# South China Morning Post

PUBLISHED SINCE 1903 | VOLUME LXIV | NO. 160

SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2008

南華早報

see live updates at www.scmp.com




Putonghua ambassadors Suki Ko Ning (left), Jennifer Ng Ching-ching, Tinia Chan Sau-ting, Cherry Lam Man-hei, Kay Yung Chung-ki and Catabell Woo Tung-nuen, all 15. Photo: Mimi Lau

# Putonghua – the language of hospitality

Mimi Lau

Nearly 300 secondary students are set to promote Hong Kong to mainland tourists during the Olympic Games.

The Putonghua Training Programme for Student Tourism Ambassadors has been organised by Hong Kong Community College, an associate degrees provider under Polytechnic University.

It has trained 280 secondary students from 40 schools in a series of workshops on Putonghua speaking skills and local tourism highlights since November. Eight schools were selected to present their tourism research projects this week in Tsim Sha Tsui's Avenue of Stars.

Speaking after the exhibition of the projects, the chairman of the government advisory body on language education, Michael Tien Puk-sun, said integrating Putonghua with tourism was a creative approach to learning.

"The programme creates a real language environment to encourage students to use more Putonghua," Mr Tien said.

Community college director Simon Leung Tak-wing said that in view of the fast-developing tourism industry, it was appropriate to combine the learning of Putonghua with training in how to be tourism ambassadors.

The college is planning to arrange for the students to take up tourism ambassador roles at actual tourists' spots such as Wong Tai Sin Temple during the Games as a way to put their new skills into practice.

The HK$600,000 programme was funded by the government advisory body. It started in November and runs until August.

Jennifer Ng Ching-ching, 15, from HKMLC Queen Maud Secondary School, said she chose to join because she wanted to show a special side of the city to tourists.

"We can demonstrate Hong Kong's hospitality by introducing its history while practising our Putonghua at the same time," Jennifer said.

The team's topics included background on the Legislative Council, Man Mo Temple and popular snacks.