

The 'Activity Card', which provides post-reading activities, serves not only as a reading record but also feedback to pupils themselves on how well they have understood the book. The activities also help them build up their skills in extensive reading, and extend their knowledge and imagination through giving response to the characters, events and ideas of the book. It is hoped that the support materials provided will make the process of reading more fruitful and enjoyable.

### **Conferences, Workshops and Public Enquiries**

The project team has also been actively engaged in activities aimed at raising awareness of the value of extensive reading and extensive reading programmes in primary schools. This is done through presentations at seminars and workshops. In November 1993 two sessions on extensive reading were run for Primary teachers of English participating in the ILE Refresher Course. In the two-hour plenary session the participants were introduced to the definition and aims of extensive reading and the need for extensive reading programmes in the curriculum. A few teachers expressed concern about allocation of class time to the Scheme and the implications for the teaching schedule of English, but it was generally perceived that extensive reading should be given greater emphasis in the curriculum. The participants were also introduced to the particular design of the Primary Extensive Reading Scheme, including the resource package, teachers' and pupils' tasks in the Scheme and related implementation procedures. In the two-hour workshop session the participants were given some hands-on experience in developing and evaluating support material for extensive reading. They were invited to inspect a sample of books potentially usable for extensive reading and design workcards to accompany a book they would choose for their pupils. At the reporting back session they presented and evaluated the materials produced.

In December 1993 the ERS team presented a paper entitled 'English Extensive Reading in the Primary Curriculum—Current Practices and New Initiatives' at the International Language in Education Conference. The findings of the survey conducted by the team in October 1993 were presented and the implications for the development of the Primary English Extensive Reading Scheme were discussed. There was also a mini-display of children's books. The audience, including teachers, teacher educators and publishers from Hong Kong and overseas, expressed great interest in the Scheme.

In March 1994 the ERS team was invited to give a talk on extensive reading programmes at the Salvation Army Teachers' Conference. In the talk, both the resource package for the HKERS(PRI) and the operation of the Scheme were described and discussed.

The ERS team has also received enquiries from individual schools, teachers and parents about the Scheme, mostly about the implementation schedule and the selection of books.

## Future Development

As mentioned earlier, the HKERS(PRIMARY) will be implemented by phases in schools from September 1995. More development work will need to be done before that date. In the coming year the following will be undertaken:

1. Revision of workcards developed this year and review of booklists in the light of further piloting;
2. Development and trialling of the placement test;
3. Development of a teacher education package, including teacher's manual, teaching aids and guidelines to help schools to implement the Scheme as well as sample lesson plans and schemes of work. These include, among others, using big books to introduce to pupils the features of different parts of a story book and to demonstrate various reading strategies;
4. Development of reading charts and records to help teachers and pupils monitor progress;
5. Preparation and conduct of induction courses for headteachers and teachers from schools interested in joining the Scheme;
6. Procurement of books in the Scheme and the production of workcards and documentation ;
7. Development of evaluation instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme and to improve its materials and operation.

## References

- Asher, S. R. 1980. 'Topic interest and children's reading comprehension' In Spiro, R. J., Bruce, B. C. & Brewer, W. F. (Eds.), *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Bright, J. A. and McGregor, G. P. 1970. *Teaching English as a Second Language*. London: Longman.
- Elley, W. and Mangubhai, F. 1983. 'The impact of reading on second language learning'. In *Reading Research Quarterly* 19:53-67.
- Ng, S. M. 1989. 'Improving reading and language learning in young Singapore children'. In Gopinathan, S. and Barth, V. (Eds.), *The Need to Read*. Singapore: Festival of Books, Singapore Pte. Ltd.
- Ng, S. M. 1992. 'Evaluating two programmes for improving English language learning in young learners of other languages'. Paper presented at the IRA (International Reading Association) World Congress on Reading, Maui, Hawaii.
- Yu, V. Chiu, E., Siu, W. and Yau, R. 1994. 'English extensive reading in the primary curriculum—current practices and new initiatives'. In *Language and Learning—International Language in Education Conference Proceedings* (in press).

# THE HONG KONG VOCATIONAL ENGLISH PROGRAMME

**Grahame Bilbow**  
**HKVEP Co-ordinator**  
**Institute of Language in Education**

## Introduction

The Hong Kong Vocational English Programme, or HKVEP, is a new training/certification scheme based on a partnership between the Hong Kong Government and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board (LCCIEB). Since May 1993, a Unit has been housed at the Institute of Language in Education with responsibility for co-ordinating the Programme.

The HKVEP is, to put it simply, an attempt to introduce *standardised curriculum and assessment frameworks* into the teaching of English for Business in Hong Kong. Its goal is to act as a quality yardstick offering employers and the person in the street a way of making enlightened choices when considering courses in Business English.

The HKVEP is not a course, nor is it a set of courses. Rather, it is, we hope, a considered framework within which high quality courses in Business English can be conducted by approved language training providers in the Territory.

Certain language training providers have been invited to join the scheme in this early stage of the Programme. At the moment, collaboration is underway with two of the most well-known and respected language training providers in the Territory, The British Council and the Centre for Professional & Business English at Hong Kong Polytechnic. Ultimately, it is anticipated that a number of other institutions will also be invited to participate in the scheme.

As one of the requirements of the Programme, approved training centres, or 'Programme Centres', as they are termed, submit courses to the HKVEP Unit for validation. The purpose of validation is to ensure that courses conform to the *curriculum and assessment frameworks* elaborated within the Programme. Courses are validated and certification offered at four increasingly demanding Stages focusing on language activities that range from simple to complex. We believe that meaningful certification can, and should, be offered to those with very limited language skills. Where certification is tied to actual language performance in very limited tasks as it is at the lowest Stage of the Programme, certification is both feasible for the students and attractive to students' employers.

Given the above, it is clear that the four Stages of the Programme cannot be contiguous. Rather, we envisage that students will take HKVEP certificates *throughout their working lives*.

## Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Frameworks

As mentioned above, the HKVEP is an attempt to systematically quality assure *curricula, assessment mechanisms and the certification of courses* in vocationally-oriented English.

The purpose of the HKVEP is to validate courses that focus on *useful and practical* work-related language activities, and to offer certificates to those who have demonstrated performance in these activities. The term 'activities', as used within the Programme, is synonymous with 'tasks'.

Students' performance in the range of language activities covered by their HKVEP course is assessed periodically throughout their course according to clearly defined performance criteria. This is a far cry from the traditional final examination-based assessment mode that is so common in Hong Kong. We believe that the assessment framework inherent in the Programme leads to a clearer view of students' performance in English.

Certification is largely the responsibility of the London Chamber of Commerce & Industry Examinations Board, and is similar in structure to the Board's *Foreign Languages at Work (FLAW)* scheme. In order to be eligible for certification, students must register and pay a small registration fee to the Board.

Certification has two parts. The first is a certificate that shows the *average level of performance* across the board in the course the student followed. The second part is an itemised *Profile of Performance*, showing exactly how the student performed in the assessed language activities covered by the course. It is hoped that these profiles will be welcomed by employers as useful proof of their employees' language skills.

### Activity Types

Here, I should like to look in more detail at how decisions were made as to what constituted appropriate activities to be assessed at each of the four Stages of the Programme.

The following broad areas of language use (or Activity Types) have been elaborated:

- Conversation for (Social &) Business Purposes
- Correspondence for (Social &) Business Purposes
- Understanding and Using Information presented in spoken/ written form
- Presenting information in spoken/ written form
- Project work (involving integrative use of a range of the above)

Clearly, *Conversation* and *Correspondence* both involve a high degree of interaction with other people. *Understanding/using information* and *Presenting information*, on the other hand, are seen as rather more one-sided activity types. Lastly, *Project work* is an integrative Activity Type calling upon a wide range of language skills.

To illustrate the type of range of language activities which each of these Activity Types encompasses, let us consider just one Activity Type—'Conversation for (Social &) Business Purposes'. This Activity Type, might

include job interviews, conversations with contractors on site visits, conversations with clients, office social chat, answering telephone enquiries, making travel arrangements and so on.

## Characteristics of Activities

In order to differentiate between the four Stages of the Programme, it was necessary to distinguish some of the parameters that determine the *inherent difficulty of activities*. We know, intuitively, for example that it is more daunting to make a presentation in front of 20 unfamiliar people on a complex technical subject than it is to do so informally in front of two or three familiar colleagues on a familiar topic. We tried, therefore, to single out some of the characteristics that marked activities as more or less demanding. Subsequently, these characteristics serve to inform judgment as to which activities should be practised and assessed at each of the four Stages of the Programme.

The characteristics that were distinguished were:

- range of ideas understood and expressed (narrow—broad)
- range of topics (work-related—work-related/social)
- range of interactants (1:1—1:1, small/large group)
- range of formality of relationships (formal—formal/informal)
- range of information to be synthesised (narrow—broad)
- range of problem complexity (simple—complex)

Having mapped out a range of characteristics that could, by and large, be applied to Activity Types at each of our four Stages, we were then able to decide on the range of real-world Activities that were appropriate for each Activity Type at each Stage of the Programme, and for each Stage produce a *Profile of Core Activities* (*Appendix I contains profiles of core activities for Stages I and IV*).

To this Profile, Programme Centres were able to add other, elective activities which would be included on the basis of the specific needs of students. The balance of core activities and elective activities helps us to achieve comparability between certificates while, at the same time, ensuring that course providers can also meet students' needs in the way they want to.

## Conclusion

This paper has traced the development of the Hong Kong Vocational English Programme until December 1993. It has focused on the curriculum framework of the Programme, with its task-centredness, and has also shed light on the assessment and certification frameworks of the Programme.

The official launch of the Programme is scheduled for May 1994, when an Agreement between the Hong Kong Government and the London Chamber of Commerce & Industry Examinations Board will be signed. However, there are already in excess of 1 000 students taking part in the pilot implementation of the Programme.

If current indications prove reliable, it is anticipated that the Programme will have a significant impact on the quality of vocationally-oriented English language training in the Territory in the coming years.

1. CORE ACTIVITIES AT STAGE 1

ACTIVITY TYPE	CORE ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITY TYPE	CORE ACTIVITIES
Communication	basic social conversation	Communication	basic social conversation
Communication	completing standard business letters or forms	Communication	completing standard business letters or forms
Understanding	understanding simple factual information	Understanding	understanding simple factual information
Understanding	following simple spoken instructions	Understanding	following simple spoken instructions
Understanding	understanding simple messages in business correspondence	Understanding	understanding simple messages in business correspondence
Understanding	following simple written instructions	Understanding	following simple written instructions
Understanding	presenting basic factual information	Understanding	presenting basic factual information
Understanding	reporting simple events	Understanding	reporting simple events
Understanding	form-filling	Understanding	form-filling
Understanding	writing simple messages	Understanding	writing simple messages
Understanding	Using specific	Understanding	Using specific

# Hong Kong Vocational English Programme



## CORE ACTIVITIES AT STAGE I

ACTIVITY TYPE	CORE ACTIVITIES
<i>Conversation for (social &amp;) business purposes</i>	<p>talking about self and job</p> <p>basic social conversation</p>
<i>Correspondence for (social &amp;) business purposes</i>	<p>completing standard business letters or faxes</p>
<i>Understanding &amp; using information presented in spoken form</i>	<p>understanding simple factual information</p> <p>following simple spoken instructions</p>
<i>Understanding &amp; using information presented in written form</i>	<p>understanding simple memos</p> <p>following simple written instructions</p>
<i>Presenting information in spoken form</i>	<p>presenting basic factual information</p> <p>reporting simple events</p>
<i>Presenting information in written form</i>	<p>form-filling</p> <p>writing simple messages</p>
<i>Project work</i>	<p>Course specific</p>

# Hong Kong Vocational English Programme



## CORE ACTIVITIES AT STAGE IV

ACTIVITY TYPE	CORE ACTIVITIES
<i>Conversation for (social &amp;) business purposes</i>	<p>talking to clients</p> <p>advanced social conversation</p>
<i>Correspondence for (social &amp;) business purposes</i>	<p>writing complex social/ business letters</p> <p>writing complex business faxes</p>
<i>Understanding &amp; using information presented in spoken form</i>	<p>understanding complex presentations</p> <p>taking minutes</p>
<i>Understanding &amp; using information presented in written form</i>	<p>understanding complex written texts</p> <p>understanding and revising company-specific literature</p>
<i>Presenting information in spoken form</i>	<p>giving a formal presentation</p> <p>participating in meetings</p>
<i>Presenting information in written form</i>	<p>writing company-specific literature</p> <p>writing short reports</p>
<i>Project work</i>	Course specific



# WHAT ARE PUPILS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH (A) COURSEBOOK-BOUND ACTIVITIES AND (B) COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES?

*Course No.: EP941*

*Group 2 Claudia Lai Pui Ting*

*Group Tutor: Anne Gordon*

## Introduction

The primary syllabus (CDC, 1981) states that the learner's needs and interests should be of primary concern in language teaching. However, various problems in my school (and probably in Hong Kong) prevent teachers from giving pupils ample opportunities to use English to communicate for some meaningful purpose related to their lives.

These problems include the pressure of exams which emphasise the formal aspects of the language, the demand of parents and school for good examination results, and coursebooks which often do not promote pupils' interests and purposeful use of the language.

Teachers cannot do anything about problems concerned with exams, parents' demands and school aims, but they can do their best to overcome the problem of the coursebook by using communicative activities instead of coursebook-bound activities. Communicative activities (Pattison, 1987) give pupils a social and personal reason to speak, and they have an information gap to be filled or an area of uncertainty to be made clear.

## The Problems of Coursebooks

My investigation aimed to examine the problems of my school's coursebook and to see whether communicative activities help promote interest and purposeful use of the language.

Most primary coursebooks emphasise written, formal exercises rather than meaningful use of language. They often cannot meet the needs and interests of pupils, so teachers have difficulty maintaining interest and sustaining motivation. Pupils do not always know when and how to use the language learnt in real-life situations.

Teachers therefore should not be disciples of coursebooks and follow every activity suggested. Sometimes they do provide practical ideas for teaching, but teachers should analyse the textbook and supplement them with, or adapt coursebook activities into, communicative activities.

But can communicative activities increase pupils' interest in learning English and promote purposeful use of the language? Will pupils find them enjoyable and useful? Will they cause too much noise in group work or pair

work? Will brighter pupils dominate speaking roles and weaker ones find it a burden to talk with others and so fail to finish tasks? Do pupils prefer coursebook activities to communicative ones?

## Plan of Action

The class I took was 6C in my own school. It has 30 pupils of average ability but they are nice, obedient and willing to learn. They are used to the teacher using 95% English in English lessons.

I used the school's scheme of work for five periods, based on Unit 23 of *Integrated Primary English*. The language structure to be taught was:

I am sorry/pleased/happy to+infinitive

I am sorry/pleased/happy to+infinitive+noun clause with 'that'

A communicative activity was made with minimum adaptation from certain coursebook activities. Pupils were exposed to one communicative activity and one coursebook activity for the same teaching objective in each of three lessons (two of them double periods).

Afterwards pupils were given questionnaires in Chinese and English asking them to compare the communicative activities and the coursebook activities. There were also interviews with bright, average and weak pupils.

I completed a self-evaluation form after each lesson and observation was also done by a fellow teacher and my ILE tutor.

## Results and Discussion

In the first lesson a lot of time was spent on pairing and instructions. Pupils seemed to enjoy the communicative activity more: weaker ones tried their best and no bright ones dominated. It was not as noisy as I expected. However, they did not have enough time and some instructions were not clear enough.

Pupils found the communicative activity more interesting (23-4), easier (17-10), more enjoyable (23-4), more useful (17-10) and felt it involved more thinking (19-8). Some weaker pupils said it was nice to talk to classmates in English and they preferred to have more speaking than written work.

In the second lesson, pupils appeared more motivated with the authentic materials (newspaper cuttings) used in the communicative activity. They were active and eager in expressing their opinions and communicating with one another. They appeared bored by the coursebook activity and their spirits dropped spontaneously. They also found it difficult.

Pupils found the communicative activity more interesting (29-0), easier (24-5), more enjoyable (29-0), and more useful (21-8), though a slight majority found the coursebook activity involved more thinking (16-13).

In the third lesson the communicative activity seemed a little difficult for the pupils, with pair work within two big groups, and the tape I recorded was of poor quality. The coursebook activity was easier, with a good tape from the publisher and the dialogue in the textbook; however, it involved a lot a writing which they didn't seem to enjoy.

Questionnaire results were unexpected: pupils still found the communicative activity more interesting (25-2), more enjoyable (21-6), more useful (24-3) and felt it involved more thinking (17-10), but they did find it more difficult (16-12). It seems they prefer to have a certain degree of difficulty and thinking involved. (The overall questionnaire showed 23 of them felt activities should not be too easy.)

Another question indicated that pupils found the second and third communicative activity more related to their lives than the coursebook one, the first scoring the same as the coursebook one. They also had greater confidence in using English for the second and third communicative activities than for the coursebook ones.

The overall questionnaire showed they most liked group work and work with the whole class, and least liked working alone.

## Conclusions

This classroom investigation convinced me that communicative activity is necessary to facilitate effective and meaningful learning. Learning activities should always be relevant to the interests and needs of the pupils. Teachers should not stick to everything in the coursebook but be sensitive to the suitability of the materials. Coursebook activities sometimes have their value, but adaptation and supplementation are necessary. A certain degree of difficulty and thinking is needed but if activities are too difficult, brighter pupils will dominate. Group work and pair work should be given more often and noise levels are acceptable.

It is inevitable that more time is spent to make the lessons interesting and successful, so I would conclude that it is better to make the best use of the available materials in the coursebook and make adaptations with the available time. Teachers should also gather materials already available at the ILE and other educational centres.

## References

- Hong Kong Curriculum Development Committee. 1981. *Syllabuses for Primary Schools: English (Primary 1-6)*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Pattison, P. 1987. *Developing Communicative Skills*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# IS IT EFFECTIVE TO PRACTISE THE SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN PRIMARY 4 THROUGH DOING ACTIVITIES?

*Course No.: EP941*

*Group 1: Jennie Au Chun Yu*

*Group Tutor: Dave Carless*

## **Background**

Most Hong Kong Cantonese-speaking pupils have problems with English tenses. Many primary school teachers of English think the best strategy is to tell pupils, in Cantonese, the rules of English tenses, but pupils find that learning tenses is boring. They have to be aware of the change in the verb forms in relation to the subject as well as the time of events. They need time to choose which part of the verb or which auxiliary verb to use, whereas in Cantonese we just add a single word or two to indicate different tenses.

## **Investigation Question**

My 4D pupils in Hennessy Road Government Primary AM School learnt the simple past tense a few months ago. However, because of the tight syllabus, many pupils forget the rules and correct usage due to insufficient practice.

I decided to investigate whether it was effective to practise the simple past tense in Primary 4 through classroom activities. By "effective" I mean pupils showing interest and getting enjoyment from the task, being involved in the activities, and understanding and using English appropriately. I felt more practice could facilitate pupils' production of the target tense, and enhance their concept of the language so they could acquire mastery: internalising it and speaking more naturally and fluently.

I chose classroom activities as the strategy for practising the simple past tense in order to motivate and arouse pupils' interest. Wright (1984) suggests that games sustain learners' interest and Klippel (1987) stresses that activities should train students to use their knowledge of the foreign language flexibly. Rinvoluceri (1984) says one of the advantages of games is that everyone is working at once and the teacher is free to find out what students actually know.

## **Investigation Plan**

The pupils were used to the traditional teaching ways, so they seldom had activities during lessons. I decided to use the cartoon character Bugs Bunny throughout all five investigation lessons. The content in the lessons was all situational and the four lessons were coherent, each building on what the previous one had taught. The following table shows my plan for language items to be practised and activities to be carried out:

Lesson	Language Item for Practice	Activities
1	What did you/he do yesterday/this morning? I/he _____ . (regular verbs ending in '-ed')	Playing with puppets Pair work (dialogue) Singing songs Creating lyrics for songs
2	What did you/he do last Sunday? I/he _____ (regular verbs)	Listening to tape Whole class activity (like Simon Says) Playing with puppets Playing board game Snakes & Ladders (pair work)
3	Did he _____ last Sunday? Yes, he did. He _____ (positive answers only)	Listening to tape Playing jig-saw cards Playing with puppets Singing songs
4	Did he _____ last Sunday? No, he didn't. He did not _____ . (negative answers first) He _____ . (then exact answer)	Listening to tape Whole class activity (paper cut-outs) Playing with puppets Playing board game Stepping Stones (group work)

I gave the pupils a 5-minute pre-test at the beginning of the first lesson and the same test at the beginning of the fifth (last) lesson as a post-test. Besides oral practice through activities, a series of four worksheets were designed for written practice as consolidation towards the end of each of the four lessons. In the second half of the fifth lesson an evaluation form was used to collect pupils' views on the various activities. Observation forms were also designed for a fellow teacher and my ILE tutor to use, and a self-evaluation form for myself.

### Results and Discussion

Some activities were more successful than others. All the children liked playing with the puppets. Buggs Bunny came into every lesson and even the

shy, passive pupils were willing to take part and acted as Bunny. As a result they were motivated to practise the target structure without noticing it. Even those not nominated to play Bunny wanted to ask him questions. They enjoyed the activity and used full sentences with simple past tense.

Because pupils seldom sing in English, some were shy and reluctant to sing out loud with me but they enjoyed making up their own lyrics for the "London Bridge" tune. This allowed them to practise the target tense in written form. They then enjoyed singing what they had written with my electronic piano accompaniment, and they completed the song sheet quickly.

I found pupils did not enjoy listening to tapes much. This might have been affected by the noisy environment outside the school and an unsuitable voice I had chosen for Buggs Bunny.

I found that playing board games (Snakes & Ladders and Stepping Stones) was the most effective of all the strategies I had planned. Pupils were co-operative, they helped and interacted with each other using the simple past tense while playing and they encouraged each other to use the correct language form. I heard some Cantonese when they were excited but I did not consider it a serious matter. Many pupils, including the problem child in my class, asked for a photocopy of the board games when lessons were over.

Pupils enjoyed the whole class activities (a Buggs Bunny version of Simon Says and jig-saw cards). They were eager, followed instructions properly, and participated actively. They sometimes made errors but I gave them hints to bolster their confidence.

In pair work dialogue, pupils were curious to find out what each other had done that morning and the previous day.

They did not do the worksheets as well as I had anticipated, but results were affected by carelessness.

The results of the tests, however, were extremely encouraging. Scores improved from an average of 54% in the pre-test to an average of 84% in the post-test, an average progress of 30%. This indicates that after four lessons' practice of the simple past through classroom activities, pupils made significant and good progress.

The pupils' evaluation showed they all enjoyed the activities, and considered the board games, playing with the puppet and the whole-class activities the most useful practice. Although 12 out of 39 did not find it easy to understand English throughout the lessons, a majority of 27 did.

## **Conclusion**

The way pupils practised the target language in these lessons was entirely different from the traditional teaching method, but the results were encouraging. Pupils participated actively and with enjoyment, they interacted and co-operated with each other, they showed understanding and were able to use full sentences in the past simple tense confidently and naturally. They showed significant progress in the post-test. Therefore I

concluded that play activities are effective for practising the simple past tense in Primary 4. This might not be the same for other tenses or other language items, but there may be other activities that are equally effective.

Having experimented with this unusual method of teaching, I myself have also benefitted and learned a lot. I believe play activities are a better method of conveying language skills to pupils. I recommend colleagues try this in their own schools—but remember that good preparation is essential for success.

## References

- Klippel, F. 1987. *Keep Talking—Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rinvolutri, M. 1984. *Grammar Games—Cognitive, Affective and Drama Activities for EFL Students*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, A., et al. 1984. *Games for Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# AN ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM VERBAL INTERACTION IN ENGLISH LESSONS AND HOW IT AFFECTS LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR COMMUNICATION

*Course No.: EP941*

*Group 6: So Chi-ping, Lydda*

*Group Tutor: Shirley Chan*

## Introduction

The CDC Primary English Syllabus (1981) states that 'meaningful use of the language for purpose of communication represents an essential element in successful language learning (p. 21)' and that 'the learner should be given the maximum opportunity to use English as the medium of interaction with others (p. 24)'. However, some people complain that our children cannot communicate with others in English efficiently. So what has happened to the teaching and learning process in our classrooms?

## Investigation Question

Rivers (1987: 4) states that 'students achieve facility in using a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages (that is, messages that contain information of interest to speaker and listener in a situation of importance to both). This is interaction.' If interaction then is the key to teaching language for communication, three questions arise:

- 1 What kinds of interaction are ongoing in our classrooms?
- 2 How do our children learn English?
- 3 What kind of language-learning situations are they in now?

## Investigation Plan

I adopted the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) to categorise the interaction patterns in classrooms and analyse them. This codes classroom talk with the numbers 1 to 10 and can be summarised as follows (adapted from Allwright and Bailey, 1991: 202):



TEACHER TALK	INDIRECT INFLUENCE	1 Accepts feeling of student 2 Praises or encourages student 3 Accepts or uses ideas of student 4 Asks questions
	DIRECT INFLUENCE	5 Lectures 6 Gives directions 7 Criticizes or justifies authority
STUDENT TALK		8 Student response 9 Student initiation 10 Silence or confusion

I used the FIAC to look at the following questions:

- a What percentage of class time does the teacher talk?
- b What percentage of class time do the pupils talk?
- c What kind of immediate feedback does the teacher give to pupils after they respond?
- d What behaviour does the teacher use to elicit pupil response in the class?
- e To what extent are pupils asked to respond to narrow, predictable questions?
- f To what extent are pupils given the opportunity to give their own ideas?
- g What behaviour does the teacher use more extensively in communicating?

### Research Method

The research was carried out by direct classroom observation of five lessons in a Primary 4 class of 38 students at Cheung Wong Wai Primary School in Tai Wai.

The observer sat at the back of the classroom and coded the interaction taking place every three seconds. The record of an observed lesson was a series of numbers, like 10-6-10-8-2-4-9-5-7-6-6-9-2-3-10 .... The same number was repeated when one type of talk went on for more than three seconds. However, if more than one interaction appeared in the three-second time period, the observer recorded all of them in the order they occurred.

The frequency for each type of talk was calculated and also the frequency of different 'transitional interaction chains'.

### Results and Discussion

In the first lesson, in which pupils responded to 'Wh-' questions on a text, the two highest categories of talk were 8 (21.7%) and 4 (14.2%). Teacher talk (categories 1-7) was 65.8% and pupil talk (categories 8 & 9) was 23.8%. There were few chances for pupils to initiate responses (2.1%).

The second lesson taught 'How' questions and revised simple past tense form. The highest categories were 5 (33.0%) and 8 (23.2%), but the responses were merely 'teacher-response-feedback'. Teacher talk was 62.8% and pupil talk 27.2%.

The third lesson was an ETV lesson and 42.2% of the time was spent watching in silence. Of the remaining time, teacher talk was 37.9% and pupil talk 19.9%, including the highest amount of pupil initiated talk (category 9) in the five lessons (7.4%).

In the fourth lesson the teacher told a story and asked questions. Then pupils had an activity re-arranging the story's order. Teacher talk was 77.3% and pupil talk 12.3%.

The fifth lesson was revision of the simple past. The highest categories were 5 (23.0%) and 6 (19.2%). Although category 8 was 18.1%, the answers were still controlled and limited. Pupil initiation was a poor 2.2%.

The five most frequent interactional chains were 4-8-4, 5-8-5, 8-4-8, 8-5-8 and 8-3-5.

Chains 4-8-4 and 8-4-8 were mainly the teacher asking questions with predictable answers, and little thought required. It is a pity there were not more 8-3-5 chains where the teacher accepts the pupil's ideas. There were even instances of the teacher not accepting a pupil's response when the pupil was correct and the teacher wrong.

## Conclusion

From the study, we can conclude that there is two or three times as much teacher talk as student talk. The five most frequent transitional interaction chains show that our children learn English by answering teachers' questions and listening to teachers' lecturing. Few discussions or problem-solving tasks take place. Interaction between pupils themselves is not enough. Most of the teacher's questions were display questions which did not induce pupils to talk more.

From this investigation I understand more deeply that teaching does not equal learning. It is not necessary for the teacher to talk for the whole lesson. Pupils should be motivated to involve themselves in the language learning process. Materials provided should be more authentic. Learning situations should relate to their own experience. These factors can help enhance the effectiveness of communication activities, of which there should be more: discussions, games, competitions and problem-solving tasks. Teachers should also ask more open-ended questions to encourage pupils to express their own ideas.

## References

- Allwright & Bailey. 1991. *Focus on the Language Classroom: An Introduction to Classroom Research for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hong Kong Curriculum Development Committee. 1981. *Syllabuses for Primary Schools: English (Primary 1—6)*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Flanders, N. A. 1970. *Analysing Teacher Behaviour*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Rivers, W. M. 1987. *Interactive Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

# CAN THE INTRODUCTION OF PROCESS WRITING ENHANCE POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS WRITING AMONG PRIMARY PUPILS?

*Course No.: EP941*

*Group 7: Lam Yuen-mei*

*Group Tutor: Jennie Chan*

## Introduction

The main focus of my classroom investigation was to introduce process writing to my P6 class in Tai Po Government Primary P.M. school and to see if there was any discernable change in the attitude of the pupils towards writing.

The students are accustomed to 'paper and pencil' writing exercises in which they copy words or passages, write dictations, do grammar and comprehension exercises and engage in guided writing. These exercises are mainly mechanical drills for reinforcing memory, neatness and accuracy rather than the means for genuine exchanges of information or for the expression of ideas. The one place for students to present their ideas is in guided writing, but even here the pupils are restricted either to producing the correct sentence pattern to fit particular picture cues or to manipulate the words in the questions set, to produce a correct answer.

Because of their limited language proficiency, children are not ready to express themselves freely according to common belief and so linguistic accuracy aided by various cues is the major concern of learning.

It was my concern with the pupils' point of view about writing that led me to this piece of action research.

## Investigation Question(s)

Calling on the work of P. Czerniewska (1992) which emphasizes process rather than product, and the development of the writer rather than the text, I wanted to see the effect on the attitudes of my students if they were introduced to the process approach to writing. My specific questions were:

1. Would the students feel able to write without the help of the usual 'aids'?
2. Would they enjoy writing more if they were allowed to express themselves freely?
3. What kind of writing programme would I use to foster a more positive attitude towards writing?

## Investigation Plan

To measure attitude changes in student preferences for the language skills, self-evaluation of these language skills particularly of their writing

skills and their reaction to process writing, I designed and administered two sets of questionnaires before and after the course.

Due to the limited amount of teaching time available (5 lessons), the usual five stages in process writing were reduced to three—pre-writing, drafting and re-drafting. For the pre-writing stage large pictures were used as cues for students to build up word banks which they then used to draft and revise descriptions of the pictures. The same technique was applied to story writing but with the addition of a criteria list for a story.

Throughout, I demonstrated each writing stage for the students who then practised the techniques on their own in groups of three to four, thereby allowing for group discussion, peer teaching and editing.

Instead of marking and grading the student writing, I looked for ways of providing formative feedback so that the students become aware that their achievements were being valued.

I also had the help of my tutor and a colleague who kindly filled in observation sheets for me.

## **Results**

In addition to the questionnaires and texts produced by the students, I analysed data obtained from the observation sheets used by a colleague and my ILE tutor who sat in on the teaching sessions.

Despite some grammatical weaknesses (noun-verb agreement, use of tenses), the writing products revealed expressive and meaningful texts enriched by creative attempts to attribute statements to characters, the use of a range of grammatical devices (different sentence types, adjectives) and attempts of write their own ending to the story.

From classroom observation it was noted that the various stages of writing proved helpful to students in building up their finished product. Peer teaching was noticed and for the story writing constant reference was made to the criteria listed. Though new to them, the students were able to handle the demands of process writing which, in turn, generated considerable student enthusiasm.

This enthusiasm is reflected in the questionnaire findings which provided very positive results. There was, for example, a 31% increase in the preference for writing, a 26% increase in those who thought they were best at writing, especially in free-writing.

## **Conclusion**

This experience has made clear that focusing on grammatical accuracy kills motivation. It also indicates that the process approach is a more meaningful way to encourage positive attitudes towards writing and I would not hesitate to introduce this approach into the primary classroom.

## Reference

- Arnold, R. 1991. *Writing Development*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Byrne, D. 1967. *Progressive Picture Compositions*. Hong Kong: Longman Group.
- Czerniewska, P. 1991. *Learning About Writing*. U.S.A.: Blackwell Publisher.
- Mahon, T. 1992. 'From sentence to story: A process approach to the development of composition skills in the primary school.' In Lau, M. and Murphy, M.J., (Eds.), *Developing Writing: Purposes and Practices*. Hong Kong: ILE.
- Poon, L., Lo. A. and Kong. S. 1993. 'Developing learner responsibility in the early stages of writing'. In Wong, B., Harris, J., Hepburn, H. and Bunton, D. (Eds.), *ILEJ 10, 1993*. Hong Kong: ILE.
- Stewart, M. 'Language awareness and self awareness : cognitive and affective concomitants of a process approach to writing instruction" 1988. In Bickley, V. (Ed.), *Languages and Education In A Bi-Lingual or Multi-Lingual setting*. Hong Kong: ILE.
- Stewart, M. and Cheung, M. 1989. 'Introducing a process approach in the teaching of writing in Hong Kong' In Lau, M. and Allison, D. (Eds.), *ILEJ 6 1989*. Hong Kong: ILE.
- Yau, R. 1992. 'Action research report—A writing programme for primary 2' In Lau, M. Harris, J. Hepburn, H. (Eds.), *ILEJ 9 1992*. Hong Kong: ILE.

# **ACTION RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY THE LEARNING AND TEACHING OF TENSE AND ASPECT IN HONG KONG LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**Course No.: ES941**

**Group 5: Wu Si Cheong, Gilbert**

**Cheung Yui Cho, Patrick**

**Lee Ka Kui, K.K.**

**Leung Kwok Wing, Joseph**

**Group Tutor: Gertude Tinker Sachs**

## **Introduction**

As an end-of-term project of the ILE Refresher Course for Teachers of English in Secondary Schools, this action research was done in four weeks. Despite the serious time constraint, the project was smoothly carried out though we could not claim much reliability from our findings.

## **Rationale**

1. Hinkel (1992) reports the order of acquisition of temporal references and aspectual implications of adult Chinese ESL learners in 8 different tenses. This study attempts to examine if there are any significant differences in the order of acquisition for young Chinese ESL learners with different learning abilities, motivation and learning environment.
2. Zhou (1992) denounces the effect of formal instruction on the learning of tense and aspect. Task-based activities were carried out in this study to see the effectiveness of task-based approach in the learning of tense and aspect.
3. O'Malley et al. (1987) underlines the importance of L1 information in L2 learning. This study also examines the effect of time markers which also exist in Chinese in the learning of English tense and aspect.
4. No previous research has been documented on the learners' responses in the task-based approach which claims to be learner-centred. This study hopes to throw light on this respect from learners with low L2 proficiency, low motivation and disciplinary problems.

## **Design of the Study**

The study consists of 3 phases, namely the pretest, the experimental teaching and the post-test.

*Pre-test:* Subjects from two Form 2 classes in 3 different Tai Po secondary schools with different banding were chosen. Sentences used in Hinkel's (1992) study formed the framework of the test items. All test items

were further simplified in simple language structures and Chinese translation was added to the tense and aspect descriptors in the multiple choice questions. There were two sets of test items, one with time markers and the other without.

*Experimental Teaching:* Task-based activities were tried out in Assembly of God Hebron Secondary School with students of low learning abilities, low L2 proficiency, low motivation and disciplinary problems, with the conviction that if a task-based approach works there, it will certainly work in other more favourable classroom settings in the teaching of tense and aspect. Four group members paired up to teach four 35-minute experimental lessons for each of two Form 2 classes. Task-based activities were planned. Lesson plans were written to standardize and monitor teaching procedures in classrooms.

*Post-test:* To examine the effect of task-based learning on the learning of tense and aspect and the effect of focusing on time markers in teaching tense and aspect, the same sets of test items were distributed to the experimental classes for the post-test after 4 days of experimental teaching.

## **Results**

This study reconfirms Hinkel's (1992) findings in the order of temporal references in different tenses, the findings of Dulay and Burt (1974) in the natural sequence of children's L2 acquisition and findings of Bailey et al. (1974) are no obvious differences between adults and children in the acquisition order of past -ed and progressive -ing. However, obvious differences have been found between adults and children in the acquisition order of aspectual implications.

No significant effects of instruction on the acquisition of tense and aspect have been found as the effectiveness of task-based activities was not fully explored in such a short experimental teaching period. Nevertheless learners gave positive responses to the interest and helpfulness of task-based approaches in their learning. In addition, no clear indication of the effect of equivalent L1 time markers in the acquisition of L2 tense and aspect was found.

## **Conclusion**

Though we could not have any strong claims for this action research in view of various limitations, we enjoyed the process of finding answers to our day-to-day teaching problems.



## References

- Bailey, N., C. Madden and S. Krashen. 1974. 'Is there a 'natural sequence' in adult second language acquisition?' *Language Learning* 24:235-243.
- Dulay, H. and M. Burt 1974. 'Natural sequences in child second language acquisition.' *Language Learning* 24:27-53.
- Hinkel, E. 1992. 'L2 tense and time reference'. *TESOL Quarterly* 26: 557-572.
- O'Malley, J. M., A. U. Chamot and C. Walker. 1987. 'Some applications of cognitive theory to second language acquisition'. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 9, 287-306.
- Zhou, Y, P. 1992 'The effect of explicit instruction on the acquisition of English grammatical structures by Chinese learners'. In C. James and P. Garrett (Eds.), *Language Awareness in the Classroom*. Longman. 254-277.

Comparison of Order of Acquisition of Temporal References with Hinkel's (1992) findings

Hinkel's (1992) findings

Chinese adult ESL learners N = 70	WSCSS		NTHYKSS		AGHSS (Pre-test)		AGHSS (Post-test)	
	Class 1 N = 40	Class 2 N = 42	Class 3 N = 39	Class 4 N = 40	Class 5 N = 41	Class 6 N = 41	Class 7 N = 42	Class 8 N = 41

Right now / at the moment of speaking

Present Progressive

1 1 1 2 1 1 1 2 1

In the present and in the past

Present Simple  
Present Perfect Progressive

7 5 4 7 3 7 5 6 3 7 6 7 3 4 6 7

In the past

Present Perfect  
Past Progressive  
Past Simple

8 4 2 8 4 2 8 6 1 8 7 2 8 4 5 8 5 2 8 4 2 5 7 1 8 5 2

Past Perfect Progressive  
Past Perfect

Before another past event

6 3 6 3 5 3 4 5 4 4 3 4 5 6 8 5 3 4 6 8 4 3 6 8 4 3

# **ACTION RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY PROMOTING CREATIVE WRITING THROUGH STIMULATING ACTIVITIES**

**Course Number: ES941**

**Group 5: Wing-Hung Chan**

**Eliza Chiu**

**Mary Tsui**

**Group Tutor: Gertrude Tinker Sachs**

## **Introduction**

'Motivating students in Hong Kong to write in English can be a daunting task,' Henry Hepburn (1992)

In discussion of our action research topic the members of our group unanimously agreed that writing should top our priority list amongst the four skills.

Our hypotheses are as follows:

1. Through exposure to various forms of writing, namely: poems, songs and stories, students can become aware that the teaching and learning of writing in a foreign language may be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience.
2. Stimulating language activities can be an effective means to release tension and reduce the anxiety experienced by L2 learners in L2 classrooms.

## **Problem Identification**

In our experience as teachers, we found writing to be a very difficult task for students in Hong Kong. The problems they encounter are as follows:

1. Psychological—Writing is a one-way communication and no recipient is involved. There are often no immediate responses and feedback given.
2. Linguistic—Writers have to make a personal effort to ensure that they can be well understood. They have to be careful in the choice of lexical items, syntax and linking devices.
3. Cognitive—Writing is acquired through a process of instruction. Students have to master the written form of the language and to learn certain syntactic items which are less used in verbal communication.

## **Procedures**

Before the experimental teaching, a pre-teaching questionnaire was distributed. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out the students' attitude towards English and the skills they feel least competent in. The

questionnaire also asked about students' experiences in song appreciation, writing lyrics, poem appreciation, poem writing, story reading and writing at both primary and secondary levels.

During the lessons, teachers observing the lessons were given observation forms to find out students' involvement in various activities such as group discussions, reading and writing tasks and their performance in carrying out the given activities.

After the lessons, students were given a questionnaire on their reaction to the presentation of the lessons, their participation and their degree of interest.

## **Findings and Reflections**

From the findings of the pre-teaching questionnaire on students' experience in learning English, a very high percentage of students (72%) say that they like English and 41% of the students indicate that they often enjoy their English lessons at school.

However, when the data of pre-teaching and post-teaching are compared, there is a significant change of students' attitude towards writing poems, songs and stories.

To sum up, before the experimental teaching students' attitude towards writing was negative; however, after being exposed to the poems, stories and songs and taking part in the activities, students' interest in learning them and writing them were promoted.

## **Reflections on Hypotheses**

During the experimental teaching students had, for the first time in their lives, written their own poems, lyrics and endings of stories. In the course of the activities, most students were actively involved in all the tasks assigned. They completed the tasks so spontaneously that they were not even aware of the fact that they were actually carrying out the creative writing tasks which, according to our pre-teaching questionnaire results, they consider the most difficult task of language learning.

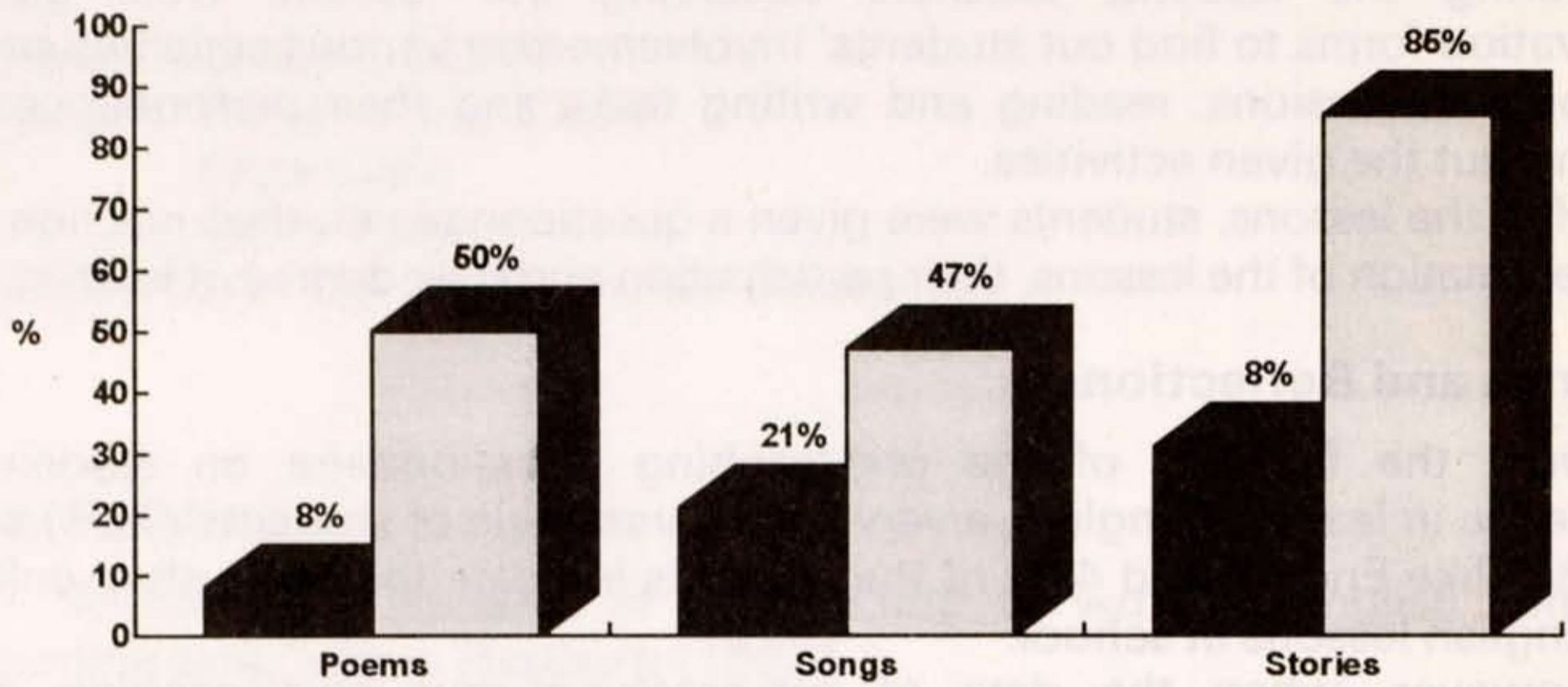
## **Conclusion**

This action research has shown us that the stimulating activities used in our experimental teaching provide a wide range of expressive writing tasks through which students were enabled to develop an ever-improving capability to communicate, to think and to put their expressions and ideas forward. The activities have successfully promoted students' interest in writing.

## **Reference**

- Hepburn, H. 1992. 'Motivating students to write'. In M. Lau and M. J. Murphy (Eds.), *Developing Writing: Purposes and Practices*. English Division, Institute of Language in Education, Education Department, Hong Kong.

**Students' attitude towards writing poems, songs and stories before and after Experimental Teaching**



■ % of students who have thought of writing their own poems, songs and stories before the Experimental Teaching □ % of students who will try writing their own poems, songs and stories after the Experimental Teaching

# **ACTION RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY LOWERING THE AFFECTIVE FILTER DURING SPEAKING ACTIVITIES**

***Course No.: ES941***

***Group 8: Lau Mei Chu Amy***

***Yau Man Lin***

***Tse Ngan Suet Han Donna***

***Leung Sze Kam Margaret***

***Group Tutor: Maria Axler***

## **Introduction**

Speaking is the weakest language skill of Hong Kong students and teachers often tend to overlook the provision of opportunities for students to practise speaking. Two of the possible reasons are large class sizes and little emphasis on speaking in Certificate Examinations. It is, however, the students' fear of speaking English in front of their peers (Wong 1984) and teachers' discouraging remarks about students' oral abilities that contribute to an affective filter that inhibits Hong Kong students. The purpose of this research was to explore some ways of lowering the students' affective filter by building up their self-confidence.

## **Identification of problems**

The most common and obvious symptoms observed are:

- i. Frequent requests for using Cantonese before any attempt to communicate in English.
- ii. Stammering or speaking in a very soft voice when they have to speak in English.
- iii. Changing answers when requested to repeat, even though their answers may be correct.
- iv. Poor intonation and inappropriate stress resulting from the interference of Cantonese patterns.
- v. A lack of vocabulary and expressions.

## **Methods adopted in overcoming the problems in speaking activities**

### ***Experimental Teaching***

A series of 4 lessons on the theme 'Relationship' was designed and conducted (see scheme of work in Appendix I) based on the following principles, and students' responses observed.

### *A comfortable setting*

The conventional Hong Kong classroom setting may create a threatening alienation effect on students as the teacher faces the whole class as an authoritarian figure. Thus, we tried to use a more relaxing setting by asking students to sit in a semi-circle when we conducted the drama activity. We also arranged them in groups when they participated in discussions. As a result, they felt more comfortable since they could cooperate with each other in a small group when completing a task.

### *Group learning*

A supportive learning atmosphere is important for lowering the affective filter in speaking activities. According to Donaldson (1978) and Mercer and Fisher (1993), children may be able to accomplish activities within familiar or supportive contexts which they cannot do in unfamiliar or unsupportive situations. It is believed that peer learning, in the form of group work, can best achieve the aim of creating a positive learning environment. Fisher (1993) has further explained why peer or group learning has such positive impact on learning. He claims that 'activities which encourage a true sharing of ideas amongst essentially equal partners are likely to be a fruitful way of encouraging children to test out their assumptions and develop their thinking.'

### *Teacher support*

Teachers also play an important role in creating a positive learning environment by raising students' self-esteem. We paid special attention to the use of simple language so that students could follow the instructions without difficulties and understand that they did not need difficult expressions to communicate. We were also aware of the importance of giving verbal encouragement in the process of teaching/learning.

### *Arouse motivation by providing authentic situations*

We adopted a thematic approach (Relationship) in this project and designed a series of activities leading to the final product of paraphrasing the lyrics and singing the songs for Father's Day and writing and reciting Cheers on Friendship.

A topic which is of interest to students can encourage active student participation. Sandilands (1990) claims that discussion subjects should correspond to students' interest. She then suggests ten ways to get students involved successfully in discussions, and among them, the use of songs and videos can always stimulate their interest. In providing a variety of stimulating and relevant input, we used a song and a TV commercial as audio-visual aids.

## *Raise students' awareness of the language*

Without sufficient linguistic competence, students cannot express themselves clearly. The need to provide relevant language patterns is unquestionable. It is especially necessary in lower forms as they have a limited command of the language; therefore, we provided the necessary vocabulary about the quality of friendship for the students before the discussion task.

## *Questioning Techniques*

We were particularly careful in designing open, referential or exploratory questions in order to facilitate longer or more elaborate answers. 'Desired' question types may not be able to elicit 'desired' verbal responses from student (Wu 1993) . Other factors, such as students' attitudes towards questioning and their answering behaviour in the classroom, and the questioning strategies used by the teacher, need to be considered. In the questioning strategies, we were always aware of giving them more encouragement and allowing them more room for making mistakes.

## *Cognitive input for discussions*

Without knowledge of the subject content, students find it difficult to actively take part in discussions. We approached the problem by carefully selecting and designing activities which were related to their daily life experience. We provided audio-visual aids and samples of the assigned tasks. For example, we used wallpictures and songs to stimulate ideas and prepared some rewritten lyrics and Mother's Day cards as samples.

## **Conclusion**

We observed that the students were more and more comfortable and involved in the speaking activities. First, the setting was unconventional and the atmosphere relaxing, so students could participate in all activities in the absence of pressure. Second, a wide variety of activities, such as songs, games, video and drama, were included in the lessons. Students felt free to enjoy the fun of learning and speaking English in different situations or contexts. Third, the teachers were very friendly and had a high awareness of giving verbal as well as material encouragement (in the form of prizes). Hence, the threat of rebuke or punishment from teachers was minimized. The teachers took the lead to dramatize certain scenes, therefore students could feel freer to express or get involved in activities. The use of group work provided much support for students as the safety of numbers was guaranteed. As a result, they were less afraid to attempt new things, to appear 'funny' or 'special' in class or to make mistakes in group presentations.



## Recommendations

Timing is very important in learning and teaching. Teachers should not squeeze every minute for what they wanted to teach without paying attention to the needs of students.

The interest of students in the task is another very important consideration. Teachers should observe students' responses to determine whether to develop or change a topic. To make the lessons more interesting, teachers should prepare various speaking activities in a thematic way.

Teachers can have each group report their conclusion or explain why they have not come to one. The focus of attention should be on the ideas expressed rather than the linguistic accuracy. Critical thinking can be fostered in this way without frustrating the students.

Further writing exercises can be derived from the discussion task. The students can reflect on their performance in the discussion and express their feelings or insight. Linguistic accuracy can be given more attention here. But over-marking can still be discouraging and bring about negative backwash to students. So focus-marking is more desirable and constructive remarks should be given at the end of marking. If possible, the teachers can point out the students' good work in group discussion. This can surely impress the students, making them know that their work is always noticed and appreciated.

A friendly environment is crucial to both learning and teaching. It is better for teachers to meet the target class and build up a good relationship with them before the research begins. This helps to reduce the students' fear of having strangers teach or observe them in the class. However, time constraint and administrative problem often make such arrangements difficult. Therefore, there must be some interesting activities for both the teachers and students to relax and warm up with at the beginning of the lesson. Then they can teach and learn effectively and comfortably.

Feedback is always important for improvement. At the end of the research, there should be a feedback session for teachers and students to exchange opinions about the lessons and give advice to each other. This will enable both parties to look at the lesson from different perspectives and make modifications for further development.

There are constraints in everyday classroom situations and the suggestions made above may sound difficult; however, they are all worth trying and can surely help to create a comfortable learning environment which is vital to effective teaching and learning.

## SCHEME OF WORK

Theme: Relationship

Task title	Objectives	Vocabulary	Skills	Teacher's activity	Ss's activity	Aids	No. of period
Parental love	Ss can share their experience of parents' love in oral English		Extracting information from audio-visual materials	(1) Play TV advertisement & song (2) Prepare Ss for group discussion	(1) Guess relationship shown on TV (2) Tell how the singer expresses his love	T.V. advertisement and a song	1
Children's love for parents	Ss are able to express their love to parents with a song		Express their love for parents by rewriting lyrics	(1) Initiate group discussion (2) Conduct singing contest	(1) Group discussion & presentation (2) Pair work (3) Rewrite lyrics & perform	Wall picture, sample songs	1
Good qualities of friends	Ss know that learning & speaking English can be fun	Positive adjectives of character	Speaking with expression	(1) Involve Ss in dramatization of good qualities of friends	Act in the drama by following Ts	Stickers, paper tree and paper fruit	1
The need for friends	Ss have more confidence in learning & speaking English		How to write a cheer	Divide Ss into groups & prepare them for cheer & bookmark writing	write a cheer expressing need for friends on bookmarks	Paper basket and bookmarks	1

KEY: Ss-Students

Ts-Teachers

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barnitz, J. G. 1994. 'Discourse diversity: principles for authentic talk and literacy instruction' *Journal of Reading* 37:7 April 1994
- Baudains, R. and Baudains, M. 1989. 'Overcoming the discussion block' *Practical English Teaching* June 1989
- Donaldson, M. 1978. *Children's Minds* London: Fortune
- Fisher, E. 1993. 'Distinctive features of pupil-pupil classroom talk and their relationship to learning: How discursive exploration might be encountered' *Language and Education* Vol. 7 No. 4, 1993
- Kletzien, S. B. and Baloché, L. 1994. 'The shifting muffled sould of the pick: Facilitating student-to-student discussion' *Journal of Reading* 37:7 April 1994
- Mercer, N. and Fisher, E. 1993. 'How do teachers help children to learn? An analysis of teachers' interactions in computer-based activities' *Learning and Instruction* 2
- Sandilands, B. 1991. 'Successful discussions: X ways to get involved'. *Practical English Teaching* December 1991
- Sandilands, B. 1991. 'Successful discussions: Open a topic file' *Practical English Teaching* December 1991
- Smith, L. J. and Smith, D. L. 1994. 'The discussion process: A simulation'. *Journal of Reading* 37:7 April 1994
- Wolf, S. A. 1994. 'Learning to act/acting to learn: Children as actors, critics, and characters in classroom theatre' *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28(1) February 1994
- Wong, C. 1984. 'Sociocultural factors counteract the instructional effects of teaching through English in Hong Kong' University of Washington, MS.
- Wu Kam Yin 1993. 'Classroom interaction and teacher questions revisited'. *RELC Journal* 24(2) December 1993