

Report of Activities (2016-17)

Toni McLaughlan (University of Delaware, USA) was Visiting Faculty with the department for the 2015-2016 academic year, as part of a collaboration with the English Language Fellow (ELF) programme of the Regional English Language Office (RELO, American Embassy). The department offered a specialised Academic Writing Certificate Course (January-May 2016) for English (Honours) students with Amrita Singh facilitating the January segment dealing with 'Writing about Literature' and Toni McLaughlan working with students on the processes of essay and research paper writing for the rest of the term. Toni McLaughlan also facilitated a Basic Workshop on "Applying to American Universities and Writing a Statement of Purpose (SoP)" for KNC undergraduate students on 25th April 2016.

A Faculty Development Programme on the second year Skill Enhancement Course (SEC) option under the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)'English Language Teaching' (3-5 May 2016) was organised with Toni McLaughlan as resource person. The 3-day FDP addressed the 6 core topics in the ELT syllabus 'Knowing the Learner', 'Methods', 'Structures of English Language', 'Materials', 'Assessment' and 'Using Technology'. The FDP was attended by 35 participants from 15 colleges of Delhi University. A follow-up FDP on 'Teaching Language Skills' (27-28 June 2016) was facilitated by RELO English Language Specialist, Dr. Julie Ciancio. Over two days of interactive workshops, 25 participants from Delhi University, IIT Delhi and Aligarh Muslim University examined the new recommended 'Apple' book for the Delhi University CBCS English Language Teaching course: *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Snow. A subsidized Indian edition of this book was released in October as a result of KNC-RELO intervention. Dr. Ciancio, the Dean of the College of Education at Westcliff University, California, covered the pedagogical history of ELT, the main segments of the 'Apple' book relevant for the syllabus and presented several practical options for delivering the content to students. In the third FDP in this ELT series held from 31 September – 3 October 2016, Senior RELO English Language Specialists Donna Brinton and David Bohlke approached the paper through texts like Jeremy Harmer's *How to Teach English* (2007), which characterises itself as a text for "early stage teachers". Drawing on their teaching materials, production expertise with Cengage, Pearson and Cambridge University Press, they worked with 30 participants from 18 Delhi University colleges and IIT Delhi towards evolving suggestions to improve the CBCS syllabus and evaluation patterns for the ELT Skill Enhancement Course. The recommendations for syllabus change and exam paper pattern discussed at the FDP and in a subsequent meeting, were accepted by the English Department CBCS Sub-Committee for Syllabus Revision.

This RELO-KNC English department collaboration resulted in 8 faculty scholarships being awarded by RELO for online courses dealing with the 'Fundamentals of TESOL', 'Teaching English Communicatively', 'Professional Writing', 'Teaching English to Teens', 'Critical Thinking' and the TESOL Core Certification Programme. Toni McLaughlan was awarded the TESOL Leadership Mentoring Programme Scholarship by TESOL International enabling her to attend the 50th Anniversary TESOL Convention (6-8 April 2016) at Baltimore with two faculty members. Sanam Khanna was funded by RELO to attend the *Leadership Training Workshop* organized in collaboration with TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages International Association) in Goa

from 15-18 December 2016. Four faculty members were awarded the Professional Development Travel Grant for Practicing ESL/EFL Teachers allowing two to attend the TESOL Conventions in Baltimore (2016) and Seattle (2017) respectively.

Heather Mehrrens (University of Maryland, USA) is Visiting Faculty with the department under the ELF programme for the 2016-17 academic session. She has been facilitating Remedial English, Academic Writing and Introduction to TOEFL classes for the English (Honours) and the BA (Programme) English Discipline students. She has also been working as a teacher trainer/mentor with Delhi University and Jamia faculty through collaborations with the Institute of Life Long Learning facilitated by KNC and as part of the TESOL Core Certification Programme.

The English department of Kamala Nehru College collaborated with Katha India to conduct a Certificate Course on Translation and Media (January-March 2016). This 32-hour course was conceptualised by Sukrita Paul Kumar (Advisor for Katha's project 'Translating India: Understanding Diversity' and Aruna Asaf Ali Chair at the Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi) and Anandana Kapur (Filmmaker and Social Scientist), and coordinated by Amrita Singh and Namita Paul of the English department. The course was attended by 37 participants representing 11 institutions. The students were exposed to the challenges of translation in various media such as Broadcast, Advertising, Cinema and the Web. Each session was mentored by experts from the field like Ravikant (CSDS), Alka Malhotra (UNICEF), Marya Shakil (CNN-IBN) and Sayema Rehman (Radio Mirchi). These sessions pushed the idea of translation from merely referring to linguistic transfer to seeing translation as an activity across media forms. A bilingual glossary of terms across these media forms was evolved by the participants.

The Department of English conducted classes in Remedial English 1 August – 10 November 2016. The classes were held for 2-3 hours per week. The sixty eight students who enrolled for the classes, were arranged in groups of 11-18, divided among 6 teachers: 14 students from II BA Hindi (H) with Shobha Rani; 12 students from II BA Hindi (H) with Kavita; 18 students from III BA Hindi (H) with Sylvia Sagolsem; 11 students from III BA (P) with Neha Singh; 12 students from II BA (P) with Kanak Yadav. One foreign student from I BA English (H) was tutored on a one-to-one basis by Amrita Singh, who was also the coordinator for these classes. The teachers constructed their plans based on the needs, aptitude, interests and requirements of the students in each group. The teachers shared resource material and lessons with each other to enable flow of ideas and provide aids to each other. They focused on components of language, particularly grammar, in a context-based and communicative manner. They worked to employ all four skills – Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing – in their lessons. Some of the lessons focused on:

- using correct tenses based on context
- knowing how to conduct basic conversations like: asking for or giving directions, giving compliments, discussing the weather, how to accept or refuse
- framing and organising simple and complex sentences
- role plays
- listening to conversations, speeches and directions and responding to them

- reading and comprehending diverse types and levels of text
- vocabulary building based on different contexts

'LitLuminous 2016: Into The Darkness, Relooking the Overlooked', the annual event of the English Department Literary Society opened with a panel discussion re-evaluating underanalysed figures and villains in literary, cinematic and popular culture on 25 February 2016. Dr. Anjana Neira Dev (Gargi College) moderated the presentations by Dr. Debashree Dattaray (Jadavpur University) on "'Silenced' Characters as a Subversive Space: A Comparative Study of Madame Bovary and Pather Panchali" and Dr. Swati Pal (Janki Devi College) on 'Bollywood Baddies Bante Kaise Hain: Mapping the Bad Guys'. The student paper presentations and other competitive events that followed explored the notion that villains are constructed as the ideological other – "Every search for a hero must begin with something which every hero requires – a villain".

The 'Introduction to Culture Studies Certificate Course' (February – April 2016 and August 2016 – January 2017) was facilitated by Dr. Prithvi Raj and Neha Singh of the English department. The sessions covered topics like 'The Inception of Culture Studies', 'Popular Culture and Subculture Studies', 'Media Studies' and 'Postmodernism' and worked towards student research papers in the area.

2016. P. Payal conducted a Workshop on 'Comics: Methods and Histories' on 15 February 2016. The workshop offered a brief history of sequential art through the ages so that students could understand the genealogy of "comics" today. Students were shown images of different styles of comics to acquaint them with the visual vocabulary of graphic narratives. Students went on to create their own 1-page comics on a range of themes and ideas. The workshop enabled students to understand the process of text production while also helping them to expand their notions of what constitutes a "text". Three of the completed comics are being published in the May edition of the department's newsletter *White Noise* which had a range of creative, graphic, art, translation and academic pieces.

The English Literary Society organized a poetry reading and talk by Charles Wallace Scholarship recipient Mihir Vatsa on 11 August 2016. 'The Difficulty with Mixing Two Languages Together', 'My Mother Visits a Beauty Parlour', 'English: A Personal Essay' were among the pieces shared with the audience. Mihir Vatsa is a poet, writer, and heritage archivist who grew up in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, before moving to Delhi for higher studies. Winner of the Srinivas Rayaprol Poetry Prize and an award in Writing from Toto Funds the Arts, he was the writer-in-residence at University of Stirling as its youngest Charles Wallace Fellow. His first collection of poems, *Painting That Red Circle White*, appeared in 2014 and was termed a "must-read" by *The Sunday Guardian*. He gives an annual guest lecture on Hazaribagh at Department of Archaeology, Durham University.

A commemorative meeting for Mahashweta Devi was organized on 4 August 2016. Her corpus of empathetic, subversive narratives from zones of conflict was discussed and an extract was read out from Devi's iconic short fiction 'Draupadi'.

The Literary Society organized 'Process and Print: A Conversation on Indian Publishing' an interface with the publishing industry on 1 September 2016. Bidisha Das from Oxford University Press and

Tarini Uppal from Penguin Random House gave a glimpse of the academic and fiction publishing worlds in India. Tarini Uppal is a commissioning editor at Penguin Random House India. Bidisha Das works as an Editor for Oxford University Press India in the English Language Teaching department. She is a former recipient of the 'Chacha Nehru Scholarship for Artistic and Innovative Excellence', for creative writing, awarded by the NCERT.

The English Literary Society organized a student seminar titled 'Why Discuss Fantasy in the 21st Century Classroom' on 20th October 2016 with presentations by Sandhra Sur, Tanushree Basuroy, and Urveesha Nirjar of II BA English (H). Nirjar analysed Harry Potter in print to explore the consequences of the 'appeal' of fantasy fiction for children using distinctly psychological, reader response frameworks toward the understanding of fantasy. Basuroy discussed the televisual rendition of *Game of Thrones* in order to understand if a change in medium (print to television) can change the reception or agentive potential of the representation of female characters in intermedial fantasy. Sur took the discussion back to print by focussing attention on the implications of the metafictional technique used by Funke's *Inkheart* trilogy. These academic research papers mentored by Samarth Singhal were finalised for publication under the titles, 'Fantasy for a Child: The Appeal of Harry Potter', 'Fantasy through a Contemporary Lens: A Discussion of the *Game of Thrones* through Its Gender Discourse and the Impact of Visual Adaptation' and 'Querying Reality: Metafiction and Authorship in Cornelia Funke's *Inkworld* Trilogy'.

On 9 November 2016, Prof. Galin Tihanov, George Steiner Professor of Comparative Literature, Queen Mary University of London delivered a talk on 'Scales of Comparison: The Paths of Comparative Literature and the Return of "World Literature"'. In addition to having authored several books, he has also been a Member of the Editorial Board of Comparative Critical Studies (Edinburgh UP) since 2004. He outlined the pitfalls of the Comparative Literature paradigm and argued for the return to World Literature as an alternative framework of analysis. He emphasised the supranational nature of literature in today's globalised communities and claimed that the World Literature paradigm negotiates the resulting complex contemporary literary configurations better. Also, as part of the British Council's Humanities Tour, Prof. Ross Forman, University of Warwick delivered a master-class on 'New Directions in Postcolonial Thought' on 16 January 2017. This was followed by a meeting with the department faculty and Principal to discuss collaborative possibilities between the two institutions.

The French Lieutenant's Woman was screened on 30 January 2016 and the BBC Mini Series Version of *Crime and Punishment* on 13 February 2016 to enhance the students' understanding these prescribed texts. On 22 July 2016, *Breath* (2007-2008 theatrical production based on Samuel Beckett's play by the same name) produced by the National Theatre School of Canada was screened, followed by *Waiting for Godot* (2001) directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, starring Barry McGovern, Johnny Murphy, Alan Stanford and Stephen Brennan. These screenings were organized to introduce students to the formal experimentation of modernism, and were envisioned as an entry-point to the course. Students were shown *Sita Sings the Blues* (2008) directed by Nina Paley and featuring Annette Hanshaw's music on 26 July 2016 in order to discuss contemporary reappropriations of Indian myth and American pop culture.

The Literary Society and Book Club also organized a book reading and interactive session with Anjum Hasan and Anil Menon to showcase their latest books – *The Cosmopolitans* and *Half of What I Say* –

on 18 January 2016 as a precursor to student and faculty participation at the Jaipur Literature Festival. On 13 April 2016, the Book Club coordinated with WDC to host a traditional performative oral storytelling of 'Dastaan Goopi Bagha Ki' by dastangos Valentina and Fouzia. The latter is modern India's first female dastango.