

**Adopting e-Learning to Cater for  
Students with Special  
Educational Needs  
in the Junior Secondary English  
Classroom**

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# Objectives

1. Develop an awareness of different educational needs of students that teachers in the mainstream English classroom need to address and the role of e-learning in helping to address these needs
2. Explore different e-learning resources and strategies that can be used to successfully develop the language skills of students with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom
3. Develop effective teaching strategies that facilitate the learning of students with SEN in the mainstream classroom with the use of e-learning resources

# Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- o The term special educational needs is very broad and includes a wide range of needs, from mild forms of dyslexia to severe forms of autism (Hockley, 2016).

# Warm-up Chat

- Why did you join this workshop today?
- What are your experiences with SEN learners?
- What e-tools and platforms have you been using with your learners during the disruptions caused by COVID-19?

# Today we will look at three broad SEN groups

- o Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing (Dyslexia)
- o Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- o Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

# Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing (Dyslexia)

- o Dyslexia is a neurobiological disorder that affects the development of both decoding (written word pronunciation) and encoding (spelling)

# Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- o Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a condition that becomes apparent in some children in the preschool and early school years. It is hard for these children to control their behavior and/or pay attention

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- o Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disorder that affects the brain's normal development. Children with ASD have difficulties with social communication and interaction. They also have narrow interests and repetitive behaviour, and might have sensory sensitivities.



# An inclusive classroom

- o finding out why students do not learn well and why some learn better than others
- o using appropriate strategies to make each student learn better, including removing barriers to learning
- o not intended to even out abilities and performances, but to enable all students to learn and perform to the best of their abilities. (CDC, 2002)

# Equality vs Equity

- o **Equality** in the classroom – Everyone is treated the same regardless of background and abilities.
- o **Equity** in the classroom - Factors specific to person or group should not interfere with their potential for academic success.

# What could be the main benefits of using e-learning with SEN learners?

- o Discuss your ideas in groups
- o Go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
- o Type in the pin
- o And share your ideas

# E-learning and learner autonomy

- o **Desire** – to take active role in their learning (motivation to focus on a learning goal, to engage in intentional steps towards that goal, and to persist in these efforts).
- o **Ability** – knowledge about and skills/strategies in the language being learned, as well as planning their own learning, acting so as to promote learning, and evaluating their own efforts
- o **Freedom** – opportunities and space to take an active role of some kind in their learning

(Huang & Benson, 2013)

# E-learning and learner autonomy

- o Pre-COVID-19 and during COVID-19, we have seen the essential role of technology in our teaching and student learning, however, equally important is learner autonomy.
- o Technology is just a tool; we need to teach our learners how to use it for learning.

# The role of e-learning resources in helping SEN learners

- o Technology can now allow learners to develop self-help and self-referencing skills
- o Language can be delivered to learners at the point of need (Hockley, 2016)
- o Tablets and other devices have made it easier now to cater for diversity and can be engaging and interactive (Cumming & Rodriguez, 2013)
- o Tablets and other devices allow students to become more independent, autonomous and engaged (Queensland Government, 2012)

# Exploratory Task

- o We will engage in four different activities aimed at supporting different skills (writing, speaking and reading) in the English language classroom using the following e-learning tools:
- o Google Translate
- o Word Hippo
- o Seesaw

We will then reflect on the activities and consider their benefits and challenges for SEN learners.

# Task 1: Google Translate

- Using Google Translate for forward and back translation.
- Everyone is using Google Translate (or other translation tools), but most don't use it well!!  
This can lead to 'Chinglish'



# Task steps

- o Enter the following text into Google translate:
- o ‘Teachers have done an amazing job over the last year. They have had to quickly adapt their teaching practices under extremely challenging circumstances.’
- o Translate the text into ‘Traditional Chinese’
- o Then translate the text back again.
- o Note down any differences you see.

# Task 1: Reflection

- o How might we use Google Translate effectively in the classroom?
- o What might be the benefits and issues of using Google Translate?

# Task 1: My Thoughts

- o In the classroom, you can use the task to show the differences between English and Cantonese syntax and raise students' awareness of translation tools and how to effectively use them.
- o For SEN students, this awareness raising makes English language rules more transparent and clearer.
- o Students can be encouraged to use other tools before using Google Translate. And for it to be a resource to help them, not to rely on 😊
- o They can also be reminded to use the 'read aloud' function on Google Translate.

# Task 2: Word Hippo

- o Using Word Hippo for vocabulary exploration and enhancement.
- o Go to Word Hippo and try out some of the tools.  
<https://www.wordhippo.com>
- o I recommend:
  - o Antonyms (Opposite of)
  - o Synonyms (another word for)
  - o Sentences
  - o Pronounce
  - o Find conjugations

# Task 2: Reflection

- o How might we use Word Hippo effectively in the classroom?
- o What might be the benefits and issues of using Word Hippo?

# Task 2: My thoughts

- o You can use 'word hippo' in the classroom for students to do word level work. It provides them with a quick resources to find alternative words to enrich their writing, or check meanings.
- o Synonym searches can be more effective than definitions.
- o Pronunciations can help them practice saying the words.
- o Another tool for pronunciation: Youglish

# Task 3: Seesaw

- o Using Seesaw as an interactive digital classroom environment.
- o Go to Seesaw. Follow the link or scan the QR code (provided on the day of the workshop)
- o Create one of the following documents to introduce yourself:
  - o An annotated photo
  - o An illustration with voice over
  - o A video

# Task 2: Reflection

- How might we use Seesaw effectively in the classroom?
- What might be the benefits and issues of using Seesaw?



Some general and e-learning  
Strategies to support learners  
with SEN

# Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing (Dyslexia)

- Challenges
- General Strategies
- e-learning Strategies

# Challenges

- o Learn to rhyme words
- o Learn the letter names and sounds of the alphabet
- o Confusion of letters and words (b/d, p/q and was and saw, dog and god)
- o Reversal of letter (persist past the age of 7 or 8)
- o Confusion with letters with similar sounds (/f/ or /v/)
- o Retaining the visual representation of irregular words for reading and spelling (once)
- o Spell words differently on the same page (wuns, wunce for once)
- o Spell word the way they sound rather than their look (sed/said)
- o Slow word perception – reading rate and fluency

# General Strategies

- o Make English as transparent and structured as possible
  - Make learners aware of the differences between Chinese and English
- o Explicitly teach them the rules – e.g. phonics / SVO structures
- o Get them interested in reading – road signs, menus, trips etc.
- o Multisensory (and fun 😊)! –include visuals and images with materials.
- o Provide tools, such as dictionaries and word banks to help learners

# E-learning Tools

- Wolfram-alpha
- Wordhippo
- Youglish
- Teen and Adult Phonics Library app (Ipad only)
- Bitsboard
- Wordwall
- MES English
- Google tools: Translate, images

# Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

- o Challenges
- o General Strategies
- o e-learning Strategies

# Challenges

- o Concentrating for long periods of time
- o Focusing on tasks they don't find interesting or engaging
- o Staying still and often fidget in chair or with hands and play with things
- o Executive function: Disorganization / time management

# General Strategies

- o Fidget toys and option to sit on gym ball
- o Colour coded folders to separate homework books by subject / priority
- o Timetable – visual schedule (Respond better to visual cues)
- o Giving choice of task
- o Silent reminders (Make student aware of the sign)



# e-Learning Tools

- o Kahoot
- o Videos – Youtube / Instructables
- o Type up on iPad / computer (Word / Pages)
- o Tools for students – Graphic organisers (Other option – Read Write Think / Popplet / padlet)
- o Wordwall

# Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Challenges
- General Strategies
- e-learning Strategies

# Challenges

- o Highly complex special need
- o Often have difficulty in social interaction
- o Often have difficulty reading emotions
- o Often have difficulty in change and unexpected situations
- o Like logical and systematic
- o Following requirements and instructions
- o Coming up with ideas and awareness of different genres (Can recount events but difficulty with fiction and imagination)

# General Strategies

- o Provide predictable environments e.g. clearly posted timetable and preview any changes (teachers' sick leave, school events, substitute teacher, student teacher, observation)
- o Visual cues (Pictures on desk, sign language, display on blackboard)
- o Use graphic organisers and writing framework
- o Ask them to write in first person and talk about themselves
- o Explicit explanation or demonstration of what the task requires
- o Displays of synonyms

# E-learning Tools

- o Social interaction and reading emotions
  - o Whatsapp group for English
  - o Edmodo / Seesaw English class group
  - o Mentimeter (Poll everywhere / Zeeting)

# Key Points

- We need to teach learners strategies to help them so they can rely more on themselves and develop greater self awareness and confidence to tackle challenges in English
- We can provide learners with choice and this will increase their autonomy and independence

# Some Useful Websites for SEN x ELT x E-learning

o **Oxford University Press page on Dyslexia**

<https://oupeltglobalblog.com/2013/09/19/dyslexia-a-problem-or-a-gift/>

o **Oxford University Press on ADHD/ADD**

<https://oupeltglobalblog.com/2014/03/05/teaching-students-with-attention-concentration-and-hyperactivity-difficulties-how-to-stop-those-spinning-tops/>

o **Language without Limits**

<http://www.languageswithoutlimits.co.uk>

o **Apps for autistic learners**

<https://thejournal.com/Articles/2011/12/05/Apps-for-Autistic-Learners.aspx?Page=6>

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