During the conference I was one of four students selected to present the student statement in front of over 150 government officials and teachers. After a lot of hard work we managed to be one of three teams selected by Microsoft to be funded a Grant to help turn our project into reality.

We named our project weLearn. Students want project based learning but as of yet we do not have a collaborative system for sharing and working on our ideas. We are developing a system so that students can have a formal platform to share the project based learning experience. Students will develop more creative ideas to enhance their learning. In this platform everyone will answer the question "How do you learn?" After the group presentation we had to face the maximum number of questions, as many teachers were excited about our idea.

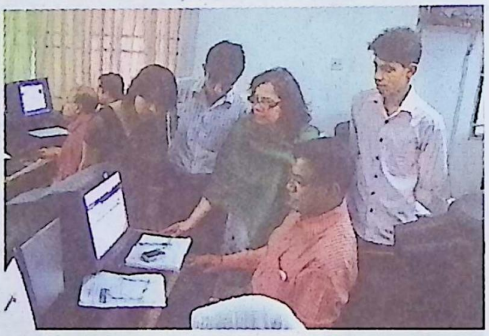
On the first day we had a brainstorming workshop by Bernise Ang and Shaun Koh of Syinc.org. It helped the students to think more deeply about issues surrounding education and what they can do to help inspire change. Then we witnessed a presentation by Joel Neoh on entrepreneurship. He shared his experiences and thoughts after winning Malaysia's version of The Apprentice, 'The Firm', and co-founding YouthSays.com, Malaysia's largest for-profit network of youth opinion. We also had a presentation by Brian Lariche on project management. Brian shared his experiences as a teacher working with NGOs. He generously gave up his time to come back and give priceless one-on-one advice and support to the students' projects. 57 students from a local KL school met with the student delegates and answered questions about education in groups for about 2 hours.

As for the forum itself, it was an eye opening experience. To know that so much is being done to change the face of education is like a breath of fresh air. I was really surprised to see what the innovative teachers of Asia Pacific had done; it gives me hope that one day our education system would be different. Personally to me it was like visiting more than just one country. Having a mix of people with different backgrounds who came from different countries and cultures working together was something new. It was amazing to see our similarities and differences in black and white.

(Graduated from BRAC University in Computer Science)

Training of Trainers Workshop on Technology in Language Teaching

Rubina Khan



BANGLADESH English Language Teachers Association (BELTA), in collaboration with the Department of English, Presidency University, organized a one-day workshop on "Teaching with Emerging Technologies" on July 03, 2009. The facilitator for this workshop was Professor Nasreen Rahim, Technology and Distance Education faculty and Staff Development Chair at Evergreen Valley College, San Jose, California. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Acquaint participants with various emerging technology tools.
- Give them hands-on experience using these tools to enhance teaching and learning.

This was the third in the series of workshops conducted by Professor Rahim on technology for BELTA. The teachers who participated in the workshop were from Dhaka University, Daffodil, East West and Presidency Universities. In addition, teachers from BAF Shaheen School and College, Adamjee Cantonment College, Boston International School and College, Holy Child school and College and Campion School took part in the training. Lead trainers are expected to cascade this training on technology to their colleagues.

This particular workshop gave participants hands on training in using blogs. Used worldwide, blogs were presented as learning tools which allow participants to create new opportunities for interaction with peers, provide discussion forums beyond coursework where students often learn as much from each other as from instructors or textbooks.

Professor Rahim introduced the participants to various web 2.0 tools on the Internet. She encouraged teachers to utilize the free open sources available on the web to empower their own and their students' learning. The tools she introduced included Wiki, Twitter, Facebook, Ning, Social Bookmark, Flickr, Youtube, Podcast, and Second Life. Facebook was presented as the most popular mode of social networking to be used as a springboard for interaction, a basic premise in language learning and usage. Wiki offers a flexible collaborative communication tool where students can access and participate from any location with Internet access. Youtube offers experience of viewing videos and engaging with the content via language comments by users. Social Bookmarking allow users to share information and learning resources. Twitter is another micro-blogging tool that promotes active learning. Podcast allows education to become more portable. Flickr offers a visual media to facilitate a sense of connection. In accordance with the promise of developing a Digital Bangladesh, BELTA has taken a positive step towards raising awareness among English language teachers about the benefits of technology and how they can harness the potential of the worldwide web to cater to varied learning styles and develop the English language skills of their learners.