

## Connecting Students' Learning Experiences between English Language and Non-language Subjects through Promoting Language across the Curriculum at the Junior Secondary Level

### Introduction

This example illustrates how content and language learning can be integrated in the English Language, Integrated Science (I.S.) and History lessons. The English teacher introduces the rhetorical function “making comparisons” and its related language items in the English classroom while teachers of I.S. and History help reinforce the knowledge in subject-specific contexts.

### Cross-KLA Collaboration

### Impact on Learning

### English Language

#### (Reading)

- Drawing students' attention to the rhetorical function, i.e. “making comparisons” and the related language items, e.g. “both”, “compared to”, “more/-er...than”, “however/but”, “on the other hand”, using the reading text “Chinese or Western parenting: Which is best for you?”

#### Chinese or Western Parenting: Which is Best for You?

...Ms Chua was both too strict with her children and too critical of western parenting methods...

...Instead, they said that “good parents make sure their children get top grades”...

...Other studies show that, compared to western parents, Chinese parents spend 10 times longer every day doing homework and other academic activities with their children...

...Chinese parents, however, believe that they know best for their children, and therefore make their choices of activities and courses of study for them...Chinese parents, on the other hand, believe that their children can...

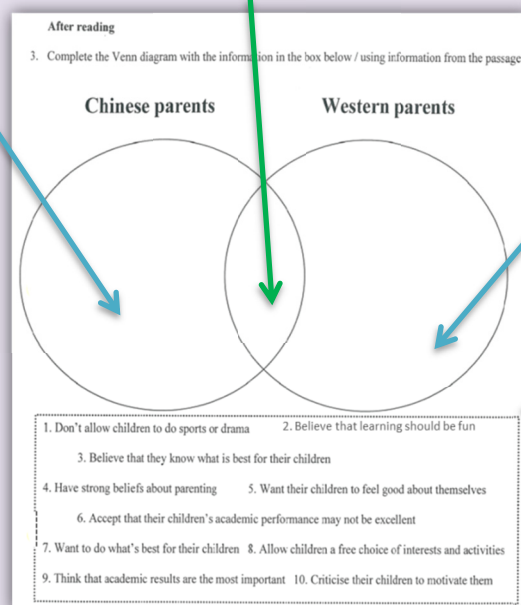
- Students are guided to understand the rhetorical function “making comparisons” and how the related language items are used in context.



- Helping students understand the reading text and the rhetorical function “making comparisons” by organising the main ideas using a graphic organiser, i.e. a Venn diagram

To compare

- the differences between Chinese and western parents
- the similarities between Chinese and western parents



Main ideas  
of the  
reading text

- Students are guided to understand the rhetorical function “making comparisons” by identifying the similarities and differences between Chinese and western parents.

- Highlighting to students the use of the language items used for making comparisons in the reading text and helping them practise these language items in language practice activities, e.g.

Language items	Showing similarities	Showing differences
Both	✓	
Like	✓	
Unlike		✓
On the other hand		✓
However / but		✓
Instead of		✓
Compared to		✓

When Amy Chua's article appeared in the Wall Street Journal, a lot of people made comments about it on the Internet. Here is one of the comments. Complete it using the words in the box below to fill in the blanks.

Amy Chua's article is insulting to Chinese parents! I am Chinese, and my parents are totally different from her! Ms Chua forced her daughters to play the violin and the piano. \_\_\_\_\_, my parents let me choose what instrument to play. I chose the trumpet and I really enjoy playing. What is the point of learning an instrument if you don't enjoy it? Also, Ms Chua would not let her daughters take part in school drama productions. My parents, \_\_\_\_\_, encouraged me to try acting. \_\_\_\_\_wasting time, it really improved my confidence and speaking skills. My parents always encourage me and praise me when I do well. \_\_\_\_\_most Chinese parents nowadays, Amy Chua is much stricter, even cruel to her children. She is presenting an unfair stereotype of Chinese people. Please don't think that all Chinese parents are like her!

however      on the other hand      by contrast  
unlike      instead of      compared to      both

- Students become more aware of the connection between the language items and their language functions, and their understanding of the use of the language items is further reinforced.

(Writing)

- Engaging students in making comparisons between Amy Chua's typical Chinese parents and their/most parents in Hong Kong in a writing task:

Guiding students to plan for their writing task using a Venn diagram

You can use the Venn diagram below to organise your ideas:

Amy Chua's "typical" Chinese parents vs My parents / most parents in Hong Kong

**Similarities**  
Both types of parents....  
Like the "typical" Chinese parents, my parents also.....

**Differences**  
By contrast,...  
On the other hand  
However  
Compared to Western parents, Chinese parents are much stricter  
Instead of making me play music, they let me do sports

- Students are guided to
  - make connection with the reading text "Chinese or Western parenting: Which is best for you?"; and
  - organise their ideas about the similarities and differences between Amy Chua's typical Chinese parents and their/most parents in Hong Kong using a Venn diagram.

- Providing the opportunities for students to apply the language items to compare different views and behaviour between Chinese/the students' parents and western parents in the writing task:

I'm certain that it's just a stereotype. Sure, a lot of parents from China are strict compared to the ones from the west. But as you know, I'm from Hong Kong, but unlike Amy Chua, my parents aren't that strict! My parents allow me to participate in extracurricular activities and I can watch the TV whenever I want!

Race doesn't determine whether western or Chinese students are good at Mathematics or not. Both western and Chinese parents wish their kids to do their best at school, maybe the Chinese students just happen to work harder than western students!

In this case, it doesn't involve the parents.

- Students are engaged in applying the language items in context and their understanding of the rhetorical function "making comparisons" and the related language items is consolidated.

## Integrated Science (I.S.)

- Helping students connect their learning experiences between English Language and I.S. by highlighting the rhetorical function “making comparisons” and the related language items previously introduced in the English lessons

Reminding students the language items that they can use for making comparisons in the I.S. learning activity

You can make use of the words below in completing the learning activity:

However.....  
.....but.....  
.....while.....  
Unlike .....  
Like.....  
Both....and.....

- Students’ awareness of the rhetorical function “making comparisons” and its related language items is further reinforced in Science contexts.

- Providing opportunities for students to produce texts that involve making comparisons in Science contexts

### Similarities:

(a) Both respiration and burning have the same word equation.

(b) Like respiration, ~~burning will also~~ produces heat energy.

### Differences

(c) Unlike burning, respiration ~~can be~~ controlled.

(d) Burning ~~occurs outside living cells~~ but respiration occurs inside living cells.

### Examination paper

(d) Compare the arrangement and movement of particles in a liquid and in a gas. (3 marks)

The spaces between liquid particles are small but the spaces between gas particles are big. Liquid particles can move around easily and gas particles can move around freely. Both particles arrange irregularly.

- Students are able to
  - connect their learning experience to integrate content knowledge and language learning; and
  - apply the language items to present their ideas in Science contexts appropriately.

## History

- Helping students connect their learning experiences by highlighting the rhetorical function “making comparisons” and the related language items previously introduced in the English lessons

Reminding students the language items that they can use for making comparisons in the History learning activity

Examples:

- > **More** people lived in towns after the Industrial Revolution.
- > Before the Industrial Revolution, machines were made of wood **but** they were made of iron after the Revolution.

You can also use connectives like 'while' and 'however'.

- Students' awareness of the rhetorical function “making comparisons” and its related language items is further reinforced in History contexts.

- Providing opportunities for students to produce texts that involve making comparisons in History contexts

compare the conditions before and after the Industrial Revolution.

- Before the Industrial Revolution, the farms were small but after the revolution, the farms became bigger.
- People travelled on foot, on horseback or in coaches before the revolution, however, people travelled on steamships and railways after the revolution.
- Animals and water energy were sources of energy before the revolution while steam-engines were the source of energy after the revolution.

### Examination paper

#### Source C

The following is the history of an organization in Hong Kong.

In late 19th century Hong Kong, many women and children were kidnapped and sold. On 8th November, 1878, a group of local Chinese presented a petition to the Governor, Sir John Pope Hennessy, to set up an organization to save the kidnapped women and children.

#### Source D

The following described another organization in Hong Kong.

It was set up by a group of Chinese community leaders in 1872. It provided medical, education and burial services in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Government granted 12 hectares of land to this organization in 1870.

- (i) Identify two similarities between the organizations described in Sources C and D. (4 marks)

- Students are able to
  - > connect their learning experience to integrate content knowledge and language learning; and
  - > apply the language items to present their ideas in History contexts appropriately.

*Some of the activities have been tried out in Methodist College. We thank the school for sharing their experience.*