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**An Analysis on Students' Participation in Guo-Tai
Elementary School: The Observations and Findings in
Children Tutoring**

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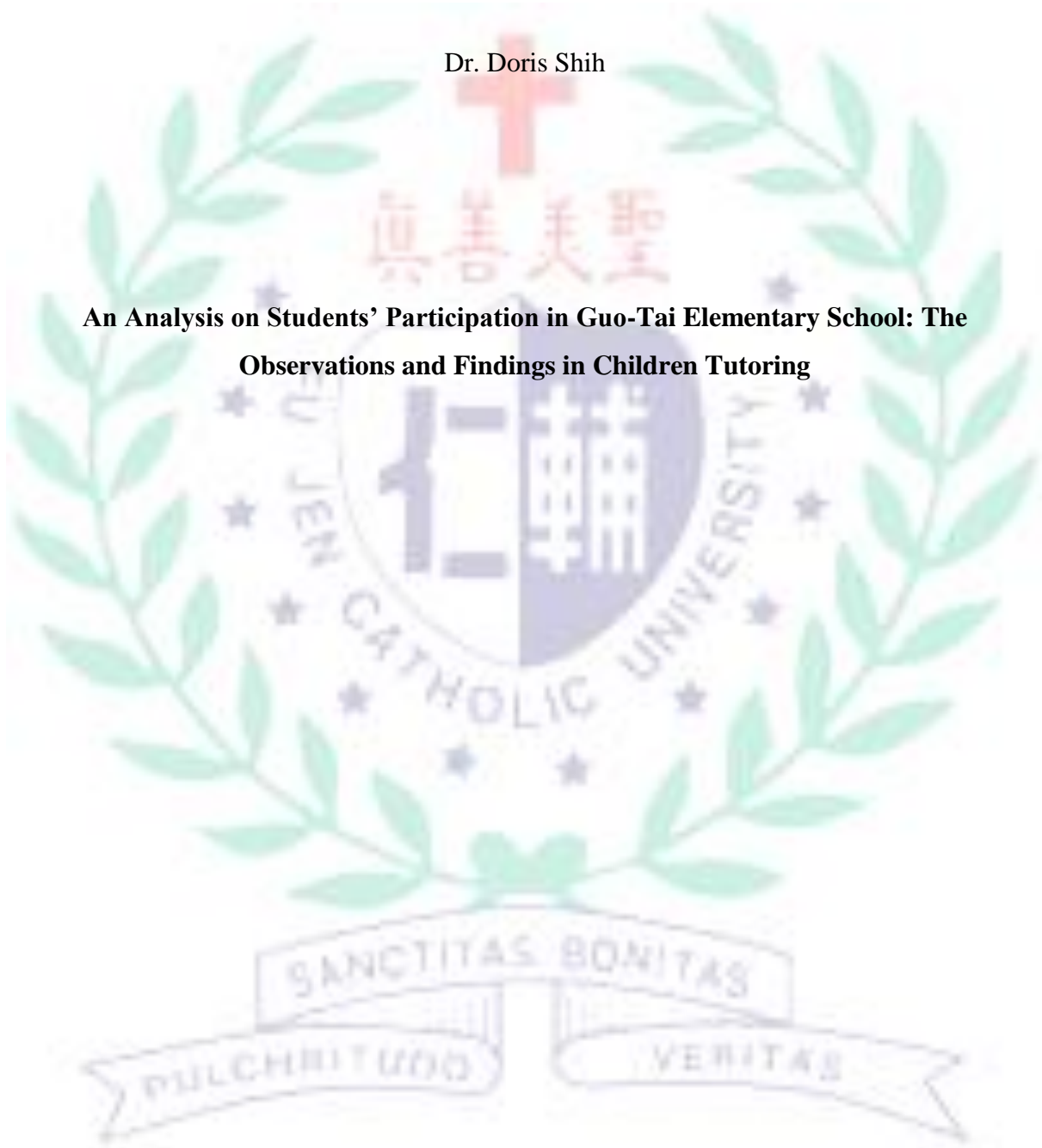
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Fu Jen Catholic University

Introduction to TEFL

Dr. Doris Shih

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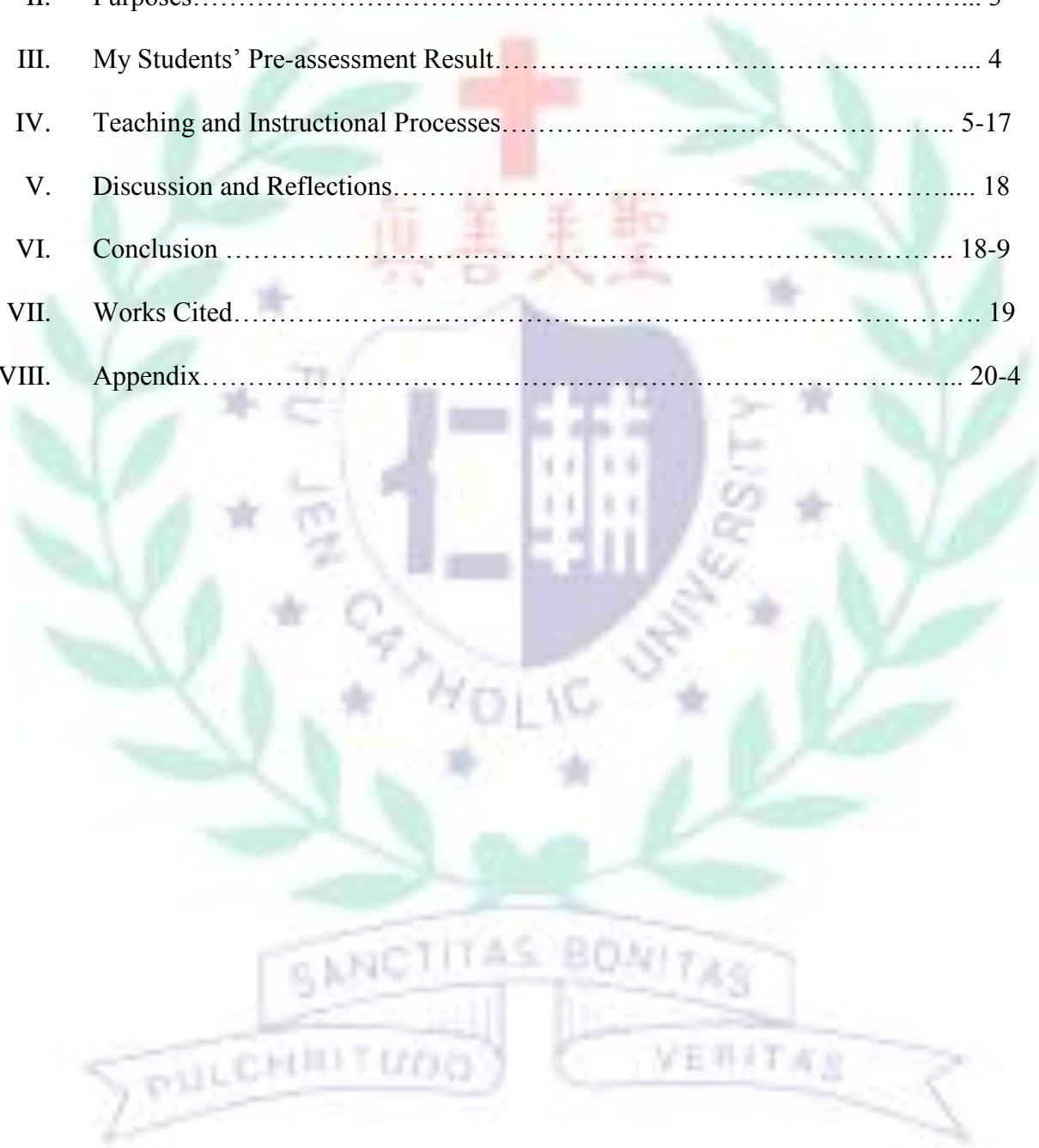


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13th January 2021

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Introduction

Being a teacher had always been my dream when I was little. Fortunately, The English department in Fu Jen University gave me the chance to do service learning through teaching preschool students in Guo-Tai Elementary School. However, I was afraid that I had to let my dreams be dreams because I had decided to enter the field of business after my graduation so as to follow my father's expectations. Nevertheless, during the service teaching, I really enjoyed being the English teacher of those little children in Guo Tai Elementary School. My 2 students were in second grade, both of whom were beginners in learning English (and I was the beginner in teaching English). The whole process of service teaching was so challenging but fun. In service teaching, I managed to implement the teaching theories I learnt in class on my students; also, I had experienced how the real situation of being an English teacher would be in elementary school. I treasured this service teaching experience very much, and hopefully in the future, I got the chance of being an English teacher so that I could implement the experience I learnt in this service teaching.

Purposes

During the 11 weeks of service teaching, I aimed to reinforce my students' basic concepts of English such as the 26 English alphabet, as well as numbers and colors in English. Instead of teaching English speaking, writing, listening, reading, I considered reinforcing their basic knowledge in English was more practical and important for the second grade students. The main purpose of this paper was to evaluate the whole service teaching progress in teaching second grade students at Guo Tai Elementary school, including the teaching methods and theories I used for the students, the design of Lesson Plans and the worksheets, the interactions and relationships with the students, the students' learning outcome, and the difficulties I faced when conducting the service teaching. In addition, for this year, our department planned to hold a Halloween event for the children in Guo Tai Elementary school. This was our first time holding a big event that should be both enjoyable and educational for the children with a specific theme: Halloween. Thus, I would also discuss the design of the event and assess the outcomes and problems in this paper.

My Students' Pre-assessment Result

This year, I was co-teaching with my classmate, Frank. Frank had done the service teaching in the previous semester (he was teaching fourth grade students last year). According to Frank, compared to fourth grade students, second grade students were far less proficient in English. Second grade students had insufficient basic knowledge for English; thus, once our content happened to be too challenging, students would lose their learning motivation in no time. As a result, we must carefully design our lesson plans, and choose ones that fit our student's capacity. For the first week of service teaching, we assessed our students' English ability by writing random simple vocabularies (e.g. colors and numbers) to test their English spelling, speaking, and reading ability. The results are shown below:

Evaluation Criterias (poor-normal-good)	Nina	Vic
English spelling	normal	normal
English speaking	poor	poor
English reading (Words Recognition)	good	good

Without a doubt, English speaking ability has always been the hardest ability to train especially for Taiwanese students. First of all, our government's education methods do not emphasize English speaking; they focus more on English reading and listening. Secondly, Taiwanese students tend to be shy and unconfident in their English ability. As a result, it is common for all local Taiwanese students (including Nina and Vic) to be poor at English speaking. Their English spelling abilities were normal; though some spelling errors could be found, it was acceptable since they were new to English. As for their English reading (words recognition) ability, to my surprise, they could already recognize some of the English words such as pink, eleven, etc. Perhaps in modern times, English can be seen everywhere in one's daily life even in Taiwan. They would pick up some English words in and outside the school, resulting in their good English reading abilities. However, after doing a more thorough examination on their English ability, I found out that they did not recognize every English alphabet; they could not even correctly write down some of the alphabets. Therefore, after analyzing their English abilities, I had decided to build up their fundamental English knowledge (e.g. alphabets, numbers, colors) first before they encountered more difficult ones such as grammar or sentence structure.

Teaching and Instructional Processes

Theories and Methods Used

We used 3 kinds of teaching theories/ methods in our service teaching; all of them are somehow interrelated to each other when applying them in our lesson plans. That is, every theory/ method was used simultaneously in service teaching.

Suggestopedia (Desuggestopedia)

As mentioned, second graders tend to be shy and unconfident in their language ability, which greatly decreases their learning motivation. As a result, increasing their learning motivation comes first; otherwise they are prone to refuse to listen to the instructors. Suggestopedia is a teaching method that uses positive suggestions to encourage students and boost their learning motivations; by de-suggesting students' psychological barrier and giving positive suggestions, students can possess a relaxing and comforting learning environment ("Suggestopedia"). We must de-suggest students' psychological barriers, which means we have to make friends with the students first. Every time before we start the lesson, I will give a short talk with my students, asking what they have done recently; where they have gone on the weekends; what they have learned in school today. I even spend extra time for Nina to read her favorite books together after the lessons end. After applying this teaching method, I find that students are more willing to participate in class and follow the instructions because you know each other (students and teachers) well. Students are less shy when confronting the instructors, and spontaneously finish the instructors we asked them to do. In addition, according to Tim Bowen, "positive suggestions would make the learner more receptive and, in turn, stimulate learning ("Teaching Approaches: What Is Suggestopedia?"); giving compliments to students without any hesitation is really important when using the suggestopedia method. Similar to behaviorism theories, students' learning motivation increases as they are getting compliments, vice versa.

Audio Lingual Method

Audio Lingual Method (ALM) deals with students' English pronunciation and listening abilities. ALM includes drill with repeating practice of a language listening and speaking. Based on behaviorist theory, ALM involves the process of habit formation, which includes positive and negative reinforcement (Bowen, "Teaching Approaches: What Is Audiolingualism?"). As mentioned in the suggestopedia method, instructors must give positive reinforcement when students have completed the

instructions. We conduct drills to help students to correctly memorize both written and oral forms of a word. In my opinion, ALM is somehow similar to the theories from “Human Computer,” where it allows students to correct themselves when hearing repetitive and correct pronunciation from the instructors. When the students pronounce the vocabularies correctly, we give compliments (positive reinforcements). If they fail or refuse to pronounce a word, we do not force or compel them to speak out those words; instead, we repeat the words several times until they are more familiar with those words. It is not recommended to force students to pronounce the vocabularies; it not only makes students feel threatened but creates a stressful learning environment because they are afraid of failing or committing mistakes.

Grammar Translation Method

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) seems to be unsuitable for L2 beginners since GTM involves the teaching of grammar and sentence structures which are more complicated. However, we use GTM mostly for the use of the mother tongue (L1). Bowen indicates that some learners “need the security of the mother tongue,” which we consider crucial when teaching lower graders (“Teaching Approaches: The Grammar-translation Method”). It is very challenging to teach second graders completely without Chinese (their mother tongue). Therefore, we use Chinese to support our lessons, and it makes students less stressed when they can understand what the instructors are talking about. Likewise, as suggestopedia is to create a relaxing and comforting learning environment for students, GTM uses mother tongue to build a closer connection with students, creating a stress-free space so that it will not limit students’ learning motivation. As we conduct our lessons, we always inform our students of the Chinese meaning of a word first then the English one; also, we use both Chinese and English in the lessons so that students can ask questions in Chinese without stress.

Lesson Plans

We prepared 3 lesson plans for our students. Each of them lasted for 2-3 weeks so the students could have more thorough learning experiences. Before we introduced the new lessons, we went over what they had learned last time first to help them familiarize the contents. For the first 3 weeks we taught English alphabets; then another 3 weeks for numbers; the other 3 weeks for colors.

Lesson Plan 1: Alphabets

Target Audience: Second grade students

Learner Level: Beginner

Class Size: 2 people

Class Length: 40 minutes (For 3 weeks)

Instructors: Daniel Frank

Terminal objective:

- To check if the students can identify and memorize all English alphabets

Enabling objectives:

1. Students can identify both the uppercase and lowercase of an English alphabet.
2. Students can pronounce the English alphabets correctly.
3. Students can write the English alphabet correctly.

Materials:

- Pen or pencil
- Paper
- Practice worksheet
- Exam
- Color pencil or crayon

Time and Materials	Procedures
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10 min	<p>English Ability Evaluation/ Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk to students to analyze how many English alphabets they can tell. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tell the students to write down as many alphabets they know as possible. ● Review what they had learned in the previous week
20 min	<p>Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let the students learn the English alphabets parts by parts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Break down English alphabets for each week teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ First week: A-H ■ Second week: I-P ■ Third week: Q-Z ● Each week, the students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learn the both writing and oral forms of the alphabets ○ Practice to write the English alphabets in both uppercase and lowercase on the worksheet ● In the final week, students will be given a test to evaluate their learning outcome.
10 min	<p>Creativity Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be given a paper to draw whatever they like ● Teacher will teach the English words for what the students have drawn. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example: the student draws a dog, the teacher will teach the student the spelling and the pronunciation of the word “dog.”

Exam

- In the final week, this time period will be used for the students to do their exam

Lesson Plan 2: Numbers

Target Audience: Second grade students

Learner Level: Beginner

Class Size: 2 people

Class Length: 40 minutes (For 3 weeks)

Instructors: Daniel Frank

Terminal objective:

- To check if the students can identify and memorize simple numbers in English

Enabling objectives:

1. Students can identify English numbers 1-12.
2. Students can pronounce English numbers 1-12 clearly.
3. Students can write English numbers 1-12 correctly.

Materials:

- Pen or pencil
- Paper
- Practice worksheet
- Exam
- Color pencil or crayon
- Number cards

Time and Materials	Procedures
10 min	<p>English Ability Evaluation/ Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the first week, teachers will talk to students to analyze how many numbers in English they can tell. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tell the students to write down as many English numbers as they can. ○ Show the students some cards with English numbers written on them to test how many English numbers they can identify. ● For the second and third week, teachers will review what the students had learned in the previous week
20 min	<p>Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let the students learn the English numbers parts by parts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each week, teachers will teach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ First week: 1-5 ■ Second week: 5-10 ■ Third week: 1-12 ● Each week, the students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learn both writing and oral forms of the English numbers ○ Practice to write the English numbers on the worksheet ● In the final week, students will be given a test to evaluate their learning outcome.

10 min	<p>Creativity Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be given a paper to draw whatever they like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teacher will teach the English words for what the students have drawn. ○ For example: the student draws a dog, the teacher will teach the student the spelling and the pronunciation of the word “dog.” ● Students will pick a book written in Chinese. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers will read the book with the student together ○ Teachers will find some of the Chinese vocabularies in the book then teach the students their English forms. <p>Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the final week, this time period will be used for the students to do their exam
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Lesson Plan 3: Colors
<p>Target Audience and Context: second graders in Guo-Tai Elementary School Learner Level: Intermediate Class size: 2-3 Class length: 40 minutes</p>
<p>Terminal objectives <i>Students will be able to:</i> Pronounce different colors correctly. Talk to the whole class and respond to others.</p> <p>Enabling objectives <i>Students will be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Familiarize themselves with different colors’ pronunciation after teachers’ demonstration. ● Explain the drawing of themselves to every person in class. ● Respond to others’ words.

Materials

- 6 colors in English handout (Appendix A)
- Blank paper
- Crayons
- Cellphone (if students do not how to draw something)

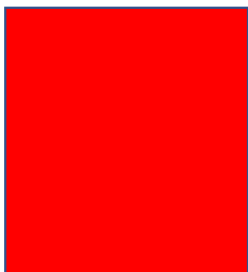
Time and Materials	Procedures
3-5 min.	Warm-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask students their activities in the weekend ● Ask students whether they have known some colors in English.
10-15 min. Appendix A (6 colors in English)	Task 1: Teaching colors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute Appendix A (6 colors in English) to students ● Demonstrate the pronunciation of one word per time, and ask students to repeat until all 6 words are read. ● Ask students whether they need to review the words.
13-18 min.	Task 2: Free drawing and opinion sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute blank paper to students ● Ask students to use the 6 colors that have been taught to draw something ● Students talk about what they draw with teachers and their peers and each one gives a response.
2-4 min.	Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give points to students based on their performance ● Ask whether students have final questions and their opinions on the design of activities.

Appendix A



6 Colors in English

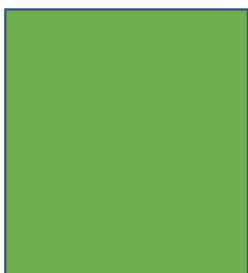
Red



Yellow



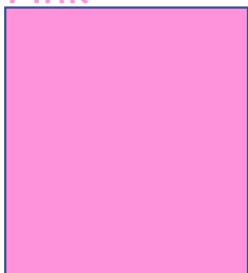
Green



Blue



Pink

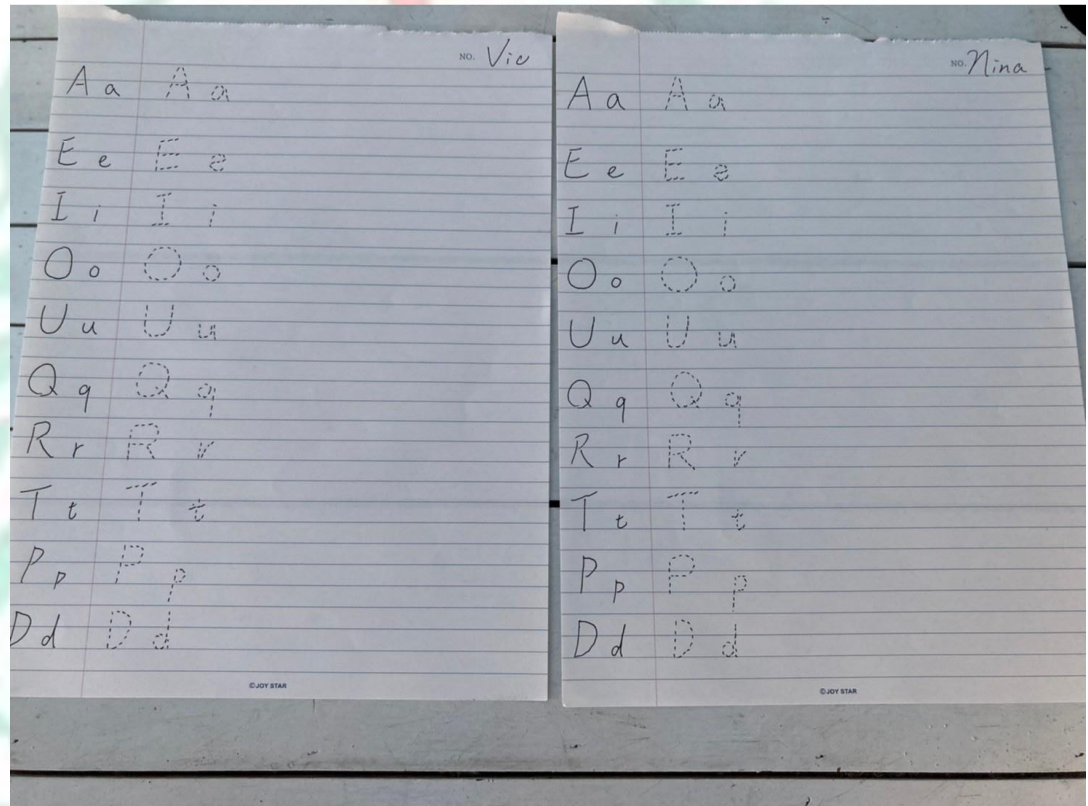


Black

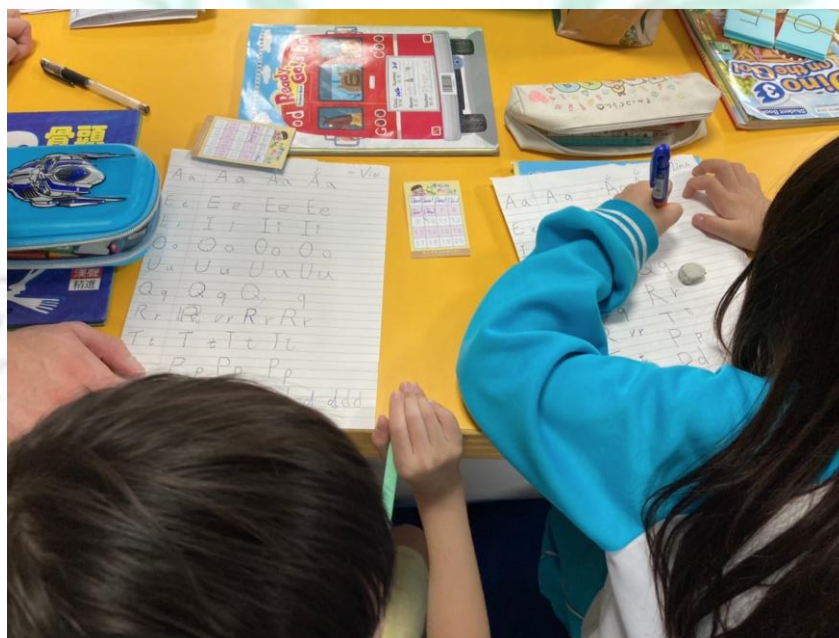


Worksheets

We decided to handmade most of our worksheet; that way we can precisely meet our student's requirements. By customizing worksheets, unlike conventional worksheets found online, designed worksheets are more suitable for second graders, which increase both of their learning motivation and efficiency.



(Fig 1. Handmade worksheet includes every vowels and confusing alphabets)

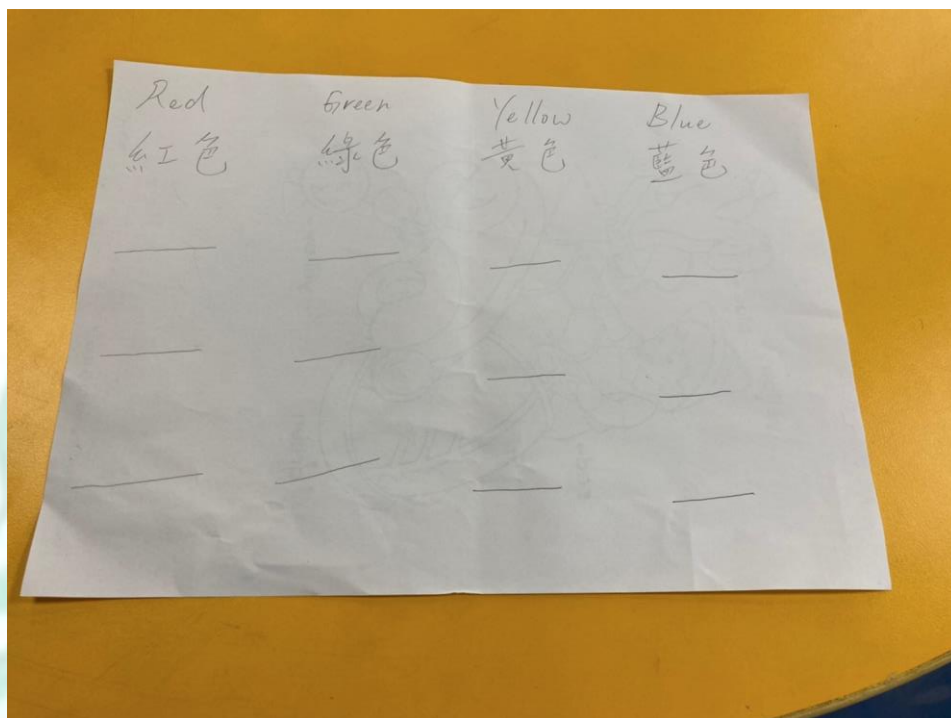


(Fig 2. Students completing the handmade worksheets. We can tell that Vic writes faster than Nina.)

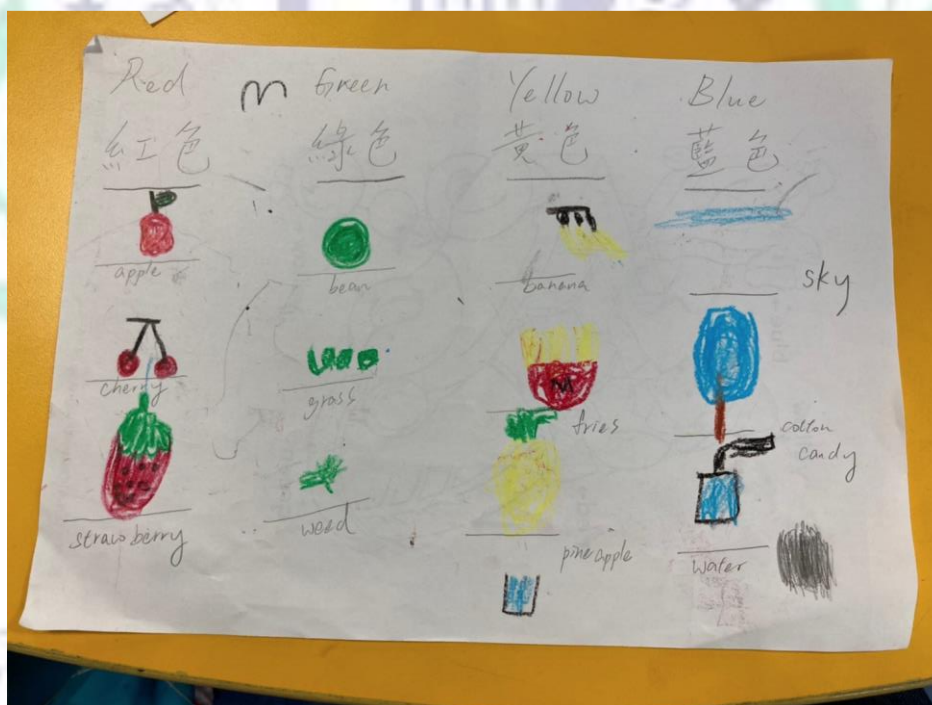


(Fig 3. Students using flashcards to memorize English numbers)

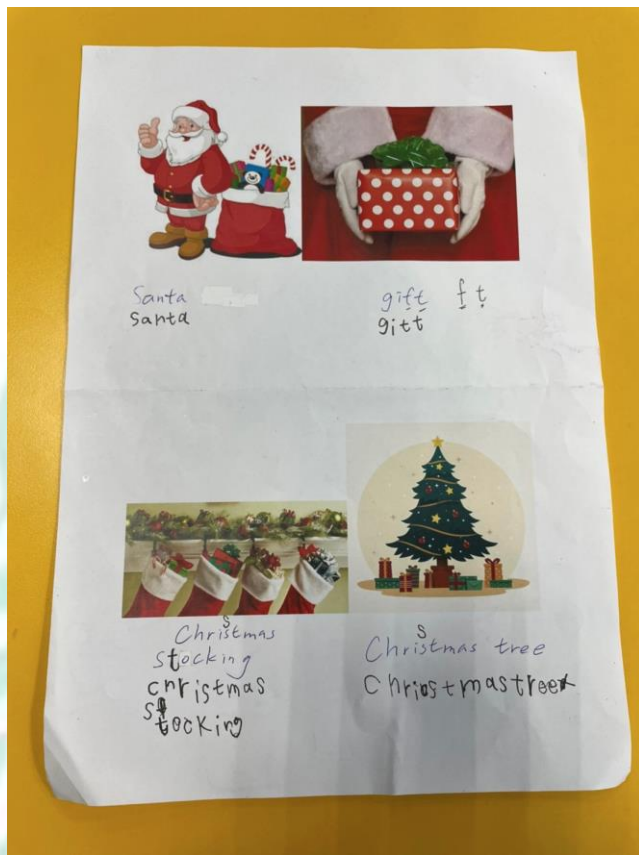




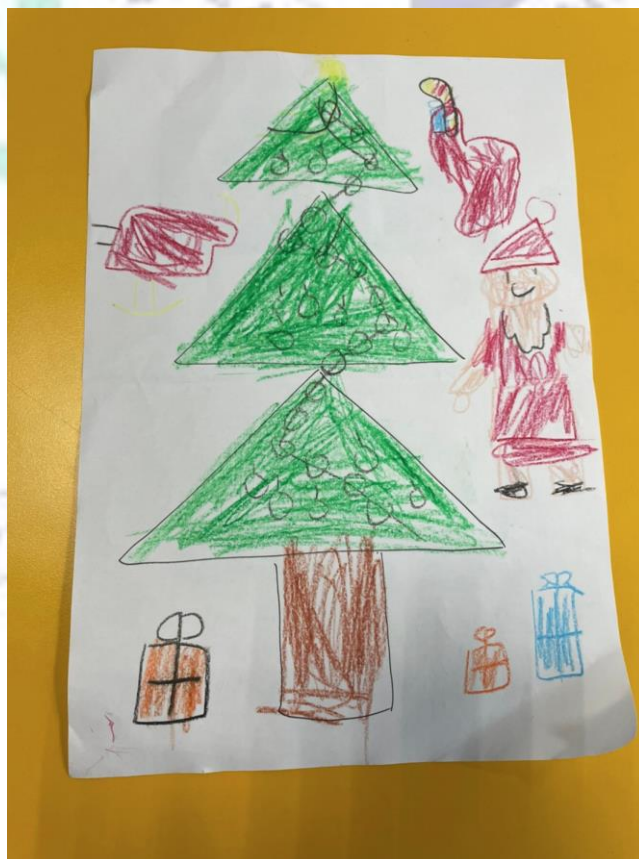
(Fig 4. Handmade worksheet for teaching colors)



(Fig 5. The result.)



(Fig 6. Christmas worksheet)



(Fig 7. Student's drawing)

Discussion and Reflections

Unlike some of my classmates, this was my first time doing service teaching at Guo-Tai elementary school. Despite the help from those experienced classmates, we encountered some difficulties throughout the service learning this time. In my opinion, the biggest challenge this year was the preparation for the Halloween Event. Holding a big event for the children was not an easy task. First, we must carefully choose the contents that best suit the children; those children are from grade 1 to grade 6 so the content should be retained at intermediate level. At the same time, we had to make sure the content did not make the children feel bored; otherwise, the children would not concentrate on the content we are going to teach them. In addition, we were a group of teachers consisting of junior and senior students; we did not even know each other well when entering this service teaching. Fortunately, every one of us was willing to work with each other as a team; after several group member meetings, we had come up with suitable contents and activities for the children and for the event. The rehearsals went smoothly, and we put up a successful show for Guo-Tai's students on Halloween.

Aside from the Halloween Event, another difficulty we encountered was that students taking sick leaves without informing the teachers. I was surprised that our students are both absent on one of the service teaching days. As a result, I decided to support other teachers from different groups. It served as a great experience when helping out other teachers because they tended to have more students to handle (my group is 2 teachers to 2 students, other groups might be 2 teachers to 4 students). I had heard that my group originally got more students, but some of them dropped. Therefore, the balance of manpower in distributing teachers to students should better be re-arranged so that students could have efficient lessons and a comfortable learning environment.

Conclusion

Teaching is not an easy job, but it is not the hardest one. As long as the teacher is willing to devote time and efforts into their students, teaching can actually be a fun thing to do. In this service learning program, we get the chance to be the “real” teachers. We have to assess our students' English ability first; then come up with the contents that best fit our students' learning level. Moreover, when teaching children, we must include some activities to enrich our lessons and to entertain our students so they will not feel it is boring. But I want to express that every hard work pays off when one sees their students learn new things and become more knowledgeable.

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Appendix





(Fig 8. Permission to enter the school.)



(Fig 9. Receiving the Thank-You Certificate from the school principal.)



(Fig 10. The last day before we say goodbye.)



(Fig 11. Students' learning situation and environment.)



(Fig 12. Halloween Event rehearsal 1.)



(Fig 13. Halloween Event rehearsal 2.)



(Fig 14. Halloween Event happy ending.)



(Fig 15. Teachers.)





(Fig 15. Teachers and teachers' teacher)

