Survey on
Support for Students' English Language Learning
During Class Suspension (3 Feb - 15 Mar 2020*)

Summary Report
(Primary and Secondary Schools)

* Announcement made on 25 Feb about further extension of the class suspension period to 19 April 2020

NET Section

18 March 2020

Context

Government announcements on measures to adopt during the COVID-19 outbreak

Issue date	Announcement
25 Jan	Extension of CNY holidays to 16 Feb as a preventive measure
27 Jan	Schools advised to activate school-based contingency plans
12 Feb	Principle of "lessons without borders; suspending classes but not suspending learning" affirmed
13 Feb	Classes suspended until 16 Mar, subject to further assessment ◆ Schools to use different learning modes to maintain motivation & interest ◆ EDB to provide online resources to facilitate self-learning at home and to provide support for teachers through hotline, mobile apps, webinars, etc.
25 Feb	Class resumption deferred till 20 Apr, subject to further assessment

The Survey

Survey administration

- An invitation was sent to all EPCs and NETs in primary and secondary schools in the public sector on 17 February. The deadline for completion was 24 February.

- The completion of the survey was anonymous and voluntary.

Purpose of the survey

To learn about:

1. the support being provided by schools through the English panel during the class suspension period:

   ○ the *language focus* of the support (e.g. reading, vocabulary, etc)

   ○ the *type* of support (e.g. conducting online lessons, preparing worksheets)

2. NETs' involvement in the support

Questions about support for students and NETs' involvement

EPCs	NETs
• The curriculum component(s) that the English panel's support focuses on *(Items provided for selection)*	• The language focus(es) of the NET's support *(Items provided for selection)*
• The contributions made by English language teachers, including NETs, to student learning during this period *(Items provided for selection)*	• The NET's involvement in students' learning activities during this period *(Items provided for selection)*
• Other contributions to student learning made by the English teachers, including the NET	• Other contributions of the NET
• Ways to communicate with students about their learning during this period *(Items provided for selection)*	
• Suggestions on what NETs can do to contribute to student learning during this period	

Survey data

Completion rate

	No. of responses	Completion rate
EPCs (Pri)	68	14.3%
NETs (Pri)	70	14.7%
Total	**138**	**14.5%**

	No. of responses	Completion rate
EPCs (Sec)	40	8.7%
NETs (Sec)	113	24.5%
Total	**153**	**16.6%**

- The response rate is relatively low.
- Caution should be exercised in interpreting results and making inferences.
- Survey data may be considered 'indicative' or 'giving examples' of current practices during this period.

Support provided: English Panel's support

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Language focus of the support	- Reading/viewing (92.6%) - Grammar (73.5%) - Vocabulary (73.5%) - Listening (39.7%) - Writing (32.4%) - Speaking (22.1%)	- Grammar (97.5%) - Reading/viewing (95.0%) - Vocabulary (87.5%) - Listening (80.0%) - Writing (75.0%) - Speaking (52.5%)
Types of support	- Preparing worksheets (85.3%) - Making audio recordings (67.6%) - Creating online resources (61.8%) - Conducting online teaching (54.4%) - Designing writing tasks (33.8%)	- Preparing worksheets (92.5%) - Creating online resources (72.5%) - Conducting online teaching (70.0%) - Designing writing tasks (70.0%) - Making audio recordings (47.5%)

Support provided: NETs' involvement

	PNETs	SNETs
% of NETs involved in the support	94.3%	99.1%
Year levels involved	39.4% in both KS1 & 2 54.5% in KS1 6.1% in KS2	45.5% in both KS3 & 4 37.5% in KS3 11.6% in KS4 5.4% involved in KS1/2 *(probably in special schools)*
Language focus of the support	● Reading/viewing (89.4%) ● Vocabulary (63.6%) ● Listening (60.6%) ● Speaking (50.0%) ● Writing (39.4%) ● Grammar (24.2%)	● Reading/viewing (75.0%) ● Writing (61.6%) ● Vocabulary (59.8%) ● Grammar (57.1%) ● Speaking (56.3%) ● Listening (44.6%)
Types of support	● Making audio recordings (84.8%) ● Preparing worksheets (51.5%) ● Creating online resources (50.0%) ● Designing writing tasks (34.8%) ● Conducting online teaching (31.8%)	● Preparing worksheets (72.3%) ● Designing writing tasks (57.1%) ● Creating online resources (50.0%) ● Conducting online teaching (48.2%) ● Making audio recordings (41.1%)

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Suggestions as to what NETs can do to contribute*

Primary EPCs' suggestions

(in no particular order)

- give local teachers support and advice
- suggest useful websites and online tools
- provide self-learning and self-assessment materials for students
- prepare videos to promote personal hygiene
- produce storytelling videos
- provide resources to develop students' phonics skills

Secondary EPCs' suggestions

(in no particular order)

- work with the team
- recommend useful links and websites
- provide English language learning resources for fun learning
- design worksheets on language arts
- edit students' good work
- provide listening and speaking practices through an online platform
- conduct online oral practices
- promote group interaction online
- provide DSE oral skills training

* Similar practices reported in Slides 10 & 11 are not included here.

Suggestions as to what NETs can do to contribute*

Primary NETs' suggestions

(in no particular order)

- collaborate with local English teachers to produce online materials
- be open to the needs of the school and colleagues
- prepare a central database of materials
- make videos explaining how to complete specific tasks using apps
- talk to and motivate students via videos
- provide opportunities for students to communicate with teachers and peers
- use the flipped classroom approach
- have students make mini-videos to practise the four skills
- help students develop good learning habits

Secondary NETs' suggestions

(in no particular order)

- set a clear focus for online support and learning
- work with the EPCs to integrate the flipped classroom approach
- maximise the use of online tools and resources and also be aware of their limitations
- create online speaking groups
- use online tools to engage students in learning and connect with them
- offer support to students with emotional problems via email
- chat with students who are starving for human interaction
- focus on life skills

* Similar practices reported in Slides 10 & 11 are not included here.

Means of communication with students
(Top 3 choices)

	Primary	Secondary
EPCs	• Telephone calls (80.6%) • School intranet/e-classroom (73.1%) • Educational online platforms, e.g. Google Classroom (62.7%)	• Instant messaging tools, e.g. WhatsApp (87.2%) • Telephone calls (82.1%) • School intranet/e-classroom (79.5%)
NETs	• Through another teacher (60.6%) • School intranet/e-classroom (37.9%) • Educational online platforms, e.g. Google Classroom (37.9%)	• Educational online platforms, e.g. Google Classroom (95.0%) • Instant messaging tools, e.g. WhatsApp (80.0%) • School intranet/e-classroom (76.3%)

Additional online, e-learning and communication tools used by EPCs/NETs

Primary EPCs/NETs	Secondary EPCs/NETs
(in no particular order)	(in no particular order)

Primary EPCs/NETs (in no particular order)

- School website
- ClassDojo
- GRWTH
- RainbowStar
- Google Drive
- Moodle
- Starfall
- Quizlet
- SeeSaw
- YouTube
- Kahoot
- Google Forms

Secondary EPCs/NETs (in no particular order)

- WeChat
- MS Office 365 Teams and OneNote
- Google Hangouts Meet
- Google Docs
- Zoom
- Flipgrid
- Readworks
- PowerPoint
- Keynote
- iMovie
- Apple Screen Capture
- Google Forms
- HKEdCity

Discussion

Opportunities

For developing knowledge of and skills in using apps, online tools and websites

- learning about and using learning management systems such as Google Classroom
- creating digital lesson guides (with links to digital files/videos students need to access), videos, online lessons and assignments
- flipping the classroom
- practising different language skills online
- conducting small-group and one-on-one discussions online (especially in secondary schools)

Challenges

- Uneven student access to electronic devices and online platforms
- Students muting camera and mic when having online live lessons
- Miscellaneous technical issues
- Concern about online abuse, e.g. sharing of recorded sessions with unknown groups
- School management's expectation that teachers are available all the time

- Relatively low level of student engagement
- Need to set a clear focus and well-defined goals for online learning
- Can never replace face-to-face learning
- More to be done to cater for students' affective needs

Integration of social and emotional learning: some practices shared

- Providing one-on-one teacher-student contact using instant messaging tools and the phone
- Building in 'human interaction'/ informal conversations to cater for students' social and affective needs especially when students are experiencing social isolation during this period of time
- Maintaining student connection with learning and the school community
- Focusing on life skills, care for others and means of dealing with the difficult circumstances arising from the COVID-19 outbreak

Questions about students' readiness for online learning

- Do students have the necessary self-directed learning, self-management and technical skills?
- Is there enough parental support at home?
- How easy is it to get access to online tools and platforms? (Reportedly cross-boundary students had difficulty in this respect.)
- Are electronic devices readily available? (Reportedly some students had difficulty given that there was only one device available for use by the whole family.)

One key question to ask is:
"What needs to be in place in order that students can learn well in an environment that relies heavily on the use of technology?"

Considerations for engaging teachers in supporting learning in this period of class suspension

- Should we be emphasising equal distribution of teachers' workload? Or should we tap into teachers' individual strengths?
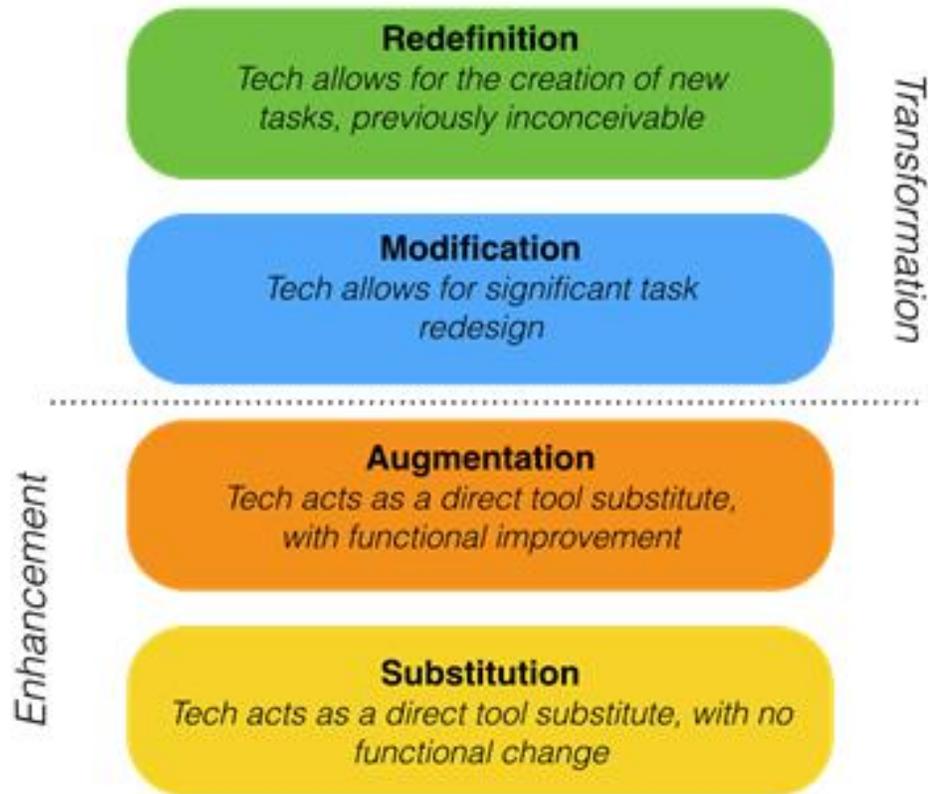- Should we focus more on sharing quality materials?

Way Forward

Building Professional Capacity & Communities of Practice

Conceptualising practices with the SAMR model to build our professional capacity

(Puentedura, 2003)

Reflecting on our practice

To what extent are we using technology:

Substitution

- as a direct tool substitute with little functional change to the activity design? (e.g. using a word processor instead of writing by hand)

Augmentation

- still as a direct tool substitute but with functional improvements? (e.g. making the learning process more engaging with use of images and hyperlinks)

Modification

- to make significant changes such as redesigning or re-sequencing activities to transform students' learning experience? (e.g. creating an online bulletin with use of Padlet for peer assessment)

Redefinition

- to create a learning task that is only possible through the use of technology? (e.g. use of Google Docs for students from different places to do collaborative writing in real time)

To what extent have we considered the following when designing our online lessons?
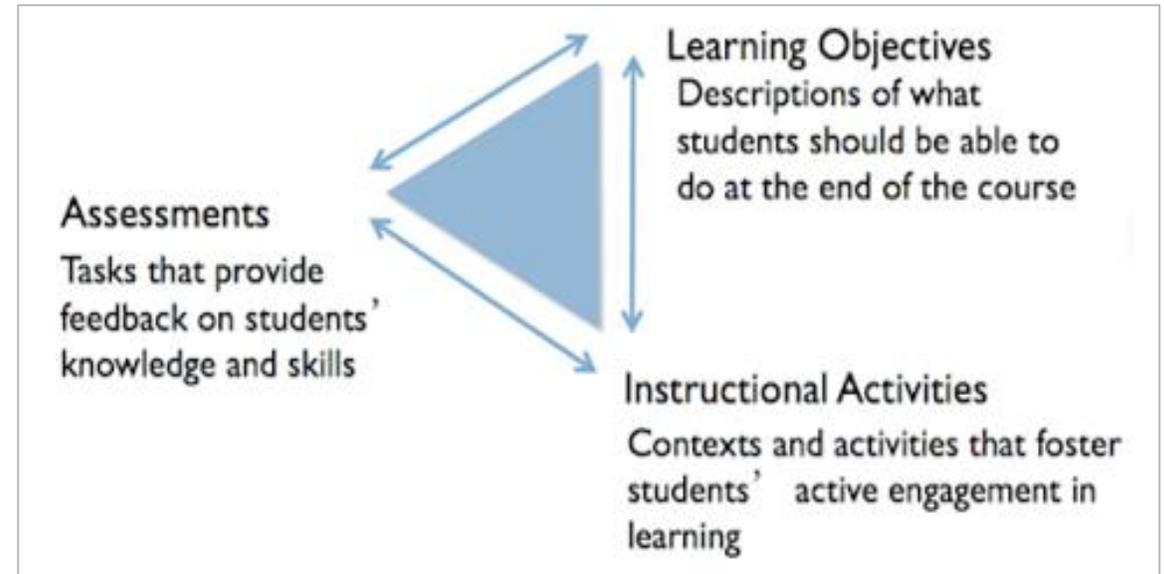
Online learning and teaching

Elements to be incorporated:

- Goals & objectives
- Scope & sequence (also giving due consideration to the amount of screen time)
- Storyboard of lessons & learning activities
- Interactive & collaborative environment
- Assessment
- Teacher-support materials

Source: https://www.smartbrief.com/original/2019/01/what-makes-online-course-great

Constructive alignment between content, instruction and assessment - the three pillars of student learning

Learning Objectives
Descriptions of what students should be able to do at the end of the course

Assessments
Tasks that provide feedback on students' knowledge and skills

Instructional Activities
Contexts and activities that foster students' active engagement in learning

Source: http://acrobatiq.com/products/adaptive-learning-2/

Learn more about "constructive alignment" on this webpage created by Prof. John Biggs, a renowned scholar who used to teach in HKU in the 80's and 90's.

Conclusion

- We **applaud the hard work done by our teachers, including NETs**, during these challenging times. Apart from supporting student learning, the commendable efforts made by our teachers enable us to see **the power, and the limitations, of technology**.
- This period of class suspension has brought online learning into focus. On top of **technical skills** that are essential to online learning, students also need to develop **self-directed learning and self-management skills** in order that learning from home can be effective.
- At all times we need to **cater for students' diverse needs**, including their cognitive and affective needs.
- Through **reflective practice**, we as teachers and school support officers continue to **develop our professional capacity** to improve our curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment strategies.
- The small-scale survey and the analysis presented above provide a starting point for this **much needed self-reflection** to prepare ourselves for similar and even more daunting challenges in the future.

THANK YOU