

Information Paper

Target Oriented Curriculum

This paper briefs Members on the progress made by the Education Department (ED) in implementing the Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) in schools as well as the results achieved.

Background

2. Upon the recommendation of the Education Commission Report No.4 (1990), The Education Department (ED) introduced TOC to improve the quality of education. During 1990 to 1995, various researches and experimental schemes were conducted in order to set the curriculum framework and contents, as well as the directions of implementation.

3. The elements of TOC are generally accepted by the teaching profession. These include:

- setting clear targets for teaching and learning
- including knowledge, thinking, skills and attitudes in the learning contents
- using daily contexts in teaching and learning to facilitate the application of knowledge

- promoting the five fundamental ways of learning, i.e. reasoning, communicating, conceptualising, inquiring and problem solving
- adopting a student-centred teaching strategy to cater for individual differences
- putting equal emphasis on learning targets and processes, which should correspond to the modes of assessment
- integrating assessment into teaching and learning -- diversified modes of assessment should be adopted to get a clear picture of a student's learning performance, progress, strengths and weaknesses, and the feedback could help improve the quality of teaching and learning

4. In order to encourage and assist schools to implement TOC effectively, apart from providing schools with grants, ED has also offered teachers training programmes, professional support and opportunities to exchange views. Resource centres have also been established to provide schools with reference materials and other necessary support.

Implementation Progress

5. Since the 1995/96 school year, ED has been encouraging primary schools to implement TOC in the three core subjects, namely Chinese, English and Mathematics, starting from Primary 1. The number of primary schools implementing TOC has risen from 76 in the 1995/96 school year to 753 (89% of the total number of primary schools) in the

1998/99 school year. By the 2000/01 school year, TOC will be extended to all primary levels in the three core subjects.

Studies on Effectiveness

6. According to observations by ED inspectors during their visits to schools implementing TOC, the quality of teaching and learning, the collaborative culture in schools, and students' learning attitudes and abilities have been enhanced. During 1996 to 1998, ED has commissioned the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Institute of Education to conduct studies on the implementation of TOC in schools, the professional competencies required of teachers, training support and resources required by teachers in implementing TOC, the results of adopting the Target Oriented Assessment (TOA), as well as the overall effectiveness of TOC in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Key findings of the above studies are as follows:

Teaching and Learning

- the majority of schools are able to improve the modes of teaching and learning, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching and learning;
- most teachers are able to act as collaborators, for example, putting equal emphasis on learning targets and processes;

improving students' thinking and learning skills, developing positive learning attitudes, and catering for learning differences;

- teachers have started to use a variety of assessment methods to assess students' learning outcomes. As a result, teachers have a more comprehensive picture of students' performance, and can use the feedback to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- 70% of the teachers think that there are more interaction and collaborative learning among teachers and students, and that students have more interest in learning;
- 60% of the teachers feel that students' confidence, self-learning ability and initiative have been enhanced;
- more than half of the teachers think that students have managed to master more skills, for example, students have shown marked improvement in listening and speaking skills in studying the Chinese language;

Collaborative Culture in Schools

- co-operation among teachers have generally been strengthened, for example, teachers have worked together to formulate teaching schedules and assessment methods, to select and share teaching materials, to design learning and assessment tasks, and to share teaching experiences. Peer lesson observations have also become more common among teachers; and

- over 60% of school heads and teachers indicate that both teachers' professional autonomy and communication among teachers have been strengthened, which is conducive to the development of school-based curriculum.

The findings above match very closely with the observations of ED inspectors during school visits.

7. On the other hand, the studies above have also suggested that ED should make the following improvements in implementing TOC:

- avoid dichotomising TOC from traditional concepts of teaching; and to align TOC with other curriculum initiatives, for example, the Activity Approach, so as to avoid contention and incompatibility;
- reduce central monitoring and control, and strengthen the co-operation between its Curriculum Development Institute and Advisory Inspectorate Division;
- strengthen public understanding of the TOC concepts and the implementation strategies;
- clarify the correlation between TOC and the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) as soon as possible;
- place more emphasis on training up teachers' leadership and management skills; and

- reduce the workload and time of teachers in assessing, recording and reporting; enhance the guidelines on assessment; and provide more information on how to exercise professional judgement to assess students' performance and to make good use of the feedbacks in enhancing teaching and learning, forming a continuous cycle of teaching-learning-assessment.

Future Directions and Related Work

8. Based on the studies on effectiveness mentioned above and the experience gained from the implementation of TOC over the years, ED will introduce improvements to the curriculum and the implementation approach, and encourage schools to implement TOC independently and flexibly. Moreover, ED has drawn up the following plans on the future directions of TOC:-

| Future Directions | Related Work |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to encourage schools to adopt TOC elements which have been accepted by the teaching profession• The Curriculum Development Council has endorsed that in the future revisions and updating of | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ED will conduct continual evaluation on the curriculum and commission tertiary institutions to conduct research on individual dimensions• The experience gained from the implementation of TOC and |

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| <p>various syllabuses, elements of TOC will be incorporated according to the needs and characteristics of the subjects concerned. For instance, the syllabuses of General Studies, Physical Education and Putonghua for primary levels have already adopted the conceptual framework and philosophy of TOC; likewise, the syllabuses of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics for secondary levels are being revised to tie in with the TOC for primary levels</p> | <p>other initiatives will be taken into account when formulating the school curriculum for implementation in the 21st century</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage teachers to use their professional judgement to integrate flexibly the teaching strategies of TOC with other teaching practices which have been proved effective | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through school-based support and development, we will focus our teacher training, research and resource development on the enhancement of the quality of teaching of learning. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simplify the recording and | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ED is consulting the relevant |

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| <p>reporting work of TOA; encourage teachers to reduce the number of formal assessments and tedious recordings; make effective use of feedbacks to enhance the quality of teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow schools to decide whether to use the Bands of Performance (BoP) in reporting students' performance in conducting assessment | <p>parties on the simplification of TOA; the consultation period will end on 15 January 1999</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to conduct school visits, provide teacher training programmes and disseminate related information to schools, so that teachers can make effective use of feedbacks received in the teaching-learning-assessment cycle to improve teaching and learning.• Provide relevant support to schools, including the development of computer software to assist teachers in converting the results derived from TOA into scores |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To facilitate the linking of TOC with the SSPA System, it is recommended that schools can opt to include a 'coursework | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ED is consulting schools on the proposal and the consultation period will end on 15 January 1999 |

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| <p>mark' component, up to 20% of the total scores of the students, in the three submissions of marks for SSPA purpose at Primary 5 and Primary 6, starting from the 1999/2000 school year, so as to fully reflect the students' performance in all the learning targets</p> | |
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Education Department
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