

Action Research on the Effectiveness of Partnership Collaboration in ICT Language Projects

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Abstract: This is a collection of cases using technology to facilitate students' language learning in English and Chinese Language in primary and secondary schools. Apart from the school partners, these cases also include some third parties such as publishers and tertiary institutions in their implementation processes. The aim of this session is to focus on the conceptual design of such framework and provide some practical strategies on the implementation strategies for the collaboration between schools and partners involved in these projects as well as to demonstrate how the e-Learning platform can facilitate students learning.

Structure of the Session

This interactive session includes three cases in using technology to facilitate students' language learning. Below is the general description of the three cases.

ICT in English Acquisition for the 21st Century Learners

The project focuses on English Language Education for students in the Key Stage 3 (Secondary 1 to 2). The school sees that a 21st Century learning environment should comprise of the following 6 elements: Understanding of 21st Century Skills and Outcomes, Relevant Curriculum and Instructional Design, Informative Assessment, Authentic, Self-Directed Output, Scaffolded Content for Different Learners and Ubiquitous Access to Technology.

Based on the framework, the project will be scaffolding 4 particular topics into the existing S1/S2 English curriculum. Electronic learning content for S1 to S2 students will be jointly developed by English teachers from our school cluster (True Light Middle School of Hong Kong, Hong Kong True Light College, True Light Girls' College, Kowloon True Light Middle School) and the content provider with integration of appropriate 21st Century skills and use of technology. In addition, instructional design and assessment strategies for rigorous learning outcome will be implemented, in particular catering for learner diversity.

The learning content will be delivered through a tailor-made platform and table PCs (e.g. iPad) in a classroom setting. The ratio of student to PC is expected to be 2 : 1. The hardware platform chosen for this project is far more engaging than the traditional "point and click" input method in laptop systems, and this could transform the learning experience of students. Our project aims at changing the teaching and learning process from 1 to 40 one-way knowledge transfer model to student-centered and highly collaborative learning model. In an engaging digital environment, students can easily create, distribute and collaborate with each other.

Professional development for teachers in transforming pedagogical model are sought from consultant and a systematic professional development plan for teachers, leadership, and students will be deployed.

e-Learning Resources Depository for Primary English Language

The project schools will produce a set of English electronic learning package for P.1 to P.3 students. There are two schools participating in the project. Both of them act as testing beds to try the innovative pedagogies and e-Learning materials. Six collaborating partner organizations have been aligned to work out the implementation. They come from educational publisher, information technology sector, tertiary institution, etc. Their roles include curriculum design, WiFi system support, hardware installation and project evaluation.

The schools hope that through such high-quality package, the schools can promote a 'Paradigm Shift' in learning and teaching in terms of the interactivity in pedagogical practices and students' self-directed learning so as to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching. The schools believe that such 'Paradigm Shift' can help develop the idea of life-long learning.

The electronic courseware includes the core curriculum at Key Stage 1 as suggested by the EDB. To cater for individual learning differences, there will be different levels of exercises provided to students. The assessments will have 'Safety Net' so that students with learning difficulties will be able to achieve their basic competence through repeated practice and revisions. It is expected that after using the electronic courseware,

students' learning motivation and interest will be enhanced tremendously.

Adaptive LMS for Chinese Language Learning

In this presentation, teachers from an e-Learning Pilot Scheme (Scheme) supported by the local education authority, the Education Bureau (EDB), will introduce how a web-based platform facilitates the learning of Chinese Language in Hong Kong primary schools. Two local primary schools with different demographic background joined hand together under the Scheme to develop an e-Learning environment in which Chinese Literacy (reading, writing, speaking and listening) is expected to be learnt through innovative ways and adaptive use of information communication technology (ICT) in the 3-year project period. By collaboration with local ICT educational service provider (ESP) and academics of the discipline from the university, such a Chinese e-Learning platform has been being developed and reviewed in terms of its applicability and effectiveness. The frontline teachers design the curriculum contents and related assessments, which will be in turn transformed into e-Learning materials by the ESP for students to be used inside and outside the classroom. The pedagogical application and adaptive use of these materials become the focus of study in the Scheme.

The present paper addressed the key features and development of the web-based platform. The new ways of Chinese Language learning will be discussed and compared with the conventional ones. With the guidance and research expertise provided by the academics, the effectiveness of the project will be discussed in the light of relevant literatures and research methodology. The expected outcomes of the project: (1) enhanced quality in Chinese Language learning; (2) student self-directed learning; (3) catering for individual difference; and (4) cross-subject integrated learning and joint-school collaborative projects/tasks (e.g., quality circle on Chinese Writing), as well as its implications to school-based e-Learning development will be discussed with reference to the observation and evaluation of the application of such a newly-developed e-Learning environment during the first stage (6-month period) of the project. The collaboration modes among frontline teachers, academics and ESP for the development of such a new e-Learning platform are to be explored and reviewed for not only the sake of efficient running (in the latter 2-year period) of the project, but also of the effective learning through electronic ways and collaborations beyond school boundary.

Theme of the Session and Expected Outcome(s)

Teachers and principals from both primary and secondary schools will highlight the essence of components in designing such e-Learning materials for facilitating students' language learning as well as those implementation strategies that work with the collaborative partners.

By the end of the session, the participants will

- understand the conceptual framework, idea, implementation strategies of the project with focus on collaboration between the schools and the partners involved
- understand how the Chinese pedagogical practices is transformed into an "adaptive" e-Learning platform
- know more about the collaborative modes among teachers and across schools and service providers for the development of web-based teaching materials
- get the ideas how diversified learning needs would be catered and how self-directed learning habits would be established by means of the e-Learning platform

Session Activities—Brief Rundown of Each of the Activities to be Conducted in Sequence, with Focus, and Person(s) Involved

	Session Activities
1	<p><i>Case 1 Presentation</i></p> <p><i>ICT in English acquisition for the 21st Century learners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project Scope</i> • <i>Conceptual Framework of Project Design</i> • <i>Aims and Objectives</i> • <i>Implementation Details</i> • <i>Project Timeline and Evaluation</i>
2	<p><i>Case 2 Presentation</i></p> <p><i>e-Learning resources depository for Primary English Language</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vision of the project</i> • <i>Aims of the project</i> • <i>Ways of Implementation</i>
3	<p><i>Case 3 Presentation</i></p> <p><i>Adaptive LMS for Chinese Language learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demonstration of an "adaptive" Chinese e-Learning platform</i> • <i>Introduction of students' performance/work/attitude as a result of the platform (preliminary findings)</i> • <i>Comparison of the (expected) differences in learning and teaching by means of e-Learning and conventional textbook</i>
4	<i>Q & A</i>