Quality School Improvement Project: Tracking Students' Learning through Comprehensive Enhancement of Assessment Literacy

QSIP–CEAL
2021/22

A Collection of School-Based Examples

Contents

About QSIP-CEAL

The Quality School Improvement Project: Tracking Students' Learning through Comprehensive Enhancement of Assessment Literacy (QSIP-CEAL) is a school-based professional support programme that endeavours to enhance English language teachers' assessment literacy and assist them in developing effective assessment practices in Key Stage 2 (upper primary level) and Key Stage 3 (junior secondary level).

QSIP-CEAL is one of the initiatives implemented by the Quality School Improvement Project (QSIP), an organisation established by the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, which aims to build professional capacity for comprehensive school improvement. The project is a university–school support programme, which was commissioned by the School-Based Professional Support Section of the Education Bureau and financed by the Education Development Fund in September 2017. It has operated under the Quality Education Fund Thematic Networks–Tertiary Institutes (QTN-T) programme since September 2019.

Objectives of the Project

In the 2021/22 school year, QSIP-CEAL provided professional school-based support to three primary schools and three secondary schools with the following goals:

- equipping English teachers, along with the entire teaching staff of schools, with knowledge, skills and attitudes for building effective assessment practices to inform their instruction;
- strengthening the capacity of school leaders, curriculum leaders and instructional leaders to lead assessment-informed improvement activities;
- developing school-based practices of effective assessment in English language at both classroom and curriculum levels;
- empowering students to engage in self-assessment practices to monitor and regulate their own individual learning.

Adhering to the philosophy of comprehensive school improvement, the project led curriculum and instructional leaders through change. Tailor-made on-site professional support for assessment design and implementation was provided based on a needs analysis and progress review, delivering a multi-level focus on (1) the classroom level, (2) the curriculum level and (3) the department level.
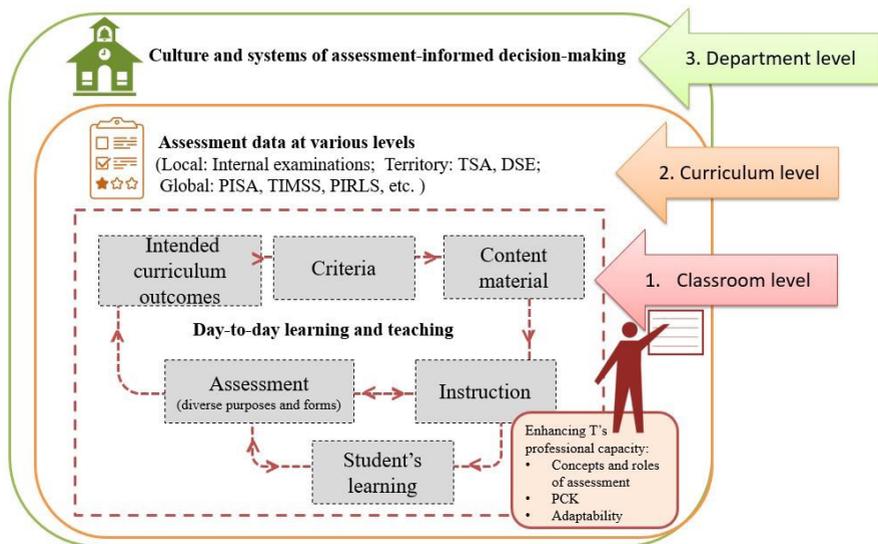
Professional Training Activities

The professional support was delivered in various forms, which included (1) teacher development workshops, (2) seminar, (3) collaborative lesson planning meeting, (4) assessment design, (5) classroom teaching, (6) lesson observation and post-lesson discussion, (7) assessment data analysis, (8) joint-school professional learning community and (9) dissemination activities.

The Project Workflow

The Workflow (2021/22)

Initiation

1. Workshop 1 to the entire teaching staff --- project introduction and classroom assessment

2. Needs analysis --- document analysis/core meeting/lesson observation

Planning

1. Workshop 2 to equip English Language Panel members with knowledge of assessment literacy

2. Meeting with all English panel members; reporting on findings of needs analysis and suggesting areas of improvement

Implementation

1. Unit planning for effective classroom assessment techniques (CATs)

and/or

2. Review and revision of internal assessment policies and tools

and/or

3. Effective use of external assessment data (DSE, BCA)

and

4. Joint school professional learning community to strengthen the capacity of curriculum leaders of all subjects to explore assessment-informed improvement actions

Dissemination of impacts
(Territory-wide)

Dissemination of impacts
(within-school)

1. Sharing of practices and outputs with the entire teaching staff: assessment kits and strategies/Ts' learning/Ss' learning
2. Collecting post-implementation data for the teachers' assessment literacy research

During the project, two designated school-based workshops – (1) Assessment Literacy for ALL Teachers and (2) Analysis of Assessment Tools: The What, Why and How for English Teachers – were conducted at individual schools to align teachers with the concepts and principles of effective assessment. The School Development Officers of QSIP-CEAL collaborated with English teachers to facilitate the development and implementation of curriculum, teaching and assessment strategies based on the school context and needs analysis. Moreover, to enhance opportunities for professional exchange, QSIP-CEAL established a joint school professional learning community for both current and former participating schools. Three networking activities were organised, featuring the role of curriculum leadership in enhancing assessment literacy. At the end of the school year, the participating schools took part in both internal and territory-wide dissemination activities to share the good practices and insights gained from the project with educators inside and outside the schools, respectively.

Participating Schools for 2021/22

Choi Wan St. Joseph's Primary School
St. Antonius Primary School
Tin Shui Wai Methodist Primary School
Carmel Alison Lam Foundation Secondary School
ELCHK Lutheran Secondary School
Lok Sin Tong Leung Chik Wai Memorial School

Case 1

Using Students' Data to Inform Teaching of Reading Comprehension

Choi Wan St. Joseph's Primary School

Using Students' Data to Inform Teaching of Reading Comprehension

School
Choi Wan St. Joseph's Primary School

Background
Brushing up students' reading skills was the major target that the teachers from Choi Wan St. Joseph's Primary School intended to achieve. Despite meticulous planning of the reading skills to be taught from P1 to P6, supplemented with teaching resources developed over the years, there was still room for improvement in reading comprehension, as reflected by students' performance in assessments.

The teachers had two questions in mind: (1) *What else should they do so that students could better pick up reading skills? and* (2) *How in-depth should they re-teach the area that students were not able to master in a recent assessment?*

In this collaboration, the effort was paid to reinforce the learning-teaching-assessment (L-T-A) cycle. In addition, supplementary materials were developed to provide students with more practice in the skills in which they were weak in.

Level
Primary 6

Strategies Used
1. **Tracking Students' Performance and Developing Subsequent Follow-ups through Backward Design**
2. **Adopting a Range of Classroom Assessments to Track Students' Learning**

Actions Taken

1. Tracking Students' Performance and Developing Subsequent Follow-ups through Backward Design

A results-focused lesson is considered to be more effective than a content-focused one as the former focuses on the *learnings* that we expect students should be able to grasp by the end of a lesson (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Based on the backward design put forth by Wiggins and McTighe (2005) to structure a results-focused lesson, the teachers first identified problems that students showed in assessments as the focus to work on. They thus communicated regarding the desired results that students were expected to achieve at the end of a collaboration cycle. Following this very first step, the work then moved on to developing materials and teaching strategies that could achieve the desired learning outcomes.

With a consensus to brush up students' reading skills, steps to locate and tackle students' weaknesses were carried out in the first term ('Phase 1') and second term ('Phase 2') respectively.

a. Phase 1

i. Analysing students' performance data

After the first term test, the teachers processed students' scores and located questions that the majority of students performed unsatisfactorily. It was found that questions asking about the duration of time were the most common weakness seen among students.

There were two questions in the test asking about time. The questions and common mistakes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Questions with unsatisfactory student performance in 1st Term Test 2021/22

Part	Text	Question	Correct answer	Common mistake
C	A poster about the Music and Arts Week	Q.4 How long is the Music and Arts Week?	5 days	13th to 17th March
G	Radio show dialogues between a host and a badminton star	Q.4 How long has May played badminton?	10 years	◇ seven ◇ seven years old ◇ seventeen years old

As seen in the table, several possible problems might have been attributed to the wrong answers.

For Part C, it showed that students might not have a concrete idea of the type of answers to respond to the question phrase 'how long'. As a result, they stated the dates instead of the duration.

For Part G, there involved the calculation of the years (see the excerpt of the text in Figure 1). Students might have problems with questions requesting them to process data, such as the need to do calculation in this case. They also had difficulties giving the right quantifiers in answer.

Figure 1: Excerpt of Part G in 1st Term Test 2021/22

Jerry:	Congratulations on winning the Hong Kong Badminton Championship. You're just seventeen years old and you've achieved so much. What is your reason for your success?	
May:	Well, lots of sweat.	
Jerry:	I see. When did you started playing badminton?	10
May:	I was seven when I had my first badminton lesson. I just fell in love with the game.	

The skill of extracting information to answer questions about duration was not the main focus in P6. Yet, data reflected that there was a need to re-teach this.

ii. **Devising teaching materials in collaborative lesson planning sessions**
Material design: Aligning with the theme being taught

According to the scheme of work, the coming chapter to be taught was about film reviews. There were no questions about duration of time in the chapter comprehension section. Therefore, the teachers developed a supplementary worksheet on film advertisements with the showing times (Figure 2). The material was made in line with the theme being taught in that period, incorporating the target skill to be re-taught.

Figure 2: Supplementary material about duration of time

Extended Text – Advertisement

Kathy is reading some film advertisements. Read the advertisements carefully and choose the best answer for Questions 1-3 and 6. Give short answers for Questions 4-5.

Trendy Cinema

Good news for all students! In August, you can get $20 off when buying any ticket at our cinema with your student card. This special offer is valid by 31 August. For more information, please visit www.trendycinema.com or call 2876 5432.

$50 for a movie ticket

Penguin Crisis Director : Kitano Matsushima Time : 9:00pm-10:30pm Penguin Yuki (dubbed by Carrie Lee) lives in the Antarctica peacefully. One day, she finds that the sea ice is melting quickly and her home is going to disappear. She is forced to move her home. The story is meaningful and it tells an important message of protecting our environment! Will Penguin Yuki survive?	**Class 8** Director : James Brown Time: 7:30pm-9:30pm A French teacher, Leila (Sophia Marshall), moves to another high school in Paris. Two students, Jean and Mitch (Joe and Michelle) turn the teacher's life and the class into a mess. At the end of the film Joe plays truant but the teacher succeeds in convincing him to go back to school. After that, can Miss Leila change Jean and Mitch to become good students? The film explores the importance of the relationship between students and teacher.
Hidden Secret Director : Grace Yung Time : 7:40pm – 9:15pm Sanders (Patrick Leung) and Roy (Luke Ma) are siblings. They look friendly to each other but actually they compete to inherit their father's vast fortune. Who can get the money and property at the end? The ending happens out of the blue will surely surprise you!	**Only You** Director: Tammy Lee Time 7:20pm-9:00pm Maggie (Bertha Hui) and Thomas (Tim Kwan) are a pair of couple. They fall in love with each other but their parents do not approve their relationship. Can they get married at the end? This film definitely melts your heart this year. You should prepare a packet of tissue while watching.

Material design: Scaffolding

To better address students' weaknesses, a graphic organiser was used to help them process data. For less able classes, a simplified version of a graphic organiser was used (Figure 3a), while a graphic organiser requesting students to find more information was used in more able classes (Figure 3b). Both versions had the core function of drawing students' attention to the duration of time that each movie lasted.

Figure 3a: Graphic organiser for less able classes (Teacher's version)

Movie Name	Duration	Actor(s) / Actress(es) / Voice Actor
e.g., *Penguin Crisis*	1 hour 30 minutes	Carrie Lee
2. *Class 8*	2 hours	Sophia Marshall, Joe, Michelle
3. *Hidden Secret*	1 hour 35 minutes	Patrick Leung, Luke Ma
4. *Only You*	1 hour 40 minutes	Bertha Hui, Tim Kwan

Figure 3b: Graphic organiser for more able classes (Teacher's version)

Movie Name	Director	Duration	Character(s)	Actor(s) / Actress(es) / Voice Actor
e.g., *Penguin Crisis*	Kitano Matsushima	1 hour 30 minutes	Penguin Yuki	Carrie Lee
2. *Class 8*	James Brown	2 hours	Leila, Jean and Mitch	Sophia Marshall, Joe, Michelle
3. *Hidden Secret*	Grace Yung	1 hour 35 minutes	Sanders, Roy	Patrick Leung, Luke Ma
4. *Only You*	Tammy Lee	1 hour 40 minutes	Maggie, Thomas	Bertha Hui, Tim Kwan

The above graphic organisers were means to deconstruct the text into smaller, more readily understandable pieces. At the same time, they set examples for students to follow on how to convert the showing time into a duration. In addtion, using a graphic organiser in class can serve as a form of formative assessment to track students' understanding, and to give feedback accordingly.

Out of the seven comprehension questions designed for this supplementary worksheet, one was devoted to testing if students could respond correctly to the question phrase 'how long'. The question '*How long does "Class 8"* last?' was set. Students could mostly answer this question correctly after the scaffolding.

iii. Incorporating the re-taught elements in the next assessment

To complete the L-T-A cycle, a question testing students on the duration of time was intentionally added to the following assessment (1st Term Exam). Please see the excerpts from the corresponding text and answers in Figure 4 and Table 2, respectively.

Figure 4: Excerpt of a comprehension text (Part H) in 1st Term Exam 2021/22

> I was astonished by the story plot. Kevin Kwan played the role of Martin well. His acting showed a clever and careful Martin. Though the film kept me from 5pm to 7 pm, I enjoyed every minute in the cinema. I highly recommend this film to all my friends.

Table 2: Details of the target question in 1st Term Exam 2021/22

Part	Text	Question	Answer
H	Film Review	Q.3 How long is the film 'Who Is the Real Burglar?'	◇ 2/two hours ◇ 120 minutes

A slight improvement in student performance was seen this time. More students were able to use duration of time to respond to the question phrase 'how long', and more students were able to give the right quantifier (i.e., hours/minutes) this time.

b. Phase 2

In the second term, a new round of performance analysis and follow-up was carried out.

i. Analysing students' performance data

The results of the 1st Term Exam revealed that students needed more support in handling summary cloze. A short summary cloze was set in comprehension Part I. The excerpt where answers are located, as well as the questions, are shown in Figure 5 and 6 respectively.

Figure 5: Excerpt from Part I

> Lucky Draw
> Donate $20 and you can enter our highlight of the day, lucky draw! Thanks to our generous sponsor Wonder Shop! The prizes are a camera ($1000) and a computer notebook ($2000).

> Admission Ticket
> All students are welcome! You may come and join with your family and friends too! Tickets are sold at $10 each. A group ticket for 4 is sold at $30 only. Tickets are available from the School Office from 2nd December. You may also get the tickets at the school entrance on the Charity Fun Day.

Figure 6: The summary cloze question with answers

6. Tim is telling his uncle about the Charity Fun Day. Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word.

> I joined the fun day with my parents and brother. I bought a (i) __group__ ticket for only thirty dollars. My brother got prizes in Leap Frog. We sang two songs with Miss Lau! I was a winner in the lucky draw. I got a (ii) <u>camera</u>! I can take photos of you next time when we meet.

In the collaborative lesson planning session, possible reasons for students' unsatisfactory performance were discussed.

Table 3: Possible reasons for students' unsatisfactory performance

	Question and Answer	Possible Reason(s)
6(i)	I joined the fun day with my parents and brother. I bought a <u>(i) group</u> ticket for only thirty dollars.	Common mistake: **admission** Possible problems: 1) Students did not realise that the **article 'a'** has restricted which word should be filled in. 2) Students did not realise other hints: ◇ $30 for 4 (in the text) ◇ I, my parents, brother = 4 (in the question)
6(ii)	I was a winner in the lucky draw. I got a <u>(ii) camera</u>! I can take photos of you next time when we meet.	Students might have failed to locate specific information because they missed the clues: 1) can take photos 2) winner 3) lucky draw

ii. Devising teaching materials in collaborative lesson planning sessions
Material design: Aligning with the theme being taught

Similar to the follow-up in the first term, a supplementary material was developed to address students' weaknesses shown in the assessment. According to the scheme of work, the following chapter to be taught covered the theme of endangered animals. Given that the teaching period was around the Chinese New Year, the teachers chose to adapt a material on tigers, which echoed the Chinese zodiac for the year. The material adapted is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Tiger - Material adapted as a follow-up to 1st Term Exam 2021/22

P.6 Term 2 (Unit 4) _ Extended Reading Text (Tiger Facts)

Name : _____ (   ) P.6 _____ Date : _____ (   )

WWF (World Wild Fund) is the leading organization in wildlife conservation. Read the homepage of WWF and find out how WWF helps saving the endangered species.

//www.wwf.org.hk/en/reslib/species/

Who We Are	What We Do	Resources	Visitor Centres

Tiger

Tiger Facts

Appearance and Features

[1]Tiger is the largest member of the cat family. Tigers have stripes on their skin and fur. Each tiger has its own unique set of stripes. They have markings on their ears
5   called 'ocelli' that look like eyes to fool their **prey**.

[2]The Amur tiger is the largest type. Its body can be 4 meters long and it can weigh up to 300 kilograms. Tigers can run up to 65 kilometers per hour and they are the true "King of the Jungle" because lions don't live in jungles but tigers do.

?

10   [3]Tigers are solitary animals. They like to hunt alone at night and they prey on a variety of animals. They love to eat larger prey such as deer and wild pigs. They especially like to eat porcupines which have long, pointed quills (feathers) that cover their backs to protect them. However, only one out of ten hunting activities is successful. **They** can eat 30 kilograms of meat at one time.

15   ### Population and Distribution

[4]Tigers have been around for over 2 million years. Six subspecies of tigers can be found around the world. You can see the six different kinds of tiger below.

🐯 Threats and Actions

20
[5]Tiger is the one of the most threatened animals. Tiger numbers have dropped dramatically. There are only about 3,890 remain in forests.

[6]By the 1940s, hunting had driven the Amur tigers to the brink of extinction – with no more than 40 remaining in the wild. The loss of habitats also stopped the growth of tigers. Tigers had no place to live and they died.

25
[7]Luckily, the amount of Amur tigers increased to 540 as conservationists pay effort. With successful promotion in India on tiger conservation, WWF has new ways for a Tiger Network Initiative to save the endangered tigers. Their works help reduce threats like habitat loss.

****

conservation :（對動植物、自然地區、歷史建築等的）保育　　　**species :**（動植物的）種，物種
unique : 獨一無二的；與眾不同的　　　**Population :** 泛 指人口，文章指動物總數
Distribution: 分佈　　　　　　　　　**habitats :** 棲息地

<Reading text adapted from National Geographic kids>

<u>Employing scaffolding to help students tackle questions in a step-by-step manner</u>

A summary cloze (Figure 8) was designed to teach students essential skills for handling this type of question.

Figure 8: Summary cloze with answers for the material on tigers

11. Read paragraphs 4 to 8, fill in each blank with **one** word. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

Numbers of tigers have (1)____dropped_____ all over Asia. There are 3980 tigers remaining in the (2)___forests_____. Because of poaching and habitat loss, Amur tigers were in danger of (3)_____extinction_____ by the 1940s. With successful promotion to India on tiger conservation, WWF has some new ways to (4) ____save_____ the endangered tigers.

Diagnosing students' difficulties, the teachers agreed that students often lacked skills in handling a cloze.

To make the skills for tackling a cloze visible and easy to understand, the teachers came up with four essential steps for attempting to fill in blanks in a cloze. They then rephrased the steps into short, student-friendly phrases, as seen in the *'4 Steps for Doing a "Cloze" '* in Figure 9. During the lesson, the teachers demonstrated how to fill in some of the blanks in Question 11 following the 4 steps.

Figure 9: 4 steps for doing a 'Cloze'

4 steps for doing a 'Cloze'

1. Read the sentence
   +
   find out the part of speech(adj/ v/ n..?)

2. Look for the words before and after in the passage

3. Re-read the sentence
   +
   confirm meaning

4. Check grammar

2. Adopting a Range of Classroom Assessments to Track Students' Learning

a. Pre-lesson tasks

A cloze always requires a thorough understanding of a text, and a mastery of grammar. To teach a cloze summary, the first step was to prepare students for the text content. To begin with, input that provided them with background information on the topic and motivated them to read more about it was essential.

The teachers prepared videos related to tigers and facts about the animal for students to watch at home. Google Forms were used in post-watching tasks. Depending on the class ability, the tasks ranged from giving short answers (for more able students) and filling in blanks (for average students) to providing a sentence of reflection (for less able students). Examples of post-watching tasks are shown in Figures 10a, b and c.

Figure 10a: Post-viewing task for more able students

Fun Things about Tigers
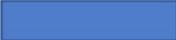
切換帳戶 ☁

在您提交這份表格時，系統會記錄您的電郵地址

*必填

Name : *

您的答案

After watching the video , choose one thing about tigers that you are most interested in. *

◯ appearance

◯ features

◯ habitat

◯ population

◯ diet

What do you want to know more about tigers? *

您的答案

According to your question, can you find the answer from "Tiger Facts" or the videos that you watch? What is the answer? *

您的答案

Figure 10b: Post-viewing task for average students

Pre-task checking:

Video watching: https://youtu.be/jEQaRY4YpVo
1. Tigers have black and orange ____stripes____.
2. Male tigers can reach a length of _____3.3_____ metres and a weight of more than _____300_____ kg.
3. Tigers are carnivores which means they eat ____meat____.
4. They hunt by ____night____.
5. They cannot outrun fast animals like ____deer____.
6. They live in ____jungles____, swamps, snowy pine forests, to grasslands.
7. Unlike lions who live together in prides, they live ____alone____.
8. The cubs live with their mother until they are about ____two____ years old.
9. People cut down forests for ____cities____ and farms, the tigers have fewer and fewer places to make their homes.
10. Fortunately, people are working hard to save tigers from ____extinction____.

Figure 10c: Post-viewing task for less able students

Watch the video (2:34-9:21).
Write one sentence of what you have learnt about tigers.

b. Classroom assessments

Classroom assessment is 'the kind of assessment that can be used as a part of instruction to support and enhance learning' (Shepard, 2000). Usually simple and ungraded, classroom assessment provides timely information for teachers on how students are learning at a particular stage. Such evidence is essential for teachers to provide instant feedback, as well as enabling them to design the next teaching episode so that it can better cater to students' needs.

i. Group work

Before arriving at the final stage of doing the summary cloze, it was important to teach students to understand the entire text. To do so, the teachers first used a simplified text about pandas to teach students how to generalise the key ideas presented in a paragraph. After that, students were asked to match the subheadings to the paragraphs in the target text 'Tiger'.

In small groups, students circled key words in paragraphs, discussed their choices and matched the subheadings printed on paper strips. The activity facilitated peer learning, and employed a tactile mode to cater for different learning styles. The product displayed by each group showed whether the group could circle key words and/or match the right subheadings, allowed the teachers to understand students' difficulties.

Figure 11: Students in a group work
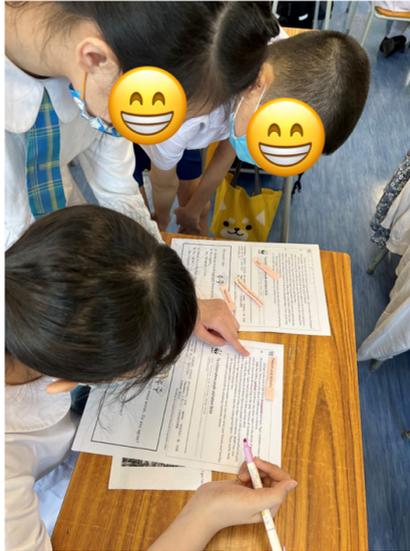
ii. Hand signals

A reading text is loaded with information. A quick and simple way of tracking students' understanding is to use hand signals. The teachers used this technique during a lesson to ask for a range of information (the meaning of a word, specific information for a question, what a pronoun is referring to, etc.). A brief example of the usage of this approach is as follows:

T:	Can you guess what the meaning of the word 'prey' is?
	Show your fingers for the option you think is correct:
	1: A toy
	2: Food (an animal)

This simple technique not only provides teachers with information about students' learning progress, but it also facilitates whole class participation. This kind of interaction is also less threatening for students who are nervous about whether they can answer questions correctly in front of a class.

Figure 12: Students responding to a question using hand signals

Impact

1. Student Level

The collaboration focused on the area in which students were weak in an assessment. It involved round of teaching targeting the particular area. As a result, the teachers noticed that students were more confident when attempting questions asking for duration or a summary cloze. The improvements that students showed in the two question types in the subsequent assessments also demonstrated that the re-teaching efforts paid off.

On the whole, the project motivated students to participate in class. After doing the pre-task, students were more prepared for lessons and, in turn, more willing to participate. Moreover, the use of classroom assessment that fostered peer support and was also less threatening in nature helped establish a lively, interactive classroom atmosphere.

2. Teacher Level

The teachers reflected that the collaboration offered them ideas on how to better follow up on students' performance. Before the collaboration, based on the data gained from assessments, the teachers carried out individual follow-ups. They expressed worries about how to juggle between carrying out post-assessment follow-ups and catching up with the teaching schedule. They were not sure how much time and effort to invest in because the assessment that followed might not cover that area again.

Therefore, the collaboration allowed the teachers to work as a team and gain mutual support. It first located the weak areas commonly seen in the grade level. Materials were developed in line with the chapters for that period of time. Thanks to this approach, the teachers did not need to worry if their classes were behind the teaching schedule. In addition, supplementary materials would not seem detached from the theme being taught during that period of time. Arranging to have the re-taught items in the next assessment completed the L-T-A cycle. This would provide the teachers with evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching strategies and the materials developed.

In sum, the teachers valued their experiences on developing materials to respond to students' problems. They saw the collaboration as a channel for professional exchanges and mutual support among teachers in the grade level.

Way Forward

The collaboration showcased how to use students' data to inform teaching and carry out a L-T-A cycle that complemented the original scheme of work. The English coordinators and the vice principal who participated in this year's collaboration have laid down two areas on which to focus:

- Strengthening the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment
- Further instilling the professional exchange function of collaborative lesson planning sessions within the department with reference to this collaboration

References

Shepard, L. A. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher, 29*(7), 4–14. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X029007004

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.). ASCD.

Case 2

Enhancing Assessment Literacy: From Classroom Level to Curriculum Level

St. Antonius Primary School

Enhancing Assessment Literacy: From Classroom Level to Curriculum Level

School
St. Antonius Primary School

Background
St. Antonius Primary School is located in East Kowloon. There are a total of five classes in P4. Two of the five classes are what is called *bring-your-own-device* (BYOD) classes. As students require more exposure to the English language outside the classrooms, language support is much needed.

A total of five P4 English language teachers were involved in the collaboration. Two of them had taught the previous P4 cohort. Their experiences were valuable because they were able to provide first-hand information about the specific learning needs and difficulties that P4 students used to have.

The P4 teachers decided to work on grammar and reading skills as the main foci for the collaboration. In the first term, the grammar item chosen was comparative and superlative adjectives and quantifiers. Back referencing of pronouns in reading was the focus of the collaboration in the second term.

Level
Primary 4

Strategies Used
1. Evaluation-Planning-Implementation-Evaluation (E-P-I-E) Model
It has been the English department's practice to use the E-P-I-E model to carry out curriculum and department level plannings. The model was adopted in this QSIP-CEAL collaboration. Assessment reports were scrutinised and based on the evaluation carried out, goals were set according to students' learning needs and difficulties.

Figure 1: The E-P-I-E model adopted
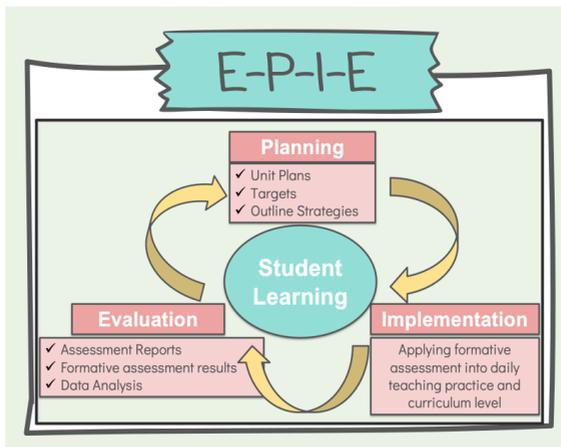
Assessment reports from the last cohort were referred to. For the reading paper, students were seen having difficulties in applying the reading skills learnt. As for the writing paper, students need more support in changing the forms of comparatives and superlatives. Based on the evaluation that the teachers made from the school assessment reports, coupled with the observations of the P4 teachers from the previous year, the target for the collaboration was made clear.

Students faced challenges in the spelling and application of comparatives and superlatives. Rules were taught but many students were still confused about their usage and unable to apply them.

Figure 2: Scrutiny of the previous cohort's P4 assessment reports

Last Year's P.4 Assessment Report

Reading Paper

In the parts of reading comprehension, students were quite weak in making inferences. For example, in Part H (Qs. 4 and 5), most students were not able to identify the meaning of "Hurray!" and the meaning of "top of the class". Many students also overlooked the clues about time, so they could not answer the questions correctly in Part I (Qs. 2 and 4). As for Part J, students, especially those in general classes, were also weak in locating specific information from the text. They could not match their answers to the corresponding questions.

Writing Paper

1. Students were very weak at comparing things with using the comparative and superlative adjectives. They were not familiar with using the correct sentence structures to compare things.

The assessment data of the previous cohort was used to modify instructions and lesson designs to benefit the future cohort, i.e., the current year's P4 students. Feed forward was set in motion.

Figure 3: Feed forward was set in motion
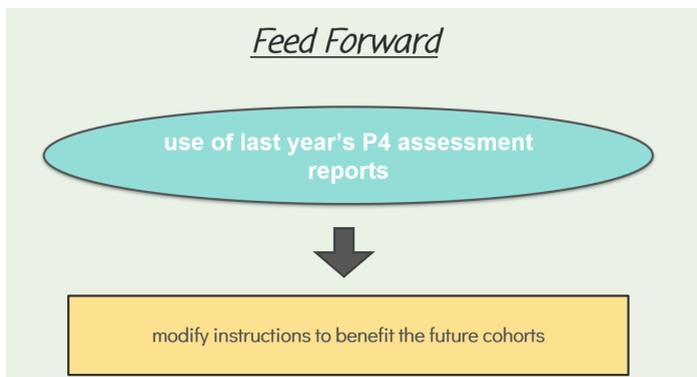
2. Use of Formative Assessment Tools in the Classroom

a. Pre-lesson quiz and post-lesson quiz

In the first term collaboration, comparatives and superlatives were the focus of the trial in formative assessment of the classroom level. A pre-lesson quiz was carried out at the beginning of the teaching of the grammar item, to inform the teachers on whether students could identify parts of speech, i.e., nouns and adjectives. Adjectives are the foundation for forming comparatives and superlatives and the quiz informed the teachers of students' prior knowledge of adjectives. After knowing this, the teachers were able to more specifically adjust their teaching pace to cater for students' learning needs.

Figure 4: Students' pre-lesson quiz

The quiz was designed in this way because the accurate identification of adjectives is the foundation for learning comparatives and superlatives. Gathering data from the quiz, the teachers were able to conclude that students need to have a clearer concept of the different parts of speech. A lot of support had to be given to students in order to help them to identify adjectives. After acquiring this data on students' learning, the teachers drew up follow-up actions for teaching the identification and use of adjectives.

Figure 5: The pre- and post-lesson quizzes of the same student

At the end of the lesson, students had to complete a post-lesson quiz on adjectives. They were asked to write five adjectives learnt that day. Most of the students finished the task and had satisfactory results. Having these two quizzes as formative assessments, the teachers were given feedback about the effectiveness of the teaching of the day's lesson. Students were able to recognise adjectives, which showed that learning had taken place.

b. Adjective-rule table

Apart from pre- and post-test, an adjective-rule table was also adopted when teaching comparatives and superlatives. The teachers categorised different comparatives and superlatives, according to how the forms are changed, e.g., +er / +est, y ⇨ ier/ iest. Adjectives were also categorised according to the number of syllables, i.e., 1-2 syllables and 3 or more syllables. They were also categorised into regular and irregular adjectives. The rules and explanations, which are listed in Figure 6, helped students become familiarise with the forms of turning an adjective into its comparative and superlative forms by presenting the categorisation visually.

The table worked as a reference for supporting students' learning on changing the forms of adjectives. Students made use of the table for self-checking. Assessment as learning was practised as the use of it engaged students in self-checking. Students also made used of the adjective-rule table for answering questions in their homework.

Figure 6: The adjective-rule table for learning and self-checking

Adjectives (1-2 syllables)	
Rules	
+ er /est	cheap / cheaper than / the cheapest
	clean / cleaner than / the cleanest
	hard / harder than / the hardest
	light / lighter than / the lightest
	long / longer than / the longest
	new / newer than / the newest
	old / older than / the oldest
	short / shorter than / the shortest
	slow / slower than / the slowest
	small / smaller than / the smallest
	soft / softer than / the softest
	thick / thicker than / the thickest
y ⇨ ier /iest	busy / busier than / the busiest
	dirty / dirtier than / the dirtiest
	dry / drier than / the driest
	empty / emptier than / the emptiest
	funny / funnier than / the funniest
	happy / happier than / the happiest
	heavy / heavier than / the heaviest
	hungry / hungrier than / the hungriest
	pretty / prettier than / the prettiest
	spicy / spicier than / the spiciest

Rules	
Adj. ending with letter e	cut<u>e</u> / cute**r than** / **the** cute**st**
	fin<u>e</u> / fine**r than** / **the** fine**st**
`+r / st`	lar<u>ge</u> / large**r than** / **the** large**st**
	rud<u>e</u> / rude**r than** / **the** rude**st**
Adj. ending in a short vowel *(a,e,i,o,u)* **and a consonant**	bi<u>g</u> / bi**gger than** / **the** bi**ggest**
	f<u>a</u>t / f<u>a</u>**tter than** / **the** f<u>a</u>**ttest**
(last letter)	h<u>o</u>t / h<u>o</u>**tter than** / **the** h<u>o</u>**ttest**
`Double the consonant`	s<u>a</u>d / s<u>a</u>**dder than** / **the** s<u>a</u>**ddest**
`+er`	thi<u>n</u> / thi**nner than** / **the** thi**nnest**

Adjectives (3 or more syllables)

Rules	
`more ___ than /` `the ___est`	delicious / **more** delicious **than** / **the most** delicious
	interesting / **more** interesting **than** / **the most** interesting
	popular / **more** popular **than** / **the most** popular
	* special / **more** special **than** / **the most** special
	* tired / **more** tired **than** / **the most** tired
	* useful / **more** useful **than** / **the most** useful

Adjectives (Irregular)

Rules	
X	g<u>oo</u>d / better than / the best
	bad / worse than / the worst

c. e-Learning tools

Another grammar item, the quantifiers 'too many' and 'too much', was chosen for the trial of formative assessment in the classroom. An e-learning tool was used for teaching this grammar item. Students were asked to make sentences with the quantifiers 'too many' and 'too much' on *Nearpod*, which allowed the teachers to take immediate follow-up actions. Feedback was given to the students. The use of this e-learning tool allowed real-time interaction for instant feedback. Students engaged in peer checking by reading their classmates' work. They also self-evaluated their learning process. The teachers were able to better gauge the learning level of students and adjust their teaching pace accordingly.

Figure 7: Students classwork performed on the e-learning tool for formative assessment

easy view of answers of all students
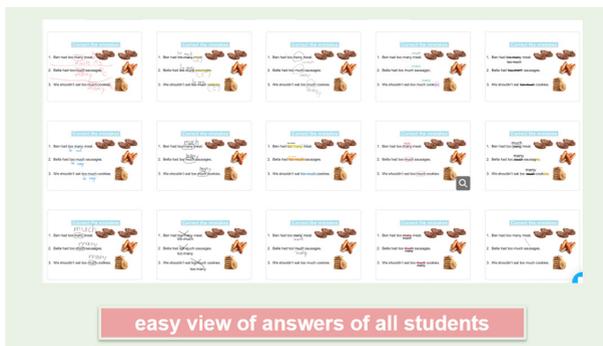
In this sentence correction task, students were asked to cross out the mistake in each sentence and make corrections. The interface of this e-learning tool has made providing feedback to students much more effective for the teachers, as they could see all students' answers at a glance.

Figure 8: Students in-class work on the e-learning tool for formative assessment

Too (many / much) fried food (is / are) bad for us.

peer check + immediate feedback from teacher
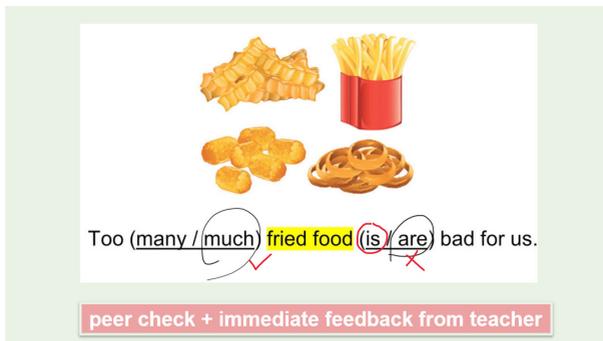
The e-learning tool enabled the teachers to select certain common errors and bring them up for further discussions in class. Peer checking could be conducted efficiently as students' work was easily shared and being displayed in every single student's e-device. Students simply corrected the errors by clicking their own e-device to edit. Once students' answers were submitted, teachers gave on-the-spot feedback to students that greatly facilitated the learning.

Figure 9a: Use of the e-learning tool for peer-learning and assessment as learning

Correct the mistakes

1. Ben had too many meat. *too much* ✓ (U)
2. Bella had too much sausages. *too many* ✓ (C)
3. We shouldn't eat too much cookies. *too many* ✓ (C)

Peer Learning + Assessment as Learning (note-taking skills: (U) / (C)

Students learnt from each other while correcting the peer's mistakes. This practice enhanced students' note-taking skills as they were asked to mark others' work and took their own notes to explain the answer, e.g., whether a countable or uncountable noun was needed to match the correct quantifier 'too many' and 'too much'.

Figure 9b: Use of the e-learning tool for peer-learning and assessment as learning

Correct the mistakes

1. Ben had too many meat. much ✓
2. Bella had too much sausages. many ✓
3. We shouldn't eat too much cookies. many ✓

Peer Learning + Assessment as Learning (note-taking skills: highlighting the plural form)

Students were able to make use of the highlighting function of the e-learning tool to spot the plural forms of the food items. This made easier for them to complete the task for formative assessment and understand the differences in the usage of 'too much' and 'too many' for uncountable and countable nouns.

d. Note-taking

Figure 10: Sample worksheet design facilitating note-taking as formative assessment
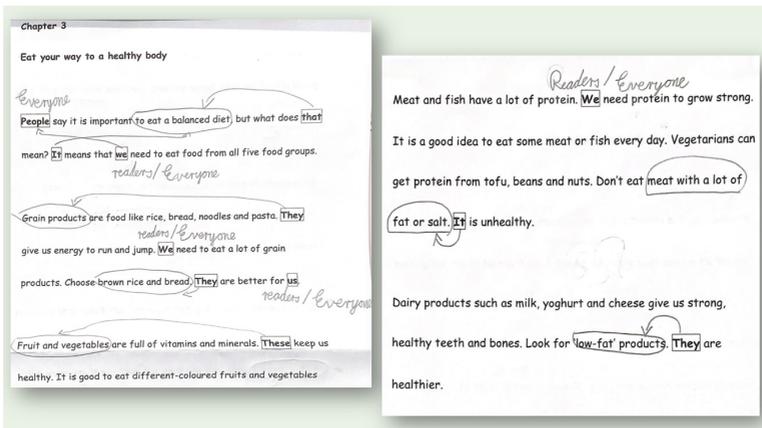
The task was designed as follows: The teachers extracted a passage from the textbook and put the pronouns in bold type face on the worksheet. This was to help students focus on the pronouns, which was the main learning objective of the lesson. Back referencing skills were taught explicitly and students were asked to make notes of the pronouns that were being referenced to.

To assess students' learning, the teachers asked students to replace the pronouns with the word(s) referenced. By checking the sentence, most students were able to spot their own mistakes if the sentence did not make sense and they were able to replace the pronouns with another word(s) from the text. From the notes that students made, the teachers spotted mistakes made by individuals and then provided them with feedback. Re-teaching also took place when the teacher identified common mistakes.

e. Exit Card

An exit card was given to students at the end of the reading skills lesson. The purpose of the exit card was to check whether students could understand the use of back referencing skills to locate the pronouns. On this exit card, students were asked to read a short paragraph and find out what the pronouns referred to. Most students did quite well in finding the subject pronouns in Questions 1 and 2. Figure 11 shows a sample of an exit card. In this case, some students struggled with the object pronouns 'them' and were unable to find the correct word that it referred to.

From the results that the teachers obtained from the exit cards, they found that most students could locate the subject pronouns referring to. However, some students had problems in locating the object pronouns, which showed that students were not familiar with this type of pronouns.

Thus, the result that the teachers obtained from the exit card task helped a great deal in modifying the instructions for the following lesson – the teachers made clarification of the usage of object pronouns, which was the focus of that lesson.

Figure 11: Exit card task

4. Data Analysis

To better align learning-teaching-assessment (L-T-A), questions on pronoun referencing in reading were set in the assessment paper of the final examination.

The teachers wanted to learn more about the use of assessment data to provide feedback on learning and teaching. Two questions with pronouns as the testing point were selected for a trial of item analysis.

Figure 12: The two assessment questions set on pronoun back referencing

I'm doing a school project with two of my classmates, Ken and Jim. Ken thinks we should stop having school uniforms. He thinks **they** are uncomfortable and expensive. However, Jim thinks we should keep uniforms. It's good because they make all students look like a family. He also thinks they look neat and tidy.

I'm going to see Ken and Jim this Saturday to talk about the project, but **I** don't know what to tell them. Do you think uniforms are important?

Assessment Paper

2. In line 2 , the word 'they' refers to _____ .
   - A. Fufu and Ian
   - B. Ken and Jim
   - C. all students
   - D. school uniforms
3. In line 6 , the word 'I' refers to _____ .
   - A. Tom
   - B. Ken
   - C. Ian
   - D. Jim

Figure 13: Item analysis conducted by teachers

The % of Choosing Each Answer in Each Item of Each Class

Items	answer	1		2		3	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
G2	A		%		%		%
	B		%	%	%	%	%
	C		%	%	%	%	%
	D		%	%	%	%	%
	Blank		%	%	%	%	%

Data Analysis

Option B: Option with the second highest percentage

Option D: Correct Answer

		4		5		Pr. 4	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
			%	%	%	%	%
			%	%	%	%	%
			%	%	%	%	%
			%	%	%	%	%
			%	%	%	%	%

The data here shows the percentage of students choosing each answer for each option for each class. The items highlighted in yellow are the correct answers. Those highlighted in red indicated that many students chose option B instead of option D in Question 2.

Figure 14: Question 2 of the item analysis

Item Analysis

I'm doing a school project with two of my classmates, Ken and Jim. Ken thinks we should stop having school uniforms. He thinks they are uncomfortable and expensive. However, Jim thinks we should keep uniforms. It's good because they make all students look like a family. He also thinks they look neat and tidy.

In line 2 , the word they refers to _____ .

- ○ A. Fufu and Ian
- ○ B. Ken and Jim ← strong distractor
- ○ C. all students
- ● D. school uniforms

In this question, students were asked to find out what the word 'they' refers to. Most students chose option B, 'Ken and Jim', whereas the correct answer was option D, 'school uniforms'. When the teachers got the data, they engaged in discussions of why students had opted for option B. It was thought that students might not understand that the pronoun 'they' could refer to both people and things. In addition, after the discussion of why students had opted for option B, the teachers came up with some follow-up tasks. They designed a follow-up worksheet of the same testing point. Moreover, the teachers taught students to substitute the options with the pronouns and read aloud the sentences in order to check if the meanings were correct.

Actions Taken

E-P-I-E has always been used in the department. A needs analysis was conducted prior to the commencement of the collaboration to determine the target area for improvement on learning and teaching.

Collaborative lesson planning sessions were held throughout the school year and two rounds of lesson observations were carried out.

Two workshops on assessment literacy were conducted. One was conducted in late August 2021 for all teaching staff. The other workshop, held in late November 2021, was for English teachers and focused on assessment tools.

A whole school sharing session was held in late July 2022. Teachers of five other subjects, Chinese, Mathematic, General Studies, Music and Visual Arts, also shared the assessment practices tried out in their subjects respectively during the school term.

Impact

1. Student Level

Students were seen to be more engaged during lessons when tasks for formative assessment were carried out.

They had the opportunity to practise self-checking, which raised their awareness of the application of the rules of comparatives and superlatives. With the teachers' intended frequent reminders, students were seen making notes as part of their learning, e.g., pronoun referencing when reading texts. Automation was seen happening among the more able students, who were able to self-check by replacing terms with pronouns to check the meaning.

2. Teacher Level

The teachers reflected on how they were more equipped with assessment skills and had gained experience in:

- exploring different instructional methods for formative assessment;
- reviewing and improving teaching strategies to conduct formative assessment;
- enhancing teaching effectiveness through the use of formative assessment;
- attempting the use of backward design in curriculum design and aligning L-T-A in their daily lesson planning.

Figure 15: Backward planning model

Backward Planning Model

Input — What students need to learn

Process — How students learn

Output — What and how students display their learning
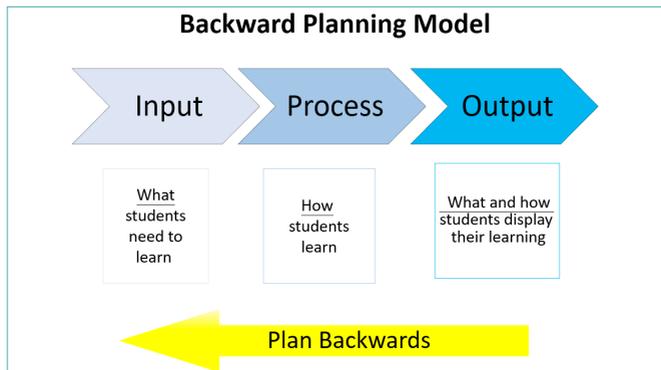
Plan Backwards

The teachers have become much better informed about students' strengths and weaknesses with backward planning now in place. Designing the assessment questions during the lesson planning stage has more clearly anchored the learning. This has demonstrably enhanced the effectiveness of the learning and teaching.

3. Curriculum Level

The L-T-A cycle was strengthened through a review of internal assessment papers and learning and teaching materials. The teachers then decided on the challenging parts for students and the testing points be assessed in the examination. By adopting backward design in the curriculum planning, the teachers set the examination paper as part of the lesson planning.

Designing formative assessment tasks is gradually taking on greater importance in collaborative lesson planning sessions. This will be one of the items to be included in the P4 collaborative lesson planning sessions.

4. Departmental Level and School Level

At the internal dissemination conducted in late July 2022, the teachers from the English Department, together with teachers from five other subjects, shared their assessment practices developed this year with the entire teaching team. These ranged from formative assessment tasks conducted in face-to-face classroom settings to students' self-assessment conducted during online lessons and online assignments.

Given that assessment literacy is one of the major concerns of the school, the sharing was a showcase of the teachers' enhanced understanding, as well as a display of the good work conducted in different departments.

Way Forward

As more teachers gained experience in formative assessment, they will be the change agents sharing their experiences and ideas with their peers.

More emphasis will be placed on the use of formative assessment in the daily teaching at other grade levels of the English Department.

The same applies to the use of backward design in curriculum design and the alignment of L-T-A at their both classroom and curriculum levels.

References

The following books are useful references about assessment literacy:

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests.* Oxford University Press.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning.* Routledge.

Hattie, J., & Clarke, S. (2019). *Visible learning: Feedback.* Routledge.

Regier, N. (2012). *Book two: 60 formative assessment strategies.* Regier Educational Resources. https://portal.gssd.ca/public/mr3xg4k4nrxxq5dvfz4hq5lomq/Lists/SharedDocuments/Assessment/Formative%20Assessment%20Ideas-Natalie%20Regier.pdf

Tileston, D. W. (2004). *What every teacher should know about student assessment.* Corwin Press.

Case 3

Formative Assessment: A Blended Approach to Support Learning and Teaching

Tin Shui Wai Methodist Primary School

Formative Assessment: A Blended Approach to Support Learning and Teaching

School

Tin Shui Wai Methodist Primary School

Background

Tin Shui Wai Methodist Primary School is an aided school in Tin Shui Wai. Students have a satisfactory level of English language proficiency. Taking the students to the next level is the aim of the English Language Department. Based on an analysis of students' performance in their recent external and internal assessments, the P4 English teachers came to the conclusion that honing and polishing students' writing skills was one of their top priorities. Based on the data collected, students' marks in content were relatively low due to lacking elaboration of ideas. Moreover, students' performance in language would have been more satisfactory if they had used a wider range of vocabulary. To address the needs of students, the teachers introduced a series of strategies to improve students' writing skills. This case report presents the trial strategies and looks closely at how blended learning can be used to enhance learning and teaching.

Level

Primary 4

Strategies Used

Learning to write is a challenge for primary school students. Lack of elaboration and lack of vocabulary are common challenges among students. However, it is impossible for students to achieve good performance if they are unable to provide ideas with plenty of supporting details and a wide range of vocabulary in their writing. Therefore, motivating and teaching students to elaborate their ideas and increasing their vocabulary have become English teachers' major concerns. To help students make improvements, both relevant input strategies and classroom assessment are needed.

The strategies used by the teachers are summarised as follows:

1. Flipped Classroom Approach

Many teachers began to adopt blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, combining classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences. A flipped classroom is a type of blended learning where students are introduced to the learning content at home and practise working through it at school. This approach can save a lot of the time that is spent on teaching and ensure that more class time is used for student practice; moreover, it makes learners more responsible for their learning and enhances their independent learning skills (Yang & Chen, 2020).

Figure 1 shows the video that students were assigned to watch before the lesson. The video was created by the teachers, introducing the content of the writing topic, 'A Story about Places to Visit in Tsim Sha Tsui'. Students then had to finish a pre-lesson worksheet as illustrated in Figure 2. According to Heiner and Rieger (2016), by looking at the average responses to pre-reading quiz questions, teachers can gain insights into which topics their students find difficult and react to these data by adjusting instructions for the next class.

Through the flipped classroom approach, students obtained the background knowledge for the writing task independently, at home, allowing them to learn at their own pace and be ready for the lesson. The pre-lesson task helped the teachers gauge students' understanding and better plan their instruction. In addition, instead of spending much time on direct teaching, the teachers had more class time to carry out different formative assessments in the classroom.

Figure 1: Video that students were assigned to watch before the lesson

Figure 2: Pre-lesson worksheet

A. Tsim Sha Tsui is one of the most popular places in Hong Kong. What do you know about this place? Brainstorm your ideas below:		
① Location	Where is Tsim Sha Tsui? ○ Hong Kong Island ○ Kowloon ○ New Territories	
② Transportation	We can go to Tsim Sha Tsui by _____. (You can choose more than one answer.)	
	○ bus ○ MTR ○ tram	○ minibus ○ LRT ○ the Peak tram	○ taxi ○ cable car ○ ferry
③ Places to go and things to do	Which place in Tsim Sha Tsui do you want to go to? What can you do there? e.g., Hong Kong Museum of History ➡ look at the displays 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____	

2. Using Graphic Organisers to Help Organise Writing

Planning is one of the most crucial parts of the writing process, and it poses a challenge for many primary students. Culham (2005) states that teachers need to spend time helping students figure out what they want to say and helping them learn how to organise their ideas into a written story as organisation helps structure information so that the writing makes sense to the reader.

To address this problem, Santangelo and Olinghouse (2009) promote using graphic organisers to enhance the organisation and generation of ideas in student writing. Graphic organisers provide visual and graphic displays for students. They not only demonstrate relationships between different parts of the story but also show students the steps that they can follow in their work.

Figure 3 illustrates the sequence chart that the teachers used in the lesson. Students were asked to match the pictures in the five-picture story with the corresponding parts of the story, clarifying the relationship between the problem and the solution and showing the order of events. By having the concept visualised and broken down into manageable parts, students were encouraged to organise their story with a beginning, middle and end. This prewriting activity served as part of the formative classroom assessment, ensuring that students could master the concepts and understand the flow of the story.

Figure 3: Sequence chart of the story

Part		What are the 3 parts of a story?	
1	Beginning	Introduce • Characters (who?) • Setting (When & Where?) • Problem (What?) – sometimes	tourist information counter/ staff suggest
2	Middle	• Describe the events that happened	take photos / museum/ look at the displays go out of / straight / turn / opposite get lost / worried
3	Ending	• Describe how the problem was solved • Share feelings of the experience • Share lesson(s) learned	?

3. Using Wh-Questions to Elaborate Ideas

A major problem faced by the teachers in teaching second language writing was that students failed to write with details. They often struggled to write a few sentences based on the prompts given. Helping the students elaborate their ideas and enrich their writing became teachers' concern. According to Rahim et al. (2017), students do not organise their ideas properly but just write what is on their mind without planning. Therefore, students must learn pre-writing skills such as the use of wh-questions to organise their ideas so that they can produce longer and more detailed writing. Sharing the same belief, the P4 English teachers decided to use the wh-questions as a guide to enable students to generate ideas. Figures 4 and 5 show how they put the theory into practice in different classes.

Figure 4: Using wh-questions to elaborate ideas
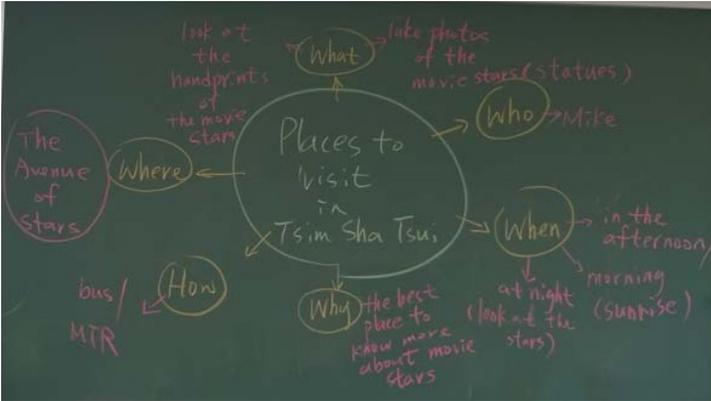
Figure 5: Using wh-questions to elaborate ideas
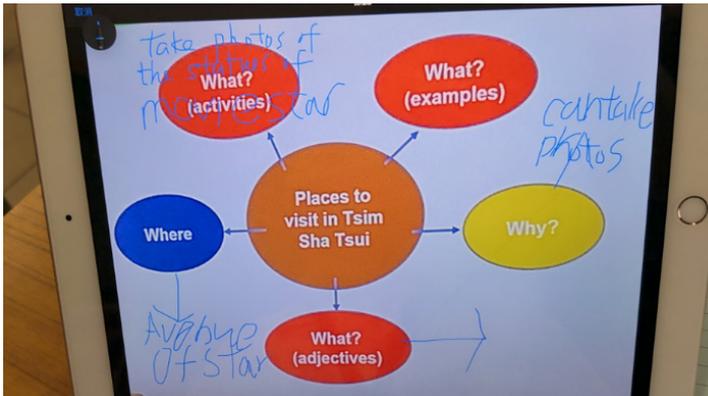
During the face-to-face lesson, wh-question words highlighted in a mind map were used to help students elicit details for their writing. To equip students with the target skills, students wrote the beginning of their stories by writing about the first scenic spot, the Hong Kong Museum of History, under the guidance of the teacher. After providing necessary input, the teacher checked if students understood the materials shared. Less able students were asked to refer to the mind map on the blackboard to generate ideas together with their classmates for writing about the next place, the Avenue of Stars. For more able groups, students were required to work out their ideas individually on their iPads. By utilising the benefits of blended learning, (i.e., making use of students' prior knowledge gained in the video and the writing skills acquired in the lesson), students were able to give more supporting details and put things together to form a meaningful paragraph.

The teachers reflected on how the wh-questions help students improve their narrative writing. They served well as a tool for students to generate details, develop ideas and enrich their content, as they required elaboration from the students who were being asked. Students formed paragraphs with more detailed and relevant answers by answering the wh-questions. Figure 6 below is a sample of student work that illustrates this impact. This was particularly helpful for less able students who found it difficult to generate ideas and express what they wanted to write. The teachers kept applying this technique as input and formative assessment in their writing classes.

Figure 6: Student elicited details in their writing with the help of wh-questions

4. Using 'Juicy' Words to Replace 'Tiring' Words

The teachers all agreed that having a good vocabulary helps students communicate in a more engaging way. Depending on just one or two words to describe an idea leads to repetitive and unconvincing writing. With the aim of helping students write more effectively by having a richer vocabulary to draw from, students received their own juicy word anchor chart, in which synonyms of boring words were introduced, followed by teacher demonstrations in which they replaced some of the verbs and adjectives that students overused in their writing with juicy words. Students were then asked to review their original work and make changes as suggested. This formative assessment helped students identify the target areas that they needed to improve. Improving vocabulary is essential for English learners, especially those who want to make progress and advance. Figures 7 and 8 demonstrate how this strategy was adopted and how students made improvements respectively.

Figure 7: Introducing juicy words
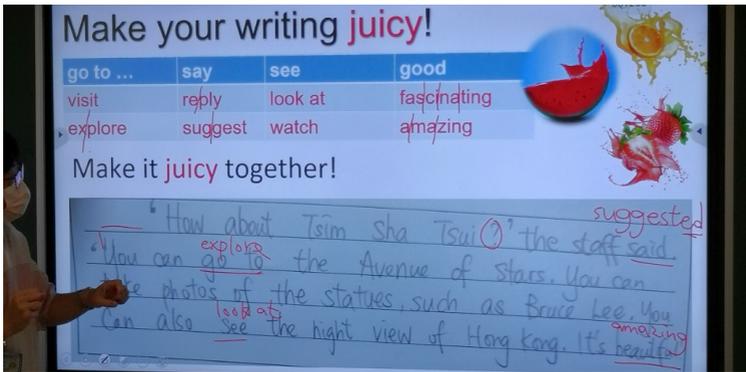
Figure 8: Sample student work
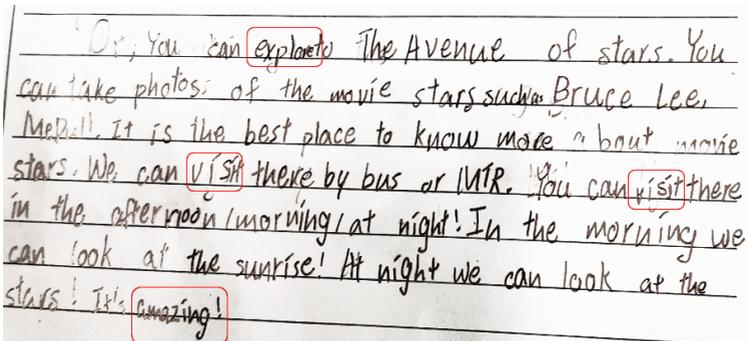
5. Practising Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is important because it allows students to review their strengths and weaknesses. Self-assessment in writing includes activities that lead students not only to evaluate their writing, but also develop writing skills and habits for further improvement. To enable them to know their own performance and be aware of the improvements that they need to make, students should be taught to monitor their self-evaluation process by going over their own performance against a set of explicit criteria. In this lesson, students were given a writing checklist (Figure 9) to conduct self-assessment, self-checking their work step by step based on the guidelines (Figure 10). To cater for individual differences, less able students were asked to fill out a simpler writing check-list (Figure 11).

Figure 9: Writing checklist for self-assessment

Figure 10: Sample of student work
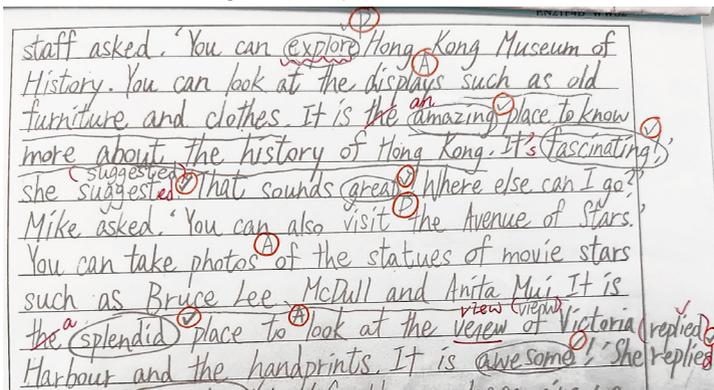
Figure 11: Writing checklist for self-assessment for less able students

No.	Writing Checklist	Put a ✓ if it is properly done
	Self-assessment	For less able students
1	I wrote about 1 place in paragraph 2.	
2	I wrote about at least 1 activity in paragraph 2.	
3	I added at least one elaboration to each activity.	
4	I used different adjectives to describe the activities/ things/ feelings	

Actions Taken

At the beginning of the academic year, the School Development Officer (SDO) of the QSIP-CEAL team had a meeting with core group members of the school to discuss the focus of the collaboration. Following this, the SDO paid a courtesy visit to a P4 class to get a general idea of the learning and teaching at the school.

Aiming at encouraging the school to adopt a whole school approach to enhance teachers' assessment literacy, two workshops were held. The first was held in late August, introducing assessment literacy to all teaching staff. The second was a needs analysis workshop for English language teachers, which was held in mid-November.

Collaborative lesson planning meetings with the English teachers were also arranged on a regular basis to discuss teaching strategies and develop learning materials. To try out the strategies discussed and evaluate their effectiveness, lesson observations and post-observation feedback sessions were conducted in December 2021 and May 2022. At the end of the collaboration, an evaluation meeting was held to enable reflection and assist in the planning of future development. Finally, the P4 English teachers shared their experiences and insights gained from the QSIP-CEAL project with other teaching staff in a within school dissemination session and a territory-wide dissemination in July 2022.

Impact

1. Student Level

The impacts of assessment literacy on student learning were noticeable. Students participated in a variety of learning activities and classroom assessments, which provided them with opportunities to realise the importance of and gain skills in organising a narrative story, elaborating ideas and putting tired words to bed. Students were also empowered to monitor and self-evaluate their own learning from the process of writing. By following

explicit instructions, students were able to check their own writing to see if it met the criteria in order to identify areas in which they could improve. Thanks to their improved skills and confidence in expanding their ideas, as well as their use of self-evaluation, students' follow-up writing tasks showed satisfactory improvements in terms of both content and language.

2. Teacher Level

At the teacher level, the teachers' capacity for assessment literacy has been strengthened. The teachers have gained knowledge of and skills in assessment literacy, using effective formative assessments to enhance the teaching of writing. They have also become more aware of the importance of the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment. This was demonstrated by their instructions for the writing lesson, in which the learning activities and assessment tasks for enriching both content and language were closely linked with each other. After confirming the learning objectives, a series of learning activities and assessment tasks, including a pre-lesson task, formative classroom assessment, self-editing and a follow-up assignment, were given to students, ensuring that each of the critical elements of instruction interacted effectively with one another and supported the learning outcomes.

The teachers have also paid more attention to the use of student performance data. They acknowledged that making use of the analysis reports based on the formative assessments in the classroom helped them understand students' learning difficulties in a more objective way. Based on the learning feedback received, the teachers could make adjustments to their teaching so that no students were left behind.

3. Curriculum Level

The collaboration has had positive impacts on curriculum planning. The English panel head has decided to establish a juicy word list with students of different levels to expand students' vocabulary. Moreover, using student work as an effective data point to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment design and make corresponding modifications will be another change made by the department.

Way Forward

The development of formative assessment through a blended learning approach has had a good start. The efforts of the P4 teachers have paid off. Based on the fruitful experiences gained in this project, the teachers will keep exploring other strategies of blended learning to improve learning, teaching and assessment.

In addition, the planning of writing lessons will be further reviewed and modified. As students take time to form a habit, the teachers will create opportunities for students to use the target skills intentionally and constantly in their learning processes, including in assessments. The use of graphic organisers, mind maps and wh-questions to help students write in a more organised way with more details will definitely be continued in writing lessons. The teachers will also try to teach other elements one at a time and in depth, such as having an appropriate ending and coherent links within paragraphs.

The teachers will also pay more attention to the validity of assessments, ensuring that each task measures what it was designed to measure. For example, if giving relevant ideas with supporting details is the expected learning outcome, students should be given a topic with which they are familiar to write on.

Promoting peer-assessment is another aspect that the teachers will consider. The teachers believe that it is essential to equip students with lifelong skills in assessing and providing feedback to others. In the coming year, on top of checking their own work, students will also be required to comment on the work of their peers based on prompts from the teacher.

References

Culham, R. (2005). *6+1 traits of writing: The complete guide for the primary grades.* Scholastic.

Heiner, C., & Rieger, G. (2016, October). *Preclass-reading assignments: Why they may be the most important homework for your students.* Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative. https://cwsei.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/cwsei/resources/instructor/Pre-reading_guide_CWSEI.pdf

Rahim, M. A. A., Rustam, R. M., Primsuwan, P, Amat, R., Yusof, S. M., & Tahir, N. M. (2017). The effectiveness of using wh-questions in improving the writing skill of upper primary school students in Malaysia. *International Journal of Development Research, 7*(9), 15466-15470.

Santangelo, T., & Olinghouse, N. G. (2009). Effective writing instruction for students who have writing difficulties. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 42*(4), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.17161/foec.v42i4.6903

Yang, C. C. R., & Chen, Y. (2020). Implementing the flipped classroom approach in primary English classrooms in China. *Education and Information Technologies, 25*(2), 1217–1235. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-019-10012-6

An Exploration of Assessment Practices: English Paper 3 Listening and Integrated Skills

Carmel Alison Lam Foundation Secondary School

An Exploration of Assessment Practices: English Paper 3 Listening and Integrated Skills

School

Carmel Alison Lam Foundation Secondary School

Background

Based on the implications revealed by the analysis of internal assessment results, the teachers at Carmel Alison Lam Foundation Secondary School identified students' learning needs for tackling the integrated tasks in Paper 3. The analysis of students' scripts helped the teachers specify three target areas for improvement:

- guiding students to understand the context of the tasks, identify keywords and predict the main ideas in the listening component;
- teaching students how to extract ideas from the Data File by understanding the genre features and language features of different text types;
- helping students learn and apply the different components and appropriate language features of formal texts.

Level

Secondary 1

Strategies Used

1. Using Visuals to Familiarise Students with the Contexts of the Tasks and Using Graphic Organisers to Help Students Organise Vocabulary Knowledge

Understanding the contexts in which tasks and relevant materials are presented is a prerequisite for students to make sense of task requirements and locate relevant information. The contexts of tasks are often presented in text format, which can present challenges to students attempting to form a mental picture of the situation. To help students anchor their understanding of contexts, visual aids, such as pictures showing the contexts of a singing contest and a formal meeting, were used to help students visualise the

people and actions involved in them. As Felder and Henriques (1995, p. 28) suggest, the use of visual aids is one of the most effective ways to accommodate the difference between teachers' teaching styles and students' learning styles or, in this case, the difference between the presentation of the context in the learning materials and students' learning styles. To help students organise their vocabulary knowledge of these contexts, a graphic organiser was used to help them categorise words. The use of the graphic organiser served two purposes: to help students learn and organise knowledge in a systematic manner and to provide a useful reference material enabling students to predict possible answers for the questions in the task.

2. Enhancing Students' Learning through Formative Assessment

Integrating assessment in the instructional process can help teachers identify the learning difficulties of students and adapt their teaching to respond to student needs in an informed manner. After analysing the milestones to be achieved for the completion of the final tasks, the teachers designed classroom assessments to help students gain a clear understanding of the success criteria and provide them with multiple practice exercises so that they could reflect on their performance based on the feedback given and strive to improve in a new attempt.

3. Revising and Making Scoring Visible to Students

The teachers made school-based adaptations to the success criteria and scoring system and communicated to students the message that every small step taken in learning is valued. Language and genre features showing regards for formality is outlined clearly to students. The award of score(s) for each small step that students took to show awareness of such features aimed to help students identify the specific targets to be achieved and motivate them to make an attempt.

Actions Taken

1. Designing Pre-Lesson Tasks to Help Students Acquire Contextual Knowledge and Making Use of a Graphic Organiser to Help Students Organise Key Ideas

a. Using visual aids in pre-lesson tasks to help students visualisze the context and learn key vocabulary items necessary for task completion

The teachers designed a matching exercise (Figure 1) on an e-learning platform. Students were provided with a picture showing different people in a singing contest, which was one

of the contexts presented in the integrated tasks. Students looked at the different people involved in the contest and matched the keywords by looking up the meaning of the words. A similar approach (Figure 2) was adopted to help students understand another context – a formal meeting – which was presented in one of the Data File sources.

Figure 1: Visual aids in the pre-lesson task
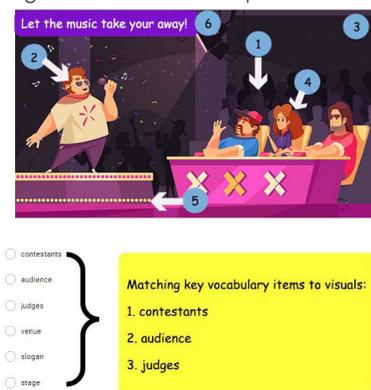
Figure 2: Visual aids in the pre-lesson task

b. Using graphic organisers to organise knowledge

According to Novak (1998), concept maps play a key role as a tool for representing the knowledge held by a learner, and constructing a concept map is one of the ways in which students can acquire specialised vocabulary. Having anchored students' understanding of the contexts in the pre-lesson task, the teachers used a graphic organiser – a semantic map (Figure 3) – to help students organise knowledge and predict possible answers by categorising different keywords. To check students' understanding, the teachers also encouraged students to think of other possible keywords that could be placed under each category.

Figure 3: Graphic organiser to help students organise key ideas

Words related to a contest at school
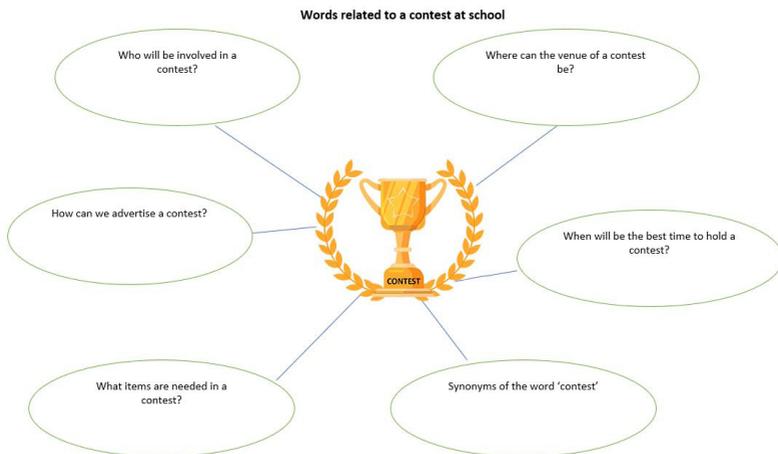
After consolidating the contextual knowledge with students by checking possible answers to the questions on the semantic map, the teachers guided students in making predictions about the type of key information to be presented in the audio component. For example, when students saw the cue word 'venue' in the question, they predicted that the word(s) they were going to hear in the listening component would be ones that referred to a place. Having made predictions with reference to the semantic map, many students were able to catch the key information in the while-listening stage.

Figure 4

students attempted to match the words to the bubbles and supplement extra points from their own understanding

Students followed teachers' guidance to make predictions of the key points they were going to catch from the listening component before it was played
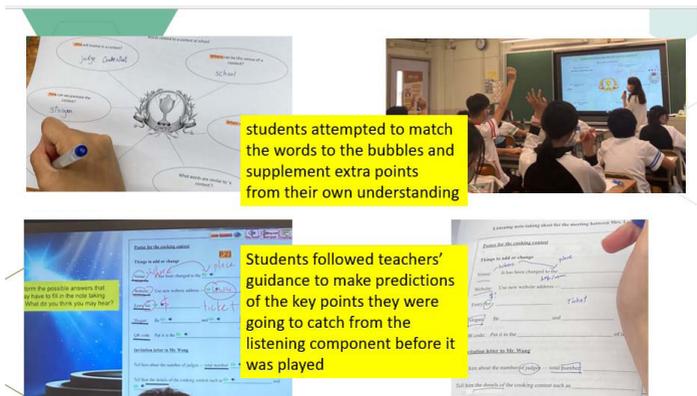
2. Analysing the Genre and Language Features that Help Students Locate Key Information in a Text and Designing Formative Assessment that Allows Them to Transfer the Knowledge Learnt

Besides understanding unfamiliar contexts, another challenge identified by the teachers was understanding the more formal genres in the Data File and extracting key points from them without copying verbatim. The key reason why students were copying verbatim was their lack of ability to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information presented in the Data File sources. By highlighting the types of key information needed and the kind of language features used in presenting them, the teachers aimed at helping students differentiate the key information to be extracted. They designed a worksheet (Figure 5) which guided students in learning the structure of meeting minutes and analysing the language features and their specific function(s) in expressing different kinds of key information. For example, the structure 'proposed / suggested + v-ing' is commonly used in meeting minutes to denote a suggestion raised in the meeting. Instead of spelling out these features to students, the teachers instructed students to make observations, and they then checked if the students could identify the functions of the language features (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Students then transferred their knowledge in analysing other parts of the meeting minutes. The teachers adopted a colour-coding approach and assessed if students could identify the target language features and differentiate the different types of information presented in a short paragraph (Figure 8).

Figure 8
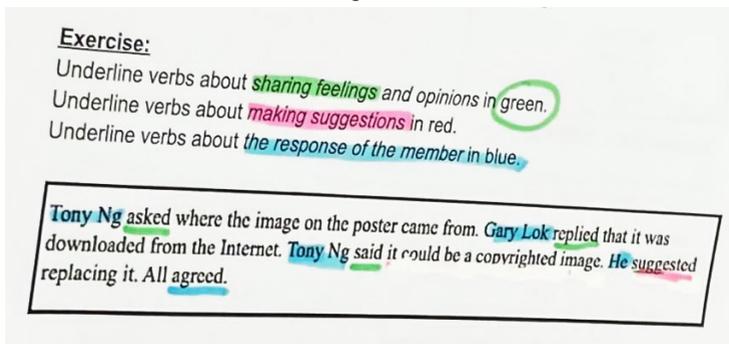
One other challenge that the teachers identified in helping students tackle integrated task was that students do not have sufficient practice in writing one text type before the syllabus rushes to introduce a new one to them. To ensure that students got sufficient practice and feedback before they were assessed, the teachers designed 'mini practices' to help students focus on one particular aspect each time (Figure 9). This not only allowed more time for students to comprehend, acquire and reflect on their learning at a deeper level, but also helped the teachers give more detailed feedback on specific areas for improvement.

Figure 9
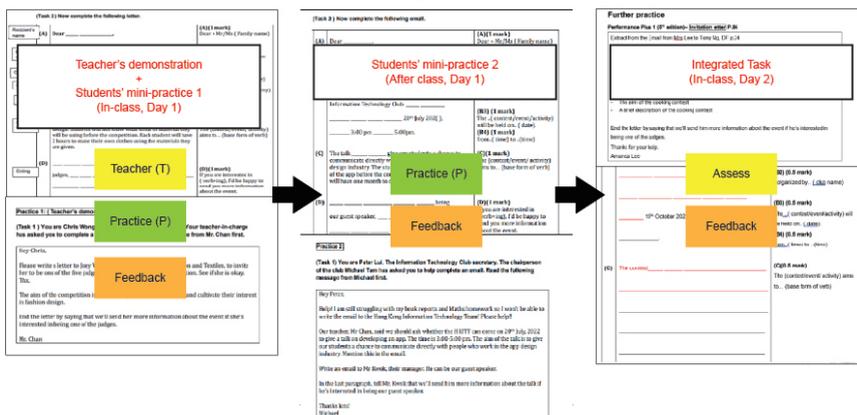
3. Refining the Scoring System to Help Students Visualise the Elements Assessed and Motivate Them to Make an Attempt

Martin-Kniep (2000) suggests that clear and descriptive performance criteria accompanied by rubrics and models serve the purpose of communicating expectations for students' achievement in ways that they can understand. With this in mind, the teachers refined the rubrics by allotting a mark for each target language feature used to connect ideas, expressing regard for formality (Figure 10). Different from the existing practice of awarding students a mark out of five marks for 'language' and two marks for 'appropriacy' which does not help students make sense of what constitutes to the different levels listed in the rubrics, the teachers refined the scoring system in a way that allowed students to clearly visualise the language features that contributed to the language and appropriacy domains. The teachers made these refinements with the aim of motivating students to make an attempt, as students understood that they would be awarded for every small step they took at the foundation-building stage.

This design was an example of both assessment for learning and assessment as learning, as both the teachers and students could use the clearly laid-out rubrics to evaluate learning and teaching and set clear goals for the next endeavour in follow-up practices.

Figure 10

Invitation letter rubrics (Total marks: 11 marks)	
(A) Dear Mr. Wong,	(A) (1 mark) Dear
(B) I am writing to invite you to be one of the judges for a cooking contest organized by our school Cooking Club. The contest will be held on 15th October 202( ), from 3:00 pm to 6:00pm. There will be three judges in total.	(B) (4 marks) (B1) I am writing to...(base form of verb) (B2) ..organized by.. (club name) (B3) The ..(contest/event/activity) will be held on.. (date). (B4) .from..(time) to ..(time)
(C) The cooking contest aims to test the cooking skills of our students. The contest is similar to the popular cooking show on TV--- The Top Chef. Students will not know what ingredients they will be cooking with before the contest. Each student will have 45 minutes to cook a dish using the ingredients they are given.	(C) (1 mark) The (contest/event/ activity) aims to... (base form of verb)
(D) If you are interested in being one of our judges, I'd be happy to send you more information about the event.	(D) (1 mark) If you are interested in (verb+ing), I'd be happy to send you more information about the event
(E) Yours sincerely,	(E1) (1 mark) Yours sincerely
Tony Ng	(E2) (1 mark) Name of sender
(NA)	(E3) (1 mark) Post

Impact

1. Student Level

Through thoughtfully designed pre-lesson tasks that included visual aids to help students visualise the contexts (e.g., a semantic map to organise vocabulary items), students could identify the types of answer that they would catch in the listening component. Allotting marks for each small step taken and making the scoring criteria visible to students increased students' willingness to make attempt. Comparing students' performances in the Term 1 and Term 2 listening exams, the teachers found that even students of lower English proficiency made more attempts in Term 2. Moreover, the overall passing rate for Part B of the listening paper increased, which was very encouraging to the teachers.

2. Teacher Level

The teachers shared how the exploration had given them new insights into the design of teaching materials, learning activities and assessments. In the collaborative lesson planning meetings, the teachers discussed the discoveries that they had made by analysing assessment data and identified challenges faced by students at different stages of learning. This helped them understand difficulties from the perspective of students and make data-informed decisions on task design, as well as refinements to the teaching schedule and the scoring system.

3. Curriculum Level

The participating teachers acknowledged that modifications to the curriculum were necessary to ensure sufficient opportunities for conducting formative assessments. The team decided to drop the practice of briefly introducing multiple target genres to students by reducing the number of genres to be covered each year, thus making space for deep learning and assessment for learning. With careful planning for vertical progression, the teachers aim to cover different target genres in depth at different levels.

Way Forward

With their solid experience of making data-driven refinements to existing classroom assessment practices and the confidence gained from seeing students' actual improvements, the participating teachers have become pioneers, sharing their explorations with fellow teachers at the school. The team is planning to transfer the insights gained from the collaboration to other levels to review and refine the listening curriculum.

References

Felder, R. M., & Henriques, E. R. (1995). Learning and teaching styles in foreign and second language education. *Foreign Language Annals, 28*(1). 21-31. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1995.tb00767.x

Martin-Kniep, G. O. (2000). Standards, feedback, and diversified assessment: Addressing equity issues at the classroom level. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 16*(3), 239–256. https://doi.org/10.1080/105735600406733

Novak, J. D. (1998). *Learning, creating, and using knowledge: Concept maps as facilitative tools in schools and corporations.* Taylor & Francis.

Case 5

Enhancing Learning and Teaching Effectiveness with Formative Assessment in the Classroom

ELCHK Lutheran Secondary School

Enhancing Learning and Teaching Effectiveness with Formative Assessment in the Classroom

School
ELCHK Lutheran Secondary School

Background
ELCHK Lutheran Secondary School is a Chinese medium-of-instruction school in which students have different levels of English abilities. Catering for the vast learner diversity in class has been challenging. The teachers wanted to explore how the use of formative assessment in the classroom would enhance learning and teaching effectiveness.

Listening was selected as the focus of collaboration in the first semester. It has been identified as the most challenging among the four skills in language learning for students. In the second semester, reading was selected as the focus of collaboration. To boost students' confidence and strengthen particular reading skills before promoting to S4, the teachers planned to make use of the post-examination period to teach a Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Paper 1 reading text of the appropriate level of difficulty.

Different classroom assessment tools have been deployed to deal with the difficulties faced by students in both listening and reading. The teachers decided to equip S3 students with selected listening and reading skills to boost their confidence.

The teachers wanted to try out how the provision of quality feedback to students would enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching. The use of a backward planning model became part of the collaboration plan. To provide more specific feedback, the teachers implemented formative assessment activities in the classroom and learning practices based on the task and the strategies discussed during the collaborative lesson planning sessions.

Level
Secondary 3

Strategies Used

1. Needs Analysis: Use of Vocabulary Inventory

The lack of vocabulary was one of the reasons of the difficulties for the students in attempting listening and reading tasks.

The vocabulary inventory also served as a needs analysis. The inventory was given to students as a pre-task. Based on the answers, the teachers collected information on students' prior knowledge of the vocabulary items. Lesson time was saved as vocabulary items that students already knew did not have to be taught.

During the lesson, students were asked to read the words in the inventory aloud to make sure that they knew the pronunciation. The goal was to provide input as support, which helped students to be more confident when listening to the recording.

Figure 1: Words selected for the vocabulary inventory included key words from the recording

Figure 2: Design of the theme-based vocabulary inventory for the HKDSE reading task

Students were required to indicate their knowledge of each vocabulary item by using the symbols: '+', '?', or '0'. These symbols mean 'I know the word', 'The word seems familiar' and 'I don't know the word' respectively. Students also made notes of some explanations of the words for their own learning.

The purpose of using the inventory was for the teachers to quickly spot which vocabulary items required explanation and which ones did not.

Figure 3: Sample student work of the vocabulary inventory for the reading task

2. Self-Questioning – Self-Checking as Formative Assessment

Teachers expressed one of the most common reasons for students to make mistakes in listening is their lack of awareness of the purpose or subject matter of the listening tasks. The use of self-questioning in a pre-listening task was tried out in order to develop students' listening habits.

Since students are usually not familiar with the context of a listening task, it is important for them to understand the context and the topic. Very often, students find that the content of a recording not making sense. This pre-task could be considered as an example of assessment as learning. The aim of it is to raise students' awareness of the importance of knowing about their role and the listening task(s) they have in hand.

When self-questioning was applied, students developed a clearer concept about who they were and what had to be done. They were found to be more confident in attempting the listening task.

Figure 4: Self-questioning task for listening

To make better sense of the text and tasks, the self-questioning task required students to ask questions before, during, and after reading the instructions and materials. This was part of active reading. For skilled readers, the self-questioning quickly became automated.

Given that students better understand their role and the situation, it is still common for students to make mistakes with pronouns and tone, etc. Prediction making is what active learners go through before reading or listening to a text. This is when they predict what they are going to hear or read. Students predict what vocabulary they may hear, and what emotions the speaker(s) in the audio may feel. They listen to confirm their ideas. It is easier for students to use their prior knowledge to make sense of what they are about to listen to.

The self-questioning task is an example of both assessment for learning and assessment as learning. In addition to students performing the task as a self-check to raise awareness, the teachers were able to make use of the answers provided by students to feed back on the progress of learning and teaching, which helped inform the next step of teaching.

Students in the school who struggle with reading comprehension are often passive readers. They can read and understand vocabulary items at word level but have problems connecting words and sentences to make meaning. Passive readers are unable to visualise what they read and they fail to connect details to people, places and events. Students who struggle with comprehension may read a passage from a text and not be able to recall key points or details. Self-questioning is applied in reading to help students improve through self-checking.

Self-questioning helped the passive readers to become more active by providing directions to their reading. During and after reading the passage, students asked themselves questions. The teachers directed students to read for specific information so that the questions could be answered. High-achieving students and competent readers employed active-reading strategies, such as self-questioning. As a result, they continually reflected on their understanding and employed strategies such as re-reading. By internalising this habit of self-questioning, students were themselves engaging in assessment as learning. They were more aware of the various types of essential information crucial for the thorough understanding of a reading text.

Figure 5: Self-questioning task for reading

Self-questioning: Pre-reading Task

What is the text type?	an email/ an article / a leaflet/ a report/ a proposal
What is the genre?	_____
What is the language and tone?	formal/ semi-formal
Who is the writer?	• _____ • _____
Who are the target audience?	_____
Where is this text likely to be found?	_____
What is the purpose?	_____
Writer's message	_____

S3 students were provided with a set of questions for self-questioning. This set of questions could in general be applied to other texts. The ultimate goal of getting students to work on these self-questions was that they would internalise this framework after repeated practice. This served as a framework to guide students in how the reading of texts should be

approached. Questions on text source, text type, genre, language, tone, purpose of the text and writer's message, etc., were included.

With practice, students were able to familiarise themselves with the above-mentioned elements and thus, better comprehend the text.

As with tackling the listening tasks, the teachers used self-questioning tasks as a self-check to raise students' awareness. They also made use of students' answers to this formative assessment to give feedback on the progress of learning and teaching. Thus, informing the next step of teaching.

3. Note-Taking and Note-Making

The teachers assessed students' learning with the notes they took. Some students had not developed the habit of predicting answers or identifying useful information that might appear before a recording begins. As a formative assessment task, their predictions were checked by the teachers prior to listening to the audio clip.

The teachers guided students in distinguishing the nature of words. Students identified the words with facts and opinions before listening to the recording. This gave the teachers information on whether students had understood the context well enough to proceed, or if (re-) teaching was needed.

Figure 6: A student's note-making

Based on students' notes, the teachers provided feedback to students on whether they were heading to the right direction for predicting and/or expecting the information to be heard in the recording.

4. Use of Graphic Organisers

The teachers made use of graphic organisers as a tool for formative assessment, and to visually present the organisation of the text. When the listening component was a narrative one, a flow chart was adopted. The sequence of events could then be clearly presented to the learners.

Figure 7: A student's work using a graphic organiser
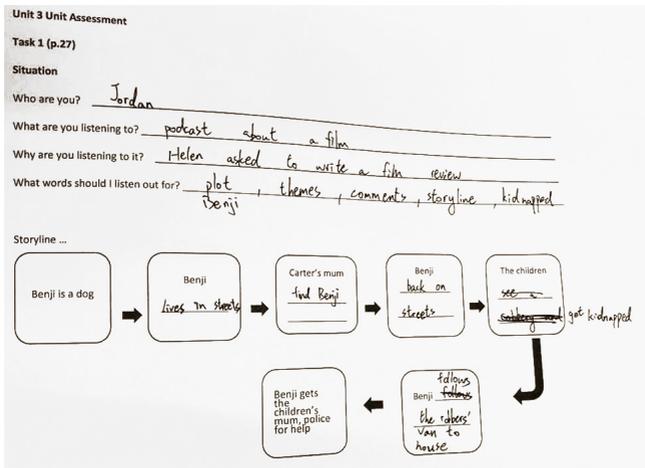
This task was carried out prior to the actual listening to the audio clip. By reading the instructions and questions, students made guesses about the development of the story. When the teachers walked around the classroom and collected information about students' work, they were not looking for correct answers. On the contrary, they were looking for common inaccurate predictions made, after which they provided students with immediate feedback on how the predictions could be made more accurately.

Students were more familiar with the use of a graphic organiser, as they had tried it with listening task(s) in the first semester. In the second semester, the teachers provided only an empty graphic organiser for the reading task. Students had to think of and select important and relevant information for each box.

Figure 8a: A student's work using a graphic organiser

4. How Hannah Brencher started writing letters to strangers:

| felt alone | → | hit by depression and loneliness | → | wanted to reach out to someone | → | she started writing letters |
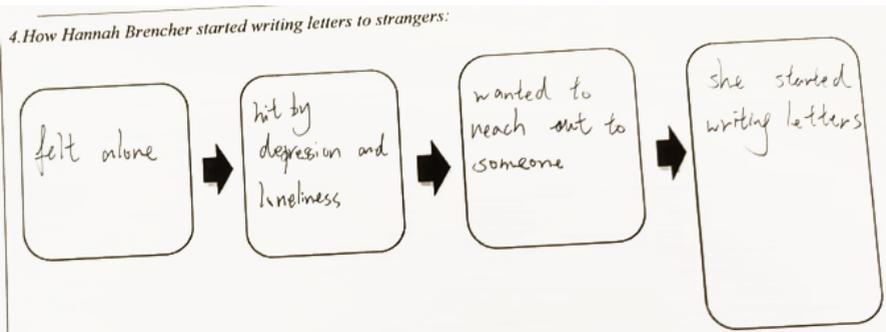
Figure 8b: A student's work using a graphic organiser

4. How Hannah Brencher started writing letters to strangers:

After
① College
↗
= graduation

College → University

② Moved to New York City ~~but~~ ③ was hit by depression and loneliness

Г One day Felt so alone, she wanted to reach out to someone. ⌐

④ She started writing letters Letters to complete strangers
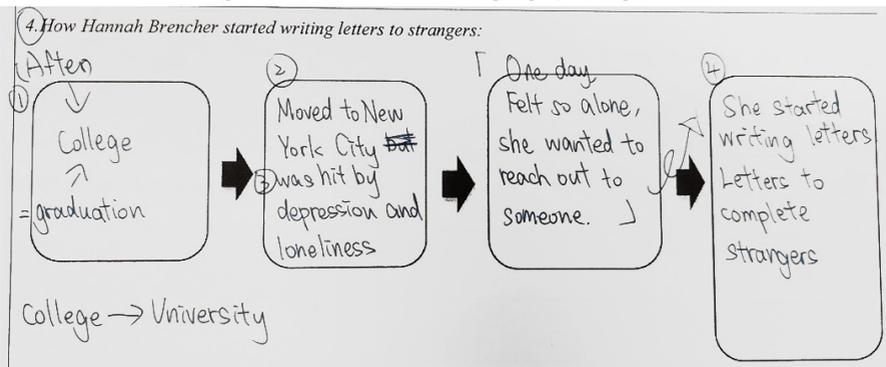
Figure 8c: A student's work using a graphic organiser

4. How Hannah Brencher started writing letters to strangers:

| After graduation, she moved to New York City. | → | She was hit by depression and loneliness. | → | One day, she felt so alone and wanted to reach out to someone. | → | She started writing letters to complete strangers. |
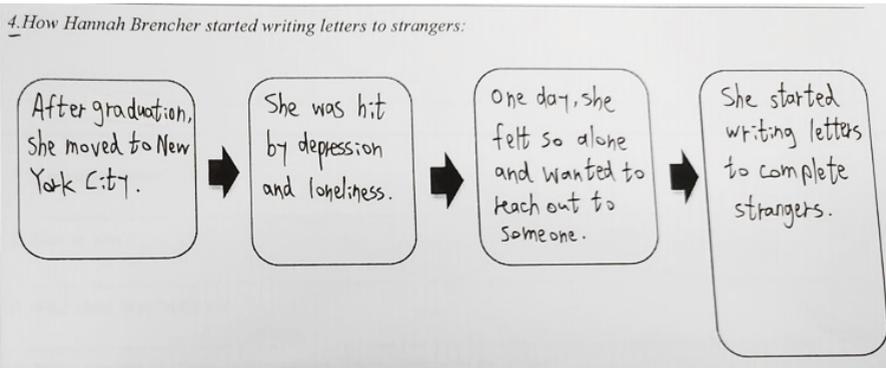
Figure 8d: A student's work using a graphic organiser
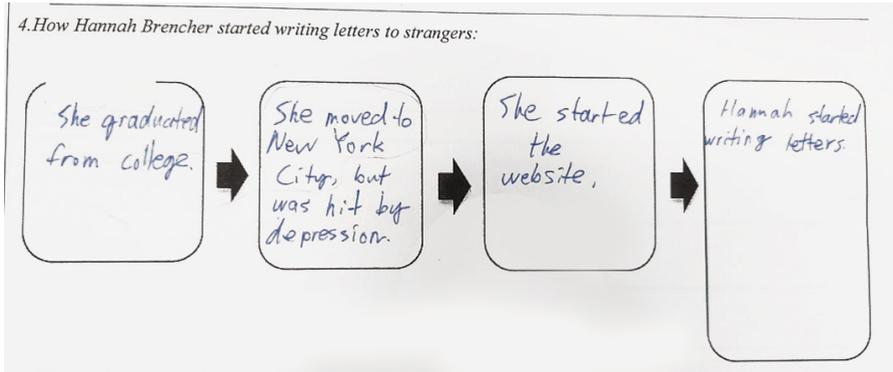
This presented a challenge to students. The teachers spotted many different answers, some of which were less important information that was not supposed to be put in the graphic organiser. This informed the teachers on to what extent students understood the text and were able to identify the important episodes.

5. Backward Planning Model

A backward planning model was applied in the learning and teaching of reading. The learning and teaching goal, i.e., main idea and referencing, were clearly defined right at the beginning of the planning stage.

The learning–teaching–assessment (L-T-A) cycle was strengthened through thorough discussions, follow-up work of adaptation, and trial of new strategies for students to learn about main ideas and references in reading.

The skills to be tested were determined prior to the teaching of the reading skills. See Figure 9 for the questions and testing points set for the pre-test and post-test.

Figure 9: Aligning teaching with the questions and testing points set at the pre-and post-tests

Reading Pre-test Statistics

		Class (No. of Students)	3A	3B	3C	3D
Referencing	Q8	*What does 'they' (line 18) refer to?*				
Referencing	Q11	*What is 'the problem' (line 20)?*				
Main ideas	Q17	*Which of the following is the best alternative title to Text 4?*				

Reading Post-test Statistics

		Class (No. of Students)	3A	3B	3C	3D
Referencing	Q2	*What does 'the exact same thing' (line 3) refer to?*				
Referencing	Q14	*What does 'it' (line 18) refer to?*				
Main ideas	Q16	*Which of the following is the best alternative title for Text 2?*				

Actions Taken

The planning of the collaboration commenced after the whole-school assessment literacy workshop which was conducted in late August 2021.

During the preparation stage, there were discussions on which of the four language learning skills should be chosen as the focus. Listening was selected.

An assessment literary workshop for English teachers only was conducted in late October 2021. At this occasion, assessment that could be further improved at both curriculum and department levels was explored.

With reference to the needs analysis and students' learning needs, reading was chosen as the focus of collaboration for the second semester.

Despite the suspension of the project during the 'special vacation' that took place from March 2022 to April 2022 due to the pandemic, collaborative lesson planning sessions were conducted throughout the academic year.

Lesson observations were conducted in December 2021 and June 2022 and evaluation of the collaboration was conducted in June 2022.

Impact

1. Student Level

The teachers described how the majority of students were rather passive in doing listening tasks, which was due to the fact that they were unfamiliar with the instructions, headings, prompts and choices that were given to help them predict the likely development of the task in hand. Students also had difficulties in predicting the vocabulary that they would be hearing in the recording and in making guesses about the possible answers.

The teachers had done a lot in terms of reading, from recognising the words to understanding the meaning of words in context. When students encountered vocabulary that they did not know of or recognise due to inaccurate decoding, they were likely to skip and move ahead. For students, the more blanks in a line of text, the harder it is to make meaning of the text and the more difficult the reading task becomes. Moreover, students had to identify the main ideas and specific details and make inferences about what they were reading.

With different strategies and tasks being tried out, students were more aware of the task at hand. Many students were seen beginning to develop the habit of keeping a vocabulary list based on the theme-based vocabulary inventory provided by the teachers.

Students were seen to be more aware of contextual clues, and better preparing themselves for the tasks ahead. Students were also more confident in attempting short listening tasks.

Students, the more able ones in particular, were gradually understanding the importance of getting the main idea of each paragraph. They realised how the use of graphic organisers could help them in achieving this.

2. Teacher Level

The collaboration has enhanced the teachers' assessment literacy. The teachers agreed that the use of various formative assessment tasks in the classroom was very useful in informing them about what the next step of teaching should be. Students' performance in the

assessment activities provided useful feedback on learning and teaching. The data collected in this way were more accurate and hence more beneficial than those collected solely by observations during class.

The teachers' feedback and effective modeling of answers increased students' confidence in listening tasks. With their enhanced knowledge and skills in assessment for learning, the teachers placed more focus on providing students with immediate oral feedback during lessons and adjusted their teaching strategies accordingly.

The teachers also became more aware of making learning explicit, and they practised applying different formative assessment tools, which helped cater for diverse learning needs of each class.

It was obvious that the above strategies facilitated students' learning and will be adopted in the future. The teachers are better informed about students' strengths and weaknesses with formative assessment in the classroom carried out.

3. Curriculum Level

The L-T-A cycle has been strengthened. Clear learning goals were set during the planning stage. What students were targeted to achieve, was aligned with the assessment goals. In order to achieve this, the assessment set was aligned with the teaching.

Given the encouraging results seen in the reading tests, the alignment of the written, taught and assessed curriculum will be further strengthened.

There are strategies and tools that can be used in the learning and teaching of both listening and reading.

The use of a vocabulary inventory, for example, has become a regular formative assessment activity in lessons. The teachers found this to be a very useful, yet easy-to-use tool for collecting information about students' learning and providing feedback for their teaching.

The use of graphic organisers as a formative assessment tool will also be included in the planning of the curriculum.

4. Departmental Level and School Level

The English Language Department took this opportunity of collaboration to reflect upon learning and teaching through the use of formative assessment in the classroom.

At the internal dissemination for the entire teaching staff conducted at the end of the academic year, the assessment practices tried out in other subject departments were shared.

Item analysis was tried out in Mathematics Department. Moreover, the provision of immediate feedback to students by engaging them in formative assessments in the classroom were adopted in other subjects.

Way Forward

The collaboration this year has set the wheel in motion for further enhancement of formative assessment.

a. Promotion of the following by the English Language Panel at other levels:

- strengthening of the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment
- formative assessment activities in the classroom to facilitate assessment as learning

b. The use of data to conduct a needs analysis in other subject panels.

c. The use of internal dissemination to share experiences and ideas among different Key Learning Areas.

References

The following books are useful references on assessment literacy:

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests.* Oxford University Press.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning.* Routledge.

Hattie, J., & Clarke, S. (2019). *Visible learning: Feedback.* Routledge.

Regier, N. (2012). *Book two: 60 formative assessment strategies.* Regier Educational Resources. https://portal.gssd.ca/public/mr3xg4k4nrxxq5dvfz4hq5lomq/Lists/SharedDocuments/Assessment/Formative%20Assessment%20Ideas-Natalie%20Regier.pdf

Tileston, D. W. (2004). *What every teacher should know about student assessment.* Corwin Press.

Case 6

Developing and Using Self-Assessments to Help Students Build Better Reading Skills

Lok Sin Tong Leung Chik Wai Memorial School

Developing and Using Self-Assessments to Help Students Build Better Reading Skills

School
Lok Sin Tong Leung Chik Wai Memorial School

Background
Teaching reading in English is undoubtedly important as well-chosen teaching materials can always serve as functional tools that expose learners to how the language is used naturally, purposefully and authentically. In recent years, teaching reading has developed into a high-pressure endeavour, and it has become increasingly apparent that reading ability is crucial in determining the opportunities for getting better grades in examinations and securing university places. Therefore, efforts to teach reading, set standards and measure performance reflect and add to the pressure.

This article describes how the teachers of Lok Sin Tong Leung Chik Wai Memorial School improved their students' willingness and ability to read by designing a worksheet that served the purposes of self-assessing and self-learning. The teachers added a Help Corner to the worksheet, which provided students with additional support for practising code-breaking, using contextual clues, recognising genre features and making meaning with the text. By observing students' responses and learning outputs, the teachers identified students' learning difficulties and adjusted their teaching plans accordingly.

Level
Secondary 3

Strategies Used

1. Understanding Assessment

Assessment should be an ongoing process that helps teachers make decisions and helps learners see that they are making progress (Curriculum Development Council, 2009 & 2017). In addition to practising assessment of learning that aims at judging and reporting on students' achievements, teachers are also encouraged to promote *assessment for learning,* which gathers information for instruction evaluation purposes so that learning and teaching can be adapted to meet learners' needs (Wiliam, 2011). The revision of the reading worksheet design upheld the fundamental principles of assessment and reflected the teachers' understanding and determination to foster *assessment for learning* in the classroom. The reading worksheets were designed to guide learning and teaching rather than evaluating learners alone. The new design also served the purposes of *assessment as learning*, as it allowed students to seek progress and guidance and evaluate their own performance by checking their answers against the prompts and success criteria that the teachers had written especially for them.

2. Modelling and Supporting the Process of Comprehending

'Reading is an extremely complex process' (Roe & Smith, 2005, p. 9). It is regarded as an act that 'demands complex sets of responses – some of them cognitive, some attitudinal, and some manipulative' (Downing, 1982, p. 535). In the past, *comprehension* was treated as something that a reader *'has'*, and it was practised in workbooks and tested by questions at the end of a story rather than being taught (Durkin, 1978-1979). However, reading teachers today are urged to guide students through *'comprehending,* which is now regarded as an *action*, something that a reader *does'* (Rycik & Irvin, 2005, p. 19). It is believed that the focus of instruction and assessment should be on comprehending, not just comprehension.

Since comprehending is a 'mysterious process' that 'could not be observed or explained' (Rycik & Irvin, 2005, p. 19), helping teachers understand the role of comprehending in reading and designing learning and teaching materials that get students to practise the skills of directing and evaluating their own process of comprehending are key to teaching reading. The lesson plans and worksheets were created to help struggling learners gain success. They guided the reading teachers in how to model comprehension skills as well as explicitly teaching what students needed to do to put things together to make sense of the reading material and providing additional support that facilitated students in practising the skills on their own, both inside and outside the classroom.

3. Connecting Assessment with Scaffolding

To create the necessary scaffolds that provide enough guidance for students to read a text with greater success and lay the groundwork for reading independently in the future, teachers need to identify what students can do on their own and what they might be able to do with some additional help. It takes effort to assess carefully the background knowledge and related vocabulary that students possess for reading a particular text. It is also important for teachers to go through relevant assessment data before planning for instruction (Dann, 2002; Stobart, 2014). Most crucially, teachers should communicate with students that it is natural to encounter difficulties while reading and that there are steps that readers can take to tackle these difficulties (Rycik & Irvin, 2005).

Scaffolding learning by incorporating questions that guide students to think aloud, including self-questioning, self-assessing and self-confirming, is significant to proficient reading. Such questions may guide students to (1) activate background knowledge, (2) use knowledge about language and reading to construct meaning, (3) monitor and recognise when difficulties occur, and (4) seek help in identifying repair strategies to correct problems.

4. Aligning Assessment with Learning Objectives and Instructional Strategies

Assessments should be developed to reveal how well students achieve the intended learning outcomes through the adopted instruction. For this to occur, teachers must ask themselves the following questions to ensure that assessments, learning objectives, and instructional strategies reinforce one another:

a. Learning objectives:

- What do I want students to know/do at the end of the lesson?

b. Assessments:

- How can students reveal whether they have achieved the learning objectives?
- What kinds of tasks/questions would I use to make students display their learning?

c. Instructional strategies:

- What kinds of activities, in and out of class, will help students achieve the learning objectives and prepare them for the assessments?

Teachers should also document their responses to these questions to ensure the curriculum alignment, both horizontally and vertically.

Actions Taken

The description of uncommitted and unmotivated English learners given by the teachers suggested that reading instruction in their classrooms needed to address both students' will and skills to read. Therefore, the scaffolding learning activities that were designed to promote engagement went beyond supporting the comprehension of particular texts to address the development of independent readers over the long term, aiming at achieving the following.

a. Increasing will

Announce to students what they are going to read. Show understanding of their reluctance to read and their avoidance of reading, as the reading task is unlikely to be interesting to teenagers, and it may seem to have little use. Alert students to the difficulties that they may encounter. Explain what the reading passage is about and the efforts required to accomplish the task. Provide the readers with good reasons to believe that their effort will pay off. By doing so, the students are more likely to persist in the task when they encounter difficulties.

b. Developing skills

Add a Help Corner (See Appendix 1) filled with questions and prompts to guide students through the process of comprehending so that they consciously connect their previous knowledge and experiences of reading to their new ones. Such guided questions should facilitate students in performing the following strategies.

- Activating background knowledge by thinking about what is already known about the reading material.
- Continually making predictions about what is being read.
- Sounding out the difficult words.
- Using contextual clues and other textual aids (e.g., diagrams, charts, bold print) to answer the *literal questions*, to which answers can be located directly in the text.
- Inferring information that is not directly stated in the text by drawing on students' prior knowledge or by connecting each new piece of information found in the text.
- Asking whether there is a particular word or concept that can solve the confusion.
- Using fix-up strategies when confused (e.g., slow down, reread, read ahead, and get help).

QSIP-CEAL(2021/22) Case 6

The teaching plan below (Table 1) shows the learning objectives and classroom activities that guided the students through reading a new text after some theme vocabulary was taught.

Table 1

Secondary 3 English Module 2: Animal Conservation			
Lesson	Learning Points / Objectives	Classroom Activities	Resources/ Materials
1-3	**Reading** ◇ To recap the thematic vocabulary learned ◇ To develop independent reading skills so that students learn to be a good reader Target reading skills to practise: ❖ predicting what to read ❖ connecting text with previous knowledge about the topic ❖ inferring the meaning of unknown words - identifying main ideas ❖ identifying tone and mood	**Preparation work** ◇ Conduct a vocabulary recap activity to strengthen students' (ss) 　❖ memory of pronunciation and meanings 　❖ word association ◇ Announce to ss that they are doing reading comprehension, and familiarise them with commonly used question words/phrases. ◇ Give out the worksheet. Assign ss to read the instruction and the two titles ALOUD. Guide ss to predict what they are going to read. 　❖ For lower divisions, consider the following: 　　▶ completing the first few questions with ss to model the reading and thinking processes; practising prediction and thinking-aloud while skimming the title, picture and topic sentences 　　▶ explicitly demonstrating vocabulary inferencing and thinking-aloud and practising this with ss ◇ Introduce the target reading skills to practise. Draw ss' attention to the related questions and the wording used.	◇ Vocabulary list / worksheet ◇ Reading Worksheet ◇ PPT
	◇ To check answers with peers ◇ To justify answers by stating contextual clues ◇ To play a more active role in class by informing the teacher (T) of the assistance they need	**While-reading (Part 1)** ◇ Assign ss to read the passages SILENTLY and complete the worksheet **without using the dictionary. Assure ss of their ability** to finish 80% of the questions. Remind ss to apply and connect what they are reading with the other texts and the previous knowledge they gained about the topic. ◇ Ask ss to refer to the Help Corner whenever they need a clue. 　❖ For upper divisions, challenge ss to fold up the worksheet to hide the Help Corner.	Reading Worksheet

Lesson	Learning Points / Objectives	Classroom Activities	Resources/ Materials

1-3		❖ For lower divisions, divide the worksheets into sections to cater for ss abilities and attention span.
		
		◇ Ask ss to label the questions that they find challenging.
		
		While-reading (Part 2)
		
		◇ Assign ss to check their answers to selected questions with their partners. Make sure that ss point out the clues that they have used, especially when discrepancies occur.
		
		◇ For less able groups, demonstrate the student-student (S-S) dialogues and then drill ss in practicing them.
		
		    ❖ Some useful expressions ss may use while checking answers with one another.
		
		    S1: Let's check the answer.
		
		    S2: Sure! My answer for (Question 1) is _____. And yours? / What's yours?
		
		    S1: The same. I got it because of the word / phrase _____.
		
		    S2: The next one. Mine is _____. I am not sure.
		
		    S1: I think the answer is _____. Look at line _____. It says _____.
		
		    S2: I see.
		
		    S1: But I may not be correct. Let's wait for Miss/Mr _____'s explanation.
		
		◇ When the S-S exchange is complete, encourage ss to raise questions.
		
		◇ Explain the difficult questions before showing ss the model answers.
		
		◇ Acknowledge ss' efforts, assuring them of their ability to read independently and get the main ideas of the passage. Tell ss that their performance provides T with more information for planning the next lesson.
		
		◇ Assign ss to *reread* the passage and complete the questions on another worksheet as homework. Emphasise that with their understanding gained from their first reading, they will surely get the answers to all the questions.
		
		◇ Assign ss to check answers with their peers in the following lessons by going through the steps regarding peer-check and seeking explanations from T again.	

Lesson	Learning Points / Objectives	Classroom Activities	Resources/ Materials
4-5	◇ To recognise the features of an article ◇ To learn and use the vocabulary and expressions to describe protecting endangered animals	**Post-reading** ◇ Go through the main ideas of the text. ◇ Show ss the performance data. Announce the questions and difficulties to be explained. Acknowledge ss' effort, and tell them that their performance and responses have provided more information for lesson planning. ◇ Explain the difficult questions. Show the data on using the Help Corner and evaluate its helpfulness with ss before showing the model answers. Use student work as far as possible as teaching materials. Guide ss to improve their work. ◇ Remind ss **not to rub off the answers of their first-attempt** so that they can learn more by comparing their answers with the model answers. ◇ Highlight target vocabulary and sentence patterns. Teach usage and pronunciation using ppts. ◇ Assign ss to reread the passage and complete extra questions on another worksheet as homework. Emphasise that with their understanding gained from their first reading, they should be able to get the answers to all the questions.	

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate some of the questions written to guide students into practising think-aloud.

Figure 1

Figure 2

The reading worksheets written to accompany the lessons are appended to this article (Appendix 1). The Google Forms version is shared via the link and QR code below.

https://forms.gle/cuU4Rwx9L4vEspK59 ▶

Impact

1. Student Level

What often takes place in the classrooms is either smart students answering all the questions or teachers answering their own questions. Using a worksheet consisting of questions and prompts especially created to facilitate independent reading, think-aloud and self-assessment allowed every student to read and answer the questions with support before the model answers were given (Figure 3). Even passive and less able learners were more on task because they were arranged to be part of the learning process instead of just being spectators.

While students were urged to observe, self-question and exchange their thoughts and ideas, their misunderstandings and misconceptions were exposed during the process. At this moment, they were playing the role of not only learners but also contributors as they were informing their teachers of the instruction to adopt to address their learning needs.

Figure 3

PEER-CHECKING GUIDELINES

- When you finish, do the following.

1. Check the answer to each question with your neighbour.

2. If your answer is not the same as your neighbour's, circle the question number.

3. If you think your answer is better than your neighbour's, convince him/her to make changes. Point out the clue(s) you have used to get the answer.

4. Do corrections after peer-checking.

5. Which question(s) do you want your teacher to explain further? Write the question number(s) below.

- _____

2. Teacher Level

Creating the reading comprehension worksheet in Google Forms allowed students' performance data to be collected quickly, and such data assisted the teachers in identifying both the students' potential and the challenges that struggling learners were facing. Therefore, the teachers could provide supplemental explanations and resources proactively to improve the chances of learning success (Figures 4 to 6).

Figure 4
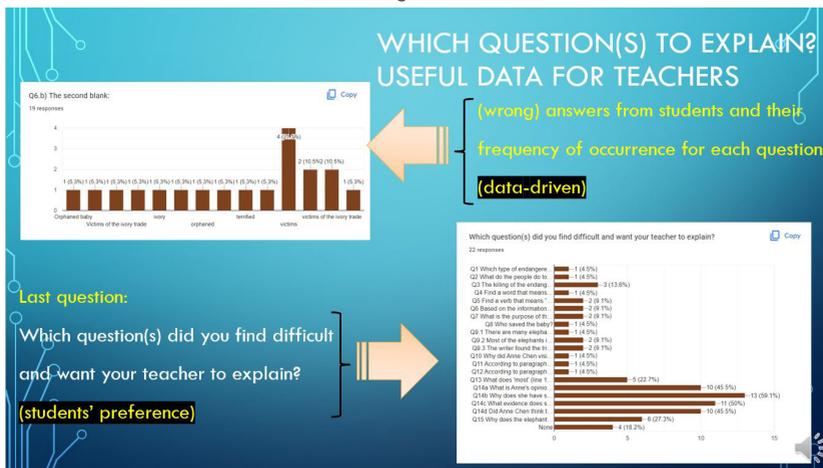
Figure 5
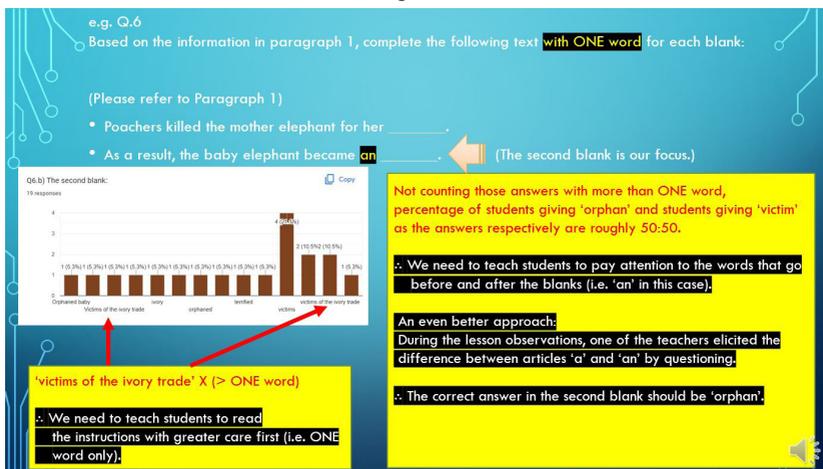
Figure 6

SKILLFUL ELICITATION DISPLAYED BY TEACHER(S)

6. Based on the information in paragraph 1, complete the following text with ONE word for each blank:

Poachers killed the mother elephant for her _____. result, the baby elephant became an _____. N

Imagine a sunny day at a nature reserve in Kenya. A huge adult elephant is playing with her tiny baby. Twenty-four hours later, the terrified baby is found by park workers beside her mother's dead body. Poachers have cruelly   hacked off the mother's valuable   ivory   tusks.   Both the mother and orphaned baby have become victims of the ivory trade.

'[O]rphaned' is an adjective but the second blank requires a noun.

The correct answer is 'orphan', not 'victim'.

However, 'orphaned' is an adjective in the passage. After noticing that a vowel should follow the article 'an', students also need to have the awareness to change the parts of speech.

The following details were elicited:

- After 'an', it should be a noun (As there is a full stop after the blank and only ONE word is needed, adj. is not an option.)

- After 'an', it should be a singular & countable noun.

- After 'an', it should be a vowel (not necessarily the letters a/e/i/o/u).

The teachers demonstrated a stronger sense of mission that drove them to continually motivate students to improve their reading skills, especially in terms of making inferences and using their previous and newly acquired knowledge. They have gained more confidence and expertise in creating prompts that guide students to think aloud, and they were happy to see how the reading worksheets enabled them to visualise students' learning processes and progress (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7

TEACHERS' REFLECTION

- It was a good teaching experience.
  (first time teaching an online reading lesson based on concrete learning evidence gathered on Google Forms)

- Some very weak students did not understand certain words that appeared in the questions, so they could not get the correct answers even with the use of Help Corner.
  (Solution: provide a glossary of crucial words, mainly **the non-guessable ones**, in advance)

- It is helpful to guide students to 'think aloud' (i.e., stating each step of the thinking process that helps students to locate the answer in Help Corner.) The worksheet allowed the teacher to visualise the learning process and progress.

Figure 8

A RECAP OF BENEFITS (CLASSROOM LEVEL):

- Assessment for Learning (AfL)
  (teachers gather information about student learning from Google Forms to
  inform teaching and provide timely feedback to students)
- data-driven (well-informed by assessment data)
- think-aloud
  (design focused instruction to explicitly teach strategies to address students' areas of
  weaknesses in Help Corner; provide opportunities for focused and selective feedback
  by teachers)
- time-saving (no need to ask students in class what they don't understand)
- developing autonomy in learning, catering for learner diversity and promoting self-
  directed learning (students can choose when to use Help Corner / whether to use Help
  Corner)
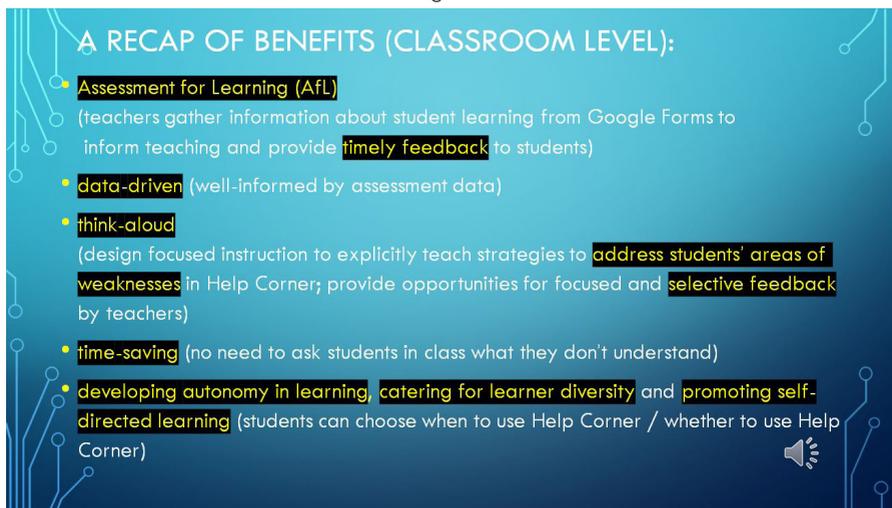
3. Curriculum Level

The graded approach adopted by the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) gives candidates a choice regarding which optional part of the paper, divided into B1 (Easy) & B2 (Difficult), best matches their ability without any labelling effect. The use of statistical equating ensures that candidates taking different parts of the examination receive comparable scores. As the school-based 'Marking-Up B2' policy encourages additional statistical adjustment of candidates' scores to reward their efforts in answering more complex questions, it is expected that more and more students will opt for B2. This also indicates an increasing demand for teachers' help and support to improve students' comprehension. The Head of the Department stated that the teaching strategy of creating a reading worksheet with a Help Corner that guides students to make inferences independently will continue to be developed, and it will even be extended to the senior secondary curriculum.

Way Forward

To equip junior secondary students with the language knowledge and skills necessary for use and study at the senior secondary level, teachers need to raise their awareness of the importance of planning the curriculum systematically and progressively, as well as

developing the necessary skills to do so. For this reason, it is hoped that the English teachers will use the knowledge and insights gained from Workshop 2 conducted by the QSIP-CEAL team, featuring assessment tools and data analysis, when they review and refine the reading curriculum and assessment policies shortly.

References

Curriculum Development Council. (2009). *Senior secondary curriculum guide- The future is now: From vision to realisation (Secondary 4-6).* HKSAR Government Logistics Department.

Curriculum Development Council. (2017). *Secondary education curriculum guide, Booklet 2 Learning goals, school curriculum framework and planning.* HKSAR Government Logistics Department.

Dann, R. (2002). *Promoting assessment as learning: Improving the learning process.* Routledge Falmer.

Downing, J. (1982). Reading – Skill or skills? *The Reading Teacher, 35*(5), 534-537.

Durkin, D. (1978-1979). What classroom observations reveal about comprehension instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly, 14*(4), 481-533.

Roe, B. D., & Smith, S. H. (2005). *Teaching reading in today's middle schools.* Houghton Mifflin Company.

Rycik, J. A., & Irvin, J. L. (2005). *Teaching reading in the middle grades: Understanding and supporting literacy development.* Allyn & Bacon.

Stobart. G. (2014). What is 21st century learning – and what part does classroom assessment play? In Assessment & Support Team (Ed.), *Assessment & Learning (Issue 3)* (pp. 1-14). Education Bureau, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Wiliam, D. (2011). *Embedded formative assessment.* Solution Tree Press.

Lok Sin Tong Leung Chik Wai Memorial School
S3 English – Reading
Endangered Animals (Paragraphs 1 to 3)

Name: _____ Class: _____ Class No.: _____ Date:_____

Text 1: Ivory orphans					
Paragraph		Question	Help Corner	Help Corner Used?	
1	1	Which type of endangered animals is mentioned in the article? ____elephants____	The picture can give you some clues.	☐ Yes	☐ No
1	2	What do the people do to the elephants? (One word) ____hunt/kill____	The line / small words below the title can help you: African elephants **are hunted** for their tusks.	☐ Yes	☐ No
1	3	The killing of the endangered animal: Where: __at a nature reserve in Kenya__ When: ___on a sunny day___	When – date/time Where – place	☐ Yes	☐ No
1	4	Find a word that means a group of people who catch and kill the animals. ____poachers____	A noun ends in -er, -or, -ist always indicate a person.	☐ Yes	☐ No
1	5	Find a verb that means 'cut' in the paragraph. ____hacked____	Step 1: Look for a sentence describing an act of cutting/killing. Step 2: Look for a verb in that sentence which means 'cut'.	☐ Yes	☐ No
1	6	Based on the information in paragraph 1, complete the following text with ONE word for each blank: Poachers killed the mother elephant for her ___ivory / tusks___. As a result, the baby elephant became an ___orphan___.	The first blank: Step 1 Revisit the sentence below. *Poachers have cruelly hacked off the mother's valuable ivory tusks.*	☐ Yes	☐ No

Paragraph		Question	Help Corner	Help Corner Used?	
			Step 2		
			Remove all the adjectives and adverbs in the sentence. The sentence will become an S + V + O structure:		
			Poachers have hacked off the mother's ivory tusks.		
			Step 3		
			Now think about: Why do the people kill the mother elephant? For what? Which should be the keyword to put down?		
			The second blank:		
			Step 1		
			The question is asking "When a baby's mother dies, what will the baby become?" As '**an**' is used before the answer, look for an **adjective** that **starts with 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o' or 'u'**. Make sure it is used for describing a baby elephant.		
			Step 2		
			Turn the adjective into a noun.		
1	7	What is the purpose of the writer in paragraph 1? Choose the best answer: A. To describe the elephant's life in the nature reserve. B. To entertain the readers with a story of the elephants. C. To explain the jobs of the workers at the nature reserve. D. To alarm the readers by the sad life of the elephants.	A writer's purpose is his/her reason for writing = Why does the writer write this article? The first and/ or the last lines of the last paragraph always give a hint: Also, look for words used in the paragraph that describe the situation of the elephants: ◇ terrified baby ◇ dead mother ◇ cruelly	☐ Yes	☐ No
2	8	Who saved the baby? a rescue team (from the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust)	Read the passive structure of the first sentence: The baby was saved by	☐ Yes	☐ No

Paragraph		Question	Help Corner	Help Corner Used?
2	9	Decide if the following statements are **true (T), false (F),** or if the information is **not given (NG)** in paragraph 2 by putting a tick (✓) in the correct column. 	Statements	T	F	NG
a. Most of the elephants in Kenya are saved by the rescue team.		✓	
b. The writer found the trip touching.	✓				a. If the elephants are lucky enough, they can be saved by the rescue team. Are they lucky in Kenya? b. Step 1 – Read the last line and underline 'not only... but also...' ... not only ... but also = and e.g., *He is not only rich, but also kind.* = He is rich and kind. Step 2 - Are 'touching' and 'moving' synonyms of each other? Look at this example: e.g., touched and moved *I am touched/moved by your help.*	☐ Yes ☐ No
2	10	Why did Anne Chen visit the orphanage? to take photos for an exhibition on endangered animals.	The 'to-infinitive' part usually tells us the reason / purpose / aim / objective.	☐ Yes ☐ No
2	11	According to paragraph 2, what happens to most other baby elephants affected by the ivory trade? They die alone in the wild.	Step 1 In the question, 'most other baby elephants' refer to baby elephants who are **not s_____** by a rescue team. And, what happens to these unlucky baby elephants? If you still cannot get the answer, go to Step 2. Step 2 ◇ Read lines 7-8 'However, many other elephants are not so lucky and die alone in the wild.'	☐ Yes ☐ No
3	12	According to paragraph 3, how did Anne get to know the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust? from a friend	Read the first sentence in paragraph 3.	☐ Yes ☐ No
3	13	What does 'most' (line 15) refer to? most zoos	The dash '—' is usually used to give the definition of the noun before the dash. Circle the noun that appears in front of the dash '—' in the sentence. Remember, 'most' is always used with plural nouns. Now add 's' or 'es' to make it a plural noun.	☐ Yes ☐ No

Paragraph		Question	Help Corner	Help Corner Used?	
3	14	a) What is Anne's opinion on zoos? She is against zoos. / She dislikes zoos.	Revisit lines 14-15, 'I was concerned it would be like a zoo…' ◇ What is a synonym for the word "concerned"? (Circle your answer.) 〔 pleased ∣ worried 〕 ◇ What are we often concerned about? (Circle your answer.) 〔 a happy news ∣ a problem 〕 ◇ We (like / dislike) happy news. 　We (like / dislike) a problem. ◇ To express an opinion, we can say We like it = we are for it. 🙂 We dislike it = we are against it. 🙁	☐ Yes	☐ No
		b) Why does she have such an opinion? It is because she thinks zoos are more focused on attracting visitors than caring for the animals.	Revisit the sentence in lines 14-16 'I was concerned it would be like a zoo — most are more focused on attracting visitors than caring for the animals.' A dash '—' is also used here to give an explanation for the action or belief before the dash. So, the part after the dash '—' is the reason why the writer has such an opinion.	☐ Yes	☐ No
		c) What evidence does she give to show her strong opinion? She says she would have left the orphanage if it was like a zoo.	<u>Step 1</u> In the question, 'evidence', means a fact that supports an opinion. <u>Step 2</u> (1) Look for a sentence in which the writer talks about her personal experience or reaction. This is always how they elaborate an idea or justify an opinion. (2) This kind of sentence always consists of personal pronouns like "I" and "me". (3) Conditional sentences 'If …., ….' are one of the ways to express an opinion.	☐ Yes	☐ No

Paragraph		Question	Help Corner	Help Corner Used?
3	14	d)* Did Anne Chen think it was alright to visit the elephant orphanage? Why? Yes, she felt it was alright to visit the elephant orphanage because the animals were treated with tremendous care // because all contact between visitors and orphans is carefully overseen by the staff.	Step 1 Look at lines 14-15: I was concerned it would be like a zoo. - 'concerned' means 'worried' (-) - 'it' means 'the elephant orphanage' (line 13) ∴ At first, the writer thought it was NOT okay to visit the elephant orphanage IF IT WAS THE SAME AS THE ZOO. BUT Step 2 Look at lines 16-18: 'If that had been true, I would have left immediately.' Which type of conditional sentence is this? What does it indicate? Circle your answers. a real action / an imaginary action a past action / a future action Step 3 Find out if the following is true: The elephant orphanage is like a zoo. - So, is it okay to visit the zoo now? Yes/No (Lines 18 to 19 give you the answer – 'I needn't have worried though') Step 4 Anne needs NOT have worried. Why? Look for the reasons in lines 19-22.	☐ Yes ☐ No
3	15	Why does the elephant orphanage allow visitors to see the elephants for one hour only? (lines 20-21) to make sure the elephants get enough rest // to avoid disturbing elephants too much	If you were the elephants, would you like to get more rest? Or would you like to see humans all the time? The elephant orphanage would like to make sure the elephants get what they want.	☐ Yes ☐ No

Contact Us

Teachers interested in knowing more about QSIP are welcome to contact us.

General Enquiry

Tel :   3943 5050

Fax :   2603 7551

Email :   qsip@cuhk.edu.hk

Website: https://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/qsip/

Address: Rm 712, Sino Building, Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research,

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Sha Tin, N.T.