Talking Sense

Alumni

Graduates Shine at Chief Executive’s Awards for Teaching Excellence (CEATE)
Foreword

We take pride in the fact that our Faculty has been consistently ranked among the World’s top Education Schools since the subject rankings began four years ago. Those rankings say a great deal about the achievements of colleagues and the global esteem which the Faculty enjoys.

This latest issue of Education Matters celebrates the achievements of a number of individuals and provides updates on Faculty activity: in Research, Learning & Teaching and in Knowledge Exchange. In particular, I would like to highlight the achievements of our graduates in this year’s Chief Executive Awards for Teaching Excellence (CEATE). As reported on p.12-13, there were HKU alumni in no fewer than five of the winning teams, and in the English Language Education KLA, where two teams shared the top prize, one team consisted entirely of HKU graduates while the other was led by another of our alumni. Congratulations - we are enormously proud of all of you!

Now that our Faculty’s Pearl Jubilee has come to an end, we are already looking forward to our next celebration! In 2017-18, we will be celebrating 100 years of teacher education at the University of Hong Kong – a story that began with the establishment of a Department for the Training of Teachers in the Faculty of Arts in September 2017. We look forward to involving as many alumni as possible in the Centenary celebrations. If you have any suggestions of activities to mark this historic event, please send them to eduert@hku.hk.

Towards the end of our Faculty’s Pearl Jubilee celebrations in 2014-15, we learned that the Faculty of Education, HKU had been ranked World Number 6 in the 2015 QS World University Rankings by Subject. University rankings are notoriously fickle – not least because the ranking organizations make adjustments to their metrics on a regular basis. Nevertheless, we take pride in the fact that our Faculty has been consistently ranked among the World’s top Education Schools since the subject rankings began four years ago. Those rankings say a great deal about the achievements of colleagues and the global esteem which the Faculty enjoys.

I would like to conclude this celebratory Foreword by placing on record my gratitude and appreciation of our Faculty colleagues, students and alumni for all your achievements and everything you contribute: to scholarship, to your professions and to the communities you serve. Whatever our ranking, you are an immense source of pride to all of us. We look forward to celebrating further achievements (and more CEATE awards!) in forthcoming issues of Education Matters.

Professor Stephen Andrews
Dean
Language in education is a hot topic in many countries, perhaps nowhere more than Hong Kong. Many people here are bilingual, some even trilingual and the debate has raged for decades over whether learning through one’s mother-tongue (first-language) is best, or whether adopting the ‘global language’ English as the medium for learning gives children that much-sought-after head start in life.

Professor Amy B M Tsui, the Faculty’s Chair Professor (Language and Education) has been very much front and centre in this debate. In 1998, when the Hong Kong Government implemented mother-tongue education policy in schools, she was part of a three-member panel charged with adjudicating the appeals from schools against the government’s decision to mandate the use of Chinese as a medium of instruction. She has been involved in research in a variety of aspects of the subject for over 15 years, and is a dedicated advocate of doing what is best for the student. Professor Tsui believes that one of the keys to discovering what that ‘best’ might be comes from studying what actually happens in the classroom when – as is happening in countries in Asia now – children are getting their education in a language that is not their home language.

She readily acknowledges that the answers are not clear-cut, pointing out that globalization and many other constantly changing factors bring about their own new questions. She will be addressing some of these questions in her upcoming Distinguished Lecture on Educating The Global Citizen: Policy and Practice in Asian Contexts.

Says Professor Tsui: “Nowadays English language is no longer viewed as a second or foreign language but as a basic skill. All Asian countries are grappling with this – and the real question at the moment is how do you equip your students with the English language skills they need to be competitive in an international workplace, but not at the cost of their home language?”

Language Policy

The discourse surrounding the Hong Kong Government’s proposal of implementing mother tongue education in schools in 1997 was very much one of educational efficacy. Professor Tsui points out that in fact this was the stance of a panel of educational consultants invited by the then British colonial government to advise on educational policy way back in 1982 (the Llewellyn Report). Yet, their recommendation to adopt mother-tongue policy in schools was not taken on board until after the change of sovereignty in 1998.

This motivated Professor Tsui to work on a volume, in collaboration with Professor James Tollefson, entitled...
Medium of Instruction Policies: Which Agenda? Whose Agenda? published in 2004. It covered Medium of Instruction (MoI) policies all over the world, and looked at how language policies were often shaped by social, political and economic agendas, rather than by an educational agenda. “In Hong Kong, it is clear that mother-tongue policy in 1998 was very much shaped by a political agenda,” says Professor Tsui.

Subsequent to this volume, Professor Tsui, again working with Professor James Tollefson, published a second volume in 2007, Language Policy, Culture and Identity in Asian Contexts, which examined how Asian countries addressed the tension between the preservation of their own cultures and identities and the need to equip their citizens with English skills in order to be globally competitive.

Professor Tsui’s lecture will expand on this, examining how MoI policy has changed in Asian countries since globalization. “Now all countries are pushing English Medium of Instruction (EMI),” she says, “and they’re pushing it for children at earlier and earlier stages. Some are going for immersion from primary level, mostly in Science and Mathematics.”

This is happening even in countries like Japan and South Korea, which are very protective of their national languages and cultures. “At the official level in these countries EMI is a definite no, but in the private sector EMI is spreading,” she says.

Research on the efficacy of different models of bilingual education so far has been inconclusive – some studies say EMI for non-native speakers of English is effective, others say it is detrimental to learning and cognitive development. Professor Tsui maintains that one cannot draw any conclusion without looking at the context-specific mediating factors. She will be talking about these mediating factors in her forthcoming lecture.

The Faculty and Language Education

Asked about the contribution the Faculty has made to language in education studies, Professor Tsui cites the setting up of the Chinese Medium of Instruction (CMI) Centre in 1998 by colleagues in what is now the Chinese Language and Literature Division in the Faculty with the aim of providing support for schools switching from English medium to Chinese medium. Numerous meetings, seminars and workshops were conducted with schools, curriculum and assessment materials in Chinese were provided, and an online platform was set up for the schools to support each other.

The CMI Centre now comes under the Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research (CACLER), which has recently been doing a lot of work to support the learning of Chinese by non-Chinese-speaking students in Hong Kong schools. Professor Tsui also notes the contribution of Professor Angel Lin’s ongoing research and development work on language across the curriculum. Professor Tsui is now working with a group of colleagues from the English Language education, Science education and Mathematics education, to study how subject content knowledge is constructed through the medium of English and Chinese in the classroom.

“This is very important work. Just because you can speak a second language does not mean you can teach in it – and academic language is different to everyday conversation. Do teachers have a good enough grasp of the academic language to teach it well, and in turn do students have a good enough grasp of English to be able to learn another subject in the language?”

Classroom Discourse

Expanding on the study of classroom discourse, Professor Tsui points out that while much research has been done on the written discourse of subject knowledge, how knowledge is constructed in classroom discourse is still under-explored.

She cites a volume that she produced with her colleagues and Professor Ference Marton, University of Goteborg, on discourse in content classrooms, entitled Classroom Discourse and the Space of Learning, published in 2004,
which shows how language used in the classroom can open up or restrict opportunities for learning. She further cites an interesting PhD she supervised, which focused on the same teacher teaching the same topic to one class in English and to another class in Chinese. “It was the same teacher, so the macro structure of the lesson was the same but the differences showed up in each segment. When teaching in the students’ native language, the teacher was much better able to elaborate on a concept, and to ask open-ended questions of students and to get full, rounded responses from them.

“In the English medium lessons, when the teacher couldn’t get a response from students to her open-ended questions, she would switch to asking simpler factual questions, and finally to questions that required only yes and no answers. If the teacher has to do that frequently, then the result is there is no exploratory discussion in classrooms, as the students don’t have the language skills. That in turn means the depth of the process is being lost, or certainly narrowed, and students’ cognitive development suffers.”

This kind of comparison study is important, she maintains, as it shows where using a second language as the MoI may fall short. “Teachers must be made aware of these pitfalls, and ensure students’ cognitive development is not adversely affected.”

Looking to the future, Professor Tsui says proposals are being formulated for the setting up of a Centre for Research on Language Policy and Practice (CRLPP), which will look at policy issues at macro and micro level. It is still at the planning stage, and requests for funding are still being fine-tuned but she hopes that if it gets the go-ahead, the centre will attract and provide a platform for scholars who’ve been working in this area, particularly in Asia.

“Research on Language Policy is at an interesting crossroads in Asia, where everyone is grappling with the English language issue,” she says. “We are trying to work out the best way to ensure young people emerge from school with English competence that will enable them to work anywhere in the world, while also maintaining their home language and culture. First language fluency must be maintained, otherwise you get subtractive bilingualism, where you learn a new language but lose your own.”

International Recognition

Professor Tsui is a leading figure in Language Policy and Education Reform, receiving many awards in recognition of her valuable contribution to research. The most recent, an honorary degree of Doctor of Education, was conferred on her by the University of Edinburgh earlier this year. In the Laureation address, Professor Tsui was lauded for her inspirational academic leadership, especially in the historic four-year undergraduate education reform at HKU during her term as Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice President (Teaching and Learning) at the University. The address further commended her eminent scholarship in language and education, and her commitment in local and international education communities.

Appointed in April to the new role of Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning), Dr Gary Harfitt says he is building on what has already been achieved. Experiential and hands-on learning have always been a critical part of the Education Faculty’s curriculum, whether through teaching practice or Knowledge Exchange programmes.

The expansion of Experiential Learning opportunities is a clear goal that has the full support of the Faculty. The main stipulation for all such projects is that they must be beneficial to both sides. “It’s a process not a product, because experience and learning are so closely connected,” says Dr Harfitt. “There must be sustainability and benefit for the recipients as well as our students. Everyone can benefit if the projects are well organized and purposeful.

“Experiential Learning is not compulsory, but I hope students will see this as an opportunity to learn and to grow. Nobody has to go to China and/or overseas, but they should be encouraged to do Experiential Learning of some kind – for the simple reason that they will benefit from it ... and probably thoroughly enjoy it too!”

Faculty undergraduates in English and Chinese language education already get exposure to experiential learning through immersion programmes, “These are compulsory, funded elements of the curriculum whereby students attend courses at our partner universities in Beijing (Chinese) or Brisbane (English), enjoy cultural tours and visit local schools. Most love it and have no problems. Some get nervous because they’ve never been outside Hong Kong before. They need more counseling and reassurance, but I believe it’s still a very rewarding and memorable experience for all of them.”

The Faculty has secured funding from the Gallant Ho Experiential Learning Centre to expand the Experiential Learning programme to ensure all students can benefit. Opportunities will not only be overseas – it is hoped that all undergraduate courses will have local Experiential Learning elements. This is already happening on the Year 4 BA&Ed(LangEd)-English programme where 30 final-year students are taking the skills they have acquired from a Literacy course taught by Ms Suzi Nicholson and putting them to use on a local buddy reading programme run by Kids4Kids.

An elective offered in the second semester on teaching literature in English will also include a similar link to this reading programme. Kids4Kids is a Hong Kong group which encourages young people to get involved in community work. Its Buddy Reading Programme aims to help children aged six to 12 who can’t afford books and to instill in them a love of reading.

“Since it is the Faculty’s aim to prepare students to be teachers, we’re keen to build this into our literacy and pedagogy programmes as a credit-bearing requirement,” says Dr Harfitt. “Students will have the chance to develop curriculum and teaching materials which will actually be used by other volunteers working for Kids4Kids. They will also be expected to read with the kids in local community centres, which is arguably a better learning opportunity than what they do now, which is often a simulated reading practice with their peers in class – although this type of practice can be helpful, it’s not a very authentic experience in our eyes.”

“We want our programmes to be about learning, service, awareness, reflective practice and opportunity,” says Dr Harfitt. “Students should be taken out of their comfort zone sometimes, but we have to ensure they are well supported throughout.

“Our Faculty is different to other Faculties because we’re training our students to be professional teachers. They already do a lot of teaching practice on their double degrees and the language students also undertake immersion – which is a heavy workload, so we are wary of overloading them. Having said that, within the next five years, we must create space for all our students to engage with Experiential Learning projects and in areas that appeal to them. We believe these opportunities not only feed into their professional development as teachers, but...
also help them to become more all-rounded, socially aware adults who can stand on their own. So Experiential Learning is very beneficial.”

The Faculty took the opportunity on the Information Day and during the Open House to introduce new students to some of the possibilities Experiential Learning has for them. “It was presented as a list of opportunities and not as a list of compulsory activities. We want to get students more engaged and more excited about it and we want to work with our students on this. The attitude is: ‘Look what we can do!’”

A prime example of what students can do includes teaching young learners in Vietnam on an educational programme organized by the Protect and Empower All Children through Education (PEACE), which was set up by a final-year economics student, Ivan William. “Ivan, who is from Indonesia, received a scholarship to study in Singapore and then Hong Kong,” explains Dr Harfitt. “He felt he wanted to give back, and decided to work with a French charity in Ho Chi Minh to set up PEACE. He asked if our Faculty would help his team design learning materials and mentor volunteers, but I thought we could offer more than that, given our students’ knowledge and developing expertise in teaching and learning. Now we have funding and have been able to make this part of an Experiential Learning elective taught by Dr Andy Gao.”

Other opportunities for undergraduates in this elective include Pathfinders, a group that is also run by HKU students including an Arts student, Yolanda Yau: this project involves working with older students in Cambodia. So far 19 students have committed to going to Cambodia or Vietnam this coming January or June.

Another new experiential learning elective taught by Dr Margaret Lo has been popular this year. This elective focuses on mentoring and advocacy skills and seeks to widen participation in tertiary education by supporting underprivileged students in the community both academically and socially.

A new Common Core course taught by Dr Liz Jackson encourages students to explore topics related to freedom, physical space and human experience and contains a powerful experiential learning aspect. “We are also seeking to open up opportunities for our Science students and we are exploring possible links with an international school in Thailand,” says Dr Harfitt. “We are working closely with Ronald McDonald House Charities in Hong Kong to support their Read the World programme, which is being set up to promote a love of reading in children from low-income families in the Tin Shui Wai district. Colleagues have offered to run mentoring workshops for the volunteers and we also hope some of our undergraduates will become volunteers.

“In November this year, seven of our undergraduates will accompany the junior secondary students of a Hong Kong secondary school to Guangzhou, where they will mentor the local Hong Kong secondary students teaching Chinese P3 learners in a partner school there. It’s an exciting start and something to build on.”

Teaching Practice is already part of Education students’ professional development programme, and so these kinds of Experiential Learning projects are extensions of what our students already do. “The difference is that experiential learning is about applying their skills in different contexts,” says Dr Harfitt. “For example, in Vietnam there are no computers, the classrooms are basic – it’s not what our undergraduates are necessarily used to. They will have to be innovative and work outside their comfort zone.

“Even though we are labeled Asia’s World City, some students have had quite a sheltered upbringing and little experience outside Hong Kong. But it is our aim that they will return from Experiential Learning projects – whether they are here in Hong Kong or abroad – as more confident, more reflective, more socially aware and more capable individuals. Experiential Learning is about developing personal and professional qualities, but it’s about giving to the community and about giving to the students as well.”
A ssessment is an inevitable part of student life, enabling the university, the academics – and perhaps most importantly the students – to analyse how effectively the learning process is working and what is being gained . . . or lost.

Professor David Carless, Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) and Professor in the Division of English Language Education, has spent more than a decade analysing the assessment process. In 2011 he won a Research Output prize for his book From Testing to Productive Student Learning, in 2012 he was Outstanding Research Student Supervisor and in 2013 Faculty Outstanding Researcher. Now Professor Carless has produced a book, entitled Excellence in University Assessment based on his studies of award-winning professors and the relationship between the students’ learning process and assessment.

Prior to this project, he concentrated mainly on assessment in relation to schools, but this book is based on ten years’ research into assessment at the university level. “How a student’s work is assessed can have an impact on the whole learning experience,” he says. “Assessment plays a very important role within a productive learning experience. Exams are useful, but there should be more variety to the ways in which we assess a student’s progress and achievement.”

Professor Carless conducted case studies of HKU professors from five disciplines – Architecture, Business, History, Law and Geology – who had won awards for their teaching. “I observed classes and talked to teachers and students about their experience pertaining to assessment.”

He noted changes in methods of assessment at HKU and how individual teachers interpreted those means of assessment. “For example, some of them found it more useful to assign several small tasks over a course rather than one big one at the end, so the students are encouraged to spread their efforts.

“Instead of cramming for one exam at the end they must make an effort throughout. Cramming for an exam gives no opportunity for discourse – it’s just the student and the exam paper. But with more ‘iterative’ tasks, there is a dialogue, a back-and-forth feedback exchange.”

Professor Carless feels this kind of process is important in higher education, as it is a better reflection of what happens in life. “In a real-life work situation you often don’t just take one shot at a task – you research, reassess and refine before handing over a finished product or proposal.

“I term it ‘mirroring real life’ – and it’s an essential part of useful and productive assessment . . .”

As an example, he cites a task set by a Business professor, who got students to give oral presentations in which they had not only to demonstrate what they knew, but present it in a problem-solving situation, deal with feedback from the audience and argue their case – all of which happens in real-life work situations.

The book also emphasizes the value of feedback – not only from teachers, but also from peers – and throughout, not just at the end of a project, when it has limited use as the task is already complete. Professor Carless sees self-assessment as a vital part of the process. “Again in real life they will need to develop a sense of the quality of what they are doing, to self-monitor and analyse, to justify their performance. Self-assessment gives students a sense of responsibility – doing a good job rests on their own shoulders.”

He focuses too on the importance and value of group projects. “Some people don’t like group projects as they feel it’s difficult to tell who is contributing what. But it is still worthwhile as it encourages students to engage with their peers. It also teaches them to manage a project and shows them that, as in real life, some members of the team will work harder than others.”

The book is based on a period of gestation and about 18 months of writing, editing and production work. All of these are familiar tasks, but promotion of the book took Professor Carless into a new area – social media.

“l’m not a facebook user and probably never will be,” he says, “but I became intrigued by the possibilities of Twitter after reading some articles about how to use it to promote research. It’s a good platform. Even though you only get a limited word space, the important thing is you can add a URL so you can link to articles, websites, videos, speeches, etc.”
Dr Carol To first became interested in autism while working as a speech therapist. She did her undergraduate degree at HKU, then worked within the community as a speech therapist, before being a Faculty member in the University in 2008.

Many of the clients who came to her for speech therapy were individuals with autism, so she tried to find relevant research on the condition. “I discovered plenty of information about autism in Westerners,” she says, “but very little about autism among Chinese speakers or in Asian communities. Since rehab services for clients with autism are based on the English literature, I started doing research.”

Her first project in 2009 was on children with autism. “Services for autism in Hong Kong only began 20 years ago,” she explains. “The first children to benefit from those are adults now – I studied them. It was quite difficult – they come across as very literal, and need a lot of assistance to maintain a conversation. It took me a while to understand how to interact with them.”

But through this a quite unexpected result occurred. Three things happened: first, Dr To discovered that people with autism tend to be very good at and enjoy repetitive, routine work. Second, although they are high-functioning adults, who have finished schooling and in some cases have degrees, they have difficulty finding and keeping employment because of their weak social skills. Third, there is a shortage of people to do the more repetitive tasks in research and adults with autism are potentially great to fill the gap.

Dr To, as they say, did the mathematics. Not only did she employ some adults with autism as research assistants in her lab but also, through her KE project Serving Individuals with Autism, she is now enlightening the community about autism and what people with this condition have to offer society. “In the past, NGOs have been active in helping people with autism find jobs, but often they have not been able to hold on to those jobs – mainly because they have poor communication skills and lack the social skills to enable them to get along easily with their work colleagues,” she says. “Hong Kong is a developed city but it lags behind other developed countries in providing support and opportunities for adults with autism. I want to raise awareness here, and try to build networks to help them – particularly to find jobs and a place within the community.”

There are important differences between Chinese autism and others. Social communication has cultural characteristics, so there are differences in how autism manifests itself across cultures. For example, eye contact for Chinese tends to be briefer than for Westerners, so diagnosis or manifestation can be different.

“One characteristic of most adults with high-functioning autism is that they tend to be very bookish, they can read a
Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences Professor James J. Heckman has devoted his professional life to understanding the origins of major social and economic problems related to inequality, social mobility, discrimination, skill formation and regulation, and to devising and evaluating alternative strategies for addressing those problems. While his work is rooted in economics, he collaborates across disciplines to get to the heart of major problems. Professor Heckman shared the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences with Professor Daniel McFadden in 2000 and is the Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago.

On March 30, 2015, the HKU community and the general public were privileged to hear Professor Heckman’s lecture entitled “Investing in Early Childhood – Creating Opportunity and Promoting Social Mobility by Investing in Skills: A Lifecycle Perspective” in the Grand Hall at HKU. The public lecture was co-organized by our Faculty; the Faculty of Business and Economics, HKU; and the Chicago Economics Society. Details can be found at http://web.edu.hku.hk/event/others/page2.
On May 13, 2015, the Faculty held an Open House event. More than 300 DSE students came to the event, which filled the Rayson Huang Theatre without an empty seat for the first part of the afternoon. The participants then dispersed to a variety of locations for talks where Programme Coordinators and teachers introduced JUPAS applicants to the Faculty undergraduate programmes on offer. Our current students provided valuable support at the booths in the foyer of Rayson Huang Theatre, shared their experiences during the seminars, and guided the participants around the campus. The participants responded that they had learned more about the Faculty’s undergraduate programmes and gained useful information about finalising their JUPAS choices through the event.

The Summer Institute was guided by five Faculty facilitators, two international experts and 14 resource persons who provided specialized expertise in designated parts of the programme.

The Institute this year attached great importance to student learning through experience, in a redefined notion of the curriculum. Participants learned from first-hand experiences, from a whole range of activities, through interactions with teachers and students from HKU, as well as discussions with prominent guest speakers. There were various site visits, too.

An Asian Summit on Higher Education took place over two days during the two-week programme, where resource persons discussed critical issues about innovations and paradigm shifts in higher education. By the end of the two-week programme, 12 Knowledge Products had been generated by the participants as real-life projects which could be brought home and put into practice in their respective countries or institutions. Based on the feedback collected from the participants, they all declared that this was a remarkable learning experience. They all hoped to continue to make the best use of their relationships with HKU. The idea of Institute alumni was raised and was welcomed by many.

The Faculty held the 12th in our Education Seminar Series, entitled “Walking through IT Pathway with Kids”, delivered by Ms Hsu Siu Man, Supervisor (Student Counselling) of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups; Mr T K Kang, clinical psychologist; Mr Sau Yiu Chow, parent and secondary school teacher; Ms Maggie Kwok, parent and primary school teacher; and Dr Allan Yuen, Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Information Technology in Education of the Faculty, in the Rayson Huang Theatre on June 27, 2015. In the seminar, the speakers and the audience, including parents and teachers, discussed how to learn with kids positively and happily, using IT. Don’t worry if you missed the seminar, as details can be found at http://web.edu.hku.hk/event/parent-seminars.
Event Spotlight

Distinguished Lecture on “Freedom of Speech and the Asia Pacific: Does Charlie Hebdo Go Too Far?”

Freedom of speech is a fundamental right that underpins a successful democracy. But it is not an absolute right: it must be balanced with other freedoms in society. On June 26, 2015, Emeritus Professor Gillian Triggs, the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, shared with us her thoughts about this significant topic. Professor Triggs’ address considered the reasons for protecting satirical publications such as Charlie Hebdo, while, at the same time, enacting laws that prohibit ‘hate’ or racist speech that may ‘offend and insult’ or lead to physical violence and conflict.

Nations within the Asian region have adopted significantly differing approaches to the protection of freedom of speech. Additionally, and unlike other parts of the world, there is no regional Charter or Bill of Rights to which nations have adhered, and no regional court or commission to provide jurisprudence about fundamental freedoms. The practices of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong and Australia were examined by reference to the agreed international protections for freedom of speech. It was concluded that states of the Asian region typically recognize freedom of speech in their constitutions, but permit wide-ranging exceptions under legislation. Professor Triggs suggested that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other institutions, such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) or the Asia Pacific Forum on National Human Rights Institutions, might play a leadership role in facilitating a cohesive regional standard to provide more effective freedom of speech in practice. Details of the lecture can be found at http://web.edu.hku.hk/event/lectures.

Distinguished Lecture on “The Globalization of the University”

Universities have developed as global institutions in three important respects: they have greatly expanded in the last fifty years, they increasingly operate within a global frame of reference, and university organization and management have increasingly become professionalized. The expansion of universities reflects the triumph of human capital ideas. The global frame of reference emphasizes the value of broad accessibility, social usefulness, and professionalized organization. The university as a global institution influences university developments throughout the world. University developments are shaped by the demands of both universal templates of excellence and their particular historical roots.

In his lecture on September 17, 2015, Professor Francisco O Ramirez, Professor of Education and Sociology at Stanford University, addressed these developments via a theoretical framework that emphasizes the centrality of the nation-state and organizational identity and legitimacy. The presentation attracted a full house. Details of the lecture can be found at http://web.edu.hku.hk/event/lectures.

AERA Annual Meeting 2015

In April, more than 20 colleagues and students of the Faculty contributed – as presenter, discussant or chair – to this year’s American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting in Chicago. The 2015 AERA Annual Meeting theme “Toward Justice: Culture, Language, and Heritage in Education Research and Praxis” is a call to examine the meaning of culture, language, and heritage in education research and praxis with the aim of advancing justice, which matches one of the Faculty’s Strategic Research Focal Areas “Equity and Social Justice”. The Faculty also co-organized, for the first time, with Beijing Normal University, a reception for more than 200 guests. This was a valuable chance to raise the Faculty’s profile as well as to establish connections with international counterparts. The delegation also took the opportunity to visit the University of Chicago.
**Collaboration between UNESCO Chairs**

HKU hosts a UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education, which works closely with the Faculty’s Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC).

CERC’s latest publication in its Monographs Series has been produced in collaboration with the UNESCO Chairs in International Education for Development at George Washington University, the United States. The book is entitled *UNESCO’s Origins, Achievements, Problems and Promise: An Inside/Outside Perspective from the US*. It has been written by Raymond E. Wanner, who is a distinguished figure in both UNESCO and US foreign policy circles.

Raymond Wanner recounts the leading role that the US played in the establishment of UNESCO in its initial decades, and laments that US participation has declined in more recent times. The book is an instructive account of the intersection between national and international interests, and the UNESCO Chairs are glad to collaborate in disseminating its messages to the national and international communities.

**International Partnership for Comparative and International Scholarship**

The annual conference for this 60th anniversary will be a special occasion for our Faculty, because we shall have strong visibility. Professor Mark Bray, UNESCO Chair Professor in Comparative Education, is President-Elect of CIES. He is responsible for the conference, with support from a team including members from HKU, Canada and the United States.

**Conference on the Learning and Teaching of Chinese to Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Kindergartens and Primary Schools**

The conference was held on March 28, 2015 at Graduate House, HKU. It was organized by two USP (University-School Support Programme) project teams housed under the Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research (CACLER): “Supporting Kindergartens in the Teaching and Learning of Chinese for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Children (2012-15)”, led by Dr Joseph Lam; and “Accommodating Diversity: Supporting the Learning and Teaching of Chinese Language for Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Primary Schools (2014-17)”, led by Dr Cheung Wai Ming.

In the hope of fostering the exchange of research-based and classroom-based knowledge, we offered this platform in which intellectuals and practitioners locally and regionally discuss and share their ideas, perspectives, experiences and research findings about teaching and learning of Chinese for non-native learners in terms of curriculum, teaching materials and pedagogy in school settings, with special emphasis on the transition issue from pre-primary to primary level. The conference themes were addressed through 28 diverse plenary and featured presentations, papers, poster demonstrations and forums.

Two keynote speeches were presented during the conference. Professor Tse Shek Kam spoke about “The Application of Integrated and Effective Approach in Recognizing Chinese Characters in L2 Teaching and Learning: Practical Experience in Asia”, and Dr Lam and Dr Cheung shared their experiences about developing story books to address the needs of young language learners, in their presentation “From Basic Characters to Differentiated Story Books”.

The conference was a great success, with around 290 delegates from 75 local schools, including 19 of our partnership schools, who stepped up to generously share their school-based experiences and knowledge generated with fellow researchers and teaching professionals. Their experiences and perspectives are, without doubt, invaluable assets to those in our field.
he Faculty scored multiple triumphs at this year’s CEATE, with HKU alumni in no fewer than five of the winning teams. Two teams took the top prize in the English Language Education Key Learning Area category – one of them, from the Good Hope School, was made up entirely of HKU graduates – and the other, from Ning Po College, was led by another HKU graduate. Faculty alumni were also in teams from HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary & Primary School, HKUGA College and TWGHs Mrs. Wu York Yu Memorial College, which won Certificates of Merit.

Said Dean Stephen Andrews: “Our graduates are having a bumper year. The Faculty is greatly honoured that they have achieved such excellence in their careers in the teaching profession.”

The Good Hope School team are Chermaine Luk, Matthew James Drysdale, Holly Ho, Kevin Michael Toong and Rachel Wong, while the Ning Po College team comprised Wong Mei Chu Evelyn (from HKU), Kong Kit Yi, and Liu Qianzhao.

Good Hope team leader, Chermaine Luk, graduated with a First Class Honours BEd(English Language) degree in 2003, and an MEd(English Language) in 2006. She taught in a newly established DSS school for five years, then chose to teach at Good Hope, as it is her alma mater which gave her the opportunity to serve and to give.

Asked how the team worked together, Chermaine said: “The five of us have worked together for six years. We know each other's strengths and complement each other very well. Approaching the award tasks has allowed us to work even more closely with each other, in addition to the routine teaching. Together we prepared our statements, lesson planning for lesson observation by the assessment panel and attended interviews. The process has been very enjoyable and rewarding.”

Team member Rachel Wong added: “We have been working together since 2010, when I graduated. Kevin and I work together daily, we are partners in running the school’s drama activities. While we are there to focus on stage performances and making drama a means to motivate students in using English and appreciating literature, Holly and Matthew train students to sharpen their brains and tongues in public speaking and debating; and Chermaine is our leader.”

Rachel is from the first batch of graduates of the BA&BEd double degree programme, which was launched in 2005. She majored in English Language and Linguistics & Comparative Literature and then did her MA in Literary and Cultural Studies.

“What I learned in the Faculty has definitely set the cornerstone of my teaching career,” she said. “In addition to the actual things I got to study there, I had the chance to meet knowledgeable doctors and lecturers who are walking models of good teachers. For example, Dr Gary Harfitt really walked his talk in his class. Dr K K Tong, another teacher we had, was demanding but inspiring. His tough questions turned out to be stimulants which moved us to take further steps in our study, and now our teaching. Without them, I may not have been able to realize the importance of ‘walking the talk’ and challenging myself now.”

Wong Mei Chu Evelyn is head of the team from Ning Po College. She did both her BEd (2002-06, First Class Honours) and Masters (2007-09) in English Language Education at HKU and has been teaching at Ning Po College since 2006, becoming English Panel Head in 2010.
The members of her team have worked together as language teachers for years, and she says they constantly remind themselves of the importance of widening perspectives and comparing what they have been doing in this school to what is really happening and needed outside.

Evelyn believes that taking part in programmes such as CEATE can help that process and “serve as a great opportunity to reflect on what we have been doing, or more precisely, what we believe and endeavour to do. It turned out to be a real chance for us to professionally grow and develop. Being awarded the CEATE is such a great encouragement to all of us, every member of our English panel and school. Such recognition makes us know that we are working on the right track and moving in the right direction.

“The professional discussions on various English learning and teaching issues during the whole CEATE process have also given us lots of insights into what we can do to further support our students in facing future challenges in language learning. In this sense, CEATE is not only an award for what we have done but also open up doors for what we can do further.”

Looking back at her time at HKU, Chermaine agreed that what she learned during her degree courses has been applied daily in daily teaching: “The lectures on drama teaching, literature teaching, mistake management, major methods, grammar pedagogies have all been very practical,” she said. “I believe my six years in the Faculty of Education has shaped me as a teacher. I learned from all the professors and lecturers, and model myself upon them.

“A particular inspiration was Professor Stephen Andrews (now Dean), who was my supervisor for my final year dissertation. Before that I was most inspired by his lectures on grammar teaching, and have always admired his passion for teaching.”

Asked why she had chosen to specialize in English language learning, Chermaine said: “I have had a strong interest in the language since primary school, and was lucky enough to have very good teachers during my secondary school years. Their way of teaching has inspired me that English is not just a subject, but the key to the modern world and a wealth of culture and history. I would love to pass this on.”

Said Evelyn: “To me, English is a lingua franca – a language that allows communication and exposure to culture of the other parts of the world. It is one of the languages that can effectively open up doors for students.”

The winning teams were presented with their prize by Chief Executive C Y Leung on July 10 at a ceremony at the Conference Hall, Central Government Offices, Tamar, Admiralty. Evelyn recalled his speech at the ceremony: “He mentioned that he was very happy to see that the awardees this year are all dedicated to building a language environment in which students would be confident enough to express and communicate,” she said. “This exactly coincides with our team’s belief – confidence plays a key role in initiating and sustaining the cycle of language learning.”
Students

In learning you will teach and in teaching you will learn

By Melanie Oh Hye Min, BA&BEd(LangEd)-Eng, Year 2 student (2014-15)

The students in the BA&BEd English major were given the opportunity to teach in Caritas Yuen Long Chan Chun Ha Secondary School. It was definitely a unique and memorable experience for all of us. People say it is always hard to try something new but if you make the first step you’ve won half the battle. I guess the experience marked the official start of my teaching life.

To summarize our lesson on March 10, 2015, we first showed the students two video clips from this year’s Academy Awards prize-giving ceremony. The (edited) speeches of Eddie Redmayne and Julianne Moore were shown to them. We taught students the sentence patterns and vocabulary that the two award-winning actors used, so that they can learn how to express gratitude and say ‘thank you’ in different ways. We also invited them to imagine they had won a competition, and to write up their own speeches and present them in front of the class.

The overall atmosphere of the lesson was relaxed and enjoyable. Students were active in answering our questions and sharing their own experiences or views. I did not feel especially nervous or tense even though it was my first time to teach. They paid attention to us and did not challenge or disrupt the class.

One thing that made the lesson less effective was students’ use of electronic gadgets. The students in my class used their smartphones quite frequently to translate or search meanings of words that were new to them. I do not doubt that these translating apps are useful in that they could immediately understand the teaching materials (such as the video clips) and what we were saying. However, I am afraid that they may also hinder their desire to write down the meaning or memorize the new words. If students are too reliant on gadgets, they might forget vocabulary after understanding the context, making the learning process less efficient. To improve this situation, we did not prohibit the use of electronic gadgets, but we encouraged them to write down the meanings on worksheets that we prepared for them. This might help enhance their memory and help them to use the words again later.

At the end of the class, we asked the students to give us some feedback and they said the lesson was interesting! They said they liked it because “it is different from our English lessons, it is not about grammar”. I believe students are more interested in topic-based lessons rather than learning theoretical terms and rules. They like to be introduced to real life activities and people, and also things that they can really use in daily life. I am very glad that the materials we prepared were targeted right at their level, and they saw them as useful. I have also learned that this approach can get students’ attention, rather than simply reading and doing exercises from the textbook or simply explaining grammatical rules. If we can seek out interesting topics to intrigue students, they would be more focused, tend to be more creative and the materials should be easier for them to remember. This was evident in the role-play part of the lesson as they raised quite a lot of interesting ideas such as a drawing competition, badminton competition and even a sleeping competition. They were also able to use what they had learned previously in the class. At first I did question the effectiveness of this approach, but it turned out to be successful because we addressed many crucial aspects of language such as grammar, phonics, writing and reading skills, all in a meaningful context!

I feel glad that the English level of the students was diverse. One student was significantly more advanced than others, her English was more fluent and she knew more relatively advanced vocabulary. She was reading a book that I read in my senior secondary school. Two pupils were quieter, but still they listened to us and gave reactions
ocasionally. Others were very willing to participate. It made me think that rather than teaching a group of students with high English level but unwilling to learn, I would prefer to teach a less capable but inquisitive class.

To be honest, I was not that enthusiastic about teaching before the experiential activity. It was my parents’ idea to major in English education. However, the lesson changed my mind and I started to think maybe it is not a bad idea to become a teacher. It is because of the students. I have to admit that their energy and willingness to learn did touch me and provoked me to reflect on myself. Their English language level is not high, but their enthusiasm was higher than any other students, even myself. I can feel that they are paying full attention to us and love to ask questions. I could not articulate the gratitude I felt when they told me they need and like to learn new things. I have always thought a great person should be able to change others – change how people think and how people act. I think not only teachers can change students, but students can also change teachers. And that is why I want to be a better teacher now.

What makes the experiential activity fruitful is not just knowing that the students learned a lot of new things, but the fact that I also learned a lot from them. It was my greatest pleasure to teach these intelligent, inspiring, and lovely students. I believe they will enjoy their way to learning English and become better global citizens who will bring glory to their school.
We are glad to know that Professor Stephen Andrews has been re-appointed as Dean of Education for a further period until July 31, 2017. Under the leadership of Professor Andrews, the Faculty will continue to strive to reach greater heights.

Promotion and Tenure

Promotion to Professor
Professor Lena Wong
Professor Law Sam Po

Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor
Dr Lai Chun
Dr Li Yongyan
Dr Lu Jingyan
Dr Anatoly Oleksiyenko

Tenure as Associate Professor
Dr Andy Gao

New Appointment

Division of English Language Education
Dr Cheri Chan, Assistant Professor

Division of Mathematics and Science Education
Dr Kennedy Chan, Assistant Professor

Division of Policy, Administration and Social Sciences Education
Dr Jung Jisun, Assistant Professor

Retirement

We would like to express our heartiest thanks to our former Division Heads, Dr Fiona Hyland of the Division of English Language Education and Dr Benny Yung of the Division of Mathematics and Science Education, for their contributions and their devotion to the Faculty. We wish them a happy and healthy retirement!

Goodbye

We would like to express our gratitude and send our best wishes to the following staff members who have left the Faculty. We wish them the best of luck in their future endeavours and they will certainly remain a part of our networks.

Division of Chinese Language and Literature
Mr Lam Tung Fei, Lecturer

Division of English Language Education
Ms Vanessa Pang, Lecturer

Division of Learning, Development and Diversity
Dr Rachel Sun, Assistant Professor
Dr Wang Ying, Post-doctoral Fellow

Welcome

Faculty
Mr Ng Nicky Chun Yick, Learning Designer
Dr Frank Zhu, Research Assistant Professor
Division of Chinese Language and Literature
Miss Lau Kwok Ling, Lecturer
Division of English Language Education
Dr Chan Yee Him Jim, Assistant Professor
Mr Benjamin Moorhouse, Lecturer
Ms Sharon Lai, Assistant Lecturer

Division of Information and Technology Studies
Dr Michele Notari, Post-doctoral Fellow

Division of Learning, Development and Diversity
Dr Gao Shuling, Post-doctoral Fellow

Division of Mathematics and Science Education
Dr Leung Shuk Ching Jessica, Assistant Professor
Division of Policy, Administration and Social Sciences Education
Dr Li Jun, Associate Professor
Dr Liu Peng, Assistant Professor
Dr Chan Si Wai, Lecturer

Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences
Professor Thomas Klee, Professor
Professor Stephanie Stokes, Professor
Dr Anna Petrova, Post-doctoral Fellow
Ms Esther Wong, Assistant Lecturer
Ms Winsy Wong, Assistant Lecturer

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**Company name and address:**  

**Year of graduation:**  
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