

## Buddhist Tai Kwong Chi Hong College HKBM Underpinned by Cross-Disciplinary "Critical Friend Support" Enriching the Curriculum System Empowering Students to Become Creator of Learning Experiences

Buddhist Tai Kwong Chi Hong College has been participating in CLAP@JC project since 2020. The School has employed the Hong Kong Benchmarks for Careers and Life Development (HKBM) to examine its career and life development (CLD) initiatives and has received "Critical Friend Support"<sup>1</sup> advanced by the HKBM cross-disciplinary team. Based on the school's self-evaluation results, professional and practical recommendations have thus been given to establish a self-improvement action plan for the school, particularly in the areas of "BM5: Student Engagement and Co-creation" and "BM7: Linking Curriculum Learning to Career and Life Development". The School has since expanded its Career Life Planning Team, encompassing all teachers to become significant stakeholders in students' CLD.

### Optimising human resource allocation Unleashing diverse values

"CLD" was by no means a new concept for the teaching and administrative staff at the school, given that it had always been a focal point in the school's triennial plan. There, however, might not have been a well-established system in place for its execution. With the launch of the second phase of CLAP@JC, the school took the opportunity to participate in the project. Alluding to the reasons for the move, Ms. Leung Wing Woon, the Principal said, "the school hoped to further extend students' potential through CLD, help them understand themselves, and make use of their strengths. We also wanted to provide students with a platform to connect with the outside world." With the support of HKBM "Critical Friends", the school has achieved over the past three years the goal of improving CLD education and further its systematic support for student's personal growth.

**The inception of HKBM emerged as an opportunity to restructure our human resources allocation by spinning off the CLD Team from the Guidance and Discipline Team, and increasing its number of staff from three to seven."**

—Ms. Leung Wing Woon, the Principal



▲ Principal Leung, indicates that her role in promoting CLD within the school is mainly to integrate resources from various sources and to set the priorities for the initiatives.

The Career Life Planning Team and the Counseling and Guidance Team are both under the leadership of Vice Principal, Mr. Kong Fai Man, who through his lead in resources reallocation, has made the teams within the school as a whole aware of the importance of CLD. Vice Principal Kong shared that, "mobilizing resources, as well as reallocating time, requires the understanding of colleagues. To this end, our strategy is to have every colleague try leading a team and participate in experiential activities with students, so that through personal experience, they can understand the importance of CLD for students."

Three years ago, the school, with the assistance of one of the "Critical Friends" —the "Assessment & Action Plan Advisor" (AAPA) under HKBM — leveraged on HKBM to evaluate the school's overall implementation of its CLD education. The AAPA opined from an objective perspective, and guided the school to dive deep in reflecting on its own strengths and weaknesses in the pre-existing CLD education.

<sup>1</sup> Definition of critical friend:

In realm of school self-evaluation & improvement (Macbeath & Swaffield 2005; Chapman & Sammons 2013, p27)

**"HKBM has formed a consensus throughout the school that CLD is an essential part of a student's personal growth, and in order to enhance it, the management needs to pave the way by providing frontline teachers with resources, and manpower as well as class hours."**

—Mr. Kong Fai Man, Vice Principal



▲ From left: Vice Principal Mr. Kong Fai Man, Principal Ms. Leung Wing Woon, Career Mistress Ms. Yau Wing Sze.

### Working hand-in-hand with professional consultants Proposing cross-benchmarks practical ideas

Upon the completion of the first self-evaluation, AAPA held a meeting with the school management and its Career and Life Planning Team to explain in detail the level of achievement and reasons for each benchmark, and to propose improvement suggestions. For example, some good practices that have been implemented in other schools can be adjusted according to the school situation and before the actual action plan is developed.

AAPA also collaborates with the school to come up with CLD activities and propose cost-effective methods for execution. "AAPA and its team's involvement is like providing a 'book of wisdom' for schools, with multiple different ideas," said Ms. Yau Wing Sze, the Career Mistress. Initially, when first approaching HKBM, she could feel at a loss, but with AAPA's support, she realized that a CLD activity can incorporate different elements at the same time. As long as there is comprehensive and careful consideration in the planning process, achieving comprehensive goals is not difficult and does not add extra workload to teachers.

One of the key applications of cross-benchmark is the training of "CLD Ambassadors" to arrange a series of experiential activities and to construct a platform for them sharing with their classmates. Students selected as CLD Ambassadors will first participate in the Joint-School CLD Club activities, where they will learn CLD concepts together with students from other schools and exchange ideas with guests from different industries to understand the VASK (Values, Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge) of various professions. After completing training, CLD Ambassadors themselves will organize activities within the school to introduce such CLD concepts as VASK to their classmates, as well as to provide subject selection support for other Form 3 students.

**"AAPA could usually devise a 'killing-two-birds-with-one-stone' type approach, connecting several benchmarks through one single activity. It turns out that doing a good job in CLD is simpler than I might have imagined."**

— Ms. Yau Wing Sze, Career Mistress



▲ "CLD Ambassadors" set up booths on campus for students to use VASK cards to get to know themselves.

## Support from other "Critical Friends" Broadening the horizons of teachers and students Corresponding support from critical friends

**"Critical Friends will conduct a comprehensive analysis based on HKBM for the school, enabling the school to understand how to promote CLD more effectively. They propose novel ideas that suit the school's situation and suggest appropriate actions for the school to take. Some will also personally participate in activities, provide feedback on student performance, and promote learning among teachers and students."**

—Ms. Leung Wing Woon,  
the Principal

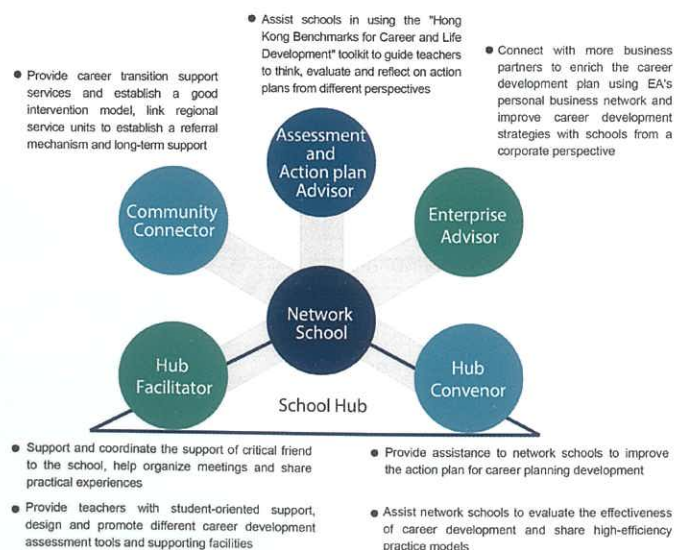
The "Hub Facilitator" (HF) for the school, besides taking part in the training of our "CLD Ambassadors," also provides support for teacher training. Ms. Yau, the Career Mistress noted, "HF in collaboration with AAPA organizes different counselling skills workshops for Form 3 and Form 6 class teachers, which help them pick up on how to follow up on students' emotions and CLD issues after the release of examination results. Career counselling is no longer solely the responsibility of the Career Life Planning Team, but rather a collective effort of all teachers in the school. Students can contact different teachers at any time to seek advice. "Many teachers have proactively sought more guidance on further studies from the Career Planning Team in response to parents' inquiries, reflecting a heightened awareness of CLD throughout the school.

"The Enterprise Advisor" (EA) is a volunteer from the



▲ The "Enterprise Advisor" (EA) accepted interviews from his students, who used what they had learned from the EA to create short films and later share them with other schoolmates.

business sector connected by CLAP@JC. The EA assigned to the school in its first year was the owner of a company dealing in African Drums, who also dabbles in various industries, including film production. In his spare time, he actively participates in voluntary work to give back to society. As a 'slasher,' he has provided a workshop for teachers, sharing his personal CLD experiences, enlightening them on the possibility that besides one's main job, one can always develop interests in other areas and engage in community service. Through this, they can



▲ The CLAP@JC Project has a cross-disciplinary team that provides "Critical Friend Support" for each school, with regard to its HKBM self-evaluation and the action plans that follow.

appreciate the diversity of career development and grasp the concept of 'expanded notion of work,' and be inspired to broaden their imagination in the realm of CLD.

In the "KOL Training Programme", EA, again in collaboration with the HF, taught students filming and editing skills, with an end game of them applying what they had learned and conducting an interview with the EA himself. "Students not only were able to put their fingers on the industry requirements, but also learnt good work attitudes from him, which would be helpful for their future interactions in the workplace," said Ms. Yau. Finally, the school showed the completed edited interview clips during its morning assembly, so as to let all of the students benefit from the EA's career experience and have meaningful encounter with the world of work.

## Curriculum mapping under professional advice Offering diverse activities to inspire reflection

**"The school, following AAPA's recommendation, collected information on the situation of different subject groups through questionnaires so as to understand the extent of the connection between the curriculum and career and life development (CLD)."**

— Ms. Yau Wing Sze, Career Mistress

In addition to planning activities and designing school-based counselling training, AAPA also conducted Curriculum Mapping for schools to enable principals and Career Mistress to understand the activities, teaching content or educational programmes of various subjects and administrative groups in the school, which can be linked to CLD elements and aligned with "BM7: Linking Curriculum Learning to Career and Life Development", such as the application of VASK assessment tools.

In recent years, Ms. Lui Ho Man, who is a Biology teacher and is also the Extra Curriculum Team Head at the same time, has invited representatives from academic departments of various tertiary institutions, such as that of the Nursing and Nutrition Science, to share with students who elect Biology and give them more exposure on the subject-related professions. At times, arrangements are made for students to visit subject-related workplaces, such as food safety laboratories. "During the process, the speaker will raise some 'realistic' issues, such as the admission requirements of the subject. Students are aware of the decisive impact of academic performance on their future CLD, and their motivation to learn will naturally increase."

In terms of extra-curricular activities, Ms. Lui has also strived to arrange a variety of interest experiences for students. For instance, she cooperated with Ms. Yau and successfully arranged for students to participate in the kindergarten internship programme of the Tai Po District Office. "Students often find that they do not have the patience it takes when it comes to teaching children, and they think that internships are very helpful for self-understanding, which is in line with the purpose of CLD experience." Whether it is for interest or for career exploration, the school emphasizes post-activity reflection, and after each completion, the teachers will guide students to use the VASK form to reflect on and summarize their experience.



▲ Representatives from tertiary institutions come to the school to teach students to write a Student Learning Profile (SLP).

"HKBM has fortified my belief that students should try more in different fields, even if they may not be able to find a direction for development immediately, they need to experience more, explore their own interests, and continue to explore in the future."

— Ms. Lui Ho Man,  
Biology Teacher & Extra Curriculum  
Team Head



▲ Speaking of favorable outcomes brought about by the CLD activities, Ms. Lui observed that on the whole the students had become more motivated than before. "For example, the school has a talent show every year, and the number of applicants was quite small in the past, but in recent years, the number of student sign-ups has been on the rise."

With the rigorous support from 'Critical Friends', the school engaged in the whole-school approach participation model which successfully led to the school reaching "fully achieved" in more benchmark sub-items in the second self-evaluation the following year. The whole-school approach to CLD has since become part and parcel of the annual plan of each academic subject group, preparing students with industry information and personal development direction through both the curriculum and activities.

## "CLD Ambassador"

### Student-led career and life planning Presenting the needs of their peers from an "audience" perspective



▲ Hung believes that being a CLD Ambassador has broadened her horizons, and opened her eyes to multiple pathways, meanwhile she rejoices in sharing with her classmates.

Hung Po Lam, who is currently a Form 6 student, said that becoming a "CLD Ambassador" has helped her personally make progress by leaps and bounds in just three years. "Joint-School CLD Club has given me the opportunity to encounter people from all walks of life. At first, I thought I would be interested in the profession of accountant, but later I found out that the job nature was not suitable for me, who was rather weak in Mathematics, and I would have to obtain bunches of licenses."

Learning from a barista later at the "Career Expo" event, Hung realized that the threshold of becoming one is not that high, meanwhile she obtained a preview of its income prospects and working environment, which changed her

preliminary view of this profession and thinks it can actually be a career for her. "Just because I enjoy meeting and mixing with different people and value friendship."

As a "CLD Ambassador" within the school, Hung is responsible for organising and arranging CLD activities on campus, and she is often approached by students for advice on course selection. "Some students feel pressured to seek advice from their teachers, by contrast it will be more intimate to ask their classmates for advice." She believes that students' proactive participation in promoting CLD activities can compound the benefits to themselves.

"Students from other classes will also ask me information about subject selection, I will ask relevant questions to the teachers in relation, search for information on the Internet, and importantly share with my classmates how to do so. Students share information and support among with each other among ourselves. It is satisfying to be able to help my classmates and learn more about different professions", Hung said.

## Sharing through School Hub Forging synergy in "Joint School KOL Training Programme"



▲ Students from four secondary schools participated in the "Joint School KOL Training Programme" to learn how to make a video documenting EAs' CLD story.

Like every other network school, Buddhist Tai Kwong Chi Hong College has joined the School Hub. The school brings its experiences and good practices into the hub for information exchange with multiple other schools. Take the "Joint school KOL Training Programme" for example, the school got to invite the EA from another school within the Hub for an interview.

Each school was able to send students to take 6 workshops on interviews and film-making skills. The HF took up the coordinating role throughout the planning and execution process and became one of the workshop mentors. Eventually, the network schools brought home

the accomplished interview clips for sharing among their own teachers and students, which linked it up with value added to their own resource pool for CLD.

Tang Kwan Yeung, a student who participated in the "Joint School KOL Training Programme", benefited a lot from the interview skills training. "My mentor will observe my performance and give me advice and remind me to smile more during the interview to make the interviewee feel reassured, which is an important communication skill. Through making contact with students from different schools, I have gradually learned how to speak appropriately in different situations."

She mentioned the EA, who she got to interview, was a product manager with an international company. She rarely has the opportunity to meet this class of professionals in daily life, and so she made the most of it, and dived deeper in understanding the world of work. "The manager shared how he started from a low level, how he would face customer complaints with an open mind, and how not to care too much about other people's opinions. From him, I felt that I have picked up on some essential VASK, which has been an invaluable experience."



▲ With the experience of the "Joint School KOL Training Programme", Tang has gained a better understanding of herself and the world of work, and she feels that the future is full of possibilities.

Compared with others, schools with adequate support from Critical Friends and School Hub are better positioned to advance CLD education. They steadily formulate and assess clear CLD policies, enhance teacher training in skills and leadership, and create effective mechanisms. By fostering student engagement and embedding CLD into the curriculum, these schools fortify the link between academic subjects and career pathways.



### HKBM Data Reveals

Results of self-evaluation showed that the support of "Critical Friends" could further facilitate the promotion of Benchmark 1: "A Stable and Visible Career and Life Development Policy", Benchmark 2: "Professional Competencies and Leadership", Benchmark 5: "Student Engagement and Co-creation" and Benchmark 7 "Linking Curriculum Learning to Career and Life Development", especially in schools with adequate support.

# The Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development (Schools) **CASE STUDY 2024**

## About CLAP@JC

Created and funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, CLAP@JC is a ten-year Trust-initiated Project and a cross-sectoral support platform on career and life development (CLD), aiming to foster a sustainable ecosystem by bringing together the education, community and business sectors to smoothen the transition from school to work for all youth. The project encourages youth to "LIVE DIFFERENT, LIVE FULL" and maximise their endless potential through setting sail to a unique life journey.

CLAP@JC aims to transform the conventional life planning services model by broadening the definition of talent and success. This new approach guides youth to explore multiple career and life pathways consistent with their own Values, Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge (VASK). The project has implemented a newly created "Hong Kong Benchmarks for Career and Life Development" (HKBM) to uplift the industry standard in support of youth to establish clearer life directions and smoother school-work transition.



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