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# Community Ageing with Health and Dignity through a Service Learning Initiative

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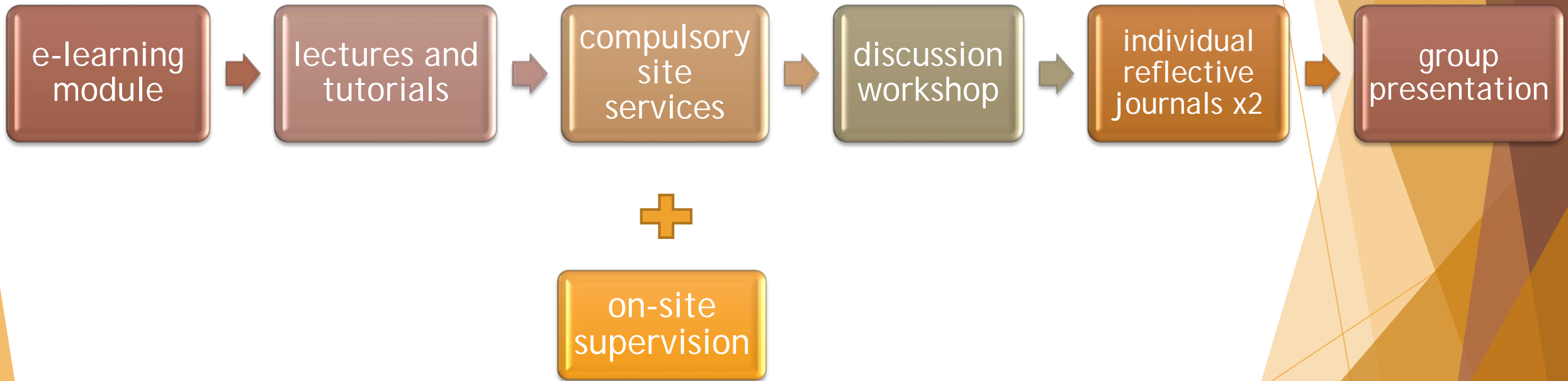
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# Background and objectives

- ▶ A new compulsory service-learning subject in the Practices of Health Promotion was introduced in 2019 with aims to:
- ▶ Equip students with the **knowledge of theories and methods in health promotion** (focus on planning, implementing and evaluating health promotion programmes) in community health
- ▶ Introduce the **relevant policy and research** in the field of health promotion
- ▶ Develop students' ability to **apply principles and concepts of health behaviour** to motivate individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle
- ▶ Instill in students a strong sense of **empathy, social responsibility and professionalism**

# Teaching and learning approach



# Site services in community centres



Group	Number of students	Targets	Contents
A	8	Elderlies in Ho Chui District Community Centre	Dementia Community Support Scheme
B	8	Elderlies living in Sau Mau Ping public housing estate	Home visits
C	12	Elderlies in Ho Wong Neighborhood Centre for Senior Citizens	Centre activities
D	8	Elderlies living in Chak On Estate	Home visits

36 students did home and site visits organised by four neighbourhood centres for senior citizens under Sik Sik Yuen

# Activities completed by students

- ▶ **Needs assessment** (questionnaire about self-care routines, regular medications, drug compliance, alcohol use, smoking, nutrition and eating pattern, physical exercise, anxiety, depression, stress, sleep, pain, social support, utilisation of health services)
- ▶ **Health assessment** (blood pressure, pulse rate, height, body weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), waist-to-hip ratio, gait)
- ▶ **Interactive health promotion activities** such as games and physical exercise demonstrations
- ▶ **Provision of advice** and demonstration on nutrition and eating patterns
- ▶ **Practical advice** on pain management, medication compliance, alcohol use, and smoking cessation

# Analysis of students' reflective journals

Method:

QDA Miner software

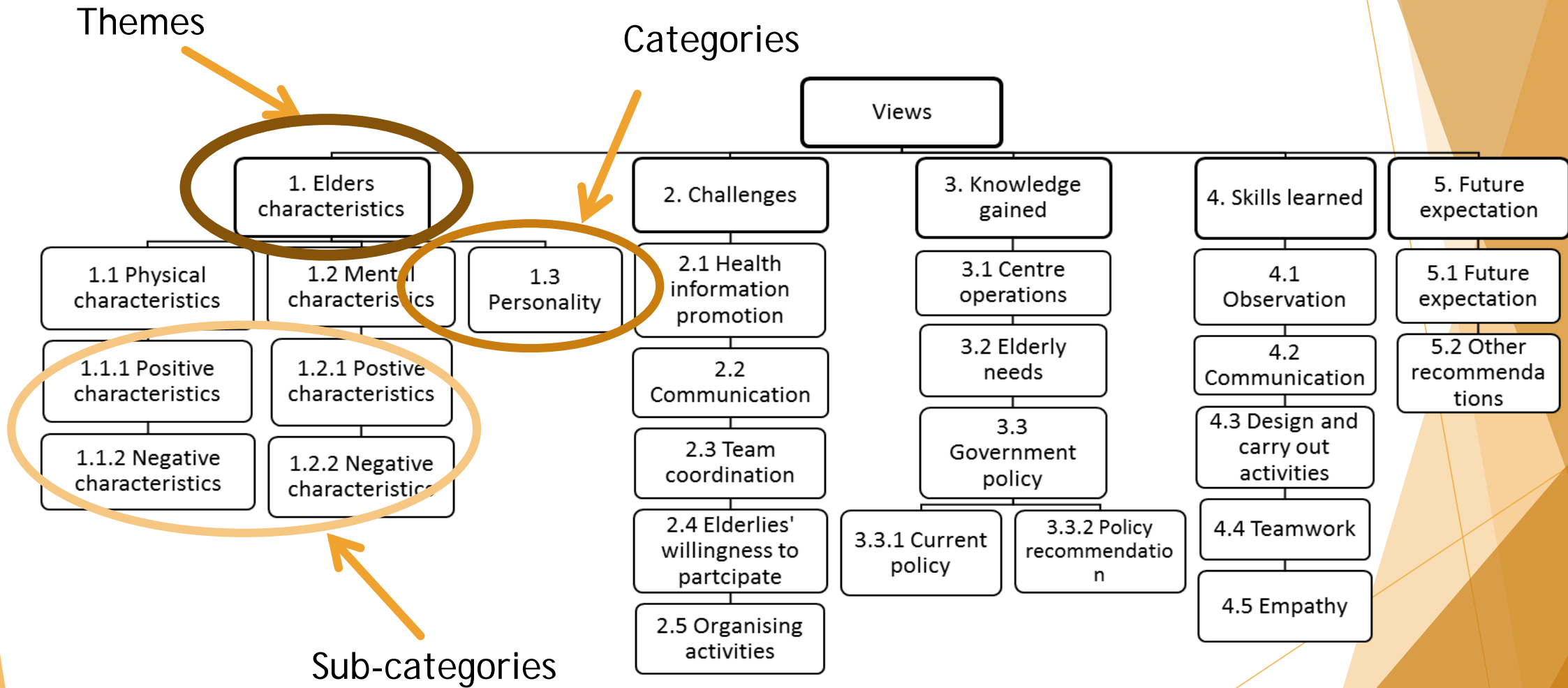
Constructed an analytical framework



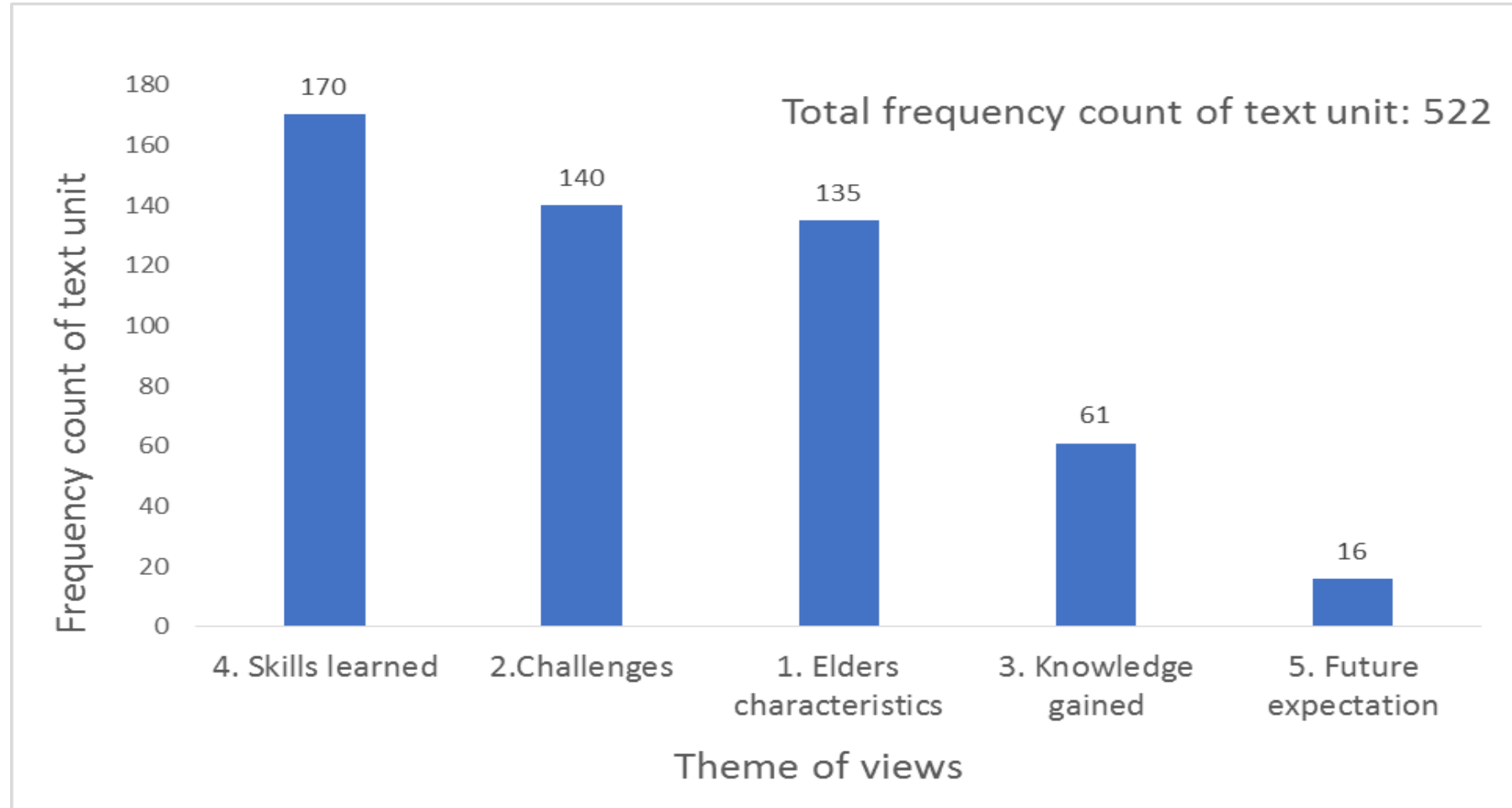
- ▶ 'Text Units' = phrases and sentences that represented the main points of views
- ▶ 'Sub-categories' = subdivided by Categories
- ▶ 'Categories' = grouped by Text units with similar meaning
- ▶ 'Themes' = grouped by Categories with similar meaning

Reflective journals 'content were then analysed and summarised

# Hierarchy chart for analysis of views collected



# Themes of views



The views were grouped under 5 themes and 24 categories based on the analytical framework



# Top 6 categories of views

Communication  
(skills learned)

Elder's  
personality

Communication  
(Challenges)

Elders' physical  
characteristics

Design and carry  
out activities  
(Skills learned)

Teamwork  
(Skills learned)

## Communication skills

- ▶ **Improved communication skills** were frequently mentioned by students
- ▶ Most of them had learned to be a **good listener**, *"be patient and talk slowly with gentle tone"*
- ▶ Some of them had learned to open and continue conversations by **introducing more about themselves** and **showing appreciation**
- ▶ They also mentioned about avoiding talking about **politics, privacy and personal information**, and speaking English in between sentences
- ▶ A few of them had learned to show **attentiveness** and non-verbal communication skills such as having suitable **body touch, eye contact and facial expression**



## Design and carry out activities

- ▶ Students mentioned the need to consider **elders' ability** in order to design appropriate activities for them
- ▶ They learned to set the **content** of the activities to be meaningful and joyful
- ▶ Students suggested to **guide and assist** the elders carefully during the activities
- ▶ They **reflected themselves** that they should have done the preparation better and thoroughly

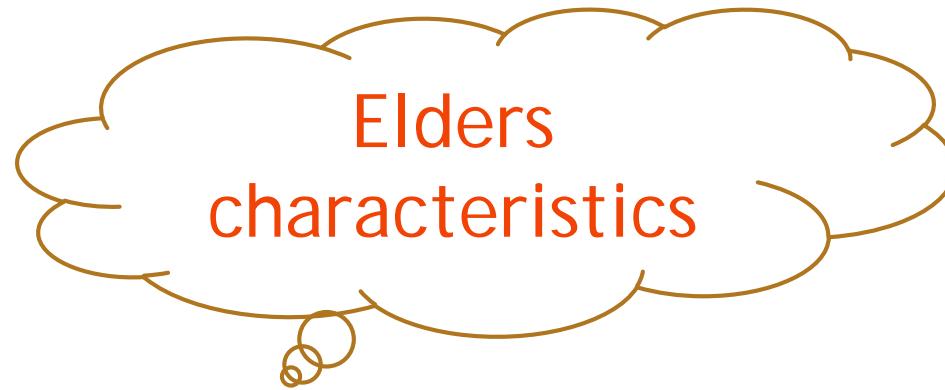


- ▶ Students identified how to **cooperate and help** with each other in conducting and solving problems during activities



## Communication (challenges)

- ▶ Most students pointed out that they **lacked of experience** communicating with elders, causing them difficult to start a conversation
- ▶ Some of them were **nervous** to talk with the elders
- ▶ Some felt hard to find a common topic to discuss due to **generation gap**
- ▶ Two of them also mentioned having **language barrier** as the elders spoke with other Chinese dialects



## Elders characteristics

- ▶ Students clearly identified the characteristics of the elders that they encountered
- ▶ “Physical characteristics” → most students identified views were on “Negative physical characteristics” from elders such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and knee and back pain
- ▶ “Personality” → a lot of students identified positive personality of elders such as being friendly, kind and talkative, which have changed their traditional views on elders



- ▶ 11 students talked about demonstrating **empathy** towards elderly when communicating with them
- ▶ three of them mentioned that they had learned to show empathy by **understanding elders' health conditions and concerns**

# Overall observation

- ▶ The site service component of this service learning subject has fulfilled the three intended learning objectives:
- ▶ To discuss the roles and ethical decisions by the government and health care professionals in health promotion, and reflect on their **roles and responsibilities** as responsible citizens
- ▶ To **communicate effectively** with client group and their families
- ▶ To demonstrate **empathy** for people in need and a strong sense of social responsibility



# Acknowledgement

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- ▶ We also thank the senior management and centre staff from Sik Sik Yuen for providing an opportunity for the students in service learning to put into practice their learned theories in serving the elderly.

*Thank You*