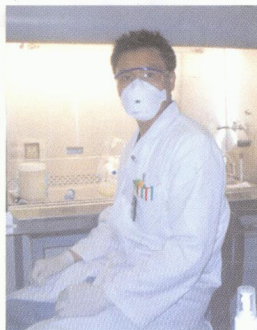




In this issue of the Newsletter, we are very glad to have two research postgraduate students sharing their experience of being a member of the Genetic Sequencing Team which has successfully sequenced the coronavirus genome. It was a hard process to complete the sequencing task but the result is what we are all proud of.

31 OCT 2003



Numerous tasks and heavy workload in the SARS project make me tired but satisfied. We can apply what we have learnt in the project and also learn a lot from the process.

SARS was a nightmare for everyone in Hong Kong. When I received the message that our lab would be involved in the SARS research and investigation, I was really excited. Our team, including postgraduate students, undergraduate students and technicians, started the preparative works immediately and waited for the samples from the Department of Microbiology. After receiving the RNA samples, we tried our extremely best to decode the SARS coronavirus genome. We spent only a week to complete the full-length sequence of the virus genome. It was amazing and unbelievable that we were able to output a comparable sequencing efficiency with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the US and Canada Cancer Agency, where hundreds of staff were working with industrialized sequencing stations. We worked more than 18 hours a day, or even more on the days just before the launch of the complete sequence. I was not a hall resident but I had temporarily stayed in Starr Hall for two weeks so as to make good use of time on the virus research. It was really a new and exciting experience for me.

After exploring the virus genome, our work is now focusing on SARS vaccine development and improvement on current diagnosis systems. A confirmed case has been reported in Singapore recently. Nobody knows when SARS will return in the future. Effort is still needed and we are all well prepared for the next challenge.

-Raymond Hui Kin Hi, PhD student, Department of Zoology

We were all excited when we blasted the very first 300 base pairs of the SARS coronavirus genome. Then it was a battle against time. Our sequencing team worked around the clock to keep the lab running for 20 hours a day. At last, we completed the sequencing task on the 16th April, three days after the announcement of the first SARS coronavirus genome from the Toronto sequencing group. With a team of eight graduate students and one post-doctoral fellow, we were competing with several world-class sequencing teams around the world, and finally we came third. That was nothing but all about our team spirit and passion for science.

-Hon Chung Chau, MPhil student, Department of Zoology

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From above to down:

Catherine Robinson
Programme Leader and
Module 1 Teacher

Benny Tai
Module 1 Teacher

Sydney Wong
Module 1 Teacher

Learning to Teach A Programme for Teaching Assistants

Postgraduate Studentship Holders Who are Required to Teach at HKU

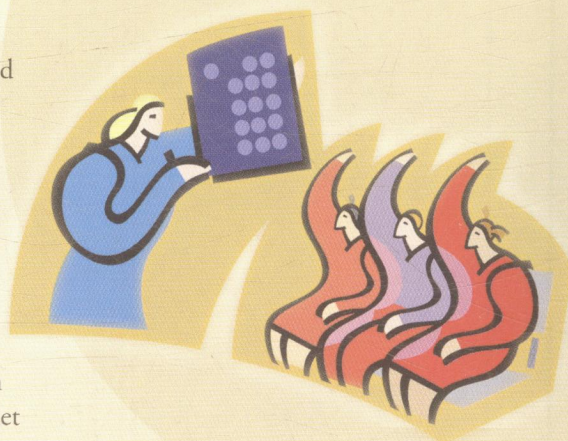
During March, we began our second *Learning to Teach* programme, and nearly 40 students enrolled. We made a great start, and then, you've guessed, SARS struck Hong Kong. So, like all the other teaching programmes in the university, we had to postpone many of our sessions. All good teachers have to be flexible and ready to make changes, and we were pleased to note that our participants – potential teachers – were cheerfully accommodating of the hasty, last minute changes that we made to the programme.

We started the *Learning to Teach* programme in September 2002, and on the advice of those participants, we extended the second programme considerably. You can view the programme on <http://www.hku.hk/caut/pgscourse/>. This time, we ran a basic course (Module 1) for four weeks, and we offered a number of Options, for participants to choose two. This group, however, really wanted to work themselves hard, so many enrolled for more than the required two. Good to see this sort of pro-active effort, and interest in becoming a good university teacher. In addition to the micro-teaching, participants teach real classes in their department. They have the support of a faculty consultant, from the Learning Network, who helps them plan, observe lessons, and finally, observes them teach, and gives helpful feedback.

Interested in joining us?

We offer the programme again in October and November. Please visit our homepage <http://www.hku.hk/caut/pgscourse/> for information. If you can't attend the programme in Semester 1, we will offer it again in Semester 2. You can register your interest on our homepage, and we will contact you, once we have the dates of the Semester 2 course finalised.

So, what was it like being a participant on this programme? We asked some of them to let you know what the programme meant to them:



Learning
to
TEACH

Introduction to Graduate Studies at HKU

Besides attending the 24-hour classes of GRSC6001 Introduction to Thesis Writing, students are required to attend a 1.5 hour seminar on Introduction to Graduate Studies at HKU delivered by the Dean or an Associate Dean of the Graduate School starting from Semester 1 of 2003-2004. The seminar will form part of the course requirements of GRSC6001 although students will not be assessed on the content of the seminar.

Students cannot pass the Core Course I until they have attended the seminar. Students can also attend the seminar first before enrolling for GRSC6001 or vice versa. The attendance record of the seminar will be valid for two consecutive semesters.

The seminar will be organized twice in each semester. Students are required to register for the seminar separately. The schedule of the seminars in Semester 1 of 2003-2004 is as follows:

Seminar A

Date 22 October 2003
(Wednesday)

Time 10:30am–12noon

Venue T2, Meng Wah Complex

Quota 270

Seminar B

Date 11 December 2003
(Thursday)

Time 6pm–7:30pm

Venue T2, Meng Wah Complex

Quota 270

Guneet Makkar – Faculty of Medicine:

“The learning to teach programme was an eye opener, so different from the traditional approach of blackboard teaching. The course had potent content with interactive teaching methods. Excellent guidance, in a pleasant learning atmosphere, from the well qualified and experienced teachers was the mainstay of the course. Overall, it was especially beneficial to develop lateral thinking when approaching a subject and special modules like concept mapping helped me immensely. A strong commitment for independent learning is an essential pre-requisite of the course.”

Priyanka Jain – Faculty of Architecture:

“A big leap in life begins with a small step. I had always wanted to teach. Lack of teaching experience, however, made me nervous and apprehensive whenever I was asked to lecture to a group or a class. Then the “Learning to Teach” program caught my attention and I decided to give it a try and enrolled in it. And after attending the course, all I can say is that it was a wise and correct decision.

What I like most about the program is that it never proclaims any high ideals and neither does it promulgate churning out masterminds. Rather, it is an interactive and practical course which helps in building self-confidence and an in-depth perception regarding learning and teaching which are the foundations of an excellent teacher.”

Priyantha Edussuriya – Faculty of Architecture:

“Learning to Teach, conducted by CAUT is one of the best learning exposure we experience in HKU. Being a university student in Sri Lanka and Hong Kong, I never

before had such an opportunity to discuss what we expect from a teacher and student’s responsibilities towards better education. A small group of young researchers together with well experienced facilitators share knowledge and discuss different teaching scenarios in the form of “two-way learning process but not as one-way teaching process”. Starting from minor points like arrangement of the class room set-up, to higher order learning aspects such as evaluation and feed back level, it gave us insights on “teaching”. I would like to call this course as a “beginning to learn teaching’ and it refreshes our minds to think ahead beyond conventional formal teaching. Also, there is more to learn about teaching and to be a ‘good teacher’. However, this course has shown us the way forward.”

John Guest – Faculty of Arts:

“The workshops were very thought provoking and enjoyable but it was also interesting due to the diverse backgrounds of my fellow course attendees, coming from almost every faculty within the university. They brought their own particular experiences, needs and problems to share at the workshop. This must be one of the first courses I have attended where I have gained a considerable amount from my fellow classmates as well as the instructor.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course and found it both stimulating and challenging. Despite the different components of the course, it turned out to be less time intensive than I had first imagined. The atmosphere is open and inquiring, friendly and non-judgmental, perfect to build confidence and develop your own teaching techniques. Overall, it has been an extremely useful course to attend in my ongoing struggle to become an effective teacher.”

Students MUST register before attending the seminar. The Graduate School staff will verify the identity of the student by checking the student card. Registration can be done via the following webpage: <http://www.hku.hk/cgi-bin/gradsch/app/join.cgi>

For further queries, please contact

The Graduate School

Tel: 2857 3470

Email: gradsch@hkucc.hku.hk



PGSA Welcomes You

The Postgraduate Student Association (PGSA) of The University of Hong Kong is a voluntary student organization run by and for postgraduates. The membership is open to all HKU postgraduates. PGSA acts as a communication channel between the postgraduates and the University. It concerns about the academic and social issues of the postgraduates and regularly organizes academic, recreational and social events for members.

PGSA has successfully held many activities for postgraduates in the past months, including:

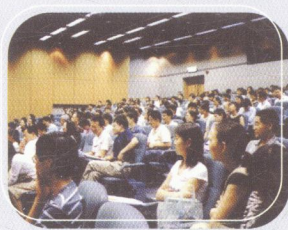
1 Communication Night - Cuttle Fishing Boat Trip in Sai Kung

Over 90 postgraduates took part in the interesting boat trip on 2-3 July 2003 to make friends with each other and with the guests, including Mr. Wang Guoli, Vice-President of the Science and Technology Department, Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, and Dr. Gracemary Leung, Acting Director of the Personal Development and Counselling Centre of HKU.



2 Information Seminar on the New Policy for Visa Application for Postgraduate Students and Scholars from Mainland China

More than 200 postgraduate students and scholars attended this seminar on 18 July 2003, which was co-organized with the Graduate School and the Office of Student Affairs. Speakers included representatives from the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, the Hong Kong Immigration Department, the China Travel Services (Hong Kong) Limited and the Shenzhen Visa Office.



3 "Ride for Tomorrow - Cycling around Hong Kong Island 2003"



It was co-organized with the Hong Kong Backpacker's Association (HKBA) on 23-24 August 2003 to raise fund for ORBIS.

Another charity fund-raising function, "Wild Camp 1000", will be held on 15-16 November 2003 at the wild campsite of Wan Tsai Peninsula, Sai Kung, Hong Kong.

This function is organized by the Hong Kong Backpackers' Association (HKBA) and the Salvation Army (SA). The PGSA is invited to join the organization of this function.

4 Tibet & Sichuan Exchange Tour 2003

39 postgraduate Students from HKU, PolyU and CityU joined this tour on 23 August - 3 September 2003 with the help from the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR.



5 Orientation Program 2003



In order to welcome fresh postgraduate students and help them make their university life memorable from the very beginning, the PGSA, for the first time, organized an

orientation program to welcome the new blood of the university. A help desk was set up at the Run Run Shaw Building podium on 1 September to help the new postgraduate students with their registration and answer their questions. In the afternoon of 6 September, we also organized a campus tour to familiarize the new postgraduate students with the campus. Then, in the evening, an information talk was given to share with the new postgraduate students the study life in HKU. A hall tour on 7 September to St. John's College, Ricci Hall and Graduate House gave the new students a closer look to campus life. An orientation camp, "Joyou 2003", was held on 27-28 September by the PGSA Travel Club at Wong Yi Chau, located at Eastern Sai Kung.

6 Toshiba Ownership Program 2003

The PGSA organized the Toshiba Ownership Program 2003 from 15-23 September to help postgraduates buy Toshiba notebooks with a great discount. More than 150 PGSA members bought their Toshiba notebooks from this program.



The PGSA has currently 7 sports teams and two clubs to enrich the study life of postgraduate students in HKU. They organized regular trainings and friendly matches with different associations on/off campus. Their contact information can be found at http://www.hku.hk/pgsa/public_html/Clubs.htm

PGSA is ready to serve all postgraduate students. Welcome to join us.

URL: <http://www.hku.hk/pgsa>

E-mail: pgsa@hkusuc.hku.hk

P407, Graduate House, The University of Hong Kong



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