Literacy Skills Development Series – Effective Use of Information Technology to Develop Literacy Skills in the Primary English Classroom

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Objectives

1) Explore ways to exploit e-learning resources and tools to:
   • strengthen students’ capacity in processing different reading texts and stimulate them to interact with the content and think creatively
   • enhance students’ ability to produce a variety of written and/or multimodal texts for different purposes

2) Develop our abilities in activity and task design to facilitate the development of literacy skills with the use of e-learning resources and tools
Overall aims for the English Language Education KLA curriculum in *ELE KLACG (P1 – S6) (2017)* document

‘1. To provide every student of English with further opportunities for extending their knowledge and experience of the cultures of other people as well as opportunities for personal and intellectual development, further studies, pleasure and work in the English medium.

2. To enable every student to prepare for the changing socio-economic demands resulting from *advances in information technology*, these demands include the interpretation, use and production of materials for pleasure, study and work in the English medium.’

Technology in the classroom

“Technology has always been at the forefront of human education. From the days of carving figures on rock walls, to today when students are equipped with several portable technological devices at any given time” (Purdue University, 2017)
Technology and literacy skills development

What do we think?
Share your ideas on Mentimeter

• e-learning resources and tools can help enhance students’ reading skills by...

• e-learning resources and tools can help enhance students’ writing skills by...
Technology and literacy skills development

• e-learning resources and tools can help enhance students’ reading skills by...
  • providing them access to a world of texts, at different levels, on different topics, and from different cultures and contexts (often free)
  • supporting reading through interactive tools – text to voice / on-line dictionaries
  • creating communities around interests and texts – Fan Fiction
  • motivating them to join the wider world of English users
  • gamifying skills development and reading
  • providing a way to respond and ask questions when reading
Technology and literacy skills development

• e-learning resources and tools can help enhance students’ writing skills by...
  • providing a wider and real audience for students’ work
  • creating platforms for students’ work beyond the teacher and peers and with them
  • providing samples and exemplars for various genres
  • providing space to brainstorm and discuss writing ideas collaboratively and get inspired!
  • allowing for more professional looking output and a diversity of multimodal means of presenting work
Today’s workshop

• Based around the story of ‘The Three Wishes’ by Elizbeth Rogers
• We will look at ways to exploit the text using different e-learning tools and multimodal features to ‘Level Up’ our learners’ literacy skills
  • Level 1 – Reconstruct it!
  • Level 2 – Add to it! - Make it Multimodal
  • Level 3 – Change it! Change the text type
  • Level 4 – Create it! Modify the story and make it our own
Seesaw

- Seesaw is a digital platform specifically designed for learners aged four to 18 (Seesaw, 2019)
- Seesaw is free, has an easy-to-use interface and does not require a username or password
- Teachers can have varying levels of control of learners’ postings and interactions
Getting on to Seesaw

• Take out your device
• Download the app: Seesaw Class
• Click ‘I’m a Student’
• Scan the QR code to enter the classroom
Level 1: Reconstruct it!

- Discuss: What do you need to know to be able to read a text for meaning?

- Activity 1: Text reconstruction and analysis
  - Each group will get a cut up of the story.
  - You need to put the sentences in order to make a coherent story.
  - Compare your story to others.
  - Listen to the original one and check your answers.

- Think: How did you know this was the right order? What knowledge and skills did you use?
Level 1: Reconstruct it! Feedback

• Reading a text for meaning is a complex process requiring us to draw on our linguistic, genre and world knowledges as we interact with the text. By activating our top-down and bottom-up skill, we can successfully draw on our knowledge to read for meaning.

• “Reading is much more than the decoding of black marks upon a page; it is the quest for meaning and one which requires the reader to be an active participant” (Cox, 1991, p.133)

• One common genre feature is missing here. What is it?

Illustrations!!!

• What does the omission of illustrations do to our ability to read this text for meaning?
A Multimodal world!

• “Multimodal texts are those texts that have more than one ‘mode’ so that meaning is communicated through a synchronization of modes. That is, they may incorporate spoken or written language, still or moving images, they may be produced on paper or electronic screen and may incorporate sound.” (Walsh, 2004)

• “Multimodality involves the complex interweaving of word, image, gesture and movement, and sound, including speech. These can be combined in different ways and presented through a range of media.” (Bearne, E. And Wolstencroft, H. 2007)
Most texts today are multimodal

Each mode serves a function!
Level 2: Add to it!

• Activity 2: Make it multimodal

• Each group will get a couple of pages from the book, ‘The Three Wishes’.

• Use the ‘draw,’ or ‘note’ function on Seesaw to add ‘illustrations’ ‘audio-recordings’ or ‘emojis’ to create a ‘multimodal’ version of the pages.

• Upload them to Seesaw.
Level 2: Add to it! Feedback

• Discuss – How would a task like this help develop learners’ literacy skills and knowledge? What does it tell you as a teacher about what your learners know and can do?

• Other cool tools:
  • Random Emoji  http://byrdseed.com/emoji/
Level 3: Change it!

• Many texts share similar purposes but authors choose a specific text for a reason.

• What do these two texts have in common?

https://www.isd.gov.hk/eng/tvapi/12_ms219.html
Level 3: Change it!

• Discuss: What is the purpose of the story, ‘The Three Wishes’? Why did the writer write it? Does she have a message?

• Think before you do? Be careful what you wish for?

• What other texts could be used to share this message?

• Posters?
Level 3: Change it!

• Create a poster for displaying in your school to persuade or educate students to think before they act.

• Use ‘Canva’ to create the poster: https://www.canva.com/

• Share your creation on Seesaw.
Level 3: Change it! Feedback

• Discuss: How would this activity help learners make connections between different types of texts?

• We don’t wake up one day and say, ‘I am going to make a poster.’ or ‘I am going to write a story.’ We start with a purpose (to entertain, inform, persuade, instruct (or a combination) and then choose the best text type(s) to achieve our purpose.

• Other tools that can be used to ‘change’ text types:
  • Comics: Pixton / Toondoo
  • Skits: Puppet Pals 2
Level 4 - Create it!

Discuss: Do you think the story ‘The Three Wishes’ is an original idea?

We learn to write by reading and ‘stealing’ ideas.

Create new from old.
Level 4 - Create it!

Ways learners can modify a story:

• Change the characters, setting, problem, solution or ending;
• Change viewpoints; tell the story from a different character’s perspective;
• Add new details or characters;
• Add a modern or new item; and,
• Extend the story forward or backward
Level 4 - Create it!

• In groups, brainstorm ways we can modify and change the story ‘The Three Wishes’

• Share your ideas on ‘Padlet’

Change the characters, setting, problem, solution or ending;  
Change viewpoints; tell the story from a different character’s perspective;  
Add new details or characters;  
Add a modern or new item; and,  
Extend the story forward or backward
Level 4 - Create it! Feedback

• Discuss – How would a task like this help develop learners’ literacy skills and knowledge? What does it tell you as a teacher about what your learners know and can do?

• By modifying and adapting texts,
  • Students will write a clear genre and have a social purpose in mind.
  • They can take ownership over their writing and feel confident and comfortable to be creative.
  • It provides teachers with the opportunity to focus on different aspects of the story to build up students’ awareness of the story structure, purpose, intended audience, features, language and vocabulary.
  • Students will feel pride in creating an original text that can be shared within a positive writing environment.
Conclusion

• E-learning resources and tools are there to enhance the experience and pen and paper still have a place.

• Developing literacy skills takes time and we need to create a positive learning environment that encourages learners to take risks and try 😊
Apps and tools introduced today

• Digital learning platform: Seesaw: https://web.seesaw.me/
• Instant response tool: Mentimeter: https://www.mentimeter.com/
• Random Emoji generator: http://byrdseed.com/emoji/
• Poster creator: https://www.canva.com/
• Shared space and brainstorm tool: https://padlet.com/
References


Hockley, N. (2015). Five things you always wanted to know about technology and young learners (but were too afraid to ask). English Teaching Professional: 97 (p. 66).


