

Textbooks are No Longer Just Textbooks - Innovative Talent Cultivation Program is Launched by Ministry of Education

(Courtesy of Chen, Pei-Ling at the Division of Junior High, Elementary School and Preschool Education)



In 2013, the achievements of the “Aesthetic Cell-Textbook Transformation Program” initiated by three students at the National Chiao Tung University made a sensation and were well-received by all sectors. At the end of last year, the Ministry of Education invited the representatives of the Aesthetic Cell to form the "Textbook Quality Promotion Committee for National Elementary School and Junior High School Under the Ministry of Education" (hereinafter referred to as the "Textbook Promotion Committee"). After three committee meetings, with the full support of all the committee members yesterday, the innovative "Implementation Program on National Elementary School and Junior High School Textbook Compilation and Design Talent Cultivation" was passed, which has written a new chapter in Taiwan’s future textbook talent cultivation mechanism.

Fan, Sun-Lu, Political Deputy Minister of Education, said that the restrictions on the specifications and fonts of textbooks have been relaxed, and that the passage of "Implementation Program on National Elementary School and Junior High School Textbook Compilation and Design Talent Cultivation" at this time by the Textbook Promotion Committee aimed to introduce professionalism and cultivate more textbook design with a sense of design and aesthetics in the hope that the future textbooks in our country would not only have the function of delivering knowledge but also have multiple benefits, such as inspiring children's aesthetic sense and creative enlightenment.

There are 20 members in the Textbook Promotion Committee, including Aesthetic Cell Association, parent groups, teacher groups, and academic experts in finance, accounting, and design, that participate in assisting with the planning of textbook policies and improvement of quality development. Since its official operations on October 24, 2018, three committee meetings have been held. Recently, at the third meeting of the "Textbook Promotion Committee" hosted by Fan, "Implementation Program on National Elementary School and Junior High School Textbook Compilation and Design Talent Cultivation" was passed. The K-12 Education Administration of the Ministry of Education would then take over and continue to invite the committee members to work out the details in the hope that the first wave of courses would be launched this summer.

The key points of the "Implementation Program on National Elementary School and Junior High School Textbook Compilation and Design Talent Cultivation" are as follows:

1. The cultivation program stresses importance to the teaching needs of the new curriculum guidelines and the development of the textbook industry

The changes of teaching contents and styles are the key to realizing the vision of the Curriculum Guidelines of 12-year Basic Education; the contents and styles of textbooks are the important basis for teachers' teaching design. The new curriculum guidelines emphasize the cultivation of core competencies, and excellent textbooks that are of greater help to teachers. To meet the

teaching needs under the new curriculum guidelines, improve the quality of textbooks, and promote the development of the textbook industry, the content of the program has been planned accordingly.

2. The cultivation program strikes a balance between enhancement of in-service personnel's abilities and cultivation of long-term talents.

The editing of textbooks needs to be based on the long-term research and development as well as the involvement of writing and design talents. Therefore, for the future planning, in addition to taking into account the enhancement of in-service editors' abilities, long-term cultivation and training need to be implemented for in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and students who are interested in writing and designing textbooks.

3. The cultivation program focuses on the development of basic education, as well as writing and designing practices.

The editing of textbooks includes the development of the content, as well as layout and design of the content; therefore, the writing and designing practices are of the utmost importance. Although textbooks are different from general books, authors should have the basic knowledge of the curriculum guidelines, curriculum design, teaching and learning methods, textbook systems, and evaluation, and the textbooks developed will be more in line with teachers' teaching needs and students' learning process.

4. The method courses are provided, course time, and relevant supporting measures are flexible and supportive.

When planning a curriculum, in order to meet participants' actual needs, flexible course planning (elective internships, such as basic knowledge and skills, writing practices, and design practices), course time planning (such as centralized, decentralized, or mixed), training certificates, and other relevant supporting measures are provided, to support those who are willing to dedicate themselves to the textbook industry and put resources to good use.

The Ministry of Education said that in the future, through the operations of the Textbook Promotion Committee, it would respect professional opinions and engage in dialogue and cooperation with civil groups to build the consensus on the value and quality of textbooks, thereby enhancing the environment in the textbook industry in Taiwan.