

Articulating Reform Between the Secondary and University Levels

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Reforms at Secondary Level: Structure

1. Structural Change: 3+3+4 system

- ❁ Abolish the British model (7-year secondary schooling):
3-year junior secondary from Secondary 1 to 3, 2-year senior secondary from Secondary 4 to 5 and then 2-year matriculation from Secondary 6 to 7.
- ❁ Migrate to the mainland Chinese or American model (6-year secondary schooling):
3-year junior secondary from Secondary 1 to 3 and 3-year senior secondary from Secondary 4 to 6

Reforms at Secondary Level: The Curriculum

2. Curriculum Change: NSS Curriculum

- ❁ A **New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum** will be implemented in **September 2009**, in which new curricular and syllabi will be developed for all subjects. In particular, some existing subjects will be combined to form a new subject whilst some others will be abolished.
- ❁ There are **four core subjects** (Chinese, English, Mathematics and Liberal Studies), alongside with other electives (e.g. Physics, History, Economics) and other learning experiences (moral and civic education, community service, aesthetic and physical activities).
- ❁ **Liberal Studies** will become a **new core subject** for **ALL** senior secondary school students.

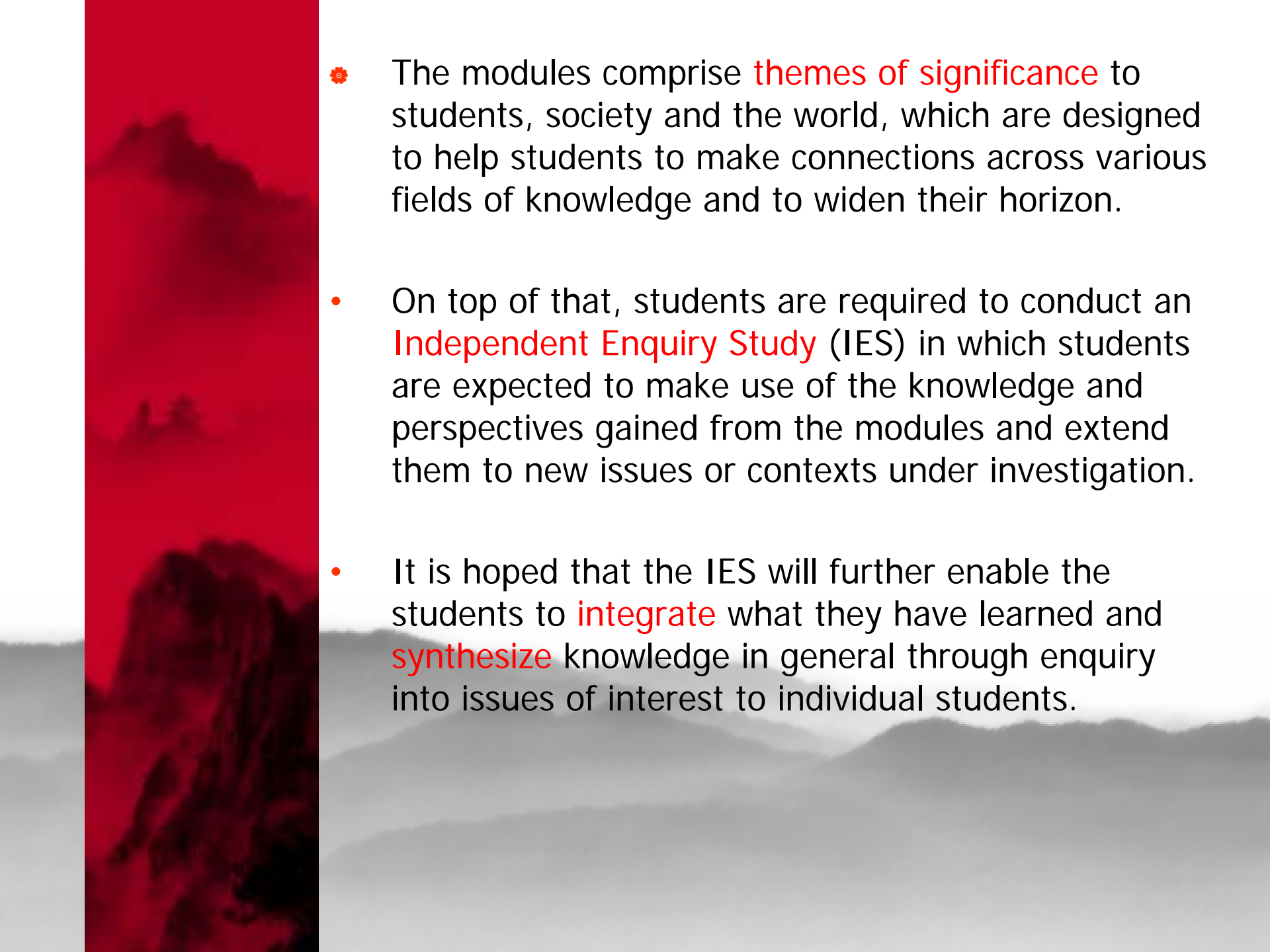
What is Liberal Studies?

- According to CDC & HKEAA (2007), Liberal Studies aims to **broaden students' knowledge base** and **develop their social awareness** through the study of various issues. This would help students develop the **capacity for life-long learning** to face the challenges of the future.
- Liberal Studies is a **cross-curricular subject** which enables students to make **connections among different disciplines**, examine issues from **multiple perspectives** and **construct personal knowledge** of immediate relevance to themselves in contemporary world.
- It enables students to develop **independent learning capabilities and cross-curricular thinking**.

Curriculum framework and structure


The curriculum has three broad Areas of Study, namely "Self and Personal Development", "Society and Culture" and "Science, Technology and the Environment", under which there are six modules:

- **Self & Personal Development**
Module 1: Personal Development & Interpersonal Relationships
- **Society & Culture**
Module 2: Hong Kong Today
Module 3: Modern China
Module 4: Globalization
- **Science, Technology & the Environment**
Module 5: Public Health
Module 6: Energy Technology & the Environment

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- ✿ The modules comprise **themes of significance** to students, society and the world, which are designed to help students to make connections across various fields of knowledge and to widen their horizon.
 - On top of that, students are required to conduct an **Independent Enquiry Study** (IES) in which students are expected to make use of the knowledge and perspectives gained from the modules and extend them to new issues or contexts under investigation.
 - It is hoped that the IES will further enable the students to **integrate** what they have learned and **synthesize** knowledge in general through enquiry into issues of interest to individual students.

Second ary- Univers ity Articula tion

- ❁ In parallel, the university reforms also focus very much on general education and **tailor-make general education curriculum** for their undergraduate students.
- ❁ However, when the universities design these curriculum, have they **taken into account and built upon the prior learning experiences as well as learning outcomes of students** in the NSS Liberal Studies? If so, in what ways have they done it?
- ❁ Furthermore, some **overlaps** are found between the Liberal Studies curriculum and the universities' general education curriculum, in terms of curriculum content and learning outcomes expected of the students. How would the universities address these? **In what ways can they deepen or broaden students' learning** in the same area of study or topic?

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- ❁ To conclude, in order to ensure a smooth interface between secondary education and university education in general education, it would make more sense for the universities to **ascertain what the first year students would have learned** in Liberal Studies when they design and make their curriculum.
 - ❁ It would be worthwhile to undertake some kind of **empirical studies** to examine and evaluate student learning in Liberal Studies (even with the existing Advanced Supplementary Level Liberal Studies), which will help to inform the curriculum decision making of the universities.
 - ❁ Finally, if the universities truly believe in the value of general or liberal education, they should highlight the importance of Liberal Studies in their **university admissions requirement**, which will give clear message to the secondary school students, teachers, principals and the public.



Thank You