



## A large scale blended-learning writing course

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## Outline



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## Acknowledgments



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## Background



- 3-3-4 (New Hong Kong curriculum: 2012)
- Common core curriculum: 30/120 credits of which 6 are taken by the year 1 English for Academic Purposes/Proficiency course
- The nature of HKUST – a science and technology university
- HUMA 1000 – a humanities course for non-humanities students
- 1600 students per academic year
- 800 students per term (3 content streams)
- 2 lecturers, 2 coordinators, 8-10 language instructors, 2 teaching assistants
- Why blended-learning and why for this course?

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## Some definitions



- MOOC
  - Massive
  - Open
  - Online
  - Course
- Blended- learning
  - online and face to face teaching and learning in a blend (coherent, constructive, teleological)
- TEL – Technologically Enhanced Learning
- Networked learning

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## HUMA 1000: Course rationale



- *To create a transformative humanities learning experience for all freshmen*
- *To produce a distinct humanistic signature for UST engineering, science and business graduates*
- *To address the increasingly diverse and international backgrounds of incoming freshmen in terms of secondary education, linguistic proficiency and upbringing*
- *To set a standard (exemplary model) for broad-based (GE) higher education with the most diverse student body in Hong Kong.*

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## Course structure



### Lectures (HUMA faculty) Face to face

- 2 hours weekly
- Topics may change each term
- Required reading most weeks
- Provide content for term essay and online work
- In-class quizzes (20% of the course mark)

### Writing workshops (CLE) Blended learning

- 5 in number usually in weeks 3 - 13
- The workshops are divided into online and classroom sections. (Online participation 10% of the course mark. Classroom participation 10% of the course mark)
- Support students in the writing of a term essay (50% of the course mark). The essay is co-marked by CLE instructors and HUMA faculty.

### Online (HUMA) Online forum

- Discussion (10% of course mark)

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## How the course works 1



- You have to teach the course before the content
- The whole course is facilitated via the Canvas LMS, partly online and partly in class
- The course is presented to students as two learning pathways that lead to their composition of a persuasive essay, related to the course content

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## How the course works 2



- Ways of knowing and understanding; how we claim knowledge
- Introductions and introductory paragraphs
- Argument
- Concluding your essay
- Students write a draft of their final essay which is not graded. This forms the focus of a consultation in workshop 5

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## How the course works 3



- Workshop 1 online
- Workshop 1 classroom
- Workshop 2 online
- Workshop 2 classroom
- Workshop 3 online
- Workshop 3 classroom
- Workshop 4 online
- Workshop 4 classroom
- Workshop 5 classroom consultations on draft essay

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## Students' view of the course



- <https://access.ust.hk/cas/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fcanvas.ust.hk%2Flogin%2Fcas>

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## An example



The importance of argument (workshop 3)

- Video lecture
- Activities (Online quiz)
- Classroom session

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## Video lecture

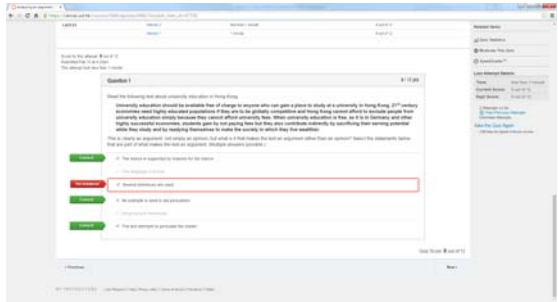




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## Activity (online quiz)






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## Classroom session






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## Out of class work





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## Course development



Writing materials:  
January – May 2015  
3 writers, 2 consultants  
1-2 days per week per person

Designing the videos and pre-production:  
April-June 2015  
3 writers, 2 consultants  
1-2 days per week per person


Filming: June-July 2015  
PTC team: 4 people  
CLE: 4 presenters and 4 'directors'  
CEI: Instructional designer  
Pre-studio: 4 half days  
Studio: 6 half-days

Postproduction July-August 2015  
Review, Editing, Subtitles, Sound, Translation.  
PTC team: 4 people  
CLE: 4 presenters and 4 'directors'  
CEI: Instructional designer  
A lot of time!

Setting up the course on the LMS 2015  
August 1-22  
CEI: 2 people  
CLE: 3 people  
HUMA: 4 people  
This was pretty much a full time job

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## Initial feedback



- Students like the format of the course and the content
- The think the level of difficulty and the amount of work are OK, maybe a little on the high side
- They find the course helpful
- But they like the face to face part best and some would like it to be longer!
- Apart from lack of familiarity with the LMS, instructor reaction was very positive.

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## Closing thoughts 1



"In spite of the abundance of publications available on the topic of technology use in FL learning and teaching, the evidence that the technology has made a measureable impact upon FL learning or teaching is quite limited. Existing studies span a wide range in terms of validity and reliability and many do not include measures of outcome data."

Ewa M. Golonka, Anita R. Bowles, Victor M. Frank, Dorna L. Richardson and Suzanne Freynic (2014) Technologies for foreign language learning: a review of technology types and their effectiveness. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 27:1, 70-105

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## Closing thoughts 2



"I believe, then, that the field of SLA, in general, and CALL, in particular, would extremely benefit from a dialogue between cognitive and socially oriented perspectives."

"...I would like to see the day in which cognitive and socially oriented theories and constructs are used complementarily to inspire and interpret new CALL research of all kinds."

Luis Cerezo. (2015) Theoretical approaches to CALL research: Towards a psycholinguistic perspective. In *A Psycholinguistic Approach to Technology and Language Learning* edited by Ronald Leow, Luis Cerezo, Melissa Baralt. De Gruyter Mouton.

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Thank you

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