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Issue 9 Scheme

Keeping Stakeholders Informed

news
2008

Success Through Collaboration

The aim of the Primary NET Scheme to place a NET in every primary school in Hong Kong is approaching fruition. This makes the PNET Scheme a major plank in the EDB's commitment to the English Language standards of local students.



Such a large publicly-funded scheme warrants scrutiny and measurement. Its effectiveness needs to be demonstrated. Its impact on students' English standards and on their attitude to learning and using English needs to be considered. We also need to know whether the impact of the Scheme flows into improved proficiency in the use of English.

The 'Evaluation of the NET Scheme for Primary Schools in Hong Kong 2004 - 2006' was conducted by Melbourne University and the Hong Kong Institute of Education. The study sample included 140 schools, 665 Local and 100 Native-speaking English Teachers and 5,914 Key Stage 1 students.

To share the results of the study, the NET Section conducted the 'Growing with the Primary NET Scheme Conference 2007' in October. Speakers included Study Report author Prof. Patrick Griffin, Chris Wardlaw, Simon Tham and Ralph Barnes. They highlighted the participation of school principals and NET-LET collaboration as the keys to the Scheme's success. The speakers pointed to the role of NET Section Advisory Teachers in supporting school progress.

The PNET Scheme is enhancing the English teaching capacity of primary teachers. It is creating energised environments in which students learn through using and enjoying the English language.

By Ralph Barnes (Project Manager)

Improvements – easy as 1, 2, 3 ... 4

School practice can be improved in four main areas, according to Prof. Patrick Griffin of Melbourne University. Prof. Griffith undertook an extensive territory-wide evaluation of the Primary NET Scheme, the results of which were presented at the 'Growing with the Primary NET Scheme Conference 2007' in October. The four key areas for recommended improvements are:

1. curriculum;
2. learning and teaching practices;
3. ongoing assessment and reporting; and
4. infrastructure.

Firstly, it is recommended that the NET be used to support curriculum reform in school and that the infrastructure provided by the NET Section should be aimed at achieving this goal.

Secondly, skills development should be the focus of learning and teaching practices and assessment should focus on achieving proficiency and not on particular test scores.

Finally, the impact of infrastructure upon curriculum, assessment, and teaching and learning is substantial and can be bolstered by effective school policies and resource allocation.

The compelling evidence of the success of the PNET Scheme resulting from the evaluation has also provided the NET Section with clear signs of how to make further improvements. By applying the recommendations of the report to daily activities in schools these improvements can be realised.

By Joseph Wariner (AT)

Hong Kong school types and their funding

Finance Types 資助種類	Primary 小學	Secondary 中學	Levels 學校級別	Kindergarten 幼稚園	Primary 小學	Secondary 中學	Post-Secondary 專上教育
Government 官立	37	35	Sessions 授課時間	AM 上午	PM 下午	Whole Day 全日	Evening 夜校
Aided 資助	481	372	Gender 就讀學生 性別	Girls 女	Boys 男	Co-educational 男女	
Private Independent School Scheme 私立獨立學校計畫	6	6					
Caput* 按額補助	NA	6	English		Chinese		
Direct Subsidy Scheme 直接資助計畫	19	56	A Government Secondary School for Boys		官立中學(男校)		
English Schools Foundation 英童學校	10	6	An Aided Primary School (co-educational) (whole day)		資助小學(男女校)(全日)		
Private 私立	82 (non Private Independent School Scheme)	46 (non Private Independent School Scheme)	Direct Subsidy Secondary School for Girls		直接資助 中學(女校)		

* Caput - The government funding they receive is based on the number of students they take each year.

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Curriculum Development Principles

By Simon Tham (Chief Curriculum
Development Officer)



In English Language Education, as in other Key Learning Areas, schools develop curricula to suit the learning needs of their students and the pedagogic styles of their

teachers. As curriculum leaders, school principals monitor the implementation of these teaching programmes and review the learning outcomes attained by students.

In October, the NET Section invited school principals and other English teachers to

attend a sharing session entitled 'Growing with the Primary NET Scheme Conference 2007'. They heard how the PNET Scheme is contributing to English learning and teaching in primary schools. Results of the territory-wide evaluation explicitly link the active involvement of principals with the success of programmes to improve English language acquisition in schools.

Since the inception of the Advisory Teaching Team, we have advocated the benefits of collaborative planning. Where NETs are involved, this extends to co-teaching. Principals are an integral part of this collaboration. Whether or not they are present at sessions where teaching strategies and student activities are planned, their support and involvement is vital. By supporting timetabling arrangements which enable co-planning, principals facilitate effective curriculum development.

Principals also contribute by ensuring that teachers have access to professional development opportunities. The impact of these teacher seminars and workshops

is amplified in school-based sessions where participants share and promulgate innovative strategies. More broadly, releasing teachers to take up advisory positions on secondment builds capacity on a territory-wide basis.

In the 2006-2007 school year, the NET Section conducted workshops for principals on maximising the impact of the PNET Scheme in their school. Principals who attended commented upon their applicability. They also appreciated the opportunity to work with fellow principals to reinforce networks. These sessions will be continued in the current school year and I cordially invite all primary school principals to attend.

The Principals' active involvement in the NET Scheme is a key to students' success.

English Week Helps Students Speak

Collaboration between St Anthony's Primary School and South Island School (SIS) resulted in a successful English Week at St Anthony's in Pok Fu Lam from 12th – 16th November.

St Anthony's NET Ms Chrissy Kostakis and Ms Chris Keating from South Island School arranged for 29 students from SIS to assist with activities including basketball, cooking, game booths, a writing workshop, a speech festival and a singing contest.

Collaborative activities inspire kids

The SIS students, from Forms 8, 9 and 10, took a leading role in planning the week, designing the story-telling session for P1 and P2, cookery sessions for P3 and P4, playing basketball at recess and lunchtime and explaining all the activities. This provided the SIS students with valuable insights into the considerations to be made when preparing activities for differing ability levels. Although, when asked if this had inspired any of them to consider a teaching career the answer was a resounding 'No!'.



Staff involved were full of praise for all the students; Ms Keating saying how hard the students had worked to help each other, and what a positive experience it had been for everyone. Ms Kostakis appreciated the opportunity for social interaction that it had given the St Anthony's students.

It is thought that this was the first time that this type of collaborative English Week has taken place in Hong Kong but, judging from its resounding success, we should hope it isn't the last.

By Joseph Wariner (AT)

The 'Write' Time for Creativity!



On 26 November 2007 Sherryl Clark spent a day at our school. Sherryl is a practising and published writer and a lecturer in Creative Writing at Victoria University TAFE (Technical and Further Education – Melbourne, Australia).

At our school she spoke to all students during assembly and later to smaller groups of S1 and S3 students.

Students asked questions at the assembly which showed a high level of interest in what Sherryl had to say. Sherryl also spoke about a writer's life and how her work is inspired. This encouraged us to have a new interest in our everyday life

and what we see around us. Sherryl also had some great handouts to help students write. These handouts gave a simple process with a concrete formula to help with plot and character development. For plot, she gave us the idea of three main and challenging obstacles for our main character to overcome. If these obstacles are not difficult or challenging enough the story will be boring.

We will be able to incorporate her ideas into our study of novels and writing next term and we certainly have many new ideas to reinforce and remind students about their writing. These ideas will also feed very nicely into the work of developing our new senior secondary curriculum.

For more information on Sherryl and what she does please go to:

www.sherrylclark.com

By Ellen Fulton, (NET)
St Catharine's School for Girls
Kwun Tong

English Teachers' study tour in Australia

Hong Kong teachers brought back golden memories from their summer study tour in Australia. Seventeen teachers and the principal, Mr Mak, from PLK Leung Chow Shun Kam PS (AM) school spent a week working and having fun in Melbourne and the gold rush town of Castlemaine in country Victoria last summer holidays.

Spacious, colourful, stimulating classrooms, rich with student work and visual language; small, variously grouped classes; flexible student seating and movement; high priority for student interest, involvement, initiative, independence, interaction, sharing, attention and self discipline; low priority for text book learning, preparation for examinations, homework and teacher correction of written work – these were some of the observations during the study tour of four Australian schools.



We thoroughly enjoyed looking, listening, taking notes, sharing responses and interacting with teachers, children, homestay families and community members. We even took one or two photos – of us, of locals, of us and locals, of schools and student activities, of Australian settings and wildlife and, of course, of us gold panning at Forest Creek Mine.

Continued friendship with the Australian schools, including a student exchange programme, is also on the golden horizon.

By Michelle Wu (English Panel Chair) and Peter Nunan (NET)
PLK Leung Chow Shun Kam PS (AM), Tuen Mun

PS Like to see some more pictures? Have a look at this website:
<http://www.plkleskam.edu.hk/AustralianSchoolVisits/AustralianSchoolVisit.htm>

Family Ties to the PNET Scheme



Hong Kong is like my second home. My brother and sister also live and work here and we are all teaching in primary schools within minutes of each other in Kowloon.

about her school and adventures in Asia. I thought that teaching in Hong Kong would allow me to explore a different culture as well as being an 'agent of change' in a school. Two years later, I was the one calling my brother, Troy, encouraging him to do the same thing.

Life in Hong Kong has been a delightful adventure. There is always something new to see and do. Most importantly, teaching my students and seeing their smiling faces in my lessons makes me happy. I made the right choice!

We often exchange teaching ideas and e-mail resources. Our father was a wonderful role model for us, having taught for 34 years. My sister, Michelle, has been teaching in Hong Kong for the past four years. She is the one who encouraged me to join the PNET Scheme. Every week she would call home with interesting stories

By Nadine DeCoff, (PNET)
St Rose of Lima's School

Language Arts: a Dramatic Difference

'Drama for Hong Kong Schools' was one workshop where no one could nod off. Participants were chasing each other as cat and mouse, lying on the floor and building shapes with their bodies in the three-hour workshop run by Mr William (Bill) Henderson of St Francis of Assisi's College in Fanling.

The workshop was organised by the Regional NET Coordinating Team (RNCT), NET Section, as part of its ongoing centralised professional development programme. St Francis of Assisi's College was the perfect location for the workshop with its two large drama rooms. Aside from participating themselves, the 29 secondary teachers who attended were able to watch a performance by a group of S4 students who had won an award at the Hong Kong

Speech Festival in the rehearsed original scene (group devised) section.

Bill Henderson is an experienced drama teacher, having taught drama for 12 years in Australia and having examined drama for the Australian equivalent of the A levels for five years. Since coming to Hong Kong in 1998, Bill has also undertaken a Masters in Drama in Education through Griffith University in Australia. His enlightened principal, Mr Choy Ko Leung, supported Bill's study by allowing him time to complete his residency for the course in Australia.

To make the most of Bill's recent study and drama expertise, his school has embraced Language Arts. Bill teaches students simple drama exercises as well as how to



write scripts and create short plays. By the time they have completed S3, all students have had exposure to drama in English.

With the New Senior Secondary syllabus, this is a chance for other schools to involve their NET in teaching Language Arts and use them as a valuable resource person.

By Gina Green (RNC)

Art Attack

"The juxtaposition of post-modern expressionism and Daliesque surrealism serves to highlight interpretations of the new service model. This collection firmly cements the NET Section as the cultural hub of Hong Kong."

Ralph Barnes: acting curator of the ATT Museum of Fine Arts

"I think you've hung them upside down."

Chris Wardlaw: art critic and marathon runner

Just two of the many responses to the collection of 12 canvasses on display at the NET Section office in Tsuen Wan.

What is it that has so excited the art world?

A new service model, new ATs, new teams and a new school year . . . time for some team building and bonding. And what better way than through art!

The experts from Chameleon Workshop were called in; carpets



covered, paint provided and blank canvasses awaited our creativity.

After a brief brainstorming session, when teams were asked to write down their ideas of team qualities and objectives, the real fun began. Each team had to use a variety of techniques and paints to represent their ideas. Collaboration was essential as the disparate views had to coalesce into a unified whole. Initial ideas were painted over and other ideas added as virgin canvas metamorphosed into visual representations of each team's unique viewpoint.

The 'artists' then explained the significance of their work and answered probing questions such as "What's that blue thing?" "Why is there a banana on the sun?" and "Can we open the wine now?"

The exhibition is now open.

"They make 'The Mona Lisa' look like a painting of a woman smiling."

Peregrine St John Boffington: art historian Sotheby's London