Developing Junior Secondary Students’ Writing Skills with Reference to the Learning Progression Framework (Refreshed)

English Language Education Section
Curriculum Development Institute
Education Bureau
December 2016
Objectives of the Workshop

• To introduce the concept of progressive development of writing skills at the junior secondary level with reference to the Learning Progression Framework (LPF)

• To explore the design of effective learning and teaching activities that develop students’ writing skills

• To provide hands-on activities on identifying students’ strengths and weaknesses in writing and giving quality feedback

• To provide suggestions on how to enhance students’ writing skills in the school-based English Language curriculum at the secondary level
By the end of the workshop, you will have

• a better understanding of the key considerations in planning for the progressive development of writing skills at the junior secondary level; and

• explored some effective strategies for helping students formulate, develop, elaborate on, organise and present ideas in their writing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Programme Rundown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>To introduce the concept of <strong>progressive development of writing skills</strong> at the junior secondary level with reference to the <a href="#">LPF</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td>To provide suggestions on <strong>improving the design of the writing tasks</strong> based on the learning outcomes articulated in the LPF to <strong>enhance writing skills and foster creative thinking</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 3</td>
<td>To provide hands-on activities to <strong>examine students’ work and introduce effective strategies to give quality feedback and promote assessment for/as learning</strong></td>
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<td>Part 4</td>
<td>School sharing</td>
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<td>Q &amp; A and Evaluation</td>
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To introduce the concept of progressive development of writing skills at the junior secondary level with reference to the LPF.
What is the LPF for English Language?

**The LPF:**

- represents the growth of learners on a developmental continuum as they work towards the Learning Targets and Objectives of the English Language curriculum;

- is made up of Learning Outcomes organised under the four language skills and divided into eight levels of attainment, i.e. Attainment Milestones (ATMs);

- helps teachers better understand and articulate learners’ performance; and

- helps teachers plan strategically how to enhance English Language learning and teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATM</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
Curriculum Framework (What students are expected to learn)

Values and attitudes

Skills

Knowledge

Relationship between the Curriculum Framework, LPF and BC

LPF (What students can do as a result of learning and teaching)

Basic Competency
Curriculum Framework, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, and LPF

Goals
- Curriculum Framework
  (What students are expected to learn)

Process
- Learning
- Teaching
- Assessment

Attainment
- Learning Progression Framework
  (What students can do as a result)
Structure of the LPF for English Language

- LOs organised & presented under the four language skills
- LOs for each language skill expressed in the form of outcome statements (a general description of learner performance)
- Pointers provide specific examples of what learners are able to do in demonstrating the LOs.
- Exemplars illustrate the expected student performance.

UPs elucidate some of the learning objectives which do not lend themselves to the description in terms of 8 levels of attainment but are essential to English language learning.
Outcome Statements give a general description of student performance at each ATM.
Activity 1

In groups,

- study the Outcome Statements for three ATMs (1, 4, 8) of the LPF for Writing; and
- identify the aspects of progression in the Outcome Statements for Writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing - Level 1</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Using a wide range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and a range of text types</td>
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</table>
Relationship between Outcome Statements and Pointers

Outcome statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pointers</th>
<th>Outcome Statements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pointers tell what students are able to do at each ATM.</strong></td>
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</table>

**Table: Outcome Statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Writing short tests to convey simple information, ideas and personal experiences on familiar topics.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Level 6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Underlying Principles**

- LOs for each language skill expressed in the form of outcome statements (a general description of learner performance).
- Pointers provide specific examples of what learners are able to do in demonstrating the LOs.
Progression of Learning Outcomes for Writing
- Content

**Complexity of information & ideas**

**Range of purposes**

**Familiarity of topics**

**Length of texts**

**ATM 1**
Completing blanks in short texts to convey simple information centred around objects, people and actions

**ATM 4**
Writing short texts to convey simple information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar topics with some elaboration

**ATM 8**
Writing texts to convey information, ideas, personal experiences and opinions on familiar and less familiar topics with substantial elaboration
Progression of Learning Outcomes for Writing - Organisation

Linkage between ideas & across paragraphs

Overall organisation of ideas

ATM 1
Putting words under appropriate headings/topics

ATM 4
Linking ideas quite coherently in a short text, and showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas

ATM 8
Linking ideas coherently throughout the text, and showing effective overall organisation of ideas
Progression of Learning Outcomes for Writing - Language

ATM 1
Using some simple words quite appropriately, and showing an awareness of some simple formats

ATM 4
Using a small range of quite appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and quite appropriate tone, style, register and features of some text types

ATM 8
Using a wide range of appropriate and accurate language forms and functions, and appropriate tone, style, register and features of a range of text types
LPF – Outcome Statements

CONTENT
The outcome statements show the progression in terms of:
• **Complexity of information and ideas**
• **Length of texts**
• **Familiarity of topics**

ORGANISATION
The outcome statements show the progression in terms of:
• **Linkage between ideas within and across paragraphs**
• **Overall organisation of ideas**

LANGUAGE
The outcome statements show the progression in terms of:
• **Language forms and functions used at different levels of writing**
Pointers provide specific examples of what learners are able to do in demonstrating the Learning Outcomes.
• Progression of Pointers for Writing

**Organisation – Progression in Overall Organisation of Ideas**

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</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Putting words under appropriate headings topics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Putting ideas about a topic in sentences</strong></td>
<td><strong>Linking ideas quite coherently in a short text, showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Linking ideas quite coherently in a short text, and showing an awareness of overall organisation of ideas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Linking ideas quite coherently in some part of a text, and showing some overall organisation of ideas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Linking ideas coherently throughout the text</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

- Establish links using **some simple cohesive devices** (e.g. simple connectives, pronouns) with some consistency
- Establish links **within some paragraphs** using a range of cohesive devices with some consistency
- Establish strong links **within and across paragraphs** using a wide range of cohesive devices with consistency
• Progression of Pointers for Writing

Language and Style – Progression in the Range of Language Forms and Functions

<table>
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</table>

- use **simple present**, **simple past** (mainly **familiar verb forms**), present continuous and **future tenses** with some consistency
- use **a small range of tenses** with some consistency
- use **a range of tenses and the passive voice** with **(some)** consistency
- use **various tenses and the passive voice** for various purposes with consistency
UPs elucidate some of the learning objectives which do not lend themselves to the description in terms of 8 levels of attainment.
Underlying Principles

The Underlying Principles in the progression of Writing Skills form **an integral part of the LPF** and include:

- the **language development strategies**, **generic skills**, and **positive values** and **attitudes**;

- the **meaningfulness and appropriateness** of the written texts to the context, purpose and audience;

- the development of **writing strategies**:
  - Generating ideas by **brainstorming or seeking and selecting information and ideas** from different sources
  - Asking questions to **clarify and seek information** for correction
  - Editing drafts by **correcting errors** in language
  - Revising drafts by **adding, deleting, substituting or linking ideas**
  - Reflecting on own writing **based on feedback** from teachers / peers
Setting objectives
Identifying strengths and weaknesses of learners

...with reference to the LPF for writing
To provide suggestions on improving the design of the writing tasks based on the learning outcomes articulated in the LPF to enhance writing skills and foster creative thinking.
Helping Students Progress

• Making good use of the LPF to develop students’ writing skills

• Improving the design of writing activities based on the learning outcomes articulated in the LPF to encourage imagination and foster creative thinking
Activity 3

1. Read the instructions of a writing task. Discuss in groups and share your ideas.

2. Review the writing activities for the task and read a sample of the writing performance of the average S3 students in a school.

3. Decide if the writing activities provide adequate teacher support to help students make progress in the development of the writing skills. Make suggestions on how the writing activities can be improved.
Writing Activities

1. Read lists of precautionary measures for typhoons. Classify each measure as what can be done before, during, and after a typhoon.
2. Label each picture with a suitable weather-related word from the list.
3. Listen to the weather forecast in the evening. Note down the weather forecast for major cities in Asia.
Analysis of students’ work

Writing Performance of an Average Student

Typhoon

Teacher’s comments:
• Better organisation required
• Ideas are mediocre and lack originality
• Lots of grammatical mistakes. Please proofread!

C2 L2 O2
Agree or Disagree?

Do the pre-writing activities provide adequate teacher support to help students:

• **organise ideas** for the writing task?

• **develop ideas** for the writing task?

• **develop the language needed** for the writing task?
What is your approach to the learning and teaching of writing?

They don’t know how to get organised. What a mess!

Their stories are all similar. Super boring!

How to enhance students’ writing skills...

Lots of grammatical mistakes!
Helping Students Progress

- Improving the design of writing activities based on the *learning outcomes* articulated in the LPF to encourage imagination and foster creative thinking
Organisation:
- ATM3 Arranging ideas in a short text using simple & limited means (chronological sequence)
- ATM4 ... using paragraphs, including an introductory and concluding statement

Content:
- ATM4 Write simple stories...
- ATM5 ... with a setting, a simple plot and simple characterisation

Language & Style:
- ATM3 Use a small range of adjectives to describe things & feelings...
- ATM3 Use a small range of adverbs to describe time & manner...
- ATM4 Show an awareness of using some stylistic features (e.g. dialogues) to support the purpose of text
Guiding students to generate and organise ideas on a given topic.

Preparing students to apply the vocabulary related to typhoons to the story.

Providing an opportunity to develop students’ creative thinking skills.
What do students usually write?

Weather forecast

No School

Sleep

Play
There are many strategies helping students enrich the content...

1. Creative thinking tools
2. Image prompts
3. Writing prompts
4. Shared-writing
Strengthen Language Input

- Consolidating students’ knowledge on selected vocabulary which they may use in the final writing task
- Equipping students with some vocabulary building strategies
- Providing students with phrases/expressions to describe typhoon scenes
Label each picture with a suitable weather-related word from the list.

- Downpour
- Flood
- Drizzle
- Drought
- Freezing
- Foggy
- Hail
- Snowflake
- Blizzard

Provide opportunities for students to turn passive vocabulary to active vocabulary.
Helping Students Make Progress in Language

Adding details to a given idea for further development.

Where did people have fun on typhoon days? People gathered by the pier.
What did people do to have fun? People got wet by the waves.
→ People gathered by the pier to get drenched by the enormous waves.

What was the experience like? Was there any danger? Show what you saw, heard & felt.

The thrilling experience was more like a theme park as people gathered by the pier to be drenched by the enormous waves crashing against the wall...

Demonstrate use of comparisons
Encourage use of five senses
Show both feelings & actions
Use stimulating audio and/or visual prompts
Watch the news clip “Typhoon Usagi brings havoc to Hong Kong and southern China”. Based on what you watch, build a mind map to show the effects of typhoon, the damage, and the safety caution needed.

**Concept Map**

**Typhoon**
- Bringing heavy rain and winds
- Paralysed airport leaving travellers stranded
- Drenched by spray from enormous waves

**Damage**
- Trees topped
- Struck the coast
- Causing deaths
- Depriving tens of thousands of power
- Batterings the city
- Cars blown off roads

**Safety**
- Stay at home
- Moved to safety
- Take precautions

**Fun**

**Effective use of concept maps to generate, expand & organise ideas**

Please refer to the worksheet for the writing task
Helping Students Make Progress in Organisation

Revisit Story Structure to add interest to the plot

**CONTENT:**
- ATM4 Write simple stories...
- ATM5 ...with a setting, a simple plot and simple characterisation

**ORGANISATION:**
- ATM3 Arrange ideas in a short text using simple & limited means (chronological sequence)
- ATM4 ... using paragraphs, including an introductory and concluding statement

**LANGUAGE & STYLE**
- ATM3 Use a small range of adjectives to describe things & feelings...
- ATM3 Use a small range of adverbs to describe time & manner...
- ATM4 Show an awareness of using some stylistic features (e.g. dialogues) to support the purpose of text
To provide hands-on activities on identifying students’ strengths and weaknesses in writing and giving quality feedback
Assessment for Learning integrates assessment into learning and teaching. It assists students to understand what they are learning, what they have attained, and what is expected of them, and helps teachers collect evidence of students’ learning so that teachers can provide students with timely feedback and refine their teaching strategies. (English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide 2016).
Five key strategies of assessment for/as learning

Where the learner is going

1. Identify and clarify **learning goals and success criteria**

Where the learner is now

2. **Engineer effective classroom discussions** and other learning tasks that elicit information about student learning

What the learner needs to get there

3. Provide descriptive **feedback** that moves learners forward
4. Through targeted instruction and guidance, **engage students** as learning resources for one another
5. Through targeted instruction and guidance, help students understand what it means to ‘own’ their own learning, and **empower them** to do so

How could teachers bring about improvement to their writing skills?

The use of the LPF

- shifts the **focus from the content to its outcomes**, which places emphasis on learners
- provides a **common “language” and “tool”** for teachers to use in the learning, teaching and assessment process
- explains what is expected of students in terms of:
  - where are they now? *(existing strengths and weaknesses)*
  - where are they going? *(goals)*
  - where to next? *(“feedback” /“feedforward”)*
Classroom Writing Assessment

• Writing assessment should maximise its formative potential so that it can be used to promote student learning through:
  
  - Adopting process writing
  - Providing effective feedback
  - Promoting peer/self assessment
Adopting Process Writing
“A process approach to writing is recommended” (Eng Lang C&A Guide, CDC 2007, p.83).

“Methodologies entirely focusing on language errors are hardly adequate in improving learners’ abilities” (Syllabuses for Secondary Schools Eng Lang, CDC 1999, p.95).

The process approach:

- The purpose of a piece of writing is stressed
- Students behave like writers in real life
- Teachers will try to extend the readership and readers will respond to writing (review)
- Single drafting is to be replaced by multiple drafting
Teaching Writing: two views?

Product-oriented
• Write as a learner

Process-oriented
• Write like an author
Process-oriented writing

**Prewriting**
- Analysing purpose & audience
- Brainstorming ideas

**Writing**
- Organisation
- Word choice
- Sentence fluency

**Responding**
- Teacher conference
- Self/Peer evaluation

**Editing**
- Making changes to spelling, punctuation, grammar construction

**Revising**
- Enriching content / Clarifying
- Using precise language

**Publishing**
- Bulletin board
- School website
- Public reading

Adapted from: http://faculty.uoit.ca/hughes/Writing/WritingProcess.html
Responding:

• Focus on ideas first
• Build on what writers know and have done
• Get writers to think how to improve their writing
• Resist making judgments about the writing

Sample Conference Questions
- Tell me more about that.
- What’s the most important thing you’re trying to say?
- What’s your favourite part? How can you build on it?
- How could you find out more about your topic?
- Is all this information important? What parts don’t you need?
- Why is this significant to you?
- What do you want your reader to know or feel at the end of your piece?
Providing Effective Feedback
Teacher feedback

- Teachers “must avoid providing detailed editing comments on the surface form without paying attention to organisational and content issues” (*Syllabuses for Secondary Schools English Language*, CDC 1999, p.94).

- “Teachers need not correct all the mistakes in learners’ work. Total correction is time-consuming for the teacher and discouraging for the learners, particularly when the latter sees their papers full of red ink” (*Syllabuses for Secondary Schools English Language*, CDC 1999, p.95).

- “Teachers should give comments on the drafts they have collected from learners...They should make suggestions which will enable learners to carry out revisions in the areas of organisation, grammar and mechanics” (*English Language C&A Guide (S4-S6)*, CDC and HKEAA 2007, p.86).
Use of Quality Feedback

- Constructive
- Focused – Linked to Learning Objectives
- Quality Feedback
- Diagnostic
- Clear and Easy to Understand
Typhoon Day

Last Friday, I was happy because I don't need to go to school. Last Friday morning, I was playing computer games. Suddenly, I heard a thounder. The thounder was very loud. I was scared.

I go to the Hong Kong Observatory website to check the weather. Is Typhoon hit Hong Kong? I was happy. I looked the TV news. It also plays the Typhoon news. The reporter said the typhoon signal no 8 was up. The student should not go to school because it is dangerous.

My brother did not stay at home. He went to the street to saw how typhoon is and took a photo for me. He is naughty. Although stayed at home was boring but I won't went out because it was thounder.

Source: Territory-wide System Assessment, 2014: Report on the Basic Competencies of Students in English Language, Key Stage 3 (HKEAA, 2014: p.188)
## Discussing with students how to improve their writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before the discussion:</th>
<th>Decide on the area to work on with students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>during the discussion</td>
<td>Ask students strategic questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after the discussion</td>
<td>Guide students to do their individual revisions after the discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternative way to give feedback - Strategic questioning

- create motion
- create options
- help students gain new perspectives on how to improve

Oral scaffolding

instructional conversations (Lantolf, J)

collaborative dialogue (Swain, M & Lapkin, S, 2000 & 2001)
Strategic Questions

When students are on the right track, teachers can ask:

• Why do you think that...?
• How do you know that...?
• Can you show me what you mean?
• What might be an example of that?
• Can you tell me more about...?

When students need to consider other possibilities:

• Is it possible that...?
• What if I said that...?
• What if you looked at this from X’s point of view?
• Would you still say that...?
• So, what might happen if...?

When teachers want to engage other learners:

• Who agrees with this point?
• Has anyone got another idea?
• Can anyone tell me more?
• Does anyone want to ask X a question about his answer?

(Glasson, 2009)
How a teacher uses strategic questioning to help students improve their writing

• Students have been asked to discuss how the story can be improved.
• In the following transcript, the teacher helps students think about how to create a better plot for the story. The teacher uses strategic questioning (highlighted in green) to help students focus on the learning intention of the lesson (to write a story with a better plot).

Source: Glasson, T (2009) Improving student achievement
T: Do you like this story?
Hailey: I don’t like it. It is not interesting. It does not have an ending...

T: Why do you think it does not have an ending?
Hailey: Um...it is so sudden.

T: Does that mean you think the writer has not finished the story?
Hailey: Yes.

T: And how you can tell that? What do you think the writer should write at the end?
Hailey: It said the brother went out. I want to know what happened to him.

T: Mmm Aiden, did you hold the same view?
Aiden: I think so...it is good to know what happened to the brother.
T: OK. How can we add that?
Aiden: I want to add the brother got hurt by broken glass in the storm.
T: So you want to describe what happened to the brother when he went out to take a photo during the typhoon?
Aiden: Yes.
T: Why do you think describing what happened to the brother during the typhoon will improve the story?
Aiden: It makes the story more exciting.
T: Exactly. It can be the high point of the story. We have learned about the different parts of a story. Do you know how we call this part of the story?
Aiden: Is it ... climax?
T: That is right. Climax is a very important part of the story. We can make an impact with it. Can anyone tell me what we should write after describing what happened to the brother? Cindy?
Cindy: Um... I don’t know...

T: What if we describe what happened after the brother got hurt in the storm?

Cindy: He was saved by the policemen. Then we end the story.

T: That’s right. We all want to know what happened at the end. We have learned about different ways to end a story. Is it possible that we use one of them?

Cindy: ...like... um... well... reflection?

T: Reflection! That’s a very good suggestion! Tell me how we can add a reflection, Cindy!

Cindy: I don’t really know how to add it...

T: Well, a reflection can be what we have learnt from the story. What have we learnt from what happened to the brother?

Cindy: ...Um... we should not go out... when it is typhoon.

T: Great. We can add a reflection, like “Although it is boring to spend the whole day at home, we had better stay indoors when there is a typhoon.”
Activity 3(b)

Share your views:

1. How can strategic questions help students improve their writing?

2. Would you use strategic questions when you teach writing? Why or why not?
Why use strategic questions in class when you teach writing?

- To **encourage students to think aloud** as they are evaluating a text with the teacher’s support (this will model the thinking process for the weaker students)

- To **encourage students to engage in the thinking process by giving reasons, examples, clarifications and elaborations to defend their thinking**

- But you need to formulate the questions in advance
  (Glasson, 2009)
Other strategies to promote assessment for/as learning

What will make classroom teaching time more learning focused?

- Wait time
- Think time
- Turn to your partner
- Think/pair/share
- Discussion e.g. speed conferencing (e.g. 1 mins)
- Hands down
Promoting Peer/Self Assessment
• Teachers should share learning goals and success criteria explicitly with students, so that students know what they are working towards in their writing.

• They can use success criteria / checklists to help students improve drafts in progress.

• They can set personal learning goals, engage in self and/or peer evaluation, and reflect on and monitor their own learning, so that assessment can become a powerful tool to promote learning, serving the purposes of assessment for and as learning (Earl, 2013).
When designing the success checklists, Teachers should:

- **identify the requirements for each task in terms of the three domains in the LPF to develop task-specific assessment rubrics;**
- **acknowledge students’ attempts and efforts (e.g. in the “risks” they take in expressing ideas in English, even though this means making more grammatical mistakes in writing);** and
- **suggest what students can do in order to improve their writing.**
In groups:

1. Read the checklists/evaluation forms.
2. Comment on their effectiveness in helping students to improve their writing.
Compare the two assessment forms. Which one do you prefer? Why?

Materials developed by Ms Rebecca Farmer for the PDP on Assessment For/As Learning
How do the evaluation forms help learners improve their writing?
FROM... Bringing about Improvement to a Draft

TO... Facilitating Progressive Development of Writing Skills
Possible Steps in Using the LPF to Enhance Students’ Writing Skills

1. Identify the requirements for each task in terms of the three domains in the LPF.

2. Develop a task-specific feedback sheet and set assessment criteria based on the task requirements.

3. Help Ss develop strategies to approach the writing tasks, e.g. highlighting keywords, drawing a mind map, structuring the text.

4. Ask Ss to complete the first draft independently. **OR** Help Ss develop the first draft through appropriate teaching strategies, e.g. shared writing.

5. Guide Ss to improve their draft through conducting a teacher conference or peer/self evaluation.

6. Provide constructive feedback on Ss’ work with reference to the LPF.
Using the LPF to Enhance Learning and Teaching

😊 To provide reference for understanding students’ learning progress

😊 To plan and review

😊 To help students progress along the learning continuum

😊 To provide a checklist of dos and don’ts in each and every lesson

😊 To record only

😊 To set benchmarks
THANK YOU!