



賽馬會「知優致優」計劃

Jockey Club “Giftedness Into Flourishing Talents” Project

# Turning Trash into Treasure

**English Language Primary 5**

Level 1: School-based Whole-class Teaching



香港賽馬會慈善信託基金

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

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## **Background and Notes**

The design of the learning and teaching plan reflects the actual circumstances of the particular school at the time of implementation. As it is developed and tailor-made to meet the specific cognitive and affective needs of students, all learning and teaching resources are for reference only.

When adapting the materials, curriculum, instructional and assessment modifications can be made in accordance with the diverse needs and abilities, learning styles and aspirations of students, professional competence of teachers, and gifted education development of the schools.

Teachers are strongly recommended to read the introduction, theoretical background and summary of the resource package to have a better understanding of the principles of Gifted Education and strategies for implementation.

**This unit includes 1 foreword and 1 lesson plan.**




With reference to our resources, educators can design suitable learning activities and implement the elements of Gifted Education, based on students' needs and interests, and teaching experience, so as to unfold students' potentials to the fullest.

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# Turning Trash into Treasure

**Grade: Primary 5**

**No. of Lessons (Learning Time): 4 Lessons (140 minutes)**

<b>Prior Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of different types of recycled materials (plastic / wood / cardboard / metal / glass / cloth)</li> <li>- Experience in writing procedures with action verbs (e.g. cut, paste, draw etc.)</li> <li>- Working with peers</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will be able to describe the features of a handmade product through verbal presentation</li> <li>- Students can identify problems in daily life</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will generate creative ideas on the production of a product based on a problem identified in daily life</li> <li>- Students can give comments and evaluate the output of their peers by identifying the features that they appreciate most and provide suggestions for improvement</li> </ul> <p><b>Values and Attitudes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will enjoy the process of preparing the presentation through collaborating with their peers</li> </ul>
<b>Learning &amp; Teaching Strategies</b>	Drawing on Students' Daily-life Experiences, Peer Collaboration, Peer Feedback, Differentiation, Strength-based approach
<b>Operation Mode of Gifted Education</b>	Level 1: School-based Whole-class Teaching
<b>Core Elements of Gifted Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Higher-order Thinking Skills</li> <li> Creativity</li> <li> Personal-social Competence</li> </ul>

## Foreword / Background

Presenting ‘procedures’ about creating a product with the appropriate language features is one of the suggested competencies regarding speaking skills for students of Key Stage 2 in Hong Kong (Curriculum Development Council, 2017). In general, this presentation skill is usually taught with a grammarian and teacher-centred approach in Hong Kong because it is believed that students may not be able to give the presentation without explicit guidance from teachers. Students are expected to present the procedures with high accuracy instead of working on a more creative and enriched content. After teachers’ verbal explanation about the major features of the text type ‘procedures’ and introducing the use of connectives, for example, ‘first’, ‘then’, ‘finally’ with the textbook or the presentation file, students write down the procedures based on the examples given and present their procedures through reading aloud the written notes. Teachers usually then grade their presentation, focusing on the level of accuracy when they speak.

The target group of students involved in the following discussion is from one of the project schools of Project GIFT. The target group of students was allocated into 5 classes randomly. Students in these 5 classes could be divided into two major groups, with different characteristics and learning needs. Group A consisted of students who possessed comprehensive skills in speaking. They showed high accuracy in their English Language speaking. They loved expressing their ideas verbally and they were able to speak logically. On the other hand, Group B consisted of students with limited confidence in speaking English. They were anxious about making grammatical mistakes in speaking English. They focused more on the level of accuracy rather than expressing their ideas.

Based on the teacher-centred approach mentioned, and from observation in the past, teachers found that students produced extremely structured presentations. Group A students were found underachieving as there was a gap between their potential and their performance. They were unable to perform to their potential and were not motivated to produce a more enriched content during their presentation about a product. Moreover, there was a lack of creativity in their presentation. They merely completed the task through reading aloud the notes which were written down based on the structures and vocabulary items given. Group B students were usually found passive in class and did not show much task commitment. They were able to speak following the examples given, but they were anxious about participating in any speaking activities. They did not show much confidence in sharing their ideas or reading aloud the notes they made while they were presenting.

## Objectives of Collaboration

To resolve the situation stated, students’ engagement and their level of creativity had to be raised. To further enhance students’ learning, teachers reviewed the causes of the situation and discussed how students could display their potential in the speaking task. With the Professional Development and School Support (PDSS) Team of Project GIFT, teachers were first guided to

analyze the behavior and characteristics of the students from their daily observation. They found that Group A students demonstrated creativity in some classroom speaking activities, for example, group discussion and role-play. They also showed their awareness of daily life issues through their conversations and opinions given in class. On the other hand, Group B students showed more willingness to share with peers during group learning tasks rather than undertaking individual tasks. They also had a strong interest in art and craft.

Given students' diverse abilities and characteristics, teachers explored some strategies to raise the engagement of all students in the speaking task, in addition to fostering the creativity of Group A students and minimizing the anxiety of Group B students. As a result, teachers of the school designed five consecutive lessons of whole-class learning experience through collaborative lesson planning and discussion. Lesson observations and post-lesson discussions were also conducted to evaluate the learning process and outcomes. The learning objectives and process would be modified and tailored for all five classes by the English teachers and the PDSS Team based on the learning needs and characteristics of the students. It was expected Group A students would share their skills, knowledge, and show engagement in the learning process and Group B students would be able to be engaged in the learning process.

## Theoretical Framework

### 1. Meaningful Learning with Extension for the Gifted

As suggested by Fehrenbach (1993), gifted students could not display their potential given limited learning contents and limited learning opportunities. They could not be engaged in learning experiences which were not meaningful to them. Jarvis (2010) pointed out that many gifted students were frustrated because they were not provided with relevant experiences. They needed to learn in line with their interests and abilities. To motivate gifted students to achieve a higher quality learning result, it is important to provide an extended learning content and a wide range of learning activities for them. Gifted students behave differently from their peers in terms of individual characteristics and learning needs (Bruning & Horn, 2000). They are usually more competent in terms of language development (Sak, 2016). Making use of skills with higher-order thinking, such as questioning, critical thinking, problem-based learning, and creativity with open-ended tasks, is really important for gifted students (Kronborg & Plunkett, 2015).

### 2. Fostering Creativity of Highly Able Students

A supportive and positive learning environment is important for students' enhancement of creativity. Amabile (1989) stated that highly creative students experience difficulty in traditional school environments. According to Whitmore (1980), creative children achieve a higher standard learning outcome when the learning environment is less restrictive. To bolster the creativity of the highly able students, challenging learning tasks with a relevant learning experience is necessary (Csikzentmihalyi, 1988). Cropley (1995) stated that teachers who used a more cooperative style of learning, which involved inspiring students divergent thinking and promoting students' self-evaluation could foster the development of creativity in the classroom.

### 3. Learning Activities based on Students' Characteristics

Students have different individual characteristics. To respond to the diverse characteristics of the students in whole-class teaching, including those with higher ability in English Language, and students with limited confidence in English Language, differentiated strategies could be adopted (EDB). With reference to Tomlinson and Hockett (2008), differentiation means using multiple ways to run through the learning process by differentiated learning strategies and content. Every student learns at their own level of readiness and interests.

To motivate students with limited confidence, a strength-based approach could be adopted. According to the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983), there are eight intelligences embedded in the human mind, namely linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, musical, bodily kinesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and naturalist intelligences. If students are allowed to learn using their own strengths and learning styles, not only will the engagement of the students be raised, their ability in English Language can also be enhanced.

### Learning and Teaching Strategies

Over the course of the learning process of the 5 consecutive lessons, a more student-centered approach was adopted. The learning objectives were also reviewed. Besides merely describing the 'procedures' of creating the product with the target vocabulary items and connectives through verbal presentation, students were expected to generate creative ideas on the content of the presentation by describing the features of the piece of craft. Also, they were expected to give comments and evaluate the output of their peers by voting for the best designed product in the class. All of them would enjoy and be engaged in the process of learning through collaborating with their peers. Creativity of Group A students could be fostered while the anxiety of Group B students could be minimized so that they could show more willingness to participate in the learning process.

To engage students in the learning tasks, the following strategies were adopted:

#### 1. Meaningful Learning – Relating to Students' Daily Life

To relate the learning content to students' prior experiences in their daily life, the focus of the speaking task would be on problem solving and the development of a creative content instead of putting too much concentration on the accuracy of the grammar items and the language structure. A theme which was more relevant to students' daily life – "Turning Trash into Treasure" was then chosen because students had a strong awareness of the daily life issues, including those happening at school. At the beginning of the unit, students were asked to participate in "No Trash Bin Day". The trash bin in the classroom would be taken away and they had to keep the pieces of trash created. They then analyzed the types of trash that they created and looked for those which could be recycled. After that, they formed into groups of 4. They listed some daily problems that could be found in the classroom or the school campus. They then had to create a list of products which could help solve a specific problem that came up in the group. They then selected the

best possible products which could be created with the recycled materials and resolved the daily problems identified within their groups.

## 2. Learning with Extension

To provide more opportunities and time for the highly able students to generate their own ideas and explore relevant options, different activities were implemented. The stage of preparation before giving the presentation in the discussed unit consumed more than half the time of the unit. Students were given opportunities to design their own products with their own chosen recycled materials, after that, they could produce the products with their peers and give a presentation to their peers in the final lesson. All students were involved in activities of different levels. For students with higher ability in English Language, they were involved in a range of challenging activities such as categorizing and classifying different types of problems and recycled materials, which could help them generate ideas and analyse the features of a high quality product which helped solve daily problems. For the students with limited confidence, they were involved in searching for different illustrations of different products made with recycled materials and different vocabulary items which could be used. Students with limited confidence who were good at making craft were assigned to produce the products with recycled materials according to the design of their group.

## 3. Fostering Creativity - Positive and Supportive Environment

To foster the creativity of the highly able students, it was necessary to provide a positive and supportive environment for students to learn. At the same time, students appeared to be more willing to share their ideas with peers rather than working individually. Therefore, different group learning tasks were assigned. Based on their learning needs, group learning could help students engage more and they could generate more creative ideas in a supportive environment. Students with higher ability in verbal English could further develop while students with average or less language proficiency could be encouraged by their peers during the group learning tasks.

To further develop this supportive and positive learning environment, students were provided opportunities to share their products through a gallery walk. After students shared their products, their peers provided feedback according to the uniqueness, usefulness, and the level of attractiveness of the products. The audience would be given the opportunity to vote for the best products among all groups.

## 4. Responding to Students' Characteristics - Differentiation

All students were expected to be involved in the production of the piece of craft in groups, sharing the 'procedures' verbally by using the target sentence structures and vocabulary items, and giving comments or suggestions based on others' sharing. To cater for the diverse learning needs, a differentiated process was implemented throughout the unit. During group discussion, students with stronger language ability were expected to give a brief elaboration of their own opinions. After that, students joined in groups and roles within groups were assigned based on their own strengths. Clear instruction and guidance from the teacher enabled each member to recognize his/her relative

strengths in their groups. Students with limited confidence who showed more interests in handicraft would focus more on the production process, while students with higher ability in English writing could generate more creative ideas on the features and work on the descriptions of the procedures. During the sharing, students with limited confidence would share the procedures and the features of the products. In order to win a vote from their peers in the last session of the unit, the highly able students would need to promote their product to the audience with persuasive statements.

To motivate students of limited confidence to participate in the learning process, students were allowed to pick their own roles in their groups. They could choose to illustrate the products, describe the 'procedures' of making the products, be involved in the production process with the use of the recycled materials to make the product, or share the products with their peers. More importantly, it would be their own choice about which part of the process of making the product they would contribute to.

## Discussion

### 1. Evidence of Learning

Students showed their active engagement throughout the learning process. They took the initiative to do the presentations, to walk around and to share ideas and exchange thoughts with teachers and their peers during the gallery walk. It was unexpected that students displayed comprehensive observational skills when they identified some problems in their daily classroom. One of the examples was that students realized that it was a problem for teachers to breathe in lots of dust when they were cleaning the blackboard. Teachers were also impressed by students' creativity in solving the problems identified. Their creativity in raising ideas, and realizing the mechanics of their products were impressive, and their creative products demonstrated their observation power to solve real-world daily problems. Responding to the problem mentioned, students created a duster with a bottle of water attached. Water could be splashed on the blackboard before cleaning. Students were found willing to stay engaged throughout the learning process because they felt they owned the learning. Students showed their full engagement and commitment during the gallery walk session. Context was successfully established by the manner of visiting others' products during the gallery walk. Students were willing to share their ideas and the products created. In the end, every student voted for the best products among all with constructive comments.

### 2. Roles of Teachers

In order to cater for the learning diversity in the classroom, the teachers facilitated the learning process using a more student-centered approach. The teachers guided and supported the learning of the students by providing different levels of questions or notes for students with different abilities. The classroom setting became more flexible instead of having a traditional and restricted setting as in the past. The setting changed according to different learning activities. The teachers created an interactive classroom that enabled students to display their final products for a gallery walk activity. With the gallery walk, the teachers helped facilitate peer evaluation, while students were allowed

to walk around the classroom and look at the products produced by their peers. The teachers also strengthened students' motivation to pitch their work through verbal presentations with explanations to their peers through voting for the best products among all. The teachers created a learning environment with less restrictions and with lots of opportunities for students to share their ideas. Students with higher ability in English Language could stretch their language potential, while concurrently, other students were involved in an English-rich environment with the opportunity to express their ideas in other ways.

### 3. Challenges and Suggestions

To further enhance the effectiveness of the learning process, it was suggested that some open-ended guidelines with scaffolded learning experience could be given before students' presentation. For example, the steps of giving a presentation or a list of vocabulary which could be used during a presentation. Scaffolding could be more feasible and leave more room for students to demonstrate their verbal sharing with creativity if teachers would try to adopt an open-ended guideline for students, with a prerequisite being the scaffolded experience co-shared across lessons beforehand. Moreover, teachers could intervene where appropriate to bring about team work and more interaction among students in their team, given the fact that traditional grouping such as "drawers", "presenters", "proofreaders", etc. were absent when students formed groups according to their interest. Furthermore, infusing an appropriate form of evaluation could help students engage better. Since students were having discussions most of the time, the establishment of the need to use English in those discussions should be clear to all students, in particular when students were so engaged in the making of products and the process of the learning activities. Lastly, more exposure to beyond-classroom learning could be given to students, especially the gifted students. Teachers could set questions beforehand with topics raising concerns on the problems happening beyond the school campus.

The implementation of the above strategies would be challenging since both teachers and students are not used to the new learning and teaching strategies. Teachers may try to implement the strategies in their daily teaching practices so that students can get used to the new learning practice day by day. Time limitation would also be one of the major concerns of most of the teachers because more time would be necessary for preparation. Teachers could form a group learning community among themselves so that they could get support from each other.