

PROMOTION OF READING IN SCHOOLS



Reading is the key to unlocking students' full potential, enabling them to open up a world of possibilities. It has been a key task in curriculum development since the launch of the curriculum reform in 2001 and is always one of the top priorities in school plans and curriculum. However, are you, as an English teacher, baffled with the following questions about promoting reading?

How can I get different stakeholders on board to promote reading?

What resources can I use when promoting reading?

How can I help students connect ideas and concepts acquired in different KLAs through reading?

How can I motivate my students to read?

How can I collaborate with other KLAs/subject departments to promote Reading across the Curriculum (RaC)?

What's the role of the school library in the promotion of reading?

Read on to be informed, inspired and equipped with ideas for promoting reading!

READING-RELATED RESOURCES

The English Language Education (ELE) Section provides numerous resources to enhance the learning and teaching of reading skills and promote reading at the primary and secondary levels. They include resource packages, recommended book lists, reading assessment tasks, professional development programmes, ETV programmes, etc. Come visit our website and explore the resources at http://www.edb.gov.hk/ele_reading.



BUILDING A READING SCHOOL

To promote and cultivate a stronger culture of reading in English in school, we should plan-implement-evaluate the reading curriculum holistically, taking into consideration students' learning needs across levels and how it fits into the school-based English Language curriculum.

Planning

Planning Holistically

- Set reading as a key task in the school-based English Language curriculum with clear focuses
- Align promotion of reading with the school's major concerns/latest curriculum initiatives where appropriate
- Review and refine the existing reading programmes/activities (e.g. Extensive Reading Scheme, morning reading time, book fairs) to create synergy and enhance effectiveness
- Deploy financial and human resources for the promotion of reading

Implementation

Organising Whole-school Reading Activities

- Collaborate with the school library to organise reading-related activities such as theme-based book displays, author visits, library lessons, bookcrossing, World Book Day Vote
- Promote reading activities and share the joy of reading through social media platforms
- Promote reading as a lifelong habit instead of a homework assignment



Enhancing the Learning and Teaching of Reading Skills

- Teach reading and enabling skills, e.g. phonics, vocabulary building strategies and dictionary skills, explicitly
- Keep track of students' progressive development in reading skills by using reference tools such as the Learning Progression Framework



Promoting RaC

- Identify reading materials (e.g. information texts) with suitable entry points for connecting students' learning experiences
- Help students develop reading skills necessary for reading texts written for general or academic purposes
- Collaborate with other KLAs on selecting books and designing activities for consolidating students' knowledge and skills acquired across KLAs



Engaging Stakeholders

- Organise training workshops for parents (e.g. storytelling techniques) to ensure that the reading culture extends to home
- Keep parents informed of the latest quality reading materials, e.g. uploading a recommended book list to the school webpage
- Enlist support from non-governmental organisations to promote reading in school
- Invite alumni to give talks on the importance of reading



Creating a Pleasant Print-rich Environment

- Make books a prominent part of the campus and provide students with easy access to reading materials, e.g. placing books in the English Corner and the class library
- Use themed décor and create an inviting and cosy environment to encourage reading
- Decorate the library with students' works or their book/author recommendations



Making the Most of Available Resources and Data

- Leverage external resources, e.g. block loan service and storytelling sessions of Hong Kong Public Libraries
- Utilise the school library's loan record and survey data to inform the choice and procurement of reading materials suited to students' interests and levels
- Make good use of the resources provided by the EDB, e.g. EDB's suggested book lists, the Promotion of Reading Grant



Evaluation

Evaluating the Effectiveness

The areas for evaluation should align with the programme/activity objectives. Here are some examples:

- Is the promotion of reading set as a key task in the school-based English Language curriculum?
- Are students motivated and equipped with the skills to read?
- Are students' learning experiences in different KLAs well connected?
- Is a reading culture fostered among students?
- Are resources effectively deployed to facilitate the promotion of reading?
- Do different stakeholders actively participate in promoting reading?

Make sure appropriate tools are adopted to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme/activity.

INVITING READING NOOKS AND BOOKS — HOW HHCKLA BUDDHIST WISDOM PRIMARY SCHOOL DEVELOPS IN STUDENTS A LOVE OF READING

Let's set off on a tour to HHCKLA Buddhist Wisdom Primary School to find out what has been done to create a favourable environment for cultivating in students a love of reading.

Immerse students in books

A variety of books are within easy access to students. They are placed not only in the library, but also in the reading area called "Wisdomland" and the self-learning corners located on every floor, where students can grab a book and read in their free time.



Create a cosy reading environment

The library is decorated with a woodland theme to bring nature into the library. All the reading areas are colourfully and comfortably furnished to encourage students to sit back, relax and read.



Stock the campus with a diverse range of high-interest reading materials

Students are provided with not only books and magazines for leisure reading but also ample reading materials relevant to their learning in different subjects as well as their interests and needs. Books on display are rotated regularly.



Encourage reading through an inspiring atmosphere

English reading materials like posters, notices, proverbs and quotes about reading are placed in different areas on campus such as the foyer, corridors and staircases to encourage students to read more outside the classroom.



INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL OF CARMEL SECONDARY SCHOOL

Carmel Secondary School places much emphasis on cultivating a good reading habit among the students. We have interviewed the principal, Ms NG Miu-yee, Maria, and some teachers to find out what they do to promote English reading and RaC in their school.



Q: How do you kindle and sustain your students' interest in reading?

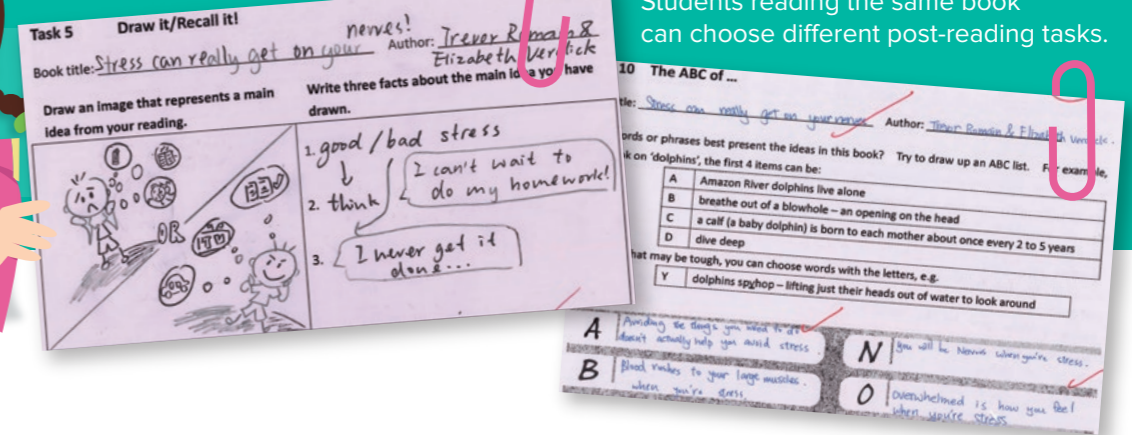
A: Motivating our students to read is always our key task. You know, every year, we conduct reading activities and programmes of different varieties. For the promotion of RaC, we have two reading lessons per cycle at the junior forms devoted to the “non-fiction reading programme” covering topics from different KLAs.

Q: Can you tell us more about the “non-fiction reading programme”?

A: It dates back to seven years ago when we first piloted this programme. At the secondary level, students need to acquire reading skills for academic purposes to support them in learning non-language subjects through English and in coping with more formal and complex texts that deal with cross-curricular themes in the English Language curriculum. That's why we thought it was crucial to promote reading non-fiction. Building on the Extensive Reading Scheme in our English Language curriculum, we hoped the programme could encourage students to read more non-fiction texts to further develop their literacy skills, concepts and ideas related to different KLAs, world knowledge, etc. As we would also like to develop students into self-directed learners through this programme, we have incorporated tasks which require students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own reading progress in the programme.

Q: What books do students read in this programme?

A: Teachers of different departments recommend non-fiction books linked to the curriculum content and themes covered in their KLAs. Of course, we take into consideration students' interests and the cognitive and language demand of the books. Plus, books of

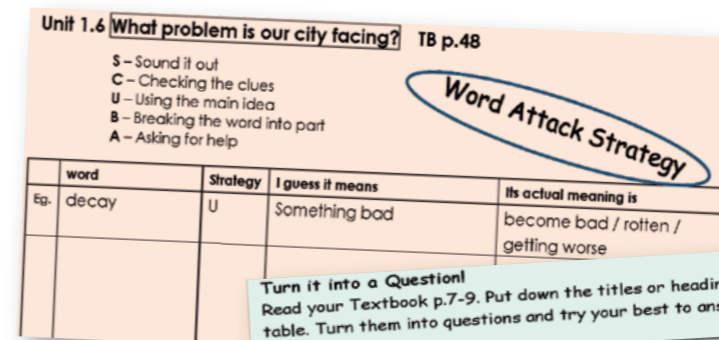


Students reading the same book can choose different post-reading tasks.

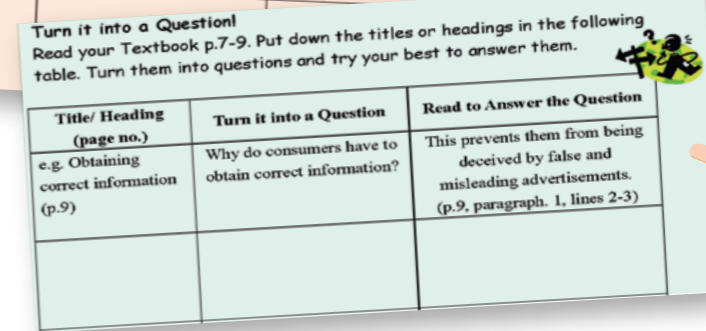
different levels are available to cater for learner diversity. We also let students read books of their own choice from elsewhere and choose how to respond to their reading afterwards. I think it's important to provide opportunities for students to make choices on books and post-reading tasks as when they have autonomy, they will take responsibility for their own learning.

Q: Can you share with us how teachers collaborate in this programme?

A: It's cross-departmental. This programme was initially designed by the English Department in consultation with other subject departments. Now the English Department is responsible for revising the programme content and providing support to colleagues on RaC when needed. The school library takes up the logistics, manages the resources and chairs meetings with teachers of different KLAs involved in conducting lessons for this programme.



Incorporating reading skills in non-language subjects (Geography (top), EPA (bottom))



Q: What advice would you give to schools for promoting reading and RaC?

A: Well, not easy but definitely worth the effort! Capitalise on the existing reading programmes and don't be too ambitious. About RaC, start small. Collaborate with one or two departments first or even start within the English Department. It's important to promote understanding of RaC among teachers and get support from the school management in terms of financial and human resources.

