

Catering the Needs of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties in the Universities of Hong Kong

Wong Tina

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong

Abstract

This project aims to conduct a small-scale study in three universities in Hong Kong to determine how the lecturers meet the academic and personal needs of students identified with specific learning disability (SpLD) in their classes. Students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) exhibit extreme difficulty in acquiring adequate proficiency in the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling and mathematics (Yuen et al., 2005). Some of these students may also have difficulties in problem solving and social skills development. With the increasing number of these students enrolled in the programmes offered by local higher education sector, it is important to examine the teaching strategies adopted by lecturers in local universities to cater the special learning needs of students. The university provides guidelines to lectures on teaching students with SpLD but the guidelines are general in nature. As students with different SpLD possess different characteristics, lectures may adopt strategies different from those guidelines to cater individual learning needs.

This study will be prescriptive in nature, that is informing the participants (lecturers and students with SpLD) regarding the “best practices” of meeting the needs of students with SpLD and then determining to what extent each lecturer conforms to such best practices in their class. A total of 10 lecturers and 10 students with SpLD from various universities in Hong Kong are invited for interviews of this study. The benchmark of “best practices” (based on the guidelines by Education Bureau) in meeting the needs of students with SpLD is developed. The interviewees will be informed about the developed benchmark. Then the benchmark will be adopted for determining to what extent each lecturer conforms to such best practices in their class. This project helps to raise the awareness about adopting necessary teaching skills to develop the potential of students with SpLD.

