

ELE Lunch Seminar 21 Feb, 2019

## Using ebooks in the early primary English classroom-the perspectives and insights of pre-service English teachers

### Speaker:

Ms. Jessica Lee

### Invited student speakers:

Chung King Chi, Lee Cheuk Lam, Wong I Na

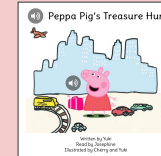
Lo Nga Lin, Lee Hoi Lam Tiffany

Yan Tsoi Lam, Lam Yin Kwan, Joson Nicole Lee Kaye Kaye

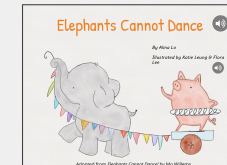
## Outline

1. Project background (Jessica)
2. Experience sharing (student speakers)
3. Recommendations (Jessica)
4. Q & A

### Ben, Cherry & Josephine



### Alina & Tiffany



### Tsoi Lam, Nicole & Kaye



## Project background

Two challenges in the training of pre-service English teachers:

1. How to better prepare them to support learners who struggle with learning to read
2. How to provide them with opportunities to explore new technologies to enhance the teaching of fundamental reading skills

## Learning approach adopted

- An experiential approach to encourage recruited students to take an active role in constructing knowledge and building skills for themselves



You will learn by *doing*.

- You will undertake a project which allows you to **see, think and act** like a teacher of struggling/ beginning readers and **reflect** on your performance.

Feedback

Supervision



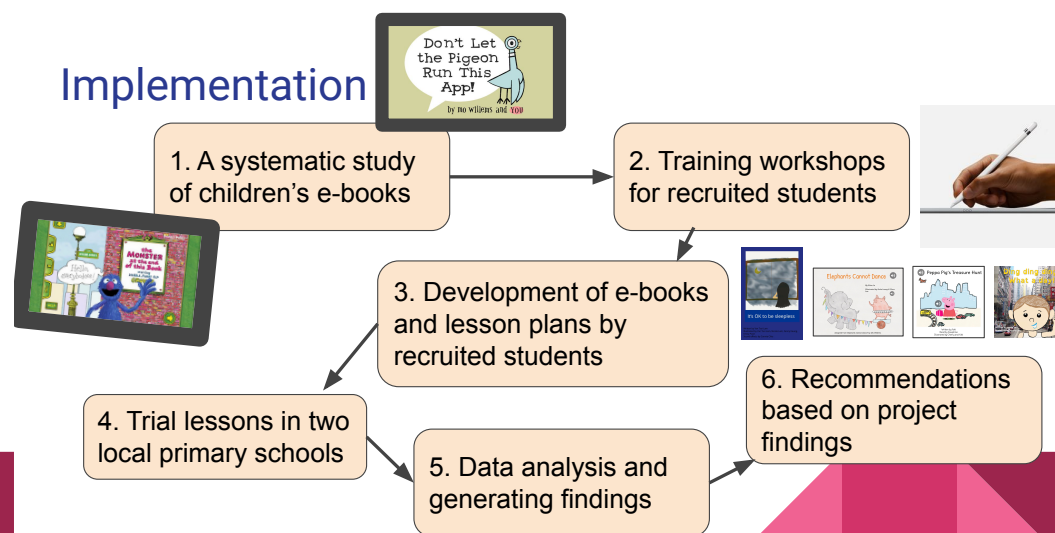
## Recruited students

Total no. of students recruited	27
Review of commercially published ebooks	11
Making ebooks	23
Developing lesson plans	16
Conducting trial lessons	18

## Why teacher-made e-books?

- Technology is generally popular with pupils—a source of motivation
- Recent research has shown ebooks offer benefits to struggling and reluctant readers due to ebooks' potential in improving comprehension and speed
- Teacher-made ebooks: we want to make books with customised support, books that even struggling readers CAN and WANT to read

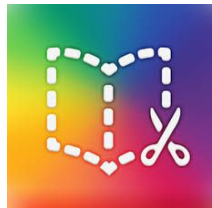
## Implementation



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## Book creation tool



Book  
Creator

What we like about this app:

- Integrate text with images, sounds and videos
- Record audios
- 'Read to me' and word-by-word tracking
- Embed hyperlinks
- Easy control through swiping and touching
- Allow sharing with a link and real-time collaboration
- Intuitive design and easy to use

Anyone can be  
an e-book  
creator!



## Suggested structure for each lesson

**Pre-, while- and post-reading to support comprehension and learning (40 mins)**

- **Pre-reading** to activate/ build background knowledge and arouse interest
- **While-reading** to support comprehension and model reading strategies
- **Post-reading** to provide pupils with opportunities to respond to the story and consolidate learning

**Audio recording in groups (15 mins) and book selling session (10 mins)**

- Pupils break into groups and record new narration for the book
- Book selling session to build reading interest and encourage ss to read outside class

## Reading Log

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1uFCDrOb2wj700\\_C5a\\_uwxumNcq5v-IUO](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1uFCDrOb2wj700_C5a_uwxumNcq5v-IUO)

Experience sharing  
by student s



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## Unique affordances of e-books

“It is easy to make changes to an e-book, to make an ebook your own and give students **a sense of ownership**. They can enlarge the icon and when they like something, **they will revisit it many times and this helps them to learn**...I remember when I was in primary school, there was a school assignment which required us to read aloud to our parents. If an ebook is used, **teachers can really check whether a student has really read aloud**.”

## Unique affordances of e-books

“Although the framework for teaching e-books and print books is the same, the activities you can do with your students **has a lot more variety**. For example, you can add different IT elements, you can add a link to another ebook or a matching activity. These are not possible with the print version.”

## Unique affordances of e-books

“I am a passive person. I will just go along with the story and accept the story the way it is....with an e-book we can tell students **they can have their own ideas** about the story...when they read their own version of the story, they will **gain self-confidence**.”

## What makes a good e-book

“ A well-designed e-book **must be different from a print book**, not a print book transferred to an e-version.”



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## Knowledge about teaching of reading

“Good readers **ask a lot of questions** when they read.”

“**Asking questions** is really important, which can lead the students to make predictions. At the start I didn’t think of asking so many questions and doubted if the students will respond. But after we tried to ask them questions, we realised the students would really respond to us. We were surprised that they were more creative than us and their guesses are logical.”

## Classroom management issues

“The students need to **familiarise themselves with e-books** and learn how to use them. E-books are new to them and students may easily get distracted by them. So **management of e-books** is important and we need to keep an eye on the students to ensure they stay focused.”

“It **takes time to practise** quickly deciding when to give out and get back the ipads. This can’t happen in just one or two lessons.”

## Lack of opportunities to practise reading in local English classrooms

“I think we can really give them some “alone” time to read. I think **teacher’s time is too much**. And **we don’t really let them read by themselves**.”

Helping pre-service teachers to harness the potential of ebooks as a tool to support learning to read



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## 1. Book design

1. Designing a book that is both suitable and appealing to struggling readers is important but not easy. In order to design such a book, first of all, we need to understand:
  - Why do these children tend to shy away from books? What difficulties do they face in reading a book? What do these children need in order to learn to read?
  - What appeals to these children?
  - How can unique affordances of ebooks help us to address these needs?

## Composing a secret message

CIPHER ALPHABET			
A = B	H = A	O = O	V = L
B = V	I = D	P = Y	W = P
C = G	J = Z	Q = F	X = U
D = Q	K = C	R = J	Y = I
E = K	L = W	S = X	Z = R
F = M	M = S	T = H	
G = N	N = E	U = T	

Figure 1

KTJKCB=?

*Eureka!*

## Using ebooks to support 'learning to read'

- Supportive features of e-books can **reduce cognitive load** needed for decoding and allows a child to focus on extracting meaning from the text.
- This **improves comprehension**, helps a child to **stay on task** & most importantly **sustains their reading interest**.
- Examples of such supportive features include:
  - Multimedia elements to support comprehension
  - Fluent and expressive narration to make meanings clear
  - Word-by-word highlighting in sync with the reading voice
  - Interactive hotspots hindering/ enhancing understanding and learning

## Using e-books to promote reading enjoyment

- How e-books support six key facets of engagement (Kucirkova et al., 2017)
  - **Affective** engagement: **how does the child feel when reading the book** ( e.g. positive attitudes/ satisfaction such as pleasure, enjoyment and inclusion)?
  - **Interactive** engagement: **does the book encourage the child' active involvement in reading, requiring his/ her input/ contribution?**
  - **Shared** engagement: **does the book facilitate opportunities for shared engagement with the child** (e.g. prompt conversations with teachers/ peers)?
  - **Sustained** engagement: **does it nurture the child' sustained engagement in reading?**
  - **Creative** engagement: **does it encourage the child to develop his/ her imagination or use his/ her own creativity** (e.g. come up with their own stories/ characters)?
  - **Personalised** engagement: **can the book provide an individualised/ tailored reading experience to the child** (e.g. opportunities to take on different characters)?



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## Affective engagement



Whether the e-book is fun/ enjoyable and makes children feel positive does matter.

Children are generally motivated by their favourite characters and topics that are interesting or familiar or relevant to their lives.



## Personalised engagement

Let's see how the pupils make the book their own:

[https://read.bookcreator.com/6WzGMg93DjU5c23x90H7GkqTDfm2/d2-dbp-WQfyhclQuVSWd\\_w](https://read.bookcreator.com/6WzGMg93DjU5c23x90H7GkqTDfm2/d2-dbp-WQfyhclQuVSWd_w)

## 2. The challenges of learning to teach reading

- Learning to read is of utmost importance to a child's educational prospects. However, the teaching of reading is a complex process which requires considerable knowledge and skills.
- However, these are hard to acquire without a **long period of focused study** and **supervised practice**.

(Moats, 1999)

## Examples of necessary knowledge and skills

- Five essential components of effective reading instruction (The National Reading Panel, 2000)
  - phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension strategies
- Core principles of working with learners with difficulties in reading (Crombie, 2014)
  - Multi-sensory learning, making learning systematic, sequential and cumulative, opportunities for overlearning, providing good models and helping ss to develop mnemonic strategies



## Teaching reading comprehension

- Comprehension—***understanding what one reads***—is the essence of reading. Reading comprehension strategies should be a central part of the teaching of reading.
- Examples of what teachers can do to teach these strategies:
  - Make use of the book cover to make predictions
  - Stop at unfamiliar words and discuss how contextual clues help us to work out their meanings
  - Good readers ask questions to monitor their comprehension and make inferences to fill in the gaps in a story as they read—have we modelled this enough when we read a book with our students?

## Emphasis on reading fluency

- The ability to read most words in context ***quickly, accurately, automatically and with appropriate expression and phrasing***. (Cunningham, 2009).
- Fluency is critical to reading comprehension but it is often neglected in local English classrooms.
  - “If text is read in a laborious and inefficient manner, it will be difficult for the child to remember what has been read and to relate the ideas expressed in the text to his/ her background knowledge.” (The National Reading Panel, 2000, p.11)

## Nation's Four Strands (2007)

**Meaning-focused input**  
e.g. to listen to the teacher's reading aloud

**Fluency development**  
e.g. to retell the story using pictures from the story; perform a skit based on a story read in class

**Meaning-focused output**  
e.g. to tell who the characters are; fill in a story chart

**Language-focused learning**  
e.g. learn adjectives to describe characters; break unknown words into parts



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## Ways to support reading fluency

Three core principles (Kuhn 2009):

1. Model expressive reading.
2. Provide sufficient support and a great deal of practice.
3. Emphasize appropriate phrasing



### 3. Effective integration of technology

Some guiding questions you can ask yourself:

- Can the teacher choose suitable e-books and technological tools to model and guide the use of a literacy skill?
- Can the teacher model and guide how to use the digital affordances of the chosen text/ tool?
- To what extent can the teacher capitalise on the affordances of the chosen text/ tool to enhance his/ her instruction (e.g. Are the e-books used in a way that can support both better comprehension and engagement? Are students being encouraged/ discouraged to practise decoding and reading strategies)?

(Schugar, Smith & Schugar 2013; Baxa and Christ, 2017)

### It's all about give and take.

Me: I was really amazed at how much you guys have learned from the project. Your integrated understanding of this subject matter really amazes me.

A student: It's all about 'give and take'. We took part in the process in full--we did the book reviews, we wrote the e-books and designed the lessons by ourselves. I learned most from transcribing our own lessons.



Sow in tears  
Reap in joy



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# Q & A



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