

Education Commission Report No. 6

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March 1996 • Hong Kong

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**Enhancing Language Proficiency :
A Comprehensive Strategy**

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INTRODUCTION

In October 1993, the Education Commission (the Commission) set up a Working Group to study the problem relating to language proficiency. In July 1994, the Working Group published its report for a 3-month public consultation. In the light of public response to the Working Group report, the Commission produced a draft Education Commission Report No. 6 entitled “Enhancing Language Proficiency: A Comprehensive Strategy” (the draft Report) to consult the public again on the issue in mid-December 1995 for a period of six weeks.

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT REPORT

2. Over 40 000 copies of the draft Report, together with a leaflet highlighting the major recommendations, were issued for the purpose of consultation. During the consultation period, the Commission conducted over 20 briefing sessions for legislators, educators, teacher unions, business and employer associations, professional bodies, District Board members, international schools and English Schools Foundation, parents, and representatives of the media. The draft Report was widely published and reported by the media. Commission Members also contributed a number of articles to newspapers.

3. The draft Report generated a great deal of public interest and discussion. There were no fewer than 120 editorials and articles in all major Chinese and English newspapers. Some 155 written submissions were received from various educational bodies, business and professional organisations, and members of the public. In general, the main thrust and spirit of the draft Report were widely supported and subject to certain views which are highlighted below, most of the 38 recommendations received clear public endorsement.

MAJOR PUBLIC VIEWS ON THE DRAFT REPORT AND THE COMMISSION STANCE

The availability of the necessary funding

4. A major concern expressed in respect of the draft Report was that the Government has not demonstrated any financial commitment to address the problem of language proficiency and, given the considerable additional resources involved, the recommendations may not be implemented in good time. The Commission has accordingly urged the Government to make the necessary commitment and has recommended a realistic implementation time-table.

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR)

5. The draft Report recommended that, as a priority, SCOLAR should be set up under the Commission to conduct research into the language education needs of Hong Kong, to develop policies designed to meet those needs, and to monitor and evaluate such policies in a coherent and systematic manner. It also recommended that SCOLAR should be formally linked to the Language Fund Advisory Committee (LFAC).

6. There was overwhelming public support for the setting up of SCOLAR. There were however mixed views on whether SCOLAR should be independent of the Commission. Having considered the pros and cons of the two options, the Commission is of the view that the Administration is in a better position to consider whether there should be an independent SCOLAR or not. It therefore feels that the status of SCOLAR should be left to the Administration to decide.

7. As regards the relationship between SCOLAR and LFAC, there were also mixed views on how SCOLAR should be linked to LFAC. The Commission recommends that this should be rationalised in order to make the best use of resources already provided for the enhancement of languages.

Benchmark qualifications for teachers

8. The draft Report considered that benchmark qualifications should be developed to provide for a fully-trained language teaching profession at primary and secondary levels as a long term solution. The Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) has been invited to develop the concept. This proposal was generally well received, but some teachers expressed concern that there would be a

shortage of language teachers if the standards were set too high. The Commission has referred all views expressed on the issue of benchmark qualifications to ACTEQ for consideration.

Supply of language teachers

9. There were concerns as to whether there would be an adequate supply of trained language teachers both in respect of English and Putonghua. The draft Report recommended that before an adequate number of local teachers are trained, schools should be encouraged to employ on local terms more native English speakers, who are qualified English language teachers, to teach the subject.

10. The recommendation received mixed views. While some educators recognised the merits of the recommendation, many local teachers and school heads had reservations about the cost-effectiveness of expatriate teachers. The commission recommends that the Education Department (ED) should work out details of the new scheme carefully, having regard to an evaluation of the existing scheme. The details should include induction programmes and support services for expatriate teachers, the deployment of those teaches, ways to help expatriate teachers and local teachers to work together in the teaching of English etc. In addition, it was felt that expatriate teachers should also assist in the training of teacher trainers and trainees of both the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

11. Many submissions stated that native Putonghua speakers who were qualified to teach Putonghua should also be employed to teach the subject.

The need to review the workload of language teachers in primary and secondary schools

12. There was overwhelming support from teachers and educators for the draft Report recommendation that the workload of language teachers should be reviewed. They were strongly of the view that the recommendation should be given top priority. In connection with this, it was also suggested that the teaching methods for language subjects, the curriculum, and examinations should all be reviewed as they affect the acquisition of language proficiency and have a bearing on teachers' workload. The Commission agrees that the relevant reviews should be one of SCOLAR priority tasks.

The need for language subjects to be assessed at primary level

13. A large number of respondents felt that the teaching of languages at primary level needs reinforcement. Many expressed the view that primary school students lack

motivation to learn languages well partly because the existing Academic Aptitude Test (AAT) does not include an assessment of a student's English and Chinese language ability. It was felt that there is an urgent need for the existing system to be reviewed. On the other hand, some teachers pointed out that one must not lose sight of the ill-effects of full-scale examinations in core subjects, which prompted the introduction of AAT in 1978. The Commission therefore recommends that SCOLAR should, as one of its priority tasks, review whether AAT helps or hinders the achievement of desired levels of language proficiency, bearing in mind that the Board of Education is also reviewing AAT as part of an overall review of compulsory education. The Commission also recommends that SCOLAR should establish general goals and specific attainment targets for language learning at primary level, taking into account the learning targets set under the Target Oriented Curriculum framework.

The medium of instruction policy

14. While the concept of mother-tongue teaching was generally supported by teachers and educationalists, many members of the public were still under the mistaken impression that mother-tongue teaching would lead to a corresponding decline in the standard of English. The Commission considers that the Final Report should reaffirm the policy of mother-tongue education and that a public education programme regarding the rationale of mother-tongue teaching should be strengthened.

15. In connection with mother-tongue teaching, the draft Report recommended that ED should publish its advice on the appropriate medium of instruction in 1997 for adoption by individual schools in 1998. There were some reservations about the basis for the Medium of Instruction Grouping Assessment but the recommendation was generally supported. The main concern was the lack of sanctions for non-compliance by schools. Teachers suggested that there should be a clear enforcement programme. The Commission recommends that clear indications of sanctions for non-compliance be given by ED.

16. There is a strong body of opinion that it is educationally more beneficial for a child to start learning English as a second language formally after he or she has developed an aptitude for learning in the mother-tongue. However, such an opinion has met with widespread scepticism. Many parents want their children to start learning English as early as possible. The Commission recommends that SCOLAR should conduct research into the learning pattern for a child in the acquisition of language skills in the context of Hong Kong where the mother-tongue is Chinese.

Promoting Putonghua

17. The draft Report made a number of recommendations aimed at promoting Putonghua. There was strong support for these recommendations. However, concerns

were expressed that, given the general lack of training in Putonghua among Chinese Language teachers and the need to develop appropriate curriculum and textbooks, schools may not be ready for intensive promotion of Putonghua. The Commission therefore recommends that, in the long run, all Chinese subject teachers should be trained to teach Putonghua. In the meantime, SCOLAR should study the relationship between Putonghua and the Chinese Language subject in the school curriculum, and develop research on appropriate curricula and textbooks to support the recommendation. In addition, responding to public suggestion, the Commission recommends that schools should be encouraged to employ native Putonghua speakers who are qualified teachers in Putonghua to teach the subject. These teachers should also assist in training teacher trainers and trainees of both the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

Extension of Intensive English Courses for English-medium students in Secondary Six (S6) and Secondary Seven (S7)

18. The draft Report recommended the extension of Intensive English courses to over 10 000 S6 and S7 students from English-medium schools who have obtained Grade D or E at the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and experience difficulty in meeting the expectations of tertiary institutions. The proposal was generally welcomed. There were however doubts as to its cost-effectiveness given the large number of students involved. The Commission recommends that ED be asked to plan the scheme so that it operates in a most cost-effective manner in terms of student targets, the format and timing of the courses etc., and to make an evaluation of the scheme after a reasonable period of time.

Adherence to specified entrance requirements by tertiary education institutions

19. The suggestion made in the draft Report for our tertiary education institutions to adhere more strictly to their specified entrance requirements in respect of English was well received by the institutions involved. There was also public support for this suggestion. However, it was also clear from the consultation that there is a need for further study of the relationship between different grades in the Use of English examination and the ability to cope with tertiary level study through English. A recent study by the University of Hong Kong suggests that more research data are needed in this respect. Findings of such studies will have implications for the grading criteria for the Use of English examination in future, which in turn may provide greater motivation for sixth formers to learn English. The Commission recommends that SCOLAR should, as a priority, co-ordinate relevant research on this subject.

Intensive Vocational Language Courses

20. The draft ECR6 recommends that a new Intensive Vocational Language Scheme be launched to provide tailor-made language programmes both in English and Putonghua for school leavers joining the workforce. This recommendation is supported by the public, by employers and professional bodies such as the Employers' Federation of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Society of Accountants. However, the business sector has made the point that vocational language courses will need to be objective and result oriented. Employers urged the Government to take the lead in setting certain vocational language standards and in validating relevant courses. The Commission suggests that views of employers be reflected to SCOLAR on which the business community should be represented.

The role of parents and the media

21. A criticism that was made by a large number of people in respect of the draft Report was that there was little discussion of the roles which parents and the media should play in promoting language proficiency. It was felt that positive action by parents and the media could have a great impact on the ways young people learn their languages. The Commission accordingly recommends that the roles of parents and the media should receive greater attention in the Final Report. In addition, the Commission also recommends that tertiary institutions which provide journalism and communications courses should be encouraged to incorporate in their training programmes guidance on the responsibility of the media in promoting the use of good language.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

22. The Commission has considered all major public views on the draft Report and has made revisions to the recommendations where appropriate. The final recommendations are at Enclosure I.

RECOMMENDED PHASED APPROACH TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FINAL REPORT

23. In the light of the public response, and taking into consideration the need to adopt a more realistic and structured approach towards implementation, it is proposed that the various recommendations be implemented in phases, with Phase I concentrating on laying the foundation for the long term measures and implementing the priority short term initiatives. The recommended phases are set out at Enclosure II.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

24. Many of the recommendations in the Final Report can be implemented by redeploying existing human, financial and organisational resources more effectively. However, to implement fully all the recommendations will involve a considerable amount of additional resources. The likely financial implications of the first phase will be as follows:

<i>Items</i>	<i>Financial Implications (\$M)</i>				<i>Total for 4 years \$M</i>			
	Year 1 \$M	Year 2 \$M	Year 3 \$M	Year 4 \$M				
Phase 1	SCOLAR	Contract Staff (N#)	4.0	5.2	4.0	5.2	18.4	
		Civil Service Staff Salaries and Expenses (R*)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	8.0	
		Research Expenses (N#)	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	12.0	
	Putonghua	Strengthen the teaching and learning of Putonghua (R*)	1.2	7.9	8.7	9.4	27.2	
		Summer Classes (N#)	9.5	9.9	10.4	0	29.8	
		Native English Speaking Teachers (R*)	2.7	1.7	17.6	16.5	38.5	
		Review Teachers' Workload (N#)	0.8	0	0	0	0.8	
		Intensive English Courses (R*)	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	46.0	
		Public Education and Publicity Programmes (R*)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.0	
		Improving Teacher Support Services	Non-recurrent (N#)	3.0	0	0	0	3.0
			Recurrent (R*)	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	13.6
		Reading and Writing Schemes	Task Force (N#)	1.0	0	0	0	1.0
		Total	N#	21.3	18.1	17.4	8.2	65.0
			R*	21.3	27.0	43.7	43.3	135.3

Note - R* : Recurrent Expenditure
N# : Non-recurrent Expenditure

25. The total financial implications for the implementation of items in Phase I involve \$65M non-recurrent expenditure, and an additional annual recurrent expenditure of \$21.3M in the first year, rising to \$43.3M in the fourth year. With the exception of the ECR5 recommendation of creating senior teacher posts in primary schools, it is difficult to estimate the financial implications of some of the longer term measures to be implemented in Phases II and III. The ECR5 recommendation is estimated to require additional annual recurrent expenditure of \$43M in the first year, rising to \$131M in the fourth year.

CONCLUSION

26. Since October 1993, the Commission has been studying closely the problems relating to language proficiency in Hong Kong. In the light of the views of language experts, educationalists, and professionals, and of the extensive feedback received from the community, it believes that a consensus has been reached regarding these problems and their solutions. This Report sums up that consensus. The Commission strongly urges the Government to provide the necessary resources to implement this Report, and to demonstrate its commitment to improve language proficiency in Hong Kong.

March 1996
The Education Commission

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

(A) Formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policy

- A1: A Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) should be set up as a priority and its relationship with the Language Fund Advisory Committee should be rationalised. The question of whether SCOLAR should be independent of the Education Commission should be left to the Government to decide.
- A2: Membership of SCOLAR should comprise a balanced mix of language experts, educators, front-line teachers, policy makers, representatives of business and professional bodies, the media and parents. SCOLAR should work closely with agencies whose work have an impact on language proficiency such as the Education Department (ED), Curriculum Development Council (CDC), University Grants Committee (UGC), Hong Kong Examinations Authority, Vocational Training Council, tertiary institutions, Hong Kong Institute of Education, and schools.
- A3: SCOLAR should be supported in its work by a Support Unit comprising both professionals with experience and expertise in language in education, and administrative staff.
- A4: SCOLAR should embark on the following tasks as a matter of priority:
- to research into the optimal learning pattern for a child in the acquisition of language skills in respect of both English and Chinese in the context of Hong Kong where the mother-tongue is Chinese.
 - to establish the general goals and specific attainment targets for language learning at primary level, taking into account the learning targets set under the Target Oriented Curriculum framework.
 - to review whether the Academic Aptitude Test helps or hinders the achievement of desired levels of language proficiency among teachers and students.
 - to study the relationship between Putonghua and the Chinese Language subject in the school curriculum.
 - to co-ordinate research projects in respect of the relationship between different grades and the Use of English and the ability to cope with tertiary level study through English.
 - to publish findings of the above studies and research for public information.

(B) Language goals and language development

- B1: Government should set realistic language goals for kindergarten, primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, and tertiary levels, taking into account advice by SCOLAR. In implementing this recommendation, we suggest that SCOLAR should consult advisory bodies concerned with language development.
- B2: There should be clear objectives to develop language proficiency on a life-long basis, resulting in better articulation of the language requirements for the various levels of a child's development, including kindergarten, primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational.
- B3: Employers should be encouraged to develop their own vocational language programmes.
- B4: Government should encourage kindergartens and schools to experiment with different models of language development for young children, including immigrant children, and to evaluate the outcome by formal research.
- B5: There should be a systematic and co-ordinated approach to promote interest in and development of the four language skills (i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing). Resources for this should come not only from schools, but also from the community e.g. public libraries, the mass media, youth centres and the business sector.

(C) Teacher education and development

- C1: The concept of 'benchmark' qualifications for all language teachers should be explored by the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) with a view to making proposals to the Government as early as possible in 1996.
- C2: Minimum language proficiency standards should be specified, which all teachers (not just teachers of language subjects) should meet before they obtain their initial professional qualification. The standards should be designed to ensure that new teachers are competent to teach through the chosen medium of instruction.
- C3: Teacher education institutions should give more attention to language awareness and language skills issues by -
- recruiting and training professional staff who have a good understanding of Hong Kong's complex language environment and the language development situation in which local students and teachers find themselves; and

- ensuring that adequate attention is given to issues of language awareness and language skills in initial training programmes for all teachers.

C4: New language teachers who have not been trained to teach that language should have early opportunities for 'first-aid' advice and training.

C5: ACTEQ should monitor the implementation of this group of recommendations i.e. recommendations C1 to C4.

(D) The medium of instruction policy

D1: The policy of mother-tongue teaching as expounded in ECR4 should be reaffirmed and the implementation of it be given extra impetus by ED. Specifically, ED should build on what is already being done towards achieving the goals of the ECR4 policy on medium of instruction to ensure an even greater impact. This can be done by embarking on a comprehensive research programme to follow the academic and personal development of groups of students, matched for academic ability and experiencing different medium of instruction models. The research should follow the groups throughout their secondary education, with 'snapshot' progress reports each year presented for discussion to the Board of Education and other relevant bodies. Findings of such research should be published to dispel misconceptions about the effectiveness of mother-tongue education.

D2: ED should publish its advice on the appropriate medium of instruction in 1997 for adoption by individual schools in 1998. To ensure adoption, ED should give clear indications of sanctions for non-compliance.

D3: So long as qualified native English speaking teachers are employed on local terms of service (plus, where appropriate, the provision of an outward passage to Hong Kong on first appointment), all schools should be given the option to employ such teachers. ED should make suggestions on the deployment of teachers having considered the conditions and requirements of the schools concerned. In addition, ED should give advice regarding induction programmes, and support services for expatriate teachers, ways to help local teachers and expatriate teachers to work together in the teaching of English. It should also monitor and evaluate the scheme. Native English speaking teachers should assist in training teacher trainers and trainees of both the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

D4: Secondary Six (S6) and Secondary Seven (S7) students from English-medium schools who experience difficulty in learning English should, as is the case of their counterparts in Chinese-medium schools, be given extra help in the form of intensive English courses. ED should work out the mode of operation of the programme carefully so that the scheme would be implemented in a most cost-

effective manner in terms of student targets, the format and timing of the courses etc. It should also monitor and evaluate the scheme after a reasonable period.

- D5: As a further impetus to mother-tongue education, ED should review the package of positive discrimination measures and advise on the additional incentives or assistance that may be required.
- D6: Arrangements for helping S6 and S7 students to make the transition from Chinese-medium secondary education to English-medium tertiary education should be reviewed so that viable longer-term arrangements can be devised.
- D7: Government should co-ordinate the implementation of the medium of instruction policy and evaluate the effectiveness of relevant measures after a reasonable period.

(E) Teaching of Chinese and English as subjects

- E1: Government should give high priority to funding the ECR5 recommendation for an improved senior teacher ratio in primary schools. This will enable schools to appoint senior teachers as Panel Chairs in the language subjects.
- E2: As a matter of priority, SCOLAR should work with CDC, language educators, and other relevant bodies to initiate the following tasks:
 - (a) to define a more co-ordinated approach to the language development of young children up to the end of Primary Three;
 - (b) to develop more stimulating and relevant syllabuses, especially in respect of the Chinese Language subject;
 - (c) to develop the 'language across the curricula' approach in designing the syllabuses;
 - (d) to ensure better articulation between the various levels of education in relation to language requirements and development;
 - (e) for the purposes of the above tasks, to ensure adequate and appropriate input from the community, in particular the business sector; and
 - (f) to investigate the relationship between Chinese and Putonghua.
- E3: ED should develop an appropriate intervention programme for young children who cannot cope with learning English, in order to prevent their developing a sense of failure.
- E4: ED should review the workload of language teachers, to ensure that the total load (including preparation, delivery and marking) is in general no greater than

the workload of teachers in other subjects. The review report should be presented to the Board of Education for consideration.

- E5: Schools and educational institutions should develop formal arrangements for drawing up, implementing and reviewing language-related policies and practices. For example, schools could assign language co-ordinator responsibilities to a suitably experienced senior teacher. SCOLAR should work together with educational bodies to identify and spread good practices in this respect.
- E6: The existing extensive reading scheme should be extended to cover all levels of primary and secondary schooling and to cover both the Chinese and English languages, and there should be a similar scheme for writing. For this purpose, consideration should be given to the setting up of a task force in the ED to work out details of the schemes, including the feasibility of combining the schemes with the more general library grants and the financial implications involved. ED should collaborate with the Urban Council and Regional Council to make use of public resources to promote reading schemes among students.
- E7: Local tertiary institutions should be invited to provide, within their quotas of post-graduate students, a number of post-graduate places where teachers, teacher trainers, inspectors, curriculum developers and other professionals can acquire an advanced qualification in Chinese Language teaching and undertake research relevant to language in education in Hong Kong.

(F) The teaching and learning of Putonghua

- F1: In the long term, Putonghua should be part of the core curriculum for all primary and secondary students. Accordingly, we support the Government initiatives (announced in the Governor 1995 Policy Address) to introduce a new Putonghua curriculum for primary One, Secondary One and Secondary Four in September 1998.
- F2: Putonghua should be included in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination as an independent subject in the year 2000. However, we recommend that SCOLAR should study further the relationship between Putonghua and the Chinese Language subject in the school syllabus to ascertain whether it would be more appropriate for Putonghua to be taught as a separate subject or as part of the Chinese Language curriculum in both short term and the long term.
- F3: Minimum proficiency standards for teachers of Putonghua should be enforced as soon as practicable. Local teachers should have the opportunity to acquire a Putonghua proficiency qualification either during their initial training or through in-service part-time courses.

- F4 Subject to ACTEQ advice, all Chinese subject teachers should, as a long term goal, be trained to teach Putonghua as well. In the meantime, SCOLAR should develop research on an appropriate curriculum and textbook to support this recommendation.
- F5: Schools should be encouraged to employ native Putonghua speakers who are also qualified teachers in Putonghua to teach the subject. They should also assist in the training of teacher trainers and trainees of both the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

(G) Support services

- G1: Government should strengthen the existing resource centres and computerisation projects in schools and set up a new Language Resource Centre for teachers to perform the following functions:
- to give language teachers physical access to a professional library and a bank of teaching and curriculum materials;
 - to provide computer links to schools so that teacher can obtain professional advice or gain access to on-line databases of useful materials;
 - to encourage teachers to develop their own high-quality teaching materials; and
 - to promote professional exchanges of ideas and materials among language teachers through seminars, workshops and courses; through less formal face-to-face interaction; and through computer networks.
- G2: SCOLAR should explore the use of multi-media technology to enhance the learning and teaching of languages.
- G3: The admission of students is, and must remain, an important area of academic freedom for tertiary education institutions, but the Commission recommends that the UGC-funded institutions be requested to enforce strictly their minimum entrance requirements as regards language proficiency.

(H) Public perception and community participation

- H1: Public education and publicity programmes should be launched at suitable intervals to increase public understanding of the nature of our language improvement strategy, its goals and the progress of implementation. For example, tailor-made manuals should be published for students, parents and journalists, including those still under training, to promote awareness of the importance of language proficiency and to give advice on how they could help in enhancing language proficiency.

- H2: Employer associations should be encouraged to develop suitable vocational language programmes for their employees.
- H3: An Intensive Vocational Language Scheme should be launched to provide tailor-made language programmes (both in English and Putonghua) for school leavers intending to join the workforce. The Scheme should be jointly run by both the public and private sectors. Details of the Scheme should be worked out by the Government and its effectiveness monitored by SCOLAR.
- H4: Language courses provided by the various adult education and vocational institutions should be further promoted.
- H5: Government should work closely with the public in general, and particularly with the media, employers and educationalists, to promote a positive awareness of language proficiency issues, and sponsor programmes which help enhancing language proficiency. Tertiary institutions with schools of journalism and communications should be encouraged to incorporate in their training programmes guidance on the responsibility of the media in promoting the use of good language.

RECOMMENDED PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF ECR6

Phase I (to commence in 1996/97)

(A) For commencement in early 1996

- Government to put in place the institutional framework for a language education policy i.e. SCOLAR
- ACTEQ to make proposals on benchmark qualifications
- Teacher education institutions to give more attention to language awareness and language skills issues
- ED to review teachers' workload, the teaching method, curriculum and examinations etc.
- ED to develop a new Putonghua curriculum for Primary One, Secondary One and Secondary Four, to arrange in-service teacher training for primary and secondary teachers, and to organise summer classes starting in 1996 for primary and secondary school students who wish to learn Putonghua
- Government to launch public education programmes regarding mother-tongue teaching and the community role in enhancing language proficiency
- ED to work out details for the native speaker teacher scheme in respect of both English and Putonghua subjects with a view to appointments of some of these teachers in the new school term in September 1996
- ED to work out details for the intensive English courses for S6/S7 English medium students with a view to offering such courses during the 1996/97 school year
- ED to undertake a feasibility study regarding the reading and writing schemes with a view to submitting proposals to SCOLAR by the end of 1996
- Government to make applications to the Language Fund for the launching of Reading and Writing Schemes, Intensive Vocational Language Programme, provision of support services (e.g. Teacher Resource Centre and computer projects), and research and development projects under SCOLAR
- Government to encourage employers to develop their own vocational language programmes
- ED to publish its advice on the appropriate medium of instruction in 1997 for adoption by individual schools in 1998

(B) For commencement in mid to late 1996

- ED to consider 'first-aid' advice and training for new language teachers who have not been trained to teach that language together with schools and teacher education institutions
- ED to review the package of positive discrimination measures for Chinese-medium secondary schools and advise on additional incentives
- ED to review arrangements for helping S6 and S7 students to make the transition from Chinese-medium secondary school to English-medium tertiary education
- ED to start the development of appropriate intervention programmes for young children who cannot cope with learning English
- Government to co-ordinate the implementation of the medium of instruction policy and evaluate the effectiveness of relevant measures
- Government to invite local tertiary institutions to provide in due course a number of post-graduate places where teachers, teacher trainers, inspectors, curriculum developers can acquire an advanced qualification in Chinese Language teaching and undertake research relevant to language in education in Hong Kong

Phase II (to commence as soon as resources are secured)

- Creating panel chair posts in primary schools
- Implementing proposals by ACTEQ relating to benchmark qualifications
- Continuing Phase I programmes as required
- Implementing the extensive Reading and Writing Schemes
- Subsidising non-government organisations to run language courses for adults

Phase III (when SCOLAR has completed its priority tasks)

- Following up SCOLAR proposals