

Ready Steady

Issue 3 March 2017



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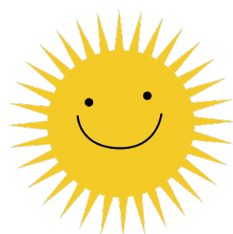
Foreword

Self-directed learning (SDL) is a process in which individuals take the initiative to learn, monitor and assess their learning progress. It is a generic learning skill that students have to master in the 21st century. SDL is gaining popularity in primary school education; have you created an SDL environment for your class? If not, are you ready to try out a module, putting theory into practice?

Rewarding SDL modules require great contributions from both teachers and students. Yet, it is not as demanding as you may think. Simple questions such as 'Can I build a cooperative learning environment for my students?' and 'Am I available for consultations as appropriate during the learning process?' can readily help produce effective SDL modules.

In this issue of **Ready Steady**, our experts will outline the key stages of SDL: getting ready for self-learning, setting learning goals, engaging in learning processes and evaluating learning progress. Experienced professionals will share their insights on how to try out SDL activities in classroom settings. We hope this issue of **Ready Steady** will help demystify the basic concepts of SDL, becoming your stepping stone to engaging SDL modules.

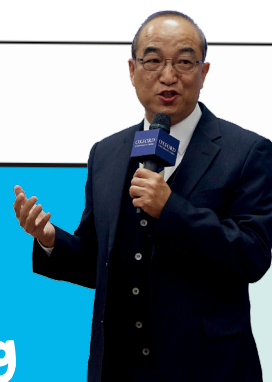
Successful self-directed learners enjoy learning. They treat SDL as a vital step to lifelong learning. So let's get ready for SDL activities and help our students navigate the fun seas of learning!



May Wu

Teacher Trainer,
Oxford University Press

e-Learning Seminar: Flying high through e-learning



This was another warmly received event held by OUP at the University of Hong Kong on 10 December. The seminar called on two distinguished guest speakers to share their insights on enhancing teaching effectiveness through e-learning.

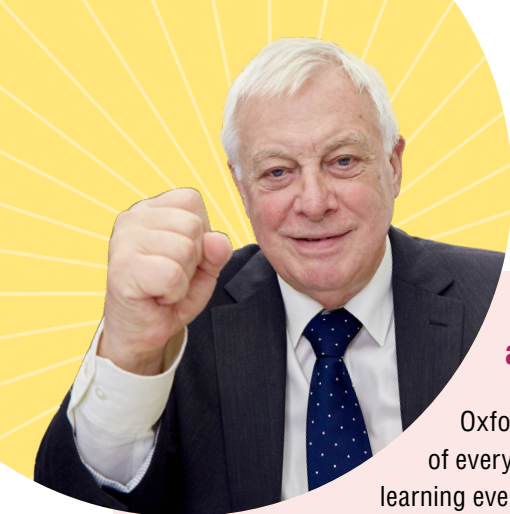
Dr Paul Sze, Professional Consultant (Honorary) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, started the seminar by sharing his valuable experience in using the flipped classroom approach to teach a Primary Four English class. The audience was mesmerized by the joyful flipped classroom activities with 'zero' disciplinary issues. The authentic 'Shopping for the class party' module included inspiring tasks on pre-class videos and fun activities, followed by a post-module quiz. Dr Sze concluded his presentation by emphasizing how flipped classroom activities can benefit both students and teachers. Students feel less frustrated with their homework, with all the pre-class preparations and fun, practical in-class activities, while teachers can support students to learn better and become self-directed learners.



In the second session, Dr Wilton Fok, Director of e-Learning Development Laboratory of the HKU, introduced six easy steps for using *iClass* to plan e-lessons. Instead of one-way teaching, students watch video lectures at home then complete engaging in-class tasks, such as inspiring multiple choice questions, online evaluations, journals and animations for peer sharing. This session ended with a lively real-time activity with instant online feedback. Teachers attending the seminar all participated actively with enthusiasm using their mobile devices.



Scan to know more
about our events.



Lord Patten's Visit to OUP Hong Kong

Oxford University Chancellor inspires OUP Hong Kong at 'Oxford Inspiring Friday'

Oxford Inspiring Friday, an event organized on the last Friday of every month, has become an eagerly awaited social and learning event for our colleagues at OUP Hong Kong. The 'Oxford Inspiring Friday' event in December was extra special since the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Lord Patten of Barnes, visited our new Hong Kong office to address our colleagues. He complimented us on furthering the University's mission and encouraged us to keep up the good work of furthering learning and knowledge, making this world a better place to live in.

Needless to say, the snacks for this Friday event included one of Patten's favourite local delicacies, 'flavoursome and creamy egg tarts'. Topics shared in the event displayed higher creativity and enhanced teamwork among our colleagues.

Lord Patten, 72, was the last British governor of Hong Kong, serving from 1992 until the 1997 handover. He was affectionately nicknamed 'Fei Pang' by the Hong Kong people.



From Theories to Strategies



Workshops with authentic demonstrations on how teachers can collaborate through the use of SDL strategies

A series of workshops were held in January and February 2017, providing teachers with the chance to apply theory to practice, by discussing and assessing ideas for self-directed learning (SDL) activities in classroom settings.

Our honoured guest speakers included Dr Yuen Yi Lo, Assistant Professor at HKU's Faculty of Education, and Dr Tracy Cheung, Lecturer at HKU's Faculty of Education, as well as experienced frontline teachers in English Language Teaching.

In the workshops, our speakers explained the theoretical framework and principles of Assessment as Learning and Self-directed Learning. Authentic materials were also provided to aid participants' understanding on how relevant learning strategies can be applied. The workshops were well received by primary school teachers, who found the materials both practical and resourceful in helping students to become better language learners!



Teacher's Corner

Writing used to be the most difficult language learning skill among students. Many of them reported that they did not know what to do and had no ideas at all. Thanks to the introduction of process writing, students have gained more confidence in writing. English Panel Head Miss Sapphire Ng from Yan Tak Catholic Primary School is going to share her experience with us.



In the pre-writing stage, teachers set the writing purposes and learning objectives with the students. Then we discuss and brainstorm ideas with them. Here, our school makes use of mind maps, graphic organizers and acronyms to help our students brainstorm ideas.

When writing stories, our students know to include the elements Characters, Setting, Problems, Actions, Conclusion and Emotions (the acronym is C-SPACE). They first find out all the relevant information from the pictures and create ideas for each story element. In addition, we teach our students paragraphing by referring to the story map so that they can easily identify that the opening paragraph involves 'C', 'S' and 'P' (Characters, Setting and Problems), the middle paragraphs are about 'A' (Actions) and the last paragraph is about 'C' and 'E' (Conclusion and Emotions).

At the writing stage, we help our students organize their ideas in paragraphs. For story writing, with the input in the pre-writing stage, we only need to remind students to make use of their story maps to write paragraphs and extend their ideas by writing more about 'why' and 'how'.

Revising and editing are another two stages which help our students to polish their writing before it is published. For revising, we provide our students with a mnemonic PIGS checklist (Punctuation, Ideas, Grammar and Spelling) and we ask them to focus on 'I' first. For this, students need to check if they have included all the writing elements and

ideas in their drafts. We also help our students to revise their writing by showing them the revision focuses, such as using more connectives, adjectives or dialogues.

In the editing stage, we ask our students to focus on 'P', 'G' and 'S'. Other grammatical mistakes not stated in the checklist will be marked by teachers. Sometimes we ask students to find a partner and do peer checking. In this way, not only do we train our students with proofreading skills, we also provide chances for our students to work with their peers and appreciate their classmates' work.

In the last stage, the publishing stage, we ask students to write neatly and draw pictures to illustrate their ideas. After students publish their work, we ask them to do a quick self-reflection to comment on their own progress. We do believe that it helps our students to write better and achieve higher in the future.

There is no doubt that it takes a longer time (approximately 6 to 8 lessons) to complete one process writing cycle; some teachers reported that they spent 10 lessons on it! We understand that it means a lot of teaching time but we all believe that it is worthwhile. When we persist in doing it, it takes less time and we enjoy a more fruitful outcome. What is more important than finding confidence and courage on our students' faces when it comes to second language learning?



C-SPACE	
Characters	Giraffe, Zebra, Hippo, Snake, James and Danny
Setting	One evening in the zoo
Problems	The animals want to escape from the zoo.
Actions	Giraffe gets the keys and the animals open their cage.
Conclusion	The animals are free.
Emotions	They feel excited.

Photo credit: Yan Tak Catholic Primary School

Meet our Expert

How do e-learning tools facilitate self-directed learning?



Dr Wilton Fok

Director, e-Learning Development Laboratory,
Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering,
The University of Hong Kong

Self-directed learning (SDL) is a hot topic in the education sector. How to motivate students to learn by themselves is one of the most difficult questions to answer. Teachers wish students would acquire some basic knowledge by themselves so that they can spare more lesson time on discussions and interactive activities, transforming the class from one-way information dissemination to two-way knowledge discovery. Some approaches for making use of technology to facilitate SDL are as follows:

First, we should allow students to control over as much of the learning experience as possible. Teachers should play the role of facilitator and encourage two-way discussions in class. Students can write, draw or even video record their ideas and opinions using tablets, and submit them to their teachers through Cloud Networking. Teachers can then instantly capture the central ideas by reading the Tag Cloud display, which highlights the most frequently submitted keywords. Charging students with the task of developing their own learning turns them to their own resources, develops their emerging individuality and helps them practice being knowledge explorers.

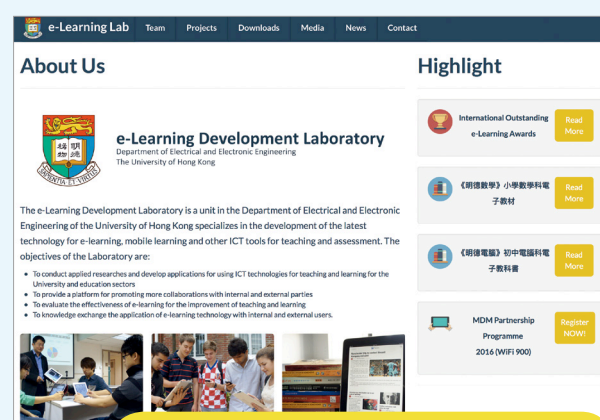
Secondly, we should foster an environment for students to challenge themselves to perform at their best. In the *iClass* Learning Management System (LMS), students can read the English content published by Oxford University Press and take the quiz challenges. Such quiz challenges, which often associate with a score ranking table, create an environment of friendly competition and effectively stimulate students to self-learn.

Thirdly, after taking quiz challenges, providing timely feedback to the students is vital to keep their interest and momentum. Besides the automatic marking of structural questions, *iClass* also allows students to read and score open-ended questions submitted by their peers. They can learn from one another by

playing the role of the teacher as they assess and comment on others' works. Learning motivation could be further enhanced in this way.

Another key success factor of SDL is the effective self-assessment of students' own efforts. Many principles of motivation are built into the design of SDL, such as the pursuit of one's high-interest goals. They negotiate and agree on the assessment method with their teachers and take responsibility for collecting evidence to achieve their goals. This could be facilitated by using the e-portfolio function in *iClass*. Students can generate a record of their works submitted through the self-learning activities. This e-portfolio will be useful for students and teachers to evaluate their work.

Last but not least, a huge amount of valuable data can be collected from students throughout their SDL process. We will need to find self-learning behavioural data, such as the online browsing duration, breadth and depth of the SDL, common mistakes made in the online quizzes and score distribution of the class. A good LMS should provide resourceful analytic data for teachers and parents to monitor the progress and effectiveness of students' learning.



Visit the website of the HKU e-Learning Development Laboratory to learn more about the latest developments in e-learning. Resourceful pedagogy videos and publications on e-learning can be downloaded here!

Power Bank

From Brainstorming to Publishing

Process writing can actually be captivating! With the help of specially designed graphic organizers and revision checklists, students can easily create their own masterpiece without feeling bored at all! Here's how:

Pre-writing

Choose a topic. Use graphic organizers to facilitate brainstorming and help students gather their ideas. A pencil and a piece of A4 paper, printed with the grids 'Topic', 'Text type', 'Beginning', 'Middle' and 'Ending', are all they need for this.

Drafting

Help students organize the ideas they gathered. Ask them to start writing the draft, from start to finish. Teach them to bring out the main ideas of the topic at the beginning. For the middle, they should write 2-3 main ideas, each containing at least one supporting detail. The ending should show their feelings towards the topic.

Revising

Invite students to review and revise their writing. Equip each student with a revision checklist. Students have to check each box as they read over their writing. They can read it either silently or aloud. Then they should add, remove, rearrange or replace words to ensure clarity.

Editing and proofreading

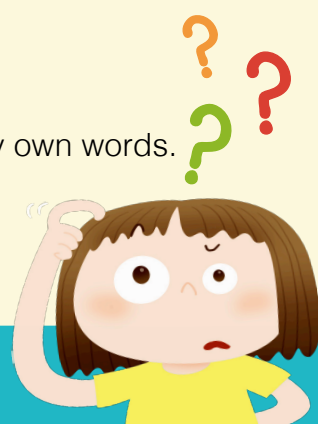
Ask students to polish their writing line by line. They should check the grammar, spelling and punctuation. Review all the choices of diction. Once the final corrections are done, publish the writing!

Sample graphic organizer

Topic:	Tomatoes	
Text type:	Informational report	
Beginning:	Tomatoes are a popular fruit that belong to the nightshade family.	
Middle:	Question 1: How do they look? How do they grow?	
	Detail	Detail
	A huge variety of tomatoes are distributed all over the world.	Tomatoes grow on vines that can be 180cm tall when supported.
	Question 2: Is it good for our health?	
	Detail	Detail
	Good for our eyesight and stomach.	Reduce our blood pressure and contain antioxidants.
Ending: (showing emotion)	My favourite recipe has fresh and juicy tomatoes in it.	

Sample revision checklist

- ☐ My beginning paragraph summarizes the topic in a few sentences.
- ☐ The middle part contains at least two main ideas about my topic.
- ☐ Each main idea is supported by at least two detailed descriptions in my own words.
- ☐ All my sentences are complete and precise.
- ☐ The ending shows my feelings about the topic.



A A riddle is a question that has a funny or unexpected answer. It helps us to think in English and build a better vocabulary. Can you guess the answers for the riddles below?

1. Starting with the letter 'L',
I come before 'stone' and 'soda'.
I am a small green fruit,
That mixes well with Sprite and Cola.

What am I? _____

2. Rough skin covers me but I'm not a rhino.
I'm yellow on the inside but not a mango.
Never think that I am a banana,
Look for me on a Hawaiian pizza.

What am I? _____

3. I am a kind of fruit,
On which you can dine.
To get another fruit,
Simply add me to 'pine'.

What am I? _____

4. I can be made into vegetable juice;
Yet I am not a tomato.
My orange skin can be peeled;
Yet I am not a potato.
You can see me in the cake for your brunch;
Or anywhere on the plate for your lunch.

What am I? _____



B Now it is your turn to make up your own riddle with the tips below:

Step 1 Decide the subject of your riddle.

Choose an object.

Step 2 Decide the length of your riddle.

Keep it short and clear.

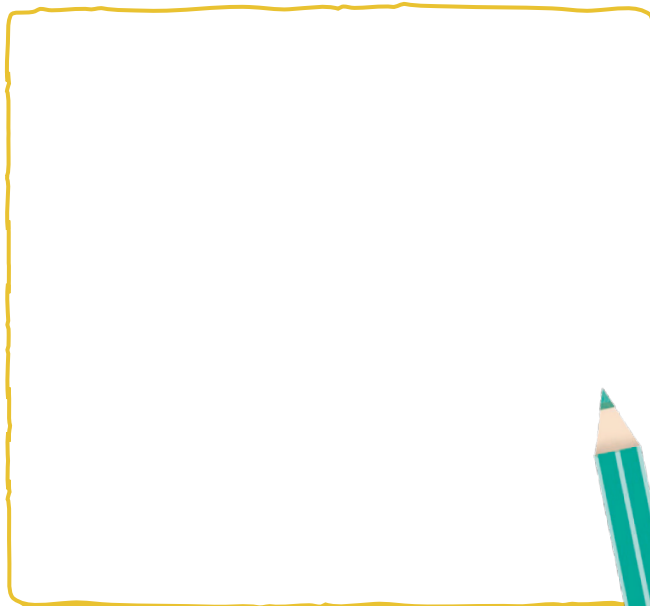
Step 3 Start drafting.

Think about the features of the answer to write a list of ideas. For example, the colour, shape, texture and function of the object.

Step 4 Review and revise.

Use metaphors, personification and rhyming pairs. Make it fun!

Step 5 Share with friends.



Photocopiable

Watch This Space

Things to look out for in the coming months



Scan to get the electronic version of *Ready Steady*.



Oxford Primary English Outstanding e-Learning Awards 2016–2017



Turn your lesson plan into a trip to the UK!

To promote e-learning and build a support network for sharing e-learning teaching strategies among schools, OUP and the e-Learning Development Laboratory of HKU proudly host an e-learning competition. Submit your entry by 24 March 2017 and win a trip to the UK!

Fun with English (answers)

Part A

1. A lime
2. A pineapple
3. An apple
4. A carrot

Part B (Any reasonable answers are acceptable)

It looks green.

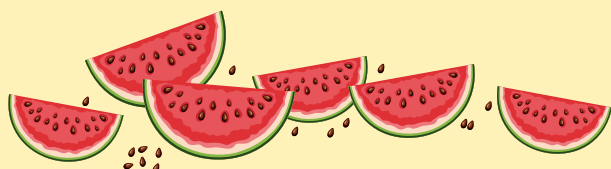
It opens red.

What you eat is red.

What you spit out is black.

What is it?

Answer: A watermelon.












In the next issue

- Focus on the hottest ELT issues
- More news, interviews and students' activities

Look out for the next issue of **Ready Steady** in June 2017.

For enquiries, please contact the OUP Account Executive for your school.

Account Executive	Mobile No.	District
Gabriel Tam 	6112 9497	All (Hong Kong)
Noel Cheung 	6112 9498	Hong Kong Island East
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