



# Using Literature-Based Instruction in the Classroom for Young Learners in Macao

Tam Ka Lok   Loi Sio Hong   Xu Tianru   Cheong Sut Weng   Sin Im Leng

## Literature-Based Instruction

Literature-based instruction is an approach that can accommodate individual student differences in reading abilities. Meanwhile, it can focus on interest, enjoyment and comprehension of texts. The role of the teacher is to encourage students to choose the trade book (a book for general readership). Self-selection of trade books or literature books is highlighted in this approach. In fact, it is personalizing reading, which is part of the individualized approach. It is said that teachers should provide reading time every day.

## The Reasons for Using the Literature-Based Approach in the Classroom

The literature-based approach is designed to help young learners develop their reading literacy through literature in context. Furthermore, this approach can help children develop an appreciation and enjoyment of literature while at the same time acquiring literacy skills. It is important to note that while individuals often see phonics-based instruction and the literature-based approach as separate teaching tools, the two can easily be combined. By guiding children to focus on different aspects of print exposure, teachers can help them make an association between reading skills acquisition and reading for pleasure.

## Applying Literature-Based Instruction in Macao Classrooms

Silent reading time with the use of reading logs for each lesson can be part of literature-based instruction. Silent sustained reading is important as it enables one to feel independently competent. It can also develop a habit that hopefully encourages young readers to read more in the future. However, before students become independent readers, teachers should provide a range of initiatives to guide the process. Thus, the students are allowed to select a text from the library and allotted 10 minutes at the beginning of each English class to read silently. Teachers can provide each of them with a reading log to record what they have read and to comment on it. The completed reading logs are then exhibited in the classroom, thus allowing the children to know more about the books they have not yet read and to select titles that are intriguing. After a period of time, the students can be assigned the task of presenting their log responses in class in the form of a reading conference. After the reading conference, the teacher can encourage the rest of the class to ask the presenter questions. This enhanced task will not only develop the



students' ability of critical thinking, but will also provide an opportunity for their newly acquired knowledge (about the book) to be recognized. In addition, the students are challenged to communicate and interact with one another about reading. When a few students recommend the text they have read to the others in a persuasive manner, they are actually practising another incorporated skill of presentation as well. Such are productive skills highlighted in literature-based instruction, helping students to gain confidence in using the language.

Sustainable silent reading can be adopted as a long-term goal in curriculum planning in accordance with the "Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments in English Language for Secondary Schools" initiated by the DSEJ as it has proved to fulfill the requirements of certain levels of attainments.

## Conclusion

It is important to develop students' reading literacy in school as it is one of the three assessment domains for PISA. This can be achieved with the use of literature-based instruction, which can motivate and engage students in reading. Therefore, schools should consider creating a classroom library to develop students' interest in reading.

