



Project Title:

Web-based English language learning and exit portfolio system

Name/s:

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Project Description:

The web-based English language learning/exit portfolio system can potentially be used by all students on degree and sub-degree programmes who follow any of the ELC's English language courses. Using this system students should:

- develop more effective English language learning strategies and be better equipped to take on responsibility for life-long English language learning (re. PolyU Strategic Objective 1.1 and the ELC's mission and goals); and
- build up a rich overview of their progress and achievements in English language learning that may be of value upon their entry into, and their progression through, the professional workplace.

Project Objectives:

This project focused on the development of a web-based portfolio system to guide and support learners in their language learning activities and to document learners' achievements and language development.

Project Deliverable/s:

- (1) Webfolio interface together with learner support facilities for, including, among others:
 - teacher / peer feedback;
 - goal-setting, reflective practice, tracking and evaluating learning progress, and uploading multi-media files as evidence for employment or professional accreditation;
 - possible integration with SAO's ePortfolio for students to demonstrate holistic development upon graduation
- (2) Collaboration with seven other tertiary institutions in Hong Kong to develop a web-based Hong Kong English Language Passport to support graduate employability
- (3) Dissemination of findings through publications, conference presentations, seminars and workshops locally and overseas.

Project Benefits / Challenges:

Major challenges include:

- learner engagement (e.g. priority to credit-based core subjects, but not ePortfolio?)
- teacher buy-in (e.g. increased workload? Benefits of ePortfolios?)
- curriculum design to take account of time required for exploring and becoming confident about ePortfolio use
- raised awareness of the ePortfolio for language development within and across institutions and the public
- training and support for teachers and students to understand ePortfolio concept and to provide hands-on sessions
- confusion over different ePortfolios for different purposes (e.g. SAO ePortfolio and ELC ePortfolio)
- institutional policy to support ePortfolio for language development and employability

Project Evaluation:

Generally students and teachers were positive about the ePortfolio as a tool to support English language learning. It was seen as particularly helpful for recording the learning process, and for providing out-of-class English practice opportunities. There is evidence to suggest that students saw the ePortfolio as an extension of class-based activity, where they had the chance to discuss, write about and share experiences in both their social and learning lives with teachers and classmates. The fact that the writing and sharing – on topics of students' choice – is conducted in the medium of English suggests that the ePortfolio offers a useful site for fostering continual language learning and increased learner responsibility.

Impact on Teaching and Learning

The ePortfolio was integrated into subjects run by the ELC. As ePortfolio authors, students identified language learning goals to align with the learning outcomes of the subject they were studying. This helped to raise students' awareness of their language abilities, and to focus attention on appropriate learning strategies to fulfill the identified goals.

Impact on Teaching

Overall, teachers saw the ePortfolio as a useful way to help students keep track of their learning progress and to demonstrate the outcome of their learning using multi-modal means. The ePortfolio is considered an important complement to limited class-based instruction, supporting the blended mode of learning at the ELC.

