

Four steps to making SAI decisions

Transcript of SAIs and BonSAI video 2

Transcript of video two of five

This video is available from www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/tertiary-entrance/sais-bonsai/bonsai-videos

Voiceover

There are four steps in the process of making decisions about allocating SAIs.

The first step is to assign levels of achievement. Using the criteria and standards defined in syllabuses, teachers assign exit levels of achievement to student folios of work at the end of Year 12, or when a student leaves a course.

Once this process has been completed, a rank order of students in the subject can be created. Creating a rank order of students may be done in conjunction with placing students on the Form R6 required for verification. Often, two or more students might be placed on the same rung on the Form R6. When this happens teachers should carefully consider student folios of work to see whether students can be separated in the rank order. Often even when students are placed on the same rung on the Form R6, there may be subtle differences in their work that means they can be separated within the overall rank order for the subject. SAIs are designed to represent those small differences between students' performance. However, if the work really is the same, there is no problem with having multiple students in the same position in the SAI rank order.

The third step in the process of allocating SAIs is to decide on gaps in the rank order, to show the real differences between students. This step is crucial for accurate representations to be made. Teachers must carefully compare students' folios to work, and decide how similar or how different students are to each other.

The BonSAI_2014 program, available free on the QCAA website provides a simple tool to assist teachers decide on gaps between students in the rank order. You can actually see the rank order on the screen, so student names can simply be dragged and dropped along a 400 to 200 scale. SAI points are automatically allocated.

The final step in the process is to check the reasonableness and accuracy of the decisions made to make sure that the SAI distribution really does represent the differences between students' performance.

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Sometimes teachers think that, if they submit SAIs to the QCAA, then it's our job to check them and contact the school if there are any issues. While we do check the reasonableness of every distribution submitted, only teachers themselves know whether the SAIs are the best representation of the differences and similarities between their students. We also have a very limited amount of time for checking before OPs are calculated, so schools shouldn't rely on us to pick up everything. It is very important that schools check and double-check SAIs before they are submitted to the QCAA. They really do hold their students' OPs in their hands.

Voice over

SAI distributions should be compatible with the information on the Form R6. Even though SAIs and the Form R6 are two different representations of student performance, and serve different purposes, they are derived from the same information — students' folios of work. Therefore, there should be a relationship between the two.

Teachers should check that the gaps between students SAIs are a good representation of the actual difference between them. If students are close together on the Form R6, their SAIs should be more similar than those of students who are further apart.

Teachers should also check that there is an increasing amount of difference between students. Remember, students work that matches the lower levels of achievement are likely to be more similar to each other than students work that matches the higher levels of achievement, but there should never be more than 'double the difference' between any two places in the SAI distribution.

This is because over many years of comparing students' folios of work, subject experts have never seen 'double the difference' between sets of student folios. In fact, there is often much less difference between students than this, particularly if an SAI distribution only covers a couple of levels of achievement. 'Double the difference' is a limit, not something to aim for.

The BonSAI_2014 program uses a simple 'average points per rung' calculation to assist teachers check these things. For more information about how to calculate 'average points per rung', see the BonSAI_2014 user guide available on the QCAA website.