



# Exploratory Practice: Putting relevance at the heart of language teaching and scholarship



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**12:45 – 14:00**

**Room 646, Meng Wah Complex, HKU**

**Chair: Dr Jingjing Hu**

## **Abstract:**

It has often been suggested that language teachers should engage in research but this is not a simple process. Teachers cite the lack of relevance of much research to their lives, as well as indicating the limited time and resources to engage in research. As a way through the conundrum, Allwright (1993, 2003) suggests Exploratory Practice affords opportunities to integrate research and pedagogy in meaningful ways.

In this paper I will argue that Exploratory Practice (EP) offers a sustainable way for teachers (and learners) to conduct research which is entirely relevant to our language teaching (and learning) lives (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, Hanks, 2017). Drawing on data gathered in a language centre from participants engaging in EP for the first time, I discuss the challenges and the opportunities that this brings. What puzzled the learners and teachers? How did they investigate? What did they find difficult, and what affected their motivation? Their comments offer profound insights into the potential for developing our understandings about language learning and teaching. I end by suggesting that Exploratory Practice offers an innovative way to integrate research and pedagogy – a new, original and relevant form of scholarship.

## **References:**

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## **About the speaker:**

Judith Hanks started teaching EFL in 1987, moved to EAP in 1999, and has worked in China, Italy, Singapore, and UK, as a teacher, manager, teacher educator. Now Associate Professor at the University of Leeds, her research interests include: Exploratory Practice in EAP; Intercultural issues in language teacher education; and (exploratory) practice as research.

**~ ALL ARE WELCOME ~**

**For enquiries, please contact the Office of Research at 3917 8254**