

Workshop on Professional Writing

By Mr Tyler HO

The captioned workshop jointly organised by the YMC and Continuing Professional Development Committee (CPDC) on 30 November 2024. The speaker was Dr Kong Kwok Wai, who has an extensive background in international investment banking and engineering. Dr Kong has held senior roles at Barclays Capital and BNP Paribas and worked as a project engineer at CLP. Currently, he designs and delivers technical and business training courses for engineers at major companies.

Dr Kong began the workshop by highlighting the fundamental differences between Chinese and English, using the phrase “道可道非常道”(The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao) to illustrate that the two languages have distinct structures and expressions. This set the stage for understanding the unique challenges Chinese writers face when writing in English.

During the workshop, Dr Kong focused on three main areas: avoiding common writing mistakes, writing efficiently, and projecting a professional image through writing. He highlighted several technical writing issues often encountered by Chinese writers, such as missing the articles (“a, an, the”), excessive use of the future tense, placing time-indicating phrases at the beginning of paragraphs, and positioning main ideas in the middle rather than at the beginning of paragraphs.

Dr Kong also addressed common mistakes to be avoided, including noun-verb disagreement and dangling modifiers. He gave practical advice on how to write stronger sentences by making clearer points. One of the key messages Dr Kong shared with the participants was the importance of simplicity in writing. He noted that the main reason people struggle with writing is often not a language problem, but a lack of thought for the intricacies of their experiences. Dr Kong encouraged participants to read more news reports, since they are typically well-structured and can serve as good examples.

The workshop provided valuable insights into professional writing, particularly for those who write in English as a second language. Dr Kong’s emphasis on simplicity, clarity, and understanding the nuances of one’s experiences offered practical guidance for enhancing writing skills. The event was a great opportunity for participants to learn from an expert and to improve their professional writing practices.



Dr Kong (standing) explaining the critical competencies required to prepare a well-organised professional report