

GE Exemption and Transfer: Challenges and Opportunities

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Dr. Vicky Lee

College of International Education,
Hong Kong Baptist University

A Common Spirit of GE across Universities and Community Colleges

To prepare students

- * Communication skills
- * Problem solving
- * Breadth
- * Global and local citizenship
- * Cultural competence
- * Connectivity between the personal, social and global worlds

(See *GE Guidebook* Chap 2 & 4)

The role of GE in facilitating articulation in the two-stage degree structure

Well-aligned GE curriculum between the two sectors (degree and sub-degree sectors). GE curriculum (with its focus on intellectual and other generic skills, knowledge and values) can serve as a kind of

- * “**common core**” or “essential courses” not only within an institution but across institutions
- * “**currency**” to allow vertical transfer

If GE can be used as a “**transfer package of ‘common core’**” then, the future of sub-degree as stated in 3.41 of the 2010 Review can be realized when “...the two-stage route should not have to be longer than the more conventional route” (UGC Higher Education Review, 2010).

The important role of GE in Credit Accumulation & Transfer Scheme (CATS)

UGC Higher Education Report December 2010:

8.27 states that the purpose of CATS is to

- * To assist in the efficient use of educational resources by minimizing duplication in training, and allowing students to build on the credits obtained in earlier years, at the sub-degree level for instance, to obtain higher-level education.

GE Role in CATS

8.27 also states that the purpose of CATS is:

- * **Cost reduction:** a CATS will make it possible for students to complete certain courses at institutions that are less generously provided for than universities, as long as the necessary **quality assurance** is in place.

Examples: GE core courses such University English, Chinese, numeracy, IT, Culture and Civilizations, PE etc.

Grim Reality...

GE Credits often do not transfer...

- * Very **stringent policies** in Universities for recognition of GE credits completed at community colleges
- * **GE core courses** - repeating and duplicating of coursework (even in English writing and communication)
- * **GE Distribution courses** - repeating and duplicating of course work (even though the range of distribution areas are very similar if not identical, see GE Guidebook Chap 4)

Reasons??

- * Little or **no alignment** between community colleges and Universities (exception HKBU and CIE) on GE curriculum and design
- * **Little dialogue** between the universities and community colleges concerning GE curriculum
- * **Lack of transparencies**

As a result ...waste of resources

- * Retaking, repeating and duplication of course work are very common.
- * Waste of tax payers' money and resources
- * Waste of students' own money, time, and efforts in their sub-degree education.

Teaching and Learning Quality Compromised...

- * **Heavy study loads** - cramming all extra units (GE units + other pre-requisites) within the two senior years - little time for anything else.
- * **Forego opportunity for overseas exchange.** Some students opt for extension of one more year in order to realize their dream of higher education.
- * Sub-degree courses and education are devalued and in some cases, **a belittlement of the students' sense of identity as sub-degree entrants.**

Future of GE

- * More **dialogue** between GE office of UGC funded universities and community colleges - invite submission of GE syllabi from community colleges for review - published recognized list of GE courses (started by HKBU GE Office).
- * **Transparency** - Students would know before hand the number of make up GE courses if they articulate to a particular UGC degree programme.
- * Developing a **culture of accountability, collaboration and fairness** to **students, parents and the community**.
- * Common course code...
- * Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- * GE Certificate...

Thank you!