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Bureau urged to offer more detail on language help

Ethnic minority pupils learning Chinese as a second language from September will not use a simplified Chinese syllabus, while senior secondary students studying an applied Chinese-language subject will undergo no public examinations, the education minister has revealed.

The education bureau yesterday released the framework for the new subject in a written reply to a question submitted by Civic Party legislator Claudia Mo Man-ching.

Further detailed information including lesson examples, assessment tools and learning materials have still to be provided to teachers and students.

Starting in September, the government will introduce in phases an applied Chinese-language subject for students at senior secondary level.

Students will be able to earn a qualification in the subject which will be recorded in their Diploma of Secondary Education certificate, but it will not be exam-based.

“The learning framework provides a clear set of expected learning outcomes for non-Chinese speaking students at different learning stages,” Secretary for Education Eddie Ng Hak-kim said.

“With it, teachers could set learning targets, progression and expected learning outcomes, and use a progressive ‘small-step’ learning approach to enhance students’ learning.”

But the bureau sees no need to set up a centre of research into teaching Chinese as a second language, Ng said.

Holing Yip Ho-ling, acting executive director of ethnic minority advocacy group *Unison*, said the decision was disappointing.

“As the subject is new, there is not much research on it available for those looking to learn about it. This is the reason a research centre is needed,” Yip said.

She also criticised the government for the lack of detail in the framework. Not enough had been done to explain to ethnic minority students and teachers how the subject will work, she said, adding that students needed to understand how learning the subject would help them.

Teaching Chinese as a second language for ethnic minority pupils was proposed by Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying in his policy address in January.

About 15,600 non-Chinese speaking students attend primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.

EDUCATION

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