



Proactive theme-based approach of English learning

▲ Back row left to right: Mr MOHAMMAD, Thair, Mr TAO Elvin
Front row left to right: Mr HO Teck-way, Sam, Ms HORGOS, Jennifer Anne, Ms CHAN Yin-yu, Jenny



Teaching Philosophy

"Our objective is to establish an approach that can enable students to truly enjoy learning. Our curriculum is planned on units that are theme-based or project-based. It focuses on developing the capabilities of students in using English in an authentic environment."



Ms HORGOS, Jennifer Anne
(Years of Teaching: 13)

Mr HO Teck-way, Sam
(Years of Teaching: 9)

Mr TAO Elvin
(Years of Teaching: 13)

Ms CHAN Yin-yu, Jenny
(Years of Teaching: 9)

Mr MOHAMMAD, Thair
(Years of Teaching: 5)

School

HKUGA College

Subjects taught

**English Language
(S1-6)**

Teachers presented with the Certificate of Merit



Interview with the Teachers

Our aim is to provide learners with opportunities to use English in meaningful contexts through cross-curricular projects, so they can explore knowledge and make connections among ideas and concepts in different subject areas and gain proficiency in their English Language skills.

Integrative use of English in authentic contexts

One example of learning English in authentic context is when S2 students were asked to sell muffins baked by themselves, or fruit punch or organic sweets made with unique recipes during lunchtime for charity. Prior to such a chance of selling their own food products, they had to win a competition in designing their own packaging and posters. They even recorded their own promotional jingles to compose the sales pitch. This demonstrates how annual cross-departmental projects are used to facilitate students to learn English through authentic real-life scenarios. "Instead of learning what advertising is on paper, students have to choose their products and apply the skills to advertise the products. They have to actually create the promotional content and practise the whole process," Mr Mohammad explained. In this particular advertising project, he even guided his students to write the selling message as well as the product information that constituted part of the packaging.

The integrated approach fosters a sense of belonging among students and develops their ownership of their works. Division of labour is another major factor to make it possible; while English teachers are



◀ Students and teachers sharing a laugh during a role-play on job interviews



▼ Students engaged in communicative and interactive tasks in the classroom

concentrating on language training, teachers of other subjects would teach students on subject knowledge like design and food-making processes. "The authentic quality of real-life scenarios is important, because we want to train our students to fulfil lifetime needs. When they leave school, we want them to be able to use English confidently and fluently in real-life situations," said the teachers.

Encouraging creativity and free expression

Learning English should be fun and students have to be proactive and creative. With this vision in mind, the team has designed theme-based tasks for students. "For instance, when we teach S6 students Shakespearean classics, the focus is far beyond studying the texts but to go further to explore and appreciate the universality of the themes. Very often, students have to come up with their own ideas and develop the ideas into stories on their own. To a certain extent, they have to take risks." The teachers elaborated, "We want to bring the language alive so it is not just an academic test."



▲ S5 students being challenged while participating in a group discussion

Nurturing global citizens

Apart from the cross-disciplinary nature of English lessons, the team of teachers is working hard to fulfil their mission of cultivating a global vision among students. In order to compose persuasive arguments while writing argumentative essays, students are encouraged to look at different views of different parties. For that, they need to research and understand the different social backgrounds and aspirations of different people. "We are so proud that our students can actually utilise what they have learnt in English lessons in their daily life," Mr Tao concluded.

Teachers' Sharing

Creating a holistic language environment

The overarching philosophy of the English panel at HKUGA College is to provide students with a holistic language education. We aim to prepare students not just for the examinations, but for life outside school. We see English as a vital life skill, and our curriculum is designed to nurture students who are as confident in face-to-face communication and public speaking as they are in reading and writing. All-round competency in these skills gives students more opportunities in life.

We aspire to foster in students a love and appreciation for English in all its forms. We aspire also to develop their creativity, communication skills and co-operative learning skills that are essential in the modern world. Above all, we aspire to cultivate students who are eager and confident in using their English Language skills to actively engage in the world around them.

Characteristics of our school-based curriculum

The English curriculum is entirely school-based and designed to cater for the needs and interests of our students. All the units are thematically organised, covering all eight language arts and non-language arts electives over a six-year period. Each unit is centred



► A student reporting to class after a group discussion



◀ Fashion Show - The finale of the English Week

around interactive and purposeful tasks and projects so that students are always using language with a clear purpose and objective in mind. These tasks range from process writing, oral presentations to large-scale group projects such as advertising (involving the creation, marketing and sale of a product) and film production (including scriptwriting, storyboarding, acting and filming). These projects are completed in collaboration with other panels, such as Technology & Living, Music and Visual Art.

Nurturing intrinsic motivation and lifelong learners

A great deal of attention is paid on developing intrinsic motivation: once students understand and appreciate how important and pleasurable learning English can be, then lifelong learning can take place. The curriculum emphasises engaging learners in genuine and authentic acts of communication. An authentic and natural English Language learning environment is created throughout the school. The learner-centred instruction enables students to take an interest in and responsibility for their own learning. They approach their work with purpose and a strong sense of ownership. The interactive, collaborative nature of the task-based and project-work approach has proven to be the most effective way in developing learners' interest, confidence and proficiency in English, as reflected in the positive learning attitude and good performance of our students.



We are delighted and proud to have won recognition from this Award. We believe that the English programme at the College is effective in stimulating and maintaining students' interest in learning English as well as providing them with the necessary skills and confidence to use English in their everyday life, both during their school years and beyond.

- Students involved in discussions to find out answers by themselves

Assessment Summary

Promoting students' motivation and developing a love for learning English through the provision of a language-rich and cross-curricular learning environment

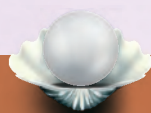


The awarded teachers' pedagogical belief is that students could learn best when they are given the right stimulus and environment to learn English. More importantly, language learning and teaching should be holistic and integrated. To uphold their belief, a language across the curriculum approach is adopted in the school. To provide a broad and deep language learning experience for students, thematic-based teaching units integrating the English subject with other subjects are designed. Cross-curricular collaboration with teachers of other Key Learning Areas to strengthen the use of English in all subjects in the school is put in place. Task-based learning with emphasis on project work and process writing as the learning platforms is adopted. A variety of opportunities to widen learners' exposure to the authentic use of English outside the classroom is provided through the promotion of cross-curricular activities. Different assessment modes such as task-based assessments, group work, presentation and project work are designed to promote assessment for learning and assessment as learning to further enhance cross-curricular collaboration.

A school-based reading programme is used to develop students' reading habits and independent learning skills. The notion of enjoyment and learning in a relaxed language-rich environment is cherished. The teachers' target is not only on developing learners' language competencies, but also on inspiring a love for the English Language. Teachers aspire to instill in students an ability to appreciate the beauty of the English Language and harness it to enhance their personal, intellectual development and cultural understanding. In the classroom, teachers act as facilitators, guiding students in the process of learning, asking the right questions, and involving students in

discussions to find out answers by themselves. Sources of instructional input are mainly drawn from authentic materials to increase interest and motivation. Pleasurable and meaningful extra-curricular activities that involve using English in authentic situations such as taking part in Speech Festival, watching plays and completion of reading logs, are provided to foster learners' love for the English Language, positive values and attitudes vital to independent and lifelong learning.

The teachers have succeeded in implementing the true-spirit of learner-centred instruction at school, which can enhance students' language competencies and encourage learner independence. The holistic and integrated approach they adopt has given the right stimulus to enable students to make steady progress in enhancing their language competencies. The teachers are dedicated to their work and have demonstrated good collaboration in building up a motivating learning environment that empowers students with good language competencies. They also set themselves as role models for self-improvement by disseminating their good teaching ideas and practices among other teachers and providing support to new teachers.. Their enthusiasm has fostered a culture of sharing among teachers.



Ways to Obtain Information on the Teaching Practice



Website:

<http://subject.hkugac.edu.hk/english>

Contact



Mr TAO Elvin



Tel: 2870 8815



Fax: 2870 8825



Email: elvin.tao@hkugac.edu.hk