

**THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

**Micro-Module Courseware Development Grant**

**Scheme 2: Studies in Foundation Courses**

**Final Report (2016-17)**

**PART I**

Project title: Academic Writing Skills Modules  
Principal supervisor: Lee, Miranda Kwok Yee  
Co-supervisor(s) --  
Department / Unit English Language Teaching Unit  
Project duration: From May 2017 to June 2018  
Date report submitted: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**1. Project objectives**

The project objective is to develop micro-modules on the introductory of academic writing skills, particularly in enhancing users' awareness of avoiding plagiarism, as well as applying paraphrasing, summarizing and referencing skills in academic writing. The micro-modules allow ELTU1001 course teachers to "flip the classroom" or apply blended learning when they go through "Module 5D Expository Writing: Avoiding plagiarism by paraphrasing, summarizing and referencing". It may also serve as independent learning modules for students who have academic writing skills need.

The project follows its original objectives. Three micro-modules were produced by the ELTU lecturers and staff. The interactive micro-modules have been uploaded to a Blackboard course and the ELTU website for ELTU1001 course teachers' use as optional materials. We will produce more micro-modules in the near future to cover different aspects of academic writing skills.

## 2. Process, outcomes or deliverables

During the project period, three team members (Mr. Chris Rozendaal, Ms. Maggie Lau and Ms. Miranda Lee) worked on the micro-modules context using different approaches, including video clips recording, cases analysis and discussion, animated lectures, samples analysis, and step-by-step demonstration. The micro-modules are designed to be short and interactive as suggested by new elearning pedagogies.

In the proposal, we aimed to develop three experimental micro-modules, while we will consolidate the experience and set up an effective and sustainable framework for future ELTU academic writing skills micro-modules. The proposed topics were “Paraphrasing skills and strategies”, “Summarizing skills” and “Paragraph development synthesizing material in sources”. However, the team agreed to develop an introductory module to arouse students’ awareness of plagiarism for better coherence among the academic writing skills and replaced the “paragraph development” module; thus, three micro-modules are produced as follows:

1. Plagiarism
  - A series of video clips embedded in Articulate with cases analysis and pre/post quizzes; online contact/duration: 20-30 minutes)
2. Paraphrasing
  - An Articulate presentation with interactive activities; online contact/duration: 10-20 minutes)
3. Summarizing
  - A PowToon animation embedded in Articulate, with step-by-step demonstrations, and summary writing samples and activities; online contact/duration 10-20 minutes)

The three micro-modules are hosted in a Blackboard course-site titled “Academic Writing Skills Micro-modules” which will also be linked to a ELTU course titled ***ELTU1001 Foundation English for University Studies*** as flipped classroom, blended-learning and/or

supplementary learning materials for its *Expository Writing Module* (Module 5D: Avoiding Plagiarism by Paraphrasing, Summarizing and Referencing).

The production timeline was adjusted due to technical obstacles such as audio/video production, video editing, HTML5 programming and compatibility of Articulate platforms. It was also difficult to find time to work on the productions and developments during term time for teaching staff which also delayed the production timeline.

Overall, three micro-modules were completed as proposed; however, as we mentioned in the proposal, there are more topics in academic writing skills that we hope to work on in the near future.

### **3. Evaluation Plan**

As our production timeline was altered, we only piloted the micro-modules in small groups. The evaluation may not directly indicate achievement of our objectives, as the use of micro-modules is an option for teachers, while teaching and practicing on academic writing skills still take place in regular classrooms. However, students will benefit from the self-learning modules.

### **4. Dissemination, diffusion and impact**

Three micro-modules are hosted in ELTU website and a Blackboard course-site

<http://eltu.cuhk.edu.hk/files/micro-module/>

[https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk/ultra/courses/\\_99791\\_1/cl/outline](https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk/ultra/courses/_99791_1/cl/outline)

**Module 1: Plagiarism** – This micro-module will challenge learners to think about different types of plagiarism, and to think carefully about situations that may be less clear. There are eight situations to consider, each followed by expert feedback.

**Module 2: Paraphrasing** – In this second part of the micro-module, learners will enjoy a journey of using paraphrases appropriately and professionally in their writing.

**Module 3: Summarizing skills and strategies** – In this part of the micro-module, learners will learn how to write a summary effectively.

The micro-modules will be used as flipped classrooms, blended-learning and/or supplementary learning materials for academic writing skills. In this project, the micro-modules will be applied in the ELTU 1001 course (Module 5 Expository Writing). Teachers may use the micro-modules to “flip the classroom”; so students could obtain basic concepts from the micro modules before going to class, then focus on the application of skills when they meet their teachers. With the help of the micro-modules, teachers will change their roles to facilitators, rather than lecturers/speakers; while the time saved for boring lectures (or informative presentations) would be replaced by challenging, more relevant writing tasks and mini-projects. On the contrary, other subject courses in other disciplines may use the micro modules as self-learning activities for students’ preparation of academic essays to be conducted for their end-of-course assessment.

This MMCD project provided an opportunity for the courseware development team to explore and experiment on the e-learning pedagogies in the new e-era, which forged a sample framework of micro-modules to be produced in the ELTU. The skills and experience obtained will be transferable and sustainable for e-learning/e-platform courseware development.

## PART II

### Financial data

Funds available:

Funds awarded from MMCDG	\$ 60,000
Funds secured from other sources (please specify: Nil)	\$ 0
Total:	\$ 60,000

Expenditure:

Item	Budget as per application	Expenditure	Balance
Production Costs (Assets):	\$18,975		
Computer, video & audio editing software, printing			
Audio & video equipment and misc.	\$6,000	\$24,418.44	( \$ 556.56)
Teaching relief for lecturers and ELTU services on I.T. development services and SCORM development and programming	\$28,000	\$26257.60	(\$1742.40)
Student helpers	\$7,025	\$9323.96	\$2298.96
Total:	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$0

## PART III

### Lessons learnt from the project

Technical issues, including audio, video and video editing, HTML5 programming, software computability, and time management are the main obstacles that we encountered. After the production of the trial modules, we have tested the displays in different electronic devices using different browsers and learning management systems. It took unexpected amount of time to debug and fix the technical problems. We could have purchased professional services for solving the issue, however, the budget was found insufficient to hire I.T. services for mobile-web compatible applications development. It took us extra time to go for a lower cost (yet more time-consuming) option – to self-learn and apply the productions and development skills in our project. With the help of ELTU staff and lecturers, we finished the modules in an acceptable presentation quality.

## PART IV

### Information for public access

The Academic Writing Skills Micro-Modules on summarizing, paraphrasing, referencing skills and avoiding plagiarism will help students, especially freshmen and novice academic writers, to observe academic honesty and to become more confident in writing essays within their discipline. The online learning components will cater students with different learning styles and needs, thus they can benefit from the modules in personal ways. The micro-modules will also free up instructional class time for teachers to engage students in interactive learning.

#### **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: academic writing skills

Keyword 2: plagiarism

Keyword 3: paraphrasing, paraphrase

Keyword 4: summarizing, summary

(Least relevant)      Keyword 5: *modules*

#### **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)**

**(a) Project website:**

*If a publicly accessible project website has been constructed, temporary URL:*  
**<http://eltu.cuhk.edu.hk/files/micro-module/>**

**(b) Webpage(s):**

*Project is summarized in a webpage (say a page in the department's or faculty's website), please provide the URL(s) here.*

**<http://eltu.cuhk.edu.hk/files/micro-module/>**

**(c) Tools / Services:**

*Tools or services used : Articulate, RISE (under Articulate); PowToon education version*

**(d) Pedagogical Uses:**

The micro-modules could be conducted in “Flipped” classroom, as well as in class (task/discussion based) or independent learning

**“Flipped” classroom**

1. Post the file/ URL on your course website. Ask students to view the micro-module and complete the tasks.
2. In the next class, go through the scenarios and writing samples individually, asking students to recall the key points/strategies, and discussing the key skills applications from each.

**Outside class (independent learning)**

1. Post the file/ URL on your course website. Students can view the micro-module and complete the tasks.
2. Ask students to note any uncertainties or ambiguities to discuss with you during office-hour consultations.

**(c) Others (please specify):** *Nil*

**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 &amp; Year of offering</u>	<u>Approximate No. of students</u>	<u>Platform</u>
<i>ELTU1001 (Module 5D)</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> term 2018/19 2<sup>nd</sup> term 2018/19</i>	<i>1000 1000</i>	<i>Blackboard</i>

**Table 3: Presentation (if any)**

*Please classify each of the (oral/poster) presentations into one and only one of the following categories*

	<b>Number</b>
<i>(a) In workshop/retreat within your unit (e.g. department, faculty)</i>	<i>Nil</i>
<i>(b) In workshop/retreat organized for CUHK teachers (e.g. CLEAR workshop, workshop organized by other CUHK units)</i>	<i>Nil</i>
<i>(c) In CUHK ExPo jointly organized by CLEAR and ITSC</i>	<i>Nil</i>

(d) In any other event held in HK (e.g. UGC symposium, talks delivered to units of other institutions)	<i>Nil</i>
(e) In international conference	<i>Nil</i>
(f) Others (please specify)	<i>Nil</i>

<b>Table 4: Publication (if any)</b>	
<i>Please classify each piece of publication into one and only one of the following categories</i>	<b>Number</b>
(a) Project CD/DVD	<i>Nil</i>
(b) Project leaflet	<i>Nil</i>
(c) Project booklet	<i>Nil</i>
(d) A section/chapter in a booklet/ book distributed to a limited group of audience	<i>Nil</i>
(e) Conference proceeding	<i>Nil</i>
(f) A chapter in a book accessible internationally	<i>Nil</i>
(g) A paper in a referred journal	<i>Nil</i>
(h) Others (please specify)	<i>Nil</i>

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

Academic writing is one of the key skills emphasized in university studies. Avoiding plagiarism, applying paraphrasing and summarizing skills and acknowledge cited sources probably are essential skills in academic essays writing, which require intensive practices. However, students have reportedly encountered difficulty in summary writing and paraphrasing source materials in their writing process. Although these skills were taught in class, students may not be able to master them within a brief lecture.

A series of micro-modules in honing basic and yet essential academic writing skills will prove useful in preparing novice writers for coping with demands of essay writing at the university and for further publications purposes.

Three micro-modules in academic writing skills are developed and they could be used in flipped classrooms, blended-learning and/or supplementary learning materials for the ELTU1001 course's Expository Writing Module. In addition to a 3 to 5 minutes' brief introduction on the topics, the micro-modules also include hands-on follow up activities, such



as sample analysis, exercises, paragraphs re-writing, and a short quiz.

Users will enhance awareness of how to avoid plagiarism, as well as apply paraphrasing skills, summarizing strategies and referencing skills in academic essays writing.

These micro-modules may also serve as online independent learning materials for courses that involve academic writing skills and use written essay assignments as assessments.