



Issue 8 Scheme

Keeping Stakeholders Informed

news

2007

Smoothing the Way for New NETs

Arriving in Hong Kong to take up a NET position in a primary school can be a daunting proposition. NETs in this situation have been calling out for something to smooth the pathway to integration into school life. The NET Section has devised a Support Programme for this purpose. Three workshops were held at regular intervals in the 2006-2007 school year. Topics covered included the nature of the Hong Kong teaching context, curriculum adaptation and Reading To Learn.

A total of 52 first-year NETs enrolled in the workshops. These teachers were from diverse backgrounds in terms of teaching and life experiences. The experienced team of Support Programme organisers faced the challenge of supporting the varying needs of this group. The Programme called for interactive and practical sessions with immediate school applicability. These supplementary sessions continue the collaborative and cooperative themes that characterise NET Section offerings. New NETs honed a framework to support the development of their teaching skills within the Hong Kong context.



Workshop participants:

- applied problem-solving processes to real life scenarios
- matched textbooks to readers to devise curricula that met schools' needs, and
- created activities on classroom readers which acknowledge learner diversity.

The NET participants encountered a wide variety of strategies. They completed each session with a collection of teaching strategies and ideas. They also shared their experiences and built up an informal supporting network. Feedback from participants was positive and it is anticipated that another round of workshops will be held in 2007/2008.

By Lyn Sobolesky (AT)

ONE NET'S SUPPORT REPORT

I am lucky that my school has a friendly and supportive school culture. They encouraged me to join this Support Programme.

'The Support Programme really expanded my knowledge of the school hierarchy, curriculum adaptation and catering for learner diversity in the classroom. I was also able to share the very practical ideas and teaching strategies I learned with the SET and LETs in my school. During the Programme I met other NETs in the same position and was able to share experiences and make new friends.

After each session, I went back to my school with new ideas that I wanted to try out in lessons. I would encourage others who are new to Hong Kong, new to the NET Scheme or with relatively little teaching experience to join the Programme. I am sure they will find it very helpful. I hope the NET Section continues the Programme!'

By Naomi Mulwa

Naomi Mulwa is a NET at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School. Naomi participated in the Support Programme in 2006/2007.

Official Terms in English & Chinese (& Acronyms)

Education Bureau EDB	教育局	Native-speaking English Teacher NET	以英語為母語的外籍英語教師 (外籍英語教師)
Curriculum Development Institute CDI	課程發展處		
NET Scheme for Primary Schools PNET Scheme	小學以英語為母語的英語教師計劃 (小學外籍英語教師計劃)	Literacy Coordinator (PLP-R)	識字計劃統籌員(小學識字計劃 - 閱讀)
Enhanced NET Scheme for Secondary Schools	以英語為母語的英語教師加強計劃 (中學外籍英語教師計劃)	English Panel Member (EPM)	英文科組員
Advisory Teaching Team ATT	教學諮詢小組	English Panel Chair EPC	英文科主任
Advisory Teacher AT	諮詢教師	School English Teacher SET	伙伴英語教師
Regional NET Coordinating Team RNCT	外籍英語教師區域統籌小組	Local English Teacher LET	本地英文科教師
Regional NET Coordinator RNC	外籍英語教師區域統籌員	Classroom Assistant CA	課堂助理
Primary Literacy Programme –Reading (Key Stage I) PLP-R (KSI)	小學識字計劃 - 閱讀 (第一階 段)	Teaching of English as a Second / Foreign Language(TESL/TEFL)	教授英語作為第二語言或外語

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Recipe for Success

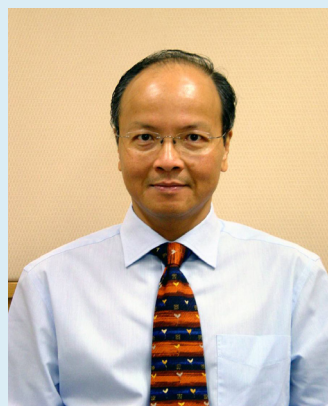
By Simon Tham (Chief Curriculum
Development Officer)

At the start of this new school year, the NET Section welcomes a new intake of recruits into our community. There are many professional and personal rewards to be reaped from living and teaching in Hong Kong. NETs who have completed contracts under the Scheme and have signed again for extended employment, typically mention certain aspects of a NET's life which give them satisfaction and enjoyment.

Hong Kong presents a rich and varied environment to enjoy. Despite the stereotype, it is not merely a city of dense crowds and sky-scrapers. Hiking trails are ubiquitous and well-maintained. There are beaches to enjoy and mountains to scale. The built-up environment has coffee houses and air-conditioned shopping as a foil to apartment life.

To the expatriate teacher, Hong Kong offers a wide range of cultural and culinary experiences. Buffets

at a five-star hotel or a bowl of noodles at a shared table in a local eatery both reflect eating Hong Kong style. There is a new calendar of festivals for the newcomer to enjoy and investigate. Each festival is an opportunity to get to know more about the host culture and



understand the significance of these occasions to colleagues and students.

NETs who work for multiple contracts develop a wide circle of friends. Initially, the members of the induction group form a support group. Later this circle will widen to include others from inside and outside the teaching fraternity.

Many NETs will find themselves invited to meals, weddings and other important occasions. These are experiences which NETs treasure and remember.

In terms of work-related issues, there is a maxim amongst NETs that 'every NET's experience is different'. Working in a cross-cultural environment can result in misunderstandings. Whatever the nature of the school, those incoming teachers who collaborate with the school to work towards agreed goals will find the experience rewarding. Potential problems can be averted by coming to understand the school culture and the processes operating there. Efforts made to provide students with positive learning experiences will always be recognised and appreciated.

NETs who enjoy their stay in Hong Kong seize its opportunities for entertainment in their leisure time, and feel they are part of a cohesive teaching team during working hours.

I wish you all the very best at the start of a new school year.

Deployment + Enjoyment = Curriculum Development

'I began teaching at my current school in October 2006 and currently teach 28 periods over a 6-day cycle. The school realised that introducing Language Arts in Secondary 1-3 would help the students get used to poetry, prose and drama and cope better with

Language Arts complements the teaching of English in the junior forms.

these text types when they moved into Secondary 4. Also, Language Arts complements the teaching of English in the junior forms.

I worked as a NET at Belilios Public School from 2002-2004 and used Language Arts quite extensively when I taught there. Some of the Language Arts strategies and ideas I used at Belilios are appropriate to the school I now work in, although they require a lot of modification because the medium of instruction in my new school is Chinese.

During Language Arts lessons, I have been able to co-teach alongside my Chinese colleagues and help them develop their professional expertise. I also have plenty of time for planning lessons and developing materials appropriate to my students. Luckily, I have been used as a resource person and am happy to be developing the curriculum to accommodate the recent education reforms'

By Pathma Moodley, NET

Pathma works at Shau Kei Wan East Government Secondary School, a CMI school on Hong Kong Island. She has been tasked with introducing Language Arts to the junior forms.

Animal Magic in the Gardens!

Take 46 excited students with worksheets, clipboards and packed lunches, 6 energetic teachers, one lively AT, one large bus, some good weather and you have the recipe for...a great visit to the Hong Kong Zoological Gardens!

Primary NET Simon Heppelthwaite's ecotourism background proved useful in planning the trip for Primary One students from Sha Tau Kok Central Primary School. The trip provided the students with a real life context in which they could practise their English. They also learnt more about animals.

Before the trip, the children participated in English activities devised by their teachers to ensure maximum benefit from their visit. These activities included substitution within existing sentence structures and miming games. Thus the students had the language to describe the actions of the animals. Maps with suggested routes and details about animals were produced for teachers.



During the visit, students had to observe five animals and complete a table which matched particular animals with their actions. Animals don't always co-operate, so students were taught how to identify the most active animals, which included monkeys (long tails), lemurs (big eyes) and apes (no tails).

Other activities included drawing and guided descriptions. Even the often reclusive orangutans and jaguar came out to see the children. A most enjoyable day was had by all!

By Jeffrey Chow, AT
Picture by IT technician Alex Wong

A Lesson for Mr Wardlaw

The English Panel at Tuen Mun Government Primary PM School recently received a visit from Mr Chris Wardlaw, Deputy Secretary for the HKSAR Education Bureau. The Panel, led by the school headmistress Ms Frances Chung, shared the successes of the school English programme in terms of the regular co-planning, innovative co-teaching and the promotion of English within the wider school environment.

Six student representatives, Benny Chan (6A), Betsy Poon (6A), Lilian Wong (5A), Aaron Tse (5A), Kitty Kwan (5A) and Michael Leung (4A), did a tremendous job of making Mr Wardlaw welcome and gave him a tour of the school. Many questions and ideas were exchanged during the tour! The guest also joined a storytelling lesson jointly taught by Ms Tracey Watson and Ms Edith Choi and participated in a P.4 co-planning meeting. Mr Wardlaw viewed broadcasts of the school English Channel, English Day, assemblies and drama via the school website and expressed his pleasure at the level of confidence and creativity shown by the students and teachers.



At the end of his visit, Mr Wardlaw shared his appreciation of the fine work done by the English Panel and the impact upon student learning. He added that it had been a 'real pleasure to spend time with very effective teachers and fine students!'

By Tracey Watson, NET

The Power and the Passion

Dermot Creagh is the NET at Thomas Cheung Primary School in Tai Wai and speaks about the ancient Japanese art of Daito-ryu Aikijujutsu.

‘A Japanese English teacher introduced me to Daito-ryu in the early 1990s when I was teaching in Japan. I had been interested in martial arts since I was a primary school student, so I guessed that this would be a great way to get to know the local teachers better, as well as getting a unique perspective on Japanese culture.

The art of Daito-ryu, passed down for generations in Japan, is primarily an empty-handed fighting system featuring a wide variety of throws, pins, controls and other self-defense techniques. It also serves as a challenging ‘path’ for personal growth, with benefits ranging from improved physicality to greater self-confidence.

I started teaching the art almost three years ago because I wanted to meet more Hong Kong people and now have six Chinese students from various backgrounds. My students include a policeman, a pastor, a Chinese University student

and three business people. Mastery of the art does not depend upon superior physical strength, nor does it involve punching or kicking. Everyone can take part. Why not think about trying Daito-ryu?’

Dermot’s ‘Daito-ryu’ group trains on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:00-9:00pm.

For more details, contact Douglas Tang at: www.hk_daito_ryu_aikijujutsu@yahoo.com.hk

By Dermot Creagh, PNET



Skating Practice Melts the Ice

Canadian culture slid into some Lock Tao Secondary School students’ schedules in May when the Canadian NET at this Tai Wai school, Mr Paul Dobson, decided to take some of his students to the ice-skating rink at Festival Walk for the English Club’s end-of-year activity. Many of the students had never skated before and were quite curious about how to go about it but others were ‘old hands’ and even took their own skates. Not surprisingly, the results were varied – some got the hang of it right away, gracefully gliding along on the ice, but there were those who slipped to the ground, looking for the safety that only the ledge could provide.

Before the big day, there was plenty of preparation. Serving student-teachers from both the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Institute of Education, under the NET’s ever-watchful eye, helped plan morning announcements, organised ‘How to Skate’ videos for the students to watch and practised dialogues. They also helped the NET supervise students whilst they were on the rink.

Such a trip is not only be the perfect way to brush up on your skating skills, but it is also a great way to improve your English skills!

By Paul Dobson, NET, Lock Tao Secondary School

‘Pink Ladies’ in Summer Splash-a-thon!



Over the past few years, I have taken up the traditional sport of dragon boat racing. It’s made a big splash in my life.

and exercises. ‘Keep snapping that arm! Punch forward! You’re not working hard enough! Reach! Dig deep!’ The commands shouted by our coach echo across the water and settle like mist around the boat.

During the weeks leading up to the dragon boat races, we have to train harder, run faster and give our all. However, I love training and the rush I got when our team won the Gold Cup was incredible!

Power. Precision. Passion. These are the 3 ‘Ps’ that my team is constantly striving to achieve. The other 3 ‘Ps’ are: Out Pink! Out Paddle! Out Party! For the Lamma Ladies (also known as the Pink Ladies because of our bright pink team shirts) team spirit and constant commitment are characteristics that drove us to win three gold cups in 2006.

After practice, the boats glide to shore and we limp away to soak up hot showers and soothe our aching muscles.

By Christina Pezos, PNET

All of this paddling, splashing and fun, however, demands a huge amount of time and serious commitment. A typical weekend sees me on the 8.30am ferry to Lamma Island for a buffet of drills



Christina and her fellow ‘Pink Ladies’ taking top place in Stanley in 2006