

Project Title : Blended approach for social work learning: A reflection-based and user-oriented pedagogical model

Leading University : The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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

Project Leader(s) : Professor LAM Ching-man, Professor, Department of Social Work, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Summary of Proposal

This cross-university collaborative project involves all five UGC-funded social work programs in Hong Kong to develop a reflection-based, user-oriented pedagogical model for social work education. The model adopts a blended approach as an innovative, ground-up response to current challenges in social work education, including limited opportunities for discussion due to increased curricular content, lecture-based teaching that restricts reflection, and the need for social work learning that balances local and international contexts. With newly available technologies and the thoughtful integration of online and traditional face-to-face learning, blended learning is an effective teaching approach that accommodates specific course content and goals.

Values, knowledge, and skills are three domains central to social work education and practice. Growing evidence suggests that the use of reflection in learning ranks among the most viable approaches (Halton, Murphy & Dempsey, 2007). However, in Hong Kong, such pedagogy remains underdeveloped (Lam, Wong & Leung, 2007). At the same time, integrating personal and professional selves is a central theme in social work (Campbell, Scott-Lincourt & Brennan, 2008). To achieve the goal of integration, students need to reflect on their value systems, beliefs, and judgments, as well as why they hold them, and have encounters with service users to attain personal adequacy and allow self-reflection (Coulter et al., 2013; Driessens et al., 2015).

With an aim to reflect values, impart knowledge, and develop students' practical competence, the project adopts blended learning strategies to develop a reflection-based, user-oriented pedagogical model for social work education in Hong Kong. The specific

objectives are:

1. To develop a reflection-based, user-oriented pedagogical model for blended learning that integrates the teaching and learning culture and context of Hong Kong in social work curriculum;
2. To strengthen teachers' understanding of, capacity for, and expertise in integrating blended learning in social work education;
3. To foster students' interest and engagement in social work learning and their personal and professional growth; and
4. To facilitate the ongoing discussion and exchange of knowledge, information, and experiences among local social work educational institutions.

To achieve those goals, both traditional classroom learning and various e-portfolios (e.g. SPOCs, MOOCs, flipped classrooms, apps, and e-forums) will be used. Theme-based workshops, capacity-building seminars, and an international conference will be held to spread knowledge of the project's results. To monitor and evaluate the project, a mixed-method evaluation with both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be adopted.

Summary of Final Report

This cross-university collaborative project involves all five UGC-funded social work programs in Hong Kong to develop a reflection-based, user-oriented pedagogical model for social work education. The model adopts a blended approach as an innovative, ground-up response to current challenges in social work education. With newly available technologies and the thoughtful integration of online and traditional face-to-face learning, blended learning is an effective teaching approach that accommodates specific course content and goals.

Values, knowledge, and skills are three domains central to social work education and practice. Evidence also suggests that the use of reflection in learning (Halton, Murphy & Dempsey, 2007) and integrating personal and professional selves (Campbell, Scott-Lincourt & Brennan, 2008) ranks among the most viable approaches. However, in Hong Kong, such pedagogy remains underdeveloped (Lam, Wong & Leung, 2007). The project therefore was initiated by adopting blended learning strategies to develop a reflection-based, user-oriented pedagogical model for social work education in Hong

Kong. The specific objectives are:

1. To develop a reflection-based, user-oriented pedagogical model for blended learning that integrates the teaching and learning culture and context of Hong Kong in social work curriculum;
2. To strengthen teachers' understanding of, capacity for, and expertise in integrating blended learning in social work education;
3. To foster students' interest and engagement in social work learning and their personal and professional growth; and
4. To facilitate the ongoing discussion and exchange of knowledge, information, and experiences among local social work educational institutions.

The project integrated traditional classroom learning and various e-portfolios (e.g. SPOCs, MOOCs, flipped classrooms, apps and e-forums). Project outcomes including 15 eLearning teaching materials, four MOOCs course, an e-Forum, five capacity-building workshops, five theme-based seminars and a hybrid mode international conference. Besides, mixed-method ongoing evaluations were conducted to evident the project effectiveness. Both qualitative and quantitative evaluations provided substantial support for the blended approach of teaching and learning. This is the first and only project up to date that involved all the UGC funded social work programs to jointly revisit and develop the curriculum. The eLearning teaching materials developed were widely used by both UGC and the higher education sector. It is an impactful project for the sector and has a significant impact in the area of using a blended learning approach in social work teaching and learning.