The Language Clinic (LC)

Presenters
Gilbert WONG
Ivan CHUI

Education Development Office
What is the Language Clinic?

Generally speaking, a place where University students can…

- Get help with their assignments
- Learn editing and proofreading skills
- Become self-learners
- **Speak English** (a 2nd language in many cases) in a natural way
Philosophies

- Language learning is an on-going process and should be integrated with regular courses (Writing Across Curriculum)
- Students should take responsibility for their own learning (OBTL)
- Students are in a good position to help other students
- Different Colleges/Schools have different needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CB</th>
<th>CHS</th>
<th>CSE</th>
<th>SCM</th>
<th>SLW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business proposal</td>
<td>Narrative essay...</td>
<td>Lab report</td>
<td>Creative writing</td>
<td>Legal letter...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History and Development

- LC for EN Students (2003/04)
- LC for FHS Students (2004/05)
  - Initiated by Dr Rodney Jones (EN), supported by FHS
- LC for FB Students (2005/06)
  - Dr Rodney Jones as PI,
  - Supported by TDG with injected funding from FB
- LC for FSE, BST & SR Students (2006/07)
  - Dr Rodney Jones as PI,
  - Supported by TDG with injected funding from DSL/FSE/BST

Starting from 2007-08, the LC project was institutionalised
- LC for SCM & SLW Students (2007/08 Sem B)
  - EDO operates the LCs, Dr Rodney Jones as Founding Consultant
Our Services

1. Face-to-Face Consultations
2. MSN Counseling
3. Literacy events (all with explicit ILOs)

LC website: http://www.cityu.edu.hk/language_clinic/
(available at EDO website → Learning → Learning Resources → Language Clinic)

Choose a date and book an appointment. Then upload a draft assignment there.
Daily Face-to-face Consultation
Social Gathering
International Games Night
Easter Treasure Hunt
However,

- **NOT** a magic bullet
- **NOT** an editing service
- Students’ **TIME MANAGEMENT SKILL** is important
Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

for CLIENTS: After using the LC service, student users would be able to

a) identify and correct common errors
b) attend to fluency in writing

for LC TUTORS: At the end of the LC training workshops, student tutors should be able to

a) analyse a text effectively and identify errors at different levels
b) reflect on their tutoring skills and provide guidance to clients in their writing
1. Professional Training Workshops

- Focus on goal setting, communication, tutoring and text analysis skills
- Taught by EDO professional staff
- Tutors’ performance observed regularly by the project instructors
2. Training Camp

- “Think Smart-Play Hard Camp” for student mentors working in various peer tutoring schemes including the LC, SI and PALS to reflect on their mentoring work in 2007/08
- Adventure and experiential learning games
- Self-empowerment and goal setting
Service effectiveness (ATs) (Data of 2007/08)

1. User Assessment
   a) Student/Client Usage
   b) User Questionnaire Survey
   c) Students’ Written Assignments - Value Addedness

2. Student Tutor Assessment
   d) Entry and Exit Test Results - Value Addedness
   e) Tutor Observation
   f) Tutor Self-evaluation
1. User Assessment

a) Client Usage: Face-to-Face Consultations

- **3514** appointments in the year, with 2130 in Sem A and 1384 in Sem B
b) User Questionnaire Survey

**Fig 2: Reasons For Visiting Language Clinic**

- Need advice on grammar: 24%
- Need advice on text organisation: 19%
- Need advice on content: 19%
- Need advice on vocabulary: 16%
- Need advice on English learning materials: 8%
- Suggested by teacher: 5%
- Suggested by friend: 9%

**Fig 3: Users’ Comment On The ILO Achievement**

- Be able to identify some features of different genres
- Be able to identify and correct some errors in writing
- Be able to use appropriate vocabulary in writing
- Be more confident to communicate in English

- Strongly Disagree □ Disagree □ Neutral □ Agree □ Strongly Agree
c) Students' Written Assignments - Accuracy

- 2 sets of assignment drafts were collected from some students who have visited the LC, one written before the consultations and the other afterwards.

**Fig 5** Number of Errors Found in Students' Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>before consultation</th>
<th>after consultation</th>
<th>before consultation</th>
<th>after consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Student Tutor Assessment

Assessment Rubrics

- How we make sure that the ILOs are achieved
- Constructively aligned with the Scheme ILOs and TLAs
- Announced and explained to all tutors in the orientation
d) Student tutors’ Entry & Exit Test Results

- 15 student tutors, Week 4 -13 of Sem B
- Proofread an essay and point out any grammatical mistakes or wrong use of vocabulary
- Comment on the text organisation and coherence by looking at the use of cohesive devices
e) Tutor Observation

- 2 formal observations conducted by the project instructor for 21 final year tutors, Week 7 – 13 of Sem B
- Tutoring skills, language ability, work attitude
- Discussion between the observer and the student tutors at the end of the observation
Fig 8  Helping the client to determine his/her difficulties

Fig 9  Giving useful and accurate advice

Fig 11  Getting the client to talk

Fig 12  Responding to the client's needs
f) Tutor Self-evaluation

- Self-evaluation form completed by all tutors at the end of the year
- Most believed they had achieved the ILOs and more confidence on their English proficiency, communication skills and work attitude
It really WORKS!!
How do the LC Activities Align Constructively with the University ILOs

‘International Games Night’ ILO: Engaged in cultural exchange, students can apply cross-cultural knowledge to a variety of situations

TLA: Tutors lead students of different nationalities to play English games

RELATE cultural awareness to collaborate effectively in a broad range of teamwork situations

TLAs: Tutors encourage clients to spot out and correct their writing mistakes

APPLY multi-disciplinary critical thinking skills to solve problems and create new ideas

Client ILOs:
- a) Identify and correct common errors
- b) Attend to fluency in writing

‘Social Gathering’ & ‘Easter Treasure Hunt’ ILO:
Students can communicate effectively and confidently in English via different games in a relaxing social context

Tutor ILOs:
- a) Analyse a text effectively and identify errors at different levels
- b) Reflect on their tutoring skills and provide guidance to clients in their writing

(Make your teaching apply these skills)

APPLY effective communication, language, numerical and IT skills to a variety of professional settings

GENERATE a positive and flexible approach to lifelong learning and employability

‘Ideal Graduates as Professionals’

TLAs: Tutors attend training camp, workshops & daily consultations, work with online management system in handling appointments and research

TLAs: Participants cooperate with each other and speak naturally in English via competitions, games and dinner

‘International Games Night’ ILO: Engaged in cultural exchange, students can apply cross-cultural knowledge to a variety of situations
Future Plans

- Ally with more academic Departments
- Record students’ participations in their co-curricular transcript
- Serve as an extensive learning resource and back-up for students engaging in any language assessment schemes under the University 4-year curriculum
- Combine resources with some other University English enhancement schemes such as the Language Companion Course (LCC) & Tell Me More (TMM)
So, how could **YOU** help promote the Language Clinic to your students?

- Announce the service in your classes and encourage students to use it, particularly before major written assignments are due.
- Identify students in your courses with English writing difficulties and ‘refer’ them to the Language Clinic.
- Build Language Clinic visits into courses or projects (such as Final Year Projects).
Thank you!