香港教育大學
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The development of an online English summary writing platform for discipline-specific language learning

Teaching Development Grant (TDG) Project Sharing Session

Principle investigator: Professor Cheung, Hintat

Department of Linguistics and Modern Language Studies

語言學及現代語言系
LINGUISTICS AND MODERN LANGUAGE STUDIES

Collaborations for this TDG project

	Name	Department/ Unit
Principal Project Supervisor(s)	Prof. CHEUNG, Hin Tat	Linguistics and Modern Language Studies
Co-supervisor(s)	Prof. CHOW, Hung Kay Daniel	Health and Physical Education
	Dr. CHAN, Wai Hong Daricks	Mathematics and Information Technology
	Dr. LIU, Fung Ming	Linguistics and Modern Language Studies

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Outline

1. Rationales
2. Constructing the learning platform
3. Students' learning activities on the platform
4. Students' evaluation and feedback

Purposes of the project

- To enhance HPE and MIT students' overall summary writing skills through continuous summary writing practice.
  - (i) To establish two discipline-based text banks with guided summary writing tasks.
  - (ii) To construct an online English summary writing platform that can provide automatic feedback.
  - (iii) To embed the above mentioned English summary writing platform into the Moodle system at EdUHK.

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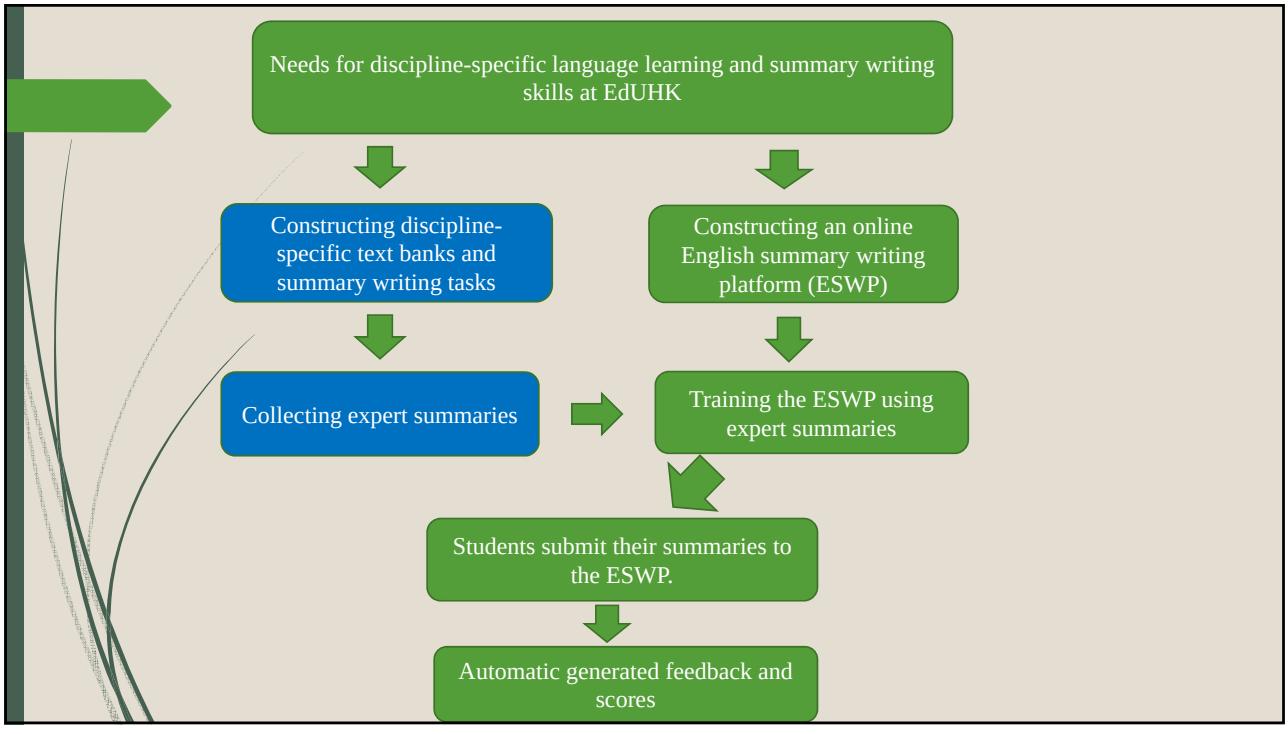
Rationales

The needs of our students as a result of EMI

- Needs for developing discipline-specific language learning and writing activities
- Support for Honours project - summary writing skill
- Needs for a platform that allows self-study.



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Constructing discipline-specific text banks

Texts selection criteria:

1. **Discipline-specific and relevant**: texts are relevant to the subject-matter in the respective majors and they are the key literature/readings students need to read.

2. **Language proficiency level:** texts are suitable for Year 4 or 5 students who are going to work on their honors projects.

Constructing guided summary writing tasks

Departments	Types of summaries
HPE	Summarizing a general physical education article
	Summarizing a book chapter
	Summarizing a literature review
	Summarizing research methods and findings
	Summarizing a whole research article
MIT	Summarizing a general mathematic article
	Summarizing mathematic literature

The summary writing tasks were developed based on the literature provided by academics in the respective departments.

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Sample summary writing tasks for the HPE department

Summarizing a general physical education article

Read the following news article *Time to encourage more exercise*. Summarize the main viewpoints of the article and the evidence used to support the viewpoints.

Summarizing a physical education book chapter

Read the following book chapter on *Physical activity in young children* and complete three short summaries below:

(1) purposes of the book chapter;

(2) the first recommendation on physical activity and its rationales;

(3) the second recommendation on physical activity and its rationales.

Sample tasks for the MIT department

Summarizing a general mathematic reading

Read page 2 and page 3 of the article - 'Who said the mathematics will be boring' and summarize in 200 words the approach to teach science and math as suggested by the author.

Summarizing a mathematic literature

Read the following article and summarize possible approaches to deal with controversies found in measuring perimeter in 150 words

Danielson, C. (2005). Perimeter in the curriculum. *For the Learning of Mathematics* 25(1). 30-33.

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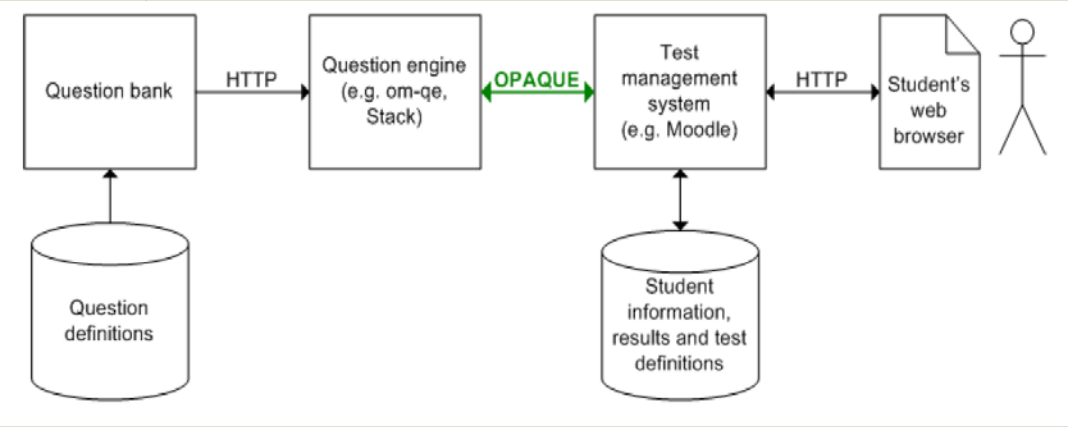
Collecting expert summaries

Expert summaries were collected from the content experts in the disciplines.

Expert summaries were used to train the learning platform.

Constructing an on-line summary writing platform



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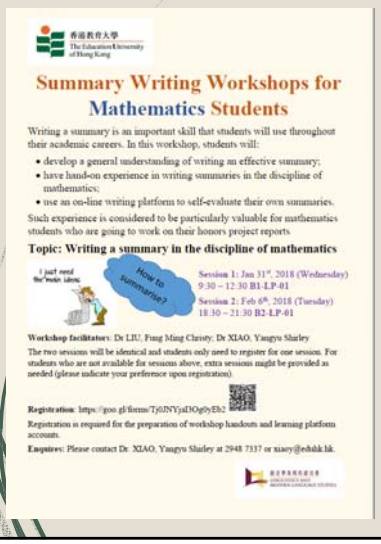
Summary writing workshops and on-line summary writing



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Summary Writing Workshops for Mathematics Students

Writing a summary is an important skill that students will use throughout their academic careers. In this workshop, students will:

- develop a general understanding of writing an effective summary;
- have hand-on experience in writing summaries in the discipline of mathematics;
- use an on-line writing platform to self-evaluate their own summaries.

Such experience is considered to be particularly valuable for mathematics students who are going to work on their honors project reports

Topic: Writing a summary in the discipline of mathematics

I just need the main ideas

How to summarise?

Session 1: Jan 31st, 2018 (Wednesday) 9:30 – 12:30 B1-LP-01

Session 2: Feb 6th, 2018 (Tuesday) 18:30 – 21:30 B2-LP-01

Workshop facilitators: Dr LIU, Fung Ming Christy; Dr XIAO, Yangyu Shirley

The two sessions will be identical and students only need to register for one session. For students who are not available for sessions above, extra sessions might be provided as needed (please indicate your preference upon registration).

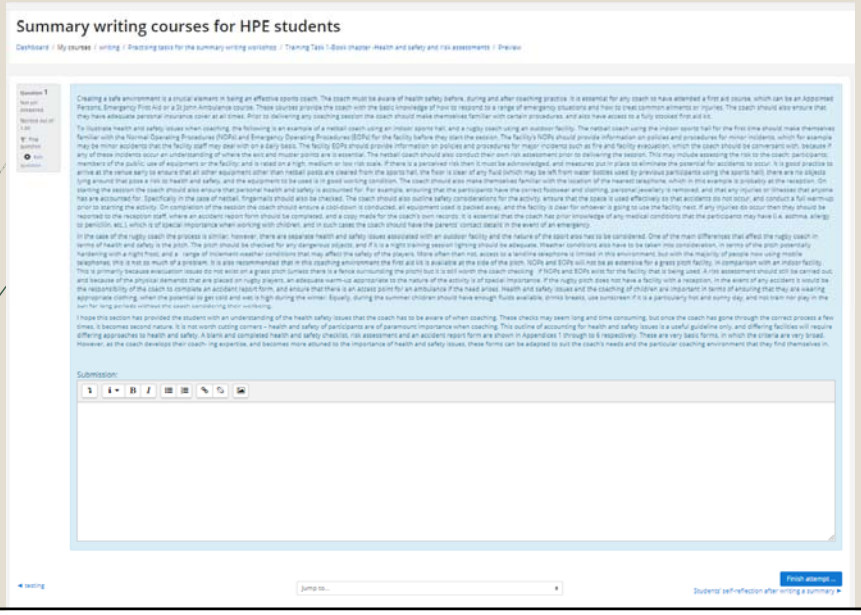
Registration: https://goo.gl/forms/Tj0JNYjaI3Og0yEb2

Registration is required for the preparation of workshop handouts and learning platform accounts.

Enquires: Please contact Dr. XIAO, Yangyu Shirley at 2948 7337 or xiaoy@eduhk.hk.

- Study summary writing skills through face-to-face workshop.
- Hands-on experience of writing a summary using the on-line summary writing platform.

Submitting summaries to the on-learning platform



Summary writing courses for HPE students

Dashboard / My courses / writing / Practising tasks for the summary writing workshop / Training Task 1-Book chapter-Health and safety and risk assessments / Preview

Submission:

Finish attempt ...

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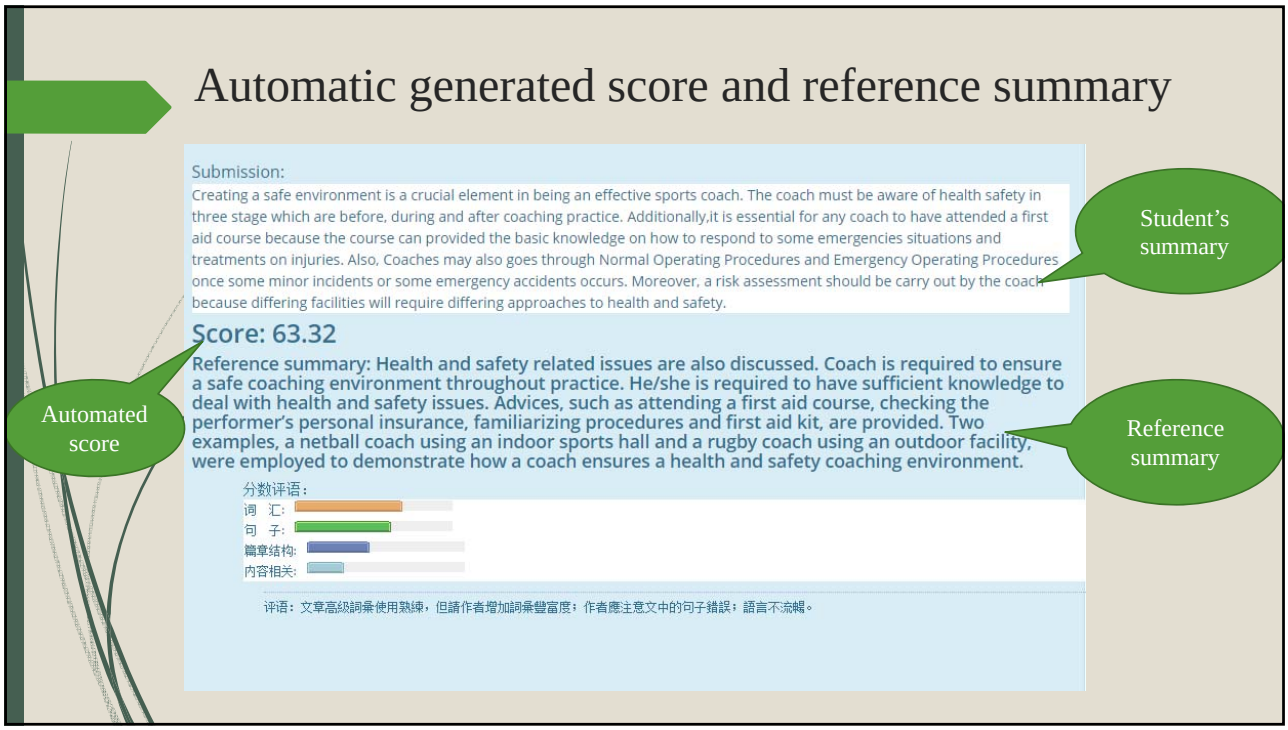
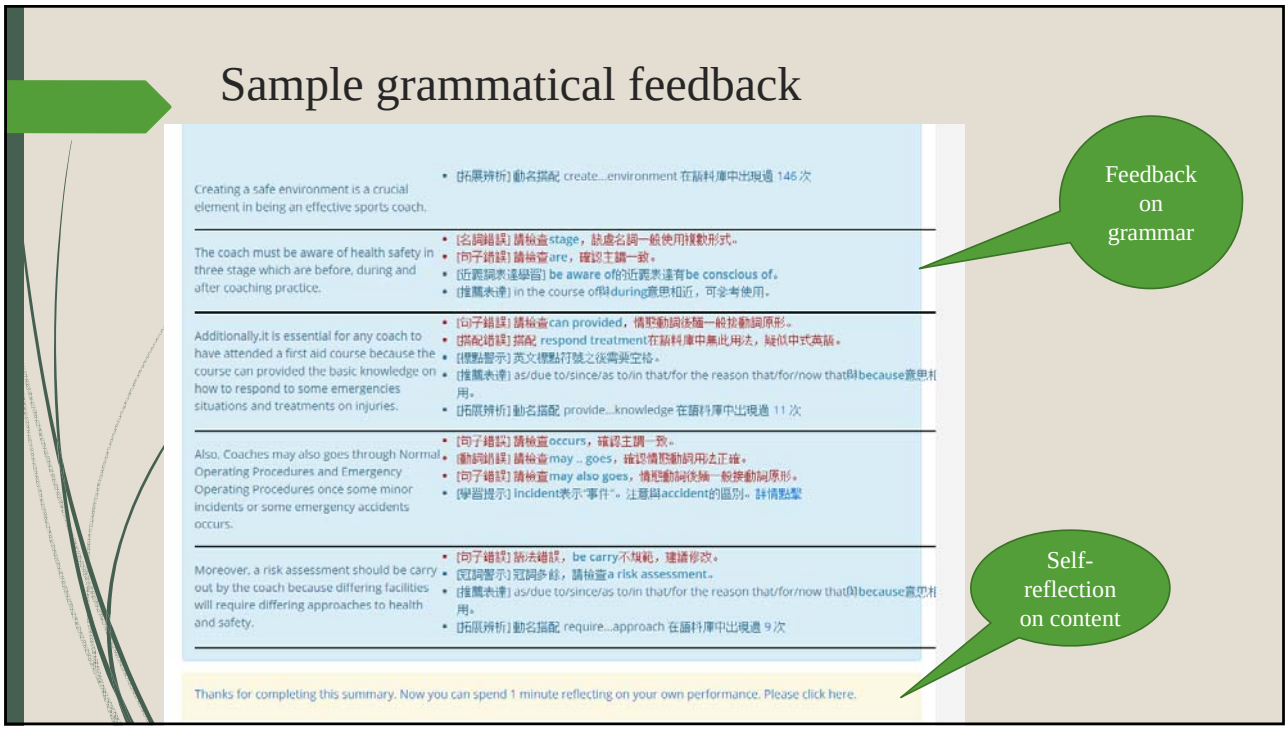
Automatic generated score and reference summary



Sample grammatical feedback



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Self-reflection

My summary is brief and is within the word limit

- (•) Not selected
- ( ) Yes. I have achieved this criteria.
- ( ) I could be doing better at this.
- ( ) I am not doing this and I need to work on this.

I have included main ideas.

- (•) Not selected
- ( ) Yes. I have achieved this criteria.
- ( ) I could be doing better at this.
- ( ) I am not doing this and I need to work on this.

I have included key supporting details.

- (•) Not selected
- ( ) Yes. I have achieved this criteria.
- ( ) I could be doing better at this.
- ( ) I am not doing this and I need to work on this.

I did not include specific information.

- (•) Not selected
- ( ) Yes. I have achieved this criteria.
- ( ) I could be doing better at this.
- ( ) I am not doing this and I need to work on this.

I did not add in my own opinions (objective).

- (•) Not selected
- ( ) Yes. I have achieved this criteria.
- ( ) I could be doing better at this.
- ( ) I am not doing this and I need to work on this.

My summary truly reflects ideas in the source text (no misinterpretations).

- (•) Not selected
- ( ) Yes. I have achieved this criteria.
- ( ) I could be doing better at this.
- ( ) I am not doing this and I need to work on this.

I use synthesizing and paraphrasing (no direct copying).

- (•) Not selected
- ( ) Yes. I have achieved this criteria.
- ( ) I could be doing better at this.
- ( ) I am not doing this and I need to work on this.

(Areas for future improvement) Which aspect do you think you can improve more after this summary?

Workshop feedback questionnaire responses

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The content of this workshop is relevant to my study.	30	2	5	4.07	.868
2. There were sufficient practice activities provided in this workshop.	30	3	5	4.23	.568
3. This workshop addressed my needs in writing a summary.	30	3	5	4.10	.662
4. The workshop helped me develop an understanding of characteristics of a good summary.	30	3	5	4.20	.805
5. The summarising skill that I learned in this workshop will be useful for my future writing (such as honors project writing).	30	3	5	4.13	.681
6. I would like to attend more summary writing workshops like this one.	30	2	5	3.97	.850
7. The feedback provided by the on-line learning platform is helpful	30	2	5	3.93	.740
8. The on-line writing platform provides me with chance for self-study.	30	2	5	4.13	.776
Valid N (listwise)	30				

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Post-workshop interviews

Major themes

- EMI education and discipline-specific language needs
- Perceptions of discipline-specific summary writing workshops
- Perceptions of machine generated feedback
- On-line learning platform and chance for self-study
- Expectations of future discipline-specific language support

EMI education and discipline-specific language needs

Academics' and students' language proficiency are a major challenge of EMI education.

- Academics' language proficiency
- Students' language proficiency

Needs to support discipline-specific language learning

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Perceptions of discipline-specific workshops

Relevancy to the subject matter and familiarity

- Relevant to the subject matter.
- More attractive or interesting.
- Easier to learn summarizing skills because of familiarity

Benefits of discipline-specific language learning

Perceptions of discipline-specific workshops

Attainment in summary writing skills

- Structure of a summary
- Strategies in organizing a summary
- Strategies in extracting useful information from the text
- Chance of practising summarizing skills

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Perceptions of discipline-specific workshops

Attainment in summary writing skills

- Reported evidence of use summarizing skills
- Useful for Honours project report writing

Perceptions of machine generated feedback

Strengths

- The system helps with checking the grammar.
- The reference summary tells us what a good summary look like.

Limitations and suggestions

- Feedback focus on language only.
- It would be better if feedback on content and logic can be provided.
- It would be better if bullet points can be provided.

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On-line learning platform and chance for self-study

- Good chance for self-study
- Students with learning needs are more likely to use the system.
- The on-line learning system can be more interactive

Students' expectations of future discipline-specific language workshops

In general, students responded that they expect more similar discipline-specific workshops in the future, which would possibly focus on:

- Words and vocabulary that suitable for academic writing.
- Developing introduction and conclusion.
- Developing the structure of an essay.
- Write lesson plans and rationales.
- Disciplinary language courses for different year groups.

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Sum up

- The current project develops an on-line learning platform that are suitable for discipline-specific language learning, and the system has been tried out with HPE and MIT students.
- The study reveals that students have discipline-specific language needs.
- The on-line summary writing platform support students' learning needs by helping them develop summary writing skills, and offering chance for self-study.

Way forward

- The current on-line summary writing platform can be further developed and used to provide continuous writing support for MIT and HPE students.
- The on-line learning platform can be re-trained by the texts from other disciplines, so as to provide summary writing training for other departments.
- More discipline-specific workshops can be provided on other topics and writing genres.

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For any further questions, you can send an email to Shirley: xiaoy@eduhk.hk.

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