

**Paving the way for independent learning:  
Incorporating self-directed learning  
elements and life-wide learning into the  
school-based English writing curriculum**

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# Background information

<b>Support level</b>	P4
<b>Students' major needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of self-directed learning (SDL) capabilities</li><li>• More exposure to different text types in addition to narrative texts</li></ul>
<b>Teachers' major concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to foster SDL capabilities among students</li><li>• How to promote creative thinking, communication, collaboration and problem solving skills among students</li><li>• How to enrich the school-based writing curriculum</li></ul>
<b>School context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organising a whole-school life-wide learning (LWL) activity (Creativity Carnival) for students to creatively think what they can do, and authentically and meaningfully apply what they have learned</li></ul>

# Objectives of the project

- To **engage** students in learning English;
- To develop students' **language competence, generic skills and SDL capabilities**;
- To design a **more balanced school-based writing curriculum**; and
- To develop teachers' professional capacity in conducting **holistic curriculum planning**

# Major strategies adopted

- 1. Inside the classroom:** Infusing **SDL elements** into different learning tasks
- 2. Outside the classroom:** Making good use of the **LWL activity \*Creativity Carnival** as an authentic context for P4 students to apply knowledge and skills

\*An annual school event in which students at each grade level organise some activities for other students.

**Life-wide learning (LWL)**  
**(Education Bureau, 2019)**

- student learning in **real contexts and authentic settings**
- enabling students to **achieve certain learning goals that are more difficult to attain through classroom learning alone.**

**Self-directed learning (SDL)**  
**(Curriculum Development Council, 2014; Knowles, 1975)**

- **learners' control** and **self-management**, learners' **reflection**, personal **autonomy**, **tendency of self-learning**, such as the independent pursuit of **learning outside school**
- a learning process with **setting goals**, **identifying and choosing resources and strategies**, and **monitoring** and **evaluating** learning outcomes

Integrating **LWL** and **SDL** to help students achieve **whole-person development** and **lifelong learning**

## Rationale for adopting the strategies

### Authenticity

- Extending classroom learning to learning through **hands-on experiences** and running the **Creativity Carnival** so that students could acquire and apply skills and knowledge through real-life experience **within and outside the classroom**

### Lifelong learning capabilities

- Incorporating **SDL elements** in different learning tasks and using the **Creativity Carnival** as a platform for students to enhance and sharpen **SDL capabilities and other generic skills**

Outside the classroom

Inside and outside the classroom (home)

Unit 4  
Old Hong Kong

### Creativity Carnival

Tasks for P4 students:  
Organising and conducting the Carnival through running:

1. A **Puppet Workshop** to teach fellow schoolmates **how to make a puppet**
2. A **Puppet Show** to tell fellow schoolmates **facts about old Hong Kong**

**Life-wide learning:**  
**Application of SDL and lifelong learning skills**

Writing tasks (procedural texts, dialogue writing and presentation speech)  
Speaking tasks (dialogue and presentation)  
Hands-on experience (puppet making)  
Note-taking skills

Infusing **SDL** into different learning tasks:  
**Monitoring** and **evaluating** through **checking** and **reflection**, and developing **self-study skills**

Reading

Vocabulary

Choosing their own learning materials from different websites suggested by teachers

Grammar

Learning through a self-learning corner provided

Knowledge

Choosing their own learning materials from a wide range of resources provided:

- a recommended reader
- websites
- online videos
- ETV

Infusing **SDL** into different learning tasks:  
Choosing resources for **autonomy of learning**

# Strategy One

**Inside the classroom:** Infusing  
**SDL elements** into different  
learning tasks

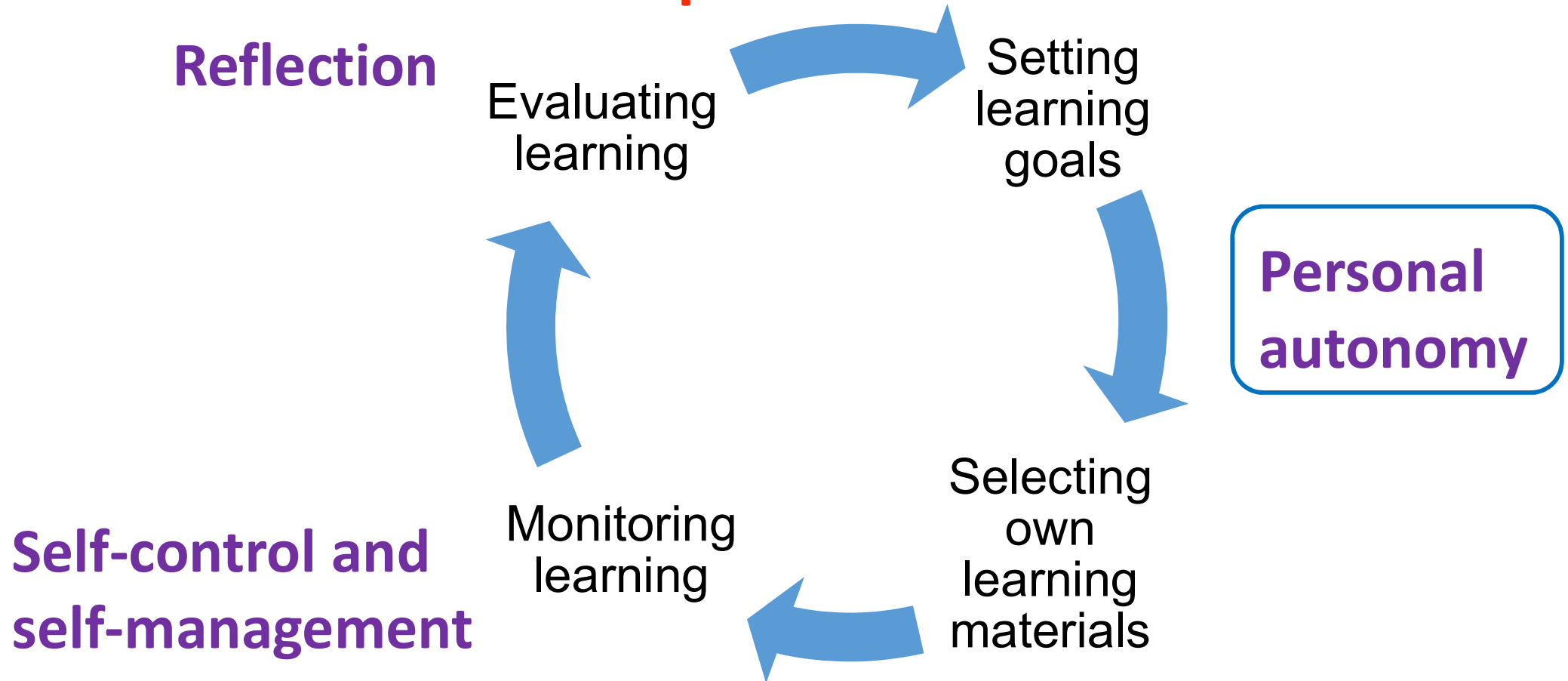


## Self-directed Learning (SDL)

(Curriculum Development Council, 2014; Knowles, 1975)

- learners' control and self-management, learners' reflection, personal autonomy, tendency of self-learning, such as the independent pursuit of learning outside school
- a learning process with setting goals, identifying and choosing resources and strategies, and monitoring and evaluating learning outcomes

# Conceptual framework of developing students' SDL capabilities



## Receptive skill (reading)

Area	Objective	Tasks	SDL element
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To facilitate learner <b>autonomy</b>: Students could choose their own learning materials for puppet making.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students were provided with different resources such as <b>websites</b> to learn vocabulary about clothing, accessories and jewellery.</li><li>A task sheet about materials was designed for students to finish at home.</li><li>Students could also use other kinds of materials not covered in the task sheet to make their own puppet. In that case, they had to check the English names of the materials they wanted to use <b>on their own</b>.</li></ul>	Selecting own learning materials

## Receptive skill (reading)

Area	Objective	Task	SDL element
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To provide students with <b>autonomy</b>: Students could use the resources provided to learn more about imperatives used in a procedural text and for giving instructions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A <b>self-learning corner</b> with websites and online videos was provided for students to learn more <b>according to their own interest</b>.</li></ul>	Selecting own learning materials

## Receptive skill (reading)

Area	Objective	Tasks	SDL element
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide students with <b>autonomy</b>: Students could choose their own learning materials about:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hong Kong in the old times</li> <li>how to make a puppet</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A reader about making ice-cream was <b>recommended</b> for students to read <b>on their own</b> before writing a procedural text.</li> <li>In addition to the textbook, other resources including a <b>website and an online ETV programme</b> were provided for students to learn some facts about old Hong Kong.</li> <li>Other resources such as <b>websites and online videos</b> were also provided for them to learn how to make a puppet.</li> </ul>	Selecting own learning materials

# Conceptual framework of developing students' SDL capabilities

**Reflection**

Evaluating  
learning

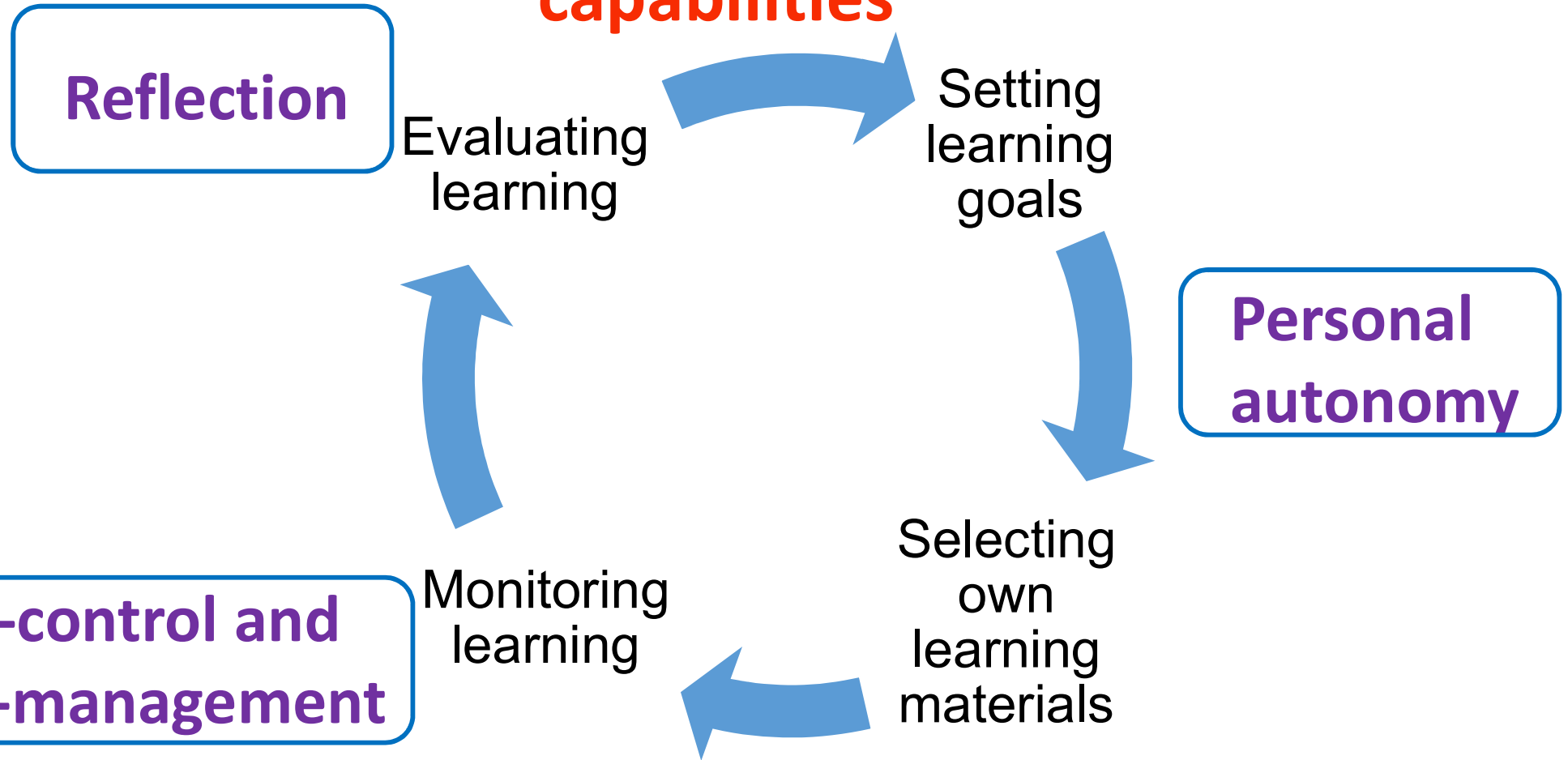
Setting  
learning  
goals

**Personal  
autonomy**

**Self-control and  
self-management**

Monitoring  
learning

Selecting  
own  
learning  
materials



## Productive skills (writing and speaking)

Area	Objective	Tasks	SDL element
Note-taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To develop students' <b>study skills</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students were encouraged to <b>take notes</b> during lessons.</li><li>Students jotted down key points of a lesson and <b>made reference to</b> them when writing the procedural text.</li></ul>	Monitoring learning

## Productive skills (writing and speaking)

Areas	Objectives	Tasks	SDL element
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To train students how to <b>evaluate own learning</b> through:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Self-evaluation</li> <li>b) Peer checking</li> <li>c) Self-reflection</li> </ol> </li> <li>• To <b>set a further goal</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students were provided with a <b>checklist</b> to evaluate their own writing.</li> <li>• During lessons, students worked <b>in pairs or groups</b> when doing tasks so that their partners or groupmates could help check their work.</li> <li>• Students did <b>reflection</b> on their own writing.</li> </ul>	Monitoring/evaluating own learning and setting further learning goals



## Productive skills (writing and speaking)

Areas	Objectives	Tasks	SDL element
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To prepare for the Puppet Workshop</li><li>To train students to <b>evaluate</b> their own performance</li><li>To <b>set a further goal</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students practised <b>at home</b> how to give instructions.</li><li>Students were provided with <b>a self-evaluation form</b> to evaluate their own speaking performance.</li><li>Students <b>set the next goal</b> after reflection.</li></ul>	Evaluating own learning and setting further learning goals

## Strategy Two

**Outside the classroom:** Making good use of the **LWL activity Creativity Carnival** as an authentic context for P4 students to apply knowledge and skills

# Skills application: Lifelong learning capabilities, receptive skills and productive skills

Event	Objectives	Tasks	LWL/ SDL
Creativity Carnival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide students with an <b>authentic</b> learning environment to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) learn knowledge and skills that cannot be learned in the classroom alone</li> <li>b) apply <b>lifelong learning and SDL skills</b></li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p><u>Puppet making</u> Students conducted a Puppet Workshop to teach fellow schoolmates how to make a puppet.</p> <p><u>Puppet Show</u> Students introduced fellow schoolmates to some facts about old Hong Kong through a Puppet Show.</p>	LWL and SDL

# Impact at student level

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1. Students' writing content was enriched. They were able to:
  - ❑ generate **richer content** out of the information sources they had selected for themselves
  - ❑ **elaborate** their ideas by giving further details
2. Students developed target SDL capabilities and other lifelong learning skills. They were able to:
  - ❑ refer to **relevant resources for self-learning** → increased exposure to different learning tools and text types
  - ❑ make **reflections** on their own learning performance and identify areas for improvement
  - ❑ sharpen their **generic skills** for lifelong learning, e.g. communication skills, study skills, creativity
  - ❑ apply knowledge and skills learned in writing tasks in different contexts

# Impact at student level

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3. Students' **learning motivation** was enhanced in the life-wide learning activity. They were able to:
- ❑ prepare for and promote the Creativity Carnival
  - ❑ create displays on the overall theme of the event
  - ❑ apply the language and generic skills learned in the English lessons
  - ❑ learn through interaction with students from other levels through cross-level activities (e.g. Puppet Workshop and Puppet Show)
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## Impact at teacher level

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1. Teachers' **understanding** about developing students' SDL capabilities was enhanced.
  2. Teachers learned more about **how to engage students in meaningful and authentic contexts**, and learned **how to design scaffolding activities** systematically.
    - They provided students with **hands-on activities** to actualise their writing.
  3. Teachers' **capability to conduct holistic curriculum planning** with the **infusion of new initiatives** appropriate to students' development and learning needs was strengthened.
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## Impact at curriculum level

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1. The school-based writing curriculum has become **more balanced and enriched** with the **infusion of SDL and life-wide learning** to promote independent learning.

## Facilitating factors

- English teachers' **commitment to infusing SDL elements** into the school-based English Language curriculum so as to align with the school's overall direction
- Provision of an **authentic context** for students' application of knowledge and skills through **life-wide learning experiences**

## Concluding remarks

- Gradually **shifting more responsibility for learning** to students so as to develop their SDL capabilities
- Providing students with relevant **hands-on and life-wide learning activities** to
  - strengthen students' **motivation** towards learning English
  - to enrich their **overall learning experience**



## Way forward

- The school will continue to focus on the development of SDL and try out other experiential learning tasks in the coming years.