



Development of the App “Growing Edibles 101” for the Experiential Learning in the GEF Programme

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Background

The General Education Foundation (GEF) Programme is designed with the vision of shaping students into better global citizens by cultivating their knowledge, attitudes, and values regarding nature, science, and humanity through the reading of **classics**.

To engage students in critical reflection on the classics through direct experience and consideration of real-life situations, farming sessions have been introduced as experiential learning in one of the GEF course UGFN1000 “In Dialogue with Nature” since 2015-16. Students were invited to do farming practices, followed by interactive discussions on related classics with the teacher and with fellow students in each session.

Such learning experience has gained positive feedback from the students, and it is going to be extended to the other GEF course UGFH1000 “In Dialogue with Humanity” in the coming semesters.



Challenge

Based on our experience, students’ general lack of understanding of the relation between nature and farming and insufficient farming techniques presented an obstacle to their learning. A considerable amount of time had to be spent on explaining basic knowledge and techniques in each practice session. Meanwhile, inadequate attention or mere forgetfulness on the part of the students could lead to poor growth of the crop, resulting in a disappointing learning experience.

Objectives

In order to support the farming practices in the GEF courses as an experiential learning, a mobile App named “**Growing Edibles 101**” (**GE101**) is being developed. The objective of which is to improve the teaching and learning of the GEF courses. With the help of the App, users will be able to flip the experiential learning sessions and strengthen the blended learning in the GEF Programme. Interactive learning materials will be developed for student access and use prior to the practical farming sessions. This project also aims to support students’ interactions by communication technologies.

Featured Functions

- Connecting the knowledge, attitudes, and values taught in the GEF Programme with farming practices by asking reflective questions and displaying inspiring famous quotes;
- Equipping students with essential knowledge and basic farming skills by tailor-made notes, illustrations, and videos;
- Facilitating the selection and planting of crops based on the selection criteria input;
- Issuing reminders and confirmations of daily farming tasks for student groups;
- Serving as a platform for communication among students in groups and between teachers and students.



The App Structure

1. Daily Work Reminder
 - Irrigation notification
 - Harvest reminder
 - Weeding notification
 - Planting recommendations
2. Weather Report
 - Weather forecast
 - Bad weather warning
 - HK Observatory Link
3. Farming Essentials
 - The seasons
 - Soil management
 - Garden maintenance
 - Farming skills
4. Crop Information
 - Crop introduction
 - Photos
 - Planting conditions
5. Individual Farming
 - Wish list
 - Planting list
 - Crop history
6. Collaborative Farming
 - Group list
 - Job division
 - Forum

“The earth’s vegetation is part of a web of life in which there are intimate and essential relations between plants and the earth, between plants and other plants, between plants and animals.”
- Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

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