

24 May 2013

2:00pm – 2:45pm

Room A308

Roundtable Title: Assessing writing in the disciplines

Presenter: Dr Alan Urmston, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract

A renewed emphasis on written literacy in Hong Kong's tertiary education sector, as evidenced by the implementation of initiatives such as a genre-based approach to writing, special writing requirements, the development of diagnostic writing tests, indicates a need to re-examine how we assess the writing ability of our students. In recent years, task-based or process-writing approaches have been favoured. The former would seem appropriate only for particular forms or genres of writing, such as workplace or vocationally oriented. The latter, while acknowledged as providing the opportunity for students to develop their writing skills, is time-consuming, labour-intensive and challenging to assess fairly given that the final product is inevitably a co-construction between writer and teacher. These issues regarding the assessment of writing, along with others such as whether to assess holistically or analytically and what kinds of diagnostic feedback we should be providing to students' to help them improve their writing will be discussed in this roundtable.

Biodata

Alan Urmston is Assistant Professor in the English Language Centre of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, where he coordinates English language assessments through the Language Testing Unit, which he heads. Alan's professional interests lie in the field of language testing and assessment.