

ISSUE14  
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on the NET  
Scheme

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Mahjong fun

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*Keeping Stakeholders Informed*

# NET Scheme *news*

## 'Speak Out – Act Up!'



Students watched with excitement as competitors spoke out and acted up in the New Territories East Region's first improvised drama competition. The 'Speak Out – Act Up!' competition was organised by the Regional NET Coordinating Team at the NET Section and attracted 17 teams from 11 schools.

Altogether seven teams won prizes with Immanuel Lutheran College's Team A winning the first prize. ILC's NET and co-trainer Mrs Carol Ann Ferguson said, "Working with students before the competition was the most enjoyable extra-curricular activity I've been involved with in Hong Kong. The students were very enthusiastic and willingly took risks with both language and acting as they became more confident. They constantly surprised and delighted us."

One of the winning team members, Stella Wong Hoi Tung, added, "It was interesting to see how schools worked with their topics . . . my confidence, creativity, language and communication skills have been enhanced through the improvised drama group."

The original idea for the competition came from Mr Bill Henderson, NET, at a Tai Po and North combined NET cluster meeting. The competition was a pilot project with a view to being run in at least two Hong Kong regions next year.

Ms Kanyu Wong, the NET at Elegantia College (Sponsored by Education Convergence) in Sheung Shui, helped organise the event at her school. The small theatre was a perfect, intimate venue for the approximately 125 attending on Saturday, 25 April.

The judges were all experienced in drama. They were Mrs Lilana Kung, a retired secondary school principal and coordinator of a drama festival, Mr David Andrews, founder and director of Chunky Onion Productions – an educational theatre company – and Ms Lorraine Tweedy, a NET Section Advisory Teacher.

"The competition was a really low-risk, high-reward creative experience for those who participated. All of the actors learned, grew and had FUN," Mr Andrews, said.

*By Gina Green, RNC*



Turn to the last page for the full list of prize winners.

## Help your child to create a Picture Dictionary

1. Revisit the letters of the alphabet.
2. Ask your child to write one letter of the alphabet on every page of the note book.
3. Cut out pictures, e.g. from old magazines, that start with the letters on the pages.
4. Paste the pictures on the appropriate pages.
5. Label each picture.
6. Group and record frequently-used and theme-related words. Suggested themes are:
  - Words I like – names of family, friends, pets, food
  - Living things – plants, trees, animals
  - Words about time – seasons, days of the week, months of the year
  - Action words – verbs
  - How I feel – feeling words
  - Transport – buses, trains, cars
  - Festivals – names, food, activities

## 幫助您的孩子製作圖畫字典

1. 與孩子重溫英文字母A – Z。
2. 指導孩子在筆記薄的每頁順次寫上一個英文字母，如第一頁寫「A」，第二頁寫「B」。
3. 讓孩子剪下與每一頁的英文字母有關之圖畫〔可用舊雜誌〕。如蘋果圖畫〔apple〕、皮球圖畫〔ball〕。
4. 將有關圖畫正確地貼在每一頁上，如蘋果圖畫貼在「A」頁上、皮球圖畫貼在「B」頁上。
5. 在每幅圖畫下寫上英文字詞。
6. 收集及記錄不同主題及常用字詞，可供參考的主題如下：
  - 我喜愛的字詞 — 如家庭成員和朋友之名字、喜愛的寵物、食物等。
  - 生物 — 如植物、樹林、動物之名稱等。
  - 時間 — 如季節、星期、月份等。
  - 與動作有關的字詞 — 動詞。
  - 我的感覺 — 所有形容感覺的字詞。
  - 交通 — 如公共汽車、火車等。
  - 節日 — 節日名稱及有關之食物、活動等。

## Experiencing language in a real context



The Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Schemes in Hong Kong emphasise the development of a diversified and stimulating learning environment as the ideal setting for the acquisition of an additional language. Language learning should be experiential; when students are in

a situation where they use English they will develop their communicative competence. It is worth while to consider how this looks in an effective school and how NETs can contribute to such a learning environment.

When students work in groups or pairs, opportunities for genuine communication are created. An example of this is the ‘Speak Out – Act Up!’ Improvised Drama Competition recently organised by the NET Section, which is described on Page 1 of this newsletter. Here students create their own imaginative texts to give expression to real and imaginary experiences.

When we design learning tasks, it is very important to consider the age and interests of the students involved. An event such as an excursion to Hong Kong airport is a highly motivating experience because the students themselves are the focus of the activity. The excitement

of travel and the bustling crowds and staff reinforce the bond between the students’ experiences, their thinking and the verbal and written responses that they make.

This edition of *NET Scheme News* also features an article on the use of debate to provide a context for using purposeful language. Students build upon a framework of knowledge and skills developed through the process of debate preparation and rehearsal. The teams combine collaboration, participation and communication to produce a language product that is meaningful and authentic. This is done in the challenging and stimulating atmosphere of competitive point-making and rebuttal.

When we think of the learning environment in schools, we think of the visually stimulating and text-rich classrooms and English corners that local and expatriate English teachers create. The primary and secondary NET Schemes work in school to take the learning environment beyond the classroom and enrich learning so that language skills can be grasped more fully.

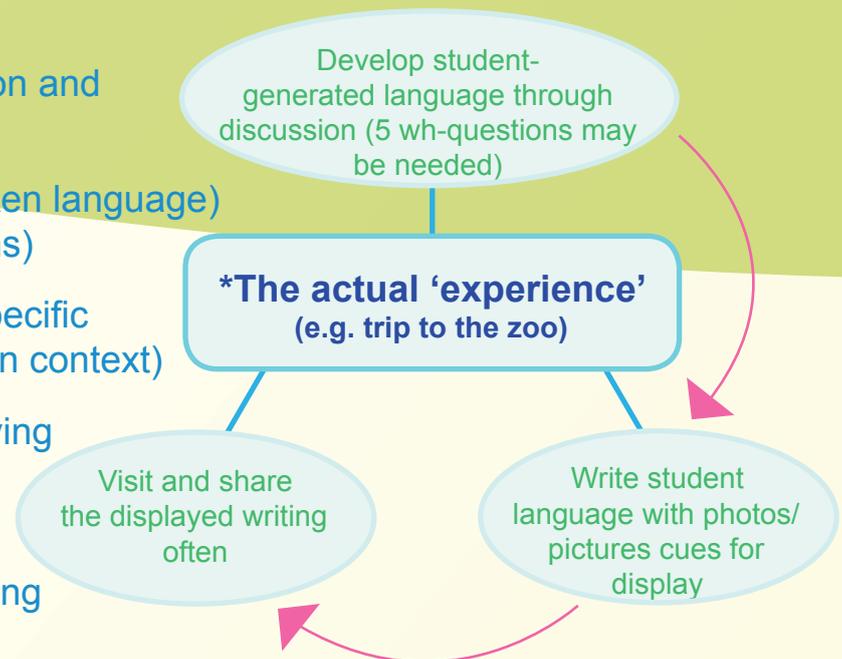
Readers may also notice that this edition is an enlarged one. We have included a segment by students with their response to The Pearl Report aired on Sunday, 19 April 2009.

By Simon Tham  
Chief Curriculum Development Officer

# Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach uses acquisition principles in which language:

- is internalised through personalisation and authenticity
- proceeds from the known (own spoken language) to the unknown (topic language forms)
- goes from a general situation in a specific direction (toward a meaningful written context)
- incorporates opportunities for achieving success
- is enhanced through integrated listening, speaking, reading and writing



By Chris Dowson, AT

\* The actual experience could occur before or after discussion.

## P3 students exercise healthy habits



The P3 students at SKH Chu Yan Primary School in Kwai Shing have recently been introduced to the big book *For Our Health* as part of the school's involvement in the PLP-R programme. As part of the unit of work, students learn about a variety of 'healthy habits' such as maintaining a balanced diet, going to bed early, exercising dental care and regular exercising.

As teachers, we have sought to increase and enrich the students' understanding of the text by developing a number of cross-curricular activities that relate to the shared-reading sessions. Some of these activities have involved healthy food banquets, teeth-brushing demonstrations and listening to Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata.

One of the most interesting activities has been the introduction of The Healthy Exercise, a song and movement routine that is based on common warm-up exercises used in PE lessons. This routine was developed by Ms Elsa Ho, LET, with the help of her P3 class. The students were asked to make up a number of actions that exercised different areas of the body. The movements and a related chant were then performed simultaneously to the beat of rhythm sticks used by the teachers.

We found that the SKH Chu Yan students responded enthusiastically to this activity. I believe their intrinsic motivation to learn English was increased due to the fun nature of this activity combined with the sense of ownership they gained through seeing their own ideas put into action.

By Venessa Franklin, NET

# Students' views on the NET Scheme – A response to the Pearl Report

“Since the Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme started in 1998, the discrepancies between Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) and Local English Teachers (LETs) have been discussed by locals. Some have been concerned about whether NETs would take away the jobs of local English teachers. Some have blamed the unfair deal and the ostensibly better welfare enjoyed by NETs. As students, we should also be allowed to express our opinions, as we are the end-users. Here are some of our thoughts.”

“Those who open their minds will surely be able to gain from the opportunity of working with a NET. NETs can improve students' English, **share culture** and build **mutual understanding** and **respect**.”



NET Bruce Mackie dresses up as Mr Incredible at PLK Ma Kam Ming College.



NET Brett Craig has some fun with students at YCH Wong Wha San Secondary School.

“NETs provide exposure to more everyday English like ‘I messed up’ instead of ‘I made a mistake’. More **colloquial** or **functional** use of language is a key to helping us move up to a higher level of language learning.”

“Several NETs have taught us and we have found them **inspiring**. Each one is as different as each of our local teachers. They are just as **innovative**, **empathetic**, **caring** and **committed**. They are flexible and use more activity-based or theme-based lessons.”



NET Luisa Saccone dresses up for Halloween at TWGH Wong Fung Ling College.



NET Donna Atkinson and Vice Principal and Head of English Ms Brenda Lee with (from left) American Field Services exchange student Maike Bruggemann, Cokyo Tsang, Belinda Wong and Kenneth Yiu, from Shung Tak Catholic English College

"I see our teachers **working together** with the NET in many activities. Although the NET is the president of the English Society, we still see many of the other teachers working alongside her. They **adjudicate**, they **plan** and they **teach**. In fact, I cannot see any difference between our teachers and the NET except for the colour of her skin."



NET Sue Diskin encourages a love of poetry at Tsang Pik Shan Secondary School.



NET Carol Ann Ferguson helps students at Immanuel Lutheran College with their exam skills.

"In the words of Robert Phillipson, Research Professor at Copenhagen Business School Department of English, NETs possess 'greater facility in demonstrating **fluent, idiomatically appropriate** language, in appreciating the **cultural connotations** of the language, and in being the final arbiter of the acceptability of any given samples of the languages'."

"As students, we see both NETs and LETs as essential. They might be skilled in different aspects, so it is quite meaningless to argue whether it is Shakespeare or Bill Gates who is more important. The best solution is **mutual respect** and **understanding**. The youth of the future will benefit the most if there is a **sense of optimism** about the NET Scheme."



NET Margaret Bevans and English teacher Ms Cheung Ching Yi join in the Christmas fun at NTHYK Tai Po District Secondary School.



NET John Hone entertains students at Pool To Middle School with a drama activity.



NET Lene Jensen encourages reading at YCH Wong Wha San Secondary School.

All the above quotes come from: Cokyo Tsang, Kenneth Yiu and Belinda Wong, students at Shung Tak Catholic English College, Yuen Long

# Research pays off for debate champs



(from left to right) Mr Ian Sanderson (NET), Connie Yip, Michael Cheung, Vanessa Wong, Moses Ko, Alice Lai, Stella Ho and Miss Rita Ng

Developing a clear teamline and doing considerable research were keys to TWGHs Kap Yan Directors' College debating team's success, their NET and coach Mr Ian Sanderson said.

The team of Form 6 students, Vanessa Wong, Connie Yip and Michael Cheung, won the final of the Native English-Speaking Teachers' Association (NESTA) Debate Competition in February against the team from HKFEW Wong Cho Bau Secondary School, trained

by the NET, Mr Jeff Bell. The competition attracted 55 teams from 51 secondary schools.

"I encouraged the team to read newspapers and find out a lot about the topic so they could focus on the content. The organisation of the content in presenting the case as well as the ability to listen to arguments and target specific rebuttal, a highly demanding task in the second language context, were also extremely important points," Mr Sanderson said.

The debate competition led to collaboration between local schools with TWGHs Kap Yan Directors' College competing in friendly practice matches against St Francis of Assisi's College. "Collaboration with NETs and LETs who have debating experience is important in growing a debating program," Mr Sanderson said.

Teachers can learn more about debating skills in workshops run by the Regional NET Coordinating Team at the NET Section, dates for which will be found on the e-Services Training Calendar next year. The book, **NETworking: Using Debate in the English Classroom**, is also available from the NET Section.

By Gina Green, RNC

## Welcome to Cathay Pacific City

One of the career education initiatives of Yan Chai Hospital No. 2 Secondary School in Tuen Mun this year was an excursion to Cathay Pacific City.

Co-organised by one of the former graduates of the school, Ms Grace Pang, and the Careers Counselling and Guidance Committee of YCH2SS, the behind-the-scenes look at the various operations of Cathay Pacific City attracted students from Forms 1 to 7.

The group was accompanied by one of the school's careers advisors, Ms Maribel Lo, with the English Panel Head, Ms Joyce Wong, English teacher, Ms Iris Shum, and the NET, Mr Bernie Clark. This made the trip an English language speaking opportunity too.

After an introduction to the airline, the tour leader, Ms Juliana Wang, then led the group to view the flight simulator facility. Elaine Kwan, a Form 7A student said, "I haven't had contact with such a gigantic, sophisticated piece of machinery before. It's a great opportunity to learn more about airlines."

Students also learnt about check-in procedures, with an opportunity for some of them to simulate the experience of tagging passengers' bags. They were also fortunate to witness some new Cathay recruits undergoing their in-flight service training.

Chan Tan Shun, from Form 1B, particularly enjoyed the excursion. "Cathay Pacific City is really like a modern international city. It's not like an ordinary office or training centre. I'm so fortunate to have this chance to be here," she said.

We all got a chance to 'travel first class' for once and enjoy the comfort of the first class cabin. Janet Chan, from Form 6A said, "It's the only way to fly." We all agree.



Yan Chai Hospital No. 2 Secondary School students and teachers in front of the DC3 at Cathay Pacific City

By Bernie Clark, NET

# An effective school is a happy school



For some schools, introducing the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading (PLP-R) back in 2004 was just the beginning. Lam Tsuen Public Wong Fook Luen Memorial Primary School in Tai Wo has made the PLP-R the basis of their own school-based reading programme. This is now being extended into P4 and P5 and shortly into P6 classes.

At the same time the school has signed up to be a pilot school for the PLP-R/W which develops writing strategies into an integrated literacy programme. Teachers even use PLP-R methodology in other subject areas and in classes they teach at other year levels.

So how does this school find the time and energy to effectively develop their own curriculum? Firstly, a high priority is given to collaborative planning involving coordinator Ms Helen Yee, the NET, Ms Raewyn Raynel, LETs and the Classroom Assistant. The Principal, Mr Luke Lam, organises other school events so they do not coincide with these co-planning meetings. The co-planning time is therefore regular and collaborative.

Secondly, trusting and sharing relationships are fostered. This is a community of teachers where reflection and good communication ensure improved student learning outcomes. To visitors, the atmosphere in the school is ‘like a family’. Retired teachers come back to lend a hand and older students act as ‘reading buddies’ for their younger school-mates.

By Ribbon Dai, AT

## Students pause to reflect on animals



Students at Chai Wan Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School overcame their fear of dogs and enjoyed using English when Professor Paws came to visit their school.

The school was introduced to the free Professor Paws programme by their NET Section Advisory Teacher, Ms Tanya Kempston, last year. The programme is organised by Animals Asia and consists of four lessons over a month.

Participating students are divided into groups of 12 in a separate classroom. There is at least one native English-speaking tutor, a volunteer dog owner and a trained, docile dog in each classroom.

Students learn in English how to communicate safely with animals and take good care of them. Students also have the chance to walk, feed and brush the dogs. At the end of the programme, students make their vows to be Pet Cadets and love animals. This is a great experience for the students since most come from housing estates, where the chance of keeping a dog at home is rare. They can finally overcome their misunderstanding that dogs are frightening, aggressive and dangerous creatures.

The Animals Asia people who run the scheme provide worksheets and freebies for the Pet Cadets over four weeks (once a week). For more information contact [www.animalsasia.org](http://www.animalsasia.org).

By Lucia Chow, AT

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## Finding your inner sampan lady



By Deb Warton, NET

The term ‘sampan lady’ is a misnomer. For those of you aspiring to be a sampan lady, you must first surrender any sense of genteel breeding. As a foreign sampan lady, I am at the bottom of the sampan lady pecking order. Mimicking the animal kingdom, my inferior status is reflected by the location of our school’s marquee. We discreetly position it behind a podium so as not to attract the ire of the established sampan ladies.

Etiquette is also observed in the pursuit of our quarry. The sampan ladies relentlessly circle the tourists attempting to badger them into submission. I cannot approach the tourists until the ladies have exhausted their guile and retreated to lick their wounds. With a gaggle of students in tow, I then attempt to persuade the tourists to take our free sampan tour. To their credit, many generously accept the challenge.

Aberdeen Baptist Lui Ming Choi College sponsors free English guided tours of Aberdeen. The tours take place on two consecutive Saturdays in December, between 10am and 3pm. Special tours are sometimes arranged upon request. For more information, please contact the English Panel Chairperson, Ms Jenny Lai, at [llcn@almcc.edu](mailto:llcn@almcc.edu).

What better pastime could there be than to spend an evening playing mahjong with fellow NETs and Advisory Teachers. We – Kathy, Mary, Bonnie, Catherine and Jacqui – are a group that meets weekly for fun, socialising, eating and drinking, and for a ‘serious’ game of mahjong. But it is not so serious as to have any currency change hands!

What a great way it is also to become familiar with some Chinese characters for the winds, dragons, seasons and flowers, and especially for the numbers 1 to 9.

Yes, our games take longer than those of our local colleagues and we use more complicated hands, possibly inherited from the British model. And yet for us all, there is that sense of entering into an age-old game that is embedded in the Chinese history and tradition of the people we work with daily. It is a recreation that goes across cultures.

So . . . what does the sound of the tiles being ‘twittered’ or re-arranged for the next round evoke for you?

## Twittering of the sparrows



By Jacqui Ussher, NET

## List of ‘Speak Out – Act Up!’ prize winners

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize: Immanuel Lutheran College – Team A
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Baptist Lui Ming Choi Secondary School – Team A
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Wong Shiu Chi Secondary School – Team A

- Best teamwork: NTHYK Tai Po District Secondary School
- Most original performance: Immanuel Lutheran College – Team B
- Best use of dramatic techniques: Shatin Tsung Tsin Secondary School – Team A
- Best use of language: PLK Ma Kam Ming College

- Speak Out – Act Up! – Superstar Performer: (best overall performer) Chan Che Chun, Charles, Kau Yan College
- Speak Out! – Star Award (best use of English): Tsang Ching Ka, Christy, Baptist Lui Ming Choi Secondary School
- Act Up! – Star Award (best acting): Wong Ka Ming, Wong Shiu Chi Secondary School



Mr D. Andrews and Wong Ka Ming