



教與學發展中心
CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
香港恒生大學
THE HANG SENG UNIVERSITY
OF HONG KONG

My Teaching Story

Academic Year 2020-21 (Third Issue)

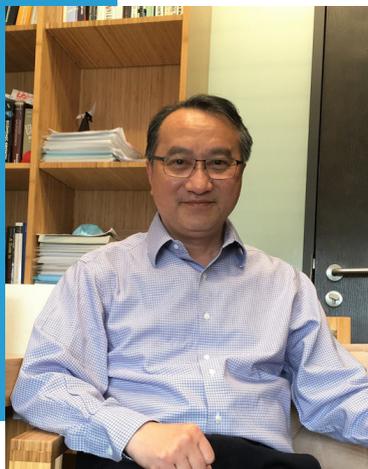
THE HANG SENG UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dr CHENG Ka Ming, Ben



As the COVID-19 cases escalated in Hong Kong in early 2020, the University made a difficult decision to switch from face-to-face teaching to online teaching and then to mixed-mode teaching. The abrupt shift in teaching modes proved disruptive for teachers and students. However, this pandemic crisis provides an opportunity for teachers to derive disruptive innovation in teaching. Excellent teachers kept on SHINING in teaching regardless of the teaching mode.

In the third issue of "My Teaching Story", seven Teaching Excellence Awards Recipients (2019/20), Dr Lam Wing Kin (Chinese), Dr Amy Kong (English), Dr Joyce Lee (English), Dr Amy Wang (Management), Dr Kenneth Kwong (Marketing), Ms Rosalie Woo (Economics and Finance) and Ms Maggie Wong (Social Science), are committed to sharing their teaching stories with us. Their innovative pedagogies/approaches, "Humanistic", "Connecting the Dots", "SHARP", "Person-centred", "Case-based", "Mutual Growing" and "Service-Learning", would certainly give you some insight into your teaching!

Enjoy reading!

Ben Cheng
Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning

Developing the Teaching Persona by Connecting the Dots

Dr KONG Ying Yuk, Amy

Senior Lecturer of Department of English

Every year, when teachers win the teaching excellence award, they are often asked to share their teaching strategies. But instead of describing what I do to optimize the effectiveness of students' English learning, I would like to explain the rationales behind my approach. Many of these rationales come from my own learning experiences and the theories I learnt in the past. They become the dots connected to my traits of teaching today.

The first dot is about my own secondary school life. I have to confess I was one of the luckiest students because I had been immersed in a very rich English-speaking environment since I was in the middle school. I studied in a traditional Catholic EMI girls' school from S.1 to S.7, where all the lessons, activities, and even the assemblies were conducted in English. My principal was a nun. She always read the Bible and sang the hymns in English elegantly.



DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PERSONA BY CONNECTING THE DOTS

My English teachers taught me not the grammar rules, but how to appreciate literature. Unlike many of the other schools, where only English lessons were conducted in English, most of the subject teachers in my school also spoke very good English and forced us to speak English to them after class. I still remember I felt very scared when I was in S.1 because the Liberal Studies (LS) teacher spoke very fast English and hardly could we understand the difficult terms such as the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Court of Final Appeal. In order not to lag behind her class, I revised and previewed LS every day after school, looking up the dictionary for the correct pronunciation and meaning of the vocabulary I didn't understand. The result was good. I gradually adapted to the English learning environment and became a fluent English user myself. This practice continued when I entered the university to study English as my major. This time I was even exposed to different varieties of English as the professors came from different parts of the world, and by learning different Englishes, I have become a master of this international language as well.



I did not realize how important the school environment is in developing one's English competency until I was asked by a student about the reason for my proficient English in the first year of my teaching. I told her I studied in an EMI school before. She told me she also came from an EMI school, but most lessons and activities were conducted in Cantonese, so she and her classmates did not see the needs of communicating in English, except that they had to memorize the English terms in different subjects. It was at that moment I decided to run as many English activities as possible to provide more English-speaking opportunities for our students. As the English Language Centre Coordinator, I have been coordinating different English lunches and workshops for our students to practice English speaking. Moreover, in order to build up students' confidence in presenting themselves in English in front of the crowd, I am determined to run at least one competition every year, such as English Public Speaking Contest, Drama Competition, and Singing Contest. Of course, before they performed on the stage, they had to undergo intensive training offered by me and my colleagues. I also lead the cultural tour every year. In addition, in class, I try to explain everything in English at a natural, moderate speed. I do not intentionally slow down my speech because I believe only by exposing students to natural English input can they acquire the language. Of course, I do double check if they understand the concepts from time to time to ensure they catch up with the lesson.

DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PERSONA BY CONNECTING THE DOTS

DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PERSONA BY CONNECTING THE DOTS

The second dot comes from the theory I learnt about "scaffolding". Despite the ample input, students still make mistakes when they navigate the tasks independently. In other words, there is still a gap between the input they absorb and the output they produce. And very often, these kinds of mistakes, or even errors, are related to subtle, complicated lexico-semantic errors that are not salient to learners unless purposefully spotted out. For example, students may write something like this:

More women will participate in the job market. It promotes the economy.

The sentence should be revised as:

More women will participate in the job market. This promotes the economy.

The difference between "It" and "This" is not related to grammar (in fact, the sentence structure is correct in the original sentence), but rather, it's about the word choice related to the meaning. This is something that cannot be identified easily by students themselves. And this is where "scaffolding" should step in. Thanks to my PhD study, I learnt about Vygotsky's concept of "scaffolding", which refers to the support and guidelines offered to the novice by the expert. At first, I chose to apply this knowledge in my dissertation only to fulfil my supervisor's request, but the more I learnt about it, the more I realized it was so true, at least when reflecting on my own English learning experiences.

I still remember when I was in S.5, although I could speak English fluently, I only scored a C in my oral exam and the teacher attributed my underperformance to my flawed articulation. I felt confused by the comment until my mistakes were spotted one by one by the Vice Principal. For example, I did not pronounce the “k” sound when I read the word “extra”. These are some subtle errors I wouldn’t be able to notice myself. Merging my PhD knowledge and my own learning experiences, I decided to offer “scaffolding” to my students one by one, at least for writing an essay. I usually meet them individually to discuss the draft before the final submission and ask them to clarify all the ambiguous expressions they write. The outcome is desirable. Perhaps petrified by my detailed comments, they treat my assignment seriously, and spend much time proofreading their work before submission. I remember one student made many mistakes in the first draft, but then he produced a perfect piece of work in the end. I asked him why he could make such a drastic improvement, and he told me he spent three whole nights revising his 500-word essay based on my advice. Of course, whether students can produce such perfect work in a timed manner is another issue about procedurization, which is practicing. But at least students are on the right track to write the essay in proper academic English after my one-on-one scaffolding.

DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PERSONA BY CONNECTING THE DOTS

DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PERSONA BY CONNECTING THE DOTS

The last dot comes from a TED talk given by Michael Sandel, who posited that the division between winners and losers is setting us apart in society. However, in my opinion, even in university, haven't we, teachers, sometimes presumed ourselves to be "leaders" or "experts" and students to be "followers" only? But is such kind of "leader/follower" differentiation favorable to cultivate our students to be independent learners? Or does it in fact undermine their passion for learning? Of course, we teachers have the expertise in our own field, but for areas where students can take the lead, shouldn't we give them a chance? As an English writing teacher, I never consider myself omnipresent. Of course, I am better than my students at English language knowledge. However, writing is not only about language, but also sophisticated ideas and logical thinking. When I teach them to write a research essay on the topic of their interest, I value their ideas. I divide the class into four groups, and then categorize students working on similar topics together. Each of them has to present the draft, and then the peers have to raise questions and give comments based on the peer review form given. At this point, I usually become a humble audience who ask them to clarify the subject knowledge I am not familiar with, and usually not only the presenter, but also the peers answer my questions proactively as if they were the professionals.

Sometimes, they even have heated debates about the logical fallacies of the presenter's ideas. I was, indeed, very impressed when one peer immediately sent a research article to the presenter for her reference last year. Although this kind of peer review is not about language improvement, it has heightened students' excitement about the assignment, and many of them are so dedicated to perfecting their work after the presentation. Sometimes, displaying a certain degree of humility could make teachers look more human, close the gap between us and students, and unleash their potential to take up the leader's role.

Teachers play a pivotal role in nurturing future pillars of our society, and there are many avenues to reach this goal. For me, to be an inspiring teacher, I take a retrospective approach to reviewing my prior experiences and the theories related to English learning. By connecting the dots, I have developed my own teaching persona and become who I am today.



DEVELOPING THE TEACHING PERSONA BY CONNECTING THE DOTS

Dr KWONG Ka Kei, Kenneth

Assistant Professor of Department of Marketing

When I was asked to share the ways in which I teach and motivate students to learn, a case-based problem-solving approach immediately came to my mind. This teaching approach allows students to get a taste of a real business. Honestly, I knew nothing about case teaching during the early days of my career. I started teaching at my alma mater in 1999/2000 as a graduate instructor. After 20 years of self-growing and development, I was named as one of the best teachers in HSUHK for my strong belief in case teaching.

Photo taken at City University of Hong Kong in the first-year teacher gathering hosted by the Faculty of Business. Second from the left: Dr Kenneth Kwong



As a faculty member in marketing education, my teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the pragmatism that students acquire knowledge through the critical examination of others' experience and practice. It guides my course design and assessment strategy to use real cases as the key instruction in my class. Given that the universal truths are hard to find in the marketing field, case-based teaching allows a greater tolerance for ambiguity and the use of multiple sources of data to make sense of our socially constructed reality.

Getting a Taste of a Real Business: Case Teaching

Instead of looking for an absolute or standard answer in the ever-changing marketing environment, I prefer to lead students to find out their solutions to problems in marketing using scientific methods. Today's teacher is not a sage on the stage but more like a guide on the side to help students acquire the needed knowledge and skills. When teachers and students become a partner in learning, effective instruction is achievable. It is how learning shall take place.

While many cases were business news from leading magazines and newspapers, I have written some to incorporate theories and present the uniqueness and difficulties in each decision-making process. Cases were either selected or developed based on a set of principles, which are collectively known as 4As to denote accessible, authentic, applicable and attainable. That is the students can opt to access additional information of the case company in the public domain. The case shall not be hypothetical but needs to be authentic. Students can apply the acquired knowledge to solve problems of the case, providing evidence of attaining the learning outcomes.

Photo taken at the company visit of Lee Kum Kee's factory at Tai Po Industrial Estate with graduate students. Fourth from the right: Dr Kenneth Kwong





Photo taken with the management of TWG (the parent company of Tsit Wing Coffee) and students from Marketing and MSC-EM programmes in a company interview.

As a pedagogy, case teaching helps students develop an understanding and appreciation of how the theory can possibly explain the practice and strategy of firms in marketing. It offers a structured opportunity to activate a participative learning and brings students closer to the socially-constructed reality and encourages interactions between me as a teacher and students as a learner. I can recall the puzzlement of students when they were told a black tea and coffee supplier consistently maintaining a share of around 70% in this business-to-business market. Students found it hard to understand as they initially thought that there are many suppliers of these commodity-like products. This case offered a new perspective to students that suppliers like Tsit Wing Coffee can still be very competitive and value-creating even in a commodity market should they remain agile and innovative. The concepts of distinctive capability and marketing innovation account for the successful transformation of Tsit Wing Coffee from a wholesaler to a leading B2B brand that specializes in black tea and coffee solutions. The result is that the cups of milk tea served at McDonald's, Café de Coral or Tai Hing, all actually are products from Tsit Wing Coffee.

The certificate of Honorable Mention in the Asian Case Competition on the case title of Tsit Wing



Getting a Taste of a Real Business: Case Teaching

Many of these case studies were taken in a form of group-based project that seeks to enrich the learning experience of students. Each project team was required to give an interim report to receive formative feedback for improvement prior to a final submission. Some cases appeared in an examination or final assessment to ascertain the ability of students to diagnose marketing problems and make recommendations. To help recap the major concepts covered in discussions, students will get a quick highlight for an after-class revision.

Recently, I started to build a collection of statements on student's self-reflection on learning. Some reflected a high level of understanding of the subject matter and provided a critical evaluation of the self-contribution to the group-based case project. All these are regarded as a positive sign of using a case-based problem-solving approach in marketing education.



Photo taken with my students in the BBA-Marketing Alumni Homecoming Party.

To support learning beyond classroom, I have initiated and organised several university-wide student competitions on entrepreneurship and marketing. Students were encouraged to use the knowledge and their talent to either start a new business or market a product. There were workshops and seminars alongside these competitions to broaden the horizon and exposure of students. Moreover, practitioners were invited to meet our students and share their experience. By promoting teamwork and networking, these competitions served as an alternative platform for teaching and learning.

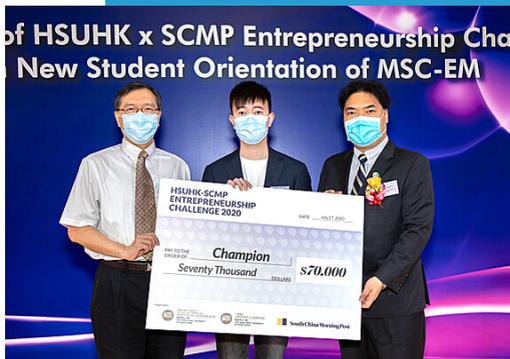


Photo taken with the champion, who is a marketing student at the HSUHK x SCMP Entrepreneurial Challenge 2020 and Dr Haksin Chan (HoD, MKT).

My goals as an educator in marketing are threefold. First, I want to rectify the misconception of students that marketing is a common sense. I address this misconception by carefully designing the module contents to maintain academically sound and preserve the right balance between theory and practice. Instead of relying on one's instincts or common senses, students are taught to answer questions in marketing using relevant frameworks.

Getting a Taste of a Real Business: Case Teaching

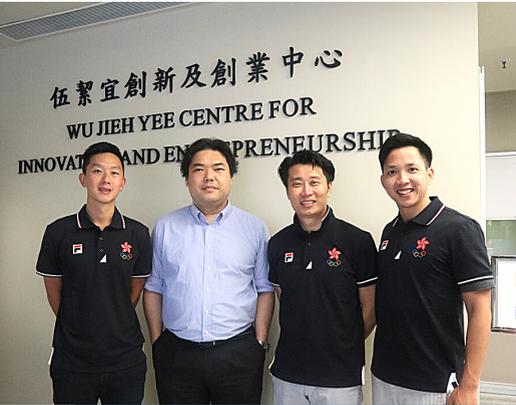


Photo taken with a scholarship donor and retired elite athletes, who are my students in the MSC-EM programme.

Second, I want students to learn rather than just memorize the marketing concepts and theories without true understanding.

I use case teaching and participative learning to provide live examples to help students internalize the acquired knowledge. Third, I expect students to solve marketing problems independently using scientific methods. I seek to achieve this by presenting different and sometimes conflicting views to students and ask for their opinions. I always question the viability and challenge their suggestions, leading students to re-think other possible options. Students are always supported and encouraged to join internal and external competitions to increase exposure and gain practical experience.

In general, I believe that students should be stimulated to think on their own. Learning is much effective in the interactive contexts where authentic cases are presented with problems that students are asked to offer well-grounded solutions.



Photo taken with graduates of MSC-EM programme.

It is the learning experience that matters to students. From this perspective, there is no perfect teaching and even the best practices are subject to change. Teaching is a developmental journey that needs to be continuously reviewed, refined, and renewed.

林永堅博士

中文系高級講師

離開大學校園後，我便踏上中文教師的旅程。從恒商、恒管到恒大，學校名稱轉了又轉，我卻依然留在這裡。若教學工作只是教「書」，那麼十多年來千篇一律的照本宣科，老師難免成為異化的勞工。然而，我們真正教的是「人」，是一個個有血有肉、個性各異的年青人，這樣的工作便有趣得多了。

在過去一年，社會紛紛擾擾，原有熱鬧的面授課堂，無可避免改為網上教學。一張張有輪廓有表情的臉孔，在冷冰冰的熒幕上，也只剩下一式一樣的黑色方格。看不見「人」，人與人的溝通又如何進行呢？於是我忽發奇想，嘗試利用學校的網絡教學平台（Moodle），仿倣網上流行的討論區，按教學內容、導修課題開設不同的討論群組，讓學生於網上自由發言，交流意見。令人意外的是，成長於網絡時代的年青人，對網上溝通並不陌生，加上網絡討論能消除真實發言的尷尬與疑慮，反令網上討論的氣氛比平日更為熾熱。討論區化身成為同學間互動的小天地，版面上滿佈著不同的網絡表情符號、鮮活的生活化語言與輕鬆隨意的玩笑，甚而平日沉靜內向的同學也敢於發言，反駁調笑。這時候，雖然看不見對方的臉，但我們還是看到了「人」。

但課堂教學畢竟有限，班內學生眾多，難以顧及不同「人」的個性與興趣，加上教學時數有限，師生相處每每隨著學期結束而煙消雲散。但教學當擁有更寬廣的天地，學生的學習空間不應只限於課堂，校園內外尚有無限的空間與可能，供師生探索發掘。況且，中文作為母語，是我們思考、感受與表情達意的媒介。

中文教育的目的也不止於語文訓練，更是人文、文化與情感的教育。 如果



「人」文 教 育



傳統文化是時光留下的痕跡，文化教育便是讓年青人感受到它的醇厚與溫度。

過去數年，我嘗試將中文教學延展至課室以外，與學校不同部門，如學校圖書館、商道與文化中心等合作，籌辦各類型以中文閱讀、文化探索為題的體驗活動。學生透過同儕間的彼此交流及真實體驗，逐步探索自我、建立個性。在一系列的文化活動中，師生不只是談文說藝，談的更是理想、人生、情感與種種價值，觸碰的不只是文字，更是一個個思想敏銳、情感真率的青春靈魂。

《論語》有言：「子以四教：文、行、忠、信。」傳統教學旨在使學生得到文化、品行、情意的全人培育與薰陶，成為懂得關懷、思考、表情達意的獨立個體。可惜的是，現今教育大多淪為技能訓練與「象牙塔式」的學術討論，教學早已脫離生活，更脫離了「人」。在疫情之下，面對空無一人的課室，正是難得的契機提醒了我們：教育最重要的，是不管課室內外，在我們面前的都是「人」，是一個個懂思考、會感受年青人，而此才是教育的根本所在。

Dr LEE Lok Hin, Joyce

Lecturer of Department of English



'Teachers who have been teaching for twenty years may be divided into two categories: those with twenty years' experience and those with one year's experience repeated twenty times,' said Penny Ur, a renowned linguist in the field of English-language teaching.

The unprecedented pandemic represents the game-changer in teaching and learning, as both teachers and students have to rise to the occasion. Teachers, especially, can no longer follow the same old routine. Instead of becoming desperately anxious about COVID-19, I positively regard it as an opportunity to carry out trials that I have been imagining for years. My fervent beliefs in teaching, which can be encapsulated by the acronym SHARP succinctly, enable me to go through all these challenging times.

Sincere: One of the very first things that I tell my students at the beginning of the new school year is always, 'I'm very strict, but it doesn't mean that I'm not sincere or nice. If you're willing to learn from me, then you will definitely get the grade that you deserve.' It is of paramount importance to establish boundaries and ground rules in the first instance, as this serves to better align my expectations with students'. To arouse their interest in English learning through the development of highly personalised tasks, I endeavour to understand their individual personalities and learning needs with genuine sincerity.

“ How I Strive to Be a SHARP Teacher ”

For instance, I observed that a student had her lessons regularly in a cafe; she then told me that she attended classes after working part-time for a social enterprise. This helped me to discover her interest in social enterprises and encouraged her to write about such organisations in her final essay, which I found to be an extremely original and personal piece of work. In addition, during online teaching, chat boxes allow quieter students to voice their views more freely and actively. Consequently, I constantly adapt and seek to also raise more complex questions, as less outspoken learners show greater willingness to express their thoughts by typing their ideas. Such observation and subsequent adaptation allow me to offer a complete learning experience for all students in the class.

Helpful: Both online and hybrid teaching modes pose tremendous challenges, as teachers must make themselves and their classes helpful in a completely different setting. In the past, I occasionally shared posts related to English on Facebook; however, as some students cannot attend face-to-face classes, I have to further explore other methods to increase my teacher presence and students' exposure to English; for instance, I take advantage of already existing online resources and design methods of class engagement and assessment accordingly with a view to offering more personalised formative feedback despite reduced face-to-face contact with some students. Such a multidimensional scaffolding approach allows students to consolidate their knowledge gradually and helps to ready them for course assessment.



“
How I Strive to
Be a SHARP
Teacher

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Approachable: In face-to-face teaching, teachers can offer immediate feedback directly to students. However, it presents a formidable challenge to give individual verbal comments in an online teaching environment.



In addition to providing the written feedback mentioned above, I emphasise that I am always reachable via various channels such as emails, Facebook messages, and MS Teams chats. Furthermore, during online teaching, I usually divide students into smaller groups in various breakout rooms; while they are working on tasks in groups, I talk to each of them to see if they require any additional help. As students are generally more eager to share their thoughts in smaller groups, I can better understand and address their needs by being reachable.

Reflective: During lessons, even online ones, I pay attention to every minute detail – whether students look confused, whether they are able to answer questions confidently and adequately, whether they burst into laughter when I crack a joke, and whether they can achieve what I ask them to complete at the outset. What is deeply fascinating about teaching is that every student is unique, and so is how they perceive my teaching and their own learning. Over the years, I have learnt to be more self-critical and reflect upon my teaching practices. I am constantly revising my teaching methods thinking about what works, what does not work, and what I can learn from other great teachers. Likewise, I encourage students to evaluate their own performance with fresh eyes. One prime example is the use of online quizzes as part of the formative assessment. The vast array of online materials means that the flipped classroom approach can be adopted more flexibly. Not only do I prepare PDF reading materials, but I also require students to browse websites including YouTube and make notes in advance to prepare themselves for in-class assessments. This encourages them to challenge themselves, develop self-discipline, and become more accountable for their own learning.

Principled: Although I am friendly showing genuine enthusiasm for my students, I maintain high standards. I have two stringent rules that students must adhere to: they must be punctual and they must also avoid the use of electronic devices during face-to-face lessons. For example, in face-to-face classes, I require my students to put their electronic devices aside almost always. When they have questions, instead of looking things up on Google, they must ask me questions directly, which enables me to give instant feedback. Certainly, there are some exceptions; sometimes in the last 10-15 minutes of the lesson, in order to reinforce what they have learnt, I hold interactive Kahoot!, Quizlet, or Quizziz quizzes that have to be completed using their own electronic devices. Most students, if not all, understand that my fundamental principles are to maintain their attention and pique their interest.

In a nutshell, it is my utter conviction that no matter how the world changes, I strive earnestly to be a SHARP teacher utilising my accumulated years of experience in devising effective teaching strategies that are suitable for face-to-face, online, and hybrid classes. Lastly, I would like to take this unique opportunity to thank all my SHARP students – they have taught me how to be a better teacher who treasures every year of additional experience that they kindly provide.



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**How I Strive to
Be a SHARP
Teacher**

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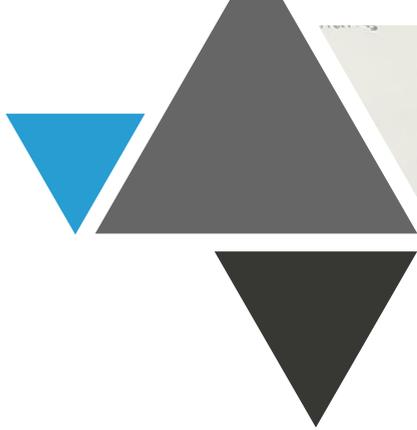
Dr WANG Yamei, Amy

Assistant Professor of Department of Management

Management – being categorized in the business domain – can be misconstrued as a technical and strategic discipline because “hey, it’s business, it’s not personal”. However, at its heart, the field of management involves the study of people, the relationships they craft with others, and the exploration of themselves in their working lives. Therefore, when I consciously pause and take the time to reflect on my own teaching journey, the first thing that comes to mind are the notable people who have inspired me along the way. Undoubtedly, the most central figure in my teaching journey is my father whose influence planted, watered, and grew the seed of teaching in me at a young age.

As an English literature professor, my father used to teach me and my sister (quite literally and figuratively) life lessons using Shakespeare, American poets, classical literature, etc. My sister and I would roll our eyes, bite our tongues, and think, “not again!” every time my father started one of his soliloquies, trying to subtly (or not so subtly!) tell us something. “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child!” he would exclaim when we complained about his strictness towards our studies. He would then describe how King Lear’s daughters drove him to madness with their ingratitude, praise the qualities of an ideal daughter in Cordelia, and remind us to learn from this Shakespearean tragedy. As children, we thought the stories were bewildering but the message was simple: dad was just doing what he thinks is best for us.

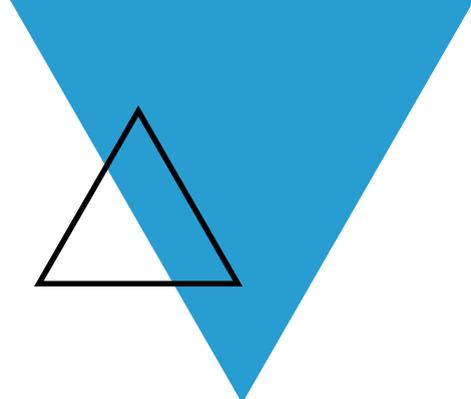
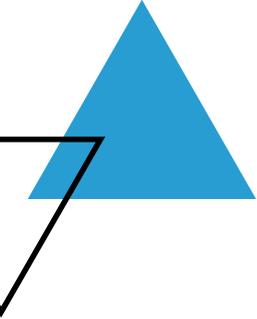
Miles to Go



As I grow older, the memories of my father's "lessons" have become more meaningful, in part because I am finally mature enough (I hope!) to understand the intricacies of what my father was trying to say, and in part because those are treasured moments spent with him. When I contemplate how those moments have influenced my teaching, two main lessons stand out to me.



Before I Sleep



Lesson 1:

“What did I know, what did I know of love’s austere and lonely offices?”

My father once shared the poem “Those Winter Sundays” by the American poet Robert Hayden which describes a narrator reflecting upon his childhood as an adult. The poem, known for its phrase, “What did I know, what did I know of love’s austere and lonely offices?”, describes a man’s realization of the sacrifices his father made in raising him from a young boy to an adult. The poem highlights a child’s naivety in evaluating his father’s actions and it is only later on in life that the child realizes his father’s love for him.

Similarly, only now — as an adult — am I able to fully appreciate and be grateful for how my father raised me. In doing so, I realize that the role of an educator plays a crucial role in influencing the lives of young people, not only at a specific point in time, but also well into their adulthood. John Dewey, a major player in the establishment of the American public school system, declared that “the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life”. When my father was teaching me about Shakespeare, he wasn’t just telling me the play by play of the story; he was guiding my values with its morals and truths and trying to make me a better person.

As a child, there were so many more interesting things to do than to sit through my father’s philosophical stories so it was natural to be impatient at times. However, whether I knew it at the time, I was learning from him. I now recognize that much of my teaching style stems from how he communicated with me.

MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP

For instance, one pedagogical method that I frequently use in my teaching is storytelling. Interestingly, I have come to learn that humans are storytelling organisms that lead “storied” lives; that is, humans are naturally wired to cognitively understand, remember, and tell stories because humans most often remember information in story form. As a teacher of business students who have limited work experience, storytelling has been effective for me in conveying key theoretical terms. Just as my father recounted his favorite stories to me, I have also explained leadership theories by recounting Julius Caesar, illustrated business innovation with the works of Roald Dahl, and incorporated a variety of literature into my examples. Another – and more important – quality that I am grateful to my father for instilling into me is the passion for the art of teaching. Like my father, I very much enjoy interacting with students and deriving meaning from knowledge. I enjoy being able to be part of a students’ academic growth. And I especially cherish the social responsibility of developing the younger generation. Few are as lucky as us who have an occupation that we are passionate about. My father, if you’d like to know, continues to rage about King Lear to his students even though he is well past his retirement age.





Lesson 2: “What I have been trying so hard to tell you all along is simply that my father, without the slightest doubt, was the most marvelous and exciting father any [girl] ever had.” – Roald Dahl, Danny the Champion of the World

The second – and more important – realization that inspires my teaching is the meaningful relationship that I developed with my father. In teaching me, my father also incorporated care, compassion, and warmth which has inspired my own teaching beliefs. Therefore, although my teaching philosophy is continually evolving, the biggest belief that guides my teaching is the importance of forming and maintaining meaningful teacher-student relationships. Scholars universally acknowledge that meaningful relationships between educators and learners can yield significant learning. When I think about the teachers that made the biggest impression in my own life, I remember those who took the time to interact with me in a way that made me feel acknowledged and respected. Indeed, studies have shown that positive feedback about schools usually involved “individuals who care, listen, understand, respect others and are honest, open, and sensitive.” Thus, my approach to developing meaningful relationships with my students is to adopt a person-centered approach with a focus on showing empathy, having positive regard for students, and being genuine. In showing empathy, I have learned many different and interesting stories of students’ lives and I believe my interest in them allows them to feel respected and acknowledged in my class. In showing mutual respect, one of my biggest beliefs is that the classroom is a place of reciprocity in which everyone contributes and learns from each other. I aim to learn from students just as much as they learn from me so that I can better communicate and transfer knowledge more effectively.



MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP

Learning from the students also allows me to learn to better communicate with them on topics that they can relate to (especially as the generation gap increases every year along with my age!). I have found that students particularly enjoy (incredulously) informing me of the current social trends such as popular restaurants, clothing trends, and gossip – all of which can be referenced in our classes. Not only can I preserve my youth (!) by keeping up-to-date with current trends, at the same time, I also find that students are very engaged and interested when I share experiences and knowledge about the “good old days” (i.e., before the internet was available) because they have never experienced it before. Reciprocation and continuous learning from all parties not only bridges the generational gap, but can also facilitate communication and engagement for everyone.

So where does my teaching journey go from here? I certainly look forward to it continuing to evolve and reflect the experiences and relationships I will have in the future. But what is most fitting is that my teaching journey has come full circle: under the conditions of the pandemic, I find myself teaching my father on how to navigate the technological wonders of online classes and providing my own classroom tips. I still have a long way to go before “the student can surpass the master”, but I am inspired to continue to pave my path for teaching, just as my father has done. I conclude with some lines from one of my favorite poems by Robert Frost depicting a man’s incomplete journey that has yet to be traveled before taking a rest:

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Ms WOO Yan Yin, Rosalie

Senior Lecturer of Department of Economics and Finance

It is my great honour to be one of the recipients of HSUHK Teaching Excellence Awards 2019/20, and I take great pleasure in sharing my teaching story. Having shared my teaching philosophy in the teaching statement, my practices of online teaching, and some tips of teaching abstract concepts in two of the seminars organized by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), I am going to share my journey of being a teacher here.

According to Confucius, "When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers" (三人行, 必有我師焉). It means that there is always something to learn from anybody you encounter. During my journey as a teacher, my students and I learn from each other and grow together.

The Outset

The very first day of my teaching journey started at a Form 4 Economics class in a young secondary school. Students were generally weak academically, especially their abilities to use English, handle numbers, and think logically. Like a small child mimicking adults' behaviour, with no teaching experience at all, I adopted the teaching models used by my teachers. They were the only role models whom I had observed and could imitate.



I taught with the notes provided by a senior teacher, explained every concept, and completed the blanks in the notes with students. After the first lesson, students went to the senior teacher and complained that they could not understand what I had been talking about in the class, not even a single word! That was my first lesson to “learn”.

The terms that were trivial to me conceptually might be extraordinarily difficult ones to the students. I even could not understand why they could not comprehend the concept. My first lesson was to learn how to put myself into their shoes. Understanding their abilities, their learning needs and difficulties, I started to adjust my ways of teaching, my pace, and more importantly, adjust my expectations. I shall not expect that all students perform equally. Every student has his/her strengths and weaknesses, and his/her unique way of learning.



Being assigned as the teacher-in-charge for the school's Hong Kong Road Safety Patrol was another challenge. I had never been a member in any uniform groups during my primary or secondary school studies. I had to attend the training courses of foot drill together with the student members. Even though foot drilling was not one of my favourite parts in this extracurricular activity, I needed to encourage the students to practice in order to perform in some special events and also participate in foot drill competitions!

However, laughing, sweating, and suffering together had built a close relationship between students and me over time. Learning how to communicate with teenagers, how to get along with them, and how to understand their thoughts is fun and fruitful. Growing with students through extracurricular activities is a fabulous experience which cannot be achieved through classroom lessons.

Two students remained etched in my memory. I was the class teacher of a Form 1 class. A boy, Jay, in my class, who was outstanding and lovely, changed to be very quiet after a two-day absence from class. Later, he became very naughty, rebellious, and attention seeking. Having talked to Jay's mother, I found out that his father had just passed away from a car accident. That has put great pressure on Jay emotionally. The school immediately formed a team to follow the case and support the family. I was too upset that I could not even talk to Jay.





Another girl in my class, Lam-Lam, was 3 years older than her classmates. Apparently, she was a bit more mature than her classmates and so she found difficulties in getting along with them. Lam-Lam was not emotionally stable in the class. One day I needed to check parents' signatures on the student handbook but Lam-Lam did not get hers. I asked if she forgot or if her parents were too busy. She replied that she did not know where her parents were or how to find them. I was not sensitive enough at that moment, and I kept asking her about her parents in the class that made her very embarrassed.

From the school's counselling department, I learned later that Lam-Lam was raised in the Child Care Home of Mother's Choice because her parents both were under 18 when she was born. When she reached the age of 14, she had to leave the Child Care Home, but both of her parents did not want to take the responsibility of taking care of her. She was like a ball being kicked back and forth between her parents. That made Lam-Lam emotionally unstable and angry, and she cried easily in class.

Apart from academic knowledge and teaching skills, there were a lot for me to learn to be a good teacher. Good teachers show empathy, treat each student as an individual, and take the time to know the students both inside and outside of the school setting. It is essential for a teacher to be observant, attentive, empathetic, and having a positive attitude. Not only can we connect with students by being empathetic and understanding, this connection can also directly impact their learning in the classroom too.



From HSSC to HSMC to HSUHK

After 5 years of teaching in secondary schools and obtaining the Postgraduate Diploma in Education and Professional Diploma in Professional Accountancy, I would like to have a change in my career path. Knowing that Hang Seng School of Commerce (HSSC) was going to transform itself into a private university, I seized the opportunity to be part of this legend.

I was teaching A-level Economics in the first 3.5 years in HSSC. The students were very different from those I taught in the previous schools. Students joining HSSC as six formers were the top 10%, maybe 5%, from all secondary schools in Hong Kong. They were academically excellent, engaging, ambitious, and determined. They strived for the best results in the AL examinations in order to enter their dream universities, undertaking their dream disciplines.

No matter how hard I had prepared for the lesson, it could never satisfy these AL students. They wanted to understand every single concept thoroughly. They thought outside the box and always asked challenging questions. They also had a very high expectation of their teachers. Teaching these demanding students was stressful, but it sharpened my teaching techniques and elaboration skills. Answering their questions helped me explore the theories or concepts even more widely and deeply. This is mutual growing in teaching and learning.

Good teachers are strong communicators. Effective communication skills are essential in teaching. By communicating with students at the beginning of the year about how I could help them achieve their goals and listening to their needs, students had more confidence in their teacher. That also facilitated teaching and learning in the classroom.

MUTUAL GROWING



While HSSC was migrating to Hang Seng Management College (HSMC) and Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK), it was another new change for my teaching. I encountered another kind of students – undergraduate students, who were very different from secondary students in terms of learning abilities, attitude, motivation, and expectations.

Engaging with students became one of the focuses in my teaching. Being able to engage with students with humour and creativity, and to bring students' learning into the real world become important parts in effective teaching. It is not about sitting back and just lecturing (this was what I felt about my lecturers when I was an undergraduate student), it is about engaging in the work. When students feel my passion and the lectures sound useful to them, they are more engaged in learning.

New Era

Adaptability is one of the key skills needed to be a teacher. Effective teachers need to be able to work in a constantly evolving environment and adjust their teaching methods based on the background of their students, changing curriculum, practices, and requirements. During the pandemic, most of the teaching and learning activities were moved online. It was an unprecedented change in education, which brought pressures on both teachers and students. Online / mixed mode teaching and learning may become the new normal in the future.

Teachers are life-long learners. Learning how to adapt and adjust has become one of the most useful skills in my teaching career. No one is born to be an excellent football player or a fabulous chef. I have been growing in failures and learning from mistakes. While every single change is a challenge, it also provides an opportunity for me to grow and learn. My teaching story has not come to an end yet; I look forward to the growth the next chapter brings me.



**MUTUAL
GROWING**

Ms WONG Mei Ki, Maggie

Senior Lecturer of Department of Social Science

When I was in primary school, I had dreamed of being a teacher when I grew up. Seeing the teacher talking in front of the blackboard while all the little kids in the classroom submitted their attention, I thought being a teacher was so amazing as everything was under his/her control. They made orders and punished pupils who disobeyed. They were adored by pupils that they received Christmas cards.



When I was in secondary school, I still wished to become a teacher one day. I was no longer naïve to be overwhelmed by the authority a teacher possesses, but inspired by the impact some teachers exerted on that shaped my idea of the purpose of life and my self-identity. I started to understand that great teachers can make an enduring impact on one's life and that makes the career very meaningful.



Teaching with Life Impacts



A famous quote from Albert Einstein goes like this: "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt from school." When I am determined to make a career in education, I always remind myself of this quote. I had a life lesson of this quote from two teachers, Ms Poon and Ms Ng. I would like to dedicate this article as my deepest heartfelt gratitude to them for their impactful teaching.

Before I met Ms Poon, I used to be one of very typical Hong Kong students who studied solely for the purpose of exams and future career prospects. Ms Poon was the first teacher who ignited my imagination to learning. I remembered there were so much fun and vigorous debates on social issues in her class. Her response to my idea was like a breeze to my captivated mind. I started to crave for knowledge. The most soul-fulfilling moment during my university was the time I spent in the library doing reading alone. Ms Poon changed me to an active learner and it's a lifelong reward for me.

As inspired by my teacher Ms Poon, I am determined to create some lasting effect of my teaching on my students as she did to me. My classes always start with a question to spark students' curiosity. For example, in the lecture of social class and social mobility, there was the question "is it true that education eliminates class inequalities?" and "is it unfair to fathers when paternity leave is generally a lot

shorter than mothers' maternity leave?" in the class of gender. Many students may think yes at the beginning, but then they would become suspicious when it is too easy to say yes. With the curiosity to think otherwise, they will join me in the lecture to explore the possible answers.



In the era of "knowledge at your fingertips", students are no longer required to memorize knowledge. But I still insist on making my class memorable by experiences. In the lecture of social class, students were asked to take a piece of scrap paper and make it into something that can be thrown to the bin right in front of the white board. One would be given 10 grade points if the target was hit. The only constraint was that student had to stay in his/her original seat to do the throw. The classroom was soon filled with screams of complaints from students in the last few rows yelling, "that's totally unfair to me." Students in the first rows were silently happy. As expected, student in the first row hit the target with least effort. After the game, I explained the game as a metaphor to understand the social class of the family we are born to. Students were invited to re-design the game if it's to promote social equality.

In the past two years, I tried to make learning memorable to students through service-learning. In a book reading club on Saturday mornings, HSU students would play ice-breaking games, read Chinese picture books, and visited the neighborhood with the Pakistani pupils.

TEACHING WITH LIFE IMPACTS

Through the personal and authentic interaction, the big brothers and sisters would then reflect on their perception of this minority group who were invisible to them before. Their ethnic sensitivity would be sharpened when they understand more about the Pakistani's way of life. For example, my student was surprised that a Pakistani girl said she had never tasted egg tarts because it's not Halal food. Another primary 6 girl said she would be so worried to go to mainstream local secondary school as her Chinese language was so bad. From such sharing my students would learn about the obstacles the ethnic group faced to socially integrate into the mainstream society. I believe this first-hand personal experience would be more powerful and effective to construct students' understanding and values on issues related to race and ethnicity than my lecturing in class.

Service-learning is beneficial to not only my students but also the social groups in the community who are in need. The Pakistani pupils would have a chance to interact with Chinese people, other than their teachers in school, using Chinese. When they were brought to the HSU campus for a day trip organized by my students, they would be inspired of the idea of studying in a university in the future.

When my students shared that they were pleased to see the impact of their work on others' life, I believe that they would then become a socializing agent in their families and among their friends to promote social inclusion.

When I was notified of the result of the teaching excellence award, I shared to Ms Ng the next minute that I wrote "You should be proud of me!". Ms Ng was a very special teacher to me as I never attended her class in classroom. Our encounter began in her messy office where she inspired hope to me as a life coach. She was truthful to share her experiences, good or bad, proud or stupid. From her mentorship I am impressed by the importance of self-disclosure to get connected with students.

TEACHING WITH LIFE IMPACTS

When students know me as a person who eats and sleeps, makes mistakes and stumbles in life like everybody does, they would be more willing to open up themselves to me.

My interaction with students extends outside classrooms since my service as Assistant Warden in the Old Hall in 2015 and Associate Master in S H Ho Wellness College in 2018. On campus residence, it is a home away from home for our students. In RC, as one member in this big family, I cook, do voluntary services, and run with the students. In these encounters, we talk about life, about love, about travelling, about society. As days go by, I get to know the students as persons with strengths and weaknesses. The friendships that last after graduation is the best reward for me as a teacher.



CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

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