



# **Working together : Experience sharing on incorporating group discussions into the GE Programme**

**HKTA YYI Chan Lui Chung Tak Memorial School**  
Ms. Woo Sze Wan, Emily

**School-based Curriculum Development (Primary) Section**  
**School-based Support Services Office**  
**Education Bureau**

Ms. FUNG Ho Kwan, Jeanda (Senior School Development Officer)

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Learning in Action : Teach to Learn — Learn to Teach

# The Policies...

## *MOI Policy*

Small-class teaching and learning

**TSA**

**ESR**

# Some phenomenon observed ...

- Much time has been spent on teaching the 8 vocabulary (repetitive reading aloud but not phonics skills, word chunking: root word, prefix, suffix...), 2 to 3 language structures (doing textbook exercises but not asking them to make sentences every day), the pre-task and while task and post task in each and every unit in the textbook (Are the tasks building up skills in writing and speaking at the end?)
- **How do we see the importance of teaching reading skills & text types explicitly, providing group work for students to work on grammar & vocabulary building, reading comprehension, process writing, speaking skills, feedback etc.?**

# The difficulties



Oh! Our curriculum is sooooo packed with modules ...

- **Knowledge** factor: the student doesn't yet know aspects of language that enable production
- **Skills** factor: the student's knowledge is not sufficiently automated to ensure fluency
- **Affective** factors: lack of confidence or self-consciousness might inhibit fluency

# What our students need



- *A core grammar*
- *A core vocabulary* of at least 1000 high frequency words
- Some common *formulaic expressions*
- *A core 'phrase book'* of single and multi-word units (chunks), sentence bank
- Mastery of pronunciation (early *phonics development*)

# Grouping children to work together: what attributes of each child can be considered?

Previous knowledge?

Ability to read?

Girl or boy?

Ability to speak?

friendship?

Ability to listen?

The working group

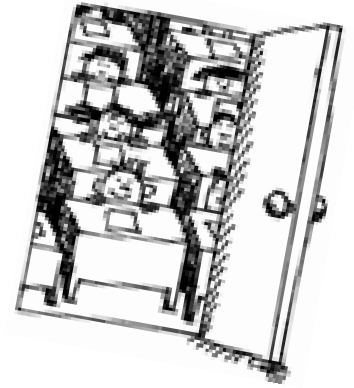


Willingness to cooperate?  
NCS, NAC, SEN, ADHD ...

Ability to write?

Start at an early stage  
regularly & consistently

# Experience sharing



## HKTA YYI Chan Lui Chung Tak Memorial School





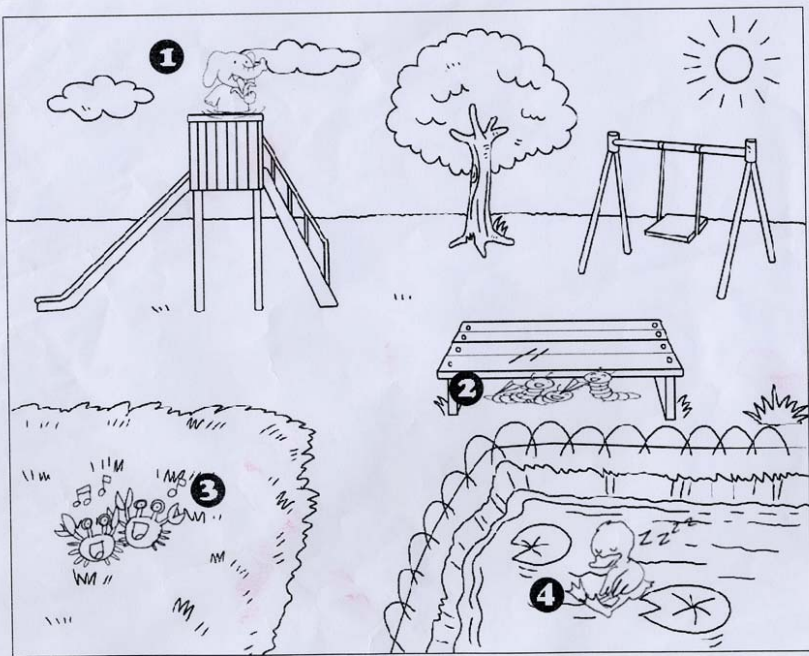


P. 1 class

Longman Elect 1B

Module: Having fun

Task: Making sentences using appropriate nouns (animal names and names of places), present continuous tenses and prepositional phrases





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## Language for talk

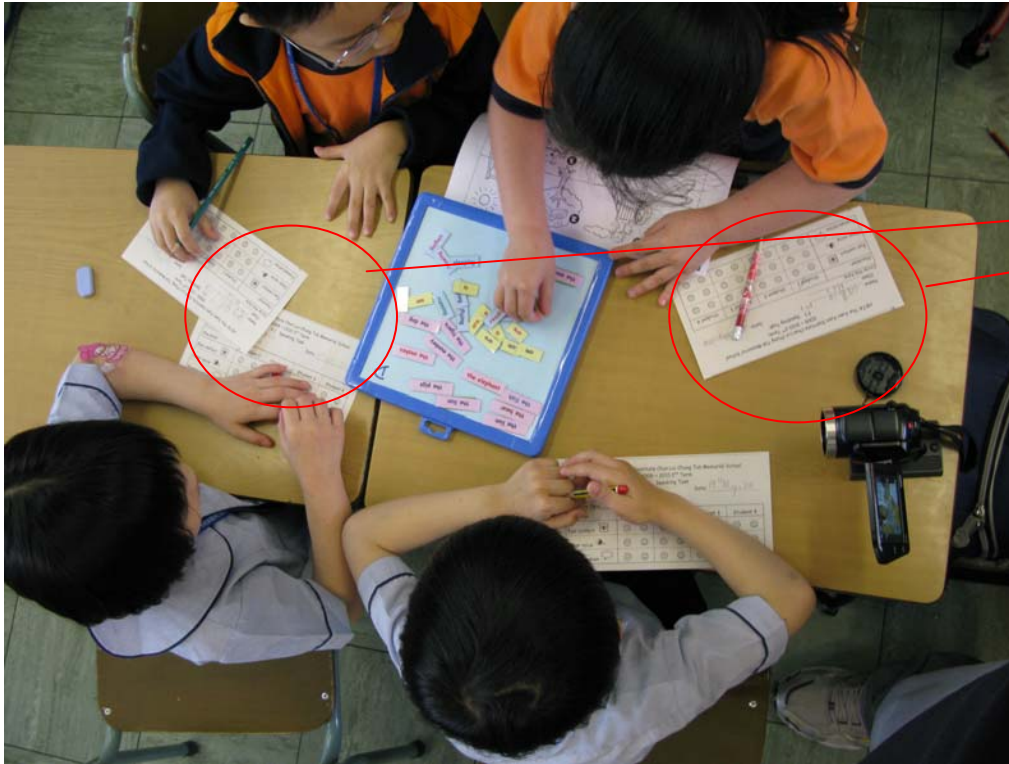
Let's start.  
It's your turn.  
It's my turn.  
Please read.  
You're right.  
You're wrong. It is ...

...

Sentences made by  
students in the  
group



P. 1 a group of students discussed about the sentences about what the animals are doing



Feedback sheet:

1. Voice
2. Pronunciation
3. Eye contact



P. 2 class

Longman Elect 2A

Topic: Children in the Giantland

Task: Students need to discuss what a giant can or cannot do in Hong Kong based on the prompts provided on the worksheet.



## P. 1 class

New Magic 1B

- Topic: Animal Riddles
- Task: Writing animal riddles using appropriate colour words and adjectives to describe different body parts of animals.

# Animal Riddles

By Salesian Yip Hon Millennium Primary School

Each group gets **one big worksheet** and **4 paper strips**. *Each* student gets **your own paper strip**.

(**Student 1** → **Number 1 paper strip**.  
**Student 2** → **Number 2 paper strip**.  
**Student 3** → **Number 3 paper strip**.  
**Student 4** → **Number 4 paper strip**.)



# P. 1 Group work: Making animal riddles

\_\_\_\_\_ (colour)

\_\_\_\_\_ (things can do)

\_\_\_\_\_ (tail, nose, eyes, ears ...)

\_\_\_\_\_ (where it lives)

What is it?

1. Write your sentence in your group. (8 min.)

2. Read aloud your sentence to your group mates. (8 min.)

3. Teacher feedback on correct and incorrect answers.

4. Students pair check the sentences together and self-correct.

# Proofreading:

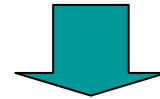
Teacher to students  
Students to students

Is this correct?



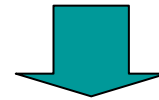
For examples:

It has big nose.



It has **a big nose**. ✓

It has a short legs.



It has **a short legs**.

It has **four short legs**. ✓



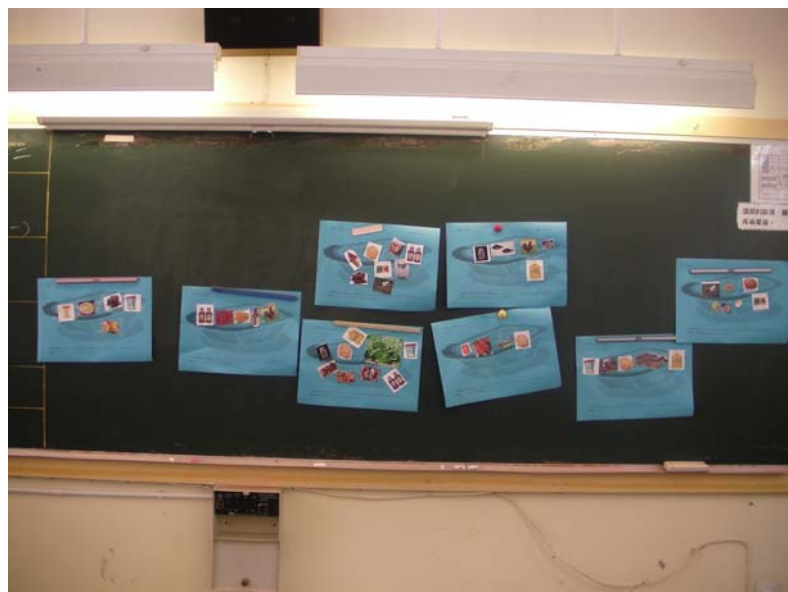
P. 2 class

Longman elect 2B

Reader: The Hungry Giant  
Module: Food and Drinks  
Task: Discuss in groups and agree on the ingredients to be put in the soup for the Hungry Giant. Give reasons for your choice.



# The Hungry Giant



Students individually prepared food cut-outs from newspaper and magazines.

In groups, they shared their cut outs and explained why they wanted to put these into the bowl of soup.

# Collaborative Learning Strategies

- Round Robin
- Roundtable
- Talking Chips
- Team Word-Webbing
- Numbered Heads Together
- Pairs Check
- Think-Pair-Share
- Think-Write-Pair-Compare
- Three Stray, One Stay
- Jigsaw

## Reasons for Using Small Groups to Foster Learning (Adapted from Fostering Learning in Small Groups by Jane Westberg and Hilliard Jason)

- Learners gain a sense of ownership of the learning process.
- Help learners build their own knowledge. Knowledge built is knowledge understood.
- Provide an environment for learners to practice skills in a safe environment so that skills will be more rehearsed when applied in the "real" setting.
- Provide opportunity to learn effective group process and be part of a team (a "learning team").

- Provide opportunities for enhancement of communication skills.
- Provide opportunities to give and to receive feedback.
- Provide opportunities for learners to learn from each other rather than the "experts" who sometimes cannot explain content at the level needed by the learner.
- Help learners understand others' points of view.
- Provide a supportive environment.
- Provide opportunity to learn by teaching/sharing.



# Schools could start by ...

- **Trying to incorporate ONE group discussion activity into each unit as a start, progressing to doing it every other day;**
- **Planning the task design so that students ability to listen and speak is maximised and skills to read and/or write are practiced;**
- **Exploring ways to support students (Questioning & feedback during and after group Work);**
- **Assessing and evaluating group work so that students know where they are in terms of their communication skills**

# Chinese, English, Mathematics, G.S...

- The adoption of a **whole-school approach to group learning**
- **Careful planning and organisation** of speaking and listening opportunities
- **Plentiful opportunities** to speak and be listened to

# References

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Thank you!