

Exemplar 14: Building Confidence in Using and Speaking English

Overview

This exemplar features the different measures taken in [Hoi Ping Chamber of Commerce Secondary School](#) (HPCCSS) to build students' confidence in using and speaking English. It also describes the good teaching practices we observed in Miss Wan's remedial class, where she incorporated relevant learning materials suited to students' needs and interests and used a number of strategies to alleviate students' anxiety about learning English.

The following are some distinctive features:



I. Opportunities for public speaking:

- Recruiting students as announcers in morning assemblies
- Adopting an open-to-all approach to encourage students to participate in the Hong Kong Schools Speech and Drama Festival



II. Building confidence in speaking through drama:

- Using drama as an opportunity for expression of feelings and ideas rather than as a performance



III. Alleviating the English-learning anxiety of lower-ability students:

- Being aware of students' fears and anxieties in learning a second/foreign language, particularly lower-ability students
- Providing scaffolding and fostering a friendly learning environment by establishing a good rapport with the students and by incorporating fun and games in the learning materials so that students are willing to take risks
- Attending to the needs and interests of lower-ability students

Opportunities for Public Speaking

Morning Assemblies

As an EMI school, HPCCSS has tried to make use of all possible opportunities to increase students' exposure to English and build their confidence. One way to boost students' confidence in speaking is to provide them with opportunities to speak in public. As there are three English morning assemblies every week, HPCCSS views this as an opportunity for students to speak English in public and use English in a meaningful way by making announcements and promoting English Curriculum Activities (ECAs).



Mr Wong Kin Chung,
the principal



Click on the video clip to hear the views of Mr Wong Chiu Seung, the English panel chairperson, about the English morning assemblies, plus a short segment of an assembly in which a club activity is promoted.

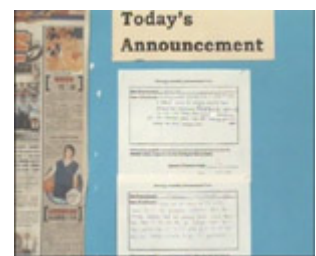


Scaffolding and support

1. Announcement forms and templates

To help students who are not entirely confident in using English to make announcements, the school provides announcement forms in which sentence structures are provided. Students only need to fill in the relevant information. Students are also provided with announcement templates so that they can put announcements in English on the blackboard in the classroom. These forms and templates provide the necessary linguistic scaffolding and serve several functions:

- They help students to convey their messages clearly.
- They give students confidence in writing and making the announcements.
- They facilitate the use of good English.



Useful expressions for class announcements	Notes & Examples
<p><u>Meetings / Gatherings / Various Functions</u></p> <p>1. ____ (a) ____ please attend ____ (b) ____ at ____ (c) ____ in ____ (d) ____.</p> <p>Please be punctual.</p> <p>e.g. <u>Kin House Cheer Leaders</u> please attend <u>a meeting at 12:45 p.m.</u> in <u>the Art Room</u>.</p> <p>2. ____ (a) ____ is meeting on ____ (b) ____ at ____ (c) ____ in ____ (d) ____.</p> <p>All must attend.</p> <p>e.g. <u>The Chess Club</u> is meeting on <u>Monday at 3:30 p.m.</u> in <u>Rm G7</u>.</p> <p>All must attend.</p> <p>3. Those who have joined ____ (a) ____ please go to the ____ (b) ____ at ____ (c) ____ for ____ (d) ____.</p> <p>e.g. Those who have joined <u>the debate competition</u> please go to the <u>Art Room at 3:30 p.m.</u> for <u>a meeting</u>.</p> <p>4. ____ (a) ____ organized by ____ (b) ____ is to be held in ____ (c) ____ at ____ (d) ____.</p> <p>All are welcome / Participants please be punctual / It is free / It is open to S1 – S3. Please ask ____ (e) ____ for details.</p> <p>e.g. <u>The Science Quiz Competition</u> organized by <u>the Science Club</u> is to be held <u>in the Art Room at 3:30 p.m. today</u>. All are welcome.</p>	<p>a. participant: class representatives, individual's name...</p> <p>b. event: meeting, cheering team practice, speech training, writing course...</p> <p>c. time (date): 4 p.m. (today / on 1 April)...</p> <p>d. venue: Art Room, IS Lab...</p> <p>a. participant: Chess Club, Basketball Team, Drama Club...</p> <p>b. day/date: e.g. Monday, 1 May...</p> <p>c. time: e.g. 3:30 p.m...</p> <p>d. venue: Rm 101, Music Rm...</p> <p>a. event: science quiz competition, singing competition...</p> <p>b. venue: Art Room, Geography Room...</p> <p>c. time: lunch time, 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>d. purpose: a meeting, a rehearsal, preparation, a briefing...</p> <p>a. event: basketball competition, film broadcast...</p> <p>b. organizer: English Association...</p> <p>c. venue: Art Room, Music Room, basketball court...</p> <p>d. time (date): 4 p.m. (today / on 1 April)</p> <p>e. person: Amy Chan of 6A, chairperson of the JPC Club...</p>

_____ to **(b)** by **(c)**_____.

e.g. Please pay the annual fee to the monitor by Monday.

6. Please bring **(a)** for **(b)** **(c)**.

e.g. Please bring \$10 for the class party tomorrow.

Students interested in **(a)** please put a '✓' against their name on the name list.

e.g. Students interested in the inter-class football competition please put a '✓' against their name on the name list.

Please return / give **(a)** to **(b)** in **(c)** at **(d)**.

e.g. Please return the name list to Amy Chan of S6A in the Art Room at 12:45 p.m.

9. **(a)** please stay after school to **(b)**.

e.g. Amy Chan please stay after school to do the board.

10. **(a)** please see **(b)** at **(c)**.

e.g. Amy Chan please see Ms Wong at 12:45 p.m.

a. **fee:** annual fee, school fee, party fee,

transportation fee, photo fee, membership fee..

b. **person:** Amy Chan of 6A, treasurer..

c. **date/deadline:** 1 April 2003, Friday..

a. **thing:** your PE uniform, 2 apples each group.

b. **purpose:** picnic, party, visit, DS lesson.

c. **date:** tomorrow, on Monday, on 1 May...

a. **event:** dancing competition, course on soap making...

a. **thing:** name list, application form, reply slip.

b. **person:** Amy Chan, Ms Chan..

c. **place:** Art Room.

d. **time:** 12:45 p.m..

a. **name:** decoration team, Amy Chan..

b. **purpose:** decorate the board, have practice, finish your work, have a draw, see Mr Wong..

recipient: Amy Chan.

person: the Principal, the social worker...

time: 10:30a.m., recess time...

Vocabulary and phrases:

- People: participants, volunteers, helpers, committee members, chairperson, class representative, monitor, treasurer, secretary, group leader, students who would like to.../ students who are interested in....
- Event: meeting, practice, rehearsal, sharing, orientation, farewell party, competition, discussion, course, house meeting, games, refreshment...
- Time: before the 1st lesson, after the last lesson, during the 1st recess, by / on or before Monday, at lunch time, after school, during the holiday, on Saturday morning...
- Action: please contact, hand in, submit your work, complete the form, see, check...

The Benefits of Being a Student Announcer

Interviews were conducted with five student announcers (1 S.4, 3 S.6 & 1 S.7 students). All five students commented that when they made announcements in public for the first time, they were very diffident. However, with practice, they all became more confident in public speaking. Some thought that making announcements was fun and exciting; others felt that they were more willing to participate in other English activities as their confidence in speaking grew. The following is a summary of the benefits that they mentioned:

1. Gained confidence in speaking in public.
2. Obtained feedback (both positive and negative) from their peers and teachers on the announcements that they made. Positive feedback helped them gain confidence.
3. Developed a more positive attitude towards English.
4. Boosted self-esteem. Students felt that they had accomplished a difficult task.
5. Reduced fear of making mistakes.
6. Learned from listening to the announcements made by fellow students.

Watch the video to learn more about the student announcers' experiences.



Speech Festival



Most schools participate in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival by nominating students who are likely to win an award in the competition. HPCCSS sees participating in the speech festival as an opportunity to develop students' interest in English and to gain confidence in speaking English in public. Therefore, they exploit the opportunity to organise a series of activities in the first school term and adopt an "open-to-all approach" to encourage all interested students to participate.

The following is a brief account of how the activity series was organised in 2003/04:

1. Set pieces for the speech festival for different classes were posted on the board at the main entrance of the school.
2. Participation in the speech festival was promoted in the morning assemblies at the beginning of the school year.
3. Students read the set pieces on the school board and decided whether they were interested in the set pieces and the event.
4. Students who preferred to recite poems of their choice were encouraged to search for their favourite poem from a number of poetry books available in the school library.
5. The NET, Mr Walker, recorded all the pieces onto compact disks and distributed them to all participants so that students could listen to a recitation of the poem by a native English speaker.
6. Training was provided to students who registered to participate in the speech festival.
7. In early November, a poetry and drama recital was held in the school hall after school. All participants recited their pieces and all students were invited to watch the performance.
8. Junior-form students were invited to watch the performances during school hours. This served the purpose of arousing their interest in future speech festivals.

Each year, around 130 students participate in the speech festival, and they have been highly successful in gaining awards. For example, in the year 2002/03, two choral speaking teams comprised of about 80 students won first and second places. In other categories of competition, nine students won awards, with three first places, four second places and two third places.

Students' views

According to Miss Wan, students who join the speech festival one year usually continue to do so in subsequent years. This gives them a lot of chances to speak before an audience and helps to boost their confidence in speaking English. It also encourages students to participate in English-speaking activities and enjoy opportunities to use English for communication. Miss Wan's view was supported by the interview data collected from students who participated in the speech festival. Click on the video to hear students' views.

In addition, the students also reported that they learnt English better through participating in speech festival activities rather than just learning grammar rules. They appreciated the open-to-all policy, which provided opportunities to all students, not just the outstanding ones.



Choral Speaking



Choral speaking is one of the speech festival events that is highly recommended by Miss Wan, who has been training the choral speaking team in HPCCSS for a number of years. The team has won several awards. According to Miss Wan, students feel honoured to be in the team, especially when they are given the opportunity to perform in the school Speech Day or have the opportunity to perform in public at the Ko Shan Theatre.

Below are some suggestions provided by Miss Wan:

1. Combine actions with music to make a poem more appealing and interesting to students.
2. Invite students to help with costume-making, so they don't have to wear the school uniform at the performance.
3. Ask students for their opinions and work with them to come up with actions that help convey the message and help the audience to visualise what is being described in the poem.
4. Set some standards, so students know what they are expected to accomplish.

Interviews were conducted with five students (1 S.3, 1 S.4, 1 S.5, 1 S.6 and 1 S.7) who have participated in choral speaking for at least two years. Comments on their experience in choral speaking are summarised as follows:

1. Choral speaking is fun and interesting, as different elements can be incorporated into the performance, e.g. the sounds of animals, music, actions, etc.
2. Students treasure the strong team spirit developed during practice and the competition. They also appreciate the fact that they can make a lot of friends from different forms and classes.
3. Students learn how to cooperate with others as they need to do and say the same things at the same time. One student even mentioned that the training she received from choral speaking will be beneficial to her future career as she may need work in collaboration with other colleagues.
4. Students gain confidence to speak English and perform on stage. They also learn how to express themselves through body language and facial expressions.
5. Students appreciate the fact that they can stand on stage together and don't have to face the audience by themselves, and thus even the shy students can participate in choral speaking.
6. Interest in learning English is increased as students learn more vocabulary and learn to appreciate poems and English literature during training.

Click on the video clip to learn more about students' experiences in choral speaking, and to see a short segment of their performance at the School Speech Day.



Drama Festival and In-school Drama Shows

HPCCSS has a tradition of participating in the Chinese Drama Competition, English Choral Speaking, duologues and dramatic scenes. With the help of Mr Walker and other English teachers, HPCCSS participated in the English Drama Competition for the second time in the academic year 2002/03.



Although the goal of any competition is to win, Mr Walker also views competition as a way of helping students to achieve the following:

- Gain more confidence in speaking English
- Learn new skills
- Engage students in the learning process
- Learn new words and understand the meaning of those words through responding to and interacting with others
- Increase knowledge of phraseology and pronunciation
- Develop solidarity among students

With that vision in mind, all students who came to the drama audition were given a role. Mr Walker adopted a similar approach in the school drama shows for junior-form students. This gave students a chance to learn and perform irrespective of their English proficiency. Tailor-made scripts were created to ensure everyone had a role to play.



During the drama competition rehearsals and the training for the drama shows, students were reminded to reflect on their performance and think of ways to improve it. A lot of interaction and collaboration took place between Mr Walker and the students, which increased students' contact with a native English speaker and their exposure to English in authentic situations.

Students' Experiences

We interviewed five students who took part in the drama competition and six students who participated in the drama show. The benefits of their experiences are summarised as follows:

1. Increased self-confidence and confidence in speaking English
2. Improved speaking fluency and pronunciation
3. Learned useful phrases and vocabulary
4. Increased interest in learning English
5. Increased interest in drama
6. Gained a strong sense of success
7. Gained more courage to act and dance on stage
8. Made new friends
9. Increased opportunities to speak English
10. Learned English incidentally while learning how to act



The video clips below provide a short segment of the drama training provided by Mr Walker and some feedback from students who participated in the drama show.



GOTCHA

by David Walker

(The wind is howling outside. The group of cheerleaders bursts into the old house to escape the storm. Some have torches. The place looks dilapidated and spooky, so once inside, they proceed cautiously.)

SCENE 1:

Kate: Ok girls. Stay calm. This storm won't last forever.

Ruby: This place doesn't look so friendly, Coach.

Scout: That's the only thing she's said all trip that's made any sense.

Melody: Perhaps we should go back to the bus? ...

Britney: And walk back down that broken road? No way.

Renée: Ruby's right, coach. This place looks scary.

Petra: It's better than the storm outside.

Kate: Now come along girls - a few cobwebs and a bit of dust never hurt anyone.

Jeannie: It's not the cobwebs that worry me coach; it's the spiders that go with them.

Kate: Jeannie, as one of the senior members of the team, I want you to help us here. We've got to keep the girls calm.

Taz: (screams) ah ... spiders!

Kate: Now look what you've started.

Jeannie: I'm sorry coach; I wasn't thinking.

Scout: Taz! Get a grip! It's just a little spider! Don't be such a baby! It won't eat you!

Ruby: Stop picking on her. We're not all as brave as you, Miss know-all.

Petra: The first thing we should do is to get a fire going in that old fireplace and warm the room up.

Bonnie: This place gives me ...

Bridget: ... the heebie-jeebies. I wouldn't be surprised ...

Bonnie: ... if it was haunted.

Melody:)

Taz:) Haunted! Oh no!

Renée:)

Petra: Stop that silly talk. I've never heard such nonsense! There are no such things as ghosts.

(A ghostly howl echoes through the house. The group falls silent and huddles fearfully together.)

Simon: Is that what "haunted" means?

Sadie: Yes, it means it's full of ghosts and spooky things - just like that.

Simon: Cool! I've always wanted to see a ghost.

Melody: Don't say things like that! Your wish might come true and then you'll be sorry!

Scout: Don't start him on ghosts and blood and all that. He'll never stop. It's his favourite subject. Why did mum make me take you along with us?

Simon: Because I'm so lovable and cute, and you should spend some quality time with me.

Kate: Girls, listen to me. Pay attention please! We'll have to stay here for some time. The driver said that the bus would take several hours to fix and this storm is still very heavy.

Sadie: But you said it wouldn't last long, Coach. I don't like it here.

(Many agree with her)

Kate: This old place looks solid enough and it doesn't leak ... I think. Anyway, what we need to do is to have a look around and to find some things to keep us warm.

Petra: Perhaps some wood for a fire and some blankets to put around us. Once we get warm we'll be a lot happier.

Jeannie: We could split up and explore this house in groups ... so we don't get lost.

Kate: Good idea.

Bridget: So we don't get murdered ...

Bonnie: ... on our own, you mean ...

Bridget: and our bodies thrown to wolves and vampires ...

Many: Wolves and vampires!!!

Kate: Enough! (*to Petra*) Here is a torch. Take Melody, Sadie and Taz and look around upstairs for anything we can use. I'll send Scout and Ruby up the other staircase.

Petra: Don't put them together, Coach. They've been fighting all day.

Kate: What about?

Jeannie: Scout thinks Ruby wants to steal her boyfriend? I had to separate them when we were on the bus.

Petra: So I should take Ruby with me, and I'll send Melody with Jeannie.

Kate: Ok – let's get things happening quickly before they all have hysterics.

Jeannie: Melody, Renée and Britney, come and help me find some firewood and blankets. Oh Simon, what are you doing? You can come with me also.

Petra: And Ruby, Sadie and Taz we'll go another way and look for the same things. This'll be an adventure, won't it?

Sadie: Adventure wasn't exactly the word I was searching for just then.

Britney: Why are we so lucky – NOT?!

Jeannie: Here Britney, you can take the torch. Won't that be fun? I'll see you soon, Coach.

(They begin to move off)

Renée: Why can't I hold the torch?

Simon: By rights I should hold the torch because I'm a boy.

Renée: You're lucky to be still living because you're a boy. Now shut up.

Simon: Hey, did I ever tell you about why wolves howl on nights when vampires roam the Earth?

(They exit)

Petra: Let's go adventurers!
(Her group huddles closely to her, visibly afraid)
Come on, come on; where's that good old "Devil may care" attitude?

Taz: Did she say "Devil"?

(They exit)

SCENE 2:

Bonnie: What are we going to do, Coach?

Bridget: Can we start a fire? It's so cold.

Kate: Good thinking. Here are some matches. Why don't you collect some of that old newspaper lying around on the floor?

Scout: The others will find some wood. They won't take long

Bridget: Unless that thing ...

Bonnie: ... gets them first ...

Scout: There's no "thing". That noise we heard was just the wind in the rafters.

Kate: That's right, girls. The wind can sound very strange, especially on dark, stormy nights.

(While Kate & Scout are talking a ghostly apparition moves quickly from one doorway to another. They do not see it. However, Bridget & Bonnie are dumbstruck)

Scout: What's wrong with you two? You look like you've seen a ghost.

Kate: Oh stop acting so childishly. No! I don't want to hear your silly excuses. Come over here and behave yourselves.

Bonnie: Coach, don't you think it's weird ...

Bridget: ... that our bus broke down here, ...

Bonnie: ... in the middle of nowhere?

Kate: The driver said the engine simply failed. He thought it might have been a fuel blockage.

Bridget: And we had to walk up to this dump ...

Bonnie: ... along that broken road while the storm was raging?

Scout: Bad luck happens. We couldn't predict that.

Bonnie: But maybe, that thing planned it ...

Bridget: ... so that we would be lured here and ...

Bonnie: ...it would throw our bodies to the wolves and vampires!

Scout: I think you two watch too much television.

Kate: You certainly have very active imaginations. Perhaps it would be better if we did some exploring of our own.

Scout: That's the best suggestion I've heard in a long time. Come on you two scaremongers. Let's find ourselves an adventure.

Kate: Or some firewood at least.

(They exit)

SCENE 3:

(Jeannie's group makes its way into the room. The torch flickers and goes out.)

Britney: Great! That's all we need! This stupid torch doesn't work!

Jeannie: Don't panic! There's no need to worry. We'll be all right.

Renée: How do you know? Anything could happen in this house and no one would ever know.

Melody: There could be ghosts and ghouls hiding away here – really spooky stuff.

Jeannie: Oh come on. You'll just scare yourself with talk like that.

Renée: And they could cut up our bodies into a thousand parts ...

Melody: And drink our blood ...

Britney: And we'll all be sorry then, won't we?

Renée: Did you hear that?

Britney: What is it?

Renée: Shhh. I thought I heard something.

Jeannie: Oh, for heaven's sake! Don't be so ...

Renée: No! Really! Listen!

Melody: I can hear it too.

Britney: So can I. It's coming this way.

Jeannie: That's enough girls ... oh, I can hear it too. What can it be?

Simon: It's probably a ghost and he died tragically and every full moon he has to avenge his death by taking a mortal soul.

Britney: There, I heard it again. We'd better hide.

Renée: Quick! Let's hide next to the fireplace.

Britney: I don't want to die.

Simon: We've all got to go sometime.

Melody: Bob down so it can't see us. Stay absolutely still. Don't make a sound.

(Petra's group makes its way cautiously into the darkened room - backwards. They shuffle across the room in the darkness and back into Jeannie's group. All girls scream and run about hysterically. Finally, a whistle is heard and everyone falls silent.)

Kate: Stand where you are! Don't anyone move!
(She turns on a torch.)
What on earth is going on?

Jeannie: We heard a noise and ...

Petra: My group was in one of the rooms down the hall when we saw an apparition ...

Kate: An apparition? Like a ghost, you mean.

Bridget: We told you, coach ...

Bonnie: Now the others have seen it ...

Bridget: ... so it's got to be true ...

Petra: Well, Ruby said she saw it go from one door to another ...

Scout: Ha! Ruby saw a ghost! Yeah, Ruby sees lots of things.

Ruby: And just what do you mean by that Wonder Woman?

Scout: Hey, be careful who you call names, Glamour Girl! Go back to your ghosts!

Simon: You tell her, Scout! Don't take that from her!

Ruby: I'll give you more than ghosts in a minute. I'll take out your lights!

Scout: Just like you want to take out my boyfriend, I suppose?

Simon: Get her Scout! Punch her on the nose!

Kate: Girls, stop squabbling this instant. Scout, I'm very surprised you'd behave this way. You're one of my senior team members. And as for you, Simon, the less we hear from you, the better.

Simon: I was only trying to help.

Ruby: Yeah, Scout, you should be ashamed of yourself.

Kate: Keep quiet, Ruby. Stand over there.

Petra: Come here, Ruby.

Simon: You were really cool, Sis. You should really knuckle her, just like this. Give her the old one, two ...

Scout: All right, Simon. Thanks for your help, but that's enough.

Simon: But, I ...

Scout: No buts. Now be quiet!

(A ghostly howl breaks the mood. Everyone is frozen to the spot.)

Taz: There it is again!

Melody: This house is haunted for sure. We're all going to die.

Bonnie: And our bodies will be thrown ...

Bridget: ... to the wolves and vampires.

(A ghostly shape moves from door to door. Only Sadie sees it)

Sadie: Ah, the ghost!

(Everyone screams. The lights are extinguished and everyone runs around panic-stricken. Fade.)

SCENE 4:

(Kate, Petra, Scout and Jeannie come into the room, each leading some younger members of the team. Simon is with Scout.)

Simon: Wow! A real ghost! I can't wait till I tell my friend Henry Wong. He'll be mad he wasn't here. Did you see how it floated in the air?

Scout: I didn't think it actually floated ... but that's enough talk about ghosts at the moment. The others don't want to think about it.

Kate: Have we found everyone? Go around and count them will you, Petra?

Jeannie: Everyone is very scared. We need something to get their minds off what's been happening here.

Kate: You're right. Did you bring the CD player up from the bus?

Scout: Yes, we've got it. Why do you want it?

Kate: I think we should have the girls do the "Hey Mickey" routine.

Jeannie: Right on! That should get them excited. Hey Petra, let's play "Hey Mickey".

Petra: Why didn't I think of that? That's just the medicine we need at the moment.

Kate: OK girls. Listen in! I want to see you do the "Hey Mickey" routine. There's no better time than the present. I'm sure it'll lift our spirits.

Taz: Did you say "spirits", Coach? It's probably not the best choice of words at the moment.

Petra: Oh, come on, Taz. You're not going to let the wind blowing in the rafters get you down now, are you?

Jeannie: Let's get organised. Take your positions.

Taz: Should we wear our uniforms? I've got mine here in this bag.

Petra: Mmm. No I don't think we need to this time. We'll save those for the competitions.

(They line up for the routine)

Sadie: Why don't you join us Coach?

Ruby: You too Petra. Come on. It'll make everyone feel better.

Kate: Why not? Let's do it!

(After a little more preparatory shuffling, the music starts and they perform "Hey Mickey". When they finish they are obviously happier and cheer and clap each other.)

SCENE 5:

(Everyone is sitting around the large room, the fire is going and the mood is much happier.)

Sadie: Oh, that makes me feel much better.

Britney: Me too. We'll go well in the competitions I think.

Renée: We've put a lot of work into our routines. We deserve to do well.

Kate: Yes, you do. You've been the best team I've trained, I think.

Melody: Do you really mean that, Coach?

Kate: Absolutely!

Ruby: I thought we had a little trouble with timing.

Britney: Timing? I thought it was good.

Ruby: No. I thought it was a little weak over your way (*indicating Scout*).

Scout: Bad timing over my way? In your dreams, Dancing Queen! I'd expect that from you, seeing you haven't a chance with Andy.

Ruby: Huh! More than you know, Wonder Woman. He likes me more than he likes you any day!

Renée: Don't listen to her, Scout.

Simon: Yeah, she's only teasing you.

Scout: I can't think of anything lower than to try to steal someone else's boyfriend.

Ruby: He doesn't like you. Be real! Look at you! What can you offer him?

Scout: Why, you ... I'll get you!

Ruby: Yeah – you and whose army?

(They rush at each other but the other girls hold them apart.)

Kate: Girls! Enough! What a disgraceful display! Petra, Jeannie, take them to different parts of the room.

Petra: Hey, cool down, Scout. What's got into you?

Scout: She's been teasing me for weeks. I suppose I just reached my limit.

Petra: That's certainly no example for the younger members.

Jeannie: We're supposed to be a team, Ruby. Why are you undermining us?

Ruby: It's Scout. She thinks she's so good. She gets everything her way.

Jeannie: That's nonsense. She doesn't get any more than anyone else around here.

Kate: Everyone needs to rest and keep warm. The storm is still quite fierce but I'm sure it will clear up by morning. I want everyone to be quiet so that others can get some sleep if they want to.

(The girls huddle into small groups with a few blankets around them. Kate brings Scout and Ruby together to talk to them)

Kate: Petra and Jeannie, make sure everyone is comfortable.

You know I am very disappointed with both of you for the way you are behaving. There had better be no more displays of anger between you or else I might get angry – very angry.

Britney: That can't be true. Whoever told you such a thing?

Sadie: No one told me. I saw it myself, with my own two eyes.

Britney: Oh, for sure!

Petra: Girls! Shhh! You heard Kate. Don't make any noise so everyone can get some sleep.

Britney: Well, tell her not to tell lies.

Sadie: I'm not telling lies.

Kate: (*To Scout and Ruby*) Do you see what your actions can lead to? You have set a bad example for the others.

(*To Sadie and Britney*) What's the matter Britney?

Britney: Sadie says that ghosts wear sport shoes.

Jeannie: What do you mean by that?

Sadie: When I saw the ghost last time, I looked down because I was frightened and I saw that it was wearing sports shoes.

Kate: Sports shoes? That's strange.

Petra: Yes, very strange!

Kate: Are you absolutely sure that you saw the sports shoes, Sadie?

Sadie: Yes, Coach. I'm not lying.

Britney: Oh yeah!

Kate: No – I believe her.

Petra: Are you thinking what I'm thinking, Coach?

Kate: Yes, I think so. Girls, listen to me. Come around, come around. I've got an idea I want you to hear.

SCENE 6:

(Girls are huddled about the room in blankets, as before. All is quiet. Scout and Taz are near one of the doors.)

Scout: I hear something. Listen!

Taz: Yes, I can hear footsteps.

Scout: Quick! Rouse the others.

Kate: Ok girls. Get ready. Keep still everybody. Don't make a sound.

(A ghostly sound echoes through the room and the ghost appears and begins to cross from one door to another. However, when it is halfway across the space, the girls spring into action. Torches come on and the girls let out a mighty roar as they attack the ghost. They jump on it and drag it to the centre of the room.)

Petra: All right Mr. or Mrs. Ghost-in-sports-shoes, your fun is over!

Jeannie: Take his mask off. Let's see who it is.

(The sheet is lifted over his head, revealing a boy. All the girls step back. There is a collective gasp. The boy tries to hide his face.)

Taz: He looks familiar. Where have I seen him before?

(The girls crowd around him trying to identify him)

Scout: Andy! What on earth is this?

Melody: You mean it's Andy – THE Andy - your famous boyfriend?

Ruby: Andy, why are you dressed like this – a ghost?

Kate: Do you know this ... person?

Scout: Yes, Coach. I do know him.

Ruby: And I know him too. His name's Andy.

Petra: Yes I've seen him at training sometimes. He comes to meet Scout ... or Ruby.

Kate: Well, what have you got to say for yourself?

(Andy says nothing)

Jeannie: Has the cat got your tongue, eh? OK girls let's persuade him to speak up.

Andy: No. No more. I'll talk. Just don't hit me again.

Kate: Speak up! My patience is wearing thin. It's been a long night.

Andy: It was just a joke, you know; a bit of a prank.

(Silence as the girls look from Andy to themselves and back again)

Petra: A joke? A joke for whom? Who's laughing?

Taz: Just some dumb boy joke!

Kate: And what did you hope to achieve with this "joke" of yours?

Andy: Hey, it was only for a laugh! Can't you chill out a bit?

Jeannie: Do you realise people could have been seriously injured running about in this place in the dark?

Ruby: I know what you were up to now. You wanted to make fools of us, didn't you?

Renée: How would he make fools of us?

Melody: Well, I don't think he takes us very seriously. You don't, do you, Andy, the big scary ghost?

(Girls laugh at him. Andy hangs his head silently)

Ruby: He wanted to have his fun up here and then he'd go back to school. And he would tell all his football mates how scared the cheerleaders were in this old house.

Scout: Is this right, Andy? Is that what you wanted to do? Just make fools of us?

Taz: Yeah – just some stupid boy joke, gone wrong!

Scout: I don't think we need to see each other after this, do we? We're finished!

Ruby: And don't look at me, Andy! I don't want to have anything to do with a loser like you. Not after this fiasco.

Simon: Hey, don't worry, Sis. He's a drop kick. You can do a lot better than him. If you're lucky, you could find someone like me.

Ruby: Yeah, chin up Scout. He's no good for either of us. Friends?

Scout: I'm sorry for all the rude things I said to you.

Ruby: Don't apologize; I deserved them. No hard feelings.
(They hug)

Kate: I imagine you paid our bus driver to stop the bus here. Is he on the football team also?

Andy: Yeah – he is. Look I’m sorry about all of this. It got out of hand. I acted stupidly.

Kate: And you’ll feel a lot worse when we tell this story back at school next week.

Andy: Oh no. Don’t do that ... please.

Jeannie: You deserve it! I know some of the football guys. They’ll really give you a really hard time about this. How you were beaten by a bunch of frightened cheerleaders.

(Laughter from the girls – “yeah”, “bad luck”, “loser” etc)

Kate: Go and tell your friend to get that bus ready in 5 minutes or else there’ll be double trouble!

Andy: Yeah – OK.

(Andy exits)

SCENE 7:

Kate: Right, girls. Let’s prepare to leave. Take any bags or coats that might be yours – don’t leave anything here.

Bonnie: Coach, we think it would be ...

Bridget: ... really cool and the right thing to do ...

Bonnie: ... to do the routine one last time.

Renée: That’s a good idea.

(Other girls agree excitedly)

Kate: OK – if that’s what you want, that’s what you’ll get.

Petra: Line up girls.

Jeannie: Who’s got the music?

Petra: I want to see good straight lines, sharp movements, all together. We’re out to win the trophy, remember? Let’s go.

(They launch into “Hey Mickey” once more. The routine is only half way through when Jeannie calls a stop to the dance)

Jeannie: What’s that noise? Something’s wrong.

Britney: Yes, I can hear it too.

(Many of the other girls say they can hear it. Then a ghostly howling echoes loudly through the house)

Kate: Oh no – not again. This place really is haunted.

Simon: How cool is that? A real ghost this time!

Bridget: We told you, Coach ...

Bonnie: ...when we first came in here ...

Bridget: ... but you wouldn't listen.

Kate: Never mind that now. Quickly, everyone, grab your things and run to the bus.

(The girls scramble out of the house – in panic & screaming - a ghostly laughter rings out)

FADE

GOTCHA – List of characters :

Kate:	Coach of the cheerleader team.
Petra:	Assistant coach.
Scout:	Senior member of the cheerleader team. Girlfriend to Andy.
Jeannie:	Senior member.
Bonnie:	Cheerleader & close friend of Bridget.
Bridget:	Cheerleader & close friend of Bonnie.
Britney:	Cheerleader.
Renée:	Cheerleader.
Melody:	Cheerleader.
Ruby:	Ruby. Rival of Scout's for the affections of Andy.
Sadie:	Cheerleader.
Taz:	Cheerleader.
Simon:	Younger brother to Scout. Late primary school age.
Andy:	Not a cheerleader. Senior high school age.

Building Confidence in Speaking through Drama



Promotion of Drama

Mr Wong Chiu Seung, the English panel chairperson, is keen to promote drama in the school. He feels that drama is fun and can help reduce students' anxiety about speaking. In the year 2002/03, Mr David Walker, the school's NET, was given the responsibility of co-teaching drama with S.1 - S.4 teachers as part of the regular English lessons.

Drama vs Theatre



Mr Walker, who has 20 years' teaching experience in secondary schools in Australia and enjoys theatre and drama, points out that drama has often been confused with theatre. He believes that drama is an exploration and expression of feelings and does not necessarily end up in theatre. Therefore, he feels that teachers can and should incorporate drama activities in class, especially through fun and physical activities with the aim of building students' confidence in themselves, as well as in speaking.

Physical Activities



Physical activities were conducted at the beginning of each drama lesson, which helped students relax and overcome their inhibitions in speaking English. Because of the limited space in the regular classroom, Mr Walker conducted his drama lessons either in the school hall or in the covered playground whenever possible. The physical activities usually started with something very basic and simple. For instance, in some classes students were asked to walk in a circle and perform different actions called out by Mr Walker. Then they played some games that involved performing actions according to Mr Walker's instructions and required some cooperation with other students.

The video clip below shows Mr Walker's views on drama and some of the physical activities he conducted in the drama lessons we observed.



Scaffolding

One of the objectives of Mr Walker's drama lessons in Class 2E was to have students create a short skit in small groups and then perform it in front of the entire class. In preparing students to produce the short skit, Mr Walker took the following steps to provide scaffolding for students to complete the task:

1. Prepared different sets of sample short scripts and distributed them to the students. (Topics of the sample short scripts were drawn from themes found in students' Form 1 and Form 2 textbooks to ensure that the students were familiar with the topic and had enough background knowledge to draw on.)
2. Asked students to practise reading the sample script and perform in front of their classmates, so everyone had a chance to speak.
3. Assigned students to work with the same group to produce their own scripts, using their own ideas, but modelled on the sample script.

With the sample script as a model of conversational discourse, the task encouraged students to express themselves through creative use of the language and to collaborate with each other. Students found it fun and interesting to write their scripts in groups and to perform in front of the class. Apart from writing the scripts, students also learned to use body language to express themselves and to be less inhibited and restrained.

Watch the video below to hear about what students learned from the task.



Students also became more aware of the needs of their audience. They tried to use words so that other students could understand the humour embedded in the script. See video below to learn about students' views on this issue.



Script 1

WORLD RECORDS (3) (sample script provided by Mr Walker)

S1: I'm really worried about Peter.
 S2: Our friend Peter Wong? Why are you worried about him?
 S1: Lately he's been behaving very strangely.
 S2: This is the first I've heard about this. What is so strange about his behaviour?
 S1: He's eating a lot of bananas.
 S2: But bananas are a fruit. They're good for you. There's nothing wrong with eating bananas.
 S1: Peter is eating them by the bagful. He eats more bananas than I've ever seen anyone eat before.
 S2: Well, perhaps it's a stage he's going through.
 S1: And now he wants to climb up trees every day.
 S2: That sounds like fun. He loves adventure. There's nothing wrong with a little adventure in your life.
 S1: Last Saturday he climbed the tallest tree in the park.
 S2: Wow! He really is brave.
 S1: Or crazy! He told me he read the list of the ten most intelligent mammals.
 S2: Oh yes. I've seen that list. Human beings are the most intelligent, aren't they?
 S1: Sometimes I have to wonder. Peter told me he wants to know what it feels like to be a chimpanzee.
 S2: And is that why he's eating bananas and climbing trees?
 S1: Yes, I think so. He said he wanted to make contact with man's closest relative, the chimpanzee.
 S2: Do you think if we took him to the hospital now, Dr Mak would examine him?
 S1: Perhaps we should take him to a vet.

Be a bird (students' work)

K: Do you know what's going on with Peter?
 J: What's problem with him?
 K: He looks strange. Yesterday I saw he was reading book in library when I came there.
 J: What's wrong with reading book in the library? I t's good for him.
 K: But that book is talking about how can people fly!
 J: Wow wow wow. He wants to make a plane.
 K: No, he wants to fly with his arm.
 J: What? He eats chicken wings every day is because he wants his arm to become wings of the bird.
 K: Is this true? Oh, it's very terrible.
 J: I t's not the most terrible things. I saw him ate the worms last Monday.
 K: Yesterday, I saw him climbed a plant tree in the city and I saw him
 J: I think he wants to be a bird.
 K: I think he is crazy.
 J: Shall we talk to him?
 K: No. I think we should take him to see Dr Wan once.
 J: I hope that he can become normal in the future with the help of Dr. Wan and us.

Script 2

<p><i>Math homework (sample script provided by Mr Walker)</i></p> <p>S1: Have you done your maths homework?</p> <p>S2: I tried to, but I got all the problems wrong.</p> <p>S1: Oh heck! I'm going to get into a lot of trouble.</p> <p>S3: Why's that?</p> <p>S1: I didn't finish my homework last week also.</p> <p>S3: Yep! You're right, you know. Mrs Smith will kill you for sure!</p> <p>S1: Well, don't sound so happy about it. What can I do?</p> <p>S2: Have you asked (<u>a boy or a girl's name here</u>) for help?</p> <p>S1: _____ wouldn't help me. I bet he/ she thinks I'm a loser.</p> <p>S2: You're crazy! Why would he/ she think that about you?</p> <p>S3: I like _____ a lot. I think he/ she's very friendly.</p> <p>S2: So do I. We've had some great conversations.</p> <p>S1: Whenever I try to talk to him/ her I get all confused.</p> <p>S3: And you can't speak properly? And you feel very nervous?</p> <p>S1: Oh yes – that's what I feel exactly.</p> <p>S2: Hey, you're in love. That's what I reckon.</p> <p>S1: No way. No I'm not. I've never been in love in my life. That's a crazy idea!</p> <p>S3: It sounds suspicious. Why else would you be all tongue-tied when you spoke with _____?</p> <p>S2: I think you've got a crush on _____.</p> <p>S3: I don't think there's anything wrong with it. He/ she is a really nice person.</p> <p>S1: Both of you are crazy! How could anyone believe such a thing?!</p>	<p><i>Copying the homework (students' work)</i></p> <p>Phoebe: Are you guys done yet? I want my work back.</p> <p>Alan: Wait, Phoebe. Just a couple more questions and it is done.</p> <p>Alex: Be patient, phoebe.</p> <p>Phoebe: Come on! You guys. The monitress will collect the assignment in just three minutes. You know what the monitress is like.</p> <p>Alex: Yes, she is a pain in the neck. She doesn't take late assignment.</p> <p>Alan: You are right. I remember Peter handed in his homework just one minute late on time. She just went straight to Miss Sun for it.</p> <p>Phoebe: You see. That's why I am so worried that you may not finish copying on time.</p> <p>Alan: Let's do it fast, Alex.</p> <p>Alex: Okay. Phoebe, be quiet.</p> <p>Phoebe: Oh! Alex, Alan, someone is coming.</p> <p>Alex: You are too noise, Phoebe!</p> <p>Alan: I told you we would be fast.</p> <p>Phoebe: No! Mr Lee is coming. Close your book!</p> <p>Alan: My god! It is too late. He is already behind us.</p> <p>Alex: Oh no. Poor us.</p>
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Suggestions from Mr Walker

For teachers who would like to incorporate drama activities in their lessons, Mr Walker has the following suggestions:



1. Do it!
2. Plan it by researching drama activities on the Internet and in books.
3. Start with simple activities and gradually build your confidence and knowledge of drama.
4. Start playing games involving both teachers and students to break down barriers.
5. Approach the class with a positive attitude.
6. Be accepting and approving of what students give you as output.
7. Don't let anybody put students down.
8. Do a few activities yourself before asking students to do them, so you can adapt them to your class.
9. Use the school hall or a bigger room if necessary, so you can include movement games and a bit of exercise.
10. Be prepared to change rooms if other teachers complain about the noise level.
11. Be careful when conducting "hot seat" activities or movement games because students can break chairs or damage their uniforms.
12. Remember that drama does not have to lead to theatre.
13. If you decide to stage the drama, seek help from other teachers. Don't try to do too much by yourself.

Watch the video below to learn more about Mr Walker's suggestions to other teachers for organising drama activities.



Mr Walker used to work in a lower-band school, where he also organised drama activities. Click on the video below to find out his experience.



Alleviating Learner Anxiety



Anxiety has always been one of the major obstacles that second/foreign language learners have to overcome. This is particularly the case with lower-ability students. In the academic year 2003/04, Miss Wan taught a remedial class in Form 2 comprised of 21 students. About half of the class were from new immigrant families of low socio-economic status. According to Miss Wan, students from immigrant families are at a disadvantage when it comes to learning English, as they have only been learning it for a few years and have little exposure to the language outside class. As a result, many of these students are afraid of English, as Miss Wan described:

"They are afraid of learning English because they know they are not as good as the other students, so I need to help them to relax and cultivate their interest in learning English in order to give them hope."

In order to help students gain confidence in learning, Miss Wan has made a conscious effort to help her students. Go to the next page to view an account of Miss Wan's efforts, identified on the basis of lesson observations and interviews.

Click on the video clip to learn more about Miss Wan and her teaching.



Tailor-made Worksheets

Miss Wan designed worksheets using a font size of 14 rather than 12 and limited the number of questions on each page. Her justification was that less-able students can be overwhelmed by a lot of words in small print. When they feel that they cannot cope with the task, their learning suffers.

Regular Dictation

With regard to dictation of a difficult passage, Miss Wan separated the text into two sections, so students only had to do dictation on one section at a time. This way, their chances of "failing or giving up in the dictation" were lower and they had "a greater sense of success".

Unseen Dictation

When students were given unseen dictation, more support was provided. For example, Miss Wan wrote the text herself and incorporated some of the vocabulary items that students had learned previously so that they could recycle these items. She also changed the parts of speech of these vocabulary items and encouraged students to use their background knowledge and phonics skills to figure out how certain words should be spelled. In this way, they needed to apply what they had learned and could not rely on memorisation.

Revision

Miss Wan also revised the vocabulary items with students in preparation for the unseen dictation. During the revision, students were divided into two groups (boys and girls) and were then called on to dictate different phrases read by Miss Wan on the blackboard. Clues were given if students had difficulty figuring out the spelling of certain vocabulary items. Because the revision was done in the form of a game or a competition, students were keen to participate. This kind of revision not only helped students prepare for their unseen dictation, but also alleviated their fear of doing unseen dictation. One of Miss Wan's students said:

"Since I could remember how to spell the words we went over on the blackboard, I was not scared when I had to do the actual dictation."

Support was also given to students on the pronunciation of the words.



Scaffolding and Risk-taking

In order to provide more scaffolding for students' learning, Miss Wan incorporated a variety of activities on a specific topic into her lessons. For example, after teaching a unit on cartoons and a popular comic book about McMug, she showed the movie "Toy Story" to students in the MMLC. Afterwards, students were asked to write a composition called "Toy Story 3". The students could use the information they had acquired to create a new story. Miss Wan also encouraged some students to read their compositions aloud to the class.



The fact that students felt safe in Miss Wan's lessons is demonstrated by an incident in which one of the students, in the course of presenting his story to the rest of the class, took the initiative to teach other students a vocabulary item he used in his story to ensure they knew what he was trying to convey. Click on the video clip on the left to view the incident and to hear some students' comments about the learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Further student comments about how the encouragement and support they received from Miss Wan alleviated their fear of speaking English are listed below:

"Sometimes, I am afraid of losing face if the teacher points out my mistakes in front of the whole class. When a classmate doesn't know how to pronounce a word, she [Miss Wan] teaches the whole class again, instead of just focusing on the student. Then the whole class learns the word again and one does not get the feeling that he/she is the only one who doesn't know the word. It really gives us confidence to ask [questions]."

"In Form 1, I was a lazy student. I liked sitting there and listening to what the teachers taught. I seldom asked questions. Now she [Miss Wan] encourages us to speak English and I dare to ask questions. Sometimes, I ask some interesting questions and tell jokes....We are happy and the lessons are more relaxed...She always encourages us to speak in front of the class. We are not afraid of speaking. Also, for some group activities, we are allowed to leave our seats to express our views...."

In many instances, students reported that they were not afraid to speak in class because they knew Miss Wan would not scold them if they made a mistake; instead she would give them support and help them. Another reason why Miss Wan was able to make students feel comfortable in the classroom was her good relationship with the students. Students commented that their relationship with Miss Wan is like "friends" and that they are "very close" and "can talk freely".

Miss Wan says that she used to be a stern teacher. However, after having her own child, she realised the importance of putting herself in the shoes of the students. Miss Wan tried to smile more in class and treat the students like her own children. She believes that if students like the teacher, they will also like the subject taught by the teacher and thus "they will not be so rebellious and will achieve more in the lesson".



Personalising Grammar Lessons



Miss Wan made use of students' curiosity about teachers' lives to introduce defining and non-defining relative clauses. First of all, she divided the class into two groups, boys and girls. Photos were shown through an overhead projector, so every student could see the pictures clearly. Then students had to locate Miss Wan, her daughter and her husband in different pictures using relative clauses. This is a very good contextualisation of the use of defining relative clauses for identification.

Two marks were given if students were able to make a complete sentence such as "Miss Wan is the one who is wearing a hat." Only one mark was given if they said something such as "wear a hat". Students were very excited when they saw Miss Wan's photos, and very eager to raise their hands and say where Miss Wan was.

Many of them tried hard to use the taught grammar pattern. After the identification activity, Miss Wan spent some time explaining the difference between defining and non-defining relative clauses. Before teaching students about relative clauses, she also reminded them that there would be another competition following her explanation, so that students would be more attentive when they listened.

By showing photos to the students and giving them a real purpose for using the taught sentence structures, Miss Wan ensured that students were more involved in the lesson and more motivated to learn. In fact, not only did students learn the grammatical structures taught in the lesson that day, they also learned more about Miss Wan, which helped to create a bond between her and the students. Click on the video clip on the right to view a short segment of the lesson.



Students reported that they had fun and learnt at the same time in the lesson. They appreciated Miss Wan sharing her personal life with them.

Sample of students' writing

Toy Story 3

Sample 1

I was a little pig made of plastic called McMug. I was very cute, many children and adults like me. I had a round face and round tummy. My legs were very short because I usually walk on two legs. I was given to Andy by his aunt as a birthday present.

Andy put me in his bedroom. The room was very big. There were many different kinds of toys, for example Woody, Buzz Light-year, etc. The room was very colorful.

On the first night when Andy turned off the light and went [to] bed, all the toys started to move. Buzz thought that I was a bad toy, so he hit me heavily. I hurt a lot and all the toys cheered. I was very unhappy. Then I went back to my small box and I started to cry sadly. Suddenly, an old toy Stinky Pete said that I was Hamm's cousin whom Hamm was another toy. All the toys stopped cheering and looked at Stinky Pete. Buzz asked him why he knew that. He said that when he was young, he saw Hamm and McMug born together.

Finally, all the toys apologized to me and we became good friends.
(copy submitted by Alan)

Sample 2

"Oh! What's the matter? Where am I?"

I asked myself. Here, it was very dark, and I felt afraid. Oh! Listen!

There were many noises.

"Andy, this is your birthday present."

"Thanks aunt."

Am I a present to Andy? I can't imagine that...

After a period, the box where I was in was opened. I saw a little boy take me up. I was in a room, a room with many toys. I thought that the boy was called, Andy. I remember his voice. He was very happy, but also felt tired, so he went to bed.

Then the room was dark again. I heard some voices. Some toys came near me.

"Hi, I am Buzz, who are you?"

"bus?"

"No! It's Buzz."

"Ok, Buzz my name is McMug, I am a birthday present of Andy."

"Welcome! Let me introduce my friends to you. This is Wood, Mr. & Mrs.

Potato...etc

"Do you want a part with us"?

"Can we?"

"Of course!"

Then we had a party. We felt very happy. They are very nice. But I ate a lot of food. So I really wanted to go to bed.

At the last, I snored loudly and slept on the floor.

(copy submitted by Cyris)

Tennis Match



Because most of the students in Class 2E come from families of lower socio-economic status, Miss Wan understands that her students have few opportunities to come into contact with English outside the school. In order to raise their awareness of using English in daily life, she introduced English songs, video clips, TV clips and films.

For example, when Miss Wan was teaching a lesson using a reader about a tennis match, she took time to explain the rules of tennis and then showed students a short TV clip of a recorded tennis match between Sampras and Agassi. This helped students to understand not only the game but also what the umpire said during the match. When we interviewed some students three months after the lesson, even less-able students could remember some of the tennis terms they had learned.

Miss Wan felt that students would be more inclined to watch English TV channels and English films and listen to English songs for leisure if they were exposed to them in class. She said:

"I showed them a tennis match in class today. I hope that will arouse their interest in English channels. The most important thing is try to alleviate their fear of English. One student told me that he was extremely scared of English at the beginning of the term. I asked him, "Do you like English?" He said, "No, absolutely not." But now he is okay in the English class. When I asked whether he still disliked English, he said it wasn't too bad. So my first goal is to make sure he doesn't hate English."




A Game

As well as using a TV clip in the lesson, Miss Wan also tried to relate the story from the reader to the students' daily lives, so students would find the lesson more meaningful.

The story in the reader was about how a girl, Sara, won a very challenging tennis match after listening to the advice of her friends. After Miss Wan had finished this part of the lesson, she played a game with the students. She wanted to reinforce the message that students can seek help from others when facing challenges in their lives. Click on the video clip to see how Miss Wan conducted the tennis game in the lesson.



Opportunities for Public Speaking

<p>English Morning Assemblies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Involve students in using English for purposeful and meaningful communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">increase students' experience in public speakinghelp students gain self-confidence and confidence in speaking Englishhelp students gain a strong sense of successincrease students' interest in learning Englishengage students in the learning process
<p>Speech Festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage students in various English activities throughout the term 	
<p>Drama Festival and Drama Shows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide students with the opportunity to learn and perform, irrespective of their English proficiency 	


Building Confidence in Speaking through Drama



- create physical stimulation to sustain active learning
- help students gain courage to speak English
- provide a fun and stress-free environment for learning
- encourage active thinking and creativity

Alleviating Learner Anxiety

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<p>Manageable Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultivate students' interest in learning English • give students a greater sense of success • alleviate English learning anxiety 	<p>Friendly Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage risk-taking • help build students' confidence • develop a good rapport • give students a reason to like the teacher and the subject
<p>Students' Needs and Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help students to be more vigilant about observing class rules (e.g. no-Cantonese class rule) • give students a real purpose for using the taught sentence structures • increase students' motivation and involvement in learning (e.g. using students' curiosity about teachers and their love of looking at photos to introduce relative clauses) 	<p>Relevant Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arouse students' interest in using English outside class • increase students' interest in learning English • increase students' enjoyment of learning English 

Suggestions

What other schools can learn from this exemplar



I. Opportunities for public speaking

- Explore and make good use of opportunities provided by different school events and extra-curricular activities to engage students with the target language.
- Provide students with opportunities for public speaking and give them the necessary guidance and support so they can live up to the challenges and expectations.
- Adopt an open-to-all approach to encourage more students to participate in the Hong Kong Schools Speech and Drama Festival.

II. Building confidence in speaking through drama

- Remember that drama does not have to lead to performance in theatre.
- Incorporate drama and physical activities in regular classes in order to provide students with opportunities to express their feelings, ideas and creativity.
- Try to teach some English lessons outside of the classroom.

III. Alleviating English learning anxiety of lower-ability students

- Be aware of students' fears and anxieties in learning a second/foreign language, particularly lower-ability students.
- Cultivate students' interest in learning English by making learning tasks manageable, interesting and relevant to them.
- Provide scaffolding and foster a friendly learning environment where students are willing to take risks.