

For discussion
on 3 July 2020

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Development of textbooks and teaching materials for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools

Purpose

This paper aims to outline the learning and teaching resources adopted by schools, including the development, selection and monitoring of textbooks and teaching resource materials.

Learning and teaching resources used by schools

2. Quality teaching resources should meet the aims, objectives and contents of the school curriculum, help students to construct knowledge, develop skills, nurture positive values and attitudes and facilitate self-directed learning. Other than textbooks, teachers have long been professionally adopting resources developed by other government departments, non-governmental organisations and education-related organisations to enrich learning and teaching. Besides, teachers also search information to develop school-based teaching resources, such as notes, worksheets and supplementary information.

Textbook review mechanism

3. As for textbooks, the Education Bureau (EDB) has a rigorous textbook review mechanism in place to ensure that textbooks included on the Recommended Textbook List (RTL) are in line with the school curriculum, of good quality and fit for student learning. When writing textbooks, publishers are required to make reference to the latest guidelines on textbook printing and review issued by the Curriculum Development Institute of the EDB as well as the Textbook Writing Guidelines for each subject. Textbooks submitted for review are assessed by relevant subject review panels comprising members from within and outside the EDB (external reviewers include in-service principals, teachers, academics from universities, and other professionals well versed in the subjects concerned). The review procedure is fair and

impartial. Currently, textbooks for most subjects in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools are accepted for review and all textbooks that have undergone the review are listed on the RTL for schools' reference in their selection of textbooks.

4. As regards senior secondary Liberal Studies (LS), although it has not yet been included in the textbook review mechanism, to safeguard the well-being of students, we introduced a special measure to provide a one-off professional consultancy service for publishers of senior secondary LS "textbooks" in September 2019 with a view to enhancing the quality of those LS "textbooks" already published on the market. As at late June 2020, personnel responsible for rendering the professional consultancy service have finished reviewing the "textbooks" submitted in accordance with the aims and objectives of the senior secondary LS curriculum and publishers have been provided with professional feedback for improving the quality of the senior secondary LS "textbooks". Publishers that participated in using the professional consultancy service undertook to duly follow up the amendments suggested by the EDB and are now revising their "textbooks". It is expected that the publishers will complete the revision as early as possible so that the revised "textbooks" can be ready for schools' adoption in the coming school year. Taking into account the experience of the professional consultancy service, the EDB will deliberate on the quality assurance measures for the subject, including the feasibility of submitting LS "textbooks" for review.

Learning and teaching resources developed by EDB

5. The EDB has also been developing learning and teaching resources in order to provide schools with quality teaching materials, including the learning and teaching resources developed for various subjects, Educational Multi-media Resources and those from the EDB One-stop Portal for Learning and Teaching Resources (<https://www.hkedcity.net/edbosp/>) for schools' adoption. We have been conscientious in developing learning and teaching resources, ensuring that they are in line with the curriculum and reviewed by the EDB's subject specialists. In addition, before the resources are distributed to schools, academics and other professionals are invited to give comments on a need basis. Experienced teachers are also invited to conduct trials in order to enhance their quality and ensure their suitability and usability. We will continue to develop various teaching resources in supporting schools.

School-based teaching materials

6. It is considered part of the professional duties of teachers, as teaching

professionals, to exercise their expertise in selecting suitable teaching materials, making adaptation to the content of the materials, or even developing school-based materials on their own in accordance with the curriculum aims and objectives, and the standards and learning needs of their students. Owing to the wide range of learning and teaching resources from diversified sources, the EDB has provided guidelines to remind schools of the necessity for setting out well-defined school-based criteria for the selection of learning and teaching materials and devising a review mechanism for evaluating and updating the learning and teaching resources adopted by schools. We have also been elucidating to schools, through various channels such as curriculum guides, circular memorandum (e.g. EDB Circular Memorandum No. 26/2020 – Selection of Quality Textbooks and Learning and Teaching Resources for Use in Schools), different professional development programmes for teachers and school visits, the requirements and criteria for the selection of learning and teaching resources, emphasising that teachers should be prudent in the selection of teaching materials and ensure that the learning and teaching materials of various subjects are in line with the aims and objectives of the central curriculum. The contents of and information provided in the materials should be correct, complete, objective and impartial. Through effective teaching strategies, teachers should enable students to acquire relevant knowledge and skills, and nurture in students positive values and attitudes.

School-based management on teaching materials

7. From the school operational perspective, in view of the considerable amount of school-based resource materials, it is not practical to propose the EDB to review the resources of every subject from every single school. There are both empowerment and accountability in school management. For the benefits of students, members of the school management (including the subject chairpersons) have the responsibility to understand and monitor the resource materials selected and developed by teachers and ensure that the contents and quality of the resources are aligned with the curriculum aims and objectives set by the Curriculum Development Council as well as the standards and learning needs of students to safeguard their well-being and enable them to construct knowledge, make analysis from different perspectives and express their views in an impartial and rational manner. The EDB also reminds teachers of the importance of values education and the need to adopt an objective, rational and impartial manner and guide students to respect different views. Under no circumstances should teachers bias their teaching with their political stance or mislead their students and impart negative values. Teachers demonstrate their professionalism through teaching in line with the curriculum, selection and adaptation of teaching

resources and application of appropriate teaching methodologies to cater for learner diversity, in addition to the accountability for the provision of quality teaching.

Monitoring from the EDB

8. The EDB officers have always been monitoring the quality of learning and teaching through External School Reviews (ESR) and Focus Inspections on different Key Learning Areas or subjects, and providing specific professional advice to enhance schools' continuous development. Besides evaluating the holistic planning of the school curriculum, external reviewers and inspectors will also examine if teachers are able to select appropriate learning and teaching resources and adopt effective teaching strategies to help students use an objective, rational and unbiased attitude to ponder problems from multiple perspectives, construct knowledge, as well as develop critical thinking skills and positive values such as respect and inclusiveness. They will also have professional exchanges with the schools and provide suggestions for improvement. To enhance schools' continuous improvement and development, it is imperative that they embrace the spirit of self-reflection. We hope the incorporated management committee (IMC) / school management committee (SMC) can, after receiving the inspection report, lead the school to consider the inspection findings and suggestions positively, and take appropriate follow-up actions actively. On following up on the school's implementation of the related improvement work, the Regional Education Office concerned will continuously assist the school to implement school-based management and provide necessary support. Should the quality of school management and learning and teaching of subjects fall short of satisfaction, the EDB will take follow-up actions in accordance with the established mechanism, including urging the IMC/SMC to make improvement based on the inspection report, and encouraging the school to apply for school-based support services of the EDB. If necessary, a follow-up inspection will be arranged to ensure that the school has implemented follow-up recommendations to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

9. As regards kindergartens (KGs), all KGs joining the kindergarten education scheme are required to undergo Quality Review (QR). The objectives of the QR are to validate the findings of School Self-evaluation, and ascertain whether KGs have met the prescribed standards. The review team will make professional judgement on the overall performance of KGs based on the Performance Indicators. If they find that the curriculum, teaching resources or homework of the school cannot cater for the abilities and developmental needs of children, the EDB will request the KG concerned

to stop the arrangements immediately and implement improvement measures. Such inappropriate arrangements will also be reflected in the school's QR report which will then be uploaded to the EDB website for public information. The EDB will follow up with the situation through school visits. Besides, the EDB will conduct focus inspection for all KGs in Hong Kong by random selection to understand the implementation of the curriculum and the major concerns, with a view to facilitating the continuous development of the aspect of learning and teaching of KGs. Upon completion of the focus inspection, staff of the review team will provide oral feedback to the school immediately and explain clearly the impropriety, followed by a letter to the KG stating suggestions for improvement for the KG's follow-up actions.

Cases – follow up

10. If the public has any queries about the appropriateness of teaching materials or professional conduct of teachers in developing the teaching materials of a particular school, one can reflect the same directly to the school concerned or to the EDB. Upon receipt of a complaint, the school has to handle the case immediately and explain its school policy and monitoring mechanism to the relevant stakeholders. If the EDB receives a complaint, we will assess the nature of the case and decide whether to conduct a direct investigation or request the school concerned to follow up. The EDB will examine whether the reports and explanations submitted by the school are adequate and professional, and review whether there are any problems in the school's monitoring mechanism and teachers' professional conduct. If the school is found having any negligence in its management and monitoring in teaching or not undertaking necessary professional responsibilities, the EDB will follow up in a serious manner. If any teacher is found to have violated the professional conduct, the EDB will take appropriate follow-up actions having regard to the gravity of each case. These include issuing an advisory, warning or reprimand letter to remind the teacher concerned of the need to uphold professional conduct for meeting the expectations of parents and the general public for teachers. For serious misconduct cases, the EDB may consider cancelling the registration of the teacher concerned pursuant to the Education Ordinance.

Advice sought

11. In conclusion, the EDB has paid due regard to the quality of learning and teaching resources, put in place a rigorous textbook review mechanism and provided to schools quality resources in supporting learning and teaching. For school-based

teaching materials, we will continue to enhance the awareness of school management and professional accountability under the existing quality assurance mechanism for schools, while strengthening the professional training of teachers to enhance the quality of school-based teaching materials.

12. Members are kindly reminded to note the learning and teaching resources adopted by schools, including the development, selection and monitoring of textbooks and teaching resource materials.

Education Bureau

July 2020