Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

Final Evaluation Report	Project No. : 18/QEGS/09-10

Part A

Project Title   :   Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshops for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Students

Name of Grantee :   HKU SPACE Po Leung Kuk Community College

Project Period   :   From   September 2010   (*month/year*) to   August 2012   (*month/year*)

Part B

Please use separate A4-size sheets to provide an evaluation of the Project with regard to the following aspects:

1. Project activities contributing to the attainment of Project objectives, extent of attainment of the objectives, evidence or indicators attesting to the attainment of the objectives, and if applicable, reasons for not able to achieve the objectives.
2. Impact or benefits of the Project to the participants, the target institution(s) or the sector.
3. Cost-effectiveness of the Project against clear indicators, e.g. utilization of available resources, unit cost per beneficiaries, sustainability of Project activities/impacts, applicability of Project outcomes/deliverables to other institutions, or alternative approaches for equivalent benefits at less cost, etc.
4. Outcomes and deliverables of the Project.

Signature: _____   Organization Chop: _____

Name of Authorized Person: Dr Keith Lam _____

Name of Grantee Organization: HKU SPACE Po Leung Kuk Community College

Position of Authorized Person: College Deputy Principal _____

Date: 3 0 NOV 2012

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme (QEGS) Project

Project No.: 18/QEGS/09-10

Final Evaluation Report on "Guided English Writing Workshops for Associate

Degree and Higher Diploma students"

HKU SPACE Po Leung Kuk Community College

November 30, 2012

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Introduction

This report aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic project "Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshop" (referred hereafter as 'the workshop') funded by the Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme (QEGS) and implemented between September 2010 and August 2012 at HKU SPACE Po Leung Kuk Community College (HPCC). Financial details of the project are to be submitted separately in the financial and auditor's report. The objectives of the project were twofold: 1) to investigate the needs of the associate and higher diploma students at HPCC in relation to a repertoire of academic skills and learning strategies, and 2) to develop and implement a guided English writing learning package in a workshop to improve students' writing abilities in preparation for various academic and professional needs.

A learning package employing various learning strategies (e.g., analytical versus metacognitive) and addressing various generic and academic writing skills was developed based on the analysis of a student questionnaire (504 respondents) and student interviews (13 interviewees) on learning needs and strategies. The package was administered in a workshop – composed on nine 80-min sessions – initially to a pilot group of 10 students and subsequently to an experimental group of 24 students (one discontinued studies at HPCC) which was compared with a control group of 20 students not attending the workshop (three discontinued studies at HPCC and three were absent in IELTS post-test). An assessment of the receptiveness and effectiveness of the workshop is based on a variety of qualitative and quantitative indicators including student attendance and feedback, in-class observation, an in-school textual analysis of pre- and post-workshop student essays, and pre- and post-workshop IELTS writing scores.

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Attainment of Objectives

Table 1 provides an overview of the objectives, related activities, degree to which attainment of said objectives was achieved along with related evidence/indicators. A valuable observation gained from the post test results has also been noted in the final column.

Table 1: Attainment of Objectives

Objective statement	Activities related to the objective	Extent of attainment of the objective	Evidence or indicators of having achieved the objective	Reasons for not being able to achieve the objective, if applicable
Investigate the needs of HPCC students with regard to generic and academic skills and the learning	Activities in Stage 1 of the project (Sep 2010 – Feb 2011) including the following:	Fully achieved	1. Questionnaire 2. Student responses 3. Sample of promotional	NA

strategies involved	• *Questionnaire on learners' strategies* • *Literature review* • *Student selection* • *In-house assessment on language concepts* • *In-depth interview on learner styles and learning strategies* • *Trial sessions of the workshop* • *Development of the initial draft of the writing enhancement package* • *Pre-test (IELTS) administration* For details, please see Section 5		activities signup and flyers Sample of the literature reviewed 4. Sample of language proficiency assessment worksheet 5. Sample of interview worksheet 6. Signup sheet for trial workshop 7. Outline of initial workshop 8. Results of IELTS test – 22 Jan 2011 Evidence for each related activity is provided in the appendices referenced by the relevant activities in Section 5.	
Develop and implement a guided English writing learner package to improve students' writing abilities, and foster independent critical thinking strategies.	Activities in Stage 2 -4 of the project (Mar 2011 – Aug 2012) including the following: • *Pilot run of Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshop using the initial draft of the learner package* • *Analysis and assessment of student in-class performance and after-class*	Fully achieved	1. Completion of the Guided English writing learner package 2. Positive Student feedback 3. Performance of pre- and post-workshop essay on IELTS tasks (statistically significant) [See note below] 4. Writing performance in IELTS writing task (statistically	NA

	reflection	insignificant)	
	• *Edition and Completion of the initial learner package for Phase III*	Evidence for each related activity is provided in the appendices referenced by the relevant activities in Section 5.	
	• *Implementation of the learner package in Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshop*		
	• *Analysis and assessment of student in-class performance and after-class reflection*		
	• *Completion of the learner package*		
	• *Implementation of the learner package in Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshop Part 2*		
	• *Post-test (IELTS) attendance*		
	• *Final evaluation and financial audit of the project*		
	For details, please see Section 5		

Note:

Note that the absence of improvement in the IELTS scores (Item 3) could be attributed to a lack of consistent practice after the workshop and before the IELTS post-test (10 weeks in between). Instead of a re-run of the workshop, students were requested to practice what they have learnt with the checklist provided on writing tasks. A low submission rate (4%) of post-workshop exercises indicates a lack of practice, which was confirmed by the post-test feedback from students with no significant improvement in their IELTS writing scores. This observation will be used to provide more emphasis on post workshop revision among students.

Analysis and Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Package

Implementation of the guided writing learner package

The learner package was administered in the format of nine weekly 80-min lessons to the students in a pilot group (10 students) in stage 2 and the experimental group (24 students) in stage 3, 4 of the project as described in Section 2 of this report. The receptiveness and effectiveness of the learner package were evaluated against a variety of qualitative and quantitative indicators including student attendance and feedback, in-class observation, an in-school textual analysis of pre- and post-workshop student essays, and pre- and post-workshop IELTS writing scores.

Workshop attendance and student feedback

Findings indicate that the participants were generally receptive of the workshop with an attendance rate of 90%, a weekly assignment submission rate of 58% and post-lesson reflection submission rate of 60% (during the workshop period), and a satisfaction score of 4.1 (max.5). Over 88% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the workshop had helped them improve and would attend similar workshops in the future. Samples of post-lesson reflection on generic (fundamental grammar) and academic skills (chart and graph interpretation) are provided as follows:

...I gained basic insights into some fragments I had encountered before, say the "missing-subject fragments", and I do hope to try my best to avoid it from happening again. Being a Chinese, Chinese to a certain extent does affect my English writing and that's why I lose my subjects occasionally. Before attending the lesson, I usually couldn't distinguish the differences between clauses and phrases as , really, I thought of phrasal verbs whenever I saw the word "phrase". From now on, I knew that phrase refers to a group of words without verb, which is , frankly, what i hadn't noticed before. In a nutshell, i learned some fundamentals under the basic framework of English in the lesson and recalled and distinguished something i had not noticed or realized before. And i look forward to next lesson of learning from writings of others.

Student xxxxxx038

I learnt how to do the writing task 1 in IELTS better after I have this lesson. Charts and graphs are the useful visual aids to present some statistics or data. However, if there are lots of data that readers found it hard to understand, writing a short summary could help them to focus on what the main points are in the graphs. I learnt to circle the most important pattern and trends on the graph in planning how to write. There are quite a number of vocabulary that I learnt in this lesson are very useful in describing charts or graphs, for example, upward trend, rise significantly, gradually

increase, etc. I hope I could improve in writing this kind of description on charts by doing different exercises, as I believe in "Practice makes perfect".

Student xxxxx321

Details of feedback scores on individual lessons are in Appendix 1. Analysis and comments on the skills addressed in each lesson will be discussed in Section 3 of this report. Affective and perceptive findings suggest the learner package is effective in raising the learning interests and awareness of language pitfalls and critical analytical skills in academic writing.

Textual analysis of pre- and post-workshop academic essays on IELTS task from past papers

In addition to student feedback and reflection, a quantitative textual analysis was performed on the pre- (22) and post-workshop (18) academic essays using topic prompts from IELTS past papers. Frequency were noted on clausal grammatical mistakes (e.g., sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and comma-splices), academic vocabulary (Coxhead, 2000), effective topic sentences (displaying a summarized theme of the paragraph), paraphrasing of topic prompts in the introduction and conclusion (a criterion in IELTS writing task), summarization of arguments in the conclusion and unique impersonal examples (a construct to operationalize objectivity). A textual illustration and a frequency record of these parameters and samples of pre- and post-workshop writing are shown in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, respectively. Findings are illustrated in Table 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Frequency counts of language constructs in pre- and post-workshop writing

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Error. Fragment	Pre	22	1.36	1.364	.291
	Post	18	.50	.707	.167
Error Run-on	Pre	22	1.27	1.352	.288
	Post	18	.39	.778	.183
Error Comma-splice	Pre	22	1.23	1.193	.254
	Post	18	.44	.705	.166
Sentence Structure Error	Pre	22	3.86	2.455	.523
	Post	18	1.33	1.495	.352
Academic Vocab	Pre	22	6.91	2.877	.613
	Post	18	12.50	5.973	1.408
Topic Sentence	Pre	22	.86	.889	.190
	Post	18	1.89	.758	.179

Paraphrase	Pre	22	.77	.752	.160
	Post	18	1.44	.705	.166
Conc. Summarization	Pre	22	.45	.510	.109
	Post	18	.78	.428	.101
Unique	Pre	22	.32	.477	.102
Example	Post	18	.67	.970	.229

Table 3: Difference in generic and academic constructs in pre- and post-workshop writing with Independent t-test (at 95% confidence level)

	t-test for Equality of Means					
			Sig.	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
	t	df	(2-tailed)	Difference	Difference	Lower	Upper
Error. Fragment	2.428	38	.020	.864	.356	.144	1.584
Error Run-on	2.458	38	.019	.884	.360	.156	1.612
Error Comma-splice	2.453	38	.019	.783	.319	.137	1.429
Total Sentence Structure Error	3.825	38	.000	2.530	.661	1.191	3.869
Academic Vocabulary	-3.882	38	.000	-5.591	1.440	-8.506	-2.675
Topic Sentence	-3.873	38	.000	-1.025	.265	-1.561	-.489
Paraphrase (Intro. + Concl.)	-2.891	38	.006	-.672	.232	-1.142	-.201
Concl. Summarization	-2.142	38	.039	-.323	.151	-.629	-.018
Unique Example	-1.483	38	.146	-.348	.235	-.824	.127

Statistically significant improvements with a 95% confidence (*p*<0.05) were recorded in all categories except the use of unique examples, suggesting that students remain excessively personal in terms of writing content, an area which cannot be improved in general writing workshops but books are recommended to

enhance content delivery. The improvements show that students displayed an immediate awareness of grammatical mistakes, the use of formal and academic vocabulary, and an improved paraphrase and summarization of the main themes in academic writing. The use of hedging devices, such as modal verbs and epistemic adverbials, are too infrequent to be measured with statistical reliability, but they can be partially reflected in the use of unique and impersonal examples for the advancement of arguments. Its underuse suggests that more 'content' in various topics can be introduced, an area on which students can work with the reference recommendation provided in the learner package.

Writing performances in IELTS tests

While an immediate improvement was noted in the in-house academic writing immediately following the workshop, the IELTS writing scores, however, did not reveal a statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) between the pre- and post-tests of both the experimental and control groups. Findings are illustrated in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4: A comparison of pre- and post-workshop IELTS scores of the experimental group (t=0.609, df=23, p=0.548)

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	5.604	24	.6590	.1345
Post-test	5.521	24	.7587	.1549

Table 5: A comparison of pre- and post-workshop IELTS scores of the control group (t=-1.889, df=19, p=0.074) (Note: The unexpectedly low p value could be due to a low N(20) and a low correlation of pre- and post-scores (0.36))

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	5.150	20	.6304	.1410
Post-test	5.500	20	.8111	.1814

The absence of improvement in the IELTS scores could be attributed to a lack of consistent practice after the workshop and before the IELTS post-test (10 weeks in between). Instead of a re-run of the workshop, students were requested to practise what they have learnt with the checklist provided on writing tasks. A low submission rate (4%) of post-workshop exercises indicates a lack of practice, which was confirmed by the post-test feedback from students with no significant improvement in their IELTS writing scores.

Actually i think it's only a matter of time for preparation. I had been preparing for exam(with

*all subjects packed within 8 days), interviews, complex assignments and presentations before the IELTS test, that made me **unable to revise the notes and write some essay for preparation**. So, my lack of writing practice and revision resulted in the drop. But i really think that the workshop is really useful and i've learned something far which can't be measured from a mere of IELTS writing band. Thank you sir.*

<div align="center">Student xxxxxx038</div>

*I was **busy with my college work** submission along with my future plans of what to do next. Due to these reasons i **could not revise your checklist.***

<div align="center">Student xxxxxx983</div>

*I **didn't go through the materials before the test**. But I did borrow some exercises from library, maybe I was too late to practise :(For the reading part, I remember you said that we should read the passage first, so I try your technique and it works! But for the writing, you really helped us a lot, the main reason for not improving is **my lack of practice**.*

<div align="center">Student xxxxxx392</div>

Students who have improved, on the other hand, could specifically reflect on how constant practice with the materials could bring an improvement.

In your lesson notes and checklist, I will highlight the key points and key concepts, hence, to remind myself and bear in mind. For example, I can still remember that the topic sentence can exist in the latter paragraphs. In addition, I do the exercise/practice inside the notes, so that to be familiar of tasks. For the checklist, I focus on some areas, such as having at least THREE synonyms of each keyword. And I will spend some time to search some vocabularies and memorize them.

<div align="center">Student xxxxxx811</div>

I revise the notes that you gave us in the lesson by understanding its meaning and do some practice at home before going to have exam. You have given us a list of adjectives describing the trend of the charts in writing task 1. I looked up for the exercise and answer key that you gave us every week and see how to use those words to write a good passage. I really found the notes about charts and graphs helpful as I did not know how to write this kind of description before joining the workshop. Also, I found that the notes talking about the argumentative writing skills is also useful, e.g. about how to use the tense, some "dos and don'ts" in writing argumentative assay. Thank you for your teaching on

all those writing skills in English.

Student xxxxxx321

Thanks for your help! I got a satisfied result in my IELTS exam, especially in the writing task. For Task 1, I learned how to analyze the graph from the workshop and the steps to describe the graph; for example, the first paragraph is to describe the topic of the graph but not copying the title only, describe the significant points first and how to make comparison. These skills helped me to finish Task 1 better. For Task 2, the workshop reminded me the skills of writing essay, especially of writing strong topic sentences. I found it very useful.

Student xxxxxx856

Based on these feedbacks from these two groups of students, it can be argued that a sustainable writing performance, as an active production skill as opposed to reading and listening, requires constant post-workshop practice. The difficulty of academic writing is further confirmed by its comparison with the other skills in the IELTS test scores. Table 6 in the following page shows that students' writing performances were the worst when compared to reading, listening, and speaking. Statistically significant improvements were also recorded in the receptive skills of reading and listening for both the experimental and control groups, but not in production skills of writing and speaking.

Table 6: A comparison of the IELTS scores in writing, reading, listening, and speaking

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
2011 Jan WRITING	44	5.398	.6784
2012 Apr WRITING	44	5.511	.7738
2011 Jan Overall	44	5.761	.6690
2012 Apr Overall	44	6.057	.7940
2011 Jan Reading	44	5.807	.8574
2012 Apr Reading	44	6.364	1.0021
2011 Jan Listening	44	6.091	.8778
2012 Apr Listening	44	6.557	1.0955
2011 Jan Speaking	44	5.523	.7067
2012 Apr Speaking	44	5.591	.6758

Conclusive remarks

With a cross-examination of the findings above and in consideration of the project objectives, the project is considered successful. Student needs and learning strategies, as well as overall interest in academic writing, have been raised and enhanced in the areas of grammatical accuracy, academic vocabulary, paraphrasing/summarizing, and the effective use of topic sentences.

Project Impact

This section highlights the positive impacts of the project on the attendants of the workshop, and HPCC overall. Contributions of the students will be described with respect to the employment of generic, and academic writing skills, and the development of critical and reflective learning strategies facilitated by the learner package. Benefits to HPCC will be outlined in relation to the sustainability, applicability, and an estimate of the cost-effectiveness of future workshop implementation. The outcomes and deliverables of the project will also be summarized.

Benefits to project participants

The primary benefits to the workshop attendants reside in a heightened awareness of and an adoption of a critical learning approach in the various generic and academic writing skills. Instead of reiterating the quantitative measurements of these benefits already depicted, a qualitative account of skill enhancements is provided below.

Enhancing grammaticality and appropriacy

The workshop has raised the students' awareness of the importance of 'verb' (or 'transitivity' in terms of linguistics concept) as the governing concept of sentence structures. The summary of clause types and common errors in the learner package was considered valuable by students. With a systematic recognition of sentence structures outlined in the learner package, fewer run-on and sentence fragments were identified in subsequent rewrite exercises. A specific expansion of academic vocabulary and the general employment of formal registers were also recorded in post-workshop writing (Appendix 3), facilitated by supplementary and self-help learning guides including the 'Chinglish Guide' and 'Formality Guide'.

Improving cohesion and coherence

Student originally showed an over-reliance of explicit conjunctions rather than a 'textual coherence' through pronouns and semantic linkages. Activities on sentence restructuring were considered difficult by students, but reading exercises with an illustration of 'theme-rheme' analyses (start and end position of a sentence) of

textual examples were supported by positive student feedback (Appendix 1).

In terms of generating coherent ideas, a table of synonyms was considered effective by students. A planning with different semantic categories was introduced and well used by students in their assignments (Appendix 4) as reflected in an increase in the paraphrase of essay topics and summary of major themes of argumentation in post-workshop writing. To reinforce these critical writing skills, a list of academic vocabulary (Coxhead, 2000) and tutorial books were included in the learner package on synonyms and formal vocabulary from newspaper.

Another area of improvement is the increased use of quality verbs to represent and categorize ideas despite the general awareness of the importance of theme statements or topic sentences. Most pre-working writings revealed the use of 'to-be' verbs which did not convey the writer stance in argumentative essays. Verbs of various attitudinal natures such as 'facilitate', 'undermine' were introduced in a 'writing checklist' (Appendix 5) to support and refute arguments. Increased use of quality topic sentences with attitudinal verbs were observed in post-workshop writings.

Interpreting and presenting data logically

With the unavailability of a breakdown score of the analytical task in the IELTS test, in-class observation, assignments (Appendix 6), and student reflections serve as the primary assessment of what students have learnt in data interpretation and presentation. The workshop attendants were found to have paid more attention to the purpose, category, title, and significance of various charts & graphs. (At the beginning of the workshop, more than two-thirds of students could not distinguish the difference between a text description and chart/graph, and wrongly mentioned that the purpose of a chart description is to convey personal opinions with arguments not illustrated in the chart/graph). Satisfaction was noted by the students with a feedback score of 4.2 (max. 5). Some difficulties, however, were noted among students with flowcharts. Additional exercises concentrating on words serving various rhetorical functions for processes were provided (Appendix 7).

Promoting autonomous learning

In addition to an explicit teaching of writing skills, the workshop also aimed to promote independent and reflective learning among students outside a classroom setting. A 60% submission rate of post-lesson written reflection can be considered acceptable, taking into account of the non-compulsory nature of the workshop and students' workload at school. Such reflective exercises facilitate the specific identification of one's weaknesses and an awareness of the newly acquired learning concepts. The reinforcement of such concepts, however, requires long-term practices which can be augmented by the supplementary self-help materials such as 'Checklist on argumentative writing' and 'Online Resources Guide'.

Benefits to HPCC

The benefits to the workshop attendants outlined above can be potentially extended to all students (approximately 2000) of the community college who share a similar learning background and needs. The guided learner package, consisting of nine 80-min sessions, can be conveniently implemented as a supplementary enhancement workshop in regular school terms or in the summer in a normal classroom setting but with no specific demand on manpower and equipment. Different modules of the workshop, such as fundamental language skills, charts and graphs interpretation, or cohesiveness/coherence development, can also be administered independently of each other to accommodate specific school curriculum, and students' individual timetables. Enhancement workshops of a similar format have been a constant and well-received practice at HPCC without an additional cost of acquiring headcounts and classrooms. The implementation of this guided English enhancement workshop is therefore considered applicable and sustainable over many years with no significant obstacles or risks identified at the time of this writing.

Taking into account the availability of part-time teachers who may contribute, potentially all students in the institution can benefit. A further reduction in the associated estimate shown below reflects the cost-effectiveness of the project.

$1,438,000 / 5000 students in a 5-yr period = $290 student

Unit cost = $290 / 12 hr per workshop = ~$24 per student per hour

Cost-effectiveness

This initiative's main costs included the Project Implementation Officer, the Package Developer and the pre and post IELTS tests. Precise expenditures are included in the Financial Report with the complete package. Given the large addressable student population, it is concluded that given the estimated unit cost per potential beneficiary at HPCC, the total expenditures are well justified.

Table 7: Financial Status

Budget Items (Based on Schedule I of Agreement)	Approved Budget	Actual Expense	Balance
Manpower	$1,092,000.00	$953,675.90	$138,324.10
Equipment and Resources	$95,000.00	$71,315.97	$23,684.03
Services	$35,000.00	$7,200.00	$27,800.00
General Expenses	$216,000.00	$156,720.80	59,279.20

Assumptions:

One-time cost of the project (provisional): $1,438,000

Implementation of future workshop in years: 5

School period per year (2 semesters + 1 summer):   3

Teachers available per school period: 10

80-min workshop session per teacher per school period: 6

Students per workshop session: 25

Calculations:

Workshop sessions per year = 10 x 6 x 3 = 180

Workshop sessions in 5 years = 180 x 5 = 900

Unit cost per potential beneficiary at HPCC = $1,438,000 / (900 x 25)

$$= \sim\$64 \text{ per session}$$

$$= \sim\$48 \text{ per hour}$$

Since the skills addressed in the project are not to be outdated within five years and the package can potentially be implemented in other community colleges with similar settings, the unit cost per beneficiary can be significantly lower than $48 per hour which could be considered low when compared to a typical rate of $60 - $100 per hour of a language course.

Deliverables and Modes of Dissemination

The major deliverables of the project are the identification of major learning needs and strategies, and a heightened awareness of, if not sustained improvement by, the generic and academic writing skills which the project participants employ critical and reflective learning more frequently than before. Specific deliverables include a guided enhancement learner package consisting of nine 80-min lessons of learning materials with writing samples and explanations of target skills and language points. In addition, the package includes an instructor guide and supplementary guides such as 'Chinglish Guide', 'Formality Guide', 'Online Resources Guide', and a summary checklist on argumentative writing. Details of the dissemination activities conducted are reported in the Activity List in Section 5.

While a sustainable writing performance may require discipline and diligence by less proficient students over an extended period, the package appeared to have fostered an immediate awareness of language concepts in grammar, academic vocabulary and formality. Since the package has incorporated inputs from hundreds of students and can be readily administered in a one-semester timeframe with minimal teaching resources, it is recommended that the learner package be implemented in recurring workshops with practices

of various academic topics, which may potentially benefit thousands of associate degree and higher diploma students.

Activity List

Stage 1 – Determination of learning needs and strategies

Project activities completed in this stage (Sep 2010 – Feb 2011) are reported below in Table 8.

Table 8: Stage 1

Dates, time and venues	Brief descriptions of activities and resources used for implementing the Project *	Number and types of participants (if applicable)
Sep 2010 (Distribution) Oct – Nov 2010 (Analysis) HPCC campus	*Questionnaire on learners' strategies* • A 25-min, 50-item questionnaire aimed at obtaining information on the learning habits/strategies in and perceptions of English writing was administered, targeting more than half (15/28 classes) of the students with a random representation of various Associate (AD) and Higher Diploma (HD) programmes. • The questionnaire was administered in-class with a response rate of 100%. • Results of the questionnaire were analysed according to the *"Two Classes, Six Sets"* learning strategy framework described in major literature and recommendations were made for the writing enhancement package and workshops. • Details of the analysis and recommendation were included in the "Needs Analysis Report" in Phase I. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 8: Adapted version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire ✧ Appendix 9: Responses from students to the adapted SILL questionnaire ✧ Appendix 10: Sample of a completed SILL questionnaire	504 HPCC AD, HD Year 1 students taking class General English III (C1 level of Common European Framework)
Sep 2010 – Feb, 2011 HPCC, HKU campus	*Literature review* • Literature on language learning strategies, learner types, academic English, specific writing issues encountered by Chinese learners were reviewed to provide inputs into the design and analysis of the questionnaire, and into the development of the writing enhancement package and workshop.	Project Implementation Officer

	• A list of references is provided in the reference section of this report. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 11: Sample of the literature reviewed	

Oct – Nov, 2010
 	
HPCC campus
	Student selection
	
	• Promotion of the workshop was launched and 60 students were selected as described in Schedule I of the project - 25 in a target group, 25 in a control group, and 10 for pilot testing in Phase II. Participation in the workshop was voluntary.
	
	• The numbers of participants in various stages of the selection process were as follows:
	   - Indication of interest in questionnaire (402);
	   - online registration (256);
	   - submission of application form with brief writing on interests in English learning (161);
	   - invitation for interview (119); and
	   - interviewees (78).
	
	• The three major selection criteria were:
	1) students' demonstration of interest in attending the workshop (not only in IELTS attendance);
	2) commitment to attending the workshop and continuing their studies at HPCC in Year 2 (selected students will attend the workshop in Year Two; and
	3) the variety of academic/professional programmes the students represent, covering the discipline of business, accounting, health, hospitality, psychology, sports, social service, legal and law enforcement.
	Evidence:
	✧ Appendix 12: Samples of promotional activities signup and flyers
		HPCC AD,HD Year 1 students

Nov 2010 HPCC campus	***In-house assessment on language concepts***[+] • In view of the difficulties in English vocabulary and grammar reported in the questionnaire, a brief 25-min assessment (this is not a pre-test) on academic vocabulary and language concepts was administered to the students. • The results confirmed a lack of knowledge in academic vocabulary and pattern recognition in sentence structures were the target areas for improvement. • Details were reported in "Needs Analysis Report" in Phase I. **Evidence:**	49 HPCC students from the target and control group (one was unavailable for the test time)

	✧ Appendix 13: Sample of a completed language proficiency assessment worksheet	
Nov 2010 HPCC campus	***In-depth interview on learner styles and learning strategies*** • To complement the quantitative findings of the questionnaire, qualitative ideas/opinions were collected in an in-depth (10-item, 40-min) interview with 13 students on their learning styles/strategies, experience and difficulties. • Details were reported in "Needs Analysis Report" in Phase I. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 14: Sample completed interview worksheet	13 HPCC students from the target and control group (participation is voluntary)
Oct – Nov 2010 HPCC campus	***Trial sessions of the workshop[+]*** • To prepare for the pilot testing of the writing package in Phase II, three trial 1.5-hour sessions with each addressing a different topic were conducted. • Participation and feedback were on a voluntary basis with 16 student feedback forms collected. • A student feedback score on the usefulness and difficulty of the sessions were 3.9 and 3.1, respectively (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest), indicating an appropriate approach of the writing package development. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 15: Signup records of the trial (pre-pilot) workshop	19 HPCC students Project Implementation Officer as instructor
Oct 2010 – Feb 2011 HPCC campus	***Development of the initial draft of the writing enhancement package*** • An initial draft of learning materials with an instructor's guides were developed for the workshop comprising nine 1.5-hour sessions. • The package addresses 10 generic and seven specific areas in English writing through interactive and communicative learning tasks. • Authentic reading/writing materials, featuring the findings and recommendations garnered from the questionnaire, literature review, assessment on language concepts, in-depth interviews and the trial workshop were utilized. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 16: Outline of the pre-pilot workshop	Project Implementation Officer Learning Package Developer
Oct 2010 – Feb 2011 Nikko Hotel at TST	***Pre-test (IELTS) administration*** • Two info sessions on IELTS, as a pre-test, were conducted: - the first provided a general introduction and promotion of the test (mainly organized by the Student Development Resources Centre);	~60 HPCC students (1st info session) 50 HPCC students (2nd info session)

- the second offered details of the registration process. • The 50 selected students attended the test (academic module) on Jan 22, 2011. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 17: Results of the Pre- IELTS test – 22 January 2011	

Stage 2 – Pilot workshop and learner package development

Project activities completed in this stage (Mar 2011 – Aug 2011) are here reported in Table 9.

Table 9: Stage 2

Dates, time and venues	Brief descriptions of activities and resources used for implementing the Project *	Number and types of participants (if applicable)
Feb – May 2011 HPCC campus	***Pilot run of Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshop using the initial draft of the learner package*** • Nine weekly 80-min lessons of the workshop were administered to a pilot group of nine students with an average attendance rate of 94%. • The submission rate of after-class reflection and assignment were 88% and 94%*, respectively. • All students either agreed or strongly agreed the workshop had helped them improve and indicated they would like to attend similar workshops in the future. • An overall satisfaction score of 4.7 (max. 5) was attained. *Note: Calculation was based on the first eight lessons excluding the last session due to student commitment to the preparation of exam at the end of the school term. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 18: Pilot workshop attendance ✧ Appendix 19: Sample of submitted assignment in pilot workshop ✧ Appendix 20: Sample of student feedback in pilot workshop	9 HPCC AD, HD students who completed General English III (C1 level of Common European Framework)
Feb – Aug 2011 HPCC campus	***Analysis and assessment of student in-class performance and after-class reflection*** • Observation and analysis were performed on the following: - language concepts; - learning styles; - in-class performance; and - after-class reflections.	Project Implementation Officer

	• Conclusions derived from the above were addressed in each of the lessons in the course outline below. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 19: Sample of submitted assignment in pilot workshop ✧ Assessment Report submitted in Phase II	
May – Aug, 2011 HPCC campus	***Edition and Completion of the initial learner package*** for Phase III • Based on the instructor assessment and student feedback, the majority of the workshop components addressing the foundation of language skills were preserved. • Critical analysis was reinforced by an additional session on charts and graph analysis. • Materials on proper utilization of online resources were perceived as overly challenging and so removed from the core outline and revised as a supplementary learning resource. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 21: Revised outline of the workshop ✧ Revised Learner Package submitted with the report	Project Implementation Officer & Learning Package Developer

Stage 3 – Experimental workshop part 1

Table 10 shows the project activities completed in this stage (Sep 2011 – Feb 2012).

Table 10: Stage 3

Dates, time and venues	Brief descriptions of activities and resources used for implementing the Project *	Number and types of participants (if applicable)
Sep – Nov 2011 HPCC campus	***Implementation of the learner package in Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshop*** • Nine weekly 80-min lessons of the workshop were administered to the experimental group of 20 students with an average attendance rate of 92%. • The submission rates of weekly after-class reflections and assignments were 70% and 65%*, respectively. • Over 88% students chose agree or strongly agree to the issues of whether the workshop had helped them improve and their interest in attending future workshops. • The overall satisfaction scores of the workshop and the instructor were 4.2 and 4.4 (max. 5), respectively.	20 HPCC AD, HD students formed the experimental group (identified in phase I of the project in Jan, 2011) Note: four students attended the workshop in

	*Note: Calculation was based on the first eight lessons excluding the last one due to student commitment to the preparation of exam at the end of the school term. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 22: Workshop attendance (post pilot – part 1) ✧ Appendix 23: Sample of submitted assignment (post pilot workshop) ✧ Appendix 24: Sample of student feedback (post pilot workshop)	Feb – Apr 2012 due to HPCC internships and family issues in this phase, and one discontinued studies at HPCC.

Sep 2011 – Feb 2012
 	
HPCC campus
	Analysis and assessment of student in-class performance and after-class reflection
	● As in Stage 2, observation and analysis were performed on the following:
	   - language concepts;
	   - learning styles;
	   - in-class performance; and
	   - after-class reflections.
	● Conclusions derived from the above were addressed in each of the lessons in the course outline below.
	Evidence:
	✧ Assessment Report submitted in Phase III
		Project Implementation Officer

Sep 2011 - Feb 2012 HPCC campus	***Completion of the learner package*** ● Based on the overall instructor assessment and student feedback in pilot implementation in Phase II and implementation in Phase III, the final learner package addresses the fundamental skill sets in academic writing (see Table 6). ● Supplementary materials cover learning guides on online resources, academic vocabulary, Chinglish avoidance, and formal-vs-informal registers. ● An up-to-date outline of the workshop has been provided. **Evidence:** ✧ Revised Learner Package submitted with the report.	Project Implementation Officer & Learning Package Developer

Stage 4 – Experimental workshop part 2 & project assessment

Project activities of Stage 4 (Mar 2012 – Aug 2012) are reported below in Table 11.

Table 11: Stage 4

Dates, time and venues	Brief descriptions of activities and resources used for implementing the Project *	Number and types of participants (if applicable)
Feb – Apr 2012 HPCC campus	***Implementation of the learner package in Guided English Writing Enhancement Workshop Part 2*** ● Nine weekly 80-min lessons of the workshop were administered to	4 HPCC AD, HD students in the experimental group

	the remaining four students in the experimental group who could not attend the stage 1 workshop. • The aggregate attendance rate of the workshop (Part 1 plus Part 2) was 90%. • The submission rates of weekly after-class reflections and assignments were 60% and 58%[*], respectively. • Over 88% students agreed or strongly agreed the workshop had facilitated their progress and that they were interested in attending similar workshops in the future. • The overall satisfaction scores of the workshop and the instructor were 4.1 and 4.4 (max. 5), respectively. *Note: Calculation was based on the first eight lessons excluding the last one due to student commitment to the preparation of exam at the end of the school term. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 25: Overall workshop attendance and submission of assignments and reflections	
Apr 14, 21 2012 Regal Kowloon Hotel at TST	***Post-test (IELTS) attendance*** • The 44 selected students attended the test (academic module) on Apr 14, 2012, and 30 on Apr 21, 2012. (Three students discontinued studies at HPCC and three were absent in the exam) • Two exam dates were offered to students to accommodate their different school timetables. **Evidence:** ✧ Appendix 26: Results of the Post- IELTS test – 14 and 21 April 2012 ✧ Test fee settlement provided in the financial audit report.	44 HPCC students

May – Aug, 2012
 	
 HPCC campus
	Final evaluation and financial audit of the project
	 • Project activities and the attainment of associated objectives highlight the benefits to the following:
	    – project participants and HPCC;
	    – sustainability and applicability of the project; and
	    – outcomes and deliverables.
	 Evidence:
	 ✧ Final Evaluation Report.
	 ✧ Auditor Report
		Project Implementation Officer and project leaders
		
		 Financial Auditor

Conclusion

Overall, the findings indicate that the workshop was well received and the participants quite satisfied with the new learning package. In addition, statistically significant improvements at a 95% confidence level ($p<0.05$) were recorded in the post-workshop essays in grammatical accuracy, the use of academic vocabulary, and overall organization of academic essays with the employment of effective topic sentences and paraphrased texts. Although the aggregate IELTS writing scores did not reveal a statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) between the pre- and post-tests by both the experimental and control group, improvements appeared to be reflected in the post-workshop writing, post-test student feedback. More consistent practice, especially with writing as an active production skill as opposed to reading and listening, will consolidate and help retain the newly acquired writing concepts and skills.

With a triangulation of the analyses above, the project is considered successful with regard to the two stated objectives. The associated research and workshop have identified students' needs and learning strategies, and have aroused their interests in academic writing. While a sustainable writing performance may require discipline and diligence by less proficient students over an extended period, the package appeared to have fostered an immediate awareness of language concepts in grammar, academic vocabulary and formality. Since it has incorporated input from hundreds of students and can be readily administered in a one-semester timeframe with minimal teaching resources, it is recommended that the learner package be implemented in recurring workshops with practices of various academic topics, which may potentially benefit thousands of associate degree and higher diploma students.

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