

10:00am - 10:30am

Block Y, Room Y301

Invited Speaker

Mr Cameron Smart

Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

Cameron Smart is an English Language Subject Manager (Assessment Development) at Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. He has been working in the field of EFL teaching and testing for the last twenty-two years, having worked in Scotland, Spain, Hong Kong and England.

Topic: HKDSE English Language Examination: Challenges and Opportunities

Abstract

The introduction of the HKDSE English Language examination in 2012 will signal the end of a period of remarkable stability in the testing of final year secondary school students in Hong Kong, replacing, as it does, the Use of English AS level examination, which has been in existence in its present format for the last 20 years. One of the most pressing challenges facing English Language Centres in tertiary institutions is, therefore, trying to coming to grips with what the different grades of the new examination will mean in terms of the English language skills first-year undergraduates are likely to possess in order to make decisions regarding syllabus and materials design.

This task should be made easier, in theory at least, by the fact that standards-referenced reporting (SRR) will be employed for the HKDSE as a means of making levels of achievement explicit for end users. Although this may represent a radical difference for tertiary institutions in the type of information they will have to deal with regarding incoming students' abilities, SRR has actually been employed for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) English Language since 2007.

This talk will, therefore, outline the characteristics of the HKDSE English Language examination and of SRR and how this may apply to the ELCs in Hong Kong. I will also look at how SRR has provided an impetus for reviewing and improving the test design of present English Language examinations and how this may affect the HKDSE in the future.