

# The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

## Executive Summary

For Teaching Development, the goal was to support the University's strategic initiatives of blended-learning and experiential learning within the tri-modal education framework by designing and delivering courses based on these approaches, through sharing and building good practices with respect to these initiatives and building teacher competence for these approaches. This goal was achieved through four key activities:

- Faculty-initiated projects to encourage innovation in teaching and course development. There were a number of calls for teaching development proposals over the triennium which were evaluated by a panel of experienced faculty. Special emphasis was put on active learning pedagogies including experiential learning, and blended-learning. A total of 33 projects were funded from 2016-19.
- Courses and projects aligned with strategic education focus areas, including entrepreneurship and design thinking, sustainability. A strategic project in each of these three areas was implemented during the triennium.
- Communities of Teaching and Learning Practice to share and build teaching competencies in strategic areas. Two communities of practice, one in area of sustainability education and one in entrepreneurship education were successfully established.
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to further enhanced scholarly teaching was developed by organizing teaching and learning symposia at the end of 2017/18 academic year and similarly in 2018/19. Faculty were also supported for attendance and presentations at international conferences to share and learn, as well as supported in education journal publication of their innovations.

With the Language Enhancement Grant (LEG) funds, the Center for Language Education (CLE) was able to enhance its language support for HKUST students in three major ways: consolidated provision of formal language courses, with focuses on customization and innovation, provision of an informal curriculum, and continued development of a battery of assessment tools to measure competencies in language use.

HKUST students have all benefited from the twelve credits of English (six credits of general academic literacy plus six credits of discipline-specific academic literacy in

English) and three credits of Chinese built into the undergraduate curriculum.

The CLE takes great pride in its provision of a repertoire of discipline-specific language courses to students enrolled in different curricula in the four Schools of Science, Engineering, Business & Management, and Humanities & Social Science, as well as programs offered by the Inter-disciplinary Programs Office (IPO). The development of such courses involves close collaboration between CLE teachers and individual departments to ensure that the language provision is most relevant to student needs and made in the most timely fashion.

Customization is also key to the provision of Chinese Communication courses to HKUST students. The CLE has developed two sets of courses to meet the specific needs, interests and aspirations of ethnic- Chinese students from Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and Taiwan, and non-ethnic-Chinese students with different prior Chinese learning experiences and varying levels of proficiency on entering HKUST.

The approach to language teaching taken by the CLE, as outlined above, represents one in which courses emphasise authentic communication in real-life situations, and which fosters reflective learning regarding the purpose, audience and context of communication, and ultimately making decisions on the choice of language to be used in terms of register. This reconceptualization of language use as competencies is a valuable product of our professional practice over the years; it also serves as a catalyst for further development work for both teachers and students involved.

Innovation is an ever-present element of CLE work and is broadly understood to include developments that benefit long-established ways of learning and teaching languages as well as the fast-developing field of Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL). Through the pioneering work done by several CLE teachers, new ways of delivering language education have been adopted at various levels of CLE's work, on a multiple of platforms.

The CLE offers an informal curriculum, known as iLANG, which consists of a range of extra-curricular activities in the form of short courses, workshops, and one-off or regular events. These activities have proved popular with students by allowing learners to acquire language in non-threatening circumstances and for specific academic, professional or cultural contexts. A logical step to take from now involves increasing the proportion of activities which entail student interaction across language groups. This has the advantage of realizing another mandate of HKUST, namely, to

create opportunities for internationalization.

ELPA (or “English Language Proficiency Assessment”), a battery of tests which has been developed within the CLE, has continued its development in terms of validity and reliability and the purposes that it serves. The CLE will build on its success and work towards innovative assessment methods which can provide profiles of students’ various language competencies in different disciplines and professions. This includes adopting a multimodal view of communication, and encouraging learners to produce evidence of competence in a variety of media.