

## Exemplar 1: Promotion of Reading: A Whole-school Approach

### Overview

The emphasis that [Carmel Secondary School](#) (hereafter CSS) puts on reading is illustrative of its awareness of and readiness to cater to its students' needs. Most CSS students are from lower Band 1, and some are from Band 2. Learning English is not an easy task for lower Band 1 students, and the principal believes reading can help improve their language proficiency:

"My own and my colleagues' learning experience tells us reading is a prerequisite for knowledge acquisition. No matter what subjects you are studying, you have to read more in order to study those subjects well. So, we hope to encourage students to take the initiative to read, develop interests in reading and form a reading habit."



The fact that students are mostly from working-class families, with little English language support from home and inadequate exposure to English in their everyday life, is the reason for the English panel's promotion of extensive reading. Mrs. Ronica Chan, the English panel chair, explained:

CSS students can be characterised as follows:

- They are mostly from working-class families.
- They have little English language support at home.
- They lack exposure to English in their everyday life.

Because of this, the English panel decided to promote extensive reading. Mrs Ronica Chan, the English panel chair, explained:



"We understand that some students come from disadvantaged families. The school has to encourage them...Students from elite schools may be able to go travelling with their parents and listen to English songs at home. Our students have little exposure to everyday English."

This exemplar on CSS's reading promotion focuses on the following:



## Whole-School Promotion of Reading

"Broaden Horizons - Be Active Readers" 主動閱讀 擴闊視野



- theme adopted from 2000/01 to 2001/02

Under this theme, the following activities were organised:

- reading schemes for students and parents
- book exhibitions
- seminars and workshops on reading conducted by teachers or local writers
- visits to public libraries
- reading camps
- reading-related competitions
- publication of a newsletter on reading: "Books for Keeps"

The results achieved were remarkable. There was 100% increase in the borrowing rate of library books!



CSS continued to organise the above activities in subsequent years. Among the reading activities organised in 2003/04, three are worth noting:

- ["Ten Thousand and Beyond" Reading Competition](#)
- [Parent-Child Reading Scheme](#)
- ["Books for Keeps"](#)

These activities show how the school has involved teachers, students and parents in the promotion of reading.

## Reading Competition

### "Ten Thousand and Beyond" Reading Competition



The competition encouraged both teachers and students to read Chinese and English fiction and non-fiction. The target of having to read at least 10,000 books by the end of the school year was set for the whole school. Prizes were awarded to classes and individuals who have achieved the highest reading records.

This created an atmosphere of solidarity as well as competition in the whole school. Teachers and students worked together to achieve the target for their own classes as well as for the whole school. Teachers set a very good example by participating as readers.



A library newsletter that publicises this event

In our interview with the English panel, Mr Calvin Foo, explained how he motivated his students:



**The video subtitles in this exemplar have been slightly edited for easier comprehension.**

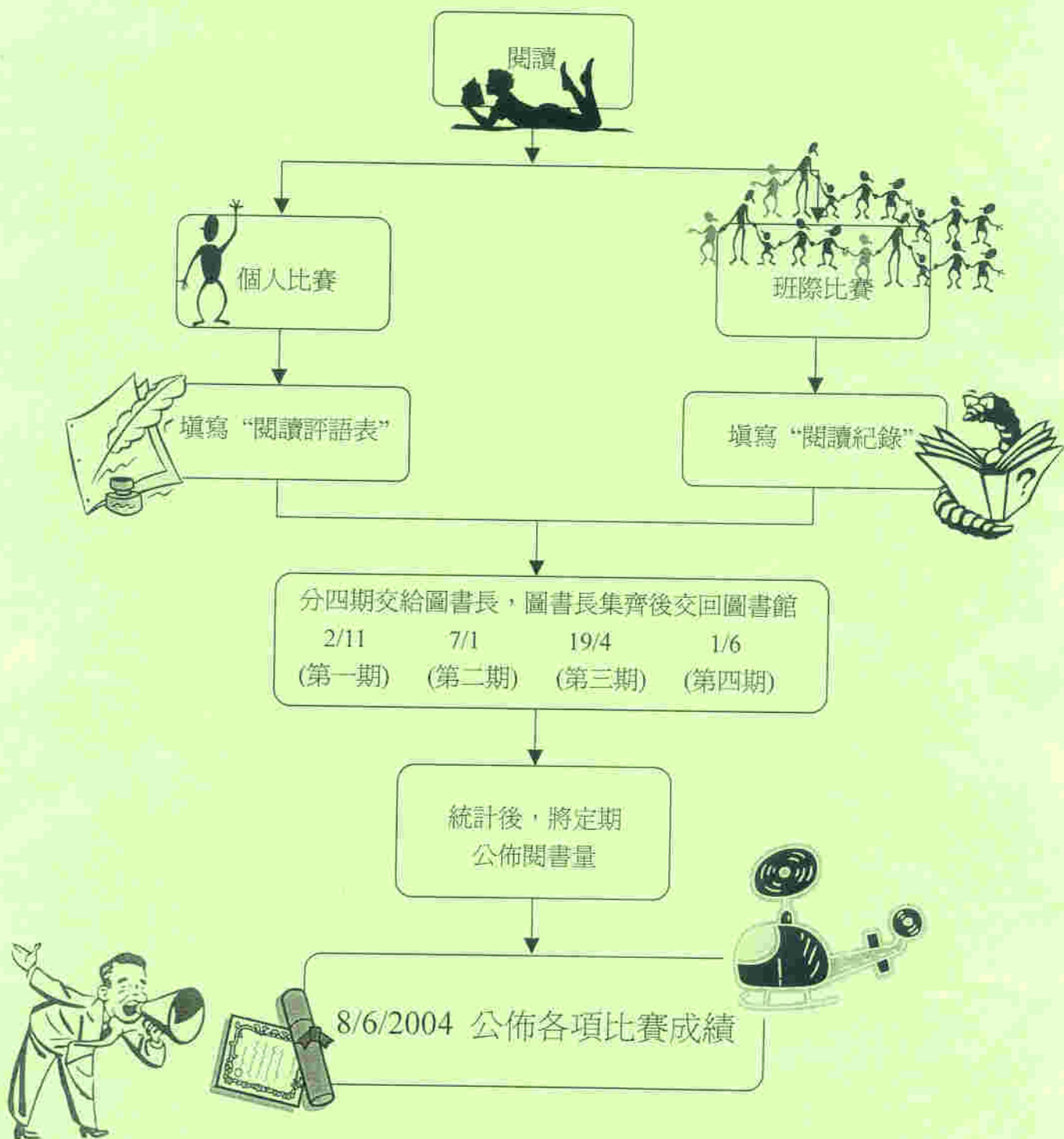


Awarding students with the best reading records shows how the school tries to motivate its students. The winners go on a helicopter ride, which, for students from working-class families, is an experience they will never forget. That the target of 10,000 books was reached in only four months is indicative of the tremendous success of this initiative.



## 「破萬卷」閱讀計劃

全校同學一同參與的「破萬卷」閱讀計劃已經於9月中開始了，相信同學現正在努力閱讀，力求達到目標。同學閱書後，別忘了在有關紀錄表上登記。同學多看一本書，我們便近日標多一步，同學要努力加油呀！！



## Parent-Child Reading Scheme

The Parent-Child Reading Scheme is co-organised by the Parent-Teacher Association and the school library. The aim of the scheme is to motivate parents to "encourage their children to read at home." (*Mrs Cheung, the school librarian*). The scheme works as follows:

- A student enters the scheme with a parent and they are given a log book.
- After reading a book, the student shares it orally with his parent.
- The student then enters the date, book title and a grade indicating the interest level of the book, and obtains his parent's signature.
- The parent does the same after reading a book.



The school librarian, Mrs Cheung Kwan Shun Man, pointed out another aim of the "Parent-Child Reading Scheme":

"...We want to stress that parents also have to read. It's important that parents are role models. Interaction and sharing after reading is very important."

For a school like CSS, lack of education and working commitments mean that many parents cannot read with their children. Nevertheless, 42 parents joined this scheme to read with their children in 2003/04.





Excellent!  
 $32 + 88 = 120$

Checklist

Sc (2)  
P (4)  
C (3)



# 「閱」出彩虹

## Read for Teeming Joy

迦密中學

家長子女齊閱讀獎勵計劃(01-02)

Carmel Secondary School

Parent-Child Reading Scheme(01-02)



參加者 姓名：

Name of Participant 謝燕萍

班級：

Class 1C (30)

# 閱讀紀錄

本數	日期	書名/Title	*評語	家長簽名	#子女簽名
41	28/1	收筆十年之奇幻之旅	C	Chen	
42	30/1	阿丹去冬	B	Chen	
43	1/2	本班最後一個乖仔	B	Chen	
44	2/2	Another World	B	Chen	
45	3/2	Where was Kennedy	B	Chen	
46	3/2	The poor rich girl	A	Chen	
47	5/2	Scotland	B	Chen	
48	7/2	Just like Trisha	B	Chen	
49	8/2	Muhammad Ali King of the ring	C	Chen	
50	10/2	輕輕鬆鬆看醫生	B	Chen	
51	13/2	In the sea	B	Chen	
52	13/2	The elephant man	A	Chen	
53	14/2	The titanic is sinking	A	Chen	
54	15/2	Magic Garden	B	Chen	
55	16/2	The Pathfinders	A	Chen	
56	20/2	The colombian connection	A	Chen	
57	26/2	The centerburg takes The Big ""	B	Chen	
58	27/2	The last recorder	A	Chen	
59	27/2	中國電影新華載主	B		TYP
60	27/2	The monkey paws	B	Chen	

28 FEB 2002

家長閱讀本數: 32 子女閱讀本數: 39 合共: 60



## 與女兒一起走過的日子

回想三年多前，每個星期天，我都會和女兒到公共圖書館走一趟。想不到，日子久了，女兒果真培養了閱讀的興趣來。

昔日，女兒升讀英文中學，沒想過要怎樣來幫助她適應學校的生活。怎料，開學不久，甚麼「HOME READING」的東西來了；為了幫女兒完成功課，我常陪她到圖書館找合適的英文書，充當看書時的活字典，分享故事中的人物、內容等。這段「一起看書」的日子，大約維持兩年，期間，我除了要騰出私人空間和時間外，最重要的，還是要耐心地支持和等待，慢慢讓「看書」變成生活的一部份。

踏入中二，漸漸看到閱讀的成效了；女兒於上課時很明白，做功課和書寫時都漸見暢順，這正正減低了學習時遇到之語言障礙。當然，要提升語文能力，不單要多聽、講、讀、寫，還要持之以恆，故此，舉凡學校之閱讀獎勵計劃、親子閱讀、閱讀營等，我都盡力支持和參予。

暑假過後，小女將升上中五，在她身上，我看到學校老師們的心血，也看到她個人付出的努力。往後的日子，讀書成敗，主要靠她個人的自發性，家長的角色是關心和認同。今天，人人口中嚷著要提升香港學生的語文能力，相信從多閱讀做起便可，願與家長們共勉！

4A林子心（2001-2002）家長  
林麥少英



## "Books for Keeps"

The newsletter "Books for Keeps" includes book recommendations made by teachers, students, parents and even caretakers. It was introduced in 2000/01, and since then several issues have been published each year.



The school librarian observed that students are keen to borrow titles recommended by their teachers and peers. An S.3 student, Iris, explained that the newsletter provides useful information:

"The newsletter includes book recommendations. If a recommendation is good, then I often borrow the book."

In addition to the newsletter, the school library plays an indispensable role in promoting reading.

# 書海漫遊 Books for Keeps



第二期/二零零三年十二月十八日 ISSUE 2/2003 DEC 18 迦密中學 Carmel Secondary School

**Name:** Miss Mak Yuk Ngun

**Title:** Happiness is a Choice for Teens

**Author:** Paul Meier, Jan Meier and their children

**Call No:** 616.843 MEI (Public Library)

bumpy difficult times I had had when I was a teenager, and these difficulties are exactly what my students may be undergoing!

## Content/Comment:

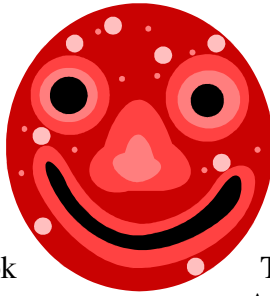
I chose this book for two reasons.

Does this title sound familiar to you? Have you ever tried to read a book because someone recommends it? This was exactly what I did. Mrs. Chiu introduced the Chinese version of this book – ‘Happiness is a choice’. When I tried to borrow this book from the Urban Council Library, all ten copies of both the Chinese and English versions had been out – a clear evidence of its popularity! However, the computer catalogue also showed that there’s another book of the same series – ‘Happiness is a choice for teens’ available in the children’s section. I lost no time in getting hold of it.

The book title also caught my attention immediately as I surfed through the computer catalogue. I wonder if you still remember a survey conducted through the internet in early 2001 – ‘How happy are teenagers?’ Despite the affluence most HK teenagers enjoy, results of the survey revealed that our teenagers were the most unhappy compared with many other less privileged teenagers in Asia! What’s happened to our teenagers?

Teenage years seem a bit distant for me now. What remain are mostly happy memories. Either I’ve outgrown adverse emotions, or human memories tend to filter unpleasant things.

However, I did experience problems in interpersonal relationship with friends and family, got upset and worried about my appearance and school performance. Reading this book has refreshed my memories of the



We’ll all get upset and even depressed at certain moments of our life. Teenagers are no exception. Do you want to feel more positive and upbeat? Concentrate better? Remember things easier? Sleep more healthily? Succeed at school?... Here’s the book for you. The book has not been translated into Chinese yet. As it is written for teenagers, I’d say the English version is still highly readable and very easy to follow for students of Form 4 or above.





# 書海漫遊 Books for Keeps



第三期/二零零四年二月二十五日 ISSUE 3/2004 FEB 25 迦密中學 Carmel Secondary School

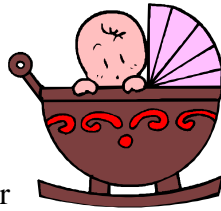
**Name:** 5A Lai Kwai Chi

**Title:** Superfudge

**Author:** Judy Blume

**Call No:** F BLU

**Content/Comment:**



Do you have a baby sister or brother? If yes, you would like this book very much and might have similar feelings as Fudge. If not, don't be sad; you'll love this book too. Why? Just keep reading.

Life at Fudge's home has definitely changed - they've got a new BABY!! Are you excited with this news? However, it seems to be bad news to Fudge, who is a very clever 5-year-old child. Since his baby sister Tootsie has got all his parents' attention and she cannot play with him, he starts to get sick of her and tries to sell her. He always asks others, "if you take her to your house, I will give you a quarter." When that doesn't work,



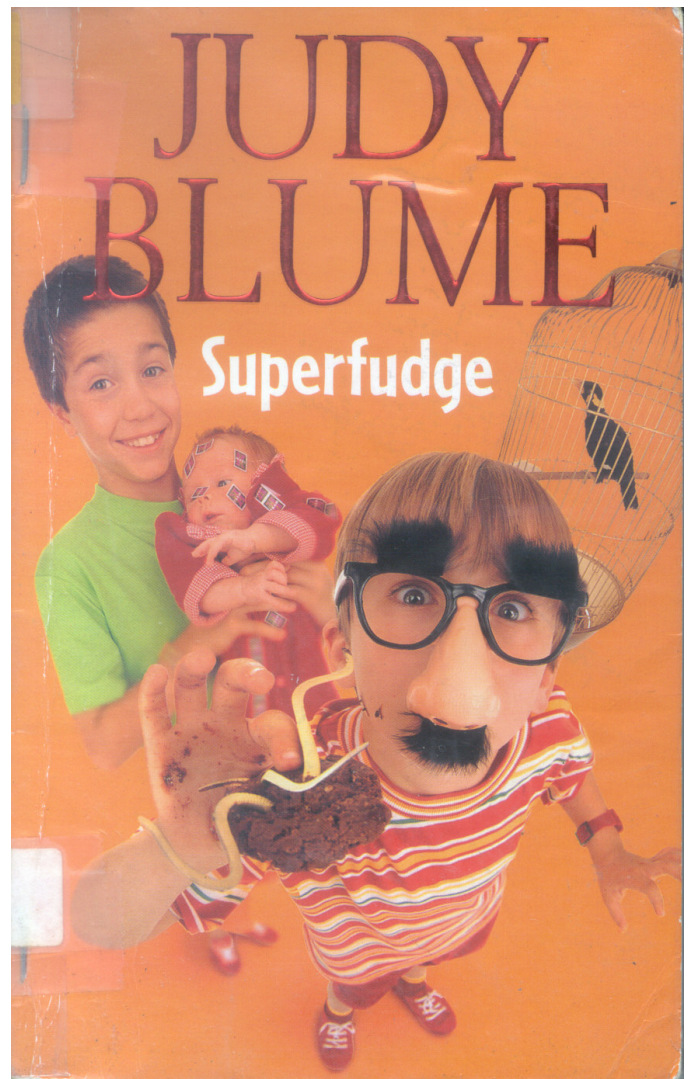
Fudge sticks stamps all over Tootsie and wants to trade her. Whenever his mother is angry with him, he tries to calm her down by using his best-little-boy-in-the-world voice to say I love you Mummy.

Moreover, on the first day in kindergarten, Fudge kicked his teacher and called her Rat Face just because she did not call him Fudge ... He has made a lot of trouble and seems that only his big brother Peter can help him out.

After reading this, what do you think about Fudge? Angel or monster? I prefer the former one and I do love Fudge. He is so innocent. However I do not want to have a brother as I may argue and fight with him. Maybe I am not mature enough to be a sister. But how about you?

I really love this book and it makes me laugh. So I strongly recommend this book to you.

It is not only because it has an excellent story, but also it can help you improve your English writing. Moreover, if you want to know more interesting things about Fudge, if you want to know how Peter "tolerates" Fudge and more things about Tootsie, just borrow and read this book by yourself.



## Role of the School Library

According to the school librarian, before 2000/01 the library was primarily reactive. It was open for students to borrow books, it helped teachers locate and order books, and it organised a few reading activities. But with the launch of the whole-school initiative, the library became proactive. The following changes were made:

- Renovation took place in the summer of 2000.
- An area was designated as the Reading Corner with sofas, plants and a book display cabinet.

Now, students not only borrow books but they linger and read. They also use the computer facilities available in another corner of the library. The school librarian is proud of the Reading Corner as well as the multiple functions of the library:

"This Reading Corner is beneficial to students. They think that it is a comfy place, so they come in and read books."



"In the past, the books were not very accessible... Now, the library is no longer just a place to borrow books. It's a place for reading, borrowing books and research - it's multi-purpose."

Students also get involved in the operation of the library by being school librarians. The team of school librarians includes 70 S.1-S.4 students, and a few S.6 leaders. In addition to routine duties on the loan and return of books, these students are entrusted with the task of selecting titles to add to the library collection.



To empower and motivate students, the school arranges several visits to local bookstores so that student librarians can select books. An S.5 student, Gigi, said she likes this practice because the school allows students to choose the books they want to read:

"The selected books are screened by teachers, but the school usually buys the books we recommend because we know what other students want to read."





As part of the Parent-Child Reading Scheme, the library stocks titles suitable for parents.



Parents are given a book list and they can borrow books through their children. The Parent-Child Reading Scheme and book display are promoted on Parents' Nights.

## ERS Lessons (S.1 - S.3)

CSS has built upon the framework of the former Education Department's ERS by enlisting parental support and including an element of story-sharing to make reading interactive.

Mrs Ronica Chan, the English panel chair, named three ways that stories are shared.

Teacher-student conferencing



..



Peer-sharing



....



Individual students sharing stories in front of the class



....



CSS recognises that parental support for reading is essential. When the ERS was launched, the English panel suggested that 10 to 15 minutes in S.1 Orientation and Parents' Night be set aside to promote the scheme and explain the educational value of storybooks. Now, during Orientation and Parents' Nights, Mrs Ronica Chan does the following:

- Introduces the scheme
- Invites winners of the school's story-telling competitions to tell stories
- Asks students to demonstrate peer-sharing
- Demonstrates teacher-student conferencing





- Invites parents to share experiences of supporting their children to read English books at home
- 





### **Teacher-Student Conferencing**

Teacher-student conferencing involves a student sharing a book with the teacher. The self-service nature of the ERS lessons has freed the teacher of tedious administrative work, he/she is able to monitor students' reading and talk to students about their books.

The student can come to the teacher (or vice versa), and talk briefly about the content of the book, share feelings or make comments about it. The teacher responded by asking questions and sharing her thoughts about the book.

To address the needs of less able students, Mrs Chan suggests the following:

Ask shy students simple questions to help them relax and open up.

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### **Sharing stories with the class**

Sharing stories in class is another common practice. As in teacher-pupil conferencing, students summarise what the book is about and share their feelings about it.



### **Peer-sharing**

Peer-sharing encourages students to share their thoughts about the books that they have read. It also motivates students to read the books that their peers have read.

## Project Work on Reading Habits (S.2)

The "Reading Habits project" — a survey of students' reading habits — is part of the English curriculum and is carried out as follows:

- In groups of five, students design questionnaires consisting of 10-20 items.
- Each group interviews 10 students from any form and then collates the data.
- Students present their findings in class and write up a group report.
- Each student then writes a letter to the principal recommending measures to promote reading.

Students are taught how to design questionnaires, conduct oral interviews, analyse and present data, and write a survey report and a formal letter.

This project was introduced in S.2 in 1996. Miss Maria Ng, the former English panel chair, explained the rationale behind the topic choice:

"Students have done extensive reading for more than one year, and S.2 is the time for them to reflect on what they have read. We hope that this will encourage them to read more."

In brief, this project enables students to reflect on their reading habits and find out about their schoolmates' reading habits. It also informs the school of students' opinions of its reading resources and environment, as well as improvements it should make.

The letter to the principal is a writing practice and also enables students to make recommendations. When asked whether she considers students' suggestions, the principal's answer was affirmative:

"Yes, we do consider their suggestions, provided they are feasible. If they are infeasible, we will show our appreciation and explain why we can't adopt their suggestions."





In addition to textbooks, there is a set English reader in S.1–S.6. Our study reveals that a class reader can support both intensive and extensive reading.

Miss Grace Wong, the assistant English panel chair, pointed out that a lot of the ERS books in junior forms are graded readers, and that students would benefit from reading originals that are in authentic English. The table below lists the book titles for 2003/04 and the activities used with them.

Form	Book Title	Class Activities
S1	<i>The Finger-Eater</i> by Dick King-Smith	Role-play & story-writing on other kinds of "eaters"
S2	<i>Loudmouth Louis</i> by Anne Fine	Script-writing & dramatisation
S3	<i>Frindle</i> by Andrew Clements	Discussion & presentation
S4	<i>A Pack of Liars</i> by Anne Fine	Writing tasks & board display
S5	<i>Animal Farm</i> by George Orwell	Role-play of a scene
S6	<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> by Mitch Albom	Oral discussion on themes and writing

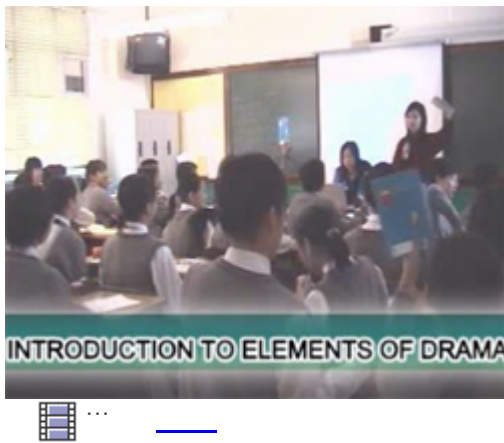
Script-writing and dramatisation in S.2C illustrate the productive use of a class reader.

Summary of the activity:

- Students were first asked to read the book *Loudmouth Louis* at home.
- A discussion of its themes followed.
- Then Mrs Ronica Chan taught students how to write scripts.
- The class was divided into groups and each group was responsible for transforming an episode in the storybook into a play script.
- The scripts were marked and returned, and students revised them.
- Then the groups rehearsed in class, before they finally performed in front of the class.



The introductory lesson, the rehearsal and the performance of the dramatisation



The class reader is also exploited to train higher-order thinking. In the script-writing lesson, Mrs Ronica Chan did the following:

- She covered the format and elements of a play script.
- She then taught students to use adjectives (that could not be lifted from the storybook) to describe facial expressions.

Mrs Chan explained that students had to infer from the context adjectives that best described the characters' feelings and expressions:

"I hope they can have their own interpretation of the story. The story does not have these elements, and actors and actresses can only know how to act when they read the scripts."

The interpretation of the class reader through script-writing and dramatisation had the following advantages, according to students:

1. It helped them understand their class reader more than ERS books.
2. It enhanced vocabulary retention.
3. It required them to understand the feelings of the characters before they could portray them in a script.

'''



For the student interview

Benefits of CSS's use of the class reader:

- Provides a more extended text than that of a reading comprehension passage.
- Generates active student participation.
- Requires more intensive reading than ERS.
- Encourages students to probe deeper into their text.
- Teaches them how to interpret stories.
- Provides scaffolding for extensive reading.

## Home Reading (S.1 - S.2)

The Home Reading Scheme requires that S.1 and S.2 students read for 30 minutes at least five times a week and record their thoughts about the books in a Home Reading book. Teachers respond to content and highlight glaring mistakes, but do not mark these entries intensively. Because Home Reading involves writing, it has been incorporated into the writing curriculum. The students we interviewed felt very positive about Home Reading:

"It's like a diary — you write about books you've read and how you feel about them... I write to Mrs Chan... She writes back. It's like exchanging our diaries."  
*(Irene, an S.3 student)*

"I like Home Reading because I can write about my interests... I do Home Reading so that my teacher can read it."  
*(Jazzy, an S.6 student)*

The autonomy to choose books is one reason why Jazzy, an S.6 student, loves Home Reading. Another reason is that unlike doing book reports, students can note down their thoughts as they read:

"Writing book reports is boring... we may have interesting ideas while reading, but we may forget them after reading the whole book. Home Reading allows us to jot down our ideas as we read."

"I have different feelings for different parts of a book. I won't finish the whole book in a single day. It's better to jot down my feelings when reading different parts of a book."  
*(Carol, an S.3 student)*

Being able to write freely is one more reason why students like Home Reading. Carol, an S.3 student, found she wrote better in Home Reading than in compositions when she was in S.2:

"Home Reading is less stressful. When writing compositions, I have to think of many things. My writing for Home Reading is better."  
*(Carol, an S.3 student)*

At CSS, students share their feelings about what they have read both in writing for Home Reading and verbally through the informal ELT curriculum, namely, story-sharing corners.



## Story-sharing Corner



The aim of the story-sharing corner is to train students to become peer-tutors and listen to junior students sharing stories. The activity is carried out as follows:

- It takes place at lunchtime on two Fridays every month.
- Approximately 6-7 students from S.3 to S.5 act as peer-tutors.
- They set up counters near the school entrance to listen to S.1–S.3 students sharing English stories.
- The story-tellers are expected to bring along their storybook, queue up and wait for their turn to share stories with the peer-tutors.
- The peer-tutors also share their thoughts, comment on the performance of the story-tellers, and give out candy or stickers if they think the story-tellers have performed well.

To help overcome initial fear, the peer-tutors are provided with a list of expressions that they learn and memorise before the story-sharing corner. There are expressions related to greeting, seeking clarification, comforting a story-teller who forgets to bring the book, etc. Teachers also visit the story-sharing corner to help students.

As mentioned in our discussion of ERS lessons, the story-sharing corner is an extension of peer-sharing. It not only engages students meaningfully in oral English outside of class, but also empowers them to evaluate their schoolmates.

# Carmel Secondary School

## Story-sharing Corner

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2003.

Helper: Wallis

Class	Name	Title	Comments
3B	Kwan Man Yi Rowena	The magic finger	good
3B	Kwan Man Yi Rowena	The three little pig	nice, but <del>common</del> story
3B	CHEUNG TIM ZI	Word Word	
3A	Lam Chung Tang	Save our school	good try.
3A	Ma Oi Yin	Foal in the Fog	she has came for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> times
2D	Chan See Lok	Loudmouth Louis	shy.
2D	Yeung Chung Yee	Loudmouth Louis	good,
2D	Choi Man Chu.	The Frighted Thief	good! brave! but I don't
			think she know a lot vocabulary

## Some useful expressions

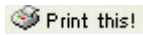
1. Good afternoon. Please sit down / Please be seated.
2. What is the title / the name of the book you would like to share?
3. (no book) It doesn't matter. Just tell me as much as you remember.
4. Oh, I have read it before. I read it when I was F. ?
5. Oh, this part is not clear. Could you repeat?
6. Please speak up. / Louder please.
7. (give some natural responses throughout the sharing)
8. Which part of the story do you like / dislike most? Why?
9. Do you like the story, why?
10. Would you recommend it to your friends?
11. Thank you very much. You have done a good job.
12. Thank you very much. You are a bit nervous. Do better next time. You can do very well.
13. Thanks a lot. I enjoy your sharing very much.
14. The gift is for you. Please come again next time.

## Comments

1. Very good / Well done / Fair / Not good enough...
2. Fluent / poor language
3. Good eye-contact / not enough eye-contact
4. Good voice / not loud enough / too soft
5. Able to tell the story clearly. Good opinion.
6. Very pleasant / too cool / too nervous
7. ...



## Home Reading - Jazzy



Our embedded case, Jazzy, entered CSS in 1998, the year when Home Reading was introduced as an optional assignment in S.1 and students did at least five entries per week. Jazzy did Home Reading in S.1 and S.2, and carried on voluntarily in the first half of S.3. She wrote a total of 474 entries, from which we can trace her language development and changes in her attitudes towards extensive reading.

[Changed Perception of Reading over Time](#)

[Cultivated Reading Habits](#)

[Improved Language Awareness and Proficiency](#)

[Facilitated Testing of Reading Strategies and Book Selection Criteria](#)

[Developed a Sense of Ownership of Text](#)

## Changed Perception of Reading over Time

Jazzy reported her initial indifference to extensive reading and how her attitude changed. In response to the question about whether she enjoyed reading before entering S.1, she replied:



At the beginning of S.2 she wrote this entry (Figure A) about reading bringing happiness to mankind:

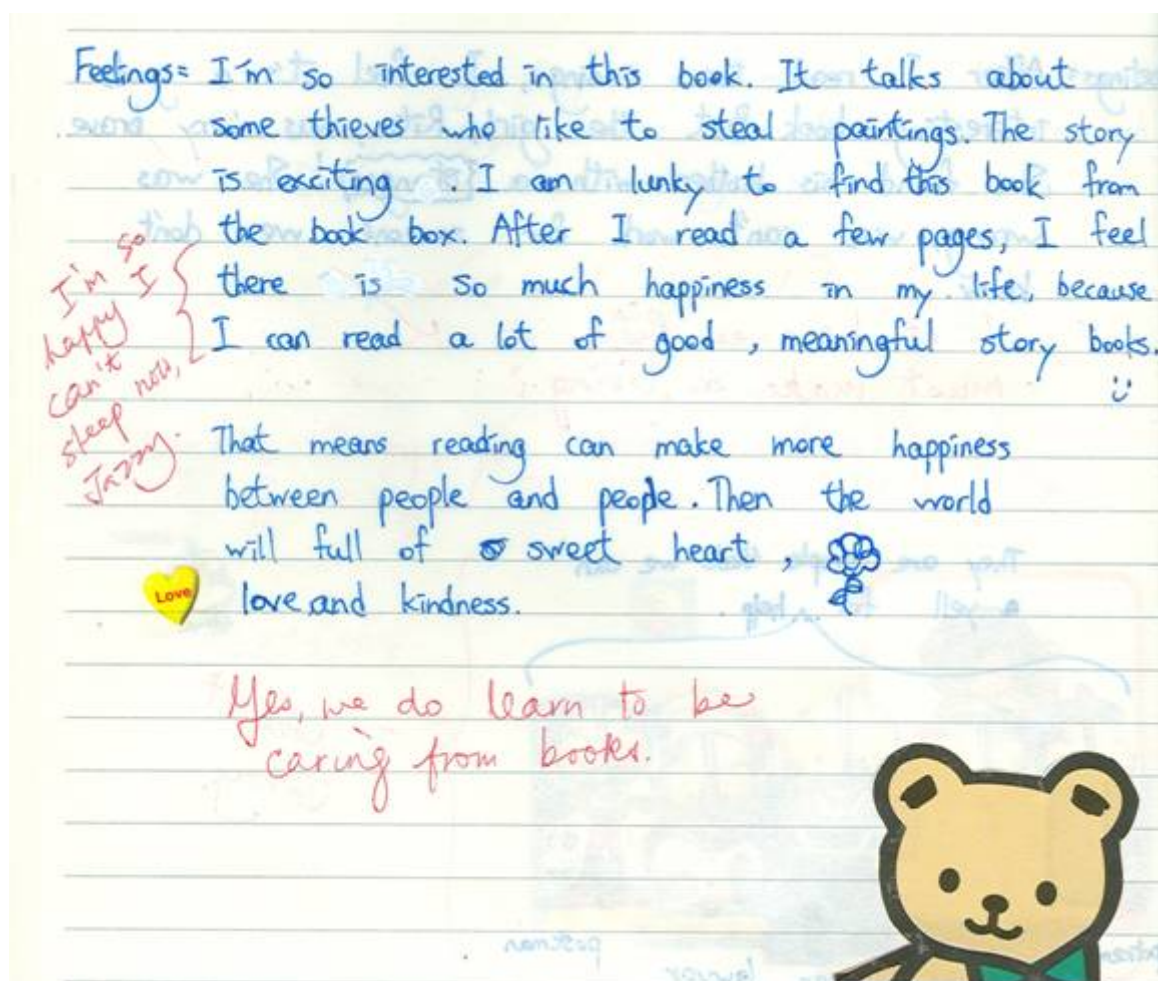


Figure A: Home Reading Entry dated 28 September 1999

## Cultivated Reading Habits

Reading habits cannot be formed in one day. Reading for 30 minutes every day requires persistence, and Jazzy found it difficult at first. It took time for her to get used to it:

"At first, I wasn't in the habit of reading every night...but because I did Home Reading, I had to read for 30 minutes every evening. I felt that it was difficult in the beginning, and I had a sense of being forced to do it. However, this habit was formed as time went on and I got used to it."



## Improved Language Awareness and Proficiency

There are a number of examples from Jazzy's entries that inform us of her improved language awareness and proficiency. Jazzy remembers some of them, one being her use of relative clauses.

Relative clauses are taught formally in S.2 in CSS, but Jazzy was able to use them before S.2. When we asked her what areas of improvement she made, she mentioned:

"Grammar and sentence structure. I don't think English can be improved in one day. I began to write more fluently after I had been reading for one to two months. Take relative clauses for example, Miss Ng [her English teacher] had not taught them yet – the Wh-words – but I could use them very naturally. I had already acquired the knowledge."

The first time Jazzy used a relative clause was on 3 January 1999 (Figure A), less than two months after Home Reading started. She wrote "who was called Dickson":

"I saw the use of relative clause a lot in the books I read. After 'who', usually people are introduced. Every author writes in this way so I can introduce people in the same way when I write."

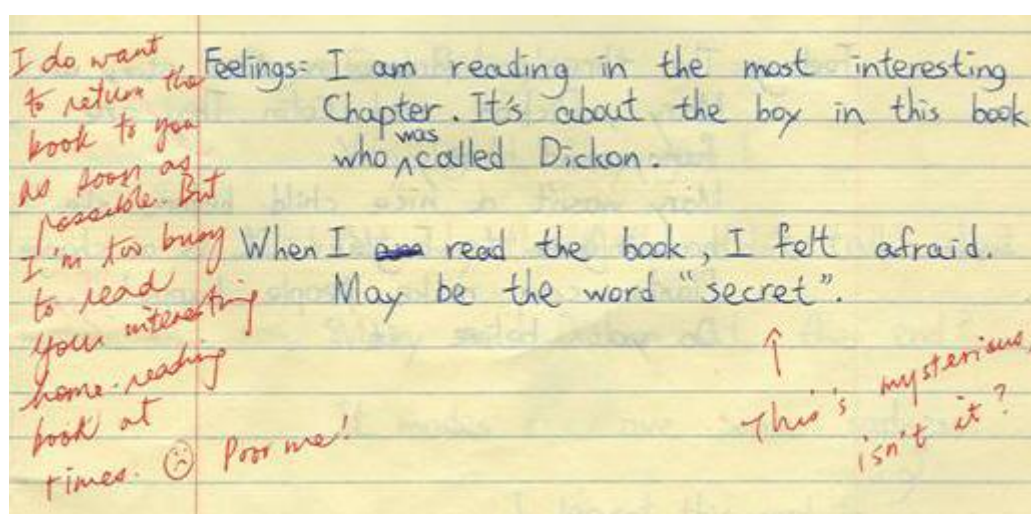


Figure A: Home Reading Entry dated 3 January 1999

Besides relative clauses, Jazzy mentioned that she learnt informal expressions and vocabulary items from books:



The three entries below illustrate how Jazzy learnt about the omission of the article 'a' in front of the word 'news'. In Figure B, she wrote 'a good news'. This mistake was picked up by the teacher, who implicitly provided the correct use in her response.

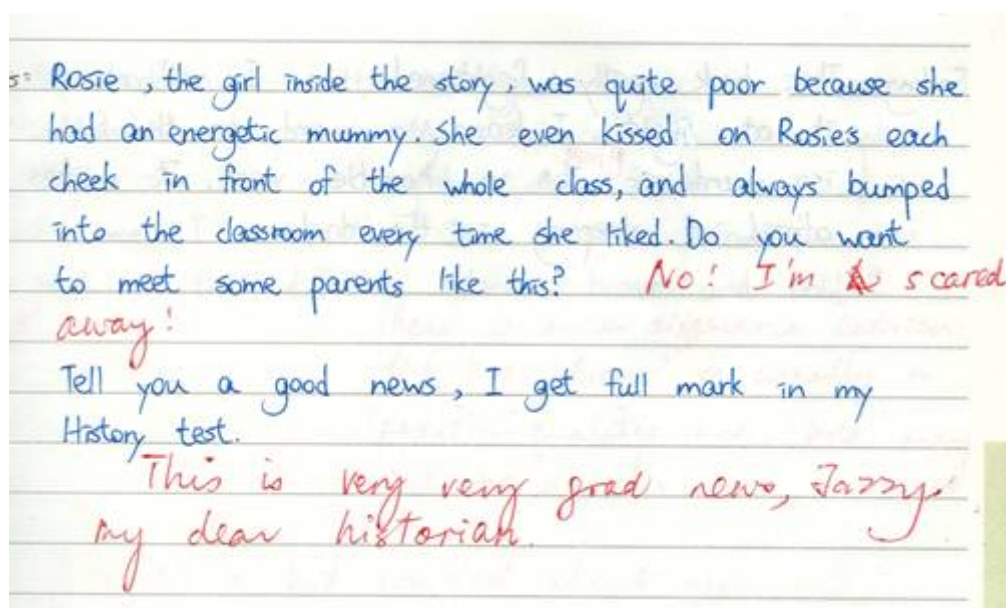


Figure B: Home Reading Entry dated 6 April 2000

Slightly over a month later, Jazzy made the same mistake with 'news' and this time the teacher highlighted the problem (Figure C). Jazzy finally got it right in her entry on 27 May 2000 (Figure D).

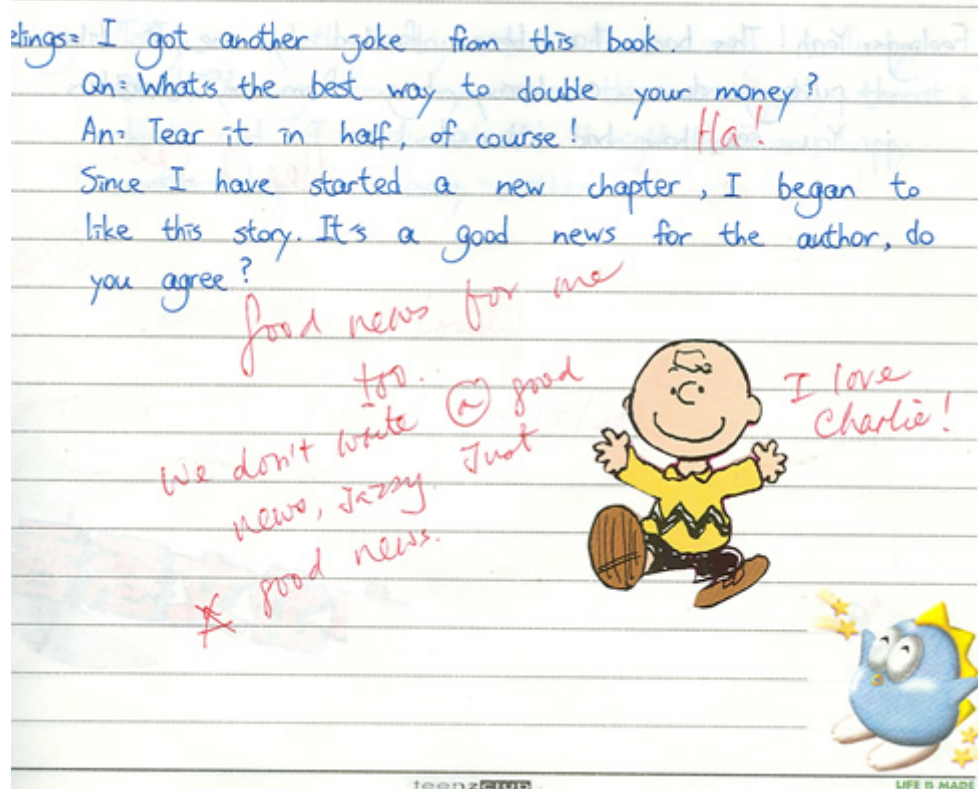


Figure C: Home Reading Entry dated 11 May 2000

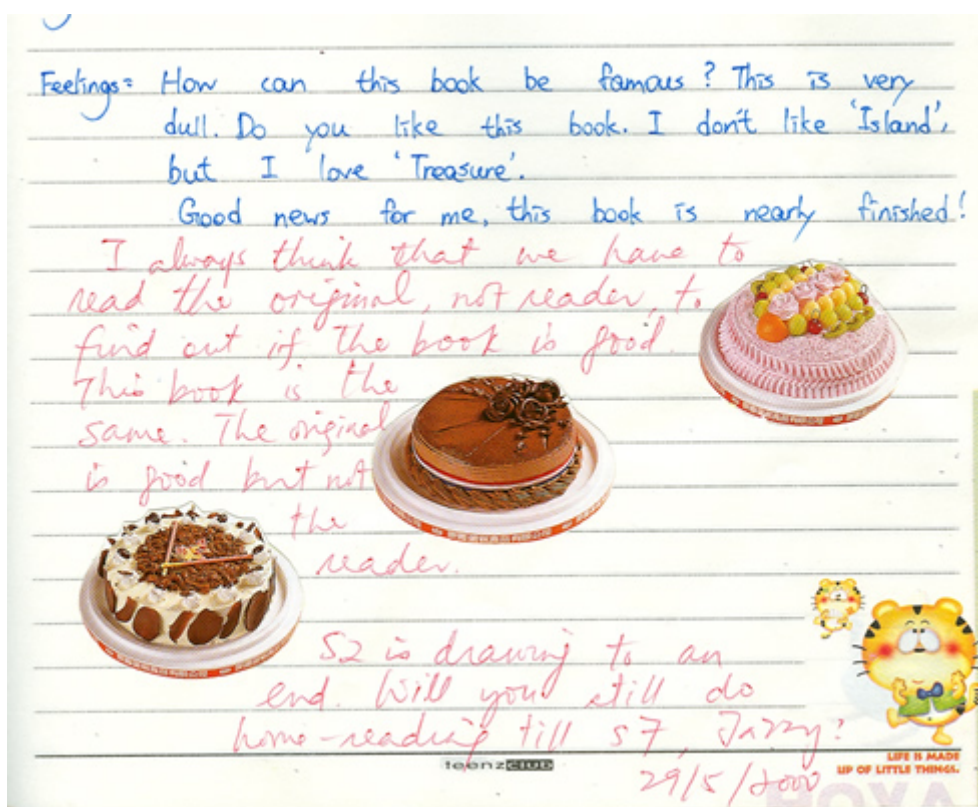


Figure D: Home Reading Entry dated 27 May 2000

The teacher's feedback on Jazzy's language problems raised her awareness of language use and she still remembers this incident:

"Yes, I still remember 'a good news'. Every time I write 'good news' or 'news', I think of Miss Ng telling me that there is no 'a' for 'news'."

While in the example of 'good news' Jazzy was made aware of her mistake by the teacher's explicit feedback, there were also occasions when Jazzy acquired the correct use of an item

without direct feedback from the teacher. For example, soon after the teacher wrote "Thanks, Jazzy, for doing your Home Reading, no matter how busy you are!" (from entry dated 8 December 2000), Jazzy wrote "No matter how bad the drawings are, I like the book." (from entry dated 24 December 2000). She had learned the phrase from the teacher's writing and had incorporated it into her own writing.



## Facilitated Testing of Reading Strategies and Book Selection Criteria

It is worth noting how Jazzy experimented with different reading strategies in the process of reading. In her entry dated 3 January 1999 (Figure A), she wrote about reading slowly in order to understand better:

Feelings: Because I want to understand the story, so I read it slowly. This method is right. Yes Take your time.

Dear Jazzy,

It's GREAT FUN to read your comments! I enjoy it so much! ☺ ☺ ☺

Ms Ng  
12/1/99

Figure A: Home Reading Entry dated 3 January 1999

Jazzy's meta-cognitive awareness is also evident in her comments about how to select books. In her entry dated 26 August 1999, Jazzy wrote that she chose books by looking at the words and pictures. The day after (Figure B), she decided not only to pick books written by famous writers, but also to select those written by unknown writers. Her confidence in her ability to select good books was so great that on 30 September 1999, she concluded that she should be consulted when the Education Department buys books.

Feelings: This book fits me. Though the author of the stories are not very famous, but their stories are lovely. So when we borrow a book, we should not only notice the author. Am I right? Definitely!

There are many less famous authors who write good books too!

Figure B: Home Reading Entry dated 27 August 1999

## Developed a Sense of Ownership of Text

The examples of Jazzy's entries show that reading has made her think on a deeper level. She now questions what she reads. If she disagrees with the ending of a story, she suggests alternatives, as exemplified by the entry dated 19 January 2000 (Figure A). In other words, Jazzy has developed a sense of ownership of text.

In the entry dated 14 April 2000 (Figure B), Jazzy was reading *Invasion of the Dinner Ladies* by Michaela Morgan and Dee Shulman. The story is about food, and it inspired her to write a rhyme on food for her Home Reading.



Figure A: Home Reading Entry dated 19 January 2000

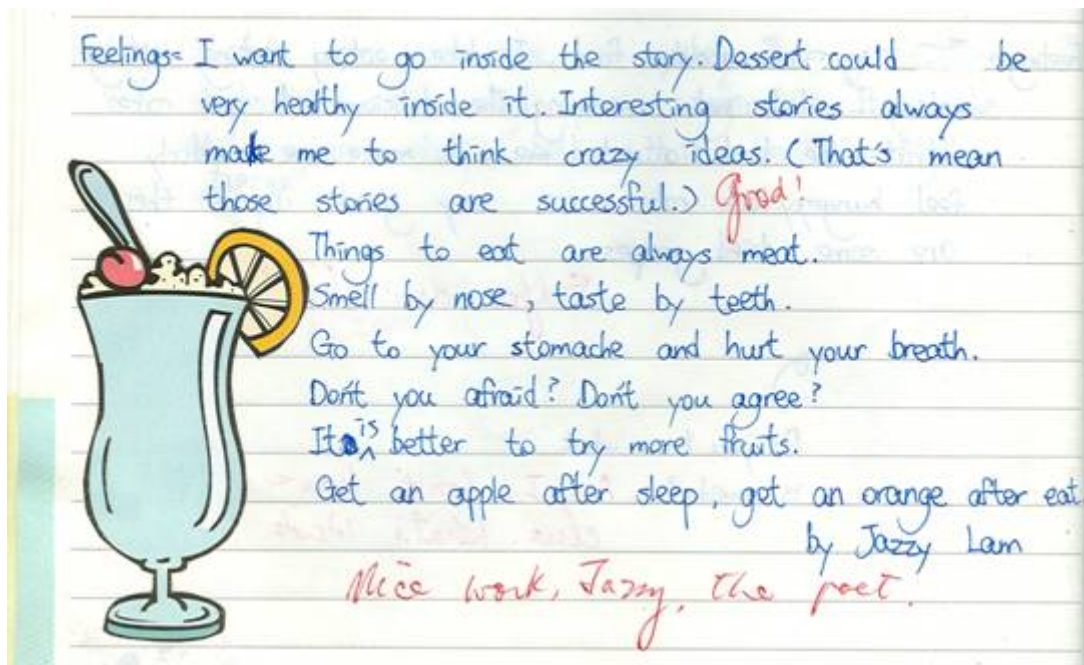


Figure B: Home Reading Entry dated 14 April 2000

Jazzy explained that the more she read, the more ideas she had. She was also able to judge whether the plot of a story was commonplace or not. Books on poetry and rhymes inspired her to write poems:



### a. Student-Student/ Teacher-Student Dialogue

One feature that stands out in our study of CSS's extensive reading is the ample opportunity to talk about or write about books:

- Students share stories in ERS lessons.
- They discuss books orally with peers in story-sharing corners.
- They share their thoughts by writing entries in their Home Reading books\*.
- Students are engaged in oral or written dialogue with one another and with the teacher.

Students we interviewed about the story-sharing corner highlighted the importance of interaction. A story-teller from S.2, Gloria, described story-sharing as "interaction of ideas between students of different forms."

Vicky and Kaiser, peer-tutors from S.3, made these comments:

"I prefer students to share their story with us, rather than reading from a script. There should be some interaction."

"I ask them to share the story, not just open the book and tell us what it is about."

Discussion was evident in the story-sharing corner that we observed. Around fifty junior students shared stories in half an hour's time. We also observed that the story-teller did not only report the content of a book, but they also discussed the story with the peer-tutors.

### b. Meaning-Making

Story-sharing corners and entries in Home Reading books require that students express themselves clearly to their audience. Jennifer, an S.5 student, recalled the difficulty of expressing herself in English and her fear of making mistakes when she first began to share stories. Catherine in S.2 also thought sharing stories made her aware of the importance of clarity. Both students became more confident after they started going to the story-telling corner:

"When I was a story-teller in S.1, I felt nervous. I was afraid of making mistakes. I didn't know how to translate my thoughts from Chinese into English. I then tried to speak, disregarding the mistakes I made...I gained more confidence, and I became a peer-tutor in S.3."

"I learned to be less shy. I had to speak clearly in order to make others understand me. This also helped my oral skills."

We also observed how story-tellers tried to get their meaning across. William, an S.2 student, shared the story *Death of an Englishman*. He wanted to use the word "sympathise" and tried asking the peer-tutor for help. He finally used the phrase "feel sorry for" instead.





### **c. Exploration of Language Use**

In the process of communication, the speaker/writer explores language use and experiments with it. An S.3 student, May, valued the chance to share stories with peers and to apply what she had learnt in an authentic situation:

"Usually we don't have much chance to read out the vocabulary we have just learnt, but the story-sharing corner provides a place for us to try out the new vocabulary we've learnt and consolidates our knowledge of new words."

Reading is often perceived as a solitary activity. But the extensive reading that takes place at CSS allows the reader to interact with their peers and teachers, thus facilitating genuine communication and experimentation of language.

### Teacher-student Dialogue

Teacher-student dialogues, meaning-making and exploration of language use are all evident in Jazzy's Home Reading. Figure A is the first entry in her Home Reading book. It contains only a general comment on the story she read. When the teacher wrote "Why?" Jazzy wrote back and gave a reason.

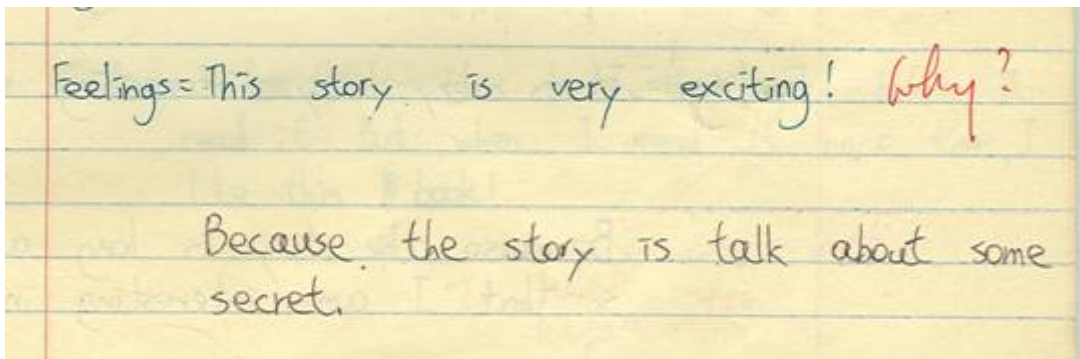


Figure A: Home Reading Entry dated 25 November 1998

When she first saw the word "Why?" Jazzy had this feeling:

"It seemed she [the teacher] did not understand my writing. She needed more information from me."

The teacher's response to her Home Reading motivated Jazzy to write in greater detail. In her entry dated 1 March 1999 (Figure B), Jazzy did the following:

- gave a general comment on the story and a reason for her comment
- recommended it to the teacher
- commented on a character in the book
- asked the teacher for her view
- marked off an area on the page for the teacher's response
- wrote the word "idea" in red and put a colon after it
- decorated her Home Reading with a picture of a cartoon character

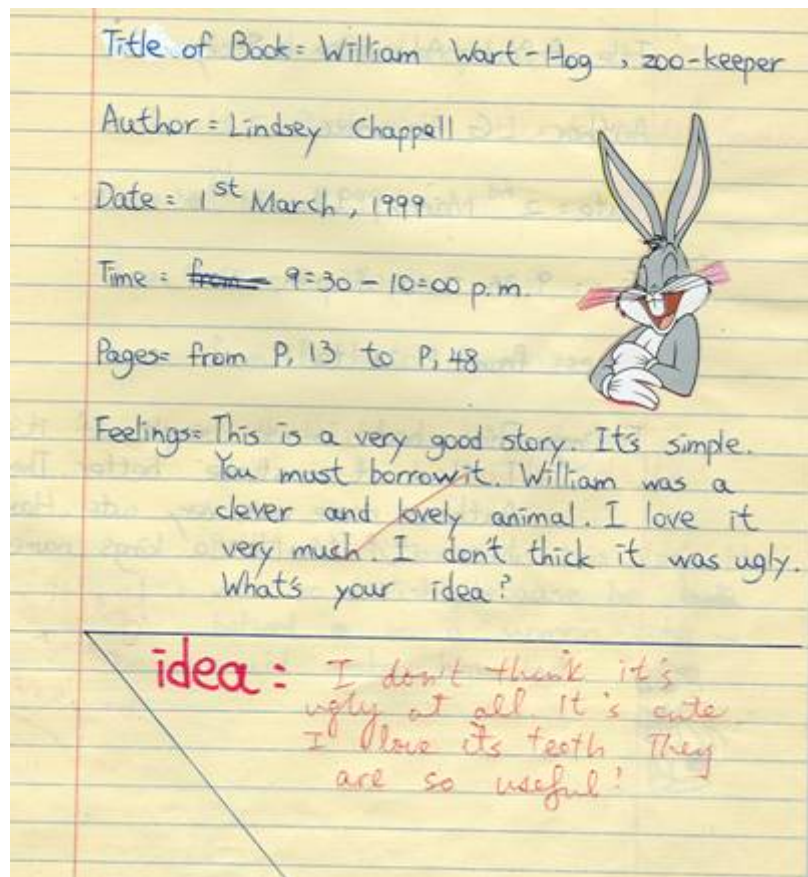


Figure B: Home Reading Entry dated 1 March 1999

This entry is much richer in content. The pronoun "you" indicates Jazzy's awareness of the teacher being her reader.

A comparison between these two entries reveals the move away from general comments to more specific detailed discussion of authors, characters, storylines, personal reflections and experience. The teacher's response gave Jazzy ideas about what she could write. According to Jazzy's mother, Jazzy looked forward to her teacher's response



### Meaning-Making

The dialogic nature of Home Reading also presents Jazzy with a need to make her meaning clear. In her entry on 28 December 1998 (Figure A), Jazzy asked whether the teacher understood her.

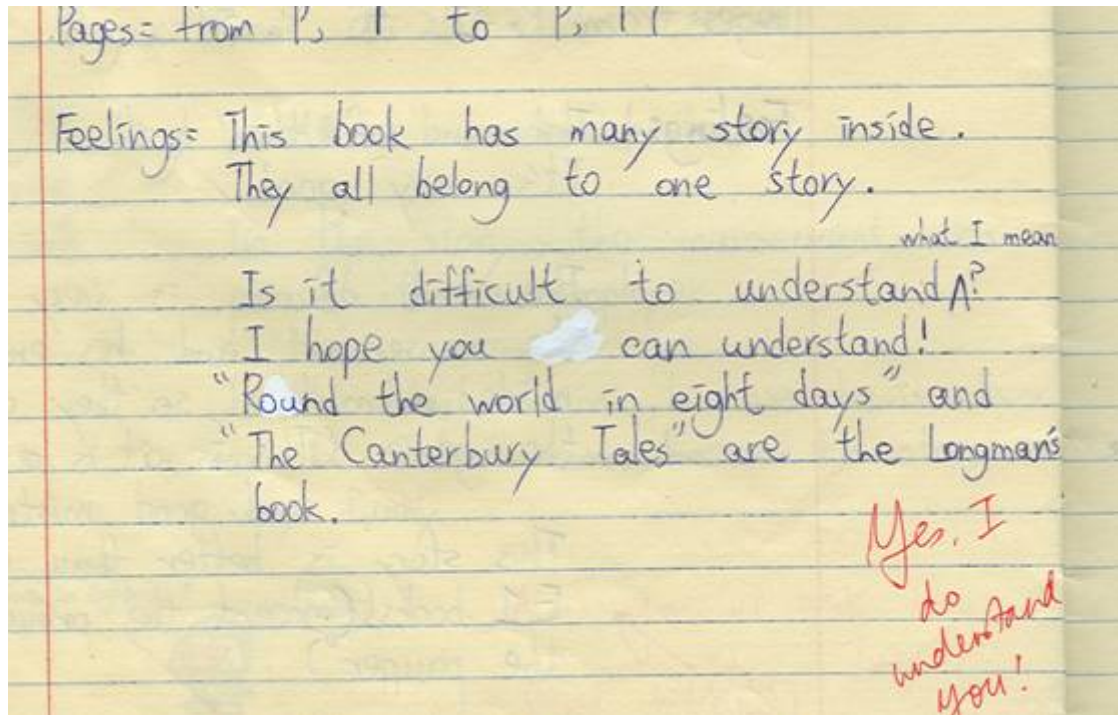


Figure A: Home Reading Entry dated 28 December 1998

Worried that her teacher might not understand her, Jazzy asked the teacher directly. She was reassured by the response "Yes, I do understand you!" Jazzy confessed in our interview that she had:

"...this worry while doing Home Reading. But my English has improved since I started writing more. I now know how to express myself."



## The Impact of Extensive Reading on Language Learning

### Exploring Language

Jazzy's entry dated 17 November 1999 (Figure A) shows clearly her exploration of language. Below her sentence "it's not possible" she wrote, "Isn't it better if I use impossible?"

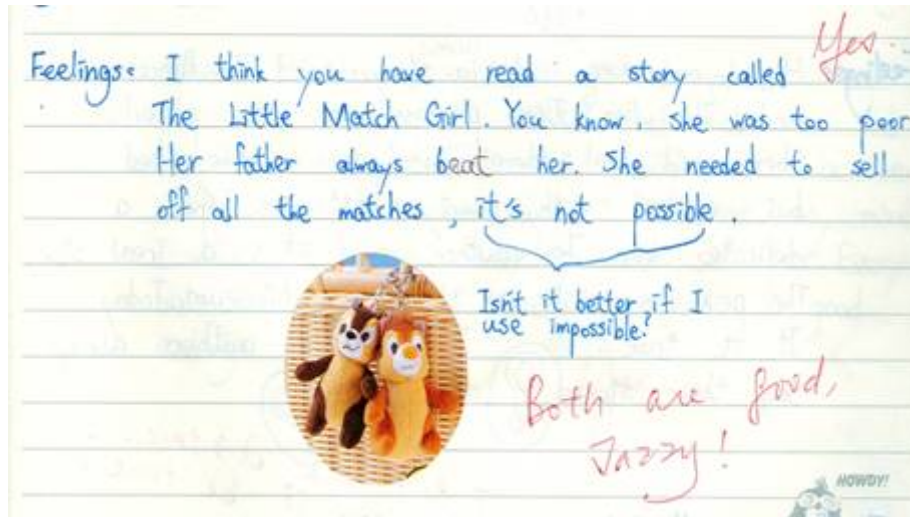


Figure A: Home Reading Entry dated 17 November 1999



Jazzy explains how she deals with new vocabulary.

Extensive reading has made a positive impact on Jazzy's language development:

- Her attitude towards reading has changed.
- She has formed a reading habit.
- Her language awareness and proficiency have increased.

In her entries we also noted exploration of reading methods and identification of book selection criteria, as well as development of a sense of ownership of text.

## Home-School Cooperation

Parental support is often constrained by the parents' education, occupation, perception of reading and the time they can spare. In this section we focus on the type of support schools can enlist from parents, and how parents can take an active role to help their children learn.

Mrs Lam, the mother of Jazzy, the S.6 student whose entries we looked at, has supported the Parent-Child Reading Scheme since it was introduced and has encouraged Jazzy with her Home Reading. She was invited by the school to share her experience on Parents' Night. She also wrote an article for the School's Handbook for Parents.

Mrs Lam appreciates the school's efforts to inform parents of school activities. She said:



Mrs Lam recalled that Home Reading was a challenge for Jazzy. Having read very few English books in primary school, it was a daunting task. It was the same for Mrs Lam, because she read few books at that time:

"I seldom went to the library. We wouldn't go to bookstores and read books. In fact, we were just a traditional and ordinary family... I didn't even have a library card.... So how could I borrow books?"

However, Mrs Lam rose to the challenge. She visited public libraries with Jazzy at weekends and helped her select books with pictures, less text, big font size and interesting content.



Mrs Lam also helped collect pictures from magazines and pamphlets so that Jazzy could decorate her Home Reading books. She also discussed what to write with Jazzy and suggested that she do the following:

- Share the parts of the book she liked or disliked
- Include her reaction to the ending

- Write down her feelings about the characters

But she did not dictate to Jazzy: "After reading her work, I didn't correct anything. I would just take a look and see what she wrote."

In the process of offering Jazzy support, Mrs Lam's perception of reading changed. Her interest in reading grew and she began to read a variety of books.

Jazzy observed that her mother has started to enjoy reading.

"...in fact my mother [Mrs Lam] did not really like reading at first. It's only after I started Home Reading that she started reading more books... she reads a wider range of books now."

While Mrs Lam was able to read with Jazzy and take her to public libraries, some parents do not have the time. But parents can at least show some interest in what their children are reading.



Parents exert considerable influence on their children's reading. While schools cannot mandate parent-child reading time at home, they can

- stress the value of reading, and
- keep parents informed of their reading programmes.