

Part C

Project Details

Goals and Objectives.

This project aims to improve Hong Kong primary school students' English skills and creativity through classroom literacy activities which make learning enjoyable and interesting. Our goal is to develop effective and innovative English instruction methods which enhance language and reading proficiency, promote interest and positive attitudes in reading, and encourage creativity through language activities. The goal supports several main areas of English language education curriculum development in Hong Kong (Curriculum Development Council, HKSAR, 2004, p. 8).

Within the project period, effective and innovative English instruction methods, naming dialogic reading and reading in creative texts, will be developed, and their effectiveness will be demonstrated. These methods will benefit the 2 participating schools and their 240 primary grade 2 students immediately. After the project period, the methods and materials developed in this project will be available and advertised to all local primary schools. They will contribute to the English language education curriculum development and facilitate the construction of an effective English learning environment for our children. The ultimate goal is to prepare students for reading to learn and becoming lifelong learners.

Shared reading provides an excellent context for vocabulary learning and discussion of prints. Though shared reading is useful, passive exposure to words supports learning less effectively than children's active usage of words (Nagy & Scott, 2000). The effects of shared reading greatly depend on the interaction between adults and children. Therefore, methods which enhance teacher-child interaction and children's active participation in shared reading are particularly useful. This project aims to apply dialogic reading, an interactive adult-child reading method, in local classrooms, to enhance children's English use and positive attitudes in English learning. Teachers will be trained to engage dialogic reading with their children in class so that children are supported to use English and express their ideas with confidence.

Apart from language and reading acquisition, shared reading is useful in stimulating growth in other aspects, such as creativity (e.g., Bechler, 1975; Walsh & Blewitt, 2006). Storybooks with creative texts will be adapted in this project, for example some alternative versions of well-known stories. These creative texts will allow and encourage children to generate novel and divergent responses from their reading. The unique and playful experience will enhance the reading motivation and strengthen creative thinking in children. Teachers will be trained to make use of these texts to stimulate children's innovative and creative thoughts. One of our goals in this project is to create methods which integrate generic skill development and language instruction.

After the program evaluation, we will promote these techniques to all primary schools in Hong Kong. We will advertise these techniques through our manuals, workshops and website, developed based on the materials and feedbacks from this program. A manual and a website with comprehensive information about children's reading and creativity development will be produced and will be available to all primary schools in Hong Kong. Our long-term goal is to adapt these techniques to help improve early English-language instruction in children and integrate generic skill development with language instruction. We are paving the road for learning English with joy and interest in children, instead of studying it by rote memorization from textbooks and exercises.

Our success in meeting these goals will be evaluated through our experimental intervention. The effects of dialogic reading and reading in creative texts will be compared to the growth of children who are not exposed to any of these new techniques. We will administer objective tests to children individually to measure their English and creativity performance. After pretesting children on language and reading skills, reading interest and creativity, classes will be randomly assigned to 4 groups, including a) dialogic reading with creative texts; b) dialogic reading; c) typical reading; and d) control. For the typical reading group, teachers will be provided with storybooks, same with those given to the dialogic reading group,

but they will be asked to read with their children with the ways that they typically do. This group helps determine whether our program yields greater improvement compared to what is typically done by teachers with their students on reading. For the control group, they will read with books of their choice and no new reading materials of this project will be given prior to final testing. The control group is important because they allow us to compare the effects of new reading materials on stimulating children's language and literacy as compared to no new reading materials. Teachers and children in all groups will engage in reading activities for 12 weeks with 2 reading sessions per week. All participating classes will receive the dialogic reading and reading in creative texts materials after the posttest.

After the 12-week reading intervention, children will be posttested on the same measures used in the pretest. The improvements of children's performance between pretest and posttest will be compared across the 4 groups, for measuring the success of the program. We have several expectations. First, all children will show some improvements over time given their learning in the existing environment and their natural growth across time. Second, the typical reading group will show greater improvements than the control group, as teachers and children will engage in regular reading activities with new materials during the intervention period. Third, the dialogic group and the dialogic reading with creative texts group will improve in English skills and reading interest more quickly than the control and the typical reading groups, as they encourage interaction between teachers and children. Fourth, the dialogic reading with creative texts group will have greater growth in creativity.

Needs assessment and applicant's capability

Shared reading and storybook telling have been employing in reading workshops in primary schools. There are around two English reading workshops per week for primary grade 2 students. Therefore, these reading workshop sessions provide an ideal condition for the implementation of this project. Teachers will engage in shared reading as they normally do with their students. The only change will be the modification of teachers' behaviors in shared reading so as to make reading more interactive and to include the creativity component. Teachers will be trained to use these new reading methods (dialogic reading and reading in creative texts), and eventually be able to adapt storybooks available at schools for dialogic reading and incorporating creativity in language instruction. Within the project period, storybooks will be provided, and storybooks which the schools already possessed will be used if appropriate.

We are well-prepared to carry out this project. We carried out four studies (please see attached abstract and newspaper article) on Chinese children earlier and showed measurable effects of the dialogic reading for both Chinese and English language and reading skills. The significance of our reading research in literacy education has been recognized by international authorities, and has been awarded the United Kingdom Literacy Association/ Wiley-Blackwell Research in literacy Education Award 2011. (please see attached award certificate).

The present study is an extension of these, to apply this effective method in English instruction in classroom and integrate creativity teaching in language instruction. The applicants consist of two professors from City University of Hong Kong who have published widely on research in children's development and education, including language and reading development in both Chinese and English, and creativity (please see attached c.v.s). The two primary schools involved are strongly committed to language comprehension enhancement and have good support for new initiatives in this area.

Targets and expected number of beneficiaries. 8 classes in 2 primary schools participate in this project. Participating schools are Christian Alliance H.C. Chan Primary School and Ng Wah Catholic Primary School. All participating schools and their students (approximately 240 students, 120 in each school) will benefit from this project immediately following the project. The schools will receive storybooks and manuals which contain techniques and examples on stimulating children's English acquisition and creativity development. Also, they will participate in workshops which will enhance their understanding

of children's development in English skills and creativity. The program is expected to raise not only English abilities but also interest in learning English of their students, which will in-turn enhance English instruction efficiency in these schools.

Apart from these immediate benefits, this proposed project will be useful for educators and parents of Hong Kong primary school students. We aim to develop a manual and a website advertising dialogic reading and reading to enhance creativity techniques, and giving suggestions and hints on how to create a stimulating learning environment for developing English ability and creativity in Hong Kong children. 1000 copies of manuals will be produced and sent to primary schools in Hong Kong. The website will be made available to schools and the general public. Also, we will hold seminars as a platform for promoting these useful techniques directly to teachers.

Conceptual framework

Language acquisition is an important milestone for young children. In nowadays society, mastering language(s) apart from an individual's first language is getting more and more prominent. English is an official language in Hong Kong, and English instruction has long been being included in our education curriculum. However, learning English in Hong Kong children is particularly difficult, because of the lack of full English immersion in daily life, huge differences in the characteristics of Chinese (first language) and English (second language), and great variations across families in literacy activities and habits.

Schools play a key role in promoting children's language development. Among young children, one important way in which children's language and literacy skills improve is through shared reading. One of the best known programs for fostering effective parent-child reading is the dialogic reading technique (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). In this method, children's verbalizations are supported and expanded by adults. Children learn to become the story-tellers, as adults support them. Through the uses of questioning, extensions, and praise, adults facilitate more language interactions with the children. This dialogic reading technique used in classroom and home has yielded language advantages for English-speaking children (e.g. Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Huebner, 2000; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Whitehurst, Falco, Lonigan, Fischel, DeBaryshe, Valdez-Menchaca, & Caulfield, 1988; Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angell, Smith, & Fischel, 1994), Chinese-speaking children (e.g., Chow & McBride, 2003; Chow et al., 2008), and Korean-speaking children (Lim, 1999).

The effectiveness of dialogic reading in children's first language, especially English, is well-supported. Recently, Chow, McBride-Chang and Cheung (2010) have conducted the first study in examining the effects of dialogic parent-child reading at home in learning English as a second language. They have demonstrated the effectiveness of dialogic reading between parents and children in promoting Hong Kong kindergarteners' English language and reading skills (see attached research abstract 1). Given the potential of dialogic reading in enhancing English learning, it is promising to modify and extend dialogic reading technique to English learning in classroom for Hong Kong children. Dialogic reading has been successfully employed in classroom for teaching English as a first language in English speaking children (e.g., Whitehurst et al., 1994), showing the feasibility to implement dialogic reading in English instruction. We expect that dialogic reading will have positive impacts on Hong Kong children's English acquisition and reading interest given these research and practical evidences.

The development of creativity in school children has become one of the major foci in educational reforms in different Chinese societies, including China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Hui & Lau, 2010). In Hong Kong, creativity has been identified as one of the nine generic skills to be nurtured and defined as a behaviour that is "the result of a complex of cognitive skills/abilities, personality factors, motivation, strategies, and metacognitive skills" (Curriculum Development Council, HKSAR, 2001, p. 45). Creative teaching and learning can be infused in the eight key learning areas in the formal curriculum, including English language education. As a modelling of creative behaviours, effective strategies include providing children with opportunities to interact with interesting and creative reading materials, asking questions

leading to divergent and original responses, and suggesting novel words in vocabulary learning (Belcher, 1975; Hui & Forrester, 2006; Walsh & Belwitt, 2006).

In sum, this proposed project will develop effective language activities which could be used efficiently by teachers and schools in promoting Hong Kong children's English abilities, reading interest and creativity.

Innovation

This proposed project builds on a previous project funded by the Quality Education Fund (Project number: 2003 / 0754) and 4 research studies which showed the effectiveness of dialogic reading in enhancing Chinese and English learning in Hong Kong children. There are two major extensions.

First, this previous project focused on parent-child reading at home. The present proposed project will focus on teacher-student reading in classroom. It is the first project which applies dialogic reading to learning English as a second language in classroom. It will develop dialogic reading materials with specific guidelines suitable for English instruction in Hong Kong primary schools. Second, the present proposed project will integrate creativity components with shared reading. It will produce innovative materials for teachers and schools for how to enhance creativity through shared reading.

Extent of Teachers' and Principals' Involvement in the Project.

The primary schools involved agree to allow pre- and post-testing of participating children on English abilities and creativity during school hours at their schools. School administrators, such as Principals or curriculum leaders (PSMCD or English Panel Chairperson or associates) will help coordinate the testing and the reading intervention. Teachers will be trained to use the dialogic reading and reading in creative texts methods through workshops delivered by our team. The teachers will then implement these methods in their classes.

Implementation Plan with Time-line. This project will be carried out from 1 March 2012 to 31 December 2013. Details are shown in the following table.

Schedule

Proposed Time-line (Month/Year)	Events	Details
3/2012 – 5/2012	Material preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Storybook selection and purchase ● Developing dialogic reading and reading in creative texts materials ● Developing record books for teachers to record their reading sessions
6/2012 – 7/2012	Material production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Designing and making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dialogic reading and reading in creative texts manuals - Record books
8/2012 – 10/2012	Teacher training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training teachers on the dialogic reading and reading in creative texts methods ● Working out with principals and teachers a plan of testing and reading intervention implementation
11/2012 – 12/2012	Pretesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children will be tested individually for 2 sessions, 45 minutes each, with English and creativity measures in schools by trained experimenters.
1/2013 – 4/2013	Reading program implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers and children will read for 12 weeks ● The intervention groups will employ dialogic

		reading and reading with creative texts or dialogic reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluation meetings between the teachers and the applicants will be held to monitor the progress
5/2013 - 6/2013	Post-testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children will be tested individually for 2 sessions, 45 minutes each, with English and creativity measures in schools by trained experimenters.
7/2013 - 8/2013	Data entry and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data entry and analysis
9/2013	Programs evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluation of the program
10/2013 - 12/2013	Workshops and report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops for teachers to share the results and experiences of the reading program will be held ● Report writing
11/2013 - 12/2013	Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A manual will be created for schools to promote dialogic reading and reading in creative texts ● A website will be created to provide information on dialogic reading and reading in creative texts ● Public talks will be held for schools to promote dialogic reading and reading in creative texts to educators of children in Hong Kong

Expected Deliverables and Outcomes.

Outcomes: This project will facilitate English learning with joy in primary school students. It will adapt dialogic reading methods and reading with creative texts in local classrooms, and will promote a more interactive English learning environment in local classrooms. It is expected that students' English language and reading abilities, interest in learning English, and creativity, will be enhanced through these innovative and interactive reading methods.

Products: We will develop a manual and a website to be made available to all primary schools. They contain comprehensive information about children's reading and creativity development, and methods that local schools could employ in enhancing the children's reading and creativity abilities, including dialogic reading and reading with creative texts. 1000 copies of manuals will be produced and sent to primary schools in Hong Kong. The website will be made available to schools and the general public. Also, this project will result in 2-3 journal publications on the topic of Hong Kong children's English learning and creativity development.

Budget

Item	Year 1 (03/12-02/13)	Year 2 (03/13-12/13)	Total
Staff Cost			\$307,156
Research Assistant \$12,750/month x 22months	\$153,000	\$127,500	\$280,500
Student helpers	\$13,328	\$13,328	\$26,656

\$49 x 17 hours/week x 8 weeks x 4 persons			
Services			\$16,000
Graphic design for training and reading materials, manuals and website \$8000/year x 2 years	\$8000	\$8000	\$16,000
Equipment			\$83,240
Books (Reading scheme)	\$16,500		\$16,500
Notebook computers \$8500 x 3	\$25,500		\$25,500
Printer \$1000 x 1	\$1,000		\$1,000
Digital camera \$2,500 x 2	\$5,000		\$5,000
Digital video camera \$4,500 x 2	\$9,000		\$9,000
Videotapes \$30/tape x 208 sessions	\$6,240		\$6,240
Testing materials Standardized tests and score sheets for all students in pretest and posttest	\$20,000		\$20,000
General expenses			\$111,465
Reference materials for schools \$4,000/school x 2 schools	\$8,000		\$8,000
Reference materials for developing materials and manuals \$3000/year x 2 years	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$6,000
Transportation \$8,000/year x 2 years	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$16,000
Printing and photocopying Reading materials: \$60 x 248 sets Tests: \$10 x 240 copies x 2 times Manuals for all schools: \$30 x 1000 copies Other: \$2000/year x 2 years	\$19,280	\$34,400	\$53,680
Stationery items \$1000/year x 2 years	\$1000	\$1000	\$2,000

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Postage			
Manuals: \$10 x 1000 copies	\$1,000	\$11,000	\$12,000
Other: \$1000/year x 2 years			
University overhead charge	\$13,785		\$13,785
Contingency (3%)	\$5,992		\$5,992
Total			\$523,853 \$523,900 (nearest hundred)

Justifications of budget items:

- 1) One full-time research assistant is needed to carry out the following tasks during the proposed project time:
 - a) working with school principals and teachers on the details of program implementation and testing
 - b) dealing with publishers on story book printing and pricing
 - c) helping with developing tasks for assessing language abilities and creativity and questionnaires;
 - d) testing children
 - e) organizing workshops
 - f) videotaping workshops and lessons
 - g) processing and analyzing data
 - h) producing manuals and creating a website
 - i) writing-up reports

The research assistant is required to have attained Bachelor's degree and have plenty experiences in research and dealing with children.
- 2) Student helpers will assist the research assistant on some of the above mentioned tasks. Notably, testing children and data processing would especially require extra help from part-time student helpers.
- 3) Graphic design service is needed to help with the overall design of reading materials, manuals and website. Materials and books for children must be colorful and graphically interesting so as to catch children's attention. Also, manuals and website with professional design will help deliver information and draw the attention of the public and schools.
- 4) Storybooks are necessary for the reading program. Approximately 248 (240 students and 8 teachers) copies of 12 storybooks will be needed.
- 5) Notebook computers, which are portable and could be brought to schools, are important for workshops, material preparation and test administration. These computers will also be used by the full-time research assistant and student helpers to develop reading and testing materials, manuals, and websites, administer testing, process data and write reports. Also, as 5 experimenters will administer tests to different students at the same time so as to minimize the duration for testing and the disturbance to the class, at least 3 notebook computers are needed. Using computers to administer tests will reduce colored printing and photocopying and will in-turn save cost.
- 6) Training workshops and lessons during the intervention period will be videotaped so as to produce CD-ROMs to be shared with other teachers. There will 192 reading sessions (8 classes x 24 reading sessions) and 16 training workshops.
- 7) Standardized tests are needed to objectively measure the effectiveness of the reading program and help developing other testing materials. For instance, the Peabody Picture vocabulary test – Fourth Edition, the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary test, Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices, and Wallach-Kogan Creativity Tests, which are well-known tests of language, general cognitive, and creativity abilities are ideal measurement tools for this project. They are standardized tests widely used over the world, and thus will help us to gain insights on how Hong Kong students perform compared to students in other countries.

- 8) Printing and photocopying is necessary for producing paper-and-pencil tests, reading materials, and manuals. During the project period, 248 (240 students and 8 teachers) sets of reading materials, 480 (240 students x 2 times) copies of paper-and-pencil tests and questionnaires, and teacher training workshop materials will be made. After the project period, 1000 copies of reading manuals will be produced and be sent by post to schools in Hong Kong.
- 9) Workshop trainers, research assistants and student helpers will visit schools for training, testing and meeting with principals and teachers. There will be 60 trips x 5 persons for pretest and posttest, 16 trips for workshops, 64 trips for supervising implementation and 20 trips for meeting.
- 10) Every English teacher of the participating schools will be given a set of useful resource books on English and creativity education to support the curriculum development. Also, reference books and training kits are needed for developing the materials for the proposed reading program and manuals for all schools in Hong Kong.

Asset Usage Plan

Category (in alphabetical order)	Item / Description	No. of Units	Total Cost	Proposed Plan for Deployment (Note)
audio and video equipment	Digital camera	2	\$5,000	For use in other projects on children's language learning conducted by project leader
	Digital video camera	2	\$9,000	
book & VCD	Books (Reading scheme)		\$16,500	For use by teachers and students in the participating primary schools, and in other projects on children's language learning conducted by project leader
computer hardware	Notebook computers	3	\$25,500	For use in other projects on children's language learning conducted by project leader
office equipment	Printer	1	\$1,000	For use in other projects on children's language learning conducted by project leader

Note: for use by school / organization / in other projects (please provide details of the department / centre to which the asset will be deployed and the planned usage of the asset in activities upon project completion).

Report Submission Schedule

I / My school / My organization commit(s) to submit proper reports in strict accordance with the following schedule:

Project Management 計劃管理		Financial Management 財政管理	
Type of Report and covering period	Report due day	Type of Report and covering period	Report due day
Progress Report 1/3/2012 - 31/8/2012	30/9/2012	Interim Financial Report 1/3/2012 - 31/8/2012	30/9/2012
Progress Report 1/9/2012 - 28/2/2013	31/3/2013	Interim Financial Report 1/9/2012 - 28/2/2013	31/3/2013
Progress Report 1/3/2013 - 31/8/2013	30/9/2013	Interim Financial Report 1/3/2013 - 31/8/2013	30/9/2013
Final Report 1/3/2012 - 31/12/2013	31/3/2014	Final Financial Report 1/3/2012 - 31/12/2013	31/3/2014

Evaluation parameters and method.

The proposed program will be evaluated through our rigorous experimental intervention. To obtain baseline data, all participating children will be individually tested on English abilities, reading interest, and creativity before the intervention (pretesting). Teachers and their students will then engage in a 12-week intervention.

Children will be individually tested on the same tasks after the intervention (posttesting). The posttesting will reveal the extent to which differences in children's performance by group, and will indicate that the effectiveness of dialogic reading and reading in creative texts on promoting English learning, reading interest and creativity. Our performance indicators will be the actual testing scores. The benchmarks will be dialogic reading and reading in creative texts are effective in enhancing children's English abilities, reading interest and creativity. Specifically, we expect that the dialogic reading and reading in creative texts promote greater improvements in English abilities, reading interest and creativity than the control conditions.

Sustainability of the Outcomes of the Project.

This proposed project will provide effective and innovative methods for stimulating Hong Kong children's English learning and creativity with joy and interest. These methods are important for educators, because they can be alternate methods of traditional rote memorization from content in textbooks or exercises, and so they can enhance English learning and enthusiasm for learning English at the same time.

Also, generic skill development could be incorporated in language instruction. We plan to develop a manual on English dialogic reading and reading in creative texts together with comprehensive information about reading and creativity development for mass distribution and to be available for primary schools in Hong Kong. This manual will help educators create the best English educational environment for our children. Also, a website will be developed to advertise these methods which will be easily accessed by educators.

In addition, this project will result in 2-3 journal publications on the topic of Hong Kong children's English learning and creativity development. These papers will generate more discussions and suggestions on how to construct a better learning environment for children learning English as a second language.

Dissemination plan.

A manual on English dialogic reading and reading in creative texts together with comprehensive information about reading and creativity development will be produced for mass distribution and will be made available for primary schools in Hong Kong. Also, a website will be developed to advertise these methods which will be easily accessed by educators. Public talks will be held in order to promote effective English instruction methods and the way to integrate generic skill development in language instruction to educators of children in Hong Kong.

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