



自資高等教育聯盟

Federation for Self-financing  
Tertiary Education

# Flash

Nov 2016

SPECIAL EDITION

Welcome to the Special Edition of Flash. This issue highlights the new direction of our projects. It will also be available on our website [www.fste.edu.hk](http://www.fste.edu.hk).



## FEATURE

### New Initiatives on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Counseling

The Federation is pleased to announce its first initiatives on special educational needs (SEN) and counseling!

In recent years, the self-financing tertiary education sector has been facing various types of challenges. In spite of the declining number of students in the sector, there are more and more students with special needs. Hence, academic support and counseling services for SEN students are available in most institutions. However, the access to and types of support services provided are largely limited to the insufficient resources. In this regard, FSTE has taken the initiative to offer professional development training and will subsequently provide central support services for Member Institutions; it is hoped that the comprehensive needs of SEN students can be better understood and addressed.

#### Key Facts

##### *Declining self-financed sub-degree students*

- There were 52,000, 39,700, and 38,000 enrolments in self-financing sub-degree programs for the academic year 2013/14, 2014/15, and 2015/16 respectively. It was a 27% decline over three years.<sup>1</sup> This downward trend has also been observed in Diploma Yi Jin (DYJ).

##### *More complex needs*

- Proportion of SEN students pursuing University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded full-time post-secondary programmes has been persistently low: 0.3% of total student population<sup>2</sup>. Self-financing sub-degree programmes provide them with alternate pathways to progress to higher education.
- Based on figures from seven DYJ provider institutions, proportion of SEN students has increased from 2.34% to 8.14% of the DYJ student population over academic years 2014/15 and 2016/17. This is nearly a 3.5-fold increase in three years.
- Actual proportion of SEN students in the entire self-financing tertiary education sector (inclusive of DYJ and other sub-degree programmes), despite declining student number, is expected to be higher and is projected to increase in coming years.

### Seminar on Handling Special Educational Needs (SEN) Cases in Diploma Yi Jin



As a kick-start, the Seminar on Handling Special Educational Needs (SEN) Cases in Diploma Yi Jin was successfully held at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University on 24 August. Special thanks to our keynote speaker, Ms. Helen Kwok, Counselling Psychologist, Hong Kong Shue Yan University Counselling and Research Centre, for providing her valuable insights to over 70 DYJ teachers and administrators. It provided an overview of counselling psychology, new understandings of SEN, with focuses on Dyslexia, Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder, and Autism, supported with experiential activities, video and discussion.

In subsequent to the seminar, cases of students with diagnosed or suspected SEN, as well as information regarding school support services were collected among DYJ provider institutions. We wish to understand more about the specific needs of SEN students, and to provide additional teacher and student support accordingly. For more photos of the activity, please visit our website.



<sup>1</sup> Concurrence for Self-financing Post-secondary Education (2016) Key Statistics on Post-secondary Education

<sup>2</sup> LegCo Panel on Education Subcommittee on Integrated Education (2014). Report

## Future Direction: Development of Centralized Counseling and SEN Support Services

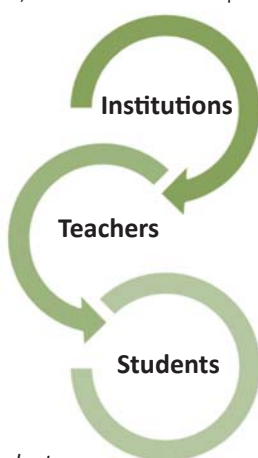
With a view to addressing the comprehensive needs of students with special needs, a system of centralized counselling and SEN support services is being planned.

At present, most institutions have adopted an “academic-oriented approach” in supporting students’ special learning needs. Academic support, usually in the form of special examination arrangement or remedial classes, is provided. Nevertheless, SEN students encounter difficulties in multiple facets of their school lives. This is not limited to academic attainment, but also their personal development and social relationships. Psychosocial support such as counseling and peer programme, on the other hand, is inadequate in most institutions. For example, there are insufficient staff members with training in relevant disciplines (e.g. psychology, social work). Task force specializing in provision of SEN support is established in very limited number of schools. Students seeking counseling services usually take very long time. Hence, attention to the psychosocial needs of SEN students should be brought forth, and relevant support would be strengthened accordingly.

Endeavored to fostering a humanistic environment conducive to students’ holistic growth, planning for a line of central support services is now underway. After all, in synergy with existing services available in institutions, through provision of teacher training as well as counseling and relevant services by the FSTE (Figure 1), it is hoped that SEN students are well supported in their learning, psychological, and social development.

### Teacher Support

- **Seminars** held to enhance teachers’ understanding of SEN
- **Theme-based workshop series** to equip teachers with practical handling skills



### Institutional Support

- **Surveys** conducted to investigate the present needs and future direction of support services
- **Central support services** to lessen pressure on current counseling systems

### Student Support

- **Face-to-face counseling** provided to guide students facing various issues
- **Talks/seminars/workshops/trainings** to enhance students’ awareness and teach essential life skills
- **Peer support programme** held to promote inclusive school culture

Figure 1. Comprehensive model to support SEN students

## F New Project Funded by EDB QESS

### The development of learning materials in relation to Chinese as a second language for post-secondary education

In Hong Kong, non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students account for 6.4% of total student populations at all levels and the figure is expected to be higher every year (Unison, 2015). Nonetheless, due to the differences in cultural and family background, NCS students encounter great difficulties in learning Chinese language, that adversely affect their admission to mainstream secondary schools and universities. The opportunities for future studies and employment are questionable as a result. In this regard, measures that can foster their integration into the society and widen their engagement in various types of jobs should be advocated, so as to strength their mobility in local employment market.

The Government have committed to supporting the integration of NCS students into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese Language. In 2014, an Applied Learning Chinese Language Course for NCS students has been introduced at the senior secondary level as an alternative qualification of Chinese language (under DSE Core Subjects).



In response to the needs of NCS students as well as demand in manpower, FSTE has taken the initiative to enhance the Chinese proficiency amongst NCS students studying in the self-financing post-secondary sector through the development of learning materials in relation to Chinese as a second language together with an associated online sharing mechanism. It is the first-ever joint effort in the sector to provide appropriate learning and teaching resources for improving NCS students’ proficiency in Chinese language. Funded by QESS, FSTE and The Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University will develop the Chinese curriculum and deliver the course to NCS students at self-financing post-secondary level. By raising their standards in Chinese language close to employers’ expectation, they are expected to be more competitive in the society and the employment market.

