



**Language Education Review
by the Standing Committee
on Language Education and Research
(SCOLAR)**

**“Action Plan to Raise Language Standards
in Hong Kong”**

January 2003

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FOREWORD

For a number of years, there has been growing concern within the community over language standards and the need for a more concerted approach to improve the language competencies of our population if Hong Kong is to remain a truly cosmopolitan city.

In early 2001, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR)¹ began the task of reviewing language education in schools and in the wider community with the aim of developing a set of recommendations on ways to raise language standards in Hong Kong.

As part of the process, my colleagues and I have reviewed academic and official literature on the subject, visited primary and secondary schools, discussed the issue in depth with key stakeholders, and conducted a survey on language learning.

We are extremely grateful to all the interlocutors for their valuable input in this long and, at times, difficult process.

After months of deliberations, we have drawn up an Action Plan we believe will raise language standards. We are now seeking the views of the public before finalising the plan for submission to the Government. This review report sets out our major findings and recommendations. A separate consultation document is issued to the public as a summary of this report.

We look forward to receiving your support and your constructive views on this very important issue.

Michael Tien
Chairman
Standing Committee on Language Education and Research

¹ The terms of reference and membership list of the Committee are at Annex I.

OUR APPROACH

The recommendations in this report set the **direction** for future language education policies and measures, and are what we consider **realistic** and **achievable**, taking into account factors such as availability of resources and qualifications of serving language teachers.

Our recommendations focus on two major issues -

- (a) **specifying a clear and realistic set of language competencies expected** of our students and workforce to reflect the current and future needs of our society (Chapter 2); and
- (b) **creating a more motivating language learning environment** through the collective efforts of all parties concerned (e.g. Government, school management, teachers, parents, employers and the mass media) to help all learners achieve the expected competencies (Chapter 3).

Apart from our recommendations, we have also recorded in this report the views we received on certain controversial issues during our informal consultation with key stakeholders. We hope this would facilitate public discussion on those issues, which have mostly to do with the implementation details and timetable of individual recommendations.

CHAPTER 1

WHY DO WE NEED TO BE BILITERATE AND TRILINGUAL?

1.1 Language can be defined as ‘a system of human communication ... employed by a community...’ (*The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, 1993). It is a critical feature that defines a particular culture. It is what we use to acquire and construct knowledge. The ability to understand and master language has a profound impact on the cognitive and social development, academic achievement and career prospects of every individual.

1.2 In a wider context, the language ability of a community is key to its prosperity.

1.3 In Hong Kong, Chinese and English have been commonly used for more than a century. Part of the reason for Hong Kong’s success as an international city has been the ability to bridge the gap between the English-speaking, global business community and Chinese-speaking merchants and traders in Hong Kong and the mainland of China. Being biliterate and trilingual has been our competitive advantage.

1.4 Increasing globalisation and a more open China market have made it more important than ever to enhance the language abilities of the community to meet the challenges of greater competition.

How do we fare?

1.5 Over the years, we have developed a firm foundation for teaching and learning Chinese and English, that includes -

- (a) Comprehensive curricula for Chinese, English and Putonghua at primary and secondary school;
- (b) Close to 17 500 Chinese, 15 000 English and 5 600 Putonghua teachers in primary and secondary schools²;

² Statistics as of October 2001

- (c) A substantial percentage of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools devoted to language subjects -

| | Primary 1- 3 | Primary 4 – 6 | Secondary 1 - 3 |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Chinese Language | 25%-30% | 25%-30% | 17%-21% |
| English Language | 17%-21% | 17%-21% | 17%-21% |

Table 1: Percentage of overall curriculum devoted to language subjects

- (d) Schools well-equipped with multi-media and other information technology (IT) facilities to assist language learning; and
- (e) Free-to-air electronic media providing a wide variety of local and non-local content in Chinese and English.

1.6 The results of public examinations such as the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCE) examination indicate that students have performed fairly consistently in language subjects over the past three decades.

1.7 For Chinese, the percentage of students attaining Grades A-C has ranged from 17.7% (about 4 500) in 1970 to 16.5% (about 14 000) in 2002. Overall, 65% (about 56 000) of students attained Grade E or above in 2002, compared to 66.8% (about 17 000) in 1970.

1.8 For English, the percentage of students attaining Grades A-C, the equivalent of a General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O-Level) pass³, has ranged from 9.4% (about 2 500) in 1970 to 8.5% (close to 6 000) in 2002. Overall, 63% (close to 44 000) of students attained Grade E or above in 2002, compared to 57.7% (about 15 000) in 1970.

1.9 For Putonghua, the number of students sitting for the HKCE Putonghua examination has grown by 65% from about 1 300 when the examination was first introduced in 2000 to around 2 200 in 2002. The

³ Since the mid-1960s, Grade C or above in the HKCE English Language (Syllabus B) examination and its predecessor has been recognised as equivalent to a pass (Grade C or above) in the GCE O-Level (Overseas) English examination, based on regular vetting by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

percentage of students attaining Grades A-C has also increased gradually from 22.9% (around 300) in 2000 to 31.8% (around 700) in 2002. Overall, the number of students attaining Grade E or above rose from 62.3% (about 800) in 2000 to 72.9% (about 1 600) in 2002.

1.10 An international literacy project on reading proficiency in the local language⁴, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in the early 1990s, found that Hong Kong students were ‘average’ in reading at Primary 4, and above the international mean at Secondary 3. A more recent IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2000) found that Hong Kong students are generally good at reading for information and textual understanding, but not as proficient in critical and evaluative reading.

Falling standards or rising demands?

1.11 Notwithstanding the above, employers have often expressed concern about inadequate language proficiency of their employees, particularly in spoken English and Putonghua⁵.

1.12 What is the problem? It may be that language demands in the workplace have outstripped the growth in the number of graduates or workers with the required level of language proficiency. Consider the following -

- (a) The contribution of service industries to GDP has risen from 69% in 1982⁶ to 86% in 2000; the percentage of employees engaged in service industries has over the same period increased from 52% (1.25 million) of the workforce to 79% (2.55 million);
- (b) Over the past decade, the number of regional offices of

⁴ The IEA Study of Reading Literacy, Achievement and Instruction covered 32 School Systems. Hong Kong students were assessed on their proficiency in reading Chinese text.

⁵ See, for example, the 2001 Business Outlook Survey conducted by The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, the Business Prospect Survey 2001 conducted by the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, and the 2000 Establishment Survey on Manpower Training and Job Skills Requirement conducted by the Census and Statistics Department.

⁶ This is the first year when the data concerning service industries’ contribution to GDP and employment became available.

international companies in Hong Kong has more than doubled from 1 345 in 1992⁷ to 3 119 in 2002;

- (c) Hong Kong's top three trading partners in 1970 were the USA, Japan and the UK. In 2001, the mainland of China has risen above the USA and Japan and became our largest trading partner; and
- (d) The number of tourists from the mainland and Taiwan has increased almost 50-fold from about 140 000 in 1980⁸ to 6.9 million (50% of total visitor arrivals) in 2001.

1.13 Since the late 1970s, Hong Kong has transformed from a manufacturing base into a knowledge-based, services-oriented economy with closer economic ties to the mainland. The number of students enrolled in full-time, post-secondary programmes⁹ increased from 15 000 in 1971 to 95 000 in 2001. More service sector jobs and higher education opportunities are now available, but these demand higher language proficiency from our workforce and students.

What should be done?

1.14 Given these changes, it serves no useful purpose to deliberate whether language standards have fallen or not. The best course of action now is to take concrete, concerted and well-targeted measures to raise the language standards of the population to match the ever-increasing demand for students and workers with good language skills.

1.15 To bring about the required improvements, we need to start by specifying a clear and realistic set of expected language competencies to reflect the current and future needs of our society, and ensure all concerned know what they should work towards. This will be the focus of Chapter 2.

⁷ This is the first year when the data on number of regional headquarters in Hong Kong became available.

⁸ This is the first year when the data on visitor arrivals from the mainland became available.

⁹ These include programmes offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (and the former Colleges of Education and Technical Teacher's College), other University Grants Committee -funded institutions, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (and the former Technical Institutes and Technical College) as well as private post-secondary institutions.

1.16 Once the language competencies expected are clear, we should do all we can to enable our people to achieve them. The survey we conducted as part of this review shows that the first necessary step is to raise our students' motivation for language learning. Chapter 3 will discuss in detail the role of each relevant party in creating a more motivating language learning environment for our students and workforce.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- SPECIFYING A CLEAR AND REALISTIC SET OF EXPECTED LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES

2.1 Language is a living, evolving human activity. Every person should strive to improve his or her language ability throughout life.

2.2 However, it is impractical and unrealistic to expect every member of our population to attain a high level of proficiency in both Chinese and English. Language competencies expected of students at different education levels and working adults in different fields should be realistic and should reflect society's current and future needs.

2.3 These expected competencies should be clearly defined with descriptors (i.e. statements describing what a person at a particular level of proficiency can do) and accompanied by exemplars (i.e. samples of written work or recordings of conversations illustrating what a person at that particular level of proficiency can generally do).

2.4 Advances in education assessment in the past decade have made it easier to measure language proficiency. Some overseas systems, such as the Council of Europe¹⁰, have adopted a framework of reference or a language proficiency scale¹¹ to describe what persons at different proficiency levels are able to do with a collection of 'can do' statements (i.e. descriptors).

Section 1 Basic competencies for Primary 1 to Secondary 7

2.5 In Hong Kong, performance bands (see Annex II) were developed in the early 1990s based on past studies involving teachers and academics. These bands comprise statements that describe what learners

¹⁰ For details, please refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in the Modern Languages section of the Council of Europe website at <http://www.coe.int>, and the exemplars produced for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), which are based on the Framework, at www.ielts.org.

¹¹ "Progress maps", "proficiency scale", "scales of achievement", and "bands of performance" are frequently used interchangeably.

are able to do in listening, speaking, reading and writing in each Key Stage¹². The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) has since adopted these performance bands to describe the learning targets of the Chinese and English Language Education curriculum for Primary 1 to Secondary 5 . However, these performance bands are not accompanied by samples of students' works (i.e. exemplars).

2.6 In July 2002, the Curriculum Development Council issued new curriculum frameworks for Chinese and English Language Education. These set out in detail the learning targets and objectives of each Key Stage, with the performance bands as reference.

2.7 The Council is now developing a full set of learning outcomes that will describe the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in Chinese Language and English Language that students are expected to achieve/develop on completing Key Stages 1 to 4 (i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 5). Basic competencies (BCs), which are subsets of the learning outcomes that all students should achieve at the end of each Key Stage, are also being worked out to facilitate the development of the Basic Competency Assessments (BCA) recommended by the Education Commission.

2.8 We support the Council's work on the development of learning outcomes and basic competencies, and recommend that the same effort be extended to Secondary 7, with the addition of a new Key Stage 5. Moreover, for the public's ease of reference, the basic competencies in the use of Chinese and English in listening, speaking, reading and writing should be clearly illustrated with descriptors and exemplars.

2.9 All students in Hong Kong are given nine years of free and compulsory education. Upon completing Secondary 3, Secondary 5 or Secondary 7, students who are not going on further studies may leave the education system to join the labour market.

2.10 We recommend that the basic competencies for Key Stages 3,

¹² Progression from Primary 1 to Secondary 5 is divided into four Key Stages. Key Stage 1 covers Primary 1 to 3, Key Stage 2 Primary 4 to 6, Key Stage 3 Secondary 1 to 3, and Key Stage 4 Secondary 4 to 5.

4 and 5 should reflect the level of Chinese and English that students entering the labour market upon completing Secondary 3, 5 or 7 will respectively need to master to function effectively in the entry-level jobs they are likely to undertake¹³. Such competencies or generic language skills (e.g. taking part in simple conversations, understanding verbal and written instructions, comprehending and composing simple written text) will provide a good foundation for further language training in the workplace.

2.11 Currently, the Curriculum Development Council's Key Learning Area (KLA) Committees on Chinese and English Language Education include only teachers and academics. To ensure that the views of employers are taken into account in setting the basic competencies for Key Stages 3 to 5, the membership of these Committees (or the working groups set up under them) should be expanded to include human resources professionals with expertise in language training.

2.12 In developing English Language basic competencies for Key Stages 3 to 5, the Council should also make reference to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), which is used world-wide for the assessment of English language competencies in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Its nine-band scale is illustrated by both descriptors and exemplars. The University Grants Committee (UGC) has recently adopted the IELTS as a common English proficiency assessment for students graduating from the UGC-funded institutions.

2.13 As we specify the language competencies expected of students in Primary 1 to Secondary 7, we should also develop the necessary assessment tools to help monitor students' progress and assess the extent to which they are achieving the basic competencies.

Section 2 Assessment for Primary 1 to Secondary 3

2.14 The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has been commissioned by the Education Department¹⁴ (ED) to

¹³ See Annex III for the top 10 occupations held by Secondary 3, 5 and 7 school leavers (Source: 2001 Population Census, Census and Statistics Department).

¹⁴ The Education Department and the Education and Manpower Bureau have been re-organised with effect from 1 January 2003.

develop the Basic Competency Assessment (BCA) to monitor students' achievement of the basic competencies for Chinese Language and English Language from Key Stages 1 to 3 (i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 3). The Authority is expected to complete both the System Assessment and Student Assessment programmes in 2006¹⁵.

2.15 The Basic Competency Assessment is a low-stake assessment and monitoring tool to enhance learning and teaching. The System Assessment programme of the BCA will be conducted on samples of local students. It should provide the Government with information on the overall percentage of students achieving the basic competencies in listening, speaking, reading and writing at the end of Key Stages 1 to 3 (i.e. Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3), and the variance among schools. It should also allow individual schools to understand the overall language standard of their own students as compared to the standard of the student population as a whole. The Government should channel available resources to schools that need help.

2.16 Through the Student Assessment programme of the BCA - an online, self-directed learning programme on reading and listening - school management and teachers could obtain additional information on individual students' learning needs and problems. They should use this information to supplement what they collect through regular internal assessment (e.g. classroom observation and school examinations) to help identify students who require additional support in language learning.

2.17 *A question was raised during our informal consultation: What should be done if students fail to achieve the basic competencies in either Chinese or English Language for a particular key stage, say, Key Stage 1?*

- *Some suggested that these students should be required to stay in the same school level (e.g. Primary 3) until they achieved the relevant basic competencies.*
- *Others suggested that students should proceed to the next school level (e.g. Primary 4) but be kept from progressing to*

¹⁵ See Annex IV for a detailed timetable for the development of the basic competencies and the Basic Competency Assessment.

the next Key Stage (e.g. staying in Key Stage 1) for the particular language subject they had difficulties in.

- *Still others argued that students should proceed to the next school level (e.g. Primary 4) and Key Stage (e.g. Key Stage 2), but additional support should be provided to ensure that they achieved the basic competencies in the particular language at the end of the next Key Stage (e.g. Key Stage 2).*

We welcome public views on what actions should be taken to help these students reach the expected level.

Section 3 Assessment for Secondary 5 and 7

2.18 Beyond Key Stage 3 (i.e. Secondary 3), the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCE) and the Hong Kong Advanced Level (HKAL) examinations on Chinese and English are, and will likely continue to be, the most widely accepted public examinations of students' language competencies at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5 (i.e. Secondary 5 and 7). Currently, these examinations administered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority are norm-referenced, where performance of a candidate is compared to that of other candidates, and grades are awarded according to the relative standing of the candidates in the cohort. The Authority is now considering converting its examinations, where appropriate, from norm-referenced to standards-referenced, where performance of a candidate is compared to a set of performance standards, and grades are awarded according to the standard attained by the candidates.

2.19 Before the HKCE and HKAL examinations can be used to monitor students' achievement of the basic competencies for Key Stages 4 and 5, the language competencies reflected by the grades attained in these examinations must be clearly defined. We recommend that the Authority should -

- (a) complete revamping the HKCE Chinese Language and English Language examinations from norm-referenced to standards-referenced in 2007. It should also complete the development of standards-referenced HKAL Chinese Language and Culture and Use of English examinations in

2009, subject to reform of the senior secondary education structure; and

- (b) ensure that Grade E (or the passing grade) of the standards-referenced HKCE Chinese Language and English Language examinations reflects the basic competencies for Key Stage 4 (i.e. Secondary 5). Similarly, Grade E of the HKAL Chinese Language and Culture and Use of English examinations should reflect the basic competencies for Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 7).

When these are done, we can be sure that all students passing the HKCE and HKAL examinations on Chinese and English have achieved the basic competencies set for their respective Key Stages.

2.20 The Basic Competency Assessment, together with the standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations on Chinese and English, will provide a complete set of assessments to measure and monitor the achievement of the basic competencies of our primary and secondary students.

Section 4 Language requirements for university admission

2.21 Beyond Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 7), some students will continue their studies in local universities. It is important to ensure that these students have the necessary Chinese and English language competencies to benefit from higher education programmes conducted in either of the two languages.

2.22 With regard to Chinese language competencies, students admitted to higher education programmes should demonstrate a level of Chinese not lower than the basic competencies for Key Stage 5 (i.e. Grade E in the HKAL Chinese Language and Culture examination).

2.23 As for English, we note that international students admitted to the undergraduate programmes in the United Kingdom are generally required to demonstrate a level of English equivalent to a pass (i.e. Grade C or above) in the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE

O-Level) (Overseas) English examination or Band 6 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). While some universities in Hong Kong also adopt similar requirement for the admission of, for instance, non-local students, all local universities accept Grade E in the HKAL Use of English examination as the general minimum requirement for local Secondary 7 students. As it is unclear how the level of English represented by a GCE O-Level (Overseas) pass or IELTS Band 6 compares to that of a HKAL Use of English Grade E, we recommend that local universities consider if their present general minimum requirement is adequate and, if not, whether a higher HKAL Use of English grade should be adopted for admission to their English-medium undergraduate programmes.

2.24 *A question was raised during our informal consultation: Why is GCE O-Level (Overseas) pass or IELTS Band 6 not adopted by local universities as the general minimum requirement for the admission of all students?*

- *Some suggested that while the HKAL Use of English examination was tailored to the local school curriculum for Secondary 6-7, the GCE O-Level (Overseas) English Language examination and the IELTS were not.*
- *Others argued for benchmarking the HKAL Use of English Grade E against GCE O-Level (Overseas) pass or IELTS Band 6 so that the language requirement for admission to local universities would be comparable to those adopted overseas.*

We welcome public views on these suggestions.

Section 5 Basic competencies expected of university graduates and working adults

2.25 Since the HKCE and HKAL examinations are based on language curricula for senior secondary education, they are not appropriate for people who have left the school system. For working adults who wish to assess their English language competencies certified, we recommend that they make use of the IELTS, which has been adopted by the UGC as a common English proficiency assessment for graduating students of the

UGC-funded institutions.

2.26 To show the working population and their employers how the IELTS results compare to those of the curriculum-based assessment, we shall carry out a study to establish the equivalence between the IELTS band scores and the passing grades of the future Basic Competency Assessment and standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations, which reflect the basic competencies for Key Stages 3 to 5 (i.e. Secondary 3, 5 and 7).

2.27 To give university graduates a better idea of the English Language basic competencies employers expect of them, we shall consult human resources experts to determine the IELTS band scores that reflect that level of competencies. We encourage professional bodies to similarly specify the level of English expected of their professional groups with reference to the IELTS band scores. The basic competencies expected of university graduates and professional groups will likely be higher than those set for Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 7).

2.28 For the assessment of Chinese language competencies, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority should develop a general Chinese proficiency assessment, that is not curriculum-based, to meet the needs of working adults. The Authority should establish, as far as possible, equivalence between the results of this general proficiency assessment and the future Basic Competency Assessment and standards-referenced HKCE and HKAL examinations. For instance, there should be at least three grades in the general Chinese proficiency assessment corresponding to the Chinese Language basic competencies set for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 (i.e. Secondary 3, 5 and 7).

2.29 To ensure that the general Chinese proficiency assessment would cater for all stakeholders, including the employers of university graduates and professional groups, the Authority should consult human resources experts and professional bodies to determine the levels of Chinese expected of university graduates and professional groups, which are also likely to be higher than the basic competencies set for Key Stage 5 (i.e. Secondary 7).

2.30 We recommend that working adults upgrade their Chinese

and English through continuing education. Those with educational attainment at Secondary 3, Secondary 5, Secondary 7 or university graduate level should aim to achieve the basic competencies set for their respective education level if they had not done so while at school. This would help to ensure their competitiveness in terms of language competencies.

2.31 Moreover, we expect university students to make the necessary efforts to upgrade their Chinese and English to the level employers expect of them when they graduate. Tertiary institutions should provide suitable language enhancement programmes to support their students in such efforts.

2.32 *A question was raised during our informal consultation: Why are university graduates not required to attain an expected level of Chinese and English before they are granted a degree?*

- *Some argued that university graduates were the cream of the crop and should be subject to higher demands in terms of language proficiency.*
- *Others believed that university education and language proficiency were two separate issues, and the latter should not be made a pre-requisite of a degree award.*

We welcome comments from the public on these views.

Section 6 Putonghua proficiency scale for the general public

2.33 Putonghua was introduced into local school curriculum as an optional subject in 1986, and later as a core subject in 1998. Beyond school, the social environment affecting the learning and use of Putonghua is changing rapidly and could be significantly different for individual students. It is thus considered premature to develop learning outcomes or basic competencies to describe what students can be expected to achieve in Putonghua in different Key Stages.

2.34 Nevertheless, the majority of Hong Kong's existing workforce did not learn Putonghua while at school. They now need to upgrade their Putonghua competencies to meet the growing demands of

the workplace. To help them plan and assess their progress in Putonghua learning, we need a scale of proficiency and an appropriate assessment tool that caters to their specific needs (e.g. the need to strengthen both listening and speaking skills).

2.35 In 1994, the State Language Work Committee ~~chinese removed~~ ~~chinese removed~~ began to administer the Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi ~~chinese removed~~ ~~chinese removed~~ (PSC), which is a national assessment of Putonghua proficiency. The PSC prescribes the testing materials and focuses on pronunciation. The test format includes reading out selected words, phrases and passages, and a short monologue. Some professions in the mainland require specific PSC grades for employment (e.g. news broadcasters must attain the top Grade 1A).

2.36 The Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi is designed to serve the specific needs of the mainland, where Putonghua is more widely used. In Hong Kong, where the use of Putonghua is not yet as widespread, the average learner needs to grasp not only the oral skills tested by the PSC but also skills in listening, conversing, pinyin and Cantonese-Putonghua transcription. Although in recent years a number of institutes in Hong Kong have been authorised to conduct the PSC in Hong Kong, and the number of candidates sitting for the assessment has been increasing steadily, an alternative to the PSC is needed to suit the particular needs of Hong Kong people.

2.37 The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority introduced the Test of Proficiency in Putonghua (TPP) in 1988 and the Test of Advanced Proficiency in Putonghua (TAPP) in 1990 to serve this need. Both tests consist of a written paper that assesses a candidate's skills in listening, pinyin and Cantonese-Putonghua transcription, and an oral paper that assesses a candidate's pronunciation and ability in monologue and discourse. However, the two tests currently do not provide clear descriptors and exemplars to articulate the levels of proficiency represented by the grades they give.

2.38 We have commissioned the Authority to develop a Putonghua proficiency scale to illustrate, with descriptors and exemplars, the different levels of Putonghua competencies certified by the Test of Proficiency in

Putonghua, and to improve the assessment where necessary.

2.39 When the scale becomes available in late 2003, validation should be carried out to determine if it is adequately and accurately describing the full range of Putonghua proficiency existing in the local population and whether it requires any further development. The validated scale will provide a reference for future review of the Putonghua curriculum for school education as well as the HKCE Putonghua examination.

Section 7 Employers' demands as driving force

2.40 We should never under-estimate employers' demands as a driving force behind improvement in language standards. We recommend employers to set clear language requirements for recruitment and promotion. For positions requiring educational attainment at Secondary 3, Secondary 5, Secondary 7, graduate and professional levels, we encourage employers to set their language requirements with reference to the basic competencies expected of these respective education levels.

2.41 As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government should take the lead in adopting the basic competencies as reference in reviewing its language requirements for civil service appointments in future.

CHAPTER 3

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- CREATING A MORE MOTIVATING LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Section 1 Students' attitude and motivation

3.1 While we work towards establishing a clear and realistic set of expected language competencies and developing the necessary tools to assess their achievement, we must also strive to create a more motivating language learning environment to help our students and workforce achieve those competencies. Here we must first address the issue of students' motivation, which plays a central role in learning. Given the same ability to learn a language and presented with the same resources and environment, students with stronger motivation are likely to learn more and better.

SCOLAR's survey

3.2 As part of the review, we conducted in March 2002 a perception survey on students, parents and teachers to ascertain local students' attitude towards language learning and the factors affecting their motivation. Some 23 primary and 29 secondary schools participated in the survey, with 1 193 questionnaires completed by students, 1 011 by their parents, and 512 by their Chinese and English Language teachers. The major findings of the survey are set out below. (To see the full report of the survey, please contact the SCOLAR Support Unit.)

How motivated are our students?

3.3 As seen in Table 2, 47% and 44% of the students surveyed indicated that they had "strong" or "very strong" motivation to learn Chinese and English, while only 25% said they were strongly or very strongly motivated to learn Putonghua. Parents and teachers generally perceived an even lower level of motivation among the students than the students did themselves.

| | |
|--|---|
| | Percentage of students with "strong" or "very strong" motivation to learn languages |
|--|---|

| | Students' self-perception | Parents' perception | Teachers' perception |
|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Chinese Language | 47% | 35% | 11% |
| English Language | 44% | 26% | 8% |
| Putonghua | 25% | 20% | N/A* |

Table 2: Students' motivation to learn language

(Only Chinese and English Language teachers were surveyed.)*

What motivates our students?

3.4 The top five reasons given by the students for their motivation to learn Chinese, English and Putonghua are set out below. The percentages of students agreeing and strongly agreeing to the statements are shown in brackets.

Motivation for learning Chinese Language

- (a) I will be able to express myself more precisely and effectively (84%).
- (b) A good foundation in the language will enable me to learn and acquire new knowledge in the future (83%).
- (c) I am Chinese and should learn the Chinese Language well (81%).
- (d) It will help me to find a good job in the future (79%).
- (e) It will help me learn more about Chinese culture or appreciate it better (72%).

Motivation for learning English Language

- (a) It will help me to find a good job in the future (84%).
- (b) A good foundation in the language will enable me to learn and acquire new knowledge in the future (82%).
- (c) English is an international language, with which I can communicate and make friends with people from different countries or of different races (80%).
- (d) Learning the English Language well will help me to learn and perform better in other academic subjects (72%).
- (e) My parents want me to learn the subject well (72%).

Motivation for learning Putonghua

- (a) It will help me to find a good job in the future (67%).
- (b) A good foundation in the language will enable me to learn and acquire new knowledge in the future (66%).
- (c) I will be able to express myself more precisely and effectively (64%).
- (d) I am Chinese and should learn the Chinese Language well (64%).
- (e) It will help me learn more about Chinese culture or appreciate it better (61%).

3.5 The findings showed that most Hong Kong students were well aware of the value of learning Chinese and English well. This should not be surprising as it is acknowledged by everyone that good results in the HKCE and HKAL Chinese and English language examinations are essential for admission to Secondary 6 or higher education, and for getting a good job. A majority of the students were, nevertheless, also able to appreciate the value of language as a tool for communication and knowledge acquisition.

3.6 While close to 40% of the parents felt it was most important for their children to get good grades, they should pay attention to the finding that students were less likely to feel strongly motivated to learn languages if all they had in mind was the passing of examinations.

3.7 In fact, about one-third of the students felt that focusing too much on examinations lowered their interest in language learning. On the other hand, a significant positive link was found between a student's interest in language subjects and his/her level of motivation for language learning. Students had a stronger motivation to learn languages if they liked language subjects, had teachers who could arouse their interest in the subjects, or found the content of the subjects interesting.

3.8 Nevertheless, further analyses revealed that, while 70-80% of the students felt that their language teachers acted responsibly as teachers, only 55%, 46% and 30% found their Chinese Language, English Language and Putonghua teachers successful in arousing their interest in these subjects.

3.9 As regards the curriculum, only 41%, 36% and 22% of the students found the content of the Chinese Language, English Language and Putonghua subjects interesting, and only 50%, 48% and 34% found what they learned in these subjects applicable to their daily life.

3.10 It is imperative, therefore, that we **raise Hong Kong students' motivation** for language learning, particularly their interest in the relevant language subjects.

How to raise students' motivation?

3.11 When asked what could be done to make language subjects more interesting, students supported the following suggestions –

- (a) more learning activities;
- (b) greater use of multimedia language learning software;
- (c) teaching beyond the examination syllabus;
- (d) reduction of examinations and tests; and
- (e) reduction of homework.

3.12 The above findings indicate that we must first help our language teachers to improve and enrich their pedagogy and to adopt a curriculum that is more relevant and interesting to their students if we are to raise our students' motivation for learning languages.

3.13 Apart from highlighting the crucial importance of teachers and the content of language subjects, the survey also confirms the significant role that school management, parents and the wider community can play in strengthening students' motivation for language learning and in creating a more conducive environment. Its findings indicate that -

- (a) **teachers** must be able to arouse students' interest in language subjects by improving their teaching methods such as providing more learning activities and making greater use of multi-media teaching and learning resources;
- (b) when developing the whole-school language **curriculum**, teachers must take into account the needs, interests and ability levels of their students, and consider how to make language

learning more relevant to the daily life of students;

- (c) **schools** should create an environment that provides more opportunities for the use of English and Putonghua;
- (d) **parents** must act to support their children's language learning in school, and play an active role in promoting their children's interest in extensive reading; and
- (e) schools, parents and students should make better use of the **mass media**, particularly English and Putonghua television and radio programmes, as a resource for language learning.

We shall address the roles of these relevant parties one by one in Sections 3 to 7 below.

Section 2 Guiding principles of language learning

3.14 Before we move on, we would like to highlight the following guiding principles underlying effective language learning, the spirit of which will be reflected in the discussion of the ensuing sections -

- (a) To make language meaningful and useful to the learner, it is essential that the learning and teaching of the four key language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) be integrated. Listening and speaking skills are pre-requisites for oral communication and should be developed from an early stage;
- (b) Proficiency in a language is more than just the mastery of the four skills. It entails an appreciation of the cultural background as well as the appropriate use of the language in a variety of contexts;
- (c) It is conducive to language development if learners are exposed to language(s) at a young age through activities they can do and enjoy;
- (d) Language is a tool for communication. It is thus important to enable learners, particularly young ones, to learn a language and apply it in meaningful and purposeful contexts;
- (e) Extensive reading has been proven to be very beneficial to language learning; and

- (f) A person's intellectual ability and analytical power is intertwined with the development of language ability.

In relation to the last principle, we feel obliged to address at this juncture the controversial issue of the medium of instruction.

Medium of instruction

3.15 It is important to make a distinction between the learning of a second language through adopting it as the medium of instruction (MOI), and the learning of a second language as a subject.

3.16 Many people believe that using a second language as the MOI for academic subjects will enhance students' proficiency in the second language through increased exposure and use, without significant adverse effect on the learning of the subject matter. However, local empirical research since the 1970s has consistently shown that the majority of our secondary school students have not reached the level of English proficiency necessary to benefit from English-medium instruction. Some students were in fact performing worse in both English and other subjects taught in English as compared with students who received Chinese-medium instruction.

3.17 Local studies have pointed out that three pre-conditions must be fulfilled before a second language can be used as the medium of instruction –

- (a) Teachers has adequate proficiency to teach in that language;
- (b) Students has adequate proficiency to learn through that language; and
- (c) Suitable support measures are available (e.g. bridging programmes to help students switch to a new MOI).

3.18 It is common sense and borne out by educationalists worldwide that it is easier to learn through one's mother tongue than through a second language, as this presents less of a language barrier in the learning process. Since the 1970s, the Education Department has been advising schools not to use English as the MOI unless the three pre-conditions are fulfilled. However, many schools ignored the advice and

continued using English as the MOI even though the three pre-conditions were lacking.

3.19 In 1996, the Education Commission Report No. 6 recommended issuing “firm guidance” on the appropriate MOI to be adopted by individual schools. The Education Department issued a consultation document in early 1997. All Members who spoke at a motion debate of the Legislative Council in May 1997 were in support of the move. The Guidance was issued in September 1997, and has been implemented among secondary schools since the 1998/99 school year.

3.20 Since the Guidance was implemented, tertiary education institutions commissioned by the Education Department have been tracking students’ performance through longitudinal studies. Interim findings of these ongoing studies indicate that the intended benefits, e.g., more lively interactions between teachers and students and more effective teaching and learning in classrooms, are being achieved. On the other hand, the Education Department has also commissioned studies to explore ways to enrich the language environment in schools to help students achieve better language competencies.

3.21 It is important to note that the current policy does not represent any in-principle objection to using a language other than the mother tongue as the MOI. The critical consideration is the objective evaluation of the existence or otherwise of the three pre-conditions mentioned above. Past studies estimated that only about one-third of local secondary school students could benefit from English-medium instruction. As and when more schools and students meet the pre-conditions, there could well be room for more schools and students to switch to using English as the MOI in the future.

3.22 In conclusion, we support that the students’ mother tongue should be adopted as the MOI unless the three pre-conditions are fulfilled. It is important to note that the overall aim of education is to nurture new generations that are capable of effective communication, life-long learning, innovation, and critical and exploratory thinking. To achieve this aim, a language that is not a barrier in the learning process – for most students, their mother tongue – should be used as the MOI. Government policy in

this regard will be reviewed in conjunction with the review of the secondary school places allocation system in 2003. The review should re-examine, among other things, the mechanisms used to ensure that the three pre-conditions are being met by the secondary schools using or wishing to switch to English as the MOI.

Teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua

3.23 During our review, there have been suggestions that we should, as a matter of policy, adopt Putonghua in the teaching of Chinese Language, with a view to achieving –

- (a) better learning of Chinese Language because Putonghua is the spoken form of standard written Chinese; and
- (b) better Putonghua.

3.24 It should be noted that, since November 2000, the Curriculum Development Council has stated in its Chinese Language curriculum documents that using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language is the Council's long-term goal. Under the current MOI policy, Chinese-medium schools may use either Cantonese or Putonghua to teach Chinese Language and other academic subjects. Pending further studies and deliberation, the Council has recommended a school-based approach and advised schools to consider their own circumstances in deciding whether to use Putonghua as the MOI for the Chinese Language subject.

3.25 The Language Fund and the Quality Education Fund have in recent years conducted three studies that are relevant to the consideration of the issue. Since only a small number of local schools are currently using Putonghua to teach the Chinese Language subject, the studies' sample size is small. They have also employed different methodologies in measuring students' progress in Chinese Language learning. These factors should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings of the studies, which are summarised at Annex V. The findings so far indicate that –

- (a) teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua will enhance students' Putonghua proficiency;
- (b) there is no conclusive evidence yet to support the argument that students' Chinese will be better if they learn the subject

through Putonghua than through Cantonese. All three studies have found cases where the students who learn Chinese Language through Putonghua do better than their counterparts who learn through Cantonese. However, in two of the three studies, there are also cases showing no difference between the two groups or opposite results.

3.26 We recommend that more studies should be conducted to further understand the conditions necessary for schools to make a successful switch to using Putonghua as the MOI for Chinese Language and prevent possible negative outcomes before a firm policy and implementation timetable are formulated.

3.27 Nevertheless, we foresee the growing use of written Chinese and Putonghua in both the official and business arenas, and fully endorse the Curriculum Development Council's vision. In the light of its benefit to the learning of Putonghua, we strongly encourage schools, which consider that they have the pre-conditions for success in place, to try using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language. These schools should use the relevant findings of local studies on the subject as reference. In respect of teachers' proficiency in Putonghua, the schools should ensure that the Chinese Language teachers teaching in Putonghua satisfy the Language Proficiency Requirement for Putonghua teachers in speaking and classroom language. They should also ensure that their students have the ability to learn in Putonghua, and make available support measures to facilitate a smooth transition.

3.28 In 2000, we launched a Putonghua Summer Immersion Course Subsidy Scheme with support from the Language Fund to provide subsidy at a maximum of \$10,000 per teacher to attend summer immersion courses in the mainland. So far, over 400 serving Putonghua and Chinese Language teachers have benefited from the Scheme. We intend to continue with the Scheme, giving priority to serving Chinese Language teachers who are not at the same time Putonghua teachers¹⁶. It will help to enhance the Putonghua proficiency of Chinese Language teachers and allow more schools to try teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua.

¹⁶ Serving Putonghua teachers are already eligible for a separate training subsidy from the Education and Manpower Bureau to help them attain the Language Proficiency Requirement for Putonghua teachers.

3.29 During this transitional period and before there are enough Chinese Language teachers with sufficient proficiency in Putonghua, some schools have expressed the desire to engage teachers of Chinese Language from the mainland, using the Capacity Enhancement Grant. We fully support such initiatives, provided that the teachers to be engaged hold qualifications that are equivalent to a local degree in Chinese Language and recognised teacher training in the subject.

3.30 *A question was raised during our informal consultation: Why should we be so concerned about the necessary conditions for a successful switch?*

- *Some argued that without a firm policy and timetable, schools and teachers had little incentive to try using Putonghua to teach Chinese Language.*
- *In the light of negative outcomes found in some of the local studies, others cautioned against moving forward too quickly without sufficient understanding of possible pitfall.*

We welcome public views on this particular issue of setting a timetable for adopting Putonghua as the MOI for Chinese Language among local schools.

Section 3 Curriculum and pedagogy

3.31 In developing a language curriculum, teachers must keep in mind the aims of language education, and choose the appropriate content, teaching methods and assessment tools to achieve those aims.

3.32 Our survey findings indicate that students are more likely to be motivated to learn a language if they find what they are being taught –

- (a) appropriate in depth and breadth;
- (b) relevant to their daily life; and
- (c) stimulating and interesting.

In terms of pedagogy¹⁷ and assessment, students prefer more learning

¹⁷ 'Pedagogy' here refers to teaching methods.

activities and more extensive use of multi-media resources. They also hope to see a reduction in homework, examinations and tests.

3.33 In the following paragraphs, we shall discuss how the learner-centred approach of the ongoing curriculum reform would impact on the content, pedagogy and assessment of Chinese and English Language education and help raise students' motivation for language learning. But before we discuss the more formal language curriculum for primary and secondary education, we shall first take a look at language education at the pre-primary level.

Pre-primary level

3.34 The guiding principles reviewed in Section 2 confirm the benefit of exposing young children to languages through purposeful and enjoyable activities. As the primary aim of early childhood education is to help children develop their physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional and social skills through integrated learning experiences, the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" issued by the Education Department in 1996 does not prescribe any language curricula such as those for primary and secondary education. It does, however, lay down the goals for the development of basic skills in listening/speaking, reading and writing, and provides specific guidelines on appropriate language activities for pre-primary children.

3.35 The Education Department has also advised kindergarten operators since 1994 to use the child's mother tongue as the medium of instruction in pre-primary education. Exposure to a foreign language (e.g. English for Chinese children) should only be introduced if suitable teachers are available to do it through an informal approach, e.g. in the form of simple rhymes, songs, conversations and language games. The underlying belief is that children should first master their mother tongue, which would provide them with a tool for thinking and communication as well as a firm foundation for the learning of other languages.

3.36 However, a survey conducted by the Education Department in May 2000, covering 721 kindergartens, found that over 97% of the kindergartens surveyed provided some form of English activities for their

students. 36% employed native-speaking English teachers for the job. For the remainder, the task was taken up by local teachers. Frequently employed methods included teaching English through games, songs, picture and word cards. The survey also found some 55% of the kindergartens surveyed "teaching" English by means of textbooks, and 32% giving increasing quantity of penmanship assignments to children from kindergarten Grade 1 to 3.

3.37 So far, no survey has been conducted on Putonghua activities in kindergartens and child care centres. However, discussions with kindergarten operators and early childhood education experts in local tertiary institutions suggest that the teaching of Putonghua in kindergartens is becoming more popular.

3.38 Having consulted local experts in the field, we consider that development of a child's mother tongue should take precedence over the acquisition of other languages at the early childhood stage. For most young children in Hong Kong, Cantonese and written Chinese is their mother tongue and should be used as the medium of instruction in pre-primary education.

3.39 While we appreciate that early exposure to a second language could benefit subsequent language development of young children, we are concerned that 55% of the kindergartens surveyed were using textbooks to teach English and 32% gave English penmanship assignment to young children. That suggests that the teaching methods used by some kindergartens have moved far beyond the informal approach recommended by the Education Department. We discourage such practices, and must emphasise that exposure to second languages at the pre-primary level should be -

- (a) developmentally appropriate;
- (b) authentic;
- (c) accurate;
- (d) in context;
- (e) pressure-free; and
- (f) enjoyable (e.g. through songs and games).

3.40 The Language Fund and the Quality Education Fund have each sponsored a considerable number of projects on pre-primary language acquisition, which include research studies, and development of teaching and learning materials and activities. The findings and products of these projects provide useful information and resources to local early childhood educators, and should be made available to them. In particular, the Education and Manpower Bureau should –

- (a) disseminate good practices in teaching the mother tongue (i.e. Cantonese and written Chinese) and good strategies for providing effective and appropriate exposure to Putonghua and English for young children; and
- (b) work with the Hong Kong Education City to provide, through its resource library, a more comprehensive collection of research findings and teaching resources relevant to pre-primary language acquisition for teachers' and parents' reference.

3.41 Besides adopting an appropriate informal and action-embedded approach, it is equally important to have suitable teachers to help children build a firm foundation for language development. As language models, kindergarten teachers and child care workers should be able to demonstrate accurate pronunciation and proper language use. Operators of kindergarten and child care centre should use the Language Proficiency Requirement for English and Putonghua Teachers in speaking, or its equivalent, as reference in the recruitment, deployment and professional development of staff if they wish to provide exposure to English and Putonghua to their students.

Primary and secondary level

3.42 For primary and secondary education, the current curriculum reform advocates a shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach. The Curriculum Development Council has recently published the new curriculum frameworks for Chinese Language and English Language, setting out what students should know, value and be able to do at various stages of schooling. They can be found in the Chinese and English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides

(Primary 1 to Secondary 3) issued in September 2002. Building on existing effective practices in language learning and teaching, the Council seeks to promote new developments conducive to broadening and enriching learners' learning experiences.

- 3.43 On English Language Education, new emphases include –
- (a) teaching of grammar in context, and providing learners with opportunities for using language purposefully in authentic situations;
 - (b) teaching of phonics in meaningful contexts to develop learners' speaking (pronunciation), writing (spelling) and reading skills, and to facilitate their acquisition of stress, rhythm and intonation through shared reading at primary level;
 - (c) helping learners enhance their vocabulary building skills through purposeful tasks and meaningful contexts;
 - (d) enhancing language learning through flexible use of a wide variety of quality print and non-print resources;
 - (e) ensuring learning and teaching materials and activities are relevant to learners' interests, experience, needs and aspirations;
 - (f) facilitating the development of a 'reading to learn' culture; using language arts to promote reading and help learners develop their critical thinking skills and creativity; and
 - (g) creating a language-rich environment through promoting cross-curricular approaches¹⁸ to learning (e.g. language camps and fun days).
- 3.44 On Chinese Language Education, new emphases include –
- (a) enriching students' balanced and holistic learning experience in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
 - (b) helping students master Putonghua and the simplified

¹⁸ Language is acquired not only through the language subjects, but in all subjects and often beyond the classroom. Hence, teachers of all subjects should collaborate to support language learning both within and beyond the school.

Chinese characters to facilitate communication with the mainland and other regions;

- (c) enhancing cultural education, and cultivating students' understanding of, reflection on, and identification with the Chinese culture;
- (d) heightening students' interest in reading and expanding its range and quantity; and
- (e) developing and flexibly employing diversified learning materials to cater to the needs of the students and the social development of the times.

3.45 Frontline teachers are generally in support of the new curriculum frameworks, and appreciate the greater autonomy and flexibility they have been given to determine content and methods. Indeed many schools are developing innovative pedagogical strategies to raise students' motivation to learn languages. However, some teachers have also expressed concern about the increase in workload arising from curriculum planning and adaptation and trying out of new teaching and assessment methods. Moreover, some parents and school management are strongly influenced by the examination-oriented culture. Their resistance to any significant divergence from traditional practices (e.g. frequent dictations, mechanical drills, tests, and textbook-bound teaching approaches) has deterred some teachers from innovations in curriculum and pedagogy.

3.46 We fully endorse the learner-centred approach of the curriculum reform. To provide teachers with the necessary support for implementing the reform in their schools, we recommend that the Education and Manpower Bureau -

- (a) assist all schools in reviewing their whole-school language curriculum and pedagogy. School management and language teachers need to examine critically the curriculum and pedagogy they currently adopt and take bold steps to help raise students' interest in language subjects;
- (b) continue to provide support, with resources from the Language Fund, to schools that wish to organise English language camps and other co-curricular language activities

for their students. In March 2002, we organised an English language camp for 2 500 secondary students and 8 200 primary students with support from the Language Fund. Evaluation reveals that the camp stretched students' language abilities, and helped them overcome the psychological barrier to the use of English in daily communication outside the classroom; and

- (c) ensure that the 600 plus native English-speaking teachers (NETs) in primary and secondary schools are properly deployed to achieve the objectives of the schemes. A study sponsored by the Language Fund and completed in 2001 indicates that the NET Scheme for secondary schools has yielded positive results. It has enriched the school language environment and brought in a wider variety of teaching methods, but the objective of promoting professional exchanges and collaboration between local English teachers and the NETs was not fully achieved.

3.47 In addition to Government support, professional development of language teachers, administrative and professional support of the school management, and education of parents are essential elements in successful curriculum reform. We shall examine the roles of these key stakeholders in the next few sections.

Section 4 Language teachers

3.48 Language teachers undoubtedly play a critical role in language education. They are the language models of students, particularly in learning a second language. In our survey on students' motivation, students ranked "teachers" as the most important factor affecting whether they liked a particular language subject. Teachers have the most direct influence on students' interest in learning a language.

Preparation of language teachers

3.49 Effective language teachers need to be proficient in the language they teach, have a good grounding in subject knowledge, and be acquainted with the latest theories and practices in language teaching and

learning. They need to synthesise and apply their knowledge and skills to motivate and help students to improve language ability.

3.50 Language teachers should be familiar with the skills in teaching, e.g., reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, syntax, language structure and language arts. They should be acquainted with the latest developmental psychology and education theories, school and classroom management skills, education research methodology and education policy. Language teachers should also cultivate an interest in reading and an appreciation of the relevant cultures.

3.51 In terms of subject knowledge, language teachers should possess linguistic knowledge of the language (e.g. an understanding of the sound, structural and meaning systems of Chinese and English) as well as knowledge of language education. For English teachers, knowledge of the social-cultural aspects of English as an international language and that of second language acquisition and bilingualism are also essential.

3.52 During this review, we noted that there is as yet no agreed framework for the professional development of teachers. In the hope of accelerating the process of developing such a framework, we have ventured to draw up at Annex VI frameworks for Chinese and English Language teachers respectively based on inputs from focus groups of frontline language teachers, school principals and teacher education providers, taking into account local language teacher education programmes as well as challenges brought about by the education reform. The draft frameworks cover subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, proficiency in the language, and the general professional understanding, values and attitudes that we believe language teachers should acquire/develop before they enter the profession and seek to upgrade throughout their career.

3.53 We must emphasise that the frameworks at Annex VI are only draft documents. We are also mindful that it is not the identification of the required knowledge, skills and values, but their professional integration and application in the classroom that is important. Nevertheless, we hope the draft frameworks will contribute to the eventual development of a comprehensive professional development framework for language

teachers. Professionals in the education sector are welcome to comment on them. We also hope that the Education and Manpower Bureau and local teacher education providers will make reference to the frameworks when designing pre-service and in-service training programmes for language teachers.

3.54 Apart from better defining the professional development needs of language teachers, we must also put in place a comprehensive plan to help teachers update and upgrade their professional capabilities.

3.55 Regarding language proficiency, we support the policy requiring all English Language and Putonghua teachers to meet the respective Language Proficiency Requirement. Serving teachers should meet the requirement as soon as possible through exemption, training or sitting of the Language Professional Assessment for Teachers. School management should closely monitor the progress of their teachers in meeting the requirement and ensure that their teachers do so within the specified time frame.

Qualifications of language teachers

3.56 As regards language teachers' grounding in subject knowledge and pedagogy, we have identified three areas of concern –

- (a) Out of the 17 500 serving Chinese and 15 000 serving English teachers in all primary and secondary schools, about 1 500 (9%) Chinese and 2 100 (14%) English teachers have not yet received any professional teacher training;

| | Total no. of teachers | No. of untrained teachers (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Primary</i> | | |
| Chinese | 12 278 | 935 (8%) |
| English | 9 276 | 1 075 (12%) |
| <i>Secondary</i> | | |
| Chinese | 5 207 | 567 (11%) |
| English | 5 703 | 1 067 (19%) |

Table 3: Number of primary and secondary school teachers teaching the Chinese and English Language subjects and proportion of them without teacher

training in 2001¹⁹

- (b) In terms of subject-training²⁰, about 1 600 (9%) of the Chinese teachers and 5 000 (33%) of the English teachers are not ‘subject-trained’;

| | No. of ‘subject-trained’ teachers (%) | No. of ‘non subject-trained’ teachers (%) |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Primary | | |
| Chinese | 11 452 (93%) | 826 (7%) |
| English | 5 396 (58%) | 3 880 (42%) |
| Secondary | | |
| Chinese | 4 455 (86%) | 752 (14%) |
| English | 4 527 (79%) | 1 176 (21%) |

Table 4: Distribution of ‘subject-trained’ and ‘non-subject-trained’ language teachers²¹

- (c) opportunities for serving teachers to engage in continuing professional development to upgrade their subject knowledge and teaching methods are limited.

3.57 To ensure that all new language teachers have completed the necessary preparation before they enter the profession, we recommend that all schools should, as far as possible, recruit teachers with the following qualifications to teach Chinese and English Language from the 2003/04 school year -

- (a) a Bachelor of Education degree in the relevant language subject; or
- (b) a first degree in the relevant language subject and a

¹⁹ These figures refer to the number of in-post permanent teachers who were teaching Chinese and English Language in local ordinary primary and secondary day schools according to the Teacher Survey conducted by the Education Department in 2001.

²⁰ A teacher is regarded as ‘subject-trained’ if he/she teaches a subject that is relevant to any of the subjects he/she has taken in the Hong Kong Institute of Education (or the former Colleges of Education), post-secondary colleges or universities (in either academic or teacher training programmes). For primary school teachers, regardless of their specialization, graduates from the Hong Kong Institute of Education (or the former Colleges of Education) are all regarded as ‘subject-trained’ in ‘Chinese Language’, ‘Mathematics’ and ‘General Studies’. There is as yet no definition for ‘subject-trained Putonghua teachers’. It is important to note that ‘subject-trained’ teachers may or may not have received teacher training, i.e. ‘subject-trained’ teachers can be untrained teachers. Similarly, ‘non-subject-trained’ teachers may have received teacher training but not in the relevant subject.

²¹ Statistics from the Teacher Survey conducted in 2001.

Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate in Education (PGDE or PCEd) with a major in that language subject.

The programmes leading to these qualifications would provide language teachers with the necessary foundation in subject knowledge and pedagogy, upon which teachers should seek to further upgrade through continuing professional development.

3.58 In cases where a school finds it necessary to appoint a new teacher without the above-mentioned qualifications to teach language, it should ensure that the candidate holds at least a sub-degree, and should only offer the appointment on the following condition –

- (a) if the new recruit holds a first degree in the relevant language subject, that he/she should complete the PGDE or PCEd programme with a major in that language subject within three years of taking up the employment;
- (b) if the new recruit holds a first degree with a major that is not relevant to the language subject he/she teaches, that he/she should complete the PGDE or PCEd programme with a major in that language subject and a postgraduate level programme focusing on the subject knowledge of the particular language within five years of taking up the employment; or
- (c) if the new recruit does not hold a first degree, that he/she should complete the Bachelor of Education programme with a major in the relevant language subject within five years of taking up the employment.

3.59 To help new teachers referred to in paragraph 3.58 (b) acquire the necessary subject knowledge, we encourage teacher education providers to custom design postgraduate level programmes for these teachers.

3.60 Our long-term goal is to develop a professional language teaching force with the qualifications specified in paragraph 3.57 above. School management should encourage serving language teachers to acquire those qualifications, and move progressively towards deploying only teachers with such qualifications to teach language subjects.

3.61 According to the Teacher Survey conducted by the Education Department in 2001, about 16 000 (91%) out of 17 500 serving Chinese Language teachers and 10 000 (67%) out of 15 000 serving English Language teachers in all local ordinary primary and secondary schools are ‘subject-trained’. However, only about 2 400 (14%) serving Chinese Language teachers and 1 900 (13%) serving English Language teachers held a Bachelor of Education degree in the relevant language subject, or a first degree in the relevant language subject²² and a PGDE/PCed with a major in that language subject.

3.62 In late 2000, \$10 million was set aside in the Language Fund for an Incentive Grant Scheme for serving English teachers to pursue degree or above level studies in English or teaching of English with a maximum subsidy of \$20,000 per person. So far, 206 applications, of which about 30 are made by ‘non-subject-trained’ teachers, have been approved.

3.63 To encourage more serving teachers to acquire the qualifications referred to in paragraph 3.57 above, we recommend setting up a new incentive grant scheme, which would –

- (a) cover both Chinese and English Language teachers;
- (b) provide a grant to meet 50% of the course fee, subject to a maximum of \$30,000; and
- (c) give priority to ‘non-subject-trained’ teachers.

3.64 Furthermore, we recommend that language teachers who have acquired the qualifications specified in paragraph 3.57 and with at least three years of teaching experience should be given the title of “Professional Chinese Language Teacher” or “Professional English Language Teacher” as a form of recognition.

3.65 *A question was raised during our informal consultation: Why*

²² Relevant language subjects refer to only Chinese/English Language and Chinese/English Literature in the Teacher Survey.

a deadline is not set for all serving language teachers to acquire the specified qualifications?

- *Some were of the view that nothing could be achieved without a deadline.*
- *Others were concerned that a deadline would put additional pressure on language teachers, who were already required to meet the Language Proficiency Requirement for Teachers.*
- *Still others argued that some experienced teachers were very effective even without the specified qualifications and should not be forced to acquire them.*

3.66 *On the other hand, those who were in favour of a more positive approach asked: Why can we not offer an increment in addition to a title as recognition for the language teachers who have acquired the specified qualifications?*

- *Some agreed that the offer of an increment and special recognition would highlight the importance of acquiring the specified qualifications.*
- *Others felt that financial incentive and special recognition should not be necessary to entice teachers to pursue continuing professional development, which was a responsibility of all serving teachers.*
- *Still others were concerned about the huge recurrent financial implication of providing an increment to all languages teachers who have acquired the specified qualifications and the knock-on effect on teachers of other subjects.*

We would appreciate public views on the best approach to motivating serving language teachers to pursue further education or training relevant to their profession.

Support for curriculum reform

3.67 Besides a good grounding in subject knowledge, pedagogy and proficiency, we recommend providing additional support to language subject panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) and language teachers to ensure the success of the curriculum reform.

3.68 We need to equip, in particular, the chairpersons of language subject panels (or curriculum leaders) with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide leadership in adapting the language curricula to suit the specific needs of their schools. We understand that the 16-week full-time professional upgrading courses currently run by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) will be revamped to provide more intensive and focused training for Chinese and English Language panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders), concentrating on curriculum leadership, development and management. To ensure that the training will meet the needs of front-line practitioners and address the issues they face in teaching and learning, the HKIEd should seek inputs from panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) on the design of the courses with regard to both the content and the mode of delivery.

3.69 To support language panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) in implementing the curriculum reform, we must also acquaint all serving language teachers with the latest **pedagogical** knowledge and skills required for the curriculum reform. We recommend engaging experienced teachers (serving or recently retired) with outstanding teaching practice for three years. They should undergo training in mentoring and change management skills as well as the latest innovations in pedagogy. This group could then become a special task force of teaching consultants. Its members would be stationed in districts to work with individual schools, with a view to enhancing their pedagogical capability. These teaching consultants will guide and encourage language teachers to collaborate on integrating new knowledge and skills into their teaching practice. They will also help to build district-based networks among language teachers to facilitate ongoing professional development. The initial target is to engage 180 teachers on a full-time basis or the equivalent on a part-time basis.

3.70 Curriculum reform cannot be accomplished at school level without the support and leadership of school principals. It is thus essential for principals to understand the purpose of the reform and embrace the changes that it entails. The continuing professional development of principals should therefore include curriculum reform and change management as core elements, and all principals should be required to upgrade and update themselves in these two areas regularly.

3.71 On the overall demand for and supply of language teachers, the Government should monitor the situation closely and make adjustments to the provision of training places as and when necessary. The Government should also consider how to increase the opportunities for language teachers to engage in continuing professional development beyond the qualifications referred to in paragraph 3.57.

Section 5 School management support

3.72 We have already seen in Section 4 that panel chairpersons (or curriculum leaders) and teachers of language subjects must have the administrative and professional support of the school management to develop and implement a language curriculum and teaching approach that best suit the needs and interests of students.

Administrative support

3.73 One of the most frequent and justified complaints of language teachers is their heavy workload. We mentioned in Section 3 that some teachers are concerned about the additional workload arising from the curriculum reform. To help reduce teachers' non-teaching workload and enhance language teaching effectiveness, the Government has in recent years provided a substantial amount of additional resources to schools, including –

- (a) improved clerical provision since 1998;
- (b) provision of the Capacity Enhancement Grant²³ since the 2000/01 school year. Schools may hire with the grant extra staff or services for the enhancement of students' language proficiency;
- (c) provision of one NET to each secondary school and an additional graduate English teacher to schools that use Chinese as the MOI since 1998;
- (d) provision of NETs or English Language Teaching Assistants (ELTAs) to primary schools starting from the 2002/03 school year;

²³ Each primary school was given between \$445,000 and \$544,000 and each secondary school between \$370,000 and \$445,000 in Capacity Enhancement Grant for the 2001/02 school year.

- (e) upgrading of a post in primary schools to senior teacher rank to provide curriculum leadership in the teaching of English since the 2001/02 school year;
- (f) provision of an additional graduate post to primary schools from the 2002/03 school year to strengthen curriculum leadership for the whole school; and
- (g) centralisation of the processing of student financial assistance applications.

3.74 School management should make better use of these resources and review the school's work processes to relieve language teachers of non-teaching duties so that the latter can focus on improving the effectiveness of language teaching and learning. In support of such efforts, the Education Department has developed a practical guide to help schools critically examine the non-teaching workload of their teaching staff and identify improvement opportunities and measures. This tool-kit and some examples of good practices have been uploaded to the Education Department Homepage for school management's reference. The Education and Manpower Bureau should disseminate the good practices more widely and provide the necessary assistance to schools that wish to undertake work process review.

Professional support

3.75 Language learning is not confined to language lessons but permeates all subjects. In addition to efforts directed at language subjects alone, school management should adopt a language-across-the curriculum approach, involving not only language teachers but teachers of all subjects to support students' learning of both Chinese and English.

3.76 As mentioned in Section 3, the strong emphasis some parents and school management put on examination results and their allegiance to traditional teaching and learning practices (e.g. frequent dictations, mechanical drills, tests, and textbook-bound teaching approaches) have become major obstacles to innovation in curriculum and pedagogy. School management should discourage an examination-oriented culture and the inappropriate and ineffective use of homework and assessment. They should back the professional decisions of their language subject panels and

explain to parents the school's language teaching approaches.

3.77 For the long-term interest of their school's language education development, school management should nurture a high quality team of language teachers by supporting and promoting continuing professional development, and progressively reduce deploying 'non-subject-trained' teachers to teach languages.

3.78 School management should also encourage more extensive use of information technology and multi-media teaching and learning resources to help students move beyond textbooks. A good collection of multi-media resources can be found in the Hong Kong Education City website (www.hkedcity.net). Some examples of innovative use of information technology in education have also been published in the Chinese and English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides (Primary 1 – Secondary 3).

3.79 Moreover, school management should open up new experiential learning opportunities, such as language camps and fun days, debates, speech and drama activities, for students to practise and develop their language skills. They can also provide immersion programmes or placements in local commercial firms in collaboration with the business sector²⁴, alumni, and sister schools both inside and outside Hong Kong.

Section 6 Parents

3.80 Outside the school, students are heavily influenced by their parents and the wider language environment. What is done in schools to help students learn languages must be backed up by the concerted efforts of parents and other sectors of the community. We will focus on the role of parents in this section and turn to the role of the wider community, particularly the mass media, in the next.

3.81 Our survey found significant positive correlation between parents' attitude and actions and their children's motivation and attitude towards language learning in the following aspects -

²⁴ For example, the Adopt-a-School Scheme by the Young Entrepreneurs Development Council.

- (a) Students whose parents cared and had expectations about their performance in language subjects were more likely to be strongly motivated to learn languages;
- (b) Students who read extensively had stronger motivation for language learning and better performance in language subjects; and
- (c) Students whose parents bought them extra-curricular reading materials were more likely to be strongly motivated to learn both Chinese and English.

3.82 Parents can go a long way towards creating a conducive language learning environment at home. They have a powerful influence over their children's education, and should not think that language learning is only a matter for teachers and schools.

Parent education

3.83 The Education Department has recently embarked on a comprehensive parent education programme with an allocation of \$50 million. A Parent Education Implementation Team was established in September 2001 to implement the programme, which includes production of parent education reference materials, training of parent educators, and other promotional and educational activities. Among other things, this programme will help parents learn how to help their children develop good language abilities and good reading habits.

3.84 We understand that many parents are faced with competing demands from both work and home. They may have limited time and energy to devote to supporting their children's education. Notwithstanding this, we encourage parents to make the best effort to spend more time with their children and build a good relationship with them from a young age. In support of their children's language development from early childhood, parents should -

- (a) listen to their children with patience, show them that they are understood, and refrain from interrupting. This could help to build their children's confidence in expressing themselves;
- (b) talk to their children about what is interesting to them and

- encourage them to ask questions;
- (c) stimulate their children's desire to communicate through story-telling and games;
 - (d) help their children cultivate an interest in reading by –
 - (i) developing a reading habit themselves;
 - (ii) taking their children to libraries regularly;
 - (iii) helping to select high quality reading materials that their children find interesting;
 - (iv) spending at least, say, 15 minutes a day to read, e.g. a story book or the newspaper, with their children;
 - (v) encouraging their children to pay attention to reading materials found in their daily life, e.g. road signs, advertisements, public notices and product labels, etc.; and
 - (e) encourage their children to express their thoughts in writing, and show appreciation for their efforts and creativity.

3.85 In addition, parents with school-age children should –

- (a) show their children that they care about their learning in schools;
- (b) recognise that too much emphasis on examination results and excessive drilling and tutorial classes are not effective means to sustain children's interest in language learning in the long term;
- (c) understand that raising their children's motivation for language learning is the key to enhancing their children's language standard;
- (d) support language teachers in the implementation of the curriculum reform; and
- (e) keep in close touch with teachers to gain a full picture of their children's progress.

3.86 Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) can act as forums in which school management, teachers and parents can exchange views on

the school's language teaching approaches. Language experts may also be invited to give talks on issues of particular concern to parents.

Promotion of reading

3.87 As discussed above, our survey shows a strong correlation between a student's reading habits and his or her motivation for language learning and achievement in language subjects. In other words, the more a student reads, the more likely he or she will attain a higher language competence.

3.88 However, our survey also shows that reading habits among students, parents and teachers are weak²⁵. Similar findings have been obtained from other studies on reading habits²⁶.

3.89 Promotion of reading has been a key element in many countries' education policies aimed at enhancing overall level of literacy²⁷. These nation-wide strategies are backed up by theories and research with clear targets and supporting training programmes.

3.90 The Education Department set up a Task Force in May 2002 to map out a comprehensive strategy to promote reading among students. As part of the strategy, schools have been asked to incorporate reading into their school plans, and a focused school development programme is being developed to support this effort. Action research on promotion of reading approaches and their impact on learning will be conducted. Lists of quality reading materials will be compiled and good practices in promoting a reading culture will be disseminated for schools' reference. In addition, promotional activities will be arranged in collaboration with organisations, such as the public libraries, Hong Kong Education City, television and radio stations, to publicise the importance of reading.

²⁵ About 70% and 88% of the students surveyed read five or fewer Chinese and English books in a school term. Close to 90% and 99% of parents read five or fewer Chinese and English books every three months, while only about 62% of Chinese Language teachers and 47% of English Language teachers claimed that they had a habit of reading materials other than newspapers and magazines.

²⁶ For example, *Education Department (2001) "Survey on Reading Habit of Students in Hong Kong"*; and *The Hong Kong Federation of youth Groups (May 2002) "Young People Learning English and/or Putonghua – Youth Poll Series No. 97"*.

²⁷ See for example the national literacy programmes in USA (www.ed.gov/pubs/stratplan2002-07), UK (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy), Australia (www.dest.gov.au/schools/literacy&numeracy), and New Zealand (www.tki.org.nz/e/r/literacy-numeracy)

3.91 We support this initiative to promote reading, and appeal to all parents for their support in nurturing a good reading habit in their children.

Section 7 The wider community

The mass media

3.92 In the wider community, the mass media is one of the most potent agents of public education. Most people come into contact with the mass media, in particular the television and newspapers, every day. With the project approach of teaching becoming more popular, students are also increasing their use of the mass media to collect information for school projects. The media is therefore an influential model of language use for both students and working adults.

3.93 Our survey found that –

- (a) the most popular media among students were in the order of television, radio, magazines/weeklies, internet and video-tapes/VCD;
- (b) the most popular types of programmes were in the order of drama series, pop entertainment, current affairs, documentaries and sports;
- (c) students who watched or listened to English and Putonghua television and radio programmes had a much stronger motivation to learn these two languages; and
- (d) 36% of students said they never or very seldom watched English television programmes, while 65% said they never or very seldom watched Putonghua programmes.

3.94 We have a very diverse and rich mass media in both Chinese and English in our open society. During our review, we consulted professionals in the field and examined various possible ways to promote more extensive and better use of the mass media as a resource for learning languages.

3.95 Studies overseas suggest that providing subtitles in **television**

programmes is a powerful means to bring about learning in a second language. In April 2002, the Broadcasting Authority held a public hearing on the renewal of the domestic free television programme service licences held by Asia Television Limited (ATV) and Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB). We have conveyed to the Authority our following recommendations –

- (a) Programmes with high viewing ratings on the Chinese channel should be broadcast with Cantonese/Putonghua NICAM;
- (b) All English programmes on the English channel should be provided with English subtitles and priority should be given to programmes for children and young people; and
- (c) Each free English channel should devote the 6 - 7 p.m. time-slot, on at least two weekdays, to programmes that students find interesting, to be selected on the advice of students, teachers and parents.

3.96 We note that in response, the Authority will require ATV and TVB to provide -

- (a) English subtitles for all news, weather, current affairs programmes and emergency announcements on the English channels by 1 December 2004. The Authority will conduct a review in 2007 to assess if this requirement should be extended to other programme types in the light of community feedback; and
- (b) a minimum of two hours of programmes with educational value targeting teenagers per week between the hours of 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. on the English channels, with English subtitles.

3.97 In the meantime, the Language Fund has provided support for a pilot project whereby –

- (a) two entertaining English television programmes suitable for secondary school students have been selected on the advice of teachers and students;
- (b) English teaching and learning materials and activities will be developed on the basis of these selected programmes and

made available online for teachers and students' self-access;
and

- (c) advance notice of the availability of such programmes and associated materials and activities will be given to teachers so that they can encourage students to watch the programmes and attempt the online English exercises and activities. Teachers may also integrate these resources into their curriculum or adapt them as co-curricular activities.

The project will be launched in the second half of the 2002/03 school year.

3.98 The main objectives of this project are to demonstrate to both teachers and students the potential benefits of using English television programmes as a resource in English teaching and learning, and to promote the greater use of this resource. We hope this project, if successful, will open up many more possibilities for collaboration between mass media operators and educators to make learning of a second language an enjoyable experience.

3.99 In the print media, **newspapers** are the most widely read publications in Hong Kong. To encourage the use of high quality language in news and headline writing, the Language Fund will sponsor the Newspaper Society of Hong Kong to create a new category of awards in the Society's Annual Hong Kong News Award. The new awards will recognise Chinese and English news and headline writing of high language standard. They will be offered for an initial period of three years from 2003 to 2005.

3.100 In Hong Kong and elsewhere alike, **pop culture** exerts considerable influence in shaping trends among the public, particularly the younger generation. Our experience in the Hong Kong Workplace English Campaign and Putonghua Month 2002, which enlisted pop stars as ambassadors, also indicate that celebrities in pop culture are effective spokespersons for language education. Further consideration, should therefore be given to spreading our messages to the general public through pop culture by, for instance, inviting pop stars to perform in English and Putonghua or share their experience in language learning with young people.

Life-long learning

3.101 Ultimately, the upgrading of language abilities and the improvement of individuals' competitiveness should be the responsibility of the learners themselves, and depend to a large extent on their own initiative. The Government has in recent years provided a variety of subsidies and training programmes to help members of the public improve their language competence. We urge working adults, in particular, to make the best use of these schemes, which include –

- (a) The **Workplace English Training Funding Scheme**, which provides subsidies for individual employees to upgrade their English, and for professional bodies and trade organizations to develop English training courses that are not readily available in the market. Up to the end of November 2002, about 10 000 individuals have reached the English benchmark relevant to their job types. Another 8 000 are currently pursuing their studies (see www.english.gov.hk for details);
- (b) The **Continuing Education Fund**, which provides subsidies for training in Chinese, English and Putonghua to non-degree-holders aged 18 to 60. Since the Fund was launched in June 2002, over 3,000 applications for language-related training subsidies have been approved (see www.info.gov.hk/sfaa/cef for details); and
- (c) Language training programmes offered by the **Employee Retraining Board**, which have so far benefited over 55 000 persons, aged over 30 or above, who are affected by economic restructuring (see www.erb.org for details).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 It is vital that we raise the language standards of the community if we are to successfully meet the challenges of the future and consolidate Hong Kong's position as Asia's world city. We must not lose sight of the fact that with increasing globalisation and a more open China market, it is becoming even more important for all of us to improve our language skills so that we can capitalise on the opportunities opening up in the years and decades ahead.

4.2 Language learning is a complex issue, which straddles the education and non-education sectors, and involves notably –

- (a) standard setting and curriculum (including content, pedagogy and assessment) development;
- (b) teacher training;
- (c) school management support;
- (d) parent education and support;
- (e) community (including the mass media) support; and
- (f) personal efforts of individual learners.

4.3 The Government should strengthen communication and collaboration with various key stakeholders, including the Curriculum Development Council, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, higher education and vocational training institutions, employers and professional bodies, teachers, school management, parents, and the mass media, to ensure that all parties are working together to support language education in Hong Kong.

4.4 Beyond the realm of language education, the Government should consider whether a more explicit and comprehensive **language policy** should be adopted to promote biliteracy and trilingualism in both the public and private sectors of the community.

4.5 As the advisory body on language education both inside and

outside the school system, we shall monitor and follow up with relevant Government and educational bodies to ensure that their policies and programmes work in sync to achieve the objectives of raising the overall language standards of our population.

4.6 The foregoing is the full report of our language education review for public consultation. We have issued a separate consultation document, which summarises the findings and recommendations in this report, and would appreciate your views. You may obtain a copy of the consultation document from the District Offices or download it from our website at www.language-education.com.

4.7 Please send your views in writing by post, fax or e-mail to the SCOLAR Support Unit on or before 28 February 2003 –

Mail address: 17/F, Murray Building
Garden Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Language Education Review)

E-mail address: pcssu@emb.gov.hk

Fax number: 3150 8018

For enquiries, please call 2186 7191.

4.8 After collating your comments and opinions, we will submit our final recommendations to the Government.

