

Project Title : Language Enhancement for Capstone Projects Using Interactive Apps

Leading University : The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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

Project Leader(s) : Dr Julia CHEN, Director, Educational Development Centre; Senior Lecturer, English Language Centre, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

### **Summary of Proposal**

This project, comprising co-investigators from five UGC-funded tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, aims to achieve two major objectives: 1) to enhance the English abilities that undergraduate students in different disciplines need to complete their capstone projects, and 2) to develop a mobile app for students to organize their capstone project ideas and to practise the English required at different stages of capstone projects, e.g. the English needed to write the abstract, literature review, methodology, findings, conclusion and recommendations of their report, and the English skills they need to verbally present and defend their thesis.

To achieve these two objectives, the project will bring together English language teachers and discipline academics/project supervisors, as well as experts in mobile app design, be they staff, students or experienced app developers. Language resources that are specific to the use of English for capstone projects in different disciplines will be developed. General language resources that address common English needs will also be produced. These resources will then be delivered to students via a mobile app. Students from different disciplines will have access to a capstone project English app that is developed specifically for them. This app will offer in-app and push notifications so that students will receive project reminders and relevant English resources at each stage of their capstone project process. Students can personalize the app for themselves and they can use other functions on their phones to help them generate ideas for their capstone project.

This proposal addresses some crucial needs and gaps because many UGC-funded institutions do not offer specific English language training for capstone projects for different disciplines, and even for those institutions that do, the deliverables of this project can supplement the language training, which is not necessarily in the semester when they write their final report. The final year is an important year for students as they strive to complete their degree programmes and relate their projects to their future career or study. The capstone project is the demanding learning task that students have to complete in their final year, and maintaining their English standard through working on their capstone projects can build their confidence and help them to effectively showcase the knowledge and skills acquired in their university education.

### **Summary of Final Report**

This project entitled ‘Language Enhancement for Capstone Projects Using Interactive Apps’ comprises investigators from five UGC-funded tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, and aims to achieve two major objectives: 1) to enhance the English abilities that undergraduate students in different disciplines need to complete their capstone projects, and 2) to develop a mobile app that offers students tips on the English needed to write different sections of their capstone report.

To achieve these two objectives, the project brought together English language teachers, discipline academics/project supervisors, as well as education developers, including experts in mobile app design. Language resources that are specific to the use of English for capstone projects in various disciplines, e.g. engineering, logistics, science, textile, nursing, were developed. General language resources that address common English needs were also produced. These resources were then delivered to students via a mobile app called Capstone Ninja that was produced by the project team and published on Apple Store and Google Play for students to access using their universities’ single sign-on. The app contains three major functions: (i) language modules and tips to help students write different sections of their capstone project, (ii) a to-do-list to manage their project timeline, and (iii) a function for single and/or group chat between students and their supervisor.

The project has addressed some crucial needs and gaps because many UGC-funded institutions do not offer specific English language training for capstone projects for different disciplines, and even for those institutions that do, the deliverables of this project can supplement the language training, which is not necessarily in the semester(s) when students write their capstone report. The app produced in this project, Capstone

Ninja, has attracted over 5 000 user registrants, and produced 76 learning modules and 494 learning units. Evaluation of the project via analysis of student writing, student logbooks, and feedback from users has shown the value of such additional, ubiquitous language support to students in the final year of their undergraduate studies.

Another deliverable of the project was an international conference that was held on 20-22 May 2021. The online conference attracted over 1 000 registrants from 48 countries on six continents in the world. There were three plenary presentations, nine colloquia, four panel discussion, 125 paper presentations, eight pre-recorded presentations, and three workshops by experts in the field. Feedback from conference participants was overwhelmingly positive.