



**1. Let's know more about Mrs. Ferguson first.**

Mrs. Ferguson is our school's NET teacher who came from Australia. She started her teaching life in ILC in 2006. Mrs. Ferguson is an experienced teacher. She also worked in an Australian University for 5 years in a teacher education program. Apart from teaching in her home country, she has worked as a NET teacher in other countries, like Japan, before coming to Hong Kong.

**5. Can you talk about your work in Japan?**

I worked as a guest teacher in Japan for half a year. The Osaka and Queensland Governments organized an exchange program and I was chosen to be the guest teacher. The working experience in Japan was interesting. I worked with teachers and students in high schools. I also worked in City Hall in the International Section. I did things like writing a booklet for foreigners living in Osaka. Actually, the work of a guest teacher is quite varied. I taught English to adult employees in City Hall as well. During the stay in Japan, I was able to continue my study of Japanese

**10. Do you ever get homesick while working in Hong Kong?**

I usually go back to Australia at least once a year, usually in summer holiday and/or Christmas. One year, I didn't go back for Christmas and it was the worst Christmas I have ever had. I missed my family so much as Christmas is an important family celebration in Australia.

**2. Why would you choose to become a NET teacher in Hong Kong?**

That's really a difficult question. I am a person who likes travelling and experiencing other countries' cultures. However, the main reason I came to Hong Kong is that one of my colleagues left Australia to work in Hong Kong and she suggested that I should too. I took her advice and explored some schools in Hong Kong. I found that I really love this place, so I stayed here and started my work as a NET teacher. Working in Hong Kong is different from working in Australia. It's interesting too.

**6. What are the similarities between Japanese students and Hong Kong's students?**

SHY! They are all very shy and lack confidence. In fact, they can do far better than they think they can. Maybe it is a part of the Asian personality. They are very humble and keep on thinking that they are not able to accomplish anything. But actually, I could communicate quite well with them. Improving the confidence of my students here and in Japan is one of the things that I have wanted to do.



● with Korean students



● in Japan

**11. Do you feel sad about the modification of the ELC?**

Yes, I do. Since the ELC moved into the library, it is not so obvious and it's harder to attract students. The afternoon activities have fallen away too as the area is small. We are not able to run the ELCafe. Therefore, I really feel a bit sad that we don't have somewhere for students to come and use English for natural purposes.

**3. Have you ever experienced pressure due to the Hong Kong education system?**

This is one of the hardest problems that I have to deal with being a NET teacher in Hong Kong. On one hand, I am aware that students focus on their examinations and concentrate on learning what can help them to pass the exam. On the other hand, I hope that students can learn language in a relaxed way and in the way they like so as to develop an interest in acquiring languages. Thus, there are conflicts between learning language and learning language to pass exams. This is what I have to struggle with.



● Improvised Drama winners

**7. What do you do when students speak language other than English?**

This problem can be handled easier in Japan as I know Japanese. I actually understand the conversations. However, I can only understand some Cantonese here. Hong Kong students like to use Cantonese. When I asked one student a question in English, he replied in Cantonese! I think this is a matter of confidence. Students think that if they can't use "perfect" English, they should not say anything. But it doesn't matter if it is not perfect. What I focus on is communication, not perfection.

**12. How do you allure students to learn English?**

I think activity is a good way to do this. For example, if we're doing a games activity, students don't think about learning English and focus on the game instead of on grammar rules and language structure. It is something we call an "embedded approach" to language learning and I have found that this works very well – and that students usually enjoy it.

**4. Do you ever feel depressed because of students' exam-oriented attitudes?**

Not really, but I need to be able to show how the things I teach can be related to exams. Sometimes, I think students don't realize that everything we learn is valuable eventually. Nowadays, when students find that the knowledge is not directly related to exams, they see it as worthless. However, from my experience of exam systems and being a lifelong learner of languages, I believe everything we do for language learning is valuable.

**8. After working in Hong Kong for so many years, have you improved in Cantonese?**

Yes. I can chat a little with people in the market now. I understand the price of items in stores and the names of many products. I still can't read Chinese but I do pick up some terms when people are talking. When I listen to Cantonese conversations, I can sometimes follow them now. I think Cantonese is a musical language. I was terrified about the tones and afraid I would say something wrong because of the tones.

**9. What do you think about the performance of ILCians?**

I wish they would speak English more. I was really thrilled with last year's F.5 students' oral results in HKCEE. It was the best result since I have been here. What I really want to say is that ILCians are very delightful students. I appreciate their courtesy, pleasant working attitude and respect. Generally, students in ILC are the nicest group of students that I have worked with.

**13. Can you introduce some English activities held in ILC to all of us?**

We have an Improvised Drama club at which students perform completely in English. Apart from acting, students also plan and discuss their storylines, though they usually make up dialogues as they perform. It is a good way to practice and learn English as well as a fun activity.

We also have an annual English Drama Competition. This year's format is a bit

different from previous ones. This year, F.2 students will compete in Readers' Theatre and F.3 classes will have a commercial competition. They have to present a television advertisement. It is important to do more activities which allow us to use our second language. We have to make sure that we get a balance between learning and entertaining; between hard work and fun.

