

Assignment: How are current curriculum Policies helping or not helping to achieve the objectives of the basic education for all?

The Seychelles case

The Seychelles National Assessment Policy advocates that all students at the end of the Primary Cycle (Primary Six) sit a written national attainment test and also a written selection test (Secondary Three Coordinated exam) when they reach secondary 3. Both tests attempt to measure a variety of cognitive skills, namely knowledge, comprehension and application. Focus is on academic knowledge and skills. It is worth noting that apart from the Kreol and French language tests, all other tests are done in English. The mean for most subjects tested is usually around fifty. Analysis results indicate that students who are competent in English score higher marks than those who are less competent in the language. Further more students who are academically weak in all subjects usually fail all the subjects. All tests are done in individual schools. Nonetheless they all automatically proceed to the next level (Primary Six to Secondary One and Secondary three to Secondary four).

Attainment tests for Primary Six are designed by Curriculum Developers and teachers who are members of the curriculum teams in each subject. The Secondary Three Coordinated exam is written by subject teachers and or subject leaders from schools. Both tests are moderated by subject specialist officials at the Assessment, Testing and Accreditation Unit (ATA) in the Ministry of Education.

At secondary five level, all students are tested to see how eligible they are to sit the IGCSE Cambridge examination. Past IGCSE examination papers are given and the tests are marked by individual subject teachers. It should be noted that the schools are free to choose their own papers. In some cases teachers choose sections of the papers only. The results of such school-based tests are used as students' final grade at the end of the secondary cycle. Successful students may sit between one to seven IGCSE examinable subjects. This includes both academic and non-academic subjects. Results are used for selecting students for Post Secondary Education according to their choice. There are eight such institutions: National Institute of Education (for teacher training), National Institute of Health and Social Services, Seychelles Institute of Technology, Seychelles Hospitality and Tourism Centre, Seychelles School of Business Studies, Seychelles School of Advanced Level Studies, Seychelles Horticultural and Farming Centre, Seychelles Maritime Studies. Entrance to Post Secondary Institutions requires a minimum of three IGCSEs Grades A to C.

Such practice is more advantageous to academically oriented students. Students who are more skill oriented tend to be at a disadvantage. As Seychelles is a small country with an average student population of 1500 pupils at each level and a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:30, it therefore proposed that the following changes are made to ensure that there is fairness to all students in the assessment

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system. Hence:

- Oral tests in all subjects for non/poor readers of all three languages assessed to certain skills would be advantageous
- Non academic subjects such as Personal and Social Education, Physical Education, Art and Craft, Technology Enterprise, should be tested. Students' competencies in these subjects need to have as much recognition as for those in academic subjects that are assessed in writing.
- Alternative ways of assessing students' competencies in academic and non academic subjects need to be included. Some examples are: group assessment for cooperative learning, one-to-one/group oral tests, independent working on hands-on activities, pen & pencil paper tests.
- More time need to be set aside for assessing students
- Syllabus content need to be re-assessed and reduced to allow for more effective teaching, learning and assessment of individual competencies
- More focus on formative assessment than on summative assessment
- Quality training on formative assessment for teacher trainers, teachers, personnel from the ATA & Quality Assurance units, and curriculum developers.

Seychelles: Statutory assessment			
Question	Brief answer	More detail	Further information
Is there a compulsory assessment system?	Yes. The National Attainment Test, and the Secondary 3 Coordinated Examinations	The National Attainment tests are closely aligned with the National curriculum to assess student learning of selected curricular knowledge and skills in the six core subjects. The Secondary Three Coordinated Examinations is an annual assessment of students in Secondary Year 3 (aged 14-15). It is intended to cover all curriculum areas and is for selection purposes for academic or vocational options.	
What is the compulsory assessment system intended for?	Evaluative, summative and informative purposes.	The National Attainment test measures student performances based on the Seychelles curriculum framework learning objectives at the end of the Primary Cycle. It provides a means of reporting on the performance of individual students and schools. It serves as one basis of accountability for students, schools, and districts. The stated goals are to: -measure student performance; and -improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction. The Seychelles Ministry of Education ranks schools on the basis of National Attainment Test results. This provides teachers with a means of comparing	

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		<p>their school results with the national means for each subject. School head teachers use the information for setting goals, priorities and targets in the school's development plan. School teachers also use the information for monitoring student learning and targeting areas for improvement. Curriculum developers make use of the results for curriculum redesign.</p> <p>The Secondary Three Coordinated Examinations provide feedback to students and teachers on how well students have achieved curriculum-based learning objectives. The main purpose of such examination is help teachers guide students in their decisions for choice of academic or vocational options. School head teachers and teachers use the information for the school's annual education results report, and for setting goals, priorities and targets in the school's development plan. Provides system-wide information on student achievement levels for consideration in relation to national results and other data on student achievement levels. The information is also used for monitoring student learning and targeting areas for improvement through curriculum redesign or programme initiatives.</p>	
Which pupils are assessed?	<p>All pupils at the end of the Primary cycle (Primary 6).</p> <p>All pupils in secondary three (S3).</p>	<p>The tests should be administered to all students in the relevant Years, including students with limited proficiency in the different subjects but excluding those with disabilities, who attend special schools.</p>	
When are pupils assessed?	<p>Years 6, ages 11-12.</p> <p>Year 9, age 14/15.</p>	<p>National Attainment testing usually takes place at the end of the academic year (November/December), with scoring (marking) taking place in December.</p> <p>The school year runs from January to December.</p> <p>The Secondary Three Coordinated Examinations takes place in July/August.</p>	
Which subjects are assessed?	<p>English, Kreol, French languages, mathematics, science, social studies History and Geography.</p>	<p>Different subjects are tested for the two different age groups as follows:</p> <p>Year 6:- English, Kreol, French languages, mathematics, science and social studies</p> <p>Year 9: English, French languages, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography</p>	