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## A SIMPLE SONG

I was asked to conduct one two-hour session on Social Studies (the History component) to two groups of 1st Year Certificate in Education students. The topic for the session was **teaching methods in History**. I conducted a self-contained session that needed no follow-up.

The inspiration for the session came when I looked at the guidelines given by the Ministry of Education on teaching methods:

### Teaching Strategies

- 1 The Social Studies syllabus should not be thought of in terms of information to be passed on didactically by the teacher to the pupils. Rather it seeks to inculcate certain values in the pupils through developing knowledge, skills and attitudes as they explore History and Geography.
- 2 Teachers will therefore need to vary their teaching strategies to make Social Studies attractive, effective and meaningful. Strategies such as projects, quizzes, simulation games, field trips, films, talks, debates, surveys and reports should be employed.

I noticed that the use of songs was missing as a possible teaching strategy. There could be good reasons for it yet I am confident that singing is an activity highly enjoyed by and attractive to the pupils. At the same time, I know that many children love to memorise songs and so the information contained in the songs will not escape them.

I decided to conduct an "experiment" with my class. I gave them an hour to come up with songs related to the pioneers of Singapore and ended with a short concert at the end of the session during which everyone had to come to the front of the class to sing their song.

The aim was two-fold:

- to demonstrate that it is not difficult or too time consuming for teachers to come up with songs for their classes; and
- to demonstrate that learning through songs is effective and enjoyable.

The “experiment” was a success. The students broke up into groups of five or six and each group put up one item at the end of the one hour.

Here are four of the songs reproduced without any alteration in order to demonstrate to the reader how easy it is. There are some mistakes, but these are first drafts.

I am sure the reader can use them creatively.

by Helen Choo Chieh Chen

### **TAN TOCK SENG (Tune: Clementine)**

Tan Tock Seng, Tan Tock Seng  
 He's a man from Malacca  
 He sold fruits and vegetables  
 In a shop in Singapore (Chorus)

Diseases were spreading all around  
 So he started a hospital  
 To cure smallpox and cholera  
 And a cure for leprosy (Chorus)

Formerly it was at Pearl's Hill  
 But the soldiers took over  
 So it shifted to Serangoon  
 And later to Moulmein Road (Chorus)

CHORUS  
 Oh our pioneer (3)  
 Tan Tock Seng  
 Was a great man  
 During his time  
 Oh our pioneer  
 Tan Tock Seng

## **NARAYANA PILLAY (Tune: Happy Wanderer)**

Came from Penang with Raffles  
 First worked as a chief of clerk  
 First Indian building contractor, who built those brick houses

### **CHORUS**

Narayana(3)  
 Narayana Pillay  
 Narayana(2)  
 Who built those brick houses

That fatal day of his life, when all his goods caught fire  
 Then Raffles took pity on him and lent him some money

### **CHORUS**

Narayana(3), Narayana Pillay. Narayana(2)  
 His cotton goods caught fire

And with the money, he made some more  
 And soon he built a school  
 He also gave some land for free  
 To build Sri Mariamman Temple

### **CHORUS .**

Narayana(3), Narayana Pillay. Narayana(2)  
 He was a generous man.

## **PIONEERS OF SINGAPORE (Tune: One Way Ticket)**

One way ticket (6) to Singapore  
 They all came from various countries  
 Got a place here and never went back  
 Ooh . . . they were pioneers of Singapore . . .

They were Narayana Pillay  
                   Syed Omar  
                   Tan Tock Seng and Alex Guthrie  
 Ooh . . . They all helped to build up Singapore . . .

And from them came a temple and a mosque  
 Schools and hospitals too  
 Roads were built and trade increased  
 And ships came from everywhere

### **REPEAT CHORUS**

**JOSE D'ALMEIDA (Tune: Lacuceracha)**

Jose D'Almeida, D'Almeida

He came from Portugal

He was a doctor (2)

And he helped to heal the people

He had a trading firm

Dealing with coffee and spices

He was a leader

of the Portuguese and Spaniards

So remember him (2)

He's Doctor D'Almeida

So don't forget him (2)

For the great things he has done

OLE!