

Who are the preferred part-time lecturers?

**Students' perceptions in a Hong Kong
self-financing institute**

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Why part-time lecturer (PTL)

- Cut personnel expenses: especially for self-financing institutes
- Economic conditions: more graduates of graduate schools take up part-time jobs
- Provide flexibility in staffing
- Access lecturers who are not available on full time basis
- A way to recruit special talents

PTLs as effective lecturers

Different parties judge PTLs from different angles:

- Researchers: PTLs' contributions to students' performance and academic result
- University administrators: PTLs' impact in the operation of the school
- Students: their experience from interacting with the PTLs

Review:

How students rate PTLs (1)

- Employment status: neutral
- Accessibility
 - Physical availability: less available than FTLs
 - Social accessibility: no significant difference between PTLs and FTLs
- Ability to provide consultation: not conclusive
- Informal interaction with students: unclear

Review:

How students rate PTLs (2)

- Grade leniency: PTLs give higher grades
- Response to students' needs: more responsive
- Teaching approach: less preferred, as PTLs tend to use more traditional (lecture based) approach

Hong Kong students' view of PTLs

- Limited formal data
- Informal data tends to be linked to non-teaching issues like providing powerpoint file or notes.

Research Questions

1. “What are the preferred traits (Formal qualifications, Social desirableness, and Teaching related competences) of an effective PTL?”

2. “What are the preferred behaviour (Relationship related behaviour and Task related behaviour) of an effective PTL?”

Research Method

- Quantitative data collected by survey
- Target institution: Self-financing branch of a university in Hong Kong

Sample Population

- 8 groups of 343 students from various business related programmes were invited to participate and 259 (75.5%) questionnaires were collected.
- 225 questionnaires (92.6%) were accepted from the collected questionnaires.
- 46.7% are students from degree programme, 41.3% associate degree, 10% executive diploma programme.

The questionnaire

- The questionnaire asks students to think of an effective PTL when they ranked, in a Likert scale of 1 to 5, how close the statements in a 31-item list matched the traits or behaviour of the effective PTL they have in their minds.

Traits and Behaviours of Effective PTLs Ranked According to Mean Scores

Traits* / Behaviours	Mean Score	Std. Dev.	Skewness	% of positive answer
Good presentation skills	4.43	.755	-1.349	90.2
Use real-life example in teaching	4.32	.638	-.505	91.5
Interesting class	4.29	.752	-.860	86.7
Share experience in studying	4.18	.711	-.650	86.6
Good subject-related knowledge	4.16	.764	-.833	82.7
Provide prompt reply to questions	4.16	.684	-.470	86.2
Give students chance to speak	4.15	.634	-.236	87.1
Spend additional time to help students	4.12	.729	-1.019	86.7
Good language skills	4.09	.802	-.947	84.4
Encourage students to study	3.99	.710	-.283	77.8
Provide opportunity to communicate	3.95	.652	-.822	82.7
Modify course to fit students' needs	3.94	.797	-.857	77.3
Lots of teaching experience	3.90	.831	-.513	72.0
Keep Smiling	3.83	.772	-.060	66.1
Give tips/hint for exam.	3.81	.917	-.428	64.9
High academic qualification	3.77	.745	-.787	70.4
Work experience	3.77	.769	-.411	67.4
High professional qualification	3.73	.722	-.641	68.1
Recognize good performance	3.68	.783	-.372	61.3
Use new approach in teaching	3.66	.805	-.518	61.9
Provide career consulting	3.65	.769	-.157	59.7
Easy pass	3.54	.988	-.055	46.9
Using Cantonese in teaching	3.41	.870	.044	43.5
Good computer skills	3.39	.789	-.309	45.8
Strong research record	3.37	.807	-.292	45.2
Provide psychological consulting	3.36	.858	.044	40.4
High career achievement	3.30	.867	-.247	42.2
Applying IT in teaching	3.25	.752	-.184	37.2
Physical appearance	3.07	.908	-0.70	29.6
Social status	2.88	.802	-.052	20.3

Traits of effective PTLs

Traits selected by a high percentage ($> 80\%$) of students

- Good Presentation Skills (90.2%)
 - Good Language Skills (84.4%)
 - Good Subject-related Knowledge (82.7%)
- Other traits (Formal qualification and social desirableness) are less associated with effective PTLs

Teaching related Competencies of effective PTLs

Characteristic of an effective PTL	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Positive answers (Strongly agree + Agree)
Good presentation skills	4.43	.755	-1.349	90.2
Good language skills	4.09	.802	-.947	84.4
Good subject-related knowledge	4.16	.764	-.833	82.7

Formal Qualification of effective PTLs

Characteristic of an effective PTL	Mean score	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Positive answer (Strongly agree + Agree)
High academic qualification	3.77	.745	-.787	70.4%
High professional qualification	3.73	.722	-.641	68.1%

Social Desirableness of effective PTLs

Characteristic of an effective PTL	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Positive answer (Strongly agree + Agree)
High career achievement	3.30	.867	-.247	42.2%
Strong research or publication records	3.37	.807	-.292	45.2%
Good physical appearance	3.07	.908	-.070	29.6%
High social status	2.88	.802	-.052	20.3%

Behaviour of effective PTLs

Behaviours selected by high (> 80%) percentage of student

- Applying updated real-life example in teaching (91.5%)
- Give students chance to speak and to ask questions in class (87.1%)
- Make the class interesting (86.7%)
- Spend additional time after class on helping students (86.7%)
- Share his/her past experience in studying (86.6%)
- Provide prompt reply to questions or e-mail messages (86.2%)
- Provide students with opportunity to communicate (82.7%)

Relationship related Behaviour of effective PTLs

Characteristic of an effective PTL	Mean score	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Positive answers (Strongly agree + Agree)
Make the class interesting	4.29	.752	-.860	86.7
Shares his/her past experience in studying	4.18	.711	-.650	86.6
Provides prompt reply to questions or e-mail messages	4.16	.684	-.470	86.2
Provide students with opportunity to communicate with lecturers or tutors	3.95	.652	-.822	82.7

Task related Behaviour of effective PTLs

Characteristic of an effective PTL	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Positive answers (Strongly agree + Agree)
Applied updated real life examples in teaching	4.32	.638	-.505	91.5
Gives students chance to speak and to ask questions in class	4.15	.634	-.236	87.1
Spends additional time after class on helping students	4.12	.729	-1.019	86.7
Encourage students to study	3.99	.710	-.283	77.8
Modifies course content to suit the needs/interests of the students	3.94	.797	-.857	77.3

Conclusion

- The top ranked characteristics of the preferred PTLs are mostly related to teaching such as good presentation skills and good subject related knowledge of the PTL.

Recommendation – Traits of PTL

In selecting effective PTLs:

- Teaching related competences are very important - Students emphasize the ability of the instructor to organize and transmit the information to them.
- Students also show strong preference for a lecturer who has the ability to make the class interesting

Emphasise – Task related Behaviours

- PTLs should apply updated real life examples in teaching, spend additional time after class on helping students, give student the chance to speak and ask questions in class and modify course content to suit the needs/interesting of the students

Emphasise – Relationship related Behaviours

- PTL should be *approachable* to student and be willing to *share with them experience in learning, spending additional time with them, reply promptly to their mails and provide career and psychological consultation* to them

Deemphasise

- Qualification factors *like high academic qualification and high professional qualification* should be deemphasised.
- Social desirableness factors like *high social status, high career achievement and high research activity* are also not important.
- Items related to Teaching style like *applying new teaching approach* or even *applying IT* are of lesser importance to students.

Recommendation for teacher

- *Easiness of the course* is not of prime importance.
- Proper use of humour can be an effective way to create such an interest.
- Challenges is acceptable as long as students perceive that the lecturer is effective in “*transmitting*” the knowledge to them

Recommendation - Administration

- Establishing some mechanism that can facilitate interaction between PTLs and students