

Teaching Force for Basic Education

Aim

This paper provides an overview of the current teaching force and reports on the latest measures in enhancing teacher education (TE).

Background

2. The Administration has always attached great importance to developing and maintaining a dedicated and professional teaching force as a crucial means to improving the quality of school education in Hong Kong. In June 1992, the Education Commission (EC) published its fifth report which focused on the policy concerning TE. Many recommendations in the report have been put into effect, including the merger of the former colleges of education and the Institute of Language in Education (ILE) [previously run by the Education Department] into the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), the setting up of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) and the introduction of graduate posts in primary schools. According to the planned upgrading process of the TE programmes run by the HKIEd, all pre-service training programmes on primary and secondary education will be degree-awarding programmes from 2004 onwards.

3. Since 1997, in view of the pivotal role of teachers in the education reform, the Administration maintains its commitment to enhancing the professional competence of teachers. As part of the continual enhancement policy, the Administration has

- accelerated the provision of graduate posts in primary schools from September 1999, with a view to achieving 35% graduate primary posts by the 2001/02 school year;
- introduced measures to encourage newly appointed graduate teachers who are untrained to complete a teacher training course within the first six years of their service;
- enabled all serving primary and secondary school teachers to

reach basic information technology (IT) competency by the 2000/01 school year; and

- provided a language enhancement package for primary and secondary English and Putonghua teachers to meet the language proficiency requirement by the 2005/06 school year.

Current Situation

Overview of the Teaching Force

4. For monitoring and planning purposes, the Education Department (ED) conducts an annual Teacher Survey in October every year to capture relevant statistics on teachers. As at October 2000, the total number of permanent teachers in all local day schools (including special schools) was 47 907. The overall vacancy rate was 0.9%. The turnover rate of teachers during October 1999 to September 2000 was 4.0%. Please see Table 1a at *Annex I* for details.

Training and Qualification

5. As at October 2000, 19 535 primary and 20 211 secondary school teachers were professionally trained, representing 90% and 84% of the respective teacher populations. In terms of academic qualification, 9 075 primary and 20 660 secondary school teachers possess a degree, representing 42% and 86% of respective teacher populations. Please see Table 2 at *Annex II* for the number and percentage of primary and secondary schools teachers with training or holding degrees.

Progress Over Time

6. Compared with the figures in 1991, our teaching force has increased from 39 706 to 47 510, indicating a growth rate of about 20% over the last 9 years. The vacancy rate has dropped from 2.2% to 0.9% while the wastage rate has also dropped from 10.7% to 4.0%. In terms of professional training, the percentage has increased from 86% to 90% at the primary level and from 73% to 84% at the secondary level. The percentage of degree holders has also increased from 6% to 42% at the primary level and from 69% to 86% at the secondary level. Such indicators suggest a more stable and better equipped teaching profession has evolved over the last decade. Please see *Annexes I and II* for an

overview of the teaching force and statistics on their training and qualification as at 1991 and 2000.

Challenges Ahead

7. Teacher training is crucial to the delivery of quality education. The Administration will continue to liaise with the TE providers in stepping up opportunities for initial teacher education (both full-time and part-time) as well as continuous professional development programmes for serving teachers and principals.

8. The education and the curriculum reforms have laid emphasis on promoting lifelong learning in society as well as learning to learn. The success of the reforms largely hinges on the ability of teachers to effect the required changes in classrooms, so as to provide an all-round education to students and enhance their learning outcomes. This will require upgrading of teachers' professional knowledge and skills, and a change in paradigm in the following ways:

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Subject syllabuses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Key Learning Area (KLA) learning experiences and learning targets</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Learning content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>A balance of learning process and product</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Knowledge transmission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>A balance of knowledge transmission and construction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Curriculum implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>School-based curriculum development</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Teaching students of similar abilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Teaching students of mixed abilities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How to teach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How to learn and how to assess</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Academic ability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Multiple intelligence</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assessment for the purpose of ranking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assessment of pedagogical effectiveness for proactive intervention</i>

9. In support of the curriculum reform, the Curriculum Development Institute will be launching a series of training programmes in collaboration with TE institutions and other TE providers. These programmes aim to facilitate front-line educators to understand the key concepts and implementation of the curriculum reform by means of on-line learning, self-learning packages, tutorials, workshops, seminars,

action learning and assessments. The initial programmes will cover the teaching of high-order thinking, moral and civic education, coping with individual student differences, curriculum and assessment, as well as key learning areas.

10. Committed to the delivery of quality universal basic education for all, teachers are now required to deal with more difficult situations and problems – teaching students with varied family backgrounds, abilities and attitudes. Teachers are also required to meet higher expectations by adapting themselves to new teaching methods, new technologies and new policy initiatives. In this connection, teachers need to pursue career-long professional development, keep abreast of the latest pedagogic studies and teaching methods, as well as to improve their professional competence. A coherent policy on professional development embracing pre-service teacher training, induction programmes and in-service development is, therefore, crucial to ensure the continuous enhancement of professionalism among our teachers and schools.

Refined TE Objectives

11. The ultimate objective is to enhance the professional competence of teachers. Separate focuses have been identified for three different stages of a teacher's career:

- (a) pre-service training : to ensure that all newly recruited teachers will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the job of a schoolteacher, and establish a sound basis for engagement in lifelong learning.
- (b) induction : to provide all newly appointed teachers with an induction programme that will be sustained throughout their initial years of teaching so that they can become effective, reflective practitioners.
- (c) in-service development : to encourage serving teachers to actively engage themselves in continuous professional development so that they can manage different levels of tasks as they progress along the various stages of their career.

Progress in Other Enhancement Areas

Core Competencies and Professional Development Framework

12. Core competencies for teachers refer to the ability, authority, skill, knowledge and attitude, etc., required to perform their duties effectively. Core competencies defined according to the rank and job nature of teachers can serve as a basis for setting up in-service education policies and allocating resources. The articulation of core competencies and the development of a teachers' professional development framework will ensure that the essential needs of teachers at different stages of their career can be met. In this regard, ED has already commissioned consultancy studies on teacher competency and career ladder, which are expected to be completed by 2002.

Quality of Teacher Trainees

13. Pre-service TE programmes serve as gatekeepers in selecting the most suitable candidates to become prospective teachers. In the admission selection process, TE providers are encouraged to exercise their discretion by giving greater weighting to interviews, taking into account the candidates' breadth of vision as well as their leadership skills as demonstrated in course work and extra-curricular activities. In this connection, the HKIEd has from the 2000/01 school year initiated a General Suitability Interview scheme for its pre-service B.Ed programme and invited experienced front-line practitioners to participate in the process so as to select the most appropriate candidates. It is hoped that similar practices will be extended to other teacher education institutions.

Induction of New Teachers

14. The first year of practice often produces stress and uncertainty, which may cause frustration and a sense of failure. To help new teachers adapt to the profession, principals have been encouraged to include teacher induction as an important component of the school's development plan.

15. Through the Quality Education Fund, the Administration has been providing support to such mentoring partnerships between schools and The University of Hong Kong (i.e. the Unified Professional Development Fellowship in Mentoring project) and that with the HKIEd

(i.e. Training Service & Action Research on Learning to Teach for Primary School Teachers). The ACTEQ will also look into ways to further improve teachers' professional growth through an induction/mentoring system. From the 2001/02 school year, ED will step up induction support for an estimated 1 600 newly appointed primary and secondary school teachers in the form of sustained workshops on such themes as practical advice on teaching, classroom management, student guidance and staying healthy. An induction kit is being planned to help schools with their school-based support.

In-service Teacher Education

School-based Development

16. In line with the spirit of school-based management (SBM), schools are required to include their staff development programme in the annual school plan. To better equip principals and senior teachers in planning for staff development, supervising, communicating and giving advice to colleagues, components of instructional leadership and teacher development have already been incorporated into their professional development programmes. Schools have also been granted training resources under the general domain of the Operating Expenses Block Grant (OEBG) for flexible use. Additional resources have also been provided through the Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG) to create space for teachers' professional development.

17. To help schools purchase and build up, according to their specific needs, a collection of professional materials to support teachers' professional development, a one-off book grant at the rate of HK\$500 per teacher and totalling \$23 million was provided to government, aided, caput and local schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme in May 2001. To optimise the use of resources, schools are encouraged to co-ordinate in the procurement and sharing of books with other schools in the same district or under the same sponsoring body. In addition, a Teachers' Digest has been issued by ED on a quarterly basis since April 2001 to disseminate good ideas and practices among teachers.

Professional networking and exchange

18. Peer support and experience sharing are important for teachers. Networking provides an opportunity for teachers to come together, as well as to share and learn from others' experiences. ED started a two-year

pilot District Teacher Network Scheme in March 2000, which sought to promote 40 items of outstanding teaching methods as well as promote action research and class observation among teachers.

Continuous Professional Development

19. Many teachers currently undertake a variety of professional development programmes such as degree courses, short courses, seminars and workshops either at their own expenses or with the aid of government subsidies. Some others are attending designated courses to meet existing promotion requirements. To promote lifelong learning and continuing professional development (CPD) among teachers, ED is now formulating a framework which will give recognition to teachers' self-enhancement efforts and provide alternative pathways to meeting promotion requirements. The framework will also draw reference from the studies on teachers' core competencies and career ladder.

Early Childhood Education

20. To enhance the quality of the teaching force for early childhood education, the Administration has raised the entry requirements of kindergarten teachers and required them to possess a pre-service Qualified Kindergarten Teacher (QKT) qualification from the 2003/04 school year. All newly appointed kindergarten principals will have to complete the Certificate in Education (Kindergarten) course from September 2002 and all serving kindergarten principals will be provided with Certificate in Education (Kindergarten) training from the 2001/02 to 2005/06 school years.

Advice Sought

21. Members are requested to note the content of this paper.

Education Department
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Annex I

Table 1a: Teaching Profession in Hong Kong, 2000

	Ordinary Schools		Special schools	Practical schools	Skills opportunity schools	Overall
	Primary schools	Secondary schools				
Establishment	22 030	24 204	1 417	106	150	47 907
Strength	21 825	24 014	1 403	103	165	47 510
No. of vacancies	205	190	14	3	0	412
Vacancy rate	0.9%	0.8%	1.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.9%
No. of drop-outs	840	938	63	13	5	1 859
Wastage rate	3.9%	4.0%	4.5%	11.4%	3.2%	4.0%

Source: Teacher Survey 2000

Note: There were 716 teachers in English Schools Foundation (ESF) schools and 1701 in international schools who were not covered above.

Table 1b: Teaching Profession in Hong Kong, 1991

	Ordinary schools		Special schools	Practical schools	Skills opportunity schools	Overall
	Primary schools	Secondary schools				
Establishment	19 065	20 120	1 398	-	-	40 583
Strength	18 752	19 637	1 317	-	-	39 706
No. of vacancies	313	483	81	-	-	877
Vacancy rate	1.6%	2.4%	5.8%	-	-	2.2%
No. of drop-outs	1 777	2 310	188	-	-	4 275
Wastage rate	9.4%	11.8%	15.0%	-	-	10.7%

Source: Teacher Survey 1991

Note: There were 472 teachers in English Schools Foundation (ESF) schools and 845 in international schools who were not covered above.

Table 2: Comparison of Training and Qualification of Primary and Secondary School Teachers, 1991 and 2000

	Primary		Secondary	
	1991	2000	1991	2000
Trained				
Number	16 086	19 535	14 387	20 211
Percentage	86%	90%	73%	84%
Degree-holding				
Number	1 091	9 075	13 477	20 660
Percentage	6%	42%	69%	86%

Source: Teacher Survey 1991 and 2000

Note : Figures covered teachers in local ordinary day schools only, those in ESF and international schools as well as schools of special education were not included.