



Schools Sign Up: 64 more schools join PLP-R/W

In August 2007, 18 Hong Kong primary schools took part in the pilot programme for the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading and Writing (PLP-R/W). The initial evaluation of the P1 students involved indicated a significant improvement in the students' reading and writing skills within the first year.

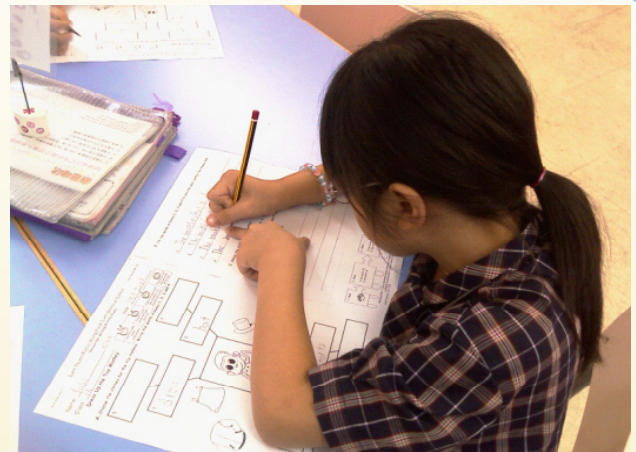
PLP-R/W uses shared and guided reading, but it features shared writing as the main teaching strategy. Students and teachers use these strategies to share read and write texts in a meaningful way.

A total of 85 Local English Teachers (LETs) and 18 Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) were in this initial cohort of schools. These teachers supported a total of 2,127 P1 students. Now these schools are continuing the initiative into P2. They are implementing and reviewing the resources and materials developed.

Following the successful evaluation of the pilot, all non-PLP-R schools were invited to sign on to the programme. Sixty-four schools have taken up this opportunity in the current academic year. This new cohort of schools involves 269 teachers and 5,838 P1 students. Included are two Seed schools supporting students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Section continues to support curriculum reform in schools. Eighteen hours of centralised professional development and ongoing school-based workshops are provided to teachers implementing the PLP-R/W.

Lionell Horn and Christina Suen
(Assistant Project Managers – NET Section)



A student from Lam Tsuen Public Wong Fook Luen Memorial School practises her writing skills.



Helen Yee and students from Lam Tsuen Public Wong Fook Luen Memorial School "sharing the pen".

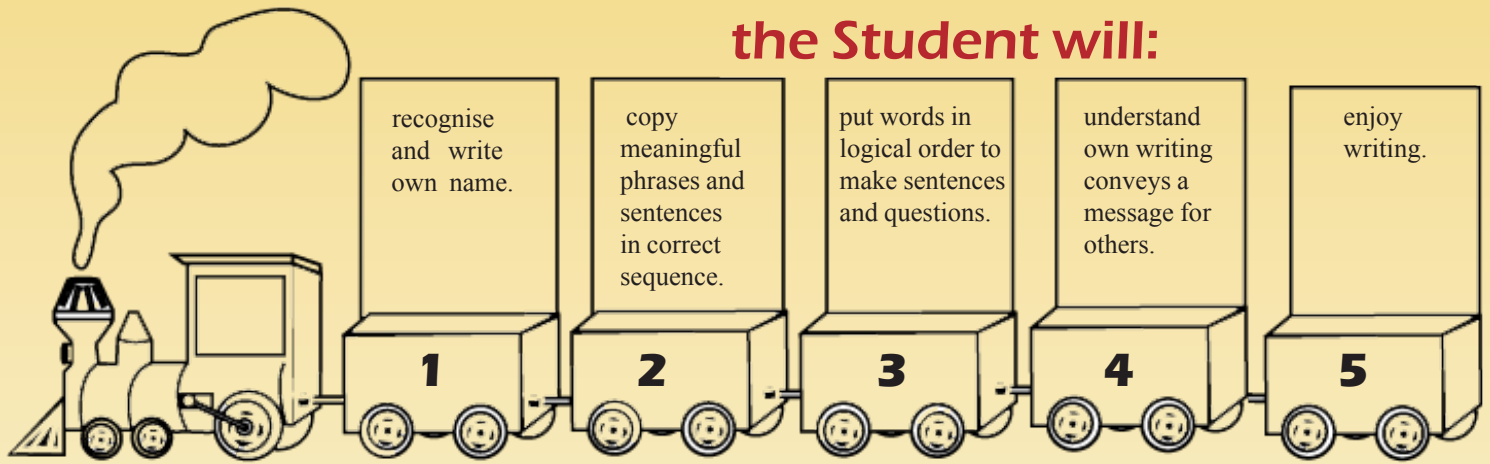
"I feel good about the quality of work the children produce."

"The resources are very useful and the style of teaching suits me."

Local English Teachers on PLP-R/W

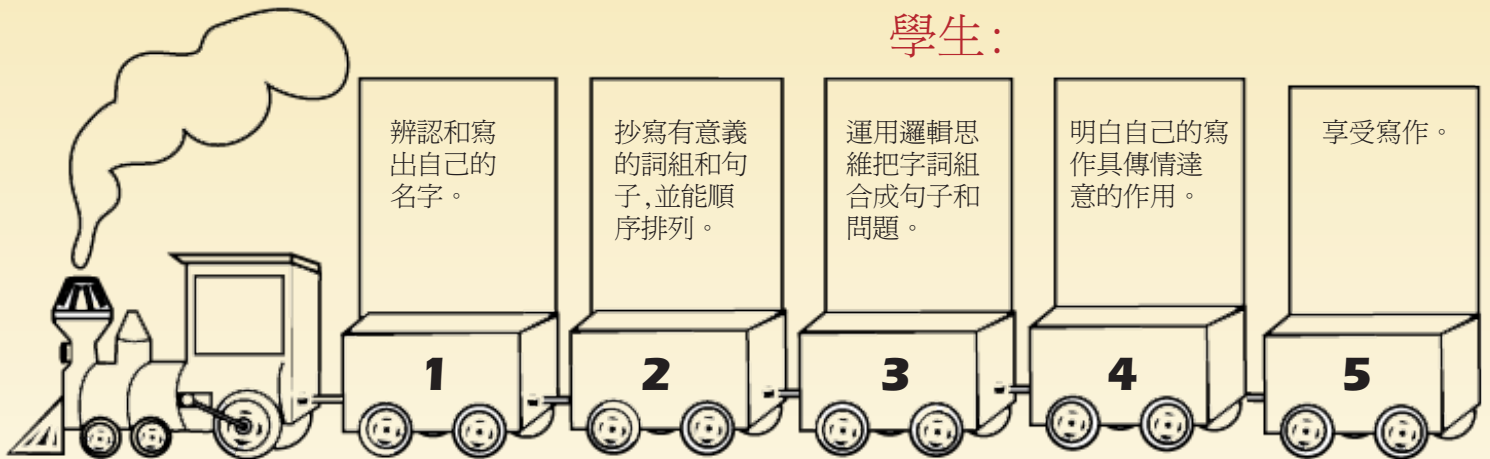
In the Process of Learning Writing

the Student will:



在學習寫作的過程中，

學生：



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Integrating Language Skills and Teaching Strategies

By Simon Tham (Chief Curriculum Development Officer)



Language experts and commonsense both tell us that learning a language involves the integration of all language skills. Like developing mastery of a sport or a musical instrument, it takes a holistic approach to synthesise the individual elements into a working command.

In developing literacy in English, an integrated approach takes advantage of the reciprocal interaction between reading and writing (for example) to build capacity in both. Vocabulary and language structures encountered in books are reinforced through the students' writing.

This is the principle that underpins the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading /Writing (PLP-R/W). This programme integrates language skills and makes their connection explicit to the learner. Building upon the developmental work done in the PLP-R, and reflecting the spirit of the English Language Curriculum Guide (P1-6), the PLP-R/W will increase students' capacity to undertake real-life tasks involving English.

The PLP-R/W is an integrated programme in other ways as well. Through the practice of collaborative planning and teaching, it synthesises the teaching strategies of NETs and local English teachers. Its integrated and graduated units of work link with the textbooks and language structures the students are encountering in their General English programme. We recommend

schools allocate 50% of English lesson time to the PLP-R/W.

In PLP-R/W schools, teachers exploit the inter-relationship between planning and assessment in the teaching of reading and writing. Formative assessment techniques give teachers specific information on how to direct and structure their teaching strategies.

Finally the support package components (resources, professional development and advisory support) work together to scaffold teachers through the implementation of the programme.

When these factors work together we are sure that successful language learning outcomes will ensue.

'Language structures ... in books are reinforced through students' writing.'

Making time for PLP-R/W

Teachers at two schools in the New Territories have made substantial changes to their English programming this year.

Fung Kai No 1 Primary School in Sheung Shui and Yan Chai Hospital Ho Sik Nam Primary in Tuen Mun have reduced textbook teaching to allow for 50% of lesson time to be allocated to the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading and Writing (PLP-R/W).

Teachers have committed to extensive professional development and are now well into the delivery of the programme.

Lessons are centred on interesting big books which link directly to textbook content and the language skills described in the English Language Curriculum Guide (P1-6). Students are connecting with the books and are keen and active participants in tasks designed to develop speaking, reading and writing skills simultaneously.



At this stage all reports are positive. Teachers are busy taking on board the challenges and innovations to regular programming. All have high hopes for a successful year.

By Margaret O'Brien (AT)

Collaboration – a great way to learn

Inter-school collaboration is a great way to share practice and observe strategies.

Hennessy Road Government A.M. Primary School in Wan Chai has developed its own English curriculum, and there is strong collaboration between the NET and LETs. Over the past year, English teachers have been welcoming staff from Marymount Primary School, Happy Valley, to their English lessons, to examine the innovations that NET Kathi Dearman-Jones has introduced to the school, and to plan related strategies in their own classrooms.

On October 13th, the focus of the lesson was the teaching of phonics in context during shared reading as well as controlled writing linked to the phonics objective.



The ensuing conversation raised the importance of phonemic abutment in phonics retention, implementation of process writing in the classroom, and methods of catering for learner diversity reflected in behaviour management. Marymount staff also reflected on the use of mnemonic aides, activities related to stages of cognitive development, and the impact of reinforcement and explicit encoding opportunities for children

throughout the primary years.

Shared experiences like these are excellent ways to reflect on teaching and to scaffold further innovation in one's own school.

By Labhaoise Upton (AT)



IT as a teaching tool

To excite, inspire and motivate was what I had in mind as I prepared for the open video conference lesson at my school. I would teach my class of 40 S1 elite boys, whilst being observed via the Internet by Nanhai Experimental Middle School, in Nanhai, Guangdong, and Christ College, in Shatin, as well as others from my school at the back of the classroom. Through modern technology it seemed that one world was being brought into one classroom.

I arranged the students into five groups of eight. The first activity was a quiz on the 'Olympics' and 'Food'. My aim was to relax the students and show teachers that active learning involves making mistakes and sometimes an unknown outcome. The second task was group presentations of a recipe. Although these presentations were already prepared, I wanted to show teachers how S1 students could work in groups and prepare and give excellent presentations with heavy guidance beforehand. The final task was for everyone to vote for the best presentation and recipe. The students were excited by the idea of a video vote from the teachers watching!

After the lesson I reflected on the fact that I was often in my classroom contributing my small part to the NET Scheme. I hoped that I had excited, inspired and motivated my class. I went home content to make the winning recipe, Black and White Chocolate Jing Jing.

By Caroline Holroyd
(NET, St Joseph's Anglo-Chinese School)

Iceland



Myvatn Naturebaths

somewhat of a misnomer. At times, it really felt warm.

Being my first trip there and with a car hired for nine days, it seemed a good idea to see as much as possible and, hey, it looks like a small island on the map. So, I chose my overnight stops and made the bookings and only later realised just how far apart places really were. That meant over 3,500km all up and on some days 9-10 hours driving. Since many of the roads off the main circular Ring Road are unsealed, sometimes the going was pretty slow. In summer, however, the daylight hours are long – it never got really dark.

The landscape is unusual and in parts spectacular. It is not ‘all rocks’ as I had been told by some. Around the coast it is green with bright ground-level wildflowers

growing everywhere. The emptiness – few cars or people – appealed to me; the food was high quality and it is a very safe and easy place to travel.

For water lovers, don’t expect a day lazing in the sun on the beach. Think instead of cool, empty beaches of white, gold or black sand; good value, ultra-clean local swimming pools with hot tubs; and the Blue Lagoon, a geo-thermally heated blue sulphur pool and its equivalent in the north at Myvatn. Then there are the awesome glaciers to walk or snowmobile on, and around every corner is another stunning waterfall.



Traditional turf houses at an open air museum

The downside – it is very expensive (although since I visited that may have changed!) and it is also guaranteed you will get some wind and rain.

That said, I thought it would be a one-off destination, but I’m not so sure now. Why Iceland? Why not?

By Gina Green (RNC)

NETs new to Hong Kong



debating and participating in choral speaking.

For Sadeef Tazeen, the appeal of being a NET lies in the room the job provides for creativity and flexibility. At her school (St Stephen’s Church College) in Bonham Road, she enjoys the opportunity to use creative strategies in building her students’ oral skills. She is involved in drama activities with her S3 students and is moving into using broadcasting,

Sadeef is from Kolkata in India and did her schooling at the Irish Loreto Convent there. She finds elements of Hong Kong culture familiar, in particular the value that parents put on their child’s education and their high expectations.

Daniel Canham is a newly-arrived primary teacher from Luton in the UK. He is thrilled to be given the opportunity to teach at HKCWC Hioe Tjo Yoeng Primary School in Hong Kong. Daniel has settled in quickly to the hectic pace of life in Hong Kong and living in Yau Ma Tei, he has easy access to many tourist sights. Already he has ventured up to The Peak and braved the chairlift to the Big Buddha. Daniel already feels at home



and has a very supportive and helpful staff at his school. “I have always wanted to come to Asia. Hong Kong is vibrant and exciting.”



Learning Cantonese and practising with her new colleagues is one of the first things Adriane Mercier hopes to achieve in Hong Kong. Adriane, from Ontario, Canada, is a Primary NET at Aplichau Kaifong Primary School. “Some of my friends were already working in Hong Kong so I thought I would join them,” Adriane said. “Initially I had some culture shock and hated it but it has already grown on me. I thought I would stand out but I just seem to blend in.”

In Memorium

It was with much sadness that we learned of the passing away of our esteemed former colleague



and friend Ms Antonia Chan on 22 October 2008. Antonia spent over 35 years working in local primary schools. She was able to contribute this experience while working as an AT in the NET Section from 2003 to 2006. Antonia impressed everyone with her gentleness, patience and charm.