

05 Experiencing multifarious assessments

At the school administration meeting in June, 2004, we were informed of the fact that our school would be inviting the Assessment Team of Education and Youth Affairs Bureau to come for a comprehensive evaluation. At this I was terribly shocked. It was because the daily routine tasks had been giving us quite a burden. With the visitation of the inspectors, the teachers would be getting extra weight on top of the existing heavy work-load. At that time I did hold a certain "alarm" in learning the news of the coming of the Inspectors, thinking that their inspection would merely be supervising, examining, and their final aim was to search for the mistakes of our pedagogic work. Even though the Assessment Team of Education and Youth Affairs Bureau had come before hand to offer very cordial and hearty explanations of the aim, procedure and content of the comprehensive assessment, I still felt threatened for being evaluated.

However, during the three days of assessment in May 2005, the deep-rooted "alarm" instigated by the Inspectors was all gone. All the visiting Inspectors were not only well equipped with knowledge of professional theories but had also gone through "much combat" in the pedagogic mission. Therefore, they were supposed to be the teachers of teachers. Furthermore, they all devoted totally into the process of the practice, the attitude of which did win all our respect. The point that led to my heartfelt admiration was that during the operation, they communicated with us kindly, friendly and compassionately, encouraging us to express our sentiments and our different opinions. This succeeded to convince us that they did not come to supervise our pedagogic performance but to help us to make a better impartation of knowledge.

I myself greatly appreciated the manner of their operation and the technique of handling the situation. Being on the front line of education, they did understand that the teacher was the real initiator of the pedagogic activity. Especially in the present supervisory structure and policy, to have the chance to be observed again, I was afraid it would be a matter of a few years in the future. The Assessment Team was able to convince the teachers to hold a positive view of the evaluation to accept and communicate with the Team members. This helped the teachers to discover their merits and shortcomings, stimulating them to improve both the pedagogic method and technique. I deeply believed it to be the key work of the assessment.

During the whole process of evaluation, there was a section of personal interview with the Team members. It was not at all a lecturing time but an encouraging medium leading to a chance of offering carefree self-expression and individual opinion. Through that visit, the teachers, though busy as we were, still could present our view of the educational reformation to Education and Youth Affairs Bureau. That was really an excellent means as the Inspectors were playing the bridge between the Bureau and the schools, bringing all the suggestions and actual situations back for reference in the Administration Plan. I, too, had voiced a few points in the interview and they ran as the following:

1. The aim for promoting small class teaching

It is a practice to fortify the teaching outcome but does not lessen the workload of the teachers. The reason is, though the number of students in a class is smaller, the number of teaching periods is just as many. With the tedious miscellaneous non-teaching



duties, the teachers are heavily burdened. The aim of decreasing the obligations of a teacher is to allow them to concentrate mainly on the pedagogic work. Should the workload not be reduced, even if there were inspectors with more excellent supervisory technique and more splendid suggestions, the teachers shall still be helpless and the pedagogic achievement shall offer only a poor result despite the herculean effort.

2. Increase the number of inspectors

Altogether there are nine inspectors for the total of eighty-five schools with almost five thousand teachers and over ninety thousand students in Macau. To supervise so many schools, it will be impossible to increase the number of supervision or to maintain the follow-up work thoroughly. Therefore, add the number of inspectors in accordance with the number of the schools and teachers of the present day is a very urgent matter.

3. Pedagogic performance inspection should be established on the basis of mutual confidence

The willing collaboration of the person being inspected is the key to the success of the supervision. Therefore, the inspector should first establish fine mutual confidence with the teacher to get rid of psychological rejection. During the inspection process allow the teacher to perform active participation, and not to create the atmosphere of being inspected but make it a project of which the teacher is one of the participants to give him/her the chance to manifest the teacher's professional capability. Being an educator on the front line, it is hoped that the optimized reformation could be commenced from the fundamental base to guarantee the unceasing improvement of quality pedagogy in the school to maintain a continuous development.

By Lam Siu Pui, Department Head of Escola Chong Tak
Excerpted from "Teacher's Magazine", 14th Issue, May, 2006.