

## Curriculum Journal - Decision on Manuscript ID RCJO-2020-0063

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From: Curriculum Journal (onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com)

To: arsyad.arrafi@ikipmataram.ac.id

Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2020, 06:17 PM GMT+8

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17-Nov-2020

Dear Mr Arrafii:

Your manuscript entitled "TENSIONS IN THE TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ASSESSMENT REFORM", which you submitted to Curriculum Journal, has been reviewed. The reviewer comments are included at the bottom of this letter.

Thank you for submitting your paper to the Curriculum Journal and our apologies for the length of time it has taken to get reviews undertaken and completed. The Covid pandemic seems to have affected academic workloads. However we did eventually get two very constructive reviews and Reviewer 2 in particular went to great lengths to provide helpful feedback for which we are very grateful.

Both reviewers were very supportive of the paper and keen to see it published but suggest that major revisions are required. The feedback has been collated according to major headings in the article with additional editorial comment in the attached document. Please feel that you can ask for further clarification if this would assist your revisions.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to Curriculum Journal, your revised manuscript should be uploaded by 16-Jan-2021. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision by this date, we will consider your paper as a new submission.

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This will direct you to the first page of your revised manuscript. Please enter your responses to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you made to the original manuscript. Please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s).

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Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Curriculum Journal and we look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,  
 Professor Mark Priestley and Dr Stavroula Philippou, Editors  
 Dr Daniel Alvunger, Professor Kathryn Hibbert, Professor David Leat, Dr Nienke Nieveen, Associate Professor Claire Sinnema and Dr Tiina Soini, Associate Editors

#### Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

##### Comments to the Author

The paper examines Indonesian teacher perceptions of the assessment reform in that country.

##### Introduction

The introduction sets the scene effectively for the paper. The theoretical framing section, includes recent and relevant literature although I had some questions. I could see that that authors were using Brown's work but was unclear what the authors intended me to take from the summary of the paper by Hargreaves, except it appears in the discussion? Brown has done more recent work ... could this be included/ do the authors see this as relevant?

Please could a more extensive coverage of literature on non-western settings be included – this would seem to be relevant given the context of the study. The same comment applies to the section on values in relation to previous research on non-Western contexts.

I strongly recommend a section on the Indonesian educational context – without this it is difficult to interpret teacher comments and challenging to appreciate the contribution of the paper beyond taking a survey to a new context.

##### Data collection

Please check details on the profiles of teachers who were interviewed – these do not always add to 15; please also clarify the profile of the group discussion participants, including why civil servants were interviewed and what is the significance of rural versus urban participants. Here again I needed to know more about the Indonesia context. I note that the descriptors for teachers in this section do not match those in the results section.

##### Results

These are carefully set out and include some interesting issues and tensions. I appreciate the inclusion of names and counts and interpreted that GD codes came from the group discussion?

Please consider whether tables to summarise points would add clarity - I wondered if they might ease the challenge of monitoring prevalence.

Page 6 line 10/11 state that Brown's framework guided the analysis but earlier text suggests a more ground up coding-please clarify

Learner agency – I was not clear of the basis of the comment that teachers seemed to develop a more positive construction – there does not seem to have been an opportunity to track views over time. Here I was concerned about the numbers of teachers making the different comments – raising again the need to clarification of participants

##### Discussion

The discussion was clear and coherent as it was set out although I was interested again to know more about counts. Here I wondered again about the paper contribution beyond exploring ideas in another context – did / could the particular non-Western context add any new insights.

Reviewer: 2

##### Comments to the Author

This paper is important work as it examines the understandings of assessment (and assessment reforms) that teachers in Indonesia have. We need more work which explores diverse cultural contexts as without this, we risk generalising (often inappropriately) Anglophone research to the rest of the world. Because of this, I hope the authors will persist with the development of this manuscript until it reaches a publishable state.

While it is important to the field, the piece as written is not publishable yet. There are many aspects which require further clarification and claims which are yet to be substantiated. Below are some of my suggestions on how to strengthen the manuscript so it would become more publishable.

##### Introduction

Your opening paragraph begins to make clear the potential challenges for this reform in Indonesia. However, it would be strengthened by more explicitly stating claims (e.g., "perhaps inconsistency or paradoxes among the reform policies" – such as what?) and ideally supporting these with more literature. I appreciate your identification that there is not much research to support your claims re the current environment, but even more direct reference to policy, current frameworks, teacher education syllabi, etc. would strength the argument and give your interested reader somewhere to

go to start understanding your context (e.g., "Assessment training has often been embedded as an additional topic in the general professional development" – is there anything you could cite here?).

Grammar/sentence structure issues:

"Research has documented a diverse teachers' conception of assessment purposes." – remove 'a' and make conception plural.

"In this research, group discussion allowed further exploration about individual teacher conception revealed" -conception needs to be plural

"Ten teachers (25 propositions) valued students' involvement in assessment less important."- missing 'as'

Lit review section

Here, keep working towards synthesis. What are the big messages of this body of literature as illustrated in the discrete studies?

- While I agree with your criticisms of Hargrave's work, if it is a weak study, why cite it? I would remove it rather than spend multiple sentences critiquing its methods (that is not the purpose of your paper).

Instead, pick up more recent and relevant work:

Barnes, N., Fives, H., & Dacey, C. M. (2017). US teachers' conceptions of the purposes of assessment. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 65, 107-116.

Brown, G. T., Gebril, A., & Michaelides, M. P. (2019, March). Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment: A Global Phenomenon or a Global Localism. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 4, p. 16). Frontiers.

- You don't cite Brown's work in China and Hong Kong with teachers in the non-western section- I think this is important to include.

- Kennedy, K. J. (2016). Exploring the influence of culture on assessment: The case of teachers' conceptions of assessment in Confucian Heritage Cultures. *Handbook of human and social conditions in assessment*, 404-419.

- Additionally, articles specifically focusing on teacher conceptions in time of reform might be helpful:

- Darmody, M., Lysaght, Z., & O'Leary, M. (2020). Irish post-primary teachers' conceptions of assessment at a time of curriculum and assessment reform. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 1-21.

With the second half of your literature review, you make a few jumps in logic. First you are talking about assessment in general, but then narrow to peer- and self-assessment, without making it clear why this particular subset of assessments was a focus. Was it an important part of the reform?

In your lit review about PASA and of teacher perspectives of assessment purposes (e.g., formative/summative), there is substantially more literature which you should include:

Harris, L. R., & Brown, G. T. (2013). Opportunities and obstacles to consider when using peer-and self-assessment to improve student learning: Case studies into teachers' implementation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 36, 101-111.

Methods

I think it is interesting to use both individual interviews and a group discussion – it would be good to get your rationale for having two kinds of qualitative data collected. Why use a multi-method approach? How long did the interviews generally go for? With the samples, I was unclear if some of the same participants participated in both data collection strategies or if they were completely different groups. Also, you mentioned that 11 were 'civil servants' – I'm unfamiliar with that term. You mentioned that you transcribed the interviews on the day they occurred- I'm assuming there was only one conducted per day?

Thank you for providing a description of your transcription process; such details are important, yet seldom included.

I also appreciate your descriptions of your analytical process. There are still some things to make clearer:

The transcripts were carefully read and annotated to familiarise with and look for the big picture of the data (Saldana, 2013). The iterative sweeps revealed a large number of initial codes which could be grouped into a category through examining the relationship among the related codes (Denscombe, 2007). [so codes became categories? How did you determine this? An example illustrating this process would be helpful.] Then, all categories and associated codes were counted and then grouped based on the theoretical codes. [how did you determine theoretical codes? What were these?] However, the focus of analysis of the group discussion transcripts was thematic ideas of interactive conversation among the group members. [what is the difference between theoretical codes, categories, and thematic ideas] Thus, counting codes in group transcripts was not relevant as one idea might be expressed by multiple participants. [did you count the codes elsewhere- it hasn't been described in your process yet.]

Also, in the results, you quantify 'propositions' but never discuss in your methods what counted as a 'proposition' within the data. Is it a sentence? A phrase? A paragraph? Was each utterance considered to be a proposition, or only those about particular topics? How many 'propositions' were in each interview?

## Results

In your results, you state "The analysis was guided by Brown's model of teachers' assessment conceptions: accountability, improvement and irrelevance" '.

However, in your methods, you said "The analysis process was qualitative, inductive and interpretive, and not relying on a priori codes, using content analysis approach". If you were guided by Brown's model, wouldn't it have provided/informed some a priori codes?

In your results, are you presenting the findings of the interviews and focus groups together? I'm not entirely sure which data set is being used in each section.

The statement "Despite such positive views, teachers held negative perspectives" confused me. Were the same teachers stating both positive and negative views?

Your descriptions in your learner agency category puzzled me. You said "Teachers seemed to gradually develop a more positive construction of assessment conception in relation to students' involvement in peer assessment, self-assessment and learning autonomy, despite there being a prevalent level of uncertainty in regard to the practicality and efficacy of these strategies in their classrooms for the improvement of students' learning." – how did you determine they 'gradually' developed a more positive construct? Do you mean within the interview? Or over weeks/months/years (in which case, how did you know this)? If you do say they became more positive about it, I'm confused why you would align this with Brown's irrelevant category.

You say "Teachers reported a mixed, overlapping conceptions specific to K13 assessment, featured by both positive (163 statements) and negative opinions (265 propositions), implying that their thinking tended to be strongly negative." – When you say 'strongly negative, isn't that ignoring the 163 positive statements? Again, I am not sure what a proposition is and if it is similar/different to a statement.

You say "These findings suggest a tension in teachers' conceptions; although teachers indicated some degree of enthusiasm, they also showed considerable uncertainty because of the perceived complexities involved." These two halves of the sentence don't go together terribly well. To me, emotional responses to the reform (what you are talking about in the second half), don't constitute conceptions. The words 'opinions' or 'attitudes' might be more accurate than conceptions.

I love this quote "Our job in K13 is [first] to assess, [second] to assess, [third] to assess and to assess, all [learning aspects] we must assess. Even a student farting [is also assessed] for the behavioral aspect of learning [Subki\_GD2]" – it adds humour, but also captures the notion of teachers feeling like they're being forced to over-assess.

## Discussion

You open your discussion saying "The exploratory approach of this study indicated that teachers hold complex, multidimensional but relatively 'convergent' conceptions of assessment (e.g. grade orientation)." What do you mean by a 'grade orientation'? This is the first time this term has been introduced and it was not defined anywhere.

I disagree with your reading of Brown's work here "In addition, while Brown's study assumed that the three purposes were distinctive conceptions, my study indicated that teachers' perceived purposes of assessment are interrelated" – While he identifies three broad conceptions (actually four as there is school accountability and student accountability), he also argues that these are interrelated based on data he has collected across many studies.

In this section, you make many claims- please double check that all can be substantiated by the data you actually have and the analyses you have conducted (e.g., "teachers tended to consider the assessment function regarding teaching and learning improvement as a single dimension" ).

I also found it a bit odd that you didn't make any mention here of their responses to the reforms (which constituted a whole section of your results).

## Conclusions

In this section, you also make many strong claims which I'm not certain are substantiated (e.g., "This research clearly identified that teachers viewed accountability and improvement dimensions of assessment as equally important") – did ALL teachers? Do all explicitly say these are equally important?

In this section, you also make some bold statements. For example:

the quality of education across the country should not be evaluated solely by a single standardized test; rather each region (provincial government) should be gradually given more autonomy to improve and evaluate the education quality. Thus, I argue that the centralised national examinations should be removed from Indonesian education system.

I do not disagree with your argument, but to me, it is very weakly (if at all) connected with your data. You have data suggesting how a sample of teachers feel about the reforms, but not establishing the need for national exams to cease (that is your opinion). In your article, try to keep to evidence based points.

Best wishes as you continue to refine your work.



Indonesian-Teachers---Assessment-Feedback.docx

23kB

## Decision Letter (RCJO-2020-0063.R1)

**From:** CJEditor@Wiley.com

**To:** Arsyad.arrafii@ikipmataram.ac.id

**CC:**

**Subject:** Curriculum Journal - Decision on Manuscript ID RCJO-2020-0063.R1

**Body:** 01-Feb-2021

Dear Dr Arrafii:

Your manuscript entitled "TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ASSESSMENT REFORM IN INDONESIA", which you submitted to Curriculum Journal, has been reviewed.

The reviewer comments are included at the bottom of this letter. These are rather positive and we are pleased to say that it is nearly 'there'. The suggested changes are not all very precise and you will have to use a little judgement in places. These are generally matters of helping the reader to interpret the Indonesian context (especially what preceded this reform), with which few will be familiar and therefore it should be helpful to provide some careful qualitative interpretation of the setting and the outcomes. The reviewer has kindly agreed to review these final changes and we hope that you will feel that this is a supportive process in achieving publication. Please consider these suggestions, and we look forward to receiving your revision.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to Curriculum Journal, your revised manuscript should be uploaded by 03-Mar-2021. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision by this date, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

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**IMPORTANT:** Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Curriculum Journal and we look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,  
Professor Mark Priestley and Dr Stavroula Philippou, Editors  
Dr Daniel Alvunger, Professor Kathryn Hibbert, Professor David Leat, Dr Nienke Nieveen,  
Associate Professor Claire Sinnema and Dr Tiina Soini, Associate Editors

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author

Thank you for your careful attention to reviewer comments. I agree that the revisions have tightened the article particularly with respect to context, participants and discussion.

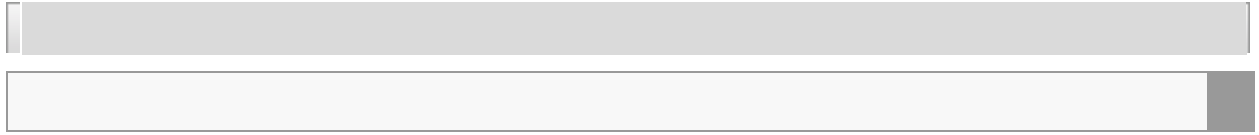
I have some further queries re context though - I found pages 1-2 which were added very useful..but request a few further additions... along the lines of when was KI introduced? I did wonder to what extent this is a prescriptive rather than a framework curriculum (see page 2 lines 30 - Given such a prescriptive mandate....).

The criteria at the end of the first paragraph of the introduction ... valid, fair, integrated, sustainable etc .. address all current key concerns and suggestions for 'quality/ effective' practice - I wondered if these are all listed in the document. If so the challenge to teachers is considerable and the commentary later about imposition and incoherence and limited professional development take on additional salience.

Also - while I understand the article to be focused around reforms, I am aware that teachers like all people do not change beliefs or practices quickly. The introduction begins with contrasting the K13 curriculum with the earlier one but I think I needed deeper understanding of the previous context to fully appreciate the findings. For example, I found it really interesting - given international rhetoric - that the teachers linked assessment to student accountability and then to school accountability but not to teacher accountability. You will see here that I am focused on contextual factors which will help me think how to translate these findings to my own context.

With regard to participants I was interested in the urban / rural balance and implications of level and note you did not report of teacher demographics in the results commentary or quotes .. I assume this means you found not difference worth commenting on? I realise the small sample might preclude this, but on the whole in my reading and experience there is often a rural / urban difference based around resourcing.

**Date Sent:** 01-Feb-2021





## Curriculum Journal - Decision on Manuscript ID RCJO-2020-0063.R2

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From: Curriculum Journal (onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com)

To: Arsyad.arrafii@ikipmataram.ac.id

Date: Wednesday, July 28, 2021, 02:09 PM GMT+8

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28-Jul-2021

Dear Dr Arrafii:

Thank you for your resubmission to the Curriculum Journal and the editing that you have undertaken. The original reviewer has returned his/her comments which are favorable although there are some further small suggestions which we agree need to be addressed as they will add clarity and sharpen the focus at the points indicated.

In addition we would ask that you extend the conclusion a little in relation to the availability of suitable professional support for changing assessment practice in your context. You might consult the following papers which offer perspectives on these issues in 2 other national contexts, and of course you may draw upon the literature you have already referenced:

Catarina Andersson & Torulf Palm (2017) Characteristics of improved formative assessment practice, *Education Inquiry*, 8:2, 104-122.

Johnson, C. C., Sondergeld, T. A., Walton, J. (2019). A study of the implementation of formative assessment by master teachers in three large urban districts. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(6), 2408–2438.

If these papers are not available to you please let us know. This suggestion is made to make the paper more accessible and interesting to the international readership of the journal, in other words, the conclusion needs to show the significance and the relevance of what you are examining in Indonesia to other researchers in other contexts who are however similarly interested in understanding the socio-political challenges of comprehensive curriculum reform. From this perspective, the results are interesting, but are at the moment somewhat generalized, not giving insight into individual teachers' competing conceptions and more broadly the challenges of assessment reform; this is the rationale with which we are recommending these papers, which consider similar issues in other countries (US and Sweden). Thus, we would like the conclusion to include a brief comment on the potential for support for teachers' development of formative assessment practice in Indonesia - does such infrastructure exist? If not, what would you suggest?

Subject to these minor revisions, your paper could be suitable for publication. Please consider these suggestions, and we look forward to receiving your revision.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to Curriculum Journal, your revised manuscript should be uploaded by 27-Aug-2021. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision by this date, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

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Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Curriculum Journal and we look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,

Professor Mark Priestley and Dr Stavroula Philippou, Editors

Dr Daniel Alvunger, Professor Kathryn Hibbert, Professor David Leat, Dr Nienke Nieveen, Associate Professor Claire Sinnema and Dr Tiina Soini, Associate Editors

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author

Thank you for highlighting changes - I can see that feedback has been responded to but the additions need a second look to make sure the flow works.

Page 27 – the additions on Indonesian are interesting but, with the focus on contracts and finance, I was not clear how they related to the argument of the paper in terms of assessment reform. Please could this be further clarified.

Now – top of page 28, the gap that is mentioned is not clear. I can see this is intended to relate to the note that research is scant on the previous page but this connection is now lost.

The point on student grades being linked to school grades is interesting – could a note be made about what it means for schools to be graded

## Curriculum Journal - Decision on Manuscript ID RCJO-2020-0063.R3

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From: Curriculum Journal (onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com)

To: arsyad.arafii@ikipmataram.ac.id

Date: Monday, August 23, 2021, 11:15 PM GMT+8

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23-Aug-2021

Dear Dr Arrafii:

Ref: "WE MUST ASSESS ALL, EVEN A STUDENT FARTING [IS ALSO ASSESSED] FOR THE BEHAVIORAL ASPECT OF LEARNING": TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ASSESSMENT REFORM IN INDONESIA

Thank you for your revised submission to the Curriculum Journal, which has addressed the small suggestions from the editorial team. We are pleased to inform you that it can be accepted for publication. The conclusion helps put your article into a wider context of assessment reform. There is one very small point in the conclusion, in that you write 'that changes in examination and grading system are inevitable' and it is debatable that they are inevitable, as there may be confounding policy imperatives (as in other countries)? Perhaps we can suggest that the sentence reads something like 'changes in the examination and grading system are implied (or called for)'. This can be dealt with at the proof stage if you are happy with the suggestion.

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Sincerely,

Professor Mark Priestley and Dr Stavroula Philippou, Editors

Dr Daniel Alvunger, Professor Kathryn Hibbert, Professor David Leat, Dr Nienke Nieveen, Associate Professor Claire Sinnema and Dr Tiina Soini, Associate Editors

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