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Keeping Stakeholders Informed

NETScheme_{news}

Partners in English Language Teaching



The NET Section recently hosted other English language teaching support sections of the Education Bureau at a joint colloquium entitled 'Language Boundary Brokers: Breaking the Boundaries in Language Learning and Teaching'.

Presentations were made on:

- varieties of English and how these impact on Hong Kong students;
- how communities of practice develop innovative teaching strategies;
- recent findings on formative assessment in Hong Kong; and
- the incorporation of formative assessment into everyday class activities.

One interesting issue raised was catering for English users at three levels. There is the inner circle of mother tongue native speakers, the outer circle comprising English learners in ESL environments and the expanding circle of EFL learners in EFL environments – a huge and growing group estimated to be between 500 million and one billion.

Findings on formative assessment in Hong Kong were related to overall learning and teaching performance. These results pointed to some reasons for improved effectiveness such as the implementation of the Primary Literacy Programme - Reading at Key Stage 1, and catering for learner diversity through formative assessment. Attendees heard that incorporating formative assessment highlights the importance of co-planning and co-teaching. As schools move toward school-based modes of assessment, the use of student portfolios and profiling is emphasised.

By Chris Dowson, AT

Assessment for what? Evaluation for whom?

Formative assessment, or ongoing classroom assessment, leads to the most improvements in teaching and individual student learning. Formative assessment means that students instantly learn how they are progressing toward stated learning objectives and expectations, and teachers know whether their techniques and strategies are facilitating effective learning. Teachers and students get this feedback on a regular and continuous basis.

In English language classrooms, students' listening, speaking, reading and writing can be formatively assessed in a number of ways by teacher, class, peer and/or self-evaluation. Through these interactions with teachers, peers and through self-evaluations, students can get a realistic picture of where they are in the learning process, and teachers can adjust their teaching to ensure more satisfactory learning outcomes.

Examples of formative assessment are:

Listening

Attending,
verbal summarising,
self-evaluation

Speaking

Group
discussion, presentations,
checklists

Reading

Running
Records, reading logs,
literature reviews

Writing

Conferencing,
portfolios, analysis

Pursuing Effective Practices at Home

There are many ways that children can build up knowledge about the world around them. One of these ways is by producing their own dictionary.	建立子女對世界事物的了解，可以從不同途徑著手。其中一個方法是子女們做一本隨身攜帶的字典。
How: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children choose words/phrases/expressions that they are interested in and write them on a note pad. 	方法: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 根據興趣，子女選擇他們有興趣的事物，然後在拍子簿內加以描述。
Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to do as there are different ways to represent the meanings of words/phrases/expressions, such as the use of symbols, signs and pictures. Flexibility, as it means easy reference anytime, anywhere. Parents learn the interest areas of their children. Children work at their own pace and do so according to their ability and interest. Children build up a sense of achievement. Over time, children develop a bank of useful and meaningful words/phrases/expressions. 	此活動的好處: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 子女可運用符號或圖畫記錄人、事、物或感想。 靈活及富彈性，子女可以隨時隨地進行描述。 父母可藉此了解子女的興趣所在。 各人可就自己的興趣及能力進行調適。 子女可建立成功感。 久而久之，子女將可擁有一套屬於自己的「字庫」。

NET Scheme Contributes to Whole-school Language Policies



As teachers and parents, we expect that Hong Kong students develop the skills needed to engage and prosper in today's globalised environment. These include the language skills that enable graduating students to engage with people from other countries both in business and social situations. In Hong Kong this involves students becoming trilingual and biliterate. While considering the implications for developing students' English language proficiency, we must also consider the roles of Cantonese and Putonghua both as areas of study and as media for acquiring subject content.

In the 2009/10 school year, schools will have an increased percentage of total lesson time that can be allocated to English-medium extended learning activities (ELAs). This will involve schools developing a 'whole-school' language policy which puts student needs at the centre of curriculum

planning. Language panels in schools are considering their role in this developmental work. In addition, all departments/teachers are looking at the language demands of their respective subject content.

A major part of any whole-school language policy will be the fostering of a language-rich environment in the school. This is an area in which the

Activities with NETs are times when language happens for a real purpose . . . where students use language to express their joys and their frustrations.

NET Scheme can make a significant contribution. Specifically, NETs enable students to be experimental in their use of English in the chatting and sharing that occurs outside class. Activities and events involving NETs such as drama and poetry festivals and competitions are valuable language learning opportunities.

More important than the outcomes of these events are the processes

of language acquisition that occur while students are preparing entries or rehearsing performances. At these times real language happens for a real purpose. This is also where students use language to express their joys and their frustrations.

As schools move towards establishing working groups to consider language policies, they will have to consider the current position of students in relation to language learning. They will also audit the language expertise that is available in the teaching team and the attitudes of stakeholders (students, parents and teachers) towards learning additional languages.

The experience of NETs and the support programmes and learning materials that are available through the NET Section contribute significantly to an effective whole-school language policy. In the NET Section we advocate collaboration and for all teachers to sign into communities of learning to bring about improvement.

By Simon Tham
Chief Curriculum Development Officer

Drama Boosts Language Learning



Drama offers a wonderful way to learn English and to promote creativity in students. At Bishop Ford Memorial School, Miss Wong Ching Ha and I work together, creating dramas and using drama strategies. Beginning with extracurricular activities we are now producing more challenging plays such as ‘The Wizard of Oz’ and ‘Aladdin’. Students from Primary 3 to 6 have all improved immensely both in drama skills and use of English.

I do the direction, and the production is handled by Miss Wong. It is a partnership that has worked very well and the strong friendship between us has helped in the success of every drama created.

This year’s show, ‘Noah’s Ark’, is our most ambitious and includes music and sound effects. Besides performing at the HK Drama Festival, the students will also perform at the P6 Graduation Ceremony and for the entire school in

July. The skills gained from Drama are more important than any awards won, and the students show their excitement in every show. This is the biggest ‘award’ the teachers at BFMS could wish for.

By Michelle DeCoff, NET
Bishop Ford Memorial School

The 3 Cs

The cornerstones of Shanghai Alumni Primary School’s culture

Shanghai Alumni Primary School has implemented theme-based learning for six years now. This year’s theme ‘Love of Nature’ aims to encourage students to adopt a positive attitude towards the natural world. The year began with a ‘Green Slogan Competition’, and winning designs were printed on T-shirts and worn at later events.

Every year the school dedicates a whole week’s English lessons to theme-based learning. This year the focus was studying creatures and their place on Earth and enabling students to be environmentally responsible. Students created 3D environmental placards representing their values.

The ‘English Funfair’ was the highlight of the year. It was a whole-day event of enjoyable experiences in the use of English through extracurricular activities. The ‘Variety Show’, hosted by students, included a Recycled Fashion Parade. Upper Primary students designed outfits of recycled materials that were modelled by Lower Primary students.

Miss Kathleen Wong, the English Panel Chair, said, “a culture of consistency, creativity and commitment has enabled our school to raise standards year after year”.

By Linda Russell, NET
Shanghai Alumni Primary School



Experience, Enjoy and Write!



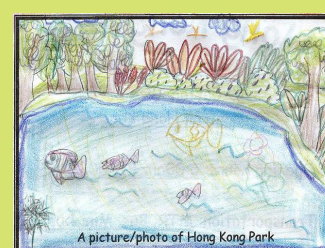
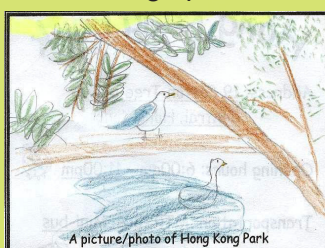
“We are at the aviary! There are many beautiful birds! Wow! There are some very big birds above us!”

Samuel, Lok Him Ng (Student)

Some P4 students from Tuen Mun Government Primary School are in training for a bright future in tourist marketing! They came, they saw . . . they wrote!

NET Tracey Watson and P4 teachers gave their students an opportunity to link their textbook to the real world by exploring the delights of Hong Kong Park as an interesting place in Hong Kong. The students soon added to their repertoire of adjectives as they found the park not merely interesting, but also exciting and amazing with colourful flowers, wonderful views and beautiful birds.

As a follow-up to this shared experience, they relived the excitement by writing pamphlets about the park to encourage other children to visit. Their charming artwork and enthusiastic endorsement of the park should have the Hong Kong Tourism Board sitting up and taking notice!



By Tracey Watson, NET
Tuen Mun Government Primary School

'There's No Business

A friend recently invited me to take part in a local stage production of 'A Man For All Seasons'. Mmm . . . good professional development I thought, so I accepted. Robert Bolt's original drama had been translated and adapted by the famous Hong Kong director and playwright Hardy Tsoi Sik Cheong. His version was in Cantonese of course, so it was lucky I had the non-speaking part of 'Guitar Player'.

The rehearsals were gruelling, six weeks of seven evenings a week until very late, and all day Saturday and Sunday. My 'friend' forgot to mention that! The whole cast and crew were incredibly professional and talented, and it was a real privilege to work with them.

After five sold-out shows at City Hall to very appreciative audiences, it was a great buzz walking on to the stage to take that final bow. Sadly, and co-incidentally, actor Paul Schofield, famous for his role as Sir Thomas Moore in the 1966 film version, died in England aged 86, just before production began.

By James Vickers, AT

Like Show Business . . .'



NETs Return to Hong Kong



Jan Hall –

"I love to see the local teachers take an idea and run with it."

Working at a primary school in Hong Kong is a great change and source of pleasure for Primary NET Jan Hall, who now works at Yuk Yin School in Sheung Shui.

Jan started as a PNET in 2002, the first year of the PNET Scheme, and despite having to return to Australia after one contract in 2004-2005 to help out her sick mother, she was determined to return. "I like the challenge of teaching in Hong Kong and the kids are just great," Jan says. "I love to see the local teachers take on an idea and run with it – the exuberance and excitement they have – and I love having the skills to help them to do that."

"There is always something new and enjoyable to do here, for example, recently we incorporated using the story book approach into P1 and I was really excited about that," Jan said.

Outside work Jan also feels quite at home in Hong Kong. Her enthusiasm for teaching is only paralleled by her enthusiasm for bonsai growing and what better place to do that than in her house in a quiet village outside Tai Po.

"I hope I can find a bonsai club in Hong Kong – if anyone knows one – please tell them to let me know," she said.



Nick White –

"Hong Kong really is the 'city of life'."

Nick White has had a long connection with Hong Kong having met his Hong Kong Chinese wife in 1981 at university in the UK.

"Hong Kong is incredibly familiar to me – it's weird – the places are so different but I feel completely at home in both the UK and Hong Kong," Nick said at a recent NET cluster meeting.

"Coming back from the UK you soon get used to the frenetic pace of life, the heat and humidity – I like that vital energy in Hong Kong. It really is the 'city of life'," Nick said.

Nick taught as a local NET in a secondary school in Hong Kong from 1995 to 1998, but after returning to Hong Kong in 2008, he has been working at SKH Chan Young Secondary School in Sheung Shui on the Enhanced NET Scheme.

"I think it helps to know the culture; I feel I have already been welcomed at the school this year and have formed friendships," Nick said.

THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

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