提升

香港語文水平行動方案

Action Plan to Raise
Language Standards
in Hong Kong

語文教育檢討總結報告

Final Report of
Language Education Review

ACTION PLAN
TO RAISE
LANGUAGE STANDARDS
IN HONG KONG

FINAL REVIEW REPORT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
(SCOLAR)

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FOREWORD

The language education policy of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is to enable the Hong Kong people, particularly students and working adults, to become biliterate (in written Chinese and English) and trilingual (in Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English). While this policy has extensive community support, how best to achieve its goal has been a subject of ongoing debate both inside and outside the education sector.

For a number of years, there has been growing concern within the community over the need for a more concerted approach to improving the language competencies of our population to ensure that Hong Kong remains a truly cosmopolitan city.

In early 2001, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR)[1] began a review of language education in Hong Kong. My colleagues and I have reviewed academic and official literature on the subject, visited a number of schools, discussed the issue in depth with key stakeholders, and conducted a survey on motivation for language learning.

We issued a consultation document titled 'Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong' in January 2003. Copies of the document were made available at District Offices for distribution to members of the public. They were also sent to kindergartens and child care centres, primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions, school councils, teacher organisations, parent-teacher associations, education-related advisory bodies, business associations and professional organisations. We also posted the consultation document and the full review report on the SCOLAR website (www.language-education.com) for online access by the public.

During the eight-week public consultation period, I presented the consultation document at meetings of the Legislative Council Panel on Education, Education Commission, Curriculum Development Council, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Council, and

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[1] The terms of reference and membership of the Committee are at Annexes I & II.

Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications. I also conducted two public consultation sessions to reach out to members of the community and solicit their views.

We received a total of 193 submissions by post, e-mail, fax and telephone from a variety of organisations and individuals. The review findings and recommendations were also widely reported in the media.

We would like to thank all members of the public who shared their valuable ideas with us. We have tried to summarise their views and our response to them (both shaded in blue) in this final review report.

Our final recommendations (underlined, with action parties identified in the right margin) attempt to set the direction for future language education policies and measures. They are what we consider to be realistic and achievable, taking into account public opinions and factors such as the availability of resources and the qualifications of serving language teachers. We have also recapitulated our recommendations at the end of this report for ease of reference.

The successful implementation of our final recommendations relies on the support and co-operation of the entire community. I appeal to the Government, school management, teachers, parents, employers, the mass media, and language learners themselves each to do their part. Let's work hand in hand to raise language standards in Hong Kong!

Michael Tien
Chairman
Standing Committee on Language Education and Research

CHAPTER 1

WHY DO WE NEED TO BE BILITERATE AND TRILINGUAL?

1.1   Language is a critical feature that defines a particular culture. We use language to acquire and construct knowledge. The ability to understand and master language has a profound impact on the cognitive and social development, academic achievement and career prospects of every individual.

1.2   In a wider context, the language ability of a community is key to its prosperity. In Hong Kong, Chinese and English have been commonly used for more than a century. Part of the reason for Hong Kong's success as an international city has been the ability to bridge the gap between the English-speaking, global business community and the Chinese-speaking merchants and traders in Hong Kong and the mainland of China. Being biliterate and trilingual has been our competitive advantage.

1.3   Increasing globalisation and a more open China market have made it more important than ever to enhance the language abilities of the community to meet the challenges of greater competition.

1.4   Feedback received during public consultation revealed an impression among members of the public that our concern about the local population's language standards was based primarily on economic considerations. We thus find it necessary to emphasise here our recognition of the critical importance of language competence in fulfilling the overall aims of education[2]. Good language ability is essential for **life-long learning** and the **communication of knowledge, ideas, values, attitudes and experience**. It enables our younger generation to realise their full potential and cope effectively with the challenges of a rapidly changing and keenly competitive knowledge-based society.

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[2]   The overall aims of education for the 21st Century, according to the Education Commission, should be 'to enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large.'

Falling standards or rising demands?

1.5   The results of public examinations such as the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCE) Examination indicate that students have performed fairly consistently in language subjects over the past three decades[3]. Yet employers have expressed increasing concern in recent years about the inadequate language proficiency of their employees, particularly in spoken English and Putonghua[4]. This concern was confirmed by the overwhelming public support towards our call to raise language standards in Hong Kong.

1.6   It may be that language demands in the workplace have outstripped the growth in the number of graduates or workers with the required level of language proficiency. Consider the following -

    (a)   The contribution of service industries to GDP has risen from 69% in 1982[5] to 87% in 2001[6]; over the same period the percentage of employees engaged in service industries has increased from 52% (1.25 million) to 80% (2.61 million) of the workforce;

    (b)   Over the past decade, the number of regional offices of international companies in Hong Kong has more than doubled from 1 345 in 1992[7] to 3 119 in 2002;

    (c)   Hong Kong's top three trading partners in 1970 were the USA, Japan and the UK. In 2002, the mainland of China[8] was our largest trading partner above the USA and Japan; and

    (d)   The number of tourists from the mainland and Taiwan has increased over 60-fold from about 140 000 in 1980[9] to 9.3

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[3] For Chinese, the percentage of students attaining Grades A-C has ranged from 17.7% (about 4 500) in 1970 to 16.5% (about 14 000) in 2002. Overall, 65% (about 56 000) of students attained Grade E or above in 2002, compared to 66.8% (about 17 000) in 1970. For English, the percentage of students attaining Grades A-C, the equivalent of a General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O-Level) pass, has ranged from 9.4% (about 2 500) in 1970 to 8.5% (close to 6 000) in 2002. Overall, 63% (close to 44 000) of students attained Grade E or above in 2002, compared to 57.7% (about 15 000) in 1970.

[4] See, for example, the 2001 Business Outlook Survey conducted by The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, the Business Prospect Survey 2001 conducted by the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, and the 2000 Establishment Survey on Manpower Training and Job Skills Requirement conducted by the Census and Statistics Department.

[5] This is the first year when the data concerning service industries' contribution to GDP and employment became available.

[6] Based on provisional statistics for 2001.

[7] This is the first year when the data on number of regional headquarters in Hong Kong became available.

[8] The mainland of China has been Hong Kong's largest trading partner since 1985.

[9] This is the first year when the data on visitor arrivals from the mainland became available.

million (56% of total visitor arrivals) in 2002.

1.7   The above statistics attest to Hong Kong's transformation since the late 1970s from a manufacturing base into an international knowledge-based, services-oriented economy, with closer economic ties to the mainland. On the other hand, higher education has expanded enormously over the past 30 years. The number of students enrolled in full-time, post-secondary programmes[10] has increased from 15 000 in 1971 to 101 000 in 2002[11]. It is obvious that more service sector jobs and higher education opportunities are now available. These, nevertheless, demand a higher language proficiency of our workers and students.

What should be done?

1.8   Given these changes, it serves no useful purpose to deliberate whether language standards have fallen or not. The best course of action now is to introduce concrete, concerted and well-targeted measures to raise the language standards of the population to match the ever-increasing demand for students and workers with good language skills.

1.9   To bring about the required improvements, we should start by **specifying a clear and realistic set of expected language competencies** to reflect the current and future needs of our society. This will help to ensure that all language learners know what they should be working towards. It will be the focus of Chapter 2.

1.10   Once the expected language competencies have been clarified, we must do all we can to help our workers and students achieve them. The survey we conducted as part of this review shows that the first necessary step is to raise people's motivation for language learning. Chapter 3 of this report will discuss in detail the roles of various parties in our community in **creating a more motivating language learning environment** for our students and workforce.

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[10] These include programmes offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (and the former Colleges of Education and Technical Teacher's College), other University Grants Committee-funded institutions, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (and the former Technical Institutes and Technical College) as well as private post-secondary institutions.
[11] Based on provisional statistics for 2002.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?
- SPECIFYING A CLEAR AND REALISTIC SET OF EXPECTED LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

<u>Action by</u>

Section 1   Description and assessment of expected language competencies

2.1.1   While we strive to strengthen our competitive advantage in being biliterate and trilingual, it is impractical and unrealistic to expect every member of our population to attain a high level of proficiency in both Chinese and English.

2.1.2   The Chinese and English competencies expected of students at different educational levels and of working adults in different fields should reflect society's current and future needs. They should at the same time be realistic, i.e. achievable by individuals within a normal range of ability.

2.1.3   Different individuals may begin learning Chinese and English at different times in their lives. For most Hong Kong people, formal education in both languages starts in primary school. Setting out the competencies to be achieved at this and other stages of schooling will be helpful for the planning and evaluation of individual students' progress in language learning.

2.1.4   Language learning is a life-long task. It does not stop at the end of school education. University students and working adults, who have left the school system, should continue to enhance their language ability. To help them set their language learning goals, we see the need to provide more information on the Chinese and English competence employers expect of them.

2.1.5   <u>We thus recommend specifying the competencies expected of language learners both inside and outside the school system according to educational attainment up to university graduate level and beyond. To facilitate public understanding, these expected language competencies should</u>

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<u>be clearly defined using descriptors (i.e. statements describing what a person at a particular level of proficiency can do) and be accompanied by exemplars (i.e. samples of written work or recordings of conversations illustrating what a person at that level of proficiency can generally do).</u>

2.1.6   Some overseas bodies, such as the Council of Europe, have adopted a unified scale of language proficiency to describe what persons at different proficiency levels are able to do in listening, speaking, reading and writing, with a collection of 'can do' statements serving as descriptors. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages[12] and the ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) scale[13] are two examples of such proficiency scales[14]. Language learning programmes and tests have been developed by different European agencies with reference to the two scales, which provide common bases for the recognition of qualifications across Europe. The relationship between the two scales and a number of English tests developed with reference to them is shown in a diagrammatic representation in Annex III.

2.1.7   We will see from Section 2 below that efforts are already being made in Hong Kong to specify the Chinese and English competencies expected of students in Primary 1 to Secondary 5. We suggest that similar efforts be made to define the language competencies expected of students and working adults beyond the educational level of Secondary 5. The resulting sets of expected Chinese and English competencies, as illustrated in Annex IV in the form of a scale, will provide a common basis for developing language learning programmes and assessment for local learners. As we will see in Section 7 below, a similar scale of Putonghua proficiency will also be developed.

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[12] For more information on the Common European Framework, please refer to the Modern Languages section of the Council of Europe website at http://www.coe.int.

[13] For more information on the ALTE scale, please refer to the ALTE website at www.alte.org.

[14] 'Progress maps', 'proficiency scales', 'scales of achievement', and 'bands of performance' are frequently used interchangeably.

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Section 2   Basic competencies of students in Primary 1 to Secondary 7

2.2.1   In Hong Kong, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) has adopted the 'bands of performance'[15] since the early 1990s to describe the expected performance of students in relation to the learning targets of the Chinese and English Language curricula for Primary 1 to Secondary 5. These 'bands of performance' were developed based on past studies involving teachers and academics. They comprise statements that describe what learners are able to do in each Key Stage[16].   However, the descriptors are not yet accompanied by samples of student performance (i.e. exemplars).

2.2.2   In July 2002, new curriculum frameworks for Chinese and English Language were issued by the Curriculum Development Council. They set out in detail the learning targets and objectives for the two Key Learning Areas, making clear to language teachers what they should aim to help their students achieve in each Key Stage.

2.2.3   To assist teachers to evaluate their students' progress in learning the two languages, the Council is further developing a set of **learning outcomes,** which will describe the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that students can be expected to develop on completing Key Stages 1 to 4 (i.e. at the end of Primary 3, Primary 6, Secondary 3 and Secondary 5).

Curriculum
Development
Council
(CDC)

2.2.4   Moreover, the Council is working out a **subset** of learning outcomes called **basic competencies** (BCs) that are essential for all students to achieve at the end of each Key Stage. The Council will provide descriptors and exemplars to

CDC

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[15] The 'bands of performance' can be found in Appendices 10 and 11 of the English Language Syllabus for Primary 1-6 (1997) and Appendices 14 and 15 of the English Language Syllabus for Secondary 1-5 issued by the Curriculum Development Council in 1999.

[16] Progression from Primary 1 to Secondary 5 is divided into four Key Stages. Key Stage 1 covers Primary 1 to 3, Key Stage 2 Primary 4 to 6, Key Stage 3 Secondary 1 to 3, and Key Stage 4 Secondary 4 to 5.

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illustrate these basic competencies in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

2.2.5   In our public consultation exercise, both the education and business sectors expressed support for the development of basic competencies in Chinese and English Language for students in Primary 1 to Secondary 7. Most recognised the need to take employers' views into account in setting the basic competencies expected of students having completed Secondary 3, 5 or 7. Some educators, however, cautioned that a **balance in educational and vocational considerations** should be struck to avoid an over-emphasis on the functional aspect of language proficiency and a neglect of other important elements in the language curricula (e.g. enjoyment and appreciation of literature and other language arts). There was also the worry that school management and teachers would focus solely on the basic competencies and lose sight of the need to help students achieve the full set of learning outcomes for each Key Stage.

2.2.6   Taking into account these views and concerns of the public, our final recommendations are as follows –

(a) We support the Curriculum Development Council's work on the development of learning outcomes and basic competencies in Chinese and English Language from Key Stages 1 to 4. We recommend that the same effort be extended up to Secondary 7, with the addition of a new Key Stage 5. (When a new three-year senior secondary education structure is introduced, a new Key Stage 4 should cover Secondary 4 to 6.)

CDC

(b) We support the illustration of basic competencies using descriptors and exemplars. Providing concrete examples of student performance in listening, speaking, reading and writing (i.e. exemplars) will help to make the basic competencies understandable to the general public.

CDC

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(c) Students who have completed Secondary 5 or 7 may leave the education system to enter the labour market. A small number of students may do so upon completion of Secondary 3. We recommend that the basic competencies to be achieved at the end of Key Stages 3 to 5 should reflect the level of Chinese and English required by Secondary 3, 5 or 7 students to function effectively in the entry-level jobs they are likely to undertake[17]. Such competencies (e.g. taking part in conversations, understanding verbal and written instructions, comprehending and composing written text) will provide a good foundation for further language training in the workplace.

CDC

(d) Currently, members of the Curriculum Development Council's Committees on Chinese and English Language Education are all teachers and academics. To ensure that **both the educational and vocational needs** of our students are addressed in the planning and development of language curricula, we recommend that the membership of these Committees and relevant working groups be expanded to include **human resources professionals** with expertise in language training.

Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB)

(e) The Curriculum Development Council should make reference to English proficiency scales used internationally, such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or the ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) scale, in developing the basic competencies for English (see also paragraph 2.6.3 below).

CDC

(f) The basic competencies for a Key Stage should be regularly reviewed to accommodate changes in societal demand as well as changes in the

CDC

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[17] See Annex V for the top 10 occupations held by Secondary 3, 5 and 7 school leavers (Source: 2001 Population Census, Census and Statistics Department).

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language proficiency of the population over time.

(g)   School management and teachers should help students to achieve not only the basic competencies but the **full range of learning outcomes** that the language curricula aim to deliver.

School management & teachers

Section 3   Assessment for students in Primary 1 to Secondary 3

2.3.1   Having specified the basic competencies expected of primary and secondary students, we need instruments to help us assess the extent to which students are achieving them. The former Education Department[18] (ED) has commissioned the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) to develop the **Basic Competency Assessment** (BCA), as recommended by the Education Commission, to monitor students' attainment of the basic competencies in Key Stages 1 to 3.

EMB & HKEAA

2.3.2   There are two BCA programmes – System Assessment and Student Assessment. The BCA **System Assessment** will be conducted on students at the end of Key Stages 1 to 3 (i.e. in Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3) **progressively from 2004 to 2006**[19]. It should be a low-stakes assessment and monitoring tool to indicate to the Government the overall percentage of students achieving the basic competencies for their Key Stages in each of the four skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). It should also allow individual schools to understand the overall language standard of their own students as compared to the standard of the student population as a whole.

EMB & HKEAA

2.3.3   To monitor individual students' progress in the four language skills, school management and teachers will rely on internal assessment (e.g. classroom observation, school

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[18] The Education Department has been merged with the Education and Manpower Bureau since January 2003.

[19] The System Assessment will start for Primary 3 in 2004, followed by Primary 6 in 2005 and Secondary 3 in 2006.

<u>Action by</u>

assignments and tests).   The online **Student Assessment** programme of the BCA will provide schools with additional information on individual students' strengths and weaknesses as well as their progress in attaining the basic competencies in reading and listening[20].   The programme will provide a large pool of assessment items, which teachers and students can use as a language learning resource.   The programme will become available in phases **from 2003 to 2006**. <u>School management and teachers should use the information collected through their schools' internal assessment and the Student Assessment programme to identify students who require additional support in language learning.</u>

EMB & HKEAA

School management & teachers

2.3.4   Feedback received during our public consultation generally supported the idea that regular assessment should be instituted to keep track of students' progress in language learning from Key Stages 1 to 3.   However, against the background of a strong examination-oriented culture in Hong Kong, there were major concerns about the possible negative influence of the BCA System Assessment on language education in schools.   Educators were worried that most schools would spend much time drilling their students for the Assessment if the test results were made public and used by the Government to evaluate individual schools' performance.

2.3.5   We acknowledge that it is necessary to guard against any potential damage arising from inappropriate drilling towards tests.   We agree with educators that the Government should announce its policy relating to the reporting and use of the assessment results as soon as possible to dispel any misconceptions and alleviate anxiety. To address the concerns expressed, we have added a recommendation on the reporting of the assessment results in sub-paragraph 2.3.8(a) below.

2.3.6   What action should we take to help students who do not attain the basic competencies in Chinese or English

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[20] The Student Assessment programme will focus on the assessment of basic competencies in reading and listening.   In the longer run, this programme will become part of an Assessment for Learning Resource Bank, the scope of which will be expanded to cover other learning outcomes and language skills.

<u>Action by</u>

Language? Few agreed that such students should be retained in the same school level unless they also had problems in other subjects. Most who responded to our question in the consultation document believed that students who failed to achieve the basic competencies should be allowed to proceed to the next school level and the next Key Stage. But additional support should be provided to help them catch up and achieve the basic competencies at the end of the next Key Stage. There was also some support for keeping students in the same Key Stage with regard to the particular language subject in which they had difficulties. The majority of the public believed that individual schools should be given the discretion to adopt an approach best suited for their students, considering the schools' own circumstances in terms of student diversity and available resources.

2.3.7   We agree that school management and teachers, who have the most information about individual students, are in the best position to decide how to help their students improve their language competencies. Our recommendations in sub-paragraphs 2.3.8(b) and (d) below aim to encourage schools to give proper attention to students with particular difficulties in language learning.

2.3.8   <u>Considering the views and concerns of the public, our final recommendations are as follows -</u>

(a) <u>The Government should report the BCA System Assessment results of the student population as a whole for public information. However, to keep the System Assessment a low-stakes assessment, neither the Government nor the school management should release results of individual schools to the public.</u>

EMB

(b) <u>Individual students who do not attain the basic competencies in Chinese or English Language should not be barred from moving up to the next school level unless they also have difficulties in other subjects. School management may allow these students to move up to the next school level</u>

School management

<u>Action by</u>

as well as the next Key Stage. They should provide these students with additional support in the relevant language subject (e.g. through small group teaching) to help them catch up and achieve the basic competencies for the next Key Stage. Alternatively, school management may allow such students to move up to the next school level but keep them in the same Key Stage for the relevant language subject. They may consider adopting cross level subject setting[21], through which students at different school levels but with similar ability in a language subject may be taught in the same group.

(c) Based on the information collected through the System Assessment, the Government should channel available resources to schools according to their need for support in language education. In terms of resources allocation, priority should be given to helping primary students achieve the basic competencies for Key Stage 2 before they enter secondary schools.

EMB &
school
management

(d) The Government should also work with individual schools to devise appropriate strategies and programmes to enhance language teaching and learning based on the information collected through the Basic Competency Assessment.

EMB &
school
management

Section 4   Assessment for students in Secondary 5 and 7

2.4.1   Beyond Key Stage 3 (i.e. Secondary 3), the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCE) and the Hong Kong Advanced Level (HKAL) Chinese and English examinations have been the most widely accepted assessments of students' language competencies at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5 (i.e. Secondary 5 and 7). Currently, these examinations, administered by the Hong Kong Examinations and

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[21] With cross level subject setting, pupils of the same standard in a subject (e.g. English), who may come from different school levels, are re-grouped into the same set. A curriculum appropriate to their standard is chosen.

<u>Action by</u>

Assessment Authority, are norm-referenced, where the performance of a candidate is compared to that of other candidates, and grades are awarded according to the relative standing of the candidates in a cohort. The Authority has recently decided to convert its examinations, where appropriate, from norm-referenced to standards-referenced. In a standards-referenced assessment, the performance of a candidate is compared to a set of performance standards, and grades are awarded according to the standard attained by the candidates.

2.4.2   In the public consultation exercise, we found general support for the move to make the HKCE and HKAL examinations standards-referenced. While some would like to see the change implemented as soon as possible, others cautioned that sufficient time should be allowed for the standards-referenced examinations to be developed properly, in consultation with the education sector on the examination format and grading criteria.

2.4.3   In its response to our recommendations in the consultation document, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority confirmed that it had decided to adopt a standards-referenced system for the HKCE Chinese and English examinations. The main purpose is to provide more explicit meaning to the grades given for the examinations, by making clear what a candidate with a particular result in a language subject can do. The Authority now plans to introduce standards-referenced HKCE examinations for both Chinese and English in 2007.

2.4.4   The Authority will consider and decide by the middle of 2005 whether standards-referenced HKAL Chinese and English examinations will also be developed and be implemented in 2009. By mid-2005, the Authority will have completed the development of the standards-referenced HKCE Chinese and English examinations. Moreover, by then, the timing of the proposed changes to the senior secondary education structure will have become clearer.

<u>Action by</u>

2.4.5   During public consultation, it was pointed out to us that setting Grade E (or the passing grade) of the future standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations against the basic competencies for Key Stages 4 and 5 respectively may affect the stability of the grade standard over time. Since the basic competencies for each Key Stage will be regularly reviewed, linking a particular grade of a standards-referenced examination to the basic competencies for a Key Stage would entail changes in the standard of that grade whenever the basic competencies for that Key Stage are revised. We agree that it is important to maintain the stability of the standard of the grades given for a standards-referenced examination, and have thus revised our recommendation as shown in sub-paragraph 2.4.6(d) below.

2.4.6   <u>Our final recommendations, taking into consideration the views received from the public and the advice of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, are as follows -</u>

(a)   <u>We support the Authority's decision to develop **standards-referenced HKCE examinations for Chinese Language and English Language**, and its plan to implement them **in 2007**.</u>   HKEAA

(b)   <u>Should the current senior secondary education structure continue, we recommend that the Authority develop **standards-referenced HKAL Chinese Language and Culture and Use of English examinations** and implement them **in 2009**.</u>   HKEAA

(c)   <u>The Authority should clearly specify the standard of each grade given for its standards-referenced examinations, using descriptors and exemplars in listening, speaking, reading and writing.</u>   HKEAA

(d)   <u>The Authority and the Curriculum Development Council should agree on and advise the public the particular grades in the standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations that reflect the basic competencies for Key Stage 4 (i.e. Secondary 5) and Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 7).</u>   HKEAA & CDC

<u>Action by</u>

2.4.7   The Basic Competency Assessment, together with the standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations, will provide a complete suite of assessments to help us monitor students' achievement of the basic competencies in Chinese and English Language from Key Stages 1 to 5 (i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 7).

Section 5   Language requirements for university admission

2.5.1   Beyond Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 7), some students will continue their studies in local universities. The public indicated their agreement in the consultation exercise that students admitted to universities should have the necessary Chinese and English competencies to benefit from higher education programmes conducted in one or the other of the two languages. Some people, nevertheless, cautioned against barring from higher education students who were weak in languages but strong in other abilities.

2.5.2   With regard to English, there was support for aligning the local minimum requirement for university admission, which is currently Grade E in the HKAL Use of English examination, to the standard adopted overseas for admission of international students. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the English language requirement for international students is generally set at Grade C or above in the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O-Level) (Overseas) English examination[22], or Band 6 or above in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)[23]. In the event that local English language requirement has to be raised to keep in line with international standard, some questioned whether there would be enough qualified students to take up the 14,500 publicly funded first-year first-degree places each year.

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[22] Since the mid-1960s, Grade C or above in the HKCE English Language (Syllabus B) examination and its predecessor has been recognised as equivalent to a pass (Grade C or above) in the GCE O-Level (Overseas) English examination, based on regular vetting by the former University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES).

[23] IELTS is an international assessment of English language competencies in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Candidates receive scores on a Band Scale from 1 up to 9.

<u>Action by</u>

2.5.3 <u>Having considered the views of the public, our final recommendations are as follows –</u>

    (a) <u>Students admitted to higher education programmes should demonstrate a level of Chinese and English not lower than the basic competencies for Key Stage 5 (or the new Key Stage 4 when the new senior secondary education structure is in place).</u>

    (b) <u>The University Grants Committee (UGC) should work with local universities to determine, with the help of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority and the Curriculum Development Council, the grades in the future standards-referenced HKAL Chinese and English examinations to be set as the general minimum requirement for university admission. In doing so, they should take into account the English language requirement adopted overseas for admission of international students to English-medium universities, such as Grade C or above in GCE O-Level (Overseas) English, or Band 6 or above in IELTS.</u>

UGC, local universities, HKEAA & CDC

Section 6   Language competencies expected of university graduates and working adults

English competencies

2.6.1 We found in our public consultation exercise that employers and business organisations were generally supportive of specifying the language competencies expected of working adults, including university graduates, at different levels of educational attainment. Since the University Grants Committee has adopted IELTS as the common English proficiency assessment for graduating students of the UGC-funded institutions, we suggested in the consultation document that English competencies expected of university graduates and professional groups be specified with reference to the IELTS Band Scale. We also recommended that IELTS be used to assess the English proficiency of working adults.

<u>Action by</u>

2.6.2   Many English language course providers and test administrators, however, disagreed with our recommendations. They argued that IELTS was not suitable for all working adults. Neither was it appropriate, in their view, to specify the language competencies expected of working adults with reference to the IELTS Band Scale. Their arguments were as follows –

(a)   IELTS was not designed for the purpose of assessing workplace English. Its academic module was designed for assessing students' English proficiency for the purpose of pursuing academic studies at university level, while its general training module was mainly used for the purpose of immigration to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The test format and content were not relevant to the use of English in the workplace.

(b)   IELTS was not designed to assess English proficiency at the lower end, and thus might not be suitable for some working adults with educational attainment at the level of Secondary 5 or below.

(c)   The international business English tests accepted by the Workplace English Campaign[24] (WEC) were designed for the specific purpose of assessing English skills for work. They are more appropriate for working adults and have been gaining acceptance among local employers and employees.

2.6.3   Some course providers and test administrators also suggested that the ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) scale or the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages should be adopted as a common frame of reference for specifying expected language competencies for working adults. The ALTE scale and the

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[24] A number of international business English tests are accepted by the Campaign for meeting the Hong Kong Workplace English Benchmarks and applying for grants under the Funding Scheme of the Campaign. For a list of the tests, please refer to the Campaign website at www.english.gov.hk.

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Common European Framework (see Annex III) have been used internationally to benchmark language tests for both younger and older learners of a wide range of proficiency[25]. They were considered to be better points of reference for setting expected competencies for local students and working adults.

2.6.4   Following the argument in sub-paragraph 2.6.2(c) above, course providers and test administrators suggested that besides IELTS, local working adults should be encouraged to make use of the international business English tests accepted by the Workplace English Campaign to assess their English proficiency.

2.6.5   There was support for clarifying the comparability of results obtained in IELTS and the various international business English tests. As shown in Annex III, IELTS is already linked to the ALTE scale, which is in turn mapped onto the Common European Framework.   The international business English tests accepted by the Workplace English Campaign are also related to either the ALTE scale or the Common European Framework. We believe it is possible to establish the general comparability of results across these different English tests using the ALTE scale or the Common European Framework as the common frame of reference.

2.6.6   <u>Taking into the account the above views and advice, our final recommendations are as follows –</u>

    (a)   <u>Working adults with educational attainment at the level of Secondary 3, 5 or 7 should refer to the basic competencies developed by the Curriculum Development Council for Key Stages 3 to 5 to better understand employers' expectations of their English competencies (see also sub-paragraphs 2.2.6(c) and (d) above).</u>

Working adults

    (b)   <u>Expected English competencies should also be</u>

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[25] The University of Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) provides five general purpose English as a foreign language examinations that cover the full range of the ALTE scale. Candidates taking the Key English Test (KET), which is at the lowest level of the five, are mostly people aged 18 or below.

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specified for university graduates and entry-level professionals to give them a better idea of employers' expectations. We shall consult human resources experts and specify the English competencies expected of university graduates with reference to the ALTE scale or the Common European Framework. We encourage professional bodies to do the same for entry-level professionals of their respective groups.

SCOLAR

Professional bodies

(c) Working adults who wish to assess their English competencies can make use of a range of international English tests, including the IELTS and the international business English tests accepted by the Workplace English Campaign.

Working adults

(d) We shall carry out a study to establish the general comparability of results across the various English tests available in Hong Kong (e.g. IELTS, the international business English tests accepted by the Workplace English Campaign, the future Basic Competency Assessment and standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations). We aim to provide what is similar to a conversion table[26] to help the public determine if two persons holding results from different English tests may be regarded as having similar level of English proficiency.

SCOLAR

2.6.7   When the development of basic competencies and the tasks referred to in sub-paragraph 2.6.6(b) above are completed, a scale showing the English competencies expected of employees with educational attainment at the levels of Secondary 3 and above will become available for employers and employees' reference. The scale will be similar to the one shown in Annex IV. We recommend that working adults upgrade their English through continuing education to attain at least the expected competencies for their educational level. This would help to ensure their

Working adults

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[26] The conversion table can be based on the Hong Kong Workplace English Benchmarks, which is referenced to the ALTE scale. For diagrammatic illustration, please refer to Annex III.

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competitiveness in terms of language proficiency.

Chinese competencies

2.6.8   During our review, we consulted experts in the field and could not find any assessment of Chinese competencies suitable for native-speaking working adults in Hong Kong. We therefore recommended in the consultation document that the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority should develop a **general Chinese proficiency assessment** for local working adults.

2.6.9   In response to our recommendation, the Authority has advised that it will not have the capacity to undertake the project until after it has completed the development of the Basic Competency Assessment and standards-referenced HKCE Chinese and English examinations. The Authority was also uncertain about the community's demand for a general Chinese proficiency assessment and thus the financial viability of such an exercise.

2.6.10   <u>Having regard to the Authority's concerns, we recommend that –</u>

    (a)   <u>The Authority should develop a non-curriculum-based general Chinese proficiency assessment to meet the needs of working adults. The Authority should start the project as soon as it completes the development of the Basic Competency Assessment and standards-referenced HKCE Chinese and English Language examinations. It should offer the assessment to the public no later than 2010;</u>   HKEAA

    (b)   <u>The Authority should establish, as far as possible, the comparability of results across the general Chinese proficiency assessment, the Basic Competency Assessment and the standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations. For instance, there should be at least three grades in the general Chinese proficiency assessment corresponding to the basic competencies in</u>   HKEAA

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Chinese Language set for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 (i.e. Secondary 3, 5 and 7);

(c) The Authority should ensure that the assessment responds to the needs of all stakeholders, including the employers of university graduates and professionals. The Authority should consult human resources experts and professional bodies to determine the Chinese competencies expected of university graduates and entry-level professionals. These are likely to be higher than the basic competencies set for Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 7);

HKEAA

(d) The Language Fund should provide the necessary financial support to the Authority for the development and initial administration of the general Chinese proficiency assessment, which in the long run should be operated on a self-financing basis.

SCOLAR

2.6.11 As in the case of English, when the development of basic competencies and the tasks referred to in sub-paragraph 2.6.10(c) above are completed, working adults will be able to refer to a scale indicating the Chinese competencies expected of employees with educational attainment at the levels of Secondary 3 and above. Again, the scale will be similar to the one shown in Annex IV. We recommend that working adults seek to improve their Chinese through continuing education and achieve at least the expected competencies for their educational level.

Working adults

2.6.12 In the consultation document, we asked the public whether university graduates should be required to attain a specified level of Chinese and English before they are granted a degree. Views on this issue were diverse among the public. Nevertheless, there was a general agreement that university students should make the necessary efforts to upgrade their Chinese and English to the level employers expect of graduates. Instead of imposing a minimum language requirement for graduation, we recommend that local universities continue to provide suitable language

UGC, local universities & university

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enhancement programmes to help their students attain the language competencies expected of them when they graduate.

students

Section 7   Putonghua proficiency of students and working adults

Students' proficiency

2.7.1   Putonghua was introduced into the local school curriculum as an optional subject in 1986, and later as a core subject in 1998. Almost all Primary 1 to Secondary 3 students are now learning Putonghua in schools.   Putonghua has also been offered as a subject in the HKCE examinations for Secondary 5 students since 2000.

2.7.2   In the public consultation exercise, we found a general consensus on the need to strengthen the teaching and learning of Putonghua in schools. It was suggested that a Putonghua proficiency assessment should be developed to evaluate students' achievement after learning Putonghua for nine years from Primary 1 to Secondary 3. We agree that such an assessment will provide useful feedback to schools on the effectiveness of their Putonghua programmes.

2.7.3   <u>We recommend that the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority revamp its HKCE Putonghua examination[27] and turn it into a standards-referenced assessment of listening and speaking suitable for students of Secondary 3 and above. The Authority should work with the Curriculum Development Council to determine the grades in the standards-referenced examination that represent the respective levels of proficiency expected of students having completed the Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 Putonghua curricula (see also paragraph 2.7.10 below). In doing so, they should take into account employers' demands with regard to the Putonghua proficiency of employees with educational attainment at the levels of Secondary 3 and 5.</u>

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[27] The existing HKCE Putonghua examination has four papers assessing listening, pinyin, speaking, and language knowledge and application.

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2.7.4　　Since the cohort of students who started learning Putonghua in Primary 1 in 1998 will complete Secondary 3 in 2007, we recommend that the Authority complete the revamping of the HKCE Putonghua examination in time for implementation in 2007. The standards-referenced examination should be open to all students of Secondary 3 and above. School management and teachers should encourage their Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 students to attempt the examination and attain the respective levels of proficiency expected of them.

HKEAA

School management & teachers

Working adults' proficiency

2.7.5　　The majority of Hong Kong's existing workforce, who completed their school education before 1998, did not learn Putonghua while they were at school. They now need to upgrade their Putonghua proficiency to meet the growing demands of the workplace. We recommend that a scale of proficiency and an appropriate assessment tool be provided to help them plan and assess their progress in Putonghua learning.

2.7.6　　In 1994, the State Language Work Committee (國家語言文字工作委員會) began to administer the Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi (普通話水平測試) (PSC), which is a national assessment of Putonghua proficiency. The PSC prescribes the testing materials and focuses on pronunciation. The test format includes reading out selected words, phrases and passages, and a short monologue. Some professions in the mainland require specific PSC grades for employment (e.g. news presenters must attain the top Grade 1A).

2.7.7　　The Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi was designed to serve the specific needs of the mainland. In Hong Kong, where the use of Putonghua is not as widespread, the average learner needs to grasp not only the oral skills tested by the PSC but also skills in listening, conversing, pinyin and Cantonese-Putonghua transcription. An alternative to the PSC is thus needed to suit the particular needs of the working population in Hong Kong.

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2.7.8　　　The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority introduced the Test of Proficiency in Putonghua (TPP) in 1988 and the Test of Advanced Proficiency in Putonghua (TAPP) in 1990 to serve this need.　Both tests consist of a written paper that assesses a candidate's skills in listening, pinyin and Cantonese-Putonghua transcription, and an oral paper that assesses a candidate's pronunciation and ability in monologue and discourse.　However, the two tests currently do not provide clear descriptors and exemplars to articulate the levels of proficiency represented by the grades they give.

2.7.9　　　<u>We have commissioned the Authority to develop a Putonghua proficiency scale to illustrate, with descriptors and exemplars, the different levels of Putonghua competencies certified by the TPP.　When a draft of the scale becomes available in the first quarter of 2004, validation and further development will have to be carried out to ensure that the scale covers the **full range of Putonghua proficiency** existing in the local population.</u>

HKEAA

2.7.10　　　<u>The Putonghua proficiency scale would provide a common frame of reference for specifying the levels of Putonghua proficiency expected of Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 students (see paragraph 2.7.3 above) and reporting the results obtained in the TPP and TAPP.　Working adults can make use of the HKCE Putonghua examinations, the TPP and TAPP to assess their Putonghua proficiency.　They can also set their own goals in Putonghua learning against a particular level of proficiency on the scale.</u>

HKEAA

Working adults

Section 8　Employers' demands as driving force

2.8.1　　　We should never underestimate employers' demands as a driving force behind improvement in language standards.

2.8.2　　　Some members of the public were concerned that our emphasis on the influence of employers' demands might aggravate the local examination-oriented culture and add

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undue pressure on students and employees. However, many others believed that making employers' expectations clear to students and employees would help the latter set more realistic language learning goals. Thus our final recommendations remain as follows -

(a) <u>Employers should set clear language requirements for recruitment and promotion. For positions requiring educational attainment at Secondary 3, Secondary 5, Secondary 7, university graduate and entry professional levels, we encourage employers to set their Chinese and English requirements with reference to the competencies expected at these educational levels.</u>

Employers

(b) <u>As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government should take the lead in adopting the expected competencies as reference in reviewing its language requirements for civil service recruitment in future.</u>

Civil Service Bureau

CHAPTER 3

HOW DO WE GET THERE?
- CREATING A MORE MOTIVATING LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

<u>Action by</u>

Section 1   Students' attitude and motivation

3.1.1   As we work towards establishing a clear and realistic set of expected language competencies and developing the necessary tools to assess their achievement, we must also strive to create a more motivating language learning environment to help our students and workforce achieve those competencies.

Survey on students' motivation

3.1.2   As part of the review, the Hong Kong Policy Research Institute was commissioned to conduct a perception survey of students, parents and teachers in March 2002. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain local students' attitude towards language learning and the factors affecting their motivation. Some 23 primary and 29 secondary schools participated in the survey, with 1,193 questionnaires completed by students, 1,011 by their parents, and 512 by their Chinese and English Language teachers. The major findings of the survey are summarised below.

How motivated are our students?

3.1.3   As seen in the table below, 47% and 44% of the students surveyed indicated that they had 'strong' or 'very strong' motivation to learn Chinese and English, while only 25% said they were strongly or very strongly motivated to learn Putonghua. Parents and teachers generally perceived an even lower level of motivation among the students than the students did themselves.

	Percentage of students with 'strong' or 'very strong' motivation to learn languages		
	Students' self-perception	Parents' perception	Teachers' perception
Chinese Language	47%	35%	11%
English Language	44%	26%	8%
Putonghua	25%	20%	N/A*

(* Only Chinese and English Language teachers were surveyed.)

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What motivates our students?

3.1.4   A majority of the students surveyed believed that a good foundation in Chinese, English and Putonghua would help them to learn and acquire new knowledge on a life-long basis. They also recognised the importance of language ability for landing a good job in the future. Yet concerns for their future career and personal development were not their only motivation for learning languages. Students appreciated the social value of languages as tools of communication. They believed that learning Chinese Language and Putonghua would help them to express themselves more precisely and effectively, while better English would allow them to communicate with a wider range of peoples. Moreover, most students believed they should learn Chinese Language and Putonghua well because they were Chinese, and because a mastery of the language would help them learn more about Chinese culture and appreciate it better.

3.1.5   The above findings show that our students are well aware of the importance of language competence in various aspects of their lives. Why then are our students not more strongly motivated to learn languages?

3.1.6   The lack of motivation among local students may have something to do with our heavily examination-oriented culture in education. One-third of the students

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surveyed said that focusing too much on examinations lowered their interest in language learning.

3.1.7   On the other hand, the survey found that students generally had a **stronger motivation** to learn languages **if they liked language subjects, had teachers who could arouse their interest in the subjects, or found the content of the subjects interesting**.   However, only 55%, 46% and 30% found their Chinese Language, English Language and Putonghua teachers successful in arousing their interest in these subjects. As for the curriculum, only 41%, 36% and 22% of the students found the content of the Chinese Language, English Language and Putonghua subjects interesting, and less than half of them found what they learned in these subjects applicable to their daily life.

How to raise students' motivation?

3.1.8   It is, therefore, imperative that we **raise Hong Kong students' motivation** for language learning, **particularly their interest** in language subjects.   The general public supported this call.

3.1.9   We must first help our language teachers to improve and enrich their pedagogy and to adopt a curriculum that is more relevant and interesting to their students if we are to raise our students' motivation for language learning. However, actions are needed not only on the part of language teachers. The survey findings confirm the significant role played by school management, parents and the wider community in strengthening students' motivation and creating a more conducive language-learning environment. In summary, the findings suggest that -

(a)   **teachers** should arouse students' interest in language subjects by improving their teaching methods such as providing more learning activities and making greater use of multi-media teaching and learning resources;

(b)   when developing the whole-school language **curriculum**, teachers must take into account

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the needs, interests and ability levels of their students, and consider how to make language learning more relevant to the daily life of students;

(c)   **schools** should create an environment that provides more opportunities for the use of English and Putonghua;

(d)   **parents** should support their children's language learning in school, and play a more active role in promoting their children's interest in extensive reading; and

(e)   schools, parents and students should make better use of the **mass media**, particularly English and Putonghua television and radio programmes, as resources for language learning.

Section 2   Guiding principles of language learning

Guiding principles

3.2.1   Before we move on to discuss the role of each relevant party in greater detail, we would like to highlight some guiding principles underlying effective language learning.   The spirit of the following principles will be reflected in our recommendations in the ensuing sections of this Chapter -

(a)   To make language meaningful and useful to the learner, it is essential that the learning and teaching of the four key language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) be integrated. **Listening and speaking skills** are prerequisites for oral communication and **should be developed from an early stage**;

(b)   Proficiency in a language is more than just the mastery of the four skills.   It entails an **appreciation of the cultural background** as well as the appropriate use of the language in a variety of contexts;

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(c)   It is conducive to language development if learners are exposed to language(s) at a young age **through activities they can do and enjoy**;

(d)   Language is a tool for communication. It is thus important to enable learners, particularly young ones, to learn a language and **apply it in meaningful and purposeful contexts**;

(e)   **Extensive reading** has shown itself to be very beneficial to language learning; and

(f)   A person's intellectual ability and analytical power are intertwined with the development of language ability.

Medium of instruction

3.2.2   In relation to the last principle, we feel obliged to address at this juncture the controversial issue of the medium of instruction (MOI).

3.2.3   Many people believe that using a second language as the MOI for academic subjects can enhance students' proficiency in the second language through increased exposure and use, without significant adverse effect on the learning of the subject matter. However, local empirical research since the 1970s consistently showed that the majority of our secondary school students had not reached the level of English proficiency necessary to benefit from English-medium instruction. They pointed out that the following three preconditions should be fulfilled before a second language might be used as the MOI –

(a)   **teachers** must be capable of teaching in that language;

(b)   **students** must be sufficiently proficient to learn through that language; and

(c)   suitable **support measures** (e.g. bridging programmes) must be available to help students switch to the new MOI.

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3.2.4   Since the 1980s, the Government had been encouraging local schools to adopt the students' mother tongue as their MOI. In 1996, Education Commission Report No. 6 recommended issuing 'firm guidance' on the appropriate MOI to be adopted by individual schools. A two-month public consultation exercise was conducted in early 1997, and there was general public support for the issue of guidance on mother-tongue teaching. In a motion debate held in May 1997, Legislative Council Members spoke unanimously in favour of using Chinese as the MOI. Later in September 1997, the former Education Department issued the 'Medium of Instruction Guidance for Secondary Schools'. According to this Guidance, schools should adopt Chinese as the MOI for all academic subjects, starting with their 1998/99 Secondary 1 intake and progressing each year to a higher level of secondary education. Schools that wish to use or to continue using English as the MOI should demonstrate that they fully satisfy the requirements in terms of teacher capability, student ability and support strategies and programmes.

3.2.5   It was expected that students learning through their mother tongue would be better able to understand what was taught, analyse problems, express their views, develop an enquiring mind and cultivate critical thinking. Since the Guidance was implemented, tertiary education institutions commissioned by the former Education Department have been tracking students' performance through longitudinal studies. **Findings indicate that the intended benefits of mother-tongue teaching**, e.g., more lively interaction between teachers and students and more effective teaching and learning in classrooms, **are being achieved**.

3.2.6   In September 2000, a joint working group, comprising members of the former Board of Education and SCOLAR, recommended to the Government that the implementation of the Guidance should continue up to the 2003/04 school year. It also suggested that the long-term MOI arrangements for secondary schools be considered in conjunction with the review of the secondary school places allocation system in 2003/04.

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3.2.7   To achieve the overall aim of education, we believe students **should learn through a language that is not itself a barrier in the learning process**. For most students in Hong Kong, this means learning through their mother tongue. <u>We, therefore, support the use of the students' mother tongue as the MOI. If schools wish to use a second language as the MOI, they should ensure that the preconditions mentioned in paragraph 3.2.3 above are fulfilled. We recommend that the MOI policy review to be conducted in 2003/04 should re-examine, among other things, the mechanisms used to ensure that the three preconditions are being met by the secondary schools **using or wishing to switch to English** as the MOI **for all subjects**</u>.

EMB

3.2.8   In our public consultation exercise, some people expressed their concerns about the reduction in exposure to English among students learning all subjects (except English Language) in Chinese. To address such concerns, we understand that the former Education Department has already provided a package of support measures, including the provision of additional English Language teachers and additional grants for purchasing equipment and books, to strengthen the teaching and learning of English in Chinese-medium schools. It has also commissioned a study to explore the effectiveness of an enrichment programme in increasing students' exposure to English while they continue to learn in their mother tongue.

3.2.9   <u>Indeed, we believe it is important to increase students' exposure to English outside the classrooms in both Chinese-medium and English-medium schools. We have highlighted in sub-paragraph 3.1.9 (c) the survey finding that suggests more opportunities for the use of English should be provided in schools. We shall suggest some possible ways to do this in Section 3 and Section 5 below.</u>

School management & teachers

Teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua

3.2.10   During our review, there were suggestions that

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we should recommend, as a matter of policy, that Putonghua be adopted in teaching Chinese Language. Those who made such suggestions argued that learning Chinese Language in Putonghua had the following benefits -

(a)   students' general Chinese competence would be better;

(b)   students' Chinese writing, in particular, would suffer from less interference from Cantonese; and

(c)   students' Putonghua proficiency would improve.

3.2.11   Since November 2000, the Curriculum Development Council has stated in its Chinese Language curriculum documents that using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language is the Council's long-term goal. Under the current MOI policy, Chinese-medium schools may use either Cantonese or Putonghua to teach Chinese Language and other academic subjects. Pending further studies and deliberation, the Council has recommended a school-based approach and advised schools to consider their own circumstances in deciding whether to use Putonghua as the MOI for the Chinese Language subject.

3.2.12   The Language Fund and the Quality Education Fund have in recent years sponsored three studies that are relevant to the consideration of the issue. The following should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings of the studies, which are summarised in Annex VI –

(a)   The sample for each study was small, as only a small number of local schools were using Putonghua to teach the Chinese Language subject; and

(b)   The studies each employed different methodologies in measuring students' progress in Chinese Language learning, making comparison of research results difficult.

The studies found that students who learned Chinese Language in Putonghua showed **improvement in**

Action by

Putonghua proficiency and were **better in Chinese writing** than their counterparts who learned the subject in Cantonese. However, there is as yet no conclusive evidence to support the argument that students' general Chinese competence will be better if they learn Chinese Language in Putonghua. In two of the studies, students who learned through Putonghua showed no difference or a worse performance in their general Chinese competence than their counterparts who learned through Cantonese.

3.2.13   In the public consultation exercise, we found that most people agreed that teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua should be a long-term goal, but did not believe that every school was ready for the change. The majority supported a step-by-step, school-based approach. Many people also saw the need for more research on the subject and for more Chinese Language teachers to become ready before the Government set a policy and timetable that applied across the board to all schools.

3.2.14   We believe that teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua will help improve students' Chinese writing and Putonghua proficiency, and foresee the growing use of written Chinese and Putonghua in both the official and business arenas. We thus fully endorse the Curriculum Development Council's **long-term vision to use Putonghua to teach Chinese Language**. Nevertheless, in the light of the inconclusive findings of the local studies conducted so far, we recommend that more studies be conducted. The Government needs to **better understand the conditions necessary for schools to make a successful switch** to Putonghua and prevent possible negative outcomes, before formulating a firm policy and implementation timetable for all schools to adopt Putonghua as the MOI for Chinese Language.

CDC

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EMB

3.2.15   Until a firm policy and timetable is set, we strongly encourage those schools that believe they have the preconditions for success in place to try teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua. As a basic condition, the Chinese Language teachers they deploy to teach the subject in

School
management

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Putonghua **must satisfy the Language Proficiency Requirement for Putonghua teachers in speaking and classroom language**. The schools should also ensure that their students have the ability to learn in Putonghua, and make available support measures to facilitate a smooth transition. At the same time, the Education and Manpower Bureau should disseminate more widely the findings of relevant studies and good practices in using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language for the reference of interested schools.

EMB

3.2.16   To help enhance the Putonghua proficiency of Chinese Language teachers and enable more schools to try teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua, we will continue with the Putonghua Summer Immersion Course Subsidy Scheme launched in 2000. With support from the Language Fund, we will provide a maximum subsidy of $10,000 for teachers to attend summer immersion courses in the mainland.   Priority will be given to serving Chinese Language teachers who are not at the same time Putonghua teachers[28].   The provision of subsidy will be subject to participants showing an improvement in Putonghua proficiency after attending the immersion courses.

SCOLAR

3.2.17   Before there are enough local Chinese Language teachers with sufficient proficiency in Putonghua, some schools have expressed the desire to engage teachers of Chinese Language from the mainland, using the Capacity Enhancement Grant, to help them teach the subject in Putonghua. We fully support such initiative during the transitional period, provided that the teachers to be engaged hold qualifications equivalent to a local degree and recognised teacher training both in Chinese Language. We also found general support for this interim measure in the public consultation exercise.

School management

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[28] Serving Putonghua teachers are already eligible for a separate training subsidy from the Education and Manpower Bureau to help them meet the Language Proficiency Requirement for Putonghua teachers.

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Section 3   Curriculum and pedagogy

3.3.1   In developing a language curriculum, teachers must keep in mind the aims of language education, and choose the appropriate content, teaching methods and assessment tools to achieve those aims.

3.3.2   In terms of content, our survey findings indicate that students are more motivated to learn a language if they find what they are being taught –

>   (a)   appropriate in depth and breadth;

>   (b)   relevant to their daily life; and

>   (c)   stimulating and interesting.

In terms of pedagogy[29], students prefer more learning activities and more extensive use of multi-media resources.

3.3.3   In the following paragraphs, we shall discuss how the learner-centred approach of the ongoing curriculum reform would impact on the content and pedagogy of Chinese and English Language education and help to raise students' motivation for language learning.   However, before we examine the more formal language curriculum for primary and secondary education, we shall take a look at language learning at the pre-primary level.

Pre-primary level

3.3.4   Since 1994, the former Education Department has been advising kindergarten operators through the Manual of Kindergarten Practice to use the child's mother tongue as the medium of instruction in pre-primary education. The Department has also advised that exposure to a foreign language (e.g. English for Chinese children) should only be introduced if suitable teachers are available to do it through an informal approach, e.g. in the form of simple rhymes, songs, conversations and language games. The underlying belief is that children should first master their mother tongue, which would provide them with a tool

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[29] 'Pedagogy' here refers to teaching methods.

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for thinking and communication as well as a firm foundation for the learning of other languages.

3.3.5   <u>We are in full agreement with the advice of the former Education Department.   Having consulted local experts in the field, we consider that development of a child's **mother tongue should take precedence** over the acquisition of other languages **at the early childhood stage**. For most young children in Hong Kong, Cantonese is their mother tongue and should be used as the medium of instruction.</u>

Kindergarten & child care center operators

3.3.6   <u>As language models for young children, kindergarten teachers and child care workers[30] should demonstrate accurate pronunciation and proper language use.   Teacher education providers should pay special attention to the Cantonese pronunciation and general Chinese proficiency of kindergarten teachers and child care workers in their pre-service and in-service training programmes.</u>

Kindergarten teachers & child care workers

Teacher education providers

3.3.7   Some members of the public have argued and we agree that early exposure to English and Putonghua could benefit subsequent language development of young children.   Nevertheless, the proficiency of kindergarten teachers in the language concerned and the approach to introducing the language to young children are very important. <u>With regard to proficiency, we recommend that kindergartens **should provide English or Putonghua exposure** to their students **only if** the **teachers** they deploy to do so **meet the Language Proficiency Requirement** for English or Putonghua teachers **in speaking**.</u>

Kindergarten operators

3.3.8   With regard to teaching approach, we firmly endorse the informal approach recommended by the former Education Department.   In this connection, we noted that a survey conducted by the former Education Department in

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[30] Upon the harmonisation of kindergartens and child care centres in the 2004/05 school year, child care centres will only serve children aged 0 to 3 while kindergartens will provide services to children aged 3 to 6. Since the focus of child care centres is on providing care to young children, the exposure to second languages is considered not applicable.

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May 2000 found that over 97% of the 491 kindergartens surveyed provided some form of English activities for their students. The most frequently employed methods involved the use of picture cards and word cards, songs and games. Nevertheless, some 55% of the kindergartens also taught English by means of textbooks. 32% of them gave an increasing quantity of penmanship assignments to children from Kindergarten Grades 1 to 3. This suggests that the methods used by some kindergartens to teach English have moved beyond the recommended informal approach.

3.3.9   Discussions with kindergarten operators and early childhood education experts in local tertiary institutions suggested that the teaching of Putonghua in kindergartens was also becoming more popular. The Education and Manpower Bureau has recently commissioned its first territory-wide survey on Putonghua activities in kindergartens. The findings of the survey will show us what proportions of our young children are being exposed to Putonghua and how it is being done.

EMB

3.3.10   In accordance with the guiding principles outlined in Section 2, we believe that young children should be exposed to languages through purposeful and enjoyable activities. We are particularly concerned that teaching methods that are inappropriate for young children, such as the use of textbooks and penmanship assignments, may kill their interest in learning languages. Thus we must emphasise that exposure to languages at the pre-primary level should be -

    (a)   developmentally appropriate;

    (b)   authentic;

    (c)   accurate;

    (d)   in context;

    (e)   pressure-free; and

    (f)   enjoyable (e.g. through songs and games).

3.3.11   In the public consultation exercise, educators expressed their support for these principles, which we

Action by

believe apply to the learning of both the mother tongue and non-native tongues, such as English and Putonghua, among local children. We support local teacher education providers to continue to train kindergarten teachers in teaching approaches based on these principles. At the same time, we strongly recommend that kindergarten operators encourage their teachers to follow these principles in conducting language activities for young children.

Teacher education providers

Kindergarten operators

3.3.12   The Language Fund and the Quality Education Fund (QEF) have each sponsored a good number of projects on pre-primary language acquisition, which include research studies as well as development of language learning materials and activities. The findings and products of these projects have been uploaded to the SCOLAR website and the QEF Cyber Resource Centre respectively. We encourage local early childhood educators[31] to make full use of these resources to develop suitable language activities for their students.

Early childhood educators

3.3.13   To enhance the effectiveness of language education at the pre-primary stage, we further recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau should –

(a)   closely monitor and evaluate through inspection visits the language activities provided by kindergartens for pre-school children, and make its findings available to the public;

EMB

(b)   disseminate more widely good practices in teaching the mother tongue (i.e. Cantonese) and written Chinese and in providing exposure to Putonghua and English for young children;

EMB

(c)   work with the Hong Kong Education City to provide, through its resource library, a more comprehensive collection[32] of research

EMB & Hong Kong Education City

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[31] Early childhood educators here refer to kindergarten teachers and child care workers as well as their principals and supervisors.

[32] Besides those resulting from projects sponsored by the Language Fund and Quality Education Fund, outcomes of projects conducted by local tertiary institutions and the Vocational Training Council using funding from other sources should also be made available to the public as far as possible.

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findings and teaching and learning resources relevant to pre-primary language acquisition for teachers and parents' reference;

(d) educate parents on appropriate approaches to facilitating the language development of young children.

EMB

Primary and secondary levels

3.3.14   For primary and secondary education, the current curriculum reform advocates a shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach, which we fully endorse. We recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau assist all schools in reviewing critically the language curricula and pedagogy they currently adopt and making necessary changes to raise students' interest in language subjects.

EMB

New curriculum frameworks for English and Chinese Language

3.3.15   As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Curriculum Development Council has recently published new curriculum frameworks for Chinese and English Language[33], setting out what students should know, value and be able to do at various stages of schooling.   In **English Language Education**, the emphases of the latest curriculum include –

(a) teaching of **grammar** in context, and providing learners with opportunities for using language purposefully in authentic situations;

(b) teaching of **phonics** in meaningful contexts to develop learners' speaking (pronunciation), writing (spelling) and reading skills, and to facilitate their acquisition of stress, rhythm and intonation through shared reading at primary

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[33] These can be found in the Chinese Language Education and English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides (Primary 1 to Secondary 3) issued by the Curriculum Development Council in September 2002.

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level;

(c) helping learners enhance their vocabulary building skills through purposeful tasks in meaningful contexts;

(d) enhancing language learning through flexible use of a wide variety of quality print and non-print resources;

(e) ensuring that learning and teaching materials and activities are relevant to learners' interests, experience, needs and aspirations;

(f) facilitating the development of a 'reading to learn' culture;

(g) using language arts to promote reading and help learners develop their critical thinking skills and creativity; and

(h) creating a language-rich environment through promoting cross-curricular approaches[34] to learning (e.g. language camps and fun days).

3.3.16   In **Chinese Language Education**, the emphases of the latest curriculum include –

(a) enriching students' balanced and holistic learning experience in listening, speaking, reading and writing;

(b) helping students master Putonghua and the simplified Chinese characters to facilitate communication with the mainland and other regions;

(c) enhancing cultural education, and cultivating students' understanding of, reflection on, and identification with Chinese culture;

(d) heightening students' interest in reading and expanding its range and quantity; and

(e) developing and flexibly employing diversified

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[34] Language is acquired not only through the language subjects, but in all subjects and often beyond the classroom. Hence, teachers of all subjects should collaborate to support language learning both within and beyond the school.

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learning materials to cater for the needs of the students and the social development of the times.

3.3.17   In the consultation exercise, the public expressed support for a more lively approach to the teaching and learning of English and the use of a greater variety of print and non-print materials. Many also mentioned the need to teach **grammar, phonics and phonetics**. Some were of the view that an **adequate amount of practice** on these elements was necessary in the learning of English as a second language. We agree with these views, and note that such elements are emphasised in the latest English Language curriculum.

3.3.18   Besides grammar and phonics, we would also like to highlight the need to promote **language arts**. In our survey, 72% and 61% of students said they were motivated to learn Chinese Language and Putonghua because they would like to learn more about Chinese culture and appreciate it better.   About 63% of the students were motivated to learn English because it enhanced their ability to appreciate Western movies and literature and understand Western cultures. <u>We recommend that the greater use of language arts (e.g. poems, short stories, films, jokes, popular song lyrics and dramas) should be promoted to</u> **<u>enrich students' understanding of both Chinese and English-speaking cultures</u>** <u>so as to raise their motivation for learning the two languages.</u>

EMB, school management & teachers

3.3.19   Feedback from the public on the new Chinese Language curriculum focused primarily on strengthening the teaching and learning of Putonghua, which we have already discussed in Chapter 2. There was also support for introducing simplified Chinese characters to local students.

3.3.20   Some members of the public were concerned that not enough attention was being given to the teaching of **Cantonese pronunciation** in schools. Others were worried about the **increasing influence of Cantonese on Chinese**

Action by

writing among students. We understand that standards[35] for Cantonese pronunciation, Putonghua pinyin, traditional and simplified Chinese characters as well as modern Chinese writing have been adopted by the Curriculum Development Institute[36]. However, many people, including teachers, may not have given much attention to the pronunciation of Cantonese.

3.3.21   As Cantonese is the primary spoken medium of instruction in local schools, we recommend that teachers should master and teach students **standard Cantonese pronunciation**. Teacher education providers should also pay more attention to the Cantonese pronunciation of both new and serving teachers in their programmes.

Teachers

Teacher education providers

3.3.22   Like the general public, we are concerned about the growing prevalence of the use of colloquial Cantonese in Chinese writing. Thus we recommend that teachers make conscious efforts to help their students distinguish the difference between **standard modern Chinese writing** and the colloquial Cantonese-influenced Chinese writing they come across frequently in local advertisements and publications. Teachers should require their students to adhere to the national standard in modern Chinese writing.

Teachers

Language environment in schools

3.3.23   The curriculum reform also emphasises the need to help students go beyond the classrooms in language learning. In this regard, we found considerable support during public consultation for efforts to enrich the language environment in schools and promote co-curricular language activities.

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[35] Reference documents on the form of traditional Chinese characters (常用字字形表(修訂本)) and Cantonese pronunciation (常用字廣州話讀音表) published by the former Institute of Language in Education of the Education Department in 1990 and 1992 respectively are generally accepted by local Chinese Language teachers and textbook publishers as the official standards. As for the form of simplified Chinese characters, Putonghua pinyin and modern Chinese writing, the national standards promulgated by the Central Government can be found in the Ministry of Education's website at http://www.china-language.gov.cn/

[36] The Curriculum Development Institute is part of the former Education Department and the current Education and Manpower Bureau. It is also the Secretariat of the Curriculum Development Council.

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3.3.24   One initiative introduced in recent years to enhance the English language environment in local schools is the **Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Schemes**. A NET has been provided to each publicly funded secondary school since the 1998/99 school year. A similar scheme to provide NETs to publicly funded primary schools was started in the 2002/03 school year. An Advisory Teaching Team (ATT) comprising 20 primary NETs and 20 primary local English Language teachers has been formed to provide support and advice to schools with primary NETs. These NET schemes aim to enrich the language environment in schools, raise students' interest and confidence in learning and using English, introduce innovative teaching models and practices, and promote the professional development of teachers. It is estimated that 470 NETs will be employed in secondary schools and 320 NETs in primary schools in the 2003/04 school year.

3.3.25   While most members of the public recognised the value of the Schemes, some were concerned about the inappropriate and ineffective deployment of NETs in some schools. Others questioned the adequacy of some NETs' qualifications for teaching English as a second language. We recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau monitor more closely the implementation of the NET Schemes in primary and secondary schools to ensure that their objectives are being achieved[37]. As regards the qualifications of NETs, we will address the issue in detail in Section 4 below.

EMB & school
management

3.3.26   We believe that the promotion of **co-curricular language activities** will also help to enhance the language environment in local schools. We recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau continue to provide support, with resources from the Language Fund, for

EMB &
SCOLAR

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[37] A study sponsored by the Language Fund and completed in 2001 indicated that the NET Scheme for secondary schools yielded positive results. NETs enriched the school language environment and brought in a wider variety of teaching methods. But the objective of promoting professional exchanges and collaboration between local English Language teachers and NETs was not fully achieved.

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schools that wish to organise English language camps[38] and other language activities for their students. To give local students more opportunities to interact with their English-speaking peers, some members of the public suggested in the consultation exercise that more exchange programmes and joint school activities involving local schools and international schools should be organised. <u>We support such suggestions and recommend that the Bureau play a more active role in promoting the networking and organisation of joint activities between local schools and international schools.</u>

EMB & school management

Quality of textbooks

3.3.27   While there was general support for a less textbook-bound approach to language education, the quality of textbooks remained a major public concern. Some argued that stimulating and interesting language textbooks were needed to support a more lively approach to language teaching and learning. Others pointed out that the quality of language used in the textbooks of both language and other subjects was important to support the learning of languages across the curriculum.

3.3.28   While textbooks are but one of many types of teaching and learning resources available to language teachers nowadays, they continue to be an important resource. We understand that the Curriculum Development Institute has an established mechanism for vetting textbooks. <u>We recommend that the Institute should encourage textbook publishers to **produce more stimulating and interesting language textbooks** for students.</u>

Curriculum Development Institute

Section 4   Language teachers

3.4.1   Language teachers undoubtedly play a critical

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[38] In March 2002, SCOLAR and the former Education Department organised English language camps for 2 500 secondary students and 8 200 primary students with support from the Language Fund. Evaluation revealed that the camp stretched students' language abilities, and helped them overcome the psychological barrier to the use of English in daily communication outside the classroom.

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role in language education. They are language models for students, and have a direct influence on students' interest in learning a language. In our survey on students' motivation, students ranked 'teachers' as the most important factor affecting whether they liked a particular language subject or not.

Preparation of language teachers

3.4.2   Language teachers should be proficient in the language they teach (**proficiency**), well grounded in knowledge and understanding of the language (**subject knowledge**), and conversant with the latest theories and practices in language teaching and learning (**pedagogical knowledge and skills**). Their effectiveness is dependent on their ability to synthesise and apply their knowledge and skills to motivate and help students improve their language competence. They should also cultivate an interest in reading and develop an appreciation of the relevant cultures.

3.4.3   During the review, we noted that there was as yet no agreed framework for the professional development of language teachers. We have ventured to draw up at Annex VII two frameworks for English and Chinese Language teachers respectively, based on inputs from focus groups of frontline language teachers, school principals and teacher education providers. In drafting these frameworks, we have taken into account the structure of local language teacher education programmes and the new challenges brought about by the education reform. These frameworks outline the subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, proficiency in the language, and the general professional understanding, values and attitudes that we believe language teachers should acquire/develop before they join the profession and seek to upgrade throughout their career.

3.4.4   We recommend that local teacher education providers review their pre-service and in-service programmes for language teachers using these frameworks as a reference. The Education and Manpower Bureau should also make reference to them in recognising local and

Teacher education providers

EMB

Action by

non-local language teacher qualifications, to ensure adequate preparation of language teachers in subject knowledge and pedagogy. Moreover, the Bureau should regularly review these frameworks in consultation with the language teaching profession, and encourage language teachers to use them in professional development planning.

3.4.5　　While the public generally agreed that language teachers should be professionally prepared for their work, some questioned why it was necessary for language teachers to have a good grounding in subject knowledge and pedagogy in addition to language proficiency. We have explained during public consultation that proficiency in the language is essential but not sufficient to make a good language teacher. Teaching a language involves not only one's ability to use the language, but also his/her abilities to help others learn and use the language accurately and appropriately. Thus to teach a language effectively, one must have knowledge of the language systems (e.g. sound, structural and meaning systems), understanding of the social and cultural aspects of the language (e.g. how the language is used in international commerce and in pop culture) as well as practical skills in teaching the language.

3.4.6　　On the other hand, some members of the public argued that a teacher's enthusiasm for teaching was equally, if not more, important than his/her qualifications, knowledge and skills. We agree with this view. That is why we have already included professional qualities, attitudes and ethics in the professional development frameworks for language teachers.

Building a professional language teaching force

3.4.7　　With the frameworks as reference, our long-term goal is to develop a professional language teaching force with good language proficiency, subject knowledge and pedagogy as well as the motivation to seek continual professional development.

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3.4.8   <u>On the question of proficiency, we note that all English and Putonghua teachers are already required to meet the Language Proficiency Requirement for Teachers. We support this policy and see it as an important step forward in assuring both new and serving teachers' proficiency in the language they teach. School management should closely monitor the progress of their teachers in meeting the Requirement and ensure that their teachers do so within the specified time frame[39].</u>

English and
Putonghua
teachers

School
management

3.4.9   Having consulted local teacher education providers during the review, we consider that the possession of the following qualifications is essential to ensuring adequate preparation of language teachers in proficiency, subject knowledge and pedagogy -

(a)   a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree majoring in the relevant language subject; or

(b)   a first degree majoring in the relevant language subject <u>and</u> a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate in Education (PGDE or PCEd) majoring in the same language subject.

3.4.10   Annex VIII shows the types of qualifications held by serving Chinese and English Language teachers. Qualifications in Categories (a) and (b) are broadly in line with the qualifications stated in paragraph 3.4.9 above. The statistics[40] indicate that only around 10% of primary school language teachers held qualifications in those categories in 2001.   The percentages of secondary school language teachers holding such qualifications were higher, ranging from 51% for Chinese to 36% for English. They also reveal that significant proportions of our English Language teachers   are   teaching   the   language   without   proper

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[39] The current policy requires that English and Putonghua teachers who joined the profession before the 2001/02 school year meet the LPR through exemption, training, the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT), or a combination of these means, by the end of the 2005/06 school year; those who join the profession in the 2001/02 to 2003/04 school years should meet the LPR through exemption and/or the LPAT within two years of joining the profession; and those who wish to join the profession from the 2004/05 school year onwards should meet the LPR through exemption and/or the LPAT before taking up their teaching duties and should pass the Classroom Language Assessment within one year thereafter.

[40] Statistics as at October 2001

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preparation in subject knowledge or pedagogy. Around 43% of primary English Language teachers and 21% of secondary English Language teachers held neither a degree nor any teacher training in the relevant language subject.

3.4.11   These figures tell us that we are still very far from our long-term goal of building a language teaching force with professional preparation assured by the qualifications stated in paragraph 3.4.9 above. To keep the condition from worsening, we must first put in place a comprehensive plan to assure the professional capabilities of our new language teachers before or shortly after they enter the teaching force. At the same time, we should encourage and provide assistance for serving language teachers to upgrade themselves in the subject knowledge and/or the pedagogy of the language they teach.

Entry qualifications of new language teachers

3.4.12   <u>We recommend that, as a matter of principle, all new Chinese and English Language teachers should hold qualifications equivalent to those specified in paragraph 3.4.9 above.</u> The public consultation exercise found general support for raising the entry qualifications of language teachers. Nevertheless, some principals expressed concern about finding qualified candidates to teach in their schools. Others pointed out that school management would have started or even completed their recruitment exercise for the 2003/04 school year by the time our final recommendations are published. Thus it would not be possible for them to adopt the recommended entry qualifications in recruiting new language teachers for the coming school year. At the same time, the Government would need some time to put in place a mechanism to implement the new entry qualifications requirement.

3.4.13   <u>In the light of the above concerns and advice, we recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau introduce the recommended entry qualifications of new language teacher in the 2004/05 school year. From that year onwards, school management should, as far as possible,</u>

EMB & school
management

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recruit teachers with qualifications equivalent to those specified in paragraph 3.4.9 above to teach Chinese and English Language in their schools.

3.4.14   We recommend that school management should explore more varied channels to find new language teachers with the specified entry qualifications to teach in their schools.   Only if they fail to find qualified candidates, should they offer appointment to candidates holding at least a sub-degree[41] on the following conditions -

School
management

(a)   New recruit holding a first degree in the relevant language subject should complete a PGDE or PCEd programme majoring in that language subject within three years of taking up the employment;

New teachers

(b)   New recruit holding a first degree in subject not relevant to the language he/she teaches should complete a PGDE or PCEd programme majoring in the relevant language subject and a postgraduate level programme focusing on the subject knowledge of that particular language within five years of taking up the employment; or

(c)   New recruit without a first degree should complete a BEd programme majoring in the relevant language subject within five years of taking up the employment.

School management should note that starting from the 2004/05 school year, English Language teachers joining the profession are also required to meet the Language Proficiency Requirement before they take up their teaching duty[42].

School
management

3.4.15   We encourage both local and non-local institutions to develop suitable postgraduate-level programmes for new teachers whose first degrees are not in the relevant language subject to help them acquire the

Teacher
education
providers

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[41] Sub-degree here includes Certificate of Education, higher diploma and associate degree.
[42] See footnote 39 above.

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necessary subject knowledge.

3.4.16   Furthermore, we recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau re-deploy its resources to provide more training places so that new language teachers without the recommended entry qualifications could acquire them within the time frame specified in paragraph 3.4.14 above.

EMB & teacher education providers

3.4.17   During public consultation, we received a number of enquiries about the recommended entry qualifications of new language teachers.   Individual members of the public and teacher education providers were both eager to find out what particular degree programmes might be considered relevant to the Chinese and English language subjects[43] and what qualifications might be regarded as equivalent to a BEd or PGDE/PCEd. We should clarify here that paragraphs 3.4.9 and 3.4.14 only set out the broad categories of qualifications that would give language teachers the necessary foundation in the subject knowledge and pedagogy of the relevant language. For implementation of the recommendations, the Education and Manpower Bureau should, in consultation with teacher education experts, establish a mechanism to advise on the particular local and overseas programmes that may be accepted for meeting the requirement.   Attention should be given to ensuring that the quality of programmes offered by non-local institutions is comparable to those offered by local institutions.

EMB

3.4.18   We understand that the Government has accepted the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) to upgrade the entry qualifications of teachers[44].   Subject to the necessary legislative amendment, the minimum qualifications of permitted teachers will be raised to the level of higher diploma or associate degree with effect from

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[43] Questions have been raised as to whether degree programmes in linguistics, communications, translation, etc. might be considered relevant.

[44] At present, any individual with results at Grade E or above in five Hong Kong Certificate of Education subjects may be granted a permit to teach (permitted teacher), and any permitted teacher with at least 10 years of teaching experience may apply to become a registered teacher.

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the 2003/04 school year. According to ACTEQ's latest thinking, in future, permitted teachers must complete initial teacher training before they may apply to become registered teachers. They would also have to hold at least a first degree and complete an internship programme. These proposed new requirements for registration would apply to teachers of both language and other subjects. Permitted teachers may continue to teach without a registered teacher status, but may, thus, compromise their career prospect[45].

3.4.19　　As regards new teachers who have not received any initial teacher training but are given teaching responsibilities for justifiable reasons, ACTEQ is considering requiring them to attend a preparatory course before or shortly after they assume their teaching duties. The purpose of the course would be to equip new but untrained teachers with the basic knowledge and skills they need to handle their work.

3.4.20　　We are pleased to note that our recommendations on the entry qualifications of new language teachers are generally in line with ACTEQ's latest thinking on the qualifications of permitted and registered teachers. Both committees are moving in the same direction of building a teaching force with members holding at least a first degree and having completed initial teacher training. Our recommendations go one step further to require that the degree and teacher training qualifications held by new language teachers should be in the relevant language subjects. In our view, **new language teachers who fail to meet the conditions set out in paragraph 3.4.14 within the specified time frame should not be allowed to continue to teach language subjects in schools**.

3.4.21　　<u>We support ACTEQ's idea of **requiring untrained new teachers to attend a preparatory course**. We recommend that the course for untrained new language teachers should cover basic language teaching skills. The</u>

ACTEQ, EMB & teacher education providers

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[45] In aided schools, permitted teachers without a relevant teacher training qualification are barred from advancement beyond Point 17 (if they entered the profession on or after 1 April 2000) or Point 19 (if they joined the profession between 1 January 1991 and 31 March 2000) on the Master Pay Scale.

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course should begin before they start teaching and may continue into their first school term. Furthermore, we recommend that the preparatory course should be recognised as part of the BEd or PGDE/PCEd programmes that the untrained new language teachers will eventually undertake.

Professional development of serving teachers

3.4.22　　Apart from recruiting qualified new language teachers, school management should move progressively towards deploying only teachers with qualifications equivalent to those specified in paragraph 3.4.9 to teach Chinese and English in their schools. They should encourage serving language teachers, particularly those who have neither a degree nor any teacher training in the relevant language subject, to upgrade their qualifications and pursue continuing professional development.

School management

3.4.23　　To encourage more serving teachers to upgrade their qualifications, we recommend setting up a new incentive grant scheme[46], which would –

SCOLAR & serving teachers

    (a)　cover both Chinese and English Language teachers;

    (b)　provide a grant to meet 50% of course fees, subject to a maximum of $30,000 per teacher; and

    (c)　give priority to teachers who have neither a degree nor any teacher training in the relevant language subject.

3.4.24　　In the public consultation exercise, we found general support for our recommendations in paragraphs 3.4.22 and 3.4.23 above. The majority of those who expressed their views to us also opposed the setting of a deadline for serving language teachers to acquire the

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[46] In late 2000, $10 million was set aside in the Language Fund for an 'Incentive Grant Scheme for English Teachers' to support serving English Language teachers in pursuing degree or above level studies in English or teaching of English, with a maximum subsidy of $20,000 per person. About 200 applications were approved.

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recommended qualifications.

3.4.25   Some members of the public suggested providing paid study leave or supply teachers to relieve teachers on training from their regular duties. This, they believed, would encourage more serving teachers to pursue professional development.   There was also support for giving recognition to language teachers who attain the recommended qualifications in the form of a special title and/or an increment.

3.4.26   Having considered the latest deliberations of ACTEQ, we have decided not to pursue the granting of a special title for qualified language teachers, lest the public be confused by yet another title in addition to 'permitted teachers' and 'registered teachers'. At the same time, we note some educators' argument that continuing professional development is a responsibility of teachers. The provision of paid study leave, supply teachers or increment should not be necessary to entice language teachers to pursue training. Moreover, under the current financial circumstances, it is unlikely that the Government could provide such incentives.

3.4.27   In this connection, we understand that the Education and Manpower Bureau is currently reviewing the structure of teaching grades. ACTEQ is also developing a teacher competencies framework to help identify teachers' developmental needs at various stages of their career, regardless of the subjects they teach. <u>We recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau take the opportunity to work out a career ladder for language teachers, **specifying the qualifications** and core competencies to be attained **for advancement in the teaching grade**.   In doing so, the Bureau should take into account the entry qualifications of new language teachers recommended in paragraph 3.4.9 above.</u>

EMB

3.4.28   During public consultation, we were asked to clarify whether serving English Language teachers who acquired our recommended qualifications would be eligible

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for exemption from the Language Proficiency Requirement for Teachers (LPR). The LPR policy provides that English Language teachers with relevant degrees[47] and relevant training[48] may apply for exemption from the requirement. Our understanding is that the qualifications we recommend in paragraph 3.4.9 will be accepted for the consideration of exemption from the LPR. Nevertheless, serving English Language teachers who joined the profession in the 2000/01 school year or before are required to meet the LPR before the end of the 2005/06 school year (see paragraph 3.4.8 above). If they plan to apply for exemption, they must acquire the necessary qualifications before the specified date. Otherwise, they should consider attaining the LPR through other available avenues, such as language proficiency training or assessment.

3.4.29   We must reiterate our support for the requirement that all serving English Language teachers meet the LPR before the end of 2005/06 school year. That would help to ensure that all serving English Language teachers attain the basic level of proficiency needed to teach the language effectively. In recognition of the attainment, we recommend that teacher education providers **give teachers** who meet the LPR **credits or advanced standing for** their **BEd programmes**, of which training in proficiency is a part. **For PGDE/PCEd programmes** that focus primarily on pedagogy, or postgraduate-level programmes that focus primarily on subject knowledge, we recommend that the **attainment of LPR be made a pre-requisite for admission**.

EMB & teacher education providers

Qualifications of Native-speaking English teachers (NETs)

3.4.30   Besides the qualifications of local English

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[47] Under current LPR policy, 'relevant degree' means a recognised degree or higher education programme with substantial components on the study of English and its use. This includes degrees in the study of the English language (including English studies, English literature, and linguistics), degrees in education with specialisation in English, degrees in the communicative use of English and degrees in translation with English as one of the principal languages studied.

[48] Under current LPR policy, 'relevant teacher training' means recognised initial teacher training with specialisation in English and supervised English teaching practice. Initial teacher training obtained before September 2000 is recognised for exemption regardless of the subject of specialisation.

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Language teachers, some members of the public have expressed to us their concerns about the qualifications of the NETs engaged in local schools. Under the Government-funded schemes -

    (a)   NETs in secondary schools should possess -

- a bachelor's degree majoring in English Language, Linguistics, English Literature, English Studies or a Modern Language[49]; <u>and</u>

- a PGDE or equivalent, or a Teaching of English as a Foreign Language or a Second Language (TEFL/TESL) qualification at least at diploma level; <u>and</u>

- at least one year's post-graduate experience of teaching English (preferably as a second or foreign language) at secondary school level or above.

    (b)   NETs in primary schools should possess -

- a bachelor's degree, preferably majoring in English Language, Linguistics, English Literature, English Studies or a Modern Language; <u>and/or</u>

- a recognised teacher training qualification, preferably in Primary Education or TEFL/TESL.

3.4.31   The NETs who have been recruited on the basis of the above requirements, particularly those in primary schools, may not hold a first degree and a PDGE with a major relevant to the English language subject. Yet we recognise that in English-speaking countries, teacher training programmes in primary education will normally prepare teachers to teach English, whereas training in

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[49] Applicants who possess a bachelor's degree in other academic subjects may be considered if they hold a PGDE or equivalent, a TEFL/TESL qualification at diploma level and at least one year's post-graduate experience of teaching English at secondary school level or above.

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TEFL/TESL will equip teachers with the skills for teaching English as a foreign or second language. Thus we recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau should review the qualifications for appointment to ensure that the **NETs recruited** to teach in local schools have the necessary preparation in subject knowledge and pedagogy **comparable to the qualifications specified in paragraph 3.4.9**. For primary school NETs, we recommend that candidates should have teacher training in primary education and in teaching English as a foreign or second language.

EMB

Support for curriculum reform

3.4.32   While we strive to build a professional language teaching force in the longer term, we must also provide more immediate support to help panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) and teachers of language subjects to push forward the curriculum reform in their schools.

3.4.33   We need to equip, in particular, the panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) of language subjects with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide leadership in adapting the language curricula to suit the specific needs of their schools. We support the restructuring of the 16-week full-time professional upgrading courses by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) to provide **more intensive and focused training for Chinese and English panel chairpersons** (or curriculum leaders), concentrating on curriculum leadership, development and management. To ensure that the training will meet the needs of the front-line practitioners and address the issues they face in teaching and learning, the HKIEd should seek input from panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) on the design of the courses with regard to both the content and the mode of delivery.

HKIEd & EMB

3.4.34   To support their panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) in implementing the curriculum reform, all language teachers must also be acquainted with the latest pedagogical knowledge and skills required for the current

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curriculum reform. We recommend engaging serving or former teachers with outstanding teaching practice and rich frontline experience for at least three years on a full-time or part-time basis. They should undergo training in mentoring and change-management skills as well as the latest innovations in pedagogy. This group could then become a special **task force of teaching consultants**. Its members would be stationed in districts to work with individual schools, with a view to enhancing the pedagogical capability of their language panels. These teaching consultants would guide and encourage language teachers to collaborate on integrating new knowledge and skills into their teaching practice. They would also help to build district-based networks among language teachers to facilitate ongoing professional development.

3.4.35 General public support was found in the consultation exercise for the above measures. Some members of the public were, nevertheless, concerned that the task force of teaching consultants might take the best language teachers out of schools. As stated in paragraph 3.4.34 above, we will consider engaging serving language teachers on a part-time basis so that they may continue to serve their own schools while providing consultancy services to other schools. Educators also pointed out that it was more important to have competent teaching consultants with expertise in language teaching than to meet our initial target of recruiting 180 full-time consultants or their part-time equivalent. We agree with this view and will put quality first in the recruitment of consultants.

3.4.36 Last but not least, the curriculum reform cannot be accomplished without the support and leadership of school principals. It is thus essential for principals to understand the purpose of the reform and to embrace the changes that it entails. We recommend that the **continuing professional development of principals should include curriculum reform and change management** as core elements, and all principals should be required to upgrade and update themselves in these two areas regularly.

EMB & principals

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Section 5   School management support

3.5.1   To develop and implement a language curriculum and teaching approach that best suit the needs and interests of their students, language teachers must have the administrative and professional support of the school management.

Administrative support

3.5.2   One of the most frequent and justified complaints of language teachers is that they have too heavy a workload. The general public clearly shared this concern, and supported lessening the non-teaching workload of language teachers. Some suggested reducing the size of the classes taught by language teachers to allow the latter to give more personal attention to students.

3.5.3   In recent years, the Government has provided a substantial amount of additional resources to schools to help reduce teachers' non-teaching workload. They include improved clerical provision since 1998, and provision of the Capacity Enhancement Grant[50] since the 2000/01 school year. To enhance language teaching and learning in schools and support the curriculum reform, the Government has also, among other things, -

(a)   introduced the NET Schemes for secondary and primary schools in the 1998/99 and 2002/03 school years respectively;

(b)   upgraded a post in primary schools to senior teacher rank to provide curriculum leadership in the teaching of English since the 2001/02 school year; and

(c)   provided an additional graduate post to primary schools from the 2002/03 school year to strengthen curriculum leadership for the whole

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[50] Each primary school received between $151,600 and $526,000 and each secondary school between $240,067 and $430,363 in Capacity Enhancement Grant for the 2003/04 school year. Schools may hire with the grant extra staff or services for the enhancement of students' language proficiency.

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school.

3.5.4   **School management should** make better use of these resources and review the school's work processes to **relieve language teachers of non-teaching duties** and allow them to focus on improving the quality of language teaching and learning. In support of such efforts, the former Education Department has developed a practical guide to help schools critically examine the non-teaching workload of their teaching staff and identify improvement opportunities and measures. This tool-kit and some examples of good practices can be found in the Education and Manpower Bureau homepage for school management's reference. The Bureau should disseminate the good practices more widely and provide the necessary assistance to schools that wish to undertake work process review.

School management

EMB

3.5.5   While some educators believe that reducing class size is the key to improving language teaching and learning in schools, others believe that it is more important for the students to be taught with the right methodology than for them to be in a small class. Overseas research suggested that a significant drop in class size was necessary to bring about any major improvement in teaching and learning. However, in the current financial circumstances, there is a limit to what can be done with class sizes, and it may be more realistic to seek improvement in language teaching methodology. Therefore, we recommend that **teachers flexibly employ different group teaching strategies to cater for the needs of different students**. School management should make full use of available resources, including teaching assistants, parents and technology, to support teachers in such efforts. For instance, teachers can divide a class into small groups. They can engage some groups in more interactive learning activities, while other groups make use of self-access multi-media resources to learn on their own or with support from peers, teaching assistants and/or parents.

School management & teachers

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Professional support

3.5.6   Language learning is not confined to language lessons but permeates all subjects. We found in the consultation exercise that the public was particularly keen to see enhancement in the bilingual environment in schools and the adoption of a language-across-the-curriculum approach to teaching and learning. In addition to efforts directed at language subjects, school management should involve not only language teachers but teachers of all subjects to support students' learning of both Chinese and English.

School management

3.5.7   We have heard from many teachers that the strong emphasis some parents put on examinations and their resistance to any substantial divergence from traditional practices (e.g. frequent dictations, mechanical drills, tests, and textbook-bound teaching approaches) are major obstacles to the curriculum reform and innovations in pedagogy. School management should discourage an examination-oriented culture and the inappropriate and ineffective use of textbooks, homework and assessment. They should uphold the professional decisions of their language subject panels, and strengthen communications with parents, explaining to them the school's language teaching approaches.

School management

3.5.8   School management should nurture a high quality team of language teachers. As discussed in the last section, they should **explore all possible channels to recruit qualified new language teachers**, and move progressively towards deploying only teachers with the recommended qualifications to teach languages in their schools. They should also support and promote the continuing professional development of language teachers.

School management

3.5.9   Moreover, school management should encourage more extensive use of information technology and multi-media teaching and learning resources to help students move beyond textbooks. A good collection of multi-media resources can be found in the Hong Kong

School management

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Education City website (<u>www.hkedcity.net</u>).   Some examples of innovative use of information technology in education have also been published in the Chinese and English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides (Primary 1 – Secondary 3).

3.5.10   <u>School management should also open up new experiential learning opportunities, such as language camps and fun days, debates, and speech and drama activities, for students to practise and develop their language skills.</u> Immersion programmes or placements in local commercial companies could be provided in collaboration with the business sector[51], alumni, and sister schools both inside and outside Hong Kong. As suggested in Section 3 of this Chapter, management of local schools could also initiate exchange programmes and joint school activities with international schools.

School management

Section 6   Parents

3.6.1   Outside school, students are heavily influenced by their parents and the language environment in the wider community. What is done in schools to help students learn languages must be backed up by the concerted efforts of parents and other sectors of the community. We will focus on the role of parents in this section and turn to the role of the wider community, particularly the mass media, in the next.

3.6.2   Parents can go a long way towards creating a conducive language-learning environment at home. They have a powerful influence over their children's education, and should not think that language learning is a matter for schools and teachers only. The public agreed with us on this point, and supported greater efforts in educating parents and involving them in the language learning of their children.

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[51] For example, the Adopt-a-School Scheme by the Young Entrepreneurs Development Council.

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Parent education

3.6.3   The former Education Department embarked on a comprehensive parent education programme with an allocation of $50 million in 2001. A Parent Education Implementation Team was established to implement the programme, which includes production of parent education reference materials, training of parent educators, and other promotional and educational activities. Among other things, the programme helps parents learn how to help their children develop good language abilities and reading habits.

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3.6.4   <u>We understand that many parents are faced with competing demands from work and home. They may have limited time and energy to devote to supporting their children's education. Nevertheless, we encourage parents to do their best to spend more time with their children and build a good relationship with them from a young age. In support of their children's language development from early childhood, parents should -</u>

Parents

- (a) <u>listen to their children with patience, show them that they are understood, and refrain from interrupting. This will help to build their children's confidence in expressing themselves;</u>

- (b) <u>talk to their children about what is interesting to them and encourage them to ask questions;</u>

- (c) <u>stimulate their children's desire to communicate through story-telling and games;</u>

- (d) <u>help their children cultivate an interest in reading by –</u>

  - (i) <u>setting a good example for their children;</u>

  - (ii) <u>taking their children to libraries regularly;</u>

  - (iii) <u>helping to select high quality reading materials that their children find interesting;</u>

  - (iv) <u>setting aside some time each day to read, e.g. a story book or the newspaper, with</u>

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their children;

    (v)   encouraging their children to pay attention to reading materials found in their daily life, e.g. road signs, advertisements, public notices and product labels, etc.; and

(e)   encourage their children to express their thoughts in writing, and show appreciation for their efforts and creativity.

3.6.5   In addition, parents with school-age children should –

Parents

(a)   show their children that they care about their learning in schools;

(b)   recognise that too much emphasis on examination results and excessive drilling and tutorial classes are not effective means to sustain their children's interest in language learning;

(c)   understand that raising their children's motivation for language learning is the key to enhancing their children's language standard;

(d)   learn more about the current curriculum reform and support their children's language teachers in its implementation; and

(e)   keep in close touch with teachers to gain a full picture of their children's progress.

3.6.6   If they have questions and doubts about the language teaching approaches and practices of their children's schools, parents should seek the advice of the school management. Parent-teacher associations can also act as forums in which school management, teachers and parents can exchange views on language teaching and learning. They may invite language experts to give talks on issues of particular concern to parents.

Parent-teacher associations

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Promotion of reading

3.6.7   A strong correlation between a student's reading habits and his or her motivation for language learning and achievement in language subjects was found in our survey. In other words, **the more a student reads, the more likely he or she will attain higher language competence**.

3.6.8   However, our survey also showed that reading habits among students, parents and teachers were weak[52]. Similar findings have been obtained from other studies on reading habits or reading literacy[53].

3.6.9   Promotion of reading has been a key element in many countries' education policies aimed at enhancing overall levels of literacy[54]. These nation-wide strategies are backed up by theories and research with clear targets and training programmes to support teachers.

3.6.10   The former Education Department set up a Task Force in May 2002 to map out a comprehensive strategy to promote reading among students. As part of the strategy, schools have been asked to incorporate reading into their school plans, and a focused school development programme is being developed to support this effort. Action research on approaches used to promote reading and their impact on learning will be conducted. Lists of quality reading materials will be updated and expanded, and good practices in promoting a reading culture will be disseminated for schools' reference.   In addition,

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[52] About 70% and 88% of the students surveyed read five or fewer Chinese and English books in a school term. Close to 90% and 99% of parents read five or fewer Chinese and English books every three months, while only about 62% of Chinese Language teachers and 47% of English Language teachers claimed that they had a habit of reading materials other than newspapers and magazines.

[53] E.g. *Education Department (2001) 'Survey on Reading Habit of Students in Hong Kong; The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (May 2002) 'Young People Learning English and/or Putonghua – Youth Poll Series No. 97'; and International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (2001) 'PIRL 2001 International Report – IEA's Study of Reading Literacy Achievement in Primary School in 35 Countries'*

[54] See for example the national literacy programmes in USA (www.ed.gov/pubs/stratplan2002-07), UK (www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/literacy), Australia (www.dest.gov.au/schools/literacy&numeracy), and New Zealand (www.tki.org.nz/e/r/literacy-numeracy)

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promotional activities will be arranged in collaboration with organisations, such as the public libraries, Hong Kong Education City, and television and radio stations, to publicise the importance of reading.

3.6.11 <u>We support this government initiative to promote reading among students. We believe that parents can support this effort by helping to nurture good reading habits in their children through practices mentioned in sub-paragraph 3.6.4(d) above.</u>

Parents

Section 7   The wider community

The mass media

3.7.1 The language environment in schools and homes is strongly influenced by that in the wider community. The public recognised the need for all parties in the community to work together if the biliterate and trilingual environment in Hong Kong was to be enhanced. They considered the mass media a particularly important part of the local language environment. The quality of language used in the mass media was believed to have a significant influence on the community's language standards.

3.7.2 Most people come into contact with the mass media, in particular television and newspapers, every day. With the project learning approach becoming more popular, students are also increasing their use of the mass media as well as the Internet for information gathering and research.

3.7.3 During the review, we consulted professionals in the field and examined various possible ways to promote more extensive and better use of the mass media as a resource for language learning. In our survey on students' motivation, it was found that –

    (a)   the most popular media among students, in order of preference, were television, radio, magazines/weeklies, the Internet and video-

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tapes/VCDs;

(b)   the most popular types of programmes, in order of preference, were drama series, pop entertainment, current affairs, documentaries and sports;

(c)   students who watched or listened to English and Putonghua television and radio programmes had a much stronger motivation to learn these two languages; and

(d)   36% of students said they never or very seldom watched English television programmes, while 65% said they never or very seldom watched Putonghua programmes.

These findings convince us that greater efforts should be made to provide entertaining English and Putonghua programmes on television and radio that are suitable and attractive to our students.

3.7.4   Studies overseas suggest that providing subtitles in **television** programmes is a powerful means to bring about learning in a second language. In April 2002, the Broadcasting Authority held a public hearing on the renewal of the domestic free television programme service licences held by Asia Television Limited (ATV) and Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB). <u>We conveyed to the Authority our following recommendations –</u>

(a)   <u>Programmes with high viewing ratings on the Chinese channels should be broadcast with Cantonese/Putonghua NICAM;</u>

(b)   <u>All English programmes on the English channels should be provided with English subtitles, and priority should be given to programmes for children and young people; and</u>

(c)   <u>Each free English channel should devote the 6 - 7 p.m. time-slot, on at least two weekdays, to programmes that students find interesting, to be selected on the advice of students, teachers</u>

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<u>and parents.</u>

3.7.5   We found overwhelming public support for the provision of English subtitles for English television programmes in the public consultation exercise.   Some members of the public also demanded that the television and radio services in English and Putonghua be strengthened in both quantity and quality.   The general consensus was that television and radio services could be better utilised for the learning of English and Putonghua.

3.7.6   We note that under their new domestic free television programme service licences that will take effect on 1 December 2003, ATV and TVB will be required to provide -

ATV & TVB

(a)   English subtitles for all news, weather, current affairs programmes and emergency announcements on the English channels by 1 December 2004; and

(b)   a minimum of two hours of programmes with educational value targeting teenagers per week, between the hours of 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., on the English channels, with English subtitles.

3.7.7   The Broadcasting Authority will conduct a review in 2007 to assess whether the provision of English subtitles should be extended to other programme types in the light of community feedback. <u>We strongly recommend that English subtitles be provided for drama series and other popular programmes on the two free English television channels as early as possible.</u>

Broadcasting Authority, ATV & TVB

3.7.8   In the meantime, the Language Fund has provided support for a pilot project to promote the use of English television programmes in the teaching and learning of English, whereby –

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(a)   two   entertaining   English   television programmes suitable for secondary school students have been selected on the advice of

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teachers and students;

(b)   English teaching and learning materials and activities have been developed on the basis of these selected programmes and made available online for teachers and students; and

(c)   principals and teachers are given advance notice of the availability of such programmes and associated online resources, and encouraged to promote them among their students. Teachers may integrate the resources into their curriculum or adapt them as co-curricular activities.

The broadcast of the selected programmes started in February 2003 and will continue until August 2003.

3.7.9   The main objectives of this project are to demonstrate to both teachers and students the potential benefits of using English television programmes as a resource in English teaching and learning, and to promote the greater use of this resource. We hope this project will open up many more possibilities for collaboration between mass media operators and educators to make the learning of a second language a more enjoyable experience.

3.7.10   We are glad that TVB, one of our partners in this project, has agreed to provide English subtitles for the second programme. Feedback received from students so far confirms that the provision of English subtitles is helpful to their comprehension of the programme and to their learning of new English words and phrases.

3.7.11   In the print media, **newspapers** are the most widely read publications in Hong Kong. <u>To encourage the use of high quality language in news and headline writing, the Language Fund sponsored a new category of awards in the 2002 Annual Hong Kong News Awards organised by the Newspaper Society of Hong Kong, and plans to sponsor the awards for at least two more years. The new awards recognised Chinese and English news and headline writing of high language standard.</u>

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3.7.12   In Hong Kong, as elsewhere, **pop culture** exerts a considerable influence on trends among the public, particularly for the younger generation. Our experience in the Hong Kong Workplace English Campaign and Putonghua Month 2002, which enlisted pop stars as ambassadors, also indicates that celebrities in pop culture are effective spokespersons for language education. Further consideration should therefore be given to spreading our messages to the general public through pop culture by, for instance, inviting pop stars to perform in English and Putonghua or to share their experiences in language learning with young people.

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Life-long learning

3.7.13   Ultimately, the upgrading of language abilities and the improvement of individuals' competitiveness should be the responsibility of the learners themselves, and depend to a large extent on their own initiative. In recent years, the Government has provided a variety of subsidies and training programmes to help members of the public improve their language competence. We urge working adults, in particular, to make the best use of these schemes. They include –

Working adults

    (a)   The **Funding Scheme for Workplace English Training**, which provides subsidies for individual employees to upgrade their English. Up to the end of May 2003, about 12 400 individuals have reached the English benchmark relevant to their job types. Another 6 300 are currently pursuing their studies (see www.english.gov.hk for details);

    (b)   The **Continuing Education Fund**, which provides subsidies for training in Chinese, English and Putonghua to non-degree-holders aged 18 to 60. Since the Fund was launched in June 2002, over 6,500 applications for language-related training subsidies have been approved (see www.info.gov.hk/sfaa/cef for details); and

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(c)   Language training programmes offered by the **Employees Retraining Board**, which have so far benefited over 60 800 retrainees aged 30 or above (see www.erb.org for details).

Language policy

3.7.14   During our review and the public consultation exercise, we found a number of issues that are important for maintaining and enhancing the biliterate and trilingual environment in Hong Kong. These issues, nevertheless, go beyond the scope of language education. We believe that the Government should address them through the introduction of a more comprehensive language policy.

3.7.15   We recommend that a **high-level inter-bureau working group** should be set up and chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration to consider relevant issues, such as -   Government

(a)   whether certain organizations in the public and private sectors should be required by law to provide all written materials for public consumption, including but not limited to signs and notices in public places, in both Chinese and English;

(b)   whether certain organizations in the public and private sectors should be encouraged to ensure that their frontline employees are trilingual in Cantonese, Putonghua and English at a level appropriate for their job;

(c)   whether television and radio service operators should be required to issue internal guidelines on proper language use and to provide Cantonese, Putonghua and English pronunciation training to their presenters and performers as appropriate;

(d)   whether consideration should be given to providing more high quality English and Putonghua radio programmes, with improved quality of reception, through, e.g. the

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introduction of digital radio service; and

(e)   whether, in addition to the support given to new arrivals from the mainland, more opportunities should be provided for non-Chinese residents and new immigrants to learn Cantonese and written Chinese, so as to facilitate their integration into the local community.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1   It is vital that we raise the language standards of the community if we are to successfully meet the challenges of the future and consolidate Hong Kong's position as Asia's world city. With increasing globalisation and a more open China market, it is becoming even more important for all of us to improve our language skills, so that we can capitalise on the opportunities opening up in the years and decades ahead. Apart from its economic value, good language ability is also essential for our pursuit of life-long learning.

4.2   Language learning is a complex issue, which straddles the education and non-education sectors, and involves notably –

   (a)   standard setting and curriculum (including content, pedagogy and assessment) development;

   (b)   teacher training;

   (c)   school management support;

   (d)   parent education and support;

   (e)   community (including the mass media) support; and

   (f)   the personal effort of individual learners.

4.3   As the advisory body on language education both inside and outside the school system, we have put forward our recommendations on actions to be taken in respect of each of the above elements with the aim of raising the motivation of local students and working adults for language learning and enhancing the biliterate and trilingual competence of the local population as a whole. We hope the Government will consider our recommendations carefully, and strengthen its communication and collaboration with various key stakeholders to ensure better support for language education in Hong Kong. To raise language standards in Hong Kong, now is the time for action.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

SPECIFYING AND ASSESSING LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES EXPECTED OF OUR STUDENTS AND WORKFORCE

- To give our students and working adults a clear target to work towards, **Chinese and English competencies** expected of our students, university graduates and entry-level professionals **should be specified** using descriptors and exemplars.

- **Assessment instruments should be developed** to help the Government, educators and the learners themselves evaluate if the expected language competencies are being achieved.

Students in Primary 1 to Secondary 7

Basic competencies [paras. 2.2.1 – 2.2.6]

- The development of **basic competencies in Chinese and English Language for Key Stages 1 to 4** (i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 5) by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is supported. The same effort should be extended to Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 6-7).

- Both **educational and vocational considerations** should be taken into account in developing the basic competencies for Key Stages 3 to 5 (i.e. Secondary 3-7). The advice of human resources professionals with expertise in language training should be sought.

- Basic competencies should be regularly reviewed to cater for changes in societal demand as well as changes in the language proficiency of the population over time.

- School management and teachers should **help students achieve** not only the basic competencies but **the full range of learning outcomes** that the language curricula aim to deliver.

Basic Competency Assessment [paras. 2.3.1 – 2.3.8]

- The **System Assessment** of the Basic Competency Assessment (BCA) to be conducted on students at the end of Key Stages 1 to 3 **should be a low-stakes assessment**. Neither the Government nor the school management should release the results of individual schools to the public.

- The **Student Assessment** of the BCA is an online programme, which

will give schools additional information on individual students' attainment of the basic competencies in reading and listening. It will provide a large pool of assessment items, which teachers and students can use as **a language learning resource**.

- The Government should channel available resources to schools taking into consideration their need for support in language education as reflected in their performance in the BCA.

- School management should provide additional support to students who have difficulty in achieving the basic competencies in Chinese or English Language for their Key Stage. However, these students should not be kept from moving up to the next school level unless they also had problems in other subjects.

Standards-referenced public examinations [paras. 2.4.1. – 2.4.6, 2.7.1 – 2.7.4]

- The development of **standards-referenced Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCE) Chinese and English examinations** by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and their implementation **in 2007** are supported.

- The Authority should also develop standards-referenced Hong Kong Advanced Level (HKAL) Chinese and English examinations and implement them in 2009.

- The HKEAA and CDC should decide which grades in these standards-referenced examinations reflect the basic competencies of students in Secondary 5 and Secondary 7 (i.e. Key Stages 4 and 5) respectively.

- **To help evaluate Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 students' proficiency in Putonghua**, the HKEAA should revamp its HKCE Putonghua examination to make it **a standards-referenced assessment** of listening and speaking suitable for students of Secondary 3 and above. The Authority should complete the revamping of the examination in time for implementation **in 2007**.

- The HKEAA and CDC should decide which grades in the standards-referenced HKCE Putonghua examination reflect the levels of proficiency expected of students who have completed the Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 Putonghua curricula respectively.

Language requirements for university admission [paras. 2.5.1 – 2.5.3]

▪ The University Grants Committee should work with local universities to determine, with the help of HKEAA and CDC, which grades in the standards-referenced HKAL examinations reflect the level of Chinese and English required for university admission, taking into account relevant English standard adopted overseas.

University graduates and working adults

▪ University graduates and working adults should strive to attain the language competencies expected of individuals at their educational level. However, imposing a minimum language requirement for university graduation is not recommended. [paras. 2.6.7, 2.6.11 & 2.6.12]

▪ **Employers**, particularly the Government, **should adopt the language competencies expected** of working adults at different educational levels **as requirements for recruitment and/or promotion**. [paras. 2.8.1 – 2.8.2]

▪ To assess their competence in English, working adults can make use of the international English tests available in Hong Kong, including the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the tests accepted by the Workplace English Campaign. [paras. 2.6.1 - 2.6.6]

▪ To help local working adults assess their competence in Chinese, the HKEAA should develop **a general Chinese proficiency assessment** and offer it to the public **no later than 2010**. [paras. 2.6.8 – 2.6.10]

▪ To help local workers plan and assess their progress in Putonghua learning, the HKEAA has been commissioned by SCOLAR to develop **a Putonghua proficiency scale** based on its Test of Proficiency in Putonghua. [paras. 2.7.5 – 2.7.10]

CREATING A MORE MOTIVATING LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

▪ School management, teachers, parents, the mass media and other relevant parties in the community should work together to create a more motivating language learning environment for local students and working adults.

Curriculum and pedagogy

- At the pre-primary level, development of a child's mother tongue should take precedence over the acquisition of other languages. Language activities should be authentic, enjoyable and pressure-free. **Exposure to English and Putonghua** should **only** be introduced **where teachers with the required proficiency are available and an appropriate informal approach is adopted**. [paras. 3.3.4 – 3.3.13]

- The **student-centred approach** of the ongoing **curriculum reform** at primary and secondary levels is supported. School management and teachers should adopt **more lively teaching methods** and make use of a wider variety of print texts, multi-media resources and co-curricular activities to **increase students' interest in language learning**. [paras. 3.3.14, 3.3.17 & 3.3.26]

- More attention should be given to the **teaching of grammar, phonics and phonetics in English Language** and **Cantonese pronunciation and standard modern Chinese writing in Chinese Language**. **Language arts should also be promoted** to enrich students' understanding of Chinese and English-speaking cultures. [paras. 3.3.17 – 3.3.18, 3.3.20 – 3.3.22]

- **Native-speaking English teachers** (NETs) should be **properly deployed** to enrich the language environment in schools, bring in innovative teaching methods and promote the professional development of local English Language teachers. The Education and Manpower Bureau should **ensure** that the NETs recruited are **adequately prepared in subject knowledge and pedagogy to teach English as a second language in local schools**. [paras. 3.3.24 – 3.3.25, 3.4.30 – 3.4.31]

- The Curriculum Development Institute should encourage publishers to produce **more stimulating and interesting language textbooks**. [paras. 3.3.27 – 3.3.28]

Teachers

- To ensure the success of the curriculum reform, **more intensive and focused professional development programmes** on curriculum leadership, development and management will be provided **for panel chairpersons** (or curriculum leaders) of language subjects. [para. 3.4.33]

- In addition, **a task force of** district-based **teaching consultants** should be set up **to help individual schools improve their language curricula and pedagogy**. [para. 3.4.34]

- To ensure that **language teachers** are adequately prepared for their work, i.e. **proficient** in the language they teach, well grounded in **subject knowledge** and acquainted with the **latest theories and practices in language teaching and learning** [paras. 3.4.2 – 3.4.6] –

  - All English and Putonghua teachers should **meet the Language Proficiency Requirement for Teachers** (LPR) **within the time frame specified by the Government**. The attainment of LPR should be recognised by teacher education providers with the granting of credits or advanced standing for Bachelor of Education (BEd) programmes, and become a pre-requisite for admission to postgraduate-level teacher education programmes. [paras. 3.4.8, 3.4.28 – 3.4.29]

  - Starting from the 2004/05 school year, new language teachers should hold at least a **BEd degree majoring in the relevant language subject,** or both **a first degree and a Postgraduate Diploma (or Certificate) in Education** (PGDE/PCEd) **majoring in the relevant language subject**. [paras. 3.4.9 & 3.4.12 – 3.4.13]

  - New language teachers without the recommended qualifications should **acquire them within 3 to 5 years of their entry into the profession**. The Education and Manpower Bureau should re-deploy its resource to provide more training places for these new language teachers. [paras. 3.4.14 & 3.4.16]

  - **New language teachers who have not received any initial teacher training should attend a preparatory course** before and/or shortly after assuming teaching duty. The course should cover basic language teaching skills. [paras. 3.4.19 & 3.4.21]

  - An **incentive grant** covering 50% of the course fees, subject to a maximum of $30,000, **should be provided to encourage serving language teachers to acquire the recommended qualifications**. Priority will be given to those who have neither a degree nor any teacher training in the relevant language subjects. [para. 3.4.23]

  - The Education and Manpower Bureau should develop a career ladder for language teachers, specifying the qualifications and core competencies to be attained for advancement in the teaching grade.

[para. 3.4.27]

School management

- **School principals should** familiarise themselves with the principles of the curriculum reform and **enhance their skills in change management** through continuing professional development. [para. 3.4.36]

- To allow language teachers to focus on improving the quality of language teaching and learning, school management should critically review their schools' work processes and deployment of resources to **reduce language teachers' non-teaching workload**, and facilitate the adoption of appropriate group teaching strategies. [paras. 3.5.2 – 3.5.5]

- School management should nurture a high quality team of language teachers, promote a language-across-the-curriculum approach, and discourage ineffective use of textbooks, homework and assessment in their schools. They should encourage more extensive use of information technology and multi-media resources, and explore new experiential learning opportunities for their students, such as language camps and joint school activities with international schools. [paras. 3.5.6 – 3.5.10]

- School management should **strengthen** their **communications with parents** and **help them understand the school's approach to language teaching and learning**. [para. 3.5.7]

Parents

- **Parents should help their children** cultivate an interest in language learning and **develop good reading habits**. [paras. 3.6.4 – 3.6.5, 3.6.7 – 3.6.11]

- Parents should learn more about the current curriculum reform and support their children's teachers in its implementation. Parent-teacher associations can act as a forum for the exchange of views on language teaching and learning among school management, teachers and parents. [paras. 3.6.5 - 3.6.6]

The wider community

- Schools, parents and students should **make better use of the mass media**, particularly English and Putonghua television and radio programmes, **as resources for language learning**.

- To promote the use of English television programmes in the teaching and learning of English [paras. 3.7.4 – 3.7.10] –

    - **All** English television programmes should have **English subtitles**; and

    - Students, teachers and parents should help to select programmes of interest to students for broadcast on the free English television channels.

- The Language Fund will continue to sponsor the Annual Hong Kong News Awards to recognise Chinese and English news and headline writing of high language standard. [para. 3.7.11]

- Adult language learners should take advantage of the various funding schemes and training programmes offered by the Government to improve their language competence. [para. 3.7.13]

- A **high-level inter-bureau working group should be set up and chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration to consider language policy issues** that are relevant to enhancing the biliterate and trilingual environment in Hong Kong but **beyond the scope of language education**. [paras. 3.7.14 – 3.7.15]   Relevant issues may include -

    - whether certain organizations in public and private sectors should provide written materials for public consumption in both Chinese and English and provide trilingual frontline services;

    - how to enhance the quality of language used in programmes produced and/or broadcast by local television and radio service operators, including ensuring the accurate Cantonese, Putonghua and English pronunciation of presenters and performers;

    - whether more quality English and Putonghua radio programmes, with improved quality of reception, should be provided through, e.g. the introduction of digital radio service; and

    - whether support should be given to non-Chinese residents and new immigrants for learning Cantonese and written Chinese.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (MOI)

- **SCOLAR supports adopting the students' mother tongue as the MOI**. If a second language is to be adopted as the MOI, three preconditions – teachers with the capability to teach in that language, students with the proficiency to learn in that language, and the provision of suitable support measures - must be fulfilled. [paras. 3.2.2 – 3.2.7]

- The MOI policy review should re-examine the mechanisms used to ensure that these three preconditions are being met by schools using or wishing to use English as the MOI for all subjects. [para. 3.2.7]

- Both English-medium and Chinese-medium schools should create an environment that provides more opportunities for the use of English outside the classroom. [paras. 3.2.8 – 3.2.9]

TEACHING CHINESE LANGUAGE IN PUTONGHUA

- **SCOLAR fully endorses the Curriculum Development Council's long-term goal of teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua.**

- Findings from a limited number of local studies conducted so far indicate that students who learn Chinese Language in Putonghua show improvement in Putonghua proficiency and Chinese writing but not necessarily in general Chinese competence. No firm policy or timetable is thus recommended for using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language, pending further studies on the conditions required to ensure a successful switch and prevent possible negative outcomes. [paras. 3.2.12 – 3.2.14]

- **Schools** that believe they have the preconditions for success in place are strongly **encouraged to try using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language**. As a basic condition, these schools **should ensure** that the Chinese Language **teachers** deployed to teach the subject in Putonghua **satisfy the Language Proficiency Requirement for Putonghua teachers in speaking and classroom language**. [para. 3.2.15]

- To help Chinese Language teachers enhance their Putonghua proficiency, the Language Fund will provide them with subsidies to attend Putonghua summer immersion courses in the mainland. [para.

3.2.16]

- Engagement of Chinese Language teachers from the mainland is supported as an interim measure to help interested schools try teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua. The teachers engaged should hold qualifications equivalent to a local degree and recognised teacher training both majoring in Chinese Language. [para. 3.2.17]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To advise the Government on language education issues in general, and in particular -

(a) to advise on the overall policy on language education, including the medium of instruction;

(b) to advise on the setting of language standards, including general goals for language learning at different levels of education and specific language attainment targets at each stage of education;

(c) to advise on measures to be adopted to attain the standards mentioned in (b) above;

(d) to identify research and development projects which are necessary for the enhancement of language proficiency and language in education, and to implement or oversee the satisfactory completion of such projects;

(e) to co-ordinate all research and development activities relating to language proficiency by relevant agencies; monitor their progress, evaluate their effectiveness, and make recommendations to the Government accordingly;

(f) to develop and promote a public education and information programme in respect of language proficiency issues; and

(g) to advise the Trustee of the Language Fund on policies and procedures governing the operation of the Language Fund, and to provide such assistance as the Trustee may require to support, directly or indirectly, the enhancement of the language proficiency of the community.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

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Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower Bureau

Deputy Director of Education (until November 2002)
Education Department

Chairperson of Curriculum Development Council's Committee
  on Chinese Language Education (with effect from 1 April 2003)

Chairperson of Curriculum Development Council's Committee
  on English Language Education (with effect from 1 April 2003)

Chairperson of Curriculum Development Council's Committee
  on Early Childhood Education (with effect from 1 April 2003)

Chairperson of Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications
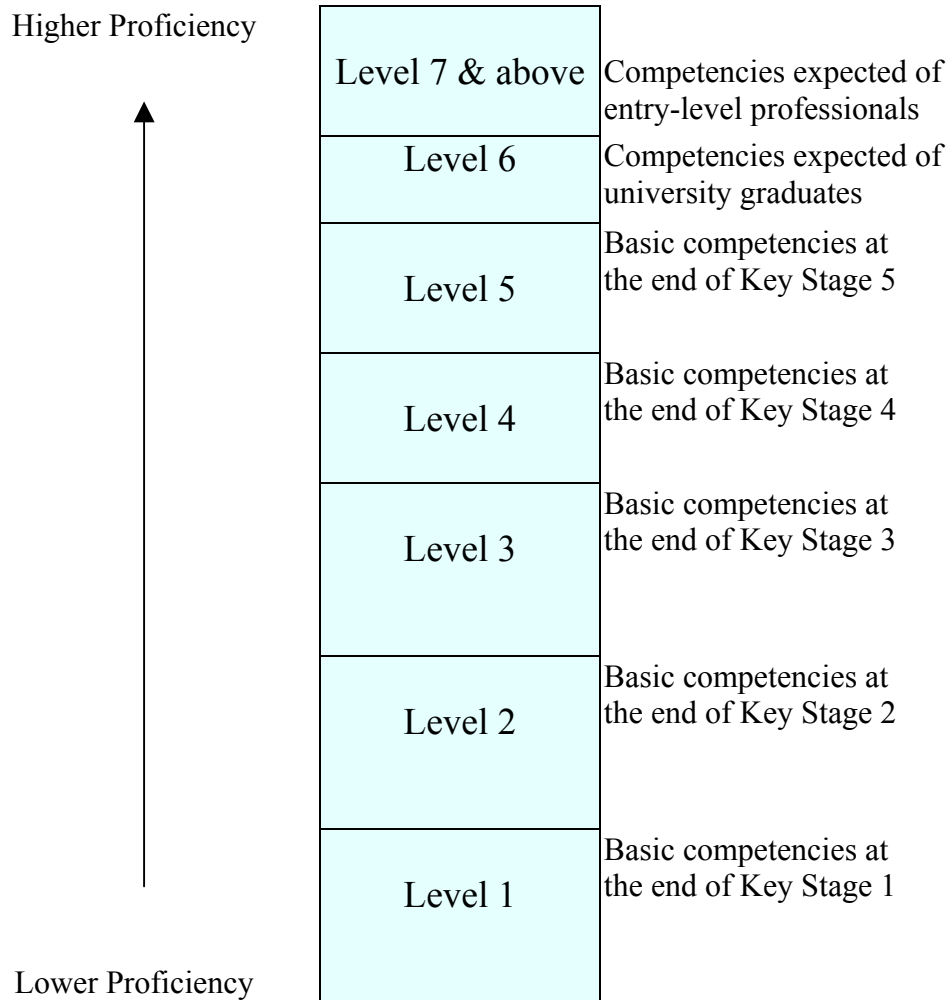 or representative (with effect from 1 April 2003)

Secretary-General of Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
  or representative (with effect from 1 April 2003)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SCALES AND INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH TESTS

Type	Scale	Scale	Scale	Test	Test	Test	Test	Test	Test	Test	Test
Scale Developer / Test Provider	**Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR)**	**Council of Europe (COE)**	**Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)**	**British Council (BC), International Development Programs Australia (IDP) and University of Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages Examinations (Cambridge ESOL)**	**University of Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages Examinations (Cambridge ESOL)**	**University of Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages Examinations (Cambridge ESOL)**	**Pitman Institute Examinations (PIE)**	**The Chauncey Group (ETS)**	**Ordinate Corporation**	**London Chamber of Commerce & Industry Examination Board (LCCIEB)**	**London Chamber of Commerce & Industry Examination Board (LCCIEB)**
Origin	Hong Kong	European Union	European Union	United Kingdom & Australia	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United States	United States	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Name of Scale / Test	**Hong Kong Workplace English Benchmarks (HKWEB)**	**Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF)**	**ALTE Scale**	**International English Language Testing System (IELTS)**	**Business Language Testing Service (BULATS)**	**Business English Certificates (BEC)**	**Examinations Certificate in English (ECE)**	**Test of English in International Communication (TOEIC)**	**Phone Pass Set 10**	**English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA) Tests**	**English for Business (EFB) / English for Commerce (EFC)**
Reporting of Results				**Band**	**Score**	**Level**	**Level**	**Score**	**Score**	**Score**	**Level**
Higher Proficiency ↑				9							
		(C2.2 proposed)	5 Good User (Upper Advanced)	8							
	4 High	C2 Mastery (Proficient User)		7	90 to 100		Advanced		79		
	4 Mid	C1 Effective Operational Proficiency	4 Competent User (Lower Advanced)	6	75 to 89	BEC Higher	Higher Intermediate	951 to 990	76	383-441	
	4 Low								73		Level 4
	3 High							901 to 950	69		
	3 Mid	B2+ Vantage +	3 Independent User (Upper Intermediate)	5	60 to 74	BEC Vantage	Intermediate	801 to 900	66	325-382	
	3 Low							701 to 800	62		Level 3
	2 High	B2 Vantage						601 to 700	58		
	2 Mid	B1+ Threshold + (Independent User)						501 to 600	54	252-324	
	2 Low		2 Threshold User (Lower Intermediate)	4	40 to 59	BEC Preliminary		401 to 500	51		Level 2
	1 High	B1 Threshold						251 to 400	47		
	1 Mid	A2+ Waystage +		3	20 to 39		Elementary	201 to 250	42	226-251	Level 1
	1 Low	(Basic User)	1 Waystage User (Elementary)						36		
	Pre 1	A2 Waystage		2				101 to 200	26		
Lower Proficiency		A1 Breakthrough	0 Breakthrough (Beginner)	1	0 to 19		Basic	10 to 100		0-225	Preliminary
	off-scale	off-scale	Below Breakthrough off-scale	0	off-scale	off-scale	off-scale	off-scale			
Remarks	The benchmarks were developed and aligned with the ALTE scale by SCOLAR as part of the Hong Kong Workplace English Campaign launched in 2000.	The framework was developed for the Council of Europe based upon work by Trim and Van Ek and others (latest version published in 2001).	The scale was developed by ALTE based on the CEF.	The test was initiated by the British Council as the English Language Testing System (ELTS) and later redesigned as IELTS with the involvement of IDP Australia.	This is a proficiency test for business English.	This test of business English targets specific levels of ability.	This is the Pitman's test of office English.	This is a general proficiency test for business English modelled on TOEFL.	This is a general English speaking proficiency test administered on the phone.	This is a general business English proficiency test developed with LCCIEB's support	This is general proficiency test of English for business and commerce.
Mapping	Mapped to the ALTE scale by SCOLAR		Mapped to the CEF by ALTE	Mapped to the ALTE Scale by Cambridge ESOL	Mapped to the ALTE Scale by Cambridge ESOL	Mapped to the ALTE Scale by Cambridge ESOL	Mapped to the CEF by PIE and to the UK's National Qualifications Framework By the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority		Mapped to the CEF Scale by Ordinate.	Mapped to the HKWEB by SCOLAR via pilot testing data	Mapped to the CEF by LCCIEB

Note: The alignment of English language tests with the English proficiency scales shown here is derived from A Worldwide ELT, EFL, ESL, EAL, LEP, ESOL Assessment Scales and Tests Mapping Project (AWEMAP). This is for reference only. Details of the mapping have to be verified with respective examination bodies.

REPRESENTATION OF A LOCAL SCALE OF EXPECTED LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

Higher Proficiency

Level 7 & above	Competencies expected of entry-level professionals
Level 6	Competencies expected of university graduates
Level 5	Basic competencies at the end of Key Stage 5
Level 4	Basic competencies at the end of Key Stage 4
Level 3	Basic competencies at the end of Key Stage 3
Level 2	Basic competencies at the end of Key Stage 2
Level 1	Basic competencies at the end of Key Stage 1

Lower Proficiency

OCCUPATIONS OF YOUNG PERSONS
UPON COMPLETION OF SECONDARY 3, 5 OR 7

According to the 2001 Population Census, the 10 occupations taken up by most working persons -

(a) Aged 15 to 19 with **Secondary 3** as highest level of education attainment -

- Housekeeping and restaurant services workers
- Shop salespersons
- Domestic helpers and cleaners and related workers
- Building furnishers and related trades workers
- Electrical and electronic instrument mechanics and fitters
- Hairdressers, barbers, beauticians and related workers
- Transport labourers
- Machinery mechanics and fitters
- Messengers, watchers and security workers
- Other services elementary occupations

(b) Aged 15 to 19 with **Secondary 5** (or completion of Project Yi Jin) as highest level of education attainment -

- Shop salespersons
- Numerical and material recording clerks
- Housekeeping and restaurant services workers
- General clerks
- Client information clerks
- Messengers, watchers and security workers
- Secretaries and keyboard operating clerks
- Cashiers, tellers and related clerks
- Hairdressers, barbers, beauticians and related workers
- Electrical and electronic instrument mechanics and fitters

(c) Aged 20-24 with **Secondary 7** as highest level of education attainment -

- Numerical and material recording clerks

- General clerks
- Business and administration associate professionals
- Shop salespersons
- Secretaries and keyboard operating clerks
- Domestic helpers and cleaners and related workers
- Client information clerks
- Discipline and protective services workers
- Nurses and midmives
- Cashiers, tellers and related clerks

**SUMMARY OF LOCAL RESEARCH FINDINGS ON
THE TEACHING OF CHINESE LANGUAGE IN PUTONGHUA**

Project Title	Chief Investigator [Source of Funding & Project Completion Date]	Scope and Objective(s)	Methodology	Major Findings & Observations
Comparing the effect of using Putonghua or Cantonese to teach Chinese Language on primary students' Chinese language proficiency	Senior Research Officer, SCOLAR Support Unit [Language Fund; May 2002]	• To investigate the mastery of written Chinese by primary students – • when taught in Putonghua or Cantonese; and • in schools with longer or shorter history of teaching Chinese language in Putonghua.	• Assessment of 2 279 Primary 1-6 students in 16 primary schools using a calibrated test of written Chinese. (The test was developed through another Language Fund project on the assessment of Chinese language proficiency of primary students in Hong Kong.)	• There is no definite pattern in the mastery of vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing showing either an advantage or disadvantage of learning Chinese Language in Putonghua among junior primary students. However, senior primary students taught in Cantonese performed consistently better than their counterparts taught in Putonghua. • Students in schools with a longer history (more than three years) of using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language tended to produce longer writing than students in schools with two or fewer years of experience. (The length of writing correlates positively with students' overall scores in writing.) However, in all other measures, there were no marked differences in performance between the two groups.

Project Title	Chief Investigator [Source of Funding & Project Completion Date]	Scope and Objective(s)	Methodology	Major Findings & Observations
A feasibility study on the teaching of Chinese Language in Putonghua at primary and junior secondary schools in Hong Kong and the design of a course on using Putonghua as classroom language	Dr. Ho Kwok Cheung, The Hong Kong Institute of Education [Quality Education Fund; end June 2002]	• To identify problems faced by schools using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language to primary and junior secondary students and provide assistance where necessary. • To design a course to train primary and secondary school teachers to teach Chinese Language in Putonghua.	• Case studies of four primary schools and two secondary schools, involving about 247 Primary 2 & 3 and Secondary 1 & 2 students. • Interviews of principals and teachers; surveys of students and parents. • Students' performance in Putonghua and Chinese Language measured using individual schools' internal assessment regimes.	• There was general support among parents for teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua (2/3 of 188 parents surveyed expressed support). • No noticeable difference between students who learned in Putonghua and those who learned in Cantonese with regard to general performance in Chinese Language. • Students who learned in Putonghua performed better in writing in terms of style, fluency and diminished interference from Cantonese. • Students who learned in Putonghua also showed improvement in Putonghua, especially in listening and speaking, and increased general confidence in conversing in Putonghua. Conditions for success: • A gradual and phased approach (e.g. use of Cantonese to teach Chinese Language and teaching of Putonghua as a separate subject in Primary 1-2, followed by introduction of Putonghua as medium of instruction for Chinese Language in Primary 3 with a three-month transitional period); • Teachers with appropriate teacher training in Chinese Language and adequate Putonghua proficiency (i.e. Level 2B or above in the Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi);

Project Title	Chief Investigator [Source of Funding & Project Completion Date]	Scope and Objective(s)	Methodology	Major Findings & Observations
				• Putonghua kept as a separate subject to focus on pinyin and pronunciation; and • Development of appropriate textbooks and teaching materials and creation of a Putonghua language environment in school.
The effect of using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language on secondary students' learning of the subject	Prof. Ho Wai Kit, Chinese University of Hong Kong [Language Fund; 3rd Quarter 2002]	• To investigate the effect of teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua on students' development of Chinese Language proficiency. • To collect students' views on the learning of Putonghua and its use as medium of instruction.	• Longitudinal study and survey of 699 students in four secondary schools as they progressed from Secondary 1 to 3. • Comparison of students who were taught Chinese Language in Cantonese and Putonghua. • Assessment of students' Chinese ability in writing, vocabulary, sentence structure, reading comprehension and conversation.	• Questionnaire survey results indicate that about 40% of students taught in Putonghua liked the arrangement and perceived improvement in their own Putonghua proficiency. • Assessments of student performance show that students taught in Putonghua did better in writing tasks than students taught in Cantonese.

DRAFT FRAMEWORK OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The following framework attempts to set out the professional knowledge, skills, qualities and attitudes that English Language teachers in Hong Kong should develop over the course of their career for the continuous enhancement of their effectiveness. While the types of knowledge, skills, qualities and attitudes are presented as discrete items, they should be integrated and applied in a holistic manner. (The list of items is not meant to be exhaustive.)

Domain	Item
English Language Subject Knowledge and Skills	**An effective English Language teacher is able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills in an integrated manner –** 1. **Linguistic Knowledge of English and Related Skills** e.g. an understanding of the sound, structural and meaning systems of English and the use of English in context; an ability to analyse spoken and written English texts and English lexis. 2. **Knowledge of the Social-Cultural Aspects of English as an International Language** e.g. an understanding of the roles and functions of English in various social-cultural spheres (e.g. use in commerce, media and pop culture), and various types of literary works and oral traditions (e.g. classical, contemporary and children literature). 3. **Knowledge of Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism** i.e. an understanding of relevant theories and their implications with reference to the teaching and learning of English in Hong Kong. 4. **Knowledge of English Language Education** e.g. an understanding of relevant approaches and strategies for the teaching and learning of English to different age groups.

Domain	Item
English Language Pedagogy	**An effective English Language teacher is able to apply his/her pedagogical skills in an integrated manner and/or provide useful comments and feedback to students as and when appropriate in the -** 5. **Teaching of Reading** 6. **Teaching of Writing** 7. **Teaching of Listening** 8. **Teaching of Speaking** 9. **Teaching of Vocabulary Skills** 10. **Teaching of Syntax and Language Structure** 11. **Teaching English through Language Arts and Appreciation of English-speaking Cultures** 12. **Development and Evaluation of Curriculum and Assessment** 13. **Use of Teaching and Learning Resources**
English Language Proficiency	**An effective English Language teacher is able to use the four language skills in an integrated manner for various (including professional) purposes -** 14. **Reading** 15. **Writing** 16. **Listening** 17. **Speaking** 18. **Classroom Language**

Domain	Item
Professional Qualities and Attitudes	**19. An effective English Language teacher develops professional attitudes towards language education** e.g. ability and willingness to reflect on and evaluate critically their English teaching and learning experiences; a positive and critical attitude towards curriculum innovations in English Language teaching; an interest in English-speaking cultures.
General Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes	**20. General Professional Knowledge and Skills** e.g. an understanding of various education theories and effective education strategies, and their applications with reference to, e.g. child and adolescent development, learners' characteristics, students' motivation, classroom management, school management, education research methodology and education policy. **21. Cross-Disciplinary Knowledge** e.g. general knowledge of various arts, humanities and sciences. **22. Nine Generic Skills in the New Curriculum[55]** (a) Collaboration Skills (b) Communication Skills (c) Creativity (d) Critical Thinking Skills (e) Information Technology Skills (f) Numeracy Skills (g) Problem-solving Skills (h) Self-management Skills (i) Study Skills
Professional Ethics	**23. Ethics** (a) Professional Responsibilities (b) Professional Morality

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[55] According to the new curriculum framework, students should be helped to develop the nine generic skills set out here in the table (Curriculum Development Council, 2001). Teachers should themselves possess these skills in order to help their students develop them. The generic skills required of teachers may change as and when further curriculum reforms develop in future.

DRAFT FRAMEWORK OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The following framework attempts to set out the professional knowledge, skills, qualities and attributes that Chinese Language teacher in Hong Kong should develop over the course of their career for the continuous enhancement of their effectiveness. While the types of knowledge, skills, qualities and attitudes are presented as discrete items, they should be integrated and applied in a holistic manner. (The list of items is not meant to be exhaustive.)

Domain	Item
Chinese Language Subject Knowledge and Skills	**An effective Chinese Language teacher is able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills in an integrated manner -** 1. **Knowledge of Chinese Characters** 2. **Knowledge of Phonetics** 3. **Knowledge of Grammar** 4. **Knowledge of Literature** 5. **Knowledge of Culture** 6. **Knowledge of Chinese Language Education**
Chinese Language Pedagogy	**An effective Chinese Language teacher is able to apply the following techniques and skills in an integrated manner and provide useful comments and feedback to students as and when appropriate in the -** 7. **Teaching of Reading** 8. **Teaching of Writing** 9. **Teaching of Listening** 10. **Teaching of Speaking** 11. **Teaching of Vocabulary skills** 12. **Use of Teaching and Learning Resources** 13. **Teaching of Culture** 14. **Teaching of Thinking Skills** 15. **Teaching of Literature** 16. **Moral Education**

Domain	Item
Chinese Language Proficiency	**An effective Chinese Language teacher is able to use the four language skills in an integrated manner for various (including professional) purposes -** 17. **Reading** 18. **Writing** 19. **Listening** 20. **Speaking** 21. **Putonghua** 22. **Calligraphy**
Professional Qualities and Attitudes	23. **An effective Chinese Language teacher develops professional attitudes towards language education** e.g. ability and willingness to reflect on and evaluate critically their Chinese teaching and learning experiences; a positive and critical attitude towards curriculum innovations in Chinese Language teaching; sustained interest in reading and writing.

General Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes	24. **General Professional Knowledge and Skills**
	
	e.g. an understanding of various education theories and effective education strategies, and their applications with reference to, e.g. child and adolescent development, learners' characteristics, students' motivation, classroom management, school management, and education research methodology and education policy.
	
	25. **Cross-Disciplinary Knowledge**
	
	e.g. general knowledge of various arts, humanities and sciences.
	
	26. **Nine Generic Skills in the New Curriculum**[56]
	
	   (a) Collaboration Skills
	
	   (b) Communication Skills
	
	   (c) Creativity

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[56] According to the new curriculum framework, students should be helped to develop the nine generic skills set out here in the table (Curriculum Development Council, 2001). Teachers should themselves possess these skills in order to help their students develop them. The generic skills required of teachers may change as and when further curriculum reforms develop in future.

Domain	Item
	(d) Critical Thinking Skills (e) Information Technology Skills (f) Numeracy Skills (g) Problem-solving Skills (h) Self-management Skills (i) Study Skills
Professional Ethics	**27. Ethics** (a) Professional Responsibilities (b) Professional Morality

QUALIFICATIONS HELD BY SERVING LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Types of Qualifications Held by Serving Language Teachers[1]	Chinese Language Teachers		English Language Teachers	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
(a) Relevant BEd or relevant first degree plus relevant PGDE/PCEd (i.e. a BEd in Chinese/English Language, or a first degree in Chinese Language/Literature or English Language/Literature plus PGDE/PCEd with major in Chinese/English Language)	550 (4.5%)	1 883 (36.2%)	582 (6.3%)	1 292 (22.7%)
(b) Relevant first degree plus relevant Certificate of Education (CertEd) or relevant higher degree plus relevant PGDE/PCEd (i.e. a first degree in Chinese Language/Literature or English Language/Literature plus CertEd with major in Chinese/English Language, or Master's/Doctorate degree in Chinese Language/Literature or English Language/Literature plus PGDE/PCEd with major in Chinese/English Language)	681 (5.5%)	746 (14.3%)	246 (2.7%)	764 (13.4%)
Sub-total	1 231 (10%)	2 629 (50.5%)	828 (9%)	2 056 (36%)
(c) Relevant degree[2], but no relevant teacher training[3] (i.e. a first degree in Chinese Language/Literature or English Language/Literature, but no PGDE/PCED/CertEd majoring in Chinese/English Language)	151 (1.2%)	483 (9.3%)	312 (3.4%)	764 (13.4%)
(d) Relevant teacher training, but no relevant degree[4] (i.e. a PGDE/PCEd majoring in Chinese/English Language or a CertEd majoring in Primary Education[5], but no first degree in Chinese Language/Literature or English Language/Literature)	10 002 (81.5%)	1 312 (25.2%)	4 185 (45.1%)	1 687 (29.6%)
(e) No relevant degree[6] & no relevant teacher training[7]	894 (7.3%)	783 (15%)	3 951 (42.6%)	1 196 (21%)
Sub-total	11 047 (90%)	2 578 (49.5%)	8 448 (91%)	3 647 (64%)
Total	12 278 (100%)	5 207 (100%)	9 276 (100%)	5 703 (100%)
	17 485		14 979	

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[1] Statistics as at October 2001 obtained from the 2001 Teacher Survey conducted by the former Education Department
[2] This can be a first degree or a higher degree.
[3] These teachers may have received teacher training majoring in other subjects.
[4] These teachers may have a first or a higher degree, but not in the relevant language subject.
[5] For primary school teachers, graduates from the Hong Kong Institute of Education (or the former Colleges of Education) are, regardless of their specialisation, all regarded as 'subject-trained' in 'Chinese Language', 'Mathematics' and 'General Studies'.
[6] This refers to either a first degree or a higher degree.
[7] These teachers may have a first or a higher degree and/or teacher training qualification, but not in the relevant language subject.