

A UWAS Training Initiative in Cambodia

“Teaching and Learning English through ICT” 19-23 December 2005, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Background



Group picture after the Certificate Awarding Ceremony

In December 2005, two UWAS members, **Rosemary Khoo** and **Sandra Segeram**, volunteered their services to conduct a course in Cambodia on “Teaching and Learning English through ICT” in Phnom Penh. This five-day intensive training course was a collaborative effort of UWAS, the Cambodian Teacher Training Department (TTD) MoEYS (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports), and UNESCO. The original training initiative came from UWAS (University Women’s Association (Singapore)), which had included language and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) training as one of its aid programmes to Cambodia. In this collaboration, UWAS was responsible for providing the specialist instruction, whereas the other agencies took care of other costs related to training *viz* internet usage, printing of materials, teachers’ allowance, tea-breaks, etc.. This initiative, like other UWAS Cambodian projects, was made possible through funds from the Lee Foundation.

Earlier in August 2005, **Khoo Kim Choo** and Rosemary Khoo had made a brief field visit to Phnom Penh to discuss with TTD, NIE and UNESCO the training requirements and possible training venues. It was decided that the training should take place in the first week of December and that the training site be at the centrally-located NIE.

Due to difficulties of connecting computers to the Internet, the Cambodian authorities had to postpone the dates of training twice, and the training finally took place

from 19-23 Dec 2005. **Marianne Teo**, who had originally intended to go and had assisted in the preliminary preparations was then unable to do so, and Sandra went in her place.

The Participants

The course participants were 29 core teacher trainers who were also teachers of English, five of whom were women. Although UWAS had requested that half the participants be women, the Ministry found this stipulation difficult to comply with. Nineteen came from the six regional teacher training centres while ten were from NIE.



Course participants hard at work - teacher trainers, but now they are students grappling with a new technology

The Instructors

Both UWAS members who conducted the course possessed TESL qualifications viz. Rosemary Khoo (PhD; MA; Dip Ed; Dip TESL; BA Hons) and Sandra Segeram (MA; BA; DipEd; Dip Appl Ling; Dip TESL).



Dr Rosemary Khoo



Ms Sandra Segeram

The Course Schedule



Preliminary meeting of instructors with Cambodian officials -
Mr Heng Sorin, Mr Leang Seng Hak and Ms Sombath Eath

The instructors flew into Phnom Penh on the evening of Friday 16 Dec. They spent the next morning at the NIE training site meeting up with **Mr Leang Seng Hak**, Director of TTD, and **Dr Im Koch**, Director of NIE, and also testing the internet connectivity, download speeds and software compatibility on both the PC and Apple laptops that they had brought along. Sunday was devoted to making modifications to the workshop tasks in the light of English coursebook materials which they received on their arrival. **Mr Heng Sorin** and **Ms Sombath Eath** were indispensable as liaison between the instructors, MoEYS and UNESCO.



Class in session



Relaxing during tea break



Cambodian snacks

The course began the next day and comprised 10 three-hour sessions (with 15-min tea-breaks in between) from Monday to Friday, beginning at 8.00 a.m. The instructors flew back to Singapore on Saturday morning, 24 December.

Training Venue

The training room was located at the NIE SRK School of Information, where a room had been fitted with computers which had been connected with internet access only the day before. The set-up was simple and each participant had a computer to work with. Although the internet connection was at times unstable, these problems were ironed out by the instructors and the standby technical support provided by NIE.



Training venue SRK School of Information



Going home after a long day

The Course Programme

The course comprised 30 hours and was aimed at equipping participants with both theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills necessary for using the internet in English language teaching. The course content had been designed to include aspects of language teaching methodology and lesson planning. Topics included:

- The place and potential of using ICT in language teaching and learning

- Technical terminology and terms specific to ICT and language learning and teaching.
- Useful language learning resources and websites.
- Principles of good language teaching practice.
- Identification of spoken text types.
- The organization patterns of reading and writing text types (narrative, descriptive and expository) and their language features (grammar and vocabulary).
- Integration of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).
- Devising practical classroom exercises and activities integrating ICT.
- Creating a lesson plan using the prescribed lesson template.



Course booklet given to each participant

Participants' Lesson Plans On Ministry Website



A course participant presenting his lesson plan to the group

The tangible course outcomes were the production of detailed lesson plans of classroom language lessons incorporating ICT, which were completed either individually or jointly by participants. These could be uploaded onto the Cambodian Ministry of Education's website.

On the first day of the course, each participant was given a course booklet which the instructors had prepared. Handouts were also given out for each of the training sessions.

A brief ceremony marked the opening of the course, and the course concluded with a short certificate awarding ceremony with speeches from the officials: **Dr Supote Prasertsri** (Education Programme Specialist, UNESCO), Dr Leang Seng Hak, Dr Im Koch, and Dr Rosemary Khoo.

A Certificate bearing the logos of MoEYS, UWAS, JFIT and UNESCO was awarded to each participant for completing the course.



Certificate Awarding Ceremony – a proud moment

Follow-Up

A course evaluation was administered during the final session. Comments from participants were very positive and encouraging and all aspects of the course were found interesting and useful. Regarding how the course could be improved, a recurring point was that the course could be of longer duration. Many participants requested for a follow-up of the course, such as the use of Powerpoint in language teaching, innovations in methodology, or anything that would improve teaching skills.

UWAS may want to consider doing a follow-up training course with the Cambodian Ministry and UNESCO in their future plans of helping the region.

Comments

ICT training is both labour intensive and expensive, and the rigorous five-week 30-hour training programme entailed a month of preparation in order to provide up to date web resources to include in the course booklet. Powerpoint presentations and workshop activity sheets. The instructors also made back-up copies of diskettes of numerous websites, web books and web dictionaries downloaded from the internet, in case facilities and equipment in Cambodia were unsuitable for quick surfing in class. This entailed many hours of surfing the internet prior to the course. The instructors made minimal use of hotel internet facilities for last minute adjustments to materials.

The participants were a motivated group and the training was highly appreciated by the Cambodians judging from the hospitality given to the instructors and the remarks at the closing ceremony by Dr Leang that this was one instance of external aid where there was “much action and few words”.

On April 22 2006, the instructors received a pleasant surprise in the mail - a warm letter of appreciation from the Senior Minister of MoEYS, **Dr Kol Pheng**, for their contribution to Cambodian teacher education.

Note; Marianne: Letter from Senior Minister MoEYS, Dr Kol Pheng; please place here.