



Issue

12 Scheme

news

Keeping Stakeholders Informed

February 2009

NET Scheme turns 10

After 10 years, almost 70 of the original 280 NETs recruited in 1998 are still working on The Enhanced NET Scheme in secondary schools. Forty-three 10-year NETs took the chance to reunite and receive acknowledgement for their contribution to Hong Kong



education at the 'Supporting Learning and Sharing Cultures: The Enhanced NET Scheme 10th Anniversary Conference' on November 1 at Queen's College in Causeway Bay. NETs were presented with

certificates of appreciation by the Deputy Secretary for Education, Dr Catherine Chan Ka Ki, and the head of the NET Section, Mr Simon Tham.

The day attracted around 450 participants and provided the perfect opportunity for teachers to network. Mr Michael Suen, the Secretary for Education, said that schools had now become attuned to the strengths of NETs and the roles they played, such as serving as cultural ambassadors and linguistic role models.

Prof. Amy Tsui, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) of The University of Hong Kong, gave the keynote speech in which she stressed the importance of mutual engagement, saying that NETs and LETs needed to collaborate to ensure successful exchange of ideas in schools. It is perhaps more useful for NETs to see themselves as 'boundary brokers' instead of 'change agents', Prof. Tsui said, once again stressing the importance of NETs' and LETs' collaboration. Graduate student Ms Akina Lam and two current students, Jeannette Siu and Man Wong, also spoke fondly of their experiences with NETs.



Man Wong

The afternoon session started with a humorous keynote speech by Mr Nury Vittachi, one of Asia's most prolific authors.

Collaboration leads to success



The Enhanced NET Scheme 10th Anniversary Conference gave teachers a chance to enjoy some excellent professional development in the form of two 90-minute workshops. Presenters of the 22 workshops included university lecturers, other outside providers, NETs and LETs (Local English Teachers) and staff from the NET Section.

One such workshop, 'Different but equal: NET and LET collaboration', was run by Dr David Carless of the Faculty of Education at The University of Hong Kong. The workshop, which was filled with lively discussion, focused on how NETs and LETs have complementary capacities and may play different roles in developing students' English.

Dr Carless recommended NETs be wary of criticising the local system, show interpersonal sensitivity and adopt some local methods. He said NETs were most likely to be successful if they 'took it slowly', tuned into the examination system and tried to appreciate and understand Chinese language and culture.

He suggested LETs identified and used the capacities and interests of their NETs and made efforts to welcome them both socially and professionally. He said that LETs should be sensitive to different NETs' abilities and motivations.

Dr Carless said he saw collaboration as a key to professional development and stressed this could not occur without supportive relationships.

Parent involvement in school is the key

Student achievement improves:	提升學生學習效能的要訣：
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in a home environment that encourages learning and where parents express high but realistic expectations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 家長能提供良好的家庭學習環境，及對子女作出高而合理的期望；
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the family is involved with the school and its activities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 家長支持及積極參與學校的活動；
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the school works together with the family to support learning; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 家校合作支援學生學習；
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when parents and other care-givers spend quality time with students so they can watch, mimic, communicate and interact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 家長善用優質的親子時間，與子女有良好的溝通以促進學習。
The NET Section actively encourages parent involvement in schools through the use of bilingual parent-support packages, home-reading booklet schemes and, in some schools, the use of portfolios to inform parents of their children's work and progress.	透過雙語家長學習支援教材套及英文課外書親子伴讀計劃等資源，外籍英語教師組鼓勵家長積極支援學生學習。我們亦鼓勵學校提供學生表現量表，幫助家長了解子女的學習進度。



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A Learning Community

By Simon Tham (Chief Curriculum Development Officer)

As head of the NET Section and in previous roles I have had the opportunity to witness the growth and evolution of the secondary and primary NET Schemes over the past 10 years. This journey has been long and not without its twists and turns.



Back in 1998, the notion of 'change agent' had currency. Of course from the perspective of experienced and successful Hong Kong English teachers this prompted the questions of 'why change?', 'change what?' and 'who is going to change?'

More recently, questions have arisen concerning the use of English as a native, second or foreign language. These questions have been impinging upon the selection and deployment

of expatriate language teachers. When recruiting and deploying expatriate teachers, the focus has been shifting to the needs of schools and the learning needs of language students. Schools are concentrating on their own particular curriculum goals and finding teachers who enable English panels to meet them.

English panels are composed of teachers, but they are themselves a community of learners. Teachers, including NETS, form their identity partly from being a valued and respected contributor to this community. Communities offer support and re-affirmation; they also require certain elements of engagement.

Speaking at the Enhanced NET Scheme 10th Anniversary Conference in November, Professor Amy Tsui of The University of Hong Kong identified the need for mutual engagement between local and expatriate English teachers. The 'enterprise' that the panel is engaged in should be negotiated. Finally, the

repertoire of ideas and practices that directs teaching and learning needs to be shared by the community.

English panels comprising local and expatriate teachers can be seen as straddling a boundary between different 'Englishes'. Teaching styles, strategies and materials are carried across a 'boundary' and, as at all boundaries, the ideas need to be explained, justified and adjusted for the new country. If innovation depends upon one individual, the ideas will never be sustained. In the words of Professor Tsui, ideas and practices need to be 'co-constructed by both LETs and NETs. Otherwise, they will not have a life and they will never become core practice'.

In the NET Section we advocate collaboration, for all teachers to sign into communities of learning to bring about improvement.





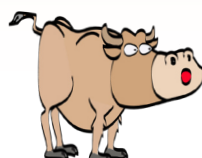
Ready for Chinese New Year



What a great occasion Chinese New Year is for students! It's a time to celebrate, renew, eat, as well as to visit relatives and friends. Festivals are something that our students get really excited about.

The Festival Resource Package 2 DVD by the Advisory Teaching Team recently produced and released to schools covers the main festivals celebrated in Hong Kong. English language teaching based on these festivals offers a chance to use authentic and highly motivating teaching opportunities with students. The eight festivals covered are: Birthdays, Easter, Chinese Festivals (this includes Ching Ming, Mid-Autumn Festival and Dragon Boat Day) Chinese New Year, Halloween and Christmas.

Each festival topic on the DVD has: listening, writing, speaking and reading activities, songs, history, poems, PowerPoint presentations, a literature list, video footage and useful websites. As well as excellent support for celebrations by teachers and students, the visual and auditory resources and activities in this package offer first-rate opportunities to reinforce effective English language teaching.



By Chris Dowson (AT)

Around the Conference



10-year NETs celebrate



Baranowski, Anthony
 Bayer, Perry
 Beula, Robert
 Boswell, Craig
 Bulley, Meryn
 BurrIDGE, Robyn
 Bushell, Maureen
 Candler, Robert
 Chapman, Amanda
 Cotter, Leonie
 Dalton, Barry
 Deamer, Mark
 Dietrich, Brian
 Dyer, Stan
 Farmer, Stephen
 Gaughan, Tara
 Gibbons, Evelyn
 Green, Gina
 Henderson, Bill
 Hone, John
 Honig, Sabine
 Hopkins, Alan
 Jackson, Angela
 Janavicius, Kristina
 Johncock, David
 Karczewski, Jolanta
 Kelly, Raymond
 Koehoorn, George
 Kostianos, Lois
 Lane, Charles
 Langley, Christine
 Lee, Cynthia
 Leheny, Jennifer
 Lloyd, Michael
 Lye, Matthew
 Lynch, Rodger
 Margetts, Karen
 Mark, Nicolette
 McKay, Jennifer
 McNamara, Paul
 Medley, Linda
 Mok, Mary
 Nanda, Deepak
 Nixon, Clive
 North, Stephen
 O'Callaghan, Christine
 Orams, John
 Pak, Samuel
 Pankhurst, Terence
 Peacock, Jacqueline
 Pinsent-Priso Tanya
 Polden, Erica
 Poon, Dora
 Price, Ann
 Pritchard, Valerie
 Pujadas, Carlton
 Salter, Mary
 Sarrazcin, Timothy
 Schwedersky, Mark
 Stone, Janene
 Thompson, Vicki
 Trotter, Marc
 Tymkow, Robert
 Warton, Deborah
 Watson, Maree
 Whelpton, John
 Wilson, Marilyn
 Witham, Sophie
 Wyse, John