Briefing Session on Optimising the Four Senior Secondary Core Subjects

Scenario on Curriculum Planning at School Level

Curriculum Development Institute
February 2021
School Background

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>No. of lessons/cycle</th>
<th>% of lesson time in 3 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>S5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Language</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Issues of Concern Identified

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

- **Timetabling for M2 lessons**
  - M2 lessons fall outside the regular timetable and only few students take M2.
Issues of Concern Identified

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

• **Other Learning Experiences and Applied Learning**
  ◦ Time allocated to OLE is not adequate and no Applied Learning is offered.
Adapted Timetable
(through optimising the 4 core subjects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>No. of lessons/cycle</th>
<th>% of lesson time in 3 years/change (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S4</td>
<td>S5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Language</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renamed subject</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common block</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common block

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For all students</th>
<th><strong>OLE (different themes on a rotational basis)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• MCE (e.g. healthy lifestyle, national identity)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Community service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Career-related experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Aesthetic development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Physical development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ choice</th>
<th><strong>Subjects</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Applied Learning courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maths (Extended Part – M2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other activities</th>
<th><strong>(on a rotational basis)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LaC/RaC activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• English enrichment programmes (e.g. writing skills, debating skills, drama)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• English intervention programmes (e.g. phonics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• STEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Chinese writing programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mathematics enhancement programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating the common block

Example:

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

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

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

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

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

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

LaC/RaC

English Language

Life-wide Learning

Reading & Writing Focuses

Module
- Green Living

Reading materials
- Articles, infographics

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

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

Topic
Good Food Going to Waste

Topic
Food Rescue

Action:
- Community Service: Collecting & delivering food donations to a food charity
- Writing a proposal on Food Angel Recruitment
- Running a Campaign “Food Rescue”
Manpower planning

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