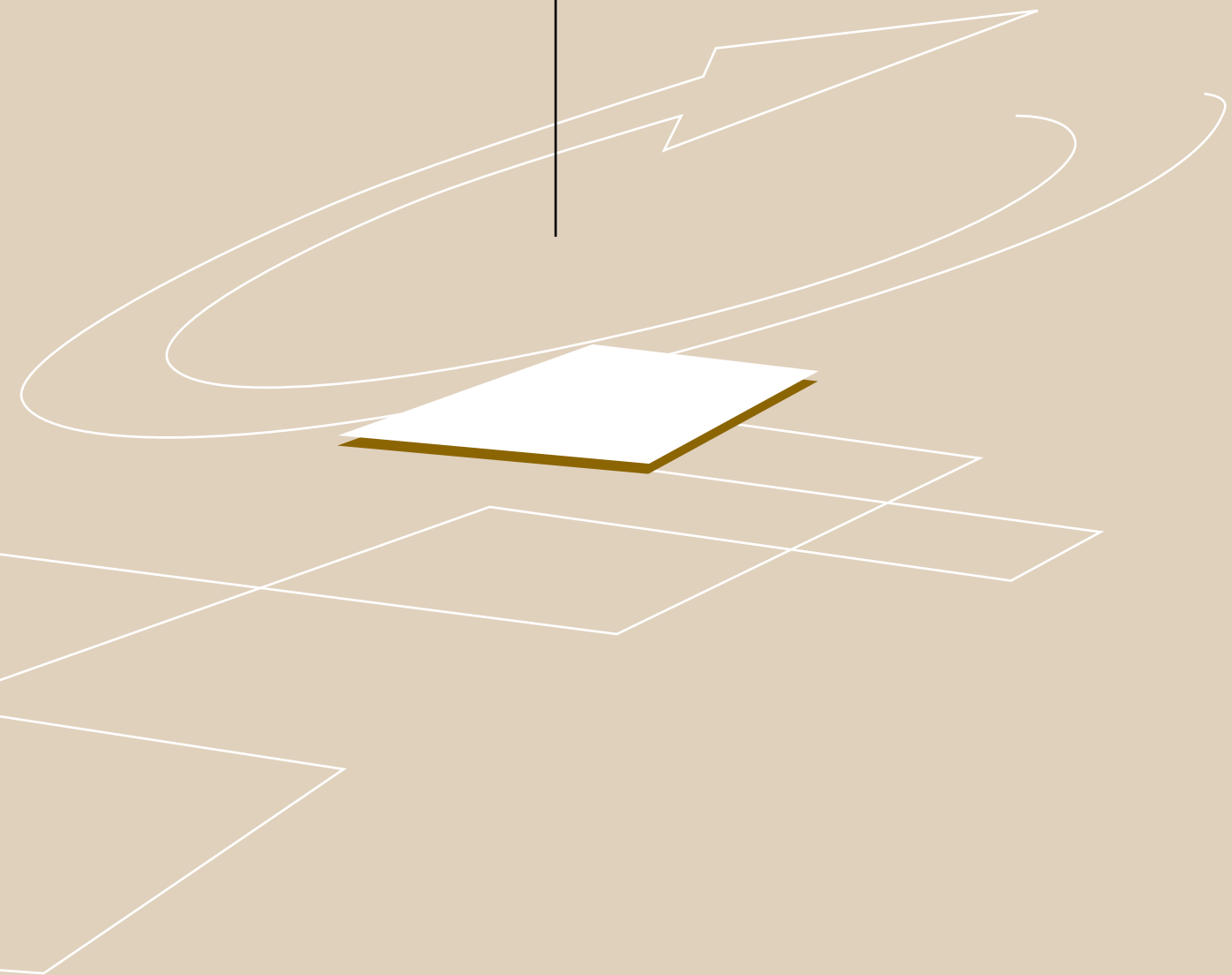
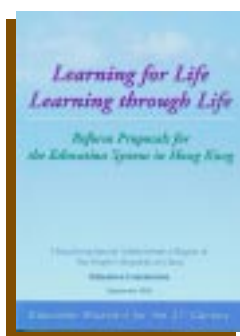


Chapter 1

A Holistic Review of the School Curriculum





“Learning for Life, Learning through Life”
Reform Proposals for the Education System
in Hong Kong
Education Commission
September 2000



“Learning to Learn – The Way Forward in
Curriculum Development”
Consultation Document
November 2000

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report entitled "Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development" is to set the general directions for curriculum development in Hong Kong for 2001-2011, and make recommendations for actions for 2001-02 to 2005-06. The directions and recommendations are in harmony with the vision and overall aims of education for the 21st Century laid down in the Education Commission's (EC's) Report on Learning for Life, Learning through Life - Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong published in September 2000. The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) has considered public responses to the set of consultation documents Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development (November, 2000), the policy contexts of Hong Kong, local school experiences and research, and also developments in different countries. The action plans for 2006-07 to 2010-11 will be prepared in due course, based on a review report on developments between 2001-02 and 2005-06. The ultimate goal is to raise the quality of education and levels of student achievement in Hong Kong.

Aims of Education for the 21st Century

“To enable every person to attain all-round development according to his/her own attributes in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of his/her society, and contribute to the future and well-being of the nation and the world at large.”

“Our priority should be to enable our students to enjoy learning, enhance their effectiveness in communication and develop their creativity and sense of commitment.”

(Reform Proposals for the Education
System in Hong Kong 2000)

Structure of the Report

- This publication is the main report produced after the Holistic Review of the Hong Kong School Curriculum (HORSC) and its public consultation, and is accompanied by a folder of exemplars of authentic and practical experiences in Hong Kong schools. Its structure is as follows:
 - ⇒ Chapter One provides information on HORSC conducted by the CDC during 1999-2001, feedback from the public on the consultations and responses by the CDC, and the tasks ahead for 2001-02 to 2005-06.
 - ⇒ Chapter Two depicts the guiding principles, the strategies for action planning and critical success factors.

Key Reform Proposals

- 1 Shifting from transmission of knowledge to learning how to learn
- 2 Shifting from over-emphasizing academic studies to focusing on whole-person development
- 3 Shifting from compartmentalized subjects to integrated learning
- 4 Shifting from reliance on textbooks to use of diversified learning and teaching materials
- 5 Shifting from classroom teaching to learning beyond the classroom, with support from the community
- 6 Shifting from traditional time-tabling to an integrated and flexible arrangement of learning time
- 7 Abolishing premature streaming and providing more opportunities for students to explore their aptitudes and potentials

(Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong 2000)



“A Holistic Review of the Hong Kong School Curriculum”
Proposed Reforms
Curriculum Development Council
October 1999



“Learning to Learn – The Way Forward to Curriculum Development”
Consultation Documents

- ⇒ Chapter Three defines the scope of the school curriculum, that is, what is worth learning for our students.
- ⇒ Chapter Four provides suggestions on actions to promote effective learning, teaching and assessment for all people making a contribution to curriculum development.
- ⇒ Chapter Five focuses on the measures and resources to support schools and teachers.
- ⇒ Chapter Six concludes the whole report.

- The folder of exemplars published alongside this report illustrates the points in action in this report, wherever appropriate, for the reference of readers. The relevant exemplar in the folder is indicated by



- This report does not present the detailed framework of learning targets or contents of each Key Learning Area (KLA), nor is it a manual of prescriptive actions. The new curriculum guide for each KLA will be published in 2002, and subject guides for revised or new subjects will be revised in subsequent years. These guides will provide further details on learning, teaching and assessment.

The Review

The HORSC was conducted by the CDC during 1999 and June 2001 in parallel with the EC's review of the education system conducted from 1998 to 2000. At the present time, measures to support schools in agreed directions are underway.

The review has involved a wide range of participants, including students, parents, teachers, principals, librarians, publishers, local and overseas academics and teacher educators, professionals, employers as well as youth groups and non-government organisations.

Throughout the review, comments and views were collected through both formal channels of participation, for example in formal committees, working groups, seminars, open forums, etc. and informal networks of critical friends, consultants and the mass media. Reference has also been made to local research and development in other countries.

Views of the Public and Responses of the CDC

Comments were received by post/fax or through email, and views were also reflected through various media, and in the consultation forums held for different stakeholders during the public consultation period.

Detailed information on the feedback is found at the web site of http://cd.ed.gov.hk/cdc/Feedback_from_the_public.htm (Consultation on Learning to Learn: Public Views and Comments). The following is a summary of the responses:

- The public appreciates the problems associated with recent curriculum development as pointed out in the consultation documents:
 - ⇒ It was often a top-down approach but with insufficient support for school change.
 - ⇒ There was a lack of communication to ensure that the message or intention was clearly understood.
 - ⇒ There was also a tendency to suggest that the 'new' is always better without due regard to existing strengths, e.g. the positive impact of Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) on schools.
- The public also shares the view that the existing school curriculum is fragmented, with overlapping subjects, and that some subject contents are over-prescribed and outdated.
- The public agrees with
 - ⇒ the guiding principles set out for this round of curriculum development
 - ⇒ the overall aims of the new school curriculum
 - ⇒ the recommendations on the directions to be taken in curriculum development
 - ⇒ the gradual approach (10-year plan) and the emphasis on partnership/collaboration with different parties, with the whole of society contributing, instead of a top-down approach to development
 - ⇒ the use of evidence through Collaborative Research and Development ("Seed") Projects to generate useful knowledge and experiences
 - ⇒ the curriculum framework and the learning goals:
 - ◇ students to develop independent learning capabilities through developing generic skills, foundation knowledge in eight Key Learning Areas, and personal values and attitudes
 - ◇ learner-centred and whole-person development to stretch the students' potential

The Overall Aims of the School Curriculum

The school curriculum should provide all students with essential life-long learning experiences for whole-person development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physical development, social skills and aesthetics, according to individual potential, so that all students can become active, responsible and contributing members of society, the nation and the world.

The school curriculum should help students to learn how to learn through cultivating positive values, attitudes, and a commitment to life-long learning, and through developing generic skills to acquire and construct knowledge. These qualities are essential for whole-person development to cope with challenges of the 21st century.

A quality curriculum for the 21st century should therefore set the directions for teaching and learning through a coherent and flexible framework which can be adapted to changes and the different needs of students and schools.

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

- ◇ four key tasks for promoting learning capabilities: moral and civic education, reading to learn, project learning and information technology for interactive learning
- The CDC recognises the major concerns of the public and will address the following issues in different chapters of this report:
 - ⇒ the curriculum reform is too broad and needs refocusing (Chapter 3)
 - ⇒ the fear and misunderstanding that school-based curriculum development implies shifting responsibilities from the Education Department (ED) to schools, thus leaving everything in the hands of the teachers (Chapters 4 and 5)
 - ⇒ whether the Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) has faded out or not (Chapter 2)
 - ⇒ more explicit examples to illustrate the principles of learning and teaching, and assessment (Chapters 3 and 4)
 - ⇒ teachers are overburdened by different kinds of educational reforms, and there is a perceived lack of support (Chapter 5)
 - ⇒ the suspicion/misperception that Chinese History is abolished (Chapter 3)
 - ⇒ the need for examinations and assessment to be in line with curriculum changes (Chapter 3)
 - ⇒ how the senior secondary curriculum, which involves higher stakes, is going to change (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5)
 - ⇒ more specific details are required on
 - ◇ the schedule and targets in each phase (Chapter 2)
 - ◇ the action of different parties (Chapters 3, 4 and 5)
 - ◇ the eight Key Learning Areas (Chapter 3 and subsequent KLA curriculum guides scheduled for 2002)
 - ◇ assessment (Chapter 4)
 - ◇ evaluation (Chapter 6)
 - ◇ the ED's commitment and support to schools and teachers in terms of know-how and resources (Chapter 5 and the folder of exemplars)

- In preparing our students to meet the challenges of
 - ⇒ a knowledge-based society
 - ⇒ globalisation
 - ⇒ the impact of information technology
 - ⇒ the transience of things
 - ⇒ the rising need for moral considerations
 - ⇒ increasing public participation in government affairs
 - ⇒ the interdependent but competitive world

the CDC has set out the overall aims of the school curriculum and specified the goals that our students should be able to achieve:

1. recognise their roles and responsibilities as members in the family, the society, and the nation; and show concern for their well-being;
2. understand their national identity and be committed to contributing to the nation and society;
3. develop creative thinking and master independent learning skills (e.g. critical thinking, information technology, self-management);
4. engage in discussion actively and confidently in English and Chinese (including Putonghua);
5. develop a habit of reading independently;
6. possess a breadth and foundation of knowledge in the eight Key Learning Areas; and
7. lead a healthy lifestyle and develop an interest in and appreciation of aesthetic and physical activities.

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

Tasks Ahead - All to Act (2001-02 to 2005-06)

We invite all parties to act together in 2001-02 to 2005-06 in the following priority tasks useful for improving the current situation of learning and teaching, raising levels of student achievement, and whole-person development.

- **Create more space** in curriculum planning and implementation, as well as in school management, for students (to think and learn) and for teachers (to teach effectively, reflect and focus on professional work), through various means, including:

- ⇒ Trimming and restructuring the curriculum
- ⇒ Re-engineering work process in schools, reducing unnecessary administrative workload of teaching staff
- ⇒ Reducing excessive tests, examinations and dictations
- ⇒ Planning the time-table flexibly
- ⇒ Making good use of various grants
- ⇒ Sharing good practices and learning and teaching materials with peers
- **Motivate** every student to learn in various environments (school, home, community) using a range of diverse and appropriate strategies. Minimise or remove practices that de-motivate students.
- Use the following **four key tasks** as tools to promote effective learning and teaching:
 - ⇒ Moral and civic education to help students establish their values and attitudes
 - ⇒ Reading to learn broadly with appropriate strategies to learn more effectively
 - ⇒ Project learning to develop generic skills, acquire and build knowledge
 - ⇒ Using information technology for interactive learning
- Use effective learning and teaching strategies to help all students to acquire **basic competencies in Chinese, English and Numeracy**, appropriate to their level of study as an enabling tool of learning.
- Among the nine generic skills, accord priority to **critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills** and use effective learning and teaching strategies in Key Learning Areas to strengthen these generic skills.

Policy Contexts

The recommendation to promote students' independent learning capabilities for whole-person development is set in the following policy contexts as a way of providing opportunities for further development:

- An urgent appeal to change the university admission system in line with broadening the S4-5 and S6-7 curricula – producing a positive washback effect on the reform of the senior secondary curriculum.

- 60% of secondary school graduates will receive post-secondary education by 2010 – curriculum reform is going to strengthen students' capabilities for further study.
- An increasing number of associate degrees will be offered in tertiary institutions in Hong Kong – creating more life-long learning opportunities for today's students.
- The systems of senior secondary education, continuing education, and higher education are under review by the Education Commission, to be completed by mid-2002 – smoothening the continuity between school and post-secondary education.
- The need to cater for student diversity in terms of abilities, potential and interests.
- The government will continue to review resources it puts into school education – providing more effective support to teachers and schools.
- A co-ordinated approach to reforms and participation by all sectors.