



The 4th ELC Symposium: June 3, 2013 *The Symposium Edition*



Symposium Rundown of the Day



By Allan Cheung (CityU)

On a warm June 3rd, 2013, teachers gathered for the 4th Annual ELC Symposium at City University of Hong Kong. The main theme this year was "The position of English Language Provision in Hong Kong Tertiary Institutions".

As explained on the website (<http://booking.elc.cityu.edu.hk/ocs/index.php/ELC/2013>), "the ELC Symposium continues to provide opportunities for teachers, researchers, and administrators from English language centres to share ideas and experiences". There were 36 paper presentations, 3 workshops and a total of more than 240 participants from various tertiary institutions in Hong Kong and Macau. The event was organized in order to share innovative ideas, showcase current research, and discuss the future of ELCs in the territory.

The event began with an address by Fiona Williams, Head of CityU ELC. Then Professor Arthur Ellis, the Provost of CityU, gave a speech to welcome the audience. Professor Martha Pennington from the Department of English (CityU) gave her plenary speech looking into the nature of English language teaching.

Thereafter, lectures and workshops were given by teachers from various universities all over Hong Kong, many of them by teachers from CityU ELC.

The presentations during the day covered various topic areas, with a special focus on improving student learning and using technology as a learning tool. To end the day, a panel of Heads from ELCs all over Hong Kong answered questions posted online by audience members on a range of topics related to the sub-themes of the symposium.

If you have any questions or comments, please email Allan Cheung at aznbaldy1213@yahoo.com

Message from Fiona Williams (Head of ELC, CityU) - see pg. 2



Interview with Hebe Wong (Symposium Chair) - see pg. 4



Fiona's Outlook on the 2013 Symposium

by Fiona Williams



Fiona Williams (CityU) speaking during the panel discussion

On Monday, 3rd June the English Language Centre (ELC) of CityU hosted the 4th ELC Symposium. The language centres in the different universities in Hong Kong take it in turns to run this annual event and this year it was our turn. Over 240 English language teaching professionals came this year and we had a very successful day.

At these symposiums and similar forums, the ELC staff at CityU share what we are doing with other universities and we pick up ideas for our own courses and co-curricular activities so that we can continue to offer the best services for everyone at CityU.

This year we had the opportunity to hear what the other institutions have been doing for the new curriculum. We also heard teachers talking about their innovations in e-learning and their use of mobile devices in the classroom as well lots of activities that are run outside the classroom.

From our centre, Jane McGettigen and Bilands (Bee) Dy presented the peer feedback activities they have used in the classroom; Stephen Bolton talked about our approach to e-learning; Tim Chung, ELC instructor, shared his experience of helping students from Science and Engineering on their Final Year Projects (FYPs); Billy Chan, Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), shared his insight into our Practical Language Activities; another group of GTAs talked about using competition in the classroom; Fiona Siu, ELC instructor, presented on an aspect of hedges in our EAP course

QUOTES

"The ELC staff at CityU share what we are doing with other universities"

"Remember, we can help you make a BIG difference."

and Roxanne Wong was part of a group telling us all about the value of the DELTA, a test you can all take to help you understand your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to English.

ELC teaching staff are now preparing for the new academic year, making changes to what we have to offer based on what we have learnt throughout the year, and we look forward to seeing all of you at some point coming down to use our facilities and take part in all the activities we have to help you develop your English language proficiency.

Remember, we can help you make a BIG difference.



Instructors at the ELC
Emma Bruce and Roxanne Wong



Former and current CityU ELC colleagues

(left to right) John Fung (HKUST), Christy Chan (CityU), and Flora Leung (City U)



Current CityU GTAs

(left to right) Luke Leonard, Bobby Cox and Suzanne Buckingham

The following are highlights of some of the very popular paper presentations:

"Flipped Classroom": Turning Conventional Learning Upside Down

By Alex Ling



"Flipped classroom is about doing homework in class, and doing classwork at home." said Phil Smyth, a senior lecturer working at the University of Hong Kong, in his workshop on applying this bold idea to enhance writing instruction. To many old-school English teachers, this new teaching mode is unimaginable. However, after listening to how this works and its potential advantages, it is not hard to understand why this is possibly, according to him, the "pedagogical solution" to students' lack of feedback and motivation.

In contrast to the conventional teaching method in which students passively listen to lectures and do whatever they are told, the teaching method suggested by Phil challenges this teacher-student learning process and requires

learners to participate in classroom functions and discussions actively. During lessons, time would mostly be allocated to collaborative writing activities and in-group discussions, so as to stimulate students' creativity and encourage them to give comments on each other's works. While outside the classroom, students would need to listen to several pre-recorded mini-lectures, go through related readings and get some individual assignments done, acquiring all the relevant knowledge and skills in preparation for later discussions



Photo: Phil Smyth (HKU) at the 2013 CityU Symposium

"Writing tasks do not have perfect answers." Phil suggested. "By seeing more writing can we realize what works and what doesn't." This underlines one of the major advantages of this teaching

approach in which students can have more chances to look at peers' assignments, figuring out the best way to improve their own writing. On top of that, seeing other group mates' quality works can probably drive all students to work harder and write better.

"[Students will] spend more time on writing, not less", predicted by Mr. Smyth. He believes this unconventional scheme can actually make students take writing tasks more seriously. Teaching staff from different tertiary institutions are very excited about the trial scheme set to take place in 2014, hoping that it can bring educators one step closer to a more effective and ground-breaking way of teaching English writing skills.

If you have any questions or comments, please email Alex Ling at lhl1408@yahoo.com.hk



CityU GTAs as participants, presenters and emcees



Lunch time live music performance by Elizabeth Shultis (GTA), and friends

PEOPLE IN THE SYMPOSIUM



The Logistics Team, student helpers, and Symposium Chair, Dr Hebe Wong



2013 Symposium: The Spearhead of the Event

by Charmaine Lau



As City University was responsible for chairing the 4th ELC Symposium this year, Dr Hebe Wong, an Associate Head of ELC and a recipient of the long service award, is no doubt the best choice for being the chairperson of this grand event. Her goal-oriented vision spoke for itself as it motivated every single staff member in the ELC, including office staff.

Committee had to work closely with one another, make quick decisions to deal with different challenges.

Making changes and finding solutions were the keys to success in this symposium. It is important for departments to demonstrate their academic rigor in hosting and participating in academic events.

On top of that, the committee succeeded in adding new features to this symposium. These included the first online discussion forum that enabled participants to interact on a larger scale. Participants were invited to post questions that they wanted to ask the heads of the English language centres. Moreover, the organizing committee archived every PowerPoint shown in the presentation sessions for further reference.

Despite all the challenges, Hebe feels very pleased to have completed this symposium. This event proved that every member of the CityU ELC has made an extra effort to achieve the goal of keeping up the profile and image of the centre.



Participants from various institutions in Hong Kong

FAST FACTS

Over 240

Participants at the symposium

1st

ELC Symposium organized by CityU

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Over 30 presenters from various tertiary institutions

Since its establishment in 1997, this is the very first time that the CityU ELC hosted an inter-institution event. It was a very challenging experience, for Hebe and the whole department. "I had no idea what to do at the beginning," said Hebe Wong. From reviewing proposals, setting up rubrics for reviewing, and promoting the event, to managing logistics, Hebe needed to put different pieces of the symposium tasks together based on her experience of attending conferences and meetings.

According to Hebe, keeping everything on schedule was the hardest part of the organizing process since she was required to meet tight deadlines. During the whole process, the different teams in the Organising

David Gardner: An Insider's Look

by Charmaine Lau



David Gardner, the Associate Director of the Centre for Applied English Studies of the University of Hong Kong, was both a presenter and participant at the 4th ELC symposium. David has enjoyed taking part in ELC Symposia throughout the last few years since he has been able to meet new people and to gather with old friends. Being able to share professional knowledge and feelings with people who share the same interest, this event can help him to improve, change and enhance the way of learning and teaching English in the brand new curriculum.

Regarding the promotion of English through Socialization and Integration Activities, David gave a session on the recent EUE (Enhancing the Use of English) project carried out at HKU. The project's aims were to provide opportunities for authentic language use, achieve integration and inclusivity and promote English as a *lingua franca* (common language) on the HKU campus. Since its commencement in 2012, the project has proved to be very beneficial to students. For instance, by polishing their English skills, the project raises the competitiveness of students in the job market. At the same time, it emphasizes the integration of native and non-native speakers in the university as well.

According to David, these aims are crucial for the university to fulfill the mission of Internationalism, and to pursue the goal of inclusivity.

CityU shares the belief, which is why the ELC organizes different Practical Language Activities. PLAs provide opportunities for students to practice using English in conversation or discussion with English speakers, which is an example of promotion of English through socialization. Some activities also provide opportunities to sharpen reading and listening for input into other means. These forms of practice can also be regarded as an example of the integration of native speakers and non-native speakers, in line with the approach described by David Gardner.

Among the various sessions offered by different professors, David found the session "English in General Education: Science Fiction as a Reflection on Humanity" the most interesting; It was offered by Mr. Andy Morrall from PolyU. This session included various popular topics among students, for example, aliens, different life forms and alien-human love. Such special topics have successfully raised the interest and attention of students in learning English, and have made students more motivated to polish their English skills.



Every participant gained a lot in this symposium, and it is exciting to think how they are going to bring what they learned into the classroom.

If you have any questions or comments, please email Charmaine Lau at charmainelkw@gmail.com

A New Twist on Writing Classes

by Alex Ling



Unlike other language skills, writing ability cannot be passively taught through repeated practice, as it takes feedback and comments from others to refine and improve. However, given limited resources, it is often next to impossible for one lecturer to go through every single draft and assignment handed in by twenty to thirty students in class, let alone thoroughly review them. Helen Zhao, a professor from Chinese University of Hong Kong, introduced a web-based annotation tool called Classroom Salon which is ready to tackle this thorny issue. It allows students to review one another's work, thus fostering more comprehensive feedback on students' writing assignments.



far left: Jane McGettigan (CityU) and *far right:* Professor Zhao (CUHK)

Classroom Salon enables students to grade their classmates' assignments online, rating them as well as highlighting grammatical and other language problems. It is similar to the peer review sessions for drafts uploaded to Blackboard during English writing lessons, but with a more user-friendly and convenient design. By getting in-depth review from other classmates, students can be exposed to different opinions, which is essential for their own revision. Lecturers, too, benefit from

this new way of teaching as well. With full access to online feedback just one click away, teachers are able to view the "hot spots" underlined by pupils, and can even track all the comments received by a particular student. These features help lecturers gain a better understanding of students' weaknesses and thus readjust their curriculum to address students' needs. In this ground-breaking teaching model, the teacher's role is less dominating, and they are mainly advisors steering the group discussion in a fruitful direction. In turn, writing lessons become more interactive, engaging and fun.

Professor Zhao, with reference to her department's first-hand experience of trying this application, states that the success of this teaching method depends on students' learning autonomy and willingness to share their ideas.

Some audience members suggest that students are quite shy and timid while reviewing their classmates' work. Therefore, to venture into a brave new world of this promising peer feedback scheme, students must first pick up their pen and paper and start writing with motivation and without presumption.

If you have any questions or comments, please email Alex Ling at lhl1408@yahoo.com.hk

PRESENTERS AND PARTICIPANTS



Keynote Speaker Prof. Martha Pennington giving her speech titled "What is This Thing Called ELT?"



Dr. Jane Lockwood (CityU) participating in the panel discussion.



CityU ELC colleagues

Style or substance? A choice or a fallacy?

By Alex Ling



In order to foster better communication between the head and the staff in local English Learning Centres (ELC), Dr. Bruce Morrison, the Director of the ELC at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, talked about management and leadership, which are complementarily related to better communication and collaboration.



Dr. Bruce Morrison, Head of the PolyU ELC

Posed at the beginning of the workshop, the question of "Style or Substance?" addresses people's presumptions about the roles occupied by the leadership and management. According to popular belief, leaders are mainly responsible for influencing others' actions and leading associates towards their own vision and goals. It is highly personal and varies greatly in style. However, management seems to exist at the other end of the same spectrum, putting its chief emphasis on

efforts to accomplish desired goals and objectives using available resources efficiently and effectively.

As Morrison pointed out, leaders should learn to know more about the substance, permitting each staff member to use his or her own style in their areas of expertise. In this way, leaders can get the chance to comprehend the structure of ELC inside out, thus building a realistic mindset of how to implement changes in the best way possible.

"[This talk is about] dealing with people and making everyone happy."

As for lecturers, they can also add more personality into their work, flexibly adopting orders to suit different students' needs, and voice their opinions actively to bring about constructive changes. So at the end of the day, the key note is to achieve seamless and adaptable cooperation among ELC workers, and provide the best possible service and support to students.

The talk concluded with an interesting and fitting metaphor: a stunning Aston Martin, a car which successfully combines the sleek style of a sports car and the practicality of a Toyota family car. This vivid illustration of a successful marriage between management and leadership takes centre stage on a well-established ELC. Management and leadership, like any other happy couple; can't possibly do without each other.

If you have any questions or comments, please email Alex Ling at lhl14o8@yahoo.com.hk



Dr. Bruce Morrison (PolyU) speaking during the Panel Discussion.

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Left to right: Dr. Bruce Morrison (PolyU) and Dr. Arthur McNeill (HKUST)



Left to right: Prof. Kathleen Ahrens (HKBU) and Dr. David Gardner (HKU)



Dr. Jose Lai (CUHK)



Left to right: Rebecca Pang (Lingnan), Dr. Arthur McNeill (HKUST), Fiona Williams (CityU), Dr. Jose Lai (CUHK), Prof. Kathleen Ahrens (HKBU)

Putting Heads Together

By Charmaine Lau



The highlighted event of the 2013 Symposium was the panel discussion by English Centre Heads from different universities. During this session, panel heads evaluated the course teaching and learning process of students in the new 3-3-4 curriculum by answering questions raised by participants and colleagues, such as the use of Self-Access Centres, the cooperation of English Departments and ELCs and support for Professional Development. The session also emphasized the future development of English Learning and Teaching.

Different universities have their own ways of developing the ELC. At CityU, the ELC and the English Department share lots of resources and innovative ideas, jointly shouldering responsibility for English enhancement among college students. Since the English Department has a very long history, it is able to provide ELC with very strong back up and support. According to the Head of the CityU ELC, Fiona Williams, enhancing students' engagement and learning in English in innovative ways are the Centre's goals. As for other universities, like CUHK, BU and IED, they have been working closely with different departments from different faculties so as to provide more collaboration and cooperation. They are hoping to build up a strong bonding so as to carry out better research and teaching strategies. Yet all of the ELCs have the same target of polishing the English skills of students in many different ways.

At CityU and other universities, tutors urge and encourage students to go to the SAC to sharpen their English skills. There is a Self-Access Centre available in every university, which has a unique identity and purpose on campus. They are the designated areas where students can go and do independent study by utilizing resources including IELTS notes and multimedia materials. There are all sorts of resources and guidelines assisting students in the SAC, including computer assisted language learning.

The panel discussion provided opportunities for teachers to discuss and explore the trends of teaching and learning in the new curriculum. As several speakers noted, in order to maximize the function of ELC, ELCs themselves should speak up and express their own ideas regarding development. This will shape the perfect ELC for each institution. To maximize the potential of every ELC, they should not be constrained, so that each of them can develop their own strengths and strategies. This is definitely the way ahead.

A Message from the Newsletter Team



left to right: Allan Cheung, Charmaine Lau, Alex Ling

We have attended some of the most popular sessions, especially the ones with queues and jam-packed rooms.

We apologize in advance if there are any inaccuracies regarding any content written in this issue.

Special thanks to Hebe Wong, Fiona Williams, and The ELC as a whole for allowing us this opportunity to work on the Special Edition Newsletter. We would like to express our gratitude towards every participant and interviewee from the symposium. All in all, it was a great experience and learning opportunity for all of us. Thank you!

Regards,

Allan Cheung, Charmaine Lau, Alex Ling
Symposium 2013 Newsletter Team

For more information, please visit us at:

www.cityu.edu.hk/elc



If you would like to access pictures from the 2013 symposium, please visit us at:

<https://symposium2013.elc.cityu.edu.hk/ocs/index.php/ELC/2013/schedConf/gallery>

Academic Word List (AWL) Word Search Competition

Name: _____

Student ID # _____

*Have a chance to win a
\$50 dollar cash coupon!
See below for details!

Directions:

1. Please circle or highlight the words in the word bank located in the word search below.

| Word Bank | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. essential | 2. motivation | 3. authenticity | 4. presumption | 5. autonomy |
| 6. associate | 7. symposium | 8. annotation | 9. strategy | 10. fallacy |

O E S S E N T I A L K H S A A W W J O
 C R I I R B A Z B B F L J S T W U P V
 Y Z P B W K L U R Z S R D S X U D Y A
 D R X J N D I P H X U U K O F N G C U
 C F R R H Y P O I W Z A M C O E D N T
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 M O T I V A T I O N S O T A B E T G E
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 H H B C M N Z P A U S Y Y S B H Z U I
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 K K O O U S O E D Z O X M Y I J B K I
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 G G Q M N P W C O K F A W M Z U H A Y
 J Y Z A T X P T X S L I K G J V I I U
 E U B X S M U U G L X L P B D B W U G
 E Q L Y E A A A A G M U R Z W L A F C
 Y M N Y D O Y F H L E O K Y B Z U U Y

2. (5) random participants will be chosen to for the \$50 cash coupon prize.
3. After you have found the words in the word search, please submit this with your name and student ID to the Self-Access Centre (SAC) located at G2513, 2/F, Green Zone, AC1.
4. Due date: January 7th, 2014 Good Luck!
*This raffle is restricted to current CityU students only.