

**Research Project: Development of Learning,
Teaching and Assessment Materials of English
Language to Enhance Effective Learning and
Teaching in Collaboration with Participating
Schools of the 2016 Tryout Study (Primary 3)**

Project Report

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1. Background

Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) has been implemented for years. The Government has initiated enhancement measures on certain arrangements of TSA in recent years. After conducting a review on the TSA, for the arrangement of Primary 3 TSA in 2016, the Coordinating Committee on Basic Competency Assessment and Assessment Literacy (Committee) recommended the conduct of the Tryout Study. Taking into account various factors, the Committee recommended the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority to invite about 50 primary schools of different types, with each school participating as a unit, to participate in the Tryout Study to ensure representativeness, reliability and validity of the Study. Other schools were also encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis. A series of professional support measures are being provided for Tryout schools and schools can join according to their needs. One of the support measures is engaging participating schools in joint research and development projects conducted by tertiary institutions on developing learning, teaching and assessment materials.

This Project is one of the above-mentioned joint research and development projects, commissioned to the project team of the Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong. It aims to address general problems and work out promising solutions in the learning and teaching of English reading and writing in primary schools. It also focuses on building teachers' capacity in developing teaching and assessment materials as well as designing learning activities to enhance effective learning and teaching. The materials could be used on the "Web-based Learning and Teaching Support" (WLTS) and the Student Assessment Repository (STAR) in light of promoting assessment literacy.

Being a joint research and development project, the project team has incorporated a design-based research into the project. Through identifying teachers' and students' needs, co-designing teaching and learning materials ("packages"), lesson observations and debriefing, as well as evaluation of the designed materials, the project team attempts to examine the potential impact of this collaborative project on teachers' professional development and students' learning of English literacy skills. This report summarises the rationale and theoretical underpinnings of the project, the methodology of the research and its key findings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Literacy development: Needs and challenges

In Hong Kong, one of the government key policy objectives is to help students become biliterate in both Chinese and English and "Reading to Learn" is stated as one of the four key tasks in the most recent education reform document, "*Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development*" (CDC, 2001). English enjoys special socio-economic status in Hong Kong and hence there has always been great emphasis on English language education (Lin & Man, 2009). Despite this, analyses of students' performance in the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) still reveal some typical weaknesses in reading and writing in English, including lack of reading

and writing strategies (e.g. inferencing skills, guessing word meaning from context), small vocabulary size, limited background knowledge of the reading and writing topics, little knowledge of different text types/ genres (HKEAA, 2013; Tong, 2009b). It was also found that students lacked motivation and interest to read, and they were exposed to a limited set of text types and tasks in TSA papers (Tong, 2009a). For instance, primary students are often required to write a story or descriptive text, with some picture prompts.

2.2 Connecting reading and writing

Some research has shown that reading is indeed an active and interactive process (Grabe, 1991), because it requires readers to make use of various types of knowledge, including lexicogrammatical knowledge, general world knowledge and genre knowledge, in order to make sense of the texts (Hedge, 2000). In particular, readers need to decode words from their letter patterns, identify meanings within sentences, infer connections across the whole text, and to interpret the writer's meaning and intentions (Rose & Martin, 2012). Similarly, writing is a productive process, during which writers select language to construe meaning in order to achieve certain communicative purposes (e.g. to entertain, to inform and to evaluate). They make careful choices of words, grammar and sentence patterns, and follow some rhetorical structures to organise their ideas. Therefore, reading and writing are actually two sets of closely connected skills drawing on the same pool of knowledge. Thus, it is important for teachers to design appropriate activities to connect reading and writing.

2.3. Theoretical framework for connecting reading and writing: The Sydney School genre-based pedagogy

The Sydney School genre-based pedagogy is based on functional linguistics (Rose & Martin, 2012). The essence of this approach is using genre, or text types, to provide contextualised language learning experience. It stresses the inseparable relationship of different elements of language, including vocabulary, sentence patterns realising language functions and text structure, to achieve communicative purposes of genres (see Figure 1). Based on the genre-based approach to language learning, a pedagogical framework ("the Teaching and Learning Cycle") has been proposed to help second language learners develop reading and writing skills in a cycle of "deconstruction, joint construction, independent construction" (Figure 2; Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 66). During the deconstruction stage, the teacher prepares students to read with some pre-reading activities which enable students to grasp the main ideas of a text. The teacher then reads together with students, employing the "detailed reading" strategies. The teacher interacts with students during detailed reading, so as to help students understand the text and draw students' attention to its linguistic features (words, grammar, sentence patterns, text structure) of that particular text type. With such language awareness, the teacher then co-constructs a piece of writing (be it sentences, short paragraphs or texts) with students. After the guided practice, students will be able to write another piece of text on their own during the independent construction stage. Hence, the genre-based pedagogy integrates both top-down and bottom-up strategies for students to

access reading and writing. The framework also illustrates when and how teachers can offer scaffolding for students, and hence provides useful insights for developing innovative tasks fostering vocabulary and grammar learning, reading and writing strategies.

Figure 1. The language learning task – text-in-context (Rose, 2012, book 1, p.25)

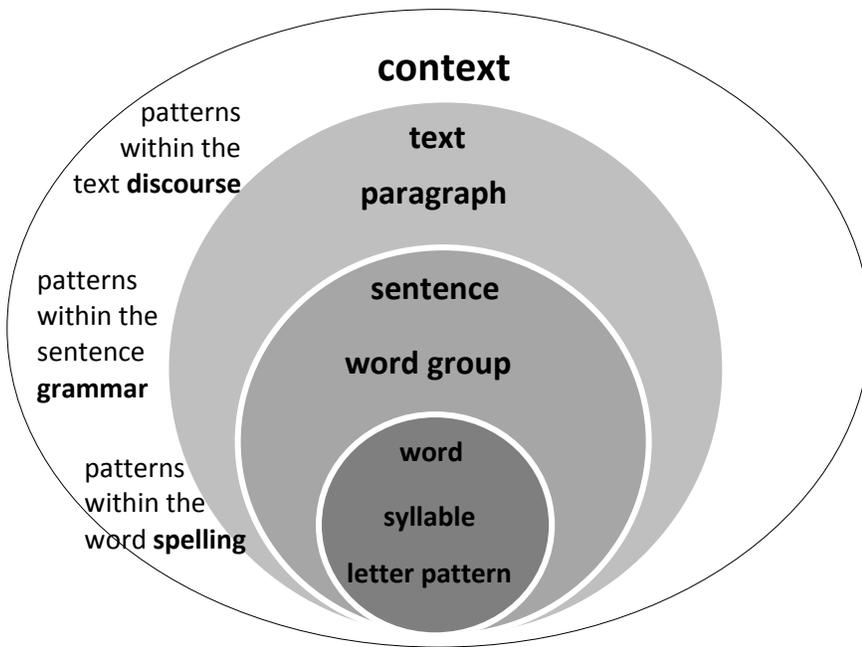
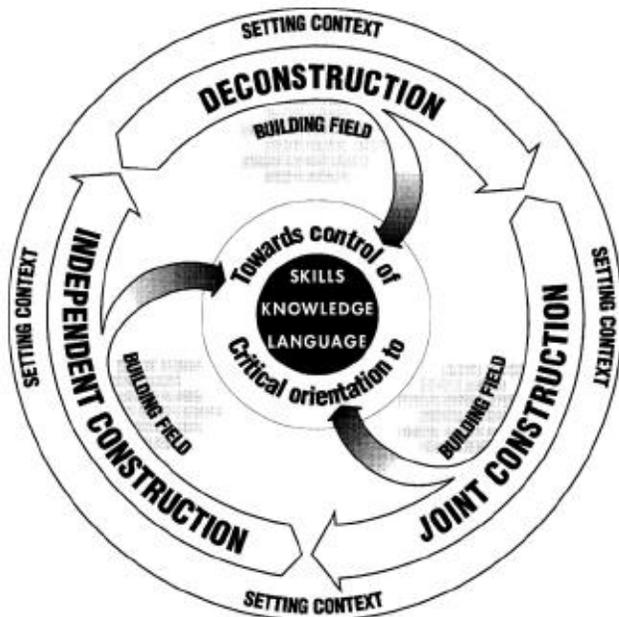


Figure 2. The Teaching and Learning Cycle (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 66)



2.4. Research Questions

Based on the aforementioned, this project aims to provide school-based support to the nominated primary schools in strengthening their students' vocabulary learning, reading and writing skills, through offering intensive, onsite and school-based professional support including professional development activities, collaborative school-based learning and teaching material development, as well as research. The key research questions include:

1. How may the university-school collaborative project have affected teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices in teaching English literacy skills?
2. How may the university-school collaborative project have helped students develop their English reading and writing skills?

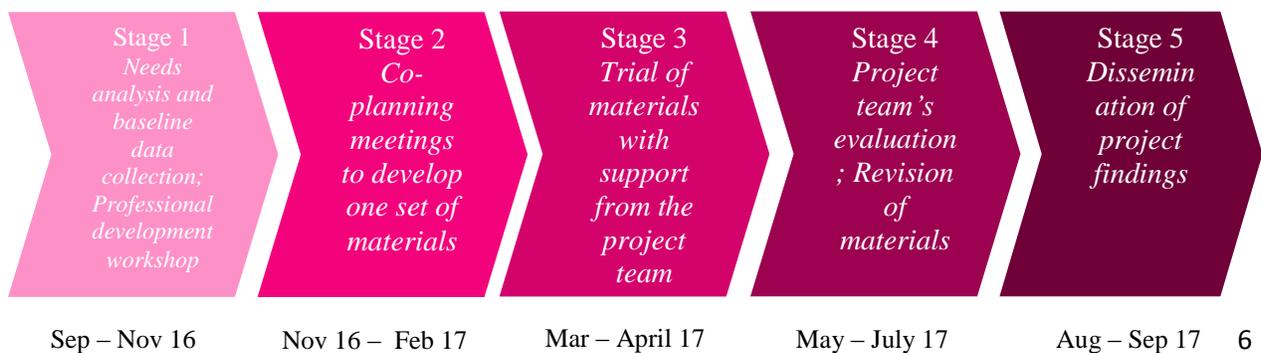
3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This project adopted the design-based research approach. According to Anderson and Shattuck (2012, p. 16), it is 'a methodology designed by and for educators that seeks to increase the impact, transfer, and translation of education research into improved practice. In addition, it stresses the need for theory building and the development of design principles that guide, inform, and improve both practice and research in educational contexts'. As mentioned earlier, the aims of this project are to (1) address the general problems and provide feasible solutions in the learning and teaching of English reading and writing in primary schools; and (2) enhance primary English language teachers' ability to develop teaching and learning materials as well as designing learning activities to promote effective learning and teaching of English literacy skills. Hence, the design-based research approach was well suited for the purpose of this project.

Kim et al. (2015) state that the design-based research process 'involves multiple stages (1) diagnosing a learning problem, (2) designing design-based learning activities, (3) facilitating classroom activities, (4) evaluating student interactions and design artifacts, (5) specifying learning evidence over three separate activities, and (6) suggesting the next steps to enhance the continuous cyclical research process' (p. 576). Similarly, this 13-month project included five major stages to achieve the aforementioned objectives and to cater for the needs of the participating schools. Figure 3 outlines the implementation procedures of the project.

Figure 3. Procedures of the project (13 months)



At the beginning of the project, needs analysis was conducted in the participating schools so as to ensure that the materials developed would suit their needs. Also, the project team met with the participating teachers to understand their existing practices of teaching reading and writing, difficulties faced by the teachers and students, typical assessment tasks, and their expectations of the project. To help evaluate the effectiveness of the materials developed by this project, the project team collected some baseline data related to the students' reading and writing performance (e.g. TSA results and analysis, students' writing samples). In addition, one 3-hour professional development workshop was organised for the participating teachers so as to enrich their knowledge of different text types (or genres), genre-based approach to connecting reading and writing, as well as principles of assessment for learning.

In stage 2, the project team visited the project schools several times to have co-planning meetings with the teachers to discuss the design of the package, such as the theme, the target genre, the key learning objectives, the scaffolding needed, and the design of the tasks and activities. The teachers and project team co-designed the packages to address the problem(s) identified in their school contexts.

In stage 3, one set of materials (i.e. the package) developed for this project was tried out by the participating teachers, with the support from the project team. During this stage, depending on the willingness of the schools and teachers, the project team visited the schools to observe some lessons in which the materials were used, followed by post-lesson discussion if time allowed.

In stage 4, an evaluation was carried out after the implementation of the project and suggestions would be provided to the project schools for further improvement. Some data, such as teachers' feedback or reflections, students' sample work (especially the writing tasks) and reading assessment papers were collected. Based on the data collected, the project team revised the packages to make them more appropriate and effective.

In stage 5, to facilitate professional exchange among teachers and extend the impact of the project, a cluster meeting was organised for the participating teachers and one 3-hour public seminar was held. The participating teachers were invited to share their experience in the project with other colleagues. Some of their reflections were also included as evidence of their professional development.

3.2. Research participants

3.2.1 Schools

Five primary schools nominated by the Education Bureau (EDB) participated in this project. These primary schools are located in different districts in Hong Kong, with students of different characteristics (see "Students" below). All schools aimed to help their students improve their vocabulary learning and English literacy skills.

3.2.2 Teachers

The 17 participating teachers came from the five nominated primary schools. Most of them attended a PD workshop, co-planning meetings, debriefing sessions after lesson observations and a cluster meeting throughout the project. Most teachers were experienced teachers while a few of them were novice teachers.

3.2.3 Students

Each school was asked to select one grade level to be involved in this project. That explained why the student participants were from different grade levels (from primary 2 to 5). Around 446 students were involved in this project. Owing to the history and location of the schools, their students' possessed different demographic characteristics and English proficiency levels. In a couple of the schools, the students were largely local Cantonese-speaking students, with average or above average English proficiency level. In some other schools, the student population consisted of certain proportion of cross-border Mandarin-speaking students and non-Chinese speaking students (e.g. Pakistanis). Cross-border students made up a large proportion of the Chinese students' population. Based on the teachers' comments, most of these students had limited vocabulary and low motivation to learn English. Their English proficiency was also relatively low.

Table 1 below summarises the information of the participants in this study. The informed consent of all the participants has been secured.

Table 1. The summary of the information of the five primary schools

Schools	No. of teachers	No. of students	Grade level	Target area of improvement
A	2	37	P.2	Reading
B	3	121	P.2	Reading & Writing
C	5	135	P.4	Reading & Writing
D	4	75	P.5	Reading & Writing
E	3	78	P.5	Reading

3.3 Data Collection

The researchers served as the consultants for this project (i.e. the project team) and thus data were collected through participant observation. An advantage of being part of the researcher-teacher collaboration was that the researchers were able to collect more in-depth data through the role of an 'insider' of the project, which allows rich description and thorough understanding (Robson 2002). Therefore, multiple sources of data were collected for this project:

- (a) students' sample work of reading and writing tasks (including their writing in the designed package and their performance in a reading post-test designed by the project team;
- (b) video recordings of the lessons in which the materials were used and observed;

- (c) observation field notes jotted down by the project team during lesson observations;
- (d) audio-recorded co-planning meetings, debriefing sessions and evaluation meeting, together with the field notes taken by the project team during those meetings.

The triangulation of the various sources of data ensured the reliability and validity of the present research. Also, these quantitative and qualitative data complemented each other and helped provide more insight into the research questions.

3.4 Data Analysis

To address the first research question concerning whether there were any changes in teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices, teachers' opinions and reflections expressed in the co-planning meetings, debriefing sessions and evaluation meeting, together with their pedagogical practices in the observed lessons were analysed. The meetings and the observed lessons were first transcribed verbatim. The project team then analysed and coded the transcripts to identify any emerging themes revealing the teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices in different aspects that this study is interested in. After preliminary coding, the different sources of data were compared to see whether consistent patterns/ changes emerged and were combined to depict a more comprehensive picture. In particular, when interpreting the teachers' beliefs, their responses in the co-planning meetings, debriefing sessions and evaluation meetings would complement and elaborate the descriptive data retrieved from the observed lessons and students' performance.

To address the second research question regarding the effectiveness of the materials in helping students develop their literacy skills, the students' performance on reading and writing tasks in the designed package was analysed to identify whether students applied what they had learned in the package. For the reading post-test, students' performance was first summarised with descriptive statistics. Their students' answers in the post-test were further analysed in detail to identify their strengths and weaknesses in reading skills as well as their improvement, if any. It has to be noted that because of the nature of the project, it was very difficult for the project team to implement comparable pre- and post-project reading and writing tests and then to conclude if the students showed any improvement. Instead, the project team focused on analysing the sample work collected from students of different ability levels and to identify the evidence that could demonstrate the potential effectiveness of the designed materials in helping students. Some of that evidence may also gather support from teachers' reflections, which were also referred to during the data analysis process.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Teacher development

This section explores how the implementation of the project might have contributed to the change in teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices. After analysing the data gathered from

teacher meetings and lesson observations, two major themes were identified: *curriculum planning and development* and *changes in pedagogical practices*. These are presented and discussed as follows, with quotes from the meetings and excerpts from the observed lessons cited as evidence.

Theme 1: Curriculum planning and development

As illustrated in the Literature Review, the Sydney School’s genre-based pedagogy was adopted as the theoretical and pedagogical framework for this project. The project team introduced this framework to the teachers in the professional development workshop and followed it when designing the packages with the teachers. After the project, the project team observed that collaborative project may have influenced the ways that the participating teachers planned their curriculum and unit of work.

First, the school-university collaboration provided an opportunity for the teachers to reflect on their existing scheme of work with the help of the project team, evaluate its effectiveness and then revise it. For example, during the first meeting with the participating schools, the project team would discuss with the teachers their existing scheme of work and prompt them to share any difficulties when teaching a particular unit. Such discussion actually served as a needs analysis and helped teachers to identify their students’ needs, review their scheme of work and think about how they could handle the difficulties they had. For instance, school E chose to write a newspaper article as the final writing task of the package. A teacher shared her previous experience in teaching students how to write a newspaper article and stated her students wrote it like a diary. To address this problem, the project team suggested highlighting the features of a newspaper article. Therefore, in the package, one activity was added, i.e. comparing the features of a newspaper article and a personal recount/ a diary. This activity was introduced at the lead-in stage and Excerpt 1 is the worksheet.

Excerpt 1. The lead-in task of the package developed for school E



Newspaper Article and Personal Recount Feature Hunt

Put a tick (✓) next to the feature that can be found in the text(s)

Features	A Newspaper Article	A Personal Recount
Title		
Headline		
Event(s) written in time order		
Written in columns		
Written in the first person (I, We)		
Written in the third person (He, She, It)		
Introduction (who, what, when, where, why)		
Direct Speech		
Conclusion		
Written in paragraphs		
Photo(s)		
Written in the past tense		

Upon the completion of the project, the teachers from school E reflected on this project in the evaluation meeting.

Panel Head from school E: To me, as a curriculum leader, I think they (the collaboration) really give me some insights especially this textbook we use it for 10 years ... We try different ways but it's good to have somebody ... some ... your expertise to help us to develop the materials and think about... okay, maybe we can try that way for especially for cater for learner diversity ...

Ms Y: We look at the unit in different aspect ...

From the teachers' quote, it can be seen that the teachers benefited from the project as it inspired them to think further and try something new to design the teaching and learning materials.

Second, the participating teachers appeared to develop some ideas of how to plan a unit which better connects reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary teaching. The essence of the genre-based pedagogy is using genres, or text types, to provide contextualised language learning experience. It stresses the inseparable relationship of different elements of language, including vocabulary, sentence patterns realising language functions and text structure, to achieve communicative purposes of genres. With the help of this approach, teachers first deconstruct the text and find out its linguistic features. This can help the teachers plan a more coherent teaching unit. For example, for school E, since they chose a newspaper article as their target writing task, the language focuses they selected were direct speech, simple past tense and past continuous tense. Instead of teaching these language items separately, teachers highlighted how the language items realise language functions so as to perform the communication purposes of that genre. Excerpt 2 is an example taken by a teacher from school E sharing the idea of contextualised language learning during the cluster meeting. It can be seen that in the package, the teachers guided students to think about how and why a particular language item (e.g. direct speech) was used in a particular genre. Such contextualised grammar teaching is likely to enable the students to actually *use* the item, instead of simply understanding the form and structure.

Excerpt 2. A PPT slide extracted from the sharing of a teacher from school E

The image shows a PPT slide with a green and yellow vertical bar on the left. The title is 'Post-Reading Stage' in green. Below the title are two numbered points: '1. Review direct speech and punctuation' and '2. Review simple past tense and past continuous tense'. There are two inset boxes, each titled 'DIRECT SPEECH IN NEWSPAPERS'. The left inset box contains two questions: 'Do you read newspapers?' and 'Can you usually find direct speech in a newspaper article?'. Below these is the text 'Now, let's have a look at a newspaper article!'. The right inset box contains the question 'Why is it important to use direct speech in newspaper articles?' followed by two bullet points: 'It tells readers what other people say or think.' and 'It gives readers a clearer picture of the event.'

Third, to a certain extent, the genre-based approach aligns with or facilitates the outcome-based approach, as teachers are encouraged to think about how to prepare the students for the final writing task (which is one of the key learning outcomes). They are then prompted to consider the vocabulary items, grammar items, sentence patterns or text structure students need. In this way, the unit design would become more coherent and focused.

For instance, the panel head from school E shared what they had learnt from this project and gave advice on using outcome-based approach. Her comment is as follows.

Panel Head from school E: When you choose to use the outcome-based approach, you need to think of the outcome before deciding on the vocabulary. In other words, working backward is easier than working forward. ... After deciding on the outcome, you then figure out what words students might want or need to use in their writing but are not taught in the textbook. Then you use word cards and or picture cards to teach these words, followed by bingo games or whatever activities to consolidate students' learning. Some teachers even ask students to use these extra words to write sentences so as to prepare them for the writing tasks.

The teachers from school D shared similar feelings. In particular, they learned the benefits of narrowing down the language focus, through developing the materials based on the genre-based pedagogy and the outcome-based approach. One teacher was teaching the remedial class with students of special educational needs and she believed that narrowing down the language focus could help students to learn better. Other teachers from school D reflected as follows:

T1 (panel head): We added a short writing, i.e. the feature article in the test paper. ... Students could apply what they have learnt from the package to their writing. I think the students have a firm grasp of what they have learnt... The package really focuses on target language items ... patterns. That's why sometimes, the R class (remedial class) can follow and learn those patterns. Frankly, (in the past), when we taught, we didn't really narrow down the language items and the teaching plan was not really well-planned, students might not grasp the concept very well. But for this package, it only focuses on a few language items to teach and they are taught repeatedly. Therefore, students can memorise them longer and produce what they have learnt in their feature articles.

T2: After teaching this unit, I think I should select some appropriate items to teach and/or give up teaching some items. ... It is a very good reflection. Do we really have to follow the textbook and teach everything on it? ... For the package, the language items are narrowed down and thus students know what they have learnt from a unit. If we follow the textbook and teach everything on it, it might be a bit confusing.

It seems that after the project, these teachers have gained some insights into planning their curriculum in the future.

Theme 2: Changes in pedagogical practices

Through the collaborative partnership between researcher and teachers, the intervention might lead to the changes in teachers' pedagogical practices. In the present study, after identifying the

problems leading to general weaknesses in English reading and writing of primary students and designing the teaching and learning activities to address the problems through the collaboration, the teachers attempted to implement the package, which inevitably changed their pedagogical practices. One outstanding theme identified from nearly all teachers is **integration of multi-sensory elements into the classrooms**.

The participating teachers highlighted the use of multimodal elements in their lessons, such as, the use of songs, videos and online games. In each of the packages, some multi-sensory elements were integrated. For example, the project team designed a package about healthy diet with the teachers in school C. One language focus was the use of countable and uncountable nouns. In the first meeting, when asked to share their experience of teaching that particular grammar item before, the teachers from school C stated that their students, even the more able ones, found it difficult to grasp the concepts of countable and uncountable nouns.

Therefore, when designing the package, the project team tried to think of some other ways to teach the grammar item. Instead of simply teaching students the rules of using the countable and uncountable nouns with the use of the blackboard, (which is a deductive approach to grammar,) the teachers from school C first introduced this grammar item with the use of video and asked students to complete the worksheet in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3. Extract of a worksheet of a more able student in school C

Task 1

In the video, Gran and Kitty talk about food and drinks. Some words are countable but some are uncountable. Put the words in the correct groups.

Countable nouns	Uncountable nouns
sweets ✓ ✓	cheese ✓ ✓
tomatoes ✓ ✓	milk ✓ ✓
apples ✓ ✓	rice ✓ ✓
grapes ✓ ✓	bread ✓ ✓
eggs ✓ ✓	orange juice ✓ ✓
sandwiches ✓ ✓	pasta ✓ ✓
	apple juice ✓ ✓

Teachers then drew students' attention to the use of countable and uncountable nouns by asking some guided questions in order to deduce some rules of using the countable and uncountable nouns. Excerpt 4 is an example showing how students from school C deduced the rules of using the countable and uncountable nouns with the help of the video.

Excerpt 4. Extract of a worksheet of an average student in school C

Gran tells us **TWO** important things about uncountable nouns. What are they?

1. You can / cannot count uncountable nouns.

2. For uncountable nouns, we don't add 's' and the article 'a / an'.

This might suggest that the use of the multimodal elements has a positive influence on students' comprehension of the use of the countable and uncountable nouns (Scaife & Rogers, 1996). Mayer (2014) argues that 'people learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone' (p.6) since 'in the process of trying to build connections between pictures and words, learner are able to create a deeper understanding than from words or pictures alone' (p.7).

As a matter of fact, teachers continued to integrate more multimodal elements, such as a song from Youtube and some online games into the next unit. This shows that teachers from school C changed their pedagogical practices to cater for their students' learning styles and needs, instead of simply asking students to do some drillings. Excerpts 5 and 6 are some tasks in this unit which incorporated multimodal elements, including songs (Excerpt 5) and online interactive games (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 5. The lead-in task for the unit which makes use of a song and its lyrics

Unit 4 A Balanced Diet

Pre-reading activity

Fill in the lyrics (Version A)

Listen to a song and circle the correct answers below.

Food Groups Are Rockin' Tonight

Sung by Brian Haner

Food groups are rocking tonight.
Food groups are rocking tonight.
Everybody's feeling alright.
Food groups are rocking tonight.
We're gonna have some fun
when breakfast / lunch comes.
'Cause the food groups are rocking tonight!

Vegetables / fruits like broccoli,
peas, and Brussels sprouts.
Keep our bodies healthy from the inside out!

We need dairy / breakfast every day,
like milk and cottage cheese.
To keep our bones / body growing strong.
So we don't get weak in the knees.

Food groups are rocking tonight.
Food groups are rocking tonight.
Everybody's feeling alright.
Food groups are rocking tonight.
We're gonna have some fun
when lunch time comes.
'Cause the food groups are rocking tonight!

Apples, bananas, and oranges are fruits / vegetables
that taste so sweet.
But don't let that fool you
They've got lots of vitamin C / vitamin E.

Grains / Trains to give us energy / warmth like cereal and bread.
The fuel your body needs to burn
just like your mamma said.



Unit 4 A Balanced Diet

* Food groups are rocking tonight.
Food groups are rocking tonight.
Everybody's feeling alright.
Food groups are rocking tonight.
We're gonna have some fun
when dinner comes.
'Cause the food groups are rocking tonight!*

You've got to have some protein / vitamin C
like chicken, fish, and steak.
It helps you build strong muscles / bones
so you can play all day.

Eat a little from each food group
every single day.
If you do, I promise you,
you'll chase those blues away.

Repeat

Food groups are rocking tonight.
Food groups are rocking tonight.
Rocking Tonight!

From: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gal_vxVnn8Yg



Read the lyrics and finish the table.

Food groups	Good for us	Examples
	keep our bodies _____	broccoli, peas and Brussel sprouts
Dairy (products)	keep our bones _____	
	have lots of _____	apples, bananas and oranges
Grain products	give us _____	
Meat and fish	help us build _____	chicken, fish and steak

Excerpt 6. A communicative activity adapted from an online interactive game for the students to practise the target grammar item and sentence structure

Unit 4 A Balanced Diet

Pre-writing task : Detective game

Situation:

You are the junior food detective. You have received 5 case files of children who have not-so-healthy habits. Your job is to HELP THEM OUT!

Click the case files, find out each of their problems and help them turn those not-so-healthy habits into healthy ones.



There are **more sentence patterns** that you can use to **give advice**.

	It is important to	eat a lot of fruit and vegetables.
	It is better to	eat a little meat.
	It is necessary to	eat a few grapes.
	It is a good idea to	eat less junk food.
		eat more apples.
		eat fewer sweets.

Reminder:

- A lot of/ more → uncountable and countable nouns
- A few/ fewer → countable nouns
- A little/ less → uncountable nouns



Unit 4 A Balanced Diet

Pairwork

Let's solve some of the cases. (*Note: more challenging)

Visit this website again.

<http://www.primarygames.com/science/nutrition/games/amazinafooddetective/index.htm>

<p>Case 5: Emily What was the problem of her eating habit? She ate _____.</p> <p>Advice for her: _____ _____ _____</p>	
<p>Case 6: Althea What was the problem of her eating habit? She _____.</p> <p>Advice for her: _____ _____ _____</p>	

Indeed, apart from teachers from school C, other participating teachers also incorporated more multimodal elements into their lessons and mentioned the effectiveness of using multimodal elements during the evaluation meetings. Below are some of the teachers' comments on the integration of multisensory elements into the lessons.

Teacher from school B: Overall, I think the package is useful. A song is used as a lead-in activity to introduce the jobs. I think it is interesting ... The lyrics is easy and there are subtitles... It is good to use a song to introduce the topic. My students like it. ... For example, right now, I am teaching the days of week, such as Tuesday and Wednesday and I remember what we did in this package. Then, I tried to find any suitable songs on the Internet and I found some. I used it in the lesson and I found it helpful.

Teacher from school D (teaching the remedial class): Students from remedial class can learn better when more time and multisensory elements are introduced into lessons. They like multisensory elements ... I think multisensory elements are really important ... Even though a student's attention usually wandered, s/he could still learn something from any multisensory elements.

With the above evidence drawn from this project, multisensory elements can help younger learners, particularly the weaker one, learn better. Also, the collaborative project seems to inspire

teachers and encourage them to incorporate multisensory elements into their lessons, even after the implementation of the project. These may demonstrate some sustainable impact of this project on teachers' professional development.

4.2 Student development

To address the research question 2, the analysis of students' performance on reading and writing tasks will be presented in this section, followed by a general discussion about students' motivation.

4.2.1 Students' performance

4.2.1.1 Reading

In the "teaching/learning cycle" of the genre-based pedagogy, the first stage is "deconstruction", in which the teacher prepares students for reading and then reads together with them (i.e. detailed reading). It is assumed that through reading together with the students, with the teacher asking questions about the text to check students' understanding of the passage and to draw their attention to the language features of the text, students' reading strategies will improve. Hence, the project team designed a reading assessment for each grade level of the participating students and invited the schools to conduct the assessment during the post exam period (i.e. June to July 2017). P.2 and P.4 students were asked to read one text and answered 7 to 8 questions; whereas P.5 students read two texts and attempted 12 questions (see the Appendix for one set of reading assessment paper). Students' performance on this reading assessment was generally satisfactory and showed that they have acquired the basic reading skills, for instance, locating specific information by identifying the keywords. Surprisingly, most of the less-able students has satisfactory performance in this assessment. In the following, we will present our analysis according to Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2).

KS1 students' performance

KS1 students included in this project were the P.2 students from schools A and B. Based on the results of the assessment, most students performed well on questions about locating specific information by identifying the keywords which are familiar to them. Also, they were quite familiar with the topics of the assessment reading passage as these topics, namely, free-time activities and jobs were topics of the designed packages.

Teachers from school A commented on their students' language proficiency during the first two meetings. The teachers said that their students were generally very weak in English. One teacher from a remedial class stated 'They (students) are less-able students and weak in reading. They even cannot comprehend a question.' Surprisingly, students (from remedial class) from school A showed very satisfactory performance in the assessment paper. For instance, they performed well on doing referencing question (i.e. question 4) asking about the meaning of the pronoun. This may be attributed to teachers' reading instruction when using the packages, which aimed at

helping students to develop some basic reading skills. Excerpt 7 shows some of the PowerPoint slides designed by the project team and the teachers to help teachers conduct detailed reading in class.

Excerpt 7. PowerPoint slides used when teachers conducted detailed reading in school A

Look at this picture. Can you guess who they are?



They look like **superheroes/ superman and superwoman.**

But are they superheroes? Let's find out!

- Read these two sentences and try to find out who they are.

Great Girl and Super Boy are superheroes. They help good people and fight bad people. Read the story and find out more about them.

- Who** are they?
They are Great Girl and Super Boy.
- Are Great Girl and Super Boy superheroes?
Yes, they are superheroes.

When can they go to Dr K's office?

'Let's go and have a look,' says Great Girl. 'What about tomorrow after school'?

'Sorry, I can't,' says Super Boy. 'I have piano lessons on Tuesdays.'
Ah! I'm free on Wednesdays.'

What day is it tomorrow? Tuesday

Can Super Boy go to Dr K's office on Tuesday?
No.

Can Great Girl go to Dr K's office on Tuesday?
Yes.

Can Super Boy go to Dr K's office on Wednesday?
Yes.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Super Boy		X	✓				
Great Girl		✓					

Excerpt 7 shows that some guided questions were provided to help students comprehend the text. Indeed, some questions of this reading assessment such as questions 4 and 6 were designed to be similar to those found in the text in the reading package. With the help of the package and teachers' instruction, the majority of the students (93.75%) answered the referencing question (i.e. question 4) correctly. Compared with question 4, fewer students answered question 6 correctly but still over half of the students (62.5%) were able to do so. It seems that the students from school A have mastered the skills of referencing and locating specific information when they only needed to deal with small amount of keywords. However, because of their limited vocabulary, it is found that students were generally weak in high-order thinking questions like working out the meaning of a phrase and processing compound sentences.

Similarly, teachers from school B said that their students were generally weak in English and had limited vocabulary. They also highlighted the huge learner diversity in a class. Students' scores of the first term test (before the implementation of the project) ranged from 9 to 96 (out of 100). Based on some sample work and lesson observation, the students from school B appeared to be more proficient in English than those from school A. Therefore, the assessment paper the project team designed for school B was relatively more challenging than the one for school A.

Based on the results of the assessment, more than half of the students from school B performed well on questions about locating specific information by identifying the keywords which are familiar to them and inferring information by using the clues in close proximity. This might again be attributed to the teachers' practice of detailed reading with the PowerPoint slides Excerpt 8.

Excerpt 8. PowerPoint slides used when teachers conducted detailed reading in school B

The image shows two PowerPoint slides. The left slide has a yellow background and contains the text: "Let's read Lines 20-21", "What does Milly's elder brother do?", "A zoo-keeper.", and "Here's a clue: He takes care of animals in the zoo." with a small image of a zoo enclosure. The right slide also has a yellow background and contains the text: "He works with big cats.", "Which animals does he take care of?", "Can you name some animals that are big cats?", and three images of a lion, a tiger, and a leopard with labels "lion", "tiger", and "leopard" below them.

In the PowerPoint slides in Excerpt 8, some guiding questions and related images were provided for students to locate the answers. This can raise students' awareness of using pictorial clues to find out the answers. Indeed, in the reading assessment designed by the project team, more than half of the students could make good use of the pictorial clues to help them choose the correct answer of question 2. However, because of the students' limited vocabulary, it is found that students were generally weak in high-order thinking questions: (a) working out the meaning of a phrase; (b) making predictions about the likely development of the text by identifying keywords and (c) identifying the supporting details explicitly stated in the text. Also, the students were weak in answering questions in complete sentences.

KS2 students' performance

The P.4 and P.5 students from schools C and D completed the reading assessment paper. Based on the results of the assessment, most students from both schools performed well on questions about locating specific information by identifying the keywords. In addition, more than half of the students from school C did well on (1) working out the meaning of a phrase and (2) organising information and ideas in texts by using the text structure. The students from school C performed relatively well than those from school D. One possible reason is that the students from school C were quite familiar with the theme (i.e. healthy diet, which was the same as their package) and the genre. Also, based on the students' work and lesson observations, the students from school C appeared to be more proficient in English than those from school D.

Based on the teachers' comments at different co-planning meetings, the students from school C were exposed to different text types, but they lacked vocabulary. And the students' scores in the TSA reading paper (before the implementation of the project) ranged from 6 to 36 (out of 37), reflecting a rather huge learner diversity. To address this issue, differentiated worksheets were used across classes and there was one more teacher assisting in the English lessons in a weaker class. As mentioned above, the students from school C performed comparatively well in the reading assessment designed by the project team. This might be due to the use of the designed materials with the detailed reading strategies and extra reading questions, which are shown in Excerpt 9.

Excerpt 9. Some extra comprehension questions included in the package for school C

4. Mr Grunt said, "Oh dear!" after he found out what the three little pigs ate for lunch.
- Why did Mr Grunt say "Oh dear" ?
- A. He loves the three little pigs.
- B. The three little pigs did not have a balanced diet so he needed to help them.
- C. He was afraid that the big bad wolf would catch them next time.
- D. He was happy because the three little pigs ran away from the big bad wolf.
5. The story tells us to _____.
- A. eat more meat.
- B. have a balanced diet – not too much or too little of any food.
- C. run faster.
- D. sleep more.
6. Eating healthy food can help us become fit. What else can we do to keep ourselves fit? Give one suggestion.
- _____
- _____

7. Ms. _____ loves sports and enjoys swimming and running. She uses a lot of energy every day. Which food group should she eat? Name two food items in that food group.
- _____
- _____
8. After reading this article, do you think you have a balanced diet? What food will you eat less or more?
- Yes, I have a balanced diet because _____
- _____
- Or
- No, I do not have a balanced diet because _____
- _____
- I will eat _____
- _____

Also, some questions of this reading assessment such as questions 5 and 6 were designed to follow those found in the textbook and the designed package. However, during the evaluation meeting, the teachers from school C commented on the pre-reading worksheets, which aim to help students develop their prediction skills. They said that their students found them very difficult as they were not used to doing prediction. This might explain why the students did not perform well on questions about (1) identifying the main ideas and (2) locating details to support their ideas. Also, a teacher from school C mentioned their students lacked vocabulary and it would be difficult for them to express their ideas. This might illustrate why more than half of the students (51.2%) could point out the correct food group in question 6 but among those students, only around half of them could provide appropriate reasons to support their ideas. Interestingly, for question 7, there were more students providing suggestions (44.88%) than those pointing out the food item (38.58%). This might be resulted from the 'Food Detective Game' and the final writing task in the package, in which students had to give healthy eating advice.

As mentioned earlier, the students from school D did not perform as well as those from school C. One possible reason is that the students from school D were in general rather weak in English. Also, they might not be familiar with the topic (i.e. car racing) and the genres (i.e. speech and newspaper article). Despite those factors, the students from school D did well on questions about locating specific information and processing some compound and complex sentences. This might be brought about by detailed reading process, teachers' modelling and extra reading questions. Excerpt 10 shows some examples of the detailed reading PowerPoint slides.

Excerpt 10. PowerPoint slides used for detailed reading in school D

This article is about ...

Hint: Look at the first paragraph

Inventors are adult scientists who work in laboratories, right? Wrong! Children can be inventors too.

Let's find out whether our guess is right!

Guiding questions

- Can children create something new?
- Where do children invent new things?
- Can you guess what this article is about?

Read the third paragraph.

Fourteen-year-old Becky's invention helps **doctors** all over the world — and **astronauts** all over space! Becky put special paint **under her writing** paper because she wanted to write in the dark. Now **her invention** (Glo-Sheet), is used for reading patients' information in hospitals at night. It is also used in spaceships when the lights are turned off to save energy. Amazing!

Guiding questions

- **What is Becky's invention called?**
It is called **Glo-Sheet**.
- **Who find Glo-Sheet helpful?**
Doctors and astronauts find it helpful.

4.2.1.2 Writing

Students from all schools were required to do the writing task at the end of the project. The genres of the final product were the same as those of their reading texts, and various tasks were included in the post-reading and pre-writing stage to provide sufficient scaffolding for the students to complete the writing task. Our analysis of the selected students' work shows that most students managed to apply what they had learnt from the package to their final writing. In addition, most of the less-able students demonstrated very satisfactory performance in their writing task. We will present our analysis of KS1 and KS2 separately, and we will focus on the 'content', 'language' and 'organisation'.

KS1 students' performance

Content

In terms of the content, the majority of students from both schools A and B met the requirements of the task. Excerpt 11 is the work done by a weak student from school A.

Excerpt 11. A piece of descriptive writing done by a weak student from school A

have -> has

1. Look at Pages 6-7 of your notebook.
2. Use the information to write about one of your friend's activity
Remember: Use "He/She" to write about your friend's activity.

CHANSIUCHUEN kelvin's activity ✓

CHANSIUCHUEN kelvin has drawing lessons on Monday. ✓

He goes to church on Thursday. ✓

He meets relatives at the church. He likes it because he can learn. ✓

From the above, it can be seen that the student could describe his friend's weekly activities. He was also able to explain what his friend did and why he liked it. As commented by the teachers in school A, most of his students had very limited English proficiency and special educational needs. Hence, what Excerpt 11 shows can be regarded as satisfactory or even encouraging.

For school B, the majority of students wrote beyond the requirements of the task. For example, they mentioned their family members' workplace and their personality. Excerpt 12 is one of the average students' writing.

Excerpt 12. A piece of descriptive writing done by an average student from school B

Me and my family

My name is Eva. I am 7 years old. I am in Class 2E. I live in Shen Zhen.

I come to school by school bus.

My school is CYPY.

My father is a bus driver. He works on a bus. He drives a bus.

My mother is a waitress. She works in a cafe. She serves food to people.

I have one big brother. He is 10 years old. He is polite. He always say 'please' and 'thank you'.

I feel I love my family.

This could be the result of the scaffolding activities that students did in the designed package, such as the riddles and memory card games prior to the writing task (shown in Excerpts 13 and 14). Through those activities, students not only got more ideas about the topics, but also built up their vocabulary bank. The following are some examples of materials used prior to the writing.

Excerpt 13. The riddles designed for the students to build up their vocabulary bank and practise sentence structure

LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING PICTURE.
TELL ME WHAT **THEIR JOBS ARE**
AND WHAT **THEY DO**.



They are police officers.
They **catch** bad people.

WHERE DO POLICE OFFICERS WORK?

They work in a police station.



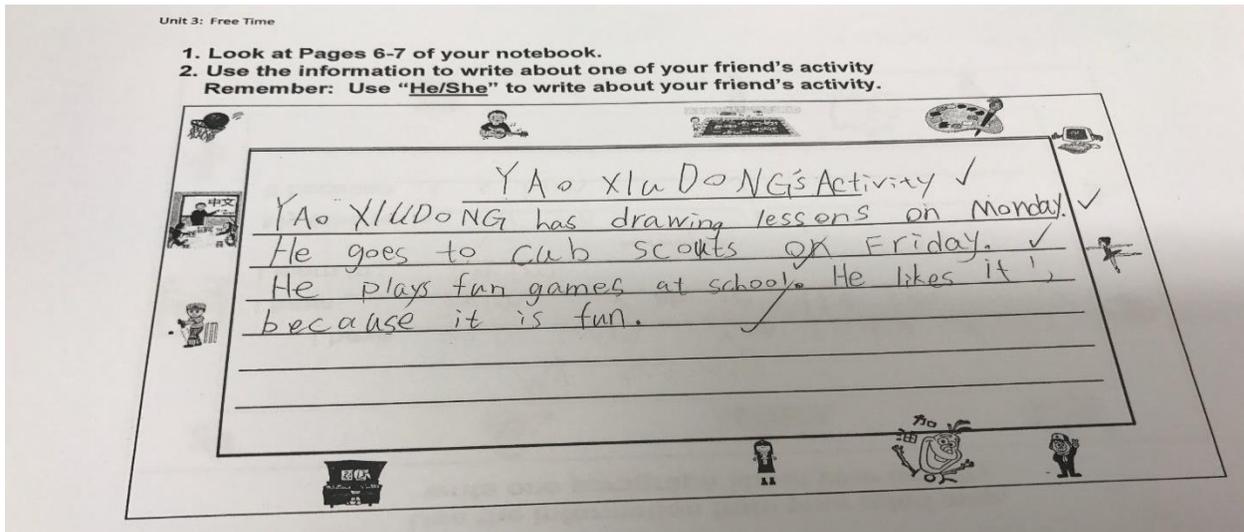
Excerpt 14. The memory card games designed for the students to consolidate the vocabulary knowledge

 a policeman	 a police station	 a policewoman	 a police station
 police officers	 a police station	 a postman	 a post office

Language

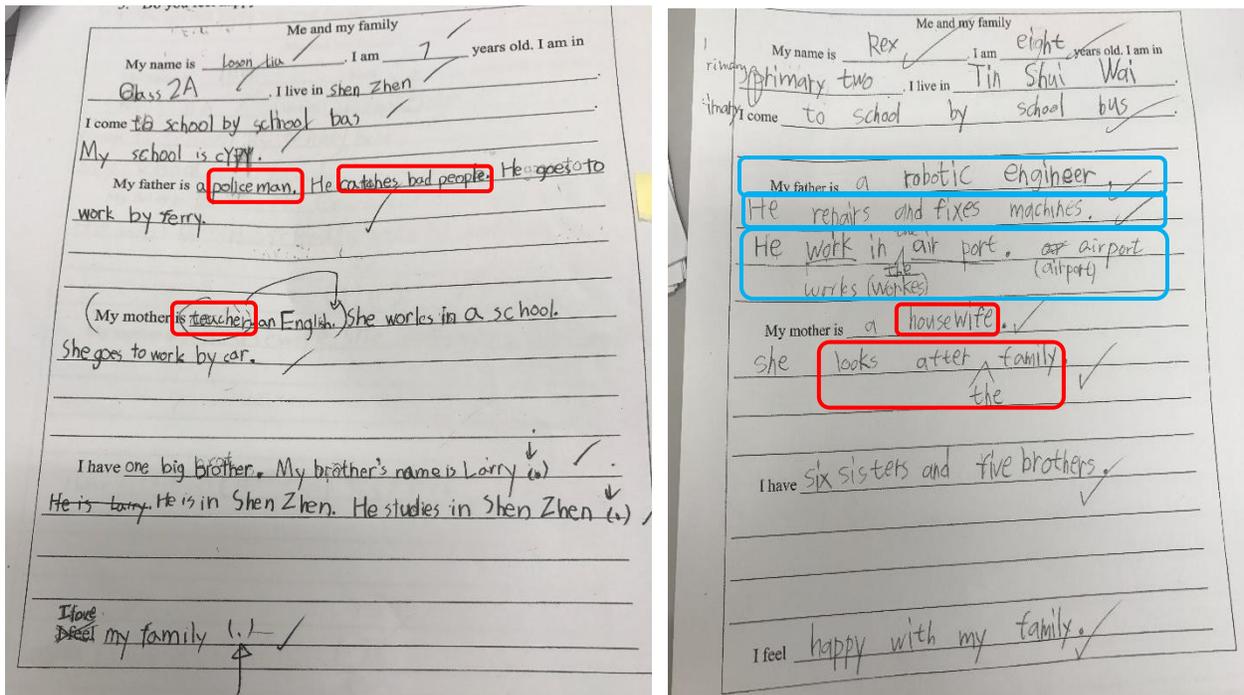
In terms of vocabulary and language enhancement, students from both schools used appropriate vocabulary items for the writing task. For example, students from school A used appropriate activity vocabulary and action verbs such as “**go** to church”, “**has** piano lessons”. They could even express more than one idea in one sentence, namely the activity and the day of the activity. They could further elaborate their ideas by explaining what they did during the activity and the reason. The sample in Excerpt 15 illustrates how the student used complex sentences to express the ideas (e.g. “*He likes it, because it is fun*”).

Excerpt 15. A piece of descriptive writing done by a weak student from school A



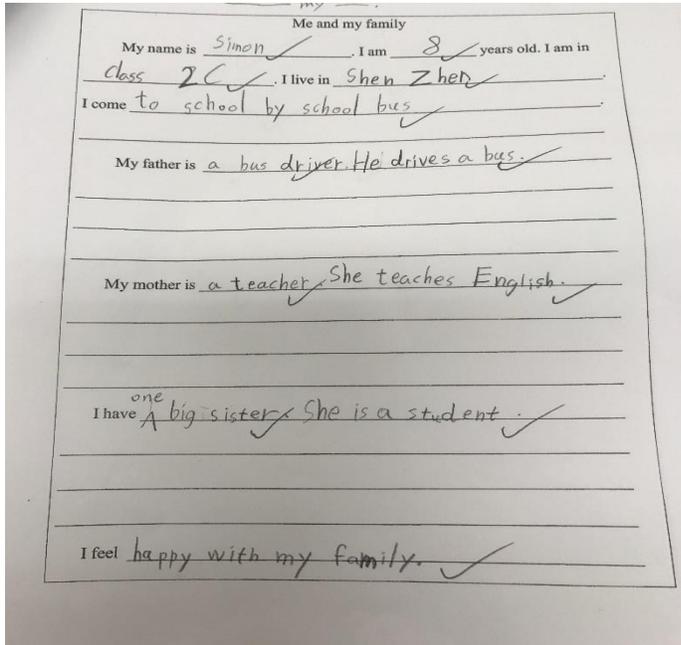
For school B, prior to the project, the writing tasks designed by the school focused on testing students' grammar abilities. After the implementation of the designed package in this project, students progressed from controlled writing to writing a short description about themselves and their family members. This allowed some students to show their creativity and elaborate on their ideas. Most of the students could apply the vocabulary items related to jobs and job natures which they had learnt during the lessons. This is illustrated in Excerpt 16 (relevant vocabulary items are highlighted in red while creative ideas are highlighted in blue).

Excerpt 16. Two pieces of writing done by more-able students from school B



As for the less able students, although they did not take risk in their writing, they were still able to fulfill the minimum task requirement by following the guided questions. This is illustrated by Excerpt 17.

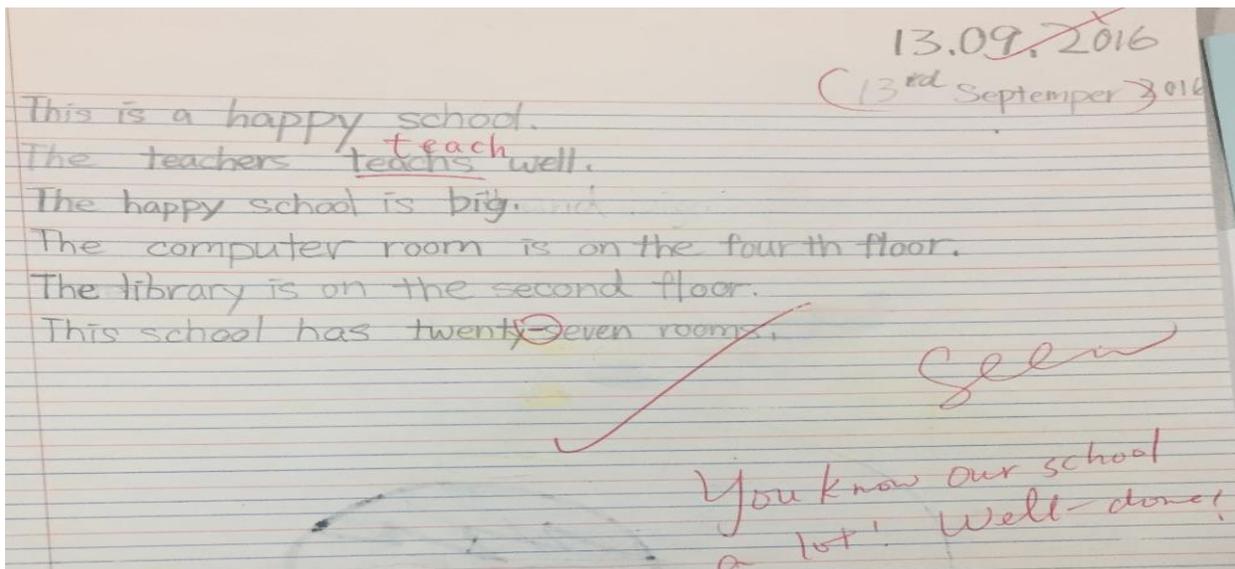
Excerpt 17. A piece of writing done by a less able student from school B



Organisation

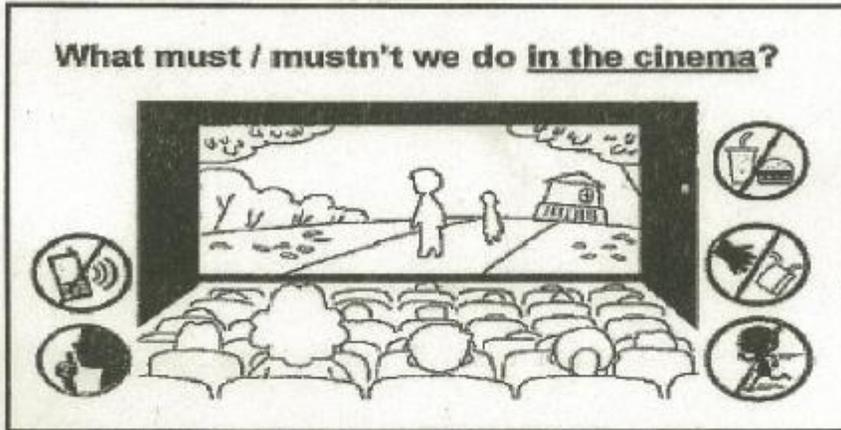
Before the implementation of the package, students from both schools wrote in isolated sentences (instead of in coherent paragraphs or short texts). Excerpts 18 and 19 are two examples of student work collected prior to the project.

Excerpt 18. A piece of writing homework done by a student from school A



Excerpt 19. Extract of a test paper of a student from school B

K. Tom is going to write a poster for the cinema. Help him write the topic and finish the four rules using "must" or "mustn't". The first one has been done for you as an example. 10% @2%



Guide for the cinema ✓

e.g. We mustn't eat or drink.

1. We mustn't litter ✓

2. We must keep quiet ✓

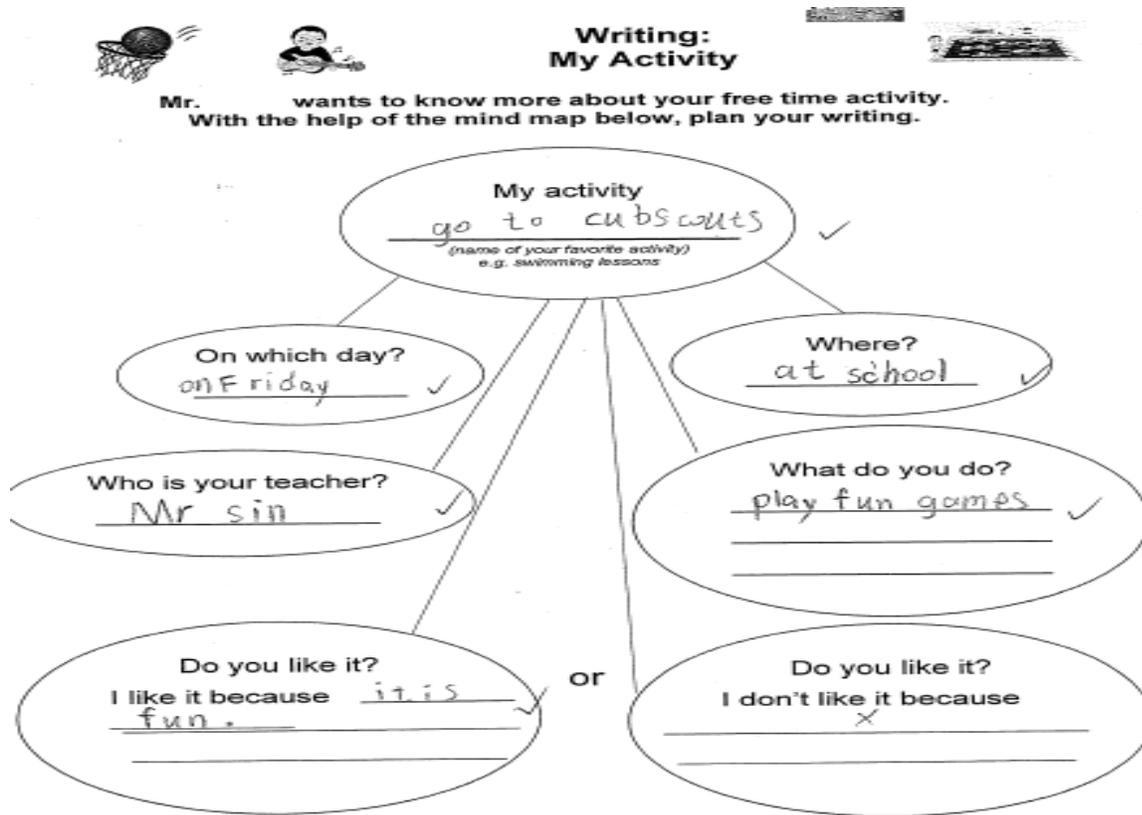
3. We mustn't talk on the phone ✓

4. We mustn't run around ✓

After the implementation of the package, students from school A wrote a coherent paragraph to describe their peers' activities in the writing task. For school B, students wrote in paragraphs, with good lexical-semantic organisation, namely, job-job nature-workplace. This might be

attributed to the planner (or the graphic organiser) in their writing. Excerpt 20 shows the planner and the writing task completed by a student from school A.

Excerpt 20. The planner and the writing task completed by a student from school A



**Use the information from your mind map,
write one paragraph about your activity**

My activity ✓

I ~~have~~ go to cubs counts ✓ on Friday ✓.

I ~~have~~ play fun games ✓ at school ✓.

I learn to play with fun _____.

(what do you do?)

My teacher is MR sin ✓. I like _____.

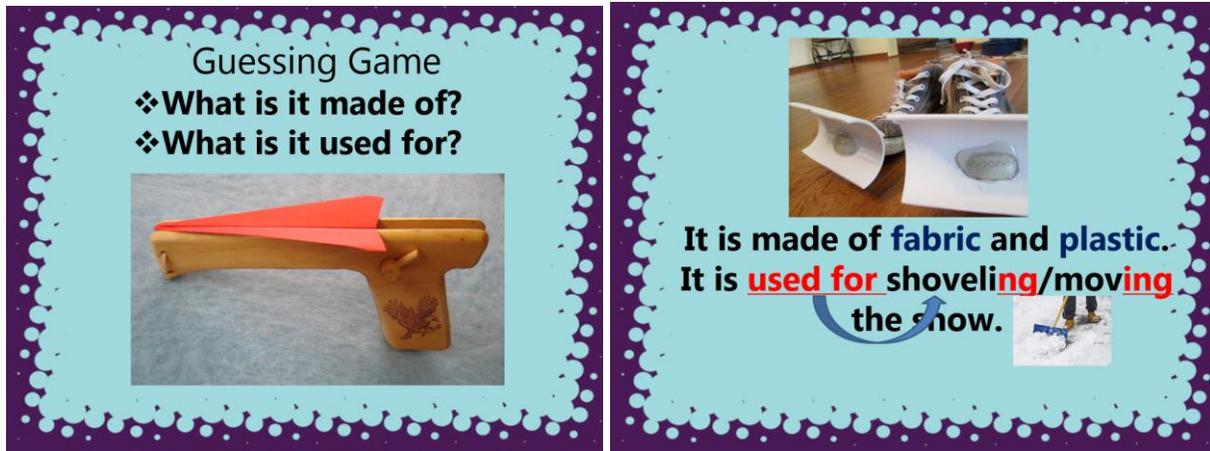
it because it is fun ✓ _____.

KS2 students' performance

Content

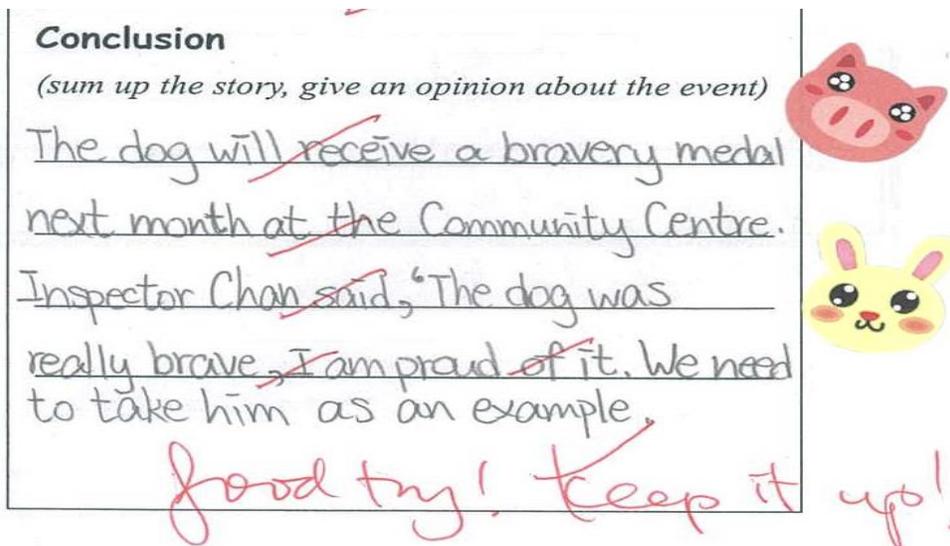
In terms of content, the majority of students from schools C, D and E fulfilled the requirements of their writing tasks. Most students could make good use of the ideas gained from the designed packages and applied them to their writing. For instance, Excerpt 21 shows some slides of the guessing game activity used by school D to stimulate students' creativity prior to the writing task.

Excerpt 21. The guessing game activity used by teachers from school D in the pre-writing stage



For other schools, some similar activities were also carried out in the pre-writing stage to help students gain more ideas for their writing. For instance, with the genre-analysis and brainstorming tasks in the package, one more-able student from school E showed her creativity in her newspaper article, which is shown in Excerpt 22.

Excerpt 22. Extract of a planner of a more-able student from school E



Language

In the language aspect, students from all schools used vocabulary and grammar items appropriately. They also applied the vocabulary items and sentence patterns learnt from the packages to their writing. It is believed that through the deconstruction of the genre, students understood more about how to use language items appropriately in their writing. Some examples taken from different schools will be presented in the following sections to show students' performance in the writing task.

School C

The designed package was about healthy diet, and the final writing task was an article including advice on healthy diet. Prior to the writing task, students practised the target grammar items and sentence patterns (e.g. "We need to...", "It is important...", "We should...", "Too much/Too many...") through playing a "Food Detective Game", in which they had to give eating advice. This helped learners verbalise the language patterns and in turn enabled them to use those patterns in their writing. Excerpts 23 and 24 are two writing samples taken from school C.

Excerpt 23. Extract of a school magazine article done by a more able student to give advice on how to change students' bad eating habits - Sample 1:

Your new healthy snacks

We found out that the schoolmates usually have biscuits, potato chips and cookies at recess. Too much fried food, sugary food and oily food is bad for your health. They should stop eating junk food and have fruits or nuts. They are healthy snacks

Your new healthy meal

Excerpt 24. Extract of a school magazine article done by an average student to give advice on how to change students' bad eating habits - Sample 2:

Eating too much junk food is bad for us. We need to eat less sugary food, salty food and fried food. We should also drink fewer soft drinks. It is important to eat more grain products and dairy products. We should also eat less sweets and snacks.

↑(repeated)

School D

The package was about children inventors and their inventions. In the writing task, it was observed that students could use appropriate words to describe their inventions, for example, vocabulary for materials like “plastic” and “metal” and sentence patterns such as “It is used for ...”. They could further elaborate their ideas in explaining their peers' inventions and why they liked it. Excerpt 25 illustrates how one student used relevant vocabulary items and complex sentences to express his ideas.

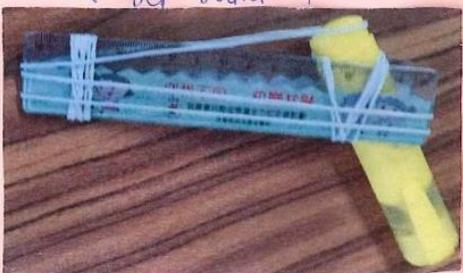
Excerpt 25. Extract of a feature article done by a more able student to describe his invention

Rubber band pistol

My invention is a rubber band pistol. It is made of rubber and plastic. It is used for shooting. I invented it because I can play with my friends. My friend like it and think it interesting.

by Kenny

“Rubber band pistol”



“easy music”



School E

The target genre of the designed package was newspaper articles. During the co-planning meetings, the teachers from school E mentioned that their students tended to misuse the direct speech. To help students understand how to use direct speech in a newspaper article, in the designed package, students were asked to examine a newspaper article and discuss the reason for using direct speech. Excerpt 26 shows some slides which help students to pay attention to the importance of using direct speech in a newspaper article.

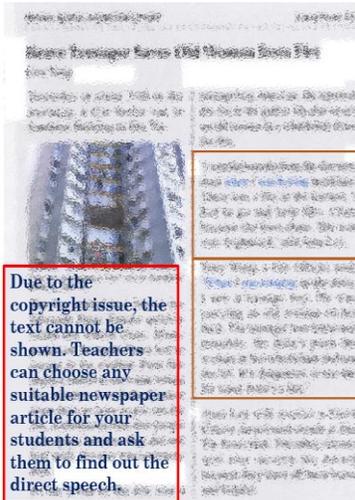
Excerpt 26. PowerPoint slides used when teachers drew students' attention to the importance of using direct speech in a newspaper article

DIRECT SPEECH IN NEWSPAPERS

- Do you read newspapers?
- Can you usually find direct speech in a newspaper article?

Now, let's have a look at a newspaper article!

READ THE FOLLOWING NEWSPAPER ARTICLE



How many times is direct speech used in this newspaper article?

Two times!

** In some newspaper articles, direct speech may be used a few times but it depends on the situation.

DIRECT SPEECH IN NEWSPAPERS

- Why is it important to use direct speech in newspaper articles?
 - It tells readers what other people say or think.
 - It gives readers a clearer picture of the event.

It is believed that such awareness raising activity enabled the students to use direct speech in their writing task appropriately. Excerpts 27 and 28 show how students used direct speech suitably:

Excerpt 27. The newspaper article written by a more able student from school E

B. The police caught the robber. A reporter from *Morning Daily* interviewed Jason about the robbery. Finish the news report in about 60-80 words.

22 April 20xx MORNING DAILY Local News A6

Loyal Dog Saves Boys

by Jenny Shiu

Yesterday at about 7:00 in the morning, A thief decided to kill a boy called Jason in Kowloon Park. Jason's dog saved him.

The thief ran away. Jason called the police. Finally, they caught the thief. Jason and Alice were happy.

Yesterday, Jason and his dog, Alice, were playing happily in Kowloon Park. A thief used a knife to point at Jason since the thief had not enough money to go on an airplane and hide in another countries. Jason was frightened.

'The thief told me to give him money to him since he did not have enough money to use. However, I didn't give him money, so he used a knife and pointed at me,' said Jason.

Then, Alice bit him hard.

Hazel, a police women, said, 'When the other policeman and I were going to the scene, we saw a dog. It helped his owner. It was very brave. Luckily, the dog was not hurt.'

The dog will receive a bravery medal in

ideas	
language	month
Organization	

 at the Community Centre. Inspector Chan said, 'It's very and brave. I was very proud of.'

Excerpt 28. The newspaper article written by a less able student from school E

B. The police caught the robber. A reporter from *Morning Daily* interviewed Jasc about the robbery. Help the reporter finish the news report in about 60-80 word

22 April 20xx MORNING DAILY Local News A6

Brave Dog Saves Boy

Derek Hui

A robbery took place last evening at about 8:00 p.m. in the park. A boy was attacked by a man.

Jason was in the park. He went to the park in the evening at 8:00 p.m. He played with a dog happily. Suddenly, a thief took a knife and pointed at Jason. Jason felt frightened. The thief said, "Give me all your money." Jason's dog ran to the thief and bit his leg. The thief got hurt and screamed. Then he ran away.

At the end, Jason and his dog were safe. They went back home. The dog will receive a bravery medal next month at Community Centre.

Inspector Chan said, "The dog saved Jason in the park. It is a good and brave dog. It will give a bravery medal to the dog next month at Community Centre."

Ideas	5
Language	5
Organization	5

Organisation

In terms of organisation, students from all schools could organise the structure and ideas of their writing in a more systematic way through the help of a writing planner/template. Furthermore, the genre analysis during the pre-writing stage enhanced students' awareness of the language features and structure of the target genre. All these seemed to improve the quality of students' writings. This especially helped the less able students to write a relatively well-structured article. Excerpt 29 serves as an example showing how the planner/template helped a student from school C to plan his main ideas with supporting details.

Excerpt 29. A planner/ template used before he wrote a school magazine article

<p>1. Title Try to be catchy!!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">^{eating} Health ^{habits} eating for every day ✓</p>
<p>2. Introduction Tell readers what this article is about. You may briefly talk about students' bad eating habits</p>	<p>① eat a lot of junk food ✓ ② did not eat <u>anything</u> ← anything ③ drink soft drinks ④ eat more rice because it gives us energy ✓</p>
<p>3. Body paragraph 1 Give advice on how to change their bad eating habits</p>	<p>① eat more vegetables because they are good for your body. ✓ ② eat more grain products because it ^{gives energy} is energy for your body ✓ ③ eat a lot of fruit because the fruits is healthy to your body ✓</p>
<p>4. Body paragraph 2 Give suggestions on how to pack a healthy lunchbox</p>	<p>① eat '3 2 1' rule for lunch ^{fruits are} lunch ✓ ② eat a lot of vegetables for the lunch box ✓ ③ eat less fried food in your lunch box ✓ ④ put the healthy food in your lunch box ✓ ⑤ put more vegetables in your lunch box ✓</p>
<p>5. Conclusion Encourage readers to follow the '3 2 1' rule.</p>	<p>- changes our bad eating habits ✓ - vegetables ✓</p>

use capital letters to write the title!

Good Habits for Every Day

Eating Title

Introduction

Briefly talk about students' bad eating habits

Some types of food are good for us and others are not. Many of our schoolmates ^{do not} have good habits ~~for~~ every day. ^{also} Many schoolmates have a bad habits for every day. Many students eat a lot of junk food and eat a lot of meat.

Repeted similar idea

Body

paragraph 1

Give advice on how to change their bad eating habits

Eating too much junk food is bad for us. It is bad for your body. So we ^{should} eat more vegetables ^{and it is} good for my body. We also ^{need to} eat more grain products because it ^{gives} energy for your body.

Body

paragraph 2

Suggestions on how to pack a healthy lunchbox

We can prepare a healthy lunchbox for ourselves. According to Smart Lunch '3 2 1' rule, ^{we should} you can put more vegetables and put less meat in ^{the} lunch box ~~for~~ ourselves to eat your healthy lunch. ~~Also eat a little meat~~ ^{we need to} and eat a lot of grain products for your lunch.

Conclusion

Encourage readers to follow the '3 2 1' rule.

So let's ^{healthily} follow the 3-2-1 rule and eat healthy! Let's ~~change~~ our bad eating habits and be healthy!

Similarly, students from school D showed improvement in their writing in terms of organisation. Before the implementation of the project, most students did not include an introduction and conclusion in their article. After the implementation of the package, students wrote appropriate

introduction and conclusion. This might be resulted from the genre-based pedagogy – with the help of the deconstruction of a feature article, the students had a better idea about its structure and language features. Excerpt 30 illustrates how the students wrote a good introduction and conclusion to arouse readers’ interests and encourage readers to create something new.

Excerpt 30. A feature article written by a group of more able students

Creative Kids

happy!

SA students are smart and creative. They invented some interesting and useful things. Let's see what they did.

DIY Watercolour Drawing board
My invention is DIY Watercolour Drawing board. It is made of metal and plastic. It is used for holding paints. I invented it because I didn't want to make paint. I want to make my desk dirty. Many people think it is useful.
by Aristalam

Shake Can
My invention is called 'Shake Can'. It is made of metal. It is used for playing music. I invented it because I got no money to buy the things to play music. It is easy to make. You can make your own can!
by Yoyo Chung

Cardboard Man
My invention is Cardboard Man. It is made of cardboard. It is used for holding paper. I invented it because I want to keep my notes tidy. I like it and I think it is good and useful.
by Tony Huang

Rubber band pistol
My invention is a rubber band pistol. It is made of rubber and plastic. It is used for shooting. I invented it because I can play with my friends. My friend like it and think it is interesting.
by Kenny Wong

If you have an idea, don't be afraid to try it out. Use things that you can find at home. Take that step today!

Even the lower achievers from school D managed to write an introduction and a conclusion in their article, although the content of their body paragraphs was not as rich as that of high achievers’. Still, the low achievers showed their understanding of magazine articles in terms of structure. Excerpt 31 present an example.

Excerpt 31. A feature article written by a group of less able students

Useful Household Tools

We can create something useful to make our lives easier.

Automatic blackboard
This is an automatic blackboard. It is made of wood and metal. It is used for cleaning the blackboard automatically.
By Elaine

Rabbit pet
This is a rabbit pet. It is made of metal. It is used for sweeping the floor and playing football with me.
By David

Automatic eraser
This is an automatic eraser. It is made of plastic. It is used for erasing the mistakes on your homework automatically.
By Hilda

Rabbit Car
This is a rabbit car. It is made of metal. It is used for doing housework.
By Iken

If you have an idea, don't be afraid to try it out. Be creative and make something interesting. Take that step today!

Encouraging results were also observed in school E. Based on the teachers' past experience, their students could not distinguish between a newspaper article and a story. With the help of a lead-in activity in which students needed to compare a newspaper article with a story, students realised their differences. Later, by deconstructing the genre, students better understood the language features and structure of a newspaper article.

Excerpt 32. A worksheet used for deconstructing a newspaper article

The structure and special features of a newspaper article

Let's find out the structure and special features of a newspaper article.

Headline
-get readers' attention
-tell the story in as few words as possible

Name of the writer/reporter

Lead paragraph
-summary of the news
-should answer most of the 6W's questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How

Body paragraphs
-tell readers more about the news
-direct quotes from witnesses
-the paragraphs are usually quite short

Section of the newspaper

Feature 1: Photo and caption
-give readers a snapshot of what happened, where it happened or to whom it happened.

Feature 2: Report in the third person (e.g. he, she)
-retell the event without being involved in the story

Feature 3: Direct speech
-quote what people said to give readers a clearer picture of the event and provide a strong proof

Conclusion
-sum up the story
-give opinions about the event

Due to the copyright issue, the text cannot be shown. Teachers can choose any suitable newspaper article to deconstruct it.

In the task shown in Excerpt 32, students had opportunities to label a newspaper article to better understand the structure of a newspaper article. Through the help of a writing planner, students could organise the structure and ideas in a more systematic way. This helped the students, especially those less able ones, to write a relatively well-structured newspaper article. This is evidence in Excerpt 33.

Excerpt 33. A writing planner used by a less able student before writing his newspaper article

Situation: The police caught the robber. You are a reporter from Morning Daily and interviewed Jason about the robbery. Finish the news report in about 60-80 words.

Headline
Brave Dog Saves Boy

Name of the reporter
 Derek Hui

Lead paragraph
(summarize the events – remember to answer most of the 6W questions: who, what, when, where, why, how)
 A robbery took place last evening at about 8:00 a.m. in the park. A boy was attacked by a man.

Body paragraph 1
(report in third person: He/She)
 Jason was in the park. He went to the park in the evening at 8:00 p.m. He played with a dog happily.

Body paragraph 2
 Suddenly, a thief took a knife and pointed at Jason. Jason felt frightened.

Body paragraph 3
(what the witness(es) said: include 1 or 2 direct speech quote)
 The thief said: "Give me all your money." Jason's dog ran to the thief and bit his leg. The thief got hurt and screamed. Then he ran away.

Body paragraph 4
 At the end, Jason and his dog were safe. They went back home.

Conclusion
(sum up the story, give an opinion about the event)
 The dog will receive a bravery medal next month at Community Centre. Inspector Chan said: 'The dog saved Jason in the park. It is a good and brave dog. I will give a bravery medal to the dog next month at Community Centre.'

With the above evidence, the relationship between the genre-based approach and students' language development, especially their writing development, became clearer, particularly regarding how the approach improves students' writing. It demonstrates how this approach helped students develop reading and writing skills in a cycle of 'deconstruction, joint construction, independent construction' (Rose & Martin, 2012).

4.2.2 Students' motivation and engagement in the lessons

Based on the lesson observations, it seems that students enjoyed the lessons and actively participated in the lessons. For example, quite a lot of students raised their hands to answer teachers' questions and they were engaged in the group activities. Photos 1 to 4 are some images taken during the lesson observations.

Photo 1. Primary two students were eager to answer their teacher's questions when detailed reading was conducted in school B



Photo 2. Two classes of primary four students in school C were keen to answer their teachers' questions and actively participated in some group activities in both reading and writing lessons



Photo 3. Two classes of primary five students in school D were actively involved in their lessons when teachers conducted detailed reading



Photo 4. Primary five students in school E were actively engaged in a pre-writing group activity.



Also, during the evaluation meetings, nearly all the teachers stated that their students enjoyed the tasks and activities designed in the package and became actively engaged in the lessons. For example,

Teachers from school B: Our students enjoyed the lessons. The kids are interested in drawing in the collage and the writing. ... Because of the repetitive learning, weaker students become more confident in learning English.

Teachers from school C: Overall, our students enjoyed the package. Students like the missing items game but they think it is too short and it is better to make it longer. Also, they like the songs, for example, 'Ice-cream once in a while'.

Teacher from school D (teaching a remedial class): Before doing the worksheet, a lot of language support was given. In the past, the worksheets were heavily guided by me. When I talked about how to do this worksheet (in this package) and indeed I didn't complete my first sentence, more than half of the students didn't wait for my guidance and had already started doing the worksheet. At that time, I was so surprised and happy. In the past, I wrote everything on the blackboard and usually conducted group writing. This time, even though I wrote something on the blackboard, the students didn't copy and did it on their own. I was so surprised and happy. The students finished it very quickly and one student said 'teacher, it was so easy'. Since the patterns were taught repeatedly, students could follow it. I was so happy and the students had a sense of achievement since they could do it. ... Students enjoyed the lessons as there were a lot of multisensory elements integrated into the lessons. They are motivated and hope to have similar package used in the next lesson.

5. Limitations of the project

Despite the encouraging results reported above, there are several limitations to this research study. Although there are many benefits of adopting the design-based research, Barab and Squire (2004, p.10) argued that "if a researcher is intimately involved in the conceptualisation, design, development, implementation, and re-searching of a pedagogical approach, then ensuring that researchers can make credible and trustworthy assertions is a challenge" (cited in Anderson and Shattuck, 2012, p. 18). Second, the results of the post reading assessment might not reliably reflect students' ability as it was carried out during the post-exam period. Most students might not do it seriously and one school (school E) could not arrange the assessment, which may have affected the reliability of the post-test data. Third, the validity of the data collected from lesson observation. Observer's paradox may arise when doing lesson observations (Richards, 2003), as the presence of the observers (including the project team members and EDB officers) may have influenced the teachers' and students' behaviours (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). It is possible that the students may have participated more actively in lessons than they usually did, simply because they were aware of the presence of the observers. However, the project team tried their best to triangulate different sources of data to ensure their validity and reliability.

6. Conclusions and pedagogical implications

It has been proposed that collaboration between researchers and teachers can facilitate both teachers' professional development and students' learning, but its actual effectiveness has seldom been empirically evaluated, probably because of its ambiguous nature and the difficulty in separating it from other variables. This paper reports a small-scale study examining the effectiveness of a 13-month collaborative project between the project team at the University of Hong Kong and some teachers in enhancing primary students' literacy skills in Hong Kong. With multiple sources of data, this study shows that the collaboration between the project team and teachers helped students to develop their literacy skills, especially the writing skills. Also, it facilitated teachers' professional growth in curriculum design and pedagogical practices related to teaching reading and writing skills. Such positive results may have been due to the fact that the collaboration provided opportunities for the teachers to analyse and become more aware of their students' needs, thereby being engaged in designing a more suitable curriculum and revise their pedagogical practices.

With its observations and findings, this project may yield the following implications for the teaching of reading and writing in Hong Kong primary schools.

Vocabulary Teaching

- (i) According to Quinn, Petscher and Lopez (2015), 'vocabulary knowledge has a causal influence on reading comprehension' (p.171). As commented by the teachers and reflected from our analysis of students' performance in the reading assessment, students have limited vocabulary, which may hinder them from answering those higher-order questions. It is suggested that more support should be provided for vocabulary building. According to Stahl & Fairbanks (1986), 'a combination of definitional and contextual approaches is more effective than either in isolation: such mixed methods do, in general, increase reading comprehension' (cited in Nagy, 1988, p. 6). In other words, when teachers teach vocabulary, it would be better for them to provide definitions and examples of how words are used in authentic contexts. For younger learners, in order to reduce their cognitive load, it would be better to provide images and/or contexts which are familiar to them. For example, to teach the word 'sink', instead of just providing the dictionary definition - 'to go down below the surface or towards the bottom of a liquid or soft substance', it would be better to provide a simple sentence like 'The ship sinks to the bottom of the sea' and/ or a picture. This can help learners, especially those with lower English proficiency to make sense of the definition.



- (ii) Apart from using the combination of the approaches, it is equally important that students are given opportunities to use the vocabulary. Repetition of the word is also important in vocabulary learning. For example, once students understand the word ‘if’, teachers can organise different kinds of activities for them to use the word ‘if’, for example, playing a role-play game. Students are given a role and say something using the pattern: ‘If I , I would...’.
- (iii) In addition, it is crucial to help students to build up their vocabulary bank. Several classroom activities such as ‘Semantic Mapping’ and ‘Semantic Feature Analysis’ can be introduced (Nagy, 1988). For semantic mapping activity, teachers can first introduce a theme like ‘horror’ and ask the whole class to brainstorm the related vocabulary, for instance, scary, haunted house, ghosts and vampire. For linear arrays, which is one example of semantic feature analysis, teachers can show different types of relationships among words. For example, teachers can provide one or two words about ‘important’ and then ask students to generate more words, as in these examples, Important, big, crucial, essential ...
- (iv) For more-able students, teachers might consider adopting incidental word learning as Fielding, Wilson, and Anderson (1986) found that reading taking place outside classroom was the best predictor of vocabulary growth between grades 2 and 5 (cited in Nagy, 1988, p. 15). In other words, teachers can encourage students to read books outside school. For example, in school C, as students are used to e-learning resources (e.g. iPads and google classroom), teachers can choose some suitable online reading materials or texts and encourage students to read them. This might help the students to improve both reading and writing skills.

Reading strategies training

It is essential to help our students develop their reading strategies. Based on the observations of this study, detailed reading could be integrated into reading lessons. Instead of simply asking students to read a text on their own and check the answers to the comprehension questions afterwards, teachers could read the text together with the students. During the process, teachers could design various guiding questions not only to help students understand the content of the text, but also help students to develop some target reading strategies.

Application of genre-based pedagogy to connect reading and writing

Based on the teachers’ reflections, our observations and analysis of students’ writing samples, the genre-based approach seems to help students improve their writing skills. Hence, it is strongly advised that teachers can adopt this approach to design suitable activities to connect reading and writing. In this way, students can gain more ideas from reading and apply them to their writing. Furthermore, students better understand how language is used to convey meaning

and achieve the communication purpose, thereby using the language appropriately in their writing. During the writing process, a planner/template could be provided for the students to organise their ideas more systematically. Weaker students can benefit even more from the joint construction process, in which teachers guide them how to do the writing. This can help students perform better and build up their confidence when they write on their own.

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Appendix: A sample reading assessment paper

KS1 Set 1

Amy sends a letter to her friend in Japan.

Read the letter.

11 May 20XX

Dear Cherry,

How are you? Do you like your new school in Japan? Now, I live in Shatin and I'm studying in Sunrise Primary School.

I really like this school because we have different activities to join. Every Monday after school, I have drawing lessons. I learn to draw flowers, cars and animals. I enjoy drawing animals best because they are cute and easy to draw. My teacher, Miss Chu likes my drawings. She thinks I draw well. Also, I go to Brownies twice a week, on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Sometimes, we have to make things to sell. Yesterday, I made a paper box with a picture of a monkey on a tree. Today, my leader, Thomas taught us to march and stay in a straight line. I did not like marching because it was very hot in the sun and I got tired soon.

I like my new school and most of the activities. Do you also join activities after school? What is your favourite activity?

I hope to hear from you soon.

Love,

Amy

Circle the best answer.

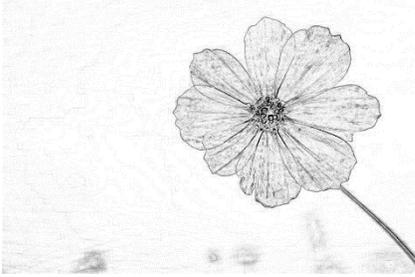
1. Who lives in Japan?

- A. Amy
- B. Thomas
- C. Cherry
- D. Miss Chu

2. Who wrote the letter?

- A. Amy
- B. Thomas
- C. Cherry
- D. Miss Chu

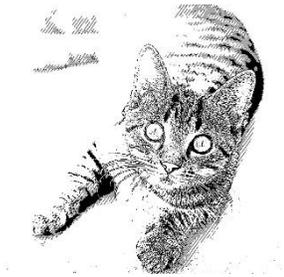
3. Which things does Amy learn to draw?



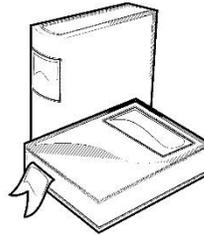
1



2



3



4

- A. (1) and (4)
- B. (2) and (4)
- C. (1), (2) and (4)
- D. (1), (2) and (3)

4. Read paragraph 2. What does 'they' refer to?

- A. flowers
- B. cars
- C. drawings
- D. animals

5. How many times a week does Amy go to Brownies?

A. three

B. two

C. five

D. four

6. Which date did Amy make the paper box?

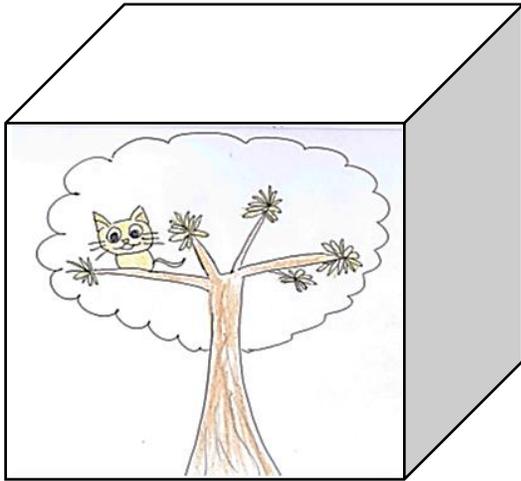
A. 9 May

B. 10 May

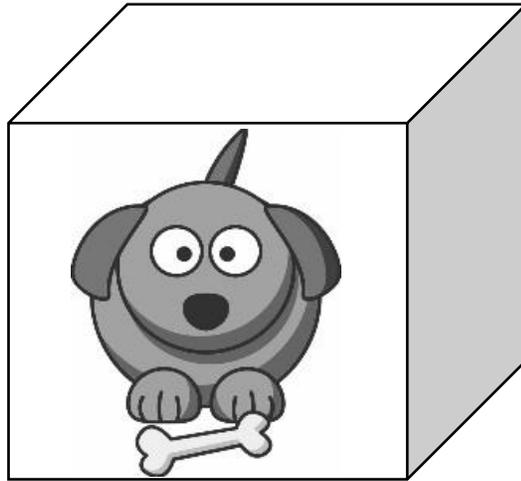
C. 11 May

D. 12 May

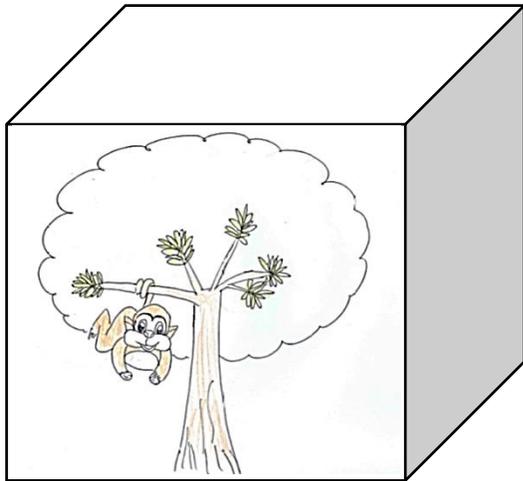
7. Which picture shows the paper box made by Amy?



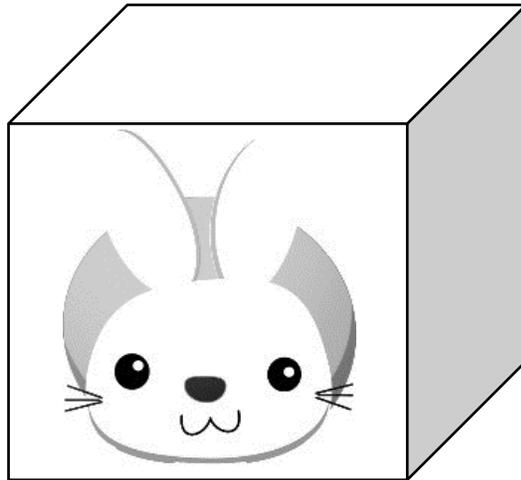
A



B



C



D

8. Amy did not like marching because _____

- A. it was very hot and she got tired.
- B. it was boring and she wanted to go home.
- C. it was not fun and she wanted to play with her friends.
- D. it was cold and she hated the cold weather.