

II Project Information

Project Title (in English)	Project Title (in Chinese)
Language Support Programmes for Enhancing Weaker Students' English Language Proficiency	Nil

A. Project Summary

Acknowledging the gap between the curriculum of secondary education and that of the sub-degree programmes in terms of their medium of instructions and English language demands in both English and content subjects, educators in Community Colleges in Hong Kong face significant challenges in helping students, particularly students with lower English proficiency [LEP], to enhance their English language proficiency and to learn through English as their second language in the sub-degree programmes. Finding resources to explore multiple ways to assist students in their English language development has thus become one of the major tasks of our College to improve the quality of the graduates from the associate degree [AD] programmes. The proposed project aims at providing additional English language support for enhancing LEP students' English language proficiency, facilitating their adaptation to a post-secondary English-medium learning environment. The funding of the project will be used in two main areas: i) English language workshops for LEP students, and ii) development of learning and teaching materials for academic/ workplace English language development at the sub-degree level:

i) English Language Workshops for LEP Students:

According to Cummins & Man (2007), to function competently in English in daily life and academic situations, students have to develop i) conversational fluency, ii) discrete language skills, and iii) academic language proficiency. In other words, to be a competent user of English who are able to meet the English language demands in their further academic pursuits, graduates from the AD programmes are expected to have developed not only broad-based knowledge in English vocabulary, phonology, grammar and spelling, but they should also be able to master more sophisticated sentences, discourse knowledge and higher order thinking skills essential for success in both academic and non-academic contexts.

What's more, the sub-degree programmes are designed to provide fundamental professional training to prepare students for future employment. In short, graduates from the sub-degree programmes are also expected to be effective English communicators in their workplace. This reiterates the need for providing supplementary English language support programmes to facilitate AD students' achievement of the learning outcomes of the AD programmes.

The proposed project offers **two English workshops (each offering 10 one-hour workshop sessions)** to provide additional language support to help these LEP students cope with their learning of academic and workplace English skills required for completing a myriad of learning tasks in the English-medium AD programmes. Both of these workshops will be offered in the first year of the

AD programmes. The first workshop focusing on academic English skills will be offered in semester 1, while the second one focusing on workplace English skills will be offered in semester 2. The workshops will be run in parallel with the two compulsory English courses designed to help students meet their English communication needs in the academic and professional contexts they will encounter in their studies in the College and in their future professions. Students will receive one additional hour of English language support from **Week 2 to Week 11 (10 sessions in total)** of the semester in their first year of studies in the AD programmes.

ii) Development of Materials for Academic/ Workplace English Language Development at the Sub-Degree Level:

Both teaching and learning materials of the two workshops and the self-learning materials for academic English and workplace English will be developed based on on-going diagnosis of the English language learning needs of the target group of students in the AD programmes. The teaching and learning materials catering for the needs of learners at the sub-degree level developed by the project team will subsequently be accessible by other students in the sub-degree programmes. It is hoped that this online platform will provide additional resources to aid students' academic and workplace English language development in the sub-degree programmes and to promote their autonomy in language learning.

It is proposed that the project be implemented initially for **2 years** until 2011, to provide adequate time for the project team to explore the needs and difficulties experienced by the first year students in their learning through English as the medium of instruction at the sub-degree level, and to develop a versatile series of materials that address such learning needs and difficulties. By the end of the project, a rich collection of academic and workplace English materials that address the needs and common problems experienced by sub-degree students in different academic disciplines diagnosed from the project will be accessible by students and teachers in other sub-degree institutions through the project website.

B. Project Objectives

Background:

Educators in the sub-degree sector in Hong Kong face major challenges in helping students learn through English as their second language in the sub-degree programmes. Based on the admission figures of our College and students' overall results in the compulsory English subjects they are required to take in the AD programmes over the past years, around 25-30% of the students in our Community College have been identified as weaker students who need additional English support. This entails the community colleges a huge investment in time and effort on helping these LEP students to enhance their English language proficiency required for academic success in our AD programmes. Albeit the resources constraints, our College has introduced a variety of support measures to help this target group of students. For example, in the past few years, our English

enhancement team had organised a series of English learning activities such as English conversation club, writing workshops, English (Reading and Writing) Endurance Challenge, English Week, English First Aid (an independent language learning programme) to foster our students' English language development. In addition, first year students were also eligible for a 12-week IELTS preparatory course. To encourage students' attainment of other English language recognitions such as IELTS, we had also launched a "Partial Test Fee Reimbursement Scheme". Nevertheless, we were disappointed to find that the participation rate of the LEP students was rather low, while other students with better English proficiency were more interested in such English enhancement activities.

Currently, students in all AD programmes offered by our College have to take two compulsory English subjects, one in academic English and the other one in workplace communication, which are designed to help students cope with their needs in learning and communicating within the academic and professional contexts they will encounter in their studies in the College and in their future professions. Students with weaker English foundations often find these two courses very challenging. In addition, lacking exposure to different oral and written academic English registers which demand their use of less frequent English vocabulary and their comprehension and production of more sophisticated context-reduced and cognitive-demanding academic discourse (Cummins, 1981; Cummins & Man, 2007), these LEP students who transit mainly from an Chinese-medium secondary school to our English-medium sub-degree programmes also experience major difficulties in using English for academic purposes. Based on our colleagues' observations reflected in the post-teaching reports, the LEP students had difficulty understanding the reading materials in the content areas, and they were not capable of expressing themselves confidently, clearly and systematically in written as well spoken academic language. Frustrated by these serious learning problems, some students even dropped out or lost their motivation to learn.

Objectives of the Project:

As "there is simply no time to delay academic instruction until these students have developed high levels of English language proficiency" (Short, 1993, p. 628), it is crucial that **mandatory supplementary English support programmes** be offered to help these learners fulfill the language demands of our academic programmes (see, for example, Early, Mohan, & Hooper, 1989), which seems not to be a feasible support measure for a self-financing sub-degree programme if additional funding support is absent. The proposed project aims at providing additional English language support for enhancing LEP students' English language proficiency. By demanding the LEP students to join the **two compulsory 10-hour English workshops**, it is expected that the project will be able to help students develop their English skills to the threshold level for learning more effectively through English in the AD programmes.

To effectively and systematically 'scaffold' the learning of weaker students to facilitate their adaptation to a post-secondary English-medium learning environment, it is important that students'

entry level English proficiency be considered in the planning of any supportive English enhancement programmes. In this project, **diagnostic tests or exercises** will be developed for such purpose, which results will inform the project team the types of learning materials to be developed in the proposed English language support programmes. With the use of teaching and learning materials catering for the needs of the LEP students, students' common English learning difficulties in English and content classes at the sub-degree level can be addressed. As Cummins & Man (2007) emphasize, "extensive reading and writing is essential for the development of academic English, which students need to acquire for academic success and for higher education" (p.807). Collaboration with the content teachers will be sought in this project and discipline-specific materials will be developed to foster students' academic/ workplace English language development in the AD programmes.

In addition, to encourage students to take ownership of their learning, **learning-to-learn skills and materials promoting independent language learning** will also be developed. The self-learning materials will include self-evaluation/ reflection worksheets, independent language learning log sheets, and a guidebook for independent learning of academic and workplace English. The project will help students self-evaluate their needs in learning English and learning through English and foster their development of independent English language learning skills.

References:

- Cummins, J. (1981). Empirical and theoretical underpinnings of bilingual education. *Journal of Education*, 163(1), 16-29.
- Cummins, J., & Man, E. Y. (2007). Academic language: What is it and how do we acquire it? In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp.797-810). New York: Springer.
- Early, M., Mohan, B.A., & Hooper, H.R. (1989). The Vancouver school board language and content project. In J. H. Esling (Ed.), *Multicultural education and policy: ESL in the 1990s* pp. 107 – 122). Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Short, D.J. (1993). Assessing integrated language and content instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(4): 627-656.

C. Outcomes and Deliverables of Project

I. Project Outcomes

a. Compulsory Academic/ Workplace English Workshops

Target Beneficiaries:

Students who failed in the Use of English examination at AS level or those who admit through the Pre-AD route, i.e. around 1,700 students (850 students per year X 2 years)

All students who drop under the above described categories will receive additional English language support in the two compulsory workshops offered in Stage 1 of their AD studies:

- ◆ Semester 1, Stage 1 – Academic English workshops (10 hours)
- ◆ Semester 2, Stage 1 – Workplace English workshops (10 hours)

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this project, students with lower English proficiency in our College will be able to:

- identify their weaknesses and strengths in academic and workplace English (Workshop 1 & 2)
- enhance their academic English skills required for success in learning through English as the medium of instructions at a sub-degree level (Workshop 1)
- enhance their workplace English skills required for success in communication in professional contexts (Workshop 2)
- use independent language learning skills for extended language learning in less formal settings (Workshop 1 & 2)
- gain confidence in using English for academic and workplace purposes (Workshop 1 & 2)

b. Materials developed for the Workshops

Target Beneficiaries:

All students at the sub-degree level

The workshop materials and the guidebook for independent academic/ workplace language learning will be shared via the project website. All students at the sub-degree level may access the materials for further training in their academic/ workplace English skills.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

In addition, students at the sub-degree level at large will also be able to:

- access the teaching and learning materials developed for the academic and workplace English workshops and use the materials to develop their English skills at their own pace
- diagnose their main difficulties in academic and workplace English
- select materials that suit their needs in their study programme at the sub-degree level
- follow the instructions in the guidebook for independent English language learning and develop autonomy in language learning

II. Deliverables

- ◆ Workshops on Academic English (2 workshops) and Workplace English (2 workshops)

- ◆ Teaching and learning materials developed for the English language support programmes in academic and workplace English, including:
 - Diagnostic language tests/ exercises
 - Worksheets on academic English skills catering for learners with weaker English skills
 - Worksheets on workplace English skills catering for learners with weaker English skills
 - Reflection/ self-evaluation forms
- ◆ Guidebook for independent English language learning
- ◆ Enhancement of students' academic English, workplace communication and study skills (refer to Section G for the evaluation mechanism)

D. Implementation Details

The implementation of this project is divided into three recurring stages from July 2009 to September 2011:

I. Project Preparation:

Remark: To assure the quality of the project website, we propose to hire the professional services of a website construction company to design and construct the project website and to offer website maintenance services, which is considered to be more effective. Meanwhile, a part-time project assistant will be employed to handle other administration duties.

A. Project Website (Construction/ Update/ Maintenance)

Construction of Website: \$58,000 (Aug-Sep 2009)

Update/ Maintenance of Website (yearly basis): \$8,800 X 2 years (Aug 2009 – Jul 2011)

Estimated Expenses: \$75,600

B. Recruitment of a Project Assistant (Aug 2009)

Duties:

- ◆ Provide administration support in the implementation of the project
- ◆ Assist the subject lecturers in the preparation of the teaching and learning materials for the workshops and the guidebook for independent English language learning
- ◆ Liaise with the project owner and other staff members concerning the requirements of the project website

Salary for Project Assistant (Part-time):

$\$7,000 (\$70 \times 100 \text{ hours/month}) \times 24 \text{ months} = \$168,000 \times \text{MPF (5\%)} = \$176,400$

C. Recruitment of Teaching Staff for the Workshops

- ◆ *Workshop 1 (Academic English): Aug 2009*
- ◆ *Workshop 2 (Workplace English): Jan 2010*
- ◆ *Workshop 3 (Academic English): Aug 2010*

- ◆ *Workshop 4 (Workplace English): Jan 2011*

Duties:

- ◆ Develop the teaching and learning materials for the workshops, including diagnostic tests/ exercises, worksheets for the workshop, materials for independent language learning, etc.
- ◆ Conduct the workshops
- ◆ Mark students' assignments and provide feedback on their progress
- ◆ Report on students' performance in the workshop
- ◆ Review the workshop materials
- ◆ Assist the project owner in the project review

II. Language Support Programmes

- ◆ *Workshop 1 (Academic English): Sep 2009-Nov 2010*
- ◆ *Workshop 2 (Workplace English): Feb 2010-Apr 2010*
- ◆ *Workshop 3 (Academic English): Sep 2010-Nov 2011*
- ◆ *Workshop 4 (Workplace English): Feb 2011-Apr 2011*

A. Contents of the Workshops in Academic English/ Workplace English:

The two workshops (each offering **10 one-hour workshop sessions**) will cover the following:

- ◆ On-going diagnostic English tests/exercises to identify the needs of the LEP students based on i) their past English language learning experience, ii) present language proficiency in academic and workplace English, and iii) difficulties encountered in the compulsory English courses and content subjects.
- ◆ English practices catering for the needs of the LEP students for studying the topics covered in the compulsory academic English and workplace communication subjects
- ◆ Discipline-specific learning materials catering for the needs of the LEP students for studying their content subjects through English as the medium of instruction
- ◆ Independent English language learning skills

Estimated Number of Hours of Services Required: 10 hours X 34 classes (850 students hours per workshop/25 students per workshop) X 4 workshops over 2 years = 1360 hours

B. Development of Materials for the Workshops in Academic English/ Workplace English:

To develop materials that can effectively address students' difficulties in learning academic/ workplace English and learning within an English-medium learning environment in the sub-degree programmes, the following steps will be taken:

- ◆ Conduct on-going diagnostic English tests/exercises to identify the needs of the LEP students based on i) their past English language learning experience, ii) present language proficiency in academic and workplace English, and iii) difficulties encountered in the compulsory English courses and content subjects.
- ◆ Develop teaching and learning materials catering for the needs of the students in academic and workplace English learning.

- ◆ Collaborate with content teachers to develop discipline-related materials that can address the language needs diagnosed and support students' learning in the English-medium content subjects.
- ◆ Collect resources on academic and workplace English learning and write up the guidebook for independent English language learning

Estimated Number of Hours of Services Required: 25 hours per workshop X 4 workshops over 2 years = 100 hours

III. Project Review (Jan 2010/ Jul 2010/ Jan 2011/ Jul 2011)

- ◆ Review of teaching and learning materials for the workshops
- ◆ Review the implementation of the project (critical review of the operations of the project, tasks completed, problems encountered, actions to be taken for improvement, etc.)

IV. Project Sustainability (Jul 2011)

- ◆ Launching of the Project Website, sharing with other sub-degree partners/ students:
 - Teaching and Learning Materials for the Academic English Workshops
 - Teaching and Learning Materials for the Workplace English Workshops
 - Guidebook for Independent English Language Learning
 - Sharing of Good Teaching Practices

E. Implementation Schedule *(Please extend this table if necessary.)*

Estimated start date of project: Aug 2009

Action <i>(please indicate key milestones)</i>	Timeframe	Cash-flow Requirement*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementation of Workshop 1 (Academic English) ● Development of Workshop Materials (Academic English) ● Construction of the Project Website ● Interim Project Review (1) 	Aug 2009 – Jan 2010	\$301,900
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementation of Workshop 2 (Workplace English) ● Development of Workshop Materials (Workplace English) ● Update and Maintenance of the Project Website ● Interim Project Review (2) 	Feb – Jul 2010	\$235,100
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launching the Project Website (Test version, access for HKCC students only), Update and Maintenance of the Project Website ● Implementation of Workshop 3 (Academic English) ● Development of Additional Workshop Materials (Academic English) and Review of the Learning Materials developed in 2009-10 	Aug 2010 – Jan 2011	\$243,900

● Interim Project Review (3)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementation of Workshop 4 (Workplace English) ● Development of Additional Workshop Materials (Workplace English) and Review of the Learning Materials developed in 2009-10 ● Launching the Project Website (Open access), Update and Maintenance of the Project Website ● Project Review (final) ● Auditing of Project Account 	Feb – Jul 2011	\$240,100

Estimated completion date of project: End of July 2011

**Please refer to Appendix I for the breakdown of cash-flow requirement.*

F. Project Budget						
Projected Expenditure <i>(Please provide detailed breakdown under each item)</i>	Amount in HK\$					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
a. Manpower						
i) Manpower for the Delivery of Workshops (\$500 X 10 hours X 34 classes X 2 workshops X 2 years = \$680,000 + 5% MPF = \$714,000)	\$424,000 + MPF (5%) = \$445,200	\$424,000 + MPF (5%) = \$445,200				\$890,400
ii) Manpower for Administrative Support (\$7000 X 24 months = \$168,000 + 5% MPF = \$176,400)						
b. Equipment / Facilities						
c. Services						
i) Development of Workshop Materials (\$500 X 25 hours X 2 workshops X 2 years = \$50,000)	\$91,800	\$33,800				\$125,600
ii) Construction, Update and Maintenance of Project Website (\$75,600)						
d. General Expenses						
e. Others (Auditor's fee)		\$5000				\$5000
Total Expenditure :	\$537,000	\$484,000				\$1,021,000

Projected Income	Amount in HK\$					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
a. (e.g. fees received)						
b.						
c.						
Total Income :						
Sources of Funding						
<p>a. Amount of grant sought under this application: <u>\$1,021,000</u></p> <p>b. Other sources of funding (<i>this may include donations, contributions from the applicant/its parent organization, etc. Please give the name(s) of the sponsor(s), the amount of funding, and indicate whether the funding has been secured.</i>):</p> <p><u>(i) Contributions from the Applicants (Staff Offices, Classrooms for the Workshops, Manpower for project coordination, Administrative arrangement stipulated in Section H, Provision of space/ an online platform for the project website, Printing of workshop materials)</u></p>						
G. Monitoring and Self-evaluation Mechanism						
<p>The outcomes of the project will be assessed with reference to the following Quality Assurance Mechanism of our College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student feedback questionnaire (Quantitative and qualitative feedback on the effectiveness of the workshops) • Post-teaching reports on the Workshops (Qualitative feedback from the subject lecturers) • Students' marks and grades in the two compulsory academic English and workplace communication courses • Students' learning portfolios, including student reflections, completed worksheets, independent language learning reports, etc. <p>In addition, an interim project review will be conducted in January 2010, July 2010 and January 2011 and a final project review in July 2011. Progress reports will be prepared in January 2010, July 2010 and January 2011 respectively, and a final report on the project evaluating the implementation of the project will be compiled after the completion of the Project in July 2011.</p>						

H. Management Support and Key Personnel Involved**Administrative Arrangements (Key Personnel Involved: Programme Directors)**

- Reallocate the resources of the College to facilitate the availability of time, space (e.g. office for the project assistant) and resources (e.g. manpower and facilities) for developing and implementing the programme.
- Provide on-going support to maintain sufficient collaboration of efforts among the staff members concerned, e.g. provide the statistics/ information required for the project review (refer to Section G for the list), administrative support on the implementation of the project, etc.

I. Special Justifications if the Grant Sought Exceeds \$2 million

N/A

III Other information

1 Project Sustainability (*If applicable, please describe how the recurrent expenditure involved will be met after completion of the proposed project*)

All teaching and learning materials of the workshop and self-learning materials for academic English and workplace English will be developed based on on-going diagnosis of the English language learning needs of the target group of students in the AD programmes of our College.

To provide additional language support to students at the sub-degree level at large, the learning materials catering for the needs of the weaker students developed by the project team will subsequently be shared with other teachers and students in other sub-degree institutions through the project website, with an aim to aid students' academic and workplace English language development in the sub-degree programmes.

With access to all teaching and learning materials of the workshops, students of other sub-degree programmes can select the materials relevant to their study programme and improve their academic and workplace English skills at their own pace.

Additionally, by following the instructions in the guidebook, they can also develop strategies and autonomy for life-long language learning.

2 Preparatory work done (*If any*)

N/A

3 Past experience in organizing projects of similar or relevant nature and achievements (*If any*)

To promote English language learning in Hong Kong, the College had successfully organised several English activities for the English Festival of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) in 2006 and 2007, which details can be found on the websites of English Festival 2006 and English Festival 2007:

English Festival 2006 - English Survivor Competition

http://cd.edb.gov.hk/scolar/eng_festival_2006/en/activity_06.htm

English Festival 2007 - English Language Camp cum Camp Leader Training Programme

http://cd.edb.gov.hk/scolar/eng_festival_2007/en/activities_01.htm