



New Staff

Ready To Learn would like to introduce two of its new teachers.



Mr. Tim Cresswell

Mr Tim Cresswell is from Nottingham in the United Kingdom. A graduate of the College of York St. John University, Tim relaxes by playing and coaching football in his spare time. This is Tim's first time in Hong Kong.

Ms. Victoria Holmes is from St. Austell, in the south-west of England, and is a graduate of The University of Wales.

Vicky, who is interested in the Arts, is a keen poet and has had several pieces of her work published. She is enjoying her stay enormously and is looking forward to experiencing her first Chinese New Year in Hong Kong.



Ms. Victoria Holmes

Administration Department

In our Finance and Operations Department we would like to welcome Christina Ma (Accountant) from 13/12/04 and Elsa Lo (Operations Assistant) from 2/12/04.

Ready To Learn would like to welcome all new staff to the company and extend a very warm 'Kung Hei Fat Choi' to Tim, Vicky, Christina and Elsa.



Elsa Lo and Christina Ma

RTL is expanding!

Due to popular demand, Ready to Learn is currently looking for suitable premises to open a new centre, but as kindergarten children can only be taught a syllabus (as opposed to play/art programme) on the ground floor, podium or floor with two exclusive staircases, it is difficult. If anyone knows of such a building that has parking, MTR/KCR and convenient access, please contact: **Lilian Mak on 2388 1318 or 2330 2290**

RTL Boast Low Teacher Turnover

Ready To Learn is one of the largest private employers of teachers in Hong Kong and is proud to have a very low rate of teacher turnover.

Facts and figures about our teachers

- Our teachers have taught at Ready To Learn for an average of 2.5 years.
- Over 80% of our teachers have taught at Ready To Learn for longer than 1 year.
- Almost 50% of our teachers have taught at Ready To Learn for longer than 2 years.
- 25% of our teachers have taught at Ready To Learn for longer than 3 years.
- Almost 20% of our teachers have taught at Ready To Learn for longer than 4 years.
- Almost 75% of our teachers are from overseas.
- 60% of our teachers are female.
- 40% of our teachers are male.

HK Government Teachers Leave Hong Kong

The number of native English-speaking teachers in Hong Kong continues to fall short of targets, with the Education and Manpower Bureau revealing a shortfall of nearly 60% for the primary NET scheme.

It is believed that disillusionment with an inflexible system is widely responsible for teachers failing to renew their contracts, with many ex-teachers venting their frustrations in Internet chat rooms before leaving Hong Kong.

This shortfall comes at a time when many principals feel that the use of 'mother tongue' teaching is under threat, with proposed rule changes allowing some schools to revert back to EMI status in 2009.

Mr. Ho Hon-kuen, vice-chairman of CMI school Elegancia College, said "parents still prefer EMI schools since English skills are highly valued in the jobs market" and feared that this, coupled with the teacher shortage, would result in many schools resorting to **drilling** teachers and students in English, and that the quality of education would suffer as a result.

Cambridge and Trinity ESOL Examinations

Results

We are proud to announce the most recent results of RTL students who participated in the Cambridge Young Learners English Tests, in November, 2004.

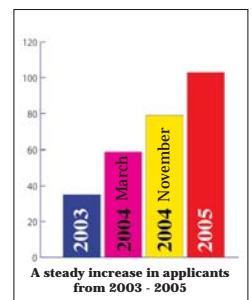
A total of 75 students took part in Starters, Movers, and Flyers, examinations and we are proud to report Ready To Learn students excelled in all three levels and in all disciplines, with 76% achieving 4 or 5 shields for Reading and Writing, 78% achieving 4 or 5 shields for Listening, and an amazing 87% of students achieving 4 or 5 shields for Speaking.

The most recent results for the Trinity ESOL examinations show equally impressive figures. Of the 59 students who participated, an amazing 93% passed, with an impressive 78% of these students achieving Merit or Distinction.

Ready To Learn would like to congratulate all the students involved.

Numbers Soar

The number of applicants for Trinity and Cambridge Examinations continues to increase. Hung Hom and North Point centres are both pleased to announce the near doubling of exam participants in recent months. A total of 103 Ready To Learn students will sit the forthcoming exam on 13th March, 2005, and specialist examiners will be in attendance. It is pleasing to note that this upward trend coincides with the excellent results achieved by RTL students, reflecting parents' confidence in the RTL programme to gain results.



Need help? We are here to listen!

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Star Pupil!



Congratulations to Jabril Ho, who has been with Ready to Learn since December, 2002 and is making admirable progress.

In fact, he is now doing so well, with the RTL programme and at school, that his mother contacted RTL to offer her thanks!

A Primary Two pupil at Alliance Primary School, Jabril's mother firmly believes that the RTL system is responsible for her son's outstanding school results.

She remarks on Jabril's improvement in oral, listening and phonics tests, and believes that RTL deserve some of his schoolteacher's praise!

Mrs. Ho also welcomes the RTL practice of taping lessons, as she knows exactly what goes on in the classroom, and mother and son are both happy that RTL do not overburden their pupils with homework!



Star pupil, Jabril Ho

Revision of Books - Striving for Excellence

Ready To Learn continually upgrade the presentation of material for the books. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who recently took part in our survey regarding the use of Mr & Mrs.



Happy Bride!

Michelle Ma, one of our part-time teachers, was married on Sunday 9th January in Saint Anthony's church. Michelle was a radiant bride and we at RTL take pleasure in wishing her lots of luck for the future.



The happy bride and groom

Meet the Academic Coordinators

Both Paula Crowder and Claire Askham wish to express their pleasure in meeting parents. Our Academic Coordinators are always willing to discuss the progress of students. This is a time when you can give your point of view and discuss fully the headway your child is making. We enjoy meeting with you and look forward to seeing you in the coming year.



Paula Crowder



Claire Askham

Ready to Learn Chinese New Year Party

Over 50 Ready To Learn staff, and their partners, gathered together on the evening of Saturday 29th January, at the Gourmet Chinese Restaurant to enjoy a traditional Chinese meal and welcome in the forthcoming New Year.

The evening was a great success; the wine flowed, the dishes were delicious and the service super.

The evening culminated in a lucky draw, with Robert Hope-Jones winning the grand prize of an MP3 player. Several others were in luck, with new teacher Vicky Holmes winning a coffee maker and gift vouchers and book tokens finding their way into the hands of numerous lucky winners.

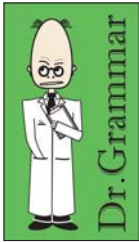
Everybody from RTL would like to extend a huge thank you to the staff of the Gourmet Chinese Restaurant who worked tirelessly to help make the evening so enjoyable.



Did You Know?



From only 29 students at the outset of Ready To Learn in 1996, RTL is now one of the largest providers of English language tuition in Hong Kong.



Dr. Grammar solves your language problems.

Dear Dr. Grammar,
I often have problems talking about colours. I usually say 'blue colour', 'green colour', 'yellow colour', or 'red colour' to describe things, but my friend says this is wrong. Please help!
Lily Lee
Kowloon

Dr. Grammar writes:
This is a common problem Lily, and easily solved. Unlike Cantonese, where 'sick' is used after naming colours, we don't need to use 'colour' in English. Simply say the name of the colour, for example: 'blue', 'green', 'yellow' or 'red'.

Dear Dr. Grammar,
I have a problem misusing words like 'boring' and 'bored', 'interesting' and 'interested'. I always mix them up. Last week I told my friends 'I am boring' and everybody started to laugh at me! What's wrong?
Charlie Chan
New Territories

Dr. Grammar writes:
*Oh dear! This is a most unfortunate condition. Try to remember that 'boring' is the **thing** causes the feeling, and 'bored' is how you feel.*

If you have a grammar problem that you need help with, you can write to Dr. Grammar at:
nick.shields@readytolearn.net

Ella's Recipes

Easy Chocolate Cake

Firstly, melt 1/4 butter with 1/4 cup cold water, and add 1/2 cup milk.

Then stir these together with:
1 1/2 cups self-raising flour
1 cup caster sugar
1 tablespoon cocoa

After that, add one well beaten egg and stir well.

Finally, bake for 45 minutes at 160°C.

We want your recipes!

Ella has kindly sent Ready To Learn one of her favourite recipes.

*If you have a favourite recipe or a special food that you like to cook, and you would like to share it with us, why don't you send it to Ready To Learn?
You can send it to: nick.shields@readytolearn.net*

Lunar New Year Quiz

Chinese New Year is soon upon us, and with it the traditional festivities and celebrations including 'Lion dancing' 'Lucky money' and long holidays!

Do you know how other countries celebrate New Year? Take the Ready To Learn New Year Quiz and find out.

1. In what country do people bring a gift of a lump of coal at New Year?

- a) Canada
- b) Scotland
- c) Japan
- d) England

2. Where is it popular to eat doughnuts on New Year's Day?

- a) Australia
- b) France
- c) United States
- d) Holland

3. In what country do people eat black-eyed peas to bring them good luck for New Year?

- a) Spain
- b) United States
- c) New Zealand
- d) Germany

4. In this country, people eat 12 grapes, one with every toll of the bell to bring good luck for the next 12 months.

- a) Australia
- b) United Kingdom
- c) Spain
- d) Italy

5. People from this country traditionally leave broken cups and plates on their friends doorsteps to bring them good luck for the coming New Year.

- a) Denmark
- b) Greece
- c) Russia
- d) Japan

6. In this country, children's shoes are traditionally filled with gifts on New Year's Eve.

- a) Poland
- b) Greece
- c) United States
- d) Canada



Kung Hey Fat Choi!

Don't worry if you found some of the questions difficult or didn't know where some of the countries are. The next RTL newsletter will include a helpful section on Geography!

Answers

1. b 2. d 3. b 4. c 5. a 6. b

How did you score?

0 - 1 2 - 3 4 - 5 6
Oops! Could do better! Very good! Top of the class!

New Year Idioms

Idioms are phrases or expressions used to describe things. The normal meaning cannot usually be guessed from the words. We use them to make our language more interesting. Take a look at the following New Year idioms!

New Year's Day is the start of a brand spanking new year. People often celebrate the New Year with parties. Everybody is very happy and usually it is easy for people to break the ice. To get the ball rolling, people often shake hands, sing songs and wish each other a 'Happy New Year'.

Brand spanking new
Doctors traditionally spank a new baby to help it breathe, so when we describe something as 'brand spanking' it means 'new'.

Break the ice means to be the first one to say or do something, in the hope that others will follow. Just starting a conversation can need someone to 'break the ice'.

Get the ball rolling is similar to 'break the ice'. It means to be the first one to start or do something while encouraging others to join in.

Satisfied Customers!

Ready To Learn is pleased to announce further development of their Corporate English department.

Recent satisfied customers include **Triumph International, Giordano, and KAB Strategy.**

Ready To Learn provided all three companies with tailor-made courses specific to the companies' requirements. This involved developing courses suited to the language needs of various departments, at various levels, from front line staff to sales and marketing teams, as well as perfecting the meeting and presentation skills necessary for senior management figures.

A high rate of success in the BULATS examination, taken after course completion, was enjoyed by all.

Ready To Learn provides experienced native English-speaking language trainers and also helps businesses successfully utilize the H.K. Government's 'Workplace English' scheme.

For further information on how RTL can help your business contact our Corporate Training Department on **2508 0912**.



RTL - Provider of Corporate Language Training to Triumph International HK

Business Tips



In all aspects of business communication it is vital to remember the 4Cs. If you don't, you will lose business, irrespective of product or service quality.

- 1 **Correct** - make sure the content is *relevant* and *appropriate*.
- 2 **Clear** - cut the jargon. Effective communication is *easy* to understand.
- 3 **Concise** - keep it *brief* to maximize interest.
- 4 **Courteous** - *how* you present is as important as *what* you present.

For more information on how Ready To Learn can help your Business English needs contact Nick Shields on 2508 0912.

Business Crossword



Across

- 1 Electronic intruder (6)
- 6 Slang for US dollar (9)
- 8 Japanese currency (3)
- 9 Information technology (2)
- 10 Valuable metal (8)
- 11 Opposite of spend (4)

Down

- 1 HK stock market (4, 4)
- 2 European Community (2)
- 3 Place to sell goods (6)
- 4 World's richest country (3)
- 5 The boss (3)
- 7 Extra payment (5)

Solution next edition

