

Remarkable Initiatives

As the School prepares for the New Senior Secondary (NSS) Curriculum in 2009, further adjustments to academic programs, student support groups and school facilities have taken place in the past year. Some of these changes are implemented to ensure a smooth transition from junior secondary to the NSS while others are improvement measure to ensure quality and all-round education for the students. The following sections highlight notable changes in the areas of academic curriculum, student support and school facilities.

Academic Curriculum

The Academic Committee has been overseeing the preparation and fine-tuning the reform of our curriculum for the past years. Meanwhile, our teachers continue to enroll in various NSS workshops to equip themselves with skills and to familiarize themselves with the NSS syllabus. The need for additional support in the School's human resources has been identified and additional teaching assistants and IT support staff have been employed to relieve the increasing workload of teachers, so that teachers may concentrate on teaching and preparing for the NSS.

Junior Forms

In addition to the human resources aspect, major reforms have already been introduced in our junior forms for the NSS. Each department identifies and targets specific areas to work on by implementing a variety of programs and / or changes.

Based on its experience with launching drama into the S1 English curriculum in 2006–07, the English Department extends the drama program to S2 last year to holistically enrich and enhance the language arts curriculum. A native-English-speaking drama teacher (NEDT) conducts drama classes together with our English teachers. Our students apply their experience in improvisation, stage movements from S1, and work in groups to create a script. The best of which was edited and then performed on the School's Annual Open Day. Their mini-drama, based on an author of great renown, was well received by the audience. Most students enjoy learning English through drama, and through the program, they become more confident in using English to communicate with each other. This school-based curriculum was highly commended by the Education Bureau subject officers during their visit in October 2008.

The Chinese Department, on the other hand, has been actively adjusting its teaching method in order to prepare for the forthcoming NSS Curriculum. Apart from adding elements of the new HKCEE syllabus to the junior form examination and implementing a “Learning Portfolio” so as to meet the requirement of School-based Assessment (SBA), two aspects are targeted in the coming year. Firstly, to accord with the Elective Units of the NSS Chinese syllabus, new teaching units have been introduced in the junior form syllabus, namely “News and Reporting”, “Literary Works and Film Adaptations” and “Topics on Chinese Culture”. Different teaching activities are being organized. For example, in the “News and Reporting” module, with the help of the technology employed in the new Campus TV, students will have the opportunity to conduct personal interviews with different people. Secondly, we aim to promote a reading and writing atmosphere. Writers are invited to deliver talks on literature and organize writing workshops for students. Students are also encouraged to participate in inter-school writing competitions. Favorable results are seen as several students from our school have won prizes in important events such as the Hong Kong Youth Literary Awards.

While the Integrated Humanities is a relatively new subject, being first introduced to the S1 curriculum in the 2005–2006 school year, topics ranging from History, Geography, Economic & Public Affairs are incorporated. Inter-disciplinary by nature, it provides a platform for Personal, Social and Humanities Education, a Key Learning Area under the EDB’s curriculum reform, aiming to build a broad knowledge base and a rich repertoire of skills in learning-to-learn as well as to nurture moral and social values through enquiry and issue-based learning in students. Course content prepares students for their future courses in Liberal Studies in Senior Secondary levels while students benefit from the useful concepts and structured approach taught in the curriculum.

Similarly, the Information Technology curriculum has undergone substantial changes with the aim of fostering students’ creativity, logical thinking and problem-solving skills. Through projects, students consolidate what they learnt in class creatively. While creativity and skills are assessed by projects, knowledge and concepts are evaluated by written assessments. The written assessments are specially designed to prepare students for the NSS Information and Communication Technology curriculum. Apart from the existing elements (i.e. *Control technology* in the S1 and S2 curriculum and *Creative Media* in S3), *3D animation* is newly introduced to the S3 Information Technology course in 2007–2008. Examples are demonstrations of future construction projects, illustrations of complicated ideas or concepts, and movies with special effects. This kind of animation not only greatly arouses students’ interest and cultivates their creativity, but also equips them with unique skills in this area. Although contemporary elements have been incorporated into the current curriculum, topics such as *2D/3D graphic design, flash*

animation, web-page design, use of Internet tools, typing skills and Chinese input methods are still part of the curriculum.

Our newly implemented school-based Science curriculum bridges with the NSS Syllabus by emphasizing much on building the processing skills and generic skills of students. As a new initiative, students' practical skills will be assessed in the lessons and during examinations. To this end, additional assistance is provided in developing their scientific hands-on skills and collaboration skills by spending more time on the training of laboratory techniques in small groups. Furthermore, the experiments require more scientific inquiry skills and hence are more cognitively demanding. Skills in proper communication of scientific ideas are also stressed. First, students are encouraged to consolidate and expand their scientific vocabulary base, so that they are well equipped to discuss science-related matters. Secondly, a greater portion of class time is allocated to the reading of contextual or authentic scientific articles. Thirdly, assignments are designed to call for high order thinking. Students are required to give more elaborate answers in their assignments, for instance, experiment design, science laboratory report writing, concept map and essay writing. Tutorials are regularly given to cater students with different needs.

Senior Forms

In 2007–08, our Academic Committee has set the basic framework of the School's New Senior Curriculum and subject streaming. The School held several parents' talks to S2 and S3 students and parents to inform parents of the changes ahead. While curriculums of all subjects in the senior forms need to be reformed, Liberal Studies, an entirely new subject in NSS, will have to be created.

In preparing the NSS Liberal Studies curriculum to be implemented, four teachers from Humanities, Mathematics and Information Technology have been deployed to a newly formed preparatory committee. The teachers have been sent to participate in the courses organized by EDB and watch closely on the recent developments of curriculum planning and public assessment methods. The preparatory committee is also exploring ways to cooperate with other teams and departments including Integrated Humanities, Science, Enrichment Course, Civil and Moral Education Team and Current Affairs Society in order to adopt a whole-school approach in preparing the NSS Liberal Studies curriculum. Other teaching staff members of our School are also taking postgraduate courses relating to Liberal Studies organised by local tertiary institutions.

Other Learning Experience

To foster a balanced whole-person development of our students, the School holds a variety of activities for the enrichment of students. For example, our lunchtime Cultural Program for S1 students covers topics from Art and Music appreciation to introducing Go to students. In addition, a special session on Leadership Training was held during the past summer for our S6 students, and District Council member Mr. Wong Kin Hing was invited to speak to our students. Unplanned events include the donation drive for Sichuan Earthquake relief last May, in which the entire School worked together selflessly to raise over \$360,000.

Support for Students

Students with Special Needs

In view of escalating social complexity, school-provided care for students' special needs, ranging from psychological health to cordial familial relationship, is indispensable. In collaboration with the School's Counselling Team and School Social Worker, a School Educational Psychologist came into service last year. Miss Chan Wai Chun, an experienced Educational Psychologist, was hired to help integrate students with special needs (SN) into the mainstream setting and curriculum.

School Educational Psychologist's duties can be viewed from different perspectives. Starting off with early identification and intervention, it is followed by assessment accommodation, curriculum differentiation and adaptation of teaching strategies, staff development, and parental involvement. Last year, we handled about 50 cases.

Last June, heads of all function teams in the School gathered together to set forth a blueprint for the policy of handling students with special needs (hereinafter termed "SN policy"). A whole-school approach was devised and will be adopted to develop policies to enhance the effectiveness of support for students concerned. In addition, a fully-fledged databank, under the close monitoring by Students' Support Team, will be set up for recording SN students. The databank, in operation since October 2008, facilitates teachers' access to information on students' SN through information technology.

Thanks to the resource flexibility bestowed by the Direct Subsidy Scheme, we are delighted at taking an advanced step of recruiting an educational psychologist on the one hand and transmitting confidential information to the involved parties on the other.

Gifted Education

The prevailing three-tier framework of gifted education in Hong Kong finds its very epitome in our School. To install quality education, the School promotes effective learning practices in the classroom (Level 1) through the introduction of the Enrichment Course. Besides spotting high-end students by observing their performance, the School Educational Psychologist also helps identify and assess the hidden talents of the students. We offer pull-out programs to these students inside the School (Level 2), hire coaches or tutors, and subsidize them to take courses run by tertiary institutions. We have also been successful in nominating some highly gifted students to be included in the Support Measures for the Exceptionally Gifted Students (Level 3) organized by The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education where they are given enhancement courses/activities in areas of leadership, mathematics, science and humanities. The School also establishes Awards for the Exceptionally Gifted Student in Multiple Intelligence with which they can pay for hiring personal coaches. Apart from academic training like creative writing and mathematics enhancement programs, we also top up students in music, visual arts, Go, dancing, Wu Shu, sport, to name but a few.

Facilities Improvement

Campus TV

One of the missions of our School is to foster leadership, critical thinking, creativity and confidence through the use of modern technology. With the endorsement of our School Management Committee, we are proud to initiate an early adoption of the High-Definition (HD) TV production technology into our school campus through setting up a HD Campus TV learning platform.

Since July 2008, some zestful students and teachers have progressively undertaken training by professionals. As a result, a substantial amount of educational TV programmes are now in the production pipeline. Today, more than 60 students are involved in the production of school TV programmes. It is becoming prevalent for our students to watch TV programmes everyday in the morning before classes and during lunchtime. TV programmes, such as news and in-house educational programmes from ten channels including English, Chinese, Putonghua, Cultural Programme, Liberal Studies, Science, Music, Sports, Visual Arts and Co-curricula Activities, are telecasted to the HD TV in each classroom.

Weather Detector

Another notable project is our school joining the Hong Kong Community Weather Information Network (HKCO-WIN). Real-time weather information at the School and other sites territory-wide could be found at <http://weather.ap.polyu.edu.hk/>. In addition, a carbon dioxide detector has recently been installed.

IT 3-D Animation and Computer Upgrade

To complement the sophisticated technology of our reformed IT program such as 3-D animation, computers of high performance are required. The School replaced all the computers in the Computer Room with ones with dual-core CPUs and special display cards.

Fencing Equipment

To provide better training for the Boys' and Girls' Fencing teams, the PE department purchased a full set of fencing equipment for training that even includes an electronic scoring system rivalling those used in competitions. Students not selected to join the School team may still try out fencing during PE lessons.