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English Edutainment: UCL intern helps make language fun

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Mastering the English language is a challenge for any student, but a mobile app developed by start-up company Tonguesten is turning education into entertainment. With support from recent UCL intern Ayne Zarof, news of the innovation is spreading.

Tonguesten (www.tonguesten.com) is a mobile platform that seamlessly slots English tests into custom-made apps for entertainment activities, such as listening to music and watching films. The apps cut selected words from movie subtitles and lyrics, leaving students to fill the gaps on their touch-screen device, while receiving feedback through an interactive game.

Finding a voice
Jonathan Walton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Tonguesten, needed help to publicise the platform. He said, "We were the classic short-staffed start-up with a million things to do and not enough time. But we needed to get the idea out there."

Support came when UCL student Ayne (Medicine MBBS, third year) joined the team thanks to a Santander-sponsored placement organised by UCL Advances. Ayne was keen to choose a company that could make a real difference to people, and also wanted to develop commercial skills that might help her set up a business as a general practitioner in future.

An impressive intern
Jonathan was delighted with Ayne’s work. “She was a creative, dynamic intern who did everything she was asked and more,” he said.

Ayne’s role focused on communication, and she effectively developed and ran the company’s PR and communications. Much of her success was self-motivated. Jonathan said, “Ayne taught herself to use Adobe and designed posters to advertise our recruitment needs at education fairs. She also built a new website and managed our social media presence.”

After exceeding expectations in every task, Ayne was brought in to add to Tonguesten’s management strategy. Together with Jonathan, she explored features for the app and led user-centred design workshops.

“She really was a great asset”. Jonathan Walton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Tonguesten

All set for success
Strong teamwork during her internship led Ayne over a personal hurdle. “I’m an introvert. I felt I was having a heart attack every time they said ‘networking!’” she said.

“I get much less nervous now”. Ayne Zarof, UCL student

Successfully combining her ambition to be a doctor with her passion for entrepreneurship, Ayne now co-manages the innovation and entrepreneurship section of the UCL medical society.

And with strong foundations for future publicity, Tonguesten is looking forward to launching its web platform in the New Year.
About UCL
UCL (University College London) was established in 1826 and is ranked as one of the world’s top-ten universities. The university is a modern, outward-looking institution, with more than 4,000 academic and research staff committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. It has a global reach, with 34% of its students coming from outside the UK, from almost 140 countries.

www.ucl.ac.uk

About UCL Advances
UCL Advances, UCL’s centre for entrepreneurship and business interaction, helps anyone who wants to learn about, start or grow a business. Its primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries. It works to support start-ups and small businesses across London by helping them to access the technical and business expertise of UCL’s staff and students, through a series of programmes to help support ambitious young companies.

UCL Advances is affiliated with UCL Enterprise, which provides UCL’s structures for engaging with business for commercial and societal benefit.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances
www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise

About Student Engagement
UCL Advances helps students learn about business, start their own enterprise or help them grow an existing venture by offering a complete programme of support which includes access to training, mentoring, one-to-one business advice from our in-house business advisors access to loans and the use of our Hatchery space.

One of these support initiatives is the Student Internship Programme (SIP) – aimed at supporting interns while they gain valuable hands-on work experience. The interns are based within a micro, small or medium sized enterprise to carry out a range of activities intended to help their host business grow.

This includes training, shadowing and work-related tasks specified by the business. It is an 8–12 week full time programme for which the intern is paid a training allowance by UCL Advances.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/support/internship-programme

About Business Support
UCL Advances provides direct business support for internal and external organisations through a variety of programmes and activities such as 1–1 advice, problem-solving through student consultancy, student internships, mentoring and others.

• We help London-based businesses grow and develop by analyzing business needs and connecting them to relevant interventions such as industry mentors;

• Through pairing teams of UCL and LBS students with businesses we deliver short-term consultancy projects addressing specific organisation needs;

• We broker relationships and fund exchanges between new and aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurs in another member state of the European Union;

• Individual angel investors connected to UCL provide seed investment to SMEs engaged with UCL Advances programmes; and

• We offer fully-funded SME Internships where UCL students spend eight to twelve weeks in a London SME working alongside the director(s) to deliver real results and lasting impact in the host organization while learning about enterprise.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/business/support