



# Student preferences and expectations: Some practical tips for designers of English enhancement programmes

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# Background: The genesis of CAPLE

- ❖ English treated as merely a subject at secondary school → failure in learning
- ❖ Inadequate English for academic and professional purposes at tertiary level
- ❖ Funding from the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme (QESS) to establish the Centre for Academic and Professional Language Enhancement (CAPLE)



# Background: CAPLE

## **For new students:**

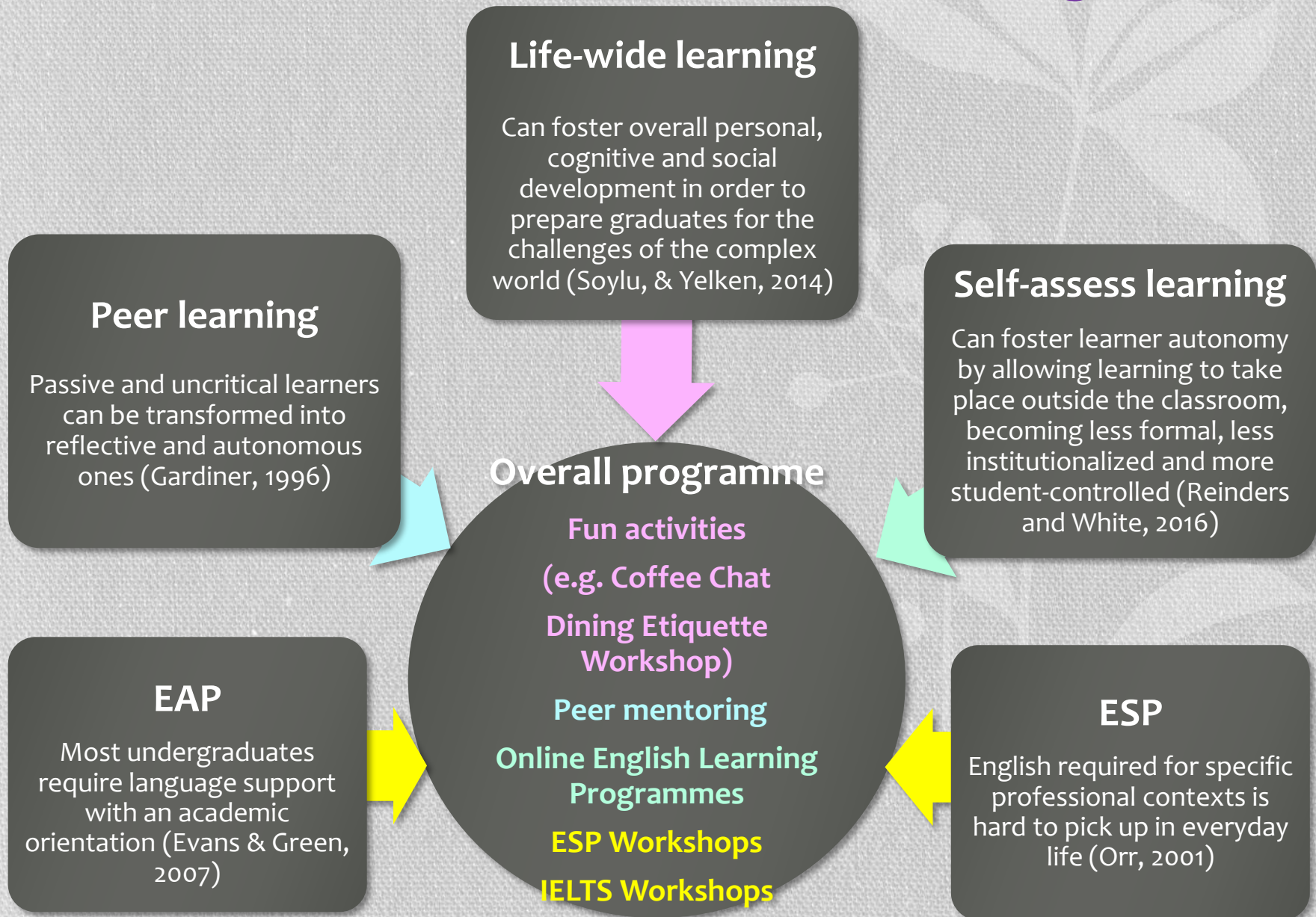
- ❖ A placement test for all Year 1 students held at the beginning of every semester;
- ❖ English enhancement courses to be recommended to students based on their results in the placement test and in the English subject in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination

## **For all students:**

- ❖ Online English learning resources for self-access learning;
- ❖ A language laboratory with 15 computers to facilitate self-access learning;
- ❖ A learning management system (LMS) for monitoring students' learning progress over the semesters;
- ❖ Language and culture learning activities for life-wide learning;
- ❖ Workshops on English for Specific Purposes (ESP Workshops);
- ❖ The Peer Language Mentorship Programme for peer learning through regular mentor-mentee gatherings.



# Theoretical foundation of CAPLE's programme





# Findings and Discussion

## Student motivation to learn English among tertiary students

### Lack of intrinsic motivation:

- ❖ Learners driven by intrinsic motivation would enjoy using and learning the language (Deci and Ryan's, 1985, 2002)
- ❖ Low participation rate of CAPLE's English and culture learning activities, such as Coffee Chat and the Etiquette Workshop indicates a lack of intrinsic motivation.

### Low level of motivation:

- ❖ There are close ties between motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation and self-initiation in language learning (e.g. Deci & Ryan, 1994; Ushioda, 1996, 2006; Yeung, 2016).
- ❖ The lack of initiation suggests low level of motivation.



# Findings and Discussion

## Student motivation to learn English among tertiary students

### **Nature of motivation – instrumental:**

- ❖ Students would make an effort when there are practical and immediate needs, as shown by their active participation in IELTS workshops.



# Findings and Discussion

## The perceived importance of English learning

- ❖ Another reason for their lack of motivation in English learning may be the perceived low importance of English compared with the core subjects.
- ❖ They do not realize that English competence is regarded by many employers as one of the attributes that graduates need to be equipped with (e.g. Education Bureau, 2010; Li, 2015).



# Findings and Discussion

## The need for coordinated efforts to promote English learning at tertiary level

- ❖ Generally uninterested in learning English, and not realizing the importance of English to their future career development, students may easily ignore the incentives to help them learn English on campus.
- ❖ Their English learning needs exist all the same, and it is the role of the college or university to alert them to such needs and provide them with the right kind of support.
- ❖ This may take continuous efforts to assess students' needs and address them with appropriate approaches, and such efforts can be coordinated by a unit dedicated to the purpose, like CAPLE.



THANK YOU VERY MUCH



# Acknowledgements

The CAPLE project is funded by the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme (QESS) of the Education Bureau.

We would like to thank the following implementation team members and language officers who have contributed to the project at its different stages:

*Mr Pedro Lok*

*Ms Helen Wong*

*Ms Taline Nichanian*

*Ms Vivian Shum*

*Mr Nicholas Stone*



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