

SPEAK WELL

MY WORLD @ ANG MO KIO CENTRAL SHARES STRATEGIES THAT ARE EFFECTIVE AND ENJOYABLE FOR CHILDREN LEARNING CHINESE LANGUAGE.



The 'See-Think-Wonder' approach is integrated into classroom activities

To make Chinese language lessons interesting, the 2019 Early Childhood Innovation (Distinction) award winner, MY World @ Ang Mo Kio Central harnesses the rich cultural heritage of artefacts in Singapore. The centre embarked on a Practitioner Inquiry (PI) project in October 2018, when Jaime Tan, the Principal and the Chinese language teacher Tseng Ju-Hsuan observed that the Chinese language lessons were not engaging the children, and they were struggling with expressing themselves in Mandarin.

MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS

The centre adopted the "See-Think-Wonder" approach, which provides a thinking frame for children to learn Mandarin and to ask meaningful questions. The preschool organised learning journeys to places of cultural interest, such as the Sun Yat Sen



Learning journey to Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

Nanyang Memorial Hall, and the Malay and Indian Heritage Centres. "Such visits help spur children's curiosity — motivating them to explore and ask questions," explains Ms Tan.

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES TO SPARK CURIOSITY, COMMUNICATION & CRITICAL THINKING

Using cultural artefacts and items such as the Malay handwashing pot, batik, sarong and various spices, the teachers encouraged children to 'Wonder' through open-ended questions such as "What would you like to find out?" in Mandarin. With practice, children learned to use "See-Think-Wonder" to ask questions. They became more interested and engaged in the activities. The teachers found that they used more Mandarin at the centre and at home, which impressed their parents.

"Parents also played a part in supporting children's learning at home. Together they made props for the 'Dramatic Play' centre, using recycled and craft materials. Back in preschool, the children did a 'Show-and-Tell' in Mandarin before displaying the props. Parents are our valuable partners in education," says Ms Tan. For an art class, a parent also came



HOW SEE-THINK-WONDER WORKS

MY World @ Ang Mo Kio Central uses this approach to facilitate children's thinking, and expand their vocabulary and communication skills. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding the discussions and helping children when they experience difficulties in expressing themselves.

SEE

Pique children's interest using photographs and concrete materials. Ask them what they see. Children use the phrase "I can see..." to verbalise their observations and hypotheses.



THINK

Use open-ended questions to extend thinking, such as "What do you think is going on?", "Why do you say that?". Children will draw on prior knowledge and experience to make inferences. They then articulate their ideas using "I think...", "I feel..."



WONDER

Encourage children to verbalise their wondering, using statements such as "I wonder if...", "I want to find out more about...", etc.



to teach the children to draw Chinese porcelain motifs on disposable cutlery.

GUIDE SELF-DISCOVERY

As a result of the PI project, teachers are now better able to facilitate and model the proper use of Mandarin, as well as provide materials and resources to facilitate children's self-discovery process and promote higher-order thinking. They have expanded the approach to English language learning. Adds Ms Tan, "Teachers are now more encouraged to implement innovative teaching strategies to help children learn in fun and meaningful ways." ●