

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Micro-Module Courseware Development Grant

Scheme 1: Basic Scheme

Final Report (2015-16)

Report due 31 December 2016

Please return by email to The Ad hoc Committee on Planning of eLearning Infrastructure
mmcd@cuhk.edu.hk

PART I

Project title: Micro-Modules for Music: Flipping Practice-Rooms and Classrooms

Principal supervisor: Jeffrey Levenberg

Co-supervisor(s)

Department / Unit Music

Project duration: From January 2016 to December 2016

Date report submitted: Dec. 23, 2016

1. Project objectives

Is the project on track to meet its objectives?

Yes, the project has remained on track to meet its objectives.

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

No, the objectives did not change as a result of working on this MMCDG project.

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.

Altogether 8 micro-modules were produced. They were employed predominantly in MUSC3213 'Special Topic in Western Music History: Sounds of Music: Past, Present, West, East' (the course designed through this grant) and, for further testing, MUSC2872, 'Survey of Western Music History I'.

Has the nature of the deliverables been changed?

The nature of the micro-modules has not changed, but the contents of some of the micro-modules were refined as I developed the course. For instance, it occurred to me after the proposal to include a module on Western classical music sung in Cantonese. This strengthened the original module, which had more modest objectives of introducing the basics of vocal sound production.

Have you adjusted your timeline?

No, the timeline has remained consistent and the course was designed and offered within the span of 12 months. For departmental teaching reasons, we extended the completion date of this grant to the end of the 2017 Spring Term.

Overall, was the project completed satisfactorily?

Yes, the project was completed satisfactorily overall, with micro-modules unique to CUHK music instruction created, classrooms often flipped, and mostly positive student and peer feedback.

3. Evaluation Plan

Have you altered your evaluation plans?

No, the evaluation plans have not changed. I had, however, tempered the students' weekly journal reflections to one per unit of the course (i.e. monthly), seeing as such writing assignments generally overwhelmed the students in my previous course (offered at the time this proposal was submitted).

What monitoring data did you collect?

One mid-term course evaluation (typical of the music department).

The end-of-term CTE and music department evaluation.

One end-of-term evaluation on the micro-modules.

Non-solicited feedback from students visiting the class.

Peer/Colleague review of one highlight of the class (projecting the students' work at the Digital Scholarship Lab).

Does your evaluation indicate that you have achieved your objectives?

The evaluations indicate that the objectives were achieved. However, as one could foresee, there were some moments of confusion and unsettledness among the students and teacher in the foreign learning environment (flipped classroom for the students, CUHK for the teacher).

4. Dissemination, diffusion and impact

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

Although I had not proposed to disseminate this project, I expect to incorporate it substantially into a future article for the Journal of Music History Pedagogy complementing those of my colleagues and predecessors at CUHK on, to use their title, "Teaching Western Music History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong." That article, of course, is contingent on at least three years of observation here and will run the whole gamut of experiences. Research travel pending, I can present this project at next year's CLEAR exhibition.

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?

To date, this project has only served my teaching and I had not indicated in the proposal that the project would be diffused with other parts of CUHK. The results may yet be, as sound production can be studied in linguistics, physics, and related disciplines. The applications of two softwares to pedagogical development will be forwarded to their developers at Stanford University, Cambridge University and King's College for reporting to their grant agencies.

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

Select micro-modules about sound production may be adapted to linguistics, physics, and general education classes on Western or Chinese Culture. However, other disciplines do not have practice rooms to flip into classrooms; as that was the primary intent of these micro-modules, other disciplines will likely find them to have tangential bases.

PART II

Financial data

Funds available:

Funds awarded from MMCDG	\$ 60,000
Funds secured from other sources (please specify _____)	\$ NA
Total:	\$ 60,000

Expenditure:

Item	Budget as per application	Expenditure	Balance
Teaching Relief	60,000	60,000	0

Total:	60,000	60,000	0

PART III

Lessons learnt from the project

Please describe your way forward.

My next step will be to switch from ‘practical’ musical studies in the flipped classroom here to ‘historical’ musical studies concerning manuscript analysis.

Please describe any of the following item(s) accordingly:

- *Key success factors, if any*
 - *Students were enthusiastic about playing their instruments and sound synthesizers/analyzers in class.*
 - *Music students visited the Chemistry Department for a demonstration on chemical ‘resonance.’*
 - *Students audited the class and voluntarily wrote positive feedback and requested to have micro-modules and group work for their classes too.*
 - *Students loved seeing their peers and older graduate students in the micro-modules.*
 - *The class saw their work presented in the new Digital Scholarship Lab.*
 - *All students without exception were able to learn the basics of the three softwares introduced in the course from the short video instructions; the micro-modules indeed saved class time.*
 - *A bi-cultural and bi-lingual class was achieved through strategic activities in English and Chinese, no matter the Western designation of the course.*
 - *For the first time, a full class of undergraduate students conducted research in the Chinese Music Archive.*
 - *The UReply program facilitated engaging an oversized class.*
 - *The ELITE filming produced high quality micro modules and the students were amused by them.*
 - *The class was collectively so vocally enthusiastic sometimes that it interrupted the music composition professor in the office next door (an extreme rarity for a music history class here, she informed me).*

- *Difficulties encountered and remedial actions taken, if any*
 - *The music department facilities are not outfitted for flipped-classrooms. This requires re-fitting HYS from top (ELITE 6/F) to bottom (Music Dept. LG-3/F).*

- *Overcrowding: Too many students want/need to take my class and we cannot have an ideal enrollment of around a dozen students for flipped-classrooms in the music department; time management with too many groups was a recurring issue.*
 - *CUHK students overwhelmingly prioritize music performance at the expense of academics and the performance faculty scheduled additional rehearsals at the expense of coursework. For four weeks of final concerts in November-December, this resulted in many exhausted students and a disengaged research professor. I lodged a complaint with the department chair.*
 - *At the time this course was developed and offered, the budget for music students' performance lessons was cut and the number of applied music credits they could take reduced, leading to general student discontent in the department.*
 - *Benchmarking this class to the equivalent elective at prestigious American universities, as the internal Undergraduate Program Review indicated, was beyond reach.*
 - *A portion of the students found the new flipped-classroom environment stressful. I maintained a fun environment as best as possible, and reminded them to keep an open mind; generous marks were given.*
 - *Continued instability at the lecturer and professorial rank in the music department impacts how students here see their teachers (and vice versa).*
 - *There's limited (if any) inter-departmental communication from the music department and, being a newcomer and non-Chinese, I could only do so much to connect this class beyond our department.*
- *The role of other units in providing support, if any*
 - *ELITE fostered the production of the micro modules and the Digital Visualization Lab enabled us to see all of the students' work together.*
 - *Suggestions to CUHK, if any*
 - *Example: what should be done differently?*
 - *CUHK is to be commended for undertaking this new initiative and one suggests first and foremost to continue. At the same time, I find myself also wanting to develop old-fashioned courses without e-learning (i.e. we need funds and time to develop textbooks/course-packets in music history that serve the students of Hong Kong, China). E-learning is only so relevant to the music department, which now has other basic challenges in curriculum to attend to with some sense of urgency.*

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: Practice Rooms
 Keyword 2: Sound Analysis/Synthesis
 Keyword 3: In-Class Performance
 Keyword 4: Tuning

 (Least relevant) Keyword 5: Historical Recording

2. Summary

Please provide information, if any, in the following tables, and provide the details in Part I.

Table 1: Publicly accessible online resources (if any)
<p>(a) Project website:</p> <p><i>If a publicly accessible project website has been constructed, please provide the URL. NA</i></p>
<p>(b) Webpage(s):</p> <p><i>If information of your project is summarized in a webpage (say a page in the department's or faculty's website), please provide the URL(s) here. NA</i></p>
<p>(c) Tools / Services:</p> <p><i>If you have used any tools or services for the project, please provide names of the tools or services in here. ELITE</i></p>
<p>(d) Pedagogical Uses:</p> <p><i>If any flipped classroom activities have been conducted, please provide information in here. If relevant, please indicate how your project output can be used to support flipped classroom activities. Following introductory micro-modules, students broke up into small groups to complete homework assignments, and then brought their work and instruments for in-class demonstrations and discussions with other groups.</i></p>
<p>(c) Others (please specify):</p>

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/ Target Students</u>	<u>Term & Year of offering</u>	<u>Approximate No. of students</u>	<u>Platform</u>
Eg1. MUSC3213	1 st term 2016-2017	25	Blackboard
Eg2: MUSC2772	1 st term 2016-2017	35	Blackboard

Table 3: Presentation (if any)

<i>Please classify each of the (oral/poster) presentations into one and only one of the following categories</i>	Number
(a) In workshop/retreat within your unit (e.g. department, faculty)	0
(b) In workshop/retreat organized for CUHK teachers (e.g. CLEAR workshop, workshop organized by other CUHK units)	0
(c) In CUHK ExPo jointly organized by CLEAR and ITSC	0
(d) In any other event held in HK (e.g. UGC symposium, talks delivered to units of other institutions)	0
(e) In international conference	0
(f) Others (please specify)	0

Table 4: Publication (if any)

<i>Please classify each piece of publication into one and only one of the following categories</i>	Number
(a) Project CD/DVD	0
(b) Project leaflet	0
(c) Project booklet	0
(d) A section/chapter in a booklet/ book distributed to a limited group of audience	0
(e) Conference proceeding	0
(f) A chapter in a book accessible internationally	0
(g) A paper in a referred journal	0
(h) Others (please specify)	0

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.

This class, entitled 'Sounds of Music: West, East, Past, Present,' was a first for the CUHK music department, in which we not only pioneered the use of micro-modules, but also effectively sought to flip the 'boring' music history classroom with the 'fun' practice rooms next door.

Among our highlights: We recreated ancient tunings from Greece and China, playing them together in class via a sound synthesizer; We recorded the birdsongs on CUHK's campus and compared our findings in class; We listened to a masterwork of Western classical music, Gustav Mahler's 'Song of the Earth' (based on Tang Dynasty poetry), sung in Cantonese and learned why we could not understand what was being said; We projected our 'sonic visualizations' on the 'big screen' in the Digital Scholarship Lab; We tested our ears with various auditory illusions one finds in musical sounds; We even tried to make sense of Aristotle's notoriously problematic 'Problems' about sound, puzzling over such paradoxes as why high sounds are low and low sounds high. All the while, we kept our musical instruments handy and played what we learned in class. Last, but not least, we even went to a Chemistry Department lab about 'resonance.' The students' evaluations about the class were predominantly positive, but the best evaluations were those that were unsolicited from students from my other class that audited on occasion. One wrote, 'By the way, Professor, I love your lecture about Song of the Earth so much. The video that was taken [with the T.A.] was absolutely fun and I like that way to let students learn and it was really attractive. I guess this kind of video making is also suitable for our class too! It would be great fun for our to understand the music history well.'

We did, however, encounter challenges along the way. First and foremost, the flipped-classroom was a new learning environment for the students, vastly foreign from a more passive learning environment, such as the lecture and rote memorization of slides. Exploring things in groups, problem-solving and (equally important) identifying problems to solve, and having open-ended inquiries--while the teacher abandoned the lecture podium to interact with the class--were unsettling for a number of students. Was the teacher actually teaching? What does it mean to learn to teach yourself? 'This course has created a lot of pressure on students' wrote one student in the evaluation. Of course, I foresaw and accepted this challenge from the start, reassuring the students about their discoveries and processes as necessary. Then there were other obstacles in that students still preferred to be practicing music, over-practicing and being over-rehearsed for end-of-term concerts, at the expense of their academics (a problem familiar to academics in schools of music, yet out-of-place for a liberal arts college within a research university). One could rightly ask why class and practice rooms would even need to be flipped at CUHK in the first place.

Overall, this class was a success and the continued development of e-learning and flipped-classrooms in some courses of the music department at CUHK is promising.