



# Issue 7 Scheme

*Keeping Stakeholders Informed*

# news

## 2007



In order for networks to maximise the penetration of successful practices into the NET community, links across networks are vital. This suggests a decentralised pattern of networking where links are established between cluster groups. Looking at new ways of forming these cluster groups is important.

Clusters have convened that involve teachers of students with special needs. Another cluster brings together teachers involved in debating. Links form and reform according to need and applicability.

The secondary NET community in Hong Kong schools is large. Through clusters and networks of clusters the RNCT delivers services to these teachers. This team intends to maintain the vitality and practicability of these NET-works.

## Sowing the Seeds of Change

By Peter Broe (APM)

In the current school year Regional NET Coordinators (RNCs) have sown the seeds of cluster groups across the regions and districts of Hong Kong

Feedback collected at these gatherings has shown that NETs appreciate the opportunity to network informally. It gives them a chance to discuss deployment and the specific teaching methods that produce results with local students. NETs recognise the students' concerns with both acquiring language and preparing for important assessment milestones.

RNCs take on the role of conveners, advisors and resource distributors. However it is the participants themselves who act as mentors and educators to their colleagues.

At cluster meetings to date, NETs have shared their resources on topics such as:

- Readers' Theatre
- English Corner
- publishing an English magazine
- process drama script writing
- blogging
- teaching poetry
- using smartboards, and
- debating

*Networks are a group of people working together to solve problems or issues of mutual concern that are too large for any one organization to handle on its own.*

*Priscilla Wohlstetter  
(2003)*

# Parents' Role in Selecting Books and Films for Home Use

In the New Senior Secondary (NSS) English Language Curriculum, Language Arts materials are going to play an important role in the refinement of students' English language skills. The following are some suggested ideas.

## *Considerations for selecting Language Arts materials*

The suitability of Language Arts materials for the language classroom varies from one group of learners to another, depending on their age, needs, interests, cultural background, language level, and intellectual and emotional maturity. It is most important to make use of materials which stimulate their personal imagination and involvement. The following should be considered when selecting Language Arts materials to be used at home.

- Appropriateness of content
- Likelihood of interest to readers
- Amount of cultural knowledge required
- Density, pace, level and clarity of language

In selecting films and documentaries, the following also need to be considered.

- Degree of visual support
- Clarity of sound and picture
- Techniques employed in the film/documentary text

Learners can be involved in selection. Your children may have some good ideas you are unaware of.

根據最新頒佈的新高中英文課程，語文藝術材料乃重要部份，對您的子女學習英語有莫大的裨益。茲將建議之運用方法臚列如下。

選取語文藝術素材考慮因素：

供課堂教學之語文素材適合與否，因學員而異。不同年齡、需要、興趣、文化背景、語文造詣、心智及情緒成熟程度等等均為關鍵。然而，最堪注意者，乃素材能否刺激學生的想像力及參考與性。以下乃一些因素供選取素材作為家中學習時考慮之用：

- 內容的適切性
- 能否引起學生興趣
- 文化認知所需之水平
- 語文的掌握程度，速度，水平和清晰度。

當選取電影或紀錄片時，應注意：

- 視覺效果之強度
- 聲音及影像之清晰度
- 用於電影和文本之技巧

學生可參與選取過程，他們可能有些好意見是您忽略的。

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## NET Scheme a Good Match with the Spirit of NSS

By Simon Tham (Chief  
Curriculum Development  
Officer)

### The formation of the Regional NET Coordinating

Team (RNCT) in August 2006, provided the opportunity to take a fresh look at the original objectives of the Secondary NET Scheme.

This is happening in the light of curriculum development associated with the implementation of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) Curriculum.

The aims of the 1998 Scheme would still appear to have contemporary application. They envisaged that the NET would enhance the teaching of English by:

- acting as an English language resource person in schools
- assisting in school-based teacher development, and
- helping to foster an enabling English learning environment in schools.

With regard to the first aim, the heightened presence of English language arts in the primary and secondary areas has reaffirmed

the NET's role as a language resource. Increasingly the emphasis is on developing and using language from and about films, texts and other language artifacts. The language of appreciation, literary criticism and comparison can be acquired and, more importantly, used in class and extra-curricular activities to add depth to students' enjoyment of these experiences. Here the NETs' function as a 'resource' arises from their familiarity with these forms of discourse.

Presently many Hong Kong secondary teachers are attending workshops and seminars dealing with the NSS Curriculum such as the elective modules and school-based assessment. This professional development provides opportunities for English panel members to work collaboratively on preparing and delivering materials and schemes of work. Here NETs are able to provide experience from similar curricular thrusts in their home countries. Opportunities abound for mutual learning exchanges drawing upon NETs' experiences of these pedagogical strategies.

The spirit of the NSS Syllabus emphasises using English for real purposes in authentic situations. This is the meaning of an enhanced learning environment. Here NETs contribute to the physical environment of learning by maintaining a text-rich area or 'corner' within the school. In collaboration with their local colleagues they also add meaning to the language environment by conducting debates and discussions and celebrating cultural events and festivals.

The RNCT is working with all English panel members to develop and share these teaching and learning opportunities which draw upon NETs' particular skills and experiences.

# Success with the Link Programme - a Pilot Scheme

By Marie McRae (NET)

Last year, we implemented the Link Programme (developed in conjunction with our Advisory Teacher) in the second term with our P1 class. This programme was developed to extend the PLP-R Scheme providing specially written units of work to link up with the Big Book that is currently being used during PLP-R lessons.

*"I was amazed and at the same time elated. Success!"*

The success of the Link Programme was very evident during a P2 PLP-R guided reading session with a small group using 'The Picnic' reader. When asked to describe the animals in the story, several students described them in detail using vocabulary and sentence patterns that they had used in their Link lessons. I was amazed and at the same time elated. Success!

Further success was noted in the first term final exams where they were asked to write at least four sentences about a picture. Several students performed well above expectations, writing 7-11 sentences, while many of the students wrote 5-6 sentences. The students were assessed on achievement objectives and learning outcomes which form part of their school report.

More programmes have been developed by the AT and the NET with cross-curricula links, e.g. Maths and Visual Arts. We are very pleased with these results after only two terms.

The students really enjoy the lessons and activities, and their overall English ability has improved, considering that we are a small school in Tsing Yi with quite a number of newly arrived students from the Mainland.

## PLP-R Programme: Climbing to the Next Stage

By Bonnie Ko (CuO)

The Primary Literacy Programme with its emphasis on Reading has been bringing positive changes to the way reading lessons are conducted in primary schools.

The programme is designed to be learner-centred with ample opportunities for students to develop language strategies, values and attitudes. All these are essential to secondary English education, especially at the junior secondary level.

Once students enter the secondary classrooms, they will find teachers using English in greater diversity and depth. Take the books and readers as an example. They are longer and demand more sophisticated skills to understand and absorb. With the use of different levels of questioning in the PLP-R Programme, higher-order thinking is encouraged.

Students think, ponder and consider when interacting with others. Practical skills are also part of the programme. Students learn to apply their phonics skills to decode words and extract meaning from pictures, words and context. PLP-R students will apply these skills and knowledge to their secondary school reading.



In the PLP-R Programme, students encounter a wide variety of reading materials. They are given opportunities to explore and experience different contexts and text types. This primary school experience will be conducive to students' reading *and* writing. Secondary students consider different angles and perspectives when writing. They are also expected to be creative and imaginative. Having been engaged in songs, chants, rhythmic pieces of work and other language arts components, students are in a better position to deal with different types of writing.

As this solid foundation is laid down, students will experience more success in English language learning in their secondary school years.

## 3 NETs Power a Creative Learning Network

By David Wu (RNC)

Three creative NETs, Rose Chue, Heidi Falconer and Karen Gaffney, who are working in an area where enriching the language-learning environment could be a challenge, collaborated on affording students with opportunities to practise English with fun. They organised an inter-school English Day at HHCKLA Buddhist Leung Chik Wai College in Tuen Mun.

About 120 students from three schools participated enthusiastically in a variety of language games. On the basketball court, they played a guessing game in which they earned points by making a basket after each correct guess. In the classrooms, students played another guessing game using plasticine. Some interviewed each other for answers that would match the prepared questions, and some tried to avoid losing play-money by finding alternative answers to yes/no questions. As a finale, all the students learned the steps for an Australian bush dance.

*Congratulations to the teachers on their successful collaboration!*



# Thrills + Passion = 7

By Andy Beaumont (NET)

The weekend of the 30<sup>th</sup> March saw the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Hong Kong Rugby Sevens Tournament.

By Friday night most die-hard fans had secured tickets one way or another, and were eagerly anticipating the weekend. The pick of the games on Friday was between the crowd favourite, England, and the home team, Hong Kong. Though England won easily, the biggest cheer of the night was reserved for Hong Kong's one and only try.

Sunday saw four teams remaining to contest the Cup final. The first semi-final saw Fiji topple New Zealand 21-12 in a thrilling match in which both sides showed their passion and flair. In the other semi, Samoa produced a tight defensive performance to overcome South Africa 10-0.

The final of this year's Sevens lived up to the expectations

generated by previous classics. Samoa stormed into a half time lead of 27-0 with Mikaele Pesamino scoring a hat-trick of tries. All seemed dead at the break but the Fijians mounted an astonishing second half comeback to get within one try of the Samoans. However, the deficit eventually proved too much and the Samoans hung on for a thrilling 27-22 victory.



It was a remarkable win for the South Sea Islanders; their first title since 1993. Rugby Sevens demands passion and endurance from players and spectators alike. The great Samoan victory has Hong Kong and international rugby fans eagerly anticipating Hong Kong Sevens 2008.

## SOUTH COAST TRACK SOJOURN: TASMANIA

by Timothy H. Thistle (NET)



EARTH in Tasmania is an ancient foundation, and bushwalking there is trekking on the floor of time. In early February, over the Chinese New Year Holiday, I explored the South Coast Track, in the remote wilderness of the World Heritage Area of Southwest Tasmania, Australia.

The Track itself is the only human impact on the land. Some sections have been firmed up by logs, but for most of its 83-km length, it is a 40-cm wide trail that presents the trekker with two vistas: the beach and the rainforest. The omnipresent feature of the latter is mud, often knee-deep.

The surrounding rainforest-covered mountains form a dense, impenetrable jungle. Words of warning from trekkers in Hobart came to me: if I got lost or injured, I could simply disappear; the Tasmanian devils are adept at eating every bit of food they can find, "bones, balls and boots".

AIR in the Southwest is intoxicating. It's been purified by winds blown 5000km across the great Southern Ocean. Night falls gently after extraordinary pastel sunsets, and the crystalline clarity of the air reveals the jeweled intensity of the constellations above.

FIRE is another of nature's terrible manifestations. Lightning impacting the forest sparked huge bushfires that were to burn for days.

WATER of the Southern Ocean, icy and frothing, is where those ashes fell. The Track crosses seven beaches. Having emerged from the rainforest, I stripped off my mud-spattered trekking clothes and boots and jumped into the freezing ocean. I looked up into the mountain ranges. I saw earth, air, fire and water intermingling - an elemental world surging with power, purity and perfection. I will carry these images with me forever.

## Creating Knowledge Together

by Michael Agopsowicz (AT)

*Professor David Hargreaves is Associate Director for Development and Research, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. In 2006 he visited Hong Kong and spoke of the nature and function of educational networks.*

Ultimately, the responsibility for implementing curriculum reform falls to classroom teachers. This is true in Hong Kong, and is demonstrated in the primary area by teachers including reading workshops in students' learning experiences. In secondary schools, teachers are coming to grips with the heightened place of Language Arts in the English curriculum.

When this responsibility is placed upon individual teachers the task can appear

daunting. Teachers respond to the challenge by collaborating and networking. Professor David Hargreaves refers to the 'created knowledge' generated when people collaborate.

He identifies three ways in which networks make changes in teaching practice manageable. They are:

- grafting it onto existing practice
- segmenting it into handle-able chunks
- sequencing change over a period.

Worldwide, teachers are carrying high workloads. The time and energy available to them for thinking about changing their practice is finite. Hargreaves uses the term 'leverage' to describe changes that have a high impact on students for a low-energy input from teachers.

This is where networks can share the load. In bringing together clusters of teachers, the NET Section fosters and nourishes teacher networks.