The ELL clan gathered at the Raffles Marina on the bright Saturday morning of 17 January for its third annual strategic planning session. The focus this time was to build on what was being done within the various courses to further infuse IT with a view to finding more common strands in pedagogic practices. The HOD, Dr Rita Skuja-Steele, outlined the need to review and reform current curricula as part of ELL’s Quality Assurance drive. A/P Cheah Horn Mun updated the group on curriculum development initiatives at NIE level. Phillip Towndrow represented the ITELL committee to share details of its on-going work. Then it was off to their work stations for five groups to discuss and devise action plans to incorporate more IT into their respective programmes. Amidst the good cheer and morning tea came action plans. Representatives from each group then shared their plans.

By P. Towndrow & M. Vallance

INSIDE...

IT action plans
Self-Access Centre
New staff members
Programme review
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Book launches, review
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Spotlight

ELL Newsletter May ’04 teams:
• Editorial: Shila Fernandez, Adam Brown & Thomas Farrell
• IT support: Michael Vallance, Mark Chan, S. Saravana, Christopher Cahyadi, N.R. Sasi Kumar

http://www.ell.nie.edu.sg/news.html
Some IT action plans

Primary team
VCD of staff demonstrating teaching strategies
Develop primary model classroom website

MA in Applied Linguistics
On-line delivery of some sessions
Accessing electronic Cobuild corpus

Literature
Webpage for introduction to study of Literature
Multi-media presentations integrated into lectures

PGDE (Secondary)
Professional sharing sessions on IT related topics
Introduction and evaluation of useful websites

PRC programme
Showcasing learners’ work online
Encouraging autonomous learning

In a bid to incorporate IT in our teaching, PRC students work in the Self-Access Centre (SAC) for an hour a week to improve their language skills. This weekly session is built into the curriculum so that all students have the opportunity to be exposed to independent learning. This is to encourage them to take an active role in their learning, as they are given full autonomy to decide on the activities they want to work on with the help of a facilitator. Unlike traditional self-access centres where worksheets usually form the core resource, the SAC at NIE taps Internet resources. Students are also encouraged to use VCDs and CDs, CD-Roms and books available at SAC to improve their English.

By Christian Chia

Guide by the side:
Mark Wilkinson, Christian Chia, Lyn May, Kwah Poh Foong
The Primary team played host to Prof Frances Christie, Emeritus Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne and Honorary Professor of Education at the University of Sydney. Her visit, from 20 Oct to 23 Oct last year was aimed at reviewing all three Primary programmes - Dip Ed, BA (Education) and PGDE (Pr).

Through intensive and rigorous rounds of consultations with coordinators and team members, the content, modes of delivery and assessments were evaluated and feedback given.

Prof Christie also gave a talk on Australian primary school education to NIE and MOE providing both an overview of trends and changing structures, and programmes in Melbourne and Sydney.

Prof Christie sat in on a PGDE class to observe four end-of-term micro-teaching presentations that included Shared Book Reading (SBR), Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) and the What I Know, What I Want to know, What I Learned (KWL).

The final stage of her visit included her sharing her nine-page report on her impressions, insights and recommendations with regard to the primary programmes. By Caroline Ho
Welcome

**Arthur D. L. Lindley:** Arthur took up his appointment at NIE after 29 years in the English Department of the NUS. He has the distinction of starting the Film Studies programme there. He is mainly interested in medieval and Renaissance literature. He claims his primary intellectual interest, however, is the Boston Red Sox.

**Yee Siau Foon:** Siau Foon was teaching at Chung Cheng High School before she joined NIE. She gained valuable theatrical experience through a theatre studies course at the Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. Her MA in English Studies thesis is on the work of David Henry’s *M. Butterfly*. She continues to investigate the use of drama in literature and language learning.

**Quek Yee Ser, Sharon:** Sharon started her teaching career as a primary and then secondary school teacher. She graduated from NIE with a BA degree and was awarded the Victor Neo Gold Medal Award for being the best Year Four English Language student of her cohort. Her research interests are spoken discourse, testing and critical literacy.

**Cynthia Macknish:** Cynthia has international experience teaching English in Canada and the Bahamas. She spent five years in Temasek Polytechnic coordinating an intensive ESL programme, and later developed a course on global issues. Currently she is pursuing a doctorate with an English university.

**Angelia Poon Mui Cheng:** Angelia taught English in Victoria JC and in Vietnam for the Singapore International Foundation. She completed her PhD in English and American Literature at the Brandeis University (USA). She then worked two years with the English Unit (MOE). She is still interested in Victorian literature, post-colonial studies and women’s writing.
Ang May Yin: May Yin did her undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the National University of Singapore. As a teacher, she taught English Language, Literature and the General Paper. At the MOE, she was involved in the review and development of the English Language, Literature, General Paper, and Theatre Studies and Drama syllabuses.

Fatima Pirbhai-Illich: Fatima has been in the field of English language teaching for more than a decade. After her MA at the University of Surrey (UK), she is completing her PhD thesis. Her research topic is on the educational outcomes of ESL students. Her other areas of research include ESL reading and identity construction.

Christine Parimala Pelly: Christine began her career as a legal advisor. She then completed her MA at NUS. Her thesis was on the culture of the primary school English teacher in Singapore. Reflective teaching, perceptions of stakeholders in educational change and alternative modes continue to interest her as possible research topics.

Sasi Kumar s/o N. Ramasamy: Sasi started work life in 1996 in Radar Telecommunication with an electronic engineering background. He fell in love with Maya...3D Software, and is aiming to become a Certified Maya Trainer. He is happy working here with the IT guys. He feels life is just too short to worry.
Lunar New Year
Hari Raya Adil Fitri
Deepavali

Guangwei tells of New Year in China

Mary invites Norhaida Aman (ALC) to talk on Hari Raya customs

Deepavali lights shine on Beng Soon, Antonia & Chris

Bagra dancers get hearts thumping & feet tapping at the Deepavali do

Hussain demos ketupat making
Peter Gu’s daughter Shan Shan is perfectly content

Angelia Poon’s son Luke looks on at mum

Sharon Quek is every bit the June bride

A big thank-you from boss Rita Skuja for Secretaries’ Week to:
(seated L-R) Cindy, Kathy, Shirley, Faridah & (standing L-R) Christopher, Sasi, Mark, Saravana
Launched on a rainy 6 February 2004, at at the LearningHub@LIBRIS, about 40 people turned up for this event. AIP Stephen Hazell from VPA was the Master of Ceremonies. Wan-ling’s book explores the problematic formation of national culture within modern English society. Starting with the Victorian era, the work documents the complex relationship of concepts such as ‘home’ and ‘frontier’, and ‘English’ and ‘colonial’ through an analysis of key literary-cultural figures in their historical contexts: Rudyard Kipling, Charles Kingsley, T.S. Eliot and V.S. Naipaul.

At the launch, Professor S. Gopinathan and AIP Philip Holden from the NUS English Department, gave differing and illuminating ‘takes’ on the book. Professor Gopinathan looked at the book’s argument in relation to the question of ‘being modern’ and modernisation in educational matters in postcolonial contexts. AIP Holden addressed the ‘postcolonial Singaporean-ness’ that framed the book’s argument.

If you thought grammar was a dry subject, think again. It was standing room only in the ELL Journal Room on 14 July for the launch of *English in Singapore: Research on Grammar* edited by Dr David Deterding, Dr Low Ee Ling and Dr Adam Brown.

As well as ELL staff, the launch was attended by representatives from NUS, the RELC and the British Council. Ee Ling acted as the MC for the occasion. The proceedings were kindly opened by Prof Leo Tan, Director NIE, who highlighted the quality of the work carried out in ELL and its relevance to national objectives such as the Speak Good English movement.

Adam gave an overview of the structure of the book and the content of each of the chapters. David rounded off the launch by playing and discussing some of the recorded data in the chapters.
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Honours students mull over a few points
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Brown Bag Seminars
Jan - April, 2004

This term we had four brown bag seminars. In January, Maha Sripathy presented "The Cultural Fit of ELT Pedagogies," a very interesting paper. In February, Shila Fernandez looked at trainees' perceptions of practicum in a paper entitled "Practicum: The best of times and the worst of times." Much interesting discussion ensued. In March, Phillip Towndrow and Michael Vallance presented "An Overview of ELL's IT Resources" and introduced us to the new ELL webpage as well as the new resources available. Finally, in April, Wee Bee Geok presented a paper on "Grammatical Metaphors and Writing in Secondary School." This paper contained much food for thought about the way writing is and is not taught in schools today.

Compiled by Kirsten Schaetzel
The following is a list of articles and books by different authors:

Books:

Articles:
the future of NIE ...
The road ahead is indeed very promising. The enterprising spirit of the staff augurs well for the future. We are already seeing a number of prestigious awards bestowed upon the Institute and its staff. I see NIE as continuing to stay ahead of competition vis-à-vis the universities, both local and abroad.

recent changes in the Singapore education system ...
The years after 1997 brought about highly significant changes. There were, of course, the three national initiatives and their incorporation into the national curriculum: critical and creative thinking, National Education and Information Technology. Today, Thinking Schools, Learning Nation is more than just an educational slogan. In education, and curriculum development, great emphasis has been placed on thinking and learning processes, problem-based learning, life-long learning, and critical inquiry. All these form the basis of much of teaching and learning in schools today. Assessment methods have changed as a result of the most recent change—the Integrated programme (IP), a seamless Upper Secondary-JC Scheme, which dispenses with the "O"-Level exams, in some schools.

life before NIE ...
I started as a non-graduate teacher in 1965 and taught in primary and secondary schools. With a scholarship from MOE, I pursued a degree at Lancaster University, UK. Later I did my MA in Sydney University, Australia. I taught and worked as a Specialist Inspector (English) at the MOE. I then went on to do my Ph.D in Monash University, Australia.

working in NIE ...
I began my career in NIE in 1993. The experience of teaching a number of modules across the board did widen my professional perspective of the various NIE programmes. My areas of responsibilities have also enlarged. Currently, I find satisfaction being an Assistant Head of ELL. I also continue to teach in the PGDE (Secondary) programme, the MA course in Applied Linguistics, and the DDM course for HODs (English/Secondary). I also have periodic MA thesis supervision. I do my fair share of Practicum supervision in order to maintain a good grasp of current developments in the schools.

the most important aspects of teacher education...
Teacher education naturally needs to be in step with how we have now conceptualized learning and assessment. This will require a mindset change and a new orientation to teacher education. It is important to develop, in the teacher, the wholesome spirit of inquiry and the right attitude to change.

special interest areas of EL teaching...
Language acquisition, discourse analysis, curriculum development, and grammar. I have since developed interests in computer-assisted assessment (CAA), case studies, and instructional materials development. I see interest diversification as a natural way to broaden my professional outlook to remain effective and relevant.