

# Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

**Progress Report**

**Project No. : 89992031**

Reporting Period: From September 2010 (month/year) to February 2011 (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: T. M. Wong

Organization Chop: 

Name of Authorized Person: T. M. Wong

Name of Grantee: SPACE, The University

Organization: of Hong Kong

Position of Authorized

Person: Project Coordinator

Date: April 13, 2011

\* 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 September 2010 – 28 February 2011)**

**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, Mr. Tommy Lui, Ms. Yung Ching San (Part-time Research Assistant), Dr. Yu Ying (Project Officer).**

## **1. Introduction**

This report details the successful completion of the proposed activities as scheduled in the third phase (1 September 2010 to 28 February 2011) of the project. To give a clear picture of the achievements up to the current stage, the research purposes of the project and the milestones achieved in the first two phases are briefly summarized first.

The present project entitled “Development of a Self-access Reading and Listening Package for Enhancing English Learning Effectiveness for Community College Student in Hong Kong” intends to identify community college students’ learning needs and wherefrom develop an independent learning package to promote students’ academic English reading and listening skills.

Since the project started on 1 September 2009, it has been proceeding smoothly in accordance with the proposed timeframe. A full-time project officer and a half-time project developer have been employed to monitor and facilitate the research progress and implementation issues. Milestones achieved in the first and second phases include:

### **1) Needs Analysis Report**

A detailed needs analysis was conducted in October 2009 through questionnaire and interviews. The analysis revealed the narrow range of strategies that students used in their academic English learning, particularly in reading and listening. The report served as a basis for the development of the self-access learning package.

### **2) Selection of Participants and Pre-test**

70 students were recruited through letter of invitation to participate in the project on a voluntary basis. A pre-test in the form of an IELTS examination was arranged in January 2010. The students’ results in the pre-test were used as the criteria to divide them into the experimental group and the control group.

### **3) Development of the Self-access Learning Package**

A self-access learning package (referred to as “the package” hereafter) was developed in June, 2010. The Package included 10 theme-based modules, each focusing on one

major reading and listening strategy. 10 students were invited to use some selected modules as a pilot. Results of the piloting served as a basis for further modifications of the package.

## 2. Types and descriptions of project activities held

The third phase of the research project commenced on September 1, 2010. The proposed tasks for the third phase are: 1) to complete the pilot study; 2) to complete the finalized version of the package; and 3) to implement the self-access package. As the pilot study was completed in the second phase (1 March to August 2010), our major tasks in this phase were revising and finalizing the package, and its implementation.

Major activities that have been conducted to facilitate the completion of the milestones set for this phase of the project are summarized and presented in Table 1.

Types	Description of Project Activities	Purposes
Analysis of the pilot test	The feedback and comments from the 10 students who were invited to use some selected modules of the package were examined carefully. Based on the feedback and comments, some of the contents and strategies were further modified to meet students' needs and the implementation of the Package.	The students' comments and feedback were incorporated in the modifications with the hope of enhancing the effectiveness of the package.
Copy-editing of the package	After the completion of the modifications, the package was sent to a professional copy-editor for final editing and formatting. This process was also informed by the students' feedback and	Copy-editing helped improve the layout of the package so that it became much more user-friendly. From these improvements, it is hoped that students can maintain longer

	<p>comments in the pilot test. After the editing, the package was more clearly presented.</p>	<p>attention span and engagement in using the package once it is implemented.</p>
<p>Finalization and printing of the package</p>	<p>The package was finalized after changes were made in the format and presentation of the contents, according to the copy-editor's comments and suggestion. The finalized package was sent to a printing shop for 40 copies of the final product.</p>	<p>The professional and high-quality printing gives a better presentation of the package. It is hoped that this can make the package more appealing to the students.</p>
<p>Finalization and printing of the user guideline</p>	<p>The draft user guideline was passed around and discussed among the project members for input and comments. Modifications were made afterwards. The guideline was then sent to printing as a separate brochure.</p>	<p>The project members' input ensures that the user guideline reads clearly to students and address students' various needs. The guideline printed as a separate brochure allows students to refer to it whenever necessary, without them turning back and forth between pages if otherwise attached to the package.</p>
<p>Copyright Clearance</p>	<p>Some audio and written materials from external resources were used in the package. Copyright holders of these materials were contacted via email. Permission has been obtained from them for the use of their materials. Payments have been made or are under process where necessary.</p>	<p>Authentic materials are emphasized in the development of the package in order to provide students with authentic language input. Therefore, materials such as research report, newspaper articles, and lectures are incorporated in the design of the learning activities in the package. Copyright issues need</p>

		to be sorted out so that these materials can be used.
Implementation of the package	The implementation of the package started with a briefing sessions for the students in November 2010. From then on, the project team has been reviewing the progress regularly.	The briefing session introduced the package, explained to the students how to use it for independent learning, and clarified the requirements involved. The Progress review meetings intended to address issues and problems coming up during the implementation of the package.

**Table 1 Descriptions of Project Activities Completed in Third Phase (1 September to 28 February 2011)**

### 3. Implementation Issues

This section summarizes the implementation issues in relation to the enforcement of the current project in the third phase, which include: 1) dates, venues, and participants of the project activities; 2) resources used for the implementation.

#### 3.1. Project activities

A number of activities have been carried out in the third phase of the project. Table 2 gives a summary of these activities.

Dates	Venue	Participants/persons involved	Activities
September 2010	KEC*	Project team	A number of meetings were carried out during this period to discuss various issues related to the implementation of the project: 1) dividing the participating students into experimental and control group; 2) examining the results of the piloting of

			the package and the modifications of the package content and organization necessary; 3) revisions of the user guideline; 4) revisions of the 3 diagnostic tests <sup>1</sup> .
September 2010	N/A	Research team	The project team worked on getting permission from copyright holders for the use of any written or audio materials obtained from external resources.
October 2010	KEC	Research team	A number of meetings were held during this period for the discussion of various issues including: 1) printing of the package; 2) the type of input and tasks for the control group; 3) the arrangement of the consultation sessions for the participating students as part of the research project; and 4) the design of a weekly progress report (see Appendix I) for the control group of students.
17 November 2010	KEC	Project team	A briefing session was held for the experimental group, explaining the timeline of studying on the package, their learning responsibilities in using the package, and the facilities and resources they were provided with. The students were also briefed on the organization of the package, and how to use it independently.

<sup>1</sup> In order for the students to monitor their progress and identify their own strengths and weaknesses throughout their work on the package, three diagnostic tests were developed and attached to the self-access learning package as separately-printed documents. The students were required to do one test upon completion of every three modules.

18 November 2010	KEC	Project team	A briefing session was held for the control group, explaining the timeline, requirements, responsibilities, and resources involved in the writing program in which they participated. The students were also briefed on the kind of training provided and the operations of the program.
December 2010	KEC	Project team	A number of meetings were held 1) review the package implementation as well as student progress; 2) to explore ways of enhancing the effectiveness of the consultation sessions, e.g. through teacher questioning and suggesting specific direction for improvement; 3) and to discuss the arrangement of the post-test.
18 January 2011	KEC	Project team	A progress review meeting plus workshop was held with the participating students. Related issues and the problems the students encountered up till then were discussed. Immediately afterwards, a workshop on interview skills for university admission and employment was given, in order to motivate the participating students for English learning.
February 2011	KEC	Project team	A number of meetings were held to 1) review the implementation of the package up to this stage; 2) discuss the arrangement of post-test.

\*Kowloon East Campus of HKU SPACE Community College  
**Table 2. Project Activities in the Third Phase**



### 3.2. Resources and Manpower

The current project has gained support and resources from HKU SPACE Community College for its smooth implementation, which include office areas, office facilities, management and logistic support, and so on. Apart from the researchers/teachers from the college who are directly involved in the research project, some full-time/half-time staff are employed to facilitate the management and implementation of the project.

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

Name	Title	Employment period	Duties
Liu Kanglong	Project Officer (Full-time)	1 March 2010 – 29 September 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.
Yu Ying	Same as above	30 September 2010 – 31 August 2011	Same as above
Cheng Chi Tan, David	Package Developer (Half-time)	1 September 2010 – 31 August 2011	Development and implementation of the self-access reading and listening package for the project by designing relevant learning materials, development of diagnostic tests for the package, and consultation for the participating students.
Yung Ching San	Part-time Research Assistant	1 May 2010 – 28 February 2011	Data processing, data management, and assistance in other research-related work.

**Table 3. Staff Employed for the Implementation of the Project**

#### **4. Project Milestones and Deliverables**

With the project activities described in section 3.1, the key milestones set out for the third phase have been achieved successfully. These milestones include:

##### **4.1. Finalization of the Self-access Reading and Listening Package**

In the second phase of the project, the development of the package was successfully completed and the piloting of the package was conducted. As a key milestone listed in the research proposal, the package was finalized in the third phase.

Firstly, based on the analysis of the pilot test and the feedback from the participating students, some contents of the package were revised, some instructions clarified, and some layout reorganized, so as to better meet the students' needs.

Secondly, informed by the students' comments in the pilot test, the project team decided to send the package to a professional copy-editor for final editing and formatting, who, from the perspective of book editing, helped address some issues that were neglected in the development stage. The issues were mainly related to the visual presentation of the contents as well as the consistency of layout and format. The copy-editor's input and suggestions were discussed among the project team and modifications were made where deemed necessary. The finalized package was better presented in both contents and format.

The user guide of the package was also finalized with the input and comments from members of the project team. The finalized user guide consists of a general introduction, explanation of how the package and modules are structured, the operational guidelines, independent learning strategies such as making action plans and time management, and resources available for the participating students.

A progress report form was also developed to facilitate the students in monitoring their progress in the package and to self-evaluate their performance. The report also encourages students to propose actions for improvement. Students are required to fill in the report form upon completion of each module and bring the report to the consultation sessions together with their questions in relation to the package.

#### 4.2. Implementation of the Self-access Learning Package

The implementation of the package started in November 2010. A briefing session for the 35 selected students marked as the commencement of the implementation, which introduced the structure of the package and modules, the timelines for students to work on the package, the requirements involved, and students' learning responsibilities. Strategies of independent learning, such as making action plans and time management, were also suggested. In addition, the students were informed of the resources available to facilitate their learning, which include learning materials, equipment, and consultation.

In order to keep track of their progress, the students are required to work on the package in the college library. The students' copy of the package is kept at the library counter, marked with their names and student number. Each copy has attached a separate brochure of the user guideline. The students need to sign in and out on a log sheet available at the counter that records their attendance and the amount of time they spend. Up to this stage, the students were found to spend, on average, about two and a half hours on one module of the package.

Since the implementation started, consultation sessions have been arranged every week from Monday to Friday at fixed time slots. The students are advised to consult with the project team the problems and difficulties they encounter when they work on the package. Through questioning and scaffolding, the project team helps the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in academic reading and listening, and suggests directions for improvement. A consultation form has been developed for the use of the teachers in charge of the consultation sessions in order to facilitate probing and record keeping. From the commencement of the implementation of the package to the end of the current stage, about 186 hours of consultations sessions have been conducted by the project team.

The progress of the implementation and the effectiveness of the consultation sessions have been reviewed regularly by the project team, through meetings and oral work report.

## 5. Evaluation of the Project

The milestones set in the proposal for the third phase of the project have been achieved successfully through various project activities. Up till the end of the current reporting period, about 75% of the project has been completed in terms of key tasks. With this progress attained, the project is ready to enter into the final phase during which the major foci are to continue the implementation of the package and to complete the post-test. It should be noted that the pre-test was in the form of an internationally recognized English language test, i.e., IELTS. The same English test will be arranged as the post-test. The project team has started liaising with the British Council for the test arrangement and will continue to work on this in the next phase of the project.

## 6. Budget and Expenditure

The third phase sees no change in the implementation of the proposed project objectives and attainment of milestones, except for some minor alterations regarding the expense of the budgeted items. As mentioned in section 2, the package was sent for copy-editing as part of the finalization process. Since the proposed budget does not include an item for editing and formatting of the package, approval was sought and obtained from the Education Bureau that an amount of HKD 6,000 could be used from the provision for "photocopying of the self-access package" to cover this new expenditure.

Table 4 below summarizes the expenditure for the third phase (also note that the figures are estimated due to the delay of financial booking). A detailed breakdown of the expenditure for the budgeted items will be provided in the final report after auditing of the whole project is completed.

Items	Approved budget	Actual Expenditure	Remarks
Manpower	282,625	248,169	
References	24,237*	12,045	*Approved budget left from Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Printing and photocopying of the self-access package	20,000	16,340	
Copyright Clearance	35,000	6,275.96*	*More payments will be settled in the fourth phase due to the late response and arrival of invoice from the copyright holders.
Others	4,000	3,997	
Total	364,762	286,826.96	

**Table 4. Actual Expenditure against Approved Budget in the Third Phase of the Project**

## 7. Summary

This progress report summarizes the major activities, milestones, implementation issues in relation to the participants and beneficiaries of the current project during the third phase of the study. In addition to an overview of the research progress, a broad and contextual assessment of the project in terms of research activities conducted in this phase is also provided. Based on the achievements laid out in this report, 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. Progress Report Form for the Control Group

Appendix II. Pictures of Consultation Sessions and Students Working on the Module in the Library (in CD-ROM)