

2:45pm - 3:25pm

Block Y, Room Y303

Presentation Title: Tracking Students' Progress in English under the Four-year Curriculum: The TELT Project

Presenter / Co-presenters: Dr Alan URMSTON, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Ms Felicia FANG, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Ms Carrie TSANG, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Dr Jane LOCKWOOD, The Hong Kong Institute of Education
Ms Michelle RAQUEL, The Hong Kong Institute of Education
Ms Christine SHIRLEY, Lingnan University

Abstract

The aim of this presentation is to introduce to local language centres and the language teaching community in Hong Kong the Tertiary English Language Test (known as the TELT). The TELT, consisting of sub-tests of reading, listening, grammar and vocabulary, was developed at the Centre for Language in Education at the Hong Kong Institute of Education to help place incoming students into streams for English language enhancement. It was felt that the existing Hong Kong AS Level Use of English is not sensitive enough to discriminate between students and also that increasing numbers of students are entering the Institute from outside of Hong Kong with varying, and sometimes unreliable or unverifiable statements of their English language proficiency. During the trialling and early implementation stages of the TELT it was proposed that it could also be used as a tracking tool of the progress of students' English language learning. In other words, students could take the Test at intervals during their programme of study and monitor their progress.

In 2009, the English Language Centre at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Centre for English and Additional Languages at Lingnan University of Hong Kong were invited to become involved in the further development of the TELT. It was felt that an inter-institutional collaboration would benefit the development of the Test by facilitating item writing and test development leading to enhanced validity. Furthermore, as a result of discussions between the collaborating parties, it was proposed that for the TELT to best serve its function as a tracking mechanism for students, it should provide diagnostic information so that students (and centres) could more precisely measure their progress and take steps to improve their areas of weakness. In addition, it was considered that the Test should be made as widely available as possible and so should be web-based.

In the talk, representatives from the three collaborating institutions will describe the development, trialling and implementation of the TELT, as well as the ongoing project to develop the systems necessary to enable the delivery of the Test via the web, as it impacts their individual institutions. The presenters will also discuss the reporting of results and how these will be used by students, teachers and administrators at each institution. The importance of the TELT as an integral part of the provision for English language enhancement at the tertiary level in the four-year curriculum will also be discussed.

Biodata

Alan Urmston is an Assistant Professor in the Language Testing Unit of the English Language Centre. He is coordinator of the Graduating Students' Language Proficiency Assessment and of all projects relating to language assessment, including the TELT project. He also teaches English in the ELC.

Felicia Fang is a Language Instructor in the Language Testing Unit of the English Language Centre. Her main areas of responsibility are the Graduating Students' Language Proficiency Assessment and projects relating to language assessment, including the TELT project. She also teaches English in the ELC.

Carrie Tsang is a Project Associate in the Language Testing Unit of the English Language Centre. Her main area of responsibility is the TELT project.

Jane Lockwood is Head of the Centre for Language in Education, which is responsible for language learning programmes, facilities and co-curricular activities at the Institute.

Michelle Raquel is a Language Instructor in the Centre for Language in Education and is coordinator of the TELT.

Christine Shirley is Head of the Centre for English and Additional Languages, which aims to enhance the English language and thinking skills of its students, and to provide language support to help students succeed in their academic studies through core and elective courses as well as co-curricular language activities.