

# Global Trends in School-Based Assessment: Implications for Effective Implementation in Sri Lanka

E.M.Y. Sachith<sup>1</sup>, R.D.C. Niroshinie<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Planning & Evaluation, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

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## ABSTRACT

This systematic review summarizes evidence on implementation, philosophical underpinnings, methodologies, and challenges of School Based Assessment (SBA) conducted in 12 countries including Finland, Canada, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Africa, the Caribbean, Australia, Malaysia, China, the United States, and Sri Lanka. Based on policy documents, empirical research, and academic publications, the review reveals that SBA has become a major international reform strategy that will empower student-centered learning, formative assessment, and holistic evaluation. The analysis divides SBA models based on the underlying philosophical orientations and shows that most of the Western systems are mostly constructivist and with learner-centered models, and most of Asian systems are standardized, centrally regulated models. Although the structures differ, SBA is largely known to support deep learning, intrinsic motivation, and meaningful engagement of learners. In the examined settings, multiple common obstacles limit efficacious implementation, such as the overload of workload on teachers, lack of assessment literacy, insufficient professional development, and ongoing issues with reliability and consistency. The comparison of 48 publications guided by PRISMA indicates the similarities in cross-national aspects as well as significant regional variations, which provides a strong foundation of evidence in the future of policy and practice. The review finds that permanent capacity-building of teachers, systematic moderation of teachers, and harmonious policy alignment are critical in ensuring equitable and effective implementation of SBA to maximize its role in fostering student-centered learning and quality education.

**Keywords:** School-Based Assessment, formative assessment, global educational reform, PRISMA-style approach, philosophical foundations, methodologies, and challenges

## INTRODUCTION

School-Based Assessment (SBA) is an innovative and flexible method for evaluating students in schools, allowing for actual, formative, and ongoing assessments that align with students' learning and curricular goals. SBA has emerged as a significant strategy to modernize education and develop 21st-century skills like critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork. However, the implementation of SBA varies across different areas due to differences in educational policy, socio-cultural context, and teacher training. This comprehensive research aims to identify best practices, impediments, and possibilities related to SBA adoption, focusing on experiences from twelve different countries. SBA is a formative and performance-orientated alternative to traditional high-stakes examinations, developed to align assessment with real-world skills and learning objectives for the 21st century. It emphasizes continuous evaluation, authenticity, and student agency in the learning process. The study aims to investigate the influence of various educational philosophies and system structures on SBA practices, identify universal obstacles, and suggest policy solutions on a global scale. SBA encourages authentic, continuous, and relevant examination processes, but many poor countries, such as Sri Lanka, face significant obstacles in realizing its promise. Despite countries with high incomes, such as Finland, Canada, and Australia, incorporating SBA into their national assessment policies, Sri Lanka faces significant challenges in implementing it.

Despite the widespread adoption of School-Based Assessment (SBA) across the world, the academic literature does not provide any systematic and profound reviews of it, which would critically examine its philosophical foundations and practical implementation problems. The majority of studies are inclined to concentrate on the efficiency of SBA in definite countries or in definite schools, and few attempts are made to compare the results in meaningful cross-context to another setting. These analyses are essential, not only in that they help to clarify the theoretical underpinnings, such as constructivist or competency-based learning models, on which SBA is based, but also reveal the situational barriers and practical difficulties of the problem. These issues are preparedness of the teachers, resources, assessment literacy and policy congruity.

The research aims to analyze Sri Lanka's history and present trajectory in implementing SBA into its educational framework and provide a comprehensive review of various SBA techniques being implemented globally.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

School-Based Assessment (SBA) has been widely adopted across educational systems globally, driven by philosophies emphasizing constructivism, learner-centered pedagogy, and formative evaluation. Countries such as Finland have institutionalized SBA through formative feedback, portfolio assessments, and strong teacher autonomy, fostering deep learning and student ownership (Sahlberg, 2011). Similarly, Canada's "Growing Success" policy promotes individualized and reflective assessment strategies to cater to diverse learner needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010; Earl & Katz, 2002).

And also, New Zealand's NCEA framework connects SBA with national qualifications through curriculum-aligned tasks, encouraging self-regulation and inquiry (NZQA, 2023; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2019). In Hong Kong, SBA is integrated within the high-stakes HKDSE examination system through inquiry-based and project work methods, supported by structured training and moderation (Carless et al., 2011; Tong & Adamson, 2015). Singapore, known for innovation-based education, employs SBA via frameworks like Project Work and Design Thinking (MOE, 2020).

Also, South Africa's Continuous Assessment System (CASS) uses SBA to address educational equity but faces infrastructure and training challenges (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2007; Sayed et al., 2013). The Caribbean region has advanced digital SBA through the CXC system, strengthening authentic learning and teacher-student engagement, especially after COVID-19 (Evans, 2021; Issaka et al., 2020). Australia integrates SBA into high school assessments under the HSC and SACE boards, balancing formative and summative assessments with strong moderation (Klenowski, 2011; NESIA, 2023).

But, In Malaysia, the Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah (PBS) model promotes a hybrid approach combining psychometric, co-curricular, and formative assessments. However, initial implementation challenges led to revisions under PBS 2.0 to enhance training and tool support (Zakaria et al., 2024). China's SBA reforms emphasize reflective learning and soft skills but face rural-urban disparities (Tan, 2016; Deneen & Hoo, 2021). The United States, with decentralized education policy, implements SBA through portfolio and performance assessments in models like NYPSC, aimed at civic engagement and deeper learning (Brookhart, 2013a; Fine et al., 2020).

In contrast, Sri Lanka officially introduced SBA in 1998 (MOE, circular, 1998/45) following foundational reform movements dating back to the Handessa scheme of 1945 (Aturupane & Little, 2019). Despite multiple policy circulars (1998/45, 2001/23, 2017/23) and a comprehensive framework of 31 assessment types, actual implementation faces persistent barriers. These include limited teacher assessment literacy (Weerakoon, 2025), over-reliance on summative exams (Senarath, 2020), inadequate infrastructure (NEC, 2016), and domination of classroom practices by lower-order assessments (Abayasekara & Arunatilake, 2018; Edussuriya et al., 2018). Moreover, Sri Lanka's curricular reforms have not fully embraced 21st-century assessment principles such as authentic rubrics and higher-order thinking evaluation (Hapugoda & Kulasekara, 2024). The absence of validated SBA tools, weak moderation systems, and lack of community awareness further widen the gap between policy and practice (Perera et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2022). While the Ministry of Education has provided SBA guideline handbooks, training inadequacies and administrative burdens have undermined their effective use

(Circular No. 2003/13; 2017/23). Scholars advocate for realigning SBA with the broader goals of national education transformation (Sachith & Niroshinie, 2025).

Across all reviewed contexts, countries with successful SBA systems share several key features:

- Comprehensive and sustained teacher professional development
- Clearly defined assessment rubrics and feedback structures
- Robust moderation and quality assurance mechanisms
- Student participation in assessment through self and peer evaluation

But, in Sri Lanka's limited progress is attributed to:

- The absence of validated and standardized SBA tools (Perera et al., 2020)
- Persistent exam-centric mindsets in schools and among parents (Senarath, 2020)
- Teacher resistance to new assessment paradigms (NEC, 2016)
- Increased workload for teachers, inconsistent implementation across schools, lack of professional development and Low parental and community trust in SBA mechanisms (Sachith & Niroshinie, 2025)

To move forward, the literature recommends the development of contextually validated SBA tools, alignment of SBA with the formative curriculum, capacity-building for educators and administrators, and national-level awareness campaigns to build confidence in SBA as a valid measure of student learning.

## METHODOLOGY

This systematic literature review aimed to synthesize global and local literature on School-Based Assessment (SBA) practices, following the PRISMA guidelines. The review process involved four steps: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Key components included a comprehensive search across various academic and policy-related databases, such as ERIC, JSTOR, Google Ads for Professionals, and repositories managed by the government and institutions. The search keywords included "School-Based Assessment," "Formative Assessment," "Portfolio Assessment," "continuous assessment," and "performance-based assessment." The inclusion criteria included articles published in academic journals, policy briefs, reports produced by the government, and dissertations reviewed by another peer.

An internal quality rating grid was used to assess each selected study's methodological rigor, policy relevance, and contextual clarity. A framework for analytical considerations and coding based on individual themes was used, using a method known as theme analysis. A thorough coding approach was used to identify recurring concepts and patterns, which were then classified into five categories: assessment philosophy, methods of assessment, teacher responsibilities and role, challenges and policy-level interventions.

To find patterns, differences, and policy ramifications, each topic was researched deeper across countries, resulting in a comparative framework relevant across different countries. Procedures were carried out to verify the provenance of documents, evaluate the publication's legitimacy, double-code themes, and validate results unique to each nation through at least two trustworthy sources. A PRISMA flow diagram was developed to provide a visual representation of the selection process, and a comparative summary table was prepared to compare and contrast different aspects of SBA implementation among the twelve countries studied in this study. PRISMA Summary Table of SBA Implementation is shown below in Table no: 3.1.

Table no: 3.1. PRISMA Summary Table of SBA Implementation

Country	Philosophy	Assessment Methods	Teacher Role	Challenges	Moderation System	Key Features
Finland	Constructivist	Project work, portfolios	High autonomy, Trained in assessment literacy	None significant	Minimal moderation	Emphasis on teacher autonomy
Canada	Student-centered	Formative tasks, peer/self eval	Customized feedback, Ongoing training	Varies by province	Provincial variation	Flexible models; strong emphasis on equity
New Zealand	Competency-based	NCEA, internal assessments	Design curriculum-aligned tasks	Moderation consistency	External moderation	Clear links to curriculum competencies
Hong Kong	Standards-driven	SBA tied to DSE exams	Responsible for detailed assessment	Teacher workload, Implementation gap	Strong moderation	Integrated into high-stakes assessment
Singapore	Hybrid	Oral tasks, project work	Integrated with MOE-SEAB moderation	Workload, Neutrality	Internal + external	High-performing; systematized teacher PD
South Africa	Equity-focused	Continuous assessment	Track learner progress, Resource constrained	Class size, Training, Resources	Cluster moderation	Overcomes exam-centric legacy system
Caribbean	Moderated SBA	CAPE SBA projects	CXC guidelines, Moderate responsibilities	Workload, Feedback time	Regional moderation	Structured regional frameworks
Australia	Outcome-based	Projects, reflective tasks	State-guided, Moderated	Standardization, Workload	State-based moderation	Flexible implementation across states
Malaysia	Centralized	Oral, written, observation	Use SPPBS system, Trained regularly	Tech issues, Teacher confidence	National moderation	Phased SBA integration; limited teacher agency
China	Nationally-driven	Task banks,	BEQMS-monitored,	Exam-centered culture,	Local + central checks	Reforming exam-centric tradition

		behavioral rubrics	Varies by region	Standardization		
USA	Standards-based	Portfolio, digital assessments	Formative-driven, Diverse by state	Policy variance, Resource gaps	School/district level	Diversity across states; equity concerns
Sri Lanka	Exam-reduction	Continuous, unit-based	Formative Assessment Facilitator, Record Keeping and Reporting	High teacher-pupil ratios, Limited training in assessment literacy.	Limited moderation	Early stages of SBA institutionalization

Source: Study data

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Assessment Philosophy and Methods

Schools of Business Administration (SBA) in nations such as Finland, Canada, New Zealand, and Singapore are founded on constructivist and student centred ideologies that promote active learning and learner autonomy (Sahlberg, 2011; Earl & Katz, 2002). Educational approaches such as project-based learning (PBL), performance tasks, portfolio evaluations, and reflective diaries are commonly utilized to enhance students' critical thinking and engagement (Brookhart, 2013a; NZQA, 2023).

Finland and New Zealand place a strong emphasis on formative feedback, personalized learning pathways, and curriculum-aligned tasks, which enable students to regulate their learning and receive continuous support (Sahlberg, 2011; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2019). In contrast, countries like Singapore and Hong Kong have adopted more structured and standardized SBA formats tied closely to national examinations, often focusing on subject-specific assessments and rigorous moderation (Tan & Ng, 2020; Carless et al., 2011; Tong & Adamson, 2015).

At the same time, countries like China and Malaysia are moving away from systems focused only on exams to more mixed assessment models that include psychological testing, evaluations of extracurricular activities, and lessons on morals and values. These changes reflect a growing commitment to aligning assessment practices with 21st-century learning needs and national identity goals. Table 4.1 below summarizes and presents the differences that exist in Assessment Philosophy and Methods in different countries.

Table No: 4.1. Summary of the differences that exist in Assessment Philosophy and Methods in different countries

<b>Finland</b>	Constructivist, student-centred, formative-focused (Sahlberg, 2011)	Project-based learning, portfolios, performance tasks, reflective journals	Personalized learning, continuous feedback, curriculum aligned tasks
<b>Canada</b>	Student-centred and inquiry-based learning (Earl & Katz, 2002)	Performance tasks, portfolios, project work	Formative feedback culture; promotes learner autonomy
<b>New Zealand</b>	Constructivist, competency-based, autonomy-driven (Hipkins & Vaughan, 2019; NZQA, 2023)	Project-based tasks, portfolios, NCEA internal assessments	Strong formative assessment, self-regulated learning



<b>Singapore</b>	Structured, standardized SBA aligned with national exams (Tan & Ng, 2020)	Subject-based assessments, performance tasks, practical tests	Rigorous moderation, alignment with high-stakes exams
<b>Hong Kong</b>	Exam-aligned mixed SBA system (Carless et al., 2011; Tong & Adamson, 2015)	Projects, practical assessments, subject tasks	Strong monitoring and moderation; standardized formats
<b>China</b>	Shift from exam-heavy to holistic assessment	Psychological tests, extracurricular evaluation, subject tasks	Values education, citizenship, whole-child development
<b>Malaysia</b>	Mixed assessment with holistic orientation	Performance tasks, co-curricular assessment, moral/values education	Emphasis on 21st-century skills, character development

Source: Study data

### Role of Teachers and Moderation

Teachers are central to SBA implementation, as they are responsible for designing assessment tasks, delivering timely feedback, guiding student reflection, and recording learning progress (Brookhart, 2013a; Earl & Katz, 2002). In countries such as Canada and Australia, this role is supported through structured training programs and moderation frameworks, allowing teachers to assess with confidence and consistency (Klenowski, 2011; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010; ACARA, 2020).

Moderation mechanisms play a vital role in ensuring inter-school reliability and fairness. For example, New Zealand's NZQA implements rigorous teacher moderation and professional judgment verification (Hipkins & Vaughan, 2019; NZQA, 2023). Similarly, Singapore's SEAB and South Africa's Umalusi enforce national quality assurance processes through benchmarking, marking schemes, and cross-school moderation practices (MOE, 2020; Sayed & Kanjee, 2013).

However, in countries such as Sri Lanka and China, gaps in teacher training, limited exposure to formative assessment strategies, and a lack of effective moderation structures hinder the full realization of SBA's potential (Perera et al., 2020; Deneen & Hoo, 2021; NEC, 2016; Weerakoon, 2025). Without reliable moderation, disparities across schools and regions undermine assessment equity and validity. Table 4.2 below summarizes and presents the differences that exist in Role of Teachers and Moderation in different countries.

Table No. 4.2: Summary of the differences that exist in Role of Teachers and Moderation in different countries

Canada	Teachers create tasks, provide feedback, facilitate reflection; with the help of planned training.	The provincial moderation structures maintain uniformity.	Well-founded teacher judgment systems.
Australia	The use of SBA is guided and trained by teachers.	State moderation, benchmarking, cross-school standardization.	Assures of dependable and just evaluation.
New Zealand	Professional judgment is applied by teachers; training by NZQA.	Strict moderation, checking of judgments.	Good reliability as a result of good QA.

Singapore	Subject-based SBA is administered by teachers on national guidelines.	SEAB moderation, marking schemes, benchmarking.	Very standardized and quality guaranteed.
South Africa	SBAs are scored and planned by teachers based on the national policy.	Umalusi does outside moderation and QA.	Good QA and implementation are regional.
Sri Lanka	The teachers prepare SBA tasks, but they are not trained properly.	Limited or weak moderation; Intermittent practices.	Loopholes decrease credibility and fairness.
China	Mixed assessments are dealt with by teachers.	Incident structures of moderation that are in progress.	Low training standards have an impact on uniformity.

Source: Study data

## Challenges

Across diverse educational contexts, challenges to effective SBA implementation are often linked to excessive teacher workload, limited assessment literacy, inequitable resource allocation, and policy-practice misalignment (Klenowski, 2011; NEC, 2016; Earl & Katz, 2002; Sachith & Niroshinie, 2025). These systemic issues reduce teachers' capacity to design meaningful assessments and offer timely feedback, undermining the core objectives of formative and student-centred evaluation.

In developing countries, additional structural limitations compound these problems. The digital divide, insufficient technological infrastructure, and large class sizes act as significant obstacles to equitable SBA deployment, particularly in under-resourced rural areas (Sayed & Kanjee, 2013; UNESCO, 2022; Zakaria et al., 2024). The credibility of SBA has been particularly vulnerable in nations such as South Africa and Sri Lanka, where inconsistent implementation and lack of standardization have led to stakeholder mistrust and accountability issues (Perera et al., 2020; Weerakoon, 2025; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2007).

These examples highlight the critical need for robust monitoring, moderation mechanisms, and continuous professional support to maintain the integrity and reliability of school-based assessment systems. Table 4.3 below summarizes and presents the variations in challenges observed across countries.

Table No. 4.3: Summary of the variations in challenges observed across countries

<b>Teacher Workload</b>	Excessive workload reduces teachers' ability to design quality assessments and give timely feedback	Global issue (developed and developing countries)	Weakens formative assessment and reduces SBA effectiveness
<b>Limited Assessment Literacy</b>	Teachers lack knowledge on formative strategies, task design, and feedback	Sri Lanka, China, many developing nations	Training gaps affect quality, consistency, and fairness
<b>Resource Inequity</b>	Unequal allocation of resources limits fair SBA implementation	Rural/under-resourced regions in developing countries	Capacity to implement SBA varies widely between schools
<b>Policy–Practice Misalignment</b>	Policies exist but implementation is inconsistent	Global contexts (Klenowski, 2011; NEC, 2016)	Leads to confusion, superficial compliance, and mistrust

<b>Digital Divide</b>	Lack of devices, connectivity, and technological infrastructure	Developing countries, rural contexts	Negatively impacts assessment equity and digital SBA processes
<b>Large Class Sizes</b>	Oversized classrooms reduce ability to give individual feedback	Developing countries (Asia, Africa)	Limits student-centred and formative assessment
<b>Weak Moderation &amp; Standardization</b>	Lack of structured moderation leads to inconsistent judgments	Sri Lanka, South Africa	Undermines reliability and reduces stakeholder trust
<b>Stakeholder Mistrust &amp; Accountability Issues</b>	Inconsistent implementation reduces credibility of SBA	South Africa, Sri Lanka	Emphasizes need for quality assurance and monitoring

Source: Study data

### Technological Integration and Innovation

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a critical inflection point, accelerating the digital transformation of School-Based Assessment (SBA) systems across the globe (UNESCO, 2022; Evans, 2021). Countries such as the United States, Australia, and Caribbean nations adopted digital tools like e-portfolios, Google Classroom, and virtual feedback platforms to maintain instructional continuity and formative assessment (Brookhart, 2020; ACARA, 2020; Issaka et al., 2020). To address educational challenges, Malaysia and China created hybrid SBA models that mixed traditional tests with information about students' emotions and moral thinking (Mahmud et al., 2020; Tan, 2020; Zakaria et al., 2024; Deneen & Hoo, 2021). These models aimed to support holistic learning and well-rounded student development.

Even with these new approaches, there is still a big problem with digital inequality, particularly in rural and poorly funded schools, where issues like poor infrastructure, lack of internet access, and insufficient teacher training make it hard for digital SBA tools to work well (UNESCO, 2022; Weerakoon, 2025; Perera et al., 2020). This points out the need for equitable digital investment and policy mechanisms to bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusivity in post-pandemic assessment reforms. Table 4.4 provides a summary of the technological integration and innovation observed across different countries.

Summary of the technological integration and innovation observed across different countries

United States	Use of digital platforms (e-portfolios, Google Classroom, virtual feedback tools)	Online formative assessment, digital learning continuity	Rapid digital shift during COVID-19
Australia	Adoption of digital learning & assessment systems	E-portfolios, online feedback systems	Strong digital infrastructure but regional disparities exist
Caribbean Nations	Integrated digital platforms to maintain SBA during pandemic	E-classrooms, online feedback mechanisms	Supported instructional continuity and remote SBA
Malaysia	Hybrid SBA models combining academic, emotional, and moral data	Traditional tests + affective domain indicators	Supports holistic learning; innovative hybrid models



China	Digitally enhanced hybrid SBA approaches	Digital tools + moral/values assessments	Aims for holistic development; uneven implementation
Rural/Under-resourced Regions	Limited internet, poor infrastructure, lack of teacher ICT skills	Low adoption of digital SBA tools	Digital divide remains a major obstacle
Global Post-pandemic Context	Greater dependency on digital platforms	Expansion of e-learning and virtual assessment systems	Requires equitable digital investment and strong policies

Source: Study data

## POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective SBA (School-Based Assessment) systems are underpinned by clear national policy frameworks, comprehensive teacher training, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms (Earl & Katz, 2002; OECD, 2013). Countries such as Finland, New Zealand, and Singapore demonstrate that successful SBA depends on aligning assessment practices with pedagogical goals while offering institutional support structures such as continuous professional development and robust moderation (Sahlberg, 2011; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2019; Tan & Ng, 2020). For Sri Lanka, the review recommends a multi-pronged strategy to enhance SBA credibility and effectiveness. First, the development of validated and reliable SBA tools is essential to reduce inconsistency and increase standardization (Perera et al., 2020). Second, moderation mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure inter-school equity and fairness in grading (NEC, 2016; Weerakoon, 2025). Third, ongoing teacher professional development in formative assessment principles, rubrics, and feedback strategies is necessary to build assessment literacy (Abayasekara & Arunatilake, 2018; Brookhart, 2013a).

Lastly, the integration of SBA into Sri Lanka's national education policy must be done with institutional clarity, clear role definitions, and sustained policy commitment to ensure alignment across curricular, assessment, and accountability domains (Sachith & Niroshinie, 2025; UNESCO, 2022). Table 4.5 summarizes the policy recommendations for Sri Lanka derived from international practices.

Table No. 4.5: Summary of the policy recommendations for Sri Lanka derived from international practices

<b>National Policy Frameworks</b>	Effective SBA requires clear policies aligned with pedagogy and curriculum	Finland, New Zealand, Singapore	Integrate SBA with national education policy using clear role definitions and policy coherence
<b>Teacher Training &amp; Professional Development</b>	Continuous PD, assessment literacy, and moderation training strengthen SBA quality	Finland, New Zealand	Provide ongoing PD on formative assessment, rubrics, feedback strategies
<b>Institutional Support &amp; Moderation</b>	Robust moderation ensures consistency, reliability, and fairness	Singapore, New Zealand	Strengthen moderation mechanisms to ensure inter-school equity and reduce grading disparities
<b>Validated &amp; Reliable SBA Tools</b>	Standardized tools improve assessment validity and minimize inconsistencies	Global best practices	Develop validated SBA instruments to improve reliability and comparability

<b>Assessment Literacy &amp; Pedagogical Alignment</b>	SBA succeeds when pedagogy and assessment share aligned goals	Finland, Singapore	Enhance teachers' assessment literacy; align SBA tasks with student-centred pedagogy
<b>Policy Commitment &amp; System Coherence</b>	Sustained national commitment ensures long-term success and scalability	OECD nations	Ensure long-term policy stability, institutional clarity, and stronger accountability structures

Source: Study data

## CONCLUSION

Globally, School-Based Assessment (SBA) is increasingly recognized as a flexible and context-sensitive tool for evaluating student learning in a manner that is holistic, authentic, and inclusive (OECD, 2013; Brookhart, 2013a). Rooted in constructivist and formative paradigms, SBA empowers learners to engage meaningfully with content through reflection, feedback, and performance-based tasks (Earl & Katz, 2002; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2019). It is not only a method of assessment but also a pedagogical tool that supports deep learning, metacognition, and self-regulation (Sahlberg, 2011; Tan & Ng, 2020).

Despite differences in socioeconomic and educational contexts, recurring themes emerge globally—most notably, the critical role of teacher preparedness, policy coherence, and systemic institutional support (Klenowski, 2011; UNESCO, 2022). Successful examples from Finland, New Zealand, and Singapore illustrate that when SBA is embedded within national curricula, supported by robust moderation systems, and complemented with sustained professional development, it enhances both equity and learning outcomes (Sahlberg, 2011; Hipkins & Vaughan, 2019; MOE, 2020).

Conversely, nations like Sri Lanka, South Africa, and China reveal how implementation gaps, such as insufficient teacher training, weak infrastructure, and policy-practice disconnects, continue to undermine the full potential of SBA (Perera et al., 2020; Deneen & Hoo, 2021; Sayed & Kanjee, 2013; Weerakoon, 2025; Sachith & Niroshinie, 2025). These challenges call for targeted reforms, particularly in the areas of assessment literacy, tool validation, and digital equity, especially in rural and underserved areas (UNESCO, 2022; Zakaria et al., 2024).

As education systems globally move beyond the limitations of high-stakes, summative examinations, SBA presents a promising pathway for cultivating lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and adaptive citizens for the 21st century (Brookhart, 2020; ACARA, 2020). Its emphasis on learner agency, formative feedback, and real-world applicability aligns with the evolving demands of modern economies and democratic societies.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies that evaluate the sustained impact of SBA on academic performance, student well-being, and post-school outcomes. Moreover, cross-national comparative studies are needed to identify effective models of SBA implementation and scalability across diverse educational systems, including those in low- and middle-income countries.

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