

# Lecturer News and Sharing

My personal experience of GE

Dr. CHU Yun Chung

「博」覽世情——載譽歸來

Dr. Benjamin CHENG

The Moment I fell in Love with My baby!

Ms. Amy TSANG

## My personal experience of GE

### Dr. CHU Yun Chung

“Just try to introduce yourself,” said Brian when he invited me to write a short article for this CIE Alumni newsletter. “Doesn’t it sound like a job interview,” I thought, “but what about me would people possibly be interested in knowing?” Then I recalled a question I was asked during the interview of this job...

I joined CIE as a lecturer in mathematics and I had this great opportunity mainly because mathematics (or more precisely numeracy) had become a core area of General Education (GE) curriculum in the Baptist University and therefore CIE needed to recruit more lecturers in this area. Naturally, I was asked to give my views on GE during the job interview. So, I think, the most relevant way to introduce myself now is probably to share my personal experience of GE.



Dr. Chu Yun Chung (Right)

I first came across the term “General Education” when I became an undergraduate student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in late eighties. (Let’s not disclose the exact year.) CUHK was the pioneer university in Hong Kong to promote GE and at that time, we had to take six GE courses. One thing that has not changed over generations is that students keep questioning the value of GE. To answer this question of the students nowadays, the best way is perhaps to tell them what I remember I learnt from GE 25 years ago and ask them to have the same reflection 25 years later themselves.

The first GE course I took was called “art and methodology of thinking”. This was also the first ever course I took that was taught in Mandarin, and I was so poor in Mandarin! I had to read the textbook before every class but then it became a habit that I enjoyed so much. Nowadays my colleagues and I would sigh at our inability to make students understand the great value of preparing for the class in advance! What did I learn in that course? So much that I don’t know which to say, but perhaps this example from the book: When a man looks at an English sign written “Attack Dog Insides” on the entrance of a house and then walks away, it did not, logically, imply that he was afraid of dogs or even he could read English at all! And nowadays I can still tell the difference between “what I really know” and “what I guess I know”.

The second GE course I took was called “Guided Study”, which was very informal. In one “lecture” we were asked to write down 5 good things and 5 bad things about ourselves (Oh! Not again!) and stick them on our T-shirts, walk around and let our classmates read them. So embarrassing but at least we all discovered how reluctant people were to disclose the bad things about themselves! Another important thing that I learnt from this course that I still re-

member is this: People have the RIGHT to choose friends. No matter how eager you want to make friends with someone, you cannot presume that they must return the same sentiment.

The third GE course I took was called “Chinese Culture and its Philosophies”. Honestly I did not dislike this topic but somehow this course was just not my cup of tea and I cannot recall anything interesting about it. So what have I learnt? Not all GE courses were interesting! At least some could be as boring as my own major courses.

The next GE course I took was quite the other extreme. It was called “Perspectives in Business” and I cannot possibly name all the interesting knowledge that I have learnt from this course. For example, the lecturer would design various games and activities to help us understand why it was possible to have win-win situations and how negotiations could help to achieve that. However, there was a major flaw in the design of this course: It did not have a final exam. Therefore, many students started to skip classes (as attendance was not compulsory) after the mid-term test despite the interesting lectures. I guess the lecturer was so disappointed that this course was not offered again in the next year. So what I learnt from this GE course? It is not only the teacher’s responsibility to motivate students to learn, but also the students’ responsibility to motivate the teacher to teach (or at least keep teaching).

The fifth GE course I took was “The Modern West”, which required us to read some western literatures such as Boccaccio’s *The Decameron*. I was not exactly the literature-type but at least I learnt this after our discussion of Shakespearean tragedies: Tragedies were tragedies not because they could not be avoided, but rather because they COULD have been avoided, only that people failed

to avoid them because they could not overcome their own weaknesses.

The last GE course I took was called “Religious Faith and Modern Life”. Out of the six GE courses I took, this one had the most in-class discussion, and we examined many societal issues from a religion perspective.

Having read the above, many of my CIE students would probably exclaim at this point, “NO Math GE?” Well, mathematics was not a GE core in my time and as a science student, I was not allowed to take mathematics as my GE elective. I did sit for the first lecture of the Math GE course and the lecturer talked about voting mechanisms and used calculations to show how different voting systems could lead to very different results despite the same wishes of the voters. Voting was not so much a concern in Hong Kong in late eighties but nowadays I do wish that more Hong Kong people would have understood the limitations of various voting mechanisms before they were engaged in a hot debate.

Going back to the question I was asked during the CIE job interview, I have to admit that I have already forgotten what answer I gave for my view on GE but I don’t think I could provide a meaningful view because I was no expert in GE. What I shared above was just my encounter with GE instead of my view. Perhaps, a person is like a pyramid, where his expertise is the tip defining his height and GE is the base defining his volume. What GE has taught me is that the world is bigger than whatever boundary we can draw for ourselves, and there is always something out there. This is exactly how I feel after joining the CIE family. I had been teaching for more than ten years before joining CIE, but still this job turned out a whole new exciting experience to me, and I have since enjoyed every moment of redrawing my boundary.



## 「博」覽世情——載譽歸來 Dr. Benjamin Cheng



三年前，Benjamin 毅然離開工作多年的CIE大家庭，雖然不捨，但當日希望再展翅、再超越的心如火熾熱，促使他勇敢走出comfort zone，重新回到校園，在浸會大學全職攻讀博士課程。

由全職講師變成全職學生，感覺自由自在，可以了無牽掛地享受學習，當然令人嚮往；但三年的博士生涯，也並非全無掛慮——最令我感到焦慮的，莫過於那份『不確定感』；有時候挑燈夜讀，身心俱疲，難免會質疑自己的選擇：離開自己喜愛又穩定的工作崗位，是否對的選擇？

然而，事實證明Benjamin不單作了對的選擇，那更是明智的抉擇！Benjamin 的博士論文屢獲殊榮，除了奪得美國新聞及大眾傳播學會百周年學術會議的最佳互動論文獎外，更在歐洲廣告學會國際廣告研究會議晉身最佳學生論文獎三甲。

2013年九月，Benjamin回歸CIE，他還帶了甚麼回饋這大家庭？「這四年的博士生涯，我參加很多大大小小的國際學術會議，令我的眼界更闊、更廣！同時，重新過了三年學生生活，我對學生的感受，有更切身的體會，令我更明白他們多一點。」

## The Moment I fell in Love with My baby! Ms. Amy Tsang

After a 10-month journey, it was the time to welcome the special gift, a new born with amazing grace on Boxing Day last year, although there was hard time during and after pregnancy.

When I first saw him, I got many questions in mind, like “why does he look so funny or well... so strange? Is it normal?” As his head is so big compared to the rest of his body. A growing baby is just so wonderful! In the first months, he drew all the energy right out of me. But that fatigue turns into waves of happiness when he looks into my eyes with a smile.

The first time he cooed with a beautiful grin was a magical moment to me. That was the moment I first fell in love with this angel, Winston. His smiles tell me he loves me.

Winston, Amy and David  
1 March 2014

P.S. To my beloved students and colleagues, thank you for all your blessings and support!



## **Editorial**

### **CIE Alumni Relations Committee**

Dr. Sheren Cheng, Mr. Eric Lau, Dr. Miranda Ma, Mr. Brian Poon, Dr. Lorraine Yeung, Ms. Noel Wong

### **Editor**

Mr. Dickson Cheung, Ms. Yau Yuet Yee

### **Designer**

Ms. Carol Wong

 電話Telephone: 3411 3388

 網址Website: [www.cie.hkbu.edu.hk](http://www.cie.hkbu.edu.hk)

 電郵Email: [ciepr@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:ciepr@hkbu.edu.hk)

 地址Address: 石門校園 | 新界沙田安睦街 8 號 (港鐵石門站D出口)  
Shek Mun (Shatin) Campus | 8 On Muk Street, Shek Mun, Shatin  
(MTR Shek Mun Station Exit D)