

NET

SCHEME NEWS

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DREAM

BIG





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This newsletter is prepared by the NET Section, CDI, EDB. All comments and suggestions on the newsletter can be sent to jeremygray@edb.gov.hk.

What Can Be Imagined Can Be Achieved

What can be imagined can be achieved.

This tagline of an iconic TV commercial should ring a bell with those who were in Hong Kong in the 1990's. With John Lennon's *Imagine* playing in the background and footage showing different epoch-making events in the past century, such as the first moon landing and Martin Luther King Jr. delivering his 'I Have a Dream' speech, we were taken on a trip down memory lane and inspired to pursue big dreams.

When the Enhanced NET Scheme in Secondary Schools and the NET Scheme in Primary Schools were introduced respectively in 1998 and 2002, no one then had a crystal ball to foretell exactly what we could achieve by 2020.

Now, as members of a thriving international learning community, we applaud the professional collaboration and the array of pedagogical innovations promoted through the NET Scheme, all of which help foster our teachers' professional growth and create engaging learning experiences for our students.

In this issue of the NET Scheme News, thanks to the thoughtful contributions from school teachers and the NET Section's Advisory Teachers and Regional NET Coordinators, we celebrate some of the scheme's achievements in a good range of areas, including the promotion of storytelling, family literacy, learning through play, inclusive and positive education, e-learning and the makerspace movement.

The success of collaborative projects which provide community service deserves a special mention. The popularity and impact of the projects accounted for in the articles, 'Let Our Imagination Run Wild', 'Family Literacy in a Kinderwonderland' and 'Sparking the Imagination', are attributed to the commitment of natural and exuberant storytellers from the NET Scheme community. These wonderful professionals went the extra mile to fill every storytelling session that they conducted with memorable experiences for both the kids and parents taking part.

To design competitions that help children realise their potential by working with and learning from their peers may sound a bit far-fetched in Hong Kong where competition is keen. Yet this is the exact goal of the range of competitions organised under the NET Scheme. In the article, 'Hands on Stage: Voices From Teachers and Students', what Tidus Tiu from Salesian English School, a

member of the school's puppetry team, says about his experience attests to the achievement of the goal and gives a boost to us as the organiser:

"All my life I was one of those people without friends and don't interact well with others. Because of this activity, I've learnt that communication is key to success."

In many ways, learning environments reflect the educational beliefs of the designer. In the 21st century, a powerful learning environment is where learners' diverse needs are embraced and where learners are encouraged to explore, to learn and acquire skills from experience, to construct and apply knowledge, to be creative and to define and solve problems. In the kind of learning environment depicted in the articles, 'Empowering Learners', 'Learning Through Play', 'Makerspace' and 'Positive Education', expectations play a critical role in shaping learners' outlooks. In such positive environments, we can, in Plato's view, "discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation" and we can liberate the mind of a learner through asking them to "make something", anything.

In the article titled 'Twenty Years of English Language Support', Professor Mary Shepard Wong, Principal Investigator of the last NET Scheme evaluation team, shares the key findings of the two scheme evaluations conducted from 2015 to 2017. She also draws our attention to how "a more fully developed support system for professional and curriculum development" has made our scheme stand out in the region. As to the way forward, she appeals to us to "offer (our) insights into how the scheme might continue to support English language teaching and learning in (our) schools and communities, creating and sustaining a truly multilingual Hong Kong."

What can be imagined can be achieved. Lincoln once said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." Let's keep dreaming bigger dreams and put our heads together to maximise the benefits of the NET Scheme and to create a brighter and a more promising future for our children.



Joe Leung, Chief Curriculum Development Officer (CCDO), NET Section



Twenty Years of English Language Support



Dr Mary Shepard Wong giving a keynote speech at the 'Enhanced NET Scheme 20th Anniversary Conference', 23 June 2018

Background to Hong Kong's NET Scheme

The Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in Hong Kong, comprised of the NET Scheme in Primary Schools (PNET Scheme) and the Enhanced NET Scheme in Secondary Schools (ENET Scheme), has supported English language teaching in Hong Kong for more than 20 years. The ENET Scheme was launched in secondary schools in the 1998/99 school year with the goals to support professional development of English language teachers and advance the quality of English language teaching through providing teaching resources and models of good practice. In 2002, the scheme was extended to the primary sector with the introduction of the PNET Scheme. In the same year, the NET Section was established to provide professional support for the implementation of the NET Scheme.

Comparison of NET Schemes in the Region

Hong Kong is not alone in providing government-sponsored English language teaching support. Similar programmes in the region are: the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme in Japan, established in 1987; the English Programme in Korea (EPIK), launched in 1995; and the Foreign English Teacher in

Taiwan (FETiT), started in 2008. Although these schemes differ in terms of purposes and practices, thus making blanket comparisons difficult, Hong Kong's Scheme has higher recruitment standards in terms of expected levels of qualifications and experience for entry into the programmes, as well as a more fully developed support system for professional and curriculum development.

Two British Council reports by Copland et al. (2016a; 2016b) provide an overview and comparison of several NET Schemes and programmes that recruit and send teachers overseas. The reports include the following remarks about Hong Kong, "The current scheme – called NET (or PNET if teachers work in primary schools) – recruits *experienced and qualified* teachers to work with (local English teachers) on designing and delivering interactive lessons on certain aspects of the curriculum" (Copland, et al., 2016b, p.11, emphasis added). They go on to state that "the Hong Kong NET Scheme is one exception to the general trend to employ inexperienced, untrained teachers" (Copland, et al., 2016b, p.12). It is encouraging to see that in a comparison of schemes by outside scholars, the Hong Kong Scheme is valued for its more rigorous requirements for NETs in terms of experience and training.

Evaluations of the Impact of the Scheme

Since its inception, the NET Scheme has been subject to regular evaluation. The first territory-wide evaluation of the PNET Scheme was undertaken between 2004 and 2006 by a team of researchers from The University of Melbourne and the then Hong Kong Institute of Education (EMB, 2007). The second PNET evaluation was undertaken between January 2015 and October 2016 by a team of scholars from Azusa Pacific University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Open University of Hong Kong and The University of Hong Kong (EDB, 2018). The first external evaluation of the ENET Scheme was conducted between 1998 and 2000 by scholars from the then Hong Kong Institute of Education (Storey, Luk, Gray, Wang-Kho, Lin & Berry, 2001). The second ENET evaluation was conducted by scholars from The University of Melbourne between 2008 and 2009 (EDB, 2009). A third ENET evaluation was completed in 2017 by scholars from Azusa Pacific University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Open University of Hong Kong, and The University of New South Wales (EDB, 2018).

PNET Scheme Evaluation and Findings

In the latest PNET Scheme evaluation (EDB, 2018), over 13,000 participants were surveyed, including students, parents, local English teachers, NETs, school heads, and NET Section personnel. To enable the research team to gain a more in-depth understanding of the operation of the scheme, 32 interviews were conducted in eight case study schools with different stakeholders, plus eight additional interviews with NET Section personnel, as well as 24 observations of the English environment of schools, co-planning meetings, and classrooms in which team-teaching occurred.

The overall findings of the most recent PNET Scheme evaluation point to the success of the scheme in achieving its objectives by having a positive impact on the learning and teaching of English in the primary schools. Stakeholders acknowledged the contribution of the scheme to the enhancement of students' English language learning, noting gains in general proficiency, literacy skills, oral fluency and accuracy, as well as increased confidence and motivation. In addition, evidence was found of an enhanced repertoire of pedagogical practices and an increased use of English

in the classroom by local English teachers. The positive change was engendered by the co-planning and co-teaching between NET and local English teachers with professional support from the Advisory Teachers of the NET Section. It was also found that support by the school head and an openness and willingness to collaborate among both NETs and local English teachers were instrumental in the effective deployment, utilisation, and integration of NETs in schools.

The latest PNET Scheme evaluation resulted in several recommendations for the NET Scheme to help build upon its achievements and address the challenges faced in supporting English language learning and teaching. Key among the recommendations was for all stakeholders to continue to foster a collegial culture among NETs and local English teachers. Most notably in the PNET Scheme was the success found in co-teaching, which research has shown is not easy to achieve. Collaboration works best when there is ample time allotted in the schedule for co-planning, when teachers are provided with training and professional support for curriculum development and co-teaching,

similar to that currently provided by the NET Section. It achieves the best results when teachers feel valued, supported, and respected. As for NET recruitment and deployment, it was recommended that the scheme ensure that teachers recruited through the scheme have the appropriate qualifications and experience for the positions and tasks for which they are hired. It was also recommended that the NET Section continue to strengthen communication channels with all parties with an interest in the NET Scheme, including school heads, parents, students, local English teachers, NETs, NET communities, scholars and the public sector. This will ensure the NET Scheme can continue to inform stakeholders of their goals and accomplishments and also seek out stakeholders' insights to address potential challenges.

ENET Scheme Evaluation and Findings

The most recent ENET Scheme evaluation (EDB, 2018) included over

7,000 online surveys, and over 40 interviews and focus groups, 32 of which were conducted with different stakeholders in eight case study schools. Case studies included 26 observations of the English environment of schools, co-planning meetings and classrooms in which NETs were teaching, and shadowing of the NET. Nine non-school based interviews and focus groups



were conducted with a variety of stakeholders, including EDB personnel.

The evaluation points to the overall effectiveness of the ENET Scheme and positive achievements, especially in enhancing schools' English speaking environment and promoting the use of culturally authentic resources. It also offers suggestions for potential areas of improvement in terms of NET recruitment, deployment and support, as well as in public relations such as exploring ways to communicate the ENET Scheme's goals to stakeholders while seeking to remove misconceptions about the scheme's work. It was recommended that in light of the diverse ways of NET deployment, the scheme continue to encourage secondary schools to consider the unique experience, qualifications and interests of the NETs when they recruit NETs and determine their deployment. Schools should consider what specific NET expertise is needed and how they might make the most of the NET given the school's unique mission, student demographics and their English panel members' needs. The NET Section should continue to encourage schools to integrate the NET into the English panel both socially and professionally and promote a culture of collegiality and collaborative professional development.

Conclusions and Ways Forward

Notwithstanding concerns raised by some stakeholders, such as the availability of enough NETs with the right



qualifications and professional experience, schools that are struggling with the implementation of the scheme, NETs who feel underutilised, and the questioning of NET 'perks' among some local staff, there is much to celebrate about the scheme. With a 20-year history, Hong Kong's NET Scheme is well established with a support system of Advisory Teachers for the PNET Scheme and Regional NET Coordinators for the ENET Scheme as well as a slate of innovative programmes and tailor-made resources to offer schools. The most recent evaluations found that a majority of stakeholders support the scheme, noting students' increased motivation to speak English, the support schools received from the scheme's programmes, and the expanded repertoire of pedagogical practices and resources that teachers are using. With the diversity in Hong Kong's schools, a one-size-fits-all approach will not suffice. NET Scheme guidelines need to retain enough flexibility to allow the scheme to flourish in all contexts. It is my hope that stakeholders, including school heads, teachers,

students, parents, teacher educators, researchers and the public, are encouraged by the recent reports and offer their insights into how the scheme might continue to support English language teaching and learning in their schools and communities, creating and sustaining a truly multilingual Hong Kong.

Mary Shepard Wong, Ph.D., Azusa Pacific University

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Family Literacy in a Kinderwonderland



Christmas comes early for kindergarten kids in Tung Chung.

PLK Mrs Ma Kam Ming Cheung Fook Sien College hosted a fun-filled afternoon for 64 kindergarten kids from five kindergartens in Tung Chung, together with their parents and teachers on 3 December 2019. It was all part of the NET Section's *Let Our Imagination Run Wild - Storytelling Tour* to promote family literacy and reading.

Students, teachers and parents from Shin Yat Tong Yat Tung Kindergarten, CPC Green Pasture Kindergarten, Tung Chung Baptist Kindergarten, PLK Cheung Poon Mei Yee Kindergarten, and The Salvation Army Rosita Yuen Kindergarten, took part in different interactive storytelling and arts & crafts sessions.

A heartwarming feature of the storytelling sessions was the contribution of 13 student helpers from Tung Chung Catholic School, who were trained by the NET Section storytelling team in June 2019. They developed their skills and confidence in conducting short storytelling sessions with small groups of children before and after the main storytelling sessions. They should be given a big round of applause for doing such a fantastic job in their first storytelling adventure.

As always, the day ended with parents choosing from a selection of recommended books and reading to their children using some of the newly learnt techniques to bring the stories alive and make them more engaging for their little ones.



Storytellers from Tung Chung Catholic School

The activities were made possible by the strong support from the Islands District School Development Section and the Hong Kong Island School Heads' Association.

Here are the QR codes for two videos capturing the highlights of the storytelling sessions and the arts & crafts sessions:

Training for students in Tung Chung Catholic School



Storytelling for Kindergarteners in Tung Chung



Arts & Crafts cum Storytelling Sessions

John Hone, Regional NET Coordinator, NET Section



Let Our Imagination Run Wild: Family Literacy and Cross-Generational Reading

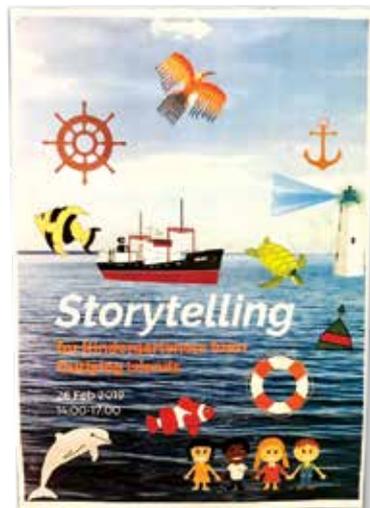
“That’s what we storytellers do. We restore order with imagination. We instill hope again and again and again.” - Walt Disney

Making reading a regular fun family activity is one of the main goals of *Let Our Imagination Run Wild*, a community project run by the NET Section to promote family literacy and cross-generational reading. In various venues around Hong Kong, parents look on as their kids are read stories in an active, engaging way using drama, songs and improvised, fun activities.

Children learn to read at school but they learn to love reading on their parents’ laps. Family literacy is an essential part of children’s development because it nurtures the love of reading and strengthens the bond between parents and their children.

In *Let Our Imagination Run Wild*, the storytellers take children on an imaginary trip to meet and interact with the amazing characters in the stories. They tap children’s imagination and creativity with hands-on activities to make the characters come to life. Participating children are immersed in an exciting and interactive world of fiction where possibilities abound and future dreams are formed.

As another group of participants, parents observe the NET Section’s storytelling team bringing the stories to life with interactive games and engagement strategies to warm up and create a good atmosphere in the room. Every session ends with the storytelling team giving the parents some tips on how to engage their children in the reading process by making it more fun and memorable. The parents then read selected stories to their own children. By taking part, they learn about the importance of reading and storytelling to their children’s personal, social and literacy development.



They also pick up some storytelling skills to engage their children further with captivating stories at home.

Sitting down with children to read a story is an opportunity for adults to re-engage with their own childhood and a child’s world. In joining their children in the world of fantasy in the picture book chosen, parents start to lose their sense of self-consciousness. Indeed, being silly together has psychological benefits for both parents and children. It is the ultimate parent-child bonding experience.



Training for students in Marymount Primary School

Training sessions are also held for primary and secondary school students and they have opportunities to try out their newly learnt skills in an authentic environment. These very enthusiastic student trainees take an active part in the storytelling and then hold their own sessions in small groups to wrap up the activity in a meaningful way.

John Hone, Regional NET Coordinator, NET Section



The NET Section of the Education Bureau has been running the ‘*Let Our Imagination Run Wild – Storytelling Tour*’ since 2018. It aims to promote family literacy through storytelling and other literacy activities using picture books, music, nursery rhymes, simple props, etc. to foster children’s love for reading and learning. Events have been held at kindergartens, primary schools, shopping centres and public spaces all over Hong Kong.

Parents reading to their kids



The shining eyes tell their own story

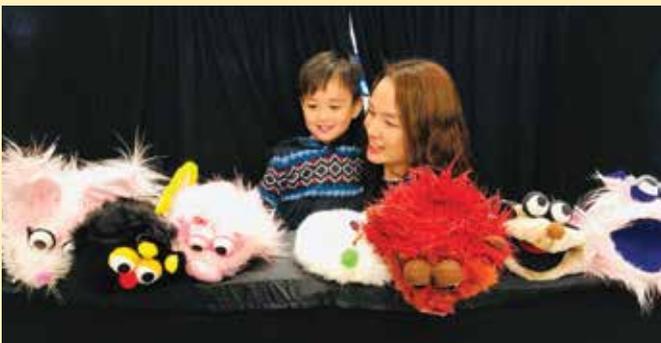


Scan the QR code and watch the video of *Storytelling at the HK Maritime Museum* on 26 February 2019

Storytelling for Kindergarteners from the Outlying Islands at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum (26 February 2019)

Children and parents from the outlying islands took part in our maritime themed session at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum.

Having fun with arts, crafts and puppets



Creating shining eyes at the Joyful Reading Carnival



Bringing stories to life at Plaza Hollywood



Joyful Reading Carnival at Plaza Hollywood (2 & 3 March 2019)

The biggest session was held at Plaza Hollywood in Diamond Hill in March 2019 where hundreds of parents and children joined in the fun as part of the EDB’s Joyful Reading Carnival.



Scan the QR code and watch the video of the *Joyful Reading Carnival* 2019

Empowering Learners With Intellectual Challenges

“It’s time we take our focus off disabilities, and place it on capacities, so we can see the person first.” – Robert M. Hensel



Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School is a school for learners aged 6 - 18 where they are valued, accepted and celebrated. Students have intellectual challenges of varying degrees that can impact the way they store and process information. The school offers an adapted curriculum that can meaningfully address their learning needs in functional academics, personal and social skills, and vocational skills development.

As the NET of the school, I have been given the freedom to plan lessons according to the newly updated *Adapted Learning Targets and Learning Objectives for the English Language Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disability*. Together with the rest of the dedicated English team, we work on providing engaging learning opportunities so that children with cognitive challenges can enjoy learning and make progress together.

NET Section Support

From the outset, the NET Section has provided invaluable support for the development of our school-based curriculum. We were introduced to a range of assessments that helped to identify students who needed additional support, as well as to build upon the interests of learners through a strength-based Response to Intervention (RTI) approach. Our Advisory Teacher, Ms Carol Pang, is always generous with her time in visiting our school, working alongside teachers on our home ground, relating inclusive English teaching practices directly to the individual teacher’s level of experience and the needs of specific groups of children.

We have also benefited from the regular cluster meetings arranged by the Advisory Teaching Team. In our recent meetings, NETs and local English teachers were able to further our understanding in the policy area focusing on special educational needs by unwrapping the standards of the Adapted Curriculum as a team, and building the dialogue needed to reflect on students’ learning.



Raising Expectations

Expectations play a critical role in shaping children’s outlooks. In the past, students with intellectual disabilities (ID) were not considered capable of learning to read. Many of the children with challenges entered school with much less exposure to print than their typically-developing peers. As a result, many parents and teachers of these learners focused on life and survival skills, and the learners grew up to be under-literate, thus severely limiting their choices and job opportunities.

In February 2018, *The Adapted Learning Targets and Learning Objectives for the English Language Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disability* restated that all students are entitled to English language education. Regardless of their special educational needs, it stated that "ID students should be provided with a wide range of learning experiences that help them develop capabilities for lifelong learning and prepare them better for further studies, future careers and the demands of the modern world."

Recent research has indicated that students with intellectual challenges need to receive intensive reading practice and instructions that are provided explicitly, systematically and consistently. Nevertheless, research also shows that these students learn to read using the very same cognitive process as typically-developing students. It is therefore imperative for students with intellectual challenges to be also exposed to comprehensive instructional strategies similar to those taught in mainstream schools.



With the support from our principal, Ms Peggy Chu, and panel head, Ms Miku Tsang, our tight-knit team has collaborated tirelessly to bring in relevant elements of the Primary Literacy Programme - Reading & Writing into our school-based curriculum, incorporating the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and helping to reinforce a holistic approach to language learning.

Team-Based Approach

At Hong Chi Winifred Mary Cheung Morninghope School, I feel fortunate to participate in a team-based approach to teaching, whereby the team of staff, including the principal, teachers, therapists, psychologists, teaching assistants, social workers and custodians, collaborate to help children access the education they need. Instruction is always cooperative to motivate learners to take responsibility for their own learning.



Great emphasis is placed on promoting learners' sense of well-being through fostering their sense of "school connectedness", making sure students understand that the adults and peers in the school care both about their learning and them as individuals.

Embracing Students With Exceptionalities

Each one of us, at some point in our lives, would experience some sort of special needs that would require an open-hearted acceptance by others. An atmosphere of empowerment, self-help and growth is therefore important for an inclusive community.



"Sometimes real superheroes live in the hearts of children fighting big battles."
- Anonymous

I am thrilled to find myself amongst the presence of a team of professionals who are strong advocates for learners with intellectual challenges. It has been inspiring to be around teachers who consider students' behaviour as clues to their specific needs for achieving positive outcomes. After all, we need teachers to give their best to help students dream and fight for the best version of themselves.

Theresa Cheung,
NET, Hong Chi Winifred
Mary Cheung
Morninghope School

Let Students Learn Through Play - Promoting Active and Pleasurable English Learning Through Play in Key Stage 1 (Learning Through Play)

“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.” - Plato

In 2019/20, the “Seed” project *Learning Through Play* was launched. In play, children develop exploratory as well as explanatory drives: they actively look for patterns, test hypotheses and seek explanations, leading to increased complexity in thinking, learning and understanding (Gopnik et al, 1999). These cognitive processes are socially and culturally situated and, through the subject disciplines, can become increasingly refined (Wood, E. & Attfield, J., 2005).

Learning Through Play is not about children doing what they want in the classroom. In the “Seed” project, it is conducted in a carefully planned environment with four specific stations to allow students space and opportunity for learning to take place.

The stations provide appropriate materials for students to make choices, interact with each other and solve problems collaboratively as illustrated in the picture on the right.

Below is a brief explanation of the four stations in *Learning Through Play*.

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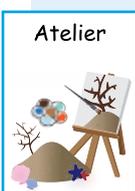


At the station ‘**Small World Play**’, students exercise their imagination. Small World Play allows students the opportunity to:



- play together, self-regulate, exchange ideas and communicate feelings;
- create stories around things they are familiar with;
- acquire new experiences and practise speaking and listening; and
- improvise and use language in a meaningful way.

At the station ‘**Atelier**’, students create, design and investigate a variety of materials, tools and techniques. Atelier allows students the opportunity to:



- develop visual, spatial and tactile awareness;
- experience sensory learning;
- practise gross motor and fine motor control;
- understand conceptually how the world works; and
- invent and share new ideas.

“Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul.” - Friedrich Fröbel

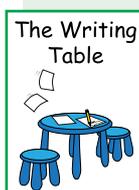


At the station **'Book Nook'**, students read for enjoyment in a relaxing and comfortable environment. Book Nook allows students the opportunity to:



- generate new ideas;
- research more on a particular topic;
- make their own choices and decisions;
- develop independence; and
- present ideas in different ways to show their learning.

At the station **'The Writing Table'**, students publish their work. It provides a good balance of activities that develop fundamental writing skills. The Writing Table allows students the opportunity to:



- organise their ideas;
- practise fine motor skills;
- extend their vocabulary; and
- be exposed to creative use of the language.

**Winnie So, Curriculum Development Officer,
Jojo Chan, Advisory Teacher, and
Jonathan Lee, Advisory Teacher, NET Section**



An enthralled audience



"Thank you & well done!" said Mr Joe Leung (CCDO, NET)



Briefing session for storytellers (2019/20) in Hong Kong Central Library



Re-creating a story at Cheung Chau Public Library

Sparking the Imagination

Since the 2015/16 school year, the NET Section has been working with Hong Kong Public Libraries of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to run English storytelling sessions for kids. This storytelling programme is a great way to promote literacy and spark the imagination of our children. Through these sessions we can host fun book sharing experiences for kids and at the same time offer NETs an opportunity to be involved in local communities outside of the school environment.

Jackie Kennedy, former American First Lady, once said, "There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all." This explains why the storytelling programme has been so popular. It has been expanding ever since its inception. From 38 sessions in the first year, there are now about 60 sessions held in more than 20 public libraries all over Hong Kong. Thousands of children have enjoyed listening to stories and responding through creative arts and crafts activities.

As We Serve, We Connect and We Grow

Since the 2018/19 school year, the NET Section's support for the promotion of family literacy has expanded to

'Baby shark do doo do, Baby shark do doo do do ...'

make reading opportunities more inclusive. To cater for the needs of ethnic minority groups, our storytelling programme in public libraries has included sessions partly conducted in Urdu, Nepalese and Hindi to engage children from those language backgrounds. These storytelling sessions recognise and value the first language and the culture of these children.

"Good stories surprise us. They make us think and feel." – Joe Lazauskas and Shane Snow

In the 2019/20 school year, our community service is being further enriched through our collaboration with Bring Me A Book, a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of family literacy. After the storytelling sessions it organises, this charitable organisation gives away story books to participants so that the pleasure of reading can be taken home.

Let's continue to spark the imagination of our young minds through storytelling!

Catherine Lam, Regional NET Coordinator, NET Section



“CPD Has Never Been So Much Fun!”

The NET Section recently held hands-on puppet making workshops to upskill teachers, who can then go back to their schools and introduce puppetry in their classrooms. Teaching English through puppetry is a great way to support literacy development in the classroom as students are engaged in a variety of creative activities and fun experiences. Puppets can be used to increase confidence as students create voices and actions that match the personalities of their puppets. It can also encourage co-operation and collaboration as all stakeholders work together to produce shows and enter the annual 'Story to Stage' Puppetry Competition organised by the NET Section.

The workshops were well received and the participants had great fun producing some very creative puppets which they took back to their schools. In the comments given as feedback, teachers loved the workshops; found them a practical and useful guide to making puppets with a lot of special tips, and were excited to show the students these kinds of puppets back in their schools.

Comments from evaluation forms:

Question: Which aspects did you find particularly useful?

Very useful tips, I love this workshop. The best!

How the sock puppet can be used at a workshop with students – the kids will love it!

Very practical for making class-based puppets or preparing for the competition

How to easily make a puppet for the English class

Good for English language teaching

How to make a puppet from scratch

Practical approach to making puppets is awesome!

The special skills to avoid making mistakes when making the puppets

The puppetry making process is helpful and memorable!

It was a great workshop – everything was useful!

Sock puppet making will be great for kids

Making the puppets is very interesting. All the presenters are very helpful and they give us some ideas on how to use the puppets in our English lessons.

Exact steps for creating different kinds of puppets

Rachael Williamson, Advisory Teacher, NET Section

Voices From Teachers and Students



Fanling Rhenish Church Secondary School won a 1st prize

The 2019 edition of 'Hands on Stage' Puppetry Competition attracted 25 teams from 22 secondary schools. The three sessions were held at Tuen Mun Town Hall and Sheung Wan Civic Centre on 14 and 15 May 2019.

Teams wrote original scripts based on the topics of 'Puppet-re: The Importance of Recycling - Recycling ...' or 'Up-ett-re: The Importance of Upcycling - ...', adding their own subtitles. They performed their 5-to 7-minute puppet plays in teams of 4 to 5, with up to two student helpers handling the backdrops and in some cases props. Teams could use either commercial or handmade puppets. In 2019, most teams opted to make their own puppets from recycled materials. Some upcycled props were also included, such as a plastic bottle for a vase.

Judges, Ms TJ Hanretta, Mr Alex Wilcox, Mr James Vickers and Mr Ivan Idzik, were looking at the performances in terms of the quality of the scripts, voice work, puppetry technique, puppet design, backdrop and effects. Two teams new to the competition took away first prizes. Fanling Rhenish Church Secondary School and True Light Girls' College won beautiful crystal trophies and book coupons for their fine performances. The other first prize winner was St Teresa Secondary School, a team which had won a second prize the previous year. Some backdrops and props in 2019 stood out with a team from De La Salle Secondary School N.T. using a stunning marine setting with umbrellas adapted to represent jellyfish.

For 'Hands on Stage', each year there has been a briefing session in the first term followed by a puppetry workshop for schools new to the competition. Teachers and students also received support in one of the

30-minute voluntary consultation sessions held after school hours at the NET Section office in Tsuen Wan.

These consultation sessions helped teams refine their performances shortly before the competition. As Ms Megan Ireland, the NET from Fanling Rhenish Church Secondary School, said, "At the puppetry consultation, we were a long way from ready, but it was good for students to listen to someone as an outsider who pointed out some key things that we'd missed ... we changed one setting after that - we put in more action and made it more light-hearted. The consultation was one of the keys to our success. I am certain our play wouldn't have been as entertaining otherwise. I'd recommend teachers attend." According to Mr Daniel Desilets, the NET from Christian Alliance S W Chan Memorial College, "Consultation sessions are useful because the kids may sometimes forget, or in some cases, ignore our advice. Hearing the comments from someone else they don't know hits home more than hearing it from us."

Students really seemed excited about taking part in the 2019 competition and also enjoyed watching the other teams perform. They could see how puppetry helped them develop various skills, in particular team work and puppetry skills.

Hilda Chan, a student from Helen Liang Memorial Secondary School, (with the support of team members Kristy Ho, Yoyo Ho and Irene Man), said, "We've joined the puppetry competition 3 years in a row. This year we put ourselves 'into the shoes of garbage' and explained how wasteful humans are. We really liked how we could incorporate art and creative writing into drama and we were hidden - so no stage fright!" Their team members, Grace Chen and Koey Mak, said, "We

helped design the puppets using recycled materials like polystyrene boxes and plastic bottles. It's easy to collect the materials and yet it's a challenge for us to make them sturdy and durable. We spent quite a lot of time ensuring that the puppeteers could control the puppets in a comfortable way."

Tidus Tiu, from Salesian English School, said, "All my life I was one of those people without friends and didn't interact well with others. Because of this activity, I've learnt that communication is key to success." His teammate, Harry Chan, said, "I enjoyed the puppet shows, because the students in the other schools also performed well and I found it interesting watching them." Another student, Caleb Hon, said, "I learnt about pursuing continuous improvement to reach perfection and the importance of upcycling – this was a very good experience for me."

One of the students at Ho Dao College (Sponsored by Sik Sik Yuen), Chow Pui Yee Belle, said that they were absolutely thrilled to watch the puppetry performances and learn from them. Their teacher, Ms Prachi Sharma, said that her enthusiastic puppetry students had said it was a reward in itself to be able to watch other teams perform.

All up, puppetry proved a popular activity with the teams in 2019 and the puppets and props proved in some cases to be amazing, showing how much effort had gone into the whole competition. As Lee Cheuk

Ling, a student from Fanling Rhenish Church Secondary School, nicely sums up, "To enter the puppetry competition we had to think of an interesting idea and write a script, make the puppets and then perform our play. Our theme this year was upcycling and we also had to make our puppets from upcycled materials. It was a tough challenge because it took time to find the materials and use them in a new way. But we were amazed at the puppets we created – we never imagined we could create puppets like that!"

The 'Hands on Stage' Puppetry Competition was the first step taken by us to promote integrating puppetry into the English language classroom. We are confident that it will pave the way for thoughtful use of puppetry by teachers to enhance every student's English language learning experience as it builds their confidence in English language use, opens the door to their creativity and imagination, and, most important of all, makes English lessons fun.

The Regional NET Coordinating Team of the NET Section is committed to supporting puppetry through our school-based support services from the 2019/20 school year onwards. A resource pack on Object Theatre, a more advanced form of puppetry, will also be published later in the current school year. Interested teachers are welcome to contact their Regional NET Coordinator to find out more about these puppetry-related initiatives.

Gina Green, Regional NET Coordinator, NET Section

Winners' List:

Prize	School	Trainer(s)
1st Prize	Fanling Rhenish Church Secondary School	Ms Megan Ireland (NET)
	True Light Girls' College	Ms Salai Capel (NET)
	St Teresa Secondary School	Mr Kwai Lam Li (NET)
2nd Prize	Christian Alliance S W Chan Memorial College (Team 1)	Mr Daniel Desilets (NET) Ms Li Siu Man, Julia (LET)
	Shek Lei Catholic Secondary School	Mr Nigel Pearson (NET)
	De La Salle Secondary School, N.T. (Team 2)	Ms Jackaline McPhie (NET) Mr Daniel Au (LET)
3rd Prize	AD & FD POHL Leung Sin Tak College	Ms Sandeep Bhogal (NET)
	Helen Liang Memorial Secondary School (Shatin)	Ms Chan Yeuk Yu, Erica (LET)
	De La Salle Secondary School, N.T. (Team 1)	Ms Jackaline McPhie (NET) Mr Daniel Au (LET)
Merit (2 per venue)	Christian Alliance S W Chan Memorial College (Team 2)	Mr Daniel Desilets (NET) Ms Li Siu Man, Julia (LET)
	The Methodist Church HK Wesley College (Team 1)	Ms Nikki Bali (NET)
	The Methodist Church HK Wesley College (Team 2)	Ms Nikki Bali (NET)
	Po Leung Kuk Laws Foundation College (Team 1)	Ms Laurette Wong (LET)
	Po Leung Kuk Laws Foundation College (Team 2)	Ms Laurette Wong (LET)
	Salesian English School	Mr Peter Hakim (NET)
Puppet Design (handmade puppets only)	Caritas St Joseph Secondary School	Ms Che Yiwon, Yvonne (LET)
	Helen Liang Memorial Secondary School (Shatin)	Ms Chan Yeuk Yu, Erica (LET)
	De La Salle Secondary School, N.T. (Team 1)	Ms Jackaline McPhie (NET) Mr Daniel Au (LET)
Audience Prize (no certificates)	AD & FD POHL Leung Sin Tak College	Ms Sandeep Bhogal (NET)
	Ho Dao College (Sponsored by Sik Sik Yuen)	Ms Prachi Sharma (NET)
	Salesian English School	Mr Peter Hakim (NET)

Competitions Are Not Just About Winning



Our school, De La Salle Secondary School N.T., entered two NET Section competitions in 2019: 'Stories on Stage' and 'Hands on Stage'. We followed a process of inclusion for both competitions and were very successful in both.

One whole class was involved in the 'Stories on Stage' Competition, from reading the chosen stories and brainstorming ideas for the script to directing and performing. Two teams were formed within the class, with every student contributing and participating. Students were given the opportunity to experience the joy of performing regardless of their English ability or previous experience. All students participated, including SEN students.

In 2019, as in previous years, our school took the puppetry performances 'on the road', as part of the outreach to primary schools programme (led by Ms Constance Cheung and Mr Daniel Au). Our two puppetry teams visited local primary schools to share

their performances with over 150 students. After the performances, the puppetry teams engaged the primary students in learning simple puppet-making techniques that our teachers had acquired at the NET Section 'Hands on Stage' workshop.

Our school enjoyed participating in both of these competitions as they enabled students who did not have strong English language backgrounds to positively engage in meaningful and worthwhile English-speaking activities.

From the outset, we started with two teams. As our interest in the competitions grew, we were able to provide more and more students from different backgrounds with the opportunity to learn and shine, and also to share and care for each other. Last year we had four successful entries.

**Jackaline McPhie, NET,
De La Salle Secondary School, N.T.**

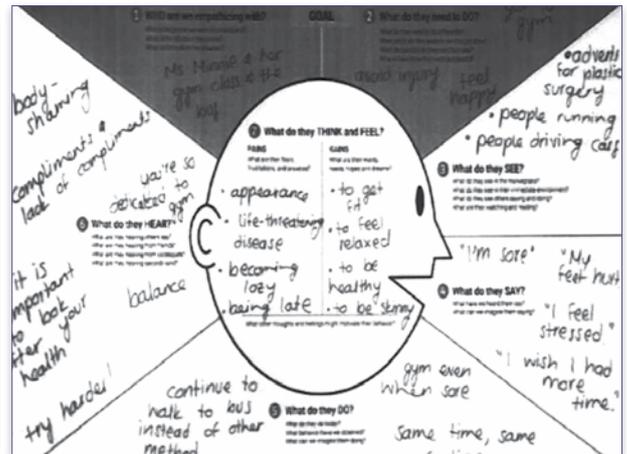


De La Salle Jellyfish

Making Thinking Visible



Attempting the quiz again after learning more about the design thinking process



The use of graphic organisers

Picture yourself back at school, sitting diligently (or not so diligently) at your desk waiting for your teacher to explain an assignment. You prepare yourself for yet another stale essay topic, a predictable grammar quiz, or worse still, an oral presentation, forcing you to die of embarrassment in front of the entire class. Now imagine how liberating it would have been if instead the teacher had asked you to make something. Anything.

Maker education is just this - giving students the agency and encouraging them to take ownership of their learning. 'Makerspace' is based on the idea of making learning and the thinking process visible; it gives students a physical space to be creators and not just consumers of knowledge. In a makerspace, narrow and generalised traditional assessments are replaced by student voices and choices.

A makerspace could be a workshop, filled with tools and equipment. It could be a classroom, equipped with paper, pens, and colourful stationery. It could be an outside area, an auditorium, a computer lab - it is really quite flexible. You do not need state-of-the-art equipment or to be a trained carpenter or an IT technician. You simply need to give students time, space, and encouragement. You can set a general topic or task, with a language focus such as conditional sentences, and allow them to interpret and bring it to life through making something that they find interesting and challenging. This could be a comic book, a board

game, an animation, an app, a website, a music video - anything that speaks to their interests. Using a design process, students develop their ideas and tinker with prototypes until they are satisfied with the final product.

The NET Section Makerspace Project aims to develop creativity and problem-solving skills for secondary students, helping them to see English as a language of



infinite possibilities - not a textbook of prescribed rules. Through the 'tinkering process', students learn how to identify problems and areas to improve, building their resilience and a more powerful connection with the purpose of language. Ultimately, we hope to see students more passionate about English, and the world around them, through empowering them to be makers and creators.

Lauren Minnie, NET, Marymount Secondary School

21st Century Skills in Primary English Language Classrooms

Tung Koon School (Sheung Shui)

e-Learning and information literacy are two of the major emphases in the updated *English Language Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 - Secondary 6), 2017*. In the course of promoting the use of technology to facilitate learning, teachers have enriched their school-based curriculum with a variety of apps and e-learning opportunities.

Tung Koon School (Sheung Shui) is introducing their students early to a variety of e-learning activities by implementing the KS1 Space Town literacy programme. In the P3 'Cool Kids' unit, students research by reading across the curriculum

and gathering information from the Internet about foreign customs, festivals and foods.

Reflecting on the implementation of the unit, the teachers found that student collaboration and group communication were necessary to complete the multi-tasks assigned. Research from the Internet needed to be moderated by students through exercising their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. According to Fullan (2014) (see diagram below), these are important 21st century skills required for the well-being of society. Teachers were also challenged to change: while once familiar with delivering 'chalk-front' lessons, they now need to assume the role of a facilitator in developing students' information literacy.



Collaborative e-Learning in the classroom

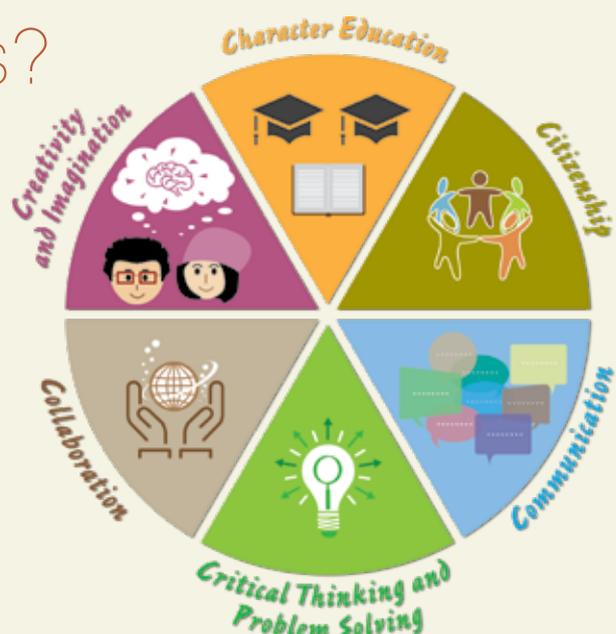
What Are the 6 Cs?

The 6 Cs of Education

The 6 Cs of education are key 21st century skills that need to be developed for both student and society well-being (Fullan, 2014).

Research shows that the 6 Cs are equally important and need not be taught sequentially or in order of priority.

When learners are exposed to engaging learning environments and assigned collaborative tasks, their 6 Cs can develop and thrive.



Reference

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Students collaboratively making, sharing and commenting on their videos



Mui Wo School

Another school providing students with rich opportunities to develop 21st century skills through their school-based English language curriculum is Mui Wo School. Here, P6 students demonstrate how effective e-learning tools can enhance their motivation and language acquisition in G.E. classes. By sharing video portfolios with their classmates, KS2 students practise and develop the four language skills, while preparing for their P6 interviews.

During a recent visit, it was observed that the platform used by the NET, Ms Iza, was the app SeeSaw, through which the students had already uploaded their book review videos in the previous lesson. The students were on task from the start when the teacher shared a couple of book reviews using the app and invited them to give comments. Throughout this process, the teacher guided the students to focus on specific areas for comment (e.g. pronunciation, camera techniques, etc). With this model, students then worked in groups of two to three to view classmates' videos and give comments through SeeSaw. Working in different spaces, including the playground, the students were focused throughout

and clearly enjoyed watching their classmates' videos and discussing their comments.

Finally, the teacher brought the class back together to summarise the lesson's learning points, and share the students' comments. This is a fine example of how learning English can be fun and engaging, and at the same time can provide meaningful learning opportunities for students.

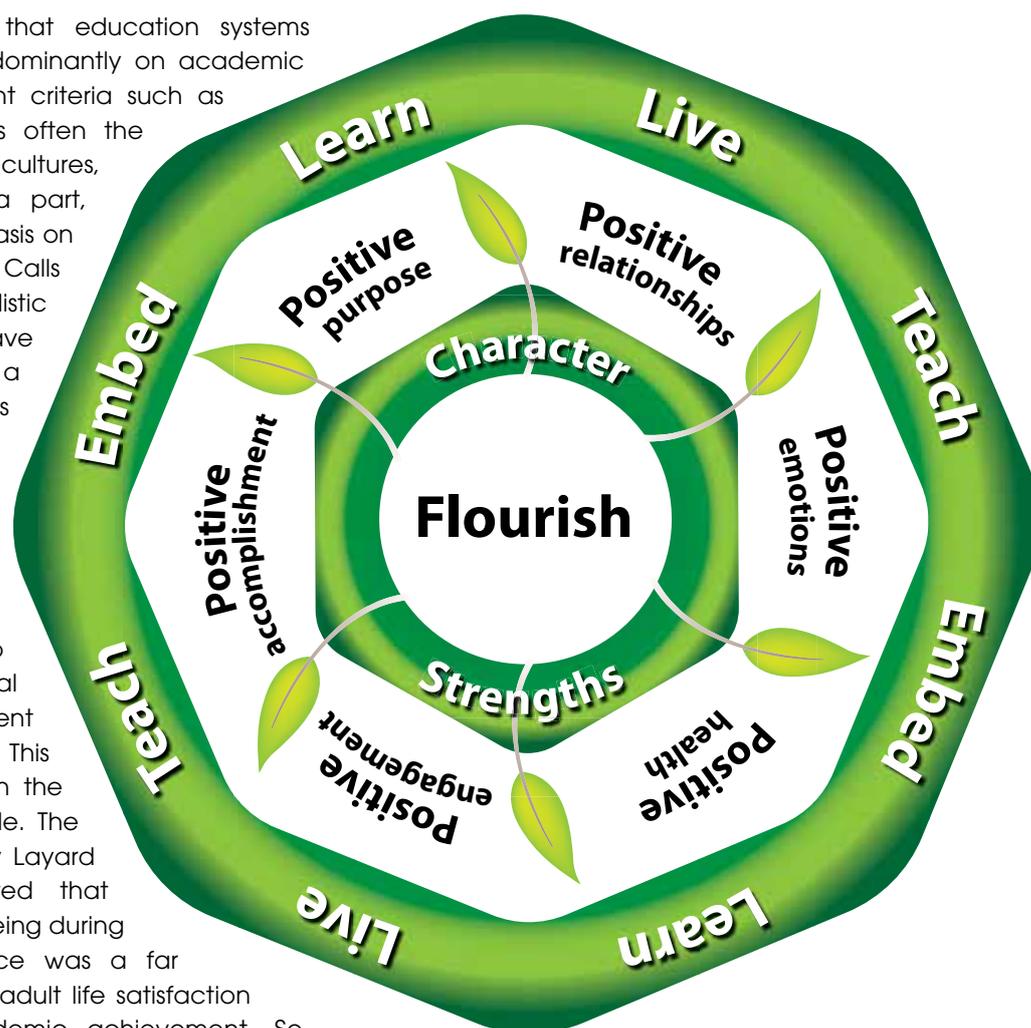


Jeremy Gray, Project Manager (Primary NET), and Gary Knight, Advisory Teacher, NET Section

Positive Education

It has long been noted that education systems have tended to focus predominantly on academic outcomes and achievement criteria such as standardised testing. This is often the case in Confucian heritage cultures, of which Hong Kong is a part, which place a strong emphasis on high-stakes examinations. Calls for more inclusive and holistic approaches to education have been voiced and heard with a shift in recent years towards more progressive and child-centric paradigms. For instance, 21st century skills are now being widely promoted in schools around the world. Less, though, is being done to address the psycho-social and emotional development needs of our children. This stands in stark contrast with the empirical evidence available. The influential research done by Layard et al. (2014) demonstrated that experiencing positive well-being during childhood and adolescence was a far stronger predictor of future adult life satisfaction and happiness than academic achievement. So, what can be done to improve students' schooling experiences and propose a curriculum that fosters emotional wellness, stronger developmental outcomes and adaptive behaviours? Well, positive education might provide an answer to meeting these evident student needs.

The positive education movement can find its roots in positive psychology as popularised by the prominent theorist Martin Seligman (Boniwell, 2008). Positive psychology employs a strength-based approach to mental health and well-being and focuses on a number of aspects such as resilience, general well-being and happiness. Other precursors in the field include Carol Dweck (2006) with her seminal work *Mindset* or Angela Duckworth (2016) and her acclaimed work *Grit*. The Geelong Grammar School in Australia with its Institute of Positive Education has been a pioneer in applying positive psychology to the world of education and operationalising it (Institute of Positive Education, 2020). I was lucky enough to attend a talk by the institute's director, Justin Robinson, at last year's 21st Century Learning Conference in Hong Kong. The framework proposed by the institute (see the figure above) bases



itself on Seligman's (2011) work and his PERMA model. The PERMA acronym encompasses the following dimensions: positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M) and achievement (A). The underlying rationale of the model is that we have a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) that must be fulfilled in order for us to flourish, and positive psycho-social and emotional functioning is determinant in achieving this. The good news is that achievement (A) is of course one of the core needs but should not be obtained at any cost and should be understood in light of the diversity of students we teach. The studies students pursue should be engaging and stimulating and provide them with opportunities for deep learning through which they may enter into a state of flow. Relationships (R) too are key to the psycho-social and emotional development of our students and fostering positive outlooks. These include positive relationships with peers but also with teachers whose role it is to provide students with positive and supportive learning environments. Lastly, meaning (M) refers to the higher-order need that we have even at the youngest of ages to enjoy self-fulfilment, find a purpose to our lives and truly flourish.

While it is one thing knowing where we want to go, the roadmap to getting there is not so clear. A proposed approach by the Institute of Positive Education involves the four following dimensions:



Time, of course, is of the essence in Hong Kong and having another add-on to the already busy curriculum may be counter-productive. However, by taking an implicit approach through which well-being is recognised, valued and embedded in the curriculum, this need not be the case. For instance, working on student character strengths can help them become more engaged and find meaning and purpose. Practising mindfulness might alleviate stress and allow students to feel more relaxed. Setting aside time for self-reflection and thankfulness allows individuals in distress to take

a step back and realise that their situation might not be so bad after all. Building students' capacity for 'learnt optimism' and visualising success can allow them to take control of their lives, realise that they have the answer to their problems and overcome these through resilience. Implementing only a few of these ideas might go some way to promoting the positive values and attitudes as outlined in the Hong Kong curriculum guidelines.

Simon Herd, Advisory Teacher, NET Section

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Diversity: Celebrating a World of Difference

The 2020 edition of the Filmit Competition was launched on 24 October 2019 at the Filmit Briefing Session. This follows on the success of the 2019 competition with the highest quality films ever and a doubling of the number of participants from the previous year.

The theme this year is Diversity: Celebrating a World of Difference.

Two New Categories Have Been Introduced This Year:

- One-Minute Film (Pilot - Secondary only)
- Film Poster Design (Primary and Secondary)

The Filmit 2020 Competition is organised by the NET Section of the Education Bureau in partnership with the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao, Radio Television Hong Kong and Chinese International School Film and Media Department.



Packed Briefing Session for Filmit 2020

You can find full details of the Competition on our e-platform.

John Hone,
Regional NET Coordinator,
NET Section



Scan for
Filmit 2020