

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

QSIP-CEAL 2020/21

A Collection of School-based Examples

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Quality School Improvement Project



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This publication showcases six school-based teacher development projects implemented under QSIP-CEAL in the 2020/21 school year. The positive changes described in the school cases are a result of the collective efforts of the schools which have participated in the collaboration. QSIP would like to extend a special vote of thanks to the principals and teachers for their generous sharing of their school-based experiences. Their achievements in actualising assessment for learning, and establishing a self-improving mechanism conducive to on-going school improvement as well, are highly commendable.



About QSIP-CEAL

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

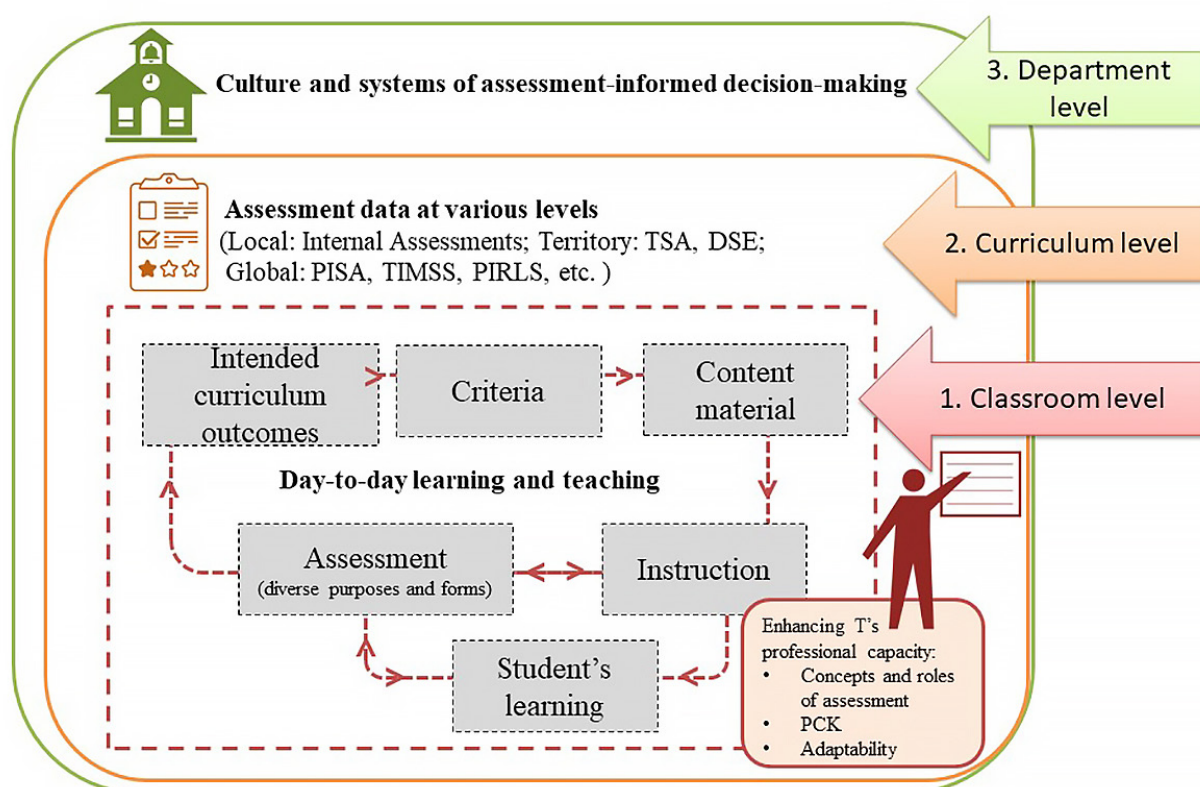
QSIP-CEAL is one of the initiatives implemented by the Quality School Improvement Project (QSIP), an organisation established under the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, which aims to build professional capacity for comprehensive school improvement. The 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 been operated under the programme, the Quality Education Fund Thematic Networks-Tertiary Institutes (QTN-T), since September 2019.

Objectives of the Project

In the 2020/21 school year, QSIP-CEAL provided professional school-based support to three primary schools and three secondary schools with the goals of:

- equipping English teachers, along with the entire teaching staff of schools, with knowledge, skills and attitudes which build 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 at both classroom and curriculum levels in English Language; and
- empowering students to engage themselves in self-assessment practices to monitor and regulate their own individual learning.

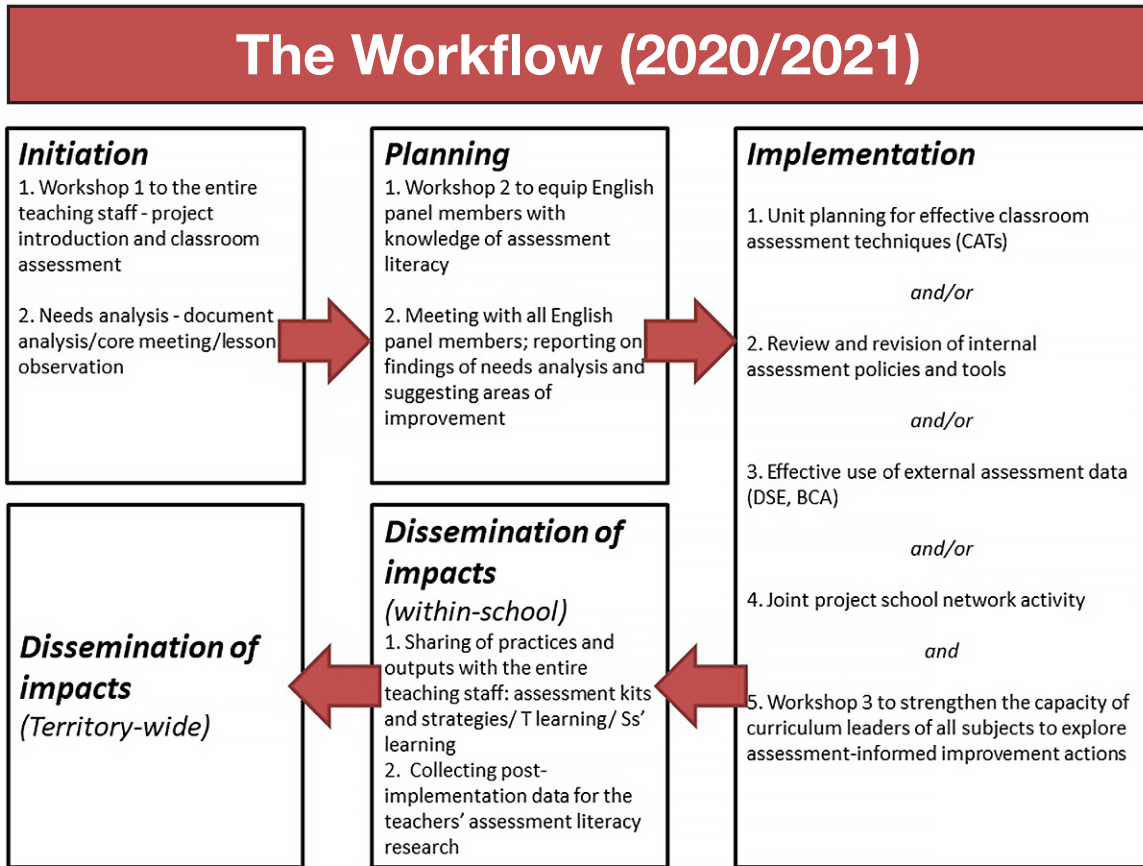
Adhering to the philosophy of comprehensive school improvement, the Project led curriculum and instructional leaders through change. Tailor-made on-site professional support for assessment design and implementation were provided based on needs analysis and progress review, delivering a multi-level focus on: (1) Classroom level, (2) Curriculum level and (3) Department level.



Professional Training Activities

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

The Project Workflow:



The three designated school-based workshops:

- Assessment Literacy for ALL Teachers
- Analysis of Assessment Tools – The What, Why and How for English Teachers
- Assessment Literacy for Curriculum Leaders

Participating Schools for 2020/21

Catholic Mission School
 Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School
 Stewards Pooi Kei Primary School
 Kiangsu-Chekiang College (Shatin)
 PAOC Ka Chi Secondary School
 Tin Shui Wai Methodist College

CASE 1

Formative Assessments: Practices and Techniques in the Virtual Classroom

Catholic Mission School

Formative Assessments: Practices and Techniques in the Virtual Classroom

School

Catholic Mission School

Background

It is generally accepted that using formative assessment in the classroom is a requisite component of learning and teaching. Data collected from formative assessments helps teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. It then will assist the teacher to adjust or revise the lesson plan and give the students advice on how to improve their work (Prinsloo & Van Rooyen, 2003).

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers are required to conduct online lessons occasionally – but not all teachers feel fully prepared to meet this sudden challenge especially as traditional knowledge checks are no longer as easy as they are in the physical classroom. Teachers are then in search of new tools to face difficulties they have not faced before.

Based on the belief that keeping formative assessment in their online classes is essential to help support learning during the learning process, P4 English teachers at Catholic Mission School decided to update their teaching tool kits so as to assist them to achieve internationally accepted goals that teachers around the world share, for example, encouraging student engagement and exploring ways to utilise formative assessment in their virtual classroom. To address such an immediate need, the teachers introduced a series of strategies to collect instant student feedback in an effective way in order to guide instruction.

The aim of this article is to present the relevant learning activities arranged and illustrate how students achieved the desired learning outcomes.

Level

Primary 4

Strategies Used

With the intention of conducting formative assessment effectively in the virtual classroom, the team of teachers adopted the following strategies :

1. Using Student Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

As Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999) states 'Assessment is today's means of modifying tomorrow's instruction', pre-assessment is important for teachers to plan their lessons as it gives information about what is already known about a topic. In order to check students' prior knowledge of using modal verb 'should' and 'should not' to give advice, a pre-lesson task was assigned to students. Students were asked to give advice for one scenario without any teaching. Teachers could read each of the response closely, and informed students of the next step of designing the learning content. Teachers chose an e-learning tool for students to work on their pre-task as it enabled teachers to connect the task with the learning activities in online lesson together.

Example 1A

Mr. So would like to go to a movie while he hasn't finished marking the dictation. Give him one advice to solve his problem

Please type your name as well...

Students use "imperatives/can" before the lesson

Anonymous 4mo
 Ethan Alshabi
 Mr So can watch the movie on another day since the dictation is more important than the movie
 2
 Add comment

Anonymous 4mo
 Austin Shadiq
 Mr So can mark dictation before or after the movie, that way he finishes both the tasks.
 2
 Add comment

Anonymous 4mo
 Victor G. Esangin
 1) Watch the movie on Netflix and mark the dictation books at home.
 2) Watch the movie tomorrow night and mark the dictation books on the current day at school 📚.
 3) Ask Miss Luo to help. (Remember to get her a gift 🎁, such as a ring!)
 emergency use
 4) Ask me for help!
 3
 1 comment
 Anonymous 4mo Crazy
 Add comment

Anonymous 4mo
 Lily Thompson
 1) watch the movie in the evening and mark the dictation in the afternoon.
 2) ask Ms Lou to help you mark the dictation.
 3) ask Ms Lou to help mark half of the dictation.
 4) Mr so should not go to see a movie
 2
 1 comment
 Anonymous 4mo nice work lily

Anonymous 4mo
 mark it when you finish the movie or tmr or you can do it when you get home
 1
 1 comment
 Anonymous 4mo You did great

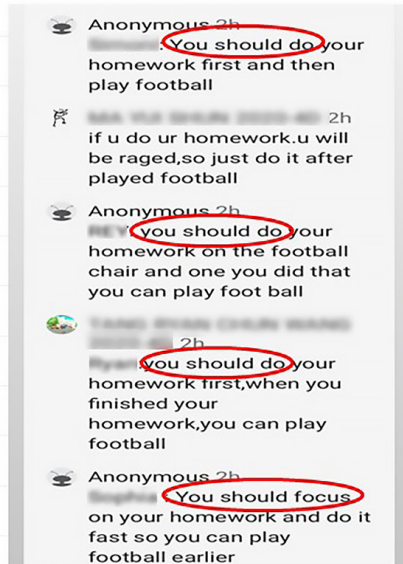
Anonymous 4mo
 Ethan Alshabi
 Mr So can finish marking the dictation very fast and then he will have time to go to the movie. Or Mr So can watch the movie on another because the Dictation is more important than the movie.
 2
 Add comment

Anonymous 4mo
 Mark the dictation first
 1
 Add comment

Based on the student performance shown in Example 1, the teachers found that students had no idea about the topic 'Using should and should not to give advice'. Most of them used 'imperatives' and 'can' instead, which are both inappropriate. The former indicates the state of commanding and the latter is used to express ability, possibility, permission, request and offer. Assessing prior knowledge like this allows the teachers to understand the needs of students and plan their instructions accordingly. Explicit explanation of the use of 'should/should not' to give advice was then given in the lesson.

Example 1B

Students' good work



The vast majority of students were able to use "should" to give advice during the lesson.

The basic objective aim achieved (See screenshot)

We did some extension work...

"I recommend ____ (ing)

2) why don't you...?)

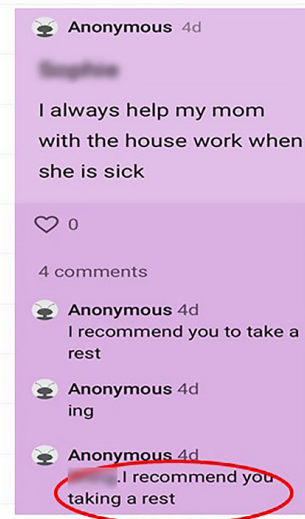
3) if I were you, I would...

T's comment:

Good: Extra grammar points; many were able to use them.

Immediately presented a diverse range of ability, but catered through choice

Could've differentiated more on the lesson objectives



After receiving exposure to the target language, students were asked to rewrite their advice (Example 1B). Based on the work of students, the teacher realised that students were able to use 'should' and 'should not' correctly. The teacher then made a qualitative data-driven decision. They introduced some other expressions of giving advice, such as 'I recommend...', 'Why don't you....' and 'If I were you, I would....' to enhance students' English ability.

Example 1C

Consolidation: Homework

E-learning Game

We _____ smoke because smoking is bad for our health.

A should B should not

You should not _____ too much fast food.

A eats B ate C eating D eat

Should we _____ a bike without a helmet?

A rode B rides C ride D to ride

Result 7 for 'Should or shouldn't'

ASSIGNMENT QUIZ 16 Mar 11:26 No deadline 10 (11) All Best First wordwall.net/play/12668/431466

Summary



Using data to improve instruction

Results by question

Question	Correct	Incorr...
1▶ Jack cannot focus in the online lesson. He _____ turn off the Youtube function in his digital device.	10	0
2▶ The COVID-19 situation is serious, we _____ wear a mask when we go out.	10	0
3▶ If you have fever, you _____ go to school.	10	0
4▶ We _____ bully the others.	10	0
5▶ You _____ click the raise hand button before you want to share your opinion in the online lesson.	10	0
6▶ You _____ turn on your camera during the online lesson.	10	0
7▶ You _____ keep on jumping around in the classroom.	10	0
8▶ Mary gains a lot of weight during the school suspension period, she _____ do more exercise to keep fit.	10	0
9▶ We should _____ more vegetable in each meal.	9	1
10▶ We should _____ the door before we get into the classroom.	10	0

Results by student

Student	Submitted	Correct	Incorrect	Time
Arianna	11:36 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	1:11
Micah	11:36 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	1:20
Agnes	11:36 - 16 Mar 2021	9	1	1:18
Arnya b	11:36 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	1:28
Jessica Liu	11:36 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	1:35
Aaron li	11:37 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	53.5
sherlock	11:38 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	43.5
T	11:38 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	58.8
Hayden	11:38 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	1:19
kingsley leung	11:41 - 16 Mar 2021	10	0	2:06

Offering reports to track students' performance is a good point of using online learning platforms. Example 1C illustrates the e-homework assigned by teacher after the lesson. Other than giving a summary report, the e-learning tool "Wordwall" also showed results by students and questions. It outlined where students performed well and advised those who needed more input. This made it easier for teachers to provide specific and timely feedback to students based on the data analysis. So the teacher considered it as an alternative to traditional pen-and-paper homework to consolidate student learning and check retention levels.

2. Using Multi-sensory Strategies to Increase Student Participation

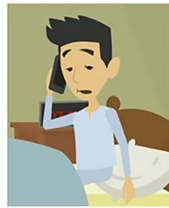
According to Morin (n.d.), multi-sensory instruction is a teaching strategy that uses more than one sense at a time. By conveying information through five senses, such as touch, smell, taste, movement, hearing and sight, students are encouraged to connect with new information by different means. It is particularly effective to engage students in online classes without the physical presence of students.

Example 2A

Lead in

Video (Star Class)

Our teacher gets upset when students don't come to class. So you **should** go to class.



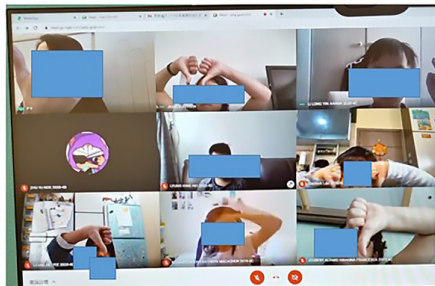
You **should not** go to class today. You cannot focus in class when you feel sick.



Whose advice do you agree with?

Should my friend go to class today?

Physical checks for understanding:
Giving **hand signs** to show a response to a question

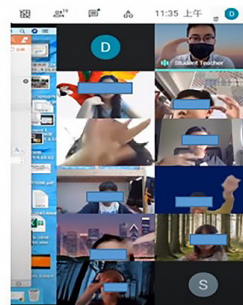


Turn on your camera

Give me a thumbs up if you think he **should** go to class.



Give me a thumbs down if you think he **should not/shouldn't** go to class.

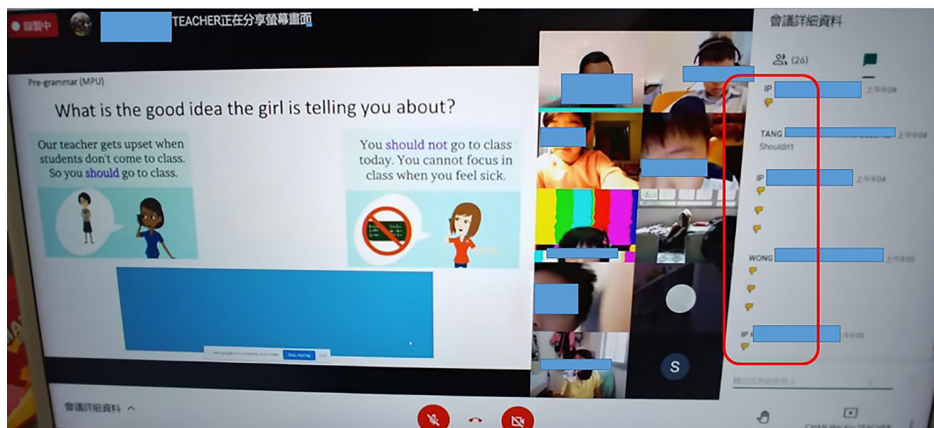


Give me a thumbs up if you think he **should** go to class.



Give me a shaking hand if you think he **should not/shouldn't** go to class.

Check for understanding:
To show a response to a question in the **chat box**

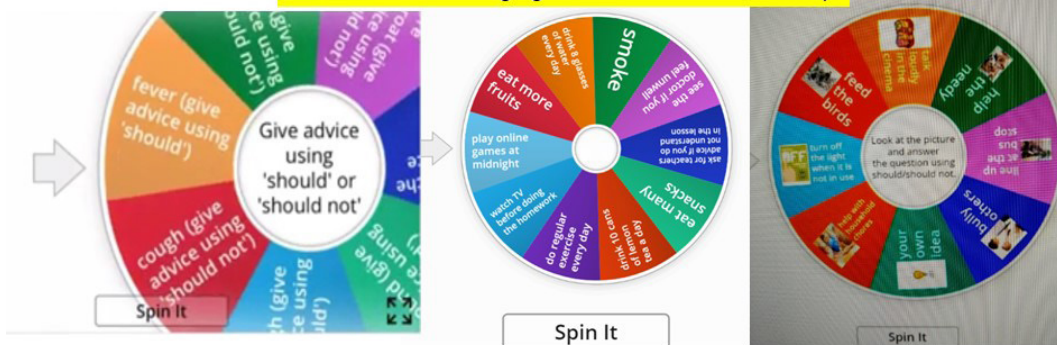


Example 2A illustrates how the teacher made good use of multi-sensory strategies to enhance student participation. A video was played as a lead-in to arouse students' interest. Students were then asked if the boy having a fever in the video should go to school or not. When the question was posed to the class, students were asked to respond by simply giving a thumbs up or thumbs down — the responses were then displayed on the screen in real-time. Such classroom response system not only can help engage students, but also let teachers understand how students are performing. It also gives students a chance to move a bit after sitting in front of the computer for long. Asking students to insert the emoji of thumbs up or thumbs down in the chat box is another way to serve the purpose of increasing student participation as all students have a chance to express their idea.

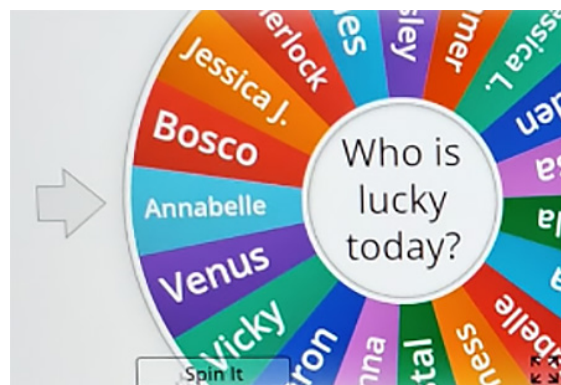
Example 2B

Formative assessment:
Using “should” and “should not” to make sentences about obligation.

Using Online Random Wheel to motivate and engage students in a fun way



Different versions to cater learner diversity



Entertainment-driven learners are more easily motivated to benefit from the learning process through meaningful activities defined in a game context (Covaci, Ghinea, Lin et al., 2018). In view of the fact that educational computer games can improve both attention and memory of students, the teacher designed a game-based activity to check students' understanding of using 'should' or 'should not' to talk about obligation (Example 2B). Students were very excited about having their names on the random wheel. The sound of students' laughter filled the air once a student was picked to make a sentence based on the hints given in another wheel. Since students were eager to know who the next would be and how the classmate would perform, they concentrated in class.

3. Using E-learning Tools to Foster Self- and Peer Assessment

Self-assessment and peer assessment are assessments which allow students to assess their own performance and each other's performance respectively. Both can be used as part of a formative assessment process. They are valuable in helping students to reflect on their own learning and learn from each other. Most importantly, by having self- and peer assessment, students learn how to be responsible for their own learning.

Example 3A

Mr. So would like to go to a movie while he hasn't finished marking the dictation. Give him one advice to solve his problem.

Please type your name as well...

Students make corrections after teacher's explanation in class

Anonymous 4mo

You should watch the movie first then mark the dictation

3

1 comment

Anonymous 4mo
joshua herv movies are mostly watched at night when he finshed then it will be minight

Mr So, you should:

- 1) Mark the dictation first, then you can go to watch the movie another day.
- 2)Ask Miss Luo to help you mark it. (You should remember to buy a gift for her, such as a necklace !)
- 3)Ask me to help! 😊😄😂😂(just saying)

3

1 comment

Anonymous 4mo
You can choose one of them to follow, Mr So.

Anonymous 4mo

Mr. So should mark the dictation and then go to a movie, because the dictation has a due date, but the movie doesn't.

1

1 comment

Anonymous 4mo
some movies have limits

Anonymous 4mo
in you should ask ms Lou to help mark the dictation

3

3 comments

Anonymous 4mo
nice

Anonymous 4mo
good

Anonymous 4mo
cool

Anonymous 4mo

you should forget about the movie and mark the dictation instead 😊

3

Add comment

Anonymous 4mo

Mr So can:

- 1) You should mark the dictation first then go to watch the movie
- 2)You should mark it the next day

**** Only Emergency**** Ask Ms Luo to help you (Do something nice for her. E.g. Buy her a gift or something) ****Just Emergency****

2

1 comment

Anonymous 4mo
Good idea

Anonymous 4mo

you should watch the movie first then mark the dictation

- 2.you should ask miss lou to help and go to the movie(and you should buy a big present for her or two)
- 3.you should wait for miss lou to mark it and you should go to the movie with her
- 4.you should watch on netflix
- 5.you should ask me to help
6. you should forget about the dictation and watch the movie then make an excuse why you didn't mark the dictation and they will be mad at you(im joking don't try it)

4

Anonymous 4mo

Mr. So should mark the dictation before he goes to the movir

0

As mentioned earlier in Example 1A, students were taught the form, use and meaning of the modal verb 'should' and 'should not' after being diagnosed with having problems in giving advice in the pre-lesson task. To ensure students understand the key concepts, the teacher used an e-learning tool "Padlet" to create multiple walls to house all the posts shared by students. Students were then required to assess their own performance by correcting their mistakes on the Padlet (Example 3A). Besides helping students clarify their misconceptions by themselves, the activity also makes it easier for the teacher to manage instant student feedback on one screen.

Example 3B

Mr. So would like to go to a movie while he hasn't finished marking the dictation. Give him one advice to solve his problem.

Please type your name as well...

Students vote for the best piece of advice

The screenshot shows a Padlet wall with several posts. A yellow box highlights the instruction 'Students vote for the best piece of advice'. Red circles highlight the heart icons representing votes on various posts. The posts include:

- Post 1: "You should watch the movie first then mark the dictation" (3 votes).
- Post 2: "Mr. So should mark the dictation and then go to a movie, because the dictation has a due date, but the movie doesn't." (1 vote).
- Post 3: "you should forget about the movie and mark the dictation instead" (3 votes).
- Post 4: A list of 6 suggestions (4 votes).
- Post 5: "Mr So, you should: 1) Mark the dictation first, then you can go to watch the movie another day. 2) Ask Miss Luo to help you mark it. (You should remember to buy a gift for her, such as a necklace!) 3) Ask me to help! (just saying)" (3 votes).
- Post 6: "you should ask ms Lou to help mark the dictation" (3 votes).
- Post 7: "Mr So can: 1) You should mark the dictation first then go to watch the movie 2) You should mark it the next day" (2 votes).
- Post 8: "** Only Emergency** Ask Ms Luo to help you (Do something nice for her. E.g. Buy her a gift or something) **Just Emergency**" (2 votes).
- Post 9: "Mr. So should mark the dictation before he goes to the movir" (0 votes).

Assessment as Learning

Peer Assessment

- Vote for the best piece of advice, think about:
1. Is it a good idea?
 2. Is the grammar correct?

Click on the ❤️ to show your choice.

Many teachers agree, applying the language by actually using it, i.e. immersion, is one of the most effective ways to learn the language. Thus, the teacher created a chance for students to practise giving advice to others. What the students had to do was to read classmates' problems which were collected in advance, followed by giving advice to at least three classmates (Example 3B). By doing so, teachers could see if students were able to transfer what they have just learnt to a new context. Students were then given clear criteria to assess their peers' performance. They could click on the heart button to vote for the best piece of work.

The activity encouraged students to build up their understanding, as well as to reflect on their learning by comparing their own work to their peers. By giving each other feedback, students learnt from and supported each other. It helps students develop lifelong skills to improve their own work. And it tells why peer assessment is an important component of Assessment as Learning.

The two examples above have shown that self- and peer assessment can still conveniently and effectively be carried out in online lessons by using e-learning tools.

Actions Taken

A meeting was held in early September, right at the beginning of the academic year, to discuss the needs of English teachers and confirm the focus of collaboration with the English panel head. School Development Officer of the QSIP-CEAL Project paid a courtesy class visit to a P4 class to get a general idea of learning and teaching at the school.

Three units, two from the P4 textbook and one from the P3 textbook, were chosen for collaborative lesson planning. After each cycle of collaborative sessions, lesson observations and post-lesson-observation feedback sessions were conducted. Evaluation meetings with P4 and P3 teachers were held at the end of each term to enable reflection and assist in the identification of future change.

A within school dissemination was arranged in June in which English teachers who participated in the project shared experiences and insights gained from all initiatives taken with teachers of other subjects.

Impact

1. Student Level

The impacts of assessment literacy on student learning are positive. Students have got more involved in self- and peer evaluation. According to teachers, students have become more able to reflect on their own performance as well as to give meaningful feedback to peers. Besides, a major increase in students' motivation and engagement in online lessons was noticed.

2. Teacher Level

The collaboration has enriched teachers' knowledge and skills on conducting classroom formative assessment. They have been more aware of learning, teaching and assessment alignment. Teachers have also developed their I.T. skills, being familiar with online learning tools in particular. With those well-chosen e-learning tools, teachers were able to check student understanding, encourage peer learning and facilitate self-correction.

Teachers have also been more confident to make use of student data to inform their instruction. They all agreed that making use of both the qualitative and quantitative data in formative assessments did help teachers better identify students' learning difficulties.

Way Forward

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, technology-driven learning was adopted in the last two years and the 'classroom-only' approach is transforming. Traditional face-to-face learning is combined with e-learning. Students are given greater flexibility such as learning at their own pace. It helps students with different learning needs and styles to realise their full potential. Having experienced the benefits of using online tools and platforms in enhancing learning and teaching in the virtual classroom, teachers at Catholic Mission School have come to a conclusion that they are working towards a hybrid model of teaching in the future. They plan to explore more about blended learning, which is the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences, and is an effective way to enhance student learning by using various formative assessment tools.

Teachers have also learnt that assessment could be used as an investigative tool to find out as much as we can about what students know, and the confusion, misconceptions, or gaps they might have. Teachers believe that assessment literacy is about a continuous process of growth for students as well. Inspired by this project, in the future, they would like to guide students to become assessment-capable students who are able to evaluate the processes and products of their learning. The ultimate goal is to help students to become a self-directed learner – being able to think more actively about where they are now, where they are going and how to get there.

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CASE 2

**Strategies for Success:
Classroom Activities and
Formative Assessment for
Vocabulary Instruction**

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School

Strategies for Success: Classroom Activities and Formative Assessment for Vocabulary Instruction

School

Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School

Background

According to the analysis of students' performance in their recent internal summative assessment, English teachers at Ching Chung Hau Po Woon Primary School arrived at the conclusion that their students have a relatively low mark in reading among the four language skills. Many of them struggle with reading lengthy texts in the exam, which is caused by their lack of English vocabulary. Therefore, the teachers decided to strengthen students' reading proficiency through building up their vocabulary. This article aims at sharing the newly adopted strategies that enhanced learning and teaching of vocabulary and how the teachers improved their instruction to tackle students' learning difficulties in using the assessment data.

Level

Primary 5

Strategies Used

Vocabulary is one of the very important areas in language, and plays a significant role for learners in acquiring a second language (Cameron, 2001). It is impossible for students to learn English without word knowledge. Therefore, the teaching of vocabulary has become one of English teachers' top priorities. To help students master vocabulary well, effective instructions including both comprehensible input and relevant classroom assessment are required.

The strategies used by teachers are summarised below:

1. Using Graphic Organisers to Help Build Vocabulary

Graphic organisers are excellent tools that help students develop vocabulary skills. By visualising the connections between words and their meanings, not only can students better understand the meanings of words, but also find it easier to remember them.

Example 1

Definition:

A present is something that you give to someone on a special day to show friendship or to say thank you.

Examples:

birthday presents,
Christmas presents

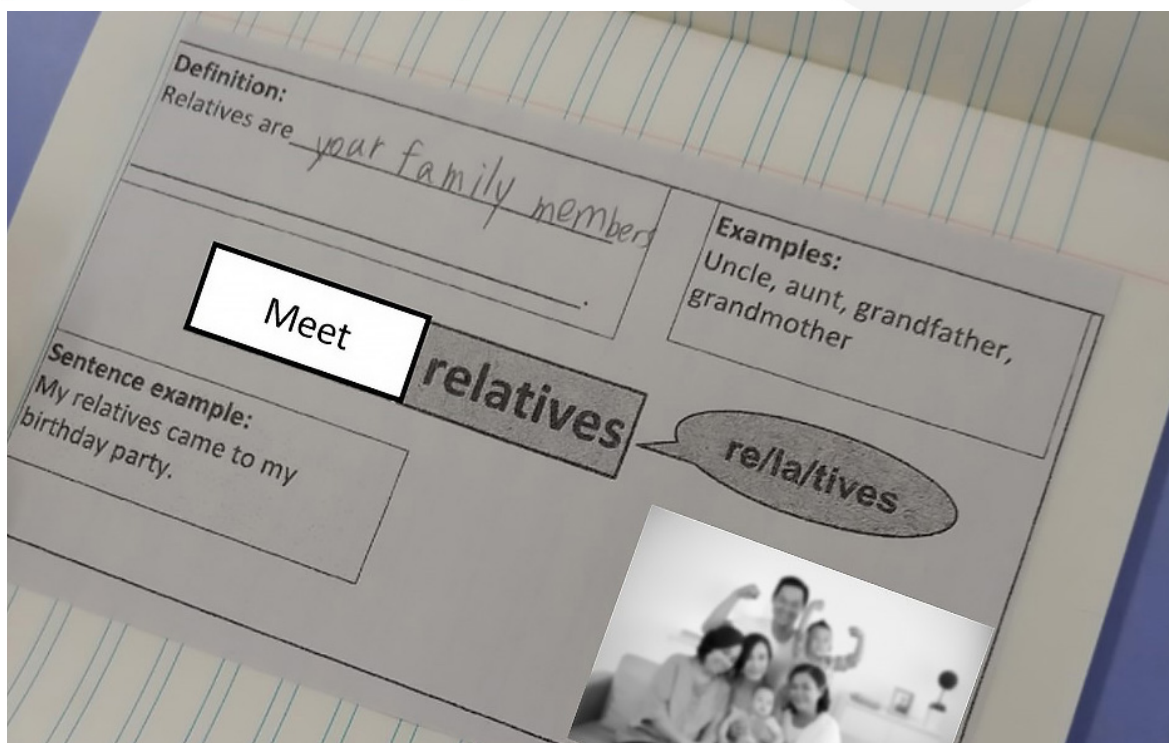
give

presents

pre/sents

Sentence example:

I gave a present to Annie on her birthday.




Example 1 illustrates the design of the graphic organiser used by the teachers in the lesson. It engaged students in inserting the definition, pictures, examples, a sentence example and syllable chunks for a target vocabulary item and its collocation. It simultaneously activated students' prior knowledge, and presented new information to them visually. Students were encouraged to think about each new term from different aspects. When using such a design with capable students, the teachers could even introduce the synonyms and antonyms of the new words.

2. Enhancing Students’ Learning through Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an essential part of learning and teaching. According to Black and William (2001), formative assessments are activities that provide information to teachers to be used as feedback to adjust the teaching work to meet the needs of students. To make formative assessment productive, teachers should train students in self-assessment so that they can meet their learning objectives and how to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The table below illustrates the details of implementing formative assessment in the classroom.

STEP 1	Activity / Task
	<p>After providing necessary input, the teacher wanted to check if students understood the material teacher shared. To make vocabulary review fun and effective, an interactive vocabulary matching game (Picture 1) was arranged. According to Eline (1997), visual aids can make ideas clear and understandable and help an audience remember facts and details. In order to increase student participation, students were asked to work in groups and send a representative to match the target words with pictures and their collocations.</p> <p>The activity provided teachers with student feedback, and they could immediately adjust instruction based on students' errors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Picture 1: Vocabulary matching game</p> 

STEP
2

Activity / Task

Picture 2.1: Guided writing task

FAMOUS COUNTRIES FOR STUDY TOUR

- 1. Which country** will you go for your study tour?
- 2. Which tourist attractions** will you visit?
- 3. What local food** will you eat?
- 4. Who** will you meet?
- 5. What will you buy** for your relatives in HK?

The graphic includes icons for a hamburger, a burger, the American flag, the Japanese flag, the South Korean flag, the Statue of Liberty, a plate of sushi, and a bowl of ramen.

Stahl (2005) states 'Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world'. The teachers believe that application of the target words is crucial as it provides another context for learning word meanings.

Therefore, students were challenged to apply the target words to their own experiences after the matching game.

In the guided writing task (Pictures 2.1 and 2.2), students were asked to write a short paragraph about their plan for a study tour, using the words they had just learnt.

The classroom assessment provided students with an opportunity to process the meaning of each word at a personal level.

Picture 2.2: Guided writing task

Going on a Study Tour in Japan

I will go to Japan for my study tour. I will visit tourist attractions such as Mount Fuji and Tokyo Tower. I won't make a video. I will eat local food such as Sushi and sashimi. I will meet my host family and give presents to them. I will buy souvenirs like green tea and mochi for my relatives.

Finally, I will send postcards to my parents and friends. I hope I can learn a lot of new things as well as the culture of Japan.

To cater for learner diversity, tiered writing worksheets were designed. Less able students were given more clues to complete their task (Picture 2.3).

As can be seen from students' work, they were able to use the new vocabulary words to express their own ideas with a few spelling mistakes.

The teacher was told what and how the students really did in their vocabulary learning process from the qualitative data collected from the writing task.

Picture 2.3: Tiered worksheet for less able students

Going on a Study Tour in Japan

I will go to 1. Japan for my study tour. I will 2. eat local food such as Sushi.

I will 3. visit Doraemon Museum

I will 4. drink green tea such as mochi

I will 5. make video and send postcard to them. I will like _____ for my relatives in Hong Kong.

I will send postcards to my friends too.

STEP 3

Activity / Task

Peer-assessment and self-assessment is important to learning because it helps students know what to do to develop each other's learning as well as reflect on their own learning process.

In this lesson, students were required to comment on the work of their peers with prompts from the teacher (Pictures 3.1 and 3.2).

Students adopted a serious attitude towards the task and some were able to give meaningful feedback to their partners.

Picture 3.1

Going on a Study Tour in Japan

I will go to Japan for my study tour. I will visit some tourist attractions like Tokyo Tower. Tokyo Tower start working for the television signal since 2012. we can also go up the tower to see the view of Tokyo. I will also eat local food such as sushi. I will buy some souvenirs like green tea

Picture 3.2: Peer evaluation

Name: _____ Class: P.5

Read your partner's writing and give him/her some comments.

Name of your partner: _____

Checklist

Content:

- provide interesting information with supporting details
- provide an appropriate ending

Language:

- use the words we learnt today correctly
- use future tense

Organisation:

- write in a paragraph

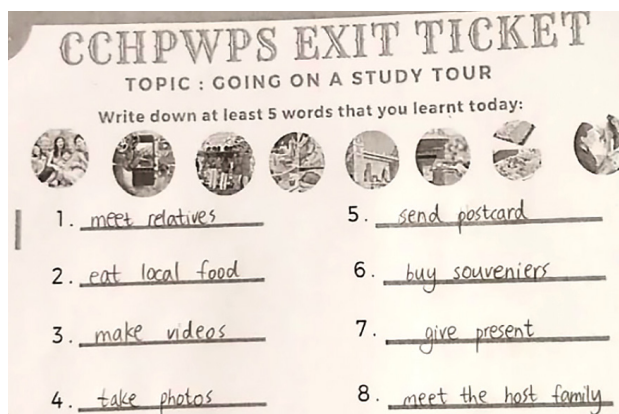
Others

- V R not finishing ur worksheet!

*Put a tick in the box if it is properly done.

As for self-assessment, students were given an Exit Ticket (Picture 3.3) at the end of the lesson as an informal measure of how well students understand the topic and a way to collect student data for planning instruction of the next lesson. This also allowed students to know their performance and to be aware of the improvements they needed to make. Although students were asked to write down at least five words that they learnt in that lesson, most of them could put down all the collocation words with minor spelling mistakes and plural form of nouns.

Picture 3.3: Exit ticket



STEP 4

Activity / Task

To consolidate students' understanding and application of the target vocabulary in an authentic context, the teacher prepared a piece of e-homework in the form of cloze passage using Google forms. Students could attempt exercises of a different degree of difficulties and review their work. Level 1 was the easiest and Level 3 was the most challenging (Picture 4.1). This can enhance their learning motivation and commitment to self-learning. Using

Picture 4.1: E-homework (cloze passage)

PLE 5A Unit 5 Cloze Passage

*必填

1. Name (e.g. Chan Tai Man)

2. Class Number

單選。

3. Class *

單選。

- 5A (Level 2) 跳到第 12 題。
- 5A (Level 3) 跳到第 4 題。
- 5B (Level 2) 跳到第 12 題。
- 5B (Level 3) 跳到第 4 題。
- 5C (Level 1) 跳到第 21 題。
- 5C (Level 2) 跳到第 12 題。
- 5D (Level 1) 跳到第 21 題。
- 5D (Level 2) 跳到第 12 題。
- 5E (Level 1) 跳到第 21 題。
- 5E (Level 2) 跳到第 12 題。
- 5G (Level 1) 跳到第 21 題。
- 5G (Level 2) 跳到第 12 題。

Matt's sister, Judy, is writing an email to her cousin about Matt's study tour. Finish the e-mail by using words which you learnt today for each blank. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

Dear Cally,

My brother Matt is going on a study tour to London next week. He will stay with his (Q1) _____, Mr. and Mrs. Buckingham, who are living on Queen's Road. Matt wants to (Q2) _____ to his host family when he sees them for the first time. Therefore, he is now busy going shopping.

Once Matt has arrived at London, his first thing to do is to (Q3) _____, especially roasted beef and Fish and Chips. You know how much he likes eating, right? After that Matt will (Q4) _____ like the Buckingham Palace. He promises that he will take a lot of photos and (Q5) _____ such as English tea from there. He will also (Q6) _____ about those places and upload them to YouTube. Before Matt leaves London, he will (Q7) _____ from my mother's family. Last but not least, Matt also promises to (Q8) _____ to each of us before he leaves the city.

Last night my mum said our family could visit London at Christmas. Will you join me in that case?

Love,
Judy

Q1: _____ * **Level 3**

Q2: _____ *

Q3: _____ *

Q4: h _____ f _____ * **Level 2**

Q5: g _____ p _____ *

Q6: e _____ l _____ f _____ *

Q7: _____ * Q8: _____ *

單選。

- meet relatives
- meet host family
- meet friends
- meet teachers

單選。 **Level 1**

- give presents
- buy souvenirs
- send photos
- make videos

online tools benefits assessment. There are powerful data collection tools that can provide instantaneous feedback to both students and the teachers.

As grades were released immediately after each submission, it allowed students to see their total score and which questions they answered correctly or incorrectly.

This instant feedback encouraged the students to question their understanding and ask for help if necessary. In turn, the teacher could assess how well students had understood the lesson.

Once the students had completed the assessment, the teacher took some time to reflect on the results. As shown in the table of results analysis (Picture 4.2), students' performance in Questions 4, 6 and 7 was less satisfactory. This quantitative data, similar to the findings of Exit Ticket, gave the teacher ideas that students were weak in spelling and countable noun. Thus, the teacher revisited the lesson with a different approach - clearing up areas that the students felt confused. Follow-up activities like spelling games, dictation and proofreading exercises were provided to heighten students' awareness of spelling and use of plural nouns.

Picture 4.2

Using assessment data to improve teaching and learning

Cloze passage results analysis

No. of Correct Responses (Overall)			
Questions	Level 1 Attempters	Level 2 Attempters	Level 3 Attempters
1	74%	95%	90%
2	79%	83%	77%
3	84%	100%	90%
4	42%	63%	77%
5	53%	90%	90%
6	42%	80%	73%
7	42%	95%	73%
8	47%	80%	83%

Actions Taken

To discuss the focus of the collaboration with core group members, a meeting was held at the beginning of the academic year. Right after that, School Development Officer of the QSIP-CEAL Project paid a courtesy visit of a P5 class to get a general idea of learning and teaching at the school.

To enhance assessment literacy of English teachers along with the entire teaching staff of the school, a total of three workshops were held during the collaboration. The first workshop was held in early September, introducing assessment literacy to all teaching staff, followed by a needs analysis workshop for English language teachers in late October. The third workshop, on assessment literacy, was organised for curriculum leaders in early November.

Regular collaborative lesson planning meetings were also arranged to discuss teaching strategies and develop learning materials. In order to try out the strategies discussed and evaluate their effectiveness, lesson observations and post-lesson-observation feedback sessions were conducted in November and following April. At the end of the collaboration, an evaluation meeting was held to enable reflection and assist in the planning of future development.

Finally, P5 English teachers shared their experiences and insights gained from the project with teachers of other subjects in a within school dissemination session in June.

Impact

1. Student Level

The collaboration has impacted on students' learning quite considerably. Students' learning motivation has been enhanced with a variety of learning activities such as group competition, semantic mapping and e-exercises. Students have also developed a habit of keeping vocabulary notes using the vocabulary building strategies introduced. Besides, cooperative learning has been facilitated among students and students' confidence of conducting self- and peer assessment has been boosted. With the introduction of online learning tools, students have also developed self-directed learning skills, having the ability to manage their own learning activities and needs.

2. Teacher Level

The collaboration has made positive impacts on teachers. Teachers have become more aware of the importance of the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment. When planning a lesson, they would identify interests and needs of students; think of ways to enhance students' motivation; develop class activities to meet learning objectives and assess what students have learnt. Teachers have also gained a better understanding of

the role of formative assessment, assessment for learning and assessment as learning in particular, in enhancing English learning and teaching in everyday classroom practice.

3. Curriculum Level

The use of graphic organisers and chunking of words are found effective in helping the students to understand word meanings and improve pronunciation respectively. Teachers would like to adopt these strategies in other levels in their future teaching.

4. Departmental Level and School Level

The culture of developing formative assessment has extended beyond the English panel. For example, the Mathematics panel recognised the benefits of classroom assessment. Teachers have become more aware of providing timely feedback to students after identifying students' weaknesses from class activities. Teachers also try to promote assessment as learning in their panel. Self-assessment and peer assessment are included in student assignments, providing chances for students to evaluate their own performance and make adjustments with clear learning goals and criteria.

Way Forward

In addition to enhancing learning and teaching through formative assessment, teachers recognise the importance of using student performance data, both qualitative and quantitative, to inform instruction. The current practice of section analysis in the General English examination paper will be extended to item analysis so that more detailed information of students' performance would be collected. Furthermore, a focus of development is to review on the assessment design, including mark distribution, time allocation and question validity. For example, teachers will reconsider giving more time for students to finish the tasks in the G.E. Paper which include reading, writing and grammar.

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CASE 3

**Designing Formative
Assessments that Encourage
Learners to Learn How to Learn**

Stewards Pooi Kei Primary School

Designing Formative Assessments that Encourage Learners to Learn How to Learn

School

Stewards Pooi Kei Primary School

Background

To meet the demands of educating students to be autonomous learners, who can analyse, reason and collaborate with others to solve problems, teachers have been exploring ways to facilitate students taking the initiative and be more responsible for learning how to learn. Conducting assessment-for-learning activities in the classroom that encourage students to practise discovery learning and collaborative learning simultaneously, teachers are training students in (1) reading, handling, organising and sharing information, (2) raising questions, (3) sharing opinions, (4) expressing difficulties, and (5) seeking assistance, simultaneously (Dann, 2002). Such activities aim to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses and encourage students to self-assess and self-monitor their progress. By so doing, the teachers switch their role from being a knowledge-transmitter to more of a learning facilitator while their students practise being not just an active learner, but also a contributor and an assessor during the process (Dann, 2002; Lee & Mak; 2014).

This article describes how the teachers of Stewards Pooi Kei Primary School adopted discovery learning techniques to teach and assess students' grammar knowledge. Their students demonstrate relatively higher English competencies compared to other schools in the same district. The teachers wished the students to take an active role and establish broader applications for language learning and communicative skills through 'learning by doing' instead of passively receiving knowledge. By observing students' responses and learning outputs, the teachers were able to make immediate adjustments to the teaching plan based on students' needs.

Level

Primary 5

Strategies Used

1. Discovery Learning

Discovery learning, introduced by Jerome Bruner in the 1960s, is a method of active learning. Students are arranged to wrestle with the given questions by combining existing and newly acquired information. Students are encouraged to probe and to take risks while solving a problem. Verner (2014) believes that students pay more attention and stay more engaged as they are guided to solve a grammar mystery, playing the role of language discoverers. Discovery learning is an inductive instructional approach.

Teaching grammar to students by adopting discovery learning, what comes first is the meaning, followed by the form and the rules. The teacher avoids teaching the grammar rules by rote learning but by helping students to discover the relationship between bits of information using a series of activities.

- a. Present the students with a variety of sample sentences featuring a particular grammar concept without explaining how such concept is used.
- b. Prompt the students to identify the similarities and differences appear in the sample sentences.
- c. Facilitate the students to share their discoveries with peers and then figure out the grammar rules on their own.
- d. Offer support to guide students to consolidate and organise the knowledge gained.
- e. Create opportunities that allow the students to put their knowledge into practice.

2. Using Classroom Assessment as Learning Tools

Assessment should be an integral part of the instructional process to identify students' individual learning difficulties and then prescribe remediation procedures (Bloom, 1971). Launching activities in the classroom to assess students' knowledge before or after teaching makes learning and teaching effective (Stobart, 2014) because these activities assist students in (1) finding out where they are in their learning, (2) making clear the learning intentions and success criteria, (3) responding to teacher feedback and (4) building knowledge. Hence classroom assessments 'would not take time away from learning but would serve to assist and enhance learning' (Guskey & Jung, 2013, p.29). A good classroom assessment plan even provides a road map for instructional changes (short-term), even curricular changes (long-term).

Actions Taken

Using 'when' and 'while' to describe two simultaneous actions in the past has been one of the most challenging grammar points to teach. Many students are confused about whether they should use simple past or past continuous tense in the sentence. Instead of teaching it explicitly, the teachers made their P5 students read a series of sample sentences taken from a passage they had just read in the previous lesson to generalise the grammar rules on their own. Students acquired study skills such as comparing and contrasting ideas and supporting opinions with evidence during the learning process. They shared their discovery with their peers by saying, for example, "According to sentence C, we can use 'while' to start a sentence. However, we can also use it in the middle of a sentence, like sentences A and B." Based on students' responses, the teachers provided students with instant feedback to tackle their difficulties and misconceptions.

The table below displays the teaching plan used by the teachers to guide students through the discovery task in a double lesson.

Discovering Grammar	
Using 'when' and 'while' to describe two simultaneous actions in the past	
Objectives	Teaching steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover rules of using 'when' and 'while' • Share opinions with peers; explain with evidence to resolve discrepancies • Display the known and unknown about using 'when' and 'while'; actively inform teacher about their learning needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T explains the lesson flow. T emphasises the importance of learning through discovery and assures them of their ability to learn grammar rules through comparing and contrasting. 2. T gives out Worksheet 1 (<i>Appendix 1</i>), on which four sample sentences written with 'when' (Task 1) and some prompting questions (Task 2) are there. Make sure ss are given sufficient time to read through the worksheet and think about the prompting questions before they are assigned to discuss with peers. 3. T models how to use the prompting questions for ss, that guide them to investigate and discuss, and explains explicitly the expected student behaviours, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describing their observation, • telling the similarities and differences, • explaining their thoughts/assumptions supported with evidence, and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> raising questions or rebutting to resolve discrepancies. (**T must deliberate his/her modelling so that ss learn what to do and say during the learning process.) (For stronger students, T may invite them to voice their prediction without using the prompting questions. Make sure the students are guided to justify their predictions.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> T provides cues and monitors students' understanding Based on ss' responses, T guides ss to consolidate; helps them to integrate and synthesise key ideas. <p>(Repeat the steps above when teaching 'while' using Grammar Worksheet 2 (<i>Appendix 2</i>.)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply the grammar knowledge gained and self-/peer-assess their learning performance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ss complete a post-learning quiz independently to demonstrate their understanding of using 'when' and 'while'. (T may give out the quiz via Classkick, an e-learning tool, for data collection purposes.) T reminds ss to justify their answers using the rules constructed before submitting their work to the teacher T gives instant feedback to ss who complete their work fast so that they could revisit their work instead of idling. T encourages ss to value mistakes by correcting an answer using a colour pen and making notes that help improve performance. (T demonstrates how to make notes if necessary.) As a conclusion to the activity, the teacher can ask the students to explain the grammar rules as a final check. (For less able students, T may ask students to proofread a few more sentences and point out the mistakes using the knowledge acquired.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To organise and consolidate the knowledge gained 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> T shows ss how to organise the knowledge they gained using a table featuring the similarity and differences of using 'when' and 'while'. (Picture 2 on Page 34 shows the table used.) T assigns ss to complete a workbook exercise as homework.



Impact

1. Student Level

Learning grammar through a discovery approach, the students have become more engaged in the lessons. They have been urged to observe, question and exchange their thoughts and ideas, which allowed their misunderstanding and misconceptions to expose during the process. They played the role of contributors, enhancing the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom. For example, reading the sentence 'Mr. Kwok was watching his favourite football team on television while he was drinking beer.', a few students wondered if drinking beer was a shorter action and asked why using while + past continuous tense to go with that. The students' queries informed what the teacher should teach that fully addressed students' learning needs.

Students have learnt to analyse and interpret the acquired information rather than memorising the correct answers. More importantly, they have realised that learning takes place not only through success but also making mistakes. Even the passive and less able learners are more on task because they are arranged to be part of the learning process instead of just being spectators. They are practising what an active learner should do. Picture 1 shows a student's answers to the guided questions, and his personalised remarks added to the worksheet after listening to the teacher's consolidation.

Picture 1

Name: [Redacted] Stewards Pooi Kei Primary School Class: J.5 [Redacted]

LE5B Ch.8 Accidents around us
Discovering learning 2 – Using 'while'

Task 1 - Read the following sentences carefully. Compare the two actions mentioned in each sentence, is one of them very much longer than the other one? If yes, circle the longer one.

A. Mr. Kwok was watching his favourite football team on television **while** he was drinking beer.
 B. Alan Tse was eating popcorn **while** he was watching his favourite team, South China.
 C. **While** we were playing in the playground, the alarm went off.

Task 2 - Read the sentences again to figure out the rules of using 'while' to talk about past events. Fill in the blanks and circle the answers.

1. We use 'while' to talk about two actions that were happening at the same time.
 2. We use 'while' before mentioning the (shorter / longer) action and we present it by using (simple past / past continuous) tense.
 Sentence (A / B / C) show(s) that.
 3. We can use 'while' at the (beginning / end) of the sentence. Sentence (A / B / C) show(s) that.
 4. We can also use 'while' (before / between) the two clauses. Sentence (A / B / C) show(s) that.
 5. We use 'while' to talk about two (short / long) actions happening at the same time. Sentence (A / B / C) show(s) that.
 6. We cannot use 'while' before short or the shorter actions.

2. Teacher Level

Teachers have demonstrated a stronger sense of mission that drove them to continually guide and motivate students to seek solutions using their previous and newly acquired knowledge. They help students become more active learners using discovery activities that encouraged risk-taking and problem-solving. They have realised that using familiar scenarios as the basis of new information could support learners to extend what they know and discover something new.

Teachers have achieved a better sense of achievement because they could see the students' learning needs and help them tackle the problems, which often led to immediate improvements. They have gained more confidence and trust in their students' ability to learn independently, especially when clear instructions and prompts are given. They have learnt that they could use direct instruction less. Their awareness of prioritising students' active participation to contribute to their instruction has been heightened.

Moreover, teachers have recognised the importance of deliberating their modelling to show students how to perform the expected learning behaviours, including thinking aloud, expressing thoughts, supporting ideas with evidence, and consolidating knowledge. Picture 2 shows how the teacher modelled for the students how to organise the grammar knowledge they gained in the lesson using a summary table to serve revision and self-assessment purposes.

Picture 2

Organising knowledge

- ▶ Teacher showed students how to organize knowledge
 - compare and contrast the rules; present the similarities and differences using a table, which can be used as a tool for self-assessment later.

when	while
two actions happening at the same time	
Before shorter actions	X
Before longer actions	
Sentence starter (Beginning)	
Connective (Between two clauses)	

Task 2 - Read the sentences again to figure out the rules of using 'when' to talk about past events. Fill in the blanks and circle the answers.

1. We use 'when' to talk about two actions that were happening at the same time.
2. We usually use 'when' before the (longer / shorter) action and present it using (simple past / past continuous) tense. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E / F) show(s) that.
3. We sometimes use 'when' before the (longer / shorter) action too. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E / F) show(s) that.
4. We can use 'when' at the (beginning / end) of a sentence. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E / F) show(s) that.
5. We can also use 'when' (before / between) the two clauses. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E / F) show(s) that.
6. We can use 'when' to talk about two long actions too. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E / F) show(s) that.

Task 2 - Read the sentences again to figure out the rules of using 'while' to talk about past events. Fill in the blanks and circle the answers.

1. We use 'while' to talk about two actions that were happening at the same time.
2. We use 'while' before mentioning the (shorter / longer) action and we present it by using (simple past / past continuous) tense. Sentence(s) (A / B / C) show(s) that.
3. We can use 'while' at the (beginning / end) of the sentence. Sentence(s) (A / B / C) show(s) that.
4. We can also use 'while' (before / between) the two clauses. Sentence(s) (A / B / C) show(s) that.
5. We use 'while' to talk about two (short / long) actions happening at the same time. Sentence(s) (A / B / C) show(s) that.
6. We cannot use 'while' before short or the shorter actions.

3. Curriculum Level

There is no doubt that teaching using the deductive, direct-teaching approach is faster and can be an efficient way to teach large numbers of facts and concrete concepts. However, when student engagement and assessment for/as learning are the learning outcomes of the intended curriculum, lesson activities should be conducted using the inductive approach. Now, there is a clear direction for refining grammar teaching for promoting student-centred learning, providing students with more opportunities to actively connect the knowns with the unknowns so that students play the role of learners and assessors at the same time in the lesson. Picture 3 illustrates the long- and short-term modifications the teachers have planned to make to the lesson design and curriculum of P5 and 6.

Picture 3

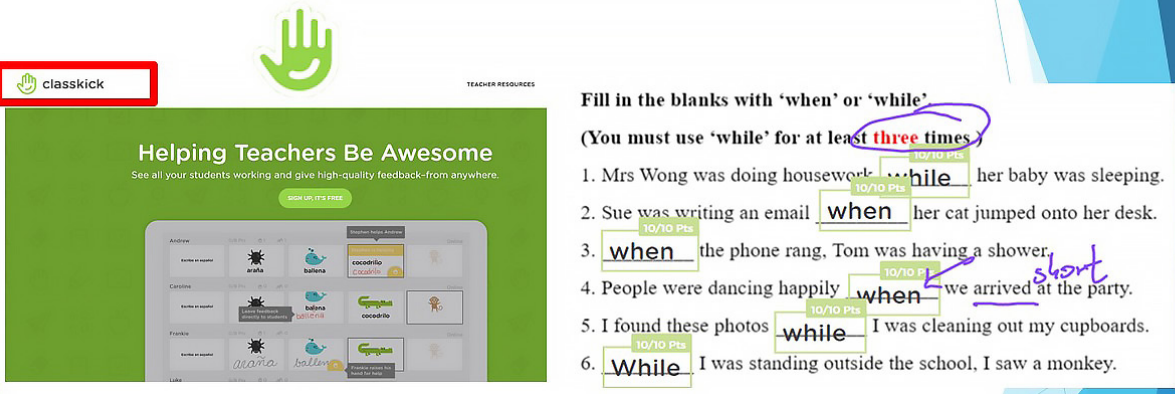
The adjustments made based on student performance

- ▶ Short-term adjustment(s)
 - Used discovery learning to teach grammar
e.g. 'so' vs 'so that', and 'If' conditional sentences
 - Run end-of-lesson quizzes (exit tickets) to help students consolidate the knowledge gained and check their understanding at the same time.
- ▶ Long-term adjustment(s)
 - Use discovery learning in the upper primary
 - Use e-learning tools to collect students' performance data (pre-test & post-test)
 - Arrange peer discussions to train students in justifying answers and expressing thoughts

Learning and teaching in class no longer focuses on finding the correct answers but also on the things students discover in the process. Picture 4 shows how a teacher delivered an end-of-lesson quiz via Classkick to collect student performance data so that instant feedback could be given to guide students to self-correct. With such data, the teacher identified the common mistakes and then discussed them with the students instead of going through all the questions.

Picture 4

End-of-lesson quiz (Exit-ticket)



classkick

TEACHER RESOURCES

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Fill in the blanks with 'when' or 'while'
(You must use 'while' for at least **three** times.)

- Mrs Wong was doing housework **while** her baby was sleeping.
- Sue was writing an email **when** her cat jumped onto her desk.
- when** the phone rang, Tom was having a shower.
- People were dancing happily **when** we arrived at the party.
- I found these photos **while** I was cleaning out my cupboards.
- While** I was standing outside the school, I saw a monkey.

The teacher could see students' answers and provide them with swift feedback.

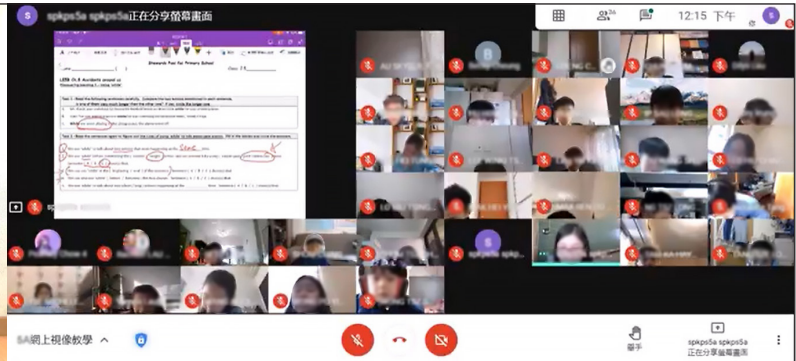
Classroom assessment has been used to check and reinforce student learning. Picture 4 illustrates how the more able students were challenged to practice high-order thinking. The students needed to tackle the question by applying the knowledge of both 'when' and 'while'. They were facilitated to re-read the rules and share their opinions with evidence. The culture of using student assessment performance to lead instructional and curriculum modifications has been acquired; it will take some more time to be secured.

4. Departmental Level and School Level

The facilitation of teacher collaboration, peer lesson observation and professional dialogues with regard to the features of both formative and summative assessments illustrated what being assessment literate entails and why teachers' assessment knowledge and competence are crucial to student learning. The school and curriculum leaders were made aware that the development of assessment literacy should be viewed as a career-long learning process, which is ongoing, experiential and collaborative. They will continue to learn and reflect on their practices to make improvements.



Collaborative lesson planning



Peer observation of online teaching

Areas for improvement

- ▶ Collecting students' first attempt data using e-Tools
- ▶ Peer-checking the answers if situation allowed so that students could explain how they found out their answers when there was a discrepancy
(Assessment as Learning)

Teacher reflection about a lesson taught

Way Forward

It was an absolute pleasure working with such a great team of P5 teachers, one of whom is the vice principal and former head of the English panel. With her leadership as well as the knowledge gained from the CEAL Project, it is likely that she will lead her colleagues to reinforce good assessment practices in all contexts. They will continue to see student engagement, learning target clarity and appropriateness as a foundation of sound assessment practice and advocate for student involvement in their learning through using assessment as a learning and teaching strategy. They will also continue to share their experiences with other subject departments and fellow CEAL schools in the future.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Discovering Grammar 1 — Using ‘When’

Read the following sentences carefully. Compare the two actions mentioned in each sentence. Is one of them longer than the other one?

If yes, **circle the longer one**

- A. I was walking by the school football pitch **when** some pupils waved at me.
- B. The cleaners were still cleaning **when** I left.
- C. My dog died **when** I was 5 years' old.
- D. **When** the teacher was writing on the blackboard, the whole class burst into laughter.
- E. Mom was ironing the clothes **when** dad was reading the newspaper.

The rules of using ‘when’

1. We use ‘when’ to talk about two actions that were happening at the _____ time.
2. When one action is longer than the other one, we usually use ‘when’ before the (shorter / longer) action and present it using (past / past continuous tense).
3. We can also use ‘when’ before the (shorter / longer) action. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E) show(s) that.
4. We can use ‘when’ at the (beginning / end) of the sentence. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E) show(s) that.
5. We can also use ‘when’ (before / between) the two clauses. Sentence(s) (A / B / C / D / E) show(s) that.

Appendix 2: Discovering Grammar 2 – Using ‘While’

Read the following sentences carefully. Compare the two actions mentioned in each sentence. Is one of them longer than the other one?

If yes, **circle the longer one**.

F. Mr. Kwok was watching his favourite football team on television **while** he was drinking beer.

G. The thieves broke into the woman's house and stole her baby **while** she was cooking in the kitchen.

H. **While** the children were playing in the playground, the alarm went off.

The rules of using ‘while’

1. We use ‘while’ to talk about two actions that were happening at the _____ time.
2. We use ‘while’ before mentioning the (shorter / longer) action and we present it using (past / past continuous tense). Sentence(s) (F / G / H) show(s) that.
3. We can use ‘while’ at the (beginning / end) of the sentence. Sentence(s) (F / G / H) show(s) that.
4. We can also use ‘while’ (before / between) the two clauses. Sentence(s) (F / G / H) shows that.

CASE 4

Alignment of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Kiangsu-Chekiang College (Shatin)

Alignment of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

School

Kiangsu-Chekiang College (Shatin)

Background

Teaching vocabulary in secondary schools can sometimes be frustrating. Students may rely on words they have learnt in primary school and are reluctant to push themselves to adopt vocabulary they are taught in secondary school. Such complacency is commonly seen in upper band schools. Kiangsu-Chekiang College (Shatin) (KCCS below) is one such case.

As Stahl (1999, p.7) puts it, 'vocabulary knowledge certainly affects comprehension'. This tendency may, in the long run, influence students' ability to comprehend. Teachers from KCCS also found that there was room to improve regarding students' performance in reading papers.

In face of these perennial issues, teachers wished to explore ways to motivate students to learn vocabulary, and enhance their skills in reading through vocabulary instructions.

Level

Secondary 2

Strategies Used

1. **Aligning Learning, Teaching and Assessment by Backward Planning**
2. **Designing Teaching Materials that Guide Learning**
3. **Adopting A Range of Classroom Assessments to Track Students' Learning**

Actions Taken

1. Vocabulary

a. **Aligning Learning, Teaching and Assessment by Backward Planning**

Effective lessons should clearly state the desired outcomes at the outset (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). With the end goal of broadening students' vocabulary, teachers reviewed the vocabulary section in exam papers, and agreed that students should be taught to use those words and spell them correctly. With these two desired results in mind, teachers made the following changes in assessment.

i. Analysing Reasons for Low Performance and Redefining Expectations

Picture 1: Vocabulary section from exam paper before collaboration (part of session)

2019/20 S2 First Exam

F. Vocabulary (10 marks)

Complete the passages below with the vocabulary provided in the word box. Use each word at most ONCE only.

species	insatiable	startled	skyscrapers	adversely	rational	endangered
pressing	glimpses	regret	consumption	stunning	casually	brink

Another Face of Hong Kong

Hong Kong is home to a diverse array of wildlife, so take a walk on the wild side and see the (1) _____ city in a whole new light.

Beyond its world famous (2) _____, Hong Kong is a city of contrasts. While it might appear like a big concrete jungle, visitors might be surprised to find that Hong Kong is also home to 262 outlying islands and

The old version of the vocabulary section provided word choices for students (Picture 1). Students were asked to select words with the right meaning and part of speech to complete the passage. Although words were given, the task was still very challenging to many of them. Upon reflection, teachers came up with two possible reasons:

- Students were not motivated to revise vocabulary.
- Students did not assimilate grammatical sentence structures.

Besides, concerns about whether students could really learn and apply the words taught were raised. Teachers pointed out that students showed limited vocabulary in writing and speaking. Noticing these problems, teachers agreed that a change in assessment format should be made. Instead of providing options to students, the first letters of words were given in the blanks and students were required to spell the words themselves (Picture 2).

Picture 2: New testing format of vocabulary section

2020/21 S2 First Exam
<p><u>Part 3 Vocabulary (10 marks)</u></p> <p>A. Basic Level (10 marks)</p> <p><i>Complete the article with the vocabulary in the Unit 3 and Unit 4 vocabulary lists. The first letter has been given as hints. You should make sure that your answers are spelt correctly <u>with the first letter</u> given.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Let's go Plastic-free</p> <p>Hong Kong is an international financial centre. But it isn't all banks and (1) s_____. There are plenty of great beaches to swim, (2) s_____ and wind-surf. But in recent years, the (3) s_____ views of beaches are ruined by the</p>

b. Revamping Teaching Materials

i. Vocabulary List

To make vocabulary teaching more focused, the original vocabulary list was redesigned. Three questions were put forth and the subsequent criteria were suggested by teachers:

- How to select words?
 - Words that are common and generally useful for students to know with reference to their frequency, usefulness, transferability and difficulty.
- What to include apart from words?
 - Parts of speech and meanings
- How to arrange the content?
 - According to the order of appearance in the text
 - Dividing word lists into basic and challenging parts

To help students build vocabulary, 'teachers should also take note of their frequency of occurrence across different text types and the vocabulary demand in non-language subjects' (The Curriculum Development Council, 2017, p.35). Since the old list was considered lengthy and with words that might be hard to frequently recycle (Picture 3), teachers intentionally chose words that would meet students' needs in reading and writing this time. Besides, parts of speech and meanings were provided so as to assist students to comprehend passages.

Attention was paid to the list arrangement. Words were arranged in their order of appearance in the text for easy reference. To cater for learner diversity, the set of words was categorised into 'basic level' and 'challenging level' (Picture 4 & 5). Teachers selected words that they expected students to be able to spell and apply as core vocabulary. The words that teachers would want students to recognise and know the meaning at this stage were put in the 'challenging level' table.

Picture 3: Vocabulary list before collaboration

Unit 3 - Grow a sustainable future

Vocabulary	Part of speech	Meaning
1. incinerator	(n.)	a furnace for destroying things by burning them, especially waste
2. critic	(n.)	a person who expresses an unfavorable opinion of something.
3. foolproof	(adj.)	incapable of going wrong or being misused
4. eliminate	(v.)	to get rid of; do away with
5. emission	(n.)	the production and release of something, especially gas
6. fume	(n.)	Gas; vapor; harmful smoke.
7. outrageous	(adj.)	shocking
8. vegetarian	(n.)	a person who does not eat meat
9. insatiable	(adj.)	impossible to satisfy
10. appetite	(n.)	desire for food
11. unsettling	(adj.)	causing nervousness or anxiety, disturbing
12. insanitary	(adj.)	so dirty or ridden with germs as to be a danger to health
13. adverse	(adj.)	Not helpful; harmful
14. ingest	(v.)	to take food, drugs, etc. into your body, usually by swallowing
15. massive	(adj.)	large and heavy; great in size or scope
16. urgency	(n.)	importance requiring quick action
17. pressing	(adj.)	requiring immediate attention; urgent
18. brink	(n.)	the edge of something
19. drought	(n.)	a long period without rain
20. severe	(adj.)	very bad or serious

Picture 4: Words students were expected to master their usage and spelling were put in the basic level table

Basic Level

Vocabulary	Part of speech	Meaning
1. sustainable	(adj.)	causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time
sustainability	(n.)	the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment
2. excessive	(adj.)	too much or too many
3. adopt	(v.)	to accept or start to use something new
4. appetite	(n.)	desire for food
5. livestock	(n.)	animals and birds that are kept on a farm, such as cows, sheep, or chickens
6. deforest	(v.)	to cut down or destroy trees in an area
7. adverse	(adj.)	Not helpful; harmful
8. massive	(adj.)	large and heavy; great in size or scope
9. pressing	(adj.)	requiring immediate attention; urgent
10. disaster	(n.)	a sudden event that causes a lot of damage, such as a very bad fire, storm, or accident

Picture 5: Words that students were expected to recognise and know the meaning were put in the challenging level

Challenging Level

Vocabulary	Part of speech	Meaning
1. insatiable	(adj.)	impossible to satisfy
2. the atmosphere	(n. phrase)	the mixture of gases around the earth
3. insanitary	(adj.)	so dirty or ridden with germs as to be a danger to health
4. contribution	(n.)	something that you contribute or do to help produce or achieve something together with other people, or to help make something successful
5. undeniably	(adv.)	in a way that is truly certain

ii. Vocabulary Worksheets

Students were guided to understand a word's meaning and part of speech through sentence making. Making sentences of all the words on the list would be a tedious job. With this in mind, teachers offered options. Students could choose words from the list to construct sentences.

Picture 6: Worksheet on sentence making and extended response

Sentence making

(a) Circle two words and use them to make two sentences.
 (b) Use any words in the table to complete the sentence about the text.

	Word	Sentence
1.	sustainable sustainability	Sentence (1) <i>It will help the environment if you adopt a vegetarian diet.</i>
2.	excessive	
3.	adopt	
4.	appetite	Sentence (2) <i>The farm keeps many livestock so that it sells them with a large amount every day and becomes rich.</i>
5.	livestock	
6.	deforest	

Excessive appetite for meat is bad for the environment because *livestock* releases some greenhouse gases to cause global warming, so we need to *adopt* a vegetarian diet.

A student's response to 'About the Text'

Further to sentence making, a sentence for completion was set to test students' understanding of the text. It also offered room for students to recycle the taught vocabulary. As seen from the above student's work, a student used the target words '*livestock*' and '*adopt*' in his/her extended response (Picture 6).

c. Adopting Classroom Assessments to Inform Teaching

Formative classroom assessments are activities conducted by teachers to track students' learning, give feedback accordingly, and modify their instructions that would improve student's motivation and learning (McMillan, 2007). Several activities were undertaken by teachers to serve the above purposes.

i. Admit Slip

Admit slip is used as a means to gauge student understanding about a given topic at the beginning of lesson. It can test students' prior knowledge when a new topic is introduced, or be served as a way to check if students have grasped things taught in the previous lesson. While grading is not needed, admit slip is a platform for students to reflect on learning, and at the same time, provide information for teachers to decide if they have to re-teach certain areas.

Picture 7: Google Document as admit slip

Admit slip: write down 3 words you learnt in paragraphs 1 & 2

1. deforest	2. adopt deforest excessive	3.	4. Adopt Excessive livestock	5. Adopt Excessive Deforest	6. Adopt Deforest livestock
7	8 Insatiable Deforest Adopt Insatiable sustainability	9 excessive	10. adopt Deforest Livestock	12. adopt Livestock deforest	14 Insatiable Adopt Livestock
15 adopt livestock deforest	16	17.	18 Deforest adopt atmosphere	19 adopt deforest sustainability	20 adopt deforest livestock
21 adopt Deforest excessive	22 Adopt deforest livestock	23 Adopt Insatiable Appetite	24. Adopt deforest Livestock	25. 1) adopt 2) Insatiable 3) deforestation	26 1. adopt 2. deforest 3. livestock
27 Adopt Deforest insatiable	28. Livestock Atmosphere excessive	29. Adopt Livestock deforest	30. adopt Livestock excessive	31 Adopt Excessive Deforest	32 Adopt Livestock excessive

Students that needed more attention

Words that teachers might need to re-teach

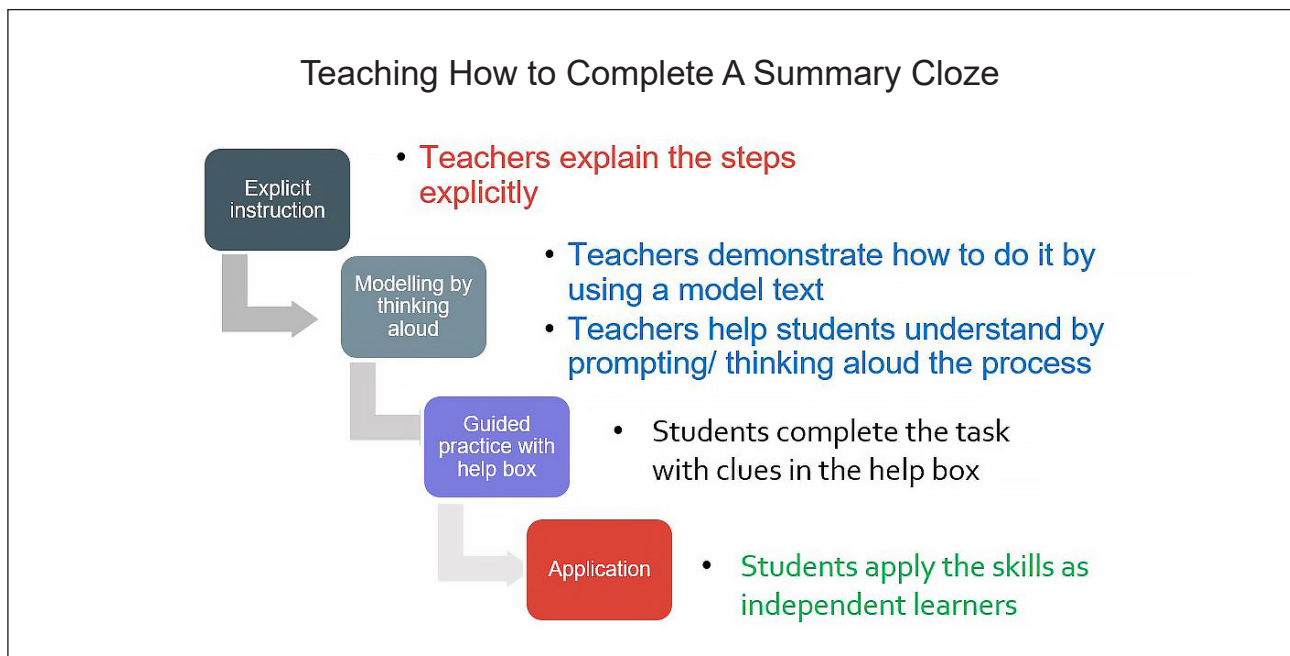
During school suspension period, teachers adopted Google Drive Document as admit slip. Students were asked to type three words they had learnt in the previous lesson on the document. The numbered boxes corresponded to students' seat numbers, where students typed in words in their respective boxes.

This quick activity allowed teachers to know words that were less familiar among students (Picture 7). From the result, only two students recalled the word '*sustainability*' and just one remembered the word '*atmosphere*'. The teacher then realised it was worth teaching the less commonly recalled words again in the lesson. Such follow-up action would result in spacing effect, which refers to outcome brought when content taught in a spread-out-through-time manner instead of being crammed in a short period of time. It is found that spacing effect in teaching vocabulary would produce a higher long-term retention compared to massed learning (Sobel, Cepeda, & Kapler, 2011). Applying admit slip as classroom assessment to track students' learning can therefore modify teaching, and at the same time help students learn more effectively.

Besides, a few students were found lagging behind or not being on task during Zoom lesson as their boxes were empty. Actions were then taken to see if those students encountered any problems.

2. Comprehension – Summary Cloze

Picture 8: Flow chat of new teaching approach on summary cloze



a. Aligning Learning, Teaching and Assessment by Backward Planning

In the second term, teachers identified summary cloze in the reading comprehension section needed support. Unlike vocabulary in the first term, a consensus was drawn on keeping the format of summary cloze. To attach importance to this part, more marks were

allocated to summary cloze in the final exam. Greater variation on sub-questions came with higher weighting was allocated to the summary cloze. This could provide a fuller picture to see if students had grasped the skills (Picture 9 & 10).

Picture 9: Table of grammar skills assessed in S2 2019/20 Final Exam Paper (Before collaboration)

Words from the text	Answers in Q.4	Grammar Tested
i. 1,510 deaths	i. to die	to + infinitive
ii. ... zero overdose deaths	ii. nobody has died	subject, vocabulary
iii. more than 270,000 visits annually	iii. is visited	passive voice

Picture 10: Table of grammar skills assessed in S2 2020/21 Final Exam Paper (After collaboration)

Words from the text	Answers in Q.11	Grammar Tested
iv. You can stroll	iv. strolling	suggest + gerund
v. after shopping	v. after shopping	N.A.
vi. different themed areas	vi. different themes	adj. + noun (plural)
vii. After taking photos	vii. can take	modal (can) + infinitive
viii. enjoy... dining	viii. can...dine	modal (can) + infinitive
ix. making a wish come true	ix. to make	to + infinitive
x. is then tossed	x. by tossing	prep. + gerund

b. Teaching Materials

i. Employing Word Formation Table to Work on Target Vocabulary

One of the strategies to build vocabulary is to teach students to use knowledge of word formation (The Curriculum Development Council, 2017). To train students in summary cloze skills, a past paper was chosen as teaching material. The words that were answers for the summary cloze question, together with the ones worth highlighting in the passage were put in a word formation table (Picture 11). In the table, students were asked to write down other parts of speech of the selected words. It was supplemented with an exercise for students to apply these words in sentence level. The aims behind such design were threefold:

- To expose students to the various forms of the target words.
- To provide them with opportunities to use the words grammatically.
- To guide them to attempt sentence structures that they would face in the adapted paper.

Picture 11: Word formation table

Word Formation

Fill in different parts of speech of the words below.

	Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
1.	N.A.		cultural	
2.	speculate			N.A.
3.			innovative	
4.	substitute			N.A.
5.		immigrant/immigration	N.A.	N.A.
6.	influence			
7.		theory		
8.	travel			N.A.

Following this table was a set of sentences with blanks for students to use the words above to complete meaning. The design of the exercise is discussed in 2.b.ii below.

ii. Designing Teaching Materials that Guide Students to ‘Think-aloud’

‘Think aloud’ is a common strategy that teachers vocalise what they are thinking so as to model the process to tackle a task for students. For students who are attempting comprehension questions, such verbal think-aloud process may not be feasible. Therefore, modification was done to teaching materials in which students were guided to undergo the process in a written manner. Help boxes were put next to each blank in the summary cloze section. Respective sentence patterns and part of speech rules were explained in the boxes. By visualising the thinking process of a teacher, students were led to arrive at answers step by step.

Picture 12: Exercise for students to apply the target words

Fill in the following sentences by choosing a word from the above table. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct. In the bracket, fill in the part of speech of the chosen word. The first one has been done for you as example. The clue box underneath each sentence provides you hint. Circle the right choice among the options given.

- He has a **theory (n)** that the particular germ caused this deadly disease. Whether or not his idea is correct is yet to be proved.

○ We usually have a verb/noun/adj/adv after the article 'a'
- As an international school, our students are from _____ () diverse backgrounds. There are Chinese, British, Dutch, Japanese, American, Malaysian and Thai students. They have different religions and traditions.

○ diverse is a(n) verb/noun/adj/adv
○ To describe it, we need a(n) verb/noun/adj/adv
- Before pandemic, he _____ () to at least four different countries every year. Now he can only visit various places locally in Hong Kong.

○ In a sentence, we have Subject + verb/noun/adj/adv + object
○ The first sentence talks about things in the present/ past/ future

Help box

iii. Providing Options to Students During Practice

Several changes were made to the original past paper question to assist students. Echoing the vocabulary exercise mentioned in 2.b.ii, brackets requiring students to fill in the part of speech were added to the target question in the past paper. It aimed to once again draw students' attention to the importance of sentence structures in attempting summary cloze.

As more able students might have already picked up skills elicited in the first exercise, the help boxes were put as a separate section this time to serve as an optional input. Should the students need support for a particular question, or all questions, they could refer to the help boxes located at the lower part of the page. Otherwise, students could just complete the summary cloze. This handy arrangement of teaching materials could cater for learner diversity in two ways:

- More able students could focus on the summary cloze only.
- Less able students could refer to the help box(es) and had the autonomy of using the amount of support they needed.

Picture 13: Original summary cloze question in past paper

7. Complete the following summary chart of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 using either words from the passage or your own words. Use ONE word to complete each blank. (5 marks)

Picture 14: Adapted summary cloze question for practice

Summary Cloze (changing POS) (2nd Form Test 1819 Q.7)
 Complete the following summary chart of paragraph 2, 3 and 4 using either words from the passage or your own words. Use ONE word to complete each blank. You may need to change the forms in order to provide grammatically correct answers. (10 marks)

Help box (Optional)
 Use this box to assist you to come up with the POS of the words to be filled in.

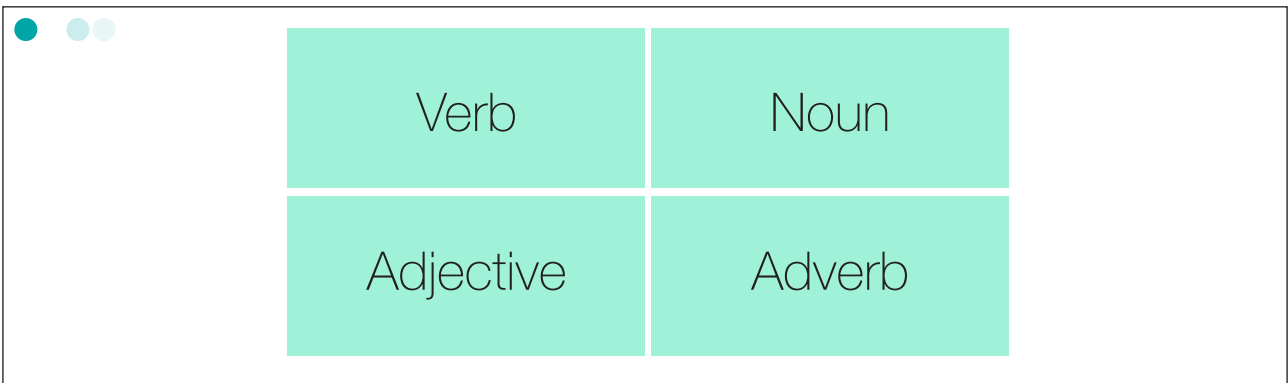
	Note Circle the option that you think is correct	If you have chosen a verb, what tense should you use?
i.	Chefs + <u>verb/noun/adj/adv</u> + it (S + V + O)	
ii.	..., which is much _____ o Which → relative pronoun, meaning 'it' o Much is commonly used in comparison: e.g. 'much higher', 'much thinner' o It + is + much + <u>verb/noun/adj/adv</u>	
iii.	Egg tart imitators from Guangzhou + <u>verb/noun/adj/adv</u> + to Hong Kong (S+V+O)	
iv.	... to Hong Kong together with Chinese _____ Chinese is a(an) <u>verb/noun/adj/adv</u> , which is to describe a(an) <u>verb/noun/adj/adv</u>	
v.	The egg tart was _____ by pastel de nata. This sentence is in <u>passive/active</u> voice. The blank should be a word in <u>verb/noun/adj/adv</u> form.	

c. Adopting A Range of Classroom Assessments to Track Students’ Learning

Understanding the right parts of speech (POS) plays a pivotal role in doing summary cloze. Teachers mainly employed word cards and exit card to learn what students struggled with.

i. Word Cards

With similar application as admit slip, teachers guided students to write down verb, noun, adjective and adverb on a piece of A4 paper:



At the beginning of the lesson, teachers showed the target words on the screen. They had been taught the previous lesson. In order to recall the words’ nature, teachers asked students to fold the paper and raise the word’s corresponding POS. The activity could give teachers a general idea on whether certain words they needed to re-teach. Furthermore, it also served as a self-assessment that made students aware of their learning.

ii. Exit Card


Teachers outlined the process to handle summary cloze in five steps. Before the end of the lesson, teachers showed the following slide and checked if students had picked up the main focus of the lesson.

Picture 15: Exit card at the end of lesson

EXIT CARD

What are the steps of completing a summary cloze?

1. _____ keywords in the cloze.
2. Look for _____ around the blank.
3. Label the _____ and identify the sentence structure.
4. Locate the answer in the reading passage with the help of keywords.
5. Fill in the blank with correct _____.



Impact

1. Student level

Improvement in students' performance in both the vocabulary section and summary cloze in exams was observed. Although the new vocabulary section was more challenging when compared with the old version, students were able to spell words in the basic section, and many attempted the challenging part in the bonus section as well. Similar situation also happened to summary cloze. With more sub-questions, teachers expressed that students did a better job in summary cloze in the final exam. This is evidence that the strategies used were conducive to better learning.

On the whole, the project motivated students to participate in class. In particular, students were enthusiastic about the word card (admit slip) activity as observed by teachers. Using an individual set of word cards to show answers, the risk of making mistakes in front of the class was greatly reduced. Students were therefore more willing to respond in class.

2. Teacher Level

Having participated in the entire process of backward planning, teachers expressed that this approach would better assist them to plan the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. To design what is worth learning, teachers now begin with the end in mind. There are three things they focus on:

- What students are going to do with this topic in the final assessment?
- How was the students' performance in the past assessment?
- What problems would students face in learning this topic?

The above questions steer teachers in planning teaching materials and activities.

Since students' abilities and learning problems may differ year by year, timely changes and adaptations need to be made to suit students' needs. Teachers have recognised the importance of using diversified classroom assessments to track students' learning, and more importantly, to use the information collected to adjust their instructions accordingly.

3. Curriculum Level

This collaboration brought about two layers of impact to the English panel.

A learning circle is developed among S2 form teachers. They reviewed past student performance and located two specific areas to tackle. Professional exchanges on what to teach and how to teach were facilitated by the collaboration. The changes made to the vocabulary list and the teaching of summary cloze in this project will be kept and reused in the next academic year.

Moreover, such a form-based teaching experiment and try-out success was used as a pilot study for the panel to kick start changes in other forms. Since the two panel heads participated in the entire collaboration, problems identified and strategies used in the project were easily disseminated to other forms. During collaboration in the first term, panel heads saw the potential benefits of the new vocabulary teaching and therefore communicated with S1 and S3 teachers to adopt similar approach of having basic and challenging vocabulary sections:

Picture 16: Vocabulary section in S1 First Term Exam Paper 2020/21 (part of the section)

Section 4 Vocabulary (13 marks)

Part 1 Basic Level: *You are writing a blog entry about a charity that helps children. Complete the blog entry using the correct form of the words from the Basic Level Vocabulary list. The first letter of each word is given as a hint. You should make sure that your answers are spelt correctly **with the first letter** given. Part 1 is compulsory. (13 marks)*

Help a child in-need get a chance in life

There are many charities in the world which aim to (1) c_____ poverty but *Save-A-Child* aims to do so by connecting individual donors to individual children, one-to-one. Each donor agrees to (2) s_____ at least one child.

Part 2 Challenging Level: *You are writing a blog about being a teenager during the COVID-19 school suspension. Complete the blog entry using the correct form of the words from the Advanced Level Vocabulary list. The first letter of each word is given as a hint. Part 2 is **not** compulsory.*

(2.5 bonus marks, 0.5 marks each)

Adolescence is a difficult time of life in general; the (1) r_____ we go through as so many changes are happening to our minds and bodies are immense. But my generation has to experience a totally new (2) p_____: going to school online during a global pandemic.

The strategies used in teaching summary cloze will be introduced and promoted in the other forms in the coming academic year.

Way Forward

Dissemination of strategies and the application of backward planning are considered to be practical and effective to bring along changes after conducting the CEAL project. The panel has laid down two areas to focus on:

- To facilitate the sharing of experiences and strategies among junior forms
- To strengthen the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment

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CASE 5

**Backward Design in Curriculum
Design to Strengthen the
Learning-Teaching-Assessment
Alignment:
A Case Study of A Diverse
Learner Setting**

PAOC Ka Chi Secondary School

Backward Design in Curriculum Design to Strengthen the Learning-Teaching-Assessment Alignment: A Case Study of A Diverse Learner Setting

School

PAOC Ka Chi Secondary School

Background

As a Chinese Medium-of-Instruction school (CMI) with a multicultural student body, there is huge learning diversity among a single student cohort. Students of the school are allocated to different English classes according to their English abilities, yet the diversity is still great in comparison to many other local schools.

The change in the listening assessment format presents a more challenging level of English learning. The S3 to S4 transition, listening tasks in particular, poses a challenge to students of the school. Teachers reflected that the current S4 core curriculum may not fully address class-based needs.

To make learning and teaching more effective, teachers adopted backward planning in the curriculum design to enhance the alignment of learning-teaching-assessment (L-T-A). The goal was to help students better learn, develop and practise listening skills more specific to short listening tasks. It was hoped students' confidence would also be built gradually if self-improvement would be seen.

Level

S4¹

¹ 2020/21 is the second year that the school collaborates with QSIP on CEAL Project. The school obtained permission from the EDB granted for the collaboration to take place in S4.

Strategies Used

1. Review of Student Performance, Curriculum Design and Internal Assessment

At the beginning of Term One, teachers reviewed the 2019/20 marker's report of S3 final examination Paper 3 to analyse students' performance. Along with the observations made by the teachers from their first month of teaching, teachers concluded that there was a need to strengthen the English foundation of the current S4 cohort. Partly due to school suspension, there was insufficient regular listening practice. It was revealed that students had difficulties adjusting to the spelling of commonly used words, theme-specific vocabulary, and thus the demanding Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) listening tasks.

The following shows the analysis conducted by the S4 teachers.

Curriculum and Materials Review		
S3 English to S4 English Transition		
ASPECT	S3 English	S4 English
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and short TSA Practice Tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longer and more integrative HKDSE Exam Practices
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to simple data Copying simple information Completing short integrated tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to key information Note-taking Reading instructional texts Completing writing tasks
Challenges Collaborative Lesson Planning: PAPER 3 MARKER'S REPORTS + BLOCK 1 T&L REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak English foundation Not enough regular practices Slow in listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to adjust to more challenging tasks Spelling/vocabulary become VERY taxing in tasks Time management
Teaching strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class-based strategies Selective short tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam Paper Practices

Below is the sample of questions selected in Part A listening examination for item analysis.

Item Analysis

Remarks
to much
con...
to much
cum...tion
to mich
...tion
to much
per...
com...tion
co...tion
communication
commuitcation

Observation:

→ **communication** written as cum...tion/ com...tion/...tion

→ **too much** written as to much

Positive reflection	Negative reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to catch the pronunciation • Tried to make use of the phonic skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not able to manage some core vocabulary

Item Analysis

ANS: surprised	ANS: relieved	ANS: thrilled	ANS: fascinated
Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
disappointed	1	fascinated	thrilled
1	1	fascinated	offended
1	1	1	1
disappointed	1	fascinated	surprised
thrilled	1	surprised	1
thrilled	1	fascinated	surprised
thrilled	1	fascinated	surprised
thrilled	1	fascinated	surprised

Observation:

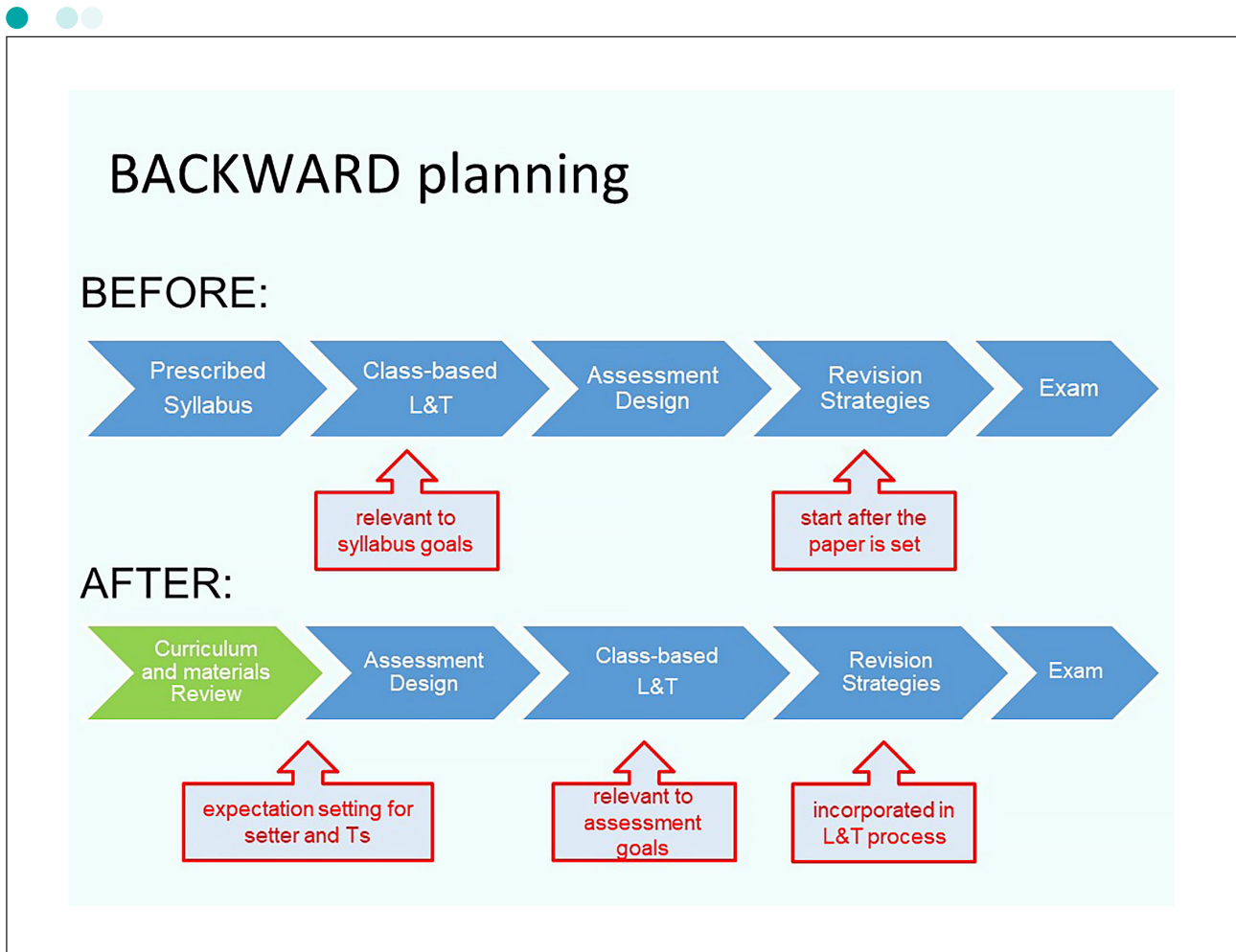
→ **Confused meaning:**

- surprised
- thrilled
- fascinated

Positive reflection	Negative reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can identify speaker's feeling by speaker's intonation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient understanding of the meaning/context for the feeling

2. Backward Planning

With an aim to help students bridge the gap between learning and assessment, teachers rearranged the steps in planning of Part A in the listening paper. The following shows the difference in steps taken in the 2020/21 school year.



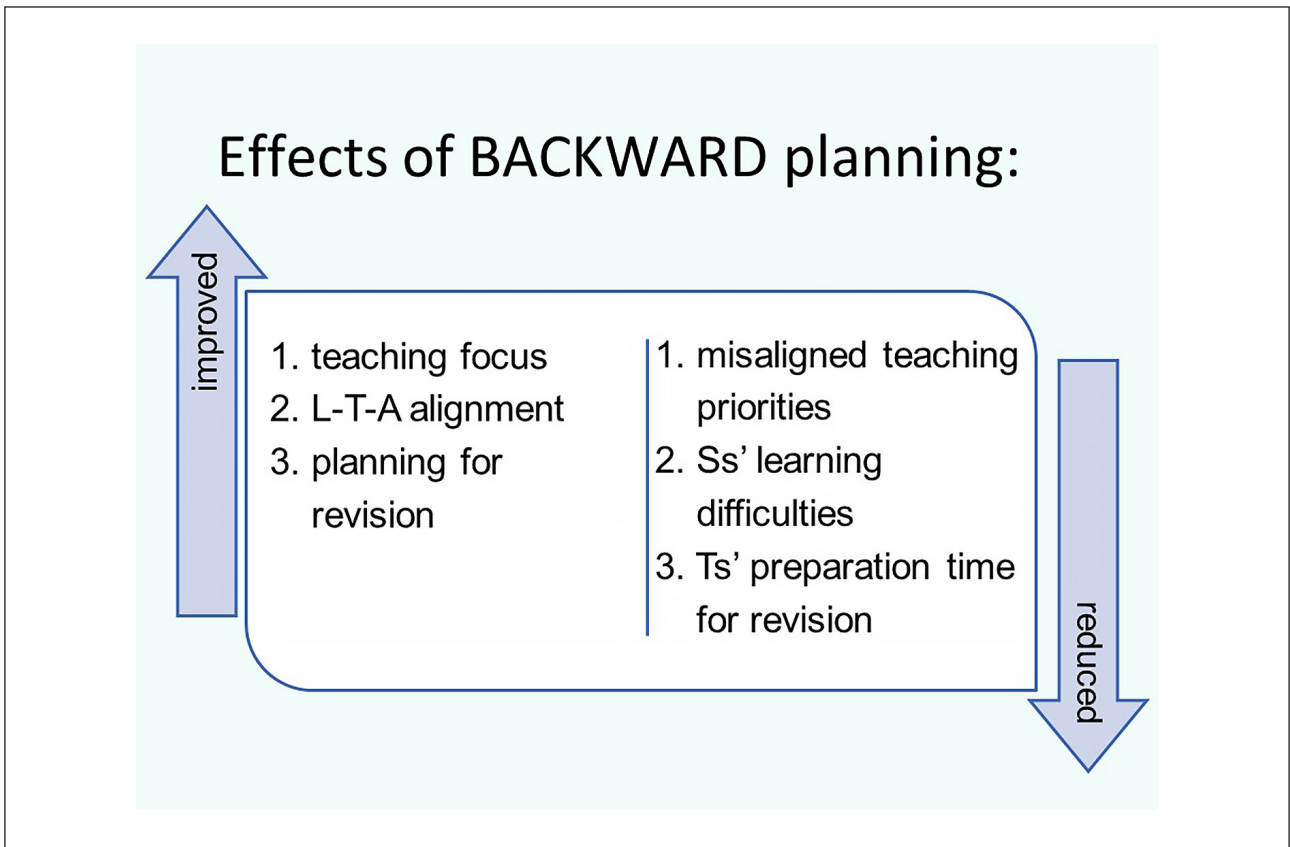
From a team perspective, the use of backward planning allows teachers to be more focused on their teaching priorities, that is, listening skills or items to be taught. In the past, teachers tended to put too much focus on class-based needs which resulted in a misalignment in learning-teaching-assessment.

Instead of solely focusing on the specific class-based needs, teachers could then adjust their teaching focus and pace according to the assessment framework designed prior to learning and teaching.

Since teachers set the examination paper at the initial stage of the planning of the Part A listening curriculum, they were well aware of what would be the essential testing items in the standardised test. The test served as formative assessment for teachers to feedback learning and teaching. Based on the data collected from the standardised test, teachers incorporated skills / items which students' did not do well in the revision. This made teaching focus very clear to teachers.

Teachers found their learning and teaching more closely tied to the assessment. And with the more defined and specific assessment goals, not only are the class-based needs being addressed, the diversity in each class was also addressed.

A summary of the effects of backward planning is shown in the following. ● ●●



3. Adaptation of Curriculum, Materials and Assessment Design

Given the major challenges for the students were on spelling and vocabulary, the S4 Paper 3 Exam setter revised the initial draft of the Term One listening examination paper.

Keeping the topics and audio materials at the S4 level, teachers allowed themselves to compromise the levels of answer writing for this first-time HKDSE-format listening paper to

a format that required less spelling or lengthy answer writing. Teachers also simplified the wording in some questions to make comprehension more manageable for students.

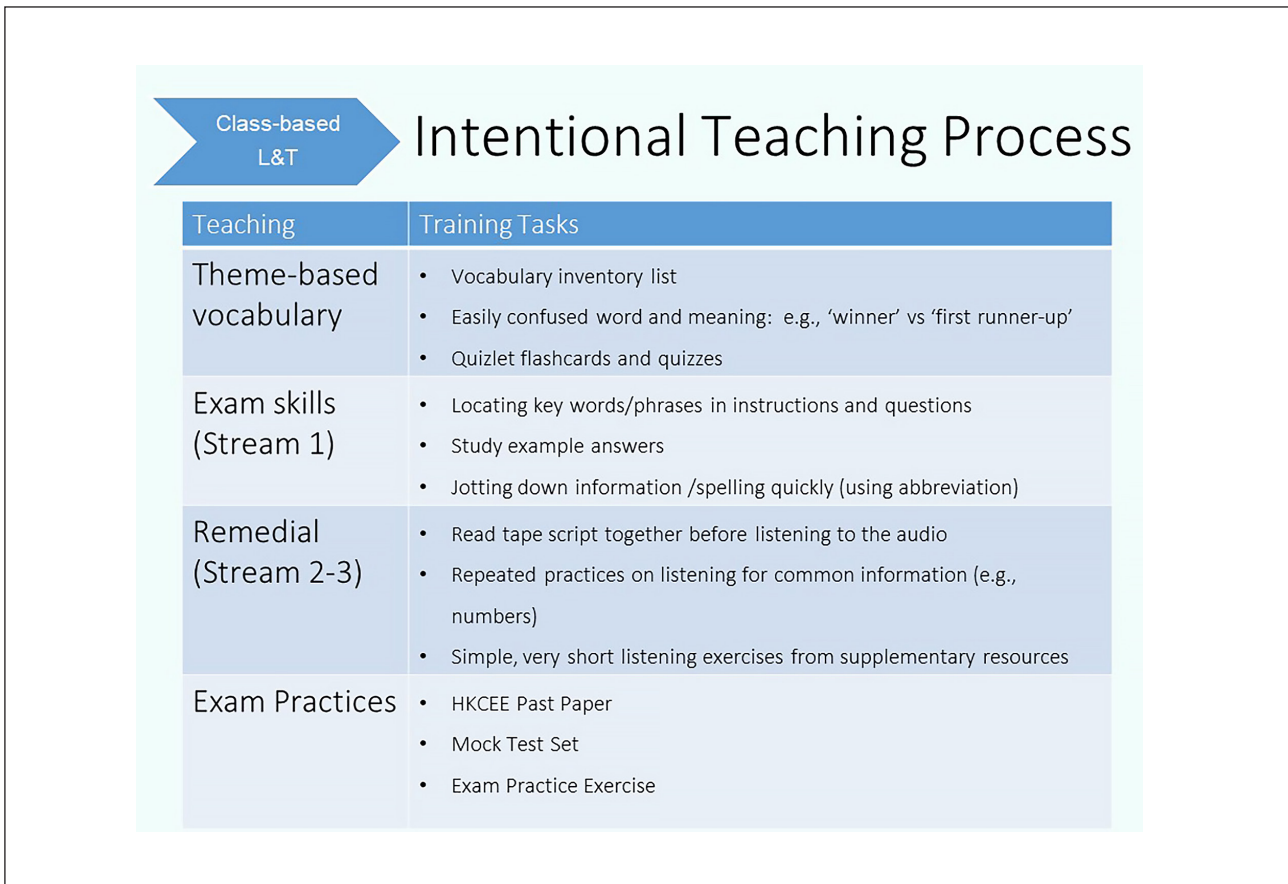
Assessment Design		S4 TERM 1 EXAM PAPER 3 SETTING	
ASPECT	S4 PAPER 3 PARTA (Draft 1)	S4 PAPER 3 PARTA (Final)	
Scope and level of difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● relevant to topics in textbook teaching ● authentic conversations* (setter's own design) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● relevant topics (KEPT) ● adaptation of S3 to S4 bridging materials 	
Part A Question Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multiple-choice ● Blank-filling ● Table completion ● Tone/attitude identification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● listening for numbers ● one-word blank-filling ● picture matching ● authentic conversations* (KEPT as Task 4 for a challenge) 	
Collaborative Lesson Planning Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Too challenging for students to comprehend the questions (Will students need to process too many words in questions?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most answers relevant to textbook teaching ● Fewer words in questions (more manageable for comprehension) 	

After revising the standardised assessment, as teachers returned to lesson planning, it became very clear to teachers how to adjust the next step of teaching. They intentionally focus on helping students bridge their learning to assessment.

For example, knowing specifically that there would be several questions related to listening to numbers and figures, students in Stream 2 and Stream 3², then focused more on practices related to listening to numbers.

²Stream 2 & 3 were classes consisted of less able students.

Having known what would the testing points be in the assessment, the teacher of Stream 1³ planned lessons that focused on training students' examination listening skills which the class had yet to master. In this way, teaching was not necessarily bounded by the same focus used in other classes.



Instead of focusing on intensive drilling with too much content, teachers wanted to go back to the principle of keeping the listening tasks and revision meaningful for the students. Hence, a series of materials were developed. Some were for students' own revision. Some tasks served as formative assessment tasks. For example, after practicing on Quizlet, an online learning tool, students were to read out the words and record them for their teacher to listen.

³ Stream 1 consisted of a majority of non-Chinese students (NCS), who are more able in English.

MEANINGFUL Learning Tasks and Self-Evaluation

- Audio-visual vocabulary aids
- Vocabulary inventory
- Short tapescripts for revision on common dialogue patterns
- Basic, short listening tasks on targeted listening skills



Vocabulary Inventory, Short article reading on targeted topics (words from exam script/questions, targeted themes)

Audio Word Cards (Quizlet)

Short Listening Tasks: (with audio clips, simple listening, reading of tapescripts)

Instruction Reading Practice (revise textbook practice tasks)

Supplementary listening tasks (from online ESL resources)

4. Self-reflection

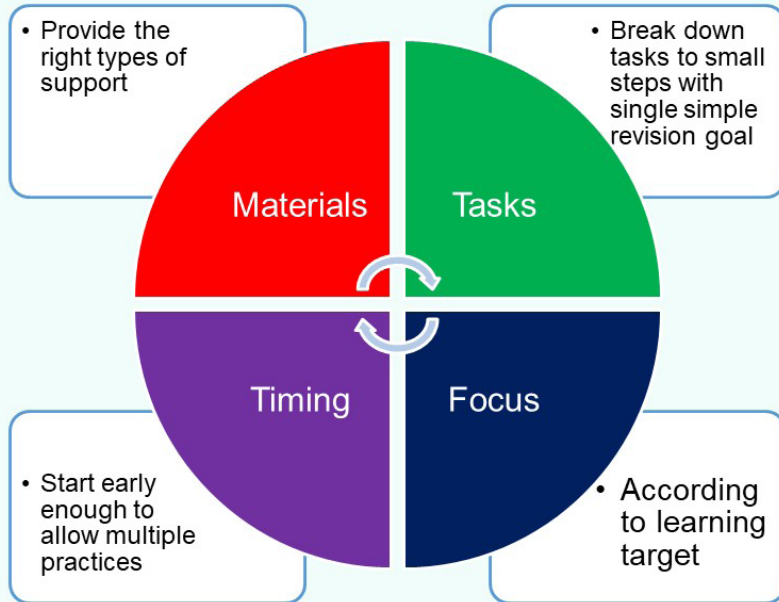
As a reflection of formative assessments, teachers concluded that the Part A listening materials should provide the right types of support, the tasks should be broken down to small steps with just one single, simple learning goal. Rather than having various goals in one task, which overwhelmed the students.

The curriculum design on the part of revision did not stay within the design of revision materials, but it should be a holistic planning of the learning focus, design of materials, presentation of tasks, and schedule of implementation.

The focus of revision should be set according to targeted performance instead of an overly ambitious goal.

With that teachers were able to better plan the time for implementation, allowing sufficient time for repeated practices.

A holistic planning after evaluation



Actions Taken

Needs analysis was conducted prior to the commencement of the collaboration to determine the target area for improvement on learning and teaching of listening. External and internal assessment papers, markers' reports and learning and teaching materials were studied.

A workshop on assessment literacy on listening for all English Panel members was conducted. Suggestions on assessment design and how the learning and teaching of listening could be further improved were discussed with teachers of different levels in the session.

Impact

1. Student Level

As a result of the tryout of using more formative assessment tasks in the lesson, teachers observed that fewer answers were left blank in the mid-term and final exam. This implies that more students were motivated in attempting the listening paper.

The use of tasks like audio-visual vocabulary aids, vocabulary inventory tasks, short tape scripts for revision have helped students, less able ones in particular, tremendously in building up habits of prioritising their focus and better preparing themselves for the tasks ahead.

Students' confidence in doing listening tasks is slowly but gradually being built.

2. Teacher Level

Teachers who have been collaborating in the CEAL project for two consecutive years are apparently highly aware of the importance and effectiveness of using backward design when mapping the curriculum. Accumulating two years of experience, teachers are gradually developing the use of backward design in curriculum design and aligning L-T-A in their daily lesson planning.

The use of a vocabulary inventory list (*see Appendix 1*), for example, has become a regular formative assessment activity in lessons. Teachers find it a very useful and easy-to-use tool to collect information about students' learning to feedback teaching methods.

Teachers have been much better informed about students' strengths and weaknesses with backward planning in place. Designing the examination paper prior to teaching proved to enhance the effectiveness in learning and teaching.

3. Curriculum Level

The L-T-A cycle has been strengthened through a review of internal assessment papers and learning and teaching materials. Teachers then decide on the challenging parts for students and testing points to be assessed in the examination. By adopting backward design in the curriculum planning, teachers set the examination paper during lesson planning, that is prior to teaching of the relevant listening skills.

4. Department Level and School Level

The internal change agents, teachers who collaborated in the CEAL project, have been promoting and leading the implementation of strategies like backward planning in the different junior forms. They also practised strengthening the L-T-A cycle in listening and other language items.

At the internal dissemination session conducted towards the end of the academic year, the assessment practices tried out in other subject departments were shared. Item analysis were tried out in the Mathematics panel. Provision of immediate feedback to students by engaging them in formative assessments in the classroom were adopted in some junior form Chinese lessons.

Way Forward

Senior forms:

- For less able students, consolidation of common spellings by regular short, multiple dictations on the same targeted words is essential.
- Better L-T-A aligned assessment tasks on listening skill practices are to be used for more effective learning, teaching and students' self-evaluation.
- Instead of repeated revision tasks, more frequent and regular formative assessment tasks of the appropriate level and with more scaffolding as learning support are to be designed for revision and more effective feedback purposes.
- Backward planning to be adopted in curriculum planning across all four skills for horizontal alignment.

Junior forms:

- Further alignment of learning, teaching goals with assessment goals.
- Plan listening curriculum from a more holistic perspective, e.g., not to compartmentalise learning and teaching of listening.
- Set learning goals to beyond fulfilling Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) and textbook-task requirements.
- More emphasis on enhancing students' awareness of English word pronunciation and common English dialogues when teaching reading, writing, and speaking.

If readers are interested in learning more about assessment literacy, the following books could be useful resources.

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford University Press.

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

Regier, N. (2012): *Book two: 60 formative assessment strategies*. Regier Educational Resources.

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

Appendix

Appendix 1: Vocabulary Inventory List ● ●●

Vocabulary Inventory List

Vocabulary Inventory (WS 2)

- Put a “+” in the box if you know the meaning.
- Put a “O” in the box if you don’t know the meaning.
- Put a “?” in the box if you are not sure of the meaning.

Useful adjectives

	Vocabulary	+ / O / ?
1	complicated	
2	cowardly	
3	demanding	
4	depressing	
5	encouraging	
6	happy	
7	mean	
8	practical	
9	satisfactory	
10	serious	
11	silly	
12	stressful	
13	unbearable	
14	unhappy	

Listening Exam Revision

Vocabulary Inventory (WS 1)

- Put a “+” in the box if you know the meaning.
- Put a “O” in the box if you don’t know the meaning.
- Put a “?” in the box if you are not sure of the meaning.

Words talking about problems

	Vocabulary	+ / O / ?
1	bullying	
2	challenges	
3	commit crimes	
4	complaints	
5	fail	
6	family problem	
7	language problem	
8	little pocket money	
9	materialism	
10	peer pressure	
11	poor communication	
12	stress	
13	study	
14	temptation	
15	too much homework	

CASE 6

**Using Assessment Data and
Different Assessment Modes to
Inform and Improve Instruction
and Student Learning:
A Case in Writing**

Tin Shui Wai Methodist College

Using Assessment Data and Different Assessment Modes to Inform and Improve Instruction and Student Learning: A Case in Writing

School

Tin Shui Wai Methodist College

Background

Having focused on improving the teaching and assessment of reading skills in the first year as a project school of CEAL, the proficient team of teachers at Tin Shui Wai Methodist College moved on to explore different classroom assessment tools to tackle difficulties faced by students in writing. The different tools served the function of helping teachers more accurately diagnose students' difficulties, informed teachers on the kind of feedback to provide to students' learning and how to direct efforts at curriculum and instructional adaptations (Earl, 2013). Teachers grasped the opportunities presented in the process of school-based curriculum refinement to plan the text types and language features to be taught and assessed with an aim to implement formative assessment practices and encourage knowledge transfer.

Level

Secondary 3

Strategies Used

1. Refinement of the Existing Curriculum to Create Opportunities for Formative Assessments and Skill Transfer

Teachers reviewed the existing writing curriculum by analysing the text type features and language features required in each piece of writing. They then revised some of the writing questions so that students could have two consecutive practices on writing genres having a similar function (giving advice) that involves similar language features (language for giving advice or making recommendations). This not only provided a chance for students to recycle the knowledge and transfer the skills that they had acquired, but also encouraged formative assessment practices – learning from the mistakes and comments in the first piece to set targets of improvement for the second piece.

2. Collecting and Analysing Formative Assessment Data to Inform Learning and Teaching

Once the target learning objectives had been identified, difficulties faced by students of different ability levels were predicted. Teachers then collected formative assessment data on a focused area from the first piece of writing. The data was grouped according to students' performance in that particular piece of writing and analysed to inform teachers and students of the follow-up actions to take and the goal(s) to set for the second piece of writing.

3. Guiding Students to Conduct Assessment as Learning Tasks to Deepen Their Understanding of Their Own Learning Progress and the Task Requirements

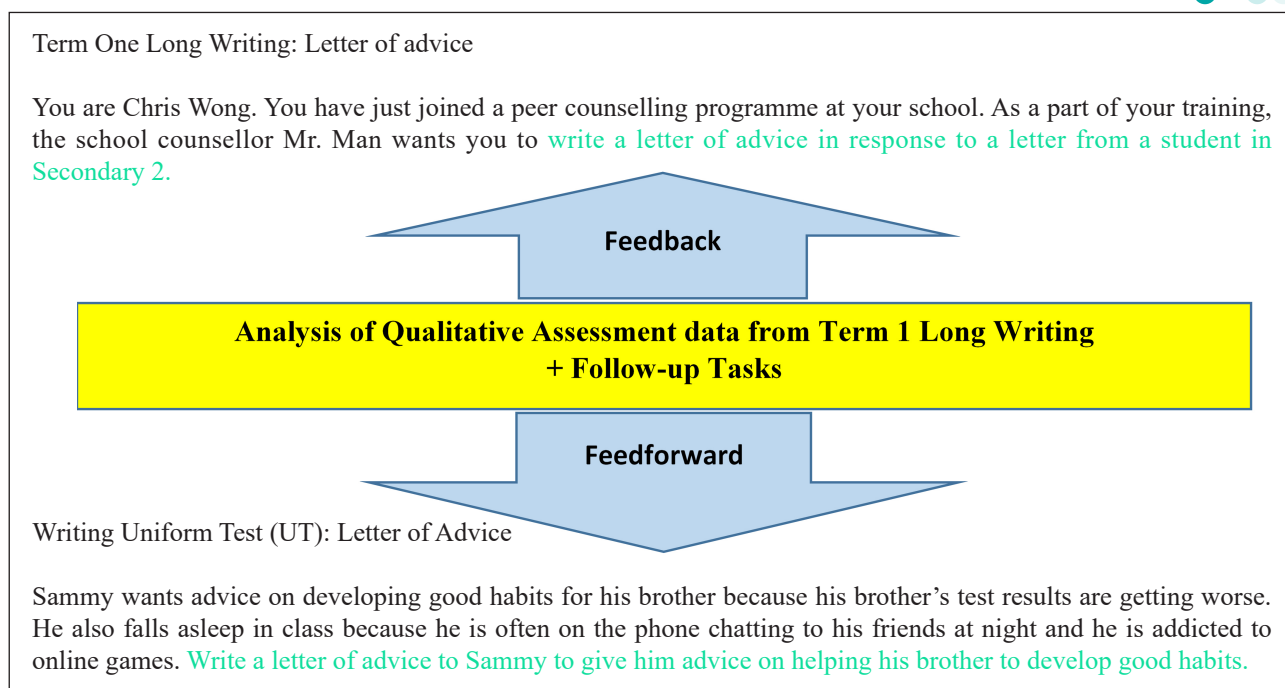
Post-writing self- and peer evaluation tasks were designed to help students reflect on their own performance, doing focused practices on weaknesses diagnosed and learning from reading and critiquing the production of their peers.

Actions Taken

1. Review and Refine the Existing Writing Curriculum to Align Teaching and Assessment

To create opportunities for the recycling of knowledge and skills, the writing curriculum was adjusted to ensure the target language features could be employed in two or more consecutive pieces of writing for knowledge transfer.

Figure 1



As seen in Figure 1, in Term One, letter of advice (informal) was set as one of the target genres to be taught and assessed. Teachers identified language for giving advice such as conditional sentences type 1, 2 as well as 'It is (adj) to (v)...' as the target teaching point and designed input worksheets (Figure 2) to help students write the patterns grammatically.

Figure 2

Use of conditional sentences					
2a	If	Pronoun	Verb [simple present tense]	Noun,	Clause
Example	if	you	follow	the workout videos,	you will learn how to enjoy sports alone.
Your try					
2b	If	Pronoun	Verb [simple past tense]	Pronoun,	I would
Example	if	I	were	you,	I would
Your try					
					Main Clause
					try some healthy snacks.

2. Collecting and Analysing Qualitative Assessment Data in Students' Writing

To aid teachers in making data-driven decisions, the analysis of assessment data must be done in a way that allows for the identification of gaps for remedial measures or advancement (Dial, 2016). While collecting quantitative data like marks that students gained in the content, language and organisation domain in a writing task may give teachers a general picture of students' performance and in which domain(s) student need more guidance, it may not help teachers to identify the wide variety of mistakes and challenges present in individual students' work. To accurately judge whether students could use the target language patterns taught and diagnose other problems, teachers collected qualitative data by inputting sentences each student had written to give advice on a spreadsheet (Figure 3) while marking their compositions. The teacher of each class then grouped them according to 'High', 'Mediocre' and 'Low' level according to the students' performance in the writing. The sentences were then analysed to see whether students could use the target patterns and whether there are other problems reflected.

Figure 3: Teachers collected qualitative data with the focus on 'language for giving advice' on a spreadsheet to help themselves clearly visualise and categorise data

	A	B	C	D	E
1		Class number	Student Name	Marks	Basic structures (e.g. modal verbs)
2	High	23		10	You ought to help yourself to less your stres; I think you should try to running and swimming.
3		20		11	I suggest that you could eat healthier snacks; Besides, WHO says, 'we ought to have 400g of healthy snacks day.'; I think you should listen to music before
4		26		10	I suggest you can have healthier snacks; I suggest you can do individual sports.
5	Mid	2		8	I suggest you can study more at home; I suggest you be brave.
6		7		8	I suggest that you could try to eat healthier snacks; I suggest that you could find a private tutor to help her individually.
7		12		8	I suggest that you could try to eat more fruit; I suggest that you can do individual sports.
8	Low	3		4	I would suggest she should eat more vegetables and do more individual sports.
9		10		3	
10		15		6	I suggest that you could eat healthier snacks, such as eating some nuts or some cereals; I suggest that you should try to do individual sports, such as runn
11					
12	All	1		8	you should take your friend's advice. You can try running, swimming or playing tennis.
13		2		8	I suggest you can study more at home; I suggest you be brave.
14		3		4	I would suggest she should eat more vegetables and do more individual sports.
15		4		5	I suggest that you could have healthier snacks.
16		5		9	I suggest that you could try to eat some healthier snacks, for example, nuts; I suggest that you could try to do some own sports, such as running or yoga.
17		6		8	
18		7		8	I suggest that you could try to eat healthier snacks; I suggest that you could find a private tutor to help her individually.
19		8		9	I suggest that you could go running and do individual sports.
20		9		8	I suggest you can try to do individual sports, like swimming, running or rope skipping.
21		10		3	
22		11		9	I suggest that you can do individual sports.
23		12		8	I suggest that you could try to eat more fruit; I suggest that you can do individual sports.

The data collected showed that most students, except for a few less able ones, were able to use conditional sentences and 'It is (adj) to (v)...' grammatically to give suggestions. However, the data revealed a challenge that had not been anticipated: students, especially those of 'mediocre' and 'low' ability, gave advice that were either illogical or irrelevant to the causes of the problems mentioned in the letter seeking advice. This discovery informed teachers that most students were ready to move on from language (practices in forming grammatical conditional sentences) to content (understanding keywords in the question and coming up with logical advice in response).

Figure 4: Letter seeking advice: one of the problems students needed to tackle was their friend's failure in understanding what teachers talked about on the lesson despite paying attention

Also, I struggle with studying. I never passed any of my tests. The teachers gave me too much homework that I can't handle. And I can hardly understand what the teachers are talking about in the lessons. But I am too scared of asking silly questions and getting scolded by others. I've also been sleeping very badly for the last two weeks. I always wake up in the middle of the night because of nightmares. Then, I can't get back to sleep. I always dream about failing my tests and quizzes. My friends say that I should not be upset, but that makes me even more frustrated.



Figure 5: The qualitative data (advice given by students) revealed that some students were unable to give logical advice to the problems mentioned

	Marks	Basic structures (e.g., modal verbs)	If-conditionals type 1	If-conditionals type 2	Advanced structures (questions, adj. patterns)
High	14	I suggest that you ought to try your best to do more individual sports such as yoga, running and swimming .	If you do more individual sports, you will find the advantages of doing sports easily.	If I were you, I would eat more healthy snacks like oranges, apples, cereals and yoghurts.	It is useful to find a private tutor so you can try to find a private tutor in the internet.
Mid	7	In terms of learning, you should pay attention to the teacher's teachings in class.	If you don't like strenuous exercise, you can do some relaxing exercises.		
Low	3			If I will you, I will try to do some healthy diet, such as running and swimming.	

3. Guiding Students to Engage in Assessment as Learning Tasks to Help Reflect on Their Own Writing, Learn from Their Peers and Understand How to Give 'Good Advice'

Based on the qualitative data and various types of problems identified in individual students' writing, teachers refined the (a) self-evaluation checklist and (b) follow-up worksheets to encourage students to read and identify from their own work their strengths and areas of improvement. They were also given time to read their peer's work and then rewrote a part that they thought improvements could be made.

a. Revised self-evaluation checklist that guides students to conduct self-reflection

Russell et al. (2012) believe that self-assessment is a tool that can empower students to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers at the school had long adopted the approach, but they also saw the need to make refinement. The original design of the self-reflection checklist (Figure 6a) only required students to tick boxes on the items that they could complete. Students might have different interpretations on whether they have achieved an item or not, especially for items with adjectives like 'relevant and readable'. The revised self-reflection checklist (Figure 6b) required students to do counting in the content and language domains and then decide whether they were satisfied with their work or wanted to seek improvement. This helped students clearly visualise the areas

they can do well on and the areas they need to work hard on and kept them well-informed when they set new goals for the new piece of writing that includes similar items.

Figure 6a: The original post-writing self-reflection checklist

(A) Self-reflection:

After reading the corrected piece, I found that...

1. I could write more than 200 words. (WOW!!!)	
2. My content is relevant and readable. (Ms Winnie could understand.)	
3. I didn't have a lot of spelling mistakes. (<5 ☹)	
4. I could give more than 3 pieces of advice. (Good enough!)	
5. I used the correct format of letter of advice.	

Of course, I think...

1. I have to write more and I know I can do it.	
2. I have to read the questions more carefully.	
3. I have to proof-read the spelling of the words.	
4. I have to elaborate more my ideas. (at least giving a specific example)	
5. I have to pay attention to the format of letter of advice.	

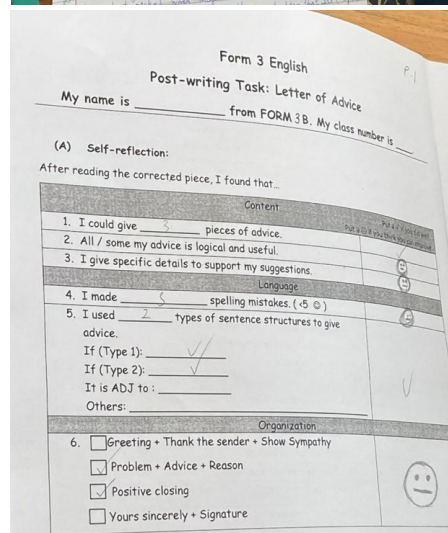
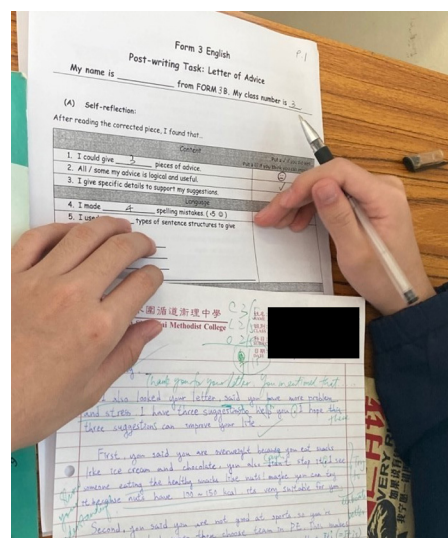
Figure 6b: The revised self-reflection checklist

(A) Self-reflection:

After reading the corrected piece, I found that...

Content	Put a ✓ if you did well Put a ☹ if you think you can improve
1. I could give _____ pieces of advice.	
2. All / some my advice is logical and useful.	
3. I give specific details to support my suggestions.	
Language	
4. I made _____ spelling mistakes. (<5 ☹)	
5. I used _____ types of sentence structures to give advice. If (Type 1): _____ If (Type 2): _____ It is ADJ to : _____ Others: _____	
Organization	
6. <input type="checkbox"/> Greeting + Thank the sender + Show Sympathy <input type="checkbox"/> Problem + Advice + Reason <input type="checkbox"/> Positive closing <input type="checkbox"/> Yours sincerely + Signature	

Figure 7 & 8: Students were given individual reading time to re-read their work and complete a self-reflection checklist with quantifiable items



b. Follow-up Tasks that Facilitate Peer Learning

Task 1: Analysing samples of advice to understand what makes a feasible advice

Teachers selected pieces of advice that represented common problems diagnosed in students' work (Figure 9, circled in red) and thought aloud to students what makes good advice and illogical advice.

Figure 9: Teachers used students' work to analyse with them what makes an advice good or illogical

	<p>I am overweight. I really love eating junk food and I eat at Fast Food Shop A 4 days a week. My friends say the food at Fast Food Shop A are very unhealthy but I think they are delicious. <i>(Highlight the problem + cause)</i></p>	<p>Who gives illogical / unreasonable advice? Write down WHY the advice is illogical/unreasonable in the box below.</p>
A	<p>You should eat less if you want to lose weight.</p>	<p> But she loves junk food!</p>
B	<p>You should not go to Fast Food Shop A. Maybe you can visit Fast Food Shop B instead?</p>	<p> Fast Food Shop B food is also fatty.</p>
C	<p>I know snacks are really delicious. If you want to have snacks, you may try some healthy snacks like banana with dark chocolate, berry smoothie and mixed nuts. Slowly reduce the number of times you visit Fast Food Shop A.</p>	<p> He can still have snacks but they are healthier! Change bad habit slowly</p>

Task 2: Peer assessment

After learning what constitute good or illogical advice, students read scenarios of problems and causes and gave advice by typing them on e-platforms. They were then assigned to read the advice given by their peers and evaluate whether the advice is a feasible one, an illogical one or more detailed elaboration was needed by filling in the column on the right. By engaging students in the analysis of their peer's work, students had a clearer understanding of what constitute quality work (Vagle, 2015).

Figure 10: Students read and evaluate each other's advice on an e-platform

<p>Problems + causes</p>	<p>Advice</p>	<p>:) / : / :(Why?</p>
<p>A. 1st Term Writing UT</p>		
<p><i>Sammy</i> wants advice on developing good habits for his brother: His test results are getting worse. He falls asleep in class because he is often on the phone chatting to his friends at night and he is addicted to online games.</p>	<p>a) You can just more study (study more), than the results will be better.</p> <div data-bbox="582 1803 1005 2027" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Cater for learner's diversity: Stronger students are pointing out problems for weaker students.</p> </div>	<p>It can make you more know(know more about) the question.</p> <p>: (Because did not actually solve the problem. --Right he still sleeps late</p>

Task 3: Peer learning

Having guided students to understand more on how to provide feasible advice through evaluating their peers' work, teachers then selected samples of good advice given by students to highlight how they used 'personal experience', 'examples' or 'expert's saying' etc. to elaborate on their advice to make it more persuasive (see Figure 11). Students then located an advice that needed improvement from their own writing and tried to rewrite it following their peers' examples. With examples, students had more concrete ideas on how to elaborate on and support the advice they had given and thus made improvements in the content and organisation of their writing.

Figure 11: Peer learning task sheet



Student A

USING 'EXPERIENCE'

Three years ago, I had this problem too, but I successfully overcame the difficulty. Now I'm sharing with you my experience.

Student B

SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

If I were you, I would try to eat some healthy snacks, such as nuts, or some low-sugar and low-fat food, which can satisfy your appetite. There are many other meal replacement products, and they can effectively make you eat more without getting fat.

Student C

SPECIFIC AND MORE CREATIVE EXAMPLE

Why don't you keep a notebook for yourself? Using a notebook makes it easier to learn. You can keep one. Design it beautifully and share with me.

Learn from your classmates!

Choose a point / a sentence in your writing and rewrite it.

I learnt from _____.

My original sentence(s):

My new sentence(s):

Impact

1. Student Level

Students' performance in subsequent writing tasks that demanded giving advice and recommendations showed improvement in coming up with logical advice and some with elaboration that supported it. The self- and peer assessment practices introduced as post-writing reflection activities also introduced a classroom culture of keeping students informed of their own progress and making adjustment by learning from their peers. This helped students recognise how each attempt is not an end product or a destination, but an opportunity to understand oneself and strive for improvements.

2. Teacher Level

Having experimented the process of collecting, analysing and using qualitative assessment data, teachers gained a first-hand experience of how different types of assessment data could be used to adjust the teaching and learning focus. The qualitative assessment data helped teachers discover and pinpoint particular mistakes in students' writing in a more accurate and focused manner and thus informed them on the follow-up tasks and activities to design. Teachers also tried designing post-writing self-reflection checklist and peer assessment that proved to be effective in helping students reflect and seek improvements. Teachers revealed that this experience had led them to move on from designing post-writing task that focused mainly on different grammatical mistakes to tasks that pinpoint mistakes informed by assessment data, making the follow-up work a more effective one that could really help students to reflect and learn.

3. Curriculum Level

As teachers took the opportunity of reviewing and refining the existing writing curriculum to create opportunities for knowledge recycling and skill transfer, teachers showed heightened awareness in not only aligning daily teaching with assessments like quizzes, tests and examinations, but also how the analysis of genre features, language features and formality is key to deciding the types of daily writing tasks to be assigned and how they are interlinked to form a progression.

Way Forward

The proficient team of English teachers at Tin Shui Wai Methodist College were professional, diligent and devoted to improving their assessment strategies and practices to help their students learn best. Having experimented with various assessment strategies and using different types of assessment data, it is believed that the team will continue to reinforce good practices and explore other sound assessment practices. The professional collaborative culture also means teachers will share with each other sound practices and effective strategies for the continuous progression of the English panel.

References

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