

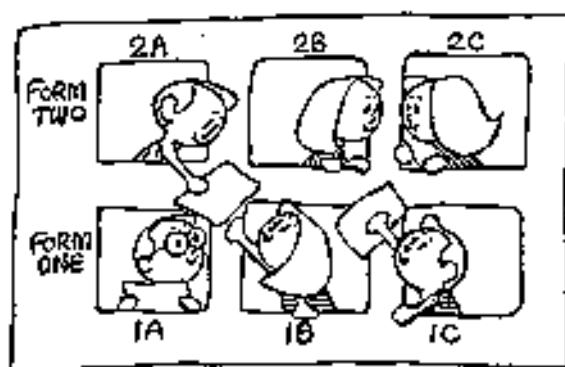
## IV. PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

### A. Role of the Panel Chairperson

#### a. *Co-ordination across levels*

As the chief organiser for the teaching of English in the school, the Panel Chairperson, in collaboration with other teachers of the panel, needs to make a careful diagnosis of the English language needs and interests of the student body and of its general English strengths and weaknesses. On the basis of this information, a language programme can then be drawn up for the entire school. This would also provide a ready framework for teachers of the same level, those involved in Remedial Teaching in particular, to map out core and optional syllabuses catering to the needs of both the mainstream and the remedial classes.

The Panel Chairperson should ensure that there is adequate co-ordination across levels to provide a smooth progression and continuity for students of the mainstream classes as well as those of the remedial classes.



#### b. *Co-ordination within the same levels*

As an overseer of the remedial programme, the Panel Chairperson should ensure that there is close co-ordination between teachers of the mainstream as well as the remedial classes. She can arrange for a place and time for teachers to meet and design the scheme of work, to select core and optional elements for teaching, to adapt or produce instructional materials, to formulate policies on how to deal with examination papers, to interchange experiences, problems and solutions to problems and so on, both in formal sessions such as panel meetings and also in more informal ways.

To facilitate a more systematic sharing of materials, the Panel Chairperson can supervise the building up of a resource bank, with an efficient access system and proper storage facilities. Teaching ideas or aids tried out in one class can also be recorded as teaching

suggestions and appended to the scheme of work for sharing with other classes. (Please see Appendix 3 for an example of a scheme of work highlighting core and optional teaching elements with an annex for the sharing of ideas.)

c. *Professional and moral support*

As a subject expert, the Panel Chairperson should always be on hand to offer professional advice to the panel members, especially those who are new or non-subject-trained. She can also lend her administrative support for teaching ideas and strategies through the provision or purchase of books, reference, library and audio-visual resources, etc.

In times of difficulties, such as when problems are identified but there are no ready solutions, the Panel Chairperson can provide moral support by showing her understanding and concern, acknowledging the good work and contribution of teachers thus far and join in the exploration for solutions.

d. *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Needless to say, the success of Remedial Teaching depends a great deal on the close co-operation of all the teachers of the English Panel. To monitor its progress, the Panel Chairperson can invite the assistance of the level co-ordinators as well as the co-ordinator for the Remedial Teaching of English. She should also see to it that the remedial programme is under constant evaluation and review so that everyone is happily involved in bringing about a rewarding experience for teachers and students alike.

**B. Role of the Remedial Class Teacher**

a. *Co-ordination with mainstream class teachers and other remedial class teachers*

i. Scheme of work

It is essential for the remedial class teacher to co-ordinate with teachers of the mainstream classes to agree on the core items (the minimum) to be covered in the scheme of work for the level. (Please see Appendix 3 for an example of a scheme of work.)

ii. Examination papers

Based on the scheme of work and the agreed core, examination papers could be set to cater for the span of abilities within the level, for the mainstream class students as well as for the remedial class students.

iii. Resource bank

The reduced marking load as a result of smaller class size allows the remedial class teacher more time for the preparation of teaching materials. However, the choice and preparation of appropriate materials to suit the abilities of the students and to bridge the gaps in their knowledge can be very time-consuming. The building up of a resource bank through team work and systematic sharing is therefore highly recommended. The support of the Panel Chairperson or level co-ordinator could be sought. (Please see Annex to Appendix 3 for ideas on systematic sharing of materials.)



b. *Identification of students' weaknesses*

At the beginning of the academic year, it is useful to identify areas in which most students are weak, as well as individual weaknesses. Based on these findings the teacher can tackle the weak areas first rather than build on a shaky foundation.

The Hong Kong Attainment Tests could be used as a diagnostic instrument to help identify students' main area(s) of weaknesses. (Please see Appendix 4 for the use of Hong Kong Attainment Tests for diagnostic purposes.) Apart from written tests, an oral assessment could also be included to provide a more complete language profile for each student.

The teacher's own observation of student performance in class and in written assignments is also a very reliable basis for identifying weaknesses.

c. *Selection, adaptation and designing of teaching materials*

Given the same number of periods it is not feasible for the remedial class students and the mainstream class students to do exactly the same work with the same set of coursebooks, even though more individual attention

could be given. Hence the remedial class teacher has to carefully select, adapt or design materials to suit the abilities of the students.

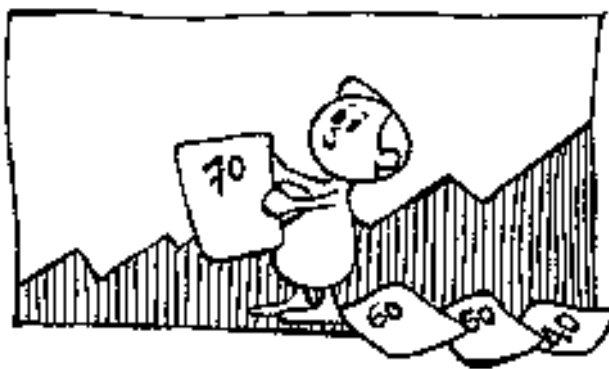
The selection of core and optional teaching items through co-ordination with the mainstream class teachers is an important first step. It is better to teach thoroughly the chosen core items, with appropriate adaptations, than to go over everything superficially. The following are some ideas on how to adapt materials to suit student ability:

- i. Select only parts of the original material for students to do, while making sure that the core items on the scheme of work have been adequately covered.
- ii. Simplify the material by
  - replacing difficult vocabulary items with easier ones
  - writing a simpler version
  - providing additional hints such as illustrations to aid comprehension
- iii. Select/design manageable tasks to give students a greater sense of satisfaction and hence develop their confidence.
- iv. Introduce smaller teaching steps by inserting/designing graded exercises to bridge any gaps in students' knowledge.

(Please see Appendix 5 for ideas on selection, adaptation and designing of teaching materials to suit student ability.)

d. *Record keeping and progress review*

It is recommended that individual student records be kept to note down where each student starts from, and his/her strengths and weaknesses. A record of work throughout the year with remarks could also be kept. The records would be very useful in reviewing individual student progress and devising appropriate teaching strategies catering for individual needs. (Please see Appendix 6a for an example of an individual student's record form and 6b for an individual student's progress record.)



### C. Teaching Strategy

Strictly speaking there is no such thing as a remedial teaching method. Successful language teaching always depends on a combination of factors which include

- a. a well planned programme,
- b. a stimulating approach,
- c. interesting and meaningful content/tasks, and
- d. sufficient exposure.

This is perhaps more true for students who have fallen behind.

For weaker students however, more emphasis can be put on the following:

- a. Start from where students are --

Students' strengths and weaknesses should be gauged and the teaching programme should build on what students already possess and bridge any gaps in their knowledge.

- b. Use materials that suit their level --

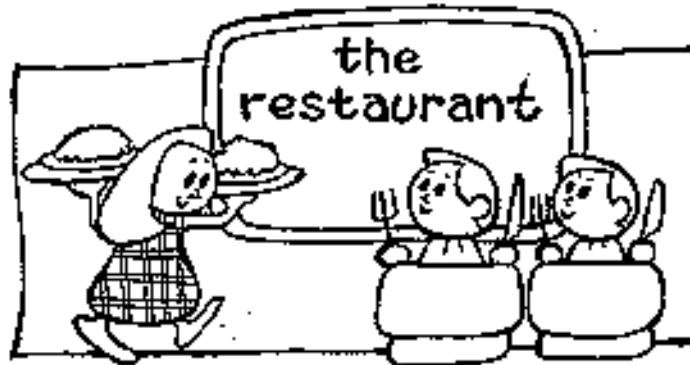
The choice of teaching/learning materials is very important. The remedial class teacher should carefully select, adapt and design materials that cater for the needs of the students.



- c. Provide more concrete examples to show how the language functions --

The remedial class teacher should make more use of real objects, pictures and aids, more situational examples and dramatised

dialogues, more language games and activities.



- d. Provide more opportunity for practice and use --

The remedial class teacher should build in more practice, repetitions and recycling of items to improve students' retention. Extension activities involving meaningful use of language should never be neglected.

- e. Encourage more exposure to English --

English should be used as the teaching medium. The remedial class teacher could also encourage more extensive reading by using library resources and making more use of language teaching tapes and ETV programmes.

- f. Plan a slower progression of work --

Priority should be given to revising what students have forgotten in their previous learning. Progress in smaller steps. Teach a little at a time and devise plenty of activities to practise the little that is taught.

In general, the remedial class teacher needs to adopt an approach which emphasises variety of content and tasks to cater for student interests and needs; make full use of concrete examples and aids to facilitate understanding; give sufficient practice and recycle items to improve retention; and provide plenty of exposure to good English through the use of library books, language tapes and ETV. Integration of the 4 language skills as far as possible is also recommended to make teaching and learning of the different skill areas more interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Teachers are advised to read the Revised Syllabus for more detailed guidance on teaching methodology.

#### **D. Tests and Examinations**

- a. Examination Papers

For streaming, setting or selection purposes, it is necessary to compare the achievements of all the students in the level in end-of-term or end-of-year examinations. This can be done in two ways:

- i. by having a common examination paper,
  - ii. by having a different (easier) paper for remedial classes but devising a scaling strategy for the comparison of scores.
- b. Setting of examination papers

Most schools in Hong Kong devise a common paper for all the students. When a common paper is used, the scope of the paper should centre round the core items specified in the scheme of work, which the remedial class students should have covered. Optional items, which the mainstream class students might have learnt but the remedial class students have not, should not figure more than 20-30%, so that the remedial class students who have made an effort to assimilate all that is taught to them can score reasonably well.

The items set should also be graded from easy to difficult to cater for the span of abilities and to distinguish different levels of achievement.

e.g.

40%	40%	20%
easy	medium	difficult

Please note that while teachers can aim at approximating the suggested ratio of 4:4:2 among easy, medium and difficult items taking the paper as a whole, there is no need to apply this formula too rigidly to individual sections of the paper.

(Please see Appendix 7 for examples of graded items to cater for a range of student abilities.)

Alternatively, schools may wish to devise separate papers for different ability groups and apply a scaling strategy for comparison of scores across the groups. As regards the allocation of places for students in S4, schools adopting separate papers for mixed ability groups may wish to consult the Education Records and Junior Secondary Education Assessment Section of the Education Department for technical information and advice on scaling strategies for rank-ordering purposes.