

# **Easy stories, easy learning**

**Using self-developed stories to enhance  
children's listening and speaking skills**

**Peace Evangelical Centre Kindergarten**

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# Background of the school

- Joined the project in 2009/10
  - 3 project teachers
  - 2 levels: K2 & K3



# At the end of the 1st project year ...

- Tried conducting Shared Reading and Songs, Rhymes and Games successfully.
- Teachers decided to revise the school plan for English language exposure at the end of the first project year.



# Background of the case

## Project teachers found that ...

It is difficult to identify suitable big books for some themes.

Less able children were not confident of speaking English and did not actively participate in English activities.

Some children were least interested in learning letter sounds through the phonics textbook. It is difficult to help children remember the learned letter sounds.

Maybe **Storytelling** can help ...

# Why adopting Storytelling?



- It allows children of different abilities to have many opportunities to listen to and speak in English in meaningful contexts.

# Why self-developed stories?

- The stories can match the themes of the school curriculum.
- The stories will be appropriate to the developmental needs of the children.



# Why self-developed stories?

- The vocabulary items or sentence patterns that the children had learned previously can be embedded in the stories when appropriate.



# Different stages in creating simple stories for exposing children to English



Creating new stories with interactive elements for children to participate with familiar words from Mar to Jun

Developing a unit with Storytelling as the main teaching strategy from Dec to Feb

Creating self-developed stories and props in Nov & Dec

Creating a new ending for existing stories in Oct & Nov

Trying out simple storytelling activities in Oct

# Tryouts of stories with a new ending

## Under the Sea



Teachers created a new ending for the story *Under the Sea*. Children could help solve the problem in the new ending.

# Tryouts of self-developed stories

## Messy Grandma



Teachers developed Kamishibai for the self-developed story *Messy Grandma*.

# Video observation

## **Video clip #1:**

*The Caterpillar and the Worm* (an adapted story with interactive elements for children to listen to and say some learned target language features in a meaningful context)



## **Video clips #2:**

*The Big Umbrella* (a self-developed story together with the content of the phonics textbook for children to learn the sound of letter U)



# Children's Successful Outcomes

- They enjoyed storytelling activities:
  - they were longing for storytelling activities.
  - they asked teachers to retell some stories even though they heard them for more than 3 times.
  - they liked the after-storytelling activities, such as craft making or role playing the story.



# Children's Successful Outcomes

Game: <Letter V – A van race>



Role play : <Bark George>

# Children's Successful Outcomes

- Children of different abilities were able to participate in the storytelling activities:
  - more capable children could predict the development of the story and give suggestions to the characters.
  - less capable children could make sound effects or play around the cutouts.



# Children's Successful Outcomes

- They showed greater enjoyment in learning letter sounds:
  - They were motivated to say the target letter sounds as they participated in telling the story.



# Children's Successful Outcomes

- The simple stories developed by the teachers could help children remember the letter sounds.
- They liked the stories in the English Letter Story Set.



# Children's successful outcomes

- Parents had positive feedback, they observed:
  - children were interested in listening to English stories.
  - children sometimes would tell their parents the funny stories they learned from school (e.g. *Bark, George* and *Ugly Mummy*).



# Teachers' Reflection and Learning

- Teachers found that they ...
  - gained better knowledge of the learning objectives of English language education at the pre-primary level.
  - gained ownership of the self-developed stories.
  - enjoyed the process of developing stories and making props.



# Teachers' Reflection and Learning

- Teachers found that they ...
  - enjoyed telling English stories to children.
  - became more confident of conducting English activities.
  - became more confident of conducting parent seminar and workshops on how to expose children to English at home.



# Teachers' Reflection and Learning

- The importance of the principal's support:
  - The principal allowed time for teachers to:
    - have peer observation.
    - co-plan together to create self-developed stories.
    - co-teach with each other to build confidence.

# Teachers' Reflection and Learning

- The importance of the parents' support:
  - parents' help in making props and materials for storytelling activities and extended activities.



# The Way Forward in 2012

- Teachers revised the school plan for English language exposure at the end of the school year.
- Teachers continued create self-developed stories to arouse children's interest in English language learning.
- Project teachers passed their knowledge and the learned teaching strategies to non-project teachers.

