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Chapter 2 Learning and Instructional Matters

2.1 School-based curriculum planning

2.1.1 Introduction

Students are entitled to the learning experiences provided in the central curriculum. Therefore, schools and teachers are encouraged to adapt the central curriculum in developing their school-based curriculum to enhance student learning for achieving the learning targets and aims of education. Adaptation measures may include readjusting the learning targets, varying the organisation of contents, offering optional studies, and adopting diverse learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Hence, when developing a school-based curriculum, apart from adopting the guidelines from the Curriculum Development Council (CDC), schools should also take into account teachers' professional views when making school-based adaptations, and strike a balance between such considerations.

While designing the school-based curriculum, schools should develop a practical whole-school curriculum plan which is based on the reflections on their strengths, the mission of their school as well as the short-term and medium-term targets of the current curriculum reform. This systematic plan can ensure that every member of the school works towards achieving the priority learning goals set by the school through planning targets of different phases and strategic steps of the school curriculum development.

The [“Basic Education Curriculum Guide - Building on Strengths \(Primary 1-Secondary 3\)”](#) (2002) and the [“Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide – The Future is Now: From Vision to Realisation \(Secondary 4 – 6\)”](#) (2009) developed by the CDC provide schools with very comprehensive guidelines and suggestions on curriculum planning, learning, teaching and assessment. Please visit the [“Curriculum Development Institute”](#) webpage for details.

Schools have to ensure that the school-based curriculum is in line with the Overall Aims of Education set out by the Education Commission and the Overall Aims of the School Curriculum set out by the CDC:

Overall Aims of Education set out by the Education Commission

- To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/ her own attributes 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 society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large.

Overall Aims of the School Curriculum set out by the CDC

- 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 potentials, 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; develop generic skills to acquire and construct knowledge, which are essential for whole-person development to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.
- A quality curriculum for the 21st century should therefore set the directions for teaching/ learning through a coherent and flexible framework which can be adaptable to changes and the different needs of students and schools.

2.1.2 Goals

Schools also have to ensure that the school curriculum is in line with the goals and learning aims at each stage of schooling. In view of the contexts of Hong Kong and the development strategies proposed below, we hope students will be able to:

1. recognise their roles and responsibilities as members of the family, 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;
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.

For details, please browse the [“Curriculum Development Institute” webpage](#).

2.1.3 Guiding principles

In planning the school-based curriculum, schools are advised to observe the following guiding principles:

1. Students should learn how to learn, which involves developing their independent learning capabilities leading to whole-person development and life-long learning.
2. A learner-focused approach should be used to make decisions in the best interests of students.

3. All students have the ability to learn, though they might have their own different ways of learning. Therefore, they should be entitled to opportunities for essential learning experiences for whole-person development, as well as opportunities for developing diverse potentials.
4. Both the basic education and senior secondary curricula should be broad and balanced, comprising five essential learning experiences and eight key learning areas, in order to lay a good foundation for students' future life, employment, further studies and life-long learning.
5. In addition, the senior secondary curriculum should be diversified, providing students with a variety of options for some specialization to cater for their different interests, aptitudes and abilities.
6. Curriculum development should be a continuous improvement process to help students learn better. The school-based curriculum should be adjusted with time and with reference to the contexts of specific schools.

2.1.4 Learning experiences

Learning experiences are the contexts of learning processes and learning contents, and the social environment in which students learn how to learn. Students should be entitled to five essential learning experiences that correspond to the aims of "moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic" development in education:

1. moral and civic education to develop personal character and interpersonal skills, the creativity to innovate, the spirit to live up to expectations and enjoy learning;
2. intellectual development to lay a firm foundation of knowledge;
3. community service to develop commitment and responsibility;
4. physical and aesthetic development to lead to active and healthy living styles and the appreciation of aesthetic qualities; and
5. career-related experiences to link studies with career aspirations and job opportunities.

The five essential learning experiences listed above are to be developed throughout all stages of schooling, except for career-related experiences, which are more difficult to be implemented at junior primary level.

2.1.5 Life-wide learning

Life-wide learning generally refers to the learning experiences that take place beyond the classroom. It requires teachers to make good use of resources and facilities available at their schools and in the communities, in order to create suitable learning environments (combinations of time, place and people) for particular educational purposes. Such experiential learning in authentic environments enables students to achieve certain learning goals that are difficult to attain through classroom learning.

Schools should exercise flexible use of learning time to provide students with essential learning experiences beyond the classroom, e.g. some extra-curricular/co-curricular activities could be included in a more flexible timetable.

Students are entitled to the five essential learning experiences. Under the overarching concept of life-wide learning, learning inside and outside classroom should complement each other to achieve the aim of whole-person development and life-long learning. Schools have to ensure that the school curriculum provides students with sufficient opportunities for life-wide learning.

In a school curriculum framework, Life-wide Learning plays the following important roles:

1. to extend classroom learning experience in the eight Key Learning Areas, e.g. field studies and science museum trips;
2. to enrich students' learning experience beyond the Key Learning Areas, e.g. community service and extra-curricular activities; and
3. to enable students to develop essential skills and attitudes for both classroom learning and their daily lives, e.g. leadership training, thinking skills development, adventure training and emotional management.

For life-wide learning, it is not quantity but quality that matters, i.e. teachers need to ensure that the experience is aligned with the aims being pursued, and that the students reflect on what has occurred and learn from it. It is also necessary for schools to develop a system to facilitate it holistically. For more details, please browse the [“Life-wide Learning” webpage](#).

2.2 What is to be learnt in the school curriculum

2.2.1 Components of the school curriculum

The Curriculum Development Council develops a Curriculum Framework as the basic structure for learning and teaching throughout all stages of schooling. The Curriculum Framework allows for different interpretations of contents and flexible use of different learning strategies and styles to suit individual needs.

The curriculum framework has three interconnected components, namely:

1. **Key learning areas (knowledge/ concepts)**
2. **Generic skills**
3. **Values and attitudes**

2.2.2 Key learning areas

The organisation of the school curriculum is structured around fundamental and connected concepts of major knowledge domains. These provide the context for the development and application of generic skills, values and attitudes. The existing subjects are grouped under eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs), namely:

1. **Chinese Language Education**
2. **English Language Education**
3. **Mathematics Education**
4. **Personal, Social and Humanities Education**
5. **Science Education**
6. **Technology Education**
7. **Arts Education**
8. **Physical Education**

Details about subjects under the eight KLAs are accessible at the [“Curriculum Development Institute” webpage](#).

2.2.3 Generic skills

Generic skills are fundamental to help students learn how to learn. They are to be developed through learning and teaching in the context of different subjects or KLAs, and are transferable to different learning situations. Nine types of generic skills are identified as essential:

1. **Collaboration skills:** For example, listening, appreciation, group work, helping one another and negotiation help students to engage effectively in tasks and teamwork, and to benefit from collaborative relationships.

2. **Communication skills:** For example, making speeches, responding to questions, listening and writing help students to interact with people and express their ideas effectively.
3. **Creativity:** For example, thinking from different perspectives, suggesting alternatives for doing things and accepting different answers help students to develop the ability to produce original ideas and solve problems appropriate to contexts.
4. **Critical thinking skills:** For example, independent thinking, identifying right and wrong and self reflection help students to draw out meaning from given data or statements, generate and evaluate arguments, and make their own judgements.
5. **Information technology skills:** For example, finding information on the Internet, word processing, using spreadsheets and communicating with electronic mail help students to seek, absorb, analyze, manage and present information critically and intelligently in an information age and a digitized world.
6. **Numeracy skills:** For example, budgeting, manual calculation, using the calculator and analysing statistical data 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:** For example, handling problems, resolving conflicts, facing crises and making decisions help students to use thinking skills to resolve a difficulty and determine the best course of action.
8. **Self-management skills:** For example, preserving emotional stability, handling stress, managing one's time and finances and leading a healthy life help students to build up self-esteem and accomplish goals.
9. **Study skills:** For example, collecting and processing information, using different learning tools and applying what is learnt in daily life help students to develop good learning habits, and the abilities and attitudes to enjoy learning.

2.2.4 Values and attitudes

1. Values are qualities that students should develop as principles for conduct and decision, e.g. rights and responsibilities, commitment, honesty and national identity, while attitudes are the personal dispositions needed to perform a task well, e.g. open-mindedness and co-operativeness. Values and attitudes affect the development of each other.
2. Values can be learned as key concepts, for instance, filial piety and honesty in school subjects such as Chinese Language and General Studies, sustainability in Science/ Technology, hospitality in Travel and Tourism, or they can be applied to specific themes for relevant understanding and decision-making, e.g. respect for law.

3. Suitable attitudes are to be cultivated whenever the learning activities help, e.g. perseverance in Physical Education, integrity in project learning. Meanwhile, teachers should also employ those attitudes as pedagogical principles to guide student learning, e.g. giving students freedom to choose a topic of interest, being open-minded and respecting evidence in the development of critical thinking.
4. Values education: The aims of education as stated in the Education Commission Report have placed priority on moral and civic education and the promotion of Chinese culture, in order to build up a national identity and commitment. These are also the special emphasis for the short-term phase of curriculum development. In addition, over the last twenty years, many value-oriented studies have emerged in the school curriculum, such as moral and civic education, sex and family education, health education, environmental education, computer ethics, media education and other miscellaneous themes, e.g. legal education. Schools are advised to develop further their school-based modes of values education.

2.3 Enhancing students' learning

2.3.1 Principles of facilitating learning and teaching

The following principles are based on research evidence, literature from various sources as well as the practical experience of schools:

- opportunities for learning and the learning environment
- improving the curriculum
- learning and teaching strategies
- assessment for learning
- home-school co-operation and parental support

1. Opportunities for learning and the learning environment

Opportunities to learn are to be found in a variety of environments: the school, the classroom, the community, the home, the physical environment, the Internet and the workplace. Efforts should be made to expose students to learning opportunities geared towards achieving the aims of the school curriculum. The general principles are:

- a. physical qualities such as adequate space, ventilation, lighting and furnishing should be catered for;
- b. the environment should be safe and caring, with positive feedback and encouragement and without threats, humiliation and embarrassment;
- c. the environment should provide a variety of learning resources and stimulate learning;
- d. the environment should provide room for students to progress through both collaborative and independent learning;
- e. the learning environment may be outside the school to expose students to relevant, authentic and meaningful experiences; and
- f. the learning environment should value diversity in students' dispositions as well as learning outcomes.

2. Improving the curriculum

- a. The answer to "what is worth learning" is an important aspect of deciding whether students will learn how to learn. The contents of learning include knowledge/concepts, skills, values and attitudes. They will change with time as the needs of students and society change. Therefore the curriculum, as learning experiences, should be continuously improved in order to keep abreast of changes.
- b. Each school should have a curriculum and learning plan that are carefully set. The policy is to be reviewed and adjusted in response to evidence of students' changing

needs. The following principles can be used for schools to set their curriculum and learning plans:

- The goals of the curriculum should be broad enough to achieve whole-person development and to enable every student with diverse needs to learn to his/ her full potential.
- The plan should be holistic and coherent to help students build up conceptual structures, connect ideas, see things from different perspectives, and construct their own knowledge, experiences and judgements.
- The school should consider the developmental characteristics of children and arrange for suitable progression and continuity.
- There should be flexibility in the use of time, space, the environment and resources, in order to accommodate the diverse learning/ teaching activities needed for different purposes of learning, and the learning needs, styles and abilities of students.
- The school should recognize the impact of interface in schooling on learning, especially at kindergarten/ primary 1, and the need to help students to adapt to the transition. Schools should refer to the [“Basic Education Curriculum Guide - Building on Strengths \(Primary 1 - Secondary 3\)”](#) and the [“Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide – The Future is Now: From Vision to Realisation \(Secondary 4–6\)”](#) for suggestions on how the interface at KG/P1, P6/S1 and S3/S4 can be addressed.

3. Learning and teaching strategies supporting students of different abilities

Learning effectiveness does not depend solely on teaching methods, especially when independent learning is much emphasized. However, teaching activities are equally important, as learning and teaching are interactive processes. They involve complex and dynamic relationships between the individual learner, the teacher, and the learning context. The principles that are generally found to promote effective student learning are:

- a. Motivate students through a variety of ways, such as letting them know the goals/ expectations of learning, building on their successful experiences, meeting their interests, considering their emotional reactions, and caring about their self-esteem. These principles apply especially to students with weaker performance.
- b. Draw on or help students to develop a wide range of generic skills, e.g. communication skills, critical thinking skills and creativity, through the learning activities they engage in across the curriculum. Help students to construct knowledge and take risks.
- c. Use diversified learning/ teaching approaches and strategies which allow every student the opportunity to learn in ways suited to him/ her. Different types of learning/ teaching strategies and activities have different purposes and strengths in specific contexts. It is dangerous to suggest that any one activity, e.g. student-centred group teaching, is in general better than another, e.g.

teacher-centred whole class teaching. Examples of learning/ teaching approaches and strategies are available from the [“Curriculum Development Institute” webpage](#).

- d. Vary the roles of teachers, parents and students according to the needs of learning/ teaching strategies. Teachers' roles will range from a transmitter of established truths and knowledge to multiple roles such as a resource person, a facilitator, a consultant, a counsellor and an assessor.
- e. Use a diversity of learning/ teaching resources, e.g. electronic, print and human, rather than focusing only on textbooks. Capitalize on opportunities (e.g. current affairs, school/ classroom contextual situations) to facilitate spontaneity and change in response to different demands and situations. This widens the exposure of students and helps them to learn in a changing environment.
- f. Widen the space of learning through using authentic life-wide learning opportunities outside the classroom, such as on the school premises, in the home and in the community, and organise co-curricular activities to complement classroom learning. Partner with community sectors in providing the five essential learning experiences.
- g. Provide students with quality homework that helps students to develop independence of learning at home, as an extension of learning at school. Homework should cover a variety of meaningful activities such as reading, observation, lesson preparation and revision, rather than mechanical and repetitive exercises.
- h. Teachers should conceptualize and understand the needs of the students and the rationale, underlying principles and relevant contexts of good practices, rather than drawing directly on the successful experience of others.

4. Assessment for learning

Assessment practice is an integral part of the learning/ teaching cycle rather than a separate exercise to be done at the end of teaching. Assessment can facilitate learning to learn, depending on the function of assessment, what it assesses and how it is designed. Assessment for learning is underpinned by the confidence that every student can improve. In the venture of widening the opportunities for learning, the general principles of assessment for learning are:

- a. Formative assessment should be used to provide effective feedback (e.g. corrective, diagnostic) that motivates and improves learning. For instance, feedback may lead to students recognising their next steps and how to move forward. The feedback may be formal or informal. Assessment practices that inhibit or narrow learning opportunities should be reduced to a minimum. These practices include counting the quantity rather than the quality of tests; spending time unproductively on detailed recording for administrative purposes; awarding marks/ grades which lower the self-esteem of some students; and demoralizing some students through negative comments.

- b. Students should be assessed through a diversity of assessment modes which focus on the purpose and process of learning, not just on academic outcomes. For instance, observation may be used to assess participation in discussion, written assessment for the expression of personal views, and project work for interdisciplinary thinking. In basic education, it is not recommended to assess students in the format of public examinations.
- c. Share with students the goals of learning and let them know and recognise the standards they are aiming for.
- d. Teachers should adjust and improve teaching in the light of the results of assessment.
- e. Student self-assessment should be encouraged, to enable them to learn from understanding their own learning. This is particularly crucial to encouraging life-long learning.
- f. Students who fail to meet the minimum standard at a certain level should be given appropriate support, e.g. more in-depth diagnosis of learning needs, together with appropriate and differentiated instructional strategies.
- g. Opportunities should be provided for both teachers and students to review and reflect on assessment data together.
- h. Changes in assessment have to be viewed in conjunction with teachers' perceptions, school management factors, parental expectations and societal expectations.

5. Home-school communication

Home-school communication is essential to enhancing the use of resources and strengthening the concerted efforts of both the school and the family in improving students' learning. Schools are advised to:

- a. Establish a partnership with parents in educating their children.
- b. Help parents understand that standardized teaching/ learning processes and materials alone cannot help children to achieve all-round development. Rather, diversified teaching/ learning styles, strategies, contexts and resources can maximise the different potential of different students.
- c. Help parents understand the purposes of assessment. The rank order of their children in class through aggregated scores does not necessarily reflect the actual abilities of their children. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of their children is more essential for genuine improvement and progress.
- d. Communicate with both parents and students, e.g. by means of a school newsletter, open-door parent-teacher conferences, a parent bulletin board and assignment notebooks.
- e. Use different strategies to engage all families in the learning of their children. Children do well in schools when parents have expectations of their studies, encourage the productive use of their time and provide learning experiences as a regular part of family life.

2.3.2 Quality homework

1. Effective homework has positive and beneficial effects in reinforcing and facilitating classroom learning, stimulating thinking, encouraging active independent learning, developing interests and fostering a closer relationship between learning in school and at home. Moreover, it facilitates a closer liaison between parents and the school.
2. Homework should not be set for its own sake, but should have expected learning outcomes. In view of the wide variation in students' learning needs, abilities and home environment, there are no hard-and-fast rules about the frequency, amount and type of homework that should be set at each class level. This is a matter in which teachers are expected to exercise professional judgment in accordance with the needs of their students. Homework that focuses on meaningless mechanical repetition and rote learning should be reduced to the minimum.
3. In devising a homework policy, schools should take into account the students' physical and emotional development and other important demands on their after-school time. It is important that each school should have a written homework policy and that the head of school should exercise proper control over the homework being set. The policy should be worked out in consultation with the teaching staff and parents. It should be reviewed constantly, so that a balance is maintained between the demands of various subjects and the learning needs of the students. For more details of guidelines on homework, please refer to [“Booklet 8 on ‘Meaningful Homework-Consolidating Learning, Deepening Understanding and Constructing Knowledge’ ”](#) of the [“Basic Education Curriculum Guide - Building on Strengths \(Primary 1 - Secondary 3\)”](#).

4. The following are some examples of variety in homework:

a. Reading outside class

Teachers may advise students on how to choose suitable reading materials according to the contents of teaching, which is very important in education. After students have finished reading, teachers may ask them to share with other classmates the content of the book or to give their views on how the content is related to the aim of the lesson or daily life experiences. Students are therefore trained to speak to the whole class, which in turn helps enhance their confidence and ability in verbal expression and raises their interest in reading.

b. Collecting information

Teachers may ask students to collect pictures, information or models relating to the contents of a lesson. Such training enhances students' ability to collect useful information and their interest in learning.

c. Project learning

Teachers can reinforce students' learning by engaging them in project learning set in line with the contents of teaching. Through such training, students learn how to co-operate with others and understand the importance of division of

labour. Project learning also helps students develop their proactive attitude, problem-solving ability and creativity.

d. Listening to tapes/ CDs, watching education documentaries or television programmes

Teachers may ask students to listen to tapes/ CDs on various topics such as stories, music and phonics. They may also introduce education documentaries and television programmes to students so as to widen their knowledge in different areas.

e. Snippets of information about activities

Students may be asked to make a record of the snippets of information about outdoor activities or visits organised by schools. The exchange of findings and views amongst students helps strengthen students' powers of observation and their expressive ability.

f. Feature talks and role-plays

Students may be asked to collect information and conduct feature talks or role-plays which are relevant to the contents of teaching, current issues or extensive reading. Students of higher grade levels may be engaged in topical debates as well. All these activities help students consolidate their organizational skills and expressive ability.

2.3.3 Flexible use of learning time

1. The learning time provided by the school includes all school days for lessons as well as activities such as open days, school picnics, sports days and other learning activities organised within and outside school after lessons and in the holidays. To help schools use school days effectively for learning and teaching, [EDBC007/2005 “School Holiday List and Student Learning Time”](#) suggests ways to increase the number of active school days and maximize the learning time for students.
2. Schools have to exercise flexibility in using lesson time by allocating time to subjects/ key learning areas based on a percentage of the curriculum time on a yearly basis. A brief summary of the suggested lesson time allocation for primary, secondary and senior secondary levels is at the Appendix. More details are also provided in the [“Basic Education Curriculum Guide - Building on Strengths \(Primary 1 - Secondary 3\)”](#) and the [“Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide – The Future is Now : From Vision to Realisation \(Secondary 4 - 6\)”](#).
3. In preparing the timetable, schools may adopt the following practices in accordance with teachers' readiness, students' abilities and interests, and the availability of the necessary facilities and resources:
 - a. vary the timetable for different terms of the school year according to practical needs;
 - b. vary the length of lessons or learning sessions;

- c. reserve sessions for reading and collaborative learning such as project work, cross-subject and cross-key learning area activities;
- d. reserve sessions to address the needs of different students, such as through remedial teaching, self-study and completion of assignments under supervision;
- e. allocate more time to take care of the personal growth of students, especially at junior primary level;
- f. allocate more time for students to use school facilities such as computers and the school library; and
- g. keep the school open to students after formal school hours for self-learning and for students who need to use school facilities such as the school library in completing assignments and other learning activities.
- h. adopt a flexible time-tabling arrangement to provide senior secondary students with the opportunities to gain access to different elective subjects. Schools also need to ensure effective use of their available teaching space. In planning the senior secondary curriculum, students' choices should always be accorded top priority in time-tabling arrangements.

2.3.4 Selection of textbooks and learning materials

1. To enhance learning effectiveness, it is imperative that textbooks and learning materials used by schools should meet the educational needs and abilities of the students, without imposing an undue financial burden on parents.
2. In selecting textbooks and learning materials, schools are advised to observe the following:
 - a. Schools are not allowed to accept any donations, or any form of benefits from textbook publishers or textbook retailers such as equipment on free loan, free teaching aids and supplementary teaching resources (e.g. overhead projector, television set, computer hardware, computer software), cash grants for purchase of equipment or teaching aids, free on-site services to schools, funding for school functions, speech day floral baskets, advertisements for school publications, scholarships, prizes, etc, so as not to increase the cost of publishers or that the choice of textbooks to be in any way influenced. In addition, teachers should not accept advantages or luxurious entertainments offered during the marketing activities of textbooks so as to avoid public criticism and hence adversely affecting the reputation of the school and the image of teachers;
 - b. Prior to the implementation of the “debundling” policy, schools should use effectively the teaching resources provided by the publishers and recycle them within schools as far as possible to alleviate publishers' costs and maintain stable textbook prices;
 - c. Schools should set up textbook committees to select textbooks for use by students. Subject/ KLA textbook committees should draw up a set of predetermined evaluation criteria before the textbook selection commences; a weighing factor

- should be assigned to each of the criteria according to their importance and the recommendations, and the final decision of the textbook committee should be properly recorded, with individual School Management Committee/ Incorporated Management Committee assuming a monitoring role;
- d. Schools should encourage their teachers to refer to the criteria for selecting textbooks in the “Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks”. The Guiding Principles can be downloaded from the [“Textbook Information” webpage](#);
 - e. When selecting books, subject/ KLA or kindergarten textbook committees should also compare the price of the textbooks or learning materials in addition to their quality. When equally suitable textbooks/ learning materials are available, careful consideration should be given to the price to maximise the value for money. The reason(s) of not selecting the cheaper textbook or learning material must be properly recorded. Schools should give due consideration to select those textbooks that are not priced;
 - f. Textbooks are not the only learning materials. Teachers should exercise their professional judgement in preparing and choosing learning and teaching materials to meet the needs of their students. Teachers may use the free learning and teaching resources and everyday authentic materials offered on the internet by the EDB as supplementary teaching materials to enhance teaching effectiveness and depend less on textbooks. Besides the textbooks from publishers, the implementation of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and the encouraged use of diversified teaching materials are supported by learning and teaching resources offered on the internet by the EDB;
 - g. For those New Senior Secondary subjects, such as Liberal Studies, where the EDB does not accept submission of books from textbook publishers for review nor recommend schools to use textbooks, e-learning resources produced by the CDI or jointly with other organizations will be provided by the EDB at the “Web-based Resource Platform for Liberal Studies” of the HKEdCity. Teachers are encouraged to make good use of resources and depend less on books so as to lessen the economic burden of parents. Schools are reminded that some textbook publishers may still publish reference books for these subjects and consideration should be given to whether students have to buy these books which are not reviewed;
 - h. School can make reference to the Recommended Textbook List issued by the EDB when selecting textbooks and learning materials. However, this is not a compulsory requirement;
 - i. Schools should, through communication with Parent-Teacher Associations, provide adequate information to parents to enable them to play the role of well-informed consumers. Schools should also collect parents’ views and suggestions on textbook lists and reflect their views to textbook publishers. Schools should also inform parents that EDB and publishers have arranged to upload the publication information of new textbooks as well as the contact telephone numbers of the textbook publishers concerned on the [“Curriculum Development Institute” homepage](#) from mid-July to end of September every year for the reference of students and parents. The information will be updated every

Friday during the said period. This will avoid the hassle of purchasing textbooks that are not yet published;

- j. The School Textbook Assistance Scheme of the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) provides textbook assistance to primary and secondary students from government, aided, caput and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme. It covers textbooks and miscellaneous school-related expenses for students who are financially in need. Since the 2006/07 school year, the SFAA has requested schools to submit their nominations of disadvantaged students before the start of the school year so that the grants could be disbursed to the financially needy students as soon as possible. The EDB encourages schools to pay particular attention to the economic circumstances of students' families and to submit their nominations of disadvantaged students to SFAA for early processing. For details concerning the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, please visit the "[Student Financial Assistance Agency](#)" website;
- k. With the implementation of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum in September 2009, it is advisable that schools, when drafting their New Senior Secondary textbook lists, should only list out for the students the textbooks required for the concerned level. In order to minimize their economic burden, it is not necessary for the parents to buy textbooks for more than one level; and
 1. Some book retailers provide interest-free instalments for parents to alleviate their burden of making one-off payment for the textbooks. Schools are encouraged to assist in providing such information to the parents for their reference.
 3. For more details on the selection of textbooks and learning materials, please refer to:
 - EDBCM087/2010 "Notes on Selection of Textbooks and Learning Materials for Use in Schools"
 - EDBCM100/2010 "Arrangements Related to Textbooks for the New School Year"
 4. Schools should observe the copyright issue while developing their school-based learning materials. Please refer to:
 - EDBCM075/2009 "New Licence Agreement on Copying Printed Copyright Materials"
 - EDBCM158/2009 "Licence Scheme for Photocopying of Hong Kong Newspapers and Magazines by the Hong Kong Copyright Licensing Association Limited"

2.3.5 Weight of school bags

1. Over-weight school bags may bring additional stress and fatigue to students. The Department of Health recommends that, as a precautionary measure, students should avoid carrying school bags which exceed 15% of their body weight for long periods of time. Schools are encouraged to implement measures which are practicable and effective in their own circumstances to reduce the weight of school bags. The following are some guidelines for schools to consider:

- a. give advice to students to foster the habit of packing school bags every day, and to remind them that magazines, toys and other unnecessary things should not be brought to school;
 - b. obtain co-operation from parents, e.g. to select school bags and items which are made of light-weight materials and help their children to pack school bags according to the time-table;
 - c. review the time-table and minimise the number of subjects for each day so that lessons requiring students to bring plenty of learning materials are evenly spread over the week;
 - d. take weight and size into account in selecting textbooks in addition to their educational value;
 - e. avoid using too many supplementary workbooks;
 - f. use loose-leaf files for homework assignments; and
 - g. provide storage facilities to avoid the need for students to carry some of the items to and from school every day.
2. For more detailed guidelines and references on reducing the weight of school bags, please refer to [EDBC024/2003 “Guidelines on Reducing the Weight of School Bags”](#) and [“Primary Education – Curriculum Resource Reference Materials”](#) webpage.

2.4 Development strategies to support schools and teachers

Professional support to teachers and schools is essential in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Since different needs require different strategies and no one strategy is all-powerful, multiple interactive development strategies are planned to support teachers and schools.

2.4.1 Curriculum support materials

EDB is developing a variety of curriculum support materials for schools' reference:

- a curriculum guide for each KLA and revised/ new subject guides;
- a bank of exemplary teaching/ learning/ assessment materials for the curriculum, to be generated by development and research projects and contributed by schools;
- textbooks to be made available by publishers; and
- other relevant publications such as research and development reports and newsletters.

For further information regarding the [“Resources and Support”](#) and [“Key Learning Areas”](#), please browse the Curriculum Development Institute webpage.

2.4.2 Teacher development programmes

1. A variety of professional development programmes are provided to in-service teachers and school heads based on the needs of curriculum change, the purpose of different modes, the demand from schools, and other opportunities available in Hong Kong. Teachers may choose to study those that are relevant to their needs. Two broad categories of professional development programmes are provided:
 - a. courses to enhance the overall professional knowledge of teachers, e.g. catering for individual differences, motivation, critical thinking skills, curriculum and assessment, gifted education, moral and civic education, Chinese culture, media education, curriculum management and leadership; and
 - b. KLA/ subject specific courses to meet the needs of the new curriculum framework, and sustain the curriculum and assessment reform.
2. Information about most programmes is accessible at the [“Curriculum Development Institute”](#) webpage and [“Training Calendar System”](#).
3. A range of collaborative research and development projects on key curriculum changes will be conducted in partnership with schools and consultants/ universities. Priority will be given to the following emphases:
 - a. curriculum planning, learning and teaching strategies in KLAs;
 - b. development of critical thinking and creativity through learning activities;

- c. assessment for learning (to improve learning and teaching);
- d. four key tasks (project learning, reading to learn, moral and civic education, and information technology for interactive learning); and
- e. school-based curriculum development

The above projects will serve the following purposes:

- to generate useful experiences for the reference of other schools, including evidence-based learning/ teaching/ assessment materials;
 - to enable schools and teachers to be reflective practitioners and curriculum leaders to enhance the capacity of reform; and
 - to serve as an impetus to school-based curriculum development.
4. The School-based Curriculum Development (Primary) Section and the School-based Curriculum Development (Secondary) Section of the School-based Support Services will provide on-site support to assist schools in strengthening learning in the existing curricula, in promoting curriculum leadership, and in developing a school-based curriculum along the lines of the new curriculum framework.
 5. Schools may also use the Capacity Enhancement Grant, the services of the Regional Education Offices and other sources of flexible funding such as the Quality Education Fund to meet different needs.
 6. Schools and teachers will be networked to facilitate the sharing of experiences and dissemination of good practices through the Regional Education Offices and other means.

2.5 The roles of change agents in schools

It is generally recognized that school heads, primary school curriculum leaders, senior teachers and panel heads, teachers and teacher-librarians are change agents for helping students' learning.

2.5.1 School heads

The suggested roles of school heads are to:

1. plan curriculum, instructional and assessment policies;
2. set targets and priorities for development;
3. build up a good learning environment;
4. nurture staff's curriculum and instructional leadership;
5. set targets and phases for organisational change;
6. value quality rather than quantity in teaching and learning;
7. create curriculum space and time for teachers;
8. manage resources and enhance the transparency in the deployment of resources;
9. co-ordinate departments and support the autonomy of departments;
10. commend progress and improvements made;
11. communicate effectively with staff;
12. remove barriers;
13. share knowledge and experiences; and
14. communicate with parents.

Please also refer to [EDBC004/2006 “Measures to Relieve Teachers’ Workload”](#).

2.5.2 Primary school curriculum leaders

The suggested roles of primary school curriculum leaders are to:

1. assist school heads to lead and coordinate whole school curriculum planning and facilitate implementation of the plans;
2. support school heads in planning and coordinating school assessment policy and assessment practices;
3. to lead teachers/ specialists staff in improving learning and teaching strategies and assessment practices through collaborative lesson preparation and professional development programmes;
4. to promote a professional exchange culture within the school and to establish links with other schools for sharing of experiences in learning, teaching and curriculum development; and
5. to take up a reasonable teaching load (which should be about 50% of the average teaching load of a teacher of the school) for trying out or piloting different learning, teaching and assessment strategies for further curriculum development.

2.5.3 Senior teachers and panel heads

The suggested roles of senior teachers and panel heads are to:

1. lead curriculum and instructional changes;
2. support the professional judgement of teachers;
3. keep abreast of the latest developments and changes;
4. liaise with other KLAs co-ordinators, across subject areas;
5. manage resources and flexible use of resources;
6. share issues, knowledge and experiences;
7. facilitate professional development; and
8. commend success and provide appropriate feedback.

2.5.4 Teachers

The suggested roles of teachers are to:

1. strengthen learning-to-learn skills in learning and teaching;
2. be resourceful;
3. keep abreast of the latest developments and changes;
4. foster a quality learning environment;
5. be ready to try out and work on strategies;
6. collaborate with community workers;
7. be reflective;
8. share issues, knowledge and experiences; and
9. formulate a personal professional development plan.

2.5.5 Teacher-librarians

The suggested roles of teacher-librarians are to:

1. plan, coordinate and manage all matters relating to library resources such as supporting the implementation of all sorts of reading schemes and organizing library programmes to support and enrich the school curriculum;
2. support and develop resource-based learning and teaching activities of the school curriculum in collaboration with teachers;
3. coordinate library periods (not subject teaching) and other related activities to:
 - a. develop students' interest in reading,
 - b. develop students' information skills and attitudes in using information derived from all formats and contexts appropriately and ethically, and
 - c. enhance students' self-learning ability and positive attitude in life-long learning (e.g. in project learning).

Appendix School days and suggested lesson time allocation for primary, secondary and senior secondary levels

1. Primary (P1-P6)

Total number of school days

For whole-day schools, the total number of school days in a school year should not be less than 190 days. For bisessional primary schools the total number of school days should not be less than 209 days. The minimum number of school days is calculated as follows:

- 365 days in a whole year –**
- 90 days for school holidays –**
- 3 additional discretionary holidays –**
- 3 staff development days during which students do not need to attend school –**
- 79 Saturdays and Sundays not included in the school holiday list = 190 days**

For more details, please browse the [“Guidelines on Drawing up the School Calendar” webpage](#).

Suggested lesson time allocation

Key Learning Areas	Subjects	Suggested Percentage of Lesson Time Allocation*
Chinese Language Education	Chinese Language, Putonghua	25% - 30%
English Language Education	English Language	17% - 21%
Mathematics Education	Mathematics	12% - 15%
Science Education Technology Education Personal, Social and Humanities Education	General Studies	12% - 15%
Arts Education	Visual Arts, Music	10% - 15%
Physical Education	Physical Education	5% - 8%

Lesson Time for Flexible Use

Schools can use the time (approximately 19%) for activities that meet their individual needs and contexts, e.g. activities/ learning programmes for remedial, enrichment and enhancement purposes, cross-curricular activities, fieldwork, promoting reading, etc.

More details about the calculation of school days and suggested lesson time allocation are given in [EDBC007/2005 “School Holiday List and Student Learning Time”](#) and [“Basic Education Curriculum Guide”](#) webpage.

2. Junior Secondary (S1-S3)

Total number of school days

The total number of school days in a school year should not be less than 190 days.

Suggested lesson time allocation

Key Learning Areas	Suggested Percentage Lesson Time Allocation
Chinese Language Education	17% - 21%
English Language Education	17% - 21%
Mathematics Education	12% - 15%
Science Education	10% - 15% (8% - 10%)* *The time allocation of 8% to 10% is intended for schools whose curriculum has a technology education orientation. This curriculum should connect students' learning experiences in science and technology education.
Technology Education	8% - 15% (25% - 35%)* *The time allocation of 25% to 35% is intended for schools chosen to have a curriculum with a strong orientation in technology education. These schools generally have a background such that technology subjects would be better vehicles for their students to develop generic skills. In these schools, the lesson time, in terms of percentages, allocated to other key learning areas will be lower than that in schools across the territory.
Personal, Social and Humanities Education	15% - 20% (10% - 15%)* *The time allocation of 10% to 15% is intended for schools whose curriculum has a technology education orientation, so that the essential contents for personal, social and humanities learning, including Chinese history and culture, can be accommodated.
Arts Education	8% - 10%
Physical Education	5% - 8%

Lesson Time for Flexible Use

Schools can use the time (approximately 8%) for activities that meet their individual needs and contexts. These activities and programmes can be for remedial, enrichment and enhancement purposes in the form of additional study within the key learning areas, or for school programs or activities such as activity weeks, visits to the mainland, outward bound experiences, leadership training camps, etc.

More details about the calculation of school days and suggested lesson time allocation are given in [EDBC007/2005 “School Holiday List and Student Learning Time”](#) and [“Basic Education Curriculum Guide - Building on Strengths \(Primary 1-Secondary 3\)”](#) webpage.

3. Senior Secondary Level (S4-S6)

Whole-school curriculum planning

In planning the whole-school curriculum and developing strategies for achieving the learning goals, schools are encouraged to make reference to the [“New Academic Structure Web Bulletin”](#), the [“Curriculum Development Institute”](#) and the [Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority websites](#) to obtain up-to-date information on:

- [Curriculum and Assessment Guides](#)
- curriculum resources and example; and
- examples and tools for planning the senior secondary curriculum

In planning the whole-school curriculum, consideration should be given to all related items including time allocation for the different components of the student programme; the elective subjects offered in various levels and classes; flexible grouping and block time-tabling arrangements; the deployment of teachers; and teachers’ professional development and knowledge management; as well as other resources. All these are intertwined.

Three components in the senior secondary curriculum

The senior curriculum is made up of three components, namely Core subjects, Elective subjects and Other Learning Experiences as depicted below. It provides a student programme for whole-person development which aims to develop the potential of each student.

Components of the Senior Secondary Student Programme		% of Time Allocation
Core Subjects	Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies as core subjects for ALL students	45-55%
Elective Subjects	2 or 3 subjects chosen from 20 elective subjects, a range of Applied Learning Courses and other languages	20-30%
Other Learning Experiences	Moral & Civic education, Community service, aesthetic development, physical development, career-related experiences	15-35%

Time allocation

Lesson time is the time when students are in close contact with teachers, normally in the classroom, but not necessarily so. Based on the calculation of 190 school days per year and an average of 6 hours a day in school, the student programme and the time allocation suggested for each subject are based on 2,700 hours of lesson time over three years of senior secondary education

Schools may exercise some flexibility over time allocation for different subjects and learning experiences to suit the specific needs of the students and the context of the school. They should, however, provide students with essential learning experiences, including intellectual development, moral and civic education, community service, physical development, aesthetic development and career-related experiences;

Schools should avoid spending too much time on unnecessary tests and examinations. Emphasis should be put on assessment for learning. Please see [“Booklet 4 of the Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide: The Future is Now: from Vision to Realisation”](#).

The suggested time allocation for different components of the learning experiences over three years is as follows:

Core Subjects	Chinese Language	338 – 405 hours (12.5 – 15%)
	English Language	338 – 405 hours (12.5 – 15%)
	Mathematics	270 – 405 hours (10 – 15%)
	Liberal Studies	270 hours (Min 10%)
2 to 3 Elective Subjects		540 – 810 hours (20 – 30%) 270 hours (Min 10% per subject)
Other Learning Experiences	Aesthetic Development	135 hours (5%)
	Physical Development	135 hours (5%)
	Moral and civic education, community service and career-related experiences	135 hours (5%)