

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Information paper for the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning

Professional Development of Teachers at The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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December 2010

Noted at the Second Meeting (2010–11) of the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning on 17 February 2011, after which small revisions were made to Figure 2.

1. Professional development through the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR)

Professional development of teachers at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is conducted in two main ways. The first occurs within departments and faculties in the form of scheduled seminars and workshops presented by University staff and/or by visiting academics. The second approach to professional development is via a formal schedule of courses and activities on a wide range of topics relevant to teaching and learning (T&L). These are conducted by the University’s Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR). This brief report will focus on activities associated with CLEAR.

The model under which CLEAR operates is shown in Figure 1; this model illustrates how the Centre works at University, faculty and department levels, as well as with individual teachers. Further details are available on CLEAR’s website <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/>. It is significant to note that, under this model, professional development does not occur only in formal seminars and workshops; it is also embedded in learning-enhancement projects and in consultations with faculties, departments and individual teachers. There are considerable synergies across all four key functions of CLEAR’s work. See also Section 4 of this report.

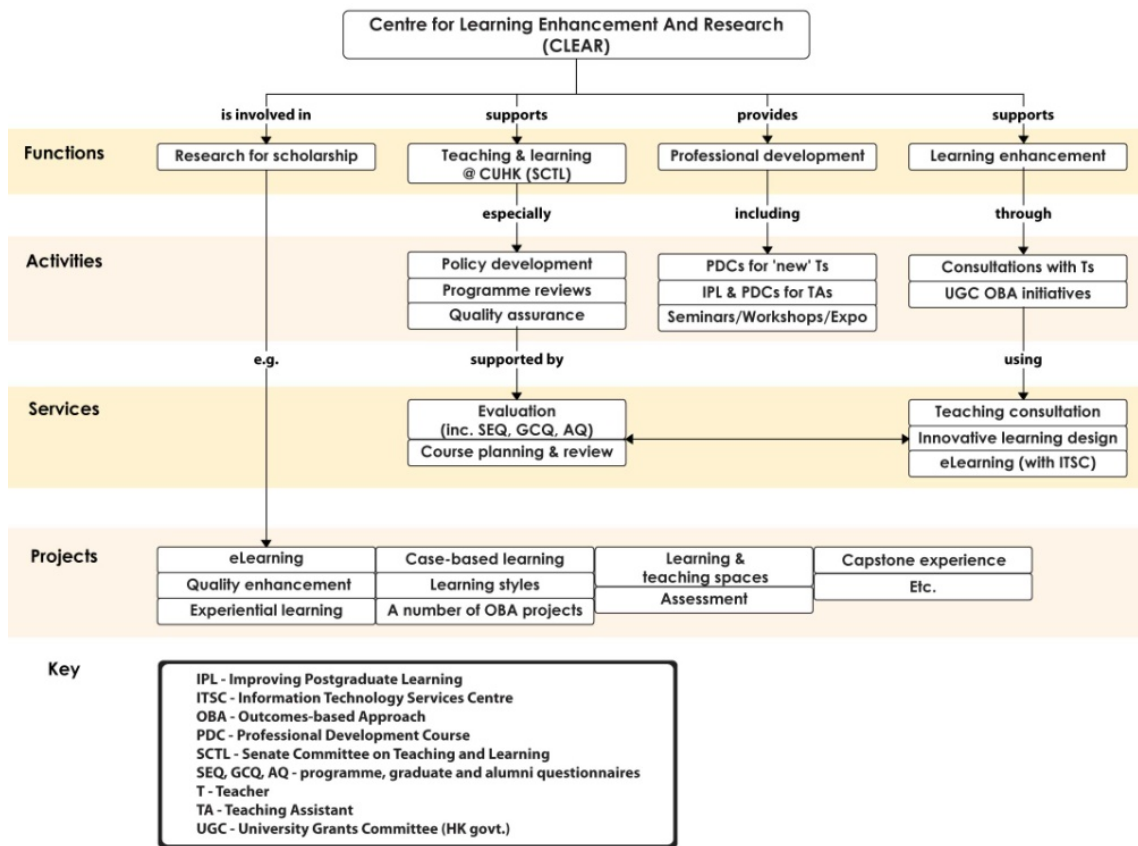


Figure 1. Model under which CLEAR operates.

2. Link to University T&L policy

The development of CLEAR's formal professional-development courses (PDCs) has been guided by the University's T&L policy, the 'Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review' (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/english/teaching/teaching-learning-quality.html>). All sectors of the University are now aligned in the one T&L policy with appropriate distinctions for the different contexts. The wording in the Integrated Framework documents relating to professional development of teachers for each sector is in Table 1.

Table 1. Policy requirement for professional development of teachers at CUHK.

Sub-degree sector	Undergraduate sector	Taught postgraduate sector
Training and ongoing professional development for new teachers are available through Self-financed SD Programme Units (SSPUs). Programmes are also expected to have a plan to ensure the quality of teaching by part-time staff.	A programme of professional development for all new teaching staff at the level of Assistant Professor or below, including Teaching Assistants, is mandatory in most cases. Programmes are also expected to have a plan to ensure the quality of teaching by part-time staff, including research postgraduate students who have duties as teaching assistants.	A programme of professional development for all new teaching staff at the level of Assistant Professor or below, including Teaching Assistants is mandatory in most cases. Programmes are also expected to have a plan to ensure the quality of teaching by part-time staff.

3. CLEAR's formal professional-development courses

As University policy stipulates in the 'Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review', a PDC offered by CLEAR is compulsory for all teaching staff of the University at the level of assistant professor or instructor. New teachers in other ranks are also encouraged to take the course, or selected sessions that focus on relevant pedagogy topics and teaching methodologies

3.1 Evaluation of PDCs for teachers

A foundation-level course, titled 'Becoming an excellent teacher', consists of 12 hours of formal sessions and a significant reflective assignment. It is offered in two modes: as an intensive course over a four half-day period and also on a cumulative basis. The cumulative basis was introduced in 2008 in order to provide teachers with a considerable degree of flexibility. Full details are at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/pdc.html>. The programme details are also disseminated at the annual orientation programme for new academic staff. Since 2003, more than 670 full-time teachers at CUHK have completed the course.

CLEAR events are evaluated with a short questionnaire about the relevance, content and conduct of the session(s). Figure 2 shows aggregate evaluation scores for PDCs conducted since 2003. From 2003 to 2007 the data refers to intensive courses. Since 2008, when the cumulative approach was introduced, evaluation data on all contributing courses, seminars and workshops have been included. Overall, Figure 2 shows that the number of attendances is rising, and also there is an upward trend in the evaluation scores.

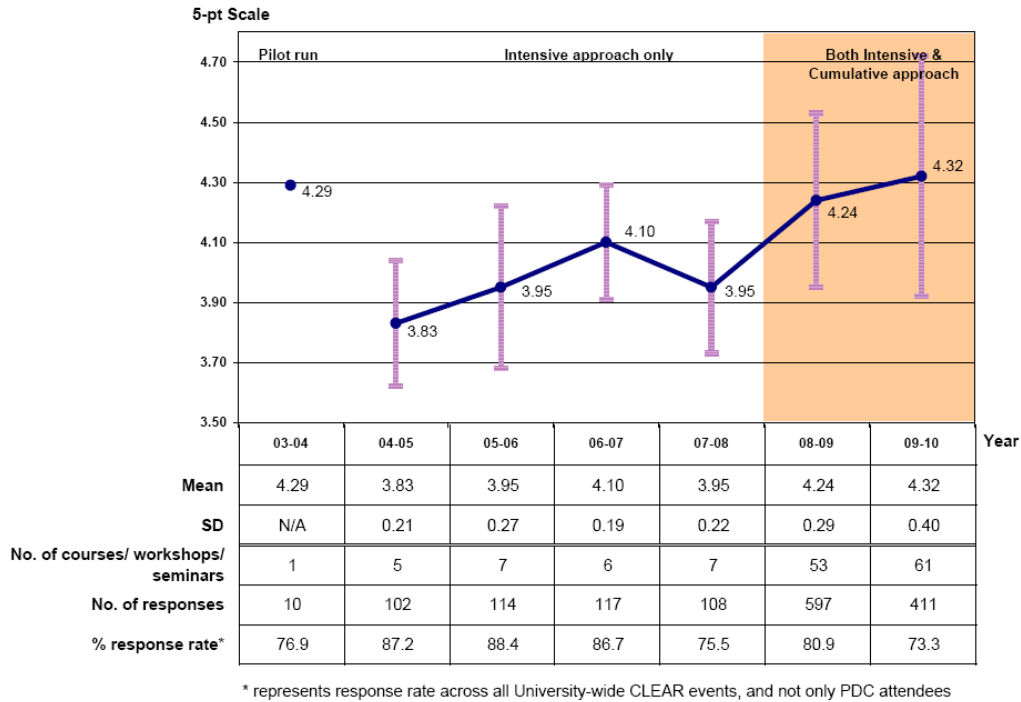


Figure 2. Aggregate evaluation scores for PDCs for CUHK teachers conducted since 2003.

There is no significant difference between scores of teachers who complete a PDC via an intensive course or by the cumulative strategy (Table 2). It is also worth noting that from an institutional investment perspective, a higher proportion of instructors leave CUHK than those in a professorial grade (Table 3).

Table 2. Difference in evaluation scores between PDC approaches over 2008–09 & 2009–10 (number of evaluations in brackets).

PDC mode	Mean evaluation scores (5-pt scale)	
	2008–09	2009–10
12-hour intensive course	4.21 (1)	4.29 (2)
cumulative approach	4.24 (52)	4.32 (59)

Table 3. Data on teacher attrition rates from CUHK.

	No. of teachers completing a PDC (from June 2007 to November 2010)	Attrition rate from CUHK
Professor grade	130	6.92%
Instructor grade	155	27.10%
Others	14	28.57%
Total	299	18.39%

3.1.1 Follow-up on teachers' experience after completion of a PDC

CLEAR administered a follow-up questionnaire in October 2010 to all staff who had completed a PDC in the period March 2006 to September 2010. There were 108 responses (response rate of 23.4%). A summary of the responses to quantitative items is shown in Table 4. The questions invited responses on attitude, effort, teaching knowledge and practice, teaching effectiveness and satisfaction. There are no significant differences between results for assistant professors (n = 47) and instructors (n = 53). (There were eight responses from teachers not in these two grades who had chosen to complete a PDC.)

Table 4. Summary of quantitative responses from 108 CUHK teachers.

Scale	No. items	Mean (5-pt scale) (all)	Mean (instructor)	Mean (assistant professor)
Attitude to teaching	2	4.20	4.28	4.10
Effort on teaching	2	4.47	4.50	4.47
Knowing how to teach	3	4.05	4.05	4.06
Teaching in action	3	4.12	4.14	4.12
Effectiveness of teaching	3	4.33	4.36	4.30
Satisfaction in teaching	2	4.33	4.42	4.27

There were three open-ended questions and the data are summarized in Figure 3 in the form of four quadrants which identify issues deemed as important or less important for assistant professors and for instructors. While there were no significant differences between assistant professors and instructors in the quantitative data, some differences appear in the qualitative analysis. Assistant professors regard technical support and reflection on teaching as being especially beneficial, while instructors regard professional-development opportunities more highly.

		Instructors	
		Important for teaching	Less important for teaching
Assistant Professors	Important for teaching	<p><i>Quadrant 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative feedback from CTE • Being able to accommodate different student expectations • Direct student feedback 	<p><i>Quadrant 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support for improving teaching • Self reflection on teaching
	Less important for teaching	<p><i>Quadrant 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional-development activities to improve teaching 	<p><i>Quadrant 4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research output, publications • Administrative work (which occupies a great deal of time)

Figure 3. Assistant professors and instructors views on factors impacting on teaching (108 responses).

3.1.2 PDC assessment: Evaluation of teaching consultations conducted by CLEAR

In order to make the assessment for the PDC as relevant as possible, CLEAR has encouraged teachers to actively reflect on their teaching as the culmination of the PDC. For several years most teachers have chosen to conduct an individual reflection on a selected group of classes and a few have opted for peer evaluation. See <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/prodev/pdc.html> for details.

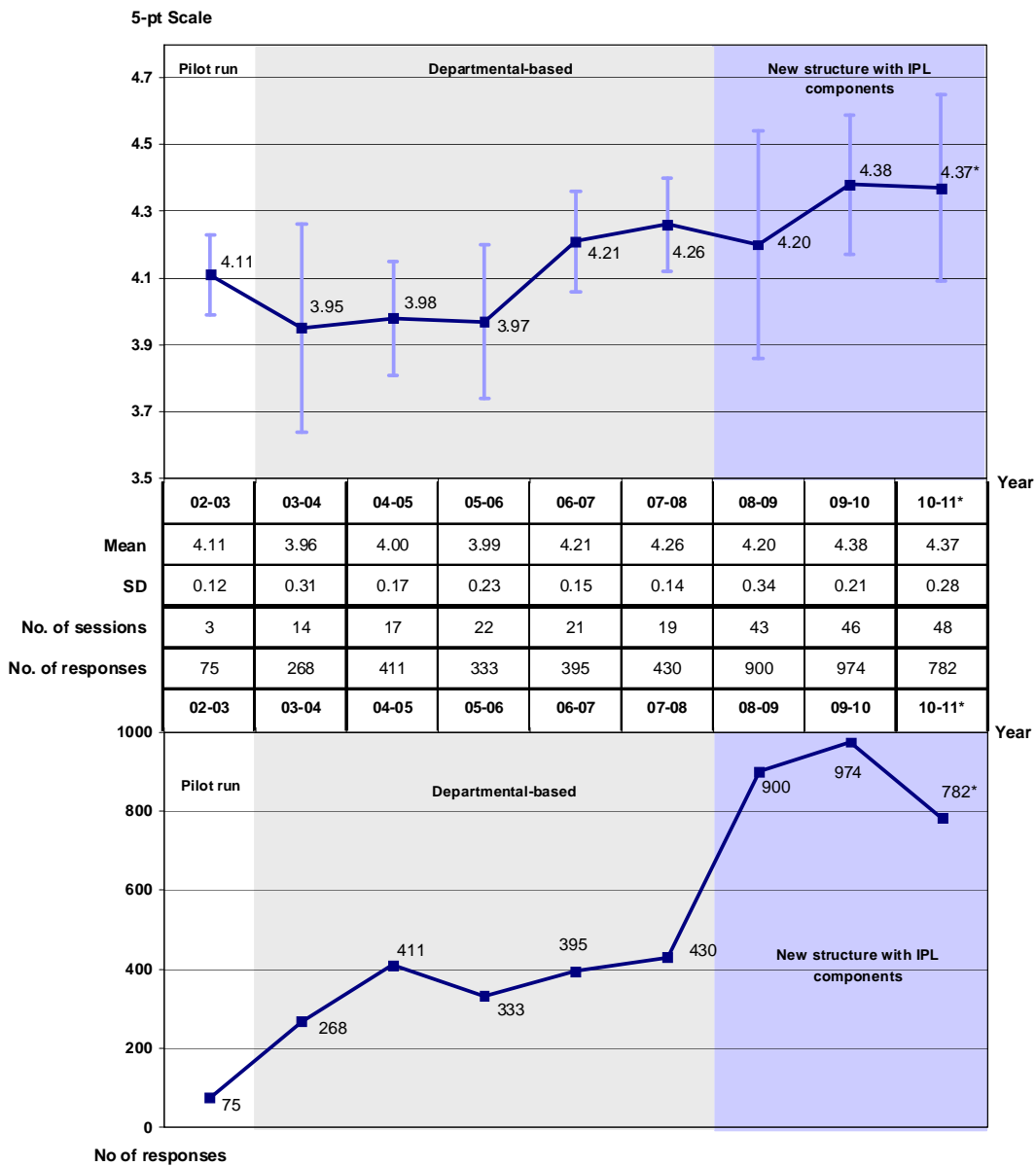
However, in the last year, we have more actively encouraged teachers to partner with a CLEAR professor in doing an indepth analysis of one particular class. Normally, the class is videoed and the consultation occurs a short period after the class, though a few consultations have been based on direct observation. To date, 37 consultations have taken place. Feedback on completion of the consultation has been uniformly very positive. In order to assess the medium-term impact of these consultations, 23 teachers who had completed a teaching consultation at least six months before October 2010 were invited to further reflect on the value of the experience. Fifteen completed questionnaires were received from the group, representing a response rate of 65.2% – six males and nine females. A summary of the data is in Table 5. The open-ended comments echo the high quantitative feedback. The positive tenor of the responses has affirmed our intention to continue supporting this time-intensive reflective exercise.

Table 5. Feedback on CLEAR teaching consultations from 15 CUHK teachers.

Scale	No. of items	Mean (5-pt scale)
Utility of teaching consultation	4	4.53
Impact on specific areas of classroom practice	6	4.31
Understanding of pedagogy	8	4.10

3.2 Evaluation of PDCs for teaching assistants

Turning from teaching staff to teaching assistants (TAs), since 2003 approximately 2,300 research postgraduate students have completed a course, titled 'Becoming an excellent TA'. Prior to 2008 all sessions were based in departments. Since then, a streamlined design has been introduced which combines tailored sessions with modules from the Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL) programme. Details of the current course are outlined at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/ipl/41.htm>. This course is an integral part of training in facilitation and communication skills for the University's postgraduate students. Figure 4 shows aggregate evaluation scores for PDCs conducted since 2003. Overall, Figure 4 shows that the number of attendances is rising (as there is ~100% response rate to evaluations), and also there is an upward trend in the evaluation scores.



* Data recorded up to December 2010; incomplete for 2010–11 year.

Figure 4. Aggregate evaluation scores for PDCs for CUHK TAs conducted since 2003.

3.3 Internal benchmarking exercise conducted within CLEAR

The academic staff in CLEAR are aware that the PDC for teachers that we offer is limited in scale and scope compared with similar offerings overseas, for example, in Australia or the United Kingdom. However, we believe we are part of an international community and have taken the opportunity of a recent large-scale report commissioned by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (Hicks, Smigiel, Wilson, & Luzeckjy, 2010) to benchmark our own modest efforts against good practice elsewhere. The five staff in CLEAR who are most actively involved in running our professional-development activities independently rated our programme on a number of domains listed in Hicks et al. (2010) related to the design and development of PDCs. Within the constraints of our limited resources our ratings were satisfying (Table 6 & Figure 5).

However, our discussions indicated a number of factors and challenges that need to be considered if CUHK is to achieve PDCs that rank well against international best practice. Figure 6 provides a comprehensive list of the factors that impinge on the successful conduct of PDCs. The items relating to these factors and challenges are noted in bold caps in Figure 6.

Table 6. Internal benchmarking results by five CLEAR staff using criteria listed in Hicks et al., 2010.

Domain	No. of criteria in Hicks et al., 2010	Mean ranking (SD) for teachers' PDC	Mean ranking (SD) for TAs' PDC
Strategy and policy	9	2.79 (0.76)	2.59 (0.69)
Curriculum and content	13	3.61 (0.43)	3.38 (0.37)
Programme structure	3	3.40 (0.20)	2.70 (0.95)
Quality assurance	8	3.60 (0.60)	3.40 (0.66)
Overall	-	3.35 (0.39)	3.02 (0.42)

Scale in terms of level of importance attached to each criterion:

1 = no; 2 = no but ...; 3 = yes but ...; 4 = yes

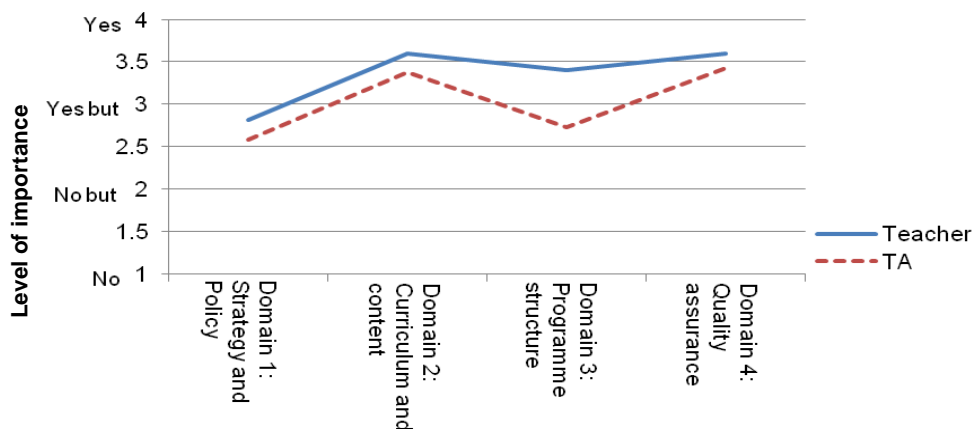


Figure 5. Summary of internal benchmarking results (means only) by five CLEAR staff using criteria listed in Hicks et al., 2010.

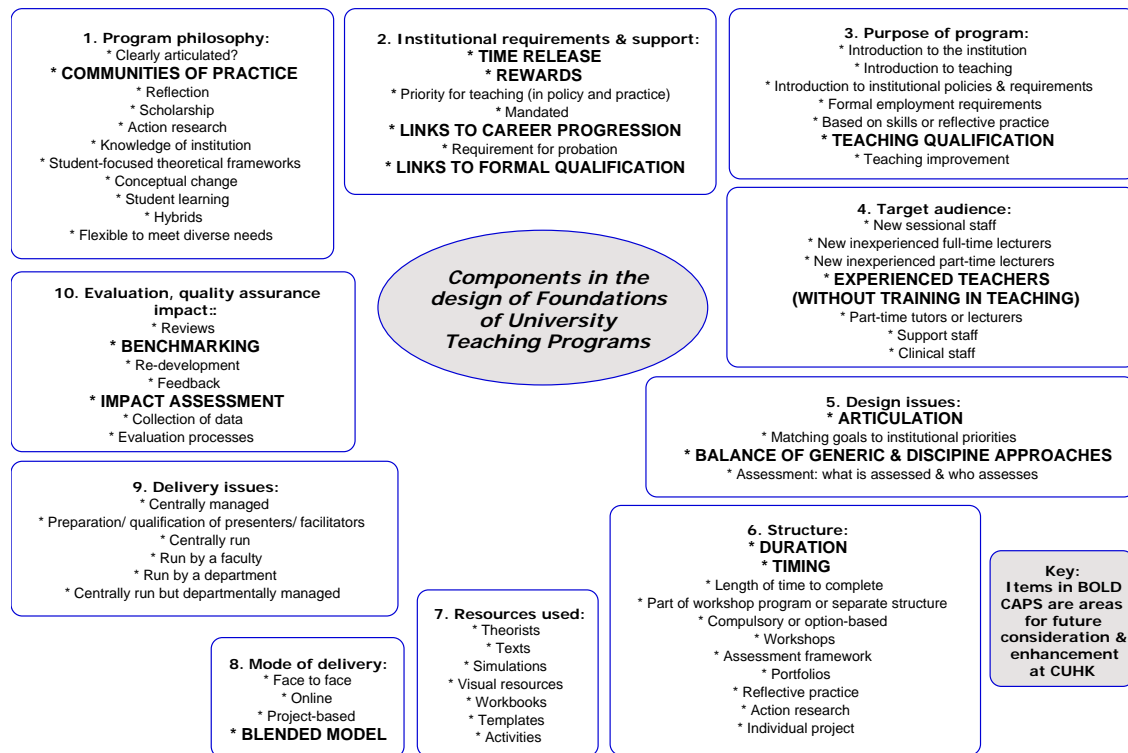


Figure 6. Elements to be considered in designing Foundations of University Teaching Programs (after Hicks et al., 2010, p. 53).

Reference

Hicks, M., Smigiel, H., Wilson, G., & Luzeckjy, A. (2010). *Preparing academics to teach in higher education*. Canberra: Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Retrieved December 4, 2010, from <http://www.flinders.edu.au/pathe/>

4. Professional development in a broader sense

In a broader sense, professional development should not only occur in formal seminars and workshops for teachers as individuals, but should also be taken more broadly to mean (i) the provision of staff development grants/ programmes and staff-exchange programmes, the former is administered by the Personnel Office and the latter by the Office of Academic Links (OAL) and OAL (China); and (ii) embedded in learning-enhancement projects and in consultations with faculties, departments and individual teachers. This latter broad category of professional development can be illustrated by the model under which CLEAR operates at University, faculty and department levels, as well as with individual teachers, previously noted in Figure 1 (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/about/mission.html>).

A summary of the breadth of CLEAR's activities and outcomes for the professional development of teachers in the years 2008–2009 and 2009–2010, mapped against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of CLEAR's Strategic Plan (http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/download/report/CLEAR_Strat_Plan_Nov10.pdf), is in the Appendix.

Summary of Activities & Outcomes for CLEAR for 2008 to 2010

KPI	2008–2009	2009–2010
1.1. Promote Outcomes-Based Approach (OBA) concepts & projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 workshops & seminars on OBA (3 at University level & 6 at department level) Represented CUHK at 3 UGC-sponsored OBA symposia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 workshops & seminars on OBA Represented CUHK at 2 UGC-sponsored OBA symposia
1.2. Liaise with faculties & departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented on 5 department & faculty committees 28 tailored sessions for 24 separate faculties & departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented on 4 department & faculty committees 31 tailored sessions for 23 separate faculties & departments
1.3. Contribute to University policy development for T&L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented on 14 University-level committees or groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented on 9 University-level committees or groups
1.4. Support T&L grants & projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in 20 funded projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in 20 funded projects
1.5. Provide support for quality assurance of T&L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 199 SEQ/ GCQ/ AQ administrations (see http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/enhance/evaluation.html) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 206 SEQ/ GCQ/ AQ administrations
2.1. Provide T&L development opportunities for CUHK academic staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52 workshops & seminars open to all teachers 21 different workshop topics open to all teachers 296 individual teachers participated in ‘open’ workshops & seminars Teachers completed 1667 contact hours in ‘open’ workshops & seminars Overall evaluation scores in open sessions were 4.3 on a 5-point scale 41 teachers completed the professional-development course 28 tailored workshops & seminars 40 departments & units participated in 52 additional CLEAR-led activities & consultancies 9 teachers from 7 departments received feedback on their teaching, based on an analysis of video-recording a class 110 teachers participated in the CLEAR-led orientation for new staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62 one- & two-hour workshops & seminars open to all teachers 31 different workshop topics open to all teachers 245 individual teachers participated in ‘open’ workshops & seminars Teachers completed 1,585 contact hours in ‘open’ workshops & seminars Average evaluation score for open sessions was 4.3 on a 5-point scale 97 teachers completed the Professional Development Course 31 tailored workshops & seminars 50 departments & units participated in 118 additional CLEAR-led activities & consultancies 37 teachers from 24 departments received feedback on their teaching, based on an analysis of video-recording a class 130 teachers participated in the CLEAR-led orientation for new staff
2.2. Provide T&L support for new Teaching Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31 tailored training sessions for Teaching Assistants (TAs) in departments 466 TAs attended CLEAR courses 176 TAs successfully completed training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36 tailored training sessions for Teaching Assistants (TAs) in departments 498 TAs attended CLEAR courses 282 TAs successfully completed training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 932 contact hours in CLEAR courses for TAs & Pg students • Coordinated 49 Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL) sessions for 106 student groups • 11 IPL sessions were conducted by CLEAR staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 996 contact hours in CLEAR courses for TAs & Pg students • Coordinated 49 Improving Postgraduate Learning (IPL) sessions for 110 student groups • 12 IPL sessions were conducted by CLEAR staff
3.1. Support learning design for enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in 27 discrete curriculum design & assessment small-scale projects • In collaboration with ITSC, CLEAR supported 13 discrete eLearning initiatives • In collaboration with the Library & ITSC, CLEAR provided support for planned development of new learning & teaching places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported planning for the new normative four-year curriculum in all 8 faculties • In collaboration with ITSC, CLEAR supported over 30 short talks on eLearning cases at CUHK • In collaboration with the Library & ITSC, CLEAR provided support for planned development of new learning & teaching places
3.2. Provide resources for CUHK staff to use in renewing their T & L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITSC & CLEAR organized 'Expo Excellence Online 2008' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 54 teachers presented papers & posters ○ 120 delegates attended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITSC & CLEAR organized the 'Teaching & Learning Innovation Expo 2009' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 67 teachers presented papers & posters ○ 117 delegates attended
3.3. Support language & learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported initiatives of the Senate Committee on Language Enhancement • Language enhancement discussed in consultations with programmes, & in CLEAR professional-development sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported initiatives of the Senate Committee on Language Enhancement • Language enhancement discussed in consultations with programmes, & in CLEAR professional-development sessions • Supported Independent Learning Centre in the development of a new Strategic Plan
4.1. Conduct research in student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally involved in 25 funded projects • 25 refereed papers published, & 6 non-refereed papers & keynotes presented at international conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally involved in 30 funded projects • 16 refereed papers published, & 13 non-refereed papers & keynotes presented at international conferences
4.2. Contribute to the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in 7 international conference committees • Invited as speaker at 3 conferences • Members of 23 editorial boards • Engaged in 9 external university activities as higher-degree examiners or advisory-committee members • Hosted visitors from 8 countries – Australia, Canada, China, India, New Zealand, South Africa, UK & USA • Represented on 8 local professional community committees & groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in 3 international conference committees • Invited as speaker at 8 conferences • Members of 14 editorial boards • Engaged in 10 external university activities as higher-degree examiners or advisory-committee members • Hosted visitors from 12 countries & regions – Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, UK & USA • Represented on 8 local professional community committees & groups