

The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong

School-based Educational Psychology Service (Primary)

I. Foreword

Since 1994, the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong (CDHK) has started recruiting educational psychologists (EP) to serve the Diocesan secondary schools. The educational psychology service (EPS) was extended to primary schools in 2002. At present, over half of the Diocesan primary schools are served by school-based educational psychologists. To improve the quality of education and cater for student diversity, the psychology services cover remedial, preventive and developmental work at multi-functional levels involving students, parents, teachers and school personnel.

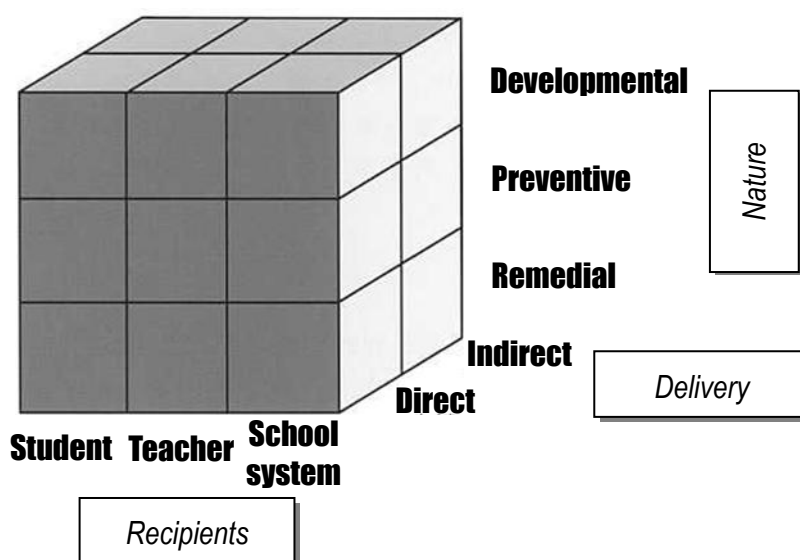


Diagram 1: Framework for school-based Educational Psychology Service

II. Service delivery

Educational psychologists deliver EPS on three levels:

1. School System Level

It refers to the mechanism, policies, rules and ethos, e.g.:

- Support schools in developing whole-school policies to cater for student diversity, including but not limited to policies on integrated education and accommodation for students with special educational needs, policies on gifted education, discipline, guidance and anti-bullying.

¹ Diagram 1 Source : Guides on Educational Psychology Service (2004) by Psychology Department, HKU

- Support schools in developing effective mechanism to meet the diverse educational needs of their students. For instance, set up and develop Student Support Team (SST) on the strategies in helping students with special educational needs (SENs) and resources allocation, implementation of Early Identification and Intervention Scheme for students with learning difficulties, assessment and curriculum accommodation, support of students with SENs in small classes as well as reviewing the progress of students.
- Advise and collaborate with teachers and school personnel in developing an inclusive ethos and environment for students with diverse needs. Support individual schools in implementing self-evaluation review and quality assessment, such as the use of Assessment Programme for Affective and Social Outcome (APASO) and analyzing data to design preventive and developmental programmes. Related topics could be positive school ethos and anti-bullying, etc. EPs also play a role in curriculum design and development.
- Support schools to manage crisis and conduct crisis drills.
- Support schools in implementing new educational initiatives in promoting student and school development.

2. Teacher Support Level

EPs also intervene on the teacher level to advise on and support teachers in meeting students' learning needs. It would be another way to strengthen teacher's effectiveness for better school development. EPs in CDHK endeavor to:

- Conduct staff development training for equipping teachers with knowledge and skills to meet the personal, social and educational needs of students.
- Provide consultation services for teachers in planning and implementation of appropriate intervention measures for students, such as classroom management, thinking skills and pedagogical strategies, etc.
- Advise and support teachers in curriculum planning and design, such as personal growth curriculum for all students, literacy enhancement programmes for students with Specific Learning Difficulties, enrichment programmes for talented students.
- Support teachers in school-based action research related to the domains of student support as well as learning and teaching.

3. Student Support Level

Student level includes direct and indirect services for individual students, student groups and parent supports. EP's service delivery varies, depending on different student needs. For instance, EPs will:

- Assess students who are suspected to have learning difficulties or developmental problems. EPs will advise SST on the support services in schools and discuss with teachers and parents about the assessment results and recommendations.
- Provide counselling and guidance service for students with emotional and behavioural problems.
- Refer students in need to outside agencies for follow-up services, such as occupational therapy, psychiatric services, special schools and family services, etc.
- Assist schools in designing and implementing Individual Educational Programme (IEP) for students who need intensive learning support.
- Participate in parent education. EPs will help prepare parent education programmes to enhance parents' confidence and effectiveness in their parenting role.

III. Mode of school-based services

According to the guidelines from the Education Bureau (EDB), a EP visits each serving school 2 to 3 times per month. The number of school visit days is adjusted according to school needs. Two teachers from each school will serve as coordinators to facilitate EP services in school. Every EP devises his/her own school visit schedule and informs the school about visit dates to facilitate the job arrangements.

IV. Monitoring of EP services

Since the start of EPS, a Steering Committee has been set up to monitor its service quality and plan its development. The Steering Committee comprises an Assistant to the Episcopal Delegate for Education, experienced principals and EPs as consultants. Also, cluster school meetings chaired by experienced principals are held regularly to review the service delivery in each school. Every year, EPs draft annual work plan, mid-year review report and annual progress report for each school. At the end of the school year, every principal fills out the performance evaluation form for the EP serving his/her school. This form is one of the supporting documents for the appraisal of individual EP's job performance every year. To overview the effectiveness of EP service, annual survey would be conducted as well.

V. Professional development of EPs

Every EP meets an experienced EP consultant regularly for advice and guidance on their school work and professional development. Among EPs, a monthly team meeting is held to discuss their school work, joint-school programmes and matters related to office administration. Also, EPs would participate in professional development activities with prior approval from the Steering Committee.