

St. Paul's Convent School

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The Birth of the Integrated Humanities Curriculum at St. Paul's Convent School

Introduction

Recent education reforms have encouraged a change in classroom teaching style. Ideas for change are based on social changes and needs and also the research findings of prominent educational psychologists. They suggest that teaching must take into account the personalities of learners and different cognitive types.

Howard Gardner of Harvard University has identified seven distinct intelligences. Recent cognitive research has identified that students possess different kinds of minds and learn, remember and understand in different ways. According

to Gardner, all students are able to know the world through language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical thinking, and the use of the body to solve problems or to make things, an understanding of other individuals and an understanding of ourselves. He also stresses that individual students will have different levels of different intelligences.

These differences have challenged the traditional system of education which shares the thinking that all students are similar and learn material in the same way. Gardner states that most students would be better taught if material was presented in a variety of ways and different methods of instruction are used.

Integration allows teachers to plan a variety of lessons around a broad topic without restrictions and boundaries between subjects. Teachers have the freedom to design lessons that incorporate the basic skills of each subject area and at the same time educating the students in a more socially aware and responsive manner.



Lesson content can be chosen on the basis of interest and relevance, taking into account the desired learning outcomes.

Our Integrated Humanities programme places much emphasis on the development of the individual as a knowledgeable and responsible member of society. We firmly believe that quality education requires educating students who are able to respond to social, political and economic change. This includes moral awareness and educating students to understand their responsibilities towards themselves, their family and the society.

Quality education should also develop a student's self-esteem and encourage respect for their culture and cultural values, as well as respect for others. It is not enough to teach students just to know facts and information. If we are to equip our students for a complex and changing world with an ever changing society, they need to be independent, flexible, confident, socially aware and morally grounded.



Students need to be educated to think critically and constructively. We need to equip our students with the confidence to respond to change, to meet challenges and difficulties in their lifetime. Learning is thus, a lifelong process, therefore, we should enable them with the skills to:

- Learn how to learn
- Research
- Anticipate and respond to change
- Analyse intelligently
- Critically evaluate situations
- Take responsible actions
- Understand events in the perspective of a wider political and economic context
- Work collaboratively and independently

With all these in mind, we boldly took plunge into this great challenge in developing our Integrated Humanities curriculum. We believe that the curriculum will best support effective learning and help shape our students' value and integrity, such that they will be responsible and caring citizens of Hong Kong.

Way of Access to Further Information of the above Teaching Practice

Please e-mail to the ATE Secretariat (ate@emb.gov.hk) stating the specific information you would like to obtain.

Preferred Way of dissemination / collaboration

Please refer to the latest news of sharing activities organized by the ATE Teachers Association.

Website: www.ate.gov.hk

Contact

ATE Secretariat: ate@emb.gov.hk

Remarks of the Assessment Panel

The strength of this nomination is the group's innovative school-based English across the Integrated Humanities curriculum, which has been implemented in Form 1 since year 2000 and later extended to Form 2. They have incorporated English Language, English Literature, and the Integrated Humanities, i.e. History, Geography, and EPA, into the new curriculum, aiming to foster stronger language skills and generic skills. Students learn through doing group projects and oral presentation.

