

Healthier & Happier Living



Christmas at Phnom Penh

One of the benefits of living and working in Hong Kong is its proximity to the rest of the world. Coming originally from Australia, so geographically isolated, I find it great that at holiday times it takes next to no time to travel to many interesting places. So during the Christmas holidays my husband and I traveled to Cambodia and met up with our daughter and my sister. After a short flight of two and half hours we landed in the capital, Phnom Penh, for a relatively cheap and relaxing holiday.

We enjoyed visiting the Royal Palace, the National Museum and haggling at the Central and Russian Markets, but the highlight of our trip was taking a cooking course. On Christmas day at 8 am we met at the restaurant where the 'Cambodian Cooking Class' is based. We were taken by tuk tuk to a local market which was similar to the wet markets of Hong Kong, but nowhere near as clean. Then we went back to a small residence and climbed three flights of narrow steep stairs to a roof top. This was covered over with a roof but no walls, and was set up with many working benches and little gas stoves. There were around a dozen of us in the group, mainly from the US and Australia, with a few teachers probably as it was school holidays in most western countries. We made spring rolls from scratch with a dipping sauce to accompany them. Then we pounded up different ingredients to make a curry paste for the local dish of fish amok. With circles of banana leaf we fashioned a cup held together with toothpicks. Into this cup we put the fish and the curry paste mixed with coconut milk and then placed it into a bamboo steamer. While the fish amok was cooking we got a bottle of champagne from the shop down the road and enjoyed this with the freshly cooked spring rolls. Our fish amok was served with rice and it tasted sensational. It was really nice to just sit and relax, eating and drinking and at no time were we pressured to leave. One of the most relaxing and fun Christmas lunches I have ever had and no washing up afterwards.

by **Glenda Bradley** (NET),
Sir Kadoorie Primary School



From HK to Inner Mongolia

Last Easter we were asked to go to Inner Mongolia to work with local teachers on ways of engaging students with English. We had the most extraordinary time culturally and professionally. We had three days where we delivered workshops for the local teachers, and given the very difficult conditions they had for teaching English (e.g. inaccessibility to YouTube or authentic examples of the spoken language due to Wu Dan's remoteness), they were enthusiastic and energetic and we did feel they gained something from these...maybe not as much as us though!!!

What we noticed on arrival was the desolate monochromatic landscape... all shades of brown... and being winter even the trees joined the same colour scheme. The contrasts were the same as all through China – donkey cart and laden bicycle beside black saloons and SUVs, but not as many of course.

We were wined and dined (actually beered and meated) heartily 3 times a day, and after their initial shock that we didn't eat meat, the veggie food was overwhelming and very tasty! Being vegetarians we didn't compete on the meat side of things but certainly stood our ground with the drinking, dancing and singing! We sang a Putonghua love song, learnt a Mongolian song and sang Waltzing Matilda (of course). Performing 'The Wild Colonial Boy' to a room of native Mongolians in traditional dress who were clapping along as happily 'under the influence' as ourselves, while we did a little bush polka was quite a fun way to spend a Saturday night!

With an open mind and a sense of fun and respect, we have developed strong and lasting connections with this country.

by **Wayne Furlong** (NET), Buddhist Hui Yuan Collage
and **Penelope Adams** (AT)



Go surf; Go search

Wonder if all our NETs know there is a street named 'Boundary Street' in Hong Kong. Do go surf, and search too for 'Ladies' Street', 'Goldfish Street' and 'Bird Street'. You might try Cat Street too if you are not a bird or goldfish fancier. Happy hunting.

by **Daniel Hannah** (AT)

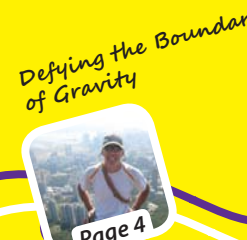
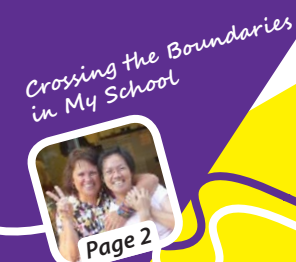
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NET Scheme

"Keeping Stakeholders Informed"



NET Section celebrating the commissioning of new office space at the end of 2010

Crossing Boundaries in 2011 and the Year of the Rabbit

The 19th issue of the NET Scheme Newsletter sees the beginning of another year – 2011 and the Year of the Rabbit. In this issue, we would like to invite our readers to some exciting hops across boundaries as we highlight how NETs help break the boundaries in the teaching of English and how Hong Kong offers possible boundary-crossing experiences.

Having joined the NET Section more than nine months ago, I find that the Section itself is a testimony to the beauty of crossing the boundaries. With a staff of 80, the Section is a rich blend of faces from different races and nationalities, as you can see from one of our many happy team photos. The cultural variety has not only brought colour and excitement to our work but has also greatly broadened our vision and enlarged our capacity to embrace the world. Incidentally, having been with the NET Section for five years as Project Manager, Mr. Ralph Barnes has just embarked on another kind of boundary-crossing experience after leaving the Section on 28 February 2011. I would like to invite all our readers to join the NET Section in wishing him the very best in his future endeavours.

Our curriculum too is going with much increased vitality and creativity as we aim to enhance language across the curriculum (LaC) through closer collaboration

between the English Language Education KLA and other KLAs. English teachers are all encouraged to promote reading across the curriculum and equip students with the skills required for reading to learn. The NET Section is working with a few secondary schools on a project to explore effective strategies for implementing language across the curriculum and one of our centralised professional development workshops for primary teachers in March 2011 will have LaC as the focus. Do come and join us and share with us your experience in crossing the boundaries in English language teaching in your schools.

Now simply follow our purple bunny to find out how our NETs, our ATs and our students have overcome geographical boundaries, cultural boundaries and even personal boundaries to pursue personal enrichment and a life-time of sweet memories. Happy reading and I wish you a very prosperous new year full of boundless energy.

Rosana Chong

Rosana CHONG
Chief Curriculum Development Officer

Primary Corner



Crossing the boundaries in my school

My husband, Des and I arrived at the Hong Kong airport on a cold December night in 2004, met by Vivian, my English panel chair. Little did I know that she would become one of my closest friends in the world! At first everything was very strange... voices, faces, smells, customs. As time went by, my world became so much richer through my experiences at my school.

I made a decision to study Cantonese. After four years, I could communicate quite well. Now I chat away like a local... not too hard with about 1000 pupils, teachers and parents to help me! I made another decision - never to refuse an offer to participate in a social or school activity. It has paid off. With a great Principal and friendly staff, I have experienced weekend trips to China, shared food at school, attended weddings, funerals, birth celebrations and lots of social visits to different places.

Then there's Vivian! She has taught me so much about the culture of Hong Kong, taken me to so many places, invited me, my friends and family to her home and out on other social activities. She organised an amazing 60th birthday party for me at school and, along with some other staff, came to my party in Wan Chai! Her whole family has become special to Des and I. I hope they will one day visit us back in Oz.

I often say my position here has been the best experience in my career. Nice to finish on a high note, after going to school every day for 56 years as a student and teacher! I can thank Vivian and my Principal, staff and students for this. They have been great... and I hope for lots more fun until I 'draw stumps' in July 2012.

by **Kaye Hastie** (NET),
Ka Ling School of the Precious Blood



Broader challenges of border crossings

Quite a number of Hong Kong schools, especially in the North District, have some students from Mainland China who travel across the border into Hong Kong to go to school each day. This has increased with the broadening of cross-border relationships since the handover in 1997. However, only children who are born in Hong Kong or have a parent with Hong Kong Citizenship are eligible to apply for education here.

Many schools in the New Territories have found this to be an attractive option, especially at a time of falling rolls in Hong Kong. It may bring new challenges to schools as most Mainland children have Putonghua (Mandarin) as their first language whereas the medium of instruction in most classes is Guangdonghua (Cantonese). Whilst this can be remedied with tutorials and support it can be difficult to find the time for this when working within the tight timeframe of school bus routes and border crossings.

There is a difference in school culture and teaching methods that students must adjust to, which can be considerable in English. For example, a number of Mainland students who have joined our school in P2 are able to read many high frequency words and chant them in a deep, loud monotone. However, they often struggle to recognise them in context or use them in a sentence.

Students from over the border usually enlarge the cultural dynamics of the school by broadening the diversity of such aspects as ethnicity, traditions, socio-economics and educational experiences. Classes with a broader range of student experiences and attitudes can be refreshing when trying to brainstorm or elicit responses to questions or activities.

There can be problems, especially when dealing with home care, social services and language. Considerable staff time also has to be spent on ensuring the safe passage of students from the border to school and back to their families. Further complications may arise when matching timetables with holidays, events and parent availability.

by **Simon Heppelthwaite** (NET),
Sha Tau Kok Central Primary School

Big, big world in small Hong Kong

Chiu Sheung School, Hong Kong, is an ethnically diverse primary school in Pok Fu Lam. The student body is made up of Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese, Indian, Nepalese, Filipino, British, Sri Lankan, Bengali, Singaporean, Thai, American and Pakistani children, or some mix thereof. This diversity influences the school's approach to classes and extra curricular activities. In January 2011, students participated in an eight-day project learning programme which focused on raising cultural awareness and appreciating traditions from around the world. P1 to P3 students focused on the culinary characteristics of different countries while P4 to P6 students researched music, dance, sports and yoga. Each level had a specific question and theme that they would explore for the first seven days and then they would present their findings to the school on the final day.



I got to spend my project learning time with the students of P1A as we learned about spices and how they are used. There were lots of smelling, tasting and cooking (both in and out of the classroom) as we experienced some of the various ways different countries use spices. A field trip to an Indian spice shop showed the students how people buy and use spices. After that, we took a trip to an Indian restaurant where students had the opportunity to try some of the spices and Indian food they were learning about. It was cute to see how proud the Indian, Nepalese and Pakistani students were when we discussed curry. Hearing their side comments like, "I eat that at home!" or "My mom can make!" always brought a smile to my face. Ultimately, the P1 students walked away from project learning open-minded, accepting, and perhaps, even knowing a little bit more about what their classmates are eating for lunch.

by **Ryan Costley** (NET),
Chiu Sheung School



Sharing of resources and books between countries

In my school in Hong Kong there was an abundance of unused teaching materials: text books and big books. So when my friend mentioned that she had some members of her family teaching voluntarily in a small rural school in Ko Samet in Thailand, I asked my Principal if it was alright to share some of these surplus materials with this school. The recipient school was extremely happy and grateful as they have very few teaching resources and in fact they don't even have desks!

The teachers and students were delighted to receive the packages, as you can see in the photos. The book donations will hopefully continue and extend to other schools once we overcome considerations of postage. If anyone has any ideas, please contact me.

by **Simone Kirkland** (NET),
TWGHs Lo Yu Chik Primary School

Primary CPD Events (Mar to May)

| Mar 2011 | |
|------------|---|
| 1, 2 | Using the Co-operative Learning Techniques in Group Work to Cater for Learner Diversity |
| 8, 9, 12 | Making Effective Use of Assessment Data |
| 18 | Fun With IT in the English Lessons |
| 22, 23, 26 | Collaboration between ELE and Other KLAS to Enhance Language Across the Curriculum at Primary Level |
| 29, 30 | Using Effective Aural/Oral Activities for Authentic Communication in the English Classroom |
| Apr 2011 | |
| 12, 13 | Developing Skills and Enjoyment in Reading through Story-telling and Reading Aloud |
| May 2011 | |
| 3, 4, 7 | Smooth Transition from KS1 to KS2 in the Development of Writing Skills |
| 13 | Reinforcing Knowledge of the Chinese Culture in the English Classroom |
| 17, 18, 21 | Making the Most of Reader's Theatre (Part 2): Script Writing and Puppet Show |
| 24, 25 | Incorporating Phonics Learning and Teaching into the School-based English Language Curriculum |

Secondary Corner



Visitors from ESF Island School

On Wednesday, April 28, 2010 Yan Chai Hospital No.2 Secondary School in Tuen Mun, under the guidance of English Panel Head Joyce Wong, hosted a visit by a group of year 12 students from ESF Island School, accompanied by their teacher Mr. Lee Oliver. This should prove to be the first of a number of interactions planned between the schools, aimed at fostering the speaking of English amongst the YCH students and exchanging insights into the schools' educational and cultural differences.

After a brief ice-breaking exercise accompanied by refreshments, the students headed for the Home Economics room for the main event - pizza-making! Working in small groups and led by YCH2SS NET Teacher, Bernie Clark, the students set about creating their masterpieces.

First, while some were involved in making the dough, others in their group chopped and prepared the toppings that included ham and salami, corn, capsicum, pineapple and cheese. Next came the actual creation of the pizza, with everyone generously piling on the toppings, finishing off with special pizza cheese and a sprinkle of oregano. These were truly 'serious' pizzas! Then it was into the oven and before long the kitchen began to fill with that irresistible aroma of freshly cooked pizza. Soon eyes bulged in expectation as each pizza emerged from the oven and was sliced up ready for sharing. Aaah! What a treat! In no time at all, there wasn't a trace of pizza anywhere to be seen.

And so, after some photo-taking and exchange of contact details, the Island School students waved goodbye to their newfound friends and boarded their bus for the journey home. But it wasn't long before messages began to whiz across cyber space - mobile phones, email and Facebook - all proclaiming what a great experience it had been. Hannah Wong, a student at YCH2SS said, "The programme is amazing. I don't have many chances to speak with native English speakers so this is just what I need. Let's hope our next meeting at Island School in the coming school year can be as much fun."

by **Bernie Clark** (NET),
Yan Chai Hospital No.2 Secondary School

'Speak Out - Act Up!'

On stage. No script. A five-minute performance. An audience of teachers, students, and judges.

"It's a chance to have the freedom to create... It's challenging... It's amazing... It's unbelievable."

These students were talking about 'Speak Out - Act Up!', an improvised drama competition run by the Education Bureau's (EDB) Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Section. Student teams from 26 secondary schools in the New Territories worked in groups of 4-6 to create and perform 3-5-minute improvised dramas in English.

"The competition gives students: an opportunity to use English in a creative way through improvised drama; an opportunity to experiment with language in different roles and dramatic contexts; and a head start on the NSS English Language Elective module, Learning English Through Drama," said Ms Gina Green, a Regional NET Coordinator in the NET Section.

"It's great... students have an opportunity to use all four language skills and perform in English in a meaningful and fun way," said NET Elvira Lee. "They also get some valuable experience working in teams."

Ronald Lam reflected on his team's winning performance, "We were quite nervous using English and performing in front of everyone, but actually it was really amazing to get up on stage. 'Speak Out - Act Up!' was really fantastic."

by **Bruce Mackie** (NET)



The winning team from Pui Shing Catholic Secondary School act out in the improvised drama competition 'Speak Out - Act Up!' held on 24 April 2010. Students (with their teachers) from left to right: Jessica Lam, Ms Faith Wu, Karen Li, Mr Dominic Chan, Ronald Lam, Nicole Law, Vincent Li.

Secondary CPD Events (Mar to May)

| Mar 2011 | |
|------------|--|
| 3 | Briefing Session for 'Clipit: 2011', a Student-created Film Competition |
| 17 | Using Rubrics for Formative Assessment |
| 21, 22, 24 | Film Editing Workshop for 'Clipit: 2011', a Student-created Film Competition |
| Apr 2011 | |
| 7 | Exploring Social Issues through Print Media |
| May 2011 | |
| 5 | NETworking: Using Short Stories in the English Classroom |
| 12 | Workplace Communication in the English Classroom |