

JCSRS Newsletter June

First and foremost a very warm welcome to our new principal Alan Howells. Alan has extensive experience with learners with special needs and we wish him all the best in his new role with our school and the ESF.



Class 2 also has a very important person to introduce. Cindy joined us earlier this term and has settled in very well at the school. If you have not met her just look out for her great big smile. You can't miss it!

The final new arrival is a furry one. Renaissance College managed to acquire some baby hamsters 'by accident' and offered one to us. So we waited with baited breath for one to be big and strong enough to come to JCSRS.

We requested a lively one because with our students, he needs to be! Lucky us when this little fellow arrived. Cindy's brother Andy is a big fan and visits daily with his mum when he has finished school.

I asked Andy to name the hamster with a 'good name'. He chose the best name... 'Andy'!



PECS Training

A two-day intensive PECS training course took place on April 24-25 for most of the school staff. The presenter was Amanda Reed, from Pyramid Educational Consultants of Australia.



The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is often used with individuals with communication difficulties to help them acquire a *self-initiating, functional* communication system. In PECS, learners are trained to give a single picture or sentence strip to ask for what they want e.g. "I want biscuit". At higher levels, students may also learn to make use of adjectives e.g. "I want **blue** candy," or learn to comment on their surroundings e.g. "I see a cat!" or "I smell lemon."

Throughout the training, staff were keen to ask questions and everyone gained a lot of insight from doing hands-on practice in small groups.

PECS has certainly helped some of our students to communicate more effectively in the school and home environment!



Leo wants a biscuit!

Science INSET For teachers

On the 17th of March, Mr Grant Anderson, Science Coordinator of Bradbury School, shared many helpful ideas with JCSRS teachers on how to facilitate learning using the inquiry approach. He brought a lot of interesting and valuable teaching tools and resources. The hands-on experience we had exploring the different topics of enquiry benefitted us greatly.



For the past few months I have been working towards my PECS Implementers Certification.

This is an advanced level of the training the school staff has recently undertaken (see above), where I actively have to demonstrate to Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. my ability to implement all phases of PECS according to the PECS protocol.



It has been a lot of hard work, particularly the assignments in which I had to video myself working through all the 7 phases of PECS. I would have been unable to complete my course without the help of the following students and their families:

Seona and Fiona Kenny, Gavin Ma, Darius Kwok, Lola Gorton, Leo Purdie, Nathan Lau, Debora Lai, Nikhil Hasija, Simon Mountain and Ken Chung.

The staff at school have also been very supportive, allowing me to work with students during class times and when borrowing materials.

Finally, I would like to add an enormous thank you to my parents, Bruce and Anne Richardson for doing everything and anything to help, and putting up with me during the arduous task of editing the footage.

Thank you once again to everyone!

Amber E. Richardson



Fiona and Seona participating in a Functional Activity Phases IV-VII



Gavin requesting reinforcers (Phase I)



Darius requesting reinforcers (Phase I)



Nikhil, Simon and Ken comment on music they like (Phase VII)



Nathan, Lola and Leo having snack (Functional Activity Phases III-IV)



Debora choosing a shade of eye shadow (Phase IV and attributes)

So You Want To Be A Rock and Roll Star?

Jockey Club Sarah Roe School in conjunction with FunkyMonkey Theatre Company is proud to announce the premiere of the Senior Choir.

On **June 17th** there will be an hour-long musical recital featuring the Senior Choir, the Boys Choir, the Girls Choir and the Dance Group. The music ranges from 50's doo wop, through 60's rock and roll, a major stop at 70's Glam rock, a quick dip through 80's pop, with a brief wave at 90's alternative before continuing all the way to 2000's indie. Put this date in your diary now! Rock on!

Rock And Roll Is Gonna Save The World

The Senior Choir performed some of their repertoire at the China Coast Community, the only English speaking old people's home in Hong Kong on May 27th. They rehearsed hard to present not only some of their favourite rock numbers, but a few musical numbers that the audience joined in.



FunkyMonkey
Theatre
Company



Classes 1 and 2 Pilot a New Invention

Gerald Wong (below with Gavin), a design student at PolyU, is creating a new toy for students with autism. For the first two terms of this school year, Gerald worked very hard to gather information for his school's final project.

He volunteered at JCSRS two days per week, and spent a lot of hands-on time with students in classes 1 and 2. *Editor's note: He has the 'magic touch' with special needs children!* 😊

After observing the students and gathering information from members of our staff, Gerald decided to design a product that children could enjoy while increasing their exposure to sensory materials.

His trial product was a huge success!

At the end of April, Gerald came to school with a product for the students to try. In essence, the toy was made up of four pairs of cubes, each made of different sensory materials. One pair was soft with zippers and laces, another was rough with spinning parts, the third pair began to vibrate when it was screwed together properly, and the fourth had lights and sound when the pair of cubes connected.

The students in both classes had a wonderful time exploring Gerald's creation. Without exaggeration, they enjoyed exploring the materials for thirty uninterrupted minutes, and most had great big smiles as they played. We are now looking forward to enjoying the final product! Thanks, Gerald!



Educational trip to visit the Marine Police

Class 7 and Ken from class 8 have been learning about the Hong Kong community and how people can make a difference in our society.

On Thursday 23rd April we visited the Marine East Division to learn about different roles played by the Marine Police force. We were met by the Divisional Commander and his staff.

We learned about the Marine Police duties and we were shown some of the police standard issue

equipment such as police extendable batons and beat radios.

We were also shown the equipment on a police launch. The officer in-charge gave us a detailed briefing about some of the police procedures and the sophisticated equipment onboard such as radars, speed monitors, GPS etc.



We then were taken in a police launch to Kau Sai Chau golf course.

Here we were taught how to play golf, and practice on the golf range. After all these exercises we visited the club facilities and enjoyed a delicious 3 course lunch, before returning by police launch to the Marine East Division headquarters and taking the school bus back to school.

We all want to say a big 'THANK YOU' to **Mr. Taylor** for his generous support for this educational visit.

Continued Professional Development For JCSRS Staff

In mid-May, JCSRS staff were invited to attend a selection of professional development seminars lead by Joy Allcock. Her emphasis was on assessing literacy for PYP using cleverly-devised analytical tools which the brave student volunteers from primary 1 at Renaissance College assumed were games. That in itself deserves a clap!

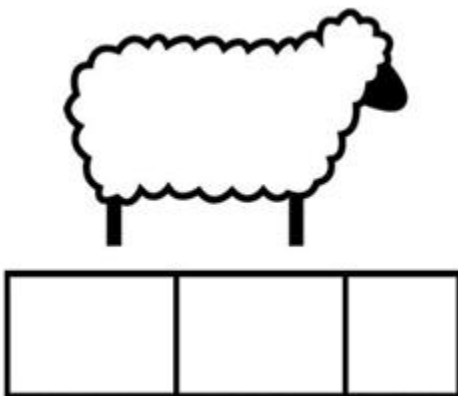
Joy is the author of the Spelling Under Scrutiny resources <http://www.spelling.co.nz/about.shtml> and began a Master of Education degree in 1996 with the intention of finding ways to help children master reading and writing in English.

Her approach is child centered with the emphasis on helping children learn to decode text. She specialises in supporting students learning English as a second language which is applicable to many of our children at JCSRS.

I have taught English as a second language in Asia for over 10 years and have a PGDE majoring in English as a second language for primary students, so thought there might be a lot of repetition of ideas I had previously heard.

Not so! Joy opened my eyes to simple techniques which help learners tackle the many ways the same sound can be written using Elkonin boxes http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elkonin_boxes.

Here is an example which seems simple with sheep but then try it with the name 'Jacqueline':



Here you would write:

sh	ee	p
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An Elkonin box for the word sheep, which consists of three phonemes (sounds)

Joy was a clear, erudite speaker who knew her subject inside out. Let's hope she can return to Hong Kong and share her ideas with more ESF staff.

Rachel Sproston