

Project Title : The Responsive University: Appreciating Content Sharing in General Education

Leading University : The University of Hong Kong

Participating UGC-funded University(ies) : The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Project Leader(s) : Professor Ricky Y K KWOK, Associate Vice-President (Teaching and Learning), The University of Hong Kong

Summary of Proposal

For the past five years, “online learning” has been a source of fascination in the Higher Education sector. As witnessed in the last round of UGC funding scheme, there was great interest in building centralized and one-stop knowledge exchange platforms, such as the Knowledge and Education Exchange Platform (KEEP) and HKMOOC. But these new platforms need a new ecosystem to support them - good content being the primary determinant. Our current assessment is: good content is lacking, and it hurts the potential, strength, maturity and sustainability of the entire ecosystem of technology-enhanced student learning experience. We believe that through this project we can identify the key factors that enable the greater success of the innovative platforms and programmes already funded by the UGC, and help them to deliver on their value propositions.

Summary of Final Report

The “Responsive University” project, code-named “Responsive4U” (R4U) as the project was a tight collaboration among four institutions: CUHK, HKUST, PolyU, and HKU (leading institution), was an ambitious undertaking to promote technology-enriched blended learning and general education courses sharing. In this 3-year project, eleven blended courses were developed and shared by the four institutions. Each of these courses are blended in the sense that didactic lecturing was replaced by online lecture videos with high production quality, freeing up the classroom for active learning tasks. As such, the overarching pedagogy used is what is usually referred to as the “flipped classroom” learning. These courses are blended in another regard—blending

students: the courses were shared among all four institutions so that a student, in a way similar to an exchange program, could take a course from another institution for credits, on top of having a taste of the culture and atmosphere of the host institution, which might be just several MTR stations away from his/her own institution. After spending the first year to develop the courses, in two academic years, over 2 000 students completed the courses in this project.

One of the key goals in this project was to experiment with different active learning designs in the classroom. Gamification and game-based learning were the most notable examples of such experiments. In one course, a board-game was designed to capture the key learning outcomes of the course. In the focus-group interviews, students mentioned that the associative learning enabled by the board-game was very effective in retention of the knowledge which might otherwise be quite dry if a conventional delivery mode (e.g. lecture) was used. In another course, an App was developed for students to collaborate in groups of four to five in handling tasks that involved a lot of information gathering. Again, students told us that the technology-enriched pedagogy eliminated the tedious paper-and-pencil documentation tasks, facilitating a much more efficient collaboration. There were many more innovations in this project (e.g. using a makerspace approach for classroom learning) that could not be described here due to space limitations.

Finally, the project would not have been successful without the genuine collaborations among the four institutions at different levels: leaders, teachers and administrators. The finale event, an e-symposium (<http://responsive4u.org/e-symposium>) and its live discussion session, attest that the project has generated important impact in advancing teaching and learning practices with technology support.