

Project Title : Enriching Senior Year Places Students' Learning Experience through Curricular and Co-curricular Activities in Hong Kong's Universities

Leading University : The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Participating UGC-funded University(ies) : City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Project Leader(s) : Dr Kin CHEUNG, Associate Professor, School of Nursing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Senior year places (SYP) in universities are UGC funded and allocated specifically for graduates of sub-degree programmes. SYP students will be admitted to the university based on a credit unit transfer system and complete their studies in 2 years. The SYP student population is growing rapidly, so their unique learning needs should be emphasized.

However, based on worldwide evidence-based studies and the local pilot study conducted by the project leader, SYP students are suffering from a “mismatch” between their learning needs and institutional offerings. This “mismatch” is affecting their learning experiences. Two significant factors underpin this “mismatch”: (1) the imperfect programme alignment of subject credit transfers between sub-degree and degree programmes which leads to heavy study loads (some students take 8 subjects per semester); and (2) the lack of adequate basic academic competency skills, psychological, career support and international exposure. Even though they are admitted to the third year, they are in fact first-year students in the new environment.

To fulfil the needs of SYP students, the specific objectives of this project are to: (1) meet the learning needs of SYP students before, during and after their transition into the degree programmes in the participating universities; and (2) enhance SYP students' learning experience by improving their academic competencies, future career preparations, library searching skills, individual well-being, and internationalised

experience during their time at university. Accordingly, the 3 major deliverables will be: (1) a student-centred online support system with interactive multimedia courseware shared initially among the 4 participating universities to administratively monitor, facilitate and advise SYP students from the first point of study interest all the way to graduation; and (2) a series of institutionally transferrable educational curricular and co-curricular activities enhancing students' transitions into degree programmes and subsequent learning experience that will tie in seamlessly with the online support system; and (3) institutional benchmarks and guidelines shared by participating universities concerning expectations of SYP students and the assessments of their achievements.

In addition to the anticipated positive impacts of the project on SYP students' learning experiences, this project will lead to a paradigm shift from competition to collaboration among sub-degree and degree programmes to provide flexible and diversified admissions. The online platform will facilitate the transparency of the subject alignment for credit transfers from sub-degree to degree programmes, while the courseware or other curricular and co-curricular activities will facilitate smooth transition processes and meet the learning needs of SYP students.