#### Cover design

The first runner-up of 'The New Senior Secondary Academic Structure' Wallpaper Design Competition (Student Section): Tsang Wai Shan, student of Shun Tak Fraternal Association Yung Yau College

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## 'Decoding' the New Senior Secondary Curriculum

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Student

Handbook

Education Bureau Curriculum Development Institute

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## Introduction

## This is a handbook prepared for YOU!

The New Senior Secondary (NSS) Curriculum provides flexible and diversified learning opportunities for students from S4 to S6. It aims to broaden your knowledge base and horizons, to develop your thinking and potential, so that you can be more prepared for further studies and career development in the future.

## This Handbook will enable you to understand:

- the NSS Curriculum
- how to adopt appropriate learning strategies
- the learning opportunities provided by the NSS Curriculum
- multiple progression pathways

We will be promoted to senior secondary students. Just like you, we wish to know more about the NSS Curriculum for the coming three years. With the help of our teacher, Miss Decoder, we will know more about it.



Dee

Alice

I am Miss Decoder.

Why do I need to know about the NSS Curriculum?

The world today is changing rapidly. How can learning at school prepare us for the challenges of our age of information explosion and ever-changing society? Like you, Dee and Alice will have a wide range of opportunities for personal development in the senior secondary school years. Making good use of these opportunities will put you on the road to success.

> What learning opportunities do we have?

> > What are the aims of these learning opportunities?

## Learning goals of the NSS Curriculum

The NSS Curriculum provides diversified learning opportunities to cater for a range of students' needs, interests and abilities, as well as to foster their whole-person development. In general, there are seven major learning goals:



# 'Decoding' the NSS Curriculum

Making good use of the learning opportunities in the senior secondary years would certainly give us greater confidence to meet future challenges!

The NSS Curriculum is made up of three components, as illustrated below:

## **4 Core Subjects**

Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies

## 2 or 3 Elective Subjects

2 or 3 subjects chosen from NSS elective subjects, a range of Applied Learning courses and Other Languages

## Other Learning Experiences

What is the NSS Curriculum about?

Moral and Civic Education, Community Service, Aesthetic Development, Physical Development and Career-related Experiences



I know that there are four Core Subjects in the Curriculum. What can I learn from Chinese Language as a core subject?



Through the Chinese Language subject, you can build up your vocabulary; develop your sense of the language; enhance your competence in reading, writing, listening and speaking; develop your ability of independent language learning; enhance your thinking competence, cultural accomplishments and aesthetic sentiments; and develop your affection towards your country and nation.

My thoughts: E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...

How can I benefit from **English Language?**  Through the NSS English Language curriculum, you can build up your language knowledge and generic skills (e.g. communication skills) as well as develop positive values and attitudes (e.g. confidence in using English), which are conducive to lifelong learning. You can also advance your personal and intellectual development in our rapidly changing knowledge-based society.



E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...





### My thoughts:

E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...



I have heard that there are no textbooks for Liberal Studies and it only requires group discussion in class. I've also heard that we can easily pass the exam without doing much revision. Is that true?



Absolutely not. Some of the learning materials for Liberal Studies come from newspapers, magazines, reference books and other multimedia resources such as the Internet. Group discussions are indeed very common in the learning of Liberal Studies. Students can apply the knowledge they have acquired from other subjects during their discussions on specific issues and topics such as 'Can electronic cigarettes help people reduce smoking?' Students may be enlightened through learning from each other. They may then be able to build knowledge, broaden their horizons, develop the ability to think from multiple perspectives, and pursue lifelong learning. The assessment of Liberal Studies aims to reflect students' ability to discuss and analyse issues as well as to express their opinions and views with elaboration and support from real and appropriate examples.

> My thoughts: E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning agals...

Could you briefly tell us what the **Mathematics** subject is about?

Mathematics consists of a Compulsory Part and an Extended Part. All students must study the Compulsory Part. The Extended Part is designed for students who need more mathematical knowledge and skills for their future studies and careers, and for those whose interests and maturity have been developed to a level that enables them to benefit from further mathematical study in different areas. Two modules are offered as choices for students in the Extended Part. They are Module 1 (Calculus and Statistics) and Module 2 (Alaebra and Calculus). Students are allowed to take only one of the two modules.

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What are the Elective Subjects?

According to students' abilities and interests,		
students can choose two or three subjects		
from among 20 elective subjects in different		
Key Learning Areas (KLAs), a range of Applied		
Learning courses and Other Languages.		

#### **NSS Elective Subjects**

Key Learning Areas		Subjects
Chinese Language Education	Chinese Literature	
English Language Education	Literature in Englis	sh
Personal, Social and Humanities Education	<ul> <li>Chinese History</li> <li>Ethics and Religious Studies</li> <li>History</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Economics</li> <li>Geography</li> <li>Tourism and Hospitality Studies</li> </ul>
Science Education	<ul><li>Biology</li><li>Physics</li></ul>	<ul> <li>Chemistry</li> <li>Science (Integrated, Combined)</li> </ul>
Technology Education	Business, Accounting and Financial Studies     Design and Applied Technology     Health Management and Social Care     Information and Communication Technology     Technology and Living	
Arts Education	Music	<ul> <li>Visual Arts</li> </ul>
Physical Education	Physical Education	n

JAN

### My thoughts:

E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...



Students can now only take two or three elective subjects. For those students who wish to take science-related courses in university, will the curriculum confine their choice of subjects?

I am very interested in science, but I don't

want to limit myself to just

taking science subjects.

What can I do with

regard to choosing elective subjects?

Under the NSS Curriculum, the Science Education KLA

provides not only Physics, Chemistry and Biology as individual subjects, but also a new subject called Science.

The new subject operates in two modes: Integrated Science and Combined Science, with the aim of providing space for students to take elective subjects from other KLAs after taking one or more electives from the Science Education KLA. E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...

Combined Science is designed with this taken into consideration. Combined Science is built

on the Science (S1-3) curriculum and offers

such combinations as 'Physics and Chemistry',

'Biology and Physics', as well as 'Chemistry

and Biology', for students wishing to take two

elective subjects in the Science Education KLA.

Students can take a specialised science

subject such as Biology, Chemistry or Physics

together with Combined Science. In this way, they can take another subject from the other

KLAs as their third elective subject.



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## My thoughts:

E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...





Integrated Science is designed for students who have diverse interests and who wish to take ONE science subject alongside one or two elective subjects from other KLAs. It is a brand new curriculum with a comprehensive coverage of the key ideas in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The curriculum adopts a thematic approach and is structured around contexts of daily relevance to help arouse students' curiosity and to enhance their motivation in learning. Through systematic investigations into these contexts, students will develop an understanding of the nature of science and the unifying concepts that pervade science. The scientific knowledge and skills acquired would

also contribute towards developing students' problem-solving skills.

Ah, I see.

**My thoughts:** E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals... APR

What is Applied Learning?

Depending on individual schools' decision whether to offer them, Applied Learning (ApL) courses can be taken as elective subjects.

- The Education Bureau introduces ApL to S5 and S6 to cater for the diverse learning needs of students. ApL complements NSS subjects by offering studies with stronger elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields.
- With equal emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes, ApL aims at enabling students to understand fundamental theories and concepts through application and practice, and to develop their generic skills in authentic contexts, preparing them for further studies and/or work as well as lifelong learning.
- Students may choose courses from the following six areas of studies: Creative Studies Media and Communication Business, Management and Law Services Applied Science Engineering and Production

## My thoughts:

E.g. My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...





#### The more OLE the better, isn't it?

Don't assume that 'the more OLE is necessarily the merrier'. The heart of OLE is the learning process that enhances your skills and cultivates your values. It is the quality of OLE that matters, not the quantity.

Why is Other Learning **Experiences (OLE) included** as part of the NSS Curriculum? What is it? Do we need to deliberately engage ourselves in more activities to demonstrate our strengths?



OLE is one of the three integral components of the NSS Curriculum. A minimum of 15% of the total learning time (suggested minimum lesson time: 405 hours) is allocated to OLE, which includes Moral and Civic Education, Community Service, Career-related Experiences, Aesthetic Development and Physical Development.

- In fact, these learning experiences have been provided by many schools for years. Through them, it is hoped that students can develop positive values and social responsibility, which are conducive to their whole-person development.
- Your school will normally arrange sufficient OLE for all senior secondary students. Therefore, you do not have to organise extra activities for yourselves. Generally speaking, students do not need to arrange and accumulate 405 hours of OLE all by themselves.



The following are some examples of the five areas of OLE that schools will normally arrange for their students:

### Moral and Civic Education,

for example: Class teacher periods Ethics and religious education Sharing of current affairs Environmental protection activities ...

#### Community Service. for example:

Flag days

for example: Service opportunities inside school PE lessons Sports competitions Cleaning the campus/ beaches Basketball team Visiting homes for the elderly Physical fitness activities ...

#### for example: Career talks Business mentorships Organising school campus radio Field work projects in a real context ...

Career-related Experiences,

#### Physical Development, Aesthetic Development,

for example: Music, visual arts and drama lessons Visiting arts exhibitions Conducting project learning related to the arts Participating in arts performances or competitions .

## My thoughts

E.g.: My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...

**Does OLE** need to be examined?

This learning approach emphasises students' participation and experience, so OLE will not be examined. The OLE programmes that you take part in can be recorded in your Student Learning Profile (SLP), subject to your selection.

### My thoughts

E.g.: My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...





- The NSS Curriculum encourages schools to assist students to develop their own SLP to celebrate their achievements and participation in terms of whole-person development.
- In short, SLP provides supplementary information to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education. Apart from your academic performance in school, the SLP also summarises your participation and achievements in OLE.

Do we need to have all our learning experiences presented in the SLP?

No, you don't have to do so.

- The SLP is a summary report of your participation and achievements conducive to whole-person development during your senior secondary years, rather than an account of each and every detail.
- You should understand that the SLP emphasises quality rather than quantity. Besides, an overly lengthy SLP could be a sign of being incapable to present yourself concisely.

E.g.: My impressive learning experiences... My short-term learning goals...

Some classmates told me that the SLP has something to do with university admission. Is it true?

The aim of the SLP is to promote whole-person development. It is not an assessment tool, nor should it be treated solely as a vehicle for university admission.

- Under the New Academic Structure, universities will consider the information of students' achievements and their participation in different areas, providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate the range of competencies and personal qualities necessary for university education.
- The Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) announced in October 2008 that universities will accept the SLP as a reference document for admissions consideration.





Welcome! This is a blog for us to talk about LEARNING!



Dee

Get subscribed

### My Learning 'Strategies'

Date of blog: 10:02 a.m., 5 May

How can we choose appropriate learning strategies for the NSS Curriculum?

Last week our class teacher asked each group in our class to discuss this online and then post our views and experiences to this blog.

## Three common categories of teaching approaches

Date of blog: 10:55 a.m., 6 May

Our Chinese teacher, Mr. Koo, said 'Teaching approaches can be summarised into three categories':



y' ('Co-construction' ch Approach

If you could match your teacher's teaching approaches with suitable learning strategies, it will bring the best results to your learning.



### What is the 'direct instruction' approach?

Date of blog: 1:15 p.m., 7 May

Mr. Koo continued to explain: 'Direct instruction' approach means that teachers directly tell students the facts, knowledge and procedures. When teachers believe that students have inadequate background knowledge to carry out in-depth analysis or enquiries, they will usually employ this approach.

### 'Strategies' to facilitate my learning under the 'direct instruction' approach

Date of blog: 12:05 p.m., 8 May

Teachers and students all think the following suggestions will help students learn better when teachers are using the 'direct instruction' approach:

- Make good use of graphic organisers to link relevant knowledge and concepts together, and consider the relationships and connections between concepts and ideas.
- Make good use of notes
- → Before lessons, brainstorm and write down some questions or key points for further exploration.
- → In class, write down the themes, subtopics and key points provided by the teacher.
- ➡ After class, write down the questions that classmates or you have raised.
- → During revision, classify key points in various ways (with the effective use of coloured pens).

Mr. Lee believed that some students have a negative attitude towards the 'direct instruction' approach. Actually, as long as we adopt a positive attitude, try our best to understand the learning objectives and content the teacher covers, and play an active role, we can improve our learning.

## What is the 'enquiry' approach?



Date of blog: 3:33 p.m., 8 May

Mr. Koo explained further: 'enquiry-based learning' usually starts with raising questions. Firstly, the teacher or students will put forward a list of investigative questions. The students then collect information relevant to these questions, analyse them, and present their findings and conclusion.



## 'Strategies' to facilitate my learning under the 'enquiry' approach

#### Date of blog: 4:05 p.m., 8 May

Some classmates agreed that we should adopt the following learning 'strategies' in carrying out enquiry-based learning activities.

- Develop a sense of curiosity and a desire to learn more
- Think independently and from multiple perspectives
- Be proactive and ready to accept challenges
- Participate actively in discussions, sharing ideas and raising questions
- Select and analyse relevant information
- Overcome fear of failures or difficulties, and learn through trial and error

Teachers agreed these are good strategies too! However, we still need to consider: Besides acquiring knowledge, what other learning abilities (e.g. the ability to express oneself and resolve problems) have we developed in the process? How can we apply these abilities in other subjects or learning experiences?

## What is the 'co-construction' approach?

Date of blog: 11:23 a.m., 9 May

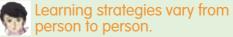
We were not quite familiar with the third teaching strategy, i.e. the 'co-construction' approach, so Mr. Koo gave us some hints. He said, 'Through interaction between teachers and students, they build knowledge together and share ideas in a process of interactive collaboration. For example, after taking part in a learning activity at a museum, each team systematically uploads the information they have collected to a learning blog to further explore certain topics.'

## 'Strategies' to facilitate learning under the 'co-construction' approach

### Date of blog: 11:23 a.m., 9 May $\pm$ $\pm$ $\pm$ $\pm$ $\pm$ $\pm$ $\pm$

Teachers and students suggested that we should pay attention to the following learning 'strategies':

- Participate actively in learning activities and learn collaboratively
- Communicate with your classmates (including expressing your opinions actively, listening to others' ideas attentively, reviewing and reflecting together)
- Set your own learning agenda and monitor your learning progress
- Try different learning methods  $\star$   $\star$   $\star$   $\star$   $\star$   $\star$   $\star$   $\star$
- Be open-minded; don't be shy or afraid of taking risks. \* \* \*

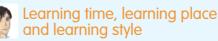


#### Date of blog: 11:58 a.m., 9 May

Dee, Alice and other students all have their own individual learning styles and needs. Besides using appropriate learning strategies to suit different teaching approaches, it is most important to understand the learning objectives of different subjects and then adopt an approach that best suits you in terms of learning time learning place and learning st



**learning time, learning place** and **learning style**. This will make your own learning more efficient and effective.



#### Date of blog: 12:12 p.m., 9 May

When the Liberal Studies teacher asks us to do enquiry-based ( $\bigcirc$ ) learning, I would first invite my classmates home ( $\bigcirc$ ) during the weekend ( $\bigcirc$ ) for group discussion. Then we would research information separately. Finally, we collaboratively work out the conclusion ( $\bigcirc$ ) at school. Some classmates like searching for information in the library ( $\bigcirc$ ), some prefer using the Internet ( $\bigcirc$ ), while others prefer visiting museums ( $\bigcirc$ ). All in all, we opt for the way we want to learn according to our own preferences.





#### Date of blog: 1:25 p.m. , 9 May

Several members in our team like communicating and discussing ( $\bigcirc$ ) online at home ( $\bigcirc$ ) in the evening ( $\bigcirc$ ). So we don't need to meet and we think that's pretty effective!



#### Date of blog: 3:25 p.m., 9 May

In addition to choosing appropriate learning strategies, you should think about where you can get more useful learning resources if you want to make learning more effective.



Date of blog: 3:55 p.m., 9 May

Are there any other learning resources apart from textbooks, assignments and worksheets given by my teachers?



Date of blog: 4:30 p.m., 9 May

Dee, we can make good use of learning software, the Internet or other media, environmental and natural resources, libraries etc., to get suitable materials or information for learning.



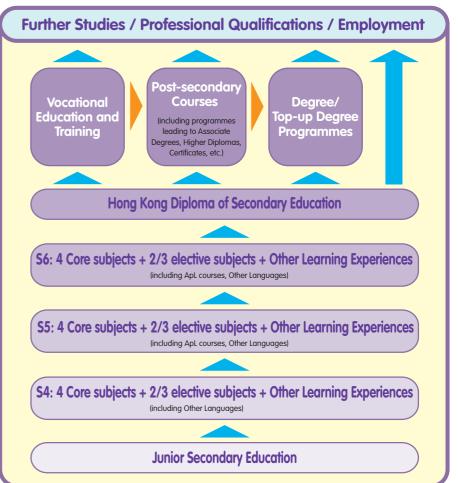
Date of blog: 5:01 p.m., 9 May

Alice is right, but remember: The more isn't necessarily the better! Selecting, sorting and organising materials and knowledge is more important than indiscriminately gathering tons of information and materials.

# Getting prepared • Heading towards the future!

The NSS Curriculum provides multiple pathways for students in terms of lifelong learning. Upon graduation, students may choose between work and further studies. The pathways for further studies include university education, sub-degree courses and courses offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education.

#### Multiple Progression Pathways



# Students' Voices

In the NSS Curriculum, we should not confine ourselves to subject knowledge. To consolidate our learning, we have to develop a habit of thinking from multiple perspectives. In addition, I'll make sure I take time to participate in OLE to broaden my horizons and learn how to get along with others. I will also select relevant information to build my SLP.

Alice

I believe we will succeed one day with a positive attitude towards learning and the courage to face challenges.

Lam Yuen Chi

At senior secondary level, we have to learn to become better learners and citizens and develop a positive personality, rather than just acquiring academic knowledge from textbooks.

Lam Chun Wai

Chau Mei Sze

The elective subjects offered by the school may not be able to satisfy the needs of every student. However, students should treasure every opportunity provided. What we can get from the senior secondary years is not only the scores on report cards, but the ability to plan for our future and get along with others. 🚽 🖉 Chan Yan Yee

To learn is actually to gain pleasure from acquiring new knowledge and experiences. In the past, however, I was so used to rote learning and I regarded learning as a boring business. Studying under the NSS Curriculum, I will attempt to think more critically and participate in more activities both inside and outside school. Apart from gaining more experiences, I will consolidate what I have learnt through reflection and gain pleasure in the learning process.

I intend to take Medicine at university. Other than taking two subjects in the Science Education KLA, I want to pursue my other interests by taking Business, Accounting and Financial Studies as another elective subject. Besides, I will take part in OLE and build my SLP, hoping that I can empower myself and develop greater interest in learning.

Wong Suet Sum

In the past, I thought the purpose of learning was to get high marks, and I often learnt by rote. Under the NSS Curriculum, I recognise the importance of understanding and reflection. Therefore, I am now more enthusiastic about participating in the OLE, which my school will specially arrange for us to develop an active learning attitude. In addition, I will review my learning strategies with my teachers and classmates for self-improvement.

Dee

I hope the NSS Curriculum can help me learn how to think. Instead of learning merely through memorisation, I will try to apply what I have learnt flexibly in other circumstances.

Chan Ka Hei



University Entrance Requirements under the '334' Academic Structure Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education

Links to Tertiary Institutes and Universities NSS Subjects Related Information

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Assessment Frameworks of NSS Subjects

**Assessment Guides** 

NSS Subjects Offered by Schools

## Difered by Schools

'Frequently Asked Questions' Booklet

# Education Bureau

'Students' Corner' of the 'New Academic Structure "334" Web Bulletin' includes:

> Reference Materials for NSS Subject Choices and Career Development

www.edb.gov.hk/334

**Multiple Pathways** 

New Senior Secondary Curriculum and

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