

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

### **Summary of Proposal**

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 ten 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.

### **Summary of Final Report**

This project aims to set up a Holistic Competency Hub that specialize in and support the development and assessment of holistic competency in university education. To develop pedagogical and assessment strategies for holistic competency development, we have (1) collected and analyzed cross-institutional survey data on students' perception of generic skills development and assessment, (2) conducted interviews with academics, senior management and potential employers to gain a comprehensive picture of current expectations of and current practices in holistic competency development and assessment, and (3) conducted interviews with teaching and learning experts from universities across the globe to collect good practices in the development

and assessment of holistic competencies. Findings from the survey and the interviews informed the development of teaching and learning resources for guiding teachers in course and assessment design to promote holistic competency development. The resources are made available on the website of the Holistic Competency and Virtue Education hub which is established to foster and advance the development and assessment of holistic competency by offering consultation services and practical tips on delivering holistic competency education.

This project will have a long-term impact on the teaching and learning of holistic competencies in Hong Kong higher education institutions. In the long run, the hub will strive towards becoming a leader of holistic competency education in Hong Kong by pushing for an educational and cultural shift towards balancing the importance of holistic competency with academic knowledge. It will not only provide advice and support to teachers who are keen to work towards incorporating holistic competencies into university education but will also provide opportunities for both teachers and students to develop holistic competencies, as well as assessment literacy in these competencies.