

# NET Scheme *news*

## "Keeping Stakeholders Informed"



I received an email, not too long ago, from a colleague; the subject was 'How the alphabet is taught to kids nowadays'. When I opened the attachment, I was greeted by the familiar letters, all 26 of them, from A to Z. Upon a closer look however, I realised that while A was still for "apple", the rest of the alphabet had been given very novel representations. The letter B was no longer for "boy" or for "ball" and C was neither for "cat" nor "cloud". The "dog", "donkey" and "dinosaur" that used to sound out D were no longer on the scene.

It is now apparent that the disappearance of these traditionally used words from the alphabet has made way for new e-words, the language of computers and the Internet. So now, B is for "bluetooth", C is for "cafe" and D is for "download". As for E, the traditional words "elephant" and "envelope" have been replaced by "email". The letter F of course is now for the most popular book among students, "Facebook". Want to know the rest of the words that represent the computer age alphabet? Try G for "Google".

Consider the "apple", the forbidden fruit in religion, mythology and folklore. It has become an icon with a missing bite look in the modern world of science and technology. With it comes a whole new language as depicted in the new e-alphabet. Indeed, with the advance of technology and the emergence of new social networks, the students of today are constantly exposed to new vocabulary which continues to evolve. Truly, learning is a lifelong process.

This issue of our newsletter is centred on the fifth letter of the English alphabet – E for e-learning. So what exactly is e-learning? E-learning covers all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching. More often than not, the information and communication system serves as specific media to facilitate the learning process. Just picture this: learners enter their response to a reading comprehension question into a networked device and, in the split of a second, their answers show up on the screen for the teacher and the class to work on, effortlessly supporting learning.

E-learning, a product of the "e" generation, is NOT a distraction, as some of its detractors may want us to believe. Nor does it replace the human dimension in learning and communication, such as contact with the teacher and the peers. If done judiciously, e-learning can make learning more engaging, interactive and student-centred, and consequently help boost learning motivation. The key lies in having a spot-on perception of e-learning. For instance, it is important to note that a lesson that incorporates e-learning does not have to be one that involves the use of e-resources or e-tools every single minute. Adopting e-learning is a delicate move – too much of it smothers while having too little of it, we'll risk missing out on its potential. When informed by the principles of good learning design, the use of e-learning in the English classroom can certainly do wonders to English language learning.

It is with great pleasure that we introduce to you in this issue of our newsletter two local primary schools where e-learning is already changing the landscape and climate of English language learning. The first school is Ling To Catholic Primary School. The school's English Panel has kindly contributed an article to our newsletter entitled "SMART Learning and Teaching in the 21st Century". The second is PLK Tin Ka Ping Millennium Primary School. Mrs. Kirsten Freeman, the NET Section's Advisory Teacher, has written a report on the school's use of iPads in the PLP-R/W classroom. We hope readers will find the two articles inspiring.

In the Secondary Section, we are proud to share with you some of the exciting events prepared by the Regional NET Coordinating Team including the Clipit Competition and their latest project, "Enhancing Students' Language Skills and Beyond through Multimedia Tasking (MmT)", which targets Junior Secondary students. Note the part played by technology in both activities and how learning is strengthened and enhanced through e-learning.

In our leisure page, the focus is also on the letter E, this time for eco-learning. Our seconded teachers are eager to share with our readers an eco-tour they took in March this year. Find out about their one-day adventure and if you are interested, visit the websites provided in the article. That should give your reading experience a very nice "e-finish". On that note we would like to remind the readers that our newsletters are always uploaded onto our website for those who prefer to read online. Here is the link:

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=8090&langno=1>

**Have Fun**

Electronically and ecologically, something extraordinary is sure to excite us as we continue to explore life and this "other life" in the world wide web. As for the NET Section, the arrival of a new Section Head in June promises not only excitement but also new adventures. I am sure Mr. Joe LEUNG will be writing to you himself in the next issue.

While I wish my successor all the best, I would like to thank all my colleagues and readers for the support given to me since I joined the NET Section in May 2010. Allow me to finish with an appeal with a befitting E resonance – let's embrace and enjoy education through e-learning.

On this note, let me invite you all to join the e-learning ride. You don't need to be an IT expert to enjoy this ride – all you need is a determination to help integrate e-learning into the experience of our English classroom.

*Rosana Chong*

**Rosana CHONG**  
Chief Curriculum Development Officer

# Primary Corner



## iPads in the Classroom

In 2011, PLK Tin Ka Ping Millennium Primary School applied for a grant from the EDB to enhance e-learning in their school. The school thought of using iPads in the classroom during lessons to complement and extend the PLP-R/W lessons, building on the interactive and innovative aspects of the programme. This would encourage, for example, more students to actively participate in the phonics and high frequency word activities than in a usual class situation. The school was a pilot school for the PLP-R/W programme, therefore has embedded the teaching strategies for reading and writing in their English lessons.

The PLP-R/W (KS1) provides schools with big books, small books and letter books, which contain many of the grammar items and language structures suggested in the ELCG. These books also expose students to phonics, high frequency words and vocabulary that can be consolidated in the GE lessons. The small books are written to be used as home readers to support the story-line, language structures and vocabulary of the big books.

The school used the grant to have the small books and letter books converted into apps that students can download. The books are uploaded onto the store as each unit is taught. The students complete a simple quiz at the end of the book and this is sent to HKU where information about the students' reading habits is collected for analysis.

The school has also developed apps to support the vocabulary, phonics and grammar items taught in both PLP-R/W and GE lessons. The games are fun and interactive and can be used for both whole class teaching in the lessons by linking the iPads to the interactive whiteboard, and by individual students in the lessons and at home.

The AT has seen an increase in the motivation of the less able students to participate in activities in class and read the small books and letter books outside the lessons. As the games provide different levels of learning, a sense of achievement is felt by the students as they successfully complete the games, read the books, and progress through the levels with increased confidence in using English.

While this has been a huge amount of work for the teachers, the response of the students to the project has been amazing and continues to inspire the teachers!

**Kirsten FREEMAN**  
AT, NET Section



## SMART Learning and Teaching in the Twenty-first Century

The incorporation of the latest technological innovations in learning and teaching is paramount to staying competitive in a twenty-first century school in Hong Kong. With parents demanding the most modern learning environment for their children in order to give them a competitive edge in their learning careers, schools have to keep up with technological advances.

As such, Ling To Catholic Primary School, in a pilot project, has allocated a significant amount of resources into bringing a regular low-tech classroom into the twenty-first century. With the setting up of an interactive learning centre equipped with a SMART board, we are hoping to create a tech-savvy learning environment conducive to engaged, motivated and interactive learning.

To take it one step further, a section at the back of the room has been sectioned off by way of a one-way mirror to allow for peer lesson observation amongst teachers with minimal disruption to students' learning. The installation of digital cameras at strategic spots in the room also allows the lesson and students' real-time work to be broadcast live via a web-feed to anywhere in the world.







As the technology is still quite new to the teachers, we are still in the trial stage as the curriculum is adapted one unit at a time to incorporate software relevant to the units. Over time, we expect technology to be an integral part of learning and teaching.

As part of the inauguration, a demonstration lesson was conducted in 2011 with our sister school, Boula Experimental School in the Mainland. The lesson was a success for all involved although the preparation time was quite significant.

Overall, the interactive learning centre is proving to be a sound investment. It allows for the sharing of best learning and teaching practices with students and teachers anywhere in the world. In partnership with other schools that are similarly wired, 'classroom' learning might soon make way for global learning as students and teachers connect with the use of the latest technology.

**The English Panel**  
Ling To Catholic Primary School

## Secondary Corner



### 'Clipit': A Student-created Film Competition

Spring is the time of year for a special type of multimedia tasking. During this period, budding student film makers are meticulously finalising storyboards and adding the finishing credits to their films for 'Clipit': A Student-created Film Competition.

Now in its fifth year, 'Clipit' is open to all secondary schools in Hong Kong. This year, an invitation package was sent out in January and two professional development workshops were given in March ('Film Frames' on 1 March 2012 and 'Film Editing' on 20 March 2012).

Students have an option to use one of two un-edited clips (*Clipit* section) or to film their own footage for the cross-curricular *Science → Film-it* section. Students who participate in the *Clipit* section will focus their short film on one of the eight themes from the modules in the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum. Students who participate in the *Science → Film-it* section will not only access the language and resources from both their English and Science subjects, but also the expertise of their English and Science teachers.

For more information about the competition, see: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=262&langno=1>



### Enhancing Students' Language Skills and Beyond through Multimedia Tasking (MmT) at the Junior Secondary Level

The Regional NET Coordinating Team (RNCT) at the NET Section has launched Multimedia Tasking (MmT), a new Seed Project for the 2012/13 academic year.

The MmT Seed Project addresses the changing literacy demands on students in the information age. Increasingly, students are required to access and produce digital texts (interactive posters, blogs, word clouds, fanfictions, photo stories, electronic portfolios) that incorporate multiple modes of communication. Web 2.0 applications allow students to collaborate and interact on tasks in real time. Unlike traditional print texts, digital texts combine words with graphics, images and sound to convey meaning in novel ways. Students need to be aware of the processes of reading/viewing digital texts and responding to digital texts using the functions of multimedia software applications.

The MmT project aims to develop units of work that enhance students' ability to handle authentic multimedia tasks at the junior secondary level. There are a number of schools about to embark on the 2012/13 MmT journey. Whether your English Panel is incorporating multimedia learning into the curriculum or you are planning to focus more on digital literacies, the NET Section can offer support through the collaborative planning of effective learning and teaching strategies and materials.

For further information, contact Mr Peter Broe, [pbroe@edb.gov.hk](mailto:pbroe@edb.gov.hk).

# Educational Walk



## Extraordinary Rock

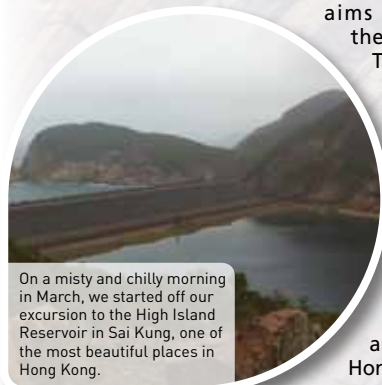
We are four primary English teachers who have been seconded to the NET Section since September 2011. Our secondment has given us opportunities to participate in school visits and help organise professional development workshops, experiences teachers do not easily get in the midst of their heavy teaching duties. Further, we were able to enrol in a course called "From Experience to Learning Series – Extending students' learning with Life-wide Learning in Hong Kong Geopark" organised by the Curriculum Development Institute, which took us on a one-day eco-tour on 9th March.

Life-wide Learning is an effective strategy that aims to move students' learning beyond the classroom into other learning contexts.

Teachers are encouraged to fully utilise the resources and settings available at their schools

and in their communities in order to create appropriate learning contexts for specific educational purposes. Such experiential learning extends and enriches our students' experience for whole-person development and enables them to be successful life-long learners. Through joining the eco-tour and learning more about Geopark in Sai Kung, we hoped to discover different ways to organise and design practical Life-wide Learning activities for students.

The eco-tour provided us with a lot of information about Geopark, such as its history and landscape. We were particularly impressed by the unique hexagonal rock columns near the East Dam of the High Island Reservoir. They are neatly arranged and exposed along the coast of High Island. They are also the highest rock columns in Hong Kong.



On a misty and chilly morning in March, we started off our excursion to the High Island Reservoir in Sai Kung, one of the most beautiful places in Hong Kong.

We value having had this experience and hope to share it with all the English teachers and their students. Through widening students' exposure to the natural environment and extending their learning beyond the classroom into other contexts, we believe different learning goals that can be difficult to attain in a classroom setting can be achieved. For instance, if students could have the chance to explore Geopark and get closer to nature, they would be able to appreciate more the beauty of the natural environment. Their awareness of the need to conserve and preserve Geopark would also be raised. In fact, some cross-curricular modules could also be developed to raise students' awareness of the connection between the English language and other subjects, e.g. Moral Education, General Studies and Visual Art.

Here are two websites we would like to share with you readers. We hope you will have the chance to see the extraordinary rock formation, but perhaps on a less chilly day!

[http://www.geopark.gov.hk/en\\_index.html](http://www.geopark.gov.hk/en_index.html)

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=3110&langno=1>



Does the rock-face look like a giant pipe organ being pressed and distorted? Students may be interested in making sketches of these rock columns and writing a description of them, making good use of their imagination and creativity.



Here are the four of us, Belinda, Sherlene, Vikki and Tenny (from left to right), in front of the majestic-looking rock formation.

**Belinda WU, Sherlene LAU, Vikki LAU, Tenny LUK**  
Seconded Teachers, NET Section

### OUR NEWSLETTER TEAM

• Editor-in-chief: Teresa CHU

• Team Members: Fanny LK CHEUNG, Kit YONG, Mary SCANLAN, Lorraine TWEEDY, Phillip WEBER, Cydia LAU, Anna CHAN, Tracy LIU, Sherly CHAO

This Newsletter is prepared by the NET Section, CDI, EDB.

All comments and suggestions on the Newsletter may be sent to > [teresachu@edb.gov.hk](mailto:teresachu@edb.gov.hk)

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