

CAMBRIDGE

ENGLISH FOR LIFE

November- December 2005

CEFL MAKING ITS MARK

It has long been a concern that the level of English language proficiency amongst Malaysians was in decline. And it has been clear for some time that radical measures were needed to halt, and indeed reverse, that damaging trend. Malaysian schools are now placing more emphasis on the language, but schools can only do so much in the short term to address this long standing problem.



The private sector must also play its part. And at CEFL we have led the way in providing English language programmes designed both to raise English language proficiency levels and to stimulate an interest in language learning using the communicative approach to language learning. At the same time we have offered students the opportunity to gain a qualification from the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, which not only provides a measure of their

achievement, but also gives them a widely recognised external qualification, which, at the higher levels, serves to meet the English language entrance requirements of colleges and universities worldwide.

As an Authorised Centre for the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, CEFL is able to conduct the examinations at its own centres for the convenience of students.

This year we have seen the numbers entering for the various levels of the Cambridge examinations grow enormously. And this figure is likely to continue growing.

The results continue to be very encouraging. In the June round of exams, our students achieved a pass rate of 98% which is significantly higher than the overall global pass rate. And it is the achievements of our students which lead us to believe that we are getting it right and making our mark in the world of English language teaching.



Young Learners English

Main Suite

STARTING EARLY WITH CEFL



When bemoaning the falling standards of English, we Malaysians often hark back to "those days" when standards of English were much higher, when, of course, it was the medium of instruction in schools. The question that needs to be

answered today is: "how can we engineer a return to the standards of those days?"

There is no easy answer. Learning a language is not like learning any other subject. With maths or history you can get to grips with the subject by learning a mass of facts. With a language you cannot. Learning a language requires a different approach. Languages are learnt by developing the language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking and where these skills are in constant use, as in a country where the language is the native tongue, acquisition of the language will be achieved more rapidly. In our case, once the medium of instruction in schools was changed, the opportunities for using English were increasingly reduced resulting in progressively lower levels of proficiency in the language.

Steps are now being taken to provide more exposure to the language in schools, but it will be many years before these measures bear fruit.

In the meantime, what remedial action can be taken? Or, how can parents best help their children acquire English language proficiency so that they reach a standard which will benefit them when the time comes for them to move on to tertiary education or enter the workplace?

Part of the answer is to start young; to expose children to the language from the earliest age. Those of us old enough to have gone through the English medium school system have the ability now to communicate in English at virtually native speaker level. But we can also communicate with our fellow Malaysians in "Manglish" and switch from one English to the other instinctively. Today, most Malaysians speak Manglish fluently, but, children especially, do not know there is "another English" which is the

language in which the world communicates.

At Cambridge English For Life (CEFL) there is a structured programme of courses that starts with Junior English for children from as young as four. The Junior English courses provide children with the basic building blocks of English and offer that first step in learning that "other English". From Junior English the children progress to Young Learners English courses which come at three levels, Starters, Movers and Flyers. These courses prepare the children for the Cambridge Young Learners' English Tests, designed by Cambridge ESOL Examinations to reward children's efforts to learn English and to encourage them to develop a positive attitude to language learning.

For children of secondary school age there are five levels of courses leading to the "Main Suite" of Cambridge ESOL examinations which culminates in the Certificate of Proficiency in English.

CEFL believes that success in acquiring language skills can be achieved most effectively using the communicative approach to learning. All course lessons are interactive, and materials used are colourful and relevant to the particular age group. This makes learning engaging and creates excitement, especially important for the younger learners.

It is also important that learners should be exposed to all the language skills and CEFL courses give equal emphasis to reading, writing, listening and speaking according to the needs of the learners. The Cambridge ESOL examinations test each of these skills and provide qualifications which are not only a measure of the success of the course of study, but also provide valuable certification which is recognised by colleges, universities and employers worldwide.

And if success in these external examinations is to be used as a gauge of the effectiveness of CEFL's courses then CEFL has an enviable record with a pass rate of 98% in the recent June exams, significantly higher than the overall global pass rate.



But perhaps more telling is the response from learners' parents and the learners themselves. Here are two examples of what CEFL's parents have to say:

"Since my children joined CEFL, their English language has improved. They find learning at CEFL interesting because they get to learn things they don't learn in school" Carina Lee, Johor Jaya

"Seeing our children enjoy attending their classes and gaining more confidence in their spoken and written English after less than a year at CEFL – we must have made the right choice" Jessie Lim, Kota Kemuning.



HOLIDAY ENGLISH PROGRAMME

- A modular Intensive English Course for the school holiday

CEFL offers classes at five levels of English. Courses are designed to prepare students for higher academic studies and professional work in English as well as university entrance exams. Students are in class for 20 hours per week for each module.

Duration of each module : 5 days / 20 hours
Whole Course : 20 days / 80 hours

Core Modules

Structure and Communication - the integration of grammar, listening and speaking. This module aims to increase accuracy and fluency in communication through individual and group language skills practice, language projects and self-access listening and speaking tasks. In addition, this module provides opportunities for conversation with colleagues of native speaker fluency and proficiency.

The communication component seeks to improve listening, speaking and grammar skills. This will develop fluency and confidence in communication in both professional and social settings, enhance listening skills, and examine the grammar of English. Class activities include discussion, dictation, presentations, and the use of music and other multimedia resources to enhance learning.

Reading

The Reading module provides reading practice while covering strategies for efficient reading, skimming, scanning, identifying main and supporting ideas, making inferences and summarising. Students will have the opportunity to enhance their reading skills through practice with class readings and authentic texts which target vocabulary development.

Writing (Composition)

This module provides intensive practice in writing with an emphasis on grammatical accuracy and clarity of content. The module also focuses on developing students' abilities to write both academically and professionally. Students learn sentence, paragraph, and essay structures as well as examine letter and resume writing styles.

In essence, the emphasis of the module is writing well organised and effectively developed paragraphs as well as giving attention to individual writing needs. Problematic grammar areas are identified and reviewed.

Listening, Speaking and Pronunciation

This is an integral module for students who are preparing to undertake higher academic studies. The module explores techniques of effective oral communication and provides opportunities for extensive practice. The tasks are designed to help students to develop active listening strategies for improving comprehension. The focus on pronunciation targets vowels, consonants, as well as the patterns of stress and intonation that help non-native speakers to speak English intelligibly. The language learning facilities provide a place for directed language practice from a variety of speaking activities.

TOWARDS MASTERY of ENGLISH

YOUR SEARCH FOR A LANGUAGE CENTRE ENDS HERE

Cambridge English For Life™ provides high quality, practical, academic, vocational and professional English language training.

Cambridge English For Life™ administers the University of Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Exams, which are known throughout the world and recognised by universities and corporations worldwide.

JUNIOR ENGLISH

YOUNG LEARNERS ENGLISH - Starters, Movers & Flyers

THE CAMBRIDGE MAIN SUITE

Key English Test (KET) • Preliminary English Test (PET)
First Certificate in English (FCE) • Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)
Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)

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