Dear Colleagues

In this July 2016 issue of the “Newsletter from DLTC”, the Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee (DLTC) has invited Dr Ben Cheng to share his good teaching and learning practices with colleagues. Dr Cheng taught “ENG2003 Information Technology” and “EIE1002 Electronics Science” in 2015/16 Semester 1. Both subjects have received many positive comments from students.
ENG2003 is a compulsory subject for a number of undergraduate programmes offered by the Faculty of Engineering. Students thus come from a diversified academic background. Dr Cheng and other ENG2003 subject lecturers delivered the theories and skills in lectures and ran workshops on alternate weeks to equip students with the necessary skills before practising what they had learned from lectures.

In the workshops, students gained hands-on experience on setting up network, routers and servers. They used emulator to develop and test Android applications. Dr Cheng thought the students enjoyed this learning experience as they could apply these skills in daily life. This gave the students a sense of achievement and motivation to learn.

The continuous assessment of ENG2003 consisted of quizzes, tutorial questions and laboratory exercises. The quizzes were in open-book format. Students were encouraged to discuss about the quizzes with their classmates. The regular quizzes could keep students on track of their own study progress. For the tutorial questions, Dr Cheng would work out some example questions together with the students first and then let the students attempt other questions by themselves. The answers to the questions would later be posted on the Blackboard. By motivating students to practise with the tutorial questions regularly, this can help them better prepare for the final examination and hence improve their success in the subject.

As for the subject EIE1002, this was the first time Dr Cheng taught this subject. He modified the teaching schedule to enable students to learn the concepts and theories in lectures first before engaging themselves into hands-on practices in laboratory sessions. As this is a first-year subject for BSc in IMT students, Dr Cheng tried to reduce the pressure on the students. For example, he arranged open-book quizzes and allowed students to bring an information sheet to examination thus relieving them from the pressure of rote memorization. He also encouraged students to stay abreast of the University’s and departmental notices and news by teaching them the way to use emails and connect to campus WiFi on their mobile devices in the first lecture.

What We Learn…

From Dr Cheng’s experience, we found that the following might have contributed to positive learning experience for students:
(i) Arrange Lecture before Laboratory Work

Teaching the theories and knowledge at lectures before they practised the skills in laboratory experiment to ensure students know clearly what they would be doing during the experiment.

(ii) Keep Students on Track of Their Own Study Progress

Designing regular open-book quizzes and encouraging students to discuss with their classmates to enable them to keep on track of their own study progress.

(iii) Provide Hands-on Experience and Instill Sense of Achievement

Allowing students to engage in hands-on experience which in turn enabled them to realize the usefulness of the things they learnt and instilled in them a sense of achievement when they could complete the tasks.

(iv) Cultivate Leisure Atmosphere for Learning

Reducing learning pressure and encouraging collaborative learning could cultivate a leisure atmosphere for students’ learning.

The DLTC will continue to identify good learning and teaching practices for sharing. If you have any teaching practices and experience that you want to share with colleagues, you are welcome to send us your views anytime.

Dr Daniel Lun
Chairman, Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee (DLTC)
Department of Electronic and Information Engineering