Putting The Joy Back Into Learning

At Lingnan Hang Yee Memorial Secondary School, we see the teaching of English as an exciting challenge to make learning as fun and practical as possible. We know that the best way for students to become engaged in the lesson is to have them become active rather than passive learners. So, in an effort to have more engaging activities in the class, we have incorporated a lot of student-centered activities into the teaching of English.

1. Teaching English through Language Arts

We have incorporated a lot more Language Arts components into the teaching of English in our lower forms. These activities have been developed in-school and include a wide variety of fun experiences for our students. For example, in S.3, we challenge student’s creative writing talents by getting them to produce a ‘T.V. Commercial’. They must write the script, design and make the set, act and direct the entire production themselves. This teaches students leadership skills, team building/cooperating skills, creative writing, and organizational skills while having fun and practicing their English.

In S.2, students are given chances to perform a ‘Radio Drama’. The script is school-based and the performance involves students to incorporate a lot of different skills. With no visual component, students need to produce dialogues, music and sound effects to help the listener imagine the story. This enhances students’ creativity and interest while learning English.

Also, in S.1, we encourage students to actively participate in a ‘Story Telling Festival’. The story is written by the school NET and it has shown a variety of moral themes such as honesty, modesty, and kindness. It not only teaches students how to appreciate reading short stories, it also helps promote moral education through reading English short stories. The Story Telling Festival provides all S.1 students a wonderful learning experience and it also caters students of different abilities. It cultivates students’ interest in reading and it also teaches students how to tell stories vividly.
Together these initiatives all form part of the strategy to equip our students with the skills they need to meet the demands of the new NSS curriculum.

2. Project-based Learning

We also introduce project-based learning activities in different levels to help students acquire various generic skills. All the activities provide students with chances to bring real life experience into their English classrooms. The extension of English learning to students’ daily experience shows students how they can use English in their everyday life.

In S.1, students investigate their new school life and carry out a project called ‘My School and Me’. In S.2, students collect information and carry out interviews in a project called ‘My Idol’. Students also learn how to write a report. In S.4, students carry out their learning outside classrooms and they interview tourists from all over the world about their trips to Hong Kong in a project called ‘Tourist Hunt’. They then design a 4-day itinerary for different types of tourists. In S.6, students collect news clippings and compile a project on a particular current issue. All these stimulate students’ learning in various ways and students learn a wide range of generic skills such as creativity, communication skills, etc.

3. English Learning and Cultural Exchange Program

Our school holds a study tour to Saskatoon of Canada every summer. The purpose of the trip is to give all the students who participate an opportunity to improve English by immersing themselves in an all-English environment where they have to use English every day in basic communication. The students are accompanied by their school English teachers and they live with carefully selected Canadian host families and each day from Monday to Friday, the students attend formal English lessons in a school and they are taught by fully qualified Canadian teachers, in a small class size of about 6-10 students to one teacher. Afternoons are then
spent on special field trips to various Canadian industries, cultural venues or special sports activities. Evening activities include swimming, family time, movie night, etc. At the weekends, special field trips are planned like: a tour of the University of Saskatchewan; camping and horseback riding; a trip to the Rocky Mountains. It is believed that such a program can foster in students the desire for lifelong learning by opening the world to them through experiential education.

Starting from 2007-2008, the Program is funded by the Education Bureau under the English Enhancement Scheme, for the consecutive six years. The Program is highly appreciated by the Education Bureau and it is the first time the program of this kind being funded since it is totally school-based. The most stimulating thing is the Program is also supported by the S.H. HO Foundations. It funds students with financial difficulties and so, even the underprivileged students can also enjoy the benefits of such learning program. There is also a scholarship to award academic achievers. In this program, students are definitely the ones who benefit the most. It definitely widens their horizons and provides them with a life-long learning experience.

What makes the program more meaningful is that students return from the immersion and become involved in peer-tutoring in the school to help other students overcome their fear of communicating in English. They would also help as student assistants to the English teachers in the English Corner and would help organize events of the English Corner.

4. Providing English Learning Opportunities
Every year, we encourage our students to participate in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival. Students of all levels participate in the competition and the result is always promising. This year, one of our students, Isaac Mak of 4C, has been awarded the Champion in S.4 Boys Solo-verse Speaking.

In the school morning assembly, S.6 students are provided with chances to give an English
morning talk to all teachers and students. Students select their own topic, usually on current issues, write their own thoughts and share it with the whole school. It boosts students’ confidence in English public speaking and it also gives lower-forms students a chance to share their senior form schoolmates’ learning experience.

Besides, we always aim at giving our students a lot of English learning opportunities outside classroom so as to enhance their motivation in English learning. For example, there is an English Music Show for all S.1 and S.2 students. It is organized after school and the show provides students with a lot of fun elements such as drama, music, rap, songs and dance steps. Students enjoy a lot in the show.

Also, there is a live theatre performance for our S.4 students. It is also organized after school and the activity gives students a chance to experience a live theatre performance which students are rarely get themselves exposed to in their daily life. It is believed that such activities can help create an English-rich environment in school and it also cultivates students’ interest in appreciating English works.

Last but not least, we have an English Corner in school. The school NET stays in the English Corner during lunch hours and she welcomes students to have various English activities with her. Students like the games such as Scrabble and Pictionary.

5. S.1 and S.2 Speaking and Listening Skills

This is a program co-taught by the NET and the English teachers. It aims to expose students to a range of TEFL-based English learning methods to engage them in communicative, task-based, content-based and cooperative language learning. The focus will be on natural, Standard English for accurate and functional use. It is to help students develop both micro and macro speaking and listening skills, enabling them to hear English sounds and phrases more accurately, be more receptive listeners and express themselves more clearly and confidently in English. The program also aims to employ a wide range of content to reflect students’ own lives, interests and studies and to encourage students’ to actively, creatively, and autonomously make their own choices and give their own opinions.