

Exemplar 9: Storytelling in the Oral Curriculum

Oral Storytelling Curriculum

This exemplar features the oral storytelling curriculum developed by Miss Nikelle Ebert, a NET teacher at Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College.

The project followed Miss Ebert's 1B class for 10 weeks during the second term of 2003-2004. The course began with Miss Ebert reading aloud fairy stories to her students, and concluded with a summative assessment where students worked in groups to read an extract from a story to their teacher.

From our observations, there are several distinctive features worthy of examination and description:



Reading aloud

By reading aloud to her students, Miss Ebert generated interest and motivated students to engage in the language.



Correction and feedback

The way Miss Ebert corrects and provides feedback to her students helps students improve and overcome any learner anxiety as second language learners.



Group work

The use of group work in lessons helps promote cooperative learning.



Assessment

The assessment rationale and implementation offers teachers an interesting and viable alternative to existing practices for assessing oral English.

Background and Goals

When Miss Ebert arrived at Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College two years ago, she was asked by the panel chair to design an oral curriculum for the junior form students. The Form One curriculum had to encompass poetry in the first term, and storytelling in the second. Miss Ebert would teach each class of students once a cycle. Other than that, Miss Ebert was given free rein with its design.

Course aims

When designing the curriculum, Miss Ebert had a number of language objectives for this course. She hoped to help students attain:

- 1. Increased fluency and better pronunciation**
- 2. Better reading skills**
- 3. Exposure to more vocabulary**
- 4. Awareness of different sentence structures**

In addition to these, Miss Ebert hoped to use poetry and storytelling to:

- 5. Create interest and motivate the students to speak more English**
- 6. Build the students' confidence to use English**

Although this research focuses upon Miss Ebert's storytelling curriculum with her 1B oral class, it also makes references to the few lessons we observed from her first-term poetry unit.





Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College is a school in Tai Wai that uses English as the medium of instruction. It first came to the attention of this project due to the fact that the students had significant value-addedness in their Hong Kong English Attainment Scores across all junior forms during the year 2000-01.

Two years ago, Miss Ebert and the English panel chair started to plan an oral curriculum for junior form students (S.1) that aimed at enhancing students' oral skills through the teaching of short stories and poems. It was decided that stories and poems provided the teachers with a rich context for language input in class. Miss Ebert was given the freedom to design her own course and over the last two years it has evolved into a very distinctive approach to the teaching of oral English in lower forms.



For more details about the school, please visit their [website](#)

School contact information:

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School telephone: 2604 9762

Principal: Mr Yuen Kwok-Hei (袁國禧先生)

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Timetable and Structure

Because Miss Ebert only has one oral lesson per cycle with each junior form class, she has designed fairly self-contained lessons to maintain continuity. Each story therefore lasts only one or at most two cycles. The focuses of the lessons include:

- 1. Story structures**
- 2. Vocabulary**
- 3. Pronunciation**
- 4. Group work skills**
- 5. Presentation skills**

The oral assessment takes place during class time at the end of term.



The following table gives an idea of the range of stories covered in the ten weeks of the second term (2004):

10 Feb	<i>The Elves and the Shoemaker</i>
2 Mar	<i>Cinderella</i>
11 March	<i>Lady and the Tramp (1)</i>
22 March	<i>Lady and the Tramp (2)</i>
31 March	<i>Video - Timmy's gift</i>
22 April	<i>The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse</i>
4 May	<i>The Petrol Tank</i>
13 May	Oral guidelines and presentation
24 May	Preparation for oral exam
3 June	Oral assessment

**Form 1 Oral English
Work Schedule 2003-2004**

Number of lessons per cycle: 1 lesson per class (5 classes)

Prepared by: Nikelle Ebert

SEMESTER 1

Assessment Dates: Cycle 10 (10 – 18 December 2003)

Assessment Task: In small groups, students will choose one poem studied in class this semester and present the poem to the class (focus will be on pronunciation, expression, rhyme scheme, and presentation skills).

Note: Phonics will not be taught as a discreet unit; instead it will be contextualised into all units throughout the year and exploited where possible and appropriate.

Cycle	Tasks and Products	Assignments	Homework
1 2/9-10/9	Focus: Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class expectations ● Name games ● Simple conversational interaction (to gauge level of language ability) 		Prepare a short, informal speech using a greeting, saying name, and using 1 adjective to describe self.
2 11/9-23/9	Focus: Introduction to poetry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion: What is a poem? What is the purpose of a poem? When do we use them? ● Examples of simple poems (rhymes) – read and understand key vocabulary 		Cloze activity based on simple poems studied in class.
3 24/9-3/10	Focus: Simple poems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is rhyme? ● Rhyming words (construction of a vocabulary bank – phonics will be exploited here) 	Teacher to check students' notes up-to-date.	Rhyming words activity (complete the poem using an appropriate word that rhymes)

4 6/10-15/10	<p>Focus: Rhyming schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is a rhyming scheme? ● Identifying rhyming schemes in simple poetry (focus on correct tone and pace for recitation) 		Identification of rhyming scheme of more complex poems (unseen).
5 16/10-24/10	<p>Focus: Reciting verse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listening/watching examples of good recitation ● Whole class recitation of poem previously studied (focus on projection, pacing, expression) 		
6 27/10-4/11	<p>Focus: Recitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group presentation of a simple poem ● Focus on expression, pacing and fluency 	Group presentations	
7 10/11-18/11	<p>Focus: Quiz & Presentation Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will undertake a short quiz, testing them on all vocabulary learnt from the beginning of the semester ● Teaching and practicing of good presentation skills 	Quiz	Organising possible group members for the assessment task.
8 19/11-27/11	<p>Focus: Assessment task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion of task requirements ● Formation of groups and choosing poems 		Group preparation for assessment.
9 28/11-9/12	<p>Focus: Assessment task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be given the lesson to work with their group, preparing their assessment presentation 		Group preparation for assessment.
10 10/12-18/12	ORAL EXAMINATION		

SEMESTER 2

Assessment Dates: Cycle 22 (1 – 9 June 2004)

Assessment Task: In small groups, students will recite one of the stories studied this semester. Focus will be on fluency, expression, pronunciation and simple dramatic skills.

Note: “Key stories” which will be studied throughout the semester will be chosen at the beginning of Semester 2.

11A 2/2-5/2	Focus: Skills ● Students will complete grammar and vocabulary worksheets		Finishing worksheets.
Lunar New Year Holidays			
12 6/2-16/2	Focus: Warming up ● Reminder of class expectations ● Confidence building and voice projection activities (building on presentation skills from last semester) ● Discussion of work and focus for this semester		Students to write a short piece explaining their favourite story.
13 17/2-25/2	Focus: Story-telling <i>The Elves ...</i> ● Discussion: What is a story? Why do we tell stories? ● Listen/watch a story being told (key story 1; key vocabulary)		Cloze activity for understanding story studied in class.
14 26/2-8/3	Focus: Key story 2 <i>The Elves ...</i> ● Reading of key story. ● Key vocabulary ● Vocabulary exercises for consolidation		Finishing vocabulary exercises from class.
15 9/3-17/3	Focus: Key story 3 <i>Cinderella</i> ● Reading of key story ● Key vocabulary ● Introduction of plot and storyboarding		Students to do a storyboard of the plot of key story 3.
16 18/3-26/3	Focus: Storyboards and key story 4 <i>Lady ...</i> ● Sharing of storyboards ● Reading of key story 4 and vocabulary	Storyboards.	Vocabulary activity from key story 4.
17 29/3-31/3	Focus: Stories on Video <i>Timmy's Gift</i> ● Watching famous fairytale stories on video		

Easter Holidays			
18 21/4-29/4	Focus: Key story 5 <i>Town Mouse + Country Mouse</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading for understanding and vocabulary extension ● Discussion of conventions of a story (orientation, complication, rising tension, climax, resolution) 		
19 30/4-10/5	Focus: Storytelling competition & key story 6 <i>The Petrol Tank</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key story 6 – reading, vocabulary, identifying conventions of story ● Organisation for story telling competition ● Revision of good presentation techniques 		Students prepare for storytelling competition.
20 11/5-19/5	Focus: Assessment requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion of assessment requirements ● Teacher to model assessment to reinforce good presentation skills ● Students choose groups and story for assessment 		Group preparation for assessment.
21 20/5-31/5	Focus: Preparation of assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practice assessment presentations ● Student-teacher consultation 		Group preparation for assessment.
22 1/6-9/6	ORAL EXAMINATION		

Resources: Key stories (to be chosen at a later date); various activities from teacher reference books; Hong Kong Education City English Campus Homepage (www.hkedcity.net/english/); other miscellaneous resources including videos.

Choosing the Text

What criteria does Miss Ebert use in selecting the text?

Miss Ebert is conscientious about selecting her texts for the oral curriculum. She selects stories according to the following criteria:

1. Stories that students will be familiar with

As Miss Ebert only sees her students once a cycle, it is important that each lesson be discrete and self-contained. Familiar texts activate the students' schemata more readily, and will engage the students' motivation from the outset.

2. Stories that stimulate the imagination of students

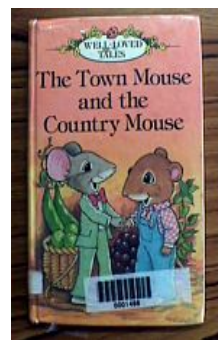
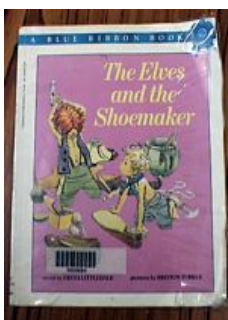
By choosing fairy-tales such as *Lady and the Tramp* or *Cinderella*, Miss Ebert is able to tap into the imagination of students, thereby arousing their interest. One student reported in an interview afterwards that he found the stories interesting "because it won't happen in real life."

3. Stories that contain ample examples of the target language items she aims to address

Miss Ebert uses her stories as a "tool" to approach her language and teaching objectives, allowing her to:

- **introduce new vocabulary,**
- **contextualise pronunciation work,** and
- **introduce different sentence structures,** including those related to story structures (e.g. "Once upon a time")

Bibliography



Stories	Reference
<i>Lady and the Tramp, Cinderella</i>	Author unknown, (1988). In: <i>Disney's Two Minute Classics</i> , A Golden Book, Wisconsin: Western Publishing Co.
Timmy's Gift (video)	Author Unknown, (1991). <i>Precious Moments Presents "Timmy's Gift"</i> , A Golden Book video, Wisconsin: Western Publishing Inc.
<i>The Elves and the Shoemaker</i>	Littledale, Freya. (Retold) (1975). <i>The Elves and the Shoemaker</i> , New York: Scholastic Inc.
<i>The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse</i>	McKie, Anne. (Retold) (1982). <i>The Town Mouse and the Country</i>

<i>the Country Mouse</i>	<i>Mouse</i> , Leicestershire: Lady Bird Books.
<i>The Petrol Tank</i>	McRobbie, David. (1975). <i>The Talking Tree and Other Stories</i> ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reading Aloud

Miss Ebert believes strongly in providing the students with a sound model of how to read the text before they start to work on it. She does this for two reasons:

1. To engage students' attention from the outset

As can be seen from the video, the usually "boisterous" 1B class are mesmerised by Miss Ebert's storytelling. When students were asked at the end of the term what they enjoyed best, several boys cited Miss Ebert's reading aloud as being "so interesting" and something that they "remembered the best"



2. To model the language contained in the text

By modelling the language for her students, the class is exposed to good examples of pronunciation, intonation and stress. They are then expected to produce this later on, both in group work and in the final assessment.

The Benefits of Reading Aloud

Throughout the course, Miss Ebert took time to read stories aloud to her students. This normally occurred as the class was being introduced to a new text or fairy story. In interviews, Miss Ebert spoke passionately about how she feels that reading aloud has a calming influence on her students and how it can motivate them to read and enjoy texts. Indeed, during the lessons, the students' attention was evidently engaged by the teacher reading to them. In interviews with students, many even said that their favourite part of the course was when Miss Ebert read to them. For some, it was probably the first time that someone had read a whole book to them.



Much research has been done into the benefits of reading aloud to students in class. Although there are claims that reading aloud takes up too much time, many educators and researchers believe that the time spent is worthwhile because it enhances classroom instruction and leads to academic achievement.

There are many advantages to reading aloud in front of students. Some of the most important benefits are that it allows students to experience the rhythms of the English language, it models and produces enjoyment and it promotes learning from the printed word. The students are encouraged to engage with the text, and the reading from the teacher often helps the weaker students or low achievers in the class (Bridge, 1989). Morrow and Weinstein (1986) argue that this actually encourages reading, models fluent reading and is a way to share reader responses. Greaney and Hegarty (1987) developed this theme by claiming that teachers who read aloud to their students are, in fact, recommending a book, and that this may, in turn, lead to increased reading.



Miss Ebert sees that reading aloud to her class taps their interest and attention. However, it is not just the element of enjoyment that she is keen to develop. She also claims that reading aloud is integral for continuing to model what good readers do as they read texts to achieve comprehension.

References

Bridge, C. (1989). Beyond the basal in beginning reading. In P. Winograd, K. Wixson, & M. Lipson (Eds). *Improving basal reading instruction* (pp. 177-209). New York : Teachers College Press.

Greaney, V., & Hagerty, P.E. (1987). Correlations of leisure time reading. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 10, 3-20.

Morrow, L.M., & Weinstein, C. (1982). Increasing children's use of literature through programme and physical changes. *Elementary School Journal*, 83, 131-137.

Group Work

Why use group work?

In an interview, Miss Ebert mentions that she attempts to use group work as often as she can, in order to:

1. Maximise opportunities for students to speak

In an oral class with 41 students, it is nearly impossible to give each student a chance to speak up in the classroom. However, by forming groups, students have many opportunities to practise speaking.

2. Reduce anxiety in the students

From her own experience in learning German, Miss Ebert is aware of learner anxiety in speaking a second language. Students gain confidence through practising with their friends, so that when they are put on the spot in class, they have built up the confidence to present their ideas.



Effective group work requires group-work training

1B are an energetic class, and without the proper structure, they can easily get out of hand. In order to "channel their energy into something productive", Miss Ebert devoted a lot of time in the first term to training the class in how to do group work. This included:



- Teaching the students to **form groups quickly** and efficiently.
- Giving **clearly defined roles** for the students in each group (leader, reporter, note-taker, contributors)
- Giving explicit and **clear instructions** about the purpose and expectations of the task.
- **Actively monitoring** the students and providing support during group work.

The Benefits of Group Work and Learner Training

Classroom organisation is a major concern for many teachers because of the large class sizes and the small and cramped classroom conditions. In Miss Ebert's class, there are 41 students, which makes it very difficult for her to involve and engage the attention of every student in oral lessons. This experience is one that is shared by many teachers in Hong Kong. However, Miss Ebert realises the importance of group work in promoting and achieving the teaching and learning goals of her curriculum.



Group work is a cooperative activity with a number of students (usually 3-5) discussing a topic or solving a problem. In groups, there is often more participation and more equality in turn allocation. Additionally, the students feel more relaxed in groups because they are working with peers and feel more able to experiment with language. In a whole-class setting this is not the case and there is the added "pressure" imposed (consciously or not) by the teacher. Students can take risks in their own group without fear of comment or derision from a whole class listening to their response. In the group, the teacher is not present and so the dynamics are altered. As a result, the group formation allows students to take some of their own decisions regarding their learning.



The other benefit of group work is that the teacher is freed from his/her normal role as the transmitter of information from the front of the classroom. Instead, the teacher can walk around and monitor each group, stopping to provide advice and support to individual students.

There are, of course, problems associated with group work. In local settings, many teachers worry about increased noise levels when students work together. This can often pose problems for teachers who are expected to "manage" the class efficiently (which often translates into keeping the students quiet). Also, it is true that not all students respond to group work. Many students prefer to work on their own

and dislike being asked to work with others. The students may not like one another and this is a potential problem for teachers when forming groups. Finally, many students revert to their mother tongue when placed in groups and so teachers may feel that the use of group work is counter-productive.

It is easy to find problems with group work, but the advantages of cooperative learning surely outweigh the negative factors mentioned above. In Miss Ebert's class, there is a focus on cooperation, as seen in the final assessment, and so group work fits perfectly into the overall objectives of the oral curriculum. Miss Ebert admits that the class can be "a handful" at times, but when they know what they are supposed to do, they work attentively and with enthusiasm. This stems from the teacher's conscious attempt to share the teaching and learning objectives with her pupils. The students are also given clear roles in each group and they all know what they have to do.

Significantly, this type of learner training starts at the beginning of the school year as the teacher gradually moves from using columns and rows of students in cooperative tasks towards a more formalised version of groups where students choose their own partners. Miss Ebert allows her students to choose their own groups as she believes that ownership of the task is a powerful motivating force. However, she also reserves the right to change the groups if the students are not working together according to her instructions and expectations. Hence, she is able to manage the classroom organisation efficiently and fairly.

References

Ur, P. (1981). *Discussions that work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pronunciation, Vocabulary & Correction



Miss Ebert considers correction and pronunciation to be an extremely important part of her class, and believes this is doubly so given her role as a Native English Teacher (NET).

1. Teaching pronunciation and vocabulary in context

Miss Ebert teaches pronunciation in context. Without touching on IPA symbols, she works with her class on difficult sounds as they arise from the stories. Examples include the "L" sound (e.g., *L*ady and the Tramp) or the "th" sound (e.g., *The El*ves and the Shoemaker).

Similarly, the class go over the key vocabulary items of the stories. Miss Ebert stressed that it was not so important for the students to understand every single word in the story as much as to gain confidence that they could

approach a book and get a grasp of the story.

Sometimes Miss Ebert uses the story as a springboard for teaching other vocabulary items. Aside from learning that "puppies" are baby dogs from *Lady and the Tramp*, students were also introduced to other baby animals, such as kittens, calves, ponies and kids.

2. Making pronunciation fun and physical

Miss Ebert uses syllable-clapping and exaggerated face movements to illustrate the sounds of words. This makes pronunciation practice lively and interesting. It also helps students make the connection between the kinesthetic action and the sound produced.

3. Face-to-face correction with an awareness of over-correcting

Miss Ebert notices which students need the most pronunciation help in the class, and when she walks around the classroom, she will position herself so that those students will be able to see her face and model her.

At the same time, she is keenly aware that students may be embarrassed if they are singled out. Correction is an area that can have a number of psychological effects on the learner (Bartram & Walton, 1991), so Miss Ebert is careful to correct in an encouraging manner, thereby creating an environment in which her students have the confidence to take risks when producing English.



4. Encouraging students to help each other

Miss Ebert attempts to create an atmosphere where it is acceptable for students to seek help from their friends. In doing so, she has been able to produce a class atmosphere in which students feel confident to help and correct each other - even during a presentation or a final exam.



Reference

Bartram, M., & Walton, R. (1991). *Correction: A Positive Approach to Language Mistakes*. LTP Teacher Training.

Overcoming Learner Anxiety Through Correction Techniques

Although Miss Ebert has been teaching in HK for two years, she displays remarkable sensitivity to the psychological factors that often inhibit L2 learners in the classroom. Horwitz (1991) has argued that learning a foreign language is psychologically unsettling, and in a study conducted on students in Hong Kong, Tsui (1996) suggested that learners adopt a deliberate strategy of being reticent and passive in class. Many teachers in HK will be familiar with "passive" students who are unwilling to answer questions in class, even when they know the answer to the teacher's questions. Many Asian students do not like to be seen to "show off" in front of their classmates by answering questions and therefore choose to remain silent. Other students are often afraid of answering questions for fear of derision from the class or, worse, the teacher. These cultural phenomena have implications for the teacher, especially in oral classes where students' L2 output is expected to be maximised because of the focus of the lesson. Miss Ebert talks openly about not wanting her students to "lose face" and therefore adopts group work in class so that there is more equal participation from students and less fear from them as they work together using the target language.



Miss Ebert is also aware of the importance of positive reinforcement throughout her lessons, and in particular when she is correcting students or providing them with feedback. Instead of highlighting an individual student's errors or mispronunciation in front of the class, Miss Ebert makes the conscious decision to speak to the student individually. She monitors the students and models the language when she hears an error being made. By doing this, she is able to help students with specific problems and they can then address the error on their own without having to speak up in front of the class.

Miss Ebert also places great emphasis on encouraging students to correct one another. This peer support stems from the group work that underpins the lessons, and which could be observed in many lessons as well as in the final assessment. By encouraging a positive atmosphere in class where students are willing to take risks with the language, the common problems of learner anxiety and reduced self-esteem are significantly lowered. Not surprisingly, teachers of 1B reported increased confidence in the students as a result of Miss Ebert's oral curriculum and her teaching strategies in lessons.

References

Horwitz, E., Horwitz, M., & Cope, J. (1991). Foreign language classroom anxiety. In E. Horwitz & D. Young (Eds) *Language Anxiety : From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Tsui, A.B.M. (1996). Reticence and anxiety in second language learning. In K. Bailey & D. Nunan (Eds) *Voices from the Language Classroom*. New York : Cambridge University Press, pp. 145-167.

Assessment

As the assessment is a storytelling presentation, in the classroom, in groups, it is a **logical and integrated conclusion** to the curriculum.

Structure and rationale of the assessment process

1. Assessment is scheduled for the final lesson

In many local schools, the NET teacher has to assess students individually in the exam timetable, which can be quite tedious for the NET teacher, and stressful for the student. By structuring the oral exam in groups in the final lesson, this assessment is an efficient use of time and teacher effort.





2. Students choose text for oral



Each group of students is allowed to select an abridged version of a story they have studied in class to present in the exam. Interestingly enough, while students reported that they chose the stories themselves, Miss Ebert explained to us that she pushes stronger students towards more difficult texts, and weaker students towards simpler texts.

3. Students are given criteria for assessment

When the assessment criteria are transparent, students know what to aim for and what to improve upon. Miss Ebert does this in two ways:

- Students are taught presentation skills and practise evaluating each other's class presentations (Video of [presentation skills](#) )
- Students are given  [written copies](#) of the criteria and Miss Ebert goes over what is expected of them in class.



4. Students work in groups for the final exam



Having group work in the final exam is an extension of the group work students have engaged in throughout the term. The rationale and the benefits of this remain the same: to reduce learner anxiety, to foster cooperation and peer learning, and to reduce unhealthy competition. Storytelling also lends itself to group presentation, as students can play with different character voices, as well as individual and choral arrangements.

5. Students receive teacher support

Aside from modelling storytelling in class, Miss Ebert also makes a tape of her reading the stories available on the school server for students to practise. Furthermore, Miss Ebert gives personalised feedback and correction during the group work sessions. Students are also encouraged to find her outside class and seek help.



6. The final test occurs in the oral lesson

On the day of the final assessment, students present their 2-3-minute stories in groups in front of Miss Ebert. The other students can prepare quietly by themselves or take time to watch their classmates. In the exam that we observed, the atmosphere was supportive and students spoke with confidence. Students were respectful and appreciative of their peers' work and even offered corrective feedback.

Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College
Second Examination 2003-2004
F.1 English Language (Oral)

Name: _____ **Time Allowed: 10 mins**

Class: F.1 ____ **No:** ____ **Max. Mark: 20**

Date: 1 June to 9 June 2004 (Cycle 22)

You have already arranged groups of three (3) or four (4) students during class time. Your group has also chosen a story to recite.

In your group recite your story loudly, clearly and in an interesting manner.

Be sure to use your voice as well as appropriate body language and facial expressions.

You will have five (5) minutes to prepare your presentation and five (5) minutes to present it.

You may read the story from the piece of paper given to you in class.

Make sure all group members participate equally.

GOOD LUCK!

Story Sets

Set 1: The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse (by Anne McKie)

Set 2: Lady and the Tramp (adapted by Mary Packard)

Set 3: The Petrol Tank (by David McRobbie)

Set 4: The Elves and the Shoemaker (retold by Freya Littledale)

Set 5: Cinderella (adapted by Mary Packard)

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Name: _____

Time Allowed: 10 mins

Class: F.1____ No: ____

Max. Mark: 20

Date: 1 – 9 June 2004 (Cycle 22)

Final Score: ____/20

Marking Criteria

Set number of story recited: _____

Score Assessment Criteria	Excellent 5	Good 4	Average 3	Below Average 2	Poor 1
1 Loud and clear voice.					
2 Demonstrates a high degree of accuracy, fluency and intonation.					
3 Good use of voice, eye contact and body language to promote communicative effectiveness.					
4 Good group and turn-taking skills.					

The Elves and the Shoemaker

Retold by Freya Littledale

There was once a good shoemaker who was very poor. He had only one piece of leather to make one pair of shoes. He cut the leather that night and decided to make the shoes in the morning.

The next morning he went to his table and there was a fine pair of shoes!
“But who could have made them?” the shoemaker said.

A man came in and paid the shoemaker two gold coins for the shoes.

The shoemaker bought two pieces of leather.

The next morning the shoemaker found two pairs of ladies' shoes. Two ladies came in and paid four gold coins for the beautiful shoes.

Every night the shoemaker cut the leather. Every morning the shoes were made. And everyday more people came to buy his beautiful shoes.

Just before Christmas the shoemaker and his wife stayed up to see who was making the shoes. At twelve o'clock two elves came in.

The elves climbed up onto the table and set to work making the shoes.

The next morning the wife and the shoemaker decided to make the elves clothes and shoes.

On Christmas Eve the shoemaker left no leather on the table. He left the pretty gifts instead.

At twelve o'clock the elves came in ready to work. But when they saw the gifts they were very happy.

After that night the elves were never seen again. But everything always went well for the good shoemaker and his wife.

1. Handouts



- Criteria for the exam, outlining the details (stories available, dates, etc.)
- Marksheet for the exam
- Sample story (*The Elves and the Shoemaker*)

2. Additional videos

(a) Presentation skills

In this video, Miss Ebert works on the presentation skills with the students (video taken from the first term poetry unit, December 2003).



(b) Feedback on group practice

This video shows a group of girls practising for the oral assessment. Nikelle listens to them and gives them feedback.



(c) Storytelling competition

After the assessment, the group with the best score from each class had a chance to present to the whole form in an end-of-term storytelling competition. Watch the students from 1B perform on stage here.



3. Sound files

To prepare the students for their exam, Miss Ebert recorded herself reading the stories and put this on the school intranet for her students to listen and practise.

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GOOD LUCK!

Story Sets

Set 1: The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse (by Anne McKie)

Set 2: Lady and the Tramp (adapted by Mary Packard)

Set 3: The Petrol Tank (by David McRobbie)

Set 4: The Elves and the Shoemaker (retold by Freya Littledale)

Set 5: Cinderella (adapted by Mary Packard)

Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College
Second Examination 2003-2004
F.1 English Language (Oral)

Name: _____

Time Allowed: 10 mins

Class: F.1____ No: ____

Max. Mark: 20

Date: 1 – 9 June 2004 (Cycle 22)

Final Score: ____/20

Marking Criteria

Set number of story recited: _____

Score Assessment Criteria	Excellent 5	Good 4	Average 3	Below Average 2	Poor 1
1 Loud and clear voice.					
2 Demonstrates a high degree of accuracy, fluency and intonation.					
3 Good use of voice, eye contact and body language to promote communicative effectiveness.					
4 Good group and turn-taking skills.					

The Elves and the Shoemaker

Retold by Freya Littledale

There was once a good shoemaker who was very poor. He had only one piece of leather to make one pair of shoes. He cut the leather that night and decided to make the shoes in the morning.

The next morning he went to his table and there was a fine pair of shoes!
“But who could have made them?” the shoemaker said.

A man came in and paid the shoemaker two gold coins for the shoes.

The shoemaker bought two pieces of leather.

The next morning the shoemaker found two pairs of ladies' shoes. Two ladies came in and paid four gold coins for the beautiful shoes.

Every night the shoemaker cut the leather. Every morning the shoes were made. And everyday more people came to buy his beautiful shoes.

Just before Christmas the shoemaker and his wife stayed up to see who was making the shoes. At twelve o'clock two elves came in.

The elves climbed up onto the table and set to work making the shoes.

The next morning the wife and the shoemaker decided to make the elves clothes and shoes.

On Christmas Eve the shoemaker left no leather on the table. He left the pretty gifts instead.

At twelve o'clock the elves came in ready to work. But when they saw the gifts they were very happy.

After that night the elves were never seen again. But everything always went well for the good shoemaker and his wife.

Change in the students

After a year of working with Miss Ebert, the students have improved in language, in confidence and in their social skills. They can recall the stories and poems, even from the first term, so the materials and the course have clearly made an impact on them.



In their own words:

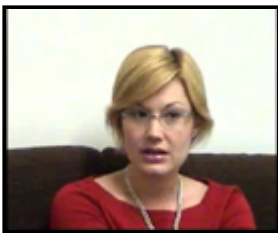
From student interviews



Better pronunciation, use of new vocabulary, increased confidence and interest in stories

- "Our pronunciation is better."
- "We learn more difficult words and use them in writing and reading."
- "I am more confident now."
- "The stories are good. I am interested in them."
- "Students were able to remember poems and stories from the first term, which indicates that they enjoyed the classes and the texts chosen."

From Miss Ebert's observations



Students are more relaxed and fluent

"I just want them to have a try... I've seen girls come up to me and they know what they want to ask about the text but they just don't know how to say it. But now they will try or they will ask someone to help, 'How do you say that in English?' **They seem more relaxed as a result** and are not so defensive. Also, **there are definitely students who have achieved greater fluency.**"

From classroom observations and questionnaires



Better team members, better language learners

- There is a supportive and cooperative atmosphere in lessons in which students can help each other learn.
- Students have become more articulate and fluent at the end of the year than they were at the beginning.

From a student questionnaire:

- Significant increase in use of cognitive and rehearsal strategies.
- Significant increase in perceived control of English learning .
- Significant decrease in learner anxiety.

From their class teacher

Confidence in quieter students due to support from class



"Even the quieter students, or the shy students, still have to speak up, because all of them have to come out, and recite the story in front of the class, or tell the story in front of the whole class. So even if maybe at the very beginning they were shy, once they see that the other students can do it, they all can do it. So I think the atmosphere is fine. And then **the whole class, they show support to the students** - I mean, who speaks in front of them. **That's why they won't be shy any more.**"

From their panel head

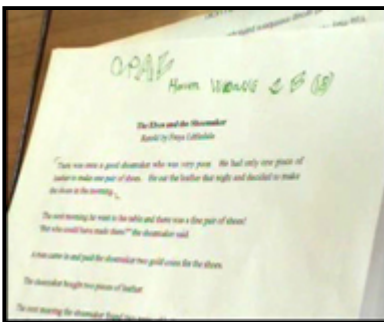
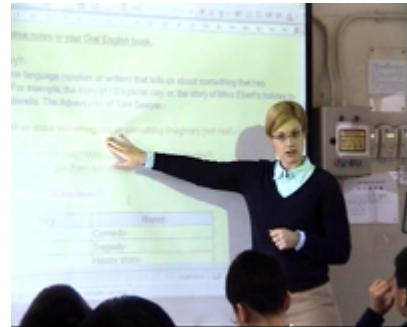


Good relationship with their NET

"I can see that the students enjoy all these oral lessons. They've got very good relationship with our NET (Miss Ebert). I don't think our students will be afraid of talking to foreign English speakers."

The design of the curriculum by Miss Ebert closely follows a model suggested by Hoover & Patton (1997), in which teachers were advised to do the following:

1. **Select the subject to be taught**
2. **Plan the general method of instruction taking into account class size, etc.**
3. **Obtain or make required resources and materials**
4. **Identify students who will need some adaptations**
5. **Student considerations:**
 - **Does the student have the required skills for this work (e.g. literacy)?**
 - **Can the student work without supervision? Can the student work cooperatively with others?**
 - **What is the attention span of the student?**
 - **Does the student have any behaviour problems?**
 - **What will the work output be from this student?**
 - **Will the assessment procedure have to be modified?**



In the oral lessons featured in this exemplar, it is clear that the teacher has planned her lessons with many of these recommendations in mind. The texts are chosen because of their interest level to students as well as their appropriacy in terms of the target language. The teacher copes with individual differences in the class through her employment of group work and the adaptation of texts, particularly in the final assessment where students work together to present their texts. The group work also helps to overcome the limitations brought about by the large class size. Students are very aware of their learning objectives throughout the lessons, and this comes from the clear instructions given by the teacher.

References

Hoover, J., & Patton, J. (1997). *Curriculum adaptations for students with learning and behaviour problems* (2nd ed.) Austin: ProEd.



A successful curriculum is one that is able to adapt itself to the needs of the individual students and classes, as well as to changes in the school and society. In our interviews, Miss Ebert recounted to us the changes she has made this year, as well as changes she would like to make in the future.

1. Adapting the curriculum to the changes in the school

This is the second year of the oral storytelling curriculum in action. Miss Ebert noted that she has added the video "Timmy's Gift", in part because last year's curriculum was cut short by SARS, but also because:

"I wanted to include a different medium, and I wanted them to hear a different English speaking voice other than my own, which is sometimes really hard to get

over here, if you don't have time to cut and paste resources."

2. Reflecting on what went well

When reflecting upon what went well in the class, Miss Ebert's response reveals her ability to adapt to the needs of that particular class.

"They're a kind of an excitable class... and one thing I've achieved is getting them to channel the excitement and channel it into something, instead of just being a bit silly about it. Some of the boys still need a lot of restraint, let's put it that way. But I think they know that they can be excited but if they are going to be excited they also need to do something with it."

3. Reflecting on what could be done better

As a teacher who is eager to improve from year to year, Miss Ebert critiques her teaching this year. She reflects that perhaps she could have moved to less structured activities a little sooner.

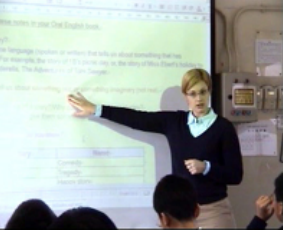





"Next year - if I am still teaching Form One and doing the same thing, I am going to try making them speak more with me by prompting them earlier."



4. Maintaining high expectations of the students

When asked whether she had any advice she could share with other teachers, she urged teachers to have **high expectations of students**, while **maintaining realistic language expectations and established routines** with the junior form classes. Miss Ebert also talks about the importance of building a **community atmosphere** in the class, and being willing to **try out different ideas**.

Summary of Benefits

DESIGN	 <p>Curriculum design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and cohesive structure • Works within logistical limitations • Uses storytelling to generate interest in English 	
IMPLEMENTATION	<p>Reading aloud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models English language rhythms • Creates enjoyment and learning from the printed word 	<p>Group work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages peer learning • Maximises speaking opportunities 
	<p>Pronunciation, Vocabulary and Correction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates opportunities for work on: pronunciation, intonation, fluency and vocabulary acquisition • Correction is encouraging and implemented with an awareness of student's needs 	<p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated and transparent assessment • Efficient use of teacher time and effort • Promotes cooperative learning 
EVALUATION	 <p>Result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have noticeably gained in confidence and fluency, according to the teachers and students and from classroom observations <p>Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an ability to reflect and adapt curriculum according to changes in the school and society • Reflects on the curriculum in relation to individual classes of students • Maintains high expectations of students 	