Collaborative Research and Development ("Seed") Projects for the 2016/17 School Year

Promoting Text Grammar to Support Students' Literacy Skills Development with the Use of Information Technology in the Junior Secondary English Classroom

English Language Education Section
Curriculum Development Institute
Education Bureau

Learning & Teaching of Text Grammar

Effective teaching strategies

Text Grammar

Students learning:

- grammar items in **authentic texts**
- how grammar contributes to the **coherence & the structure of a text**
- how to apply grammar knowledge to create texts of **different genres**

Literacy Skills

Students developing:

- **reading** and **writing** skills with a better grasp of grammar knowledge

Effective use of e-resources

Planning & Implementation of the 'Seed' Project

Level:	S.2
No. of Students:	38

Tryout 1

Theme:

Hobby

Language focus:

Adverbs of sequence,

Imperatives

Text type:

Digital book,

blog, video

Tryout 2

Theme:

Inspiring

People

Language focus:

Adjectives,

Non-defining relative clauses

Text type:

Digital article,

Print article

Reading input from teacher

Tryout 1 (Hobby)	Tryout 2 (Inspiring People)
• A blog • A video	• A print article • A digital article

Students' work

Tryout 1 – a blog on hobby

Tryout 2 – an article about an inspiring person

TRYOUT

Focusses of the “Seed” Project

Promoting text grammar

Incorporating e-learning in the junior secondary English classroom

FOCUS 1
TEXT GRAMMAR

Learning Activity 1

Text grammar:

- supporting students in understanding the relationship between language and context

Post-Reading:

1. *Your friend has decided to fold an origami heart for his mom. Your teacher shows you a video tutorial on it. In groups, compare the video tutorial and the instructions (i.e. Paragraph 5) in Unit 10, complete the table on p.7 and post your findings on the web whiteboard.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8_NFJavbZg&index=21&list=PLnoO3k54vcBQ_tNFyn7ukM1-LaQBAG2Ld

Students watching a video and reading a text on paper folding

When listening to your classmates' presentations, write down their observations in the table.

Areas	Similar	Different	Observation(s)
e.g. Level of formality	☐	☑	Linur us: ➢ more formal. ➢ longer and more complete sentences. Video tutorial: ➢ less formal. ➢ abbreviations used e.g. don't, it's, gonna (going to). ➢ shorter sentences.
(i) Purposes of the texts	☐	☐	
(ii) Use of pronouns	☐	☐	
(iii) Use of adverbs of sequence	☐	☐	
(iv) Use of verbs (e.g. tenses, imperatives)	☐	☐	

Students comparing the use of grammar items in the video and article

Students reporting their observations

Text grammar

Supporting Students' Literacy Skills Development by:

helping them **understand how the genre** and **context affect the choice of language**

facilitating **the co-construction of the knowledge** on the use of grammar items in different texts

Learning Activity 2

Text grammar:

- guiding students to understand how the use of grammar items achieves different communication purposes in a text

Techniques to enhance persuasion

Question

- *Ask questions to engage the readers.*
  E.g. Can you make an egg bounce?
  Next time you want to say "thank you" to someone, why not do it with origami?

1. Positive tone

- *Use positive adjectives, such as "fun", "amazing", "relaxing".*
  E.g. You will be left with a surprise and a fun, bouncy egg.
  It is amazing just how much beauty one can create from a simple sheet of paper.
  Origami is a relaxing pastime.
- *Encourage readers to take actions with imperatives.*
  E.g. Try this simple science experiment.
  Join the Science Club to experience the joy of scientific discovery.

2. The rule of three

- *Use a collection of three words, phrases or sentences.*
  E.g. A little paper crane, a tiny keepsake box, or a teeny jumping toad for a young friend.

Students learning how different grammar items can perform the function "to persuade"

Follow the instructions in the hint boxes to improve the blog. Share your suggestions on "Mentimeter".

My Hobby is tea drinking, a hobby in Japan since the 9th century and in China before the 8th century.

When I was five years old, I've loved to stay with my father. And my father always drink Wuji Mountain Rock Tea, the taste of Wuji Montain Rock Tea is not bitter, it actually has a sweet aftertaste. Now I love to spend my free time taste another Chinese tea, because for it sweet aftertaste.

(i) ⌃ I think the best part about tea drinking is there are many diffrent types of tea leaves that you can learn about and enjoy (ii) Mostly I enjoy drinking tea for its relaxing effect and its positive impact on health. It is also a very low cost hobby to start at any time.

To get started with drink as a hobby will vary based on the types of tea. You can choose that the tea you are interested and in the special ceremony that you may wish to have. A tea pot or a set of cups and infusers or strainers are most common for tea preparations.

If you wants to make a prefect tea, just fallow these steps. First, for most teas the ratio will be one to two teaspoons of loose tea leaves. Then, add the boiled water into tea pop and you need to wait less than 30 seconds to up to 10 minutes. Finally, you will get a nice tea to drink!

Tea drinking as a hobby is both healthy as well as delicious, it provides an opportunity to learn about different tea cultures in different countries. (iii) ⌃

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Hint box (i): Start the third paragraph with a question.

Hint box (ii): Use a collection of three phrases to explain why the blogger likes drinking tea.

Hint box (iii): Add an imperative at the end of the paragraph to encourage readers to drink tea.

Students reading their classmate's work

Students suggesting how to make their classmate's work more persuasive

Text grammar

Supporting Students' Literacy Skills Development by:

Guiding them to understand how different grammar items can be used **to serve the function "to persuade"**

Promoting **assessment for learning** by providing opportunities for students to comment on and improve their peers' work

Encouraging **peer feedback** with **e-learning**

Learning Activity 3

Text grammar:

- facilitating students' understanding of how grammar items are used to communicate the intended meanings

Students viewing an authentic blog on how people talk about Trump

Students analysing how adjectives are used in the blog

Put a "✓" next to the celebrities who like Donald Trump and an "x" for those who do not like him.
Quote a line that they said which indicates their attitude. An example has been done for you.

Celebrity	Like (✓) / Dislike (x)	What they said
J.K. Rowling	x	"How horrible. Voldemort was nowhere near as bad."
Chelsea Handler		
Robert De Niro		

Students inferring the people's attitude towards Trump with their understanding of the use of adjectives

Structure of an article about an inspiring person in my life

Read the online article about Steve Jobs.
(Website: http://mphero.com/hero.asp?hero=S_Jobs_olympus_jlw_US_2011)
There are five paragraphs in the online article. Tick the boxes that contain the main ideas of the paragraphs, and arrange them in the correct order.

Main ideas	*Sequence*
☐ Introduce the inspiring person and explain why he is considered a role model	
☑ Give details about his life (e.g. date of birth, family, education and career)	2
☐ Describe his achievements	
☐ Sum up by explaining why he is great	
☐ Quote his famous sayings	
☐ Tell what you can learn from him	
☐ Give facts about his death	
☐ The impact he has on others (including the writer)	

What else can we add to the article on the inspiring person in your life? _____

Students working out how the use of grammar items contributes to the cohesion of the text

Text grammar

Supporting Students' Literacy Skills Development by:

Facilitating the **identification of the grammatical features** of a text with **highlighting**

Guiding students to **'notice' the forms and functions** of the target item(s) more easily with **videos**

Developing their ability to choose and **use the appropriate forms** to express different meanings

FOCUS 2
E-LEARNING

Incorporating e-Learning in the English Classroom

- e-Resources used in this project:

- **Applications: Book Creator, Mentimeter, Popplet etc**
- **Multimodal texts / e-books**
- **Internet resources / videos**

e-Learning

Some Positive Impacts on Students' Learning:

The use of Popplet **promotes assessment for learning** more effectively.

The use of Mentimeter can allow teachers to **understand students' learning progress**. Teachers can **provide instant feedback** to address students' problems.

The use of Book Creator provides an authentic context for **the development / practice of English skills and generic skills** in an integrative manner.

Digital Texts Produced by Students

- Use of appropriate grammar items in the text
- Appealing typeface with pictures

Relative clauses

Adjectives

Adverbs of Sequence

Malala Yousafzai who was born in 12 July 1997 is an activist in Pakistan and famous for women's education. She has two brothers, parents and two pet chickens.

Her life is glorious and thrilling. When Malala was eleven years old, she started talking about the right to education. Her father had taken her to the media club to make her speech. It made Malala become famous.

Later, she recorded live on anonymous blogs to the BBC' s edit Amir. In 2009, she criticized the militants at the press conference. Then, she started her determination to become a stateswoman, not a doctor who she had wanted to be.

But as Malala Yousafzai became famous, she was often threatened. At a rally in the summer in 2012, the terrorists decided to kill Malala. On the way to school, she was shot three times.

Picture of Malala Yousafzai

Picture of Malala Yousafzai

Picture of Malala Yousafzai

Picture of a gun

Pictures

EVALUATION

Impacts on Students
- Writing

Strongly agree / Agree

Strongly disagree / Disagree

Pre-tryout questionnaire

2.iii.a When I write, I can use suitable vocabulary.

Post-tryout questionnaire

2.vi.e When I have writing activities from my English teachers, I can use suitable vocabulary.

Pre-tryout questionnaire

2.iii.c When I write, I can include relevant ideas in my work.

Post-tryout questionnaire

2.vi.b When I have writing activities from my English teachers, I use information and ideas from relevant sources.

Impacts on Students
- Writing

Strongly agree / Agree

Post-tryout questionnaire

2.v The experience of producing digital texts can help me improve my _____:

Impacts on Students
- Reading

Strongly agree / Agree

Strongly disagree / Disagree

Post-tryout questionnaire

1.i Understanding the structure of a text helps me follow the development of ideas.

1.ii Analysing the use of grammar helps me understand the text.

1.iii The different modes of representation help me understand the text better.

Impacts on Students
- Reading

Strongly agree / Agree

Strongly disagree / Disagree

Post-tryout questionnaire

1.iv When I read a text, I can:

a) comprehend the information in it.

b) identify the structure of it.

c) follow the development of ideas.

d) understand the use of grammar in it.

Impacts on Students
- Grammar

Strongly agree / Agree

Strongly disagree / Disagree

Pre-tryout questionnaire

3.i I enjoy learning grammar in English lessons.

Post-tryout questionnaire

3.i I enjoy learning grammar in English lessons.

Pre-tryout questionnaire

3.ii I can apply my grammar knowledge to help me understand a text.

Post-tryout questionnaire

3.ii I can apply my grammar knowledge to help me understand a text.

Impacts on Students
- e-Learning

Strongly agree / Agree

Strongly disagree / Disagree

Pre-tryout questionnaire

4.i I can use e-learning tools to complete my school work.

Post-tryout questionnaire

4.i I can use e-learning tools to complete my school work.

Post-tryout questionnaire

4.ii The e-learning resources help me understand the use of grammar in a text.

4.iii The e-learning resources help me practise / apply what I have learnt from a text.

Impacts on Students

Data Collected from the Post-Tryout Student Interview

It is more interesting to learn English with e-learning resources. Learning grammar from textbooks is too boring.

I like creating an e-book. I can develop my creativity in the process.

The learning activities on grammar help me consolidate my understanding and facilitate my use of the target grammar items, especially relative clauses.

The feedback from the teacher helps me improve my writing.

Evaluation of the "Seed" Project

Data Collected from the Post-Tryout Teacher Interview

Guiding students to evaluate their peer's writing facilitates the implementation of assessment for and as learning.

Helping students understand the use of grammar items in a text can improve their reading and writing skills.

Students are able to use the grammar items appropriately in their writing exam. It shows that the project has facilitated real language application/use.

A lot of the digital texts produced by students are of good quality. Apart from language skills, it is an opportunity for students to develop their generic skills such as creativity and practice self-directed learning.

The impact of e-learning on motivating students to learn English is phenomenal, especially for weaker students. They get more engaged in the English activities.

Recommendations

- The use of e-learning tools can enhance learning and teaching through:
  - arousing students' motivation in learning English;
  - engaging students in the learning activities; and
  - providing students with a higher sense of autonomy and confidence in presenting their work in digital format.

- However, technical problems may arise if teachers and students are new to e-learning. It is suggested that no more than two apps should be used in each lesson.

Recommendations

- When incorporating the text grammar in the learning of English, teachers should:
  - allow students to express in their own language instead of sticking to the model answers
  - make use of the instant interactive tools to enhance assessment for and as learning

Future Plan of the "Seed" School

- The design of the learning activities will be extended to S3 English classes.
- S3 students will be engaged in the production of digital multimodal texts with the app "Book Creator" in English lessons.
- The materials made in the seed projects and the strategies learnt will be modified and adopted in all classes in S2.
- Demonstration will be done by Mr. Ben Chan and Ms. Maggie Su for the other S2 English teachers. Collaborative lesson planning will be done before the implementation.
- In the long run, multimodal texts and e-magazines will be created and modified by students at all forms.