

## **Scholars and Experts Supporting the Continuation and Extension of the SLCO Model in HK (with supporting letters):**

### **Local Scholars and Experts in Paediatrics, Education, and Speech and Hearing Sciences**

- ❖ **Dr. Cheri CHAN (yycheri@hku.hk),**
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- ❖ **Dr. Sylvia DOO (doo@netvigator.com)**
  - Specialist in Paediatrics and Head, Child Development and Assessment Centre,  
St. Paul's Hospital;
  - Honorary Consultant, Hong Kong Parent Association for the Hearing Impaired;
  - Former Acting Senior Medical Officer and Head, Hearing Impairment Subspecialty Team,  
Child Assessment Service, Department of Health, HKSAR Government.
- ❖ **Dr. Catherine LAM (catherine\_lam@dh.gov.hk),**
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### **Scholars and Experts from Mainland China, Taiwan and Macau**

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- ❖ **Ms WEI Dan ,**
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### **Overseas Scholars and Experts**

- ❖ **Prof. Thomas K. HOLCOMB (THolcomb@ohlone.edu)**
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- ❖ **Prof. Joseph K.K. KEI (k.kei@uq.edu.au),**
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- ❖ **Prof. Marc MARSCHARK (memrtl@ntid.rit.edu),**
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  - Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education.
- ❖ **Prof. Diane LILLO-MARTIN (dianelillomartin@me.com)**
  - Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Connecticut, US
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- ❖ **Dr. Anita SHIRIN (santia@email.arizona.edu)**
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- ❖ **Prof. Bencie WOLL (b.woll@ucl.ac.uk),**
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Our Ref:

14 August 2012

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Support the continuation of the Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme (SLCO)

It is my great pleasure to write this letter in support of the JC-SLCO Programme developed by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, directed by Prof Gladys Tang and her team.

As an English language teacher educator in the Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, I am always interested in visiting schools to observe good practices. In April 2012, my colleague, Ms Margaret Lo, arranged a school visit for teacher educators and pre-service primary teachers to observe how deaf children are learning with hearing children at the Kowloon Bay St. John the Baptist Catholic School. During the visit, we learnt a great deal about the benefits of co-enrolment and we were highly impressed by the high quality of teaching and learning observed in the classrooms. I was deeply touched by the passion and commitment shown by Mr Chris Yiu, the project manager of the JC-SLCO Programme, the deaf and hearing teachers and the Principal to make learning truly inclusive. As a result of the visit, the deaf teachers at the school were invited to run a series of sign language workshops for our pre-service English language teachers. The sign language workshop was a great success and raised pre-service primary teachers' awareness of how to support students with special needs.

The JC-SLCO Programme has inspired me to initiate a Faculty-based research project in the University of Hong Kong to examine how English language teaching practices in Hong Kong can be more inclusive. In May 2012, I invited a world renowned scholar on inclusive education, Prof Roger Slee, Victoria Institute, Melbourne, as a Faculty Visitor to the University of Hong Kong. Mr Chris Yiu kindly arranged a visit for Prof Slee and myself to observe the bi-lingual enrolment programme at the kindergarten in Ngau Tau Kok. Prof Slee and I were able to see teachers and students communicating with each other using both oral and sign language.

In conclusion, I fully support the efforts of the JC-SLCO Programme and sincerely hope that it will continue to receive funding from sponsors. This programme can help educators and policy makers make better decisions about inclusive education practices and it is programmes such as this that will benefit our students and truly make a difference in building a better Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully



Dr Cheri Chan  
Teaching Consultant  
English Language Education

25 Sept. 2012

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing in support of the Center for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies (CSLDS), Chinese University of Hong Kong's (CUHK) efforts to obtain funding for a bilingual and co-enrollment pilot program for hearing impaired students in a regular Hong Kong secondary school. This program is to be a continuation of a successful pilot program that has been carried out in the preschool, a regular HK kindergarten and primary school for the past 6 years, which was started with the support by the then Secretary of Education and Manpower Mrs. Fanny Law. The funding CSLDS needs now is for the secondary school program. The goal of this effort is to provide a comprehensive alternative model for educating the hearing impaired children from preschool through secondary school in HK.

I am writing in the capacity of the former Senior Specialist, Head of the Audiological Services & Deaf Education Section of the Education Bureau (EdB). I have been retired from the service since the end of 2006, after working in this field for over 27 years. We had many successful initiatives for the deaf and hearing-impaired children during my predecessors and my period in the Bureau. But there was so much more I would like to have accomplished especially in the area of deaf education. I remember that the Bureau and the Section's motto then was "No one is left behind" and "Every hearing impaired child is a Star". Despite our best efforts, we were unable to live up to our motto. There is still much that can and should be done to ensure that "No hearing impaired child is left behind". The funding CSLDS is seeking will help reach this goal to improve the hearing impaired children's ability to communicate. Being able to communicate effectively is the key that unlocks their isolation, opening up a whole new world for them, a world that will enable them to achieve an education.

When I was still working in the Bureau, one of my main concerns was that some of the deaf and hearing impaired students, especially those that were in the Special School for the Deaf in HK were doing poorly, both academically and in social integration. Due to poor communication skills, many of the students were unable to understand much of what went on in the classroom and left school having learned very little of what was presented to them. My heart cried out for them. They received 9 years of free and compulsory education, just like any other student in HK. But after 9 years of education, some of the students could not even achieve a Chinese literal standard of primary 3 or 4 level, not to mention other academic subjects! They had difficulty in something as basic as reading a newspaper. Because reading was so difficult for them, they had little if any interest in reading. The hearing impaired also found it difficult to

express themselves clearly in any form, neither the spoken nor the written form. Even when they tried communicating in a sign language, it would usually come out in a mumble, jumble of confusing signs. Without acquiring proper language skills, how could they convey even their most basic thoughts to others or understand what others were trying to convey to them.

Since there was no proper teaching of HK Sign Language (HKSL) in any Schools for the Deaf in HK, all they could learn was some simple signs that were passed on from schoolmates, either being made up among themselves or from their deaf family members, who acquired their signs from somewhere or the deaf community. No one had ever studied HKSL properly and systematically before, not to mention teaching it and using it as a medium of instruction in school. Sign language was like a taboo in the special schools. Even after the CSLDS has been studying HKSL for over 15 years, some teachers in the Special Schools for the Deaf now still have a hard time opening themselves up to and accepting the language.

We often say that our deaf and hearing-impaired children are deaf but not dumb. They are surely not dumb; some of them are actually very smart. But under this kind of education system, one can imagine what they would be like when they graduate. Without acquiring a language, they are not able to even think properly, not to mention that they cannot express themselves fully and precisely either verbally, in a written form or in a sign language. But they are not dumb. Just like any one of us, they have feelings and needs; they have potentials and dreams; they want to become independent, self-fulfilling individuals, having contributions to the society. But instead they have to depend on their family members for only simple communications and on the society for social security. But they and surely we as a society don't want them to spend their lives depending on their family and society for their livelihood.

A few years before I retired, I was so happy to see that at last there was someone in the academic field who has an interest in studying HKSL. I started working with Professor Gladys Tang of the CUHK who is also the Director of CLSDS, hoping to bring some changes in the then deaf education system in HK. But several years passed and we still had great difficulty in changing the attitude of the School for the Deaf. The task was like trying to move a mountain! They were so entrenched and comfortable in the way they had always done things that they would not seriously explore the ideas we were presenting to them. We were very frustrated and disappointed with their attitude and resistance to change.

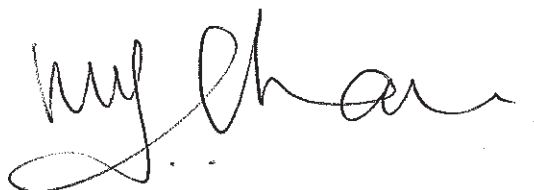
Then came the Hong Kong Jockey Club's (HKJC) agreement to support the CSLDS's pilot program, a 7-year project on "Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrollment: A Research Program on an Alternative Model of Deaf Education in Hong Kong" from preschool to primary level, starting in the academic year 2006/07. The program is now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year and the HKJC has agreed to fund the program for one extra year. Throughout the 6 plus years this program has been in existence, I have personally known and worked with most of the people involved in this program. I know them to be passionate about their work and dedicated to the task of improving the education of the hearing impaired. The CSLDS has had very positive feedback from both the hearing and the hearing impaired students, and their parents. The responses have been equally good from the schools, academics and professionals in the field locally and all over the world. It is a successful model in terms of academic achievement and social integration for both the hearing and hearing impaired students. Everyone, especially the deaf community is very excited about the impact this program has on improving the quality of education available to the hearing impaired. In carrying out this project, the resources developed, the teaching methodology and strategies adopted also proved to be useful for educating other students with special education needs and those from ethnic minorities.

Now the students are in Primary 6 and they would be going on to a regular secondary school the next academic year. You would think the EdB would gladly take up its role and develop the model to benefit more students and at higher levels. But coming from EdB myself, and knowing them to be very conservative and having to go through all the red tape, it is very unlikely that they would fund a pilot project as an alternative model for deaf education in secondary school. EdB would try considering incorporating the present model into its education system only when it has been proven successful. The CSLDS and the program need support from the public and private institutions.

As far as I know, CSLDS would like to involve more people and organizations in the society for the project, so that more people will have a better in depth understanding of what they are doing and sharing the joy of achieving something quite spectacular and life changing. They the CSLDS, the students, the parents and the school need your support.

The CSLDS with all their previous experience have most of the setup ready for the secondary school project to be introduced to the school and become part of the school curriculum, what they are lacking is your funding. Hope you can seriously consider granting them the funding. I am most certain that the students, the parents, the schools, the government, the society and even EdB eventually will appreciate your contribution to this great endeavor with a committed mission to improve the quality of

education for the hearing impaired and other students in HK, Taiwan, Singapore, China, and those countries and communities using Chinese as a means of communication, and around the world as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Chan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Tina Man Yuk CHAN  
Retired Senior Specialist/Section Head (1996-2006)  
Audiological Services & Deaf Education Section  
Education Bureau





## **Child Development and Assessment Centre 兒童發展及評估中心**

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24 September 2012

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

### **Support for the continuation of the *Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme***

I am writing with great pleasure in support of the **Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme** (SLCO) developed by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, directed by Professor Gladys Tang and her team, and supported by The Hong Kong Jockey Club.

As the coordinator, and later the head of the Hearing Impairment Subspecialty Team of Child Assessment Service, Department of Health, I first met Professor Tang many years ago in the Ascertainment Committee meeting hosted by the Audiology Service, Education Bureau. Every year students with hearing impairment were assessed and prepared for promotion to primary school. Child Assessment Service helped out in providing multidisciplinary assessment and reports. Special and difficult students were brought up and discussed in the Ascertainment Committee meeting that composed of various representatives in the field. Professor Tang impressed me by her professional knowledge and enthusiasm in deaf education.

More collaboration was established after our first acquaintance. We send out team members in sitting in Professor Tang's lectures. Professor Tang's team was also invited to give training for staff in the Child Assessment Service and presented in the bi-monthly scientific meeting hosted by the Hong Kong Society of Child Neurology and Developmental Paediatrics. Through these well received inter-changes, we learn more about the theoretical basis and scientific evidence of sign linguistics and its importance in overall development of a student with hearing impairment.

Our relationship not just limited to academic exchange. The Child Assessment Service had the honor to be part of the Territory-wide research in studying the current situation of hearing impaired student in local primary and secondary schools. Moreover, on top of the above research data, we further developed the study on Multi-dimensional profile of primary school students with significant hearing loss, aimed at a closer look on their performance in various developmental aspects and their related factors.

Comment on the usefulness of a programme cannot be made without referring to their outcome. As an Honorary Consultant of the Hong Kong Parent Association for the Hearing Impaired, I can give testimonials on the growth and development of students studying under the SLCO programme. Not just on the rapid acquisition of both signed and verbal languages and reading abilities, but their lovely smiles and self-confidences proved the success of this bilingual education. Parents in this programme always give very positive comments. Without trace of commercial element, they tried every opportunity in introducing their peers about what they have gained from the programme.

In the recent anniversary school performance of KBSJB Primary School, I believed that all audiences were touched by the power of 'inclusive education', not just by the smoothness of four-language performances but the atmosphere of whole school commitment with real inclusion. Deaf education in Hong Kong had a long history but yet students were challenged badly and outcomes were mostly discouraging. The SLCO programme at KBSJB Primary School is a revolutionary exemplar; I saw the light for students and their family with hearing impairment.

It is much delighted to witness the gestation and delivery of the Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme. The programme is deeply deserving of further and continuous support from the Hong Kong Government and other funding bodies. I sincerely hope that the SLCO Programme will continue to thrive to help children and their families with hearing impairment, to bring communities together, and to make Hong Kong a better place for all.

Thank you for your attention. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Sylvia Doo  
MBBS (HK), DCH(Ireland)  
MRCPCH, FHKCPaed, FHKAM(Paed)  
MSc (Epidemiology & Biostatistics) (CUHK)

Specialist in Paediatrics  
Head of Child Development and Assessment Centre, St. Paul's Hospital  
Honorary Consultant of the Hong Kong Parent Association for the Hearing Impaired  
Former Acting Senior Medical Officer, and Head of Hearing Impairment Subspecialty Team, Child Assessment Service, Department of Health



香港中文大学手语及聋人教育研究中心：

2011年7月1日，我们参观了香港中文大学手语及聋人教育研究中心与香港赛马会合作举办的双语聋人教育项目学校九龙湾圣若翰天主教小学。该所学校实行聋健合一的全纳教育方式，健听教师与聋人教师协同授课，所有的健听学生学习手语，聋生则通过看话和手语方式学习语言。从学校的文化环境看，聋生已经很好地融合进来；语言和心理得到良好的发展。项目实施有各方参与，这种融合方式在内地较少见到，值得借鉴。同时，也使我们对聋人同时使用双语形式的效果有了直观感受。

国家手语和盲文研究中心



顾宝清 魏丹

2012年8月26日





**The Hong Kong Society of  
Child Neurology and Developmental Paediatrics**  
香港兒童腦科及體智發展學會

To whom it may concern

17 September 2012

Re: Supporting the Continuation and Extension of the  
Sign Bilingualism & Co-enrolment Deaf Education (SLCO) Programme in Hong Kong

I would like to congratulate the vision and leadership the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in developing the SLCO Programme for children with hearing impairment, and to write in support of its continuation at preschool/primary levels and extension to the secondary level.

As a consultant developmental paediatrician and member of the Management Committee of the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education (JC-SLCO) Programme, I was privileged to have witnessed the development of this paradigm-shifting inclusive, oral-sign bilingual education programme in Hong Kong. The Programme benefited not only children with hearing impairment linguistically and academically, but also nurtured a group of children, with and without hearing impairment, growing up together in learning and friendship, with a positive attitude towards sign language and deafness.

Development of brain connectivity for language acquisition takes place over the early months and years of a child's life. For this to occur successfully, effective language input from birth is essential. Although children with hearing impairment face serious deficiencies in accessing aural-oral language, sign language can provide the necessary language input, through which development of the language brain may continue to take place over this critical period. Children who later acquire varying degrees of hearing from assistive devices or cochlea implant will have a stronger language foundation upon which to develop oral language. For those who continue to have very limited hearing despite treatment measures, it will be an important support to not only language but cognitive development and learning.

In addition to the bilingual education programme, learning materials produced by the Programme have benefited children with hearing impairment and those with other special needs. The impact of this research is expected to be extended to the wider Chinese speaking and international community.

In sum, I strongly support the continuation of the Programme, such that the current positive impact can be consolidated and extended. I look forward to Professor Gladys Tang and her team receiving support from public and/or funding bodies to realize this very important mission, and to seeing a through-train model from baby signing to secondary education for children with hearing impairment in Hong Kong.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Catherine Lam

Vice President, Hong Kong Society of Child Neurology & Developmental Paediatrics

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8 August 2012

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**Support for the continuation of the *Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme***

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of the **Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme** (SLCO) developed by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, directed by Professor Gladys Tang and her team, and supported by the Hong Kong Jockey Club.

I first learned about this programme through my Post-Graduate Diploma in Education English Major student, Ms Fion Wong, who is a teaching staff member of the SCLO project. As her tutor, I was her supervisor for the Practical Teaching component of the PGDE programme. I had the great fortune to observe Ms Wong's Co-enrolment English lessons at Kowloon Bay St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, and what I observed and learned made a deep impression on me. The lessons I observed were conducted in both English and Hong Kong Sign Language, and involved students in learning, practicing and using English for meaningful expression. During the lessons there was lively interaction between hearing and deaf teachers and students. Deaf and hearing children collaborated in sign language and spoken and written language to work out a language puzzle. Hearing and deaf children talked and joked with each other in sign language. Hearing children called over a deaf teacher to ask questions or seek advice, deaf children asked for assistance from hearing teachers. Deaf children spoke aloud along with hearing children when playing a vocabulary game. True bilingualism was strongly evident, as I couldn't always tell who was 'hearing' or who was 'deaf'.

Last October, the student-teachers in Year 3 of the BEd Primary English programme were about to study a module entitled, *Catering for Diverse Learning Needs*, taught by inclusive education specialist, Dr. Feliz Polat. As Programme Convenor at the time, I took the opportunity to enrich this module by arranging a visit to KBSJB Primary School so our student-teachers could learn more about the about the SLCO programme and to experience a powerful example of 'inclusive education' in Hong Kong. The visit was eye-opening and inspiring for all of us, and many of the student-teachers have since taken up training in sign language, and are currently assisting in the school's summer English programme for deaf students. In addition, several students will have the opportunity to carry out their



teaching practicum in this school in the coming academic year and gain further experience and understanding of the Co-enrolment programme. This is an extremely valuable opportunity, much welcomed by our students. It is my personal and professional wish that many of my students will go on to teach in sign bilingual, co-enrolment classrooms when they graduate.

As an educator, I fully support inclusive education and am challenged by its far reaching social and educational aims and complex understandings of language and learning which interconnect different fields, such as speech and hearing sciences, language acquisition and cognition, child development, multiliteracies and linguistics, curriculum, pedagogy and policy. Professor Roger Slee, a leading scholar on inclusive education, reminds us that the core principle of inclusive education is, of course, *inclusion*. This does not mean that a student with special educational needs is simply given a special desk to sit at, special learning materials, and a special tutor to work with, while the other “regular” children carry on with “regular” classroom learning. While such practices are well intentioned, may be theoretically informed, and may offer certain learning opportunities to children with special needs, these practices may fundamentally serve to *exclude* students through labeling, isolation, and separation. Such practices seem to miss the core ethos of inclusive education: that *everyone* – students, teachers, parents and wider community - benefits, learns and grows from inclusive educational practice. Inclusive education is thus transformative as it is built on social democratic educational principles of community, equity and social justice.

The SLCO programme at KBSJB Primary School is an exemplar of inclusive education. There is no doubt that deaf children are learning English, Maths and other subjects more effectively in the programme, but the impact is much deeper and wider: deaf children in this school - who in other contexts may be profoundly isolated and lonely - experience human connection, friendship and acceptance, all vital for personal, emotional growth and well being. In this inclusive context, the children and teachers - both deaf and hearing – expand their linguistic and communicative capacities; they learn that communication is complex and social, and not simply about vocabulary, spelling and correct grammar. Most importantly, they learn to understand, respect, and form friendships with others who are different from themselves. ‘Difference’ in a truly inclusive environment such as the SLCO programme is commonplace, taken-for-granted, even mundane. These are extremely meaningful and far reaching learning outcomes, not easy to achieve in today’s globalised world of increased competition, inequality, materialism, and environmental degradation. The continuation and expansion of this project is therefore not only important, but a social and educational imperative.

When the BEd Year 3 students returned to campus, they wrote an article about their visit and published it in the Faculty of Education’s newsletter, *Education Matters*. In the article they wrote about what they learned and observed about co-enrolment teaching, but they also reflected on the nature of communication, the power of community, and learning and teaching as human and social processes. They said they became better teachers. This is the transformative impact of true, inclusive education.

The SLCO project manager, teachers and staff, together with Principal Margaret So are amongst the most dedicated educators I have ever met. The programme is deeply deserving of further and continuous support from the Hong Kong Government and other funding bodies. I sincerely hope that the SLCO Programme will continue to thrive to help deaf and hearing children learn, to bring communities together, and to inspire young student-teachers to make the world a better place.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret So', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Margaret M. Lo**

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DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION  
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Chair, Professor Gladys Tang

Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages,  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

2012/08/08

Dear Professor Gladys Tang and Manager Mr. Chris Yiu,

I am honored to receive your continuous professional guidance and support to me. Because of your assistance, I obtained Taiwan's NSC grant and started to begin my deaf bilingual experiment since last year autumn semester; and I am doing the 2<sup>nd</sup> year bilingual experiment now. On June 29, the Public Television "sign language new" program reported the deaf bilingual programs in Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan. I already sent the website to Professor Tang for her reference.

I admire your team members' achievement. Professor Tang tried her best to promote deaf students' educational performance in inclusive settings, which I think is very unique in Asia, especially for Chinese deaf students. In Taiwan, bilingual deaf education is a new concept. I want to express my gratitude to Gladys, Chris, and all of your team members. Because of your pioneer and excellent long-term sign bilingual inclusion programs, we could learn from you and could adapt it into our current situation in Taiwan. And I also found some benefits of this experiment—the positive impact on both deaf and hearing kindergarten students' language, communication, fine-motor development, and social interaction. Parents of both parties also gave positive feedback to our experiment.

I also would like to thank you for sharing your wonderful experiences with us and sent us some of your teaching materials and teaching plans for our references. I and my team members would like to visit you in October so we could improve our deaf Bi-Bi program. I hope you could assist us in sharing your parent education, research findings, and sign linguistics analysis experiences and gave us some suggestions for our future experiment.

I am so pleased to know that you have the desire to continue your experiment and extend the possibilities of allowing deaf students could co-enroll with hearing students in the secondary school settings. I wish you much success in the future.

Sincerely,

Min-Hua Hsing, Professor in deaf education field, NUTN

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20 July, 2012

Professor Gladys Tang  
Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies  
Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Dear Gladys

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for showing me your research work during my visit to your centre on Friday, 6 July.

Your efforts in achieving the goal of the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education (JC-SLCO) Programme are to be commended. While promoting the use of signed language as an additional/ accompanying language in educating severely hearing impaired children in Hong Kong appears to be going against the traditional oral-aural or auditory-verbal approach, this new approach of bilingualism will help children to communicate more effectively both in the home and school setting. For example, there are children who have communication and learning problems despite the use of cochlear implants or powerful hearing aids. These children may have auditory disorders such as central auditory processing disorders and auditory neuropathy spectrum disorders which severely restrict their ability to decode the speech signals.

I would strongly recommend more ground breaking research in signed language and its use with children (hearing impaired as well as normally hearing children) to optimise learning under your JC-SLCO Programme. I'd like to congratulate your research team on your achievements so far.

I look forward to hearing more about your research.

Yours sincerely



Joseph Kei, BSc(Hons), Cert Ed, PGDip Sp Ed, PGDipAud, PhD  
Associate Professor and Head of Division of Audiology



Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery

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4<sup>th</sup> September 2012

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

***Letter of Support for Continuation of the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education (SLCO) Program***

As a local consultant of the JC-SLCO program, I am writing this letter in support of its continuation whole-heartedly. Affirmatively, I find the program benefits all educational professionals, the parents, the hearing-impaired children and as well as the normal hearing counterparts.

The overall effect of the program is far reaching in view of the comprehensiveness of the scopes including listening, speaking, reading, writing and learning of the children. As a speech-language pathologist, I would like to comment in particular the areas concerning the oral language development of the hearing-impaired children.

Firstly, sound research findings on oral language development have become evident. It has long been a belief, at least in the field of speech therapy, that sign language impedes oral language development. By showing that the majority of hearing-impaired children in the JC-SLCO program achieve satisfactory progress both on signing as well as on oral language, the project provides the first ever data-driven evidence to confirm that signing and oral language is not in a competitive relationship. By improving language processing in general, facilitation both on sign and oral language could be achieved. This is a very important message to the public as well as to the educators in the community.

Another important finding originates from the detailed evaluation on the oral language abilities of children with hearing-impairment who have been receiving mainstream education. About sixty percent of the mainstreamed students were found to have severe language



impairment. Even more alarming is the fact that the language delay does not necessarily associated with one's degree of hearing loss. The belief of integrating children with hearing impairment into normal classrooms as the best option for everyone deserves a serious re-evaluation. The present JC-SLCO program acts as an alternative platform to benefit the hearing impaired population in the educational field who may not fit into the present mainstream program.

Development of training materials has also benefited the community. I am very pleased to witness the production of the speech perception training material (*Sound Jigsaw: A Speech Perception Training Kit for Cantonese-speaking Children with Hearing Impairments*). This is the first training material specifically designed for improving the speech comprehension ability of the hearing-impaired children. With the meticulous content, picture design and training workshop, the training kit has been well received.

Development of oral language database has laid the foundation for further academic study. The database of "The Oral Language Abilities of D/hh children in Mainstream Primary Schools in Hong Kong" provides a comprehensive dataset showing the various speech and language abilities of the students. The dataset is believed to be the most complete database covering the widest school age Cantonese-speaking children. Setting up such a database definitely serves an important foundation for future research.

I have the privilege to meet the program staff, the parents as well as the students during my school visits and meetings. Professor Gladys Tang and Mr Chris Yiu demonstrate remarkable dedication as project leaders. Their contribution is most admirable. Under their leadership, I have witnessed the enthusiasm of the program staff, the contentment of the parents and the joyous learning environment. The laughter of the students, be it from the hearing-impaired or from the normal hearing children, has always been the most highlighted and memorable part of my school visits. I am very honored to be able to participate the program and I am sure the continuation of the project will bring along more benefits to the children.

Yours faithfully,



**Kathy Yuet Sheung LEE, Ph.D.**

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August 23, 2012

YUI Kun Man  
JC-SLCO  
Centre for Sign Linguistics & Deaf Studies  
G/F, Academic Building No. 2  
Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Shatin, New Territories  
HONG KONG

Dear Chris,

This is to inform you of my willingness – indeed, my eagerness – to serve a second year as a consultant to the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism and Co-Enrollment and Deaf Education Programme (JC-SLCO).

As you know, I recently submitted a grant proposal to the United States government to host an international conference on research pertaining to bilingualism and co-enrollment for deaf children. As described in both my 2010 book with Patricia Spencer (*Evidence-based Practice in Educating Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students*) in my 2012 book with Peter Hauser (*How Deaf Children Learn*), preliminary evidence suggests that co-enrollment programs like yours offer the best possibility for providing deaf children with full access to the regular school curriculum. Such opportunities will lead to greater academic success and the skills necessary to eventually succeed in the workplace. I do hope that your program continues to collect data on program activities and related academic achievement of your students. It is only through such *in situ* evaluations that the benefits of co-enrollment can be shared with countries around the world.

Please let me add that I have worked with schools for the deaf, education programs, and organizations throughout the United States and the rest of the world, and I have never seen program as motivated to comprehensively evaluate itself and continually discover the opportunities for their students. As you seek support for continuing your programming through secondary school – an essential activity if co-enrollment is going to be objectively evaluated (and, hopefully, its continuing success documented) – please let me know if I can be of any assistance. My compliments on continuing to provide outstanding education services for deaf children in Hong Kong, and my thanks for allowing me to be associated with it.

Yours sincerely,



Marc Marschark, Ph.D.  
Professor and Director

20 August 2012

Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism & Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme  
c/o Professor Gladys Tang, Chinese University of Hong Kong

**RE: Visit in connection with the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism & Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme**



A one-day programme of activity was organised by Professor Gladys Tang for 28 May 2012 to observe and comment on current activities in the. The three external participants in the visit were Professor Bencie Woll, Director of the Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre (DCAL) at University College London, Dr Guiping Xu, former doctoral student of Professor Woll and currently post-doctoral researcher at the University of Hong Kong, and Ms Kathryn Mason, researcher and PhD student at DCAL, studying language and cognitive development in deaf children.

An earlier visit was made in 2010. At that time I reported

The integrated approach to bilingualism which is at the heart of the project is to be commended and contrasts favourably both with bilingual programmes in other countries which seek to artificially separate the use of spoken and signed language and only teach SL first, and with programmes in which inclusion in mainstream education without consideration of the individual child is seen as the answer for all deaf children. The evidence that learning HKSL does not negatively impact on spoken language development needs to be disseminated as widely as possible in Hong Kong. The report also shows the impressive development of resources and assessments through the project. These serve as a good example of how research on deaf children has positive benefits for children in general.

I went on to comment that the programme could be strengthened further in a number of ways by expanding the training programme to include child development, assessment, language development, etc. and by ensuring inclusion of deaf research and teaching staff in all activities of the project including contributing to policy and interpretation of findings. I also suggested that the project should develop further plans to meet the level of parental interest, provide sign language classes for more hearing children, and support mixing of deaf children with children in other classes. Additionally, it was recommended that there be further development of strategies to get the message through to professionals (teachers, doctors, audiologists, therapists) about the benefits (and lack of disadvantages) of bilingualism. The plans for knowledge transfer and dissemination were well-thought out and thorough in relation to the education sector and parents. However, the project should also include other relevant professional groups, including speech and language therapists, audiologists, physicians and surgeons, who have important roles following diagnosis and in early intervention. The strength of the project in providing an evidence base for practice has the potential to make an enormous difference to deaf children's development, education and adult lives.

The visit in 2012 provided an opportunity to see the children's progress and discuss the projects' research and knowledge transfer activities in the context of the earlier report.

The programme arranged was as follows:

Morning at Kowloon Bay St. John The Baptist Catholic Primary School

9:00 – 9:15 Welcoming session

9:20 - 9:55 Class observation: Class 5A (English)

10:00 – 11:15 Meeting with Programme staff/ School teachers

11:15 – 11:40 Observation: Recess time (whole school Sign Language practices )

Afternoon at the Chinese University of Hong Kong

Meeting with researchers to discuss current and planned data collection and analyses

### **School observation**

Having visited the school in 2010, it was particularly interesting to be able to observe the children's progress. Two main differences were apparent. At the time of the first visit, lessons were given by specialist teachers, with the deaf and hearing classroom teachers assisting. This reduced their role in the planning of lessons and their engagement with the children, and in particular, disadvantaged the deaf teacher. My comments about ensuring the full involvement of deaf teaching staff reflect some concerns. It was very pleasing to see, therefore, that lessons were now designed and delivered by the deaf and hearing teacher working together. This has had a very positive effect on both the children and the teachers themselves and provided an outstanding example of team teaching. The teachers themselves had matured in their understanding of deaf children's needs and of how to meet them.

The notion of teamwork was further evident in the way the deaf and hearing children worked together effectively on their workbooks and classroom exercises. The hearing children demonstrated high levels of sign language skills – and both the hearing and deaf children were enthusiastically involved in learning English. Their good social and linguistic relationships are a credit to the scheme – providing hearing children with a real understanding of communication in society – and providing deaf children an unfortunately rare opportunity to interact freely with their hearing peers.

The recommendation to provide opportunities for hearing children in general to learn sign language had been acted on across the school, with signing lessons during recess, and observations of relaxed interaction by the deaf children with hearing children from other years and classes. The school staff retain their enthusiasm and commitment to the project.

During the afternoon session, the research team presented some of their work on developing assessments for language development in deaf children. The deaf members of the research team led the presentations reflecting their increased involvement in research design and interpretation of findings. The assessments have been designed to serve as both research tools and as the basis for standardised assessments. By creating tools which parallel those for spoken languages and other sign languages, the team are maximising the opportunities for comparison with other populations of children.

In summary, the progress and achievements of the project since its inception have been impressive. The project is not only contributing directly to enhancement of the educational and social experiences of both deaf and hearing children in Hong Kong but is beginning to provide the evidence base need to underpin long-term intervention strategies for deaf children internationally.



Professor Bencie Woll FBA  
Director, DCAL Research Centre and Chair of Sign Language and Deaf Studies



6 July 2012

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Support the continuation of the Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme (SLCO)

It is my great pleasure to write this letter of support for the JS-SLCO Programme developed by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, directed by Prof Gladys Tang and her team. As the course manager of the “Thematic Course on Education of Students with Hearing Impairment and Speech and Language Impairment” commissioned by the Education Bureau for the training of in-service teachers to support students with special educational needs in mainstream schools, my students and I were generously give opportunities to visit The Kowloon Bay St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School for six times in the past two years. The school is in the 6<sup>th</sup> year in implementing the SLCO Programme.

Our visits were comprised of discussions with the Programme team members including Prof Tang’s team members, Principal So, and Vice-Principal Ng of the school and the teachers involved in the Programme; class observations, interviews with the deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) students and their hearing peers and their parents. As a speech-language pathologist and also an audiologist, I was very impressed with the Programme’s enormous success in including deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) students in a barrier-free learning environment. Not only the DHH benefited from the oral and sign bilingual learning environments. I was amazed to see that the hearing peers were also benefited from the additional visual information provided in the sign-oral teaching environment.

From the interviews with the students, the DHH students and the hearing peers were able to communicate effectively usual oral and sign language in a complementary way. I deeply believe that this is a very strong piece of evidence for our education system in Hong Kong to consider offering the sign bilingual co-enrolment inclusive environment, as evidenced by the success of the SLCO Programme, as an option for the DHH students especially those who fail to develop competent oral language abilities for various developmental and medical reasons albeit after fitted with the latest hearing technologies and received intensive oral language training.

Prof Tang is an internationally renowned expert in sign linguistics and deaf studies. I am sure with her leadership the SLCO Programme will have a profound influence on the service delivery model in the education of DHH students in Hong Kong. I believe the Programme will bring in many new perspectives in developing effective teaching programs for DHH students in the Chinese communities in Hong Kong, and in the Chinese-speaking communities globally.

I sincerely hope that the SLCO Programme will continue to thrive with ongoing and continuous support from the Government and other funding bodies. I have no reservations in recommending this Programme to you and I wish Prof Tang and her team every success for running the Programme and extending it to the secondary curriculum.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Yours faithfully



Kevin YUEN Chi Pun

PhD, MSc (Audiology), BSc (Speech & Hearing Sc)

Associate Head/ Assistant Professor

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澳門大學  
UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU

October 10, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: The Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Program**

I am writing in support of the continuation of the Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Program, organized by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and supported by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

I learned about this program from a seminar delivered by the Prof. Gladys Tang in 2011. I was impressed by the passion of her and other team members in promoting sign languages, and also fascinated by their mission to promote sign language education from a new perspective.

Based on my exchange with organizations for the Deaf communities, I learned that even though the Deaf can communicate through sign language among themselves, there is still a barrier between the Deaf and the Hearing populations if many members in the Hearing population know little about sign language, or worse, have misunderstandings about sign languages and the Deaf. Some organizations hold sign language classes not only to promote sign language, but also to narrow the gap between the Deaf and Hearing populations. These classes, with the involvement of the Deaf, can expand the social network of the Deaf, promote positive attitudes of the Hearing toward the Deaf, and also develop social groups that involve both the Deaf and the Hearing.

But the Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Program goes beyond this goal, and introduces sign language education in classroom settings. They aim not only to teach sign language to students, both deaf and hearing students, but also make sign language natural for them. Some believe that sign language may alienate the Deaf, but based on the sharing by Prof. Gladys Tang in the seminar I attended, as well as sharing by the students, parents, and teachers in the program, sign language can become an asset for the students, hearing or deaf.

UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

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I also appreciate the team's mission to not only provide services, but also conduct research to enrich our understanding of the process and how to best serve the Deaf. I am collaborating with the team on surveys related to the program, and I am impressed by their enthusiasm to conduct scientific research that have practical significance. The program is a valuable opportunity to enrich our understanding of the Deaf children, their families, and people around them.

The program is unique in its nature, and the human resources it developed, deaf and hearing teachers and researchers, are valuable assets to serve the deaf community and promote harmony between the deaf and the hearing. It is my pleasure and honour to give my highest recommendation to this program for continuous support from the Hong Kong SAR Government and other funding bodies. If you have any further questions, I will be glad to answer them (email: [sfcheung@umac.mo](mailto:sfcheung@umac.mo)).

Yours Sincerely,



Shu Fai Cheung, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Department of Psychology  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities  
University of Macau  
Macao SAR, China



University of Connecticut  
*Department of Linguistics*

College of Liberal  
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Gladys Tang  
Centre for Sign Linguistics & Deaf Studies  
Chinese University of Hong Kong

Dear Gladys,

I was delighted to visit the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme in Hong Kong in May, 2013. I have heard and read about this program in many places, agreeing with the philosophy of providing education for Deaf children in a fully bilingual environment. Still, actually seeing the program and meeting some of the students involved made a big impact on me. In the classroom I observed, Deaf and hearing students interacted casually and productively, using Hong Kong Sign Language and Chinese. In fact, when I visited the students were having a lesson in English – which they also understood very well – discussing different types of pollution.

One reason I was so impressed by the program was the ease and naturalness I observed when the hearing and Deaf students interacted with each other. All the students use HKSL to discuss their schoolwork, negotiate their responses to the in-class exercise, or reply to the Deaf teacher. Likewise, the Deaf and hearing teacher seemed to work together seamlessly, sharing responsibility for communication and education. Just as people who are multilingual can easily switch between their languages and use them in the appropriate contexts, the students and teachers in the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism programme seem to be facile with their multiple languages, despite the difference in modality between signed and spoken languages.

In a small group session with a few of the students, I found out that they like learning in multiple languages – Deaf and hearing alike. The co-enrollment concept has allowed them to make Deaf and hearing friends, to be truly integrated. Those who are graduating want to continue using HKSL in their next school. This program is making great strides in education, and I hope to see it continue to do so for a long time.

*Diane Lillo-Martin*

Diane Lillo-Martin  
Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor  
Director of the Cognitive Science Program

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Shirin D. Antia  
University of Arizona  
College of Education

Co-enrollment for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) children is a solution to low academic expectations that arise when these children are educated separately in segregated classrooms, and also a solution to possible social isolation that can occur when DHH children are educated in general education classrooms with other hearing children as their only peers. The purpose of coenrolled classrooms is to change the learning environment by providing DHH students complete access to the academic curriculum and also to give them opportunities to socialize with DHH and hearing peers. Co-enrollment classrooms are characterized by three key components: a) the classroom contains a critical mass of DHH students b) the class is team-taught by a general education teacher and a teacher of DHH students and c) both sign and spoken languages are used in the classroom.

Research conducted at the University of Arizona shows that DHH students who are in co-enrolled classrooms benefit academically because teachers hold them to the same expectations and academic standards as they do other students. Academic achievement of co-enrolled DHH students is higher than that of DHH students in self-contained classrooms and they make one year's progress in a year's time (as compared to about a third of a year in a year's time in segregated classrooms). They are equally engaged in classroom learning as their hearing peers.

In terms of social outcomes, several research studies show that the DHH children interact with their hearing peers, are liked and have friends, and also are rated by teachers as having social skills equal to their hearing classmates. Many hearing classmates learn to sign as do the teachers.

Shirin D. Antia  
University of Arizona  
College of Education

While in Hong Kong I had the pleasure of observing the co-enrolled classrooms at St John's PS. I saw exemplary co-teaching; the teacher of hearing and teacher of DHH co-ordinated their teaching. I could see that all the students in the classroom were participating. The hearing and DHH students worked with one another on academic tasks. Both hearing and DHH students were called upon to respond to teacher questions. The DHH students were clearly members of the classroom.

The manner in which the DHH students were accepted by their classmates and teachers was even more obvious during an assembly. Several hearing students acted as sign language interpreters during this time. Both DHH and hearing students signed fluently. Hearing students who were not in the co-enrolled classrooms, seemed to accept the DHH students and the use of sign language.

The university and the school are to be commended for the manner in which they have managed and conducted the co-enrollment model. It is a difficult model to use, as teachers have to coordinate and collaborate. However, the positive results for DHH and hearing students are well documented.

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15 April 2014

Yiu Kun Man  
Centre for Sign Linguistics & Deaf Studies  
Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Shatin, New Territories  
Hong Kong

Dear Chris:

This letter is being written to extend my support to the innovative work you are doing at the Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism and Co-Enrollment and Deaf Education Programme (JC-SLCO). After hearing many positive things about the program over the years, I was fortunate enough to visit the program last month and meet the wonderful staff, parents, and students involved. That visit made it even more clear to me the powerful impact of your work on improving the social and educational opportunities for young deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Hong Kong. For this reason, I'm pleased to offer this letter of support.

As you know very well, deaf and hard-of-hearing children throughout the world continue to suffer from misguided pedagogical policies that do not fully support the learning needs of this unique population. The limited success of many deaf education programs can be attributed to low expectations of the school administration, poor communication skills of the instructors, and limited understanding of the parents about their children's potential. As a deaf person, it breaks my heart every time I visit such programs. To my delight, I saw none of that when I visited your program. There is no question in my mind that the program must continue.

All the best to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. K. Holcomb".

Thomas K. Holcomb, Ph.D.  
Professor/Interim Dean