

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

Progress Report

Project No. : 89992031

Reporting Period: From March 2010 (month/year) to August 2010 (month/year)

Part A

Development of a Self-access Reading and Listening Package for Enhancing English

Project Title: Learning Effectiveness for Community College Students in Hong Kong

Name of Grantee: School of Professional and Continuing Education, The University of Hong Kong

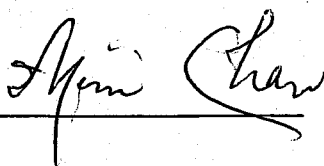
Project Period: From September 2009 (month/year) to August 2011 (month/year)

Part B

Please use separate A4-size sheets to report the progress with regard to the following aspects:

1. Types and brief descriptions of Project activities held/completed during the reporting period (*the information may be presented in the form of a table*).
2. The dates, time, venues and number of participants / beneficiaries of Project activities held, and resources (e.g. equipment, manpower) used for the implementation of Project activities.
3. Project milestone(s) and deliverables attained at the end of the reporting period and evidence showing the attainment of milestones and deliverables.
4. The percentage, in terms of key tasks, of the Project completed at the end of each reporting period.
5. Project variation*, if any, during the reporting period, together with details and justifications

Signature: _____



Organization Chop: _____



Name of Authorized Person: MIMI CHAN

Name of Grantee SPACE, The University

Organization: of Hong Kong

Position of Authorized

Person: Project Coordinator

Date: October 20, 2010

* A separate written application should be submitted to the Grant for prior written approval.

*Progress Report of Project should be signed by the head of the Grantee organization, the person-in-charge of the Project or the person who signed the Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme Agreement for acceptance of the Grant on behalf of the Grantee organization.

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme (QEGS) Project

Development of a Self-access Reading and Listening
Package for Enhancing English Learning
Effectiveness for Community College Students
in Hong Kong

Progress Report (1 March 2010 – 31 August 2010)

Project Leaders: (*in alphabetical order*) Prof. Mimi Chan, Dr. Sabina Mak and Dr. Michael Wong

Team members: (*in alphabetical order*), Mr. David Cheng (Half-time Package Developer), Dr. Jessie Choi, Dr. Liu Kanglong (Project Officer), and Mr. Tommy Lui, Ms. Yung Ching San (Part-time Research Assistant)

1. Introduction

Following the successful completion of milestones in the first phase (1 September 2009 to 28 February 2010) of the project, the activities in the second phase have been completed according to the proposed schedule in a satisfactory manner. In order to set a background for this current progress report, the purpose of the research project and milestones achieved in the first phase are briefly summarized here.

The current Quality Enhancement Grant Project titled “Development of a Self-access Reading and Listening Package for Enhancing English Learning Effectiveness for Community College Students in Hong Kong” commenced on 1 September, 2009. The project is aimed at meeting the needs of community college students by developing a self-access learning package (referred to hereinafter as “the Package”) focusing on the two receptive academic English skills of reading and listening.

Since its commencement on 1 September 2009, the project has been going smoothly in accordance with the proposed timeframe. A full-time project officer and a half-time package developer were employed to monitor and facilitate the research progress and implementation issues. The milestones achieved in the first phase include:

1) Needs Analysis Report

A thorough needs analysis in the form of questionnaires and interviews was conducted in October 2009 and it was discovered that community college students lacked necessary reading and listening strategies to study academic English effectively. It was also found that most students possessed a relatively narrow sense of academic learning strategies and related them to examination-taking skills only. Thus, the findings supported the idea that the development of a self-access reading and listening package can be a viable approach for addressing their weaknesses in this area.

2) Pre-test

A pre-test in the form of an internationally recognized English language test, i.e., IELTS, has been arranged for the participating students of the project. Their scores

are used as the principal data for grouping the students into a control group and an experimental group.

3) Selection of Participants

We sent out a letter of invitation to the students to seek their interest in participating in the project. 70 students were finally selected as the participants. These students then took the IELTS test as the pre-test. The 70 students will be divided into two groups, and to ensure accuracy in our findings, it is guaranteed that there should be no statistically significant difference in terms of the overall English competence between the two groups. These students will start their self-access learning from October 2010 as proposed.

2. Types and Descriptions of Project Activities Held

The second phase of the research project started on 1 March, 2010 and since then, a number of activities have been conducted for facilitating the progress of the project. Our major task during this phase was to complete the Package which consists of 10 modules in total. The design of the Package is based on the findings in the needs analysis and recent trends in ESL (English as a Second Language) academic reading and listening research. As tailor-made self-access learning materials, the Package integrates the necessary strategies which community college students are supposed to master, and includes a rich variety of contents with 10 different themes. With the joint efforts of our project members, the Package was successfully completed and will be used by our students starting from October 2010.

Major research activities leading to the completion of milestones set in the research proposal during the second phase (1 March to 31 August 2010) are summarized here and presented in Table 1.

Types	Description of Project Activities	Purposes
Literature review	The literature review for this phase is mainly on the operationalization of different academic reading and listening strategies. Literature under review includes a number of research papers, textbooks, IELTS	By conducting a related literature review in this area, it is hoped that a more solid and rigorous package that is appropriate for community college students.

	training books.	
In-depth analysis of questionnaire and interview data	Based on the preliminary analysis of related data in the first phase, a more in-depth analysis of the data is conducted on a continuing basis. A research paper titled "Investigating the academic reading strategies of community college students in Hong Kong" was completed and sent to <i>The International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning</i> for further review.	The purpose of this continued analysis of data is to fully exploit the data at hand. The publication of our research findings can also benefit the teaching of academic English, particularly the skill of academic reading, in other community colleges of a similar nature.
Design of the Package	A rough design of the Package was set at the beginning of the project. Since the second phase of the project started, we have run a series of group meetings to fine-tune the design criteria and content flow of the Package. It was decided that the Package be divided into 10 separate but not discrete modules in which all the important reading and listening strategies will be covered and taught in a systematic manner.	The design criteria and content flow of the Package are strictly based on research findings obtained from needs analysis and a thorough review of related literature. To a large extent, it can address the needs of community college students through their self-access learning.
Development, modification and proofreading of the Package	For better developing the Package, we also invited a number of English teachers in HKU SPACE Community College to contribute their insights and expertise by helping to search for related contents and to design some sets of questions. Cross-checking and assessment were implemented for the modules developed to ensure content reliability and validity. An English native speaking teacher was also invited to help proofread the package and ensure consistency of contents and related strategies.	The vigorous process of content development, modification and proofreading is implemented for ensuring a high validity and reliability of the Package. Special concerns include the adjustment of certain strategies in order to cater the self-access nature of the package.
Pilot test	10 students were invited to have a pilot test of the selected modules of the Package. Overall, the students reacted positively to the package and they also commented	The pilot test can help the researchers and package developers to address issues that are ignored from students' perspective. Some of the

	that the pilot test strengthened their motivation to participate in the main test.	contents and strategies were further modified to better meet the needs and the implementation of the Package.
Finalization of the Package	After the Package contents were modified and proofread, our project members also devoted time to check the format of every module for ensuring its consistency and accuracy. A guideline was also added to the Package for better guiding the students on how to use the materials for self-access learning.	The inclusion of a detailed guideline is important for guiding students on how to make the best use of the Package rather than treating it as examination-like materials. It is hoped that students will be better motivated after studying the guideline before starting their self-access learning.

Table 1. Description of Project Activities Completed in the Second Phase (1 March to 31 August 2010)

3. Implementation Issues

In this section, implementation issues in relation to the enforcement of the current project are briefly summarized. These include: 1) dates, venues and participants of the project activities; 2) resources used for implementing the project.

3.1. A list of activities carried out in the second phase of the research project is briefly summarized in the following table (Table 2).

Dates	Venue	Participants / Persons Involved	Activities
March-August, 2010	KEC*	Research Team	A number of group meetings were arranged during this phase. The major issues being discussed in the meetings include 1) design criteria and content flow of the Package; 2) implementation issues such as recruitment of students, design of learner contract; 3) ordering of books; 4) clearance of copyright for the contents developed.
15 June, 2010	KEC Meeting Room	Research team and HKU SPACE KEC library staff	A meeting was held with our library colleagues to discuss a number of issues, including: 1) placement of the learning package and reference books; 2) venue for students to implement self-access learning; 3) safety and placement of learning equipments; 4) maintenance of a log book for checking students'

			attendance
7 July, 2010	KEC	10 students from HKU SPACE Community College	10 students from HKU SPACE Community College were invited to take the pilot test by studying the selected modules. After the test, they were instructed to complete a small questionnaire. Findings in relation to their feedback and comments were taken into consideration for further revising the Package.
June-Aug, 2010	N/A	Research Team	A number of reference books on IELTS and academic English reading and listening were ordered and purchased through A & P Bookshop, Cengage Learning and Dawson Books.
July-Aug, 2010	KEC	Research Team	Letters and emails for requesting copyright permission were sent to the related authors in the hope of clearing copyright for the contents taken from certain reference books and the Internet.
July, 2010	KEC	Chan Mei Mei Mimi; Liu Kanglong; Mak Ho-yan Sabina; Wong Lap Tuen	A research paper based on the needs analysis was jointly completed by four members of the research team. The said paper was accepted by the "14th Cross-strait Forum on Continuing Education" to be held in Hong Kong Baptist University and will be presented in the conference.
July, 2010	KEC	Same as above	The above research paper was sent to <i>The International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning</i> and is now under review.

* Kowloon East Campus of HKU SPACE Community College

Table 2. Dates, Venues and Participants of Project Activities in the Second Phase

3.2. Resources and Manpower

For enforcement of the current project, HKU SPACE Community College has provided related resources, including office areas, office facilities, management and logistics support, etc. In addition to the researchers/teachers within the college who are directly involved with the current research, some full-time/half-time/part-time staff are employed for facilitating the implementation of the project. In May 2010, a new research assistant was also employed to help facilitate the implementation of the research project.

The names, duties and employment period of these added staff are summarized in Table 3.

Names	Title	Employment Period	Duties
Kwok Sai Kit, Steven	Project Officer (Full-time)	1 Sep 2009 — 3 Jan 2010 (resigned on his own accord)	Facilitating the coordination and implementation of the current project, performing administrative duties related to the day-to-day operation of the project and producing regular reports on the project.
Liu Kanglong	Same as above.	1 Mar 2010 — 29 Sep 2010	Same as above.
Cheng Chi Tan, David	Package Developer (Half-time)	1 Sep 2009 — 31 Aug 2011	Development and implementation of the self-access reading and listening package for the project by designing relevant learning materials.
Kalpana Rajesh Agrawah	Part-time Research Assistant	1 Sep 2009 — 31 Mar 2010	Processing of questionnaire data in computerized form, data coding and assistance in other research work.
Yung Ching San	Same as above.	1 May 2010 — 31 Aug 2010	Same as above.

Table 3. Staff Employed for Implementing the Project

4. Project Milestones and Deliverables

In line with the project activities, the key milestones set out in the project for the second phase have been successfully achieved during this period. These milestones include:

4.1. The Self-access Reading and Listening Package

As a key milestone listed in the research proposal, the Package was completed through the joint efforts of the research team. The Package takes into consideration the findings from the needs analysis report and the recent trends in ESL academic reading and listening research. As a tailor-made self-access package for community college students, the Package tries to address the immediate needs and weaknesses of this group of students in academic English reading. The Package consists of 10 modules in total, with themes ranging from “happiness”, “family”, “earth” to

“language and culture” and “education”. One of the purposes of the Package is to equip students with the necessary background knowledge of social, economic and cultural issues which are of immediate importance for academic English learning. By learning the theme-based self-access materials, it is hoped that students will develop both effective reading and listening strategies and gain a better understanding of factual encyclopedic knowledge.

Learning guidelines are also included in the Package. The guideline gives a detailed introduction of the reading and listening macro-strategies and micro-skills. Students can check the list for specific skills which they feel inadequate. To a large extent, the Package is both theme-based and strategy-based to allow learners to cross-check the areas or strategies they intend to learn. For an elaboration of the theme and strategies/skills, please see Appendix 1.

4.2. Pilot tests

One pilot test was conducted on 7 July, 2010 in which 10 students were invited to complete a selected module. Students were given two to three hours to study the Module. After the learning session was completed, they were instructed to complete a questionnaire and provide their feedback in a group interview. It was found that most students reacted positively to the design of the Package and they also indicated an increased motivation to participate in the current project. Analysis of the interview data showed that most students, though having learned some reading/listening strategies in high school, are inadequate in their academic English competence. As a result, there is a need for them to study the strategies in a systematic manner in order to be qualified for university education. Feedback and comments obtained from these students were taken into account for further revising and modifying the contents and design of the Package.

4.3. Research paper

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire and interview conducted in the first phase, we have drafted a research paper titled “Investigating the academic reading strategies of community college students in Hong Kong”. The paper has been sent to *The*

International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning and is currently under review. A Chinese version of the paper has been accepted by the Eleventh Cross-strait Forum on Continuing Education 「第十一屆海峽兩岸繼續教育論壇」 and will be presented in the conference on November 18-19, 2010. It is believed that the findings-based on the students in HKU SPACE Community College will benefit other schools of a similar nature. In this regard, dissemination of knowledge is equally important for improving the teaching quality of community college education in Hong Kong.

5. Evaluation of the Project

As set out in the proposal, all milestones in the second phase have been successfully attained by conducting related project activities. The percentage, in terms of key tasks, of the project completed at the end of the current reporting period is about 50%. This has paved the way for the project to enter into the third phase where the major focus is the implementation of the Package aiming at improving students' academic reading and listening skills. The copyright clearance is also a major target upon entering the third phase. It is worth pointing out here that we have started the clearance of copyright starting from June and a number of authors have granted us permission to use their work. We will continue to work on the copyright issues in the third phase in the hope of obtaining permission for using external resources.

6. Budget and Expenditure

So far as the current project is concerned, there is no change in the implementation of our proposed project activities and attainment of milestones in the second phase. There are minor discrepancies between the budgeted and the actual expense on some budgeted items. Please refer to Table 4 for the expenditure of the first and the second phase (also note that the figures are an estimated figure due to the delay of financial booking). A detailed breakdown of the expenditure for budgeted items will be provided in the final report after the auditing of the whole project is completed.

Items	Stage 1		Stage 2		Accumulated Total	
	Approved Budget	Actual Expenditure	Approved Budget	Actual Expenditure	Approved Budget	Actual Expenditure
Manpower	282,625	211,057	282,625	289,081	565,250	500,138
References	60,000	19,120	30,000	46,643*	90,000	65,763
Equipment	39,100	2,173	--	35,178	39,100	37,346
Software	--	--	15,000	11,066	15,000	11,066
Design of questionnaires	5,000	--	--	--	5,000	--
Printing of questionnaires	3,000	--	--	--	3,000	--
Miscellaneous	4,000	1,079	4,000	5,600	8,000	5,779
IELTS Application Fees	105,000	94,500	--	--	105,000	94,500
Total	498,725	327,929	331,625	387,568	830,350	715,497
Remarks*	Orders have been placed; some of the invoice will be dated in the third phase					

Table 4. Actual Expenditure Against Approved Budget in the Second Phase of the Project

7. Summary

This progress report summarizes all the major activities, milestones, implementation issues in relation to the participants and beneficiaries of the current project during the second phase of the project. Apart from an overview of the research progress in the first phase, a broad and contextual assessment of the project in terms of the research activities completed is also provided. Based on what has been achieved during this period, it can be seen that the project is being carried out, with the aim of completing the research goals and milestones in compliance with the proposed timeframe.

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Appendix I: A List of Reading and Listening Strategies and Skills with Correspondent Themes.

Appendix II: Research paper entitled "Investigating the academic reading strategies of community college students in Hong Kong" (both Chinese and English versions)