

“All are Educable”

Prof. Tam Man Kwan
School Supervisor

Instructing All and Rejecting None

In the age of feudalism, education is the privilege for the nobles. As a result, Confucius proposed the idea of “instructing all and rejecting none”. His act contributed a lot to the prevalence of education, the discovery of hidden talents, the quality and peace of society as well as the Chinese culture and civilization. Nowadays, as we all know, education has already become a key element for the development of politics, economics, and society. Promoting education has become an indispensable policy of every country in the world.

Looking back to the social development of Hong Kong, the prevalence of education does not only help one to raise his social status, but also cultivate talents and build up the international network for Hong Kong. The above makes Hong Kong an open and cosmopolitan city. Regrettably, because of the influence of commercialization, the achievements of education career are also being judged by laws of managements, thereby making the competition among education industry a vicious one. More to add, on account of the decreasing number of students, the sustainability of schools and the stability of the jobs of teachers are threatened.

It is a pity that the idea of “instructing all and rejecting none” is being replaced by “providing education for the talented only”. Since 2006, the majority of primary schools have become a full-day one while secondary schools have implemented the 334 scheme. In 2008, the government implemented twelve-year free education, providing every student with a chance to complete twelve years of primary and secondary schooling. When recruiting Primary 1 or Secondary 1 students, all schools should have moral commitment – providing effective education to all the admitted ones. At the beginning of the academic reform, education workers need to emphasize their vision and mission in order to fulfill society’s expectation on education.

All Are Educable Our mission, “All are Educable,” consists of several concepts. First, it points out that everybody can have the right to receive education. Everybody, disregard of his/her family background, social and economic positions, or even his/her personal qualities, should not be deprived of his/ her chance of receiving education. The right to receive education should be protected by society. Considering from the perspective of social institutions, most

countries have a clear policy or even legal codes to regulate our right of receiving education nowadays. In practice, as an educator, we should protect this right devotedly. Some frontline educators offer supplementary lessons to students absent from school because of sickness in order to protect their education opportunities. However, teachers rarely provide supplementary lessons to students who lose their learning hours as a result of, for example, lateness. What is more, some teachers go as far as asking poorly-performed students to leave the classroom, depriving the learning opportunities of the students. As seen from the above examples, some frontline educators fail to comply with their professional mission of protecting the learning opportunities of students. Therefore, an important issue for educators to reflect is how to comprehensively look after and safeguard the learning opportunities of the students in practice.

Besides, “all are educable” is not merely about providing students with learning opportunities. More importantly, it is our belief that every child has his/ her own inborn potentials. They can all be a useful person sooner or later. As for what “useful” actually refers to, we will go into details below. The critical question is whether we have provided enough opportunities to stimulate the students to develop their potentials. In the past, many people try to equate potentials with academic performance, or even exam results. They have forgotten the implication of diversified talent of an old Chinese saying, “people of whatever career can excel.” The Multiple Intelligences Theory[1] by Harvard scholar Howard Gardner is the theoretical ground for such belief. He points out that the human potentials are diversified. Nobody is born to be a loser. As long as we have offered the right education and nurture to a child, every child can be a useful person.

Third, to put “all are educable” into practice, educators should have a heart comparably to parents’. No parents dislike their children. No parents would discriminate their children based on talent. Parents would take care of their children devotedly, without any hesitation. Parents give love and care unconditionally to their children and would never give up on them under whatever circumstances. To parents, children are like an unpolished diamond. They firmly believe that, after appropriate education, their children will be able to shine in their life. Parents would undoubtedly give hope on the future of their children, place high expectations on them and support them to pursue their dreams with all their efforts. The expectations that parents placed on their children cause great pressure to the latter. However, reasonable expectations can motivate children to strive for excellence. In a similar vein, reasonable expectations from teachers together with appropriate teaching strategies can certainly drive students to develop their abilities and maximize the gain from learning.

This view point is not just an ideal concept. Rather, it is supported by research. Scholars conducted an experiment by randomly selecting a bunch of students and dividing them into 2 groups. The scholars told teachers that the 2 groups of students had different abilities, and

hence teachers had different expectations on the students. The result of the experiment shows that “good” students perform better. However, the truth is when teachers have higher expectations on students, the former would provide more learning opportunities and give more support and responses to students, which helps them to develop a sense of belonging to their schools, raise their self-image, consolidate their momentum to work harder, and strengthen their learning motivations and interests. Under this circumstance, students certainly perform better academically[2] . This “self-fulfilling prophecy” is not merely a conception of Greek mythology, but also actual happenings at school every day. Besides, some researchers conducted research on students with grass-root and middle class backgrounds respectively. The scholars found out that teachers usually expect students from grass-root background develop a career corresponding to their background upon graduation. Thus, teachers adjust their expectations accordingly and adopt a traditional method emphasizing execution of order and obedience to institutions when they teach this group of students. On the contrary, teachers adopt a largely different way to teach middle-class students. As teachers expect these students to work in management level, they usually deploy a more liberal teaching method which stresses on high-level learning skills and aims, such as thinking and analysis. These 2 groups of students show great difference in their learning achievements. Obviously, as Bernard Shaw emphasized in *Pygmalion*, it is how people look at the flower selling girl that matters instead of the way she behaves. In a nutshell, the difference is due to different expectation that teachers place on different students. Unsurprisingly, some scholars criticize that education actually copies the existing class stratification of our society.

In the previous paragraph, we have talked about teachers’ expectations on students which would lead to varying achievements of the latter. Actually, “care” alone is enough to change people’s behavior. In the 1920s, a western electrical appliance company carried out an experiment. It divided workers into 2 groups, “the experiment group” and “the control group.” The scholars implemented a series of measures in “the experiment group” such as different working times and changing working environment with varying light strength. The experiment aimed to explore how different measures influence the productivity of workers. In “the control group”, working time and procedures remained the same so that it would provide an easy comparison of the 2 groups’ productivity. The researchers found out that “the experiment group” showed improvement in their productivity. But what is more striking is that a similar improvement was found in “the control group” as well. After detailed analysis, the researchers reached a conclusion: “the control group” showed improvement mainly because they knew that they were “cared” by the management during the experiment period.

As the above experiment demonstrates, a lack of “care” often makes the students fail to push themselves for improvement. Many students who go astray during their adolescence are usually because their parents do not have a right expectation on them. This expectation seriously strays from the core abilities of their children. In some cases, even though some

parents have right expectations on their children, the former fails to provide appropriate, positive and active support which weakens the motivation to improve of their children. Under these circumstances, if students encounter any setbacks, they will easily deviate from the normal path. This is precisely the issue which teachers and parents should exchange ideas about in order to ensure students to lead a healthy life and enjoy their learning. Therefore, as frontline educators, we must evaluate our students, provide suitable teaching materials, set appropriate progress requirements, and resort to the right teaching methods so as to achieve “low starting point, yet fast progress.”

All can be useful in life

What is the definition for being useful in life?

Consumerism is congested in the modern society. Many people equate the amount of money one earns to the level of success one gets, they see striving for wealth as their life-long target. Nevertheless, both academic research and local knowledge reveal that the degree of happiness is not directly proportional to the amount of income one gets once such income exceeds the basic needs for living. Indeed, blindly striving for wealth would easily lead to the ending of concentrating on details yet forgetting the main purpose of life. According to the report of Fortune, only 13% of people who were chosen as the top 400 rich and powerful people in 1982 still remained in the list in 2005. It can be seen that wealth only lasts for a short period of time. Quite a lot of rich people from different parts of the world, such as Warren Buffet and Bill Gates, donate their money for public welfare. Their actions show us that donating some money for the needy would bring transfinite joy back. Therefore, people should confront the topic of money by thinking and mastering the methods of financial management, instead of interminably striving for more money.

Lots of examples show that historical people have become famous and memorable for ages mainly because they have done something beneficial to the general public, but not due to their pursuit of reputation and authority. In daily life, it is not difficult to discover that people who strive hard for fame and authority would in the end understand that both are not only hasty and casual, but also like two sharp-bladed knife; when profit is being put above conscience and without proper handling, authority would bring about corruption, hurting oneself as well as the others, and turning to be the origin of worry instead of joy.

Therefore, “being useful” is not only restricted to fame, profit or authority in this speech. The criteria of being useful as advocated by the ancients are (Zuo Zhuan. Duke Xiang 24th year) – “le de”, “le gong” and “le yan”, have high reference value for parents and teachers.

“le de”

The concept of "le de" is prevalent. To put it simple, “integrity, diligence and self-respect” are the prominent elements of being “le de”. Integrity refers to sincerity and credibility. While sincerity is the fundamental of respect, it can make our “mind” upright. A “rightness mind” will enable us to act honorably, to disseminate affinity and assimilate with different people, and to win the respect of others. All men are equal, as if all things do matter, thus, we should treat everything in a respectful manner. In Buddhism, there is saying that the greatest wisdom is hidden in all beings. We can always learn from people around us, regardless of their age, sex and level of success. In post-modern society, the chaos theory also pointed out that matter which appears to be trivial may impact the overall situation.

This resembles the philosophy of Total Quality Management. From the management point of view, in order to achieve the best result, every single item should be properly arranged and taken care of. A number of recently inflicted global disasters are the results of people overlooking some trivial key factors. The 911 incident in the United States in 2001 is the most well-known one. Take Hong Kong’s SARS outbreak in 2003 as an example, the disease spread from Hong Kong to the rest of the world, including Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan and Canada. It caused nearly 300 deaths and more than a thousand infected cases in Hong Kong. Countless patients suffered from the squeal. Yet, the source of the outbreak is one single mainland patient.

“Trust” refers to credibility and commitment. Hence, “Integrity” consists of three components – “faith, words and behavior”. When these components link together, a long-term, robust, reliable and predictable model will be set in the social behavioral network, resulting in valuable credibility and a wide range of support. Viewing from the economic side, a more utilitarian point of view, a mutual-trust relationship can reduce transaction costs and enhance cost-effectiveness.

“Diligence” is the attitude towards work. “To make up for lack of natural talent by hard work” is a traditional Chinese wisdom. It emphasizes that congenital deficiencies can be complemented by ones’ efforts and hard work. A Western saying “Practice Makes Perfect” also carries the same meaning. This positive attitude guides millions of people to success. Guo Jing, a character from Jin Yong's novels, is the best portrayal of it. In reality, we can easily find that hard work is an essential element in a lot of success stories.

"Self-respect" is to define ones’ own position in the community. In searching this position, many people incorrectly put fame and fortune as the ultimate goal in life. However, this short-sighted approach will only make people fall unconsciously into the vortex of pain and can not

extricate themselves. In fact, everyone in the world is equal, whether you lead a happy life or not depends on your inner realm of peace. As long as we can keep a child's innocence, we can always have a clear conscience, our heart will not be unobstructed, we can be carefree and do things according to our wills.

Modern society emphasizes individual rights, but people are animals that live in groups. They cannot depart from society to live alone. It is human's group living nature which makes people easily recover from sadness after receiving others' support. At the same time, people would be even happier after they share their joy, success and knowledge with others. Indeed, authority, wealth and reputation would only raise yet not diminish even if you share with others. According to Economics, self concern of a person would lead to the concern of shared benefits in society, but these kinds of benefits are not related to human nature. For the world's richest man, Bill Gates, he bases on the principle of self concern to lead and manage his business on information technology, optimizing the company efficiency and the product quality so as to win consumers' support in the market. Nevertheless, he never hesitates to donate large amount of his money to help the needy. Thus, if we look at the various gains and losses in life from the perspective of human nature and share more of our gains with others, social trust between each other would be greatly enhanced. This would definitely give a positive effect in constructing the social capital. As a result, it is very important for us to educate students' concern of sharing at school.

How could we formulate the duties of the teachers so as to foster students to attain the mission of being “le de”? To educate students with good morality, teaching staff should make use of multi-disciplinary, lively and social strategies and grasp every opportunity to teach. It allows students to learn from concrete experiences and understand the true meanings behind each moral lesson. Ultimately, practice is far more important than percept. It is true that most students do not have as much experience as their teachers; however, their perspicacity of sincerity towards other people is not weak at all. If teachers can insist on sticking to their eager devotion on teaching, students would be influenced one day. Moreover, teachers' words and deeds would be students' behavioral model.

In addition, teachers need to nurture students' intrapersonal intelligence. Students need to learn to detach themselves and to develop a habit of self-reflection so as to ensure that words and deeds will not deviate from the right track. With the advancement in science and technology, information is expanding at an alarming rate. Each piece of information carries both positive and negative sides, but the media may not report these messages in an entirely comprehensive way, more often challenging the values and beliefs of the general public. Therefore, when such incidents arise, those are opportunities for us to reflect on in order to further strengthen our moral beliefs, and learn to insist on the rightness. But in real life, the biggest obstacle in effective reflection is often our own self. Our experience, be it success or

failure; together with our knowledge, are burden or even blind spot in the course of reflection. As a result, when confronted with major issues, we can start from zero and think in a lateral and reverse way so as to explore an issue more thoroughly and strengthen our own stringent moral convictions.

“le gong”

In the context of society, “le gong” can be explained as matters relating to the defense of homeland; while in the personal context, it may denote ones’ achievement. In our society, there are different kinds of jobs and they are all interrelated. All jobs are equally important to the economic system, if error or breakdown occurs in any part, the overall system will be damaged to a certain extent. Hence, in order to maximize the interest of society, everyone should be dedicated to his job. Heroic statue cannot stand without the foundation underneath, thus, the “gong” (deeds) of the statue and the foundation are the same. From the perspective of Total Quality Management, the success of an organization relies on the dedication and cooperation of its members, whilst the strength of a country relies on the effort of its citizens. You will not be surprised by Japan’s economic achievement if you see how rigorous the salespersons in Japanese department stores work. Every member is equally important to the organization. Therefore, as long as the students can perform their required roles in society, complete their tasks and fulfilled their responsibilities, they can be regarded as “le gong”.

The simple interpretation of “le gong” is to get things done and attain the goals. Under normal circumstances, things are done according to some standard procedures, such as defining the matters, formulating strategies, deciding measures, implementation of tasks and consequently completion. The first step is to figure out what is to be done. As everything has its subjectivity and objectivity, if everyone is able to perceive the objectivity of the matter and to establish a common communication platform, things will get simpler and are easier to be accomplished. However, the grow-up experience, thinking perspective and values of an individual can affect his judgments, making him blind to certain aspects of the event. As a result, one ought to be highly objective when understanding different issues.

The second step is to formulate strategies. People usually start from their past experience; however, in this ever-changing information era, it may not be an effective way to simply adapt all the past experience to the current situation. Instead, past experience must be revised and updated to cater to needs of the new people and environment. Try to start from the simplest when formulating strategies, this is the idea behind the “tipping point”[3] or the one of the Chinese Taiji styles (to maximize the outcome with the minimum effort). In fact, many simple strategies can yield satisfactory outcomes. On the other hand, complex strategies often involve much time and efforts in explanation, and may easily lead to errors in implementation.

Therefore, creativity must be emphasized in formulating strategies and measures. The underlying meaning of creativity is to respect the tradition instead of following it blindly. A lateral and reserves way of thinking should be adopted so as to maximize the outcome and generate the greatest cost-effectiveness.

Before choosing an appropriate measure, we should first prioritize different items and evaluate the cost-effectiveness. The overall effectiveness of implementation depends on the level of familiarity of the tasks, as well as the degree of cooperation among different members. Excellent cooperation relies on the members' assimilation, tolerance and support. Without trust, even a team of professionals may not be able to complete their mission. A low level of trust will only raises the transaction costs. The exercise of power is another common issue arising from collaboration. In a team, different roles are given different powers in order to promote collaboration and enhance effectiveness. When exercising power, the users' ability and sincerity will affect the overall outcome. A capable and sincere man can create positive effect to the team whilst an authoritative and egoistic man tends to hinder the effectiveness of collaboration.

When the task is completed, review and evaluation are essential for reflection. The experience accumulated will become a unique knowledge of the individuals and institutions.

Prof. Shi Tanbo, a scholar in Yale University stated that the standard tests in school can only reflect the inert intelligence of students, not their actual ability. [4] Prof. Shi noted the correlation coefficient of people's work performance and their cognitive ability is very low, i.e., 0.2 (page 224). His argument indicates the insufficiency of the examination-oriented education system – it merely produces students with good academic results, but not develops their ability to work.

To ensure that students can master the basics of “le gong”, the school management needs to plan a full range of learning activities, deliberately creating opportunities for all students to participate in various functions. Through interacting with others, students can learn organization, communication and collaboration skills, they can further enhance their ability and confidence, and better prepare themselves for the future. Teachers can analyze and review students' performance, and help them to acquire knowledge in a systematic way. At the same time, teachers should also highlight the importance of having good health and concentration. It is essential for us to keep a healthy lifestyle as one cannot perform well with poor health. Moreover, individuals who cannot concentrate may not be able to accomplish individual tasks, not to mention achievements in career.

“le yan”

The original meaning of “le yan” refers to the publication of books so as to expound ones’ unique doctrine, and to pass down the wisdom from generations to generations. With the advancement in information technology, there are now plenty of ways to spread knowledge and wisdom, such as magazines, journals, Internet, VCDs or DVDs. Therefore, it is not difficult to publish books to express one’s thought nowadays. Yet, to formulate unique and groundbreaking arguments which can be passed down the ages is not easy. The actual meaning of “le yan” is to master the presentation and writing skills, to be able to speak one’s mind, and to convey one’s feelings and observations in a vivid and comprehensible way, while the arguments do not need to be groundbreaking.

Comprehensive training in speaking, writing and listening is necessary to attain “le yan”. This training not only lay the foundation for continuous education, but a clear and concise writing style is also the pre-requisite for “le yan”, thus highlighting the importance of developing students’ interest in reading.

In addition, analytical skill is equally important. We are flooded with information in this information age. In every piece of information, the author or editor’s value is hidden behind words. Therefore, students must receive appropriate training to develop their critical thinking skills and enhance their observation, so that they are able to analyze and filter information from different perspectives and make judgments. By integrating and organizing information, their knowledge can be enriched.

Training on analytical skills can help to strengthen the organization skill of students. It is a challenge to ones’ organization skill every time he tries to convey his ideas, be it orally, literally or graphically. When delivering complicated messages such as people, time, place and events, etc., the author must consider his own will and the audiences’ response at the same time, and organize the message in a way that would generate the maximum impact and deepest penetration. Therefore, trainings on students’ logical and critical skill are essential.

Students’ interest in reading should be developed at an early age to make it long-lasting. Yet, it is not easy to train their critical thinking. Nowadays, with the strong media influence, many people are influenced either by the mainstream ideas or the power groups. Hence, it poses a great challenge for the educators to teach students how to stay aside from the manacles and to think independently. Some commentators point out that a good teacher is the one who would emphasize to his students that they should have a critical and suspicious attitude in studying. Therefore, the basic strategy is to start from the educators themselves. They should adapt an open attitude in the course of education, encourage students to analyze from different

perspective, urge them to figure out “why is it” instead of simply understanding “what is it”. Although it takes more time and efforts in search for ideology, and the outcomes may not be as fast and obvious as the traditional way of education. From a sophisticated point of view, the knowledge acquired by students will be more long lasting.

In order to strengthen the organization skill of students, teachers need to allocate time and space to create more interactive opportunities for students, and let them explore the relationships among people, time, place and events, including the relations of before and after, cause and effect, primary and auxiliary, etc. These activities need to be conducted on a regular basis to attain a long term effect.

For any article or speech, if it is not spoken from the author’s heart, it will be less convincing. Hence, the ultimate goal for education is to inspire students to understand themselves and be true to themselves. In this post-modern society where individualism is valued, if students are able to explore their own way, they can still attain the goal “le yan” although the society is flooded with information.

“le de, le gong, le yan” and Whole Person Development:

The targets of “le de”, “le gong” and “le yan” mentioned above are seemingly simple and easy, yet practically they are not. It is because in this era of information explosion, many virtues and moral principles are over-polished and thus confuse and perplex people, leading us to concentrate on the details but overlook the main objective. Now it is the time to drop all affectation and return to original simplicity, so as to be easy for people to refer to.

The above discussion on “le de, le gong and le yan” has its order, so is the case for the elements of being a useful person. "le de" is the basic element for being a useful person. It is like the main pillar in a building as it makes sure an individual can stand up right in the community. Anyone who lacks sincerity in words and deeds is like a tall building with short pillars. It will be difficult for him/ her to get a long lasting achievement no matter "le gong" or "le yan". Moreover, the use of language, analytical skills, communication skill, critical thinking and innovative thinking[5] etc. are required for one to "le gong" and "le yan". It is not necessary to categorize these elements rigidly. In other words, "le de”, “le gong” and “le yan” is the framework for whole person development, involving the nurture of mankind moral and accomplishment. This idea is in common with the visionary whole person development concept of the modern education thinking.

In fact, judging from the lifecycle of human beings, the ten to twenty years of school education merely takes up a small part of our life. In this era when information is rapidly updated, the

knowledge a person acquires in his/ her early stage of life is definitely not enough to straighten out all the matters in the later stage. In contrast with the moral basic, the way of learning and thinking of a student can be long lasting. The most important task for educators is to nurture teenagers' moral character. It is also important to nurture their generic skills so that they can solve any problems which may come up in the future. Having the ability to learn continuously in the sea of knowledge and to make good use of the skills and tools in hands, they will be able to unleash their potentials and become useful persons in the future.

In an examination-oriented environment, educators are undoubtedly having all kinds of pressure. But if we think from the perspective of "le de, le gong, le yan", getting high marks in examinations means the student have strong memory, a clear mind, good presentation skills and good time management. These elements are required for one to "le de, le yan". When the educators are nurturing students' skills necessary for "le de, le yan", they also improve the students' ability in sitting for examinations and help them to get good results in public examinations. This will in turn assist them in meeting their expectations and their parents' expectations on them. If teachers are still worried, they can focus more on training students' techniques in tackling examination questions. They should not distort the course and content of education and give up the whole person education belief.

Individual Success and Social Development

The above discussion starts with an individual student's achievement path to explore the role of educators. Yet individuals are part of the social community after all. If the vision "all are educable, all can be useful" is isolated from social development and the community interest, then this vision will only become an self desire, which is totally against the grain of education. It is because the objective of education is to improve the individual performance, as well as the benefits for the community. This makes the work of educators more meaningful.

When the social structure and people's lifestyle are simple, trust is the basis for people interaction. People will then become peaceful and society will be harmonic as a whole. This phenomenon can still be found in some communities with strong historical or cultural binding. With complicated social structure and diversified lifestyles, as well as the trend of materialization, there is not much trust among people in society. Contracts become important and social behavior is no longer spontaneous. In such environment, honesty and sincerity appear to be more important.

Those who determine to "le de" will radiate strong affinity when they are interacting with others by making them feel the comfort and the positive influence. They also pay the good

deeds forward, and purify the consciousness of individuals and society, hoping to build a sincere community.

Those who are determined to “le gong” cannot only enrich the meaning of their own lives, but also enrich those of others. Take the job of a cleaning worker as an example. When facilities are cleaned by the cleaning worker, people will feel more comfortable when they are using them. The hygiene of the community is also improved. Everyone's health is thus protected because of his work. Similarly, the High-ranking and influential leaders can surely benefit billions of people when they execute their responsibilities rightfully. In the past two hundred years, the fruitful results of scientists do not only improve the living standard of human beings, but also greatly reduce diseases and nature hazards.

As we can see in the different levels and segments, people in different roles can bring endless vitality to the community after they have accomplished their tasks.

Those who achieve in the aspect of “le yan” bring various perspectives for the community, induce all-dimensional thinking, and strengthen the community’s understanding on people and events. On one hand, this can induce the community to think of the deeper meaning of an event; on the other hand, this can prevent the ideologies of the community from heading towards a deadlock, resulting in an open and diversify society. Both the contend of hundreds of different scholars during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period in Chinese history as well as the Renaissance in Western history prove that multi perspectives bring vitality and energy to society and are beneficial for cultural and scientific research and innovation.

As a result, from a macro point of view, “le de, le gong, le yan” will finally become the motivating force for the improvement in human society.

Towards the Elite

According to the goal of "being useful", when educators are taking care of their students as if they are their children, they can also interpret the student’s achievement by considering a wider range of external factors. Students are like seeds being strewn in different soils and environments. The work of a teacher is to eliminate the obstacles for the student so that students can enjoy sufficient sunshine and fertile soil, and grow healthily. Teachers should also act like parents and put a high expectation on students and have reasonable request for students so as to bring out their diversified potentials. At the end, the students we nurture, though seemingly ordinary, can unleash the greatest power in their life to lead an

extraordinary life. This is the most important essence of education, and this explains why education work is a life influencing project.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the discussion here about the ideas of "becoming useful" through "le de, le gong, le yan" have no intention to degrade education, nor to find excuses for students to have mediocre results in public examinations. Without a doubt, all teachers and parents wish that their students and kids can excel in public examinations, yet this is neither practical nor necessary. Even though a student finishes his secondary education with mediocre results in public examinations, he can still excel and become the elite of society if he can be a confident, sincere and responsible person who learns continuously, thinks independently and works hard towards the goal he sets. I believe that no teacher or parent will find such a student or child unsatisfactory if he has such achievements. Students with the above merits are considered to be persons who have infinite potentials and energy. Once the opportunities arise, they can be the cream in the industry, the elite of society.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, education work should be people-oriented and educators should be scrupulously abided to their professionalism. Educators should not be cherry picking. Instead, they should teach step by step with a parental heart, in accordance with different students' aptitude, with a mission to enlighten students' potentials. By doing so, they are on the path towards success.

(1) Gardner, Howard *Frames of Mind : The Theory of Multiple Intelligence*. NY : Basic Books 1983.

(2) Jussim, Lee *Self-fulfilling Prophecies : A Theoretical & Integrative Review*. *Psychological Review*. 1986, V93, N4, pp429-445.

(3)Gladwell, Malcolm *Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Back Bay Books, 2002.

(4) Sternberg, Robert J. *Successful Intelligence* N.Y. : Plume 1996 ◦

(5) The 9 generic skills listed by the Curriculum Development Council include:

1. collaboration skills 2. communication skills 3. creativity 4.critical thinking skills 5. information technology skills 6. numeracy skills 7.. problem solving skills 8. self-management skills 9. study skills. These 9 generic skills have basically covered various research conclusions of success by different scholars.

See “Learn to Learn – Lifelong Learning Whole Person Development (6.2001) Printed by the Printing Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China