

Recommendations on maximising learning time for the benefit of student learning

There is evidence showing that effective learning time is a pre-condition but not a sufficient condition for school effectiveness and good teaching and learning. Learning time refers to not only classroom periods as students can gain learning experiences anywhere and anytime such as life-wide learning activities. Learning time includes lesson time (teacher-student contact hours in settings not limited to the classroom), the time outside class at school (such as recess, lunch breaks, after-school time, open days, examination days) as well as the time spent outside school including holidays. Hence, schools should holistically plan and arrange students' learning time so as to nurturing students' ability and attitudes in self-directed learning, and creating more opportunities for them to learn, thus allowing them to make the most benefit out of learning in school. Some possible ways for schools to achieve the above objectives are suggested below:

Create more learning time for students

- Curriculum adaptation and quality use of learning time
 - Adapt the curriculum by making reference to the core and extension components suggested in the CDC Key Learning Area and subject curriculum guides.
 - Use the recommendations in Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides to reduce overlapping content, to create time and space for life-wide learning, project learning, library lesson, morning reading, etc.
 - Encourage active learning by students, e.g. providing them learning materials for preparation and/or presentation, and lower teachers' instruction time correspondingly.
 - Organise cultural/aesthetic activities (such as concerts, painting classes, drama and dance performance, etc.) during lunch time and before/after school for whole-person development.
 - Use Saturdays and school holidays flexibly for conducting co-curricular activities such as voluntary service, exchange programmes outside Hong Kong to broaden students' learning experiences.

- Review assessment policy and practice
 - Develop a school assessment policy by giving more emphasis on “Assessment for Learning” and “Assessment as Learning”. Avoid disrupting student learning by frequent tests or examinations.
 - Avoid spending too much time on pre-test and pre-examination revisions and post-test and post-examination correction of answer scripts by students.
 - Provide well-planned post-examination activities to enhance student learning, e.g. community service, career-related experiences, moral and civic education

programmes, physical and aesthetic experiences, accelerated learning programmes, etc.

- Change the assessment practice by reducing the weighting of the final end-of-term examination. Schedule the final examination period to a later time in the school year instead of early June.
- Change the practice of shortening the time students attend at school during and after examinations (particularly at the primary and junior secondary levels).

➤ Scheduling of staff development days and discretionary holidays

- Schedule staff development days for Saturdays to avoid affecting the learning time of students as far as possible. Staff development days are excluded from the counting of school days.
- Review the practice of scheduling discretionary holidays and consider reducing the number in each school year.

Exercise flexibility in time-tabling arrangement to extend and enrich students' learning experiences

- Arrange more double periods, longer periods of 45-55 minutes or a combination of long and short periods in different terms or throughout the year to provide students with a wide range of learning experiences to meet different learning needs and objectives.
- Readjust the timetable in each term to cater for a fair weighting of subjects as well as learning needs of students.
- Make flexible use of lesson time to enable grouping of students for the same subject within the same level for promoting reading, collaborative learning, thematic study and project learning.
- Arrange block time for large group teaching, whole-school activities or for life-wide learning.

More guidelines on how to help students make the most benefit out of learning in school are given in the *Basic Education Curriculum Guide – To Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1 – 6)* and the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* prepared by the Curriculum Development Council in 2014 and 2017 respectively. Relevant information is available at the website of the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) (website address: www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-guides).

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