DIRECTOR’S WORDS

The launch of the four-year undergraduate curriculum in September 2013 signalled the beginning of what is perhaps the busiest period for the Centre in its 21-year history. The university reforms followed significant changes in Hong Kong’s schools and meant the admission of an additional 3,500 undergraduates, all arriving a year earlier than in the past. Because English is the official medium of instruction at HKU, a major element of the new curriculum is the provision of English and the Centre for Applied English Studies is at the heart of this provision.

Our contribution to the new curriculum has been to multiply the number of courses we offer, accept a large increase in students, double the number of credits awarded, and shift our emphasis from a general professional competence in English to academic literacy. Undergraduate students are now required to take 12 credits of English, 6 of which are in our Core University English course (CUE) and 6 in the form of “English in the Discipline” (ED). CUE is a first-year course for all freshmen designed to bridge students’ school and disciplinary studies in English. ED courses, on the other hand, are the result of intensive discussions with faculty members throughout the university and of various projects looking at the literacy demands and expectations of some 30 different subject disciplines. All these new courses have also involved finding ways to offer students the means to extend their learning experience beyond the classroom and into some 80 to 100 hours of out-of-class learning.

The new intake meant that we have taught more students than ever before. In 2012–2013 the Centre taught 9,114 undergraduate students (including 2,897 in CUE), 1,390 students in summer workshops, staff courses and other programmes, and 1,548 students in postgraduate courses. We also conducted 2,436 self-access consultations and ran a very successful series of out-of-class learning experiences for students through our grant-funded Enhancing the Use of English programme. Sixty-three students took part in the Centre’s own postgraduate diploma and masters programmes and we continued to supervise nine of our own PhD students pursuing topics in applied linguistics. All this activity, moreover, took place against a backdrop of an academic culture in which staff have published four books with leading publishers as well as several articles in international journals, given papers and keynote speeches at major international conferences, won Teaching Development Grants and acted as consultants and course examiners to universities in several countries.

The 2013-2014 academic year promises to be another challenging and productive period as we prepare to introduce many of our new ED courses, and we look forward to meeting these challenges with the same enthusiasm and attitude towards research-informed language education for which we are well-known.
ENGLISH-IN-THE-DISCIPLINE (ED) COURSES

In the academic year 2013-2014, CAES begins a new phase in the evolution of its services by launching 20 of its 30 new English-in-the-Discipline (ED) courses. These courses are a compulsory component of 4-year degree programmes. They represent a distinctive approach within language education by focusing on language features embedded in the communicative practices of specific disciplines.

The communicative demands of the discipline represent challenges to students of all language backgrounds. They need focused support to meet these challenges. To this end, CAES has been collaborating with faculties at HKU to identify student needs and to complement each programme’s communication demands. Thus ED courses aim to go beyond basic language proficiency to develop students’ skills to participate in disciplinary contexts by enhancing academic literacy.

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ENGLISH STUDIES

The restructured Postgraduate Diploma in English Studies programme accepted a new cohort of students for the 2013-14 academic year. One of the programme’s new initiatives has been the introduction of the independent learning project during the summer period which is a direct response to the survey feedback from the previous graduates. Concomitant with such a change is the reduction in the length of the course while maintaining the prescribed learning hours. Students can now finish the programme in one year.

THE ASIAN JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

CAES has transformed and re-launched its journal to broaden the scope which now encompasses the teaching, learning, use and status of English in Asia or among Asians in other parts of the world; and the impact of Asian cultures or contexts on any of the above. The March 2014 issue will have a special focus on the role of English as a Lingua Franca in Institutions of Higher Education in Asia.

For more information, please visit the website http://caes.hku.hk/ajal.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

CAES has continued to enhance its academic profile by leading and participating in research projects producing substantial academic output. Colleagues continue to make numerous presentations at local and international conferences, as well as writing scholarly books and book chapters, and articles for a range of international journals such as Asian ESP Journal, Computers and Composition, Language and Education, Language Teaching and Reflective Practice. As a leading researcher in the field, our director Professor Ken Hyland has recently published a new book titled Disciplinary Identities (published by CUP) and edited two books titled Stance and Voice in Academic Writing and Corpus Applications in Applied Linguistics.
REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

While our major role is to serve the student population within the University, CAES continues its efforts to have a positive impact on the society surrounding us. In April and June 2013, CAES staff organized two rounds of visits to the Centre for 10 local secondary schools, hosting a total of 80 students and teachers. During the visits, participants benefited from the various activities which aimed at improving their English speaking skills and building their confidence in using English.

CAES LANGUAGE SUPPORT IN THE LEARNING COMMONS

An exciting new development for CAES self-access provision is its move to the Learning Commons from September 2013. In collaboration with ITS which manages the Learning Commons facilities, we have located learning materials, DVDs, workshops, writing support, teacher consultations and the student peer-tutoring service all in Zone R of the Learning Commons. It has already proved to be popular with students who seem to like this convenient location.

NEW DEPARTMENTAL LOCATION

All CAES staff office and multimedia classrooms are now on the 6th floor of the Run Run Shaw Tower on the Centennial Campus.
STAFF NEWS

Promotions, Arrivals, Departures

Congratulations to

New promotoes
Ellie Law, Lecturer
Jane Stokes, Senior Lecturer
Alex Sum, Executive Assistant

Farewell to

Departing colleagues
Clarice Chan, Kenny Li, Athena Loch,
Paul Martin, Jason Petsch, Mike See,
Matthew Sung, Jesse To, Gloria Wong and Carol Yu.
We wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

A Warm Welcome to

New colleagues
Bowie Cheung, Clerical Assistant
Cynthia Lee, Associate Professor

Achievements

We are delighted to announce that Eleanor Kwan has completed her Ph.D studies at Lancaster University in the U.K. She studied the literacy practices, both in-class and out-of-class, of business students at HKU.

New Staff Profile: Cynthia Lee

In September 2013, Associate Professor Cynthia Lee joined our Centre from Hong Kong Baptist University where she was Programme Director of the MA in Language Studies. She holds a PhD in Language in Education from The University of London, and her research areas include pragmatics, second language learning and web-based teaching. She has conducted major funded research projects, and consultancy for the Education Bureau. Dr Lee is a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and a past Chairperson of the Hong Kong Association of Applied Linguistics (HAAL).

TESOL INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lillian Wong was elected by members worldwide to the Board of Directors (2012-2015) of TESOL International Association, the largest international organization for teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages with 13,000 members. With her role on this central governance body which aims at advancing professional expertise in English language teaching and learning worldwide, Lillian is involved in developing the strategic plan, setting goals, establishing policy and giving directions, reviewing and approving the annual budget as well as overseeing the work of 21 interest sections, 17 standing committees, various task forces and over 100 affiliates. Lillian is in particular working with the Research Task Force and two Standing Committees, the Research Committee and the Serial Publications Committee, to promote research within the Association and the profession. She is also investigating CAES hosting a two and a half day TESOL conference at HKU in January 2015.

OBITUARY

Lara Lam passed away peacefully in the Hong Kong Sanatorium on 22 August 2013. She was a valued and beloved teacher and colleague who taught at the Centre from 1993 to May 2013.

Lara brought with her to HKU a strong background in English language teaching from Canada and Hong Kong, and expertise in phonology, cross-cultural linguistics and fine art. She contributed to many areas of the Centre’s teaching, particularly as coordinator of English courses for Engineering and teacher on postgraduate courses ranging from English phonology to academic writing.

Lara brought her warmth, thoughtfulness and collegial spirit to the Centre’s Social Committee serving as chairperson between 1999 and 2007. Beyond the Centre, Lara was a member of the Senior Common Room Executive Committee and, for many years, a co-opted member of a Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority panel.

Lara was a dedicated teacher, who thought first of her students and continued to teach and perform her duties until May this year. She is greatly missed by all who knew her.

(For the full version of this obituary, please visit http://caes.hku.hk/obituary)
AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR AGNES LAM

Agnes Lam retired in 2013 after having worked at our centre for 18 years. During that time, Agnes made tremendous contributions to the Centre’s development and performed various roles including a period as Acting Director. She is also a successful scholar and an accomplished poet.

1. You’ve always been considered a caring and people-oriented manager by many CAES colleagues. Do you find being a poet helps you bring into your daily work the highly sensitive ‘inner you’ that is evident in your poetry?

The inner me existed long before I was known as a poet. My poetry is only an expression of that inner self. Throughout my growth as a person, my inner self has remained rather unchanged. What shaped my inner me were really the values my parents gave me as well as my Christian upbringing and, of course, my reading of many writers around the world from a young age. I remember in particular being touched by Tolstoy’s humanitarian writings during my teenage years. I was also deeply affected by my father’s passing away when I was 13. So I have always known that life is short and I cannot take anyone or anything for granted.

2. You’re not only an accomplished poet, but also an accomplished researcher, particularly in the area of language education. Do you have any memorable or interesting research experiences that you can share with us?

The last few years I have focused not on language education but on Asian poetry in English in my research. My project involved field interviews of 50 published poets writing in English in different Asian locations: Macau, Hong Kong, Singapore, Manila, Mumbai (Bombay) and New Delhi. To be able to meet all these poets in person was memorable. Though I was meeting many of them for the first and only time, they trusted me with their life experiences and their writings. The oldest among the 50 poets was born in the 1930s and the youngest, in the 1980s. The themes and styles in their works are simply amazing. I am bringing out an anthology of their works in the next few months.

3. Now that you’re retired, is there anything you want to do or accomplish?

At the moment, I am still very busy with various publications and still receiving invitations to give conference papers or poetry readings etc. The first month after my retirement, the Education Bureau arranged for me to talk to schoolteachers about poetry, which I enjoyed. In May, I attended a conference in Germany. I am happy to continue doing all these and, at the same time, to write more poetry and stories. I also hope to take better care of my husband and myself and spend more time with my family.