

General Education Consolidation Course Professional Staff Development Workshop

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Prof. Laurance Splitter

Dr. Pamela Leung

Mr. Siulong Au

1.

INTRODUCTION OF GECC



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Course Synopsis

- 3-credit point, 1-semester “capstone” course towards the end of undergraduate studies
- Requires students to:
 - Reflect critically on their undergraduate learning experience (inside and outside classroom)
 - Develop an integrated view of how and where they position themselves in relation to their future goals, plans, and aspirations
 - Submit an annotated e-portfolio based on their experience, reflections and stored artefacts from their undergraduate studies

Course Prerequisites

- Complete GE Foundation Course
- Complete required number of GE Breadth Courses, which is normally 4
 - Allowing more flexibility for (especially non-BEd) students, the last GEBC could be taken concurrently with GECC

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

CILO₁

- Communicate (orally and in writing) personally, reflectively and critically *about their undergraduate experience* (including, but not restricted to, GE), utilizing the Institute structures of the 4Cs Learning Framework and 7 Generic Intended Learning Outcomes, the GE Learning Outcomes (GELOs) and GE Criteria.

CILO₂

- Make, and reflect critically on, connections *between* what they have learned in their undergraduate studies *and specific aspects of their own lives and experiences beyond the classroom*.

CILO₃

- Articulate their own beliefs, values and goals in order to describe a personal description or vision for living a worthwhile life.

Content, CIOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CIOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Recapitulation of 4Cs Learning Framework, 7 Generic Intended Learning Outcomes, GELOs, GE-CILO A, Criteria and F-CIOs	CIO ₂	Documentary review and analysis, and class sharing
Reflection on students' FC, BCs, major, other studies and beyond-classroom learning experiences and outcomes	CIO _{1 & 2}	Student presentation (short and informal), class sharing and discussion
Review of e-portfolio as a learning tool and students' relevant records	CIO _{1 & 2}	Case studies, IT workshops and class discussion
Analytical and creative approaches to preparing a CC e-portfolio	CIO ₂	Reflective entries and class discussion
Guided brainstorming of themes for a CC e-portfolio with respect to students' reflection	CIO _{1, 2 & 3}	Online and Class discussion
Evaluation of reflections raised by students during working on their theme and e-portfolio	CIO _{1, 2 & 3}	Individual presentation, and class sharing

Tentative Assessment Scheme

Assessment task	Weighting (%)	CILO
Two reflective entries with following two elements:	20%	CILO _{1, 2 & 3}
1. Self-reflection on class meetings, sharing, discussions and e-portfolio construction	<i>1st entry: 7%, 2nd entry: 13%</i>	
2. Critical feedback on peer study group sharing and discussions		
An individual presentation on e-portfolio	20%	CILO _{1, 2 & 3}
An individual e-portfolio	60%	CILO _{1, 2 & 3}

Course Structure

- Attend mass lecture (per programme) at the beginning of the semester to acquire skills for reflective thinking and writing
- Then engage in interactive reflective sharing and discussion in the two-hour small meetings
- Meet with GECC supervisor and fellow group-members (as *critical friends*) in consultation sessions* for reflective writing and preparing their individual e-portfolio
- Complete reflective entries of self-reflection on class meetings, sharing, discussions and e-portfolio construction as well as critical feedback on peer study group members' construction of e-portfolio, for the purpose of guiding and consolidating their self-discovery learning progress
- Present and submit their e-portfolio at the end of the course

* *Students are divided into 5x5-member peer study groups (with 25 students constituting a single class under the supervision of a GECC supervisor).*

GECC Supervisor Workload

- 39 hours (full-course workload) for individual GECC supervisor:
 - Pre-semester professional development workshop of 6 hours
 - 1 mass lecture of 2 hours
 - 4 small-class meetings of 2 hours each
 - Group consultation session of 2 hours for each group (5 groups of 5 students)
 - Individual presentation in 2 meetings, 3 hours each
 - Individual consultation sessions (by appointment) of 7 hours in total

Tentative Course Schedule

Course Schedule	Timeframe		Contact Hour (Supervisor)	Contact Hour (Student)
Professional development workshop	Pre-semester	(Oct, 2014)	6	0
Student mass awareness meeting	Pre-semester	(27 th Nov, 2014)	---	(1)
First phase:				
Mass lecture	Week 1	(5 th – 9 th Jan, 2015)	2	2
4 small-class meetings	Week 2-5	(12 th Jan – 6 th Feb)	4 x 2 = 8	4 x 2 = 8
Submission of 1 st reflective entry	Week 3	(19 th – 23 rd Jan)	---	---
Submission of 2 nd reflective entry	Week 5	(2 nd – 6 th Feb)	---	---
Second phase:				
Group consultation sessions	Week 6-7	(9 th – 27 th Feb)	5 x 2 = 10	2
E-portfolio workshop (hosted by LTTC, voluntary attendance on need basis)	Week 6-7	(9 th – 27 th Feb)	0	2
Third phase:				
Individual presentations	Week 8-10	(2 nd – 20 th Mar)	2 x 3 = 6	2 x 3 = 6
Individual consultation sessions (appointment on need basis)	Week 10-12	(16 th Mar – 10 th Apr)	7	---
Submission of e-portfolio	Week 13	(13 th – 17 th Apr)	---	---
Total contact hours:			39	20

GECC Supervisors should...

- Have a reasonably flexible schedule, in order to accommodate both formal teaching hours and (especially) informal consultations to students;
- Possess good understanding of what it means to think, speak and write reflectively and critically, and be confident in communicating these aptitudes to students;
- Be capable of teaching and discussing with students in spoken and written English; and
- Understand the practicalities of e-portfolio construction.

2.

THE GECC SMALL-SCALE PILOT EXPERIENCE



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GECC Small-scale Pilot

- January – June, 2014
- 4 students who had participated in GEFC pilot
 - 1 BEd(EL), 1 BEd(Pri)-Math, 2 BEd(VA)
- 1 supervisor with 1 assistant
- Originally planned 4 class meetings, eventually the 5th one was added (c.f. **Observation 3** below).

Small-scale Pilot Schedule

Course Schedule	Timeframe of Completion
First phase:	
1 st to 5 th class meeting	15 th Jan – 6 th Mar, 2014
Submission of 1 st reflective entry, 1 st draft	By the fourth class meeting
Submission of 1 st reflective entry, 2 nd draft	By the fifth class meeting
Submission of 1 st reflective entry	One week after the fifth class meeting
Second phase:	
1 st individual consultation session	Early to Mid-March, 2014
Submission of 1 st reflective entry, revised (final) version	Mid- to late March, 2014
Supplementary class meeting (with LTTC)	24 th April, 2014
Submission of 2 nd reflective entry	Late April, 2014
Third phase:	
2 nd individual consultation session	Late April to late May, 2014
Presentation	5 th June, 2014
Submission of e-portfolio	16 th June, 2014

Observations & Attempted Solutions

Observation 1:

- Students had little understanding of reflecting on their learning experience and writing critically.

Attempted Solutions:

- We adhered to the framework of the 4Cs Learning Framework and 7 Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (and other generic outcomes), GELOs and GE Criteria, so students with different levels of attainment could all find materials for reflection. [[Class Meeting 2, p. 4](#)]
- We conducted interactive activities to explore and familiarise:
 - Students' PILOs to bring them to review courses they had studied; [[Class Meeting 3, p. 5](#)]
 - Ways and methods of thinking. [[Class Meeting 3, p. 12](#)]
- We introduced the concept of reflective thinking to students based on Dewey's "How we think". [[Class Meeting 3, p. 16](#)]

Observations & Attempted Solutions

Observation 2:

- Students felt that the course was too ideal, conceptual and abstract, without a systematic set of concrete skills or knowledge like other undergraduate courses.
- Consequently they had no idea of how they should do their reflective entries and e-portfolio.

Attempted Solutions:

- Dewey's "How we think" was adopted as the framework for teaching reflective thinking. [[Class Meeting 4, p. 7](#)]
- We developed detailed assessment guidelines as frameworks to guide them through each assessment item. [Guidelines for [reflective entry](#), [presentation](#) and [e-portfolio](#)]
- Sample reflective entries and assessment worksheet (following CIOs) were prepared for class discussions to familiarise students with reflective writing. [[Sample reflective entries](#) and [assessment worksheet](#)]

Observations & Attempted Solutions

Observation 3:

- Because of **Observation 1** and **2**, the original planning of 4 class meetings was not enough to set students on track for their e-portfolio.

Attempted Solutions:

- An extra 5th class meeting was added; both the 4th and 5th meeting were devoted to discuss students' reflective entries. [[Class Meeting 5](#), in-class reflective entry discussion of student [1](#) and [2](#)]
- The assistant put extra time and effort (outside regular consultation hours) guiding each student's planning, execution and revisions of reflective entries and e-portfolio.

Observations & Attempted Solutions

Observation 4:

- Given students' different level of learning and reflective attainments, class discussions tended to be passive, quiet and not as "critical" as *critical friendship* needs to be. (The situation was even worse on Mahara.)

Attempted Solutions:

- Instead of the traditional sitting arrangement, we sat in circle to promote equal participation.
- In later class meetings in particular, the emphasis was placed on students' own reflection, which could prompt mandatory contribution from every students.
- Ideally, meaningful issues and reflections from "critical" class discussions should be reflected in students' reflective entries and e-portfolio, which would be recognised in corresponding assessment items.







Observations & Attempted Solutions

Observation 5:

- Students' English proficiency (both written and spoken) remained a major obstacle of effective presentation, reflective writing and e-portfolio annotations.

Attempted Solutions:

- We adopted a flexible approach to spoken language during class meetings and consultation sessions, in which Cantonese was allowed (while English is still the Medium of Instruction for assessment items), for the purpose of students' self-expression.
- We emphasised both formal and informal student-teacher interactions, devoting more time to construe students' meaning and help them communicate their reflection.
- The assistant also put extra time and effort (outside regular consultation hours) assisting each student's writing of reflective entries and e-portfolio.

3.

TRIAL MARKING OF GECC SMALL-SCALE PILOT SAMPLES



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Evaluating Sample Reflective Entries and E-portfolio

- Evaluate sample reflective entries on assessment guideline (reflective entries) used for the small-scale pilot [Sample reflective entry [1](#) and [2](#)]
- Identify reflective elements and ways of reflection
- Mark the samples accordingly and discuss with us
- Input and comment on the guideline



Evaluating Sample E-portfolios

- Evaluate sample e-portfolios on assessment guideline (e-portfolio) used for the small-scale pilot [Sample e-portfolio [1](#) and [2](#)]
- Identify theme(s), structure and organisation
- Mark the samples accordingly and discuss with us`
- Input and comment on the guideline

References

- Biggs, John and Kevin Collis (1982). *Evaluating the quality of learning: The SOLO taxonomy (structure of the observed learning outcome)*. New York: Academic Press.
- Dewey, John (1910). *How we think*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Co.
- Schön, Donald (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.