Developing Students' *Creativity and New Literacy* Skills through Language Arts Elective Modules: An EDB Professional Development Workshop

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To Begin

1. **Label** the picture with as many words as possible (word level).
2. Write a **caption** for the picture (sentence level/text type).
3. Write a **short dialogue** between two characters with the picture as the setting (sentence level/text level).
4. Write a **short short* story** in which the dialogue takes place (sentence level/text level).
5. Imagine some **personal characteristics** of the artist who painted the picture (word level).
6. Write a **short diary entry** by the artist on the day he or she painted the picture (sentence level/text level).
7. Write a **short imaginary biography** of the artist (sentence level/text level).
8. Read a **short biography** of the artist (text level).
9. Find a painting that represents something about **your own personal characteristics** and add them to the painting (word level).
10. Write a **400-word memoir** of an experience in your life that uses your painting as an illustration (sentence level/text level).

* A very short story, usually less than 1000 words, often with a sharp focus on character or plot.

Part 1 - Language Arts
# in the HK English Language curriculum

Language Arts (LA) in the current curriculum, including the compulsory part of the curriculum and the LA electives, provides an opportunity for **four kinds of enrichment opportunities**:

1. **Lexical** enrichment
2. **Cultural** enrichment
3. **Personal** enrichment
4. **Communicative** enrichment

Language Arts
in the HK English Language curriculum

Each of these areas enhances the other in an **interaction** of **language**, **ideas**, and **personal response**.

A **creative and cooperative learning environment** maximises the benefit of L.A. teaching.

Personal enrichment

Communicative enrichment

Cultural enrichment

Lexical enrichment
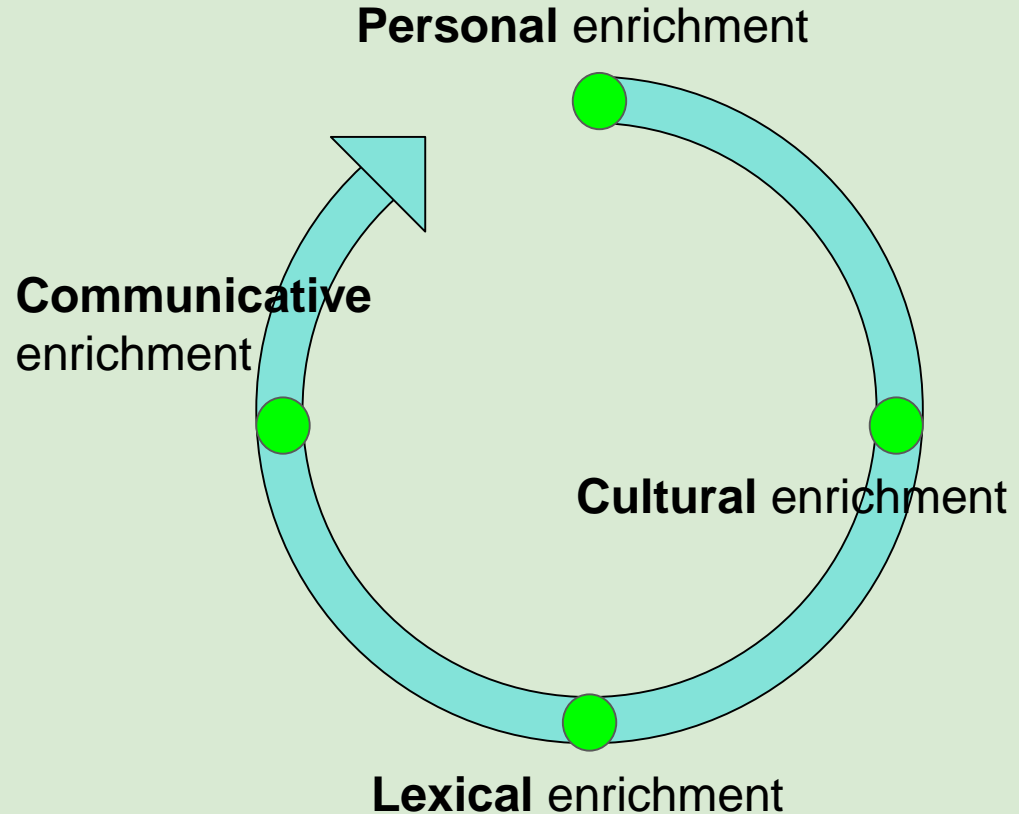
The Role of Creativity in Language Arts

'Creativity' is **'useful originality'**.

Ultimately, <u>all students</u> of English need 'space' (a time and place) to practice *using what they've already learned in new combinations and for new purposes.*

In the context of language learning, there are different kinds of creativity:

1. Original **arrangement of familiar words**
2. Original **personal response**
3. Original **combination of familiar ideas**
4. Original **applications of a variety of resources**
5. Original **perspectives on a familiar topic**

What is the "New Literacy"?

"New literacies generally are new forms of literacy made possible by digital technology developments."

Wikipedia

"We're in the midst of **a literacy revolution** the likes of which we haven't seen since Greek civilization."

The New Yorker

Examples of 'New Literacy' in practice

New Literacy text types and language activities relevant to secondary students:

- blogging
- digital storytelling
- maintaining a website
- reading, writing and commenting on fan fiction
- collaborating on and writing wikis (and webquests)
- conducting and collating online searches
- podcasting and videocasting
- processing and evaluating online information

(Wikipedia "New Literacies" definition)

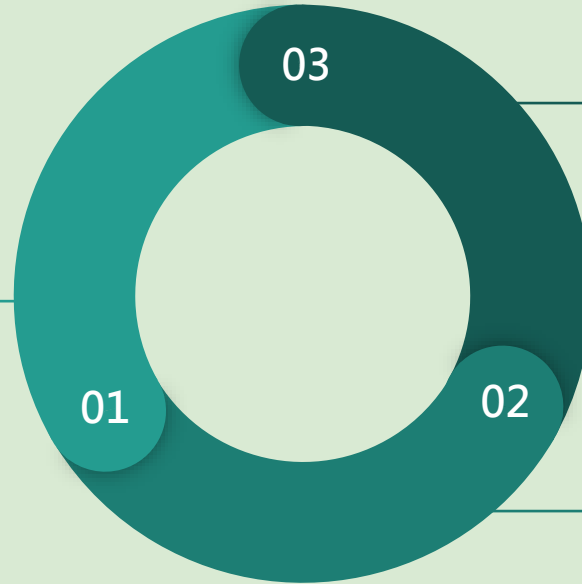# Examples of New Literacy in practice

(There are many others!)

- participating in online social networking spaces
- creating and sharing music videos
- photoshopping images and photo sharing
- shopping online
- participating in online discussion lists
- emailing and using online chat
- creating and sharing digital mashups

(Wikipedia "New Literacies" definition)

Integration of Traditional L.A., New Literacy and e-Resources

3. e-Resources

e-Resources provide an ever-expanding ocean of opportunities for discovering resources, hosting learning activities and student interactions, and for sharing/publishing students language processes and products.

1. Traditional Language Arts

Topics and language objectives from the compulsory part of the curriculum are revisited and practised in the traditional L.A. Electives.

2. The New Literacy

New literacies and multimedia introduce ways to combine language with graphic, audio and video representations, allowing more creative learning, practice and communicative opportunities.

03

01

02

Multimedia and Multimodality: **Save the Children**

Consider:

- Sound
- Colour
- Motion
- Framing
- Focus
- Language
- Meaning

Systematic LA Bridging Strategies

Three strategies for connecting Language Arts lessons to the compulsory part of the curriculum:

1. ## Integration (Mix)

    Integration of language arts 'mixes' the language arts with the existing, compulsory part of the curriculum. The formality, organisation and extent of the integration may be agreed upon by the English panel members or left to individual teachers' discretion.

2. ## Segregation (Separate)

    Segregation of language arts in curriculum planning is devoting a designated time and place in the curriculum, alongside the compulsory part of the curriculum, to specific LA genres or objectives. The amount of time committed to LA for each form level and genre depends on factors such as student ability, interests, other opportunities and the extent of other strategies in use, such as integration.

3. ## Augmentation (Add)

    Augmentation of the curriculum with language arts is 'adding' required or elective opportunities for learning language arts to periods of time outside the designated lesson structure.

Part 2 - Principles and Practices of The Language Arts Curriculum

- Compulsory part of the English curriculum
- English Electives
- Projects
- Cross-curricular
- Extracurricular

New literacy in the English curriculum

"'Traditionally, 'literacy' refers to **the ability to read and write effectively to achieve desired goals** or outcomes and develop one's knowledge and potential. With the rapid development of IT and social media, **'literacy' has taken on a new meaning as texts are no longer a linear form of presentation limited to words but are composed of various modes of communication** (e.g. images, animations, sounds, graphics). **Students, therefore, need to be equipped with new literacy skills** to process and create multimodal texts in which messages are conveyed in different modes (e.g. linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, spatial)."

- English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (2017), p8

"New Literacy" and Language Arts

Creatively *blending* traditional genres, language objectives, and text types with visual, video, digital and other interactive media can take place in single lessons, units, elective classes or across the curriculum.

Three effective ways to integrate Traditional Language Arts and New Literacy is through:

- **Graphic Novels**
- **Life Writing**
- **Fan Fiction**

Graphic Novels

What are Graphic Novels?

Graphic novels are stories that rely heavily or entirely on visual images to convey story elements such as setting, plot and character. They are written for all ages, on a wide range of topics and with varying degrees of difficulty (like traditional print stories). **Many of the learning objectives of Drama can be addressed with Graphic Novels.**

Why Graphic Novels?

- Graphic texts are more accessible and can encourage reading.
- Graphic texts can be used to appeal to the reluctant, disengaged or struggling reader.
- Graphic texts offer sophistication of plot and theme without sophisticated language.
- Graphic texts encourage students to use and apply previously learned language to describe, discuss and analyse stories.
- Graphic texts are cross-curricular, providing opportunities for making connections across the curriculum.
- The sequential art in graphic novels often engages students more effectively than information found in textbooks and other curriculum materials.
- Graphic novels offer opportunities to teach more content rather than less because so much is covered in just a few pages.

Visual literacy: a complement to text

- **Young people are used to making meaning from visual input.** This is an essential source of information for 'digital natives'.

- **Pictures tell a thousand words.** Think of all the visual texts to which we are exposed. We rarely find text without graphic support.

- **We live in a visual age.** Visual literacy, the ability to "read" images, is increasingly a critical life skill. Learning to analyse - and create - visual support is essential in a digital age.

Visual literacy: a complement to text

Challenges for English teachers:

- How can teachers build on students' skill of interpreting visual texts in order to enhance language learning?

- What elements are involved in 'reading' an image, and how can teachers help students develop the skills to do so thoughtfully?

Reading graphic novels: Reading Illustrations

- What does this illustration depict?
- What story might it illustrate?
- What is the mood? How is this conveyed?
- What does the setting tell you about the socio-cultural background?
- How might this illustration position its readers? Who might it include or exclude?

Sample Lesson Ideas for Graphic Novel *The Arrival*

Teaching with Graphic Novels in Secondary Schools: A unit plan using *The Arrival*		
OUTCOMES		
Students will:		
· Read and respond to *The Arrival*.		
· Use drama to highlight/portray significant events/themes/moods in the text.		
· Identify social issues in The Arrival– migration, refugees, loneliness, etc.		
· Identify the key features of texts: graphic novels, newspaper reports, informal letters, short narratives		
· Deploy above features to produce new texts: newspaper reports, letters, refugee stories.		

Specific language focus:	**Functions/grammar**
Text types	Identifying who, what, when and where.
Refugee stories	Recounting key events.
Newspaper reports	Describing people; appearance and personality.
Letters	Writing dialogue

Assessment possibilities:

Work samples: Worksheets as evidence of ability to identify typical/unusual aspects of a graphic novel; stories, as evidence of general writing standard and ability to follow the format of a newspaper article, short narrative and letter; summaries of classmates' stories as evidence of listening ability, and ability to analyse a story.

Anecdotal records: of spoken contributions in group tasks

Performance notes: Role-plays- evidence of rehearsed speaking ability.

Orientating task/s	Teaching notes/steps	Resources
1.Introduce ideas of travel and migration 2.Using prediction skills	The teacher introduces the cover of the graphic novel *The Arrival* and uses the See, Think, Wonder framework (http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03c_Core_routines/SeeThinkWonder/SeeThinkWonder_Routine.html) This can be done by projecting the single image on the screen or giving each group a large sheet of paper with the image on it and asking them to write down their ideas using sticky notes around it. Teacher generates a list of ideas based on what students see (observation), what they think (inference) and what they wonder (question). Teacher uses ideas generated by the students to create a concept map of words – migrant, traveler, refugee, journey, foreign,	Book: The Arrival, with multiple copies of the cover image or a visualizer to project the image. Large sheet of paper for concept maps. Sticky notes

The complete unit plan can be found at this link.
Thanks to my colleagues Dr Bidisha Banerjee and Dr Jeff Clapp for sharing their ideas and material!

Online Resources for Teaching with Graphic Novels

- http://dw-wp.com/

- https://sites.google.com/a/ualberta.ca/fanfiction-for-literacy/

- https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teaching-graphic-novels/

- http://www.edudemic.com/teaching-graphic-novels/

- https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/26/education/26comics.html

- https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/4785143331912227/

Life Writing

What is Life Writing?

Life Writing is a genre of writing that includes a range of text types, such as diary, memoir and autobiography. Life writing focuses on both the skills of effective storytelling and the process of meaningful reflection.
Many of the learning objectives of Short Stories can be addressed with Life Writing.

Why 'Life Writing'?

- Life writing is immediately relevant to all students; their experience, choices and character are the content of their writing.
- Life writing is adaptable to all ability levels.
- Life writing engages students' abilities in reflection, critical thinking, value choices and imagination.
- Like graphic texts, life writing can appeal to the reluctant, disengaged or struggling reader.
- There are abundant age- and language-appropriate texts for inspiring themes and the modelling of life writing language.
- Life writing creates a more authentic learning community when students share and reflect on lived experience.

Input: Models and Inspiration

- Students can learn about the lives of others from traditional media (books, articles), videos and online resources. These examples can inspire thinking skills, observation skills and effective language skills appropriate for life writing.

Input: First-Person Narratives
"Humans of New York"

Text, visual and video references provide students with models of effective storytelling in 1st-person narratives.

"Humans of New York", for example, provides hundreds of examples of portrait photos with one-paragraph, 1st-person narratives of diverse people's ideas and experiences. Students can write a one-paragraph "autobiography" based on this model and share it with classmates.

http://www.humansofnewyork.com

Input: Life is a story
"Drawing My Life"

For **language modelling and input**, students can be introduced to the life stories of famous and interesting people through a variety of multimedia resources that include visual, listening and reading skills. **"Drawing My Life"** is a genre of video-based life stories, with many examples on Youtube.

Output: Writing Real and Imagined Diary Entries

- To practise writing from different perspectives and points-of-view, students will write diary entries for different people *in the first-person*.
- For example, students read selected diary entries from *The Diary of Anne Frank*
- Students write an entry in Anne's diary for a later date, in her voice but with imagined historical and personal experiences.
- Record your own diary entry from a recent memorable day.

Classroom activity: "How Do You Define Your Life?"

- Students watch the video of Lizzie Velasquez who has an extremely rare disorder that prevents her from gaining any weight.
- Students answer questions and analyse the talk using the handouts and online materials provided.
- Modeled on the text type of a university entrance essay, students answer the question "How do you define your life?"

Output: Ten Turning Points Timeline

1. Teacher defines what a "turning point" is in a person's life and gives several examples (paradigm shift, critical decision, crisis or success), including some of his or her own. The common feature is that after each of these events, something in the person's life has changed forever (though it may be a big or small change).
2. Look at the timelines of some well known heroes, celebrities, or artists. Decide if the events in the biography qualify as turning points or not.
3. Students brainstorm a list of 10 experiences they have had from earliest memory until now that qualify as 'turning points'.
4. After listing ten turning points, students select and write a short paragraph on 3-4 of them.
5. One of the turning points is developed into an essay through additional steps of process writing.

Fan fiction / fanfiction / fanfic

What is Fan fiction?

Fan Fiction is a genre of **story-writing that is based on characters from popular culture, written by fans**. Characters, settings, and plot elements may be borrowed from popular novels, films, televisions shows, real-life musicians and other celebrities, even video games. Fans then write new scenes, endings or entire stories based on their imagined alternatives. **Many of the learning objectives of Popular Culture can be addressed with Fan Fiction.**

Examples of Fan Fiction Scenarios

1. A familiar fairy tale, such as Sleeping Beauty or Cinderella, needs a modern ending. **Write a new ending** to the fairy tale that would be more interesting to readers in 2018.
2. J.K. Rowling wants to write an eighth book in the Harry Potter series but needs some ideas. Students write a **story proposal/outline** with ideas for an eighth book. (Voldemort is dead, so introduce a new villain.)
3. Students choose their favourite television series and write a short description of one of the scenes they enjoyed. They write a **replacement dialogue** between two of the main characters and perform it in class.
4. Your students' favourite musician/band is performing in Hong Kong and they and a classmate/friend win backstage passes to visit him/her/them after the concert. Write a **short-short story** describing the backstage meeting with the musician/band members.

Why 'Fan Fiction'?

- Fan fiction begins with the student's interest, so it is highly motivating

- Fan fiction encourages students to become familiar with the source material through careful reading, research and attention to detail

- Like graphic texts and life writing, fan fiction can appeal to the reluctant, disengaged or struggling reader.

- There are abundant age and theme appropriate texts for inspiration and modelling of language.

- Fan fiction creates a natural audience, a community of readers who can share, comment, edit or collaborate in creative writing.

Classroom Activity 1: Introducing Fan Fiction

- Introduce the idea of fans and fandoms.
- Divide class into groups based on 4-5 types of fan fiction (books, movies, music, television shows, games).
- Provide each group with a corresponding example of fan fiction.
- Ask each group to: 1) summarise the piece; 2) rate the piece after a review of what to look for; 3) make suggestions for improvement; 4) write a helpful review based on a book review.

Classroom Activity 2: Reimagine the Story

- When reading a class novel or play, encourage critical reading and **multimedia literacy** by asking students to **re-imagine the story in a different media**. In other words, if it were not a traditional narrative or play, how could the same story be told in different ways?
- **For example,** students might choose to tell the story through the Facebook profiles and status updates of multiple characters; Instagram posts incorporating text, photos, and video; a WhatsApp text dialogue between two characters; or a Youtube vlog that permits authors to speak directly to the audience - and the audience to respond with comments.

Classroom Activity 3: Create Missing Scenes

- Missing scenes are basically any scene that is not a part of the original story but would make sense in it (Gutierrez, 2012).
- If your students are reading a novel that leaves some area unexplored, having students write missing scenes is a good way to help add more to the story.
- Because of the popularity of missing scenes in other media (such as movie scenes, television, etc.), this will hopefully be a fun and engaging activity for your students.
- Take it a step further by getting your students to turn each other's written missing scene into drama skits or videos to help the original writer understand how their writing was perceived and understood by others in the classroom.

Classroom Activity 4: Students as Beta Readers

- *"Beta-reader"* is the fan fiction term for a proofreader. Beta-readers are an integral part of the online fan fiction community.
- As a classroom activity, students can become beta-readers for or with each other. Alternatively, students can post a request for a reviewer for their own work and work with them online throughout the process of their writing.
- Beta-reading helps writers improve their writing. It also provides an authentic opportunity for students to learn about providing constructive feedback. This is an important skill in today's collaboration-driven world.
- Provide students a model of positive and helpful feedback that is appropriate for their age and ability.
- This Peer Review lesson from http://www.readwritethink.org suggests three steps to successful peer feedback: 1) Compliments 2) Suggestions 3) Corrections. While designed for younger students, the principles are appropriate for secondary students unfamiliar with peer editing.

Classroom Activity 5: Publishing and Feedback

- Once students have been through the beta-reading process and feel their stories are ready for a wider audience, they may post their stories in a location where they can be shared with classmates, schoolmates and/or family and friends.
- Depending on your school's technological resources, classes might create their own internal sharing on platforms such as a blog, website, e-portfolio or wiki. Feedback can be allowed on some platforms to allow students to interact with their readers.
- Students can also post the story to a publicly available site like fanfiction.net, Figment, or Wattpad.
- Once stories have been posted, be sure to keep watch of the feedback coming in from readers. How much you interact with your readers is up to you, but many fan fiction authors find discussions with readers can be constructive ways to learn to improve future stories. Some even edit the posted story based on feedback received.

Note: Fanfiction classroom activities online resource and references.

Online Resources for Teaching with Fan Fiction

- https://sites.google.com/a/ualberta.ca/fanfiction-for-literacy/resources/classroom-activities
- http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/activities-projects/writing-fanfiction-30647.html
- https://www.education.com/lesson-plan/fan-fiction-finales/
- The Fanfiction reader: Folk tales for the digital age by Francesca Coppa

Integrative Teaching Approaches for Creativity and the New Literacy

New Literacy Genres	Correspondence to LA Electives	Integrating Activity	Potential Platforms
Graphic Novels	• Drama	Use elements learned from graphic novels to create a storyboard for a dramatic performance. Record and edit it.	• Google Drive • Blog • Adobe Spark Video • Youtube • Edpuzzle
Writing Your Life	• Short Stories	Write a fictional short story modeled on a short-short story and based on an important real-life experience. Blend with a digital platform.	• Traditional book • Online resource • Blog or Website • WebQuest
Fan Fiction	• Popular Culture	Research a favourite celebrity and include him or her in a scene (or ending) from a story such as *Harry Potter* or *Hunger Games.*	• Youtube • Edpuzzle

Integrative Teaching Approaches for Creativity and the New Literacy

LA Principles	Examples	Platforms
To increase students' language practice, confidence and fluency: **Design language arts activities which recycle prior learning**	● Review portfolio of prior learning to extend topics; undertake new tasks ● Create a final multimedia presentation of learned material ● Watch flipped class videos using prior content or language	● **Google Drive** ● **Blog or Site** ● **Edpuzzle** ● Youtube ● Adobe Spark Video
Design grammar-in-context activities with authentic, creative and digital texts	● Read biography of hero, celebrity or historical figures ● Write biographical sketch ● Write digital diary or fan fiction sketch	● **Blog or Site** ● **WebQuest/Online resource** ● Traditional book
Design activities with both top-down and bottom-up language objectives	● Music video review ● Movie trailer review	● **Edpuzzle** ● Youtube
Design language activities with graphic, video, audio and text features	● Read and write graphic novels ● Video and podcasting	● **Blog or Site** ● Adobe Spark Video
Design activities that include a balanced focus on language form, meaning and analysis	● Reading autobiographical memoir ● Writing personal memoir (e.g. paradigm shift)	● **WebQuest/Online resource** ● **Blog or Site** ● Traditional book

Part 3 - Examples of New Literacy Activities and Applications

Flipping English with Edpuzzle

Demo of Edpuzzle: Every video is a L.A. opportunity

- *Save the Children* television commercial
- TED talk, Lizzie Velasquez "How do you define yourself?"
- Vincent Van Gogh, celebrity artist biography

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E-resources for hosting New Literacy learning activities

G-Suite: Harnessing a Virtual Classroom

- **Blogger** for sharing LA resources
- **Sites** for directing student activities through WebQuest
- **Forms** for flexible interaction and feedback

Recommended References:

The Teacher's Guide to Media Literacy: Critical thinking in a multimedia world

by Cindy Scheibe and Faith Robow, Corwin Press 2012

Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New media pathways to literacy, learning and creativity

by Jason B. Ohler, Corwin Press (2nd Edition) 2013