Nurturing Active Learners and Proficient Users
NURTURING ACTIVE LEARNERS AND PROFICIENT USERS

2010 Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee Report
13 January 2011

Mr Lee Hsien Loong
Prime Minister

The bilingual policy is a cornerstone of our education system. To ensure that it can stay effective and relevant with the changing language environment in homes and the community, I appointed the Director-General of Education (DGE) to lead a Committee to review the teaching and testing of Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs) in Singapore schools.

The Committee consulted extensively with different stakeholders in the course of its work. It surveyed over 22,000 teachers, students and parents, and held discussions with language professionals, individuals, media professionals and community leaders. It made study trips to Australia, China, India, Malaysia, and the United States to observe the latest developments in teaching, learning, and testing of languages.

The Committee emphasised that MTL has to be a living language for students, to be used and valued, and not just to be taken as an examinable subject. It made four key recommendations to nurture active learners who can use their MTL to communicate proficiently in everyday life.

First, align the teaching and testing of MTL to achieve proficiency. We must recognise that students enter Primary schools with different home language backgrounds, and we must cater to their different starting points. We should develop clear descriptors of the desired language proficiencies at key stages of education, to guide teachers and students on exactly what is expected. Lessons must be more engaging and interactive, so that students can see the direct relevance of what they are learning. This will require curriculum improvements and more use of info-communication tools.

Just as importantly, examination and test formats have to support changes in teaching and learning. Tests will become more interactive and emphasise more on using the language in realistic situations. The Committee has laid out a timetable for these changes, to give students and parents ample time to prepare for them.
Second, help all students learn MTL to as high a level as they can. We have already added another SAP school. We will enhance existing programmes for students with a flair for MTL and introduce some new ones. For students who have greater difficulties learning MTL, we will update the MTL 'B' syllabus, to help them learn to communicate confidently in MTL, especially orally.

Third, foster a more conducive environment for students to use MTL. This is in fact the best way for them to master the language. Hence, MOE will support schools to work with the wider community to create opportunities for students to use MTL and imbue the right culture and values. For example, schools can organise 'MTL fortnights' to kindle students' interest in the languages through novel and exciting ways. MOE will provide funds to each school to work with community groups to enrich their cultural and language environment to complement MTL teaching.

Fourth, deploy and develop more MTL teachers. This is critical. We already have a dedicated corps of MTL teachers in Singapore, but we need to reinforce their ranks and support them with more resources. We will step up recruitment, open up more career pathways for language teachers, and train them to do proficiency-oriented teaching and assessments.

These initiatives, if implemented well, will keep our bilingual policy up to date and effective. They will enable our young to communicate in their respective Mother Tongues, better appreciate our cultural roots, and connect with other communities in Asia and beyond.

The Committee's recommendations represent another significant step in our efforts to improve the learning of Mother Tongue Languages. Only through continuous improvement and innovation can we retain this precious asset for future generations of Singaporeans.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

DR NG ENG HEN
17 January 2011

Dr Ng Eng Hen
Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence

Dear Dr Ng,

I am pleased that the Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee has completed a comprehensive professional review on the teaching and learning of Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs) in Singapore schools. I thank the Committee members for their good work. Their insightful and practical recommendations will improve MTL education in Singapore.

Singapore is one of the few countries in the world that has successfully implemented a bilingual education system. A growing proportion of Singaporeans are literate in two or more languages. But to sustain this achievement, we must continually update and improve our MTL curriculum, teaching and examination, to keep abreast of changing conditions in Singapore and around the world.

This review is therefore timely. Over the last decades, the language environment in Singapore has steadily shifted. We are using English more widely in our daily lives. In schools, English is the medium of instruction, with MTL forming an integral part of the curriculum. In homes, more parents are talking to their children in English, though a significant proportion still use Malay, Tamil, Mandarin or dialects. As a result, students enter school with very varied language backgrounds and abilities. Some already have a good working knowledge of their MTL; others are less familiar with the sounds, patterns and rules; and yet others have grown up learning two languages. These different groups have different needs when it comes to learning MTL.

MOE must therefore enhance and target MTL teaching, to cater to a wider range of students with different starting points. We must help every student to attain as high a proficiency in MTL as he or she is capable of with reasonable effort. We need special programmes to
stretch those talented in languages, and nurture a bi-literate cadre adept at traversing languages and cultures. We must also support those who have difficulties learning languages, to encourage them to persevere and acquire the basics of their MTL. For the majority, we want them to become proficient enough to communicate effectively in their MTL, to understand and appreciate their cultural heritage, and to develop a love for the language.

MTL teaching in schools is naturally a matter of great interest and concern to the broader community of MTL speakers. How best to teach and examine MTL are educational issues, so we should be guided by professional advice on the most effective approach educationally. We should recognise the abilities and limits of our students, and take full advantage of the accumulated experience of language teaching in Singapore and abroad, and the possibilities opened up by new technology. At the same time, I encourage the broader community to play an active supporting role, creating an environment where the language is used, and organising enrichment programmes to complement what the schools do. The Government will provide resources to support community projects to raise MTL proficiency levels. I hope MTL communities will understand and support the purpose of these changes, and work with the Government to achieve the language outcomes that we all desire.

Singapore’s bilingual policy has served us well. Knowing MTL helps to centre us as an Asian society and retain our Asian roots and values, and gives our people an edge in the global economy. Singapore parents value MTL and want their children to be bilingual. We must do our utmost to maintain our linguistic heritage and advantage.

Cabinet has approved MOE’s plan to implement the Committee’s recommendations. MOE should now do so progressively and systematically, to keep our Mother Tongue Languages alive and valuable to our young.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**BILINGUALISM AS CORNERSTONE**

1. Bilingual education in English (EL) and the Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs) remains a cornerstone of Singapore’s education system. EL, as the common language of instruction, enables all our students to plug into a globalised world. Economically, it has built an environment conducive for international business here. The learning of MTL has provided a link to their heritage and Asian roots for the various ethnic groups. Collectively, the learning of EL and MTL by the different communities has shaped Singapore into a cosmopolitan city that embraces multi-lingual and multi-cultural diversity and attracts people from both East and West. Furthermore, with the rise of China and India, and the integration of ASEAN, learning our MTLs will gain increasing relevance and provide our students and companies with a competitive edge. This is a key strength of Singapore that we would do well to preserve and enhance.

**IMPETUS FOR REVIEW**

2. The MTL Review was motivated by two developments. First, the language environment in Singaporean homes is evolving and will result in a wider range of linguistic exposure and abilities with regard to MTL when compared with previous cohorts who grew up in a different home language environment. Second, advances in the understanding and practice of teaching languages have occurred in other countries, as increasingly more people want to learn a second language due to globalisation and the rise of India and China. Concurrently, innovations in information technology (IT) devices and software have also expanded the options to enhance the teaching and learning of languages.

3. In January 2010, the MTL Review Committee (MTLRC) led by the Director-General of Education was formed to evaluate these developments and their impact on the teaching and learning of MTL in Singapore. The goal was to propose appropriate strategies for MTL teaching, learning and assessment, given Singapore’s unique context, that would promote the use of MTL as a living language among our students.

4. Three sub-committees were formed - for Chinese Language (CL), Malay Language (ML) and Tamil Language (TL). The composition of and terms of reference for the Committee and sub-committees are in Annex A. This review also builds on the work of previous reviews of the MTLs – in 1991, 1999 and 2004-5.

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1 The review in 1991 was for Chinese Language only.
2 The recommendations of the 2004-5 reviews have been implemented for the primary levels, and the secondary-level curricular reforms will be rolled out from 2011.
FACT FINDING

Changing Language Environment in Singapore

5. The Committee sought to better define the varying proportions of use of and exposure to EL and MTL at home and in different community settings in Singapore. This would impact the speaking and learning environment of MTL for our students. It also sought to assess the impact of the new curricula and teaching approaches introduced after the 2004-5 MTL reviews. To help inform the Committee in its review, the Ministry of Education (MOE) conducted a survey involving 3,799 teachers, 9,543 students and 8,815 parents. The Committee also held 19 focus group discussions with 229 educators (school leaders, heads of department and teachers), 85 parents and 22 community leaders.

6. Information gathered from MOE’s administrative records, the survey and focus group discussions confirmed the changing and more diverse home language environment in Singapore.

Key Findings

7. The long-term trend of English becoming a dominant language used in homes is shown by the annual data of incoming Primary 1 (P1) students over the past twenty years. This rising trend is seen across all communities, albeit not to the same degree. Among ethnic Chinese students, the proportion with English as the most frequently used home language rose from 28% in 1991 to 59% in 2010. Among Indians, the corresponding figures are 49% in 1991 and 58% in 2010. For Malays, the rise was from 13% to 37% over the same period.

8. The survey also revealed a more complex picture of the home language environment. For example, among P6 students learning CL or TL, 38% reported using predominantly EL at home, roughly one-third reported using predominantly their MTL at home, and the remaining one-quarter to one-third reported using both EL and their MTL equally. For ML students, the use of ML at home is still prevalent (50%), with one-third using both EL and ML, and the remaining 17% using predominantly EL.

9. Home language was found to influence students’ attitudes towards and proficiency in MTL — fewer students from EL-speaking homes liked learning MTL. This suggested that teaching methods would need to be different for students from different home language backgrounds. However, interest to learn MTL was generally high across all three MTLs. MTL was also deemed an important subject by a large majority of parents and students across all levels. CL students cited its usefulness and importance for their future, while ML and TL students cited doing well in the subject and enjoyable lessons as important reasons for their interest in learning MTL. MTL was also seen by teachers, parents and students as important for transmitting culture and values.
10. The survey also indicated that the efforts of previous MTL reforms were working well. It found that a higher proportion of P6 students liked learning MTL in 2010 compared with earlier surveys conducted in 2004-5; teachers felt that the new curricular initiatives implemented since the last MTL review were beneficial for students. During the focus group discussions, parents and teachers also affirmed that the MTL reforms based on the 2004-5 reviews were headed in the right direction and were bearing fruit. Parents recognised the good work of our MTL teachers in implementing the reforms.

Global Advances in Teaching of Languages

11. The MTLRC reviewed developments that had occurred in other countries in language teaching, learning and assessment. It made study trips to Australia, China, India, Malaysia, and the United States of America (USA) and spoke with educators, parents and students to understand their progress and to pick up learning points.

12. Through their visits and exchanges, the Committee learned that native-speaking societies (Chinese in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Tamil in Tamil Nadu, Malay in Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia) do not face the same challenges we face in Singapore. In these societies, students grow up in and are constantly exposed to an environment where the dominant MTL is used extensively in everyday life, starting from the home and continuing into school and the wider community. They have much less exposure to other languages. Even in this context, these countries continue to invest in making language learning relevant, enhancing the use of new pedagogies and technologies, and placing emphasis on students' ability to communicate effectively through both oral and written forms.

Learning in a Multi-Lingual Environment

13. The Committee also learned from experts and educators with extensive experience teaching in mixed-language and multi-lingual environments that learning is most effective when learners are taught to use the language in an active and interactive manner for a variety of real-life settings, including using the language to learn about its associated culture. This is regardless of whether the learner is in a dominant MTL or multi-lingual environment.

14. Various systems have shaped their curriculum, teaching and testing methods around this principle. The teaching and learning of languages is focused largely on applying the language in real-life situations. Broadly, students are given opportunities to use the language in three communication modes: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. A typical lesson might start with the teacher introducing some vocabulary, followed by teaching sentence-building skills, and then activities such as group work to allow interpersonal communication between students using the language, and oral presentations.
15. To guide teaching and testing, experts agree on the sound educational principle of stating clear expectations of what learners can master at different stages of learning. Such **proficiency descriptors** are articulated for six language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, writing, interacting in spoken forms and interacting in written forms. The descriptors aid teachers in aiming for observable outcomes when teaching students. With clarity in what is expected of them, learners too are better motivated to progress from one level to the next. There have also been significant advances in using different teaching methods and aids, particularly information and communication technology (ICT)-enabled platforms for more effective learning of languages.

16. The use of proficiency descriptors extends to testing as well. For example, the Advanced Placement (AP) examination for Chinese Language and Culture developed by The College Board in the USA is designed as a “performance-based assessment” to measure students’ attainment of language proficiencies. The test is also fully ICT-delivered as ICT is used as a tool to provide authentic contexts for assessment such as requiring students to use Hanyu Pinyin text input to compose an e-mail response. This would be close to real work-life scenarios and contemporary social communications.

**PURPOSE AND GOALS OF MTL LEARNING**

17. MOE’s educational goal remains to support and enable every student to learn MTL to as high a level as each student is able to. The Committee acknowledges that schools may have a challenging teaching environment when it comes to MTL, as our students come from homes with diverse patterns of language use. After studying the developments and practices in other countries, the Committee is of the view that Singapore must evolve its own approach to the teaching of MTL. The approach must be one that not only recognises different starting points and applies appropriate methods for different learners, but also builds on past reforms and existing strengths.

18. The Committee has outlined three broad objectives in the teaching and learning of MTL to develop proficient language users:

a. Communication - This is a valuable skill for life and work. In addition to their mastery of the English language, proficiency and ability to communicate in MTL gives Singaporeans a competitive edge.

b. Culture - Learning MTL enables our students to understand and develop their unique identity through a deeper appreciation of culture, traditions, literature and history. This is a critical base to preserve the transmission of cultural values and traditions associated with each MTL in our society.

c. Connection - Proficiency in MTL enables our students to connect with communities across Asia and the people who speak that language or share that culture.
19. In achieving these objectives, the key is to help students to like, learn and use their MTL as a living language, and produce proficient users who can communicate effectively in a variety of real-life settings.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS
ACTIVE LEARNERS, PROFICIENT USERS

20. The MTL reforms based on the 2004-5 reviews are in the right direction and are bearing fruit. We recognise the good work of our MTL teachers in implementing the new MTL curriculum and will build on existing strengths.

21. The Committee recognises that our teaching methods will have to take into account the different home language backgrounds and language learning abilities of students, especially in the early foundation years. The MTL curriculum should be designed and taught to develop proficient users who can communicate effectively using the language in real-life contexts and apply it in inter-personal communication, listening and reading for comprehension, and presenting in spoken and written forms.

22. To facilitate this, MOE will provide language proficiency descriptors to guide teaching, learning and assessment. Assessment will be aligned with the changes in teaching and learning. There will also be greater use of ICT platforms to create realistic, interactive settings that test students’ ability to use the language effectively and meaningfully.

23. Students will continue to be exposed to culture and values through the language. There is also a need to work with the wider community to create environments in and beyond schools that are conducive to MTL learning and use. In this way, we can make MTL directly relevant to students - a living language, and not just an examinable subject.

24. While the main recommendations will help all learners, the Committee also examined ways to help two specific groups of MTL learners - those with high ability in MTL and those who face greater difficulties learning MTL.

25. The Committee has identified four recommendations to further enhance our MTL teaching and learning:

   A) Aligning teaching and testing to achieve proficiency;

   B) Enhancing different provisions for learners of different abilities;

   C) Creating an environment more conducive for MTL usage and learning; and

   D) Deploying and developing more MTL teachers.
A) Aligning Teaching and Testing to Achieve Proficiency

i) Recognising Different Starting Points

26. MOE will expand and build on the customised teaching approaches arising from the 2004-5 MTL reviews. Our MTL curriculum will continue to adopt student-centric, customised approaches especially during the foundation years in primary school. In the early primary years, schools will place more emphasis on recognising students’ different starting points and addressing their learning needs. We will offer more help and support to those with little or no foundation to help them develop confidence in learning the language, while stretching those who are more able or have stronger foundations in MTL.

27. Oracy is the natural foundation for language learning. Children learn their first language through listening to care-givers and adults in the family, followed by speaking it, and then starting formal learning in school. Hence, for beginning learners and those who need more support in MTL learning, the teaching approach will be to first build the oracy foundation before learning reading and writing. There will be more systematic teaching of oral vocabulary and sentence structures to develop students’ foundational language skills. For students who have some foundation in MTL, the teaching approach will build on the oral skills they already possess, and help them progress to reading and writing.

28. Reading and writing are integral parts of the MTL curriculum. Developing an early proficiency in reading builds a strong foundation in literacy which will help children acquire the vocabulary to express themselves better. Reading and writing skills will be taught more systematically in MTL lessons, building on the children’s oracy foundations.

29. Teachers will be equipped with the appropriate teaching strategies to cater to different learner profiles. These include motivational strategies to build a positive affirmative learning environment and adopting the bilingual approach where EL is used in the initial learning stage. Teachers will enhance their use of a variety of classroom strategies, such as greater use of group work to encourage interaction, and the use of songs, rhymes and drama to strengthen oracy and make learning more engaging.

ii) Using Proficiency Descriptors to Motivate Progress

30. The learning of MTL must lead to students applying and using it in their lives. Our MTL curriculum will aim to develop students into proficient language users who can communicate in a confident, effective and meaningful way in real-life situations.

31. To guide teaching and learning practices for the development of proficient language users, MOE will provide proficiency descriptors to more explicitly spell out the language skills and levels of attainment our students should achieve at various key stages of learning (P2, P4, P6, S2 and S4). A draft of the proficiency descriptors at Primary 6 (P6) and Secondary 4 (S4) is in Annex D. MOE will conduct studies to ensure that the proficiency descriptors are validated through empirical research and data, and to refine these over time.
32. The proficiency descriptors will help teachers tailor their teaching, classroom activities and assessments to create more opportunities for students to practise and use their MTL in specific ways, e.g. show-and-tell, role-play and group discussion. With clearer goals, students will also be more motivated to progress from one proficiency level to the next.

33. Furthermore, the use of everyday situations and contexts, current affairs and contemporary issues as well as authentic materials (e.g. reports, news articles) will provide real-world context for classroom learning. This will allow students to see the relevance of MTL to their daily lives, and enable students to achieve practical language competence. MOE will develop teaching resources to support teachers.

iii) Strengthening Interaction Skills

34. There should be more language activities and tasks in class for students to apply and develop their communication skills. In real-life communication, much of language use is for interaction, requiring a combination of receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Many real-life situations also require spontaneous two-way interaction (e.g. listening and responding orally during a conversation or reading and responding in writing to an email). Hence, our curriculum will emphasise spoken interaction and written interaction skills in addition to the four basic skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing.

iv) Greater Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

35. We should leverage on our students’ familiarity and regular use of ICT for MTL learning. The 2010 survey found that across all three MTLs, students were ICT-savvy and interested in using ICT to learn MTL. ICT opens up new possibilities such as the use of interactive content, assignment of individualised tasks and the provision of different resources and activities to suit the different needs of students. Furthermore, ICT can provide individualised feedback and help the teacher to reach out to all students.

36. To support teachers, a new resource package that promotes interaction skills and greater use of ICT will be produced. There will also be a web-based MTL oracy portal to strengthen oracy learning. MOE will rescope the curriculum to create time for interactive language use at all levels. We will encourage language use in its various forms: inter-personal communication, listening and reading for comprehension, and presenting in spoken and written forms, whilst continuing to expose students to culture and values through the language.

37. As computer-based writing is fast becoming the norm in the workplace and for social communications, it should be introduced to students alongside traditional teaching of script at an appropriate stage. The manual writing of script is a core skill that will continue to be taught, as it lays the foundation for the learning of MTL. It has been found that writing script by hand

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3 For P1-P2, there is adequate lesson time to incorporate the new package. For P3-P4, curriculum content will be reduced by 10% to accommodate the new package. At P5 and P6, school-based modules (10-15% of curriculum time) will make way for use of the package. For secondary and JC levels, the new MTL syllabuses will be designed to incorporate interaction skills within the curriculum.
helps strengthen memory retention and word recognition\(^4\). There should thus be a judicious balance between the use of both methods for more effective learning outcomes.

v) Assessments and Exams that Test for Proficiency

38. Resulting from the previous MTL reviews in 2004-5, new examination formats have been implemented at the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), O-, N- and A-Levels to reduce rote memorisation, include more contextualised questions, and increase emphasis on oracy and language application.

39. In the Committee’s focus group discussions, teachers and parents were of the view that while MTL pedagogy and curriculum content have become more aligned to the promotion of language proficiency, some assessment formats seemed to have less practical relevance. This points to a need for better alignment between curriculum and assessment.

40. The Committee is of the view that school-based assessments and national examinations should be aligned to the overall goal of nurturing active learners and proficient users of MTL. For instance, as we want our students to learn to use MTL for interactive communication, both school-based and national examinations will, in future, include items which test spoken interaction and written interaction skills.

41. Examination formats will change, with the addition of new item types (e.g. items to test interaction skills), modification of item types (e.g. the use of video stimuli instead of line drawings for oral examinations) and the reduction of certain existing items, in order to maintain the current overall difficulty level.

a. As it is important for our Higher MTL (HMTL) students to have good oral communication skills, oral assessment will be included as part of the O-Level HMTL examination from 2016. This will align testing with curriculum, and motivate students to develop strong oral proficiency.

b. Video clips, instead of line drawings, will be used as stimuli for oral examinations. The video stimuli will provide more engaging and realistic contexts for conversation\(^5\) between students and examiners.

c. New types of test items on interaction skills will be introduced. In addition to essay-writing\(^6\), MOE will extend the use of dictionaries and e-dictionaries to new written interaction items (e.g. writing an email response to a stimulus) in examinations.

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\(^5\) The oral examination tests students’ ability to express themselves orally and hence the video clip is meant as a stimulus. Comprehension of details in the video clip will not be tested.

\(^6\) Dictionaries are currently allowed for use in essay writing in the PSLE, O-, N- and A-Level MTL examinations. E-dictionaries have been allowed since 2007.
d. In line with the use of ICT-enabled pedagogy, computer-based writing will be introduced in
selected sections of secondary and JC level examinations (e.g., written interaction items),
starting with groups which have smaller candidature. Once assured of the technical and
examination administration aspects, this can be progressively expanded to other groups
over time. (Writing script remains an integral part of language learning, especially at primary
levels as it helps to strengthen word recognition and spelling. Also, keyboarding skills may
not be well-developed among all primary school students. Hence, the Committee does not
recommend that computer based-writing be tested at the PSLE.)

42. The timeline for the changes in national examination formats are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Timeline for Proposed Changes in Examination Formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Examination Format</th>
<th>MTL ‘B’ A-Level</th>
<th>MTL/H1 MTL A-Level</th>
<th>O-Level</th>
<th>O &amp; N Level</th>
<th>PSLE</th>
<th>A-Level</th>
<th>H2 MTLL</th>
<th>O-Level</th>
<th>Higher MTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard input for selected sections of exams</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>T.B.C</td>
<td>T.B.C</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>T.B.C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* H2 Mother Tongue Language and Literature (MTLL) is a content subject. It includes a literature component. There is no oral component in this examination.

T.B.C: To be confirmed, pending further studies.

43. MOE and SEAB will work together closely to ensure smooth implementation and to give
adequate lead time for students and teachers to be familiar with the new curriculum, the
adjustments to classroom teaching and learning, and the new assessment methods.

44. Schools will be given time to adopt the new assessment modes in classroom-based and school-based examinations. School-based assessments will need to incorporate more elements that test interaction skills and language use in familiar and authentic contexts. Schools will need to use video clips as stimuli for oral examinations, instead of the line drawings currently used. Secondary schools and JCs will need to include computer-based writing modules in assessments. Schools will communicate with parents and inform them of the changes before they take effect.
B) Enhancing Different Provisions for Learners of Different Abilities

45. There is strategic value in nurturing a larger pool of Singaporeans who are effectively bilingual with strong proficiency in both EL and their MTL, and who possess a deep understanding of the related cultures. These individuals add to the cultural ballast and vibrancy of Singapore and can harness their language and cultural skills to establish connections with the region.

46. For students with the ability and interest to study Higher MTL (HMTL), MOE will help them develop higher levels of language proficiency and cultural knowledge. MOE will build on enhancements made in past reviews which have resulted in a larger proportion of O-Level students offering HMTL. While the intent to create an enriched environment for our HMTL students is the same across all three MTL groups, the specific delivery model will be differentiated to accommodate differences in circumstances and student enrolment.

47. At the same time, we need to help those who face difficulties in their MTL learning to persevere in their efforts. There will be enhancements to the customised approach at the primary level to take into account different starting points. At the secondary level, a different curriculum is available for those who face greater difficulties learning MTL. The MTL ‘B’ curriculum, with an emphasis on oracy skills, helps learners to communicate with confidence in their MTL. This will sustain their interest in MTL, and not discourage them. The foundation will also stand them in good stead later in life when they need to deepen their MTL learning for personal or career reasons.

Higher Chinese (HCL)

48. Current provisions for students interested to study HCL include the widespread availability of HCL instruction across schools, the whole-school environment provided by the Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools, the Bicultural Studies Programme (Chinese) [BSP(C)] available in 4 SAP secondary schools, and the Chinese Language Elective Programme (CLEP) available in 5 JCs/schools.

49. Further enhancements for the study of HCL will be made as follows:

a. Nan Chiau High School will be the 11th SAP secondary school from 2012, providing an enriched learning environment for students to develop fluency in CL and achieve a deeper understanding of Chinese history and culture;

b. MOE will enhance the CLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion programmes and organising a series of CLEP lectures;

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7 The BSP(C) is a 4-year programme from S3 to JC 2, to groom highly proficient bilingual and bicultural Singaporeans with a confident and intuitive understanding of history, culture and contemporary developments in China. The 4 schools offering it are: Dunman High School, Hwa Chong Institution, Nanyang Girls’ High School and River Valley High School.

8 CLEP is offered in Hwa Chong Institution, Dunman High, Nanyang JC, Temasek JC, and Jurong JC to groom academically-able CL students to become effectively bilingual and nurture literary talents through a deeper appreciation of their MTL and literature.
c. MOE will allow an additional insertion point at JC 1 in BSP(C) schools to increase access to the BSP(C); and

d. MOE will introduce a new A-Level subject – Chinese Linguistics and Translation, at the H2 level in selected schools from 2015\(^9\). This subject has practical value, and will help groom future bilingual professionals with mastery in both EL and MTL. The focus on linguistics will also nurture in students an appreciation of the construct of the Chinese language. Some of these students could be groomed to become future CL teachers.

**Higher Malay (HML)**

50. Over the past few years, MOE has expanded the number of HML centres to make HML instruction more accessible. Two autonomous schools\(^10\) offer the Elective Programme in Malay Language for Secondary Schools (EMAS). EMAS brings together a critical mass of HML students and provides them with an enriched environment to develop fluency in ML and a deeper understanding of Malay language and culture. It also aims to encourage them to eventually become cultural transmitters in areas such as teaching, journalism and the arts. At the JC level, two JCs offer the Malay Language Elective Programme (MLEP)\(^11\).

51. Further enhancements for the study of HML will be made:

a. Anderson Secondary School will be the 3\(^{rd}\) school to offer EMAS;

b. MOE will enhance the MLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion and organising a series of MLEP lectures;

c. Pioneer JC will be the third MLEP centre; and

d. MOE will increase the number of MLEP scholarships.

**Higher Tamil (HTL)**

52. Since 2004, MOE has also expanded the number of HTL centres, and designated the Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre (UPTLC) as the national TL resource centre. UPTLC promotes the teaching and learning of HTL, and makes a wider range of enrichment activities accessible to students interested in Tamil language and culture. The centralised provision of enrichment programmes allows HTL students from different schools to congregate at UPTLC to create the critical mass necessary for delivering quality programmes.

\(^9\) MOE will explore the feasibility of offering equivalent subjects for ML and TL at a later stage.


\(^11\) MLEP is offered at Innova JC and Tampines JC to groom academically able ML students to become effectively bilingual and to nurture their literary talents through a deeper appreciation of ML and literature.
53. Further enhancements for the study of HTL will be made as follows:

a. UPTLC will anchor a new National Elective Tamil Language Programme (NETP) catering to secondary school and JC students, to enrich their learning of Tamil language, literature and culture; and

b. MOE will introduce a new scholarship scheme for deserving NETP students at the JC level.

54. The measures to provide more opportunities for HMTL students to attain higher levels of language proficiency are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Enhancement and Expansion of MTL Special Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CL</th>
<th>Sec</th>
<th>- Establish an 11th SAP school at Nan Chiau High School from 2012</th>
<th>- Establish a 3rd EMAS centre at Anderson Secondary School from 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JC</td>
<td>- Provide an additional insertion point for the Bicultural Studies Programme (Chinese) [BSP(C)] at JC 1 from 2012</td>
<td>- Introduce a new subject in Chinese Linguistics and Translation at the H2 level in selected JCs from 2015</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Enhance CLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion and organising a series of CLEP lectures</td>
<td>- Enhance MLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion and organising a series of MLEP lectures</td>
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</table>

55. For students who are weaker in MTL, we aim to equip them with functional competency in oral communications. MOE has made MTL ‘B’ more accessible to students who are unable to cope with the demand of standard MTL. These include having more MTL ‘B’ centres and relaxing the eligibility criteria for A-Level MTL ‘B’.

12 MOE announced in Nov 2010 that Nan Chiau High School will be a SAP school from 2012.
56. MTL ‘B’ will place greater emphasis on communication, especially in developing listening, speaking and spoken interaction skills. More activity-based approaches (including the use of ICT, role play and group discussions) as well as authentic materials (e.g. news articles, advertisements and ICT-based media) will be used to make lessons more engaging and help students to appreciate MTLs as living languages.

C) Creating an Environment Conducive to MTL Usage and Learning

57. Given the changing language environment, the Committee recognises that the use of MTL beyond class time is critical to making MTL a living language for our students. Together, schools, parents and community partners can play key roles in providing students with opportunities to be immersed in an environment conducive to the use and learning of MTL.

58. Schools will have structured time and programmes to create an environment that encourages students to use MTL and appreciate the culture associated with the language. This will enhance the learning experience for students and inspire their interest in MTL.

59. The Committee makes the following recommendations for schools to achieve this goal:

a. Organise school-based CL, ML and TL Fortnights annually, in collaboration with community organisations and key stakeholders including parents and alumni. During the MTL Fortnights, a range of outside-class MTL activities will be provided to enable students to learn and use MTL in novel and exciting ways. The MTL Fortnights should bring MTL learning into the community and the community into the school to kindle students’ interest to use MTL;

b. Organise Mother Tongue language and cultural camps to immerse students in an environment that encourages them to learn and use the language;

c. Organise structured reading programmes that provide age-appropriate reading materials and reading corners. Schools should also find creative ways to cultivate in students the habit of reading MTL books; and

d. Engage parents to support students in learning MTL (e.g. via sharing platforms or online resources).

60. Funding will be provided for schools to implement the MTL Fortnights and enrichment programmes.

61. Arising from the 2004-5 MTL reviews, the Committee to Promote Chinese Language Learning (CPCLL), Malay Language Learning Promotion Committee (MLLPC), and Tamil Language Learning Promotion Committee (TLLPC) were formed to rally the support of community organisations to promote the use of MTL beyond schools. Good progress has been made by these committees and students have benefited from the variety of programmes and expertise provided by the community groups.
62. Going forward, MOE and schools can do even more to tap these community resources to support the MTL Fortnights and other programmes.

63. MOE will increase funding for the three MTL Promotion Committees to strengthen their partnerships with schools, the community and the media and organise more programmes to support the learning and use of MTL. Specifically, the Promotion Committees will:

a. Support schools in organising activities for the CL/ML/TL Fortnights (e.g. provide resource persons and facilitate language and cultural enrichment activities);

b. Organise a variety of language and cultural enrichment activities (e.g. drama workshops, cultural camps, performing arts events, immersion programmes) in collaboration with schools;

c. Develop a wide range of age-appropriate reading materials to promote reading, and develop ICT-based resources (e.g. podcasts or vodcasts) to support MTL learning;

d. Explore with the media interesting and meaningful radio and television programmes that can be broadcast for children; and

e. Organise MTL events for the family, and seminars for parents to learn effective strategies to support their children in learning MTL.

64. In total, MOE will make available up to $45 million for schools and the MTL Promotion Committees over the next five years to support their efforts in working with parents and the community to create opportunities for the learning and use of MTL.

65. In addition, MOE will also work with the National Library Board (NLB) to promote reading for children in community libraries. Furthermore, we will review the curriculum guidelines for kindergartens and childcare centres for alignment with the direction of the Committee’s recommendations (e.g. help children build good oracy foundations through songs, rhymes and games).

66. Beyond the efforts of schools and community groups, parents can play a key role in creating a home environment for their children to learn MTL. Early exposure to spoken MTL and the use of MTL at home and with relatives provide children with stronger foundations for formal learning in school. Parents would be encouraged to participate in the schools’ MTL Fortnights where possible, and to take advantage of the various programmes organised by public libraries and community groups.

13 The 2010 survey found that the majority of parents, regardless of home language background, acknowledge the importance of learning MTL and are supportive of their children’s MTL learning. The three Committees should leverage on this high level of parents’ support to enhance MTL learning.
D) Deploying and Developing More MTL Teachers

67. The Committee’s recommendations will require more MTL teachers. Good teachers are key to the delivery of quality teaching and learning in the classroom. While we have a dedicated corps of MTL teachers in Singapore, more are needed. We will step up recruitment efforts and groom more potential MTL teachers.

68. An additional 500 MTL teachers will be deployed to schools by 2015. The additional teachers will help to support the implementation of the MTLRC recommendations.

69. We will strengthen teacher training and in-service professional development to enable our MTL teachers to meet the learning needs of students with different MTL abilities and home language environments.

Growing the Pool of Potential MTL Teachers

70. The various initiatives to develop students with the ability and interest to pursue MTL at a higher level will help to grow and strengthen the pool of students who could become future MTL teachers. MOE will also encourage more students to read Mother Tongue Language and Literature (MTLL) at H2 and H3 levels and continue to offer more teaching scholarships and awards.

Broadening Recruitment Pathways

71. Currently, high performing A-Level students with good grades in H2 or H3 Mother Tongue Language and Literature and who demonstrate an interest in MTL teaching may be offered the Overseas Teaching Scholarship (Specialist). To broaden the potential catchment of MTL teachers, MOE will also open applications to candidates with good O-Level HMTL or A-Level H1 MTL results and have the aptitude and interest to be MTL teachers.

Strengthening Pre-Service and In-Service Training

72. Pre-service teacher training and in-service professional development will be further enhanced to support the implementation of the Committee’s recommendations, including the use of different pedagogical methods to deliver customised approaches at the primary level, and more proficiency-oriented teaching and assessment across the board.

73. MOE will continue to work closely with the National Institute of Education (NIE), the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language (SCCT), the Malay Language Centre of Singapore (MLCS) and the UPTLC to strengthen professional development for MTL teachers.

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14 Some of the increase will be part of MOE’s overall plan to add 3,000 more teachers to the teaching force by 2015.
15 In line with the Committee’s recommendations on curriculum, pedagogy and assessments, more structured training and support will be provided in areas such as the explicit teaching of language skills, differentiated and structured pedagogical approaches, designing of ICT-integrated lessons and authentic assessments.
74. A summary of the Committee’s recommendations and the intended implementation timeline is attached at Annex G.

**CONCLUSION**

75. The Committee affirms the importance of bilingualism as a cornerstone of our education policy. To maintain our bilingual policy and respond to the changing home language environments, it is necessary to refresh and update our approach to the teaching and learning of MTL from time to time.

76. The Committee sees the objectives of MTL education for our children as helping our young to acquire the necessary proficiencies to communicate, to appreciate our culture, and to establish connections with other communities in Asia and beyond. We aim to develop proficient language users who can communicate effectively using the language in real-life contexts and in various forms - inter-personal communication, listening and reading for comprehension, as well as presenting in spoken and written forms. Students will continue to be exposed to culture and values through MTL.

77. The Committee acknowledges the fine work done by our corps of dedicated MTL teachers. It recognises that its recommendations build on the good work of previous reviews. In the areas of teaching and learning, the Committee recommends enhancements to the customised approach for different groups of students, taking cognisance of their different starting points. Clearer descriptors of the desired language proficiencies at key stages will be used to guide teaching, learning and assessment. There will be updates and refreshing of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment for MTL, all with the aim of making MTL a living language, not just an examinable subject.

78. More MTL teachers will be provided, and training will equip our MTL teachers to implement the new initiatives. More pathways will be opened for individuals strong in their MTL and interested in becoming teachers to take up teaching of MTL as a career.

79. Schools, homes and the wider community need to work in concert, to create opportunities for students to be immersed in an environment conducive to MTL learning. To this end, MOE will enhance its support for the good work of the community groups, working hand-in-hand with schools. Parents can help by exposing their children to MTL regularly and from their early years.

80. Our people’s proficiency in English and their MTLs has contributed in no small means to creating Singapore’s distinctiveness and competitive edge. The recommendations in this report represent another step in the continuous innovation required to keep our MTL education relevant for our nation and citizens. It is only with this mindset of continuous improvement and innovation that we can ensure that we will keep this precious asset for future generations of Singaporeans.
CHAPTER 1

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE
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THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

BILINGUALISM AS CORNERSTONE

1. Bilingual education in English (EL) and the Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs) remains imperative for Singapore. It is a cornerstone of Singapore’s education system. EL, as the common language of instruction, enables all our students to plug into a globalised world. Economically, it has built an environment conducive for international business here.

2. The learning of MTL for the various ethnic groups has provided a link to their heritage and Asian roots. Furthermore, with the rise of China and India, and the integration of ASEAN, learning MTLs will gain increasing relevance and provide our students and companies with a competitive edge. Asia is the fastest growing region in the world, a trend which is expected to continue for the next few decades. Within Southeast Asia, a good grounding in Malay will allow our people to plug into our immediate region with ease. Farther afield, with the rise of China, a good command of Chinese will open up vast opportunities for our younger generation. Tamil, being one of the oldest living languages of India, serves as a gateway for our citizens to access growing markets within India and other parts of the South Asian continent.

3. Collectively, the learning of EL and MTL by the different communities has shaped Singapore into a cosmopolitan city that embraces multi-lingual and multi-cultural diversity, attracting people from both the East and the West.

4. Bilingualism is a key strength of Singapore that we would do well to preserve. To do so, we will need to continually review and refresh our approach to teaching languages to take into account changes within Singapore as well as broader shifts in the region and beyond. As such, over the last two decades, MOE has conducted three major reviews of the MTLs in 1991, 1999 and 2004-5.

MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGES REVIEW COMMITTEE (MTLRC)

5. Even as we affirm the vital role of bilingualism in our education system, MOE is mindful of the trends and developments within and beyond Singapore. The 2010 MTL Review was motivated by two such trends. First, the language environment in homes of Singaporeans is evolving and will result in a wider range of linguistic exposure and abilities with regard to MTL compared with previous cohorts who grew up in a different language environment. Second, advances in the understanding and practice of teaching languages have occurred in other countries, as increasingly more people want to learn a second language due to globalisation and the rise of

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16 The review in 1991 was for Chinese Language only.
17 The recommendations of the 2004 Chinese Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee, and the 2005 Malay Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee and Tamil Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee have been implemented for the primary levels. The secondary-level curricular reforms will be rolled out in 2011.
India and China. Concurrently, innovations in information technology (IT) devices and software have also expanded the options to enhance the teaching and learning of languages.

6. In January 2010, the MTLRC led by the Director-General of Education was formed to evaluate these changes and their impact on our teaching and learning of MTL in Singapore. The Committee was tasked to survey best practices of language learning in Singapore as well as around the world, and to articulate the underlying beliefs and philosophy of MTL education in the context of today’s Singapore and a highly connected and competitive world. The Committee was also to propose appropriate strategies for MTL teaching, learning and assessment, given Singapore’s unique context.

7. Three sub-committees were formed, one each for Chinese Language (CL), Malay Language (ML) and Tamil Language (TL). The composition of and terms of reference for the Committee and sub-committees are in Annex A. In conducting its work, the Committee was mindful that it was building on the work of previous MTL reviews.

**FACT FINDING**

**Changing Language Environment in Singapore**

8. Globally, there is a rise in the use of EL, especially as the lingua franca of the Internet. The Committee sought to better define the varying proportions of the use of and exposure to EL and MTL at home and in different community settings in Singapore as this would impact the speaking and learning environment of MTL for our students. It also sought to assess the impact of the new curricula and teaching approaches introduced after the 2004-5 MTL reviews. To help inform the Committee in its review, the Ministry of Education (MOE) conducted a survey of 3,799 teachers, 9,543 students and 8,815 parents. The Committee also held 19 focus group discussions with 229 school leaders, heads of department and teachers, 85 parents and 22 community leaders.

9. Information from MOE’s administrative records, the 2010 survey and focus group discussions confirmed that the home language environment in Singapore was changing and becoming more diverse. The long-term trend of English becoming a dominant language used in homes is shown by time series data collected from parents of incoming Primary 1 (P1) students over the past twenty years (see Chart 1.1). This rising trend is seen across all communities, albeit not to the same degree. Among ethnic Chinese students, the proportion of students with English as their most frequently used language at home rose from 28% in 1991 to 59% in 2010. Among Indians, the corresponding figures are 49% in 1991 and 58% in 2010. For Malays, the rise was from 13% to 37% over the same period.
While the use of EL has increased, more homes are also using both the EL and MTL. Among P6 students learning CL or TL, 38% reported using predominantly EL at home, roughly one-third reported using predominantly their MTL at home, and the remaining one-quarter to one-third reported using both EL and their MTL equally. For ML students, the use of ML at home is still prevalent (50%), with one-third using both EL and ML, and the remaining 17% using predominantly EL (see Chart 1.2).
11. Home language was found to influence students’ attitudes and proficiency in MTL: when compared with students from MTL-speaking or bilingual homes, fewer students from EL-speaking homes were found to like learning MTL. This suggested that teaching methods would need to be different for students from different home language backgrounds.

12. However, the interest to learn MTL was generally high across all three MTLs. MTL was deemed an important subject by a large majority of parents and students across all levels, with around 95% of P6 students of each MTL group believing that it was important to study their MTL. CL students cited its usefulness and importance for their future, while ML and TL students cited doing well in the subject and enjoyable lessons as important reasons for their interest in learning MTL. MTL was also seen by teachers, parents and students as important for transmitting culture and values.

13. The survey also provided indications that the efforts of previous MTL reforms were working well. It found that higher proportions of P6 students liked learning MTL in 2010 compared with earlier surveys conducted in 2004 and 2005\(^\text{18}\). For CL, there was an increase from 77% to 88%; for ML, there was an increase from 94% to 98%; and for TL, there was an increase from 92% to 95%. Generally, teachers felt that the new curricular initiatives implemented since the last MTL review were beneficial for students. Across the 3 MTLs, at least eight in ten teachers reported that the new curriculum developed for the Foundation MTL, MTL and Higher MTL courses were suitable for students.

14. The proportion of primary school\(^\text{19}\) teachers who found MOE’s MTL textbooks and instructional materials were interesting was higher than in the 2004/2005 survey (from 45% to 67% for CL, 66% to 76% for ML, and 90% to 98% for TL). Most primary school CL teachers (87%) found the new modular approach beneficial, and most primary school ML teachers (92%) reported that the use of ‘Tahap’ had met the needs of students of different ability levels. Most primary school TL teachers (85%) found the teaching of the alphabet over two years in P1 and P2 beneficial for students.

15. During the focus group discussions, parents and teachers also affirmed that the MTL reforms based on the 2004-5 reviews were headed in the right direction and were bearing fruit. Parents recognised the good work of our MTL teachers in implementing the reforms.

16. Given these positive findings, MOE will build on existing strengths to improve MTL education. Additional information from MOE’s administrative data and the 2010 survey is provided in Annex B.

\(^{18}\) The 2010 Primary 6 students were the first batch of students to benefit from the curricular enhancements recommended by the 2004-5 MTL review.

\(^{19}\) The new curriculum for secondary schools is to be rolled out from 2011.
Global Advances in Teaching of Languages

17. There is fast-growing recognition around the world that knowing an additional language confers a distinctive advantage in a highly competitive, globalised world. European countries that are officially multilingual include Belgium, Finland and Switzerland. While this is partly due to their population make-up, they emphasise the learning of more than one language so that their citizens can communicate across borders with ease. Other countries which have traditionally been regarded as monolingual, such as Australia and the USA, are also recognising the importance of learning another language in recent years. This is not merely for the sake of intellectual pursuit, but increasingly for economic and social betterment. Placed against this growing international trend, Singapore already has a head-start in providing all our students with systematic instruction in two languages during their school years.

18. The MTLRC studied developments that have occurred in other countries in language teaching, learning and assessment. Study trips were made to Australia, China, India, Malaysia, and the United States of America (USA). During these visits, the Committee met with experts and spoke with educators, parents and students to understand their progress and to pick up useful learning points.

19. Through these visits and exchanges, the Committee learned that learners in societies where the target MTL is widely spoken and used at native-level proficiency (e.g. China, Hong Kong and Taiwan for CL, Tamil Nadu for TL, Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia for ML) do not face the same challenges we face in Singapore. In these societies, students grow up in and are constantly exposed to an environment where the target MTL is used extensively in everyday life, starting from the home and continuing into school and the wider community. The learners in these societies also have much less exposure to other languages. Yet, even in this context, these countries continue to invest in making learning of their dominant language relevant, enhancing the use of new pedagogies and technologies in skilful teaching, and placing emphasis on students’ ability to communicate effectively through both oral and written forms. The Committee noted that such efforts were useful in motivating, engaging and enabling students in these countries in language learning.

20. The Committee gleaned further useful learning points about the learning of languages in a multi-lingual environment when they interacted with experts and educators who have extensive experience teaching in mixed and multi-lingual environments such as ours. Whether in a dominant MTL or multi-lingual environment, experts that the Committee met on these study trips all agreed that learning is most effective when learners are taught to use the language actively and interactively in a variety of real-life settings.

21. There was also deliberate emphasis on learning the cultures associated with languages so as to be able to connect culturally. The definition of ‘culture’ ranged from an understanding of daily customs and cross-cultural perspectives in a globalised world (e.g. greetings or cuisine), to higher-order forms such as appreciation of traditional and modern art forms and literary genres. Such cultural sharing was conducted in many modes, including story narration and ‘show and tell’.
22. The Committee noted that several systems had shaped their curriculum, teaching and testing methods around this principle of authentic learning. The teaching and learning of languages was focused largely on applying the language in real-life situations. Students were given opportunities to use the language in three communication modes: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. A typical lesson, for example, might start with the teacher introducing a list of common vocabulary items, followed by teaching sentence-building skills, and then activities such as group work to allow for interpersonal communication between students using the language as well as oral presentations.

23. To guide teaching and testing, language experts agree on the sound educational principle of stating clear expectations of what learners should be able to do at different stages of learning. In the systems studied, these expectations were scoped into clearly defined performance objectives at progressive levels. Termed proficiency descriptors, these expectations were articulated for six language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, writing, interacting in spoken forms and interacting in written forms. The direct benefits were two-fold. First, well-articulated achievement levels allowed both teacher and student to gauge the progress of language acquisition. They aided teachers in aiming for demonstrable outcomes when teaching students, and guided them in their choice and design of classroom tasks, assignments and tests. Second, the breaking down of goals into clear, progressive assessment criteria bolstered the confidence of the students so that they aspired to move on to the next stage.

24. There have also been significant advances in the use of different teaching methods and aids, particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT)-enabled platforms for more effective learning of languages.

25. The use of proficiency descriptors has implications for testing as well. For example, the Advanced Placement (AP) examination for Chinese Language and Culture is designed to measure students’ attainment of the intended levels of language proficiencies. The test is also fully ICT-delivered as ICT is used as a tool to provide authentic contexts for assessment such as requiring students to use Hanyu Pinyin text input to compose an e-mail response. This would be close to real work-life scenarios and contemporary social communications.

26. The curricula of the countries visited also sought to develop strong oral and aural foundations in students, which paved the way for greater success in reading and writing. This was particularly important for students who did not come from MTL-speaking home environments. Writing tasks were then gradually phased in to make the learning of MTL less daunting for beginning learners of the language.

27. Some systems identified a basic corpus of commonly-used vocabulary that would form the foundation for learners to build their vocabulary. This enabled new students to master more words and phrases in a shorter amount of time. The repeated appearance of common vocabulary items in different contexts helped reinforce learning and built students’ confidence in learning.
28. Although the learning points were gleaned from systems teaching a second or foreign language, the Committee has assessed that they are relevant and could be useful when appropriately adapted for the context in Singapore. Our students learn two languages in school, but come from homes with diverse patterns of language use. This creates a challenging teaching environment. Teachers can leverage the prior learning of students who use the target language at home, but must also tailor their teaching for students who learn MTL as a second language. There are opportunities, but also challenges, when students learn and use multiple languages. For instance, teachers can take advantage of, say a students’ EL facility to introduce new vocabulary in MTL (i.e. use the bilingual approach in teaching), but they must also help students to understand the differences in grammar rules and sentence structures between EL and the MTL.

29. Certainly, there are differences between Singapore and the other systems studied. In Singapore, Mother Tongue instruction is well-supported and resourced by the Ministry of Education. There is a national curriculum and assessment system, teachers are recruited centrally and deployed across schools, and textbooks and other instructional materials are developed for schools. There is also strong societal support for bilingualism across the generations, and we continue to have an MTL-speaking environment in different segments of society and in the media. These give us an edge over countries where the learning of two languages is not compulsory and language education suffers from a lack of resources.

30. Summing up, the Committee is of the view that we must evolve our own approach to MTL education in Singapore, one that recognises our unique local context and considers the different starting points of different learners.
CHAPTER 2

THE WAY FORWARD
- ACTIVE LEARNERS,
PROFICIENT USERS
CHAPTER 2
THE WAY FORWARD
- ACTIVE LEARNERS, PROFICIENT USERS

PURPOSE AND GOALS OF MTL LEARNING

1. Our bilingual policy has traditionally positioned MTL as a means of staying culturally rooted, and EL as a means to connect with the world. While these remain relevant, developments in Singapore and around the world point to a need to refresh our concept of what the goals of bilingual education should be.

2. Educationally, we must situate our bilingual policy within the broader goals of education as set out in the Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE). In addition to MTL’s important role in cultural transmission, we should place appropriate emphasis on equipping students with the skills to apply their MTL in real life settings and to use it for communication. As an integral part of the national curriculum, MTL education has to be aligned with the DOE to produce Confident Persons, Self-directed Learners, Concerned Citizens and Active Contributors.

3. This understanding also resonates with global developments. Across different education systems, the ability to use a second language and the possession of cross-cultural literacy are increasingly regarded as necessary 21st Century competencies in a globalised world.

4. Guided by these considerations, the Committee has articulated more clearly the purpose and direction of MTL teaching in our schools.

5. The Committee proposes that the key purpose of MTL education would be to strengthen the communication skills of our younger generation, to cultivate cultural awareness and appreciation of their roots, and to enable young Singaporeans to connect with similar language communities across Asia and the world.

6. We teach MTL to achieve three broad objectives:

   a. Communication – As spelt out in the DOE, a key outcome is for our students to be able to think critically and communicate their ideas confidently, in both written and spoken forms. Proficiency in both MTL and EL will equip them with the tools they need to present their ideas with impact, thereby contributing to confidence-building. It is an essential 21st Century competency that will give our young a competitive edge in a globalised world.
b. Culture - Culture and language are closely linked. This close relationship makes language a vehicle for the transmission of values and beliefs that are shaped by the culture of the society. MTL education at the national level therefore strengthens bonding within each community, and reinforces the individual’s sense of cultural heritage. For our ablest learners, some of whom will become our future teachers and journalists, MTL is a useful vehicle for achieving a deeper appreciation of culture, history and values, because the essence of much cultural inheritance (namely traditions, customs, philosophy and literature) is best imbibed in its original language form. For the majority, MTL will enable a better understanding of Chinese/Malay/Tamil culture in the context of Singapore and Asia.

c. Connection - As more Singaporeans seek out opportunities to work or study overseas, proficiency in both MTL and EL, and the knowledge of the cultures associated with these languages, gives them a distinct edge in understanding other mindsets. It facilitates their transition into new environments, and makes it easier for them to understand other cultures in relation to their own.

7. Our educational goal remains to help each student to learn MTL to as high a level as he is able to.

ENHANCING MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE LEARNING – DIRECTION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

8. To achieve these objectives, MOE will need to update teaching and testing approaches to better cater to students who come from different home language environments. There is also a need to work with the wider community to create environments in and beyond schools that are conducive to MTL learning and use. In this way, we can make MTL directly relevant to students — a living language and not just an examinable subject.

9. Based on the survey findings and feedback from our stakeholders, the MTL reforms based on the 2004-5 reviews are in the right direction and are bearing fruit. We recognise the good work of our MTL teachers in implementing the new MTL curriculum and will continue to build on existing strengths.

10. The Committee recognises that in order to help everyone learn MTL to as high a level as he is able to, our teaching methods need to be customised, and will have to take into account the different home language backgrounds and language learning abilities of students, especially in the early years when foundations for language learning are laid. The MTL curriculum should be designed and taught to develop proficient users who can communicate effectively using the language in real-life contexts, such as in inter-personal communication. Core skills such as listening and reading for comprehension remain important, even as we spur our students on to higher proficiencies and encourage them to effectively present their ideas in the MTLs in both spoken and written forms. Students will also continue to be exposed to culture and values through the teaching of MTL.
11. To facilitate this proficiency-oriented approach, MOE will provide language proficiency descriptors to guide teaching, learning and assessment. Such proficiency descriptors will help students to better understand their strengths in MTL learning, as well as provide parents and teachers with clear targets for their children and students to strive towards. Assessments will be aligned with the curricular changes to improve language proficiency. We will also increase the meaningful use of ICT platforms in teaching, learning and testing.

12. While the key changes will help all learners, the Committee also examined ways to meet the needs of two specific groups of MTL learners - those with high ability in MTL and those who face greater difficulties in learning MTL. Enhancements in customised provisions are proposed for both groups.

13. Overall, the Committee proposes four key recommendations to improve our MTL teaching and learning, which are elaborated in later chapters:

   a. Aligning teaching and testing to achieve proficiency (Chapters 3 and 4);

   b. Enhancing different provisions for learners of different abilities (Chapter 5);

   c. Creating an environment conducive to MTL usage and learning (Chapter 6); and

   d. Deploying and developing more MTL teachers (Chapter 7).
CHAPTER 3

ALIGNING TEACHING AND TESTING TO ACHIEVE PROFICIENCY (PART 1) - CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY
CHAPTER 3
ALIGNING TEACHING AND TESTING TO
ACHIEVE PROFICIENCY (PART 1)
- CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

CURRENT SITUATION

1. We have a diverse range of learners. Not all students learn at the same pace, have a natural aptitude for language learning or share a similar home language environment. Therefore, a differentiated approach for MTL teaching has been adopted to cater to the varying language abilities and home language backgrounds of students.

2. The 2004-2005 MTL reviews recognised the need to customise instruction starting from Primary 1 (P1), given the increasing proportion of students using predominantly EL at home. For CL, MOE has implemented a modular curriculum starting in P1 and P2. All students take Core modules, designed to occupy 70%-80% of CL curriculum time. Bridging and Reinforcement modules cater to students who enter school with little exposure to CL or require additional support for the Core modules. Students with the ability and interest, study the language at a higher level through Enrichment modules. For ML and TL, teachers employ differentiated teaching strategies to meet the varied needs of students. In addition, graded levels of attainment ('Tahap') are used to guide differentiated instruction for ML.

3. The new MTL curricula arising from the 2004-2005 reviews were implemented from P1 in 2007 and implemented across all primary levels from 2010. Over the past few years, encouraging outcomes of the implementation of the new MTL curricula have been noted, attesting to the use of more engaging pedagogies by teachers, greater engagement among students and improved oral proficiency (see Box 3.1 for details).

Box 3.1: Research Studies on Outcomes of the New MTL Curricula

Chinese Language

(a) In 2006, the Centre for Research Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP) of the National Institute of Education (NIE) conducted a classroom observation study entitled ‘Chinese Language Pedagogical Experiment: A Comparative Study of Classroom Practices in Singapore’ to examine the impact of the modular curriculum on teachers’ pedagogical practices and on students’ learning. The study compared 291 lesson units from 6 schools piloting the modular curriculum against 6 other (non-pilot) schools, and found that teachers using the modular curriculum organised more interactive learning activities to enhance students’ learning. Students also showed higher levels of engagement in their lessons.
Box 3.1 (continued)

Chinese Language

(b) Another study by the Chinese Department, Nanyang Technological University in 2008 involving 2,500 Primary Three students from 22 schools revealed that students in the modular curriculum demonstrated better character recognition than their peers in the control group. Those who took the Bridging modules also demonstrated a better grasp of content and sentence structures as compared to their peers under the previous curriculum.

(c) In 2008, a study conducted by CRPP, NIE involving 600 Primary Four students from schools with a high proportion of students from English-speaking homes (e.g. Anglo-Chinese School Junior) concluded that the modular approach had been effective in improving Chinese Language oral proficiency among these students. A follow-up study entitled ‘Chinese Language Oral Competence of Primary School Students’ in 2010 further concluded that the new Chinese Language curriculum was more effective in improving students’ oral performance and learning interest, particularly for students from an English language background. Higher oral proficiency test scores were associated with better perceptions of the CL class environment and students’ motivation.

Malay Language

In 2009, a study by Malay Language Unit/Curriculum Planning and Development Division, MOE on the new Malay Language primary curriculum revealed that more than 75% of teachers implemented appropriate differentiated instruction strategies (such as flexible groupings, tiered assignments and learning activities, and varied questioning) to help enhance students’ learning. More than 80% of the teachers responded that ‘Tahap’ implementation was better able to meet the different learning needs of students.

Tamil Language

In 2009, a study by Tamil Language Unit/Curriculum Planning and Development Division, MOE on the new Tamil Language curriculum noted that 90% of TL teachers commented that under the new TL curriculum, students used Spoken Tamil more frequently. Results also indicated that the new approach to alphabet instruction (where alphabet instruction is spread out over 2 years instead of 1¾, and the letters have been re-sequenced) which integrated with basic Spoken Tamil, had enabled 92% of students to better identify the TL letters and 87% of students to better able to read age appropriate story books without much assistance from teachers.
CUSTOMISED CURRICULUM CATERING TO DIFFERENT HOME BACKGROUNDS

4. Moving ahead, in view of the trends of language use in homes, the Committee is of the view that the teaching of MTL should be further customised to meet the learning needs of our diverse student profile.

5. MOE will expand and build on the customised teaching approaches arising from the 2004-5 MTL reviews. Our MTL curriculum will continue to adopt appropriate approaches especially during the foundation years in primary school, recognising that students come from different home language environments. In the early primary years, schools will place more emphasis on recognising students’ different starting points and addressing their learning needs to help them develop confidence in learning the language. We will offer more help and support to those with little or no foundation to help them develop confidence in learning the language, while helping to stretch those who are more able or have stronger foundations in MTL. In the upper primary years, students will continue to have the option of offering MTL at the Foundation, Standard or Higher levels.

RECOGNISING DIFFERENT STARTING POINTS - TEACHING APPROACHES

6. From its study trips and literature review, the Committee has gleaned useful learning points about the learning of languages. Language learning is usually the result of both explicit direct instruction in the rules and conventions of language use (e.g. grammar and expression), as well as exposure to naturalistic situations and settings where the target language is used. In formal instruction, emphasis is often placed on learners having conscious knowledge of the target language and being able to talk about that knowledge. On the other hand, where language learning is through naturalistic settings, more focus is placed on the communicative aspect, especially for young children. To learn the language in the initial stages, the learner needs to first receive comprehensible input (e.g. through the use of words and phrases that the learner can understand readily from their familiar context) and have opportunities to use the language meaningfully in natural interaction. Where appropriate, this is supplemented by explicit language support such as pictures and helping words.

7. Based on discussions with language experts and practitioners, it is clear that oracy is the natural foundation for language learning. Children learn their first language through listening to care-givers and adults in the family, and then speaking, before they encounter formal learning in school. Hence, for beginning learners and those who need more support in MTL learning, the teaching approach will be to first build the oracy foundation before they learn reading and writing. There should be more systematic teaching of oral vocabulary and sentence structures to develop students’ foundational language skills, taking into consideration their different starting points. Explicit instruction will be delivered in ‘small doses’ embedded within meaningful contexts and interspersed with engaging activities to avoid becoming repetitive drills.
8. For students who have some foundation in MTL, the teaching approach will build on the oral skills they possess, and help them progress to reading and writing.

9. Research has also shown that to learn a language to a reasonable proficiency, learners need to be provided with opportunities to use the language for authentic purposes\textsuperscript{20}. While the teaching of a language through the use of instructional resources (such as textbooks) is important, the authentic use of the language by the learner is essential for language development. If students are aware that they are expected to make use of the target language in class to accomplish tasks that they can expect to encounter in everyday life, they will pay more attention to what they hear and read, and process what is being taught to them more meaningfully. They will also take note of useful features of the language that are applicable to some of the real-life situations that they encounter. **The teaching and learning of languages should therefore focus largely on applying the language in real-life situations** (which could include situations such as conversations, oral presentations and responding to email).

10. An affirming learning environment will motivate students, especially weaker ones, to learn MTL and to achieve as high a level of proficiency as they are capable of. This will be done through the use of praise, feedback and other motivational strategies in the classroom. For beginning learners with little MTL home language exposure, the use of the Bilingual Approach will alleviate anxiety and ease students into learning MTL. In this approach, EL is used, where appropriate, to explain difficult terms or unfamiliar contexts to help students understand better.

11. Noting the various important considerations, the Committee recommends that **appropriate lesson sequences be developed to support teachers in sharpening pedagogies to meet the diverse learning needs of students**. For lower primary students and those with little foundation in MTL, the learning of oracy will precede the learning of reading and writing, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 (see details in Box 3.2). For students with a stronger foundation in MTL (i.e. those who have already acquired some knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure), learning could proceed from reading to oracy and writing activities (alternative lesson sequence is in Annex C). Oracy learning will provide weaker students with adequate support to build up their foundational language skills.

Figure 3.1: Lesson Sequence 1 – Oracy precedes reading and writing
(For lower primary students and those with little foundation in MTL)

Box 3.2: This section outlines the key features of the proposed lesson sequence where oracy learning takes precedence at the lower primary levels for learners with little or weak MTL foundation.

Lesson Trigger:
Each lesson unit will begin with simple activities (e.g. short video clips) which tap students’ prior knowledge and experience, thus setting the learning context. Students may be prompted to talk about the video content and thus be familiarised with the context. These trigger activities will help engage and ease students into learning.

Oracy Learning:
Oracy learning begins with a listening activity. Students will first listen to an audio recording (e.g. story narration, conversation, children’s songs and rhymes) or watch a video. Teachers could ask questions to help focus their attention on specific language items to be learned. This will be followed by explicit teaching of oral vocabulary and sentence structures. This process will be aided by the appropriate use of pictures, objects, interactive resources, and the Bilingual Approach, if specific explanations in English are needed.
Box 3.2 (continued):

Oral practice set in authentic contexts will help students make connections to the real world, and encourage them to use the language in everyday life. Students will practise both the presentational and interactive aspects of communication using the oral vocabulary, sentence structures and language skills that they have learnt. These aspects involve the use of both spoken production and interaction skills which are pertinent to everyday communication.

Presentation procedures include guided speaking, show-and-tell and oral presentations. Interactive oral practice will include role-play, pair/group discussion or the ‘Question-and-Answer’ segment after a presentation where students have the opportunity to be engaged in interactive communication. These activities will be supported by the use of skilful questioning and feedback techniques by the teacher as well as self and peer assessment processes.

Reading and Writing
Reading and writing are integral parts of the MTL curriculum. Reading and writing activities will be built up primarily from the students’ oral/listening activities so that they could learn the skills based on their oracy foundation. The same set of oral vocabulary and sentence structures learnt in oracy lessons will be reinforced and this will further aid their learning.

Teacher-assisted reading will be carried out in the initial years through the use of engaging reading materials to provide students with an early start in reading. Reading activities will also be supplemented by oral activities such as group discussions or oral presentations relevant to the story. Similarly, writing activities could be preceded by oral activities and dramatisation for students to verbally present their ideas or to visualise a sequence of events before expressing themselves in writing.

For CL, a repertoire of character recognition strategies such as rhythmic and character logic approach will be used where appropriate to strengthen character recognition and hence, reading. The rhythmic approach appeals to the auditory senses whilst the character logic approach helps students appreciate the meaning of characters through pattern recognition.

For ML, we will continue the use of ‘Tahap’ to enhance students’ reading ability. For TL, the Tamil alphabet instruction will continue to be integrated with oracy especially songs and rhymes. The firm foundation in TL alphabet will help to strengthen reading. Spoken Tamil will be the main medium of instruction in all TL classrooms across all levels.
STRENGTHENING INTERACTION SKILLS

12. Our MTL curriculum will aim to develop students into proficient language users who can communicate in a confident, effective and meaningful way in real-life situations. Arising from the previous MTL review, there are now a number of authentic language activities and tasks carried out during MTL lessons. Going forward, we should focus more on such activities to better develop our students in their communication skills. We will encourage language use in its various forms: inter-personal communication, listening and reading for comprehension, and presenting in spoken and written forms, whilst continuing to expose students to culture and values through the language.

13. In real-life communication, both receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) come into play. While there are some situations which require no inter-personal interaction (e.g. writing a report or silent reading), many real-life situations require spontaneous two-way communication (e.g. listening and responding orally during a conversation or reading and responding to an email in writing). As inter-personal communication accounts for a large part of everyday language use, the new MTL curriculum will place greater emphasis on interaction skills in addition to receptive and productive skills. Examples of classroom learning tasks for developing these skills are in Box 3.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3.3: Examples of Learning Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receptive skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to a story narration:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to the narration of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>success story of our track and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>field athlete, Mr C. Kunalan and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflect on the reasons for his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose an activity that you enjoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doing in your free time. Briefly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe this activity and explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>why you enjoy it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussion:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss, in small groups, which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sporting activities students in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore enjoy and why. Should we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encourage more students to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participate in these activities?</td>
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</table>
14. At all levels, the learning of MTL must lead to students applying and using the language in their lives. MOE will develop teaching resources to support teachers. Through thoughtfully designed language tasks and activities, students will be equipped more systematically with the language knowledge (e.g. oral vocabulary and sentence structures) and language skills needed for effective and meaningful communication. The use of everyday situations and contexts, current affairs and contemporary themes as well as authentic materials (e.g., reports, news articles) will provide real-world context, ensure relevance, and enable students to achieve practical language competence. By providing more opportunities for students to practise their language skills, they will also develop confidence and a sense of achievement in learning MTL.

**USING PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS TO MOTIVATE PROGRESS**

15. The existing learning outcomes focus on ‘what students should learn or know’ which may not be directly linked to the authentic use of language. In the new MTL curriculum, we will provide both learning outcomes and proficiency descriptors.

16. The proficiency descriptors will describe more comprehensively what a learner can do with the language in real-life contexts. To guide teaching and learning practices that will enhance the development of proficient language users, the proposed proficiency descriptors will more explicitly spell out the language skills and levels of attainment our students should achieve at various key stages of learning (P2, P4, P6, S2 and S4). A draft version of the proficiency descriptors at P6 and S4 is in Annex D.

17. The proficiency descriptors will help teachers tailor their teaching and classroom activities to create more opportunities for students to practise and use their MTL, e.g. show-and-tell, role-play and group discussion. Students will also be more motivated to progress from one proficiency level to the next.

18. This new approach will require research and development work (e.g., validation of descriptors, developing lesson exemplars, designing resources etc). Training will also be conducted for all teachers to enable them to use the descriptors meaningfully. To facilitate communication and training, exemplars of students' work demonstrating the attainment of proficiency descriptors at the various key stages will be developed so as to establish common understanding of the descriptors.

**GREATER USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

19. The 2010 survey found that across all three MTLs, students were IT-savvy and interested in using ICT to learn MTL. In recent years, MOE has developed various ICT resources such as Xue Le, Mekar Dalam Talian and Engum Tamilosai to support the learning of MTL. Schools have also put in much effort to leverage ICT in MTL instruction. These include the use of web 2.0 tools (e.g. wiki and online forums), electronic dictionaries and mobile devices (e.g. mobile phones).
20. Going forward, we should take advantage of our students’ familiarity with, and regular use of ICT, for the learning of MTL. Harnessing the power of ICT and interactive tools extends students’ learning beyond the classroom and would help to make concepts or explanations easier to understand. The use of computer and internet resources, together with face-to-face teaching, also allows for greater interaction between students and teachers through real-time communication. In addition, the greater use of new technologies encourages self-directed learning and trains students to be independent learners, a necessary skill for the future.

21. As computer-based writing is fast becoming the norm in the workplace and in social communication, it should be introduced to students alongside manual writing of script at an appropriate stage. Writing script is a core skill that will continue to be taught, as it lays the foundation for the learning of MTL. Recent studies\(^\text{21}\) have shown that when learning a language, manually writing out the script of the language will better register the forms of the words as compared to typing them out. This memory effect will be stronger in a logographic script like Chinese. In the new MTL curriculum, provision will be made for students to engage in both manual writing of script and computer-based MTL writing. Both methods should be taught judiciously to engage students for more effective outcomes.

22. Currently, students are comfortable typing out their thoughts in MTL on a computer: CL students use the hanyu pinyin typing software. ML students use common word-processing applications like Microsoft Word for writing tasks as ML uses the romanised script. For TL, students use the standardised Tamil 99 keyboard which can be used with many standard software packages, including all MS Office programmes. Computer-based writing tasks will also be incorporated in the ICT-based learning packages which will be developed to support the implementation of the MTL curriculum.

**RESOURCE SUPPORT AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

23. To support teachers, there will be a web-based MTL oracy portal to strengthen oracy learning. The oracy portal will facilitate day-to-day oracy learning in the classroom through task-based activities (e.g., a situational dialogue or an interview). The portal will enable teachers to listen to audio files or view the video files uploaded by students and provide timely and constructive feedback to help students improve their oral skills. In addition, peer feedback (facilitated through the use of simple rubrics) will be invited. Computer-assisted assessment is also available in the Chinese oracy portal\(^\text{22}\) to evaluate and analyse students’ oral pronunciation to facilitate self-directed learning.


\(^{22}\) Computer-assisted assessment will be added to the Malay and Tamil versions when the technologies are available and mature.
24. A new resource package that promotes interaction skills and greater use of ICT will also be produced. MOE will re-scope the curriculum to create time for interactive language use at all levels\textsuperscript{23}. We will encourage language use in its various forms: inter-personal communication, listening and reading for comprehension, and presenting in spoken and written forms, whilst continuing to expose students to culture and values through the language.

25. Moving forward, more research studies will be carried out to inform and refine MTL teaching and learning. MOE will engage appropriate language consultants and experts to advise and guide the developmental work. Some possible research studies to be conducted include the following:

a. Development of a corpus of daily vocabulary and sentence structures for CL/ML/TL;

b. Development and validation of the proficiency descriptors for MTL at key stages;

c. Evaluation of the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in MTL teaching; and

d. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of ICT in strengthening oracy and writing for MTL.

\textsuperscript{23} For P1-P2, there is adequate lesson time to incorporate the new package. For P3-P4, the new package will replace existing text-based materials. At P5 and P6, school-based modules (10-15% of curriculum time) will make way for use of the package. For secondary and JC levels, the new MTL syllabuses will be designed to incorporate interaction skills within the curriculum.
ALIGNING TEACHING AND TESTING TO ACHIEVE PROFICIENCY (PART 2) - ASSESSMENT
CHAPTER 4
ALIGNING TEACHING AND TESTING TO ACHIEVE PROFICIENCY (PART 2) - ASSESSMENT

OUR CURRENT CONTEXT

1. Arising from the previous MTL review in 2004-2005, new examination formats have been implemented at the PSLE, O-, N- and A-Levels to reduce rote memorisation, include more contextualised questions, and increase emphasis on oracy and language application. These assessment changes have helped enhance the learning of MTL.

2. External scans of international language assessment systems and study trips by the Committee have revealed a trend towards the testing of language skills using more authentic test items. This includes the design of practical communicative tasks whereby students are required to make both oral and written presentations, and to respond interactively in both verbal and written interpersonal communication. These findings affirmed that the 2004-2005 curricular reforms are in the right direction.

3. The Committee also noted a strong impetus towards promoting ‘assessment for learning’ in language teaching. Assessments are used not merely to evaluate students’ achievements after a specific period of learning and to assign them grades; they are also a means of gathering information about students’ progress to inform teaching and support learning. Skilful questioning, regular and timely feedback and the use of peer and self assessment are some of the useful classroom assessment strategies which should be integrated with teaching and learning to enhance students’ language learning.

4. In focus group discussions, teachers and parents were of the view that while MTL pedagogy and curriculum content had become more aligned to the promotion of language proficiency, some assessment formats seemed to have less practical relevance. Hence, there is a need to continue to align assessment with the overall goal of promoting proficient users.

5. Going forward, MOE will strengthen teachers’ classroom assessment practices and align our assessments (both school-based assessments and national examinations) to the proficiency descriptors which set out what students are expected to be able to do at key stages.

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24 MOE has increased oracy weighting for the PSLE in 2006, and for O-Level MTL / MTL ‘B’ and A-Level H1 MTL / MTL ‘B’ in 2012.

25 The former are termed ‘summative assessments’ while the latter are termed ‘formative assessments’.
STRENGTHENING CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

6. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It reveals whether students have learned and how well they have learned. ‘Assessment’ encompasses all the activities undertaken by teachers and students that provide feedback to improve future teaching, learning and performance.

7. As such, a primary purpose of assessment is to give ongoing feedback to learners on how they can improve their learning. Formative approaches (e.g. skilful questioning techniques, regular and timely feedback, self and peer assessment) should be integrated into everyday teaching and learning to help enhance students’ learning. In addition, the implementation of MOE’s web-based oracy portal will harness the power of technology to enhance the giving of feedback.

MAKING ASSESSMENT AUTHENTIC

National Examinations

8. Making assessment more authentic will ensure closer alignment between curriculum and assessment.

9. Currently, O-Level Higher MTL (HMTL) students are assessed in their oral skills when they offer the O-Level MTL examination at the end of S3. There is no oral examination requirement for O-Level HTML. As it is important for our HMTL students to have good oral communication skills, the Committee recommends that oral assessment be included as part of the O-Level HMTL examination from 2016. This will align testing with curriculum, and motivate HMTL students to develop strong oral proficiency.

10. Apart from the addition of an oral component to O-Level HMTL, the current structure of examinations and their relative oral and written components are appropriate and will be retained.

11. Within this overall structure, there is room to adjust assessment items (i.e. the types of questions) to incorporate the testing of interactive communication skills, to enhance the context for authentic application of language skills, and to incorporate the use of ICT. With the addition of new items, certain existing items can be reduced, in order to maintain the current overall difficulty level. The following changes will be made:

   a. Video clips, instead of line drawings, will be used as stimuli for oral examinations. These will provide more engaging and realistic contexts for conversation.

   b. New item types to test interaction skills will be developed. Possible item types include rejoinder questions (i.e. choosing the appropriate response to insert in a dialogue) and composing messages or emails for a specified context. See examples in Boxes 4.1 - 4.3.

   26 The distinction between what is expected of an MTL student and an HMTL student at O-Level in terms of oral skills will become more clearly articulated with the development of proficiency descriptors.
c. In addition to essay writing, the use of e-dictionaries and dictionaries\textsuperscript{27} will be extended to new tasks testing written interaction (e.g., writing an email response to a stimulus) in examinations.

d. In line with the use of ICT-enabled pedagogy, computer-based writing will be introduced in selected sections of secondary and JC level examinations (e.g., written interaction items). Implementation will start with groups which have smaller candidatures. Once assured of the technical and examination administration aspects, this can be progressively expanded to other groups over time. (Manual writing of script remains an integral part of language learning, especially at primary levels as it helps to strengthen word recognition and spelling. Also, keyboarding skills may not be well-developed among all primary school students. Hence, the Committee does not recommend that computer-based writing be tested at the PSLE.)

\textbf{Box 4.1: MCQ Rejoinder Question for students to choose the most appropriate response to complete a dialogue.}

根据对话的内容，选择适当的回答。

大卫：妈妈，今晚我可以去明华的家吗？
妈妈：为什么你要去他家？
大卫：今天是他的生日，大家要替他庆祝。
妈妈：好的。不过，你别玩得太晚啊！
大卫：__________________________

问题 大卫接下来会怎样回答？

A. 放心，我会早点儿回家的。
B. 没关系，我知道怎么回家。
C. 好的，你现在来接我回家。
D. 别担心，我一定不会迟到。

\textsuperscript{27} Dictionaries are currently allowed for use in essay writing in the O-/N-/A-Level MTL examinations and the PSLE. E-dictionaries have been allowed since 2007.
Box 4.2: MCQ Message Response for students to choose the most appropriate option in response to a given context.


Nota yang manakah paling tepat jika Ali menulis kepada kakaknya?

A) Kakak,


Ali
21 Ogos

B) Kakak,

Jika Kakak pergi ke rumah kawan Kakak untuk mendapatkan maklumat di Internet, jangan lupa pulang awal untuk makan malam dengan kami, ya.

Ali
21 Ogos

C) Kakak,

Kakak jangan bimbang. Ali janji akan menghabiskan kerja sekolah dahulu sebelum bermain permainan komputer.

Ali
21 Ogos

D) Kakak,

Permainan komputer itu sungguh menarik. Lain kali Kakak cubalah dulu sebelum pergi ke rumah kawan Kakak.

Ali
21 Ogos
Box 4.3: Email Written Interaction Task for students to compose a written response to a text stimulus. Students will write their answers in the template given.

Ministry of Education

2010 Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee Report
12. Table 4.1 summarises the timeline for the changes in examination formats.

Table 4.1: Timeline for Proposed Changes in Examination Formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Examination Format</th>
<th>MTL 'B'</th>
<th>MTL/H1 MTL</th>
<th>A-Level</th>
<th>A-Level</th>
<th>O &amp; N-Level</th>
<th>PSLE</th>
<th>A-Level</th>
<th>H2 MTLL</th>
<th>O-Level</th>
<th>Higher MTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video stimuli for oral examinations</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>N.A.*</td>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>(Introduce oral exam)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard input for selected sections of exams</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>T.B.C</td>
<td>T.B.C</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>T.B.C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* H2 Mother Tongue Language and Literature (MTLL) is a content subject. It includes a literature component. There is no oral component in this examination.

T.B.C: To be confirmed, pending further studies.

13. Annex E shows the proposed format for PSLE MTL examinations in 2017 and more examples of new item types.

School-based Assessment

14. Time will be given to students and teachers to ensure there is an adequate runway from improvements in classroom teaching and learning to corresponding adjustments in school-based assessment and national examinations.

15. Schools will implement oral examinations for HMTL. School-based assessments will also incorporate more elements that test language use in familiar and authentic contexts. This can be achieved through the appropriate use of authentic stimuli (e.g. dialogues, news articles, email and video clips) to contextualise test items. Design of test items would also allow for more practical application of language skills and the demonstration of interpersonal communication skills.
16. In particular, schools will start to use video clips as stimuli for oral examinations and other
oral tasks in the classroom, instead of the still pictures and topic sentences that are currently
used. Students will converse with the examiner based on a video clip they have just viewed.
The video stimuli will provide more engaging and realistic contexts for conversation. MOE will
support schools in the use of video stimuli for school-based examinations. JCs and secondary
schools will also include computer-based writing components in MTL examinations.

17. MOE and SEAB will work together closely to ensure smooth implementation and to give
adequate lead time for students and teachers to be familiarised with the new curriculum and
assessment methods. Training for the design of new test items will be provided to support
teachers in implementing these changes. Relevant pre-service and in-service training for
teachers will also be provided to increase teachers’ capacity in designing the new assessment
items. Schools will communicate with parents and inform them of the changes before they
take effect.
CHAPTER 5

ENHANCING DIFFERENT PROVISIONS FOR LEARNERS OF DIFFERENT ABILITIES
CHAPTER 5
ENHANCING DIFFERENT PROVISIONS FOR LEARNERS OF DIFFERENT ABILITIES

1. MOE will continue to help all students, regardless of MTL abilities and home language backgrounds, to learn MTL to as high a level as they can. Our curriculum must continue to recognise that students have different starting points, and adopt appropriate approaches for different groups of students. It must also aim to ultimately develop proficient language users who can communicate effectively using the language in real-life contexts.

2. For students with the ability and interest to study HMTL, MOE’s approach is to help them develop higher levels of language proficiency and cultural knowledge. Enhancements made in past reviews have resulted in a larger proportion of O-Level students offering HMTL. Notably, the proportion of students offering O-Level HMTL has risen from 15% in 2000 to 25% in 2010. MOE will build on these positive trends to further develop students who have the ability and interest to learn HMTL.

3. At the same time, we need to help those who face difficulties in their MTL learning. As mentioned in Chapter 3, there will be enhancements to the customised approach at the primary level. At the secondary level, a different curriculum is available for those who face greater difficulties learning MTL. The MTL ‘B’ curriculum, with an emphasis on oracy skills, helps learners to communicate with confidence in their MTL. This will sustain their interest in MTL, and not discourage or turn them off. The foundation will also stand them in good stead later in life when they need to deepen their MTL learning for personal or career reasons.

DEVELOPING STUDENTS WITH THE ABILITY AND INTEREST IN MTL

4. MOE recognises the strategic value of nurturing a larger pool of Singaporeans who are effectively bilingual with a strong proficiency in both EL and their MTL, and who possess a deep understanding of the related cultures. These individuals add to Singapore’s cultural vibrancy and they can also harness their language skills and cultural understanding to make meaningful connections with the region. Some of them will use MTL to a high level in their personal and professional lives.

5. While the intent to create an enriched environment for our HMTL students is the same across all three MTL groups, the delivery model will be differentiated to accommodate differences in circumstances and student enrolment.
Higher Chinese (HCL)

6. The Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools provide an enriched learning environment for students to pursue their interest in Higher Chinese Language (HCL). They have also implemented enhanced programmes following the 2007 SAP review. In addition, four SAP schools, namely, Dunman High School, Hwa Chong Institution, Nanyang Girls’ High School and River Valley High School, offer a four-year (Sec 3 to JC2) Bicultural Studies Programme (Chinese) [BSP(C)] to groom bilingual and bicultural Singaporeans who are able to engage and relate to both China and the West. A 10th SAP school was also started as a result of the 1999 MTL review.

7. At pre-university level, five schools/junior colleges offer the Chinese Language Elective Programme (CLEP) to nurture local bilingual talents who can appreciate Chinese language and literature. They are Dunman High School, Hwa Chong Institution, Jurong JC, Nanyang JC and Temasek JC. The CLEP, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2010, has contributed much towards grooming language talents for both the public and the private sectors. Notably, a number of graduates from the CLEP have made significant contributions in the teaching and media professions.

Establishing an 11th SAP school

8. The SAP programme has proven effective in cultivating students' interest in CL-related studies as students from SAP schools are well represented among junior college students who take up Chinese-related subjects such as China Studies and General Studies in Chinese, as well as the CLEP. SAP schools have also groomed many cultural transmitters (e.g. Lianhe Zaobao journalists) and language specialists (e.g. CL teachers) for the Chinese community in Singapore. The rising importance of China and the increase in proportion of students offering HCL suggest that there is room to expand the provision for students who have the interest and ability to offer CL at a higher level to benefit from a culturally enriched learning environment.

9. The Committee feels that it is timely for MOE to increase accessibility to the SAP programme by establishing an 11th SAP school. The additional SAP school will provide more students with an enriched learning environment for HCL.

Enhancing the Chinese Language Elective Programme

10. To encourage more secondary school HCL students to continue offering CL at a higher level upon progression to the JCs, MOE will enhance the CLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion programmes and organising a series of CLEP lectures to further develop their language proficiency as well as deepen their understanding and appreciation of related culture and history.

28 MOE announced in November 2010 that Nan Chiau High School would be a SAP school from 2012.
Additional Insertion Point for BSP(C)

11. The curriculum and extended overseas immersion programmes in the BSP(C) will provide students with extensive opportunities to experience and understand contemporary China. The BSP(C) is currently offered at Sec 3 in four schools. To increase access to the BSP(C), an additional insertion point at JC1 in BSP(C) schools will be introduced. The BSP(C) scholarship will be offered to outstanding students, and the JC1 scholars will have the opportunity to participate in immersion programmes in China or other Chinese-speaking societies.

Introduction of new A-Level Chinese Linguistics and Translation Subject

12. The Committee recognises that the continued economic growth of China has resulted in an increased demand for translation services in both the public and the service sectors (e.g. media, business and tourism). A focus on linguistics will also nurture students with an appreciation of the construct of the Chinese language. Some of these students could become future CL teachers. Hence, MOE will introduce a new A-Level subject, Chinese Linguistics and Translation at the H2 level, in selected schools from 2015. Given its practical value, this new subject, should have strong appeal for students who have a high ability in the language. MOE will explore offering equivalent subjects for Malay and Tamil if there is sufficient demand.

Higher Malay (HML)

13. Over the past few years, to make HML more accessible, MOE has expanded the number of secondary schools and centres offering HML from 13 in 2005 to 39 in 2011.

14. Two autonomous schools, namely, Bukit Panjang Government High School and Tanjong Katong Secondary School, host the Elective Programme in Malay Language for Secondary Schools (EMAS). EMAS brings together a critical mass of HML students and provides them with an enriched environment to develop proficiency in ML and a deeper understanding of Malay language and culture. It aims to encourage them to eventually become cultural transmitters in areas such as teaching, journalism and the arts.

15. At the JC level, Innova JC and Tampines JC offer the Malay Language Elective Programme (MLEP) to groom academically able ML students to become effectively bilingual and to nurture their literary talents through a deeper appreciation of ML and literature. In 2010, the MLEP celebrated its 10th anniversary. MLEP has contributed much towards grooming language talents for both the public and the private sectors. Similar to CLEP, a number of graduates from the MLEP have made their mark in the teaching and media professions.

16. Further enhancements to the study of HML will be made.
Expanding EMAS to a Third Secondary School

17. In view of the positive outcomes of EMAS, the Committee recommends that EMAS be hosted in a third school. Anderson Secondary School will be the third school to host EMAS to give more HML students the opportunity to pursue their interest in Malay language and culture to a higher level.

Setting Up a 3rd MLEP Centre

18. MOE will improve access to the MLEP by setting up a third MLEP centre at Pioneer JC, and increase the number of MLEP scholarships available. This will help nurture more bilingual ML talents.

19. Similar to the CLEP, MOE will enhance the MLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion programmes and organising a series MLEP lectures to further deepen the students’ language proficiency as well as their understanding and appreciation of related culture and history. This is to encourage more secondary school HML students to continue offering ML at a higher level upon progressing to the JCs.

Higher Tamil Language (HTL)

20. The Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre (UPTLC) was upgraded in 2001 to be the national TL resource centre to promote the teaching and learning of HTL, and to make a wider range of enrichment activities accessible to students interested in Tamil language and culture. The centralised provision of enrichment programmes allows HTL students from different schools across the island to congregate at UPTLC to create the necessary critical mass for a quality programme to be delivered. To make HTL more accessible, MOE has also expanded the number of secondary schools and centres offering HTL over the past few years, from 9 in 2005 to 29 in 2011.

Establishing a National Elective Tamil Language Programme

21. To enhance the learning of HTL, the Committee recommends that a new National Elective Tamil Language Programme (NETP) be set up for secondary school and JC students. The UPTLC, as the national Tamil Language resource centre, is the ideal institution to house the NETP for HTL students.

22. At the secondary level, the NETP will be open to both HTL students at UPTLC and students who offer HTL in their respective secondary schools and centres. The programme will offer cultural camps, workshops and talks by TL experts, extended immersion trips to India and enrichment modules that hone the students’ language skills as well as cultivate their appreciation of Tamil literature and culture.

23. At the JC level, UPTLC will complement the JCs in providing platforms for enrichment
Summary of Enhancements

24. The measures to provide more opportunities for HMTL students to attain higher levels of language proficiency are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Enhancement and Expansion of MTL Special Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>ML</th>
<th>TL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sec</td>
<td>- Establish an 11th SAP school at Nan Chiau High School from 2012</td>
<td>- Establish a 3rd EMAS centre at Anderson Secondary School from 2012</td>
<td>- Establish a new National Elective Tamil Language Programme (NETP) at the UPTLC for secondary school and JC students to enrich their learning of Tamil language, literature and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC</td>
<td>- Provide an additional insertion point for the Bicultural Studies Programme (Chinese) [BSP(C)] at JC 1</td>
<td>- Establish a 3rd Malay Language Elective Programme (MLEP) centre at Pioneer JC from 2012</td>
<td>- Award scholarships to deserving NETP students at JC level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduce a new subject in Chinese Linguistics and Translation at the H2 level in selected JCs from 2015</td>
<td>- Increase the number of scholarships for MLEP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Enhance CLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion and organising a series of CLEP lectures</td>
<td>- Enhance MLEP by providing additional funding for overseas immersion and organising a series of MLEP lectures</td>
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MORE ENGAGING TEACHING FOR MTL ‘B’ STUDENTS

25. The MTL ‘B’ syllabus was first introduced to S3 and JC 1 students in 2001 following the 1999 CL review, to ease the learning of MTL for students who face greater difficulties learning MTL and in coping with the standard MTL syllabus. MTL ‘B’ was extended to S1 students in 2004, when MOE relaxed the eligibility criteria. From 2010, MOE has also taken measures to increase accessibility to MTL ‘B’ for students who are unable to cope with the demands of standard MTL. These include having more MTL ‘B’ centres and relaxing the eligibility criteria for A-Level MTL ‘B’.

26. Moving forward, to strengthen students’ functional competency in oral communications, MTL ‘B’ will place greater emphasis on the authenticity of contexts and materials used. More activities (including the use of ICT, role play and group discussions) and authentic materials (e.g. news articles, advertisements and ICT-based media) will be used to make lessons more engaging and help students to appreciate and use MTLs as living languages.

29 From 2010 onwards, additional CL ‘B’ Centres have been established at St. Andrew’s Secondary School and St Gabriel’s Secondary School. MOE Language Centre (Bishan) and UPTLC started to offer ML ‘B’ and TL ‘B’ respectively from 2010 onwards. Eligibility for A-Level MTL ‘B’ was relaxed from an O-Level MTL grade of E8 and below to D7 and below.
27. To ensure that the specific learning needs of MTL ‘B’ students are met, MTL ‘B’ teachers will be trained in the appropriate use of the Bilingual Approach. They will also be trained to use task-based pedagogies and to leverage ICT-based learning to enthuse these students in their learning of MTL. The Singapore Centre for Chinese Language (SCCL), the Malay Language Centre (MLCS) and UPTLC will organise training sessions to equip these teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills.

28. Furthermore, wherever feasible, changes in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment which enhance the real-life relevance of MTL will be implemented earlier, possibly by one to two years ahead of the other learners, for MTL ‘B’ students.
CHAPTER 6

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT CONducIVE TO MTL USAGE AND LEARNING
CHAPTER 6
CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT CONducIVE TO MTL USAGE AND LEARNING

1. The language proficiency of a learner is greatly influenced by the frequency of language use. Authentic usage and exposure to MTL in various spheres of a learner’s life will facilitate language acquisition. Given the changing language environment, many students now do not have as rich a home language environment to support MTL learning as past generations of students had. The Committee has thus recognised that the use of MTL beyond class time is critical to making MTL a living language for our students.

2. Much is already being done in the formal MTL curriculum to level up MTL proficiency. Beyond classroom teaching, schools could create ample opportunities for students to use MTLs as living languages outside of the classroom. Partnership with the media and other stakeholders will also help create platforms and opportunities for exposure to the MTLs. Together, schools, parents and community partners can play key roles in providing students with opportunities to be immersed in an environment conducive to the learning of MTL.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR MTL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

3. To create an environment conducive for MTL learning, schools should have structured time and programmes that encourage students to use MTL and appreciate Chinese, Malay or Tamil culture. Doing so will enhance the learning experience for students and inspire their interest in MTL. Currently, schools offer various forms of enrichment programmes to their students. Instead of organising these enrichment programmes on an ad-hoc basis, schools should adopt a more integrated approach in incorporating these enrichment programmes into their overall plans for MTL learning, so as to provide students with an immersive environment to learn and use the language.

4. The Committee makes the following four recommendations for schools to achieve this goal.

Organise school-based CL, ML and TL Fortnights

5. Schools could collaborate with community organisations and key stakeholders, including parents and alumni, to organise school-based MTL Fortnights. The MTL Fortnights will bring MTL learning into the community and the community into the school, to kindle students’ interest to use MTL. During the MTL Fortnights, a wide range of outside-class MTL activities will be provided to enable students to learn and use MTL in novel and exciting ways. The activities could include performing arts events such as drama and cross-talks, storytelling, oral presentation, talks by distinguished members of the CL/ML/TL community, games and ICT-based activities such as film animation.
Organise Mother Tongue language and cultural camps and immersion

6. Focus group discussions with teachers and parents indicated that immersion experiences have a powerful positive effect on students’ MTL learning as well as their attitudes toward MTL. Parents also suggested that more of such programmes be arranged to benefit more students, including those weak in MTL. Post-immersion activities should be arranged to reinforce learning.

7. Schools should organise Mother Tongue language and cultural camps to provide students with an immersive environment to learn and use the language. Schools should also continue to forge partnerships with overseas schools for meaningful exchanges (be it via overseas immersion trips, hosting foreign students or other forms of collaboration/interaction via ICT) to create authentic opportunities for students to use MTL with their foreign peers.

Organise structured reading programmes.

8. Reading is an integral part of language learning. In the last three years, most schools, particularly the primary schools, have started structured reading programmes. Initial results of the efforts to promote reading have been encouraging. However, more could be done to increase the provision of supplementary readers as well as to find creative ways to further cultivate the habit of reading MTL books among students. Schools could also engage community partners such as parent volunteers, reading clubs or the National Library Board to promote MTL reading activities. To ensure strong MTL reading programmes, schools will purchase more interesting and age-appropriate reading materials, set up attractive reading corners and organise wide ranging reading-promotion activities such as skit performances, book review and sharing sessions as well as story-telling festivals.

Engaging parents in MTL learning

9. Support of parents is vital to language learning and development. Schools should also encourage parents to support their children in their efforts at learning MTL. For example, schools could provide sharing platforms for parents to exchange their views on MTL and the learning experiences of their children. Schools could also provide online MTL resources which parents can freely access and use as supplementary resources to support their children in learning MTL.

10. To better support schools in implementing the above recommendations, funding will be provided to schools.

\[20\text{ In the forms of games, quizzes, project work, reflection writing etc.}\]
GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

11. Arising from the 2004-5 MTL reviews, the Committee to Promote Chinese Language Learning (CPCLL), Malay Language Learning Promotion Committee (MLLPC), and Tamil Language Learning Promotion Committee (TLLPC) were formed to rally the support of community organisations to promote the use of MTL beyond schools. Good progress has been made by these committees, and students have benefited from the variety of programmes and expertise provided by the community groups. Over the years, the MTL community organisations, including the three MTL language promotion committees, have published reading resources, organised language seminars and collaborated with media organisations to produce several key programmes to engage our students in MTL learning. The key programmes are listed in Annexes F1 to F3. Going forward, MOE and schools can do even more to tap community resources to support the MTL Fortnights and other programmes.

12. MOE will increase funding for the three MTL Promotion Committees to strengthen their partnerships with schools, the community and the media as well as to organise more programmes to support the learning and use of MTL. Specifically, the Promotion Committees should:

a. Support schools in organising activities for the CL/ML/TL Fortnights (e.g. provide resource persons and facilitate language and cultural enrichment activities);

b. Organise a variety of language and cultural enrichment activities (e.g. drama workshops, cultural camps, performing arts events, immersion programmes) in collaboration with schools;

c. Develop a wide range of age-appropriate reading materials to promote reading, and develop ICT-based resources (e.g. podcasts or vod-casts) to support MTL learning;

d. Explore with the media interesting and meaningful radio and television programmes that can be broadcast for children; and

e. Organise MTL events for the family, and seminars for parents to learn effective strategies to support their children in learning MTL.

13. In total, MOE will make available up to $45 million for schools and the MTL Promotion Committees over the next five years to support their efforts in working with parents and the community to create opportunities for the learning and use of MTL.

31 The 2010 survey found that the majority of parents, regardless of home language background, acknowledge the importance of learning MTL and are supportive of their children’s MTL learning. The three Committees should leverage this high level of parental support to enhance MTL learning.
14. Beyond the efforts of schools and community groups, parents play a key role in creating an environment conducive for their children to learn MTL. Not only will the parents shape their children’s learning experience, but will also exert a powerful influence on their children’s attitude towards the learning of the language and appreciation of the culture.

15. From the 2010 MTL survey, it is gratifying to note that the majority of parents, regardless of home language background, acknowledge the importance of learning MTL and are supportive of their children’s efforts to learn MTL. The Committee thus recommends more assistance be provided for parents so that they can better support their children in learning MTL. Besides using the sharing platforms and online MTL resources provided by schools, parents should also be encouraged to make good use of the various programmes organised by public libraries and community groups. With better support for early exposure to spoken MTL and encouragement of the use of MTL at home and with relatives, children will be able to build a strong foundation and develop the right attitude for formal learning in school.

16. During the pre-school years, children can build stronger foundations in oracy. To align the pre-school MTL curriculum with the MTL curriculum in primary schools, MOE disseminated curriculum guidelines for the teaching of MTL to all pre-schools in 2005 and 2006. MOE will review the curriculum guidelines for alignment with the direction of the Committee’s recommendations.
CHAPTER 7
DEPLOYING AND DEVELOPING MORE MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE TEACHERS

1. Good MTL teachers are key to the delivery of quality teaching and learning in the classroom. They possess the capacity to translate the curriculum into meaningful learning experiences. As exemplary language role models, MTL teachers play an important role in strengthening the communication skills of young Singaporeans and in cultivating in them a sense of cultural awareness and appreciation, which will allow them to connect with communities across Asia and the world.

2. Over the years, we have been fortunate to have had dedicated MTL teachers whose hard work and commitment have brought success to curricular reforms and nurtured generations of young Singaporeans. The Committee recognises that the continued good work of MTL teachers will help students love the language and use it for life.

3. The Committee’s recommendations will require more MTL teachers. It is necessary to invest in augmenting our corps of quality MTL teachers. We will step up recruitment efforts and grow our local pipelines of potential MTL teachers.

4. An additional 500 MTL teachers will be deployed to schools by 2015, to complement the existing corps of about 6,600 MTL teachers. The additional teachers will help to support the implementation of the MTL Review Committee’s recommendations.

5. We will also strengthen teacher training and development to enable our MTL teachers to meet the learning needs of students with different MTL abilities and home language environments.

GROWING THE POOL OF POTENTIAL MTL TEACHERS

6. The various initiatives to develop students with the ability and interest to pursue MTL at a higher level will help to grow and strengthen the pool of students who could become future MTL teachers. These were mentioned in Chapter 5. MOE will also encourage more students to offer Mother Tongue Language and Literature at H2 and H3 levels. MOE will also continue to offer more teaching scholarships and awards.

BROADENING RECRUITMENT PATHWAYS

7. Currently, high performing A-Level students with good grades in H2 or H3 Mother Tongue Language and Literature and who demonstrate an interest in MTL teaching may be offered the Overseas Teaching Scholarship (Specialist). To broaden the potential catchment of MTL teachers, MOE will open applications to candidates with good O-Level HMTL or A-Level H1 MTL results.

32 Some of the increase will be part of MOE’s overall plan to add 3,000 more teachers to the teaching force by 2015.
STRENGTHENING PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING

8. Over the past few years, MOE has set up the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language (SCCL) and the Malay Language Centre of Singapore (MLCS) to enhance the training and development of CL and ML teachers respectively. In addition, MOE has strengthened the professional development programmes for TL teachers at Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre (UPTLC). These language centres focus on in-service teacher training whilst the National Institute of Education focuses on pre-service teacher training.

9. MOE will work closely with NIE, SCCL, MLCS and the UPTLC to enhance pre-service and in-service teacher training to support the implementation of the new curriculum. In line with the Committee’s recommendations on curriculum, pedagogy and assessments, more structured training and support will be provided in areas such as the explicit teaching of language skills, the strengthening of differentiated instruction, pedagogical approaches including the use of Bilingual Approach, as well as designing ICT-embedded lessons and authentic assessments.

10. Apart from attending courses and seminars, a key way in which teachers can upgrade themselves is through professional collaboration. MTL teachers should use existing collaboration platforms such as Professional Learning Communities, to enhance their teaching approaches and strategies. In addition, MTL teachers can participate in various professional development programmes such as Action Research or Teacher Work Attachments to enrich their conceptual and pedagogical knowledge of MTL teaching and learning.

11. To move towards an all-graduate teaching service, MOE has also developed Professional Development Packages to support teachers who wish to pursue undergraduate studies. MTL teachers can apply for the packages that best meet their needs and aspirations. These include interest-free study loans, reimbursement of course fees, study grants, and study awards. For those who are keen to obtain a basic degree from local institutions, UniSIM offers part-time Bachelor of Arts programmes for CL, ML and TL, and NIE offers full-time Bachelor of Arts programmes for CL and ML.

12. A summary of the Committee’s recommendations and the intended implementation timeline is attached at Annex G.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

1. The Committee affirms that bilingualism is a cornerstone of our education policy. To maintain our bilingual policy and respond to changing home language environments, it is necessary to refresh and update our approach to the teaching and learning of MTL from time to time.

2. The Committee sees the objectives of MTL education for our children as helping our young to acquire the necessary proficiencies to communicate, to appreciate their culture, and to make connections with other communities in Asia and beyond. We should aim to develop proficient language users who can communicate effectively using the language in real-life contexts in various forms — inter-personal communication, listening and reading for comprehension, and presenting in spoken and written forms. Students will continue to be exposed to culture and values through MTL.

3. The Committee acknowledges the fine work of our corps of dedicated MTL teachers. It recognises that its recommendations build on the good work of previous MTL reviews. In the areas of teaching and learning, the Committee recommends enhancements to the customised approach for different groups of students, taking cognisance of their different starting points. Clear descriptors of desired language proficiencies at key stages will be used to guide teaching, learning and assessment. There will be updates and refreshing of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment for MTL, all with the aim of making MTL a living language, not just an examinable subject.

4. More MTL teachers will be provided, and training will equip our MTL teachers to implement the new initiatives. More pathways will be opened for individuals strong in their MTL and interested in becoming teachers, to take up teaching as a career.

5. Schools, homes and the wider community need to work in concert, to create opportunities for students to be immersed in an environment which is conducive to MTL learning. To this end, MOE will work hand-in-hand with schools to enhance its support for the good work of the community groups., Parents can help by exposing their children to their MTL regularly and from their early years.

6. Our people’s proficiency in English and their Mother Tongue Languages has contributed in no small means to creating Singapore’s distinctiveness and competitive edge. The recommendations in this report represent another step in the continuous innovation required to keep our Mother Tongue Language education relevant for our nation and citizens. It is only with this mindset of continuous improvement and innovation that we can ensure that we will keep this precious asset for future generations of Singaporeans.
COMPOSITION OF MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGES REVIEW COMMITTEE (MTLRC)

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Director-General of Education

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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MTLRC

1. Articulate the philosophy and aims underlying the teaching of MTL to different groups of learners;

2. Identify the implications of longer-term trends and developments in the language environment in Singapore for the teaching and learning of MTL;

3. Survey best practices in the teaching, learning and assessment of MTL;

4. Recommend the appropriate approach to customise MTL learning for learners of different MTL abilities;

5. Review the use of ICT in the teaching, learning and assessment of MTL;

6. Recommend appropriate enhancements to the teaching and learning of MTL. Specifically, the Committee should:
   a. Define the learning outcomes for the different groups of MTL learners;
   b. Recommend effective pedagogies to engage the interest and maximise learning of students across the spectrum of MTL ability;
   c. Recommend appropriate assessment modes and formats for the various target groups, including the greater use of computer-aided assessment; and
   d. Recommend measures to support our most capable MTL learners in achieving a higher level of proficiency.
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Mr Low Chun Meng (until March 2010)  
*Vice-Principal, National Junior College*

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*Master Teacher (CL), Singapore Centre for Chinese Language*

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Miss Ong Xu Ying Aysel  
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Miss Lee Wei Hui  
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Mr Lim Heng Lee  
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Mr Ng Teo Heng  
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Mdm Murugeswathy Ramasamy  
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Mrs Kokilavani Vassou  
*Curriculum Planning Officer (TL)*

Mrs Varalackshmi Durai  
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*Planning Officer*

Ms Marlini Fonseka  
*Planning Officer*
SURVEY FOR MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGES REVIEW 2010: KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

1. This Annex contains data collected through MOE's administrative records and the key findings from the Survey for Mother Tongue Language (MTL) Review 2010.

Data on Home Language Use Among Primary One Students

2. MOE collects data on the home language used from parents of incoming Primary 1 students during October-November of each year. Parents report on the most frequently spoken language(s) at home. More than one language may be included. Chart B1 below shows the proportion of Chinese, Malay and Indian students for whom English is the most frequently spoken language at home.

Chart B1: Proportion of Students Speaking English Most Frequently At Home

3. There has been a clear, long-term trend of increasing use of EL as the dominant home language across all communities, albeit not to the same degree. Among ethnic Chinese students, the proportion of students whose first home language is English rose from 28% in 1991 to 59% in 2010. Among Indians, the corresponding figures were 49% in 1991 and 58% in 2010. For Malays, the rise was from 13% to 37% over the same period. While the data presented pertains to ethnic groups, the trends by MTL studied in school are similar.
Survey for Mother Tongue Language (MTL) Review 2010

4. The MTL survey, administered by the Research and Evaluation Section of the Ministry of Education in March–May 2010, collected responses from 9,543 primary school, secondary school and junior college students (Singaporeans and Permanent Residents), 8,815 parents and 3,799 MTL teachers in 242 schools.

5. The main samples for each of the target levels (P2, P6, S4) were representative of the respective main populations of students taking MTL, in terms of important characteristics like course (S4 Express, NA, NT), housing type, and parents’ educational level. Besides the main samples, special interest groups (e.g. Foundation MTL students) were also included in the survey to gain a better understanding of their profile.

KEY FINDINGS

Use of MTL at Home

6. The survey findings (see Table B1 and Chart B2) showed that there was a diverse home language environment within each of the 3 MTL groups. Students could be broadly categorised into three main groups – those who spoke predominantly English at home; those who spoke predominantly MTL at home; and those who spoke both languages just as frequently at home. For Primary 6 students who were learning CL and TL, 38% of students reported using predominantly EL at home, another roughly one-third their MTL, and the remaining one-quarter to one-third both EL and their MTL equally. For ML students, the use of ML at home was still prevalent (50%), with one-third using both EL and ML, and the remaining 17% using predominantly EL.

Table B1: Language Used to Communicate with the Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of P6 students in 2010 who spoke to their family in</th>
<th>MTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only and English mostly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• English only</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• English most of the time and MTL occasionally</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English and MTL just as frequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTL only and MTL mostly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MTL most of the time and English occasionally</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MTL only</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) The figures in the table may not add to 100 due to rounding.
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE LEARNING OF MTL

Interest in Learning MTL

7. Across all levels, MTL was deemed to be an important subject by a large majority of students. More of our younger students regarded MTL as important and liked learning MTL. 90-97% of P6 students enjoyed MTL lessons in school while the proportions at S4 (76-87%) were lower. Responses on whether students liked learning their MTL showed a similar pattern between P6 and S4 (see Table B2).

Table B2: Importance and Interest in Learning MTL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of students in 2010 who</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believed it was important to study Chinese</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoyed Chinese lessons in school</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liked learning Chinese</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ML</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believed it was important to study Malay</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoyed Malay lessons in school</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liked learning Malay</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believed it was important to study Tamil</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enjoyed Tamil lessons in school</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liked learning Tamil</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents’ Perceptions

8. More than nine in ten parents regarded the learning of MTL as important. This was similar to the findings in the 2004-5 survey. Across all levels for the 3 MTLs, high proportions of parents felt that their children were interested in learning MTL (e.g. more than seven in ten parents of P2 and P6 students thought their children were interested in learning MTL).

9. About one in five parents felt that their children were spending too much time in learning MTL. At least three-quarters of parents of primary school children reported that they (or other family members) helped their children to learn MTL, mainly by speaking in MTL. Less than one in ten parents reported encouraging their children to read MTL books.

Influence of Home Language on Attitudes and Perceptions towards Learning MTL

10. Across the 3 MTLs, the analysis by home language indicated that in general, home language had an important influence on students’ attitudes in MTL. Compared with students from other home language backgrounds, fewer students from EL-speaking homes liked learning MTL (see Charts B3-B5).

Chart B3: Proportion of CL Students Who Liked Learning CL by Home Language Background

![Chart B3: Proportion of CL Students Who Liked Learning CL by Home Language Background](chart.png)
11. MTL ‘B’ students\(^2\) were predominantly EL-speaking (CL ‘B’: 78% versus 34% of all S4 students offering Chinese; ML ‘B’: 100% versus 25%) and had less positive attitudes. More than half were not confident in speaking MTL.

12. P6 Foundation MTL (FMTL) students were mainly EL-speaking (FCL: 55% versus 38% of all P6 students offering Chinese; FML: 47% versus 17%)\(^3\).

\(^2\)TL ‘B’ students were not studied as a group as their numbers were too small for meaningful statistical analysis.

\(^3\)Similarly, FTL students were not studied as their numbers were too small for meaningful statistical analysis.
Impact of Curricular Reforms arising from the 2004-5 MTL Review

Support for Reforms

13. Curricular reforms arising from the last MTL review have been implemented at the primary levels but will only be implemented at the secondary levels from 2011 onwards. Overall, there was strong support from teachers for the new MTL curriculum that was implemented in primary schools from 2007-8. Across the 3 MTLs, at least eight in ten teachers reported that the new curriculum developed for the Foundation MTL (FMTL), MTL and Higher MTL (HMTL) courses were suitable for students. Students, parents and teachers were supportive of differentiated teaching and learning programmes. Nine in ten students across the 3 MTLs agreed it was good to have different learning programmes for students of different abilities in MTL. Nine in ten parents and at least eight in ten teachers supported the need for differentiated programmes, teaching approaches, and assessments to cater to students with different abilities.

14. Teachers believed that the new curricular initiatives implemented since the last MTL review were beneficial for students:

- Most primary school CL teachers found the modular approach beneficial (87%), and the different modules (bridging, reinforcement, core and enrichment modules) suitable for students of different abilities in CL (82%-92%).

- Most primary school ML teachers reported that the use of ‘Tahap’ (92%) had met the needs of students of different ability levels in ML.

- Most primary school TL teachers found the teaching of the alphabet over two years in P1 and P2 (85%) and the structured reading programme for P3 to P6 (96%) beneficial in learning TL.

15. The curricular reforms seemed to have a positive impact on attitudes and perceptions towards the learning of MTL. Higher proportions of P6 students liked learning MTL in 2010 compared with 2004-5. The proportion of P6 CL students who reported interest in learning CL in the 2010 survey was 88%, which was an increase over the figure of 77% in the 2004-5 survey. For ML students, the proportion increased from 94% to 98% and for TL, from 92% to 95%.

---

4 The new CL curriculum was implemented at P1 and P2 from 2007 and then at P3 and P4 from 2008 whilst the new ML and TL curricula were implemented across P1-P4 from 2008.

5 With the modular approach, all primary school students take Core modules, designed to occupy 70%-80% of CL curriculum time. Bridging and Reinforcement modules cater to students who enter school with little exposure to CL or require additional support for the Core modules. Students with the ability and interest study the language at a higher level through Enrichment modules.

6 ‘Tahap’ is an achievement indicator of language proficiency skills for the basic, intermediate and advanced levels. The graded learning outcomes are described for key stages, such as at the end of P4, P6, S4 and JC2. Teachers use differentiated instruction for students to learn at their ability level and set appropriate targets for each level.

7 Alphabet instruction was carried out only in P1 under the old curriculum.
16. Following from the 2004-5 MTL review, the Bridging Module was introduced to support early CL learners with little prior exposure to CL. The module focuses on building students’ listening and oral skills so as to give them a friendly start to CL. About eight in ten parents of P2 Bridging students were happy with the customised teaching approach. The P2 Bridging students themselves enjoyed their CL lessons (83% versus 90% of P2 students in general).

**Teaching of MTL**

**Teaching Approaches**

17. Students found a variety of teaching approaches (e.g. multimedia, drama/role play, games) helpful. Some approaches were favoured by both the stronger and weaker students. For instance, both P6 HML and FML students found group work most helpful in their learning of ML. The use of English to explain Chinese words was favoured by CL ‘B’ students, most of whom were from predominantly EL-speaking homes.

**Use of Information Technology (IT) and the Media**

18. Across the 3 MTLs, primary and secondary school students were IT-savvy and interested in using IT to learn MTL. The interest level was higher at the primary level, possibly due to greater exposure to IT in primary schools.

19. Media also played a part in sustaining students’ interest in learning MTL. Across levels, at least eight in ten students reported that their interest was fuelled by their desire to enjoy MTL television programmes/movies/songs.

**Important Topics in MTL Lessons**

20. MTL was seen as an important medium for transmitting moral values. When asked what topics were important for students to learn in MTL lessons, the highest proportions (more than 8 in 10) of parents and teachers indicated ‘moral values’. More than half of students would also like to learn about moral values through MTL lessons. Other popular topics chosen by students were: stories behind idioms/proverbs; popular music/movies; and festivals and traditions.

**Expectations of Standards**

21. Most parents (more than 70%) and teachers (at least 90%) expected students to acquire basic functional proficiencies in MTL that would enable them to understand news in MTL, and converse in MTL after ten years of MTL education. Fewer parents and teachers expected students to be able to read and enjoy MTL literature.
LESSON SEQUENCE 2 – READING FOLLOWED BY ORACY AND WRITING

(FOR STUDENTS WITH SOME FOUNDATION IN MTL)

For students with some foundation in MTL (i.e. those who have already acquired a certain amount of knowledge in vocabulary and sentence structure), learning could proceed from reading to oracy and writing activities.
### DRAFT PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS FOR PRIMARY 6 AND SECONDARY 4 MTL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Primary 6 Standard MTL</th>
<th>Secondary 4 O-Level MTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>Can understand main points in daily conversations and media programmes on topics familiar to students.</td>
<td>Can make inferences from daily conversations, talks, reports and media programmes on common everyday topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Can understand main points from texts on topics familiar to students.</td>
<td>Can make inferences from texts on common everyday topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can understand a range of text types such as student newspapers, simple personal letters, newsletters, brochures, notices, advertisements and email messages.</td>
<td>Can understand a range of text types and longer texts from various sources such as magazines, newspaper and prose passages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td>Can describe a situation or share an opinion on topics familiar to students, using appropriate vocabulary and common sentence patterns. Pronunciation and intonation are accurate.</td>
<td>Can clearly describe a situation, recount details of an event or share an opinion on common everyday topics with a reasonable degree of fluency and using a suitable range of vocabulary and different sentence patterns. The opinion is supported with appropriate examples. Pronunciation is clear and accurate; sentence intonation is natural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Can use appropriate vocabulary and common sentence patterns to write a simple narrative that includes feelings and thoughts.</td>
<td>Can use a suitable range of vocabulary and different types of sentence patterns to write an essay to describe experiences and feelings or one that expresses an opinion on a common everyday topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spoken Interaction</strong></td>
<td>Can engage in conversations on topics familiar to students, asking for clarifications when unsure. Can exchange simple ideas with others in discussion.</td>
<td>Can interact with a reasonable degree of fluency on common everyday topics. Can participate in discussion on topics of personal interest, exchanging opinions with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Interaction</strong></td>
<td>Can communicate through email or simple personal letters, describing events related to familiar contexts and expressing feelings and ideas.</td>
<td>Can communicate through email and blogs, commenting on common everyday topics, using appropriate language and expressions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXAMPLES OF ITEMS FOR TESTING INTERACTION SKILLS AT PSLE

PSLE FOR MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE (PROPOSED FORMAT FOR 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>Item Types (2010 PSLE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>MCQ Listening Test (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking and Spoken Interaction</td>
<td>Oral Test:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Reading aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Describe and give simple viewpoints (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Conversation (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Topic Essay OR Picture Essay (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Written Interaction</td>
<td>MCQ Language application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MCQ Cloze Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MCQ Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free response Comprehension (45%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New or Modified Item Types to test Interaction Skills will be weaved in (20%)

- MCQ dialogue rejoinder
- Picture à Video as stimulus
  Students will engage in simple conversation with examiners based on video stimulus
- MCQ dialogue rejoinder
- MCQ message response
- Interactive email response

Note:
1) To align assessment with intended proficiency outcomes, there will be about 20% weighting for items involving interaction skills.

2) Use of dictionary or e-dictionary will be allowed for items testing ‘writing’ and ‘written interaction.”
(A) MCQ Rejoinder question: for students to choose the most appropriate response to complete a dialogue.

Pilih jawapan yang sesuai berdasarkan dialog yang diberikan.

Fazil : Ibu, boleh Fazil ke rumah Syarul petang ini?
Ibu : Untuk apa?
Ibu : Baiklah, tapi jangan pulang lewat, ya.
Fazil : ___________________________

Soalan: Apakah jawapan Fazil?
(A) Jangan risau, Ibu. Fazil akan pulang awal.
(B) Jangan risau, Ibu. Fazil akan pulang selepas itu.
(C) Baiklah, Fazil akan pulang dengan kawan-kawan yang lain.
(D) Baiklah, Fazil akan pulang selepas memberikan kejutan kepada Syarul.

\[ \text{\underline{Pilihan Jawapan:}} \]

1) \( \text{\underline{\text{A}}}) \) Jangan risau, Ibu. Fazil akan pulang awal.
2) \( \text{\underline{\text{B}}}) \) Jangan risau, Ibu. Fazil akan pulang selepas itu.
3) \( \text{\underline{\text{C}}}) \) Baiklah, Fazil akan pulang dengan kawan-kawan yang lain.
4) \( \text{\underline{\text{D}}}) \) Baiklah, Fazil akan pulang selepas memberikan kejutan kepada Syarul.

\[ \text{\underline{Pilihan Jawapan:}} \]

1) \( \text{\underline{\text{A}}}) \) Jangan risau, Ibu. Fazil akan pulang awal.
2) \( \text{\underline{\text{B}}}) \) Jangan risau, Ibu. Fazil akan pulang selepas itu.
3) \( \text{\underline{\text{C}}}) \) Baiklah, Fazil akan pulang dengan kawan-kawan yang lain.
4) \( \text{\underline{\text{D}}}) \) Baiklah, Fazil akan pulang selepas memberikan kejutan kepada Syarul.
(B) MCQ Message response: for students to choose the most appropriate option in response to a given context.

根据短文的意思，选出适当的答案。

今天，明强回到家里，放下书包后，马上开始做功课。他一做完功课，就去玩电脑游戏。
姐姐回来了，她对明强说：“弟弟，别玩电脑游戏了。你可以让我上网查点资料吗？”电脑游戏太有趣了，明强怎么肯停下来呢。姐姐没办法，只好到同学家去查资料，一直到深夜才回来，害得家人都很担心。这时，明强知道自己错了，又不好意思对姐姐说，所以写了一张字条给姐姐。

问题：以下哪一张字条是明强写给姐姐的？

姐姐：
我太自私了，害你不能查资料。对不起，请你原谅我。
明强
8月21日

姐姐：
电脑游戏真好玩，下次我一定让你先玩。
明强
8月21日

姐姐：
请你放心，以后我一定会先把功课做完，才玩电脑游戏。
明强
8月21日

姐姐：
你到同学家去找资料，要记得早点回家吃晚饭。
明强
8月21日
2010 Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee Report

| (A) | அங்காய்!  
பின்புறையை அறிவையலாம் பலரும் எழுந்தக்கணும்.  
ஏனைய மக்களும் குறிப்பிட்டலாம்.  
நாளன்று,  
கலந்தவர் பொருளிட்டும்பெறுகிறார்.  

பதக்கம் 21.8.11 |
|---|---|

| (B) | அங்காய்!  
சித்திரம் சுருங்கியோடு கைது செய்யலாம்  
குறிப்பிட்டு கைது செய்யலாம். அந்தந்த,  
சப்பாச்சாரம் பொருளிட்டும்பெறுகிறார்.  

பதக்கம் 21.8.11 |

| (C) | அங்காய்!  
மாணவர்களுக்கு அடிக்கும் போற்றாத மக்களுடன் என்று குறிப்பிட்டலாம்  
சிவப்பு குற்றாம் மையமாக இருத்தலாம்.  

பதக்கம் 21.8.11 |

| (D) | அங்காய்!  
அறிக்கை செய்து இயற்கை கோட்டை பயிற்சி செய்யலாம்  
விளையாடிய நிலையை மையமாக குறிப்பிட்டலாம்.  

பதக்கம் 21.8.11 |
(C) Email Written Interaction Task: for students to compose a written response to a text stimulus. Students will write their answers in the template given.

仔细阅读下面的通告，然后回答下面的问题。

乐文小学学生团
教师节庆祝会
通告

各位同学：

教师节就要来了。为了感谢老师们的教导，我们打算在8月31日举行教师节庆祝会。
今年是我们在小学的最后一年，大家想怎样庆祝这个教师节呢？你有什么好建议，请电邮给我。我的电邮是cgm@gmail.com。

学长团团长
陈光明
2010年8月2日

假如你是乐文小学六年级的学生林子聪，请向学长团团长陈光明提出你对庆祝会的建议。

学生在此处作答
Baca maklumat yang berikut dan jawab soalan yang mengikutinya.

Kelab Bahasa Melayu Sekolah Rendah Pelangi
Sambutan Hari Guru
Pemberitahuan

Kawan-kawan sekalian

Mohd Azhar bin Sulaiman
Presiden Kelab Bahasa Melayu
2 Ogos 2010

Sekiranya kamu Nur Atikah Azlan, murid Sekolah Rendah Pelangi, tulis sepucuk e-mel untuk memberikan cadangan kamu.

Daripada: Nur Atikah <lzc@gmail.com>
Kepada: Mohd Azhar <cgm@gmail.com>
Tarikh: 5 Ogos 2010
Subjek: Sambutan Hari Guru

Murid akan menulis jawapan di dalam ruang yang disediakan.
### KEY PROGRAMMES OF CP CLL, M L LPC AND T LLPC

#### KEY PROGRAMMES OF CP CLL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Workshop and seminar for pre-school teachers</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop kindergarten CL teaching guides</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outstanding Pre-School CL Teacher Award</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parent-Child activities on CL learning</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organise World Book Day</td>
<td>Yearly event from 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Promote reading/ set up reading clubs/ set up reading centre at CDAC/ provide reading materials to schools/ organise reading programmes and study trips</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Authors-in-residence Programme to groom budding student-writers</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Organise annual literary forums attended by more than 900 students/ members of public yearly</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Overseas Educational Exchange Programme</td>
<td>2006 – 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cultural performance exposure scheme to deepen students' appreciation of culture and performance arts</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Organise cultural immersion camps facilitated by NTU students</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>On-air Lyrics Writing Programme</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**KEY PROGRAMMES OF MLLPC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Arif Budiman</em> Teachers Award</td>
<td>On going since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Workshop and seminars for Pre-school teachers</td>
<td>2007 and 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Language quiz for Primary School, Cepat Tepat</td>
<td>2008 and 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Language quiz Competition, Kuiz Bidai</td>
<td>On going since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malay Language Camp (Primary)</td>
<td>On going since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Quatrain (<em>Pantun</em>) workshop and competition for primary schools and Quatrain Festival for JC students</td>
<td>On going since 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Writing workshop for Secondary school and JC students - More than 80 students participated. Students produced short stories and selected writings were published.</td>
<td>2007 and 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Organise Vodcast Competition, <em>Lensa Bahasa</em></td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Debating skills for JC Students (camp, workshop and competitions)</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Youth Seminar</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Literature Workshops</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### KEY PROGRAMMES OF TLLPC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tamil Language Festival for Public - A range of activities were organised to promote use of Tamil. It was well received by the public. Participation was very encouraging.</td>
<td>Yearly month-long events in April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Forums for Parents on Spoken Tamil - 9 forums for parents were organised to create awareness on the importance of Spoken Tamil. About 800 TL parents have benefited from the forums.</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Workshops for Pre-School Teachers</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Radio Jockey Programme for students to strengthen students’ oral competency</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Drama and oral presentation workshops for students</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Immersion programmes for students (Chennai, Trichy, Tamil Nadu)</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Support publications of TL readers such as ‘Symphony of Triumphs’ (a compilation of 20 true stories of Singaporeans who have thrived), TL translation of ‘Vettirin Natham’ and Big Book for Children entitled ‘Engae Vizhunthalmu’</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Podcast and vodcast Production</td>
<td>Ongoing since 2007</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX G
### TABLE OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Recommendations</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Levels Affected</th>
<th>Year of Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customised Curriculum Catering to Different Home Language Backgrounds</strong></td>
<td>Research to develop corpus of daily vocabulary and sentence structures</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training on systematic teaching of oral vocabulary and sentence patterns, especially for Primary school students who need more support in MTL learning</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance resource support (e.g., use of songs and rhymes, multimedia resources and supplementary reading materials) to cater to different learner profiles</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using Proficiency Descriptors to Motivate Learning Progress</strong></td>
<td>Develop and validate proficiency descriptors at key stages to explicitly articulate focus and levels of attainment for the respective language skills</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Development and Validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop resources to support teachers’ effective use of proficiency descriptors to guide teaching and learning</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement new instructional materials and learning resources based on proficiency descriptors</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Develop syllabus and instructional materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: X = Year of implementation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Recommendations</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Levels Affected</th>
<th>Year of Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALIGNING TEACHING AND TESTING TO ACHIEVE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Interaction Skills</td>
<td>Teacher training to strengthen the teaching of interaction skills</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resource package (including ICT-based resources) to support learning of interaction skills</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>P1-2 S1-2 JC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)</td>
<td>Web-based oracy portal to strengthen oracy learning</td>
<td>P4 - JC 2</td>
<td>P4 S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning assessment and examinations to achieve language proficiency</td>
<td>Introduce test items on interaction skills (i.e., spoken and written interaction) and allow use of dictionaries or e-dictionaries for written interaction tasks (e.g. email response)</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce oral examination in O-Level Higher MTL</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use video clips as stimuli in oral examinations</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use computer-based writing in selected sections of examinations (starting with MTL ‘B’ and then progressively extending it to other levels)</td>
<td>Secondary and JC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Recommendations</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Levels Affected</td>
<td>Year of Implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MORE SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS OF LEARNERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HCL</td>
<td>Establish 11th Special Assistance Programme (SAP) school</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance Chinese Language Elective Programme (CLEP) with lecture series and provide additional funding for immersion</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce additional insertion point for Bicultural Study Programme (Chinese) [BSP(C)] at JC 1</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce H2 Chinese Linguistics and Translation in selected schools</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HML</td>
<td>Establish a 3rd Elective Programme in Malay Language for Secondary Schools (EMAS) centre</td>
<td>Secondary/JC</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish a 3rd Malay Language Elective Programme (MLEP) centre</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase number of MLEP scholarships</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance MLEP programme with lecture series and provide additional funding for immersion</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTL</td>
<td>Establish National Elective Tamil Language Programme (NETP) for both Secondary and JC levels at Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre</td>
<td>Secondary/JC</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offer scholarships to deserving NETP students at the JC level</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Recommendations</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Levels Affected</td>
<td>Year of Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTL Promotion Committees</td>
<td>Collaborate with schools to support MTL Fortnights and enrichment programmes</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTL Enrichment</td>
<td>Organise MTL events to promote learning and use of MTL beyond schools (e.g., family events)</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTL Promotion</td>
<td>Explore with media industries for more interesting MTL programmes to be broadcast for children</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Support</td>
<td>Increase funding support to Language Promotion Committees to promote learning and use of MTL</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Schools</td>
<td>Review curriculum guidelines to align pre-school MTL learning to new directions</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPLOYING AND DEVELOPING MORE MTL TEACHERS</td>
<td>Recruit additional 500 MTL teachers over next 5 years</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overseas Teaching Scholarship (Specialist) award to students with good O-Level HMTL or A-Level H1 MTL results</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leverage partnerships with NIE, Singapore Centre for Chinese Language, Malay Language Centre of Singapore and Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre to strengthen professional development of MTL teachers</td>
<td>Pre-Schools</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>