Enriching, Deepening and Widening Student Learning through Reading across the Curriculum

Speakers

School-based Curriculum Development (Primary) Section, the Education Bureau - Ms CHAN Yeung-ming, Eve

SKH St Clement's Primary School -Ms CHEUNG Shuk-yu, Elka Ms CHIU Yan-mei, Carol Ms TAI Man-yi, Iris

Introduction

Reading is a door leading students to the massive knowledge and experiences of the world. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has conducted reading surveys world-wide through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) puts forward in its report '21st-Century Readers: Developing Literacy Skills in a Digital World' that 'education systems need to prepare students to be able to adapt to the variety of scenarios in which they will need to read as adults. These scenarios range from their own goals and development initiatives to their experiences in further and continuing education, and to their interactions at work, with public entities, in online communities and with society. It is not enough to be a proficient reader; students should also be motivated to read and be able to read for a variety of purposes' (OECD, 2021, p. 23). This suggests that reading should support students in different scenarios and for different purposes and this idea resonates well with the idea of Reading across the Curriculum (RaC) recommended by the Education Bureau in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, the English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 6) prepared by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) advises schools to take one of the four key tasks 'reading' further to incorporate 'Reading across the Curriculum' (2017, p. 6) with a view to engaging students in reading a wide range of materials with different subject content and text types as well as developing their appreciation of reading.

The Primary Education Curriculum Guide (Pilot Version) (CDC, 2022) details the goals of RaC which are to broaden students' knowledge base, help them connect their learning experiences and provide opportunities for integrating and applying knowledge and skills developed in different KLAs/subjects.

School and Curriculum Development Background

To promote RaC at the primary English Language classroom, Curriculum Development Institute (CDI, 2020), with the support from Dr Simon Chan, gives practical advice on the role of English Language

teachers. English Language teachers can initiate RaC on their own by choosing reading materials on various topics related to different KLA/subjects and design meaningful tasks. English Language teachers can also work with teachers of other KLA/subjects and make collaborative efforts in further enhancing students' reading skills and understanding of the chosen topics. In other words, to promote RaC there is a spectrum of collaboration modes between English teachers and teachers of other KLA/subjects.

SKH St Clement's Primary School has prioritised the promotion of reading as one of their major concerns from the 2022/23 to 2024/25 school year in response to student needs. A number of strategies were identified including: Increasing curriculum time for students to read, encouraging students to share reading experiences in various modes, strengthening students' reading skills and facilitating cross-curricular collaboration through reading in a systematic way.

Factoring in EDB's suggestions and the School's major concerns, the English Department of the School decided to promote RaC anchoring in the English KLA with a particular focus on Key Stage 2.

For a more systematic and successful promotion of RaC, teachers from other departments were deliberately chosen. English teachers who taught Physical Education (PE), Visual Arts and Music were selected for more in-depth professional exchange for the purposes of understanding subject-specific curricula, planning the time-frame and identifying cross-curricular themes and learning outcomes. Materials and activities were designed in both in English KLA and the related subjects to support students' learning of selected topics. Research has shown that 'literacy is a major tool for learning any subject. Literacy skills help us learn how to learn (Richardson, Morgan and Fleener, 2012, p. 3).' Figure 1 below shows the planning of the School to promote RaC. The main target for the cross-disciplinary collaboration is the application and integration of knowledge and skills, instead of re-teaching the knowledge of other subjects in English Language lessons again.

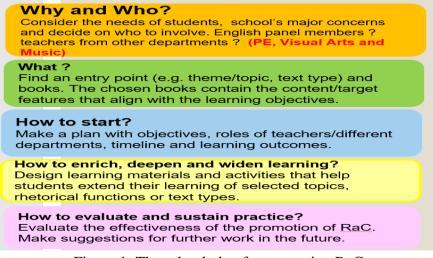


Figure 1: The school plan for promoting RaC

The Aims of Promoting RaC

While promoting RaC, the School set sight on three major aims, namely widening and deepening students' knowledge, skills and experience; developing students to be self-directed learners and nurturing students' positive values and attitudes. It is worth noting that while selecting reading materials, teachers included online materials and videos. The new digital literacy provides students with a rich, up-to-date, impactful and authentic reading experience and matches the present and future needs and interests of students. In fact, CDC has encouraged schools to enhance English language learning and teaching through utilising a variety of print and non-print resources which include electronic materials with multimodal features (CDC, 2017). Additionally, the School has been visionary in formulating the aim of leveraging reading to develop students to be self-directed learners. Being able to read independently is a core competence of a selfdirected learner. Teachers also believe that learning should not be confined to knowledge and skills, attitudes and values are of equal importance. As such, RaC topics have been especially chosen to nurture students' positive attitudes and values. Figure 2 below summarises the aims of promoting RaC in the School.

The Goals of Promoting <u>RaC</u> in SKH St. <u>Clement's</u> Primary School		
Widening and deepening students' knowledge and experience	 Support students to read a wide variety of fictional, non-fictional books as well as new literacy (web materials and videos). Explicit teaching of reading skills Incorporate interesting reading tasks and collaborate with different KLAs/subjects to widen students' personal interests as well as enrich their knowledge and experience 	
Developing students to be self-directed learners	 Further develop the Reading Enhancement Scheme through helping students to set goals Let students reflect on their reading progress 	
Nurturing students' positive values and attitudes	 Infuse positive values (e.g. being grateful, appreciate Chinese culture and have perseverance) into the reading and learning experience Let students demonstrate positive values through reflection and actions 	

Figure 2: The aims of promoting RaC in SKH St. Clement's Primary School

The three cases below aim to showcase how the School's promotion of RaC has been integrated with different English language learning and teaching strategies suggested by the English Language Education KLA Curriculum Guide (P.1-S.6) (CDC, 2017, Key Messages, 'Learning and Teaching' section). They are:

- providing greater opportunities for students to use English for purposeful communication both inside and outside the classroom
- life-wide learning
- task-based learning and teaching
- learning and teaching of text grammar
- e-learning

Highlights of Promoting RaC in P.4: A case of enriching the knowledge and supporting the practices of healthy lifestyle

'Healthy Lifestyle' is one of the seven learning goals of primary education. EDB advises schools to ensure students have sufficient physical activities within and beyond the classroom and provide strategies and related information while developing school curriculum.

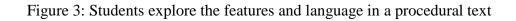
The English Department, taking on board EDB's direction, decided to work with the PE Department to widen students' learning and experience through expanding the P.4 module 'Healthy Habits' to 'Healthy Lifestyle'. Riding on the original school curriculum involving a story in the textbook through which students learned the important idea of developing good habits, acquired the vocabulary related to good habits (e.g. brush teeth and wash hands) and understood the expressions of frequency (e.g. twice a day, once a week), the School took the students further to explore different aspects of 'Healthy Lifestyle' to promote RaC.

For learning in the English KLA, cross-curricular books and authentic videos of the theme 'Healthy Lifestyle' including 'Eye Yoga', 'Yoga', and 'Rest' were selected under the theme 'Healthy Lifestyle'. This allowed students to widen their understanding that a healthy lifestyle should encompass physical and mental well-being. It is worth highlighting that the use of multimodal texts is especially useful for learning content knowledge related to physical exercises as they can immerse students in visual, auditory and non-verbal learning experiences. From the subtitles of an authentic eye-yoga video, students recognised that when viewing procedural texts, verbs are often placed at the beginning of a sentence, such as 'Place your palms gently over your eyes' and 'Allow your hands to rest there until the warmth slowly disappears'. Also, adverbs such as 'gently' and 'slowly' are important in giving information on how the actions should be carried out. From a real book about 'Yoga', students extended their vocabulary related to yoga actions such as 'Take a deep breath', 'Balance in tree pose' and 'Bend into camel pose'. Teachers also fostered students' ownership of their learning through leveraging thought-provoking questions which allowed students to explore how language is used in meaningful contexts. In other words, students learned grammar in context. Figure 3 illustrates the tasks and questions designed by teachers to guide students in their

independent exploration of the multimodal procedural text. Through the activity, students were able to generate grammar rules by themselves.

Learn the language of giving instructions. Read the instructions for eye yoga carefully.

- 1. Rub your hands together for 10 seconds to create heat between the palms.
- 2. Place your palms gently over your eyes and close your eyes.
- 3. Feel the warmth that slowly soothes and melts away any tension in the back of your eyes.
- 4. Allow your hands to rest there until the warmth slowly disappears.
- Write down the first word for every sentence:
- All the first words are <u>noun/ adjectives/ verbs. (choose one)</u>
- Write down words ending with -ly. They are called adverbs. We use them to talk about how we do some actions.
- Write down two rules for writing yoga instructions: Rule A: Yoga instructions begin with ______.
 Rule B: Yoga instructions have ______.



To integrate knowledge and skills in English language with the physical exercises, PE teachers created videos demonstrating simple yoga routines for students to follow at home. This echoes EDB's promotion of increasing students' level of physical activities outside PE lessons. Students were then tasked to practise eye yoga and yoga at home, document their activities and upload their videos onto an online sharing platform, Padlet. In the process of making the videos, students meaningfully and purposefully used the language they had learned. For example, they reported on Padlet how frequently they did eye yoga and yoga using phrases like 'I do yoga three times a week.' They also described their actions with adverbs 'I blink my eyes slowly' to demonstrate how the actions should be performed. The promotion of RaC naturally forged the links between form, meaning and usage. Teachers were happy to see that students applied their English speaking skills while demonstrating their physical activities and developed an interest in doing exercises. This is an integral part of the English language pedagogy of task-based learning. In the meaningful task of practising physical activities, students learned and used English for purposeful communication as well as developed the positive attitudes of maintaining their healthy lifestyle.

To sum up, to promote the learning goal of 'maintaining a healthy lifestyle', reading can be an anchor point to enrich students' knowledge. The collaboration with the PE Department can further build upon this by arousing students' interests in diverse healthy lifestyle practices. This integrated approach can truly embed healthy living into the fabric of their life. Figure 4 shows some eye yoga and yoga activities students shared on the e-platform.

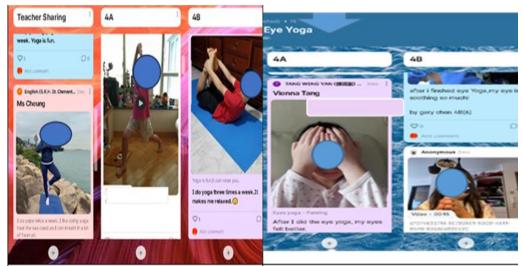


Figure 4: Students and teachers shared their experience of doing eye yoga and yoga at home

Highlights of Promoting RaC in P.5: A case of widening the knowledge of 'People we admire'

In this P.5 module of 'People We Admire', students developed an understanding of the text type of biographies which feature a famous person's personal growth, challenges he faced and achievements made. In the textbook, students read about a paralympic Hong Kong runner So Wa-wai. In order to widen students' knowledge of more influential people from the local level to the international level and foster cross-curricular learning, teachers incorporated the biographies of Olympic athletes, Usain Bolt and Michael Phelps, and renowned artists, Edward Munch and Van Gogh, into the curriculum. To support cross-curricular learning, teachers collaborated with PE and Visual Arts teachers to map out the curriculum.

For English language learning, teachers put emphasis on developing students' multiple reading skills as CDC suggests that reading skills should be taught explicitly to help students decode words and foster their interest in reading (CDC 2017, p.45-46). Students applied the reading skill of using a time-line to organise information about a person's life when they read So Wa-wai's biography in the textbook. Teachers took students' learning further to include other reading skills and strategies which were taught explicitly and of important value when reading the four other biographies. They are:

- Locating specific information
- Making text-to-world connection and text-to-self connection
- Using the framework of 'What I Knew, What I want to know, What I have learned (KWL)'

Students had opportunities to apply the reading skill of locating information when they had to identify world records related to speed, distance, years and medals. Through reading the biography of Usain Bolt, students learned that he still holds the world record of 100-metre race of 9.58 seconds at present. The

biography enabled students to understand that Michael Phelps is still legendary in swimming because of the 28 Olympic medals he has won. Text-to-world connection enabled students to link what they knew about sports and visual arts to the new information they read. Text-to-self connection helped students relate the attitudes of the influential people, such as perseverance, to their life. Figure 5 and 6 show some works demonstrating students' application of the reading skill 'Text-to-self'. After reading Bolt's biography, students resonated with his attitudes towards challenges. Students remarked 'working-hard is important'. Students also noticed that although people did not like Vincent Van Gogh's paintings, he kept on drawing. The highlights of the 'People We Admire' have inspired students and provided them with positive role models.

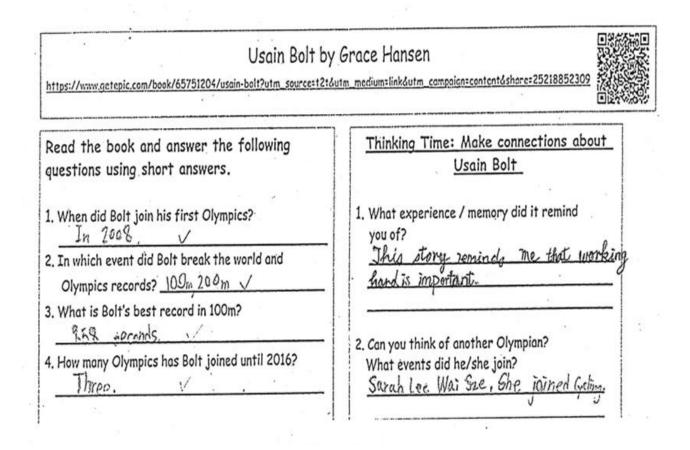


Figure 5: Students applied the reading skill of 'locating specific information' and the reading strategy of 'making connection to the world' for the biography of Usain Bolt

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bX IQAI d5g Part 2: Use your note-taking skills to find out more about Part 1: You are going to watch a short video of the worldfamous artist Vincent Van Gogh. Ask yourself what you know Vincent Van Gogh while watching the video from the Van Gogh about Vincent Van Gogh and what you want to know about Museum. him. The questions will help you understand the video. 30, 1253 a. When was Vincent Van Gogh born? March What I want to know What I know about Who encouraged Vincent Van Gogh to draw and paint? b about Vincent Van Gogh Vincent Van Gogh (K) His brother Did his He is an parents Farmers c. What did he enjoy drawing? The lives of _ impressionist have artistic d. People did not like Vincent's painting. What did he do? Painter regardless -talent, and was Carried on Groghia ands art? Van What do you think of his attitudes tow attitude towards art think his talent Stic and he mas peristent. . 900d very inherited from f. Name the colors that Vincent used when he was in the south of France. his parents! Ple pin green Dut g. 2 kinds of paintings were mentioned in the video. What did Vincent like? Tick the box. To paint exactly what he saw. To paint something in his head or mind.

Figure 6: Students used KWL reading strategy and note-taking skills when watching the video about Van Gogh

The students' widened knowledge of the world energised students' learning across PE and Visual Arts lessons. In PE lessons, teachers' curriculum mapping helped students connect what they read about running to the actual practice of it. Students learned how to swing their arms and prepare for the start to improve their running speed and even compared their running records to world standards. In Visual Arts lessons, students drew inspiration from the work of Edvard Munch. After reading about his biography and his artistic style, students expressed their own emotions through paintings. Figure 7 shows students' art works attempting to capture their sense of fear, similar to Edvard Munch. The cross-curricular learning also extended to English writing tasks. When asked to present a person they admired, students did go beyond the people they had studied. Students talked about people from all walks of life from scientists (e.g. Charles Kao), to singers (e.g. Anita Mu), and Hong Kong athletes. These works evidenced that students were willing to go beyond textbook information, conduct individualised research, and delve deeper into the lives of the people they admire. The broadening of the curriculum to include the biographies of people from different fields and the linkage of learning across subjects allowed students to have a more holistic learning experience.



Figure 7: Students' paintings expressing the emotion of fear

Highlights of Promoting RaC in P.5: A case of deepening the knowledge of Hong Kong culture

For the module of 'We love Hong Kong', teachers believed that life-wide learning experience coupled with RaC would deepen students' understanding of Hong Kong culture. EDB encourages students to participate in life-wide learning, stressing that 'learning is by no means limited to the classroom. It can take place at any time, in any place (including the home and community) and in any form. Teachers of the English Language Education KLA should enrich and extend students' language learning experiences in real contexts and authentic settings through English-related life-wide learning activities' (CDC, 2017, p. 63). In line with this approach, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, which houses a rich collection of exhibits of Hong Kong culture, especially about popular music, was chosen to be the focal point of the learning process. Music teachers were involved to maximise students' learning about the evolution of Hong Kong popular music.

For English language learning, diverse reading materials from different sources and life-wide learning activities were the main ways of supporting students' exploration of the development of Hong Kong music, a major part of our popular culture. While the textbook provided students with opportunities to read a story about visiting different places in Hong Kong, the trip to the Hong Kong Heritage Museum extended students' reading experience. Figure 8 shows different text types students read for the life-wide learning trip. Before the visit, students used the reading skills of 'reading between lines' and 'using contextual clues to guess meaning from context' to finish the reading tasks of finding information from the official website of the Museum, such as opening hours and where to buy tickets. During the visit, students read display board information in the Museum to learn about the development of Hong Kong music using the reading skill of locating specific information. After the trip, students read lyrics of English songs in 1960s and 1970s which allowed them to appreciate language arts. Students learned literary devices used in songs such as 'repetition', 'rhyming words' and 'contraction'.

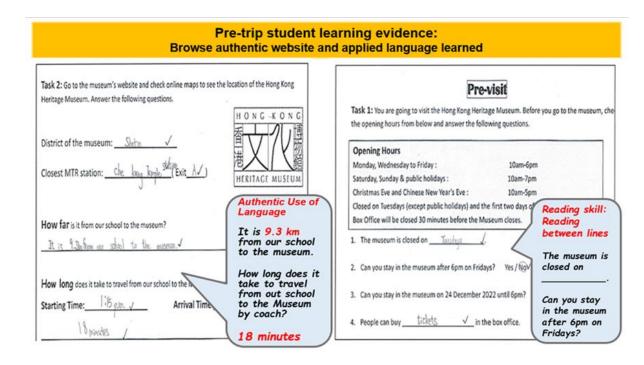


Figure 8: Pre-visit_Students applied target reading skills and strategies when reading the official website of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum

We are going to see the exhibition called 'Hong Kong Pop 60+'. Read the boards in the museum and find information to fill in the blanks.	In the 1970s, Cantopop mixed Western rhythm. Sam Hui, a member of a famous local band 'the Lotus' wrote Cantonese <mark>lyrics</mark> for his song 'Waiting for My Love'. This shows Hong Kong pop songs changed from English-language to local Cantonese songs. The song is witty, natural and fun to listen to.
Hond Kong Music In the 1950s, Hong Kong's music was affected by the culture in southern China. Cantonese opera was an important activity of the general public. During this period, 'tea dancing' was a favourite hobby of many Hong Kong people. Cantonese opera changed into 'Cantonese Opera	Cantonese Song: Waiking for My Love by The Lotus
In the 1960s, young films starring Josephine Size, Fong <u>Fong</u> and Connie Chan Po-chu were very popular and the songs in the films were loved by <u>factory</u> workers. This dress was once worn by <u>Size</u> Fong <u>Fong</u> . Hong Kong music was also affected by western culture. In the 1960s, Hong Kong young people admired western culture. A famous British band called 'The Beatles' visited Hong Kong in <u>1964</u> . Hong Kong young people imitated them and formed rock and	In 1980s, TV theme songs were loved by Hong Kong people. Francis Yip's song <i>The Bund</i> , was very popular across Southeast Asia. The song was translated in Malaysia , Thailand and Vietnam . In 1990s, Anita Mui's songs greatly influenced Hong Kong music industry. Look at this dress in the museum and find the details below. Image: Source of the source o
roll bands, such as the Lotus, singing English songs,	Draw a mind map showing the connection of Hong Kong music and the world Hong Kong music

Figure 9: During the visit: Students employed the reading skill of locating specific information when they read the display board information at the Museum

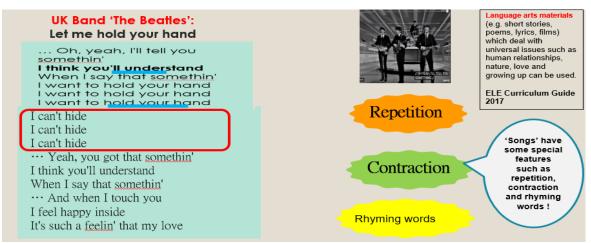


Figure 10: Post-visit reading: Students appreciated the use of language arts in songs

In music lessons, students' knowledge of Hong Kong culture was deepened through studying how Hong Kong music in the 1960s and 1970s was affected by Eastern and Western music traditions. Teachers examined musical elements in popular songs in the period with students such as the influence of Chinese opera originated from Lingnan culture and the use of western musical instruments including drums, bass guitars and acoustic guitars (Figure 11). Furthermore, students were actively engaged in music by singing songs of that era and learning how to use the instrument 'kalimba' to play songs in the 1960s (Figure 12). The cross-curricular learning between music and English language learning deepened students' understanding of the evolution of Hong Kong music and its global influence on many Asian countries. In students' post-trip writing, students wrote that they are proud of Hong Kong music which has gained popularity and appreciation worldwide. The cross-curricular experience enabled them to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the rich cultural heritage and international recognition of Hong Kong's musical contributions.

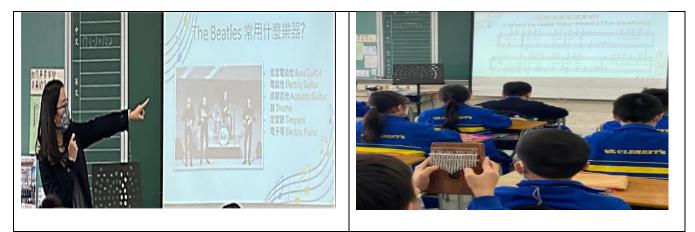


Figure 11: In music lessons, students learned about western music which affected Hong Kong music in the 1960s and 1970s

Figure 12: Students learned to use the musical instrument 'Kalimba' and played the Beatles' songs

Developing students' reading interests and habits

RaC is one of the ways to realise the School's ultimate goal to help students develop long-term interests and habits in reading. To put this goal into practice, the School has introduced the 'Reading Enhancement Scheme' to pave way for students to take reading time from school to home. The Scheme has incorporated strategies to support students to develop attitudes, competencies and skills in reading. From the beginning of the term, students set reading goals for the whole school year with support from teachers and parents. The practice helps students become self-directed readers through continuous support from teachers and family. The documentation of the fictional and non-fictional books reminds students to read a broader range of literature. Figure 13 illustrates the design of the Reading Enhancement Scheme. The post-reading records of 'what have you learned from the book' and the integration of reading strategies including 'Text-to-self', 'Text-to-text' and 'Text-to-world' help students engage in meaningful reflection after reading. Teachers found this post-reading reflection to be highly effective in sustaining students' reading interest and habits in contrast to traditional reading comprehension questions which primarily aim at checking understanding. Figure 14 shows some students' work on reading reflection. Reading reflection allows students to interact with texts, make connections, and deepen their understanding, ultimately fostering their long-term enthusiasm for reading.

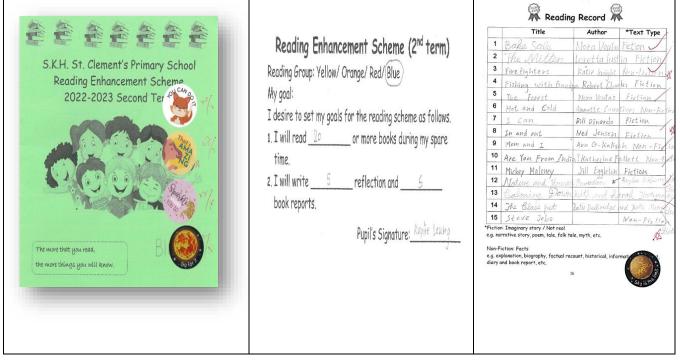


Figure 13: The design of the Reading Enhancement Scheme Booklet

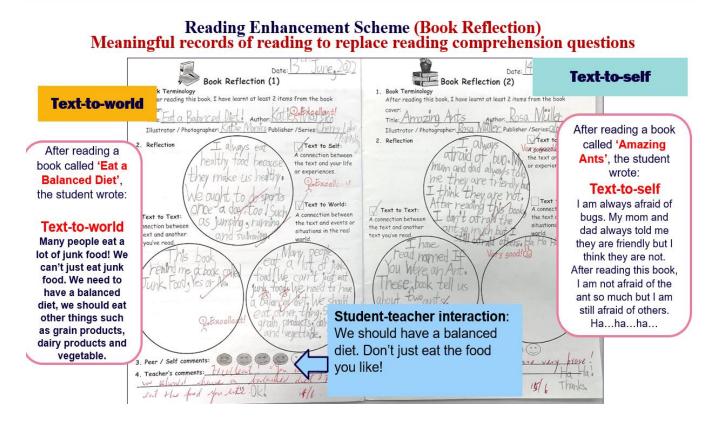


Figure 14: Book reflection as part of the Reading Enhancement Scheme

Concluding Thoughts and Way Forward

Teachers in SKH St. Clement Primary School believe that primary school education provides a prime time to cultivate students' long-term interests and develop their habits in reading. Reading, both within the curriculum and across the curriculum, opens new worlds for students, enriches their knowledge of the world and instills in them positive values and attitudes. Guided by these core beliefs, teachers in SKH St. Clement's Primary School will continue to develop their school curriculum to promote cross-curricular learning and reading while working out suitable pedagogies within and beyond classrooms. Looking ahead, further and deeper collaboration between English and other KLA/subjects will be planned as teachers have witnessed that stronger connections across the curriculum have enabled students to make meaningful links, apply their knowledge in diverse contexts, and develop a more holistic understanding of the world around them.

References

Curriculum Development Council [CDC]. (2017). English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide: Primary 1-Secondary 6. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer.

Curriculum Development Council [CDC]. (2022). Primary Education Curriculum Guide - Cultivate Values for Leaders of Tomorrow, Create Space to Foster Whole-person Development (Pilot Version).

Curriculum Development Institute [CDI]. (2020). *Reaping Multiple Benefits through Promoting Reading across the Curriculum in the Primary English Classroom*. Retrieved from: https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/eng-edu/referencesresources/RaC%20Pri/Leaflet_RaC_Pri.pdf

Organisation for Economic Operation and Development [OECD]. (2021). 21st-Century Readers: Developing Literacy Skills in a Digital World. Retrieved from <u>https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/a83d84cben.pdf?expires=1716513139&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=76CE</u> 7CE4F303B50954B2FA538782E9B3

Richardson, J.S., Morgan, R.F., and Fleener, C. (2012). *Reading to Learn in the Content Areas*. Belmont: Cengage Learning