

Project Title : Internationalising Teaching and Learning in Hong Kong
Higher Education through Building Professional
Capacity

Leading University : The University of Hong Kong

Participating UGC-funded Hong Kong Baptist University, The Hong Kong
University(ies) : University of Science and Technology

Project Leader(s) : Dr Tracy ZOU, Assistant Professor, Centre for the
Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL), The
University of Hong Kong

Summary of Proposal

The ability to stay relevant in the internationalisation process is critical to Hong Kong's higher education (UGC, 2010). It has been recognised that internationalisation does not only mean increasing the number of international students or faculty members. International, intercultural and global dimensions need to be integrated into the purpose, functions, and delivery of higher education (Knight, 2004). However, there is a gap between an institution's internationalisation mission and the teaching and learning practices of its staff members. A review of the literature and the pilot studies conducted locally have revealed a pressing need to build staff members' professional capacity in internationalisation of teaching and learning by providing professional development, offering support, and sharing and disseminating exemplary practices.

The proposed project aims to develop the professional capacity of staff members across the partner institutions in relation to internationalisation of their curricular (and co-curricular), pedagogical, assessment, and academic support practices. The major objectives are to design professional development modules and resources, enhance awareness and develop professional capacity, collectively explore key themes and topics, and promote the sharing of knowledge and exemplary practices. Based on the opportunities and challenges identified in the groundwork at the University of Hong Kong, the scope of the project will include five professional development areas: (1) Developing students' global citizenship and cultural competence; (2) Leveraging diversity in teaching and learning; (3) Using ethical, inclusive and flexible approaches to teaching and learning, curriculum design and assessment; (4) Designing and

supporting student mobility and study abroad programmes; and (5) Inter-institutional collaboration and virtual mobility.

A community of practice (CoP) approach will be adopted. During the course of the last triennium, Hong Kong's universities were encouraged to adopt a CoP approach to enhancing their teaching and learning. The work has already demonstrated that an engaged, collegial, and grassroots-led CoP approach is beneficial in building professional capacity. In this proposed project, we will continue to adopt a CoP approach and serve the role of convenors that surface and compile exemplary practices, connect people from different disciplines, build intra- and inter-institutional networking, adopt local and international benchmarking standards, and facilitate multi-party/multi-modal communication.

The outcomes of this project will include enhanced curricular and co-curricular, pedagogical, assessment and academic support practices contributing to internationalisation within and across partner institutions, based upon a high level of engagement and collaboration across stakeholders at all levels.

Summary of Final Report

This project aimed at developing professional capacity for internationalising teaching and learning among academics, teachers, and staff members across the four partner institutions. A CoP – ITL, denoting the Community of Practice on Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning, has been cultivated, which enabled its 122 members to share good practices, explore new approaches, discuss challenges and opportunities, and support one another. Over the entire project period, twenty community events, such as join-the-conversation events, workshops and seminars, a symposium, and an online international conference, were designed and facilitated to support knowledge sharing. One hundred cases of exemplary practices, 16 briefings, and some video presentations, co-constructed between the project team and members of the CoP – ITL, have formed valuable teaching and learning resources.

We have contributed to the promotion of internationalisation through translating the institutional mission of internationalisation to the actual curriculum design and teaching and learning practice at the frontline. Based on the surveys and interviews that we conducted with our members and other stakeholders, we could conclude that we helped unpack the complex concept of internationalisation and make it more relevant to practice. We also created a sense of belonging through the community building so that

members feel supported in their exploration, as illustrated by this quote: ‘Your teams are doing good work, and the people are continually express their interests and their contribution to the topic. It gives me confidence and a sense of being a family.’ (from a member interview)

Our project has also contributed insights to the scholarly discussion of internationalisation through journal publications and conference presentations. The contribution is two-fold: one focused on advancing the understanding of teachers’ conceptions and practices of internationalisation, and the other focused on promoting a community of practice approach to enhancing teaching and learning.

The project has made a positive impact on the higher education sector through developing professional capacity and changing mindsets. Our evaluation shows that members of the CoP – ITL have developed a broader understanding of internationalisation and, more importantly, incorporated that into their curricular design and classroom practice. Some of these members further became change agents and champions who spread positive messages and engaged members in the ongoing conversations. Finally, the project has enabled a higher level of engagement with internationalisation of teaching and learning within and beyond the community.