

CDC Committee on English Language Education 2011 - 2013
Gist of the Third Meeting

Date: 7 November 2012
Time: 4:30 p.m. – 6:50 p.m.
Venue: Room 1024A, 10/F Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2012

- The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed without any amendments.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

- There were no matters arising from the minutes of the second CDCC meeting held on 9 May 2012.

3. Presentation on the qualitative data from the Evaluation Study on the Implementation of the English Language Curriculum at Secondary Level

- The qualitative data from the Evaluation Study collected from the interviews and lesson observations were reported. The major findings were summarised as follows:
 - The curriculum aims specified in the Curriculum and Assessment Guide were considered suitable and appropriate by most teachers. However, they regarded the senior secondary English Language curriculum broader and more challenging than the curriculum at the junior level.
 - It was pointed out that some schools regarded the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) as the requirement of the junior secondary curriculum and the HKDSE Examination the requirement of the senior secondary curriculum.
 - Insufficient time to prepare students for the HKDSE Examination for English Language was a concern to teachers.
 - While teachers considered themselves practising assessment for learning, it was observed that teachers focussed little on how to give quality feedback to help students improve their learning.
 - Insufficient teaching time and catering for learner diversity were the major concerns of the schools interviewed.
 - Learning English was considered useful for future study and work by students but they saw very few opportunities for them to use it outside school. They found the English environment in the school helpful in enhancing their English proficiency.
 - SBA was considered helpful to students as more opportunities for speaking English were provided and it helped motivate them to read and view more English texts.
- Members were invited to give suggestions and comments based on the findings of the Study. Their comments were summarised as follows:
 - While the TSA was often regarded as the requirement of the junior secondary curriculum by schools, members agreed to the need of providing students with different learning experience through a broad and balanced school-based curriculum.
 - It was remarked that the first cohort of NSS graduates were observed to be in general more competent in expressing themselves and motivated in learning.
 - It was reported that while administrative measures were taken to address the issue of learner diversity, more effective learning and teaching strategies should be adopted to address the issue.

4. Brief report on the progress of the revision of the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (P1-P6) (BECG)

- It was reported that the review of the BECG was underway. While there would be no major changes to the BECG, some updating would be made to reflect the changing contexts.

- Updated resources and strategies to sustain the curriculum development would be included in the revised BECG for curriculum leaders' and teachers' reference.
- Members were invited to give suggestions and comments based on the proposed amendments to the BECG. Their comments were summarised as follows:
 - The provision of more exemplars on the use of language arts could raise English teachers' awareness of the importance of developing students' creativity.
 - There was a change in students' reading habits with the introduction of online communication platforms.
 - More opportunities should be provided to strengthen the development of students' writing skills.
 - Schools should take teachers' readiness, students' needs and abilities into account when planning their assessment policy.
 - The importance of home-school cooperation should be emphasised in the revised BECG.

5. Discussion on the recommendations regarding the Review of the NSS Curriculum and Assessment for Literature in English

- The majority of teachers agreed that the NSS Literature in English curriculum had broadened students' exposure to literary works of different cultural backgrounds and strengthened students' critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Based on the findings of the review, a number of changes were proposed to address the major issues identified. The proposed changes were summarised as follows:
 - The two lists of set texts would be merged into one to address concerns over the lack of flexibility in text combination and unpopularity of Set 2. The number of poems and short stories of the set texts would also be reduced.
 - In Paper 1, a choice of four options would be provided in Part 1 and there would be no restriction to specific set text titles in Part 2 so that students would be free to use the set texts they had studied to answer the questions.
- The proposed support measures to be provided by the EDB and the HKEAA regarding the suggested adjustments to the curriculum and assessment were also reported. They included:
 - Exemplary teaching plans and the organisation of networking activities (provided by EDB);
 - Annotated exemplars and good portfolio work (disseminated by the HKEAA);
 - PDPs on Portfolio Work and Appreciation (organised by the HKEAA); and
 - Briefing sessions on the 2012 HKDSE Examination results (organised by the HKEAA).

6. Discussion on the recommendations regarding the Review of the NSS Curriculum and Assessment for English Language

- Most English teachers agreed that the introduction of the elective modules had enriched students' learning experiences and enhanced their motivation in learning English. The major issues on the curriculum implementation and assessment reported were summarised as follows:
 - Teachers considered the English Language curriculum broad and challenging. A gap was identified between the junior and senior secondary curricula.
 - Teachers considered the marking and teaching load heavy. There was insufficient teaching time to cover the compulsory part, the elective part and the SBA.
 - Teachers' opinion on the Graded Approach was divided.
 - Teachers considered that SBA had brought about a positive effect on students' learning.
- Members were invited to give suggestions and comments based on the review. Explanations were provided by the HKEAA officer as appropriate. Their comments and explanations were summarised as follows:

- When asked about the value of the cut scores for different levels, it was remarked that teachers should know a typical performance at a particular level of attainment rather than that of a student on the margins of the cut scores. It was also pointed out that the cut scores would not be disclosed as they were subject to change every year and would not be applicable to the performance of students in other cohorts.
 - Regarding the graded sections in Papers 1 and 3, it was explained that extra reading time would not be provided as that would lengthen the duration of the exam and would favour strong candidates who would not need to waste time reading the easier section.
- Members were encouraged to express their views on the NSS Curriculum and Assessment in a questionnaire survey to be sent to schools soon.

7. A.O.B.

- Members and their schools were invited to join the activity “Reading Around the World” on the World Book Day on 23 April 2013 at the Hong Kong Stadium.