THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Micro-Module Courseware Development Grant

Scheme 1: Basic Scheme

Final Report (2015-16)

PART I

Project title: Digitizing Cultural Studies Pedagogies

Principal supervisor: Katrien Jacobs

Co-supervisor(s)

Department / Unit   Cultural and Religious Studies

Project duration: From January 2016 to December 2016

Date report submitted:

1. Project objectives

Is the project on track to meet its objectives?

The project was a pilot project in our department and it did meet its objectives of introducing aspects of eLearning and the flipped classroom into the core course *CURE 1009 Research Methods for Cultural Studies.* This course introduces students to qualitative and ethnographic research methods within the field of Cultural Studies. The pilot project introduced new aspects of online writing and social media analysis through the semester theme of "Online Citizens and Celebrities."

We produced 6 micro-modules and asked students to watch them at home to prepare for in-class activities. Some of these micro-modules were lectures about the course content, while others introduced the technical and conceptual aspects of online communications (online writing, blogging and video production) and how students could apply them within Cultural Studies.

As the teacher of the course I found that students did respond well to this approach and enjoyed watching these micro-modules. After introducing the first two micro-modules, we made a short video about the course and interviewed the reactions of one student, who explained that she was happy to be more involved in discussions as well as more motivated and positively

encouraged to carry out assignments. The video can be accessed on the home page of class website www.cure1009.com

Have the objectives been changed as a result of the experience of working on your MMCDG project?

Since the pilot class size was small (19 students) it was easier and more convenient to try out a variety of in-class activities and workshops to introduce research methods. Normally this course would be attended by about 40 students, which would be logistically more challenging. In this sense I still cannot predict how well the novel approach would work with a full size class. I know that the course design and class activities would need to be adapted to suit   larger classes.

We held 30% of class sessions in our department-based media lab, and these sessions were set up to introduce students to social media literacies, including writing exercises for social media and basic video production and editing exercises. It would be harder to organize these sessions for larger classes as our media lab can only hold 22 students.

2. Process, outcomes or deliverables

Please specify the number of micro modules produced, and the course(s) (with course codes and titles) that have used the micro modules in Part IV, and provide more detailed descriptions here.

We produced 6 micro-modules and the content of all of them was adjusted from what I had originally proposed. I myself produced the first 3 micro-modules as video-lectures with user-friendly Camtasia software. These video-lectures were a combination of ppt slides while inserting a webcam window while explaining the content.

The last three micro-modules are ppt slides about technical and aesthetic aspects of blog and video production. Students were asked to apply these skills for their final assignments on ethnographic research methods. These student projects also can be accessed on our site www.cure1009.com

MM1   I am that charming Message

A lecture with guidelines about how to write quality mini-essays and how to attract readers in for social media and blogs.

MM2   Will the Revolution be Tweeted?

A lecture based on an influential essay by Malcolm Gladwell, which prepares the student for their mid-term assignment about the impact of Hong Kong's Online Citizens and Celebrities.

MM3   My Dear Beloved Medium

This is a lecture about the "medium theory" of Marshall McLuhan which argues that every digital and social media platform creates its own specific user behaviors and cultural aesthetics.

MM4 How to Interview Somebody on Camera?

This is a ppt presentation with basic guidelines on how to operate a video camera and how to record an interview. The lecture also explains how to develop interviewing methods when dealing with sensitive topics.

MM5 Video Editing Guidelines

This is a ppt presentation with basic guidelines about how to edit together a recorded interview using the software Adobe Premier

MM6 How to Open a Blog on Wix?

This is a ppt presentation with basic guidelines about how to open and maintain a blog using the online software wix.com

Has the nature of the deliverables been changed?   Have you adjusted your timeline?

Yes, I changed the contents of the 5 proposed micro-modules as the course went along. I also added one micro-module about blog production so that the "hands on" package would be more complete.

Overall, was the project completed satisfactorily?

Overall it was a very satisfactory experience as a pilot project, which would have to be further adapted for a larger size core course. I was also lucky to have a very supportive and exceptional team of assistants (One RA and two TAs) who were able to carry out technical demonstrations and to give guidance to students.

3. Evaluation Plan

Have you altered your evaluation plans?
What monitoring data did you collect?

Does your evaluation indicate that you have achieved your objectives?

We carried out two evaluation plans and both of them worked very well. We collected student comments and held an in-depth evaluation meeting after the course had finished. Based on such data, we believe that we have achieved our objectives in this project.

For our first evaluation plan, we interviewed students in the course in October around the mid-term for their reactions to the first two micro modules. We documented the reaction of one student to this new way of learning, commenting that it was interesting and it made her more involved into the class and research. (The interview can be viewed at www.cure1009.com) As a matter of fact, during the remainder of course, I asked RA/TA's and students to give comments so that I could adjust the course accordingly. The comments were indeed quite positive and this attitude was also reflected in the quality of the student assignments.

With regards to the second evaluation plan, I organized a meeting by inviting the RA/TA's two students, two program directors and one lecturer in our department to discuss the methods, pedagogy and outcomes of this project on Dec 06, right after the course ended. We had a heated discussion for 1.5 hours. Professor Pang Laikwan, director of the Cultural Studies Division and Professor Chung Peichi, Program Director of the BA in Cultural Studies, showed great interested in this project and asked mainly these three questions: Whether such teaching methods and pedagogy could help students learn more in contrast to the traditional pedagogy? Secondly, How could they apply eLearning to the other courses in Cultural Studies? Thirdly, how could such a new way of learning help students acquire critical thinking skills, which is important for the field of Cultural Studies. The two students showed quite positive reaction to these questions. They considered that this course helped them experience step by step about how to do research in an academic way and with critical thinking, and the eLearning also made them become more involved into this course. One student even stated that this course was the best one she had had in her two-year studies in CUHK. Both of them thought the class in the media-lab were especially helpful as they could practice and get feedback immediately from the professor and the TAs.

In a nutshell, the students felt satisfied about this course and the program directors considered our project inspiring and adaptable for the future courses in our department. We reached the consensus that: 1. The new pedagogies of eLearning and flipped classroom work well to improve students' learning, while the environment of media lab is also very helpful and we should definitely use them more for both courses and tutorial classes 2. The new teaching methods and pedagogy could be applied to other courses with certain adjustments, such as the alternative design for students' assignments.

4. Dissemination, diffusion and impact

Please provide examples of dissemination: website, presentations in workshops or conferences, or publications.

We have participated in the poster session of the "Teaching and Learning Innovation Expo 2016" We presented a poster entitled "Digitizing Cultural Studies Pedagogies" which explained in a humorous way how teachers can apply the principles of a flipped classroom and "double-flipped classroom." We received good comments and were also given an award for our poster.

Please provide examples of diffusion: how the project results/process/outcomes/deliverables have been used in your unit and other parts of CUHK or other institutions?

The course finished mid-December 2016 and will be adapted into a regular core course in the next years, at which point several teachers could make use of the materials that we have produced. We will make all our materials available on our website www.cure1009.com

Please provide examples of impact: how the project results (micro modules) can be adapted to other disciplines.

We will make our materials available to other teachers via our website www.cure1009.com. Teachers in anthropology, sociology and media studies who do not yet have a foundation in online communications could make use of these materials.

PART II
Financial data

Funds available:

Funds awarded from MMCDG	$	65.000
Funds secured from other sources	$	
(please specify_____)		
Total:	$	

Expenditure:

Item	Budget as per application	Expenditure	Balance
Mac book computer		11.000	

Part-time RA August-december		53.000	
Total:		64.000	1.000

PART III

Lessons learnt from the project

Please describe your way forward.
Please describe any of the following item(s) accordingly:

- *Key success factors, if any*

The team of RA/TAs and students have expressed satisfaction about the course in how it offers a new template for teaching that can be further applied to Cultural Studies.

- *Difficulties encountered and remedial actions taken, if any*

The course and novel pedagogies caused some confusion amongst students who needed constant guidance from the teaching team. The course would need at least one computer lab and two teaching assistants who have the right kind of technical and academic skills.

- *Suggestions to CUHK, if any*

Our department has a small media lab with 22 Mac pro computer units, which is a small size lab for this kind of course. CUHK could invest in larger media labs with the appropriate hardware and software and make them available to teachers in the faculty of Arts.

PART IV
Information for public access

Summary information and brief write-ups of individual projects will be uploaded to a publicly accessible CUHK MMCDG website. Please extract from Part I the relevant information to facilitate the compilation of the publicly accessible website and reports.

1. Keywords

Please provide five keywords (in the order of most relevant to your project to least relevant) to describe your micro-modules/pedagogies adopted.

(Most relevant)   Keyword 1: Cultural Studies

Keyword 2: Online Citizens

Keyword 3: Research Methods

Keyword 4: Media Activism

(Least relevant)   Keyword 5: Digital Media Literacies

2. Summary

Please provide information, if any, in the following tables, <u>and provide the details in Part I</u>.

Table 1: Publicly accessible online resources (if any)
(a) **Project website:** http://www.cure1009.com
(b) **Webpage(s):** *If information of your project is summarized in a webpage (say a page in the department's or*
(c) **Tools / Services:** *If you have used any tools or services for the project, please provide names of the tools or services in here.* *We have media use of* The CRS media lab which contains 22 Mac Pro computer units. Software Adobe Premier Online software wix.com
(d) **Pedagogical Uses:** We produced 6 micro-modules that were accessed by students online before the class sessions took place. They can be accessed at our website www.cure 1009.com
(c) **Others (please specify):**

Table 2: Resources accessible to a target group of students (if any)
If resources (e.g. software) have been developed for a target group of students (e.g. in a course, in a department) to gain access through specific platforms (e.g. Blackboard, facebook), please specify.

<u>Course Code/</u> <u>Target Students</u>	<u>Term & Year of</u>	<u>Approximate No.</u>	<u>Platform</u>

	offering	of students	
CURE 1009	*2nd term 2016*	*19*	*Blackboard*
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Table 3: Presentation (if any)	
Please classify each of the (oral/poster) presentations into one and only one of the following categories	**Number**
(a) In workshop/retreat within your unit (e.g. department, faculty)	*Please insert no*
(b) In workshop/retreat organized for CUHK teachers (e.g. CLEAR workshop, workshop organized by other CUHK units) Poster Session in Teaching and Learning Innovation Expo 2016	1026HC8
(c) In CUHK ExPo jointly organized by CLEAR and ITSC	*Please insert no*
(d) In any other event held in HK (e.g. UGC symposium, talks delivered to units of other institutions)	*Please insert no*
(e) In international conference I gave a talk "Sexuality and Popular Culture in the Hong Kong Classroom" at the Association for Asian Studies conference, Seattle, March 2016.	*Please insert no*
(f) Others (please specify)	*Please insert no*

Table 4: Publication (if any)	
Please classify each piece of publication into one and only one of the following categories	**Number**
(a) Project CD/DVD	*Please insert no*
(b) Project leaflet	*Please insert no*
(c) Project booklet	*Please insert no*
(d) A section/chapter in a booklet/ book distributed to a limited group of audience	*Please insert no*
(e) Conference proceeding	*Please insert no*
(f) A chapter in a book accessible internationally	*Please insert no*
(g) A paper in a referred journal	*Please insert no*
(h) Others (please specify)	*Please insert no*

3. **A one-page brief write up**

Please provide a one-page brief write-up of no more than 500 words and a short video.

In this project, we introduced the new pedagogy of eLearning and the flipped classroom into the core course CURE1009 Research Methods in Cultural Studies. We integrated technology-aided methods of learning and doing research into the traditional qualitative and ethnographic research methods in Cultural Studies. We found the new pedagogy to be a good fit for this course and students were very satisfied with this course.

In this project, we produced 6 micro-modules to try out the method of flipped classroom. The first three micro modules focused on teaching students the concepts of online activism and online celebrity culture, while the latter three focused on teaching the students how they could do interviews, videotape these interviews and publicize their research via a blog. The students reacted very well to those micro-modules. We asked the students to practice what they have learned from micro-modules in the media lab and they did quite a good job, as shown in their weekly assignments, as well as mid-terms and final projects. But it should be noted that we could not completely rely on online materials and some in-class explanation of the content is still needed.

In terms of evaluation, we made two evaluation plans. One was informal and formal interviews with students to find out how students were reacting to the new teaching methods. The other was our evaluation meeting at the end of the course by inviting the program directors in our department and students to discuss the outcomes. In both evaluations, students showed quite positive comments stating that this course increased their motivation to learn and that they had become more actively involved in their studies. The program directors in our department, after our discussions, also agreed that such new pedagogy did work to improve students' learning and our project was adaptable for the other courses in the future.

For the outcomes of this course, we have produced a course website www.cure1009.com, where the short video-report for the course, all our teaching materials and the students' mid-term and final projects are uploaded. Teachers from our department and other departments could get access to such materials and we believe the website will be of good help for their teaching. While we used the user-friendly web-based software wix.com to produce this website, we think Facebook and other social media could also be used to share information and materials so that not only the university teachers and students, but also the general public, could have access to it.

We have also learnt the following lessons from this project: 1. As new teaching methods and novel pedagogies, TAs with both technical and academic skills are of importance to help the students to clear out some of the confusion; 2. The media lab is an important environment for students to carry out weekly assignments based on the micro-modules that they have learned at home. Thus, we suggest that CUHK should: 1. Invest in larger media labs with the appropriate hardware and software and make them available to teachers in the Faculty of Arts; 2. Offer funding to the Faculty of Arts so that each department could hire TAs to help produce e-learning materials for teaching.