

IV. Professional Guidelines

A. Role of the headmaster / panel chairperson / teacher-in-charge of remedial teaching

The headmaster or the panel chairperson usually oversees the operation of remedial teaching in the school. Sometimes the headmaster will assign a teacher to be the teacher-in-charge of remedial teaching. This teacher's duty is to ensure close co-ordination across the various levels as well as among groups of the same level.

1. Scheme of work

A time and place should be arranged for teachers to meet and design the scheme of work for a year level. They must work out the specific learning activities and language items, which must be covered by all pupils at a year level so that space is built in for necessary remedial and enrichment work. (An exemplar scheme of work for all pupils at a year level can be found on the next page.) In the case of remedial class pupils, they only learn the specific learning activities and language items. As different remedial groups at a year level may cover different specific learning activities and language items, remedial class teachers need to maintain a plan of work for the remedial class (a sample is attached at Appendix 3). All schemes of work as well as the plans of work for the remedial class at a year level and across the various levels should be regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure adequate coverage in the curriculum based on the needs and abilities of the pupils.



When preparing the plan of work for the remedial class and choosing teaching materials for them, the remedial teachers could

- refer to their pupils' individual records (a sample is attached at Appendix 2) or ask their former teachers about their standard;
- make use of some of the tasks graded “☆” published by the Development Unit of the TOC Section in their booklet ‘Target Oriented Curriculum Exemplar Tasks for English’; and
- try to use more interesting activities and attractive resources.

A sample scheme of work for Primary 2
First term/ Second term/ Third term year : 98 to 99

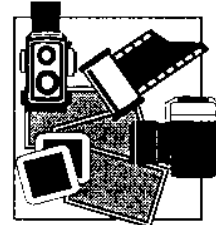
Week	Module/ Unit/ Task	Source of materials	Learning Activities	Targets	Language Learning Objectives		
					Functions	Forms	Skills
15 th & 16 th	Task: Unit: What does your father do? Module: Introducing and Describing Myself and Family Me, My Family and Friends	Target Oriented Curriculum Exemplar Tasks for English Key Stage I' Task 5 & 6	Miming p.106 Conducting a survey pp.106 &119 Pair work pp.106 & 127 Guessing game* Role play*	I.D.e K.D.a K.D.c	Ask "Wh-"questions to find out various kinds of specific information about a person. Use nouns to identify someone's occupation. Use nouns to indicate time. Use nouns to identify working places.	"Wh-" questions: <i>What does your father do?</i> <i>He is a _____.</i> <i>He goes to work at ten past eight*/eight ten.</i> <i>He works in _____.</i>	<u>Speaking</u> Use model phrases and sentences to communicate. Use appropriate intonation in questions and statements. Maintain interaction by providing information in response to factual questions. <u>Listening</u> Identify the main ideas. <u>Writing</u> Develop written text in a logical order to make meaningful sentences.

*Optional examples of language items / learning activities for enrichment work

2. Resource Bank

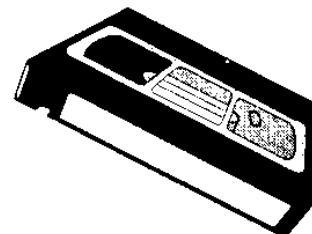
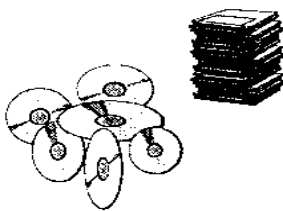
Team work and the systematic sharing of teaching materials should be encouraged. For teachers' convenience, teaching aids, workcards, worksheets, etc. could be pooled for use and eventually a resource bank could be set up.

Teachers could also elicit the help of their pupils by setting up resource making groups. Teachers could first design and select relevant materials for remedial teaching. Upper class pupils could then be called upon to help their teachers draw and colour pictures and diagrams, design tables, make models and puppets, create and record special sound effects, take relevant photos as well as write word strips and word cards. Lower class pupils could also be called upon to help upper class pupils finish the tasks.



3. Professional and moral support

The active involvement and support of the head and the panel chairperson is desirable. When problems arise, professional advice and moral support should be forthcoming especially for new or non-subject-trained teachers. Sensible teaching ideas could be supported through the purchase of necessary resources such as library books, tapes and other teaching aids.



B. Role of the remedial group teacher

1. Teacher's attitude

Very often, children who have fallen behind in English have lost their interest and confidence in learning the subject. The remedial group teacher should be patient and understanding. He should instill in his pupils a positive attitude towards the subject and help them overcome their problems and learning difficulties. He should also use stimulating teaching strategies to arouse his pupils' interest in learning so that they would make better progress.

2. Assessing the initial strengths and weaknesses of the pupils

At the beginning of a remedial programme, the teacher needs to administer to his remedial group a test on previously learnt modules / units / tasks in order to plan the remedial programme. He can do this by making use of :

- past examination papers;
- exemplar learning or assessment tasks provided by the Education Department;
- self-designed test papers;
- test papers designed by the team; and
- the Hong Kong Attainment Test.

3. Co-ordination with teachers of mainstream classes

It is essential for the remedial group teachers to discuss and co-ordinate with the mainstream teachers in planning the scheme of work / teaching programme and agreeing on the specific learning activities and language items to be covered for the level. For the different modes of operation, the arrangement could be different as follows:

a. Additional lessons

Since these two lessons are held outside school hours, teachers need to design their plans of work for their remedial groups for these additional lessons. Based on the analysis of pupils' weaknesses, a programme, the content of which is drawn from the specific learning activities and language items to be covered for a particular level of pupils, could be compiled.

b. Setting

Remedial teaching through this mode of operation would include specific learning activities and language items to be covered for a particular level of pupils. Besides these, pupils' areas of weaknesses and specific problems could also be dealt with. In the meantime, the mainstream class would cover both the specific learning activities and language items to be covered and what are optional for a particular level of pupils.

c. Partial withdrawal

With this mode of operation, the specific learning activities and language items to be covered for a particular level of pupils are taught in lessons held with the mainstream class so that the two withdrawal lessons may be devoted to remedial teaching on specific problem areas or reteaching of certain topics. In these two lessons the mainstream class would go ahead with what are optional for a particular level of pupils.

4. Preparation of teaching materials



After the pupils' areas of weaknesses have been identified and the teaching programme has been planned, the teacher would need to prepare materials for remedial teaching. These materials should be specially selected, adapted or designed to suit the ability and meet the needs of the pupils. It would be sensible for the teacher to start from where the pupils are and prepare materials to help pupils bridge the gaps in their knowledge.



5. Recording and reviewing pupils' progress

Pupils' individual records of work (a sample is attached at Appendix 2) with comments should be kept as a reference for assessment purposes as well as for the formulation and adjustment of future teaching plans. The remedial group teacher would also need to collaborate with the mainstream teachers to review pupils' progress regularly.

C. Dealing with pupils' general areas of weaknesses

The following are some general areas of weaknesses found in pupils who have lagged behind in English. It is important for teachers to identify these areas and tackle them accordingly.

Areas of weakness	Suggested ways to tackle them
<p>Inadequate vocabulary development</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For some very young pupils, new reading habits have to be developed. The teacher may need to enforce the habit of reading from left to right with the help of cartoons or comic strips. 2. Pupils should acquire the perceptual ability to discriminate 'letter forms' and 'letter order'. 3. The teacher should make sure that pupils are capable of independent word-attack. Letter-sound relationships should be taught. Simple exercises can be designed to help pupils discriminate the common phonemes. (The booklet 'The Teaching of Phonics' and the supporting video, jointly produced by the English Section of the Advisory Inspectorate and the former Institute of Language in Education may be referred to for suggestions and examples of such learning activities.)
<p>Lack of comprehension skills</p> 	<p>Some suggested activities for developing pupils' comprehension skills are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. making guesses of the theme of the story by studying the title and pictures; 2. using quizzes, games, etc. for revision of related vocabulary and structures; 3. completing exercises to reflect on reading content through activities like drawing, matching, identifying, choosing, and classifying; and 4. jigsaw storytelling: learners work in small groups and each group has to tell the class part of the story in their own words.

<p>Weakness in grammatical usage</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grammatical points should be illustrated with interesting and concrete examples. 2. Adequate practice should involve the meaningful use of what has been taught. (A publication of the English Section of the Advisory Inspectorate, 'Teaching Grammar and Spoken English: a Handbook for Hong Kong Schools' was specially compiled to offer suggestions on teaching the forms of the language.)
<p>Weakness in spelling and pronunciation</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The important skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing should be emphasized in the teaching of spelling. 2. When giving intensive instructions on spelling, the teacher should make good use of visual image of the word and letter-sound relationships to help the pupils. 3. Interesting spelling exercises for fun, such as games and quizzes, should be used. 4. Phonics can also be taught to help pupils attach sounds to letters. It is particularly useful for teaching pupils how to pronounce words with consonants, short vowels, letter blends, digraphs and long vowels.
<p>Lack of study skills</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pupils should be taught to use the dictionary, so some individualized learning can take place. 2. The setting up of self-access corners encourages individualized learning. 3. Involving pupils in self-directed activities such as using CD-ROMs for learning English should be encouraged.

D. Teaching strategies

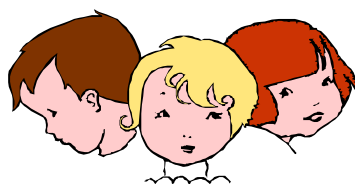
There is no one particular approach to remedial teaching. A flexible teacher would bear in mind the following factors to make remedial teaching interesting and effective:

- careful selection, adaptation and designing of teaching materials;
- stimulating approaches;
- concrete examples;
- smaller teaching goals;
- sufficient practice and recycling;
- adequate communicative use of the language; and
- increased exposure.

1. Careful selection, adaptation and designing of teaching materials

The choice of teaching materials is very important. The remedial class teacher should carefully select, adapt and design materials to cater for the needs of the pupils. The remedial teacher should start from where pupils are and bridge any gaps in their knowledge by:

- identifying pupils' strengths and areas for improvement; and
- finding out more about pupils' interest and learning difficulty through informal interviews or teacher-pupil conferences and referring to their individual records.



The teaching materials used should enable the pupils to progress towards the learning targets at the end of each Key Stage. Co-ordination with teachers of the mainstream is necessary in the selection of teaching materials.

Manageable exercises, activities and tasks are selected / designed to give pupils a greater sense of achievement. Teaching materials can be simplified by:

- replacing difficult vocabulary with easier ones; and

- providing additional hints and illustrations.

(Please see Appendices 4a and 4b for examples of simplified and manageable teaching materials.)

2. Stimulating approaches

For remedial pupils who are usually less motivated towards learning, it is important that interesting teaching approaches are adopted. Attention-holding and illustrative teaching aids like pictures, charts, cut-outs, models, puppets, realia, etc. should be used to stimulate pupil interest and to facilitate learning. This is especially inevitable in the case of reteaching.



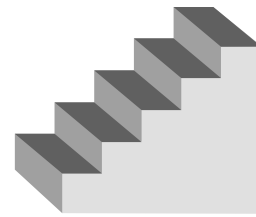
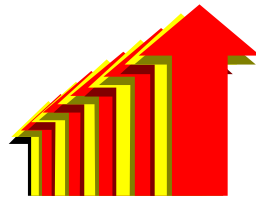
When reteaching of a certain topic is to be done, the teacher would need to disguise old materials in new texts. No pupils would be interested in a lesson in which familiar teaching materials are used in exactly the same way as they were used before.

To give a new look to the lessons, the teacher would need to vary the choice of the teaching aids, the examples, the text for presentation, the way of presentation and the activities for practice and use of target language. Hopefully, such variation would give new interest to relearning. (Please see Appendix 5 for an example of varying materials, presentation and learning activities in reteaching.)

3. Concrete examples

In teaching remedial pupils new language, sufficient examples, especially concrete ones, should be given. Use of concrete examples frees the teacher from tedious explanations and the use of the mother tongue. They help to explain explicitly a particular point that the teacher is teaching. Teaching aids like realia, pictures, charts, puppets, models, cut-outs, etc. can also facilitate teaching. More situational examples can be used to show how the target language is used.

4. Smaller teaching goals

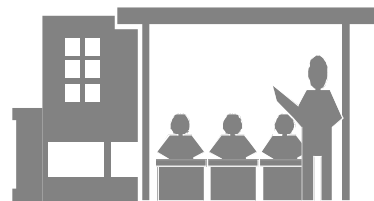


Breaking up teaching objectives into smaller goals may help pupils achieve them with much less difficulty. A gradual approach involving smaller teaching steps could be adopted to help pupils overcome their learning difficulties one by one as they appear. Correspondingly, language exercises and activities should be graded from easy to difficult to help pupils master the target language step by step. (Please see Appendix 6 for examples of using smaller teaching steps and graded exercises / activities / tasks.)

5. Sufficient practice and recycling

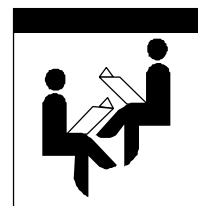
One common problem associated with remedial pupils is poor retention. To help pupils overcome this problem, the remedial class teacher could provide:

- sufficient practice and repetition to help pupils master the target language; and
- frequent recycling of new language learnt for revision and consolidation.



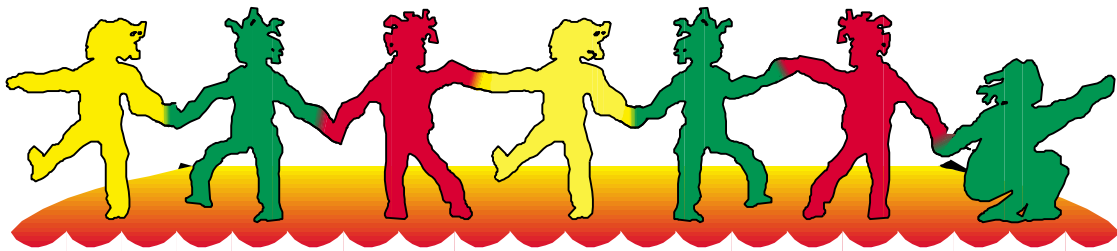
6. Adequate communicative use of the language

It is always vital for remedial pupils to connect the form of the target language with its meaning and use. Practising language through situations created in the classroom would give pupils a good opportunity to connect the form to the meaning and use of the target language. Interesting communicative activities and games should be provided for purposeful use of the language. The essential features of these activities are ‘crossing the information gap’ and ‘getting things done’. (Please see Appendix 7 for an activity involving crossing the information gap and getting things done.) Activities and tasks that involve an integration of various language skills are highly desirable.



7. Increased exposure

English should be used as a teaching medium. Pupils should be encouraged to make responses in simple English. (Please refer to pp. 152-156 of the ‘Syllabuses for Primary Schools English Language Primary 1-6 (1997)’ for a list of classroom English for teachers’ use.) ETV programmes, language tapes, library books and other multi-media resources should be fully exploited to provide adequate exposure to the language. Relevant simple songs, poems, games and stories would also provide pupils with enjoyable experience through English. (A publication of the English Section of the Advisory Inspectorate ‘Poems, Songs and Games for the Primary English Classroom’ can be consulted for suggestions. Please also see Appendix 8 for a simple rhyme on numbers and Appendix 9 for a song for practising occupations and pronouns.)



E. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It involves making judgement about learners’ progress and performance and monitoring the progress of individual learners in relation to targets or criteria. Through assessment, teachers can collect evidence of learner performance, identify their strengths and weaknesses and devise ways of assisting learners to make further progress. This is particularly necessary for remedial teaching.

1. Purposes

The following are the purposes of conducting assessment in remedial teaching:

- select pupils for remedial teaching at the initial stage;
- decide if pupils have reached the level at which they can join the mainstream classes;
- assess learners' progress / performance;
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of learners and devise ways of helping them; and
- collect feedback on their teaching and gather information for lesson planning.

2. Types of assessment

To facilitate better planning of assessment procedures, two types of assessment are suggested below:

a. Assessment for formative purposes

Formative assessment refers to the ongoing assessment of learners' progress during a learning period. Each assessment covers one to two learning targets. Suggested ways of conducting formative assessment include classroom observation, short tests and quizzes, oral interviews (with teachers or peers), assessment tasks, discussions, projects and homework. Teachers are encouraged to select and employ a range of assessment activities to collect information about their pupils' performance.

b. Assessment for summative purposes

Summative assessment refers to the evaluation of the overall progress of learners at important intervals, for example the end of a school term or a school year or a Key Stage. It aims at providing a summary description of learners' performance and progress and usually covers a range of learning targets.

It is commonly found in many schools that the same assessment paper is used for both the mainstream and remedial classes at a particular year level. This is best achieved through close co-ordination among the teachers teaching mainstream and

remedial classes at a particular level. In addition, when setting assessment papers, questions can be graded from easy to difficult with an approximate ratio of 4:4:2 among easy, medium and difficult items. Test items could be made easier or adjusted for remedial pupils by:

- providing options for learners to select as answers (Appendices 10a & 10b);
- providing cues such as pictures, the initial letter of a word (Appendix 11);
and
- providing examples for illustration (Appendix 12).