FROM THE DIRECTOR

This has been another busy year for the Centre for Applied English Studies (CAES) as we continue to deliver quality academic English courses to undergraduates across the university while preparing for the momentous changes occurring in 2012.

Looking back, we have maintained our core role of offering language enhancement programmes to all ten faculties in the university while providing courses and consultation services to almost all research postgraduate students, a total of over 8,000 students. We have continued to attract students to our Postgraduate Diploma in English Studies for in-service teachers, expanded and revised our highly successful Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics and welcomed several new PhD students to the Centre.

The Centre has continued to strengthen its vibrant academic culture. Staff have spoken at conferences around the world, several as invited keynote and plenary speakers, and published both books and articles with international publishers. Staff have also been successful in applying for a number of large Teaching Development Grants and in gaining a prestigious GRF grant. Two colleagues have graduated with PhDs this year and others have been awarded prizes and honours, with one elected a Foundation Fellow of the new Hong Kong Academy of the Humanities.

Looking forward, we are preparing for several major events in the coming year. One is our move to the new Faculty of Arts building in the new campus next summer. We eagerly await the additional space gained from this. 2012 also marks a new century for HKU and the Centre has been active in many of the university’s centenary celebrations. Most significantly, however, we have been active in collaborating with faculties in preparing courses for the 2012 curriculum reform. The new four-year curriculum involves us in developing 33 new 6-credit English in the Discipline courses across the university and contributing to a substantial increase in our online learning materials. Our new book for a General University English course, to be taken by over 2,500 students entering the university in 2012, will be published this academic year.

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

Ken Hyland

UPDATE ON THE NEW CURRICULUM

ENGLISH IN THE DISCIPLINES: ACADEMIC LITERACY SEMINAR SERIES

In May 2011, under the auspices of the Steering Committee on the 4-Year Undergraduate Curriculum and the Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, CAES offered a seminar series on the new English in the Discipline (ED) courses and Academic Literacy. The two-seminar series aimed to inform the university community on the development of ED courses for the new curriculum.

The first seminar described the modes of collaboration and core content of ED courses for the faculties of Engineering, Arts and Medicine, while the second focused on the tools and resources which help students develop academic literacy. The audience of staff from various faculties and academic units participated actively in Q&A sessions and a number of them expressed their appreciation of CAES’ contribution to enhancing students’ academic literacy. The Vice President Professor Amy Tsui, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, congratulated CAES staff on their progress in ED course development.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY ENGLISH

The General University English (GUE) course book will be published by Hong Kong University Press in the next academic year. The GUE course, developed and written by CAES staff, will be offered to all students in the new cohort in 2012.
IN-HOUSE TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME

MA IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

This year sees some changes to the Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics (MAAL), the longest running such programme in Hong Kong. The MAAL programme continues to focus on the teaching, learning and use of English, offering high quality, up-to-the-minute courses from experts in the field. However, there is now greater flexibility for students in organising their study programmes, with more electives to choose from, and the introduction of a full-time mode. While the MAAL programme has always been in great demand among Hong Kong professionals, CAES also welcomes applications from outside Hong Kong.

One key innovation has been to introduce virtual seminars to bring experts from around the world to share expertise with colleagues. In the first of these, Brian Tomlinson discussed materials development.

Presentations, workshops and sharing sessions by Centre colleagues focused on course design and development. A session on formative peer assessment of teaching was offered in collaboration with the Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL).

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

CAES staff have worked on a range of funded research projects, and disseminated their work in academic books and journals as well as conference presentations.

Several staff have been awarded Teaching Development Grants. Tsang Wai Lan received an award from the General Research Fund, and Yvonne Loong and Lisa Cheung from the Leung Kau Kui Teaching and Endowment Fund.

HONG KONG JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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 development of teaching programmes, with particular reference to the Asian context. Articles in the most recent issue have focused on reading research, vocabulary acquisition, as well as second language requests and pause patterns. These and other articles in HKJAL will be of interest to anyone concerned with the learning and use of a second or other language, particularly English, by different first language background learners.

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The work of the Centre’s Research and Professional Development (RPD) Committee included a survey of staff research and professional needs. An RPD website has been created to promote research and professional practices.

In 2010-2011, research seminars and professional development sessions focused mainly on issues of curriculum reform and academic literacy. Speakers included Sue Hood from the University of Technology Sydney, Wolfgang Teubert and Sheena Gardner from the University of Birmingham, Srikant Sarangi from Cardiff University and Phil Benson from the Hong Kong Institute of Education.

STAFF PUBLICATIONS

CAES staff have been active in publishing their research. Ken Hyland has published papers in Language Teaching, Written Communication and the Journal of English for Specific Purposes, among others. He has also contributed chapters to six academic books including the Continuum.
Companion to Discourse Analysis (of which he was also co-editor) and Writing in the Knowledge Society, and with Polly Tse, co-authored a paper in the Journal of Pragmatics.


Jon Hui contributed a chapter on written and spoken complaints to the recently published volume Globalization, Communication and the Workplace.

Ashley Hazell, has recently published a chapter in Teaching Listening: Voices from the Field, on the use of podcasts and podcasting as a teaching and learning tool.

Ashley Hazell writes:

‘The Power of Podcasts: A Tool to Improve Listening Skills and Empower Learners’ takes instructors and students on a staged journey from finding podcasts for enjoyment, knowledge-enrichment and language skills improvement to finding, listening and archiving academic podcasts related to their disciplines for content knowledge. The final destination is creating a podcast themselves. Many university lecturers worldwide are taking advantage of podcasting to broadcast their lectures online as interest in online and distance learning grows and student cohorts expand. For the language learner, podcasts are a rich resource of spoken text-types, and provide content knowledge in much the same way as a written text does. They can act as a teaching and learning tool in the classroom and as an independent resource out of the classroom, and while on the move. With double cohorts, lack of classroom or lecture theatre space and the ease of listening online anywhere, it may be time for the University of Hong Kong to get podcasting.

Dora Pao, Anne Storey, Tsang Wai Lan and Tse Lai Kun participated as invited speakers in the 2011 International Conference of English for Medical Purposes (EMP2011), organised and hosted by the Medical College, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan.

Tse Lai Kun writes:

The conference was groundbreaking, initiated by a medical school with a forward looking view of the role of English in medical education and healthcare communication in international contexts. The organizers called upon educators ‘to cross the boundaries of their own disciplines and broaden their views of their own professions in collaboration with experts in other fields’.

The CAES team gave a joint paper on A Collaborative Approach to EMP. Anne Storey and Tse Lai Kun led a workshop on A Research-informed Approach to EMP: Analysing student discourse. All four were panelists in the forum discussions, with Anne Storey and Tsang Wai Lan speaking on the theme of EMP teaching materials design and development, Dora Pao and Tse Lai Kun on that of International education in biomedical sciences.

The conference attracted an almost equal number of participants from medical sciences and language education backgrounds and created a promising breeding ground for cross-disciplinary collaborative innovations.

CAES-CEDARS INITIATIVE

In a joint initiative with the Counselling and Person Enrichment section (COPE) of CEDARS, the Student Tutors Project is creating more opportunities for HKU students to speak English.

Volunteer student tutors are offering one-to-one speaking opportunities on a first-come-first-served basis to all HKU students. Beforehand, these dedicated student volunteers undergo a rigorous process of recruitment via the Virtual English website (http://caes.hku.hk/ve), vetting for English skills, and specialist training. As well as offering services in the Language Resource Centre, (4th floor, Meng Wah Complex), the program is being extended to Learning Plus, an area in the Main Library operated by CEDARS.

This initiative provides a blueprint for the peer mentoring component of the language support services to be offered in the Learning Commons of the new Centennial campus.
SUMMER COURSES

The Centre again offered its Summer Institute with general and discipline-specific English courses, IELTS workshops, and a Summer Institute for Teachers of English. The Centre also contributed English courses to the Summer Institute in the Arts and Humanities, and an English for University Studies course for students on the Early Admission Scheme.

NEW SUMMER INSTITUTE COURSES

Four new courses were added to the range of courses in the Summer Institute.

Windows to the World: Reading and Writing about the Humanities, an interdisciplinary language course, took students into the world of the 17th century Dutch painter, Johannes Vermeer.

In Talking and Writing about Music students learnt to write and speak about music critically, with appropriate terminology and style.

Advanced Discussions on China made use of a number of scholarly readings in English and Chinese as starting points for student-led English language discussions on Chinese history, language, literature and culture.

Clinical Correspondence was offered in the form of two workshops. The first workshop looked at correspondence among healthcare professionals, and the second at correspondence among healthcare professionals and non-clinical persons. Half of the participants were students of the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine and the other half came from a combination of backgrounds including Speech and Hearing Sciences and Science.

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

The Centre continued its long-standing commitment to the professional development of teachers in local schools by once again offering Summer Institute for Teachers of English workshops. These aim to integrate the theoretical with the practical, and for participants to leave with concrete ideas and tools to use in their own teaching. This year, the focus was on issues in the New Senior Secondary English Curriculum. Jane Stokes, Julie Ng and Sam Cole gave workshops on designing classroom tasks, learning English through social issues, and giving feedback on second-language writing.

INFORMATION DAY

CAES staff participated in the Information Day for Undergraduate Admissions in October 2010. Staff organized a range of activities for visitors: grammar and pronunciation diagnostics, language games, poster displays and talks. Staff also designed and produced two souvenirs which proved popular. Around 1,500 visitors attended these activities and gave very positive feedback. Professor Kam Louie, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, also praised the Centre’s efforts.
STAFF NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS

CAES continues to develop and maintain strong academic vitality:

* Ken Hyland was elected a Foundation Fellow of the new Hong Kong Academy of the Humanities
* Clarice Chan and Claudia Wong received doctoral degrees from the University of Hong Kong.
* Clarice Chan was awarded a postdoctoral research fellowship by the Australian Government to carry out research at the School of Education of the University of New South Wales.
* Lillian Wong was elected by the global TESOL membership to the TESOL Nominating Committee which nominates candidates for elections including the TESOL President and Board of Directors.

STAFF PROMOTIONS AND ARRIVALS

CAES is delighted to announce that Patrick Desloge and Lillian Wong have been promoted to Senior Language Instructor positions. Ashley Hazell, Jon Hui, Lowana Phillips, Jane Stokes and Polly Tse have been promoted to the position of Language Instructor. Two new teaching staff, Rebecca Welland and Kevin Yung joined the Centre in September 2011.

In the CAES General Office, Icy Tsang has been promoted to Executive Officer. The Centre also welcomes Jesse To and Alex Sum to the General Office staff.

A VOTE OF THANKS

In the summer of 2011, the Centre bid a fond farewell to Connie Lam, Alexandra Lam, Carolyn Ngai, Esther Wu and Keith Hall, who contributed to the Centre’s work with dedication and enthusiasm.

Clerical assistant Connie Lam retired after almost 20 years’ service to the University and to the Centre. Connie provided support to staff in the General Office and to teaching staff, performing her daily duties with care and efficiency. Connie was also a valuable organizer of staff functions and over the years introduced many new overseas staff to Chinese cuisine and customs. She played a key role in the day-to-day life of the Centre and was a very popular figure in the University. CAES colleagues will miss her greatly.

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