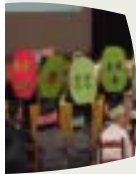


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NET Scheme news

KEEPING STAKEHOLDERS INFORMED OF CURRENT TRENDS IN THE PNET SCHEME

Poetry in Motion

By David Bartlett (AT)

Poetry is a powerful tool which can be used to unlock children's creativity and encourage them to 'play' with language in a relatively risk-free environment.

In March, almost two hundred primary and secondary school teachers participated in four poetry writing workshops. These were delivered by the Advisory Teaching Team in preparation for the Hong Kong Budding Poets competition jointly organized by the NET and Gifted Education Sections. Participants explored the harmonic devices of alliteration, assonance, consonance and rhyme. Traditional fixed poetic forms, rhythm and meter, and free verse were also discussed. Enthusiastic brainstorming and the use of mind maps elicited some wonderfully creative metaphors and similes.

Teachers were given the opportunity to use a variety of frameworks and starting points to create their own poems and were shown ways in which writing poems can be used to enhance language teaching in the classroom. As the group contribution below shows, we have creative teachers in Hong Kong. Let's use this creativity in our classrooms.

The Hag

*I saw a hag without a nose
Walking quickly, I suppose.*

*I asked the man,
"How do you smell?"*

He answered me, "Not very well!"

*"I only asked because I care
You have no ears, you have no hair."
"Oh please don't ask me how I fare."
He fixed me with his fearful stare!*

*"I am a teacher - can't you tell?
I've just been teaching the class from hell.
A double period with 2B
And look what they have done to me!"*



Poetry creates opportunities for personalization. Students have plenty to say. Communication is genuine because they are talking about their own experiences or hypotheses. They are engaged and motivated, which helps to make the lesson and the language (and sometimes even the poem) memorable.

Literature with a small 'l' By Daya Datwani (AT)



Language Arts in the curriculum involves 'literature with a small l'. Through ELA students are helped to think deeply about issues, cross-culture exchanges and authentic interactions. Teachers incorporating ELA do not necessarily need to have a strong literature background. Nor do students need to be advanced learners. There is no need to master literary terms or devices for critical analysis. Rather, teachers and students have fun through songs, creative writing, drama, stories, poetry, plays, jokes, riddles, tongue

twisters, debates and anecdotes. Through reading and exploring texts, learners become aware of basic principles which, when used in expression, become internalized.

As one AT, Daniel Hannah, puts it "The teaching of Language Arts in the classroom is an extremely powerful tool and the results are amazing!" The medium term focus in the English Language Curriculum Guide has a strong emphasis on ELA, so we better start thinking about it now!

How is the curriculum changing?

As education changes, including how we teach English, you will see children “learning to learn” and playing a more “active role” in their learning process through:

- using more quality learning resources (learning games, reading books, newspapers) and less textbook work
- doing more project work (where children research and present information) and fewer drilling tasks
- doing different homework (projects and research) and less textbook work
- doing more creative thinking and problem solving
- learning more life-skills (such as group work with other students)
- being assisted by parents playing an active role in classrooms

How can you support the school and your child in Curriculum Reform?

- be aware of the curriculum reform
- be open-minded and supportive when the school implements new curriculum ideas
- attend parent information meetings and parent workshops at the school
- support Parent Teacher Association (PTA) decisions that help the school's new curriculum ideas
- support your child with tasks set by the teacher

甚麼是課程改革？

在課程改革中(包括英國語文教學)，我們的孩子會在學習中扮演積極主動的角色，學校的學與教亦會：

- 採用優質的學與教材料，善用多樣化的學習資源；
- 推動專題研習，讓學生開發自主學習空間，並透過與人協作，建構知識；
- 採用多元化的家課，減低操練式的作業；
- 發展創意思維，激發學生的思考；
- 培養及發展學生的生活技能；
- 加強與家長的聯繫，讓家長積極參與孩子的學習過程；
- 採用多元化的評估模式，讓學生了解自己在學習中的長處和短處，並根據教師或其他評估者的回饋改善學習。

家長如何配合課程改革？

促進課程改革，家長的積極參與及協助是不可或缺的。配合課程改革，家長需要：

- 認識及瞭解課程改革；
- 對課程改革採取開放及支持的態度；
- 支持老師給予子女的學習課業及活動；
- 參加學校為家長舉辦的研討會及工作坊；及
- 支持家長教師會的工作，從而協助學校推行課程改革。

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The Role of English Language Arts

By Simon Tham (Chief Curriculum Development Officer)



activity in all Key Learning Areas. In the KLA of English Language Education these skills are in the foreground when planning student activities. The Experience Strand identifies English as “a source of pleasure and aesthetic experience by encouraging free and creative personal responses and expression”.

The inclusion of English Language Arts in

The Hong Kong School Curriculum espouses the skills of communication, critical thinking and crea-

the scheduled learning experiences of students is an opportunity for such experiences which will enrich both their facility with the language and their engagement in the learning process. In particular the musicality of poetry with its pleasing rhythms and its appeal to our senses provides a powerful ‘hook’ for engaging students.

The NET Section is active in promoting the use of poetry. **Choral Speaking** - a special working and orchestration of a poem with characteristics found only in Hong Kong - has been promoted through workshops for NETs and English teachers. Here teachers have hands-on experience in organizing and conducting choral speaking groups. Other workshops demonstrate how students’ phonemic awareness can be augmented through poetry. Participants at these workshops develop techniques for initiating the poetry writing process in their

classrooms.

Currently this Section in conjunction with the Gifted Education Section is organising the **Budding Poets Award**. This prestigious event will recognise the poetry writing skills of Hong Kong students. There have been briefing sessions and workshops associated with the award. Prize winners will be recognized at a presentation ceremony in July. Short listed poems will be collected into an album.

The poet John Keats famously observed that ‘a thing of beauty is a joy forever’. In relation to the study of poetry, this line links aesthetic appreciation with the emotional response of the reader. Through Language Arts, students’ real and imagined experiences are enriched.



The Very Hungry Caterpillar

By Carmen Liddane (NET)

S.K.H. Ma On Shan Holy Spirit Primary School recently promoted the junior primary reading programs to parents. This was done through a Shared Reading lesson co-taught by the NET and a local English teacher. The lesson featured the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle.

The planning process itself was like the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. A draft of the lesson framework was drawn up and then presented to the Primary 2 LETs and the Panel Chair. They gave constructive suggestions on how to enhance student involvement. The co-teaching LET, Celilia Fung, helped to refine co-teaching roles.

Finally, the day arrived. The caterpillar became a beautiful butterfly right before the eyes of the numerous parents. The students participated enthusiastically in every activity from reading along, identifying the same starting sounds on a transparency, to acting out the story in some wonderfully made caterpillar segments. To conclude the session, the Home Reading Programme was presented.

The demonstration lesson is reflective of a strong network of support. It would not have been possible without the AT's encouragement, the previous NET's foundation, and the ongoing support for reading from the Principal, the Panel Chair, the LETs and the ELTA.



Combined Small Schools English Camp

By Ken McNeill (AT)

Recently, four small village schools, **Kiu Saw Public School, Yuen Long Small Traders New Village Public School, Wang Chau Public School** and **Sam Wo Public School** participated in an all-day English Camp at Po Leung Kuk Jockey Club Tai Tong Holiday Camp, Yuen Long. For students from Kiu Saw and Sam Wo Public Schools, the excitement continued through the night and into the mid afternoon of the next day.

The planning committee, Miss Phoebe Lee, Ms Katherine Ip, Principal Fung and AT, Ken McNeill, provided an English programme that was varied, engaging

and educational, but above all, fun for students. T-shirt painting, the activity posts, chants, balloon races and night-time ball games were all enjoyed by students, but the most popular was the Treasure Hunt. Mixed school groups were deliberately created to ensure students met and socialised with students from neighbouring schools.

Teachers and staff from all four schools, English speaking student volunteers from HKCU, Principal Fung and ATs, Margaret O'Brien and Ken McNeill, succeeded in providing an authentic English language experience for the students.

The audience was hushed. They sat on the edges of their seats, filled with expectation.

The director (Michelle Decoff, NET teacher at **Bishop Ford Memorial Primary School**) began a brief introduction. Rehearsals had been intense since October. Now, in March, they were ready to entertain. She thanked Miss Wong Ching Ha (the producer) and Miss Kathy Tam for their help with the rehearsals and the backdrops. The cast was introduced, all twenty of them, from the Narrator through to Frog Number Three.

THEN THE SHOW BEGAN!

The performers had memorized the script to perfection. Not only that, they inter-

The Hiccupping Mouse

By Terry Martin (AT)

preted every nuance and subtlety, exploited every possibility for humour and they were to be heard clearly at the back of the auditorium. From P3 to P6 they were enthralled. They sighed during the elements of pathos, laughed at every joke, applauded rapturously and in between there was SILENCE.

Well done Michelle and the team. It's performances like this that make the NET scheme come alive.

Festival Success

By Lalita Fernandez (NET)

November 2005 was celebration time at **Salesian Yip Hon Primary School**. Natalie Ho Mei Ying, an energetic seven year-old in P2, took out a first prize in the Hong Kong Speech Festival for her recitation of the poem 'Kisses'. This has sparked interest in lunchtime poetry classes as well as next year's Festival.

Eight students from three different years met to practise. Fuelled by their newfound abilities and the joy of the spoken word, the group collaboratively learned to recite not just one poem, but three!

Students listened to a voice recording at home. Later on their voices were taped so that they could provide self-critiques

and constructive feedback. They worked enthusiastically on phonics, expression and clear diction. Stress and tone were mastered.

The Principal, Mr Tam Chuck Hung and Vice Principal, Mr Sunny Ho Wing Cheong, have been most supportive in this venture and we look forward to building on this success next year.



Seconded AT Reunion

By Peter Broe (APM)

When ex-colleagues reunite there's always much to catch up on; there's reminiscing about shared experiences and updating current career and personal developments.

This was the case on 18th March when former seconded English teachers gathered in the NET Section's seminar room. The secondment process provides the NET Section with local advisers for the Advisory Teaching Team. This creates a two-way flow of experience and information. Seconded teachers bring to the section their currency in teaching practice and their intimate knowledge of classroom practice. Simultaneously they become

Seconded teachers bring to the section their currency in teaching practice and their intimate knowledge of classroom practice.

more involved with current thrusts in curriculum policy, teaching practice and professional development.

This gathering was not only social. Attendees worked in groups to identify sets of skills and areas of knowledge common to the school and advisory positions. These include; curriculum development, interpersonal skills, and collaboration. They felt that their presentation and people skills had been augmented.

The NET Section intends to retain contact with former Local Advisory Teachers. It is felt that they provide a unique network spanning classroom and advisory practice. According to Section head Simon Tham,

“Having access to this group can only improve collaboration between the ATT and schools. It is also hoped that they will continue to develop themselves professionally and serve in an enhanced capacity.”



With their breadth of experience it is expected that ex-secondee will continue to be a valuable resource to their schools as well as a knowledgeable sounding board for NET Section initiatives.



By the time it is fully implemented, the Primary NET Scheme will have provided more than 600 Hong Kong schools with a NET. It can be appreciated that the cost of this resource is significant to say the least. As such, interest in the impact of the scheme is high not just to the NET

Impact Assessment By John Leung (APM)

Section but also to the citizens and the administrators of the Hong Kong SAR. To gain empirical data on this impact, a team of evaluators from Melbourne University has been commissioned. This team (pictured) is under the leadership of Professor Patrick Griffin. Recently they came to Hong Kong to present their Second Annual Report.

The objectives of the evaluation are three-fold

- to measure English language proficiency and attitudes to English at dif-

ferent stages of development (P1-P4) over three years

- to evaluate the PNET scheme and its implementation
- to examine relationships between implementation of the PNET scheme and pupils' developing proficiency in English – a value-added analysis

A Principals' Briefing is being convened on 25th April to present the current findings of the evaluation team. The results are eagerly awaited.

Ralph Barnes takes up PM post By Michael Agopsowicz (AT)



Kong as Assistant Project Manager in June 2003.

As of March 1st, 2006, Ralph Barnes, M.Ed., will be the new Project Manager for the NET Section. I took a few moments to find out more about him and the position.

Ralph is Australian. He spent 28 years as a practicing primary school teacher in various countries, and came to Hong

“I look forward to a bright, challenging and engaging future as Project Manager to the NET Scheme.”

always appreciate the complex nature and physical demands of classroom teaching, in any educational setting. I have been very impressed with the depth, quality and commitment of NETs and English Panel personnel within the NET Scheme.”

Ralph has been active in all aspects of NET recruitment and sees a trend for outside educational personnel wanting to re-locate and teach in Hong Kong. “I am a “glass-half-full” person, moving to see the positives and advantages of challenges that are placed before us in management, teaching and learning.”

Ralph has strong interpersonal skills which will place him in good stead as he evolves, develops and promotes the significant work generated by the NET Scheme.

In his own words “I enjoy meeting people involved in and passionate about, English learning and teaching in Hong Kong. I

“I look forward to a bright, challenging and engaging future as Project Manager to the NET Scheme.”