

# NET

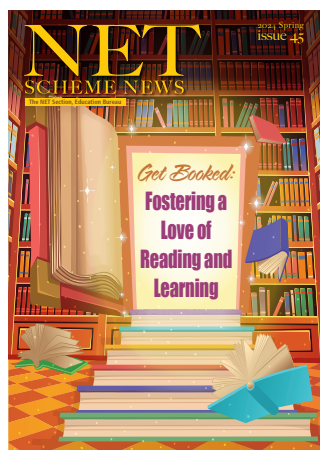
## SCHEME NEWS

2024 Spring  
issue 45

The NET Section, Education Bureau

*Get Booked:*  
**Fostering a  
Love of  
Reading and  
Learning**





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<https://nets.edb.hkedcity.net/>

To enhance the teaching content, teachers can exercise their professional judgment and consult relevant scholarly work when adopting the learning and teaching resources prepared by educators and other teachers. In support of the implementation of the English Language Education KLA Curriculum, teachers can also select appropriate parts of the resources for classroom learning or extended learning based on pedagogical consideration and the learning needs of students.

This newsletter is prepared by the NET Section, CDI, EDB. All comments and suggestions on the newsletter can be sent to [adyskywong@edb.gov.hk](mailto:adyskywong@edb.gov.hk).



# Unleashing the Power of Reading, Collaboration and Innovation

As I write the preface for this issue of NET Scheme News, themed "Get Booked: Fostering a Love of Reading and Learning", I feel privileged and humbled. Since joining the NET Section in early December 2023, I have been warmly welcomed into a vibrant community of over fifty colleagues, each bringing diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives to our shared mission. It is a privilege to work with and learn from such a passionate team, and this publication is the perfect place for you to see the fruits of their innovation and collaboration with the equally committed English teachers in Hong Kong to enrich students' English learning experiences and foster a profound love for learning.

Reading is a passport to countless adventures and endless knowledge. It opens new worlds, promotes cross-cultural understanding, and lays the foundation for lifelong learning. Our role extends beyond teaching reading skills; it involves instilling a genuine passion for reading that expands students' horizons. We delve into the art of creating an immersive reading environment that transcends the walls of the classroom, encouraging our students to explore the rich tapestry of literature. We explore how reading can provide both comfort and intellectual challenges. Above all, we foster an environment where reading is not just an educational necessity but a pursuit of personal growth and joy.

In this issue, you will find strategies, success stories and innovative approaches that schools have employed to

make reading more enjoyable and more intellectually stimulating. From introducing captivating readers that entice young minds to the integration of STEAM into literature, the different avenues through which students connect with books are explored. You will also discover inspiring narratives of cross-curricular learning brought to life through filmmaking, the dynamics of school literacy programmes, and the joyful engagement fostered by the "Battle of the Books".

Collaboration remains one of the cornerstones of the NET Section, and our commitment to the tripartite partnership between English panel heads, NETs, and advisory teachers is unyielding. You will read about the range of initiatives we undertook on two Joint School Staff Development Days, which exemplify our dedication to fostering collaboration and driving innovation among English teachers.

We look forward to your continued support and invite you to visit our Section's website regularly to keep updated on the latest developments in learning and teaching, and enjoy the wealth of resources developed by the NET Section. May 2024 bring you and your family good health, prosperity, and a multitude of captivating books to discover!

**Jenny Yeung,**  
**Chief Curriculum Development Officer**  
**NET Section**



*Ms Jenny Yeung (centre) with the management team*



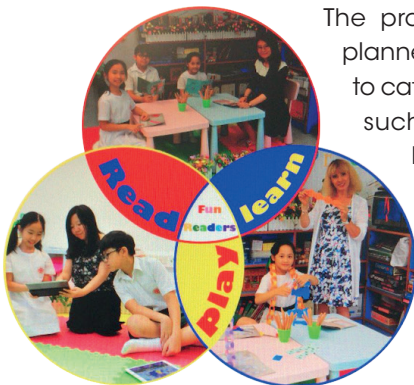
For the past 12 years, the English Team and I have dedicated ourselves to planning and teaching the school-based **Fun Readers programme** at our school. Four years ago, I embarked on a mission to elevate the reading competency of my students. To pursue this goal, I undertook doctoral studies at The University of Hong Kong. The outcome of my rigorous research and scholarly endeavours was the conceptualisation of the 'Adaptable Reading Instruction' (ARI) framework. This innovative approach has garnered significant attention and recognition among esteemed educators and scholars on a global scale.

So, what exactly is ARI? Well, it is a revolutionary approach to reading instruction that takes into account students' individual differences, as well as the valuable insights of teachers and decision-makers.

### The Fun Readers Programme

The programme spans across three primary levels: P2, P3, and P4 where students engage with various reading activities in a 70-minute double lesson each week.

The programme is meticulously planned and adapted each year to cater to individual differences such as ability, motivation, learning styles, and social preferences. Students are split into three different ability groups through pre-reading tests conducted at the beginning of each year.



Each Fun Readers lesson is thoughtfully designed to incorporate various components:

#### Whole class instructions (10 minutes)

- Shared reading/ teaching of high frequency words and phonics are done as a whole class in the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- P2 students learn the short vowel sounds. P3 learn the long vowel sounds, r-controlled words and consonant digraphs. P4 students learn phonics in context.





## Rotation Group Work (three segments of 20 minutes each):

### 1. Guided reading:

- Books are thoughtfully selected to match students' instructional reading levels.
- Students receive targeted instruction to develop their basic or advanced reading skills.



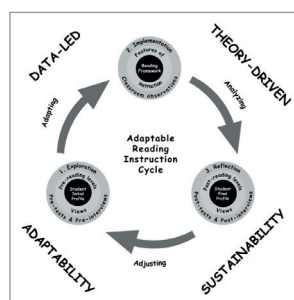
### 2. Post-reading activities:

- Practical application of learned knowledge is emphasised through hands-on activities.
- Activities such as games, experiments, puzzles, cooking, crafts, and videos are directly linked to the books students read during the guided reading.



### 3. Silent/Independent online reading on iPads:

- Students develop independent reading habits by engaging in silent or independent online reading using iPads.
- This segment helps solidify the knowledge acquired during other segments while fostering a love for reading.



The findings of this research have paved the way for the promotion of the ARI Cycle, which serves as a framework for developing adaptable reading practices in schools. The ARI cycle begins with exploring students' individual differences and views through pre-tests and pre-interviews.

This data-led approach helps create a student initial profile, which forms the basis for creating ability groups and planning/adapting the reading framework. The framework aligns with theories on balanced instruction, emphasising adaptability and a theory-driven approach for sustainable learning.

The cycle continues by implementing the adapted reading framework in a differentiated classroom setting (3 different ability groups are preferred). Teachers closely observe classroom interactions, collaboration and knowledge co-construction. Finally, a student final profile is populated after conducting reading post-tests and post-interviews informing teachers of the progress in reading ability and the changes in individual differences and social preferences. The students' final profile can then be used as a base for group creation and planning/adapting the lessons at the beginning of the next new cycle which serves as a valuable resource ensuring continuous growth and improvement.

The implications of this study are vast, and we hope they open doors to educational dialogue, bringing teachers together to share and learn from each other's experiences. The Fun Readers programme, with its adaptable reading instruction approach, has the power to transform reading journeys and empower students to become confident and skilled readers.

**Dr Carola Dinu, NET**  
**SKH Tak Tin Lee Shiu Keung Primary School**



# Inspiring Cross-curricular Learning through Filmmaking



In today's education landscape, integrating various subjects has become increasingly important. Cross-curricular learning and Reading across the Curriculum (RaC) provide students with a holistic understanding of concepts while motivating them to learn through interconnected topics. Filmmaking is an empowering educational tool that helps realise what students have learnt. In the Filmit Competition 2023, students drew upon their knowledge of environmental protection and recycling from different KLAs, showcasing their understanding of these concepts in a short film.



In line with the initiatives of the English Language Education (ELE) Key Learning Area (KLA) Curriculum Guide (P1–S6) (2017), our school has introduced RaC and cross-curricular learning since 2018. Teachers from different KLAs collaborate closely when teaching selected topics, allowing students to read and have learning experiences that span multiple subjects. For instance, under the topics of water and recycling, students first learn basic properties of water in General Studies lessons. They then explore the importance of water conservation and clean water by creating and testing their own water filters. Mathematics teachers introduce mathematical concepts such as volume measurement and calculation. English teachers encourage RaC by introducing targeted readers such as 'The Simple Science of Water' and 'We Recycle'. They also guide students in writing and presenting scientific reports on their water filters. These experiences give students valuable opportunities to integrate their learning in authentic and hands-on situations.







Even before the Filmit project, students had been introduced to environmental protection concepts as early as P3. In General Studies, they learnt about recycling and the negative impact of plastic waste. Simultaneously, during their English Space Town lessons with the reader 'The Green Earth Project Week', the students delved into the 3Rs – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle – and developed an understanding of the importance of these practices in protecting the environment and maintaining the planet's health. They even created firefly lanterns from plastic bottles and wrote procedural texts about the process. During the project learning week, P3 students further explored ocean pollution and experimented with materials that could absorb spilled oil. These cross-curricular experiences laid a strong foundation for students, enabling them to apply their knowledge in a film plot centred around plastic pollution and environmental protection.

Filmmaking has proven to be a powerful tool for fostering cross-curricular learning, authentic language learning experiences, and collaboration. By integrating different areas of learning, students gain broader and deeper perspectives on important real-world issues, and it helps foster their creativity and critical thinking skills.

**Juliet Du and Kammy Chan,**  
**English Panel Chairs**

**Luke Jenkinson, NET**  
**ELCHK Wo Che Lutheran School**







# School-based Literacy Programme

PLK Chong Kee Ting Primary School has taken significant strides in developing our school-based literacy programme. We started from P1 in the 2021/2022 school year and have successfully extended the programme to P5, with plans to implement it in P6 in the next academic year. To ensure a dynamic and engaging learning experience, our class activities are conducted collaboratively by our dedicated NET, other English teachers, and teaching assistants.

Our comprehensive literacy programme covers essential components: phonics, sight words, and novel studies. To instil a love for reading English books, we carefully select captivating children's literature which includes picture books, poetry, non-fiction and short novels.

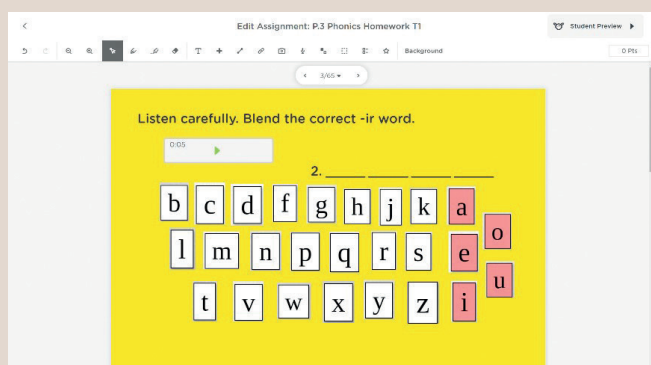


Students starting to read authentic children's books from P1 with a variety of fun activities

## Phonics

*In the phonics component, we go above and beyond by supplementing the 'Space Town Go' materials with our school-based phonics weekly practices. This has greatly enhanced the effectiveness of our phonics instruction, which is clearly reflected in the satisfactory phonics results of our students' speaking exams.*

Leveraging the *Classkick* app, we create weekly blending exercises for our students to practise in class and consolidate their learning at home. The seamless and immersive learning experience helps to maximise results.



Students collaborating with peers to build a 'preposition sculpture'





## Enhanced Sight Word Lists

Sight word acquisition is another crucial part of our literacy programme. We have enriched the Dolch Sight Word List by adding selected words from Fry Word List, resulting in a more comprehensive version.

To support our students' acquisition of sight words, we have developed weekly audio flashcards on Quizlet. To ensure proper illustration of meaning, each sight word is contextualised in sentences. These flashcards, accompanied by pictures and audios, provide a multi-modal learning experience.

To make these resources accessible at home, the sight word lists are freely available through QR codes and our school webpage. We organise seminars and provide a summer bridging coursebook for prospective parents explaining the rationale behind our sight word instruction.

**P3 List 5 Grade 3 + some of Fry's second 100 words**

different	Their socks are different.	
done	I am done with my homework!	
draw	He likes to draw pictures of cats.	
drink	Don't eat or drink on the bus.	
eight	There are eight candles on the cake.	

Our students will complete all 5 sight word lists by the first term in P3.

### Sight Words and Phonics Guidelines

**Step 1:** Scan the QR code or go to the link provided for Quizlet.

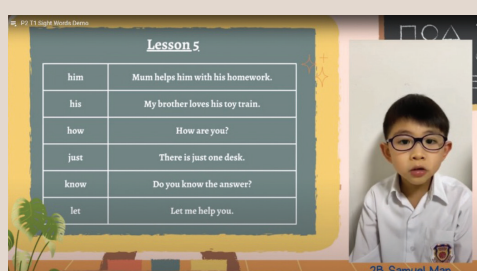
**Lesson 1** link: [shorturl.at/gnqW](https://quizlet.com/join/shorturl.at/gnqW)

Sight words	14/9	15/9	17/9
1 a	✓	✓	✓
2 and	✓	✓	✓
3 at	✓	✓	✓
4 away	✓	✓	✓
5 big	✓	✓	✓
Phonics			
1 a	✓	✓	✓
2 t	✓	✓	✓
3 b	✓	✓	✓
Parent's signature			

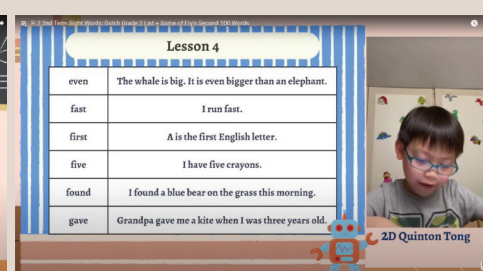
**Step 2:** Learn the sight words and letter sounds with Quizlet by reading aloud.

**Step 3:** Write the dates, tick the items learned each time and put a parent's signature to show completion.

Instructions for parents in students' reading records



P2 students developing confidence and fluency with weekly sight word practices



## Novel Studies

In the novel studies component, our students delve deep into popular children's books. Starting with picture books in the first grade, we gradually introduce poetry, non-fiction, and short novels.

To foster collaborative learning and enhance comprehension, we employ various strategies such as rally coach, fortune tellers, quiz-quiz-trade, literature circles, and group presentations. These activities engage our students actively to develop a comprehensive understanding of the reading materials and boost their confidence in English communication skills.



Slap the word vocabulary game

Fortune teller vocabulary activity (top); P4 students having a non-fiction group presentation (bottom)

In short, our school-based literacy programme is designed to cultivate a lifelong love for English reading, foster critical thinking skills, and empower our students to become confident and skilled readers. We also celebrate the joy of reading during festive occasions such as Christmas and Chinese New Year through the Bookaloud Competition. This self-initiated competition requires students to submit a five-minute video of themselves reading aloud a book they love. The competition has been embraced warmly by both students and parents as it fosters a love for reading and showcases students' reading abilities.

**Vivian Lui, English Panel Chair**  
**PLK Chong Kee Ting Primary School**



Class 1A proudly presenting a readers' theatre of their beloved story, 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen



# Integrating Values Education into the English Curriculum through Process Drama

English, often hailed as the door to the world, extends beyond being a mere subject to be assessed. It holds the power to connect students with diverse cultures and serves as a catalyst for cultivating positive values and nurturing a healthy mindset. This article delves into the incorporation of values education into the English curriculum through tailor-made class activities.



## Initiatives

Within the English Key Learning Area, the school-based curricular initiative of Diversity Learning Experience offers English teachers the flexibility to prepare students for the attainment of the seven learning goals in secondary education, including life planning and healthy lifestyles. By leveraging this framework, teachers can design class activities that align with these goals while fostering positive values.

## Implementation

One idea worthy of mention is the use of process drama workshops for S4 students. These workshops revolve around the theme of the 'University of Superpower', encouraging students to collaborate in groups and engage in various role play and drama activities such as admission interviews, practising their chosen superpowers, and undertaking examinations on assigned superpower tricks.

During the process, students are prompted to freeze at specific moments, and as the facilitator, the teacher guides their reflections. Thought-provoking questions are posed, prompting



students to consider how their superpowers can benefit society. Occasionally, instances arise where some groups contemplate employing their superpowers for illicit purposes, creating opportunities for moral lessons to take place.

The workshop culminates with a graduation ceremony at the University of Superpowers. A student representative expresses gratitude on behalf of all participants, while the teacher, assuming the role of the principal, delivers a closing message that shocks the attendees: "All superpowers will fade out upon graduation." This revelation elicits a range of emotions, including disappointment, anger, and sorrow, further deepening the students' engagement and understanding.

Understanding the importance of debriefing in educational activities, the teacher instructs students to form a 'tunnel of thoughts' by lining up and 'thinking aloud'. They are encouraged to contemplate whether they would still choose to learn and embrace their superpowers, even if they knew they would eventually lose them.

Remarkably, most students affirm their participation, emphasising that the process itself holds more significance than the final outcomes.

## Insights

Teaching English extends beyond the transmission of content or developing the four language skills. With careful planning, it also serves as a powerful tool for students to explore the world on their terms. As educators, we share the responsibility of imparting values to the future pillars of society, guiding them towards self-discovery, empathy and a deeper understanding of societal responsibilities, as well as equipping them with the necessary attitudes and values to face challenges in their lives. This process drama activity is a wonderful entry point for values education in the English curriculum.

**LAI CHAN Ching Yan, Sammi,**  
English Panel Chair and Head of Diversity Learning  
Homantin Government Secondary School





**Gratitude, Respect, Commitment** are the 3 core values our school has emphasised and promoted to our students in recent years. Last year, we were fortunate to have the chance to collaborate with our primary school and explore these values further with our primary section.



It all started with the promotion of the Week of Positivity on the primary school campus, and thus a series of activities were designed and held during the Bucket Filling Week in April 2023. It was a meaningful collaboration between the teaching staff and students in our college and our primary school.

Some senior and junior secondary students were invited to organise activities for the primary students. Based on the book on Bucket, Dippers and Lids, secondary students designed game booths and in-class activities for their primary counterparts. Language games like word puzzles, words of kindness were played to help the participants to identify / categorise the vocabulary items in conjunction with a selection of scenarios of bucket-filling and dipping being incorporated into a video for the participants to discuss and reflect on. The primary students were even encouraged to write kind messages and share various strategies to fill each other's buckets. Indeed, the integration of values and language learning took place throughout the Week of Positivity.

Modelling on the secondary students' service, P6 students paid it forward to the P5 students by serving them in the same way on the last day of the Week of Positivity. This further boosted the students' understanding of the concept and the use of language in and outside of the classroom; as such, the most valued part is the students' application of what they have learnt in their everyday life.

Thanks to the NET Section, our team, teachers and students were invited to share in the SOW Award Presentation Ceremony and Seed Project Annual Sharing Session in October 2023. Both teachers and students had very positive thoughts about their experiences and were eager to demonstrate the games as well as share their positive experiences and reflections with other schools and guests.



The whole 'interface approach' has not only displayed the ripple effect of kindness from secondary to primary students, but it has also fostered stronger bonding and strengthened professional development among teachers of KS2 and KS3. We would definitely like to continue such good practices in the future and plan for future collaboration.

**Jenny Chan, Vice Principal  
Elaine Lam, English Panel Chair  
and Bridget Ho,  
Literature in English Panel Chair  
St. Mary's Canossian College**



**Values and  
Positivity  
– Being a  
Bucket Filler**





*Build your  
professional*

★ Learn more with our  
PDNETwork workshops ★



**Assessment as  
Learning (AaL) for  
Writing**



**Catering for  
Students with SEN**



**Catering for SEN  
Part 2**



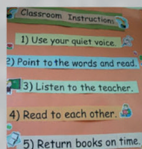
**CCA Programme  
Design**



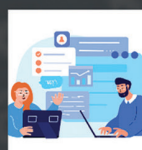
**Classroom  
Management**



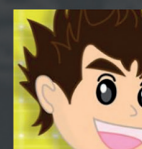
**Creating a Website  
for English Learning**



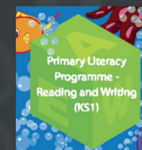
**Creating an English-  
rich Environment**



**Interactive  
Online Learning**



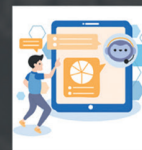
**Introduction to KIP**



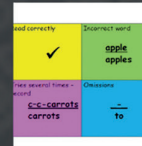
**Introduction to  
PLP-R/W**



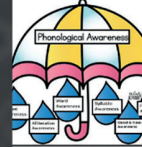
**Making Digital  
Games for SDL**



**Making Real-time  
Interactive Lessons**



**Matching Students  
to Book Levels**



**Phonological  
Awareness**



**Project-based  
Learning**



**Teaching Writing  
Online**



**Using a Digital  
Portfolio for  
Students**



**Analysing Running  
Records**



**CODING  
LITERACY**






own castle of  
knowledge



**Teaching Writing Overview**



**Vocabulary Building**



**Navigating the World of Digital Books**

**Analysing Running Records**



**NET Section's Website**




**Language Arts Inc.**




**Learning Progression Framework**



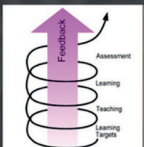
**Listening and Speaking Skills**




**Reciprocal Teaching of Reading**




**Strategies for Teaching Phonics**



**Summative Assessment**



**Teaching Reading Overview**



**Teaching Reading Overview**



**Cross-boundary Student Support (CBS)**



**DI: Developing HOTS through Questioning**



**Drama in the Classroom**



**Effective Feedback**



**Flipped Classroom**



**Guided Reading - Let's Go!**



**Interactive Formative e-Assessment Tool**



## PDNETwork: Empowering Hong Kong's English Language Teachers with Online Workshops



PDNETwork, an innovative platform dedicated to the professional development (PD) of primary school English language teachers in Hong Kong, is revolutionising the way educators enhance their skills. Accessible at <https://nets-pd.edb.edcity.hk/>, PDNETwork serves as a comprehensive hub for online workshops, covering a wide range of topics and continually expanding its offerings.

### PDNETwork workshops

At the heart of PDNETwork's functionality lies its workshops, which encompass a diverse array of content types, including text, audio, video, and photo files. These workshops are meticulously designed to align with the English Language Education Key Learning Area (ELE KLA) Curriculum Guide (P1 – S6) (2017), incorporating established research, cutting-edge insights, and real-world examples of best practices observed in Hong Kong schools.

With each passing year, PDNETwork continues to introduce new workshops, ensuring that teachers have access to the latest trends and methodologies in English language education.

One of the standout features of PDNETwork is its user-friendly interface, allowing teachers to easily search for courses based on specific topics. When it comes to enhancing the teaching of reading, PDNETwork offers a wealth of options.

### Reading workshops

Among the 40+ courses available, ten courses are specifically recommended for teachers seeking to strengthen their reading instruction. These courses encompass a broad spectrum of content, ranging from comprehensive workshops like 'Teaching Reading Overview' and 'Teaching Strategies for Reading' to more specialised sessions that delve into immersive teaching approaches, such as 'Drama in the Classroom' and 'Reciprocal Teaching of Reading'.



Furthermore, PDNetwork goes beyond surface-level reading instruction by offering workshops that explore the fundamental building blocks of literacy. Teachers can explore courses like 'Phonological Awareness' and 'Strategies for Teaching Phonics', which provide valuable insights and strategies for developing strong reading foundations in students.

#### PDNetwork Workshop Title

- ▷ Teaching Reading Overview
- ▷ Teaching Strategies for Reading
- ▷ Guided Reading – Let's Go!
- ▷ Matching Students to Book Levels
- ▷ Reciprocal Teaching of Reading
- ▷ Phonological Awareness
- ▷ Strategies for Teaching Phonics
- ▷ Drama in the Classroom
- ▷ Effective Feedback
- ▷ Vocabulary Building
- ▷ Using Epic School

#### Learning tasks and PD hours

Upon completing a course, participants are required to undertake a practical or reflective learning task. These tasks are carefully designed to reinforce the knowledge gained during the workshop and encourage practical application in the classroom.

Once a participant has fulfilled the requirements of the learning task, their mentor, typically an Advisory Teacher from the NET Section, reviews the task to ensure successful completion and offers learning feedback. This rigorous process ensures that teachers not only acquire knowledge but also effectively translate it into their teaching practice.

Once the mentor grants approval for course completion, a certificate is generated that records the professional development hours completed.

In conclusion, PDNetwork is revolutionising the landscape of professional development for primary school English language teachers in Hong Kong. With its comprehensive workshops, user-friendly interface, and commitment to fostering a supportive learning community, PDNetwork empowers educators to enhance their teaching practices and unlock the full potential of their students.

Visit <https://nets-pd.edb.edcity.hk/> today and embark on a transformative learning journey towards teaching excellence.

#### What do users think of PDNetwork?

At the time of writing this article, 2679 workshops have been completed by users accounting for around over 8000 hours of professional development! Here are some users' thoughts on the platform.

Ms Ekaterina Li, the NET of YCH Chiu Tsang Hok Wan Primary School, completed eight PDNetwork courses in the previous academic year, accounting for 25+ hours of professional development. She shared her experience using the platform as follows:

*"I am convinced that as teachers, we should never cease learning and trying new things. Undoubtedly, the digital world presents endless opportunities for self-education, but having the courses prepared by the team of professionals, carefully structured and selected for you, is a great benefit which should not be overlooked. Personally I find the PDNetwork a great supplement to my professional life."*

*"After years of teaching, many teachers tend to burn out or reach stagnation; the PDNetwork helps me to avoid both by boosting my motivation and desire to experiment. In other words, it helps me maintain growth mindset, which we look to bring up in our students sometimes forgetting about our own selves."*



**PDNetwork Team  
NET Section**



# Integrating STEAM into Children's Literature



The events of the past few years have created various learning and teaching challenges for all of us. To accommodate the needs of our current post-pandemic students in KS1, it was apparent that we had to enhance the NET Section Primary Literacy Programme for Reading (PLP-R). Through the initiative of our principal, Mr Chan Yu Kwan, STEAM has been integrated into children's literature learning.

One of the most effective strategies to engage students is to integrate STEAM education into literacy lessons (e.g. storytelling, reading aloud, shared reading). This infuses a different energy into traditional literacy lessons and can help broaden the appeal of learning and communicating in a foreign language. Students who are usually anxious about speaking in class or who have literacy challenges are more likely to participate in, and engage with the task.

Children's literature includes many topics and vocabulary items that can be related to STEAM education. These topics can provide opportunities for hands-on STEAM activities and experiments. For example, we created a P3 unit with a link to STEAM education based on the traditional fairy tale, 'Little Red Riding Hood'. In our version of the story, Little Red Riding Hood walks through the forest with a basket of cookies to visit her sick grandma. We examined the text and concluded that there were two teachable STEAM education topics presented in the story. The first one was food, health and nutrition and the second one was related to science and engineering.



When planning our units, we followed the GRASPS Model developed by McTighe and Wiggins as a framework for creating student-centred, inquiry-based learning experiences. The GRASPS Model sets up a Goal (what is the problem or goal?), a Role (what is the students' role?), an Audience (who is the target audience or recipient?), a Situation (what is the situation or context?), a Product (what is created to solve the problem?) and Standards to meet (what are the learning targets?).

Our students were tasked with writing up a healthy meal plan for their sick grandma in the role of the character, Little Red Riding Hood. They were shown a food pyramid and sample meal plans for elderly people. For the less proficient students, this was an opportunity to learn nouns related to food groups. For the more capable students, they learnt new terms and concepts, such as proteins, which maintain and build up muscles. Students were then informed that grandma craved cookies but was worried about Little Red Riding Hood's safety in the forest. So in pairs, students discussed and reported on alternate ways to send cookies to grandma without having to walk through the forest. They were then tasked with creating and designing a zip line that could be used to carry a basket of cookies down to grandma. The students finished the unit by learning how a zip line works, using simple verbs like move, pull and stop, and adjectives such as fast and slow, smooth and rough.



By integrating STEAM education into literacy lessons, teachers can help broaden students' knowledge base and enhance their learning experiences. Using the GRASPS Model for project-based learning and encouraging students to visualise themselves as the main characters in a story can work wonders in terms of enhancing their interest and comprehension. By immersing themselves in the narrative, students can more easily relate to the material and subject matter. We will continue to develop units like this to engage students actively in their learning.

**Florence Wong, NET**  
**S. K. H. St. Michael's Primary School**







## Widening Life Experience without Leaving the Classroom

We were invited to organise a professional development workshop at Joint Carmel Schools Staff Development Day on 3 November 2023. All of the primary and secondary NETs attended the workshop where they shared some of the achievements and the vision for the school sponsoring body. The focus was enriching the English language environment and we chose to present a process drama workshop which introduced some transferrable skills for students. The topic on 'the use and impact of food delivery robots in certain Hong Kong locations' seemed difficult, and our task involved taking teachers through highly scaffolded processes that they could then use with their students. We chose teacher-in-role drama as it is highly engaging for students of any age and is a medium which makes it possible to present topics which may appear very challenging, yet in a more accessible way.

Teachers analysed poetry and images about the detriment of mechanisation; watched videos about delivery robots and finally used role cards to present the view of related stakeholders. Interestingly these stakeholders may have had entirely different views to the ones held by the teachers. The 'in role' stakeholders attended a public meeting which was run by the CEO of the robot food delivery system and aired their views about having robots in their neighborhood. This was engaging and explosive as teachers took on their roles with energy, arguing with the CEO, supporting each other and validating their points with strong evidence and examples. The teachers were debriefed and then used the ideas presented within the drama to have a discussion about the same topic. Teachers at all levels felt that this would work in their classrooms and could see how the 'in-role' drama gave students an opportunity to become an expert in expressing and validating an opinion. Our thanks go to the Carmel Schools' Management who organised the day and facilitated the interaction between the primary and secondary teachers.

**Luana Hasell and Craig Robertson,**  
Regional NET Coordinators  
NET Section







## Feedback from Teachers



There are so many other ideas from your workshop that I plan to gradually incorporate into my work. I plan to share these with my colleagues to take into their classroom lessons. The main ones I'm talking about are the interpretation of the stanzas from the poem for teaching both poetry and prose, and then connecting the poem to the photo.

I found the whole workshop very productive and full of useful ideas that are easy to adapt into a busy teaching routine.

**Megan Ireland**  
Carmel Holy Word Secondary School

The activities led to ones with more verbal interaction and critical thinking. I can see how it helps to pave the way for student improvement and facilitate their growth in language acquisition.

**Kelvin Cheung**  
Carmel Divine Grace Foundation  
Secondary School

For me, the highlight of the workshop was the use of the role cards to facilitate a drama. This is a great way to connect social issues to drama skills and the development of empathy.

**Dan Henry**  
Carmel Pak U Secondary School





# Cultivating a L♥ve of Reading

In an age of ever impressive advances in technology, the challenge to cultivate both a love of reading books has become more arduous than ever. The good news is though, it is not impossible; and one way is the inspiring, territory-wide competition, Battle of the Books.

What initially seemed unfeasible, turned out to be the best surprise a teacher could have. I joined the competition in 2018, I was slightly taken aback at the difficulty and length of the books; they were authentic children's novels that native speakers would read and were not 'learning-to-read' books for second language learners. My local colleagues creased up at the mere idea of our students being able to manage these titles, some of which were 300-plus pages long. My students however, could be sold on the idea.

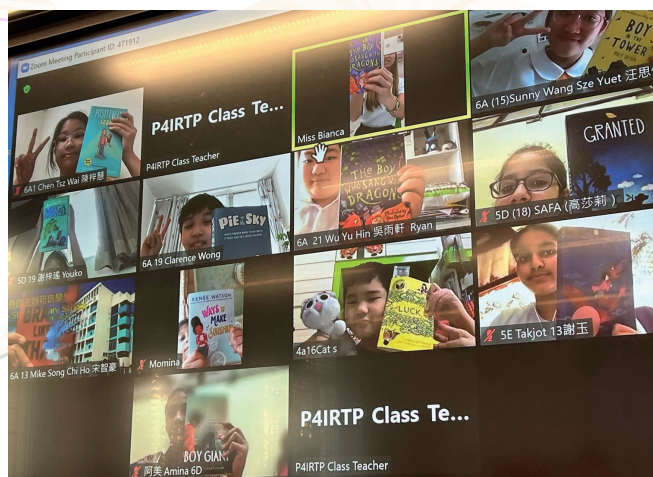
If you can sprinkle on some teacher magic, some good old-fashioned enthusiasm, you will be able to pave the way to a picture of your students' adorable faces, desperate to tell you that they have finished their current title and ask whether they can now grab the next book immediately. I even had a student run up to me to show me a book that they had asked their parent to buy them from the same series as the one on the competition book list – it was a career first for me I had finally succeeded in cultivating a love of reading.

Helping students to form a habit of reading is not something that can be rushed; you nurture their reading abilities in Key Stage One and assess their reading levels regularly and systematically in order for them to borrow and read the right 'learning-to-read' books and once the ability is there, all you need is a slight affinity. Training for the Battle of the Books competition may not be for everyone but pedagogically, the concept can work for any class, club and teacher, willing to lead the horse to water. A book club would work just as well and you could even compete in-house.





Being in the competition, however, offers several great advantages. For instance, having a book list to read from creates a true purpose for reading and training for the questions that come up, is very fun and engaging as students get to work in teams to answer questions within a short time limit. The key to the competition, is that the design and format makes it very feasible for even local students (as the original competition came from international schools); the answers are only ever the titles and authors from the book list. And from this, the competition bears another fruit: students are introduced to many great authors of modern fiction and may develop an interest in their other titles and works too. This opens a door into the realm of literature for primary students as they prepare for secondary school and its growing demand for students' reading appetites.



*Time for a disclaimer: I ended up as co-chair of the Modified Primary Section of Battle of the Books HK. In my own 5-year journey of discovery from participant to organiser, I found that what is lasting and conclusive, beyond the teaching and the competition, is that both my students and I have read more books than ever before, we loved the books together and we still love reading today.*

**Bianca Man, NET  
Ho Shun Primary School**





# Using Roles and Routines to Strengthen Critical Arguments

On 29 November 2023, my colleague Hannah Standring and I facilitated a workshop at SKH Tang Shiu Kin Secondary School for the Joint School Staff Development Day for Secondary School Teachers in the Wan Chai District. We based the workshop on the 'Thinking Routines for Writing' "Seed" Project that the NET Section is currently running, and we called it 'Using Roles and Routines to Strengthen Critical Arguments'. Thirty-six teachers from thirteen secondary schools attended the workshop, and although most participants were English teachers, a few were teachers of other subjects like Maths, Spanish and Fine Arts.

The two main objectives of the workshop were: 1) to investigate how Thinking Routines could be used to engage students in thinking critically about an issue; and 2) to explore teaching strategies that support students with strengthening their arguments for writing and speaking.

What exactly are Thinking Routines? How can they help engage students in critical thinking and strengthen

their arguments? Thinking Routines were first developed at the Harvard Graduate School of Business as part of Project Zero's work on 'Visible Thinking'. The researchers at Project Zero developed a set of practices designed to help make thinking visible, which they coined 'Thinking Routines'. In essence, Thinking Routines are "short, easy-to-learn mini-strategies that extend and deepen students' thinking" when used routinely in the classroom (Project Zero 2022).

We started by introducing the 'Claim Support Question' routine, applying it to a commercial featuring a precocious little girl who makes the surprising claim that her dad is a space alien! We then demonstrated how Thinking Routines could be applied to a question from the 2024 HKDSE sample English Language Paper 2 (Writing) to develop students' critical thinking and argumentative writing skills. We chose Question 5 from this paper, which requires students to argue for one side of an issue:

*A significant proportion of Hong Kong land is developed for residential or commercial purposes. You strongly believe that more land should be used for open space and recreation.*

*The Town Planning Board is inviting the public to express their views. Write a letter to the board and support your arguments with reasons.*

After unpacking the question and identifying the four different ways in which land could be developed or used in Hong Kong (i.e. for residential purposes; for commercial purposes; to create more open space; or for recreational purposes), we used the 'Chalk Talk' routine to make notes on poster paper at four different stations around the room. Participants walked silently from station to station and wrote down their responses to the Chalk Talk questions:

- What are the advantages of using land for \_\_\_\_\_ purposes?
- Who in society would support the use of land in this way? (stakeholders)

It did not take long before the posters were filled with ideas to support the use of land for each purpose referenced in the question.





The next two Thinking Routines we introduced were 'Step Inside' and 'Circle of Viewpoints'. For the 'Step Inside' routine, participants worked in groups to explore one stakeholder position. The Step Inside questions helped each group dig deeper into their respective roles. The participants were then rearranged into mixed groups for the 'Circle of Viewpoints' routine. In this activity, each group elected a scribe whose job was to write down on Post-it notes the responses of each stakeholder to the Circle of Viewpoints prompts, including how they thought land should be used and why, and what questions they had for other stakeholders.

In the final activity, we returned to the 2024 HKDSE Sample Paper 2 Question 5. Participants were asked to place their Post-it notes on poster paper to create an outline for the letter in support of the position "that more land should be used for open space and recreation." In this activity, we used the 'Claim Support Question' routine in combination with 'Generate Sort Connect'. Participants had already generated the arguments (claims), supporting evidence (supports), and questions for each stakeholder role referenced in the question. Now it was time to sort the Post-it notes and connect the ideas into a logical and cohesive outline for the letter. We encouraged participants to incorporate the claims of the residential and commercial stakeholders by refuting them with counter arguments.



Although the approaches varied somewhat from group to group, all six outlines contained strong claims in support of using land for open space and recreation, as well as counter arguments against developing more land for residential and commercial purposes. We were encouraged by the feedback from some participants, who told us they liked the interactive nature of the workshop and felt that using Thinking Routines would work well to engage students in writing.

If your school is part of a larger network of schools that holds annual staff development days and you are looking for ways to make the experience more relevant and rewarding for NETs, local English teachers and other English-speaking teachers, please consider contacting us at the NET Section.

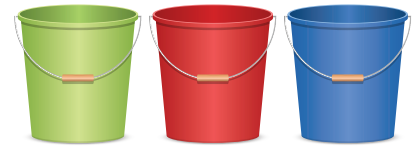
**Stephen Cooley,**  
**Regional NET Coordinator**  
**NET Section**

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# The Bucket Filling Week



Reading is a gateway to knowledge, imagination, and personal growth. It has the power to instill values, shape character, among many other things. In this article, I will explore how stories were successfully used to implement values education during our 'Bucket Filling Week', and the impact of these stories not only during the activity week but beyond it as well.



Classroom reading allowed us to first introduce the concept to students in a structured manner. The concept was fairly new and quite abstract, and so provided students with a solid understanding of the theme. This

meant that students were able to wholly engage in the week and its upcoming activities. The stories selected allowed students to explore themes such as kindness, respect, and compassion, and the importance of these values within their lives.

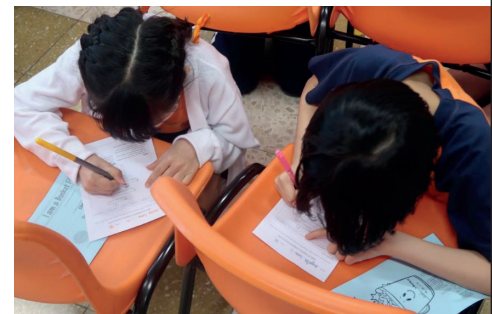
We also sought to further cement key concepts through lunchtime storytelling, so that students could access the theme in a freer, less structured environment. Through these sessions, students were able to identify the positive and negative behaviours modelled by the characters, raising the question, what kind of person do I want to be? The experience encouraged active participation involving the use of open-ended questions, interactive props, role-play, just to name a few.

Following this, we found that when returning to the classroom, students were much more willing and able

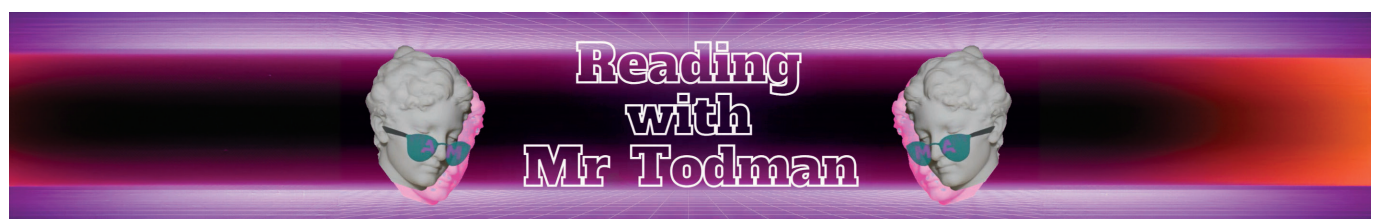
to participate in discussions regarding the theme. Students were able to better analyse characters' motivations, reflect on the values portrayed and apply their knowledge to real-life scenarios. With a sound base established, this propelled us into some deep discussions about moral dilemmas and the ethical implications of our actions.

The power of stories extended beyond our 'Bucket Filling Week'. Throughout the school year, we were able to leverage the impact of stories by incorporating such into various events and activities that promoted values education. Using a similar approach, students were given the chance to combine their knowledge and build upon concepts with a different focus. For example, applying their understanding of bucket filling and how this ties into other themes like love and growth.

Incorporating stories into values education is a powerful way to engage students, nurture empathy, and develop their understanding. As teachers, we know it is important to find opportunities where we can create meaningful reading experiences that instill values and shape our students' lives. With this in mind, we have continued to leverage the impact of stories, in the aim of building a culture of character development that goes beyond the classroom.



**Naomi De-Alwis, NET**  
**St. Mary's Canossian School**



To help cultivate a love of reading at my school, I have decorated the English Room with the theme 'Under the Sea' to create a comfortable and quiet place for students to read. I have also filmed 'Reading with Mr Todman' videos for students to watch at home, where we read several books together. Once the students finish reading a book, they design a book review poster which is displayed on the 'Good Work' wall in the English Room.

This has helped all students to love reading and improve their English.

**Andre Todman, NET**  
**N.T.W.J.W.A Christian Remembrance of Grace Primary School**

