INTRODUCING CAES

The Centre for Applied English Studies (CAES) has come a long way since it was first set up in 1992. While its main role as the provider of quality academic English courses to undergraduates across the university remains unchanged, it also offers a comprehensive suite of programmes to the Graduate School, a Postgraduate Diploma in English Studies for in-service teachers and a highly successful Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics. The Centre also has a number of PhD students and a vibrant research culture which helps inform its teaching and contributes to its academic vitality. Currently we offer courses and consultation services to over 8,500 students in all faculties of the university at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The excellence of our work is attested by the overall score of 9.2 (from 10) in the last Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review and a score of 83.8% in the last Research Assessment Exercise conducted by the University Grants Committee.

Among our accomplishments this year, CAES staff published five books with international publishers and 13 articles in refereed journals. Staff gave over 15 presentations at international conferences, eight as invited keynote and plenary speakers. We received research grants totalling $1.84 million and a staff team received a prize for the best presentation at one international conference. We were also delighted that five staff members completed their doctoral studies and one member received a Commendation certificate awarded by the Secretary of Home Affairs, HKSAR. All four of our professorial staff submitted proposals for Government sponsored GRF grants.

In addition, we have been active in collaborating with all ten faculties in preparing courses for the 2012 curriculum reform and the 80% increase in our undergraduate teaching load we will experience at that time. The new four year curriculum involves the Centre in creating over 30 new 6-credit English-in-the-Discipline courses across the university and contributing to a substantial increase in our online virtual language enhancement materials. We are also developing a new course book of materials for a General University English course to be taken by over 2,500 additional students who will enter the university in 2012. This work has been supported by five Teaching Development Grants and the recruitment of several new staff members.

Some of these initiatives are described in a little more detail in this brochure, which I hope you find informative and useful in introducing ourselves to you.

With best wishes,
Ken Hyland

ENGLISH-IN-THE-DISCIPLINE COURSES

A major contribution to the new 4-year degree curriculum will be compulsory 6-credit English-in-the-Discipline (ED) courses specifically designed to meet the needs of the subject discipline.

In consultation with faculty members, CAES staff are currently developing 36 new courses, with piloting of selected courses beginning this year, leading to full implementation with the first 4-year cohort in 2012.

On May 24th 2010, a special ED Development Week involving all CAES staff kicked off with a morning of input talks and culminated in an interactive round-up session. Dedicating the whole week to ED development proved to be a highly effective way to move forward with the preparation of the new courses.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY ENGLISH TEXTBOOK

Teachers from CAES have also been developing a new textbook for students who will take the new General University English Course from 2012. This course will be taken by all first-year students, except those who enter the university with very high levels of English proficiency. The course and the textbook focus on the writing, reading, listening and speaking skills that students will need in order to make the jump from learning at secondary school to learning at an English-medium university. The textbook focuses on developing students' ability to write an essay and a report, participate in tutorial discussions and read and listen to academic texts. Additionally, the textbook will introduce students to common grammatical features of academic language while aiding their academic vocabulary development.
EMBRACING RESEARCH: SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Embracing research for professional development and personal engagement has been a key theme for the Centre during the past year. All CAES teachers take part in Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to enhance their knowledge and consider the application of new findings in their teaching. Our current areas of special interest are Academic Genres, Autonomy, Communication in the Health Sciences, Language Education, and Postgraduate Writing.

While some SIGs are now working towards the preparation of focused bibliographies and conference presentations, others are engaging in academic discussion and critique. The groups also aim to contribute to the Centre through seminar presentations or identification of speakers in their specific areas of interest. Embracing research in this way is a new challenge for some and an ongoing commitment for others, promoting a new type of collegiality and increased enthusiasm regarding the value of research for active classroom-based practitioners.

Staff at a Special Interest Group meeting

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

HONG KONG JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Published biannually, The Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics (HKJAL) is an international, blind-refereed journal. It aims to promote the development of principled links between theoretical linguistics, educational research, language planning and the implementation of practical teaching programmes within, or relevant to, a Chinese context. Its readership are professionally concerned with issues related to the use of English as a second or foreign language by Chinese first language background learners.

RESEARCH, GRANTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Research in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT) directly informs curricular development at the Centre. Recent research output includes articles in publications such as the Cambridge Journal of Education, English for Specific Purposes, Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Journal of Second Language Writing, Language Learning Journal, Modern English Teacher and Modern Language Journal. Our main strength is research related to academic discourse in higher education and applied English studies as a whole; seminal works include English for Academic Purposes, Academic Discourse and Teaching and Researching Writing. CAES staff also serve as editorial board members or reviewers for a wide range of international journals and have participated in conferences in areas such as English as a medium of instruction, language awareness and minority education.

CAES staff have also maintained a strong track-record of securing funding for research and course development from the Research Grants Council (RGC) or Teaching Development Grants (TDGs). One such project funded by the RGC General Research Fund is "Messages in tutor responses to students' writing in English" and TDG funding has continued to support the development of new English courses for almost all faculties.

Peter Voller, the CAES self-access coordinator, has recently co-edited Mapping the Terrain of Learner Autonomy, a set of papers on autonomy in language learning, with Felicity Kjisik, Naoko Aoki and Yoshiyuki Nakakata, leaders in the field in Finland and Japan. Published by the Tampere University Press at the end of 2009, it addresses some major developments in the field over the past ten years and provides an analysis of the current state of learner autonomy practices through examples that cover the classroom, the internet and the self-access centre. It also examines issues of identity and discourse in language advising and teacher development, and looks at emerging research agendas, centred on the socio-cultural context of learning, such as learner identity, learning communities, settings and modes of practice.

Recent CAES staff publications
CAES SEMINAR SERIES

The CAES Seminar Series is an important initiative which articulates the research-informed orientation of our Centre. During the academic year 2009-10, a total of 16 research, pedagogy and professional-development-based seminars were offered. We also benefited from workshops conducted by Prof. Michael Prosser and Dr. Diane Salter from HKU’s Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) to facilitate our transition to the new curriculum.

Of the nine seminars offered in the first semester, six were given by speakers from outside the Centre: Dr. John Milton from UST, Dr. Tony Lee from HKIEd, Helen Enright from the University of Melbourne, and two Thai scholars, Dr. Issra Pramoolsook and Dr. Instisarn Chaiyasuk, whose academic visits were funded by CityU’s young scholar program. The seminars in the second semester featured more in-house speakers including the Centre’s Director who addressed the proximity issue in professional and popular science journals.

Sandy Fung with kindergarten children on her Career Exposure Day

IT DEVELOPMENTS IN CAES

In addition to providing web services for English teaching and learning, the IT Team at CAES is moving forward with an ambitious standardization of online systems for both teaching and learning, in tandem with the streamlining of administrative systems.

As the Centre gears up for the implementation of the new curriculum, efforts are focused on providing students with greater access to learning materials, and offering teachers a unified course management system, enabling easy administration of course web sites.

CAES is also putting into practice more paperless backend systems that allow for more efficient working practices and help minimize our environmental impact.

CAREER EXPOSURE PROJECT FOR ARTS STUDENTS

In the Career Exposure Project, about 500 Arts students a year gain insights into the job demands and expectations of English use in their chosen careers. Students are responsible for contacting an organisation and making arrangements for a Career Exposure Day in which they work-shadow and interview their hosts, giving them first-hand experience of what is involved on a day-to-day basis.

Throughout the project, students prepare employment-oriented personal e-portfolios, which demonstrate their oral and written communication skills and provide an opportunity to showcase their self-awareness, presentation skills, creativity and reflectiveness as learners. At the end of the course, all students give a presentation, sharing and reflecting on their experiences during the Career Exposure Project.

Dr. John Milton’s seminar at CAES

Patrick Desloge’s talk on ‘A Paperless Workflow’
POSTGRADUATE NEWS

RENEWAL OF THE MA IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

The MA in Applied Linguistics (MAAL) was first set up in 1996 in the then English Centre and is one of the longest running and most prestigious programmes in the field. The MAAL consistently receives positive evaluations from external examiners and attracts high calibre applicants. The programme will undergo some structural changes from September 2011 to maintain and enhance its relevance to the modern world.

The changes include the addition of a full-time learning mode for those who want to complete the programme in a single year. This may be attractive for those without other full-time commitments and may also attract students from outside Hong Kong. Other changes include additional electives to broaden students’ choices and the revamping and enhancement of core courses to make the programme even more comprehensive.

Happy faces from MAAL, Class of 2009

PHD STUDENTS

PhD students (full-time and part-time) in the field of applied linguistics are supervised by CAES staff with recent graduates’ research topics covering curriculum development, teacher beliefs and practices, learners’ experiences, teacher development, language acquisition and discourse analysis. One CAES teacher acted as Overseas Supervisor for a PhD student from Cambridge University working on language attitudes and language choice in China. A number of CAES staff are actively involved in PhD studies in areas such as Business English, General University English, materials development, classroom pedagogy and assessment.

Four new postgraduate students have recently joined the Centre – Althea Ha, Dick Huang, Polly Tse and Richard Zhang. Their research interests range from technical vocabulary learning among students of Finance, corpus-based research on writing, authorial voice in research articles, and language choice and identity among Chinese sojourners in Macau.

ENGLISH COURSES FOR SUMMER INSTITUTE IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

About 50 students were enrolled in the English for Chinese Learners and Strategies for Confident Conversation and Presentations both offered by CAES as part of the Summer Institute in the Arts and Humanities during July 2010.

The English for Chinese Learners course aimed at improving students’ written and presentation skills in English, by giving ample opportunities to use both written and spoken English in the context of business communication. It also covered business correspondence, English pronunciation, cross-cultural communication, business meeting simulations and reports. Students were also given the opportunity to teach their classmates idiomatic English, improving their presentation skills in the process.

The Strategies for Confident Conversation and Presentations course aimed at developing students’ oral and presentation skills in both informal and formal contexts. The areas covered by the course included strategies for interesting and effective conversation, networking, and speaking in a business context.

Summer Institute students at an end of course party with Tess and Sam

STAFF NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr. Lisa Cheung was selected as a finalist for the 2009 Christopher Brumfit Ph.D./Ed.D. Thesis Award. Entitled “Merging corpus linguistics and collaborative knowledge construction”, Cheung’s thesis received the evaluation ‘Highly commended’. Sponsored by Cambridge University Press and the journal Language Teaching, the award recognizes doctoral thesis research that makes a significant and original contribution to the field of second language acquisition and/or foreign language teaching and learning.
Clarice Chan’s paper “Forging a link between research and pedagogy: A holistic framework for evaluating business English materials” in *English for Specific Purposes* (2009) has been one of the “Top 25 Hottest Articles” of the journal for four consecutive quarters since its publication.

**PROMOTIONS AND DEPARTURES**

Within the Centre, Dr. Ken Lau was promoted to Assistant Professor and Anne Storey and Miranda Legg were both promoted to Senior Language Instructor. Sam Cole, Tess Hogue, Conntia Lai and Claudia Wong all earned promotions to Language Instructor. Dr. David Gardner was appointed Associate Director of the Centre from June 2010.

Staff members Lisa Cheung (Birmingham University), Natalie Fong (HKU), Ken Lau (Lancaster University), Martin Tang (University of Technology, Sydney) and Lillian Wong (HKU) all completed their doctoral studies recently.

The Centre says goodbye to three members of staff this year: Lara Lam is retiring, and Letty Chan and Alina Wan are leaving to pursue further studies.

**FAREWELL TO A LONG-SERVING COLLEAGUE**

CAES said “au revoir” to Lara Lam at a function in June 2010 held in honour of her service to the Centre and the University. Lara joined the Centre in 1993, bringing with her a strong background in English language teaching with experience from Canada and Hong Kong, and expertise in phonology, cross-cultural linguistics and fine art. She has made contributions to many areas of the Centre’s work, as coordinator of English courses for the Faculty of Engineering, course developer of ENGG1001 - a special course for first year Engineering students and as a teacher of postgraduate courses ranging from English Phonology to Academic Writing, and co-teacher on the very successful broadening course *From Paintings to Stories: the Interplay between Art and Literature*. Lara also made a great contribution to the Centre’s morale through the warmth, thoughtfulness and collegial spirit she brought to the Centre’s Social Committee as an outstanding chairperson from 1995-2007.

![Lara Lam and her students in class](image)

**CENTRE FOR APPLIED ENGLISH STUDIES**
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