Working Group on
Textbooks and e-Learning Resources Development

Executive Summary of Main Report

Education Bureau

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Report by Working Group on Textbooks and e-Learning Resources Development

Executive Summary

Foreword

1.	In the 2008-09 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced, "*To enhance students' ability for self-learning and interactive learning, and to promote the use of e-books rather than printed copies, we will look into the development of electronic learning resources. The use and prices of school textbooks have become a public concern. Some people have pointed out that the frequently-revised textbooks have imposed a financial burden on parents in recent years. We will invite information technology experts, parents, school principals, teachers, publishers and others to form a task force to study these issues in detail. We will draw on international experience in formulating long-term measures to alleviate the financial burden on parents and to facilitate learning.*"	Therefore, the Government set up the Working Group on Textbooks and e-Learning Resources Development (WG) to examine the development of textbooks and e-Learning resources and make recommendations to the Secretary for Education (SED) so as to formulate effective strategies and measures.

Terms of Reference

2.	 The terms of reference of the WG are to advise the SED on the future development of textbooks and e-Learning resources, including:
(i)	the introduction of e-textbooks and other alternatives; and
(ii)	examining the role of textbooks in supporting student learning and other related practices such as textbook provision, quality assurance and textbook prices in the context of the Curriculum Reform.

Background & Discussion

e-Learning

3.	Since 1998, the Government has been determined to promote information technology (IT) in education. Three IT in education strategies have been launched and a huge amount of resources has been allocated to promote, through IT, a

"paradigm shift" in school education from a textbook-based and teacher-centred mode to a more interactive and learner-centred mode. e-Learning involves the use of the electronic media to promote various learning and teaching strategies to help students achieve the learning targets.   In today's information-rich world, e-Learning not only promotes self-directed learning, but is also an effective means for students to pursue life-long learning, thus helping to materialise the ultimate goal of "paradigm shift" in learning and teaching.

4.   e-Learning is a global trend. It is actively promoted throughout the world, not only because times have changed, but more importantly, due to the fact that e-Learning has its uniqueness and merits which are conducive to enabling student learning and enhancing learning effectiveness.   e-Learning should not be implemented in one single mode but encouraged to develop in diverse ways.   The WG recommends that the Government should launch a pilot scheme to look into the suitable modes of implementing e-Learning as well as the necessary support measures in order to generate and identify useful practices, which will lead to an effective e-Learning solution for Hong Kong .

e-Learning Resources

5.   The technological media for the promotion of e-Learning can be tools, such as computer programmes, online community sharing and collaborative tools.   It may also be multimedia and interactive e-Learning resources on basic learning content. Since the WG's inception, the public has taken e-Learning resources to mean e-textbooks. However, the education sector has taken a different point of view, and opined that various interactive e-Learning resources could better facilitate learning.

6.   As such, the successful implementation of e-Learning hinges on the availability of sufficient quality e-Learning resources for teachers to choose from. Given that a huge amount of e-Learning resources can be found on the Internet, their quality varies, with some which are designed not in accordance with the local curriculum.   At the present moment, what we need are comprehensive e-Learning packs which are curriculum-based, can be used in class and at home by students for their learning, and can function as the source of reference for further inquiry.   In response to such demand, as a short-term measure, the Government may consider putting in additional resources to strengthen and expedite the development of the "Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Teaching Resources".

7.   The WG considers that learning resources should be diversified. At present, teaching is largely based on printed resources supplemented by e-Learning materials. However, in view of the increasing global trend of using e-Learning resources as the medium for learning and teaching in lesson and after lesson, the reliance on printed textbooks will decrease correspondingly. Yet, it does not imply that e-Learning resources will wholly replace textbooks. Instead, both would complement each other and co-exist in the future.   As a result, the WG hopes that the textbook publishing sector and the IT sector will actively participate, through professional division of labour, in developing e-Learning resources that will suit the needs of students and ultimately establish a sustainable market for e-Learning resources.

8.   In order to facilitate the development of the e-Learning resources market, the Government may consider injecting funding as a short-term measure to encourage acquisition of more e-Learning resources by schools with a view to further advancing its development.   Besides, the Hong Kong Education City (HKEdCity) should exercise its role as a market promoter to establish a one-stop business platform to provide services such as product exhibition, sales, digital rights management, and payment gateway for on-line transactions of e-Learning resources, etc.

Other Issues Relating to e-Learning

9.   Apart from promoting e-Learning, the WG and other stakeholders are also concerned about the possible impact on students' physical, psychological and social health brought by the frequent use of computers.   Some stakeholders are also concerned about copyright issues regarding the use of on-line e-Learning resources. The WG is of the view that the Government should enhance education and support to stakeholders on these two issues.

Summary of Development of e-Learning

10.   **One of the objectives of promoting IT in education is to improve the quality of learning through electronic technology which is in line with the vision of the Education Reform implemented over the years.   e-Learning will make learning more efficient, effective and interesting, and help students develop the habit of life-long learning, which in turn facilitates whole-person development. At present, the extent to which various schools have developed e-Learning is different. Further deepening of e-Learning is, therefore, the issue that we should work on.   The WG hopes to find out how to implement e-Learning more**

effectively through reviewing different aspects of e-Learning resources.

Relationship between Curriculum Development and Textbooks Development

11.　　In the face of drastic changes in society, rapid technological development and the ever expanding realms of knowledge, the knowledge acquired by students and the mode of learning must keep abreast of the times to meet societal needs.　The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) published the report *"Learning to Learn – The Way Forward in Curriculum Development"* in November 2000 and the document *"Basic Education Curriculum Guide – Building on Strengths"* in 2002, setting the general direction and focus for future curriculum development in Hong Kong to enhance students' independent learning skills so as to achieve the targets of whole-person development and life-long learning.

12.　　Textbooks are an important learning tool for all students. Though textbooks are not the same as the curriculum, they are closely related.　Therefore, in exploring the way forward for textbooks development, apart from understanding the current practice of the compilation of textbooks, we should also be aware of the role that school curriculum and textbooks should play in the context of the Curriculum Reform. The textbooks used in Hong Kong are mainly compiled according to the syllabuses/curriculum guides developed by the CDC, the Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks, as well as the subject-specific textbook guidelines developed by the Education Bureau (EDB). On the whole, textbooks help, to a great extent, in supporting the effective implementation of curriculum by schools.

Role of Textbooks in the Context of Curriculum Reform

13.　　Textbooks should cover the core components and the essential learning elements of various subjects in the Key Learning Areas set by the CDC.　The activities and learning materials suggested in textbooks should be able to help students acquire the learning experiences and generic skills advocated in the Curriculum Reform.

14.　　Teachers may use textbooks when designing learning and teaching activities. They may exercise their professional judgment to select suitable materials, exercises and tasks from textbooks, together with other sources (such as the media, the natural environment, the Internet and community resources), to design their own learning and

teaching materials to cater for students' needs.   They need not regard textbooks as the only teaching materials. Likewise, in using textbooks to learn, students should not mechanically memorise the textbook contents. Rather, they should integrate the textbook contents with other learning resources so as to construct knowledge and develop insights beyond the textbook contents to broaden their perspective.

Textbook Review

15.   The existing textbook review mechanism is a quality assurance mechanism which has worked well all along.   To ensure that quality textbooks are available to schools, the EDB has devised a stringent textbook review mechanism.   Textbooks will be included in the EDB's *Recommended Textbook List* only if they meet the requirements, which are broadly summarised as follows:

> (i)   they should be in line with the aims/learning targets/focuses/basic principles set in the curriculum guidelines/syllabuses;
>
> (ii)   they should cover the core components stated in the curriculum guidelines/syllabuses;
>
> (iii)   the information and data/concepts should be accurate, clear and appropriate;
>
> (iv)   the content, organisation and concept development should be appropriate and reasonable;
>
> (v)   they should provide the necessary learning activities to achieve the learning targets; and
>
> (vi)   the language should be correct.

Textbook Revision

16.   Under the existing "three-year rule of no revision", the EDB only accepts applications for revision of textbooks (except for the subjects of Social Studies, Economic and Public Affairs, and Government and Public Affairs) which have been included in the *Recommended Textbook List* for more than three years. Further, applications will only be approved if there are sufficient justifications for textbook revision and if significant improvements in the proposed revision contents have been made.

17.   The EDB has been strictly enforcing the "three-year rule of no revision", and publishers' applications for textbook revision submitted to and approved by the EDB in recent years have clearly decreased.   In the light of the Curriculum Reform, the

school-based curricula of many primary and secondary schools were re-developed, or revamped progressively by subject and on a "level-by-level" basis from 2000-2006, and the textbooks catering for the new curricula of different subjects were adopted by students in different years. Unfortunately, this is often misconstrued by parents as the "**curriculum being revised every year**" and the lack of monitoring by the EDB so that publishers can "**revise textbooks every year**".

18.   After the implementation of the New Academic Structure, student learning consists of four Key Stages: P1 to P3 as Key Stage 1, P4 to P6 as Key Stage 2, S1 to S3 as Key Stage 3, and S4 to S6 as Key Stage 4 with each Key Stage lasting three years. It is necessary to review and improve the existing "three-year rule of no revision".

19.   According to the EDB's statistics, 80% of the textbooks approved for revision in the 2008/09 school year have been in use for more than four years before their submission of application for revision.

Existing Measures to Reduce Textbook Prices and Alleviate Parents' Financial Burden

20.   Following the principle of not interfering with the free market, the EDB has been implementing various measures to reduce textbook costs and alleviate parents' financial burden, including:

(i)   liaising closely with textbook publishers to seek their support in sharing the hard times with the public by not increasing textbook prices substantially, and to urge them to uphold their integrity and adhere to their proper code of business practice by not providing schools with any form of advantages, donations (including equipment, teaching aids, computer software, free on-site services), free gifts or luxurious hospitality during textbook promotion to avoid including the related costs when pricing textbooks;

(ii)   issuing the "Guidelines for Printing of Textbooks" to publishers for reference, and requesting them to adopt the "functional and cost-effective approach" by making use of appropriate printing methods, paper and design with low-cost features to reduce the production costs of textbooks; and

(iii)   issuing to schools a Circular Memorandum on "Notes on Selection of Textbooks and Learning Materials for Use in Schools" every year, and providing guidelines and advice on how to select suitable textbooks and help

students minimise textbook expenses through teacher seminars.

21.   According to the recent survey conducted by the Consumer Council, there has been a slight drop in the amount spent on purchasing textbooks – a drop of 0.6% and 0.5% in secondary and primary schools respectively.

22.   The School Textbook Assistance Scheme of the Student Financial Assistance Agency provides students of government, aided, caput and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools from needy families with textbook assistance to purchase textbooks. In 2008/09 school year, a total of 294,037 students were benefited by the School Textbook Assistance Scheme and the amount of assistance provided was $470 million. Since the 2006/07 school year, the Student Financial Assistance Agency has requested schools to forward their nominations of the disadvantaged students to the Agency so that they can start their processing work early and issue the grants to the students before the start of the school year.

23.   The Social Welfare Department (SWD) also provides full-time students of primary or secondary schools or technical/commercial institutes receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) with a grant for selected items of school-related expenses including textbooks. In 2008/09 school year, the SWD has provided 119,048 CSSA students with the mentioned grant amounting to a total of $360 million.

24.   Textbook prices cover textbook costs and publishers' costs, which include the cost of providing complementary teaching materials to schools.   This bundled sale or purchase of textbooks and complementary teaching materials is undesirable. To the WG's knowledge, in the process of textbook promotion, textbook publishers usually provide schools with a set of complimentary teaching materials as a service to schools. These include teachers' handbooks, question bank, CD for teaching, teaching aids, wall charts, etc.   As different schools have different needs on the set of teaching materials, this arrangement of free provision of teaching materials by publishers will definitely result in a certain degree of waste.

Summary of Development of Textbooks

25.   **Textbooks are an important learning tool for students.   Quality textbooks can help students to learn, enhance learning effectiveness, broaden their knowledge and develop their ability of learning to learn.   However,**

expensive textbooks have imposed a heavy financial burden on parents. Although the Government has, in the principle of not interfering with the free market, implemented various measures to reduce textbook costs and curb increases of textbook prices so as to alleviate parents' financial burden, the effect is far from satisfactory. The WG hopes to make effective improvement recommendations on textbook publishing and pricing to provide students with quality and reasonably priced textbooks and learning materials through a review of the various aspects of textbook development, while observing the principle of maximising benefits to student learning and not compromising the quality of textbooks.

Focus and Recommendations of Various Issues

26.   During the course of study and discussion, the WG has adhered to the principle that the prerequisite of all discussions concerning the development of textbooks and e-Learning resources should focus **on the quality of learning and teaching**. Upon this basis, consideration has been given to feasible measures on reducing the textbook prices, improving the existing textbook system and providing schools with effective and suitable e-teaching resources to enhance the effectiveness of student learning. Under this prerequisite, the WG has conducted an in-depth discussion and study on these issues and made recommendations accordingly. Chapter 5 of the Report sets out the focus of the discussion of these issues and the WG's recommendations.

Issue (1) – e-Learning	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. Should e-Learning be fully implemented by schools? And how?	1. e-Learning should become the major mode of learning in the future. The mode adopted should be diverse rather than inflexible or single-faceted.
2. What support measures should be taken to sustain the development and implementation of e-Learning?	2. In order to look into how e-Learning should be implemented in class as well as support measures needed, the Government should launch a pilot scheme to support schools which are keen on developing e-Learning so that they can try out e-Learning based on their experiences and ideas.
3. What are the long-term strategies to be taken by the	

Government regarding the implementation of e-Learning?	3. Schools joining the pilot scheme should collaborate with relevant sectors to develop pedagogy for e-Learning, promote teachers' professional development, develop IT infrastructure and support measures as well as develop the market for e-Learning resources.
	4. The Government may consider setting up a steering committee as well as encourage and support the relevant sectors to form a cross-sector working group. Apart from supervising the implementation of the pilot scheme, the duties of the steering committee will also include evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of the pilot scheme and making recommendations to the Government on the long-term strategies on the full implementation of e-Learning. The cross-sector consortium will endeavour to promote collaboration and partnership among schools, the publishing sector and the information technology sector with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the pilot scheme.
	5. The sustainable development of e-Learning depends on the co-operation and joint efforts of various sectors to give appropriate support. The Government should take the lead to create an appropriate environment for e-Learning and make it become students' major mode of learning.
	6. The Government should formulate concrete measures to ensure that all students can participate in e-Learning regardless of their socio-economic status, physical or intellectual status.

Issue (2) – e-Learning and e-Learning Resources	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. What kinds of learning resources are required to support e-Learning? 2. Are existing e-Learning resources sufficient? 3. Who should be responsible for the quality assurance of e-Learning resources?	1. Stakeholders should adopt an open attitude towards using learning resources, whether the comparison is between conventional textbooks and e-Learning resources or between different types of e-Learning resources. 2. The choice of learning resources should be geared to providing students with the best mode of learning, and the most effective learning environment. 3. In order to facilitate teachers to select the appropriate e-Learning resources that support curriculum implementation and to provide relevant teaching suggestions, the Government should consider, as a short-term measure, deploying additional resources to strengthen and expedite the development of the "Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Teaching Resources". 4. An on-line teacher community should be set up on the HKEdCity to facilitate the exchange of views regarding the use of e-Learning resources and development of a professional peer review culture with a view to improving the quality of e-Learning resources.

Issue (3) – Development of Market for e-Learning Resources	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. What actions should be taken to promote the development of the market for e-Learning resources?	1. The Government should make it clear that one of the aims of the pilot scheme is to encourage collaboration between schools and other sectors in developing and promoting the e-Learning resources market.

| 2. What is the role of the Government in developing the market for e-Learning resources? | 2. The Government may consider providing grants to schools to encourage them to buy e-Learning resources. |
| | 3. The HKEdCity should set up an e-commerce platform for e-Learning resources to assist students and teachers to acquire such resources from various providers, as well as to facilitate the sharing of e-Learning resources designed by teachers. |

Issue (4) – e-Learning and Students' Physical, Psychological and Social Health

Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. How does the frequent use of computers affect students' health?	1. The Government should provide information on the impact of physical, psychological and social health brought by the use of computers to students and parents.
2. How can e-Learning be conducted in a healthy way?	2. While encouraging more extensive use of e-Learning resources, schools and parents should also pay attention to students' physical, psychological and social health.

Issue (5) – Copyright Issues of e-Learning Resources

Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. How can we protect intellectual property in the digital environment?	1. The Government should step up publicity to teachers on how to handle the electronic media, including the copyright of on-line resources.
2. How can we strike a balance between sharing e-Learning resources and protecting intellectual property?	2. The e-commerce platform for e-Learning resources of the HKEdCity should include an effective digital copyrights management system.

Issue (6) – Textbook Publication	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. Should the time of textbook compilation given to publishers be extended? 2. Should the Government take up the responsibility of textbook publication?	1. The EDB may further strengthen its consultation and communication with the textbook publishers when the curriculum is being developed and when the textbooks are being written and pending submission for review, so that they are fully informed at every stage and can effectively equip themselves for textbook development. 2. It is undesirable for the Government to fully take up the responsibility of textbook publication. The existing policy of allowing voluntary participation by textbook publishers should be maintained. However, the Government may encourage some educational organisations, non-governmental organisations and non-profit-making organisations to publish reasonably priced paperback textbooks and teaching resources to cater for the need of the public for quality and inexpensive textbooks.

Issue (7) – Textbook Review Mechanism	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. Should the existing textbook review mechanism be abolished? 2. If "no", what improvements can be made?	1. The existing textbook review mechanism should be maintained. However, the EDB may, via the existing Textbook Committee, review the existing textbook review mechanism with the textbook publishers to further improve the system. 2. The feasibility of allowing other educational organisations to be involved in textbook review should be explored.

Issue (8) – Selection of Textbooks in School	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. Are the current practice and role of teachers and parents in the selection and purchase of textbooks subject to discussion? 2. From the point of view of consumer's right, should parents' participation in the selection of textbooks be enhanced? If "yes", how to do so?	1. Schools should enhance communication with parents concerning the selection and use of textbooks. For example, schools may consider holding consultations at the meetings of the School Management Committee in order to solicit views and suggestions on textbook-related issues from parent representatives. 2. The EDB should enhance communication with parent organisations to collect their views and suggestions on textbooks, and reflect their views to textbook publishers.

Issue (9) – Textbook Prices	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. Should textbooks, as well as teaching and learning materials, be debundled for pricing? 2. After debundling, how can it be ensured that schools will have sufficient resources to buy the various learning and teaching materials?	1. Textbooks, teaching materials and learning materials should be debundled for pricing as soon as possible. The cost of the bundled teaching materials and learning materials imposed on textbook pricing is undesirable. It puts unnecessary financial burden on parents. 2. The EDB should continue to develop on-line teaching and learning resources, including the setting up of a curriculum resource bank, to provide teachers and students with diversified teaching and learning materials to cater for their learning and teaching needs. 3. The EDB should step up efforts to encourage teachers to produce and share their self-designed teaching materials so

	as to move away from textbook-bound teaching and to enhance their professional capacity.
	4. The market of on-line resources provided by the publishing sector should be expanded. Textbook publishers should be encouraged to produce quality on-line learning resources for schools and parents' choice.
	5. The EDB should issue guidelines to schools, stating clearly that they are not allowed to solicit any free teaching or learning materials from textbook publishers, and should reveal the titles of teaching and learning materials so as to ensure a fair competition in the textbook market.
	6. To increase the transparency of textbook prices, continued efforts will be made to upload the prices of all books (including both old and new textbooks) in the Recommended Textbook List onto the website of EDB in April each year, so that teachers can take the prices into consideration when preparing the booklist for the next school year.
	7. Book retailers should be encouraged to provide interest-free instalments for parents to alleviate their burden of making one-off payment for the textbooks.
	8. The EDB should continue to collaborate with the Consumer Council to step up the monitoring of textbook market activities.

	9. The EDB should closely monitor the situation after the debundling of textbooks, as well as teaching and learning materials. If schools have any financial difficulties in the purchase of teaching materials, the EDB should, where appropriate, provide more funding for schools to ensure that they have sufficient resources to buy the teaching materials required.

Issue (10) – Textbook Revision	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. Why should there be revision of textbooks? 2. How to respond to the public's complaints concerning the lack of regulatory measures by the EDB on the indiscriminate revision of textbooks and increase of prices by textbook publishers? 3. Is the existing "three-year rule of no revision" out-dated?	1. The "three-year rule of no revision" should be changed to "five-year rule of no revision", and the EDB should strictly review whether the applications for textbook revision are truly justified. 2. The EDB should communicate with textbook publishers via the Textbook Committee and clearly define the meaning of "need" in respect of textbook revision which will serve as the basis for vetting future applications. 3. After the revision has been approved, the textbook publisher has to explain to teachers the reasons for revision so that the teachers can compare the new version with the old one before making a choice. 4. Whenever there are minor changes or updates in the curriculum in the future, the EDB should provide supplementary teaching and learning materials of the modified parts for schools' reference and use.

Issue (11) – Textbook Recycling Programme	
Focus of Discussion	*Recommendations of WG*
1. The provision of recycled books to students by schools can alleviate parents' financial burden. However, is it practically feasible? 2. Are there any alternatives to promote textbook recycling?	1. The EDB may promote the co-operation between environmental protection agencies and schools, and launch various kinds of textbook recycling programmes, such as the donation and sale of second-hand textbooks, as well as the buying of reference books and story books and loaning them to students according to their school context (e.g. teaching needs and parents' wishes). 2. The EDB should draw on international experiences and explore the feasibility of textbook recycling programmes that suit the local learning culture of students. The EDB should then devise further direction on textbook recycling. 3. The EDB should intensify their promotional efforts by urging schools to organise used book sales or donation campaigns, and encouraging students to participate in textbook recycling.

Action Plan

27.   Chapter 6 of the Report sets out the action plan for implementing the above recommendations.

(A) Objectives

- To recommend **direction and strategies on the development of e-Learning** building on existing strengths and facilitating diversified development.

- To encourage schools to make **flexible use of e-Learning** in order to

promote self-directed learning and interactive learning as well as to cater for learners' diversity, with a view to **enhancing learning effectiveness**.

- **To optimise and rationalise the existing textbook system**.

(B) Development of textbooks and e-Learning resources to improve the existing mechanism and enhance learning and teaching

1. **A three-year pilot scheme on "Promoting e-Learning" will be launched in 20 - 30 local schools in the 2010/11 school year.**

Aims:

- To develop, try out and evaluate different modes of teaching and learning, in order to identify the effective ways of implementing e-Learning in different subjects.

- To explore a sustainable and commercially viable business model for the e-Learning resources market, in order to cater for the needs of schools, teachers and students.

2. **From the 2009/10 school year onwards, additional resources will be provided to strengthen and expedite the development of the existing "Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Teaching Resources" (including Primary Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and General Studies). In the meantime, measures will also be taken to expedite the development of the Depository for the junior secondary levels so as to expand the coverage of the Depository in terms of Key Stages and Key Learning Areas.**

Aims:

- To develop the "Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Teaching Resources" which serves to provide practical advice on the use of IT in teaching and learning and recommendations on the selection of appropriate digital resources so as to relieve teachers' workload in implementing e-Learning.

- To help teachers and students acquire diversified and quality e-Learning resources from the Internet to facilitate e-Learning.

3. **In the 2009/10 school year, a one-off grant will be provided to all local schools for purchasing e-Learning resources for students (the grant to be used by schools in the next three years).**

   Aims:

   - To further promote the use of fee-charging e-Learning resources in schools.

   - To encourage the publishing sector and other sectors to expedite the development of e-Learning resources and enhance the quality of the resources.

4. **To set up an e-commerce platform for e-Learning resources and an on-line community for teachers at the HKEdCity website.**

   Aims:

   - To provide an infrastructure platform to promote the development of the market for e-Learning resources.

   - To help students and teachers acquire quality e-Learning resources from the Internet.

   - To encourage the publishing sector, the IT sector and the education sector to jointly develop e-Learning resources.

   - To enhance the evaluation of e-Learning resources via on-line communities.

5. **From the 2010/11 school year onwards, textbooks and teaching and learning resources will be debundled for pricing so as to allow the market to operate on a user-pays basis. Teachers and parents may choose to buy only the resources that fit their needs. The EDB will issue guidelines stating clearly that schools are not allowed to solicit any free teaching or learning materials from textbook publishers. The EDB will closely monitor the situation after the debundling of textbooks, as well as teaching and learning materials. If schools have any financial difficulties in purchasing teaching materials, the EDB will, where appropriate, provide more funding for schools to ensure that they have the materials required for teaching.**

Aims:

- To rationalise the current situation of bundled sale and purchase of textbooks and teaching materials.

- By adopting the user-pays principle, textbook publishers will be encouraged to produce the appropriate amount of teaching materials as required by schools.   This will help reduce cost and avoid waste, thereby lowering the price of textbooks.   As such, the stakeholders' interest will be safeguarded and the public's expectation can be met.

- To allow schools to buy the appropriate teaching materials that fit their specific needs.

6. **From the 2010/11 school year onwards, the "three-year rule of no revision" will be changed to "five-year rule of no revision".**

   Aims:

   - To rationalise the arrangements for application for textbook revision – Since the implementation of the Curriculum Reform in 2000, the curriculum framework for each Key Stage has now been basically established and is subject to less change. There is an obvious decline in the need for textbook revision in the light of the Curriculum Reform. Under the new academic structure, each Key Stage lasts for three years. Hence, it takes teachers three years' time to complete using a set of textbooks before they can make any concrete suggestions on issues such as the compilation and contents of textbooks as well as the coherence and articulation of the learning activities and themes.   For publishers, it is not until the relevant Key Stage has been completed that they can carry out specific analysis and reviews on the textbooks to see if there is any need for revision.   All these take time.   Taking into account that textbooks submitted for revision are required to make quality amendments and that the principle of cost control should be adhered to, we estimate that the publishers need at least 24 months to complete the reviews and development.   It is therefore more reasonable to allow publishers to apply for revision after a five-year period, as compared with the existing three-year rule.

   - The above measure can reduce the frequency of textbook revision, thus addressing the complaints of the public.   In the long run, it can also help

to stabilise textbook prices.

(C)	**Other support measures**

7. To effectively steer the e-Learning pilot scheme, the Government may consider setting up a steering committee as well as encourage and support the establishment of a cross-sector working group. Apart from supervising the implementation of the pilot scheme, the duties of the steering committee will also include evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of the pilot scheme and making recommendations to the Government regarding long-term strategies on using e-Learning resources. The cross-sector consortium will endeavour to promote collaboration and partnership among schools, the publishing sector and the information technology sector with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the pilot scheme.

8. In-depth studies on the copyright of e-Learning resources and the possible impact on students' health due to the frequent use of such resources will be carried out in order to formulate relevant strategies and support measures.

9. During the consultation period of any major curriculum change, communication with textbook publishers will be strengthened to help them get hold of the development of the curriculum at an early stage and get well prepared for textbook compilation.

10. The existing textbook review mechanism will be further improved and the feasibility of allowing other educational organisations to be involved in textbook reviews will be explored.

11. Communication with parent organisations will be enhanced. Parents' views and suggestions on textbook quality and prices will be collected and reflected to textbook publishers for improvement.

12. The transparency of textbook prices will be increased. Continued efforts will be made to upload the prices of all books (including both old and new textbooks) in the Recommended Textbook List onto the website of EDB in April each year, so that teachers can take the prices into consideration when preparing the booklist for the next school year. Seminars and workshops for teachers will be held to sharpen their professional judgement in selecting textbooks.

13. The EDB will provide supplementary teaching and learning materials for schools whenever there are minor changes or updates in the curriculum in the

future.

14. Educational organisations, universities or other non-profit-making organisations are encouraged to participate in the development of textbooks, and teaching and learning materials so as to provide teachers with a wider range of choices.

15. Schools may launch various kinds of textbook recycling programmes, such as the donation or sale of second-hand textbooks and the purchase of story books for loan to students according to school-based contexts (such as teaching needs, parents' wishes, etc.) so as to encourage students to re-use textbooks.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

28.   In the context of e-Learning, there will be a change in the role of teachers from being a knowledge transmitter to a learning facilitator. In this respect, they have to formulate appropriate teaching strategies to guide students to learn in a proper direction and in an organised manner. Teachers have to learn how to assist students in selecting and assessing the information from multiple perspectives and using them to solve problems. In formulating teaching strategies, teachers have to identify the targets of learning and provide students with IT learning resources, so that they can make use of appropriate IT to learn properly at suitable times. They should ensure that student learning remains the main concern and avoid using IT simply for the sake of using IT. Besides, teachers can also make use of the flexibility of e-Learning to formulate various teaching strategies according to students' needs and abilities in order to achieve personalised learning.

29.   To enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching, to develop students' ability of learning to learn and to foster their whole-person development are the focuses and objectives of the future development of Hong Kong education, and textbooks and electronic learning resources are one of the key factors of success. In the face of rapid social and IT development, the development of e-Learning resources is increasingly inevitable. However, printed textbooks are still playing an important role in lessons. With the continuous improvement of traditional textbooks complemented by the development of updated e-Learning resources, we have created a much better learning environment for students so that they can keep abreast of the latest knowledge and information, develop their ability of learning to learn and pursue life-long learning.

30.   In order to achieve the above objectives, the EDB should:

(i)   use the various development modes tried out in the pilot scheme to encourage and promote the education sector and the publishing sector to participate in the development of e-Learning resources, with a view to providing more diversified learning materials and modes for teachers and students;

(ii)   actively develop e-Learning resource banks to reduce the workload of teachers in applying IT to learning and teaching;

(iii)   formulate concrete measures to ensure that all students can participate in e-Learning regardless of their socio-economic status, physical or intellectual status;

(iv)   strengthen communication with textbook publishers and make efforts to improve the existing textbook review and revision mechanism; and

(v)   provide a fair playing field for the publishing industry to compete, so that reasonably priced textbooks and e-Learning resources can be produced by textbook publishers and other organisations.

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