

THE STANDARD

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Asian Psychological Services and Assessment Inc.



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Making Standards Work!

JANUARY 31, 2017

APSA WELCOMES 2017 WITH A BLAST

In 2017, the Asian Psychological Services and Assessment Inc. (APSA) sees itself taking bold moves to achieve its vision of supporting human capital development in the Philippines.

There are major challenges presently besetting the Philippine education sector that APSA intends to strategically but holistically address through capacity strengthening and service innovations. One of these challenges concerns the implementation of the flagship reform program of the Department of Education (DepEd) known as the K to 12 Program. With good intentions of fostering a conducive learning environment and preparing learners for entry level work, the K to 12 curriculum has radically changed the course offerings as well as the learning requirements in basic and higher education levels, with basic education schooling lengthened from 10 to 12 years. Another major challenge is the further integration of the Philippines to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community. Integration demands that the country harmonizes its education curricula and work standards with those of the ASEAN member nations.

APSA welcomes all of these challenges and sees them as providing an opportunity and venue to extend its services and advance education advocacies. APSA's thrusts for 2017 are described and related in this issue of The Standard. Accomplishments of APSA for the previous year that shape its present initiatives and activities are also discussed.



The enthusiastic and dedicated staff of Asian Psychological Services and Assessment Inc. (APSA). Photo taken by Jenilly Ona.

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APSA FROM THE INSIDE

APSA Consolidates Its Organizational Capacity

In anticipation of the educational challenges of 2017, APSA consolidated its organizational capacity during the second half of 2016. In terms of decision making, it expanded its board membership from five to six academic and industry leading lights. Current members of the APSA Board of Directors are Dr. Rhoderick Santos (CEO and Chairperson), Dr. Rose Marie Salazar-Clemeña (President), Dr. Genevieve Ledesma-Tan (Founding Member/Director), Fr. Dr. Francisco Estepa, S.V.D. (Independent Director), Mr. Richard Marquez (Independent Director), and Mr. Wallen Rex Tan (Independent Director). The youngest member in his early 30s, Mr. Tan, joined APSA in May 2016. All members of the APSA Board of Directors are lead advocates of education and business innovations in the country.

Together with the foregoing development, Dr. Liberty I. Nolasco was also installed as Administrator and concurrent Head of Research, Development and Publications Office of APSA in November 2016. Dr. Nolasco has over a decade of experience in academic work, research, and consultancy, with brief stints of managerial leadership, in the Philippines and overseas prior to joining APSA. She is tasked with setting the strategic direction of APSA and introducing innovations while promoting content development in its projects and activities. Dr. Nolasco receives technical assistance from six experienced unit managers of APSA: Alma Ocheda of Accounting and Finance Unit; Adelaida de Perio of Marketing Unit; Eduardo Cruz, Therese Dela Cruz, Renato Jontilano and Zaldy Cosep of Operations Unit.

APSA Engages in Product and Service Innovations

For 2017, the Board of Directors approved the thrust of APSA for product development. In view of the previously cited education challenges, APSA is staged to introduce SBA products that are already attuned to 21st century demands for learning and work. During the first half of school year (SY) 2017-2018, it is scheduled to release SBA products for core courses of English, Mathematics and Science from pre-elementary up to senior high school levels. The following assessment materials will also be made available during the same period: Assessment of Maritime Potential (gauges readiness of students for maritime employment), Assessment of Pre-elementary Potential (gauges readiness of learners for early age schooling), and College Readiness Test (gauges readiness of students for collegiate life in view of the curricular changes brought about by K-12 and global trends).

ment platforms that are fit and adapted to different school settings. By first half of SY 2017-2018, options shall be made available to schools which can choose between traditional or non-traditional assessment platforms. With these choices, APSA can offer more user-friendly assessment designs as well as flexible packages for assessment tools, which include a much more structured but improved design of its service training programs.

These innovation projects were shaped by feedbacks of schools and their specific requests for APSA services in 2016. APSA is customizing SBA materials for some schools. These developments mean that APSA is taking seriously its partnership with schools to essentially make standards work for everyone.

The complete line up and description of the new APSA SBA products will be reported in the next issue of *The Standard*.

More crucially, APSA is currently developing new assess-

A Redefined Role for APSA in Knowledge Creation

The Board of Directors of APSA, led by Dr. Rhoderick Santos, pushed for reengagement of APSA in knowledge creation in 2017. This is in line with its desire to foster intellectual discourse on educational assessment and measures in the Philippines. In this light, the newly installed APSA Administrator, Dr. Liberty Nolasco, spearheaded efforts to transform the newsletter and journal of APSA as venues of intellectual discourse through their activation and regular publication beginning in January 2017.

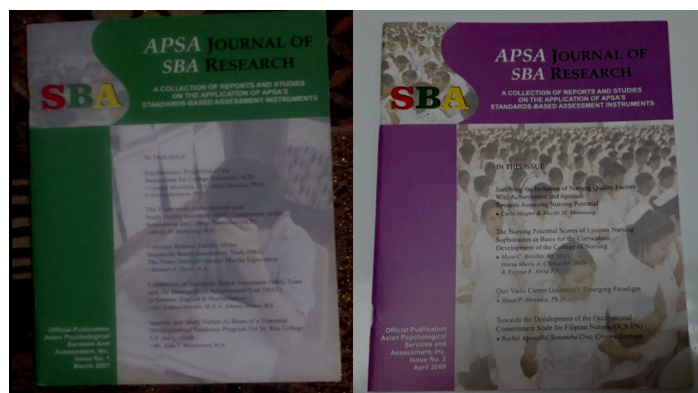
Prior to 2017, the APSA newsletter known as *The Standard* was published on an annual basis. For 2017, APSA aims to publish its

newsletter every quarter of the year. The first two issues of *The Standard* are scheduled for release in the APSA website on 6 February 2017 and 30 March 2017. Together with other write ups, their print issues are to be published on 30 April 2017 thru *The Standard*, magazine edition.

APSA has also published two issues of its scientific journal, the *APSA Journal of Standards Based Assessment (SBA) Research* — one in 2007 and another in 2009. Given the mandate of schools to promote internationalization, the reactivation of this journal will certainly benefit those that subscribe to APSA's SBA as well as the

academics, education managers and practitioners who are in serious search of publication venues for their scholarly works. For 2017, the online release of the first two journal issues shall coincide with the print release of The Standard.

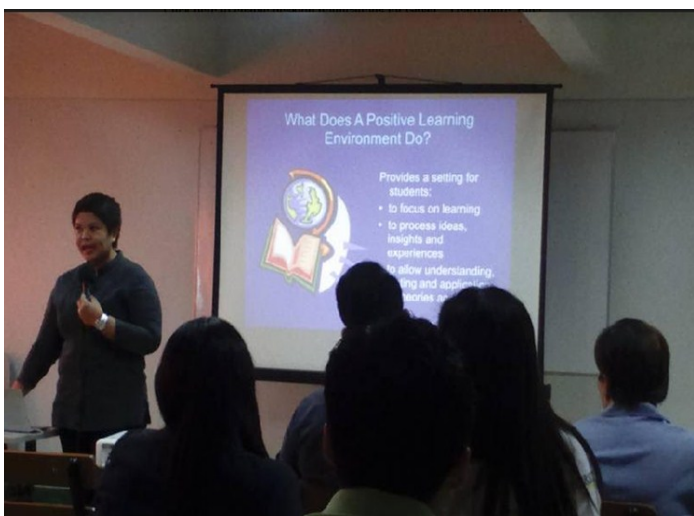
APSA invites interested parties to contribute relevant articles to its newsletter and journal. The Research, Development and Publications Office (RDPO), in cooperation with the Testing Unit, disseminated the Call for Papers for these publications during the second week of January 2017. Inquiries on prospective participation and submission can be forwarded to APSA's RDPO email address: apsa.ao.rdp@gmail.com.



APSA Journal of SBA Research (2007 and 2009). Photo taken by Liberty Nolasco and Jenilly Ona.

Work Rolls Out for the New APSA Administrator

On 3 November 2016, Dr. Liberty I. Nolasco started to assume the post of APSA Administrator and concurrently took over the management of research, development and publications in APSA. This dual function was held by the first APSA President, Dr. Leticia Azusano. The Marketing Unit, headed by Ms. Adelaida de Perio, temporarily took charge of research and publications functions when Dr. Azusano passed away in 2015.



Ms. Therese Dela Cruz conducting training on classroom management in Baliuag University on 7 November 2016. Photo taken by Liberty Nolasco.

Part of the short term agenda of Dr. Nolasco is to visit schools and join events organized by APSA. Such is to bring the concerns of clients closer the top management of the company. Dr. Nolasco made her first school visit on 7 November 2016. She went to Baliuag University to observe the conduct of post-assessment service training of APSA for K-12 teachers. Ms. Therese Dela Cruz, the Testing Unit Head, facilitated the training, focused on the topic, "Teachers as Guidance Designates/Life Coaches; Positive Learning Environment through Discipline". Dr. Nolasco and Ms. Dela Cruz

were warmly welcomed by Guidance Director, Mr. Christian E. Jordan, RGC, and Career Counseling Officer, Mr. Christian V. Dela Cruz.

Two days later, Dr. Nolasco gave an opening address for the Math Circle Convention (see below the article on Math Circle Convention for additional details). Cognizant of the issues and challenges of K-12 and ASEAN integration confronting 21st century educators, she assured participants that APSA is taking serious steps to address these concerns through innovations and partnership building with education stakeholders.

Likewise, Dr. Nolasco attended the School Counselors Circle Convention on 2-3 December 2016. She was introduced to guidance counselors and psychometricians of different schools who expressed their gratefulness for and support to APSA services. Some even related how the standards based assessment (SBA) of APSA have helped them secure the requirements for SBA set by their local or international accreditors.

Dr. Nolasco activated the developmental function of her office in conducting two post assessment trainings on SBA data utilization. On 21 November 2016, she held her first training in Saint Pedro Poveda College, wherein she was joined by Ms. Adelaida de Perio to interpret results of SBA data to teachers of English, Mathematics and Science. Dr. Nolasco and Ms. De Perio were kept in good company by Ms. Charisse Marie C. Raagas, School Guidance Director, and Ms. Olive Gillo, School Psychometrician.

Dr. Nolasco facilitated her second training in La Salle University Ozamiz Campus on 24 November 2016. The event was co-organized by Dr. Flordeliz Ejercito, Dean of the College of Education. Education and Engineering Instructors joined the training as academic participants. Having formerly taught in De La Salle University, Dr. Nolasco stressed the nexus between Lasallian Guiding Principles

and the SBA objectives of APSA. Instructors were glad to learn about the unity of purpose of La Salle system and APSA. After the training, Dr. Nolasco was invited by the Vice Chancellor for Academics and Research, Dr. Elsie Dajao, for some talks.

Dr. Nolasco subsequently visited two other Lasallian campuses. On 22 November 2016, she held a meeting with Mr. Randolf Renegado, Manager of the Admissions Office of La Salle Lipa in Batangas. They talked about the need for APSA to develop alternative assessment platforms that schools can use by SY 2017-2018. On 18 January 2017, she met with Brother Ophelia Fugoso, AFSC, to discuss assessment needs of the Lasallian Supervised Schools Office (LASSO). Her meetings were arranged and attended as well by Ms. Nette Capili, Marketing Executive for La Salle Lipa, and Ms. Jenilly Ona, marketing Executive for LASSO.

A number of schools are already lined up for visits by Dr. Nolasco in the next three months. The overall purpose of these



Participants pose for a photo after the training conducted by Dr. Liberty Nolasco (3rd from the right) on the subject, "Optimizing SBA Data Utilization", in La Salle University Ozamiz Campus on 24 November 2016. Dr. Flordelis Ejercito (4th from the right) served as co-organizer of the training program. Photo courtesy of De La Salle Ozamiz.

visits is to discuss the partnership plans of schools with APSA for product development.

Principals Circle of the Philippines Partnered with APSA for Its 10th Annual Convention



School managers take time to interact with fellow delegates to the 10th Principals' Circle Convention held in Hotel Jen on 25-26 August 2016. Photo taken by Myrna Diaz.

In partnership with APSA, the Principals' Circle of the Philippines (PCP) held its 10th Annual Convention last 25-26 August 2016 at the Hotel Jen in Manila City. The convention themed "Sustaining School and Leadership Success" was formally opened by PCP chairperson Dr. Theresita Yague. Over 100 school heads nationwide were presented with topics and relevant issues on school management, leadership, and conflict resolution. Speakers for legal and financial management issues included Dr. Jocelyn Cruz and Atty. Willie B. Santiago. Coaching, mentoring skills, and data-driven skills relevant to school leadership were discussed by Mr. Rey Cabalo and APSA President Dr. Rose Marie Salazar-Clemeña, respectively. Ms. Bernadeth Daran from the Department of Education (DepEd) elaborated on the K-12 Teaching and Learning Pedagogy. Mr. Mark Ayaay shared the importance of the use of calculators in the classroom while Mr. Earnest Tan talked about achieving a reasonable work-life balance.

Education for Leadership: The 5th Science Circle of the Philippines Convention

A fruitful 2-day convention was successfully organized by the Science Circle of the Philippines in partnership with APSA on 18-19 August 2016 at the Orchid Garden Suites in Manila City. Headed by Prof. Teresita Religioso, Chairperson of the Science Circle, the 2-day convention served as avenue for science teachers to seek infor-

mation on the recent trends in Science education, share their experiences in their field of practice, as well as establish networks for professional linkages.

On its fifth year, concerns on learning pedagogies, learning outcomes, and learner audiences were tackled by various academ-



Delegates of the 5th Science Circle Convention actively participated in the seminar-workshop facilitated by Mr. Joseph Jacob on 18 August 2016. Photo taken by Myrna Diaz.

ics and professionals in the industry. Mr. Joseph Jacob, Supervising Education Program Specialist of the Department of Education (DepEd), delivered a paper on Understanding the K-12 Science Teaching and Learning Pedagogy. His discussion was followed by a seminar workshop he facilitated on Effective Approach in Assessment of Learning Outcomes in Science. Mr. Delfin Bautista, part time faculty member of the Ateneo Graduate School of Education, presented his pedagogical study, Teaching Science the Right Way. Ms. Merlie Girle Caparal, Master Teacher II of Ramon Magsaysay High School, discussed Harnessing the Role of Classroom-Computing in K-12 Science Subjects. Dr. Religioso presented the findings of her study on Cultivating Interest of Millennials in Learning Science and Technology.

APSA Collaborates with the Math Circle of the Philippines to Raise the Bar of Mathematics Education

The Math Circle of the Philippines, in collaboration with APSA, launched its Annual Convention on 9-10 November 2016 in Hotel Jen in Manila City. The convention bore the theme, “Raising the Bar: Strengthening Mathematics Education”. Dr. Liberty Nolasco, the New APSA Administrator gave opening remarks before convention delegates (see related story in section, APSA from the Inside, from previous pages).

The curriculum specialist from the Department of Education (DepEd) started the convention proper with a discussion centered on the “Understanding the K-12 Teaching and Learning Pedagogy in Math”. The well sought after convention speaker, Dr. Ian June Garces, Associate Professor of Ateneo de Manila University,

graced the event with his presentation on “Developing Formative Assessment in Math” and “Teaching and Learning Mathematics thru the Use of Technology”. Dr. Levi Elipane, Professor of the De La Salle University, shared her views on “Mathematical Teaching Situation”. Mr. Tetsu Yamaguchi spoke about Suken, a global Mathematics certification program and examination that is offered in the Philippines through APSA. During the second day, Dr. Flordeliza Francisco, Associate Professor of Ateneo de Manila University, introduced the concept of Problem Solving Playground in a lecture-workshop that she facilitated. Prof. Julius Basilia, Associate Professor of the University of the Philippines Diliman, presented a unique subject of discourse in Mathematics education, “Developing Students’ Argumentative Skills in Math”.



Participants of the Math Circle Convention pose with one of the convention speakers, Dr. Ian June Garces (fourth from the left), and the Marketing Head of APSA, Ms. Adelaida de Perio (third from the left). Photo taken by Myrna Diaz.

School Counselors Circle Holds Convention in Collaboration with APSA for 2016



Dr. Carol Dahir was explaining the framework for ethical standards in counseling during the first day of School Counselors Circle Convention held on 2-3 December 2016 in Hotel Jen in Manila City. Photo taken by Myrna Diaz.

The School Counselors Circle (SCC) collaborated with APSA for its annual convention on 1-2 December 2016 at Hotel Jen in Manila City. The convention was themed, “Multicultural Cultural Competencies and Ethical Issues: Millennial Concerns for Counselors”. Dr. Rose Marie Salazar-Clemeña, President of APSA and School Counselors Circle, gave her opening remarks and related the realities of the ASEAN 2016 and the K to 12 program. She urged everyone to get to know this generation better and the challenges that beset them as part of building conducive learning environment in schools.

The convention was also graced by the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Carol Dahir, Professor and Chair of the School Counseling Department of New York Institute of Technology. She centered on the theme and discussed the ethical framework for school counseling that was developed by the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). Dr. Dahir introduced the said framework in the convention to encourage the development of Philippine standards on counseling ethics soon.

Dr. Dahir stated that counseling has gray areas that border some ethical issues that need to be confronted. She expressed that ethics should guide the practice of the counseling profession and that counselors have the ethical responsibility to collaborate with

teachers in dealing with student concerns. She also walked the participants through the ASCA guidelines and discussed some ethical issues that one may find troublesome to address but laws clearly tackle to protect the practice of counseling, nonetheless. In the name of social justice, customs, and values, delegates were encouraged to be leaders, advocates, and change agents of ethical counseling.

Meanwhile, Dr. Salazar-Clemeña talked about the measures of student success and this kind of success contextualized in fostering ethical standards of counseling in the Philippines. She also discussed the importance of data-driven decision making, and how it can assist, promote collaborative efforts of teachers and school staff, and strengthen the foundation of school counseling programs. She also underscored the need to analyze the roadblocks to decision-making and the various ways of addressing these roadblocks.

Updates on the counseling profession were also shared by Dr. Carmelita Pabiton, member of the Professional Psychology Board for Guidance and Counseling of the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC). She informed participants that PRC is currently reviewing the framework and content of the licensure examina-

tions, undertaking collaborative efforts with Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and reviewing the standards of counseling centers.

Later in the afternoon of the first day and during the second day of the convention, four lecture workshops were held. Dr. Alicia Estrellado, an Associate Professor of the De La Salle University Guidance and Educational Psychology Department, discussed her research on the resiliency of learners and its implications to counseling. Dr. Jose Alberto Reyes, Graduate program from the same department gave the counselors an overview on the school setting application of Dialectical Behavior Therapy. A thorough presentation on the characteristics of millennials and challenges to counselors in dealing with them was given Dr. Christine Saldivar.

The fourth workshop, facilitated by Dr. Dahir, aimed to foster the sensitivity of delegates to ethical issues, their tolerance for ambiguity, as well as to examine their prejudices and optimize their work involvement with students and families. Kitchner's Moral Principles were used as the model of ethical decision-making. In collaboration with Dr. Salazar-Clemeña, Dr. Dahir identified some ways by which delegates can address ethical counseling issues.

The convention was attended by close to a hundred delegates serving as guidance counselors, psychometricians and disciplinary officers from both APSA member schools and those enrolled in other private schools.

APEC Schools Partner with APSA

As the leading company in standards-based educational assessment, APSA unites with the vision of the APEC schools to providing students with access to world class education in 2016.

The APEC schools owned by Ayala Education Inc. and Pearson Affordable Learning Fund partnered with APSA in assessing student achievement thru the latter's Standards-Based Assessment (SBA). The SBA is designed to specifically determine the learning needs of students. The SBA gauges the level of knowledge and competence of students for a particular subject of a certain grade level. The first ever pre-test of the APEC schools using SBA materials was administered to 400 students from Grade 7 to Grade 8 on 4 June 2016.



A branch of APEC School. Photo Courtesy of the APEC schools, website at <https://www.apecschools.edu.ph/news.html>.

APSA Journal

APSA invites interested parties to submit articles for APSA Journal of Standards Based Assessment (SBA) Research. Articles containing 3,000 to 8,000 words and falling under the following topics may be published:

1. Measures of student performance in APSA SBA.
2. Improving quality of education through APSA SBA results.
3. Best practices and/or success stories concerning data utilization of APSA SBA results.

Well thought out essays, review articles, and reflexive notes with 2,000 and 3,000 words and tackling the following topics can also be considered for publication:

1. State of the art of education measures and assessment.
2. Teaching experience in utilizing SBA results.
3. Outcomes of SBA results utilization.
4. Improving career counselling and guidance services through SBA results.
5. Partnership of APSA and client schools.

Submitted articles should follow and comply with APA writing standards (for details, see weblink: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). *Deadline of submission for the first issue is on 20 February 2017 and for the second issue on 22 March 2017.* The publication of the first issue is on 28 February 2017 and the second issue on 30 April 2017. Kindly email your inquiries and articles to apsa.ao.rdp@gmail.com.

GLOBAL APSA

Another Milestone in 2016 for United International Private School of Dubai and APSA

The United International Private School of Dubai (UIPS), through the school principal, Dr. Eunice P. Orzame, supported by the Deputy Managing Director, MME. Badria Ali, signed another Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with APSA in 2016. The recently signed MOA states that APSA shall provide assessment services to UIPS for the following learning levels: Kindergarten 2 (KG2), Grade 6, and Grade 10.

The signing of MOA in 2016 was the second time APSA earned the trust of UIPS as the latter's assessment service provider. In this light, UIPS agreed to use the Preelementary Assessment, Assessment for College Potential (Attitude and Study Habits) and Aptitude Test to gauge the readiness of learners for KG2, Grade 6 and Grade 10, respectively.

Dr. Maria Jolit Angeline P. Malaya, the School Psychologist of UIPS, spearheaded the test administration last 18-20 September 2016. Dr. Malaya was assisted by school teachers of KG2, Grade 6 and Grade 10 in facilitating testing activities in UIPS.

The first MOA was signed by APSA and UIPS in September 2015. APSA was entrusted to assess the performance of Grade 10 students using its Aptitude Test. The results helped student identify their potential and chose their future careers. The reliability of the Aptitude Test impressed and satisfied UIPS administrators. Partnership with APSA was thus seen as a breakthrough initiative of UIPS in standardized testing services and improving teaching quality of the school. APSA has since then been considered by UIPS as preferred global partner for standards based assessment.



The actual testing of learners from KG2, Grade 6 and Grade 10 in the United International Private School of Dubai spearheaded by Dr. Maria Jolit Angeline P. Malaya on 18-20 September 2016. Photo taken by Maria Jolit Angeline Malaya.

APSA Continues to Host International Standard Certification for Mathematics

It was 10 years ago when APSA introduced the Suken Mathematics Certification (Suken hereafter) of Japan in the Philippines. On 9 November 2016, the Mathematics Certification Institute (MCI) of Japan, the certifying organization of Suken established under the auspices of the Ministry of Education of the Japanese Government, honored APSA for the latter's unwavering support and partnership for one full decade. APSA CEO and Chair, Dr. Rhoderick Santos, received the plaque of appreciation from MCI representative, Mr. Tetsu Yamaguchi in a brief program held during the Math Circle Convention (see related article from *APSA from the Inside*).

The involvement of APSA in Suken is a centerpiece of its capacity building initiatives for the academic and teaching community. Suken offers an internationally recognized standardized certification for Mathematics aimed at enhancing the mathematical ability of examinees to encourage their participation in sound economic undertakings. Examinees undergo graduated assessment for proficiency in Mathematics consisting of 10 certification levels called Kyus. Suken gained early recognition in countries outside of Japan, particularly Indonesia, Korea, Singapore, and the United States.

The most recent Suken Global Mathematical Certification was held on 12 November 2016 in Southville International School in Las Piñas City. A total of 52 out of 130 teachers (40 percent) passed the certification standards of Suken. There was a sole passer for Level 2, certified for proficiency to teach Mathematics in elementary and high school, up to second year only. The rest of Suken passers registered proficiency to teach in elementary school (4th to 6th year for Levels 8 to 6) or high school (1st to 3rd year, Level 5 to Pre-1st Level). The detailed results of the assessment are tabulated below.

KYU	TAKERS	PASSERS
<i>Level 1</i>	0	0
<i>Pre-Level 1</i>	4	0
<i>Level 2</i>	4	1
<i>Pre-Level 2</i>	24	7
<i>Level 3</i>	16	3
<i>Level 4</i>	14	11
<i>Level 5</i>	8	5
<i>Level 6</i>	17	5
<i>Level 7</i>	19	7
<i>Level 8</i>	24	13
TOTAL	130	52



Plaque of appreciation received by APSA from Mathematics Certification Institute of Japan in December 2016. Photo taken by Anne Liway Natividad.




APSA staff administering assessment for Suken Global Mathematics Certification on 12 November 2016 in Southville International School. Photo taken by Anne Liway Natividad.

APSA Featured in International Testing Newsletter

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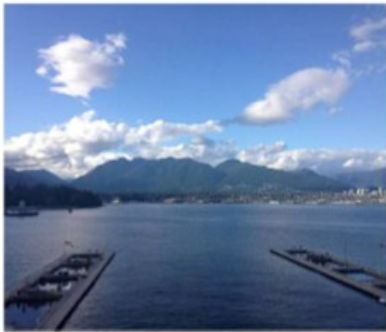
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The newsletter where APSA was mentioned for its pioneering engagement in SBA using advanced methods of IRT for item analysis. Photo created by Liberty Nolasco.

APSA was placed in the international spotlight for its pioneering contribution to educational assessment in the Philippines. Such contribution was tackled in the December 2016 issue of the *Testing International*, the official newsletter of the International Test Commission. It was specifically mentioned in the newsletter article, "Revolutionizing the Use of IRT in the Philippines", written by Ms. Maria Felicitas Mamauag, founding member of the Philippine Educational Measurement and Evaluation Association (PEMEA) and research consultant of APSA for product development.

Ms. Mamauag pointed out that contemporary innovations in testing remain unpopular despite their propitiousness and numerous advantages. Such reality holds true for the Item Response Theory (IRT) that replaced the classical test theory (CTT) for relevance and potency but developed little following. Nonetheless, APSA was able to turn the tide to the favor of the country when it adopted the state-of-the-art IRT methods for the development of SBA materials beginning in 2003. Consequently, it has placed itself on a par with a few global institutions that boldly subject their assessment instruments to stringent analytical processes.

As cited by Ms. Mamauag, among the tests offered by APSA to private schools are Standards-based Assessment (SBA) for Pre-Elementary; English. Math and Science for Grades 1 to 11; Assessment for High School Potential (AHP) for the basic education level; Assessment for College Potential or ACP (now College Readiness Test), with ready packages for specific disciplines such as Nursing, Engineering, Accountancy, Education, Maritime, and Criminology for the tertiary level.

APSA Newsletter

APSA invites interested parties to submit articles for the newsletter, *The Standard*. Articles may fall under these topics:

1. Experience of school managers and/or (non) teaching staff in engaging in APSA's organized and/or sponsored activities.
2. Student performance in APSA SBA.
3. Best practices and/or success stories concerning data utilization of APSA SBA results.

A single article should be anywhere between 100 and 1,000 words. Good reflective articles written in excess of 1,500 words will appear in APSA newsletter as condensed article but will be published as full length reflexive notes in APSA SBA Journal. The publication of the first issue of *The Standard* is on 31 January 2017, and online dissemination will be on 6 February 2017. *Deadline of submission for the second issue on 28 February 2017.* The publication of the second issue will be on 30 March 2017. Kindly email your inquiries and articles to apsa.ao.rdp@gmail.com.

In Quest for School Excellence: On Standards-Based Tests and Data-Driven Instructions

The practice of education sees to it that students demonstrate their understanding of the subject they are taught to learn. The learning process must be able to gauge the achievement of the goals of education in general and of the standards of the subject in particular.

What we call assessment is an essential feature of the practice of education and the learning process. It is a judgment that requires comparison of learning criteria to actual student performance. It is therefore a judgment of the quality of teaching and learning in school as well as the student's behavior and attained skills, abilities, and knowledge.

Assessment can determine if we are teaching what we think we are teaching; if students are learning what they should be learning; or, if there is a better way to teach the subject matter for better learning. It is important to the teaching process because it can tell what educational goals are met and missed out. It is an integral part of education because it can affect decisions about grades, instructional needs, curriculum development, student advancement, future employment of graduates, and school funding.

Assessment needs testing to gauge the level of knowledge, skills and attitudinal improvements already achieved by the students. Testing cannot be done rather arbitrarily. It works to the best interest of schools and students if standardized.

Standardized testing is typically accompanied by a set of established standards or instructional framework that guides teachers on what to teach and how to deal with their taught subjects. One advantage of standardized tests is it delivers objective assessment of student performance as it is developed by experts. Their questions are devoid of bias and their results are comparable across examinees.

Standardized testing is relevant and useful when it can support and promote data-driven instruction. Data-driven instruction provides information on what each student has learned and what teachers should do to improve (further) skills of their students. It makes teachers constantly mindful of their role to their students. It helps administrators, teachers and parents to accurately assess student learning and identify improvements on

administrative and instructional systems to continually promote student achievement.

When standardized tests provide the data needed to drive plans and decisions of schools, educators become more responsive and more flexible in constructing new teaching approaches and improving skills sets of students.

Therese Dela Cruz

APSA: Up Close and Personal

APSA is at the forefront of Standards-Based Assessment (SBA) in the country. Thus, it has created an avenue that keeps educational institutions abreast with the latest trends in educational assessment and measures.

With all the successes that APSA has reaped in the last two decades, one may ask what makes it whole as an institution? What makes its people united and able to work together despite obstacles and challenges that the company does confront?

Truth be told, as cliché as it may sound, APSA has made its employees feel they are not just instruments of earning company profits. They are regarded as talented individuals who are appreciated for their individuality. They are accepted as part of the work team as does one to a family member.

As compared to other companies, APSA does not conform to a very rigid culture wherein you have to be very prim and sophisticated upon entering the premises. There are in-house rules to follow, no doubt. But the pressure of having a highly strict regulation is replaced by warmth and love by individuals who constitute the company. If you try to get into the office for at least a few days, you will feel how welcoming the people are in APSA and you can get to know how it is working with them, who feel comfortable with their own social spaces and in their own work spaces. Indeed, APSA has established a unique work culture over the years that drives everyone to work harder and to continue delivering.

According to various researches around the globe, happy employees tend to work better and achieve more than those who are not. In APSA, there is no sense of individualism and isolation but an aura of warmth and acceptance for those who faithfully contribute to the growth of the company.

Jenilly Ona

ISO Certifies APSA

Beyond adopting internationally recognized standards of education and industrial assessment, APSA pursues its global vision by seeking accreditation for its operations by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

On 23 November 2016, APSA maintained ISO certification. It passed the stringent examination of two independent auditors, Ms. Grace Del Rosario and Ms. Lorna Valdez. Its recertification is testament to its ability to maintain the quality of its operations and continuously improve its own system.

APSA started its pursuit for ISO accreditation on 3 February 2006. It works on the belief that ISO-accreditation provides APSA with global recognition for its quality operations. Since then, it has striven to uphold its ISO recertification.



APSA was once again recognized for its quality operations with its ISO recertification given on 23 November 2016. Photo taken by Anne Liway Natividad.

APSA staff answering questions of ISO evaluators. Photo taken by Anne Liway Natividad.

APSA names Awardees for English and Math for SY 2015-2016

True to its mission, APSA commits itself to deliver excellent and focused assessment technologies for educational institutions thru its Standards-Based Assessment (SBA) in English, Math and Science. The SBA evaluates student achievement and proficiency levels based on local and international standards. To boost student achievement and give credit where it is due, APSA recognizes students who obtain the highest mean scaled ability scores (MSAS) in the SBA for English, Mathematics and Science.

In December 2016, a total of 38 students were recognized by APSA for obtaining the highest MSAS in English and Mathematics. Sixteen students were Mathematics awardees and 22 students were English awardees. Student awardees are recognized on an annual basis. They receive certificates of recognition from APSA. The recognition of student achievement was first observed by APSA in 2010 for the school year 2009-2010. Their names and represented schools are listed below.

MATHEMATICS AWARDEES

MATH GRADE 1

ZHENG, ALEXANDER MARK C.

MGC New Life Christian Academy

MATH GRADE 3

BERNABE, ANTONIO BENITO S.

Colegio San Agustin - Makati

SY, SANDRENE RYLIE D.

MGC New Life Christian Academy

TAN, BRAEJANN C.

Philippine Cultural College - Caloocan City

NALUNDASAN, ENRICHE T.

St. Edward Faith Community School - Cavite

DALANGIN, GADRIEL SYMONE R.

Stonyhurst Southville International School-Malarayat

LANDICHO, MARIA BERNADETTE M.

Stonyhurst Southville International School

DELA CRUZ, MARGARET ELLYSE S.

Zamboanga Chong Hua High School

MATH GRADE 4

IGNACIO, JOSE LORENZO

La Marea Academy - Dagupan City

YAP, CHRISTIAN JACOB C.

St. John's Institute - Bacolod City

ONG, DEREK TYLER U.

St. Peter the Apostle School - Manila

DALIDA, RAPHAEL DYLAN T.

St. Mary's Academy - Pasay

LANDICHO, JUAN RAFAEL M.

Stonyhurst-Southville International School - Batangas City

MATH GRADE 5

UBANOS, FILBERT JOSEPH A.

Elizabeth Seton School - Las Piñas

DALIDA, RAPHAEL DYLAN T.

St. Mary's Academy - Pasay

MATH GRADE 6

CHAN, ANDREI LENARD R.

Zamboanga Chong Hua High School

ENGLISH AWARDEES

ENGLISH GRADE 1

DELENA, YELENA MARIA N.

Colegio San Agustin - Makati

MENESES, ELIZABETH SKY R.

Colegio San Agustin - Makati

PERALTA, DOMINIQUE O.

Ednas School of San Carlos

LEAL, MARIELLE KATE F

Elizabeth Seton School - Las Piñas

MORALES, JAY MARIE V.

Elizabeth Seton School - Las Piñas

ENGLISH AWARDEES (con't)

CUA, KAYE MONIQUE G.
LEE, SI WOO
REYES, RAINNIEL CARYN E.

Pangasinan Universal Institute
Southville International School and Colleges - (MUNICH)
Stonyhurst Southville International School-Malarayat

ENGLISH GRADE 2

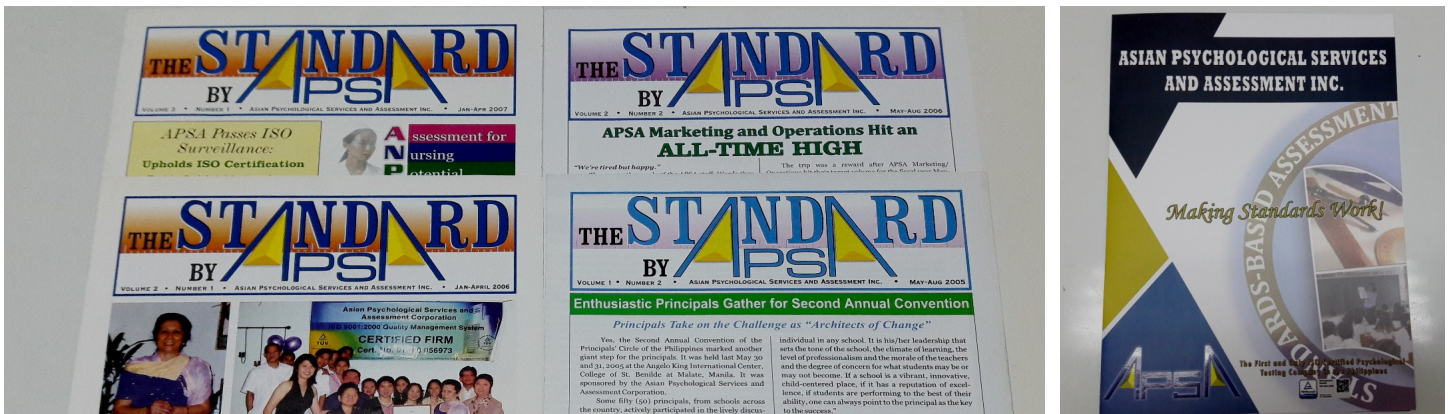
ROSARIO, ARMAN MATTHEW C.
SALAZAR, PRINCESS ANNALIZ C.
MACASAET, GABRIELLE L.

LNU-Creative Montessori Center - Dagupan City
LNU-Creative Montessori Center - Dagupan City
St. Theresa's College - Quezon City

ENGLISH GRADE 3

GAYETA, LARA JOY O.
DELOSO, RACHEL LAURCYEL F.
HABITO, CARLA MARIE R.
CANSANAY, MIGUEL FRANCISCO S.
BERNABE, ANTONIO BENITO S.
CORONEL, SAMANTHA THERESE B.
DE RAMOS, AEA ZACH FAVT B.
RAMIN, JOSH PRINCE C.
ESGUERRA, ALEXANDRA RAE D.
DOROMAL, REYSHEIL ANNE B.
LANDICHO, MARIA BERNADETTE M.

Bloomfield Academy
Bohol Wisdom School
Christian School International
Claret School of Quezon City
Colegio San Agustin - Makati
Colegio San Agustin - Makati
Colegio San Agustin - Makati
Colegio San Agustin - Makati
Elizabeth Seton School - South
Hua Siong College of Iloilo - Main
Stonyhurst Southville International School



The APSA SBA materials and past issues of *The Standard*. Photo taken by Jenilly Ona.

APSA Takes Pride in IMO Awardees

APSA takes pride in the achievement of two young Math Olympiads from its member schools: Farrell Eldrian Wu of MGC New Life Christian Academy and Albert John Patupat of De La Salle University Integrated School.

Wu and Patupat garnered major feats from the prestigious 57th International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO) held in Hongkong on 6-16 July 2016. Wu and Patupat bagged gold and silver medals, respectively. Wu scored 30 points, beating around 600 other participants from more than 100 countries, while Patupat obtained 23 points. Their solid performances helped the country ranks 17th place in the competition, up from 36th place in 2015.

Wu and Patupat also shattered their previous years' records. Wu obtained bronze and silver medals in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Patupat, on the other hand, brought home bronze medal in 2015.

MGC New Life Christian Academy and De La Salle University Integrated School are among APSA member schools subscribing



Second from the left in the picture is Farrell Eldrian Yu while at the rightmost side is Albert John Patupat. Photo courtesy of Rappler through website: <http://www.rappler.com/science-nature/matter-numbers/139986-filipino-students-win-gold-international-math-olympiad>.

to Standards-Based Assessment (SBA) to gauge student achievement.

Students from APSA Schools Bag Medals from 13th IMSO

The results of the 13th International Math and Science Olympiad (IMSO) for Primary School held from 9-13 November 2016 in Indonesia once again showcased the country's competitiveness in international competitions for Math and Science.

The Philippine delegates won a total of 35 medals from the competition. Students from schools utilizing APSA's Standards-

Based Assessment (SBA) brought home 4 gold, 14 silver, and 15 bronze medals. The IMSO was participated in by students from 18 countries and cities such as Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, China, India, Iran, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Netherlands, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand, Tajikistan, Taiwan, and Vietnam.



Sean Matthew G. Tan, Grade 6 student of the Jubilee Christian Academy wins silver medal in 13th International Mathematics and Science Olympiad for Primary School Students on 9-13 November 2016 in Indonesia.

GOLD MEDALISTS

Raphael Dylan Dalida
Filbert Ephraim Wu

St. Mary's Pasay
MGC New Life Christian Academy

SILVER MEDALISTS

Sean Matthew Tan
Justin Timothy Uygongco
Siegfried Kerwayne Kwan

Jubilee Christian Academy
Hua Siong College of Iloilo
Zamboanga Chong Hua High School

BRONZE MEDALISTS

Jay Miguel Chua
Hannah Gabrielle Manansala

St. John's Institute
Colegio San Agustin-Makati

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Dr. Liberty Nolasco is the APSA Administrator. She holds a doctoral degree in Public Administration and Governance from the University of the Philippines Diliman Campus. Before joining APSA, she held stints as academic, researcher, and consultant, and had briefly assumed leadership positions (e.g. policy adviser and top executive) in different institutions in the Philippines and overseas. She has published locally and internationally and occasionally writes column articles.



Ms. Adelaida de Perio is the Head of Marketing and Human Resource Units of APSA. Better known as Teng, Ms. De Perio has been with APSA for more than 10 years. She is currently completing her doctoral dissertation at the De La Salle University Brother Andrew Gonzales College of Education. She was also part of the Rotary Group Study Exchange students for the Netherlands in 2013. She has journal and book article publications, and is a regular contributor of APSA's *The Standard*.



Ms. Therese Amita R. Dela Cruz is the Testing Unit Head of APSA. She previously worked as basic Education Counselor at Southville International School and Colleges, and Psychometrician at Universal Robina Corporation. Currently, she is pursuing Ph. D. in Counseling Psychology at De La Salle University. She obtained her graduate degree in Counseling with high distinction at St. Scholastica's College Manila. She conducts seminars related to classroom management, counselor education and counseling program development and management.



Ms. Jenilly Ona is a Marketing Account Executive of APSA. She is presently pursuing graduate studies in MA Psychology, Major in Clinical Psychology at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila City. Her area of interest in the graduate program is neuroscience. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Behavioral Sciences from the University of the Philippines Manila. She is a regular contributor to APSA's *The Standard*.