

Q&A for “Other Learning Experiences (OLE)” and “Student Learning Profile (SLP)”

Other Learning Experiences (OLE)

Q1: Is there any upper or lower limit percentage for each component in Other Learning Experiences within the ‘15% to 35%’?

A1: Schools need to ensure that students are provided with opportunities of the five areas of experiences under the NSS Curriculum framework so that they have the necessary exposure for balanced, whole-personal development to meet the learning goals of the curriculum. The suggested minimum time allocation is 5% each (i.e. at least 135 hours over 3 years) for Aesthetic Development, Physical Development, and other components (i.e. Moral and Civic Education, Community Service and Career-related Experiences). However, there is no upper limit percentage for each component in OLE within the 15%-35% time allocation.

Q2: What are the possible modes of delivery of OLE?

A2: When planning for OLE, schools should aim to strike optimal balance between OLE components and provide diversified modes of providing OLE opportunities. For example: Timetabled lessons in Physical Development/ Aesthetic Development/ Moral and Civic Education **supplemented by** time-tabled arrangement after-school/on Saturdays, outside classroom activities, providing life education/ environmental/ aesthetic/ creativity education projects, integrated learning days and after-school activities. Some schools may arrange an integrated programme to allow their students to undergo several components of OLE, instead of confining certain activities for a particular area of experience. Community Service and Career related Experiences are most likely to be held outside normal school hours.

Q3: How to implement 5% Aesthetic Development building on existing practice / strength?

A3: There are different modes for implementing Aesthetic Development. To continue the arts learning experiences at the junior secondary level and to further develop students' creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and critical responses to the arts, schools should flexibly adopt the modes of implementation that build on their own strengths and develop from their existing practices to provide students with quality arts learning experiences.

It is worth noting that the "suggested minimum time allocation" is to provide schools with guidance in planning and implementing OLE. Schools could implement Aesthetic Development (AD) in accordance with their own situation and strength. The best way to deliver AD is to provide students with structured learning, which are complemented with authentic arts activities outside the classroom. Structured learning includes music and / or visual art lessons, regular and structured programmes for arts learning (e.g. drama, dance, media arts) etc. On top of structured learning, schools should also organise authentic arts activities in the form extra-curricular activities and interest groups. However, the ratio between structured learning and the related activities need not be rigid. What is more important is that schools should provide adequate arts learning opportunities for their students.

Q4: What are the good practices of scheduling physical education (PE) lessons?

A4: As students should put on suitable clothing and footwear and do warm-up and cool-down exercises for taking physical activities, most secondary schools try their best to schedule double-period PE lessons, very often for the last two periods of the day or linking them to a recess or the lunchtime. Not only does it ensure the adequacy of students' learning time in each lesson, it also creates space for including more educationally meaningful and more interesting elements in PE lessons. At present, the majority of schools provide students with two periods of PE lessons per cycle or per week (about 80 minutes). All schools are highly recommended to keep these effective measures to safeguard students' entitlement to pursue a broad, balanced and safe programme that covers a variety of movement experiences. In PE, life-wide learning is the key to success. Therefore, learning in PE is not confined to lessons. Schools should encourage students to actively participate in co-curricular physical activities, and make full use of the facilities within and outside school as well as community resources to achieve this.

Q5: Could KLA's activities be counted as Other Learning Experiences?

A5: Some KLA's **extension activities** could be counted as OLE. It depends on the content and purpose of these activities, whether they could meet the expected outcomes of the five components of OLE. The expected outcomes of OLE are to build up students' *life-long capacities*:

- To become active informed and responsible citizens;
- To respect for plural values (including art appreciation);
- To adopt a healthy living lifestyle; and
- To develop career aspirations and positive ethics.

However, it is not suitable to count those activities involving School-based Assessment (SBA) towards that for OLE. Teachers should use their professional judgment to organize suitable and meaningful OLE programmes or activities for their students in order to nurture them in the five essential Chinese virtues "Ethics, Intellect, Physique, Social Skills and Aesthetics". After all, it is the *quality* of these experiences that really matters, in terms of enabling whole-person development.

Q6: Could the study of the ApL (formerly known as COS), elective PE and AE, and Ethics and Religious Studies be regarded as some of the components of OLE?

A6: **Yes.** When students take Ethics and Religious Studies, Physical Education, subjects of Arts education as elective subjects and /or ApL, the learning experiences *could be* counted towards respective OLE components, so long as the knowledge & skills, (cognitive), values & attitudes (the affective) are taken care of.

For example, if a student takes Ethics and Religious Studies as elective subject, the student has already satisfied some of the requirements of OLE such as the Moral & Civic Education component. The student may wish to spend more time in other components of OLE if found appropriate.

Q7: Will service opportunities at school be recognized as community service?

A7: The purpose of community service is to enable students to acquire some experiences of serving others and to develop their sense of responsibility. The school itself is a community. Students can have many opportunities to achieve the same objectives if there are in-school service opportunities, or even serving local primary schools and kindergartens. However, ideal community service in senior secondary levels should not be confined to school environment and can be expanded to outside school, if appropriate, for building up sustainable life-long capacities to serve in their community after schooling.

Q8: Will there be any SES discrimination among those learning opportunities provided by different schools?

A8: Programmes or activities organized by school for OLE should cater for students with different SES while in some schools, financial subsidies should be sought for students from low SES to ensure equal access among all students if they wish to, or alternatively, no student should be deprived from participating in an activity for financial reason. Future employers or tertiary institutes would use their own discretion to judge the OLE opportunities and the SES discrimination would be minimized if *quality experience (or what students learned)* is the focus of the OLE. Schools should not think that more expensive programmes are necessarily more effective than those that cost less. Furthermore, schools are encouraged to use the existing ‘Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund’ and EDB’s ‘School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes’ to subsidize financially-needy students to participate in related activities.

Q9: If a student participates in an activity that is not organized by school (e.g. piano tuition), could it be recognized as an OLE?

A9: No, strictly speaking, OLE refers to the programmes organised by schools (or ‘through schools’) under the NSS framework, in which OLE occupies 15% or more curriculum time, with an aim to ensure students’ whole person development. However, schools may allow their students to include their participation or awards that were gained outside school into their own SLPs (preferably under a separate column) to recognise these participation.

Q10: Would OLE incur any additional resource implication?

A10: No, schools are encouraged to build OLE on their existing strengths and practices and to make good use of existing resources (e.g. OEBG) flexibly. Most OLE components do not require extra resources (e.g. MCE, PE, music lessons, visual arts lessons) whereas teachers would take up responsibility to run OLE.

Q11: Do schools have to track individuals’ detailed participation in OLE (both within and outside normal school hours) to show the compliance of 15% minimum allocation?

A11: Schools need to *offer* OLE provisions or opportunities for students to participate in and outside normal school hours. However, there is no need to track and monitor individual participation in ‘hour-by-hour’ manner, especially in activities outside normal school timetable. Practical strategies such as setting ‘two activities and one service per student’ as school policy, measures to encouraging students to self-manage their participation are often effective.

Q12: According to our school’s present situation, we find difficulty in both fitting OLE into the timetable and auditing the total time spent for OLE. Is there any workable strategy suggested to achieve this requirement?

A12: Some may worry about its feasibility of many aspects of the NSS curriculum framework through ‘*the lenses of the existing*’. Under such perspective, they therefore find it difficult to squeeze time to fulfil the suggested OLE time allocation. However, under the NSS contexts, given that the 4 core subjects and 2 / 3 electives make up merely 65-85% of the total lesson time, adequate space has been reserved for OLE in the NSS curriculum framework. It would thus be feasible for OLE to fit into the timetable. Among many possible strategies and approaches in OLE time planning and calculation, a ‘*minimum threshold approach*’ is suggested. The approach emphasised that as long as a threshold (i.e. 15% of curriculum time) is reached, there is no need to audit all the OLE time spent (e.g. extra or co-curricular activities) for students.

(For details, please refer to the article,
"A self-checking workflow of OLE time arrangement":
http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/ole/ole_articles/)

Q13: Would allocating time for OLE in timetable cause any adverse effect on students’ learning in the core and elective subjects?

A13: Spending curriculum time on OLE is definitely worthwhile for students’ development. Some people may comment that OLE will lower students’ academic achievement. Overseas and local researches show these kinds of learning experiences not only help students’ all-round development, but also contribute in improving learning attitudes and academic results. In many ways, OLE could create a unique learning ‘space’ which differs from subject learning. Without too much pressure, students are often found more likely to reflect deeply and enjoy the learning process. Such effects may ‘wash back’ to everyday classroom learning and will subsequently help raising achievement. While many used to believe they are mutually exclusive, well-designed OLE may enhance attitudes towards learning, school and the learners themselves. This may also improve subject learning and thinking skills. Therefore, there should not be any conflict about timetabling between OLE and subjects. In fact, they are complementary to each other.

Student Learning Profile (SLP)

Q1: My school has already the practice to issue transcript and/or report card to every student when they leave the school. Does my school need to redesign the SLP?

A1: SLP is a celebration of what a student could achieve and participate, in terms of their whole person development during the senior secondary years. Schools will have full discretion on the overall design and implementation of the SLP, including the format, content and amount of details. Therefore, if the existing practice could serve the purpose, it is not necessary to *redesign* for the sake of the SLP. However, some schools may see SLP as an opportunity to improve the existing school report practice (e.g. introducing learning portfolios, adding more information on activity participation in the school report). Schools should encourage every student to build up their profiles in SS years.

Q2: Does the SLP include every single activity attended by a student?

A2: **No, it is not necessary.** Ideally students should be given some opportunities to decide which activities are deemed to be significant and to be included/highlighted in the final profile report. Teachers should help individuals to understand the principle, ‘**quantity but quality that matters**’ in presenting oneself and quite often, an over-lengthy SLP could be a sign of incapability in presenting personal strengths concisely.

Q3: Does school need to validate the students’ achievements and every single activity the student attended, even the ones that are not organized by school?

A3: Schools are expected to keep and verify record of students’ activities as in their existing school report practices. There is no need to do differently if the current practice serves well. Schools do not need to verify or include ‘outside activities’ in their SLP. If ‘outside activities’ are included in SLP, it should be listed in a separate column/ section from the main OLE list and students need to bear full responsibility to produce evidence (e.g. attendance certificate) against the information listed when required in the future.

Q4: Why can’t the SLP be formalized by using a standardized format?

A4: The concept behind SLP is *not new* to schools. There are many existing school practices (e.g. school reports, transcripts, portfolios) that already serve the SLP purpose and they vary from schools to schools. SLP with a standardized format would therefore be deemed difficult to fit all schools. However, there are some ‘exemplary templates’ available in WebSAMS and on EDB web for school reference.

Q5: Does the SLP mean that every school needs to adopt a ‘sophisticated’ portfolio system for their students?

A5: No, it is not necessary. The ultimate aim of SLP is to reflect a fuller picture of our students’ whole person development during the senior secondary education. According to present situation, most schools should already have a kind of recording system to record such information, in terms of student participation and achievements. Therefore, schools could make good use of existing recording system to generate their SLP without adopting a portfolio system.

It is worth noting that ‘portfolio’ refers to an assessment process that encourages reflection and self-management among students; whereas a ‘profile’ tends to refer to a document demonstrating students’ achievements and development. Although there are some schools using a portfolio to generate a SLP, Schools are strongly advised to review their existing practices (esp. in pastoral care/ form tutors area) and to weigh the pros and cons of incorporating such learning element in the portfolio process, in terms of **workload, costs and its value-added benefits.**

Q6: Do schools need to implement SLP at junior secondary forms?

A6: No, SLP is for Senior Secondary levels only. However, some schools may use the chance to nurture their junior secondary students to raise their concerns on whole person development.

Q7: Would EDB provide any tool and examples to help schools to build the SLP?

A7: In order to assist schools to implement the SLP for NSS, the WebSAMS has been enhanced to add a ‘SLP module’. The new module has been released on 14 Feb 2008. Templates are provided for schools’ reference. Schools may upgrade their systems accordingly if necessary. The content of SLP may include brief information of:

- Academic performance in school;
- Other Learning Experiences;
- Performance / awards and key participation outside school
- Student’s ‘Self-Account’

Please refer to <http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/slp> for other related tools and example templates.

Q8: How would the SLP link with the University Admission?

A8: Universities will consider taking into account in their selection a broader range of information of student achievements in different areas and provide students the opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the range of competencies and personal qualities that they will need to benefit from undergraduate education. SLP has good reference value to universities. The Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) also declared in October 2008 that, during the admission process, universities will accept SLP as a reference document that provides additional information on students’ whole person development. Therefore, schools will assist students to develop the SLP to provide comprehensive information about students’ performance in different areas.

Updated: 10 November 2008