

**Code:** E04 / E08

**Title:** Exploring the framework, content, and classroom examples for teaching students about global and local issues for a better transition to secondary schooling

**Speaker:** Ms FUNG Ho-kwan, Jeanda (Senior School Development Officer)

Flashing back to the sharing session conducted last year on the topic *‘Incorporating social and global issues into the primary school English language writing curriculum for better transition to secondary’*, teachers were brought to an understanding of why global issues matter to schools nowadays, and the need for primary students to read a wide range of informational texts on global issues and themes for better transition to secondary levels. Understanding that global issues feature prominently in the new Senior Secondary syllabus, teachers agreed that many young people's horizons are indeed not broad enough for them to face the challenges of future public assessments which involve a great deal of reading. Many of their students have rarely travelled outside their locality, not to mention the capacity to communicate in English in a multi-cultural society, especially for under-privileged students. The importance of developing the necessary English language skills which help to equip them to look beyond Hong Kong and to understand the diversity of languages and cultures in different parts of the world and the richness of culture across our planet was recognized by the teachers during the seminar.

Schools have begun to embrace this agenda in recent years because it can be good for schools in both prosperous districts and schools in districts that are more deprived. Today's younger generation need to learn to engage in communication with people from a wide range of different cultures and traditions. **The change of the direction of the curriculum allows our local students to benefit from a wider cultural perspective that is across our planet.** According to a growing number of internationally-minded educators, teaching our younger generation about global issues and encouraging them to see the world through other eyes is of huge importance. There is similarly a growing interest worldwide in teaching children global awareness in primary schools.

On a pragmatic front, in order to develop **a school-based programme that could raise global awareness of students of different backgrounds**, it has to comprise different global and local topics. That could mean reviewing and trimming down the existing overburdened curriculum based on textbooks. The support officer has worked together with English teachers in a number of schools **to explore the framework, content, and specific classroom examples, and conduct inquiries, implement different reading and writing strategies, and have on-going reflection and evaluation during co-planning meetings.** The writing packages developed with the schools were designed to enable a range of students with different abilities to benefit from social, cultural and global perspectives they would not be exposed to otherwise. The concept and language use might be as simple as donating, volunteering or taking positive action to protect our planet and their related language use in the Key Stage Two curriculum. These helped to open up students' eyes to ideas and

vocabulary they otherwise would not see and also helped students see that there are others around the world that are less fortunate and need help.

Student evaluation of the lessons and the writing generated showed that they valued the focus on *How to help the ones in need - Charity*, *How to protect our environment – go green*, *Problems in our world* and *Carnivals* because they are valid for everyday life and they helped them know about the world. **The learning process helped increase children's empathy and understanding of cultures and religions.** Also, **the teachers began to have more confidence and faith that raising the reading and writing standards of students** was not an unattainable task.

Several outcomes were identified during the course of development:

**Outcomes:**

- Raised global awareness of students during the course of the learning modules
- Enhanced student learning in the context of global and local issues
- Improved reading and writing pedagogies and practices in the modules and thereby improved reading and writing standards
- Greater understanding of how to involve students meaningfully in their own learning and hence improved learning attitudes

In this sharing session, the officer will help teacher participants develop their knowledge of what contributes to effective learning and teaching through a range of modules on global and local topics; their own subject knowledge about global and local issues; and their understanding of how to support students on the path of seeking knowledge of the world and applying them in the learning modules. Techniques and materials to stimulate students' thinking on social, global and cultural issues will be explored. Also, teachers will learn that for students to become competent readers and writers, it involves soliciting useful resources around them for reading input, and at the same time comprehending the use of the forms, functions and features of writing by making good use of the resources. Sample learning materials and lesson clips will be shared with teacher audience.

(This session is intended for teachers who did not participate in a similar seminar last year.)