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Using a Quality Education Fund grant, Prof Pong and his colleagues have developed a virtual learning environment for 'connected education' that enhances the transition from secondary to tertiary education. This innovation provides us with an exemplar of collaboration and a model for delivering distributed learning that crosses educational contexts.

This innovative learning environment delivers pre-recorded video-on-demand lectures in small segments, interspersed with virtual synchronous meetings using a mix of



live-video, text-based chat and shared virtual whiteboards. The live-on-line meeting is solely for the purpose of Q&A and takes place with students co-located in a number of regional remote classrooms in selected secondary schools and with teachers located at HKUST. The outcome of this innovation has been a significant rise

in students' active participation as evidenced by a substantial increase in the number of questions posed by students over the traditional lecture mode of delivery.

The system also makes content available in multiple languages and uses animations and other interactive means such as online simulations to increase the depth of learning of key concepts, while simultaneously catering to different learning styles. In addition, the system allows increased student-teacher and student-student interaction through the use of asynchronous conferencing.

