



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

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The People's Republic of China

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Miss Odelia Leung
Clerk to Education Panel
Legislative Council
Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Leung,

Final Report of the Study on Small Class Teaching

The Administration reported at the Education Panel meeting on 16 February 2004 [LC Paper No. CB(2)1282/03-04(01)] the launch of a longitudinal Study on Small Class Teaching (the Study) to assess small class teaching in the local context in terms of both academic and affective outcomes, with a view to identifying the teaching strategies and modes of support necessary for maximizing the benefits of small class teaching.

We are pleased to inform Panel members that we have, in accordance with the findings of the Study, framed the professional development programmes including school-based workshops on “Co-operative Learning”, Learning Circles for collaborative lesson planning, workshops on effective strategies such as extended whole class instruction and increased use of pair and group work etc., in order to support teachers for the implementation of small class teaching in public-sector primary schools starting from Primary 1 in the 2009/10 school year. The in-service training courses for teachers have been rolled out within 2009 with provision of supply teachers as appropriate and will spread over a period of six years. The relevant findings of the Study on effective teaching strategies and support, and the corresponding professional training and support activities are tabulated at the Annex for Members’ reference. The Executive Summary of the Report on the Study (English version only) has been uploaded onto the Education Bureau homepage and the full Report (English version only) has been placed in the Central Resources Centre at Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre for public reference.

For enquiries, please contact the undersigned at 2892 6627.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lau', written over a white background.

(ML LAU)

for Secretary for Education

The gist of relevant findings of the Study on effective teaching strategies and modes of support necessary for maximizing the benefits of small class teaching

- To support teachers to implement small class teaching to enhance learning effectiveness, the professional development programmes of teachers should be framed around the six broad principles of (i) setting clear learning objectives, (ii) using extended questioning techniques, (iii) increasing pupil participation, (iv) using group and pair work, (v) providing appropriate feedback and (vi) creating a framework for assessment.
- It is crucial to promote teaching for understanding by increased pupil talk and participation through extended whole class discussion, together with the increased use of pair and group work, thus easing the transition from the current emphasis on whole class instruction where pupils spend most of their time watching or listening to the teacher. These initiatives should concentrate initially on improving the quality of questioning during whole class discussion and with the effective use of peer tutoring during pair work where more knowledgeable pupils are able to help slower learners, thereby allowing teachers to provide more individual attention. When the use of more effective whole class teaching strategies have begun to take root, collaborative group work could be implemented.
- In coping with diversity, aspects of class organization and pedagogy to bring about improvement in pupils' attainment should be in place. These include the development of flexible grouping strategies so that teachers can sometimes concentrate on slower learners while the more advanced work independently, the use of peer tutoring and the creation of resources which relate as far as possible to the pupils' daily lives. The biggest improvement would come about, however, if teachers could raise the expectations of pupils and convince them that it is often lack of effort rather than ability which stops them from making progress.
- The approach of 'Learning Circles' should be promoted for both inter-school sharing across subjects and intra-school sharing of pedagogical issues, which focuses at any one time on a specific pedagogy, allows teachers to observe and evaluate each other's classroom practice and thereby enhances the participants' professionalism.

Corresponding professional development programmes in 2008-2009 to support teachers to maximize the benefits of small class teaching

Time of Delivery	Professional Training and Support Activities
April 2008	School-based workshops on “Co-operative Learning”
April – June 2008	Learning Circles for collaborative lesson planning formed to support teachers to plan lessons together, observe lessons at each other’s schools and review their practices
May 2008	Seminar on Small Class Teaching in Shanghai by education practitioners from Shanghai
July 2008	Sharing sessions on planning for small class teaching by school heads and teachers with experience in small class teaching
September 2008 – August 2009	School networking for regular professional support and sharing of experiences and resources
October 2008	Seminars on objectives and implementation strategies of small class teaching by Education Bureau (EDB) officers
December 2008 – June 2009	Learning Circles for Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics teachers to attend periodical workshops as well as to meet once a month to observe lessons at each other’s schools, followed by review discussions facilitated by the school support team of EDB
December 2008 and April 2009	Study tour to Shanghai to conduct school visits to observe effective teaching pedagogies in small classes through lesson observations, and to share views and experience with Shanghai experts and front-line education workers on implementation strategies and support measures as well as other contextual factors contributing to the smooth implementation of small class teaching
December 2008 – June 2009	Sharing sessions with the teacher education institutes on the findings of the Study with a view to reinforcing their teacher training programmes and in-service courses under planning
March – May 2009	Workshops on effective strategies to maximize the benefits of small class teaching for Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and General Studies teachers
May 2009 onwards	In-service training courses for teachers with provision of supply teachers as appropriate to roll out and spread over a period of six years
October – November 2009	Workshops on effective strategies to maximise the benefits of small class teaching for Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics teachers