



Issue 10 Scheme news

Keeping Stakeholders Informed

2008



The Principles of Curriculum Leadership

On Friday the 18th of April, 33 primary school principals gathered at the NET Section in Tsuen Wan. They considered the leadership role they play in developing the English curriculum in their schools and how the NET Section contributed to the task of refining curriculum and learning and teaching strategies.

Dr Evelyn Man, from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, gave a presentation titled Enhancing the Quality of the Learning and Teaching of English. Her presentation focused on reviewing highlights of the English language curriculum and understanding how principals support English curriculum development. She also spoke about incorporating NET Section advisors and NETs into the School English Plan.

The second session saw the NET Section seminar room transformed into a theatre. NET Section officers Bonnie Ko, Tanya Kempston and Alice Wong scripted and performed a three-act drama. Various scenarios involving collaboration between NETs and local teachers were enacted. Issues of cultural awareness and professional expectations were woven into familiar school settings.



This presentation inspired a discussion of NET deployment and cultural understanding. Principals then shared effective strategies and approaches from their own schools.

The workshop concluded with a presentation from Ms Lau Wai Ming, Principal of CCC Kei Wan Primary School, Aldrich Bay. She spoke of the changes effected at the school since the implementation of the Primary NET Scheme. Attendees indicated that they found the session informative. A further session will be conducted on the 16th of May.

By Peter Broe APM

Focus on ADD/ADHD

ADD/ADHD is a debilitating, little recognised and widespread condition that is surrounded by confusion and debate in the professional community, according to a leading authority on ADHD, Dr Lynn Weiss. It can create chaos in the lives of sufferers and those close to them and is characterised by serious and persistent difficulties in three specific areas: attention span, impulse control and hyperactivity (sometimes).

Some of the symptoms are common to us all, but the occasionally distracted person is not ADD/ADHD. When a child shows behaviours associated with ADD/ADHD, consequences may include difficulties with academics and with forming relationships with peers; therefore, appropriate instructional strategies and interventions should be implemented. These include medical studies, a neurological exam, psychological evaluation, educational testing and behaviour rating scales.

This is not something children outgrow. The symptoms of the disorder may change as a child ages, but the disorder is usually carried into adulthood. As teachers, we need to help the distracted student because good students are better at focusing their attention, using encoding strategies, using organisational strategies and monitoring their study strategies.

By AndreaMacKenzie RNC

Some P1 Teaching Reading Strategies Explained for Parents

家長專欄：介紹小一閱讀教學

<p>『常見字彙』</p> <p>『常見字彙』在英文語法裏是最常用的字，如能熟讀這些字彙，必能幫助學生流利地閱讀，而這亦是學習閱讀的重要策略。故此我們鼓勵學生在家中經常練習這些字彙以期達到以上目標。</p>	<p>『歌曲與詩歌』</p> <p>歌曲和詩歌內有簡易的生字和大量的『常見字彙』，如能熟讀這些歌曲和詩歌，必能幫助學生流利地閱讀，也能使他們明白歌曲和詩歌的內容和意義，而這亦是學習閱讀的重要策略。故此我們鼓勵學生在家中要經常練習和唱詠這些歌曲和詩歌以期達到以上目標。</p>	<p>『動作字母』</p> <p>『動作字母』能幫助學生學習每個字母的聲音，當學生能掌握所有字母的聲音，他們便能閱讀更多的字，這亦是學習的重要策略。</p>
<p>Sight Words</p> <p>Sight words are the most commonly used words in the English language. Learning to recognise these words instantly will help children to read fluently. This is an important strategy when learning to read. We encourage students to practise these words at home.</p>	<p>Songs and Poems</p> <p>Songs and poems with easy vocabulary and many sight words help students to read fluently and for meaning. This is important when learning to read. We encourage students to read and enjoy songs and poems.</p>	<p>Action Alphabet</p> <p>The action alphabet helps children to learn the sounds of letters. When students learn the sounds of letters they can read more words. This is an important strategy when learning to read.</p>

By Ann Hanlon NET
SKH St Clement's Primary School

PLP-R Caters to Learner Diversity

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By Simon Tham (Chief Curriculum Development Officer)



Changes in the curriculum mean that all Hong Kong students will soon be provided with six years of secondary education. One implication of this is

that students will need to enter secondary school with sufficient literacy skills, in both Chinese and English, to cope with the curriculum.

This development places even more importance on all students becoming literate in primary school. Under one curriculum framework we provide for the needs of students with a very wide range of learning styles and abilities. The Primary Literacy Programme – Reading (PLP-R) caters for different learning styles. PLP-R teaching and learning strategies are multi-sensory in nature. Students interact with

the text using a variety of senses: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic.

Big Books enable visual learners to see the text while engaging emotionally and intellectually with the story. The students are also attracted by, and learn through, the use of illustrations in the Big Books. Students with an auditory learning style are caught up in the reading.

To help kinaesthetic learners there may be a special English room set up. This then involves students in movement through relocation. Within the room, kinaesthetic learners are stimulated by movement between activities and by taking an active role, e.g. by taking on the role of one of the characters or by standing to chant a refrain or a repeated line. Such tactile activities as using play dough also help these learners.

In guided reading, students work in ability groups. Levelled texts and activities ensure there is challenge without frustration – they are

working at their own instructional reading level. Throughout, teachers use questioning techniques that maintain engagement. Different types of questions draw in and challenge students with diverse learning abilities.

PLP-R encourages students to read ability-appropriate books at home with the involvement and encouragement of parents. Guided selection of materials and a conducive environment support the enjoyment of reading.

By understanding the diversity of learning styles and ability we build literacy in all our students.

Levelling and activities ensure there is challenge without frustration.



SKH Yat Sau Primary School and Integrated Education

Our school began its Integrated Education (IE) Programme in 1999 and the programme has continued to evolve and diversify in the ways it supports students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Students with SEN fall into three groups. There are those who have needs in social skills development, academic areas and speech/language therapy. We also provide academic and assessment services for students.

Support for parents has continued to grow in spite of difficulties in resolving issues such as ways to enhance learning and motivation. We have regular parent sharing sessions and have more recently had increased collaborative support from external professionals.

We are glad to see that the inclusive atmosphere among students, teachers and parents in our school has become well established. As teachers we understand that we need to support each other in handling students, supporting parents and developing better ways to handle and teach students with SEN.

We will continue to think of different ways to help our students with SEN in all aspects of their learning. We are looking at Occupational Therapy and Sensory Integration programmes, and to that end we are raising money to establish a Sensory Integration room in our school for the benefit of our students.

By Cheung Yuen Yin Anthea
SKH Yat Sau Primary School

The Past Comes Alive

NETs and students were amazed at the sight of a 1970s record player on a recent visit to the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. The NETs were amazed because they realised their students had never seen a record player with LPs, and the students were amazed because they did not know such things had ever existed.



At a Shatin cluster meeting, organised by the Regional NET Coordinating Team, the idea of a joint school activity was discussed. Mr Paul Dobson, the NET from Lock Tao Secondary School, and Mr Bruce Reid, the NET from Caritas Shatin Marden Foundation Secondary School, later took a combined group of students to the museum in Tai Wai. The students enjoyed the exhibition, 'Riding a Melodic Tide: The Development of Cantopop in Hong Kong' and the chance to talk to the NETs.

Other joint activities among Shatin schools include the S7 oral practice sessions held every year between eight schools in the area.

By Gina Green RNC

Feet together, toes apart... That is how you have to start!

Irish ceili dancing is a great way to exercise and have fun, and for P5 and 6 students at KCBC Hay Nien (Yan Ping) Primary School, it was an opportunity to practise English in a new context.

In December 2007, ten students attended a workshop in which they learned a traditional dance, the Haymaker's Jig. The children engaged with instructional English, as they were required to follow instructions in action - this led to a little chaos and a lot of laughter.



The session started with locating Ireland on the world map and looking at pictures of traditional Irish dancing costumes. We then listened to Irish music and clapped along to the rhythm. Soon the children could clap in counts of eight, and it was time to learn the movements of the dance.

Following the simple introduction, the children were quickly advancing, retiring, swinging and clapping, amid some spirited debates over whether to use left or right hands! The children managed to dance the jig several times, to the enjoyment and exhaustion of their teacher.

Dancing sessions such as these allow children to experiment with language and to feel successful in a non-academic context. Known vocabulary is consolidated in an authentic situation and new words are introduced and reinforced through physical and musical association and repetition. Children can practise the kinesthetic, spatial, musical and interpersonal skills incorporated in this type of dancing - and a good time is had by all!

Comhghairdeas! (Well done!)

By Labhaoisa Upton AT

Maybe you're already doing it



In any sense of the word, Hong Kong classrooms contain a diverse range of students, in particular in the ability to learn. For those involved in teaching English, this may include students who, for a number of reasons, are unable or unwilling to comprehend, speak, read and/or write more than a few isolated words. Such students represent a challenge to traditional ways of teaching.

Many of the “special” practices that support students struggling with learning English can be summed up as best practice. To put it another way, a study in Hong Kong of integrated education found that when teachers adopted methods and strategies that are seen

as “special” to support students with learning problems in the regular classroom, not only did their English improve, but so did the English of the rest of the class.

So what are these methods and strategies? A major strategy is the adoption by the school of a “Whole School Approach” in which all staff as a team know how and why students are being supported within an established ethos of acceptance and trust in classrooms. Cooperative group work, peer tutoring and a more communicative approach, i.e. more listening and talking with students, are commonly used.

More direct strategies such as seating students with difficulties near the teacher and gaining their attention prior to being addressed are used and students receive as much individual attention as possible. However, the teacher is mobile and aware of activity in the classroom. A multi-sensory approach of doing, seeing and hearing has been incorporated, together with positive reinforcement to increase learning and appropriate behaviour, into classroom practice. Learning is “scaffolded” for students and material which is authentic and personal has been broken down into small, manageable steps.

Do you already have many of these strategies and methods in your school and teaching armoury? If you do, not only are you helping struggling students, but your regular students are benefiting as well.

By Chris Dowson AT

Mastering the Art of Further Study

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”, or so the old adage would have us believe. However, for many mid-career teachers a further qualification, whilst requiring some sacrifices, can be a prospect-enhancing and personally fulfilling experience. With the wide range of courses available it is often difficult to know which one to select: MA or MEd, a local university or maybe distance learning? A significant number of NETs have undertaken higher degrees whilst working in Hong Kong, so what has the experience been like for them?

Clela King, a Primary NET from Hong Kong Student Aid Society Primary School in Tin Shui Wai, is in her final year of an MEd (TESOL) programme with the University of Tasmania and has found the course challenging but rewarding. Clela says that completing the course has required self-discipline but that being able to put her professional experiences towards a recognised qualification has been a worthwhile process. As Clela says: “Hong Kong is an academic environment, and with many of my colleagues studying it wasn’t difficult to find support when my motivation was low”.

Of course, with a wide variety of attendance modes now available, it is possible to complete Masters degrees

from a much wider variety of institutions in a far greater number of countries than just a few years ago. So before making the decision, it is worth doing your research online as to staff specialisms, costs, time, qualifications etc. in order to make your ambitions of holding a higher degree a reality.



By Joseph Wariner AT