

## **School Time-table arrangement - Cross Level Subject Setting (Primary)**

In the strategy of cross level subject setting (CLSS), pupils are placed into different sets according to their English proficiency level. Each set may include pupils coming from different class levels or different classes of the same level. During English lessons, pupils may have to move out of their original classrooms to another classroom designated for their level. This moving in and out of different classrooms involves administrative arrangements so as to provide the most convenience to pupils and to cause the least chaos. To facilitate such regrouping of pupils, classes involved in the strategy must also have English lessons at the same time. This carries implications for both the teacher allocation and the arrangement of the school time-table.

In GCEPSA Whampoa Primary School, there are five classes each in P. 3 to P. 6, all implementing CLSS in the 2000-01 school year. Their arrangement is to divide the four levels into two main blocks, one of P. 3 to P. 4, and the other of P. 5 to P. 6. The sets re-grouped from P. 3 and P. 4 have English lessons in the same time block, and sets from P. 5 and P. 6 have English lessons simultaneously in another time block. Thus, ten English teachers are adequate to teach all the classes.

The exemplar of the new school time-table is shown below, in comparison with the old one:

**Time table of English lessons with the implementation of CLSS**  
**GCEPSA Whampoa Primary School**  
**(a comparison of the old and new school time-tables)**

Old school time-table (without CLSS)		New school time-table (with CLSS)	
Time	Lesson	Time	Lesson
8:25-8:50	Assembly and Class Teacher Time	8:25-8:50	Assembly and Class Teacher Time
8:50-9:25	First lesson	8:50-9:20	First lesson
9:25-10:00	Second lesson	9:20-9:50	Second lesson
10:00-10:35	Third lesson	9:50-10:20	Recess
10:35-11:00	Recess	10:20-10:50	Third lesson (English class for P. 5-6)
11:00-11:35	Fourth lesson	10:50-11:20	Fourth lesson (English class for P. 5-6)
11:35-12:10	Fifth lesson	11:20-11:35	Recess
12:10-1:00	Lunch	11:35-12:05	Fifth lesson (English class for P. 3-4)
1:00-1:35	Sixth lesson	12:05-12:35	Sixth lesson (English class for P. 3-4)
1:35-2:10	Seventh lesson	12:35-1:30	Lunch
2:10-2:45	Eighth lesson	1:30-2:00	Seventh lesson
2:45-3:20	Tutorial class	2:00-2:30	Eighth lesson
		2:30-3:00	Ninth lesson
		3:00-3:20	Tutorial class

### Comparison of the pros and cons in the CLSS time-table

Without CLSS	With CLSS
1. 40 lessons each week (8 lessons each day, 5 days each week)	1. 45 lessons each week (9 lessons each day, 5 days each week)
2. Each lesson lasts 35 minutes, a total of 1400 minutes each week	2. Each lesson lasts 30 minutes, a total of 1350 minutes each week, 50 minutes less than previously
3. 9 English lessons each week, 22.5% of the total lesson time	3. 10 English lessons each week, 22.2% of the total lesson time, a prima facie loss of 0.3 % when compared with previously
4. English has 1 or 2 double periods each week, similar to all other subjects. It takes around 5 minutes for the change of lessons	4. The time loss is mostly compensated for by the time saved in the double period arrangement
5. English lessons of 20 classes from P.3-6 spread randomly throughout the time table	5. English lessons are in two main blocks: P.5-6 classes are arranged in 3rd and 4th lessons, and P. 3-4 classes in 5th and 6th lessons
6. All pupils remain in their original classrooms during English lessons	6. English lessons are preceded and followed by recess time to facilitate pupils' moving in and out of different classrooms more smoothly
7. More chance for Arts Education to have 3 consecutive lessons	7. Little chance for Arts Education to have 3 consecutive lessons

Teachers were initially worried over the confusion caused to pupils and their possible behavioural misconduct when changing classrooms. Things settled down quickly as pupils became familiarized with the new system after about one month. Teachers' feedback is affirmative as they find that the double period class time can be better utilized than before.

**The benefits of the new time-table include:**

- Facilitation of smooth transition of pupils to and from different classrooms as the English lessons are all arranged in-between recess time
- More flexible allocation of teacher resources as teacher can be arranged to teach both the upper and lower level sets
- Better use of class time as the double period allows adequate time for pupils to engage in more challenging tasks and for teachers to do necessary follow-up action
- More time for pupils to relax and recuperate during the long morning study as there are two recesses
- More time for teacher to address pupils' needs, handle administrative matters, and take a rest

The school head also expresses satisfaction over the new time-table, with the only concern being that Arts Education may not have 3 consecutive lessons as in the past.