

# **Title: Stretching Student Potential: Designing Interactive and Enjoyable Tasks with Authentic Contexts Using e-Learning**

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## **Introduction**

The Primary Education Curriculum Guide (2024), prepared by the Curriculum Development Council, informs schools of the need to focus on the updated Seven Learning Goals (7 LGs) of Primary Education, Three Major Directions, and Seven Major Renewed Emphases, with the aim of enhancing student learning and fostering their healthy growth and balanced development. The updated 7 LGs emphasise active learning, which includes ‘being proactive in biliterate and trilingual communication’ and ‘developing generic skills and inquiry thinking holistically, and learning independently and actively’ (Education Bureau, 2024, p. 4).

Making reference to the suggestions from the English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 - Secondary 6) 2017, schools can adopt e-learning to promote active learning among students, strengthen their interaction and motivation, and make effective use of learning and lesson time with the ‘flipped classroom’ strategy. To better cater for diverse students’ learning needs as well as enhance learning and teaching effectiveness, schools can utilise e-learning resources with different levels of learning tasks designed and further develop diversified modes of assessment (p. 69-70).

Every English learning task should have the following five features (Curriculum Development Council, 2017, p. 65):

- A task should have a purpose and involve students in using English to achieve the various purposes set out in the learning targets and objectives.
- A task should have a context from which the purpose for using English emerges.
- A task should involve students in a mode of thinking and doing.
- A task should have a process which requires students to draw upon their framework of knowledge and skills.
- A task should engage students in carrying out a purposeful activity leading towards a product.

In view of this, the English Language curriculum leaders from Alliance Primary School, Whampoa, and Yaumati Catholic Primary School have collaborated with the School-based Curriculum Development (Primary) Section and teachers from other schools in the Learning Community for Primary School English Language Teacher Leaders (2023/24) to co-plan two units for the General English programme in Primary 5 and 6. Different meaningful and purposeful tasks have been designed, utilising different e-learning tools to enhance overall teaching effectiveness and students' enjoyment of learning.

**Unit Design (1) - Alliance Primary School, Whampoa**

| Overview of the Selected Unit |   |  |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| KS2 P.5                       |   |  |
| Unit                          | Language Focus  | Text types   |
| Police stories                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use the past continuous tense to talk about actions that continued for a period of time in the past</li><li>- Use 'when' to link a longer action and a shorter action in the past</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Stories</li><li>- Newspaper articles</li></ul> |

Figure 1: An Overview of the Language Focuses and Text Types Covered in the Selected Unit

The target students at Alliance Primary School, Whampoa, are highly proficient in speaking and writing in English. They are very active and accustomed to working in groups. However, they often find learning tenses boring. Building on the existing publisher materials used by the school, students' learning about the topic of detectives and crimes was extended, providing them with more opportunities to apply the target language purposefully and meaningfully, as well as engage in thinking from different perspectives. Students act as detectives to investigate crimes, gather evidence, interview witnesses and suspects, and write reports during the learning activities.

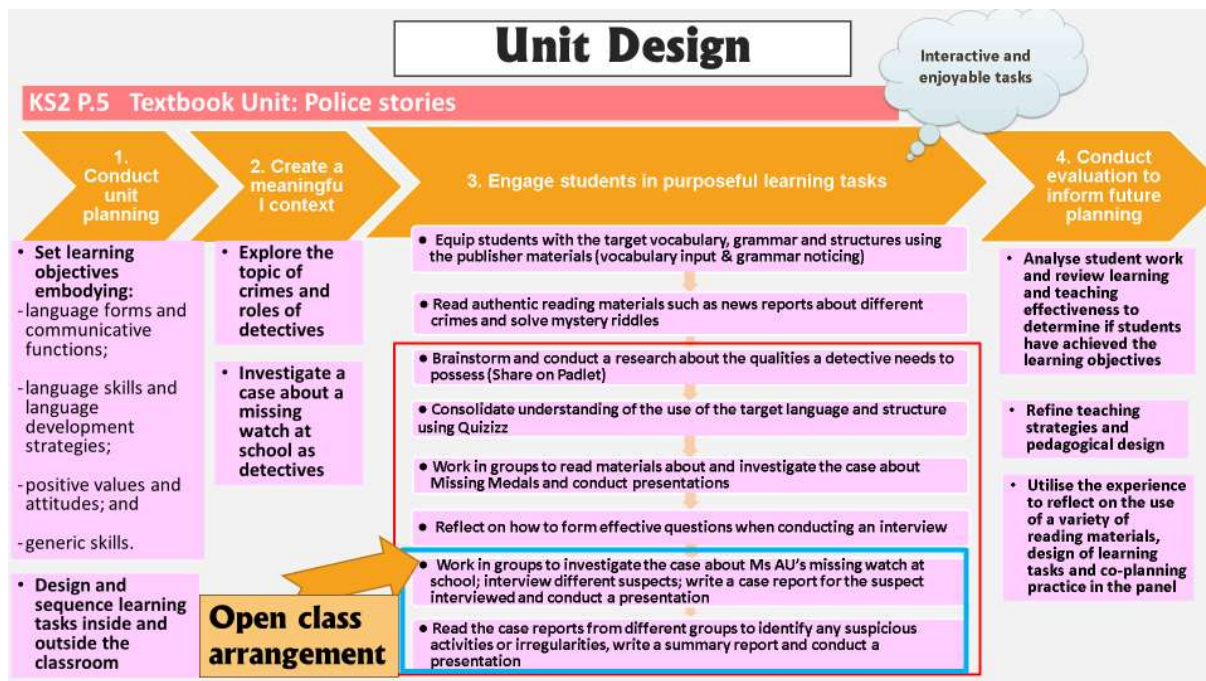


Figure 2: The Unit Design of 'Police stories' in Primary 5

### Sharing ideas on Padlet

- What does a detective do?
- What qualities or personalities does a detective need to have?

Students brainstorm and conduct a research about the qualities a detective needs to possess

### Using Quizizz within and beyond the classroom

**Case A1236 : A missing necklace**

**Suspect 1: Josh**

8:00 pm - this morning (sleep) → 11:00 pm (near the alarm) → NOW

**Suspect 2: David**

10:00 pm - 11:45 pm (watch Soul in the cinema) → 10:00 pm - 11:45 pm (eat a whole bucket of popcorn) → NOW

Guide students to discover the differences between "when" and "while" using the interactive features and functions of Quizizz.

### RECAP ON THE JOBS AND QUALITIES OF A DETECTIVE

- Observant
- Careful
- Rational
- clever
- patient
- careful

### PROOFREADING (USING AN E-PLATFORM)

was drinking

was leaving

Figure 3: The Use of e-Learning to Enhance the Overall Effectiveness of Learning and Teaching

During the scaffolding activities, students were encouraged to brainstorm ideas and conduct research on the qualities and personalities that a detective needs to have. They shared ideas on an e-learning platform beyond class time, provoking meaningful discussions in the classroom at a later stage. With

the strong language abilities students generally possess, different grammar noticing activities were designed, allowing them to discover the differences between ‘when’ and ‘while.’ They were also given opportunities to discuss and reflect on common mistakes, such as those in subject-verb agreement and the spelling of present participles made when applying the past continuous tense in their assignments in class.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

Do what a detective should do:

1. investigate crime scene and gather evidence  
(Class Setting and the background information)
2. interview suspects in groups (the observers)
3. write a case report for every suspect
4. Upload the report onto Padlet and present
5. Summarise each group's report and finish the case report as homework

### GROUPINGS:

You are going to work in groups:

Group 1-2 : Ms R


Group 3-4 : Mr Y

Group 5-6 : Ms H

Group 7-8 : Ms J

### 1. INVESTIGATE CRIME SCENE

**CASE BACKGROUND:**  
Miss Kooey Au, a teacher at APSW, reported a missing watch. On 2nd May 2024, there were only 6 people in APSW after school at night. This happened within the school during a meeting. This happened attended by four guests (Ms R, Mr Y, Ms H, and Ms J), Mr. Ip (Miss Au's colleague) and Miss Au. No CCTV tapes can be extracted yet.



### 2. GATHER EVIDENCE

### 3. INTERVIEW WITNESSES AND SUSPECTS

–ALIBI

–ANY SPECIAL INCIDENTS?

–USE YOUR QUESTIONING SKILLS!

Detective \_\_\_\_\_'s Notes

**INDIVIDUAL NOTE PAPER**

A timeline might help:

Timeline: \_\_\_\_\_

Background:  
-Miss Kooey Au missing watch  
-2nd May 2024  
-only 6 people at school at night for a meeting (four guests (Ms R, Mr Y, Ms H, and Ms J), Mr. Ip (Miss Au's colleague), Miss Au)  
-the watch was discovered missing after the meeting

### 4. WRITE A REPORT FOR THE SUSPECT

Detective \_\_\_\_\_'s Notes

A timeline might help:

Timeline: \_\_\_\_\_

Background:  
-Miss Kooey Au missing watch  
-2nd May 2024  
-only 6 people at school at night for a meeting (four guests (Ms R, Mr Y, Ms H, and Ms J), Mr. Ip (Miss Au's colleague), Miss Au)  
-the watch was discovered missing after the meeting

Alliance Primary School, Whampoa  
A1237: The Missing Watch Case Report

Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of the crime: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the suspect: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of the crime happened: \_\_\_\_\_

Timeline: \_\_\_\_\_

Suspect's alibi: What did they say that they were doing?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Details to be added:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Summary:  
We think \_\_\_\_\_ is  
( ) not likely ( ) somewhat likely ( ) very likely  
to be the thief because \_\_\_\_\_

**GROUP DISCUSSION**

Students uploaded their work onto Padlet.

Figure 4: Examples of the Learning and Teaching Materials and Activities



During the main task, the students worked in groups to investigate the case of the teacher's missing watch at school. They interviewed various suspects, wrote case reports for the suspect interviewed, and conducted group presentations. Afterwards, they read the case reports from different groups beyond the class time using an e-platform to identify any suspicious activities or irregularities. Each group of students then wrote a summary report based on their findings and conducted a presentation to share their conclusions with the class.

| Suspect | What did they say that they were doing?   | Likely to be the thief?<br>(Yes / No) |
|---------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Ms R    | arrived at school at 7pm and went straight to the meeting room. (room 101) She sat opposite Miss Au. She didn't leave the room. (her seat) said meeting time is 7:00pm. She was looking at the evidence [Australia] She did not go on vacation. | (Yes/No)                              |
| Mr Y    | chatting about PS stuff. On 8:15pm he went to toilet. (Ms R said that too.) said: Ms R was nervous going back to her seat (she never left according to Mr Y)  | (Yes/No)                              |
| Ms H    | She was jotting notes and listening during the meeting. Miss H was the last to the meeting. She said a female went out for a call but forgot who.   | (Yes/No)                              |
| Ms J    | Went out of the room for some fresh air. (9:00) When went out room 60's door was lightly opened and light was funded on. said arrived home at 10:00. But meeting ended at 10:00 according to Ms R.  | (Yes/No)                              |

| Suspect | What did they say that they were doing?   | Likely to be the thief?<br>(Yes / No) |
|---------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Ms R    | She was sitting on her seat the whole time. (sit opposite Miss Au) she arrived she went straight to the meeting room after. | No                                    |
| Mr Y    | He was talking about PS stuff and on 8:15 he went to toilet. He said Ms R looked nervous after leaving her seat.            | Yes                                   |
| Ms H    | She was a bit late to the meeting and she was listening and dropping notes the whole time.                                  | No                                    |
| Ms J    | She went out to get some fresh air and the door of the meeting room is lightly opened.                                      | No                                    |

Figure 5: Examples of Students' Work

Observations and student interviews revealed that the students were highly engaged in the task, particularly enjoying the detective theme. They expressed that the authentic use of language in this context made the learning experience both meaningful and purposeful. Many students remarked on how the investigative nature of the task captured their interest, allowing them to actively participate and apply their language skills in a fun and engaging way. Furthermore, the teacher noted that the e-learning features significantly facilitated interaction among students within and beyond class time. The e-platforms used encouraged students to continue their conversations outside of the classroom, allowing them to share insights, ask questions, and collaborate on assignments.

| Interview questions and students' responses  |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| T: Teacher   | S-A: Student A | S-B: Student B |
| T: Can you talk about something regarding the lesson?  |                |                |
| S-A: It was very entertaining.   |                |                |
| S-B: Of course. I think the whole class made it an unforgettable day. I think it is a new lesson for us. I think Ms AU should do more of these because it is encouraging. We may want to pursue this job as detectives. We can learn more things by role-playing.                          |                |                |
| T: What have you learnt?   |                |                |
| S-A: We learnt some key words like "while" and "when". We also learnt to talk about time, to be detectives, and the past continuous tense. I think it is a very good opportunity—a good lesson. They mixed the detective theme with tenses and key words, letting us learn something more. |                |                |
| S-B: We have learnt a lot. Most importantly, the past continuous tense. We learned how to use "when" and "while", and when to use them. We also learned about leadership, how to communicate with people, express ourselves in different emotions, and question others.                    |                |                |

Figure 6: Extract from the Students' Interview

## Unit Design (2) - Yaumati Catholic Primary School

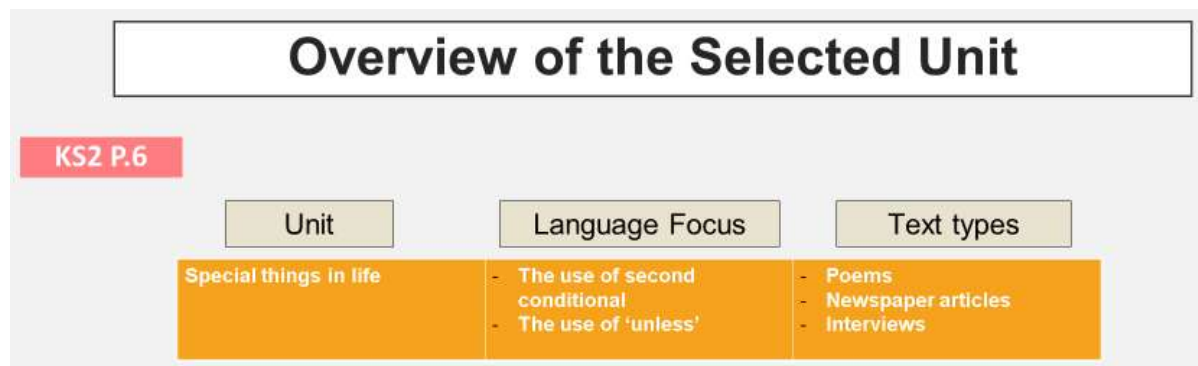


Figure 7: An Overview of the Language Focuses and Text Types Covered in the Selected Unit

The target students at Yaumati Catholic Primary School achieved better academic results in Primary 6. They are very active and eager to express their ideas. They are also curious about learning a variety of topics. Building on the existing publisher materials used by the school, students' learning about the topic of zoo accidents was extended, providing them with more opportunities to apply the target language purposefully and meaningfully, as well as engage in thinking from different perspectives. Through a series of learning and teaching activities, students can better understand the duties, expectations and limitations of various parties such as zoo keepers, visitors and the government.

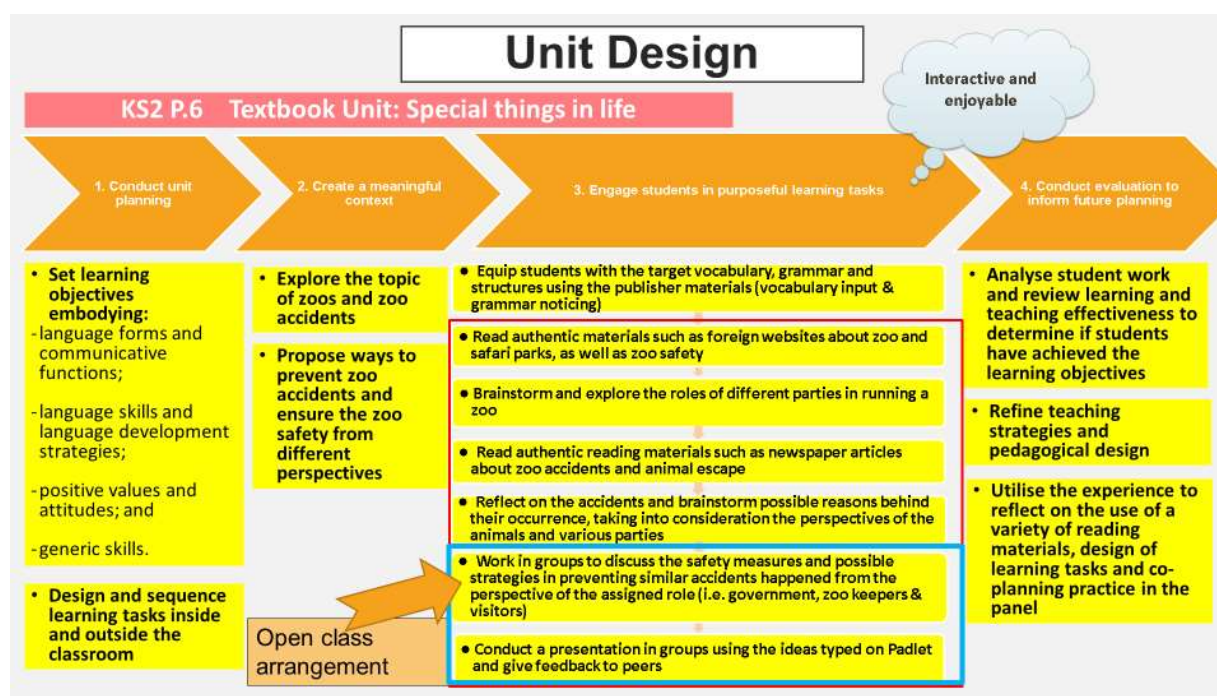


Figure 8: The Unit Design of 'Special things in life' in Primary 6





**How can we prevent the accidents at Hellbrunn Zoo?**

**government**      **zookeepers**      **visitors**

Discuss and type your ideas on Padlet.

**Guidelines for discussion**

**Government**

Consider the following situations. Answer all **FOUR** questions on Padlet.

1. If the zoo was too small and packed, ...
2. If the animal species were not enough, ...

What would you do to ensure zoo safety if you were the government?  
(Suggest **TWO** ways to prevent the accidents from happening and **give reasons** to your ideas.)

3. If we were the government, ...
4. If we were the government, ...

- Students were assigned different roles, and they had to discuss the safety measures according to those roles with their group mates.

**(Peer Evaluation and Feedback)**

*Presentation*

Group \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Checklist for presentation**

|   | 😊 | 🙂 | 😐 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Accurate use of second conditional sentences      |   |   |   |
| Able to give logical reasons to support the ideas |   |   |   |
| Good organisation of ideas                        |   |   |   |
| Loud and clear presentation                       |   |   |   |

Comments (if necessary)

1. Write your classmates' names
2. ✓ appropriate boxes
3. Write comments in point form

- After discussion, students conducted presentations in groups. They also needed to comment on other groups using the checklist.

Figure 10: Examples of the Learning and Teaching Materials and Activities

During the main task, the students worked in groups to discuss safety measures and possible strategies for preventing similar accidents from the perspective of their assigned roles (i.e., government officials, zookeepers, and visitors). They typed the gist and key ideas from the discussion on an e-platform and conducted a group presentation. Students used the rubric shared by the teachers to provide feedback to their peers regarding the use of target language and structure, the richness of content, and presentation skills.



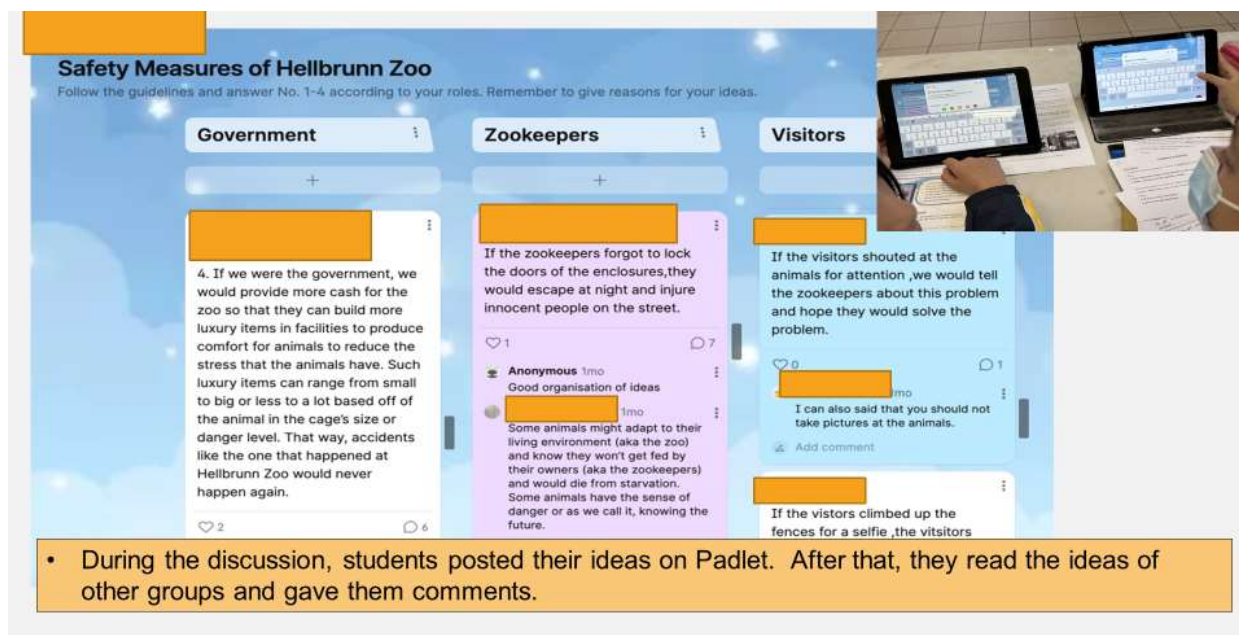


Figure 11: Students' Work on an e-platform

Observations and student interviews revealed that the students were highly engaged in the task, particularly enjoying the topic of zoo accidents and animals. They noted that the authentic use of language in this context made the learning experience both meaningful and purposeful. They shared how stepping into the roles of zookeepers, government officials, and visitors sparked their interest, enabling them to actively participate and apply their language skills in an enjoyable and interactive way. Moreover, students revealed that the e-learning elements made the lessons more enjoyable and boosted their attention spans. The design of the learning and teaching activities, along with the e-learning tools, allowed them to apply the second conditional in an interesting way. They had the opportunity to view their peers' work instantly and learn from one another. Additionally, interactions between teachers and students were enhanced. According to the teacher, students continued to post ideas on the e-learning platform beyond class time, not just after that lesson. They used the platform proactively for quite a while, demonstrating their eagerness to share thoughts about zoo safety from different perspectives.

| Interview questions and students' responses  |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| T: Teacher   | S-C: Student C | S-D: Student D | S-E: Student E | S-F: Student F |
| T: Do you enjoy the lesson on 17 April?  |                |                |                |                |
| S-D: I really enjoy that class because it is the BYOD class and the activities were great! Also I learnt how to use the second conditional.                        |                |                |                |                |
| S-E: I enjoy it too because it uses different games and activities to make it easier to learn the second conditional.  |                |                |                |                |
| T: What did you learn?   |                |                |                |                |
| S-C: I learnt how to use the second conditional and I learnt some fun facts about the zoo and animals.   |                |                |                |                |
| S-D: I learnt a lot from that class. I learnt the usage of second conditional, some zoo knowledge and also team work.  |                |                |                |                |
| S-E: I learnt the correct usage of second conditional and some animal facts, and the duties of zookeepers and the government and the visitors.                     |                |                |                |                |
| S-F: I learnt to use second conditional in unrealistic situation instead of just writing it on paper or worksheet.   |                |                |                |                |
| T: How did e-learning platform help you learn effectively?   |                |                |                |                |
| S-D: It can help us pay more attention in class. I have many chances to form second conditional sentences in the class.  |                |                |                |                |
| S-E: I will pay more attention in class because I am bored with just using the textbook. E-learning and second conditional together ... It is interesting and fun. |                |                |                |                |
| S-F: We explored on Padlet. I made some proper sentences using second conditional.   |                |                |                |                |
| T: What was the most interesting part in the lesson?   |                |                |                |                |
| S-D: I think the most interesting part was pretending to take on different roles to help the zoo prevent accidents from happening.                                 |                |                |                |                |
| S-E: I think the most interesting part is that the second conditional makes everything possible...because it is made for impossibilities.                          |                |                |                |                |
| S-C: The most interesting part of the lesson is making sentences with second conditional because the sentences that my classmates made were very creative.         |                |                |                |                |

Figure 12: Extract from the Students' Interview

## Reflections and Takeaways

Considerable efforts were made by the two curriculum leaders to implement the co-planned learning and teaching activities. The high level of student engagement and their proactive use of language demonstrated the effectiveness of the tasks and materials. In these cases, e-learning played a crucial role in enhancing student engagement, facilitating interaction among peers, and providing opportunities for continuous learning beyond the classroom.

As curriculum leaders and English teachers, we should continuously strive to enhance and sustain students' motivation to learn. It is essential to adopt a student-centred approach, design tasks with clear purposes and contexts, and provide students with greater exposure to a variety of reading materials. Additionally, creating tasks that encourage students to draw upon their existing knowledge and skills will further enrich their learning experience. A variety of e-learning functions, such as discussion boards and collaborative platforms, could be better utilised to foster ongoing interaction

beyond class time. These tools allow students to engage in meaningful discussions, share resources, and collaborate on projects or tasks at their own pace. For instance, discussion boards enable students to post questions and responses, encouraging critical thinking and deeper exploration of topics. Collaborative platforms facilitate group work, allowing students to contribute ideas and feedback in real time, promoting teamwork and communication skills. By integrating these e-learning features more effectively, we can create a dynamic learning environment that extends beyond the classroom, ensuring that students remain connected and engaged with their peers and the curriculum.

To sustain and disseminate these effective practices, the curriculum leaders will continue collaborating with panel members in their schools to review and refine pedagogy across different year levels, leveraging the co-planning experience gained in the learning community.

## References

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