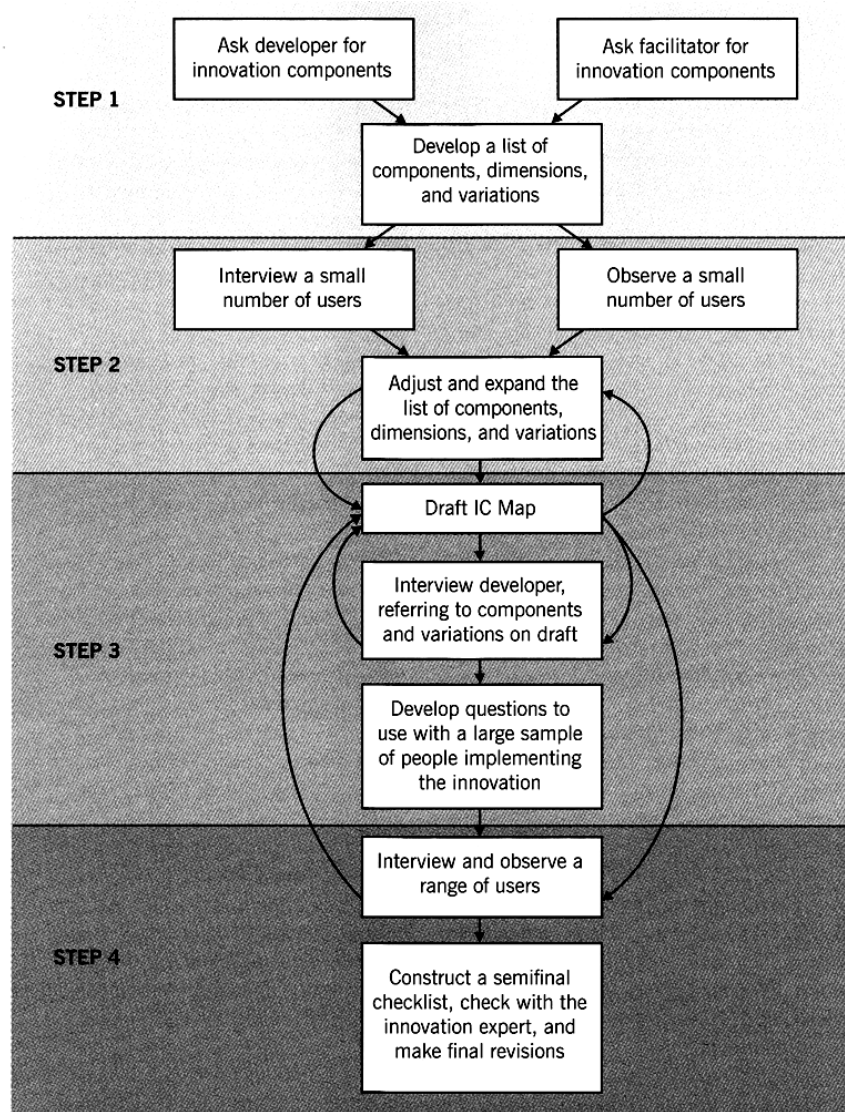


(Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 40)

On the sample IC Map shown in Figure 3.15, one may notice the presence of some vertical slashed lines and solid lines cutting the variations of a component into

three categories. These are called fidelity lines and are there to distinguish ideal and acceptable practices from unacceptable ones. The variations are organized so that the ones on the left to the slashed lines represent ideal uses, those in between the slashed line and solid line are acceptable uses and anything right to the solid line is considered unacceptable. It is however stressed that the fidelity lines are not a mandatory feature of an IC Map and should be added only after the endorsement of the developer or with support of empirical evidence (Hord et al., 2006).

**Figure 3.17** A flowchart showing the steps in constructing an IC Map



(Hord et al., 2006, p. 14)

The IC Manual (Hord et al., 2006) outlines the following steps in constructing an IC Map: (1) Identifying innovation components; (2) Identifying additional components and variations; (3) Refining the IC Map; and (4) Testing and finalizing the IC Map.

While the procedure may seem simple and straightforward, the actual collection and analysis of data and the repeated drafting and refining processes can be quite tedious and resource- and time-consuming. In the process, the IC Mappers are cautioned to focus specifically on the operational forms of the innovation, not its philosophy or implementation requirements. All too often the developers may tell the teachers what materials are to be used and for how long a day they must be used in the classroom but more important questions in the IC development would be “*how* those materials are being used and *what* happens in the classroom when they are.” (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 49). Ideally, policy developers, change facilitators, teachers and other people involved in the operation of the innovation should have a chance to come together to discuss these two basic questions and reach a consensus of the ideal, acceptable and unacceptable variations of its key components. But as it may be difficult to hold such meetings particularly for large-scale innovations, the IC Map can be an invaluable technique to help achieve the same consensus among the many different parties. The map can also serve as a diagnostic tool for training and development of teachers and as a useful evaluative instrument on the effectiveness of the innovation.

Since the incorporation of IC in the CBAM framework, numerous studies have made use of the concept and developed IC Maps to examine the change process for research, evaluation, implementation, development and training, and assessment,

and to reveal expectations for different groups of users in the adoption of the same innovation. Hord et al. (2006) conducted an extensive review of such studies in the U.S. and Canada and observed a few emerging themes:

- ♦ First, research using IC Maps indicates that higher forms of use, those forms of the innovation closer to the ideal or best practice, seem to be related to greater outcomes for students. The research conducted on the Department of Defence Dependents Schools (DoDDS standard-based math programme) (Alquist & Hendrickson, 1999; George et al., 2000) attest to this conclusion, as does the work of Koon (1995) and Bridge (1995).
- ♦ Second, IC Maps are useful in describing and evaluating the implementation of reforms, whether based on a fidelity model (Mills & Rogan, 2000) or when examining the difference between planned implementation and actual use (Alquist & Hendrickson, 1999; Anderson & Stiegelbauer, 1994; Anderson et al., 1990; Chinman et al., 2005; Crandall et al., 1982; Kacer & Craig, 1995; Meehan, 1995; Mills & Tincher, 2003; Mitchell, 1988a).
- ♦ Third, the IC concept is a way to describe best practice and its potential variations to guide practitioners in professional development or establishing practice (Loucks-Horsley & Bybee, 1998; Roy & Hord, 2003).
- ♦ A fourth theme concerns IC as a way to chart progress over years of implementation and contexts (Anderson & Stiegelbauer, 1994; Bridge, 1995). This charting of progress includes the idea of institutionalization, or the optional implementation and integration of the innovation within the school or context. Institutionalization might also result in best practice if it meets a tested developer's ideal, or if there is agreement within the context that all users are working together and that it is having positive outcomes. Crandall et al. (1982), Hord and Hall (1986), Anderson and Stiegelbauer (1994), and Gershner and Snider (2001) all include the idea of "When is the innovation institutionalized and what does that look like?" as part of their investigation and discussion.
- ♦ Finally, the IC concept has been used to plan professional development and to evaluate the progress of implementation to develop supports (Chinman et al., 2005; Melle & Pratt, 1981; Mitchell, 1988a).

(pp. 44-45)



### ***3.3 Criticisms and limitations of Concerns-based Adoption Model***

While CBAM and its various dimensions and tools have been widely used in research on educational change and implementation of innovations in the past forty years, they are not without contentions and criticisms. The first criticism is concerned with the highly descriptive nature of the CBAM framework. CBAM provides a sophisticated structure and methodology to describe key dimensions of the process, constitution and support of implementation of educational innovations but it is disputable whether a model which seeks to describe rather than predict and account for teacher change can be called a “theory” (Anderson, 1997). The overall CBAM framework describes only the interaction of the three systems and while there may be some predicative information about the progression in SoC and LoU, the theories involved include very little information on what change facilitators or innovation developers should do in response to these profiles. As pointed out by even researchers from the CBAM team themselves (Hall & Hord, 1987), more substance is in fact needed in the framework to account for the change process and dynamics and to inform intervention strategies.

Another frequent attack to CBAM is on the validity of the constructs of Stages of Concern. While the CBAM team has reported a wealth of literature which supports the seven distinct but developmental stages (see 3.2.1 for more details), its validity is still doubted and many other ways of capturing the developmental stages have also been proposed. Vandenberghe (1983), who for example, conducted exploratory factor analyses of the data from his version of Belgian-Dutch SoCQ (with the 35 original SoCQ items translated and 22 new items added) on 1604 teachers involved in an large-scale educational change in Belgium and Netherlands,

suggested an alternative classification of the seven stages: (0) awareness, (1) personal/informational, (2) consequences for pupils, (3) management, (4) collaboration, (5) refocusing according to experiences with pupils, and (6) refocusing. Bailey and Palsha (1992) likewise offered an alternative concerns framework consisting of only five stages: (0) awareness, (1) personal, (2) management, (3) impact, and (4) collaboration after conducting an exploratory factor analysis on SoCQ data among a group of 142 in-service teachers working in early intervention programmes. Cheung, Hattie and Ng (2001) proposed another five-stage Stages of Concern with (0) awareness, (1) informational/personal, (2) management, (3) consequence/collaboration and (4) refocusing based on confirmatory factor analysis of the response of 1622 Hong Kong primary school teachers on the original SoCQ and a shortened version of SoCQ. In short, the nature of the seven stages in SoC and the construct validity do require much further investigation.

A third aspect which draws much attention is the treatment of LoU. CBAM hypothesizes a development of LoU from Level 0 to IVA, then, for some of the teachers, an ever evolving process in and out of Level IVA, to Levels IVB, V, or VI. The move is driven by arousal and resolution of concerns but the exact dynamics between LoU and SoC are not articulated in the CBAM model. The absence of reference to configurations of the innovation in LoU is also heavily attacked by some, such as Leithwood and Montogery, who believe that an investigation on Level of Use is without meaning if it does not reflect the gap between teachers' actual usage of the innovation and the "ideal" use. In Leithwood & Montogery's (1987) framework of Innovation Profiles, the number of Levels of Use is not fixed and may vary for different dimensions of the innovation. The model also sets clear end points for the implementation: the routinized practice of the ideal use, which unlike CBAM,

clearly suggests that intervention for teachers' development is needed until this end point.

A last critique to be included in this section, but certainly not the last of CBAM, is how the concept of collegiate collaboration is handled. In both SoC and LoU, collaboration is related to one of the developmental stages (Stage 5) or levels (Level V). However, some CBAM theorists did point out that collaboration concerns may reflect mere features of the innovation (e.g. an innovation which includes collaboration as one of its key dimension, say team teaching or peer coaching) or the change strategy, instead of being a result of teachers' progression in the implementation (Hall, George & Rutherford, 1979). It is also suggested that collaboration concerns may be absent altogether if teachers work in systems where there is little opportunity or culture of teamwork (Hord et al., 1987). This has led researchers such as Fennell (1992) and Anderson (1997) to question whether collaboration should be included as a stage or a level in the structures.

This section has discussed a number of questions, shortcomings or limitations regarding the CBAM framework. The intention, notwithstanding, is not to discredit the model in its entirety or to discourage further work using CBAM. Rather, it is hoped that the discussion can reveal the importance of more research regarding the framework so that these problems can be addressed and resolved in future, contributing to an increased understanding in the area of implementation of educational innovations. The discussion also serves to stress the need to critically appraise the CBAM model with the first-hand data collected than to rely blindly on the assumptions inherited in this model, as well as, in fact, any other models or theories proposed in the literature.

## **Chapter 4        The Present Study in Detail**

### ***4.1    Aims and research questions***

A main theme which underlines the previous chapter is that educational change is an organic process which involves humans. With a view that the success of this process is highly dependent on the perceptions, feelings and actions of the people who actually carry out the change, it will be worthwhile to examine the implementation of the HKCEE English Language School-based Assessment scheme in terms of the perceptions, feelings and actions taken at the frontline. More specifically, the present study aims to investigate:

- i)     Hong Kong English Language teachers' perceptions and concerns towards the SBA scheme;
- ii)    how they implement the scheme; and
- iii)   their reflections on the implementation.

Six finer subsidiary questions, which are dissected from the three research questions above, have also been set up to help guide the analysis and interpretation of the research findings:

- 1)     What general perceptions did the teacher hold towards the SBA scheme?
- 2)     What pattern of concerns could be observed from the participants sampled?
- 3)     Would teachers' backgrounds affect the concern patterns of the participating teachers?
- 4)     Would schools' backgrounds affect the concern patterns of the participating teachers?

- 5) What Levels of Use were the teachers at with regards to the implementation of the SBA scheme?
- 6) What variations could be found in the implementation of major components of the SBA scheme?

The next section will describe the research design and explain in detail how answers to the above six finer questions are obtained in the research study.

## ***4.2 The research design***

The study can be broadly divided into two main parts. Part One was accomplished by the administration of a questionnaire about the participants' concerns on the HKCEE English Language SBA scheme adapted based on the Stages of Concerns Questionnaire (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006) to a convenient sample of in-service teachers English Language who taught Secondary 4-5 classes using the HKCEE syllabus in Hong Kong secondary schools. Part Two consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected English Language teachers eliciting their thoughts, self-accounted practice and reflections of the SBA scheme. The interview is semi-structured, with the procedures and basic questions adapted from the Level of Use Basic Interview Protocol (Hall, Dirksen & George, 2006). Each of the two parts will be described in the following sections in terms of its participants, instruments and data analysis.

### ***4.2.1 Part One: Questionnaire survey***

A total of ninety-five Hong Kong teachers from twenty-one schools who taught Secondary Four and Five HKCEE English Language participated in the questionnaire survey between February and May 2008. Target schools were identified through the researcher's personal contact and questionnaires were sent to a

contact person at the school who helped distribute and collect the questionnaires. In most target schools, there were five to seven teachers responsible for HKCEE English Language classes although in some schools, not all the teachers identified agreed to complete the survey.

Figure 4.1 lists some basic demographic information, such as gender, age, education, years of teaching experience, etc., of the participants whereas Figure 4.2 lists the background information of the target schools including the number of teachers participating in the survey, school's medium of instruction (MOI)<sup>1</sup>, overall banding of Secondary One intakes<sup>2</sup>, students' levels of English perceived by the participating teachers and the school's options for SBA in 2007<sup>3</sup> and 2008<sup>4</sup>. Based on the findings listed in the two figures, it can be concluded that the teachers surveyed represent a well-stratified sample of Hong Kong Secondary School teacher who teach English Language at the senior level, in terms of gender, age, education background, teaching experience, SBA experience and types of schools they are from.

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<sup>1</sup> Schools in Hong Kong were divided into two categories when the study was taken: English-medium and Chinese-medium, based on the abilities of the Secondary One intakes. Altogether 112 (about 25% among all) secondary schools were English-medium and the rest were Chinese-medium. However, this classification applied to only junior Secondary levels (i.e. Secondary 1-3) and schools had the autonomy to use Chinese, English or a mix of both, based on the needs of the students in the senior level (i.e. beyond Secondary 3).

<sup>2</sup> Students are streamed into three bands: 1, 2 and 3 according to their academic performance in primary schools (with 3 being the lowest). Students in band 1 are given the priority in allocation to their desired secondary schools, followed by band 2 and finally band 3.

<sup>3</sup> In 2007, schools had three options in the SBA scheme: (1) The school did not participate in SBA; (2) The school submitted the SBA marks for feedback only; and (3) The school submitted and included the SBA marks for subject result.

<sup>4</sup> In 2008, schools had two options in the SBA scheme: (1) The school submitted the SBA marks for feedback only; and (2) The school submitted and included the SBA marks for subject result.

**Figure 4.1 Demographic information of teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey (N=95)**

|   |   | Number    | Percentage <sup>5</sup> |
|---|---|-----------|-------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                                     | <i>Male</i>   | 25        | 26.3%                   |
|   | <i>Female</i>   | 69        | 72.6%                   |
| <b>Age</b>  | <i>Under 31</i>   | 35        | 36.8%                   |
|   | <i>31-40</i>  | 28        | 29.5%                   |
|   | <i>41-50</i>  | 20        | 21.1%                   |
|   | <i>Over 50</i>  | 10        | 10.5%                   |
| <b>Undergraduate degree</b>                       | <i>English related</i>  | 73        | 76.8%                   |
|   | <i>Non-English related but with an English-related postgraduate qualification</i>       | 9         | 9.5%                    |
|   | <i>Non-English related and with no English-related postgraduate qualification</i>       | 9         | 9.5%                    |
| <b>Postgraduate degree</b>                        | <i>With a Master's qualification</i>  | 50        | 52.6%                   |
|   | <i>English related Master's</i>   | 34        | 35.8%                   |
|   | <i>Non-English related Master's</i>   | 9         | 9.5%                    |
| <b>Teacher training</b>                           | <i>Teacher training completed</i>   | 89        | 93.7%                   |
|   | <i>Teacher training in English Language teaching</i>                                    | 78        | 82.1%                   |
|   | <i>Teacher training in other subject areas/subject areas not specified</i>              | 11        | 11.6%                   |
| <b>Level teaching</b>                             | <i>Secondary 4</i>  | 66        | 69.5%                   |
|   | <i>Secondary 5</i>  | 54        | 56.8%                   |
| <b>Other responsibilities</b>                     | <i>Secondary 4/5 English Language coordinator</i>                                       | 21        | 22.1%                   |
|   | <i>SBA coordinator</i>  | 20        | 21.1%                   |
|   | <i>Head of English Language Department (whole school/junior section/senior section)</i> | 18        | 18.9%                   |
| <b>HKCEE English Language teaching experience</b> | <i>0-5 years</i>  | 42        | 44.2%                   |
|   | <i>6-10 years</i>   | 25        | 26.3%                   |
|   | <i>11-15 years</i>  | 14        | 14.7%                   |
|   | <i>Over 15 years</i>  | 13        | 13.7%                   |
|   | <i>Average teaching experience:</i>   | 8.4 years |                         |

<sup>5</sup> Percentages were calculated based on the total number of teachers participating in the survey. The percentages may not add up to 100% since some teachers may choose not to answer a particular question or some questions allow multiple responses.

|                       |                      | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------|------------|
| <b>SBA experience</b> | <i>No experience</i> | 2      | 2.1%       |
|                       | <i>1 year</i>        | 19     | 20.0%      |
|                       | <i>2 years</i>       | 48     | 50.5%      |
|                       | <i>3 years</i>       | 23     | 24.2%      |

**Figure 4.2 Background information of the target schools (N=21)**

| School | Number of teachers | S1-3 MOI | S4-5 MOI | Band  | Students' level of English <sup>6</sup> | SBA 2007 Option <sup>7</sup> | SBA 2008 Option <sup>7</sup> |
|--------|--------------------|----------|----------|-------|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A      | 5                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 1.5-2 | 3                                       | 3                            | 2                            |
| B      | 7                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 2-2.5 | 4                                       | 2                            | 2                            |
| C      | 6                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 2     | 4                                       | 2                            | 1                            |
| D      | 2                  | English  | English  | 1     | 2                                       | 1                            | 1                            |
| E      | 6                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 1     | 2-3                                     | Not sure                     | 2                            |
| F      | 6                  | Chinese  | Mixed    | 2-2.5 | 3-4                                     | 2                            | 2                            |
| G      | 6                  | Chinese  | Mixed    | 2     | 2-3                                     | 1                            | Not sure                     |
| H      | 5                  | English  | English  | 1     | 1                                       | 2                            | 1                            |
| I      | 5                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 3     | 5                                       | 2                            | 1                            |
| J      | 4                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 3     | 5                                       | Not sure                     | 2                            |
| K      | 1                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 2     | 3                                       | 2                            | 1                            |
| L      | 5                  | English  | English  | 1     | 2-3                                     | Not sure                     | Not sure                     |
| M      | 5                  | English  | English  | 1     | 1                                       | 2                            | 2                            |
| N      | 3                  | English  | English  | 1.5-2 | 2-3                                     | 3                            | 2                            |
| O      | 7                  | Chinese  | Mixed    | 2     | 3-4                                     | 3                            | 2                            |
| P      | 7                  | English  | English  | 1-1.5 | 2-3                                     | 3                            | 2                            |
| Q      | 2                  | English  | English  | 1-1.5 | 2                                       | 2                            | Not sure                     |
| R      | 5                  | English  | English  | 1-1.5 | 2                                       | 3                            | 2                            |
| S      | 5                  | Chinese  | Chinese  | 2     | 4                                       | 2                            | Not sure                     |
| T      | 2                  | English  | English  | 1     | 1-2                                     | 3                            | 2                            |
| U      | 1                  | English  | English  | 1     | 1                                       | Not sure                     | 2                            |

<sup>6</sup> In the survey, teachers were asked to indicate their perceptions of the level of English of students at their school by stating: (1) significantly higher than average; (2) slightly higher than average; (3) about average; (4) slightly lower than average; and (5) significantly lower than average. The number displayed in the table shows the average ratings given by teachers at the same school.

<sup>7</sup> Discrepancies were sometimes found among teachers on what options the school took in 2007 and 2008 concerning the SBA scheme. The answer from the majority is chosen but in some cases where no majority is found, "not sure" is reported.



The questionnaire consists of thirty-five questions which aim to elicit the participants' Stages of Concerns on the implementation of the HKCEE English Language SBA scheme, adapted from the thirty-five item Stages of Concerns Questionnaire (SoCQ) developed by the CBAM research team (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006), with another fourteen questions on the background of the participants and one more open-ended question asking them to put down their thoughts or comments on the SBA scheme. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix G.

The original 35-item SoCQ, with the necessary replacement of “the new system” or “the innovation” by “School-based Assessment” suggested in the SoCQ Manual, was trialled on ten in-service English Language teachers who taught HKCEE English Language and a short discussion on the wording of the questionnaire was held immediately after the questionnaire was completed. The process identified seven items which may cause confusions and they were edited accordingly before the final version of the questionnaire was sent to target schools for completion. The following figure shows the edited items in the questionnaire and highlights the expressions modified.

**Figure 4.3 Revision of items in the final version of the questionnaire**

| Item | Original wording   | Final version   |
|------|--|---|
| 2    | I now know of some other approaches that might work better.              | I now know of some other approaches <u>or projects</u> that might work better <u>than School-based Assessment</u> .                   |
| 3    | I am more concerned about another innovation.                            | I am more concerned about another innovation <u>or project in English Language teaching</u> .   |
| 4    | I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day. | I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day <u>due to the implementation of School-based Assessment</u> . |

|    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| 5  | I would like to help other <u>faculty</u> in their use of School-based Assessment.                        | I would like to help other <u>staff</u> in their use of School-based Assessment.   |
| 7  | I am concerned about <u>the effect of reorganization on my professional status</u> .                      | I am concerned on <u>how School-based Assessment affects my professional status</u> .  |
| 8  | I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities.                               | I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities <u>in the implementation of School-based Assessment</u> . |
| 15 | I would like to know what resources are available <u>if we decided to adopt School-based Assessment</u> . | I would like to know what resources are available <u>in implementing School-based Assessment in my class</u> .                       |
| 17 | I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change.                             | I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change <u>due to the use of School-based Assessment</u> .      |
| 19 | I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students.  | I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students <u>in the use of School-based Assessment</u> .                                 |
| 29 | I would like to know what other <u>faculty</u> are doing <u>in this area</u> .                            | I would like to know what other <u>colleagues</u> are doing <u>in School-based Assessment</u> .                                      |
| 32 | I would like to use feedback from students to change the programme.                                       | I would like to use feedback from students to change the programme <u>of School-based Assessment</u> .                               |
| 34 | Coordination of tasks and people is taking too much of my time.   | Coordination of tasks and people <u>in School-based Assessment</u> is taking too much of my time.                                    |
| 35 | I would like to know how School-based Assessment is better than <u>what we have now</u> .                 | I would like to know how School-based Assessment is better than <u>what we have or used to have</u> .                                |

Phrases similar to “in the implementation of School-based Assessment” or “in the use of School-based assessment” were added to items 2, 4, 7, 8, 17, 19, 29, 32 and 34 to remind the participants to focus on the SBA scheme while answering. The word “faculty” in items 5 and 29 was replaced by “staff” and “colleagues” respectively as the word is not commonly used to refer to teachers in the Hong Kong secondary school setting. Items 15 and 35 were changed because many teachers in the trial survey were confused about the statement as they had already started to implement SBA. More general conditions “in implementing School-based Assessment in my class” and “what we have or used to have” were used instead.

The validity of the original SoCQ and its related constructs is already discussed in Chapter 3. Since the changes incur mainly minimal modifications in the expression and had been driven by need to clarify the meaning of the items as indicated from the feedback in the pilot study, it is believed that such revisions in fact helps to maintain the validity already established in the questionnaire.

Data collected from the questionnaire survey were entered into a computer spreadsheet once the questionnaires were received and total score for each SoC scale and its respective percentile score (based on the stratified sample collected by the CBAM research team<sup>8</sup>) were calculated for each participant. Internal consistency of items belonging to the same stage was checked using the inter-item Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) and item-scale correlations. The study followed the suggestion from SoCQ Manual (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006) in handling missing item responses—estimating the response as the average of all other completed items within the scale, but only when at least three out of the five scale items were completed. The whole data set with missing item responses for the participant, however, was discarded during internal consistency checks as the tests are not robust against missing data.

In order to answer the subsidiary research questions 2 - 4, the SoC for each individual teacher were identified through profiling of the SoC raw scores and percentile scores. Both frequency counts and average scores were also used in creation of group profiles. Answers on the open-ended question were also analyzed for the six subsidiary research questions where appropriate.

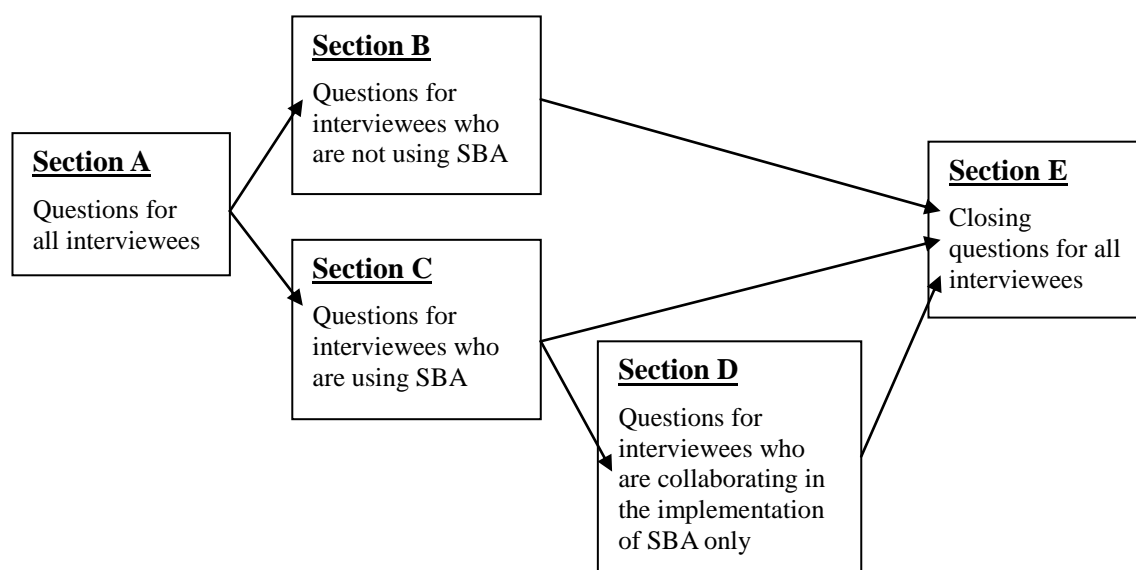
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<sup>8</sup> The scale scores and percentile scores conversion table for each SoC can be found in Appendix H.

#### 4.2.2 Part Two: In-depth semi-structured interviews

A total of eight semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teachers' perceptions, uses and evaluations of the HKCEE English Language SBA scheme between March and August 2008. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes, excluding the time for introduction and explanation of the study, and was conducted in Cantonese, the first language of the interviewees, using the LoU branching technique illustrated in Chapter 3. There were five sections in the full structure and questions were selected from the sections based on the branches the interviewee took. Figure 4.4 shows the general structure for the focused interview and Figure 4.5 also gives a list of key questions used in each section. The interviews were all recorded using an MP3 player, transcribed in Cantonese and then translated into English before codification and analysis. A sample interview transcript in English is attached as Appendix I for readers' reference. The codification and analysis of qualitative data were done in two separate fashions: once according to the Levels of Use categories in order to gauge the LoU of the interviewee and once more based on tags translated from the subsidiary research questions, in particular questions 1, 5, and 6.

**Figure 4.4 General structure of the semi-structured interview**



**Figure 4.5 Key questions used in each section of the interview**

| <b>Section A (Questions for all interviewees)</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Question</b>  | <b>Purpose</b>  |
| 1. Tell me about the SBA scheme in HKCEE English Language.<br>a. How much do you know about the SBA scheme?<br>b. Do you think that you know enough about the scheme? Yes/No. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), how would you rate your knowledge on the scheme?<br>c. Do you think you're given enough information about the scheme? Yes/No.     | i) to initiate the interview<br>ii) to probe Knowledge and Acquiring Information Categories   |
| 2. Tell me your thoughts on the SBA scheme<br>a. Are you happy or unhappy with the SBA scheme? Yes/No. Why?<br>b. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the SBA scheme as you see it?<br>c. What are your comments on the assessment tasks?<br>d. Will you say it's a more effective assessment tool than the externally held oral examination? Yes/No. | i) to get an overview of the informant's attitudes towards and perception on the scheme<br>ii) to probe Assessing and Knowledge Categories                              |
| 3. How concerned are you about the SBA scheme? Rate your level of concern on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest)<br>a. Can you summarize for me where you see yourself right now in relation to the use of the SBA scheme?<br>b. Are you using SBA in your English classes? Yes/No.   | i) to probe the informant's Stage of concern on the scheme<br>ii) to probe Status Reporting and Performing Categories<br>iii) to distinguish between users and nonusers |
| <b>Section B (Questions for interviewees who are not using SBA)</b>  |   |
| <b>Question</b>  | <b>Purpose</b>  |
| 1. Have you made a decision to use the SBA scheme in the future? Yes/No. If so, when?  | i) to separate LoU 0 from I and I from II<br>ii) to probe Status Reporting and Performing Categories  |
| 2. At his point in time, what kinds of questions are you asking about the SBA scheme? Give examples if possible.   | to probe Assessing, Sharing, and Status Reporting Categories  |
| 3. Do you ever talk with others and share information about the SBA scheme? Yes/No. What do you share?   | to probe Sharing Category   |
| 4. What are you planning with respect to the SBA scheme? Can you tell me about any preparation or plans you have been making for its use?  | to probe Planning Category  |

| <b>Section C (Questions for interviewees who are using SBA)</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Question</b>   | <b>Purpose</b>  |
| 1. Do you ever talk with others about the SBA scheme? Yes/No. What do you talk about?   | to probe Sharing Category   |
| 2. What effects do you see the SBA scheme has brought? Why?<br>a. Are you doing any evaluating, either formally or informally, about your use of the SBA scheme? Yes/No.<br>b. Have you received any feedback from students? Yes/No.<br>c. What have you done with the information you get? | to probe Assessing Category   |
| 3. Have you made any changes recently in how you use the innovation? Yes/No. What? Why? How recently?<br>a. Are you considering making any changes to the scheme at this moment? Yes/No.  | i) to distinguish between LoU III, IVA and IVB<br>ii) to probe Status Reporting and Performing Categories |
| 4. As you look ahead to later this and the next academic year, what plans do you have in relation to your use of the SBA scheme?  | to probe Planning and Status Reporting Categories   |
| 5. Are you considering making or planning to make major modifications or replace the scheme at this time? Yes/No.   | to separate LoU VI from III, IVA, IVB and V   |
| 6. Are you working with others (outside of anyone you may have worked with from the beginning) in your use of the SBA scheme? Yes/No. Have you made any changes in your use of the scheme based on this coordination? Yes/No.   | to separate LoU V from III, IVA, IVB (Go to Section D if a positive response is given)                    |
| <b>Section D (Questions for interviewees who are collaborating in the implementation of SBA only)</b>   |   |
| <b>Question</b>   | <b>Purpose</b>  |
| 1. How do you work together? How frequently?  | i) to verify LoU V<br>ii) to probe Performing Category  |
| 2. What are the strengths and the weaknesses of this collaboration for you?   | to probe Knowledge Category   |
| 3. Are you looking for any particular kind of information in relation to this collaboration? Yes/No. What kind?   | to probe Acquiring Information Category   |
| 4. When you talk to others about collaboration, what do you share with them?  | to probe Sharing Category   |
| 5. Have you done any formal or informal evaluation of how your collaboration is working? Yes/No.  | to probe Assessing Category   |
| 6. What plans do you have for this collaborative effort in the future?  | to probe Planning Category  |

| Section E (Closing questions for all interviewees)   |   |
|--|---|
| Question   | Purpose   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On the whole, how successful do you think the implementation of the SBA scheme is? On a scale of 0-10 (10 being most successful), how do you rate it? Why do you say so?</li> <li>2. In your view, what can be done at territory level (e.g. by Education Bureau or the HKEAA) to further enhance the scheme's implementation?</li> <li>3. What can be done at the school level to further enhance the scheme's implementation?</li> <li>4. What individual teachers can do to enhance the scheme's implementation?</li> </ol> <p>If the informant gives a rating of 9 or 10 in Q1, change Q2-4 to "What has been done... which enhanced the scheme's implementation."</p> | to understand how the informant evaluates the implementation of the scheme. |

The in-depth interview is a valuable data collection tool as its interactive nature allows data to be mediated between the interviewer and interviewees and through processes such as probing, checking for clarification, asking for support and elaboration, more deep and accurate data can be solicited (Cohen, Manion & Morris, 2000). Besides, participants will be more cooperative, more motivated and therefore more involved in their answering as they can understand the research and its significance more fully (Oppenheim, 1992). This builds trust among the participant and further boosts the internal validity of the present research. Besides, the semi-structure nature adopted ensures the coverage of important questions and topics and comparability of responses while at the same time allows natural development of issues from the context and increases salience and relevance of questions (Patton, 1980). The use of the structure and key questions also help moderate the validity of the interview procedures and (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). Furthermore, the triangulation in the use of multiple methods of data collection and the inclusion of

both quantitative and qualitative techniques add to the strength of validity of the current study as well.

### **4.3 *Ethical considerations***

The research study followed closely the standards set out in Department Code of Practice on Research Ethics of School of Education at University of Durham and permission to carry out the study was obtained from the Department's Research Ethics and Data Protection Sub-Committee in January 2008 before data collection started. In a nutshell, participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. The cover page of the questionnaire explains the aims of the study and the scope of the questionnaire survey clearly. As participation in the survey was anonymous, participants were not asked to sign to indicate their consents but instead were instructed to return the questionnaire unfilled if they did not wish to take part. The questionnaire does not contain any items that can reveal the identity of the participants or the schools.

In case of the focused interviews, the aims of the study and the scope of the interview were explained to the participants verbally before the start of the interview and through the participant information sheet and consent form (see Appendix J). To protect the interviewees, their identity was masked in the transcription of the interviews, case study reports and the final thesis. Their signed consent forms and audio recordings concerned, which may contain information about their identity, would not be disclosed to any third party other than the researcher and would be destroyed after successful completion of the thesis and award of the degree. Participants who indicated so in the consent form would receive a copy of the research report as promised before the contact information was destroyed.



## Chapter 5 Preliminary Findings and Analyses

### 5.1 Part One: Questionnaire survey

#### 5.1.1 Item statistics and internal consistency

As explained in Chapter Four, the data collected in the questionnaire survey was checked for internal consistency using the inter-item Cronbach's Alpha and the item-scale Pearson's correlation coefficient. The mean, standard deviation, item-scale correlation of each item are listed in Figure 5.1, with the average item-scale correlation and Cronbach's Alpha also listed for each SoC scale.

**Figure 5.1 Mean, standard deviation, item-scale correlation and Cronbach's Alpha (N=87<sup>1</sup>)**

| Item    | Mean | SD   | Item-total correlation | Average correlation | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---------|------|------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Stage 0 |      |      |                        |                     |                  |
| 3       | 4.02 | 1.82 | .390 (p=.000)          | .558                | .444             |
| 12      | 2.31 | 1.66 | .402 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 21      | 4.82 | 1.74 | .706 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 23      | 3.57 | 1.58 | .583 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 30      | 4.36 | 1.76 | .710 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| Stage 1 |      |      |                        |                     |                  |
| 6       | 2.46 | 1.34 | .417 (p=.000)          | .691                | .737             |
| 14      | 3.69 | 1.98 | .715 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 15      | 5.06 | 1.74 | .832 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 26      | 4.47 | 1.60 | .824 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 35      | 4.61 | 1.73 | .666 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| Stage 2 |      |      |                        |                     |                  |
| 7       | 2.80 | 1.80 | .697 (p=.000)          | .770                | .825             |
| 13      | 3.98 | 1.87 | .757 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 17      | 4.42 | 1.70 | .800 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 28      | 4.41 | 1.61 | .778 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 33      | 3.93 | 1.71 | .818 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |

<sup>1</sup> Data sets from eight participants were excluded in the calculation of item-scale correlation and Cronbach's Alpha due to missing responses. This gave a total of eighty-seven cases for such analyses.

| Item    | Mean | SD   | Item-total correlation | Average correlation | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---------|------|------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Stage 3 |      |      |                        |                     |                  |
| 4       | 3.57 | 1.98 | .827 (p=.000)          | .735                | .786             |
| 8       | 2.98 | 1.71 | .696 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 16      | 3.14 | 1.99 | .658 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 25      | 4.18 | 1.68 | .721 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 34      | 3.97 | 1.81 | .773 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| Stage 4 |      |      |                        |                     |                  |
| 1       | 4.94 | 1.37 | .707 (p=.000)          | .695                | .735             |
| 11      | 5.06 | 1.54 | .726 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 19      | 4.46 | 1.55 | .774 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 24      | 4.60 | 1.48 | .564 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 32      | 4.36 | 1.49 | .706 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| Stage 5 |      |      |                        |                     |                  |
| 5       | 4.02 | 1.65 | .632 (p=.000)          | .705                | .743             |
| 10      | 3.47 | 1.86 | .647 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 18      | 3.41 | 1.76 | .794 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 27      | 4.82 | 1.47 | .767 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 29      | 4.59 | 1.58 | .683 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| Stage 6 |      |      |                        |                     |                  |
| 2       | 3.04 | 1.74 | .441 (p=.000)          | .654                | .664             |
| 9       | 3.44 | 1.72 | .684 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 20      | 3.65 | 1.67 | .724 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 22      | 4.49 | 1.72 | .785 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |
| 31      | 4.14 | 1.69 | .636 (p=.000)          |                     |                  |

In general, the correlation coefficients and Cronbach's Alpha figures shown in the previous table suggest moderate-high reliability in all SoC although the figures for Stage 0 are comparatively low. In fact, not only does Stage 0 have the lowest reliability scores, three out of the five items belonging to the scale has an item-total correlation coefficient of lower than 0.6 (Q3, 12 & 23). Lower reliability scores may mean that items in Stage 0 may not be measuring the same construct—SoC Stage 0 and would imply a need to closely examine the statements concerned and their respective responses. This issue will be taken up in Chapter Six: Answers and Discussion.

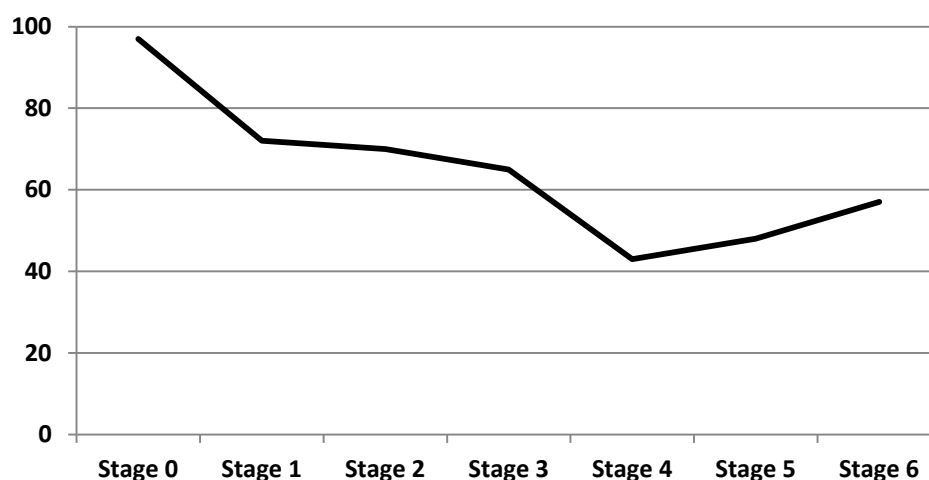
### 5.1.2 *The overall SoC statistics and general concern profile of teachers*

Figure 5.2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the raw scores and the converted percentile scores<sup>2</sup> from the mean for each SoC for the ninety-five teachers who participated in the survey. While the average raw score of Stage 4 is the highest (23.5 out of 35) followed by Stages 1 and 5 (both 20.4 out of 35) among all SoC, percentile scores converted from the average raw scores based on the standard stratified sample for SoCQ shows quite a different picture. In fact, the percentile scores indicate that the teachers sampled had the highest Stage 0 concerns (97), followed by Stage 1 (72) and then Stage 2 (70). Since all interpretations of SoCQ data, including the deduction of progression of implementation, and the subsequent validation studies conducted by the CBAM team, were done using the percentile scores converted, the percentile score was employed in the creation and interpretation of SoC profiles in the present study. Figure 5.3 is a graphical representation of the general SoC profile of all participants based on the converted percentile scores.

**Figure 5.2 Means and standard deviations of scale raw scores and the converted scale percentile scores (N=95)**

|                            |      | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|----------------------------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Raw Score<br>(max=35)      | Mean | 19.1    | 20.4    | 19.5    | 17.9    | 23.5    | 20.4    | 18.8    |
|                            | SD   | 4.7     | 5.72    | 6.48    | 6.69    | 5.13    | 5.75    | 5.56    |
| Converted Percentile Score |      | 97      | 72      | 70      | 65      | 43      | 48      | 57      |

<sup>2</sup> The SoCQ Manual recommends against averaging percentile scores because “such averaging allows the extreme values to influence the results more than might be appropriate” (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 34). It suggests the research should “average the raw scores for each Stage of Concern and refer those averages to the percentile score table” but “always use the raw scale scores in statistical analyses.”

**Figure 5.3** General SoC profile plotted using the converted percentile scores

A high Stage 0 score, as shown in Figures 5.2 and 5.3, does not mean that the teachers were non-users of the innovation. Rather, the score indicates that the teachers were more concerned about other things. Scores for Stages 1, 2, 3 are relatively high, at about the 70-percentile level, suggesting that the teachers might be new to the scheme and would be interested in learning more about the SBA scheme (Stage 1), but at the same time exhibited doubts on its use due to the effect on personal position and workload (Stage 2) and its time, logistics and other management problems (Stage 3). While Stages 4-6 are lower than Stages 0-3, a moderate tailing-up on Stage 6 can be observed from the graph, which means that the teachers might be slightly resistant to the innovation or have some ideas about alternatives which might work better.

George, Hall and Stiegelbauer (2006) suggested a further method to estimate the most concerned aspect for a group besides the mean analyses—a simple frequency count of the peak SoC. This is most useful particularly in checking against peak SoC in group averages as sometimes the peaks may be obscured in the process

of group averaging. The peak stage for each individual was identified by locating the highest percentile scores and a table similar to Figure 5.4 could be tallied. A point to note is that, in cases where the second and/or subsequent highest raw or percentile scores for the individual are very near to the peak (i.e. two percentile points or fewer from the highest score), these stages will also be considered as a peak count. From the frequency count results shown in Figure 5.4, it can be seen that Unconcern (Stage 0) was still found to be the highest among all teachers, followed by Information (Stage 1) and Personal (Stage 2).

**Figure 5.4 Peak SoC frequency count (N=95)<sup>3</sup>**

|  | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Peak Frequency Count (Based on Percentile Scores)</b> | 82      | 10      | 8       | 6       | 0       | 2       | 1       |

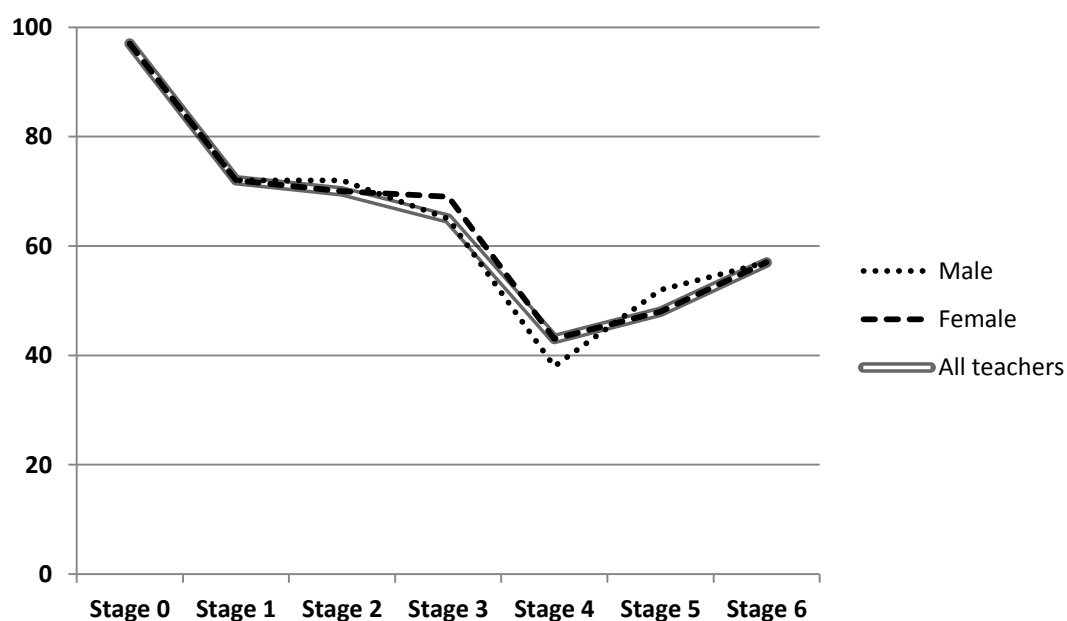
### ***5.1.3 SoC statistics against teachers' backgrounds***

The subsidiary research question 3 asks if the teachers' backgrounds have an effect on the concern profiles of teachers. In order to answer this question, a number of comparisons on the converted percentile scores from mean as well as group peak frequency counts were made against such factors as age, gender, years of experience in English Language teaching, related responsibilities held in the English Language department and experience with the SBA scheme. The results are summarized in the following figures.

<sup>3</sup> The total peak frequencies may be higher than the total number of participants since multiple peaks have been observed among many participants.

**Figure 5.5 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by gender**

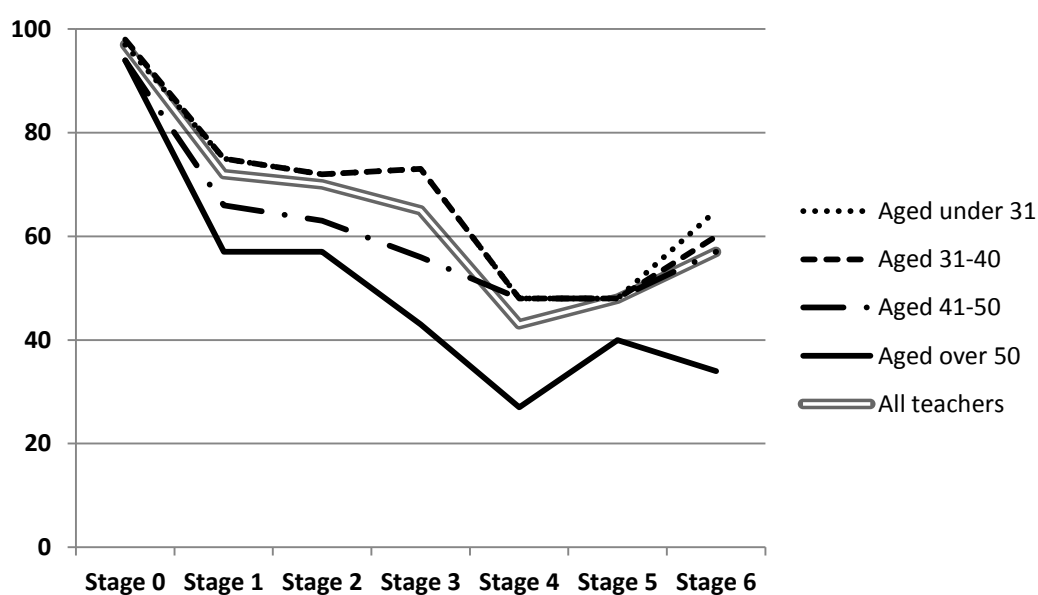
|   | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Male (N=25)</b>                          |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b> | 97      | 72      | 72      | 65      | 38      | 52      | 57      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                 | 21      | 3       | 3       | 0       | 0       | 1       | 1       |
| <b>Female (N=69)</b>                        |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b> | 97      | 72      | 70      | 69      | 43      | 48      | 57      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                 | 60      | 7       | 5       | 6       | 0       | 1       | 0       |

**Figure 5.6 SoC profiles by gender****Figure 5.7 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by age group**

|   | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Aged under 31 (N=35)</b>                 |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b> | 97      | 75      | 72      | 73      | 48      | 48      | 65      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                 | 33      | 2       | 2       | 4       | 0       | 0       | 1       |

|   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| <b>Aged 31-40 (N=28)</b>                    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b> | 98 | 75 | 72 | 73 | 48 | 48 | 60 |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                 | 25 | 2  | 2  | 2  | 0  | 1  | 0  |
| <b>Aged 41-50 (N=20)</b>                    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b> | 94 | 66 | 63 | 56 | 48 | 48 | 57 |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                 | 16 | 4  | 2  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| <b>Aged over 50 (N=10)</b>                  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b> | 94 | 57 | 57 | 43 | 27 | 40 | 34 |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                 | 7  | 1  | 2  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  |

**Figure 5.8 SoC profiles by age group**



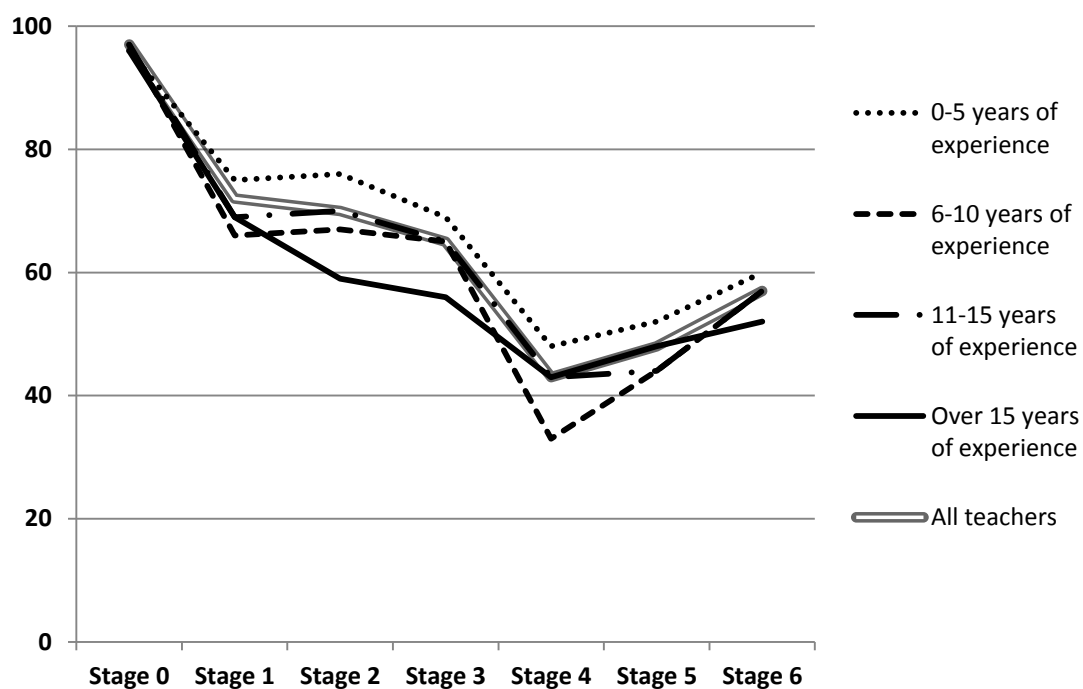
In general, the SoC profiles do not vary much according to gender. Both groups had highest Stage 0 concerns but lowest Stage 4 concerns, with similar trends as SoC proceeds. However, the concerns profiles by age group shows that age might affect the SoC pattern. While the peak and bottom remain the same, the concerns trend for teachers aged 51 or above dropped significantly between Stages 2 and 3

and then dropped even more in Stage 4. The continuous decline in level of concerns for Stages 3 and 4, read together with the high Stages 0, 1 and 2 concerns and a tailing down at Stage 6, is similar to the profile of typical interested, not terribly over-concerned, positively disposed nonusers, a contrast to the overall beginning user pattern found for the whole sample. Another point that can be deduced from the graph is that concerns for most stages tended to decrease with age. The difference is more pronounced if the scores for teachers aged under 31 and teachers aged over 50 are compared. This may mean that younger teachers are more concerned about the SBA scheme than older teachers in the sample.

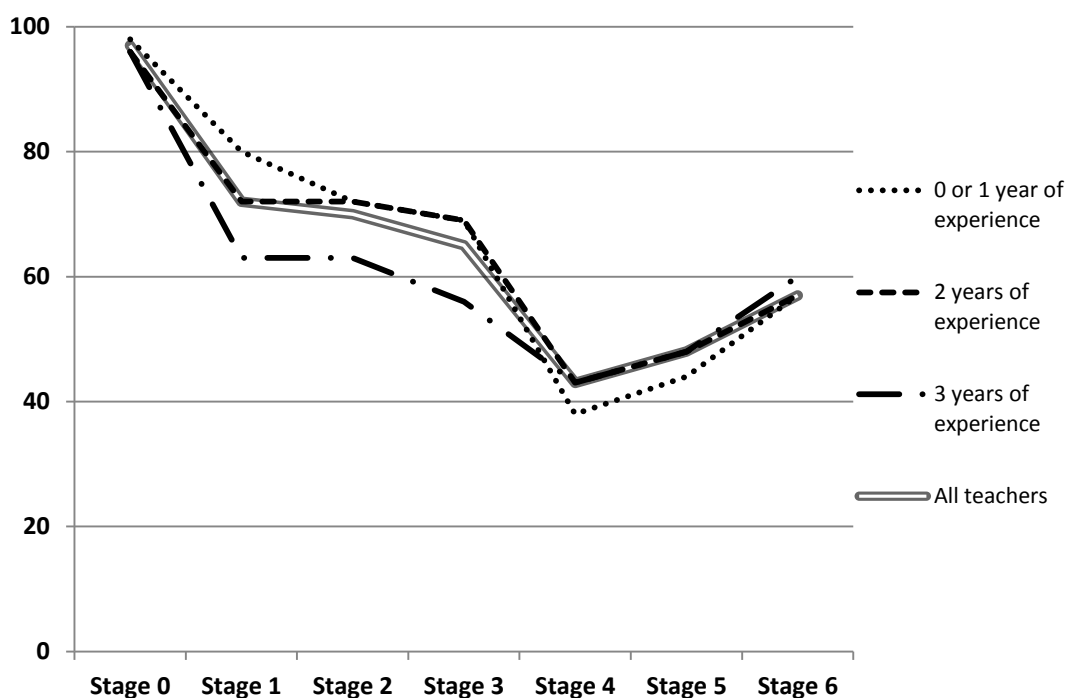
**Figure 5.9 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by HKCEE English Language teaching experience**

|   | Stage<br>0 | Stage<br>1 | Stage<br>2 | Stage<br>3 | Stage<br>4 | Stage<br>5 | Stage<br>6 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>0-5 years of experience (N=42)</b>           |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Converted Percentile<br/>Score from Mean</b> | 96         | 75         | 76         | 69         | 48         | 52         | 60         |
| <b>Peak Frequency<br/>Count</b>                 | 37         | 5          | 3          | 5          | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| <b>6-10 years of experience (N=25)</b>          |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Converted Percentile<br/>Score from Mean</b> | 97         | 66         | 67         | 65         | 33         | 44         | 57         |
| <b>Peak Frequency<br/>Count</b>                 | 21         | 2          | 3          | 0          | 0          | 2          | 0          |
| <b>11-15 years of experience (N=14)</b>         |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Converted Percentile<br/>Score from Mean</b> | 97         | 69         | 70         | 65         | 43         | 44         | 57         |
| <b>Peak Frequency<br/>Count</b>                 | 13         | 0          | 1          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Over 15 years of experience (N=13)</b>       |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Converted Percentile<br/>Score from Mean</b> | 96         | 69         | 59         | 56         | 43         | 48         | 52         |
| <b>Peak Frequency<br/>Count</b>                 | 11         | 2          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |



**Figure 5.10 SoC profiles by HKCEE English Language teaching experience****Figure 5.11 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by SBA experience**

|   | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>0 or 1 year of SBA experience (N=21)</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean        | 98      | 80      | 72      | 69      | 38      | 44      | 57      |
| Peak Frequency Count                        | 22      | 1       | 1       | 1       | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| <b>2 years of SBA experience (N=48)</b>     |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean        | 96      | 72      | 72      | 69      | 43      | 48      | 57      |
| Peak Frequency Count                        | 39      | 8       | 6       | 3       | 0       | 2       | 1       |
| <b>3 years of SBA experience (N=23)</b>     |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean        | 96      | 63      | 63      | 56      | 43      | 48      | 60      |
| Peak Frequency Count                        | 216     | 0       | 1       | 2       | 0       | 0       | 0       |

**Figure 5.12 SoC profiles by SBA experience**

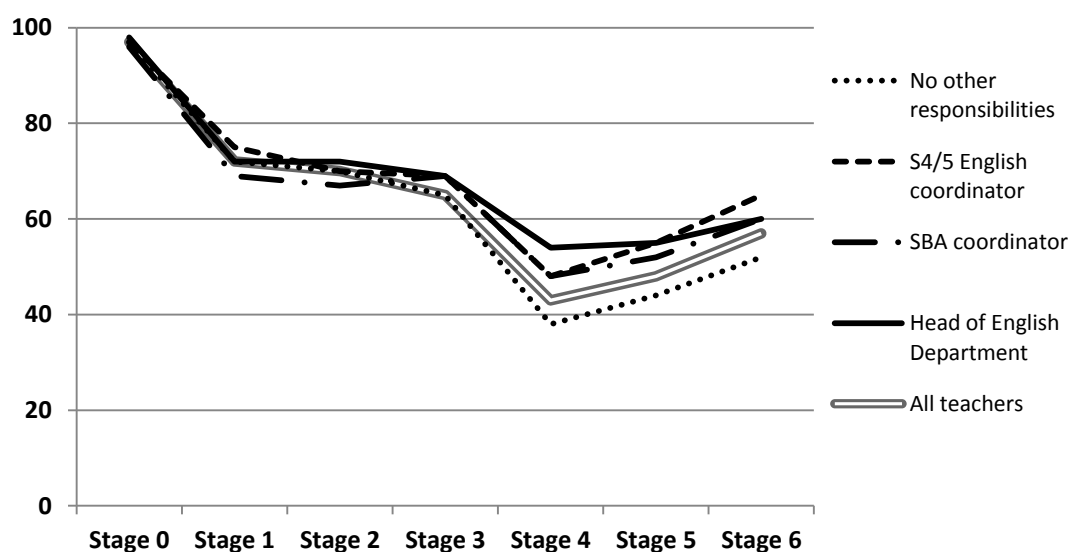
Overall, differences in HKCEE English Language teaching experience and SBA experience did not affect the teachers' SoC patterns by much. The SoC progression lines remain in a similar shape, and not many big deviations from the overall SoC figures can be observed. A difference of more than ten percentile points from the average profile can only be found in Stage 4 of teachers with 6-10 years of English Language teaching experience (15 points), Stages 2 and 3 of teachers with 15 years or more of English Language teaching experience (13 and 17 points respectively) and Stage 3 of teachers with 3 years of SBA experience (17 points).

Another area investigated in this study is whether additional English Language related responsibilities such as coordinatorship and department head duties would affect the SoC patterns. Figures 5.13 and 5.14 show the results.

**Figure 5.13 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by additional English Language related responsibilities**

|  | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>No additional responsibilities (N=56)</b>             |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>              | 97      | 72      | 70      | 65      | 38      | 44      | 52      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                              | 50      | 5       | 5       | 1       | 0       | 2       | 1       |
| <b>Secondary 4/5 English Language coordinator (N=21)</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>              | 97      | 75      | 70      | 69      | 48      | 55      | 65      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                              | 18      | 3       | 1       | 1       | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| <b>SBA coordinator (N=20)</b>                            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>              | 96      | 69      | 67      | 69      | 48      | 52      | 60      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                              | 16      | 2       | 2       | 4       | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| <b>Head of English Language department (N=18)</b>        |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>              | 98      | 72      | 72      | 69      | 54      | 55      | 60      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>                              | 16      | 2       | 1       | 1       | 0       | 0       | 0       |

**Figure 5.14 SoC profiles by additional English Language related responsibilities**



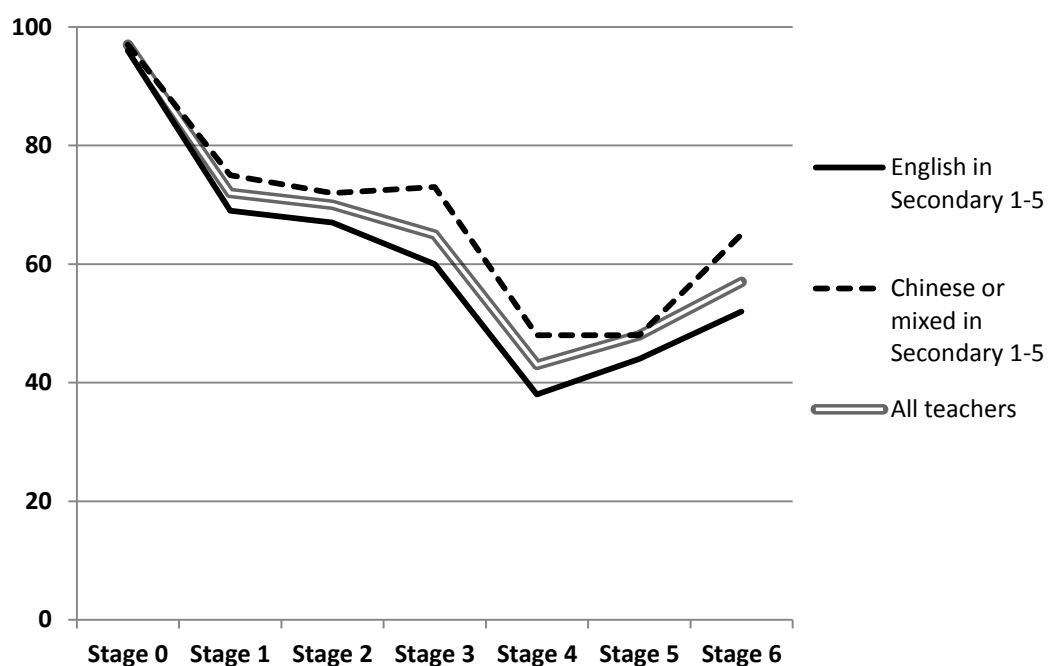
Again, the progression lines plotted are of a similar shape although it can be found that teachers with additional responsibilities consistently had higher Stages 4, 5 and 6 concerns. This is to say, teachers in such positions were more concerned about the innovation's impact on students, its collaboration possibilities and revision or alternatives to the scheme, than teachers who only taught the subject.

#### **5.1.4 SoC statistics against schools' backgrounds**

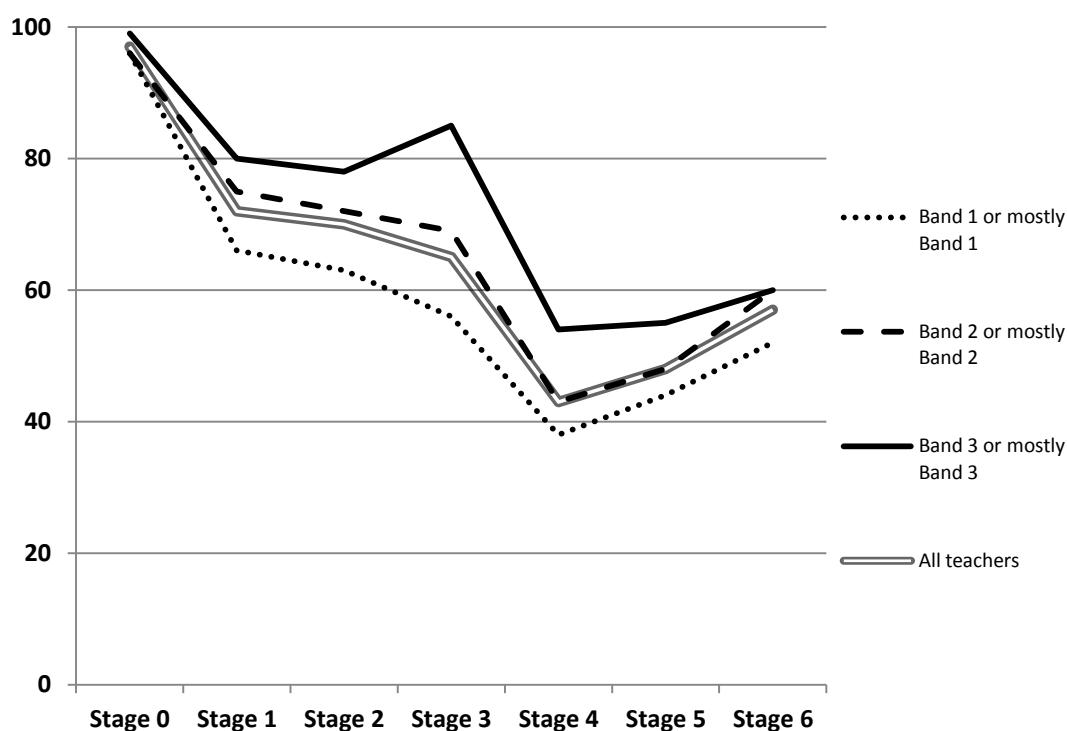
Subsidiary research question 4 asks if schools' backgrounds affect teachers' SoC profiles. One such possible school factor is students' abilities. The questionnaire includes four questions related to this area: (i) the medium of instruction (MOI) at the junior section, (ii) MOI at the senior section, (iii) banding of Secondary One intakes; and (iv) teachers' perceived English levels of their students. Responses from the sample show that all schools using English as MOI in the junior section are all English medium in the senior section whereas schools using Chinese in the junior section are all Chinese medium or mixed in the senior section. Thus, the two factors were combined in the analysis. Figures 5.15 - 5.20 summarize the results found.

**Figure 5.15 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by the Medium of Instruction**

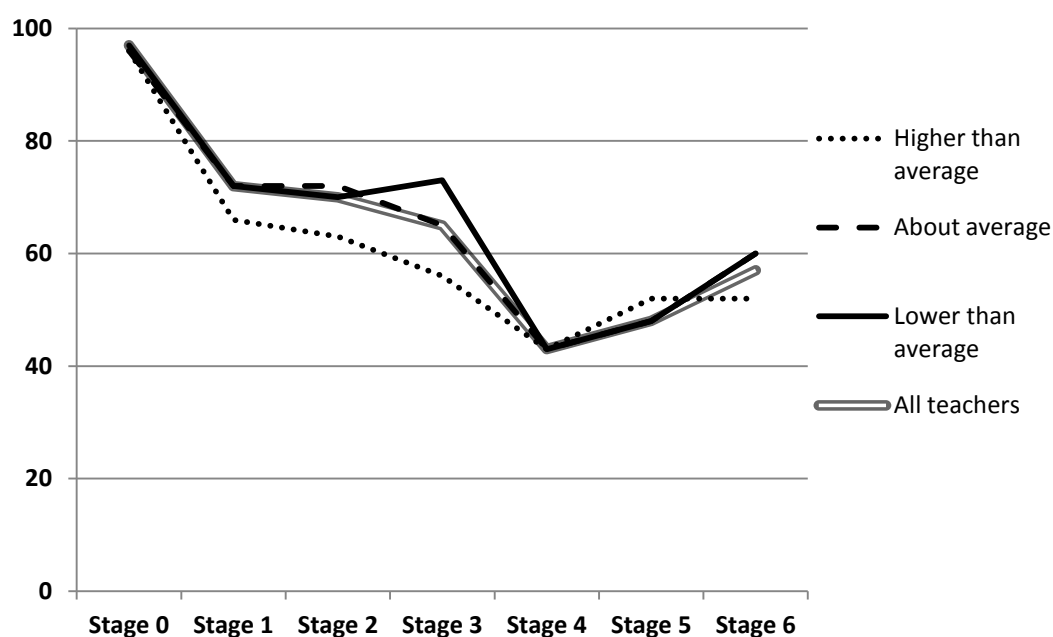
|   | Stage<br>0 | Stage<br>1 | Stage<br>2 | Stage<br>3 | Stage<br>4 | Stage<br>5 | Stage<br>6 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>English in Secondary 1-5 (N=43)</b>          |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Converted Percentile<br/>Score from Mean</b> | 96         | 69         | 67         | 60         | 38         | 44         | 52         |
| <b>Peak Frequency<br/>Count</b>                 | 36         | 14         | 7          | 3          | 0          | 4          | 2          |
| <b>Chinese or mixed in Secondary 1-5 (N=52)</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Converted Percentile<br/>Score from Mean</b> | 97         | 75         | 72         | 73         | 48         | 48         | 65         |
| <b>Peak Frequency<br/>Count</b>                 | 47         | 9          | 10         | 12         | 0          | 2          | 2          |

**Figure 5.16 SoC profiles by the Medium of Instruction****Figure 5.17 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by the banding of Secondary One intakes**

|                                       | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Band 1 or mostly Band 1 (N=33)</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean  | 96      | 66      | 63      | 56      | 38      | 44      | 52      |
| Peak Frequency Count                  | 29      | 9       | 4       | 3       | 0       | 4       | 2       |
| <b>Band 2 or mostly Band 2 (N=53)</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean  | 96      | 75      | 72      | 69      | 43      | 48      | 60      |
| Peak Frequency Count                  | 45      | 13      | 13      | 9       | 0       | 2       | 2       |
| <b>Band 3 or mostly Band 3 (N=9)</b>  |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean  | 99      | 80      | 78      | 85      | 54      | 55      | 60      |
| Peak Frequency Count                  | 9       | 1       | 0       | 3       | 0       | 0       | 0       |

**Figure 5.18 SoC profiles by the banding of Secondary One intakes****Figure 5.19 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by teachers' perceptions on students' level of English**

|                                      | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Higher than average (N=20)</b>    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean | 96      | 66      | 63      | 56      | 43      | 52      | 52      |
| Peak Frequency Count                 | 16      | 8       | 3       | 2       | 0       | 4       | 2       |
| <b>About average (N=46)</b>          |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean | 96      | 72      | 72      | 65      | 43      | 48      | 60      |
| Peak Frequency Count                 | 40      | 12      | 11      | 7       | 0       | 2       | 1       |
| <b>Lower than average (N=27)</b>     |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean | 97      | 72      | 70      | 73      | 43      | 48      | 60      |
| Peak Frequency Count                 | 25      | 3       | 3       | 6       | 0       | 0       | 1       |

**Figure 5.20 SoC profiles by teachers' perceptions on students' level of English**

The above figures reveal that students' ability did have a minor to moderate effect on the teachers' SoC profiles. On the whole, teachers from schools with lower ability students had a higher degree of Stages 1, 2 and 3 concerns towards the SBA scheme. In particular, teachers in lower banding schools displayed a heightened concern on all aspects examined than their higher banding counterparts. The difference was in particular acute in Stage 3 Management, where a difference of 39 percentile points was recorded between teachers from Band 1 and Band 3 schools. The plotted profile also indicates a second peak at Stage 3 after Stage 0 for these teachers (and a similar albeit less pronounced trend can also be observed in Figures 5.16 and 5.20 for teachers in schools with lower student abilities) – which suggests that concerns or worries arise since those teachers foresee or have encountered quite many difficulties in the logistical and managerial aspects of the SBA scheme.

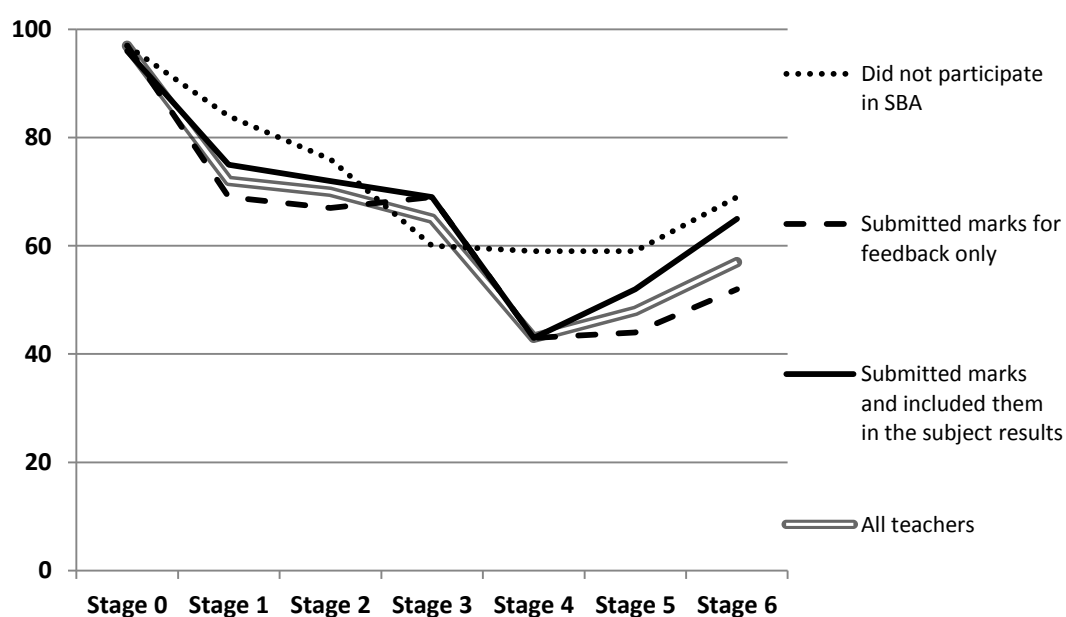
Other factors of schools' backgrounds would be the SBA options the schools took in 2007 and 2008 as the options are related to the schools' overall experience

and confidence in the use of the SBA scheme. Results are shown in the following figures.

**Figure 5.21 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by the SBA option taken in 2007**

|  | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Did not participate in SBA (N=8)</b>                                |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean                                   | 97      | 84      | 76      | 60      | 59      | 59      | 69      |
| Peak Frequency Count   | 8       | 3       | 2       | 0       | 0       | 1       | 1       |
| <b>Submitted marks for feedback only (N=42)</b>                        |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean                                   | 97      | 69      | 67      | 69      | 43      | 44      | 52      |
| Peak Frequency Count   | 36      | 8       | 8       | 7       | 0       | 4       | 2       |
| <b>Submitted marks and included them in the subject results (N=29)</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Converted Percentile Score from Mean                                   | 96      | 75      | 72      | 69      | 43      | 52      | 65      |
| Peak Frequency Count   | 23      | 11      | 6       | 6       | 0       | 1       | 1       |

**Figure 5.22 SoC profiles by the SBA option taken in 2007**

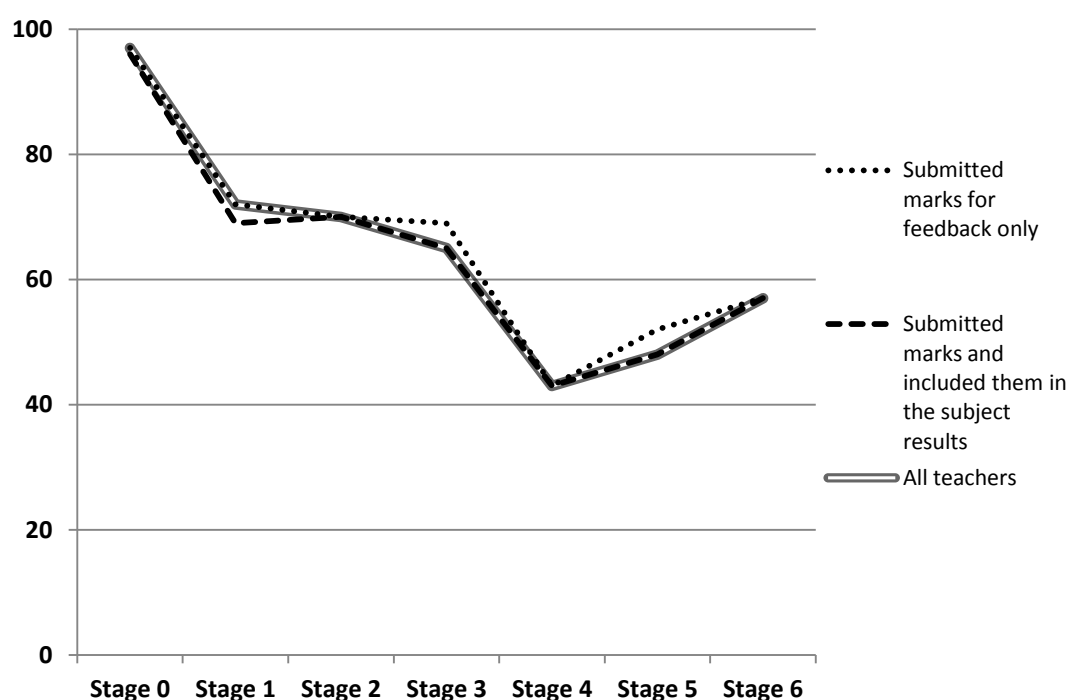




**Figure 5.23 Mean scale scores and peak SoC frequency counts by the SBA option taken in 2008**

|  | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Submitted marks for feedback only (N=24)</b>                        |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>                            | 97      | 72      | 70      | 69      | 43      | 52      | 57      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>  | 21      | 7       | 4       | 3       | 0       | 4       | 2       |
| <b>Submitted marks and included them in the subject results (N=53)</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>                            | 96      | 69      | 70      | 65      | 43      | 48      | 57      |
| <b>Peak Frequency Count</b>  | 46      | 12      | 8       | 9       | 0       | 2       | 1       |

**Figure 5.24 SoC profiles by the SBA option taken in 2008**



While no major differences were found between teachers from schools which took the two different SBA options in 2008, the 2007 option did seem to have some influence on the teachers' SoC profiles. Teachers from schools which did not participate in SBA at all in 2007 seemed to be more concerned about every aspect of

the SBA scheme except Stage 3 Management. Concerns for Stages 1 and 4 were particularly high when compared to teachers in the other two groups, suggesting that those teachers might find themselves less informed about SBA and were more afraid that the scheme might affect their students negatively.

### **5.1.5 Answers to the open-ended question**

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to put down their thoughts and comments on the overall SBA scheme. The question elicited a total of thirty-eight responses. The longest response was 148 words long whereas the shortest had only six words. A dispositional analysis found that fourteen (36.8%) responses were generally positive, praising the scheme for the benefits it brought. Seventeen responses (44.7%) were negative, focusing on issues such as the undesirable effects of the scheme or the problems in its design or implementation. The remaining 7 answers (18.4%) were more balanced, including a mix of positive and negative aspects of the scheme. Figure 5.25 shows some sample responses from the teachers for each category.

**Figure 5.25 Sample responses to the open-ended question**

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Some positive responses</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ “It gives students a purpose to speak in English. Students generally become more serious when it comes to the oral practice. The passing rate of oral paper has increased quite significantly.” (G4)</li> <li>♦ “Possibly the best reform in English teaching in HK over the past decade. Students get to speak in real English in familiar contexts in a truer, conversational setting. Furthermore, teachers have been led to understand the evaluation process and to cooperative together for more.” (O5)</li> <li>♦ “It’s about time HK joined so many other developed countries in a) treating their teachers as professionals and b) beginning to assess students in a more realistic way.” (R3)</li> </ul> |
|---------------------------------------|---|

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Some negative responses</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ “Time-consuming; the fairness of the grading system is questionable (due to subjectivity of teachers from different schools).” (A4)</li> <li>♦ “The Education Department did not have a clear plan before they implemented SBA. More materials should be provided for the assessment, for example, assessment questions and plausible ways to assess students.” (C1)</li> <li>♦ “I understand the rationale of the assessment. However, it can’t achieve what it aims. Most students do not finish the books even though they know the results can affect their HKCEE results. Also too much freedom has been given to the students, and it’s a great burden to the teachers. For example, the students can discuss for as long as they want and they can have many attempts if they are not satisfied with their results. How considerate the EDB is!” (O4)</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Some balanced responses</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ “SBA is a good component in assessing students' learning because it encourages students to read extensively throughout 2 years of time as well as reflects their ability more accurately than a one-off exam. My concern is, however, how the HKEAA ensures the moderation of each student's SBA marks is fairly done against the marks of the other Eng Lang papers. Plus, when conducting their SBAs, individual schools may not adhere strictly to the Assessment Criteria given, while some over-prepare their students to boost the final results in the English Language paper. Schools with students whose oral skills are higher than their writing skills may suffer.” (M3)</li> <li>♦ “The activities introduced in SBA programme are good and motivating, but I have reservation about using them as assessment tasks for a public examination, especially when resources and manpower are not supporting well enough in Hong Kong's situation.” (Q2)</li> <li>♦ “It may be good because some students perform better at school as they may panic at exams. Yet it is kinda unfair as teachers from different schools somehow have different marking standard. And it puts more pressure/workload to school teacher. Quite time-consuming.” (S5)</li> </ul> |

Besides an analysis on their dispositions, the answers have also been classified according to the issues they touched on. The most commented aspect (52.6%) was the impact of the SBA scheme on students, such as how the scheme might have motivated students to learn and speak English, the improvements students showed after its implementation or how students suffered as a result of SBA. The second most concerned area (34.2%) was about the scheme specifications and operation, including its design, its procedures and the resources provided. Comments on assessment issues (28.9%), workload (28.9%), scheme objectives (15.8%) and

impact on teaching (10.5%) were also found. Figure 5.26 shows the key issues found in the answers, their frequency counts and a summary of what was said about these issues.

**Figure 5.26 Key issues found in responses to the open-ended question**

| Area                                       | Frequency count <sup>4</sup> | Summary of responses  |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| <i>Scheme objectives</i>                   | 6 (15.8%)                    | Most responses were about the scheme's objectives in lessening exam pressure and encouraging students to engage in reading and speaking in English although some expressed doubt on whether these could be achieved.  |
| <i>Scheme specifications and operation</i> | 13 (34.2%)                   | The responses on this area were quite varied. Some commented on the lack of guidelines, resources and training whereas some focused on whether the procedures were easy and practical. A few expressed concerns on whether the scheme specifications were fully followed. Some responses even claimed that the scheme had become just another examination.  |
| <i>Impact on teaching</i>                  | 4 (10.5%)                    | The comments were all about how the SBA scheme had contributed to teacher development and changes in English Language teaching classroom practice and other areas in the English Language curriculum.   |
| <i>Impact on students</i>                  | 20 (52.6%)                   | Both positive and negative aspects were covered. The benefits were mostly increase in motivation and interest, more chances for authentic speaking practice and students' improvement in English and also in the examination. The negative aspects were about how certain students might be disadvantaged in their speaking assessment and how students might have been led away from doing some more solid English Language learning activities. |
| <i>Assessment issues</i>                   | 11 (28.9%)                   | Nearly all comments in this area were concerned with the fairness and reliability of SBA as an assessment tool. Some responses went into great detail explaining how the freedom in the scheme and favourism might jeopardise the whole assessment system.  |
| <i>Workload</i>                            | 11 (28.9%)                   | Most responses complained about the increased workload brought by the scheme with a few further questioning whether some of the administrative work incurred should be part of teachers' duties.  |

<sup>4</sup> The sum of the percentages is larger than 100% since many responses include comments on more than one aspects.

Further examination on the responses also shows that teachers encountered difficulties in the following areas when implementing the SBA scheme:

- ◆ Setting questions for assessment
- ◆ Preparing teaching and assessment materials
- ◆ Handling administrative work
- ◆ Acquiring resources and deploying manpower
- ◆ Standardizing assessment scores

## 5.2 *Part Two: In-depth semi-structured interviews*

A total of eight interviews were conducted for this part of the research study. Interviewees were in-service English Language teachers with between one and nine years of HKCEE teaching experience. All teachers had completed their undergraduate studies in an English-related subject and had relevant English Language teaching training. The following table shows more information concerning the informants:

**Figure 5.27 Backgrounds of interviewees**

| Name <sup>5</sup> | Gender | HKCEE English teaching experience | SBA experience | English-related duties | School code | School banding | School Medium of instruction |
|-------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Amy               | F      | 6 years                           | 1 year         | Nil                    | E           | 1              | Chinese                      |
| Betty             | F      | 4 years                           | 3 years        | SBA coordinator        | O           | 2              | Chinese/<br>Mixed            |
| Charles           | M      | 1 year                            | 1 year         | Nil                    | M           | 1              | English                      |
| Doris             | F      | 7 years                           | 3 years        | Nil                    | C           | 2              | Chinese                      |

<sup>5</sup> The identity of the interviewees was masked through the use of fictional names.

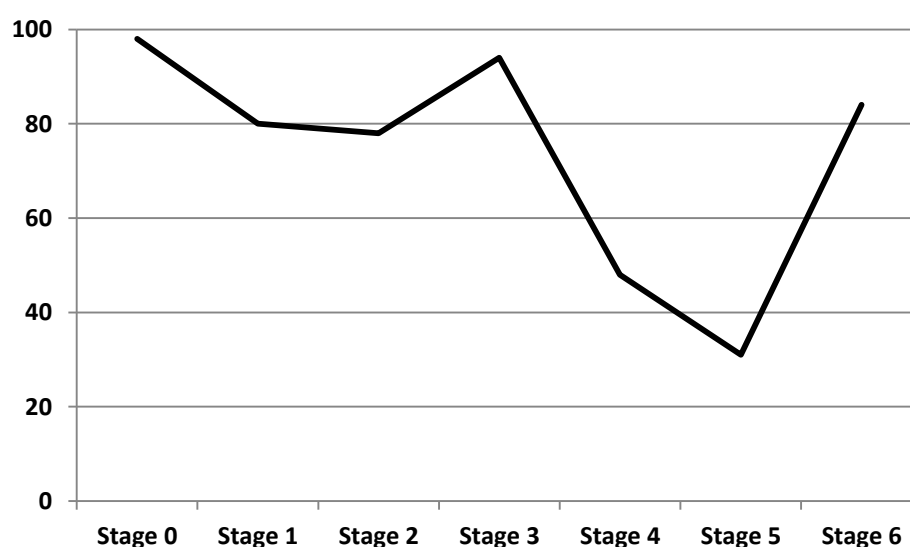
| Name   | Gender | HKCEE English teaching experience | SBA experience | English-related duties                    | School code | School banding | School Medium of instruction |
|--------|--------|-----------------------------------|----------------|---|-------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Eddy   | M      | 1 year                            | 1 year         | Nil                                       | Q           | 1-1.5          | English                      |
| Fanny  | F      | 9 years                           | 2 years        | S5 coordinator                            | B           | 2-2.5          | Chinese                      |
| Grace  | F      | 4 years                           | 2 years        | Nil                                       | T           | 1              | English                      |
| Hannah | F      | 7 years                           | 3 years        | SBA & S5 coordinator & head of department | J           | 3              | Chinese                      |

### 5.2.1 Interviewee case reports

**Case report 1: Amy** — *“I think the idea is good, but in reality, whether or not its effects are big, I do have doubts.”*

Amy had been teaching HKCEE English Language at her school for six years since she graduated with an undergraduate degree and a teacher’s qualification in English Language teaching. This was the first year, however, that she was involved in the SBA scheme. The following figure shows Amy’s SoC profile as indicated from her response in the questionnaire survey:

**Figure 5.28 Amy’s SoC profile**



The figure indicates that Amy had high Stages 0, 1, 2, 3, and 6 concerns, with the progression line peaking at Stages 0 and 3 and tailing up at Stage 6. This means that while Amy did not find the SBA scheme a very pressing issue at her work, she was very much concerned about the management aspects of the scheme and had doubts on the merits of the scheme for her students. She might believe that there were better ways to run the project or perhaps the scheme should be replaced with some better alternatives, most probably due to problems she encountered in managing the scheme. The general pattern is that of a beginning user who exhibits reservation of the SBA scheme.

Amy's response at the interview has been analyzed according to the descriptors in the LoU Chart and the analysis shows that she was an LoU IVA Routine user, who was following quite a stabilized routine in the implementation of the SBA scheme. A detailed analysis of her LoU is shown below:

**Figure 5.29 Amy's LoU profile**

|                              |     |  |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | IVA | She displayed good knowledge of the innovation including its objectives, requirements, timeline and procedures but did not seem to be seeking alternatives or actions to re-approach the scheme. She could describe the exact preparation procedures needed including how the scheme would be run further in the next term.  |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | IVA | She had attended seminars and meetings which aimed at providing information about the innovation. While she might be unsure about certain aspects of the scheme and expressed a desire to know more about them, she did not take any active effort to inform herself on these aspects since she had got enough information for the day-to-day implementation of the scheme and other more pressing issues might demand her attention and effort. |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | IVA | Sharing about the innovation was mainly about scheduling and other logistical arrangements for the assessment. However, such communication with other colleagues was in fact limited and she mainly relied on the work of the SBA coordinator. As far as the daily teaching and classroom implementation of the SBA scheme were concerned, she basically handled all by herself without much discussion and sharing with other colleagues.       |

|                         |     |  |
|-------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Assessing</b>        | IVA | She did not think much about evaluation of the scheme other than what needed to be discussed at departmental meetings on changes or improvements in terms of materials, resources and logistics and in terms of the assessment tasks used. Little on the evaluation of own use of SBA in the classroom was revealed. |
| <b>Planning</b>         | IVA | No plans had been made so far on how the scheme might be changed in the immediate, intermediate or long-term future. The teacher seemed quite satisfied with the present routine and did not think there was a need to change.   |
| <b>Status Reporting</b> | IVA | The teacher felt that the scheme was run quite smoothly and was satisfied with most of the ways the scheme was implemented at her school.  |
| <b>Performing</b>       | IVA | Few management problems were reported and there seemed to be an established routine already in place at school and for the teacher herself. She also reported that students' feedback was generally good.  |
| <b>Overall</b>          | IVA | Amy was making few or no changes in the use of SBA and was following an established routine for the scheme.  |

When asked to describe the SBA scheme, Amy focused mainly on the scheme requirements laid down by the authority and believed that the scheme was designed to reduce students' stress on assessments:

Amy: Its aim, I believe, is to **reduce students' stress**, so they don't have to do it only once in the public exam and then this is their final grade. It's hoped that they could have the assessment in a more **familiar environment**, so that they can, er, **do it with classmates that they know well, and be assessed by teachers they know well too**. So that they will be **more comfortable** and is hoped that they will have **a better performance**.

She rated herself as possessing moderate knowledge of the scheme and found herself lacking in knowledge on how the marks were moderated, added up and contributed to the final HKCEE subject grade. She also rated herself as a beginner at the scheme and looked up to her department head and SBA coordinator at the school on how the scheme should be implemented. Amy thought that the scheme was important as marks were allocated to it although it was less important when



compared to other elements such as compositions and writing skills in the English Language curriculum.

Interviewer: So er, this [SBA] for you, in your teaching, in your teaching of English Language, how important, important it is to you, you find? If I ask you to rate from 1 to 10 and give it a mark, 10 being the highest, I find it of the highest concern, put it in top priority, that's 10, and how marks will you give?

Amy: **I'll give it a 7, because it's in the end a component in the [public] exam marks.** And I told my students this: If you work hard, you could see it as an extra opportunity, an opportunity to eliminate, any personal psychological factors, and in a more familiar environment, you'll usually perform better. That's what I told them, and so, they.. try, try to motivate them. **But in the end, I still think that if you teach comprehension or writing [skills], these are more important.**

During the implementation of the scheme at her school, Amy reported that there had been big difficulties in logistical arrangements such as finding the time for assessment and technical arrangements such as the recording resources and procedures in the past but these had already been dealt with and routinized. Some changes had also been made to allow the English Language teacher to take back the oral lessons from the native English teacher (NET)<sup>6</sup> so that students could be guided on doing the SBA assessments in the oral lessons. In general, Amy believed that the implementation had been quite successful and students' feedback positive. However, she still had much doubt on the effectiveness of the discussion assessment and

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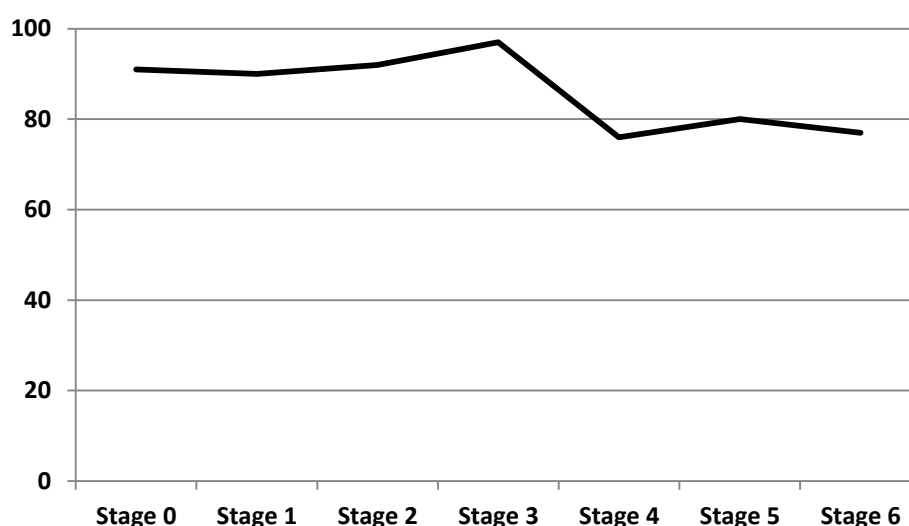
<sup>6</sup> Native English teachers (NETs) are employed from overseas on different terms from the local English teachers. The government provides funding to each school to employ one NET although some schools employ more NETs on local terms or with their own funding. NETs are expected to add to the provision of a wholly English speaking environment for students to be immersed in and to induce appreciation of foreign cultures. Since the NET is usually not locally trained and may not possess knowledge of the local curriculum and exams, some schools may only assign them to support local English teachers in oral lessons and conducting English related activities.

thought that it did not achieve much. She also wanted to cut down the number of total assessments from three to perhaps once only for the two-year period.

**Case report 2: Betty** — *“Now we don’t care much about the HKEAA, but are doing what we need to do at the school, to train the students.”*

Betty had a Master’s in Education in English Language Teaching besides her undergraduate degree and initial English Language teacher training. She had taught HKCEE English Language at her school for more than four years and had three years of experience in the use of SBA. She was also the SBA coordinator of the school.

**Figure 5.30 Betty’s SoC profile**



Betty’s SoC profile shows that she had consistently high level of concerns on all aspects of the innovation although at the same time the high score at Stage 0 also reveals that there may be other things in her English Language teaching which she was concerned with more. The progression line peaks at Stage 3 Management and is lowest in Stage 4 Consequence. Since all scores are high in her case, it is not possible to draw a conclusion as to what stage of use Betty was in from the SoC profile although a slight disposition towards the earlier stages could be observed. A

close examination on her responses in the interview shows that Betty was a LoU IVB Refinement user, who “varied the use of the innovation to increase the impact on clients within immediate sphere of influence” (Hall, Dirksen & George, 2006, p. 5).

**Figure 5.31 Betty’s LoU profile**

|                              |     |   |
|------------------------------|-----|---|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | IVB | She had a good knowledge of the innovation, including the scheme requirements, the logistics and resources needed, the short-term and long-term routines, how the students would be and had been impacted by the scheme and various alternative ways to run the scheme to suit the needs of the students.   |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | IVA | She believed that she had quite a good knowledge of the SBA scheme and was not involved in seeking more information about it. In fact, she and her colleagues had stopped going to the district-wide SBA seminars and meetings because they thought that these were just the same every year and they had heard enough. She might still be keeping an eye on the development of SBA and how other schools were doing it but she did not seek such information actively. |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | IVA | Unlike how it was like in the first or second year of the implementation of SBA, she was not involved in much sharing of the use of SBA with other teachers as they were all busy with many different things. As the SBA coordinator, she made the decisions based on how it was run in the past and students’ performance and then asked the colleagues to follow the plan.  |
| <b>Assessing</b>             | IVB | The teacher had been and was still involved in evaluating the way SBA was conducted to allow better learning and results, particularly due to her role as the SBA coordinator. She reported quite some changes in the use of SBA in the previous years, both for administrative convenience and to maximize its results.  |
| <b>Planning</b>              | IVB | She was planning to make some changes to the way the questions were set and although she was not planning any intermediate or long-term changes for the time being, she did mention that there might be a few changes she and other teachers might be considering based on students’ performance and results.   |
| <b>Status Reporting</b>      | IVB | The teacher reported varying use of procedures of SBA in the previous and current year to enhance students’ performance and results.  |
| <b>Performing</b>            | IVB | She had been exploring and experimenting different ways of implementing SBA with existing practice to maximize students’ performance and results. She was also actively monitoring the implementation and students’ performance for necessary future changes to the scheme.   |
| <b>Overall</b>               | IVB | Betty was making changes to SBA to increase students’ outcomes.   |

When asked to describe the SBA scheme, Betty focused a lot on the effects the scheme had on her students. She reported that in the beginning she was a bit resistant to the scheme but after hearing other school's experience on how it had benefited their students and then experiencing it herself, she believed the scheme was good since the design of SBA allowed her students to continuously try and improve although it did increase her workload.

Betty: Er, I did, at the very beginning, find myself resisting the scheme, because all changes do bring workload. And no one is happy when they hear the word workload. And er, but er, it's been 3 years, right? And within these 3 years, I have found my students, er, they, they have indeed, in the speaking paper, it's been somehow helpful. Because once I went to a sharing session, and the person in charge, she did say, she's a teacher at Queen's. She said she found that her students were becoming more active and were improving. At that time, however, my reaction was: Is that real? And, but er, now, starting this year, I have seen that my students have indeed improved. It's that when the students had the oral exam in the past, they really didn't say much, because they lacked the practice, and now they have been doing this with them, again and again and they have also joined training sessions, and they are more willing to speak up. So now during group discussions, it's very obvious that the students are more vocal and this is a pro.

She rated herself as a teacher quite knowledgeable about the scheme although she also thought that many of the guidelines given by HKEAA, particularly on the way the assessments should be conducted, were not clear and could add to much confusion and discrepancies. Being the SBA coordinator for her school, Betty was the main person responsible for the planning of the implementation procedures and the design of assessment tasks. While it was her job duty to take care of the scheme, in fact, she rated herself just marginally concerned about the scheme because it did

not constitute a very high weighing to the HKCEE subject scores and there were many other papers that she would devote more time and attention. Also, since the scheme had been in place for nearly three years, there were certain routines developed and so while the scheme did command a lot of attention from her in the first year, she was not too over-concerned about it at this point.

Betty: So, actually you may see it from 2 perspectives. As a coordinator, of course I am very concerned, it's my job duty. **But as an ordinary teacher, er, I'll only give it a 5** [out of 10 in terms of the level of concern]. **It's because the weighting is not high. There are other papers that I need to devote more time on.** So er, if you compare it with last year, I have devoted less time [on SBA] for my class this year. It's because, first, they're particularly weak, and second, our assessments and exams are so intensive, I'd rather ask them to work on other areas.

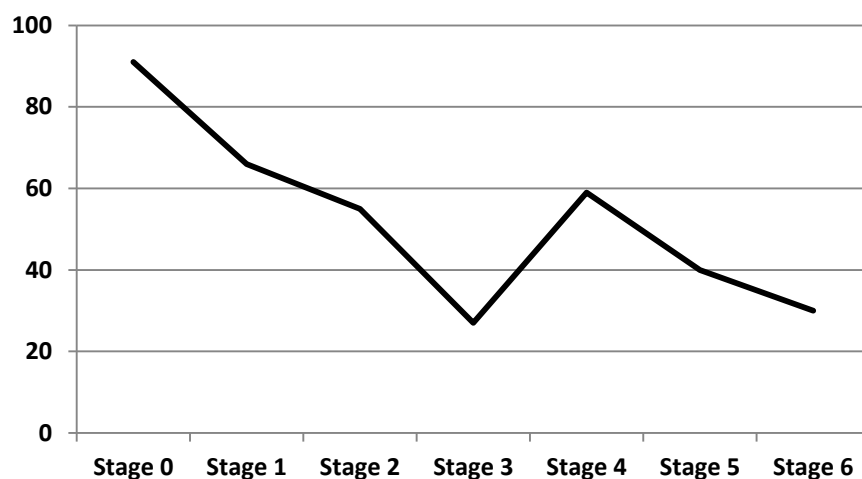
The biggest difficulty she encountered in the SBA implementation was in understanding and translating the guidelines given by HKEAA into practice. She commented that there were many uncertainties about the assessment part of the scheme, such as whether students should be allowed to see the questions beforehand or what the marking standards were exactly. She had experimented different structures in the assessment to enhance students' performance but was still a bit worried that her students might be disadvantaged if other schools were more easy on their students.

**Case report 3: Charles** — ***"I think the biggest problem now is that it doesn't go well with the education system, the learning mode."***

Charles had an undergraduate degree and initial teacher training in English Language. He had only one year of experience in teaching HKCEE English Language and had only been involved in SBA in this school year although his school

did join the trial in 2007 but opted not to include the marks. Being a relatively new teacher at the school, he was not assigned any special duties in the English Language department.

**Figure 5.32 Charles's SoC profile**



The figure indicates that Charles had high Stage 0 concerns and the percentile scores were relatively higher at Stages 1, 2, and 4 as well. It is also observed that there is a curious trend in the progression line which peaks at Stages 0 and 4 and dips at Stage 3. The profile could be interpreted as Charles having other more pressing concerns in English Language teaching than the SBA scheme although in comparison to other areas, he was more concerned on the informational, personal and consequential aspects of the innovation. The dip at Stage 3 may mean that the logistical and time management of the SBA was not an issue to him whereas the tailing down at Stage 6 also suggests that he was positively disposed towards the SBA scheme.

**Figure 5.33 Charles's LoU profile**

|                              |     |  |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | IVA | He had knowledge of the objectives, requirements and procedures of the SBA scheme, both short-term and long-term. With such knowledge, he was in fact running the SBA scheme with minimal effort or stress.  |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | IVA | He did not make special efforts to seek further information about the innovation. Although he admitted that he might lack knowledge in certain aspects of the scheme, this was not a big concern for him as he believed that he could manage the scheme quite well and could always refer to the guiding manual when needed.                                   |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | III | Resources and materials were shared between him and his colleagues, particularly those who were in the same staffroom. The sharing mainly sprang from a need to reduce management, flow and logistical problems rather than to modify the use of the innovation to enhance student outcomes.   |
| <b>Assessing</b>             | IVA | While the teacher had a lot of critical comments on the suitability of the SBA scheme in Hong Kong schools, he did not take any specific action to examine the use of the scheme for better implementation or for changes for better student outcomes. He mainly relied on the administration as far as the evaluation of the use of the scheme was concerned. |
| <b>Planning</b>              | IVA | The teacher did not anticipate much variation in the use of SBA in the intermediate or long-term future. The teacher was satisfied with the way it was implemented at his school and did not think that a change was necessary.  |
| <b>Status Reporting</b>      | IVA | He reported little problem with the personal use of the scheme and nothing about the scheme seemed to be particularly demanding or have demanded his attention. He was in fact quite undisturbed about the arrangements or possible problems in implementing the scheme at his school.   |
| <b>Performing</b>            | IVA | He was running the scheme quite smoothly with minimal management problems. When it was his first year using SBA (and in fact teaching the curriculum), there were established routines in his school and he managed to follow these routines rather effortlessly.  |
| <b>Overall</b>               | IVA | Charles was making few or no changes in the use of SBA and was following an established routine for the scheme.  |

As seen from the above analysis, Charles was rated an LoU IVA Routine user, particularly due to his ease in handling the personal and managerial aspects and his adherence to a routinized practice of the SBA scheme. When asked to depict the

innovation, Charles focused a lot on the impact it erected upon both students and teachers. He believed that his students had benefited from the scheme as they were forced to be engaged in other aspects of the English Language curriculum rather than examination skills and practice. However, he had much reservation about how its effectiveness for students of lower-ability and felt pity for those teachers implementing the scheme in lower banding schools. He considered himself quite uninformed about the innovation but at the same time he did not express a strong desire to gain knowledge about it. He did not think the SBA scheme demanded much concern for him as he could handle its implementation smoothly and without issues.

Despite his ease in coping with the innovation, the alignment of the SBA scheme with the Hong Kong culture, however, was cited as the biggest difficulty. He believed that many students in Hong Kong were not prepared for this more active and interactive mode of learning and assessment.

Charles: But I think er, SBA is not, Hong Kong is not the first place in the world pioneering it. In fact it's used in many places so I think it must be probable in some ways. But it's only that I think our education system can't tie in with it. And I think our students, well, how should I say it. Because in our Hong Kong education system, the learning mode in primary schools until secondary schools, is so, how should I say, receptive....

Whereas it's different overseas. They were trained to go and collect information, to think more themselves and to ask more when they were young. And so in fact er, this SBA scheme, I think, ties in well with this education, I mean the foreign education system. And Hong Kong has not, has not quite achieved this.

He further explained that, students, particularly the weaker ones, relied totally on their teachers to spoon-feed them with knowledge about the books and the movies

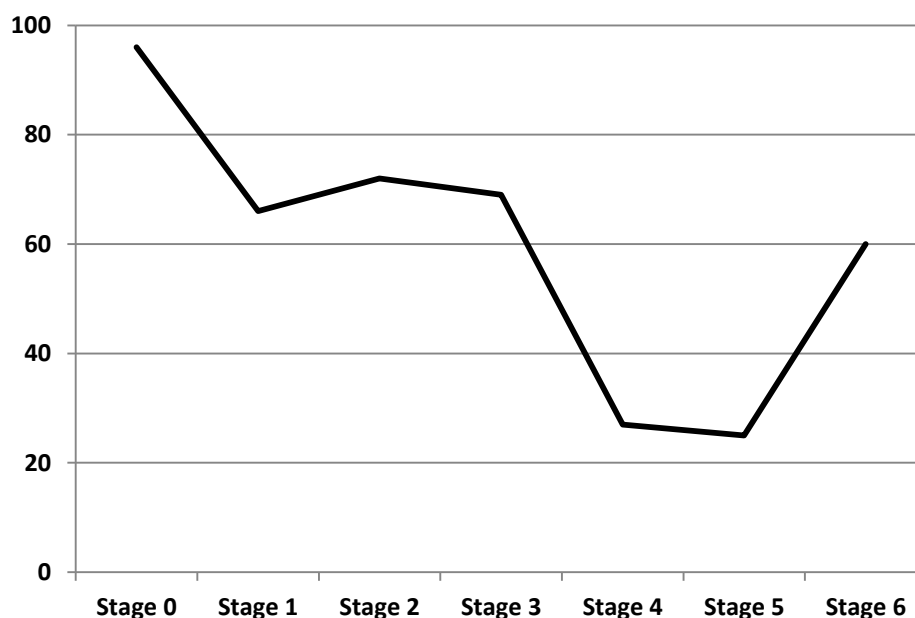


and to help them on what to say in the assessment. While some might lack the skills in interaction and discussion, others were short of confidence to put forward their views and again. He urged the authorities for support to teachers and students and more related elements to be imbued into the primary and junior secondary curricula to better equip students for this mode.

**Case report 4: Doris** — *“I think it is worth it. Er, but do we really need an assessment? That’s something we can think about. But it’s a bit paradoxical. If you don’t do this, they won’t read or watch.”*

Doris had an undergraduate degree and initial teacher training in English Language and a Master’s of Art. She had taught HKCEE English Language for seven years and was in her third year of SBA use. She did not have any special duties in the English Language department of her school.

**Figure 5.34 Doris’s SoC profile**



The SoC profile graph shows that Doris had high Stages 0, 1, 2, 3, and 6 concerns, with the progression line peaking at Stages 0 and 2. A sharp decrease from

Stages 3 to 4 and a large upsurge between Stages 5 and 6 are also observed. Similar to other interviewees, Doris was not very concerned about the SBA scheme as indicated by the high Stage 0 scores. Comparatively speaking, she was more concerned about the personal and management aspects of the scheme and might be thinking about changes or alternatives to the scheme. The pattern resembles that of a beginning user who is hesitant about the initiative.

**Figure 5.35 Doris's LoU profile**

|                              |     |  |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | IVA | The teacher possessed good knowledge of the SBA scheme and could describe both short-term and long-term objectives, requirements and procedures of the scheme. It also appeared that the teacher knew how to adopt the scheme without much difficulty.   |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | IVA | The teacher believed that the scheme had become a part of her teaching routine and did not engage herself in acquiring more information about the scheme despite her reported uncertainties on whether some of her current practice might fully adhere to the scheme requirements.   |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | IVA | Only very limited sharing activities could be found. Discussions about SBA and its operation were done only in departmental meetings and in moderating meetings when she and her colleagues reviewed and compared students' performances in the recordings. She did mention collaboration with a colleague in the conduction of the SBA assessment but it was basically run as a two-examiner assessment and no attempt had been made to broaden it to allow opinion, practice and material sharing. |
| <b>Assessing</b>             | IVA | The teacher did not think much about the evaluation of the scheme. Although she did mention some ideas on how the scheme may be changed to improve the students' performance when asked, the ideas were rather tentative and trivial and did not indicate a devoted intent to change current practices based on her assessment of the scheme.  |
| <b>Planning</b>              | IVA | Little variations in how the scheme will be implemented were projected. The teacher seemed satisfied with the current routine and did not think that there was a necessity to change the content or the procedures of the scheme.  |
| <b>Status Reporting</b>      | IVA | The teacher reported few difficulties in her implementation of the scheme and in fact felt that the scheme had already been well integrated as a part of her routine teaching. She was satisfied with most of the aspects of the scheme.   |

|                   |     |  |
|-------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Performing</b> | IVA | There was an established pattern of use concerning the SBA scheme and it was well integrated into the teacher's daily teaching. No management or logistical problems were found and things went smoothly according to the teacher a. |
| <b>Overall</b>    | IVA | Doris was making few or no changes in the use of SBA and was following an established routine for the scheme.  |

Doris was found to be an LoU IVA Routine user who was content with the current mode of the SBA implementation and had already integrated its requirements, materials and procedures into her current teaching routine, which she found agreeable. When asked to describe what the SBA scheme was about to her, Doris believed that the scheme was aimed at encouraging students to read and watch movies extensively besides being another assessment component in the public exam. She thought that the scheme also tested students' self-learning abilities in the process. Since having already been involved in the scheme for nearly three years, Doris believed that she was quite knowledgeable about the scheme and quite adept in its use. During the interview, she mentioned a few times that the scheme was already "a part of her teaching" and was not too concerned about the scheme at this point. She believed that the scheme had its merits particularly in encouraging students to read and watch more but questioned whether it had to be done as an assessment component.

While Doris did not encounter a lot of difficulties in the implementation of the SBA scheme, she thought that her students, being of lower banding and possessing lower English language abilities, were somehow disadvantaged in the assessment.

Doris:           Actually SBA, I think is good to students of high-abilities, to Band One students. It's actually very good.

They'll have more exposure [to the English Language], and if you look at it, in Form 4 and 5, students can read a lot more readers and watch quite many movies, and this brings a lot of benefits to them. **But for students who are a bit weaker, that is lower banding students like ours, it's actually very difficult. Emm, so that is we're always disadvantaged.**

I think those weaker students can perform quite well in individual presentations. Discussion, but if, **those very weak ones can't really discuss.** And perhaps they've only prepared their own part, and then they'll just say it out, one off, non-stop. And then er, that is **they can't really interact with others.**

She felt that many of her students could not conduct, in particular, group interactions properly due to their low English language abilities despite their apparent efforts paid on its preparation. She also observed that the video shooting requirement of SBA may also hamper the performance of some of her shyer students.

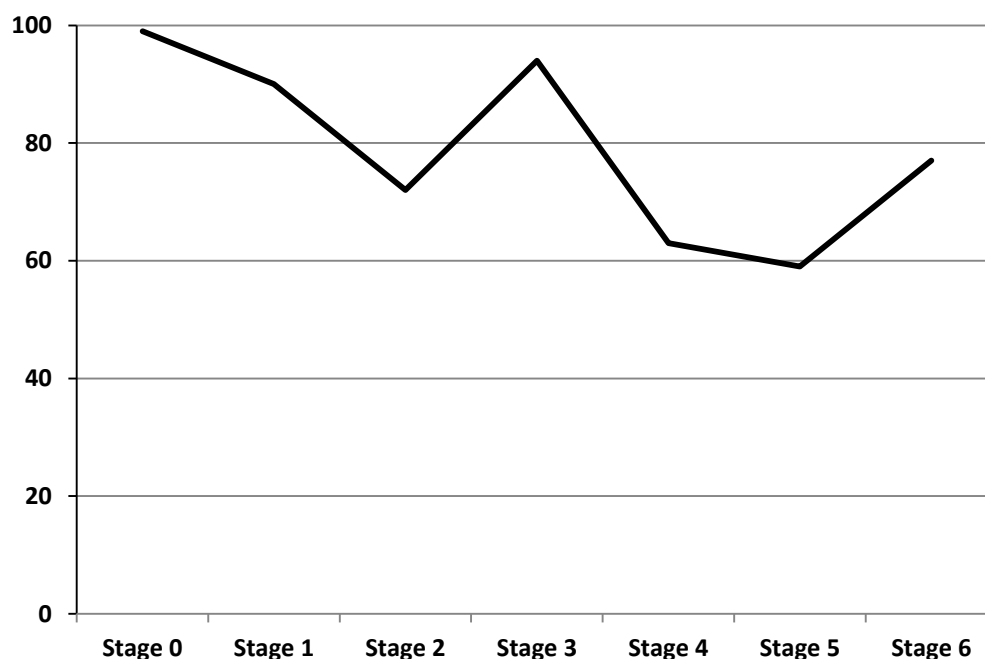
**Case report 5: Eddy** — ***"In fact to many new teachers, we're only doing a guessing work."***

Eddy was in his first year of teaching after completing an undergraduate degree and teacher's training in English. He was also new to the use of SBA although his school joined the trial scheme in the first year and had already been involved in it for nearly three years. As a new teacher, he did not have any special duties in the English Language department at his school.

Figure 5.36 indicates that Eddy had high Stages 0, 1, 3 and 6 concerns. The progression line peaks at Stage 0, falls gradually to a low at Stage 2 and then surges to a second peak at Stage 3. The line descends again afterwards but tails up at Stage 6. The pattern shows that while Eddy may not find SBA an issue of very high concern in his teaching of English Language, he nonetheless was more concerned about the management aspect of the scheme and was also thinking about changes or

alternatives to the scheme. The extremely high Stage 3 score but much lower Stages 4 and 5 scores suggests that Eddy was a beginning user of the innovation who was struggling with completing tasks associated with the SBA scheme.

**Figure 5.36 Eddy's SoC profile**



**Figure 5.37 Eddy's LoU profile**

|                              |     |  |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | III | The teacher had some understanding of the objectives, requirements and procedures of the scheme but was generally more knowledgeable about short term activities and effects than long term ones. He did not know specifically how he would be doing with it in the longer-range view and the knowledge about the scheme had not yet been consolidated to allow him to use the innovation with minimal effort or stress. |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | III | The teacher was active in joining training and sharing sessions about the SBA scheme and felt that he might not be too knowledgeable about some aspects of the scheme, particularly about the marking criteria. He also constantly sought information, including resources and experience sharing from a more experienced buddy teacher at his school to help him adopt the scheme more smoothly.                        |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | III | The teacher was paired up with a buddy with whom he discussed the preparation of resources, materials and marking criteria.  |

|                         |     |   |
|-------------------------|-----|---|
| <b>Assessing</b>        | III | The teacher believed that, as a first time user of SBA, he might not have organized himself very well in preparing his students for the assessment. His assessment of the scheme reflects his concern on time concerns, management, schedules and resources for the scheme. |
| <b>Planning</b>         | III | The teacher exhibited features of short-term planning about the use of SBA. These plans were mainly for the near future and didn't reflect detailed consideration of their long-term effects.   |
| <b>Status Reporting</b> | III | The teacher reported that he might not be using the scheme very well and focused on the issues such as time management, resource and also in understanding the marking criteria.  |
| <b>Performing</b>       | III | The use of SBA had not yet been stabilized into a routine and the teacher managed the innovation with some degree of inefficiency. He was still exploring its use and the flows of action were somehow uneven and uncertain.  |
| <b>Overall</b>          | III | Eddy was making changes to better organize the use of SBA.  |

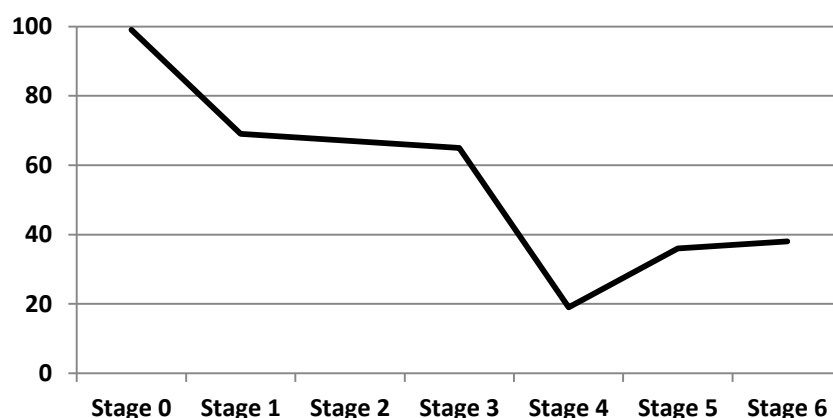
A closer examination of the interview reveals that Eddy was an LoU Level III Mechanical user who was attempting to make sense of the innovation in his use and exploration of the SBA scheme. When asked what the SBA scheme was about, Eddy replied that the scheme aimed at exposing students to different types of literary and widening their horizon so that their perception of English Language learning would not be restricted to only grammar or examination practice.

Eddy: It, actually it aims at providing more chances for everyday training and practice on discussions or speaking so that students will face the HKCEE with more confidence. But then, if you only discuss, without much real content, it's quite boring. So it hopes that students can read more books, or be exposed to different types of literary, so that they can have some basis for the discussion. So er, on the whole, it hopes, it hopes that students can more, that is not limit English learning to grammar, but extensive reading as well and then discourse on it, to train their communication skills, this is what I think the scheme is about.

He also felt that the scheme was very much tied to the emphasis on the use of language arts in English Language teaching found in the new English Language curriculum. He reported three main difficulties in his use of SBA. First is arousing students' interest and motivation to read books and movies; second is the difficulties in instruction about the books and movies to prepare students for assessment; third is about the assessment timetabling arrangement and the long time and huge effort involved. As a new teacher who had recently joined the teaching profession and had to face the SBA scheme, he had been diligently joining all the introductory workshops, seminars and sharing sessions organized by the authorities. However, he felt that he still did not fully understand the scheme although he might be able to recall the many details of the operation of the SBA scheme. He believed that the authorities would need to give more guidance and more concrete examples, particularly on the criteria and standards in awarding marks.

**Case report 6: Fanny** — *“Teachers are just too busy.... We’ve fulfilled the requirements and we’ve seen some effects, but then we just stop here.”*

Fanny had nine years of HKCEE English Language teaching experience and held a Master's degree in curriculum studies besides an undergraduate degree and initial teacher training in English. She had been working at the same school since joining the profession and was now the S5 English Language coordinator at her school. She had been involved in SBA for two years although her school joined the scheme in the very first year but did not include the scores in the final HKCEE results.

**Figure 5.38 Fanny's SoC profile**

Fanny had very high Stage 0 scores, moderately high Stages 1, 2 and 3 scores but her scores were consistently low for Stages 4, 5 and 6. The high Stage 0 score indicates that SBA was not an issue of concern in her English Language teaching although comparatively speaking, the lower stages concerns: informational, personal and management, to Fanny, were more important than the higher stages ones: consequence, collaboration and refocusing. Such a profile is found usually among beginning users of an innovation whose attention was captured by the need to meet the requirements of the innovation.

**Figure 5.39 Fanny's LoU profile**

|                              |     |  |
|------------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | IVA | Fanny displayed good understanding on the objectives, requirements, resources, processes of SBA and also the impacts on herself and her students. She knew how the scheme can be conducted in a stress-free way and with minimal effort.   |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | IVA | The teacher at this point did not solicit information and materials related to the scheme actively. While she felt that some information provided was vague and unclear she did not feel that there was a need for more information as she found her current knowledge and understanding of SBA adequate for operation and the vagueness was in fact well accounted for due to the high flexibility of the scheme. |



|                         |     |   |
|-------------------------|-----|---|
| <b>Sharing</b>          | III | The teacher shared materials and resources on SBA with colleagues with the use of a teachers' server. The sharing, however, was limited to the purpose of reducing management, flow and logistical problems but not much was discussed concerning the operation of the scheme as a whole. |
| <b>Assessing</b>        | IVA | The teacher did not think that there was a need to change the current SBA routine as she felt that both she herself and students were satisfied with the established pattern of use.  |
| <b>Planning</b>         | IVA | While Fanny had an idea of changing the books or movies currently used in SBA, she did not develop plans for such changes and in fact did not even voice out the suggestion to the panel chairperson. It was expected that the considered change was not imminent.                        |
| <b>Status Reporting</b> | IVA | The teacher reported smooth operation the SBA scheme and few difficulties in its use. She was happy with the current operation although she did wish that she had more time to better integrate SBA into other areas of English Language teaching.  |
| <b>Performing</b>       | IVA | Fanny was using the scheme with no management problems. The current SBA routine in fact had been in place since the school first tried the scheme three years ago. No major change had been made and no change was also expected or planned for the next year.                            |
| <b>Overall</b>          | IVA | Fanny was making few or no changes in the use of SBA and was following an established routine for the scheme.   |

The above LoU domain analysis shows that Fanny was an LoU IVA Routine user. She had established a routine in the use of SBA and did not have plans to deviate much from it in the near future. Fanny perceived the SBA scheme to be a curriculum tool which aims at prompting teachers to adopt more other resources such as popular movies, videos or books in the teaching of English Language while at the same time encouraging students to read and watch extensively in their English Language learning. The teacher was quite positive about the scheme and the effects it had brought particularly on her students. She felt that SBA had widened the horizon of her students and cultivated an interest to watch Western movies in English Language among some students too. She also commended the scheme for its room

that teachers can adapt some of the requirements flexibly to suit the needs and levels of students.

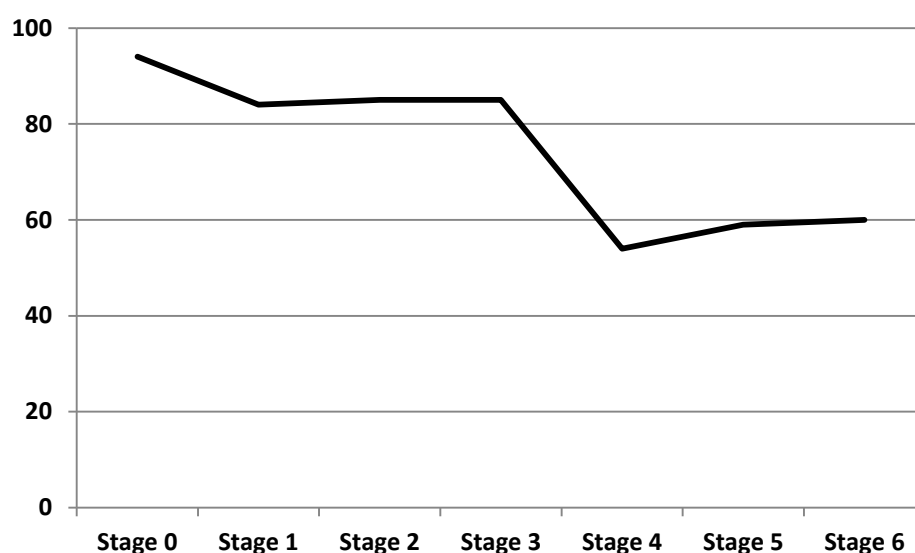
While being well satisfied with the scheme and its operation at her school, Fanny believed that the scheme could be run better if teachers were less busy and had the space to reflect and improve their teaching by integrating SBA better into their everyday teaching. She found that for example, despite her complete understanding of the need to integrate the scheme into other areas of her English Language teaching, she was at best fulfilling only its minimum requirements and held assessments and submitted scores to HKEAA and in fact treating SBA as a separate component to her teaching. It was a pity that teachers, because of this lack of room, might not be able to bring out the best out of the SBA scheme:

Fanny: I think emm... this scheme I think it's quite, compared to the real [external] exam, there're some... that is **if we teachers do not have the time to prepare our lessons then they're very much separated.** I think personally, I think teachers are just too busy. They have to deal with exams and at the same time have to do this. **We don't really have much space to integrate it** [to our teaching]. **It's a bit of a waste**, my feeling personally, yes. So I think if you say whether it's the problem of the SBA scheme or it's the problem of not enough space for teachers, I don't really know. I just feel that **if teachers have more space then SBA could be run a lot better. Yes, but if there's no space, like in my school in fact, we're only doing the minimum. Yes. So we've fulfilled the requirements and we've seen some effects, but then we just stop here. And we can't see the full effect of the scheme and strengthen it.**

**Case report 7: Grace** — *“Although it only accounts for 15%, we’ll need to put in 100% effort into it.... If you teach Form 4 or 5, you’re dead!”*

Grace had an undergraduate degree and initial teacher training in English Language and also a Master’s degree in International Peace Education. She had taught HKCEE English Language for 4 years and had 2 years of experience on the use of SBA. She joined the school she was working 2 years ago and did not have any special duties in the English Language department.

**Figure 5.40 Grace’s SoC profile**



According to the above SoC profile, Grace had high Stages 0-3 scores. The progression line was rather flat at Stages 1-3 and Stages 4-6 but there was a sharp decrease between Stages 3 and 4. The high Stage 0 score again shows that Grace did not see SBA an issue which demanded a lot of her attention in her English Language teaching. The difference in scores between the early and later concern stages also indicates that self and task concerns overrode impact concerns in her implementation of the SBA scheme.

**Figure 5.41 Grace's LoU profile**

|                              |     |   |
|------------------------------|-----|---|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | III | Grace knew both short-term and long-term requirements for SBA use and could describe in detail the procedures in its implementation. However she did not seem possess knowledge on how the scheme could be conducted with minimal stress and effort.                            |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | IVA | While Grace revealed that she was not fully satisfied with the current operation of SBA, she did not feel that there was a need to acquire further information to better implement the scheme and was not seeking information actively.   |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | III | Resources and materials were shared between her and her colleagues to reduce problems in management, flow and logistics of the SBA scheme.  |
| <b>Assessing</b>             | III | Grace had a lot of complaints on the logistical, management, workload problem brought by SBA. In fact she believed that the scheme did not really bring about many good changes on students but significantly increased her workload.   |
| <b>Planning</b>              | III | Grace had been making changes, in particular on timing of the assessment sessions so that the rundown would be smoother and would reduce her huge workload. Structures had also been added to prevent students from not reading or viewing but merely plagiarized from the web. |
| <b>Status Reporting</b>      | III | During the interview, Grace spoke extensively on the logistical, management and workload problems caused and the issue dominated much of her response.  |
| <b>Performing</b>            | III | Grace had been spending great effort in organizing materials and assessment procedures in the implementation of SBA and making changes often in response to logistical and organizational problems.   |
| <b>Overall</b>               | III | Grace was making changes to better organize the use of SBA.   |

Grace could be categorized as an LoU III Mechanical user who was mainly focusing her effort on logistic, time and workload management in the operation of SBA. She believed that the scheme was intended to be a continuous assessment tool which aimed at encouraging students to read and building reading, presentation and discussion skills among students although she was a bit sceptical about the benefits of SBA on students. When asked to describe changes the scheme had brought on her and her students, she gave the following response:

Grace: After SBA's implemented? That is after they've done SBA? **I should say, the smart ones are always smart, and for those who are reluctant it doesn't help much.** But in general, they'll read books and watch movies at least. **But I'm thinking about the workload, it's always about the workload.** No matter how familiar I am, 1 or 10, still **the workload is very high.**

Having been involved in SBA for two years, Grace felt very strongly about the increased workload the scheme erected on teachers. She had had some bad experiences of sitting and listening to students' presentations after school for one full week just to finish the assessment for one class. The scheme also demanded her to participate in many more meetings, mostly on the logistical arrangements and moderation of scores in SBA assessments, which again contributed to the huge workload. She also criticised EDB and HKEAA for not having fully planned the operation and resources well before the scheme started, resulting in teachers' plight in coping with the chaos and struggling to make SBA work for them. She envisioned that the scheme could be radically modified to lessen its demands on teachers by requiring students to film self-shooting videos themselves so that she would not have to take care of the videoing arrangements and did not need to organize in-class or after school assessment sessions and assess all students in a row. In short, the interview reveals that Grace was more negatively disposed towards the SBA scheme due to its many undesirable impacts on teachers but minimal benefits to students.

**Case report 8: Hannah** — *“They often don't include schools of lower bandings. Actually for us lower banding schools, we'll have to implement SBA differently.”*

Hannah had an undergraduate degree and initial teaching training in English Language and had been teaching HKCEE English Language for seven years, in fact at the same school. She was already involved in SBA when it was first started and

had accumulated three years of experience in its use. Being the head of the English Language department, she was heavily involved in the planning and operation of the From 4 and 5 English Language curricula and the implementation of the SBA scheme at her school. She was also the SBA coordinator and S5 English coordinator at school.

**Figure 5.42 Hannah's SoC profile**

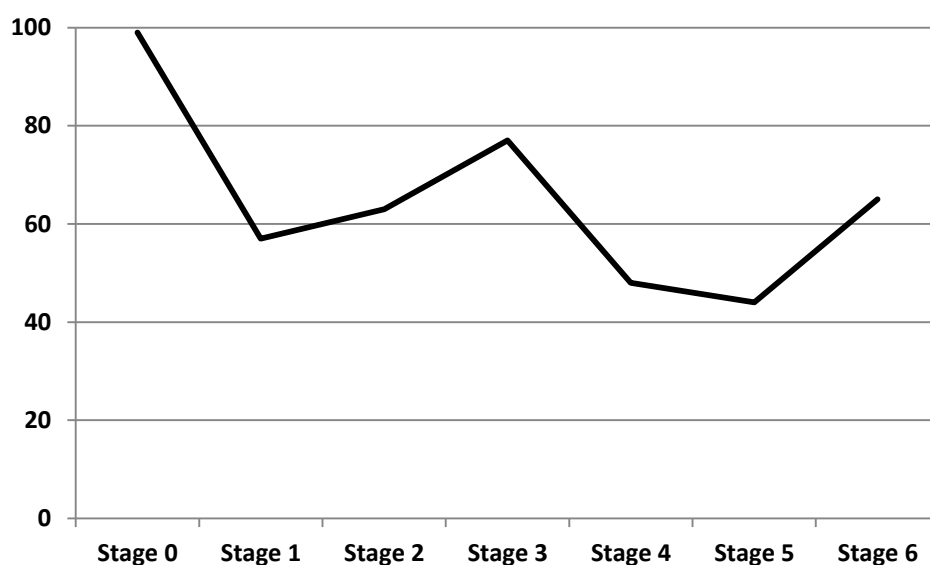


Figure 5.42 reveals that Hannah's Stages of concern peaked at Stages 0, 3 and 6, which suggests a generally low level of attention on the SBA scheme when compared to other aspects of English Language teaching but within it relative foci on the personal, management and refocusing issues of the scheme. The concurrent high Stages 3 and 6 concerns can be interpreted as the possession of strongly held ideas about how the scheme or situation should be changed in particular due to the frustration encountered in coping with the logistical and managerial aspects of the scheme.

**Figure 5.43 Hannah's LoU profile**

|                              |     |   |
|------------------------------|-----|---|
| <b>Knowledge</b>             | V   | Hannah knew how to coordinate her use of the SBA scheme with other colleagues to provide a collective impact on students. In fact, such knowledge had been consistently applied in the implantation of SBA at her school  |
| <b>Acquiring Information</b> | IVA | The teacher was not currently making any special effort to seek further information about SBA. She felt that she was quite knowledgeable about the scheme and the information collected so far was enough to make sound judgements in its use.                                    |
| <b>Sharing</b>               | V   | Hannah and her colleagues shared efforts to enhance students' outcome and the effects of the scheme through regular collaboration. Team teaching and team lesson preparation were part of the measures adopted to better facilitate the implementation of SBA.                    |
| <b>Assessing</b>             | IVB | The teacher assessed her use of SBA regularly, both alone and with colleagues in order to adjust current practices to improve students' outcomes. This continuous evaluation on the scheme in fact had triggered quite a number of changes to many aspects of its implementation. |
| <b>Planning</b>              | IVA | While Hannah had some initial ideas on changing some of the old materials used in the scheme, no plan had been formulated so far and it was not clear whether the idea would be carried through in future.  |
| <b>Status Reporting</b>      | V   | Hannah reported spending time and effort coordinating with other teachers about integrating their own use of SBA. Not only was team teaching and preparation part of the routine, she was also heavily involved in the monitoring of such collaboration as the department head.   |
| <b>Performing</b>            | V   | Hannah had been collaborating with other teachers to bring about improvements in the implementation of SBA and its benefits on students. She reported repeated success in such collaborating efforts.   |
| <b>Overall</b>               | V   | Hannah was combining own efforts to use the innovation with colleagues to achieve a collective effective on students.   |

Analysis on the interview indicates that Hannah was an LoU V Integration user and had been actively coordinating efforts with colleagues on implementing and improving the SBA scheme. She viewed the scheme as a curriculum initiative which aims at encouraging students to read and be open to more aspects of English language learning while at the same time building up students' skills to face the

external speaking public examination in HKCEE. She regarded SAB highly because of her good experience in the use of the scheme and the observed improvements in attitude, self-confidence and performance that it had brought to her students.

Hannah: I think it mainly aims at encouraging students to do more reading and be exposed to different things such as books or films. Second, I think because they can have the training from SBA in the beginning, so in fact students may, it may help them in the exam, and in the HKCEE results, that is the oral exam, **they're really much improved. That is they won't just say nothing and get a zero mark. They will at least be willing to say something.**

When asked about the biggest difficulty she had encountered in SBA, she felt that the most difficult part was to kick off the scheme at the beginning. There were many unanswered questions due to the high flexibility of the programme and no previous experience and samples from lower banding schools that she could follow. It took her and her colleagues these few years of trial and error to establish some systems and work out how its operation at her school. She felt that many of the resources or perhaps even guidelines provided by the authorities were not targeted at lower banding schools and believed that more appropriate resources for less able students and more communication and sharing sessions particularly for school with students of this background would be most useful.

### ***5.2.2 Different SBA practices***

The focused interviews not only reveal different perceptions towards SBA, levels of use of the innovation and difficulties experienced during the implementation process among the interviewees as found in 5.2.1, further analyses also show great variations in the way different teachers and schools realized the SBA scheme. Figures 5.44 - 5.49 summarise these variations in six major components of



the scheme: (1) assessment operation; (2) choice of books and movies; (3) grouping mechanism; (4) preparation for assessment; (5) integration into teaching; and (6) teachers' collaboration in SBA teaching. Unlike the creation of IC Maps, these components were not identified through discussion with the SBA developers or facilitators but were in fact grounded from the interviews. The aim here is not to construct complete IC Maps but to demonstrate how the operation of the SBA scheme could diversify although it is highly likely these components may well be present in the actual IC Maps. Readers should also note that some practices adopted, however, was in direct violation to the mandatory assessment conditions set by HKEAA and these were marked with an asterisk (\*) in the figures.

**Figure 5.44 Component 1: Assessment operation**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Amy</b>     | Assessments were conducted on Saturdays where all ECA were cancelled. One assessment was integrated to the school internal exam and was done during the exam period. |
| <b>Betty</b>   | Assessments were conducted after school.   |
| <b>Charles</b> | Assessments were conducted during normal lessons.  |
| <b>Doris</b>   | Assessments were conducted during normal lessons but might extend to after school if time was not enough.  |
| <b>Eddy</b>    | Assessments were conducted on Saturdays.   |
| <b>Fanny</b>   | Assessments were conducted in a special activity period on Friday afternoons and usually extended to after school. *Only group discussions were conducted.           |
| <b>Grace</b>   | Assessments were conducted both during normal lessons and after school.  |
| <b>Hannah</b>  | Assessments were conducted during normal lessons. *Only presentations were conducted.  |

**Figure 5.45 Component 2: Choice of books and movies**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Amy</b>     | Students chose their own books and movies freely.   |
| <b>Betty</b>   | Students chose their books from a set of class readers but chose their own movies freely.                                   |
| <b>Charles</b> | Students were assigned the books and movies.  |
| <b>Doris</b>   | Students chose their books from a set of class readers but chose their own movies freely. *Non-English movies were allowed. |
| <b>Eddy</b>    | Students chose their own books and movies freely.   |
| <b>Fanny</b>   | Students chose their books and movies from a choice of three.   |
| <b>Grace</b>   | Students chose their own books and movies freely.   |
| <b>Hannah</b>  | Students were assigned the books and movies.  |

**Figure 5.46 Component 3: Grouping mechanism**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Amy</b>     | No special grouping mechanism.   |
| <b>Betty</b>   | Grouping was based on students' abilities and there were two sets of questions to cater for the differences. |
| <b>Charles</b> | No special grouping mechanism.   |
| <b>Doris</b>   | No special grouping mechanism.   |
| <b>Eddy</b>    | No special grouping mechanism.   |
| <b>Fanny</b>   | Grouping was based on the books or movies chosen.  |
| <b>Grace</b>   | No special grouping mechanism.   |
| <b>Hannah</b>  | No special grouping mechanism.   |

**Figure 5.47 Component 4: Preparation for assessment**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Amy</b>     | No preparation was allowed at home. The questions were given minutes before the assessment.  |
| <b>Betty</b>   | Sample questions similar to the actual ones were given for trials but actual questions were revealed only minutes before the assessment.                       |
| <b>Charles</b> | Questions were given a few days earlier to allow preparation at home.  |
| <b>Doris</b>   | Questions were given one to two days earlier to allow preparation at home.   |
| <b>Eddy</b>    | Sample questions similar to the actual ones were given for trials but actual questions were revealed only minutes before the assessment.                       |
| <b>Fanny</b>   | Questions were given one to two days earlier to allow preparation at home.   |
| <b>Grace</b>   | A set of questions were given a few days earlier to allow preparation and students would be told which one they should speak on minutes before the assessment. |
| <b>Hannah</b>  | Questions were given three days earlier to allow preparation at home.  |

**Figure 5.48 Component 5: Integration into teaching**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Amy</b>     | Class readers and movies, together with group discussions, role plays and teacher presentations as demos and practices, were used in teaching for SBA.  |
| <b>Betty</b>   | No special SBA teaching was conducted other than activities for practice and preparation before the assessment noted in Component 4.  |
| <b>Charles</b> | One set book was used in reader class per month with activities such as journal writing and teacher presentations. Movie appreciation was also formally taught.   |
| <b>Doris</b>   | A morning reading scheme was set up, together with the use of journal writing, log books, plans writing on the selected books and movies and trail assessment practices, to lead students to approach the assessment tasks. |
| <b>Eddy</b>    | A separate teaching block on SBA in the school English Language curriculum based on a set of materials with set books, movie clips and trial practices.   |
| <b>Fanny</b>   | A set of reading and movie materials was adopted with instruction on how to do analysis and pre-tasks which led to the final assessment.  |
| <b>Grace</b>   | Set books were used as demonstration and trial practices.   |
| <b>Hannah</b>  | The books and movies used for SBA assessment were taught formally in the reader lesson once per week, with also pre-tasks and practices to guide students to the final assessment tasks.                                    |

**Figure 5.49 Component 6: Teacher's collaboration in SBA teaching**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Amy</b>     | No collaboration in SBA teaching.  |
| <b>Betty</b>   | No collaboration in SBA teaching.  |
| <b>Charles</b> | All teachers used the same set books/movies.   |
| <b>Doris</b>   | No collaboration in SBA teaching.  |
| <b>Eddy</b>    | All teachers used the same set books/movies and related materials and Eddy might share additional teaching resources with his buddy colleague. |
| <b>Fanny</b>   | All teachers used the same set books/movies and related materials. Further resources were shared through a web server.                         |
| <b>Grace</b>   | All teachers used the same set books/movies.   |
| <b>Hannah</b>  | All teachers used the same books/movies and related materials. Team teaching and team preparation were also adopted in SBA teaching.           |

### 5.3 *An interim summary*

Chapter Five looks at the results generated from analyses on data collected in the questionnaire survey and focused interviews respectively. It is found that teachers surveyed had higher concerns on the informational, personal and management aspects of SBA although in general they did not think that SBA was an issue on which they needed to pay a lot of attention compared to other aspects in their HKCEE English Language teaching. Subsequent analyses on the SoC percentile scores indicate that some teacher and school factors such as age group, teaching experience, SBA experience, the medium of instruction of schools, students' banding, perceived level of English of students and SBA option taken in 2007, had varying degrees of influence on the SoC score patterns. Besides, the open-ended question in the survey recorded slightly more negative responses about the SBA scheme than positive ones. It is also found that impacts on students, scheme specifications and operation, assessment issues and workload were the most commented areas in the response.

Examination on the focused interviews finds that a half, that is four out of eight interviewees were at Level IVA Routine Use on their Level of Use of the innovation. Two are found to be at Level III Mechanical Use, one at Level IVB Refinement and one more at Level V Integration. Most interviewees felt that the implementation of SBA at their schools had been quite successful and some also noticed improvements on motivation on viewing English movies and skills in speaking English. The eight teachers however had very different views as to what the biggest difficulties were in their SBA implementation. Figure 5.50 provides a summary of the findings.

**Figure 5.50 The biggest difficulties faced in SBA**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Amy</b>     | Logistical and technical arrangements for assessment and recording  |
| <b>Betty</b>   | Understand HKEAA guidelines and translating them into practice  |
| <b>Charles</b> | Alignment of SBA with the culture of Hong Kong  |
| <b>Doris</b>   | Students' low level of English, which resulted in their inability to conduct group discussions properly           |
| <b>Eddy</b>    | Arousing students' interest, SBA teaching, and logistical arrangements  |
| <b>Fanny</b>   | Lack of time to integrate SBA into teaching   |
| <b>Grace</b>   | Huge workload involved particularly in conducting assessment  |
| <b>Hannah</b>  | Understanding HKEAA guidelines and translating them into practice, particularly when the scheme was first started |

The next chapter takes on the findings reported in the present chapter and reviews the answers to the subsidiary research questions posted in Chapter Four. It also discusses the answers with reference to existing literature on curriculum, assessment and education innovations.

## **Chapter 6        Answers and Discussion**

### ***6.1    A note on the use and presentation of direct quotations***

This chapter, Answers and Discussion, is an extension of the preliminary findings and analyses reported in Chapter Five. It discusses in detail the collected data in relation to the six subsidiary research questions posted in Chapter Four, and based on the discussion, attempts to answer these six questions. Data from both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study, where appropriate, are utilized and synthesized in the endeavour.

Besides drawing from the quantitative data analyses and case studies presented in Chapter Five, this chapter also makes extensive use of direct quotations from the responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaire survey and from the in-depth interviews in the discussion, induction and deduction of research results. The use of direct quotations in fact “has become effectively standard practice in much qualitative social research and research funders now expect final reports [of a qualitative nature] to include direct quotations” (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006, p. 1). Long verbatim quotations, in particular, “help convey a sense of immediacy to the reader” and “provide the reader with sufficient data to determine whether the [researcher’s] interpretations and conclusions are warranted.” (Fetterman, 2010, pp. 126-127).

In presenting the raw quotation data in this chapter, extra care has been paid on their readability and their links to the research question being discussed. In every case, before the quotations are used, contexts for the quotations are clearly set out in the preceding remarks to help readers to put the quotations into perspectives and

understand what they serve to illustrate. In addition, the quotations are grouped according to themes and key words or key phrases are highlighted for the easy identification of emerging themes and patterns. This way of presentation helps give a clear direction to the reader despite the amount of raw data included and allows the reader to discover how the claims and generalizations put forward are arrived at. In many cases, the use of quotations and the articulation of findings are so interweaved that the absence of quotations may result in gaps in logics and argumentation.

Last, it is stressed that although sometimes the quotations grouped under the same theme may appear to repeat the same ideas, more often these quotations display a wide variety of experience, views and practices held by the participants. In fact, even when there are repetitions, no two quotations are the same—the participants may have a similar experience or point of view, but it often comes with a slightly different nuance, which justifies their worth in appearing as separate quoted materials.

## **6.2 Question 1: *What general perception did the teachers hold towards the SBA scheme?***

### **6.2.1 *Teachers' descriptions of SBA as they perceived it***

In the in-depth interviews, teachers were asked to briefly describe the SBA scheme as they perceived it. While the responses did vary, a number of underlying threads which highlights the unique features of SBA could be observed:

Amy: It includes that we need to have the students, the Form 5, the Form 4, 5 students to do **an oral assessment** in the English Language subject. Have to do it in school, 3 times... Its aim, I believe, is to **reduce students' stress**, so they don't have to do it only once in the public exam and then this is their final grade. It's hoped that they could have the assessment in a more familiar environment, so

that they can, er, do it with classmates that they know well, and be assessed by teachers they know well too, so that they will be **more comfortable** and is hoped that they will have a **better performance**.

Betty: I'd say it's a good reform. Em, it's because schools can have some control over students' assessments, and it's **not a one-off assessment**. It lasts, er, 2 years, lasts for 2 years, and consists of a number of assessments. So, we can complete the first one, and then we can know our students, what should **be adjusted and we can do it again**. And there's one thing that's good and one that is bad. The good thing is that it allows students to **try continuously**. So they, er, can keep on improving their own skills and have an **improvement each time**. But the flipside is that it has increased my workload by a lot. And er, as its name suggests, it's school-based, but because it's school-based, just so school-based, **we can do it our way**, but then it's like, er, the fairness issue. If you're allowed to do anything you want, then in fact, we don't really know what the guidelines are.

Charles: SBA is er, that is **besides ar, traditional verbal exam assessment**, speaking, listening, reading and writing, in fact they can't really reflect to a certain extent, well it's because our kids in terms of reading skills, the reading culture in Hong Kong is quite weak. Unlike in the UK, if you go to the underground, everybody's reading. So that is, I think this scheme is good, with an original intention to force students to **read more**, no matter if it is fiction, non-fiction, or even movies. This is because I think what's good is that it allows students to **choose materials that are not so boring**. So they read, and in fact they do somehow like reading them.

Doris: I think this is **a second, em, assessment**. And this is to help, I actually think that it helps them to **read more books** and watch more movies, so and test their ability to **self-learn** from this aspect. And I think, er, for students like mine who're of a lower banding, er, perhaps it can help them. They wouldn't even touch, er, story books in the past. They wouldn't read English books. And this SBA helps them get **exposure** in this area.

Eddy: It, actually it aims at providing more chances for **everyday training** and practice on **discussions or speaking** so that students will face the HKCEE with more **confidence**. But then, if you only discuss, without much real content, it's quite boring. So it hopes that students can **read more**



**books**, or be **exposed to different types of literary**, so that they can have some basis for the discussion. So er, on the whole, it hopes, it hopes that students can more, that is not limit English learning to grammar, but extensive reading as well and then discourse on it, to train their communication skills.

Fanny: It's called School-based assessment, so actually I think it includes, that is you can do it in the school and it's a tool or a way for us to **assess students ourselves**. So... I also think that... I'm not too sure about it, but I think its original intention is not only to encourage students, but actually **teachers** also have to note whether they should **use other resources** such as movies, documentaries, or books in their teaching. It in fact wants to promote this kind of activities, that is to use resources well in teaching.

Grace: School-based assessment is for From 4 and 5 students and then it looks at their **English language proficiency**. The main aim is to encourage them to read, and also those **reading skills, presentation skills, and group discussion skills**. It's a **continuous assessment** for a duration of two years and it's completed done at schools, and it allows a very controlled environment to assess students.

Hannah: I think it mainly aims at encouraging students to do **more reading** and be **exposed to different things** such as books or films. Second, I think because they can have the **training** from SBA in the beginning, so in fact students may, it may help them in the exam, and in the **HKCEE results, that is the oral exam**, they're really much improved. That is they won't just say nothing and get a zero mark. They will at least be willing to say something.

In sum, SBA was seen as an alternative to the traditional one-off external examination in HKCEE. It measures students' English Language proficiency in speaking and to a lesser extent, reading skills and ability to self-learn. Among the interviewees, SBA was perceived to be a well-intended initiative and possess certain advantages. First, it is less stressful to students than a traditional speaking assessment and encourages them to try and improve. Second, it exposes students to more pleasurable activities in the learning of English Language and also to more types of literacy. Third, it gives the power back to teachers to have more control on

assessment and leads them to rethink about their teaching. The perceived advantages by teachers in fact do correspond to the HKEAA's rationales behind the scheme on its positive washback and empowerment of teachers (HKEAA, 2006e) and suggest that teachers did agree, at least in part, with these rationales.

### 6.2.2 *Authenticity, effectiveness and fairness*

While it is true that both SBA and the Speaking paper in HKCEE English Language make use of discussion and presentation tasks to gauge students' speaking skills, the interviewees in fact saw quite a lot of differences in them. One such perceived difference was authenticity, found in Betty and Eddy's responses:

Eddy: Actually I think because the questions in the HKCEE [external Oral Exam Paper], especially those, how should I say it, are **not really too authentic**.

Betty: In the SBA, we give them a lot of time to prepare, and it in itself is also more pleasurable, it's about more pleasure. You go and watch a movie, it's more **like real life**. You watch a movie, and like what we have in daily life, we meet up and dine and I'm happy and I may wish to share [the movie] with someone. I will love to share with someone after I have watched a movie. So I think this doesn't er, only prepare them for exam, but it's for their future.... Exams could be a different matter. You give them something **less authentic**, ask them to sit and talk with someone they don't know, then this is, this is **a real test of their ability**. So, it assesses their language. So, the purpose, I reckon, is different.

While Eddie did not provide explanations on why he found the questions in the Oral Paper less authentic, Betty elucidated that SBA was more authentic because the task of sharing ideas is a natural extension after reading or viewing and is commonly found in daily life. Similar perceptions about SBA's authenticity were also found in the responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaire survey:

- B4: It is a good idea as students are **exposed to authentic English** and it's a great chance to promote English learning outside classroom.
- B7: It has made the learning and use of English **more lively and related to daily life**. It has widened students' horizons to the appreciation of English Literature (esp. in CMI schools).
- G4: It gives students **a purpose to speak** in English. Students generally become more serious when it comes to the oral practice.
- O1: Improvements have been shown in speaking examinations over the two years. Students were more willing to speak and **interactions were more natural**.
- O5: Possibly the best reform in English teaching in HK over the past decade. Students get to **speak in real English** in familiar contexts in **a truer, conversational setting**.

Authentic assessment has been a recent area of interest in assessment research and is often used to refer to performance assessment which simulates real-life tasks and contexts (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). It represents a moving away from the traditions of “decontextualized, psychometrically designed items in a choice-response format to test for knowledge and low-level cognitive skill acquisition” (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirchner, 2004, p.67) to the integration and coordination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and the capacity to apply them (Van Merriënboer, 1997) in assessment design and criterion. Advocates of authentic assessment believe that this form of assessment may bring positive effects on teaching and learning and has higher construct validity (Gielen, Dochy & Dierick, 2003). While the comments quoted so far do concur with the first point about consequential validity, many teachers who participated in the study thought that SBA is less accurate than the external paper in the assessment of students’ speaking skills. It is interesting to see that Betty, for example, thought that the external paper is more

“a real test of their [students’] ability” paradoxically because it is less authentic—discussing social issues with strangers is not something one often does in daily life and as such, is more demanding in terms of language skills and therefore more like a real test. In fact, SBA, when compared to the external paper, was considered to more “subjective”, less “fair” and perhaps less effective by many teachers:

- Amy: Er, I should say, er, I’m more inclined to, if there is in fact limitation to manpower and materialistic resources, I think, er, the public one is better. It’s **more objective**. So, I think this is the ultimate goal you do an assessment.
- A4: Time-consuming; the **fairness** of the grading system [in SBA] is **questionable** (due to **subjectivity of teachers** from different schools).
- J4: I’m **wondering the effectiveness** of SBA in assessing students’ ability in public exam.
- R2: Average students could get 6 across all domains, and that is quite **unfair on outstanding students**. Also, the marks teachers give to their own students may be **too subjective** (and do not reflect students’ genuine ability).
- S2: Personally, SBA is **not a fair assessment** due to the following points: a) Some privileged students can have better preparation as they can get **help** from their parents, siblings or private tutors; b) Time allowance for preparation is **not fixed**. Some students are allowed to prepare the questions one week or even one month before the assessment while some can only prepare for ten minutes; c) In SBA district sharing session, I found that some schools tend to **give higher scores to their students**. It’s not sure whether the final adjustment system can counterbalance the situation fairly;

Fairness, in a highly competitive examination-driven education system like Hong Kong, is often interpreted as equivalent to equality—“treating everyone equally, giving them the same task with the same input under the same conditions for the same length of time” (Davison, 2005, p.44). The flexibility and teacher autonomy

allowed in school-based system, to many, are a difficult concept which contradicts their belief of what is fair and therefore gives rise to teachers' mixed feelings that the scheme is more authentic yet less accurate and fair.

### **6.2.3 *Attitudes and feelings***

One further area related to the perception of the SBA scheme is teachers' attitudes towards it and this could be gauged by examining the responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaire survey. As indicated in 5.1.5, when given the chance to comment on the scheme in the open-ended question, 44.7% of the participants talked negatively of it, compared to 36.8% who praised the innovation for its benefits, which shows that the general attitude towards the SBA scheme was a mixed one. While it is easy to attribute the negative feelings from teachers to the tenacity of conservatism and condemn them for their resistance to changes, negative feelings are in fact natural and represent an inevitable facet of reality about implementation that is often neglected:

No one can resolve the crisis of reintegration on behalf of others. Every attempt to pre-empt conflict, argument, protest by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out.... For the reformers have already assimilated these changes to their purposes, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them, perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions.

(Marris, 1975, p. 166)

In fact, compared to overwhelming rejection observed among teachers when the scheme was first started, the outright negative feelings seemed to have been soothed down. A closer look at the negative comments shows that the majority were concerned with issues on scheme operation (47%), assessment effectiveness (47%)

and workload (41%) and suggests that teachers' negative perception towards SBA mainly came from difficulties they experienced in these three areas.

### **6.3 Question 2: *What pattern of concerns could be observed from the participants sampled?***

According to the general SoC profile displayed in Figure 5.3, SoC was highest at Stage 0 with a percentile score of 97, falling to 72, 70 and 65 at Stages 1, 2 and 3 respectively, then more sharply to a low of 43 at Stage 4 and rising slightly to 48 and 57 at Stages 5 and 6 respectively. As explained in 5.1.2, this profile shows the teachers surveyed were more concerned about informational, personal and management aspects of SBA although their overall level of concern towards SBA was very low compared to other areas in their English Language teaching.

#### **6.3.1 Stage 0: *Unconcerned Stage***

The percentile score from mean<sup>1</sup> for Stage 0 was 97, which indicates that when compared to the stratified control sample collected by the CBAM team, this group of teachers displayed a very low level of concern on the SBA scheme compared to other concerns they might have in their teaching. The following quotes from the in-depth interviews may reveal why teachers were not so concerned about it:

Betty: As a coordinator, of course I am very concerned, it's my job duty. But as an ordinary teacher, er, I'll only give it a 5 [out of a total score of 10]. It's because **the weighting is not high**. There are **other papers** that I need to devote more time on. So er, if you compare it with last year, I have devoted less time (on SBA) for my class this year. It's because, first, they're particularly weak, and second, our **assessments and exams are so intensive, I'd rather ask them to work on other areas**.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of simplicity, the term "percentile score from mean" is used to refer to the percentile score obtained from the mean raw stage scores in the percentile score table provided in the SoCQ Manual.

Charles: I don't think it's very important, because, in fact er, **their performances won't fluctuate too much**. Second, er, in fact in the end I usually, I rarely give a [Level] 3, mostly they'll get a 4 or 5, some even 6. And for the top set, that is the top class, it's all 5 or 6. So in fact for them, **it's just another routine, a practice. It doesn't make too much a difference.**

Doris: This is because I feel like it's **already part of my teaching**.

Eddy: I think, er, that I'm not really that anxious. Having done it for a year, I find that, perhaps some **logistic arrangements, setting materials**, I can **pretty much handle them**, so I think, but well I think it's half and half. Of course next year there might be a better arrangement but I am not really worried much about it.

One reason that the teachers were not too concerned about SBA was that they did not think that it matters much in the end when it comes to the students' examination results. As explained by Betty, the scheme only accounts for 15% of the total subject score and there are other areas she would rather focus on more to help her students gain a better result. Charles similarly thought that SBA does not matter much as his students generally performed well and got the top scores already at SBA. He therefore might want to allow more time for other aspects in the curriculum. Another reason was that the scheme had been implemented for some time and as Doris said, it had become part of many teachers' routine. Even Eddy, who was new to the teaching profession and to SBA, also found the logistical arrangements and materials setting manageable and as a result, was not overly worried about the scheme. Furthermore, the way SBA was handled and introduced by the authority might have led to this low level of concern:

Betty: Er, but then there's something I'm not quite satisfied with the HKEAA. It's that er, the guidelines are definitely lacking. Er, say how the marks are added up, we don't really know much. And also, there're just so many things, like there's these few years of adaptation period. You do

this if you like and do that if you don't like... So it's like it [HKEAA] doesn't really care about the scheme. Er, and when the authority doesn't care, now in fact, starting this year, we also don't care about it too much. It's because we, the Form Five teachers—our Form Four and Form Five teachers may not be entirely the same, so our Form Five teachers, as we just have too much to do, so we er, should have sat down, gone through others' recordings from time to time, and attended those meetings—we just do none of these this year. It's that everybody finds attending those meetings a waste of time, a waste of our time. And now that we have done our parts at the school, and in the past, we attended the meetings, went to the seminars, watched the recordings, we believe that we teachers do have the professionalism. Now we don't really care much about the HKEAA, but are doing what we need to do at the school, to train the students.

Betty and her colleagues had become so unmotivated about SBA that they had stopped holding SBA meetings or going to the seminars organized by the authorities. The reason, she explained, was that the HKEAA did not do much to help schools to implement and renew their experience of using the SBA scheme. The HKEAA had given schools a very high degree of autonomy in their operation of SBA and did not conduct any check or monitoring on it in practice—this laissez faire attitude had led Betty to believe that it did not care about how the scheme was run at schools anymore as long as the marks were submitted and sample videos archived. As a result, she and her colleagues would rather do the minimum and save the time for other more pressing issues such as training students for the external papers in the public exam.

In spite of the high average Stage 0 scores, a few interviewees did find SBA quite an important aspect of their work and were quite concerned about it:

Amy: I'll give it a 7 [out of a total score of 10], because it's in the end a component in the [public] exam marks. And I told my students this: If you work hard, you could see it as



an extra opportunity, an opportunity to eliminate, any personal psychological factors, and in a more familiar environment, you'll usually **perform better**. That's what I told them, and so, they.. try, try to **motivate them**. But in the end, I still think that if you **teach comprehension or writing [skills], these are more important**.

Hannah: I think it'll be a 7 [out of a total score of 10], yes. Why is the rating so high? This is because I really see that, this, for our students, you really need to **train them very often**, so that they'll have the courage to express themselves. So I think this is a very positive programme to students.

Both Amy and Hannah expressed the need to train their students for SBA so that they could succeed in the programme and as a result, put much attention and effort on it in their teaching. Nonetheless, Amy still admitted that other components of English Language such as skills in reading comprehension and writing are more important when compared to this SBA scheme.

While findings from the in-depth interviews indicate that the majority were not too concerned about the SBA scheme, the situation was however not as extreme as the SoC Stage 0 percentile score of 97 found in the questionnaire survey. It may be necessary to further investigate how this extraordinarily high score was obtained and what factors might have contributed to it.

A closer look at the data and inventory used finds that the high Stage 0 percentile score from mean is caused by the significantly lower Stage 0 raw scores found among the stratified samples collected by the CBAM research team which are recommended to be used as the baseline group in the analysis and interpretation of SoCQ data. As shown in the SoC scale scores and percentile scores conversion table found in Appendix H, the baseline group had in general low Stage 0 raw scores, with a medium between nine and ten points out of 35, and less than one percent of

participants had a Stage 0 raw score of 21 points or more. What was resulted, therefore, coupled with the much higher Stage 0 raw scores obtained in the present study, was that 37.9% of teachers surveyed turned out to have a Stage 0 percentile score of 99!

As discussed in 5.1.1, items in the questionnaire survey for Stage 0 have the lowest reliability scores: an average item-scale correlation of .558 and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .444, with the reliability scores particularly low for questions 3 (.390), 12 (.402) and 23 (.583). Figure 6.1 shows the average ratings and item-scale correlations of the SoC Stage 0 questions:

**Figure 6.1 Average ratings ( $\bar{x}$ ) and item-scale correlations ( $r$ ) found in questions for SoC Stage 0**

| Question  | $\bar{x}$ | $r$  |
|---|-----------|------|
| 3. I am more concerned about another innovation or project in English Language teaching.          | 4.06      | .390 |
| 12. I am not concerned about School-based Assessment at this time.                                | 2.31      | .402 |
| 21. I am preoccupied with things other than School-based Assessment.                              | 4.82      | .706 |
| 23. I spend little time thinking about School-based Assessment.                                   | 3.57      | .583 |
| 30. Currently, other priorities prevent me from focusing my attention on School-based Assessment. | 4.36      | .710 |

These figures reveal that there were some internal consistency problems with the measurement of the construct SoC Stage 0 in the present study and they may affect the validity of interpretations based on the converted Stage 0 percentile scores. It is also interesting to note that Question 12, which reads "I am not concerned about School-based Assessment at this time," had a moderately low correlation score of .402 although the sentence represents in essence fully what Stage 0 the Unconcerned Stage is about. In addition, it had a mean rating of 2.31 out of 7, which

was clearly out of tune with the higher means (all over 3.5 out of 7) found in other questions. The data seems to suggest that for the questionnaire survey participants, being more concerned with another innovation (Q3), preoccupied with other things (Q21), spending little time thinking about SBA (Q23) and being unable to focus attention on SBA due to other priorities (Q30) did not tie in with whether a teacher was concerned with the scheme (Q12).

In fact, as discussed in 3.2.1, the inclusion of questions for Stage 0 in SoCQ was under much debate during the initial development of the questionnaire and the final Stage 0 statements adopted were in fact taken from the original Stage 1 subset on the lack of information or awareness of the innovation (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006). If one looks closely at Figure 3.10, which lists the coefficients of internal reliability for each Stage of SoCQ found in subsequent studies, it can be seen that Stage 0 was the stage with the lowest scores in over half of the studies listed, with coefficients between .50 and .78. While the above issues may not fully discredit the validity of the Stage 0 scores, they do show that cautions are definitely needed in interpreting the scores, particularly in the present study where the reliability coefficients are low again. It may be necessary for the CBAM team and other researchers to re-examine the construct of SoC Stage 0 Unconcerned and the appropriateness of statements used in SoCQ for measuring the construct.

In conclusion, as for the present study, although it is evident that the lack of internal consistency and the extremely high percentile scores resulted might have casted doubts on the SoC Stage 0 findings from the SoCQ, the in-depth interviews, to an extent, do confirm that quite some teachers were not too concerned with the SBA scheme because they viewed other aspects of the English Language curriculum

as more important, especially in helping their students gain good results in the HKCEE.

### 6.3.2 Stage 1: Informational Stage

The teachers surveyed had a Stage 1 percentile score from mean of 72, which was the second highest score after Stage 0. Stage 1, the Informational Stage, is linked to the participant's interest in learning more about the innovation and the figure suggests that the teachers felt that they might not know enough about SBA and were motivated in gaining more knowledge about the scheme. In the in-depth interviews, the interviewees were also asked to indicate how familiar they felt they were with SBA. They gave an average rating of seven out of ten (with ten indicating complete understanding) and gave the following responses when asked to explain their ratings:

Amy: I may not be able to provide you with details. I am... as I am not the SBA coordinator, I only do what I am asked to do by other colleagues, so basically I only know how to do the assessment. So, as for other things, I don't really know what exactly I am to do....

Er, as to now, I don't fully understand, I don't know if it's a problem of our school, or it's my problem, like **the marks** and **how many percent they constitute** towards, and **how the grade is finally awarded**, I don't know anything....

Yes, and sometimes I also want to know **how other schools award marks to their students**. Will they be strict or lenient? It's because when we colleagues discuss [the marks], we'll find big differences.

Betty: Er, have been running the scheme and joining the sharing sessions. Er, I've also been to sessions to see what the standards of others are, er, and have been keeping myself informed about the scheme from the starting. So I'd say I'm quite familiar...

Charles: So I don't really know in the SBA, er, **how the marks are added up**. When it was first implemented, some parents

did come and ask me, is it a scheme for teachers or a scheme for students? Is it teacher-oriented or student-oriented? So yes, when it's out, and how er, **how are the marks adjusted, how is the final grade calculated?** In fact this is where mainly, most teachers have er, are kept in the dark.....

In fact what I want to know is, I think in fact it's already there, but I don't have much time to go to the seminars. Yes er, in fact, things like the criteria they're there. There're rubrics. For example let's say, yes, if a kid speaks it like this then it's this level, so in fact it's okay. But, in fact, in fact it's there. Say there're movie clips, I mean, the samples. Oh, so this is level what and that is level what, so they're okay. But their **standards** are actually not too high, quite low in fact. Well I think some performance is just fine, but then this is Level 5 already, or like that it's already Level 4. I think, well, how come? That is, they didn't really say much, or the performances weren't really that good.

Doris: Er, yes, definitely not enough.... For example, **the preparation time**, that is, it says that students should be given adequate time to prepare, but in reality, **how long** is that? And **should they be given the question** for the preparation? And **how long prior to the assessment?**

Eddy: Er, I think, I think er, actually I'd like to know more about these, about that is, **how the standards are set**. This is because, those videos, those videos, they did give us some videos to view, but only in the lessons, and the samples. That is quite limited and so that is I don't think I quite grasp them well.

Fanny: Actually I think many things are very vague really. That is I don't know whether this vagueness is deliberately made to allow flexibility or actually it doesn't want to have many rules to tie itself up. So when it comes to the **actual operation**, I find that there could very big variations among schools. Yes, so I would say the differences mainly come from the quality of students so that they can adapt and I think this difference is necessary indeed. So when you ask if there are many things unclear, I would say yes. Sometimes, for example, about **how many days before the assessment should the questions be released**, or er, actually **how much time should be given for the assessment?** Actually in different courses, different speakers gave us different answers. So this is quite unclear in these aspects, so now we've only found out... that is we

have figured out the way our school should approach this, the pathway and we plan parts by parts.

Grace: Er... yes. Actually those for example er, it gave us some syllabi to look at and then in the [training] sessions we had to award marks and look at how to assess students in group discussions. But those are not enough, they are not good enough. That is er, even when the performances were bad, the marks were high, Level 4 or 5. Those who didn't quite say much could get a 3. Those are not very good, not well refined. I think the pilot scheme wasn't well done.

Hannah: Emm... nothing special. If something's given to me then I think it's better... well... yes, they can give more, can more, they can give us more samples. Now it's stopped, that is there are no **new updated samples**. There're only those old or training samples. So if they can, I think the programme is still quite new, if they can, I think if they can, for example, collect **samples from different schools and different bandings**, that would be good.

The data show that there were three main areas which teachers would like to learn more: (i) the marking criteria and standards; (ii) the statistical moderation and adjustment details and (iii) clarifications on the assessment procedures including preparation time and mode. All of these refer to the summative assessment function of SBA and are related to how fairness and equality could be ensured while teachers were implementing the scheme. In fact, none of the teachers expressed a desire to learn more about the formative assessment aspect of SBA and wanted information on how the scheme could be implemented to enhance students' learning.

Research on Teacher Assessment Scheme (TAS) in HKALE Biology, a precursor of the present SBA scheme, found that the formative function of TAS was lost on teachers despite its having being implemented for over fifteen years. Many still interpreted the scheme as an extension of the public examination procedures and were deeply worried about whether they were closely following the assessment guidelines or whether they were being impartial and fair in the whole assessment

process (Yung, 2001). Earlier studies on Hong Kong English teachers before SBA was introduced also found that “the majority of these Hong Kong teachers favoured the introduction of summative school-based assessment, but wanted detailed criteria to guide their assessments and justify their results” (Davison, 2004, p.320). It came with no surprise, therefore, that the teachers interviewed wanted such details on the standards, criteria and operational guidelines to help them implement the scheme and grade their students “correctly” and “accurately”. After all, they had all started implementing the scheme for quite some time, a few even for three years, and as indicated by their self-rating, they believed they had quite good knowledge about the scheme. The high concern for information was therefore driven not by a lack of information to run the programme, but rather mainly by their need for assurance from the authorities that they were doing SBA the right way.

### **6.3.3 Stage 2: Personal Stage**

The percentile score from mean for SoC Stage 2 was 70, mere 2 points lower than the Stage 1 score. SoC Stage 2 refers to personal concerns about the demands of the innovation and its consequences. The moderately high Stage 2 score does not necessarily reflect resistance but rather means that the teachers might be uneasy about the SBA scheme due to matters such as the workload incurred, changes to teaching approaches or implications on roles professional status. As indicated in 5.1.5, 28.9 percent of the responses in the open-ended part of the questionnaire touched on the workload issue with a further 10.5 percent mentioning the scheme’s impact on their teaching. Very little mention of concerns on the change of roles or professional status caused by SBA, however, was found in the responses.

When talking about the increase in workload, most described it rather negatively and regarded them as “extra work”, “wastes” and “burdens to teachers”:

- A4: **Time-consuming**; the fairness of the grading system is questionable (due to subjectivity of teachers from different schools).
- O1: It benefits students in terms of their speaking skills as more training and focus have been put on SBA in daily practice when compared with the old syllabus. Improvements have been shown in speaking examinations over the two years. Students were more willing to speak and interactions were more natural. However, it does add **a lot of extra workload** to the teachers..
- O4: I understand the rationale of the assessment. However, it can't achieve what it aims. Most students do not finish the books even though they know the results can affect their HKCEE results. Also too much freedom has been given to the students, and it's **a great burden** to the teachers. For example, the students can discuss for as long as they want and they can have many attempts if they are not satisfied with their results. How considerate the EDB is!
- P1: I totally disagree with the way SBA has been implemented and how it is evaluated. It is little more than another "one-off" examination that does little to assess students' process of learning. All it has done is **create more work for teachers!**
- R2: A total **waste of teacher and students' time and energy**. Average students could get 6 across all domains, and that is quite unfair on outstanding students. Also, the marks teachers give to their own students may be too subjective (and do not reflect students' genuine ability). When these average students are compared with those really bright ones, they are nothing. CRAP!
- S5: It may be good because some students perform better at school as they may (be) panic at exams. Yet it is kinda unfair as teachers from different schools somehow have different marking standard. And it puts **more pressure/workload** to school teacher. Quite **time-consuming**.



Amy, who participated in the in-depth interview, also had the same feeling that the workload was high and was sometimes seen as a waste of time, by both teachers and students:

Amy: Nevertheless, its disadvantage is that it's added **a lot of work to us, really a lot.** Every time you arrange an assessment, you've got to do many things, a lot of stuff to take care of. Say for example you'll need to arrange the classroom, and then fill in the forms; all these in fact have taken away a lot of time from us. Also, you, let's say you, in the oral exam, you're helping them to take the final one, that is the public exam outside school, then in fact you can train them and provide them more opportunities to try an error. But this one, it **wastes you a lot of time** on what students may not find it as having a great effect. So it's that, and **there are kids who don't think that it's worth spending time on. They'll think that you're wasting their time** and they'd rather that you tell them exactly how the exam is like. So, er, it's sometimes very discouraging.

Grace also found the SBA scheme to be time-consuming and commented a few times that Form Four and Five English Language teachers were “dead” because of it:

Grace: Although it only accounts for 15%, we'll need to put in 100% effort into it, because we'll have to brief them, train them and we also want them to get high scores. So we have to trial, we have to give them some trial. If you think about it, there's already one real assessment to do and then we give them one more trail every time. So that means one assessment becomes two assessments and this is **very time consuming** but that's what you have to do because it accounts for 15%. But the level of difficulty may not be as high as how it was when it was first started but still **it's time consuming and we're dead.** After all, **if you teach Form 4 or 5, you're dead.**

Two more interviewees, Charles and Fanny, also expressed their concerns for the SBA workload demanded of teachers and thought that teachers' status or

professionalism might have been undermined in the current implementation of the SBA scheme:

Charles: I feel that this SBA scheme, well, just like what I said, it's good, but it doesn't really fit into our education system. And now many teachers are doing too much, unnecessarily too much, so I think, they are afraid, they are responsible for students' results. But I think, well, you can't help it, right? You can't play magic. But some teachers, for the sake of their job security, well, oh, no, we'll have to force them to make them pass. So they work day and night and then they [the students] will become even more passive....

Er, because this is a, er, a very obvious vicious cycle. Students are more scared and they become less willing, and teachers will do more. And when they do more, students become even more passive, and more passive, the teachers do more. So that is, it's a lose-lose situation. So it turns out, it's really poor in fact I've seen. Some of my classmates [at the university] told me that they were really struggling....

The weak schools are having a hard time. And they have to see, and have to spend time after school. Some may not have enough time during their lessons, now they need to do it after school. And after recording, after school, they have to spend more time after school to review the videos. And they'll have to spend more time to go through the movies with the students. In fact, I'm not, I'm not trying to go against the programme, but the support is clearly not enough.

Fanny: That is if we teachers do not have the time to prepare our lessons then they're very much separated. I think personally, I think teachers are just too busy. They have to deal with exams and at the same time have to do this. We don't really have much space to integrate it [to our teaching]. It's a bit of a waste, my feeling personally, yes. So I think if you say whether it's the problem of the SBA scheme or it's the problem of not enough space for teachers, I don't really know. I just feel that if teachers have more space then SBA could be run a lot better. Yes, but if there's no space, like in my school in fact, we're only doing the minimum. Yes. So we've fulfilled the requirements and we've seen some effects, but then we just stop here. And we can't see the full effect of the scheme and strengthen it.

Charles was of the opinion that the implementation of SBA had been heavily distorted by the culture of the Hong Kong education system where teachers are held responsible for their students' performance in the public exam. What is resulted, therefore, is that teachers, particularly those in lower-banding schools, are hard pressed to spend extra time and effort to spoon-feed, drill and force their students in their SBA work. SBA may not be the cause for this job security threat and increase in workload but the effect is most paramount because it is the only public examination component that teachers might have some control. On a similar note, Fanny felt that the workload of teachers might have prevented them from integrating SBA into the curriculum and acting professionally. They were just too busy to do more than what was minimally required and submit the scores even though they knew all too well how wasteful and unprofessional it was. The scheme, however well-intended and promising it was, therefore still failed to empower the teachers as it was not designed to suit the teachers' plight faced on huge workload and was lacking in professional space.

#### ***6.3.4 Stage 3: Management Stage***

The percentile score from mean for Stage 3 Management Stage was 65, ranked fourth among the seven SoC. The figure indicates that the teachers surveyed had a slightly higher level of concerns on the management aspect of SBA, such as the coordination of the process and the tasks involved, when compared to the stratified control sample collected by the CBAM team. Some participants in the in-depth interviews in fact commented quite extensively about the difficulties they encountered in setting up the routines and managing the SBA scheme and the changes they had made so far to help manage it:

Amy: Yes, because there's just too much stuff to cover, not enough time for teaching. Also, it's **very difficult to book students for a time to do the SBA**....

We did think about doing it after school, but er, **they have a lot of activities after school**. **Some also have to go home**, some live really far away, some are from the outlying islands and have to rush for the ferry. They have thousands of reasons of various different types. And **if you have to keep them here, it's difficult**. So now that they [SBA and the internal school exam] are combined, er, I find it good that at least my students are motivated so far. So for this exam, we can kill 2 birds with 1 stone and have the scores for both, so they'd pay extra effort....

Yes, and, but I think we've got to meet the trouble first before we knew it. So like when we did it earlier in the first trial, there were students who er, forgot. It's that **there were other activities**, and **we forgot to notify others**, and so they couldn't come back and do it. It was so daring you know....

So er, if the school could set it once, er, say perhaps really at the beginning of the year, could really set it in the school calendar, say we'll have a particular week, and it's an SBA activity endorsed by the school, and ask other colleagues not to hold anything on that day, it'll be much better...

If the school can help my department to reserve a day to do this assessment. So er, or it makes it mandatory, because in fact we inevitably will **cause troubles to other departments**, and **we're complained**. Even this time it's still the same.

But it's really not our fault. You've got no choice but to do it. And how do you, **you've got to explain to the parents** as always. After all, much time like that is wasted.

From her experience, Amy found it a very daunting task to schedule a time to hold the SBA assessment with her students. First, students were always busy and it was difficult to hold the whole class there after school or on Saturday to do the assessment. Also, other teachers and departments complained about interferences on their teaching and extra-curricular activities schedules as students were held up during preparation and the actual assessment. It took her and her colleagues a few years before they decided to integrate SBA with the internal school examination so

that SBA attained a much higher official status and to schedule the assessment immediately before the examination period so that conflicts with other teachers and departments could be lowered as no extra-curricular activities would be held during the period. Amy also expressed that the support from the school management to make the arrangement official and to reserve the day would further help her to manage the SBA scheduling more easily.

Similarly, Grace also found the assessment scheduling a difficult aspect to manage in the SBA scheme. Unlike in Amy's school where there were designated days devoted to the SBA assessments and all English teachers of the same form would run the assessment together, at Grace's school, teachers were required to find their own time, be it during lessons or after school, to do the assessment. It was not only the workload of watching forty odds presentations but also the predicament of watching and grading them in a row non-stop for a few days that was the biggest concern. There were also some difficulties she faced in handling the noise and behaviour of the other students who were not presenting and getting the presentations videoed:

Grace: This is because once I was doing Form 4 and Form 5 group presentations. **There were 43 in my class and so I had to spend one full week for them** and I really couldn't stand it. A student may have a full 40-minute, this is the individual presentation, so I just sat there and listened, and sat and listened. It was not a good experience....

I was just telling you about IP [individual presentation] and one teacher has to handle all 43 students. So it's **not possible to do it in class because of the time demands.** And when a student comes out and presents, **the other 42 students may be noisy, and you may not record the voice well, you may not be able to do the recording,** so we need extra time to do that. It's better with group discussions. In group interactions there are 4 in one group,

so there are only 10 groups and I can finish the all in two afternoons. That's better....

Betty also reported difficulties in managing the assessment aspect of the scheme. As the SBA coordinator, she was responsible for arranging the SBA assessment for all teachers at her school. She had to design the tasks, set up the assessment procedures and specifications such as the length of preparation time and the number of questions each teacher would get. All this management work, according to Betty, was very troublesome:

Betty: Emm, I think it's the questions [used in the SBA tasks that we have changed], I mean **the way the questions are set**. Er, and also our time, it's that **how much time we give our students to prepare**, these we have changed. We have tried lengthening it and shortening it, according to our experience. And also as for the assessment tasks, we've found that, well, just **giving them 1 question, or, when everybody's got the same number of questions**, then oh no, some even don't understand the questions, but then what if they, it's just so troublesome. **Setting those questions is so troublesome**. There aren't many areas you can look at. It's always the plot, the character, what you've learnt and that's it. There're no resources I can get and I have to set the questions myself, it gives me a headache. And yes, I just go and search and search on the web, but no, there isn't anything like that.

Hannah, the head of the English department cum SBA coordinator of her school, also found the management of the SBA scheme, particularly the teaching and learning arrangements, a matter of huge concern. However, her school had put in a lot of resources in supporting the teachers to address the issue:

Hannah: Now we feel, we will go and **find one more colleague** and this colleague has to be very strong in classroom management. So **he can make the students to bring, for example books, and they won't sleep when viewing the movie, and they can take in what we want them to learn**. And this we'll assign one lesson per week and this

teacher will go into other classroom, other classes and he'll teach them, and lead them to do this SBA...

About the extra teacher who's assigned to go to the class, actually in practice **we have 3 teachers in a classroom**, and split up the students in SBA. Yes, the reasons is that in the past, that was only one teacher to one class, we found that **it was difficult to care for all students, and there wasn't enough time for students to try and perform, to speak** so that's why we have this approach now, 3 teachers. So one, particularly the one from the discipline team, so he's very good at classroom management, so we can make that students bring their books and be serious about it. Yes, so we have this arrangement....

Actually if you add one more teacher, you're using more resources. So we've assessed it and thought that this decision could help.

With the extra resources spent, Hannah found that the scheme had become more manageable because there was more room for teachers to spend time on individual students and to minimize discipline and learning problems which were common to students with low ability and/or motivation in Band Three schools.

In short, the management of the SBA scheme was an issue of moderate concern among the teachers. The scheduling and other arrangements of the assessment component of the scheme seemed to have received the most attention in teachers' management of SBA although the management of the teaching and learning component was the most concerned aspect in Hannah's case.

#### ***6.3.5 Stage 4: Consequence Stage***

The percentile score from mean for Stage 4 Consequence Stage was 43, the lowest among the seven stages. The score shows that the teachers surveyed were slightly less concerned about how the innovation would affect their students when compared to the stratified control sample collected by CBAM research team. However, as indicated in Figure 5.26, a lot of teachers' responses [a total of 20,

representing 52.6% of the total number of responses] collected from the open-ended part of the questionnaire were in fact related to the impacts SBA had on students:

- B4: It is a good idea as **students are exposed to authentic English** and it's a great chance to promote English learning outside classroom. Yet, it really spends us a lot of time for materials preparation and administrative work.
- B6: **Students thought** that the SBA books we presently choosing are too easy for them. They are not really learning anything now. Besides, it takes up too much time. **Students want** to focus more on learning new words, reading textbooks and grammar book. **Some higher ability groups are happy** that SBA expose [sic.] them to a wider culture. The approach to books are [sic.] thought-provoking and lessons less boring as compared.
- B7: It has **made the learning and use of English more lively and related to daily life**. It has **widened students' horizons to the appreciation of English Literature** (esp. in CMI schools).
- E1: I think SBA could achieve its purpose in helping to **ease off students' exam pressure**.
- E6: A step in the right direction; But still **not enough marks to really motivate students to try harder**.
- F2: **Students can learn** much from SBA.
- F5: Good chance **for students to practise speaking**!
- G1: I think SBA can be a good preparation for their oral in HKCEE. I think **students are more confident in speaking** during exam.
- G2: Sounds practical as it involves intensive reading followed by oral assessment, which **makes the whole learning process worthwhile**.
- G4: It gives students a purpose to speak in English. **Students generally become more serious** when it comes to the oral practice. The passing rate of oral paper has increased quite significantly.



- J1: Though many students are still reluctant to speak English, some **students are improving** indeed in terms of **self-confidence** in using English for communication.
- M1: Once the programme is set up it is quite easy to run. The teachers can provide ample practice in class to suit all levels of English, to **allow students to perform quite well in the SBA component**.
- M3: SBA is a good component in assessing students' learning because it encourages students to read extensively throughout 2 years of time as well as reflects their ability more accurately than a one-off exam. My concern is, however, how the HKEAA ensures the moderation of each student's SBA marks is fairly done against the marks of the other Eng Lang papers. Plus, when conducting their SBAs, individual schools may not adhere strictly to the Assessment Criteria given, while some over-prepare their students to boost the final results in the English Language paper. **Schools with students whose oral skills are higher than their writing skills may suffer**.
- O1: It **benefits students** in terms of their **speaking skills** as more training and focus have been put on SBA in daily practice when compared with the old syllabus. **Improvements** have been shown in speaking examinations over the two years. **Students were more willing to speak and interactions were more natural**. However, it does add a lot of extra workload to the teachers.
- O2: **Good motivation of reading extensively; strengthening both writing and speaking skills, establishing reading culture; confidence built for expression; improving analytical thinking and organizational power**; giving opportunity for **students to assess in their own way and from others**; preparing students for related exams, e.g. speaking, reading and writing.
- O4: I understand the rationale of the assessment. However, it can't achieve what it aims. **Most students do not finish the books** even though they know the results can affect their HKCEE results. **Also too much freedom has been given to the students**, and it's a great burden to the teachers. For example, the students can discuss for as long as they want and they can have many attempts if they are not satisfied with their results. How considerate the EDB is!

- O5: Possibly the best reform in English teaching in HK over the past decade. **Students get to speak in real English in familiar contexts in a truer, conversational setting.** Furthermore, teachers have been led to understand the evaluation process and to cooperative together for more.
- Q2: The activities introduced in SBA programme are good and **motivating**, but I have reservation about using them as assessment tasks for a public examination, especially when resources and manpower are not supporting well enough in Hong Kong's situation.
- S2: Personally, SBA is not a fair assessment due to the following points: a) Some privileged students can have better preparation as they can get help from their parents, siblings or private tutors; b) Time allowance for preparation is not fixed. Some students are allowed to prepare the questions one week or even one month before the assessment while some can only prepare for ten minutes; c) In SBA district sharing session, I found that some schools tend to give higher scores to their students. It's not sure whether the final adjustment system can counterbalance the situation fairly; d) This is the third year our school implements SBA. **I can't see there's a significant progress in terms of their results and interest to read. Rather they regard it as a burden.** It's contrary to the rationale of SBA.
- S5: It **may be good because some students perform better at school as they may [be] panic at exams.** Yet it is kinda unfair as teachers from different schools somehow have different marking standard. And it puts more pressure/workload to school teacher. Quite time-consuming.

The responses show that SBA's impact on students was an area many teachers had a lot to say about. However, when read with the relatively lower Stage 4 concern scores, it may mean that many of the issues listed may not demand intense attention from the teachers or did not worry them in their present implementation of the SBA scheme.

In the in-depth interviews, besides questions on benefits and adverse effects of SBA, the teachers were also asked the question, “What feedbacks have you received from students concerning the SBA scheme?” Here are their responses:

Amy: They’ve found it troublesome, they told us. It’s that they said they didn’t understand what it wanted, very hard to catch. Say the year, I have one class of Form 4 plus a group of Form 4 [within a class]. So I couldn’t assess them at the same time. And so I’ve given this group to another colleague to do the assessment. But they sometimes come back and tell me, they wonder why er, the marks I gave to my class, seems to be more lenient than the marks the usually more lenient teacher gave to their group. So in fact different teachers have a different focus, and they know that, and think it’s not fair.

Charles: Ok. Feedback er. They utmost will say this book is not interesting, or er, actually my class is not too active, many are quite weak, so they won’t actively give any feedback. They will, well you know students at my school are quite obedient, they will just endure. So when there’s work, em, well, then they’ll do it, they won’t have any questions or come and challenge you, nothing. So er, they will utmost, I will ask, sometimes, I’ll ask, how do you find the movie? Is it interesting? Do you have strong feelings about it? Like that. So I’ll ask and they’ll say ok, or not so good. When I ask if they think this is good, some do say so and think that it does help train them, in speaking, instead of, well, you know in junior forms, reading, in the oral assessment it can be just reading aloud instead of real interactions. So I, their feedbacks are positive. And er, so, that is, they may say, oh, I have to read again. Oh, no, I haven’t read it. So, there’re a variety of feedbacks.

Eddy: Feedback from students. Well, actually no, we haven’t done anything, but perhaps we can try that and see whether students find it useful. But usually it’s like this. I’ve asked many teachers but usually, they don’t really think much about whether students have any feedback.

Fanny: Er... students think that this is good, SBA. Actually our students, they are really serious about SBA, they will prepare and write down all the points to prepare for the assessment. So, they also think er, a good point is that they are grouped with other students, so it’s easier, easier to lower their anxiety, and they also get help from each

**other**, that is because there is no such kind of competition in the assessment. When they see that the students next to them do not say much, they'll invite them to speak, and they really feel that **this has helped them to improve their marks.**

Grace: Er.. **they just don't want to do it.** Yes, "Miss, I don't want to do it." Yes, something like this. But some know that they have to do it, because it's 10% and so they'll just be good. But they usually just wait till they'll have to do it and then do it. They're not very enthusiastic, students nowadays.

Hannah: Emmm.. comments, **at the beginning they didn't want to [do it]** because they had to buy the book and it's boring to read. And later perhaps, after some encouragements and **later** when they have the assessment, they find that actually they can talk, they can understand quite a bit in English and the marks do not disappoint them, that is **they are quite encouraged by the marks. So students do quite like it.** That is because in the end, they can know immediately what marks they can and they can compare, and feel that it's quite good. But in the process, of course they'll complain.

Similar to teachers' comments of SBA's impacts on students collected in the questionnaire survey, the question also elicited both positive and negative feedbacks about the scheme. What was interesting, however, was Eddy's comment that many teachers in fact did not think much about whether students had any feedback. Charles also expressed that students in Hong Kong were very passive and did not often volunteer feedbacks. In fact, many of the feedbacks mentioned were the teachers' perceptions of their students' attitudes towards the SBA scheme. When they were further asked if any students had given any constructive feedback on how the scheme could be changed or improved, all answers were negative:

Charles: No, er, I think that is what I've just mentioned before, the problem of the education system. That is **they'll just accept, that is I'll accept everything the teacher says, and will not think about why. They won't consider that actually the system can be changed. It can be made**

**better, can be better.** So these are what we teachers will do, but they won't do these.

Doris: They're comparatively, er, less smart. So I'll say **no comments**... right.

Fanny: **Not really**, right.

A combination of students' passive involvement in giving feedbacks and teachers' undervalue of students' feedbacks may also be another reason why the Stage 4 scores were comparatively lower as there were not many issues driven by students' opinions which teachers had to deal with in the SBA implementation.

### ***6.3.6 Stage 5: Collaboration Stage***

The teachers surveyed had a Stage 5 Collaboration Stage percentile score from mean of 48, suggesting that the teachers had a similar level of concern towards collaboration in SBA to the stratified control sample collected by the CBAM team. However, when compared with other percentile scores from mean of other stages, it was second lowest among all seven stages.

Teachers' patterns of collaboration in the implementation of SBA were a major area of investigation in the in-depth interviews. One of the LoU levels, Level V Integration, was in fact used to describe users who was "combining own efforts to use the innovation with the related activities of colleagues to achieve a collective effect on clients within their common sphere of influence" (Hall, Dirksen & George, 2000, p. 7). As analyzed in 5.2.1, among the eight teachers who participated in the interviews, only Hannah was considered an LoU Level V Integration user. As explained earlier, Hannah's school had put in two extra teachers in the SBA lessons so that there would be more individual attention and better classroom management.

Also, her school had set up co-preparation periods where teachers had to sit together and prepare lessons collaboratively:

Hannah: **We teachers also have meetings, that is when we prepare lessons, we usually will spend some time talking about SBA....**

Interviewer: Among your colleagues, er, you say for example, when you discuss or prepare SBA, what do you discuss usually?

Hannah: Em, about **the progress**, and also actually, in the few pages or in the chapters, **what do we want them to learn**, is it the vocabulary or the meaning of the story, yes.

Interviewer: How often are these meetings?

Hannah: Basically we'll have **one lesson per week**.

Interviewer: One lesson per week where teachers will sit together and prepare lessons?

Hannah: In the co-preparation lesson, we'll spend some time to discuss it, yes....

Interviewer: As for this collaboration, like what you've said before, is mainly about discussion on the progress and so. What about assessment, **the assessment tasks, or the questions** you've mentioned, or all **the changes, or schedule**, what do you discuss them?

Hannah: We also discuss these in the preparation lesson, yes.

While there was still an SBA coordinator who would do the initial planning and arrangements such as choosing books and drafting the teaching plans and assessment schedules, there were regular meetings among teachers to review and adjust the plans and to discuss the actual operation. In Hannah's case, the co-preparation periods were a long standing requirement established by the school and were not specifically set up solely for the purpose of the SBA scheme. With this established requirement and the collaboration culture induced, it was not surprising that the implementation of SBA had a strong collaboration element at Hannah's school. However, high levels of collaboration do not mean that the teachers must be

very anxious about collaboration especially when it has been run properly and systems have already been in place. In fact, in Hannah's SoC profile, her Stage 5 percentile score was the lowest among all seven stages.

Although other teachers who participated in the interviews may not be classified as LoU Level V Integration users, there were nonetheless some elements of collaboration and sharing in their SBA implementation. This was usually done through the adoption of standard set books or movies and related teaching materials, formal discussions of teaching plans and assessment arrangements at departmental meetings, or informal sharing among colleagues through means such as the use of a teacher's server or a buddy system:

Charles: Err, school departmental meeting, no I mean, the panel [head] will call a meeting. **In the meeting called by the panel [head], usually we'll confirm which books to use,** or whether this book is acceptable, that is no good, **which movie is good,** which isn't. And then **for deeper discussions, it'll be informal.** Let's say, because we have different staff rooms, **I'll discuss with those who are in my staff room**....

We will, **we will share the questions,** say, because every class is different, so we set different questions, even if they read the same book. And **we have different requirements, but sometimes we'll refer to each others.** And perhaps our students are streamed into levels and I think I can go to the other class of the same level and ask if I can see how the questions are set. And because this year, I'm not that experienced. I'll ask my colleagues, can I do it this way? What if, is there any problem? How can I refine my questions? Er, **so we'll discuss, and we'll hold a meeting and discuss, which movie, which few movies, and we'll share the resources.** So it's not just one person alone. It's really difficult this way.

Eddy: We had **meetings** about it in the department but it's not too formal. **We talked about the timetable,** about, not too directly, because, about the timetable and when we should have them....

**All teachers use the same set of materials**, and then will use this set of materials to help equip the students....

This year, my partner is quite willing to share, and we'll **look at how we run it**. And after the assessment, we will **discuss the marks** we give and we'll then discuss, what marks do you think this student should get or why this mark? And so we have more understanding then.

Fanny: Actually in our school we do have a good sharing culture and resources are shared among ourselves. But we don't really have a, a model, and we must follow this particular teaching plan. Not really, and colleagues do have their room to treat it flexibly. Yes, actually **we put all these materials on to a server in the school** and we can go there and take whatever we find useful....

[We'll discuss] perhaps how to read, we're talking about, usually **the pre-assessment materials**. So it'll teach them how to analyze the book, or when there are pre-tasks, it'll guide them to build up their skills to finish the pre-tasks, yes.

Grace: [We'll discuss] **the materials, where we can find the materials. And the time, we'll set a time-table**. For example, in group discussions, perhaps we'll mix up students in different classes. For example, perhaps everybody watches Tuesday with Morris and we'll **mix up students from classes A, B, C and D to do the discussion**. So we'll have to do these. And er, yes, mainly **we'll discuss the flow**, we hope that we can have a smooth flow when we do the assessment. And then it's about the videos. After videoing we'll have to choose 3 for each group, that is upper, lower and middle performers and we'll check those and see where they're good or where they're bad. Why do you say that they're middle and can they be upgraded. These things, so it's a bit like the oral examination, three up, three lower....

Yes, **we'll prepare them [teaching materials] together**. Say I've said after we finished Animal Farm in Form 3, the whole form will run Animal Farm. **The whole form will have the same thing to run, to brief them and guide them to do it**. This wasn't done in the first year, but later after a few years of operation. But this year we have this.

It is noted, however, that while there might be some degree of collaboration, due to cultural factors and the huge workload, many teachers were happy to just



follow orders rather than making full use of their collaborative efforts to actualize the programme:

Amy: Er, our coordinator arranges everything, so **all I have to do is to sit and follow.**

Betty: So it's just up to ourselves, so after we discuss, and I don't really want to bother other colleagues, so **I'll set everything right, and it's like I'm giving instructions to them. I'll instruct them.** this this this, and then this, and **the colleagues usually do follow my instructions,** so I'll say ,they're not too concerned.

Charles: Em, actually I **just follow what others do.**

In fact, in all the responses found in the open-ended part of the questionnaire survey, none of them mentioned the issue of collaboration, and benefits, problems or difficulties faced. To take the words from Betty, she just did not want to bother other colleagues. With this lack of culture on collaboration, it was therefore not surprising to see that the SoC Stage 5 Integration scores were not high. It was just not an issue that teachers would be concerned about much, as long as everybody followed orders and did their part.

### ***6.3.7 Stage 6: Refocusing Stage***

The percentile score from mean for Stage 6 Refocusing Stage was 57, which suggests an average level of concern on the revision or replacement of the innovation compared to the stratified control sample. In the open-ended part of the questionnaire survey, while there was no response which was related to the revision or which gave suggestions to improve the SBA scheme, two of them showed very strong resistance to the scheme and condemned the scheme strongly:

P1: **I totally disagree with the way SBA has been implemented** and how it is evaluated. It is little more than another "one-off" examination that does little to assess students' process of learning. **All it has done is create more work for teachers!**

R2: **A total waste of teacher and students' time and energy.** Average students could get 6 across all domains, and that is quite unfair on outstanding students. Also, the marks teachers give to their own students may be too subjective (and do not reflect students' genuine ability). When these average students are compared with those really bright ones, they are nothing. **CRAP!**

The responses were written in such strong language that one could easily feel the teachers' fury at the project. After checking their SoC profiles, it was confirmed that both teachers had significantly higher Stage 6 percentile scores than Stage 5 scores (a hike of 64 points for P1 and 25 for R2), which could be characterized as a tailing up at the end and is often interpreted as the procession of strong negative feelings towards the way the innovation was run. The phenomenon is also found to be related to resistance to the innovation, especially for nonusers and beginner users (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

In the in-depth interviews, teachers were asked whether they had any opinion on how the scheme should be changed and a few expressed that changes were at the moment not an area of their concern. Charles and Eddy thought that the scheme was new and they were still exploring so they could not specify what changes were needed whereas Fanny thought that she was happy with the status quo as there was already a high level of flexibility in the scheme:

Charles: I think **temporarily things are still new**. And er, many things are still **tentative**. Even those come out from the government are still very **tentative**. And later there's another weighing added [in the new 3-3-4 system]. So if I, from what I know, at least for myself, not speaking for the

school, I myself am **not going to make any big changes**. Since now things work quite well, I'll just continue and later when things are finalized, then ...

Eddy: For me myself, I **haven't really thought about it** because now I'm **still exploring it** and so it'll be, I think I'll make some changes based on the experience I have this year and will change the way I run it.

Fanny: Actually I think **there is already enough flexibility in the scheme, so I don't think there's anything HKEAA should change**. How does our school... I think it's **more about how schools work and keep these**. I am not very sure, I've heard, in some meetings, some teachers see this as something very rigid. They think that things must be done this way this way and this way but we don't feel it entirely. So I'm not sure if they're wrong or we're wrong, but I feel that if **there's already such a big flexibility, actually no changes are needed**. The frequency I think is okay, a total of 4, it's okay I think.

Amy and Grace, however, thought that major changes in the SBA scheme may be needed to make it more practical and, to a lesser extent, more meaningful:

Amy: I want it to **cut the discussion part**, because it's really stupid. **It's so stupid**, and I don't know, actually there's no reason you won't know. It's because it asks the students, each of them watch **different movies, different books**, and then they sit round and discuss. **It just doesn't make any sense at all**. It's like sitting together, hey how's your character, and this is my character. So I think if you really, if you want to have a presentation, if you ask them to introduce something they like to you, I think it's very workable. And presentation skills are very useful to them in future. Discussion, er, we, if you look **at the public exam, there's, at least there's a problem they have to solve**. But now **you suddenly ask them to talk about a book**, and in fact, when you ask them to sit and do it, **you can see that they're more like giving a presentation. So what's the original purpose?** I don't really see it.

Grace: I think it's better to have **self-videos**. That is we teachers now have to do the technical support as well, in the classroom, **handle and set the equipment. If I can't set it well then it's a big problem, I won't be able to shoot on that day, then this is no good**. That is they can shoot a video on themselves for you and they can keep it in a

portfolio and then they can take another short video clip, according to their own topics, any topic may do. So then it will reduce our workload. When I watch them, I only have to deal with the paper work and listen to or watch the video. So it's their own production and it's good for their CV in the future, "Oh we've shot something like this." Then it doesn't require us, force us, and suddenly have to be very technically advanced to do the videoing and have to keep the disk for the EDB to check, yes, this may be better. That is they shoot it themselves and it'll save us a lot of workload and save us a lot of time. Yes.

No interviewees expressed that they wished the SBA scheme to be replaced although Doris' response when asked if she had further comments about the scheme at the end of the interview may hint at her doubt on whether the scheme should be continued:

Interviewer: Okay, so, er, last, I'd like to ask if you have any further comments, final remarks you'd like to add? Yes.

Doris: Will it still be carried on?

Interviewer: Er, it seems like it is. Originally they're planning to cancel the external Oral Exam paper. But now, after receiving feedbacks from teachers, it's decided that the Oral examination will be retained, with SBA added. And when it comes to HKDSE, a higher percentage will be given to it.

Doris: Er, right, goo. (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs).

Doris: Em, perhaps it may help the weaker students. But the help won't be too big. They aren't really too naïve.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there any last ranting you have? Or anything you'd like to praise this scheme? And we'll finish our interview today.

Doris: Em, reading and watching movies. I think it's worth it. Er, but do we really need an assessment? That's something we can think about. But it's a bit paradoxical. If you don't do this, they won't read or watch.

Perhaps the dialogue may well explain why Doris' SoC profile displayed the second largest tailing-up-at-the-end phenomenon among all interviewees (a hike of 35 points) after Amy's (a hike of 53 points).

### **6.3.8 *More on overall SoC pattern***

The overall SoC pattern of teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey is one that opens high at Stage 0, then falling gradually to a low at Stage 4 and finally rising slightly to Stage 6. When the profile is compared to the hypothesized development figure (Figure 3.3), it seems to be most similar to the nonuser development pattern with the high Stages 0, 1 and 2 scores although the high Stage 3 score may suggest there was some degree of implementation of SBA as management concerns usually arise along with actual operation. However, as SBA was a required part of the school curriculum and all teachers who taught HKCEE English Language would have to run the scheme and submit marks to HKEAA, all teachers were in theory users of the innovation. Answers to Background Question 5, years of experience with SBA, also confirm that all had the experience of running SBA with the exception of two respondents (2.1%). With the majority of teachers having run the scheme for 2 years, the seemingly nonuser pattern found is very curious. Why do the figures suggest that teachers were unconcerned about the SBA scheme given that it was one major element of change in the recent English Language teaching curriculum? Was the figure a result of problems of the questions for SoC Stage 0 in the questionnaire or was it teachers' coping strategies to deal with ever-changing curricula without their consent combined with high workload? Why was it that even though the scheme had been run for three years and with nearly all teachers having already participating, still teachers had the highest levels of concern

on the informational and personal aspect of the scheme? Had the authorities done enough to help teachers understand the scheme and guide them in their implementation or was it a problem of the high flexibility allowed which in fact confused the teachers? Why weren't informational and personal concerns resolved even after three years' operation of the SBA scheme? The present study does not have answers to these questions but hopes that its findings can stimulate further research on them.

#### **6.4 Question 3: *Would teachers' backgrounds affect the concern patterns of the participating teachers?***

5.1.3 has given a detailed description of how teacher factors may affect the overall SoC patterns found in the present study. It can be seen that factors such as age and the charge of additional English-related responsibilities appeared to affect the patterns quite noticeably whereas HKCEE English Language teaching experience and SBA experience might have some small influence on the patterns. Effects from gender, as revealed by Figures 5.5 and 5.6, were hardly noticeable.

##### **6.4.1 Age**

Teachers from all age groups did have a similar shape in their associated SoC profile graph but it is noted that teachers aged 51 or above had much lower percentile scores in Stages 1 thru 6 than other groups and they had more pronounced drop in scores between Stages 2 and 4. They also had a tailing down at Stage 6 unlike the other groups which tailed up, and this suggests that they were less interested in rethinking about how the scheme should be run. Teachers aged 40 or below, on the contrary, had much higher scores in Stages 1 thru 6. Further statistical analyses using One-way Analyses of Variance test (One-way ANOVA) also reveal

that the differences of stage concern scores were statistically significant at Stages 1, 2, 3, and 6.

**Figure 6.2 One-way ANOVA on raw stage scores<sup>2</sup> by age group**

|           |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.         |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|--------------|
| <b>S0</b> | Between Groups | 121.544        | 3  | 40.515      | 1.948 | <b>.128</b>  |
|           | Within Groups  | 1850.714       | 89 | 20.795      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 1972.258       | 92 |             |       |              |
| <b>S1</b> | Between Groups | 376.708        | 3  | 125.569     | 4.155 | <b>*.008</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2689.571       | 89 | 30.220      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 3066.280       | 92 |             |       |              |
| <b>S2</b> | Between Groups | 329.425        | 3  | 109.808     | 2.730 | <b>*.049</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3579.693       | 89 | 40.221      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 3909.118       | 92 |             |       |              |
| <b>S3</b> | Between Groups | 550.603        | 3  | 183.534     | 4.570 | <b>*.005</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3574.129       | 89 | 40.159      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 4124.731       | 92 |             |       |              |
| <b>S4</b> | Between Groups | 195.681        | 3  | 65.227      | 2.586 | <b>.058</b>  |
|           | Within Groups  | 2245.114       | 89 | 25.226      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 2440.796       | 92 |             |       |              |
| <b>S5</b> | Between Groups | 32.347         | 3  | 10.782      | .315  | <b>.815</b>  |
|           | Within Groups  | 3046.943       | 89 | 34.235      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 3079.290       | 92 |             |       |              |
| <b>S6</b> | Between Groups | 345.495        | 3  | 115.165     | 4.125 | <b>*.009</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2484.979       | 89 | 27.921      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 2830.473       | 92 |             |       |              |

Note: \* denotes statistical significance at  $p < .05$

There has been much research on the lifecycle of teachers and characteristics of teachers over the course of their life and of their teaching career (e.g. Peterson, 1964; Ball & Goodson, 2005) and some even take a step further and look at the relationship between various stages of teachers' lifecycle and their reactions to innovations (e.g. Smith & Keith, 1971; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Smith et al., 2005). Huberman (1985), after an in-depth study of 160 teachers in Switzerland, concludes

<sup>2</sup> As explained earlier in 5.1.2, the SoCQ Manual suggests the use of raw scale scores in all statistical analyses whereas percentile scores should be used for presentation and interpretation.

that most teachers go through a five-stage development in their career: from initial commitment in the first three years of teaching, to stabilization, experimentation, renewal and finally focusing down at the end of the teaching lifecycle. He further examines the behaviour of teachers at the last stage, focusing down, and finds that this group of teachers often ‘focus’ only on doing their own things and avoid school work and future school-wide innovations. Sikes (2005), who conducted an ethnographic study on 48 teachers in Britain, also similarly divides a teachers’ lifecycle into five stages and contends that teachers over the age of 50 may feel old and experience a decline in enthusiasm and energy and become more “mature” and “realistic”.

If Huberman’s and Sikes’ observations on teachers’ lifecycle are applied to the present-day secondary school situation in Hong Kong, it is not hard to see why teachers aged over 50, who were near the end of their teaching lifecycle, displayed a much lower level of concern on nearly all aspects of the innovation. The tailing-down at Stage 6 found, is also not surprising as they might be less interested in investing their efforts on large-scale future changes and possible replacement of the SBA scheme, given that many of them might not even be there in future to carry out and witness the change.

#### ***6.4.2 HKCEE English Language teaching experience***

Teachers’ years of experience in teaching is another aspect related to teachers’ lifecycles, which might affect teachers’ concerns patterns. Figure 5.10 shows that teachers with different years of experience in teaching HKCEE English Language had a similar shape in their associated SoC profile graph although it can be seen that teachers with over 15 years of experience had the lowest Stages 1 and 2 scores



whereas teachers with experience between six and ten years had a significantly lower Stage 4 score than the other groups. The patterns seemed a bit erratic although slightly higher scores could be found at Stages 1 thru 6 for teachers with 5 or fewer years of experience. Some of the differences were over ten percentile points, the threshold for significant differences used in CBAM research (George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006) although statistical analyses using One-way ANOVA show that none of the differences were statistically significant.

**Figure 6.3 One-way ANOVA on raw stage scores by HKCEE English Language teaching experience**

|           |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.        |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------|
| <b>S0</b> | Between Groups | 11.354         | 3  | 3.785       | .167  | <b>.918</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2039.252       | 90 | 22.658      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2050.606       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S1</b> | Between Groups | 206.702        | 3  | 68.901      | 2.183 | <b>.095</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2840.405       | 90 | 31.560      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3047.106       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S2</b> | Between Groups | 272.543        | 3  | 90.848      | 2.249 | <b>.088</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3634.861       | 90 | 40.387      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3907.404       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S3</b> | Between Groups | 97.830         | 3  | 32.610      | .716  | <b>.545</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 4101.883       | 90 | 45.576      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 4199.713       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S4</b> | Between Groups | 107.519        | 3  | 35.840      | 1.386 | <b>.252</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2327.300       | 90 | 25.859      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2434.819       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S5</b> | Between Groups | 97.734         | 3  | 32.578      | 1.005 | <b>.394</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2917.042       | 90 | 32.412      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3014.777       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S6</b> | Between Groups | 63.389         | 3  | 21.130      | .677  | <b>.569</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2810.484       | 90 | 31.228      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2873.872       | 93 |             |       |             |

### 6.3.3 SBA experience

CBAM contends that teachers' SoC will proceed from lower stages to higher stages as experience in the innovation increases and lower stages concerns are

resolved. As such, it is expected that teachers with different years of SBA experience should display differences in their SoC profiles. Findings from the present study show that there were minor differences in terms of SoC patterns across teachers with different years of SBA experiences—it can be observed that teachers with no or one year of SBA experience had higher Stage 1 but lower Stages 4 and 5 concerns whereas teachers with three years of experience had lower concerns at Stages 1, 2 and 3. While the differences, most of which were over 10 percentile points, do concur with the expectation that lower stages concerns will give way to higher stages ones as teachers' implementation of the innovation matures, analyses using One-way ANOVA reveal that none of these differences were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ), let alone a change in SoC pattern as prominent as the hypothesized development displayed in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 6.4 One-way ANOVA on raw stage scores by SBA experience**

|           |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.        |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------|
| <b>S0</b> | Between Groups | 131.933        | 4  | 32.983      | 1.530 | <b>.200</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 1918.674       | 89 | 21.558      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2050.606       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S1</b> | Between Groups | 266.126        | 4  | 66.531      | 2.129 | <b>.084</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2780.981       | 89 | 31.247      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3047.106       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S2</b> | Between Groups | 174.941        | 4  | 43.735      | 1.043 | <b>.390</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3732.463       | 89 | 41.938      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3907.404       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S3</b> | Between Groups | 182.185        | 4  | 45.546      | 1.009 | <b>.407</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 4017.527       | 89 | 45.141      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 4199.713       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S4</b> | Between Groups | 54.064         | 4  | 13.516      | .505  | <b>.732</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2380.756       | 89 | 26.750      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2434.819       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S5</b> | Between Groups | 38.388         | 4  | 9.597       | .287  | <b>.886</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2976.388       | 89 | 33.443      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3014.777       | 93 |             |       |             |
| <b>S6</b> | Between Groups | 31.397         | 4  | 7.849       | .246  | <b>.912</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2842.475       | 89 | 31.938      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2873.872       | 93 |             |       |             |

As reiterated many times by CBAM researchers (Gene, Wallace & Dossett, 1973; Hall & Hord, 1987; Hord et al., 1987; George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006; etc.), the SoC progression is not automatic, but can be aided through prompt and appropriate support. Previous studies on changes on SoC profiles during innovation implementation have found that the progression can be well supported by face-to-face interventions carried out by change facilitators to resolve or arouse stage concerns but in the case of HKCEE English Language SBA, this kind of intervention was very lacking. In most schools, the job of overseeing the SBA implementation was given to the SBA coordinator, some of whom might not even fully understand the scheme, let alone to guide other teachers in its implementation. Nonetheless, even when the SBA coordinator possessed the necessary expertise, as indicated from the interviewees, there was often very little communication between the coordinator and other colleagues on how to implement the scheme other than the one or two meetings held in a year to discuss scheduling and assessment matters. Since teachers' concerns on SBA had not been heard and addressed, there was little wonder why teachers, even after operating SBA for three years, still displayed high Stages 1, 2 and 3 concerns like those who were new to the programme.

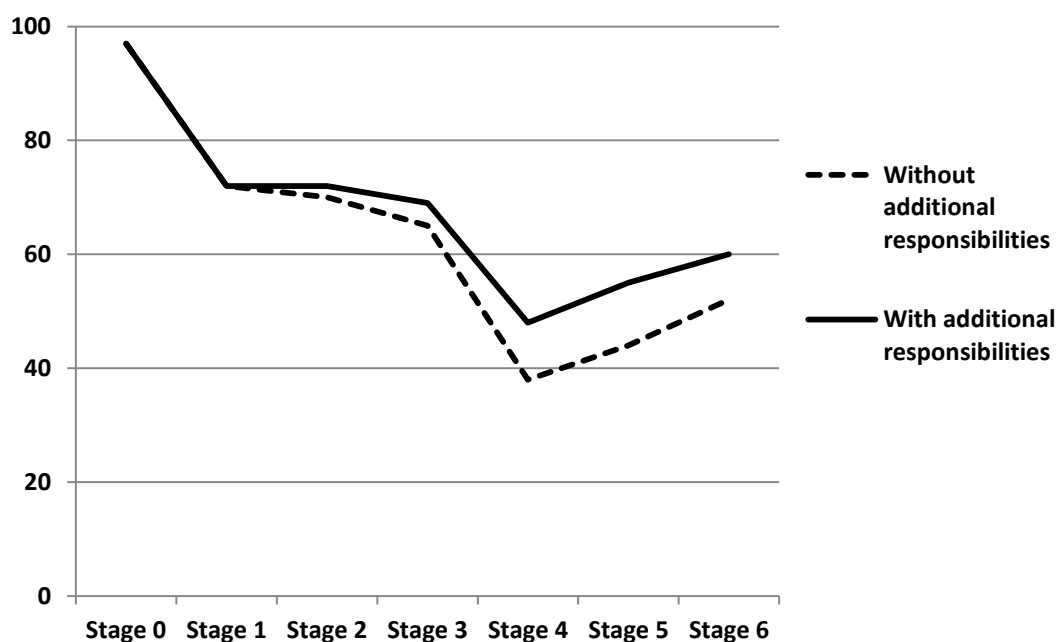
#### ***6.4.4 Additional English Language related responsibilities***

According to Figure 5.14, while all groups had similar SoC profile shapes, teachers with no additional English Language related responsibilities had lower Stages 4, 5 and 6 concerns (by at least eight percentile points). A consolidated table and a graph displaying the differences of the SoC percentile scores from mean between the two groups are shown below:

**Figure 6.5 Scale percentile scores by the charge of additional English Language related responsibilities**

|   | Stage 0 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 | Stage 5 | Stage 6 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Without additional responsibilities (N=56)</b> |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>       | 97      | 72      | 70      | 65      | 38      | 44      | 52      |
| <b>With additional responsibilities (N=39)</b>    |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Converted Percentile Score from Mean</b>       | 97      | 72      | 72      | 69      | 48      | 55      | 60      |

**Figure 6.6 SoC profiles by the charge of additional English Language related responsibilities**



Analyses by T-test (see Figure 6.7) also indicate that the differences between the two sets of SoC scores were statistically significant at Stages 4 and 5.

**Figure 6.7 T-test on raw stage scores: With additional responsibilities versus without additional responsibilities**

|    |                             | Levene's test for equality of variances |             | t-test for equality of means |        |                 |                 |                       |                         |       |
|----|-----------------------------|---|-------------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------|
|    |                             | F                                       | Sig.        | t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval |       |
|    |                             |   |             |                              |        |                 |                 |                       | Lower                   | Upper |
| S0 | Equal variances assumed     | .347                                    | <b>.557</b> | .172                         | 93     | <b>.864</b>     | .169            | .985                  | -1.788                  | 2.126 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | .174                         | 85.440 | .862            | .169            | .973                  | -1.765                  | 2.104 |
| S1 | Equal variances assumed     | 1.547                                   | <b>.217</b> | .669                         | 93     | <b>.505</b>     | .800            | 1.197                 | -1.577                  | 3.178 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | .693                         | 90.570 | .490            | .800            | 1.155                 | -1.493                  | 3.094 |
| S2 | Equal variances assumed     | .446                                    | <b>.506</b> | .579                         | 93     | <b>.564</b>     | .786            | 1.357                 | -1.908                  | 3.480 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | .595                         | 88.855 | .553            | .786            | 1.320                 | -1.838                  | 3.409 |
| S3 | Equal variances assumed     | .884                                    | <b>.350</b> | .943                         | 93     | <b>.348</b>     | 1.317           | 1.396                 | -1.456                  | 4.090 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | .924                         | 75.705 | .358            | 1.317           | 1.426                 | -1.522                  | 4.157 |
| S4 | Equal variances assumed     | .538                                    | <b>.465</b> | 2.245                        | 93     | <b>*.027</b>    | 2.354           | 1.048                 | .272                    | 4.436 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 2.311                        | 89.202 | .023            | 2.354           | 1.019                 | .330                    | 4.378 |
| S5 | Equal variances assumed     | 1.642                                   | <b>.203</b> | 2.826                        | 93     | <b>*.006</b>    | 3.270           | 1.157                 | .972                    | 5.567 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 2.907                        | 89.088 | .005            | 3.270           | 1.125                 | 1.035                   | 5.504 |
| S6 | Equal variances assumed     | 2.379                                   | <b>.126</b> | 1.738                        | 93     | <b>.086</b>     | 1.992           | 1.146                 | -.284                   | 4.269 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 1.783                        | 88.575 | .078            | 1.992           | 1.117                 | -.228                   | 4.212 |

Note: \* denotes statistical significance at  $p < .05$

The results show that teachers with additional English Language related responsibilities were more concerned about the impact of SBA on students and collaboration issues in the SBA implementation and, to a smaller extent, changes or alternatives to the scheme than those without such duties. This is not difficult to understand, given that these teachers had to be more involved in the planning, coordination and operation of the English Language curriculum, of which SBA was a part. Such teachers were also often the ones who led the curriculum and so there is

no surprise that they led the other teachers, albeit slightly in the progression of terms of SoC.

### **6.5 Question 4: *Would schools' backgrounds affect the concern patterns of the participating teachers?***

5.1.4 has briefly summarized how school factors may affect the overall SoC patterns. Medium of instruction and students' banding appeared to affect the patterns quite noticeably whereas teachers' perceptions on students' level of English and SBA option taken in 2007 had some small influence on the patterns. SBA option taken in 2008, as shown in Figures 5.24 and 5.25, did not have much influence at all.

#### **6.5.1 *Medium of instruction***

As shown in Figure 5.16, teachers from schools using Chinese or mixed languages had higher concerns at Stages 1 thru 6 than teachers from schools using English as the medium of instruction. The differences were particularly prominent at Stages 3, 4 and 6 where differences of ten percentile points or more were recorded. This is to say, teachers from Chinese or mixed medium schools were more concerned about the management and operation of SBA, the impact the scheme had on their students, and how the scheme could be renewed for improvement students' outcomes. Analyses by T-test also confirm that the differences at these three stages were statistically significant and show that the difference at Stage 2 was statistically significant as well. Furthermore, it is noted that teachers from Chinese or mixed medium schools had a second peak at Stage 3, which was not found among teachers from English medium schools, and they also had a stronger tailing-up trend at Stage 6, which indicates that these teachers had stronger negative feelings about the way SBA scheme was implemented.

**Figure 6.8 T-test on raw stage scores: Chinese or mixed medium versus English medium**

|    |                             | Levene's test for equality of variances |             | t-test for equality of means |        |                 |                 |                       |                         |       |
|----|-----------------------------|---|-------------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------|
|    |                             | F                                       | Sig.        | t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | 95% confidence interval |       |
|    |                             |   |             |                              |        |                 |                 |                       | Lower                   | Upper |
| S0 | Equal variances assumed     | 1.564                                   | <b>.214</b> | .285                         | 93     | <b>.776</b>     | .277            | .974                  | -1.656                  | 2.211 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | .282                         | 84.822 | .779            | .277            | .985                  | -1.681                  | 2.236 |
| S1 | Equal variances assumed     | 12.534                                  | <b>.001</b> | 1.906                        | 93     | .060            | 2.218           | .163                  | -.093                   | 4.528 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 1.813                        | 62.961 | <b>.075</b>     | 2.218           | 1.224                 | -.227                   | 4.663 |
| S2 | Equal variances assumed     | 4.922                                   | <b>.029</b> | 2.107                        | 93     | .038            | 2.765           | 1.312                 | .159                    | 5.371 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 2.043                        | 74.190 | <b>*.045</b>    | 2.765           | 1.353                 | .069                    | 5.462 |
| S3 | Equal variances assumed     | .039                                    | <b>.844</b> | 2.581                        | 93     | <b>*.011</b>    | 3.458           | 1.340                 | .797                    | 6.118 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 2.584                        | 90.029 | .011            | 3.458           | 1.338                 | .799                    | 6.116 |
| S4 | Equal variances assumed     | 1.251                                   | <b>.266</b> | 2.119                        | 93     | <b>*.037</b>    | 2.202           | 1.039                 | .138                    | 4.265 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 2.069                        | 78.202 | .042            | 2.202           | 1.064                 | .083                    | 4.320 |
| S5 | Equal variances assumed     | 2.049                                   | <b>.156</b> | .879                         | 93     | <b>.381</b>     | 1.043           | 1.187                 | -1.313                  | 3.400 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | .860                         | 79.035 | .392            | 1.043           | 1.213                 | -1.372                  | 3.459 |
| S6 | Equal variances assumed     | 4.040                                   | <b>.047</b> | 2.452                        | 93     | .016            | 2.736           | 1.116                 | .520                    | 4.952 |
|    | Equal variances not assumed |   |             | 2.392                        | 77.684 | <b>*.019</b>    | 2.736           | 1.144                 | .459                    | 5.013 |

Note: \* denotes statistical significance at  $p < .05$

### 6.5.2 Banding of Secondary One intakes

According to Figure 5.18, teachers from schools with mainly Banding Three Secondary One intakes had the highest concerns at Stages 1 thru 6, followed by teachers from Band Two schools and then Band One schools. The SoC percentile scores differences between teachers from Band Three and those from Band One were smallest at Stage 6 (eight points) and largest at Stage 3 (seventeen points). It is also noted that teachers from Band Three schools had a slightly different SoC shape than the other two groups, with a sudden upsurge at Stage 3 Management Stage appearing

as a second peak. The score differences among the three groups were further analyzed using One-way ANOVA and the results show that they were significant at Stages 0 and 3 although the differences of converted percentile scores at Stage 0 were mere three points between the extremes.

**Figure 6.9 One-way ANOVA on raw stage scores by banding of Secondary One intakes**

|           |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|
| <b>S0</b> | Between Groups | 135.424        | 2  | 67.712      | 3.209 | *.045 |
|           | Within Groups  | 1941.524       | 92 | 21.104      |       |       |
|           | Total          | 2076.947       | 94 |             |       |       |
| <b>S1</b> | Between Groups | 158.465        | 2  | 79.232      | 2.496 | .088  |
|           | Within Groups  | 2920.335       | 92 | 31.743      |       |       |
|           | Total          | 3078.800       | 94 |             |       |       |
| <b>S2</b> | Between Groups | 231.036        | 2  | 115.518     | 2.858 | .062  |
|           | Within Groups  | 3718.585       | 92 | 40.419      |       |       |
|           | Total          | 3949.621       | 94 |             |       |       |
| <b>S3</b> | Between Groups | 392.648        | 2  | 196.324     | 4.732 | *.011 |
|           | Within Groups  | 3816.678       | 92 | 41.486      |       |       |
|           | Total          | 4209.326       | 94 |             |       |       |
| <b>S4</b> | Between Groups | 57.939         | 2  | 28.969      | 1.101 | .337  |
|           | Within Groups  | 2419.788       | 92 | 26.302      |       |       |
|           | Total          | 2477.726       | 94 |             |       |       |
| <b>S5</b> | Between Groups | 60.037         | 2  | 30.019      | .906  | .408  |
|           | Within Groups  | 3047.268       | 92 | 33.122      |       |       |
|           | Total          | 3107.305       | 94 |             |       |       |
| <b>S6</b> | Between Groups | 164.009        | 2  | 82.005      | 2.756 | .069  |
|           | Within Groups  | 2737.191       | 92 | 29.752      |       |       |
|           | Total          | 2901.200       | 94 |             |       |       |

Note: \* denotes statistical significance at  $p < .05$

### 6.5.3 Teachers' perception on students' level of English

Figure 5.20 shows that teachers who believed their students had a higher than average English level had lower concerns at Stages 1, 2, 3 and 6 whereas the stage scores of teachers who thought that their students' level of English was average was very close to those who rated their students lower than average in their level of English, except at Stage 3 where a sudden upsurge of percentile score was found



only for the latter. The differences were subjected to One-way ANOVA but no statistically significant differences were found.

**Figure 6.10 One-way ANOVA on raw stage scores by teachers' perception of students' level of English**

|           |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.        |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------|
| <b>S0</b> | Between Groups | 29.550         | 2  | 14.775      | .664  | <b>.517</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2047.398       | 92 | 22.254      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2076.947       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S1</b> | Between Groups | 39.790         | 2  | 19.895      | .602  | <b>.550</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3039.010       | 92 | 33.033      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3078.800       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S2</b> | Between Groups | 69.090         | 2  | 34.545      | .819  | <b>.444</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3880.531       | 92 | 42.180      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3949.621       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S3</b> | Between Groups | 126.636        | 2  | 63.318      | 1.427 | <b>.245</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 4082.690       | 92 | 44.377      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 4209.326       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S4</b> | Between Groups | 5.066          | 2  | 2.533       | .094  | <b>.910</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2472.661       | 92 | 26.877      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2477.726       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S5</b> | Between Groups | 18.208         | 2  | 9.104       | .271  | <b>.763</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3089.097       | 92 | 33.577      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3107.305       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S6</b> | Between Groups | 53.637         | 2  | 26.818      | .866  | <b>.424</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2847.563       | 92 | 30.952      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2901.200       | 94 |             |       |             |

Note: \* denotes statistical significance at  $p < .05$

#### **6.5.4 The three school factors so far**

The three school factors discussed so far, medium of instruction, school banding and teachers' perception of their students' level of English are in fact very much interrelated in the context of secondary schools in Hong Kong. Amongst the 112 (about 25%) secondary schools in the territory which were allowed to use English—the language of prestige, as the medium of instruction in junior levels, all of them in fact had mostly, if not all, Band One students in their Secondary One intakes. Besides, since the students' banding allocation is a result of their academic

attainment in Primary Five and Six, moderated by an external examination on Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics, students' banding also aligns very strongly with students' level of English. That is why the three factors had very similar effects on teachers' profiles, with the medium of instruction being the most statistically significant factor found amongst the three in the present study.

In the in-depth interviews, a few teachers did mention these three factors and explain how they might affect the SBA scheme and its implementation:

Doris: Actually SBA, I think is **good to students of high-abilities, to Band One students**. It's actually very good. They'll have **more exposure [to the English Language]**, and if you look at it, in Form 4 and 5, students can read a lot more readers and watch quite many movies, and this brings a lot of benefits to them. But for **students who are a bit weaker**, that is **lower banding students** like ours, it's **actually very difficult**. Emm, so that is we're always **disadvantaged**....

I think those weaker students can perform quite well in individual presentations. **Discussion**, but if, **those very weak ones can't really discuss**.

Hannah: As for problems [of SBA], I think it's, **to students of a lower banding, teachers actually have to, have to spend extra time, or perhaps not extra, perhaps for example, the time spent on reading, writing, listening may be cut a bit and the time devoted to speaking is lengthened. Yes, and then train them about the mode of SBA.** But in fact, no matter how much time teachers spend on it, but because to less able students, they **still won't be able to reach a very high standard**, but at least they may not fail at least.....

Actually for us lower banding schools, we'll have to **implement SBA differently**, that is **how it is operated, how much is taught and all these are just given to the school to plan**.... **Usually low banding schools have been ignored**.

Actually we can't keep to exactly the way EDB wishes it to be operated. That of course, that is pilot schools, of course they're band 1 schools, EMI schools, but to students who may not even handle very basic English, they may not have reached the Form 4 level and if we force them and push them to produce the final products in SBA, to do presentations. That is in fact, in the short 1 year, can we really push our students to do these, these demanding tasks? So perhaps it should be divided into 2, to help the lower banding schools.

Both Doris and Hannah were teaching in so-called Band Three schools and they both thought that it was difficult to implement the SBA scheme because their students were weaker. For example, Doris found that her students were not capable of discussing in English and believed that they were disadvantaged because they might not benefit from the exposure due to their weak English levels. Hannah further elaborated the difficulties teachers in Band Three schools encountered: not only were the students weak and teachers had to spend a lot of extra effort just to let them able to complete the minimum requirements, the scheme was in fact designed and piloted with the higher banding schools in mind and there was no support to help the lower banding schools to implement the scheme.

Charles, who was teaching in a Band One EMI school also expressed his feelings that the scheme might not work for lower banding schools and felt pity for colleagues who taught there:

Charles: Let's say my school, Mine, mine is a high banding school, so we do it like this and have higher expectations. But lower banding schools or Chinese-medium schools, it's impossible that they could follow us....

I think this project has a good original intention. But for students in weaker schools, that is really difficult. Er, it's difficult to get them to speak, difficult to get them to watch, difficult to

**understand it after. To speak after watching, it's even more difficult. And then they have to interact, to argue, well, that is even even more difficult. Reading? It's nearly impossible....** And I know some teachers are really having a hard job. They have to go through a chapter a week with the students, explain to them what it is about. So in fact I think, er, I don't know, I think personally I won't do it. Even when I'm teaching a weak class I won't do it. I always feel that, that is, I feel that this SBA scheme, well, just like what I said, it's good, but it doesn't really fit into our education system. And now many teachers are doing too much, unnecessarily too much, so I think, they are afraid, they are responsible for students' results. But I think, well, you can't help it, right? You can't play magic. But some teachers, for the sake of their job security, well, oh, no, we'll have to force them to make them pass. So they work day and night and then they [the students] will become even more passive....

Er, because this is a, er, a very obvious vicious cycle. Students are more scared and they become less willing, and teachers will do more. And when they do more, students become even more passive, and more passive, the teachers do more. So that is, it's a lose-lose situation. So it turns out, **it's really poor** in fact I've seen. **Some of my classmates [at the university] told me that they were really struggling.** And I think, it is quite comfortable working here at my school.

**Those in St. Jo's [St. Joseph's College, a top prestigious secondary school in Hong Kong] can just ignore it. In fact most Band 1 schools don't need to care too much. But the weak schools are having a hard time.** And they have to see, and have to spend time after school. Some may not have enough time during their lessons, now they need to do it after school. And after recording, after school, they have to spend more time after school to review the videos. And they'll have to spend more time to go through the movies with the students.

In sum, it was not surprising that teachers in CMI schools, particularly in schools with mainly Band Three student intakes, had higher Stages 1-6 scores as they struggled to make the scheme, which was, as Charles and Hannah commented,

targeted at more-able students, to work for them and their students. The upsurge of Stage 3 Management Stage as a second peak also reflected the teachers' need to operate the scheme differently, and sometimes perhaps not in a way that fully align with the SBA guidelines. The dissatisfaction about the present mode of SBA implementation suggested by tailing-up at Stage 6 is also well warranted from the comments shown above.

#### **6.5.5 2007 and 2008 SBA options**

As indicated by Figure 5.22, the SBA option schools took in 2007 appeared to be a factor affecting the SoC profiles whereas the 2008 option did not affect the profiles much. Teachers in schools which did not take part in the 2007 SBA scheme had a higher percentile score from mean at Stages 1, 4, 5 and 6 and had a slightly different SoC profile shape than the other two groups. Analyses from One-way ANOVA show that the differences between the percentile scores from mean were statistically significant only at Stage 6.

**Figure 6.11 One-way ANOVA on raw stage scores by 2007 SBA Option**

|           |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.        |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------|
| <b>S0</b> | Between Groups | 1.265          | 3  | .422        | .018  | <b>.997</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2075.683       | 91 | 22.810      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2076.947       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S1</b> | Between Groups | 166.190        | 3  | 55.397      | 1.731 | <b>.166</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2912.610       | 91 | 32.007      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3078.800       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S2</b> | Between Groups | 134.192        | 3  | 44.731      | 1.067 | <b>.367</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 3815.429       | 91 | 41.928      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 3949.621       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S3</b> | Between Groups | 53.396         | 3  | 17.799      | .390  | <b>.761</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 4155.930       | 91 | 45.670      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 4209.326       | 94 |             |       |             |
| <b>S4</b> | Between Groups | 81.381         | 3  | 27.127      | 1.030 | <b>.383</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2396.345       | 91 | 26.333      |       |             |
|           | Total          | 2477.726       | 94 |             |       |             |

|           |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.         |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|--------------|
| <b>S5</b> | Between Groups | 168.849        | 3  | 56.283      | 1.743 | <b>.164</b>  |
|           | Within Groups  | 2938.456       | 91 | 32.291      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 3107.305       | 94 |             |       |              |
| <b>S6</b> | Between Groups | 246.655        | 3  | 82.218      | 2.819 | <b>*.043</b> |
|           | Within Groups  | 2654.545       | 91 | 29.171      |       |              |
|           | Total          | 2901.200       | 94 |             |       |              |

Note: \* denotes statistical significance at  $p < .05$

In fact, since there were only eight teachers from two schools which did not participate in SBA 2007 at all out of a total of ninety-five from twenty-one schools, the size sample might be too small to be representative, besides the low statistical significance found by one-way ANOVA. Although it might be possible that schools which did not join the scheme in the first year had been more hesitant about the scheme, the effect might have been overcome along with the actual operation as all schools had run at least a complete one-year cycle. While it is true teachers at these schools had less experience on SBA, results from 6.3.3 indicate that teachers' experience on SBA might not statistically significantly affect the SoC patterns. It is therefore not surprising to see that the differences based on schools' overall years of SBA experience were not statistically significant as well.

### **6.6 Question 5: *What Levels of Use were the teachers at with regards to the implementation of the SBA scheme?***

Figure 6.12 gives a summary of LoU of the eight teachers who participated in the in-depth interview part of the present study:

**Figure 6.12 LoU of the interviewees**

| LoU                              | Interviewee                   | Number |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| <b>0) Non-use</b>                | ---                           | 0      |
| <b>I) Orientation</b>            | ---                           | 0      |
| <b>II) Preparation</b>           | ---                           | 0      |
| <b>III) Mechanical Use</b>       | Eddy and Grace                | 2      |
| <b>IVA) Routine</b>              | Amy, Charles, Doris and Fanny | 4      |
| <b>IVB) Refinement</b>           | Betty                         | 1      |
| <b>V) Integration</b>            | Hannah                        | 1      |
| <b>VI) Renewal</b>               | ---                           | 0      |
| <b>Total no. of interviewees</b> |                               | 8      |

It can be seen that all of the interviewees were in fact users of the SBA scheme, which was not unexpected as the scheme was a mandatory component of the HKCEE English Language curriculum. Unlike in many other supposedly compulsory innovations where many teachers are still in LoU Levels 0, I or II in the first few years of their implementation, in SBA teachers must submit the scores to HKEAA and prepare an archive of performance samples for inspection. They would have to implement the scheme, at least in its minimum, irrespective of their attitude and readiness towards the scheme. Notwithstanding this lack of Levels 0, I or II users, the LoU distribution appeared to be convergent with findings in large-scale LoU research in which the majority of teachers fell in LoU Levels III and IVA after an innovation has been launched for more than two years (Hall & Loucks, 1977; Loucks, 1977; Hall & Pratt, 1983; Hall & Hord, 1984) although readers are cautioned about the low sample number and thus low generalization power of the LoU distribution of the present study<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, due to the absence of a fast paper-and-pen method to assess LoU, most LoU research typically does not include a large enough sample number that can be generalized in terms of distribution.

The study finds two LoU Level III Mechanical Users in their use of SBA—Eddy and Grace. While Eddy was a new teacher fresh in both SBA scheme and the teaching profession, Grace had been teaching HKCEE English Language for four years and was in her second year of use of SBA. Since there is a general expectation that teachers' LoU would proceed up to Level IVA as experience is accumulated (Hall, 1977), Grace seemed to be slightly lagging behind other teachers with similar experience though as mentioned in 3.2.2, previous CBAM research (e.g. Dirksen, 2002; Dirksen & Tharp, 1997, 1999; Graber, 2006) shows that most teachers would require two to three years to progress beyond Level III. It is, however, interesting to note that the other two teachers who were new to SBA, Amy and Charles, had already progressed to Level IV Routine. As pointed out by previous research (Dirksen, 2002; Marsh, 1987; Newhouse, 1999; Thornton & West, 1999), movement to higher LoU beyond Level III requires resources, leadership and training and time was not the only factor. The process can be best facilitated through personal coaching (Loucks & Melle, 1980). Failure to provide necessary support to LoU Level III users may cause prolonged stress, drain them and result in less effective configurations of the innovation and in the end, less effective outcomes (Hall & Hord, 1987). That Grace was very stressed and had been very much drained in her implementation of SBA is evident in her descriptions and comments towards the scheme in the interview. "After all, if you teach Form 4 or 5, you're dead" may be the best quote demonstrating her helplessness in SBA and certainly she could use a lot of support, be it resources, leadership or training, from the authority, the school and her colleagues.

Half of the interviewees were found to be in their LoU Level IVA Routine use of SBA, within the range of what is considered typical in LoU studies (Hall &



Loucks, 1977). According to Hall & Hord (1987), at a given point of time, the Level IVA users can be further divided into three groups rather equally in proportion: (a) “careers” LoU IVA users who would just stay at Routine for their whole careers, (b) users “resting” at Routine from their earlier Mechanical LoU and (c) users who once again return to Routine after having implemented LoU Level IVB, V or VI changes. Since the present study is static in nature and provides only a snapshot of teachers’ LoU in SBA, it is not possible to judge which category of LoU IVA users they belonged to without data of their previous LoU and their changes. It would be a worthwhile future venture to follow this issue and find out whether such a distinction exists in teachers implementing SBA at LoU IVA and what factors would contribute to such a distinction.

Betty and Hannah were two teachers with LoU beyond Level IVA found in the present study. Both teachers were key persons in the English Language department and in SBA scheme—Betty was the SBA coordinator whereas Hannah was the head of department cum SBA and Secondary Five coordinator. Although in theory, assumption of leadership positions is not a required condition for advancement in LoU, it is often the case that these teachers, due to their roles, are naturally more attuned about reviewing and changing practices, collaborative use or renewing or replacing the innovation than other teachers. For example, as found in the present study, Betty, as the SBA coordinator, was responsible for the implementation of the scheme and therefore had been constantly re-planning, reviewing and revising its various components. Hannah, as the head of department, was heavily involved in personnel and project management and therefore was seen actively collaborating with colleagues both within and outside the department to

make the SBA scheme work for her school. There is thus no surprise that they led others in LoU.

As mentioned earlier, Amy and Charles, despite their relatively short SBA experience, had already progressed to LoU Level IVA Routine use. Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin & Hall (1987) caution that some users may advance quickly to Level IVA by “implementing a less than ideal configuration of the innovation and then stabilizing their performance at that level” (p. 67) and compromising the quality of the innovation. It is therefore necessary not to judge implementation by looking at LoU only but also by considering the implemented configurations of the innovation.

### **6.7 Question 6: *What variations could be found in the implementation of major components of the SBA scheme?***

Figures 5.44 - 5.49 show that there were huge variations in the ways different teachers and schools implemented the SBA scheme in terms of six major components.

#### **6.7.1 Component 1: Assessment operation**

While about half of the teachers interviewed conducted the SBA assessments during their lesson time, the rest might do them after school, on Saturdays, or still within school time but in periods that were specially set out for the purpose of the assessments. There were merits and shortcomings in both treatments. When the assessment was conducted during English lessons, some teachers felt that classroom management—having all students to sit quietly to listen to the examinee could be a big problem. It would also be awkward and difficult to have the rest of the class sitting there and listen in the group discussion mode of assessment. Betty, for

example, in the first two years actually split the class into groups and took only one group at time for the assessment. However, she and her colleagues found the practice too troublesome and had switched to running it after school:

Betty: Er, in the first 2 years, we had it during class time. So say you're the class teacher, you'll take a group from your class and follow them. And the rest of the class will be supervised by a Teacher Assistant. But later, we found that this arrangement is quite troublesome. So now we put it after school. We can have 3 classrooms booked after school, and I get some colleagues to help supervise the students. Also er, another reason why we put it after school is that we wanted it to be more like an exam. It's because it's our school's practice to have oral examination after school, and there's a preparation room, and there's an examination room. So we just do it this way.

She also added that the new arrangement is more preferred because it is more like an exam. The thinking is very much in line with the feeling that examination and its pressure may be a good pushing force to students to be more "serious" and prepare better for assessments although paradoxically it is working against the aim for SBA to lessen students' pressure.

However, for the assessment to take place not in the original English Language lessons, finding a suitable time and its related logistical arrangements could be a big headache, not to mention the complexity added when teachers had to deal with questions and complaints from parents and also teachers of other subjects or taking charge of sports teams and other extra-curricular activities.

Amy: Every time you arrange an assessment, you've got to do many things, a lot of stuff to take care of. Say for example you'll need to arrange the classroom, and then fill in the forms; all these in fact have taken away a lot of time from us....

Er, that last time we did this, we, er, what did we get? **We had it done on a Saturday, and so all the ECA (extra-curricular activities) were cancelled** and we warned them and told them that they must come, or else they'd receive no mark in the internal scores [submitted to the examination board]. And so **they were all very serious** in taking the SBA. And then there's once we **combined it [the SBA] into our school's internal yearly exam**. For us it's saving us much time. Also, fewer teachers complained us about our **interference to their ECAs**, and there was no time clash. Because, we did think about doing it after school, but er, they have a lot of activities after school. Some also have to go home, some live really far away, some are from the outlying islands and have to rush for the ferry. They have thousands of reasons of various different types. And **if you have to keep them here, it's difficult**. So now that they are combined, er, I find it good that at least my students are motivated so far.

Amy shared her experience and explained how her school finally solved these problems by combining the SBA assessment with the internal school examination which gave it a higher official status to shun off the quires and complaints. It is also noted how the idea of making it more official will make the students more serious and motivated in assessment echoes again here.

### ***6.7.2 Components 2 & 3: Choice of books and movies and grouping mechanism***

The majority of the interviewees' schools gave some degree of freedom to their students as to the choice of books and movies although this autonomy could sometimes create difficulties in the operation of the SBA group discussion assessment.

Amy: It's [The discussion's] so stupid, and I don't know, actually there's no reason you won't know. It's because it asks **the students, each of them watch different movies, different books, and then they sit round and discuss. It just doesn't make any sense at all.** It's like sitting together, **hey how's your**

**character, and this is my character.** So I think if you really, if you want to have a presentation, if you ask them to introduce something they like to you, I think it's very workable. And presentation skills are very useful to them in future. Discussion, er, we, if you look at the public exam, there's, at least there's a problem they have to solve. But now **you suddenly ask them to talk about a book, and in fact, when you ask them to sit and do it, you can see that they're more like giving a presentation.**

As students did not read the same book(s) or view the same movie(s), it was impossible to find a common ground for discussion. Worse, the students could not interact naturally because they might have no idea what the other students were talking about if they had no previous knowledge about the book(s) or movie(s). As to the suggestion to group students by themes or genres to make the discussion more workable, Amy believed that it was more important to let students enjoy the reading or viewing than giving too many constraints. Rather she suggested HKEAA should consider cutting the discussion task and using only presentations.

A few schools did however choose to limit students' choice so that students in the same grouping would read or view the same materials and be able to achieve more fruitful discussions. Doris' school even took the idea further, grouped the students according to their ability and gave them different materials:

Fanny: We'll let the students to choose their books or movies. In fact we do give them some restrictions. We often, um... **they have 3 books and they'll have to choose one from them.** The reason is that because first we bought the books for the students, so they don't need to pay extra. Second we feel that students may not know what books are suitable for them so that's why we do this. It will be easier, easier when we group them. Yes, we have the same arrangement for both print and non-print materials.

So I think then **they can have real interactions.** I've seen some have different books and actually they

cannot have a... for example **they need to have the same thing to discuss in order to come to a consensus.** So I think under this situation, we'll use the same book to do this, yes.

Doris: We have **6 sets of books** and we'll take turn. And because we have 6 different groups, we have **divided students into 6 groups according to their English language ability.** And so they'll take turn to read these books and **the books in each set will be rotated.**

Hannah's school was at the other end of the variation spectrum. Drawn from the experience of SBA in the past few years, her school had decided to assign set books and movies and require the students to use them in the assessments.

Hannah: At the beginning we chose a few and then allowed students to choose. But now we've changed it so that we'll pick the book for them. **We'll look at their ability and then choose one that is appropriate.**

Not only was the arrangement simpler, the school could also see to that students would use materials of an appropriate level of difficulty and in suitable content. It might also be easier to assist and guide students to do the assessment tasks and go through the book or movie with the students in lesson, which was a great help to schools with students of very low abilities.

### ***6.7.3 Component 4: Preparation for assessment***

The majority of schools gave students the actual question for assessment a few days before to allow preparation. For schools which released the question only minutes before the assessment, all except one in fact gave sample questions to students beforehand in trial practices and told them explicitly that the actual questions would be very similar. Teachers felt that the allowance of home preparation had motivated their students and made the SBA scheme a worthwhile

experience. Betty, for example, described excitedly how even her weaker students would come to her and volunteer questions as a result of the arrangement:

Betty: And er, you're also see that they'll, they'll become more concerned. Yes, even for my weakest class, they're also very concerned about it. If you'll, you'll. **Before the exam, they'll come and ask: 'Miss, can you come quickly, come and teach me how I should say this?' 'I can't tell you.' 'Well, You can just see it a sharing.'** (laughter). So I can see that they're more serious about it. They'll go online and search for information.

Similarly, Hannah believed that the built-in preparatory and guidance element in SBA had paved a road for her very weak students who would otherwise fail right away if such element was not present:

Hannah: Because according to the guidelines from EDB and also the level of our school, we'll choose 3 days, yes, that is 3 days for them would be a reasonable time because they are really very weak. **Because if, actually we've predicted, if I give the question on the first day and then they'll have to present on the next, then they'll have a zero chance.** So we prefer giving them, it's only 3 days at most. So we'll give them the question to prepare and then they'll come back and have the SBA assessment.

Interviewer: So far how do you think your students have preformed?

Hannah: Em.. **unexpectedly**, in fact, that is train... that is we have this assessment, the mock assessment and after training, their performance are very, **I can't say they can get very high marks but at least they can get some marks, and some can get for example a Level 3 or 4** [out of a total of 6].

#### ***6.7.4 Components 5 & 6: Integration into teaching and teachers' collaboration in SBA teaching***

It was found that many of the interviewees' schools had tried to incorporate the SBA scheme into everyday teaching by using class readers, journal writing,

teacher demonstration and trial practices throughout the school term although a few opted for block teaching, devoting one or two weeks to focus on only SBA materials to guide students to complete the SBA assessment tasks. Five of the schools also made use of set books or movies so that the SBA instruction would be more structured across the form and a few even devised standardized materials centring on set books or movies for all teachers to follow.

Despite the use of set books or movies and even centralized materials for SBA instruction in some schools, only very limited collaboration among teachers was found in most cases. Other than in Hannah's school where collaborative teaching and collaborative lesson planning were established as a school practice, teachers in other schools did not collaborate much in the implementation of SBA except perhaps discussion at the few department meetings and SBA standardization meetings held in a year.

In fact, when introducing the SBA scheme, HKEAA and the Education Bureau focused their attention mainly on the assessment component of the scheme, detailing its mandatory assessment conditions, standardizing assessment procedures and scores but very little was explained on how the scheme should be integrated in the teaching of English Language in everyday lessons, let alone how the whole school should work together to bring an impact on students. Notwithstanding the scheme's intention to bring washback and change the existing examination-focused classroom practices of English Language teaching, the instruction of SBA in many schools is still stocked with drills and trial practices for the final SBA assessment. The SBA scheme lists "enhancing collaboration and sharing of expertise within and across schools" (HKEAA, 2006e, p.8) as part of its aim. However, without enough



guidelines and more importantly pushing forces on this area, it is only wishful thinking that this would happen if there has not been a framework of collaboration and sharing already established in the school structure itself.

#### 6.7.5 *Violating practices*

The study finds a total of three examples of direct violation to the mandatory assessment conditions set by HKEAA. Two were in the assessment operation component: in Fanny's school, only group discussions were used whereas Hannah's school used only presentations. It was not very clear whether the teachers understood that they were violating the conditions although both had given reasons to support their decisions:

Fanny: And actually, I am not sure, we actually only use the group discussion but we do not have presentations. This is because this [the discussion] is really, we feel, is really what they will have in the external Paper III Speaking examination, and is more connected. Because although in the external Speaking examination, there is also a one-minute presentation, but they say it's only for adjustments. The most important part in score awarding is still the discussion part. So I think, I am not sure, in fact it says schools can do these 2 tasks, so there is a room for negotiation and we are more inclined to do group discussion because we think that this training can really help them in the end to take, yes, the public exam, yes.

Hannah: The banding of our school is comparatively low so in fact for our students' benefits and also because of the limited time, so we mainly focus on individual presentations. We in fact very seldom do group discussions because their abilities can't really reach that level for group discussions.

The other violating practice found was in the component of choice of books and movies. Doris' school allowed students to freely choose their own movies,

including non-English ones, for the purpose of the SBA assessment, which in fact was not allowed according to the SBA Handbook. Doris was unsure about whether the practice was indeed a violation but allowed her students to do it anyway:

Doris: But they, well, **I don't know actually, can't they watch a Chinese film but present it in English?**  
Right. So these aren't really specified. So some of my students watch Japanese films. Or some watch those by Stephen Chow. (laughs). Like Cheung Jiang Seven.

The often vast variations among teachers in the implementation of the same innovation have long been an area of investigation in CBAM research and it was later evolved into the concept of Innovation Configurations (IC) and the avocation of the use of IC Maps, supplemented with the fidelity lines to list out and to distinguish among ideal, acceptable and unacceptable practices. In any large-scale implementation of an innovation, it is ordinary that teachers may be using some version of the innovation not accepted by the developers due to habits, ignorance, practical considerations or perhaps teachers' beliefs of what works best for their students. It is an important job to proactively watch out for these unacceptable variations and respond accordingly for successful implementation of an innovation. Sadly, in the case of the present SBA scheme, the authorities seemed rather blind to these malpractices which might have taken root in schools.

## Chapter 7      Conclusions

### 7.1    *The main research findings*

The present study sets out to examine the implementation of the HKCEE English Language SBA scheme, which was a new introduction to the Hong Kong Secondary School English Language curriculum, and wishes to investigate:

- i)      Hong Kong English Language teachers' perceptions and concerns toward the SBA scheme;
- ii)     how they implement the scheme; and
- iii)    their reflections on the implementation.

Using both questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews, it has collected a wide range of information concerning the three main research questions listed above and proceeded to analyzed and discussed in detail the data collected with reference to the six finer subsidiary questions dissected from the above three main research questions. The following is a summary of the key findings:

- ✧ The SBA scheme was mainly seen as an assessment initiative which encourages students to take part in meaningful English Language reading and speaking activities and exposes students to authentic use of English Language in the daily life.
- ✧ Many teachers were concerned about the issue of fairness and were afraid that the flexibility allowed and the subjective marking criteria might disadvantage their students.

- ✧ The majority of teachers did not think that the scheme had a high priority compared to other concerns they might have in their teaching. They felt that the scheme did not demand a lot of their attention as it had become part of many teachers' routine after its initial trial for three years and also because it was not a very important part of the curriculum. Many believed, in the end, it was the external examination papers which were more important.
- ✧ Despite the scheme being given a low priority, certain aspects of the scheme were found to have aroused heightened concerns from teachers, particularly in terms of informational, personal and management concerns. The average concerns pattern was similar to that of a typical innovation nonuser with the addition that management concerns had also been aroused during the course of implementing the scheme. The fact that informational and personal concerns had not been resolved even after three years of operation of the scheme could be seen as a wakening call to the authorities and strategies to address these two types of concerns were definitely needed.
- ✧ Teachers' background such as age and the charge of additional English Language related responsibilities and school factors such as medium of instruction and the banding of students intakes were found to have some effects on the teachers' concerns patterns. The findings might be useful for the authorities to focus on the needs of different groups of teachers and support them in the implementation accordingly.
- ✧ All interviewees were found to be users of the SBA scheme, which was expected as the scheme was a compulsory one. Six out of eight interviewees,

including two teachers who had only one year of experience in implementing the scheme, were identified as users beyond LoU Level III Mechanical Use. This suggests that the SBA scheme had achieved quite a high level of institutionalization three years after its initial introduction.

- ✧ The study finds considerable variations on the way the SBA scheme was operated in the interviewees' schools. While variations in the operation of an innovation are always expected and in the present case, many were well justified, there existed a few practices that were in direct violation to the criteria set by the authorities and were not acceptable. However, the authorities had not reported any violation so far and it was suspected that they were not aware of the malpractices given that the only monitoring the authorities had conducted was on the scores submitted. No attempt had been made to probe into the actual operation and to find out what was happening in the classroom, which is worrying, given the cases of violation found in the present study.
  
- ✧ Although some schools had attempted to integrate the SBA scheme into the everyday teaching of the English Language curriculum with the use of reading scheme, journal writing class readers and the like, the SBA instruction was often treated as a separate part of the curriculum. Besides, the instruction was oftentimes filled with drills and SBA assessment practices with the aim of ensuring that students could perform in the final SBA assessment tasks. To teachers, it was a task or a routine that they had to do. The scheme was implemented only minimally from bottom of many of the interviewees' schools.

- ✧ There were mixed attitudes towards the SBA scheme among the survey participants and the interviewees. While many agreed with the rationales of the scheme and felt that their students had improved as a result of its implementation, there were also doubts as whether the SBA scheme, or the present mode of the scheme, was the best way to achieve them. Cultural factors, problems of workload and students' standards were a few of the issues that were picked up as obstacles to the scheme's ideal actualization.

## **7.2 *Implications, recommendations and further research***

CBAM was developed under the premise that the implementation of an innovation involves more than changes in skills and behaviour but is also a process of growth in emotions and feelings. Findings from the present study show that affectively teachers were still at the early stage of trying to understand and coping with the personal and management demands of the SBA scheme whereas the LoU data suggests that the scheme had been much institutionalized if one looks at the behavioural side. The mismatch of the behavioural and affective domains in the implementation of the SBA scheme clearly indicates that there were problems that had not been addressed hidden under the seemingly high institutionalization. Examination on the operation of the different components of the SBA scheme also reveals that some practices, particularly in the areas of curriculum integration and teacher collaboration were less than ideal. All these point to the need for the authorities to monitor and review what is really happening at schools in the SBA implementation. It would be most useful if they could delegate colleagues to work with teachers on site in a few partnership schools to collect first-hand accurate information on how the scheme is being implemented in the classroom and teachers' and students' feedbacks towards it. Not only could this help the authorities to

review and improve the implementation, but the information collected could be consolidated into templates to be sent to all schools to help record the practice and experience to further monitor the implementing process.

In addition, the present study reveals that teachers at schools with mainly Band Three intakes were experiencing particular difficulties in implementing the SBA scheme. It was felt that the scheme was designed with the more able students in mind and was not targeted at their students who had very low ability and motivation in English Language. It would be necessary for the authorities to critically review the scheme guidelines and the materials they provided and provide detailed examples to help the teachers to understand how the scheme could be fine-tuned appropriately and acceptably to make the scheme work in their special circumstances.

The study also finds that the existing SBA seminars and sharing sessions were not very effective and did not attend to the need of teachers. Some even found them so unhelpful that they had stopped going to these sessions altogether. Besides reviewing and updating the contents, the authorities should rethink about the nature and functions of these meetings. Knowledge and skills are important to the successfully implementation of an innovation, but perceptions, attitudes and feelings are equally significant. Comments collected in the present study reflect that there was a high degree of uncertainty among teachers and a few also felt that their views had not been heard. The authorities should strengthen communication and provide assurances when necessary and these seminars and sharing sessions would be a good platform for them. The experience of the researcher in the present study was that teachers in fact had a lot to say about the SBA scheme and were happy to share them. They are rich ready resource which can well inform the authorities about the past, the present and the future of the SBA scheme.

Other than recommendations to the authorities in charge of the SBA scheme, the study also wishes to make a few recommendations for future research in the study of educational innovations:

- ✧ The present study has reported high internal consistency for all stages in SoCQ except Stage 0, which had a relatively low Cronbach's Alpha of .444. In fact, as discussed in 6.2.1, since Stage 0 has often been found to be the least internally consistent stage in many other studies where SoCQ is employed, it is essential for the CBAM research team and other researchers interested in SoCQ to conduct a thorough analysis on the Stage 0 items and check whether the problem stems from the statements used or there are flaws in the assumption to the construct of SoC Stage 0 Unconcerned. A revision of SoCQ Stage 0 items based on the results obtained and perhaps a modification to the conceptual framework of the construct will certainly help boost the reliability of the inventory and thus add to the validity of future research conducted using the CBAM.
- ✧ The present study has also reported an extremely high Stage 0 percentile score from mean (a score of 97) and has further found that 37.9% had a percentile score of 99. While it was expected that the Stage 0 scores might be higher when compared to the baseline stratified sample used in SoCQ scores interpretation because the baseline sample contained a proportion of nonuser teachers who were still at the initiate shock stage after the announcement of a major educational change, the figures were a bit too extreme. It might be that the extremely high scores were still warranted in the particular situation of the SBA scheme but the researcher would advise



an update of the baseline sample, given that the sample was from the 1970s, and also propose an expansion of the sample to include international samples as well.

- ✧ The present study has looked at the issue of collegiate collaboration in the SBA scheme and, convergent to the results of many studies on educational innovation, it was found that collaboration was more an issue of the change strategy and the structure of existing internal school system than a natural progression in implementation. The researcher would like to join Fennell (1992) and Anderson (1997) to urge an investigation on the issue to re-examine the appropriateness of its inclusion as a stage or a level in the SoC and LoU structures.
- ✧ The present study makes use of questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews as the main research methods. As discussed in 4.2, the use of multiple methods of data collection and the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative techniques complement each other and add strengths to the validity of the current study. One limitation, however, is that the study is relatively small in scale, with ninety-five from twenty-one schools and eight teachers from eight different schools having been involved in the survey and the interview parts of the study respectively. To enhance generalisability of the research findings, it would be a worthwhile undertaking for other better-resourced researchers who are interested in the implementation of the SBA scheme to repeat the present study with an expansion in the participant size as well.

- ✧ While the present study focuses on the implementation of the HKCEE English Language SBA scheme, it has been found that the education and school cultures in Hong Kong have great influences over the teachers' attitudes and uses of the innovation. It would also be valuable to examine teachers' uses and attitudes in implementing other new territory-wide initiatives and compare whether similar features of SoC and LoU profiles can be observed and whether comparable trends are found in the process of their implementation. The establishment of such a Hong Kong model of innovation implementation can advise policy makers and change facilitators in anticipating the issues and obstacles expected and in addressing teachers' needs and concerns more appropriately at the different stages of implementation as well.

### ***7.3 Reflections on the use of Concerns-based Adoption Model***

One key theoretical building block for the present research study is the Concerns-based Adoption Model developed by the University of Texas Research and Development Centre for Teacher Education. Despite the problems of the model indicated in the previous section, the researcher's experience in its utilization was on the whole positive. Stages of concern, for example, as a tool to monitor teachers' development in concerns over a specific education innovation, has been helpful in revealing the difficulties and obstacles teachers encountered in the SBA scheme from the teachers' point of view. While the general concerns profile revealed was out of phase with the teachers' behavioural implementation of the scheme, which might cast doubt on the universality of the progression of concerns as hypothesized in the CBAM theories, this discrepancy in

fact helped the researcher in identifying issues which underlined the actual implementation of the SBA scheme.

The second construct, level of use, was also helpful in describing teachers' use of the SBA scheme in their teaching in the present research. Besides the different labels of LoU which made the identification and categorization of teachers' use of the innovation feasible, the focused interview protocol it provides also allowed a systematic investigation of the many different aspects which the SBA scheme may entail. In fact, the difficulty of the analysis of the rich data gathered through the use of the protocol has been much reduced thanks to this structure provided.

Last, while the present study does not directly deal with Innovation Configurations, the third dimension of the CBAM, the construct offered a direction in the analysis and reporting of the various practices of the SBA scheme observed in the schools of the interviewees. The division of an innovation into its different major components and the idea of fidelity lines led the researchers to identify six major components where practices differed and to probe into some of the practices which were unacceptable based on the authority's specifications and guidelines.

Most renowned models in research are not remarkable because they are perfect. Rather, many of them have been heavily criticized with numerous loopholes and errors. These models, however, are valuable because they inspire other researchers in the pursuit of knowledge and truths in the area via perhaps a new perspective, an inventory, or even a wrong concept, which through its attack, enlightens understanding. Using CBAM, the researcher has found some results which he would term "interesting" and many more questions which are thought-provoking. The researcher believes that CBAM is a model

of promise and would recommend other researchers on education change and innovation to join in its use.

#### **7.4 *Closing remarks***

The present research study, from its initial generation of ideas and subsequent development of a research plan in 2005 and 2006, to data collection, analyses and finally writing up in 2010 and 2011, has covered a span of five years, within which considerable changes in the way wind blows concerning the HKCEE English Language SBA scheme have been witnessed. In 2005 and 2006, when the scheme was first started, there were huge debates about the scheme and media coverage was extensive. There were a lot of worries, doubts and opposing comments to the introduction of the scheme and a mass demonstration of teachers even broke out in February 2006 in opposition to the scheme. However, the heat of debate and opposition had much subsided in 2007 and when the data collection was conducted in 2008, the SBA scheme in fact seldom hit the headline of newspapers anymore. However, it was the time research on the SBA scheme flourished and quite a few research studies by both the authorities (e.g. Lee, 2008, representing HKEAA) and local researchers (e.g. Davison & Leung, 2009; Hamp-Lyons, 2009; Cheng, Andrews & Yu, 2011) have been conducted since then.

Now, in 2012, when the final report of the present study is near its completion, the scheme is not frequently mentioned, by either the media or academics. While it may be true that research or discussion on the SBA scheme might have lost its heat and popularity, it does not in any way diminish the importance of further investigation into the continual implementation of the scheme. The scheme is only five years old, and is merely leaving its infancy in the life-cycle of innovations. Teachers, schools and the authorities are only starting to review and reflect on their experience in implementing the

scheme. Many interesting developments may lie ahead and understanding of the state of teachers and operation of the scheme would always be the key to facilitate and support these developments. In fact, the literature on the SBA scheme previously mentioned all pointed to this need to study the scheme further, including its impacts on teachers and students (Davison & Leung, 2009), the need for educational and social activism as a criterion of success of the SBA scheme (Hamp-Lyons, 2009) and the interaction of parents' and students' perceptions on the scheme (Cheng, Andrews & Yu, 2011). As a closing remark, the researcher would like to join them in urging more attention and resources from the public and academic domains on research on the scheme. Only through this can the implementation be sustained and renewed for enhancement of effectiveness of the scheme.

## **Appendix A      Details on the assessment specifications of the four public examination papers of HKCEE English Language**

### **PAPER 1A READING**

Texts for this paper may be drawn from a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines, websites, short stories, government publications and promotional materials, and will be of the type commonly encountered in occupational, educational, social and recreational contexts.

Question types will include multiple-choice items, short responses and more extended open-ended responses, and may vary from year to year.

Candidates may be required to:

- follow and evaluate the development of a point or an argument;
- recognise the theme of a passage;
- decide what the mood of the writer or the tone of the passage is;
- locate or extract specific information from a passage, and relate it to a particular point or the whole passage;
- recognise what rhetorical functions (e.g. example, contrast, elaboration, generalisation) sentences perform in the development of a text;
- distinguish different points of view and arguments;
- find the implications and draw inferences from the passage;
- appreciate the writer's relation with the reader and attitude to the subject matter;
- understand how sentences and parts of a sentence relate to each other;
- decide the probable meaning of words and phrases through a study of the context by making use of previous experience of word meanings;
- understand the different types of meanings of words (e.g. denotation, connotation, collocation), and the semantic associations that exist among words (e.g. semantic fields, synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy);
- know what a word or phrase refers to in the previous or subsequent context;
- make use of knowledge of the world to make sense of the text;
- recognise how writing conventions such as punctuation marks affect meaning;
- complete or amend a text by supplying any missing words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs;
- demonstrate control of discourse features by pairing, matching or ordering sentences or paragraphs to produce a coherent text.

### **PAPER 1B WRITING**

Candidates are reminded that in order to achieve successful written communication, they need to consider the following:

- appropriacy to context;
- awareness of reader(s);
- impact on the reader(s): interest, style, and so on;
- expression of rhetorical functions: generalisation, elaboration, explanation, definition, classification, illustration, hypothesis, deduction, implication, restatement, concession, reason, cause, consequence, comparison, contrast, summary, conclusion, and so on;
- sense of purpose of writing: informing someone about something, making a proposal, appealing for something, considering an issue, changing somebody's mind, advising somebody, telling a story, defending/explaining a decision or action, persuading somebody to do something, and so on;
- management of types of writing: analytical, expressive, descriptive, persuasive, argumentative, narrative and so on;
- use of conventions of common formats: letters, articles, reports, speeches, stories and so on;
- development of an organised and cohesive text;
- correct use of language: language patterns, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.

### **PAPER 2 LISTENING AND INTEGRATED SKILLS**

Listening task types may include taking messages, writing short notes, filling in forms, and so on.

The writing tasks will require candidates to select and integrate information relevant to the task from the written and/or spoken material provided.

The written material may be in a variety of styles and formats, ranging in content from factual information to the expression of attitudes, opinions and beliefs. This material may be in prose form or be presented graphically, in tables, graphs, flow charts, pictures, and so on.

The spoken material may be in the form of conversations, interviews, lectures, telephone messages and so on.

The tasks in this paper may involve writing, editing, amending or rewriting texts in the production or completion of one or more of the following:

- letters or replies to letters,
- memos,
- reports,
- summaries,
- articles,

- texts for talks or speeches,
- diary entries,
- instructions,
- maps, tables, charts, and so on.

All tasks will be contextualised, i.e. all the information needed for completing the tasks will be provided in the written and spoken material, and the communicative purpose will be stated. In the completion of the writing tasks, candidates should take into consideration the advice given in Paper 1B Writing.

## **PAPER 3 SPEAKING**

### **Part A Group discussion**

Candidates will be examined in groups of four by two examiners. Before taking part in the group discussion, each candidate will be given five minutes to read the information provided and to make notes. After the preparation, candidates will work together on the assigned discussion task. This may involve them in:

- expressing, eliciting and responding to ideas, opinions and feelings;
- asking for and giving clarification;
- supporting and developing each other's views;
- disagreeing and offering alternatives;
- summing up the points made; and
- redirecting the discussion if necessary.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate appropriate interaction skills and make a balanced contribution without either dominating the discussion or being too reticent. They will not be allowed to take notes during the discussion but may refer to the notes made during the preparation time.

### **Part B Individual response**

After the group discussion, each candidate will need to interact individually with an examiner and respond to the examiner's question(s), which will be based on the group discussion task. The examiner will ask at least one question but may ask follow-up questions depending on the candidate's response. Candidates can make use of the information derived from the group discussion in formulating their answers, or express new ideas and opinions.



## Appendix B Sample assessment tasks of HKCEE English Language SBA

### Sample Task 1

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Name of Task: An interesting character (for lower ability learners)</b>  |   |   |  |
| <b>Oral Text-type:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> individual presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> interaction   |   |   |  |
| <b>Communication Functions:</b>   |   |   |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> describing  | <input type="checkbox"/> reporting  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> explaining  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> discussing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> classifying  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> comparing   | <input type="checkbox"/> persuading   | <input type="checkbox"/> others: _____   |
| <b>Audience--teacher plus:</b>  |   | <b>Targeted audience:</b>   | <b>Role(s) of audience:</b>  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a student partner   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fellow students   | <input type="checkbox"/> giving non-verbal responses only  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> small groups   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> students from other classes  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> questioning/commenting   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> class  |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> teacher(s)  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> interacting with no limitations  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more than one class  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> others: _____  |  |
| <b>Where on this continuum would you place the task?</b>  |   |   |  |
| <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex-grow: 1; border-top: 1px solid black; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; left: -10px; top: -5px;">←</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: -10px; top: -5px;">→</div> </div> </div>   |   |   |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spontaneous, informal dialogue, e.g. small group interaction  | <input type="checkbox"/> interactive, planned yet dialogic, e.g. semi-formal group report, interactive factual report | <input type="checkbox"/> individual long turn of planned, spoken text, e.g. news reporting, story telling | <input type="checkbox"/> individual long turn that is planned, cohesive, organized, formal, e.g. spoken report, a speech |
| <b>This task is suitable for use with the following genre(s):</b>   |   |   |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> print/non-print fiction   |   |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> print/non-print biography/autobiography  |   |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> factual books/documentaries on common topics, e.g. sports, hobbies, travel   |   |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> books/films on real life issues, e.g. environmental, social, economic  |   |   |  |
| <b>Preparation:</b>   |   |   |  |
| Ask students to think of an interesting character from a story or a film they recently read/viewed. Have them write down the personalities/characteristics of the interesting character on a note card in point-form and bring it to class. Prepare a handout (see Appendix 1) for each student.  |   |   |  |
| <b>Description of pre-assessment activities:</b>  |   |   |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distribute and discuss the handout (Handout I) with students.</li> <li>2. Have students work in pairs for 5 minutes and think of other possible questions to add on the handout.</li> <li>3. Ask students to make good use of the note card they prepared.</li> <li>4. Invite students to share their questions.</li> <li>5. Write down the additional questions on the blackboard and try to elicit some possible answers from the students.</li> <li>6. Ask students to write down some of the additional questions on the blackboard onto their handouts.</li> <li>7. Ask students to hold a pair discussion using the handout as reference.</li> <li>8. Encourage students to compare and contrast their chosen characters during the interaction.</li> </ol> |   |   |  |
| <b>Planned SBA Task:</b>  |   |   |  |
| Ask students to compare another character from the book/film they read/viewed with a partner. They may use a single note card for support and reference.  |   |   |  |
| <b>Tips/comments:</b>   |   |   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This assessment task is relatively simple and suitable for weaker students who need extra support and guidance to hold an interaction.</li> <li>• You may ask students to provide some background information about the book/film they read/viewed before the interaction begins. See the basic book review questions in Handout II for reference.</li> </ul>  |   |   |  |

## Handout I (for Sample Task 1)

### Stimulation for Interaction

**Tell me about an interesting character in your book:**

1. Is your character old or young? He/She is \_\_\_\_\_  
old/young/in-between OR  
a child/a teenager/a grown-up/an old person

Followed by an appropriate response-turn, e.g. “\*My\* character isn’t young. He’s old.” Or, “My character is also young, but he is wise because...”

2. Is your character clever or silly? He/She is clever/silly/quite clever/sometimes a bit silly/ etc.

I don't think my character is as clever as yours; I think she is quite silly because...

3. Is your character adventurous or nervous? He/She is \_\_\_\_\_  
very adventurous/quite adventurous/  
sometimes nervous / etc.

**I think my character is very adventurous. He likes to hunt for wild animals in the woods.**

4. Is your character courageous or timid? He/She is very courageous/ timid/ shy /etc.

I think my character is....

### Additional Questions:

## Handout II (for Sample Task 1)

**Book Review Questions**

## Basic questions:

1. What is the title of your book?
2. Is the book hard or easy for you, or about right?
3. What type of book is it? (science fiction, biography, romance, adventure, detective, horror, etc.)
4. If your book is a story, when and where does the story take place (or happen)?
5. What is the book about?/What is the story about?
6. Why do you like/dislike about this book?
7. What did you learn from this book?
8. How long did it take you to read the book?

---

Other questions (Your partner may ask you some of these questions or other additional questions)


## Fiction:

9. Who is your favourite character? Why do you like him/her?
10. If you can talk to one character in the story, whom will you talk to? What questions will you ask them?
11. Have you ever experienced something similar to what happens in the story?
12. Do you know anyone who is/are like the character(s) in the story?
13. Do you like the ending? Why or why not?
14. Have you changed your opinion about certain things/values after reading the book?

## Non-fiction:

15. Why did you choose to read a book on this topic? (e.g. marine life)
16. What is the most interesting part/thing you have read? Can you give me some examples?
17. Will you go on reading books on this area and recommend them to your friends? Why/ Why not?
18. If I want to know more about this subject (e.g. marine life, whales...), where can I get more information?

## Sample Task 2

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Name of Task: Choosing a gift for a character</b><br><b>Oral Text-type:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> individual presentation <input type="checkbox"/> interaction  |  |  |  |
| <b>Communication Functions:</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> describing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> reporting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> explaining <input type="checkbox"/> discussing<br><input type="checkbox"/> classifying <input type="checkbox"/> comparing <input type="checkbox"/> persuading <input type="checkbox"/> others: _____   |  |  |  |
| <b>Audience--teacher plus:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> a student partner<br><input type="checkbox"/> small groups<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> class<br><input type="checkbox"/> more than one class   |  | <b>Targeted audience:</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fellow students<br><input type="checkbox"/> students from other classes<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> teacher(s)<br><input type="checkbox"/> others: _____ |  |
| <b>Role(s) of audience:</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> giving non-verbal responses only<br><input type="checkbox"/> questioning/commenting<br><input type="checkbox"/> interacting with no limitations   |  |  |  |
| <b>Where on this continuum would you place the task?</b><br><div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 22%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> spontaneous, informal dialogue, e.g. small group interaction         </div> <div style="width: 22%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> interactive, planned yet dialogic, e.g. semi-formal group report, interactive factual report         </div> <div style="width: 22%;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> individual long turn of planned, spoken text, e.g. news reporting, story telling         </div> <div style="width: 22%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> individual long turn that is planned, cohesive, organized, formal, e.g. spoken report, a speech         </div> </div>                                  |  |  |  |
| <b>This task is suitable for use with the following genre(s):</b><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> print/non-print fiction<br><input type="checkbox"/> print/non-print biography/autobiography<br><input type="checkbox"/> factual books/documentaries on common topics, e.g. sports, hobbies, travel<br><input type="checkbox"/> books/films on real life issues, e.g. environmental, social, economic  |  |  |  |
| <b>Preparation:</b> Think of a character from a book or a film which students are familiar with. Prepare a short segment of the film or a short passage about the character.   |  |  |  |
| <b>Description of pre-assessment activities:</b><br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Give a quick summary of the story and highlight the character you have in mind.</li> <li>2 Tell students that they need to think of a gift for the character to help solve his/her problems, change his/her attitudes, improve his/her life conditions, etc. Show students a short segment of the film* or read a short passage about the character.</li> <li>3 Ask students to think of a gift for the character and explain their choices with reference to the information they just read or viewed.</li> <li>4 Ask students to share their ideas with a partner.</li> <li>5 Invite students to describe their gift and explain their choice to the whole class.</li> <li>6 During the presentation, students can conduct peer evaluations using the guidelines and evaluation form (Handout III) as reference.</li> </ol> |  |  |  |
| <b>Planned SBA Task</b><br>Ask students to prepare an individual oral presentation which provides information of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name of a book/film they have read or viewed on their own</li> <li>2. Author of the book OR Director/Script-writer of the film</li> <li>3. A short summary of the story/plot</li> <li>4. Description of the personalities of the characters and some events they are facing</li> <li>5. Description of the gift for the character</li> <li>6. Reasons for your choice.</li> </ol>  |  |  |  |
| <b>Tips/comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another pre-task: you might discuss what to give to a family member for Christmas or a festival that students celebrate and ask them to provide reasons for their choice.</li> <li>• Giving students opportunities to share their ideas with a partner in the pre-assessment activities can help prepare them to speak in front of the entire class at a later stage.</li> </ul>  |  |  |  |
| <b>Sources:</b><br>Adapted from: Julian Bamford's handouts at JALT 2003 on extensive reading classroom activities  |  |  |  |

## Handout III (for Sample Task 2)

| <b>Evaluation Forms</b>  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Form A</b>  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student Evaluation Form</b></p> <p><b>Class:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Name of presenter:</b> _____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p><b>Three things that I like about your presentation:</b></p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p><b>One thing that you can improve on:</b></p> <p>_____</p>   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Form B</b>  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student Evaluation Form</b></p> <p><b>Class:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Name of presenter:</b> _____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p><b>Three things that I like about your presentation:</b></p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><b>1. Pronunciation &amp; Delivery</b></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><b>2. Communication Strategies</b></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><b>3. Vocabulary &amp; Language Patterns</b></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;"><b>4. Ideas and Organisation</b></td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px 5px;">6</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;"><b>Total Score:</b> _____</p> | <b>1. Pronunciation &amp; Delivery</b> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | <b>2. Communication Strategies</b> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | <b>3. Vocabulary &amp; Language Patterns</b> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | <b>4. Ideas and Organisation</b> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <b>1. Pronunciation &amp; Delivery</b>   | 1   | 2                                      | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>2. Communication Strategies</b>   | 1   | 2                                      | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>3. Vocabulary &amp; Language Patterns</b>   | 1   | 2                                      | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>4. Ideas and Organisation</b>   | 1   | 2                                      | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |   |   |                                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Notes:**

- Keep the names of the student evaluators anonymous, so they can feel free to write down their honest evaluation.
- Encouraging the students to put down 3 positive written comments can ensure that each presenter will receive encouragement and praise from their peers. Something as simple as “You look very confident” will help students realize that their hard work and preparation are being recognized. Tell students in advance that the main goal of the evaluation form is to help their peers to do better next time, and not to criticize their performance.
- Form A is suitable for students who are not familiar with the assessment criteria. It may be used for S4 students.
- Form B should be used along with the assessment criteria set out by the HKEAA. It may be more suitable for S5 students who are more familiar with the assessment criteria.
- To make the peer assessment more manageable, you may take one of the following approaches:
  - Divide the class into groups of 4-5. Ask each group to submit only one completed evaluation form
  - Split the class. Send half of the class to the library for self study or silent reading, so they do not have to watch all 40 presentations in class. You may ask students to fill in an evaluation form in groups or individually.

(The University of Hong Kong, n.d., pp. 2, 8, 34, 36, 38)

## Appendix C SBA marking descriptors

### a) SBA Assessment Criteria for Group Interaction

|   | I. Pronunciation & Delivery  | II. Communication Strategies  | III. Vocabulary & Language Patterns   | IV. Ideas & Organisation  |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| 6 | <p><b>Can</b> project the voice appropriately for the context.</p> <p><b>Can</b> pronounce all sounds/sound clusters and words clearly and accurately.</p> <p><b>Can</b> speak fluently and naturally, with very little hesitation, and using intonation to enhance communication.</p>   | <p><b>Can</b> use <b>appropriate</b> body language to <b>display and encourage</b> interest.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use a <b>full range</b> of turn-taking strategies to initiate and maintain <b>appropriate</b> interaction, and <b>can draw others</b> into extending the interaction (e.g. by summarising for others' benefit, or by redirecting a conversation); <b>can avoid the use of narrowly-formulaic expressions</b> when doing this.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> use a wide range of accurate vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use varied and highly accurate language patterns; minor slips do not impede communication.</p> <p><b>Can</b> self-correct effectively.</p>   | <p><b>Can</b> express a <b>wide range</b> of relevant information and ideas without any signs of difficulty.</p> <p><b>Can</b> consistently <b>respond effectively</b> to others, sustaining and extending a conversational exchange.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use the <b>full range of questioning and response levels</b> (see Framework of Guiding Questions) to engage with peers.</p>   |
| 5 | <p><b>Can</b> project the voice appropriately for the context.</p> <p><b>Can</b> pronounce all sounds/sound clusters clearly and almost all words accurately.</p> <p><b>Can</b> speak fluently with only occasional hesitation, and using intonation to enhance communication, giving an overall sense of natural nonnative language.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> use <b>appropriate</b> body language to <b>display and encourage</b> interest.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use a <b>good range</b> of turn-taking strategies to <b>initiate and maintain</b> appropriate interaction (e.g. by encouraging contributions from others' in a group discussion, by asking for others' opinions, or by responding to questions); <b>can mostly avoid the use of narrowly-formulaic expressions</b> when doing this.</p>                                  | <p><b>Can</b> use varied and almost always appropriate vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use almost entirely accurate and appropriate language patterns.</p> <p><b>Can</b> usually self-correct effectively.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> express relevant information and ideas clearly and fluently.</p> <p><b>Can respond appropriately</b> to others to <b>sustain and extend</b> a conversational exchange.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use a <b>good variety of questioning and response levels</b> (see Framework of Guiding Questions).</p>   |
| 4 | <p><b>Can</b> project the voice mostly satisfactorily.</p> <p><b>Can</b> pronounce most sounds/sound clusters and all common words clearly and accurately; less common words can be understood although there may be articulation errors (e.g. dropping final consonant clusters).</p> <p><b>Can</b> speak at a deliberate pace, with some hesitation but using sufficient intonation conventions to convey meaning.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> use <b>some features of appropriate</b> body language to encourage and display interest.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use a <b>range of appropriate</b> turn-taking strategies to participate in, and <b>sometimes initiate</b>, interaction (e.g. by responding appropriately to others' comments on a presentation, by making suggestions in a group discussion).</p> <p><b>Can</b> use <b>some creative as well as formulaic</b> expressions if fully engaged in interaction.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> use mostly appropriate vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use language patterns that are usually accurate and without errors that impede communication.</p> <p><b>Can</b> self-correct when concentrating carefully, or when asked to do so.</p>                         | <p><b>Can</b> present relevant literal ideas clearly with well-organised structure.</p> <p><b>Can often respond appropriately</b> to others; <b>can sustain and may extend</b> some conversational exchanges</p> <p><b>However: Can</b> do these things less well when attempting to respond to interpretive or critical questions, or <b>can</b> interpret information and present elaborated ideas, but at these questioning levels coherence is not always fully controlled.</p> |
| 3 | <p><b>Volume</b> may be a problem.</p> <p><b>Can</b> pronounce all simple sounds clearly but some errors of sound clusters; less common words may be misunderstood unless supported by contextual meaning.</p> <p><b>Can</b> speak at a careful pace and use sufficient basic intonation conventions to be understood by a familiar and supportive listener; hesitation is present.</p>                                  | <p><b>Can</b> use appropriate body language to <b>show attention</b> to the interaction.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use <b>appropriate but simple and formulaic</b> turn-taking strategies to participate in, and <b>occasionally initiate</b>, interaction (e.g. by requesting repetition and clarification, or by offering praise).</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> use simple vocabulary and language patterns appropriately and without errors that impede communication.</p> <p><b>Can</b> sometimes self-correct simple errors.</p> <p><b>May suggest a level of proficiency above 3 but has provided too limited a sample.</b></p> | <p><b>Can</b> present <b>some relevant ideas sequentially</b> with <b>some links</b> among their own ideas and with those presented by others.</p> <p><b>Can</b> respond to some simple questions and <b>may be able to expand these responses when addressed directly.</b></p>   |

|   |  |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 2 | <p><b>Volume</b> may be a problem.<br/> <b>Can</b> pronounce simple sounds/sound clusters well enough to be understood most of the time; common words can usually be understood within overall context.<br/> <b>Can</b> produce familiar stretches of language with sufficiently appropriate pacing and intonation to help listener's understanding.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> use <b>appropriate</b> body language <b>when especially interested</b> in the group discussion or <b>when prompted to respond</b>.<br/> <b>Can</b> use <b>simple but heavily formulaic</b> expressions to respond to others (e.g. by offering greetings or apologies).</p> | <p><b>Can</b> appropriately use vocabulary drawn from a limited and very familiar range.<br/> <b>Can</b> use some very basic language patterns accurately in brief exchanges.<br/> <b>Can</b> identify some errors but may be unable to self-correct.<br/> <b>Provides a limited language sample.</b></p> | <p><b>Can</b> express <b>some simple relevant information</b> and ideas, sometimes successfully, and may expand some responses briefly.<br/> <b>Can</b> make some contribution to a conversation <b>when prompted</b>.</p> |
| 1 | <p><b>Volume</b> is likely to be a problem.<br/> <b>Can</b> pronounce some simple sounds and common words accurately enough to be understood.<br/> <b>Can</b> use appropriate intonation in the most familiar of words and phrases; hesitant speech makes the listener's task difficult.</p>   | <p><b>Can</b> use <b>restricted features</b> of body language <b>when required</b> to respond to peers.<br/> <b>Can</b> use <b>only simple and narrowly-restricted</b> formulaic expressions, and only to respond to others.</p>   | <p><b>Can</b> produce a narrow range of simple vocabulary.<br/> <b>Can</b> use a narrow range of language patterns in very short and rehearsed utterances.<br/> <b>A restricted sample of language makes full assessment of proficiency difficult.</b></p>  | <p><b>Can</b> occasionally produce <b>brief information and ideas</b> relevant to the topic.<br/> <b>Can</b> make some brief responses or statements <b>when prompted</b>.</p>   |
| 0 | <p><b>Does not</b> produce any comprehensible English speech.</p>  | <p><b>Does not</b> use any interactional strategies.</p>   | <p><b>Does not</b> produce any recognisable words or sequences.</p>   | <p><b>Does not</b> produce any appropriate, relevant material.</p>   |

## b) SBA Assessment Criteria for Individual Presentation

|   | I. Pronunciation & Delivery   | II. Communication Strategies   | III. Vocabulary & Language Patterns   | IV. Ideas & Organisation   |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| 6 | <p><b>Can</b> project the voice appropriately for the context.<br/> <b>Can</b> pronounce all sounds/sound clusters and words clearly and accurately.<br/> <b>Can</b> speak fluently and naturally, with very little hesitation, and using intonation to enhance communication.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> use appropriate body language to show focus on audience and to engage interest.<br/> <b>Can</b> judge timing in order to complete the presentation.<br/> <b>Can</b> confidently invite and respond to questions or comments when required for the task.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> use a wide range of accurate vocabulary.<br/> <b>Can</b> use varied and highly accurate language patterns; minor slips do not impede communication.<br/> <b>Can</b> choose appropriate content and level of language to enable audience to follow, without the use of notes.<br/> <b>Can</b> self-correct effectively.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> convey relevant information and ideas clearly and fluently without the use of notes.<br/> <b>Can</b> elaborate in detail on some appropriate aspects of the topic, and can consistently link main points with support and development.</p>                       |
| 5 | <p><b>Can</b> project the voice appropriately for the context.<br/> <b>Can</b> pronounce all sounds/sound clusters clearly and almost all words accurately.<br/> <b>Can</b> speak fluently with only occasional hesitation, and using intonation to enhance communication, giving an overall sense of natural nonnative language.</p>   | <p><b>Can</b> use appropriate body language to show focus on audience and to engage interest.<br/> <b>Can</b> judge timing sufficiently to cover all essential points of the topic.<br/> <b>Can</b> appropriately invite and respond to questions or comments when required for the task.</p>                                | <p><b>Can</b> use varied and almost always appropriate vocabulary.<br/> <b>Can</b> use almost entirely accurate and appropriate language patterns.<br/> <b>Can</b> choose content and level of language that the audience can follow, with little or no dependence on notes.<br/> <b>Can</b> usually self-correct effectively.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> convey relevant information and ideas clearly and well.<br/> <b>Can</b> elaborate on some appropriate aspects of the topic, and can link main points with support and development.</p>   |
| 4 | <p><b>Can</b> project the voice mostly satisfactorily.<br/> <b>Can</b> pronounce most sounds/sound clusters and all common words clearly and accurately; less common words can be understood although there may be articulation errors (e.g., dropping final consonant clusters).<br/> <b>Can</b> speak at a deliberate pace, with some hesitation but using sufficient intonation conventions to convey meaning.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> use appropriate body language to display audience awareness and to engage interest, but this is not consistently demonstrated.<br/> <b>Can</b> use the available time to adequately cover all the most essential points of the topic.<br/> <b>Can</b> respond to any well-formulated questions that arise.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> use mostly appropriate vocabulary.<br/> <b>Can</b> use language patterns that are usually accurate and without errors that impede communication.<br/> <b>Can</b> choose mostly appropriate content and level of language to enable audience to follow, using notes in a way that is not intrusive.<br/> <b>Can</b> self-correct when concentrating carefully, or when asked to do so.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> present relevant literal ideas clearly and in well-organised structure.<br/> <b>Can</b> expand on some appropriate aspects of the topic with additional detail or explanation, and can sometimes link these main points and expansions together effectively.</p> |

|   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| 3 | <p><b>Volume</b> may be a problem.</p> <p><b>Can</b> pronounce all simple sounds clearly but some errors of sound clusters; less common words may be misunderstood unless supported by contextual meaning.</p> <p><b>Can</b> speak at a careful pace and use sufficient basic intonation conventions to be understood by a familiar and supportive listener; hesitation is present.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> use some appropriate body language, displaying occasional audience awareness and providing some degree of interest.</p> <p><b>Can</b> present basic relevant points but has difficulty sustaining a presentation mode.</p> <p><b>Can</b> respond to any cognitively simple, well-formulated questions that arise.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> use simple vocabulary and language patterns appropriately and without errors that impede communication, but reliance on memorised materials or written notes makes language and vocabulary use seem more like written text spoken aloud.</p> <p><b>Can</b> choose a level of content and language that enables audience to follow a main point, but needs to refer to notes.</p> <p><b>Can</b> sometimes self-correct simple errors.</p> | <p><b>Can</b> present some relevant literal ideas clearly, and can sometimes provide some simple supporting ideas.</p> <p><b>Can</b> sometimes link main and supporting points together.</p>                    |
| 2 | <p><b>Volume</b> may be a problem.</p> <p><b>Can</b> pronounce simple sounds/sound clusters well enough to be understood most of the time; common words can usually be understood within overall context.</p> <p><b>Can</b> produce familiar stretches of language with sufficiently appropriate pacing and intonation to help the listener's understanding.</p>                        | <p><b>Can</b> use a restricted range of features of body language, but the overall impression is stilted.</p> <p><b>Can</b> present very basic points but does not demonstrate use of a presentation mode and is dependent on notes.</p> <p>Audience awareness is very limited.</p>   | <p><b>Can</b> appropriately use vocabulary drawn from a limited and very familiar range.</p> <p><b>Can</b> read notes aloud but with difficulty.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use some very basic language patterns accurately in brief exchanges.</p> <p><b>Can</b> identify some errors but may be unable to self-correct.</p>  | <p><b>Can</b> make an attempt to express simple relevant information and ideas, sometimes successfully, and can attempt to expand on a few points.</p> <p><b>Can</b> link the key information sequentially.</p> |
| 1 | <p><b>Volume</b> is likely to be a problem.</p> <p><b>Can</b> pronounce some simple sounds and common words accurately enough to be understood.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use appropriate intonation in the most familiar of words and phrases; hesitant speech makes the listener's task difficult.</p>  | <p>Body language may be intermittently present, but communication strategies appropriate to delivering a presentation are absent.</p> <p>The delivery is wholly dependent on notes or a written text. There is no evident audience awareness.</p>   | <p><b>Can</b> produce a narrow range of simple vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Can</b> use a narrow range of language patterns in very short and rehearsed utterances.</p> <p><b>A restricted sample of language makes full assessment of proficiency difficult.</b></p>   | <p><b>Can</b> express a main point or make a brief statement when prompted, in a way that is partially understandable.</p>  |
| 0 | <p><b>Does not</b> produce any comprehensible English speech.</p>   | <p><b>Does not</b> attempt a presentation.</p>  | <p><b>Does not</b> produce any recognisable words or sequences.</p>  | <p><b>Does not</b> express any relevant or understandable information.</p>  |

(HKEAA, 2006a, pp.31-32)



## Appendix D      Summary of the year-round SBA teaching and assessment process

The following summary is for teachers' reference only. Schools can tailor-make their own teaching and assessment plans according to the SBA requirements.

### Before or at the beginning of the S4 school year

- ☐ SBA coordinator and S4 teachers meet to plan the extensive reading / viewing scheme (based on existing ERS in junior forms if possible), the assessment schedule and professional development training
- ☐ Try to integrate SBA into the curriculum
  - Plan other teaching / learning activities in conjunction with the SBA e.g. writing and listening tasks
  - Reading and speaking skills learnt relevant to the reading and speaking exam papers
- ☐ Communicate with students and parents regarding the SBA requirements and assessment schedule
- ☐ Conduct survey to find out students' interest
- ☐ Recommend suitable text at students' level for extensive reading / viewing
  - Allow students to choose texts according to their interest
  - Three texts in two years, one each from three of the four categories
  - Texts should be selected according to the text selection criteria provided (see page 1 of the list of Recommended Texts on the HKEAA website)
  - Select from sample SBA assessment tasks provided (see Appendix II of Introductory DVD) or develop other suitable assessment tasks
  - Can prepare an SBA student handbook or logbook containing support materials to help students

### First term

- ☐ Select texts(s) to teach extensive reading / viewing skills and how to use the logbook
- ☐ Teach different kinds of oral communication skills
- ☐ Explain the assessment criteria by using a simplified version
- ☐ Show clips of students doing GI/IP; have students discuss and assess the students in the clips
  - Use clips from the introductory DVD or clips of own students
  - Video materials also available on the HKedCity SBA platform
- ☐ Practice doing a few pre-assessment tasks; record performances and give feedback to help students do better in their assessment task
- ☐ Teach students relevant self-assessment and peer-assessment skills
- ☐ Give students opportunities to self-assess and peer-assess their performances based on the assessment criteria
- ☐ Help students select appropriate texts for reading / viewing on their own
- ☐ Check logbooks occasionally to ensure that students are reading / viewing their texts
  - Logbooks do not need to be corrected or marked but some feedback is useful
  - Can give students help with pronunciation and language

Before the actual assessment

- All S4 teachers meet to view and discuss the Anchor Sets to ensure that they are familiar with the assessment criteria and standards
  - View some clips of own students for discussion and compare judgements
- Decide on assessment tasks and assessment schedule
- Can choose to conduct more than one assessment per year and report the best mark
- Prepare Assessment Record
  - Refer to the samples provided in the revised SBA Handbook
  - Can be downloaded from HKEAA website and adapted for own use

Second Term

- Actual assessment (either GI or IP)
  - Students must be familiar with the type of assessment task and the type of text
  - Students can be allowed to choose the texts they want to be assessed on if they have read / viewed more than the required number of texts
  - Can give students the general assessment task a few days in advance for preparation (length of time depends on nature of task and ability of students), but to avoid memorisation and extensive rehearsal the exact assessment task should be given shortly before the assessment
  - Students must be assessed by usual English subject teacher
  - Students should be given appropriate time to produce enough oral English to be assessed (about 2-3 minutes each)
  - Can be flexible with timing to cater to students' ability
  - Different assessment tasks can be given to students depending on their ability and the text they have read
  - For group interaction, students can be assessed in pairs or groups of three or four or more
  - Depending on the complexity of the task, about 15 minutes preparation time should be given before the actual assessment for students to make notes
  - Students can refer to their texts and logbooks during preparation
  - During the assessment students can only refer to note made on one 4x6 note card
  - Students can be given another assessment only if teacher suspects the work is not their own
  - Audio / video recording of at least nine students, three each with the best, average and lowest performance for standardisation and review purposes; more recordings can be made and used for feedback purposes
  - Recordings need not be of professional quality
  - Recordings do not need to be submitted to the HKEAA
  - Students scored according to the assessment criteria and scores recorded on the Assessment Record which is signed by the students and the teacher for authentication
  - Scores and other feedback should be given to students to help them do better in the next assessment
  - Help students choose other text(s) from a different category for the next assessment

Late June

- Students' scores are recorded on the Class Record
- All S4 teachers attend a formal within-school standardisation meeting chaired by the school SBA coordinator to standardise scores
  - Review video or audio recordings with reference to the Assessment Criteria
  - Adjustments to scores should be made if necessary to ensure fairness and standardisation
  - Should inform students if scores are adjusted

Late July

- School SBA coordinators attend district level inter-school meeting chaired by group coordinator for professional sharing and informal review
  - Review video or audio recordings
  - Share experience and good practices
  - Adjustments to scores are still possible at this stage, but not compulsory
- School SBA coordinator reports back to school SBA team
- Final scores reviewed by school SBA coordinator and submitted to HKEAA via principal

The whole process should be repeated in the first term of S5, with within-school and inter-school meetings conducted in February / early March and SBA marks submitted by the end of March.

(HKEAA, 2006e, pp.30-31)

## Appendix E      The interpretation of high and low scores for Stages of Concern

| <b>Stage 0: High and Low Scores</b>        |  |
|--|--|
| <b>High Stage 0</b>                        | Indicates a person who is not concerned about the innovation   |
| <b>Low Stage 0 &amp; High Other Stages</b> | Suggest intense involvement with the innovation  |
| <b>Low Stages 0-3</b>                      | Indicates an experienced user who is still actively concerned about the innovation   |
| <b>Stage 1 and 2: High and Low Scores</b>  |  |
| <b>High Stage 1</b>                        | Indicates a person who wants more information about the innovation   |
| <b>Low Stage 1</b>                         | Indicates respondents who feel they already know enough about the innovation   |
| <b>High Stage 2</b>                        | Suggests that respondents have intense personal concerns about the innovation and its consequences for them. Although these concerns reflects uneasiness regarding the innovation, they do not necessarily indicate resistance                 |
| <b>Low Stage 2</b>                         | Indicates that the person feels no personal threat in relation to the innovation   |
| <b>High Stage 1 &amp; Low Stage 2</b>      | Suggests that the person needs more information about the innovation. These respondents generally are open to and interested in the innovation   |
| <b>Low Stage 1 &amp; High Stage 2</b>      | Indicates a person who has self concerns. These individuals may be more negative towards an innovation and generally are not open to information about it  |
| <b>Stages 3 and 4: High and Low Scores</b> |  |
| <b>High Stage 3</b>                        | Indicates concerns about logistics, time and management  |
| <b>Low Stage 3</b>                         | Suggests that the person has minimal to no concerns about managing use of the innovation   |
| <b>High Stage 4</b>                        | Indicates concerns about the consequences of use of the innovation for students  |
| <b>Low Stage 4</b>                         | Suggests that the person has minimal concerns about the effects of the innovation on students  |
| <b>Stage 5: High Scores</b>                |  |
| <b>High Stage 5</b>                        | Suggests concerns about working with others in relation to use of the innovation. A person scoring high on Stage 5 and low on all other stages is likely to be an administer, coordinator, or team leader. Coordinating others is the priority |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>High Stage 5 with Some combination of Stages 3, 4 and 6 Also High</b> | Suggests concerns about a collaborative effort in relation to the other stages with high scores   |
| <b>High Stage 5 &amp; High Stage 1</b>                                   | Suggests a desire to learn from what others know and are doing, rather than a concern for leading the collaboration   |
| <b>Stage 6: High Scores</b>  |   |
| <b>High Stage 6 &amp; Low Stage 1</b>                                    | Indicates a person who is not interested in learning more about the innovation. The person is likely to feel that he or she already knows all about the innovation and has plenty of ideas for improving the situation  |
| <b>High Stage 6, High Stage 3 &amp; Low Stages 0-2</b>                   | Indicates a person who has become frustrated with not having Management concerns resolved and has developed strongly held ideas about how the situation should be changed. The high Stage 6 score indicates that the person has ideas about how to change the innovation or situation from his or her point of view |
| <b>Stage 6 Tailing-up for Nonusers</b>                                   | Suggests the person has strong ideas about how to do things differently. These ideas may be positive, but are more likely to be negative towards the innovation.  |

(George, Hall & Stiegelbauer, 2006, pp. 53, 54)

# Appendix F The Complete Level of Use Chart

## CATEGORIES

### SCALE POINT DEFINITIONS OF THE LEVELS OF USE OF THE INNOVATION

Levels of Use are distinct states that represent observably different types of behavior and patterns of innovation use as exhibited by individuals and groups. These levels characterize a user's development in acquiring new skills and varying use of the innovation. Each level encompasses a range of behaviors, but is limited by a set of identifiable Decision Points. For descriptive purposes, each level is defined by seven categories.

### KNOWLEDGE

That which the user knows about characteristics of the innovation, how to use it, and consequences of its use. This is cognitive knowledge related to using an innovation, not feelings or attitudes.

### ACQUIRING INFORMATION

Solicits information about the innovation in a variety of ways, including questioning resources persons, corresponding with resources agencies, reviewing printed materials, and making visits.

### SHARING

Discusses the innovation with others. Shares plans, ideas, resources, outcomes, and problems related to use of the innovation.

### LEVEL 0 NON-USE

State in which the user has little or no knowledge of the innovation, no involvement with the innovation, and is doing nothing toward becoming involved.

Knows nothing about this or similar innovations or has only very limited general knowledge of efforts to develop innovations in the area.

0

Takes little or no action to solicit information beyond reviewing descriptive information about this or similar innovations when it happens to come to personal attention.

0

Is not communicating with others about innovation beyond possibly acknowledging that the innovation exists.

0

### DECISION POINT A

*Takes action to learn more detailed information about the innovation.*

### LEVEL 1 ORIENTATION;

State in which the user has acquired or is acquiring information about the innovation and/or has explored or is exploring its value orientation and its demands upon user and user system.

Knows general information about the innovation such as origin, characteristics, and, implementation requirements.

I

Seeks descriptive material about the innovation. Seeks opinions and knowledge of others through discussions, visits or workshops.

I

Discusses resources needed in general terms and/or exchanges descriptive information, materials, or ideas about the innovation and possible implications of its use.

I

### DECISION POINT B

*Makes a decision to use the innovation by establishing a time to begin.*

### LEVEL II PREPARATION

State in which the user is preparing for first use of the innovation.

Knows logistical requirements, necessary resources and timing for initial use of the innovation, and details of initial experiences for clients.

II

Seeks information and resources specifically related to preparation for use of the innovation in own setting.

II

Discusses resources needed for initial use of the innovation. Joins others in pre-use training, and in planning for resources, logistics, schedules, etc., in preparation for first use.

II

### DECISION POINT C

*Changes, if any, and use are dominated by user needs. Clients may be valued, however management, time, or limited*

### LEVEL III MECHANICAL USE

State in which the user focuses most effort on the short-term, day-to-day use of the innovation with little time for reflection. Changes in use are made more to meet user needs than client needs. The user is primarily engaged in a stepwise attempt to master the tasks required to use the innovation, often resulting in disjointed and superficial use.

### KNOWLEDGE

Knows on a day-to-day basis the requirements for using the innovation, is more knowledgeable on short-term activities and effects than long-range activities and effects, of use of the innovation.

III

**ACQUIRING INFORMATION**  
Solicits management information about such things as logistics, scheduling techniques, and ideas for reducing amount of time and work required of user.

III

**SHARING**  
Discusses management and logistical issues related to use of the innovation. Resources and materials are shared for purposes of reducing management, flow and logistical problems related to use of the innovation.

III

### DECISION POINT D-1

*A routine pattern of use is established. Changes for clients may be made routinely, but there are no recent changes outside*

### LEVEL IV A ROUTINE

Use of the innovation is stabilized. Few if any changes are being made in ongoing use. Little preparation or thought is being given to improving innovation use or its consequences.

Knows both short- and long-term requirements for use and how to use the innovation with minimum effort or stress.

IVA

Makes no special efforts to seek information as a part of ongoing use of the innovation.

IVA

Describes current use of the innovation with little or no reference to ways of changing use.

IVA

### DECISIONS POINT D-2

*Changes use of the innovation based on formal or informal evaluation in order to increase client outcomes. They must be recent*

### LEVEL IV B REFINEMENT

State in which the user varies the use of the innovation to increase the impact on clients within his/her immediate sphere of influence. Variations are based on knowledge of both short- and long-term consequences of client.

Knows cognitive and affective effects of the innovation on clients and ways for increasing impact on clients.

IVB

Solicits information and materials that focus specifically on changing use of the innovation to affect client outcomes.

IVB

Discusses own methods of modifying use of the innovation to change client outcomes.

IVB

### DECISION POINT E

*Initiates changes in use of innovation based on input of and in coordination with what colleagues are doing.*

### LEVEL V INTEGRATION

State in which the user is combining own efforts to use the innovation with related activities of colleagues to achieve a collective impact on clients within their sphere of influence.

Knows how to coordinate own use of the innovation with colleagues to provide a collective impact on clients.

V

Solicits information and opinions for the purpose of collaborating with others in use of the innovation.

V

Discusses efforts to increase client impact through collaboration with others on personal use of the innovation.

V

### DECISION POINT F

*Begins exploring alternatives to or major modifications of the innovation presently in use.*

### LEVEL VI RENEWAL

State in which the user reevaluates the quality of use of the innovation, seeks major modifications of or alternatives to present innovation to achieve increased impact on clients, examines new developments in the field, and explores new goals for self and the system.

Knows of alternatives that could be used to change or replace the present innovation that would improve the quality of outcomes of its use.

VI

Seeks information and materials about others innovations as alternatives to the present innovation or for making major adaptations in the innovation.

VI

Focuses discussions on identification of major alternatives or replacements for the current innovation.

VI

### CATEGORIES

| ASSESSING<br>Examines the potential or actual use of the innovation or some aspect of it. This can be a mental assessment or can involve actual collection and analysis of data.               | PLANNING<br>Designs and outlines short- and/or long-range steps to be taken during process of innovation adoption, i.e., aligns resources, schedules activities, meets with others to organize and/or coordinate use of the innovation.  | STATUS REPORTING<br>Describes personal stand at the present time in relation to use of the innovation.  | PERFORMING<br>Carries out the actions and activities entailed in operationalizing the innovation.  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Takes no action to analyze the innovation, its characteristics, possible use, or consequences of use.  | Schedules no time and specifies no steps for the study or use of the innovation.   | Reports little or no personal involvement with the innovation.  | Takes no discernible action toward learning about or using the innovation. The innovation and/or its accoutrements are not present or in use.  |
| 0  | 0  | 0   | 0  |
| Analyzes and compares materials, content, requirements for use, evaluation reports, potential outcomes, strengths and weaknesses for purpose of making a decision about use of the innovation. | Plans to gather necessary information and resources as needed to make a decision for or against use of the innovation.   | Reports presently orienting self to what the innovation is and is not.  | Explores the innovation and requirements for its use by talking to others about it, reviewing descriptive information and sample materials, attending orientation sessions, and observing others using it.   |
| I  | I  | I   | I  |
| Analyzes detailed requirements and available resources for initial use of the innovation.  | Identifies steps and procedures entailed in obtaining resources and organizing activities and events or initial use of the innovation.   | Reports preparing self for initial use of the innovation.   | Studies reference materials in depth, organizes resources and logistics, schedules and receives skill training in preparation for initial use.   |
| II   | II   | II  | II   |
| <i>experimental knowledge dictate what the user does.</i>  |  |   |  |
| ASSESSING<br>Examines own use of the innovation with respect to problems of logistics, management, time schedules, resources and general reactions of clients.                                 | PLANNING<br>Plans for organizing and managing resources, activities, and events related primarily to immediate ongoing use of the innovation. Planned-for changes address managerial or logistical issues with a short-term perspective. | STATUS REPORTING<br>Reports that logistics, time, management, resource organizations, etc., are the focus of most personal efforts to use the innovation. | PERFORMING<br>Manages innovation with varying degrees of efficiency. Often lacks anticipation of immediate consequences. The flow of actions in the user and clients is often disjointed, uneven and uncertain. When changes are made, they are primarily in response to logistical and organizational problems. |
| III  | III  | III   | III  |
| <i>the pattern.</i>  |  |   |  |
| Limits evaluation activities to those administratively required, with little attention paid to findings for the purpose of changing use.   | Plans intermediate and long-range actions with little projected variation in how the innovation will be used. Planning focuses on routine use of resources, personnel, etc.  | Reports that personal use of the innovation is going along satisfactorily with few if any problems.   | Uses the innovation smoothly with minimal management problems; over time, there is little variation in pattern of use.   |
| IVA  | IVA  | IVA   | IVA  |
| Assesses use of the innovation for the purpose of changing current practices to improve client outcomes.   | Develops intermediate and long-range plans that anticipate possible and needed steps, resources, and events designed to enhance client outcomes.   | Reports varying use of the innovation in order to change client outcomes.   | Explores and experiments with alternative combinations of the innovation with existing practices to maximize client involvement and to optimize client outcomes.   |
| IVB  | IVB  | IVB   | IVB  |
| Appraises collaborative use of the innovation in terms of client outcomes and strengths and weaknesses of the integrated effort.   | Plans specific actions to coordinate own use of the innovation with others to achieve increased impact on clients.   | Reports spending time and energy collaborating with others about integrating own use of the innovation.   | Collaborates with others in use of the innovation as a means of expanding the innovation's impact on clients. Changes in use are made in coordination with others.   |
| V  | V  | V   | V  |
| Analyzes advantages and disadvantages of major modifications or alternatives to the present innovation.  | Plans activities that involve pursuit of alternatives to enhance or replace the innovation.  | Reports considering major modifications to present use of the innovation.   | Explores other innovations that could be used in combination with or in place of the present innovation in an attempt to develop more effective means of achieving client outcomes.  |
| VI   | VI   | VI  | VI   |

## Appendix G Questionnaire used in the present study

### Questionnaire Survey

**Project Title:** HKCEE English Language School-based assessment:  
Its implementation on the frontline

**Researcher:** Fok Wai-Kei Pretor

**Email contact:** pretorfok@yahoo.com

Dear Colleagues,

As English Language teachers, you are most probably aware that School-based assessment (SBA), a new assessment component, was first trialled in HKCEE English Language in 2007. While not all of you have joined the first trial, with the SBA's full implementation now expected in 2009, some of you may have been thinking, testing or even implementing the SBA scheme.

To help understand better what concerns our teachers might have towards the School-based assessment in HKCEE English Language, you are invited to complete the attached survey questionnaire. The survey contains 50 items and should take you 10-15 minutes to complete. Participation in the survey is anonymous and there is no need to write your name or your school name in any part of the questionnaire. All data collected will be kept in confidentiality.

Thank you for your valuable response in the questionnaire. Your participation does make a difference!

Yours sincerely,



Fok Wai-kei Pretor  
EdD Student  
University of Durham

P.S. If you do not wish to participate in the survey, please return the questionnaire unfilled.  
Thank you.



Concerns Based Systems International Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

## Stages of Concern Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what people who are using or thinking about using various programs are concerned about at various times during the adoption process.

The items were developed from typical responses of school and college teachers who ranged from no knowledge at all about various programs to many years' experience using them.

Therefore, many of the items on this questionnaire may appear to be of little relevance or irrelevant to you at this time.

**For the completely irrelevant items or items that are not applicable to your current status in the use of School-based Assessment, please circle "0" on the scale. Other items will represent those concerns you do have, in varying degrees of intensity, and should be marked higher on the scale.**

For example:

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| This statement is very true of me at this time.          | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 ⑦ |
| This statement is somewhat true of me now.               | 0 1 2 3 ④ 5 6 7 |
| This statement is not at all true of me at this time.    | 0 ① 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| This statement seems irrelevant or not applicable to me. | ① 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

Please respond to the items in terms of **your present concerns**, or how you feel about your involvement with **School-based Assessment in HKCEE English Language**. We do not hold to any one definition of School-based Assessment so please think of it in terms of your own perception of what it involves. Remember to respond to each item in terms of your present concerns about your involvement or potential involvement with School-based Assessment.

Thank you for taking time to complete this task.

|  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------|---|
|  | Irrelevant or not applicable | Not true of me now |   |   | Somewhat true of me now |   | Very true of me now |   |
| Circle One Number For Each Item  |                              |                    |   |   |                         |   |                     |   |
| 1. I am concerned about students' attitudes toward School-based Assessment.  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 2. I now know of some other approaches or projects that might work better than School-based Assessment.                          | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 3. I am more concerned about another innovation or project in English Language teaching.   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 4. I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day due to the implementation of School-based Assessment. | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 5. I would like to help other staff in their use of School-based Assessment.   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 6. I have a very limited knowledge of School-based Assessment.   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 7. I am concerned about how School-based Assessment affects my professional status.  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 8. I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities in the implementation of School-based Assessment.  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 9. I am concerned about revising my use of School-based Assessment.  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 10. I would like to develop working relationships with both our faculty and outside faculty using School-based Assessment.       | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 11. I am concerned about how School-based Assessment affects students.   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 12. I am not concerned about School-based Assessment at this time.   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 13. I would like to know who will make the decisions in School-based Assessment.   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 14. I would like to discuss the possibility of using School-based Assessment.  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 15. I would like to know what resources are available when we adopt School-based Assessment.                                     | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 16. I am concerned about my inability to manage all that School-based Assessment requires.                                       | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 17. I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change due to the use of School-based Assessment.      | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                       | 5 | 6                   | 7 |

|   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------------------|---|---|---------------------|---|
|   | Irrelevant or not applicable | Not true of me now |   | Somewhat true of me now |   |   | Very true of me now |   |
| Circle One Number For Each Item   |                              |                    |   |                         |   |   |                     |   |
| 18. I would like to familiarize other departments or persons with the progress of School-based Assessment.    | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 19. I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students in the use of School-based Assessment.              | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 20. I would like to revise School-based Assessment's approach.  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 21. I am preoccupied with things other than School-based Assessment.  | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 22. I would like to modify our use of School-based Assessment based on the experiences of our students.       | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 23. I spend little time thinking about School-based Assessment.   | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 24. I would like to excite my students about their part in School-based Assessment.                           | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 25. I am concerned about time spent working with non-academic problems related to School-based Assessment.    | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 26. I would like to know what the use of School-based Assessment will require in the immediate future.        | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 27. I would like to coordinate my efforts with others to maximize School-based Assessment's effects.          | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 28. I would like to have more information on time and energy commitments required by School-based Assessment. | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 29. I would like to know what other colleagues are doing in School-based Assessment.                          | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 30. Currently, other priorities prevent me from focusing my attention on School-based Assessment.             | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 31. I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance, or replace School-based Assessment.                 | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 32. I would like to use feedback from students to change the programme of School-based Assessment.            | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 33. I would like to know how my role will change when I am using School-based Assessment.                     | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 34. Coordination of tasks and people in School-based Assessment is taking too much of my time.                | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |
| 35. I would like to know how School-based Assessment is better than what we have or used to have.             | 0                            | 1                  | 2 | 3                       | 4 | 5 | 6                   | 7 |

**Please tick or complete the blank as appropriate.**

1. Gender: ( ) Male ( ) Female
2. Age: ( ) Under 31 ( ) 31 – 40 ( ) 41 – 50 ( ) Over 50
3. Your responsibilities: (Tick all that apply)
  - ( ) F. 4 English teacher ( ) F. 5 English teacher ( ) SBA coordinator
  - ( ) F. 4 English coordinator ( ) F. 5 English coordinator ( ) English Panel head
  - ( ) English Panel head – Junior Section ( ) English Panel head – Senior Section
  - ( ) Others duties related to SBA: (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Years of experience teaching HKCEE English Language:
   
\_\_\_\_\_ year(s)
5. Years of experience with the School-based Assessment in HKCEE English Language:
   
\_\_\_\_\_ year(s)
6. What was your major area(s) of study at the undergraduate school?
   
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you completed your teacher training (e.g. PCEd/DipEd)? If yes, please specify the subject.
  - ( ) Yes. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ( ) No.
8. Have you attained any postgraduate qualifications? If yes, please indicate the award and the main area of study (e.g. MEd in Educational Counselling).
  - ( ) Yes: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ( ) No.
9. What medium of instruction<sup>1</sup> does your school adopt in F.1-F.3?
  - ( ) English ( ) Chinese
10. What medium of instruction<sup>1</sup> does your school adopt in F.4-F.5?
  - ( ) English ( ) Chinese
  - ( ) Some subjects in English and some subjects in Chinese
11. How would you describe the F.1 intake of your school?
  - ( ) Wholly/Mostly Band 1
  - ( ) Between Band 1 and Band 2
  - ( ) Wholly/Mostly Band 2
  - ( ) Between Band 2 and Band 3
  - ( ) Wholly/Mostly Band 3
  - ( ) Not sure

<sup>1</sup> Excluding Chinese Language, Puthonghua, Chinese History, and other non-examination subjects

12. How would you compare the English Language standard of students at your school to that of students in other schools across Hong Kong?

- ☐ Significantly higher
- ☐ Slightly higher
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Slightly lower
- ☐ Significantly lower

13. Which option did your school take for HKCEE English Language 2007?

- ☐ The school did not participate in the SBA.
- ☐ The school submitted the SBA marks for feedback only.
- ☐ The school submitted and included the SBA marks for subject result.
- ☐ Not sure.

14. Which option is your school taking for HKCEE English Language 2008?

- ☐ The school submitted the SBA marks for feedback only.
- ☐ The school submitted and included the SBA marks for subject result.
- ☐ Not sure.

15. Please put down any thoughts or comments you have on School-based assessment in HKCEE English Language:

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--- This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your help! ---

## Appendix H      Stages of Concern scale scores and percentile scores conversion table

| Raw Scale Score | Percentile Scores |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|                 | Stages            |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|                 | 0                 | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| 0               | 0                 | 5  | 5  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| 1               | 1                 | 12 | 12 | 5  | 1  | 2  | 2  |
| 2               | 2                 | 16 | 14 | 7  | 1  | 3  | 3  |
| 3               | 4                 | 19 | 17 | 9  | 2  | 3  | 5  |
| 4               | 7                 | 23 | 21 | 11 | 2  | 4  | 6  |
| 5               | 14                | 27 | 25 | 15 | 3  | 5  | 9  |
| 6               | 22                | 30 | 28 | 18 | 3  | 7  | 11 |
| 7               | 31                | 34 | 31 | 23 | 4  | 9  | 14 |
| 8               | 40                | 37 | 35 | 27 | 5  | 10 | 17 |
| 9               | 48                | 40 | 39 | 30 | 5  | 12 | 20 |
| 10              | 55                | 43 | 41 | 34 | 7  | 14 | 22 |
| 11              | 61                | 45 | 45 | 39 | 8  | 16 | 26 |
| 12              | 69                | 48 | 48 | 43 | 9  | 19 | 30 |
| 13              | 75                | 51 | 52 | 47 | 11 | 22 | 34 |
| 14              | 81                | 54 | 55 | 52 | 13 | 25 | 38 |
| 15              | 87                | 57 | 57 | 56 | 16 | 28 | 42 |
| 16              | 94                | 60 | 59 | 60 | 19 | 31 | 47 |
| 17              | 94                | 63 | 63 | 65 | 21 | 36 | 52 |
| 18              | 96                | 66 | 67 | 69 | 24 | 40 | 57 |
| 19              | 97                | 69 | 70 | 73 | 27 | 44 | 60 |
| 20              | 98                | 72 | 72 | 77 | 30 | 48 | 65 |
| 21              | 99                | 75 | 76 | 80 | 33 | 52 | 69 |
| 22              | 99                | 80 | 78 | 83 | 38 | 55 | 73 |
| 23              | 99                | 84 | 80 | 85 | 43 | 59 | 77 |
| 24              | 99                | 88 | 83 | 88 | 48 | 64 | 81 |
| 25              | 99                | 90 | 85 | 90 | 54 | 68 | 84 |
| 26              | 99                | 91 | 87 | 92 | 59 | 72 | 87 |
| 27              | 99                | 93 | 89 | 94 | 63 | 76 | 90 |
| 28              | 99                | 95 | 91 | 95 | 66 | 80 | 92 |
| 29              | 99                | 96 | 92 | 97 | 71 | 84 | 94 |
| 30              | 99                | 97 | 94 | 97 | 76 | 88 | 96 |
| 31              | 99                | 98 | 95 | 98 | 82 | 91 | 97 |
| 32              | 99                | 99 | 96 | 98 | 86 | 93 | 98 |
| 33              | 99                | 99 | 96 | 99 | 90 | 95 | 99 |
| 34              | 99                | 99 | 97 | 99 | 92 | 97 | 99 |
| 35              | 99                | 99 | 99 | 99 | 96 | 98 | 99 |

## Appendix I      A sample interview transcript in English

**Date:** 20 May 2008

**Length of Interview:** 25 minutes (excluding introduction and briefing)

**I – Interviewer**

**B – Betty**

1. I: Alright. First of all, thank you for agreeing to help me with this interview. Right, first, I'd like to ask you, er, a few questions. As for our coming, your school-based assessment in the HKCEE, what do you know about it? Perhaps you can tell me, what it is like to you?
2. B: What do I know?
3. I: Or, how do you see the scheme?
4. B: Er, I'd say it's a good reform. Em, it's because schools can have some control over students' assessments, and it's not a one-off assessment. It lasts, er, 2 years, lasts for 2 years, and consists of a number of assessments. So, we can complete the first one, and then we can know our students, what should be adjusted and we can do it again. And there's one thing that's good and one that is bad. The good thing is that it allows students to try continuously. So they, er, can keep on improving their own skills and have an improvement each time. But the flipside is that it has increased my workload by a lot. And er, as its name suggests, it's school-based, but because it's school-based, just so school-based, we can do it our way, but then it's like, er, the fairness issue. If you're allowed to do anything you want, then in fact, we don't really know what the guidelines are.
5. I: Emmm, so perhaps you can briefly tell me your jobs in it?
6. B: Er, in fact from the beginning of the SBA scheme, at the time, I was already teaching Form Four and Five, and was already involved in it as an English teacher. And just this year, I am taking the role of the SBA coordinator for Form Five and have to help organize and run the scheme.
7. I: Emmmm. So er, if I ask you, how familiar are you with the scheme? If you are to give yourself a mark, from 1 to 10, 10 being the highest, 1 being having no knowledge of the scheme, how many marks will you give to yourself?
8. B: I'll give myself an 8, having been involved in it for a few years already.
9. I: Emmm, yes.
10. B: Er, have been running the scheme and joining the sharing sessions. Er, I've also been to sessions to see what the standards of others are, er, and have been keeping myself informed about the scheme from the starting. So I'd say I'm quite familiar.
11. I: Emmm, yes. So, at the beginning, quite a lot of teachers have opposition against the SBA scheme, right? So at that time there was strong opposition,



and so there's been quite a lot of changes in the scheme now. Do you think those changes are in fact helpful to you?

12. B: Er, I did, at the very beginning, find myself resisting the scheme, because all changes do bring workload. And no one is happy when they hear the word workload. And er, but er, it's been 3 years, right?
13. I: Yes.
14. B: And within these 3 years, I have found my students, er, they, they have indeed, in the speaking paper, it's been somehow helpful.
15. I: Er em.
16. B: Because once I went to a sharing session, and the person in charge, she did say, she's a teacher at Queen's.
17. I: Yes.
18. B: She said she found that her students were becoming more active and were improving. At that time, however, my reaction was: Is that real? And, but er, now, starting this year, I have seen that my students have indeed improved. It's that when the students had the oral exam in the past, they really didn't say much, because they lacked the practice, and now they have been doing this with them, again and again and they have also joined training sessions, and they are more willing to speak up. So now during group discussions, it's very obvious that the students are more vocal and this is a pro.
19. I: Yes, so did you school join the scheme in the very first year?
20. B: Yes, we joined the scheme in the first year, and also included the submitted marks in the public exam.
21. I: Ok. So it's been 3 years, now it's the 3<sup>rd</sup> year your school's doing this, right? Emmmm, er, so far up to now, do you think, as for the information provided to you on the SBA scheme, it is enough? Would you think that the HKEAA or the Education Bureau should provide more information or guidelines to you?
22. B: Emm, right, at the very beginning, there were a lot of constraints (set by the authority).
23. I: Yes.
24. B: So in the beginning, no one knew what to do, too many constraints. And, but then the constraints have been relaxed, but at the same time, we still didn't know what to do.
25. I: Yes.
26. B: It's because if you're too lax, then everybody has a different standard. And the difference in standard will become an area of dispute. We may justify the difference by saying that it's school-based, but then it'll just become an excuse.
27. I: Emm, yes.
28. B: As for me, we now, er, you may think that I'm too lenient in giving out the



marks, but so what? It's school-based, class-based, even teacher-based.

29. I: Yes (laughs).
30. B: (laughs) Yes. So it turns out, indeed, we do query em, how the HKEAA can be fair in this assessment.
31. I: Emmmm. So on the whole, you have mentioned a few of the things you're happy about and also things that you aren't quite satisfied. So, how satisfied are you with the whole scheme?
32. B: Err, level of satisfaction, in fact, I should say I'm happy with this kind of SBA, not because of the HKEAA...
33. I: Yes.
34. B: But it's that in the process, I've been giving a lot of training to my students, and the students are more concerned (about their study).
35. I: Emm, yes.
36. B: Er, but then there's something I'm not quite satisfied with the HKEAA. It's that er, the guidelines are definitely lacking. Er, say how the marks are added up, we don't really know much. And also, there're just so many things, like there's these few years of adaptation period. You do this if you like and do that if you don't like...
37. I: Emmm, yes yes.
38. B: So it's like it doesn't really care about the scheme. Er, and when the authority doesn't care, now in fact, starting this year, we also don't care about it too much.
39. I: (laughs)
40. B: (laughs) It's because we, the Form Five teachers—our Form Four and Form Five teachers may not be entirely the same, so our Form Five teachers, as we just have too much to do, so we er, should have sat down, gone through others' recordings from time to time, and attended those meetings—we just do none of these this year. It's that everybody finds attending those meetings a waste of time, a waste of our time. And now that we have done our parts at the school, and in the past, we attended the meetings, went to the seminars, watched the recordings, we believe that we teachers do have the professionalism. Now we don't really care much about the HKEAA, but are doing what we need to do at the school, to train the students.
41. I: Right right, emmm, so er, as for the assessment tasks, we have a few different types, do you have, do you have any comments?
42. B: Em, there's this individual part...
43. I: Yes.
44. B: Emm, I haven't really done much on the individual part, it's because in my year, we don't have the individual (presentation) task. So er, as for the group discussion part, I do find those on non-fiction, or documentary, not really workable.

45. I: Yes, yes.
46. B: It's that the students their own time don't really, even for those in Cantonese, they don't really watch them, now you go and ask them to watch those in English, on my, who will listen to you? But those on fiction I am OK with them. For fiction, you ask them to watch movies, they're fine. So they just sit together, you are for bat-man, and I'm for spider-man, and they argue, these are ok.
47. I: Ok, so do they work? During discussions, do you think that your students can, can cope with the requirements?
48. B: Er, emm, what I think is that, of course it depends on individual students. Er, some of our students, they have better abilities, then they can really have a fruitful discussion. For those who are very weak, they don't even comprehend the question. So if you ask them to sit down and discuss, they're basically talking to themselves, and it's not really a discussion. Er, er, but then still, it's good to let them try.
49. I: So, have you done anything for those students, so that they might at least understand how to cope with the assessment?
50. B: In fact we have two sets of questions. We have one set for the more capable and one for the less capable. Questions for the less capable are really silly: they're like which character you like best, or what you've learnt from the story. In fact, I can show them to you.
51. I: Ok.
52. B: Er, so er, they, we also have some samples questions for our students, but of course the wordings are not the same, we might change some, and let the students prepare at home beforehand, and try them out. So we do let them prepare and give some topics to them.
53. I: So if you are to compare it with the external oral examination, comparing SBA with the oral examination, which do you think is better, or what do you see the differences are?
54. B: Emm, I think they're not really that similar, if you look at it from their contents, er, but then the formats are the same.
55. I: Yes, so in terms of assessing English Language ability, which is better among the two, or is there any ...
56. B: I think the purposes are different indeed. It's because in the SBA, we give them a lot of time to prepare, and it in itself is also more pleasurable, it's about more pleasure. You go and watch a movie, it's more like real life. you watch a movie, and like what we have in daily life, we meet up and dine and I'm happy and I may with, to share (the movie) with someone. I will love to share with someone after I have watched a movie. So I think this doesn't er, only prepare them for exam, but it's for their future.
57. I: Yes.
58. B: So, er, so er, if this is to prepare the students for life-long development, I think now that you give them time to prepare the tasks, this is something correct. But if not, of course, exams could be a different matter. You give

them something less authentic, ask them to sit and talk with someone they don't know, then this is, this is a real test of their ability. So, it assesses their language, so the purpose, I reckon, is different.

59. I: Yes, emm, you've just mentioned that, now the project has been being run for 3 years, so er, in the beginning, you might be nervous or you may not have enough knowledge on the scheme, but now a lot of the matter is cleared up. So, as for you, how concerned are you with the scheme now? If, again, you are to give a mark from 1 to 10, 1 being not concerned, 10 being viewing the scheme as extremely important, how many marks will you give?
60. B: I think, if compared to how it was in the very beginning, it's about a 5.
61. I: Yes.
62. B: So, actually you may see it from 2 perspectives. As a coordinator, of course I am very concerned, it's my job duty.
63. I: Yes, true.
64. B: But as an ordinary teacher, er, I'll only give it a 5.
65. I: Yes.
66. B: It's because the weighting is not high. There are other papers that I need to devote more time on. So er, if you compare it with last year, I have devoted less time [on SBA] for my class this year.
67. I: Yes, yes.
68. B: It's because, first, they're particularly weak, and second, our assessments and exams are so intensive, I'd rather ask them to work on other areas.
69. I: Em, emmmm. So, now you're running the SBA scheme, in terms of your use of the scheme in the classroom, or in terms of helping the students to do the assessment, how skillful are you? Do you think that you're still a beginner, or you're quite an expert?
70. B: I'm not an expert, but I think, since, since I'm the coordinator, so I'm the one who sets things up, I'm quite involved in it... so if I'm to give a mark to myself, I'll say it's an 8.
71. I: Yes, ok, emmm. So, er, this is already the third year your school is running the SBA, er, among you and your colleagues, is there a lot of interaction, on how to prepare or how to integrate it in the classroom?
72. B: Er, in fact, when it's nearly time for, well, because. Or I should say, because we have the experience from the past 2 years. In the past 2 years, we would talk more about it. Perhaps then we weren't too clear about the scheme, we didn't know if we should give the class the questions with the same wording for preparation, how much time we should allow them, should it be same day preparation, or could they prepare it beforehand—we were not too clear.
73. I: Yes.
74. B: So then you might go and learn more and I also learn more, then we would come back, discuss and reflect. But as for now, it's school-based. So it's

just up to ourselves, so after we discuss, and I don't really want to bother other colleagues, so I'll set everything right, and it's like I'm giving instructions to them. I'll instruct them, this this this, and then this, and the colleagues usually do follow my instructions, so I'll say ,they're not too concerned.

75. I: Right.
76. B: Yes, so, they just follow what you say.
77. I: So now, when you run the SBA, do you, some schools have set aside 1 or 2 days for the assessment, just like an exam, some just put it after school, or during ordinary lessons. Which does your school adopt?
78. B: Er, in the first 2 years, we had it during class time. So say you're the class teacher, you'll take a group from your class and follow them. And the rest of the class will be supervised by a Teacher Assistant. But later, we found that this arrangement is quite troublesome. So now we put it after school. We can have 3 classrooms booked after school, and I get some colleagues to help supervise the students. Also er, another reason why we put it after school is that we wanted it to be more like an exam. It's because it's our school's practice to have oral examination after school, and there's a preparation room, and there's an examination room. So we just do it this way.
79. I: Emm.
80. B: And, the students are really serious about it. Now they're more serious.
81. I: Yes, emmm. So do they get a better result?
82. B: Yes, yes.
83. I: Emmm, so er, now, what changes do you think er, the SBA scheme has brought you?
84. B: Er, the change is that the students now have more opportunity to speak, like what I said before.
85. I: Emmm.
86. B: Er, it's like, usually they won't speak even if you force them, but now er, because it's an exam, and we tell the students that the marks are counted, an there's this pressure here, they will be a lot more serious. Er, but for teachers, many colleagues are not too happy about it, because we really have a bigger workload.
87. I: Emm, yes.
88. B: And er, because we need to, like what I said, do it after school. For example we need people to record things, and the colleagues will have to help. And this again occupies us a lot of time. And also, we're like this, we just don't know exactly how the marks should be given. So sometimes we will, you'll give this, and should I be stricter, and what if...
89. I: Emm, so what about the students, have you, after these few years of SBA, have they given any comments?
90. B: Not really. I think they er, just assume that the teachers tell them that

there's an exam, and the marks will be counted and they just do it.

91. I: Emm.
92. B: And er, you're also see that they'll, they'll become more concerned. Yes, even for my weakest class, they're also very concerned about it. If you'll, you'll. Before the exam, they'll come and ask: 'Miss, can you come quickly, come and teach me how I should say this?' 'I can't tell you.' 'Well, You can just see it a sharing.' (laughter).
93. I: (laughter).
94. B: So I can see that they're more serious about it. They'll go online and search for information.
95. I: Emm, so, say, has your school done any evaluation, on how you run the SBA?
96. B: Er, I think if you're referring to only our department, we do watch the SBA recordings. This year, we didn't do it in Form Five, but we had it last year. We also have it this year in Form Four, since we have quite a few new Form Five teachers this year, so we'll sit and watch, oh, how many marks will you give to this? Like what the EDB asks us to do, so...
97. I: Moderation meeting?
98. B: Yes.
99. I: When do you usually have it?
100. B: After school.
101. I: After school, I mean, when during the term?
102. B: Er, because we have, er, we put it in the pre-exam oral exam time slots. Our oral examinations are not held during the exam period, perhaps I can show you the timetable later. It's er, because we need to key in the marks.
103. I: Yes.
104. B: We need to key in the marks for EDB and EAA.
105. I: Yes.
106. B: So before we key them in, we'll sit, and check whether any adjustments are needed. So if, say how many marks you give, is your mean near the mean of other colleagues. After the meeting, if you want to change the marks, then just go ahead and change them.
107. I: Emmm, you're mentioned earlier, that there has been some changes to the scheme at your school. For example, you had the SBA in the lessons before, but now you have it after school. So have you, regarding the whole SBA scheme, say the assessment tasks, made any further changes, coming from the few years of experience?
108. B: Emm, I think it's the questions (used in the SBA tasks), I mean the way the questions are set. Er, and also our time, it's that how much time we give our students to prepare, these we have changed. We have tried lengthening it and shortening it, according to our experience. And also as for the assessment tasks, we've found that, well, just giving them 1 question, or,

when everybody's got the same number of questions, then oh no, some even don't understand the questions, but then what if they, it's just so troublesome. Setting those questions is so troublesome. There aren't many areas you can look at. It's always the plot, the character, what you've learnt and that's it. There're no resources I can get and I have to set the questions myself, it gives me a headache. And yes, I just go and search and search on the web, but no, there isn't anything like that.

109. I: So now, do you allow the students to choose their own books?
110. B: Er, the books...
111. I: Books or the videos.
112. B: Well, for books, it's because, for our good classes, I mean the cream classes, those classes, we use the readers. So er, like the book we choose this year, no sure it's for Form Four or Form Five, we use it for a year. The Form Five reader doesn't have TA, no I mean materials on SBA and so we have to photocopy them for our own use. And er, the students won't really buy the books, and we won't ask them to buy one specifically for SBA, because they're really expensive.
113. I: Yes, yes, emmm. So your schools get a bunch of SBA books for them...
114. B: Er, the books we get from the publishers...
115. I: Oh, emmm. What about the movies? You let them choose?
116. B: Er, They choose it themselves, yes.
117. I: So er, er, as for the coming, next year, you'll still have SBA, so er, have you thought about whether any changes are needed, or if there's anything, you don't really do it now, but you'd like to try and improve the scheme?
118. B: We haven't really thought about it, we haven't got the time so far to sit down and discuss the SBA...
119. I: Emmm.
120. B: So perhaps when all Form Four and Five exams are done. But well, no, we haven't really discussed that.
121. I: Yes, and... emmmm. So, have you worked with any external organizations or other schools and interact, and see how you can, ererer, run the SBA scheme?
122. B: Well, no. Utmost we have been to those meetings.
123. I: Yes, you mean the examiners' meetings?
124. B: Yes, yes, yes...
125. I: Do you find those examiners' meetings useful?
126. B: Indeed it's because, it's the same every year, so that's why we didn't go this year.
127. I: Em, and, er, what about among you and your colleagues, among the colleagues do you have a lot of cooperation on SBA?
128. B: Yes, in the beginning we had more, because we just didn't know anything,

there're too many questions, so we'd ask what one another's doing. Yes, there's also our panel (head).

129. I: Yes.

130. B: It's that our panel (head) will come back and tell us, what this school is doing, perhaps she has talked with her friend, and that's what the school did...

131. I: So, is there any practice, you think, er, why others can have it not we?

132. B: Yes sort of, yes. Others may allow er their students to take the tasks home, and then, er, we did indeed have a discussion on this. One colleague also told us, that her friend('s school) also allows the students to take them home, then the panel (head) told us it's not allowed, not allowed. Haha, so in the end, it's not allowed.

133. I: Yes, emmm. And, in fact, I think I've asked quite a lot of questions. So to you, on the whole SBA scheme, is there anything, last comment you'd like to add, thinking that it's something I want to say the most, something that you must say.

134. B: I'd said quite a lot already, hahahaha.

135. I: Hahaha.

136. B: And all I say are the key points, hahahaha.

137. I: Hahahaha. So, perhaps that's all...

138. B: But last, final remarks really. I really think that should give more, more clear guidelines should be given.

139. I: Yes, what kinds of guidelines?

140. B: Emm, I mean, whether or not we can allow the students to see (the questions) beforehand, and so on, or whether they can have it afterwards. And, and also the samples they give, the samples they give, can they be more realistic?

141. I: Emm.

142. B: It's because, I'm not too sure if it's real, but I've heard that, those we see, are Form Six students...

143. I: Yes.

144. B: So these aren't Form Five students. And they have got all (scripts), like they've read them all, and recited them all. These are not realistic at all. How many of our students can be like this? These are the problems of the marks, those of 5\*. Can they give us some more realistic, those, like those ordinary students. If I bring our samples and let them see, how many marks will you give really?

145. I: Emm.

146. B: And also, I'd like to know more clearly how it's linked to the oral, I mean the speaking paper, how the marks are added up. It's because I don't want that I've been very professional myself, and when my students deserve to be failed, I really fail them hard, but then what if the effects are really big,

then am I hurting them?

147. I: Emmmm.

148. B: And what if other schools aren't like that. Other schools may just want to push their students. And if they're not that good, then just not set such a high standard, or else the students may get a very bad result? And also those CD they've been talking about, this this and this, and we need to let them check. But what nonsense is that, you've never checked them, but this has given us a lot of troubles.

149. I: Yes.

150. B: It's because it takes me to only, on the CD, after we have recorded, I have to, search and mark every single person there. It just takes me so long. But if you don't use it, you don't need to waste such time.

151. I: Emmm. Ok. Thank you so much.



## Appendix J      Participant information sheet and consent form used in focused interviews

### Participant Information Sheet & Consent Form

**Project Title:** HKCEE English Language School-based assessment:  
Its implementation on the frontline

**Researcher:** Fok Wai Kei Pretor

**Email contact:** pretorfok@yahoo.com

I am a doctorate student conducting a research on the implementation of the HKCEE English Language School-based Assessment (SBA). I appreciate your participation in the research as it can help increase understanding on how the SBA can be best implemented in Hong Kong classrooms.

More specifically, the research aims to find out:

- i) Hong Kong English Language teachers' perceptions and concerns towards the SBA scheme;
- ii) how they implement the scheme; and
- iii) their reflections on the implementation.

Your participation in the research includes:

- i) an individual interview session of about 40 minutes; and
- ii) a questionnaire survey of about 50 items, which would take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Your consent to participate in the research will contain your consent to:

- (a) participate in the interview, which will be tape-recorded and transcribed;
- (b) participate in the questionnaire survey; and
- (c) allow the researcher to publish his thesis which may contain anonymous quotations from the interviews and anonymous data you provide in the questionnaire survey.

Please also complete and sign the consent form overleaf.

**Project Title:** HKCEE English Language School-based assessment:

Its implementation on the frontline

**Researcher:** Fok Wai-kei Pretor

(The participant should complete the whole of this sheet himself/herself)

|  | Please cross out as necessary  |
|--|--|
| 1. Have you read the Participant Information Sheet?  | YES / NO   |
| 2. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the study?  | YES / NO   |
| 3. Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?  | YES / NO   |
| 4. Have you received enough information about the study?   | YES / NO   |
| 5. Who have you spoken to? Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Prof _____   |  |
| 6. Do you consent to participate in the study?   | YES / NO   |
| 7. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study:<br>(a) at any time; and<br>(b) without having to give a reason for withdrawing; and<br>(c) without affecting your position in the University? | YES / NO   |
| 8. Do you wish to be provided a summary of findings when the research is completed?  | YES/NO<br>If yes, please provide your email address:<br>_____<br>_____ |

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of the participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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