Project Information

Project Title (in English)	Project Title (in Chinese)
Language Centre: a Pilot Scheme to Complement Conventional Classroom Teaching	語言中心：補足常規教學試點計劃

A.Project Summary

(please provide an executive summary of the project proposal in no more than 500 words).

Local students' language proficiency, in particular English has been under severe criticism. Post-secondary students, especially those in self-financed institutes have not got as many resources as students in the secondary or tertiary sector on language support. We conducted a small-scale study on post-secondary students' needs for language learning in February – March 2009 to identify the target recipients' needs (Finding Summary refers to Annex 1). Almost three quarters of respondents believed the provision of Language Centre would be useful to their language learning in which English ranked the most important. In addition to intra-curricular classroom teaching, they also needed resources for self-access language learning, more importantly, environment for real-life communication in listening and speaking, small group tutoring and ideally individual guidance for writing.

The Project attempts to fill the gap where formal curriculum itself cannot fully satisfy students' needs to enhance their language proficiency especially English since classroom teaching has its limitations in flexibility, individual attention and atmosphere creation. The Project aims to complement conventional classroom teaching in fostering post-secondary students' interest, self-confidence and improvement in languages particularly English by creating an atmosphere and environment conducive to their language use besides labour-intensive guidance provided by the Language Centre.

The Language Centre is proposed to situate in the campus where about 1000 students studying accredited post-secondary programmes in Hong Kong College of Technology (HKCT) take language classes daily. Apart from convenience for students, the aggregation of intra-curricular language classes and extra-curricular Language Centre activities builds a vibrant image of language learning and encourages students' immersion in the language. The actual deliverables will include:
1. Self-access language learning resources
2. Social events
3. Small group workshops
4. e-Learning platform
5. Individual improvement programme
6. Seminar for experience sharing

The proposed design of the Language Centre is enclosed in Figure 1 (Annex 2). Besides self-access language learning resources in hardware and software, manpower that is a prerequisite for labour-intensive guidance and effective interaction serving vital elements to students' success requires most support from the Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme (QEGS) which is doubtlessly an invaluable asset to HKCT who has been committed to the Project in terms of existing human and financial resources as reflected in Section F of this application form.

The Language Centre users will be registered as its members, so better connection with the students can be maintained through regular e-correspondence to members and sharing of useful learning materials on thee-Learning platform among members. Membership also avoids abuse and solicits students' sense of commitment.

The Project aims to benefit HKCT students in this pilot scheme and it aspires to extend to more post-secondary students of other similar institutes in future. The College also aims to utilise the resources provided by the QEGS to benefit academic staff from different institutions and in turn many more students in the sector, hence a public seminar will be organised to include a broader audience.

B. Project Objectives

(please identify the needs of the target recipients and explain how the project aims to address the needs).

Hong Kong College of Technology (HKCT) has endeavoured to enhance students' language proficiency by building a team of language teachers called Centre of Languages and Communication (CLC) and organising students to take language classes at its modern and independent campus. In order to identify the target recipients' needs in language learning, we conducted two focus groups of HKCT students in February and a questionnaire survey to post-secondary students of HKCT and some other institutes in March 2009 (see Finding Summary in Annex 1).

Almost all (99%) respondents of the Study on Post-secondary Students' Needs for Language Learning agreed that language learning was important and English was prioritised in importance, so this Project will provide services mainly relating to English while useful resources such as multi-lingual dictionaries will be made accessible. A majority of them (approximately 70%) supported language centre's usefulness to their language learning and they did not consider classroom teaching alone sufficient and effective for enhancing their language proficiency. They admitted a lack of interest and self-confidence in learning English so hardly could they make improvement. Hence, an unconventional Language Centre attracting passive students to visit and use its facilities / services is essential as a complementary role to regular classroom teaching. It is innovative in terms of its design to create a comfortable environment and carefree atmosphere, for instance, via the relaxing chat café, so as to facilitate interaction among users (Language Centre members) or between users and the Language Centre staff. This Language Centre will also set up a simple membership system and an e-Learning platform for the registered members so friendly invitation to its upcoming activities and sharing of useful electronic resources are made easily available to members. Such characteristics are different from conventional classrooms and library-like language centres.

Nearly 80% of respondents identified their needs for improvement particularly in listening, speaking and writing. Teacher advisors were considered highly important and some respondents specified that opportunities to have social chats in real-life English were vital to a language centre besides self-access language learning resources. Respondents also reckoned that small group interaction and even individual consultation would be very effective for improving English. In this regard, facilitation for informal chats and authentic oral communication by English speakers in designated sessions or thematic social events will meet students' needs for listening and speaking apart from provision of self-access language resources. Small group workshops which enable close interaction and face-to-face guidance will be regularly held in monthly calendars. Individual improvement programmes provide labour-intensive guidance to tailor personal learning plan to each registrant's individual needs. Small achievable goals, for example, using past tense to describe past trends in graphs, will be set in each individual consultation session followed by a short writing or speaking task communicated between the student and personal tutor on the e-Learning platform. This premier service users can easily check their own progress and have a sense of achievement by comparing their writing or speaking performance before and after the improvement programme which tailors realistic learning goals to individuals.

HKCT, committed to nurturing students' language competences despite self-funded, values very much the QEGS which supports the College to realise her enhancement plan for students on top of her groundwork over these years.

The major objectives of this Project are:
1. To promote students' interest in language learning
2. To increase students' self-confidence in speaking English
3. To improve students' English writing and speaking skills
4. To share experience of complementing classroom language teaching with the Language Centre

C. Outcomes and Deliverables of Project

(please include the expected number of target beneficiaries and explain how they will benefit from the project).

The primary target recipients of this Project will be the post-secondary students of HKCT and those students of other similar institutions in the sector are in future plan subsequent to this pilot experience. Currently there are nearly 1600 students taking accredited post-secondary education programmes at HKCT. They are all the target beneficiaries of this Project. This Project aims to address their needs by complementing formal curriculum in form of an innovative language centre in terms of atmosphere and setting which facilitates students' language use, not only providing useful self-access facilities and materials and more importantly, labour-intensive services such as small group workshops and individual improvement programme which are not affordable by conventional classroom teaching. All Language Centre users will be registered as its members to form a circle of language learners for better connection with the aid of an e-Learning platform to share resources.

The outcomes of this Project will be in form of the following deliverables:

- Self-access language learning resources for all users including 3 individual studios equipped with AV and oral recording system, 50 dictionaries of various common languages and 100 DVDs, etc.
- Social events for all users including chat café 6 sessions a week arranged in monthly calendars facilitated by native English speakers and 3 thematic social events during the Project months such as Halloween Party
- Small group workshops for all users once a week arranged in monthly calendars with themes such as CV writing, IELTS strategies and Vocabulary building
- Membership management system with an e-Learning platform for all users to share useful links and materials for language learning
- Individual improvement programmes for 50 registrants with a personal learning plan tailored to individual needs for concrete achievable goals in writing and/or speaking skills: an e-Learning account for personal tutor's feedback to their writing or speaking tasks and 8 individual consultation sessions each registrant (progress easily checked by their productive language skill tasks before and after the programme)
- A territory-wide seminar to share the Project experience with English teaching practitioners

This Project is a pilot scheme of innovating a vibrant Language Centre to complement conventional classroom teaching. It is believed that students' language proficiency will be enhanced if they cultivate interest in learning it and raise their self-confidence in using it. Registrants of the tailor-made individual improvement programme will benefit more saliently in terms of progress in productive language skills with concrete small goals. The resources in the Language Centre will definitely support students' learning and the membership system will lay foundation for continual development of language learning activities. Such practices will be disseminated to our counterparts for experience sharing that in turn benefiting many more students in the sector. It is aspired to extend this Project to wider beneficiaries by opening up to post-secondary students of other similar institutions in another attempt the next stage.

D. Implementation Details

The Project will be delivered in three main stages over 18 months:

1. The establishment of our Language Centre in terms of physical setting, hardware & software as well as setting up the Project team who will start promoting the Centre to the target recipients is the initial stage over the first 4 months.
2. The Language Centre will be in operation recruiting members and the ongoing small group workshops, social events, individual improvement programmes will be delivered for 11 months.
3. The final stage of the Project will involve the final dissemination of the Language Centre experience consolidated in the last 3 months; this will be delivered via the platform of a local seminar at the end of the pilot scheme.

Stage 1: Month 1-4	• Preparatory work (design, renovate, furnish and decorate the Language Centre) to get the physical setting ready • Facilities & materials equipped in the Centre • Membership management system and e-Learning platform set up • Recruitment, setting up and orientation of the Project Team • Promotion and grand opening of the Language Centre • Start registration of members
Stage 2: Month 5-15	• Ongoing provision of facilities (self-access language learning resources, individual studios, reading & writing zone, etc.) • Ongoing services in place (chat café sessions, small group workshops, thematic social events, individual improvement programme, etc.) • Periodic collection of users' feedback and self-evaluation review
Stage 3: Month 16-18	• Evaluation of project outcomes and consolidation of experiences • Design of the territory-wide seminar content and its guest list • Invitation for participation (expected audience: 100) • Registration of participants & preparatory work • Delivery of the seminar for counterparts

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

Estimated start date of project: August 2009

Action *(please indicate key milestones)*	Timeframe	Cashflow Requirement
Stage 1: Setting up the Project Team and the Language Centre (First 4 months: Aug 2009 – Nov 2009): ☑ Recruitment, setting up and orientation of the Project Team ☑ Renovation and furnishing the physical Centre (financed by HKCT) ☑ Hardware facilities and resource materials ☑ Software facilities including membership management system and e-Learning platform ☑ Promotion and enrolment **Stage 2**: Delivering the ongoing services for Language Centre members (a-year from Dec 2009 – Jan 2010) ☑ Six chat café sessions per week manned by native English speakers ☑ One small group workshop per week ☑ Three social events based on various themes ☑ Fifty individual improvement programmes with 8 individual consultation sessions and an e-Learning account for each registrant ☑ Periodic collection of users' feedback and review	(First 6 months) Aug 2009 – Jan 2010	750,000
Stage 2 (cont.): Delivering the ongoing services for Language Centre members ☑ See Stage 2 above	(Middle 6 months) Feb 2010 – Jul 2010	650,000
Stage 2 (cont.): Delivering the ongoing services for Language Centre members (Last 3 months of Stage 2: Aug 2010 – Oct 2010) ☑ See Stage 2 above **Stage 3** Organising a territory-wide seminar to share the experience of complementing conventional classroom teaching with the Language Centre for post-secondary students (Last 3 months of the project: Nov 2010 – Jan 2011) ☑ Evaluation of project outcomes and consolidation of experiences ☑ Design of the seminar content and its guest list ☑ Invitation for participation (expected audience : 100) ☑ Final registration of audience ☑ Final preparation work ☑ Delivery of a local seminar for counterparts	(Last 6 months) Aug 2010 – Jan 2011	250,000

Estimated completion date of project: January 2011

F. Project Budget

Projected Expenditure *(Please provide detailed breakdown under each item)*	Amount in HK$			
	Stage 1 (4 months)	Stage 2 (11 months)	Stage 3 (3 months)	Total
a. Manpower				
- ONE Project Manager (monthly paid including MPF) since Month 1	92,400	254,100	69,300	415,800
- ONE Project Officer (monthly paid including MPF) since Month 1	65,100	179,025	48,825	292,950
- TWO-THREE Native English Speakers (hourly paid including MPF: 6 sessions per week) since	17,640	194,040	0	211,680
- Support work provided by Department of Facilities Management	12,800	38,400	6,400	57,600
- Support work provided by Department of Information Technology	3,200	9,600	1,600	14,400
b. Equipment / Facilities				
-Rental of the Language Centre premises	128,000	384,000	64,000	576,000
-Design, renovation and furnishing of the physical Centre	720,000	0	0	720,000
-Furniture and relevant equipment (necessary for the uniqueness of the Language Centre) e.g., information display, computer workstations & AV accessories, TV/DVD stereo and projector	290,000	11,000	0	301,000
-Venue fee and relevant resources for seminar	0	7,000	0	7,000
c. Services	nil	nil		nil
d. General Expenses				
- Resources (books, magazines, DVDs)	140,000	20,000	10,000	170,000
-Subscription to multi-TV channels		24,000	0	24,000
-Creation & maintenance of the membership management system and e-Learning platform	100,000	20,000	0	120,000

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Total
-Promotion materials and general expenses for grand opening and seminar	5,000		10,000	15,000
-Promotion materials and general expenses for social events including chat café		20,000		20,000
-Printing, stationery, photocopying and sundries	2,000	3,820	1,000	6,820
- Honorarium for speakers	0	0	5,000	5,000
e. Others (e.g. auditor's fee)				
-Auditor's fee	0	0	3,000	3,000
-Contingency (3.5%)	24,925	27,305	5,520	57,750
-Overhead of each full-time staff (25% of salary)	39,375.00	108,281.25	29,531.25	177,187.50
Total Expenditure:	1,640,440.00	1,300,571.25	254,176.25	3,195,187.50

Projected Income	Amount in HK$					
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3			Total
a. (e.g. fees received)		nil	nil	nil		nil
Total Income :						nil

Sources of Funding:

a. Amount of grant sought under this application: ____ $1,650,000 ____

b. Other sources of funding *(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.)*:

c. Hong Kong College of Technology (HKCT) will contribute $1,545,187.5 in the grey areas of Section F.

G. Monitoring and Self-evaluation Mechanism

The Project is monitored by the Project Manager under the guidance of senior management of HKCT. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Project, several measures will be taken:

As a general monitoring and self-evaluation measure, the Language Centre will conduct interim and final reports to evaluate its effectiveness to enhance students' language proficiency as a complementary role. The reports will be discussed and endorsed in the Centre of Languages & Communication (CLC), HKCT.

Besides, feedback and opinions from the Language Centre members will be collected in an on-going basis for evaluation. Students will be asked to evaluate their interest in language learning, perceptions of their self-confidence to speak English and sense of improvement in English through focus group interview and questionnaire survey. Quantitative data about members' visits and utilisation of the Language Centre's facilities/services will also indicate students' interest enhancement while comparison between the pre-test and post-test of the individual improvement programme registrants will show how effective the programme helps them improve their writing and/or speaking skills in terms of concrete small goals in productive language skills.

H. Management Support and Key Personnel Involved

The Project team will involve the following key personnel for the Project implementation:

ONE Project Manager, who is mainly responsible for: 1) the design and the implementation of the Project; 2) the co-ordination with internal and external parties for the Project implementation; 3) the management of the activities and progress of the Project; 4) the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Project; 5) recruiting and supervising Language Centre staff such as the Project Officer, Project Assistant and chat café facilitators; and 6) conducting small group workshops.

ONE Project Officer, who is mainly responsible for: 1) providing assistance to the Project Manager in implementing the Project; 2) coordinating meeting, activities and seminar; 3) providing general administrative and clerical support to the project; and 4) serving as Language Consultant at reception counter and for the individual improvement programmes.

Furthermore, the development of the Project will also be supported by the College's senior management team, the Head of CLC and the central support departments, i.e. Department of Facilities Management and Information Technology.

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)*

❖ The Language Centre resources will be continuously existent benefiting a lot more students in future even the funding completes in 18 months.

❖ All fees are waived in this Project as a pilot scheme to encourage more students' participation and to earn good word of mouth , but the membership system lays a foundation for future extended use such as charging membership fee or service fee for the innovative services like the individual improvement programmes.   Students are willing to pay if the Project proves effective and attractive to them.   Such fees will generate recurrent income to keep the Project sustainable apart from HKCT's generous support.

❖ In summary, the Project will have a long term impact on students' language learning and the experience could be transferred to language teaching practitioners in the sector for a wider group of beneficiaries.   The Project actually seeks to extend to other post-secondary institutions further to this pilot scheme and it will make the Project sustainable if successful.

2   Preparatory work done *(If any)*

❖ The venue for the Language Centre has already been rented and renovated in a basic way at one of the HKCT campuses where a vast majority of HKCT students take language class on an everyday basis.

❖ The College is committed to the Project by getting ready to finance over $1 million as detailed in Section F such as manpower support and furnishing.

❖ Some CLC full-time staff members have been deployed for the study on the target recipients' needs for language learning enclosed in Annex 1.

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

❖ The College has been managing the Training Cum Employment Resource Centre of the Employees Training Board at Cheung Sha Wan where similar experiences can be drawn upon for operating the proposed Language Centre.

❖ HKCT has been running well-equipped libraries which include informal language resource corner and CLC has been offering various kinds of language training activities for students and receiving positive feedback from them.