

SPEAKING WITH... DR. STUART PERRIN AND MARKUS DAVIS

The Co-Editors of ETiC recently met up with Dr. Stuart Perrin, Director of the Language Centre, and Markus Davis, Short Courses Manager, at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) to discuss the National Certificate in Teaching English for Academic Purposes (NCTEAP). After being corrected on their mispronunciation of its acronym (N-C-TEAP, three syllables, the last rhyming with 'deep'), the conversation focused on the background to this newly-created award.

ETiC:
Very briefly, what is the NCTEAP?

MARKUS:
It's a three-week training programme with practical and theoretical elements which is designed to help teachers who are less familiar with delivering English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in a higher education context.

ETiC:
Why have you decided to run this programme now?

STUART:
The NCTEAP is something which has come about because of a change in the way that Chinese universities are looking at their English language provision.

Traditionally, the College English Test (CET) constitutes the English language element of a Chinese degree programme. To graduate, a student needs to pass CET 4 or, in many institutions, CET 6. However, there are radical changes unfolding in Chinese higher education at the minute and the role of English language is one of them.

ETiC:
What are the changes exactly?

STUART:
Well, one of the discussions taking place revolves around whether English should be in the curriculum at all. There are those who think there is too much English in the curriculum and that this is having adverse

effects on the 'Chineseness' of students. There is some evidence of this influence at high school level where the importance of English in the GaoKao is being downgraded slightly.

Then, there are debates about if English is in the curriculum, what it should look like. At a time when many British universities are moving away from EAP towards things such as Writing in the Disciplines, Writing Across the Curriculum, and Academic Literacies, China is discovering English for Academic Purposes. So, there is a movement within China looking at how that can be incorporated into the curriculum here. Even among the advocates

for EAP there are a number of rival groups vying to be at the forefront of the movement. The China English for Academic Purposes Association (CEAPA), which XJTLU is aligned to, is one.

ETiC:
You've mentioned the College English Test (CET) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as different routes for the future of English language provision in China. How would they be different?

STUART:
Within a CET context, teachers are essentially preparing their students to pass an exam. So, naturally the focus is very much on the skills needed for that. EAP takes a much more holistic approach to teaching. It is not just about teaching EAP for its own sake, although that is a worthy thing to do, but also about enabling students to apply what they have learnt to their wider studies conducted in

English.

ETiC:
You seem to be hinting at the possibility of students having to use English more meaningfully on degree programmes.

STUART:
That is a possibility. I'm currently involved in a project with the Department of Education in Jiangsu Province. They have given me and some other people money to look at and research the concept of an English-led curriculum within the province. Jiangsu scores very highly when it comes to education in China. It's usually ranked first or second in many areas. In terms of internationalisation, however, it isn't ranked quite so high. So, ways of improving its standing in terms of internationalisation are being explored. Partly, that means getting more international students into Jiangsu universities. But another aspect is developing

more modules and courses which are delivered in English. What all of this means is that Chinese academics who might end up delivering this new type of curriculum, and especially Chinese teachers of English, will be asked to do things they are not necessarily trained in doing. The NCTEAP is a way of providing this training.

ETiC:
We've talked a lot so far about the Chinese context. Is the NCTEAP only for teachers working in China?

MARKUS:
Not at all. Even though we work in a Chinese context, the lead trainer, Dr. Tim Marr, doesn't. There is a universal element to the training. The delivery of EAP is always context driven. That can be very local, it can be national, or it can be international. Whatever training anyone receives, they have to take it back and contextualise it in their own teaching scenario.



We have spoken to teachers who do work in other places and there is a relevance for them. For example, three teachers from the Philippines came to our National EAP Training Day in November. Stuart mentioned how people who are currently teaching the CET might find that their work is changing, but there are other people overseas who are perhaps teaching things like FCE (one of the Cambridge English exams) who might be looking to get into teaching EAP.

STUART:

To step back a little, another reason we thought about running the NCTEAP was because of the success of the National EAP Training Day. About two hundred people came and although there was an appreciation of what we were doing in terms of how we were training and how we were engaging with the core audience, there also seemed to be a demand for something beyond a Saturday afternoon in Suzhou.

When we did our due diligence, we had a look at what other types of programs such as this were on offer. And actually there isn't that much on offer at all. If you think about the experience of many teachers, even of those working here within the Language Centre, how did people come to work in English for Academic Purposes? Many of them had never been trained specifically in teaching EAP. They were working in a private language school or maybe in a high school and then they found themselves working in a university and they were expected to adapt. So it seemed to us that there was a clear demand not just within China, but generally there is a demand for training in teaching EAP.

ETIC:

With that in mind, could you give us a typical profile of an NCTEAP trainee?

MARKUS:

Well, there potentially could be quite an incredible range, so I wouldn't want to give the impression that there is only

one type of career profile which is suitable for this course. To pluck an example out of thin air, you might be looking at someone who has just graduated with an MA TESOL and who has experience of teaching within the private language school sector. In the future, they would like to apply to become a teacher here at XJTLU, but they don't have grounded work experience in EAP. The NCTEAP would provide them with training that other candidates for the same kinds of jobs might not have.

STUART:

Yes, that's quite a good profile. When we put an advert out we get a range of people who are interested in working here. For a Chinese first language speaker this is a particularly attractive job but often they don't have the experience that we would require and a course like this would help to give those people a little bit more experience through the training and subsequently make them a little bit more employable.

MARKUS:

Not only that, but recently I have been talking to administrators of courses on which the students are doing the first part of a British degree in a campus in China which is not owned by the British university. The requirement for tutors working in such an environment is not only to develop language skills but also to develop EAP skills, which we've been talking about. The organisers of those courses are looking around and asking themselves where they can find people who can deliver these courses.

ETIC:

What about a typical profile of a trainer?

MARKUS:

As I mentioned earlier, the lead trainer is Dr. Tim Marr. He has recently co-authored *Why Do Linguistics?*, an introductory guide to the study of language. More importantly from our point of view, he has extensive experience and expertise in teacher training going back to the 1990s with the British

Council in Thailand. More recently he has been director of the MA TESOL programme at London Metropolitan University, working with trainee teachers from all over the world, and in the last few years predominantly from China. His role will be to forge the direction and the philosophy of the training team. Not only will he be a deliverer of training, he will also be the trainer of the trainers, and will be designing the syllabus in conjunction with senior staff here.

We're also looking to utilise the experience and skills of our colleagues who've got feet on the ground. Tim aside, all the other trainers will be employees of XJTLU. They will all be experienced EAP teachers who have worked at XJTLU for at least one academic year. I expect there to be a wide range in terms of ethnic background, gender and age. We have a very diverse group of teachers here and the training team will reflect that.

ETIC:

Well, thank you both for your time and for sharing your thoughts. We wish you all the best with the NCTEAP.

The NCTEAP runs between 25th July and 12th August 2016. For more information and to apply, contact ncteap@xjtlu.edu.cn

XJTLU NCTEAP

National Certificate in Teaching English for Academic Purposes

A TEACHER TRAINING COURSE FOR ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP) PROFESSIONALS. CREATED BY XJTLU, THE COURSE ADVANCES THE VERY BEST PRACTICE IN EAP IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHINA AND BEYOND. RECOGNISED BY EMPLOYERS, IT IS A PRACTICAL CERTIFICATE THAT WILL HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON A TEACHER'S UNDERSTANDING OF EAP AND THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICE.



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Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University
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THE NCTEAP COURSE

On the course you will receive practical training in how to design and deliver an EAP curriculum at a Higher Education institution. You will observe our preessional classes and reflect upon your own practice. You will also be given a brief theoretical grounding in the latest sociolinguistic ideas about the role of English in China and around the world. Some examples of the certificate's content are:

- Teaching the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in an EAP context;
- Syllabus design: setting learning outcomes;
- Designing EAP assessments;
- Preparing students for lectures and seminars;
- The student-centred classroom;
- Working with academic departments;
- New technologies: using audio-visual equipment and VLEs to support learning;
- Giving feedback to students, including effective error correction.

The training sessions will take place in the morning and early afternoon, leaving time for a range of social activities to enjoy in Suzhou and its surrounding areas.

COURSE DATES

The course is an intensive three weeks, with 20 hours a week of training sessions: Monday 25th July to Friday 15th August 2016

COURSE FEES

The fees listed here are for the NCTEAP course tuition, and upon successful completion, the NCTEAP certificate. Accommodation and living expenses are not included.

Full Tuition Fees: 10,000 RMB

EARLY REGISTRATION DISCOUNT

If you apply and pay before 1st June 2016 then you will receive a 20% discount.

Early Registration Discount: 8,000 RMB

INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORSHIP

If an institution, such as a university or college, is sponsoring teachers to take the NCTEAP then for every three teachers that take the certificate we will offer one free place.

Four Sponsored Teachers: 30,000 RMB

The Early Registration Discount also applies to institutional places. If four places from the same institution are applied and paid for by 1st June 2016 then the total discount will be 40%!

Early Registration Discount (Four Sponsored Teachers): 24,000 RMB

