

LegCo Panel on Education

**Medium of instruction at Secondary 4 and above
in schools which use Chinese as the medium of instruction (CMI)**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the medium of instruction (MOI) of CMI schools for their Secondary 4 (S4) students.

Background

2. The Administration's policy on MOI is that schools should adopt the appropriate MOI to ensure that their students can learn effectively. *The Medium of Instruction Guidance for Secondary Schools (the Guidance)* was implemented in the 1998/99 school year, starting from S1. The Government undertook at that time to review the MOI arrangements in three years. To this end, a joint working group (the WG), comprising members of the Board of Education and the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, was set up in 1998 to map out the MOI arrangements for schools as from the 2001/02 school year, when the 1998/99 S1 cohort proceeds to S4.

Recommendations of the Working Group

3. In September 2000, the WG recommended, and the Administration accepted, that the following arrangements should be adopted up to the 2003/04 school year, while the long-term arrangements should be considered in conjunction with the Education Commission's review in 2003/04 of the Secondary School Places Allocation mechanism :-

- a) the current MOI arrangements for junior secondary classes in CMI and English-medium (EMI) schools should remain unchanged;
- b) CMI schools may opt to use English to teach some subjects in some classes at S4 and S5. However, in line with *the Guidance*, these schools, in making this decision, should ensure that:
 - (i) the subject teachers have the requisite capability to teach in English;

- (ii) the students are sufficiently proficient in English; and
 - (iii) there are sound school-based support programmes and bridging courses to prepare students for the switch; and
- c) schools may decide the MOI to be adopted for S6 and S7, taking into account the ability and needs of the students as well as the requisite capability of the subject teachers.

CMI Schools' Choice of MOI for the 2001/02 S4 classes

4. As explained above, for the 2001/02 school year, CMI schools may decide on their own the choice of MOI for their S4 classes, namely, to use :-

- (a) Chinese to teach all non-language subjects;
- (b) English to teach some non-language academic subjects ^{Note 1} for all or some classes; or
- (c) English to teach all non-language academic subjects.

5. According to a preliminary survey conducted in November 2000 by the Education Department (ED) on CMI schools' intended choices of MOI in S4 classes in the 2001/02 school year, about one-third of these schools indicated that they would use Chinese to teach all non-language subjects. The rest indicated that they intended to use the English medium to different extents. Of this, about 70% of them indicated that they would use English to teach one to three subjects in all or some classes, or only the Science stream. In fact quite a number of these schools intended to use English to teach only the subject of "Principles of Accounts" (so as to facilitate their students to sit for overseas professional examinations such as those of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board).

6. A more informative indicator of schools' choices of MOI for their S4 classes can be derived from the data provided by schools in their applications for additional English teachers. Such additional English teachers have been provided since September 1998 as one of the supportive measures for public-sector schools which use Chinese as the MOI at S4 and S5 to strengthen the teaching of English in senior forms. The provision is based on the ratio of the

Note 1: Non-language academic subjects refer to subjects other than language subjects (i.e. Chinese, English, Chinese History, Chinese Literature, English Literature, Putonghua, etc.) as well as practical and technical ones (i.e. Art and Design, Home Economics, Computer Studies, Physical Education, Music, etc.)

number of teaching periods in non-language academic subjects taught in Chinese (C) to the total number of teaching periods in non-language academic subjects (T).

7. Over the past few years, there has been an increasing use of Chinese as the MOI in S4 and S5 classes. This is evidenced by the data provided by secondary schools in their annual submission to ED for additional graduate teachers of English. The mean C to T ratio has been on the rise as follows :-

- 33% in 1998/1999
- 39% in 1999/2000
- 44% in 2000/2001
- 56% in 2001/2002.

These figures indicate that more and more schools are adopting Chinese as the MOI in S4 and S5 classes.

8. For S4 classes alone, in the 2001/02 school year, the C to T ratio will be 67% as compared with 48% in the 2000/01 school year. In other words, more than two-thirds of the teaching time of the non-language academic subjects will be taught in Chinese at S4 in the coming school year. The Administration is now consolidating the information on individual schools' MOI arrangements for specific subjects.

Conclusion

9. Since the implementation of *the Guidance* in 1998, it has been generally recognized that, for most students, mother-tongue teaching helps enhance their cognitive and learning ability. Schools must take into account the requisite conditions in deciding the MOI for senior secondary classes. The data obtained indicate that more and more CMI schools are adopting Chinese as the medium of instruction for S4 and S5 classes.

10. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Education and Manpower Bureau

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