



# Use of the Specialised Teaching provision to enhance English learning and teaching

## Background

In his 2005 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the provision of additional resources to public sector primary schools to improve the teacher-to-class ratio with a view to reducing teachers' workload and implementing specialised teaching. While some schools took advantage of the additional resources to achieve a reduction of workload, Fanling Government Primary School has explored a school-based mode of implementing specialised teaching.

Seeds were sown last year to pave the way for the implementation of specialised teaching. Intensive efforts have been made to develop the panel head and two level coordinators to prepare them as curriculum leaders. Strategically, the TSA data were used in combination with other types of data (e.g. subject plan, schemes of work, students' performance in class and internal assessment/writing tasks) to identify the developmental needs in areas like panel planning, curriculum planning, capacity building of teachers, student learning, etc. These needs include:

- building up the curriculum leaders' capacity to develop holistic and coherent plans at various levels;
- improvement of teaching at classroom level, the use of student-centred and interactive strategies in particular;
- enrichment of the learning and teaching resource bank for sharing among teachers; and
- improvement of students' reading and writing abilities and promoting a language-rich environment.

## Target group

English panel head and level coordinators

## Strategies used

To address the needs identified, the school has made use of the additional teacher provision of **Specialised Teaching** to relieve the workload of some teachers to enable them to work towards the overall development of the English subject. To ensure effective use of the resources, we have adopted the following strategies:

### 1. Staff deployment

The three teachers who were developed as curriculum leaders last year were chosen to form a core team to work on the priority areas listed above. Six teaching periods were reduced from their workload so that they could concentrate on developing the subject plan, leading the curriculum development of the levels they were assigned to coordinate and implementing the improvement measures. The NET has also been involved as a resource person giving advice on lesson design and co-teaching with the core teachers.

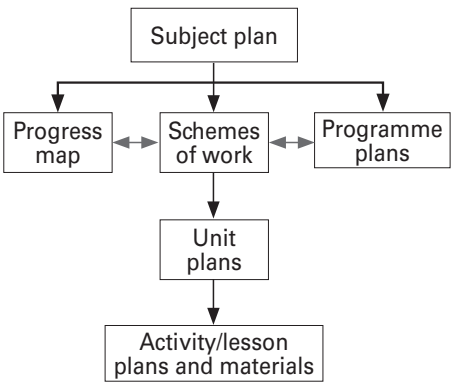

### 2. Development focuses

The English Department has set clear priorities for the year. For student learning, the three problems identified in the previous year, i.e. the lack of motivation and strategies for reading, skills in writing longer texts and rich contexts to apply English authentically. For curriculum leadership development, we aimed to develop the core teachers' capacity in planning, adopting interactive and student-centred strategies, analysing lessons and conceptualising experiences. For panel development, we aimed to develop examples of learning and teaching resources and promote professional development among teachers through regular sharing.

### 3. Accountability system

The core team kept full and systematic documentation of their work, e.g. plans, teaching materials, video-taped lessons, students' work, etc. They opened up their classrooms for observation by peers and the school management. They also reported on their work and shared their try-out experiences in panel meetings.

### What happened

Actions at different stages	Features / Observations
<b>Planning (July – Oct 06)</b>	
<p>Develop different levels of curriculum plans:</p>  <pre> graph TD     SP[Subject plan] --&gt; PM[Progress map]     SP --&gt; SW[Schemes of work]     SP --&gt; PP[Programme plans]     PM &lt;--&gt; SW     SW &lt;--&gt; PP     SW --&gt; UP[Unit plans]     UP --&gt; ALP[Activity/lesson plans and materials]         </pre>  <p>Holistic consideration and coherent planning</p>	<p><b>Subject plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• align with school goal</li> <li>• address the three areas identified last year</li> <li>• set clear focuses and expectations for each area to facilitate coherence with schemes of work and programme plans</li> </ul> <p><b>Progress map</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out the learning targets of different areas of language learning in the two key stages</li> </ul> <p><b>Programme plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detail the measures taken to address the three areas</li> </ul> <p><b>Schemes of work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• incorporate the focuses of development in the subject plan, the measures in the programme plans and the learning targets in the progress map into the scheme of work of each level</li> </ul> <p><b>Unit plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out the learning objectives and targets, learning activities, assessment tasks and strategies to be piloted</li> <li>• sequence the learning/teaching process in relation to the learning objectives</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity/lesson plans and materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify clear learning targets and the strategies to be tried out for sharing with other teachers</li> <li>• plan the learning/teaching process with respect to learners' needs and characteristics</li> <li>• include materials to be developed and evidence to be collected</li> </ul>

**Implementation (Nov 06 to Jun 07): Pilot different strategies in selected units**

Promote active participation in reading activities (P1)

- understand the plot and make predictions about the story and the characters
- recognise the format and language features of a location map

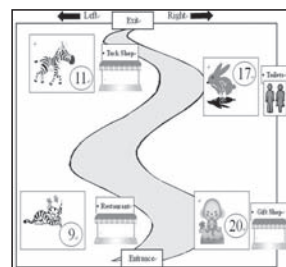
The teachers co-taught the big book 'Ten Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed'.

To arouse students' interest in reading and consolidate the key words, the teachers made much use of **dramatic voice** and **actions** and activities that appealed to their **kinesthetic, visual and musical** learning styles.

To help students predict the story, a lot of **WH-Qs** have been used.



Students acted out 'One fell off and bumped his head'



Location map of a zoo

Students were **exposed to** information texts which they would come across in daily life. They learned how to **interpret common signs** and perform tasks which require them to process the information found on the map. They were able to **understand and give descriptions** by integrating the numbers, name of animals and expressions of location and directions.

Improve students' writing abilities through process writing (P5)

- generating, elaborating and organising ideas
- peer editing and publication of students' work

The teacher asked students to write a recount of a favourite festival.

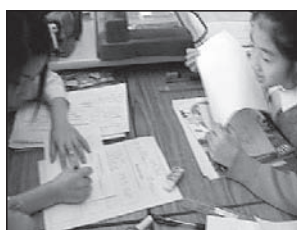
She used **a series of questions** (from eliciting facts/information to asking for explanations and feelings) to help students turn a simple idea into elaborated sentences.

To help students organise those fragmented responses, **group work** was used.

To help students transfer the learning from classroom interactions (mostly done through Q & A) to developing a piece of writing, the teacher had to re-teach by developing a '**model text**' with the whole class.

Beginning stage-	
How does the recount start? :	
* What is the name of the festival? :	
* When is it? :	
Middle stage-	
How does the recount develop? :	
* When did the festival begin? :	
* What happened? :	
* Why did the festival begin? :	
Ending stage-	
How does the recount end? :	
* What do people do? :	
* What do people eat? :	

A tool to help students analyse a reading passage and to develop ideas for writing



'I present, you comment!'

Students **grasped the requirements of a piece of good writing** through commenting on others' work.

Students learned to **respect each other and be receptive** to different opinions.

Promote an English rich environment (P2)

- within the classroom: use of games to consolidate the vocabulary learned in context
- outside the classroom: use of interview to practise the target language

The teacher aimed to consolidate the vocabulary taught in the first term.

To help students **recall** the words learned, students were asked to compile their own word lists and categorise them by theme.

To help students **retain** the words learned, students were asked to make sentences which illustrate the use of those words in authentic contexts.

To help students **create** meaning with those words, students were asked to write stories with pictorial cues.

To **expand** students' vocabulary, the more able ones were asked to include words other than those found in the textbook.

Transport	Jobs	Subjects	Actions	In a park
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____	6. _____	6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____	7. _____	7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____	8. _____	8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____	9. _____	9. _____	9. _____

Students compile their word lists and create stories with the words they learned



Two P2 students interviewing a P5 student

The activity offered a **supportive learning environment** for both groups of students, while P2 students could practise the target language with an authentic purpose and audience and P5 students could provide encouraging feedback to the P2 students on the performance.


## Impacts

The Specialised Teaching provision has **created space for the core teachers to work towards the overall development of the English subject**. Such space was profitably used for better planning at all levels, piloting strategies to tackle particular area of weaknesses and compiling documents and resources for use in future.

Getting support and guidance from the EMB staff, we have a better understanding of curriculum planning, an improvement in subject knowledge, and a wider repertoire of teaching and learning strategies. We **gain more confidence in leading the development of the subject and preparing for the ESR** in the coming academic year.

We have focussed on three areas this year, i.e. reading, writing and creating a language rich environment. We observed that the classes taught by the core teachers had **noticeable improvement in writing**. The teachers tried different strategies in teaching different text types. The **students enjoyed learning English and could apply what they had learned in authentic situations**. They enjoyed reading and writing in English. They were happy to communicate with their peers in English both inside and outside the classroom.

The experiences this year can be sustained through **sharing of experiences** with other teacher and a **complete documentation** of the school-based curriculum development process. We hope more teachers can be involved in future so that more curriculum leaders can be developed. This not only enhances the development of the English Department but also strengthens our teaching and learning.



## Facilitating factors

### 1. Strategic deployment of teachers

A critical mass of teachers, comprising an experienced panel head and two potential leaders, were chosen to pilot initiatives that addressed the needs identified in the previous year. Such a deployment has also taken advantage of the experiences gained last year as these teachers have collaborated closely with the EMB.

### 2. Connecting individual development with staff development, curriculum development and resource development

Apart from capacity building on an individual level, these teachers are expected to develop curriculum plans and resources, try out different strategies and open up their classroom for peer learning, and document the whole experience for the longer term development of the panel.

### 3. A sense of commitment

With the additional 'free' periods, the core teachers are fully aware of their accountability. They show a strong sense of responsibility and a commitment to improving language learning and teaching of the school. Their conscientious efforts in improving the plans, collecting learning evidence for reflection and compiling the documents for future reference is commendable.

## Difficulties and suggestions

Initially, the team concentrated its efforts on the professional aspect of the whole project. Early communication with the English Department or even the whole school about this school policy of resource deployment was neglected. This made it difficult for other teachers to render the necessary support. As the use of the Specialised Teaching provision is perceived as a school development strategy, it is desirable to reach a consensus with all staff on the objectives, the teachers involved and the expectations on them before term starts. These teachers will then have to work out the implementation details, reflecting on how the resources can be maximised and the effectiveness assessed. During the course of implementation, regular reporting and sharing is required to achieve transparency and professional development. Hence, communication and consensus building should not be overlooked.

## Way forward

To facilitate the **sustainability** of the work of these two years (apart from continuing with the development focuses), it is advisable to involve more potential leaders in the English Department next year. By expanding the talent pool, there is a higher chance of taking forward the curriculum reform more successfully. With the experience gained this year, the school may consider tapping into another type of human resource, i.e. its own students and those from secondary schools, to promote peer learning and prepare students for the next stage of learning.

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# Maximising students' speaking opportunities through strategic integration of formal and informal curriculum planning

## Background

It is a real challenge for Hong Kong English teachers to develop students' speaking skills when their students do not need authentic communication in English outside the classroom. Thus many teachers have come to realise a need to increase opportunities for students to speak and interact in English. This article sets out the efforts of four schools in planning the strategic integration of formal and informal curricula. The strategies used include consolidating classroom learning through extension activities linking the formal and the informal curricula; effective use of human resource development and deployment for a language-rich environment and developing potential student leaders in conducting English activities at school.

## Levels

P3-6

## Strategies used

### 1. Progressive skill development

Learners cannot acquire a second language overnight. To help them develop their language skills progressively, holistic planning is indispensable. Thus, it is important to ensure teachers and schools draw up a coherent plan for the teaching of English throughout the school years (The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 1999).

### 2. Systemic integration

(i) Linking the formal and informal curricula

'Integrating the formal and informal curricula is a way to provide relevant, pleasurable and meaningful learning experiences' (The Curriculum Development Council, 2002). By extending learning beyond the confines of the classroom and providing 'a clearly defined social context' (Littlewood, 1981), learners can develop the ability to use the language in a language-using situation (Byrne, 1986; Wilkins, 1974). Teachers can maximise such language-using situations by accommodating more English speaking opportunities in the school timetable.

(ii) Use of school resources

To maximise the opportunities for students to develop speaking skills, it is important to make effective use of school resources. Such resources, as stated in the English Language Education Curriculum Guide (2002), include hardware like facilities and equipment. Examples are Campus TV, PA system and TV corner.

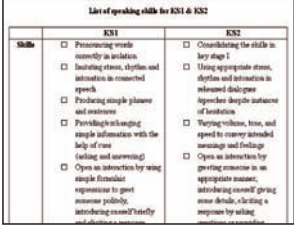

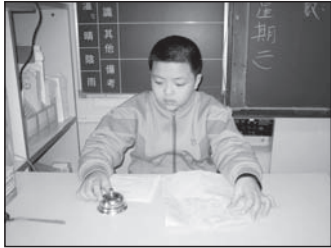

### 3. Human resource development and deployment

Recent TESOL research recommends extending the range of people that students communicate with by including native English speaking teachers (NETs) and peers. Native speaking teachers in second language teaching may act as a model for idiomatic English, and can clarify questions on language (Pawley and Syder, 1983; Davies, 1991). The NET is therefore a valuable human resource in schools.

Second language research has examined how more knowledgeable peers can assist learners in their language development (Vygotsky 1962, 1978). Yost (2001) refers to the support a teacher or more experienced peer provides for a learner as 'scaffolding'; and Le (2003) further shows that a senior peer can take on the role of a teacher in classroom activities.

We will show that effective use of these two types of human resource is crucial to the improvement of speaking skills of students among other aspects of communicative competence.

## What happened

Strategy	School-based example
<p><b>1. Progressive skill development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing speaking skills within one level and across levels</li> </ul>  <p>Speaking skills checklist</p>   <p>A student tape recording his e-mail letter to prepare for a cross level listening comprehension task</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teachers of SRBCEPSA Ho Sau Ki School referred to a checklist when planning what speaking skills to develop. The checklist was made with reference to the English Language Curriculum Guide (P1 - 6), the Territory-wide System Assessment descriptors and literature on speaking. They planned the formal curriculum horizontally for P4 and P5 and vertically across the two levels. This helped ensure appropriate skills, text types and various types of speaking activities were covered progressively within one level and across levels.</li> </ul> <p>Inter-class activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In TWGHs Hok Shan School, the P4 teachers provided an innovative writing cum speaking/listening unit when trying out process writing. The two best writers in P4 were invited to read aloud their e-mail letters to make a listening tape. The teachers then set questions based on the content of the letters. These tapes were broadcast to the P4 students on a Thursday morning through the PA system and the students completed the questions after listening to it. What is new in this initiative is that the students could practise their speaking and listening even in a unit focussing on process writing. In addition, good student work is recognised by being converted into teaching materials providing both recognition for the students, and a source of materials for the teachers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Systemic integration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating the formal and informal curricula</li> </ul>  <p>Students telling their story endings at the Christmas party</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After doing a task-based module on Christmas, all the P3 students of Hing Tak School took part in a Christmas party involving a range of speaking activities such as interviewing, singing along and storytelling. The students were able to revisit and recycle the knowledge and skills covered in the classroom. They participated with keen interest as they could see the real purpose for using the language. They also gained an opportunity to speak and listen to others speak in English.</li> </ul>



Students and teachers singing Christmas songs together



A riddle written by a P6 student used in lunch time riddle games



Morning assembly - a time for students to show their talents in speaking

- Creating a language-rich environment through effective use of hardware



Puppet show on Campus TV



Storytelling performances on Campus TV



Two young DJs chairing an English song dedication programme

- Improving writing is the key focus for students in Buddhist Lau Tin Sang Primary School this year. But the teachers made sure that students' interest in speaking was maintained by providing extra-curricular speaking activities during lunch time and after school. One example was making use of the riddles created by the P6 students in a lunch time guessing game. The student leaders read aloud the riddles to the lower level students who listened attentively to grasp the clues for the answers, and in this way, both worked together to maintain interaction and communication in English.

- Another example was making use of morning assembly time for a talent show. In the picture on the left, a P3 student was reading rhymes to the schoolmates and similar speaking performance was advocated in the school.

- As the final learning outcome of a task-based module, the students of SRBCEPSA Ho Sau Ki School created story endings and performed them through various speaking activities like puppet shows and storytelling. With the assistance of the Campus TV crew, they filmed and broadcast their speaking performances to the whole school.

- Similar to TWGHs Hok Shan, and SRBCEPSA Ho Sau Ki, Buddhist Lau Tin Sang Primary School also utilised their PA system for the provision of an English-rich environment. For example, they allowed two P6 students to be DJs in a lunch time Juke Box programme. Students enjoyed listening to the English dedication notes read by the DJs and the enjoyable English songs played.



### 3. Human resource development and deployment

- Developing students



'Come, join us in the Singing Contest!' two student MCs are promoting a school event before their schoolmates

- Deploying teachers



The NET modelling storytelling skills on Campus TV

- Developing student leaders for peer learning is a strategy used by Buddhist Lau Tin Sang Primary School. Two P6 students who are proficient English learners were coached to be English student presenters in various school events. They acted as DJs for Juke Box and MCs in a school singing contest. Their performance was a good model to encourage their peers to speak more English in schools.
- Teachers' demonstration sets a good example to students to improve their speaking skills. The NET of SRBCEPSA Ho Sau Ki School modelled storytelling skills such as appropriate use of voice before the P4 students tried. The video clip was then broadcast to the whole school through the Campus TV. It benefitted not only the P4 students, but also the whole school.


## Impacts

As a result of the effective integration of formal and informal curriculum planning, students have more opportunities to speak and interact in English. Both teachers and students appreciated these activities for the good impact on teaching and learning the strategies brought about.

First, the students showed a **change of attitude** to learning English after their participation in speaking activities. The teachers generally agreed that students' interest in learning English was aroused when they participated in activities like the song dedication activity and Christmas party. They believed that students would never learn a language with interest unless they could see the needs for communication. The teachers of Lau Tin Sang Primary School pointed out that their students were more receptive to learning English and thus there was an attitudinal change in the English learners.

Second, the **confidence of students was increased** when they experienced speaking in public on authentic occasions. The teachers of Hing Tak School reported that the Christmas party provided the students with a platform to speak English in front of a large audience and this could boost their confidence in using the language. Likewise, a P4 student of Ho Sau Ki School said, 'I have the chance to improve my speaking skills. This helps enhance my language proficiency and build up my self-confidence. I enjoy learning English through these activities.' The student MCs of Lau Tin Sang School also became more confident in using English after speaking to their schoolmates in various school events.

Third, the speaking activities helped **consolidate the teaching points of the lessons**. For example, the activities provided an authentic context for students of Hing Tak School to revisit the vocabulary and language structures they had learned in the classroom and use the language in a meaningful way. The writing-recording-



listening activity at Hok Shan School is also an example of turning individual written work into meaningful interactive tasks.

Fourth, holistic planning contributed to the **setting of clear directions and objectives** for the curriculum. For instance, the speaking checklist drafted by Ho Sau Ki School gave teachers an overview of the skills, text types and types of speaking activities that students should be exposed to. They are now more aware of what to introduce, what to reinforce and what gaps to fill at different stages of students' learning. The teachers of Lau Tin Sang School also pointed out that the subject team's proactive initiative of hosting some annual school events was helpful for planning English speaking activities at the school level more holistically.

Fifth, through speaking activities, **peer influence facilitated the English language learning process**. A P5 student of Ho Sau Ki School thought the increased exposure could enhance their relationship with peers and understanding among themselves. In Lau Tin Sang Primary School, the students who performed in the school assembly took pride in their performance and they also set a positive influence on motivating the peers to speak English in such activities.

Finally, **effective use of school resources enriched the language-rich environment for developing students' speaking skills**. Hardware like Campus TV and human resources like Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) helped create a language-rich environment, making English learning more accessible both within and beyond the classroom.

## Facilitating factors

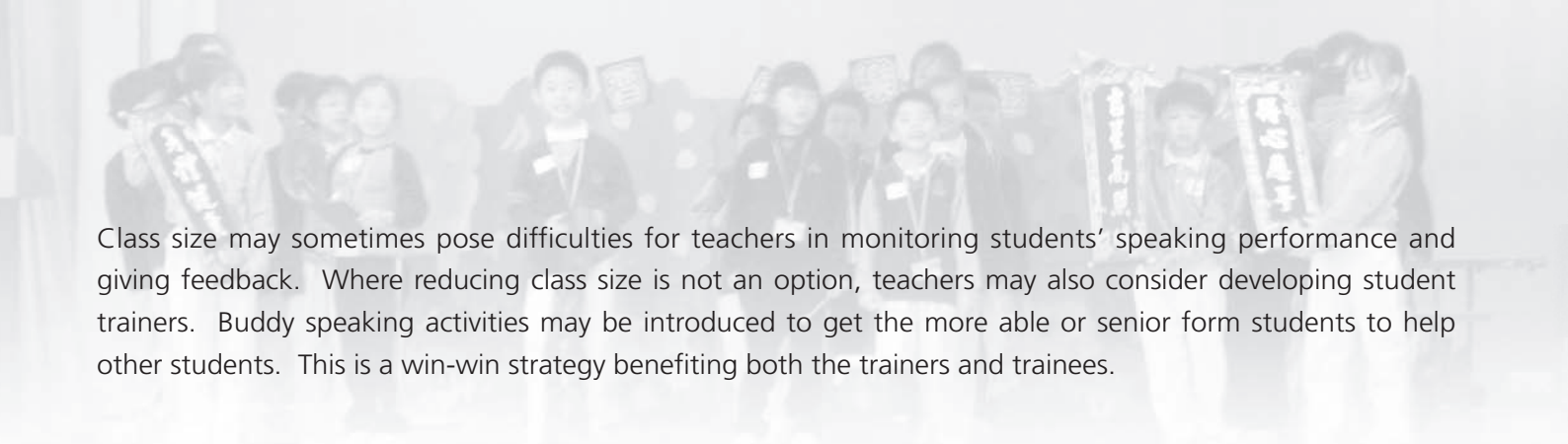
It is important to **build in the strategies in the formal curriculum**. For example, in the case of Hing Tak School, at the beginning of the school year, the out-of-class activities were included as part of the scheme of work. Common periods were also assigned for all the classes to conduct the activities. Similarly, in Buddhist Lau Tin Sang Primary School, the speaking activities were built in the school annual plan so that the English subject team would make use of school-level functions to organise their speaking activities. These measures can reduce teachers' administrative duties and most important of all, can gradually develop a culture of linking the formal and informal curricula in the school.

It is more likely for students to improve their speaking skills if there is an **authentic context and a wide range of materials and resources**. This can help them understand the real communication needs and motivate them to use the language.

Teachers should **cater for individual differences** to ensure all students can benefit. Teachers may consider using a range of speaking activities to involve students in different ways. For example, less able students may learn more effectively when collaborating with others in a group. Opportunities should be given to the more able students to stretch them further such as speaking in front of a large audience to enhance their confidence.

## Difficulties and suggestions

Speaking activities are often treated as an add-on as they are usually introduced as an extra-curricular activity. Teachers may worry they have no time and no resources to complete the extra tasks. In fact, with careful planning, these 'extra tasks' can be turned into 'extra classroom learning and teaching support'. Through making coherent plans, we can integrate the formal and informal curricula to extend classroom learning. Teachers do not need to start planning from zero but at the same time, students can be given ample opportunities to use their classroom learning in meaningful contexts.



Class size may sometimes pose difficulties for teachers in monitoring students' speaking performance and giving feedback. Where reducing class size is not an option, teachers may also consider developing student trainers. Buddy speaking activities may be introduced to get the more able or senior form students to help other students. This is a win-win strategy benefiting both the trainers and trainees.

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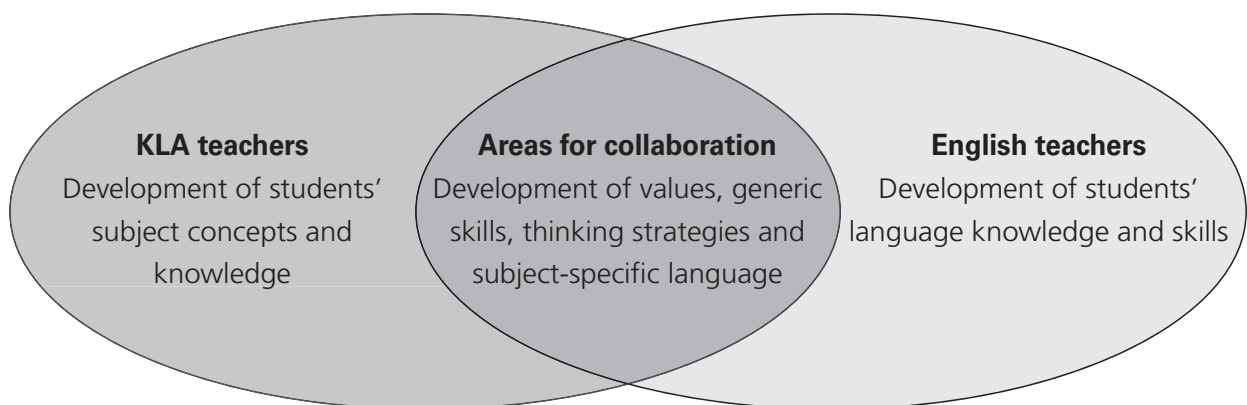
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# Making cross-curricular links with other Key Learning Areas to promote language across the curriculum

## Background

According to the *Review of Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation* (2005) and the *English Language Education Key Learning Area – English Language Curriculum and Assessment Guide* (2007), English teachers are encouraged to promote language across the curriculum and explore a cross-curricular approach to language teaching. English teachers from two EMI schools have felt the need for working with teachers of other Key Learning Areas (KLAs) for both practical and educational reasons. Promoting language across the curriculum can help students overcome language barriers when English is used as the medium of instruction in subject teaching; it also facilitates students to use knowledge and skills in a comprehensive and integrative manner.

The two schools have intakes of more able students. However, the problem of within-school diversity is more acute at one school, thus more differentiation in the school-based curriculum is needed. Preparation work was done last year. English and Liberal Studies teachers co-planned cross-curricular modules while Integrated Science teachers at the other school gave advice to English teachers on science concepts and knowledge for an English-in-Science programme. English and KLA teachers at both schools identified common areas for collaboration including the development of positive values, generic skills (e.g. critical thinking skills), thinking strategies (e.g. use of concept maps and graphic organisers, etc.) and subject-specific language as shown in the following diagram:



Despite the different cross-curricular approaches adopted, English teachers at both schools would like to achieve the following in the long run:

- Broaden students' perspectives in viewing issues so that they can connect knowledge and concepts across disciplines
- Develop students' critical thinking and language skills to support their acquisition of knowledge and concepts
- Foster synergy between English teachers and KLA teachers through cross-curricular planning so that both KLAs can complement each other for achieving greater effectiveness in learning and teaching
- Nurture a collaborative culture through encouraging professional dialogue between different KLA teachers and forming learning communities among them

## Levels

S1-S2

## Strategies used

In the two school cases, different strategies were used to implement the cross-curricular initiatives. They can be classified into the following areas in the table below:

School Case I	School Case II
<p><b>Strategy I: Approaches to cross-curricular planning - Use of different approaches for making cross-curricular links based on school-based conditions and needs</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal Studies as the entry point for inter-departmental collaboration as it is a compulsory subject in the new senior secondary curriculum</li> <li>• Cross-curricular modular design to ensure that the two curricula complement each other</li> <li>• Identification of concepts and thinking skills (e.g. organising ideas under categories and concepts, causal relationships, identifying fallacies, etc.) to be covered by different English and Liberal Studies modules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Science as the entry point for inter-departmental collaboration as many students at junior secondary level have difficulty in understanding and producing science texts such as science reports</li> <li>• Using science texts for learning specific reading and writing strategies in the English-in-Science Programme launched for students in English lessons</li> <li>• Development of language (e.g. reading and writing), generic skills (e.g. thinking skills, etc.) and language development strategies (e.g. study skills) to support students' learning of Integrated Science</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy II: Support from staff - Obtaining full support from the management and teaching staff for launching the cross-curricular initiatives</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cross-curricular planning initiated and piloted by a small group of English and Liberal Studies teachers and began as a bottom-up initiative</li> <li>• Full support from the Principal, the English and Liberal Studies panel heads obtained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An incubation period lasting for several years in the English panel before the launching of the English-in-Science Programme as a top-down initiative in 2006-2007</li> <li>• Full support from the Principal, the English panel head and the majority of English teachers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy III: Curriculum planning - Complementary teaching focuses through systematic curriculum mapping and adaptation of the KLA curricula</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic mapping out of concepts and thinking skills by English and Liberal Studies teachers in selected modules across levels and years at the initial stage</li> <li>• Professional exchanges of views and teaching ideas between English and Liberal Studies teachers to help both parties make adjustments and adaptation in their school-based curricula before implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation of S1 English language curriculum to include the English-in-Science Programme to meet the varied needs and levels of students</li> <li>• Review of S1 English and Integrated Science curriculum to support the implementation of the Programme in the following year</li> <li>• Alignment of learning and teaching with assessment for and of learning</li> </ul>

- Inter-school sharing for teachers interested in using social issues in a networking activity



Sharing of school-based experiences in cross-curricular planning

- Assessment tasks (including assignments and test & exam items) are designed to cover the language skills taught in English lessons. Students' written work is also given to English teachers for analysis and identifying areas for improvement.

**Strategy IV: Collaboration mode - Involving KLA teachers at different levels based on readiness and needs**

- Involving some enthusiastic English and Liberal Studies teachers and the Liberal Studies panel head
- Joint planning and implementation of the modules by English and Liberal Studies teachers
- Liberal Studies and English teachers playing different but complementary roles: the former group to teach thinking skills and subject concepts while the latter group to focus on the language aspects and create more opportunities for students to apply thinking skills

- Involving the Language Across Curriculum (LAC) Committee core members, S1 English teachers, Integrated Science coordinator and teachers teaching S1 students in the project
- Having the LAC Committee members working closely at the planning stage consulting the Integrated Science coordinator when necessary
- Inviting Integrated Science coordinator and teachers to observe S1 English lessons when English teachers try out the developed materials in the classroom at the implementation stage

**Strategy V: Operation mode - Making appropriate arrangements in the time-table and resource deployment to achieve effective learning and teaching**

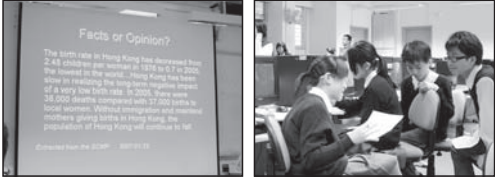


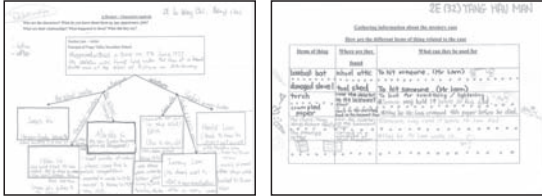

- Time-tabling: Arrangements made for English and Liberal Studies teachers to co-plan the modules and the teaching of English modules in tandem with Liberal Studies modules
- Materials: Use of a variety of materials including textbooks, newspaper articles on social issues, created materials and worksheets
- Manpower: Mobilising enthusiastic and experienced S2 English and Liberal Studies teachers to pilot a module for S1 teachers' reference and exert a positive influence on other KLA teachers

- Time-tabling: Allocation of a total of 8 English lessons in a row for the first term and 10-12 double English lessons over a spread of 12-15 weeks in the second term
- Materials: Adaptation of a variety of learning materials including textbooks, EMB resource packages, extensive reading material available in the school library as the input in the Programme to cater for students of different language abilities
- Manpower: Having English teachers take the lead at the initial stage to cover science-related language to exert a positive influence on Integrated Science teachers and other KLA teachers who can then learn how to cover subject-specific language through lesson observation

# What happened

## School Case I : Cross-curricular modular design

### Module: Mass Media – Believe it or not?

Liberal Studies	English Language Education
<p><b>1. Developed concepts about mass media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explored objectivity in news reports using news articles on slimming and dieting</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Made data interpretations in news reports and identifying fact and opinion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguished between fact and opinion in the news reports</li> <li>• Applied basic principles for identifying fallacies (e.g. relevance of arguments, consistency of arguments, sufficiency of supporting reasons, making wrong assumptions, etc.) in data interpretation</li> </ul>  <p>Students' learning of fact and opinion</p> <p><b>3. Helped students understand mass media in Hong Kong</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invited a guest speaker to give a talk on the importance of freedom of press</li> <li>• Helped students make their own value judgements on mass media in Hong Kong</li> </ul> <p><b>4. Cross-KLAs project on mass media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students worked as campus reporters to produce objective and distorted versions of news reports to help students apply the concepts, knowledge and skills learned</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Covered related vocabulary and language features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taught vocabulary items related to mass media</li> <li>• Taught language features and connotations (e.g. negative, neutral and positive) of reporting words for expressing facts and opinions</li> </ul>  <p>Giving of input by the teacher</p>  <p>Co-planning lessons to discuss the cross-curricular plans</p> <p><b>2. Helped students identify fact and opinion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidated students' learning of facts and opinions using textbook material and newspaper articles</li> <li>• Used different perspectives in viewing such social issues as crime and environmental protection found in the news reports</li> </ul>  <p>Students' use of different perspectives to analyse a criminal case</p> <p><b>3. Used debating circles to develop debating skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigned students different roles (e.g. suspects, lawyers, witnesses, jurors, police, etc.) to play in a court trial in which students gave arguments and counter-arguments in a criminal case</li> </ul>  <p>Let's have a court trial in class!</p>

## School Case II: English-in-Science Programme

### Module 1: Classifying

Integrated Science	English Language Education
<p><b>1. Developed students' content knowledge and subject - specific concepts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified the characteristics of living things</li> <li>• Distinguished between living and non-living things</li> <li>• Learned to appreciate the diversity of forms among living things</li> <li>• Learned what a habitat is</li> <li>• Learned different kinds of keys</li> <li>• Used a simple key to classify a given set of living things</li> <li>• Classified animals and plants</li> <li>• Showed appreciation of the use of classification in daily life</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Developed students' study skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derived information from observation and experiments</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Fostered language-content relationships in assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated both content knowledge, subject-specific concepts and language skills in assessment tasks</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="177 1429 772 1644" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>A classification essay with a tree diagram is written by a student. A checklist is provided for the student to self-review his work before submission to teachers for marking</p>	<p><b>1. Reinforced the concept of classification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grouped based on similarities</li> <li>• Classified based on differences</li> <li>• Differentiated class terms and specific terms</li> <li>• Classified from general to specific</li> <li>• Constructed simple keys (i.e. a tree diagram)</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Taught vocabulary and language features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taught vocabulary and sentence patterns that are essential to introduce classification and to describe classification</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="868 882 1469 1128" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Students are having small group activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included vocabulary building by covering derivative forms of words (e.g. class, to classify, classification), hyponymy (living things – plants – flowers - roses)</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Improved students' academic literacy skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taught reading strategies for content reading (e.g. 'Read around the text' for main ideas and scanning for supporting details - examples)</li> <li>• Included text analysis &amp; genre awareness</li> <li>• Used graphic organisers in reading &amp; writing (Information transfer from a reading text to a tree diagram and from a tree diagram to written form)</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="874 1778 1469 2002" data-label="Diagram"> <p>The diagram illustrates the flow of information: a student reading a book (Reading) leads to a tree diagram (Graphic organiser), which then leads to a student writing (Writing).</p> </div>





## Impacts

English and KLA teachers at both schools felt that cross-curricular planning was able to broaden and enrich their professional knowledge as they could learn from the teaching strategies and approaches used by teachers of other disciplines. The curriculum initiatives enabled them to create synergy. They perceived that students were able to show critical thinking skills and transfer the strategies and skills learned in other contexts. As for the implementation of the cross-curricular initiatives, they thought that piloting them on a smaller scale (e.g. implementing it at one level and involving one KLA first) helped them gain valuable experiences at the initial stage before extending them to other levels or KLAs.

Students at Shau Kei Wan Government Secondary School indicated that they enjoyed the synchronised teaching of English and Liberal Studies modules as they had more opportunities for consolidation and deepening their concepts and knowledge. Some students said that they wanted to do the debating activity again as students could tap into their own talents by playing different roles in the debating circles. Students at Methodist College agreed that the English-in-Science Programme had offered them coping strategies that enabled them to learn better in English. English teachers also found that more students could complete the assessment tasks that demanded greater complexity of language at their learning level.

## Facilitating factors

### 1. Full support from the management and teaching staff

- Full support given by the Principals of the two schools and the English panel members to the core teachers involved, thus facilitating them to play an active role in the cross-curricular initiatives
- Co-planning time arranged for teachers of different KLAs to discuss and develop the school-based curricula at both schools

### 2. Identifying appropriate entry points to foster inter-departmental collaboration

- Liberal Studies and Integrated Science identified as two KLAs more ready for inter-departmental collaboration before the cross-curricular initiatives are extended to other areas
- Cross-curricular initiatives implemented in a progressive manner from one level to more levels and from one year planning to cross-years planning

### 3. Identification of enthusiastic core teachers as curriculum leaders

- Core teachers taking the lead to plan and implement the cross-curricular initiatives as well as conceptualise and disseminate the knowledge generated to other English and KLA teachers
- Curriculum leadership shown by core teachers in demonstrating how to make cross-curricular links with other KLAs through lesson observation, sharing among teachers and developing cross-curricular plans

### 4. Carrying out systematic curriculum mapping at the initial stage

- Curriculum mapping of English and KLA components done at the initial stage of the curriculum initiatives to ensure coherence among them.
- Much time used at the planning stage to ensure greater success of the cross-curricular initiatives

## Difficulties and suggestions

### Difficulties

#### 1. Lack of knowledge about other Key Learning Areas

- English teachers do not know much about the knowledge and concepts specific to a content subject. Likewise, subject teachers lack confidence in language matters including subject-specific language.



## 2. Workload

- Piloting the initiatives, in addition to regular teaching and administrative duties, creates a heavy workload for teachers concerned.

## 3. Time

- Extra time and effort is required especially when teachers involved in the project lack knowledge and experience.
- Difficulty in finding common time for meetings increases with a greater number of teachers and KLAs involved.

## 4. Readiness of teachers

- Not all teachers see the need for enhancing language and content relationships and are therefore not prepared to make an attempt at making such cross-curricular links.

## Suggestions

- Core teachers to help language teachers understand that their emphasis in teaching should be placed on language skills to support students to learn other KLAs
- The need for a supportive and sharing culture among the panel members
- Arrangement of co-planning time in the timetable
- Secondment of core teachers to create space

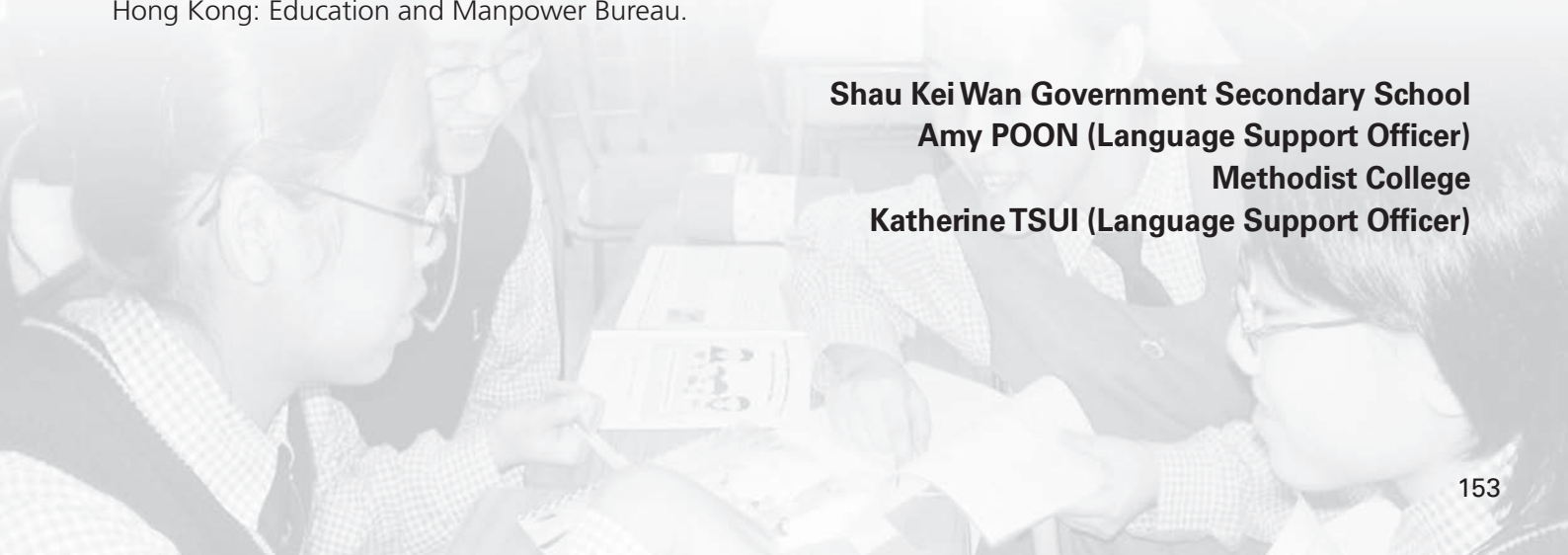
## Way forward

The two cross-curricular initiatives have been piloted for about one year. To sustain the work accomplished this year, English and KLA teachers involved would try to extend the initiatives to more modules and more levels next year. At both schools, English and KLA teachers have worked out blueprints setting the directions for the development of the two initiatives in three years' or five years' time. With the experiences accumulated this year and constant evaluation, it is hoped that the initiatives will produce a positive impact on other KLAs and be implemented on a larger scale at a later stage. Ultimately, the initiatives can significantly enhance students' learning and the quality of school-based curriculum as well as achieve the aims of curriculum reform.

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**Shau Kei Wan Government Secondary School**  
**Amy POON (Language Support Officer)**  
**Methodist College**  
**Katherine TSUI (Language Support Officer)**

# Students as valuable resources to promote cross-key stage (KS2-3) learning

## Background

Two neighbouring schools, SKH Yan Laap Primary School and SKH Lam Woo Memorial Secondary School, aspire to boost the English proficiency of their senior primary and junior secondary students respectively. However, deploying limited teaching manpower in schools to run enrichment programmes is always a brain teaser. To maximise human resources to further develop students' capabilities in learning English, the two schools worked collaboratively on a reading programme. The secondary students became the reading tutors for the primary students. A cross-key stage reading programme is a reminder that not only teachers, teaching assistants and service providers but also students themselves can be an asset in reinforcing English language learning.

## Levels

P5, S2, S3

## Strategies used

The two schools adopted **cross-age tutoring** to improve the English proficiency of their students. Cross-age tutoring involves higher grade level students (better readers who are two or three grades older), under the teachers' guidance, helping younger students (little readers). (Cohen, 1986; Gaustad, 1993; Topping, 1988). With the secondary students serving as reading tutors, reading in small groups in a supportive, relaxed atmosphere could take place. The primary students were given plenty of opportunities to practise the reading skills the secondary students taught them, discuss questions and share ideas in English.

Research studies show that cross-age tutoring is an effective learning tool by which both the tutors and tutees can flourish:

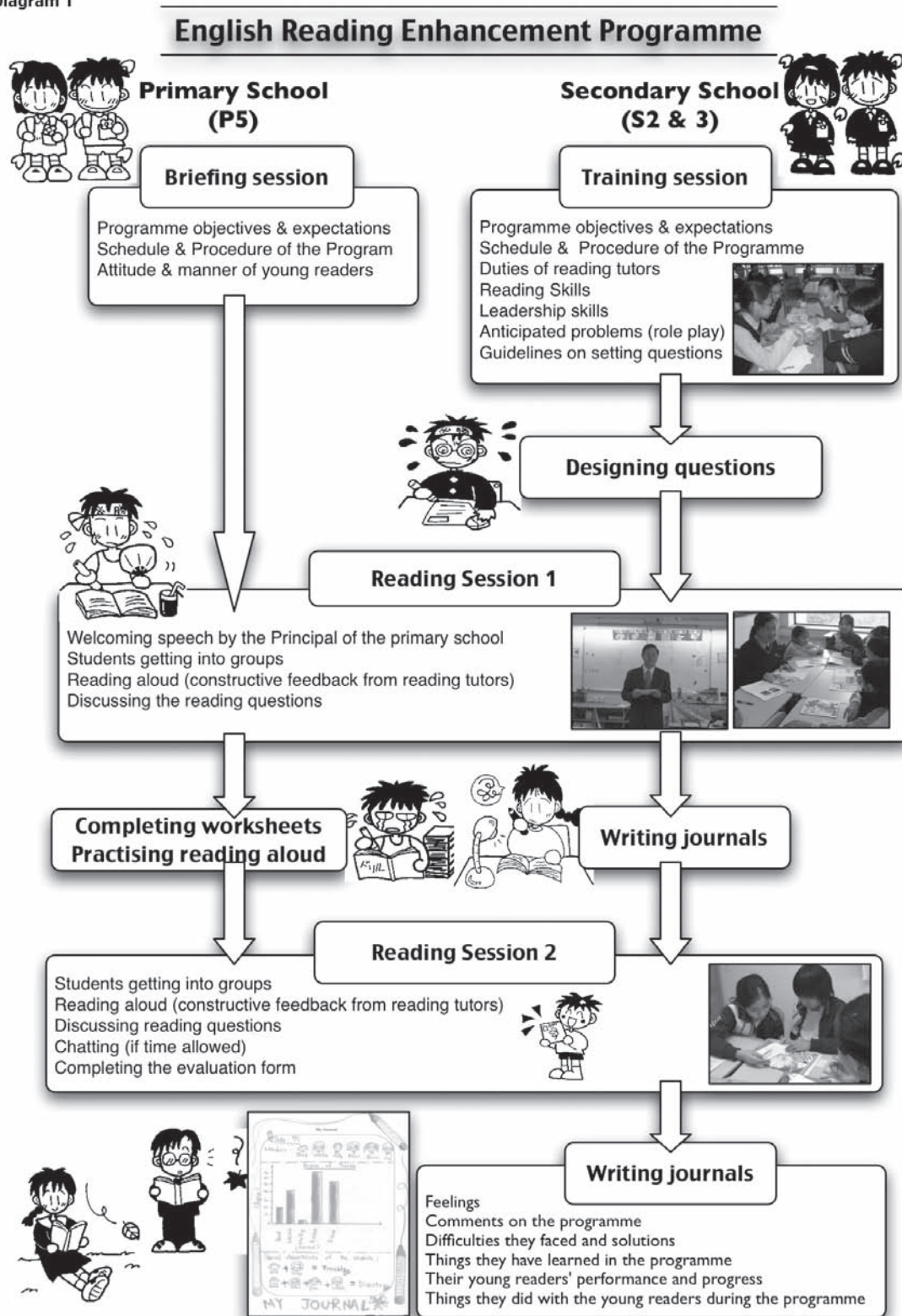
Benefits tutors receive	Benefits tutees receive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positive reading attitudes and habits</li> <li>• an authentic reason for practising in order to improve their reading performance</li> <li>• opportunities to practise and improve communication skills</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased academic mastery (organising materials to teach facilitates long-term retention; aids in the formation of a more comprehensive and integrated understanding; and reinforces knowledge base and skills)</li> <li>• increased self-esteem, confidence, and sense of adequacy as a result of making a meaningful contribution and being named a tutor</li> <li>• a new or increased sense of responsibility and awareness for what teachers must do to transmit knowledge to students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased academic mastery</li> <li>• increased self-esteem as a result of having an older, higher-status friend</li> <li>• increased praise, feedback, and encouragement over what they might receive from one teacher</li> <li>• skills demonstrated instead of just verbalised</li> <li>• immediate feedback, answers to questions and corrections</li> </ul>

The schools believe that cross-age tutoring provides a purpose for the primary students and the secondary students to work together. Through collaboration and communication, the teachers can also gain more insight into curriculum planning of English language learning to create a smooth transition from KS2 to KS3.

## What happened

The programme involved 22 secondary students (S2 & S3) coaching 80 primary students (P5). The objectives of the programme were to develop students' reading, speaking and thinking skills.

Diagram 1



# Impacts

## 1. Benefits gained by students


### (i) Post-project survey data

(a) The students thought that the reading programme gave them significant help in improving the following 5 areas:

	Primary students	Secondary students
1st	Communication skills	Communication skills & speaking skills
2nd	Reading skills*	
3rd	Confidence in using English & speaking skills	Confidence in using English
4th		Thinking skills
5th	Listening skills	Collaboration skills

\* (1) using phonic skills to pronounce difficult words;  
(2) guessing meaning (using illustrations and context as clues)

(b) The primary students liked the reading tutors and thought they were good role models. Things they learned from their reading tutors included:

Academic mastery	Learning attitudes	Personal qualities	Others
Reading aloud skills Reading skills Vocabulary Speaking skills Using the dictionary	Being diligent Keep trying Learning from mistakes Taking responsible risk Being attentive English is not difficult	Being patient Having good manners Respecting the others Being self-confident Being a leader	Interpersonal skills 

(c) The primary students reviewed that their self-esteem and confidence improved as they received positive and constructive feedback from the reading tutors.

### (ii) Reading tutors' journal entries


The journal entries reflected the benefits reading tutors gained in the programme:

#### (a) Academic mastery increased

The reading tutors learned the questioning techniques and set questions for the young readers (their learning was consolidated). During the reading sessions, they needed to explain vocabulary (their vocabulary knowledge base was reinforced), demonstrate reading skills, give comments on the young readers' performance (their knowledge and skills were internalised). The experience of being a reading tutor made them realise their inadequacy. The tutors were eager to make improvement in their own studies.

**Puss-in-Boots Worksheet** Year: Heidi Fong 2E (13)

8. Do (48) you know any pet? If yes, please introduce one of your pet. If no, please describe what kind of animal you like best and explain your answer. (Hint: You may refer to the description in this poem and answer the question.)



My Pet!

The animal I like best

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Breed: \_\_\_\_\_

Personality: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

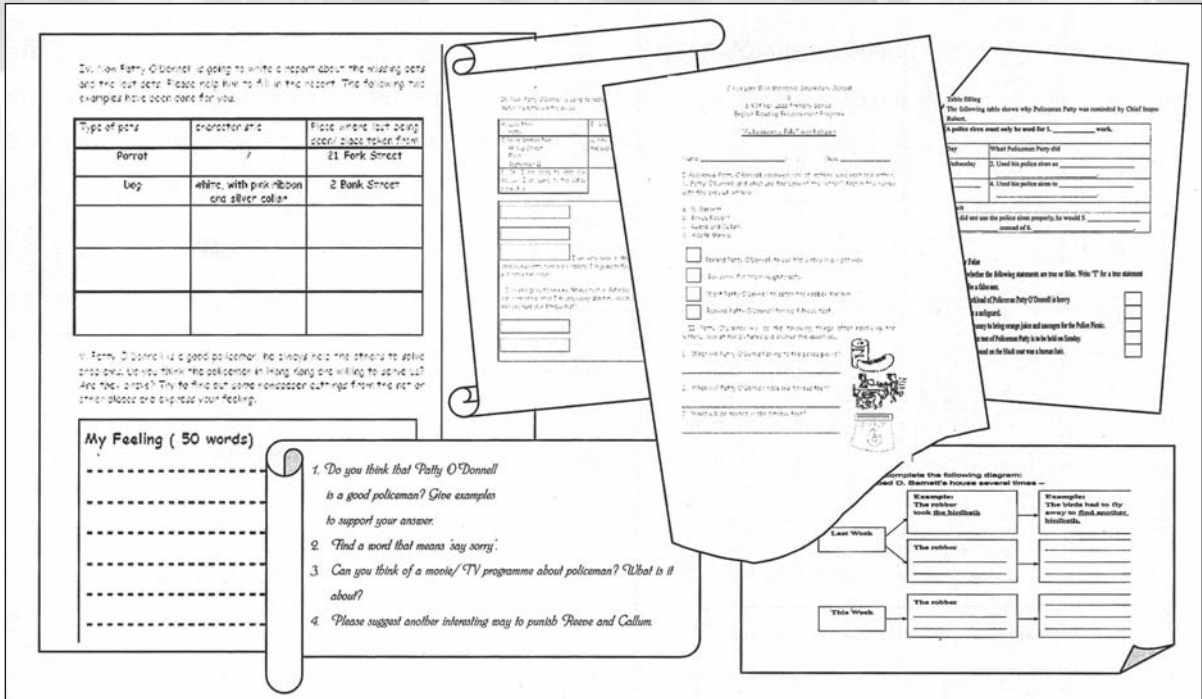
4. Who will Patty O'Donnell contact if he found a missing bird/bath and a tree?

5. What will happen to Patty O'Donnell if he kept using the siren wrongly?

III. Patty O'Donnell is a busy policeman, are you busy when you are at school? How do you feel? Please draw a picture to show your feeling when you are very busy. Remember to use the colour pencil!

In the story, the cat was the friend of the miller's son. He was loyal and helpful. In reality, what should a good friend be? Tell me your opinion.

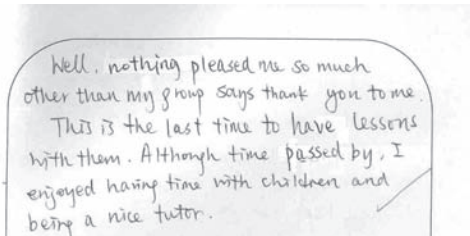
Questions designed by secondary students



Questions designed by secondary students

**(b)Self-esteem and confidence increased**

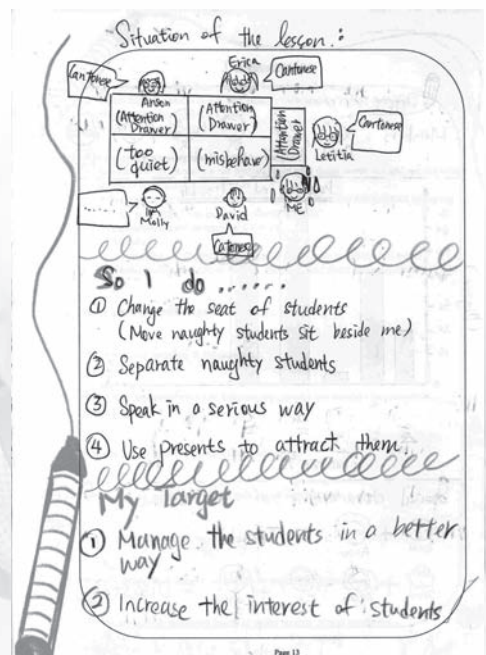
The reading tutors knew that they were making a meaningful contribution when they witnessed the improvement of the young readers made and received their thanks.



**(c) Leadership skills developed**

The reading tutors have developed some leadership skills:

- 'Everything that you wanted to ask them to do, should be told in a harmonious way, not rude ...' ~Daphne, S.3
- 'I figured out some ways to manage the discipline of my students. Do not pay attention to them when they speak Cantonese.' ~Serlina, S.2
- 'So I tried to encourage them to speak louder by telling them being shy they cannot speak good English. I tried to read a passage loudly to show them that speaking louder can make the others more willing to listen to you.' ~Cherrie, S.3
- 'I think they were too afraid of reading by themselves, so I suggested that we read together.' ~Winnie, S.2
- '... with the help of the punishment and reward system, the 1st meeting has been carried out successfully.' ~Kate, S.3
- 'I need to lead the whole group and speak more English... I am braver and tougher than before.' ~Winnie, S.2



### (d) More positive learning attitudes

The reading tutors became understanding students and became more positive towards learning and behaving in class.

*'To be a good teacher, you need to manage the time really well.'*

~Serlina, S.2

*'Teachers need to prepare a lot for the lessons and face difficulties calmly. The students rely on me so I cannot make any mistake.'*

*'Being a teacher is really a hard task. I'll respect our teachers more from now on.'*

~Cherrie, S.3

*'I understand how important the reaction of students in a lesson is.'*

*'If the students don't respond to the teacher, the teacher will hardly do well.'*

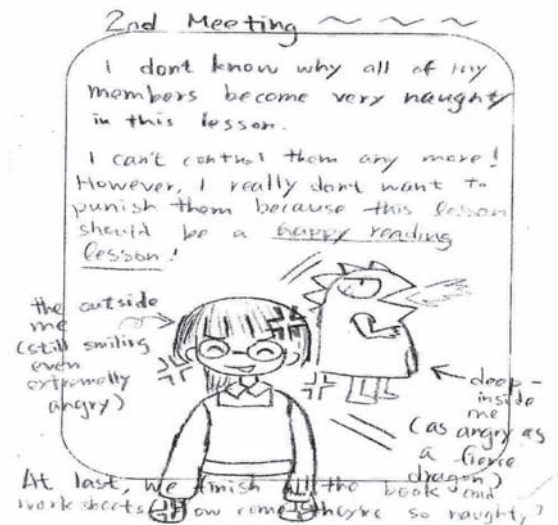
~Terrence, S.2

*'I could understand what the difficulties our teachers face now.'*

*'I think our teachers are great and I will perform better during the lessons.'*

~Mandy, S.3

### (e) Self-management



*'I need to be patient to teach students and control my temper.'*

~Connie, S.3

## 2. Curriculum interface

- (i) The design of the questions leads students to discuss topics beyond the text. The primary students got a glimpse of the lives of secondary students. The primary students benefitted from the experience of the secondary students. The cross-key stage reading programme served as a good means to bridge English across primary and secondary education.
- (ii) The reading programme provided an opportunity for primary and secondary teachers to communicate. Primary teachers learned more about the English curriculum of KS3 and secondary teachers learned more about the primary curriculum. With more information, the two schools can adjust the curricula to address their students' needs, interests and abilities.

## Facilitating factors

1. Lam Woo and Yan Laap are two neighbouring schools which have a strong interest in working together. Each year, quite a proportion of Lam Woo's S1 intake is from Yan Laap. The location facilitates the implementation and the organisational work of the programme.
2. The primary school provided the necessary support and resources (classrooms, teachers, teaching assistants) for the reading programme.
3. The programme provided ample learning opportunity for both the tutors and young readers. The tutors had ownership of the programme as they had to design the questions for the primary students.
4. The reading programme also tapped into the strengths of the students whose English proficiency is high, are eager to learn, responsible and well behaved.

## 5. Providing extra support for tutors

- The tutors sent their questions to the coordinator of the reading programme (Language Support Officer) for feedback prior to the reading sessions. The coordinator guided the tutors to include questions of different types and levels.
- Training session for reading tutors was provided.
- The tutors could approach the coordinator for advice and support through e-mail.

## Difficulties and suggestions

Difficulties	Suggestions
<p><b>Schools</b></p> <p>It was time-consuming to make arrangements regarding logistics like coordinating the schedules of two sets of students and organising resources (manpower, books, classrooms, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start planning the programme earlier (e.g. at the end of the previous academic year) so that there is enough time for the programme coordinators to take care of in-house and inter-school liaison</li></ul>
<p><b>Students</b></p> <p>It was a big challenge for S2 &amp; S3 students to teach a group of P5 students. They had to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• set questions for the P5 students</li><li>• make the P5 students speak English</li><li>• make the P5 students pay attention to them</li><li>• make the P5 students understand the things they want to teach them</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce group size</li><li>• Provide training for reading tutors on<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reading skills</li><li>• questioning techniques</li><li>• reading strategies</li><li>• group management strategies</li></ul></li><li>• Provide ongoing supervision and support for students (even if they have high English proficiency)</li><li>• Provide onsite teacher support</li></ul>
<p><b>The design of the programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some of the student participants might have lost track between two reading sessions.</li><li>• The programme appeared to be a stand-alone activity in the schools' English curricula.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involve the English teachers of the reading tutors and the young readers to provide ongoing supervision and support</li><li>• Integrate the programme with the formal curriculum and set learning targets and language focuses to deal with in class (refer to Diagram 2) to maximise students' learning</li></ul>

## Way forward

Seeing the encouraging feedback from the students and teachers of both schools, the schools are now planning to implement the reading programme again in the next academic year. Based on their experience this year, they will try to perfect the existing practices and pilot the programme in a broader scope.



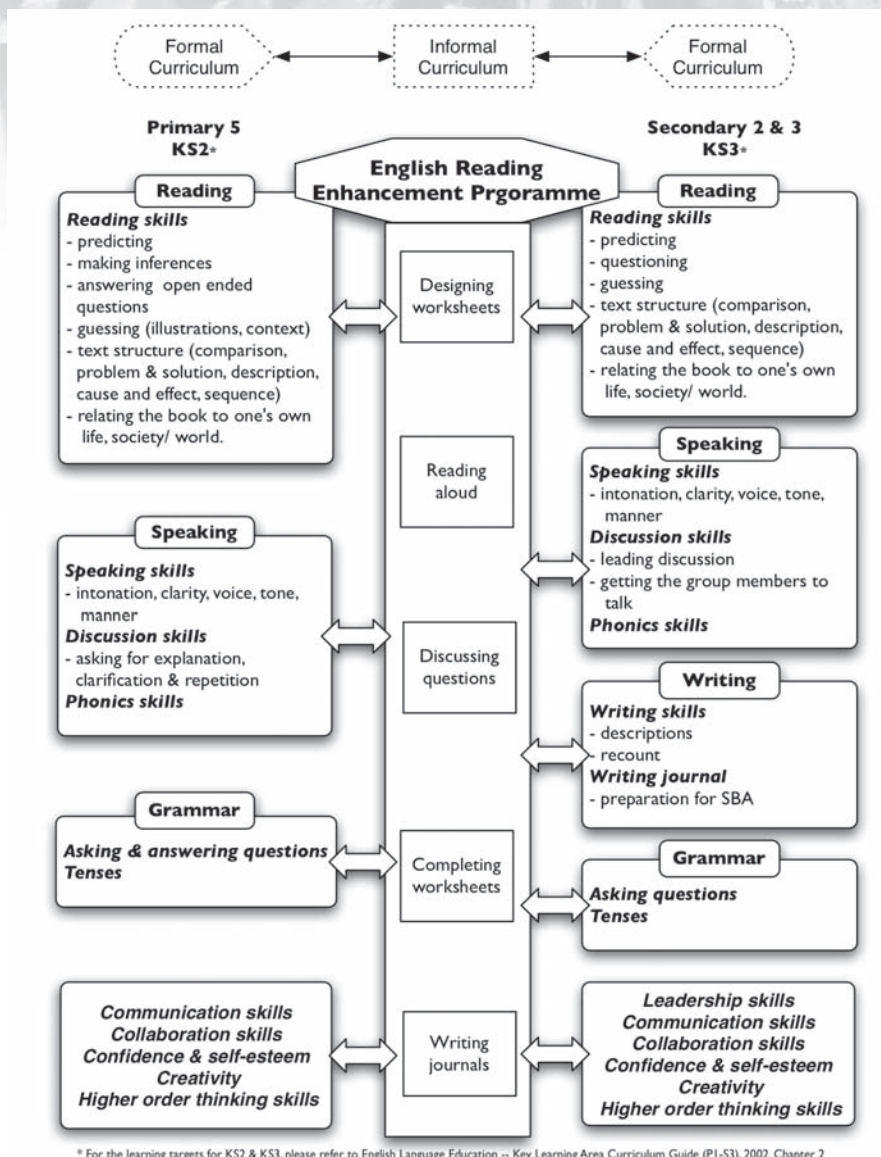


Diagram 2 Suggested design for English Reading Enhancement Programme for the coming year

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