



## 04 Characteristic requirements and essentials on operation of Macao continuing education

### Abstract:

It is the 10th anniversary of Macao's return to Motherland. Macao's economy has undergone enormous changes and the degree of internationalization increases daily. Therefore, higher standards are expected from talents. Continuing education is one of the important channels for the development of human resources and is the source for staff's enhancement on their professional ability and competitiveness. This is really the vitality of enterprises. The key for achieving more effect on economy and social developments from continuing education is how to start continuing education with target and effects. This article targets on the characteristic requirements of Macao Continuing Education and integrates it with Macao's actual situation to explore the essentials on the operation of continuing education.

### Introduction

People often said: The only constant is "change" and "changes are eternal". Whether you like it or not, the clock is ticking. It will not change according to our will and it will never wait for us half a step! The writer of "The Fifth Discipline", Peter M. Senge said "In this day and age, your only competitive advantage is to learn more quickly, more and better than your competitors."

It is the 10th anniversary of Macao's return to Motherland. Macao's economy has undergone enormous changes and its degree of internationalization increases daily. Therefore, higher standards are expected from talents. Because Macao's high education starts late and the academic levels of labor force have been low, it is impossible for people to give up their jobs for attending full time courses. Thus the demand for continuing education increases daily, especially for higher education. In addition, following the developments of Macao's international economy, more international companies enter Macao and increase their market share here.

There are definitely differences between our future occupational categories and scopes of work and our current knowledge and skill. Economic development and social improvement are just like "sailing against the current", either progress or regress. In today's era of changes, knowledge is updated rapidly and continuously. Some of the knowledge are time-sensitive and may depreciate in value. In technology in particular, knowledge which we learnt two or three years ago may become outdated. According to the estimation of American scholars, professional knowledge will depreciate 50% in value every 5 years. In the knowledge-based society, this rapid aging of knowledge is a harsh reality which constitutes a must for lifelong learning. Continuing education and lifelong learning can enhance the capability and quality of staff to better serve enterprises' developments. As for the staff, it can improve their occupational capability and competitiveness which are helpful to the developments of their personal career/occupation. Therefore, continuing education is really the vitality of the enterprises, and also the source for staff to enhance their occupational capability and competitiveness. Therefore the demand for continuing education is growing.

### Characteristic requirements of Macao continuing education

Continuing education is an important component in Macao's educational system and an important channel for the constitution of lifelong learning and learning society. There are significant different characteristics between Macao continuing education and regular education. These characteristics mainly include: needs for extensive diversity; flexible and open ways of education; effective, relevant and applicable teaching contents and so on. Proper inclusion of these characteristics is not only the right approach to start program of continuing education but also a must condition for quality assurance of the program to fulfill the aim of continuing education effectively.

### Needs for extensive diversity

There is a great variety of industries and occupations. First we can divide industries into: gambling, tourist, retail, catering, manufacturing and construction etc. From the enterprise management's point of view, we can divide into different management levels: decision-making, management, execution and operations. Different levels of staff coming from different industries are provided with continuing education of different training contents and training methods. Therefore Macao's continuing educational program approach must be flexible for different professionals and the subjects in line with the extensive diversified needs of market. Training courses even can be tailored make for some of industries and enterprises, so as to satisfy the needs of different industries and different job levels in this increasingly competitive society and work environment.

### Educational approach requires flexibility and openness

In Macao, many working people engage in regular shift work. It is impossible for them to attend regular class in long term. They cannot give up job for full time classes. So if Macao's Continuing Education does not want to abandon services for the on-the-job people who need continuing education, it must provide flexible programs for them. For example, to offer same program for two classes at two different periods (daytime and night hour), allowing them to select different class hours for participation after working shift hours or make full use of modern information technology to enrich and improve the continuing education for talent development and provide network program to meet the lifelong learning needs of citizen.

### Contents of program need to be effective, be focused and practical

In regards to on-the-job students, the aim of attending continuing education is to increase their professional knowledge and to enhance their professional skills so as to adapt to the needs of enterprises' production and operation or to meet the needs of self-improvement of competitiveness. It is significantly different from regular education. Therefore the program contents must be strongly effective, focused and practical. What are needs and deficiencies in their job? They will register the courses with contents which are usually short-time and have prompt effects.

### Teachers are required to be professionals

Because the contents of continuing education program need to have strong effectiveness, applicability and high professional levels, therefore, teachers and scholars need to be professionals with theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in the related industries and areas, having professional specialization, rich in experiences and profound theoretical knowledge, so that the programs contents are in line with practical work and can meet the needs of students for self-enhancement.





### The essentials on the operation of continuing education

In order to draw out the most benefits from continuing education, we must integrate the above required characteristics to start continuing education. I believe that we should start operation from the several areas listed below.

#### To design and develop programs according to the needs of local socio-economic developments

Continuing education institutions, being the knowledge and skills providers, must consider the relevant knowledge and skills for socio-economic developments. So we must understand the needs of human resources in market and direction of economic development before we develop and design the program. Recently, the State Council examined and officially approved the «Outline of plan for reform and development of the Pearl River Delta (2008-2020)» which approved that Macao will be positioned as a world tourism and leisure center. Thus there will be a new restructure for Macao's economy and human resources. In line with the development of Macao to become a world leisure center and its need for appropriate and diversified economic developments, continuing educational institutions should actively offer related programs for cultivation of talents for Macao's development needs.

#### Combine theory and practice in designing program contents

The major characteristics of continuing education are practicality and applicability. Continuing education is burdened with the special mission of providing basic to professional knowledge and linkage of theory and practical needs. Serious preparation for lessons and teachings are not enough. To combine theory with practice seriously is the most important thing. In particular it is even more important for continuing education with strong applicability. Therefore when we are planning design, content and organization of the program, we must take full account of theoretical link with practical cultivation to develop students' analytical and problem-solving abilities and grasp well this teaching segment. Besides teaching professional knowledge and theory relating to management areas, this program should be complemented with practical cases for analysis in order to enrich trainees' practical skills, so as to enable students to apply their knowledge after graduation.

#### To adhere to the principle of hiring teaching staff with related professionalism

People often say: teachers are the engineers of human souls. The key for construction quality depends on the quality of their own engineers. So the principle for hiring teaching staff determines the quality of program. When we hire teaching staff we must adhere to the principle of related professionalism. These teachers must be people with wealthy expertise or practical experiences in related fields. Besides in general, the lecturers need to have attained master degree or above. It is desirable that they have teaching experiences so as to guarantee their students can obtain basic knowledge and main content of the program in this area. Also they can integrate theoretical knowledge with real situation to increase the practicality and interest of program content.

#### Combining production of teaching

With many years of teaching experience, I deeply realize that there are a lot of things that could be spoken for a long time in class and yet students may not understand completely. This knowledge must be proven in study visits and after years of experiences in order to have a deeper understanding. In order to achieve the close integration of theory and practice, it is necessary that we purposely arrange some on-site teachings, case analysis and exploration. In general every trainee is able to deepen his understanding on theoretical knowledge through on-site visits and lectures,

### Advocate and implement the philosophy "education is not to teach"

"The purpose of teaching is to achieve no need to teach.....The ultimate aim of teaching different subjects is to achieve that the subjects no longer be taught and students can solve problem through self-exploration." "Education is not to teach" is the educational thought suggested by China's modern famous educator Ye Sentosa. Here "to teach" is the means, "not to teach" is the aim. "Not to teach" means "no need to teach". It means that students have strong ability for self-education. They are able to enrich and improve on their own. As mentioned above, we live in an era of new knowledgeable economy, knowledge updates rapidly, society changes with complexity, technology changes every day, social developments demands for new requirements continuously. In just ten years the knowledge which we learnt from schools becomes extremely limited. It is not enough for use in our lifetime. Therefore when we "teach" students, we have to target to cultivate the "not to teach" education, allowing students to possess the habit and ability of self-education. Hence, they can develop and improve themselves continuously according to objective environment and practical needs and in future to solve different kinds of problems which they will encounter in social activities. It is just like what the famous Soviet Union educator Waa Suhomlinski said, "Only when we can stimulate students to carry out the education of self-education, it is real education."

### Conclusion

After the return of Macao to motherland, socio-economic developments change rapidly and the demand for human resources and qualified continuing education has been increasingly. Through analysis and summary of characteristic requirements on Macao continuing education, this article points out the important elements to start continuing education program: 1. To design and develop programs according to the needs of socio-economic developments; 2. To combine design theory and practical needs for program content; 3. To adhere to the principle of hiring teaching staff with related professionalism; 4. To integrate learning with result in teaching. In this way we can effectively guarantee the quality of continuing education program and to exert the maximum benefit of continuing education.

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