Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools

Junior Middle English
Curriculum Standards

Unified Curriculum Committee of

Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary School

Working Committee

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Contents

1. Preface

In 2018, the motto "Enjoy teaching, love learning—empower children to attain achievement" was raised as the education reform vision in the *MICSS Education Blueprint*; it literally translates independent Chinese secondary schools are paradises where teachers enjoy teaching and students love learning. Each and every student who steps into any independent Chinese secondary school will grow healthily and learn actively. The MICSS education prepares students to find a foothold domestically and brave the world lying ahead as it helps them to achieve success in the future. Within this vision, the main objectives of the MICSS education reform are as follows: Every student is given the leeway to develop holistically and individually under the umbrella of moral education, intellectual education, physical education, social education and aesthetics education. They will eventually realise the importance of lifelong learning, constant self-improvement, risk-taking, innovation, ever-readiness, self-confidence and teamwork in life. In this way, they are able to attain personal happiness and are willing to strive for harmony, prosperity, development, freedom and equality for their family, ethnic group, community and country and contribute themselves successively. Aiming to implement and put the vision and objectives raised in the *MICSS Education Blueprint* in place, the Unified Curriculum Committee forwarded the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* (simply put as the *Main Standards*) to concretely push the reform and development of the MICSS Curriculum forward.

The ultimate goal of the MICSS curricular reform is the production of "lifelong learners" and thus it endeavours to improve subject curriculums to provide cross-subject and interdisciplinary learning opportunities. These are to nurture self-activated learning, collaborative learning and the ability to participate in society naturally. The curriculum standards of each subject are designed amenable to the principles and direction set forth in the *Main Standards* to pursue the command of basic notions, objectives, competencies, curricular planning and contents of the subjects, let alone pedagogical approaches and assessment recommendations. In terms of curricular practice, there will be allowances for flexibility and options targeting to encourage group learning, task-based learning, inquiry-based learning, etc.; while in the matter of the assessment for learning effectiveness, multiple assessments for the development of multiple intelligences are adapted. As such, the design and formulation of each and every subject must correspond to both the vision of the *MICSS Education Blueprint* and the recommendations of the *Main Standards* to break new ground for subject advancement.

2. Aims

MICSS education is a sustainable education industry; other than the dissemination of Chinese culture, it also ensures every student in Malaysian independent Chinese secondary schools develops holistically in terms of morality, intelligence, physical health, teamwork and aesthetics. Students are expected to sustain lifelong learning and to strive unremittingly for self-improvement as well as being inquiry-oriented, innovative, daring in response to unpredictable change, confident, and willing to work as a team. In this way, the students are capable of achieving their personal happiness and willing to strive relentlessly for the harmony, prosperity, development, freedom and equality of

their family, ethnic group, community and country to contribute successively.[1]

2.1. Junior Middle Level Curriculum Objectives

    a. To build up students' foundation on morality, intelligence, physical health, teamwork and aesthetics and to develop their capabilities complying with their own personality in the balance based on these basics;

    b. To nurture and train students on the capabilities and habits of learning how to learn, read and think to prepare for self-directed learning/active learning;

    c. To ensure students reach the basic level in knowledge, capability and attitude so as to further unleash their potential for distinctive achievements;

    d. To build up students' proactiveness and positive values towards living and life; and

    e. To create an environment for students to know about the languages, cultures and religions, etc. of the ethnic groups in the country so as to lead students to respect the pluralistic culture, recognise the reality of the country thus opening up global perspective.

2.2. Senior Middle Level Curriculum Objectives

    a. To suitably build up students' foundation on morality, intelligence, physical health, teamwork and aesthetics to get ready for their prospective, career, learning and living;

    b. To establish students' foundation on self-directed learning to further build up their capabilities on learning eagerness, independent thinking, critical thinking and innovation;

    c. To cultivate students with the will to seek excellence and be altruistic thus creating the prerequisites for greater happiness for oneself, community, country and humankind;

    d. To lead students to recognise themselves comprehensively and be confident and assured in the face of their society and era change;

    e. To nurture students' responsibility towards their own family, ethnic group, society and country and respect multiple cultures as well as broadening their global perspectives; and

    f. To create opportunities for students to partake proactively in various ethnic group activities, and ensure them to be able to interact and learn in cross-cultural environment.

3. Core Competencies

    This main curriculum standards (Trial Version) is forwarded based on the six core competencies[2] (*MICSS Education Blueprint*), including the three supplementary core competencies in response to the curriculum development of Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools, which totals up to nine core competencies as shown in Figure 1. Further explanation is touched on in the design of Senior Middle Level curriculum development. The core competencies emphasise integrated elements

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[1] Dong Zong. (2018). *Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Blueprint* (p.49). United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong).

[2] Dong Zong. (2018). *Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary School Education Blueprint* (pp.40-41). United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong).

that cover knowledge, capabilities and attitude.

Figure 1

Framework for MICSS Core Competencies

Figure 1 shows that MICSS curriculum development cultivates lifelong learners. The structure expanded into three curriculum principles that empower children to attain achievement, namely self-directed learning, communication and collaboration as well as social participation. The outer ring of the core competency structure is presented in a colour spectrum, revealing the integration of nine competencies with the three curriculum principles. The misalignment of the inner and outer circle further clarifies that the implementation of each competency incorporates the three major curriculum principles. Based on the principle of integration and feasibility, the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* promote each competency with three curriculum principles. Table 1 presents the core competencies and their definitions.

Table 1

MICSS Core Competencies and Definitions

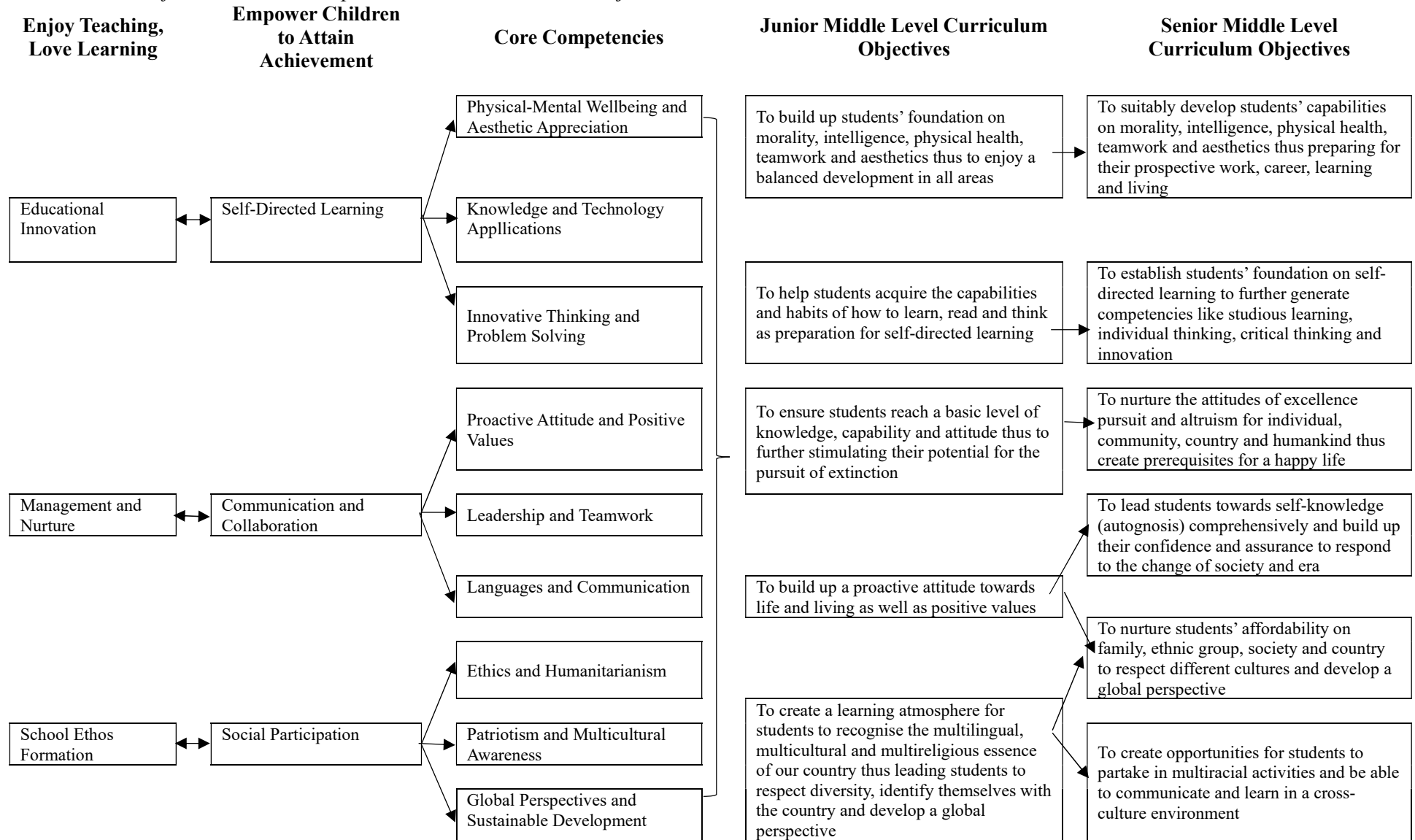| Curriculum Principle	Core Competencies	Definitions	Junior Middle Level	Senior Middle Level	Student Outcome
A. Self-Directed Learning	A1. Physical-Mental Wellbeing and Aesthetic Appreciation	She/He possesses the capability to take care of personal mental and spiritual health and knows how to appreciate the best parts in life, and can reflect on her/his experience in learning and growing thus adjusting stages of pursuits in career development. This way, it not only benefits mental and spiritual growth but also exerts proactiveness in creating happiness for her/his own life.	She/He is well informed of personal mental and spiritual health, knows the uniqueness of aesthetics and can discover personal value in living to exert richness and aesthetics thus experiencing the meaning of life proactively.	She/He possesses the competency and is informed of the approaches to promote her/his physical and mental wellbeing; she/he knows how to appreciate the true goodness of people and entities, affirm the personal value and realise professional pursuits, including how to enrich life by applying aesthetics in daily life, and relentlessly seek self-improvement to transcend herself/himself thus to create a happy personal life.	One who cares about herself/himself
	A2. Knowledge and Technology Applications	She/He possesses literacy and numeracy and living skills as well as acquiring the three languages, core subjects like Mathematics and History, etc. She/He knows and learns knowledge of other domains, leverages Information Technology to communicate, interact and express for comprehensive development; meanwhile, she/he applies these in real life for better learning outcomes thus resolving difficulties in learning.	She/He possesses the fundamentals of knowledge and various symbols and commands the application of Information Technology to sense problems in daily life and is able to communicate, experience and practice in such circumstances.	She/He possesses the ability to make use of various symbols to express and is literate in Information Technology and can focus on and deepen the particular field of knowledge to exchange experience, and express thoughts and values in innovative problem-solving.	One who is knowledgeable
	A3. Innovative Thinking and Problem Solving	She/He possesses inquisitive, critical and inferential capabilities and can use her/his creativity to monitor her/his self-directed learning skills to tackle or solve problems in living and life thus deciding on a response to social changes.	She/He possesses the capabilities of self-directed learning, inquiry-based learning, critical and inferential and innovative higher-order thinking thus using appropriate strategies to resolve and tackle daily life problems and issues.	She/He can consolidate inquiry-based learning, critical thinking and innovative higher-order thinking, and can practise active learning as well as expressing her/his creativity to further inquire into unknown realms and solve all sorts of issues and challenges in the face of daily life on this basis.	One who can solve problems

Curriculum Principle	Core Competencies	Definitions	Junior Middle Level	Senior Middle Level	Student Outcome
B. Communication and Collaboration	B1. Proactive Attitude and Positive Values	She/He possesses values like respect, voluntary accountability, studious and positive values to confront challenges generated in daily life and the learning process. She/ He also recognises the importance of fulfilling social responsibility and has the courage to make a clear and appropriate judgement when confronted with dilemmas and can learn to face discrepancies as well managing conflicts.	She/He inquires about the personal and environmental values and senses the discrepancies between them. She/He learns to live with discrepancies and build up respect, responsibility, studious attitudes and positive values in life.	She/He deepens her/his attitudes and values thus to respect, care and appreciate others' discrepancies, and can fumble on the differences of values between oneself and the existence and learn to tackle confrontation, affirm and practise positive values and competency; she/he braves to make a proper judgment in the face of difficulties and challenges.	One who cares about others
	B2. Leadership and Teamwork	She/He possesses the capability to lead and can effectively work and build up an interactive relationships with others thus developing teamwork competencies of communication, negotiation and service.	She/He possesses the basic self-directed capability and good habits and is happy to interact thus building up good collaborative relationships and can complete tasks through collaboration.	She/He possesses compassion, personal judgment, gregarious capability and attitude; meanwhile, she/he develops communicative co-operation and teamwork competency; she/he can get along well with others collaboratively, and is able to complete the assignment well with advanced planning.	One who knows the importance of teamwork
	B3. Languages and Communication	She/He possesses the background knowledge of culture, tradition and religion and can make use of Chinese learned, together with the command of Bahasa Melayu towards patriotism and love for community and is versed in English for international linkage. When it permits, she/he will master more languages and use these languages in different situations for optimal effect.	She/He possesses the background knowledge of culture, tradition, religion and can make use of Chinese learned, together with the command of both Bahasa Melayu and English to make friends from different ethnic groups thus enhancing the four skills in language learning and eventually realise the importance of language as a medium of cultural dissemination and communication.	She/He is well versed in Chinese and possesses appreciative competency to enrich her/his knowledge of local and exotic cultures, lifestyles and religions through the learning of Bahasa Melayu and English. If it permits, she/he will equip herself/himself with more additional languages in the face of academic pursuits and professional development.	One who is skillful in communication

Curriculum Principle	Core Competencies	Definitions	Junior Middle Level	Senior Middle Level	Student Outcome
C. Social Participation	C1. Ethics and Humanitarianism	She/He practices good morality and can manage her/his own behaviours and understand that it is a social responsibility to promote personal competencies. She/He can appreciate, is compassionate and respect others for their freedom of speech.	She/he practices well on good morality and can suitably reflect her/his own behaviours; she/he can likewise sustain and modify her/his initiated voluntary proactiveness and is willing to listen to different views, way of expression and respect others' decisions.	She/He possesses the correct attitude towards ethical and public issues and presents herself/himself as someone who treats others generously and is severe with herself/himself and expresses her/his care towards society through rational expression and care and learns to judge public issues from different aspects and angles.	One who is open-minded
	C2. Patriotism and Multicultural Awareness	She/He possesses the cultural identity of her/his own culture, understands and respects others' culture thus merging herself/himself in a multicultural environment, recognise the history of her/his country and realise the multiplicity of the country and is proud of herself/himself as a Malaysian who has civic awareness and responsibility safeguarding the harmony of the country for national unity and integration.	She/He is well versed in her/his own culture, understands and accepts the culture of other ethnic groups; she/he respects discrepancies, cares about national issues, and is proactive in community construction and is ready to be of service to others.	She/He identifies her/his cultural identity, respects and appreciates the discrepancies between cultures; she/he has civil awareness and knows her/his responsibilities; she/he safeguards national harmony and promotes the spirit of national consolidation and is proactive in the development of her/his community and country to confer benefits on society.	A patriot and one who loves her/his community
	C3. Global Perspectives and Sustainable Development	She/he has the competency of caring for world issues and international relationships and also cares about the environment, economics and social problems. She/He walks her/his talk in the protection of the environment, her/his and others' living mode and sustains the concept of sustainable development and cherishes resources on earth.	She/He is informed of global issues and international relationships and can express herself/himself on environmental, economic and social problems. She/He cherishes the living of resources appreciation and cares about the environment and social justice-related issues.	She/He possesses the ability to express her/his own views on global issues and international relationships and can debate on the environment, economy and social problems; She/He can keep her/his word and not bring harm to the environment, people and lifestyle; she/he is willing to partake charity campaigns such as environmental protection and social justice.	One who knows the importance of sustainable development

Figure 2

The Relation of Vision, Core Competencies and Curriculum Objectives

Enjoy Teaching, Love Learning	Empower Children to Attain Achievement	Core Competencies	Junior Middle Level Curriculum Objectives	Senior Middle Level Curriculum Objectives
Educational Innovation	Self-Directed Learning	Physical-Mental Wellbeing and Aesthetic Appreciation	To build up students' foundation on morality, intelligence, physical health, teamwork and aesthetics thus to enjoy a balanced development in all areas	To suitably develop students' capabilities on morality, intelligence, physical health, teamwork and aesthetics thus preparing for their prospective work, career, learning and living
		Knowledge and Technology Appllications		
		Innovative Thinking and Problem Solving	To help students acquire the capabilities and habits of how to learn, read and think as preparation for self-directed learning	To establish students' foundation on self-directed learning to further generate competencies like studious learning, individual thinking, critical thinking and innovation
Management and Nurture	Communication and Collaboration	Proactive Attitude and Positive Values	To ensure students reach a basic level of knowledge, capability and attitude thus to further stimulating their potential for the pursuit of extinction	To nurture the attitudes of excellence pursuit and altruism for individual, community, country and humankind thus create prerequisites for a happy life
		Leadership and Teamwork		To lead students towards self-knowledge (autognosis) comprehensively and build up their confidence and assurance to respond to the change of society and era
		Languages and Communication	To build up a proactive attitude towards life and living as well as positive values	
School Ethos Formation	Social Participation	Ethics and Humanitarianism		To nurture students' affordability on family, ethnic group, society and country to respect different cultures and develop a global perspective
		Patriotism and Multicultural Awareness	To create a learning atmosphere for students to recognise the multilingual, multicultural and multireligious essence of our country thus leading students to respect diversity, identify themselves with the country and develop a global perspective	
		Global Perspectives and Sustainable Development		To create opportunities for students to partake in multiracial activities and be able to communicate and learn in a cross-culture environment

4. Fundamental Principles

Junior Middle English Curriculum Standards is designed with Generation Alpha in mind. Generation Alpha is the generation of children born between 2010 (the same year iPad and Instagram were born) and 2025. Generation Alpha is the first generation born entirely in the 21st century. Many of them are born an only child, or one of few children, in a nuclear family at a time of falling fertility and rising longevity rates across much of the world. They are raised on digital technology, electronic devices, social networks, online games and artificial intelligence. They are growing up during the global Covid-19 pandemic and global warming. This means they may have lived through lockdowns, virtual schooling, social distancing, isolation and extreme weather events as young children. With all these come positive and negative, known and potential, impacts on their learning and attitudes. They are likely to be highly technologically literate, constantly connected, well informed and materially endowed. However, they may also face challenges such as screen addiction, shorter attention spans, instant gratification, cyberbullying and delayed social skills. Hence, the aim is to develop a curriculum that takes into consideration their needs and interests in order to develop in them a love for learning English and a desire to find out more, thus also reflecting the *MICSS Education Blueprint 2018*'s vision—to develop in students a lifelong love of learning.

The *Junior Middle 1 English student's book*, born from this curriculum standards, is likely to be first used by Generation Alpha in Malaysian independent Chinese secondary schools in 2027. In 2027, the English language remains to be taught as a second language in Malaysian independent Chinese secondary schools. Nevertheless, English remains a compulsory subject in the MICSS curriculum. Hence, the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* aims for MICSS students to be proficient in not only Chinese and Bahasa Melayu, but also English.

The *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* aspires that, through English, students are able to express their own and understand others' thoughts, ideas and feelings. Through English, they are also able to access more knowledge and information within and outside the country. They also broaden their horizons on different beliefs and cultures so that they understand and appreciate diversity. They also learn about contemporary social, economic and environmental issues. They learn about sustainable development and global values. Through English, students learn to have positive values and a proactive attitude. Equally importantly, through learning English, students also learn problem-solving, creative thinking and critical thinking skills which lead to self-directed learning. They also learn to collaborate and work within a team. They learn to give back to their community and make a positive impact. They learn not only pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary of English, but also its culture, traditions and customs. All these MICSS core competencies enable students to develop holistically in their moral, academic, physical, social and aesthetic capabilities.

It is therefore essential for students to be proficient in English. To develop students' proficiency in English, it is essential to develop the following basic and essential skills in the course of their lower-secondary education, i.e. Junior Middle 1, 2 and 3 English. These basic and essential skills include speaking, listening, writing, reading, grammar, vocabulary, children's literature and adolescent literature.

Junior Middle English is a bridge between primary-school English and upper-secondary

English, i.e. Senior Middle 1, 2 and 3 English. Junior Middle English aims to provide a transition from primary-school English to a more advanced level of English. Junior Middle English also aims to prepare students to use English with increasing proficiency for progressing to Senior Middle English. In other words, Junior Middle English in turn becomes the foundation for Senior Middle English.

5. Curriculum Objectives

The Junior Middle English curriculum is moving towards competency-based learning which focuses on the holistic development of students. In competency-based learning, students will be given a set of competencies they need to master. These competencies are set as curriculum objectives or learning outcomes for students. These competencies are based on acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes, and apply them to real-life situations. Students need to demonstrate they have mastered the competencies defined in the curriculum objectives before they can advance to the next level of learning.

The core aim of the Junior Middle English curriculum is for students to develop the following knowledge, skills and/or attitudes:
1) Listen to a variety of topics to obtain information and respond appropriately.
2) Speak to communicate information, thoughts, ideas and feelings with increasingly fluency.
3) Read, understand and respond to a variety of texts on a range of different topics.
4) Write in different genres to convey information, thoughts, ideas and feelings with increasing accuracy.
5) Apply standard English grammar in different contexts.
6) Use an increasingly wide range of standard English vocabulary and use context clues to determine word meaning.
7) Read and respond to children's and/or adolescent literature.
8) Enjoy learning English.
9) Have a global perspective.

The Junior Middle English curriculum also aims to reflect nine MICSS core competencies (see Table 2 for detail) which in turn aims to implement three MICSS curriculum principles—self-directed learning, communication and collaboration, and social participation. It is important to inculcate these important attitudes and values through the teaching of English.

Table 2
Alignment of MICSS Core Competencies and Curriculum Objectives

Core Competencies		Curriculum Objectives	
		After having completed Junior Middle English, students are able to:	
A Self-Directed Learning	A1: Physical-Mental Wellbeing and Aesthetic	CO1	know and appreciate physical and mental wellbeing as well as the beauty of English language and literature, discover self-worth in everyday life, appreciate the richness and beauty

	Appreciation		of life, and have a positive outlook on life.
	A2: Knowledge and Technology Applications	CO2	gain basic knowledge of the English language and literature, as well as use information technology tools for learning, accessing current issues and communicating in English.
	A3: Innovative Thinking and Problem Solving	CO3	develop active learning, and higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking and innovative thinking, as well as use appropriate methods to solve problems.
B Communication and Collaboration	B1: Proactive Attitude and Positive Values	CO4	explore, be aware of and appreciate own and other's values, as well as develop respectful, independent, responsible and inquisitive attitudes and positive values.
	B2: Leadership and Teamwork	CO5	show independence and good habits, enjoy interactions, build collaborative relationships, as well as accomplish goals through teamwork and collaboration.
	B3: Languages and Communication	CO6	listen, speak, read and write in English to communicate interculturally.
C Social Participation	C1: Ethics and Humanitarianism	CO7	show good moral characters, reflect on own behaviours, know that change begins with oneself, listen to different opinions and respect different choices.
	C2: Patriotism and Multicultural Awareness	CO8	understand and appreciate own culture and other cultures, respect diversity, concern about national affairs, participate in community development and be of service to others.
	C3: Global Perspectives and Sustainable Development	CO9	be aware of global issues and international trends, express views about environmental, economic and social issues, concern about the environment and social justice, as well as live out environmental care.

6. Curriculum Design

As shown in Table 3, Junior Middle English is a compulsory subject which will be studied for 3 hours 20 minutes a week (5 class periods X 40 minutes) during Junior Middle 1, 2 and 3. Dong Zong provides the Junior Middle English curriculum and *Junior Middle 1, 2 and 3 English student's books*, *teacher's books* and *workbooks* for this compulsory subject.

Table 3

Junior Middle English Curriculum Timetable

Category	Area of Study	Subject	Junior Middle 1 Class Period Per Week	Junior Middle 2 Class Period Per Week	Junior Middle 3 Class Period Per Week	Class Hours Per Week
Dong Zong Compulsory	Languages	English	5	5	5	3 hours 20 minutes

The Junior Middle English curriculum is designed with the following approaches; namely, theme-based curriculum, cross-curricular curriculum, language-skill-based curriculum, and learning English through literature.

6.1. Theme-based Curriculum

The Junior Middle English curriculum is guided by a series of themes that reflect MICSS nine core competencies, as listed below.

- Physical-Mental Wellbeing and Aesthetic Appreciation
- Knowledge and Technology Applications
- Innovative Thinking and Problem Solving
- Proactive Attitude and Positive Values
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Languages and Communication
- Ethics and Humanitarianism
- Patriotism and Multicultural Awareness
- Global Perspectives and Sustainable Development

The theme-based curriculum involves students learning through one central topic. It will link together English and other subjects (e.g., science, business, geography, history, arts, and many more) through a theme-based topic. The theme-based topic could have strong links to one subject; for example, a science, and also sustainable development (i.e. one of the MICSS core competencies), theme-based topic could be 'Green Energy'. The theme-based curriculum helps to inspire students to learn any subject through the teaching of one topic. Essentially, English is a key to open the doors of knowledge and open up a new world.

6.2. Cross-Curricular Curriculum

Hence, the themed-based Junior Middle English curriculum is also cross-curricular. A series of cross-curricular themes are taught through topics. The goal of cross-curricular curriculum is to incorporate the knowledge, skills and attitudes of other subjects into teaching English. One easy way is to combine reading instructions with other subjects. For example, teachers give students informational texts about content in other subjects such as science, business, geography, history, arts, and many more. Students are therefore learning the content of other subjects while practising reading skills their teachers are teaching.

Thus, the theme-based curriculum helps introduce students to different subjects and highlights the relationship of knowledge across academic disciplines and everyday life. While studying English language, students also learn the transferrable skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar and vocabulary. In other words, students learn to apply these English language skills across different subjects in order to learn across different subjects.

6.3. Language-Skill-based Curriculum

Hence, English language skills are taught through overarching themes and topics as well as literature. The Junior Middle English curriculum focuses on English language skills of listening, speaking, writing, reading, grammar and vocabulary. The language-skill-based curriculum will take students from basic to intermediate to advanced knowledge and skills to help them to become proficient in English step by step.

Students learn basic English language skills in primary school years. Upon this basis, the Junior Middle English curriculum aims to enable students to build on, consolidate and develop further the basic English language skills they have learned in primary school. The main focus of the Junior Middle English curriculum is to build a solid foundation at lower-secondary level in English for students progressing on to Senior Middle English. Although the medium of instruction in Malaysian independent Chinese secondary schools is Chinese, English is a compulsory subject in the MICSS curriculum to enable students to communicate interculturally, gain further knowledge and skills, and look at the world from multiple perspectives.

Language is basic to communication. We need language to exchange information, ideas, thoughts and feelings. Knowledge and culture are also stored and transmitted in either spoken or written language. Hence, language is basic in education as language is basic to all subjects in school. Thus, control of language is basic.

6.4. Learning English Through Literature

Learning English is more than learning its pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Learning English is also learning its culture, traditions and customs. Stories written for children and adolescents represent a wide range of cultures, experiences and backgrounds. Children's and adolescent literature gives students appreciation about their own cultural heritage and cultures of

other people. Literature is a mirror in which students can see themselves reflected, and also a window through which students learn to accept other people and their differences.

Learning English through children's and adolescent literature can be a fun and effective way to expand vocabularies, develop reading skills, and think about important issues. Children's and adolescent literature, such as classic stories and stories written by popular authors, can captivate readers for many generations, spark imaginations and stimulate creativity. Many classic stories transmit important morals, values, attitudes and beliefs from one generation to the next. Children's and adolescent literature encourages students to form own opinions, share thoughts and feelings about a story, develop relationships with people, promote respect for self and others, develop moral code, and foster personality. Children's and adolescent literature encourages students to be caring, considerate, responsible and friendly people. Teachers should therefore help students explore the beauty of English language, and foster a love of English literature from a young age.

7. Curriculum Content

The psychomotor, cognitive and affective competencies in Section 5 are set as curriculum objectives for students. These curriculum objectives guide the design of Content Standards and Learning Standards. The Content Standards and Learning Standards specifies and details what competencies students need to learn and master (see Tables 4, 5a and 5b). Learning Standards also specifies how mastery is defined (see Tables 5a, 5b, 6a and 6b). Performance Standards in turn describes how students will be assessed (see Table 7).

Table 4 shows the detailed breakdown of language skills, language system and literary work. Under language skills, for example, the listening section includes six different spoken genres such as conversations, discussions, interviews, news reports, presentations and speeches. The listening section also focuses on two different question types; namely, listening for main idea and listening for detail. In addition, the listening section also includes note-taking skills.

Table 4
Content Standards

Content	Item	Details

1. Language Skills	1.1. Listening	1.1.1. The listening section includes different spoken genres:
		    1.1.1.1. Conversations
		    1.1.1.2. Discussions
		    1.1.1.3. Interviews
		    1.1.1.4. News Reports
		    1.1.1.5. Presentations
		    1.1.1.6. Speeches
		1.1.2. The listening section focuses on the following question types:
		    1.1.2.1. Listening for Main Idea

		1.1.2.2. Listening for Detail 1.1.3. The listening section includes note-taking skills

	1.2. Speaking	1.2.1. The speaking section includes different spoken genres:
		    1.2.1.1. Discussions
		    1.2.1.2. Interviews
		    1.2.1.3. News Reports
		    1.2.1.4. Presentations
		    1.2.1.5. Listening & Responding
		1.2.2. The speaking section includes different common speech acts (pragmatics):
		    1.2.2.1. Greetings
		    1.2.2.2. Farewells
		    1.2.2.3. Thanks
		    1.2.2.4. Invitations
		    1.2.2.5. Requests
		    1.2.2.6. Refusals
		    1.2.2.7. Apologies
		    1.2.2.8. Compliments
		    1.2.2.9. Complaints
		    1.2.2.10. Advice
		    1.2.2.11. Suggestions
		    1.2.2.12. Other speech acts deemed as suitable

	1.3. Reading	1.3.1. The reading section includes different written genres:
		    1.3.1.1. Articles
		    1.3.1.2. Reports
		    1.3.1.3. Magazines
		    1.3.1.4. Advertisements
		    1.3.1.5. Notices /Announcement
		    1.3.1.6. Processes & Procedures
		    1.3.1.7. Product Descriptions
		    1.3.1.8. Emails
		    1.3.1.9. Messages
		    1.3.1.10. Blogs
		1.3.2. The reading section focuses on the following question types:
		    1.3.2.1. Reading for Main Idea
		    1.3.2.2. Reading for Detail
		    1.3.2.3. Reading for Inference
		    1.3.2.4. Vocabulary in Context

	1.4. Writing	1.4.1. The writing section includes different sentence structures (syntax):
		    1.4.1.1. Sentences VS Non-Sentences
		    1.4.1.2. Simple Sentences
		    1.4.1.3. Compound Sentences
		    1.4.1.4. Complex Sentences
		1.4.2. The writing section includes writing a summary (written genre):
		    1.4.2.1. Summarising
		    1.4.2.2. Paraphrasing
		1.4.3. The writing section focuses on the following essay types (written genres):
		    1.4.3.1. Factual /Descriptive
		    1.4.3.2. Opinion /Persuasive
		    1.4.3.3. Narrative
		1.4.4. The writing section includes informal and formal emails (written genres)
		1.4.5. The writing section includes how to fill in forms (written genres)

2. Language System	2.1. Vocabulary	The vocabulary section includes the following vocabulary types (semantics): 2.1.1. Vocabulary Definitions 2.1.2. Synonyms 2.1.3. Antonyms 2.1.4. Idioms/Proverbs
	2.2. Grammar	The grammar section includes the following grammatical items (morphology and syntax): 2.2.1. Nouns 2.2.2. Pronouns 2.2.3. Articles 2.2.4. Adjectives 2.2.5. Verbs 2.2.6. Adverbs 2.2.7. Prepositions 2.2.8. Conjunctions 2.2.9. Active VS Passive Voice 2.2.10. Conditionals 2.2.11. Modals 2.2.12. Determiners 2.2.13. Gerunds 2.2.14. Infinitives 2.2.15. Subject-Verb Agreement

| | | 2.2.16. Tenses:
   2.2.16.1. Present Simple
   2.2.16.2. Present Continuous
   2.2.16.3. Past Simple
   2.2.16.4. Past Continuous
   2.2.16.5. Present Perfect
   2.2.16.6. Present Perfect Continuous
   2.2.16.7. Past Perfect
   2.2.16.8. Past Perfect Continuous
   2.2.16.9. Future Simple
2.2.17. Other grammatical items deemed as suitable |
| 3. Literary Work | 3.1. Literature | The literature section includes the following literary types:
3.1.1. Excerpts of Fiction
3.1.2. Short Stories
3.1.3. Poems
3.1.4. Comics /Graphic Novels
3.1.5. Translated Chinese Short Stories /Comics
3.1.6. Translated Melayu Short Stories |

Tables 5a, 5b, 6a and 6b show in detail which and how psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills are incorporated in the Junior Middle English curriculum for the holistic development of students.

Table 5a

Learning Standards

Domain	Psychomotor (P)	Cognitive (C)	Affective (A)
Item	Pa: Listening	Ca: Language Skills	Aa: Physical-Mental Wellbeing and Aesthetic Appreciation
	Pb: Speaking	Cb: Language System	Ab: Proactive Attitude and Positive Values
	Pc: Reading	Cc: Literature	Ac: Leadership and Teamwork
	Pd: Writing		Ad: Global perspectives and Sustainable Development

Domain	Item	Description
		Ae: Self-Directed Learning

Table 5b

Description of Items in Learning Standards

Domain	Item	Description
Psychomotor (P)	Pa: Listening	I. listen, recognize, improve listening, adapt listening and naturalise listening to pronunciation of words, phrases and sentences from audio media or recordings, conversations, discussions, interviews, news reports, presentations and speeches.
	Pb: Speaking	I. imitate, say, improve saying, adapt saying and naturalise saying words, phrases and sentences in various speech acts, discussions, interviews, news reports, presentations, and listening & responding.
	Pc: Reading	I. imitate, read, improve reading, adapt reading and naturalise reading words, phrases and sentences in articles, reports, magazines, advertisements, notices/announcement, processes & procedures, product descriptions, emails, messages and blogs.
	Pd: Writing	I. imitate, write with guidance or from memory, improve writing, adapt writing and naturalise writing words, phrases, sentences in summary, essays, emails and forms.
Cognitive (C)	Ca: Language Skills	I. Listening Skills: (1) listen to and understand conversations, discussions, interviews, news reports, presentations and speeches. (2) know, understand and apply listening skills (i.e. listening for main idea, listening for detail and note-taking)

			to a variety of text types on different topics.
			II. Speaking Skills: (1) speak in, understand and respond to discussions, interviews, news reports, presentations, listening & responding. (2) speak, understand, respond to, distinguish and choose different common speech acts in different contexts (i.e. greetings, farewells, thanks, invitations, requests, refusals, apologies, compliments, complaints, advice and suggestions). III. Reading Skills: (1) read and understand articles, reports, magazines, advertisements, notices/announcement, processes & procedures, product descriptions, emails, messages and blogs. (2) know, understand, apply and analyse reading skills (i.e. reading for main idea, reading for detail, reading for inference and vocabulary in context) to a variety of text types on different topics. IV. Writing Skills: (1) know, understand and write different sentence structures (i.e. simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences). (2) know, understand and write summary, factual essay, descriptive essay, opinion essay, persuasive essay, narrative essay, informal email, formal email and fill in forms.

	Cb: Language System	I. Vocabulary: (1) know, understand and apply vocabulary, synonyms, antonyms and idioms/proverbs learnt. II. Grammar: (1) know, understand and apply various grammatical items and tenses learnt (i.e. nouns, pronouns, articles, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, active VS passive voice, conditionals, modals, determiners, gerunds, infinitives, subject-verb agreement, present simple, present continuous, past simple, past continuous, present perfect, present perfect continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous, future simple).
	Cc: Literature	I. read, understand, examine, analyse and evaluate excerpts of fictions, short stories, poems and comics/graphic novels.
Affective (A)	Aa: Physical-Mental Wellbeing and Aesthetic Appreciation	I. receive information about, practise and value physical-mental wellbeing and aesthetic appreciation through listening, speaking, reading, writing and/or literature lessons and/or activities.
	Ab: Optimistic Mindset and Positive Values	I. receive information about, practise and value an optimistic mindset and positive values through listening, speaking, reading, writing and/or literature lessons and/or activities.
	Ac: Leadership and Teamwork	I. receive information about, practise and value leadership and teamwork through listening, speaking, reading, writing and/or literature lessons and/or activities.
	Ad: Global perspectives and Sustainable Development	I. receive information about, practise and value global perspectives and sustainable development through listening, speaking,

	reading, writing and/or literature lessons and/or activities.		
Ae: Self-Directed Learning	I. receive information about, practise and value the transferrable English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary to learn about different topics across different subjects.		

Tables 6a and 6b give examples of how psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills are incorporated in the content of the Junior Middle English curriculum (i.e. language skills, language system and literary work).

Table 6a

First Example of Alignment of Content Standards with Learning Standards

Learning Standards / Content Standards	Psychomotor	Cognitive	Affective
	PcI imitate, read, improve reading, adapt reading and naturalise reading words, phrases and sentences in articles.	**CaIII2** read and understand articles.	**AdI** receive information about, practise and value sustainable development through reading lessons and/or activities.
4.1. Sustainable development	imitate, read, improve reading and naturalise reading words, phrases and sentences in articles about 'Green Energy'.	read and understand articles about 'Green Energy'.	receive information about, practise, and value sustainable development through reading lessons and/or activities.

Table 6b

Second Example of Alignment of Content Standards with Learning Standards

Learning Standards	Psychomotor	Cognitive	Affective
	PdI imitate, write with guidance or from	**CaIV2** know, understand and write essays	**AeI** receive information about, practise and

Content Standards	memory, improve writing, adapt writing and naturalise writing words, phrases, sentences in essays.	about different topics across different subjects.	value the transferrable English language skill to write about different topics across different subjects.
4.2. Self-Directed Learning	imitate, write with guidance or from memory, improve writing, adapt writing and naturalise writing words, phrases, sentences in a descriptive essay.	know, understand and write a descriptive essay on cyberbullying.	receive information about, practise and value the transferrable English language skill to write a descriptive essay on cyberbullying.

8. Pedagogical Suggestions

MICSS students learn English as a second language in a non-English-speaking environment. English is difficult for some students to learn fluently, when they have not grown up speaking it. Some students might be nervous, frustrated or intimidated to speak and write English. Hence, it is important to make Junior Middle English lessons interesting, fun and meaningful to motivate students to learn, to want to learn more and to enjoy learning.

Efforts will be made to include interesting topics, children's literature and adolescent literature in *Junior Middle English student's books* and to suggest interesting teaching activities in teacher's books. Nevertheless, it is only the teachers themselves who can make their lessons interesting by making learning English enjoyable, creating an inspirational study environment, and using innovative methods and engaging resources.

This section is divided into three parts (see Figure 3). The first part elaborates on four teaching methods; namely, Thematic Instruction, Inquiry-based Learning, Gamification in Learning and Cooperative Learning. The second part explains three teaching skills—classroom, online and outdoor teaching skills. The third part explains three types of knowledge—subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and curriculum knowledge.

Figure 3
Pedagogical Suggestions

Teaching Methods:	Thematic Instruction
	Inquiry-based Learning
	Gamification in Learning
	Cooperative Learning
Teaching Skills:	Classroom Teaching

	Online Teaching
	Outdoor Teaching
Knowledge Types:	Subject Matter Content Knowledge
	Pedagogical Knowledge
	Curriculum Knowledge

8.1. Teaching Methods

To make learning English interesting and rewarding, the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* suggests some teaching methods, as listed below.
- Thematic Instruction
- Inquiry-based Learning
- Gamification in Learning
- Cooperative Learning
- Project-based Learning
- Authentic Learning
- Multimedia Learning
- Differentiated Instruction
- Reading Clubs.

However, to save space, only Thematic Instruction, Inquiry-based Learning, Gamification in Learning and Cooperative Learning are elaborated below.

8.1.1. Thematic Instruction

Thematic instruction is a suitable teaching method to use for Junior Middle English curriculum which is a theme-based curriculum. Thematic instruction involves highlighting a specific theme and teaching specific topics within that theme. When teachers use the themes or topics in the Junior Middle English curriculum, they may need to locate additional resources and materials they will use to help students understand, explore, engage and learn different aspects of a theme or topic. They may then design relevant lesson plans that organise a variety of educational resources and activities; for example, theme-related or topic-related books and activities, primary source texts and images, group activities, field trips and many more. Teachers may also design intellectually engaging questions to help students not only learn key facts and content, but also develop critical analysis skills to discuss, defend and debate issues related to the themes or topics.

8.1.2. Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-based learning is an unorthodox method of learning that can make learning English interesting. It reverses the order of learning. Inquiry-based learning starts with students' curiosity. Curiosity encourages students to ask questions, investigate, discuss, collaborate, cooperate, debate, reflect and reach their own conclusions. Curiosity triggers an interest to learn, to understand something new, and to find out how and why it works. Curiosity thus makes learning more interesting and rewarding. If teachers keep the fire of curiosity alive in students, they may continue exploring topics they are interested in, and turn out to be lifelong learners who are brave enough to take the paths less trodden.

Although inquiry-based learning is a student-centred approach to learning, teachers remain close to students, supporting and supervising as needed. In cases where students are passive, teachers can start the inquiry process by introducing a topic or concept. Teachers may then encourage students to ask questions or help students to develop their ability to ask questions about the topic or concept. Teachers may also help students to develop their abilities to design investigations, propose hypotheses and make predictions. With appropriate teacher support, students may then take the initiative to find out answers, find evidence to support or disprove hypotheses, interpret evidence, form explanations or arguments, come to conclusions or answers to their questions, and present their outcomes to the class. Teachers may also need to guide or supervise the inquiry activities and discussions, clarify misconceptions, present further questions, encourage debate and reflection. To sum up, UNESCO recommends a four-step process to facilitate inquiry-based learning:

(1) set a challenge
(2) encourage active student investigations
(3) make generalisations
(4) reflect

Teachers may balance traditional teaching with inquiry-based learning. Depending on their students' needs, teachers may consider the following four models to introduce inquiry-based learning in their classroom.

(1) In Confirmation Inquiry, teachers provide a question, its answer and the method of reaching this answer. Teachers guide students through the investigation process to learn critical thinking and research skills.

(2) In Controlled Inquiry, teachers provide a question and an investigation method. Students use the method to find its answer.

(3) In Guided Inquiry, teachers provide a question. Students design their own investigation method to find its answer.

(4) In Open Inquiry, students, with appropriate teacher support, pose their original question and design their own investigation method to find its answer.

Inquiry-based learning develops transferable skills such as self-directed learning, communication, social interaction, problem-solving, critical thinking, argumentation and research skills. These transferable skills can be used to improve comprehension in every subject, and lead to lifelong learning.

Through inquiry-based learning, teachers and students may co-create learning experiences that connect the study of content to students' interests and futures. Although inquiry-based learning may take more time, students are more likely to deepen understanding of a concept, retain greater knowledge, and connect it to other subjects. It can also appeal to students who struggle to grasp certain concepts through traditional lessons and allow them to process certain concepts in different ways. When students explore and discover, they develop a love for learning.

8.1.3. Gamification In Learning

One benefit of gamification in learning is that students learn best when they are having fun. It

takes something many students like—gaming—and incorporates some features of gaming into lessons and activities to improve student engagement, enhance content comprehension and promote better retention of information. Gamification thus implements an element of play into study. Some examples of game-like elements or gaming strategies include, to name but a few:

- Narrative: gamification frequently uses storytelling to deliver new information to students.
- Avatars: gamification allows students to create their own classroom alter-egos with different powers to drive motivation and engagement.
- Competitions: gamification turns a task into a challenge or competition and creates competition with classmates, other classes or even with their teacher.
- Social Connection: gamification is good for social learning where students can work together with friends and compete against their scores, challenging each other to learn the most.
- Points: gamification encourages students to earn their points by completing tasks and meeting academic or non-academic objectives. It also encourages progress by showing students that goals and grades can be gradually worked towards.
- Levels: gamification helps students see their progress, when comparing and competing with others, and also see how progress can be achieved to reach goals.
- Instant Feedback: gamification allows right answers to be rewarded with positive reinforcement and wrong answers to be corrected quickly.
- Personalised Performance: gamification offers a personalised breakdown of each student at the end of each level, detailing achievements, points, strengths, weaknesses, and ways to self-assess and reflect on their performance.
- Badges: gamification awards students with badges (such as a virtual object, a pinned image on their profile or a printed badge) as a marker of success when they reach certain levels to acknowledge and reward them for their efforts.
- Leaderboards: gamification creates competition and hard work among students as they will want to see their name on top of a class-wide leaderboard or a yearlong online leaderboard.

In summary, gamification in learning involves using game-based elements such as competition, teamwork, point scoring, score tables and trophies to make for a game-like experience. These game-based elements can be applied to or incorporated into not only online, but also offline and physical teaching/learning activities. Teacher may use applications, websites, educational game-based learning platforms to implement gamification in learning English.

8.1.4. Cooperative Learning

Another suggested teaching method is cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is when students work together in pairs or small groups to accomplish a task, exercise, assignment, project or activity. Cooperative learning activities can be as follows, to name but a few.

- discussion
- role play
- group presentation
- debate
- group exercise
- group assignment

- group project
- Think-Pair-Share
- Four Corners
- Peer Tutoring
- Expert Jigsaw Group Work Rotation Method
- Three-Step Interview Method
- Round Robin Method
- Numbered Heads Together Method
- Pair Check (60-Second Peer Review)
- Fishbowl Discussion Strategy
- Choose Your Own Adventure
- Group Investigation
- Inner/Outer Circle Method
- Quiz-Quiz-Trade Method
- Reciprocal Teaching Method
- Peer Editing
- Team Scavenger Hunt
- Test-Teach-Test

Cooperative learning can be used from small to large classes, as well as in online classes. Cooperative learning can be divided into three types—formal, informal and cooperative base groups. Cooperative learning can be formal that involves students working together, for one class period to several weeks, to complete a shared goal. Cooperative learning can also be informal in which teachers quickly form temporary, ad-hoc groups, lasting from a few minutes to one class period, to complete an in-class exercise. In informal cooperative learning, for example, teachers can have introductory, intermittent and/or closure focused discussions before, during and/or after a lesson. In addition, teachers can also form long-term cooperative base groups, which can last up to a year or more, with members giving each other support, encouragement and assistance in completing a large-scale project.

Teachers' tasks in cooperative learning are to first assign students and their roles, then explain the task and instructions, listen to student discussions, monitor each group, intervene when needed to provide assistance, offer advice and guidance, assess students' achievement, feedback to students how well their groups functioned, teach needed social skills, and guide a broader class discussion.

Cooperative groups are usually organised to include a mix of students at different ability levels. In cooperative learning, students learn to interact with each other, contribute to their group's task, share and explain their views, help each other, resolve disagreements in a constructive manner, present end results to each other, listen to other groups' ideas, devise a plan of action and achieve their group's goal. In cooperative learning, students learn the importance of interdependence, cooperation, personal responsibility, individual accountability and group accountability. Students engage in cooperative learning may improve their understanding of a learning subject as well as develop and exercise critical thinking, problem solving, communication, interpersonal, conflict resolution, teamwork, project management and leadership skills.

8.2 Teaching Skills

To make learning English interesting and to help students reach their full psychomotor, cognitive and affective potentials, teachers need to be skilled in not only classroom teaching, but also online teaching and outdoor teaching, as suggested in the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards*.

8.2.1. Classroom Teaching

Teaching in the 21st Century, teachers need to embrace both traditional and non-traditional teaching/learning equipment, tools, technology aids and programmes to adapt their teaching process to benefit from the advantages brought by these educational tools. As technology changes constantly, it is important that teachers stay current with new trends and developments in both pedagogy and new technologies. Integrating some form of technology into the classroom can help teachers to offer students new ways of making learning more interesting, and preparing for future self-directed learning and technology skills. As technology continues to evolve in the 21st Century, teachers may need to update themselves regularly on changes and be open-minded about new ideas and new educational technologies, such as the following. These new educational technologies facilitate access to a multitude of the most recent information, innovative and interactive resources and activities.

- e-readers
- tablets
- smartboards
- educational websites
- presentation tools
- internet homework assignments
- class blogs
- interactive online quizzes
- online assessment platforms
- social media
- multimedia
- mobile technology
- cloud technology
- online educational games
- gamified learning apps
- infographics
- 3D printing
- interactive apps
- Artificial Intelligence
- Virtual Reality
- Augmented Reality

Technology integration is becoming predominant in the 21st Century. By taking small steps, teachers can start to enjoy the benefits that technology has to offer to their teaching and to student learning. Even with limited access, with careful planning, some risk taking and an open mind,

teachers can successfully use technology to enhance their teaching and create an interesting and enriched learning experience for their students.

8.2.2. Online Teaching

When classroom teaching is not possible, technology opens up new ways for teachers to connect with their students, interact face-to-face and deliver lessons in real-time through live online classes or pre-recorded video lessons. Online teaching has grown dramatically during recent years, particularly due to Covid-19 pandemic and the need for online education alternatives. As a result, both teachers and students are familiar with online teaching. To update their knowledge and skills, teachers may need to keep up with online teaching tools, platforms, mobile applications and software; for instance:

- work planning tools
- document management tools
- online communication tools
- video conferencing apps
- online whiteboards
- visuals
- graphic organisers
- social media channels
- online video tools
- presentation tools
- online quiz makers
- online homework platforms
- online assessment systems

8.2.3. Outdoor Teaching

Another suggestion to make learning English interesting is outdoor teaching. Outdoor environments can support students' psychomotor, cognitive and psychomotor development. For psychomotor aspect, outdoor environments are an ideal context for students to engage in physical activities and motor development which benefit their physical and mental health. For cognitive aspect, outdoor environments are also a good context for English language acquisition and development. In outdoor environments, for example, students can use English to name, describe, explain, question, compare and/or explore things, phenomena and/or actions they see and experience. For affective aspect, outdoor environments, particularly natural environments, are an authentic context which provide hands-on experiences for students to observe, explore, experience, discover and learn about different topics; for example, environmental awareness and sustainable development. A lot of students are also more likely to initiate and respond to interactions with peers and adults in the outdoors.

For outdoor teaching, teachers may need to plan, resource, facilitate and guide educational outdoor lessons and activities. Teachers may also need to plan and execute fun and informative school trips and fieldworks.

8.3. Knowledge Types

The *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* also suggests that teachers need to be equipped and upgraded with the following knowledge types; namely, subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and curriculum knowledge.

8.3.1. Subject Matter Content Knowledge

It is necessary that teachers master the subject matter content knowledge, and are able to help students understand the purposes of learning English and understand the world through English. The subject matter content knowledge encompasses English linguistics, transferrable language skills, topics in the Junior Middle English curriculum, children's literature and adolescent literature. As the subject matter content knowledge is developing rapidly, the information teachers convey to their students should always be up-to-date and reflect the latest developments.

8.3.2. Pedagogical Knowledge

Apart from the subject matter content knowledge, teachers should also be competent in pedagogical knowledge in order to convey their subject matter content knowledge to their students. Pedagogical knowledge refers to teachers' knowledge of teaching the subject matter content knowledge to help students understand the knowledge more effectively, and creating effective learning environments for students. The pedagogical knowledge includes the following:

- finding out student needs.
- knowing about curriculum resources and technologies.
- planning lessons.
- organising the subject matter content knowledge more effectively for students to understand.
- using appropriate teaching materials and media.
- diversifying teaching approaches.
- using the instruction time effectively.
- involving students actively in lessons.
- maintaining the order in the classroom.
- creating a participatory learning environment.
- communicating with students effectively.
- monitoring the development of students.
- providing feedback to students.
- evaluating students' learning achievement.
- reflecting and critically analysing their own teaching skills.
- investigating the effects of their own teaching on students' learning.
- collaborating with other teachers.
- continuing to update their knowledge and skills.

8.3.3. Curriculum Knowledge

It is also important for teachers to have curriculum knowledge. Curriculum knowledge is

knowledge of the content and aims of the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* and *Junior Middle English Curriculum Standards*. It is also knowledge of using the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* and *Junior Middle English Curriculum Standards* effectively. Teachers are anticipated to familiarise themselves with the curriculum objectives of *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards*, particularly the nine core competencies and five aspects of students' holistic development in their moral, academic, physical, social and aesthetic capabilities. Teachers are also anticipated to incorporate the MICSS core competencies and holistic capabilities into their lesson plans and learning activities.

9. Assessment Suggestions

As students' abilities are diverse, assessment methods should be diverse in order to measure the achievement of psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains. Diverse assessment methods contribute to the holistic development of students and help implement the nine MICSS core competencies.

The *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards* suggests that schools use a combination of formative and summative assessments in an effort to move on from an exam-oriented education. Formative assessment may comprise psychomotor, cognitive and affective assessments. On the other hand, summative assessment may focus more on cognitive assessment (see Figure 4).

Figure 4
Assessment Suggestions

Formative Assessment:	Psychomotor Assessment
	Cognitive Assessment
	Affective Assessment
Summative Assessment:	Cognitive Assessment

Hence, this section is organized into two main parts. The first part focuses on formative assessment suggestions which include psychomotor, cognitive and affective assessment suggestions. The second part focuses on summative assessment suggestions which focus on cognitive assessment.

9.1. Formative Assessment Suggestions

Teachers may use a variety of formative assessment tools, in the course of teaching and learning, to provide feedback in order to further learning. Formative assessment may or may not contribute towards a final mark. However, formative assessment enables teachers to check students' psychomotor, cognitive and affective development on a continuously basis, identify areas where students need to improve and provide feedback as necessary to help students to progress. It also enables teachers to evaluate their own teaching and plan for future lessons. On the other hand, formative assessment provides students with feedback on what they have learned well and what they may need to improve. This helps create a virtuous circle of teaching, learning, feedback and assessment to generate continuous improvement.

The following sections describe formative assessment suggestions that may be used to assess students' psychomotor, cognitive and affective development.

9.1.1. Formative Psychomotor Assessment Suggestions

Psychomotor skills are basic in learning a language. To learn English, students should learn to imitate, manipulate, make precise, articulate and naturalise their psychomotor skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Psychomotor ability may be measured by a proficiency level or a designated standard of accuracy, rapidity (reaction time) or smoothness. To assess students' psychomotor skills, teachers may consider the following suggestions.

- teacher observation:
  - participant versus non-participant
  - direct versus indirect
  - disguised versus undisguised
  - structured versus unstructured
  - human versus mechanical
- self-reports:
  - questionnaire
  - interview:
    - personal interview
    - telephone interview
    - focus group interview
    - depth interview
    - projective techniques
- rating scale:
  - descriptive rating scales
  - numerical rating scales
  - graphical rating scales
  - comparative rating scales
- feedback
- anecdotal records
- peer appraisal
- checklists
- Guess-Who approach
- sociometric approach

9.1.2. Formative Cognitive Assessment Suggestions

Cognitive assessment can be used to make teaching and learning more effective. Cognitive assessment is useful to find out if students can remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and/or create knowledge of English language and literature. To make teaching and learning more effective, teachers are encouraged to assess students both formally and informally using two main types of cognitive assessment for Junior Middle English; namely, formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative and summative assessments are complementary, each one adding further information about students' progress.

Below is a variety of day-to-day in-class formative assessment examples, which could be used

in combination with summative assessment, to improve learning and inform teaching. However, it is important to point out here that the *Junior Middle English Curriculum Standards* would not claim that the list of formative assessment examples presented in the *Junior Middle English Curriculum Standards* are exhaustive.

- interactive online tasks
- quick recap questions at the opening of a lesson
- Question and Answer during class
- regular short oral or written recap quizzes or tasks
- graphic organisers
- recitations
- Think-Pair-Share
- small group discussion
- oral presentations
- written assignments
- task sheets
- probing questions put to a student as they think something through
- verbal or written feedback given on students' work
- marking of students' written, oral or performance work
- checking of students' work
- observations
- self-evaluation
- peer reviews

9.1.3. Formative Affective Assessment Suggestions

Affective skills are as important as cognitive skills because learning behaviour is affected by learning attitude. Before or while learning psychomotor and cognitive skills, students should have positive attitudes towards learning the psychomotor and cognitive skills, believe their own ability to learn, feel positive about themselves, sustain their learning endeavours and exert effort to achieve. Affective skills are also important for students to be aware of, actively participate in, value, adapt to or adopt specific attitudes, behaviours, characters, interests and values such as the MICSS core competencies and UNESCO sustainable development goals. Hence, affective characteristics are also key to having a positive education.

Affective skills are often difficult to assess in quantifiable terms. Hence, affective assessment should not rely solely on one affective assessment tool. Instead, multiple assessment tools from multiple sources could be used to assess affective skills. For example, assessment of affective skills may be enhanced by acquiring information directly from the target students as well as from their parents, siblings, teachers, friends, peers and others who may know them well. Information that is more complete and consistent between sources is more likely to be valid and reliable. Some of the more commonly used assessment tools in the affective domain are as follows.

- teacher observations:
  - structured
  - unstructured

- peer ratings:
  - Guess-Who approach
  - sociometric approach
- self-reports
- self-checklists
- attitude checklist
- attitude questionnaire
- projective indicator
- adjective checklists
- assignments
- student journals
- reflection
- interviews
- case studies
- debates
- group discussions
- class activities
- surveys
- questionnaires
- Semantic Differential Scale
- Thurstone Scale
- Likert Scale

The following section will turn to summative assessment suggestions that can be used to assess students' cognitive development.

9.2. Summative Cognitive Assessment Suggestions

A variety of in-school summative assessment methods may also be used to acknowledge, record and report on how much a student has learned at the end of a period of study. Summative assessment counts towards a final mark and indicates level of understanding, knowledge, skill and ability. Summative assessment enables teachers to evaluate what students have learned well at the end of a period of study in order to help teachers to plan for subsequent teaching. On the other hand, summative assessment enables students to understand how well they have learned at the end of a period of study and how they can continue to improve. Summative assessment can take many forms including, but not restricted to:
- end-of-chapter or end-of-topic tests
- half-term assessments
- end-of-term assessments
- end-of-year examinations
- portfolio
- design and build a model
- create a work of art
- written assignments

- oral presentations
- poster presentations
- online MCQ (Multiple Choice Question) exams
- standardised national examinations
- standardised international examinations

Summative assessments usually cover a large domain of knowledge and are therefore expected to be used sparingly 2 to 4 times an academic year.

9.3. Performance Standards

The Performance Standards (see Tables 6, 7a and 7b for detail) provides a framework for assessing students' psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills on a variety of levels. It is a hierarchical framework that expects students to progress in a linear manner, beginning at the most basic-level psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills, having a good grasp of that level before moving on to the next, and ending at higher-level skills. In other words, teachers need to develop the most basic-level skills before they can introduce higher-level skills. Different levels require different teaching methods and assessment tools. Thus, the Performance Standards helps to maintain consistency between content, pedagogy and assessment tools. For Junior Middle English, students are expected to achieve at least the level of Naturalisation for psychomotor skills, the level of Understand or Apply for cognitive skills and the level of Valuing for affective skills at the end of Junior Middle 3 (see Table 6), although a higher level would be an advantage.

Table 6
Performance Standards

Domain	Item	Level	Performance Standards
Psychomotor (P)	Pa: Listening	1. Imitation	can listen and recognize—with increasing accuracy—pronunciation of words, phrases and sentences.
		2. Manipulation	can listen and recognise words, phrases and sentences from memory or following written or audible instructions.
		3. Precision	can listen and recognise words, phrases and sentences without help from others, to a high level of accuracy.
		4. Articulation	can adapt the way of listening and recognising words, phrases and

			sentences when faced with a complication, or to fit individual requirements.
		5. Naturalisation	can listen and recognise words, phrases and sentences without needing to think much about it.
	Pb: Speaking	1. Imitation	can observe and imitate—with increasing accuracy— pronunciation of words, phrases and sentences.
		2. Manipulation	can pronounce words, phrases and sentences from memory or following written or audible instructions.
		3. Precision	can pronounce words, phrases and sentences without help from others, to a high level of accuracy.
		4. Articulation	can adapt the way of pronouncing words, phrases and sentences when faced with a complication, or to fit individual requirements.
		5. Naturalisation	can pronounce words, phrases and sentences without needing to think much about it.
	Pc: Reading	1. Imitation	can observe and imitate—with increasing accuracy—reading of words, phrases and sentences.
		2. Manipulation	can read words, phrases and sentences from memory or following written or audible instructions.
		3. Precision	can read words, phrases and sentences without help from others, to a high level of accuracy.

		4. Articulation	can adapt the way of reading words, phrases and sentences when faced with a complication, or to fit individual requirements.
		5. Naturalisation	can read words, phrases and sentences without needing to think much about it.
	Pd: Writing	1. Imitation	can copy and imitate—with increasing accuracy—writing of words, phrases and sentences.
		2. Manipulation	can write words, phrases and sentences from memory or following written or audible instructions.
		3. Precision	can write words, phrases and sentences without help from others, to a high level of accuracy.
		4. Articulation	can adapt the way of writing words, phrases and sentences when faced with a complication, or to fit individual requirements.
		5. Naturalisation	can write words, phrases and sentences without needing to think much about it.
Cognitive (C)	Ca: Language Skills	1. Remember	can know and remember listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
		2. Understand	can understand and explain listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
		3. Apply	can apply listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to solve problems or respond to situations.

		4. Analyse	can critically analyse listening, speaking, reading and writing skills by examining different component parts of the language skills.
		5. Evaluate	can make judgements of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
		6. Create	can create new and original knowledge of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
	Cb: Language System	1. Remember	can know and remember grammar and vocabulary.
		2. Understand	can understand and explain grammar and vocabulary.
		3. Apply	can apply grammar and vocabulary to solve problems or respond to situations.
		4. Analyse	can critically analyse grammar and vocabulary by examining different component parts of the language system.
		5. Evaluate	can make judgements of grammar and vocabulary based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
		6. Create	can create new and original knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.
	Cc: Literature	1. Remember	can know and remember literature learnt.

		2. Understand	can understand and explain literature.
		3. Apply	can apply literature skills to solve problems or respond to situations.
		4. Analyse	can critically analyse literature by examining different component parts of the literature.
		5. Evaluate	can make judgements of literature based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
		6. Create	can create new and original knowledge of literature.
Affective (A)	Aa: Physical-Mental Wellbeing and Aesthetic Appreciation	1. Receiving	can pay attention to and be aware of physical-mental wellbeing and aesthetic appreciation.
		2. Responding	can show interest and actively participate in physical-mental wellbeing and aesthetic appreciation.
		3. Valuing	can believe in and accept physical-mental wellbeing and aesthetic appreciation.
		4. Organising & Conceptualising	can examine and adjust own behaviour to physical-mental wellbeing and aesthetic development.
		5. Characterising by Values	can adopt and act in line with physical-mental wellbeing and aesthetic appreciation.
	Ab: Optimistic Mindset and Positive Values	1. Receiving	can pay attention to and be aware of optimistic mindset and positive values.

		2.Responding	can show interest and actively participate in optimistic mindset and positive values.
		3.Valuing	can believe in and accept optimistic mindset and positive values.
		4.Organising & Conceptualising	can examine and adjust own behaviour to optimistic mindset and positive values.
		5.Characterising by Values	can adopt and act in line with optimistic mindset and positive values.
	Ac: Leadership and Teamwork	1.Receiving	can pay attention to and be aware of leadership and teamwork.
		2.Responding	can show interest and actively participate in leadership and teamwork.
		3.Valuing	can believe in and accept leadership and teamwork.
		4.Organising & Conceptualising	can examine and adjust own behaviour to leadership and teamwork.
		5.Characterising by Values	can adopt and act in line with leadership and teamwork.
	Ad: Global perspectives and Sustainable Development	1.Receiving	can pay attention to and be aware of global perspectives and sustainable development.
		2.Responding	can show interest and actively participate in global perspectives and sustainable development.
		3.Valuing	can believe in and accept global perspectives and sustainable development.

		4.Organising & Conceptualising	can examine and adjust own behaviour to global perspectives and sustainable development.
		5.Characterising by Values	can adopt and act in line with global perspectives and sustainable development.
	Ae: Self-Directed Learning	1.Receiving	can pay attention to and be aware of self-directed learning.
		2.Responding	can show interest and actively participate in self-directed learning.
		3.Valuing	can believe in and accept self-directed learning.
		4.Organising & Conceptualising	can examine and adjust own behaviour to self-directed learning.
		5.Characterising by Values	can adopt and act in line with self-directed learning.

Tables 7a and 7b give examples of how psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills in the content of the Junior Middle English curriculum (i.e. language skills, language system and literary work) can be assessed.

Table 7a
First Example of Alignment of Content Standards and Learning Standards with Performance Standards

Learning Standards / Content Standards	Psychomotor	Cognitive	Affective
	PcI imitate, read, improve reading, adapt reading and naturalise reading words, phrases and sentences in articles.	**CaIII2** read and understand articles.	**AdI** receive information about, practise and value sustainable development through reading lessons and/or activities.

4.1. Sustainable development	imitate, read, improve reading and naturalise reading words, phrases and sentences in articles about 'Green Energy'.	read and understand articles about 'Green Energy'.	receive information about, practise, and value sustainable development through reading lessons and/or activities.
Performance Standards	can read words, phrases and sentences in articles about 'Green Energy' without needing to think much about it.	can apply reading skills to read and understand articles about 'Green Energy'.	can be aware of, actively participate in, value, adapt to or adopt sustainable development.

Table 7b

Second Example of Alignment of Content Standards and Learning Standards with Performance Standards

Learning Standards / Content Standards	Psychomotor	Cognitive	Affective
	PdI imitate, write with guidance or from memory, improve writing, adapt writing and naturalise writing words, phrases, sentences in essays.	**CaIV2** know, understand and write essays about different topics across different subjects.	**AeI** receive information about, practise and value the transferrable English language skill to write about different topics across different subjects.
4.2. Self-Directed Learning	imitate, write with guidance or from memory, improve writing, adapt writing and naturalise writing words, phrases, sentences in a descriptive essay.	know, understand and write a descriptive essay on cyberbullying.	receive information about, practise and value the transferrable English language skill to write a descriptive essay on cyberbullying.

Performance Standards	can write words, phrases and sentences in a descriptive essay without needing to think much about it.	can apply writing skills to write a descriptive essay on cyberbullying.	can be aware of, actively participate in, value, adapt to or adopt self-directed learning.

10. Implementation Highlights

Below are some suggestions, particularly for schools and teachers, to implement the Junior Middle English curriculum effectively.

10.1. Schools

10.1.1. *MICSS Junior Middle English Student's Books*

MICSS Junior Middle English student's books should be a required textbook for MICSS students as they are written based on the *Junior Middle English Curriculum Standards*. Schools are suggested to use *MICSS Junior Middle English student's books* as a main teaching/learning material to support Dong Zong and to implement the visions and objectives set out in the *MICSS Main Curriculum Standards*.

10.1.2. Teacher Training

Continuous teacher training, professional development and on-the-job mentoring are important for teachers to stay up-to-date with the latest developments in teaching methods, teaching skills, knowledge types and assessment methods. Teachers also need to continuously upgrade their knowledge, skills and attitudes according to changes in education. It is therefore important for schools to understand teachers' areas of need and provide support for teachers to attend teacher training and professional development around teaching methods, teaching skills, knowledge types and assessment methods. These teacher training and professional development courses, conferences, seminars or workshops can be organised by educational institutes, Dong Zong and other organisations.

10.1.3. Resources

Teachers need their schools to provide new teaching/learning resources, particularly new educational hardware and software, for them to integrate technology and fun into classroom, online and outdoor teaching.

10.1.4. Outdoor Teaching

Teachers also need their schools' support in integrating outdoor teaching into school curriculum. Schools may also need to make good use of local facilities, amenities, resources and

people, as well as assist teachers in planning and executing outdoor teaching safely.

10.2. Teachers

10.2.1. Open-mindedness

Teachers are encouraged to be open-minded and willing to try new curriculum content, teaching methods, teaching skills, knowledge types and assessment methods suggested in the *Junior Middle English Curriculum Standards*.

10.2.2. Dong Zong e-learning Platform

Dong Zong e-learning platform (https://dongzong.my/elearning) is set up to supplement *MICSS Junior Middle English student's books*. Teachers are encouraged to use the additional exercises, activities and materials provided in Dong Zong e-learning platform.

10.2.3. Feedback

Teachers are also encouraged to use and evaluate the Junior Middle English curriculum and *MICSS Junior Middle English student's books* and give constructive feedback to Dong Zong's Curriculum Department on how any improvements can be made.

11. Appendix

Appendix 1
Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor Domains