

NET-WORKING

Examples of good professional practice within the NET scheme



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

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I am very pleased to write a brief introduction to this publication on exemplary practices by NET teachers.

The content of 'NET – Working' epitomizes the impact that such teachers are making in Hong Kong schools. As well as helping to enhance the English language proficiency of individual students, NETs are a source of inspiration in the on-going instructional review of teaching and learning of English in our classrooms. As an extension to the on-going professional collaboration, this publication highlights some of the good practices for sharing among many more teachers.

The emphasis on school self-evaluation in 'NET – Working' is important. As both a curriculum and a staff development innovation, the scheme's impact should be reviewed on an on-going basis at the school level. Feedback from this evaluation should help to inform subsequent developments in the school curriculum and strategies to meet the different ability needs of students.

A key factor in the successful implementation of the NET scheme is professional collaboration between the NET and other colleagues within the school, which must always be viewed as a mutually supportive process. This is the main theme of this publication.

While not giving us all the answers to professional questions relating to the scheme, this publication aims to provide a window for discussion, culminating in the nine seminars planned to disseminate the best practices. The opportunity will also be provided for all schools to contribute additional ideas which will liven up deliberations in our education reform.

The content of what follows is testimony to the hard work and professional commitment of the writing team and the many unsung heroes who have given advice at various stages in preparing the publication. Their ardent support indicates our belief that preparing for the NET scheme is succeeding in helping our children to improve their language proficiency.

In closing let me salute the efforts of Mr. Trevor Higginbottom and his team and we look forward to our continued partnership in the years ahead.

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Director of Education

NET-WORKING

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NET-WORKING

THE AIMS OF THIS PUBLICATION ARE:

- To disseminate good practice in various aspects of the NET scheme:
 - in teaching and learning; and
 - in professional collaboration, both centrally and at the school level.
- To provide schools with guidelines on self-evaluating the NET scheme.
- To provide a catalyst for discussion relating to the NET scheme, particularly with Principals.

THE AUTHORS BELIEVE THAT:

- The NET scheme can play an important role in enhancing English language proficiency in Hong Kong, and therefore in furthering the city's status as a world-class international centre.
- The key roles of the NET are:
 - to enhance the English language proficiency of individual students;
 - to demonstrate contemporary approaches to the teaching and learning of English in their work with students; and
 - to share professional ideas with their fellow English teachers.

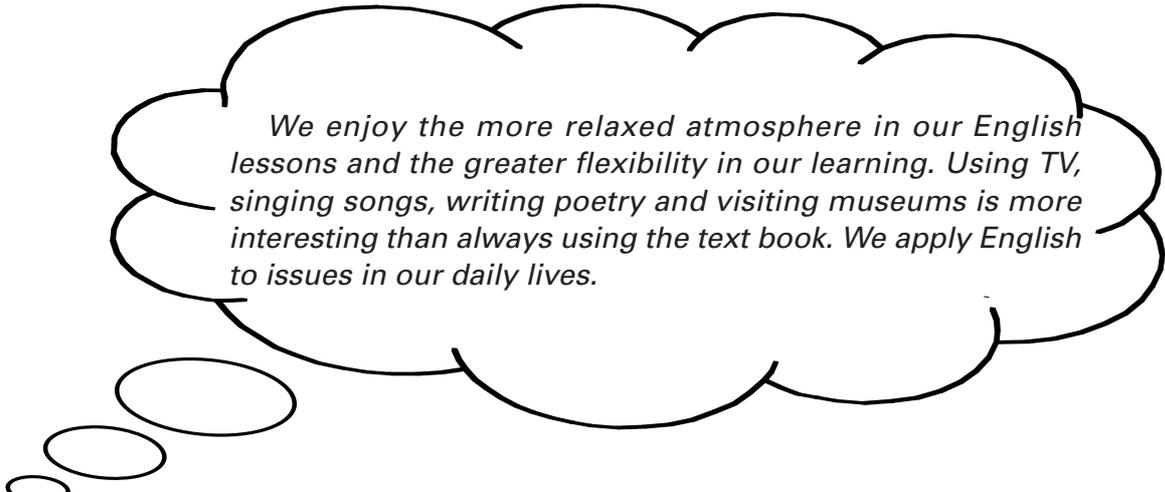
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1.0 GOOD PRACTICE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING WITHIN THE SCHEME

- This section includes some of the good practice in teaching and learning currently being adopted within the scheme in a number of Hong Kong schools. This good practice both motivates and challenges students, and thereby enhances their English language proficiency. Most of these approaches can be used as extra-curricular activities as well as in mainstream curriculum work.
- **'FURTHER IDEAS'** are included throughout the section to enable the reader to follow up the approaches suggested.



We enjoy the more relaxed atmosphere in our English lessons and the greater flexibility in our learning. Using TV, singing songs, writing poetry and visiting museums is more interesting than always using the text book. We apply English to issues in our daily lives.

Andrew Kwok, David Shum, Simon Chan, Steven Yip, Form 2 students.

1.1 USING INTEGRATED, ISSUES-BASED APPROACHES WITH UPPER FORMS

Arguably, at the moment in Hong Kong schools there is limited integration of skills and activities in the teaching of English. Many teaching programmes consign the four skills to separate time slots and prescribe different text books for each. Students would benefit if given the opportunity to spend more time on any one topic to enable them to 'recycle' vocabulary and reinforce their learning.

WHY INTEGRATE THE FOUR SKILLS?

- It enables students to develop and consolidate skills through the repetition of similar materials in different forms.
- It facilitates students' engagement with the materials and the activities.
- It enables students to become intellectually involved, so that higher-order skills such as critical thinking and creativity can be developed.
- It allows students to progress from lower- to higher-order skills in an interesting and absorbing environment, involving analysis, synthesis, criticism and creativity.

WHY ISSUES?

- Teaching through social issues is learning for life and about life. It involves the students in the world outside the classroom and it stimulates thought as well as interest through all the four skills.
- This approach to learning helps to develop students as responsible citizens.
- It stimulates the students' curiosity about the things that they read.
- Today's students are surrounded by media of every kind: for example, radio, television, newspapers, the Internet. They are constantly confronted by world events and issues. By bringing these into the classroom as the basis of learning about language, we are providing continuity between their private lives and their school lives.
- With an issues-based approach, learning becomes natural and constant. It is not just school work, it is life. If you are interested and engaged by an issue, and you have an opinion on it, you are going to talk, listen, read and write. This will happen because the students want to communicate!

The opposite page contains a summarised example of an issues-based approach, involving the integration of the four macro-skills. The issue is based on the '**Sixth Billionth Baby**', born on 12 October, 1999. (see below).



AN ISSUES-BASED TEACHING CYCLE: FORM SIX.

THE SIX BILLIONTH BABY BRIEFING ON WORLD POPULATION

Six Billion ... and Counting

On Oct. 12, give or take a few days, the world's population reaches an alarming milestone. But the growth rate has begun to ease, and next century's rise will not be as steep as modern-day Malthusians once predicted.

► **The worst crunch is coming to the poorest regions**

Paper C

Resources and Tasks

A reading comprehension exercise could be based on the editorial from the SCMP dealing with the topic of overpopulation, an analysis piece, or even a news story. An exercise could involve: (i) the **rearranging of paragraphs** from news stories on the topic; (ii) a **cloze** activity: blanking out some words in one of the articles; and (iii) **summary cloze**. These need to be devised by the teacher, but if teachers can share their teaching materials, then the load can be shared. It is helpful to get the students to set the exercises, to exchange them with each other, and to mark those that they set. Similar activities can be set for the other skills in Paper C.

Paper D

Resources and Tasks

Paper D targets oral skills, with students preparing presentations on the materials they have been working with, and engaging in a focused discussion on the topic. Other activities might include debating, speeches, news reports, short plays or dialogues, interviews, and so on. Here, the same issue can be used in a variety of forms, so that the students can become quite familiar with it.

Paper E

Resources and Tasks

Various resources can be collated for this paper: for example, newspaper photos, editorials from the SCMP, graphs on population distribution, or articles on population pressure. Tasks can then be set which are relevant to the Practical Skills Paper.



TRY THIS IDEA



Look at the editorial and the front page of today's newspaper. What issues are covered? Choose one issue and develop a range of activities based around it.

1.2 PROMOTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CREATIVITY

WHY CREATIVITY?

- Students who enjoy their learning will learn and retain more.
- Students' different learning styles can be catered for, so more students will succeed.
- Students are actively involved, so they are more likely to learn and retain what they learn.
- Students have opportunities to be involved in decision-making.
- Students' confidence is increased.
- Students are engaged in the task.
- Students are extended.
- Teachers feel more satisfied.

WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

- Using flair and imagination.
- Making something new or adapting something.
- Using all our senses.
- Taking risks.



SOME IDEAS TO TRY

These ideas all relate to the use of words in an active way. Decide on your focus - meaning, form (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation) or fluency - and be very clear about your expected outcomes. You can adapt these ideas to fit a wide variety of tasks.

- ✍ Put a word on the board. Choose an active verb like scratch, push, or stroke. Have the students repeat the word and perform the action simultaneously. The teacher should model the activity, giving examples of nouns to combine with the verbs. Notice that the sound and energy will change according to the noun being used - *Are you pushing an elephant or a piece of paper?*
- ✍ Write a sequence of words on the board. Try "slip", "slide", "topple" and "bump". What do the words suggest? Adverbs can be used too.
- ✍ Write a theme, such as weather, on the board: have the students brainstorm the topic. For example, there could be a violent wind, blowing, tossing, howling, battering, flattening. In groups, the students can speak and move simultaneously.

Use a word with an -ing ending to develop a group story or an extended description. Provide a starter such as "I saw a" An example might be "I saw a feather floating". Ask the students to add to this in round robin fashion.

STORY-TELLING IN THE CLASSROOM

WHY TELL STORIES?

Story-telling is creative, enjoyable and useful as a starting point for other language work and it gives students listening and fluency practice.

CASE STUDY: THE ENORMOUS TURNIP

A folk tale is reproduced below. Story-telling is different from reading aloud. If you intend to re-tell a story you need to know it thoroughly, and feel sufficiently at home with the characters to be able to use their voices. Use movement and gestures if you wish. Pace, pauses and vocal variety are important when story-telling.

When the story has been told, ask the students to re-tell it orally or to write it down as they remember it. Story-telling can also be an end in itself. Many other language activities can be devised using the same material. Several groups of students could produce a play based on the story: one group writing a script, another group improvising (acting without a script).



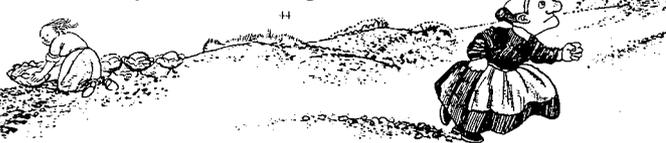
"Once upon a time in a far-away country, an old man and an old woman lived in a little old house in the country. Sometimes their grand-daughter visited them. They had a dog and a cat. A little grey mouse lived in the house, too.

One day, the old man planted some turnips. Every day, he watered those turnips and said "Grow, grow, little turnips, grow sweet. Grow, grow, little turnips, grow strong."

One turnip grew very big and strong, so one day, the old man went out to pull the turnip up for dinner. But that turnip was too big and strong for him to pull up, so the old man called the old woman : "Wife! Wife! Come and help me pull up this turnip!" The old woman held onto the old man and he held onto the turnip, but still they could not pull it up, so the old woman called the grand-daughter.



The grand-daughter pulled the old woman and the old woman pulled the old man and the old man pulled the turnip, but still they couldn't pull that turnip out of the ground."



Keep telling the story in this way until the dog, the cat and the mouse have all joined in. It's the mouse that makes the difference, and they all have turnip for dinner!



TRY THIS IDEA

- Find another folk tale to use in your class. Ask your students to ask their elderly relatives to tell them an "old story". They can then re-tell it in English.



1.3 LEARNING THROUGH POETRY

WHY POETRY?

- Poetry is language at its most inspiring.
- Poetry is capable of conveying meaning on many levels, from the simplest to the most abstract. This enables students to engage in “higher” levels of thinking.
- Poetry is “a new way of seeing” and as such it fosters the development of creativity and originality. At the same time it can stimulate the joy of experimenting with language.
- Poetry can produce strong feelings in the reader/writer. Such responses have been shown to assist in language retention over longer periods of time.
- The poetic form can be used with all students: from those who have the most basic language knowledge to senior students who may have advanced levels of language.
- Creating poetry helps students to find, learn and retain new vocabulary, because the desire to express comes from within themselves rather than being imposed from without.

GETTING STARTED

The following exercise helps students to create simple images which form the basis of all good poems: try asking them to link as many of the words in the table as possible by drawing lines between them. For example, BUTTERFLY could be linked to SILENT, SOFT, LIGHT, SHINING etc. The blank spaces could be used for new words created by the students.

<i>B U T T E R F L Y</i>	<i>HIGH</i>	<i>LIGHT</i>	<i>FLOATING</i>	<i>S N A K E</i>
	<i>ZIGZAGGING</i>	<i>GREEN</i>	<i>EXPLODING</i>	
<i>T Y P H O O N</i>	<i>GLASS</i>	<i>BENDING</i>	<i>BAMBOO</i>	
	<i>PUSH</i>	<i>ELASTIC</i>	<i>WHISPERING</i>	
	<i>FIRE</i>	<i>SOFT</i>	<i>DANGEROUS</i>	
<i>D R A G O N</i>	<i>SMASHING</i>	<i>GREEN</i>	<i>SMASHING</i>	
	<i>SILENT</i>	<i>MONSTER</i>	<i>BUILDING</i>	
<i>D R E A M</i>	<i>COLOURED</i>	<i>BANGING</i>	<i>SHINING</i>	

FOLLOWING UP

Students can then be encouraged to use the following form as a model for their own poems. They can be illustrated, decorated and displayed or put into a class poetry folder.

**Did you ever see a snake?
Zig-zagging, fork-tongued, elastic-jawed.**

SOME OTHER IDEAS TO TRY



HAPPINESS IS:

**SLEEPING,
EATING,
DREAMING,
HOLIDAYS.**

**HAPPINESS IS BEING WITH YOU
HAPPINESS IS A SMILING FACE
HAPPINESS IS THE SCENT OF SPRING
HAPPINESS IS HIDING IN THE CLOUDS**

This simple idea can be used to describe anything. A poem can consist of a single word per line, or a complex idea can be expressed with many words per line. Try: LOVE is, FRIENDSHIP is, WINTER is etc.

or, LOVE is:

L aughter
O penness
V aluable
E verlasting

Interesting poems which students enjoy creating are experiments with the form of a poem. Try getting students to write words so that together they make the shape of the object being described, such as **rain**, a **star**. An example is given below.

Jelly fish

Jelly- like
folding, spreading
oozing, melting, colourless
stinging, paralysing, eating
Innards, boneless, brainless

Q-N-W-O-L-F-S-E-L-C-A-Y-N-E-T
G-N-I-V-A-M-G-N-V-A
B-E-N-D
R-E-A-C-H
S-E-A-R-C-H
H-U-N-G-R-Y-K-I-L-L-E-R

G-N-I-C-H-T-E-R
S-T-R
G-O-U-T-W
S-A-R-D
N-G-S-W-I-N-G

1.4 INTRODUCING DRAMA TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE WORK

WHY USE DRAMA?

- Drama offers the chance for authentic and enjoyable communication.
- No special environment is needed. The classroom can be your stage.
- A few minutes of drama can give life to a lesson.
- Children often learn best when they do not know they are learning.
- Drama resources are easy to find and are plentiful.



SOME IDEAS TO TRY



Problem, crisis, solution - - - one student from a group of three states an imaginary problem. "It is raining". The second adds to this problem, creating a mini crisis. "I have no umbrella". The third solves the problem. "You can both share my umbrella". They take turns and the game continues.

Expert: yes, and - - - is also a lot of fun. In pairs students pretend to be experts on a subject, for example juggling. They then hold a conversation for the benefit of an imaginary audience, a kind of workshop. Everything they say must begin with "Yes, and ..." and reinforce what their partner has said. "Today we are going to talk about juggling and the most important thing about juggling is concentration". "Yes, and concentration will help you keep all of your balls in the air together. Practice is also important". Each speaker has to pick up and elaborate the point made by the previous speaker.

Improvisation from a strip cartoon - - - photocopy a strip-cartoon from the newspaper, either with or without the given dialogue. Students can then build a story around the "scene" in the cartoon, or dramatise it as it stands.

Four-line dialogues - - - simple dialogues, taken from every day conversation, can be readily created. Try not to make it too obvious what the context is or even the subject under discussion. Have pairs of students study the dialogues and try to put in enough emphasis, intonation and action to communicate to an audience what is going on and the relationship between the speakers. As preparation, you can show brief television excerpts and ask students what is happening. They will pick up on verbal and visual clues and learn how to incorporate them into their dialogues. Later, give slips of paper to the students with emotions written on them and ask them to perform their dialogues using that emotion. Other students can try to guess what was written on the paper.

STORY-TELLING AND DRAMA

Story-telling and drama can be combined in the exercise, "So I'll...". The first player makes any kind of statement. For instance, "It is a lovely day out." The next player in the line says, "WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS THAT it is a lovely day out, SO I WILL go for a walk." The goal is to say something logical which moves the story along. The next player would say "WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS THAT you'll go for a walk, SO I WILL come too." The teacher can always add an idea if the group is stuck or model the first half of the next sentence to keep things moving.

The object of "Speaking With One Voice", is to have the group speak as if they were one person. This is done, not by having one person take the lead, but by having the group share each word as it is formed. The players need to all be looking at each other, especially the mouths and eyes of the other students, and concentrating hard. Give the students a familiar story to tell the first time and model the activity by using mime and gesture until they get the idea.

Another way of telling a story is to have each player in the circle contribute a word at a time. If the first person to speak says "Johnny" the next person could say, "is", the next person would say "lazy". And so on. The best way to

help the players build stories is to try and keep them in the present tense. The word-at-a-time stories should also make sense. Again, start them off with a familiar story to build confidence. Instead of offering the witty word that will make everyone laugh, they should add the next most logical word. One can take a turn by adding punctuation. Simply say, "full stop", or whatever is appropriate. Banning "and" and "but" are good ways to keep people thinking and working hard.

If the students feel comfortable working with a small audience comprised of the rest of the group, activities where each student in the group takes a turn can be useful. Create an information desk and have one student be the person who works there. Each student then approaches the desk and asks for things that one might find in a department store. They are expected to make strong character choices, and make inquiries related to their characters. The help desk person is neutral and helpful to all the players who come along. This activity helps the students create a physical sense of their verbal request and develop the use of body language. It can be something as simple as someone who has a headache and needs a pill, or someone who cannot see very well who needs glasses.

THEATRE SPORTS

You could try 'theatre sports' or improvisational games in the classroom. There are many theatre sports sites on the Internet. You could start by looking at www.theatresports.com. Theatre sports activities do not require any alteration for use in the classroom and they can easily be taught by demonstration. Such games can be used to prepare students for their HKCEE and UE English oral examinations, especially in the area of listening and responding to other students' comments.

Theatre sports work well with senior and middle-level students and can lead to the possible introduction of a theatre sports club after school. Junior students often respond well to action songs and poems. Combining speaking and action helps to reinforce the memory and understanding of language items. One could use onomatopoeia, verbs of action and narrative poetry to explore meaning.



USING SOFTWARE

WHY USE COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE?

- It has far more patience than you do!
- It is kind and consistent in its treatment of errors.
- It has an enormous capacity for storing and manipulating information.
- It provides a wonderful change of scene for teachers and students alike.

Choose your software carefully

- Beware of gimmicks and products that have not been widely trialled and tested.
- CD-ROMs are best suited to extension work. They were never intended to be used by an entire class, like textbooks. (The major exception is the use of keyboarding-skills programs.)
- Double-check the hardware and system requirements of all purchases, as many commercial packages will not run on Windows NT.
- Beware of the native-speaker language demands and the idiomatic speech used in many North American packages. Choose “grade levels” carefully. Try before you buy.
- Budget ahead for software purchases, and consider purchasing a cupboard to house all your Panel’s software in the computer room itself.

Classroom management issues

- Plan your Panel’s IT-focus, level by level. All students need efficient English language keyboarding skills. This is best built into every Form One learning programme, either as a part of English, or as a separate class. Form Two or Three could have a focus on extended writing, with a double-period allocated to word-processing every week. Upper forms can be required to submit their assignments in typed form, or to submit them via e-mail.
- Seat the “experienced” computer users among the “less experienced”.
- Promote laboratory layouts in which the teacher can see the screens, not the faces. Place computers in “islands” and around the walls of the room.



TRY THIS IDEA

- Progressive stories: once students are familiar with word-processing commands and skills, ask each one to write the opening sentence of a story. Then ask each student to move to the next terminal, where they type the second sentence of another story. Gradually rotate the students around the room, allowing an increasing amount of time for reading, until you ask them to end the story in front of them with one final sentence. The finished products can be saved, printed or read aloud.

USING THE INTERNET

WHY USE THE INTERNET?

- It is the ultimate 'self-access' facility for both teachers and students.
- It is an infinite source of information, the vast majority of which is in English.
- It provides a wealth of international communication possibilities.

Where to begin?

The most important starting point for teachers wishing to learn more about using the Internet is undoubtedly **Dave's ESL Cafe**. The address of this website is: www.eslcafe.com. Here you will find links to the complete A to Z of English teaching and learning. "Dave" is Dave Sperling, who is also the author of a most comprehensive guidebook to the Internet for English teachers.

Other websites to try

If you would like to devise a puzzle for your class using your current vocabulary lists, then try www.puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com. Here, you will be able to produce custom-made crosswords and word-search activities for your own classes. Another "goldmine" of class activities is to be found at www.englishclub.net.

An excellent local web-resource for all English teachers is the University of Hong Kong's Telenex. This site can be found at www.telenex.hku.hk/telec/mainmenu.htm.

Keep your eyes open for children's Internet guidebooks. These contain a wealth of websites that are well-suited to the ESL learner.

Classroom management issues

If your entire class is 'surfing' the Internet at the same time, there may be considerable delays in downloading time, as most school networks are not designed for such 'heavy traffic'. Try downloading entire sites onto a number of computers, so that some students can work on these sites 'off-line'. Make sure that your school has installed a 'filter' program, such as **Net Nanny**, to keep students away from undesirable websites.



TRY THIS IDEA

- Keep an Internet-site notebook beside your computer.

1.6 MOTIVATING THE HARD-TO-TEACH

WHY MOTIVATE?

- The well-known applied linguist, Pit Corder, once said, "Given motivation, anyone can learn any language." Motivation to learn is absolutely essential in language learning.
- Low-achievers are probably students whose previous language-learning experiences have been unsuccessful and discouraging.
- When low-achievers are grouped together, their lack of motivation can be compounded by other self-esteem and peer-related factors, lowering their overall motivation to learn.
- Research has shown that the relationship between motivation and successful learning is actually a two-way process. The experience of successful learning is, in itself, motivating.

QUOTES FROM THE NEW ENGLISH SYLLABUS

- "Language learning activities must be related to learners' needs, interests and daily life experiences; they must be authentic and purposeful, as well as engaging the learners in genuine acts of communication." (**Section 1.4.3**)
- "Teaching efficiency is improved when the learners and their learning are the focus of attention, instead of the teacher and his/her teaching." (**Section 1.4.4**)
- "All English teachers must take on the responsibility for selecting and adopting suitable tasks from different materials, or designing tasks for their own learners." (**Section 4.2.5**)
English Language Syllabuses for Secondary Schools (Secondary 1-5).



SOME IDEAS TO TRY

- Low-achievers are, generally speaking, not interested in the types of coursebooks that have "let them down" in the past. Some commercially available textbooks make use of language and situations that are beyond the life-experiences of typical low-achieving Hong Kong students.
- Realia, real-life reading and imagery from consumer- and popular-culture may be far more appealing to them. Ask students to bring along an everyday item that has some English words in it. Supplement these materials with anything else that you can find at home: for example, instructions for assembling a toy, song lyrics, pamphlets, menus, flyers, maps, tickets, bank forms, postal charges tables, receipts, weather forecasts from the newspaper, cartoons etc.
- With student assistance, laminate these everyday items and turn them into workcards. Gradually build up a class-kit of student-produced materials.
- Make greater use of drawing, especially in vocabulary development (rather than using translation). Ask students to convert a simple story into a comic strip. Display their efforts!
- Try using the newspaper. Simple exercises with the newspaper can help students to develop their English ability in many dimensions: for example, interpersonal, knowledge and experience.



A newspaper 'scavenger hunt' is highly motivating if set at an appropriate level of language and interest.

PUPILS LEARN BEST WHEN THEY:

- are challenged in their thinking;
- are involved in problem-solving and investigation work;
- take responsibility for their own learning and become increasingly self reliant;
- work collaboratively and co-operatively;
- use a range of resources;
- plan, review, evaluate and modify their work;
- build on previous experience and make links between different areas of learning; and
- draw on their experiences outside the classroom and relate their learning to real life.

TWENTY TIPS TO BOOST SELF-ESTEEM, BOTH IN AND OUT OF CLASS

- ✍ **Use gestures that communicate praise** - high fives, thumbs up, OK hand-sign.
- ✍ **Notice little things** - watches, sports shoes, new glasses, haircuts, pencil cases.
- ✍ **Smile more often** - look pleased to see students; walk into class with a smile.
- ✍ **Get up close** - go down to desk-level; get right into groups; proximity breaks barriers.
- ✍ **Seek out quiet students** from the crowd and acknowledge them.
- ✍ **Be consistent** in your approach to individuals. Start afresh after any clash.
- ✍ When you hear or notice **something praiseworthy** about a student, **acknowledge it**.
- ✍ **Greet students everywhere** and say, "Thanks", often.
- ✍ **Make praise in class simple and private** - "Nice pen", "Good work", "I like that".
- ✍ If the culture permits it, **tactile praise is quick and easy** - a pat on the back, a handshake.
- ✍ **Wish students, "Good Luck"**, for example for tests and sports.
- ✍ Accidentally on purpose **allow students to overhear praise spoken to others**.
- ✍ **Acknowledge observed strengths regularly**, e.g. helpfulness, athletic prowess, neatness.
- ✍ **Be available for any personal approach by the less confident**, even if it's "inconvenient".
- ✍ **Don't engage students for too long in conversations**.
- ✍ **Distribute objects of value occasionally** (e.g. photos), rather than token objects often.
- ✍ Let students feel as though they are **controlling your informal conversations with them**.
- ✍ **Wave to students outside school**.
- ✍ **Animate English conversations with supportive gestures**.
- ✍ **Don't be a purist** - a two-word conversation is better than none at all.

1.7 ESTABLISHING AN ENGLISH CORNER

WHY HAVE AN ENGLISH CORNER?

English corners are proving to be very useful in many Hong Kong schools. They can be used to promote good teaching and learning practices and also to enhance professional collaboration amongst English teachers. For example, the English corner at Ju Ching Chu Secondary School (Kwai Chung) is used for the following.

- As a teaching area for the NET's Form 5 and Form 6 oral classes and for the NET's after school Form 6 and Form 7 writing classes. Other teachers also use the English Corner occasionally, especially for group discussions.
- As the NET's office (an adjacent room).
- As a drama rehearsal space.
- As a games activity centre: for example, Scrabble/Hangman/Monopoly/Cluedo. English Club (seniors) lead juniors.
- For speech (verse-speaking) practice during recess and lunchtimes.
- For English Panel meetings.
- For English Club meetings.
- As an English video screening centre. For example, "Titanic" for Form 3, "My Best Friend's Wedding" for Forms 6 and 7.
- As a centre for drama games and a preparation area for performances: for example drama, music and dance.

KEY FACTORS IN DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL ENGLISH CORNER

- The **COMBINED SUPPORT** of a senior manager, the English Panel Chair and the NET is essential in creating a **SHARED VISION** for the development of the school's English Corner.
- This shared vision must be **PROMOTED** effectively within the school, to both students and teachers.
- A **PLANNED** rather than an **IMPROVISED** approach is essential.
- A **SEPARATE ROOM** is needed. **NOT** a part of the library, or a storage space or a changing room or a sun umbrella by the canteen, which happens currently in some Hong Kong schools.
- The English Corner must be appropriately **RESOURCED**, both in terms of audio-visual aids and learning resources.
- Teacher(s) in charge of the English Corner should be given a **REDUCED TEACHING LOAD**.
- It should be appreciated that a successful English Corner can become an **IMPORTANT FOCUS** for the development of the school's English programme.

At Ju Ching Chu Secondary School (Kwai Chung), a separate English Corner and adjacent office have been created by adapting the space used for the school's discipline room, as shown in the photograph below.



SOME RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE CORNERS

At an experience-sharing session held in October, 1999 (see Pages 36 and 37), attended by local English teachers and NETs, the colleagues involved agreed on the following recommendations regarding English Corners.

- That all schools should have a policy regarding the development of their English corners, the implementation of which should be monitored and evaluated.
- That students should be required to visit the English corner and, where feasible, receive support from senior students as well as teaching staff.
- That every school's English corner should be in a room containing sufficient space and air conditioning.
- That there should be timetabled staff in charge, not just the NET.
- That funds should be made available for equipment, such as video machines, cassette recorders, headphones and computers.
- That appropriate technical assistance should be provided to support the resourcing of the English corner.
- That English Panels should be updated annually on developments relating to English corners in Hong Kong's schools.

1.8 DEVELOPING A SELF-ACCESS LEARNING CENTRE

WHY DEVELOP A SELF-ACCESS LEARNING CENTRE?

- To cater for the needs of individual students, allowing them to work at their own level and reach their own potential, rather than that of the class average.
- To develop in students a life-long learning interest as they become independent learners.
- To foster a sense of control over academic success through independent study as students focus on their specific areas of need.
- To create a fundamental shift in focus from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning.
- To develop language and IT skills through focused tasks, interactive CD ROMS, video, tape, teacher support and diagnostic testing.

WHAT SHOULD SUCH AN IDEAL CENTRE CONTAIN?

- ✓ A bank of computers (just a few will do) with connections to the Internet.
- ✓ A range of software, in particular CD-Roms, which focus on language learning.
- ✓ A display of websites which offer relevant tasks in language learning.
- ✓ A mini language laboratory for students to enhance their listening skills.
- ✓ Video/TV units through which students can access interactive video learning.
- ✓ An extensive range of varied written activities (listening, writing, grammar and tenses, vocabulary, reading, comprehension) divided into levels according to language level, not form level. All tasks need to have an answer key or offer some form of self-evaluation. Consider a common format that supplements/complements classroom teaching or offers tasks beyond such constraints. Tasks need to be achievable within limited time periods (i.e. half an hour) and to appeal to the students. This constitutes the main workload and requires extensive time commitment.
- ✓ A facilitator/co-ordinator/teacher to direct students, administer diagnostic testing where required, supervise activities, assist students, record self-access use, review materials and procedures, and respond to the ever-changing needs of students, staff and cross-curricular dimensions. This role can be shared amongst all members of the Panel if support from the Principal has first been assured. The role may be defined by the opening hours. Consider whether self-access learning will be timetabled into the English course or operate out of class hours.
- ✓ Vocabulary worksheets focusing on a different topic each week.
- ✓ A suggestion box for students' input regarding centre procedures and materials.
- ✓ A display promoting new learning materials, their applications and relevance.
- ✓ A referral system for students who need extra help with language learning.
- ✓ A record-keeping system for the signing in/out of students, tasks completed and other administrative tasks (to be used to assess future directions of the centre).
- ✓ A monthly timetable of activities with particular emphasis on spoken language.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Establishing such a centre may take months, or the best part of a year, depending on the support of the school, the involvement of colleagues and the facilities available. Yet its impact can be far-reaching, as it should become a permanent facility within the school long after the NETs have returned home. Its future success will largely depend on an understanding of its aims by all the members of the school community, and on the ability of teachers to produce relevant learning materials and to stay abreast of new technology in language learning. Both of these areas need appropriate and continual professional development, promotion and evaluation. **The photographs below were taken in the self-access learning centre at St. Francis Canossian College.**

MATERIALS

When developing materials, consider a common cover sheet which states the:

- Title
- Level
- Aims
- Instructions
- Time and materials required
- Reference to materials producer(s)



WEBSITES FOR STUDENTS

The following websites are useful for student self-access use:

- www.uitech.ac.ip/~itesli/quizzes
- www.edunet.com/english/practice.html
- www.but.ff/~rvilmi/help/grammar
- www.pacific.net/~sperling/quiz#grammar



1.9 USING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In many Hong Kong schools the NETs are involved in extra-curricular activities with the aim of enhancing their English language proficiency. Examples from four schools are included on these two pages.

AN AIRPORT VISIT



As an extra-curricular activity, the NET and a local Chinese English teacher from NTHYK Tai Po District Secondary School took a group of twenty-five Form Two and Three students to Chek Lap Kok International Airport.

The students had to complete a survey sheet after interviewing several foreign visitors in English in the airport departure area. They worked in pairs or threes in order to enhance their confidence in approaching the visitors. They were also asked to identify various signs and features in the airport written in English.

"This activity was very novel. It was a good chance for me to try to speak in English to foreigners", said Wendy Cheuk, Form 2D.

Comments afterwards from the students suggested that they had greatly enjoyed this English immersion exercise, particularly after they had overcome their initial shyness in approaching the visitors.

LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH POTTERY MAKING

Two Form 4 Pottery Groups meet once a week in the art room at Munsang College. We have had strong support from the Principal, who sees it as a cross linguistic activity. Colleagues in the Art Department have also been very helpful. I was fortunate in being able to purchase a new kiln.

We began with hand building: pinch pots, coiled pots, slab, building and free form, getting used to the characteristics of the clay, and to techniques and tools. Getting messy was the biggest feature, and very therapeutic too!

As far as possible, I encourage the Group to speak in English and they try to teach me Cantonese! Communication is of course vital in a hands-on activity like this, so the full range of communicative techniques have to be used. Both Groups are very happy and I feel they learn English in a very creative way.

NET, Munsang College

In January, 2000, members of the Pottery Groups decided to gain some inspiration by looking at the works of celebrated potters. These were found in the Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware in Hong Kong Park, and in the Chinese Antiquities Gallery of the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

We learned a lot from both exhibitions and really enjoyed the afternoon's excursions. We were very grateful to our teacher for organising them.

Polly Cheng, Form 4A

Soccer helps English goal

Having enthusiastic foreign teachers as football coaches is motivating students at one school to take a greater interest in language lessons, writes MICHAEL TAYLOR

When Bill Henderson, a native English-speaking teacher (NET) at De La Salle Secondary School in Sheung Shui, learned some of his Form Two and Form Three students were playing against La Salle College in Kowloon City, he asked if he could watch.

An avid football fan, Mr Henderson started yelling encouragement to his students from the sidelines. To his surprise, they seemed to understand what he was saying - even though they didn't understand him in class.

"I noticed that they were actually responding to some of the suggestions that I was calling in English, like 'up the wing'," he said. "They seemed to understand what I was saying because of the context.

"So I perceived this as a means of making English more relevant to the junior form students who had very low English levels, poor motivation, and little exposure to the language."

Mr Henderson and fellow teacher Marcus Lo were asked by school principal Chow Shek-fai to coach the school's junior soccer team. They jumped at the chance.

"I think that both soccer and English are international languages," Mr Lo said. "Although the students don't understand English, soccer is something they do understand. This has helped to break down language barriers and encourage teamwork," he said.

The results have spilled over into the classroom.

"I've seen a change in the students. Now they are more enthusiastic with respect to learning English. I perceived this as a means of making English more relevant," Mr Lo said.

Mr Henderson agreed, saying familiarity on the soccer pitch was creating a desire among his students to communicate with him in English.

Students at the school have traditionally had little first-hand contact with people from other countries.

"At first they were a little afraid of them," Mr Chow said of their reaction to the foreign teachers. "But now, they have become really interested. They've asked from time to time if we could arrange more training for them after school."

Mr Chow said linking English to soccer had changed the way the students regarded learning another language.

"In the past, they just learned vocabulary and grammar," he said.

"Now they are learning the language to communicate with others and also to learn something that they are interested in."

Form Two student Chan Kachun said having a NET as his football coach had increased his interest in learning English.

"I am more attentive in the classroom now and I can also answer questions in English," he said.

Since the NETs arrived, the students had been more willing to speak out, third-former Chan Man-kit said.

To Tsz-wai, a student in Form Three, said Mr Lo had been nicknamed "Owen" because he looked like Premier League footballer Michael Owen.

"Just like Owen, he runs very fast and he's a very skilful player."

De La Salle lost its match against La Salle College 2-1. Now if they could do something about that weak defence...



On the ball... Bill Henderson with his De La Salle students



SOUTH CHINA SUNDAY POST 22 NOVEMBER 1998

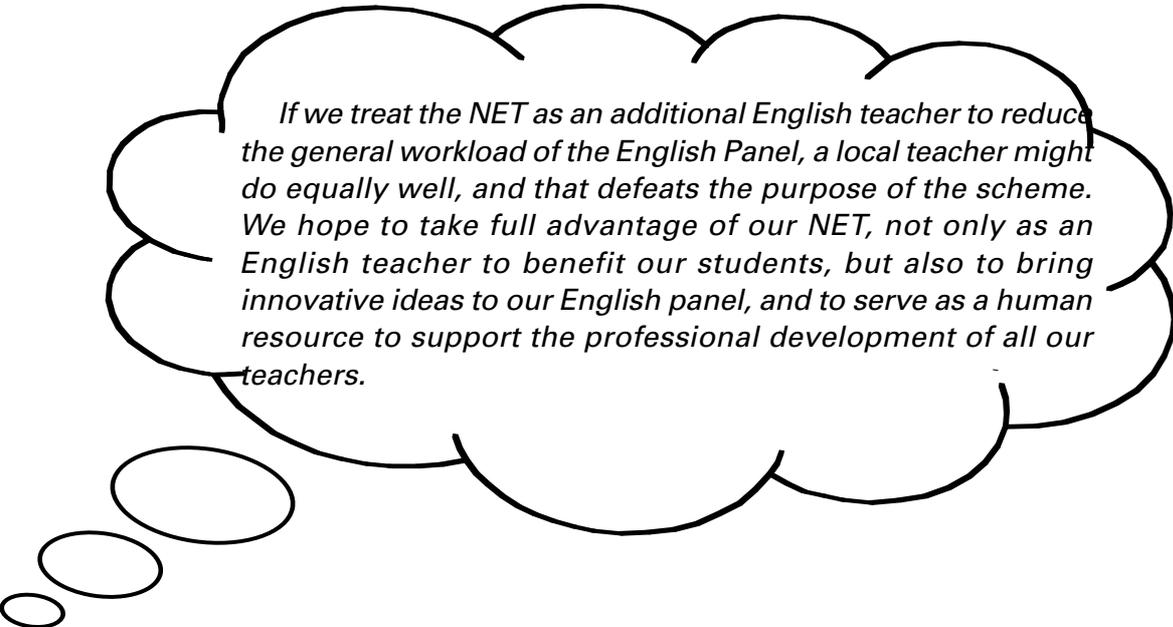
DRAMA BUILDS A LANGUAGE BRIDGE

The NET at CCC Kei Heep Secondary School started a Drama Group, an offshoot of the English Club, which is one of her extra-curricular responsibilities.

Students flock to join. The Group meets for an hour each week. During each session there are warm-up activities, relaxation, voice and speech exercises. Improvised drama activities follow and, finally, there is a rehearsal of a short play. The Group's activities have greatly enhanced the students' English language proficiency.

2.0 GOOD PRACTICE IN PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION WITHIN THE SCHEME

- One significant outcome of the NET scheme should be its influence on the teaching and learning of English in Hong Kong's schools. This section includes a summary of the ways in which the scheme can stimulate professional discussion and collaboration, both within and between schools.
- **'TALKABOUTS'** are included in the section as discussion points to enable Principals and teachers to review aspects of their current practice with respect to the NET scheme.



If we treat the NET as an additional English teacher to reduce the general workload of the English Panel, a local teacher might do equally well, and that defeats the purpose of the scheme. We hope to take full advantage of our NET, not only as an English teacher to benefit our students, but also to bring innovative ideas to our English panel, and to serve as a human resource to support the professional development of all our teachers.

Benedict Ng, Principal, Cheung Sha Wan Catholic Secondary School

2.1 TEACHING TOGETHER IN THE CLASSROOM

At HKMA K S Lo College the NET team-teaches with other members of the English Panel in virtually all her lessons. All parties were involved in the initial planning. The previous NET was involved in oral lessons with a very large number of classes. The senior management team felt that this had not worked, so the new NET now concentrates her teaching in Forms One, Four and Six. In this way the NET can model what she feels is good practice in teaching and learning in English. She feels that she gets to know her students better, which means that their individual learning needs are being met much more effectively.

WHY TEAM-TEACH?

Benefits for the students

- Students seem to gain a great deal from gathering information and being given examples and explanations in two languages.
- Students are given quick feedback and attention because there are two teachers present at all times. This certainly helps when you have large classes.
- Students can become more easily involved in small group and pair activities and quickly recognise that communication between their teachers and peers is a natural part of the language learning process.

Benefits for the teachers

- Teachers can monitor and give immediate feedback to students.
- Discipline problems are lessened when there are two people to deal with classroom issues, particularly when one of them speaks the student's first language.
- Staff share ideas and different approaches in a natural way. Professional development occurs during every lesson.
- New staff can learn a great deal about school culture when working closely with a staff member who has been there longer. A feeling of 'belonging' develops more quickly.



Team teaching at HKMA K S Lo College

LOOKING BACK

“As a new NET coming into the Hong Kong system, team-teaching was a great way to start my experience. It meant that, from the beginning, I was treated as the member of a team. At our school, all the English Panel members are given the opportunity to voice their opinions and to discuss ideas, so from the outset I had no feelings of alienation or isolation.”

The NET, HKMA K S Lo College.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE AT HKMA K S LO COLLEGE, AS SEEN BY THE NET

Stage 1: Getting to know one another

“In the beginning there was a lot of trial and error as we became used to our different styles within the classroom. At this stage, I did all of the planning and most of the delivery with the local English teacher monitoring, explaining in Cantonese and taking an equal responsibility for classroom management. We exchanged ideas and talked about what would work with each class. Gradually, we began to use the strengths that each of us had in order to direct our lessons in an interesting way. A feeling of trust and co-operation developed.”



Stage 2: Developing the team-teaching process

“After a number of months, the teamwork aspect of the teaching became more of a reality. Both teachers in each lesson participated in an active way within the classroom and began to take a lead with some of the content. It was a much more balanced approach so that the students saw their teachers reversing roles. At some point I would be leading the class and at other times the regular teacher would take over this role. This was a gradual process, developed over a period of months. This co-teaching did not occur naturally. We discussed different approaches and were keen to try out certain activities and methods in other classes.”



Stage 3: Ensuring more systematic collaboration

“Having learnt to trust one another and to value our respective approaches, we are now beginning to collaborate much more systematically. We recognise the need to pre-plan our lessons carefully in order to ensure effective classroom management, and also to find time to review our work together after the lessons. To achieve this final stage, I feel it might be better for me to work with a smaller number of teachers.”



TALKABOUT FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

- Discuss whether team teaching might usefully be introduced, or further developed, in some of your school's English lessons.

2.2 JOINT PLANNING FOR INDIVIDUAL CLASSES

Joint planning for individual classes is another strategy for professional collaboration within the NET scheme. In the current academic year the NET and the English Panel Chair at Cheung Sha Wan Catholic Secondary School have planned collaboratively for two Form 2 classes, one of which they share, the other of which the NET teaches for all their English lessons.

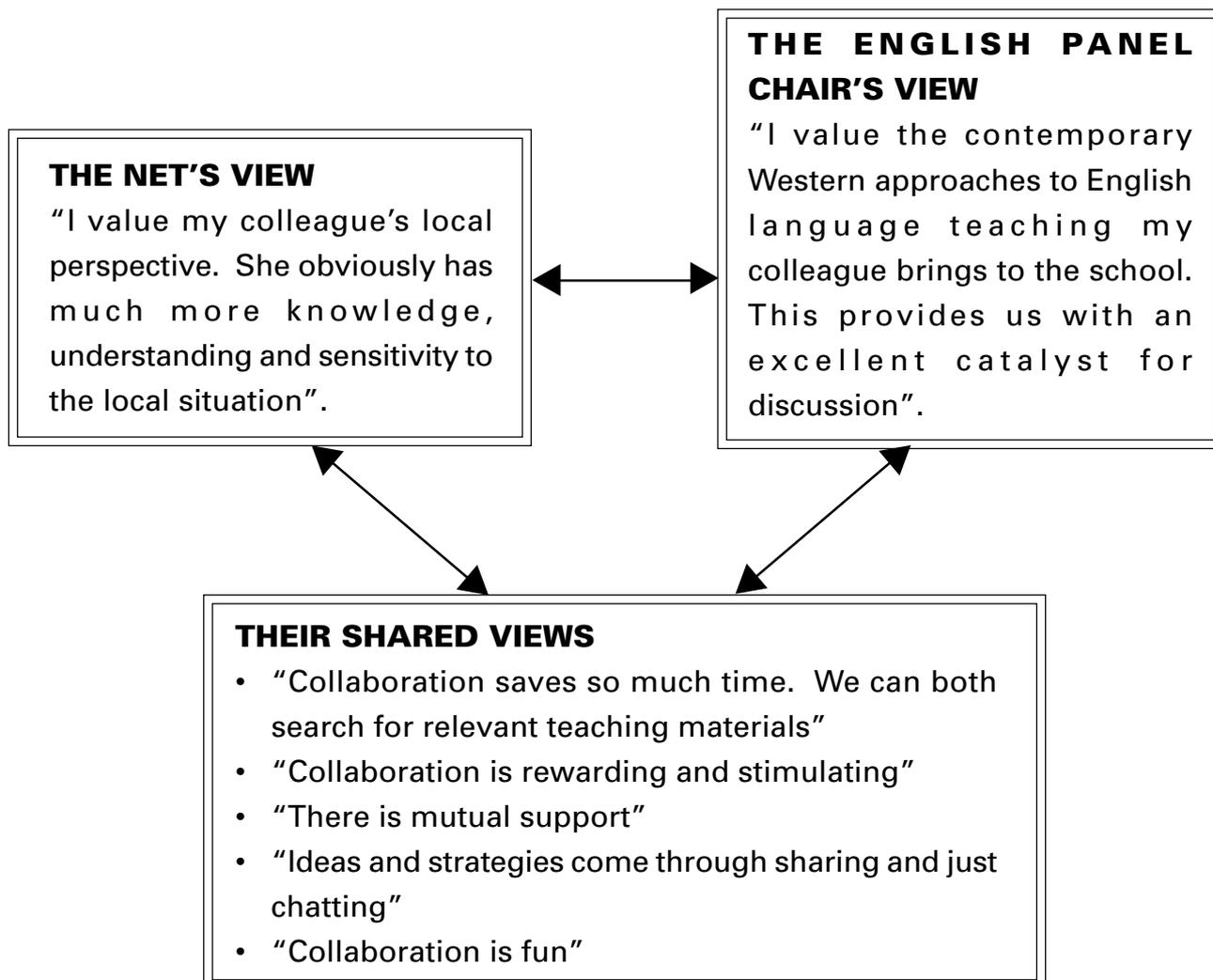
Their planning has involved the preparation of school-based materials which both supplement and extend the content of published text books used by the English Panel. These materials include packs of videos, songs, poems and computer-assisted learning aids which are thought to be particularly relevant to the individual needs of the Form 2 students.

The NET has greatly appreciated the English Panel Chair's willingness to develop teaching ideas and strategies outside the confines of the textbook. Their collective aim has been to integrate the four English language skills whenever appropriate.

The two classes have some concurrent lessons so that they can participate in information gap activities. Each class is given different information and students are paired to swap this in English. The two classes also take part in combined visits outside the school.

The Form 2 materials the two colleagues have prepared during this academic year will be a particularly useful resource bank for the English Panel to use in subsequent years.

SOME BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION



AN EXAMPLE OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ON THE THEME OF CHARITIES

During the current academic year, the NET and the English Panel Chair have undertaken joint planning for Form 2C and 2B at Cheung Sha Wan Catholic Secondary School. The NET takes 2C for all their lessons and 2B for half their lessons.

They prepared an alternative case study on charities to the one included in their textbook. Their Form 2 materials were based on community work undertaken by Cheung Sha Wan's Form 6 students at the Caritas Lok Yan Sister School. The framework of learning objectives included in the textbook informed their curriculum planning.

The NET and the English Panel Chair took the view that their case study would be good motivator and more relevant for the Form 2 classes. An additional bonus was that the six Form 6 students involved in the community work joined the two classes to talk about their experiences at Caritas and to provide English language support.

EXTRACTS FROM A FORM 2 WORKSHEET PREPARED BY THE NET AND THE ENGLISH PANEL CHAIR

CARITAS LOK YAN SISTER SCHOOL SCHEME

- What is the target group that our school serves?
- What activities have we organised for them?
- Were any fund-raising activities organised?
- What do volunteers feel about their experiences?
- What kinds of people are suitable for volunteer work?
- What can we learn from volunteer work?
- Are our students enthusiastic about helping others?
- What can we do to help the needy?
- Which organisations would you like the school to help next year? Why?



Cheung Sha Wan students at Caritas Lok Yan Sister School. These students also support Form 2B and 2C students in their English lessons.



TALKABOUT FOR TEACHERS

Consider how your school's current English language textbooks could be adapted to meet your students' needs and interests.

2.3 DEVISING SCHOOL-BASED MATERIALS

WHY DEVELOP YOUR OWN MATERIALS?

- All schools have individual schemes of work.
- Published resources do not always cover relevant topics, nor are they always appropriate for the ability and interest levels of our students.
- We want to enjoy English lessons!
- Learning should model language acquisition through communication, not just with the aim of communication.
- Overly high expectations of prior knowledge can bring about failure, while overly low expectations can ignore prior knowledge and be patronising.

The challenges of task-based learning

The new English language syllabus for secondary schools suggests that Task-Based Learning (TBL) will be introduced in 2001 and that TBL will be highly dependent on school-based resources and learning materials.

School-based learning materials serve many purposes. They may allow for the spontaneity of a single lesson or enhance a series or block of lessons. It is important, when materials are produced over a period of time by numerous different individuals, that a collective “ownership” of the materials is fostered within the English Panel. Some thought needs to be given to creating a “central resource area”, in which all the English resources are stored.

Why make materials of our own when “it’s all in the book”? The answer is, quite simply, that it is not any one book, and that all our students are different. Materials that “strike a chord” with one learner may not do the same for another. By presenting as wide a range of activities as possible, we will have a better chance of ensuring that all students gain something from them.

When devising learning materials, it is important that the design team keep the following pointers in mind.

- Materials should be of interest and relevant to our learners.
- Open-ended activities are preferable to one-answer exercises.
- A sense of audience should be fostered by the proposed activities.
- There needs to be an emphasis on active learning and research.
- The purposes and assessable outcomes should be made clear to the students.
- The materials can be used again and again.
- Sufficient “mileage” should be gained from any one set of stimulus materials.
- Students should have a record-keeping, filing system for printed materials.

A good quality laminating machine is a very worthwhile investment for any English Panel about to embark on school-based materials development.

SOME IDEAS TO TRY: USING PICTURES

Continually collect pictures of people and places from newspapers and magazines. One picture can become the source of dozens of learning activities. Photography magazines are excellent sources of “mood” photographs.

Keep a box in the staff room into which teachers can drop pictures at any time. Roster people to laminate them from time to time. Distribute them at Panel meetings, when everyone can take a few minutes to write some suitable activities for a handful of pictures. Place the pictures and their associated activities into plastic sleeves, and devise a filing system. Any one photo might have a whole collection of activities filed away behind it. Try to avoid “one picture - one activity”.

- **Autobiography/biography.** Write about the person’s life. Each member of the group concentrates on a different age, and then they work together to try to fit the different accounts into a coherent life story. Two students could imagine the same period in the person’s life, and then compare notes. Who does the person remind you of? Does their “mood” remind you of times when you felt the same way? What is happening just outside the picture? Fold or cover the picture and show it to someone else; ask them to comment on the character. Lead into other types of “biographies”. Interview a relative, a friend, a teacher, and write their biography.
- **Pairs of photographs.** Obtain two copies of the same newspaper/magazine and make two identical sets of photographs. In pairs, students describe the person they are looking at, and their partner has to guess which particular photograph they are describing.
- **Blind date.** You are going on a blind date with the person in the photograph. What will you wear? Where will you go? What will you talk about? How do you feel about it?
- **Action photographs.** Sports and news photos are useful for describing actions, conflicts and interactions between people. You are one of these people. How do you feel right now? How would you react if you were in this situation? How will you relate this incident to your parents when you go home?
- **Places.** Extremes of weather, unusual landscapes, other cultures, natural disasters. Describe the scenery, both favourably and unfavourably. Design some creative writing activities.
- **Animals.** This animal is your pet. Where will you keep it? How will you feed it? How will you exercise it? How did you acquire such a pet? This animal is unwell. You are a vet. What is wrong with it? How will you treat it?

A picture is worth a thousand words ...



TALKABOUT FOR TEACHERS

Review the ways in which you devise and collate school-based materials. Could this be done more effectively?

2.4 SUPPORTING COLLEAGUES' ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

At **Cheung Sha Wan Catholic Secondary School** the NET has led an English language proficiency course for both teaching and support staff. There have been weekly one-and-a-half-hour sessions on Monday evenings since September, 1999. The course is strongly supported by the Principal, who has attended many of the sessions.

On average, twelve members of staff have attended each session. Cakes or other refreshments are an essential part of the introduction on each occasion! The venue is a recently-refurbished small conference room which provides an excellent base for language work.

The NET's approach to language teaching with the group is based on a wide range of teaching and learning strategies. She bases much of the work on group discussion of contemporary social issues. Significantly, several members

reported that their approach to teaching and learning has been influenced by the NET's approaches to teaching and learning on the course.

The Principal has made an allowance for the NET's commitment to the course by increasing the amount of non-contact time in her mainstream teaching programme.

The course will continue until the end of May. A summative evaluation is planned, as well as an end-of-course party!

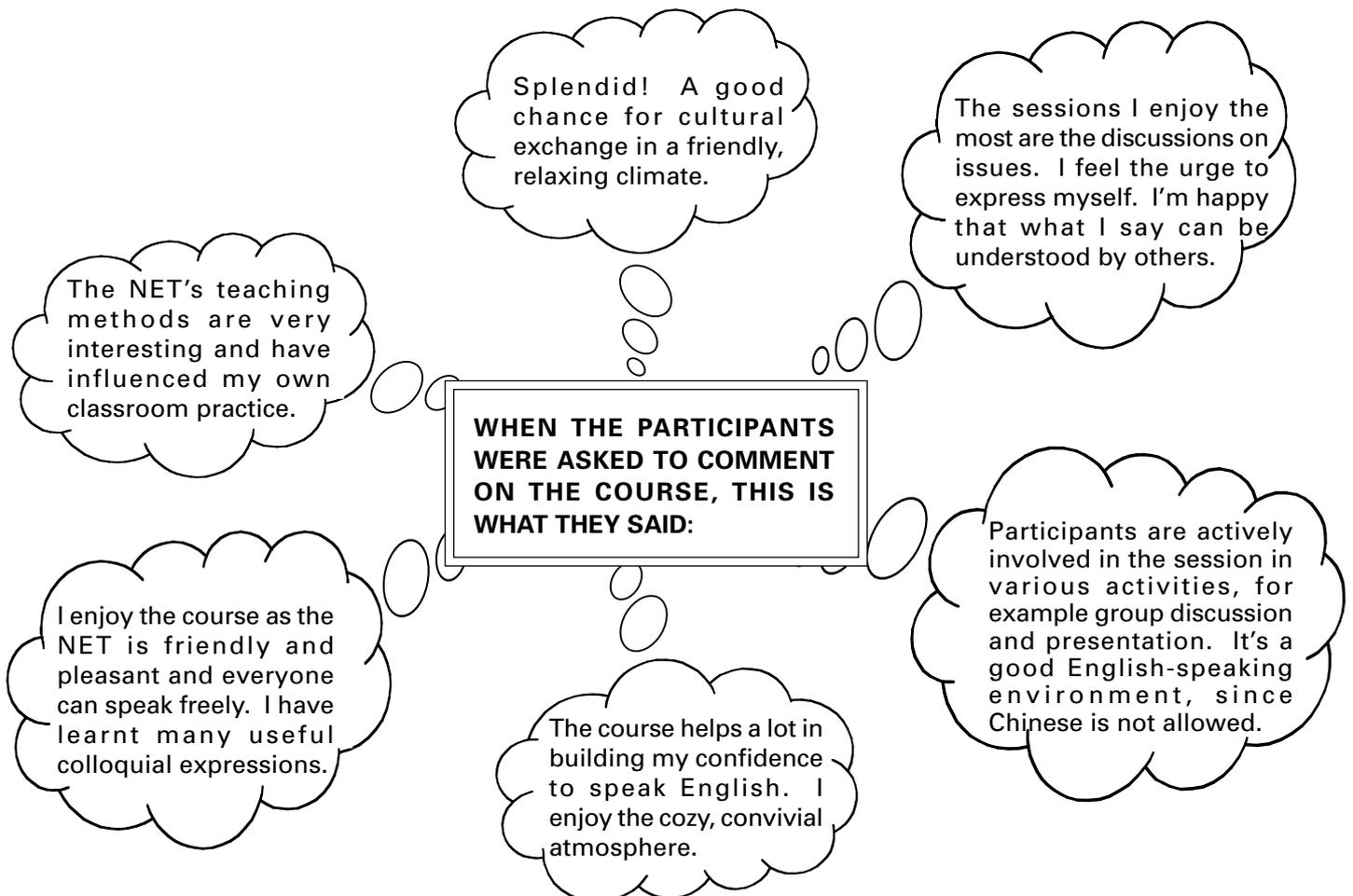
The NET supports her colleagues' English language development in other ways. For example, at their request, by checking the model answers they provide for Form 6 students to essays and follow-ups for science experiments. She also clarifies for them the pronunciation of key words in subject text books.



The course in action at Cheung Sha Wan Catholic Secondary School

A TYPICAL COURSE SESSION...

- 1** In the **introduction**, the NET asks the course members to explain some of the colloquialisms they discussed in the last session. For example, "I have itchy feet", "to do something in cold blood", "I'm having cold feet".
- 2** They then **work in pairs**, finding their partner who has an opposite word written on paper. Partners write their words on the whiteboard: for example (lethargic/energetic, serious/frivolous).
- 3** There is then **whole class discussion** on a poem suggested to the NET by a course member. This reflects on the need to enjoy life's many opportunities. Members take turns to read the poem aloud. Unfamiliar words are highlighted by the NET.
- 4** **Groupwork** follows on a worksheet prepared by the NET.
Life is short: enjoy it!
 - What is your favourite way of unwinding?
 - How often do you indulge in this activity?
 - Do you think you really listen when people talk, or are you too busy?
 - What are some of the best experiences you've had?
- 5** In a **concluding plenary** session the course members share their responses to the worksheet.



2.5 THE WORK OF THE NET BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT GROUP

WHY THE GROUP WAS ESTABLISHED?

When the original cohort of NET teachers were asked what their priorities for professional help were, the loudest voices came from those staff in schools with a significant number of low achieving students and in prevocational schools. Quite often they felt that the topics covered in NET workshops were not addressing their needs and reflected a level of ability and attainment that their students rarely possessed.

These NETs face difficult challenges. There was therefore a strong desire to share experiences with others in similar situations.

A self-help Group

A preliminary meeting acknowledged that answers were not going to come from anyone but the teachers themselves, and that self-help had to be the order of the day. The process was one of sharing problems and whatever solutions could be found. This was to be done within a framework of published material on behaviour management.

Included in the Group's early promotional material was the cartoon shown below. The point it makes proved to be very true for the teachers. Their support for each other and their ability to share and offer constructive advice proved to be the core element of the Group's work.



You'll find "Classroom Discipline" in "Three Easy Lessons" in fiction.

AIMS AGREED TO BY THE GROUP

- To share ideas and constructive suggestions about how to establish and maintain a classroom situation where it is possible to teach, rather than just battle for order and quiet.
- To develop some effective and continuing methods of both positive and negative classroom reinforcement "carrots and sticks".
- To look at low-band schools that "work", examining discipline structures in situations that are successfully creating a workable teaching environment.

OUTCOMES OF THE SUPPORT GROUP'S WORK

What main themes have been covered in Group sessions?

- Strategies for praising students appropriately in the classroom.
- The need to set and reinforce rules.
- Ensuring that non-verbal messages are as clear as possible.
- The role of the NET within the school.
- Good practice in behaviour management.
- How to manage the angry student.

How has this helped teachers?

Perhaps most importantly, the Group has given teachers a sense that they are not alone, that their isolation, whether it be social, cultural or linguistic, can be overcome or at least improved. NETs who may have been feeling extremely de-skilled have been able to help others. One teacher commented: "I enjoy coming here. I moan less. There's always someone worse off than me." More helpful than any of the techniques or tips for coping with students has been the sense that Group members can now work to their own agenda, rather than be thrown into professional confusion by the extreme demands that many of them face.

What are the elements of good practice?

- Individual teachers need to have some **clear and explicit schemes** for managing behaviour. **Consistency and strength of purpose** are what seem to count.
- In terms of positive reinforcement strategies, it was agreed that gimmicks such as lottery tickets, football cards, or candy, are useful but only for a very short time. An **appropriate balance between positive and negative reinforcement** was found to be the most effective.
- **Rules need to be made very explicit** to students.
- **NETs often require help from local teachers** in establishing rules with the class, particularly in Chinese-medium schools.
- **Teachers need to have a co-operative relationship** with the management and discipline teams within the school, including clear channels of accessible information.
- **NETs value the support of class teachers.**
- **NETs should be able to take control of the classroom situation** even in the absence of verbal communication with the students.
- Teaching material must be **matched to individual student's ability levels.**
- **Student motivation and self-esteem** are critical factors in tackling the root causes of bad behaviour.
- There needs to be **inter-school discussion** on coping strategies for people in similar situations.



TALKABOUT FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

- Are your school's current policies and procedures adequate for coping with any discipline problems which may arise in English lessons? Could some of the good practice referred to above further inform these policies and procedures?

2.6 NETS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EXPERIENCE-SHARING WORKSHOPS

NETs can contribute to the continuing discussion in Hong Kong about the teaching and learning of English by joining local teachers in inter-school staff development initiatives. This happened in the Autumn Term, 1999 when six experience-sharing sessions were arranged with the following aim:

- *to promote an exchange of ideas between NETs and local English teachers on current good practice.*

There was a very heavy demand for places on the course and an average of forty local English teachers attended each session, details of which are given below.

Date and Time	Session No.	Content
Wednesday 20 October 1999 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	1	Integrating writing, oral and listening activities. NETs contributing: Philippa Beckerling, HKTA Ching Chung Secondary School and Craig Boswell, FMO Aberdeen Secondary Technical School.
Saturday 23 October 1999 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	2	Creative approaches to English language development, for example through drama, poetry, story telling and games. NETs contributing: Mary Salter, GCC and ITKD Lau Pak Lok Secondary School and Helen Tyson, CCC Kei Heep Secondary School.
Saturday 30 October 1999 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	3	Developing an English corner. NETs contributing: Perry Bayer, Ju Ching Chu Secondary School, Kwai Chung and Leonie Cotter, St Francis Canossian College.
Monday 15 November 1999 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	4	The use of informational communication technology (ICT) in English language teaching and learning. NETs contributing: Lorraine Houlihan, Tak Oi Secondary School and Pauline Bunce, HKWMA Chu Shek Lun Prevocational School.
Tuesday 30 November 1999 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	5	Devising teaching and learning materials within schools. NETs contributing: Lin Turley, Lingnan (Hang Yee Memorial) Secondary School and Joss Williams, CMA Choi Cheung Kok Secondary School.
Saturday 11 December 1999 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	6	English language teachers as reflective professionals: self-evaluation in the English language classroom. NETs contributing: Gina Green, NTHYK Tai Po District School and Jenny Lynd, Cognitio College (Kowloon).

AN EXPERIENCE-SHARING WORKSHOP

Workshop 6 was a typical session. The **aims** were:

- to establish what it is to be a reflective practitioner; and
- to identify what good practice is in the teaching and learning of English.

The participants were involved in an activity where they listened to a newsclip of an accident report on a tape. In their groups, they then made up a story based on those details. Each group later reported its version of what really happened at the scene of the accident. The purpose was to demonstrate some of the principles of good practice in English language teaching.

The participants were then invited to complete a short autobiographical summary of their teaching career, which enabled individuals to reflect on their aspirations as a teacher. Working groups then shared ideas about good classroom practice and the effective management of English Panels.

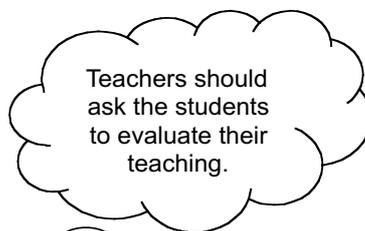
The key points the participants made about the latter are summarised in the following table.

AN ENGLISH PANEL IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN:

- All members feel valued
- There is strong leadership
- Teamwork is promoted
- There is an appropriate division of labour
- Meetings focus on classroom issues
- There is a constant interchange of ideas on professional matters.

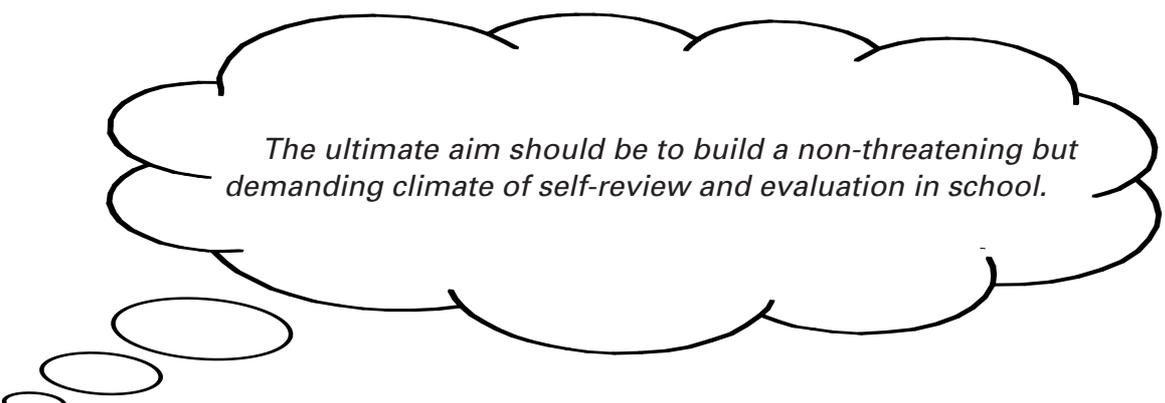
WORKSHOP EVALUATION

At the conclusion of each workshop the participants were invited to evaluate the sessions. Some of the opinions on Workshop 6 are summarised below. A summative evaluation report on the workshops as a whole was prepared for the Director of Education. The aim was to ensure that feedback from evaluation informed the planning of any similar initiatives.



3.0 THE USE OF SELF-EVALUATION IN PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE WITHIN THE SCHEME

- It is helpful to establish what is good practice within the NET scheme, both within individual schools and between schools, and to evaluate whether or not it is being achieved. The following section includes guidelines for defining and evaluating this good practice, in terms of teaching and learning and professional collaboration.
- **'TALKABOUTS'** are included in the section as discussion points to enable Principals and teachers to review and evaluate their current practice with respect to the NET scheme.



The ultimate aim should be to build a non-threatening but demanding climate of self-review and evaluation in school.

Professor Peter Mortimore: Head of The Institute of Education, University of London.

3.1 SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION ENQUIRY

In a number of schools self-evaluation is being used to strengthen professional collaboration between the NET and other teachers.

WHY SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION?

- To define what the school regards as quality education and to ensure that the students benefit from it.
- To support policy formulation and implementation relating to the scheme.
- To support development planning, which ensures that the pace of change is realistic.
- To establish a spirit of on-going improvement, enquiry and investigation which ensures that the school is a learning organisation for staff as well as for students.
- To ensure that the school feels a sense of ownership and accountability for its own development.
- To provide the school with its own research data to enable it to judge its own effectiveness.
- To complement any external quality-assurance process.
- Overall, to promote the school's development and thereby enhance student achievement.

TWGH's Chang Ming Thien College are members of the '**Ensuring Excellence**' Project, a self-evaluation initiative financed by the Government's Quality Education Fund. The Project has now been adopted by sixteen schools throughout Hong Kong.

At TWGH's Chang Ming Thien College a self-evaluation enquiry is being undertaken into the teaching and learning of English in Form One. The initiative has been planned collaboratively by the English Panel Chair and the NET, and has the active support of the Principal. The college's model of enquiry is summarised sequentially on the opposite page.



Classroom observation at TWGH's Chang Ming Thien College

A SELF-EVALUATION ENQUIRY

EVALUATION ENQUIRY THEME:

An enquiry into some different approaches to teaching and learning in oral English in Form One.



EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:

The NET and the English Panel Chair will devise indicators of excellence and observable features relating to perceived good practice in the Form One oral English course, in collaboration with the Form One English teachers.



EVALUATION METHOD:

All the Form One English teachers will observe the NET's lessons in oral English in Form One using the evaluative criteria.
An external 'critical friend' will also observe some lessons as a means of adding to the evidence base.



ANALYSIS OF DATA:

The data gathered from the lesson observations will be analysed to determine the extent to which the evaluative criteria, and therefore the perceived good practice indicators, have been met.



FORMULATION OF CONCLUSIONS:

A one-day meeting of the English Panel will be held to consider the outcomes of the evaluation enquiry and the implications for future approaches to the teaching of oral English in Form One.

In this case the evidence from the evaluation enquiry will provide the English Panel with the basis for a very thorough and meaningful review of oral English teaching in Form One. Also, school self-evaluation will have created a catalyst for formal professional collaboration between the NET and his teacher colleagues.



TALKABOUT FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Consider whether self-evaluation could be further extended, or adopted, to promote the development of the NET scheme in your school. If so, try to devise a model of enquiry to evaluate a particular aspect of teaching and learning relating to the scheme.

3.2 EVALUATING OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOL

An important task in any school-based evaluation of the NET scheme is to ask the question, 'What is good practice in the teaching and learning of English?'. A successful English lesson could include the following.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIMENSION

- The four skills are being appropriately integrated and balanced according to the new syllabus demands.
- There is an appropriate balance between 'fluency', 'meaning' and 'accuracy'.
- There is no over-reliance on the textbook. Use is made of school-based, authentic materials and the students' experiences are used to enhance the learning.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

- The learning environment is supportive to both teaching and learning.
- Students' individual abilities are being catered for as far as possible.
- The teacher is being both a 'planner' (there is evidence of effective lesson preparation) and an 'opportunist' (s/he demonstrates flexibility in exploiting the learning opportunities as they occur during the lesson).
- There is an appropriate balance of teaching and learning strategies, for example, between whole-class teaching and group work.
- The lesson has an appropriate structure. For example, there is a purposeful beginning, a central section which builds on this introduction and a conclusion within which the main knowledge and understanding acquired in the lesson are reinforced.
- Overall, the lesson is paced effectively.

PROMOTING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND SELF-ESTEEM

- Teacher/student and student/student relationships are supportive to the learning process.
- There is a sense of order and discipline throughout the lesson but the teaching and learning are proceeding in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.
- There is evidence that the students are being motivated; they are enjoying the teaching and learning.
- The teacher is promoting the self-esteem of individual students.
- Students are praised by the teacher and made to feel confident.
- Teachers are tolerant of students' errors as being part of the learning process.
- Humour is used appropriately to create a positive classroom ethos.
- The students are rewarded for positive behaviour, effort and attitude.

STUDENT ATTITUDES

- There is evidence of the active participation of all students: they are 'on task' and are willing to learn.
- The students are confident in speaking English during the lesson.
- Students are demonstrating a willingness to take risks in their learning.
- Students are prepared to ask questions.
- There is evidence of collaborative peer-teaching: the students are learning from one another.



TALKABOUT FOR TEACHERS

Try using these evaluative criteria as the basis for a discussion on teaching and learning in an English Panel meeting.

3.3 OBSERVATION OF THREE EXCELLENT LESSONS

On the next three pages there are accounts of three lessons which reflect the good practice summarised on the opposite page. The lessons were observed during a series of visits to schools as part of a research exercise relating to the NET scheme.

LESSON ONE

- This is a Form 2 class of 43 students which the NET shares with the English Panel Chairperson. The lesson lasted 80 minutes.
- The focus of the lesson is to reinforce the concept of giving advice, as outlined in the text book.

- 1** • **In the introduction there is a reference to a talk given by a Form 7 student in the last lesson, on an exchange visit he made to Minnesota.** The NET leads this discussion very skilfully and the students' responses are excellent. Over half the class contributes in a relatively short whole-class session.
 - The NET then gives the students a spelling test on the key words the Form 7 student used in his talk. Overall, their achievements are good.
 - Relationships are informal and the NET easily controls any boisterous attitudes displayed by individual students. This opening serves as a reinforcement of the previous lesson.
- 2** • **The NET then plays the class a Beatles song, 'Help'.** The students are asked to complete a worksheet as they listen, which requires them to link parts of sentences used by the singer. What problems did the man in the song have? What advice would you give him to help him to solve these problems? All the students are highly motivated, "on-task" and very willing to learn.
 - Two students are then invited to sing the song, karaoke style. This provides the class with an excellent opportunity for reinforcement.
 - Responses are then checked in whole-class discussion, with the NET making good use of the blackboard.
- 3** • **Follow-up involves pair-work in which the students discuss how they would advise individuals facing real-life problems.** The students are learning from one another.
- 4** • **The students then consider some of the grammatical issues** from a textbook. (Conditionals, 'English Express', Longman). They tackle the exercises enthusiastically and demonstrate sound understanding.
- 5** • **In a short concluding whole-class discussion, the main knowledge and understanding acquired in the lesson are reinforced.**

- The students said afterwards that they greatly enjoy the NET's lessons and it was obvious from both their written and oral work that their language proficiency had been enhanced.
- During the lesson the NET placed considerable emphasis on promoting the self-esteem of individuals. For example, "That's a good answer".
- There was evidence of excellent team work with the English Panel Chairperson, as ideas from her previous lesson were reinforced here.
- Overall, the lesson was conducted at a rigorous pace. The students were prepared to ask questions and to take risks in their language learning.



TALKABOUT FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Are songs used successfully in your school's English lessons? If not, could this be a helpful new strategy?

EXCELLENT PRACTICE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

LESSON TWO

- This is a Form 5 class of 43 students, nearly half of whom have come from mainland China within the last three years. The NET takes the class for all their twelve English lessons during a seven-day cycle. The lesson lasted 75 minutes.
- The focus of the lesson is meaningful communication. This includes the skills of clarification and negotiation of meaning.

- 1 • **In a well-paced introduction** virtually all the students participate in a whole-class discussion on the main outcomes of the last lesson. There is helpful emphasis on key vocabulary words.
 - The NET makes excellent use of the whiteboard.
- 2 • **The students are then invited to participate in an oral exercise** which involves them in asking questions of their peers, using a worksheet prepared by the NET. (See extract below).
 - The NET introduces this exercise by encouraging the students to have a 'dummy run'. She emphasises the need for them to take risks in their English speaking. There is a great deal of movement in the lesson, both from the students and the NET.
 - The paired interviewing lasts twenty minutes during which time the students are highly motivated, on-task and totally committed to speaking in English.
- 3 • **Follow-up is in groups of four**, with individual students feeding back on the responses they have received in their interviews with their peers. Here again, the students are totally absorbed in their work.
- 4 • **The concluding whole-class discussion** is rigorous.

- Student responses in this lesson were outstanding. Most individuals within the class demonstrated a remarkable willingness to speak to the observer (a complete stranger) in English. For example, the youngsters from mainland China were pleased to talk about their previous lives in rural villages.
- The lesson was characterised by the NET's considerable demands on the students combined with very supportive pastoral relationships.

FIND SOMEONE WHO - - -

- likes apples...
- watched TV last night...
- read an English language newspaper yesterday...
- likes swimming...
- has seen the 'Sixth Sense' movie.
- slept all day Saturday...
- went to a restaurant last night...
- was born outside Hong Kong...
- likes 'The English Channel' magazine...
- can tell you a relative pronoun...
- knows who Al Pacino is.....
- is going to mainland China at Christmas...
- ate rice for breakfast...
- surfed last night...
- is a Man U. supporter...



TALKABOUT FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

- Consider what new teaching and learning strategies might usefully be developed in English lessons to further enhance student motivation.

EXCELLENT PRACTICE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

LESSON THREE

- This is a Form 1 class of 39 students in a middle-banded school. The NET is team-teaching with another member of the English Panel. The lesson lasted 75 minutes.
- The focus of the lesson is to promote the skills of compromise and negotiation, whilst extending the student's vocabulary and enhancing their sentence construction.

- 1 • **In a well-paced, purposeful discussion** during which two thirds of the students contribute, the NET introduces the theme of shopping. There is a helpful focus on key words.
- 2 • **The students then work in groups** to plan both the ideal location for a shopping centre and the types of goods they would wish to see being sold. Both the NET and the local English teacher are skillful in supporting the work of different groups. There is evidence of collaborative learning, with those students who are less confident in English learning from their more articulate peers.
 - The local English teacher occasionally speaks in Cantonese to individual students as a means of supporting their conceptual development. She is also supportive to the NET when any minor disciplinary problems arise.
 - Both teachers make good use of the whiteboard to illustrate key points relating to shopping location.
- 3 • **In a very well-managed, whole-class plenary session, group** members feedback on the main outcomes of the group discussions. It is significant that both teachers play an equal role in supporting learning in terms of advice on tenses and vocabulary. This is 'collaborative' rather than 'co-teaching', at its very best.
- 4 • **In a concluding summary**, the local English teacher reminds the students of the key concepts introduced during the lesson. This is clear, concise and helpful to the students who listen attentively throughout.

- The lesson was a particularly good example of the benefits of promoting language learning in a meaningful context.
- Relationships were excellent throughout the lesson. The overall 'climate' was enhanced by the friendly, informal relationship between the two teachers. Their often humorous repartee created an informal approach which was supportive to learning.
- Significantly, several groups commented confidently to the observer in English, without any prompting, that they had greatly enjoyed the lesson. Several said how much they enjoyed being taught by two teachers.

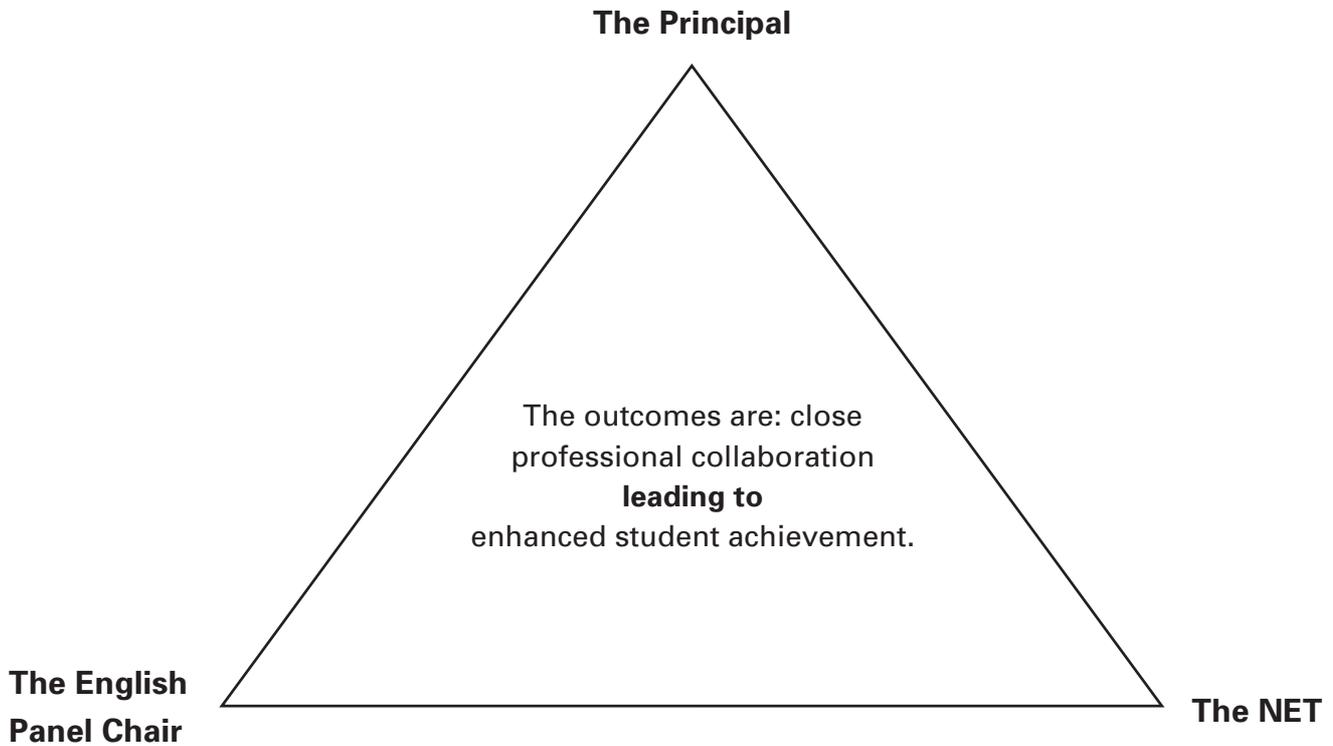


TALKABOUT FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Is this type of collaborative teaching an approach you would wish to promote in your own school? If so, how might such practices be developed in future?

3.4 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE NET SCHEME IN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS

Experience in schools suggests that, for the NET scheme to work really effectively, there must be a triangular framework of support between the Principal (or a delegated senior manager), the English Panel Chair and the NET. Schools also benefit when they receive external advisory support relating to the scheme and when there is appropriate feedback from the various networks established to support the NET scheme.



CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE NET SCHEME WITHIN SCHOOLS

The criteria for evaluating the NET scheme, summarised on the following three pages, have been devised after discussion with Principals, English Panel Chairs and NETs. Further information was obtained from a research exercise on good practice within the NET scheme organised in collaboration with the Department of Education.

To ensure effective implementation . . .

. . . THE PRINCIPAL (OR A DELEGATED SENIOR MANAGER) ENSURES THAT:

- the NET is appropriately inducted into the life and work of the school (e.g. there is appropriate 'settling in' time);
- there is initial discussion on the NET's role, including the timetable;
- early on, there is discussion on what are felt to be the NET's main professional strengths, and how these can be developed within the school;
- any cultural issues are talked through and, if necessary, resolved;
- the NET is encouraged to model good practice in English teaching and learning;
- strategies are adopted which ensure that the NET has appropriate time to work collaboratively with other teachers to promote an effective dialogue on approaches to the teaching and learning of English within the school;
- the NET's role is communicated effectively to all staff and, whenever appropriate, to students;
- the NET's work is supported continuously. This involves both formal and informal contact (e.g. a senior manager observes the NET's teaching);
- there is appropriate collaboration between the NET, the English Panel Chair, other English teachers and, if possible, other subject teachers;
- regular meetings are held between the senior manager, the English Panel Chair and the NET to review the latter's work. These discussions are informed by self-evaluation evidence. Feedback from evaluation leads to subsequent developments; and
- careful consideration is given to the NET's non-teaching roles, for example in developing resources, school based professional development; appropriate time is given for these activities.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE NET SCHEME WITHIN SCHOOLS

To ensure effective implementation . . .

... THE ENGLISH PANEL CHAIR, AS A MIDDLE MANAGER:

- supports a timetable which allows the NET (i) to model quality teaching and learning; and (ii) time to work with other teachers in developing the English curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom;
- provides support to the NET as she/he learns about the local educational system and the school culture;
- liaises with the NET on a regular basis;
- provides information on the NET's role to all staff within the school;
- encourages the sharing of ideas during English Panel meetings, and involves the NET in discussions;
- takes an active interest in the students' learning with the NET, for example by being an interested observer in his/her lessons, attending the English Corner and extra-curricular activities relating to English language development;
- in collaboration with the NET, supports the introduction of strategies which promote professional dialogue: for example, through collaborative teaching (**see Pages 28 and 29**);
- encourages input from the NET on how funding for English can be used, and allows the NET to help in the selection of appropriate teaching and learning resources;
- is willing to help the NET with student disciplinary strategies, if necessary;
- participates in staff development activities involving local English teachers and NETs outside school, and provides feedback to the English Panel; and
- helps to create a climate of on-going review and evaluation with respect to the NET scheme.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE NET SCHEME WITHIN SCHOOLS

To ensure effective implementation . . .

. . . THE NET:

- recognises the need to 'play himself/herself in gradually' by initially attempting to win the confidence and respect of colleagues;
- demonstrates an awareness of cultural similarities and differences;
- fully understands the local education system and its aspirations, including the external examination system;
- is prepared to be flexible: able to work within the system whilst encouraging change;
- acknowledges that the role not only involves his/her own teaching but is also concerned with offering professional support for other teachers;
- contributes ideas on the ways in which the NET can play a professional support role for other staff;
- recognises that collaboration/co-operation is a two-way process, with the English staff in particular;
- demonstrates a willingness to work closely with the English Panel Chair;
- is prepared to establish new student programmes, both curricular and extra curricular;
- supports and promotes the key aspirations of the scheme at the school level; and
- is prepared to be involved in on-going review and evaluation with respect to the scheme.

3.5 THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE NET WITHIN THE SCHOOL



TALKABOUT FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

- Try reviewing your policy regarding the NET scheme, using the examples of the deployment of NETs within Hong Kong schools summarised on the next three pages.

PROVIDING SPECIALISED TEACHING

All oral English

- In some schools, the NET visits every class in the school, or every class at a specific level, and conducts lessons that are largely “oral” in focus.
- This approach requires close collaboration with the various class teachers who are involved. The NET needs to be informed about progress through the scheme of work, so that he/she can plan lessons that will support the work of the class teacher. The class teachers can also assist the NET by arranging for students to bring certain materials to the oral lesson, and by preparing the students with the vocabulary items that will be used in the oral class. The regular class teacher is sometimes present, providing opportunities for team-teaching, or absent, leaving the students in a “total immersion” situation.
- The roles of the NET and the regular class teacher in a team-teaching situation can vary greatly. There needs to be regular, close collaboration between the NET and the class teacher to discuss this important issue. For example, one teacher could play the role of disciplinarian, or translator, or joint presenter, teacher-supporter, alternating presenter, camera operator - or any other “role” that seems appropriate in the particular lesson. **(see Pages 26 and 27)**

Skill enhancement

- As well as being an oral-language instructor, NETs in some schools also work as the visiting writing teacher, as a reading-scheme coordinator or as an IT instructor in the computer laboratory, for many classes.

Support teaching

- NETs in some schools support individual or groups of students, either within classes or by withdrawing small groups. This includes support for weaker students on pronunciation, self-confidence in language use and phonic awareness and for high-achieving students on critical thinking, research and presentation skills.

PROVIDING GENERAL CLASS TEACHING

Teaching the whole class

- In some schools the NET teaches one or more classes for all their English lessons. Such an arrangement means that the NET can demonstrate good practice in teaching and learning more effectively.
- Some schools believe that this approach is most satisfactory with more junior or more senior classes: Forms One or Two, Forms Four or Six.
- Many schools do not involve the NET in extended work with examination classes. However, some schools have found that their NET's innovative approach to language teaching has enhanced students' examination achievements.
- Whether or not the same teacher takes the same class in consecutive years is an issue for schools to consider.

Teaching 'split' classes

Many schools have created "split classes". The split involves the NET and another teacher either sharing the whole class during the timetable cycle or dividing the class to create a more favourable teacher-student ratio. Such arrangements can promote greater collaboration between the two teachers concerned. The following are some examples of 'split class' approaches adopted by schools.

- The two teachers "time-share" the full class, with one teacher taking the full group for some language skills (e.g. listening, oral and dictation) and the other teacher taking the remaining skills (e.g. reading, writing, grammar).
- The two teachers periodically put the two groups together for "special activities", such as viewing a videotape, learning a song, going to the computer laboratory, group-work and so on. This works quite well when the NET conducts an "oral class" and the co-teacher "returns the favour" by conducting a grammar lesson with some translation of difficult points.
- The two teachers plan uneven splits, in which one of them will take a small focus group and the other will conduct an activity with the larger group. For example, while the larger group is involved in a reading activity, the smaller group receives some remedial attention, or is shown how to use the library for research purposes.
- The nature of the "split" changes every time it occurs, depending on teacher strengths and student characteristics. One lesson per week is sometimes designated as the "special lesson", an arrangement that appears to motivate the students.

PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Newly-appointed teachers should always be encouraged to share the fresh professional experiences and perspectives they bring to their schools. This should be the case within the NET scheme. Those NETs with specific areas of expertise should also have an opportunity to contribute to the school's staff development programme. The following are examples of some of the ways in which schools have enabled this to happen.

NETs as curriculum designers

In individual schools NETs have been involved in curriculum development, in collaboration with their colleagues, for example by:

- redesigning curriculum materials;
- helping to review the English Panel's resource collection;
- providing extension materials on request;
- operating language laboratories;
- revising the reading scheme; and
- in some EMI schools, supporting the development of English language-across-the-curriculum.

NETs as contributors of specific skills and ideas

- In some schools NETs with IT skills have undertaken professional development activities in Internet search skills, web-page design and the use of CD-ROMs for teaching.
- In some English Panels, NETs have led professional development courses and/or made presentations on topics of interest in meetings.

NETs as an English language resource

- Some schools have invited the NET to lead English language enhancement courses for their teaching and/or support staff, sometimes with the "language benchmarking" exercise in mind.
- In some cases NETs have edited English language school documents, particularly internal examination papers and promotional materials for distribution outside the school.

NETs support in creating a language rich environment

- Some NETs have been involved in developing the school as a more noticeably bilingual environment. Signs and noticeboard headings have been drawn up in two languages; assemblies have had an English-element incorporated into them; public address announcements have been bilingual; notices to parents have contained bilingual subject-headings; the English Club has placed English labels on objects around the school. In these schools English has been perceived as more than just a subject within the curriculum.



TALKABOUT FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

- In an increasing number of schools, the NET now teaches one or more classes for a substantial number of their English lessons. By contrast, many schools have now abandoned the approach of the NET teaching a large number of oral classes. **Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of both these methods of deploying the NET.**
- Arguably, one very significant outcome of the NET scheme will be its impact on the teaching and learning of English within Hong Kong's schools. **Discuss the impact of the scheme so far in your school. Consider the ways in which the scheme's impact might be enhanced, through developments both inside and outside your school.**

TWO KEY FACTORS IN ENSURING THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NET SCHEME

COLLABORATION....

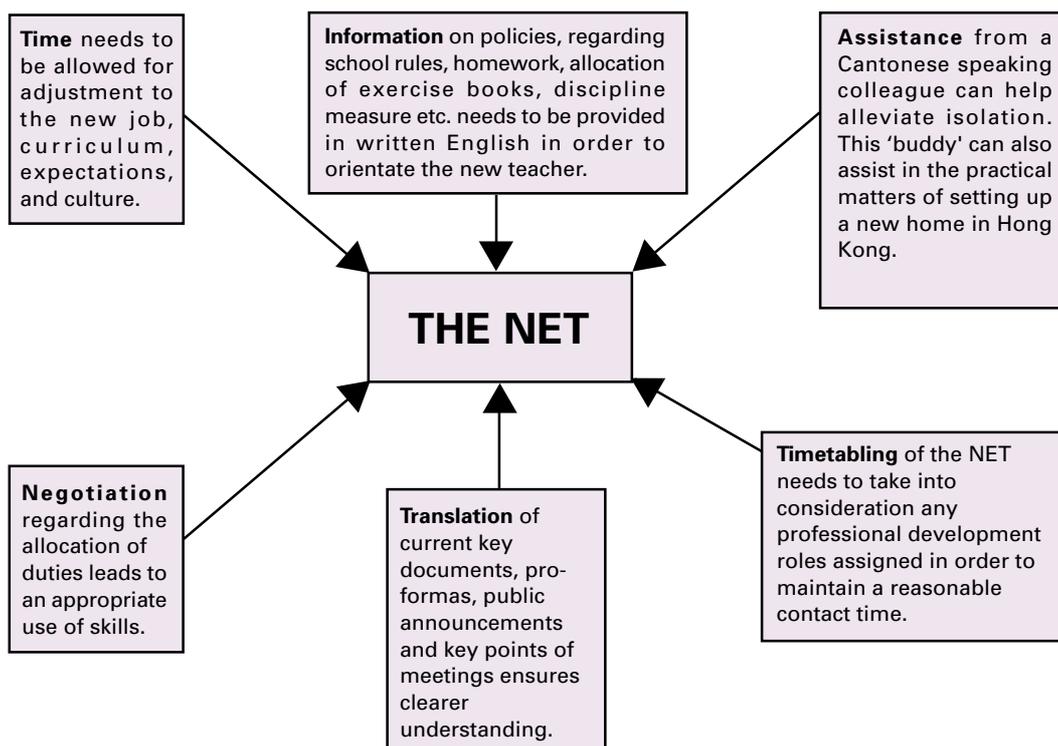
There should be effective **collaboration** between the NET and other English teachers, both inside and outside the classroom, on:

- supporting the individual needs of learners at all levels of English proficiency;
- preparing appropriate teaching and learning materials;
- designing and implementing successful teaching and learning strategies;
- ensuring successful classroom management, including discipline;
- planning methods of assessment which support the learning process, not least in terms of student motivation and self-esteem;
- monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning process; and
- developing rewarding professional relationships between teachers.

COMMUNICATION

The school and the NET are entering an ongoing partnership. Clear and constructive lines of **communication** are essential if the NET is to:

- feel comfortable in the new environment;
- have a clear understanding of the school's policies and practices; and
- be able to undertake his/her assignment effectively.



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- **Page 7**, 'Six Billion and Counting', South China Morning Post.
- **Page 9**, 'The Enormous Turnip', Illustrated Treasury of Fairy Tales, John Burningham. Illustrated by Raymond Briggs.
- **Page 11**, 'Jelly Fish', Form and Feeling, Poetry for Senior students, Elaine Hamilton and John Livingston, Longman Cheshire.
- **Page 17**, 'Pupils Learn Best when They...', Guidance on the Quality of Teaching and Learning. Harrow LEA.

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