

STETS NEWS

ISSUE 2 / 2002-2003

Report on Previous Events

The following events were held in the period of June – September 2002:

3 June 2002

Rebecca Sprengel on “Intercultural Awareness for People doing Business in English”.

On Monday 3 June 2002, Rebecca Sprengel, BESIG Co-ordinator, gave a talk entitled “Intercultural Awareness for People Doing Business in English” to members of the Singapore Tertiary English Teachers Society (STETS), in Singapore.

The audience consisted of many nationalities (from various cultural backgrounds) – British, American, Canadian, New Zealand, Malaysian, and Singaporean (Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian) - all teaching in tertiary institutions in Singapore. A few are members of the STETS BESIG*.

Rebecca spent about half of the one-hour session quickly covering the following topics: Definition of Culture; What You See, What You Don't See; The Dos and Don'ts; and Ten Tips for Success. During and after the talk, she invited questions and comments as well as gave the audience some ideas on the type of activities that can be carried out to raise students' awareness of the topic. Since most activities would require at least one or two hours to do and some, even a whole day, the rest of the session was spent on general discussions.

Rebecca showed her wealth of experience in talking about and answering the questions on the topic and it was felt that the session was too short. Nevertheless, all present gave the thumbs up and wondered if Rebecca could come back and conduct a workshop for us.

STETS would like to thank Rebecca for spending her time with us. We look forward to seeing her again in the near future.

Reported by Manee Lugg
President, the Singapore Tertiary English Teachers Society (STETS)

27 July 2002

A/P Antonia Chandrasegaran (Research SIG) on “Essay Assist”.

A/P Antonia Chandrasegaran (NIE) gave a presentation at Singapore Polytechnic on “Essay Assist”, a software program that she had developed to help students in academic writing. Antonia demonstrated how the program could be used together with a word processing program such as MSWord.

“Essay Assist” seems to perform very much like an online help program that enables students to access Help topics at 3 main levels: whole essay, paragraph and sentence. Antonia reported positive feedback from the students who tried out the program and she would be pleased to hear from STETS members who would like to take part in her project.

Christian Chia, a lecturer at NIE spoke briefly about the role and aims of Research SIG and urged members who are interested to sign up for the SIG.

Reported by Lim Hwee Ling (NUS)

31 August 2002

Ivy Tan on "Plagiarism Detection Software".

A workshop on the above-mentioned topic was held for STETS members on Saturday, 31 August 2002 at the Computer Centre in the National University of Singapore (NUS). It was attended by about fifteen STETS members from the various tertiary institutions in Singapore. The workshop facilitator was Ivy Tan, an Educational Technologist with the Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT) at NUS.

The workshop, basically, introduced "Turn It In", a plagiarism detection software used by NUS to detect electronic plagiarism. The software was developed by the University of California, Berkeley. The workshop discussed issues concerning the selection, deployment and implications of such a system with the participants and gave them hands-on experience on how to use it. The workshop enabled participants to explore both the strengths and weaknesses of using such software and highlighted the fact that at the end of the day, the tutor's or lecturer's role was still crucial in determining whether a case of plagiarism was indeed serious enough to deserve punishment. The message is: 'Teach your students to cite secondary sources correctly!'

Feedback from the participants was that they found the workshop very useful indeed, especially since Ivy also gave them a lot of tips on how to evaluate such software. They also felt that the refreshments were very good!

Reported by Mrs Radhika Jaidev (NUS)

7 September 2002

David Hyatt on "A Critical Literacy Framework".

Nineteen participants from six institutions across Singapore attended David Hyatt's workshop held at Temasek Polytechnic on Saturday 07 September 2002.

David Hyatt, the University of Sheffield's M ELT Course Director, began the workshop by presenting "A Critical Literacy Framework". Using numerous examples, he spoke on the role of language in the way we perceive the world and the way we use language to help us construct the world. We learned that, even in simple descriptions, the language is not neutral but carries implications, evaluations and presuppositions.

Using his framework as a tool, we then worked in groups to critically analyse the language in a newspaper article. An hour and a half later we shared our ideas in a lively discussion. Although it was conceded that we normally don't spend ninety minutes reading one article, the exercise made us aware that we need to help our students to understand the meaning and the context of language as they read, and we must encourage them to question in order to promote critical literacy.

David Hyatt has spoken to an appreciative audience at TP before and STETS was fortunate to get some of his valuable time during this visit. We recommend that members keep an eye out for future engagements with this speaker.

Reported by Cynthia Macknish (TP)

Forthcoming Activities

There were some changes made to the events announced in the previous issue of STETS News. Mark these new events in your diary! Your STETS representative will send you more details once the arrangements for the events are finalized.

October 2002

Possible visit to NYP
Date/Time: to be confirmed
Venue: NYP

November/December 2002

Talk by Neil England
Date/Time/ Venue: to be confirmed

STETS 1-Day Workshop conducted by Tom Farrell
Date/Time/ Venue: to be confirmed

January 2003

Visit to affiliated English Language Teachers organizations in Kuala Lumpur.
Date/Time/ Venues: to be confirmed

February 2003

STETS 21st Anniversary Celebration & Workshop
Date/Time: to be confirmed
Venue: Singapore Polytechnic Guild House (to be confirmed)

March 2003

Presentation by a SIG.
Date/Time/ Venues: to be confirmed

April 2003

STETS Annual AGM & Lunch
Date/Time/ Venues: to be confirmed

Other Events

16-21 December 2002: 13th World Congress of Applied Linguistics at Singapore.
Contact Anne Pakir - aschead@nus.edu.sg
More information on IATEFL events available at
<http://www.iatefl.org/frameset/frame.asp?../events.asp~mainFrame>

9-11 April 2003: Research in ELT International Conference (Bangkok, Thailand)
Contact Richard Watson Todd - irictodd@kmutt.ac.th
More information available at http://arts.kmutt.ac.th/research_in_elt/

STETS Membership

The annual membership fee is S\$10.00 which is renewable either at the end of June or December of each year. STETS is a non-profit organization and does not charge GST for its membership and event registration fees. Two types of membership are available:
Ordinary Membership: for full-time academic staff in tertiary institutions in Singapore.
Associate Membership: for anyone interested both in and outside Singapore.

Just complete the Membership Application Form (available from any STETS representative) and send it to us. Alternatively, you can download the form from the STETS Website at <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/sce/stets/>

Other News

Financial Assistance for IATEFL Conference

We are pleased to announce that STETS would offer financial assistance for up to 4 speakers for the IATEFL Conference each year. The financial assistance covers only the conference registration fees and it is available on a first-come-first-served basis.

Presently, STETS has already sponsored conference registration fees for 2 applicants. If interested, please contact Manee manee@sp.edu.sg for more details.

Professional Status of STETS

STETS (founded in 1982) is an affiliated member of IATEFL and therefore, enjoys the same professional status. Currently, STETS has more than 230 members.

The Society subscribes to the following six IATEFL SIGs:

- ?? BESIG
- ?? Testing
- ?? Teacher Development
- ?? Research
- ?? CALL
- ?? Independent Learning

New Institutional Representative

We are pleased to welcome Moira Wee as our new Institutional Representative for Singapore Polytechnic. She can be contacted at MOIRAY@sp.edu.sg

New Home for STETS Resources

We would like to thank Dr Wong Lian Aik (Director, CELC) for allocating cabinets in CELC for the storage of STETS materials and resources. We are very grateful for his assistance in this matter.

If you have STETS archival records and would like to add to our collection, please contact Radhika elcrr@nus.edu.sg

Calling for Speakers and Topics

What are YOU interested in?

We would like to ask all our readers to contribute suggestions for possible speakers and/or topics for events to celebrate STETS 21st anniversary and for our Annual Workshop.

The presenters could be locally-based or from overseas. The more ideas the better!

If you or someone you know, are willing to give a talk or workshop that would benefit STETS members, please contact Richard at slessor@tp.edu.sg

Call for Papers

The *STETS Language & Communication Review* invites the submission of unpublished articles concerning aspects of the teaching and learning of English proficiency and communication skills in tertiary institutions in Singapore and Southeast Asia.

Specifically, articles may discuss the following issues related to teaching and learning of English in tertiary education:

- ?? syllabus and curriculum design
- ?? testing and evaluation
- ?? teacher training, pedagogy
- ?? classroom practices
- ?? computer-assisted language learning
- ?? other issues

We also welcome submissions of the following:

- ?? reports of original research
- ?? review articles
- ?? bibliographic essays
- ?? book reviews
- ?? reviews of workshops (STETS-sponsored or otherwise)

Submission guidelines:

- ?? Length - between 1500 and 6000 words.
- ?? Abstract to be included with your submission.
- ?? A 50-word author biography to be included with your submission.
- ?? Your contact details to be included with your submission.

Articles will be submitted to a blind review by at least two of our Editorial Board members and / or subject reviewers. The Editor reserves the right to edit articles for format consistency when this does not alter the substance.

For more details, please refer to the *Contributor's Guidelines* which is available from your STETS representative or at the STETS website <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/sce/stets/>

We encourage you to e-mail your articles. However, if you mail your article, please include a soft copy on floppy disk. Please send your submissions to

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The STETS Committee