

11:45am - 12:25pm

Block Y, Room Y303

Presentation Title: Investigating undergraduates' language needs - a comprehensive needs analysis

Presenter / Co-presenters: Dr Nigel HUCKSTEP, City University of Hong Kong
Dr Eva LUI, City University of Hong Kong
Ms Emma BRUCE, City University of Hong Kong
Ms Roxanne WONG, City University of Hong Kong

Abstract

When developing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English for Special Purposes (ESP) curricula, it is common practice to conduct needs analysis to research learners' language needs at the course planning stage. This practice is not, however, commonly adopted in the development of English enhancement courses. At the City University of Hong Kong a comprehensive needs analysis was conducted before developing English general proficiency courses for undergraduates taking the 4-year curriculum from 2012. The targets were to collect students' language needs for success in the University and to identify the more common assessment tasks adopted in parent departments. Raw data collected from student questionnaires, focus group interviews, instructor interviews and questionnaires were triangulated with findings from course catalogues. The findings will enable curriculum developers to make informed decisions when prioritising the language skills covered in the new courses and when designing language tasks to be adopted in learning and testing processes. In this paper, students' language needs will be presented as seen both by students and teachers. A summary of the findings and an account of the constraints experienced when conducting the analysis will also be given.

Biodata

Nigel Huckstep teaches associate degree, undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the ELC at the City University of Hong Kong. His research interests include the application of post-structuralist thinking about language in general and in qualitative approaches to Discourse Analysis in particular. He is keen supporter of self-directed learning and of student empowerment while considering direction and input from teachers an essential part of the language learning process.

Eva Lui is an associate head in the English Language Centre at the City University of Hong Kong where she oversees assessment matters of the Centre. She is currently involved in an exemplar collection project to achieve better standard maintenance in their courses.

Emma Bruce has been working in the English Language Centre of City University since September 1997. Her professional interests include language testing and assessment and teacher education.

Roxanne Wong is part of the team developing the new assessment criteria for the ELC at City University. Her interests include assessment and helping students become more independent learners.