

## **STETS NEWS** **ISSUE 3 / 2002-2003**

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### **Special Event:**

#### **STETS 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebration Workshop conducted by David Nunan**



We're delighted to confirm what some of you may already have heard on the grapevine - Professor David Nunan will be running a STETS workshop, and also presenting a free public lecture, at the end of May 2003.

Professor David Nunan is the Director of the English Centre at the University of Hong Kong. He is a well-known academic and textbook writer. Professor Nunan is a much sought after speaker who currently averages about forty presentations a year at international conferences.

#### **Public Lecture 29 May 2003 (Evening)**

In this lecture, Professor Nunan will talk about one of his current special interests, *Performance-based approaches to curriculum and assessment* in language teaching. The focus in such approaches is on at least supplementing, and perhaps even replacing, standardised (and stand-alone) tests with assessment through such things as contextualised open-ended problems and hands-on tasks.

Professor Nunan has provided the following outline for his talk:

"Performance-based approaches to language curricula have become increasingly popular in recent years. The standards movement in North America, the Common European Framework in Europe, and competency-based education in Australia are all examples of such approaches. This lecture looks at some of the challenges and options for directly assessing learner outcomes in such curricula including the use of records of achievement, observation, and learner portfolios."

#### **Workshop 30-31 May 2003**

Throughout this one and a half day workshop, Professor Nunan will be bringing together his academic and writing experience in a workshop on *Developing Materials*. Workshop participants will explore principles for designing materials; while these can be applied to the design and evaluation of materials for a wide range of learners, at any level, the practical activities in the workshop will mainly focus on materials for an upper intermediate level of proficiency.

#### **More about David Nunan**

More background information on Professor Nunan is available at <http://ec.hku.hk/dcnunan/>

An interesting interview with him is available at

[http://www.eltnews.com/features/interviews/001\\_david\\_nunan1.shtml](http://www.eltnews.com/features/interviews/001_david_nunan1.shtml)

#### **Further details in mid-April**

Full details of venues, programmes, registration, etc. will be circulated in mid-April 2003.

Meanwhile, please put the dates for this **STETS 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebration Workshop** in your diary!

## **NOTICE OF STETS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003/2004**

Saturday 26 April 2003  
10am-11am  
Refreshments at 9.30am  
National University of Singapore  
Block Adm (OAB) Seminar Room #04-02

All STETS members are welcome  
Please RSVP [elclimhl@nus.edu.sg](mailto:elclimhl@nus.edu.sg) by 22 April 2003

### **AGENDA**

1. Minutes of Previous AGM
2. Matters Arising
3. Annual Report 2002-2003
4. Approval of Balance Sheet & Statement of Accounts for 2002/2003
5. Election of Office Bearers for 2003/2004
6. Election of Auditors for 2003/2004
7. Affiliation with STC-Singapore
8. Any Other Business

### **A NOTE TO ALL MEMBERS**

In view of concerns over SARS, this 2003/2004 STETS AGM would be a brief meeting with light refreshments. The special AGM social gathering originally planned for the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebration has been postponed to a later date. All members are encouraged to attend this brief meeting.

### **ABOUT THE VENUE**

Block Adm (Old Admin Building) is located beside the Central Library.  
More information on getting to NUS is available at <http://www.nus.edu.sg/corporate/visitors/>  
Transport and parking information is available at  
<http://www.nus.edu.sg/oed/services/csd/transportation/mrt.htm>  
<http://www.nus.edu.sg/oed/services/csd/transportation/carpark.htm>

*Ms. Lim Hwee Ling*  
*Honorary Secretary for 2002/2003*

## Our Chief Editor of Language and Communication Review

*A message from Richard Slessor (STETS Vice-President):*

“Ms. Lisa Meyer of NUS is leaving Singapore in June, and will therefore be giving up the Chief Editorship of the STETS Language and Communication Review after this next issue. Those of us who work with her on the Editorial Board know the professionalism and commitment she has brought to the role; she is also largely responsible for the attractive new look which the journal now has.



She will be very much missed, and I am sure all STETS members would want to thank her for all her hard work and offer her every good wish for the future.

Her departure of course leaves a vacancy as Chief Editor, and the Executive Committee would be delighted to hear from any STETS member who would be interested in taking on the role. Ideally they would be appointed soon enough to be able to overlap a little with Lisa, so that she could give them her personal advice on the nuts and bolts of the job.

If you would like to discuss the idea, please contact me at [slessor@tp.edu.sg](mailto:slessor@tp.edu.sg)”

## Latest News

### Affiliation between STETS and Society for Technical Communication (Singapore)



The President of STETS (Ms. Manee Lugg) and the President of the Society for Technical Communication STC-Singapore (Ms Tan Joo Khim) agreed on 9 January 2003 to form an affiliation between the two societies.

STC-Singapore’s members are mostly technical communicators/writers from the private sector. Currently, there are 23 full members and approximately 80 Newsgroup members. An affiliation with STETS will enable STC-Singapore to reach a larger audience and raise the awareness among educators on Technical Communication as a profession and a subject area. At the same time, STETS members will be able to benefit from STC members’ instructional and practical experiences in areas like e-learning and instructional design.

In addition, such an affiliation will enable both societies to hold joint STETS/STC-Singapore events that will be open to all members from both societies. A more diverse audience for such professional events can lead to better networking opportunities and more stimulating discussions for our STETS members.

Learn more about the Society for Technical Communication (US) at <http://www.stc.org/>  
Further information on the Society for Technical Communication (Singapore) is available from <http://www.stc.org.sg/>

## **Report on Previous Events**

The following events were held in the period of November 2002 – March 2003:

### 29 November 2002

#### *STETS Annual Workshop*

*“Reflective Practice for Language Teachers” conducted by Tom Farrell.*

The 2002 STETS Annual Workshop was a one-day workshop held at Singapore Polytechnic Graduates’ Guild on 29 November 2002. At this workshop, Tom Farrell led about 25 participants through activities that had them reflecting on their teaching experience and beliefs about teaching.

Participants learnt the difference between being judgmental about their teaching and being critically evaluative in a systematic, objective way. The topics covered included the use of journals and classroom observations as aids to reflection, generation of topics for reflection, and the construction of teaching portfolios.

The participants found the workshop relevant and, in their post workshop evaluation, gave Tom the highest ratings for his presentation.

Tom Farrell is assistant professor at the National Institute of Education (NIE). He has published many articles on reflective practice in journals such as *English Language Teaching Journal*, *Asian Journal of English Language Teachers*, and *RELC Journal*.

Reported by Antonia Chandrasegaran (NIE)

### 15 February 2003

*Neil England on “Singaporean Pre-service TESOL Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of Memorization in Foreign Learning and Teaching”.*

On 15 February 2003, Neil England, from the Language Teaching Institute, SEAMEO RELC, gave a talk at RELC to STETS members on the topic of “Memorization, Rote Learning and TESOL Teacher Education”. It was based on a talk Neil gave to the STETS Research SIG in May 2002 and dealt with issues he explored in a recent Master of Education dissertation and which he is now investigating further for PhD research.

The talk aimed to draw the following issues together:

- The impact of teachers’ personal pedagogical beliefs on their instructional decisions and the way in which they respond to second language teacher education programs.
- Recent critiques of the stereotype of the Asian learner as one who relies on rote memorization at the expense of ‘deep’ approaches to learning.
- Problems in creating an opposition between rote learning and creativity.
- A call for culturally appropriate and flexible TESOL pedagogy in non-Western contexts.

Neil England gave a summary of studies of the pedagogical beliefs of pre-service second language teachers in Singapore and Hong Kong, discussed the work done on the role of memorization in Confucian heritage educational cultures and gave an account of the 'bad press' given to memorization in Communicative Language Teaching. He also outlined the findings of his study of the perceptions of the role of memorization in language learning and teaching of a group of Singaporean pre-service TESOL teacher and put forward some recommendation for teacher education.

These recommendations were based on the principle of 'cultural continuity' i.e. creating behavioural and environmental links between cultural traditions of learning and innovative practice.

The audience had a range of interesting questions, most of them related to the implications for the "Thinking schools, Learning Nation" policy in Singapore.

Reported by Chin Soo Fun (RELC)

1 March 2003

*Radhika Jaidev on "Business Writing - A case of EQ over IQ."*

Radhika gave a presentation to STETS members based on her paper that was delivered at the BeSIG / IATEFL Conference (London) in November 2002. The talk which was held at NUS was attended by about 17 participants from various tertiary institutions in Singapore including 4 participants from the Society for Technical Communication (STC-Singapore Chapter). The audience was generally quite interested in the topic as most of them had, at some point, taught Business English or Business Communication skills.

Radhika's study sought to question if the success of business writing, whether for internal or external purposes, was determined more by EQ rather than IQ skills. To do this, a small study was carried out on senior executives and managers at various government as well as private organizations. The study was based on data derived from an email questionnaire as well as telephone interviews with these subjects. Their responses suggested that in most routine of business writing situations, emotional intelligence (EI) would be just as important as cognitive intelligence. Members of the audience wanted to know the profile of the questionnaire respondents as well as how often these people actually wrote anything themselves.

The study sought to show that even in the writing of a routine message (whether it be to merely give information or instructions, etc.), the use of emotional intelligence to communicate that message would better enable the writer to convey the message in the most logical way possible and in that way enable the receiver to understand its content in the manner intended by the writer. Hence, members of the audience were interested in whether or not this could actually be practiced in reality. An interesting and active discussion ensued making the entire presentation a fruitful one.

Radhika Jaidev teaches at the Centre for English Language Communication, National University of Singapore (NUS). She has ten years of experience in teaching and training adults in Business Communication. Currently, she teaches critical thinking and writing to first-year Engineering students at NUS. Her other interests include learner strategies and metacognition in relation to team-writing.

Reported by Radhika Jaidev (CELC)

*Gan-Lim Meng Choo on "Why and How Literature can be used to teach Business English".*

Meng Choo presented a paper on the use of literature to teach Business English. In his 1991 book, "Literature with a small 'l'", John McRae defines literature as "any text whose imaginative content will stimulate reaction and response in the reader". Meng Choo expanded McRae's definition to include, besides texts of local literature, audio-visual materials based on literary texts, such as movie versions of plays as well as songs. She talked about the importance of focusing on "process", and not just "product" in teaching Business English, and proposed that literature can be used in order to help students develop interpersonal skills essential in business, serve as a powerful motivator in class, and help students acquire capacity to use language appropriately for different audiences and in various contexts.

The audience participated in a demonstration of a lesson using literature in the Business English classroom and had a lively discussion on the discrepancy between what is taught in textbooks and what is expected in the business world, especially in our Asian context. How to effectively train students to write for audiences from different cultures was also discussed.

Gan-Lim Meng Choo is currently a lecturer at the Centre for English Language Communication, National University of Singapore. She has taught English proficiency and business communication to students and working adults from Singapore, People's Republic of China, Korea, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Japan, and to civil servants from the ASEAN countries of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Myanmar. Before joining the teaching profession, she was a TV journalist and newscaster, covering stories in business, education, and community development.

Reported by Gan-Lim Meng Choo (CELC)

Introduction to a Research Paper by Ivy Tan (CIT/NUS)

Ivy Tan, an Educational Technologist with the Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT) at the National University of Singapore conducted a workshop on "Plagiarism Detection Software" for STETS members on Saturday, 31 August 2002 at the Computer Centre in NUS. The workshop introduced "Turn It In", a plagiarism detection software developed by the University of California (Berkeley) and used by NUS to detect electronic plagiarism.

The following is an introduction to her paper "Selecting and Implementing Plagiarism Detection Software in a Large University".

The widespread use of the Internet has resulted in an increase in electronic plagiarism. Students cut and paste information from the Internet and claim the work as their own without giving proper credit. Paper mills allow students to publicly buy papers on the Internet. Universities around the world have implemented anti-plagiarism software to deter and detect electronic plagiarism.

The Centre for Instructional Technology (CIT) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) started researching on anti plagiarism software in August 2001. Testing different systems, selecting a suitable software service provider, researching legal implications and controversies surrounding the use of such software, drafting usage guidelines made the project challenging. The paper, "Selecting and implementing plagiarism detection software in a large university." highlights important and interesting issues which CIT had to deal with before "Turn It In" was launched in May 2002.

### **Forthcoming Activities**

Due to concerns over the SARS issue in Singapore, several of the usual STETS events and social gatherings scheduled below have been postponed.

Your STETS representative will send you more details once alternative dates for the events are finalized.

#### 5 April 2003 ([postponed till further notice](#))

Session 1: Technical Communication: Profession, Prospects and Pay

Session 2: Getting into Instructional Design

Session 3: Prospects for eLearning in Singapore

Presenters: Members from Society for Technical Communication (Singapore) & Lim Kin Chew (Head of eLearning Competency Centre)

Time: 9am-12.30pm

Venue: NUS, OAB Seminar Room #04-02

#### 12 April 2003 ([postponed till further notice](#))

Mind Our Language

Presenter: Paul Tolton

Time: 10am

Venue: British Council - Professional Development Centre, 143 Cecil Street, #17- 01, GB Building.

#### 26 April 2003

STETS Annual AGM

Time: 10am – 11am

Venue: NUS, OAB Seminar Room #04-02

\*Due to concerns over SARS, the usual social event associated with our AGM is cancelled. We will only be holding a brief annual general meeting for members and providing light refreshments.

#### 29 - 31 May 2003

STETS 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebration Workshop

Presenter: David Nunan

Times/ Venues: to be confirmed

### **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/>

## 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

Chief Editor, Language and Communication Review  
c/o Centre for English Language Communication  
National University of Singapore  
10 Kent Ridge Crescent  
Singapore 119260  
E-mail: please contact Richard at [slessor@tp.edu.sg](mailto:slessor@tp.edu.sg)

## **Other News**

### 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 Grace Kwan as our new Institutional Representative for ITE. She can be contacted at [grace\\_kwan@ite.edu.sg](mailto:grace_kwan@ite.edu.sg)

If you have STETS archival records and would like to add to our collection, please contact Radhika [elcrr@nus.edu.sg](mailto: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 21<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:slessor@tp.edu.sg)

All correspondence regarding STETS NEWS should be sent to [elclimhl@nus.edu.sg](mailto:elclimhl@nus.edu.sg)



***The STETS Committee***