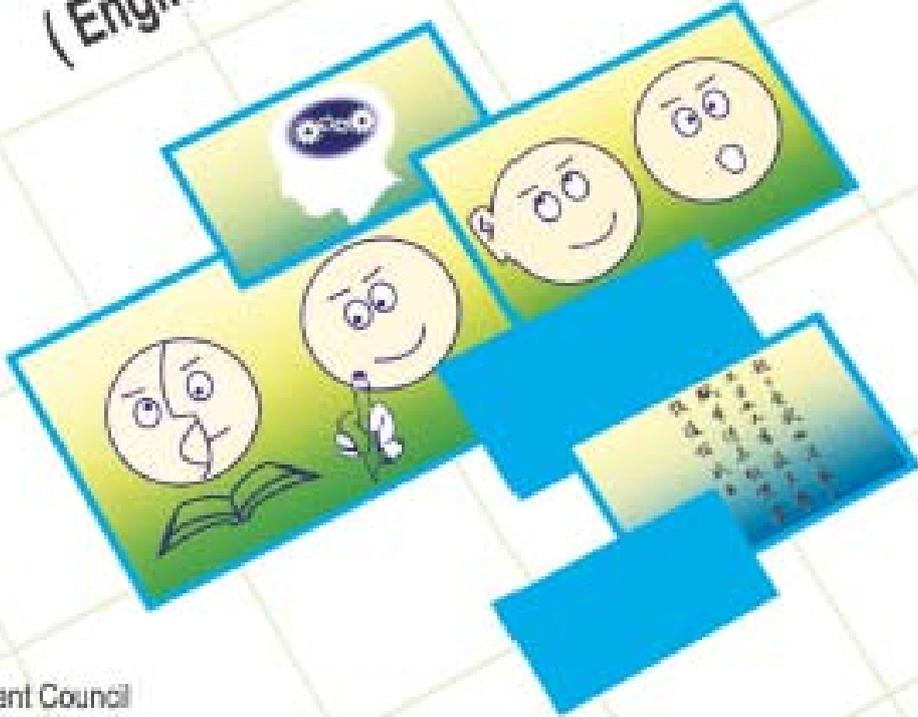


Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area

Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students

(English Translated Version)



Prepared by
The Curriculum Development Council

Recommended for use in schools by
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The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
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This document is originally written in Chinese. In case of discrepancy between the text of this translated version and that of the Chinese version, the Chinese text shall prevail.

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Preamble

The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is an advisory body giving recommendations to The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region on all matters relating to curriculum development for school systems at kindergarten, primary and secondary levels. Its membership includes heads of schools, practicing teachers, parents, employers, and academics from tertiary institutions, professionals from related fields or related bodies, representatives from the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and the Vocational Training Council, as well as officers from the Education Bureau (EDB).

In recent years, CDC has published a series of curriculum guides that propose a flexible, coherent and diversified curriculum framework for primary and secondary schools. These curriculum guides, including “*Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 3)*” (2002), “*Chinese Language Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Primary 6)*” (2004), “*Chinese Language Curriculum Guide (Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary)*” (2001), “*Chinese Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6)*” (2007), illustrate the rationale and principle of Chinese language curriculum and describe in different chapters the curriculum framework, curriculum planning, learning and teaching, assessment as well as the use of learning and teaching materials.

Under the common curriculum framework, this Supplementary Guide suggests the principles, strategies and recommendations on the practice of the Chinese Language curriculum, by taking into consideration the learning context of non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) students. It should be read together with the above-mentioned documents for more thorough understanding of the Chinese Language curriculum.

It is crucial to have the curriculum aligned with teaching and assessment, which is an important concept in the primary and secondary school curriculum. Learning and teaching strategy is an integral part of the curriculum that promotes learning and whole person development, while assessment is not only a tool to assess students’ performance, but also effective in improving learning results. Readers are advised to read all the above-mentioned documents to have a holistic picture for understanding the intertwining relationship among curriculum, teaching and assessment.

The Education Bureau recommends that schools to adopt this Supplementary Guide. The Curriculum Development Council will also review the document from time to time in light of classroom practices as well as the ever-changing demand of students and society. Appropriate support on learning and teaching materials will also be provided for schools. All comments and suggestions are welcomed and may be sent to –

Chief Curriculum Development Officer (Chinese Language Education)
Curriculum Development Institute
Education Bureau
12/F, Wu Chung House
213 Queen's Road East
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

Fax No. 2834 7810 / 2119 9065

email: ccdoc@edb.gov.hk

Chapter I - Introduction

As the southern gateway of China, Hong Kong has long been a prosperous city with a remarkable convergence of both Chinese and western cultures. Hong Kong citizens, regardless of their ethnicities, are all valuable human resources of the community. Ethnic minority citizens have always been making great contributions to Hong Kong. All sectors of the community should help them immerse into the Hong Kong society to promote harmony and prosperity.

As indicated in school enrolment statistics, ethnic minority students in Hong Kong include Pakistani, Filipino, Nepali, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese and Indonesian etc. Most of the ethnic minority students do not know Chinese when they first arrived in Hong Kong. Their usual languages spoken at home are mainly Urdu, English, Nepali, Tagalog, Hindi, etc. In this Guide, these ethnic minority students are generally referred to as “non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students”.

In Hong Kong, public sector schools provide free education for students (including NCS students) of suitable ages at primary and secondary levels. Curricula for Chinese and English Languages are provided to promote *bi-literacy* (Chinese and English) and *tri-lingualism* (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) among students. Foreign languages are also offered in a few public sector schools. Private international schools, according to their students’ originating countries, offer curricula of individual countries like the United States of America, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea and Singapore.

All Hong Kong students are recommended to learn Chinese language to build a solid language foundation and enhance their quality and competitiveness. Chinese Language has long been a core subject in local schools. Upon the implementation of the three-year senior secondary academic system, all students can receive secondary school education for six years. In meeting with the needs of the 21st Century, a three-year senior secondary academic system under the twelve-year free education policy is more effective in the promotion of whole person development. In this new system, Chinese Language is one of the core subjects.

The Chinese Language curriculum, as designed by CDC, is targeted at all Primary and Secondary school students of Hong Kong. As an enabling tool, Chinese Language is fundamental in Key Learning Areas, facilitating the learning of other knowledge disciplines. The key mission of Chinese Language Education is enabling students to enhance language proficiency, to master the norms of written Chinese, to speak fluent Cantonese and Putonghua, to appreciate the beauty between the lines, to nurture interest in language learning, to develop higher order thinking skills and competence, as well as to nurture aesthetics sense and cultural competence so as to perfect their personality and achieve whole person development.

NCS students settling down in Hong Kong, similar to their Chinese-speaking counterparts, are masters of the future Hong Kong society. NCS students who study in local schools need to adapt to using Chinese in communication and immerse into

the community. Since Chinese is the major instruction medium in local public sector schools, NCS students will have more choices in schooling if they are able to adapt to a learning environment with Chinese as the major language medium. Schools should offer their best in helping NCS students to learn Chinese effectively, eventually enabling them to immerse into the community, preparing them for building Hong Kong's future.

1.1 Purpose and Rationale

1.1.1 Purpose of the Supplementary Guide

The purpose of developing the “*Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students*” is to supplement the existing curriculum guides on principles, strategies and recommendations for implementing the Chinese Language curriculum in schools in the learning context of NCS students. It is envisaged that this supplementary guide would promote the effectiveness of Chinese Language learning of NCS students in schools of Hong Kong.

This supplementary guide should be read alongside a series of curriculum documents (or their latest versions), including –

- “*Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 3) (2002)*”
- “*Chinese Language Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Primary 6) (2004)*”
- “*Chinese Language Curriculum Guide (Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary) (2001)*”
- “*Chinese Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6) (2007)*”.

1.1.2 Rationale of Language Education

The language education policy of Hong Kong is to promote students' language proficiency, making them *bi-literate* (in Chinese and English) and *tri-lingual* (in Cantonese, Putonghua and English). In the 1997 Policy Address, the Chief Executive reiterated our goal for “secondary school graduates to be proficient in writing English and Chinese and able to communicate confidently in Cantonese, English and Putonghua.” In 2003, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) recommended in its report on Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong that the policy of “*bi-literacy and tri-lingualism*” on language education should apply to students from Primary 1 to Secondary 6.

Schools have different approaches in adopting the medium of instruction (MOI). Most local schools adopt Chinese language as the MOI. For newly arrived NCS students, this might affect their learning progress. But for NCS students who have learnt Chinese at childhood, there are less problems in learning through Chinese. No matter which MOI (Chinese or English) schools might adopt, we encourage NCS students to learn Chinese for understanding local culture, integrating into the community and enriching the quality of life.

1.2 Spoken and Written Chinese Language in Hong Kong

1.2.1 The Spoken Language of Chinese

China is a multi-language and multi-dialect country, with 56 ethnic groups speaking more than 80 languages. *Hanyu* (or Chinese language, 漢語) is the language used by the majority of the population in China and also the common language of all ethnic groups. Modern Chinese language includes the standard language (*Mandarin*, *Putonghua*) and dialects. *Putonghua* adopts Beijing pronunciation as the standard pronunciation, northern dialect as the fundamental dialect, and classics in modern *baihua* (vernacular literary language, 白話) as the norm of grammar. In general, there are seven major dialect groups in Chinese language, namely, *Beifanghua* (the northern dialect or Mandarin, 北方話), *Wu* (吳方言), *Yue* (*Cantonese*, 粵方言), *Xiang* (湘方言), *Min* (閩方言), *Kejia* (*Hakka*, 客家方言) and *Gan* (贛方言).

In the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, most citizens and the mass media are using the *Yue* dialect (*Cantonese*, 粵語). As the common dialect of Hong Kong society, Cantonese is widely used in different community aspects such as politics, economy, education, and the mass media. Cantonese is also widely used in the Macau Special Administrative Region and some Chinese communities overseas.

In the language, it has preserved quite a number of monosyllabic words in classical Chinese such as “行” (walk), “食” (eat), “醒” (smart). Popular Hong Kong Cantonese has also absorbed lots of foreign loanwords, such as “士多” (store), “巴士” (bus), “布祿” (plum). As for phonology, it is generally accepted that Cantonese has nine tones. The same syllable pronounced with different tones will become different characters in meaning.

1.2.2 The Chinese Script

There are about 30 character systems being used in China. Among them, the written language of Chinese is represented by Chinese characters (漢字). A character is formed into a square by strokes and components. This is entirely different from most scripts in the world with words spelled out by alphabets. Therefore Chinese characters are often called “square characters” (方塊字).

Since the 1950s, two systems of Chinese characters have been developed, the traditional Chinese characters (繁體字, 正體字) and simplified Chinese characters (簡化字). The majority of Hong Kong citizens and the media are using traditional Chinese characters. Traditional Chinese characters are also used in Macau, Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities. Simplified Chinese characters are the norm of Chinese scripts in Mainland China, adhering to the standard as announced in the *Jianhuazi Zongbiao* (*General Lists of Simplified Characters*, 簡化字總表) by the State Language Commission (國家語言文字工作委員會) in 1986. Simplified Chinese characters are generally used in Mainland China and Southeast Asia.

1.2.3 Choice of Spoken Language and Written Language for NCS Students in Learning Chinese

In view of the reality of language environment in the Hong Kong society, generally students would learn traditional Chinese characters at the start. Cantonese is most widely used in Chinese Language lessons. For better integration into the community and effective communication with others, it is in the interest of NCS students to learn first Cantonese and traditional Chinese characters, similar to their Chinese-speaking counterparts. Building on this foundation, NCS students would be able to communicate with more people and read more extensively should they choose to extend their learning to Putonghua and simplified Chinese characters.

There is a predominantly Cantonese language environment in Hong Kong. The majority of schools use Cantonese in Chinese Language lessons. This has provided NCS students with a suitable environment for learning Chinese spoken language and it is therefore not difficult for them to grasp listening and speaking skills in Cantonese. Publications are generally printed in traditional Chinese characters and most schools also adopt traditional Chinese characters in teaching materials. This offers more opportunities for daily-life contact and learning that is conducive to grasping reading and writing skills in traditional Chinese characters.

[In general, public sector schools in Hong Kong provide the subject of Putonghua apart from Chinese Language. NCS students may learn Putonghua through taking the Putonghua subject in accordance with their needs. Besides, taking the Putonghua subject would expand the students' exposure to Chinese language.]

For the linguistic features of modern Chinese language, please refer to Appendix I. For the Chinese learning content for NCS students, please refer to paragraph 2.2 in Chapter II.

Chapter II - Curriculum Framework

2.1 The Chinese Language Education Curriculum Framework

The Chinese Language curriculum designed by the CDC of Hong Kong provides a flexible and robust curriculum framework for schools to adapt their own curriculum in accordance with students' talents and intelligence, in order to cater for their holistic and personalised development, facilitating them in building a good foundation in Chinese language.

The central curriculum framework is an overarching framework for schools to plan and organise their own curriculum, founded on fundamental and connected concepts within major fields of knowledge which should be acquired by all students at different stages of education. It provides a context for the development and application of generic skills, positive values and attitudes. This curriculum framework is flexible and robust enough for schools and teachers to design the curriculum in different modes, catering for the diversified needs of students. The curriculum framework is composed of the three interconnected components of *Key Learning Areas (KLAs)*, Generic Skills as well as Values and Attitudes.

2.1.1 The learning contents of the Chinese Language Education KLA

Learning contents for the Chinese Language Education KLA consists of nine learning strands in terms of knowledge, ability, interest, attitude and habit, which include *Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Literature, Chinese Culture, Moral and Affective Development, Thinking and Independent Language Learning*. These learning strands are the mutually intertwining areas of language learning. Chinese language learning, with reading, writing, listening and speaking as key aspects, promotes learning in other learning strands. In the process of learning, different learning strands are mutually correlated instead of fragmented.

In the nine learning strands, reading, writing, listening, speaking, thinking and independent language learning emphasise the development of language skills, while literature, Chinese culture, moral and affective development emphasise nourishment of intrinsic quality such as ideas and feelings. Students develop their language competence through comprehensive and balanced learning in the nine learning strands.

Language, comprising spoken and written aspects, is the most important communication tool in daily life. Language usage involves skills in reading and writing as well as listening and speaking. In **Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking**, one needs to be accurate, fluent and decent in order to satisfy learning, living and future working needs. In the learning process, language knowledge acquisition, language awareness and sense development, language learning interest fostering, good learning attitudes and habits development are duly emphasised.

Literature learning is an indispensable component of language learning.

Through literature learning, students can feel the beauty of language and sense the truth, the goodness and the beauty between human and nature from the affective aspect of the works. On one hand, it enhances students' language learning interest and ability. On the other hand, students may learn about the unique and common ideas and emotions by sharing, which strengthens interpersonal communication, mutual understanding and sympathy, at the same time arouses in-depth exploration on daily-life and life experience.

Culture is an important component of language. Knowledge of culture enables communication as well as the succession to culture. Learning Chinese language can enrich students' knowledge of **Chinese Culture**, so that they can reflect and know more about the meaning of Chinese culture to the modern world. By learning Chinese language, Chinese students may learn to recognise the splendid Chinese culture and develop their affection towards their country and nationality.

Language is the vehicle of thoughts and feelings. Learning Chinese language is the way to cultivate disposition and morality. From affective stimulation to rational reflection, **Moral and Affective Development** arouses interest and enriches knowledge from emotions to promote self-examination and moral practice.

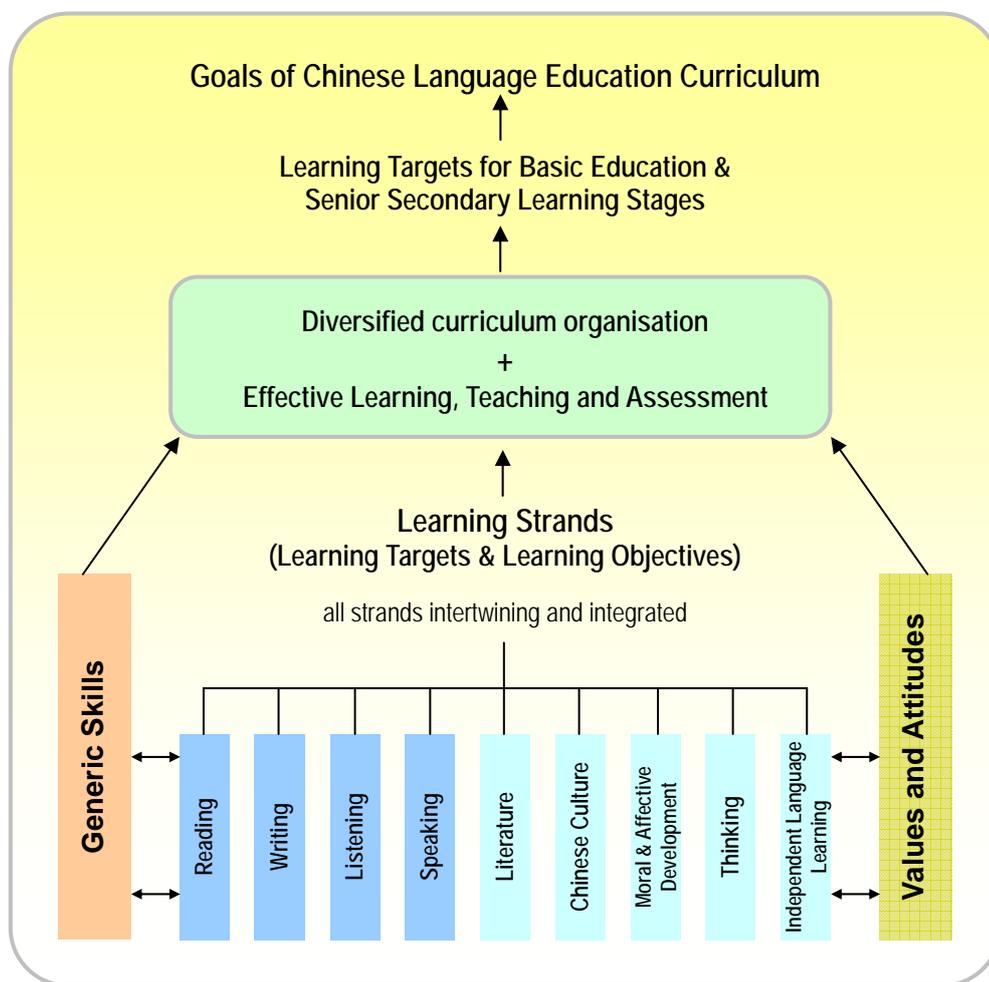
Thinking is fundamental to language usage. In enhancing students' language ability, it is important to develop their necessary thinking skills and competence for language learning, so as to help them analyse and solve problems independently.

Independent Language Learning can break through the limitation of classroom learning. Through life-wide learning, students extend the depth and width of language learning; develop their skills in acquiring, building and utilising knowledge as well as self-monitoring for establishing the foundation of life-long learning.

Generic skills are fundamental to learning. They are commonly developed through the context of eight KLAs of the central curriculum, duly emphasising the mastery of knowledge, construction of new knowledge and the application of knowledge for solving problems. Among the nine generic skills identified across the school curriculum, schools are encouraged to develop students' communication skills, creativity and critical thinking skills as a start. As the nature of knowledge context differs across KLAs, the emphasis of each generic skill in each KLA may be different. In the Chinese Language Education KLA, students' communication, collaboration and study skills are developed mainly through reading, writing, listening and speaking, while creativity, critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills are developed mainly through thinking.

Values are explicit or implicit belief-systems that students should develop for guiding their conduct and decision-making, while **Attitudes** are personal dispositions towards particular tasks. The two are mutually related. In Chinese Language Education, the development of positive values and attitudes through nurturing moral and affective dimensions, learning of literature as well as Chinese culture has long been emphasised.

Diagrammatic representation of the Chinese Language Education KLA curriculum framework is as follows –



This curriculum framework is a framework that helps schools develop its own plan and curriculum, which sets up the knowledge content, skills, values and attitude students should grasp in different learning stages. The curriculum framework offers schools and teachers ample flexibility and autonomy to design different curriculum modes to cater for students’ needs. Schools are recommended to adapt learning objectives flexibly in accordance with NCS students’ learning needs. (Please refer to Appendix IV - Exemplar on Adaptation of School-based Learning Objectives and Appendix V - Exemplar on Adaptation of Learning Objectives and Learning Modules.)

2.1.2 Curriculum Organisation

Schools organise their own curriculum with different modes according to the central curriculum framework, learning targets and learning objectives. No matter what modes schools have adopted, they are required to provide students with ample learning experiences in the nine learning strands, generic skills, values and attitude etc, while learning activities should conform to the learning objectives in each key learning area. Meanwhile, teachers are advised to organise learning objectives in

these areas well to maximise learning effect. To organise the curriculum effectively, schools are advised to pay attention to the following points –

(1) To Adopt an Appropriate Curriculum Organisation Approach

There are various approaches for curriculum organisation. Teachers may consider the school's aims and conditions or even the language environment to select the most appropriate approach according to students' need and ability; or develop students' cultural disposition with Chinese culture as the focus of teaching content; or conduct character education with morality and affection to be the focus. No matter what approach is adopted; it must help achieve comprehensive and balanced learning.

(2) Reasonable Arrangement of Learning Objectives

Regardless of the approach being adopted in curriculum organisation, learning objectives need to be arranged from simple to in-depth, from easy to difficult and from concrete to abstract, in accordance with the subject nature and students' development stages. When organising the curriculum, schools have to be aware of the continuity of learning between junior and senior class levels as well as the connection across learning contents of the same level. This would contribute to sound coherence and progression between class levels, modules and learning objectives, so that students can follow a suitable learning sequence.

(3) Proper Recycling of Learning Objectives

It is crucial to cater for students' intellectual development for learning in curriculum organisation. Important learning contents should be properly recycled in different learning stages for revision and consolidation. For example, in primary stage, students have already developed the basic ability to narrate through learning activities such as story telling, reading of fairy tales, fables and life stories etc. However, students in junior secondary level also need to enhance their narrative skill by reading narrative writing.

[Please refer to P. 15-20, 37-38 of “*Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 3)*”; P. 7-27 of “*Chinese Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6)*”.]

2.2 Learning Contents Suitable for NCS Students

The above-mentioned Chinese language curriculum framework covers the instrumental and humanistic functions of language. The content of the nine learning strands is applicable to all students. Of course, in designing the learning content, it is necessary to consider various factors of NCS students' learning, including the influences from their mother tongue, situation of second language learning, Chinese language learning standard, family background, social economic status, cultural competence, intellectual development etc, in order to decide on the most appropriate learning contents.

2.2.1 Character Learning and Writing

Character learning is the first step in language learning. With certain amount of vocabulary accumulated, students can have better comprehension, communication and application of the language. The first languages spoken by NCS students have lots of differences compared to Chinese, so students may encounter difficulties in learning the Chinese language. For example, Chinese character may be a hurdle for NCS students' learning, but at the same time, it is also the key to reading and writing Chinese. Students may find it difficult to recognise and write Chinese characters in the beginning. However, as long as they grasp certain amount of components, they will find it easier to recognise and write the characters and may improve their learning progress. (For the linguistic features of Chinese language and the comparison between Chinese and the usual languages of Hong Kong NCS students, please refer to Appendix I.)

When learning Chinese characters, both in terms of recognition and writing, students should first master the basic structure of Chinese characters; learn the concept of components and radicals in progression for effectiveness. (Please refer to Appendix II.)

2.2.2 Language Application

When it comes to the applied function of language, there are two aspects: interpersonal communication and knowledge construction. To learn a new language, as long as a learner grasps certain basic vocabulary and language habit, he/she will be able to communicate with others. When a learner masters more vocabulary and expressions, he/she may further use the new language to acquire knowledge in various areas.

For NCS students, they can communicate with others in Chinese once they learn some basic oral Chinese. In other words, they have already reached the level of "basic interpersonal communicative skills". If they want to acquire knowledge through Chinese, then they should not limit themselves to this level, and should increase the amount of their vocabulary and develop reading and writing skills that are compatible with their intellectual development, which means to reach the level of "cognitive academic language proficiency". When NCS students reach this level, they can use Chinese to enrich their knowledge and broaden their learning scope for continuous improvement.

2.2.3 Literature, Chinese Culture, Moral and Affective Development

Students' aesthetic sense, appreciation skills, disposition and morality are nurtured through the truth, virtues and beauty in language contents as well as the unique and common thoughts and feelings reflected in different works. From the affective aspect in the works, students could sense the emotions among people and nature. On one hand, it arouses students' interest in learning the language; on the other hand it strengthens communication, understanding and sympathy. It further enhances self-reflection and moral practices. All of these are very important to students of any ethnicities.

By learning Chinese culture, NCS students may know more about China, the social environment and customs of the place they currently live in. This is helpful to their immersion into the community. Moreover, they can deepen their knowledge on features of various cultures worldwide through the understanding of the unique Hong Kong culture constituted by different ethnicities. As a result, they enhance their own personality, learn to respect different ethnicities and accept diversified cultures around the world with an open mind, facilitating peace and harmony. It is a learning advantage for students to have a diversified cultural environment in Hong Kong.

2.2.4 Auxiliary Learning Approaches

Language learning should not be limited to classroom learning. The purpose of developing independent language learning skills is to allow students to study Chinese language themselves according to their own level and pace. At the elementary stage, students may adopt some auxiliary approaches such as using their mother tongue to mark the pronunciation of characters for easy memory, or using common phonetic symbols such as [l][n][s] etc to assist in memorising. Teachers should accept students in using their own ways to learn the language, and should not ask students to use phonetic symbols that they are not familiar with. Teachers should let students understand that Chinese characters or the Chinese language itself is the learning target. Any phonetic symbols are only a means in the process of mastering the language.

Cantonese is the common language in Hong Kong society. A lot of dictionaries in the market use different ways to mark the pronunciation of Chinese characters. Any reference could be adopted as long as NCS students find it easy and convenient to use.

[Please refer to p.17-19 of “Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 3)”; p.7-27 of “Chinese Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6)”.]

2.2.5 Process of Learning

The starting point for NCS students in Chinese language learning is different from that for other local students. Firstly, NCS students have needs for application skills. To help NCS students immerse into their school life, master Chinese language and adapt to the environment in Hong Kong as soon as possible, the development of students’ language application skills, especially spoken communication skills usually ranks top on the arrangement of learning contents. When students possess certain ability in listening and speaking, schools should systematically help students learn a considerable amount of vocabulary, and further enhance their reading and writing skills. For the writing of Chinese characters, it is suggested that allow NCS students be allowed to learn writing characters with simple strokes and components so that they can know more about Chinese character structure. Then, they can try to combine radicals and components to form more words. For reading, schools may make use of the context in story books to guide students in reading and to enjoy the fun brought about by words, so as to develop their reading skills and reading strategy. (For radicals and components of Chinese characters, please refer to Appendix II.)

The teaching of writing should be integrated with reading, so that there are ample vocabulary and concept input in the process of teaching. Based on comprehensive findings from research and school experience, NCS students are advised to follow the steps below to learn the Chinese language. (For learning and teaching strategies, please refer to paragraph 5.3 in Chapter V.)

(1) Start from Listening and Speaking

Since the mother tongue of NCS students is not Chinese, they should first develop their listening and speaking skills in Chinese Language lessons. This can be divided into three levels: the first is to understand the teacher's instructions in class and be able to join in-class activities and clearly express his/her own thought for effective communication with teachers and classmates; the second is to accumulate colloquial vocabulary and learn the habitual expression of colloquial Chinese language; the third is to learn more formal spoken Chinese through the teachers' demonstration in class.

(2) Character Learning

After obtaining basic listening and speaking skills, NCS students may start to learn Chinese characters, and fully use the ideographic feature of Chinese characters to learn character structure. At first, students may only learn single words one by one, but after they have built a richer vocabulary, they can learn more vocabulary and build up their language sense by using sentences and paragraphs.

(3) Chinese Character Writing

At the initial stage of learning, NCS students may see Chinese characters as pictures without knowing what strokes and components are. Students are therefore advised to learn writing strokes and some simple components while learning to recognise Chinese characters. This helps them remember and differentiate the shape of characters. By comparing characters with similar shapes, they will find it easier to learn the strokes and structure of Chinese characters. (For radicals and components of Chinese characters, please refer to Appendix II.)

(4) Reading Skills Development

When NCS students have accumulated certain amount of vocabulary, they should start to develop their reading skills systematically. In the selection of teaching materials, schools should consider the intellectual development, daily-life context and language proficiency of students, and simplify, revise or adapt the reading materials appropriately to match students' learning. When reading, schools are advised to help students master certain effective reading strategies to assist them in reading independently.

(5) Integrating Reading and Writing

The teaching of writing should be integrated with reading. After reading, teachers may arrange a writing task to allow students to imitate the content and

expression in reading materials. In the process of learning, it is important to have rich vocabulary and concept input as the foundation to develop their practical Chinese writing skills or even creative skills gradually in accordance with their intellectual development.

Chapter III - Curriculum Planning

To ensure that students could attain the learning targets, schools are required to take into account students' abilities, levels and interest, etc. to plan and design a balanced and comprehensive school-based language curriculum that aligns with the curriculum guides prepared by the CDC. This curriculum should be well-organised and progressive to sustain continuity between Key Stages. It has to strike a balance between Key Stages as well as the nine learning strands to ensure that there is a balanced and comprehensive coverage of knowledge accumulation, skills, attitudes and habit development at different Key Stages.

3.1 Basic Principles

Schools should plan their curriculum according to the following principles -

(1) Provide Balanced and Comprehensive Language Learning

Schools are required to provide balanced and comprehensive language learning through the nine learning strands: *Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Literature, Chinese Culture, Moral and Affective Development, Thinking* and *Independent Language Learning* in accordance with the central curriculum framework and in line with the curriculum objectives.

(2) Curriculum Adjustment in accordance with Students' Conditions

- **Flexible Teaching**

The Chinese Language curriculum framework in Hong Kong is robust and balanced, which provides schools with flexibility and autonomy. Teachers are advised to make full use of the flexibility and autonomy in adjusting the curriculum planning and teaching strategies according to the curriculum framework and the nationalities, language background, learning need, personality, interest and ability of NCS students, and develop their ability, potential and Chinese proficiency.

- **Diversified Learning**

Since NCS students have come to Hong Kong at different times, they may be different from local students in terms of education background and age. As a result, older NCS students may not be able to attend the same grade with classmates of the same age. Based on actual learning needs, teachers are advised to assign NCS students to lower grade classes, so that they can adapt to the Chinese Language curriculum progressively and learn to communicate with others by using Cantonese and Chinese characters.

- **Diversified Ethnicity and Culture**

Students from different ethnic groups have different religion, cuisines, costume etc. In the design of teaching topics or classroom activities, teachers are reminded to pay attention to the various customs, values and psychological needs of different nationalities, as well as to allow full development and exchange of ethnic cultures. For example, teachers may organise ethnic dance activities for cultural exchange to make language learning more interesting and meaningful. It also promotes mutual understanding between students of various cultural backgrounds to achieve the objective of multicultural exchange. For the adaptation of curriculum, teachers are reminded to be aware of sensitive topics related to religion in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding. Since there are different practices for different religions, some NCS students may have to go back to their homeland to join religious activities on certain designated dates. It is inevitable that their progress may be affected if they miss the learning of Chinese for a period of time. Language learning should be continuous, so teachers are advised to have special arrangement for students, such as to arrange holiday assignments, remedial classes before and afterschool; adjust learning progress and regulate learning content to alleviate the influence on discontinuous learning.

[Please refer to p.41-44 of “*Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 3)*”; p.33-36 of “*Chinese Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6)*”.]

(3) Fulfilling Parents and Students’ Aspirations

NCS students may have different aspirations towards their living, further studies or employment in Hong Kong, while parents may also have different aspirations towards their children’s exits. According to different situations, some students may only learn basic spoken Chinese for daily communication, or to learn simple Chinese for daily-life application but some may expect to achieve a relatively high level and use it as the medium of instruction in learning. Since the aspiration of parents and students differ, schools are advised to carefully consider the learning content and its priority for more appropriate curriculum planning, so as to fulfill parents and students’ aspirations.

3.2 Practical Experiences in Schools

Based on the central curriculum framework, many schools in Hong Kong undertake overall curriculum planning, adopt teaching contents and materials as well as design appropriate learning activities and materials in accordance with students’ knowledge of Chinese, their personal needs, interests and abilities. (Please refer to Appendices V, VI, VII, VIII, IX and X.)

From the practical experiences of schools, several modes of curriculum planning are summarised as follows -

(1) Immersion in Chinese Language Lessons

Schools arrange NCS students to study alongside other local students. The strategy is to scatter NCS students into different classes for frequent contact with other local students to speak more Cantonese, so that NCS students can learn Chinese and have equal opportunity to receive education as other local students.

(2) Bridging/ Transition

Schools separate NCS students from ordinary Chinese Language classes to relieve their learning burden caused by not being able to immerse in Chinese Language classes immediately, and allow students at different levels to have their different access points, which is conducive to tackling the problem of uneven progress.

(3) Specific Learning Purposes

Schools select specific Chinese Language learning contents to cope with learning needs flexibly. In a short period of time, students can master basic Cantonese communication to meet fundamental daily-life needs and reach specific learning targets. (Please refer to Appendix X.)

(4) Integrated

If schools have a large intake of NCS students who have diversified backgrounds, different learning progress and learning pace, they may have to adopt several curriculum modes at the same time and integrate the use of teaching modes to meet the diversified learning needs of students. (Please refer to Appendix VI.)

Chapter IV - Curriculum Modes

We hope to help NCS students achieve certain Chinese language level, which can fulfill the expectation of both students and parents, instead of pre-determining that NCS students may only learn the language at a lower proficiency level. Otherwise this will limit NCS students' development in Chinese language learning, and affect their examination, exit and career, preventing them from gaining social recognition that they deserve. In fact, there are a number of successful examples showing that NCS students can also learn Chinese language well and immerse into Chinese Language classes and the community. Experience indicates that the most effective approach is to provide continuous and targeted assistance by various modes for adaptation in accordance with students' competence and intelligence.

The following are a few modes for adaptation concluded from actual experiences for schools' reference and use. Schools are advised to study their current situation, analyse the background and the Chinese language proficiency of NCS students admitted to select one or more modes below. (For experience in Chinese regions other than Hong Kong, please refer to Appendix III.)

4.1 Immersion in Chinese Language Lessons

Whether NCS students plan to stay in Hong Kong for a long time, further their studies or pursue a career in Hong Kong, we encourage them to immerse in the Chinese Language lessons. Some NCS students in Hong Kong have started to learn spoken Chinese as early as in kindergarten. The families which can provide a Chinese speaking environment for NCS students can also enable them to learn the language better. Since NCS students may have specific learning needs in Chinese language learning, schools are encouraged to arrange NCS students in classes with local students and provide them with focused remedial teaching outside lessons to facilitate them in immersion into the Chinese Language lessons.

(1) Prevalent Conditions

- Students arrive in Hong Kong before teenage, have had early contact with Chinese language; they have opportunities to learn Chinese in the family or community, with prior knowledge in Cantonese and traditional Chinese characters.
- Students have learned Chinese in kindergartens providing a Chinese learning environment, which facilitates students' communication with peers in Cantonese.
- Students have almost reached the Chinese standard (threshold) required for learning in Chinese.

(2) Advantages

- **A Rich Chinese Language Environment**

A rich Chinese language environment is crucial for NCS students to immerse in the Chinese Language lessons and to enjoy school life in Hong Kong. Schools may arrange for NCS students to study alongside other Chinese-speaking students, so that they can learn better Chinese through communication, collaborative learning and group discussions. NCS students also acquire the language through varying contexts in authentic situations such as participating in school activities. Under a rich Chinese language environment, NCS students are able to learn, to communicate and to improve their learning in Chinese language.

- **Peer Assistance / Collaboration**

Peer assistance is the most effective way for immersion. When NCS students learn and communicate with other Chinese-speaking students, they are given chances to learn and apply Chinese. Peer assistance includes Chinese-speaking students who learn with NCS students and provide them with language support in daily life, and also embraces mutual support among NCS students. NCS students of the same ethnicity speaking the same language can also provide assistance to one another to overcome the learning problems, while others, notwithstanding their different ethnic backgrounds speaking different languages, can also make improvements through sharing of learning experiences and collaboration in learning. Teachers are encouraged to acquire a better understanding about the ethnic background of NCS students and make good use of peer collaborative learning so as to help NCS students to integrate into their school life.

- **Displaying Racial Harmony**

From the experiences of different regions and different stake-holders, it is the most productive and effective way for NCS students to learn Chinese alongside other Chinese-speaking students. Schools may arrange for NCS students to study in different classes with the majority of other local students, so that they are provided with more opportunities to communicate with other Chinese-speaking students. In such a learning environment, NCS students may find it easier and more enjoyable to learn Chinese.

- **Merging Different Cultures**

Hong Kong, as a place blending Chinese and western cultures, allows us to have easy access to different cultures which constitute precious resources for language learning. Hong Kong teachers can make use of such advantages and design a curriculum with rich cultural elements to broaden students' views on Hong Kong rituals and Chinese culture. For instance, life-wide learning activities enable students to learn outside classrooms and learn about Hong Kong culture from a different perspective. Moreover, local or cross-border

cultural activities can be organised to promote cultural exchange in the hope of enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of different cultures in achieving racial harmony.

(Please refer to Appendix XI - Exemplar on Design of Learning and Teaching Activity - New Year; Appendix XII - Exemplar on Design of Learning and Teaching Activity - The Park.)

(3) Challenges

- **NCS students studying Chinese Language alongside Chinese-speaking students at school**

NCS students who newly arrive in Hong Kong not only have to face adaptation problems in daily routines or cultural differences, but also have to undergo language transition from using their mother tongue to Chinese for communication. However, experience shows us that those problems are only temporary. NCS students can quickly overcome the difficulties and enjoy their learning with the care and support from teachers and other students.

- **Demand for remedial programmes outside lessons**

Due to the language barrier, NCS students may find it difficult to learn Chinese when they immerse in Chinese Language lessons. Teachers have to observe their classroom performance and evaluate their learning progress so as to provide them with focused remedial teaching outside lessons to facilitate immersion in Chinese Language lessons.

- **Need for effective diagnostic assessment tools**

Teachers need to make use of effective assessment tools to evaluate NCS students' Chinese language learning standards and assess their performance on reaching the threshold of learning, such as the amount of vocabulary they have grasped, to ensure their smooth immersion in Chinese Language lessons.

(4) Implementation

To diagnose students' ability and flexibly adjust teaching strategies to suit the needs: In adjusting the curriculum, teachers need to assess students' ability in Chinese through observation, course work, tests and examinations and make an appropriate decision. In the follow-up learning/ teaching process, constant diagnosis needs to be made and teaching strategies need to be revised every now and then.

Beyond the threshold: Teachers should set clear objectives when they are to adopt different adjustment strategies to diagnose whether students have attained the required standard. Once the students are proven to have the ability to pass the threshold, the NCS students would smoothly immerse into the Chinese Language lessons and learn alongside other local Chinese-speaking students.

Focused Remedial Teaching: NCS students' learning of Chinese starts

with a second language approach. Even when schools have made arrangements for their learning together with other local students in the same classroom, teachers still need to attend to their different learning needs and provide them with focused remedial teaching outside classrooms so as to facilitate their integration into Chinese Language lessons. In conducting the focused remedial teaching, it is more appropriate to arrange the learning contents (for instance, there is no [f] sound in Nepali, Indonesian and Tagalog; such phenomenon should be taken into consideration when teaching Chinese pronunciation), strategies, and learning materials according to the particular learning characteristics of the second language learners. Supportive remedial teaching could include the organisation of Chinese character learning groups, speaking training groups to focus and reinforce their study.

Self-learning platform for students: Besides formal class or after-class focused remedial learning, schools could set up self-learning platforms such as a web portal for their students to nurture their habits in independent learning. Interactive learning processes like character writing, listening drills, games on strokes etc. could provide a more relaxed learning environment and enable the students to adjust their learning pace and time, with greater interest and effectiveness.

Peer collaborative learning: The help from peer Chinese local students through games and other collaborative learning is important to enhancing both competence and communication of NCS students. In reading simple and pictorial books together, students could advance their recognition of the Chinese characters and words, and eventually their reading ability in collaborative learning. Teachers could arrange for more peer collaborative learning sessions in class on a weekly basis so as to enable students to become more engaged in pleasurable learning. (Please refer to Appendix XIII.)

Teacher interflow platform: Teachers of NCS students have accumulated abundant experiences. The mutual sharing of experiences and resources among teachers of different schools is important for enhancement of teachers' professional development. The sharing of resources could include successful case studies, school-based curriculum planning, learning materials developed by teachers and other reference materials.

Adaptation and Adjustment: There are four key learning stages (i.e. lower primary, upper primary, junior secondary and senior secondary), and nine strands (i.e. *Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Literature, Chinese Culture, Moral and Affective Development, Thinking and Independent Language Learning*). In arranging after-school remediation for NCS students, teachers could flexibly make adjustment and adaptation on the curriculum according to students' needs. (For examples on curriculum adaptation and adjustment, please refer to Appendix V.) The following strategies of curriculum adjustment are advised for schools' reference -

- **Diagnosis on students' learning needs:** Teachers need to observe students' performance in the class, course work and tests so as to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in learning and follow up with supplementing or strengthening relevant learning in the focused remedial teaching sessions. For example, if students reverse the upper and lower part or the left and the right of the components when writing characters, or they fail to write the

components in appropriate proportions, teachers may offer targeted remedial or corrective measures in teaching to strengthen students' knowledge of Chinese character strokes and structure, so as to effectively help students immerse into Chinese Language classes. (For radicals and components of Chinese characters, please refer to Appendix II.)

- **Targeted remedial measures:** Effective diagnosis of students' learning needs is important before teachers could employ appropriate strategies. For example, in achieving one of the learning objectives 'using appropriate vocabulary to express oneself in accordance with context' in the strand of speaking at the upper primary level, teachers might have identified students' weakness to be the lack of oral vocabulary and/or daily life experience that handicapped their learning. Relevant focused remedial measures need to be made accordingly. In another case at the secondary level, appropriate remedial measures were also required when teachers found that the NCS students failed to achieve the learning objective of 'understanding the coherent relation between sentences and paragraphs' in the strand of reading.
 - **Flexible adaptation of learning materials and teaching strategies in different learning stages:** According to the above mentioned examples, in the case of upper primary students being found inadequate in oral vocabulary, teachers in remedial teaching sessions could adopt the learning material at lower primary level and supplement students with relevant oral vocabulary. If secondary students are found having difficulty in understanding sentences, teachers could refer to the learning objectives of primary (Reading strand: comprehension of sentence) and focus on strengthening students' understanding of sentences through a gradual incremental process.
 - **Appropriate access point of learning:** According to the above mentioned examples, if students fail to express verbally in 'appropriate words' due to the lack of contextual experience, teachers could use some daily life contexts as the access point for their learning during remedial teaching sessions. Students will then be provided with adequate opportunity and environment for applying what they have learnt.
- **Effective use of students' strength:** Students will show their strengths and weaknesses in different strands which intertwine with each other in their learning process. Teachers should make use of students' strengths to facilitate their learning in other strands. For example, in the case of composition, students are required to present not only written expression of themselves, but also their thinking (structuring of language and logic) and affection. Some NCS students may not finish or reach the writing requirement within the stipulated time. The reason for that may vary (e.g. writing speed or insufficient vocabulary). After diagnosis, teachers could capitalise on students' strengths in verbal expression and ask them to do the composition in an oral presentation and then put it into words. This would train up their expression ability from oral to written to embrace presentation of thoughts and affection as well. (Please refer to Appendix V.)

(5) Public Examinations

Upon completion of secondary education and immersion in Chinese Language lessons for six years or more, NCS students are expected to have reached a certain language standard and can sit for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) or the coming Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination. Based on their need and actual Chinese language standard, students may also sit for the easier Chinese Language examinations arranged by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority.

[A small number of students who learn Chinese language following an adapted and simpler curriculum, which is generally not suitable for the majority of other students studying at local schools, may also sit for the General Certificate of Education (GCE), the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations arranged by the HKEAA to obtain other recognised Chinese language qualifications.]

4.2 Bridging / Transition

NCS students come to Hong Kong at different times. Some students who arrive in Hong Kong as late as in their adolescence have less exposure to Chinese language and therefore find it difficult to immerse in Chinese Language lessons. Providing NCS students only with focused remedial teaching outside lessons may not be the solution to their learning problems. Schools may encourage students to participate in bridging programmes and learn Chinese language in an intensive way. Schools, for example, may design intensive learning programmes for NCS students in long vacations to strengthen their Chinese language foundation and pave way for subsequent immersion in Chinese Language lessons; or make full use of rich language environment to provide students with chances to use the language, so that they can enhance their standard efficiently for immersion in general Chinese Language lessons. (Please refer to Appendix XIV.)

After the Bridging / Transition programmes, NCS students should be provided with a “Student Learning Profile” which reveals students’ learning pace, performance and learning standard. Teachers should give descriptions on students’ learning progress in the profile to facilitate adaptation of the curriculum or remedial teaching outside lessons.

(1) Prevalent Conditions

- Students have arrived in Hong Kong at teenage, have late contact with Chinese: they communicate in their mother tongue at home, having little contact with Cantonese and traditional Chinese characters.
- Students have different proficiency levels in various dimensions of Chinese language (e.g. *listening, speaking, reading, writing*); students have different proficiency levels.

- Students have aspirations to stay in the education system in Hong Kong as well as to seek employment in fields requiring proficiency in spoken and written Chinese.

(2) Advantages

- **Provision of Intensive Learning to Enhance Students' Chinese Language Standards**

NCS students are arranged to have intensive studies in Chinese for a relatively short period. For example, schools may arrange intensive programmes for students to learn Chinese in longer vacations, or arrange intensive learning through a special timetable. Upon completion of intensive and targeted learning, students' Chinese language foundation will be strengthened to pave way for schools' Chinese Language curriculum. This kind of learning provides students with a rich Chinese learning environment and ample learning opportunities. Such focused learning helps to enhance students' Chinese language standards within a short period of time and facilitate their immersion in lessons.

- **Provision of Focused Learning for Students to Overcome Language Difficulties**

➤ **Tackling language difficulties through comparison:** NCS students have different mother tongues. It is advisable that teachers should begin by comparing the characteristics of languages to help students find out their learning difficulties in Chinese. For instance, the widely used languages of different minority races in Hong Kong have no tones. It is advisable that teachers lay stress on the unique characteristics of Chinese language that various tones carry different meanings. For example, “東” (East) and “凍” (cold) have various tones ([dong1], [dong3]) and so carry different meanings. This should be addressed first so that students could concentrate on overcoming the learning difficulties. (Please refer to Appendix XV.)

➤ **Selection of appropriate materials:** In adopting the Bridging / Transition mode, teachers have to select appropriate materials according to students' language ability and learning psychology. Materials need to be simple and direct; vocabularies used have to match with their learning progress. This could help students enrich vocabularies, retain what they learn and communicate effectively. As for the learning contents, learning materials have to be designed according to students' age and their psychological development.

- **Ample Time for Adaptation**

NCS students have to undergo a transition period in learning. When their Chinese standards are adequate for communication, they can immerse in Chinese Language lessons.

- **Allowance for Lower Chinese Standard at the Start**

The Bridging / Transition mode is recommended for those students with a lower level of competencies. Through effective curriculum adaptation, students can learn Chinese intensively within a short period of time. After overcoming the learning difficulties, their Chinese standards can be raised.

(3) **Challenges**

- **Adoption of lower levels of competencies**

In schools adopting the Bridging / Transition mode, some NCS students may not have received an education in local kindergartens, resulting in their limited Chinese ability. Because of the limitation, they may find it difficult to pick up this language at the beginning. It is suggested that they learn from a lower starting point.

- **Teachers need diagnostic assessment tools**

In the bridging period, teachers need to make use of the diagnostic assessment tools to evaluate NCS students' learning progress. Meanwhile, teachers have to use the formative assessment so as to gauge students' learning pace and provide them with timely feedback. Moreover, in different key stages, diagnostic assessment tools can help to make sure whether students have reached the Chinese learning threshold for further immersion.

(4) **Implementation**

In cases where students' competence in Chinese is not compatible with the general learning requirement, the bridging mode can be adopted to help NCS students build a solid foundation in Chinese. Nevertheless, this is only a bridging phase and during this stage, in consideration of students' learning progress, Chinese language level and the real situation, teachers may allow students to immerse in general Chinese Language lessons. During the bridging period, teachers could formulate a bridging programme with clear objectives in learning content and material, methodology and assessment, so as to strengthen students' ability in Chinese for integration into the class. The following measures are suggested as examples for teachers' reference -

- **Principles in practice**

- **Emphasis on functional use:** Targeted at students with their second language as the access point for learning, a bridging programme should give priority to the functional use of language in terms of nurturing students' life skills and adaptation to school life and learning. For curriculum arrangement, it is suggested that students start with their learning of listening and speaking, and then slowly add the teaching content of character writing and reading. When students have certain language accumulation, teachers may combine the teaching of writing with

reading.

- **Pay attention to the disparity between spoken and written language:** Cantonese is a dialect and its expression form may be different from standard written Chinese, so teachers should be aware of the disparity and transition between the two.
- **Pay attention to features of language learning:** Teachers should pay attention to the features of language learning during teaching. For example, teachers may start teaching from listening and speaking, and gradually add reading and writing into it; teachers should also pay attention to the features of phrases and allow students to learn vocabulary from frequently-used Chinese characters that have strong word building function. Syntactic teaching should be arranged in consideration of the complexity of syntactic structure.
- **Make full use of context to increase input:** Hong Kong has a rich Chinese language environment. Teachers should fully use this advantage to strengthen input of various language materials. (Please refer to Appendix XII.)
- **Make full use of diversified modes of expression:** Different modes of expression are applicable to different social needs such as greeting. When facing different people, different modes of expression should be used. NCS students may not be familiar with the various modes of expression in Chinese. Teachers should therefore try to use diversified expression that allows students to imitate and enhance their interpersonal skills.
- **Group teaching as needed:** NCS students may have contact with Chinese language at different times when they arrive in Hong Kong. With different language background, it is natural that their learning need will be different. Therefore, teachers should take into account their diversified learning needs and arrange group teaching as needed.
- **Adaptation of appropriate learning contents:** Adapt learning content appropriately from the scope of words, pragmatic functions, types of reading, and forms of oral expression to writing skills etc. so as to cater for the different needs of the students.

- **Teaching Strategies**

During the bridging period, teachers are advised to adopt a targeted strategy in accordance with common difficulties that appear in the bridging period for second-language learning in order to assist students in overcoming barriers to their learning. The following suggestions of teaching strategy are applicable to general circumstances in Chinese learning for NCS student, and are particularly suitable for students who learn with a bridging/ transition mode:

- **Pronunciation difficulties:** Teachers could make reference to research

on contrastive analysis between Chinese language and NCS students' first language for arrangement of their teaching contents. For instance, teachers could teach students the points and methods of articulation gradually. Teachers could teach students to pronounce Chinese words bearing in mind that there is no [f] sound in Burmese, Nepalese, Indonesian, and Tagalog; that there is no distinction between aspirated and non-aspirated sounds in Indonesian and Tagalog; and that languages of south Asia do not have 'tones'. Their teaching effectiveness can be enhanced if they can make reference to the experience of foreigners learning Chinese tones. (Please refer to Appendix I.)

- **Concept in teaching Chinese characters:** The concept of 'character' and 'stroke' in Chinese language is alien to NCS students and they usually take the characters as pictures, so writing problems such as wrong position of strokes or confusion with components are common for them. In the bridging programme, teachers should focus on their learning of characters as an access point and teach them to separate the characters into components and join the components into characters and words. (Please refer to Appendix XVII.)
- **Teaching to tackle the syntactic difficulties:** For instance, there are a great number of obligatory classifiers in Chinese language which NCS students might find difficult in its usage, such as in the case of “一個” (one classifier) and “一隻” (one classifier). Teachers could set an everyday context to illustrate the situation to show when and how these obligatory classifiers can be used in indicating quantity and time.
- **Different methods for different student age groups:** For students of younger age, we can use more audio-visual learning tools such as objects, pictures, models and gestures, actions, demonstrations, scene settings etc. for vocabulary teaching to help them build up direct links between the sounds and the concepts (meanings). Learning takes place when the link between the acquired concepts and the new sounds is established. (Please refer to Appendix XVI.)

For the older students who have already developed a foundation in their first language, their comprehension is mostly achieved indirectly via their first language instead. Only when the connection is gradually internalised could they give up interpreting through the first language. Therefore, making appropriate use of the contrastive differences of the first and second languages concerned may help to enhance teaching effectiveness.

- **Varying teaching strategies according to students' learning progress:** When the learners have accumulated enough vocabularies, analysis of morphological structure may then be able to help students to learn new words. For instance, from “木” (wood) to “木材” (wood material), “木船” (wood boat), “木筏” (wood raft), “木工” (wood work), “木馬” (wood horse), “木偶” (wood puppet), “樹木” (tree wood), “林木” (forest wood),

“花木” (flower wood) etc. Such a method may help students to comprehend the meaning of the new words. It also makes memorisation of new words and analysis of new words an easier task. Such a method is especially useful for teenage students. (Please refer to Appendix XVII.).

As for learners who have possessed certain knowledge of Chinese language, minimal pair pronunciation practices could be useful for them in grasping more accurate pronunciation for phrases such as “發現 / 忽然” [faat3][jin6]/[fat1][jin4], “火車 / 貨車” [fo2][ce1]/[fo3][ce1], “千年 / 青年” [cin1][nin4]/[cing1][nin4] etc. Exercises of this kind can help students to make finer distinctions between some minute differences at the level of initials, finals and tones. (Please refer to Appendix XV.)

➤ **Flexible teaching based on a second language learning approach:** Second language learning usually consists of three stages. When teachers know which stage their students are in, they can regulate their teaching strategy flexibly. The three stages are:

- **Silent stage:** Learners usually collect second language vocabulary silently and develop language sense of the second language. During this stage, teachers should let students listen and read more to make change gradually.
- **Imitation stage:** After the “silent stage”, learners have absorbed more vocabulary of their second language, so they will try to imitate these modes of expression. Although their understanding of the language may not be thorough enough for them to express themselves completely, teachers may encourage them to express themselves in simple sentences or to imitate some idiomatic phrases, which are nicely demonstrated to enrich their second language experience.
- **Inter-language stage:** When learners accumulate more vocabulary of their second language, they will gradually get used to the expression in the language. As a result, it is common that learners mix the expression in their second language with that in their mother tongue and create an intermediary language, which is commonly called “inter-language”. During this stage, teachers should continue to provide good language demonstration to promote transition for students and help them develop a habit of expression in Chinese.

➤ **Need to pay attention to students’ difficulties in conducting assessment**

It should be noted that it is not always the NCS students’ ability that has caused their underperformance in course work, tests and examinations. For some of them, the assessment mode or question type may handicap their performance. For example, sometimes a listening test requires students to listen to a lengthy piece of audio input and students’ problem lies actually with memory rather than understanding. Teachers could improve by playing the audio input by sections and give students ample time to listen and comprehend.

In composition, sometimes students' problem lies in their understanding of the topics. For instance, in a composition test the topic "Football Match for Kei Ying (耆英, an euphemism for 'the elderly')", it is too hard for NCS students to understand the meaning of such difficult words. Teachers need to supplement the special terms with a footnote for students, or simply change the terms to those closer to their daily life. In this way, students' actual language ability could be fairly assessed.

- **Appropriate use of diagnostic tools at different learning stages of students**

Teachers need to diagnose students' ability in Chinese language at different stages. At their point of entry into schools, NCS students' ability of Chinese language has to be diagnosed so that appropriate learning objectives and contents can be set. Diagnoses at different learning stages would facilitate teachers' understanding of students' learning progress and facilitate timely adjustments in the curriculum. At the end of a learning stage, teachers can realise whether students have reached the threshold of the required standard of Chinese learning. Effective use of the diagnostic tools is a significant strategy in this Mode.

(5) Public Examinations

When NCS students reach the Chinese learning threshold and are able to immerse in Chinese Language lessons after taking Bridging / Transition programmes, they may sit for the HKCEE, HKALE, or the coming HKDSE examination. Apart from these, NCS students may also sit for the General Certificate of Education (GCE), the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations arranged by the HKEAA. (Please refer to Appendix XVIII.)

4.3 Specific Learning Purposes

Some NCS students are transient visitors or returnees who do not wish to further their studies in Hong Kong. However, as they need to live in Hong Kong for a short period of time, they have to learn Chinese for communication purpose. Based on their specific learning targets for communication convenience, emphasis would be put more on the communicative function of the language.

(1) Prevalent Conditions

- Students are returnees or transient residents: They use English to communicate and their Chinese language standards are rather low.
- They are leaving Hong Kong in a short period of time while planning to study abroad: Cantonese serves as a daily life language. They seldom use Traditional Chinese characters as the medium of communication in formal writing.

- Students' Chinese language standards are not high, they do not aspire to stay in the Hong Kong education system or to seek employment in Hong Kong: They show better performance in listening and speaking, weaker performance in reading and writing.
- Students arrive in Hong Kong at teenage, have late contact with Chinese language and do not have aspirations to stay in the education system in Hong Kong or to seek employment in fields requiring proficiency in spoken and written Chinese.

(2) Advantages

- **Suitable for students who are transient residents**

To meet their various needs, NCS transient students in Hong Kong may focus on learning basic spoken Chinese and developing listening and speaking ability for daily communication; to learn the written language in daily life context for communication and application.

- **Satisfying specific needs**

With specific learning targets, NCS students usually have to finish learning within a short period of time. They do not need to go through all the learning areas in the Chinese language curriculum. For example, they may first learn listening and speaking, or reading and postpone the learning of writing with narrower learning areas selected to integrate with actual daily-life need, the content of learning should be easier to manage.

- **Flexible management of learning levels**

Since NCS students have their specific learning targets, teachers may select intensive learning content for students and manage learning levels flexibly to relieve learning burden and pressure.

(3) Challenges

Achievements of learning can only satisfy specific needs: Based on specific learning targets and selected learning contents, students may only be able to use Chinese language for limited social communication, for example reading advertisements and filling in forms. For language application in more complicated circumstance such as reading the newspaper, their Chinese language level may not be sufficient.

(4) Implementation

- **Select learning areas of listening and speaking:** The most basic demand of language for people to stay in a place is daily-life communication. NCS students need to possess basic listening and speaking skills in order to satisfy their need in this aspect. Teachers are advised to choose listening

and speaking as the core areas for teaching.

- **Practical functions as the purpose:** Learning with practical functions as the purpose includes reading notices, instructions, newspaper and advertisements, filling in forms, writing simple letters and memos etc., to cater for the reading and writing need in daily life. Teaching should focus on the functional application of Chinese language.
- **Requirement for learning levels are relatively flexible:** With specific learning targets, it is hoped that NCS students can reach the level of basic daily-life communication shortly. Therefore, teachers should not set the learning levels too high for students, and learning content should also be easier.
- **Learning only Putonghua:** Some NCS students are only transient residents in Hong Kong, they plan to learn simple Chinese and then move to the Mainland China for future development. Since they do not intend to live in Hong Kong for a long time, they may consider learning Putonghua instead of Cantonese.

(5) Public Examinations

For transient residents, overseas students returning to Hong Kong or those who are not going to further studies in Hong Kong or find jobs which require fluent Chinese language proficiency, they may focus on language learning for meeting daily-life or working needs. If these students want to obtain qualifications, since the learning content is relatively simple and easy, they may sit for the General Certificate of Education (GCE), the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations arranged by the HKEAA. (For related information, please refer to Appendix XVIII - Overseas Chinese Language Examinations and Appendix XIX - Multiple Pathways for NCS Students upon Completing Basic Education.)

4.4 Integrated

If schools have a large intake of NCS students who have diversified backgrounds and different parental aspirations, they may need to develop one or more recommended modes to facilitate students' learning. For instance, NCS students can be arranged in different classes according to their learning standards. In this way, NCS students' needs, wishes and aspirations can be met.

(1) Prevalent Conditions

- Schools have a large intake of NCS students with diversified backgrounds including nationality, language, year of arrival, Chinese language standard, etc. They may not all be able to immerse in Chinese Language lessons at the same time.
- Different family expectations and demands: Students who stay in Hong

Kong for a long time need to integrate into the society and become part of it; students who are transient residents need only to use Chinese primarily as a means of communication.

- A wide range of Chinese language standards: Some students who came to Hong Kong in their early teens may have relatively better command of Chinese; some older students who just arrived in Hong Kong had had no contact with the language before.

(2) Advantages

Schools can offer different programmes, each with a critical mass, tailored to cater for individual student's needs: Teachers may opt to use the suggestions made for curriculum adaptation in the above recommended modes according to the standards of students. Moreover, they may design different access points for different students. For instance, for students who adopt the “Bridging / Transition” mode, teachers can use the strategy of “Diagnose of learning needs” of Mode I to understand their learning progression. Likewise, even for students who adopt the “Specific Learning Purposes” mode, teachers should also make good use of the power of peer assistance to facilitate their language learning.

(3) Challenges

- Schools need to design various programmes with different targets to meet diversified needs
- Cohesion of various stake-holders, helping one another
- School administration needs to render support and provide more resources

(4) Implementation

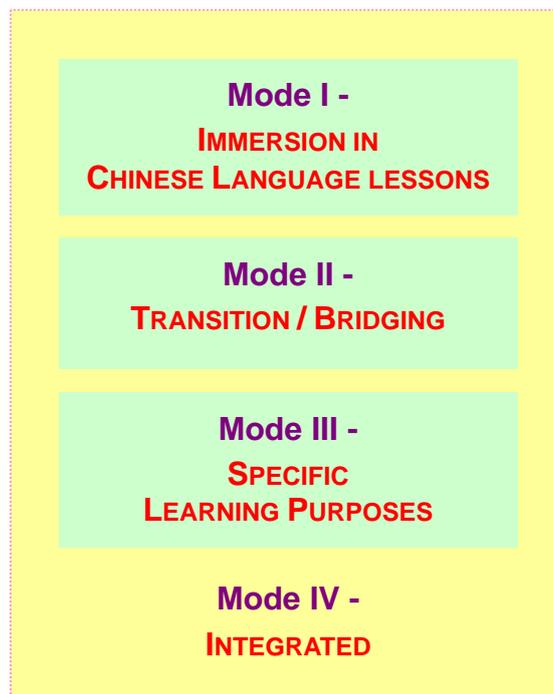
- **Class and group arrangements according to language standard:** After diagnosing students' Chinese standards, students with higher standards can be immersed in Chinese Language lessons. Students with limitations in some language skills (e.g. reading) may not be ready yet for general Chinese Language lessons. They could join the Bridging / Transition programmes to strengthen their Chinese language foundation prior to the immersion. This kind of class and group arrangements enables teachers to cater for students' needs and makes teaching more flexible. (Please refer to Appendix VI.)
- **Streaming for different modes:** Schools with large intakes of NCS students can adopt different recommended modes. They could place students in different streams, which gives them room for catering to the learners' diversified needs and helps facilitate the allocation of resources, aiming at raising the effectiveness of teaching. (Please refer to Appendix VI.)

Schools can make reference to adaptation methods under the different modes, especially Modes I and II for flexible use to maximise the impact.

(5) Public Examinations

With integrated adoption of the above modes, students may sit for relevant examinations in gaining various qualifications, based on their various learning experiences, targets and expectations.

Curriculum modes that could be adopted by schools are summarised in the diagram below –



Chapter V - Learning and Teaching

The purpose of the school curriculum setting is to assist students in grasping learning approaches, building up knowledge, developing good learning habits and self-study skills.

To design learning and teaching activities for NCS students, the first step is to understand students' backgrounds. Schools should thoroughly consider factors such as nationality, mother tongue, family and expectation etc before taking an appropriate strategy.

For comparison between Chinese and mother tongues commonly spoken by NCS students in Hong Kong, please refer to Appendix I.

5.1 Characteristics of Chinese Language Learning

Teachers are advised to learn about the difference between a mother tongue and a second language when adopting targeted learning and teaching strategies for NCS students' Chinese language teaching.

(1) Learning as a Mother Tongue

The acquisition of a mother tongue involves various factors such as culture, social life and mental development etc. It takes place simultaneously with the learning of social culture and the code of conduct. Learners accumulate their knowledge through rich language input over a long period of time in a natural language environment. There is not a particular learning sequence. Language and intelligence is almost developed in parallel.

Students who use Chinese as their mother tongue grow in a rich language environment of Chinese. They can naturally accept the customary features of the Chinese language in terms of characters, pronunciation, grammar, thinking and expression. Although the phonologic function of Chinese characters is indirect, in daily listening and speaking, students are already familiar with Chinese pronunciation. When they learn to recognise characters, the focus is mainly on the linkages among character grapheme, pronunciation and meaning.

As a mother tongue, students should strike a balance between different functions such as communication, application, deliberation and creation etc, and enhance overall language and cultural quality by extensive reading.

(2) Learning as a Second Language

Second language learning usually begins when children have grasped their mother tongue. When learners have passed their development stage, the plasticity of

their vocal systems is relatively lower and may not grasp non-native pronunciation easily. Also, their ability to imitate and memorise is not as strong as early children. With stronger self-awareness and self-esteem, their learning initiative may be lower than early children. However, learners at this stage are stronger in inductive inference and conclusion.

In most cases, a second language learner constructs the language actively through comparison and actual usage. This is a process of continuous analogy, logical analysis, reconstruction of the learner's language and knowledge structure. However, in practice, there is evidence that the influence of the mother language habits on second language learning is not a one-to-one mapping. There are some other factors such as the language structure, attitude, motive, ability and age at play.

Second language acquisition usually undergoes the silent stage, imitation stage and inter-language stage (see paragraph 4.2 in Chapter IV). Learners silently absorb vocabulary, imitate idiomatic phrases and develop language sense of the second language while listening. When speaking and writing, learners are very likely to express themselves in an inter-language that is between their mother tongue and the target (second) language.

Second language learning should not be limited to the learning of basic communication skills. It is also important for students to enhance their academic language proficiency, enrich vocabulary, develop reading and writing skills and further use the second language to acquire other knowledge. Younger students are advised to combine experience of mother tongue learning to learn a second language in a natural environment, so that their basic communication skills and academic language proficiency can be developed simultaneously. For students who start to learn Chinese at an older age, since they are mentally more mature, teachers may inspire their thinking, improve the quality of their thinking and assist them in constructing their knowledge.

(3) Difficulties of Learning Chinese as a Second Language

Consolidating the experience of Chinese language learning for NCS students in Hong Kong and other districts, the followings are the major difficulties for learning Chinese as a second language:

- **Graphemes of Chinese Characters**

To learn an alphabetic language, students may start with alphabets and use them as the basis of spelling. However, learning Chinese is entirely different. In general, NCS students do not have concepts of strokes, stroke order and components of the Chinese characters. They may easily see Chinese characters as individual pictures. For some characters, the printed form may differ from the handwritten form, which requires careful recognition to differentiate.

- **Tones**

Chinese language is tonal. To learn Chinese language, it is important for

NCS students to master the vocabulary in different tones, such as the syllables [dong1] and [dong3], pronounced in different tones, representing different morphemes of “東” (east) and “凍” (cold) respectively.

- **Vocabulary**

Chinese characters are individual “squares”. Independent characters form different words and phrases. Sentences may be written horizontally or vertically. When NCS students recognise characters in a chain one by one, it may be difficult for them to judge which two or three characters should be segmented into words with individual meanings.

In Chinese language, some lexicons may have different forms in spoken and written languages. For example, we say “的” (adjectival marker) but write it as “的” (adjectival marker); we say “搭車” (take the car) but write it as “乘車” (take the car) or “坐車” (take the car); we say “攞” (take), but write it as “拿” (take) or “取” (take) according to the situation; we say “執起” (pick up) but write it as “拾起” (pick up) or “撿起” (pick up). Some expressions containing classical elements often appear in modern Chinese, such as “相思” (lovers miss each other), “骨肉” (flesh and blood), “草木皆兵” (every bush and tree looks like an enemy soldier). Some expressions possess commendatory or derogative sense, such as “成果” (commendatory), “結果” (neutral), “後果” (derogative). Some expressions are metaphorical, such as “芳草” (fragrant grass), “巾幗” (headdress of women), “故人” (old friend). Due to the cultural sense of these expressions, it usually requires a thinking process before NCS students could comprehend and use them in context.

- **Classifier**

There are a rich abundance of classifiers in the Chinese language. When learning the Chinese language, NCS students have to master a certain amount of classifiers such as “個”, “隻”, “對”, “雙” in order to communicate with others effectively and accurately.

- **Word Order**

Students usually speaking Hindi, Urdu and Nepali need to pay special attention to the subject-verb-object word order. As for students usually speaking Tagalog, they need to pay special attention to the Chinese word order of having the “modifier placed before the modified”. (Please refer to Appendix I.)

5.2 Learning and Teaching Principles

5.2.1 Basic Principles

In the process of learning and teaching, teachers should guide students to learn positively and actively to manage learning strategies and modes and achieve

interactive learning. It is important for teachers to exercise their professionalism and autonomy in teaching to adapt the curriculum or to design a school-based curriculum; select appropriate learning materials; organise learning activities in accordance with students' varied levels and interest to achieve enhancement and remedial purposes. Teachers should be clear of the learning-teaching-assessment relationship; value the learning process; encourage students to join positively and give judicious guidance to help students learn with confidence and pleasure. While emphasising the cultivation of lifelong learning capacity, teachers themselves at the same time should also have the readiness for lifelong learning, so as to enhance their professional standard.

For desirable learning effect, teachers are advised to note the following learning and teaching principles: (1) Learner-centred; (2) Focus on reading, writing, listening and speaking skills; (3) Accumulate language materials and develop language sense; (4) Plan the teaching and setting precise learning objectives; (5) Emphasis on the organisation of teaching; (6) Cater for learning diversity; (7) Flexible selection and use of learning materials; (8) Design balanced and diversified tasks; (9) Create more space for language learning; (10) Flexible arrangement for language learning time; (11) Pleasurable and effective learning; (12) Emphasis on comprehension and enlightenment; (13) Use multi-media resources to assist teaching; (14) Learn across other KLAs or subjects.

[Please refer to p.47-50 of “*Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 3)*”; p.45-47 of “*Chinese Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6)*”.]

5.2.2 Learning and Teaching Principles that Suit the Learning Context for NCS Students

- **Understanding students' ability:** Schools should carry out assessment on the NCS students' Chinese competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing upon their entry and provide appropriate learning mode(s) to cater for their ability and needs. For instance, in remedial classes in Mode I, schools could arrange focused programmes/ classes for strengthening listening and speaking skills, or for Chinese character learning as starters, and then proceed from vocabulary learning to creative writing.
- **Clear teaching targets:** Different modes have different teaching targets. For instance, in Mode II - “Bridging/ Transition”, targets would include holistic and by-phase ones. Targeting at students' eventual immersion in Chinese Language lessons, holistic targets would include time/ work schedule while by-phase targets would include learning objectives, contents and outcomes of each phase according to the students' ability upon their entrance to school.
- **Cater for diversified needs:** Teachers need to observe the learning of NCS students even though they have immersed in Chinese Language lessons and studied together with local Chinese students so as to continuously cater to their needs. After or outside school hour remedial classes could be arranged to supplement, reinforce or enhance students' learning.

- **Adjustment measures on different standards of students:** Whichever mode a school adopts, learning and teaching should be geared to students' different starting points in their Chinese learning with appropriate grouping to facilitate learning. For some older students with lower standards, teachers could set for them a lower starting point with relevant learning objectives. Different classes and groups could have different access points and learning objectives. Teachers need to assess students' learning progress constantly and re-group accordingly so as to adjust to their learning.
- **Adaptation of learning materials:** Teachers should make adjustments in adopting appropriate learning materials for the NCS students according to their standards in Chinese, such as by adopting learning material of a lower key learning stage (say primary material for secondary, or lower primary material for upper primary) at the beginning, or by tailoring the learning material. For example, some writings narrate before expressing feelings or reasoning. For NCS students of various cultural backgrounds, it may be difficult to comprehend the abstract sentiment or principles of such writings. Teachers may first extract the narrative part from the writing for students to feel the sentiment or underlying principles first. On the teaching strategy, teachers may guide students to read and feel before sharing with their classmates, so that they can experience and understand the feelings of the author more thoroughly.
- **Flexible use of self-access learning resources:** Teachers need to guide NCS students to flexibly make use of self-access learning resources so that students can benefit through self-regulated learning and develop a good habit in using diversified resources such as after or outside school hour remedial classes to enhance their learning. Engagement in a variety of learning activities, e.g. writing exercises, worksheets on listening, games on strokes, web-based self-access learning packages etc. would enable students to learn more via different platforms. (For relevant support resources, please refer to Appendices XX and XXI.)

5.3 Learning and Teaching Strategies

Teachers should pay attention to the following learning and teaching strategies in accordance with the Chinese language learning context of NCS students:

5.3.1 Listening and Speaking

Most of the NCS students start learning Chinese language from listening and speaking. Schools are advised to plan and adjust teaching content with reference to this learning sequence.

Students usually go through the silent stage and imitation stage in second language learning. During this period, students absorb vocabulary, imitate idiomatic expressions and develop language sense through listening, but their language expression may not be complete, so teachers should tolerate and accept it. It is suggested that teachers provide language demonstration to students to create

opportunities for them to listen more, and introduce properly some Chinese words or sentence patterns to help students master common Chinese expressions.

When students have used Chinese for a longer time, they will simplify the structure or meaning of the second language and step into the inter-language stage. Teachers should not force students to use complete sentences at this stage, but should provide more good demonstration for them to consolidate their Chinese expression. Not only do students learn Chinese language for communication, but also for the acquisition of other knowledge. It is therefore not suitable to stay at the level of daily communication only. Instead, teachers should help them enhance their academic language proficiency and construct knowledge for continuous improvement.

5.3.2 Character Learning

Character learning is the key to reading and writing. For learning of these two areas, it is suggested that reading and writing of Chinese characters be separated. The structure of Chinese characters is special and difficult to write for NCS students, while recognising and reading of characters are relatively easier. By separating the learning of reading and writing Chinese characters, it helps students to accumulate vocabulary, develop reading skills earlier, strengthen the input of vocabulary and ideas and build up a solid foundation of language and thinking.

NCS students are advised to first learn basic Chinese characters that are frequently used with strong word building functions. For example, “口” and “言” are individual characters that can form different words. They are also radicals that can form different characters. Characters they formed are easy to recognise: words with “口” as the radical are usually related to movement of the mouth; while words with “言” as the radical are usually related to speaking. By selecting this kind of characters for learning, students can further enrich their vocabulary to enhance learning effectiveness. (Please refer to Appendix XVII.)

5.3.3 Character Writing

Writing Chinese characters is a barrier for NCS students in Chinese language learning. NCS learners in general lack the concept of strokes and components. Since they do not know the structure and grapheme of Chinese characters, very likely they see characters as pictures. To learn writing Chinese characters, students should first understand the structures such as stroke or stroke order. It is important for students to grasp the concept of component grouping. With the basic skills obtained, students may use the ideographic function of Chinese characters to integrate character recognising, writing and memorising. (For radicals and components of Chinese characters, please refer to Appendix II.)

Writing is the foundation of Chinese language learning, but it is not the only objective. Neither should it be made an obstruction to Chinese language learning. While learning to write Chinese characters, NCS students should at the same time continue their learning in listening, speaking, reading and culture etc. The accumulation, consolidation and exploration in language learning as well as Chinese character writing are complementary, which makes the learning content rich and diversified.

5.3.4 Reading

Reading is an essential part of language learning, which is also an effective way to enhance one's academic language proficiency. NCS students need to read at any of the learning stages. Simple readings with less vocabulary and daily-life topics are more suitable for beginners. When students have acquired a certain amount of vocabulary, teachers may increase the reading amount gradually to expand their reading scope. The content of readings has to be educational at any stage. For example, reading materials for secondary students who start learning Chinese language should be selected according to students' vocabulary accumulation. The wording of the readings should be simple, while the content should conform to students' mental development. Classical poetry, idioms and famous quotations of limited words and rich meaning are ideal for language learning. These offer students meaning and fun in reading, so that they can learn the language in pleasant and natural circumstances.

Since reading is a kind of effective learning input, materials adopted should be healthy, consistent with students' mental development and should meet the multicultural needs of NCS students.

5.3.5 Writing

The main difficulty that NCS students encounter in writing is that their limited accumulation of language materials is not sufficient for them to express their rich thinking and feelings. This usually makes people misunderstand their writing ability. As a matter of fact, the number of characters a student knows does not affect his/ her creative thinking. As long as there is an appropriate learning strategy for them, both NCS students and other local students can write beautiful articles. For example, primary students may start their imagination from objects or incidents in their daily life and use simple vocabulary to write poetry to express their feelings.

Given the problem of insufficient language material accumulation, it would be a good idea to integrate the teaching of writing and reading, and the teaching of writing should be arranged after that of reading. Teachers may inspire and guide students to write through the input of reading to cultivate students' reading skills. Teachers may allow students to start learning to write from imitation such as to write with sentence patterns provided. When students are familiar with more Chinese modes of expression, teachers may guide students to think and exercise their creativity progressively, and add their own content in writing, which facilitates independent writing at the final stage.

5.3.6 Create Rich Language Environment

The use of varied and appropriate teaching strategies and the creation of a rich language environment are beneficial to the enhancement of NCS students' interest and motivation in learning Chinese. When students adapt to the language environment, they will voice their opinions more actively and answer teachers' questions enthusiastically. After lessons, NCS students usually borrow books from the library actively and join Chinese calligraphy competitions and recitation contests,

bringing Chinese language learning into their daily-life.

5.3.7 Peer Learning

NCS students' immersed learning and participation in activities together with other local students are obviously helpful to the development of their listening and speaking skills. As reflected by the experience of some schools, some NCS students are able to adapt to Chinese Language lessons after half a year or more of immersed learning, and can answer questions in Chinese.

In the initial stage of Chinese language learning, NCS students can mainly write simple sentences. Through immersed learning together with other local students and peer learning, NCS students will greatly enrich their vocabularies, and gradually increase the number of words in writing. For example, two NCS students of different nationalities who could neither speak Cantonese nor recognise Chinese characters and were not able to communicate in English were enrolled in the same school. The school arranged for them to have lessons together with other local students to learn to communicate in Cantonese in a rich Chinese language environment. After learning Chinese for a year, they were both able to speak fluent Cantonese and write orderly compositions of about 100 words for the part on "writing with pictures and vocabularies provided" in the examination.

5.3.8 Continuous Assessment, Timely Quality Feedback

Through formative and summative assessments, teachers can adjust their teaching strategies according to NCS students' needs at different stages, in order to allow continuous improvement among NCS students in learning Chinese Language. As shown in the assessment result, some NCS students, having learnt Chinese for seven months, have obviously increased their vocabulary and attained the expected learning outcome.

Chapter VI - Assessment

6.1 Diversified Modes of Assessment

For the benefit of NCS students learning Chinese, teachers may design assessment activities in a more diversified way. For example, other than written assessment, observation, oral presentation, project learning, comprehensive assessment activity, portfolio can also assess students' performances. Teachers may adjust assessment strategies according to students' learning progress. For example, if students' listening skill is better, teachers can read to them the contents of an examination paper to strengthen the reliability of assessment.

6.2 Internal Assessment for Quality Feedback

Assessment is part of learning and teaching, it helps to diagnose students' learning progress. Internal assessment includes formative and summative assessment. In the process of learning Chinese, formative assessment is recommended. It provides invaluable information for teachers to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses and to give quality feedback to learners for improving their own learning. Teachers may find out students' learning needs and strengths and weaknesses so as to divide the learning contents into smaller parts for students' easier and progressive learning. Evidence gathered from students' learning can give teachers feedback and enable them to adjust the teaching strategies in order to enhance students' learning effectiveness.

6.3 Measurement of Chinese Language Learning Standard

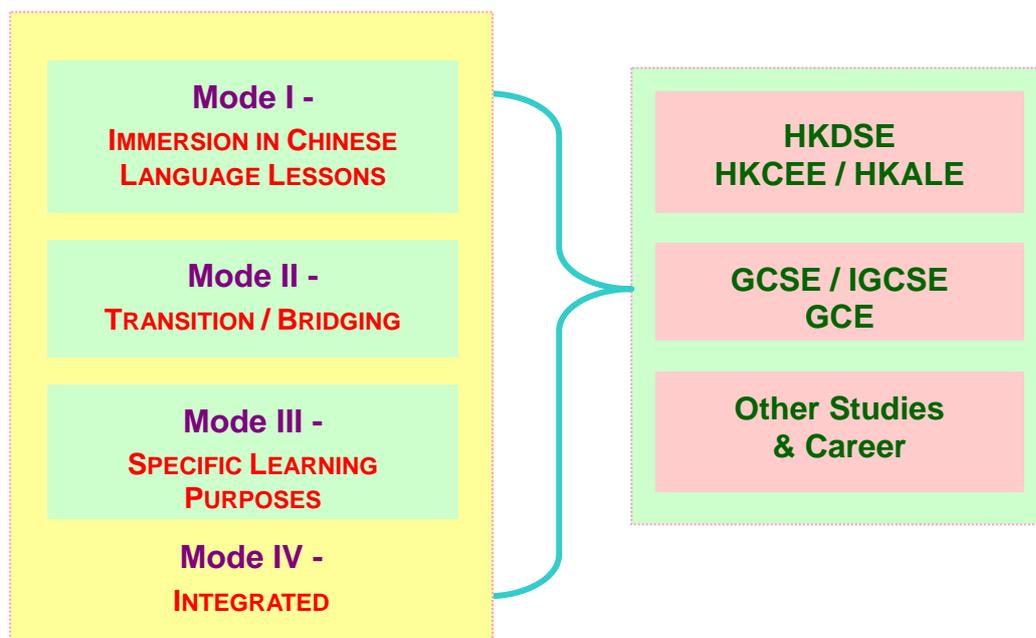
Teachers are required to measure students' Chinese proficiency at different stages. For example, the enrolment diagnosis is helpful for teachers in designing appropriate learning objectives and content for a bridging programme. Diagnosis at different Key Stages helps teachers know more about students' learning progress and make timely adaptations to the curriculum and learning standard. When one Key Stage comes to an end, teachers may also see if students have reached the threshold of Chinese language learning by diagnosis.

6.4 External Assessment

If NCS students can reach similar Chinese language proficiency levels as their Chinese-speaking counterparts, we should encourage them to sit for the Chinese Language of Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) or the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination. NCS students may also apply for other overseas examinations to obtain qualifications in Chinese language. For example, they may choose to sit for General Certificate of Education (GCE),

International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations arranged by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. (Please refer to Appendix XVIII.)

To summarise, diversified assessments and multiple exits are provided to NCS students in Hong Kong upon completion of learning in different modes as shown in the diagram below –



Chapter VII – Learning and Teaching Resources

7.1 Diversified Learning and Teaching Materials

(1) Guiding Principles on Selecting Learning and Teaching Materials

Language learning materials can be texts, audio-visual materials, objects, authentic materials, including the environment. Diversified learning materials can arouse students' learning motivation. Schools may focus on the characteristics of Chinese "expression of meaning" as well as NCS students' learning difficulties in Chinese, together with learning targets and learning objectives and students' cognition to adopt different kinds of materials to increase students' learning interests.

To help NCS students acquire useful language habits, teaching materials have to be designed with a language context, so that teachers can teach students to transfer their knowledge and skills. Teachers are advised to design different language contexts to capitalise on Hong Kong's cultural environment in enabling NCS students to transfer such knowledge to their own ability/ skills. As regards the contents of teaching materials, they have to be authentic, derived from daily life contexts so as to heighten students' learning motivation. The following guiding principles are for teachers' reference –

General Principles

- Conform to NCS students' cognitive development
- Catering for learner diversity
- Positive contents
- Diversified texts
- Arousing learning interests

Principles on Choosing Texts

- With a high readability
- Focus on practical texts

Principles on Choosing Audio-visual Materials

- With vivid languages
- Diversified expressions
- Excellent audio-visual effect and colourful images
- Highly interactive, arousing students' learning motivation

[Please refer to p.73 of "*Chinese Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 3)*"; p.71 of "*Chinese Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 to Secondary 6)*".]

Principles on Chinese Learning Material Selection

- **Learning materials have to conform to students' intellectual development.** Compared to other local students, some NCS students may have less chance to use Chinese language, so their Chinese language standard may be lower than their Chinese-speaking counterparts of the same age. When teaching NCS students, teachers at initial stage may adopt learning materials for junior classes to match up with students' standard. However, even if the type of teaching material reaches suitable standard, the content may not be able to conform to the age and mental development of students. Consequently, to promote students' improvement and development, teachers are advised to be more careful in selecting learning materials and not to adopt anything directly without adjustment.
- **Learning materials have to take into account the feature of diversified cultures among minority groups.** NCS students of different nationalities possess different cultural backgrounds such as religion, cuisine and costume etc. Some of their customs may be greatly different from Chinese culture. When selecting learning materials, teachers are advised to pay special attention to the content of material and respect the various cultures to prevent cultural disputes.

NCS students may not understand Chinese culture as much as their Chinese-speaking counterparts. NCS students are actually curious, and they would be glad to know more about Chinese culture. Therefore, elements of Chinese culture could be added into learning materials appropriately to help students grasp the cultural characteristics of their resident country, city and people around them. From that NCS students could immerse into Hong Kong society and grow up together with other local students. (Please refer to Appendices VIII and XI.)

(2) Teaching Materials Developed by Schools

Since NCS students' learning paces are different, schools have to design some learning and teaching materials that are suitable for their needs. It is advisable for the materials to embody diversified cultural backgrounds, but sensitive contents need to be avoided. Nowadays, some schools have already developed systematic materials for their NCS students. The Quality Education Fund also sponsors schools to develop teaching materials reflective of Hong Kong characteristics. These resources are available in the Central Resources Centre (CRC) for teachers' reference. At the same time, the results of on-site school-based support services and some exemplars have been uploaded on the Language Learning Support Section website. We hope that more school exemplars can be collected for the establishment of a resources sharing platform for teachers.

7.2 Learning Resource Development

(1) Developing Package Materials

The Chinese Language Education Section of the Curriculum Development Institute, Education Bureau (EDB) will help to develop a series of package teaching reference materials. These include “Lexical Lists with English explanations for Fundamental Chinese Learning in Hong Kong Schools” and its web-version, “Path to Mastery of Chinese Characters: Courseware on Chinese Character Writing” (bilingual version) and “Path to Moral Excellence: Primary Chinese Language Learning Software on Traditional Chinese Virtues” (bilingual version) and “From Traditional to Simplified Characters: Simplified Chinese Character Courseware” (English version) and “From Simplified to Traditional Characters: Traditional Chinese Character Courseware” (English version). (For package teaching reference materials, please refer to Appendix XX.)

(2) Teaching Material Adaptation

EDB will collect current school teaching materials, absorb frontline practical experience, and gather opinions widely. After review, research and adaptation, EDB will revise the materials according to students’ development to design learning sets (in a similar format as textbooks) for primary and secondary schools’ reference and use. Based on these learning sets, schools may make adjustment for more suitable learning materials in accordance with students’ language and cultural backgrounds. More diversified teaching materials are expected to be developed in the future for NCS students’ use in Chinese language learning.

7.3 Use of Community Resources

Building on existing strengths, schools may make good use of services and resources provided for NCS students in helping teachers to improve their teaching quality. Parents can have more comprehensive support. The community can also provide more suitable facilities for NCS students to integrate into the Hong Kong society.

(1) On-site School-based Support

EDB will continue to provide on-site school-based support for those schools with intakes of NCS students. Through school visits, co-planning, teachers’ professional development, establishment of a web-based platform as well as developing school-based teaching resources database, EDB will help teachers to better cater for NCS students’ Chinese learning needs.

A school-based curriculum is designed with reference to students’ different starting points. From “word recognition” to “reading”, from “reading” to “writing”, different support programmes are provided to help students enhance their Chinese reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Focus is first put on developing “integrated skills” teaching in which listening, speaking, reading, writing, together with literature, culture are included. Project learning is also developed to help

students acquire more comprehensive language learning and increase their language application skills.

(2) Collaborative Development

Schools may seek professional assistance from services and projects provided by educational organisations, charitable organisations, tertiary institutes and NGOs to provide appropriate support to NCS students. For example, EDB has commissioned tertiary institutes to set up a Chinese Language Learning Centre to jointly render support to teachers and students.

(3) Enhancing Teachers' Professionalism

• Professional Qualifications

Tertiary institutes will provide teachers with programmes for professional qualifications, e.g. certificate, diploma, degree. Through training, teachers are helped to better understand NCS students' learning difficulties from their perspectives. After obtaining the qualification, teachers may be able to develop more suitable curriculum, learning and teaching strategies and assessment tasks for their own NCS students.

• Teacher Professional Development Programmes

EDB will organise in-service training programmes to enhance the professionalism of primary and secondary school teachers regarding NCS students learning Chinese language.

• Joint-school Teacher Professional Development Activities

Currently, teachers' experience in teaching NCS students is rather rudimentary, therefore schools should focus on cultivating human resources and teachers should be encouraged to equip themselves. Apart from studies, courses, seminars, workshops and joint-school experience sharing sessions organised by EDB or tertiary institutes are also beneficial to teachers. They may gain more successful experiences about topics of common concern to enhance their teaching quality.

(4) Parental Support

Regional Offices (REO) under EDB, NGOs and other frontline departments are providing parents of NCS students with services at different levels. As most of the NCS students' parents do not know Chinese, schools should reinforce communication with them from time to time so as to let them know how their children are performing in school. Some of them cannot read Chinese characters and can hardly help their children with their studies. Hence, schools need to understand parents' difficulties and give them whatever support they need. Moreover, EDB will provide more information about education and policy to enable NCS parents to understand Hong Kong education policy and their children's learning progress for the purpose of integration into the Hong Kong society.

(5) Community Support

There are rich resources in every district community. If such resources can be fully utilised, NCS students and parents can be taken care of more comprehensively. For example, community centres can provide after school remedial lessons or nursery services. Through these, NCS students can communicate with others in Chinese language, thus facilitating their integration into the community. Besides, schools may also consider opening their campuses for appropriate after-school support for NCS students. Schools may even enroll parent volunteers to help organise activities for NCS students, encouraging them to communicate in Chinese so that their listening and speaking skills could be enhanced.

(6) Research and Development Projects for NCS students

EDB has commissioned tertiary institutes to develop research projects on NCS students' learning, e.g. collecting data from different schools for analysis; or investigating second language learners' experiences in other districts. Meanwhile, one of the institutes also conducts research on NCS students' language standards. Based on the listening, speaking, reading and writing data collected, an assessment tool would be developed. Teachers may make good use of similar assessment tools to evaluate NCS students' Chinese language proficiency so that they can adjust their learning and teaching strategies.

