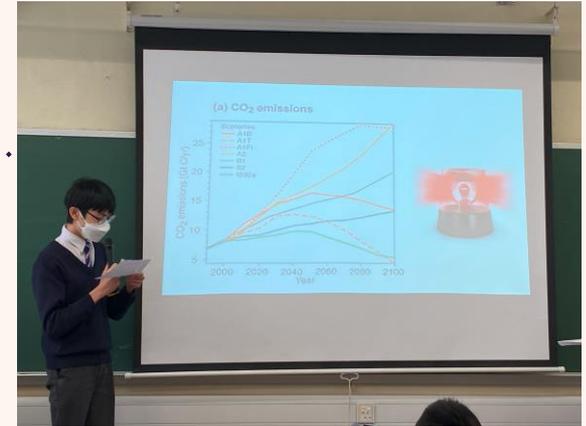# Interthinking through talk

Fostering Values & Effective Communication Skills to Enhance English Language Learning

Robin HO Shun Hong
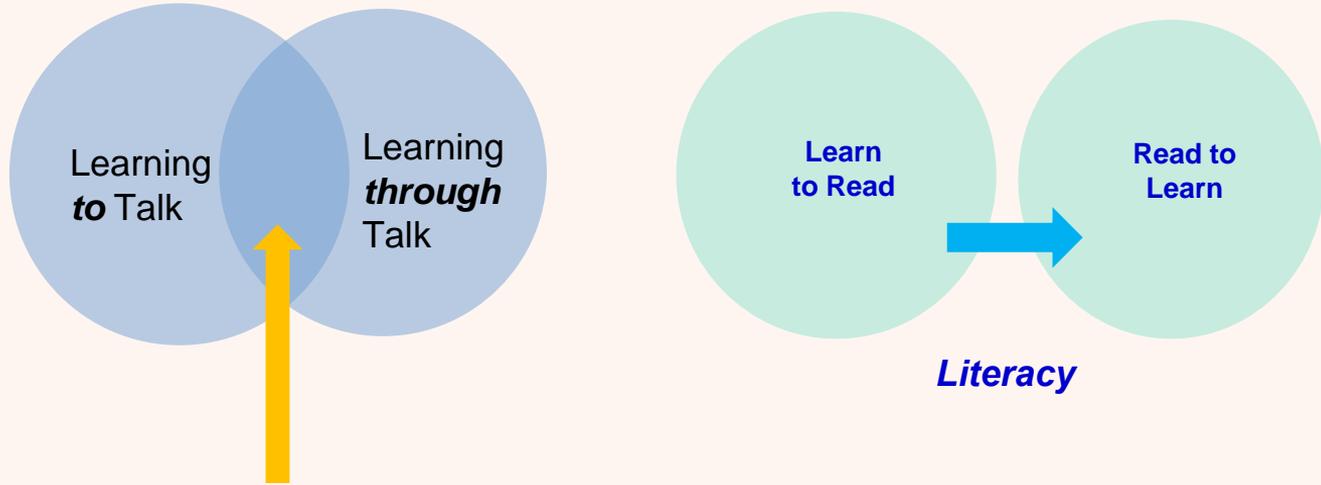**Queen's College**

19 October 2024

Literacy and Oracy in Communication

Learning *to* Talk

Learning *through* Talk

Learn to Read → Read to Learn

Literacy

Oracy is characterised as the development and application of a set of skills associated with effective spoken communication.

Interthinking: Using Talk to Think Collectively

"Oracy is important because we all need to know how to use talk to think effectively together."

- Dr Neil Mercer, Professor of Education,
University of Cambridge

School background

- **Band 1 boys' school founded in 1862**

- **Students' strengths: capable, eager to learn, want to challenge themselves**

- **Their learning needs: broaden their knowledge base, develop their empathy, oral communication skills and higher-order thinking skills**

- **Curriculum emphases:**
  - ❖ Reading (and speaking) across the curriculum
  - ❖ Higher-order thinking skills
  - ❖ Information literacy
  - ❖ Values education, including national education and national security education

- **1st year in 'Read to Speak' (R2S) project (2021/22)**
  - ❖ Target level: **S2**
  - ❖ Project focuses:
    - ✔ **Understanding different perspectives**
    - ✔ **Developing empathy**

- **2nd year in R2S project (2022/23)**
  - ❖ Target level : extended to **S3** (Same batch of students)
  - ❖ Project focuses:
    - ✔ **Enhancing oral communication skills**
    - ✔ **Promoting proper values and attitudes**
    - ✔ **Engaging in presentational talk effectively using statistics**
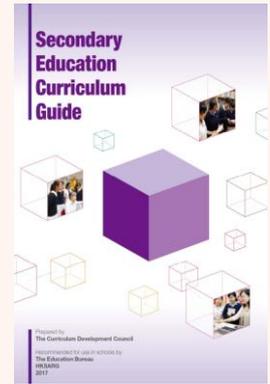
Secondary Education Curriculum Guide (2017)
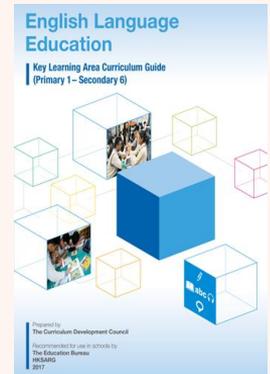
CDC ELE KLA Curriculum Guide (P1 – S6) (2017)

- **3ʳᵈ year in 'Read to Speak' (R2S) project (2023/24)**
  - ❖ **Target level: S3**
  - ❖ **Project focuses:**
    - ✔ **Enhancing oral communication skills**
    - ✔ **Promoting proper values and attitudes**
    - ✔ **Engaging in presentational and exploratory talk effectively using visual aids, such as figures and diagrams**
    - ✔ **Enhancing information literacy**
    - ✔ **Understanding Chinese culture through research on customs and traditions**

Project highlights

- **Cognitive domain:**
  - promote higher-order thinking and reflection
  - understand how numbers and images combined to convey powerful messages
  - analyse the differences between texts based on their different purposes to enhance one's information literacy

- **Affective domain:**
  - establish an emotional connection with the reader / audience through messages / texts
  - gain a deeper understanding of the value systems of our own culture by comparing past and present customs and traditions

Read to Speak project – skills development framework

Linguistic
- Lexical resource
- Register
- (Text) Grammar
- Rhetorical devices

Cognitive
- Content & structure
- Reasoning
- Explaining, clarifying & summarising
- Self-regulation

21st Century Literacy & Oracy Skills

Physical
- Voice (e.g. pace of speaking, pronunciation)
- Body language (facial expression, eye contact, gesture and posture)

Social & Emotional
- Working with others
- Confidence in speaking
- Listening & responding
- Audience awareness

'Talk' Task Design

Spoken Communication

- Prioritise oracy (spoken language) in lesson / unit planning as it provides the foundation of thinking and learning

## Knowledge Building and Application

- Provide students with quality texts to enrich their knowledge of the given topic(s)

- Structure high-quality talk that can be subject specific

Collaboration

- Design collaborative activities that provide opportunities to use spoken language to develop social awareness, subject-specific knowledge and problem-solving skills

Deeper Thinking and Reflection

- Develop students' thinking through discussion and exploratory talk

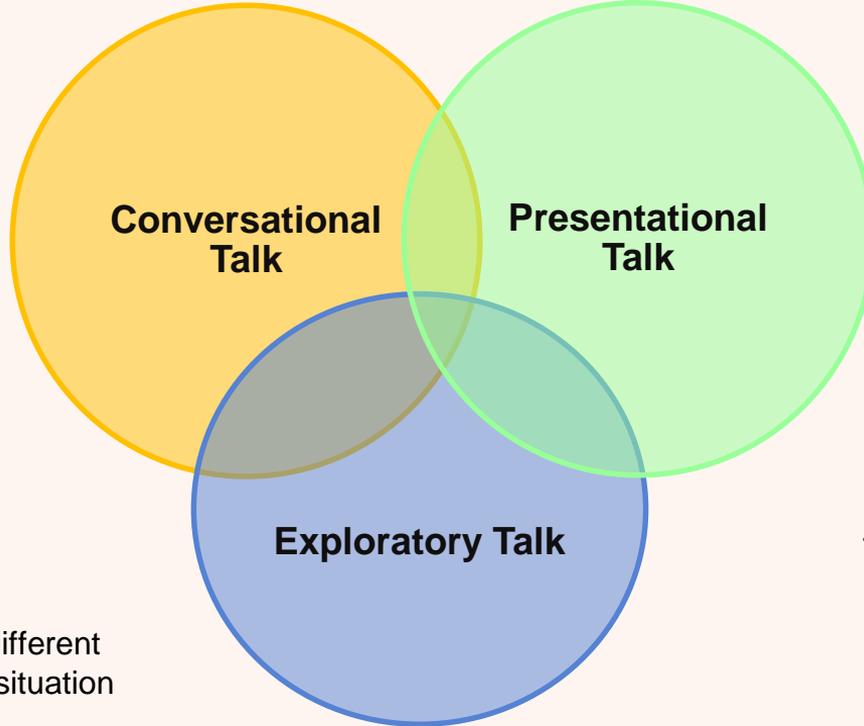- Allow enough time to challenge misconception and change thinking
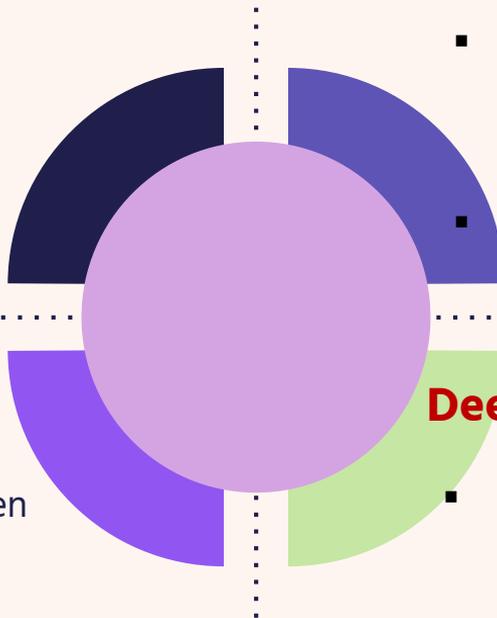
A drama performance

A recount on Adobe Express Page

A documentary / narrative film representing ideas

Conversational Talk

Presentational Talk
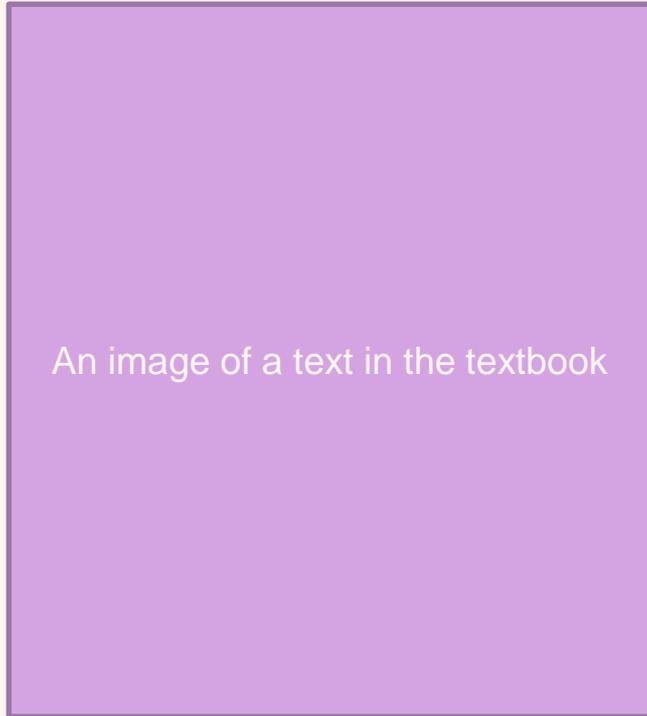
Exploratory Talk

A discussion task to explore different perspectives / roles in a given situation

TED-style presentation on a given topic

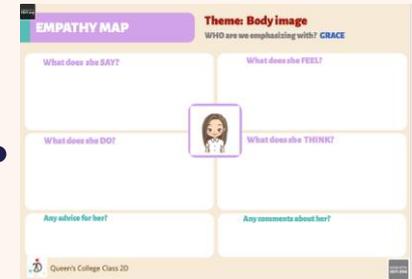# Example from our work from previous years

An image of a text in the textbook

Extended texts on the impact of social media on teenagers' body image (**a relatable and discussable topic**)

Thinking tool (Empathy map) for exploratory talk

Article from the textbook as a springboard for high-quality talk that advance thinking

Design a 3-day Challenge (**an authentic task**) to promote positive body image

Implementation for Unit 5 this year

Word choice
- Are positive/negative words overwhelmingly used to describe the subject of the text? If only the advantages or disadvantages of the subject discussed are predominantly mentioned, then it is less likely that the text is informative.
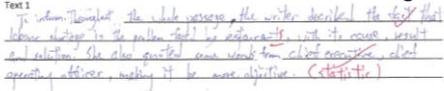
Choice of information
- If facts, figures and different opinions are represented, then it's more likely that a text is informative. If a text only argues for one side but uses logical argumentation and produces facts and figures to support its stance, then the text can be considered more argumentative than persuasive.

Questions
1. Determine, with reference to the above, what the purpose of each text is, and provide reasons/evidence for your answer.

Text 1

An image of a news article

"CRAAP" Test - adapted from the CRAAP test, looking at Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy and Purpose.

Reading skills were enhanced through teaching students how the writer's purpose can be determined through identifying a text's features.

Information literacy skills were introduced through understanding how text purposes, narrative point of view and framing effect may influence the reader's perception.

Flipped learning tasks followed by **in-class discussion** on the pros and cons of having robots serving in restaurants

Texts on robots serving restaurant (**a topical and discussable issue**)

Text analysis

Text 3

To explain. The journalist incorporates their own experiences but still presents the facts rather fairly. It has got a heavy emphasis on cause-and-effect and is based on logical conclusions. The text explains the situation fairly although it is a little biased.

2. Rank the three purposes of the three texts according to reliability and explain why you have arranged them in that order. (There may be exceptions, but think about what is true most of the time.)

_____1_____ > _____3_____ > _____2_____

The first text is a reliable article that is objective and presents facts, the third text is more emotional and biased but is still logical and mostly factual, the second text is the worst as it is very biased and omits some facts to fit its narrative.
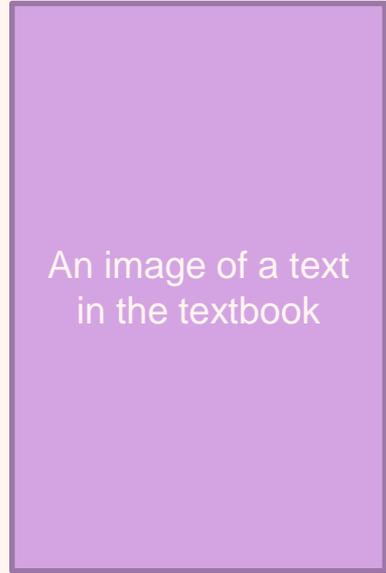
Unit 6 Work

- **1. Grasping basic concepts**
  Personal connections to the environmental issues

- **2. Interpreting information**
  - Presenting statistics via **infographics and surveys**
  - Conveying **visual** messages

- **3. Extending understanding**
  - More **balanced viewpoints** on topical issues / themes
  - Inclusion of **national security education**

An image of a text
in the textbook

Read the following article from the World Bank about one of the most important innovators from China.

Meet the Innovator Battling Plastic Waste in China: Liu Yonglong
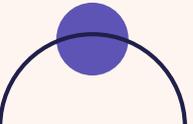
Founder,
Rendu Ocean Centre
CHINA

LIU YONGLONG

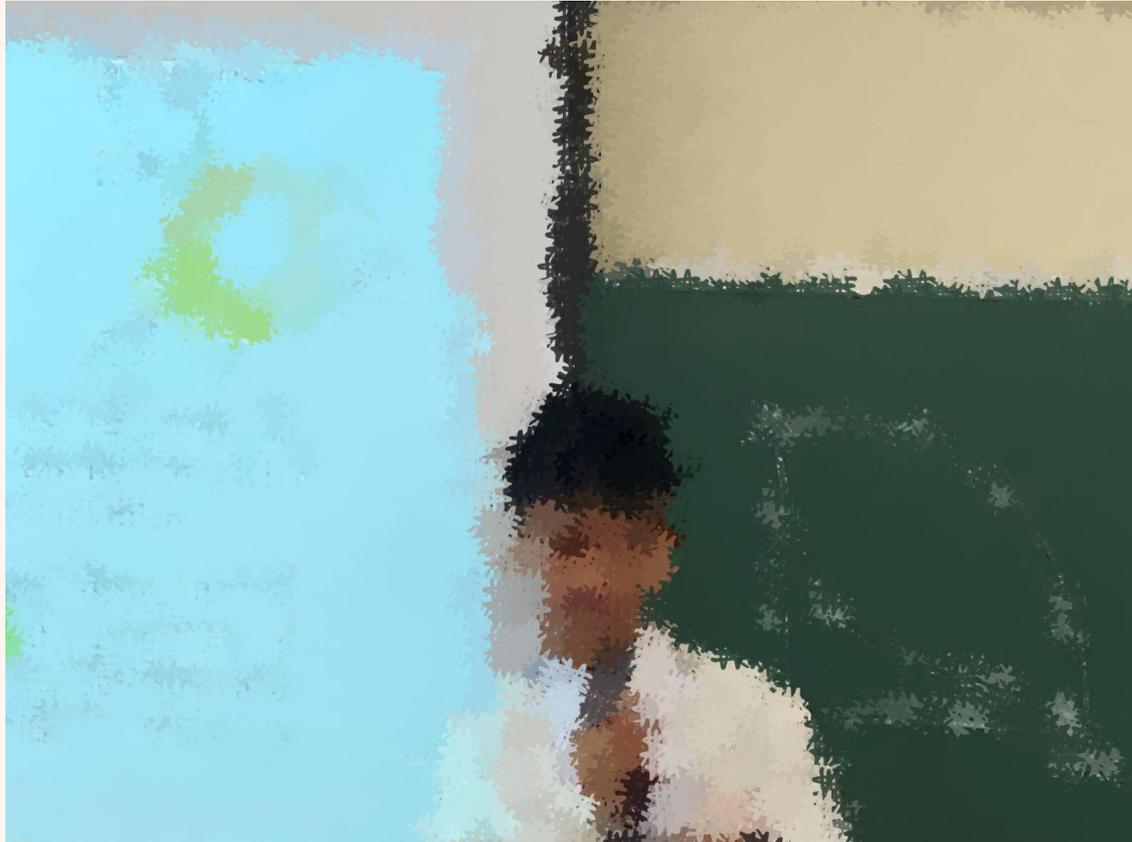▲▲▲ MEET THE INNOVATORS BATTLING PLASTIC WASTE

Contemporary text experiences

- **Examples of student work (Unit 6) - infographics**

Unit 8 Work

Extended texts on different ways of transforming traditional occupations in modern times – Cantonese hairdressing, embroidered shoes and Chinese steamed buns (mantou)
(**cultural aspects of national education**)

New technologies also make the revitalisation or restoration of "traditional" professions possible.

Online article "Making old-fashioned trendy", June 2022.
Accessed via:
https://www.hactl.com/en/stories/making-old-fashioned-trendy/

An image of a text in the textbook
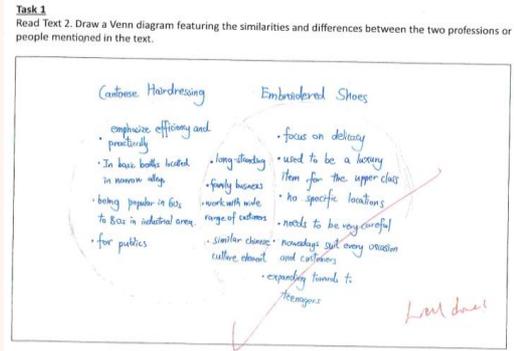
Thinking tool (Venn diagram) for exploratory talk

Past & Present

Students are required to use a Venn diagram to (i) compare and contrast differences and similarities between the profession / occupation in the past and present; (ii) comment on how traditions have been evolving over decades and (iii) discuss new elements or ways of revitalising traditions.

Chinese embroidery

Image source: "Making old-fashioned trendy", June 2022.
Accessed via:
https://www.hactl.com/en/stories/making-old-fashioned-trendy/

Cantonese hairdressing

Image source: "Making old-fashioned trendy", June 2022.
Accessed via:
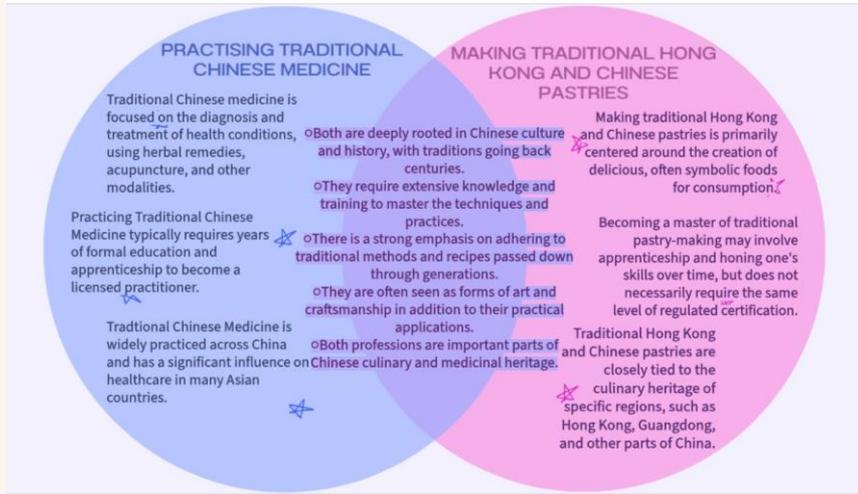https://www.hactl.com/en/stories/making-old-fashioned-trendy/

Chinese steamed buns

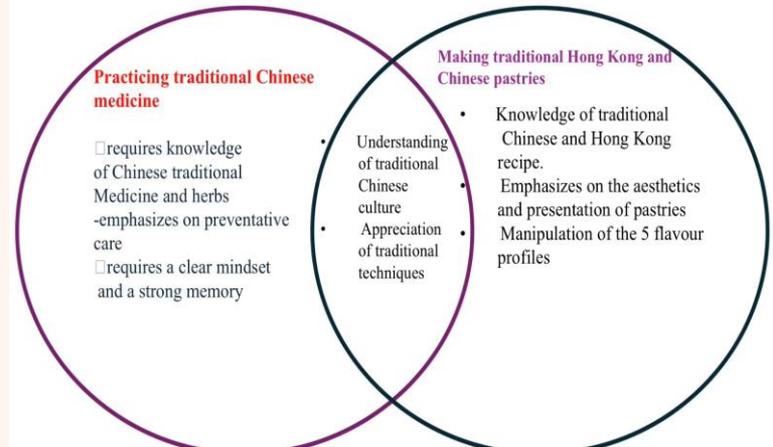Image source: "Woman Earns Enough To Buy A House & Car After 3 Years Selling Steamed Buns", December 2022.
Accessed via:
https://mustsharenews.com/steamed-buns-graduate-woman/

Example of student work (Unit 8)

PRACTISING TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Traditional Chinese medicine is focused on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions, using herbal remedies, acupuncture, and other modalities.

Practicing Traditional Chinese Medicine typically requires years of formal education and apprenticeship to become a licensed practitioner.

Tradtional Chinese Medicine is widely practiced across China and has a significant influence on healthcare in many Asian countries.

MAKING TRADITIONAL HONG KONG AND CHINESE PASTRIES

- Both are deeply rooted in Chinese culture and history, with traditions going back centuries.
- They require extensive knowledge and training to master the techniques and practices.
- There is a strong emphasis on adhering to traditional methods and recipes passed down through generations.
- They are often seen as forms of art and craftsmanship in addition to their practical applications.
- Both professions are important parts of Chinese culinary and medicinal heritage.

Making traditional Hong Kong and Chinese pastries is primarily centered around the creation of delicious, often symbolic foods for consumption.

Becoming a master of traditional pastry-making may involve apprenticeship and honing one's skills over time, but does not necessarily require the same level of regulated certification.

Traditional Hong Kong and Chinese pastries are closely tied to the culinary heritage of specific regions, such as Hong Kong, Guangdong, and other parts of China.

Venn diagram: Practicing traditional Chinese medicine + Making traditional Hong Kong and Chinese pastries

Practicing traditional Chinese medicine

- requires knowledge of Chinese traditional Medicine and herbs -emphasizes on preventative care
- requires a clear mindset and a strong memory

Understanding of traditional Chinese culture

Appreciation of traditional techniques

Making traditional Hong Kong and Chinese pastries

- Knowledge of traditional Chinese and Hong Kong recipe.
- Emphasizes on the aesthetics and presentation of pastries
- Manipulation of the 5 flavour profiles

Peer evaluation form

"They don't really need to use the script."

"They analyzed the problem thoroughly and the solutions are really detailed."

"The important numbers are in bold."

Observed changes in student learning –

01

Higher-order Thinking
- They are more capable of using visualisation tools to provide a starting point for discussion and *interthinking*.

02

Information Literacy
- They are more aware of keywords that allow them to evaluate the credibility of texts.

03

Values Education and National Education
- They have gradually developed empathy for others and a better understanding of our country.

04

Reading Skills
- They have learned to analyse a text in a more systematic manner.

05

Communication Skills
- They have developed better confidence and logic in communicating ideas.