

School-based Curriculum Change (Secondary)

A long-established secondary school in Eastern Kowloon has received increasing numbers of academically lower achievers in its S1 intake in recent years. Although there are increasing learning and behavioral problems among their students, most of the teachers are reluctant to make changes. The School Head, together with some enthusiastic and experienced teachers in the Science Department, have initiated the changes. These changes started with the school curriculum, some teaching practices and teacher development. The following summarizes the different phases of the school-based curriculum change, which is taking place with the support of officers from the Curriculum Development Institute:

Phases of Curriculum Change:

Phase 1 (98-99):

Feature: Initialization

- *Pilot Participation:* The school joined the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme in which professional support was given to schools with a large intake of academically low achievers
- *Subject involved:* initially only one subject - Integrated Science at Secondary 1 to start with.
- *Focus of work:* development of teaching resources including teaching aids, experimental designs and worksheets adapted to cater for the abilities of the students

Phase 2 (99-00):

Feature: development

- *Subjects involved:* Based on the successful experience of adapting the Integrated Science curriculum, teachers of two other subject areas - Mathematics and English Language - also participated in adapting their curriculum for the students at junior secondary levels
- *Focus of work:*
 - ▮ *Science:* adopting a wider range of student-centred teaching and learning strategies and using data from assessments as feedback to improve learning and teaching
 - ▮ *Mathematics:* re-organising the curriculum content and developing suitable worksheets to help students master some key mathematical concepts and applications
 - ▮ *English Language:* Incorporating more student-centred and task-based learning activities

in the curriculum to enhance learning motivation and shifting the teaching paradigm from knowledge transmission to the development of generic skills

Phase 3(00-01):

Feature: Nurturing the "Learning to Learn" paradigm

- *Subjects actively involved:* Integrated Science, Mathematics and English Language at junior secondary levels
- *Features of work:* School-based curriculum development in the three subject areas was designed to work towards:
 - ▶ Continuous development of authentic and practical learning and teaching resources
 - ▶ Enhancing students' participation in the learning process through more varied student-centred learning activities
 - ▶ Shifting the teaching paradigm from knowledge transmission to the development of generic skills
 - ▶ Adopting continuous and alternative forms of assessment to evaluate students' performance as a feedback mechanism to enhance the teaching, learning and assessment cycle
- Cross-fertilization among teachers is being encouraged through curriculum leadership building and collaborative projects in the school.