FIRST UECA PD FEST AT CET A

On Saturday 24 March, the first University English Centres Australia (UECA) PD Fest was held at the Centre for English Teaching at the University of Sydney. Over 140 participants travelled from as far as Perth and Auckland to attend the day of professional development for ESL & TESOL teachers. This provided an opportunity for teachers to share ideas, explore issues affecting the industry and discuss opportunities for career development.

The keynote address entitled ‘Lifelong Learning’ was given by Associate Professor Ken Cruikshank from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. The speech focused on the need for teachers to continuously challenge themselves and find new ways to help students reach their learning goals.

The principal focus of the festival was to investigate a blueprint for the language centre of the future and the best way for teachers to adapt to the rapidly-changing world. The day comprised of a series of workshops in three streams, aimed at teachers in different stages of their careers:
- Early careers teachers
- Experienced teachers
- Master teachers

Within these streams a mixture of practical and theoretical sessions were delivered with titles as diverse as ‘Advanced Drama Techniques in Language Learning’, ‘Creating an Inclusive Curriculum for our Students’, ‘Teaching Outside the Box’ and ‘Using Technology’.

As well as the workshops there were panel sessions aimed at investigating how teachers can move forward in their careers and what the TESOL environment will look like as we move into the future. The feedback from the panels helped inform the final keynote, profiling tomorrow’s students and discussing how teachers would meet their perceived needs. It was pointed out that this was not going to be easy because as Richard Riley, Secretary of Education under Bill Clinton said ‘We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist.’ It was however agreed that new technology would be one of the main challenges of the future. Not only in understanding the technology itself but understanding how our students use it and how it can best be adapted to meet their learning needs.

Overall, the PD Fest was a great success and was a suitable beginning for an event that will become a major feature in the TESOL calendar. Not only did it allow teachers of all levels of experience to discuss current issues of concern but it also gave an opportunity for participants to network in a relaxed atmosphere.

COURSE FOCUS - CAMBRIDGE CELTA NOW OFFERED - 2-27 JULY & 19 NOV - 14 DEC 2012

In partnership with International House Sydney, CET now offers the highly vaulued CELTA qualification.

Certified by the University of Cambridge, this is the most widely recognised TESOL qualification worldwide, and the industry benchmark for teaching English in Australia or overseas. It is highly practical, focuses on communicative teaching theories and includes teaching practicum with real students.

The course is suitable for native and non-native (pre-advanced and above English speakers) who want to enter the English language teaching profession, as well as experienced teachers who want to develop their skills, with a strong focus on practical teaching.

It can be taken as an individual course or alongside the TESOL course as a dual qualification. Some of the core components of CELTA:
- The principles of effective lesson planning and teaching.
- A range of practical skills for teaching English to adults.
- Skills in Communicative Language Teaching methodology.
- Confidence and control in the classroom.
- Increased language awareness and a framework for language analysis.
- A structure for ongoing professional development.
NEWS FROM THE IELTS TEAM

From 1 February CET formed an alliance with Macquarie University English Language Centre to present online test preparation courses and onsite IELTS testing at CET. These arrangements ensure that students at the University of Sydney continue to have access to IELTS tests at a convenient location. The University of Sydney IELTS Test Venue is situated on Level 5 of Wentworth Building in the Darlington/Camperdown campus and offers modern, comfortable testing rooms, state-of-the-art equipment and experienced staff.

IELTS is the world’s largest high-stakes English language proficiency test. It is co-owned by IDP: IELTS Australia, the British Council and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations. Over 1.5 million candidates take the IELTS test each year. It is recognised by over 6,000 organisations as a secure, valid and reliable indicator of ability to communicate in English. The University of Sydney IELTS test venue will offer two test sessions per month.

NEWS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Take-up of our streamlined online application system has been very positive, with more than 95% of all applications for courses and customised programs now being processed online for faster turnaround and issuing of offers.

CET and the University help students with:

– Choosing the right course.
– ‘Packaging’ student visas for the full period of English language and University of Sydney studies.
– Scholarships to help offset study costs.

– Assistance in finding accommodation.
– Airport transfers.
– Health care.
– Libraries, internet, Wi-Fi and ‘learning hub’ computing facilities.
– Excursions and social activities.
– Sport and fitness facilities.
– Student support services and counselling.
– Access to Summer and Winter Schools to accelerate progress in university degrees.
– Australian and New South Wales government guarantees of consumer rights and protection.

MEET THE TEAM

Stephen - HOA
George - Finance
Janelle - Marketing
Sandra - Admissions
Helen - Admissions
Samantha - Admissions
Rachel - Logistics
Rachel - Logistics

ACROSS THE GLOBE

The top 20 CET Student Nationality Mix - January - April 2012

South Korea, Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Germany, Switzerland, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Iran, Italy, Libya, Sweden, Turkey, Venezuela, Vietnam, China, Japan, South Korea, Iran, Chile, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Oman, Thailand, Russia, Colombia.
A national university in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, 12 science and engineering students from a private university in Tokyo.

A private university from Gunma Prefecture, Japan, 28 undergraduate students studying English for careers in health, including hospital visits and touristic activities.

30 high school students from a private high school in Ehime Prefecture, Japan enjoying two weeks of English language learning and touristic events.

A private university from Gunma Prefecture, Japan, 28 undergraduate students studying a 3-week program of English for careers in health, including hospital visits and touristic activities.

A 3-week General English language program for 20 students from a science and technology university in Tokyo.

Opening up in English – Kouta Shimamori, Mika Hasegawa, Yurina Baba and Mai Shimura, who told of their experiences. Photo: Ben Rushton

In this disaster a great amount of people died not only from the physical effects of the earthquake and tsunami directly, but also the mental effects ... like my grandfather,” she said.

Almost one year on, the 20-year-old electrical engineering student is among a group of 30 from Tohoku University in Sendai, northern Japan, who have used a five-week English course at the university as an opportunity to articulate their feelings about the disaster, and the grief accompanying the country’s recovery.

The university’s Centre for English Teaching director, Patrick Pheasant, said that speaking in another language allowed the students to throw off some of their cultural reticence while in Australia, and talk about their experiences more directly than they might have in the past.

“By speaking in English they take on a little bit of a different persona ... I think they are able to speak about things that they couldn’t really speak about in their own language,” he said.

They prepared the project before their arrival in Sydney last month but gave presentations this week. “I think it’s really powerful for them because they all wanted to stay and listen to each other’s stories,” he said.

Agriculture student Mai Shimura, 21, flew from her university accommodation when the earthquake struck.

She said she first heard radio reports of fire and “hundreds of bodies on the road”, while in a refuge in a gym, and “couldn’t believe what I had heard was real”.

Her presentation this week detailed how she later volunteered to help with the recovery efforts in a small coastal town, Yamamoto, in Miyagi prefecture, where 700 people died.

“I could never understand their pain in the true sense,” she said. “But at least I can stay close to their hearts. I can also introduce what I have witnessed.”

My son, Ben, started his USYD course this year – A Bachelor of Political, Economic and Social Science with a maths strand. Father and son sharing the USYD experience – how fortunate for them!

As the course goes, Ben is enjoying statistics but is less enthused about the softer subjects. Stay tuned.

Throughout 2011, we continued our Customised Programs service as part of a university–university partnership for the internationalisation of education. Our innovative customised programs provided a flexible pathway to the studying of English in specialised areas of expertise. Participants included researchers, teachers, and university and high school students. In addition to English language learning for school credit, our guests learnt about cross-cultural awareness, attended specialist university lectures, and enjoyed language learning-based excursions and touristic activities.

Some examples of the groups that we were honoured to host at customised programs in CET during 2011 were:

- A national university in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, 12 science and engineering students joining in a mix of General English and English for Engineering, including professional site visits and university lecture audits.
- 60 students from a leading national university in Daegu, South Korea, studying English for biomedical sciences.
- A national university from Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan, 12 students incorporated two weeks of General English studies into a tour of southern Australian cities.
- A highly specialised course in English for postgraduate research skills for a leading university in Bangkok, Thailand that concentrated on the benefits of personnel exchanges and research on academic affairs.
- A GAMSAT medical entrance examination preparation course for Middle Eastern students applying to courses in medicine at the university.
- 30 high school students from a private high school in Ehime Prefecture, Japan enjoying two weeks of English language learning and touristic events.
- A private university from Gunma Prefecture, Japan, 28 undergraduate students studying a 3-week program of English for careers in health, including hospital visits and touristic activities.
- A 3-week General English language program for 20 students from a science and technology university in Tokyo.
SUPPORTING STUDENTS & THE COMMUNITY

Our Community Workshops are part of a university-wide program which aims both to provide continued support for students at key stages of the student life cycle, from first enquiry to alumnus, and to engage further with the local community, providing support programs in areas of expertise.

TEST PREPARATION - 12-13 APRIL 2012
Test Preparation gives students the opportunity to get the test score they need by working on test strategies and common weak areas (e.g.: pronunciation and fluency).

Students learned:
– techniques for achieving higher scores in the listening and reading tests
– ways to anticipate answers in the comprehension and speaking tests
– points for upgrading writing skills
– how to identify and work on weak areas in speaking.

COMMUNICATING CROSS-CULTURALLY IN ENGLISH - 12-13 APRIL 2012

Communicating Cross-Culturally in English gives students the language and interpersonal skills to be more successful in cross-cultural environments.

Students learned:
– the main characteristics of Australian English
– the differences between Australian, American and British English
– the importance of politeness and other strategies when communicating cross-culturally.

LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH DRAMA 28/4, 5/5 & 12/5

Learning English Through Drama is a series of 3 workshops designed to help improve listening and speaking skills in English in a fun, dynamic learning environment.

Studying with a group of international students, the teacher takes students on an exciting journey of learning English through role-play, improvisation, actor training exercises and games. Students explore hot topics and current issues in a meaningful and deep way.

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

Cam TESOL: Language and Development

The 8th Cam TESOL conference was held in Phnom Penh on the 25 and 26 February with the theme of Language and Development. The conference was attended by 1500 delegates predominantly from Asia but with representatives from all around the world.

CET was represented at the Cam TESOL conference by Jannette Greenwood and Jeremy Lindeck who gave a presentation entitled ‘Preparing materials for the reading and writing sections of the IELTS test.’ This presentation provided ideas for teachers on ways that an IELTS course might be structured. There was a particular focus on common problems students have with the test and ways to deal with these difficulties.

As part of the conference participants went on a tour of local private language schools. An interesting feature was that in one chain of schools the Director had a direct video link to each classroom and was able to observe the progress of each lesson.

Perhaps the highlight of the conference was the enthusiasm, vast range of different backgrounds and language teaching experiences of the participants. This opened up interesting discussions about the different environments and issues affecting the TESOL industry around the world.

Other conferences and workshops - Quarter 1 2012
– English Australia - Brand Launch Workshop - Thursday 8 March – Dr Stephen Howlett
– NSW Government Taskforce on International Education & Research (ELICOS) - Industry Consultations - Monday 12 March - Dr Stephen Howlett
– UECA Lifelong Learning PD Fest - Sat 24 March – CET Teachers
– Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Information Sessions for Providers - Monday 16 April - Helen White and Dr Stephen Howlett
– SydnyStudent - Student Portal Demonstration - Tuesday 17 April - Dr Stephen Howlett
– Learning Management Systems (LMS) - 29 February - Janelle Adams