

FRONT COVER

EDUCATION MATTERS

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COVER STORY

Taking Local Lessons to the Global Stage

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FOREWORD

Dear Friends of the Faculty of Education,

Welcome to the latest volume of *Education Matters*. I am pleased to share with you the remarkable achievements made by our faculty members, students and alumni in the past year. You will learn more about the development of the Faculty and the collective efforts of individuals from different generations, who are dedicated to making contributions that span across local communities and the global landscape.

In this era of constant change, the field of education encounters both challenges and opportunities. As educators, we endeavour to embrace these transformations while upholding our fundamental principles. Our academic staff consistently demonstrate excellence in their respective domains through producing top-notch research and actively engaging in knowledge exchange initiatives, which significantly contribute to the advancement of education.

The Faculty also takes pride in the accomplishments attained by our graduates and students. Their hard work and commitment have not only enriched their own educational journeys but have also brought a positive impact on the communities they serve.

In 2024, the Faculty of Education will be celebrating the Ruby Jubilee, which marks a notable milestone in the Faculty's history. This moment gives us an opportunity to reflect on our achievements and embark on a chapter that integrates innovation and technology while preserving the core values of education. To further strengthen the Faculty's capacity in realising our objectives, we have reorganised our three Academic Units into four Academic Units with effect from January 1, 2024:

- Language and Literacy Education (LALE)
- Human Communication, Learning, and Development (HCLD)
- Mathematics, Science, and Technology (MST)
- Social Contexts and Policies of Education (SCAPE)

The newly designed Academic Units aim to enhance interactions and coherence among staff in cognate disciplines, facilitating the incubation and promotion of collaborative initiatives in various aspects for the Faculty's strategic development. Looking ahead to the next 40 years and beyond, I am confident that the Faculty will continue its dedication to providing quality education and cultivating an environment that nurtures intellectual growth.

I hope the articles and stories in this edition of *Education Matters* will spark your curiosity and leave you inspired. Happy reading!

Professor Yang Rui
Dean

Taking Local Lessons to the Global Stage

The Dean of Education, Professor Yang Rui, has an enviable challenge. He has been in post since summer 2022 and, since then, has watched the Faculty gain the No. 1 ranking in the world for education and educational research, as rated by the U.S. News and World Report 2022-2023, and 6th best in the world overall, in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024 by Subject.

So what should be the Faculty's next move? While Professor Yang does not believe too much importance should be attached to rankings, he also recognises that they are an external marker of how the Faculty is seen by others to be similar to "global" peers – mainly, those institutions from the West. "In a sense, the similarity represents huge progress. However, on top of such progress, I'm aiming at difference. I believe strongly that it is the difference that gives us our uniqueness," he said.

And a key difference lies right here on our doorstep. Hong Kong is unique in that the people emerging from its education system, particularly from the better schools, are equally comfortable in both Chinese and Western contexts and familiar with the seminal traditional texts of both cultures. Yet this uniqueness has not been well theorised.

"We have assistant professors here who naturally know how to put the local and the global together in their work. That's a strong advantage and it puts Hong Kong far ahead of other major universities in places like America or Europe or Japan – wonderful universities but they tend to be monocultural. In Hong Kong, you can find people who know not only their own society but also have a strong understanding of the so-called 'international', or Western, discourse. They have a bicultural, even multicultural mind."

"If you look at how this has been achieved, it's not by design, it's by accident. Hong Kong education has not been theorised very well. I would like us to do that, to look at the education policy and education practices. What kind of pedagogy is used? What kind of teachers are involved? What books do they use? What are their thinking modes? Addressing such questions is local engagement, but it can also contribute to global theory. I hope from there, we can bring that experience to more students in the world."

Embracing Local and Global

To help the process along, Professor Yang wants to see more local studies and data about the approaches and achievements of Hong Kong's education system. He also wants to bring more scholars with strong international track records into the Faculty, especially those who have experiences working in more than one culture.

But he acknowledges that balancing the global and the local is not easy. "Increasingly these days in academia, there is a focus on getting published in English in the UK and America. That's the global side. But often the local work, like school visits and focusing on what's needed in the classroom and schools, is not as highly valued. I try to persuade people that you can do both, although it is really hard work," he said.

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Apart from theorising Hong Kong's education experiences and bringing them into the global context, he would also like to see HKU scholars tap more deeply into China's educational traditions – particularly at a time when the world appears to be marching quickly away from the past, with the advent of the AI revolution and the demand for new skills and outlooks.

“You need to hold onto some of your ancient roots to give yourself a footing, and you need to know which ones to let go of. Chinese civilisation has many beautiful traditions in education but sadly very few people know how to interpret the wisdom and legacy of these traditions to the world. One reason is that most people don't really understand their own traditions because the whole knowledge system is Western. On the other hand, they also don't understand the great Western traditions.”

Tapping into Educational Traditions

“As one of the best faculties of education in the world, certainly the best among all non-Western societies, we have an obligation to bring the Chinese traditions to the world and use them as a resource to theorise education.”

Professor Yang has made a contribution himself. His book *The Chinese Idea of a University: Phoenix Reborn*, published in 2022, encourages recognition of the traditions and values of both Chinese and Western approaches in higher education.

He also points out that he has a personal connection to his cause, having benefited greatly from engaging in both cultures. Professor Yang first came to HKU as a visitor in the early 1990s and as a PhD student in 1996, before heading to Australia to work at Monash University. His early memories of HKU include professors sheltering him under their umbrella in the rain, helping him maximise his funding support as a scholarship student, and helping him navigate university bureaucracy to facilitate his return to the Faculty in 2008. He has stayed here ever since and received the Long Service Award (15 years) from the University in 2023.

“My early time with HKU changed my life. I was a very young academic from Mainland China and it was a first step to broadening my perspective and my experience in the world. I was inspired to go further and become an international scholar and I am truly, truly grateful for that. Because of that, I felt I needed to return the favour by serving as Dean.”

As he fulfils that obligation, he remains mindful of two things. One is the commonality of humans, the other is to act with this in mind. “Confucius understood that humans are different because of our practices or the environment we grew up in, but fundamentally we are the same. As I get older, the more I believe and appreciate this and it has an impact in the way I do my job.”

Professor Yang firmly believes in the power of leading by example. “I'm committed to my work, that is for sure. However, what I want to be remembered for, how I hope people will remember me in years to come, is my kindness. I try to be helpful as a critical adviser or friend, but I try to be a genuinely nice person, too. I believe that kindness is a virtue that everyone should possess.” He aspires for students to become their best selves, guided by the positive examples set by the Faculty. The teachers will continue to instil a strong sense of responsibility, integrity, and empathy in students, creating a transformative educational experience and making a positive impact on society.

“Translanguaging” in a Classroom of Native English Speakers

In a world where there are many different forms of communication – words, gestures, videos, images, even emojis – the concept of translanguaging offers a meeting point where all forms are embraced. But until now, its application has largely been confined to English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Medium Instruction (EMI) classes, where it has been used as a strategy to bridge understanding in situations where students are not native speakers of English and may be grasping for the right word.

A new study published in *Applied Linguistics* by Kevin W. H. Tai, Assistant Professor of the Academic Unit of Language and Literacy Education and Co-Director of the Centre for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education, aims to break through that barrier by showing that translanguaging can also be effective with students who are native English speakers.

“Translanguaging is an emerging concept that means communicating by tapping into our diverse linguistic and multimodal resources, such as body language, eye gaze, visual images or objects, to support our process in making meaning and creating new knowledge,” he said. This makes it distinct from code-switching, in which students switch between named languages.

“A very nice example is a T-shirt that has the word ‘I’ and a heart with a Hong Kong flag inside it. It creates meaning in a dynamic way that goes beyond code switching.”

In the classroom, it could be a situation where the teacher speaks Cantonese to explain a difficult concept while pointing to a textbook written in English. “The student has to make sense of and look at everything in order to understand the whole message,” he said.

Translanguaging in Multilingual Classrooms

Most research on translanguaging has focused on second language or EMI classrooms and on how it can help multilingual students empower their voice, support their identity construction, and support their learning of both content and language. But there is a lack of attention on how translanguaging might be applied in a classroom where everyone speaks English and is in the process of developing literacy skills.

Professor Tai’s study, conducted with Professor Wong Chiu Yin, Cathy, of Monmouth University, focuses on an American teacher who wanted to take her learning of translanguaging into just such a setting. The teacher had a class of first graders and wanted to use the approach to promote her students’ appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity. The teacher was trained by Professor Wong, while Professor Tai led the work to video-record and analyse the teaching and to interview the teacher afterwards.

“There is an assumption that if you learn English as a first language, that’s sufficient because English is the lingua franca, but this teacher was trying to broaden her students’ horizons. It’s an important theoretical contribution to the field because it advocates that not only multilingual students need to expand their communicative repertoire, but native speakers as well,” Professor Tai said.

The teacher in this study used materials such as a storybook with Spanish words – not to teach her students Spanish but to help them appreciate different ways of naming things. She deployed different

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voices and physical movements to convey characters from the Disney movie *Encanto*, and introduced discussions on Hispanic festivals and cuisine. The class included several Spanish-speaking students and the teacher and other students also learned from them.

The teacher also had a higher purpose. In a country where school shootings are no longer a rarity and there is distrust of non-English speakers, she wanted to give students a sense of belonging and community. “She hopes that through translanguaging, it can help her students to better appreciate and understand cultural and linguistic diversity in the world,” Professor Tai said.

Expanding Language Perspectives

Professor Tai’s interest in translanguaging is motivated by his own experiences. He attended a Band One EMI school in the New Territories in Hong Kong and completed secondary school in Sydney, Australia. In both cases, he faced challenges understanding concepts that were presented only in English – and was helped by teachers in Hong Kong and by Chinese classmates in Australia who provided translations.

He also did his PhD on translanguaging in EMI classrooms in Hong Kong, and his doctoral project focused on the role of translanguaging in challenging the monolingual English-only policy stipulated by the Education Bureau and school managers.

“There is an issue in that not all non-native English teachers are capable of using English well to teach content, and not many students have the academic English proficiency to learn a content subject through English. So it’s very unfair to say that if you use Chinese in that situation, you must be wrong. It really depends on how you use it strategically and appropriately to achieve your pedagogical goal. For example, it may be that the teacher is referring to a blackboard that is full of English,” he said.

“We are not saying that translanguaging means teachers are free to use any available resources in the classroom, or that you should speak Cantonese 80 per cent of the time in an EMI classroom. What we are trying to say is that you can use the resources strategically and appropriately to help students to learn. But we have a lot of work to do to get the point across.”

Professor Tai would like to see more teachers willing to participate in research on translanguaging in Hong Kong classrooms. He recently received an Early Career Scheme grant from the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong for a project on the use of translanguaging to help ethnic minority students reduce their anxiety when learning Chinese as a second language. The grant proposal received full marks from the Research Grants Council (only seven of 187 projects awarded across Hong Kong received that grade). An honorary title of “Early Career Award” was awarded to Professor Tai in recognition of the quality of his research submitted in the Early Career Scheme grant bid.

“We need to remind teachers that the goal of education is about knowledge construction. If we insist on using one language only in the classroom, it restricts the amount of resources that teachers and students can use to facilitate understanding of the concept,” he said.

“Language is no longer as simple as standardised English or Chinese, it is multi-layered – it involves multilingual, multimodal, multi-sensory and multi-semiotic resources. This is really a new perspective in understanding language that captures the creative ways we communicate in our society.”

AI in Higher Education

The advent of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) over the past year has sent universities and just about everybody else searching for experts who can advise them on best practices and guidelines. One of the top go-to people in higher education in the world has been Professor Chan Ka Yuk, Cecilia, who brings a unique set of skills and strong networks to the task.

Professor Cecilia Chan of the Academic Unit of Social Contexts and Policies of Education, has a PhD in engineering, as well as qualifications in education, and is also the new Director of HKU's Teaching and Learning Innovation Centre (TALIC), which was formed in July 2023 to bring together various teaching support units, including those focused on teaching technologies, under one roof. She previously led a team to help HKU teachers meet the challenges of online learning during COVID-19. That was a big task, but then on November 30, 2022, came an even bigger challenge, the launch of the language model ChatGPT, which has suddenly made everyone question how GenAI will change learning and their working lives.

"I started researching GenAI even before ChatGPT was launched because I was aware something was coming. And ever since, I have been collecting data about what our students and teachers want, which has also supported our HKU policy," she said.

Appreciating the urgent implications of AI, she has worked at breakneck speed to produce more than five published papers and a forthcoming book on the matter, alongside her duties at TALIC, where she helped to develop a GenAI policy for the whole University, launched WhatsApp support and an AI clinic for teachers, created a dedicated website called AI in Education, and created a five-week self-paced online module on AI literacy for both staff and students. All in less than six months.

Global Impact

Her work has attracted widespread interest not just at HKU but universities around the world, from places as far apart as the Philippines and Ecuador. Local schools have also been in touch (she was invited to speak at a conference on AI in schools for Hong Kong and Macau principals) and more than 100 people have enquired about joining her as a postgraduate student to research AI.

"It's been absolutely crazy and really interesting. I am working extremely fast because I know that the earlier you adopt, the faster that people know your work. This helps the University and the Faculty, too, because people can see we are doing top-notch work on AI in education here. In fact, HKU was one of the first universities to have a proper AI policy in place. It is a broad policy, but it is something to work with," she said.

Her own work has offered valuable insights about how university teachers and students perceive AI. One paper found both groups were equally concerned about the need for a policy to guide AI use in the classroom, and a survey of more than 400 students found that they preferred talking to a human teacher and receiving empathetic feedback from them rather than dealing with AI teachers. "I'm not saying in the future AI will not be able to offer that, but at this moment, students still want us," she said.

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The work has underscored her belief in the importance of “21st century” skills relating to holistic development – things like creativity, leadership, professional ethics and resilience – which has been her main research interest in recent years. Her book, *Assessment for Experiential Learning*, published in summer 2022, explored these skills in a context where they are often the desired outcome and she has also spearheaded the formation of the International Holistic Competency Foundation with more than 20 other leading institutions, such as the University of Oxford, Tsinghua University and the National University of Singapore, which accredits courses that develop or promote holistic skills.

“The more I look at AI, the more I can see how important 21st century skills are. People are saying, if AI is here, what will be my role? Well, you still need the human touch and things like information literacy. ChatGPT cannot represent us just because it can write a lot of lovely words,” she said. “We are trying to change the culture internationally so that people care about these soft skills, too.”

Future Prospects

To explore the effects of AI further, she has written a forthcoming book *The ChatGPT Effect: Generative AI in Higher Education* which will be published by Routledge. It is co-authored with a technology specialist and looks at issues such as assessment and AI literacy, embracing ChatGPT in curriculum design, and developing a policy framework. “This is not just for our university. I have a template showing step by step how institutions can develop an AI policy. I think everyone in the world is looking for something like this.”

Professor Chan has also written a 60-page booklet with assessment guidelines for university teachers on using AI and issues to consider. One that looms large in both publications is misconduct or plagiarism. She believes there may need to be differing boundaries or definitions, depending on the discipline. For instance, the intended learning outcome for engineering students is not their writing abilities, so does it matter if they use ChatGPT to help write their reports? For literature majors, on the other hand, its use would be different. “Each university and each faculty will need to think about what academic misconduct means with AI,” she said.

Disciplines also need to consider how AI may affect the future prospects of their graduates and what they should be teaching students. Professor Chan has secured funding to look at different industries and how they are or should be using AI. This includes the field of education, where new AI apps can generate learning outcomes and lesson plans. “Is this something we should be teaching our students how to use, because maybe it is the future? These are things we need to know.”

“This has all been a great opportunity and experience for me: one, because it is interesting for my own research and intertwines between engineering and education; two, because it is great for the university and the Faculty to be leading the way in AI in education; and finally, because it allows me to contribute to the world that future generations will experience, including my own children. The world is changing rapidly, so I am glad that I have this opportunity to play a part,” she said.

PIRLS of Wisdom

Every five years, children's reading is assessed around the world through the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) organised by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. And in almost all exercises since PIRLS was launched in 2001, Hong Kong has placed among the top three in the world.

For scholars from the Faculty of Education, that is both a point of pride and a challenge. Apart from leading the PIRLS assessment in Hong Kong, their analyses of the results have contributed to improvements in Hong Kong children's reading performance over time through dissemination to government, schools and the community. At the same time, our scholars need to look at the data in an ever more finely-grained way to identify areas of improvement.

Lam Wai Ip, Associate Professor of the Faculty, was the principal investigator of the Hong Kong section of PIRLS 2021 when the assessments were conducted (the results were released in 2023). About 320,000 Primary Four students and their parents, teachers and principals from 57 countries participated, and Hong Kong students came second best in the world, just after Singapore.

This age group is chosen because students of Primary Four age, about 9-10 years old, are expected to have mastered their language system, begun reading fluently and to be on the path to using reading to acquire knowledge.

“A large-scale assessment lets us collect information about education systems and reflect on what is happening in schools as well as in society that supports students' learning,” Professor Lam said.

The results point to many positive features in Hong Kong compared to many other places. The socio-economic status of children's families has a less significant impact on student's reading achievement here, signalling fairness in reading education in Hong Kong. Hong Kong schools also have the lowest rate of bullying and one of the lowest rates of absence from school, showing a high degree of discipline and safety.

Hong Kong students also managed to keep up their reading levels and, unlike many other regions in the world, did not experience literacy setbacks despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Our analysis showed that parents and family played an important role in maintaining students' reading ability,” she said.

Identifying Areas for Improvement

However, at the same time, there is room for improvement. Professor Lam, Professor Tse Shek Kam and Professor Cheong Choo Mui developed a new method for looking at all the questionnaire data from PIRLS called psychometric network analysis, which investigates the relationships between reading achievement and the contexts of students' classrooms and lives.

One of the key findings was a clear picture of the interplay between self-efficacy and the motivation or attitude towards reading, and reading achievement.

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“From the previous cycles, we already know reading attitude is important, but this time we have a deeper understanding of how it matters. In fact, reading attitude does not have a direct association with achievement, but it is instead associated with higher self-efficacy, or confidence. And self-efficacy is the key for promoting students’ reading achievement,” she said.

Oddly enough, motivation is not as high in Hong Kong and other Chinese-speaking places that participated in PIRLS 2021 – Macau, Taiwan and Singapore – compared with other countries. The strong performance in other factors, from less bullying and less school absence to high decoding ability learned from kindergarten, helped to mitigate the lower motivation score. Nonetheless, when self-efficacy rose by one unit, so did reading achievement.

The data also revealed that Chinese-speaking students perform better on informational reading rather than literary reading, and that girls perform better than boys. The latter was a phenomenon in all countries, driven in part by the fact that the school curriculum at this age is better suited to girls – they are more willing to sit still for longer periods – and that boys experience more bullying and use electronic devices more for non-academic activities, both of which are associated with a lower reading score.

Apart from teasing out these results, the team has suggested ways in which Hong Kong schools can address these challenges. First, teachers should work harder to make lessons more interesting and engage students in stories, so they are more motivated to read.

“If teachers can make the lesson more interesting, it will build students’ confidence levels,” said Professor Cheong. “We want the teachers to ask interesting questions about the characters and content of books, questions that are not related only to language knowledge. This can help get students thinking about the story and then they can have their own interpretation of it, which will make reading more interesting.”

Moreover, added Professor Lam, they should look beyond focusing solely on the morals of stories. “In Chinese-speaking culture, we tend to use stories to teach children moral points. After reading a story, we want them to tell us what they learned. This is important, but at the same time, we want students to be engaged in the story. We don’t want them to lose the joyfulness and pleasure of the story,” she said. The scholars hope to collaborate with others in the region to address this issue.

Dissemination and Collaboration Efforts

The results of the PIRLS analysis are being disseminated widely. The team held a press conference in May 2023 and organised seminars for academics, school administrators, policymakers, teachers and parents. In the teacher session, for instance, they taught strategies for making reading interesting and asking open-ended questions. For parents, they promoted a good home literacy environment, which they said can be achievable even with limited resources.

Judging by their track record, their engagement should result in positive change. After the first PIRLS, when Hong Kong came 14th in a field of 35, the local team analysed the results and identified areas of improvement which they shared with government departments, schools, libraries, parents and others. The government then set up a task force on reading that resulted in a number of changes, such as

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letting libraries stay open past 6pm so parents could bring their children there after work and giving teachers more training. The result: Hong Kong jumped to second place the next time around and has been in the top three ever since. The city learned lessons from the exercise as did Singapore, Russia and Ireland, which all followed an identical path to Hong Kong.

“We have maintained a good level, but let’s see how we can do better,” Professor Lam said. “The way forward now is to look more at the affective domain and aim to improve not only reading performance, but also interest in reading.”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Accessible Learning in the Virtual Classroom

Students with different disabilities face obvious barriers in conventional classrooms when it comes to accessing and absorbing content. But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and all learning went online, they were faced with a whole new set of obstacles to navigate. Everything moved to a small screen and the picture and sound could often be wonky. Even students without disabilities could struggle to see and hear the content.

That situation motivated scholars in the Faculty of Education to develop tools and guidelines to make online learning accessible to all. Building on their earlier work to enhance learning experiences for tertiary students with visual impairment and provide guidelines for disability inclusion in higher education, they have developed a set of tools, videos and guiding principles on online access and inclusion that apply to everyone.

Developing Inclusive Online Learning

The project was funded through the UGC Special Grant for Strategic Development of Virtual Teaching and Learning and launched in June 2023. It was co-developed by Dr Ma Yuet Kwan, Gloria, former Post-doctoral Fellow and Dr Yeung Pui Sze, Patcy, former Associate Professor of the Faculty. Developed through open source, it offers the first freely available guidelines on virtual learning accessibility for higher education in Hong Kong and has attracted thousands of views from students, teachers and the wider community.

“The increasing adoption of online teaching and learning during the pandemic offered many new opportunities for both teachers and students but, at the same time, students and teachers with disabilities encountered a different set of barriers,” Dr Ma said.

“For example, just in a simple Zoom meeting, students with visual impairment might not be able to read a PowerPoint in a shared screen, or those who are deaf or hard of hearing might be unable to hear the lecture or discussion. Even users without visual impairment might have poor video quality because they do not have more advanced devices or they only have a small screen. That was why we wanted to focus on enhancing accessibility of online teaching and learning for all.”

The team already had material to work with from their earlier work for students with visual impairment, where they produced guidelines on developing teaching and learning content. For example, functions on Word documents can be enabled to make them more compatible with assistive technologies such as screen readers, and colour contrast on PowerPoint or images can be tailored to make them easier to read. In the current project, they looked at 17 different kinds of technologies or software and further consolidated the options available. For example, live captioning can be turned on in Zoom to assist learners. Teachers could also consider issues such as the weight of virtual reality headsets and the stickiness of controls, to try to ensure that devices are usable by all learners.

Comprehensive Accessibility Toolkit

All of this information has been uploaded to a comprehensive website that features a toolkit, a set of demonstration videos, accessibility-focused templates for PowerPoint and Word, and cheat sheets on techniques for enhancing accessibility (see Virtual Learning Accessibility Toolkit – Guidelines on accessible digital educational materials and virtual learning environment (<https://vaccessibilitytoolkit.hku.hk>)).

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Most importantly, the project sets out a framework for approaching accessibility in education that brings it into the planning from the outset, rather than regarding it chiefly as an add-on.

“Accessibility and access to education are fundamental human rights for all individuals, including individuals with disabilities,” Dr Ma said. “Accessibility is not a checklist to fulfil. It is a shift in your mindset whereby you always consider it when you create and deliver teaching materials and activities.”

The project’s materials are aimed at both university teachers and students but can also be used by others in the community, and there is a strong emphasis on self-learning. For instance, the video series (called IDEALeaders Self-learning Video Series and available on YouTube) shows how to make different technologies more accessible and even includes a video produced with the Hong Kong Blind Union to show how screen readers work.

The toolkit and video series have been disseminated to 43 tertiary education institutions in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Teaching Excellence Alliance, and presented at international conferences, such as the International Conference on Learning and Teaching and a conference on teaching, assessment and learning for engineering organised by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers.

In the first four months, the toolkit website received more than 1,200 visitors and the video series had more than 1,300 views. There were also hundreds of downloads of the toolkit PDF, templates and cheat sheets.

“The feedback has been very positive. To the best of our knowledge, there are not similar kinds of materials available through open source in Hong Kong. We believe the materials are applicable to non-teaching staff, too, because very often they may send electronic materials, like email notifications or documents, and we hope they would consider accessibility in this process. The technical details of the project are very important of course, but the essence that we want to emphasise is the importance of the collaborative effort of each member of the university and society towards creating inclusive education for everybody,” Dr Ma said.

It is also an issue close to Dr Ma’s heart. She has mobility disability and uses a power wheelchair, and she said she had found the project empowering and meaningful. “We should try to eliminate ableism and embrace diversity on campus. I think HKU has been quite proactive in celebrating diversity, but it is an ongoing process. We want to let more people know about these concepts,” she said.

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Passionate Future Educators Win Outstanding Prospective Teacher Awards

Co-organised by the Hong Kong Prospective Teachers Association and the Hong Kong New Generation Cultural Association, the “10th Hong Kong Outstanding Prospective Teachers Award Presentation Ceremony” was held on March 25, 2023 to recognise prospective teachers who have excellent teaching ability and a passion for education. A distinguished panel of education professionals, including principals from secondary schools, primary schools, and kindergartens, as well as academics from various universities in Hong Kong, served as judges for the award.

132 prospective teachers participated in the selection process for the Award. Following multiple evaluations and trial teaching sessions, Lim Tao Jie, a student of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education in Language Education — Chinese programme was honoured with the Golden Award. Lee Tsam Yi from the Postgraduate Diploma in Education programme and Cheung Hin Ki from the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education in Language Education — English programme received the Silver Award and the Bronze Award respectively.

“The greatest benefit I gained from the competition was the opportunity to share and exchange teaching experiences with two principals. They provided valuable feedback and shared their own teaching experiences regarding my teaching methods and lesson plans, which are inspiring. I also seized the chance to seek guidance by asking teaching-related questions, and received practical advice in return,” Lim Tao Jie said.

Inspiring Innovation and Empowering Change

Sham Po Yan, Bonita, from the Bachelor of Science in Speech and Hearing Sciences programme, received the Innovation and Technology Scholarship 2023. The Scholarship was launched in 2011. It aims to encourage and nurture outstanding students to contribute to the Innovation and Technology industry. Undergraduate students who study science, engineering, and medicine subjects receive a scholarship capped at HK\$150,000 each.

Bonita has been making great efforts to help underprivileged children. She launched an online platform for storytelling to children, and set up a voluntary tutoring programme during the fifth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic to help local students from low-income families to study and to prepare for their examinations.

“I am very honoured to receive the scholarship and excited about the opportunities ahead. The scholarship will allow me to widen my international exposure, and I believe that this opportunity will help me to grow both personally and professionally,” she said.

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Exceptional education student shines through dedication to language, music, and philanthropy

Chau Cheuk Lam, Nicole, from the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education in Language Education — English programme, was recognised as one of the Top 10 Outstanding Tertiary Students of Hong Kong 2023 by the Hong Kong Youth & Tertiary Students Association.

Nicole has a deep passion for music and language, which has impelled her to master various instruments, including the piano, Suona, and the pipe organ, as well as the art of elocution. Beyond her accomplishments in music and language, Nicole exemplifies compassion through actively engaging in volunteer activities. She has devoted her time to conducting charity music performances, distributing anti-epidemic materials to those in need, and voluntarily teaching Cantonese and English to local students.

Nicole's enduring empathy was further extended to Cambodia, where she dedicated her time to voluntarily teaching Putonghua to local children. During that time, she learnt that language is not a barrier to building connections with people. It is the heart and mind that truly matter when establishing relationships with people. Even though Putonghua and English were not their native languages, Nicole and the children could all share the happiness of learning and teaching.

For Nicole, receiving this award provides validation and encouragement to continue striving for excellence. It also serves as a reminder to utilise her strengths and give back to society. Looking ahead, she remains committed to participating in volunteer services, trying her best to help more people, and contributing to building a better place for all.

A Values-Added Education

When Faculty of Education alumna and now Vice Principal at Ng Wah Catholic Secondary School, Ms Yan Sau Man, Carmen, was a teenager, she was far from the ideal student. By her own admission, she was troubled and struggling. Fortunately, a teacher of Chinese saw potential in her and gave her not only encouragement but tangible support.

“This teacher stayed behind after school every day and accompanied me in revising and completing all assignments, even for subjects she wasn’t familiar with. She even prepared lunch for me. My teacher didn’t give up on me and went above and beyond her job to dedicate extra effort and time to me. Her patience, perseverance, love and care inspired me to become a good teacher like her,” she said.

Ms Yan went on to obtain a Bachelor of Education in Language Education - Chinese in 2001 and a Master of Education (specialism in Chinese Language Education) in 2006, both at HKU. The teaching principles and opportunities she gained, and connections with experts and peers, have persisted well beyond graduation. “I have felt nurtured into becoming a continuously improving educator,” she said.

She has directed that improvement not only towards a career path into management, but also to enhancing student experience.

“My philosophy is that while knowledge is important, it is even more crucial to know how to apply that knowledge correctly. Therefore, together with other educators, we co-founded the Hong Kong Values Education Teachers Association in 2022, when the Education Bureau was actively promoting its 10 core values,” she said. Her work there has enabled her to advise schools, contribute to the development of education, and serve more teachers and students.

She is also a member of the Hong Kong Extra-curricular Activities Masters’ Association, which has brought her into contact with different organisations around the world. This turned out to be useful preparation for the COVID-19 pandemic, when she developed online exchanges with fellow students in South Korea and with Zhejiang Provincial Museum, and initiated a project that brought students and the elderly together to receive training in the game Molkky.

Ms Yan’s talents are not only at the organisational level, though. She also brings care and compassion to her engagement with students. In 2021 she was awarded the Good Teacher Award by the Szeto Wah Education Fund after being nominated by a former student who came from a financially disadvantaged family but, with Ms Yan’s encouragement, went on to pursue a degree in Chinese medicine. “I am committed to inclusive education and the well-being of diverse age groups,” she added.

PARTNERSHIP

Strengthening Regional Educational Collaborations

Shenzhen Nanshan District Education Bureau

The Faculty and the Shenzhen Nanshan District Education Bureau signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on October 25, 2023 in Shenzhen. The signing ceremony, officiated by Professor Yang Rui, Dean of the Faculty and Ms Yang Jun, Secretary of the Shenzhen Nanshan District Education Bureau, marked an important milestone in strengthening educational exchanges between the two parties.

With the aim of enhancing regional educational developments, this MOU sets the stage for facilitating the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and best practices through initiatives such as joint teacher training programmes and exchange activities. The collaboration will enrich the learning and teaching experiences of students and educators, and enhance educational standards in Hong Kong and the Nanshan District of Shenzhen.

Ningbo Education Bureau

On November 23, 2023, the Faculty established a partnership with the Ningbo Education Bureau through a virtual MOU signing ceremony, which was officiated by Professor Yang Rui, Dean of the Faculty and Professor Mao Caisheng, Party Secretary, Director General of the Ningbo Education Bureau. This partnership marks a significant step forward in promoting educational collaborations, encompassing teacher training, academic exchange, and joint research in education.

The collaboration paves the way for achieving educational excellence and making notable contributions to the advancement of education and educational practices across the regions, benefiting students, researchers, and educators involved.

EVENT SPOTLIGHTS

“Hong Kong Education and Future Learning” Knowledge Fair

The Faculty hosted the “Hong Kong Education and Future Learning” Knowledge Fair – Let’s Make an Impact Together on March 4, 2023. This whole-day event included plenary sessions and interactive workshops, featuring the themes of English and Chinese language learning (as both 1st and 2nd language), organisational learning for innovation, and digital literacy.

Representatives from the Education Bureau of the HKSAR Government, principals and teachers from local secondary and primary schools, along with other stakeholders in the community participated in the Fair. It was a precious opportunity for participants to share the key findings and exchange their insightful views that have significant implications for student learning and well-being, school development, parenting practices and parental education, and policy implementation and evaluation.

“Expanding Opportunities for Every Child to Learn Well. Can Local Experiences from the Pandemic in India Feed into Global Lessons?” Webinar

The Webinar “Expanding Opportunities for Every Child to Learn Well. Can Local Experiences from the Pandemic in India Feed into Global Lessons?”, part of the Academy for Leadership in Teacher Education (ALiTE) International Webinar Series for Exemplary Scholarship, was organised on March 23, 2023. This online lecture was delivered by Dr Rukmini Banerji, the Chief Executive Officer of Pratham Education Foundation (Pratham).

During the lecture, Dr Banerji introduced the experiences of schools and students in India during the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities and contribution of Pratham during the pandemic and more recently, and further explained how all of those experiences could feed into global lessons.

“Making Learning Visible: The Sequel” Lecture

The “Making Learning Visible: The Sequel” Lecture, also part of the Academy for Leadership in Teacher Education (ALiTE) International Lecture Series for Exemplary Scholarship, was delivered by Professor John Hattie on May 10, 2023. He is a Laureate Professor Emeritus of Melbourne Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne, Australia.

In the lecture, Professor Hattie discussed the importance of educator expertise, evaluative thinking, intentionally aligning teaching with the depth of complexity within lessons, and ensuring schools are seen by students as inviting, safe, and fair places, where they have the space to make errors, learn with their peers, and where they have great teachers by design not by chance.

EVENT SPOTLIGHTS

“ICAP: A Theory of How Students Engage to Learn” Lecture

The “ICAP: A Theory of How Students Engage to Learn” lecture, delivered by Professor Michelene Chi, the 2023 Yidan Prize for Education Research Laureate, was held on December 7, 2023. Professor Chi is Regents Professor & Dorothy Bray Endowed Professor of Science and Teaching at Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University. She is a cognitive science researcher with a focus on how students learn.

During the lecture, Professor Chi discussed the ICAP theory, which categorises student engagement into four physical ways: Interactive (co-generating with a peer), Constructive (generating some new information), Active (manipulating instructional materials), and Passive (paying attention). These four different overt ways may correspond to undertaking four different sets of covert thinking processes, thereby resulting in decreasing levels of learning: that is, I>C>A>P. Supported by hundreds of studies, ICAP guides pedagogy and evaluates the engagement modes of instructional activities for students. Professor Chi also presented additional applications of the ICAP theory, providing further insights into its significance.

PEOPLE

Welcome

Professor Fung King Tat, Daniel

Academic Unit of Language and Literacy Education

Daniel Fung joined the Faculty as an Assistant Professor in August 2023. He received English teacher training as an undergraduate at the Faculty and obtained his DPhil degree in Education from the University of Oxford. Previously, he taught at two other universities in Hong Kong. His major research interests include listening strategies, English Medium Instruction (EMI), and vocabulary learning. His research always includes pedagogical implications. He is currently investigating how learners learn to listen to teacher input in EMI classrooms.

Professor Clarence Gerald Green

Academic Unit of Language and Literacy Education

Clarence Gerald Green joined the Faculty of Education as an Assistant Professor in July 2023. He is a Canadian citizen and obtained his PhD degree from the University of Melbourne. Previously he was an Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, and a high school English teacher. He specialises in English Language Education and his research has been published in leading journals such as *Behavior Research Methods, System, Journal of English for Academic Purposes, and Language Learning and Technology*.

Dr Mo Yung Ka Ying, Karen

Academic Unit of Language and Literacy Education

Karen Mo Yung joined the Faculty as a Lecturer in September 2023. She received her EdD degree from HKU. Her research interests include reading strategies, curriculum, teaching pedagogy, and teacher professional development. Before joining HKU, she was a secondary Chinese Language and Putonghua teacher. She also served as a panel chairperson of the above subjects and chairperson of the Academic Affairs Committee. She has been a member of the Task Quality Assurance Committee (TQAC) for Chinese Language at Secondary Level in the Education Bureau since 2017.

Ms Chan Tsang Nam, Janna

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Janna Chan joined the Faculty as a Lecturer in November 2023. She received her MEd degree in Special Education from Middlesex University and PGDE from HKU. Before joining the Faculty, she taught psychology and students with high levels of individual needs at an international school. She was also a pastoral leader who mainly focused on child protection cases. She is particularly interested in inclusive education, psychometric assessments, student well-being, and guidance and counselling.

PEOPLE

Dr Chau Nga Lei, Lilian

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Lilian Chau joined the Faculty as a Lecturer in January 2023. She is currently the Programme Director of Bachelor of Science in Applied Child Development in the Faculty. She obtained her PhD degree and PGDE in Early Childhood Education from HKU. Her research interest lies in early childhood play and learning. Before re-joining HKU, she was an Assistant Professor at Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education and an Instructor at Hong Kong Metropolitan University. She served as an early childhood teacher in Hong Kong.

Professor Cheng Ka Yu, Ivy

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Ivy Cheng joined the Faculty as an Assistant Professor in September 2023. She is a Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium. Professor Cheng obtained her PhD degree from HKU and conducted post-doctoral research at the University of Manchester, UK. In 2023, she received the Women in Research (WiRe) Fellowship at the University of Münster, Germany. Her primary research focuses on enhancing neuroplasticity in dysphagia rehabilitation. As the General Secretary of the European Society of Swallowing Disorders (ESSD), she actively raises awareness and educates about dysphagia care.

Professor Jesus Alfonso Daep Datu

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Jesus Alfonso Daep Datu joined the Faculty as an Associate Professor in July 2023. He completed his PhD degree in the Faculty of Education at HKU. He is a well-being scientist with research programmes on positive education, inclusive education, STEM learning, and giftedness. He serves as the Director of the Science of Happiness and Positive Education (SHAPE) Lab. Before joining HKU, he was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education and Counselling at The Education University of Hong Kong.

Dr Lee Man Kit, Stephen

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Stephen Lee is a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Speech, Language and Reading Lab of the Faculty. He received his Bachelor's and PhD degrees in Speech and Hearing Sciences from HKU. He also completed the Fulbright/China-U.S. Scholar Fellowship in Cognitive Science at Johns Hopkins University. He is interested in understanding how humans process signals and languages.

PEOPLE

Dr Li Ran

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Li Ran joined the Faculty as a Post-doctoral Fellow in October 2022. She received her PhD degree in Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences from Boston University. Her previous research focused on language impairment and treatment outcomes in monolinguals and bilinguals with post-stroke aphasia. Currently, she is interested in using both behavioural and neuroimaging techniques to investigate reading impairment in individuals with dyslexia.

Ms Liu Hoi Yee, Rowena

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Rowena Liu joined the Faculty as a Lecturer in experiential learning in January 2023. She obtained her dual master's degrees in Education (specialised in curriculum design and implementation) and Liberal Studies. Before joining HKU, she taught in The Education University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and secondary schools. She also worked as a part-time teaching kit designer for the Education Bureau previously. Alongside being a practitioner in values education via life-wide learning, she is interested in Community of Practice, 21st century skills and values development in school contexts, field experience, and novice teacher development, etc.

Professor Tang Ding-lan

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Tang Ding-lan joined the Faculty as an Assistant Professor in August 2023. She obtained her PhD degree in Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford. She was a Post-doctoral Fellow at the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at University of Wisconsin–Madison before joining HKU. Using various research methods (behavioural testing, neuroimaging, non-invasive brain stimulation), her research focuses on improving our understanding of auditory-motor interactions during both speech production and perception, and ultimately increasing the effectiveness of future clinical interventions for patients with speech disorders.

Professor Tso Van Yip, Ricky

Academic Unit of Human Communication, Learning, and Development

Ricky Tso joined the Faculty as an Assistant Professor in October 2023. He obtained his PhD (Education Psychology) degree from HKU and is an Educational Psychologist in Accredited Register. His work aims to uncover the neuro-cognitive mechanisms of learning, particularly in special populations, and translate his research findings into practice. He published in various international academic journals such as *Psychological Science*, *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, and *Clinical Infectious Disease*. He was an Assistant Professor at The Education University of Hong Kong before joining HKU.

PEOPLE

Professor Jeremy Adam Rappleye

Academic Unit of Social Contexts and Policies of Education

Jeremy Adam Rappleye joined the Faculty as a Professor in October 2023. He obtained his PhD degree at the University of Oxford (Comparative Education) and worked at the University of Tokyo and Kyoto University in Japan for over 15 years. He previously worked as a Yale China-Teaching Fellow at Sun Yat-sen University, and has spent time at National Taiwan University. His research focuses on the potential of East Asian philosophy and practice to contribute novel perspectives on education and learning, worldwide.

Dr Zhu Kejin

Academic Unit of Social Contexts and Policies of Education

Zhu Kejin joined the Faculty as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in October 2022. Graduated from HKU, her doctoral thesis explores the interrelation between China's higher education engagement with maritime silk road countries and China's strategies for global rise. Her research also examines intellectual pluralism and university-industry interactions in the Greater Bay Area. Previously, Dr Zhu obtained her M.S.Ed degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She also served as a Lecturer at Saint Joseph's University in the United States.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements

Faculty Outstanding Research Student Supervisor Award 2022-23
Professor Lo Yuen Yi

Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award 2022-23
Dr Vincent Wong

Faculty Outstanding Young Researcher Award 2022-23
Professor Juuso Nieminen
2023 Faculty Early Career Research Output Award
Professor Kevin Tai

2023 IEEE EAB Meritorious Achievement Award in Pre-University Education
Professor Gary Wong

RGC Early Career Award 2023-24
Professor Kevin Tai

World University Rankings for Education

No.1 U.S. News & World Report 2022-23 Best Global Universities for Education and Educational Research

No.6 Times Higher Education World University Rankings by Subject 2024

No.8 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2023

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- Doctor of Philosophy [PhD]
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- Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages [MA(TESOL)]
- Master of Education [MEd]
- Master of Science in Audiology [MSc(Audiology)]
- Master of Science in Technology, Design and Leadership for Learning [MSc(TDLL)]*
- Master of Science in Library and Information Management [MSc(LIM)] Postgraduate Diploma in Education [PGDE]
- Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language) [PGDE(TCSL)] (self-funded)

* formerly known as Master of Science in Information Technology in Education [MSc(ITE)]

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