

Project Title : Driving Cultural and Educational Shift: Providing Support, Activities and Professional Development in the Pedagogy, Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning in Holistic Competencies

Leading University : The University of Hong Kong

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

Project Leader(s) : Dr Cecilia CHAN Ka-yuk, Head of Professional Development/Associate Professor, Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, The University of Hong Kong

Holistic competencies – such as critical thinking skills, communication skills, consideration and self-awareness – are skills, values and attitudes that are important for whole-person development. The importance and need for holistic competencies have been recognized around the world, including by universities and government bodies. Even students themselves understand this, but given that there are limited resources for teaching staff to effectively introduce holistic competencies into education, the students feel that their competencies still have much room for improvement.

With a deeply invested interest in this area of education, the project leader and her team have already completed major work and research on holistic competencies over the course of 10 years. The team's work includes a large-scale study looking at undergraduate engineering students' attitudes towards holistic competencies, the development of a programme for holistic competencies development, a collection of interviews with renowned professors around the world regarding their successful and innovative teaching approaches, and the creation of an online training course that

targets the holistic competencies of residential tutors.

With the team's extensive experience and sought evidence that holistic competencies are extremely important for the education and futures of students, the main goal of the proposed project is to set up a Holistic Competency Hub that will specialize in and support the development and assessment of these competencies in university education. In particular, the hub will (1) support teachers in integrating holistic competencies into in-class activities, (2) design workshops and out-of-class activities for teachers and students respectively, (3) study the ways in which residential education benefits holistic competencies development, and also (4) develop suitable assessment methods that allow students to showcase their development and levels of competencies. The hub's programmes and work will include professional development workshops and the design of teaching packs for teachers, and a competition for students to both develop and further enhance their competencies.

Furthermore, the project's collaborators at partnering universities will act as vital channels to bring the hub's work and findings to the teachers and students of their respective institutions. Drawing upon their area of expertise and experience in higher education, the collaborators will play an important role in the design of learning activities and assessment methods for holistic competencies development by providing advice and sharing the existing practices at their respective universities.

Finally, the hub will be pushing for an educational and cultural shift towards balancing the importance of holistic competencies with academic knowledge. As it works towards firmly incorporating holistic competencies into university education, the hub will also be the first independent academic support unit that provides advice, support and opportunities to teachers and students for holistic competencies development, and will therefore strive towards becoming a leader of holistic competencies education in Hong Kong.