

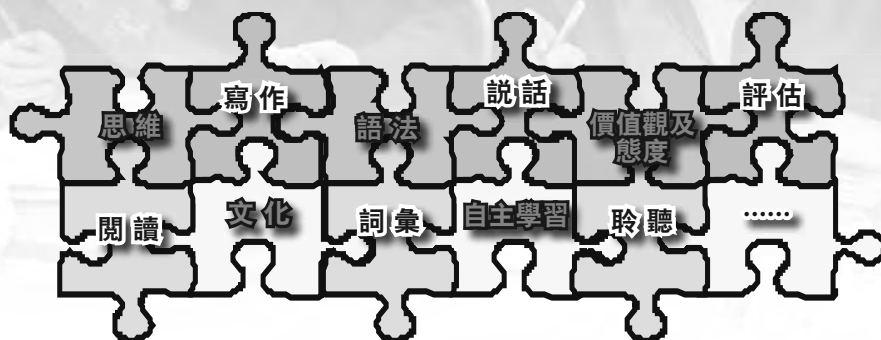
泛浮槎到四海邊 —— 語文教育旅程 (2004-2009)



語文教育及研究常務委員會就其語文教育檢討發表總結報告，建議由資深的教師及語文專家組成教學顧問專責小組，為全港中、小學的中文科(包括普通話科)及英文科教師提供支援服務，促進科主任及教師的專業成長，推動課程改革。語文教學顧問專責小組於2004年9月正式成立，截至今天，全港逾半中、小學接受了我們提供的支援服務。

過去五年，我們目睹教育及社會各界的巨大轉變，大量的教育政策及語文措施相繼推出，但也有幸見證語文教師團隊的茁壯成長。教師裝備專業能量，積極面對改變，化挑戰為機遇。作為這個團隊的緊密夥伴，專責小組與教師憂戚與共，心手相攜，共同承擔林林總總的挑戰。茲以是文記錄這段語文教育旅程，與讀者重溫難忘的片段，數往知來，為未來的航程調校方向。

乘風啟航——為語文教育之旅展帆



面對轉變與及未來的發展，專責小組選擇以語文根本為協作的發軔，與教師合力打穩學生的語文基礎，例如：推動閱讀及詞彙教學、寫作教學、說聽教學，以及多元化的評估策略等，旨在加強教師對語文基礎的教學效能，提升專業能量及自信，能探索更廣闊的語文學習空間。

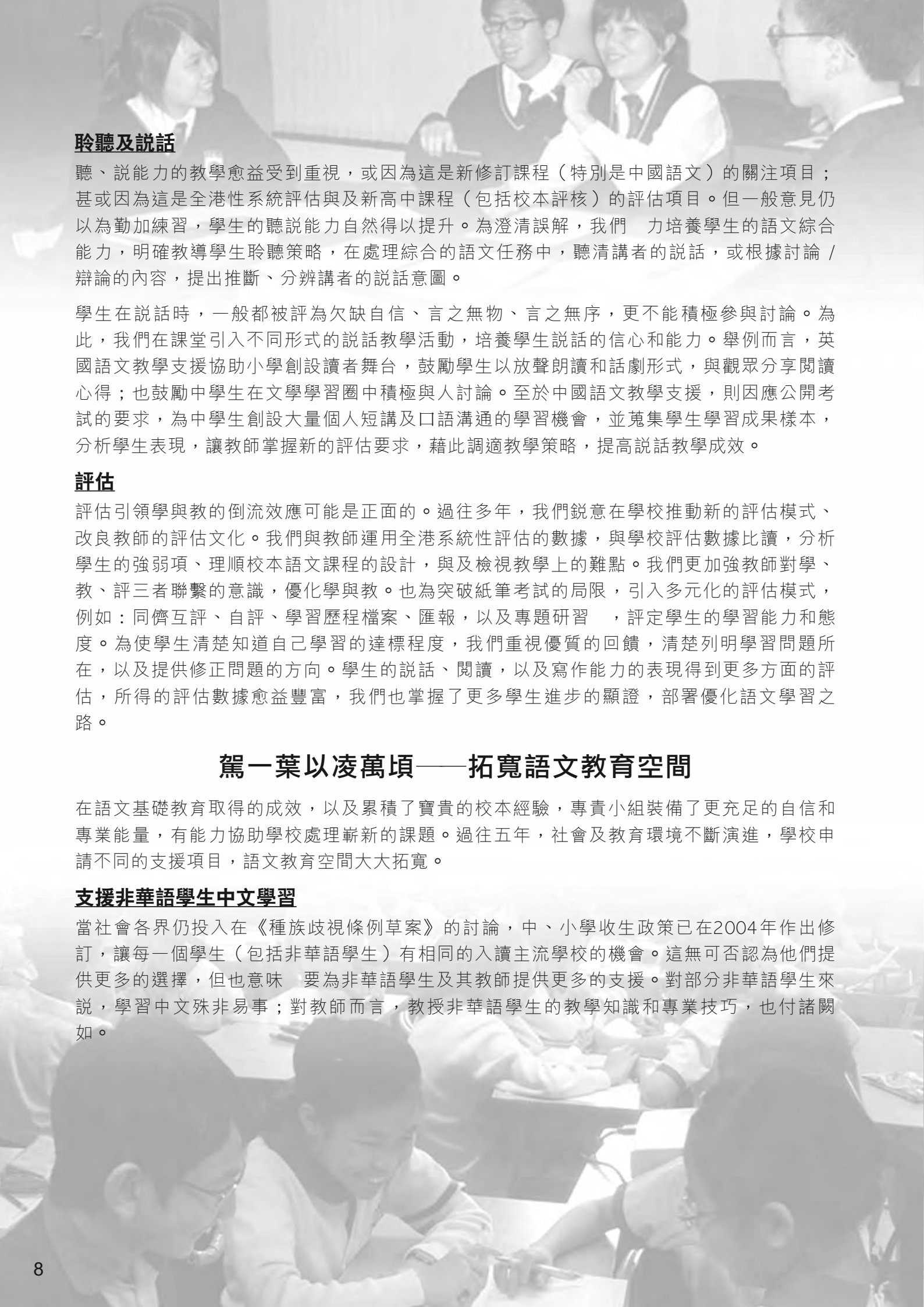
閱讀

閱讀，是一把通往廣闊知識領域的鑰匙，藉此可以提高運用語言的能力，也是發展思維能力、拓寬生活經驗的根據。提升閱讀能力一直是學校和本組的首要任務。在英國語文教育範疇，我們更強調發展學生詞彙能力，和參與支援計劃的學校，通過廣泛閱讀計劃，及為學生提供更多的伴讀對象等，提升學生的閱讀興趣和能力。在協作過程中，個別教學策略的成效得到一致肯定：例如明確的詞彙及閱讀教學策略、跨年級伴讀計劃、文學學習圈、語文支援跨學科學習，以及閱讀小組等。我們欣然發現不同學習階段的閱讀策略教學法日益受到重視，教師並以純熟的教學技巧提高學生的閱讀理解能力，使他們的分析、推斷，以及評鑑等能力得到長足的發展。由此可見，教師一方面回應了《國際評量計劃》及《全球學生閱讀能力進展研究》對香港學生閱讀能力的批評，更積極為學生迎接新高中課程，例如通識學習等，作好裝備。

寫作

讀、寫能力向來同步發展，但學生的寫作水平，常招教師不滿。舛誤盈篇、內容空洞、組織紊亂、見解無法拓展等一直是學生寫作的通病。正本溯源，我們與教師攜手合作，共同檢視每一個教學單元的設計，更通過觀課及檢查課業，探究學與教的過程，釐清問題的核心。因此，課程規劃紕漏之處得以填補，不同的教學策略亦得以落實。

針對以上問題，我們從三個層面探尋答案：(1)指導學生設立個人的字詞及語法庫，為寫作任務奠定基礎，俾能有條理地表達意見；(2)協助教師擬訂能貫通閱讀和思維能力的寫作教學課程，從而提高教學效能；(3)引入過程導向寫作及協作學習，促進建構學習方法，提高寫作成效。據此，我們可以建立更有系統的寫作教學課程，提高學生的寫作動機；也讓他們有能力寫成篇幅可觀、內容充實、條理清晰、表達準確的作品。

A background image showing a group of students in a classroom. Some are sitting at desks, while others are standing and talking. The image is in grayscale and has a slightly faded, artistic look.

聆聽及說話

聽、說能力的教學愈益受到重視，或因為這是新修訂課程（特別是中國語文）的關注項目；甚或因為這是全港性系統評估與及新高中課程（包括校本評核）的評估項目。但一般意見仍以為勤加練習，學生的聽說能力自然得以提升。為澄清誤解，我們着力培養學生的語文綜合能力，明確教導學生聆聽策略，在處理綜合的語文任務中，聽清講者的說話，或根據討論／辯論的內容，提出推斷、分辨講者的說話意圖。

學生在說話時，一般都被評為欠缺自信、言之無物、言之無序，更不能積極參與討論。為此，我們在課堂引入不同形式的說話教學活動，培養學生說話的信心和能力。舉例而言，英國語文教學支援協助小學創設讀者舞台，鼓勵學生以放聲朗讀和話劇形式，與觀眾分享閱讀心得；也鼓勵中學生在文學學習圈中積極與人討論。至於中國語文教學支援，則因應公開考試的要求，為中學生創設大量個人短講及口語溝通的學習機會，並蒐集學生學習成果樣本，分析學生表現，讓教師掌握新的評估要求，藉此調適教學策略，提高說話教學成效。

評估

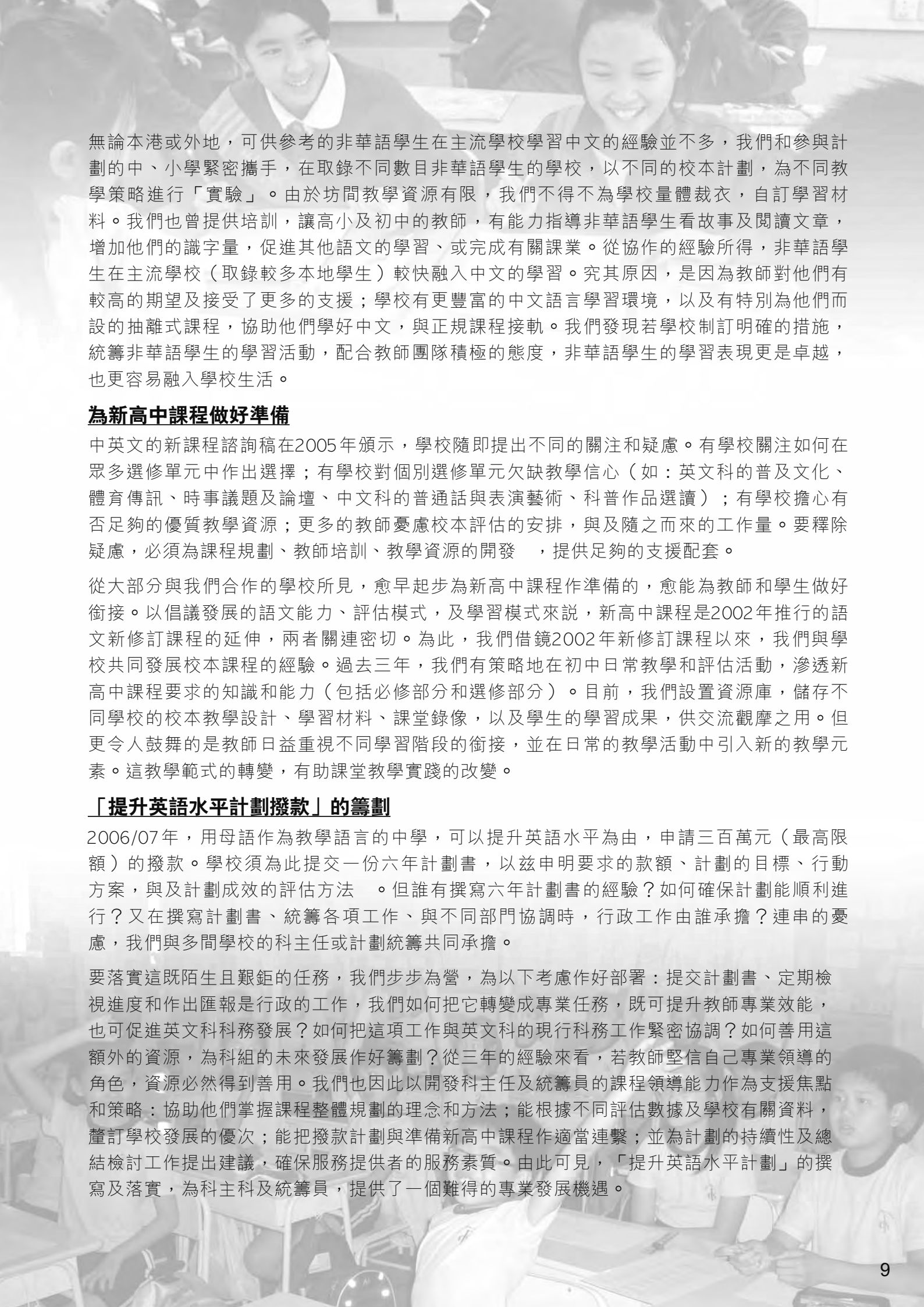
評估引領學與教的倒流效應可能是正面的。過往多年，我們銳意在學校推動新的評估模式、改良教師的評估文化。我們與教師運用全港系統性評估的數據，與學校評估數據比讀，分析學生的強弱項、理順校本語文課程的設計，與及檢視教學上的難點。我們更加強教師對學、教、評三者聯繫的意識，優化學與教。也為突破紙筆考試的局限，引入多元化的評估模式，例如：同儕互評、自評、學習歷程檔案、匯報，以及專題研習等，評定學生的學習能力和態度。為使學生清楚知道自己學習的達標程度，我們重視優質的回饋，清楚列明學習問題所在，以及提供修正問題的方向。學生的說話、閱讀，以及寫作能力的表現得到更多方面的評估，所得的評估數據愈益豐富，我們也掌握了更多學生進步的顯證，部署優化語文學習之路。

駕一葉以凌萬頃——拓寬語文教育空間

在語文基礎教育取得的成效，以及累積了寶貴的校本經驗，專責小組裝備了更充足的自信和專業能量，有能力協助學校處理嶄新的課題。過往五年，社會及教育環境不斷演進，學校申請不同的支援項目，語文教育空間大大拓寬。

支援非華語學生中文學習

當社會各界仍投入在《種族歧視條例草案》的討論，中、小學收生政策已在2004年作出修訂，讓每一個學生（包括非華語學生）有相同的入讀主流學校的機會。這無可否認為他們提供更多的選擇，但也意味着要為非華語學生及其教師提供更多的支援。對部分非華語學生來說，學習中文殊非易事；對教師而言，教授非華語學生的教學知識和專業技巧，也付諸闕如。



無論本港或外地，可供參考的非華語學生在主流學校學習中文的經驗並不多，我們和參與計劃的中、小學緊密攜手，在取錄不同數目非華語學生的學校，以不同的校本計劃，為不同教學策略進行「實驗」。由於坊間教學資源有限，我們不得不為學校量體裁衣，自訂學習材料。我們也曾提供培訓，讓高小及初中的教師，有能力指導非華語學生看故事及閱讀文章，增加他們的識字量，促進其他語文的學習、或完成有關課業。從協作的經驗所得，非華語學生在主流學校（取錄較多本地學生）較快融入中文的學習。究其原因，是因為教師對他們有較高的期望及接受了更多的支援；學校有更豐富的中文語言學習環境，以及有特別為他們而設的抽離式課程，協助他們學好中文，與正規課程接軌。我們發現若學校制訂明確的措施，統籌非華語學生的學習活動，配合教師團隊積極的態度，非華語學生的學習表現更是卓越，也更容易融入學校生活。

為新高中課程做好準備

中英文的新課程諮詢稿在2005年頒示，學校隨即提出不同的關注和疑慮。有學校關注如何在眾多選修單元中作出選擇；有學校對個別選修單元欠缺教學信心（如：英文科的普及文化、體育傳訊、時事議題及論壇、中文科的普通話與表演藝術、科普作品選讀）；有學校擔心有否足夠的優質教學資源；更多的教師憂慮校本評估的安排，與及隨之而來的工作量。要釋除疑慮，必須為課程規劃、教師培訓、教學資源的開發等，提供足夠的支援配套。

從大部分與我們合作的學校所見，愈早起步為新高中課程作準備的，愈能為教師和學生做好銜接。以倡議發展的語文能力、評估模式，及學習模式來說，新高中課程是2002年推行的語文新修訂課程的延伸，兩者關連密切。為此，我們借鏡2002年新修訂課程以來，我們與學校共同發展校本課程的經驗。過去三年，我們有策略地在初中日常教學和評估活動，滲透新高中課程要求的知識和能力（包括必修部分和選修部分）。目前，我們設置資源庫，儲存不同學校的校本教學設計、學習材料、課堂錄像，以及學生的學習成果，供交流觀摩之用。但更令人鼓舞的是教師日益重視不同學習階段的銜接，並在日常的教學活動中引入新的教學元素。這教學範式的轉變，有助課堂教學實踐的改變。

「提升英語水平計劃撥款」的籌劃

2006/07年，用母語作為教學語言的中學，可以提升英語水平為由，申請三百萬元（最高限額）的撥款。學校須為此提交一份六年計劃書，以茲申明要求的款額、計劃的目標、行動方案，與及計劃成效的評估方法等。但誰有撰寫六年計劃書的經驗？如何確保計劃能順利進行？又在撰寫計劃書、統籌各項工作、與不同部門協調時，行政工作由誰承擔？連串的憂慮，我們與多間學校的科主任或計劃統籌共同承擔。

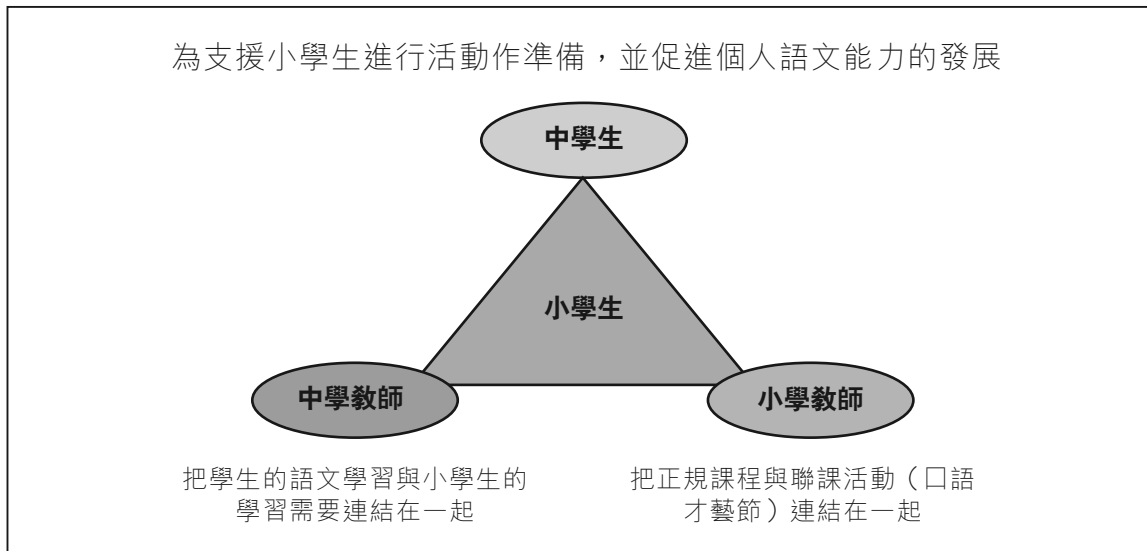
要落實這既陌生且艱鉅的任務，我們步步為營，為以下考慮作好部署：提交計劃書、定期檢視進度和作出匯報是行政的工作，我們如何把它轉變成專業任務，既可提升教師專業效能，也可促進英文科科務發展？如何把這項工作與英文科的現行科務工作緊密協調？如何善用這額外的資源，為科組的未來發展作好籌劃？從三年的經驗來看，若教師堅信自己專業領導的角色，資源必然得到善用。我們也因此以開發科主任及統籌員的課程領導能力作為支援焦點和策略：協助他們掌握課程整體規劃的理念和方法；能根據不同評估數據及學校有關資料，釐訂學校發展的優次；能把撥款計劃與準備新高中課程作適當連繫；並為計劃的持續性及總結檢討工作提出建議，確保服務提供者的服務素質。由此可見，「提升英語水平計劃」的撰寫及落實，為科主任及統籌員，提供了一個難得的專業發展機遇。

同是棹舟人——共闢語文教育新天地

在不同的語文學與教重點上，專責小組積累了大量有實踐價值的知識，不論是恆常的語文學習課題，抑或是嶄新的教學舉措，足令我們有能力在不同的語文教學支援計劃開創新的「支援模式」。

中小協作、共創互贏

不少學校都着力為學生創設豐富的英語環境，對資源匱乏的家庭而言，學生接觸英語的機會不多，為他們創設情境，在課堂以外運用英語的經驗，尤其重要。過去三年，我們聯合屯門區多所小學，建立教師網絡。除為學校提供能促進教師課程發展能量的到校支援外，我們更合辦周年的英文口語才藝節，為高小學生提供多姿多彩的語文學習活動。通過饒有趣味及富教育意義的活動，學生能運用所學，建立使用英文的動機和自信。



我們邀請多所中學的學生參與口語才藝節，擔任統籌員、主持人及助手等工作。此舉既可紓解小學教師沉重的負擔，更名為中學生「其他學習經歷」提供實踐場地，切合新高中課程的要求。專責小組為中、小學締結了難得的合作機會，讓教師有能力把正規課程和聯課活動連結在一起，也訓練中學生籌辦活動的能力。更希望通過多重的合作，師生都能鞏固所學。三年合作的經驗顯示，通過協作，師生都能有所裨益。

有系統的學習、情境學習、同儕協作學習環環相扣，共慶學習成果



性質各異的教師發展活動目標有所不同，專責小組為初中舉辦辯論教育計劃，則把不同模式的教師專業發展方法揉合，着力發展學生的語文綜合能力及思維素質，以備他們在新高中修讀中國語文及通識教育科。首先，我們為教師設計了一系列有系統的學習活動，讓他們認識什麼是辯論、辯論技巧如何融入中文課程，以及怎樣在課堂實施。之後，小組會為學校提供到校支援，與參與計劃的教師商議課程、設計教學活動，並在觀課活動中檢視學生的學習成果，讓教師在所屬學校的真情實境中運用在有系統學習的所得，更藉這深層次的學習檢討學生的學習需要、修訂教學設計，以及對教學行為有深入的反思。同時，我們也會安排聯校的觀課活動，為學校提供觀摩交流的機會，更加強學校之間的聯繫，讓之前兩種的專業發展活動發揮更強的效能。當然，壓軸出場的是為這學習群體慶祝豐收的聯校活動——辯論日營。這既可為學生創設更多的學習機會，更讓教師通過不同學生的表現，檢討及交流教學成果，為學生刻記學習「成長藍圖」。

兼具交流性質的支援模式

曩時，或有人恣意以為支援服務只為有「問題」的學校而設，或僅為學校改革積弊之用。那麼，我們如何令銳意革新、讓學校與時並進的校本需要得到滿足？專責小組在2004/05年度開始推行內地與香港教師交流及協作計劃，為40所學校提供服務，至今，參加計劃學校數目超過200所。交流及協作期間，包括優秀教師、教研員，及學校領導在內的內地的語文教學專家，以駐校的模式，每星期到校二天，協助學校進行不同課題的教研活動，例如：文言文學習、用普通話教授中文、中華文化賞析，以及結合讀寫的教學設計等。學校在內地教學專家身上成功取法，探索有系統推行課堂研究的方法、落實聚焦明確的備課，以及通過觀課和課後會議，反思學與教的成效。緊密的協作啟發了香港的教育同工，相互砥礪，更促進彼此的成長。為拓寬教學的視野，我們組團到內地考察，讓教師在不同學校情境下體認思量中國語文的多元學習方式。這種支援模式除提高教師專業能量外，更加深了他們對祖國的認識，進一步確認自己的國民身份。

把臂並肩，遨遊四海

儘管我們在數年間略有小成、積存了篤實的教學知識及經驗，但語文教育之旅豈只波光瀲灩，迎頭總有風浪。但我們堅信，追求卓越、持續發展是安全愉快旅程的重要元素。所以，在未來的日子裏，專責小組會繼續與學校攜手，致力發展課程領導，旨在協助小學靈活調度資源（例如小班教學及專科專教）、建立穩固的語文根基，支援中學成功落實新高中課程。在此，我們向一直信任本組、同行五載的學校致敬！有你們同行，專責小組增添信心和能量，為莘莘學子提供更優質的語文教育。

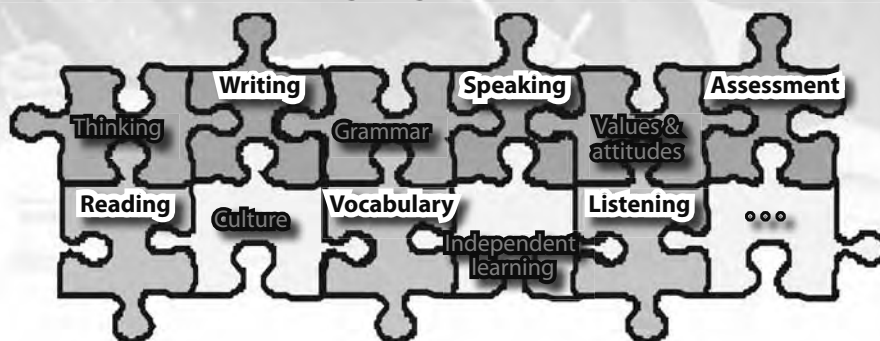
Venturing into the uncharted waters of language education (2004 – 2009)



The Final Report of Language Education Review issued by SCOLAR recommended the setting up of a task force of teaching consultants to provide Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language support services to all primary and secondary schools with a view to enhancing the capacity of Chinese and English panel heads and teachers to implement the curriculum reform. The Task Force on Language Support was formally set up in September 2004 to take forward this recommendation. As of today, we have provided support to over half of the primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.

During these five years, we have witnessed immense changes in the educational and social contexts; the introduction of numerous language-related policies and initiatives; and most important of all, the professional growth of the language teaching community in coping with the challenges and opportunities brought by those changes, policies and initiatives. As close collaborators within this community, the development and achievement of the Task Force and the language teachers have been inextricably linked. Likewise, the challenges faced by the teachers have also been shouldered by the Task Force. We would like to revisit with our readers the joys and tears in this five-year journey, reflect on our learning and refocus our work in the years ahead.

Premising on the basics in language education



To face changes and uncertainties, the Task Force has chosen to work with our teachers in strengthening the foundation areas of language education with particular emphasis on *Reading & Vocabulary building*, *Writing*, *Listening & Speaking* and *Assessment* at primary and secondary levels. Our hope was that the enhancement of teachers' capacity in tackling these fundamental areas would build up their confidence in exploring new ground.

Reading

Reading, a key to developing a broad knowledge base, enhancing language proficiency, developing thinking skills and widening life experiences, has been a priority area of development for both the schools and the Task Force. For the English KLA, additional efforts have been put into helping students expand their vocabulary. Targeted support has been given to raising students' motivation to read; enhancing their reading abilities; and providing opportunities for them to read extensively and share their reading experiences with a wider audience. Among the strategies adopted, the explicit teaching of vocabulary building skills and reading strategies, cross-age reading pals programmes, Literature Circles, reading-across-the-curriculum activities and Reading Clubs were found particularly useful. We are delighted to find that teachers have become more aware of the importance of and more competent in teaching the different levels of reading skills which help students to comprehend, predict, make inferences and judgements, etc. By doing so, teachers have not just addressed weaknesses identified by the PIRLS and PISA studies, but developed students' capacity to cope with the requirements of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum of the Language subjects and Liberal Studies in particular.

Writing

Writing has always been tackled simultaneously with reading. Teachers often complain that students' compositions are "rich" in mistakes and deficient in substance, let alone elaboration and organisation of ideas. To gain a deeper understanding of these problems, we have examined students' work together with the unit plans and task design and looked into the learning and teaching process in the classroom. We have then been able to identify gaps in curriculum planning and problems with learning and teaching.

These issues have been tackled on three fronts: (a) helping students build up the vocabulary and language required to perform the writing tasks, develop ideas and present them in a logical manner; (b) building teachers' capacity in developing a writing curriculum which integrates the teaching of reading and thinking; and (c) improving the scaffolding process through the use of process writing and cooperative learning strategies in writing lessons. The teaching of writing has become more systematic and students are more motivated to write and more able to produce longer texts with richer content, better organisation and greater accuracy.



Listening & Speaking

Increasing importance has been attached to the development of listening and speaking skills partly because of the new emphasis given by the curriculum (for Chinese language in particular) and partly because of the new assessment requirements in the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) and the NSS (including the School-based Assessment). There has been the misconception that with more practice, students' listening and speaking skills automatically improve. To enable students to cope with integrated tasks which involve listening, explicit teaching of listening skills such as making predictions, understanding the intention of the speaker, following the argument in a discussion/debate, etc. has been emphasised.

Speaking problems such as lack of confidence, inability to develop ideas and present them systematically, lack of interaction skills in group discussions, etc. are commonly found among students. A range of speaking activities has been integrated into classroom teaching to help students of different levels develop both confidence and competence in performing different speaking tasks. For instance, for the English KLA, schools have made use of Readers' Theatre to help primary students practise reading aloud; used drama to enable primary students to share their reading experience; and used Literature Circles to encourage the development of secondary students' discussion skills. For the Chinese KLA, individual presentation and group discussion skills particularly have been addressed by many secondary schools in preparation for the public exam. Samples of students' performance have been used extensively to help teachers identify the skills to be taught and understand the assessment criteria. This can help them plan their teaching of speaking more effectively.

Assessment

Assessment can have a positive washback effect on learning and teaching. Over the years, we have aimed at developing teachers' assessment literacy and changing assessment practices in schools. We have worked together with teachers to make use of TSA data in combination with other school data to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, gaps in the school-based language curriculum and problems with teaching. We have also looked into how the learning process and outcomes could be improved through better alignment between assessment, learning objectives and teaching. To enable students to display learning which cannot be assessed through pen-and-paper tests, we have tried different modes of assessment such as peer assessment, self assessment, portfolio, presentations, project work, to assess students' language abilities and learning attitudes. To help students make targeted improvement, qualitative feedback, which clearly points out students' problems and the direction for improvement, has been used. Since data interpretation and different assessment practices have been applied to speaking, reading and writing, more noticeable improvement has been found in these areas.



Exploring the uncharted zones of language education

The accumulation of experiences and achievements in tackling the basic areas of language learning and teaching has helped the Task Force build up confidence and capacity in dealing with unprecedented issues. During these five years, developments in the social and educational contexts have led many schools to ask for language support, in the following areas in particular:

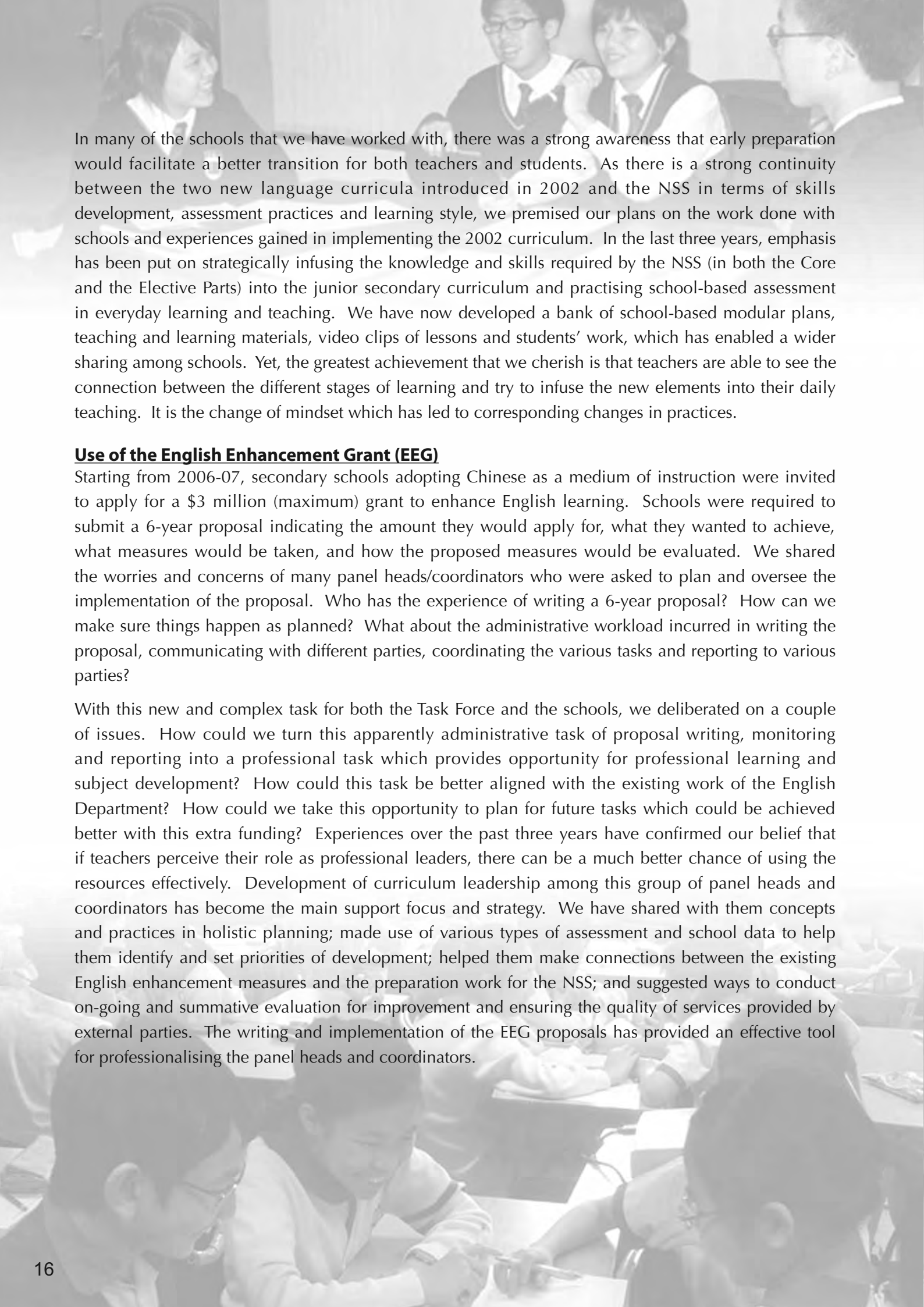
Teaching Chinese to Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students

While the discussion of the Anti-racial Discrimination Bill was going on in society, the admission policy for primary and secondary schools was changed in 2004 to enable NCS students to have an equal opportunity to choose to study in local mainstream schools. The introduction of this policy has no doubt provided more choices for NCS students, yet with it came the implication that more support has to be given to those students and their teachers. Some NCS students might have great difficulty in studying Chinese and using Chinese to study and in integrating well in mainstream schools; and teachers had neither the knowledge nor the expertise to cope with the learning needs of these students.

Since there is little reference locally and from around the world that we can draw on, the Task Force has been working closely with primary and secondary schools with various intakes of NCS students to “experiment” with different modes of curriculum design and teaching strategies; and to design tailor-made learning materials as only a limited number of appropriate textbooks are available. We have also trained local senior primary and junior secondary students to coach NCS students in reading stories and information texts so that their Chinese vocabulary can expand to cope with the learning of other language skills and tasks. What we have now learned is that most NCS students who study in mainstream schools (with a high percentage of local students) can quickly catch up in learning Chinese since there are higher expectations and also greater support from teachers, a more Chinese-rich environment at school, and a specially designed pull-out programme to help them keep up with formal classroom learning. Students have performed and integrated into school life better in schools with a more explicit and coordinated policy and measures for NCS students and a team of teachers who possess a more positive attitude towards them.

Preparation for the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum

Since the introduction of the draft version of the two language curricula in 2005, schools have raised different concerns and worries. Some were concerned about what electives could be offered as there are a number of choices; some were not confident in teaching certain electives (e.g. Popular Culture, Sports Communication, Social Issues and Debating in the English curriculum, Performance in Putonghua and Multi-media Reading, Science Fiction in the Chinese curriculum); some were uncertain about the accessibility of sufficient quality teaching and learning resources; and many were worried about how School-based Assessment would be conducted and the extra workload that would be incurred. All these concerns implied that there was a great need for support in curriculum planning, teacher training and resource development.



In many of the schools that we have worked with, there was a strong awareness that early preparation would facilitate a better transition for both teachers and students. As there is a strong continuity between the two new language curricula introduced in 2002 and the NSS in terms of skills development, assessment practices and learning style, we premised our plans on the work done with schools and experiences gained in implementing the 2002 curriculum. In the last three years, emphasis has been put on strategically infusing the knowledge and skills required by the NSS (in both the Core and the Elective Parts) into the junior secondary curriculum and practising school-based assessment in everyday learning and teaching. We have now developed a bank of school-based modular plans, teaching and learning materials, video clips of lessons and students' work, which has enabled a wider sharing among schools. Yet, the greatest achievement that we cherish is that teachers are able to see the connection between the different stages of learning and try to infuse the new elements into their daily teaching. It is the change of mindset which has led to corresponding changes in practices.

Use of the English Enhancement Grant (EEG)

Starting from 2006-07, secondary schools adopting Chinese as a medium of instruction were invited to apply for a \$3 million (maximum) grant to enhance English learning. Schools were required to submit a 6-year proposal indicating the amount they would apply for, what they wanted to achieve, what measures would be taken, and how the proposed measures would be evaluated. We shared the worries and concerns of many panel heads/coordinators who were asked to plan and oversee the implementation of the proposal. Who has the experience of writing a 6-year proposal? How can we make sure things happen as planned? What about the administrative workload incurred in writing the proposal, communicating with different parties, coordinating the various tasks and reporting to various parties?

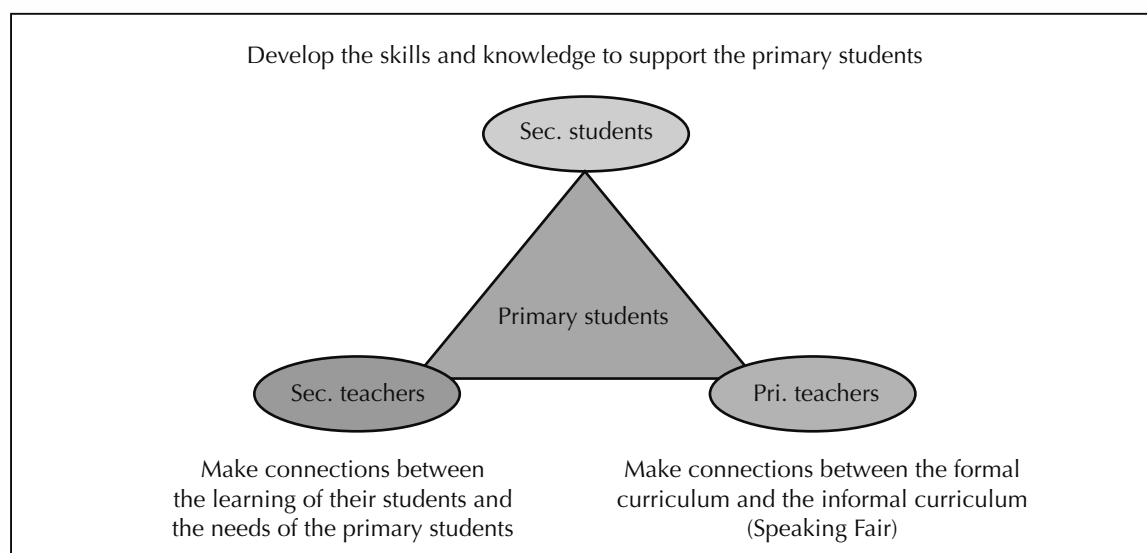
With this new and complex task for both the Task Force and the schools, we deliberated on a couple of issues. How could we turn this apparently administrative task of proposal writing, monitoring and reporting into a professional task which provides opportunity for professional learning and subject development? How could this task be better aligned with the existing work of the English Department? How could we take this opportunity to plan for future tasks which could be achieved better with this extra funding? Experiences over the past three years have confirmed our belief that if teachers perceive their role as professional leaders, there can be a much better chance of using the resources effectively. Development of curriculum leadership among this group of panel heads and coordinators has become the main support focus and strategy. We have shared with them concepts and practices in holistic planning; made use of various types of assessment and school data to help them identify and set priorities of development; helped them make connections between the existing English enhancement measures and the preparation work for the NSS; and suggested ways to conduct on-going and summative evaluation for improvement and ensuring the quality of services provided by external parties. The writing and implementation of the EEG proposals has provided an effective tool for professionalising the panel heads and coordinators.

Breaking new ground in supporting language education

We have not just accumulated ample and useful knowledge about different language focuses, irrespective of whether they are perennial or new, but have also developed new and effective “models” of school support through implementing different language support programmes.

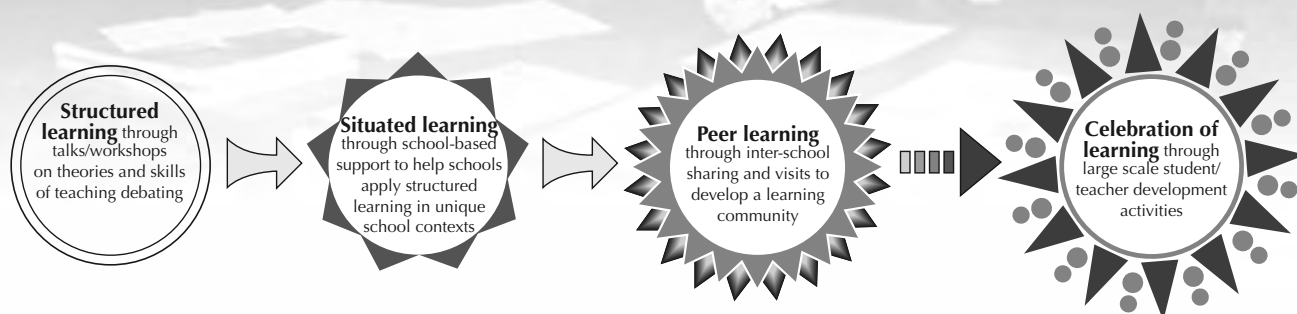
Fostering partnerships between primary and secondary schools to provide mutual support

How to increase students’ exposure to English beyond classroom learning has always been the concern of many schools, especially for those students who do not have strong family support and have only limited access to English learning opportunities. Three years ago, we established a network which involved a group of primary schools in Tuen Mun. Apart from providing school-based support to enhance teacher development and curriculum development, we organise English Speaking Fairs yearly to conduct a wide range of English learning activities for the senior primary students in these schools. The objective is to provide them with more opportunities to use the English they learn during class through fun and meaningful activities, thus raising their motivation and confidence in using English.



To conduct the Speaking Fairs, we have invited students from several secondary schools to serve as coordinators, organisers and helpers. This arrangement on one hand helps reduce the workload of the primary teachers, but more importantly provides a valuable opportunity for the secondary students to engage in Other Learning Experiences, a requirement of the NSS. The Task Force has successfully helped build partnerships between the primary and the secondary schools, developed the capacity of the teachers to connect the formal curriculum and informal curriculum, and trained the secondary students to conduct the activities. By doing so, we hope that the learning opportunities for both the primary and secondary students can be sustained. Experiences over the past three years have shown that collaboration between the two parties facilitates the learning for both groups of students and teachers.

Establish links between structured learning, situated learning, peer learning and “celebrated learning”



Different modes of teacher development have different purposes. The Task Force has tried to adopt a combination of teacher development modes in delivering a Chinese debating education programme for junior secondary students. The programme aims to develop students' integrative language and thinking skills which in turn prepares them for the NSS Chinese Language curriculum and Liberal Studies. We have designed a series of structured seminars to help teachers understand what debating is, how debating skills can be infused into the Chinese curriculum and how they can be taught in class. It was then followed by school-based support which aimed to help teachers design their school-based curriculum, implement the curriculum in the classroom and review the learning of students based on the evidence collected. This has helped teachers apply their structured learning in a practical school context. In doing so, they had to consider students' needs, refine their plan and reflect on their teaching practices which led to deep learning. We then arranged inter-school lesson observations to enable schools to learn from each other. Through such arrangements teachers had greater exposure and gained peer feedback and mutual support, which reinforced their learning from the previous two modes. The peak of the learning cycle appeared in a celebration event in which students from the collaborating schools were invited to take part in a Debating Camp. Apart from providing opportunities for students to display their learning, what was of even greater value was that teachers could reflect and share their experiences using students' performance as evidence and were able to work out a “progression map” for their own students.



Adoption of an exchange and collaborative approach to support

In the past, we might have, to a certain extent, adopted a “pathological” approach to support, i.e. support was given to “problematic” schools or to improve the weak spots of schools. Yet, how can the needs of schools who want to try innovative ideas or work for sustainable development be satisfied? The Task Force has offered the Mainland-Hong Kong Exchange and Collaborative Programme since 2004-05. To begin with, about 40 schools participated and the number has now grown to more than 200. Mainland experts, including outstanding teachers, researchers and school leaders, are stationed in our schools for two days a week to work in collaboration with the Chinese language teachers to conduct small scale research into different language issues, e.g. the teaching of classical Chinese literature, the use of Putonghua to teach Chinese language, appreciation of Chinese culture, integration of reading and writing. Schools have successfully tapped the strengths of the Mainland experts to help them conduct structured classroom research, focussed and detailed lesson planning, and reflect on the process and outcomes of teaching and learning through lesson observation and post-observation discussion. Through close collaboration and exchange of ideas from the different perspective offered by the Mainland experts, our teachers have been really inspired and yet the improvements are owned by both parties. To broaden teachers’ perspectives, exchange tours to China have been organised to enable our teachers to experience how Chinese language could be taught in different school and cultural contexts. The value added by this approach in teachers’ professional growth is coupled with an increasing understanding of our country which can bring them a step closer to developing a national identity.

Keep sailing

Despite the fact that we have had many small successes and accumulated useful knowledge and experiences over the years, the journey to improving language education is never smooth as there are always waves ahead. Yet, safe and happy sailing comes from an urge for excellence and sustainable development. In the years to come, the Task Force will step up its support in the area of curriculum leadership development with a view to helping primary schools to make effective use of different resources available (e.g. provision of small class teaching and specialised teaching) to build a firm language foundation and supporting secondary schools to implement the New Senior Secondary curriculum successfully.

We salute our collaborating schools for placing their trust in the Task Force on this five year journey! Together we have grown in confidence and competence, providing the best language education for our students.