

Collaborative Platform for Herbal Information Creation, Using in Pharmacy Classroom

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Due to the growing use of herbal medicine and other natural products by patients and consumers, pharmacists now need a basic knowledge of these topics for their professional practices. To serve this need, several courses on herbal medicine, e.g., general botany, medicinal botany, etc., are set in pharmacy curriculum. It is hard for a student to familiar with medicinal herbs with a limitation of time for study. Normally, students learn herbal medicine in both lecture and practice classes. In a practice class, some activities should be assigned to students such as taking pictures of some medicinal herbs or interview traditional practitioners. Students usually report the result into the simple file and print them out when they need. Using these conventional techniques, it is hard to find the way, which students to create a community for exchanging their information. With Web 2.0 system, it provides an opportunity for sharing information from a group of members on a topic of interest. The Knowledge Unifying Initiator for Herbal Information (KUIHerb), a system for collective intelligence on herbal medicine, is used as a platform for building a Web community for collecting the intercultural knowledge. Information in the KUIHerb has been collected for a period of time. Therefore, at least three reasons that it is not suitable to use as a learning tool. Firstly, it has only a little room for a non or a little experienced student to share a new opinion. Secondly, pharmacy students should contribute herbal information related with scientific evidences. Finally, several errors in content may occur during the learning process. The consequent is that members and visitors of the KUIHerb, may receive incorrect information. In this paper, we present an idea for building a new and clean Web site based on KUIHerb and use it as a Web-based and social network learning tool for herbal information creation. Three types of information creation, i.e., initial, voting and non-voting information are proposed. Information of herbs in several regions can be distributed and exchanged among groups of students. Several types of media can be contributed. Information about traditional and modern herbal medicine can be combined and linked together by collaborative work from students and professors. As mentioned above, the KUIHerb can be used as a tool to improve knowledge and skill in herbal medicine with a scientific method.

Reference:

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