

RGC Ref. No.: Ref. UGC/FDS14/H08/14 (please insert ref. above)
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**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL  
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR  
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)**

**Completion Report**  
(for completed projects only)

<p><b><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within <b><u>six</u></b> months of the approved project completion date.</li> <li>2. Completion report: within <b><u>12</u></b> months of the approved project completion date.</li> </ol>
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**Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)**

**1. Project Title**

Exploring English writing teachers' assessment practices and student perceptions of them  
in Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions

**2. Investigator(s) And Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved**

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Ma Jingjing/Assistant Professor	English/Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
Co-Investigator(s)	N/A	
Others		

**3. Project Duration**

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	15, Dec., 2014		
Project Completion Date	14, Dec., 2016	14, Dec., 2017	20, Jan., 2017
Duration (in month)	24 months	36 months	20, Jan., 2017
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	14, Dec., 2017	14, Dec., 2018	20, Jan., 2017

## **Part B: The Final Report**

### **5. Project Objectives**

#### **5.1 Objectives as per original application**

1. identify the assessment practices of selected EFL writing teachers in Hang Seng Management College, one of Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions;
2. identify students' perceptions of these teachers' existing assessment practices;
3. experiment with innovative assessment practices in relation to EFL writing instruction;
4. evaluate the effect of innovative assessment practices on student learning based on students' perceptions;
5. identify good assessment practices among selected EFL writing teachers;
6. identify how assessment practices in EFL writing classrooms can be enhanced;
7. develop an online resource for EFL teachers in Hong Kong's self-financing institutions and the wider tertiary community to showcase exemplary case studies of good assessment practices as identified in this project (if any); and
8. stimulate dialogue about how to enhance assessment practices in EFL writing classrooms across Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions and in the wider tertiary education community.

#### **5.2 Revised objectives**

Date of approval from the RGC: 9, Dec., 2014

Reasons for the change:

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The originally targeted participants of "EFL writing teachers" have been changed into "EFL teachers" to involve more potential participants who will be interested in this project.

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Objective 7 has been removed due to a lack of human resources and budget.

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1. identify the assessment practices of selected EFL teachers in Hang Seng Management College, one of Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions;
2. identify students' perceptions of these teachers' existing assessment practices;
3. experiment with innovative assessment practices in relation to EFL instruction;
4. evaluate the effect of innovative assessment practices on student learning based on students' perceptions;
5. identify good assessment practices among selected EFL teachers, if any;
6. identify how assessment practices in EFL classrooms can be enhanced;
7. stimulate dialogue about how to enhance assessment practices in EFL classrooms across Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions and in the

wider tertiary education community.

### 5.3 Realisation of the objectives

*(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)*

All the project objectives have been successfully achieved. Please see details below:

1. identify the assessment practices of selected EFL teachers in Hang Seng Management College, one of Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions; Three teachers have been recruited as case study participants. Classroom observation, teacher interviews and document collection (e.g. teacher written feedback) were conducted to ascertain the teachers' assessment practices. A survey was distributed to all writing teachers of an academic writing course to understand the general practices.
2. identify students' perceptions of these teachers' existing assessment practices; Focus group interviews and student surveys were conducted to gauge the perceptions of the students in the three case study teachers' classes. A survey was distributed to all the students of the academic writing course to understand their perceptions in general.
3. experiment with innovative assessment practices in relation to EFL instruction; Three case study teachers were recruited to experiment with innovative assessment practices. Classroom observation, teacher interviews and document collection were conducted to achieve this objective.
4. evaluate the effect of innovative assessment practices on student learning; Student survey and interviews were conducted to collect student views on the three teachers' implementation of assessment innovation. Based on student perceptions, the effect of the innovation has been evaluated.
5. identify good assessment practices among selected EFL teachers, if any; The data collected for objectives 2 and 4 were used to identify good assessment practices among the teacher participants.
6. identify how assessment practices in EFL classrooms can be enhanced; Based on data collected for objectives 1 to 4, factors affecting the use of assessment practices to promote learning were explored and ways to enhance these practices were identified.
7. stimulate dialogue about how to enhance assessment practices in EFL classrooms across Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions and in the wider tertiary education community. Based on the findings, three journal articles have been published and one book chapter has been accepted. Two seminars were also given by the researcher to disseminate the research findings. These research deliverables have not only

manifested the realization of objectives one to six, but also helped realize the last objective, that is, to stimulate dialogues about the enhancement of teachers' assessment practices in the local and wider tertiary education community.

#### 5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

<b>Objectives</b> (as per 5.1/5.2 above)	<b>Addressed</b> (please tick)	<b>Percentage Achieved</b> (please estimate)
1. identify the assessment practices of selected EFL teachers in Hang Seng Management College, one of Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions	√	100%
2. identify students' perceptions of these teachers' existing assessment practices	√	100%
3. experiment with innovative assessment practices in relation to EFL instruction	√	100%
4. evaluate the effect of innovative assessment practices on student learning based on students' perceptions	√	100%
5. identify good assessment practices among selected EFL teachers, if any	√	100%
6. identify how assessment practices in EFL classrooms can be enhanced	√	100%
7. stimulate dialogue about how to enhance assessment practices in EFL classrooms across Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary institutions and in the wider tertiary education community	√	100%

## 6. Research Outcome

### 6.1 Major findings and research outcome

*(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)*

The major findings for the first stage of the project are summarized as follows: in general the teachers teaching the academic English course in the study have been found to implement assessment for learning (AfL) in their classrooms, including teacher clarification of goals and what constitutes quality performance, teacher feedback, peer feedback and self feedback, as well as students' uptake of feedback. The students have been found to be positive about these practices, but they seemed to be more receptive to teacher-led AfL practices than student-led ones, which required them to play a more active and confident role in monitoring and evaluating their own learning (Please refer to the journal article "Student perceptions of assessment-for-learning practices in an English for academic purposes course" in Part C). This finding is also consistent with the finding in the case study of one selected teacher (Please refer to the journal article "Using formative assessment to facilitate learner self-regulation: a case study of assessment practices and student perceptions in Hong Kong" in Part C). The findings suggest that teachers and students need to reflect on their roles in AfL and enhance their own assessment literacy to reflect the true spirit of AfL.

The major findings for the second stage of the project are summarized as follows: the three participating teachers were found to experiment learning-oriented assessment with a focus on teacher feedback on student feedback, dialogic feedback and continuous assessment respectively. The students expressed both positive views and concerns in response to each innovation. For example, the participating teachers' written feedback practices have been investigated and students' and teachers' views of teacher written feedback have been compared to gauge the extent to which it was usable and dialogic. There were both congruence and incongruence between teacher and student perceptions, and this indicates a need for both parties to discuss the purpose, aspects, and depth of teacher written feedback to make it more usable and dialogic (Please refer to the journal article "Usability of teacher written feedback: Exploring feedback practices and perceptions of teachers and students" in Part C). The students' perceptions of another teacher innovation, learning-oriented continuous assessment, have also been explored in the context of academic literacy instruction. The students have shown very favorable opinions of the continuous assessment in their writing classroom, and they seemed to be aware of both its summative and formative functions. In terms of the formative function, the students found that the continuous assessment facilitated both their learning and self-regulation. Principles regarding the design and implementation of learning-oriented continuous assessment has been generated (Please refer to the accepted book chapter "Hong Kong college students' perceptions of continuous assessment in the context of academic literacy instruction" in Part C.) Based on the aforementioned findings, the teachers' good assessment practices have been identified. Among the factors affecting the effective implementation of the assessment innovations, teachers' and students' beliefs as well as their assessment literacy seemed to be salient factors that emerged from the research project. Pedagogical implications, with a focus on the teacher and student factors mentioned earlier, have been generated to facilitate a fruitful implementation of the assessment innovations as described in the study.

## 6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (Maximum half a page)

The findings of the current research project suggest that future research needs to investigate the influence of student and teacher factors (e.g., beliefs, assessment literacy) on the implementation of an assessment innovation such as learning-oriented assessment and how such factors may be addressed to promote its effective implementation. Since action research is particularly useful for exploring the renewal of assessment practices in higher education, the first step may be to use action research to implement learning-oriented assessment in the researcher's own writing classroom, with special attention being paid to teacher and student factors to ensure its productive implementation. After the action research stage, the researcher may elicit more collaboration among colleagues to investigate how to implement learning-oriented assessment effectively in all the writing classes in the institution in which the researcher is working.

A second line of inquiry is to focus on the use of electronic learning portfolio as one form of learning-oriented assessment. Learning portfolio carries great potential for synergizing both summative and formative aspects of assessment and technology may further facilitate its use. Action research involving the support of IT professionals may be used to explore the initial implementation. Collaboration among colleagues may be the second step to create an electronic learning portfolio for students' learning of English and English writing that spans their undergraduate study.

## 7. Layman's Summary

*(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)*

This research project explored a group of Hong Kong college writing teachers' existing assessment practices, their experimentation with learning-oriented assessment innovation, and student perceptions of these practices. Its findings contributed to a deeper understanding of potential factors affecting the effective implementation of existing formative assessment practices and the experimented learning-oriented assessment, as well as shed light on how to maximize their learning potential in the context of academic English writing. Given the crucial role assessment plays in students' learning, the insights generated from the study may help teachers in similar contexts further exploit the learning potential of writing assessment. The study has also identified good learning-oriented assessment practices and generated principles regarding its design and implementation that teachers in other similar contexts may emulate. Avenues for further research have been identified as well.

**Part C: Research Output****8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

*(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)*

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the institutional repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
2017				Ma Jingjing*	Title: Using formative assessment to facilitate learner self-regulation: a case study of assessment practices and student perceptions in Hong Kong  Journal: <i>Taiwan Journal of TESOL</i> 14 (1), 87-118	2016	Yes	Yes	Yes
2018				Ma Jingjing*	Title: Usability of teacher written feedback: Exploring feedback practices and perceptions of teachers and students  Journal: <i>Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching</i> 15 (1), 23-38		Yes	Yes	Yes

2018				Ma Jingjing*	Title: Student perceptions of assessment- for-learning practices in an English academic writing course  Journal: <i>English Teaching and Learning</i> 42 (2), 155-183		Yes	Yes	Yes
	2018			Ma Jingjing*	Title: Hong Kong college students' perceptions of continuous assessment in the context of academic literacy instruction  Book: Developme nt of EFL/L2 Literacy across the Greater China Region		Yes	Yes	No

**9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered**

*(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)*

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to <b>RGC</b> <i>(indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)</i>	Attached to this Report <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Acknowledged the Support of <b>RGC</b> <i>(Yes or No)</i>	Accessible from the institutional repository <i>(Yes or No)</i>
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Nov./2015/Guangzhou	Using formative assessment to facilitate self-regulated learning: Assessment practices and student perceptions in an EFL writing classroom	International Conference on Language Testing and Assessment		Yes	Yes	Yes
Jun./2017/Hong Kong	Student Perceptions of the Quality of Teacher Written Feedback in an Academic English Writing Course	Faces of English 2: Teaching and Researching Academic and Professional English		Yes	Yes	Yes

**10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning**

*(Please elaborate)*

Teacher reflection both during the two stages of research and after the sharing of findings prompted the teacher participants to enhance their assessment practices to improve their students' learning of English writing. The student participants were also more aware of the role they should play in the assessment processes, and they became more active and self-regulated learners.

**11. Student(s) Trained**

*(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)*

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
NA			

**12. Other Impact**

*(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)*

This research has provided insights into factors affecting the implementation of formative and learning-oriented assessment. It sheds light on how to maximize the learning potential of writing teachers' assessment practices. Writing teachers in similar contexts may experiment with the assessment innovations as attempted in the study and use these innovations to promote their students' learning of English writing, with special attention being paid to the identified factors that may affect such an implementation.

**13. Public Access Of Completion Report**

*(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)*

<b>Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
NA	

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COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR  
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)**

**Completion Report - Attachment**  
*(for completed projects only)*

<b>RGC Ref. No.:</b>	Ref. UGC/FDS14/H08/14
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	Ma Jingjing
<b>Project Title:</b>	Exploring English writing teachers' assessment practices and student
	perceptions of them in Hong Kong's self-financing tertiary education
	context

**Statistics on Research Outputs**

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (Please specify)
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project [or conference]	3	2	1	NA	NA