

Integration and Application of Family Therapy and Computer Program Knowledge – from Teachers to Students to Counseling Professionals for Developing Family Communication and Harmony

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Department

Applied Social Sciences

Principal Investigator

Dr Sylvia Kwok

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Source of funding

Nil

Link

<http://db.tt/5d0ksDmB>

Description

The project aims to develop family counseling tools (including board games and computer games) for the social workers, counselors, educational and clinical psychologists in counseling families. The project involves a total of 80 students from SS and another 120 students from CS. Students from the two departments co-operate to design the games for use as counseling tools, contributing their knowledge in family therapies and computer program design applications respectively. Knowledge was transferred from the teachers to the students in regular courses and training workshops. Students then applied and integrated the knowledge to design the games for the counseling professionals. Knowledge was further transferred to the counseling professionals to enhance family communication and harmony.

The game design was based on Systemic and Satir family therapy theories. A total of 100 sets of Systemic board games and another 100 sets of Satir board games were produced, while two computer games incorporating Systemic and Satir therapy concepts were made. The products were introduced and disseminated to the counseling professionals in a workshop.

The project has several significant characteristics:

1. It is an interdepartmental collaborative project between SS (Dr. Sylvia Kwok) and CS (Dr. W.K. Chan, Dr. Y. T. Yu). It involves students from both departments and brings together the professional knowledge of social sciences and computer sciences within the university in a single knowledge transfer project.
2. It is based on a sound theoretical framework that operationalizes the family therapy concepts in the design of family counseling tools.
3. It provides useful tools for the counseling professionals in family assessment and intervention, enhancing family communication and harmony.

4. Knowledge is not only transferred to the students, counseling professionals and families in Hong Kong, but also to Taiwan, Mainland China as well as the Chinese professionals and families all over the world via internet.

Expected outcomes

1. Regular training in the courses “Working with Children and Families” and “ Software Engineering Practice” were conducted in the semester for SS and CS students.
2. Two additional workshops were conducted for CS students to familiarize them with the family therapy concepts. CS students has paid a visit to an integrated children and youth centre to get a better understanding of the counseling setting of the families.
3. A pilot test of the games was held with the students and two families in an afternoon workshop.
4. A workshop was conducted for the counseling professionals to train them in using the counseling tools. About 200 professionals attended the workshop.
5. A pre-test and post-test evaluation study was carried out. Students generally reflected significant improvement on their awareness of the factors that may affect family relationships, understanding on the procedure of game software development, and the extent that they can apply their own ideas in the project.

Future development

1. Both qualitative and quantitative feedback will be collected from the counseling professionals and the participating families.
2. After trial run and feedback, the computer games will be uploaded onto a website and open for public so that Chinese counseling professionals and families all over the world can access and make effective use of the games in counseling.
3. More sets of the board games will be produced and distributed to the counseling organizations in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan.
4. The computer games will be translated into English so that they can be disseminated to the English-speaking countries.
5. The project will be presented by the Principal Investigator in two international conferences in June in Montreal and Hong Kong. Press conference will be held in July. Articles will be prepared for international refereed journals.