

Project Title : A Telecollaborative E-Learning Project on Foreign Language Learning

Leading University : Hong Kong Baptist University

Participating UGC-funded University(ies) : The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
The University of Hong Kong

Project Leader(s) : Dr Tushar CHAUDHURI, Assistant Professor, Department of Government and International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Hong Kong Baptist University

Summary of Proposal

The teaching & learning project will connect foreign language classes of higher education institutions in Hong Kong and the European Union (EU) on an internet platform, and introduce initiatives to students on healthy living practices at government and citizen levels. The project will encourage students to collaborate with each other on community actions and evaluate their own communities in the target languages: German, French, Italian and Spanish. The project will broaden participants' global vision by encouraging students to look at different practices in Hong Kong and Europe and will enhance their communicative skills in the respective target language that they are learning. Each project cycle of approximately 12 weeks will consist of three phases:

- (1) Knowledge Gathering;
- (2) Research Tasks; and
- (3) Group Community Project

To successfully complete each phase, the students on both sides would have to work in intercultural groups and collaborate with each other throughout the duration of the project cycle. The students will create a portfolio for the phases 1 and 2 and a PowerPoint/video documentation of the Group Community Project. Each participating institution would be responsible for developing the materials for one of the languages according to the priorities and needs of the institution. The entire project will be hosted on one common platform and students in Hong Kong and Europe would be free to register for the language of their choice.

Summary of Final Report

A Telecollaborative E-Learning Project on Foreign Language Learning (ILLSA) is a publicly funded multilingual e-Learning project in Hong Kong, which utilises the online platforms edX, FutureLearn, Google Drive and Wix to establish online cross-cultural teamwork among foreign language learners of higher education institutions in Hong Kong and Europe. Participants compare “healthy city” practices across the globe in the language they are learning - French, German, Italian or Spanish, while working in small cross-cultural groups online to evaluate their cities and communities, to perform research tasks and to organize a collaborative community project. A specially designed language course for each language on FutureLearn enables them to practice their language skills individually. Current sustainability issues, physical and mental health, cultural-, gender-, ethnicity-, and age-based diversity, and environmental aspects, are among some of the selected research areas. Occasional cooperation challenges among the participants due to differences in time zones, academic schedules and individual working patterns are resolved with the support of the ILLSA team and collaborators.

Rolled out in 2018 and organised by three leading Universities in Hong Kong, ILLSA involves 17 universities worldwide with over 300 participating students representing 40 nationalities. The project was widely reported in local newspapers as a unique good practice for foreign language learning. Project objectives include, among others: encouraging students to collaborate with each other on community actions and evaluate their own communities in the target languages, broadening participants’ global vision by exposing them to sustainability practices in Hong Kong and Europe, along with enhancing their communicative skills in the respective languages. The learning outcomes are evaluated by quantitative and qualitative analyses in the areas of language enhancement, intercultural competence enhancement, and overall perception and impact. ILLSA practices could continue beyond its completion date, by being incorporated into the curriculum of language courses at higher education institutions across the globe.