Reflecting on GE Implementation since 2012

WONG Wing Hung (王永雄)
Office of University General Education, CUHK
GE curriculum  (Before the 334 reform)

**GE Programme at CUHK**
- 15 units

**College GE**
- 6 units

**University GE**
- 9 units

*Graduation requirement*
- 99 units

Distribution requirement: limited common learning experience.

**4 Areas**
(at least 1 course from each area)
- A Chinese Cultural Heritage
- B Nature, Science and Technology
- C Society and Culture
- D Self and Humanity
2012

• 3-3-4 education reform.
• Additional 6 units for UGE.
  – CUHK rejected the easy option: students would take more courses from the 4 areas.
  – CUHK took on a challenge.
A core programme

• to add something on top of the distribution requirement (4-Area).
• to provide a platform for common learning experience.
  – to discuss big questions.
  – to read and write more.
GE curriculum (since 2012)

**GE Programme at CUHK**
- 21 units

- **College GE**
  - 6 units

- **University GE**
  - 15 units

* Graduation requirement
  - 123 units

**General Education Foundation (GEF) Programme**
- 6 units

**In Dialogue with Humanity (與人文對話)**
- 4 Areas
  - A Chinese Cultural Heritage
  - B Nature, Science and Technology
  - C Society and Culture
  - D Self and Humanity

**In Dialogue with Nature (與自然對話)**
- 9 units
Reading intensive

• In Dialogue with Humanity:

• In Dialogue with Nature:
  – Republic/The Beginnings of Western Science/Principia/On the Origin of Species/DNA/Silent Spring/Science and Method/In Search of Memory/The Shorter Science and Civilisation in China/“Why the Scientific Revolution Did Not Take Place in China—or Didn’t it?“/Brush Talks from Dream Brook/The Mathematical Universe/Elements
GEF Programme

- Reading/writing/big questions
- Year 1 **Term 2** / Year 2 Term 1
- 1-hour lecture (on the text)
- 2-hour seminar (25 students)
- ~3800 students / semester
- > 150 groups (27 GEF’s own teachers)
Implementation Plan

• 2009-2012/13 Fall: Piloting and soft launch
  – 6 old teachers.
  – Piloting: as elective courses.
  – Soft launch: for all ~500/semester 4-year students (EAS, mainland, etc).

• Since 2012/13 **Spring**: Full launch
  – Compulsory for all ~3800 students.
  – 6 old teachers + **21 new teachers**.
Big challenge
How to build up a team?

• 21(!!!!) new teachers.
• From different expertise:
  – education, literature, philosophy, engineering, physics, biology, etc.
• Syllabus: NOT designed by them.
• Many things were imposed on them.
  – assessment scheme, pedagogy, etc.
Key: Teachers’ ownership

Waiter-teacher: present the food (PowerPoint reader).
Chef-teacher: “own” the food.
Teachers’ ownership

• A teacher who owns the programme can change our students.
• Students can feel.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If we want our students [...]</th>
<th>we GEF teachers must be</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to become a learning community</td>
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<tr>
<td>to be life-long learners</td>
<td>life-long learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>to create ideas</strong></td>
<td><strong>able to create ideas.</strong></td>
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*Our vision*

*take give*
1. A learning community

- 2012/13 Fall:
  - observed classes taught by old teachers (for students of the old curriculum).
  - participated in college GE to gain experience in teaching small groups.

- 6 small teacher groups:
  - 1 old teacher (mentor) + 3-4 new teachers.
  - weekly meetings (let new teachers challenge).

- Centrally prepared materials: had one term to modify.
1. A learning community (cont’d)

• 2012/13 Spring:
  – everyone began to teach 6 groups.
  – weekly meetings for experience sharing (success and failure) and reflection.

• Since the first summer:
  – annual retreat.
2. Life-long learners

- GE lunch seminars:
  - “Using Cultural Differences to Teach Critical Thinking in General Education”
  - “Teaching Critical Thinking in General Education on Science”

- Invited speakers: on texts, pedagogy, grading.
1 June 2013: Prof. Paul Hanstedt, Professor, English Department, Roanoke College, USA
3. Creation of ideas

- Committees formed by teachers (since summer 2013)
  - Teacher Development committee
  - Student Enrichment committee
  - Learning Support Committee

- Achievements
  - student activities / teacher activities
  - teaching development projects
  - presentations in international conferences
3. Creation of ideas (cont’d)

• In-house conference: teachers shared their experience, reflection, new teaching methods, etc.
• Continued in other summer/winter breaks.
Now

• A strong team of owners.
• High reputation from students.
• They are able to train new teachers.
• Many new ideas:
  – student activities.
  – teacher activities.
  – teaching development projects.
Conclusion

- Trust junior teachers, let them contribute.
- Never say: They cannot do it without me.