

Responding to ‘Culture of Testing’ Report: Reactions and Implications

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Retracing our (my) steps

- Has y(our) assessment experiences been 'good enough'?
- Responses from the case of Singapore
- What's next?

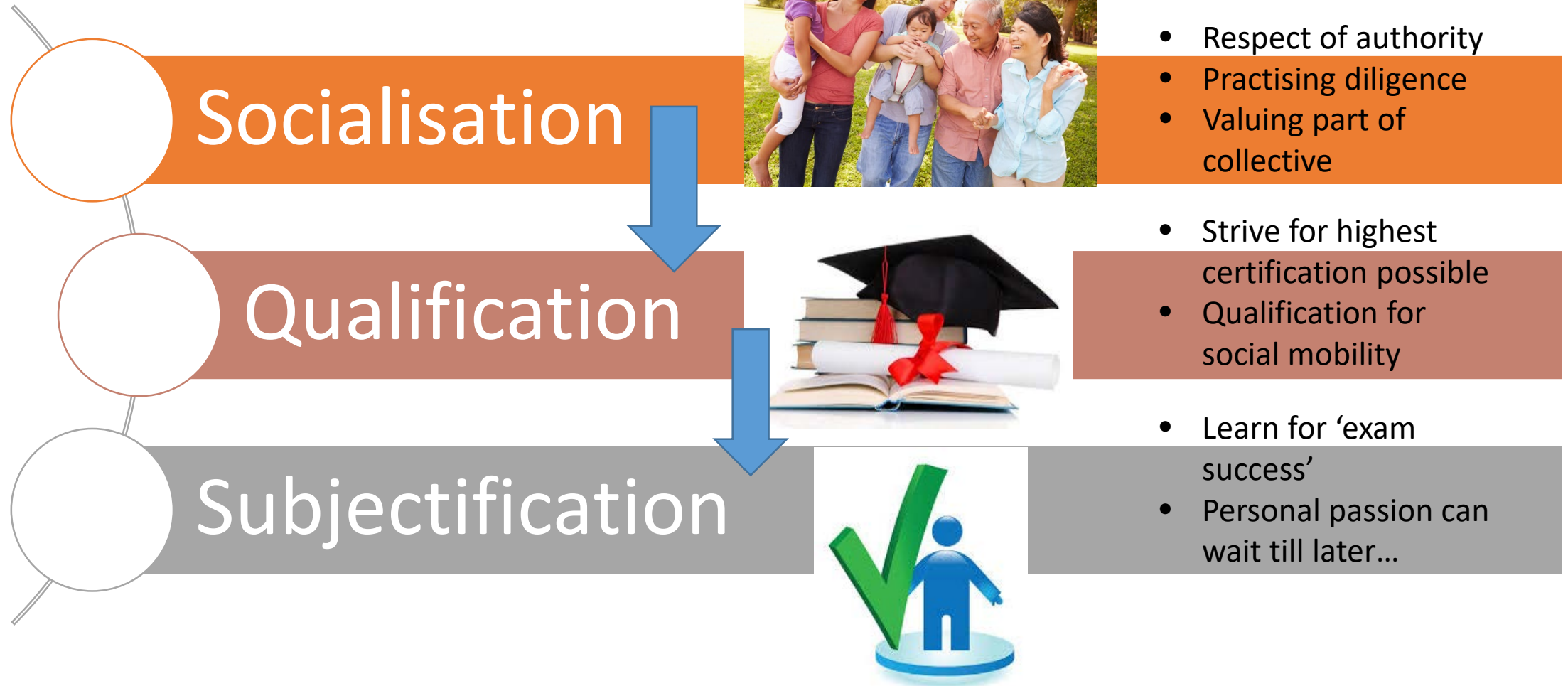
*Grant me the peace of mind to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.*



Functions of Education (Biesta, 2009)

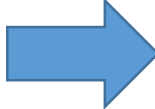

- Socialisation (into society)
- Qualification (of skills and knowledge)
- Subjectification (individual pursuits)

Functions of Education (in East Asia)





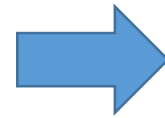
Some positive consequences (first)...

- Singularity of importance of test/examination success as indicator of future success. 
- Tremendous motivation for students to learn systematically for examination.
- Fair system of identifying good performers in examination. 
- Society values the importance of examination to identify good performers.
- Teachers pick up important 'benchmarking' skills.



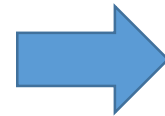
Some negative consequences ...

- Singularity of importance of test/examination success as indicator of future success.



- Learn/teach toward test (narrowing of curriculum is very real).
- Well-being of students are (increasingly?) compromised.

- Fair system of identifying good performers in examination.



- 'Exam smart' students may not function well in an 'uncertain future'.
- Gap between the 'top' and 'bottom performers' can widen.

Case of Singapore



'Teach Less, Learn More'

is about teaching better, to engage our learners and prepare them for life, rather than teaching more, for tests and examinations.

It calls on every one of us to go back to the basics, to:



Remember Why We Teach

More ...

- For the Learner
- To Excite Passion
- For Understanding
- For the Test of Life

Less ...

- To Rush through the Syllabus
- Out of Fear of Failure
- To Dispense Information Only
- For a Life of Tests

Reflect on What We Teach

More ...

- The Whole Child
- Values-centric
- Process
- Searching Questions

Less ...

- The Subject
- Grades-centric
- Product
- Textbook Answers

Reconsider How We Teach

More ...

- Engaged Learning
- Differentiated Teaching
- Guiding, Facilitating, Modelling
- Formative and Qualitative Assessing
- Spirit of innovation and enterprise

Less ...

- Drill and Practice
- 'One-size-fits-all' Instruction
- Telling
- Summative and Quantitative Testing
- Set Formulae, Standard Answers

Remember Why We Teach

Less ...

- To Rush through the Syllabus
- Out of Fear of Failure
- To Dispense Information Only
- For a Life of Tests

Focus on What We Teach

Less ...

- The Subject
- Grades-centric
- Product
- Textbook Answers

Reconsider How We Teach

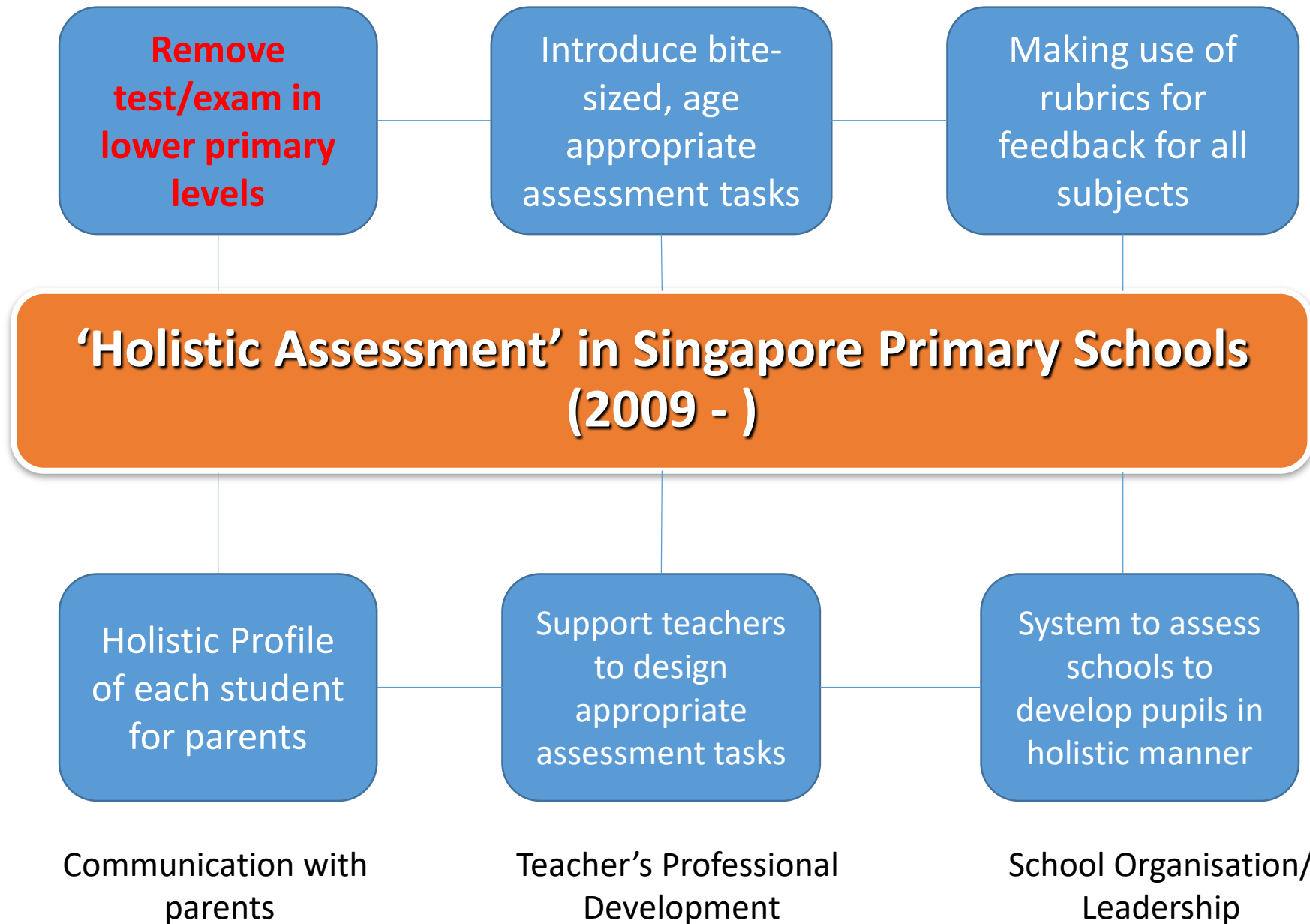
More ...

- Engaged Learning
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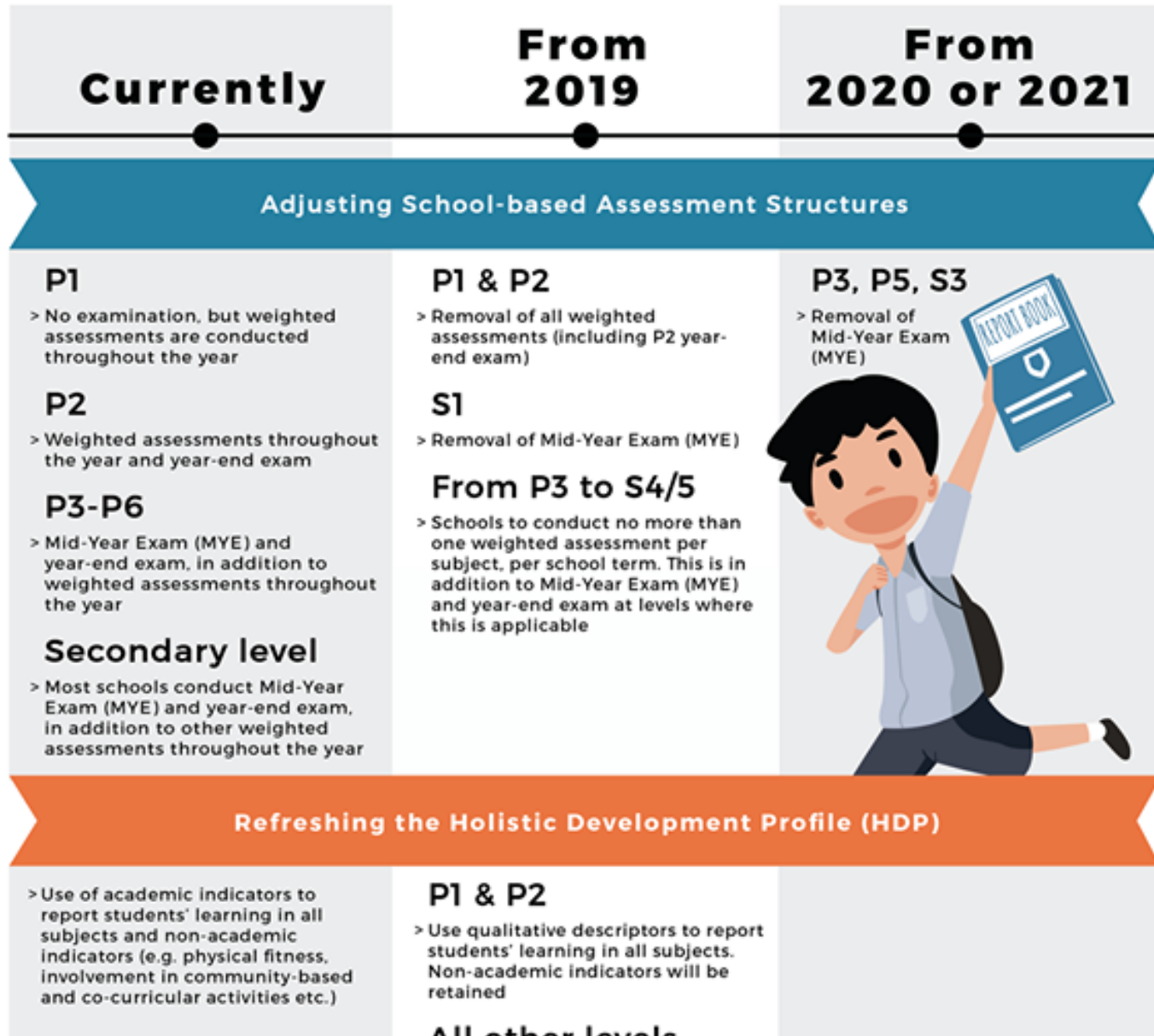
Less ...

- Drill and Practice
- 'One-size-fits-all' Instruction
- Telling
- Summative and Quantitative Testing
- Set Formulae, Standard Answers

Changing Classroom Assessment Practices



Further System Adjustment of School-based Assessment Structures

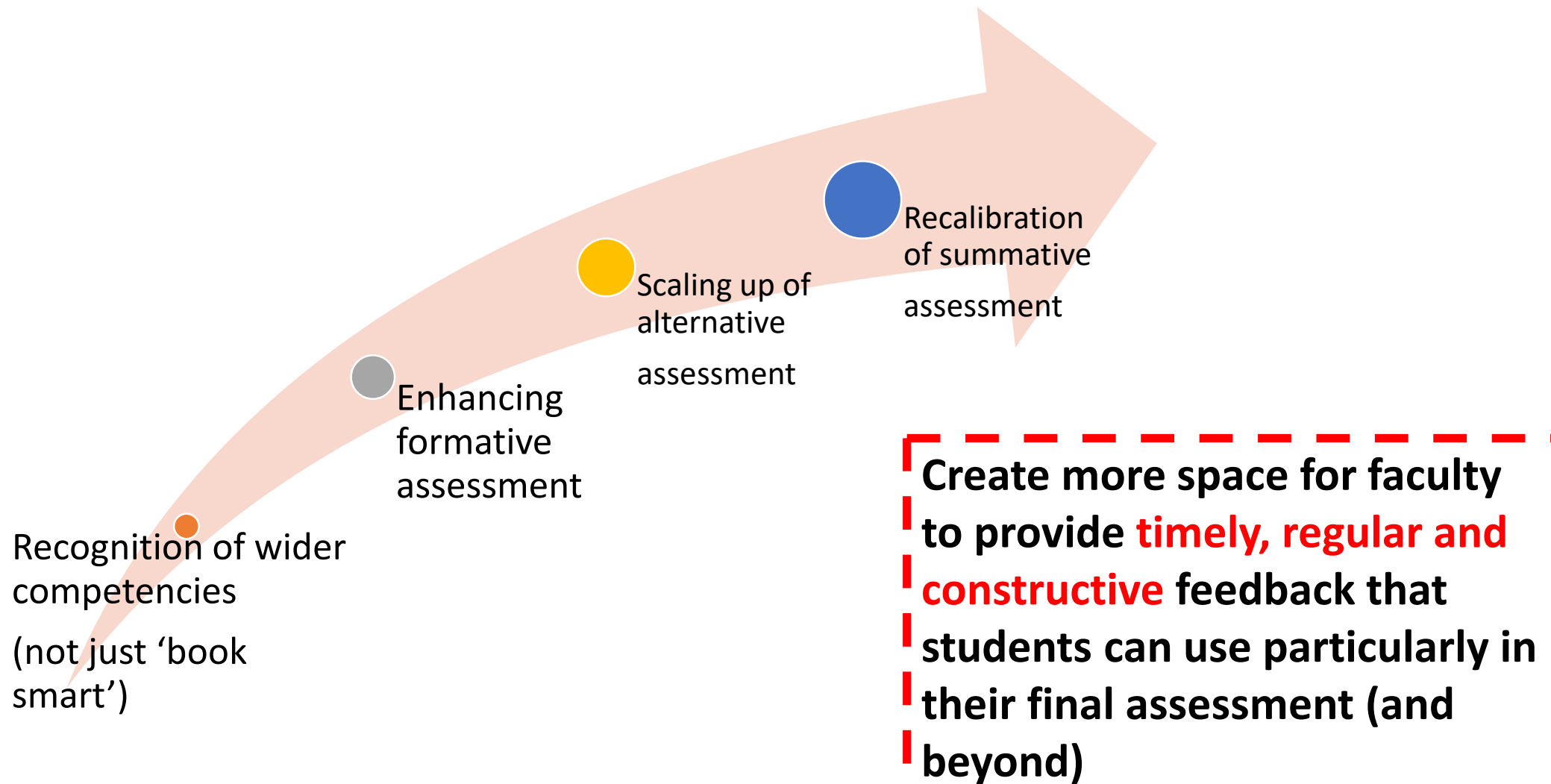


‘Learning for Life’

removal of more weighted assessments

enhancing holistic development

'Assessing less for more...'





What's next?

- Can social-cultural values be changed over-night? **No...**
- Can our society recognize wider indicators of 'success of learning'? (beyond the conventional qualifications?) **No, but we can do something...**
- Do teachers, students and parents know enough of the value of formative and alternative assessments? **No, but we can do something...**
- Can teachers be skillful enough to carry out formative and alternative assessments? **No, but we can do something...**
- Can students be assisted to pick up self-regulation skills for test of life? (rather than be discouraged by life of perpetual testing?) **Yes!**

Benefits of 'testing'

Dangers of 'over-testing'

Co/Self-Regulation	Mis-regulation
Appropriate goal setting	Unrealistic goal set
Monitoring toward the goal	Lack of monitoring
Interpretation of feedback	Unable to use feedback
Appropriate actions to close gap	Use wrong method to close gap (e.g. rote learning)
Adjustment of goals	No update of goal



Assessment in 21st century that is 'good enough'

- Beyond methodological and procedural correctness.
 - Precision of 'marking/grading' is not necessary.
- Need to consider consequential validity –the social impacts and utility of assessment for longer-term learning.
 - Growing importance of formative and alternative assessment.
- Addressing ethical questions – provide help for students systematically disadvantaged by a particular assessment regime.
 - Differentiated and developmentally-appropriate assessment for different students.

The essential (classical view) of assessment

Assessment ~ the Latin root, *assidere*, means to sit beside.



Assessment is *the* 21st century skill

Preparing students for lifelong learning necessarily involves preparing them for the tasks of **making complex judgments about their own work** and that of others and for making decisions **in the uncertain and unpredictable circumstances** in which they will find themselves in the future.

(Boud & Falchikov, 2006 p. 402)

Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (2006). Aligning assessment with long-term learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(4), 399-413.

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