

Sharing of good practices by schools participating in the Case Study on Support for Learning and Teaching Chinese Language for Non-Chinese Speaking Students (2022/23 school year)

The Faculty of Education of the University of Hong Kong was commissioned by the Education Bureau to conduct a “Case Study on Support for Learning and Teaching Chinese Language for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Students in Primary and Secondary Schools” (the Study) in the 2022/23 school year. The objectives are to understand how schools have supported NCS students’ Chinese learning and identify factors that contribute to the effective Chinese learning for these students. Six schools, including four primary schools and two secondary schools, were invited to participate in the Study. The good practices shared by the participating schools are as follows:

I. School environment: creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools

1. School management attached importance to and took part in the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools
 - All interviewed curriculum leaders placed great emphasis on the physical and mental development of NCS students. Through proactively engaged with these students, they thoroughly understood the students’ cultural backgrounds, life experiences, learning contexts, etc.
 - School management valued cultural diversity on campus and strived to create an inclusive school environment by promoting multiculturalism and inclusiveness which encompassed equality, respect and acceptance. They developed school-based measures that catered for the needs of NCS students, taking into account their religious customs, daily habits and learning needs.
2. A diverse range of measures were implemented to foster cultural integration and facilitate effective learning and teaching of Chinese language
 - Though the schools admitted a relatively low number of NCS students, they still upheld the principles of fairness and equality and treated all students from different cultural backgrounds with equal respect.
 - The effective measures included:

- (a) Making class arrangements that encourage student integration enabled both NCS students and Chinese-speaking students to attend classes together, which helped create an immersed Chinese language environment for NCS students;
 - (b) Flexibly arranging learning activities to create more opportunities for interactions between NCS students and their Chinese-speaking peers; and
 - (c) Organising multicultural and inclusive activities to promote mutual understanding and acceptance between NCS students and their Chinese-speaking peers in order to cultivate attitudes of respect, acceptance, and appreciation for different cultures, and enhance the multicultural literacy of teachers and students.
3. Emphasis was placed on teachers' professional development and multicultural competence
- Both school management and frontline teachers of the participating schools had developed multicultural competence. They recognised the cultural diversity brought by NCS students, demonstrating values and attitudes of respect, acceptance and appreciation for different cultures.
 - The teaching team designed the curriculum, adapted teaching materials and explored effective pedagogical methods and strategies through collaborative lesson planning, observation and evaluation. They participated in relevant training programmes organised by the Education Bureau or other institutions to enhance the development of the school-based Chinese curriculum and foster their professional development.
 - Mentorship schemes where experienced teachers provided guidance to new teachers were implemented to enhance their teaching competence and promote professional development. This scheme also helped the school address the turnover of teachers. For example, when experienced teachers have left, the school can still ensure the teaching quality of the teaching team.
4. Home-school networking was strengthened through ongoing communication with parents of NCS students
- Schools established mutual trust and close co-operation with parents of NCS students, enabling a better understanding of students' family situations so as to provide more appropriate support on Chinese learning. The participating schools took the following measures to promote parent-school communication:
 - (a) Having phone calls or face-to-face communication;
 - (b) Making good use of instant messaging tools for group messaging;
 - (c) Providing English translations of important notices to parents; and

- (d) Organising parent activities and encouraging the participation of parents of NCS students.
5. NCS students got along well with their Chinese-speaking peers
- One of the motivations for NCS students to learn Chinese was being able to communicate with their Chinese-speaking peers. Such peer interactions contributed to creating a Chinese language environment for NCS students both within and outside of school, providing them with more opportunities to learn and practise Chinese.
 - When encountering difficulties in their Chinese learning, the interviewed NCS students were willing to seek assistance from their Chinese-speaking peers. Some students expressed their desire for more conversations in Chinese with their Chinese-speaking peers, which would help them improve their Chinese proficiency.
6. Parents of NCS students had high expectations for their children and valued their children's Chinese learning
- The vast majority of parents of NCS students had high expectations for their children's life planning. For example, they aspired for their children to study in local universities and secure promising employment opportunities.
 - These parents gave special attention to their children's Chinese learning and actively looked for learning resources for them.

II. Learning and teaching: school-based curricula and teaching strategies

1. The development of school-based curricula was promoted under a common curriculum framework
- All the interviewed schools realised that adopting an across-the-board Chinese Language curriculum with pre-set simpler contents and lower standards could hinder the development of NCS students' Chinese language abilities. They understood that curriculum adjustments made in response to the learning context of NCS students must be based on a structured and gradual approach. Most of the interviewed schools aligned the development of their school-based curricula with a "common curriculum framework" making reference to the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework" ("Learning Framework"). In addition, relevant professional development training programmes were organised to address the challenges to and needs of frontline teachers.
 - Teachers adapted their teaching methods and assessed students' learning performance by making reference to the "Chinese Language Assessment Tools for NCS students", as well

as employing the eight levels of learning outcomes as set out in the “Learning Framework”, which provided a progressive approach of evaluation on their learning achievements.

2. Frontline teachers were concerned about the Chinese language learning needs of NCS students
 - Most of the interviewed Chinese Language teachers would talk to NCS students to understand their cultural background, life experiences, learning motivations, etc., and used such information as a reference for designing and adjusting the teaching strategies.
 - Because of the relatively small number of NCS students admitted by the participating schools and the use of school-based curriculum, teachers had more flexibility to cater for NCS students as second language learners of Chinese language.
3. Strategic measures were explored to address the learning diversity of NCS students
 - Schools placed importance on using tiering strategies to address the learning diversity of NCS students.
 - Teachers adopted tiering strategies in pre-lesson planning and in-class teaching.
 - Schools also emphasised the use of diverse teaching strategies, such as implementing collaborative teaching, arranging additional teaching staff to monitor the learning progress of NCS students during class, providing special attention in the form of individual support and homogenous grouping, so as to address learning diversity.

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