

Beginnings of a New Chapter

The past ten years have helped lay solid foundations for SEAB. In our second decade, SEAB has committed itself to continue scaling greater heights and furthering our strengths in examinations and assessment.

In this issue, we recount our celebration on 31 March with our Board members and staff as we enter into our eleventh year of our entity as a Statutory Board. In line with our mission to advance quality assessment worldwide, SEAB welcomed a number of overseas delegates and local visitors for sessions of learning and exchange in the first quarter of the year. We were also invited to represent Singapore in the sharing of our Mathematics curriculum and assessment framework to the educational fraternity overseas.

The first half of the year also saw our efforts in promoting workplace health pay off. In April, SEAB was accorded the Silver award of the Singapore HEALTH (Helping Employee Achieve Life-Time Health) Award from the Health Promotion Board, for our comprehensive health and welfare programmes for staff. In this issue, you may also find it

interesting to learn more about the meaning of “standards” in different educational contexts if you are a teacher.

You may have noticed that the SEAB-link newsletter has taken on a new look with new contents. We have introduced a crisp new look starting from this issue, embracing a clean and simplistic layout with a stylised header, coupled with exciting, relevant content. As SEAB matures as an organisation, the biannual SEAB-link newsletter is one way we hope to stay in touch with you by sharing organisation news and events, and providing

updates on assessment-related initiatives as well as training and consultancy opportunities.

To help us provide more interesting and engaging content, we would love to hear from you. Let us know what you would like to see in the SEAB-link by completing a short survey that is on the last page of this issue.

Enjoy reading and see you again in issue 20!

The SEAB Editorial Team





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SEAB Day 2015 – One SEAB, One Heartbeat



Chairman, CE, senior management and our pioneer generation celebrating our 11th anniversary.

This year, SEAB proudly celebrated our 11th anniversary on 31 March 2015 at Joyden Hall, Bugis+ Mall. It was a day for all staff to get together, mingle, laugh and enjoy the moment as we celebrate the successes in our journey together.

In line with this spirit, this year's SEAB Day theme - "One SEAB, One Heartbeat" truly captured the mood of our celebration. 'One' signifies the oneness and unity of all members in SEAB as we journey together towards the organisation's goals. The 'heartbeat' signifies the human element, i.e. staff as central to the organisation's many endeavours and aspirations for the future. The

SEAB Day is as much about the organisation as it is about the individual that makes up the organisation.

ADDRESSES FROM CHAIRMAN AND CE

Addressing the audience, our Chairman, Ms Ho Peng highlighted the achievements of SEAB as a growing organisation in the following five significant areas:

#1: A trusted and respected authority in managing the conduct of national examinations

#2: Leveraging ICT in assessment

#3: Establishing an international and regional presence and promoting Singapore model of assessment

#4: Raising assessment literacy of educators and other agencies

#5: Creating an Organisation of Excellence

Moving forward, Ms Ho further challenged everyone to be innovative in our approaches and continually strive for excellence in the new educational landscape in the 21st century, as our contributions in exam and assessment work and processes greatly impacts all our stakeholders.

CE's opening speech recapitulated in detail the various achievements and milestones attained by the organisation in the past year. She also painted the key milestones ahead for SEAB and asked for staff's continued commitment and support to work as one team to bring the organisation to greater heights.

The addresses from both Chairman and CE reiterate that every staff counts and all these achievements will not be possible without everyone playing their crucial role.



A serenading ballad with guitar accompaniment

PS21 CEREMONY

Following CE's speech was the PS21 Ceremony which reinforced the message that every staff could play a positive role in contributing to the change that we want to see in our organisation. The ceremony acknowledged the committees which

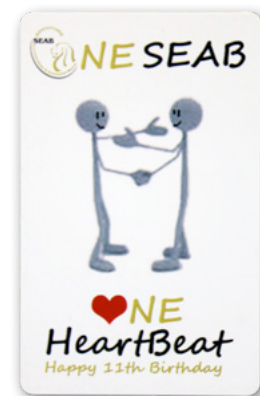
operationalise the PS21 movement in SEAB: Quality Service, Excel, Innovation and SEABlings Committee. They support the Public Service movement that encourages public officers to embrace change and be innovative in their mindset to continue to give the Public Service a leading edge. Together, the committees will lead and drive the strategic areas in SEAB's journey towards excellence.

EZ-LINK CARD DESIGN COMPETITION

Staff participation this year came through in many ways. As a prelude to the SEAB Day celebration, the staff were invited to submit designs for the "EZ-Link Card Design Competition". There were varied and innovative designs submitted by the staff. The winning design was printed on the EZ-Link Card which was given to staff and guests as a commemorative item for the event.



A show of true unity expressed in music and rhythm



Design of the EZ-link card given to staff and guests



Enchanting the audience with dance choreography



Staff all decked with colourful balloons, ready for the parade

THE SEAB ONE TALENT

As SEAB Day is a day set aside for the staff, it was only apt that they took centre stage. Indeed, one of the key highlights of SEAB Day this year was the SEAB One Talent Performance. Staff were invited to share their hobbies, passions, or simply, things that they found joy in doing. Many were forthcoming and there were no lack of talents. Altogether, nine different acts were performed.

Everyone was treated to a day of poetry recital, Dikir Barat, dance, magic show, singing and musical instrument performances. Truly, the performers endeared us with their wonderful talents and wowed the audience with their grace and style.

COLOURFUL FASHION PARADE IN BALLOONS

Another highlight of the celebration was the “Balloon Fashion Parade” segment. In the spirit of interaction, this segment required staff seated at different tables to collaborate with one another as they dressed up two representatives according to the theme of our 11th anniversary – “One SEAB, One Heartbeat”.

Everyone took to the fashion design competition with flair and creativity. With much buzz and excitement, participants paraded their designs on the stage. It was definitely a feast for the eyes!

All in all, it was definitely an enjoyable day for everyone present, which ended with the SEAB family taking a group photograph.



An annual tradition: The SEAB family photo

Release of Past PSLE Papers in Examination Format

It was an exciting February for SEAB with the announcement on the release of the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) papers in examination format. Here are some snippets of the announcement:

PSLE and SEAB

Conducted in Singapore annually, the PSLE is a national examination sat by students at the end of their primary school education.

The SEAB has the responsibility of setting the questions and administering the national examination for more than 40,000 candidates a year, across more than 20 subjects.

Standard and difficulty of the PSLE

As a checkpoint in a child's learning journey, the PSLE takes stock of a student's learning before entering secondary school by assessing their mastery of knowledge and skills in the primary syllabuses.

The examination questions are therefore pitched and aligned to the primary syllabuses. There is also a spread of questions to cater for a wide range of students with different abilities, enabling them to demonstrate different levels of mastery in the subjects.

Release of PSLE past year questions since 1993

Since 1993, SEAB has been releasing the PSLE past year examination questions to help support teaching and learning in schools and familiarise students with the types of questions. The questions were released by topics for Mathematics and Science and by item types for English Language and Mother Tongue Languages. By engaging publishers to publish these past year papers, the members of the public were able to obtain a copy of the questions in the major bookstores.

What's New?

Starting in 2015, the past three years' PSLE papers will be released in examination format for all subjects, for both the standard and foundation levels. This is to provide greater clarity on the overall standard and spread of questions and topics examined in the PSLE.

Where can I get a copy?

The past year PSLE questions have been published by appointed publishers and are available at major bookstores. More information on the appointed publishers is available [here](#).





Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES TAKING THE SINGAPORE-CAMBRIDGE GCE EXAMINATIONS

IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR TRAIN SERVICE DISRUPTION

Please report at your exam centre if you are able to reach there before the end of the exam paper. If you arrive at the exam centre before the end of the paper, you will be given the full duration to sit the exam.

If you are unable to reach your exam centre before the end of the paper, you can go to the nearest exam centre and report to the Chief Presiding Examiner.

Nearest Exam Centre

DT 14 Bugis (Interchange)	For O / N(A) / N(T)-Level: Outram Secondary School Bendemeer Secondary School Balestier Hill Secondary School Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road) Queenstown Secondary School For A-Level: Hwa Chong Institution Catholic Junior College
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Please contact your exam centre or approach the train station staff if you need assistance.

Contingency Plans for National Examination Candidates during a Major Train Service Disruption

With the onset of the national examinations and oral exams, many parents and candidates may ponder what they should do if they are on their way to sit the examination and the train service breaks down.

The disruption to train services during the national examinations period can adversely affect the conduct of examinations as it may affect a large number of candidates. Understanding the concerns of candidates and parents, SEAB has put in place procedures to address this scenario as part of our business continuity management plans.

Affected candidates will be given the full duration of the paper if they are able to arrive at the designated centre before the end of the paper. Candidates may also take their examination at any nearby examination centre if they believe they are unable to reach their designated examination

centre before the end of the paper. Examination centres have set aside additional resources to manage the displaced candidates. To ensure that national examinations are conducted with integrity and fairness, candidates will not be allowed to leave the exam centres for the full duration of the paper. This is part of the measures to prevent the leakage of the question paper while accommodating affected candidates who may report late.

Candidates and examination centres have been informed of the contingency measures and the relevant information is available on the SEAB website. Public announcements will also be made on radio channels to disseminate needed information to affected candidates. SEAB will also update our corporate website and MOE's social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Candidates can also call MOE's Customer Service Centre if they have any

enquiries or to inform SEAB if they are unable to reach their examination venues before the end of the paper.

To help candidates to locate examination centres near train stations, SEAB has also printed posters and worked with the train operators, SMRT and SBS Transit, to display them in every MRT station. Candidates can also approach the passenger service centre at MRT stations for assistance or information on any bridging transport services provided by the train service provider.

With the above contingency plans, SEAB is confident that the national examinations will be conducted fairly and with integrity in the event of a major train service disruption.

Sharing and Exchanging of Assessment Experiences

As part of our mission, SEAB is committed to advancing quality in assessment worldwide and this entails sharing our experiences and journey in assessment, as well as learning from our fellow counterparts across the world.

In the first half of 2015, SEAB hosted both overseas delegates and local visitors in our humble abode at Jalan Bukit Ho Swee.

In January, we welcomed overseas delegates from the Aga Khan University Examination Board, Pakistan on 15 January 2015 and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training on 21 January 2015. It was a rich learning opportunity as we shared the Singapore experience in examination and assessment with our visitors and in turn, the delegates provided us with insights on the assessment initiatives in their country.

On the home front, the management also hosted fellow civil servants from the Singapore Accountancy Commission on 10 February 2015 and members of the Committee on ICT- Enabled Learning (CIEL) Steering Committee on 6 March 2015.

Our journey in the development of the eExam System and experience in the administration of national examinations provided learning points for the Singapore Accountancy Commission and the CIEL Steering Committee that were relevant to their projects.

We were more than happy that the sharing sessions drew positive feedback from all participants during the visits. As a traditional proverb puts it, "In teaching others, we teach ourselves". We are thankful that the visitors provided us with an opportunity to learn from them as well.



A group photo of Dr Shehzad Jeeva from the Aga Khan University Examination Board, Pakistan with SEAB management and staff during his visit on 15 January



Mrs Doreen Goh, Deputy Director, Assessment Planning and Development Division, presenting our publication to the delegation team from Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam

“ Thank you for the wonderful presentation. We can learn a lot from your success stories. Great work! ”

– **Dr Shehzad Jeeva**, Director,
Aga Khan University Examination Board

“ A wonderful session at SEAB. We want to thank you for your time and expertise. We’ve been able to learn a lot from your knowledge and expertise in the field. Thanks a lot. ”

– **Dr Tran Xuan Thao**, on behalf of the delegation team
from Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam

What Do We Mean by Standards?

“This year, the standard of the PSLE Maths has dropped.”

When you hear such a statement, what comes to your mind? What do standards refer to? Depending on what your area of interest is, the statement can have at least four different meanings.

Layman Understanding of “Standards”

The term “standards” belongs to the class of abstract terms such as beauty and goodness. Generally, most people have some notions of what standards refer to but not everyone shares a common understanding of what standards mean or entail. As a result, people may be puzzled, confused or even unhappy, according to their own interpretation of the term.

Definition of Standards in Educational Literature

Are there definitions of standards in the educational literature that we can refer to? Yes, in fact there are many.

Sometimes, these definitions bring more confusion than clarity to the discussion. The main reason is that definitions usually serve specific purposes in defined contexts for certain groups of people.

In this article, we hope to share four related definitions of standards to the fraternity of teachers and leaders in our schools within the context of the educational landscape in Singapore, for the purpose of fostering focused and meaningful dialogue on issues related to educational standards.

Four Types of Standards

The four types of standards that we wish to define are curriculum standards, examination standards, performance standards and attainment standards. The table below shows the definitions, evidence, and the corresponding purposes.

Term	Definition	Evidence	Purpose
Curriculum Standards	The breadth and depth of what students are expected to know and can do that are stated in syllabus documents.	Syllabuses	To communicate to teachers and students what to teach and what to learn
Examination Standards	The tasks (items, questions, assessment requirements) that students are expected to do or show.	Exam Papers	To maintain comparability from year to year so that students have a fair chance of showing achievement
Performance Standards	The level of knowledge and skills actually achieved or shown in an assessment.	Candidates' work	To check the quality of students' achievement and provide information on what students know and can do
Attainment Standards	The results (e.g. percentage of passes) of an assessment.	Published Results	To account for the outcomes of education

Test Your understanding

The eight comments in the table below refer to one of the four types of standards. Which do they refer to?

Comments	Standards
1. "This year's paper has an extra section on Visual Text Comprehension that is not present in last year's paper."	
2. "During my time, we are tested on <i>Radioactivity and Nucleus</i> ; they are no longer in the current syllabus."	
3. "This year 95.2% of the candidates obtained grade C6 or better, which is comparable to last year's percentage of 95.7%."	
4. "Candidates are responding to the question with higher-order skills not seen in previous cohorts."	
5. "Compared to last year, there are fewer candidates this year who can argue cogently and logically in their essays."	
6 "The percentage of distinctions for Literature is similar to the percentage of distinctions for Mathematics."	
7. "The last 3 open-ended questions in this year's paper are harder than those in previous years."	
8. "The new syllabus has proportionally more higher-order learning outcomes than lower-order learning outcomes."	

Check out the answers at the last page of this newsletter...

Sharing of Singapore's Mathematics Curriculum Framework in London

The University of Cambridge recently launched the Mathematics framework, Cambridge Mathematics, and held a conference on 11 March 2015 in London. The conference attracted about 130 participants and mathematics enthusiasts. Speakers from various reputable institutions and organisations were invited to give presentations on the teaching, learning and assessment of Mathematics. Singapore was honoured to be invited for this initiative as well.

Singapore's education system was placed in the limelight when our students performed well in the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study. With a score of 562, Singapore teens topped the chart in problem solving as compared to students from 43 other economies.

The results have piqued the interest of many overseas educators who are keen to find out and understand more about our teaching and assessment strategies; hence, the invitation to do a presentation for the conference. Mdm Toh Hoon Sin, Deputy Director cum Lead Assessment Specialist for Mathematics, represented SEAB to give an overview of the Mathematics curriculum framework in Singapore and how assessment was conducted for the Primary School Leaving Examination.

On her experience of being invited for the presentation in London, Mdm Toh shared, "As the only Asian speaker in the conference, I definitely felt nervous presenting to an overseas audience, not knowing what to expect. However, I was heartened to know that Singapore's education

system was held in high esteem by overseas educators and was more than happy to share our curriculum and assessment strategies with them. It was also an enriching experience for me to learn more about Cambridge's Mathematics framework."

With multiple speakers sharing on various aspects of Mathematics education, ranging from teaching and learning to assessment, we are sure all participants enjoyed key takeaways from the presentations. The same goes for Singapore and we definitely hope that more of such learning opportunities knock on our doors!



Welcoming Mr Toh Poh Guan's Return as Director, Assessment Services

On 2 January 2015, we warmly welcomed a familiar face in SEAB. On this day, Mr Toh Poh Guan, former Director of Assessment Planning and Development Division, returned to SEAB with a new portfolio as Director, Assessment Services.



Believing in the value of people and recognising the unique contributions that each individual makes, SEAB is more than thankful to have veterans such as Mr Toh returning to help nurture and pass down assessment expertise and institutional knowledge to the next generation of staff.

Having spent the last decade in SEAB and with more than 30 years of experience in the education service, Mr Toh is definitely no stranger to the work in the Assessment Services Division. In fact, Mr Toh was one of the members in the working committee tasked to set up SEAB during his earlier days in the Ministry of Education.

As part of his work in the early days of SEAB, Mr Toh oversaw SEAB's national examinations as well as other assessment services, including the provision of training and consultancy services and introduction of the International Primary School Examination (iPSLE) for overseas schools.

With this much expertise on hand, it was Mr Toh's aspiration to see that his knowledge in assessment literacy is passed down to the next generation of educators. To realise this, he had been working on institutionalising his personal experiences and knowledge into organisational information prior to his retirement via documentation, standard operating procedures, training materials and publications.

Even after completing this extensive work, Mr Toh still felt the wish to return to his home ground to share his perspectives. "Face-to-face interactions and sharing sessions cannot be replaced and this will provide direct feedback and learning," he shared.

Speaking about his new role as the Director of Assessment Services, Mr Toh wishes to value add by strengthening SEAB's assessment capabilities in terms of the training and consultancy services we provide. This includes reviewing the current

Specialist Diploma in Educational Assessment (SDEA) course to reach out to more teachers. New certification courses will also be introduced to cater to various groups of teachers in the near future.

More immediately, work is in progress for a second book on assessment and a conference on assessment perspective and practices for teachers in the next year.

In the long run, Mr Toh hopes that, with his domain knowledge and expertise, he can help co-create a long term, sustainable system that enhances SEAB's assessment capabilities in producing quality assessment training and consultancy services. This, he felt was the best way he could contribute in fulfilling SEAB's vision to become a trusted authority that is recognised locally and internationally.

Be on the lookout for new and exciting training courses that will be upcoming!

“ Education is to brighten the mind and brighten the future of our students. ”

– Mr Toh Poh Guan, with a borrowed phrase on his beliefs about education and its objectives.

Training Calendar

Jul - Dec 2015

For Primary School Teachers

Workshop Title	Duration (Days)	Date of Training
Introduction to Assessment for Beginning Teachers – Chinese Language	1	28 Jul 2015
Introduction to Assessment for Beginning Teachers - Mathematics	1	Class 1 : 14 Jul 2015 Class 2 : 15 Jul 2015 Class 3 : 16 Jul 2015
Introduction to Assessment for Beginning Teachers - Science	1	02 Jul 2015
P4 Assessment Literacy – Mathematics	1	08 Jul 2015

For Secondary School Teachers

Workshop Title	Duration (Days)	Date of Training
Assessment – English Language	1.5	09 Jul & 23 Jul 2015
Assessment – Mathematics	1.5	Class 1 : 09 Jul & 20 Aug 2015 Class 2 : 10 Jul & 21 Aug 2015
Assessment – Tamil Language	1.5	15 Sep & 23 Sep 2015

For more information about the above courses, please refer to TR AISI.

Assessing Oral Presentation and Discussion In Higher Malay Language

This workshop is designed to equip participants with the knowledge, understanding and skills to assess oral presentation and oral discussion skills in Higher Malay Language. This workshop is intended for Secondary School teachers who are currently teaching GCE O-Level Higher Malay Language.

Specifically, the workshop seeks to help participants:

- Gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes a good oral presentation and discussion;
- design an oral presentation task;
- conduct discussion based on oral presentation; and
- acquire basic knowledge on production of video stimulus.

Training Schedule

Workshop Title	Duration (Days)	Date of Training
Assessing Oral Presentation and Discussion in Higher Malay Language	1	31 Aug 2015

Assessing Oral Presentation and Discussion In Higher Tamil Language

This workshop is designed to equip participants with the knowledge, understanding and skills to assess oral presentation and oral discussion skills in Higher Tamil Language. This workshop is intended for Secondary School teachers who are currently teaching GCE O-Level Higher Tamil Language.

The objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- Helping participants to gain deeper understanding of what constitute a good oral presentation and discussion;
- design an oral presentation task;
- conduct discussion based on oral presentation; and
- acquire basic knowledge on production of video stimulus.

Training Schedule

Workshop Title	Duration (Days)	Date of Training
Assessing Oral Presentation and Discussion in Higher Tamil Language	1	30 Sep 2015

To register, please click [here](#) to download the registration form. Thereafter, you may fax the completed form to us at (65) 6377 4229. For further information, please contact us at SEAB_AS@seab.gov.sg.

* The training information provided in this publication is accurate at the time of printing.

SEAB Wins the 2014



In April 2015, SEAB was accorded the Silver Award of the 2014 Singapore HEALTH (Helping Employee Achieve Life-Time Health) Award.

Presented by the Health Promotion Board, the Singapore HEALTH Award is a biennial award that gives national recognition to organisations with commendable Workplace Health Promotion programmes. To qualify for the award, organisations were assessed on the criteria of programme positioning and organisation, planning, evaluation and results as well as comprehensiveness.

Believing that people are our most important resource, SEAB's staff welfare committee partnered with the Human Resource Department from 2013 to initiate the SEAB Wellness Programme.

The SEAB Wellness Programme aims to foster a healthy workplace culture that cares for employees' health and well-being through a wide range of activities related to health and fitness for staff throughout the year. These activities include onsite

health screening exercises and health awareness talks ranging from stress and anger management to nutrition and weight management. Staff can also sweat it out during physical activities like Hatha Yoga, Tai Chi, Abs, Buns and Thighs Workout, and Line Dance, or even challenge themselves at the annual JP Morgan Corporate Challenge Run if they feel up to it.

On the winning of the award, Ms Selena Yeo, the Director of Corporate Services shared, "Receiving the award was definitely a positive recognition for SEAB as it affirms SEAB's commitment to helping our employees lead a healthy and vibrant life. People are at the heart of what we do here in SEAB and we believe that with an effective workplace health promotion programme, we can achieve more with happier, healthier employees."

With this encouragement, SEAB hopes to step up on our Wellness Programme by introducing more exciting and interesting health-related initiatives for our staff in the coming year.

Help Us Improve!

Dear Readers,

To help us develop more relevant and interesting content for you, we would like to hear from you. We would be grateful if you can take a few minutes of your time to respond to our survey by clicking [here](#). We would like to hear from you about what you like about our newsletter and the content that you would like to see.

If you have any other feedback on our newsletter, you may also write in to us directly at SEAB_SEABLink@seab.gov.sg. Thank you for your time and valuable inputs.

The SEAB-link Editorial Team



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board

Our Vision:

A trusted authority in examinations and assessment,
recognised locally and internationally.

Our Mission:

We assess educational performance so as to certify individuals,
uphold national standards and advance quality in assessment worldwide.

Our Values:

Integrity | Value people | Commitment | Professionalism | Teamwork