

Professional Development Programme 2015-2016:

“Using Information Texts in the Primary English Classroom: Developing KS2 Students’ Reading and Writing Skills”

Facilitators

Organized by the INSTEP, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong and commissioned by the Education Bureau, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region



Overview of the Programme

- ▶ **Sessions 1 and 2 will focus on the following core components:**
 - ▶ Introduction to the variety of information text genres
 - ▶ The use of info texts in language classrooms
 - ▶ Selection of information texts, recommendation of sources of texts, and multimodal resources, e.g. Readers for young learners with authentic information texts such as posters
 - ▶ Incorporation of information texts in the General English curriculum
 - ▶ Connecting primary students' learning experiences, within and outside English lessons
 - ▶ Some mentioning of reading across the curriculum—emphasis on content-based instruction (CBI) and identifying common communicative functions and language patterns in addition to text types
 - ▶ Designing language tasks based on information texts
 - ▶ Preparation for KS2 students for learning through EMI in KS3

Task 1

How do you teach reading/writing in your classroom?

- ▶ What is your belief on reading/writing & teaching reading/writing?
- ▶ How do you teach reading/writing? What have you tried before?
- ▶ What are some interesting things that you've noticed from your experience?
- ▶ What kinds of challenges / problems have you identified?



**Understanding the context,
curriculum and reading /
writing skills**

Task 2

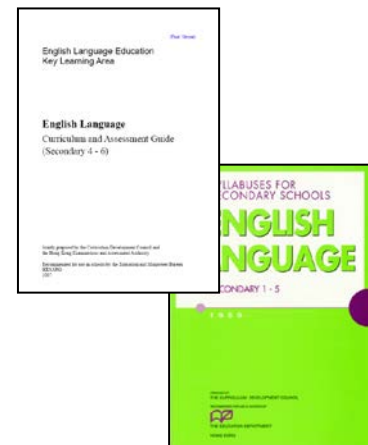
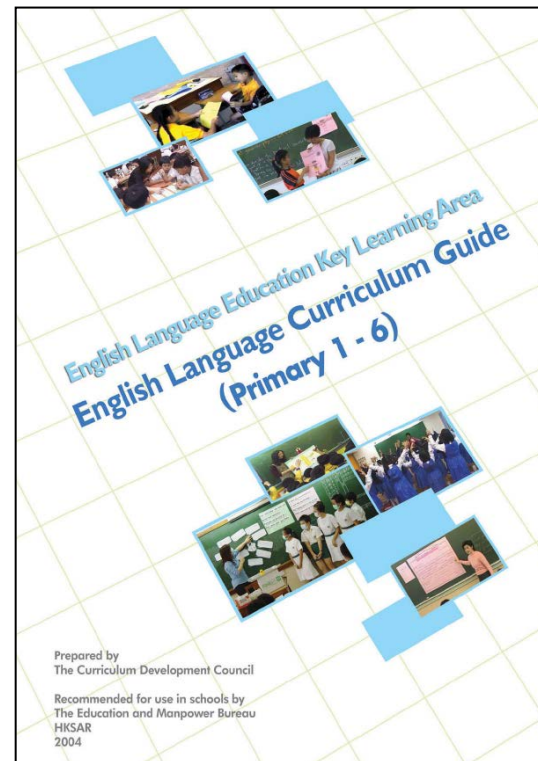
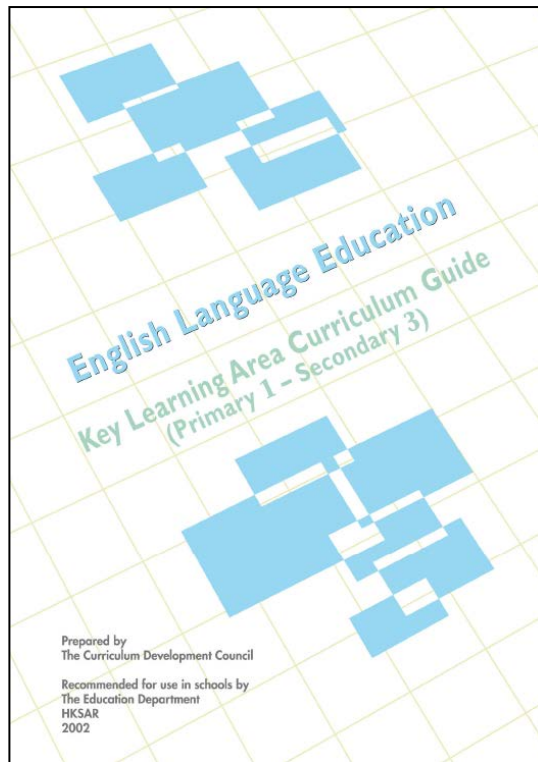
What are students learning (e.g. reading and writing) in KS2 and KS3?

- ▶ In groups, can you list out the subjects that your students are learning in KS2 (primary 4-6) and the subjects that they will be learning in KS3 (secondary 1-3)?

Discussion

- ▶ Are there any similarities or differences among these texts?
- ▶ What kind of skills or strategies do students need in order to read/write these texts?
- ▶ Are there any missing links between primary and junior secondary years?

Reading/Writing skills for Hong Kong students



What is a genre-based approach to reading and writing?

In very simple terms, this approach emphasizes **genres** (i.e. “**text-types**”) and the importance of “**detailed reading**”, which consists of **explicit instruction** on reading strategies to deconstruct a text, with teachers’ explicit demonstration, scaffolding and explanation of how to decode and infer meanings from texts.

How to apply the genre-based approach in English and Reading/Writing across the Curriculum?

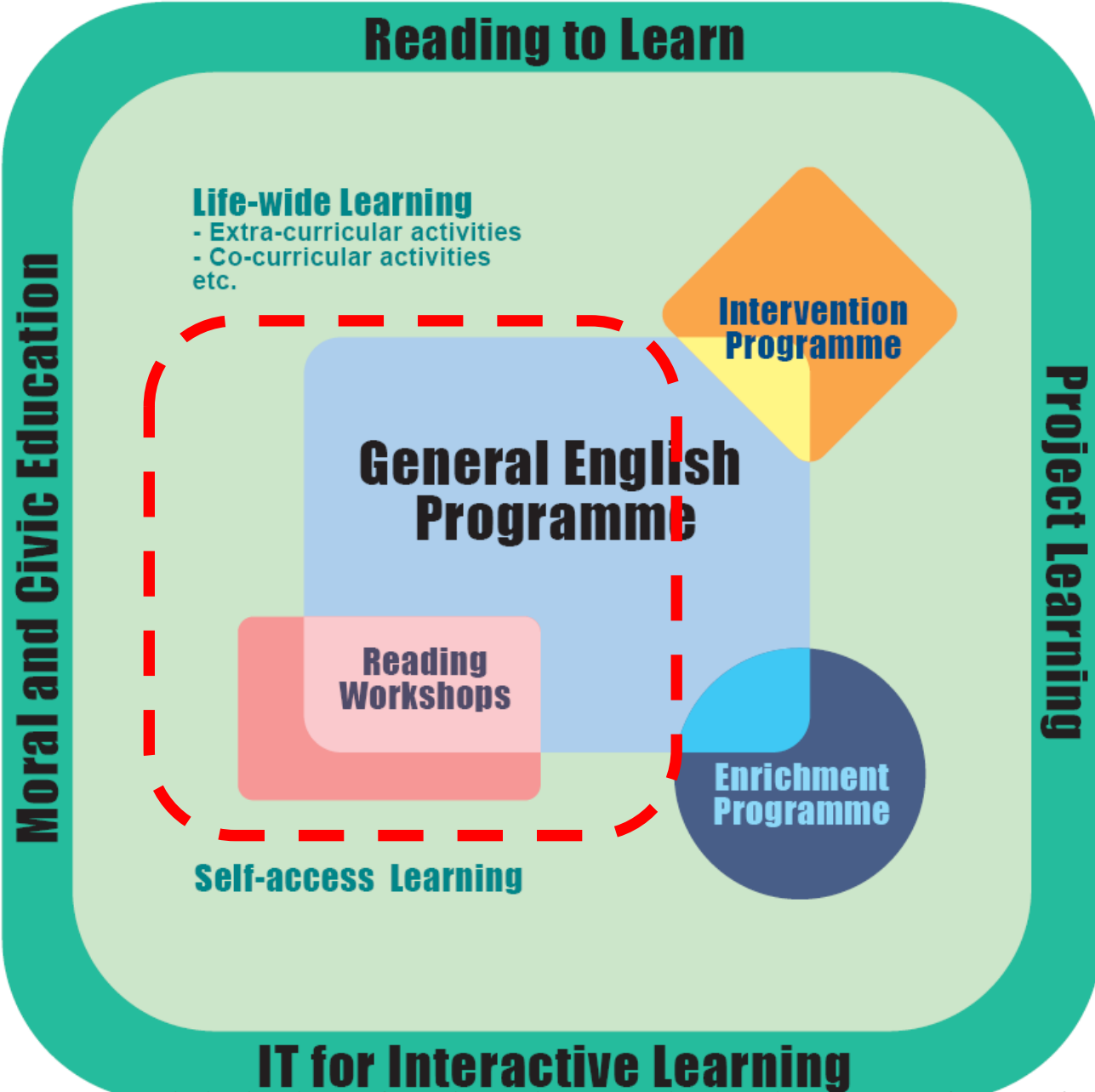
"I'm just an ENGLISH teacher, I don't know much about information text types..."

"I know nothing about Science / Maths. / History etc, etc..."

"My students are not in an EMI class..."

How to apply the genre-based approach in English and Reading/Writing across the Curriculum?

- ▶ We can start small, and with something that we are familiar with (or maybe are doing very well already!).
- ▶ Can you guess?



How to apply the genre-based approach in English and Reading/Writing across the Curriculum?

- To promote English reading/writing in English and across different KLAs, information texts are very good resources for the English classroom.
- You can make good use of this opportunity and become more aware of the importance of teaching information texts with an explicit emphasis on understanding the features of academic genres (or text types) and detailed reading strategies.

How can we find topics to enhance our English lessons to promote reading/writing in English and across the curriculum?

- ▶ Look at the following list of suggested themes. Can you think of some possible topics of information texts to promote reading/writing in your school?
- ▶ (or maybe some interesting topics that you come across in the readers you are teaching?)

Key Stage 2

Changes

- Now and then
- Respect for life
- Wishes and dreams
- Growing up
- A changing world

Food and Drink

- Favourite food and drink
- We can cook
- Eating out
- Healthy eating

Happy Days

- Festivals
- Special events
- Entertainment and leisure
- Hobbies
- A bag of laughs

Relationships

- Knowing our neighbours
- Beautiful people
- Making friends
- Send a message
- East meets West and more

The Magic of Nature

- Wonders of nature
- Out in space
- The lost world
- Fascinating oceans
- Taking care of our earth

We Love Hong Kong

- Jobs people do
- Knowing more about my community
- Travelling around
- Special people, special things

Reading for everyday life and reading for school subjects: different kinds, different purposes, different ways

- **Everyday English is different from academic English**
 - E.g., Everyday text-types are different from academic text-types

Some common text-types in language and content subjects

Text types commonly found in language subjects

- Email
- Poem
- Story
- News article
- Essay
- Recipe
- Argumentative essay
- Letter to the editor
- Advertisement
- Proposal

Text types commonly found in content subjects

- Information report
- Laboratory report
- Essay
- Historical recount
- Manuals
- Explanations on sequence and process
- Explanations on cause and effect
- Discussion
- Argumentative essay



Selecting appropriate reading materials



How can we select appropriate reading materials for our students?

- ▶ In groups, discuss and determine what issues have to be considered when we look for appropriate reading materials for our students.

Some possible issues that you might want to consider


▶ Genre egg!

- ▶ Content: Topic / subject content areas
- ▶ Language
 - text types
 - “academic functions”
 - Grammar / sentence patterns
 - Words / lexical phrases
- ▶ Linking to different KLAs in the school-based curriculum
 - ▶ Horizontal curriculum
 - ▶ Vertical curriculum / spiral learning
- ▶ Students’ interest
- ▶ Possible linkage to secondary education


Designing tasks and activities

Any other possible activities?

- ▶ From reading to writing
- ▶ Visual scaffolds
- ▶ Language scaffolds (e.g., interactive read-aloud/think-aloud)
- ▶ Speaking & listening activities



Application & presentations



An important message

- ▶ Learning and teaching is a dynamic, organic process. There is no “quick-fix”, or any SINGLE best way.
- ▶ However, there are a few principles that we can apply when we select appropriate reading materials to illustrate how tasks and activities can be designed:

A few principles for you to consider...

- ▶ That the reading materials are available to local schools (e.g. texts from local textbooks and readers, or materials from the Internet)
- ▶ That the themes / topics of the reading materials can be linked to the local KS2 English curriculum, and/or local KS3 curriculum.
- ▶ That the reading materials can be easily adapted, and appropriate tasks and activities can be designed accordingly.

No one knows your students and your school better than you!

What we have discussed in the workshop

- ▶ Introduction to the variety of information text genres
- ▶ The use of info texts in language classrooms
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