

DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING ABILITIES IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE THROUGH ONLINE CASE-BASED LEARNING AT BLACKBOARD

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PAPER ABSTRACT

Initiating by World Health Organization (WHO), Traditional Medicine (TM) has gained international prominence in promoting public health. Having over 3,000 years of development and clinical experience, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has become a scientific discipline, and its combination with Western Medicine has received worldwide recognition for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases, as well as enhancing health.

As the first institution funded by the government in 1998 to provide higher education in Chinese Medicine in Hong Kong, the School of Chinese Medicine (SCM) at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) is committed to providing quality teaching programmes, conducting cutting-edge research and offering first-rate TCM services to public. TCM education emphasizes both theoretical knowledge and clinical practices. However the pedagogies for clinical problem-solving have not been sufficiently developed in both TCM and Western medicine. Therefore development of critical thinking abilities for our students to make reasoned judgment is a significant goal for TCM education.

Construction of a medical cases archive through e-tools can effectively help design this kind of pedagogies. Under Outcomes-based Teaching and Learning (OBTL), case-based learning can provide students with debates on alternative courses of action, nurturing them to become effective decision-maker and professional practitioner. This Project aims to foster and enhance the critical thinking abilities for CM students through case-based learning, developed by an online archive of medical cases at Blackboard.

A database of medical cases in TCM Orthopaedics accumulated over the past decade has been created at Blackboard. Case-based learning by students has been initiated and motivated at its Discussion Board where students can conduct individual and peer learning based on teachers' comments. Through these brainstorming, students finally make group presentation, assessed by teachers according to the university-level Critical Thinking Rubric benchmarked with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

Assessment results and analysis of replies at Discussion Board exhibit that students (1) are actively engaged and undertake sound analysis; (2) undertake effective teamwork and construct new thoughts therefrom and (3) progress satisfactorily in clinical critical thinking and reasoning, such as interpreting, analysing, justifying, forming a final diagnosis, communicating and evaluating the whole clinical practice.

Case-based learning via online archive of medical cases is found effective to develop students' abilities of critical thinking and making informed and reasoned medical judgment in clinical contexts. The next steps will expand this archive by incorporating more cases and students' own insights, and intensify students' self-directed learning and promote this pedagogy to other TCM courses.