

NET

SCHEME NEWS



Diversity We Celebrate
Respect We Advocate



“The fundamental principle of inclusive education is the valuing of diversity within the human community.” – Norman Kunc¹

Some seventeen years ago, I had the privilege of visiting a school for children with visual impairment. I was then a member of a school inspection team tasked with observing lessons and English-related activities, interviewing teachers and students, and reporting on the performance of the school in the English Language Education Key Learning Area. During the school visit, I had a chance to observe a P5 class and acquaint myself with two students who led me to my desk and shared with me their learning experiences during and after the lesson. I also had a chance to learn more about them in an after-school programme where a native English-speaking professional provided students with oral training and practice. In retrospect, what was then an inspection duty has remained a mind-opening learning experience.



Understanding, not sympathy, is what they need

Apart from observing their interaction with their peers in the playground, I managed to have some quality time to ask the two girls what kind of support they would like to have. What the girls would never have expected is that one of their responses has become an important life lesson for the visitor:

“We don’t need sympathy. What we need most is that people understand and accept us as we are.”

It was a modest request. But coming from two students with visual impairment, it becomes a telling message for all those playing a part in promoting inclusive education.

A reverse inclusion programme

Another life lesson took place in the after-school activity that I was invited to attend – an oral English programme conducted by a native English-speaking engineer, who came with his teenage son. In the cosy environment where the programme was conducted, the engineer and his son modelled a conversation in a chosen context, explained some commonly used expressions and engaged the student participants in role play activities in a fun manner. Afterwards, the engineer thanked the school for having him and his son, as the programme offered not just an opportunity for him to do community service, but more importantly, for his son to understand more about diversity through this reverse inclusion programme.

Feeling the differences

The two students were both girls aged around 11 and had only about 20 to 30 percent of their vision. While I cannot recall every detail of the lesson we attended together, except that it was about transportation in Hong Kong, I still have a vivid memory of them engaged in the process with joy. At one point, they formed a group with other students and started ‘feeling’ the model tram, bus and taxi provided by the teacher. They also invited me to join them, on one condition, i.e. to have my eyes closed and ‘feel’ the differences as they did. The moment they took my hands to ‘feel’ the differences and to experience the kind of learning they demonstrated when applying their tactile skills and verbalising the differences was simply bewitching.



Narrowing the gap

The experiences in the anecdotes above have had a lasting impact. They have broadened my perspective on what it takes to cater for diversity and what it means to embrace diversity. They have also helped prepare me for opportunities to narrow the gap between what has been done and what can be done to promote inclusive education.



This mind-opening journey continued after the bell rang. It was recess. The two girls were keen to lead me down to the playground and they asked me to follow them. They walked down the flights of stairs with such agility that they outpaced me, leaving me astounded and amused.

¹ Kunc, N. (1992). The need to belong: Recovering Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. In R. A. Villa, J. S. Thousand, W. Stainback and S. Stainback (Eds.), *Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education: An Administrative Guide to Creating Heterogeneous Schools*, 25-39. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Going the extra mile

Now, as the Head of the NET Section, I have the honour to work with a team of dedicated professionals who will go the extra mile to collaborate with schools to develop an inclusive environment where students with diverse needs and strengths can learn and shine. Over the years, we have been exploring ways to support teachers in creating such environments. In this issue of the NET Scheme News, we have contributions from our colleagues and front-line partners that examine how the different services under the NET Scheme are helping to narrow the gap.



Using puppetry and technology to motivate students with SEN to learn English (PuppeTech)

There is no single approach to catering for learner diversity. Committed practitioners are always keen to explore, develop, review and refine strategies that can serve learners' needs to the furthest possible extent. In this regard, our "Seed" projects provide an effective avenue to facilitate the exploration and development of innovative strategies to cater for learners' needs. One such project, PuppeTech, is being implemented in three special schools. The articles contributed by our Advisory Teachers (ATs), Ms Sue Bowden and Mr Philip Wood, and our Regional NET Coordinator (RNC), Ms Catherine Lam, and those by the school project team teachers, Ms Sze Wai Mak, a local teacher at Lutheran School for the Deaf, and Mr John Orams, the NET at Hong Kong Red Cross John F. Kennedy Centre, provide rich descriptions of the different project experiences that may inspire more innovations to address students' special needs.



Fun learning environment

Fun is fundamental to all kinds of learning environments. Every year our ATs and RNCs support a number of ID schools (schools for students with intellectual disabilities) to organise their English Days. In their articles, our ATs, Mr Philip Wood, Ms Rita Menghrajani and Mr Paul Mallia, and our RNC, Mr Richard Cowler, as well as Mr Calum Wicker, the NET at Shatin Public School, share their experiences of creating fun experiences and memories for students

at Hong Chi Morninghill School (Tuen Mun), Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School, and Shatin Public School.

In a similar vein, Ms Kanyu Wong, the NET at DMHC Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School, a mainstream school, shares in her article titled "Camouflaging English Learning" how she has been trying different ways of "camouflaging English activities, rebranding them and restructuring the way they are run" to be more fun and to engage her students.



Support for ID schools

One key strategy for supporting the implementation of the NET Scheme in ID schools is to develop a community of practice. Through cluster meetings, we encourage experience sharing among the NETs and local teachers in the ID schools concerned and use the opportunity to promote effective practices. You can read about a range of strategies examined in a recent cluster meeting in the articles, "Literacy Support for ID Schools" and "Response to Intervention Framework", contributed by our ATs, Mr Philip Wood and Ms Wendy Lui, and by our Project Manager (Innovation and Publicity), Mr Lionell Horn. Adding to the professional sharing is the contribution from Mr David Hill about his experience as the first NET of Buddhist To Chi Fat She Yeung Yat Lam Memorial School, one of the ID schools.

Celebrating and respecting diversity

In her article, "What's in a Name?", our Chief Editor, Ms Teresa Chu, says "knowledge needs to work through humanity to attain grace and beauty and to find its meaning." Our effort to promote inclusive education has to be guided by a moral purpose that requires us to, as Kunc (1992) puts it, "abandon the idea that children have to become 'normal' in order to contribute to the world." To embrace inclusive education, we need first to celebrate and respect diversity. Let's walk the walk!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Joe Leung".

Joe Leung
Chief Curriculum Development Officer
NET Section

What's in a Name?

“ What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet. ”

– *Romeo & Juliet, Shakespeare*

Shakespeare probably knew nothing about Hong Kong, but for those of us who do, we can choose to call Hong Kong 'a concrete jungle', 'the Pearl of the Orient', 'the fragrant harbour', 'the city of lights', 'a shopper's paradise', 'a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China', or simply 'my beloved home city'. In fact, the name we choose and use says more about our own attitude than what is 'named', reflecting our state of mind, our beliefs, our experiences, and often, our prejudices.

As the world becomes more sophisticated and complicated, our range of knowledge also expands. We are witnessing different education systems around the globe trying to promote literacy, numeracy, art, science and technology, and new names such as STEM, STEAM and STREAM keep arriving on the horizon, marking the dawn of yet another era of human development.

Let's not forget, however, that knowledge needs to work through humanity to attain grace and beauty and to find its meaning. Perhaps the family, the classroom and the community can all benefit from a climate of respect, especially in terms of language use.

Regrettably, there seems to be a tendency among some people to use careless or inappropriate language to describe other people; language that is likely to take away dignity and convey negative attitudes. One quick example is whether you would address the driver of a bus as a 'bus driver', or honour the profession with the title of 'bus captain'. The former is definitely the more common terminology shared by most people, but on our Transport Department website, for example, we can see bus drivers referred to in a much more positive way. They are called 'bus captains'. The etymology of these two terms can tell us a great deal about people's perceptions and attitudes, as reflected in their choice of expression. While a 'bus driver' drives a bus, a captain is a master, a commander invested with both authority and responsibility, and bound by his/her profession to care for both vehicles and passengers. Learning about the difference, are we then happy to be guided by this 'language awareness' and to stay mindful, watchful and careful with our language?

When we examine the language most people use to describe those of us with disabilities, whether physical or mental, a careless attitude seems even

more obvious. Often, the language suggests and nurtures a variety of assumptions that create tension. Another example is how people would normally describe a person with a deformed face. A small child 'handicapped' by the lack of vocabulary would probably use the simple word 'ugly'. An older child, probably more attention-seeking, might prefer a word such as 'monstrous', for dramatic effect. For adults who have acquired a good knowledge of social etiquette and civilised behaviour, I believe most would say, very politely, 'a person with a facial deformity'. This more respectful and less judgemental language is definitely a huge improvement from the 'childish language' we have previously looked at by way of examples.

Can this 'less judgemental language' be further improved by weaning itself from stereotyping altogether? Our thoughts shape our words. Saying someone is deformed is, after all, a form of discrimination and stereotyping that unconsciously creeps into our mind and thus our language. While reading some comments on the movie 'Wonder', a film about a boy with Treacher Collins syndrome and therefore a facial deformity, I came across one movie review by Betsy Bozdech (Common Sense Media), which describes the main character as 'a young boy with a genetic facial difference'. Rather than labelling the boy with the word 'deformity', the writer registers only the fact that it is a face with a difference. This is non-judgemental and non-discriminatory language at its best, totally devoid of any labelling and prejudice. This is but one helpful reminder that we all have our own differences, and as such, we are pretty much the same. In fact, we are the same: we are all human, uniquely human. If we focus less on the differences, but rather more on our affinity and empathy for those who differ, unbiased language will evolve and fairly establish itself.

Former US President John F. Kennedy said, "If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity." Parents and teachers working with young people might get further insight from well-loved American poet, Maya Angelou, who said, "It's time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength." Let's cherish that beauty; let's nourish that strength. Let's respect, embrace and celebrate diversity.

**Teresa Chu, Assistant Project Manager,
NET Section**

Literacy Support in Schools for Students with Intellectual Disability (ID)

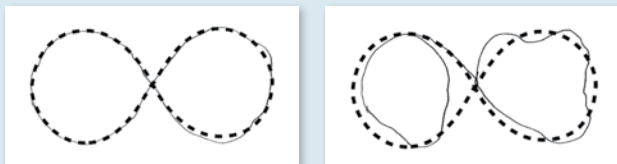
On 13 December 2018, members of the NET Section ID team hosted the second cluster meeting at Sha Tin Public School.



The ID team was working with ID schools in Hong Kong to develop students' literacy skills. Many of these students have cognitive delay, which means they may have difficulties with the perceptual development skills required to read and write. Without these skills, students will encounter difficulty and frustration with literacy development. Therefore, teachers in the ID schools have been completing pre-assessment tasks and collecting data to observe and record students' perceptual development skills. This will show students' readiness for literacy development.

Each school chooses one class and the teachers collaboratively complete a class profile that highlights the strengths and interests of each student. The benefit of using Strength Based Approaches is to engage and motivate students when learning.

The Advisory Teachers (ATs) then support their schools in collecting pre-assessment data regarding students' perceptual development skills. By completing tasks in the perceptual development booklet, teachers can decide if students are ready to take the next step in their literacy development or if further practice of these skills is necessary.



The 'lazy 8' is one of the perceptual development skills related tasks that students do. Students trace the figure 8 forwards and backwards. If students cannot complete this, it means that they will encounter difficulty when crossing the mid-line. This demonstrates that students may be unable to transfer information from the left to the right hemisphere of the brain. This relates heavily to literacy development as it would affect the students' ability to read or write across a full page and they may stop reading or writing halfway across a page. Subsequently, the students would have difficulties with pre-assessment reading tasks such as those involving understanding the concepts of print or matching students to a book level.

The perceptual development booklet contains a number of assessment tasks which highlight a student's ability in visual discrimination, left to right eye movement, identifying spatial relationships and fine motor coordination. On completion of this booklet, teachers can tell whether the student can try the next pre-assessment task, which is Marie Clay's Concept of Print.



The concept of the print pre-assessment tool is to show that students can follow the reading pattern and understand the basic conventions of written English. If students can pass this assessment, it shows they are ready to progress with their literacy development and teachers can progress to matching the student to a book level and do guided reading.

The Response to Intervention (RTI) model shows the transition from whole class support to small group teaching and individual intensive intervention. This approach works well with students who have difficulties completing the first pre-assessment task and need further practice with their perceptual development skills. A number of practical activities can be used in the classroom.

The second cluster meeting proved a success. By developing teachers' professional knowledge and introducing them to these activities and assessment tasks, teachers understood the reasons for these tasks and the importance of being able to interpret the data collected through these assessment tasks.

Similar cluster meetings have been arranged throughout the year so that ATs can continue to support teachers in ID schools with professional development, resources and teaching strategies that can help them improve students' literacy levels.



Philip Wood & Wendy Lui, Advisory Teachers, NET Section

Response to Intervention Framework

Background

How do we meet the needs of all our students, particularly those with special needs? Before 2004, teachers were encouraged to use discrepancies between IQ and achievement to identify students who might have learning disabilities. However, there are a number of reasons why IQ testing is problematic:

- the tests are questionable indicators of general ability;
- children with lower IQs and limited literacy development can be seen as 'normal' and thus acceptable;
- it takes several years before the discrepancy becomes sufficiently substantial;
- testing provides no instructionally useful information; and
- testing does not predict how well students respond to an intervention.

It is not all gloom and doom

The good news is that after the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) was passed, teachers in the United States (US) could use the Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework as an alternative. Other countries saw the benefit of RTI and started using it.

The IQ and RTI models can be classified as the discrepancy and data-based decision making models respectively. With the IQ model, teachers must wait until the students are old enough and far enough behind before intervening. In the RTI model, all students get screened, monitored and provided with intervention as a means of preventing academic and behavioural problems.

Data is the key

RTI uses data at the classroom and school levels to inform student movement within a multi-tiered instructional system. It identifies learning and behavioural problems early so that teachers can intervene to improve achievement. Student data becomes the driving force within an intervention programme. RTI encourages appropriate use of evidence-based instruction across tiers. It can be seen as a data-based decision-making model: a process that includes data collection, analysis and reflection, instructional planning and intervention.

The three tiers of learning and teaching

The RTI's three tiers include quality learning and teaching for the whole class (first tier), further remediation offered to smaller groups of at-risk students with similar needs (second tier), and one-on-one intensive individual intervention for those who are not making progress (third tier).

Individual
Intensive Intervention

Groups - needs/ability
Targeted Remediation

Whole class - support
Evidence-based
Core Instruction

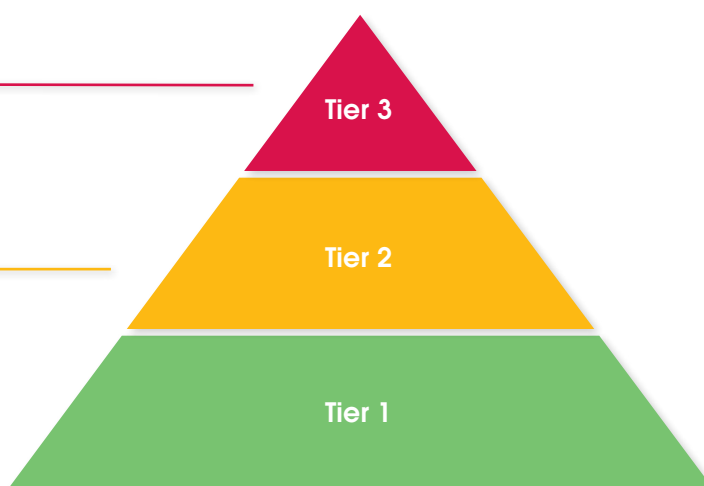
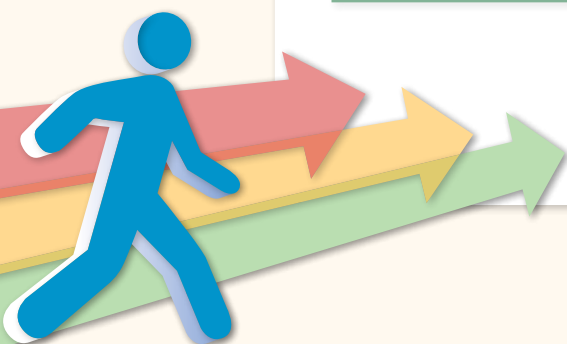


Figure 1: The RTI Framework with the three tiers of learning and teaching



What makes an effective RTI implementation?

Successful RTI-based intervention programmes include several features, such as:

- observation, identification and documentation;
- research-based instruction based on assessment and best practices;
- activities based on pre-assessment of content;
- monitoring of progress towards student self-assessment; and
- evaluation of process and product through rubrics with external and student self-evaluation.

What does the research say about RTI?

Significant evidence states that it works. RTI has the goal of being preventative, as the best intervention is prevention. It is the best way to ensure that all children learn. Longitudinal research has identified a number of positive outcomes including more equitable representation of students who have English as an additional language.

What does RTI look like in practice?

RTI:

- allows teachers freedom and understanding to differentiate learning and teaching;
- is built on best research-based curricular practices;
- is steeped in effective instructional and classroom management strategies;
- creates a process that supports all students in the classroom;
- meets the nature and needs of all learners in the class; and
- proposes avenues to identify students for remediation or intervention through an identification assessment screen, tailored curriculum development, high-quality research-based instruction and planned learning opportunities.

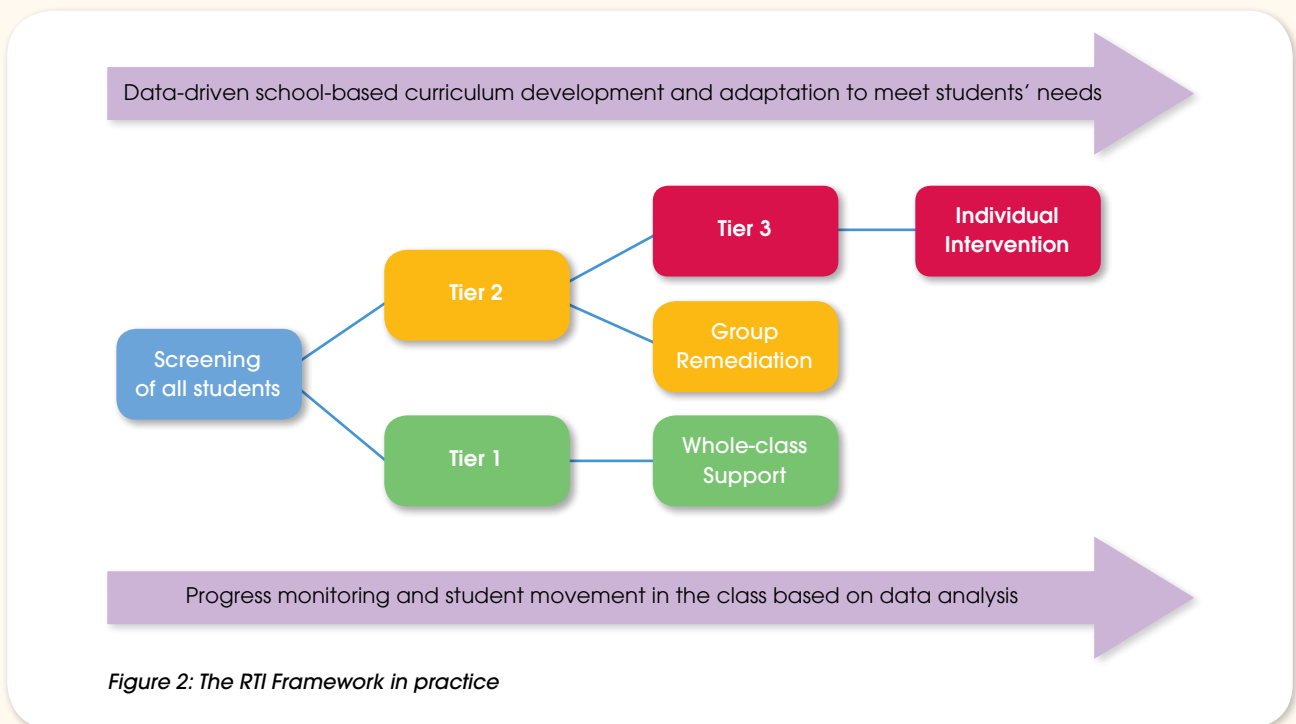


Figure 2: The RTI Framework in practice

RTI offers an important opportunity to reduce the number of children remaining disabled in literacy. Classification will not necessarily lead to a real reduction in the number of children with reading difficulties. What is essential is instruction that addresses the needs identified through screening. This implies that learning and teaching needs to be informed by this data to improve the support offered to the whole class at tier one, to smaller groups at tier two, and to address the specific needs of individuals still not progressing at tier three.

Lionell Horn, Project Manager (Innovation & Publicity), NET Section

Shatin Public School English Game Day – Thursday 15 November 2018

On 15 November 2018, ATs from the NET Section joined Mr Calum Wicker (NET) and the English staff for an English Game Day at Shatin Public School, which caters for students with intellectual disability.

The game day focused on two themes that the students were studying : daily routines for upper primary students and living a healthy lifestyle for the secondary section. The students rotated through various games and activities that included reading, active games using vocabulary cards and a spin-the-wheel word game. Students finished the reading activities by making their own bookmark that they could keep and take home based on the characters from their story.

The students' difficulties can sometimes hinder them in a classroom environment. For various reasons, the students might struggle to process information delivered verbally when there is no other stimulus to accompany it. The practical element of the English Game Day was something that really helped some students, who are at times too withdrawn to express themselves to showcase their learning. It was wonderful to witness some individuals grow in confidence throughout the morning.

The students really enjoyed the game day and they were very keen to practise the English language skills they have been learning throughout the year. Some have even taken that new-found confidence back into the classroom and become more willing participants.

Calum Wicker, NET, Shatin Public School, & Philip Wood, Advisory Teacher, NET Section

Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School

For several years I have had the pleasure of supporting Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School with their English Fun Days. The team of English teachers has been enthusiastic in planning and implementing a range of appropriate and fun activities for the students.



Activities include storytelling, making food, active language games in the hall and e-learning activities. A particular highlight of the English Fun Days over recent years has been the puppet shows facilitated by Advisory Teachers Sue Bowden and James Vickers from the NET Section Puppetry Team. The students' responses to watching, interacting and making puppets have been a sheer delight to witness. The different themes and activities presented to students through puppetry are what the school looks forward to each year.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the English Panel Chair, Michelle Cheung, and her team for their professionalism and enthusiasm in liaising with the NET Section to plan and implement appropriate and meaningful activities for their students. Finally, a big thank you to my colleagues Sue Bowden and James Vickers, for their dedication with regards to using puppets to make learning English fun for the students at Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School.



Paul Mallia, Advisory Teacher, NET Section

Bringing Some Added Sparkle to a SEN School English Day

Every year, the Learning Support Team of the NET Section supports the English Days of primary and secondary schools with students with intellectual disabilities. Teachers from the Advisory Teaching Team (ATT) and the Regional NET Coordinating Team (RNCT) work together on this task, which also helps to foster a stronger bond within the NET Section. A win-win!

We provide the students with an authentic experience of interacting in English so we act as 'extra NETs'. As with all schools, we differentiate our activities to address the readiness, interests and learning profiles of the students. Good communication with the English teachers, including a co-planning meeting in the school, is crucial.

It was fun to get rid of the office attire and dress up as the God(dess) of Fortune and Father Christmas for the Hong Chi Morninghill School's (Tuen Mun) English Day on 27 February 2018. Our goal was to engage all of the students' senses to explore Christmas and Chinese New Year in English. We hoped that by dressing up as characters and using videos and songs together with hands-on activities, the vocabulary and ideas would be more accessible and memorable to the students.

We certainly had fun and the activities saw the students engaged, on-task and enjoying each other's company. Students enjoyed wearing Christmas hats, singing Christmas songs and playing festive percussion instruments. We created a truly festive spirit. Then there was a video story on the Chinese Zodiac for the Chinese Lunar New Year. Games were integrated to encourage the students to recognise and categorise the vocabulary for the two festivals. We used pelmanism, a lucky draw bag of realia and a 'fishing' vocabulary game.



Special festive wishes in 2019 for all those lovely students who are great fun to work with, and a big thanks to the ID school principals and teachers who work with us and welcome us to their schools.

Rita Menghrajani, Advisory Teacher, & Richard Cowler, Regional NET Coordinator, NET Section

Lutheran School for the Deaf and PuppeTech



On Thursday 6 December 2018, the P5 students from Lutheran School for the Deaf had a Christmas outing to a local shopping centre to finish off the PuppeTech project they had been involved in for the past few weeks. The project involves students creating presentations using puppetry and technology. The students from



Lutheran School for the Deaf each created a presentation on their favourite festival using puppets and a green screen app.



The students are now learning about various types of shops and along with Ms Mak, their English teacher, they visited the shopping centre to find out more. The students had a great time at the shopping centre, especially

when they visited a café and enjoyed a festive treat in the way of a gingerbread man. It was a fun way to end a project on which the students had worked so hard.

Sze Wai Mak, LET, Lutheran School for the Deaf, & Philip Wood, Advisory Teacher, NET Section

Buddhist To Chi Fat She Yeung Yat Lam Memorial School

It is exciting to be a trailblazer by being the first NET at Buddhist To Chi Fat She Yeung Yat Lam Memorial School. This school is a SEN school and these schools were given permission to have a NET in 2017. So in 2018, I became the first NET in the school.



I love the size of the school because I can learn all the primary students' names and I love talking to the students at recess. I have a great team of supportive English teachers in my school: Vivian, Alice and Sary. We receive fantastic support from our AT, Wendy Lui.

We all work well together and everyone is open to new ideas and trying different teaching methods. It is an honour to be part of the first team preparing the new teaching materials for high frequency words, phonics, reading books, reading strategies and creating an English environment in the school. We have started doing English Corner activities twice a week, which I enjoy. I love meeting all the classes from P1 to P6.

I also teach a Speech Festival training class of 6 students from P5 and P6 with another teacher. We meet twice a week to practise performing the poems. The students need a lot of practice to learn how to express emotion in their voices and facial expressions.

What a pleasurable challenge it is to be the trailblazer!

David Hill, NET, Buddhist To Chi Fat She Yeung Yat Lam Memorial School





Hong Kong Red Cross John F. Kennedy Centre and Puppetry

Puppetry? I queried.

'That's right. Puppetry!' said my panel chair William. 'You have to attend a meeting about a puppetry project after school today. You're involved.'

'OK,' I replied compliantly...and in my head...a weary sigh... 'Yet another duty to add to my already heavy load and to 'delight' in. Just what the doctor ordered. NOT!'

Within a week I was welcoming a puppetry team of 3 or 4 from the EDB NET Section every Monday morning into my classroom at the Hong Kong Red Cross John F. Kennedy Centre to help me run a puppetry project for a class of 10 intellectually disabled students. They have a variety of physical problems as well, ranging from cerebral palsy to epilepsy and some of them use wheelchairs and walkers to get around. They are an interesting and varied group of multi-level learners whose average age is around 17 years old and whose academic capabilities vary.

The goal we've set for ourselves is to run a puppetry programme together with the EDB NET Section Team that will last for most of the year, make it meaningful, make it fun and achieve a good learning outcome for all students at all levels in the class. Also we needed to fit that in on top of the current curriculum. Could we achieve it? I had my doubts...but...

We're three months further down the track now. After a process of pre-assessment by the EDB team, where we all got to know a bit more about

the students, and a series of meetings to develop content, we have managed to design and build a wonderful dolls' house together with the class, and develop a mini-script about the residents of the dolls' house. We also have plans to perform the script, make a short film and produce a story book in both hard copy and e-copy. Have I become more positive about puppetry?

Yes. I've seen the students having some fun and learning all sorts of English related to things and people in houses and I've seen them enjoying



working with the team from the EDB NET Section and getting more and more animated about the project. It certainly beats worksheets and YouTube videos.

Though it's a huge challenge for some of the students who are non-verbal or have little foundation in English and even a huge challenge for the more capable ones in other ways, we now have strong hopes of achieving our aims. With luck and continued support from the EDB NET Section PuppeTech Team, I'm sure we will achieve a fun and positive learning outcome for my class. 'Puppetry?' I say to myself now. 'Yes, Puppetry!' is the answer that comes back from a little voice in my head. 'Yes. Puppetry!'

John Orams, NET, HK Red Cross John F. Kennedy Centre

Using Puppetry and Technology to Learn English – It was fun!

Providing support to students with special education needs (SEN) at HKCS Pui Oi School has been a rewarding journey for the team. The school caters mainly for students with physical disabilities and some with mild intellectual disabilities. The group of students we worked with were at Primary 5 level. The aim of the support was to enhance students' English language skills through the use of puppetry and technology. Judging by the participants' shining eyes and huge smiling faces, it was well received not only by the students, but also by the teachers involved.



Puppetry and technology are used as instructional tools to motivate students with special education needs to learn English and to enhance their learning effectiveness.



The making of puppets was fun



Let's share our puppet creation



The use of puppetry and apps has helped students overcome their shyness and improve their articulation skills in speaking English

During the co-planned lessons, students were provided with ample fun and engaging experiences to extend their English skills. They were motivated to make connections with their personal experiences. They enjoyed online quizzes because they could compete with other students. By the end of the unit, they were able to use appropriate vocabulary and language structures to express their likes and dislikes and use these in a skit.

We were happy to see that students' creativity and confidence in speaking English were both enhanced when given the opportunities to create their own puppet. The making of puppets appealed

to students' individual learning styles whether visual, auditory or kinesthetic. They were really proud of their final products. Students worked collaboratively in the presentation of their skit which was turned into a video with the Shadow Puppet app. These videos provided additional learning experiences as they were shared with their peers and teachers for enjoyment and immediate feedback. Of course, teachers could also make good use of the videos for assessing students' reading and communication skills.

**Catherine Lam, Regional NET Coordinator,
NET Section**

Teacher's Reflection

Mr Ng:

It's the first time I have made puppets. I saw how they were actually used in teaching English. Gina gave a very good introduction to various kinds of puppets and that really expanded my horizons. I think it's a nice way to draw the attention of the students, who seem to be quite interested in doing handicrafts and using puppets to speak "on their behalf".

Yoti:

I really enjoyed making the puppets! It was exciting to have people taking photos and videos of our role play.

Angel:

The Kahoot game was exciting! At first, I was a bit nervous to speak English in front of the class.

Students' Reflection

Oscar:

I like using iPads! – There were many words to read in the role play.

Chris:

I love role-play with Oscar and Angel. It's a good way to learn English!

Karl:

I like holding my puppet! But, some words are hard to read out clearly.

Camouflaging English Learning

I'm sure many of us have been through this: we rack our brains to create or organise an English activity and then no one comes. To attract our 'customers', we try all sorts of bait like candies, chocolate, potato chips and ice-cream in exchange for joining the activities. (Sad, but true, food is king.) For the more practical types, we tempt them with colourful yet stylish stationery. For the more academic types, we lure them with marks or merit points. Still doesn't work? How about a structural manoeuvre that schedules specific classes to join? Of course, in some schools, when enticements do not work, consequences (a.k.a. punishments) may. Even so, despite these strategies, there are still students who will not come, avoid the English Corner like the plague or simply cower in fear the minute they hear English spoken.

Maybe, just maybe, the idea of English activities or an English Corner needs a facelift, or an image change if you will. Because of this, I set to work on camouflaging English activities, rebranding them and restructuring the way they are run.

Experiment 1 – Rebranding the English Corner – Literally

Most schools have an English Corner and most would call it just that. We are holding a competition to rename the English Corner. Any student, no matter how insecure they are about English, can cough up a couple of words and if their entry wins, their idea and their creativity will be part of the school history – at least that's how I sell it.

Experiment 2 – Flash Mob

Students hate coming to the English Corner? No problem. We went to them. Student ambassadors prepared a simple 5-minute activity. Lunchtime was the perfect choice as there would be students in the classrooms after lunch. In the style of a flash mob, different ambassadors rushed into different classrooms, did the activity with whoever was in the classroom, gave out a prize or two and then rushed out. This way, students tried the activity simply because it was right in front of them. Both the activity and the rewards were instantaneous so there was no time for fear and discomfort to kick in. Simply put, it was over before they knew it.

Experiment 3 – Camouflage

Culture is always a good place to start simply because it is so vast. I settled on cultural workshops where culture was the main focus and English was only the language medium in which the workshop was held. With this in mind, I started the Cultural Mini-workshop series.



Luckily, my school is aligned with this idea because each year, one exchange student from another country comes to study in the school. This year, our exchange student is from Japan. With the hype and popularity of



Japanese culture in Hong Kong, this was an appropriate target. My first workshop was Yukata Dressing (dressing students in an article of Japanese traditional clothing called the yukata). Simply put, my bait was: come and have the experience of wearing a colourful yukata (and learn English on the way).

Students listened attentively about how to put on a yukata, on what occasions they could wear this type of clothing in Japan and Hong Kong, what the big left sleeve could be used for and how its use differed from the right, how students should stand or sit appropriately in this clothing, and so on. Through the demonstration and trying it out for themselves, students ventured guesses to the questions I posed. Of course, the parts that our teenagers looked forward to most of all were for me to dress them in the yukata and the selfies and photos they could take at the end of the workshop. The response was very positive and students requested similar workshops in the future.

So far, these experiments have been a lot of fun and I can't wait to try new experiments.

Kanyu Wong, NET, DMHC Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School

Our PuppeTech Project



What is PuppeTech?

PuppeTech uses puppetry and technology to motivate students with special education needs (SEN) to learn English. The PuppeTech project is built on the latest educational findings and easy-to-use learning tools. Our team tailor-makes for each project school a specific education curriculum to better suit the needs of students with SEN.

Objective:

PuppeTech gives school curriculums a range of ways for students to meet their learning goals and to demonstrate their understanding of core concepts through the practical applications of skills.

PuppeTech Approach

Works in partnership with parents and specialists

Recognises and values the uniqueness of each student

Actively engages students in decision making that affects them

Adheres to the principles of the Responding to Intervention learning model

Actively promotes equal opportunities for all students and families

The Process:

- Interested, eligible schools join the PuppeTech project.
- Schools with SEN students meet regularly with the PuppeTech team to discuss concerns they have about their students.
- The PuppeTech team works with the school individuals to build into their curriculums additional support structures and activities.

These might include:

1. Lego
2. Cardboard technology, such as dioramas
3. Small world objects and figurines for role-play
4. Puppets
5. Apps to enrich the learning experience
6. Visual schedules and emotional/behavioural regulation mechanisms

Current Status:



It has been a busy year with many milestones achieved. The PuppeTech development team gladly welcomed new members this academic year including more members of the Regional NET Coordinating Team (RNCT) as well as the Advisory Teaching Team (ATT). Two primary and two secondary schools have joined the project this year. We started the academic year with a centralised workshop that allowed teachers to explore the PuppeTech approach aimed at experiential curriculum development and a plethora of activity ideas.

What does PuppeTech look like in the classroom?

"Puppetry is used throughout the learning process for scaffolding and working towards a celebration of learning. This can be achieved by performing a puppet show or digitally showcasing students' learning by using interactive animated apps. At one of the secondary schools in the project, the students explored what happened in each room of a village house and built a story that used English within a family home context."



Chris Xavier, RNC supporting a secondary PuppeTech project school

"It was wonderful to observe the students being immersed in make-believe and storytelling through puppetry. Their faces revealed their joy and connection to the puppets."

Dora Pratley, RNC supporting a secondary PuppeTech project school

"Students explored festivals, then chose one they wanted to investigate. They wrote questions with the teacher's support. They discovered and wrote facts. They shared their ideas by using the signing puppets and later typed the subtitles. They chose which classmates would tell their facts. They were investigators, explorers, writers and directors."



Philip Wood, Advisory Teacher supporting a primary PuppeTech project school

"Students' creativity ignited when told they could use Lego to develop their story ideas. Students felt empowered to have a choice about how they wish to record and share their story with the class. Some students chose the App Sock Puppet, Puppet Pals or Bits Board. Other students took photographs of their Lego creations and added those photos with their audio recordings to the Shadow Puppet app."

Sue Bowden, Advisory Teacher supporting a primary PuppeTech project school and coordinator of the PuppeTech project

Sue Bowden, Advisory Teacher, NET Section



Filmit 2018

'If it can be written or thought, it can be filmed' – Stanley Kubrick

Filmit is going from strength to strength as was demonstrated in the 2018 competition when we had the largest ever number of schools taking part.

Students expanded their horizons and demonstrated great imagination in interpreting the Lewis Carroll inspired theme – *Europe Through the Hong Kong Looking Glass*.

From its beginning as Clipit in 2007, the competition has grown exponentially, thanks to the loyal support of schools and our partners down the years: RTHK, the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao and the Hong Kong Maritime Museum.

Filmit follows the Train the Trainer model with workshops and Filmlabs scheduled in February, March and April culminating in an Oscars style awards ceremony in early July which showcases the films and filmmakers in front of a large audience.



Filmit 2019: Protect the Planet. Reduce Waste.

Filmit celebrates its 12th year promoting short filmmaking in support of the English Language Curriculum.

Entering Filmit is a simple straightforward process. Students have to make a 5 minute film on this year's topic – **Protect the Planet. Reduce waste.**

They then submit the film with the necessary forms (application, image permission, pledge) on or before 14 May 2019.

There is a professional development programme to support the competition. The teachers may take one or two students to the first workshop (20 February for secondary and 1 March for primary).

There are further FilmLabs at Chinese International School (30 March) and South Island School (6 April) where the students will receive instruction and advice on their film projects from the IB Film students at those schools.

All the details can be found on our NET Section website. Here's the link – <https://nets.edb.hkedcity.net/>

Primary Award Winners		
Award	Film name	School name
Best Overall Film 1st	EU Through the Hong Kong Looking Glass	Buddhist Chung Wah Kornhill Primary School
Best Overall Film 2nd	Mrs Chan's New Dress	STFA Lee Kam Primary School
Best Overall Film 3rd	Mona Lisa's Secret	STFA Lee Kam Primary School
Best Overall Film 4th	Lunchtime News: A Special Report on the EU and Hong Kong	King's College Old Boys' Association Primary School No.2
Best Overall Film 5th	Hong Kong Memories	The Little Flower's Catholic Primary School
Best Solo Performance	EU Through the Hong Kong Looking Glass	Lopez Ng Laia Kee, Buddhist Chung Wah Kornhill Primary School
	Mona Lisa's Secret	So Ching Nga, STFA Lee Kam Primary School
Best Ensemble Performance	Mrs Chan's New Dress	STFA Lee Kam Primary School



Junior Secondary Award Winners

Award	Film name	School name
Best Overall Film Award	What's a Europe?	Jockey Club Government Secondary School
Special Jury Award for Excellence	The Common Misconception	HKCCCU Logo Academy
Best Direction Award	A Blend of Milk Tea	Queen's College
Best Original Script Award	I Look at Hong Kong and See EU	Bobo Lo, Beatrice Chan, Valerie Lee, Marymount Secondary School
Best Solo Performance Award	Two Stupid Thieves	Ceci Cheng, Buddhist Sin Tak College
Best Ensemble Performance Award	A Frenchman in Hong Kong	Queen's College
Best Documentary Award	A Blend of Milk Tea	Queen's College



Senior Secondary Award Winners

Award	Film name	School name
Best Overall Film Award	When East Meets West	King's College
Best Direction Award	Through Thick and Thin	YPICA Lee Lim Ming College
Best Original Script Award	Dessert Crawl	Asiya Yu, Fatima Waheed Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College
Best Solo Performance Award	When Europe Meets Hong Kong	Siu Yu Shing Adrian, Sing Yin Secondary School
Best Ensemble Performance Award	Dessert Crawl	Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College
Best Documentary Award	'Goodbye Hong Kong, Hello Europe!'	St. Teresa Secondary School

John Hone, Regional NET Coordinator, NET Section

The NET Section has developed an interactive e-platform <http://nets.edb.hkedcity.net/> with support from the HKEdCity. Through this e-platform, multimedia information will be provided about the range of projects, programmes, competitions, pedagogical innovations and other school support services promoted under the NET Scheme. The work of both the primary Advisory Teaching Team and secondary Regional NET Coordinating Team will also be publicised to the wider international community. Scan the QR code and visit our e-platform.



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