

Part C Project Overview

Project Title (in English):

Enhancing students' presentation skills, spoken English and confidence in presentations

Project Title (in Chinese):

提升學生演講報告技巧，英文會話和信心

Executive Summary

(Please provide, within this page, an executive summary of the project.)

Rationale: 'Presentations' are an extremely common mode of assessment omnipresent across all disciplines at tertiary level, yet there is to date virtually no solid support which equips students with sound presentation skills. Preparation time was mostly spent on rehearsals with limited and non-detailed feedback (e.g. speak louder; more eye contact) from teachers and peers. Many students in the self-financing programmes, who are mostly lower-achievers, are especially intimidated by this form of assessment due to their low confidence and poor English. We have witnessed innumerable cases where students made every endeavour to prepare the slides and rehearse well but failed to perform well in the actual presentation for various reasons such as nervousness and poor spoken English; the success or failure of these '10-20-minute shows' not only substantially affects their GPA, which in turn affects their further study opportunities, but also either bolsters or decreases their confidence and motivation in their studies. It is therefore both vital and pressing that students, especially the lower-achievers at community colleges, receive more support in this regard in the hope of improving their psychological well-being, academic achievements, and communication skills, thereby facilitating their whole-person development and benefiting their studies and future career.

Aim: The aim of this project, in brief, is to promote students' development in three areas: [1] students' presentation skills (in far greater detail than the general and non-constructive feedback students often receive), [2] spoken English (all practical aspects of English phonetics and phonology that play an instrumental role in effective presentations) and [3] confidence. Two strands of programs will be offered – autonomous and workshop, the former of which is in particular necessary for tertiary-level lower-achieving students as will be delineated in part E.

Pilot Study: A pilot study has already been conducted in exploring the areas students have most problems with and ways students can effectively improve their presentations in the above three aspects. The findings lay a solid foundation for the present proposed project.

Deliverables: In this proposed 2-year project, the main deliverables are teaching and learning materials in different formats (e.g. in print and in video formats), effective pedagogies in bringing about the improvement in the aforementioned three areas, and more resources (e.g. IT equipment and software; setting up a flexible self-access lab). Feedback will be sought from different parties and the effectiveness will be measured. All these can foreseeably benefit all students and teachers at the college as well as stakeholders in the tertiary edu. sector at large.

Meeting the Assessment Criteria: This project fulfils the five core assessment criteria (i.e. benefits and sustainability, viability and deliverables, institution commitment and self-evaluation mechanism, sharing of outcomes, and innovativeness) well as will be made clear in later parts. Most remarkably is the last criteria – innovativeness – for not only does this project focus on highly relevant areas that are of crucial significance to all tertiary students, the project topic per se and its associated initiatives and deliverables are unprecedented.

Part D Problems Identified

(Please provide your assessments to the problems / needs identified.)

The prevalence of presentations in tertiary education but a paucity of attention and support

It needs not be stated that presentations are extremely commonplace at tertiary level. They are usually an instrument for assessment, individually or in groups, across all disciplines including arts and humanities, science and technology, social sciences, business and so forth. To many students, it is a massive challenge to them linguistically (e.g. spoken English), psychologically (e.g. confidence; being presentable) and academically (e.g. as a form of assessment; being asked questions). However, hardly any teaching staff at the chalkface, curriculum designers, senior management teams, and initiatives and projects have focused on this common aspect of tertiary education in depth. There is an overall serious lack of support for students in the entire tertiary education sector to prepare them well for presentations. The farthest one can go is to seek help from language centres, or tutors and course-mates during rehearsal sessions. Even so, the feedback and assistance students receive in these situations are often far from enough for significant improvement. For instance, “more eye contact” & “speak louder” are some common feedback. However, students may not be fully aware of this and make the same mistake(s) again next time since there’s no follow-up – in many cases, presentations are done towards the end of the semester as a form of assessment and when they are done, the course is virtually over. It’s ‘too late’ grade-wise and improvement-wise. For those conscientious students who really take the comments seriously, after receiving “more eye contact”, they may wonder: ‘where to look at’, ‘what if I am too nervous’, ‘can I look at the screen’, ‘should I look more at the lecturer sitting at the back’ or even ‘I was looking at the audience but why did you say not enough eye contact’. In view of the paucity of solid support for tertiary students especially those relatively low-achieving studying at community colleges, much more support at many levels such as detailed feedback, follow-ups for improvement, demonstrations, special training, confidence-boosting public-speaking initiatives, etc, is of crucial significance.

On teaching spoken English

There have not been many effective teaching methods of improving learners’ oral English in a short period of time successfully. Most oral lessons in secondary schools revolve around practices with little emphasis on spoken English for successful delivery in public speaking (e.g. the use of intonation). At tertiary level, English phonology and phonetics are usually reserved for students majoring in linguistics or English education; many students, especially those studying for associate degrees and higher diplomas do not have the privilege to study these to improve their spoken English, hence the vicious circle of the better get better and the worse get worse. Therefore, this project also aims to substantiate the usefulness of introducing English phonetics and phonology to the majority of students. The content will be simplified and made more practical to the relatively low-achieving college students so that they have equal opportunities as the others to be equipped well with good spoken English to succeed in interviews, presentations, etc

On confidence and the characteristics of the target student body

Over the years, students at community colleges are deemed by the education system and society as ‘failures’. It is perfectly understandable that these students are lacking in confidence in their studies. The lack of confidence is especially prominent and problematic when it comes to the intimidating presentations students often encounter at this level. Worse still, most presentations are in English. It is thus also important, we firmly believe, for educators to also pay heed to students’ psychological well-being since in successful presentations, it is indisputable that confidence plays a pivotal role. In addition, ‘autonomy in learning’ is made one of the themes in this project as it is of especially remarkable use to the target students – rather than always imparting knowledge, we can inculcate independent and lifelong learning values; rather than teaching ‘what to learn’, we can also teach ‘how to learn’.

All in all, not only does the various supports proposed in this project switch presentations as ‘assessment of learning’ to ‘assessment for learning’, the presentation and linguistic skills, as well as confidence, students gain in the project can easily be transferable to lifelong communication skills, which, for instance, stand them in good stead when it comes to interviews and interacting with clients and customers in the future.

Part E Project Objectives and Deliverables

Measurable Objectives	How it can be achieved
<p>1. <u>To identify specific areas for improvement in presentations</u> (Although preliminary identification and a detailed list of items in presentations (e.g. under ‘eye contact’: looking at ALL the audience, right and left, front and back; looking at the lecturer/professor; minimal reliance on cue cards or the screen; etc) has already been conducted and compiled respectively in the pilot study, a more rigorous needs analysis of a larger scale will facilitate, for example, the creation of teaching materials (e.g. which areas to give emphasis on) and allow greater generalizability for reporting the findings to the whole college and beyond)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By questionnaire surveys and interviews for teachers and students - By (trial) presentations by students followed by assessment and feedback from teachers/trainers - By statistical analyses (e.g. SPSS and Excel) of the data collected via the above instruments

<p>2. <u>To Implement and assess the effectiveness of the 'autonomous strand'</u> ('Autonomous strand' refers to students receiving some support (i.e. regular meetings with trainers and receiving training materials) and their continuously monitoring and reflecting on their own progress for improvement. This has been trialled informally with only a few students in the form of case studies in the pilot test. It will be conducted in a larger scale in this project and will be further improved. Learners' autonomy is an important concept especially in tertiary education. Learners cannot be spoon-fed for their entire life and must learn to be a good monitor and reflective thinker themselves in order to succeed. Lower-achievers are in particularly dire need of these reflective skills and self-awareness. This strand aims to cultivate students' autonomous learning with some scaffolding from teachers.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By creating materials for participants in this strand - By assigning certain trainers to be responsible for this strand (e.g. meeting the participants regularly) - By measuring students' improvement before, during, and after the project by means of questionnaires and interviews (self-assessment by students), videos and actual presentations by the students (to be assessed by trainers)
<p>3. <u>To Implement and assess the effectiveness of the 'workshop strand'</u> (Workshop strand refers to students attending regular workshops on presentation skills. A principal trainer and assistants will deliver the workshops; the PA will be present to take videos and notes in order to make the content and delivery available for (1) others to run the workshops when the project ends – echoing the concept of 'sustainability' and (2) creating teaching and learning materials. A few teachers/assistant trainers will also be invited to attend some workshops so as to share their views, be involved as well as learn how to run similar workshops in the future – also echoing the concept of 'sustainability')</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By creating materials for participants in this strand - By assigning certain trainers to be responsible for this strand - By setting up workshops and ensuring they run smoothly - By measuring students' improvement before, during, and after the project by means of questionnaires and interviews (self assessment by students) and videos and actual presentations by the students (to be assessed by trainers)
<p>4. <u>To create teaching and learning materials for the improvement of tertiary students' presentation skills, spoken English and confidence</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By working with trainers and different parties to create 'draft' teaching and learning materials (e.g. videos and notes)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By using these materials in the abovementioned 2 strands and further modifying it - By finalizing the materials and sharing with students at the college and the community at large
<p>5. <u>To set-up a self-access presentation-cum-language lab</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By identifying a classroom (or open areas) to be converted to a flexible lab - By installing computers and other equipment for students' and staff's use

Project Deliverables

(Please list out all the deliverables to be achieved and how they can be shared with, if possible, other institutions.)

Deliverables	Sharing mechanism
<p>1. <u>A detailed report of findings from students', teachers' and assessors' perspectives on students' performance in presentations at tertiary settings.</u></p> <p>(This has not quite been conducted in depth in Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world – as evident in the paucity of research in the literature; it is of great meaningfulness to all stakeholders at tertiary education, not least those in self-financed institutions)</p>	<p>All students and staff will receive an e-report via email and a seminar will be held at the college</p> <p>The findings will also be shared by means of academic papers and conference presentations; the other institutions will be informed in due course (e.g. when the findings will be presented at a certain conference)</p>
<p>2. <u>Teaching and learning materials</u></p>	<p>These will be placed in the presentation-cum-language lab and some key materials will be uploaded on the online shared platform for students and teachers.</p> <p>When the project is completed, apart from academic papers and conference presentations, seminars will be held and emails will be sent to the other institutions to invite them to attend the seminars. Materials will be shared with interested institutions whenever appropriate.</p>

<p><u>3.A flexible self-accessed presentation-cum-language lab</u></p>	<p>All the students and staff can access this lab and enjoy the facilities</p>
<p><u>4.A final report and sharing sessions</u></p>	<p>Sharing sessions will be held for both the students and staff at the college and other institutions.</p> <p>Effective pedagogies, implications for curriculum design as well as future directions and possible cross-institute collaborations are some key themes in these concluding seminars.</p> <p><i>(relevant information will also be uploaded onto relevant EDB websites after the project period)</i></p>
<p><i>(Please indicate the information that can be uploaded onto relevant EDB websites during and after the project period.)</i></p>	
<p>After the completion of the project, a report/booklet of the entire project (including its rationale, pictures of different activities and the lab) will be uploaded onto relevant EDB websites.</p>	
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	
<p>Expected type and number of beneficiaries of the project</p>	<p>Directly: Approximately 2000+ students and 80+ staff members currently at the college as well as a large number of students and staff joining the college in the future</p> <p>Indirectly: all students, staff and other stakeholders at other institutions</p>
<p><i>(Please provide justification to support the above estimation and explain how they can be benefited from the project.)</i></p>	

There are currently 2000+ students and 80+ staff (full-time/part-time, teaching or support) at the college and they can all access the materials and the lab when the project period ends. Both strands are first piloted in this project and will be fine-tuned and made into regular workshops/seminars after the project period ends, thereby further benefiting future students and staff joining the college. This is facilitated by the fact that a group of teachers/students will be trained to provide such a service, and workshops and seminars by invited trainers and speakers will be recorded for reference.

As stated, this is an innovative project that is both meaningful and timely. Presentations are one of the most common forms of assessment in all disciplines at tertiary level; therefore, the findings, deliverables, and implications are all highly relevant, thought-provoking, and of immense value to all stakeholders in other tertiary institutions. The reports and materials will be shared with the other institutions in different manners when the project is completed.

Implementation Schedule		
<i>(Please list out the implementation schedule and key milestones to be achieved on a half-yearly basis.)</i>		
Estimated start date of the project (month/year)		September, 2017
Estimated end date of the project (month/year)		August, 2019
Project duration (months)		24 months
Month	Key milestones	
	In terms of project activities and deliverables	In terms of monitoring and evaluation
1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruiting a PA and other contributors (listed under POST in part F) to form a task force - Establishing the project implementation team and evaluation team - Convening meetings to discuss the project such as its rationale, details, and implementation (e.g. the two strands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stringent selection procedures will be implemented for selecting the most suitable PA and contributors. - The project implementation team and evaluation team will meet regularly to steer the entire project. - The LPI and PA will work closely and monitor everything to ensure this preparatory stage goes swimmingly.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commencing designing workshops/seminars and materials - Preparing questionnaires and interviews to be administered - Publicizing the project and recruiting participants - Purchasing equipment and other materials such as reference books - Allocating space for the lab and workstations for the project members 	
7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commencing the 'autonomous' strand and the 'workshop' strand - Recruiting students for the two strands - PA documenting all the activities (e.g. attending and recording all workshops, taking notes) and materials (i.e. collecting them from contributors and filing them). - Setting up the lab and installing equipment - Administering questionnaires and interviews - Collating and analysing findings from the questionnaires and interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from all stakeholders including the project implementation and evaluation teams, the contributors, the students and visitors (e.g. teaching staff at the college). - The PA will sit in on all the workshops and closely monitor the two strands, reporting to the LPI from time to time, who will report to the directors regularly. - The two project teams will meet regularly to evaluate the completed and ongoing work as well as discussing upcoming activities.
13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing the 'autonomous' strand and the 'workshop' strand - If the strand(s) run(s) smoothly in the previous 6 months, further enrolment opportunities will be made available for new participants so as to maximize the number of beneficiaries during the project period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should the unlikely situation where problems arise, the project teams will meet immediately to rectify the situation before recruiting new participants. - Continuous feedback from all stakeholders including the project implementation and evaluation teams, the contributors, the students and visitors (e.g. teaching staff at the college)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening up the lab for students' access; workshops will be held to teach students/staff how to use the technology to improve/teach presentation skills and spoken English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The PA will sit in on all the workshops and closely monitor the two strands, reporting to the LPI from time to time, who will report to the directors regularly. - The two project teams will meet regularly to evaluate the completed and ongoing work as well as discussing upcoming activities.
19-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concluding the project - Administering questionnaires and interviews and analysing the findings - Measuring the outcome of the project such as students' improvement - Drafting and finalizing a report on the findings analysed - Preparing for dissemination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final feedback from all stakeholders including the project implementation and evaluation teams, the contributors, the students and visitors (e.g. teaching staff at the college) - The two project teams will meet to evaluate the completed and ongoing work as well as discussing post-project continuation of certain activities.
<p>Publicity Plan <i>(Please describe all the publicity activities to be organised and materials to be produced to acknowledge the support of Quality Enhancement Support Scheme. Please suitably reflect the publicity activities as key milestones in the implementation schedule above.)</i></p>		

The following actions will be taken within a month or two (1st – 2nd month of the project):

1. Mass emailing all staff (teaching, supporting, senior management) and all students at the college re the project and the generous fund supported by QESS.
2. Announcements will be made during staff meetings, seminars, program meetings for students in all programs, classes, etc (this continues throughout the project, i.e. 1st – 24th month).
3. Promotion will also be made online (e.g. the school website).
4. Notices and posters will be created and put up on bulletin boards in common areas and inside the lifts.

During / After the project has completed (7th – 24th month and beyond):

5. Sharing sessions will be held from time to time about the progress and findings from the project as well as participants' sharing for the college and other institutions.
6. College websites and college newsletters will also be capitalized on for publicity.
7. As mentioned, a detailed report will be uploaded onto relevant EDB websites.
8. Findings from the project will be disseminated to UGC-funded universities and globally via academic exchange such as academic conferences and publication.

Part F Cash Flow and Budget				
Project Expenditure				
	Amount in HK\$			
Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Manpower	664,000	584,000	/	1,248,000
Equipment / Facilities	470,000	0	/	470,000
Services	0	0	/	0
General Expenses	50,000	11,000	/	61,000
Others (e.g. auditor's fee)	0	15,000	/	15,000
Total	1,184,000	610,000	0	1,794,000
Project Income (if any, e.g. fees received)				
	Amount in HK\$			
Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
	/	/	/	0
Total				0
<i>(Please provide a detailed breakdown of the project budget by completing the following Excel file.)</i>				
Grant Sought under the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme				1,794,000
Funding from the Applicant				0
Funding from Other Sources				0
Total Project Value				1,794,000
<i>(Please specify the amount to be funded by each funding source (e.g. donations, contributions from applicant / its parent organisation) and whether the funding has been secured. If not, please provide the plan to obtain the funding.)</i>				
N/A				
<i>(Please provide the duty lists of manpower to be funded by this project.)</i>				

Post	Duties/Nature
<p>Principal Administrator (PA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The primary reason for the relatively high salary is that the PA should be a university graduate, with some knowledge in education (preferably specializing in English language education, English phonology or psychology) and IT as well as project management/research experience. The PA should also have a very high command of English (e.g. for conversing with native English teachers and writing reports) and is a native Cantonese speaker (e.g. to help deliver the seminars in Cantonese; more approachable to low-achievers who are too afraid to speak English) - The key contact person (for all administrative matters such as answering enquiries and contacting students) - Working closely with the LPI in carrying out the project - Reporting to LPI regularly - Being responsible for all the administrative matters concerning the project including but not limited to: finance-related matters (e.g. remuneration for contributors), recording and filing (e.g. recording lessons by invited trainers, filing documents), liaising with different parties, publicizing the project and other general coordination to ensure smooth operation.
<p>IT Consultant/Assistant [Contributor 1]</p>	<p>They are only responsible for the more technical side of IT support (e.g. managing some software related to speech sound recording and analyses; providing technical assistance for recording and editing videos); the PA is responsible for general IT support duties.</p>
<p>Professional Speakers/Trainers [Contributors 2]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devising teaching plans and materials as well as innovative pedagogies - Working closely with PA and LPI - Delivering lessons/seminars <p>These teaching staff members are grouped into two categories: (A) Presentation skills and confidence and (B) Spoken English (i.e. English phonetics and phonology). All candidates will undergo stringent selection procedures and (A) themselves must be presentable, charismatic, 'can be dramatic', confident and approachable while (B) must have a good knowledge of the teaching content and have excellent delivery skills (e.g. not just chalk and talk).</p>
<p>Assistant Trainers [Contributors 3]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist the main speakers/trainers in class as, for instance, demonstrators or facilitators

	<p>- Provide content-related assistance to the PA in recording teaching pedagogies and filing teaching materials for future reference and use</p> <p>These trainers serve two important functions: (1) they assist the speakers/trainers in class thereby increasing individual attention to participants, which is especially important for this project and (2) they ensure the sustainability of the project by continuing the training workshops for future students, the outstanding of whom will in turn be invited to lead further training workshops, continuing this meaningful, mentoring-like succession.</p>
--	--

Project Sustainability

(Please estimate the amount of recurrent expenditure and describe how you will commit the resources to ensure sustainability of the project. Please put supplementary information (e.g. proof of financial support) at appendix.)

There is a very high sustainability of the project as evident in the following:

- All the teaching and learning materials, video-recordings, and others generated in the project are owned by the college. These resources can be reused and refined as well as taken as reference for running courses and curricular design when the project ends.
- Apart from the resources, a number of teachers/students/others (e.g. alumni) will have taken part in the project and sat in on or contributed to the workshops/seminars already when the project finishes. They will be the key trainers in conducting post-project workshops/seminars/training sessions, thereby ensuring the continuity of the aim of improving students' performance in presentations in the three core aspects.
- The college has a high-powered IT team of 6 staff members, who can provide assistance in IT-related matters such as equipment maintenance and upgrading when the project ends.
- The college is also willing to shoulder all the financial expenses to ensure the lab and training sessions will continue to run smoothly.
- The full-time lecturers of English are required to hold extra workshops on English during the term time and interested lecturers can help deliver content in line with the project, providing further support for sustainability.