

ABSTRACT

School-based Assessment in Caribbean Examinations
Council Chemistry: Its Implementation in Jamaican
Schools

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Effective implementation is crucial to the success of any educational change. School-based assessment (SBA) as an examination procedure is a major innovation in the Caribbean, and the ideas and conceptions related to it are still in a period of development and change.

This study investigated the practical implementation of the guidelines for the assessment of manipulative skills for SBA in the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) chemistry by Jamaican teachers. The data sources were 53 teachers drawn from schools islandwide, and 444 students from Kingston and St. Andrew.

Spearman rho coefficient of correlation was used to establish the interrelationship among the variables BEN (the perception of benefits of SBA); CLAR (clarity about what SBA means in practice); DIFF (the perception of SBA as being difficult to implement related to the complexity of the task); ORG (organisational

arrangements); and IMPL (the putting into practice the guidelines for the assessment of manipulative skills).

Both teachers and students showed majority support for SBA with some being strongly opposed to it. The data suggest that ORG and CLAR have the strongest influence on the way in which SBA is implemented. The highest correlations ($p < .01$) were between CLAR and DIFF, DIFF and BEN, and BEN and CLAR. The problems experienced by Jamaican teachers are very real. These include heavy workloads, large class sizes, inadequate laboratory facilities and technician support. Considerable variation was found in the procedures used, and in the quantity and quality of criteria selected for assessment, leading to scores that cannot be said to be comparable.

Based on the findings and the recommendations made by both teachers and students, some strategies are suggested in chapter 5 that should contribute to more uniform and comparable assessments of manipulative skills, that should enhance the reliability and validity of the SBA scores.