

**Summary of views raised in the Seminar on the  
NSS Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks  
For Principals & Vice Principals on 22 and 23 June 2005**

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b><i>Lesson Time and time-tabling</i></b>		
1.	The simulated timetable suggested is not practical as it only reserves 3 days for term test and 3 days for final examination. Schools will not have enough time to organize other activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The timetable mentioned is only a simulation done by a specific school and serves for other schools' reference only. Schools may adjust/revise the timetable according to their own situations.</li> <li>· Timetabling will be discussed in the workshops for school leaders.</li> </ul>
2.	Teaching load, with 23.8 lessons per week, is misleading as split classes for Liberal Studies, remedial teaching, practical subjects such as ICT, visual arts, Home Economics, are not counted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Split class for LS could be dealt with by the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant which was not included in the exemplar. Moreover, the revised teacher-to-class ratios (i.e. 1.7 &amp; 2.0) have already incorporated split class teaching of subjects such as ICT.</li> </ul>
3.	Based on 190 school days to calculate lesson time is unrealistic, examination days (as many as 20 days per school year in senior secondary levels) are not used for lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· In the calculation of the lesson time (i.e. 2700 hours), we have deducted 14 examination days and 3 staff development days and assumed that there are 5 to 6 school hours a day.</li> </ul>
4.	The time allocated for English language teaching is not enough as the difference between CMI & EMI is getting wider as there is a big gap in students' exposure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The time allocation is for reference only. If necessary, schools may assign more time to English Language, in particular when students only select two elective subjects</li> </ul>
5.	If there's just 1 Science class in the school (a girls' school with 4 SS1 classes), how can we offer the Sci.(combined approach)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Exemplars on timetabling arrangement will be available in the 334 workshop for school leaders and the Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide to be issued in 2006. In general, we need to strike a balance between the diversity and resources available in school.</li> </ul>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
6.	Should schools increase the number of periods for OLE to 43 periods or just retain the current 40 periods per week?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are free to make their own decision. The essence is that timetable arrangement should be able to provide students with a broad, balanced and diversified curriculum.</li> </ul>
7.	Calculation of manpower is not accurate enough as under normal circumstances, five to six subjects, rather than four subjects are offered to four classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a matter of timetable arrangement. Exemplars will be available in the 334 workshop for school leaders and the Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide to be issued in 2006.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Other Learning Experiences &amp; Student Learning Profile</i></b>		
8.	What are the percentages for the different components of Other Learning Experiences (OLE)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is neither upper nor lower limit for the different components of OLE. It depends on the availability of resources in schools and the needs of students.</li> <li>It is suggested in the Report that 5% of lesson time for OLE will be allocated to aesthetic activities, 5% to physical activities and 5% to other items, i.e. MCE, community services and career-related experiences.</li> </ul>
9.	How to calculate/count OLE, e.g. in situations when only 20 students participate in the activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is noted that in OLE, not every student has to be involved in the same activity at the same time. What's important is to ensure that students are provided with opportunities for acquiring the essential learning experiences.</li> <li>OLE include those that are specified in time-table as well as student-based.</li> </ul>
10.	Worry about the availability of places for community services, e.g. visits to the Home of the Aged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students should be provided with choices in community services.</li> <li>There are many other opportunities for community services, e.g. Flag Day.</li> </ul>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
11.	Can reading periods be counted as OLE? If not, in which category should it be placed? Will the NSSC “discourage” reading period if it does not belong to any components of NSS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Reading is one of the means of acquiring OLE. However, students cannot acquire OLE by merely reading aesthetic or moral and civic education related materials.</li> <li>· Schools need to provide with students real and quality OLE.</li> <li>· Reading to learn is one of the four key tasks promoted in the curriculum reform and is aligned with the spirit of NSS. It should be incorporated in the teaching of various KLA subjects.</li> </ul>
12.	What is the definition of community service? Will service opportunities at school be recognized as community service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The school itself is a community. Students can have many opportunities for community service at schools either at junior or senior secondary levels. However, community service should not be confined to school environment and can be expanded to outside school.</li> </ul>
13.	The issue of MOI in Other Learning Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We will have to take into account the final report on MOI.</li> </ul>
14.	How to assess and report OLE? Is it reported in 5-level or using descriptors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· As far as OLE is concerned, it is an area that is still developing.</li> <li>· It is anticipated that the reporting of OLE will be more qualitative and descriptive. It will not be too detailed but informative enough.</li> <li>· The following are some features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Brief</li> <li>· Up to readers to interpret</li> <li>· Can reflect deep learning of students</li> <li>· Flexibility will be provided in the system for students to decide what they would like to include.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
15.	How will universities count the results of OLE ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The issue will be discussed in the Liaison Group on 334 Interface Issues.</li> </ul>
16.	Concern about the development of WebSAMS and OLE and Student Learning Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· There is relevant progress in WebSAMS</li> <li>· HKEAA/ EMB is working on the format and delivery mode of the Student Learning Profile.</li> </ul>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
17.	As OLE is not assessed in public exam, can a standard and concise profile of students be issued by the HKEAA as an attachment to the exam results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Student Learning Profile aims to celebrate student's participation and success of academic and non-academic aspects during the senior secondary schooling. It needs a number of key agencies to support the issuing of the profile, including HKEAA.</li> </ul>
18.	In the process of OLE, tremendous teacher human resources (e.g. taking care of students' safety) and community resources are needed. Are these resources sufficient? Has EMB coordinated with other departments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· In many cases, OLE is not 'foreign' to school's current practice. Schools are therefore encouraged to organize school-based OLE through effective use of existing available resources, including community resources and expertise.</li> <li>· Work is in progress in co-ordinating community resource database for OLE.</li> </ul>
19.	For students with low learning motivation, e.g. those who are absolutely uninterested in OLE such as community service, it will violate the philosophy of the education reform if they are forced to participate. However, if they are not forced to do so, they would not participate. What should we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· It is important to introduce Community Service <i>progressively</i> to students. For those who are less enthusiastic, schools could organize some <i>simple, easy-to-do</i> as well as <i>interesting</i> types of activities for them to try in order to 'ignite' more positive attitudes towards Community Service. For example, teachers could encourage 'less-motivated' students using their individual talents and personal hobbies (e.g. English, IT skills, 'pop' band) to serve a group of younger children through mentoring in a local primary school.</li> </ul>
<b>School-based Assessment (SBA)</b>		
<i>(i) SBA-Rationale</i>		
20.	School-based assessment should focus on the assessment on student's abilities that could not be reflected from a written assessment like exam. Hence, SBA in Mathematics or other subjects that relied on written assignment seemed unnecessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· This is the practice adopted by the vast majority of subjects (e.g. Science and Technology subjects). In the case of Mathematics, the extended mathematics exercise cannot be assessed in the written exam.</li> </ul>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
21.	There seems to be a big difference in the weighting of SBA between music (20%) & aesthetics (50%).	<p>This is the first time the SBA to be introduced in Music. It will be better to adopt a comparatively smaller percentage in the SBA. As Music teachers have attained a certain standard in performing, and are well-experienced in assessing students' music performance, thus, 20% SBA is first introduced in Paper 2 (Performing I). VA teachers are used to the Teacher Assessment Scheme(TAS) for Portfolio, which is similar to the SBA in the NSS. The percentage of TAS in 2005 HKCEE Examination is 30%, and it will be increased to 50% in 2007. There will be no further increase of percentage in the SBA. The difference in the weighting of SBA between Music and VA is considered to be reasonable.</p>
22.	<p>For some subjects, SBA involves assessing subject achievement. What is subject achievement? Why does this requirement apply to certain subjects only? Is it that subject achievement is not required in some other subjects?</p>	<p>The SBA schemes proposed in different subjects involve assessing students' achievement in the subject. However, the content areas to be assessed depend on the nature of the subject concerned. For example, in science subjects, the focus is on practical skills; while for English Language, the focus is on speaking skills. These areas should be regarded as an integral part in the assessment of students' achievement in the subject.</p>
23.	<p>Different subjects seem to have different requirements for SBA, e.g. in Chinese subject, tests and school exams are not accepted as modes of SBA whereas they carry a certain weighting in some PSHE subjects.</p>	<p>As far as SBA is concerned, tests are regarded as a means of SBA.</p> <p>However, in the design of SBA, some subject committees, e.g. Chinese might prefer alternative modes instead of pen and paper. Each subject committee has its autonomy in deciding which mode of SBA is more appropriate for their subject.</p>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
24.	<p>The breakdown of the marks in SBA is too precise that it is difficult for teachers to indicate the difference in student performance, e.g. in Chinese Language, participation in language activities accounts for 2 marks of the total subject marks and reporting accounts for another 2 marks. This is the case for many other parts as well. It is in fact difficult to identify the difference in student performance. Moreover, there is not any public examination for the elective parts but in the end, students are assessed by their performance in the public examination. The areas assessed in the public examination and the required standard of certain elective parts are different (e.g. Putonghua) and there seems to be a lack of coherence.</p>	<p>The “2 marks” stated in the question actually refer to the 2% weighting of the whole subject. In actual operation, each part of SBA will use a 10-point scale. This is an adequate mark range for teachers to discriminate students’ performance.</p> <p>In the curriculum, the compulsory and elective parts are mutually facilitating and mutually complementary. Given the learning and assessment areas of the elective part are quite different from those of the compulsory part, the learning and assessment design embodied in these areas should be based on that of the compulsory part and at the same time, geared towards learning targets of the curriculum. In public assessment, SBA is employed in the elective part. Its testing focuses throughout must be students’ achievement towards the learning targets of the curriculum. Its areas and requirements must be common to those of the compulsory part. For example, for elective modules related to Putonghua, the SBA will focus on students’ performance on aspects of language abilities, interest, attitude and habits.</p>
25.	<p>Why does SBA of Music require the element of “Performing”?</p>	<p>In the present HKCEE music examination, “performing” is one of the compulsory components. Teachers are not expected to teach students skills in playing the musical instrument, however, they can give advice on the performing skills, such as style or how to express feeling.</p>
26.	<p>The component of News Commentary in SBA of Economics may be beyond the capacity of secondary students in general. It is a more theoretical subject and not quite possible to apply the subject knowledge at senior secondary level.</p>	<p>The new curriculum framework emphasises a constructivist and student-centred approach. Student capacity will not be taxed beyond their capacity. The curriculum is targeted at the integration of theory and application through real-life examples. Authentic examples of students’ works in this aspect were shown to teachers in the consultation seminar and support from them was evident.</p>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
27.	Is it fair to use the public examination results to moderate the SBA results? It will affect individual students who have good results in school but do not perform well in public examination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The moderation of SBA is on whole school level and will not affect the ranking of individual students in schools.</li> <li>· There will be a mechanism to ensure the proper implementation of SBA in schools.</li> <li>· Assessment guidelines on SBA will be issued for schools.</li> <li>· When students' SBA results and public exam results are significantly different, HKEAA will carry out investigation.</li> </ul>
28.	Will schools be informed of the moderated results of SBA? Can a teacher teach all disciplines of Combined Science? Similarly, can a teacher teach all disciplines in BAFS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· HKEAA will moderate the SBA results and provide schools feedback after the moderation.</li> <li>· Assessment guidelines with clear criteria, assessment content and assessment methods will be provided to schools.</li> <li>· Not advisable to ask one teacher to teach a subject covering several disciplines. Team teaching may help.</li> <li>· Staff deployment will be discussed in the workshops for school leaders.</li> </ul>
29.	The curriculum of the subject is made up of units, will teachers trained in the disciplines of Physics, Chemistry and Biology be competent in teaching those units? It will be difficult for schools to deploy teachers to teach the subject if too many questions remain unanswered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Science (Integrated) curriculum is not focusing only on the contents. Indeed, it is based on unifying concepts that are common across different science subjects. The level of the Physics, Chemistry, and Biology components will not be very demanding since it is only a 1X subject to cover all the six strands in the Science Education Key Learning Area. Schools may also consider adopting team-teaching depending on the expertise of their teachers.</li> <li>· The EMB is planning to offer 80 hours of Professional Development Programmes to prepare teachers for implementing the curriculum. Special emphasis will be given to curriculum planning, knowledge enrichment, pedagogies and new assessment approaches.</li> </ul>

Questions/Suggestions	Responses
<i>(ii) SBA - Implementation</i>	
<p>30. How to ensure fairness of SBA? How to moderate the different results of SBA provided by different schools? Some schools may be too lenient or stringent in their marking, or schools may assess based on a large or small number of tasks. Is there any clear guidelines? Will there be any mechanism like TAS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· More information and guidelines on SBA will be provided to schools including the assessment criteria.</li> <li>· SBA and TAS refer to assessments in which scores are awarded to candidates by their own teachers. Inter-school comparability is achieved by moderation procedures. For large entry subjects, statistical moderation will be used. For special subjects (e.g. visual arts), moderation will be conducted by inspection.</li> </ul>
<p>31. SBA of certain subjects is based on assignments and tasks, how to avoid students from asking their parents, private tutors etc to assist them in completing their assignments? Will it give rise to inequality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Most of the assignments and tasks are to be completed during normal school time. In the case of project and portfolio work, teachers can monitor the progress of the students and ensure the authenticity of work submitted by candidates.</li> </ul>
<p>32. SBA can make reference to the format used in Chemistry (AL). The requirement of internal tests and examinations should be clearly defined at the very beginning to ensure equality. SBA should be implemented in a small number of subjects to avoid making mistakes, as such mistakes may affect international recognition of the results. A gradual approach should be adopted and after successful implementation, it can be extended to most subjects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· SBA requirements will be clearly defined. SBA handbooks will be issued. Subjects are encouraged to adopt an incremental approach to SBA.</li> </ul>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<i>(iii) SBA - Teacher Workload</i>		
33.	SBA is very time-consuming, and the teaching workload will not be alleviated, how will this be solved?	· SBA is designed to assess normal learning activities. It is not an ‘add-on’ task for teachers and students.
<i>(iv) SBA - Student Workload</i>		
34.	Students must take six to seven subjects and the SBA focuses at SS2 and SS3 level. Students have to complete three to four project studies (or relevant projects) on average each year, are they able to cope with it?	· A core group has been set up between CDI & HKEAA to oversee the modes and arrangements of SBA of various subjects so that both teachers and students will not be overloaded by SBA.
35.	SBA will definitely increase teachers’ and students’ stress. Besides, its objectiveness and fairness are being queried. If it is simplified, the scoring in the public examinations can be used to moderate that of the internal assessment, thus the pressure of inter-school moderation will be reduced.	· This will be passed on to the one committees for their consideration.
<b><i>University Admission Criteria</i></b>		
36.	The admission criteria (requirements) of various university departments will directly affect the subjects offered in the NSS schools. When will the admission criteria of various university departments be available?	· Universities will announce their admission criteria at faculty/programme level by June 2006.

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
37.	How will the universities treat the subjects in the Career-oriented Studies such as beauty therapy or other subjects like Home Economics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Will discuss in the Liaison Group on 334 Interface Issues</li> </ul>
38.	Will recognition be given to the proposed combined science subject by the universities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Universities in general welcome the proposed combined science curriculum as an alternative to enable students to have exposure to more comprehensive science knowledge base.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Measures</b>		
<i>(i) Grants</i>		
39.	When will EMB provide the Teacher Professional Preparation Grant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Teacher Professional Preparation Grant will be provided to schools from 2005/06 to 2008/09 school years. Related circular has been issued to schools in July 2005.</li> <li>· From 2006/07 onward, a separate one-off grant NSS Curriculum Migration Grant will be provided for schools to procure necessary L/T materials and F/E items.</li> </ul>
40.	When will the details of the grants be released as they will have direct impact on the schools' planning of manpower resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant will be disbursed to schools in 2009/10 s.y. 0.1 GM per senior secondary class will be provided to schools. Details will be released in due course.</li> </ul>

	Questions/Suggestions	Responses
<i>(ii) Professional Development</i>		
41.	On training, can EMB contact all the schools in the respective districts and conduct teacher training on subjects for the teachers of the whole district, e.g. all secondary school Geography teachers in the same district receive training on the same day. Moreover, all school teachers are gathered for training on different subjects on the same day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· EMB has planned different programmes (those focusing on knowledge and understanding, assessment of student learning, learning and teaching strategies, etc) to meet different needs and has committed to offer different modes of training to teachers. Teachers may opt to participate in commissioned courses provided by EMB.</li> <li>· Schools are also given TPPG to buy services and provide school-based professional development programmes that suit their own needs.</li> <li>· Training on regional-based can be considered, but a lot of practical problems like "Can all teachers of that same subject be available at the same time?", "Are their training needs the same?", etc have to be taken care of before such training can be realised.</li> <li>· EMB has also offered some regional-based training for subjects like Liberal Studies.</li> </ul>
<i>(iii) Split Classes</i>		
42.	Will students have more choices of elective subjects in the new academic structure? There may be a large number of students, say 60, sitting in a class of a popular subject?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· It is expected that there will be no more labeling of Science or Arts streams in the new academic structure. Students will have a free choice of subjects according to their interest and needs.</li> <li>· Schools will provide different groupings of subjects for students' choices as far as possible. If it so happens that there are 60 students selecting a popular subject, splitting the group into two is a possible way out. The revised teacher-to-class ratios have taken into account the human resources for flexible grouping.</li> </ul>
43.	Split classes/small groupings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The splitting of classes into smaller groups depends on student needs and availability of resources.</li> <li>· It is not necessary to have split class for every subject. Flexibility is provided to schools in grouping.</li> </ul>

	<b>Questions/Suggestions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<i>Others</i>		
44.	Concern about the availability of money for conversion work in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The NSS Migration Grant is available for schools to cover minor adjustment of school facilities to prepare for NSS.</li> <li>· If schools need major construction work, they can apply for conversion under a separate vote.</li> </ul>
45.	It is suggested that EMB, in particular REO can discuss with individual schools about the conversion work required in schools and help to negotiate with ASD and other departments concerned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The suggestion is noted and will be brought up to the party concerned.</li> </ul>
46.	When will the revised teacher-to-class ratios be effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The new teacher-to-class ratios will be effective from September 2009, i.e. junior secondary 1.7, S4&amp;5 1.9 and S6&amp;7 2.3. After 2012, the teacher-to-class ratios will be 1.7 for junior secondary and 2 for senior secondary.</li> </ul>
47.	Is it possible for students to take 0.5 elective (half-X) in NSSC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Students cannot take half-X under the NSS curriculum.</li> </ul>
48.	Some complementary and non-core components, such as OLE and SBA can be implemented later to lessen the pressure on teachers and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· For SBA, we have taken into account the concerns of teachers and students. We will only implement SBA to those subjects which are more ready by the year of implementation, allowing the others a transitional period subject to the recommendations of the CDC-HKEAA Committees of individual subjects and taking into account the views of frontline teachers of various subjects. This will allow teachers and students to get familiar with SBA in phases.</li> </ul>