

'Quality English Language Education at Pre-primary Level' Project

**Developing a school plan for
exposing young children to English**



SCOLAR
語常會



LANGUAGE FUND
語文基金

SCOLAR Kindergarten English Language (SKEL) Team

Objectives

After this seminar, you will:

- **know more of the characteristics of young learners and their needs in second language learning;**
- **gain some ideas on the components of a quality plan for English language exposure at the pre-primary level; and**
- **gain some ideas on how to integrate the plan for English language exposure into the school curriculum at the pre-primary level.**

**From theories
to practice**

From theories to practice

- There are different learning theories which give us insight into how we can expose young children to English.
- Scholars/researchers/practitioners in the field have different arguments for and against these theories.

From theories to practice

- Yet there are some aspects of these theories that we can put into consideration when developing a school plan for exposing young children to English.

From theories to practice

SIX questions are raised by some of the practitioners in the field.

- Let's think about how different learning theories could be applied to answering the questions.

1. Why are the children in my school not interested in using/learning English?

Is this effective for motivating children to use/learn English?

- verbal compliments
- gifts such as candy, stationery, toys, etc.

What if these do not work well?

Motivating children to use/learn English

- Make the **learning process enjoyable, achievable and meaningful.**

Behaviourist Approach

e.g., Skinner, B. F.

Operant conditioning

- **positive reinforcement** (e.g., reward)
→ desire behaviour will continue
- **negative reinforcement** (e.g., neglect)
→ undesired behaviour will extinguish

2. The children in my school are not willing to speak in English. The best they can do is to speak English in single words. How can I improve their speaking skills?

- **Provide ample chances for children to listen to and speak in English.**
- **Form good models of using the language.**

**accurate use of the
language**

expansion of utterances –
showing how language features
are used in different situations
and linguistic
patterns

Behaviourist Approach

e.g., Bandura, A.

Observational learning

- Humans acquire their behaviour by **observing** and **imitating**.

3. Should I expose children to English language at an early age?

- **Exposing children to a language at earlier ages would facilitate children's learning of the language.**

Point to note:

Help children develop their mother tongue (Cantonese/Chinese) before introducing English language.

Nativist Approach

e.g., Chomsky, N.

- **Language Acquisition Device (LAD):** Children have an innate capacity for language development.

e.g., Lenneberg, E.

- **The Critical Period Hypothesis:** Children learn languages more easily before puberty.

4. When should I guide children to recognise print of words?

Is children's learning progress of English well addressed to?

e.g.,

Before asking children to recognise print of words (reading)...

rethink

Are they able to relate the meaning of words to their pronunciation? (listening and speaking)

rethink

Can they recognise individual letters of the English alphabet?

- **Take children's cognitive development and previous knowledge into consideration when deciding the learning objectives, teaching strategies and learning resources.**

Cognitive Approach

e.g., Piaget, J.

- Learning takes place when children make sense of their **new knowledge** or experience by relating it to their **previous knowledge** through assimilation and accommodation.

5. The children in my school are not good at English. I've heard that phonics can help develop children's listening, speaking and reading skills. Should I guide children to learn phonics as early as possible to solve the problem?

- Do we understand children's **current level** of English language development?
- Do we notice children's **potential** for achieving the next level/area of English language development?
- What **support** can we provide for children so as to help them achieve the next level?

e.g.

**The letter-sound relationship
of the letter *c*
(as the beginning sound in words)**

Introducing the sound
of the letter *c* through
Storytelling/Shared Reading

able to articulate
the sound of
the letter *c* e.g. /k/

knowledge of the letter *c*
(able to recognise
and name the letter)

oral vocabulary
(words beginning
with the letter *c*)
(e.g., cat, car,
coat, cake, cap)

Sociocultural Approach

e.g., Vygotsky, L.

- ***Zone of proximal development (ZPD)***: the next area of development that could only be achieved with the help and support of others (capable adults)

e.g., Bruner, J.

- ***Scaffolding***: providing support to children so as to help them go beyond the immediate information or experience

e.g.

The letter-sound relationship
of the letter *c*
(as the beginning sound in words)

Zone of
proximal development

Scaffolding:
Introducing the sound
of the letter *c* through
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able to articulate
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coat, cake, cap)

6. I have taught the children in my school how to say some words but I am not sure if they really understand them or not. What can I do?

- Allow **two-directional communication**, instead of one-way dissemination of information.
- Make the learning process **interactive**.
- Provide plenty opportunities for **genuine communication** in context.

e.g.

T : This is milk.
Milk. Milk.
Read after me. Milk.
Ss: Milk.
T : Louder, please. Milk.
Ss: Milk.

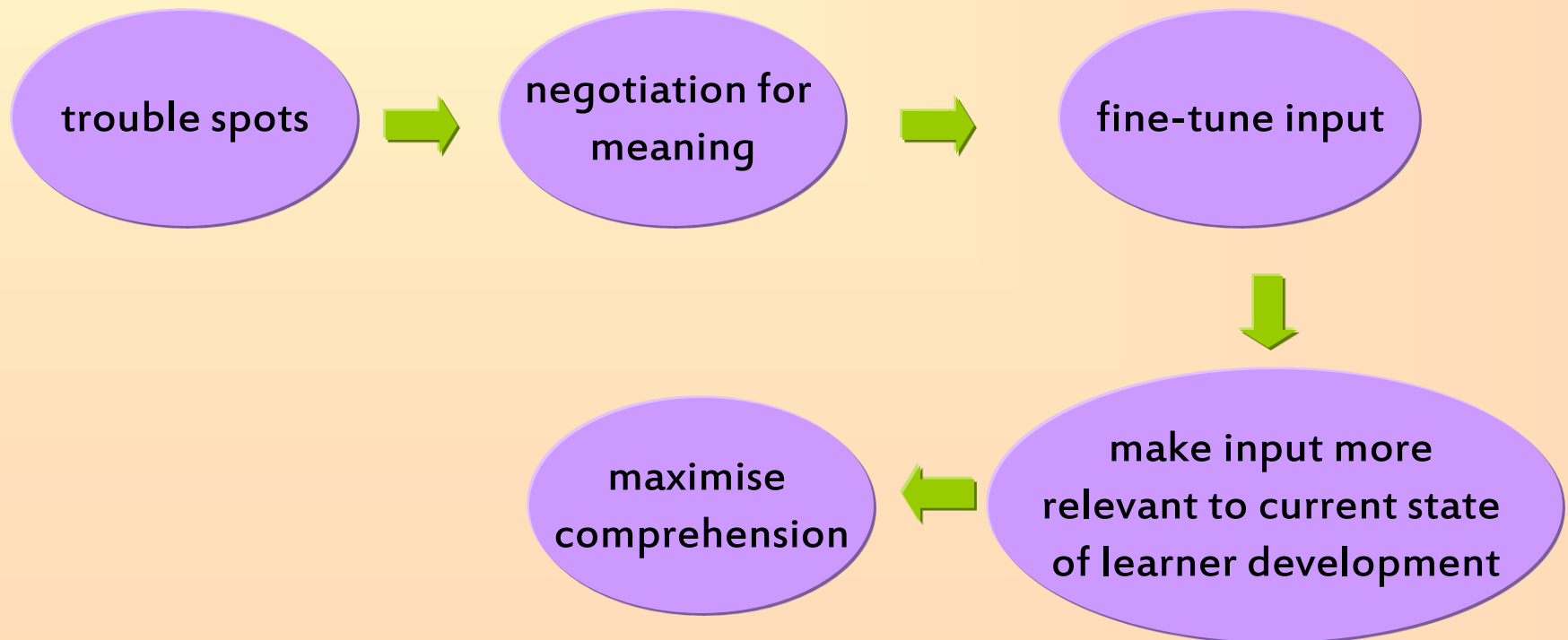


T : This is milk. Milk. (showing a picture)
S : Milk.
T : Do you like milk?
Ss: Yes.
T : This is a carton of milk. (showing 2 pictures)
S : 嗰樽咩嚟㗎?
T : Milk. This a bottle of milk.
A carton of milk and a bottle of milk.
(pointing at the pictures)
T : Where does milk come from?
Ss : ... (no response)
T : Milk comes from a cow.
(showing a picture; T pretends milking a cow by hand.)
Ss : 擠牛奶呀?
T : Yes, I'm getting milk from a cow.
T : Do you like milk or water?
Ss : Milk.
T : Who wants milk?
Say milk, then I'll give you a bottle of milk.
(T pretends giving bottles of milk to the children.)

Socio-interactionist Approach

e.g., Long, M. H., Larsen-Freeman, D.

The Interaction Hypothesis



Socio-interactionist Approach

The Interaction Hypothesis

- **conversational tactics for negotiation for meaning, e.g.,**
 - **repetitions**
 - **confirmation checks**
 - **comprehension checks**
 - **clarification requests**

e.g.

T : This is milk.
Milk. Milk.
Read after me. Milk.
Ss: Milk.
T : Louder, please. Milk.
Ss: Milk.



T : This is milk. Milk. (showing a picture)

S : Milk.

T : Do you like milk?

Ss: Yes.

T : This is a carton of milk. (showing 2 pictures)

S : 嗰樽咩嚟㗎? (clarification check)

T : Milk. This a bottle of milk.

A carton of milk and a bottle of milk. (repetition)

(pointing at the pictures)

T : Where does milk come from? (comprehension check)

Ss : ... (no response)

T : Milk comes from a cow.

(showing a picture; T pretends milking a cow by hand.)

Ss : 擠牛奶呀? (confirmation check)

T : Yes, I'm getting milk from a cow.

T : Do you like milk or water?

Ss : Milk.

T : Who wants milk?

Say milk, then I'll give you a bottle of milk.

(T pretends giving bottles of milk to the children.)

Components of a Curriculum

1. **Learning Objectives**
 - knowledge
 - skills
 - values and attitudes
2. **Teaching Approaches/Strategies**
3. **Learning/Teaching (L/T) Resources**
4. **Assessment**
5. **Learning Time**

Components of a Quality Plan for English Language Exposure

(a) Learning objectives:

i. English language knowledge

- **Vocabulary**
- **High frequency words (HFW)/
sight words**
- **Sentence patterns/expressions/ phrases**
- **Concepts of print**
- **Alphabetic knowledge – letter names**
- **Letter sounds**

Components of a Quality Plan for English Language Exposure

(a) Learning objectives:

ii. English language skills

- listening
- speaking
- reading
- (writing)



iii. Values and attitudes

- interest
- confidence

Learning Objectives

- **School: Chinese YMCA Kindergarten**
- **Theme: Measurement**
- **Number of sessions: 3**

Text	L/T Resources	Learning Activities	Learning Objectives	Knowledge/skills
Monkey Bridge	Story	Storytelling activity and drama game	' <u>One</u> monkey(s) went over.' and 'went over'	Sentence pattern and phrase
				Listening and speaking skills
The Monkey Bridge	Big Book Story	Shared-reading activity, art-and-craft activity, and game	Bridge, river, four, five, /f/	Vocabulary, sight word/HFW and letter sounds
				Listening, speaking and reading skills

Learning Objectives

- School: TWGHs Shiu Wong Lee Moon Fook Nursery School
- Theme: Family
- Number of sessions: 5

Text	L/T Resources	Learning Activities	Learning Objectives	Knowledge/skills
My Little Sister	Big Book Story	Shared-reading activity, show-and-tell activity, and games	big, little, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, toes, fingers, and 'This is ...'	Sight words/HFW, vocabulary, and sentence pattern
				Listening, speaking and reading skills
Ugly Mummy	Story	Storytelling activity and games	animal names	Listening and speaking skills

Key Concerns of Designing a Plan for English Language Exposure

Learning objectives

- **Ensure a balanced coverage of learning objectives in a year**
- **Choose learning objectives that are developmentally appropriate and child-centred**
- **Develop children's listening and speaking skills before reading and writing skills**

Components of a Quality Plan for English Language Exposure

(b) Learning activities

- **reading stories**
- **storytelling**
- **games**
- **singing songs**
- **saying rhymes**
- **show-and-tell & real-life experience activities**
- **drama activities, etc.**

Learning Activities

- **School: Peace Evangelical Centre Kindergarten**
- **Theme: Food**
- **Number of sessions: 5**

Text	L/T Resources	Learning Activities
The Great Enormous Hamburger	Big Book Story	Shared-reading activity, food tasting activity, real-life experience activity, singing, and games

Key Concerns of Designing a Plan for English Language Exposure

Learning activities

- **Provide children with lots of opportunities to listen to and speak in English in fun ways**
- **Maximise children's learning experience through a variety of activities**
- **Provide opportunities for children to interact with their language environment**

Components of a Quality Plan for English Language Exposure

(c) Learning/teaching resources

- **stories**
- **songs**
- **rhymes**
- **others**

Learning/Teaching Resources

- **School: The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Nursery School**
- **Theme: Animals**
- **Number of sessions: 5**

Text	L/T Resources	Learning Activities
Five Little Ducks	Big Book Story	Shared-reading activity, drama activities (role-playing, mime freeze, charade), and games
Four Little Ducks	Nursery Rhyme	

Key Concerns of Designing a Plan for English Language Exposure

Learning/teaching resources

Expose children to L/T resources

- **of different types (e.g., stories, songs and rhymes) *in a year***
- **that match with the learning themes**
- **with authentic English**
- **that interest children**

**Integrating the Plan for English Language
Exposure into the School Curriculum at the
Pre-primary Level**

Integrating the Plan for English Language Exposure into the School Curriculum

1. Integrate into the **learning themes** adopted in the school curriculum
2. Integrate into **other learning areas**
3. Integrate into **classroom routine**

Integrating the Plan for English Language Exposure into the School Curriculum

1. Integrate into the **learning theme** adopted in the school curriculum
 - to **enrich and extend** the theme learning
 - to **treat English Language exposure as part of the school curriculum**, not as an individual subject

Integrating the Plan for English Language Exposure into the School Curriculum

2. Integrate into **other learning areas**

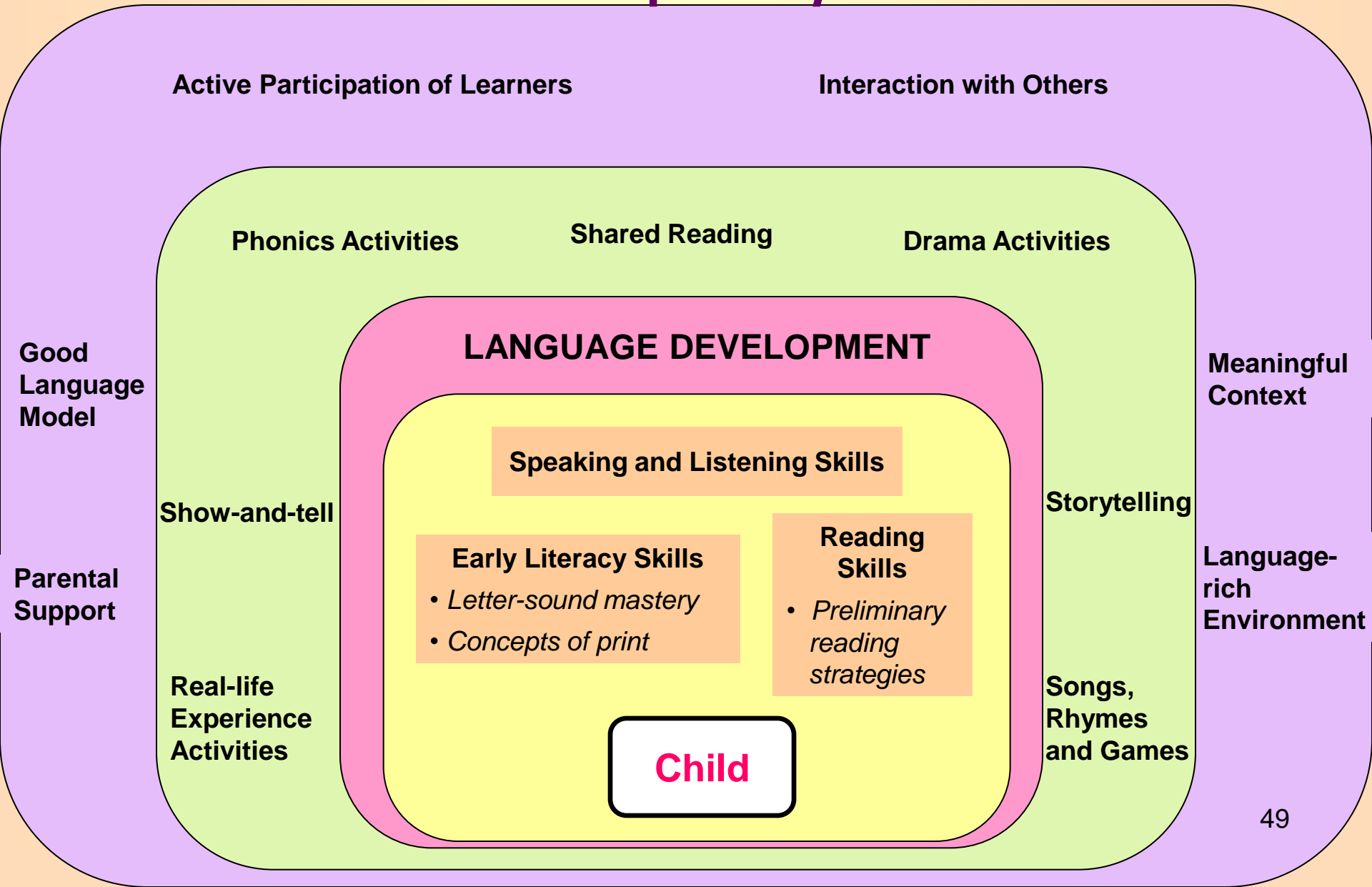
- **Physical Fitness/Music/Arts Activities**
- **Free-choice Activities**
e.g. social interaction, language activity centre
- **Festival Activities**

Integrating the Plan for English Language Exposure into the School Curriculum

3. Integrate into **classroom routine**, e.g.,

- **Welcoming Activities**
- **Morning/afternoon chat**
- **Sharing of everyday life experiences**
- **Lining up for hand washing**
- **Snack/meal time**

Plan for English Language Exposure at the Pre-primary Level



Exposure to Languages at the Pre-primary Level

It should be -

- **Developmentally appropriate**
- **Authentic**
- **Accurate**
- **In context**
- **Pressure-free**
- **Enjoyable (e.g. through songs and games)**

(SCOLAR, 2003, p.40)

English as a Second Language in Early Childhood Education

Learning Objectives: Children are enabled to –

1. develop **interest in learning English**
 - **listen to** and **read stories** and **nursery rhymes**
 - **recognise** and **make use of vocabulary** related to their everyday life or what interests them
2. **listen to** and **understand** simple conversations in everyday life
3. **sing** or **recite** **nursery rhymes** and **employ** simple words used in everyday life

English as a Second Language in Early Childhood Education

Principles of Teaching –

1. Teachers should **cultivate children's interest** in English and **motivate them to learn** by **using authentic materials** to **create a language-rich and interesting environment**.
2. Teachers should let children learn through **pleasurable activities such as singing nursery rhymes, play, storytelling, etc.**
3. Teachers should provide children with opportunities to **listen to and speak in English through conversations, reading stories** aloud and play.
4. Language activities have to **meet children's developmental needs**.

Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum, CDC, 2006, p.30

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Thank you!