

Dear Chairman and honored government officials,

Today, We would like to bring the spotlight onto the issue of the ineffectiveness of the Chinese as Second Language curriculum in Hong Kong.

All over the world, people immigrate to a new country to better their lives and the lives of their future generation. Hong Kong is no different from those countries except for one, vital component- their ability to educate their immigrant population the local language. We would like to explain the government's inadequacies in the perspective of primary school and KG students, and secondary school students.

From a young age, Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) students are taught a separate curriculum from their local counterparts. Most NCS students enroll in schools largely accommodating non-locals. In such schools, the curriculum and teaching materials for the subject Chinese Language are modified to suit their needs. Although it may seem like a gesture of goodwill to allow the NCS students to study well, it only serves to hinder their ability to master Chinese Language. In my personal experience, when I graduated from a primary school consisting largely of NCS students and started my secondary life in a local secondary school, my level of Chinese Language was found to be only at the level of 3rd graders in local schools. It affected my ability to assimilate the new, standard curriculum of a local school because of the poor foundation laid in the earlier years. Therefore, the curriculum of the Chinese Language for NCS students should be modified to not only suit their needs, but also prepare them to integrate into society completely.

In order to tackle this issue, it is advisable for the government to set a curriculum targeting NCS students. The curriculum should include elements of the Chinese Language curriculum for the locals but at the same time incorporating the needs of NCS students. It should take into account the background of the NCS students and things that set them apart from local students. For example, the fact that their primary language used at home is not Cantonese or Mandarin. Moreover, experts in teaching Chinese as a second language should be involved in the development of the new curriculum so that the needs of the students can be considered from a specialist point of view.

Moving onwards, it can be appreciated that the EDB has provided support to a number of recommendations that would enhance the teaching of Chinese as a second language such as its PEG Scheme and the learning materials provided through their collaboration with Polytechnic University. However, the issue lies within its implementation. Owing to EDB's portrayal of the measures as suggestions, primary and secondary schools lack the incentive to implement the suggestions. In addition, the guidance on the subsidy is evidently not clear enough from the countless stories of schools seeking guidance from the students themselves. My high school had a relatively large pool of resources, yet, they were ineffective in equipping me with the skill of speaking in Cantonese or Putonghua due to their lack of experiences in teaching Chinese as a second language.

There are two simple solutions to this all- 1. Provide concrete guidance on using the subsidy and 2. Make the suggestions compulsory. With a bit more research and effort from the EDB, primary and secondary schools, especially those admitting NCS students for the first time, know where specifically to start once the subsidy is received. They would also have to train their teachers to acquire the necessary skills to teach NCS students effectively and use the resources given by EDB to maintain the learning pace of NCS students and not stagnate reaching secondary school. It may take time to regulate and monitor the situation, however it could turn the future of Hong Kong around by 180 degrees.

Immigrants have built Hong Kong hand in hand with ethnically Chinese locals. Is it not time we deserve the right to be taught Cantonese and feel accepted in our community?