

# Po Leung Kuk Chee Jing Yin Primary School (AM)

Name of Awarded Teachers : Lau Siu Fan, Man Lan Ying, Nancy,  
Tam Kwai Lan, Yu Wai Kwan, Silvia

## **New Models for New Times**

### **Introduction**

#### **New Models for New Times**

In facing the challenges of "education revolution", it is clear that it is teachers, the front-line soldiers, who play an essential and crucial role in this revolution. Just as soldiers need to be very familiar with their new equipment to perform well, English teachers need to be aware of the new teaching strategies in order to be effective educational practitioners.

New models of teaching that benefit students are always of interest and we acknowledge the EMB's promotion of school-based strategies, especially in curriculum development. Our school has a well-established school-based management system with all teachers being involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of curriculum. Teachers know their students well and are able to adapt the curriculum and cater for the individual needs of their classes. Our teachers work collaboratively, with students' needs being the top priority which is reflected in the keen team spirit of our school. Our philosophy, therefore, is collectively putting students' needs first through four key areas, curriculum adaptation, learning & teaching, professional development and an enrichment programme. On reflection, we feel like front line soldiers trying out new equipment. Despite some challenges, this philosophy has proven highly successful.

### **Curriculum**

We have adopted a thematic, school-based curriculum. Themes are meaningful and relevant to students. Teachers assisted in organizing learning experiences based on students' interests and abilities. "Themes increase in relevance when children are given the opportunity to represent their knowledge in a variety of ways". (Davies, 1993). To achieve this, we have selected appropriate units of the textbook and combined and adapted them into a common theme. Curriculum adaptation initially generated a lot of work but this soon flattened out. As a result, there are varied, interesting lessons that utilize a variety of teaching models.

Our students work at their own pace through thematic learning activities using communicative and task-based approaches. Students have ownership of their learning and benefit from the strategies to cope with individual differences. However, this can create some challenges in outcomes and assessment. Standardized summative assessments are no longer appropriate due to the variation of tasks and learning styles.

### **Our New Learning and Teaching Approach**

In 2000, we joined the Primary Native-speaking English Teachers (PNET) pilot scheme which was supplemented by our own Native-speaking English Teachers (NET) Scheme. A culture of collaborative teaching was thus promoted. We co-plan and co-teach with our NETs. We all benefit from a cross fertilization of teaching ideas, strategies and methods and enrich our curriculum by integrating different learning materials such as poems, songs, phonics, stories, chants and riddles, etc. We are working on textbook adaptation, and strive to find more time to try new ideas and strategies. Our curriculum is richly developed with experiential learning tasks, providing an authentic learning environment to immerse students like visiting parks, making sandwiches, tasting ice-cream and visiting supermarkets. In this real life, stimulating learning environment, our students can practise and internalize the target structures of English language smoothly and naturally.

Another innovative idea that is being implemented currently is "Cooperative Learning". Students have more opportunities to work in pairs or groups with various patterns such as 'big brother little brother' (weaker students



paired/grouped with higher ability students.) "Cooperative learning increases thinking, the quantity of learner speech, social integration, motivation and independence." (Jacobs, 1995) Through cooperative learning, passive students are less anxious about contributing in group tasks. As a result, we find that our students speak more confidently in class and have increased enthusiasm in completing their work.

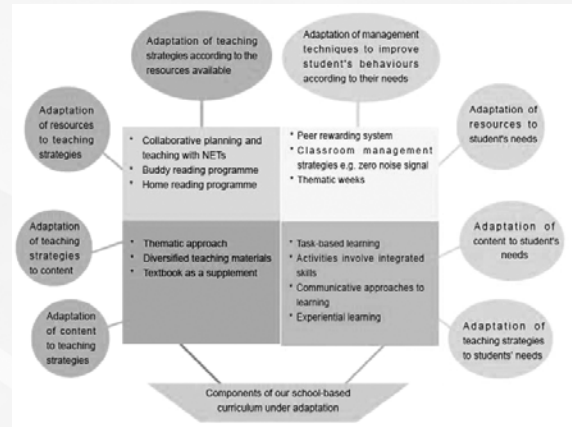
We also use the power of praise in class. The "Peer Award System" encourages our students to praise one another so as to motivate their learning. Students design their own stickers with encouraging words such as "well done, wonderful, fantastic" and give them to their schoolmates or classmates whenever they speak English. Under this program, students are motivated to speak up and develop their confidence and ability to use the language effectively.

### Enrichment programme

We all know that children are individuals and therefore our students learn at different pace and in different ways. We have introduced programmes for gifted students such as English ambassadors training, speech training and Buddy Reading leaders training, etc. Gifted students frequently use English outside the classroom and gain experience in leadership, cooperation and interpersonal interaction when they participate in these activities.

Drama activities can be a powerful tool for the learning of a language. We have organized an English drama club and have found that members gain great confidence in the use of English on stage. They are motivated to read stories in English and speak naturally with others in English. They are "falling in love" with English through drama and are proud of being members of the club. Having seen the effectiveness of drama in education, we feel the need to bring it into the classroom. We can find the abstracts of life in drama and this fosters communication, a key to language education. At this stage, we are trying to use more theatre activities to foster creativity and develop different senses in our lessons. It is hoped that we have opened the door of the English Drama world to all students.

As we are involved in the English language education policy of our school, we sometimes feel like front line soldiers grappling with new challenges in language teaching. Curriculum is definitely not only the textbook itself, but also the process of learning and teaching in or even outside the school. As teachers, we should strive to create the optimal learning environment with ongoing evaluation to ensure it is always for our students' best interests. As our teaching methods change, we find students learn in an increasingly enjoyable and meaningful environment. We are cheered when we see the positive results in students learning. New models of teaching for new times do mean that teachers need to become familiar with this new 'equipment'. We think it is a very worthwhile investment for students and teachers alike.



## Way of Access to Further Information of the above Teaching Practice

Please contact us as below.

## Preferred Way of dissemination / collaboration

Thematic talks / workshops

## Contact

PLK Chee Jing Yin Primary School (AM), 6D Sha Kok Street, Pok Hong Estate, Shatin, New Territories

School tel. no.: 2646 9181

School fax no.: 2647 2056

Web Site: <http://am.plkcjy.edu.hk>

E-mail: [plkcjy@plkcjy.edu.hk](mailto:plkcjy@plkcjy.edu.hk)

## Remarks of the Assessment Panel

This is a strong team of four English teachers who developed a School-based Thematic Approach Curriculum. They used language arts and dramatic activities which provided an authentic learning environment for students to undergo experiential learning. There is also emphasis on formative assessment, co-operative learning, and enrichment for gifted children.

The students we interviewed experienced pleasurable learning at the school. The parents commented that the English learning atmosphere in school is encouraging. Students are stimulated by the activities designed by the teachers - story telling, reciting poetry, discriminating good and bad English in interviews on TV and designing posters.

This English team has successfully created a good English learning culture in school. Collaboration among teachers is developed smoothly. Children experienced pleasurable learning and are looking forward to various interesting activities designed by the team.

