Developing the school plan for English language exposure

SA Tin Ka Ping Kindergarten
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Non-profit making half-day kindergarten located in Sha Tin Wai

English language activities are conducted by a native-speaking English teacher (NET) and the local teachers

Adopting a set of textbooks as the main learning and teaching materials for exposing children to English

Joined the SCOLAR ‘Quality English Language Education at Pre-primary Level’ Project from 2009/10 to 2010/11
Children’s learning of English

Children in the non-project classes:
• were willing to participate in English language activities
• had difficulties in understanding the teacher’s English
• relied much on the teacher’s Cantonese translations during the English language activities
• showed little confidence in using English
Difficulties and weaknesses of the school plan

Limited variety of English language activities

Lack of meaningful and authentic contexts

Too many learning focuses

Learning focuses were too difficult or not related to children’s daily experience
Difficulties and weaknesses of the school plan

- Too much emphasis on print recognition
- Covered only a limited variety of English knowledge
- Lack of an interactive language environment
Quality plan for English language exposure at the pre-primary level

- Develop children’s interest in learning English
- Provide children with enjoyable learning experiences
- Develop English listening and speaking skills
- Develop the awareness of English letter-sound relationships and preliminary reading strategies

(Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002; CDC, 2006)
Quality plan for English language exposure at the pre-primary level

- Provide children with meaningful and authentic learning contexts/materials related to their everyday life
- Expose children to English through a variety of learning activities
- Make good use of classroom environment to stimulate children’s learning

(Berman, 1998; Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002; CDC, 2006; Stewig & Jett-Simpson, 1995)
Photos of English language activities

- Shared Reading
- Storytelling
- Art and craft activity
- Storytelling
Developing the school plan for English language exposure

- Expose children to English in authentic, interesting and meaningful contexts
- Provide quality English exposure through a variety of pleasurable and developmentally appropriate language activities
- Target at appropriate learning focuses
- Integrate the exposure to English into the school’s curriculum
Integrate English language exposure into the school’s curriculum

- Planned different themes
- In line with the themes in the school curriculum
Learning focuses

- Listening and Speaking Skills
- Reading Skills
- Variety of Language Features
English language activities

• 1-3 English language activities a week
• Around 25 minutes (including a main learning activity and an extended activity)
• Main learning activities: shared reading, reading aloud and storytelling
• Extended activities: singing, games, real-life experience activities, show-and-tell and drama activities
Photos of main learning activities

- Shared Reading
- Shared Reading
- Storytelling
Photos of extended activities

Games

Singing

Drama activities
Learning and teaching materials

- Main learning and teaching resources:
  - 10 stories and 3 songs related to the themes
- Resources for extended activities:
  - 7 songs
Photos of learning and teaching materials
Language environment

- Class library
- Word wall
- English corners
- Classroom routines
Photos of language environment
Teachers’ reflection and learning

Challenges:

• Teaching capacity
• Availability of quality learning and teaching materials
• Parents’ needs and expectations
• Integration of the plan for English exposure into the school curriculum
Teaching capacity

Teachers of K2:
Two project teachers, five non-project teachers and a NET

Challenge: Difficult for the non-project teachers and the NET to implement the new plan
Teaching capacity

**Measures**

- Assigned two project teachers as homeroom teachers of three K2 classes
- Provided non-project teachers with adequate chances for observing and co-teaching
- Arranged co-planning meetings, peer observation and debriefing meetings
Teaching capacity

Deployed the NET to conduct English activities:

- Focusing on introducing letter sounds
- Other theme-related activities

Provided professional development workshops for the NET
Photos of teachers’ professional development workshops
Learning and teaching materials

• Developed interesting stories for some of the themes
• Adapted stories to meet children’s abilities
• Advised parents to purchase three (out of ten) stories for children
• Printed stories as picture books
• Placed stories in the class library
Photos of storybooks

A Picture of Daddy

The Salvation Army Tin Ka Ping Kindergarten

Oh, no!
You need to draw big eyes.

Oh, I see.
Parents’ needs and expectations
To let parents know children’s learning progress, the school provided children with:

- A booklet ‘English Songs and Rhymes’
- A picture-word booklet ‘English Vocabulary’
- Four chosen stories
Photos of picture-word booklets
Parents’ needs and expectations

To let parents know children’s learning progress, the school:

- conducted a parent seminar at the beginning of the school year
- informed parents of the stories and songs introduced through weekly notices
Integration of the plan for English exposure into the school curriculum

Conducted unit planning meetings

Developed the overview of English language activities two or three weeks prior the starting of each theme

Ensured balanced activities in different learning areas when developing the overall plan

Ensured effective communication among different stakeholders
Sustaining the project

The project teachers would continue to:
• develop the plan for English exposure
• provide training workshops for non-project teachers

The non-project teachers would help:
• refine the new plan
• sustain the new plan for English exposure in K2
Actions taken to develop the school plan for English exposure in 1st term of K2
Implications for practitioners

• School leaders:
  - Understand teachers’ needs and provide adequate support to them
  - Ensure clear division of labour and allocate sufficient human resources
  - Maintain good communication with parents

• Teachers:
  - Collaborate and maintain effective communication with colleagues
  - Be positive when facing changes or challenges
References


The End

THANK YOU!