

Title: Using e-reading materials and a variety of post-reading tasks to enhance students' reading motivation and language skills

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Introduction

Reading is the foundation of all learning and knowledge and it is the key which unlocks the door to lifelong learning. According to UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2007), reading is a significant factor affecting children's future educational and economic opportunities. Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) suggested that "changing and improving students' reading proficiency could have strong impact on their opportunities in later life" (OCED, 2002). Hence, it is crucially important to develop students' reading abilities and cultivate their love for reading from an early age.

Due to technological advancement and changing features in electronic devices, students are given more exposure to digital and multimodal texts and there has been a shift in how "literacy" is defined. "Literacy" is no longer confined to the ability to read and write, but extended to cover the ability to understand and create a range of texts that integrate linguistic, audio, visual, gestural and spatial elements, as well as the ability to use different media and technological tools for effective communication and information management" (Curriculum Development Institute, 2021, p.3). Building on the strengths and achievements of existing literacy initiatives, schools are encouraged to maximise students' exposure to an extensive selection of text types and develop their new literacy skills using a wide variety of quality resources and multimodal texts, including both printed and electronic reading materials (Curriculum Development Council, 2017).

According to PISA results, students' engagement in reading, their levels of interest in and attitudes towards reading, the amount of time they spend on reading in their free time, and the diversity of materials they read are all closely associated with their performance in reading literacy (OECD, 2021). In view of this, the English teachers of St. Bonaventure Catholic Primary School has collaborated with the School-based Curriculum Development (Primary) Section in revamping the reading and writing

curricula. Different e-learning materials have been used and a variety of reading tasks have been designed with the aim of enhancing students' reading motivation and language skills.

School Background

St. Bonaventure Catholic Primary School is an aided school operating 30 classes. Students are mainly from neighbouring estates, with different socioeconomic backgrounds. Hence, parent involvement and support in English learning vary and a great learner diversity is prominent. Great emphasis has been laid on enhancing students' reading motivation and enriching their experiential learning experience in recent years.

The School has been receiving professional support from the School-based development (Primary) Section since 2021/22 s.y. to revamp the reading and writing curricula as well as review the learning and teaching strategies adopted in Primary 3 (P3) and Primary 5 (P5), making reference to the suggestions from the English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 - Secondary 6) 2017. In order to enhance students' reading motivation and language skills, teachers have been devoting themselves to exploring different e-reading materials and designing an array of reading activities. It is hoped that students can be provided with ample opportunities for purposeful and integrative use of language and their enjoyment in reading can be boosted.

Curriculum Planning and Implementation

To work towards the goals, the core team undertook a detailed curriculum planning process that results in the development of different quality learning and teaching materials and strategies (Figure 1).

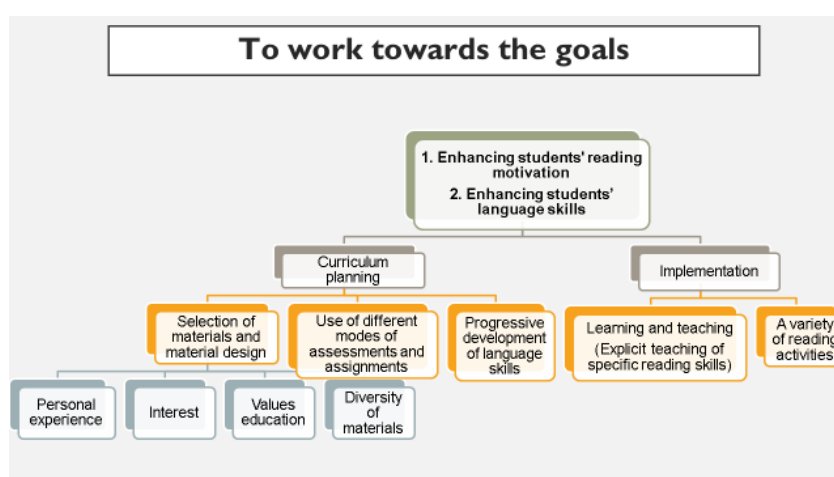


Figure 1: An Overview of Curriculum Planning and Implementation

With the aim of arousing students' reading interest and exposing students to a greater variety of text types, e-readers, including both fictions and non-fictions, were carefully chosen. Apart from matching the themes of different modules in the General English (GE) Programme, different factors were carefully considered during the selection of e-readers and e-reading materials (Figure 2). Figure 3 shows the e-readers the team selected for P3 and P5.

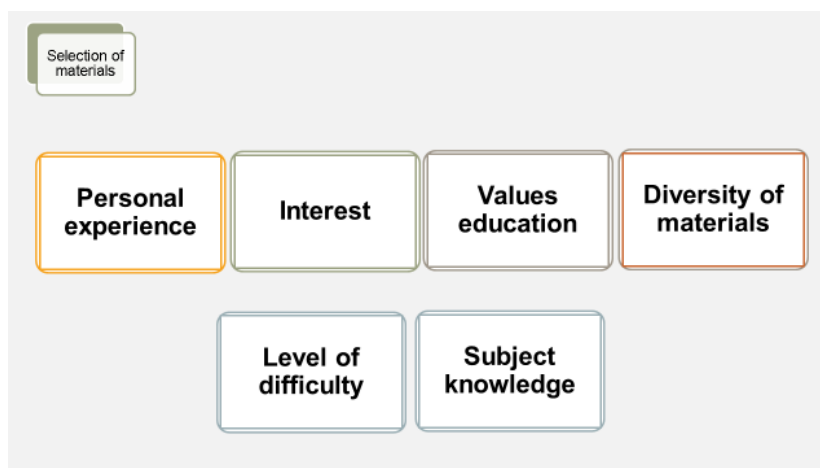


Figure 2: Aspects taken into consideration when selecting appropriate e-readers and e-reading materials

Term 1	
Fiction	Non-fiction
<input type="checkbox"/> Digger and Daisy Go Camping (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> Sports We Play (WS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Vacations (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> The World is Waiting for You (WS)
Term 2	
Fiction	Non-fiction
<input type="checkbox"/> A Super Special Soup (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> Be Positive (WS)	<input type="checkbox"/> What's on My Plate? (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> Let Us Find Ads on Food Packages (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> One Apple Tree (WS)
Term 3	
Fiction	Non-fiction
<input type="checkbox"/> Scaredy Squirrel Has a Birthday Party (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> Happy Birthday, Big Bad Wolf (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> Freda Stops a Bully (Padlet) <input type="checkbox"/> Red Cat Blue Cat (Padlet)	<input type="checkbox"/> Celebrate February (WS) <input type="checkbox"/> Birthdays Around the World (WS + Padlet) <input type="checkbox"/> Are You a Bully? (Google Form)

Figure 3: P3 e-reader list

Term 1	
Fiction	Non-fiction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeffrey and the Sloth 	-
Term 2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trouble with Time Travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incredible Places to Stay
Term 3 (In progress)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lost and Found Weekend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother's Day Crafts Cool Crafts Father's Day Crafts & Gifts

Figure 4: P5 e-reader list

Explicit Teaching of Specific Reading Skills

Concerted effort was made in creating meaningful and authentic contexts for students to learn and apply different specific reading skills. Making reference to the Learning Progression Framework (LPF) for English Language (Education Bureau, 2014), the team kept identifying and reviewing students' strengths and weaknesses in reading and set the learning objectives accordingly. The team identified different specific reading skills which they wanted to help students consolidate and develop through classroom observations, internal and external assessment results.

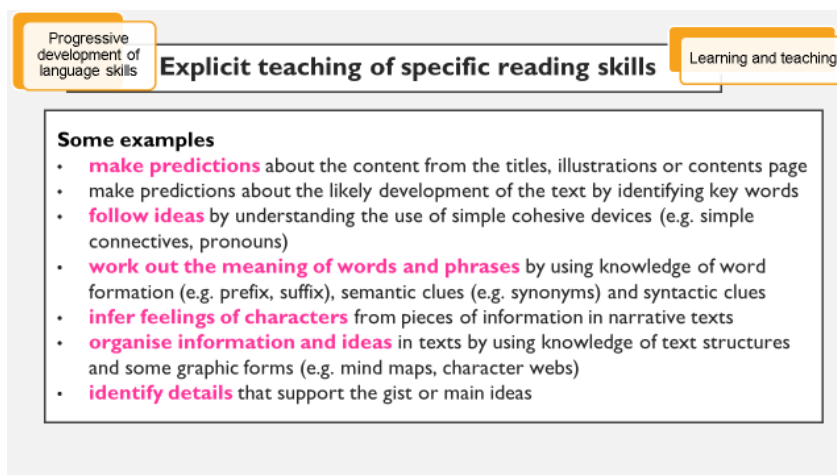


Figure 5: Examples of the specific reading skills identified

Taking 'work out the meaning of unfamiliar words' as an example, a range of while-reading activities were conducted using the e-readers to guide students to utilise both pictorial and contextual clues in guessing the meaning of the words and phrases they did not know. Furthermore, students were provided with ample opportunities to confirm the meaning of the unfamiliar words and apply them in different contexts.

Design of a Variety of Post-reading Activities

A range of post-reading tasks were designed to allow students to interact with the reading content. Examples include preparing a checklist for a lockdown party, designing and sharing a special day they would like to celebrate on an e-platform, producing a promotional leaflet for a country, writing an email to the School Head to propose a place for P5 students' outing.. It was observed that students' reading interest was greatly raised since the tasks were interesting to students. Teachers found that students were more willing to express themselves in English during reading lessons.



Figure 6: Students made use of an e-platform and some e-tools to produce the promotional leaflet.

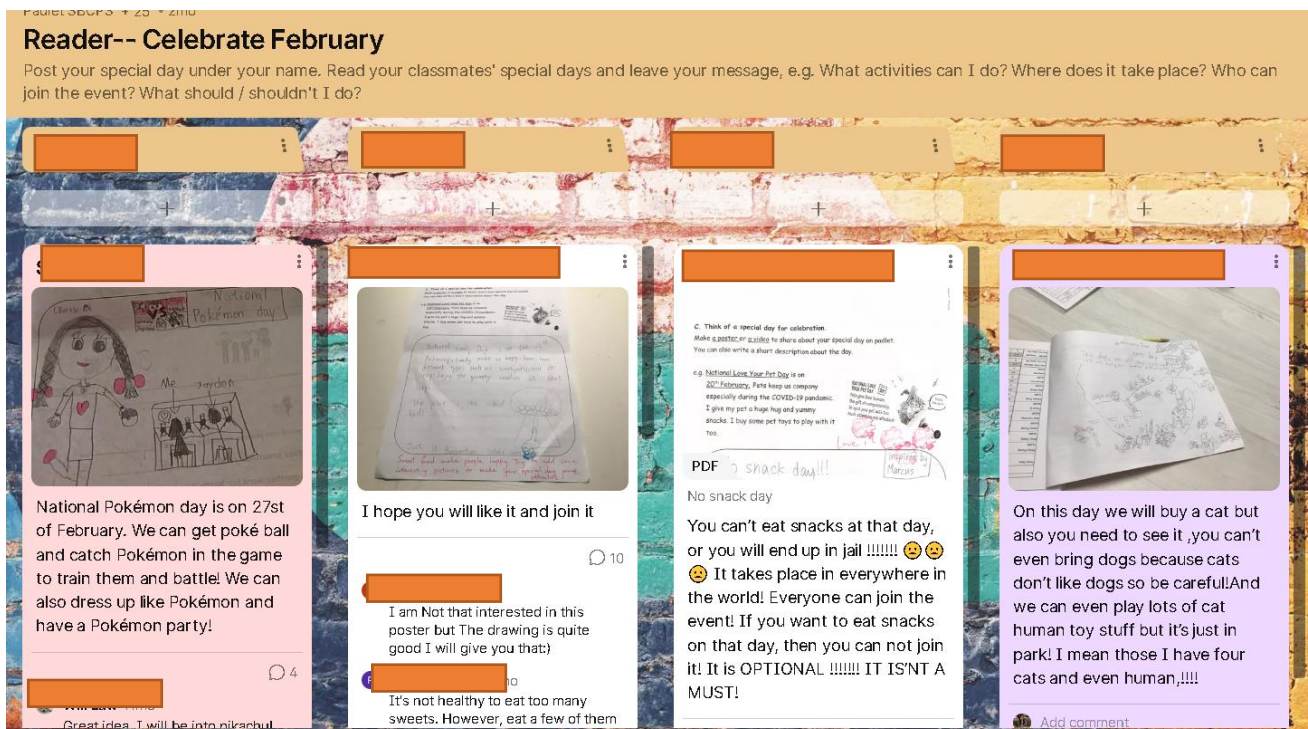


Figure 7: Students designed a special day and shared the ideas with their classmates on an e-platform. They also left some comments on their classmates' work.

Principal Lee wants to take all P.5 students on a school trip. A student has written an e-mail to him proposing where to go. Read the email.

To :	kclee@sbeps.edu.hk
From :	amylee@sbeps.edu.hk
Subject :	P.5 school trip ideas

Dear Principal Lee,

How are you? I am very excited to know that you will take us on a school trip. There are a lot of places in Hong Kong I have never been to. Among them all, I would like to go to Sai Kung. Even though a lot of classmates may prefer theme parks like Ocean Park or Disneyland, I think Sai Kung is a unique place that offers a lot to learn.

Sai Kung is also known as the 'back garden' of Hong Kong. There are traditional fishing villages, beautiful scenery, relaxing hiking trails, wonderful beaches and islands. It is unlike any other places in the city. My cousin has been there four times. He shared his experience with me and highly recommended the place.

Firstly, after arriving Sai Kung, I suggest going to the Volcano Discovery Centre. We can learn about the formation of Hong Kong's rock columns, volcanic history and features of the geosites, broadening our horizons.

A. Identify the different parts of an e-mail. Name different features by writing the correct letters in the boxes.

A. Sender	B. Receiver	C. Subject	D. Introduction
E. Background	F. Activity 1	G. Activity 2	H. Closing

To : kclee@sbeps.edu.hk

From : amylee@sbeps.edu.hk

Subject : P.5 school trip ideas

Paragraph 1 (How are you? I am very excited...)

Paragraph 2 (Sai Kung is also known as...)

Paragraph 3 (Firstly, after arriving Sai Kung, I suggest...)

Paragraph 4 (Next, we can take a speedboat...)

Paragraph 5 (I have put a lot of time...)



Food for thought...



1) How does Amy help Principal Lee know the order of the activities in the email?

☺ The use of ' _____ ' and ' _____ '.

☺ Can you think of other words we can use?

2) If you were Principal Lee, what would you think about when organising a school trip for students?

B. Read Amy's email on P.1 again. Finish the mind map below.

Suggested place: _____	Introduction _____	Reasons for the suggestion: _____ _____
Basic information about the place: _____	Background _____	Special features of the place: • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____
Others: _____		
Activity 1 Place to go: _____	Things to do or learn there: • _____ • _____ • _____	
Activity 2 Place to go: _____	Things to do or learn there: • _____ • _____ • _____	
Examples: _____		

C. Matching - What famous tourist spots can you find in Hong Kong? Match the names of the spots with the activities you can do there by filling in the letters.

1. Mai Po	() ()	A	visit Yim Tin Tsai and learn about how salt was produced in the past
2. West Kowloon Cultural District	() ()	B	know more about the floating seafood market and appreciate the fishermen's hard work
3. Sai Kung	() ()	E	visit M+ and appreciate different artworks
		F	learn about wetlands
		G	watch different kinds of birds and learn how to protect the nature
		H	visit Hong Kong Palace Museum and see the special exhibitions featuring Chinese art and culture

You may know more about the above places using the QR codes below:

Figure 8: Worksheets developed for scaffolding students to write an email to the School Head proposing a trip for P5 students

Promotion of Values Education

During the pandemic, teachers observed that students had more negative emotions and lacked interpersonal skills since they had limited face-to-face interactions with peers. In view of this, the team purposefully promoted different positive values and attitudes through using the e-readers and reading activities. Examples of the positive values and attitudes include positive thinking, care for others, respect for others, empathy and bravery.

Task : Positive Self Talk Activities

When you feel sad, scared or anxious, you will start to have negative thoughts about yourself! Try to send yourself positive messages. Here are some suggestions. You may colour the ideas you love

I am healthy.	I can do it and I will do it.	I am important.	I choose to start today with a smile.
I will keep trying.	I am kind.	I am calm and I am in control.	I am kind to others.
I am kind to others.	Today is going to be an awesome day.	I can get through it.	I love to _____.

What can you do when you feel disappointed / when someone says something mean about you? Choose one activity you want to do in the nature. Draw a picture and write about your feeling. Then you may share with your best friend.



Figure 9: Learning and teaching materials designed for the promotion of positive thinking



Write three positive messages that you can use.

1. Today is going to be an awesome day. ✓
2. I will keep trying. ✓
3. I am kind to others. ✓

Write three positive messages that you can use.

1. I can be happy. ✓
2. I am wise. ✓
3. I can do it by myself. ✓

Figure 10: Students' work regarding the promotion of positive mindset

Promotion of Experiential Learning by Actualising Students' Ideas and Suggestions

Regarding the email proposing a place for P5 students to go, students suggested a number of places and a range of learning activities to the School Head after different scaffolding tasks. Students were able to explain to the School Head what they could gain from the outing. For instance, some students mentioned in the writing that they could know more about different kinds of rare birds in person in Mai Po and immerse themselves in nature. Some stated that they could explore the village culture on Peng Chau. After different scaffolding tasks, students made good attempts in using a wide range of vocabulary and structures. Students were eager to receive teachers' feedback on their draft and make improvements in the writing. They hoped that their School Head would pick their work and actualise their suggestions. The school responded to students' ideas and suggestions in the writing by organising an English outing for all P5 students in April 2023. Students appreciated having this experiential learning experience since the places of the outing as well as the learning activities were suggested by themselves. Students' autonomy and engagement were fostered. Furthermore, students worked very hard to conduct some research on different places in Hong Kong by reading authentic materials to enrich the content of their email. Some of them even pointed out that they preferred to have more opportunities to do such kind of writing tasks since they found the context authentic and their views and ideas were valued.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Nc_f8qbGZQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nc_f8qbGZQ)

Figure 10: The school's video of the English Outing to West Kowloon and Peng Chau

Dear Principal Lee,
How are you? I am very excited to know that you will take us on a school trip. There are a lot of places in Hong Kong I have never been to. I would like to go to West Kowloon Cultural District. It is a beautiful place that offers a lot of artworks to see and enjoy. West Kowloon Cultural District is a large arts development project in Hong Kong. There are famous museums, beautiful scenery and different artworks. Mr. Wong has been there three times and he highly recommended the place. First, after arriving West Kowloon Cultural District, I suggest going to the M+ museum. We can watch movies at M+ cinema. Also, we can appreciate the exhibitions of different artists from many countries. All of the artworks are so creative and fascinating! Next, we can visit the Art Park. There are many local coffee shops and restaurants. We can buy some foods and have a picnic on the lawn. Also, we can play some group games

on the lawn ^{together} with each others! Moreover, we can appreciate the views of the harbour. I can't wait to take photos at sunset! I have put a lot of time and consideration on this school trip. I hope you will kindly think about my suggestion and we can all enjoy a good time in West Kowloon Cultural District.

Dear Principal Lee,
How are you? I am over the moon to know that you will take us on a school trip. Although my classmates may prefer visiting Ocean Park or Disneyland, I think I would like to suggest you Mai Po. It would be fun and interesting to observe the birds there. Mai Po is known as Hong Kong's paradise for birds. It is home to a host of wildlife such as buffaloes, birds, mudskippers and a lot more. Here, you can closely interact with different kinds of birds and immerse yourself into the nature. You can observe mangroves and animals. (Mai Po was highly recommended by the people who surf the Internet.) They gave a high rating of 4.4/5!

birds. We can also take photos of the views, even if it doesn't sound special, actually we can capture the view of a part of Mainland China! Secondly, we can pay a visit to the Freshwater Ponds. There, we can take a leisurely stroll over bridges to distinguish animals such as mudskippers, frogs and more wetland animals. Next, we can also try to find buffaloes to know more about their life preference and how Mai Po take care of them. Last, but not least, I would like to thank you for organising us a school field trip. I hope you can think

(Firstly, we can start off ^{with} the Bird Observation Deck. We can gaze at the special birds there! By doing so, we can learn lots of different kinds of rare

Some vocabulary items and phrases students used in the writing:

- ...highly recommend...
- ...appreciate the exhibitions of different artists...
- ...so creative and fascinating
- ...paradise for birds
- ...closely interact with...
- ...immerse yourself in...
- ...a high rating of...
- ...capture the view of...
- ...full of wonders and excitement
- ...explore peaceful scenery and relaxing water waves

Dear Principal Lee,
How are you? I am very joyful to know that you will take us on a school trip. There are a lot of places in Hong Kong I have never been to. I would want to go to Peng Chau. It is a place full of wonders and excitement that has lots to learn. Peng Chau is a beautiful and wonderful place in Hong Kong. There are amazing beaches and places to explore, peaceful scenery and relaxing water waves. My father has been there twice and he highly recommended the place. Firstly, after arriving at Peng Chau, I suggest going to the hiking trail. We can learn more about the nature there, and we might find some interesting

they are all fun and interested. animals there. Next, we will go to the village ^{explore} and ^{please mention the water factory} eat. Some of them ^{such as} have ^{to learn about Chinese history} interesting sea food there. Lastly, we will go to the temple ^{Before we leave Peng Chau, we can go to the beach and go swimming.} I have put lots of time and effort into this school trip. I hope you will pick Peng Chau for this school trip and have lots of wonderful time in Peng Chau. I believe we will

Figure 12: Students' emails written to the school head proposing a place for P5 students to go

Reflections and Way Forward

Considerable efforts were made by the team to revamp the P3 and P5 reading and writing curricula and try different learning and teaching strategies. The team was pleased to put the plans into action and witnessed students' improvements in terms of their attitude towards English learning as well as their language skills.

The team had some key observations about students' learning. Students were highly engaged in the reading lessons. They showed a great interest in reading different e-readers and became more eager to express their ideas during different reading activities. They were engaged in the opportunities to use language in purposeful and integrative ways. They enjoyed sharing ideas on the e-learning platforms with their peers and producing work in different modes.

Teachers were also afforded the opportunities to reflect on the curriculum design and the learning and teaching strategies adopted. A sharing culture was developed. Teachers worked in the collaboration developed a wider repertoire of learning and teaching strategies. They explored different ways to teach specific reading skills explicitly and effectively, and design interesting reading lessons as well as post-reading activities. Moreover, they gained more concrete ideas on how to scaffold students' learning, develop students' literacy skills strategically, review horizontal and vertical alignment in curriculum planning taken students' needs, interest and readiness into consideration. All these efforts facilitated professional exchanges and propelled growth of the teachers.

To sustain the good practices and leverage the related practices, the team will keep reviewing the curriculum at other year levels. The content of the textbooks used will also be reviewed. To create more space for students to enjoy reading, the GE Programme will be tailored and trimmed, and the design of different school-based materials and the use of the publisher materials would be carefully reviewed and integrated.

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