

From early literacy to information literacy

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Rationale

“Language is at the heart of the process of becoming literate. Through participation in these interactions, individual students construct a sense of self as readers, writers, and thinkers within the culture of each particular classroom. These constructions are salient to students' development of motivation for literacy learning.” (Johnston, 1992).

Early literacy is the stepping stone to 21st century information literacy. Here in Li Sing Primary School, I strive to enable my pupils to learn via a framework of early literacy that envelopes book handling skills, questioning, read aloud and prediction for P. 1-2 pupils. The set reading skills are extracts taken from the English Curriculum Guide published by the Education and Manpower and Bureau. (See Appendix 1) Alongside with reading, listening, speaking is also used during everyday teaching and daily activities. Process writing and free writing has also been used to help pupils to master writing as a creative process whereby they use mind map, paragraphing and connectives to make writing a meaningful learning task.

Early literacy

A step by step approach has been used to skill children up the steps of literacy. First, phonics songs and games motivate pupils to learn. Secondly, book handling skills and read aloud are introduced hand in hand. In order to comprehend the book, questioning skills and prediction are used to elicit key information from books read. Ultimately, pupils will know how to employ the taught skills in times ahead. (See appendix 2)

Vast resources that include realia, books, online books, songs and games have been used during classroom learning so as to induce pupils to learn English.

Assessment framework

Assessment refers to the board repertoire of behaviors involved in noticing, documenting, recording, and interpreting children's behaviors and performances ... First, assessment is fundamentally interpretative, influence by values, beliefs and language, and secondly, assessment has consequences for children's literate development. (Johnston & Rogers, 2001).

In order to check on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, I and the teacher librarian, Miss Wong Sui Fan has plan to conduct a pre-test and post-test to be undertaken during the first and second term in the year 2006-2007. (See appendix 3)

Information literacy

During extra-curricular activities lessons, information literacy was exposed in the form of Knowledge Forum using both information technology as well as classroom discussion so as to enable P.6 pupils to ask questions, clarify information, summarize information and last but not least to make predictions on information. In order to do so, an information technology platform was used to enable pupils to read poems by famous poets and make comments on familiar themes that are shared via a common IT platform. First, pupils are taught HOW to read a poem by using contextual clues to help them to decode the meaning of the unfamiliar words. Then, they discuss the poems using scaffolds or thinking prompts like “my interpretation of the meaning is” and state their reasons. In this way, pupils learn within an online community wherein they share their thoughts and express their comments. The pupils however, did not show that they were very enthusiastic about reading the poems even though the teachers strive to act out the poems using drama.

On second thought, I used online websites on fairytales as an entry point in order to motivate pupils to read on. Popular young adult and children's author Jane Yolen argues that in today's media influenced world, young adults lack references to the ancient myths and fairy tales that fill a basic developmental need:

- To appreciate literature, we must know the archetypes on which it is based.
- To get along with others, we must understand how our culture's values relate to theirs.
- To process our own experiences, we must compare them to those in stories.
- To build our own belief systems, we must find their roots.

(Yolen, *Touch Magic*, p. 5-20)

However, I was able to entice pupils to read and respond to the issues. The pupils read and were able to add into their own responses. Michael Higgins (1986) points out such elements as “flashback, conflict, and parallel structures that are common in children's stories and novels”. Teachers enable pupils to understand the story using graphic organizers and grid. Moreover, teachers review the fairytale’s character, plot, setting so that pupils get an overall understanding of the structural elements of the genre. The ultimate objective is to ask them to discuss online. It will be a collaborative online effort for pupils to contribute as a learning community.

Pupils are assessed quantitatively according to their participative score using an analytical tool kit. Moreover, they are also assessed qualitatively in their discussion content. It is hoped that pupils will be able to learn collaboratively as a learning community. (See appendix 4) The above experimental sessions are tried out to show the development of literacy whereupon pupils learn collectively as pupils approach 21st century information explosion. The learning process will be tracked via formative assessments done during two years of action research.

Action Research on Reading 2004/2005(Primary 1)

1. Measures of print processing

Predictor variable	No. of samples
Basic letter-sound knowledge-phonics	64
Letter identification: naming of upper and lower case letters Letter recognition	64
directionality	64
Print concepts and book handling skills	64

2. Measures of oral language proficiency

Predictor variable	No. of samples
Speech production/speech perception	64
Expressive naming vocabulary-keywords, question words	64
Demonstrate voice print match-read aloud	64

3. Measures of non-verbal abilities

Predictor variable	No. of samples
Visual discrimination of first and last letter	64
Visual discrimination of punctuation marks	64
Space between words	64

Action Research on Reading 2005/2006(Primary 2)

		2A (30)			2B (31)			Overall			Overall%		
		✓		✗	✓		✗	✓		✗	✓		✗
Understand the basic convention of written English													
1.	Recognize familiar words in new texts	23	3	4	25	0	6	48	3	10	78.7%	4.9%	16.4%
2.	Use basic conventions of written English and prior Knowledge of known words to read aloud short, simple texts	18	10	2	12	12	7	30	22	9	49.2%	36.1%	14.8%

3.	Use Knowledge of basic letter-sound relationship to read aloud simple words and short texts	20	8	2	13	6	12	33	14	14	54.1%	23.0%	23.0%
											60.7%	21.3%	18.0%
Construct meaning from texts													
4.	Identify key words in a sentence	15	5	10	16	4	11	31	9	21	50.8%	14.8%	34.4%
5.	Understand the information provided on the book cover(e.g. title, author and illustrator), content page and page numbers	8	22	0	18	13	0	26	35	0	42.6%	57.4%	0.0%
6.	Recognize the format and language features of some common text types, e.g. signs, stories	12	0	18	7	6	17	19	6	35	31.7%	10.0%	58.3%
7.	Make predictions about stories, characters, topics of interest using pictorial clues and book covers	11	18	1	23	6	2	34	24	3	55.7%	39.3%	4.9%
											45.2%	30.4%	24.4%
Locate information and ideas													
8.	Locate specific information in a short text in response to questions.	15	1	14	9	0	22	24	1	36	39.3%	1.6%	59.0%

During the year 2006-2007, teachers designed reading booklets for pupils to practice reading skills. Pupils are being exposed to a variety of different text-types, lessons on book-handling skills, read aloud, questioning skills and prediction skills. Pupils were able to make some progress from their reading assessments during the first term. During the second term, teachers try to integrate the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in an exercise book that serves as a learning diary for pupils. It is hoped that in this way, pupils can practice organizing, linking and writing what they have learnt. Moreover, it gives the teacher a clearer picture of how their pupils learn during daily lessons.

In order to widen pupils' exposure, other resources both inside and outside schools are being conducted during the year 2006-2007 as seen from below:-

Enrichment reading programs include:

- Three adult reading mums will do story telling to twelve primary two pupils.
- Reading Buddy program with St Stephen's Girls' School nine secondary school pupils will do shared reading with nine primary three pupils.
- Paired reading program within Li Sing Primary School whereby pupils in primary four conducts paired reading with primary one pupil.
- Moreover, Chinese, English, Putonghua months are held during the first and second term so as to enable pupils to have more practice in using Cantonese, English and Putonghua

in their daily school activities. In addition, festive activities during Halloween, Christmas, Chinese New Year and Easter are held to add in fun in the form of games, etc.

From early literacy to information literacy

To conclude, literacy will best be taught in a systematic way that include an open mind to undergo systematic action research that includes using updated online resources for formative assessment, lesson observation, detailed co-planning and long-term curriculum development. For 2007-2008, we have planned on setting up an English resource room and a guided reading program whereby pupils' diversity are being catered for.

As a curriculum officer, I had the social obligation to undertake action research that helps to build up a learning organization within my school involving all stakeholders concerned. However, nothing could have been possible without all our joint effort. To this, let's continue with our hard work and innovative planning in times ahead.

Bibliography

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- Moss, J.F. (1984)*Focus Units in Literature: A Handbook for Elementary School Teachers*, Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Nessel, D. D.(1985).Storytelling in the reading program.*The Reading Teacher*, 38 (4), 378-381.
- Lurie, A. *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children's Literature*, 18.
- Jane, Y. *Touch Magic*, 5-20

Appendix

Appendix 1

English Curriculum Guide

<http://emb.gov.hk>

Appendix 2

Phonics song

<http://www.kiddyhouse.com/Songs/alpha/a.html>

Online Resources

Stories

<http://www.kizclub.com>

Stories

<http://www.lil-finger.com>

Acknowledgement

Good and evil

<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/boardarchives/2004/jul2004/ftchildrengoodevil.html>

Schedule

<http://io.uwinnipeg.ca/~nodelman/fairy.htm#schedule>

Leave a reply

<http://tavernadimuse.wordpress.com/2007/03/09/bluestocking-discussion-childrens-rhymes-and-fairy-tales/>

Teach pupils to appreciate literature

<http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-928/children.htm>

Thanks to all who have contributed to make teaching and learning a satisfaction and an enjoyable experience to our children.

Appendix 3

A. Teacher Professional Development Reading Questionnaire

B. English Pre-test and post-test (reading strategies)-Miss Chan Fung Yee, Fanny

A. Reading Questionnaire (Chinese Version)

李陞小學

2006-2007 年度

老師問卷調查

「閱讀能力與策略」講座

	非常 同意	百分 比	同意	百分 比	一般	百分 比	沒有 意見	百分 比	不同 意	百分 比
1. 講座內容有助本人增加對閱讀策略的認識。	11	48%	12	52%						
2. 講座內容配合本校閱讀策略教學推行。	9	39%	14	61%						
3. 講座內容能應用於本人的課堂教學-閱讀策略。	7	30%	16	70%						
4. 我願意在推行閱讀策略期間，跟同事分享教學心得。	3	13%	10	43%	1	4%	7	30%	2	9%

李陞小學
2006-2007 年度
老師問卷調查
「閱讀能力與策略」講座

	非常同意	同意	一般	沒有意見	不同意
1. 講座內容有助本人增加對閱讀策略的認識。	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. 講座內容配合本校閱讀策略教學推行。	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. 講座內容能應用於本人的課堂教學-閱讀策略。	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. 我願意在推行閱讀策略期間，跟同事分享教學心得。	<input type="checkbox"/>				

願意分享老師的姓名：_____

B. Selected pupils list

閱讀策略評估對象

中文科：

英文科：

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
1A	宋卓螢	高	13/14	
1A	陳柏而	中	6/14	
1A	陳思言	低	8/14	

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
1A	史鳳眉	高	13/29	
1A	黃朗泓	中	21/29	
1A	陳敏怡	低	9/29	

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
1B	黃澤鋋	高	11/14	
1B	尹鈺麟	中	10/14	
1B	張翠欣	低	6/14	

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
1B	李沛澄	高	11/29	
1B	李子朗	中	7/29	
1B	鄭彩浩	低	6/29	

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
2A	麥麗怡	高	11/15	
2A	黃皓鈺	中	ABS	
2A	趙惠沁	低	9/15	

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
2A	潘惜譽	高	27/30	
2A	李柏軒	中	16/30	
2A	殷學賢	低	11/30	

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
2B	陳伯聰	高	11/15	
2B	鍾浩軒	中	11/15	
2B	崔衍華	低	12/15	

班別	姓名	程度	前測	後測
2B	陳伯聰	高	25/30	
2B	蕭子峰	中	17/30	
2B	陳志鋈	低	6/30	

B. Pretest and Post-test on reading strategies (English)

English Reading Skills

Li Sing Primary School 2006-2007
School-based Action Research on Reading Strategies
Pre-test for P.1/2 English

a) Book Handling skills (Front Cover)

- Title
- Author
- Illustrator

b) Prediction Skills

1. Pictorial Clues

2. Contextual Clues
3. Key Words

c) Questioning Skills

1. Who
2. When
3. What
4. Where
5. Why
6. How

d) Read Aloud

1. Pronunciation
2. Intonation
3. Fluency

Appendix 4

Knowledge Forum

<http://kf5.cite.hku.hk>

<http://lcp.cite.hku.hk>

<http://www.lsp.edu.hk>