

Chapter 9

The LPATE Training Courses: An Initiative to Improve Teacher Language Proficiency



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Abstract This chapter serves as an introduction to the LPATE training courses initiated by the HKSAR Government to provide in-service teachers of English with developmental and proficiency programmes. The current chapter provides a theoretical foundation highlighting the necessity for teacher professional development through training courses. This chapter then outlines the LPATE training courses provided for in-service teachers in Hong Kong between 2001 and 2005. Various modules put on by different course providers and the details of information on these modules are provided, including purpose of the training courses, the number of trainees enrolled and the attainment rate across different institutions. The chapter ends with remarks from trainees to illustrate how the training courses were perceived by course takers.

Introduction

The Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers of English (LPATE) is a test of the standards of English language proficiency for Hong Kong primary and secondary school English teachers, or those who wish to become teachers of English. The needs for a benchmark assessment have been introduced in Section I of the current book. The initiative to introduce the LPATE, however, consisted of more than merely setting up a benchmark assessment as the HKSAR Government provided multiple channels for English teachers to achieve the language proficiency requirement (LPR). LPATE training courses were one such important avenue in facilitating this requirement.

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The LPATE training courses were an example of such an alternative channel for eligible teachers to meet the language proficiency requirement. Eligible teachers included teachers holding a permanent post in public sector schools or local private primary/secondary schools offering full curriculum, who were teaching English or would be deployed to teach English. Those eligible teachers who took the training courses and passed the exit tests were considered to have met the language proficiency requirement. Thus, the LPATE training courses were an alternative channel for in-service teachers before 2000 to reach the benchmark requirement, whereas all new teachers who joined the teaching profession as from the school year 2001/2002 had to meet the language proficiency requirement through either exemption or the LPATE assessment.

The rationale for setting up the development courses was, in part, due to the backlash from teachers and their union against the imposition of the LPATE on all language teachers and where the government wished to show that the LPATE was not a one-off, stand-alone set of assessments but a comprehensive set of teacher development initiatives, hence the programmes and the workshops.

The LPATE training courses provided a range of valuable and well-resourced courses that helped English teachers develop the language proficiency required for teaching—as a government response to alleviating concerns about potential failure in the LPATE. The training courses and exit tests were expected to be designed to ensure that the language proficiency standards achieved or certified by the exit tests in the training courses and language proficiency standards as laid out by the LPATE were compatible. The courses and exits tests went through careful moderation and a number of reviews under a team of moderation panels. Support from various resources was also provided by the then Education Department to help course providers with course design, including development workshops, identification and dissemination of good practice, and the provision of feedback from internal and external examiners.

The LPATE enhancement courses were offered by course providers in both Hong Kong and overseas. The course providers were English departments or language centres at seven tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, three overseas universities and the British Council. These courses offered full support and assistance to language teachers who needed to improve their language proficiency and meet the language proficiency requirement. Teachers were allowed to enrol in one or all of the modules in each programme—whichever best suited to their needs.

The current chapter starts with an overview of the various courses provided by different course providers. It then focuses mainly on the perspective of one course provider—The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). The chapter gives a detailed description of the five modules provided by CUHK and illustrates how these modules were intended to help English teachers develop the language competence expected of them in the LPATE.

Training Courses for Language Teachers: Background

Importance for English Language Proficiency

English language teaching is a career that requires proficiency, pedagogy and professionalism. Recent studies also show English language teachers in Hong Kong becoming increasingly aware that English language teaching is a career that requires English language proficiency, subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Coniam, Falvey, & Xiao, 2017; also Chap. 18, this volume). To help second language learners develop their language skills, English language teachers must have adequate and appropriate language proficiency and confidence in teaching English to students (Andrews, 2003). English language teachers need to provide comprehensible target language input in communicative language teaching, so as to facilitate teaching English through English in classrooms (Pennington & Hoekje, 2010).

In Hong Kong, it was the case in the 1990s that English teachers, in particular those in lower band (low student ability) schools, taught English to children through Cantonese (Mak & White, 1997). In addition, in the light of the small numbers of English teachers who were professionally trained with subject matter knowledge, there were worries about low English standards in the local business sector (Tsui, Coniam, Sengupta, & Wu, 1994). In response to such a situation, the LPATE was introduced to assess the language proficiency of English teachers in Hong Kong. It was made a requirement in Hong Kong that after 1997, all primary and secondary teachers should be degree holders and be professionally trained (Coniam & Falvey, 2013; Lai & Grossman, 2008).

A number of parallels can be cited in the Asian context. In Japan, where the language proficiency of English teachers has also been a cause for some concern, the EIKEN (Jitsuyo Eigo Gino Kentei—*Test in Practical English Proficiency* in English) has been used as a benchmark test for teachers teaching English at school level. English teachers are expected to obtain Grade Pre-1 (the EIKEN has seven levels: from Grade 1—the highest level down to Grade 5—the lowest level) (Eiken Tests, 2017). In Australian state schools where English is the language of instruction, the English language proficiency of teachers has been considered to be central to the quality of education. The Professional English Assessment for Teachers (PEAT) which consists of four papers (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) related to a classroom context is another example of a standards test to ensure teachers' English language standards (Murray, Riazi, & Cross, 2012). Although PEAT is not merely set for teachers of English, such a test supports the proposition that teachers need to have sufficient English language proficiency if they need to teach through English.

Training Courses for Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional training has had a considerable positive impact on teachers' beliefs and behaviours (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010). In the specific case of teacher professional development in English language teaching, research studies indicate that teachers with more teaching experience and professional training are more proficient in the language that is available for learners to learn, with a willingness to engage learners in grammatical related issues and an ability to anticipate learner difficulties (Andrews & McNeill, 2005).

While the LPATE was established to serve as a benchmark to ensure the standards of English language teachers, the HKSAR Government also provided upgrading courses to help English language teachers enhance their English language proficiency. Since the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications (ACTEQ) in 1993, various institutional initiatives (such as the continuing professional development framework) were developed to encourage and facilitate teachers to engage in professional development activities (Mak, 2010).

Professional development can be achieved through formal and informal support activities and courses that are designed to help teachers develop as professionals (Coldwell, 2017). The research literature reveals that professional development courses exert impact on teachers' professional development. Harris' (2001) findings with a group of teachers in Hong Kong reveal that professional development is helpful when teachers reflect on their own practices; professional development and self-reflection enable them to apply what they have learned to their teaching practice.

Worldwide professional training courses for language proficiency have been provided to help teachers improve their language proficiency. Considering the specific needs of Hong Kong teachers, Mak (2013) suggests that taking a degree in English is likely to help students to master grammar and improve writing skills, and an extended period of experience living overseas enhances one's mastery of other aspects of English language such as idiomatic usage and slang. Pearson, Fonseca-Greber and Foell (2006) discuss the potential of improving language teachers' language proficiency through taking degree courses in American universities. They argue that—to provide more input and help learners maintain standards—upper division literature and culture courses offered to Years 3 and 4 students in American universities should be taught in the target language. Pearson et al. (2006) also suggest that the universities use institutional resources to support students' language development, by, for example, providing more exposure to the target language through study abroad programmes, immersion programmes within the institutions, or the chance for service learning and extracurricular language activities. Exposure to the target language is important for future language teachers. In Japan, it is also recommended that the professional development of language teachers needs to consider both target language competence and the language of classroom management (Igawa, 2013). In Australia, preparation courses for Professional English Assessment for Teachers Test (PEAT) are also provided for teachers from different disciplines and backgrounds, to help them improve their language proficiency and feel less anxious about the upcoming

Table 9.1 The LPATE course providers

Location	Course provider	Courses provided
Hong Kong	The Hong Kong Baptist University	Language proficiency course for teachers of English
	The Hong Kong Institute of Education—later renamed The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK)	Core professional upgrading for English language teachers
	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Language proficiency training course for serving English teachers
	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	Towards excellence: a language training course for in-service teachers of English in Hong Kong
	The City University of Hong Kong	Continuing education certificate in English language teaching
	Lingnan University, Hong Kong	English language enhancement course for school teachers
	The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Training programme for the English language proficiency certificate
Hong Kong	British Council	Foundation course in English language for teachers
Australia	University of Queensland	English for TESOL professional purposes
	Queensland University of Technology	Professional training courses for teachers of English

test (Murray et al., 2012). The examples above further support the assertion that while benchmark standards on language proficiency have been introduced in different places around the world, respective training courses have also been provided to help candidates achieve the required standards.

Overview of the LPATE Enhancement Courses

Course Providers

LPATE enhancement courses were offered from the 2000/01 school year until the 2005/06 school year in nine tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. A list of course providers and courses provided are summarised in Table 9.1.

As can be seen from Table 9.1, a range of courses was provided to cater for the different needs of English language teachers, with English teachers able to enrol in the courses that they felt best fit their own schedules and needs. The training

courses were intended to help English language teachers meet the language proficiency requirement set out by the Hong Kong Education Bureau in 2000.

Purpose of the Courses

Appendix “[Course Providers’ Course Descriptions](#)” presents the brief course descriptions provided by different course providers as stated in the circular memorandum (No. 562/2000) provided by the Hong Kong Education Bureau.

In general, the language enhancement courses, according to the courses providers, served the following purposes:

- To enhance the language proficiency of English teachers in the four skills area (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing)
- To support serving English teachers in further developing their language proficiency
- To enhance participants’ competence to function effectively as English language teachers
- To equip participants with skills which were readily transferable to the teaching context
- To enable teachers to use English competently in the classroom and in their professional interactions
- To promote participants’ language and professional skills mainly but not exclusively related to Hong Kong English classrooms
- To develop participants’ professionalism in language teaching practice.

The purposes mentioned above delivered a strong message that these courses would enhance English teachers’ language proficiency in the context of English language teaching and would hopefully extend beyond the confines of classroom English.

Modules Provided

The course providers offered a range of modules corresponding to the language requirements of the LPATE. A summary of the modules provided can be found in [Table 9.2](#).

Generally, the focuses of the training courses in both Hong Kong and overseas were restricted to fulfilling the syllabus requirements as stated in the LPATE requirement (Bridges, 2007). Thus, these courses covered the different aspects of the LPR which were assessed in the LPATE, namely Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and Classroom Language. The training courses provided English teachers with necessary and sufficient knowledge to meet the required assessment standards (Bridges,

Table 9.2 Modules provided by different course providers

Course provider	Modules provided					
	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Classroom Language	Others
The Hong Kong Baptist University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Hong Kong Institute of Education (the now EdUHK)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Error analysis
The City University of Hong Kong	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lingnan University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
British Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
University of Queensland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Project portfolio independent learning or consultation
Queensland University of Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Language experience in Australia

2007). Since course designers and lecturers adopted a communicative and learner-centred approach, the training courses were likely to support the development of English teachers' communicative competence along with a critical awareness of the professional language required for language classroom and interaction with other teachers (Bridges, 2007).

The modules provided by different course providers offered participants different choices. Participants who chose to take the modules offered by overseas institutions would have the chance to attend immersion programmes overseas. The immersion courses overseas were regarded as contributing to English teachers' speaking and listening skills as well as intercultural communication ability (Lockwood, 2015).

Of the ten participating institutions, nine offered courses on all five modules, except for the Hong Kong Baptist University, which did not offer the classroom language module. The courses offered at overseas universities provided participants with language experience through immersion. These modules were tailor-made to address the needs of language teaching in Hong Kong. The enhancement courses thus provided a range of opportunities for English language teachers to develop their language competence in a specific area according to their own needs, with English language teachers being permitted to enrol for one or several modules of the different training courses. Further, with a view to catering for the needs of in-service teachers, the training courses offered by the institutions in Hong Kong were offered on a part-time basis, ranging from 120 to 230 h—depending on the number of modules provided. The immersion courses at overseas institutions were offered on a full-time basis, ranging from six to eight weeks.

The LPATE Training Courses at the Chinese University of Hong Kong

The majority of the current section focuses on the LPATE training courses at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) where full course materials and supporting documents are available.

The description and analysis of the LPATE courses at the CUHK are based on the course materials used between 2004 and 2005 for two reasons. First, the course materials between years 2004 and 2005 are the most complete and comprehensive sets of courses materials that are still available 15 years after the courses were introduced. Second, the LPATE courses offered at the CUHK were basically the same each year; hence, using the courses from a single year is representative of the other years.

Features of the CUHK Training Courses

As stated in the leaflet outlining the professional development courses for teachers put on by CUHK, the training programme had the following features:

- The programme was specially designed to meet the needs of the Hong Kong teachers.
- An interactive task-based approach was adopted.
- Topics and themes used in the training courses were relevant to English teachers' professional life.
- A supportive learning environment was provided with the security of continuous assessment.

The courses, in general, were designed to take English teachers up to, or even beyond, the minimum levels of language ability set in accordance with the language

proficiency requirement (LPR). The courses were designed to enhance English teachers' language abilities, enrich their teaching and improve their professional awareness and prospects.

Structures of the LPATE Training Courses

At the CUHK, modules were taught face-to-face and involved individual and group work in a task-based approach. All course materials were based on educational themes and aimed to extend the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, to build up language awareness and to promote reflection on the teaching and learning process. Participants who took these courses were considered to be benchmarked if they satisfied all the course requirements and passed the exit tests. English teachers who were benchmarked through taking the LPATE courses were exempted from the LPATE.

The structure of the courses is presented in Fig. 9.1.

As outlined in Fig. 9.1, the LPATE courses comprised of five modules. Participants were expected to undertake continuous assessments and exit tests in order to be benchmarked. The purposes and outlines of the courses are described below, followed by an explanation of how assessments were conducted.

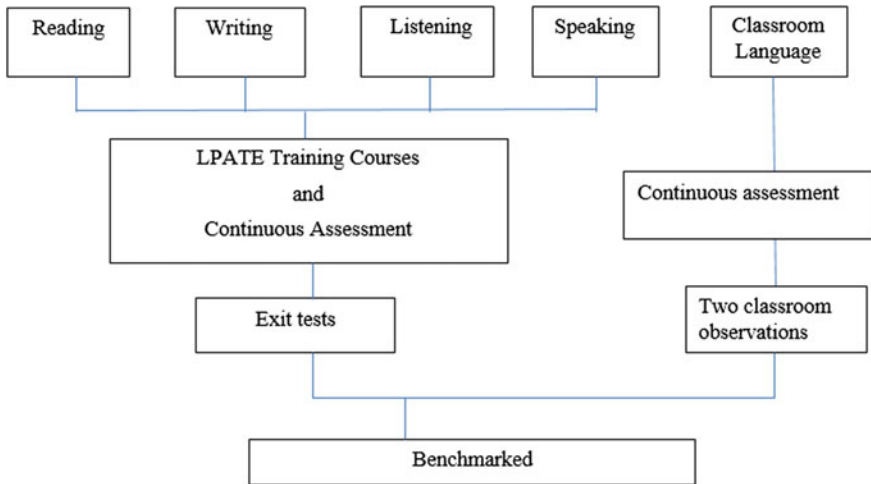


Fig. 9.1 Procedures for benchmarking

Reading Module

This module aimed to improve reading comprehension skills and extend participants' experience of reading. Passages on relevant themes from quality contemporary journalism and teaching methodology texts were used. Participants performed a variety of different tasks, involving different reading focuses and strategies.

Writing Module

This module aimed to improve writing skills and extend participants' knowledge of pedagogical grammar. Participants carried out a variety of writing tasks based on a school simulation. This module incorporated detailed consideration of principles and techniques of error correction, which was then extended into practical grammar and error correction exercises.

Speaking Module

This module covered the study of phonology and prosody, and the patterns of spoken discourse. Through detailed study of prose and poetic texts, participants were also encouraged to relate phrase structure and syntax to reading with meaning. Through a school-type simulation activity, participants learned to apply their developing language awareness in interaction with peers.

Listening Module

Programmes from TV and radio formed the basis of a study of phonological decoding, discourse structure and context- and genre-awareness, to build participants' confidence in listening to authentic texts. The broadcast programmes shared an educational theme and included discussions, debates, interviews, seminars and opinion pieces. Participants performed a variety of tasks based on their understanding of what they heard.

Classroom Language

Direct instruction, workshops, group work, role-play and micro-teaching were used to raise awareness of effective classroom language. Participants observed and prac-

tised dialogues relating to the language of the classroom. These included social and personal, organisational and instructional language. Participants were asked to record a sample of their own classroom discourse and use this text as the basis of a reflective exercise. Classroom study involved perceiving the link between teaching discourse and teaching methodology.

Continuous Assessments

Continuous assessments were designed to include a range of different activities and to cover a range of activities to test various language skills. Instructors followed a set of procedures for carrying out continuous assessment, which included giving prompt and meaningful feedback to participants, following the scales and descriptors of the LPATE. Where appropriate, participants were given copies of the instructors' feedback. Originals were kept by the instructors until the final grades were awarded.

Exit Tests

Exit tests closely modelled the LPATE. Exit tests were conducted according to the procedures of the LPATE. No examination drilling was carried out, and participants were not given prior warning of the content or themes of the exit test materials. The time allowed for answering exit test questions was the same as that allowed in the LPATE, except for the Listening Test. The reason why there was a difference lay in the fact that the Listening Tests at CUHK used authentic and unedited radio programme materials, and demanded a higher level of responses than in the LPATE itself.

In line with the practice at HKEAA, Speaking Test exit tests were assessed by two examiners. Writing Tests were marked by a third marker where there were discrepancies in results among different continuous assessment scores.

Marking Schemes

Participants were considered to be benchmarked if they satisfied the assessment requirement in the courses. For Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, continuous assessment grades counted for 50% of the overall final mark. Discretion was nonetheless applied. Where a participant had improved markedly during a course, for example, poor scores on the first assessment might be given less weight than assessments in the latter part of the programme. For the Writing module, where time did not permit all work to be done in class time, consideration was given to the fact that participants might have received help with work completed outside class—in gen-

Table 9.3 Course information by module

	Paper 1—Reading	Paper 2—Writing	Paper 3—Listening	Paper 4—Speaking	Paper 5—CLA
Total no. of classes	12	13	11	13	11
Total no. of participants who enrolled for the course	228	279	207	230	202
Total no. of participants who completed the course	225	268	197	224	192
Total no. of participants who passed	191	246	170	209	184
Overall attainment rates (%)	84.89	91.79	86.29	93.30	95.83

eral, at home, and these pieces were weighted somewhat less than those completed in classroom settings.

For Classroom Language Assessment, continuous assessment tasks were used formatively, and the overall grade was based on the assessment of the class teaching observed after the course.

The outlines above demonstrate that the LPATE enhancement courses were considerably more than an examination preparation course. The courses used a wide range of authentic tasks and exercises to help teachers achieve the expected language requirement and involved participants in reflection on their skills and practices.

Number of Participants and Attainment Rates

Table 9.3 provides an overview of the number of participants and attainment rates for the six-year period 2001 to 2006, as extracted from the final report submitted to EDB.

The attainment rates shown in Table 9.3 illustrate that the LPATE enhancement courses provided a good chance for trainees to develop their English proficiency up to the expected standards. The overall attainment rates indicate the percentage of participants who achieved a language proficiency level equal to Level 3 of the LPATE. Interestingly, Writing had a higher attainment rate than either Reading or Listening, in comparison with the consistently low attainment rate of the Writing Test in the LPATE (Coniam & Falvey, 2013; Lin, 2001; Appendix B “LPATE Results” in

Chap. 16 of this volume). It would appear that the training courses offered a good channel for participants to gradually improve their writing proficiency, especially in error correction and analysis—a major problem for many LPATE candidates—and to which considerable attention was paid in the LPATE Writing courses. The high pass rate across all modules appeared to support the conclusion that LPATE training courses were a good channel to enhance participants' language proficiency and help them meet the language proficiency requirement.

The LPATE Training Workshops

In addition to the LPATE enhancement courses, LPATE training workshops were also provided for PGDE students at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. These workshops intended to help participants develop a better understanding of the LPATE assessment so that the PGDE students had a greater chance of meeting the benchmark standards when they had to subsequently sit the LPATE. While the training programmes were only offered between the years 2001 and 2006, the workshops continued after 2006 until being finally discontinued in 2011.

The LPATE workshops consisted of six sessions:

Workshop 1: Overview

Workshop 2: Reading

Workshop 3: Writing

Workshop 4: Listening

Workshop 5: Speaking

Workshop 6: Classroom Language Assessment.

In each session, the course lecturer introduced the structure of the test paper, the major problems identified in the LPATE reports as reported by EDB (see http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/teacher/qualification-training-development/qualification/language-proficiency-requirement/lpat/lpat_assessment_reports.html for a list of the LPATE reports—accessed June 2017).

Focusing on the LPATE reports could inform teachers of the difficulties that candidates were likely to encounter when taking the LPATE assessment.

Course Evaluation and Feedback

Whereas detailed feedback forms from participants or course providers were, unfortunately, no longer accessible after fifteen years, the current section exemplifies participants' feedback from two available resources: (1) figures as obtained in the 2001–2002 course evaluation and (2) participants' feedback as submitted to the Educational Bureau in the concluding report. The participants were asked to respond to

a series of questions and score them on a six-point Likert scale, from strongly agree (6) to strongly disagree (1). The means of their responses are reported in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4 shows that generally the LPATE training courses were evaluated positively by course participants across all aspects, including content of teaching, assessment methods, and communication between teachers and students. Most items scored above 4, diverging considerably from the mid-point of 3.5, thus indicating strong acceptance of the proposition, i.e. that respondents wholly accept the argument (Bradshaw, 1990; Coniam & Falvey, 2013). In the current study, a “6” indicated a positive and “1” a negative response; thus, items which scored above 4 were considered to be strong positive responses. There were no items scoring below 3.5, indicating that participants generally held positive responses towards the training courses. Positive responses to items 1, 2, 3, 12, 13 and 14 indicated that lecturers who provided the training courses provided needed support and taught effectively in the classroom. Positive responses to items 4, 5, 15 and 16 showed that the training courses were designed at a level appropriate to participants’ level and were helpful in improving their language proficiency.

Scores of five items related to the Reading module (items 6–11) and six items related to the Listening module (items 5–6; items 7–11) were below 4 but above 3.5. It is possible that the authentic listening materials used in CUHK were challenging and participants found it difficult to apply to their own teaching. It could also be the case that since Reading and Listening are receptive skills, it takes time to transfer such skills to skills that are teachable to students.

However, the generally positive attitudes towards the training courses indicate that the training courses helped teachers with enhancing their English language proficiency so that they could meet the required LPR.

The responses from course participants were echoed by written comments provided by participants in the course evaluation forms. The comments in Table 9.5 were obtained from the final report submitted to the Educational Bureau dated 8 September 2006. This was when the whole training programme came to an end, after which all English teachers needed to meet the language requirement through taking the LPATE or by the exemption. LPATE training courses were no longer an alternative path for English teachers to meet the LPR, whereas LPATE workshops were still provided to help teachers to improve their language standards to meet LPR.

The comments above provide specific examples of how the training courses helped English teachers improve their language proficiency. The comments on the Writing Test, in particular, show that the training courses tackled the difficulties candidates have in taking the LPATE—correcting and explaining errors to students. Such comments may support the high attainment rate in the Writing Test, as shown in Table 9.3. The positive participants’ responses thus demonstrated how the training courses helped English teachers develop the language proficiency required for teaching.

Table 9.4 Course information by module (2001/2002)

Question	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	CLA
1. I think she/he is genuinely committed to teaching	4.92	5.07	5.03	5.66	5.50
2. Through her/his teaching, I have come to understand this subject	4.44	4.82	4.62	5.46	5.23
3. She/he was able to explain difficult concepts clearly	4.66	4.94	4.87	5.45	5.25
4. My interest in this subject has been enhanced by his/her method of teaching	4.15	4.54	4.70	5.58	5.06
5. I thought the subject was pitched at a level suitable for their students	4.16	4.31	3.77	4.93	5.03
6. I thought the subject was covered comprehensively	4.00	4.03	3.96	5.00	4.80
7. I found the subject matter stimulating	3.99	4.26	4.10	5.06	4.96
8. I found the subject matter interesting	3.87	4.01	3.80	5.11	4.91
9. I think the content will be very useful for my future education	3.66	4.26	3.62	5.33	5.25
10. I found that my own understanding of my specialisation has been enhanced by undertaking the course	3.72	4.32	3.91	4.99	5.04
11. I thought the right amount of reference material was recommended	3.96	4.17	3.80	4.79	4.73
12. I thought the teacher made good use of the instructional equipment provided by the faculty/university	4.20	4.36	4.36	5.00	5.20
13. I think the teachers were sensitive to students' responses in class	4.73	4.87	4.76	5.64	5.47
14. I was able to communicate effectively with the teacher in the learning process	4.37	4.76	4.76	5.45	5.39
15. I thought the assessment methods of the course assignment/examinations were fair and appropriate	4.03	4.27	4.27	5.19	4.96
16. I thought the amount of work required for assessment was reasonable	4.10	4.40	4.40	5.23	4.55
17. As an overall evaluation, I would rate the teacher's performance as excellent	4.41	4.85	4.85	5.54	5.17
18. I would recommend this subject to others	4.03	4.43	4.43	5.28	5.07
Overall mean	4.19	4.48	4.48	5.26	5.08

Table 9.5 Participant comments identified in the final report

Modules	Comments	Suggestions
Reading	The course enhanced students' teaching skills The level of materials was found to be appropriate Direct quote from a student—"Yes, the course has inspired me"	More guidance for the final examination was requested
Writing	The examples on error correction were very helpful The discussions on writing assignments were found to be appropriate Direct quotes from students "The course has enhanced my knowledge of grammar" "I am able to explain most of the errors made by my students"	It would be better if more examples on essays could be given
Listening	The materials were found to be appropriate The course contained many useful materials The ongoing assessments were found to be suitable The course has enhanced the students' listening skills Direct quote from a student—"The course helped me convey the contents more effectively"	It would be more encouraging if the speakers in the videos can slow down the speed (pace)
Speaking	On teaching materials/contents The courses contained many useful and stimulating materials The level of materials was found to be suitable The lesson on phonology is interesting The materials learnt from this course Direct quote from a student—"If I know more, I can teach my students more information"	It would be better if the duration can be extended
CLA	On teaching materials/content Direct quote from a student—"My skill of eliciting has improved"	

The course providers felt that the courses were well organised and the students had shown interest in learning different topics. As the course providers reflected, the atmosphere in the workshops was also considered to be satisfactory. As one student noted, "The organisation and contents of the workshops were excellent and appropriate. I found the notes concise and helpful. I also appreciated the suggestions and encouragement from the course director".

It should be noted that some suggestions (e.g. providing more detailed guidance on the reading examination, adjusting the speed of an authentic video to suit students' individual needs) were not realistic. The CUHK course providers, did, however, try to follow up and integrate participants' suggestions into their subsequent course design.

Summary and Conclusion

The LPATE training courses were an integral component of an initiative to improve English language teachers' proficiency and help them to meet the LPR set out in the LPATE regulations. This chapter has provided an overview of the courses provided across different course providers in Hong Kong. The purposes of the courses, as stated by the course providers, together with teacher feedback, demonstrate that the LPATE training courses were professional development courses targeted specifically at the English language proficiency needed by English language teachers.

The following two chapters—Chaps. 10 and 11—provide a detailed account of the five LPATE modules and explain how these modules were able to contribute to English teachers' language proficiency.

Appendix: Course Providers' Course Descriptions

Course provider	Course description
The Hong Kong Baptist University	This course aims to provide opportunities for participants to enhance, in each of the four skills areas, the competence that they need in order to function most effectively as teachers of English. It will be offered on a part-time basis, over a period of 15 weeks, in evening and (for some modules) Saturday mornings. In Speaking and Writing, applicants may choose between two alternative modules; these cover the same syllabus but the modules with more contact time provide additional input and further practice for teachers who feel that they would benefit from it. Applicants may choose to take individual modules
The Hong Kong Institute of Education	This programme is designed to support serving English language teachers in further developing their proficiency in the use of professional and academic English by taking them to recognised level of competence. This is achieved through in-depth focus on the characteristics and use of the four fundamental language skills in the context of English language teaching. The programme is modular in design comprising and integrated professional upgrading. It builds on the foundations of teachers' professional knowledge and practical skills, enriching their knowledge base and introducing them to further applications hereby enhancing their professionalism as fully qualified English language educators
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	The modular offering at the Centre for Professional and Business English is designed to target the individual skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and Classroom Language Assessment. They are designed to be flexible, so that teachers can fit them in around their busy timetables. The individual modules are thematically based around the common educational concerns of Hong Kong teachers and authentic materials have been drawn from sources such as the Hong Kong media and educational journal articles. The language skills development work is task-based, and it is hope that teachers will find the modules relevant, enjoyable and helpful in their work as English language teachers in Hong Kong schools

(continued)

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Course provider	Course description
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	The course aims at enhancing participants' proficiency in English with reference to their specific needs as teachers of English. An important focus of the course is on equipping participants with skills which are readily transferable to their teaching contexts. Through face-to-face training and online learning, participants will have opportunities to deepen their understanding of key concepts, master essential skills, and reflect on their professional practice in the light of evaluation and feedback by themselves, their peer and experts in the related language areas. The synergy between face-to-face training and distance learning will further raise the effectiveness of learning as well as establish strong rapport between trainer and participants and among participants
The City University of Hong Kong	The course is designed for in-service secondary school teachers of English and comprises five modules (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Classroom Language) which can be taken as a package or individually. The courses aims at promote participants' language and professional skills mainly but not exclusively with reference to the Hong Kong classroom. Modules are designed and delivered by sympathetic, qualified tutors who have local and international teacher training experience
Lingnan University	This is a tailor-made English Language enhancement course for serving primary and secondary teachers of English. Participants will also be assisted to meet the language proficiency requirement set by the HKSAR Government. The objectives of the courses are for participants to: (a) develop English language oral and written communication skills and gain confidence in using English in and outside classroom; (b) engage in ongoing language skills enhancement; (c) have models for and actively develop professionalism in language teaching practice; and (d) meet or exceed the basic language proficiency level for teaching English in primary and secondary classrooms There will be an emphasis on expert instruction, reflection, self-development and communicative activities in a relaxed and enjoyable environment with maximum flexibility. The course materials have been specifically tailor-made and will include topical Hong Kong issues
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	This programme is designed to develop the English language skills of teachers of English in Hong Kong in order that participants can meet, and go beyond, the minimum acceptable level of language abilities as determined by the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications This programme will provide instruction in the essential language skills which teachers of English require in order to be effective in the classroom and in their general educational setting. While raising levels of language proficiency to meet the established standards, it will also equip the participants with subject content knowledge and enhanced language awareness, thus enriching the professional and personal development of English language teachers

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Course provider	Course description
The British Council	The English Language Enhancement Course for Teachers (ELECT) consists of five free-standing modules that cover the requirement of Hong Kong Government's Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers. The methodology is communicative and task-based. The modules are for teachers already close to the language proficiency requirement. Assessment is through three pieces of work, spread throughout the period of study. The exit assessment is over 50% of the overall assessment. Successful candidates meet official government requirement
University of Queensland	The English for TESOL professional purpose course is designed to enhance the English language proficiency and accuracy skills of teachers, while at the same time offering insights into creative and innovative methodology appropriate for teaching English to students in the Hong Kong school system The course, with classes delivered in Hong Kong and Australia, provides opportunities for participating teachers to build up their motivation and confidence to enable them to completely use English in the classroom and in their professional interactions. It will also focus on the intensive development of English language communicative competence and fluency in the four macro-skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing
Queensland University of Technology	The TESOL Unit in the University has an established record of excellence in second language teacher training and research with many years' experience in training teachers from all over the world, including many from Hong Kong. The 8-week full-time course offers participants the opportunities to go beyond the language proficiency requirement. The course will allow participants to broaden their language skills, to deepen their knowledge of the cultural understandings and contexts relevant to English language teaching and to enjoy the enriching experience of life both at an Australia university and with Australia family

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