Subject Achievement Indicators (SAIs)

Fact Sheet 2: BonSAI

What is it?

BonSAI is a software application designed as a tool to assist teachers to assign SAIs and check the reasonableness of their decisions quickly and easily. It is available free for download from the QCAA website and can be installed on single computers or school networks.

How does it interact with SDCS?

BonSAI allows student data to be imported from the Student Data Capture System (SDCS). Once SAI distributions have been generated in BonSAI, they can be exported from BonSAI back into SDCS, eliminating the need for a lengthy data entry process.

Does BonSAI do it all for me?

No, assigning SAIs is about teacher judgment. BonSAI is simply a tool to help. BonSAI allows users to place and move students' names on a screen showing a 400–200 scale. Tools such as 'anchor students' facilitate this process. BonSAI assigns SAIs based on the position on the scale in which the student's work is placed by teachers. BonSAI cannot allocate differences between students — teachers need to use evidence in folios to make decisions as they drag and drop students' names on the screen. BonSAI creates a number of graphs and tables to allow teachers to check the reasonableness of the distribution.

Why should I use it?

Using BonSAI is a quick and easy way to assign SAIs, which ensures they are assigned using teacher judgment about the differences between student folios of work. It allows teachers to work with a portion of the whole group, then to make more fine-grained decisions about the rest of the group. The checking tools are the same as those used by the QCAA in their quality assurance processes, so using BonSAI minimises the risk of making inappropriate decisions and the chance of being called by the QCAA about the reasonableness of SAI distributions.

Can I just check SAIs with BonSAI?

Yes. If you have assigned SAIs some other way, you can either enter them into SDCS and import the data into BonSAI, or manually enter them into BonSAI. You can then use the tools in BonSAI to check your decisions, change them if necessary, and then export them back to SDCS.

Is BonSAI difficult to use?

BonSAI is very simple to install and use, and contains a set of sample data to practise with. Full instructions are available in the BonSAI User Guide, downloadable from the QCAA website:
http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/4903.html .
Video tutorials demonstrating how to use BonSAI are also available on the QCAA website:
http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/15580.html