



From left to right: Ms Sue NG, Ms Serena LAU, Mr Terence POON, Ms Phoebe PUA and Ms Lily NG

# Make it fun to learn English

## Recipients of the Certificate of Merit

Mr POON Tsz-kin, Terence (Years of teaching: 11 years)  
 Ms Lily NG (Years of teaching: 10 years)  
 Ms NG Suet-fong, Sue (Years of teaching: 22 years)  
 Ms LAU Wai-ling, Serena (Years of teaching: 24 years)  
 Ms PUA Ku-fong, Phoebe (Years of teaching: 9 years)

## School

Sun Fong Chung Primary School

## Teaching Levels

Primary 1 - 6  
 (English Language)

## Teaching Beliefs

“When we design our activities, we consider whether the activities are relevant, whether the students will enjoy them and whether they will be able to learn from them.”

# Interview with the Teachers

The English teachers of Sun Fong Chung Primary School share the same goal: to provide students with enjoyable language learning experiences through interesting lessons and lots of fun activities in a language-rich environment.

## Interesting activities to motivate learning

Students can wear pyjamas to school when they are reading a story about not being able to sleep, and spend the whole lesson lying on mats trying to fall asleep. Students like these activities very much because they feel that they are “living out” part of the story. The group leader, Mr POON, says, “When we design our activities, we consider whether the activities are relevant and whether the children will enjoy them and whether they will be able to learn from them.”

Mr POON thinks that the teachers have adopted a teaching style that emphasises “sharing” with the students instead of “feeding” them.

Ms Lily NG says, “I want students to know that learning English is fun and enjoy the learning process as much as possible. We do not stick to the textbooks but rather bring the textbooks and other learning materials to life.”

To arouse students’ interest and motivation to study English, the teachers involve the whole school. Starting from year 2000, every year, the students and English teachers dress up in costumes to “trick or treat” during Halloween. All other teachers participate and support this activity as well.



*Students are enjoying the jelly they have made.*

Ms Sue NG, who has served five schools before joining this team, says, “We think and plan things outside of the box regarding learning and teaching English. For example, we spend a whole day on Halloween while other schools may spend only a few lessons. The school becomes an English-speaking community on that day.”

## Other meaningful English activities

In Primary 1, the teachers will make jelly with the students. This helps the students to remember the vocabulary in the recipe. They will also remember the experience of making the delicious jelly.

Ms LAU points out that the junior students like to move around. “I used dancing and singing to teach them pronunciation and help them remember new words. They enjoyed the lessons very much.”

To encourage students to protect animals from cruelty and raise funds for the animals in need, the teachers invited officers from Animals Asia Foundation to talk to the Primary 5 and 6 students, and brought their pets to school for photo-taking. The “One Dollar One Photo!” session was a hit with students.



*Mr POON brought his dog to school for photo taking as part of a fundraising event.*

## Traditional ways of teaching

The school has also adopted some “traditional” teaching methods. Ms PUA especially likes reading to the students. “Many storybooks in the classroom are left untouched. They are interesting stories and make good reading. I read the stories with students in class. After listening to the stories, many students look for the books and read them on their own.”

Mr POON concludes: “It is all about motivation and exposure. If we do not provide students with exciting opportunities to learn English in the school, how can we expect them to like English and use it in the future? Therefore, we strive to give students memorable learning experiences and plentiful learning opportunities.”





**Love is like “A lamp to our feet and a light for our path” (Psalm 119:105).**

We believe that the vital element for effective language teaching is love. We also believe that learners construct their knowledge of the language through social interactions and settings beyond the classroom and that they are learning all the time. To help our students learn English well, we have tried our best to create a school environment conducive to English language learning.

## **Creating a language-rich environment**

We have put in a lot of effort to set up an English environment with language-rich displays and students' work. In addition, our students know that they can approach their native English-speaking teacher and local English teachers during recess and talk with them.

## **Motivating students to learn**

We arouse students' interest and encourage their participation by preparing relevant, meaningful and fun lessons and activities that are suitable for their levels. Before we plan our lessons and activities, we try our best to think of the most interesting and authentic ways to present what we want to teach so that we can bring out the learning items effectively. The results are always encouraging when we evaluate the effectiveness of the learning and teaching of the target items.

## **Providing ample opportunities for students to learn and use English**

We are always on the lookout for authentic experiences that allow our students to learn and use English. Just to name a few, we have students making announcements over the PA system in English; we train students to introduce the school to visitors in English; and we have invited guest speakers from different organisations, e.g., firefighters at the Tai Wo fire station, officers from Animals Asia Foundation, to our school to talk to our students.

## **Developing a learning community**

We, teachers, are learners, too. In the past few years, we have conducted different researches and have learnt more about:

**The kinesthetic approach**– The approach encourages students to move around. Students' movements are the best indicators that they understand the procedure and are actively participating. We are in favour of the approach because it caters to the needs of the weaker ones. Through observing others' reactions towards the teacher's instructions, they have more cues to follow. They also feel less embarrassed to ask their teacher or classmates for clarification.

**Developing students' reading skills**– We have focused more on our reading workshops. We hope to develop our students into independent readers. Students practise different reading skills in class through intensive reading and are encouraged to read extensively to consolidate the skills. Last but not least, we always make sure that students are having fun when they are learning English and when they are reading.

The numerous changes we have implemented in the English curriculum and the encouraging student outcomes have attracted the attention of our colleagues who teach the Chinese language. After observing our shared reading lessons, they were inspired to experiment with some of our strategies in teaching reading in the Chinese lessons. The saying, “Two heads are better than one” applies here. We believe that through collaboration and sharing, the chances of teaching effectively are significantly higher.



*Ms PUA is teaching her class how to make a cake.*

# Assessment Summary

Enriched students' English language learning experiences through providing a language-rich environment and relating language learning to students' kinesthetic senses and life experiences.

These five teachers joined the profession because they love teaching. Based on second language acquisition theories and proven pedagogical practices, they have made good efforts to create a language-rich environment, motivate students to learn English and provide ample opportunities for students to build up their confidence in using English. They have nurtured a school of students who enjoy learning English and speak English with ease and confidence.

To create an English-speaking environment, the teachers laid down the rule of "English only" in the English lessons for all teachers and students. By teaching students the necessary phrases for communication and giving them continuous encouragement, they have helped students to overcome their shyness and speak in English.

The teachers have renovated the reading curriculum and prepared relevant, meaningful and fun lessons and activities to enhance students' learning experiences and personal development. For example, in relation to the reader *Miss Daisy is Crazy*, they organised lessons for students to learn to play rugby. Students listened to instructions given in English and talked in English with their team-mates about strategies to win the game. Students enjoyed themselves and the lessons became one of their most memorable learning experiences.

The teachers have also provided a lot of opportunities for students to learn and use English outside the classroom. Besides excursions to the supermarket and McDonald's, there are the annual trip to the Peak to interview tourists and the Halloween celebration which requires students to use what they have learnt in the English lessons to get candies from their teachers and play games. There are also inter-class competitions with the winning classes being treated to lunch buffet or English movies in the cinema.

The Assessment Panel appreciated the efforts the teachers made to relate learning to students' kinesthetic senses and their life experiences. Their enthusiasm about teaching and the impressive performance of their students have inspired their Chinese language colleagues to experiment with shared reading in the Chinese lessons. The teachers have facilitated a learning community in the school.



"Trick or treat?" the students are asking their teacher, Ms NG.

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

Website: [www.sfc.edu.hk/am/](http://www.sfc.edu.hk/am/)

## Preferred Way of Dissemination

Workshops and seminars

## Contact

Email: [info@sfc.edu.hk](mailto:info@sfc.edu.hk)

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