

Teaching English Creatively: An Adaptation from Textbook Reading Passages to Play Scripts for Better Learning and Teaching in the Primary School

「創意的英語教學：改寫課本讀文為劇本，使小學有更好的教與學」

On August 21, our Center organized the captioned seminar for primary school English teachers in Hong Kong. The speaker, Mrs. Julia Wan, teaches English literature and creative writing in the Department of English Language and Literature in our University. She is also a very experienced consultant in creative English teaching. Over these ten years, she has consulted more than fifteen QEF-funded English projects, designing creative English reading programs for primary and secondary schools. In the seminar, she elucidated the advantages of using drama to teach English, and demonstrated how textbook reading passages could be adapted to play scripts so that English lessons could be more joyful, and students were more motivated to learn. In that afternoon, about forty English teachers made time to attend the seminar in midst of their busy schedule in the beginning of the new school year. Their attendance showed how interested they were in this topic, and how much they valued creative English teaching.

In the first hour of the seminar, the speaker introduced drama, which was a major genre of literature besides fiction and poetry. The essence of drama is “talk” and “act.” A play is not just a story for reading (although play scripts can be read like stories), it is meant to be performed – to be seen and heard. A playwright expresses his feelings and conveys his message to the audience through “talk” and “action”. When children perform in the English language classroom, they learn to communicate with other actors and the audience through “talking” and “acting”. Thus through performance,



於八月二十一日，本中心為香港小學英文教師舉辦了上述講座，講者是於本校英國語言文學系講授英國文學及創意寫作的溫梁詠裳女士，她也是一位經驗豐富的創意英語教學顧問。在過去十年

間，她曾經為超過十五個優質教育基金資助的英文課程當顧問，為中小學校設計創意英語閱讀計劃。在講座中，她說明以戲劇教授英語對學生的好處，並示範如何將英文課本中的讀文改寫為劇本，使學生在上英文課時更加開心和更有動機學習。當日下午，約四十位英文教師正忙於準備新的學年，仍抽空參加講座，他們的出席顯示了他們對這個課題的興趣，並且十分看重創意教學。

在講座的第一小時，講者提到小說和詩文外，戲劇是文學作品中的一個重要類型(genre)，戲劇的要義是在於它的「講」和「演」，一個話劇不僅是一個給人閱讀的故事（雖然劇本是可以作為故事閱讀），其目的在於被演繹——能夠讓人看和聽。一個劇作家透過「講」和「演」來表達其感情及傳達訊息給觀眾。當孩子們在英文課堂的演出，他們可以透過「講」和「演」來學習與其他演出者和觀眾的溝通。若文字只停留在紙上就顯得沉悶而無意義了，因此透過演出來，

words that remain on the page and seem so dull and meaningless become exciting and meaningful, making English lessons more interesting and motivating for the students. Besides, “talking” and “acting” can help students to understand the emotional meaning of the language as well.



文字就變得令人興奮和有意義了，使英文課更加有趣及激勵學生。此外，「講」和「演」亦可以幫助學生明白語言的情緒意義。

The speaker also mentioned the power of drama. She took a quote from D. Mahoney, who believes that drama has the power to “transform classroom language from dry artificiality into something close to living communication”. This implies that drama is life expression that is related to a whole person’s development, involving intellectual growth, emotional development, aesthetic appreciation, and behavioral awareness, and this can only be taught through life experience. She also emphasized that drama was an aid to language teaching and learning, so it should be integrated in regular English lessons to benefit every student in the school rather than once a year in a school event, or only benefiting a small number of students in a drama extra-curricular activity. Then, she recommended the use of “readers theatre”, which is “a co-operative or shared reading of a poem, story or lyrics”. (Braun & Braun) in the classroom. This kind of teaching approach can allow a whole class of students to participate in the lesson and cater for the students’ learning diversity. It requires no memorizing, simple costumes, etc., and it is definitely economical and easy to practice in the classroom.

In the second part of the seminar, three play scripts were used as examples. The scripts that were written by the speaker were adapted from three reading passages (for 3 different levels) that were taken from some commonly used English textbooks for primary schools (Primary Longman Elect and Primary Longman Express and English to Enjoy). The speaker demonstrated how she integrated the teaching targets (e.g. the teaching of vocabulary, grammar, phonics ...) into the adaptation to make teaching & learning more effective. The scripts

講者又提及戲劇的力量，她引述了D. Mahoney對戲劇力量

的看法，戲劇具有的力量可以「將課室語言由乏味的人造性轉化為一些近似於生活性的溝通」，這是指戲劇是關乎著全人發展的生活表達，涉及智能、情緒、審美觀及行為的意識，亦只可以透過生活經驗教授。她又強調戲劇是一種語言的教學輔助工具，是應該結合於常規的英語課堂中，使每位學生都可以得益，而不應只是一年一度的學校活動，或是一個僅有少數學生受惠的課外活動。於是，她建議採用「讀文劇場」，這是「合作或分享式的閱讀詩句、故事及歌詞」（Braun & Braun）。這一種可以讓全班學生一起參與的教學取向，又可以照顧到不同程度的學生。這並不需要背誦，只是需要一些簡單的戲服等，絕對是既經濟又容易在課室裏實行。

在講座的第二部份，有三個劇本被用作為例子，由講者所寫的劇本是改寫自三篇在小學常用的英文課本的讀文（包括了English to Enjoy, Primary Longman Elect和Primary Longman Express）。講者示範了如何將教學目標（例如：生字、文法和語音等）結合於改寫的劇中，使教學更見成效。那些劇本既有創意和趣味，對於學生又不會太複雜或是太困難。在這部份，老師們已親身體會到採用「讀文劇場」教授英文的成效。

were very creative and interesting, and they were not too complicated or too difficult for the students. In this part of the seminar, the teachers experienced the effectiveness of using “readers theatre” to teach English language in the classroom.

After the seminar, the teachers learnt more about the nature of drama and using drama as an aid to teach English effectively. They responded that the handouts that were given by the speaker were very useful. Some of them were looking forward to small group workshops on similar topics in the future. All in all, the speaker, Mrs. Wan delivered a very informative and interesting seminar, and all the participants had a pleasant and rewarding afternoon.

講座後，老師們認識了戲劇的本質和採用戲劇作為輔助工具來有效地教授英文，他們回應表示由講者提供的筆記十分有用，當中有些老師更希望日後有主題相近的小組工作坊。總而言之，講者溫女士提供一個資料充足和有趣的講座，令所有參加者有一個愉快和充滿收穫的下午。

