



The Association of English Medium Secondary Schools
香 港 英 文 中 學 聯 會

c/o YMCA of Hong Kong Christian College

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10 February 2009

The Education Panel.

Hong Kong Legislative Council,
8 Jackson Road.
Central
Hong Kong

Attention: Clerk of Panel

Dear Sir,

Re: Fine-tuning the Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools

Objectives of Fine-tuning

1. Our Association agrees with the EDB that the standard of English in Hong Kong needs to be raised given that local universities mostly use English as the medium of instruction and that the community also needs a higher standard of English in the workforce to stay competitive as an international city in the 21st Century.
2. Our Association agrees with the main thrust of the EDB's paper Fine-tuning the Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools (LC Paper No. CB(2)623/08-09(01)) as presented to the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council for discussion on 15 January 2009, namely,
 - A. The MOI policy is being fine-tuned and not overturned because the criteria for using EMI prescribed by the Education Commission Report of 2005 on Review of Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and the Secondary School Places Allocation are strictly adhered to. They are:
 - Students using EMI have the ability to learn in English.
 - Teachers teaching EMI classes have the capability to teach in English.
 - Schools using EMI provide adequate support measures.
 - B. The labeling effect on CMI schools should be minimised, but not at the cost of lowering the overall standard of English.



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- C. More resources should be given to primary schools so that students may reach the threshold of understanding basic English, both written and spoken, before they are promoted to Secondary One.

Proposed Fine-tuning Framework

3. Choice of MOI:

Since teaching is done one class at a time, we agree that EMI grouping can be made on a class basis instead of a school basis. This has the added advantage of making it possible for many more students to learn in English, namely, those who are deemed able to learn in English but are not given this opportunity because they have been allocated to CMI schools.

We agree that MOI arrangements should be left to schools provided that EMI classes meet the three criteria stated above.

We agree that raising the ELA time to a uniform 25% in Secondary I to III will enhance the English environment in schools and benefit students.

From Secondary IV onwards, schools may decide on the MOI for each subject in each class as they see fit in their professional judgement.

Ensuring the Proper Delivery of the Fine-tuning Arrangements

4. Teacher Capability:

We agree that teachers of EMI subjects must meet English language requirements and are pleased to learn that to ensure this, the EDB will provide in-service English language training for teachers switching from CMI to EMI teaching.

5. Monitoring:

We agree that the EDB must monitor the MOI arrangements of schools, their rationale and readiness for the choice and their compliance, so that learning is not adversely affected.

6. Transparency of Information:

As parents are major stakeholders in education, schools should inform them and the EDB their detailed MOI arrangements, for example, on the schools' websites. The MOI of each subject and each class should be clearly stated.



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We agree that mixed-code teaching, e.g. the use of English textbooks with classroom instruction in Chinese, should not be allowed, as this will seriously compromise the students' ability to speak and write well in English. While some Chinese terms may be used in an initial bridging programme in Secondary I, this should not last for more than three months.

Consultation with Stakeholders

7. Labeling Effect:

It is a truism that the labeling effect can never be completely removed. Parents will always favour one school over another for a variety of reasons. We agree that the proposed Fine-tuning Framework, by allowing schools diversified MOI and ELA arrangements, will eliminate the pure bifurcation of schools into CMI and EMI ones, thereby lessening the labeling effect.

Rosalind Chan
Chairperson