Briefing Session on Optimising the Four Senior Secondary Core Subjects

Scenario on Curriculum Planning at School Level

Curriculum Development Institute
February 2021

School Background

- Banding: 2
- 10 days/cycle
  - 6 days: 8 lessons, 45 mins each
  - 4 days: 7 lessons, 45 mins each
- 11 elective subjects on offer
  - Chi as MOI: VA, THS, Hist, Chi Hist
  - Eng as MOI: Phy, Chem, Bio, Econ, BAFS, Geog, ICT
- MOI policy at JS level
  - Eng as MOI: Maths, Science

Current Timetabling Arrangements

Subject	No. of lessons/cycle			% of lesson time in 3 years
	S4	S5	S6	
Chinese Language	12	11	12	15.3
English Language	12	13	13	16.6
Mathematics	11	10	10	13.6
Liberal Studies	9	9	8	11.5
X1	8	9	9	11.4
X2	8	9	9	11.4
X3	8	9	9	11.4
OLE	8	6	6	8.8

Issues of Concern Identified

- Tendency to drop 1X in S5
  - All S4 students are required to take 3X.
  - About only 1/4 will continue with 3X in S5 & S6. There is a tendency for students to drop 1X (mostly subjects conducted in Eng) in S5 because the existing curriculum is rather packed and some students find studying the elective in English challenging.
  - The school is concerned about the effective use of free lessons.

- Timetabling for M2 lessons
  - M2 lessons fall outside the regular timetable and only few students take M2.

Issues of Concern Identified

- Students' English standards
  - In general satisfactory but only few can achieve outstanding results in the DSE Eng Lang exam
  - English is adopted as the MOI for a number of the elective subjects offered. For some students, their English standards may affect their performance in these subjects.

- Other Learning Experiences and Applied Learning
  - Time allocated to OLE is not adequate and no Applied Learning is offered.

Adapted Timetable
(through optimising the 4 core subjects)

Subject	No. of lessons/cycle			% of lesson time in 3 years/change (%)
	S4	S5	S6	
Chinese Language	10	9	10	12.7 (-2.6)
English Language	10	10	9	12.8 (-3.8)
Mathematics	9	9	9	12 (-1.6)
Renamed subject	5	5	6	6.9 (-4.6)
X1	8	9	9	11.4
X2	8	9	9	11.4
X3	8	9	9	11.4
OLE	8	9	9	11.4 (+2.6)
Common block	10	8	5	10 (+10)

Common block

Over the 3 years in SS, students have OLE and lessons or other activities during the common block. Examples include:

For all students	OLE (different themes on a rotational basis)	
	• MCE (e.g. healthy lifestyle, national identity) • Community service • Career-related experiences • Aesthetic development • Physical development	
Students' choice	Subjects • Applied Learning courses • Maths (Extended Part – M2)	Other activities (on a rotational basis) • LaC/RaC activities • English enrichment programmes (e.g. writing skills, debating skills, drama) • English intervention programmes (e.g. phonics) • STEM • Chinese writing programme • Mathematics enhancement programme

Creating the common block

Example:

- The school's 10-day cycle remains unchanged.
- A short-lesson mode in lessons will be adopted on a weekday afternoon (e.g. Friday afternoons)
  ◦ lessons shortened from 45mins to 35mins
- The freed lesson time can be allocated to the common block.
- The arrangement can also be applied in JS level.

Rationale for the Adaptations

- To increase students' motivation and confidence in continuing with 3X in S5 & S6
    - Optimising the 4 core subjects releases lesson time and manpower resources. Diversified strategies can be employed to cater for learner diversity:
        - flexible grouping
        - short, focused intervention / enrichment programmes
        - structured RaC / LaC programmes
        - co-curricular and cross-curricular activities

Rationale for the Adaptations

- To expand students' learning experiences
  - Optimising the 4 core subjects releases lesson time and students' workload.
  - More time can be allocated to OLE.
  - ApL courses can be delivered in Mode 1 or Mode 2 through:
    - setting up a district-based network
    - collaboration between principals of the same network (e.g. all allocate Friday afternoons to ApL)
  - Early commencement of ApL at S4
    - Students can be more focused on preparing for DSE in S6.
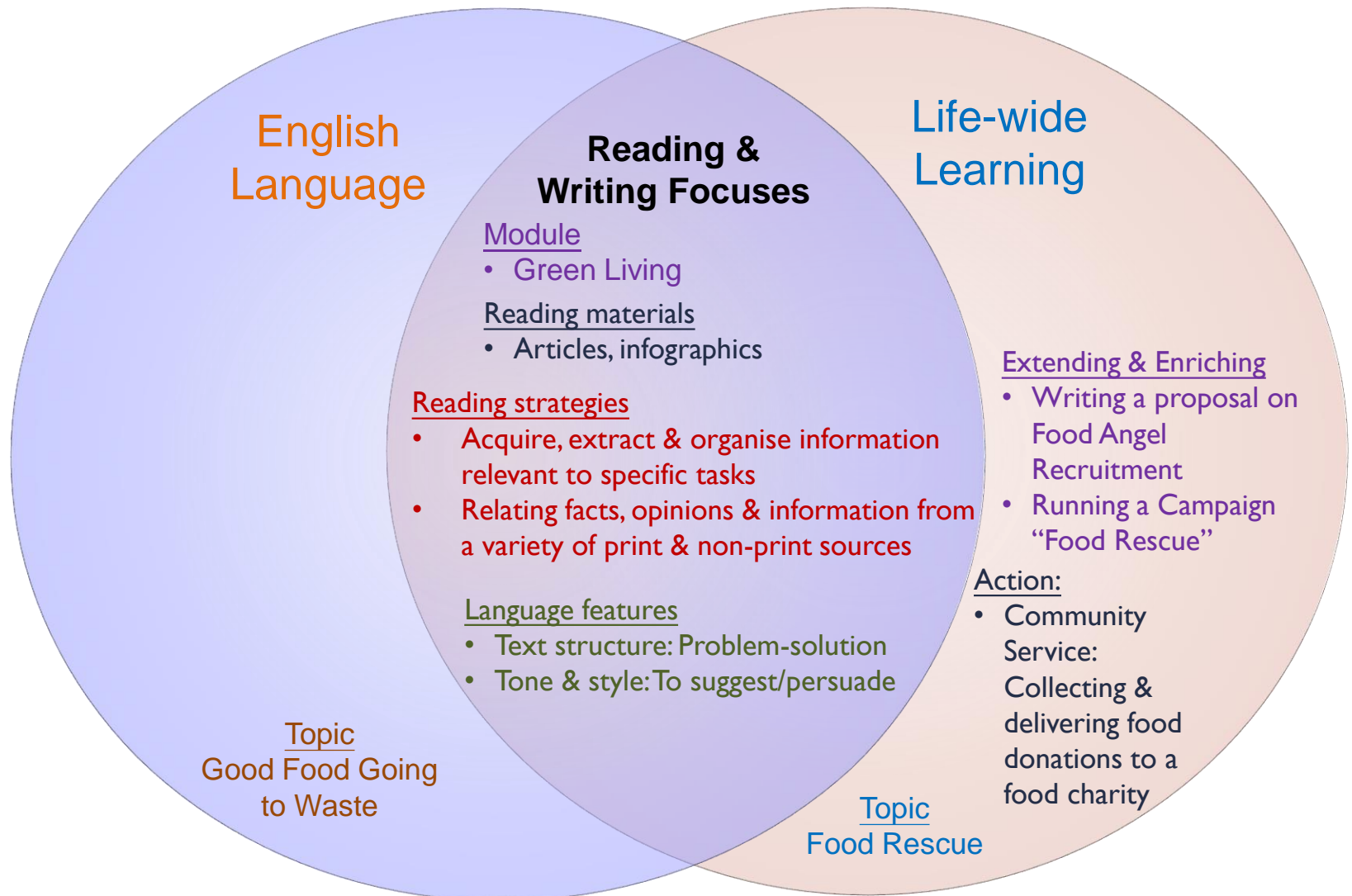
Rationale for the Adaptations

- To provide incentives for students to take M2
  - Optimising the 4 core subjects creates space for extended components.
  - M2 lessons can be incorporated in the regular timetable.

- To enhance learning of Maths
  - Lesson time freed from optimising Maths creates room for "split class" arrangements
    - There will be 2 parallel Maths lessons, in which the 4 classes will be split into 5 groups.
    - More Maths-inclined students will study all topics while opportunities will be provided for others to consolidate the Foundation Topics through smaller groups.

Rationale for the Adaptations

- To enhance English learning
  - More time and resources to address students' diverse needs in learning English
    - Releases manpower for further "split classes"
    - Releases lesson time for enrichment and intervention programmes with specific focuses (e.g. phonics, debating skills)
  - Creates room for more structured LaC/RaC activities with cross-departmental collaboration
    - help improve students' performance in the elective subjects with English adopted as the MOI
  - Released manpower provides room for partnership with educational organisations (e.g. EDB school-based support sections)

LaC/RaC

An Example of Designing a Cross-curricular Task

English Language

Life-wide Learning

Reading & Writing Focuses

Module
- Green Living

Reading materials
- Articles, infographics

Reading strategies
- Acquire, extract & organise information relevant to specific tasks
- Relating facts, opinions & information from a variety of print & non-print sources

Language features
- Text structure: Problem-solution
- Tone & style: To suggest/persuade

Extending & Enriching
- Writing a proposal on Food Angel Recruitment
- Running a Campaign "Food Rescue"

Action:
- Community Service: Collecting & delivering food donations to a food charity

Topic
Good Food Going to Waste

Topic
Food Rescue

Manpower planning

- The teachers concerned will be redeployed to take up other duties:
    - As most LS teachers have been teaching one more subject alongside LS (e.g. Hist, Geog, L&S, THS), they will be redeployed to focus on teaching these subjects after optimising.
    - At present, there are only two teachers teaching LS solely. They will take up mainly the teaching load of the renamed subject after optimising. One of them will be the panel head.
    - As there will be more structured LaC/RaC programmes, English teachers and the original LS teachers will be deployed to organise these programmes collaboratively.
    - Other teachers concerned can promote OLE.