

## Student Feedback FH200: Learning Activity 1

1. Year of study:

	Percentages (N=18)
Foundation Year	38.9
Year 1	38.9
Year 2	-
Year 3	22.2
Total	100.0

For the following statements, please indicate how much you agree

2. The first learning activity of this subject (i.e. Global English and Global Chinese) has helped me:		Percentages				Mean	S.D.
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
a)	gain a better understanding of the role of English as an international lingua franca	-	-	61.1	38.9	3.4	0.5
b)	gain a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of global multilingualism & the possibility of Chinese as a global language	-	5.6	66.7	27.8	3.2	0.5
c)	be more confident about interacting with people in multilingual contexts	-	33.3	61.1	5.6	2.7	0.6
e)	be able to find appropriate resources and tools for my own learning and research	-	22.2	61.1	16.7	2.9	0.6
f)	be able to synthesize information from different sources	-	11.1	50.0	38.9	3.3	0.7
g)	be able to learn things on my own	-	-	77.8	22.2	3.2	0.4
h)	be able to solve problems better <sup>1</sup>	-	11.1	66.7	22.2	3.1	0.6
i)	participate actively in class	-	5.6	66.7	27.8	3.2	0.5

Overall, students were fairly positive about their learning gains from Learning Activity #1. Students were especially positive about gaining a better understanding of the role of English as an international lingua franca and also being able to learn things on their own. On the other hand, a number of students had trouble learning how to find appropriate resources and tools for learning and research and had trouble developing more confidence when interacting in multilingual contexts.

<sup>1</sup> There was a statistical trend ( $p = .065$ ) suggesting that Year 1 students (mean = 3.43) reported more gain for this learning outcome versus Year 3 students (mean = 2.50).

3. Which aspects did you like best about this first learning activity?

Themes (directly extracted from students)	
<b>Second life experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Second life experience. It is an useful resource for students to explore!</i></li> <li>- <i>Experiencing Second-Life learning, a new and interesting online platform for meeting people around the world.</i></li> <li>- <i>The experience of second life.</i></li> <li>- <i>Second Life - We could fly.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Debate:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The debate section is fun, lessons are interactive and informative.</i></li> <li>- <i>I like the debate part as it helps me to know more about global language.</i></li> <li>- <i>I like debate part of the first learning activity. It helps to build up our individual and group spirit and it really helps me to improve my knowledge.</i></li> <li>- <i>The process of discussing with group members for the debate.</i></li> <li>- <i>I could practice my spoken English and gain more courage to join in a debate which I had never experienced.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Introduction of Global English as well as Global Chinese.</i></li> <li>- <i>Reading materials.</i></li> <li>- <i>Diversity of English.</i></li> </ul>

4. Which aspects did you **NOT** like about this first learning activity?

Themes (directly extracted from students)	
<b>Second life experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The lecture given by the online speaker on Second-Life a kind of less interesting, maybe due to the monotonous tone.</i></li> <li>- <i>The access to "Second Life".</i></li> <li>- <i>Second Life programme because it's not that useful in my opinion.</i></li> <li>- <i>Second Life - Not that efficient than I expected. But I liked the way of learning...different types of learning tool.</i></li> <li>- <i>The Second Life lesson is rather boring.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Debate session:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The topic of the debate. It is not really a good topic for debating.</i></li> <li>- <i>I think that each group should have different topics to debate on. And while one group is debating, the others can watch as audience.</i></li> <li>- <i>Reflection of debate required too much words that I could hardly finish it on time.</i></li> <li>- <i>Reflection, because of the word limit.</i></li> <li>- <i>Actually, the Reflection part words seems to be too much.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Two assignment is a bit too heavy. One is enough for such a short period. (the debate section is good.). Second life System is a bit not suitable nowadays.</i></li> <li>- <i>The deadline of two assignments is too close. May be one assignment is enough. Also, the tutor in Second Life didn't perform good. I was a little bit disappointed about that.</i></li> </ul>

5. What concerns do you have about this subject for the rest of this semester?  
Please suggest any improvements that we can make.

Themes (directly extracted from students)	
<b>Second life experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Second life is creative but I learned very little from it.</i></li> <li>- <i>No more Second life.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Debate session:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>If there's going to be a debate, may be some more skills about debate should be told in class.</i></li> <li>- <i>I don't know how to write a report after debate. Less theory knowledge is better. More activity.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Reduce the time-wasting part like surfing the internet during the class time.</i></li> <li>- <i>I think it can be extend longer period. We can acquire more knowledge about global Chinese and English.</i></li> <li>- <i>The times for each subjects might be too short for us to absorb more details and knowledge.</i></li> <li>- <i>More practical.</i></li> <li>- <i>To be honest, class hours (3 hrs) seems to be too long.</i></li> <li>- <i>The class lasts too long (3 hours).</i></li> </ul>

Overall, the students' qualitative comments revealed quite a split opinion about Second Life. Some students liked it, citing that it was useful and interesting. Other students did not like, even so much as to say that it should be eliminated. These students found it boring, inefficient, not useful for their learning, and there was a suggestion that Second Life is a bit out-dated in terms of current technology.

Overall, students liked the debate activity. They found it practical/applied, active, and valued the chance to work in teams. Students had several suggestions to improve the debate activity, including (1) having more topics to choose from, (2) making more explicit about what skills that they are developing in this activity, and (3) the reflection assessment could have a lower word requirement – some students felt the longer word requirement made it difficult to complete (or perhaps they were unsure how they could meaningfully fulfill the word requirement).

Some students also felt that perhaps the topics in this Learning Activity could be extended, as they felt it was too short to take in all the information. Some students felt like the class session was too long at 3 hours per session. Given that students generally liked this Learning Activity and some even asked for more, this suggestion does not seem to reflect students' disinterest. They would like to engage with and learn the material; however, one long class session each week may not be the best format for this Learning Activity.

## Student Feedback FH200: Learning Activity 2

1. Year of study:

	Percentages (N=19)
Foundation Year	15.8
Year 1	42.1
Year 2	5.3
Year 3	36.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

2. The second learning activity of this subject (i.e. Appreciation of Chinese or Western Language Arts) has helped me:		Percentages				Mean	S.D.
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
a)	gain a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of Chinese language, arts, and culture	5.3	-	52.6	42.1	3.3	0.7
b)	think in more creative ways	5.3	-	52.6	42.1	3.3	0.7
c)	understand more about Chinese cultural values and identity	5.3	-	42.1	52.6	3.4	0.8
d)	feel like I should do more to let others know about Chinese language and culture	5.3	5.3	42.1	47.4	3.3	0.8
e)	be able to utilize appropriate resources and tools for my own learning and research	5.3	5.3	42.1	47.4	3.3	0.8
f)	be able to synthesize information from different sources	5.3	5.3	42.1	47.4	3.3	0.8
g)	learn things on my own	5.3	5.3	36.8	52.6	3.4	0.8
h)	be able to solve problems better	5.3	10.5	42.1	42.1	3.2	0.9
i)	participate actively in class	5.3	-	31.6	63.2	3.5	0.8

Students in general were quite positive about their learning gains from Learning Activity #2. In particular, they were most positive about gaining an understanding about Chinese cultural values and identity (c), being able to learn things on their own (g), and participating actively in class (i).

3. Which aspects did you like best about this first learning activity?

Themes (directly extracted from students)	
Good experience of Chinese traditional culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning Singing and Dancing the opera</li> <li>- The Quing Songs and Dance</li> </ul>
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance. It does make theory become practise</li> <li>- Kunqu Performance</li> <li>- Have the chance to wear custom!</li> <li>- Costumes</li> </ul>
All aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All aspects. It is very interesting</li> <li>- All I like best</li> <li>- Teamwork &amp; creativity</li> </ul>

4. Which aspects did you **NOT** like about this first learning activity?

Themes (directly extracted from students)	
Some difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The move is too hard</li> <li>- Singing is very difficult</li> </ul>
Too few classes/ classes too short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too few classes</li> <li>- The lessons are too short</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too rush for learning a song and dance</li> <li>- Singing and Dancing (or performing)</li> <li>- Singing</li> </ul>
None	* A few students put down "None"

5. What concerns do you have about this subject for the rest of this semester?  
Please suggest any improvements that we can make.

Themes (directly extracted from students)	
More time devoted to this activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More time &amp; Real Kunqu</li> <li>- Should be longer</li> <li>- More lessons should be provided</li> <li>- Add more time into it. Add a class to watch the real performance or movie</li> </ul>
Kunqu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have Kunqu performance</li> <li>- Add activity like the nature of Kunqu Performance</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn other arts maybe!</li> <li>- Try to spend more time on introducing the Chinese Culture</li> </ul>

Overall, students seem to enjoy this activity very much as nearly all students (except 4) expressed something they like in this part, such as the performance, singing, dancing, and the costume. A few students claimed that they like everything in this Activity. A lot of them wish to have more time devoted to this activity. Some suggested other arts; while some wish to spend more time on introducing Chinese cultural aspects related to this activity.

## Student Feedback FH200: Learning Activity 3 Confucius and Humanity

### 1. Year of study:

Percentages (N=12)	
Foundation Year	50.0
Year 1	41.7
Missing	8.3
Total	100.0

There is a drop in the response rate from the first and second surveys ( $n=18, 19$ ) to the final survey ( $n=12$ ). The most noticeable aspect of this drop-off is the absence of 2<sup>nd</sup> and more significantly 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (3<sup>rd</sup> year students comprised 22.2% and 36.8% of the previous samples).

### 2. The learning activity on Confucius and Humanity has helped me:

	Percentages				Mean	S.D.
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
a) gain a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of Chinese language, arts, and culture	-	8.3	33.3	58.3	3.5	.7
b) gain a better understanding of the issues and questions in the study of the humanities	-	-	50.0	50.0	3.5	.5
c) gain a better understanding of Confucius' ideas and their relevance for today's world	-	25.0	25.0	50.0	3.3	.9
d) gain a better understanding of Confucius' ideas and their importance in Chinese culture	-	-	50.0	50.0	3.5	.5
e) understand how influential Confucius' ideas have been around the world	-	-	41.7	58.3	3.6	.5
f) me in my effort in informing others about Chinese language and culture	-	-	50.0	50.0	3.5	.5
g) understand more about Chinese cultural values and identity	-	-	41.7	58.3	3.6	.5
h) be able to synthesize information from different sources	-	-	41.7	58.3	3.6	.5
i) think in more creative ways	-	8.3	25.0	66.7	3.6	.7
j) think more analytically	-	-	41.7	58.3	3.6	.5
k) be able to solve problems better	-	-	66.7	33.3	3.3	.5
l) participate actively in class	-	-	25.0	75.0	3.8	.5
m) understand more about how cultural institution operate in real life	-	-	33.3	66.7	3.7	.5
n) Understand how cultural institutions bring Chinese culture to life	-	8.3	25.0	66.7	3.6	.7

In general, students were quite positive about this activity on Confucius and Humanity. In particular, they were positive about participating actively in class (l), thinking creatively (i), understanding more about how cultural institutions operate in real life (m), and understanding how cultural institutions bring Chinese culture to life (n).

In contrast, gaining a better understanding on Confucius' ideas and their relevance for today's world received relatively lower ratings.

### 3. Which aspects did you like best about this learning activity?

#### Themes (directly extracted from students)

The visit to Wong Tai Sin Temple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visit to Wong Tai Sin with a better comparison between Confucian(sic) and Daoism.</li> <li>- I like the visit to Wong Tai Sin Temple. I think we are treated with respect in the tour and they gave us a great introduction on Taoism.</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The English edition of concepts of Confucius because it gives us a new dimension of understanding.</li> <li>- Learning about Confucius's (sic) life and thought.</li> </ul>

Students especially liked the visit to the Wong Tau Sin Temple. These comments echo observations from other Freshman Seminar pilots -- namely, students in these subjects especially like exposure to real-life applications of the academic concepts that they are learning.

### 4. Which aspects did you **NOT** like about this learning activity? Suggestion on improvement.

#### Themes (directly extracted from students)

Preference for the medium of instruction in Chinese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I do not think the medium of instruction should be in English, it is too hard to learn and express Chinese concepts in English for freshmen...</li> <li>- I hope we can have the lecture in Chinese.</li> <li>- I don't like the Confucius concept was talked in English (sic). Teaching in Chinese would let student to have better understanding.</li> </ul>
Insufficient materials for homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too less to read but too much workload to handle.(sic) However, overall, it is good for me.</li> <li>- The information knowledge given is not enough for us to complete the assignment.</li> </ul>
Heavy workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was too much homework with such a hard topic. It is a very heavy workload.</li> <li>- The workload of this activity is a little bit too heavy.</li> </ul>

# Freshman Seminar in Language, Culture and Communication

2011/12 Semester 1

Subject Code: FH200

Level: 2

Credits: 3

Elective Subject

## Message from the Associate Dean and Subject Leader of FH200, Professor SHI Dingxu

To be offered in the Semester 1 of 2011/12 academic year as elective, this 3 in 1 subject offers you great opportunity for interdisciplinary studies and to get insight into Humanities, including the introduction of nature and characteristics of language, culture and communication.

It is fun, interactive and educational, I strongly recommend you to take this subject\* to learn your discipline from different angles.

\*on first-come-first-register basis



Prof SHI Dingxu  
Associate Dean of Faculty of Humanities

### Highlights on the 3 Learning Activities:

#### Activity 1

## Global English and Global Chinese

by Dr LI Lan  
(Department of English) &  
Dr Doreen WU  
(Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies)

It brings you to the understanding of English as a global lingua franca and the emergence of Chinese as a global language by gaining insights into the complex relationship between language and society. You will be becoming aware of the issues related to multilingualism and multiculturalism through learning and stimulated discussion in a multimodal environment. It is absolutely an interactive and exploratory learning experience.

#### Activity 2

## Appreciation of Chinese or Western Language Arts - Kunqu (崑曲)

by Dr Cindy NGAI  
(Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies)

This activity offers a good opportunity to unveil the beauty and design of classical Chinese theatre. Participants would be able to explore and get a taste of classical Chinese theatre by learning and producing an adapted theatre performance in the seminar. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that you don't want to miss!

#### Activity 3

## Confucius & Humanity

by Dr King-fai TAM  
(Department of Chinese Culture)

This activity enables you to gain a concrete understanding of the intricate issues of Confucianism that are of great relevance to today's world. You will learn not only the written medium but also cinematic works as well as field visits for a multi-faced appreciation of Confucianism.

Learning Activity	What to do in class?	Assessment
Activity 1	Combination of mini-lectures, seminar group activities and group discussions	Written Reflection and Group Debate
Activity 2	Demonstration by art performers, guided appreciation by the lecturer, in-class discussion and performance practice or doing creative works	Group Performance or Creative Works
Activity 3	Lectures, moderated discussions, field visit and small group tutorials	Reflective Journal

Remarks: Medium of Instruction is English, with some Chinese contents in the activities.





## Student Feedback FH200: OVERALL experience

### 5. Overall, this subject has helped me

	Percentages				Mean	S.D.
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
a) develop the learning skills that I will need at PolyU	-	-	41.7	58.3	3.6	.5
b) make the transition from my secondary school environment to a university environment	-	-	33.3	66.7	3.7	.5
c) understand what it means to be a university student	-	8.3	41.7	50.0	3.4	.7
d) gain a better understanding of my programme	-	-	25.0	75.0	3.8	.5
e) gain a better general understanding of disciplines other than my own in Humanities	-	-	16.7	83.3	3.8	.4
f) understand how to be a successful entrepreneur	-	8.3	50.0	41.7	3.3	.7
g) understand my career prospect	-	-	50.0	50.0	3.5	.5
h) be inspired about looking forward to my career in the Humanities	-	-	33.3	66.7	3.7	.5

The students' ratings of the overall subject were quite positive. Students were most positive about the subject helping them gain a better understanding of their programme (d), a general understanding of the other disciplines Humanities (e), inspiration in looking forward to their career in the Humanities (h), and making the transition from their secondary school environment to a university environment (b).

### 6. How useful the activities in helping your learning in this subject?

	%			
	Not useful at all	Somewhat useful	Quite useful	Very useful
a) Activity 1 (Global English & Global Chinese)	-	16.7	50.0	33.3
b) Activity 2 (Appreciation of Chinese Language Arts)	-	8.3	16.7	75.0
c) Activity 3 (Confucius & Humanity)	-	8.3	41.7	50.0

### 7. The workload for this subject:

Too little	Light	Just right	Heavy	Too heavy
-	-	41.7%	58.3%	-

8. The level of difficulty of this subject:

Very easy	Easy	Just right	Challenging	Very challenging
-	16.7%	41.7%	41.7%	

9. Which aspects did you like best about this subject?

**Themes (directly extracted from students)**

**Activity 2 (Kunqu)**

- I liked the Kunqu part the best, and I appreciate the resources the faculty put into this subject. It is really impressive to have tutors abroad.
- Performing Chinese traditional opera, visiting place outside campus.
- Kunqu performance!
- The Qun Qu part is amazing!

**Activity 3 (Confucius)**

- Confucius.
- May be we need to add two or three more classes

**Others**

- Give me really different experiences.
- It arouses our interest.
- Combination of interest and academic.

10. Which aspects did you **NOT** like about this subject? Suggestions to improve student learning.

**Themes (directly extracted from students)**

**More in-depth for each activity**

- We had a look on each part but couldn't go deeper. That's a pity. I think the range can be narrower so that the content can be deeper.
- Make each part more concrete.

**Others**

- Maybe some aspects of traditional poems could be introduced.
- Too short for each part, or can turn it out to become electives.

Consistent with the previous survey, quite a few students like Kunqu activity. Overall, students seemed to enjoy the different experiences afforded by the subject, noting that it combined interest with the academic.

Also consistent with previous surveys, the students' main suggestion was to have more depth for each activity. As discussed informally among the project team, the intention of this subject is to expose students to a wider range of experiences, so this suggestion makes sense within that context. Perhaps some efforts to remind the students about this objective throughout the course will curtail most of the frustration that students may feel about this aspect. In addition, highlighting specific subjects that students can take later in their studies that relate to the Seminar's activities may help students feel better about the possibilities of going deeper into areas that interest them.