Changes and Innovation

INTEGRATION INTO THE FACULTY OF ARTS

The adoption of the Centre’s new name coincides with its recognition as a Centre within the Faculty of Arts from July 2008. Currently, the Centre offers courses to a total of 7,473 students and also provides a language consultation service for another 1,190 students. It achieved an overall score of 9.5 out of 10 in the last Teaching and Learning Quality Review Process and a score of 8.8 out of 10 in the last Research Assessment Exercise conducted by the University Grants Committee, both of which attest to its excellence.

LEADERSHIP AND EQUITABLE CULTURE

For more than a decade, the Centre was led by Professor David Nunner, a world-class scholar in applied linguistics. Since September 2007, the Centre has embarked on an international search for a new director to lead the Centre in its preparatory work for the new four-year curriculum. In the interim, the Centre has continued to thrive under the visionary leadership of its two Acting Directors at different times: Dr. Max Hui-Bon-Ho, most noted for his contribution in the role of literature in language teaching and translation studies, and Dr. Agnes Lam, a scholar whose research on language policy and language experience in China has been widely recognised as definitive work in the field.

THE FOUR-YEAR CURRICULUM

In preparation for the four-year curriculum, the Centre has embarked on a series of initiatives to develop and improve existing programmes. A key project on General English aims to bridge the gap in English competence requirements between secondary education and university studies, while other English majors expand their majors.

NEW COURSES AND COLLABORATION

From Paintings to Stories

A new course, ‘From Paintings to Stories: The Interplay between Art and Literature’, taught by Dr. Max Hui-Bon-Ho, was offered by the English Centre in the second semester of the 2007-2008 academic year. The main purpose of the 12-week course was to examine the relationship between art and literature, and how one form inspired the creation of the other. At the end of the course, students submitted a portfolio containing a series of work, a poem, and a play script that were based on some of the paintings. The students also gave a short drama performance based on a painting of their own choosing.

Collaborative Projects with Faculties

A research project is being carried out by Chan Lap Kk of the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Medical and Health Sciences Education, and co-investigators, Tsai Lai Kun, and Chan Wai On from the CAFES. Investigating a crucial phase of the medical curriculum, the clinical years, the project aims at enhancing the understanding of the role of language in medical care. Another project on its way is a collaboration between G. McLaughlin of the Faculty of Dentistry and Lai Cheong Yonne, and Tsai Lai Kun from the CAFES. This project supports by Teaching Development Grants (TDG), is a pilot implementation of an Advanced English in the Major (EM) course which will offer parallel language support to the students during the first year of the dental curriculum.

Joint Summit with Capital Medical University

On 2 August 2007, the Centre received a 15-member delegation from the Capital Medical University, Beijing, to discuss the establishment of the Doctor of Applied Linguistics, Capital Medical University, Beijing, and to host a joint seminar on English for Medical Purposes (EMP). At the seminar, Professor Zhang Lai Ping and Professor Zhang Hua from Capital Medical University addressed the subject of teaching English to medical students and their colleagues, Ren Yan and Shi Hua from the Shanghai Jiaotong University, teaching English to postgraduate students and teaching medical English, Tsai Lai Kun, Miranda Lai Log and Philip Smits from the Centre for English as a Second Language (CESL) curricular issues based on the Centre’s English curriculum and courses which support English-medium medical clinical training and postgraduate dissertation writing.

Through similar visits, the Centre has built a network of cooperation with applied linguistics and EMP professionals from universities in the region, the other three being Tokyo Medical University (in 2005), Sydney University (in 2008), and Macquarie University (in 2008).
SUMMER COURSES

From May 26 to June 16, 2008, a total of 15 different Summer Insti-
tute courses were run, including three new courses: English for Health Assessment, Getting into Prasal Verbs, and Pronunciation through Popular Music. A total of 619 students, including 486 undergraduates and 131 post-
graduates, attended different courses. For the different courses, a wide range of presentations and group discussions, improved gram-
mar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

English for Health Assessment

This course was offered to students who expected to encounter and produce texts in contexts involving elements of health assessment. The course featured a multi-disciplinary scope, use of the authentic print and audiovisual materials, and a communicative approach in the classroom activities. Participants from the subjects of Architecture, Arts, Dentistry, Medicine and Social Sciences worked together in cross-disciplinary groups. Class activities were interactive and gave students a perfect insight into the different aspects of the subject.

Getting into Prasal Verbs

This course aimed to help students understand the grammar and usage of prasal verbs through the use of a range of authentic multimedia materials, including audio, written and photographic. Undergraduates and postgraduates from different faculties attended the course. They personalized new language learning through short dialogues, games, and teaching each other. Prasal verb rules were created by the students through the course to raise awareness of vocabulary-

Pronunciation through Popular Music

Pronunciation is often a key stumbling block in communication. This course focused on using lyrics in songs to help students improve their pronunciation through singing along with the teacher. The course emphasized playing just getting out there and improving English in a fun way.

OITA AND SONYA UNIVERSITY

Two intensive summer courses offered to Japanese students from Oita University and Sonya University gave students the opportunity to learn English intensively in both the classroom and around the country. Listening and speaking were the main focus and students created a multimedia website introducing some aspects of University of Hong Kong and their fellow students. See http://cas.s.u-hok.ac.jp and http://casln.univ.hk/.

OITA STUDENTS WITH TEACHERS XIN CAI AND JAMES CHEN

OITA STAFF AT THE CAS

In the academic year of 2008-09, the Centre for Applied English Studies has 36 full-time, 2 half-time, and 3 part-time teaching staff. Four full-time research students and 11 full-time and 1 half-time support staff in the Centre. 2007-08 saw us welcome some new faces and say farewell to some familiar ones.

Joining us in Sept 2007 were Dr. Yan Qing and Dr. Tsang Wai Lam. Dr. Bambasita W.l., Ms. Lanny Chan, Mr. Sam Cao, Ms. Evelyn Tan and Ms. Laura Walsby. Jan 2008 saw the arrival of Mr. Stanley Hills, and Ms. Shelley Lam. Joining CAS' from September 2008 were Ms. Li, Ms. Ng, Ms. Sarah Ng, Ms. Claire Storie, Ms. Sharon Wong, and Ms. Francesca Sio.

We have also said goodbye to two members of staff: Mr. Miri Malby has been appointed to his previous position of travel writer. Mr. Joshua Chan is heading to Cambridge to pursue a PhD in Iora口语 development.

New faces were seen in the General Office. Ms. Icy Yang and Mr. Frankie Weng joined the Centre in August 2007 and April 2008 respectively. Icy was responsible for the administration of the Centre’s programme before handing over to Frankie in April 2008. He is now in charge of the administration of the broadening and summer courses. Frankie is mainly responsible for the administration of summer courses, new CAS courses and the PODES programme administration for the new college.

Having served in the General Office of the English Centre for 13 years since 1996, Ms. Ting Ling left after her early retirement on May 1, 2008. To thank Ling Ling for her invaluable services and contributions to the Centre, Dr. Agnes Lam, Acting Director of the Centre invited Ling Ling and other General Office staff to a farewell luncheon.

The Centre for Applied English Studies

The Centre for Applied English Studies (CASES), established as the English Centre in 1992, provides undergraduate and postgraduate courses for all undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Hong Kong as well as support in the following key areas:

- A test centre for students and supervision for research postgraduate students.
- Teacher development programmes including a Professional Diploma in English Studies, and a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics.
- In-service courses for school teachers by special arrangement with the Education Bureau.