


WORLD EDUCATION ALLIANCE

6th Annual Congress



**Does the Change Meet the
Need? – An Observation
on Curriculum Reform**

Curriculum Reform in Hong Kong



- Hong Kong Education System – A hybrid of Chinese culture and British traditions
- Compulsory six-year primary education in 1965
- Compulsory nine-year education in 1978
- By early 1990s, higher education intake increased to 18% of eligible population

Curriculum Reform in Hong Kong



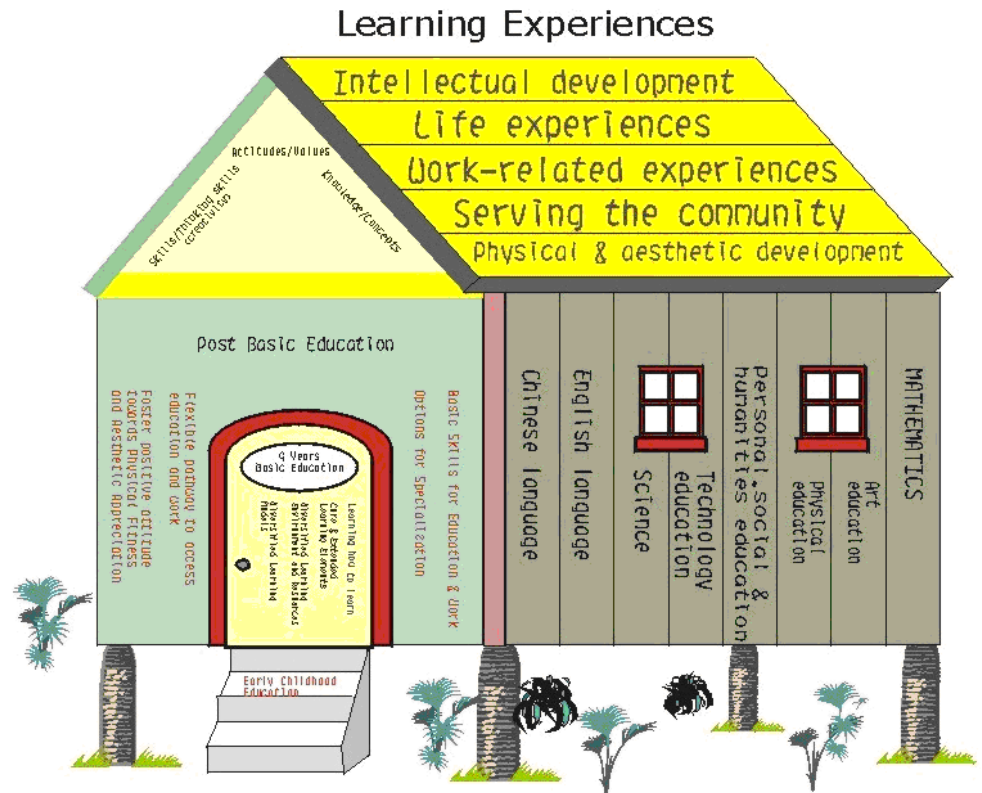
- What should education offer? (Late 1990s)
- Dissatisfaction with the education system:
 - ✓ Schools unprepared for sudden education expansion
 - ✓ Change of sense of responsibility
 - ✓ Conventional curriculum and didactic teaching
 - ✓ Employment patterns undergoing major changes

Changes in Curriculum



- “A Holistic Review of the Hong Kong School Curriculum, Proposed Reforms” (CDC, 1999)

Concepts of the school curriculum



Changes in Curriculum



- “Learning to Learn” (CDI, 2002)
 - ✓ Change of focus from “teaching” to “learning”
 - ✓ Emphasis on process of learning rather than memorising facts

Changes in Curriculum

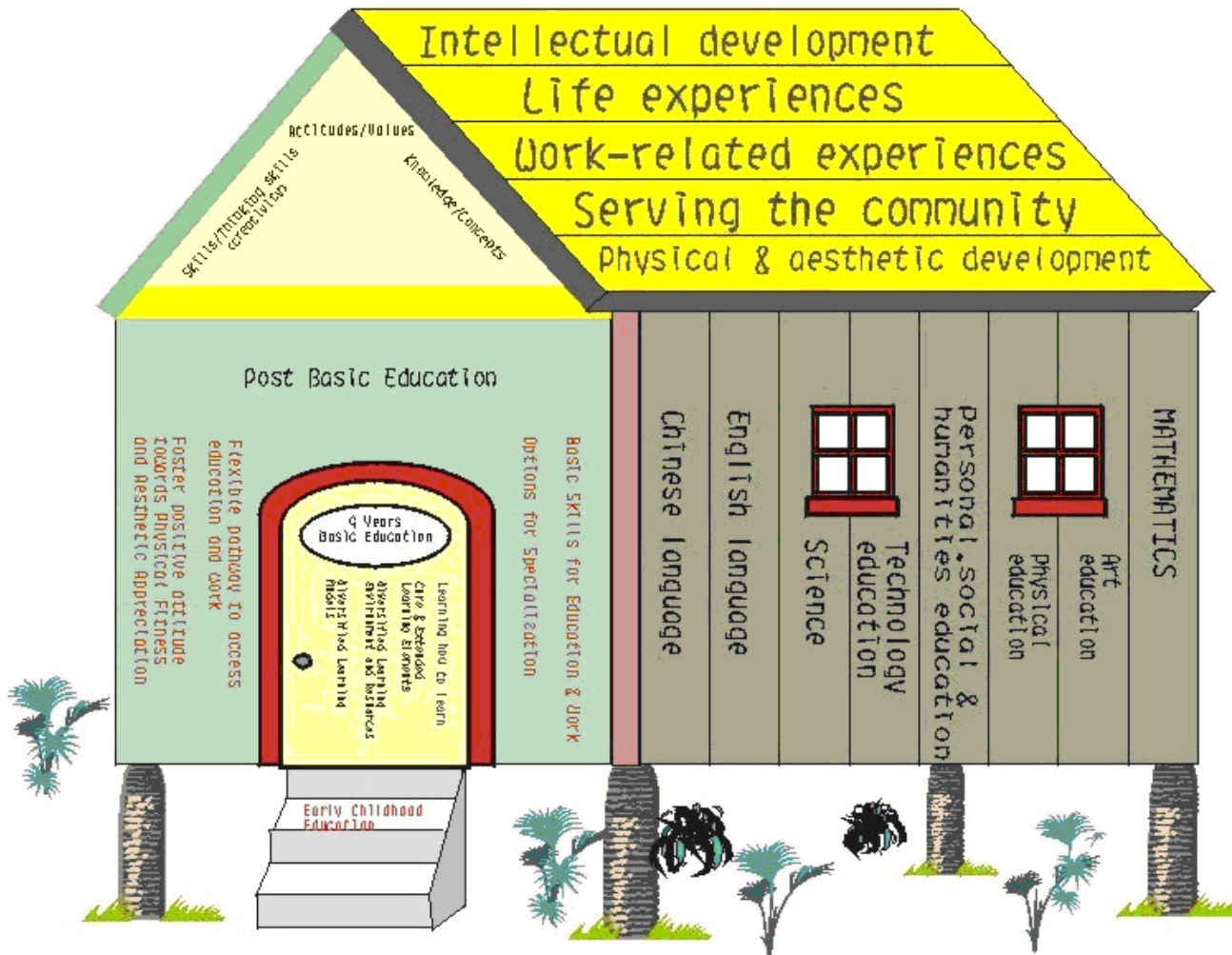


- Curriculum is designed according to students' learning experiences
- Curriculum aims at life-long learning
- Curriculum is framed around 8 key learning areas (KLA)
- Students have to take 4 core subjects + X
- Liberal Studies introduce a new area of assessment

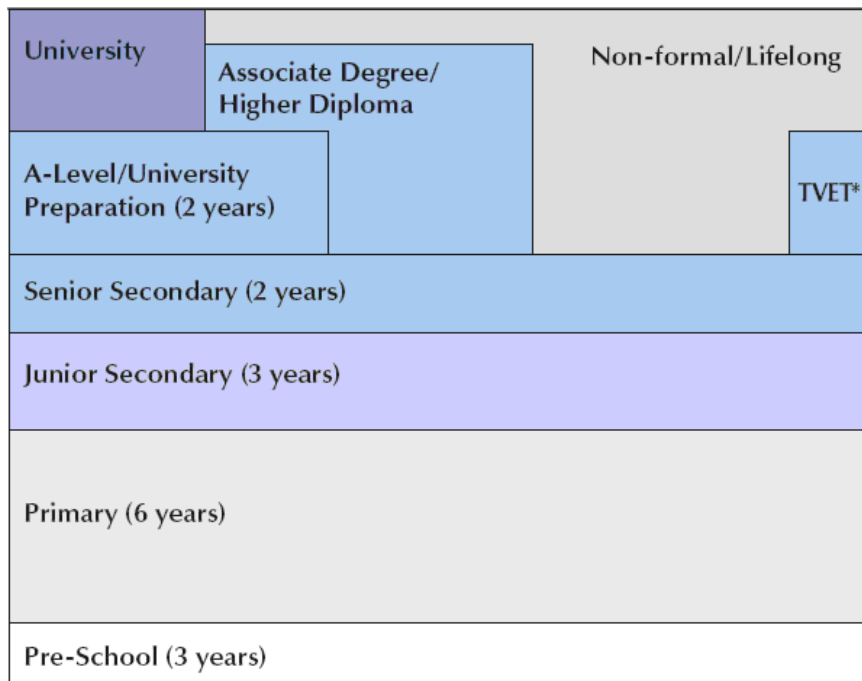
Changes in Curriculum



Learning Experiences

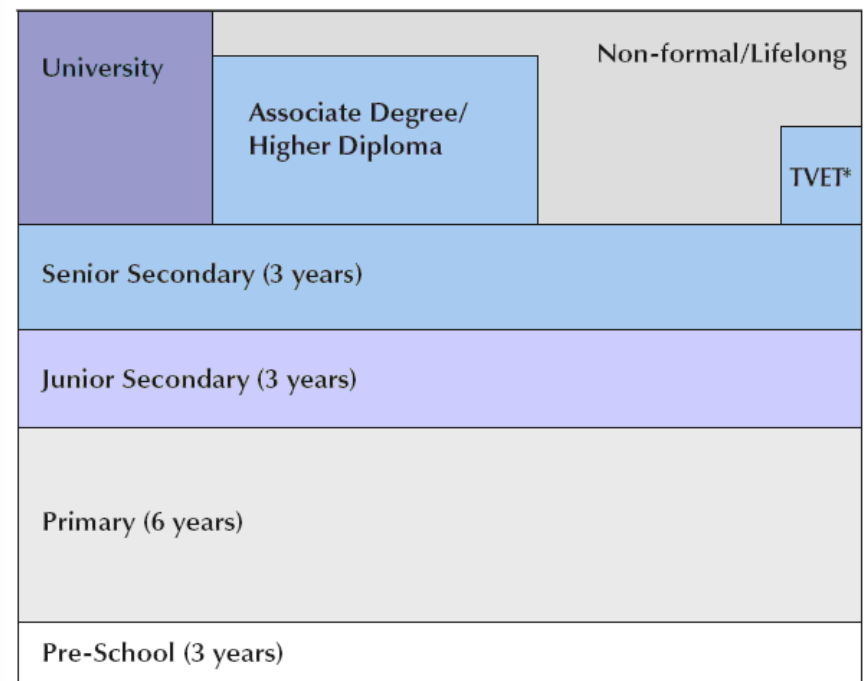


Changes in System Structure



* Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Education System Organisation
until 2012



* Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Education System Organisation
after 2012

Changes in Assessments



- Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) in 2012
- Change from norm referencing to criteria referencing
- 4 core subjects (Chinese, English, Mathematics, Liberal Studies) + 2-3 elective subjects + OLE

Fundamental Reason for the Changes



- “Curriculum reform commonly arises from demand for school curriculum to meet changes in social conditions” (Tobias Rülcker)
- Globalization – driver for the changes in education
- Information is abundant and knowledge-based society

Fundamental Reason for the Changes



- Why do we have to reform the school curriculum? (A Holistic Review of the Hong Kong School Curriculum Proposed Reforms)
- ✓ Provide students with a school curriculum which enables them to **construct knowledge and develop a global outlook** to cope with the changing and interdependent world in the 21st century
- ✓ Develop students' **lifelong learning skills** as stipulated in the aims of education in readiness for a **knowledge-based economy and society**
- ✓ Set the directions for developing an open, flexible and coherent framework for Curriculum 2000 in order to **improve the quality of students through effective teaching and learning**

Does the Change Meet the Need?



- Observations:
 - ✓ Improvement in reading literacy (PISA 2009)
 - ✓ “University students need private tutorials at \$400 per hour” (Local newspaper on 14th Jan 2011)
 - ✓ Outbreak of violence, bullying, fighting, drug-abuse, committing suicide, uploading improper materials onto web, etc.
 - ✓ University graduates having poor written English, lack of communication and social skills, lack of positive work attitude, immature...
- Are we on the right track of the reform?

Hindrance towards the Change



- Problems lie on implementation
- ✓ Teachers and principals feel tremendous pressure and extremely busy
- ✓ The more changes come, the more chaos it brings
- ✓ Two reasons: heavy workload in original setting and blockage caused by education reform
- ✓ Widening of individual differences and inclusive education makes situation worse

Hindrance towards the Change



- Role of teachers changes from knowledge provider to learner facilitator
- Student centre or student centres?
- Bottle-neck effect comes mainly from external school review, internal school review, self-reflection, changes in curriculum, decline in school-age population...

Worries about the Change



- Less time on normal teaching and learning but more time spent on Other Learning Experience (OLE)
- Able students are beneficiaries
- The poor may become poorer and the rich may become richer in foreseeable future

Back to Basics



- Are we on the right track of the reform?
- “What everybody knows is frequently wrong” (Peter Drucker)
- How would we prepare 21st century **successful candidates**?
- What is the key to success in future and how can a **competent candidate** maintain his competitive advantage?
- What is the aim of education?

Back to Basics



- “The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think – rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men” (John Dewey)
- Helping our children to explore and develop themselves to be viable and their individualism is respected.
- “Either... or” trap – skills over knowledge?

Suggested Alternatives



- “Successful leaders would have developed expertise in other field, not directly related to their jobs” (Peter Drucker)
- Another piece of information: “China: A Macro History” (Ray Huang)
- Integration of knowledge could only be done effectively by deep understanding
- Alternative: **Reduction of curriculum content**

Suggested Alternatives



- Students need to learn everything?
- “Leaders should not be fully occupied by work. They should spare at least half of their time for doing meditation and planning”
- Alternative: **Students should be given rooms for their own development**

Suggested Alternatives



- There is no radical change in assessment because it is built on previous assessment and it is used as a main tool for selecting students into local universities
- Around 18-20% who are sitting for HKDSE will go to local universities
- More able students cannot learn more in this framework
- The less able will still be abandoned

Suggested Alternatives



- Development of individual student would never be part of agenda
- Learner diversity would never be solved within the same assessment
- Root of the problem – limited number of students going to universities

Suggested Alternatives



- **Alternative:** Requirement of accepting students into university should be low while that for students to complete a program should be stringent
- **Alternative:** Releasing 5% detention rate in schools
- **Other thought:** New reporting method and new “measurement” tools

Concluding Remarks



- Education reform is inevitable
- “Son, do you want me to buy you a gold watch, an ipad or a luxury sport car?”
- “Dad, I’d like you to spare me ten minutes, sit down with me and listen to me.”
- Providing rooms for children to create their own future!



THANK YOU