



Asia Education Foundation

**Asia Literacy
Ambassadors**
Partnering Businesses & Schools

We're all part of a bigger world

Albany Senior High School, WA and Claire Hanson, media professional

The city of Albany is located on the southern coast of Western Australia. Albany Senior High School (ASHS), in the centre of the town, has approximately 1000 students, and is known for its academic, vocational and sporting achievements.

Dave Marshall had a specific goal in mind for the Asia Literacy Ambassador program, "The school year is busy enough as it is and it's tough fitting in anything more unless it ties in with the school curriculum. It's got to value add."

The Asia Education Foundation hit the spot by linking up his school in Albany with local media professional Claire Hanson. "Claire is just perfect. She has a wealth of experience and we were able to draw on her expertise in a way that fitted precisely with our goals for our Year 12 media production and analysis course. It's a small group of nine students who are studying the subject with the aim of continuing it at university."

Asian media connections

A highly regarded magazine editor, Claire was originally Perth-based, but spent five years in Asia between 2004 and 2009 as the editor of *Singapore Tatler* and latterly editor-in-chief of the *Singapore Tatler* Group. When her daughter turned two-years-old, she returned to Western Australia to be close to friends and family, and set up her own business specialising in media, PR, branding and communications.

Claire explains, "Since returning from Singapore, I really missed the celebratory nature of Singapore life, with its year-round festival and cultural program. I felt the need to share the joy and deep cultural expression of South-East Asian life with my newly adopted community. Being presented with the opportunity to become an Asia Literacy Ambassador was the perfect mechanism by which I was able to share my love of the Singapore zeitgeist with young people who have their entire adult lives and careers in front of them."

Asia Literacy: knowledge, skills and understandings about the diverse countries of Asia
ambassador.asiaeducation.edu.au



Making it relevant

Dave again, “We decided to use a magazine feature article as the vehicle for getting students to think about different audiences and different contexts. It worked out well. We started with a session where Claire talked to the group about the Asian market and about ‘individuals of high net worth’. She used a Powerpoint presentation and showed them examples of magazines. She was describing a niche market and that’s what I wanted – to get the students thinking about what would appeal to a very specific market, so that they could take the same principles and apply them to other audiences.

“The project went over four sessions of 100 minutes each. After the first session, they were sent off to do things in their own time; to find images, source contacts, chase replies to emails. Claire was incredibly generous with her contacts and she’s very well connected. The students learnt the importance of networking. Although it was about learning to pitch the right product to a particular audience, there were a lot of spin off, incidental learnings like this. Students found they had to be more confident and assertive, to get on the phone and ring people. It raised the level from a school environment to a real audience – the concept that what they produced could end up being published. It put them under pressure in a positive sense.

“It was intense, and they got a taste of what Claire’s work was like. For two of the sessions, she was there looking over their shoulders, helping them develop their feature ideas and giving them very specific, direct advice, even down to pointing out how to phrase an email to an Asian contact that would be polite and respectful, while clearly seeking an answer.”

The fact that Claire was in the same city was a huge benefit. David says, “As Claire is close by, we can be a bit more flexible with times and dates – that’s a luxury we don’t normally have.”

One of the three feature articles produced by the group has been deemed “publication quality”, and Claire has undertaken the job of sub-editing it to make it ready for submission. She and David are planning a presentation ceremony in Term 3, which will also be a chance for the students to thank Claire.

Dave ends, “Claire has an amazing amount of energy and she has instilled in the students a sense of urgency, the need to prioritise, and the importance of being very precise in how you target your audience. It gave the group a strong sense of the crossover between Australia and Asia, and I think it raised their interest in the possibility of working in Asia at some point.”

Mutual benefits

Claire says, “I am honoured to have been selected as an Asia Literacy Ambassador and have been enriched by my involvement in the roll-out of the program in regional Great Southern Western Australia. The ASHS media students really embraced the Asia Literacy concept and did a terrific job in what was, for most of them, their final year in high school. So while most were engrossed in study for their TEE, they were asked to think about big picture concepts and apply them to their media practice in a very specific manner. My company, Hanson Executive Management (HEM) takes its corporate social responsibility commitment seriously and I couldn’t think of a better way to give back to my community than via the Asia Literacy Ambassadorship. I thoroughly enjoyed the development of my professional relationships with ASHS, Dave Marshall



Asia Education Foundation

Asia Literacy
Ambassadors

Partnering Businesses & Schools

and his media students. Hopefully the Asia Literacy program roll-out will be embraced by more high schools in the Great Southern region in 2012, however, I couldn't wish for a more terrific group than those at ASHS."