

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

Progress Report

Project No. : 17/QEGS/2011

Reporting Period : From March 2012 (month/year) to August 2012 (month/year)

Part A

Project Title : Implementation of an Open Source ePortfolio for Sub-degree Students

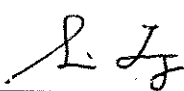
Name of Grantee : Hong Kong Community College


Project Period : From September 2011 (month/year) to August 2013 (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: Dr. Simon Leung

Name of Grantee

Organization: PolyU HKCC

Position of Authorized

Person: Director

Date: 5 October 2012

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

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

Progress report on QEGS Project-Implementation of an Open Source ePortfolio for Sub-degree Students Project Code: 17/QEGS/2011

Part B

1. Types and brief descriptions of project activities held

The project consists of two pilot studies and this report is a review of the first one (Pilot I, Phase II, March 2012-August 2012). The major activities in the mentioned period are shown in the following table:

Table 1: Types and brief descriptions of project activities held

Project Activities	Descriptions
<i>A. Implementation of Pilot I</i>	A total of 164 students participated in this pilot study. The pilot study was evaluated by surveys and telephone interviews.
<i>B. Internal promotion activities of the ePortfolios with faculty members in the College</i>	Some internal promotional activities were conducted to promote the use of ePortfolios in the College.
<i>C. Delivery of workshops</i>	Three workshops were conducted in Phase II for Pilot I participants and teaching staff in the College.
<i>D. Results</i>	Results of the surveys and the telephone interviews for Pilot I, as well as surveys for the workshops were discussed.
<i>E. Publication of a scholarly output</i>	One journal article regarding the implementation of the project was accepted for publication in the proceedings of 2012 IEEE International Symposium on IT in Medicine & Education.
<i>F. Others</i>	(1) An outsourced service was sought for further developing the ePortfolio system. (2) The trial period of using the private cloud computing service provided by the The Information Technology Service Office of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) was extended for four months, from July to November 2012. (3) A new project assistant, Ms Wincy Tse, came on board on 10 July 2012.

2. Details of project activities held used for the implementation of project activities

This section explains the details of the project activities held within the reporting period.

A. Implementation of Pilot I

Online peer discussions were incorporated in two sub-degree courses (Groups A and B) in the context of an ePortfolio Platform named SHARE in the autumn semester of 2011-2012.

The details of their participation in the project are shown in the following table:

Table 2: Implementation details of Pilot I

Groups	Course Names	No. of participants	Activities
A	CC 3724 Sociology of Culture	145	Students were expected to submit three assignments to SHARE and then exchange feedback with their classmates on the assignments.
B	CC 3759 Digital Video Production	19	Students were expected to write a film review and give feedback to three film reviews written by their classmates in the context of SHARE.

In the autumn semester of 2011-2012, teachers in both groups verbally explained the project ethos to the students and shared with them that the data collected from this study were used for educational purposes only. At the end of the semester, telephone calls were made to all participants to invite them to participate in surveys and/or interviews.

B. Internal promotion activities of the ePortfolios with teaching staff in the College

With a purpose to promote the ePortfolios in the College, some activities were conducted in the context of the ePortfolio Platform. Details are shown as follows:

(1) The College's internal weekly bulletin is now online

The College's internal weekly bulletin, named "Learning and Teaching Weekly Bulletin(LTWB)", has been uploaded to the ePortfolio Platform since May 2012. By making use of the multimedia functions of the ePortfolio Platform, LTWB has become more interactive. Colleagues could share their comments and give their ratings on the articles. LTWB could be accessed via the following link:

<http://158.132.50.65/portfolio/view/view.php?t=S6znRd9L34PwKm7FgCoM>

Besides, three articles regarding the benefits of using ePortfolios in teaching and its pedagogy were shared in the LTWB to serve as references for faculty members who are interested in ePortfolios.

(2) A sharing workshop for faculty members at the College

A one-hour workshop session was arranged on 8 August 2012 with an aim to give the College's teaching staff some teaching insights while they were preparing for the new semester in the summer. Specifically, the objectives of this workshop included:

- To identify what is an ePortfolio, its benefits, and its pedagogical uses to facilitate teaching
- To use the functions provided by the ePortfolio Platform to build an ePortfolio
- To determine how to integrate the use of ePortfolios into our teaching by referring to several case studies

Details are to be discussed in the next section "Delivery of workshops".

C. Delivery of workshops

A workshop introducing the basic functions of the ePortfolio Platform was conducted by Mr Peter Chan in Phase I (27 February 2012). The target participants were Group A students.

Three supporting workshops were conducted in Phase II. Details are as follows:

Table 3: Implementation details of workshops ✓

	Date/ Time	Instructor	Themes	Targeted Participants
I	8 March 2012/ 15:00-16: 30	Ms Vera Sun	Introduction to the use of the multi-media functions of the ePortfolio Platform	Group B students
II	8 March 2012/ 14:00-15: 30	Mr Peter Chan	What is self-reflection? What benefits will it bring to our learning?	Groups A and B students
III	8 August 2012/ 15:00-16: 00	Dr Ken Tsang	Incorporating ePortfolios into sub-degree courses	Teaching staff members

All of the above workshops were on a voluntary basis.

D. Results and discussions

This section shows (1) the survey results of Pilot I; (2) the results of the telephone interviews conducted for Pilot I participants, followed by (3) the survey results of the three supporting workshops.

(1) The survey results for Pilot I

Regarding the surveys, in Group A, there were 145 registered students and the number of respondents was 94. Thus, the response rate was 64.8%. In Group B, there were 19 registered students and the number of respondents was 8. Thus, the response rate was 42.1%. The low response rate was probably due to the fact that many students were occupied with their jobs or on their vacation at that time. They were invited to answer a simple survey to indicate their agreeable level on 5 statements (“1--strong disagree” “2-- disagree” “3--Netural”, “4--Agree” and “5--Strongly Agree”). The results are shown below:

Table 4: Survey results of Pilot I

Statements	Group A		Group B	
	The Mean	SD	The Mean	SD
1. The process of reading and giving feedback help me to understand the course requirements.	3.36	0.93	3.25	0.71
2. The process of reading and giving feedback help me to understand my progress of learning.	3.46	0.90	3.25	0.71
3. The process of reading and giving feedback help me to consolidate my subject knowledge.	3.48	0.96	4	1.07
4. I will know how to improve my work by reading feedback.	3.23	1.06	3.25	0.71
5. Overall, peer feedback helps learning.	3.34	1.07	3.5	0.76

(2) Results of the telephone interviews for Pilot I

In the telephone interviews, all students (total: 10 students from both groups) agreed that they were inspired by their classmates' assignments on the ePortfolio Platform. When asked about his learning experience brought about by the ePortfolio Platform, a participant said, "You can take a look at others' work, get some useful ideas and have a more clearer picture of what are expected from the assignments." However, some students also pointed out their areas of concern regarding the use of the ePortfolios in learning. A year one student from Group A said she did not enjoy sharing feedback on the Platform. She said, "When my teacher encouraged me to give feedback to the other classmates, I felt embarrassed and was not active in doing so. First, I would feel guilty if I leave some comments based on my misunderstanding of other's opinions. Second, I am worried that if I express views against classmates' ideas, they will be upset. Therefore, I would give face-to-face feedback to friends or whom I am acquainted with in the class in order to know their feelings and reactions directly."

Their views over the pros and cons of the benefits brought about by online peer feedback are summarised as follows:

Table 5: Students' views on the use of online peer feedback in learning—pros and cons

Pros	Cons
Students could see how a topic was handled by different students by reading their work.	The overall view could be similar since references were sought from the same pool .
Motivating students to refine their work.	Motivation was based on the assumption that the feedback and the assignment were of good quality, which, however, is not guaranteed.
Helping students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses by reading their classmates' feedback.	Some students only wanted to complete the assignments and fulfill the course requirements, not for self-improvement.
Could lessen the workload from the teacher since there were now multiple sources of knowledge;	The teacher's work was reallocated to other areas, such as writing guidelines, initiating discussions, making the feedback, etc.
Online peer discussion has no geographical and time constraints. Students could exchange their ideas anytime they wanted.	Students had no time to get familiar with the Platform as there were many assignments from different courses they needed to complete.

(3) Results of workshops

Workshop I

With a purpose to introduce the multimedia functions of the ePortfolio Platform to Group B students, a workshop titled "Introduction to the use of the multi-media functions of the ePortfolio Platform" was arranged on 8 March 2012. This workshop was strongly recommended by the subject teacher and 10 students attended the workshop. Ten survey forms were collected. The response rate was 100%.

The survey included 7 statements describing students' perspectives on learning the ePortfolios. A rating scale (strong disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)) was used in the survey. The results are shown below:

Table 6: The results of the workshop I survey

Statements	The Mean	SD
1. This workshop helps me to understand ePortfolios better.	3.9	0.74
2. This workshop teaches me something that I will not normally learn in the formal curriculum.	3.6	0.52
3. This is a worthwhile learning experience.	3.7	0.82
4. I would recommend this workshop to my fellow students.	3.7	0.82
5. This workshop helps me to learn how to showcase my academic achievements systematically.	3.8	0.63
6. This workshop is helpful for my present or future studies.	3.6	0.52
7. This workshop makes me understand the advantages of ePortfolios and this would foster my interest in learning.	3.4	0.52

Workshop II

With a purpose to promote reflective learning, a workshop titled “What is self-reflection? What benefits will it bring to our learning?” was organised on 8 March 2012 for all Pilot I students (both groups were welcome). Eleven students attended the workshop and the response rate of the survey was 100%. The survey included 6 statements describing students’ perspectives on the use of the ePortfolios. A rating scale (strong disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)) was used in the survey. The results are shown below:

Table 7: The results of the workshop II survey

Statements	The Mean	SD
1. This workshop helps me to understand ePortfolios better.	3.45	0.69
2. This workshop teaches me something that I will not normally learn in the formal curriculum.	4	0.63
3. This workshop helps me to learn how to showcase my academic achievements systematically.	3.64	0.67
4. This workshop deepens my ePortfolio knowledge.	3.18	0.87
5. This workshop is helpful for my present or future studies.	3.09	0.7
6. This workshop makes me understand the advantages of ePortfolios and this would foster my interest in learning.	3.09	0.54

Workshop III

With a purpose to promote the ePortfolios among the faculty members in the College, a workshop titled “Incorporating ePortfolios into sub-degree courses” was organised on 8 August 2012 for the College’s teachers. Fifteen teachers attended the workshop and 11 survey forms were collected. The response rate of the survey was 73%.

The survey included 12 statements describing teacher’s perspectives on incorporating the ePortfolio system into teaching. A rating scale (strong disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)) was used in the survey. The results are shown below:

Table 8: The results of the workshop III survey

Statements	The Mean	SD
1. This workshop helps me to understand what an ePortfolio is.	3.91	0.83
2. This workshop enables me to know the advantages of the ePortfolio.	3.91	0.70
3. I learn the essential steps to create an ePortfolio from this workshop.	3.91	0.70
4. I am able to follow the instructions to create an ePortfolio during the practical session.	3.73	0.65
5. This workshop stimulates my thoughts to incorporate the ePortfolio into my teaching.	3.73	0.79
6. This workshop is helpful for my present or future teaching.	3.55	0.69
7. The ePortfolio is effective to be used as a showcase, a self-reflective platform, and a collaborative platform.	3.82	0.75
8. I think that the ePortfolio is a good platform to let teachers understand more about students.	3.73	0.65
9. Teachers can use the ePortfolio to give constructive feedback to students on their learning process.	3.91	0.83
10. I think that the ePortfolio can be used as a type of assessment to evaluate students’ progress.	3.64	0.50
11. The SHARE ePortfolio is easy to use.	3.27	0.90
12. I am interested in using the ePortfolio in my teaching in the future.	3.36	0.81

In brief, the mean values of all questions in the workshop surveys were above 3. It implies that the participants generally agreed that the workshops could enable them to understand what potential benefits could be brought about by the e Portfolio Platform.

E. Publication of a scholarly output

One journal article titled “Challenges and rewards in the implementation of an ePortfolio project in a Higher Education Institution in Hong Kong” was accepted for publication in the proceedings of 2012 IEEE International Symposium on IT in Medicine & Education.

F. Others

(1) Outsourcing service for ePortfolio enhancement

The team has invited an external IT service provider to customise the ePortfolio Platform by enhancing its functionality in supporting the student development activities at the College. The whole service is expected to be finished in November 2012.

(2) Extending the trial service offered by PolyU

The Information Technology Service (ITS) Office of PolyU has worked out a service plan of their private cloud computing service for non-UGC funded institutions. At the time of writing, the project team and ITS are negotiating over the details of the plan for HKCC and both parties agree to extend the trial service until November 2012.

(3) The employment of a project assistant

Project assistant Ms Wincy Tse came on board on 10 July 2012. Her duties include supporting the project competitions and events, supporting workshops, and arranging meetings, etc.

3. Project milestones and deliverables attained at the end of the reporting period

- (1) A pilot study (with a total of 164 student participants) was successfully implemented in the autumn semester of 2011-2012.
- (2) Review of Pilot I was conducted by surveys and telephone interviews.
- (3) Workshops: Three workshops were conducted for the stakeholders of the project.
- (4) Publication of a scholarly output: One article was published in a symposium.
- (5) Others: The ePortfolios are under the progress of enhancement and it is expected to be finished in November 2012. The free trial hosting service of the ePortfolios provided by PolyU has been extended to November 2012.

4. **Project milestone(s) and deliverables attained and the percentage, in terms of key tasks, of the project completed**

Below are the key tasks that were done / achieved during Phase II:

Milestones or deliverables scheduled for completion during the reporting period	% attained	Remarks
Review of Pilot I	100%	All surveys and evaluations of Pilot I were finished in August 2012.
Delivery of Workshops	100%	A total of 3 workshops were conducted for students and lecturers.
Others	100%	The private cloud computing trial service period will end in November 2012.
Overall	100%	

All project milestones have been completed by the end of the reporting period. The system has so far been well-received by students from different aspects.

5. **Project variation**

In July 2012, Ms Wincy Tse was recruited to provide administrative support for this project. Currently, the members of the team are: Ms Catherine Cheng, Ms Phoebe Siu, Dr Ken Tsang, and Ms Wincy Tse.

6. Financial position as at the end date of the reporting period

Expenditure items	Approved budget (a)	Committed or actual expenditure (b)	Balance [(a)-(b)]
a. Manpower			
Project assistant (full-time)	\$417,700	\$64,895.71	\$352,804.29
Student helpers (part-time)			
Visiting lecturers (part-time)			
b. Equipment / facilities	\$300,900	\$5,207	\$295,693
c. Services			
Outsourced services for developing the ePortfolio system	\$200,000	\$16,600	\$183,400
d. General expenses			
Photocopying	\$44,400	\$12,856.18	\$31,543.82
Editing manuscript			
Miscellaneous			
e. Others	\$8,000	0	\$8,000
Total	\$971,000	\$99,558.89	\$871,441.11
Project Income (if any)			(nil)
Total Balance			\$871,441.11

End