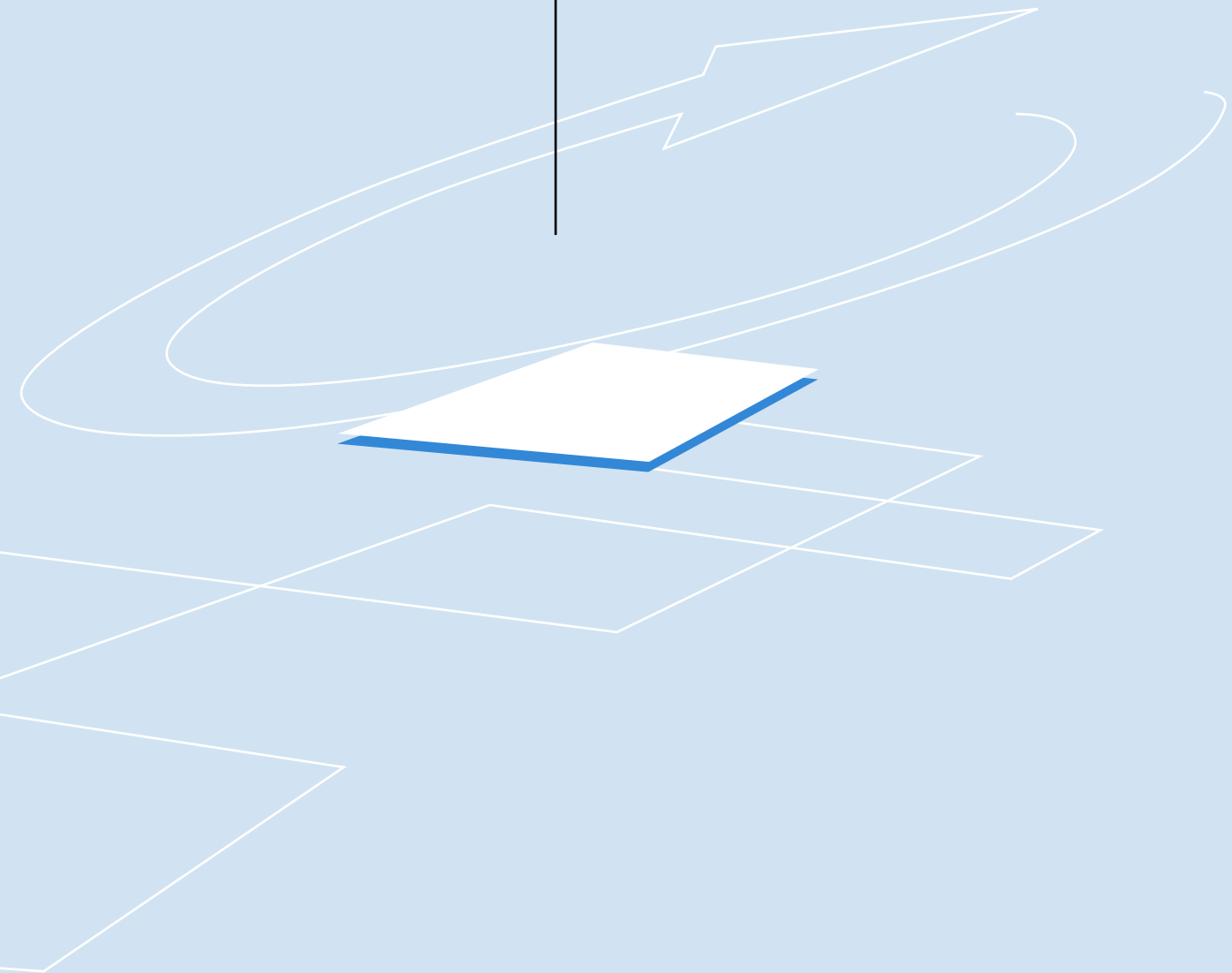


Chapter 3

The School Curriculum- What is Worth Learning?



Purpose of the Chapter

- This chapter answers the question "What is worth learning?" as a means for our students to achieve whole-person development and life-long learning. The contents of this chapter will form the basis for the following work in the short-term phase 2001-02 to 2005-06:
 - ⇒ Teachers and schools are to improve the existing curriculum whilst in transition to a new framework. The actions to be taken include trimming obsolete or less essential content, restructuring school subjects, infusing critical thinking, creativity and communication into the learning and teaching of existing subjects, and opening up more space for learning.
 - ⇒ CDC committees are to develop curriculum guides on different stages of schooling, KLAs/subjects, and General Studies for Primary Schools between 2002 – 2006 (schedule shown in Chapter 5).
- The curriculum guides scheduled for publication in 2002 – 2006 will be based on recommendations in this chapter. They will provide details on the learning targets of each Key Learning Area (KLA) framework, the organisation of contents, the learning, teaching and assessment strategies, the resources, exemplars and other useful information for the reference of teachers. However, it is not the purpose of this chapter to present details of the above.

Meaning of the Curriculum

- The school curriculum defines the views of society about 'what is worth learning', commensurate with students' abilities at different stages and with their ways of perceiving and learning about the world.
- We have to move away from the concept of the curriculum as "documents" to the concept of the curriculum as "learning experiences" to enhance the effectiveness of learning.
- Learning experiences are a nexus of
 - ⇒ aims
 - ⇒ learning processes
 - ⇒ learning contents
 - ⇒ social environment

Five Essential Learning Experiences

All students should be entitled to the following five learning experiences that correspond to “*ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics*” for whole-person development stated in the aims of education (Education Commission,2000):

- Moral and civic education - developing
 - ⇒ personal character and interpersonal skills
 - ⇒ respect for others
 - ⇒ perseverance
 - ⇒ national identity
- Intellectual development
 - ⇒ laying a firm foundation of knowledge
 - ⇒ enjoyment in learning
- Community service - developing
 - ⇒ commitment
 - ⇒ responsibility
- Physical and aesthetic development
 - ⇒ leading to healthy living styles
 - ⇒ appreciating aesthetic qualities
- Career-related experiences
 - ⇒ linking studies with career aspirations and job opportunities

Pre-primary Curriculum

- A pre-primary curriculum geared to providing a high quality, integrated early education and childcare service should have the following key features:
 - ⇒ Relevant and appropriate content that matches children's needs and interests
 - ⇒ Provision of learning experiences that build on children's prior knowledge and previously acquired skills
 - ⇒ Learning through play

- ⇒ Opportunities for children to engage in activities that are initiated by themselves
- ⇒ Theme-based learning
- ⇒ No textbook used at the nursery class level. Lower and upper kindergarten classes may choose to use resource packages as learning materials
- ⇒ Use of children's mother tongue as the medium of instruction
- ⇒ Observation records on children's performance and progress made in various developmental aspects as the core assessment data
- ⇒ Strong collaboration among practitioners, parents and community service workers
- In pursuance of the unification of pre-primary services, a combined curriculum guide for kindergartens and child care centres was issued in September 1996. This Guide, which is for the use of all pre-primary institutions in both sectors, suggests the design of a quality curriculum to achieve the aim of all-round development, and the cultivation of a positive attitude towards learning, good living habits and creativity.

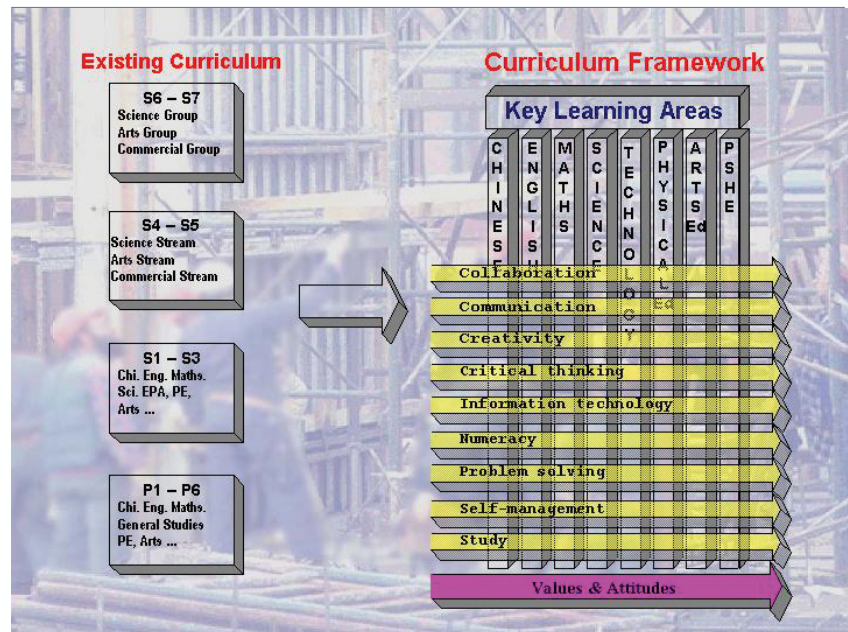
Curriculum Framework and Components for Primary and Secondary Schools

- A curriculum framework is developed as the basic structure for setting the learning targets and ensuring the standards of students at various stages of schooling. The framework is composed of three interconnected components:
 - ⇒ Key Learning Areas
 - ⇒ Generic Skills
 - ⇒ Values and Attitudes
- High expectations in Asian society and explicit goals are important factors in effective learning. Learning targets of KLAs, generic skills, values and attitudes are set for student to
 - ⇒ acquire the basic knowledge/concepts needed for an adult world in the eight Key Learning Areas
 - ⇒ develop the generic skills necessary for independent and life-long learning through the KLAs, General Studies for Primary School and other meaningful contexts

Proposed Curriculum Framework:

The proposed Curriculum framework is composed of three interconnected components: Key Learning Area, Generic Skills, Values and Attitudes

- ⇒ nurture positive values and attitudes for whole-person development



Key Learning Areas

- A Key Learning Area
 - ⇒ is a subset of a curriculum structured around fundamental and connected concepts within major knowledge domains
 - ⇒ provides the context for the development and application of generic skills, values and attitudes
 - ⇒ serves as a context for the development of understanding at a deep level and for the construction of new knowledge
 - ⇒ provides the platform for reviewing elements of learning
- The existing subjects are grouped into eight Key Learning Areas:
 - ⇒ Chinese Language Education
 - ⇒ English Language Education
 - ⇒ Mathematics Education
 - ⇒ Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE)
 - ⇒ Science Education
 - ⇒ Technology Education
 - ⇒ Arts Education
 - ⇒ Physical Education

- **Schools are recommended to choose subjects from each group in order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for students at all levels. (Appendix I - Existing Subjects and New Subjects under the Key Learning Areas(KLAs) for 2001-02 to 2005-06)**
- In each Key Learning Area, studies can be in the form of subjects, modules, short courses, projects, etc. Schools can organise their curriculum in different ways using a combination of these.
- General Studies for Primary Schools covers moral and civic education and interconnected knowledge/concepts which are relevant to students' daily life, notably from PSHE, science education and technology education, as well as elements from other KLAs.

The Issue of Chinese History and Culture

- The study of Chinese history will be strengthened in the 9-year of basic education by the following:
 - ⇒ National identity and Chinese culture is one of the six strands in the new framework for General Studies for Primary Schools (Consultation Document on Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development, November 2000).
 - ⇒ Students in all types of junior secondary schools will study Chinese history and culture, because Chinese history and culture are part of the Essential Contents for Learning in the PSHE KLA.
 - ⇒ Chinese History will remain as independent subjects in junior secondary, secondary 4-5, and secondary 6-7 levels.
 - ⇒ Traditionally, Chinese history and world history have been studied separately. The one–history approach should use Chinese history as the main thread of study. It will be piloted as a mode of study in PSHE among other modes.
 - ⇒ In 9-year basic education, Chinese will be used as the medium of instruction for the learning and teaching of Chinese history.
- There was a suggestion to form a ninth KLA of "National History and Guoqing Jiaoyu (國史及國情教育)". "Guoqing Jiaoyu" (國情教育) is a component of moral and civic education, which is one of the five essential learning experiences for whole-person development. Both "Guoqing Jiaoyu" (國情教育) and moral and civic education involve values such as national identity, responsibility and commitment to improving society and our nation. A sense of national identity is cultivated through understanding elements of Chinese history and culture, (e.g. history events, arts, scientific

and technological development, achievements of outstanding Chinese) which permeate all KLAs. Moral and civic education should be internalised through school life and life-wide learning activities within the KLAs or through realising oneself in life events. A life event approach to moral and civic education is advocated in this report. Therefore it is not desirable to separate "Guoqing Jiaoyu" (國情教育) from moral and civic education to form a ninth KLA with Chinese history.

Generic Skills

- The recommendations on the development of generic skills have been widely accepted by public consultation.
- Generic skills are not developed in a vacuum, but should be developed through the learning and teaching of the KLAs, General Studies for Primary Schools, or other contexts and activities, for example in project learning, reading, interactive learning on the Internet.
- Generic skills are fundamental in helping student to
 - ⇒ learn to acquire knowledge
 - ⇒ construct knowledge
 - ⇒ apply knowledge to solve new problems



Refer to Exemplars

- I. 1.2 閱讀與思考計畫
- I. 2.3 Using Imaginative and Literary Texts to Develop Creativity, Critical Thinking and Cultural Awareness : "Where go the boats?"
- I. 3.2 Formulating Algebraic Equations in Word Problems
- I. 4.3 培養批判性思考能力—觀點與角度
- I. 4.4 培養批判性思考能力—教學活動
- I. 5.1 Developing Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills through the Design of Experiments
- I 7.1 自然之音

The 9 Generic Skills

1. **Collaboration skills** (e.g. listening, appreciation, and negotiation) help students to engage effectively in tasks and teamwork, and to benefit from collaborative relationships.
2. **Communication skills** help students to interact with people and express their ideas effectively.
3. **Creativity** is the ability to generate original ideas and solve problems appropriate to the contexts.
4. **Critical thinking skills** help students to draw out meaning from given data or statements, generate and evaluate arguments, and make their own judgement.
5. **Information technology skills** help students to seek, absorb, analyse, manage and present information critically and intelligently in an information age and a digitised world.
6. **Numeracy skills** help students to master basic computation in daily life, use basic mathematical concepts in practical situations, make reasonable estimates, understand and interpret graphs, charts, and data.

7. **Problem-solving skills** help students to use thinking skills to resolve a difficulty and determine the best course of action.
8. **Self-management skills** (e.g. preserving emotional stability, handling stress) help students to build up self-esteem and accomplish goals.
9. **Study skills** (e.g. collecting and processing information) help students to develop good learning habits, and the abilities and attitudes to enjoy learning.

Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development
(November 2000)

- Since public feedback indicated that the curriculum reform envisaged is too broad, a priority focus will be placed on the development of three of these generic skills, namely *communication skills, creativity and critical thinking skills*, though the others should not be neglected.

Values and Attitudes

- Values are qualities that students should develop as principles underpinning conduct and decision-making, for example, rights and responsibilities, commitment, honesty and national identity.
- Attitudes support motivation and cognitive functioning. They are needed to perform a task well, for example, open-mindedness, co-operativeness, perseverance and resilience.
- Values and attitudes mutually affect each other.
- A set of values and attitudes given in *Appendix II* is recommended for incorporation into the learning targets of each KLA framework whenever appropriate.
- The development of values and attitudes such as responsibility, commitment, respect for others, perseverance and national identity is considered important for the short-term phase (2001-02 to 2005-06). They are necessary for developing goals in life and learning. It is recommended that they will be fostered through moral and civic education (one of the four key tasks) and also across KLAs in appropriate themes, learning and teaching strategies.
- Value-oriented studies such as religious education, sex education, health education, environmental education and media education, or similar studies with different terminology (affective education, life education) can be taken as an integral part of moral and civic education. A life-event approach to moral and civic education covering value-oriented themes is advocated (Chapters 4 and 5).

A list of suggested life-events for moral and civic education is offered in *Appendix III*

Advantages and Concerns of the Curriculum Framework

- The Curriculum Framework allows for different treatment of
 - ⇒ interpretation of contents
 - ⇒ scope of contents
 - ⇒ depth
- It allows flexible use of different learning strategies and styles to suit different learners so long as the learning targets are achieved.
- It ensures coherence across KLAs/subjects.
- It ensures continuity of learning across levels.
- It facilitates easy updating through modifying the learning targets.
- The concern of an open framework is that teachers may find things less concrete and worry about the workload. It takes time for teachers who are used to prescription to exercise more autonomy and liberate student learning. Measures to support schools are presented in *Chapter 5*.
- It is a valid concern that the systematic study of subject disciplines will be lost. Both integrated learning experiences (integrated studies) and discipline-based studies (e.g. physics) are valuable for students. Therefore, students should be given opportunities to study both.

Connections across KLAs

In real life, the learning experiences of students transcend the boundaries of knowledge domains. Cross-KLA studies also allow students to see things from different perspectives. The following measures will enrich the learning experiences of students:

- A new curriculum framework for General Studies for Primary Schools that is not merely a combination of the old primary science, social studies, and health education
- Liberal Studies at Advanced Supplementary level for S6-7



Refer to Exemplar

I. 7.2 非洲藝術與文化

- Two new HKCEE subjects of Integrated Humanities (for science and technology-oriented streams) and Science and Technology (for arts streams) to serve a broadening function in 2003-04 for S4 students
- Life-wide learning opportunities outside the classroom in authentic environments, e.g. community, museum, home (Chapter 4)
- Learning activities involving looking at things from different perspectives
- Learning activities like project learning, inquiry learning (Chapter 4).

What is "Trimmed" in the Curriculum?

- It is a common public perception that the curriculum is "overloading" students and should therefore be trimmed.
- The "overloading" of students derives from a mixture of problems such as overlapping and outdated content, over-teaching, poor learning and ineffective teaching. It is not necessarily due to excessive contents.
- The open framework proposed above provides the flexibility for schools to adapt the curricula to different needs of students. However, in the transition towards using the new curriculum framework by 2006, the approach to "trimming" involves the following:
 - ⇒ Taking away outdated contents and non-essential details, and leaving more space for student learning
 - ◇ Teachers of General Studies for Primary Schools can trim away the unnecessary detail in the existing General Studies curriculum (CDC, 1997) to create more space for learning (*Appendix IV*)
 - ⇒ Core, Extensions, and Additional Learning Space
 - ◇ The junior science curriculum implemented in 2000 provides a core component, while using spare curriculum time for students to plan, design and conduct science investigations in order to develop process and thinking skills.
 - ◇ The revised mathematics curriculum for primary schools to be implemented in 2002 provides enrichment activities/topics.



Refer to Exemplar

I. 9.1 締造空間、加強學習



Refer to Exemplars

I. 6.4 Business Opportunities on an Open Day

I. 4.1 個人、社會及人文教育 學習領域內的不同課程 設計模式

I. 6.1 Teaching and Learning Computer Literacy via More Meaningful Contexts

- ◇ The revised mathematics curriculum for secondary schools to be implemented in 2001 provides a foundation part, a non foundation part and enrichment activities/topics. Spare periods are also suggested for each key stage to provide space for mathematics-related school-based initiatives.
- ⇒ Flexible modes of organising the contents of studies
 - ◇ The Technology Education KLA recommends a flexible mode in which the contents of subjects can be trimmed and re-organised around common themes.
 - ◇ The PSHE KLA suggests different ways of curriculum planning, such as developing common themes to connect different subjects and introducing integrated curriculum modes of a different nature.
- ⇒ Using the open curriculum framework of learning targets
 - ◇ Schools and teachers are encouraged to use the open framework proposed in the consultation documents of each KLA to assist them to adapt the contents, learning and teaching processes, and resources to the needs of their students so that they achieve the learning targets of knowledge/concepts, generic skills, values and attitudes. Further details on effective learning and teaching are provided in *Chapter Four* of this report. Further details on each KLA will be provided by the new curriculum guides scheduled for 2002.

Focuses for Action in the Key Learning Areas and General Studies for Primary Schools

We are aware that teachers need to know how to strengthen students' learning capabilities and improve the existing curriculum now, and also how to prepare for future improvement. The ensuing pages present the focuses for action related to each Key Learning Area and to General Studies for Primary School, for the reference and action of teachers and partners in the short-term phase from 2001-02 to 2005-06 :

- **The position of each KLA and the position of General Studies for Primary Schools**
- **Directions for development**
- **Short-term emphases (2001-02 to 2005-06) in learning and teaching**
- **Major issues of concern**