



Enabling students to experience the real world in their English lessons



**Ms LUK Ka-yan,
Chermaine**
(Years of teaching: 12)

**Mr TOONG,
Kevin Michael**
(Years of teaching: 8)

**Ms WONG Hiu-ching,
Rachel**
(Years of teaching: 5)

Subjects taught

**English Language, English Drama,
English Literature (S1–6)**

Interview with the Teachers

Each student has his/her own learning style, so the best way of teaching English is to address the different needs of each learner.

Pleasurable, meaningful and productive language learning experience

"We do not want our students to memorise vocabulary, proverbs or idioms and regurgitate them on examination paper. Instead, we provide a language-rich environment with lots of activities inside and outside the classroom to encourage our students to learn English in interactive ways," according to Ms Chermaine Luk, the Head of Good Hope School's English Panel. She added enthusiastically that in order to tap the potentials of individual students, the five awardees in the school put their heads together to develop a wide range of co-curricular activities to integrate with the standard English curriculum. These activities include the production of school publications, public speaking, debates, choral speaking, musical theatre and drama. The activities are designed with the element of enjoyment and fun in mind to promote students' ability in daily life communication.



▲ Students are encouraged to make their own choice on the roles and costumes during the choral speaking competition.

"I think providing a broad variety of activities is the most important, so that students can make their own choices, and everyone has a chance to take part and express themselves," according to Mr Drysdale.

Catering for students of different abilities

The awardees believe that each student is unique with their own talents and everyone acquires language skills in different ways. In other words, the best way of teaching English proficiency for a particular student may not work well for others. Therefore, the crux of designing an English Language curriculum is to address the different needs of learners. For example, in activities such as debate and public speaking, there



▲ So many books, so little time! Students make a start at the annual Reading Festival

might be a chance that certain skilful presenters would take up the centre stage and dominate speaking time, while the weaker ones are sidelined. To avoid this, measures are in place to ensure active participation of the whole class. "We encourage shy students to take part in inter-class competitions. Fair chances are there for everyone. An example on how this is achieved can be found in our debate classes," Ms Luk said.

"The debate content is tailor-made to fit into our curriculum across all levels in the school. Students take up different roles at different times so that they can learn at their own pace. The less outspoken students might be assigned with assisting roles to help prepare floor questions and present the research materials to the debaters. Later on, these students will advance to be speakers or debaters, assuming more important or leading roles in competitions."



◀ Demonstrating their competitive spirit at the Inter-class Public Speaking Competition

As a result of such a thoughtful arrangement, several shy students have excelled in various public speaking competitions. "Even their own teachers are amazed by how well they communicate. Imagine the confidence boost that is given to the students!" said Mr Drysdale. In fact, most senior students would be equipped with communication skills and enriched vocabulary to take on a "fight in words" on sophisticated topics or social issues towards the end of their study at the school. But the strongest weapon they have acquired is confidence, that is the vital dynamo of winning a debate.

Synchronising language arts activities with the main English Language curriculum

"Five years ago, when we tried to incorporate drama into the formal curriculum, we did encounter some teething problems. When we first implemented the drama curriculum, students often had to learn poems and short stories that were not part of the core curriculum; therefore they would have to spend extra time and effort on them," Ms Ho and Ms Wong explained.

After evaluating the situation, the team decided to re-design the drama curriculum to be based on short prose, novels and poems used in literature lessons in the core curriculum. Now students are able to adapt short stories like Roald Dahl's "Lamb to the Slaughter" into a drama performance without needing to spend drama lesson time on comprehension exercises. While preparing for the drama production, students are motivated to read reference materials and carry out character analysis in class. This instills passion among students to read literature in a more in-depth way, and kindles their genuine interest in reading.

Team work as the key to success

As the school celebrated its 60th anniversary last October, the team of teachers and students staged the

musical production "Alice in Wonderland". "This large-scale production became a showcase for drama and public speaking that aspiring young performers would look up to. The preparation and rehearsals spanned over a year and a half. Both performers and backstage crew members benefited from the experience tremendously," said Mr Toong.

"Having the experience of playing different characters in the drama definitely helps. Acting enables the students to develop empathy with the characters, which further enhances their appreciation of the authors' intention in literature works," Ms Luk explained.

For the future, the panel of teachers is currently exploring the feasibility of transforming the classroom into a "court room". A "court room"? Yes, they plan to add a mock trial into their English Language



▲ Putting their heads together in a mind-mapping activity

curriculum. All these inspirational ideas aim at providing chances for students to master English as a second language, and at the same time, get acquainted with legal procedures and criminal justice process. "There is always room for improvement!" Ms Luk concluded enthusiastically. "We all are dedicated to thinking out of the box to try out new teaching methods," she said with a big smile.



Teachers' Sharing



We are dedicated professionals who work to make English lessons both challenging and accessible to all students. Coming from different parts of the world, we bring with us a huge range of experience and expertise, and we readily pass this knowledge on to every student. We also aspire to create a positive environment to immerse every student in a productive learning process.

Fostering a lifelong interest in the English Language

The ultimate goal of English teaching at Good Hope School is to develop a well-rounded English Language capability in our students. To this end students are given a rich array of learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

An integrated approach combining English Language, literature and drama education is adopted. Through this, we aim to develop in students the confidence and capability to use the language. More importantly, we hope to foster in our students a lifelong interest and appreciation for English as both a learning tool and as a global language for communication and creativity.

Across all levels, we aim to cultivate a self-learning habit, and to develop students' sensitivity to language use and cultural differences. Through the holistic



▲ Brainstorming ideas during process writing

provision of English co-curricular activities, including School Publications, Public Speaking, Debating, Choral Speaking, Musical Theatre and Drama, and by providing opportunities to serve the community, we train students to articulate personal responses, express opinions, and demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the English Language.

Developing students' talents in language arts

We contribute to the development of students via two main threads: through the formal English curriculum - i.e. classroom-based delivery of English lessons - and through co-curricular activities. We have had significant successes in these two threads individually, but our most rewarding achievements have been in the integration of co-curricular activities into the formal English curriculum. This has been particularly notable in the areas of Musical Theatre & Drama, Debating, Public Speaking, Publications and Reading, which play important roles in the language and whole-person development of the students at the school.

We have been improving and expanding the junior and senior English Drama curricula to complement our English Language and English Literature curricula. We also strive to seek new ways for our students to showcase their talents in performing arts and speech, as well as finding new outlets for students to fully utilise their creative potential.

◀ Students building up confidence in a debating group exercise



► Flexible grouping can facilitate the sharing of ideas

▼ Developing eloquence in oral presentation



In particular, an integrated curriculum incorporating English Language, Literature and Drama has been established. In English lessons, students intensively study selected pieces of short prose, poetry and novels. Based on these texts, students are aided to attain a deeper level of understanding of their content. For example, they are given opportunities to establish empathy with the characters, or challenged to interpret a wide range of language and experience in contextualised settings. Furthermore, students are encouraged to invent their own additions to the text and content in their drama performances, through activities like scriptwriting, and insertion of original, authentic dialogue for use.

As we have witnessed significant improvement in students' engagement with and understanding of set texts, as well as their confidence in using English, our belief that drama is an irreplaceable means of language teaching has been further consolidated. By making an ordinary language classroom more animated, it triggers students' interest in appreciating the language.

Encouraging participation for all

Alongside Drama Education, Debating, Public Speaking and Publications play complementary roles in Good Hope. There is a debating component in the curriculum of each level, with the end goal of holding an inter-class debating contest for each form. By tailoring the debate topics to the curriculum, students' learning in those areas is reinforced, but now with the extra motivation of competition.

We work tirelessly to develop the diverse skills involved in drama, debating, public speaking and publishing in our students. Our teachers show students what it takes to be a competent future leader with good communication, interpersonal and self-management skills by acting as their role models. More importantly, the English panel firmly believes that equal opportunities should be given to all students in developing their English proficiency. Conscious efforts are made to develop inclusive learning activities that can cater for students of all levels of ability. We feel so pleased and satisfied as all our students are actively engaged in the process of learning and acquire an improvement not only in their command of English, but also their character, communication and problem-solving skills, as well as learning the values of teamwork, commitment, self-discipline and leadership.

Throughout the years, we have helped our students to serve the community by teaching English to new immigrants in Hong Kong and primary school children in Mainland China. The English panel trains students and conducts micro-teaching sessions to equip students with the skills necessary to deliver effective teaching.



Over recent years, with the collaboration of our colleagues and the enthusiasm of our students, we have made a significant change to the teaching and learning of English at Good Hope School. With dedication and commitment, we have worked together to ensure that the broad range of co-curricular activities can integrate seamlessly into the core English curriculum to improve the quality of English learning at our school.



Assessment Summary

Enhancing students' learning outcomes through an integrated approach based on language arts and literature



▲ Enhancing students' creativity and free expression through drama activities

The awardees are a team of dedicated teachers, who have developed a coherent, balanced and diversified school-based English Language curriculum, incorporating drama, public speaking, and reading programmes to immerse learners in a productive English learning environment. An integrated teaching approach with English literature and drama as its focus is adopted to extend language abilities of students to the fullest. Reading habits are nurtured through activities such as extensive reading schemes, a reading festival, "Battle of the Books" and literacy circles. A language-rich environment is created in the school, so that learners are provided with ample opportunities to use English for different communicative purposes. A learner-centred approach in which students are encouraged to contribute to the learning process by sharing their views and learning experiences is embraced. Learners feel motivated to acquire English as a second language through a subconscious process of acquisition. This is achieved by exposing learners to carefully designed learning activities that engage them in group work or pair work for quality interaction and genuine communication.

A wide range of life-wide learning experiences in the forms of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are organised for the students to widen their exposure to the authentic and integrative use of English. Life-wide activities are organised on a regular basis to extend the learners' experience in the use of English and to enhance the development of generic skills, positive values and attitudes conducive to both language and whole-person development. Students are constantly involved in various activities conducted in English around the school.

The main focus of instruction is to develop learners' strategies and skills in self-directed learning and foster positive attitudes of lifelong learners. Processes that assist students in managing their thoughts, behaviours and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences and extend their language abilities

are adopted. Learning strategies such as forethought and planning, performance monitoring and reflections on performance are emphasised. As a result, learners' confidence as well as interpersonal and collaboration skills are fully-fledged. Students are able to develop the ability to appreciate the beauty and power of the English Language in creative or literary texts and other cultural forms, and develop a critical attitude towards ideas and values.

The teachers have demonstrated passion, expertise and outstanding efforts in devising an effective school-based curriculum which promotes an integrative use of language in a language-rich environment, and providing a wide range of learning experiences to enhance students' language competencies and cultivate their personal and intellectual development, cultural awareness and understanding of the world. They are also committed to supporting school development, which is evident in the constant sharing of their teaching ideas both inside and outside school. Above all, at Good Hope School and beyond, they have fostered a culture of collaboration among English teachers.



Ways to Obtain Information on the Teaching Practice



Website:
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