

# THT



We're not just an organization, we're an idea, a concept.-

Bill Balsamo

*Teachers Helping Teachers is dedicated to the aid and assistance of fellow educators and students in the developing countries of the world.*

## Inside this issue:

**THT/Hue 2009** 2  
**Report by Dr.**

**THT/Hue 2009** 3  
**Report Contin-**

**THT/Hue 2009** 4  
**Report Contin-**

**THT Coordinator's** 4  
**Report**

# Teachers Helping Teachers

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## THT/University of Hue, Vietnam: Our Fourth Program on the Perfume River

*Dr. Peter Wanner gives us his report on the fourth THT program at the University of Hue, Hue, Vietnam*

First, I would like to thank Rector Phuoc for inviting THT to come to Vietnam to present again. The fourth THT/Hue English Language Teaching Seminars were highly constructive. For various reasons, the number of delegates was limited to only four long time veterans, Peter Wanner, Joseph Tomei, Ronald Klein, and Steven Wolfe. Almost all of the delegates were returning to Hue for their third time. Hue University had numerous applicants, but had to turn many people away to keep the workshops and seminars at a reasonable number. 140 participants registered from 15 prefectures of Vietnam. The Vietnamese Educational Board helped provide money to the select candidates from the



**Peter Wanner (top) and Joe Tomei (bottom) working with Vietnamese teachers at THT/Hue 2009**

## THT/Bangladesh 2009

*The fourth THT/Bangladesh program (July 22—29) was a success. As Bangladesh was our first country, and the Bangladesh English Language Teaching Association was our first host, it was good to see another program succeed. This year we added a set of seminars in Sylhet, in the northeast of the country, to our regular program in Dhaka.*

*“... there is a strong desire to understand various teaching tools that can be used as self-help mechanisms, especially since the number of students per class is still very large.”*

### THT/Hue (Continued)

schools that were selected from the various junior high schools and high schools. Likewise, about 15 percent of the participants were graduate students or prospective graduate students. The purpose of this conference is to provide mostly practical teaching applications, but also some theoretical principles as well.

Junior high school and senior high school teachers are looking for ways to improve teaching in settings where they have large classrooms and also where they have limited materials such as audio recorders. Many Vietnamese schools are incorporating the use of a few computers in the classroom and therefore many teachers strongly desire more information on ways to use them as teaching tools for the students. The number of computers in most schools is limited to one or two per classroom and the large computer labs are only limited to more prestigious schools that can afford them. However, there is a strong desire to understand various teaching tools that can be

used as self-help mechanisms, especially since the number of students per class is still very large.

This year Professor Joseph Tomei highlighted a workshop on the introduction of the use of quick time as a mechanism to increase reading skills such as reading speed. This workshop was highly received by those that attended it and survey results showed that the participants want to learn more about this learning tool again next year. Time limitations always make it difficult to teach all the applications various programs offer within a 60 minute time slot.

Professor Steven Wolfe discussed how to use cultural literature such as Zen stories or parables to develop creativity and critical thinking. Professor Ronald Klein continued to highlight pronunciation exercises and applications this year, but this year he held two special small speech clinics limited to 20 people maximum. Pronunciation is an area that all teachers are very keen to improve, however most students in Vietnam are more concerned with passing the entrance exams to higher

education that do not concentrate on this area, similar to other Asian countries. In any case, the teachers were highly interactive in these workshops and rated them highly. I highlighted use of self-help computer programs to organize vocabulary and learn it easier with the use of fmSMART (known in the past as i-Know) with references to some other programs such as ‘Word Champ.’ Furthermore, I discussed factors that should be considered in making homemade and standardized multiple-choice tests in the classroom since the education ministry of Vietnam has placed more emphasis on this way of testing students because of its high reliability and validity.

As always conducting seminars and training sessions in Vietnam requires the ability to be flexible. The professors inevitably will have to change to different rooms because of various facility constraints such as inability to access the internet or the temperature of a room becoming so hot it is difficult to keep attentive, especially in the afternoon. This summer, temperatures were in the 40’s in the

## THT/Hue 2009 (continued)

Ron Klein  
working  
with teach-  
ers at THT/  
Hue 2009



use of fans in the main hall made it difficult to concentrate. However, with a quick adjustment the classes were small enough that the teachers were re-routed to a smaller cooler location. Since there were only four delegate speakers this year, most of the speakers gave at least two presentations twice so participants had a second chance to attend a presentation if they didn't make it to the first one. Handouts were prepared and available for all the presentations. Participants received a set of handouts for all presentations, even those they did not attend so they could refer to them and possi-

bly contact the speaker later on by internet if they had further questions. The closing ceremony was a landmark event with a large feast following it for the participants and the delegates. The delegates were able to interact and say their farewells to the participants and exchange information for further correspondences. THT also gave out the Balsamo Scholarship award that they have yearly awarded at this conference in the amount of 40,000 yen. This was given to the student organization that will choose four deserving students to cover their tuition for one year as undergraduate stu-

dents.

This year, the university provided beginning Vietnamese teachers as the facilitators as people to assist the delegates with any matters that needed their help. Their responsibilities may have included going to the market to help get items to take home to family members or to colleagues of their school, often requiring great bargaining skills. The hospitality of the facilitators and the staff of Hue University was absolutely outstanding, as always. Likewise, the input from the participants was also an enlightening experience for the delegate speakers. We always

The next THT/  
Hue program  
has tentatively  
been sched-  
uled for June  
11—13, 2009

*"The closing  
ceremony was  
a landmark  
event."*

## Teachers Helping Teachers Officers:

Coordinator: Pat Dougherty  
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[tht-japan.org/](http://tht-japan.org/)

## THT/Hue 2009 (Continued)

come away from each THT/Hue Language Teaching Seminar with more knowledge about the unique things that Vietnamese teachers are doing and the research they are performing. However, the time limitations always seem to make us come back to Vietnam the next year longing for more knowledge ourselves. The Fourth THT/Hue Language Teaching Seminar was valued highly by the participants and the delegate speakers. Next year we hope to have more delegate speakers so we can provide more presentations and have more participants able to attend. If you are interested in joining the language teaching seminars in Vietnam next year, please tentatively set aside June 11-13, 2010 and prepare three presentations or workshops you think will be appropriate.

## THT Coordinator's Report: Pat Dougherty

I would like to acknowledge the great work that Peter Wanner and his team did in Vietnam this year. As you can read from Peter's report, THT/Hue 2009 was a success. It was one of our smaller teams, as June is usually a busy time for most of our volunteers, but the team of Steve, Joe, Ron and Peter rose to the occasion, did double-duty, and succeeded in providing great service to the teachers who attended their seminars. We also finished a program in Bangladesh that was special in that we added another venue to our usual program. After completing our program in Dhaka we traveled six hours by bus up to the tea-plantation ringed city of Sylhet, where we did a repeat performance for the BELTA association there — and it was wonderful experience. I'll report on the Bangladesh program in some detail in our next newsletter.

I would like to mention the Balsamo Asian Scholar program, and remind our THTers and friends that we, once again, have been instrumental in recommending a great friend of THT for the honor. Dr. April Salazar, of THT/the Philippines fame, will be the Balsamo Asian Scholar for the 2009—2010 season. Seen with THT volunteers in on the left in the picture above (next to the odd looking man in the hat), April will be presenting at JALT 2009 and then doing a speaking tour of some lucky JALT chapters in Japan. Check out the JALT2009 website for up-to-the-minute information.



## What is Teachers Helping Teachers?

*Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) is a grassroots, non-profit, organization founded in 2004 in Himeji, Japan, by teachers interested in giving back to their community by working with fellow educators in the developing world. Currently active in the Asia Pacific region with plans to expand into the Middle East and Africa, THT fulfills its mission most notably by providing practical teacher-training workshops. We branch out from there and are now active in research, textbook writing, and the provision of scholarship monies (through the William Balsamo Memorial Scholarship program). Since 2004 we have had successful annual and semi-annual programs operating with hosts in Bangladesh, Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Additionally, we have a new program starting up in Kyrgyzstan this coming month, from September 8—10. For more information, see our website at [tht-japan.org/](http://tht-japan.org/), or contact THT Coordinator Pat Dougherty at [patrick.dougherty@hct.ac.ae](mailto:patrick.dougherty@hct.ac.ae) and/or [ct180@hotmail.com](mailto:ct180@hotmail.com).*