

# Teachers use newspapers in lessons

## KL school students enjoy fun classes that promote creativity, critical thinking and teamwork

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ENGLISH newspapers are not just being used as a tool by middle high school students to master the language but also to develop soft skills.

Chung Hwa Independent High School in Kuala Lumpur incorporates *The Star* newspaper in its English lessons once a month.

Secondary Three student Ong Xin Yan, 15, said she looked forward to the programme using newspapers every month as they get to do fun activities.

“We started in May shortly after school fully resumed physical classes.

“Previously, we had to come out with comic speech bubbles and creative photo captioning,” she said.

Xin Yan, who was in one of the Class Three Zhong student groups, was required to design a logo and come out with a slogan with words from the newspaper before presenting to the class, the idea and concept behind it.

“It is very entertaining and it also helps me step out of my comfort zone. We also learn a lot of other things besides the usual grammar and vocabulary lessons,” she said.

Another student from the class Tan Jia Xin, 15, said she treasured the time when she worked together in groups with her friends.

“Most of the time we converse in Mandarin but during the programme, I get to speak to my friends in English.

“We can improve our speaking skills and also get to be creative during English lessons,” she said.

Student Joel Yong, 15, said the programme was more enjoyable than the usual classes.

“It is during this period that I get to do something amusing.



English teacher Seetha Ilango (standing) guiding her Class Three Zhong students in their task of designing a logo and creating a slogan using words cut out from the newspaper. — Photos by CHAN TAK KONG/The Star

“Coming out with speech bubbles was one of my favourite programmes out of the three that had been done previously and I even incorporated a pun in that comic strip.

“It is definitely more engaging than the usual classes which are more serious,” he said.

The programme aimed to cultivate reading habits among students as well as to expose them to English vocabulary, grammar and sentence structures.

The school’s English Language Department head Tan Choon Moi said she wanted to develop the students’ higher-order thinking skills, creativity and innovativeness.

“To me, the newspaper is akin to a variety of ingredients and utilising them for teaching is the recipe to expand the students’ world view as well as exposing them to current

affairs,” she said.

“It contains a lot of information and through these programmes, we allow them to think outside the box and they get to decide what they want to create during the lessons.

“Besides, we also nurture them to be caring citizens by getting in touch with issues that relate to them. They have to come up with solutions which train their problem-solving skills,” she said.

She also credited the school principal Cheong Moey Lian who was supportive of the programme.

With Choon Moi’s guidance, the school’s English teachers can choose their preferred programmes that incorporate newspapers into their lessons.

Some of the activities include having students choose their role models featured in the



Cheong (left) and Choon Moi use newspapers to expand the students’ world view and expose them to current affairs.

newspapers and talk about them, identifying verbs and adjectives, as well as using adjectives to describe their favourite foods.

Cheong said she agreed that using newspapers as a learning tool was innovative and pushed the students to improve their English writing skills while gaining knowledge about the world.

“Mastering the English language is important as it increases their marketability after graduating,” she said.

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