

# NET

# Issue 5 Scheme

KEEPING STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED

# news

2007



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CATERPILLAR AND  
LADYBIRD: KIDS  
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## TSUEN WAN: The Advisory Teaching Team's THE NEW Office has moved! PLAN The old location holds many great memories, but time moves on, and so does the ATT

The new office in Tsuen Wan is within easy reach of all areas of Hong Kong, and just minutes walk from the Tsuen Wan MTR station; you don't even need an umbrella! We are connected to the MTR via exit B2 and an elevated walkway; just head toward the multi-storey carpark, proceed to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor, and follow the signs from there. The office itself is large and modern, accommodating an AT team that grows as the NET Scheme works towards one NET in each school. With the addition of the RNCT (see page 3), the space is really appreciated.



The PNET Scheme has been successful in providing a catalyst for on-going professional development and the dissemination of innovative learning and teaching methods. The ATT offers a full programme of Centralized Professional Development (CPD) covering a wide range of topics on English learning and teaching, such as School-based Curriculum Development, Formative Assessment, and Reading among many others.

The ATT is very proud to continue delivering CPD at the new office in our modern conference facilities. The seminar room is purpose built, and more spacious than the previous facility, with all the latest AV equipment; ideal for teachers wishing to spend the afternoon involved in professional discourse and sharing.

By Michael Agopsowicz (AT)

## SINK OR SWIM! New LETs and NETs in the same boat

“... you need to have sufficient subject knowledge, be mature and responsible, willing to learn quickly and adapt to the environment and be flexible in a number of ways.” At first glance these would appear to be the words of a NET, newly-arrived in Hong Kong.

Wrong! Those are the words of a beginning local English teacher (LET) in a secondary school in Hong Kong.

NETs often feel they are thrown in at the deep end and some have difficulties in finding out what is going on in their school. Sometimes the cultural adjustment takes some time. However, is it really any different for beginning LETs? Apparently not, according to research done at the Education Department at Baptist University, Hong Kong.

The research shows that 2-3 weeks before teaching, 75% of beginning LETs did not know what their job would entail; 50% did not know their timetable or school policy, and on starting teaching, 62.5% did not know who to ask for reliable help.

“I don't have any support ... my colleagues may be very busy so I have to handle most tasks by myself.” Sounds familiar? It's also from a LET. So NETs, relax! You are not alone in the Hong Kong context.

(Research done by Dr Victor Forrester, Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University)

# Parents' Corner / 家長角

As most homework is completed at home, parents play a vital role in helping students develop good study skills. Schools should make use of opportunities such as Parent-Teacher Association meetings and Parents' Night to suggest how parents might assist their children with their homework.

The following are some suggested roles for parents on homework:

- Parents can help by setting a regular time for homework and creating an environment at home that enables learning to take place, e.g. by removing distractions, turning off the TV and viewing only selected programmes with children. Parents should not put too many demands on their children but ensure that they have enough time for rest and leisure to maintain a healthy and balanced life.
- Parents can familiarise themselves with the learning aims / objectives of homework assignments so that they can provide suitable support to their children. They should not do the homework for their children.
- Parents should review teachers' comments on their child's homework in order to understand the strengths and / or learning needs of their children and help them to improve.
- Parents should communicate frequently with teachers to understand the students' learning environment, their progress and attitudes, with a view to helping them to improve or develop their potential further.

家長在家課方面擔當的角色由於大部分家課主要是在家裡完成，所以家長在幫助學生培養良好的研習技能方面，扮演重要的角色。校方應經常與學生家長聯絡，例如透過家長教師會、家長晚會等，向家長建議各種指導子女家課的方法。

家長在子女家課上的角色建議如下：

- 家長可協助子女安排固定的家課時間，營造一個有助學習的環境。例如：減除滋擾(關閉電視)。
- 家長不應對子女有過多的要求，要確保他們有充足的休息及閒暇時間，保持健康而均衡的生活。
- 學校應使家長多認識學生做家課的學習目標和重點，以便適當地督導子女，但切勿替代子女做家課。
- 家長應檢視教師給學生的評語，以了解孩子的長處及短處，從而協助他們改進。
- 家長應經常與教師保持聯絡，互相了解學生的學習環境、學習進展及態度，以期協助學生改善或進一步發揮所長。

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## The Evolving Role of the Primary NET Advisory Teacher

With the Primary NET Scheme into its fifth year the role of the NET Section Advisory Teaching Team (ATT) is evolving to match maturing school needs

The *raison d'être* of the ATT is the support we provide schools. We look upon the NET as a complement and an additional resource in ELT.

The NET is a point of entry for the AT and the NET Section into schools to support English language teaching and learning. All areas and all teachers of English language education can access our human and material resources.

There are altogether 564 (at the latest count) primary schools with a NET or sharing a NET. NET Section ATs are responsible for supporting a certain number of schools. The number will vary for each AT, dependent of various factors, especially availability of resources. Our support service to schools



is always adapting; becoming more focused, more "tailor made".

The NET Section does not use a one-model-fits-all type of support. This may have been appropriate in the past, and easy to handle. We are continually looking for new, innovative as well as practical ways of providing school support.

The ambit for the NET Section is that as long as a school accepts the provision of a NET, we will be there to support them and our main area of work will be at KS1, where our deployment guidelines suggest the NET should be deployed.

As the leader of this team I would like to express my appreciation of the way in which our ATs support school needs. They use their knowledge and experience to provide excellent service to Hong Kong schools.

By Simon Tham  
(Chief Curriculum  
Development Officer)

## Bon Voyage

### A look at three seconded ATs who have returned to their schools

The teacher secondment exercise within the EMB facilitates cross-fertilisation of experience and expertise. Secondees find it rewarding professionally, intellectually and socially. Every year, local colleagues leave us and go back to their schools, and Antonia Chan, Fanny Tsui and Samantha Liu are three of them.

Antonia has had experience in different types of local schools for over 35 years. Working with people from various cultures has further developed her patience and understanding. Antonia enjoyed working collaboratively with all team members. One of her notable contributions was in the development of parent education.



*Samantha Liu,  
Antonia Chan*

Fanny found the three years in the NET Section to be a valuable experience. She was involved in developing appropriate materials for PLP-R schools. Another of her projects involved the design of a reading support package for students with lower ability.



*Fanny Tsui*

One of the most precious things gained as an AT is the friendships built within the ATT. Samantha enjoyed the social side of working here such as the tea parties and the celebration of different festivities. During Shenzhen shopping trips with overseas colleagues she kindly played the role of tour guide.

We wish all returnees every success in their future endeavours.

**By Jenny Wai (AT)**

## Big Steps for Little Flowers 2006: a new era in reading at "The Little Flower's Catholic School"

Along with 67 other primary schools, Little Flower's Catholic School started the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading (PLP-R) with their P.1 class this year. I was delighted talk with the team, who offered the following comments. **The Principal, Ms CHOI Hou Yee**, "I hope to see our teachers give the students a wonderful first impression of learning English." **The EPC: Michelle Chau**, "It is very rewarding to see the little children enjoy English so much. I believe this is a very important step we are taking." **The NET: Glenda Lee**, "I've been overwhelmed with the response and support from the Principal and the team involved." **The Classroom Assistant: Connie**, "Our role is so important, to make the students love English and to take this love of English through their whole school life."



If the enthusiasm of the team carries over to the students, the classroom will be electric. I'm honoured to take this step with the school and also excited at the prospect of helping to implement this programme. I believe that this will eventually benefit all pupils and teachers in Hong Kong.

**By Sue Wedgwood (AT)**

## Here we grow! RNCT added to the mix



### An interview with John Ward, a member of the newly-created Regional NET Coordinating Team (RNCT) in the NET Section

**Q:** John, what is the RNCT and when was it created?

**A:** The Regional NET Coordinating Team or RNCT was born in August 2006. Tasked with supporting secondary schools and NETs in achieving the objectives of the NET Scheme, the team is involved in organizing professional development for secondary school teachers, developing educational materials and creating clusters and networks for secondary NETs.

**Q:** Who is in the team?

**A:** The team, headed by Assistant Project Manager Peter Broe, consists of 5 people. They are Gina Green, Andrea McKenzie, David Wu, John Ward and Tanya Kempston.

Each team member has previous experience of working in the Hong Kong education system.

**Q:** Which educational districts will the RNCT be servicing?

I will be servicing schools on Hong Kong Island and Lantau, Andrea will look after Kowloon, David is responsible for New Territories West and Gina will take care of schools in the New Territories East. Tanya's brief is curriculum development and she will also work with the team of Primary Advisory Teachers.

Thank you John! The next edition will contain more about the work of the RNCT. Welcome Andrea, Gina, Tanya, David and John!

**By Tanya Kempston (RNCT)**

## Hop into English!

The playground of a Yuen Long primary school has become the setting for a colourful new 'phonics phenomenon'

The staff and students of AD & FD of POHL Leung Sing Tak (AM) Primary School spent a busy day at the end of September creating Phonics Hopscotch. The students proved to be enthusiastic artists and paintbrushes and tins of paint were in great demand as the giant bumble bee, colourful caterpillar and laughing ladybird began to take shape. These friendly characters form the hopscotch grids.



The students worked well together in their class teams and the biggest challenge of the day was keeping little feet off the insects before the paint dried! The last things to be painted were the letters, meaning that to progress across the grid, the students will have to correctly identify and sound out letters. English Panel Chair, Ms Rowena Tam, is hoping that the hopscotch idea will give students an opportunity to have fun and practise their phonics at the same time. **By Joe Wariner (AT)**

## A Weekend Escape

One of China's best kept secrets is now out!

Only an hour's flight from Hong

Kong, offshore from Xiamen is the island of Gu Lang Yu. Its allure is in its stately architecture, the bougainvillea spraying over balcony railings and walls and the quiet, winding streets free of roadside pollution.

Known as the Isle of Pianos, the island houses an impressive collection of antique pianos and organs in two museums. Its old buildings are a mix of Chinese and Western design, as the is-

land became a consular settlement for 13 different countries in the 1940s. Most buildings are fairly well preserved, although a few of the old mansions are in dire need of a facelift.

Despite its tiny size - less than 2 square kilometers - Gu Lang Yu offers plenty to occupy the tourist. You can take in the view from Sunlight Rock, check out the cultural buildings, art workshops, gardens and Sea World.

Should you prefer to sunbathe and leave the photography to others, a sandy beach awaits. There is a good selection of guest houses and hotels on the island or you can choose to stay in Xiamen and ferry across - crossings are scheduled every 15 minutes.

**By Andrea MacKenzie (RNCT)**



## Roots & Shoots Jane Goodall and Environmental Awareness

Most NETs come from countries where many students already have strong environmental awareness and considerable knowledge and compassion towards the cause. It is a shock to some NETs when they realise that this is often not the same in Hong Kong schools. However, environmental enthusiast Corinne Kassy plans to change all that. Corinne, a PNET from Melbourne who has been in Hong Kong for nearly two years, is devoting what little spare time she has to work as the volunteer 'Roots & Shoots' Coordinator in Hong Kong.

Roots & Shoots is the education programme of the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI), which aims to connect youth of all ages across the world who want to work towards positive change in the environment. Dr Jane Goodall is a renowned primatologist whose non-profit institute aims to make a difference for all living things.

From 7-9 September, Corinne represented the Hong Kong JGI office at a global summit for Roots & Shoots leaders in Holland. Not only was this a time to learn about how we can better educate our youth, it was a way to see that the same challenges Hong Kong faces - such as lack of empathy among students and a disconnectedness from the environment - are also experienced elsewhere and have been overcome!" Corinne said. "I've returned with all the optimism and strength that is required to make a change in this world. I hope this message sparks a similar desire in all who read it."

For more information about Roots & Shoots' resources or how to start your own group, please visit [www.janegoodall.org.hk](http://www.janegoodall.org.hk) or email [corinne@janegoodall.org.hk](mailto:corinne@janegoodall.org.hk)  
**By Corinne Kassy (NET)**