



Exemplar 7: Collaborative Materials Development

Overview

A distinctive feature of [Po Leung Kuk Mrs Ma Kam Ming-Cheung Fook Sien College](#) (hereafter called the PLK Mrs Ma Kam Ming College) is the collaboration amongst the members of the English panel to develop effective teaching materials and adapt the textbooks to suit the students' needs. Members of the English panel members **develop and share teaching materials** regularly on a formal and informal basis. Materials produced demonstrate sound application of ELT principles and attention to students' needs. These materials are shared through material-sharing trays and files and an intranet. In addition, **collaborative lesson-planning meetings** within each form have been recently implemented. Teachers teaching the same form meet once a term to plan one unit in the scheme of work. Materials and activities are developed collaboratively and are subsequently implemented in classrooms. Peer observations are conducted, followed by feedback discussions amongst teachers.



Teachers have gained a great deal from these practices: their lesson-planning is more efficient, a supportive and participatory working environment has been created, and their skills in designing materials have improved. Students' attention and interest increase when teachers use supplementary materials, they acquire new knowledge outside the textbook and language learning is enhanced.

<u>Sharing of Materials</u>	<u>Collaborative Lesson-planning</u>
 	

The Principal's Approach to the Use of Textbooks

The principal, Mrs Yau, has a practical approach to the use of textbooks. Her views on the use of textbooks and the role of supplementary materials in the curriculum have influenced the English panel's practice with regards to textbook adaptation and materials design. She believes that:

- Materials development plays a key role in realising the aims of the English curriculum;
- Each textbook has its strengths, but textbooks should not be expected to meet the needs of a diverse student body;
- Teachers need skills in adapting textbook and designing materials in order to respond to students' needs and meet the objective of enhancing students' English; and
- Sharing of materials ensures that teachers are not duplicating each other's efforts.



"I think the best way to learn English is to listen more, to speak more, to read more and to write more. With regard to these aspects, we need the English teachers to design the teaching materials systematically and set up schemes of assessment."



Autonomy in the Panel

The panel deals with the textbook flexibly. Particular units are selected and sequenced according to:



- Teachers' previous experience with the unit;
- Students' preferences and interests, and
- How the content and language in the units can be linked and can build on each other.

Those teaching the same form will generally begin and end a unit in the scheme of work at the same time, but this varies from teacher to teacher since it is expected that teachers respond to the needs of their particular class and experiment with new teaching strategies. This flexibility is encouraged and exploited by the teachers for materials sharing and development.



The senior panel chair, Miss Denise Sze, adopts a "hands-off" approach to managing her team, but with clear expectations that:

- Teachers use their classrooms as sites of professional development;
- They provide a positive and enjoyable learning environment to motivate their students; and
- They exercise their autonomy to respond to students' needs and to experiment with new ideas and strategies.

Listen to teachers' views on the English panel's use of the textbook.



Teachers in the panel confirmed that they are given a great deal of autonomy in deciding how a particular unit in the textbook was to be realised in the classroom, and that they are encouraged to be creative and take risks by experimenting with new ideas:



"Denise told me to use any methods. She gives me a lot of space to... try out ideas."



"Denise will not say 'no' to us. She'll just ask us to try and see what happened then... I think it's good that we can do and try whatever comes into our mind."

Listen to Miss Medley and Miss Lai as they discuss how they plan lessons that motivate and engage learners.



Valuing new ideas

One of the most important attitudes that the senior panel chair adopts is that new ideas are not only encouraged but positively valued. Although typically teachers who have served the longest have the most seniority, Miss Sze knows that teachers who have just recently completed their pedagogical training in the latest ELT techniques and approaches can also contribute a great deal to the panel. It is this attitude that is key to promoting the collaborative atmosphere in the panel with regards to the adaptation of textbooks and the designing of materials.



Sharing Trays



The members of the English panel create and share materials with each other on a regular basis. This collaborative culture can be attributed to the principal's [approach to textbook use](#) and the [autonomy](#) teachers have to try out new ideas in their lessons and cater to their learners' needs. Materials are shared through sharing trays and files, and the intranet. They demonstrate pedagogically sound materials design and the enrichment and enhancement of the textbook. The [positive impact](#) on student learning and teachers' professional development is also presented.

Name : _____ Class : _____ Date

: _____
Form 1 English
Unit 3 -Shopping

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone-Harry Goes to School

Make a list of school supplies that you bought before the school term began.

I bought....

Complete the following by circling the correct answer. Then write the sentence in the space provided.

1. Hagrid told Harry they could get his school supplies in...

- a) London
- b) New York
- c) Hong Kong
- d) Sydney

2. Harry was told to buy...

- a) an owl
- b) a cat
- c) a toad
- d) an owl, a cat or a toad

3. They met _____ teacher(s) from school .

- a) one
- b) two
- c) three
- d) four

4. They went shopping in...

- a) Diagon Alley
- b) Queens Road

- c) Kowloon Tong
 - d) Pacific Place
-
-

5. The Nimbus 2000 was a
- a) wand
 - b) broomstick
 - c) owl
 - d) cat
-
-

6. At Gringott's Wizard Bank , Harry got
- a) a wand
 - b) an owl
 - c) a broomstick
 - d) some money
-
-

7. Harry bought
- a) one wand
 - b) two wands
 - c) three wands
 - d) four wands
-
-

8. Hagrid bought Harry
- a) a toad
 - b) a cat
 - c) an owl
 - d) a broomstick
-
-

9. After they finished shopping, Harry and Hagrid
- a) went home
 - b) had lunch
 - c) went to school
 - d) met some friends.

Material	<i>Longman Target English</i> book and unit	Skill	Type of adaptation
Harry Potter video segment and worksheet	Book 1A, Unit 3 "Shopping" 	Listening	Supplementation with authentic material

Original textbook materials



The aim of this unit is to enable students to describe a shopping trip they have experienced. This involves describing the shopping mall, describing preferences and recounting what was bought.



Supplementary materials

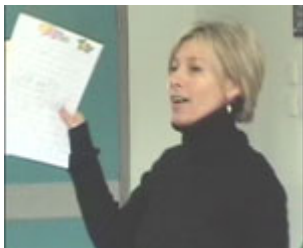


The teacher, Ms Medley, supplemented this unit with a segment from the popular movie *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (produced by Christopher Columbus and based on the best-selling book by J.K. Rowling) in which Harry goes shopping for school supplies in Diagon Alley with Hagrid, who is accompanying Harry to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Students watched the video segment and completed a worksheet. This lesson took place before students actually conducted their own shopping trip, so it was also used as language input and preparation for the core task.

This supplementary activity enhanced and enriched the textbook unit in two key ways:

1. The use of authentic materials helps to bridge the textbook with real life.
2. The choice of material—a popular Hollywood film based on an international best-selling novel aimed at young people—is highly appealing to students and acknowledges the importance of popular culture in young people's lives.

Features of the worksheet



The worksheet begins with a brief pre-listening stage in which students are asked to recall the items they bought before starting school last September. This initial recollection of students' own experience is considered good practice in encouraging top-down listening strategies. The main part of the worksheet consists of 12 multiple-choice questions based on the video segment. The 12 questions are designed to focus students on the key events in the video segment, and draw on both linguistic and visual clues as well as students' previous knowledge of the movie or book. The multiple-choice format allows students to view and listen to the video and complete the worksheet simultaneously, i.e. their attention is not wholly taken up with reading and completing the worksheet. In this way, the worksheet encourages the students to view the video in an authentic manner, thus achieving a degree of "task authenticity" (Guariento and Morley, 2001).


The lesson

The teacher executed this lesson expertly and in a very principled manner:

- She elicited what students had bought before they began secondary school and wrote these items on the board.
- She then found out how many students had seen or knew about Harry Potter, thus activating their background knowledge.
- Next, she clarified some of the vocabulary on the worksheet whilst further activating students' background knowledge of the movie.
- She asked students to move their seats so they could view the screen clearly, showing flexible use of classroom space to enhance learning.
- Finally, at the end of the viewing, she gave students a minute to complete their worksheets before checking the answers, thus helping students deal with the processing load (or the amount of language that had to be processed in the time available) in this task (Anderson and Lynch, 1988:56).



Form 2 Cartoons: Design a Cartoon Character for David Beckham's Son

Material	Longman Target English book and unit	Skills	Type of adaptation
An integrated skills task involving designing a cartoon character toy.	Book 2A, Unit 2 "Cartoon Characters" 	Vocabulary consolidation, integrated speaking and writing	Adaptation and extension of the Pokemon character design task

Original textbook tasks



The original textbook task is a Pokemon design competition (*Longman Target English 2A*, p. 28). The task:

- instructs students to design their own Pokemon character and then to describe it in writing by filling in a form.
- is contextualised as a cartoon character design competition to provide a purpose and to make the task relevant to students.
- involves the use of the vocabulary about animal parts and descriptions of animal behaviour introduced in the unit.

Adapted and newly created materials



While the original task design is pedagogically sound, the teacher made significant adaptations to the task and extended it considerably. The situation and purpose were entirely revised: The celebrity footballer, David Beckham, has a four-year-old son, Brooklyn, who is bored and asks his parents for a new toy.

1. Students are asked to work in pairs to design a cartoon character toy for Brooklyn and are given

some information about him, i.e. his age and his likes and dislikes. Students are reminded to make a toy that is safe for young children.

2. Pairs then plan and draw the cartoon character/toy on their worksheet and then share their designs with their classmates.
3. After this, students create a comic strip based on this character.
4. Finally, they individually draft a letter to David Beckham describing the new toy for Brooklyn.

Further analysis of the [adapted task and evaluation of student work.](#)



Design a Toy: The Adapted Task

There are several ways in which the revised and extended task attempts to address the needs of the teacher's particular group of students:



- Photos of celebrities such as David Beckham were used on previous occasions in this unit to teach vocabulary about faces and hairstyles in an interesting and motivating manner. The continued use of David Beckham to extend and exploit the textbook task provides coherence in the teaching of this unit.
- While the original context and purpose of the task (a cartoon design competition) are sound, identifying an actual person as a recipient or audience, even if the situation is imaginary, makes the task more communicative.
- The information about Brooklyn's preferences and the reminder to make a safe toy serve to make the task more realistic, and provide parameters for students' toy designs, necessary perhaps for those students who might have decided to include violent or otherwise inappropriate features.

☺ Beckham wants to buy Brooklyn a new and funny toy but he can't find a suitable one. He asked you to design a new cartoon character and create a new comic strip for his son. ☺

**** Before designing, think about the following things****

1. Brooklyn is four years old now.
2. He loves playing football.
3. He likes monsters.
4. He doesn't like robots.

****Make sure your design is safe for children****



- However, the type of cartoon character is left completely open-ended, unlike the textbook task, which instructs students specifically to create a *Pokemon* character. The open-ended nature of the task allows for student creativity, caters to both boys and girls, and allows for personal input for students to include features of cartoon characters they particularly like. In this way, the amount and type of scaffolding provided to students have been adapted while the core task and vocabulary remain essentially the same.
- The task has also been adapted to include collaboration and spoken interaction in pairs as students design and share their cartoon characters. This is a natural way to include oral interaction and, unlike the rather static task in the text book, which involves individual students drawing and filling in a

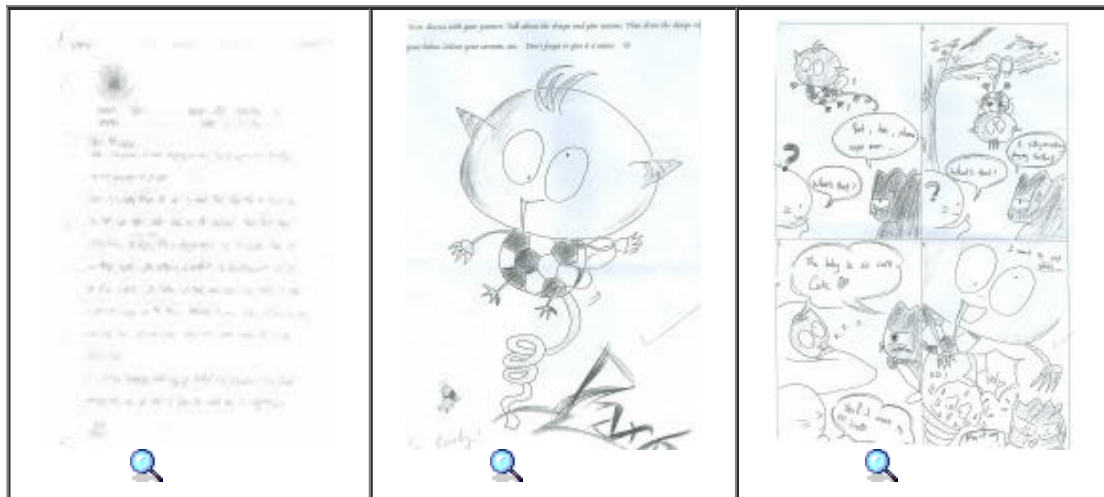
form, it brings the task alive.

- Devising a comic strip based on their cartoon character allows students to develop their character further and gives them more opportunities for creative writing practice in a familiar genre.
- Finally, the letter to David Beckham completes the task and gives students meaningful writing practice and vocabulary use.



The lesson and students' work

From the video recording of the first step of this task, it can be seen that students worked together willingly and productively, and used some of the targeted vocabulary meaningfully. Students' drawings of their toys and the illustrations for the comic strips incorporated popular cartoon characters (Bad Batz Maru/XO) and were presented in comic-strip visual style. Students' writing, although not entirely in accurate English, showed their attempts to write in an appropriate comic-strip style. Letters to David Beckham were also written in an appropriate style and voice, used vocabulary from the unit appropriately, and included well-organised and often lively descriptions of the toy.



Students learn the names of parts of animals and adjectives to describe the body in the Vocabulary building section on pp. 18–19. They learn about adverbs of manner and degree in the Language focus section on p. 22, and revised the language items in Pre-task 1 and Pre-task 2. Students also learn about question phrases in the Language focus section on p. 23.

TASK 1 Creating your own Pokémon



In this task, you will:

- ★ create your own Pokémon.
- ★ find out about your partner's new Pokémon.
- ★ create a short comic strip with your new Pokémon.

A The Cartoon Club is organising a 'Create your own 'Pokémon' Competition'. First think of a new 'Pokémon' and draw it in the space below. Then fill in the note sheet.

POKÉMON

Name: _____ Age: _____

Looks like: _____ Weight: _____

Other features: _____

Abilities: _____

Name: _____ Class: ____ () Date: _____ Grade: _____

Dad, I feel so bored! I want a new toy!



OK, Brooklyn. Let's go shopping!


☺ Beckham wants to buy Brooklyn a new and funny toy but he can't find a suitable one. He asked you to design a new cartoon character and create a new comic strip for his son. ☺

** Before designing, think about the following things **

1. Brooklyn is four years old now.
2. He loves playing football.
3. He likes monsters.
4. He doesn't like robots.

** Make sure your design is safe for children **

Form 1: A Shopping Trip

Material	<i>Longman Target English</i> book and unit	Skills	Type of adaptation
Shopping excursion and survey	Book 1A, Unit 3 "Shopping" 	Integrated writing, listening and speaking	Adaptation of original shopping excursion task in textbook

Original textbook materials



These materials were adapted from Unit 3 on Shopping in *Longman Target English 1A* (pp. 58–59). The task in the textbook first asks students to visit a shopping centre and complete a questionnaire about their trip. The questions are multiple-choice with the option of an open-response for each question (i.e. option D is "other"). The next stage involves students telling each other about their shopping trip using their answers to the previous task as a guide. Finally, students are asked to write an e-mail to an imaginary friend, "Jimmy", about their shopping trip.

Adaptations

The questionnaire

The S.1 teachers decided to use the textbook task, but with small but significant adaptations to the questions and instructions, which enhanced the original task in several ways:

The questions were first reconstructed onto a separate worksheet that closely resembled the original textbook task. This involved simple word-processing and allowed teachers to adapt the questions to suit their aims. An advantage of reproducing the task on a separate sheet is flexibility of use: the worksheet can be easily taken to the shopping mall or used for further language practice, and is less likely to detract from the genuine, real-world nature of the task.

The second adaptation involved revising some of the questions and removing the multiple-choice responses in order to personalise the task, encourage varied responses and take into account the range of real shopping experiences students were likely to have had. For example, questions such as "Which shops did you like?" and "Why did you like them?" replaced more factual questions in the original task such as "How long

did you stay there?" Removing the MC responses also made the task more demanding.

The interview

The second worksheet was a simple oral task in which students interviewed each other using the questions described in the questionnaire. While the book instructed students to tell each other about their shopping trip, the adapted task was focused on the listener, who interviewed another student and noted down their responses in the empty boxes next to each question. Thus, an information gap is created to facilitate meaningful oral exchange. The worksheet itself was very simple and was easily created from the first question sheet. Although the task was semi-controlled, genuine exchange of meaning was inherent in the task because the interview was about students' actual experiences.

The e-mail message

Finally, the students were asked to write a letter to their teacher describing their shopping trip. In the original textbook task, students were asked to write to an unknown and imaginary person named Jimmy. Identifying a real person who is familiar to students as the addressee or "audience" for their letter increased the communicative potential of the task, and was a very simple adaptation to make.



Students read an e-mail message about a shopping trip in the Reading section on pp. 44–45. They learnt the vocabulary needed for this task in the Vocabulary building section on pp. 42–43. They revised this vocabulary in Pre-task 2 and Pre-task 3. Students learnt about the simple past tense in the Language focus section on p. 46. They also learnt how to use 'There is' / 'There are' in the Language focus section on p. 48. This grammar item was consolidated in Pre-task 2.

TASK 3 Let's go shopping

In this task, you will:

- ★ visit a shopping centre and complete a questionnaire.
- ★ talk about your shopping trip.
- ★ write an e-mail message about your shopping trip.

A Work in groups. Visit a shopping centre with your friends this weekend. Then complete the questionnaire below. Tick the correct boxes.

My shopping trip

1 Which shopping centre did you go to?

Dragon Centre Festival Walk Times Square
 New Town Plaza other (Which one?) _____

2 Where is the shopping centre?

in Cheung Sha Wan in Kowloon Tong in Causeway Bay
 in Sha Tin other (Where?) in _____

3 Who did you go with? _____

4 How did you get there?

by MTR by KCR by bus by taxi
 other (How?) by _____

5 What shops and features are there in the shopping centre?

clothes shops CD shops gift shops food court
 cinema ice-skating rink roller coaster supermarket
 others (What?) _____

6 Did you buy anything?

Yes (What?) _____ No

7 What other things did you do?

had lunch in the food court watched a film
 went on the roller coaster went ice-skating
 went to the supermarket others (What?) _____

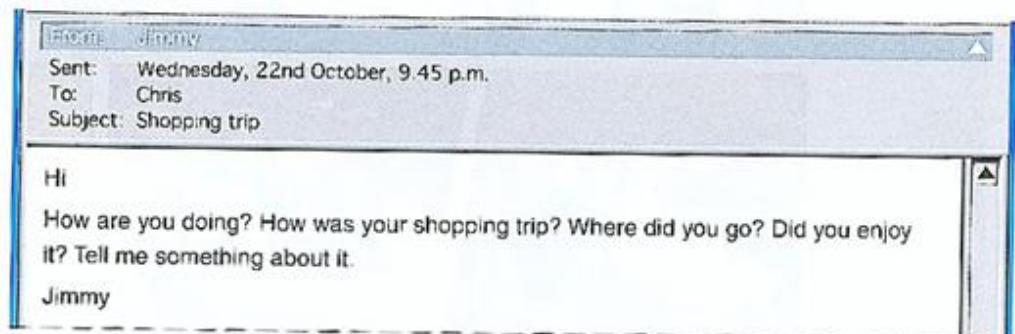
8 How long did you stay there? _____

B Work in pairs. Find a partner from another group. Take turns to describe your shopping trip. Use the questionnaire in Part A to help you. You can begin like this.



Last Saturday/Sunday, I went to **Festival Walk** in **Kowloon Tong**. I went with **Danny and Karen**. I/We went there by **MTR** ...

C Yesterday you received an e-mail message from your friend. Read the message. Then write back to him. Use the questionnaire on the opposite page to help you.



D Before you write your e-mail message, make a plan. You can use the outline below to help you.

Paragraph 1 Background information, e.g. Where did you go? Who did you go with? How did you get there?

Paragraph 2 The shopping centre, e.g. Where is it? What do you like about this shopping centre?

Paragraph 3 The shopping trip, e.g. What did you do? Did you enjoy the trip? Why / why not?

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Name : _____ Class : _____ Date: _____

My Shopping Trip.

Due Date : _____

Task: Form a group of 3 - 5 students.

You need to visit a shopping centre (e.g. – Citygate)

After your shopping trip you need to write about it.

Here are some questions you need to answer.

Write your answers in sentences.

1. Where did you go?

2. When did you go?

3. Who did you go with?

4. How did you get there?

5. Which shops did you like?

6. Why did you like them?

7. What did you do there? (eat, buy, see?)

8. What did you like about the shopping centre? (e.g. Were there any seats, plants, fountains etc?)

9. Did you enjoy the trip? Why/Why not?

Po Leung Kuk Mrs Ma Kam Ming-Cheung Fook Sien College
Form One English
My Shopping Trip – Interviewing a classmate


Name: _____ () Class: _____ Date: _____

Form a group of two or three. Take turns to interview your group members about their shopping trip. Write their answers in the spaces provided below.

Name of the group member you interviewed	
1. Where did you go?	
2. When did you go?	
3. Who did you go with?	
4. How did you get there?	
5. Which shops did you like?	
6. Why did you like them?	
7. What did you do there?	
8. What did you like about the shopping centre?	
9. Did you enjoy the trip? Why/Why not?	

Useful expressions:

Harbour City, Argyle Centre, MetroPlaza, Maritime Square
T-shirt, dress, a pair of trousers, hat, bag

Material	Longman Target English book and unit	Skills	Type of adaptation
Navigating the Orbis website	<p>Book 3A, Unit 2 "Orbis"</p> 	Reading and writing	Revision and replacement of textbook reading activity

Original textbook task



The original reading task involves a leaflet from the Charity Club at the student's imaginary school. It introduces the organisation Orbis and how it has helped people around the world. The text is followed by five questions from the imaginary school principal. All five questions are easily answered by locating the correct information and quoting verbatim from the text.



The revised version of the reading task



This sample worksheet was downloaded from the English panel's intranet and was designed to replace the textbook reading task. The adapted task involves students reading the authentic Orbis Hong Kong website rather than the specially written textbook passage, and is used after the topic of the unit has been introduced to students.



Grading the task, not the text

The first three questions on this worksheet involve extracting key information about the Orbis Hong Kong office. The next section (Task 1a-c in the second section) asks students to name the three major causes of blindness, which can be easily extracted from the website text. These four questions all require the student to read for specific information, thus using them to access an authentic text while at the same time directing them to ignore the parts in the text that are above their level. In the original textbook, however, both the text and the questions are graded for

students. Although both tasks are well-designed, the adapted task is a clear example of how an authentic text that is itself above students' level can be made accessible to students through careful construction of the accompanying question or task.

Exploiting the interactive nature of websites

The next part of the worksheet directs students to the section of the website where there are several personal stories from which to choose. Each text, connected through hyperlinks, consists of one or two short paragraphs describing the experiences of people who have benefited from Orbis' work. In the worksheet students are asked to select a story of their choice and then write "comments" about the story. This task improves on the original task in several respects. First, the reader is interacting with the text in a personal way by choosing the text he/she would like to read. Asking students to write a short "comment" on the text also invites a personal response from the learner. In order to write a short comment, students would need to summarise some if not all of the content of the text coherently, which involves meaningful language use.

Choosing which story to read, done by clicking on the hyperlink, is also an authentic way of reading websites (see Guariento and Morley 2001 on task authenticity), i.e. websites offer the reader/user multiple ways of navigating through the site, and individual readers will read the site selectively and in a different sequence. Rather than allowing the learner to click on links in the website at random, the worksheet provides guidance/scaffolding to assist students in navigating and understanding the website text.

Finally, the worksheet directs students to the "Resources section" of the website and instructs them to send an e-card to the teacher. Again, this step exploits a typical feature of websites: hyperlinks to further resources or the means of communicating with the website creators or other users. The e-card sent to the teacher gives the teacher initial evidence of students' successful reading/navigation, and encourages personal, written interaction between teacher and student.

This revised version of a reading task involves both authentic text and authentic tasks that, in turn, bring the topic to life for the student.

My name is _____. I'm studying in Form 3 _____. My class number is _____. Today is _____.

Accessing the Internet...



Please go to: <http://www.orbis.org.hk> , then choose **ENGLISH**, and try to search the following information...

On the left column, please click **About Us** → **Orbis Hong Kong**.

1. When was the ORBIS Hong Kong Office opened? _____
2. Who is the sponsor of ORBIS Hong Kong? _____
3. Where is the office of ORBIS Hong Kong? _____

Go back to the left column, please click **Blindness Issues**.

1. Name the three major causes of Blindness.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____



Go back to the left column again, please click **Patient Stories**.

1. Choose one story and read it. Write down a short comment of your selected story. (50 words)

Now, go to **Resources**, click **E-card**, send an e-card to **Miss Chow** (misswinniechow@hotmail.com). Thank you very much! ☺



Impact on Student Learning

S.1 and S.2 students identified a variety of activities they found interesting and that helped them learn. These included drama activities, movies, games and oral pairwork tasks. They commented frequently that they found the lessons more interesting and useful when the teacher did not teach solely from the textbook, and cited an increase in their attention and interest levels when the teacher used visual aids and activities. Students seemed to understand the teacher's purpose in using photos and how high interest levels lead to better learning. A number of students also mentioned an increase in knowledge as a benefit of the teacher's use of supplementary materials and activities. Finally, many students who were interviewed showed an awareness of language-learning processes and how supplementary materials such as photos and activities can help in learning new vocabulary.



2B students' views on the use of non-textbook materials in class.



Miss Medley and 1D students' views on learning English in a fun way.

Collaborative Lesson-planning

The English panel at PLK Mrs Ma Kam Ming College has recently implemented collaborative lesson planning meetings. These planning meetings have been integrated into the existing form coordination meetings and take place once a term at each form level.



The purposes of these meetings are:

- To enhance the existing materials sharing and collaboration process;
- To encourage more systematic development and evaluation of materials; and
- To provide a structured forum for professional development.

The Planning-Teaching-Reflection Cycle

The collaborative planning process involves much more than simply planning lessons together. There are several stages in the cycle of planning and teaching a unit:

1. The teachers of the same form meet once during each term at approximately the time when most teachers are about to begin a new unit.
2. The teachers plan the unit together by sharing and developing new teaching materials and activities, and discussing and evaluating previously used materials and textbook tasks.
3. A series of peer observations take place when teachers experiment with the ideas discussed in the planning meeting in their lessons, other teachers come and observe.
4. Post-observation discussions are held and tasks are revised then implemented by those teachers who observed the lesson. If timetables permit, further peer observations take place throughout the teaching of the unit.
5. Finally, the teachers reconvene to evaluate the materials/activities.

Although these meetings are scheduled only once a term, every teacher on the English panel teaches at least two levels and so is involved in two collaborative lesson planning and peer observation processes each term.



On 4th March 2004, we attended a Form Two collaborative meeting in which Unit 11, "Teen Problems", in *Longman Target English Book 2B* was discussed and planned. Materials developed in this meeting were tried out in teachers' subsequent lessons.

[Link to more details of the Form Two Collaborative Lesson-planning meeting.](#)

The S.2 Planning Meeting



A Form Two Collaborative Lesson-planning meeting was observed on 4 March 2004. All four S.2 teachers attended the meeting. Unit 11, "Teen Problems", in *Longman Target English Book 2B* was discussed. The meeting was chaired by Miss Lai. A number of good practices in lesson-planning and materials development were evident.

The meeting	Good practices
<p>Outlining of objectives:</p> <p>To describe and express feelings about common teen problems and give advice</p>	<p>Describing objectives in terms of communicative language ability</p>
<p>Sharing of materials and ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examined last year's material Miss Chow brought a song: "Don't Laugh At Me" <div data-bbox="379 1167 590 1485" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miss Fung suggested a video about bullying Miss Lai brought "Auntie Rose" letters from the <i>HK Student Standard</i> <div data-bbox="296 1659 673 1921" data-label="Image"> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using authentic materials and a range of text types Collaboration and sharing Valuing contributions
<p>Discussion of tasks and activities and how to implement them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to use recent current events - bullying case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridging the classroom and the outside world Personalising content

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to relate the topic to students' experience and own problems • When to focus on specific language: before a task, after exposure to meaningful text • Difficulty of material for own students and how it would be adapted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying principles of teaching and learning grammar and vocabulary • Considering students' needs and level
<p>Discussion of drama activity, new to teachers</p> <p>Groups prepare a short skit exemplifying a teen problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' knowledge of script-writing • "The products" are the play script and the drama performance, however only the script would be marked • Referred to Miss Medley's experience of doing drama in the hall drama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging experimenting and risk-taking • Consideration of students' prior knowledge • Focused marking • Drawing on colleagues' experience and skills
<p>Discussion of <i>Auntie Rose</i> letters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of content of one reply letter that was rather "rude" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw students' attention to the tone of the letter - Ask students to rewrite it <p>Agreement on passages to be used for dictation, core writing tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical evaluation of materials • Encouraging students' critical evaluation of texts • Exploring register in writing • Ensuring uniformity

Outcomes of the meeting

Two teaching ideas were developed further and adopted by the teachers: three of the teachers used the "Auntie Rose" letters as the basis of an integrated reading and writing task, and two teachers conducted a drama activity on teen problems.

Link to the outcomes of the meeting: [1\) Auntie Rose reading task](#) and [2\) drama on teen problems](#).

Mark Willis- Don't Laugh at Me

From the album "Wish You Were Here"

(Allen Shamblin/Steve Seskin)

***I'm a little boy with glasses
The one they call the geek
A little girl who never smiles
'Cause I've got braces on my
teeth
And I know how it feels
To cry myself to sleep...***

them. What should I do to help her?

Ah Mel

Don't want to get into a fight with her, do you? The answer is simply to stop worrying about it.

Dear Ah Mel

Psychologists tell us that shopping can be just as addictive as gambling or alcohol. It has this hold over us because it makes us feel good, even if it's only temporary. But the person who is the shopaholic seldom recognises this.

It very much depends on how much you want to get involved in your friend's life, and whether you're willing to risk your friendship. If you openly criticise her shopping, or tell her that there's something wrong with her, you may lose her.

You could try suggesting alternative outings, instead of shopping. Tell her that you're bored with shopping and you want to try something different. And make her feel good about herself. I don't mean be false, because she will see right through that. Find the good in her and praise it. She might brush you off but keep at it, and hopefully she will begin to believe in herself enough to stop her reckless habit.

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Puzzled

Dear Auntie Rose,

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Poor Son

Dear PS

It's not strange for children of divorced parents to resent the new people in their parents' lives. And it can be awkward trying to talk to these people. But give her a chance before casting her in the role of "wicked stepmother".

She is probably also feeling pretty strange and uncomfortable. Perhaps you could ask your dad what sort of things she's interested in and find out about those things yourself, so that you have something to talk about. I think that you must also admit to yourself that your parents are not going to get back together again and they need to get on with their own lives. They both love you and someone else coming into their lives is not going to change that.

Student Standard Friday, February 6, 2004



Auntie Rose

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Email: students@thestandard.com.hk

17

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Worried

Dear Worried

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Different

Dear Different

It's difficult for me to offer solutions if I don't know why people are making fun of you. You say you feel different, but you don't say in what way. Do you have three heads? Also you don't say how old you are, so it is hard for me to judge the age of your peers. Classmates can

Dear Johnny

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Embarrassed

Student Standard Friday, February 27, 2004



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Worried

Dear Worried

What a nasty girl that was, lucky you escaped the relationship early. It was very cruel for her to say what she did, and I don't blame you for being hurt and worried that the next girl will do the same. But not all girls are like that and the best advice I can give to you, is to be confident that you are a great person and not to be yourself around your new girlfriend. There is a reason this girl likes you, so feel good about yourself.

Dear Auntie Rose,

Should boys be allowed to play with toy weapons? Should they be allowed to play "war games"? My

self image question that you're dealing with. Can you face being seen with a slob, or would you rather tell him to shape up or ship out?

Dear Auntie Rose,

My younger sister's room is a mess. She is already 13 and it drives me crazy and we argue about it all the time. What can I do?

Nancy

Dear Nancy

Unless you share a room with your sister, it's really none of your business what she does in her own space, so I would advise you to leave her alone. But if you have to share a space or clean up after her, there are a number of things you can do to help her see the error of her ways.

The first is to make a point of inviting all her friends into her room whenever they visit. Hopefully she will be ashamed and clean up. If this doesn't work, on certain days (say Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) you can take one of those plastic rubbish bags, collect everything on the floor - including food, books, dirty clothes, shoes, and put them all into the bag. Put the bag in her cupboard. This way when her favourite outfit becomes covered in smelly, rotten food she will realise that it's best to clean up before you do.

really don't think you should interfere. Let your parents decide what he is allowed to do. These games may seem strange to you, but they help him stretch his imagination and he's making strong friendships as well. He will outgrow these games before you even know it. Don't take his fun away from him.

Dear Auntie Rose,

My best friends and I like to dress and act punk. My parents don't like it because they say that it is not good for me and some of the ideas go against our family's faith. How can I deal with this? I don't want to follow their so-called "family rules".

Rebel

Dear Rebel

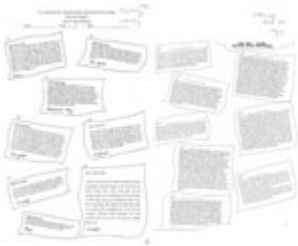
Every generation shocks their parents. So you might try to explain to yours that you are only doing your job. But other than that, there's not much you can do. When you are no longer living with your parents you can make your own rules. While you are still living with them, I'm afraid you have to follow what they

Integrated Reading and Writing: "Auntie Rose" Letters

The "Agony Aunt"-type letters from the *HK Student Standard* were written by young people. The replies written by "Auntie Rose" were written in a typically short, direct style. Letters and replies were signed/addressed with adjectives relating to feelings, such as "Worried" or "Confused". These letters were chosen by the teachers because they were the authentic version of the letters in the textbook and would clearly help to achieve the objectives of the unit.



Adaptations



The letters were made into a skimming task by separating the letters from the replies, pasting them onto two large sheets of paper, and then cutting them up into individual letters on small squares of paper. Students in groups were instructed to match the letters to the replies. The names of the addressees in the reply letters were deleted so that students could not simply match the author and addressee, but needed to skim the letters to understand the gist of each text. The deleted addressee provided an "information gap" for students to fill in as they matched the letters, and allowed for easy comparison between groups and checking at the end of the task.

The letters were cut up into individual pieces of paper so they could be moved around and organised by the group members. It also allowed for groups to organise themselves and assign particular members to deal with particular letters. If the letters had remained on the two large sheets this would have made collaboration more difficult, and it is likely that students would have worked individually rather than with group members. Also, the task itself had a clear goal — to match all of the letters — so having letters on individual pieces of paper allowed groups to monitor more clearly how well they had achieved their goal. There were 15 letters and 14 replies in each set, i.e. one reply letter had been removed so that one of the letters did not have a match. This single unmatched letter then formed the context and purpose for students to write a reply letter. The other reply letters served as authentic exposure to the form and style of reply letters.

The video shows how Miss Lai made use of Auntie Rose's letter with her S.2B class.



The other S.2 teacher who used the "Auntie Rose" letters, Miss Chow, began by using only the student letters. This was a preliminary step to prepare students for the more demanding task of matching the letters. Miss Chow asked her students to categorise the letters according to the type of problems, for example family, school, friends, as listed in the coursebook on page 66. This shows that the adapted material, while carefully designed, was used flexibly by different teachers to address the needs of different students.



Reading Polly's Problem Page

This reading passage provides input for Pre-task 1 and Pre-task 2. It also prepares students to talk about teen problems in Task 1 and write a letter in Task 2.

A One of the most popular parts of 'Teen Times' is 'Polly's Problem Page'. Every week, many teenagers write to Polly about their problems. Here are three of their letters.

Note

'Over-' is a common prefix which means 'too much', e.g. overcooked, overdo.

Dear Polly

Please can you help me? I am thirteen, but my parents are very overprotective and treat me like a baby. They never let me go out with my friends. If I leave the house, I have to phone them every hour. I am forbidden to use ICQ so I can't even chat to my friends online. My parents are too strict and I hate it.

The weekends are really boring because there is nothing to do at home. I want to go out shopping but I can't. Every time my friends ask me to go shopping with them, I have to ask permission from my parents. However, my parents always say no. My friends often tease me and call me a baby. I'm worried that I will lose my friends. If I have no friends, I'll be really miserable.

My Auntie Jane says that I ought to talk to my parents and explain my feelings. What do you think I should do, Polly? I'm desperate for help.

Pansy



Dear Polly

I have lived in Hong Kong since 1999 but still don't like it here. My Dad, who has worked here for ten years, says I should be happy. He says that Hong Kong is a great place to live and that the schools are excellent.

I like my school, but I feel worried about my schoolwork. Every day, we get loads of homework. There is too much homework for me to finish in one night. Dad is always busy with work so he can't help me. I don't have any friends in Hong Kong either so I can't ask for help. Another problem is that there is nowhere for me to study at home. The sitting room is very noisy and I have to share my bedroom with my younger brother.

What should I do, Polly?

Jiamin

Dear Polly

^{B6}
I am very worried about my girlfriend. I have known her since
35 kindergarten but we just started going out together two
months ago. At first, we were very happy and enjoyed each
other's company. However, after going out with her for a while,
I began to realise that she is actually quite a boring person.

I like to play games but my girlfriend hates games. She likes
40 sitting in McDonald's and reading. I quite like being with her but
I like to do other things too. ^{B4} My friends think I'm silly to spend
so much time in McDonald's. They laugh at me and make me feel
embarrassed.

What do you think I should do? I like my girlfriend but I want
45 to spend time with my friends too.

Benny

B Polly is doing some research on teenage problems. She reads the letters and ticks which problems the teenagers have. Help Polly by ticking the boxes for her.

Top ten teen problems	Pansy	Jiamin	Benny
1 too much homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 nowhere to study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 not allowed to use ICQ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 laughed at by friends	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5 parents too busy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 worried about boyfriends / girlfriends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7 no friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 parents too strict	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 feel bored at weekends	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 worried about schoolwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C The three letters will be published in 'Teen Times'. Polly has to write headlines for the three letters. She has thought of six ideas. Help Polly to choose a good headline for each letter.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| ① Pansy's letter | • | • | Lonely and friendless in Hong Kong |
| ② Jiamin's letter | • | • | Girlfriend or friends? How can I keep both happy? |
| ③ Benny's letter | • | • | Too poor to go out |
| | | • | No longer a baby |
| | | • | My secret job |
| | | • | What should I do? |

them. What should I do to help her?

Ah Mel

Don't want to go to school? The answer is simply to stop worrying about it.

Dear Ah Mel

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Student Standard Friday, February 6, 2004



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Different

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Rebel

Dear Rebel

Every generation shocks their parents. So you might try to explain to yours that you are only doing your job. But other than that, there's not much you can do. When you are no longer living with your parents you can make your own rules. While you are still living with them, I'm afraid you have to follow what they

Matching
activity

Name: _____ Class: _____ () Date: _____

1.

Dear Aunt Rose,
Help! I have a new boyfriend. The problem is he is 20 and I am 16. He works, but I am about 2 months HKCEE. We have been going out for about 2 months now and he is already talking about marriage. I've already met his parents, and he's gone to my family reunion and things like that. I have tried to explain that I don't want things to get too serious, but he just doesn't seem to understand. He says he can't live without me. How can I make him understand? Please help me. I'm going crazy!

Grace

2.

Dear Aunt Rose,
Next week will be the one year anniversary of my dog's death. I have been crying at night whenever I think I hear or see her. I only cry for a few minutes and then I feel better. How come I still grieve over my dog's death? And why do I only cry at night?

Sad girl

3.

Dear Aunt Rose,
I am a Secondary Two student. My classmates always calls me at odd hours to ask me stupid questions like, 'Is there any homework today?' or 'What is the title of this homework?' I don't know if they pay attention to what the teacher is saying. I just feel very annoyed about their phone calls. I have already told them not to phone me. But they never stop. What can I do?

Handsome Boy

5.

Dear Aunt Rose,
My dad wants to move out of our home and my mum is very upset and all she does now is cry and sulk. I am the only child, so it is really hard for me to decide what to do. I don't think it would be such a great idea to tell all my friends because it will make me more depressed. I never thought this would happen to me because all I ever wanted was to be happy in a nice family. I'm scared and confused and all this thinking takes me away from schoolwork and my marks are dropping. I am scared.

Daughter

4.

Dear Aunt Rose
I'm already 16 and I have been thinking about smoking. A lot of my friends smoke and I know it's not healthy. But it does look cool and it makes it easier to hang out because you always feel like you have something to do. You're not just left standing there. I don't plan on smoking all the time and I know I won't smoke when I'm older. Wouldn't smoking just when I'm out with my friends be okay?

Confused

6.

Dear Aunt Rose
I have so much trouble with my homework. I always get distracted by something else when I am doing my homework and I can't get it finished. Do you have any tips on how I can focus and get my work done?

Worried

8.

Dear Aunt Rose

I don't want to go to school anymore. Some classmates always laugh at me and call me 'Pork Chop'. Very often, they take out the things inside my schoolbag and throw them on the floor at recess. Sometimes they even hit in my back and push me onto the wall. I'm scared and unhappy but I can't tell the teachers because they threaten me that they'll beat me up if I tell anyone. Please help me!

Scared

7.

Dear Aunt Rose,
I have a boyfriend and my parents don't know. They don't want me to date until I am 16, which is two years away. Should I let them know now?

Alice

9.

Dear Aunty Rose,
I want to keep a pet cat but my parents keep saying "No". What should I do?

Pet lover

11.

Dear Aunty Rose,
During the summer holidays, I found out that I need glasses to see better. I am worried because most people in our F3 class who need glasses have most tacts or brand name glasses. So I never wore mine. I would squint to see the board or sometimes lean forward. I'm afraid that if I wear my glasses everyone will think I'm a bore and no one will like me or do anything with me. What should I do?

short-sighted

13.

Dear Aunty Rose,
I met this guy online a few months ago. We became pretty good friends and we talked a lot. But, because of all the things I hear about stalking and how Net relationships can never work, I lied to him many times.
Mostly I did it for my own safety.
Recently though, I sent him a picture of myself and he sent me a picture of himself. We have started talking more and more, up to four hours a day. We are almost like best friends.
My feelings are changing for him and his are changing for me. I've lied so much just to protect myself so I wrote him a letter and told him the truth about everything.
Did I do the right thing? Is there still a chance that he will be my boyfriend, though he lives in Macau?

Anita

15.

Dear Aunty Rose,
My big exams are coming up soon and I am having trouble with my parents. Every day after school, I'll go home and study until about 7 pm. Then I watch TV. But my dad or mom will ask me to keep on studying. I don't like people giving me orders or controlling my life. I want to be free. But of course, I have to do whatever my parents tell me to and it makes me really unhappy.

Unhappy

17.

Dear Aunty Rose,
One of my good friends from school has been a really good student until recently. Now it seems that all she's interested in doing is shopping. She buys very expensive clothes and then she doesn't even wear them. What should I do to help her?

Ah Mei

10.

Dear Aunty Rose,
Should I keep my diary? My diary contains many things. Most important is... everything I am thinking of... how I am feeling about this guy and my relationship with him. My mom doesn't know about this, but we have already broken up.
I want to throw it away because my mom usually looks through my things, when I'm asleep or when I am not around.
I tried talking to her about why she did this, but she would only get angry and ask me why I do not want her to look through my things. She suspects I am keeping a secret or something. She suspects I am I know I am. That's why I am troubled.
Part of me wants to throw the diary away so that it will be forgotten, but part of me wants to keep it because I know that it will be the only sweet remembrance and memories of him and my feelings. What should I do?

Troubled Girl

12.

Dear Aunty Rose,
I think I am having difficulty adapting to school life. I don't act like every body else at school. I feel alone in the world. I don't know what to do. I am always made fun of at school. I don't know if I should take it seriously or not. I just usually ignore it until it gets out of control. Then I get really angry and always take my anger out on my sister. What do you suggest I do?

Different

14.

Dear Aunty Rose,
Whenever I have to speak in front of the whole class my face always turns red and feels hot. It's really embarrassing to be so obviously embarrassed in front of everyone. I used to be fine, but a few months ago I started turning red when I had to stand up in front of the class. What can I do to make myself feel comfortable when I have to be on the spot?

Johnny

16.

Dear Aunty Rose,
I am an S3 student and one of my classmates refuses to speak to me. She uses every excuse she can think of to avoid talking to me. I don't know why she does this, or what to do.

Puzzled

18.

Dear Aunty Rose,
I am a very diligent and responsible student, and I am very proud to say that. The problem is, every time there is group work, my group leave me and just give me all the work to do. I always do it alone, whether it be group work or partners. I don't like the way they treat me. They think I'm so responsible and I won't need help because I am smart... But I feel degraded and abused. I tried talking to my group, but it didn't work. I feel desperate. Help!

Smart Boy

(a)

This kind of thing happens quite often, and it seems the more conscientious and willing you are, the more people will take advantage of you. The trick is learning to say "no".
I am not sure how your projects are set out, if you can get away with only doing your part, but if you can then that is what you should do. The other thing you can do is to speak to your teachers and explain the problem to them. I know this sounds like you're raving on your classmates, but in the long run you need to look after yourself as no one else will.

(c)

There is nothing you can do to change your father's mind. What has happened is between him and your mother. But you are quite within your rights to ask them where this leaves you, if you'll still be seeing him, and how often. I can understand that you don't want to tell everyone what's going on in your life, but perhaps you could share it with a friend or teacher just so that you have someone to talk to. It's not good to try to deal with these things on your own.

(b)

When girls grow up they need some privacy. That means that parents should not be looking through their private things. It would be very sad if you had to throw your diary away. One day when you have children of your own you might like to let them read it, or maybe read it yourself. Perhaps you could lock it away somewhere or give it to someone you trust. Or you could wrap it up and tape it up very tightly and hope she gets the message.

(d)

I think your problem is shared by many students. Your parents want you to do your best so that you can have a bright future. However, there is such a thing as too much!
Perhaps you could make a list of the subjects you are doing, and write down the amount of time you need to study each subject. Then, sit down with your parents and explain to them that you need to rest in between subjects, and that you cannot study all the time without any rest.
Ask them to help you make a study timetable, and that way instead of fighting with them you can work together to prepare for your exams. This will help them feel like they have some control of the situation, which should help them relax a little.

(e)

I'm afraid there's not much you can do until you leave home and live on your own. Until then you have to obey your parents. It might seem like forever before that will happen, but I promise you, when you look back on this time it will seem very short. If you really love cats, try volunteering at a shelter. There you'd get the chance to give love to cats without homes, while also enjoying some cuddle time yourself.

(f)

A whole year seems a long time to grieve for a lost pet. I can only tell you that it will heal and it will take time. Perhaps it is the way that you think about her, that makes you sad. If you believe in life after death, then surely you will believe that your doggie is in a happy place. But that doesn't stop you from being lonely. Perhaps it's time that you got another dog. The new dog won't ever replace the one you lost, but you can have someone to comfort you. Perhaps you'd like to get a dog from one of the dog rescue services in Hong Kong, that way you'll also be helping to save that dog.

(g)

Are these by any chance girl friends that are phoning you? Personally I hate phones, they always interrupt me and I think they're very rude. Even if you are busy with someone else you can't ignore the ringing of a phone. If you have a cell phone then I suggest you turn it off when you don't want to be disturbed. If you are being phoned on a landline, then I suggest you tell your callers that you are busy and will call them back when you have time. Do not answer any questions. Just tell them you will call them back then hang up. When you fail to call them back they may get the message that you have better things to do than answer their silly questions.

(h)

And this bothers you because...? Who cares why someone doesn't speak to you. That is their loss. You're an interesting and nice person and if they don't want to get to know you, why should it worry you? The answer is simply to do nothing and stop worrying about it.

(i)

Psychologists tell us that shopping can be just as addictive as gambling or alcohol. It has this hold over us because it makes us feel good, even if it's only temporary. But the person who is the shopaholic seldom recognises this.
It very much depends on how much you want to get involved in your friend's life, and whether you're willing to risk your friendship. If you openly criticise her shopping, or tell her that there's something wrong with her, you may lose her.
You could try suggesting alternative outings, instead of shopping. Tell her that you're bored with shopping and you want to try something different. And make her feel good about herself. I don't mean be false, because she will see right through that. Find the good in her and praise it. She might brush you off but keep at it, and hopefully she will begin to believe in herself enough to stop her reckless habit.

(j)

If you need to smoke to be "cool" with your so-called friends, are they really worth being "cool" with? Find some friends that do not want you to smoke or drink, etc. to be with them. There should be nothing you have to do to be cool with your friends. Don't put your health at risk just for the sake of fitting in.

(l)

I don't think your parents are going to be pleased that you have a boyfriend, especially since you already know that they only want you to start dating once you are 16. To introduce him as your "boyfriend" will bring about all sorts of negative ideas. Perhaps you could introduce him as your friend. That way they will know who you are with and may allow the relationship to continue. A word of caution: if you are kissing this boy, or doing more than this, then saying he is only a friend is a lie.

(m)

You're brave for confessing your lies to this boy. If he does care about you, then I think his love will be very strong. But please do not let that blind you to the dangers of Net relationships. If you are going to meet him then take care that you are not alone, and do not leave the group to be alone with him.

(o)

It's difficult for me to offer solutions if I don't know why people are making fun of you. You say you feel different, but you don't say in what way. Do you have three heads? Also you don't say how old you are, so it is hard for me to judge the age of your peers. Classmates can be very cruel and often when they are in a group they act differently from the way they would act if they were by themselves. Something you may find useful is to "outsmart" them. Make fun of yourself before they make fun of you. Take the "joke" away from them and own it yourself. That empowers you. There is a good saying - laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone. This is not excusing your classmates' behaviour, only helping you to deal with it. As for taking your anger out on your sister, that is really unfair and mean. Are you as bad as your tormentors or better than them?

(p)

I'm sure your friends at school will probably tease you a little about your glasses at first, but then they will forget all about them and things will be back to normal. However if you don't wear them, you could damage your eyes further, and suffer from headaches or bad posture from leaning forward to squint all the time. Also, you don't need to be worrying about your eyes when you're trying to learn. So you're just going to have to be brave and strong until everyone gets over the difference in your appearance.

(k)

It's strange that this blushing (for that's what it is) has suddenly started. Did you have an unpleasant experience to do with public speaking? If you did, perhaps you need to work through that so that it no longer bothers you. The easiest way to do this is to imagine it as very silly a cartoon and laugh about it. You might need to do this a few times before your brain will let it go. If this is not the case, then you need to "investigate" further. Do you blush if you talk to one person? How about if you talk to two? How many people have to be there before you blush? Maybe you could ask a few friends if you could practise on them and gradually increase your audience until you are no longer bothered by the size of it. The other thing you could do is to practise in an empty classroom. Sometimes it is just the formality of the occasion that makes us feel uncomfortable.

(n)

Put your running shoes on and get away from this person as fast as possible. His is a totally selfish love and he will never come to understand or respect your feelings. You will either give in to what he wants, or you will have to end the relationship completely. This guy should not be dating you, let alone pressuring you to commit, especially when you've already told him how you feel. Ask your parents for their help in keeping him away. Be careful because he may become very angry when he doesn't get what he wants from you and could become very nasty. You might even ask your parents to speak to him, or write him a letter, explaining that you would only consider such a relationship once you have matured.

(q)

Set a certain time aside for homework only. Set yourself about an hour of study time. Sit down and tell yourself to stick to it. Postpone fun stuff that you'd rather be doing until after that is done. Give yourself a reward for finishing your work. You could also do your homework in little bursts. If you have trouble sticking to something do it for about 15 minutes then get up and do something else. Don't be afraid to take a short break.

Positive Effects of the "Auntie Rose" Reading Task

When interviewed after using the "Auntie Rose" reading activity, Miss Lai was pleased that a number of groups had collaborated in the task and were able to find matches fairly quickly. In the subsequent lesson, as groups continued to match their letters, she asked the successful groups to share their strategies for completing the task.



She also described some of the positive effects of introducing this authentic text into the classroom.

Drama about Teen Problems



The second task discussed in the S.2 collaborative lesson-planning meeting, a drama about teen problems, was adopted by Miss Chow and Miss Lai. Neither Miss Chow nor Miss Lai had conducted a formal drama activity in their teaching before. Miss Chow was also new to the teaching profession and Miss Lai was her assigned mentor.

Both teachers carried out the task in much the same way. They introduced the task and asked students to form groups and prepare a drama script on a particular problem. Miss Lai gave students a worksheet to assist them in writing a drama script and instructions for planning and performing the drama.



She also gave groups the option of doing voiceovers (one student narrating and saying the lines while the other students mimed the actions) to address the mixed abilities within groups. Students first wrote their script and submitted it for editing and marking by the teacher. Then students prepared their drama, and it was performed on stage in the hall during class time. Both teachers included a feedback session at the end of each drama performance. Classmates gave advice to the characters in the story and commented on the problem shown. This feedback stage is simple but is one of the most important steps in the task as it provides the audience with a natural reason for listening, which in turn gives the performers on stage a communicative purpose.



Finally, students evaluated each performance and gave each other suggestions for improvement. This stage is also important in developing learners' self-assessment skills.

The task is pedagogically sound in the following ways:

- It involved student creativity and personal experience.
- It drew on students' knowledge of dramatic performance through television and cinema.
- It required teamwork and cooperation.
- It was an "open-ended" task (Ur 1996, Prodromou 1992), i.e. it did not require a convergent response and was thus suitable for mixed-ability groups.
- It recycled language taught in the unit (e.g. giving advice) several times in the task.

- It developed peer- and self-assessment.

[Explore the impact of the drama activity on students' learning](#)

Name: _____ Class: _____ () Date: _____

☺ What am I going to do? ☺

You are going to do a drama. But before that, you need to write a script.

☺ What is the drama about? ☺

The drama should be about teen problems, for example, teenagers may have problems with their family, studies, love, friends

☺ How long should the drama be? ☺

It should be about 5-8 minutes. You may talk about 1 or 2 cases.

☺ Who should I work with? ☺

There should be 8 students in a group. It is better that you have some girls and some boys in a group because you need different characters.

☺ What should I prepare? ☺

1. A script
2. Casting
3. Costume (if necessary)
4. Make-up (if necessary)
5. Anything you think necessary

☺ When must I hand in the script? ☺

2nd April, 2004 (Friday)

☺ When will we do the drama? ☺

16th April, 2004 (Friday)

**Cover Page
of the
Script**

Po Leung Kuk Mrs. Ma Kam Ming-Cheung Fook Sien College

Form Two English Drama

~~ Teen Problems ~~

Group Members: 1. 2B _____ () 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

Characters: 1. Mary (by Chan Tai Man) 2. Mary's dad (by Wong Mei Mei)
3. _____ 4. _____

Voice: 1. Mary (by Lee Wai Ming) 2. Mary's dad (by Leung Po Lam)
3. _____ 4. _____

**Layout
of the
Script**

Scene 1

(Mary is doing homework at home. Her brother is watching TV. It is so noisy.)

Mary: Can you turn down the TV, please? I'm doing homework right now.

Brother: You're so annoying! Just shut up! ...

...

...

Scene 2

(Mary is having an English quiz in the classroom. She finds it really difficult ...)

Miss Wong: OK. Time's up. Put down your pens.

...

...



Present or Past Tense?

4/26
re'd on
30/4

Name Group 4 Form Class No.

Subject Date

Sarah is the Aside. Harriet plays father, Mandy plays mother.
Carol plays main, Ivy plays sister, Candy plays brother, Colleen &
Karitna play friends, Aiko plays teacher.

father: Ugly Harry, Mother: Mary Harry, Main: Blue Harry
Sister: Lazy Harry, brother: Noisy Harry, friends: Colleen & Karitna,
teacher: Ms Lala

Aside: Today, we will tell you a story about family problems. This story
about a girl called Poor Harry. Poor is a poor girl, her parents, we
like her brother more than her. Her sister is lazy and ^{she} always orders
her to do housework. One day after school, she ~~went to~~ ^{went to}
home and saw that. ? ^{what?} ^{situation.}

'Poor: What happened ^{to} with the house? Why the house ^{is} dirty?

Aside: She saw her sister sitting ^{on} the sofa and watching TV. Her
brother is playing on the floor.

Lazy: Blue you must clean all the house and wash the floor
and wash the ~~clothes~~ ^{clothes}. Do you understand? ~~Let~~ ^{Do} it now.
? ^{Do it now.}

Poor: I don't know understand. I don't want do it.

Lazy: You must do it now. ^{This} is an order. ~~Let~~ ^{Do} it, ^{Hurry up} quick.

Aside: 'Poor': ^{? cleaning} cleaning the floor. When she ^{is} doing the ^{housework} work, Her
brother is coming. ^{came}

Noisy: sister, play game with me. come on.

Poor: ^{Am} I doing the work, I can't.

Nosiy: You must play with me. If you ^{do} not play with me, I will hit you and ~~tell~~ father and mother ~~you~~ ^{to} hit me

Poor: I hate you and the family.

Aside: Poor is very sad. she go out. When she go out, she meet her parents come back. ^{do} present on ^{poor to poor?}

father: Why do ^{don't you} you not go home ^{but} ~~shopping~~ shopping ^{at} here?

Poor: I want to go out, I don't want ^{go} to home

Mother: You must go home to do the house work and look after your brother. If you ^{do} not go home, I will hit you.

Poor: I hate the family!

Aside: she cries and ran away. she walk ^{along} around on the street.

Colleen: Look! Poor ^(changed around) is in here? Is it Poor there?

Katrina: Oh. Yes, ^{Hey!} Hello! Poor ^{speaking}

Poor: Hello! Colleen & Katrina Katrina

K&C: You are sad. What's happened ^{to} with you? Tell us.

Poor: Nothing.

K&C: Can we help you?

Poor: Yes. Can you go shopping with me?

K&C: OK! Let's go. now!



Name Group 4 Form Class No.

Subject Date

Aside: Next day morning. ^{In} At the classroom.

C: ^{Hey} You don't worried your family and be sad ^{or any more} any more?

Pretty: It's ok.
 (Is it a question?)
 (or an advice?)

K: If you have any problems, you will tell Miss lala.
 Can / should

Aside: K & C meet Miss lala.

K: Miss lala ^{Are you free to} Pretty feels sad. ^{to} May you ~~to~~ talk with her?

Miss: It's ok.

Aside: Miss lala ^{comes} come to the classroom and ^{talks} talk to Pretty.

Miss: ^{If} Pretty you have any problems you can tell me. And I can help you.

Pretty: Miss lala, My parents don't like me and hit me. In the family, I must do the house ^(one word) work and look after my brother, but my sister can't do. I hate my family.

Miss: You ^{about} don't worry that. You ^{doesn't anything} ought ^{should} to talk to your parents and explain your feelings.

Aside: ^① Everybody, How do you feel poor Pretty's problems?

② Do you think she can be happy later or not? Do you ^③ have a good suggestion for Pretty?

Student Engagement in the Drama about Teen Problems

Students in both Miss Chow's and Miss Lai's classes put a great deal of effort into their play scripts and performances and they clearly enjoyed the process. It was evident from the drama performances, that students were indeed engaging with English through this task. It was observed that:

- Students had taken the opportunity to be creative and personal, as demonstrated by the lively language used in their play scripts and the interesting storylines about difficult topics.
- A range of dramatic techniques were employed in the performance such as voiceovers, narration, symbols to signal scene changes (for example the jingling of keys) and the use of props and costumes. With the exception of the narrators, most of the students had memorised their lines and actually acted out their parts, improvising their lines on occasion.
- The students watched each other's drama performances with genuine interest and great attention. Students in the audience laughed, applauded and responded to each performance, and this was a key factor in encouraging the students on stage to communicate meaningfully and to express themselves clearly.



Impact of the drama activity on students' learning

"And sometimes when I forgot the lines during our performance, I didn't worry about it because we were just performing on our own and the audience just watched our performance. We just express ourselves, and we don't have to worry about our mistakes because our teacher will highlight our mistakes at last. We don't have to worry that the audience can't get our meaning."

"First of all, when we planned the drama, we looked at the topic and chose some relevant vocabulary for writing the script. Then, we wrote some sentences based on the vocabulary. The process strengthened my impression of the vocabulary and grammar. Sometimes, when we discuss the topic in our daily life in English, the sentences pop into my mind, and leave a stronger impression on my mind."

"I learnt about quick wit in speaking. Even if I forget the line, I can make up sentences according to the context. It's fun to express our ideas on the spot."

Miss Lai explains how students injected their own personalities and personal lives into their performances.



Students reported that they had benefited from the drama in the following ways:

- Increased confidence in speaking
- Improved oral fluency
- Increased sensitivity to pronunciation and voicing; and
- Consolidation of the vocabulary taught in the unit

Teachers' Views on the Benefits of the Collaborative Lesson-planning Meetings and Peer Observations

When asked about the form planning meetings and peer observation, all the teachers interviewed expressed that it was a positive initiative and that they had found the experience useful. They mentioned several benefits of the form collaboration meetings, lesson-planning and peer observation process.



Several teachers reported that the benefits included assistance in lesson-planning and access to teaching ideas:

"We come together and we can generate ideas, brainstorm more ideas. We can discuss how we can carry out the activities, and what we have to focus [on]."



One teacher also mentioned the more general benefit of connecting with colleagues during a busy and full year typical of secondary school teachers' working lives in Hong Kong:

"I think it's good for us to have the meeting. Because we can get some common ideas about what others are doing."



She also felt that the meeting helped her to discover new activities and teaching strategies, to learn about colleagues' strengths and experience, and to identify opportunities for peer observation:

"Some of them gave me inspiration about how to teach the students. For example, I remember Eva mentioned that she was going to have a drama with her students, which I'd never thought of. I thought it was difficult to do this in the school. So, in the future, I'm going to observe her lessons about her students' drama..."



Implications and recommendations for other schools wishing to foster collaborative materials design and textbook adaptation

To establish a collaborative culture amongst teachers, it should be recognised that trust amongst colleagues is the foundation of a collaborative culture. It is important therefore to value ideas and contributions from all members of the panel, whilst recognising and exploiting individual strengths and providing support to new or junior members of staff. In such a culture, competition and negative comparisons between colleagues are minimised. In addition, it is suggested that a collaborative culture is best developed at the grassroots level. It can be encouraged from above, but can only truly be established through the daily interactions of teachers.

Developing materials and adapting textbooks are areas in which teachers can collaborate. To promote this practice amongst teachers, panels can:

- Encourage teachers to take risks in the classroom and learn from trying new ideas;
- Adopt a flexible approach to the use of textbooks and allow teachers freedom to address students' needs;
- Set up systems such as the sharing trays and intranet so that the sharing and adapting of materials is simple and accessible to teachers;
- Alongside the development of a general sharing culture in the panel, include more formal and structured ways of collaborating on materials design, such as the regular planning meetings and peer observations implemented by the panel recently.

Learning to devise communicative activities based on authentic texts and to adapt existing tasks in the textbook can best be cultivated in a collaborative culture, as teachers can learn from each other. Enhancing textbook tasks and developing worksheets need not be an arduous task. From the key principles exemplified in the materials examined in PLK Mrs Ma Kam Ming College, teachers can:

- Consider task authenticity when devising tasks around spoken or written texts, i.e. consider how the text is read and used in real life and structure the task in a similar manner.
- Increase the communicative potential of the task or material by making the context and audience authentic or as authentic as possible. Very often this simply involves identifying an actual person in the students' lives as the audience.
- Make the task "open-ended" which caters for mixed-ability classes and places the emphasis on genuine rather than pre-determined responses. Again, this could be as simple as removing MC options.

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