

Survey and Evaluation of Project Springboard



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The Survey and Evaluation of Project Springboard

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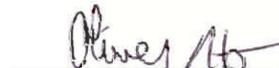
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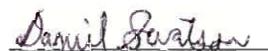
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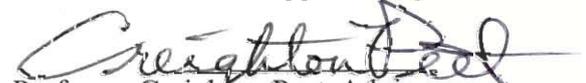


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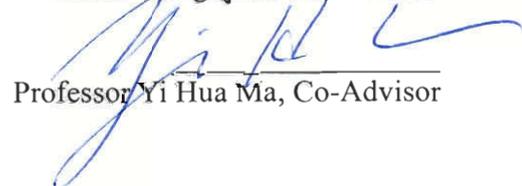


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Abstract

The Springboard Program is a newly developed educational program for students leaving Secondary Five schools and adult learners pursuing further education. In this project, sponsored by Caritas-Hong Kong, an evaluation of the program's effectiveness is made to determine if it meets the socioeconomic and academic demands placed on Hong Kong residents for higher education. Interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, students, graduates and employers to survey their individual views on how well the objectives of the program are being met.

Acknowledgements

We would like to commend and thank all the individuals who assisted us in completing this project. First, we would like to thank Caritas Adult and Higher Educational Services of Hong Kong for the guidance, contacts, support, and materials they provided. We would especially like to thank our liaison, Mr. Selwyn Cheng, for arranging our interviews and observations and generally assisting us. We would also like to thank Ms. Amy Chan and Ms. Catherine Li for allowing us to conduct interviews with them. Finally, we thank the numerous students, teachers, and administrators from Caritas' Springboard Program, as well as employers, who allowed us to conduct interviews with them.

We would like to thank our college, Worcester Polytechnic Institute for making this opportunity available to us and to the coordinators from our school in the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division. Our gratitude goes to Professors Creighton Peet and Yi Hua Ma for all their support in making suggestions and assisting in revising countless drafts. The support from our classmates in helping us improve our projects should also be recognized.

Executive Summary

Across the world, higher education is becoming increasingly important as a means of obtaining a competitive position in today's job market. As a result, the demand for admissions to higher education outstrips the supply in many countries. The Hong Kong educational system is also unable to support the large number of students who would like to pursue their education beyond secondary school. In particular, many students are not receiving high enough scores on the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), and the number of Secondary Five leavers is far too great to allow for all of these students to obtain placement in the post-Secondary Five programs they desire. Rapid socioeconomic changes are directly responsible for this explosion in the number of students desiring higher education. An increased demand for skilled labor is forcing students to seek more training.

A program was developed in Hong Kong to help alleviate some of these problems. This program, called Project Springboard, is a post-secondary education service designed for Secondary (or Form) Five leavers who do not perform well enough on the HKCEE to gain entrance into the next level of education. The program's goal is to provide those underachieving students with some form of post-secondary education suitable to 'springboard' them into even further education, as well as to increase their standing in the job market. The Springboard Program certifies graduates with a qualification that is comparable in standards to obtaining five passes on the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) for continuing education purposes.

The Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service in Hong Kong is one of ten academic institutes in the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions

that currently offer the Springboard Program to the Hong Kong community. Caritas is interested in the effectiveness of the Springboard Program, and in particular, the program that they provide. It is imperative to evaluate the effectiveness of the Springboard Program to determine if it meets the educational goals required to fulfill the demand placed by Hong Kong residents for post-secondary education. The Springboard Project research team conducted an evaluation of the Springboard Program to assess how well it was achieving its goals and to help improve the program.

There may be a lack of confidence or respect in the Springboard Program and its graduates. In addition, the program may not be producing the intended results or at least leery employers and students fear that this may be the case. The outcomes of the program can be improved if careful research is done to discover problematic areas and use this information to make improvements. Currently the Springboard Program is seen to be preparatory for entering the workforce, but it only opens up limited job opportunities.

This Springboard Project Team provided an evaluation of the effectiveness of Project Springboard, focusing on the issues of the affordability of the program, the awareness level of the program to its targeted audience, the marketability of graduates of the program, and the ability of the Springboard Program to achieve the six initial objectives laid out by the curriculum developers.

The Program's six objectives are:

- Develop students' knowledge and skills comparable to those who had satisfactorily completed S5 general education
- Enhance language proficiency for further studies and employment purposes
- Promote positive attitudes towards life and to have a sense of commitment to society
- Foster development in ethics, social and interpersonal skills
- Develop self-learning ability
- Develop a sense of appreciation for life-long learning.

Previous evaluation emphasis has been placed upon the first two objectives, which have been substantially analyzed by other parties. Thus, this report focuses upon the last four objectives.

The techniques of data extraction used were qualitative analysis of existing survey data, direct observations of Springboard Program Modules, and qualitative interviews with students, graduates, teachers, administrators, employers, and members from the Program Management Committee (PMC).

Existing survey data were used as a source of statistical data. The Springboard Project Team went to three Caritas Institutes and conducted interviews with students, graduates, teachers, and administrators involved with the Springboard Program to assess the issues described above. One Springboard module from each of three visited institutions was directly observed as well. Furthermore, the project team also conducted interviews with three employers, former and current members of the PMC, and a curriculum developer. In particular, Amy Chan, the former head of the PMC, and Selwyn Cheng, a current member of the PMC, were interviewed concerning the details of how the initial objectives of the program were to be achieved. Catherine Li, a Communications module curriculum developer, was also interviewed to assess the details of the Communications module and how it achieved the last four objectives focused of the program.

Based upon the information gathered during the course of this project, the following conclusions and recommendations have been made to improve the program and to help it achieve its six initial objectives. The Springboard Project Team has come to the conclusion that:

- The tuition for the program is too expensive.
- Students, parents and society have little knowledge of the details of the program.
- Employers are not aware of the qualifications this program provides, and students do not know enough about possible employment opportunities after graduation from the program.
- The students' knowledge and skills are comparable, but not equal to those satisfactorily completing Secondary Five education.
- The graduates are capable of pursuing further studies and employment.
- The program needs to have more involvement with society.
- The Speech Arts module enhances students' social and interpersonal skills.
- The Communications module is not intended for adults.
- The program does not adequately transmit the idea of self-learning ability, and a sense of appreciation for lifelong learning, and would benefit from having a "Study Skills" module.

Based on the previous conclusions, the following recommendations have been made.

- Reduce the program's cost.
- Provide fund raising activities.
- Provide informational sessions at schools, making sure parents are invited. Develop a more extensive advertisement campaign, placing advertisements in magazines, newspapers, on television and on the radio.
- Provide extensive information to employers about what the program provides its students.
- Provide job fairs to introduce students to possible employers.
- Increase the public's awareness to prevent any misunderstandings that exist concerning the knowledge and skills possessed by these graduates.
- When increasing students' awareness, provide them with a list of employers and educational programs that have accepted the graduates.
- Offer more community service opportunities. Instead of leaving these opportunities up to individual institutions, offer them on a broad, Caritas-wide scale and make sure there is adequate advertisement for these activities.
- Offer the Speech Arts certificate at all institutions.
- Develop a counterpart to the Communications module for adults.
- Develop a study skills module.

After determining the problematic areas and analyzing the collected data, the Springboard Project Team believes that the above recommendations will help improve the program offered by Caritas and the other members in the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions.

Authorship

All three authors were fully involved in the survey and evaluation of the Springboard Program, sponsored by Caritas Adult Higher & Education Service, and equally wrote all sections of this report.

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Chapter I Introduction

Across the world, higher education is becoming increasingly important as a means of obtaining a competitive position in today's job market. As a result, the demand for admissions to higher education outstrips the supply in many countries. In Australia, the increase in demand in 2002 will not be matched by a similar jump in the number of university places (Madden, 2001). Greece is another country that has a giant shortage of higher education seats. Of the approximately 150,000 students who took university entrance exams, only 20,000 actually obtained a seat in a university, even though informed opinion believed that twice that many were qualified for higher education (Venables, 1996).

The Hong Kong educational system is also unable to support the large number of students who would like to pursue their education beyond secondary school. In particular, many students are not receiving high enough scores on the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), and the number of Secondary Five leavers is far too great to allow for all of these students to obtain placement in the post Secondary Five programs they desire. In the year 2000, only 18 percent of 18-20 year olds in Hong Kong were admitted to university, 34 percent if admissions to overseas institutions were included (Cheung, 2000). Rapid socioeconomic changes are directly responsible for this explosion in the number of students desiring higher education. An increased demand for skilled labor is forcing students to seek more training. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Tung Chee Hwa, said, "The root of the problem is that our education system has failed to evolve with the rapid social changes... To address this problem, it brooks no delay to implement our education reforms and upgrade the

quality of education” (The Xinhua News Agency, 2001). Mr. Tung also said, “We are failing to meet the needs of a knowledge-based economy. It is imperative we catch up” (Cheung, 2000). A program was created in Hong Kong to help alleviate some of these problems. This program, called Project Springboard, is a post-secondary education service designed for Secondary (or Form) Five leavers who do not perform well enough on the HKCEE to gain entrance into the next level of education. The program’s goal is to provide those underachieving students with some form of post-secondary education suitable to ‘springboard’ them into even further education, as well as to increase their standing in the job market. An evaluation of the Springboard Program is beneficial for assessing how well it is achieving its goals for helping to improve the program.

The Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service in Hong Kong is one of ten academic institutes that is currently offering the Springboard Program to the Hong Kong community. Caritas is interested in the effectiveness of the Springboard Program, and in particular, the program that they provide. The Springboard Program is intended to be a bridging program for Secondary Five leavers and adult learners to acquire a qualification that is comparable in standards to obtaining five passes on the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) for continuing education purposes. It is imperative to evaluate the effectiveness of the Springboard Program to determine if it meets the educational goals required to fulfill the demand placed by Hong Kong residents for post-secondary education.

There may be a lack of confidence or respect in the Springboard Program and its graduates. Statistics show that less than one percent of Secondary Five leavers apply to the Springboard Program (Chung, 2001). In addition, the program may not be producing

the intended results or at least leery employers and students fear that this may be the case (Cheung, 2001). Mr. Mervyn Cheung Man-ping, vice-chairman of the Hong Kong Association for Continuing Education, said that many Secondary Five students had doubts concerning the quality of the Springboard Program, even though the government had taken the lead in recognizing the qualifications it provided (Chung, 2001). The outcomes of the program can be improved if careful research is done to discover problematic areas and use this information to make improvements. Currently the Springboard Program is seen to be preparatory for entering the workforce, but it only opens up limited job opportunities. “Graduates can seek government jobs or higher education through associate-degree programs. But the scheme's critics say [the Springboard Program] is not being widely recognized by the business sector” (Cheung, 2001).

This project provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of Project Springboard, focusing on the four program objectives that have not been examined previously. Previous evaluation emphasis has been placed upon the first two objectives, which have been substantially analyzed by other parties. The Program’s six objectives are:

- Develop students’ knowledge and skills comparable to those who had satisfactorily completed S5 general education
- Enhance language proficiency for further studies and employment purposes
- Promote positive attitudes towards life and to have a sense of commitment to society
- Foster development in ethics, social and interpersonal skills
- Develop self-learning ability
- Develop a sense of appreciation for life-long learning.

Based upon the information gathered during the course of this project, recommendations have been made to improve the program to help it achieve these latter objectives.

Chapter II Literature Review

2.1 The Hong Kong Educational System

2.1.1 General Structure

The structure of Hong Kong's educational system consists of several phases which students pass through on their way to obtaining higher education (Tak Hoi Lam, Personal Interview, 2001). Generally, children from the age of four to five begin the first phase of the Hong Kong educational system with Kindergarten. After Kindergarten, students around the age level of six enter Primary School. This second phase of the Hong Kong educational system consists of many grade levels. The first level of primary school is known as Primary one, while the second year is known as Primary two and so forth. Upon completion of Primary six, a student, generally around the age of twelve, graduates from Primary School and moves on to the next phase of the Hong Kong educational system, which is Secondary School.

Each academic year in Secondary School is also known as a Form or also as Secondary X, where X is a corresponding grade level (Eva Tse, Personal Interview, 2001). Therefore, the first year of Secondary School is Form One or Secondary One. The next year is Form Two or Secondary Two. Eventually students, usually around the age of seventeen, will reach the end of Secondary school when they graduate from Form Five and take the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). The scores that Hong Kong students receive on this examination are the basis for decisions on how and if they proceed to the next phase, which is Secondary Six and Seven.

Students that perform well on the HKCEE are qualified to proceed to more prominent Secondary Six schools, also known as Form Six schools (Tak Hoi Lam,

Personal Interview, 2001). Students who do less well on the HKCEE are not guaranteed a spot in Form Six schools, and many times they must depend on luck to enter Secondary Six schools. Students who do enter Form Six schools move to Form Seven after completing Form Six successfully. At the end of Form Seven Hong Kong students take the Advanced Level examination, which is the basis for determining which universities they are qualified to enter (Hong Kong SAR Information Services, 2000).

2.1.2 The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination

The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination is one of the most important hurdles that a student will encounter in the Hong Kong educational system. “Whether you can get into Form Six is pretty much based on the result you get on the HKCEE” (Eva Tse, Personal Interview, 2001). Students begin to prepare for the HKCEE once they reach Form Four. The curriculum for Secondary School before Form Four consists of basic subjects that include Chinese (Cantonese), Putonghua (Mandarin), English, Mathematics, Science, Music, and Physical Education (Hong Kong SAR Information Services, 2000). Once a student has reached the level of Form Four, they may choose to study from a diverse range of subjects, approximately forty-three to forty-seven, from which they will be tested in the HKCEE.

Although the student has a wide range of subjects to choose from, once past Form Three, the students in the Hong Kong educational system are divided into different tracks (Eva Tse, Personal Interview 2001). For example, Liberal Arts is a track while Science is another. These tracks that students are separated into determine the core curriculum that they will be learning throughout their enrollment in Form Four and Form Five. The division of students into different tracks is not a clear-cut line, however. For example,

students in the Science track may be taking several classes in the Science track and perhaps one class in the Liberal Arts track.

Hong Kong students continue to study the subjects in their chosen field throughout Form Four and Form Five until they are tested on the subjects in the HKCEE (Tak Hoi Lam, Personal Interview, 2000). The structure of the HKCEE consists of tests on the subjects that students have been studying in the grade levels of Form Four and Form Five. Each student has a choice of how many subjects he or she is tested on in the HKCEE. However, due to the grading system of the HKCEE, around seven to nine is the usual number of subjects to be tested on for each student. Out of the chosen number of subjects on which the student is tested, the HKCEE only takes the six highest scores. Each grade that a student receives on each subject corresponds to a different number. The grading scheme is as follows:

A = 5 points	B = 4 points
C = 3 points	D = 2 points
E = 1 point (also known as pass)	F = Fail

Since the HKCEE takes only the six highest scores that a student receives out of the subjects on which he or she is tested, the maximum score that a student can attain is 30 points (Tak Hoi Lam, Personal Interview, 2001).

2.1.3 Entrance into Secondary Six Schools

Most Secondary Six schools generally look for a minimum score of 14 on the HKCEE as the basis for a student's acceptance into that particular school (Tak Hoi Lam, Personal Interview, 2001). Students who score well on the HKCEE tend to be more confident in applying for more reputable Secondary Six schools. Students who score less well or poorly on the exam do not have a definite position in Secondary Six schools and

quite often are not able to proceed to the next step in the Hong Kong educational system. One solution for those who cannot find a spot in Secondary Six schools is to enroll in vocational schools in the Hong Kong area or abroad. The Springboard Program is one of the many programs that serve as an alternative for those students who did not do well on the HKCEE.

An emerging problem in Hong Kong is the lack of Secondary Six spots available for those who did do well on the HKCEE (Wan, 2, 2000). In the year 2000, approximately 120,000 Hong Kong students took the HKCEE. Of those 120,000 candidates, about 50,000 students scored well enough to proceed to Secondary Six. However, only approximately 24,000 Secondary Six spots were available. Students who do qualify to enter Secondary Six but cannot obtain a spot are often forced to retake Secondary Five and retake the HKCEE. Another solution, enrolling in a vocational school, is one about which many students have reservations about for fear of lack of quality.

2.2 The Springboard Program

2.2.1 Introduction to Project Springboard

The Springboard Program is intended to be a means for continuing education for adult learners and also Form Five students who did not qualify to proceed to Secondary Six schools (Xinhua News Agency, 2001).

The Springboard Program was created in the summer of 2000 (Wan, 2000). It was initially funded by the government and amounted to a total startup expenditure of 200 million Hong Kong dollars (Cheung, 2001). The Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions currently organizes the Springboard Program (HK SAR

Govt., 2001). There are ten institutions in the Federation that have a Springboard

Program. These institutions include (HK SAR Govt., 2001):

1. Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service;
2. Division of Continuing Professional Education, Hong Kong Institute of Education;
3. Li Ka Shing Institute of Professional and Continuing Education, Open University of Hong Kong;
4. Lingnan University;
5. School of Continuing and Professional Education, City University of Hong Kong;
6. School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University;
7. School of Continuing Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong;
8. School of Professional and Continuing Education, University of Hong Kong;
9. School of Professional Education & Executive Development, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
10. Vocational Training Council.

These ten institutions and the Hong Kong government currently recognize the qualifications of graduates of the Springboard Program to be equivalent to five Passes in the Hong Kong Certification of Education Examination (Cheung, 2001). Therefore, after the completion of the Springboard Program, graduates can decide whether to continue their education in the institution where they graduated or to enter other institutions included in the Federation. Alternatively, instead of immediately continuing their education, graduates of the program are certified to apply for approximately thirty government job categories which include ambulance man, assistant officer 2 (correctional), dental surgery assistant, fireman, immigration assistant, and police constable (Chan, 2000). Although a graduate of the HKCEE may have more qualifications upon graduation than a Springboard graduate, the Springboard Program still serves as an alternative to entering the workforce, albeit with a job status below that equivalent to five Passes in the HKCEE. Students from the program will qualify for a

higher-level job than when they first entered the program, however.

2.2.2 The Curriculum

The Curriculum of the Springboard Program is different from the standard curriculum of the HKCEE (HK SAR Govt., 2001). The program emphasizes “biliteracy, and trilingualism,” in Chinese (Cantonese), English, and Putonghua (Mandarin), and also in information technology applications. All of the subjects offered by the program are divided into a system of modules. In order to graduate from the program a student must complete ten modules, each of which is a course itself. Seven of those ten modules are required core subjects consisting of designated topics such as Chinese, English (2 Modules), Putonghua, Information Technology Applications, Mathematics in Practice, and Communication Skills. The remaining three modules are electives chosen by the student. The Springboard Program offers approximately forty electives, which include computer networking, multimedia design, advertising design, business practices, insurance studies, accounting and many others.

Students who enroll in the program are divided into categories that consist of full-time and part-time (Chan, 2000). Full-time students are expected to complete the ten modules in one year, while part-time students are expected to complete the program in two years. Regardless, the ten modules needed to complete the program are anticipated to amount to a total of six hundred hours.

2.2.3 Overall Springboard Program Usage Statistics

The use of the Springboard Program in Hong Kong has declined since its establishment more than a year ago (Cheung, 2001). Cheung’s article in the South China

Morning Post revealed that the number of students enrolled in the program has decreased. In its first year, the Springboard Program recorded an attendance of 3,400 students, and each available place in the program was occupied. The following year the attendance was only 2,256 students out of 5,000 available positions (Cheung, 2001). Chung (2001) agrees with the statistics provided by Cheung when she says “ONLY 1 per cent of Form Five students will pin their hopes on the Project Springboard Program if they do not achieve the necessary qualifications for promotion to the Sixth Form.” In the same article, Chung describes a survey that was conducted from July 30th to August 1st, 2001, in which some 598 students were interviewed. The results of the survey showed that a low number of Hong Kong students would consider participating in the Springboard Program.

Both of the previous articles by Cheung and Chung describe a drop in the number of students who participated in the Project Springboard. Several reasons are hypothesized as to why the program does not attract Form Five students who have not met the basic Form Six entrance requirements (Chung, 2001). The most serious problem with the Springboard Program is reported to be recognition. Although the government has claimed that graduates from the Springboard Program will have earned the same qualifications as five Passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, employers still doubt the ability of those who have graduated from the program. Chan (2001) explained in Hong Kong Imail how Hong Kong employers felt that graduates from the Springboard Program had certain inadequacies compared to a graduate of the HKCEE. Graduates from the Springboard Program can expect up to a 3% to 5% lower salary than those who have graduated from the HKCEE.

Another issue that deters students from participating in the Springboard Program is the cost of the tuition. Association vice-chairman of the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions, Mr. Mervyn Cheung Man-ping, said, “participants in Project Springboard have to pay \$30,000 for the courses” for a full year’s tuition, while “students enrolling in Secondary Five and Six evening schools pay just \$1,220 to \$1,620 Hong Kong dollars a year” (Siu, 2001). Each of the ten modules offered by the Springboard Program is estimated to cost \$2,500 to \$3,000 Hong Kong dollars per student.

2.2.4 Caritas Usage Statistics

CAHES’ Springboard Program is offered at ten institutes on Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. The number of full time students who enrolled in the Caritas Springboard Program on the 9th of October 2000 was 1,365. Of those students, 896 were enrolled in the Certificate IT Support program, 343 were in the Certificate in Trade Operations, and 126 were enrolled in the Certificate in Logistics Management discipline. The total number of part time students was 208. Details of the October 2000 enrollment statistics are in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 October 2000 Enrollment Statistics

Total # of Students Enrolled	Cert. IT Support	Cert. Trade Operations	Cert. Logistics Management
13,695	896	343	126

The number of full-time students who enrolled in the Caritas Springboard Program on the 19th of February 2001 was 1,253. Of those students, 813 were enrolled in the Certificate in IT Support, 323 were enrolled in the Certificate in Trade Operations, and 117 were enrolled in Certificate in Logistics Management. The total number of part-

time students was 199. A comparison between the enrollment statistics of the first and second term would reveal that there was a drop out rate of approximately 8% in the full-time program. Details of the February 2001 enrollment statistics are in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 February 2001 Enrollment Statistics

Total # of Students Enrolled	Cert. IT Support	Cert. Trade Operations	Cert. Logistics Management
1,253	813	323	117

The average size of each class in the Springboard Program is approximately 30 students, while occasionally there are classes that have 20 or fewer students.

2.2.5 Caritas Certificates

From the ten Caritas institutes that offered the Springboard Program, students were able to attain a certificate from three categories (CAHES, March 2001). These certificates include: Certificate in Information Technology Support, Certificate in Trade Operations, and Certificate in Logistics Management. For each student to attain a certificate, they must take the required electives for that concentration as well as the required seven core subjects that are a requirement for all.

The Certificate in Information and Technology Support requires students to take electives focusing on the use of office related software packages and resolving simple hardware problems. The electives to be taken in this concentration, each a duration of 60 hours, are Office IT 1, Office IT 2, and Office Skills.

The Certificate in Trade Operations provides students with useful business knowledge and skills. The electives under this concentration are Import and Export Trade, Retailing, and Business Environment in Hong Kong.

The Certificate in Logistics Management is a discipline that is fairly new. Caritas

Adult and Higher Education Service (CAHES) has asked the Hong Kong Logistics Association to develop a course in this area. Due to the establishment of port and production facilities in the mainland, this concentration is gaining recognition in Hong Kong. The electives under this certificate are Principles of Logistics Management, Transportation and Warehousing, and Purchasing.

2.2.6 Caritas Term 1 & Term 2 Results

Table 2.3 Term1 & Term 2 Results

Subjects in Term 1	Number of students	Number of passed	Number of failed	Passing rate percentage	Mean score
English I	1368	1116	180	85.9	58.6
IT Applications	0.3	1007	89	92.1	73.6
Office Skills	799	716	31	96.2	75
Business Environment	229	213	7	96.8	67
Retailing	70	61	5	92.4	64.9
Principles of Logistics Management	41	36	5	90	57
Core Subjects in Term 2					
English II	1378	993	257	80.4	53.1
Chinese	1378	1143	111	91	61.5
Putonghua	1312	1066	127	91.3	60.9
Mathematics in Practice	1378	912	342	68.9	54
IT Applications	244	190	29	91	69.1
Communication Skills	1378	1134	120	90.9	62.7
Elective Subjects in term 2					
Office IT1	899	757	57	93.9	67.1
Office IT2	899	725	87	90.6	63.9
Office Skills	100	91	1	91	82.3
Import & Export	350	292	26	94.8	64.8
Retailing	280	239	19	94.5	68
Business Environment	121	89	15	88.7	55.6
Principles of Logistics Management	88	35	43	45.5	49.5
Transportation & Warehousing	129	82	33	71.3	58.7
Purchasing	129	82	34	71.3	55

The detailed statistics of subjects taught, number of students in each class, and

percentage of students passed in certain modules are summarized in Table 2.3. In order for students to complete a module, they must receive a final overall score of at least 50% in that module and also attend 80% of the class sessions. Results from a Caritas internal evaluation (see charts above) reveal that students in term 1 had a high passing percentage rate in the subjects of English I (85.9%), IT Applications (92.1%), Office Skills (96.2%), Business Environment (96.8%), and Retailing and Principles of Logistics Management (90%). A more comprehensive evaluation of the second term revealed that students had a satisfactory or high passing percentage rate in the core subjects of English II (80.4%), Chinese (91.0%), Putonghua (91.3%), IT Applications (91.0%), Communication Skills (90.9%) and Mathematics in Practice (68.9%). An evaluation of the elective subjects in term 2 shows that students had a high passing percentage rate in the subjects of Office IT1 (93.9%), Office IT2 (90.6%), Office Skills 91.0%), Import & Export Trade (94.8%), Retailing (94.5%), Business Environment (88.7%), Transportation & Warehousing (71.3%), and Purchasing (71.3%). The only evaluated class in the second term that had a low percentage of passing students was Principles of Logistics Management with 45.5%

Exactly 653 students graduated from the program the 1st term, representing 52.1% of all the students.

2.2.7 Graduation from Caritas

Upon graduation, students in the Springboard Program may enter the workforce in various job fields depending on what certificate they received. The Certificate in IT Support gives students credentials to obtain jobs relating to computer maintenance, clerical work, and information technology. Job categories associated with the Certificate in Trade Operations include retail, import and export, and shipping. Those students who

intend to receive a Certificate in Logistics Management can acquire credentials to obtain jobs relating to purchasing, logistics, transport, and warehousing.

2.2.8 Caritas Teaching

The Program Management Committee (PMC) gives a set requirement for teaching staff to meet. Each teacher should have a relevant degree and at least two years of work experience. In all institutions, candidates with teaching qualifications are preferred. As of August 31st, 2001, a total of 108 teachers were involved with the Springboard Program offered at the ten Caritas institutions. There were a total of 68 full-time teachers and 40 part-time teachers. In addition to providing teaching services, Caritas also makes available counseling and guidance services to students. These services include face-to-face meetings, group meetings, talks, and workshops.

2.2.9 Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) –Evaluation of Caritas

Quality assurance is an important issue that is being evaluated now in the Hong Kong Educational System. In particular, Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service performs bi-annual evaluations to determine whether the quality of their offered programs meets the needs of a changing society. One of these programs that undergoes yearly evaluations is the Springboard Program. Since the program is new, it is a necessity that it be evaluated so that those who enroll can graduate with the expected credentials.

The Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) is an independent body established by the government in 1990. The purpose of the HKCAA is to give advice to the government on the academic standards of degree programs in higher education institutions in Hong Kong and on educational standards and qualifications in

general (HKCAA webpage, 2002). The HKCAA has played a part in assuring that the quality of education in Hong Kong stays on the right track by evaluating and giving helpful recommendations to programs.

On January 11, 2001, the HKCAA provided an evaluation report to Caritas Adult and Higher Education Services discussing their Springboard Program's structure, design and content of individual courses, teaching and learning materials, modes of teaching, assessment methods, and other relevant aspects of course delivery (HKCAA Evaluation Report, 2002). The evaluation resulted in the acknowledgement of the Springboard Program having the ability to prepare students so that they graduate with the equivalent knowledge of a student receiving five Passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). Therefore, those students who graduate from the program would be eligible to apply for civil service vacancies that require five HKCEE Passes, including Chinese and English.

In addition to the recognition of Springboard graduates as being equivalent to students with five Passes in the HKCEE, the evaluation performed by the HKCAA produced a list of detailed recommendations that would improve the modules and the overall effectiveness of the Caritas Springboard Program.

Recommendations made to improve the quality of the program are as follows (HKCAA Evaluation Report, 2002). The course developers should review the aims and objectives of individual subjects to set these at more realistic and achievable levels. The learning objectives of the individual courses, as well as those individual programs, should be examined against the competency requirements of relevant jobs. The aims and objectives of each program/certificate should be set out clearly in relation to the

constitution of the program and the choice of electives. The curriculum developers should review the teaching hours with a view to increasing these for the core subjects as appropriate, with the possible exception of the English subject.

The HKCAA also constructed a list of recommendations for specific modules that needed improvement (HKCAA Evaluation Report, 2002). These recommendations are as follows:

English: The introduction of units on basic languages skills to build the student's minimum language foundation was suggested. Another recommendation was the greater use of small tutorial groups to facilitate more student-centered teaching and individual attention.

Chinese (Cantonese): The HKCAA recommended that the amount of written exercises in Units 1, 2, 3 and writing practices in Unit 5 should all be doubled.

Putonghua (Mandarin): To improve students' ability in "listening", it was recommended that a greater variety of "listening" activities should be provided.

Mathematics in Practice: The range of material covered in this module should be more diversified to make it more relevant to a greater variety of workplace situations.

IT Applications: On-line support of learning should be provided where necessary. Another recommendation was that there should be more performance assessment, which is more suitable for evaluation of students' skill proficiency.

Communication Skills: It was suggested that more teaching hours and lessons be added to this subject. Also, the syllabus should be focused on the basic concept of communication, the pattern, styles of communication and the skills of receiving and managing messages. There should be a reduction of mass lectures, and class sessions

should be run in small groups. Lastly, the content of the course should be more diversified to make it more relevant to a greater variety of workplace situations.

2.2.10 Results of Tracking Survey

A study conducted by the Division of Continuing Professional Education of the Institute of Education, a member of the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions (FCE), investigated whether the Project Springboard Program made any difference to students in 2000-2001. They also were interested in investigating how well the Program was received. The Project Springboard Program Management Committee (PMC) stated the goal of the Program is to “provide an alternate route for those who had completed Secondary Five with unsatisfactory results and those mature students who are 21 or above to obtain a formal qualification, which is comparable to five Passes in HKCEE, including English and Chinese, for employment and continuing education purposes” (Project Springboard Program Management Committee, 2001, p. 5). The FCE states that the two major objectives for obtaining this goal are: (1) to develop students’ knowledge and skills comparable to those who had satisfactorily completed Secondary Five education, and (2) to enhance language proficiency for further studies and employment purposes. Achieving these objectives would clearly make a difference in academic advancement and career path. It is also essential that the education is unbiased in terms of gender and age, and the students participating feel good about the education they are receiving (Wong & Yeung, 2001).

One part of the tracking survey was conducted via telephone (Wong & Yeung, 2001). The analysis of this survey was based on the responses of 2,416 students in the 2000-2001 sessions. Six questions were deemed to be key in analyzing these two goals,

these being:

- Did the Project Springboard Program make a difference in subsequent further study?
- Did the Project Springboard Program make a difference in subsequent employment?
- Did the students think that the program was recommendable?
- Did male and female students differ in their program achievements and subsequent further study and employment?
- Did mature students (those aged 21 or above when they started in the program) differ from younger students in their program achievements and subsequent study and employment?
- Was the Project Springboard Program able to differentiate between higher and lower academic achievers?

The analysis summarizes the findings of these six questions as:

- Students who obtained a full certificate in the Project Springboard Program had better opportunities for further study and at higher academic levels than those who only partially completed the program.
- Students who obtained a full certificate had better subsequent employment opportunities.
- Students who successfully completed the Project Springboard Program tend to recommend the program to their friends.
- The Project Springboard Program was gender unbiased. The passing rate was similar for males and females.
- The Project Springboard Program was age unbiased. Mature students age 21 or above did as well as younger students.
- The Project Springboard Program was able to differentiate higher academic achievers from lower academic achievers for more advanced academic pursuit.

The results of the survey indicate that some of the major objectives of the Project Springboard Program have been achieved. Although the tracking survey evaluated several factors of the Program, further evaluation of the Program should include the other important objectives predetermined by the Project Springboard Program Management Committee.

Another portion of the tracking survey was conducted via mail and was sent to nine of the eleven tertiary institutions from the Federation offering the Springboard

Program (Wong & Yeung, 2001). There were seven items in the survey:

- Items 2 and 3 asked about personal details.
- Items 1 and 4 asked about the student's previous education.
- Item 5 asked about the student's achievement in the Program.
- Item 6 asked about the student's study and employment subsequent to the Program.
- Item 7 asked whether the student would recommend the Program to friends.

The students' respective institutions completed the first page of the survey. Items 6 and 7, which corresponded to the students' current study and employment and whether they would recommend the Program to their friends, were collected through a telephone survey. Of 3,119 students attending the 2000-2001 Program, nearly 3,000 students were contacted. Of these contacted students a total of 2,416 responses (63% male, 37% female) were analyzed. This is a response rate of approximately 80%. Although the response rate is fairly high, this sample may not be representative, because it is based on an opportunistic sample rather than a statistically random sample.

The number of passed HKCEE subjects was compared between the sample population and the original population by using a chi-square test. The purpose of this comparison was to determine if the sample was a good representation of the actual population. The difference between these two populations based on this one criterion was determined to be 0.17. Those who conducted the survey felt it was difficult to believe that this sole criterion could be used to determine if the populations were similar. It is on this basis that they concluded that there was no significant statistical difference between these two populations.

The first question under analysis is whether the Project Springboard Program made a difference in subsequent study and subsequent employment. This can be

examined by looking at the students who obtained a full certificate (successfully passed all ten modules) and the students who did not obtain a full certificate. The Program would have been conducted successfully if students were able to excel in either or both study and employment following completion of the Program. The study shows that the number of students who moved on to full-time study after the Program was four times more for those who obtained a full certificate (64.3%) than for those who only partially completed the Program (15.7%). In pursuing part-time study, the two groups of students were about the same (both 10%). The results show that holders of a full certificate tended to attend relatively higher levels of study such as pre-Associate Degree, higher diploma, diploma, certificate, or Secondary Six (68.5%) than did those who partially completed the Program (15.5%). The results also showed that of the full certificate holders, 54% proceeded to studies that required five Passes on the HKCEE. This indicates that there was a remarkable enhancement of study opportunity for students who had done poorly on the HKCEE. These results are summarized in tables 2.4 – 2.6.

Table 2.4 Comparison of number and percentages of two categories of full-time students in subsequent study 1

Mode	N	Full Certificate	Partial Completion
Full-time study	1364	877 (64.3%)	214 (15.7%)
Part-time study	1364	141 (10.3%)	132 (9.7%)

Table 2.5 Comparison of number and percentages of two categories of full-time students in subsequent study 2

Level	N	Full Certificate	Partial Completion
Pre-AD	1365	135 (9.9%)	12 (0.9%)
Higher Diploma	1365	226 (16.6%)	14 (1.0%)
Diploma	1365	297 (21.8%)	59 (4.3%)
Certificate	1365	264 (19.3%)	126 (9.2%)
S6	1365	13 (1.0%)	1 (0.1%)
Repeat S5	1365	10 (0.7%)	16 (1.2%)
Repeat certain modules	1365	6 (0.4%)	64 (4.6%)
Other	1365	69 (5.1%)	54 (4.0%)

Table 2.6 Comparison of number and percentages of two categories of full-time students in subsequent study 3

Requirement	N	Full Certificate	Partial Completion
Course requires 5 HKCEE passes	1353	730 (54.0%)	54 (4.0%)
Does not require 5 HKCEE passes	1353	286 (21.1%)	283 (20.9%)

The question of whether the Program made a difference in subsequent employment was analyzed by looking at the job type, nature and salary for those students who obtained a full certificate and those who only partially completed the Program. For the analysis to reflect the actual advantage gained from attending the Program, student responses were limited to those who took up employment after the date of completion of the Program. This analysis provided a more realistic reflection of employment attributed to the qualification. The analysis showed that completion of a full certificate in the Program seemed to provide much better employment opportunities for both full-time and part-time occupations. This was independent of the job type and nature, but the monthly salary did not necessarily differ for those obtaining a full certificate and those not

completing the Program.

Assessment of student perception of the Program is important because the Program is self-funded, and a negative attitude would prevent its further development due to lack of interest (Wong & Yeung 2001). The percentage of students who found the Program recommendable was 62.7%. To determine whether the Program was found to be less favorable by students performing poorly, the responses from students who obtained a full certificate and those who did not were examined separately. The students who completed the Program successfully gave a 70% favorable response. The students who did not complete the Program successfully responded with only a 47% favorable response. The study uses a rating determined by ACEA NSW & NSW DSE, which states that a program is internationally recognized as being effective if the students provide a positive feedback of around 70%. Although the Program was considered as well received if only the students who successfully completed it are considered, overall the Program clearly fell short of the students' expectations (Wong & Yeung 2001).

The issue of gender differences was analyzed by looking at the achievement of male and female students in the Program and their subsequent further study and employment. There were more male students in the study ($n = 999$) than female students ($n = 482$). The passing rate was similar for the male and female students. There were more students continuing with full time study (about 80%) than part-time study (20%). It appears that males (68%) tended to take more demanding further studies than females (59%). Continuing on to an education that required five HKCEE Passes rather than an education not requiring this qualification was used to consider if the higher education was demanding. Both genders had a similar average monthly salary. The difference in males

and females continuing on to higher study seems potentially significant, but it was concluded by the study that there were no noteworthy gender differences.

The study compared mature students to younger students to determine if their achievement and subsequent study and employment were similar. Both groups had a similar number of students pursuing full-time and part-time study. The salary for employment after completing the Program for both groups was similar. More mature students tended to have a slightly higher salary. This can be explained by the fact that more mature students obtained jobs that required more responsibility and provided higher pay. The study summarized the comparison of these two groups by stating that the more mature students did as well as, if not better than, less mature students.

The final question the study attempted to answer was if the Program was able to differentiate between higher and lower academic achievers. The results show that the more subjects the students passed in their previous HKCEE, the more likely they would obtain a full certificate of the Program. For those who got a full certificate, the medians of subjects passed and total points in HKCEE were both 2, whereas the medians for those who only partially completed the Program were 1. An analysis of the variance, which compared the mean scores found statistically significant differences between the two groups of students for the number of HKCEE subjects and for total points obtained on the HKCEE. In summary, the students who did better on the HKCEE were more likely to get a full certificate from the Program.

It is apparent that the Program made a significant difference, as it enabled students to move on to further study and higher employment opportunities. It is encouraging to see statistically that so many of these students did move on. Additionally,

concerning employment, full certificate holders clearly had an advantage in getting full-time and part-time employment over those who only partially completed the Program.

Although the present tracking study illustrates numerous promising findings, it is important to note that only two of the major objectives of the Program have been evaluated. The other objectives of this Program, which include the perceptions, beliefs, and values of the students involved, are important but have not yet been evaluated. The missing evaluation of these objectives is a limitation to the existing tracking survey. A further evaluation will help assess the Program's other objectives.

2.2.11 Project Springboard Interim and Annual Project Progress Reports

Each year, the Springboard Program Management Committee (PMC) is required to submit two reports to the Education and Manpower Bureau of Hong Kong (EMB). The first is an Interim Project Progress Report, due after the first semester of the program, and the Annual Project Progress Report, due after the completion of the second semester of the program (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). For the first year of Project Springboard, 2000-2001, the interim report was submitted to the Springboard Program Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) in March 2001, and the annual report was submitted to the Committee in September 2001. These reports contain data collected via questionnaires given to students and teachers.

There were a total of 3,267 students enrolled in semester 1 of the program, and 238 of those students dropped out after the first semester, yielding a 92.7 % retention rate in the first year (PSPMC, Sept. 2001). Both reports indicated that over 90% of the students had less than five Passes in the HKCEE. Most students were 17 and 18 years of age (35.7% and 34.4% respectively) (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). At the time of the interim

report, 0.2% of the students were 16 or younger, 14.3% were 19 years of age, 5.4% were 20, and 10.1% were 21 or above. At the time of the annual report, those younger than 21 years of age were still in the majority, representing 86% of all the students (PSPMC, Sept. 2001). The change in age group percentages is a consequence of those 238 students who left the program after the first semester. 40.2% of the students were male, and 59.8% were female. 92% of the students surveyed completed Secondary Five, and 6.3% had studied beyond that level.

The overall passing rate of Springboard students was 53% after the first semester, and 61% by the end of the first year (PSPMC, Sept. 2001). Most modules have overall passing rate data that were evaluated in both the interim and annual reports. Chinese went from a passing rate of 100% to 86%, while Putonghua moved up from 88.9% to 92% (PSPMC, Mar. 2001, PSPMC, Sept. 2001). Mathematics in Practice showed a similar increase, going from 62.8 to 72%. The passing rates from the IT applications module stayed relatively the same, with 90.5% and 91% passing in the first and second semester, respectively. Finally, the Communications skills module had a small change, from 89.3% to 88%.

The interim report stated that students were most satisfied with the Chinese module, where more than 70% of the 102 students surveyed believed the subject was good overall. Two-thirds of all the students surveyed thought the courses were set at the right level of difficulty, but the pace of teaching was too fast. The particular courses where students felt the pace was too fast were Mathematics in Practice (45.8%) and Putonghua (41%) (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). The survey results from the annual report showed that most students (70-80%) found the content of the core courses to be practical

(PSPMC, Sept. 2001). The same report also showed that students were satisfied with the courses overall. The course by course satisfaction statistics were: English, 67%, Chinese, 76%, Putonghua, 78%, Mathematics in Practice, 72%, IT Applications, 67%, and Communication Skills, 76%.

When asked about their views on student support, 48.3% of the students felt that the counseling services were not useful, and 33.9% said they were helpful (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). A majority of the students did not like the provided extracurricular activities. 63.6% did not find them adequate, while 61.6% of the students felt they were not interesting. Most students believed the learning environment and the teaching equipment were adequate, 73.8% and 60.9% respectively. 56.3% of the students surveyed thought the venues were convenient. 71% of the students felt the staff were generally friendly, but 50.4% believed the communication between students and institutions was inadequate.

The minimum required qualification for Springboard teachers is a relevant degree and 2 years of work experience, with teaching experience usually required (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). 48.3% of the teachers surveyed had education at the Master level or above, and 53.5% had a teaching qualification. The majority had over 2 years of working experience, with the mean number of years being 8.7. The majority also had more than 2 years of teaching experience, with an average of 6.4 years. The students in general had high opinions of the knowledge of the Springboard teachers. When asked to rate whether or not “Teachers possessed good knowledge of the courses”, the results were very good, with means of 2.92 to 3.03 for various core courses, on a scale of one to four (PSPMC, Sept. 2001, p. 15). Students also felt the teachers were enthusiastic and helpful to students, with similar mean ratings.

The teachers had divided opinions on the Springboard courses (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). Only a little more than half (59.7%) of the teachers thought the course contents were well organized. The same percentage believed the courses were not well designed, while 46.5% felt the course materials were useful. Less than half, or 47.4%, of the teachers thought the assignments and assessments were set at the proper difficulty level. 71% of the teachers said the curriculum materials made by the Course Development Teams were not adequate. However, 62.3% of the teachers did feel the study load set for the courses was appropriate.

The teachers had positive outlooks about their teaching and the performance of their students (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). 72.5% of the teachers enjoyed teaching the courses. They thought 51% of their students were learning effectively, and 54.8% of their students had acceptable behavior in class. They also felt the program was being administered well. 72.6% thought classroom facilities were adequate, and 76.8% said the administrative support from institutions was also adequate. 84.2% also thought the communication between institutions and teachers was adequate.

In the data collected from teachers for the interim report, the teachers also had comments on the design of the Springboard courses. For English 1, teachers suggested that there should be more of a focus on oral and listening exercises, as well as practical work and communication skills. They also wanted more supplementary teaching materials, including the use of a set textbook for grammar (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). The final report revealed another problem with English, in line with the results from the interim report. Teachers felt they were required to design too many of their own teaching materials for the English module (PSPMC, Sept. 2001). For Chinese, the teachers felt

there were too many assessments in the course, and the scope of the course was too broad. They thought there needed to be more training in reading skills, and more written exercises were necessary. The teachers felt that the Putonghua module covered too many areas in too much depth and thus was inappropriate for many students because they might find it boring. Teachers, in general, found that the Mathematics in Practice course contained some confusing exercises, and more suggestions for classroom examples should be made. They also thought students should have to pass the examination to pass the module. In the Information Technology Applications module, teachers felt the students wanted to use English terminology, because the Chinese translations weren't suitable. Teachers felt there were too many materials provided, and there was not enough time to cover the entire syllabus. The teachers also desired that materials be provided in CDROM and HTML format. Finally, for the Communication Skills course teachers felt the course was too demanding. They thought that out-of-class activities would be useful, such as camping, to give the students an open opportunity to speak with each other. Teachers also wanted more suggestions for in-class activities, as well as more teaching materials such as videotapes.

Based on the results of the interim report, the Springboard Program Management Committee made several recommendations for changes to the program. Students and teachers all thought that the curriculum materials for the core courses needed some improvement (PSPMC, Mar. 2001). Overall, teachers wanted an increase in supplementary course materials. In terms of individual modules, there were a few desired changes. Most agreed that English needed much revision. There needs to be a greater focus on grammar knowledge, and a grammar book may be required. Chinese

was determined to lack sufficient difficulty, and more written assignments and examinations should be implemented. The Putonghua module needs to put a greater emphasis on basic concepts, such as 'pinyin' and the 'four tones', since most students have little experience with the language. The Mathematics in Practice module is almost too practical. Many students lack any experience at all in what is being taught, so it is difficult for them to solve real-world mathematical problems without having any real-world knowledge. More introductory exercises are required. Most suggestions for changes to the IT applications course involve the use of more CDROM and HTML resources, as well as the use of English terminology. It was determined that the Communication Skills module needs fewer exercises and an increase in out-of-class activities to give the students a chance to converse with classmates in a more informal environment. In terms of teaching issues, it is believed that more professional development is required, since approximately half of the teachers do not have any teaching qualifications. Even though many teachers created their own useful course materials, there is no guarantee that the students will learn.

Overall, from the results of the study, it was decided that there should be a greater amount of effort put into the development of the teachers' professional skills. Also, the teachers need more administrative support and need to have access to the proper teaching resources and materials. It was suggested that some changes are needed in the overall management of the program. A suggestion was made to break up the administrative and academic work of the Springboard into different projects, with each of the 10 member institutions of the Federation spearheading one project. Another suggestion was the creation of a central Springboard Program office to assist in the daily functioning of the

program. Finally, a committee was created to plan a new management structure for the program.

2.3 Similar Programs

There are currently a few other programs in Hong Kong designed with goals somewhat similar to the Springboard Program. One of these programs is the Youth Pre-Employment Training Program. In 2001, over 12,000 people applied for 7,000 open places in this program (Wong, 2001). This program was established in 1999 by Hong Kong's Labor Department and provides various employment-related training for school leavers aged 15 to 19 to improve their job standing. The program includes leadership, interpersonal, computer, and job-specific skills, as well as 20-40 hours of English, Putonghua (Mandarin), or Japanese language training (Chan, 2001a). Like the Springboard Program, the Youth Pre-Employment Training Program has no exam requirement for entry (Cheung, 2001). The program is popular, judging by its application statistics, but there are problems nonetheless. Chan (2001a) reports that employers in industries such as tourism, hotel, and catering, were dissatisfied with trainees' language skills. The Hong Kong Catholic Commission of Labor Affairs research officer Leung Kai-yin said the program might help improve the job prospects of its participants, but the types of employment options left much to be desired (Chan, 2001b).

Another program that aims to increase the job prospects of Secondary Five leavers is called the Assistant Training Program. The Vocational Training Council and the Employees Retraining Board of Hong Kong jointly organize this program (Wan, et al, 2001). The free program is designed to teach students information technology skills so that they will be better prepared before entering the workforce. It admitted 600 students

in 2001.

2.4 Evaluation of Education Systems

An evaluation of the Springboard Program will require an understanding of the underlying principles of conducting an evaluation study. Furthermore the evaluation will be applied specifically to the field of education. Methods to extract quantifiable data from the Springboard Program by using various instruments will be required. In particular, surveying methods such as interviews will serve as the primary instruments to investigate and assist in collecting data.

An evaluation can be viewed as a measurable judgment determined by a defined process. An example of an evaluation is a statistical analysis of objective data, which were obtained according to a research design and measured by instruments to ensure accuracy, reliability, and validity (Dressel, 1976). An outline of an approach to evaluation is as follows:

1. Identify and examine the values inherent in the program
2. Formulate the objectives, goals, and purposes of the program.
3. Determine the criteria for measuring success.
4. Define, obtain, analyze, and interpret data and other information.
5. Determine and explain the extent of success and failure.
6. Indicate the relationships between experiences during the program and the outcomes of the program
7. Identify unplanned and undesirable effects.
8. Determine the impact of the program and the impact of external, uncontrolled variables.
9. Recommend the alteration, replacement, or discontinuance of the program or of individual features of the program.
10. Set up a continuing review of program results.
11. Assess the value, benefits, or social utility of the program, objectives, and processes, and of the evaluation itself.

The demand for additional rather than repeated evaluation studies to assess the outcome of educational programs arises from many sources (Popham, 1974). Granting of

funds is often contingent upon evaluation in the case where government funding provides the basis of support. A motive often held by a school board, administrators, and teachers is that an evaluation study can be used to maintain something perceived as good. Another incentive for engaging in evaluation studies is to build upon strategies that appear to work, or to learn about and improve school practices.

Many people not familiar with the field of program evaluation assume that the purpose is to determine whether a program is any good (Anderson and Ball, 1978). However, evaluators look at collective evaluation as assessing the overall effectiveness of an operating program. Others see evaluation as a means to help improve programs rather than appraising their impact for policy decisions. There are six major purposes for evaluating educational systems (Anderson and Ball, 1978). These are:

1. To contribute to decisions about program installation
2. To contribute to decisions about program continuation, expansion, or “certification”
3. To contribute to decisions about program modification
4. To obtain evidence to rally support for a program
5. To obtain evidence to rally opposition to a program
6. To contribute to the understanding of basic psychological, social, and other processes.

A definition of educational evaluation as provided by the National Study Committee on Evaluation is “the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives” (Beggs & Lewis, 1975, p. 6). Teachers evaluate students when they assign grades. Principals evaluate teachers when they rate their teaching capabilities. Superintendents evaluate principals, and school boards evaluate superintendents. The evaluation process is a data gathering process. This fact is often forgotten or ignored. It is through the process of gathering information that educational measurement makes a significant contribution to

evaluation.

The purpose of evaluating a school system is to determine whether its educational programs meet the requirements set forth by the objectives established for them (Beggs and Lewis, 1975). If the objectives of the system are not met, changes must be made that will allow them to be met. The difficulty in evaluating an educational system lies in determining how the evaluation is to occur and what types of information must be collected to provide evidence that a school is or is not meeting the objectives that have been set forth.

2.5 Literature Review Summary

After conducting research on the above topics, the Springboard Group has attained valuable background knowledge that has bettered the team's understanding of the current state of the Hong Kong educational system that is related to the Springboard Program. This better understanding of the educational system will contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Springboard Program. Furthermore, the research accomplished on the evaluation of education systems has broadened the Springboard Group's perspective on how to approach the evaluation of the Springboard Program and programs of a similar nature. The integration of all of the research topics has built a foundation upon which the Springboard Group has constructed appropriate methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the Springboard Program.

Chapter III Methodology

The Springboard Project team decided to focus on the Springboard Program offered by Caritas Adult and Higher Education Services (CAHES) for practical reasons. After consulting with Mr. Selwyn Cheng, the Assistant Organizer for Academic Affairs of CAHES, he advised us to focus on their own Springboard Program due to time constraints and other hurdles. Therefore, the Springboard Project Team concentrated on three Caritas Institutes, which, for the sake of anonymity, are referred to as School 1, School 2 and School 3. The strategy for evaluating the newly developed program, 'Project Springboard,' consisted of two parts. These parts were to assess the internal and external viewpoints of the Springboard Program. An overall assessment of the effectiveness of the Springboard Program was then made based on the data collected through interviews, existing survey data, and direct observations of Springboard modules. The effectiveness of the Springboard Program can be measured through its ability to achieve its initial six objectives (see Chapter II). The first two objectives have already been analyzed by the previously mentioned existing surveys. This report looks at all six objectives, however it focuses on the last four objectives. The questions that were used to extract data pertaining to the objectives are provided in Appendix B.

The assessment of the Springboard Program consisted of interviewing the administrators, teachers, students currently enrolled in the program, graduates from the program, developers of the program, and members from the Program Management Committee (PMC). Furthermore, direct observation was used to study the implementation of Caritas' Springboard modules. Existing survey data provided by

CAHES were then compared to the data collected through interviews and direct observation.

The administrators, teachers, and students were selected from the three Caritas institutions in Hong Kong that were to be surveyed were identified with the assistance of Caritas. From each of those institutes, a minimum of one administrator, two teachers, and five students were selected for interviewing. Additionally, four Springboard graduates were selected from Caritas' Higher Education Foundation Certificate Program with the help of Caritas. The names of these administrators, teachers, students and graduates have been withheld for reasons of maintaining confidentiality. The content of these interviews (Appendix C) covered the programs' curriculum, strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement, and accomplishment of its objectives.

Administrators were interviewed because they were able to provide information specific to the curriculum. Teachers were interviewed because they were able to provide details relating to students' needs and how the program addressed these needs. The teachers were also able to detail how the curriculum was being implemented and modified. The students currently enrolled in the Springboard Program and the graduates of the program were able to provide a first-hand account of the program's implementation.

The developers of the Springboard Program and the members from the Program Management Committee (PMC) provided the project team with a basis as to how the last four objectives of the Springboard Program were to be achieved. Ms. Amy Chan, the former chair of the Program Management Committee, along with Mr. Selwyn Cheng, a current member of the PMC, and Ms. Catherine Li, the curriculum developer for the Communications module, were all interviewed to discuss the details of how the

Springboard Program would achieve the four objectives focused upon in this report.

The direct observation of the Springboard modules provided a first-hand account of the interaction between students and teachers. At each school visited, observations were made to obtain a direct view of how each module helped achieve the four objectives that were analyzed in this project. A Chinese writing module was observed at School 1. Next a Putonghua (Mandarin) module was observed at School 2. Finally, an English module was observed at School 3.

The assessment of the Springboard Program also consisted of interviewing employers of Springboard graduates and participants of other programs that were similar to the Springboard Program. Participants in this case included administrative staff working for that particular program.

A list of employers was provided with the help of CAHES. Employers were able to give us an idea of the marketability of Springboard graduates when compared to graduates from other educational institutions. These employers also provided information concerning the credibility of Springboard graduates' ability to meet the needs of the jobs for which they were hired. The titles and names of these companies and specific employers will remain anonymous for reasons of confidentiality.

The Youth Pre-employment Training Program (YPT) was the vocational program that was seen to be in direct competition with the Springboard Program. Students of this vocational program had the option of enrolling in the Springboard Program, however they chose to enter this vocational program instead. The participant interviewed in this vocational program was a staff member who provided information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of both that vocational program and the Springboard Program. Finally,

information concerning why a student would choose to enroll in that particular program over the Springboard Program was investigated. The name of the participant from the vocational school will remain anonymous for reasons of confidentiality. In general, both the potential employers and participants from other programs helped identify the awareness level of the Springboard Program among potential students, its strengths and weaknesses, and the possible improvements that could be made.

The data collected through interviews, existing survey data, and direct observation served as the basis for an analysis on the four objectives on which this evaluation focused. The information extracted from Ms. Amy Chan, Mr. Selwyn Cheng, and Ms. Catherine Li concerning the achievement of the four objectives was the foundation with which the content from the other interviews was compared. The interviews conducted with administrators, teachers, students, and employers identified whether or not the objectives of the Springboard Program were being achieved. In addition to the four focused objectives, other issues relevant to the effectiveness of the program were addressed as well when investigating the strengths and weaknesses. The combination of different data was used to determine:

- The affordability level of the Springboard Program
- The awareness level of the targeted audience
- The marketability of Springboard Graduates
- The level of commitment to society the students possess
- The level of development of ethics, and social and personal skills
- The level of development of self-learning ability
- The level of development of a sense of appreciation for life-long learning

The method used to extract data from the qualitative interviews was content analysis. Existing survey data were directly cited, as were the direct observation data.

Chapter IV Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The Springboard Project Team has collected information concerning the effectiveness of the Springboard Program through the use of existing survey data, qualitative interviews, and direct observations (see Appendix C for interview and observation data) of Springboard modules. This chapter details the results and discussion of the data obtained pertaining to the specific issues of the affordability of the Springboard Program, awareness of the Springboard Program, and marketability of Springboard Graduates. Furthermore, this chapter includes the results and discussion of how the Springboard Program achieves the six initial objectives the curriculum developers wanted the program to achieve. For confidentiality, the names of schools and interviewees will remain anonymous.

4.2 Future options of Springboard graduates

There are a few options for students who complete the Springboard Program. Graduates can directly enter the job market or can continue on to further study. Since Springboard graduates have qualifications equivalent to five Passes on the HKCEE, other options for education are opened up for them. One possible option is the Institute for Vocational Education, or IVE. Many IVE programs require five HKCEE passes. Some interviewees indicated that it was difficult for Springboard graduates to go directly to the IVE, because they would not be accepted based solely upon the five Pass credential. They would need to perform well in interviews and may also need letters of recommendation in order to enter the IVE. There are a few certificate or diploma

programs run by private organizations, but those do not have government recognition of any sort and may not have a large amount of recognition in the private sector either. Upon our arrival in Hong Kong, Ms. Amy Chan, Organizer of Academic Affairs for Caritas and the past chair of the PMC, provided the project team with a chart of Caritas' education pathways (Fig 4.1). Students that attend Caritas Springboard institutions have a pre-defined pathway for further education, which subsequently allows them to avoid the problems inherent in changing institutions. However, this pathway will result in a longer time for students to complete a full degree than if they had gone through the traditional route to university.

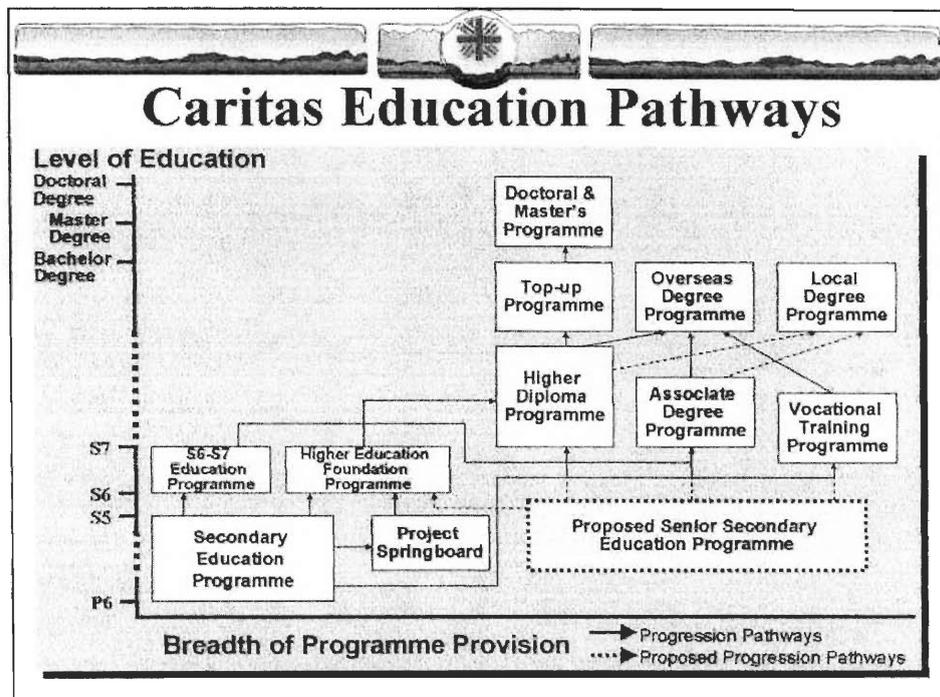


Fig. 4.1 Caritas Education Pathways (Amy Chan Presentation, Jan 2001)

4.3 Affordability

Caritas currently offers the Springboard Program for \$26,000. Their fee is

approximately \$4000-\$5000 less than the fee charged by the other institutions offering the Springboard Program. For the first three years the program is being offered, the Hong Kong Government is subsidizing the program by returning 30% of the tuition to the students for each module they pass. Since the program consists of ten modules, the amount of money returned to a typical student passing all of these modules at a Caritas institution would be \$7,800. This means successful students pay only \$18,200 for the program. After students spend their entire lives in government subsidized education, spending this amount for a non-university education seems to them excessive. Other educational programs, such as a typical university education costs approximately \$40,000 per annum, and the Associates Degree program, which lasts for two years, costs \$23,475 per semester. Although the Springboard Program is less expensive than these other educational pathways, the income a student could potentially earn after graduating from the Springboard Program is considerably less. This makes these students feel that the cost for the Springboard Program should also be less.

Ms. Chan said that even if the government does not renew the subsidizing grant, Caritas would continue to offer their Springboard Program. This is encouraging to hear, because it illustrates Caritas' strong support for their program. Since Caritas' institutions enroll the largest percentage of Springboard students, this also provides support for the program as a whole. She said that another source of funding for the program could potentially come from the Continuing Education Fund. She also stated that steps would have to be taken to reduce the program's cost to make it more affordable if the grant were not renewed. Some of her suggestions to decrease the program's cost were to reduce the elective modules and staff. Unfortunately these steps could potentially also decrease the

quality of the program.

The administrators, teachers and students each gave comments on the Springboard program's tuition. Their general consensus was that the program is overpriced, and as a result many of the students whom the program was geared to serve would be unable to participate. All of the students interviewed had friends or knowledge of people who had been interested in enrolling in the program but were unable to participate due to the high tuition. Students appreciated the government's efforts to help subsidize the tuition but felt the tuition was much too high for a program that was still being developed. Several administrators of the program felt that although the program was intended to be self-financing, the cost was too expensive. One administrator mentioned that students are able to apply for loans that cover the full cost of the tuition. One of the interviewed teachers thought that many of the institutions decided to offer the program to make money and that compared to studying for a degree, the costs are not reasonable. Since many of the Springboard Programs are more expensive than the program offered by Caritas, it is quite possible that some institutions are profiting from this program. The government's grant should not be taken into consideration when the institutions determine their fees, because doing so may result in price inflation.

Comparing the tuition of programs similar to the Springboard Program cannot be accomplished, because as Ms. Chan said, "The Springboard Program should be compared less to the formal Hong Kong educational system and should be treated more as a new qualification". Although this is her opinion, many students and employers still compare this program to others, and that is why they compare its tuition and skills provided to the other available programs. When talking to the graduates of the program, they expressed

that there was no alternative to education for their particular situation, so this program is filling a gap in the educational system. There are currently no other programs that receive recognition from the government as providing the equivalent to five Passes on the HKCEE.

There are numerous vocational programs offered by Caritas and the other institutions, but none of these provides a pathway after completion that can potentially lead to further studies. One of these particular programs is the Youth Pre-employment Program (YPTP), which is run by the Hong Kong Department of Labor rather than the Department of Education. This program provides no formal educational qualifications but rather leads to job placement. Since the government subsidizes the YPTP, the tuition of the program is free. If a five Pass equivalence and further study are not desired, then YPTP provides an excellent opportunity for obtaining work opportunities. Unfortunately the program is only able to accept about 10,000 students each year due to the funding and overhead constraints. Furthermore, only students from 15 to 19 years old can participate in this program.

4.4 Awareness

The Springboard Program was introduced to students through many different ways. These include newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, previous schools, friends, teachers, and parents. The students interviewed from all three institutes thought that most people knew about the existence of the Springboard Program but did not know about the program in depth. The majority of the students interviewed at School 1 and School 2 revealed that they wanted to join the Springboard Program because they could receive an academic standing of a student with five Passes on the HKCEE. However, many of the

students at the School 3 Caritas Institute did not know why they were at that school.

The project team believes that most students prior to entering the Springboard Program had heard about the program. However, they did not know much about the details of the program. The extent of most Secondary Five leavers' knowledge of the program is that upon graduation a student can receive an academic standing equivalent to a student who has received five Passes on the HKCEE. This seems to be the main reason why students wanted to attend the Springboard Program. Most students did not know how different the program's curriculum is compared to the Hong Kong formal education system, and furthermore, they did not understand that the Springboard Program's main purpose is to develop a student's work ethic and attitude towards life and at the same time teach skills applicable to daily life.

Most of the teachers interviewed in our evaluation had similar opinions on the awareness of the Springboard Program. The teachers generally thought that most people knew that the Springboard Program existed but did not understand the purpose behind its existence. Furthermore, most of the teachers believed that many people in society had bad impressions of the Springboard Program.

In particular, Teacher 1 said that there had been some negative comments in regards to the program, causing fewer people to enroll. He also said that he felt the program was still helpful, even though many people did not believe in it. Teacher 1 felt that the media tended to view the program in a negative light such as the fact that no universities or colleges in the Hong Kong area accepted the Springboard qualification as being equivalent to five Passes.

Teacher 5, an English teacher, identified another example of negative comments

about the Springboard Program. He said that at the end of the first semester of the Springboard Program, the government decided that graduates would have an academic standing equivalent to five Passes on the HKCEE. He believes that there were many negative comments about the program since the government did not make this decision until after the end of its first semester.

The Springboard Project research team saw a trend among the teachers who were interviewed in the evaluation of the program. Apparently, most of the teachers viewed the lack of awareness of the Springboard Program to be a weakness. Teachers believed that students as well as society as a whole did not have a good grasp of the curriculum and purpose of the Springboard Program. Furthermore, there are many jobs that require a new employee to have a Pass in a certain subject in the HKCEE. Many people believe that graduates from the program are not adequately prepared for those jobs that require Passes in specific HKCEE subjects. Due to negative comments by the media, parents are, therefore, hesitant to send their children to attend a program that might not provide an education worth the price of the expensive tuition. The Project team believes that parents may not realize that the Springboard Program is a stepping-stone for students who want to continue education where they can progress on to the next stage in the educational system.

Administrators 1, 2, and 3 had opinions about the Springboard Program that were similar to each other and similar to those of the teachers as well. In particular, Administrator 1 and Administrator 3 saw the lack of awareness of the program as one of its main weaknesses. Administrator 3 said that most people had heard of the program but did not understand the details of the program. This is due to the newness of the program.

People do not understand that the Springboard Program uses different teaching methods and curriculum to give students practical abilities that they can apply in their daily lives. Therefore, since there is a less academic focus, academic institutions are skeptical of the academic qualifications of students graduating from the Springboard Program. The opinions of Administrator 1 concur with those of Administrator 3, as he said that the Springboard Program is often confused with the Youth Pre-employment Training Program.

Ms. Chan and Mr. Selwyn Cheng, Caritas' current member on the PMC, had quite different opinions on the issue of the awareness of the Springboard Program. Mr. Cheng said that he did not think that employers and other post Springboard educational institutions knew enough about the Springboard Program. Furthermore, he also felt that there was a need for better marketing for graduates before employers would really know and understand Springboard graduates.

Ms. Chan, however, felt that there has been an adequate amount of advertisement of the program. She revealed that up to today, there have been three information sessions conducted to introduce the Springboard Program. The first session was in April 2000 with career masters, social workers, and principals. In April 2001, sessions with employers were conducted to introduce the program. Furthermore, Ms. Chan conducted several radio interviews as a way to give the program more publicity. After the end of the first year of the program, there was a televised award ceremony that had Chief Executive of the SAR, Tung Chee-hwa, in attendance, which was very good publicity for the program.

Administrators 1, 2, and 3 from different Caritas Institutes agreed with the

opinions of Mr. Cheng on the issue of awareness. Even though there have been several information sessions for career masters, social workers, principals, and employers, the administrators from the three institutes and Mr. Cheng felt that the potential students of the program were not fully aware of the details of the Springboard Program.

Three employers were interviewed on several topics including the issue of the awareness of the Springboard Program. Two of the employers interviewed, Employer 1 and Employer 2, knew very little about the program or had barely even heard about the Springboard Program. The third employer, Employer 3, knew that the program “provided opportunities for Form Five leavers or adult learners to pursue continuing education, and that the program was focused on practical skills rather than the normal HKCEE syllabus.”

Apparently, the awareness of the Springboard Program among these employers agreed with the opinions of Mr. Cheng, the teachers, and administrators of the program. Most of the employers had a very basic knowledge of the program and did not understand how the program worked and what it has achieved. Therefore, it seems that a better advertising campaign would help attract more Secondary Five leavers to the Springboard Program.

4.5 Marketability of Springboard graduates

The issue of marketability is defined as a person’s ability to get a job. The students from School 1 felt that their ability to get a job would increase because everything that they were learning in the Springboard Program would help them get a job. They felt that the Chinese, English, Mandarin, Mathematics, Communication Skills, and IT modules would all give them useful skills that would assist them in acquiring

employment. Also, they felt their marketability increased because many government jobs would be open to them, whereas this would not be true if they had not enrolled in the Springboard. They also thought their marketability increased in terms of future education. The five HKCEE Passes equivalency was very important to them, because that made future study possible. Educational institutions that required that qualification would theoretically be open to them after completing the Springboard Program.

The five students from School 2 who were interviewed also felt that the program increased their marketability, for both employment and future studies. Because the program gives qualifications equal to five HKCEE Passes, they believed they would have better job qualifications and would be able to go on to educational institutions that they could not have entered before the Springboard.

The second group of School 2 students, 21 in total, agreed that the program was increasing their marketability because the computer, language, and mathematics skills they were learning would help them get a job. They said the five HKCEE Pass equivalence would also allow them to continue their studies at other institutions.

The ten School 3 students interviewed felt differently from the other students. They were unsure if the program would help them get a job. They thought it was too difficult for any program to teach the skills required for a job, since every job would require different skills. They also thought that employers would not accept the qualification the program provided.

After conducting interviews with these students and observing classes at each of these three institutions, some key details were noticed. The School 1 Springboard students had the most positive attitude of the three regarding their future prospects, while

the students from School 3 had the most negative attitude. The class sizes differed markedly among those institutions. The School 1 classroom that was observed had only 16 students, while the School 3 classroom contained 34 students. The School 2 class that was observed held 25 students. These latter students' attitudes fell between the other two schools but were still mostly positive. The teaching quality did not differ greatly among the institutions. All the teachers were friendly, enthusiastic, and tried to involve as many students as possible. With 34 people in a classroom, as opposed to 16 people, it is much more difficult to involve each and every student in the class material. This indicates that class size is a very important factor in the effectiveness of the Springboard Program. It was apparent that the School 1 students got the most out of their Springboard education. It is the researchers' belief that the positive attitudes exhibited by those students are primarily due to a better teacher-to-student ratio, and consequently, a better classroom environment.

Teacher 1 felt that the Springboard is a very good opportunity for students who could not enter Form Six. Job requirements are getting higher and higher, and the program gives students who have no other options another chance at furthering their education and thus getting more of the qualifications they need to find employment successfully. He said that the program itself also increases students' job opportunities, especially for government jobs.

Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 felt that Springboard graduates would be better off than Secondary Five graduates in terms of job qualifications. Teacher 3 thought that the program allowed students who failed the HKCEE an opportunity to go on to study for associate's degrees, consequently helping their future job prospects. The same teacher

also felt that the practical education the program provides would give students the competence for either work or further study. Teacher 3 did think, however, that private employers may be concerned about the Springboard graduates' education, but they also may value their practical knowledge over their test results. Teacher 2 felt that the communication skills that the program provides would help the students' marketability significantly. Because the students would develop better communication skills, employers would be more willing to hire Springboard graduates in the future.

Teacher 4 said the program did increase the students' marketability. About 60% of passing students go on to further study, while 30% enter the job market. He felt that the government's recognition of the program was instrumental in increasing a student's opportunities upon graduation. Teacher 4 felt that students whom the program attracts really have no other opportunities without it.

Teacher 5 said the government recognizes and accepts the qualifications that the program provides but was unsure about the private sector. This teacher thought that even if students were not good at studying, the program might still give them another chance to better themselves. He felt that the Springboard Program was the only option for students who want to continue studying, because the five Passes qualification allows them to go on to other educational institutions.

Administrator 1 felt that Springboard students had an advantage in terms of marketability over Secondary Five graduates. He said the program teaches "the real life of work," practical skills, such as communication, that will help students throughout their lives. The government recognizes the five Passes qualification that the Springboard provides, so many government job opportunities are opened to graduates of the program.

Administrator 1 said that it might be difficult for Springboard graduates to move on to other educational institutions, because they would be competing for entry with students who did better on the HKCEE and Advanced Level examinations. However, Caritas students do have a pre-defined pathway for further education within the Caritas educational system, so they can always exercise that option.

Administrator 2 thought it is hard to gauge the marketability of graduates because the Springboard Program is so new. This person said that 30% of last year's students found jobs, but they were making low wages, and they could have gotten the jobs without the Springboard education. Administrator 2 felt that government recognition was good for Springboard students, because 31 government posts become open to them upon graduation. This administrator was unsure about the recognition that the private sector had for the Springboard Program's five Passes qualification.

Administrator 3 felt that Springboard graduates are very marketable, and the fact that around 30% of last year's graduates got jobs, with wages ranging from \$6000-12000 a month, was a good indication of this. This administrator felt that right now employers and other post Springboard Institutions are not sure about the abilities that Springboard graduates possess. However, it was Administrator 3's belief that this situation is beginning to change as more graduates enter the workforce as well as continue on to further study. Additionally, he said students would be able to continue their study at other Federation institutes, or stay within Caritas and enter the Higher Education Foundation Certificate Program, which puts them on a track to get a Higher Diploma and possibly go to university afterwards.

All of the teachers and administrators who were interviewed had very positive

attitudes about their students. They all firmly believed that the program was increasing the students' marketability, in terms of their future education prospects as well as future employment. Some of the teachers and administrators did have their doubts about the recognition that the private sector would give Springboard graduates, but they felt that was a product of the fact that the program has only had one batch of graduates at present. The teachers felt that students may have difficulty continuing on to other educational institutions after completion of the Springboard Program. This issue makes sense, because these students are competing with students that performed much better on the HKCEE and Advanced Level examinations, and at the moment, institutions will overlook Springboard students in favor of students who have gone through the traditional, established education pathway. These recognition issues can only change over time. Any new program needs time to gain acceptance, so in time, assuming the program's curriculum and aims remain the same, its graduates' marketability will continue to increase. It is curious that two administrators had opposite feelings about Springboard graduates who had been employed. They gave the same percentages of working graduates, but they felt differently about the quality of employment that the graduates had obtained. It is the project team's opinion that this is mainly a difference in personal beliefs. One administrator thinks that Springboard graduates are not getting adequate jobs, while the other administrator feels that those jobs are suitable.

Employer 1 felt that experience is more important than grades when evaluating new hires. Therefore, a Springboard graduate would have an advantage over a Secondary Five graduate due to some extra, practical education. Employer 2 felt that the language skill of the Springboard students they had hired was comparatively better than similar

program graduates or other Form Five leavers. Also, the employer said that the Springboard graduates had shown confidence when speaking in English or Putonghua in their job interviews. Employer 3 knew little of the Springboard Program and said that the vast majority of workers in the hotel where he works already possessed university degrees. That particular establishment would be extremely unlikely to accept any Springboard graduates, because they had not even employed Form Five graduates in 10 years. Employer 3 thought that there were enough people looking for work with university degrees such that there was no need to hire people without a degree.

Each of the three employers is in a different industry, which may have an impact on the types of people they would employ. It is the opinion of the researchers that this industry factor is small, since the job position that seems the least difficult, the hotel position, is the one that is demanding the highest education level. The hotel employer said that they are looking for university graduates to fill receptionist positions, for which they are overqualified. Also, the beliefs of each employer affect the types of qualifications and skills that a particular employer is looking for. The project team believes that the job requirements used to screen potential employees are based mainly upon the beliefs of the human resource personnel in charge of the hiring process. As time goes on and more Springboard graduates are employed, the opinions of human resource personnel may change and be more open to hiring such graduates, assuming new graduates continue to perform as well as employed graduates have been so far.

4.6 Objective 1: Develop students' knowledge and skills comparable to those who had satisfactorily completed Secondary Five education

The Springboard graduates were of the opinion that the Springboard Program

focused on different skills than a Secondary Five education. This only makes sense, because these two programs clearly have different objectives. The Springboard Program does not attempt to provide equivalent language skills and study opportunities, but rather gives students a needed boost to continue their learning and open up new employment opportunities. The graduates stated that they were positive the knowledge they received in the Springboard Program was not the same as a Secondary Five education. Since these graduates had previously been unable to satisfactorily complete Secondary Five, it would be pointless for the Springboard Program to be a repeat of their previous schooling. Although the Springboard students gain unique skills, these have proven to be useful, as illustrated in the tracking survey (see Chapter II.). These skills are comparable to a Secondary Five education in that they open up similar employment opportunities and a route for further study. However, the path to further study is quite different from the traditional one.

4.7 Objective 2: Enhance language proficiency for further studies and employment purposes

Several employers of Springboard graduates who were interviewed felt that the program had prepared the students satisfactorily for employment. The graduates clearly have employment opportunities available to them, as shown in the tracking survey that illustrated approximately 30% of the graduates received employment directly following graduation. This study revealed that further studies were pursued by 60% of the graduates and only 10% of the graduates were unaccounted for. The employers who had not employed Springboard graduates stated that the program did not provide suitable language skills and that further education would be required. Since every job clearly has

different demands, it is necessary for these graduates either to pursue jobs that are suitable for their level of education or to continue educating themselves. There is a clear education pathway for Springboard graduates who desire further studies. This means that the students should have a level of language proficiency that would allow them to continue studying. Students graduating from the program felt less optimistic about their language proficiency. Their greatest language difficulty was with spoken English, which was evident during interviews with the graduates. They felt that the Springboard Program did not increase their proficiency, but rather opened doors for them by allowing them to continue on to further studies. These graduates felt that obtaining a job requiring proficiency in English would be very difficult without pursuing higher education.

4.8 Objective 3: Promote positive attitudes toward life and provide a sense of commitment to society

In an attempt to investigate how the Springboard Program promotes positive attitudes toward life and provides a sense of commitment to society, a previous member and current member of the PMC were interviewed. These interviews were intended to provide details as to how the program was developed to meet this objective. Ms. Amy Chan of Caritas said, “The Communications module was designed to promote positive attitudes towards life and build a sense of commitment to society. Students learn more about themselves in this module and learn to respect themselves more. In turn, they develop a sense of responsibility to society, family, co-workers, and friends. They develop interpersonal skills.” Mr. Selwyn Cheng of Caritas believes the program “...shows the students they are not neglected, that there is always a way out. It shows there is still hope after performing poorly on the HKCEE. Without any qualifications,

many students... can join 'bad elements' of the society. The program helps give them employable skills..."

Since Ms. Chan pointed out that the Communications module was designed to meet Objective 3, one of the authors of the Communications module, Ms. Catherine Li of Caritas, was interviewed to find out how she had incorporated these elements into its curriculum. She said, "The program does this through all the different activities, projects, and assignments that students need to complete. They [teachers] remind the students to ask themselves to look to the positive side of themselves and to overlook and overcome the bad things." The Communications module, as described by Ms. Li, helps students to understand themselves better, to build up confidence and self-respect, and to learn communications skills, which will help them interact with others. The course material consists of 4 units for the whole academic year. The first unit focuses on self-exploration and self-understanding. The second unit focuses on building a student's family communication skills. The third unit of the module focuses on developing a student's basic communication skills. Students learn how to locate themselves in a group, how to interact with others, how to handle stress, and other communication and listening skills. The fourth unit of the Communications module concentrates on developing specific interpersonal skills. Students learn how to maintain relationships, how to take/give compliments/criticism, how to solve conflicts, how to convince people, and the concept of balance of power.

The students gain a commitment to society through the respect they develop for themselves and the respect they develop for others. The graduates of the program stated that the communications module placed an emphasis on developing these skills and that

they were taught how to respect themselves and others. When talking to students currently enrolled in the program, they listed numerous objectives of the communications module as things they had learned; this was very encouraging. The communications module develops these skills, so it is evident that the Springboard Program is achieving this objective for at least some students.

Another way of developing a sense of commitment to society can be accomplished through activities such as community service. The administrators of the program all mentioned community service opportunities being made available to the students participating in the program. It is reassuring to know that this aspect is being implemented in the program, but many students were unaware of these opportunities and stated that they would like to see more of them made available.

4.9 Objective 4: Foster development in ethics, social, and interpersonal skills

One of the objectives that the developers of the Springboard Program hoped it would achieve is to foster development in ethics, social, and interpersonal skills. The PMC, students, teachers, and administrators of the Springboard Program felt that the Communications module was designed to achieve that goal. In particular, a group of students interviewed at School 1 felt that one of the strengths of their program was the Speech Arts Certificate, a concentration of the communications module, which was offered only at that institute. The students felt that the Speech Arts concentration developed their communication skills through the use of group discussion and role-playing. Interviews conducted with other groups of students from other institutes that did not have a Speech Arts concentration revealed that while they did not have negative feelings about the Communications module, they were not enthusiastic about it either.

Students at School 1 were more comfortable speaking English than the interviewed students at other institutes.

Ms. Li feels that since the curriculum of the general Communications module stresses presentations, students become more comfortable with public speaking and, in turn, become more outgoing. Students studying this module are also required to complete group projects. Therefore, there is a great deal of interaction with other students which helps build their social skills. Furthermore, Ms. Li feels that the Communications module develops a student's interpersonal skills through its curriculum. For example, certain parts of the curriculum are devoted to enhance a student's ability to communicate and deal with family situations. For example, students often participate in role-playing activities that give them practice in dealing with situations that require communication skills.

Mr. Cheng also believes that the Communications module helps foster development in ethics, social, and interpersonal skills through its curriculum and activities. Furthermore, he feels that the Springboard Program as a whole integrates the concept of ethics into its curriculum. The course material that students learn gives them a sense of right and wrong. Ms. Li and Mr. Cheng both agree that the Communications module helps build students' ethics, social, and interpersonal skills. For example, in the Communications module students learn to develop their Communication skills. They are taught how to interact with their families, friends, and co-workers and in turn, a sense of morals is developed as students learn to care for their loved ones and act appropriately in society. .

The interview data show that the students interviewed at School 1 viewed the

Speech Arts Certificate with high regard and indicated that if the Communications module and Speech Arts concentration were implemented correctly, then good communication skills could be developed. Since School 1 is the only institute that offers a Speech Arts Certificate, other institutes may not view the Communications module as a strong aspect of the program. For example, a group of students from School 3 felt that the Communications module from that school was less than suitable for their needs.

The development of a student's ethics, social, and interpersonal skills extends beyond the Communications module. Ms. Chan feels that since the size of classes at School 1 are relatively small, the student/teacher relationship is very close. Students are able to express themselves more easily in smaller classes, and teachers are able to concentrate more on each student. Therefore, Ms. Chan feels that interpersonal and social communication skills are developed.

Of the three schools that were surveyed by the project team, School 1 had the smallest class sizes (approximately 15 students), while the classes observed at School 2 and School 3 were quite large, with approximately double the number of students per class. The project team's observations indicate that the student/teacher relationship was closer in the smaller classes at School 1 than at the other institutes with larger classes. Ms. Chan's opinion on the relationships between students and teachers is consistent with the class observations that were made.

4.10 Objectives 5 & 6: Self-learning ability, sense of appreciation for lifelong learning

The students from School 1 showed that Objectives 5 & 6 were being accomplished more than any other group of students interviewed. They enjoyed the

Communication Skills module and felt that it did help them learn about themselves, and gave them more confidence and self-esteem. Ten of the students planned on continuing their studies after graduating from the program. One student in particular reiterated these objectives almost verbatim. He said that the Communication Skills module helped him learn about himself and helped him increase his self-esteem. He also said that he was still young, and he wanted to continue learning as long as he could.

The opinions of the students at School 3 were at the other end of the spectrum. They thought the teacher of the Communication Skills module was “horrible.” Consequently, they did not pay much attention in that class and did not get anything out of it, starkly contrasting with what the School 1 students felt. None of them felt like the program gave them a desire to continue learning for the rest of their lives. They were just enrolled in the program to get whatever opportunities the five Passes qualification could provide them for the future. They did not care much about what the program was trying to teach them. They just wanted to get it over with and get the five Passes.

The opinions of these students on this issue mirror their feelings on the marketability issue. School 3 had a much larger number of students per classroom, and the students were just not involved in the classroom activities in general. School 1 had a small class size, and all the students were attentive and were getting much more out of their Springboard education. As mentioned before, based on the project team’s observation of the class, the teaching quality did not differ markedly among the institutes. The main difference was just the number of students in each classroom, with the smaller classroom’s students having much more positive attitudes.

Teacher 1 felt that the program did help students learn about themselves and build

self-confidence, so they would have the resolve either to apply for a job or to continue on to further studies.

Teacher 3 felt that the Communications Module helped the students learn about themselves, gain self-esteem, and achieve self-actualization. This teacher felt the education that the module provides is broad and effective.

Administrator 2 felt that the program helps students learn studying skills and communication skills to increase their confidence. This person thought that the students were very passive, after failing to perform in Hong Kong's traditional educational system, and they needed to increase their confidence to be able to continue learning and/or get a job. This administrator felt the program did help the students achieve this goal.

Administrator 3 felt that Springboard students learn useful skills that will not get outdated and will be beneficial for their entire lives. This person added that one of the weaknesses of the program is that it does not adequately convey the idea of lifelong learning. The administrator thought there should be a module to teach study skills and attitudes. However, Administrator 3 mentioned that the idea of lifelong learning was spread throughout the core modules, and that the communication skills module was working effectively in helping the students understand themselves and build up their confidence. The administrator felt that the Springboard Program gives students who failed in Hong Kong's traditional education system another year to "rebuild themselves."

Ms. Chan feels that the program exists to help the students who failed in Secondary school learn how to learn. Their poor performance in that earlier environment caused them to lose interest in learning, and the program tries to fix that using nontraditional methods. She believes that the program teaches practical knowledge

which the students can apply to their lives instantly. This ability will make the students more open to learning practical material and will then open them up to learning again. She said that the results of the tracking survey conducted after the first year of the program show good feedback on students after they finished the program, as 60% of the passing students went on to further study.

Mr. Cheng felt that the project-oriented nature of the program helps students develop self-learning ability and a sense of appreciation for lifelong learning. The students must collect data, analyze them, and give a presentation on what they learned from the project. He said this type of approach to learning is very different from what students did in Secondary school. He feels that giving them research projects in areas that interest them helps them learn useful skills. If the students see that they can do work and learn, while still being interested, they will increase their motivation to learn and to continue learning.

Ms. Li feels that the module helps build up the confidence of the students. The material presented in the module tries to give the students the idea that it is acceptable for them to have had poor academic results, because they can find other aspects of themselves where they can excel. She said that students had reiterated the concept of lifelong learning back to her, and most students were exhibiting in their behavior that these objectives had been met. Also, she said a large portion of students continue on to further study, which is another indication that these goals are being reached.

4.11 Overall Discussion

The measurement of the four objectives is very subjective. Only time will truly tell if they are being achieved. At the moment, there are some indications that these

objectives are being met, but the extent to which they are being met is not accurately known. Differences already exist in the performance of students among Caritas Springboard institutes. Students from some institutes have shown that the objectives are being met by some more than by others. At present, comparing the three institutes examined, School 1 students are producing the best results, and, to the researchers' surprise, some students reiterated these objectives nearly to the letter. Again, the most important difference observed among institutes was the number of students in each class. Neighborhood and societal differences may also play a part, but based on observing and interacting with students, there did not seem to be great differences in the backgrounds of the students at the three institutes that were visited.

Chapter V Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

Affordability

- The tuition for the program is too expensive.

Awareness

- Students, parents and society have little knowledge of the details of the program.

Marketability of graduates

- Employers are not aware of the qualifications this program provides, and students do not know enough about possible employment opportunities after graduation from the program.

Develop students' knowledge and skills comparable to those who had satisfactorily completed Secondary Five education

- The students' knowledge and skills are comparable, but not equal to those satisfactorily completing Secondary Five education.

Enhance language proficiency for further studies and employment purposes

- The graduates are capable of pursuing further studies and employment.

Promote positive attitudes toward life and provide a sense of commitment to society

- The program needs to have more involvement with society.

Foster development in ethics, social, and interpersonal skills

- The Speech Arts module enhances students' social and interpersonal skills.
- The Communications module is not intended for adult students.

Self-learning ability, sense of appreciation for lifelong learning

- The program does not adequately transmit the idea of self-learning ability, and a sense of appreciation for lifelong learning, and would benefit from having a "Study Skills" module.

Recommendations:

Affordability

- The program's cost should be reduced and fundraising activities should be considered.

Awareness

- Informational sessions should be provided at schools and parents should be invited to these sessions. A more extensive advertising campaign, placing advertisements in magazines, newspapers, on television and on the radio should be developed.

Marketability of graduates

- Extensive information should be given to employers about what the program provides its students.
- Job fairs should be organized to introduce students to possible employers.

Develop students' knowledge and skills comparable to those who had satisfactorily completed Secondary Five education

- It is necessary to increase the public's awareness to prevent any misunderstandings that exist concerning the knowledge and skills possessed by the program's graduates.

Enhance language proficiency for further studies and employment purposes

- A list of employers and educational programs that have accepted Springboard graduates should be provided to current students to show them what future places are appropriate for their language proficiency.

Promote positive attitudes toward life and provide a sense of commitment to society

- More community service opportunities should be offered, on a broad, Caritas-wide scale with adequate advertisement for these activities.

Foster development in ethics, social, and interpersonal skills

- Offering the Speech Arts certificate at all institutions should be considered.
- A Communications module for adult students should be developed.

Self-learning ability, sense of appreciation for lifelong learning

- A study skills module should be developed.

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Appendix A Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service

Caritas is a worldwide Catholic service organization that tends to the needs of all people, but most importantly to those of the poor, neglected and downcast (Caritas-Hong Kong, 1998). They strive to extract individual talents and abilities and to surmount the difficulties of those in need of their services. The services offered are uninfluenced by the participants' race, sex, religion and ideology. In fact, Caritas sees one of its purposes as that of breaking down divisions and changing selfish and unjust structures. The virtues they set forth are those of compassion, reconciliation, forgiveness and friendship.

Presently Caritas – Hong Kong consists of over 300 service components, which include services for refugees and services for the elderly, to name just a few (Caritas-Hong Kong, 1998). These service components operate in over a hundred locations and the annual budget for these programs exceeds a billion Hong Kong dollars. The majority of the funding for these programs is raised within Hong Kong. Caritas is reliant on the Hong Kong government for a substantial portion of this funding, as well as on participants of its various programs. Annual fund raising and donations are also primary sources for the continuity of their operations. Praise and support are obtained from the Government as a result of the devoted staff, volunteers and donors that realize these significant programs.

Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service (CAHES) is a branch of the Education Division of Caritas – Hong Kong (Caritas-Hong Kong, 1998). Caritas added this service in 1963. At that time they recognized the rapid societal advances that were being made and likewise stated their mission as being “committed to facilitating the growth of the learning society through promoting lifelong education”. Currently CAHES

has a total of 26 colleges that are registered with the Education Department of Hong Kong and eight of these colleges offer fulltime programs. These schools provide education and retraining services to the various local communities throughout Hong Kong.

With the introduction of Project Springboard, Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service was one of ten institutions willing to implement this newly developed program (HK SAR Govt, 2001). In doing so, Caritas become one of the founding programs, and as a result the program that has barely been in existence for two years has had little time to evolve. Although Caritas consists of over 300 services and each service consists of numerous programs, it is this program in particular that demands the attention of our IQP group due to the numerous educational reforms that are currently underway in Hong Kong.

Appendix B Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol 1

Employers of Springboard Graduates

Questions:

1. What company are you associated with?
2. What position do you hold in this company?
3. What is your awareness of the Springboard Program?
4. How many Springboard Program graduates are you currently employing or have employed?
5. What are your opinions on the abilities of Springboard Graduates compared with the skills of graduates of other similar vocational programs?
6. How do graduates of the Springboard Program compare to graduates of secondary five schools that received approximately five passes on the HKCEE?
7. How do you feel about employing graduates of the Springboard Program?
8. What programs would you recommend to acquire employees from over the Springboard Program? And why?
9. How do you think the Springboard Program could better prepare their students to enter the workforce?
10. What are the most important qualities you look for in new hires?
11. Given our explanation of the Springboard Program, do you think this type of education will be useful for potential applicants to your company?

Interview Protocol 2

Caritas Springboard Program Students

Questions:

1. What was your awareness of the Springboard Program before you entered it?
2. Who did you hear about the Springboard Program from?
3. Did many of your schoolmates know about the program as well?
4. Why did you choose the Springboard Program over other similar programs that achieve the same purpose?
5. What do you like about the Springboard Program?
6. What do you not like about the Springboard Program?
7. What do you like, or what don't you like about the curriculum that the program currently has?
8. What are the skills that you are learning that will benefit you in obtaining a job?
9. Do you think the Springboard Program has helped develop your social and communication skills? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
10. How much does your program cost?
11. How do you feel about the affordability of the program?
12. Do you feel that the education that the Springboard Program provides is sufficient for students at your age level?
13. What do you plan to do after completing the Springboard Program?
14. Do you think the Springboard Program makes you want to continue your learning for the rest of your life? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
15. How do you view the quality of teaching in the program?
16. How difficult do you think your classes are?
17. Does your school sponsor any volunteer work or community service? If so, what kind? If not, do you think they should?
18. Do you read newspapers or books on a regular basis?

Interview Protocol 3

Caritas Springboard Program Teachers

Questions:

1. Which modules do you teach at the Institutions?
2. What academic degree (or degrees) do you have?
3. How long have you been teaching overall, and how long have you been teaching the Springboard Program?
4. Do you think the teaching requirements of Project Springboard are high enough? If no, why not?
5. What are your opinions on the overall teaching quality of the Springboard Program?
6. What revisions in the modules that you are teaching now have you been informed of?
7. Have these revisions taken place?
8. What are the strengths of the Springboard Program?
9. What are the weaknesses of the Springboard Program?
10. How do you feel about the price of the tuition compared to the level of education that the students are receiving?
11. What are your opinions on the marketability of Springboard students after graduation from the program?
12. Do you think the language proficiency of students is suitable for further study or employment? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
13. What is the awareness level of the Springboard Program to the common graduate of a Secondary Five School?
14. How does the curriculum of the Springboard Program differ from the curriculum of other similar programs?
15. Does your school offer any kind of volunteer work or community service opportunities for the students?

Interview Protocol 4

Administrators of the Springboard Program

Questions:

1. How long have you been involved with Caritas and in particular the Springboard Program?
2. What are the strengths of the Springboard Program?
3. What are the weaknesses of the Springboard Program that could be improved upon?
4. What other programs exist that are similar to the Springboard Program?
5. What is the marketability of a Springboard graduate compared to a graduate of a similar program?
6. What are your opinions on the awareness that students, possible employers and other educational institutions have of the Springboard Program?
7. How much does the tuition for your Springboard Program cost?
8. What kind of community service or volunteer work programs do you offer to your students, if any?
9. What are the current changes that are being made to improve the Springboard Program?
10. What changes do you see being made in the future?
11. If the government decides not to support the Springboard Program after the 3rd year of the initial grant, will the cost of tuition be raised? How do you see this affecting the Springboard Program?

Interview Protocol 5

Members (or Ex-Members) of the Program Management Committee

Questions:

1. How long have you been involved with Caritas and in particular the Springboard Program?
2. What are the strengths of the Springboard Program?
3. What are the weaknesses of the Springboard Program that could be improved upon?
4. What other programs exist that are similar to the Springboard Program?
5. What is the marketability of a Springboard graduate compared to a graduate of a similar program?
6. One of the objectives of the program is “to promote positive attitudes towards life and to have a sense of commitment to society.” How does the program try to achieve this?
7. Does the PMC try to arrange, or sponsor any volunteer work or community service programs for students in any of the Springboard Institutions? Or, is that decision left up to the individual institutions?
8. Do you think the PMC should help administer any volunteer work or community service programs?
9. Another objective of the program is “to foster development in ethics, social and interpersonal skills.” How does the program try to achieve this?
10. The last two objectives of the program are “to develop self-learning ability” and “to develop a sense of appreciation for life-long learning.” How does the program try to achieve these?
11. What are your opinions on the qualifications required of Springboard teachers, and of the general quality of current teachers?
12. Do any changes need to be made in regards to the teachers? If so, what kind?
13. What are your opinions on the awareness that students, possible employers and other educational institutions have of the Springboard Program?
14. Do you think that employers and other educational institutions are recognizing the qualifications that the program provides? If no, why?
15. What are the current changes that are being made to improve the Springboard Program?
16. What future changes, if any, have been discussed at PMC meetings?
17. If the government decides not to support the Springboard Program after the 3rd year of the initial grant, what do you see happening to the Springboard Program?

Interview Protocol 6

Communications Module Curriculum Developer

Questions:

1. How long have you been involved with Caritas and in particular the Springboard Program?
2. Would you give a description of the curriculum and exercises in the Communications module?
3. What are the strengths of the Communications module in the Springboard Program?
4. What are the weaknesses of the Communications module in the Springboard Program that could be improved upon?
5. One of the objectives of the program is “to promote positive attitudes towards life and to have a sense of commitment to society.” How does the Communications module try to achieve this?
6. Another objective of the program is “to foster development in ethics, social and interpersonal skills.” How does the Communications module try to achieve this? How do you, or how can you gauge this development?
7. The last two objectives of the program are “to develop self-learning ability” and “to develop a sense of appreciation for life-long learning.” Would you please define how you see self-learning ability and life-long learning? How does the Communications module try to achieve these?
8. What are the current changes that are being made to improve the Communications module?

Interview Protocol 7

Springboard Program Graduates

Questions:

1. Which Caritas Springboard Institute did you graduate from?
2. Where do you currently attend post Springboard Program education? If you are not enrolled in an educational institution are you employed?
3. What were the requirements needed to enter the educational institution you are currently enrolled in?
4. How do you feel the Springboard Program has helped you in progressing in your educational studies?
5. One of the main objectives is to foster development in ethics, social, and interpersonal skills. How has the Springboard Program done this for you?
6. Another objective of the Springboard Program is to develop self-learning ability and life long learning. How has the program done this for you?
7. Another objective of the program is to promote a positive attitude towards life and develop a sense of commitment to society. How do you feel the program has accomplished this?
8. How do you view the Communications module in the Springboard Program? Has it helped you develop adequate communication skills?
9. What is the awareness level of society in regards to the Springboard Program? If most people know about the program do you think they about the program in depth?
10. How do you feel about the affordability of the Springboard Program?
11. How marketable are graduates from the program?
12. Do you feel that the Springboard Program is an institution geared towards people looking to continue education or to enter the job market?

Appendix C Interview Data

(All data contained herein are paraphrased from interviewee responses. Opinions and thoughts of the researchers are not included.)

Wednesday, January 16, 2002 – 10:00h

16 School 1 Students – Interview Protocol 2 (see Appendix C)

Data Summary:

Question 1:

All the students knew that the Springboard Program was equivalent to 5 Passes on the HKCEE, and that they would get 30% of the cost back for each Springboard module they passed. Some knew a bit more about the curriculum, and class options, because School 1 released a magazine with a lot of information on the Springboard Program.

Questions 2:

Most students heard about the program via television, newspapers, magazines, radio, friends, or from information from their old school via principals and teachers. 6 students heard about it from television, 6 from newspapers, 1 from magazines, 1 from radio, 1 from friends, and 3 from their old school. (Note: some students heard from more than one source)

Question 3:

Most students think a lot of people know about the Springboard Program.

Question 4:

They all believed that after having completed the program, they would be qualified for a better job, as well as government jobs.

Question 5:

They were happy about their ability to choose their electives. School 1 has a Speech Art program and an IT program. School 1 is the only Springboard Program school to have a Speech Art program. 8 of the students were IT, and 8 were Speech Art. They also said that School 1 runs IT A (hearing impaired), the only disabled class in Hong Kong. The students were happy about the 5 Pass equivalency, as well as the 30% refund. They also enjoyed what they were being taught. They felt the environment was friendly, and the teachers were generally good.

Question 6:

They did not like the fact that the program was so expensive, and also they did not like that it would take much, much longer than the traditional route to continue on to get a degree. Many students felt that some students didn't enroll in the program because it was too expensive.

Question 8:

They thought that everything they were learning in the Springboard would help them get a job. They thought that the core courses were practical, and would be useful for future employment. The Chinese, English, Mandarin, mathematics, communication, and IT applications modules would all give them useful skills. They also felt their electives would be very useful for them in the future. They were very happy with the Speech Arts program, and thought it would help for future acting or communications-type jobs, and they were also happy with the IT program, also thinking it would help them find work in the future.

Question 9:

They felt that the classes really helped social skills and communication, with family, friends, and classmates. They were first taught to understand themselves first, and then go on to communicate with others. They practice public speaking, role-playing, and group communication, but still feel like they need more practice, but they think that would be even more difficult for the teacher.

Question 13:

They all said they were still thinking about what they wanted to do after the program. About 10 wanted to continue with further education, and about 6 wanted to get a job.

Question 14:

Most of the students did want to continue learning. They felt they were still young and that continuing learning was something they wanted to do.

Question 15:

They generally liked the teachers of the core modules, except for English. There was one good English teacher, and one bad. The good one teaches the class mostly in English, while the other teaches mostly in Cantonese. They also noted that the IT teacher changed halfway through the year, and they felt the new teacher wasn't suitable for them because he was too monotone and boring.

Question 18:

All of the students read some form of newspaper daily.

The ages were: 22, 18, 18, 22, 18, 19, 18, 18, 19, 19, 18, 23, 21, 19, 19, 17. The average was 19.25 years.

Wednesday, January 16, 2002 – 11:10h

School 1 Teacher Interview – Teacher 1 – Interview Protocol 3

Data Summary:**Question 1:**

Teacher 1 said there are 4 modules in the IT program. He teaches IT Apps/Software and IT hardware 1st semester, and Networking 2nd semester.

Question 2:

Teacher 1 has a bachelor's degree in social work from the City University of Hong Kong. He worked for 1 year in a social service organization, and then he entered the VTC to study computers.

Question 3:

The teaching position at the Springboard Program is his first, and he has been doing it since the beginning of the program.

Question 5:

He felt the quality of teaching was okay, but he said teachers wanted more support in terms of equipment and subject materials. He also said the teachers wanted more support for the students to help them get jobs. They felt the government should offer employment services programs, as well as cooperating with the Labor Board to allow students to visit private agencies. He said if you just teach materials, the curriculum becomes more like Secondary 5.

Questions 6 and 7:

He said there were not many differences, or changes between the first and second years of the Program.

Question 8:

He said this was a good opportunity for students who could not enter Form 6 or 7, because they have no other choices. Job requirements are getting higher and higher, and the program gives them another way to get further education. They can go to Associate Degree programs, Higher Diploma programs, and possibly university. Without the Springboard, they cannot connect to those programs. He said there are programs other than university that students can enter upon completion of Secondary 5, but they require a certain amount of points on the HKCEE. 20% of the students that take the HKCEE do not get a single Pass. He felt that too many young people have nothing to do. They have no job, nor school to attend. Last year, the program was a bit more popular than this year, and there have been some negative comments in regards to the program. He felt the program was still helpful, but many continue to not believe in it. He thinks it is a valuable social control policy, keeping students in school, helping lower unemployment, and continuing to give them a chance to learn. Finally, he thinks they will have better job opportunities afterwards. He said the Springboard Program emphasizes the application of the subjects. He felt that, in a normal school, students feel bored and useless, but in the Springboard Program, the student can apply their knowledge immediately.

Question 9:

Teacher 1 felt opinions differed on the quality of the modules. Some are too easy, while some are too hard. Lots of the students cannot relate to the practical curriculum since they have no experience in those areas. In general, he thought the curriculum is suitable, but still needs some improvements. He said that students should have more course options. He thinks the program would be much more effective if the government provided more support. For example, the government needs to provide services for the

graduates to find a job, as well as subsidies to help lower the cost of the program. Caritas currently runs the least expensive program, at \$26,000. Some programs run over \$30,000. During the current economic conditions, many parents are not willing to pay that much.

Question 11:

Teacher 1 feels that this program helps build the self-confidence of the students so they will be able to apply to a job. He thinks Springboard graduates can communicate better than their peers. The feedback that they have received from employers of graduates has been good. Teacher one feels that most Hong Kong people believe that government jobs are stable jobs, and the Springboard Program is good for government jobs. He said that after the Springboard, there was a linkup to the Caritas Francis Hsu Higher Diploma program. The government recognized the higher diploma qualification this year. He noted that it's difficult for a student in one institution to change to another institution. Even though the materials are standardized, the processes, facilities, student quality, teacher quality, et cetera, are not. So institutions are reluctant to accept students from other institutions. He also said that one of Caritas' goals is to have Francis Hsu College become another university in Hong Kong.

Question 12:

He is not satisfied with the current language standards. He thinks that students know what they have studied, but they cannot express their ideas and opinions clearly, especially in English.

Question 13:

He thinks that most Hong Kong students know about the program, but there have been many negative comments from the media. The media tends to reflect the negative things, such as the fact that no universities or colleges in the Hong Kong area accept the Springboard qualification as being equivalent to 5 Passes. Thus, the students need to finish Associate Degree and Higher Diploma programs first, before they can apply to university. He said many students restudy Form 5 instead of enrolling in the Springboard Program. He feels there needs to be more advertisement for the program, stressing the difference between the Springboard and other programs. He says the government should emphasize that many students are poor in general abilities, and they should study in the Springboard to get more general abilities. He mainly feels the program is good, but they somehow need to change the public's opinions on it.

Question 14:

Teacher 1 said he did not know much about other programs, but he did say that the Springboard emphasizes general study, and basic skills, while some of the other programs are specialized. Some parents and students feel that they have studied the same things for a long time, and now it is time for them to learn something different. So they enroll in specialized hotel management, business, or accounting programs.

Thursday, January 17, 2002 – 11:00h

5 School 2 Students – Interview Protocol 2

Data Summary:

Question 1:

The students all knew Caritas' program cost \$26,000.

Question 2:

They heard about the program from televisions and newspapers.

Question 3:

They felt that most or all students know about the program, at least that it exists.

Question 4:

They chose the program because it gives 5 Passes in the HKCEE, and thus makes it easier to get a job or go on to further studies. Also, they said they chose the Springboard program because the government set it up.

Question 5:

They felt the strengths of the program were that they just got more practice in all of their courses. They didn't feel it was more difficult, just that there were more exercises and problems to work on. Also, they thought it was a more useful education, specifically mentioning IT, Communication, and Mathematics.

Questions 6 and 7:

They felt the main weakness is that the program is so expensive. Also, they thought there were not enough hours provided for each module, and there was a lot of information to learn in a short time.

Question 8:

The students felt that the IT skills they were learning would be very helpful for getting a job later in life.

Question 9:

They felt that the program did help their communication skills, especially because of the friendly environment.

Question 10:

The Caritas program costs \$26,000.

Question 11:

They thought that many students did not enter the program due to its expensive price.

Question 13:

After graduation, they said 3 wanted to get jobs, 1 wanted to study, and 1 was unsure. Of the 3 people looking for a job, they wanted to be a police officer or an accountant.

Question 14:

The students believed that it is easier than getting 5 Passes in the HKCEE, but it's an alternative to that, and it gives incentive for students to learn again.

Question 15:

They thought that the teachers were nice, and were very helpful to students if they had problems.

Question 18:

Most of the students read some form of newspapers daily.

Thursday, January 17, 2002 – 14:00h

School 2 Administrator Interview – Administrator 1 – Interview Protocol 4

Data Summary:**Question 1:**

Administrator 1 said he was involved with Caritas for 15 years, and he was involved with the Springboard Program since its planning stages. He said that the School 2 offered IT both years, and Trade Operations last year. Due to a low enrollment, Trade Operations was cancelled in favor of Accounting.

Question 2:

He felt that one of the strengths of the program was that it is an alternative to formal education. Many students did badly in chemistry, physics, history, etc, in Secondary school, but well in other subjects. Most of those students come to the Springboard Program and do well. He said he has seen an improvement in a large number of students.

Question 3:

He said that one of the weaknesses of the program was that it was still very new. People don't know, or understand the program. He said people mix up the Youth Pre-employment Training Program and the Springboard. He also said there were some criticisms on the effectiveness of the program. He felt another weakness was the program's high tuition. Students have been in government subsidized programs all their life, now they have to pay a large sum to continue their schooling. Also, he said most people knew about the normal route of schooling, that is, going from Secondary 5, to 6, to 7, then to university, and were reluctant to change, especially since it takes much longer to get to university if you go through the Springboard Program.

Question 4:

Administrator 1 said that there really weren't any similar programs. Some accept similar age groups, but they are usually very different. The YPT is a short job-training program, and certificate and diploma programs are very specialized. The Springboard is a 1 year, full time, general education program. One similar program is the IVE, or the Institute of Vocational Education. It offers certificates in a few areas, targeting Secondary 5 graduates. He said another option is repeating Secondary 5. The last one he mentioned was a certificate program offered by Caritas, which gives 1 year of instruction in trades

like hotel management.

Question 5:

Administrator 1 felt the students had an advantage in terms of marketability over Secondary 5 graduates, because the Springboard teaches its students “the real life of work,” practical skills like communication that will help them their whole lives.

Question 6:

Administrator 1 felt most students are not fully aware of the program, because most are looking at Secondary 6 and 7. People who do badly on the HKCEE feel lost, and many end up repeating Secondary 5. He said 50% of students taking the HKCEE are not first-timers. He said that because of its newness, employers don’t know much about the program. But he also said, if students do well in the Springboard, and do well after being employed, employers will take notice and hire more Springboard graduates. He said that 60% of the students receive a full pass, and about 60% of those students go on to further study, while about 20-25% get jobs. Those that continue to study go through the Foundation program, and then to the Associate Degree program, which takes 3 years. Some students also go overseas to study. Administrator 1 said that students can transfer to other institutions after completing the Springboard Program, but they will not get accepted based solely on their grades. They need things like recommendations, and good performances in interviews to get into other programs, since they are competing with people who did better on the HKCEE and A-Level examinations. Administrator 1 said the government was not a problem in terms of recognition because it recognizes the 5 Pass equivalency of the program. He thought that higher education places do accept some Springboard students, but it’s more difficult for them because they are mainly looking for Secondary 6 and 7 students. The certificate qualification given by other Caritas programs is not recognized by the government as of yet, but he said most employers base their decision to employ people based on their personal experience.

Question 7:

Administrator 1 said the program that Caritas provides costs \$26,000. He said the program is so expensive because it’s self-financing. He also said that he did not think money is that large of a problem, because students can apply for 100% loans from the government. But students and parents still feel it’s a lot of money for something so new. He mentioned that there are government subsidies for the students, where they get 30% of their money back for passed modules.

Question 9:

He said that most changes in the program involved elective subjects, where some are dropped due to low enrollment statistics, and existing modules are changed based on suggestions by teachers and students.

Thursday, January 17, 2002 – 14:40h

School 2 Teacher Interviews – Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 – Interview Protocol 3

Data Summary:

Question 1:

Teacher 2 teaches Chinese (Cantonese) for the Springboard Program, and she also teaches an English night school course. Teacher 3 teaches Mathematics and IT Applications for the Springboard Program.

Question 2:

Teacher 2 graduated from Hong Kong Polytechnic in 1998 with a degree in Chinese translation, while Teacher 3 graduated from the City University of Hong Kong with a degree in business study in 1997. They have no formal teaching degrees.

Question 4:

Both teachers do not think that the requirements for Springboard teachers are high enough. They think teachers should be required to have some sort of education training or degree. Teacher 3 said that she teaches 2 classes without any education certification whatsoever, and she believes that should not be allowed.

Questions 6 and 7:

Teacher 3 said the English module had changed a little between the first and second years. They require passing marks in both homework and exams to pass the course. Last year, only passing marks in exams were required. On the other hand, she said the IT course had been simplified. They cut many materials and terms out of the curriculum.

Question 8:

Teacher 2 felt that one of the strengths of the Springboard Program was that there is a wide range of subjects to choose from. Both teachers felt that the education the program provides is practical, and Springboard graduates would be better off than Secondary 5 graduates. Teacher 3 thought that the Springboard Program allows bad students to get associate degrees, and thus help their future prospects. Teacher 2 thought that the Springboard is a stepping-stone to more studying. Students can go on to Associate Degree, Higher Diploma, and eventually degree programs. Teacher 3 feels that the extra year learning gives the students a chance to think and decide if they want to continue studying or enter the job market. Teacher 3 said that after the Springboard, students can go into Associate Degree programs at places like City University of Hong Kong, Baptist University, Open University of Hong Kong, as well as Higher Diploma programs. She thought that most students end up going to private firms rather than getting that far in education, however. Teacher 3 said the Communication module helped the students gain self esteem and self-actualization. She said it would also help communication with family, friends, and work. She thinks the education the module provides is broad, but practical and effective.

Question 9:

Both teachers believed the main weakness of the program was its expensive cost. Teacher 2 thought the Chinese teaching materials were too simple, and there was room for improvement. She wants more Chinese grammar, because the curriculum teaches students how to write, but not how to write well. Teacher 3 thought the English class was extremely difficult, and it should be simplified. She believes the students need more exercises and more practice.

Question 11:

Teacher 2 said that the communication skills students get from the program helps their marketability significantly. With better communication skills, employers would be more willing to employ Springboard graduates. Teacher 3 said that, with the practical education they receive, students will have competence for either work or further study. She thought private employers might be concerned about their education, but they also might value their practical knowledge over their test results.

Question 12:

Teacher 2 said that Chinese is difficult to teach, because most of the students have very poor language skills. They do not know how to use the correct words for what they want to say. She said she needs to teach them to write simple sentences, but she also thought most students were hard working. They learn practical Chinese, both formal and informal writing. Teacher 3 said that after the Springboard Program, most of the instruction the students receive will be entirely in English, but the program gives them the chance to improve their English skills in a Chinese medium.

Question 14:

When asked about similarities between the Springboard Program and the YPT, the teachers said the programs were not very similar. YPT is aimed at younger people that only want to go to work. The Springboard is for more general learning, with some special skills like IT and Accounting added. Teacher 3 mentioned that IVE (Institute of Vocational Education) was similar, but has some level of HKCEE Pass requirement, whereas the Springboard does not.

What kind of teaching materials are you given, and do you have the freedom to create your own materials?

Both teachers said they are given a relatively short syllabus and do make their own materials. They said they have achieved good results coming up with their own exercises.

Thursday, January 17, 2002 – 15:30h

21 School 2 Students – Interview Protocol 2

Data Summary:**Question 1:**

All students said that the main thing they knew about the program prior to attending it was its cost, \$26,000. They all also knew general facts about the program, such as the fact that it contains 10 modules, with 60 hours of class each.

Question 2:

Of the 21 students, 4 heard from newspapers, 2 from their old school, 2 from friends, 11 from television, and 2 from magazines.

Question 3:

They all felt that not enough students know about the program, and that not enough information is made available to prospective students.

Question 4:

They chose the program because they all did badly on the HKCEE, and they wanted the 5 Pass rating after completing the Springboard.

Question 5:

Their favorite aspects of the program were that a pass in the program was equivalent to 5 Passes on the HKCEE. The students said that 5 Passes on the HKCEE signifies a standard level of education. They said that without 5 Passes, it's very difficult to continue studying, or to get a job. Also, they all thought the classes were helping their future job qualifications. They said they felt the computer, language, and mathematics knowledge would help them get a job. They also liked the 30% refund for passed modules.

Question 6:

Their main problem with the program was its high cost.

Question 9:

They felt that the communications class did provide them with good practice in communicating with friends, family, and in the future, employers.

Question 13:

Of the 21 students, 15 wanted to enter the workforce, and 6 wanted to continue studying.

Question 15:

They all felt their teachers were nice. 20 students rated the teachers on a percentage scale, 100% being the highest, 0% being the lowest. The ratings were as follows: 80, 85, 86, 87, 90, 90, 80, 75, 80, 85, 70, 99, 75, 80, 65, 80, 60, 60, 70, 80. The average rating was 78.85%.

Question 18:

Out of the 21 students, 14 students read newspapers daily.

The ages of the students were as follows: 20, 18, 17, 17, 18, 17, 17, 18, 17, 17, 18, 17, 17, 24, 18, 17, 17, 17, 17, 19. The average age was nearly 18 years, 17.81 years exactly.

Monday, January 21, 2002 – 10:00h

Employer Interview – Employer 1 – Interview Protocol 1

Data Summary:

Questions 1 and 2:

Employer 1 has been the Training Coordinator at a Hong Kong department store for one year.

Question 3:

He said he knew little of the program, but he knew there were 2-3 employees from the program. They worked in the computer department doing network support. He said most of his employees were straight out of Secondary 5.

Question 4:

He said of what he knows of the program, the skills are appropriate for such employment.

Question 6:

When examining new hires, he looks for experience over grades, so he thinks that Springboard students would have an advantage over Secondary 5 graduates due to some extra, practical education.

Question 10:

In his opinion, the most important skill necessary for most jobs at a place like his department store were customer service skills, meaning employees need to have exceptional language skills, especially English. He said that the biggest problem that applicants have is their language skills. He believes that many young people looking for jobs do not have sufficient Mandarin and English skills to properly fill the positions they desire. He also stressed the importance of computer skills. Overall, Employer 1 felt that language and computer skills were the most helpful skills to have when looking for employment.

Wednesday, January 23, 2002 – 16:00h

School 3 Administrator Interview – Administrator 2 – Interview Protocol 4

Data Summary:

Question 1:

Administrator 2 said she has been working with Caritas for 11 years, and was involved with the Springboard Program from the start. She has been working at this school for 11 years as well. In addition to her administrative duties, she also teaches English.

Question 2:

She thinks the Springboard is a chance for underachievers to find another way to continue their studies. She feels that the need for a program such as the Springboard will be present for a long time, regardless of some of the planned changes of the Hong Kong educational system. If the high school system goes through the age equivalent of Form 6, as is planned, she says the program should change its curriculum to accommodate that.

Either way she believes there should be support from the government, because the need for a program like the Springboard will remain. Administrator 2 said grades were not important in the Springboard program, it's just a pass, meaning results that are 50% or above are passing grades. She says the program does not concentrate on exam results much and that helps these students that did not perform well in an examination-based system.

Question 3:

She thinks the content of the English module is too difficult. She says there have been many requests made by teachers to the PMC to change the content, but as of yet they have not done anything. The English teachers are faced with the difficulty of teaching Form 5 content to students with Form 1-3 knowledge. She said the module had changed little between the first and second years of the program. The changes were aimed at making the content more related to daily life, but they still expect them to write complete, correct sentences, which she thinks is unrealistic.

Question 4:

Administrator 2 said there are some specialized one and two year programs that have been around a long time, that employers recognize, that the government does not. Some of these programs include accounting, hotel management, computer applications/hardware, for example.

Question 5:

She thinks it is hard to gauge the marketability of graduates because the program is so new. She said that 30% of students find jobs, but they are not making good wages, and the jobs are not very good. They received jobs like concession worker and clerks, jobs they could have gotten without a Springboard education. She felt that some students should not attend the program, they should look into other things. She said the government recognized the program well, 31 government posts were open to graduates because of the 5 Pass qualification. She wasn't sure that non-government employees would recognize that same qualification. She said that some Springboard graduates continue on to the IVE.

Question 6:

She thinks that students know a decent amount about the program, in general. There were internet sites, leaflets from schools, and other materials distributed. School 2 had a information session on the program. She thinks that it's too new for the students, and they will not be able to know enough through their school. Employers do not know much about the program either; she says that they will look at their HKCEE results and Secondary school results over Springboard results.

Question 8:

She said that School 3 offers volunteer activities for students at an elderly center. Administrator 2 also thinks there should be more activities provided, but it is difficult due to a lack of space. She said that many students want to be involved in such activities.

Question 9:

Administrator 2 said there have not been many changes between the first and second years of the program. The main difference has been that the experience gained from the first year has helped teachers and administrators run the program better.

How do you feel about the qualifications of current Springboard program teachers?

Administrator 2 feels the teachers are qualified for the jobs they hold, but she thinks the curriculum developers do not know the level of the students, so it makes teaching difficult for the teachers. They have to be very patient due to students' short attention span.

How much of the average Springboard Program English class is conducted in English?

She said very little, about 10%, of English classes are conducted in English. That is usually based on the teacher, not the curriculum, however.

Do you feel that the Springboard Program helps students learn skills that are appropriate for employment?

She said that students mainly need a positive attitude. The program does help students learn more information to help them get a job, but it also helps them learn studying skills and communication skills, to increase their confidence. Many of the students are very passive, and need to increase their confidence.

Wednesday, January 23, 2002 – 16:30h

School 3 Teacher – Teacher 4 – Interview Protocol 3

Data Summary:**Question 1:**

Teacher 4 has been a Mathematics teacher both years in the Springboard Program. He said that Mathematics is one of the better-designed courses, and that he has gotten good feedback on it. He thinks the content is useful, and there have been little change in the curriculum. He does believe, however, that more practice exercises are necessary, and more support for teachers is necessary.

Question 2:

He has a degree from Polytechnic University, and he is trained in education.

Question 4:

He said the qualifications required of the teachers are suitable, but he thinks teachers need very good training so they will not get easily upset, because the students can cause a lot of stress for them. He says there is a wide variation in the aptitude of students, so the difficulty of the classes is generally up to teachers.

Question 5:

He believes that the quality of teachers is good, and that they try to make the classes interesting. The students learn comprehensive material that is more practical, and also enables them to regain confidence in themselves. He feels he tries to make Mathematics interesting to make the students feel like they can learn again.

Question 11:

He said that communication skills were very effective in increasing students' marketability and helping them find employment. He said about 60% of passing students go on to further study, while about 30% get jobs. He thinks that the program helps them learn something they can contribute to their lives. They really have no other opportunities without the program. Also, he said government support of the program is key.

Question 13:

Teacher 4 said the awareness of the program is better the second year than in the first. He feels it is difficult for new programs, especially the Springboard, since the government has never launched a similar program. Most students are targeting university, and this is totally different. He said most advertising comes from the government, and mass media. He said the enrollment was lower this year was lower because more people know about the program, and this year's students are more motivated, and actually want to be enrolled.

Is there a difference in reputation between different Springboard Programs?

Teacher 4 said that the promotion strategy is different for each institution, so that may affect how others view each program.

Wednesday, January 23, 2002 – 16:45h

School 3 Competitor – Competitor 1

Data Summary:**What program are you a part of, and what position do you hold?**

Competitor 1 is the case manager for School 3's YPT program run by Caritas.

Please describe the program, and any differences you are aware of between your program and the Springboard Program.

She said the program was free, and that was the main attraction for students, especially because of the economic downturn. Competitor 1 said the program is only for job training, while the Springboard is meant to give students further studying options, while increasing their job skills at the same time. The YPT exists exclusively to place people in jobs, while most Springboard students go on to further education. She said that 124 students are currently enrolled in the YPT program she is involved with, but the attendance is not good. The members are generally willing to work, but not study, and there is a compulsory social/communications module required for all YPT students. The enrollment for the program is in September and February, a bit different than the Springboard Program. She said they have some overlap in terms of their target age group.

The YPT takes people aged 15-19, while the Springboard accepts Secondary 5 leavers as well as adult learners, so the Springboard has a wider audience.

Wednesday, January 23, 2002 – 17:10h

10 School 3 Students – Interview Protocol 2

Data Summary:

Question 1:

The students said they knew little about the program, besides the fact that it gives 5 Passes on the HKCEE.

Question 2:

4 of the students heard about the program from friends, 5 from television, and 1 heard from the internet.

Question 3:

They said that people generally have a better idea about the program this year than last.

Question 4:

They all joined the program because they did badly on the HKCEE and simply wanted to get the 5 Pass equivalence. The Springboard is the only choice for students who do very poorly on the HKCEE if they want to continue their studies.

Question 5:

All the students agreed they liked the fact that a pass in the program is equivalent to 5 Passes on the HKCEE.

Question 6:

The students disliked the quality of teaching. They felt that the teachers of the Springboard Program were worse than the Secondary school teachers they had in the past. Overall, they thought the program was boring. They thought the communication teacher was “horrible”. They liked the IT subjects, because they could play computer games. They liked their English class, and felt that the teacher is very good. Like all the other groups of students, these students also strongly disliked the cost of the program. They felt that the overall quality of teaching would improve if the teachers tried to make the subjects more interesting.

Question 8:

The students felt they were unsure. They said it was hard to teach what you need for a job, because no matter what, you will be doing different things at work. They said they did not think that employers accept the program.

Question 13:

5 students said they wanted to work after the program, and 5 said they planned on studying after the program.

Question 14:

All the students felt that they do not think the program makes them want to continue learning, they are only in the program because to get 5 Passes on the HKCEE.

Question 16:

When asked about the difficulty of the program, the students said it was not difficult, in general. They felt the environment was too relaxed, and they didn't have enough work to do. They felt Mathematics was a bit too hard.

Question 17:

They said they would all like to do community service, but there was not enough available. They said the school provided some, but it just was not enough, and the available spots filled up too quickly.

Question 18:

7 of the students read newspapers or books regularly.

The ages of the students were: 18, 18, 17, 19, 18, 20, 19, 19, 19, 19. The average was 18.6 years.

Wednesday, January 23, 2002 – 18:00h

School 3 Teacher – Teacher 5 – Interview Protocol 3

Data Summary:**Questions 1, 2 and 3:**

Teacher 5 is an English teacher with a bachelor's degree in social science. He said he taught English to Form 5 and 6 students.

Question 4:

He feels that the qualifications required for teachers are good enough. He said there is a large difference between the types of teaching in Secondary school and the Springboard. He said teachers must teach according to the exam requirements at Secondary school, and many students may not find this useful. He said the requirements for the Springboard are different since the program is not exam-oriented. He thinks this is better for the students, because they are freer to do what they like. Most of the students did very badly on the HKCEE, but they still want to study, and the Springboard helps give them a useful education.

Do you enjoy teaching Secondary School classes or Springboard classes more?

Teacher 5 said that he enjoyed both, but they were different. He says he can have a more personal relationship with the student at the Springboard Program, because he goes out to karaoke and barbeques with the students, because they invite him out since they are less stressed with studying. Many of the students here were bored with formal class work, and they used to be "losers" that did not pay attention. He said it is hard for them to start paying attention now. So, he says teachers must be lenient (like allowing them to listen to music, chat occasionally), while still trying to make them interested in the subject

matter. He thinks restrictive teaching does not help, and would put them in the environment that they were in throughout Secondary school. He said it was less difficult teaching English in the Springboard Program than in Secondary school, because the background is the same. He said it's more of a beginners level there, however.

Questions 6 and 7:

Teacher 5 said there had been some revisions between the first and second years of the program. He said the materials had improved a little, but that the curriculum was still too difficult. The English that they are trying to teach is beyond the student's comprehension; it is impossible for them to understand if they were left to learn the material on their own. The intention of the course is good, but it is not what they need, because the concepts are foreign to them. He tries to use comic strips, songs, and movies to help them learn. They have learned a lot of textbook English, but it does not help them learn real-life English skills. He suggests that other teachers use the same kind of materials, and that he shares with other teachers if they would like to try.

Question 8:

He said there are very very few options for Secondary 5 graduates that did badly on the HKCEE. They can retake Form 5, sit at home, or enter the Springboard Program. It's almost the only option if they want to continue studying. Teacher 5 said the program provides job skills because each core subject, as well as the electives, are practical. All these skills can help students get a job after the program.

Question 9:

He said that the government was trying not to announce whether or not it would accept the Springboard Program as 5 Passes on the HKCEE. It was only announced near to the end of the first semester of the first year of the program. This gave a very negative impression of the program to the public. This year, most schools have gotten fewer students, and he feels it is due to poor promotion, and the lingering impression that the program is not good. People would rather choose other programs, like the YPT, which has a better reputation. He said that the program needs more electives. Some institutes do better because they have more resources, and can add new electives, like computer graphics and such. Things like sports management and fashion design should be created. In general, he said more vocational elements should be added.

Question 10:

He feels that the program is expensive, even with the 30% refund for passing a module. He thinks many places created a Springboard Program simply because they knew they could make money. Compared to studying for a degree, the costs are not reasonable.

Question 11:

He said that some students got decent jobs, and some got places in higher education programs. Prior to the existence of the program, they might have to keep taking the HKCEE to get a job or higher education. Last year, he said many doubted the program, but after good results last year, it can be said that the program helped. Teacher 5 said the government recognizes and accepts the qualifications. He said he was not sure about the

private sector. He felt that even if students are not good at studying, this program may still give them another chance.

Question 12:

He feels that 1 year is not enough time to increase the English proficiency of these students. They don't know many words, not even basic vocabulary. They may have a problem for further study, but programs like the IVE do not use English as the instruction medium, so the students still have some time.

Question 14:

He said the main difference between the Springboard and other similar programs is that the Springboard is a general education. Programs such as the YPT and certificate programs focus on one single subject. He thinks students should enter the Springboard to build up their basic skills. Teacher 5 thinks there should be some required extracurricular activities, things like outdoor visits, at least once per month. Some schools provide for such things, but School 3 does not. He feels the organization should appoint a committee to organize activities for each school.

Question 15:

He said the school does not organize or provide for any community service activities, but it asks students to learn first aid. He says the school should provide information about community service, so they can learn outside of school.

Thursday, January 24, 2002 – 14:30h

School 1 Administrator – Administrator 3 – Interview Protocol 4

Data Summary:

Question 1:

Administrator 1 is the principal of School 1. He was a teacher at Caritas College of Careers, and then he taught at School 3 for 3 years. He also went to Australia for Caritas. Finally he returned to Caritas in Hong Kong in 1996 to work at School 1. As the principal he manages the provision of the program. He said that School 1 offers IT Support, Logistics Management, Trade (last year), Speech Arts/Communication (this year), as well as electives for hearing impaired students. School 1 is the only Springboard institution to have the Speech Arts and hearing impaired classes. He said some students come to that particular school because they have unique programs. He also said the school got special funding from the Education and Manpower Bureau because of these unique programs.

Question 2:

He said the strengths of the Caritas program are its unique electives. The teachers developed a good program to help develop the speech art specialized training. Staff and people outside Caritas designed the electives, and the curriculum has to be approved by the Program Management Committee. He felt that the overall strengths of the program are that it has a good structure. It offers training in generic, but important skills such as language, communication, and software applications. He said these types of things are

important for a changing society, since you “can’t expect what the future will be like.” The young people get useful skills that are beneficial for their entire lives, and will not get outdated. He also felt that the specialized electives are also strengths of the program. Administrator 3 said that there are few options for students who performed poorly on the HKCEE. They can study certificate or diploma programs, but those are not very organized. In general, they are provided by private organizations, except for the IVE, which is sponsored by the government. A disadvantage of the certificate programs is that they have no public recognition of the qualifications they provide. The YPT is not very structured, or comprehensive, due to its vocational orientation. The Springboard is a very good option because of its government support.

Do you think the Springboard Program is achieving its objective of promoting lifelong learning and self-learning ability?

Administrator 1 said that this area was one of its weaknesses. He feels that there should be a module about study skills and attitudes. However, he also mentioned that the idea of lifelong learning is spread throughout the core modules. He said the communication module is based on teaching students to understand themselves, to build up their confidence, and then they can begin to know others and communicate more effectively.

Question 3:

He felt that one of the weaknesses of the program is its lack of a study skills module. He also thinks that people do not understand and trust the program because it is so new. Also, employers and other institutions are not sure about the abilities that graduates of the program possess. Parents are also unsure about its quality. He thinks that it is beginning to change, as many graduates go on to enter the workforce as well as to further studying. He thinks the major reason for the drop in enrollment is because of an inability of parents to afford the program due to the economic downturn. The YPT, on the other hand, is attractive because the Labor Department has very good promotion, and the program is free. He said the Springboard Program needs a better promotional campaign. Finally, he said the program is very expensive, especially with the economic recession.

Administrator 3 said the program was created because of the current state of the economy. The economy is becoming more global, and Hong Kong needs more people capable of competing in this environment. The government wants to give more opportunities to make bad students more competitive, and help create new ideas to build up the economy.

Question 5:

Administrator 3 feels that Springboard graduates are more marketable than YPT graduates. The YPT has short, unconnected vocational modules while the Springboard has one year of full-time class that allows students to “rebuild themselves.” Also, the YPT does not have the government’s support. He said many Springboard graduates have been getting jobs, with wages of about \$6k-12k per month, and this shows that they are indeed marketable. He said that graduates of the program can work, enter pre-Associate Degree programs run by Federation members, or the Higher Education Foundation Certificate program that is designed to take Springboard grads. After the Foundation program, students can go to Francis Hsu College for a Higher Diploma, and then on to University to finish their degree.

Question 6:

He said the awareness level students have of the program has gone up from the first year to the second. The first year there were many students applying, but they did not know much about the program. The second year had fewer applicants, but Administrator 3 thinks they know much more about it, and enter the program because they think it can help them.

Question 10:

Administrator 3 said the entire educational system of Hong Kong is changing. A change has been proposed to change to a 6-year secondary school system, and that would thereby eliminate the existence of Secondary 5 graduates. But, he said, if that change were made, the Springboard would be changed to accept the equivalent of Secondary 6 graduates that could not go to university, as long as the necessary curriculum changes were made. He said if secondary school goes to 6 years, the current exam system might be replaced with one final examination instead of 2. Then employers would know that this new test was the new benchmark, instead of the HKCEE. The Springboard Program would have to change to accommodate that.

Question 11:

Administrator 3 felt that the loss of the current government grant (which expires after next year) would negatively affect enrollment. If the students do not get the 30% refund for passed modules, the incentive to attend the course becomes smaller. He hopes that the government will extend the grant.

How do you feel about the quality of Springboard students' language skills?

Administrator 3 felt they were definitely not adequate. There are bridging programs in overseas institutes, where students can learn very fast in an all-English environment. Administrator 3 feels that it is not that difficult for students to learn, as long as they have the initiative and confidence to do so.

How does the Springboard Program accommodate students with different capabilities?

Administrator 3 said that an exemption system might need to be created, but there exists no objective measure of ability. Classes are generally small, so he feels that that gives the teacher more space to deal with differences. All of the School 1 teachers have more than 2 years of experience and are full time teachers, so they have experience dealing with many kinds of students. He said there are also counselors to help students that are having problems. He said many students drop out after the first semester, but that is usually based on money, not on an inability to succeed in the program.

Do you feel that the academic requirements required for Springboard teachers are enough?

He said the academic requirements placed on teachers were enough. The Springboard students need more attention and care than most students, so teaching ability is not based as much on the discipline as it would be in a university. It is based more on the type of teacher rather than the degree they possess. They generally take teachers that have taught

similar students. New recruits are assessed through interviews. They need to have a similar philosophy towards the students as the program does.

Friday, February 1 2002 – Email Interview

Employer Interview – Employer 2 – Interview Protocol 1

Data Summary:

Question 1:

Employer 2 is part of a leading telecommunications company in Hong Kong, as well as the Asia-Pacific Region.

Question 3:

Employer 2 said he knows the program provides opportunities for Form 5 leavers or adult learners to pursue continuing education, and the program is focused on practical skills rather than on the normal HCKEE syllabus.

Question 4:

The employer said that his company has employed two Springboard graduates, but one has left.

Question 5:

Employer 2 said that although the company has only employed two graduates, it has been found that the language ability of them is comparatively better than the other similar program graduates or other Form 5 leavers, especially in Putonghua. Furthermore, they have shown confidence when expressing in English or Putonghua during the selection interview.

Question 7:

Employer 2 said they would not hesitate to employ Springboard graduates once they are considered suitable for us.

Question 9:

Employer 2 made the following suggestions:

- 1) Career talks – interested employers can be invited to conduct career talks to the candidates so as to let them know more about the job and the company.
- 2) Career Bazaar – it can allow candidates to select the most suitable company for them.
- 3) Workplace Attachment Training – trainees can gain practical work experience and as well to identify their own strengths and weaknesses.
- 4) Up-to-date modules – the program organizer can develop new modules according to demand in the labor market, such as Sales, Customer Service, etc, for Springboard students to choose from.

Monday, February 4, 2002 – 14:30h

Ex-PMC Member Interview – Amy Chan – Interview Protocol 5

Data Summary:

Question 1:

Ms. Chan has been involved with Caritas since 1977. She has been involved with the program before it even started, because she was one of the people who helped construct it.

Question 2:

She said the program provides an alternative route for students. It is a “light in the darkness” for students who have no other option.

Question 3:

She said that many people try to directly compare the qualifications the Springboard provides with HKCEE results. She feels the qualifications should be separated, and the Springboard should be treated as a new qualification.

Question 4:

There are many vocational-oriented programs that do not have government recognition. The EMB started the Springboard, so it does have government recognition.

Question 5:

Graduates can go overseas, they can be employed, and they can go to other educational programs. The Springboard is still new, so it has to be tried out. So far, results from the tracking survey conducted after the first year show good feedback.

Question 6:

The communication skills module is designed to help promote positive attitudes towards life and help teach students to have a sense of commitment to society. In the module, students learn about themselves, and then they learn about commitment to family, friends, and society. The better they know themselves, she says, the better they can communicate with society.

Question 7:

Individual institutions are responsible for setting up their own community service options, but the PMC encourages each institution to do so.

Question 8:

She said the PMC is policy level, and setting up community service programs is more at an operational level. Also, PMC membership is voluntary, and unpaid, so it's work additional to a normal job. But, she said the executive secretary of the PMC should try if she can find the time to set things up, however. Since each school has its own community service program, they use that to compete for more students, which is another barrier to setting up universal community service programs.

The overall design of the program is the way it is to help foster ethics, social and interpersonal skills. Classes are small, the syllabus is not exam-based, there is more

teacher interaction, and more activities. Students feel there is more care from the teacher, thus they will in turn care more about their classmates, school, and eventually their neighbors.

Questions 9 and 10:

The program is not designed to force students to acquire knowledge; it's to help them learn how to learn. They have lost interest in learning due to poor performance in a traditional school environment, and the program tries to fix that using nontraditional methods. The program teaches practical knowledge, which can be applied instantly. Without these skills, the student could not survive in the real world. The ability to apply what they are learning will make the students more open to learning that type of material, and open them to learning again.

Question 11:

She feels the qualification level of teachers is just right, and she is satisfied with the current group of teachers, but she did not know about the other institutions. They directly observe new teachers to make sure they are doing a good job. First, they are interviewed by the Service Interviewing Board, then by a specialist in their subject, and then they are interviewed by the school principal.

Question 13:

The government has publicly advertised the program. There were also three information sessions to introduce the program in April of 2000. There was one session each with career masters, social workers, and principals. In April 2001 there were sessions with employers to introduce the program. There were advertisements in newspapers, on television, and on the radio as well. Ms. Chan herself conducted some newspaper and radio interviews to spread the word about the program. After the end of the first year of the program, there was a televised award ceremony that had Chief Executive of the SAR, Tung Chee-hwa, in attendance, which was very good publicity for the program.

Question 14:

She believes that other institutions recognize the qualifications the program provides. 60% of the graduates from the first year continued on to further study.

Questions 15 and 16:

Some minor changes were made due to comments from students and teachers. Future changes include adding more extracurricular activities, and joining programs where students can go to the U.S. or Mainland China. That change may be instituted during the second term of this year, so some of the current students may be able to travel.

Question 17:

If the government does not re-institute the 3-year grant when it expires, Caritas still plans to offer the program. Without the 30% refund, many more people would not be able to afford it. She feels the government may still subsidize it, or that funding may be available from the Continuing Education Fund. If not, some things may have to be cut from the program to reduce its cost.

Can you give more information about the PMC and QAC?

The PMC overlooks the whole program, and is the policymaking body. The QAC was created to satisfy a government requirement. Some institutes don't want to be involved with the HK Council for Academic Accreditation, so the QAC was created to look at materials, teachers, exam questions, and exam scripts. They compare these across institutes to make sure the standards of the program are the same everywhere.

Monday, February 4, 2002 – 15:45h

PMC Member – Selwyn Cheng – Interview Protocol 5

Data Summary:

Question 6:

The program helps promote positive attitudes towards life and a sense of commitment to society because it shows the students that they are not neglected, that there is always a way out. It shows there is still hope after performing poorly on the HKCEE. The program is also not as academically oriented as Secondary school, and thus is a good alternative for those who performed poorly in that environment. Any student saved is good for society. Without any qualifications, many students have no future, and they can join “bad elements” of society. The program helps give them employable skills, such as IT, and language. IT is a good area for young people to learn, because it is very popular at the moment, and it opens up more possibilities to find a job.

Question 9:

The concept of fostering development of social, ethical, and interpersonal skills is distributed throughout the core modules of the program. The communication skills module covers all of these topics, but other modules have the same ideas hidden in the material, integrated in each subject area.

Question 10:

The program helps students develop self-learning ability and a sense of appreciation for lifelong learning because the material requires them to do their own research projects. They must collect data, analyze it, and give a presentation. It is different than what they did in Secondary school. Giving them research projects in areas that they are interested in helps them learn useful skills. If they see that they can do work, and learn, while still being interested, it increases their motivation to learn, and continue learning.

Question 11:

He thinks the qualifications for teachers are not too bad, considering the type of students the program caters to. The qualifications they possess are not as important as the methods they use. If they motivate the students, then they can be a good Springboard teacher. There is an extensive screening process to make sure the teachers can handle the position.

Question 13:

He does not think that employers and other institutions know enough about the Springboard. There is a need for stronger promotion before employers will really know and understand how to recognize Springboard graduates.

Question 15:

Mr. Cheng said there would be new certificates available next year at Caritas institutions. Other institutions offer generic certificates, and their structure is a bit different than Caritas'. The English module changed a bit between the first and second years of the program. They switched some of the modules of English 1 and 2, and it caused some problems for part-time students.

Tuesday, February 5, 2002 – 14:00h

Communications Module Designer – Catherine Li – Interview Protocol 6

Data Summary:**Question 2:**

The Curriculum module is one of the core modules, and consists of 60 hours of class and 4 units. The module helps the students understand themselves better, to build up confidence and self-respect, and to learn communication skills, which also helps them interact with others. Students with weak academic results typically have weak self-esteem, so they try to build that up with the course material. The first unit is designed for self-exploration and self-understanding. There are 7 sessions teaching those concepts. The second unit contains 7 sessions that are designed to improve family communication skills. After the first two units, the students have a major project to present to the class. The third unit is basic communication skills, introducing concepts like “EQ”. The course teaches them to locate themselves among the group, how to interact with others, how to handle stress, and other general communication and listening skills. The fourth unit is more specific, it teaches different stages of interpersonal skills. It goes through material describing how relationships turn bad, how to maintain relationships, how to take/give compliments/criticism, how to solve conflicts, how to convince people of things, and the concept of balance of power. After the second half, students have to complete a group project. Throughout the module, there are 7 small assignments they can do in class that they have to hand in for grading. Assignments and projects are worth 85% (50% projects, 35% assignments), class participation is worth 10%, and peer evaluation is worth 5%.

Question 3:

The program helps build up the confidence of the students. The curriculum stresses presentations, so the students must stand up and express their ideas. Teachers reinforce this idea throughout the classes, and in turn students speak up more. They try to give the students the idea that it is ok for them to have bad academic results, because they can find other aspects of themselves where they can excel. The first 2 units of the Communications module try to develop that.

Question 4:

Ms. Li thought there were a few changes that needed to be made. There are many suggested activities, such as worksheets, and class activities. There are about 2-3 of these per class. These activities target the 17-19 year old age group, but there are also a good number of working adults (mostly part-time students) that are taking the same module. Activities should be added to cater towards the older students. One problem that currently exists is that not all teachers are trained in drama or role-playing. Some teachers are apprehensive about performing such tasks. She feels that the program might have to add more options for teachers who are not as comfortable with such activities. They have teachers with psychology, social work training, et cetera... They just need good interpersonal skills. More activities should be added that fit with teachers that have different types of training. Ms. Li also felt that the title of the Communications module itself might be a bit misleading.

Question 5:

The program tries to promote positive attitudes towards life and a sense of commitment to society through all the different activities, projects, and assignments that students need to complete. They keep the students asking themselves to look to the positive side of themselves, and to overlook and overcome the bad things. This concept is integrated into all the assignments.

Question 6:

The program tries to foster development in ethics, social, and interpersonal skills through all the different topics, exercises, and projects that they are required to do. Ms. Li felt that the projects were the main method that the program uses to try to develop these skills.

Question 7:

She said that the evaluation of lifelong learning and self-learning is very subjective. The teacher gives out the grades, and they decide how well the student has performed in the module. The first and last exercises show the difference/improvement in the student. Many institutions videotape students' presentations (depending on their available resources), and use that to help measure change in the students. Ms. Li feels there is no real objective way to measure these objectives, but the students themselves have reiterated the concepts back to her, as well as us during other interviews. She says that most students are exhibiting that the objectives are being met. A large proportion progress to further study, and that is why most students are in the program to begin with.

Friday, February 15, 2002 – 11:15h

Employer Interview – Employer 3

Data Summary:**In the hotel industry, what languages are necessary?**

In the hotel industry, speaking English is a must. The 2nd language is Japanese.

How much education is required for the various jobs?

Job position depends on the level of education. In the hotel industry there is a front line and a back line. 10 years ago they employed Form 5 grads, but not now.

What types of educations are required for the various jobs?

Most of the employees (front/back line) have a university education. The Vocational Training Center offers a program that trains people for 4 months and provides a certificate to housekeepers and waiters/waitresses.

What other types of educations are sometimes frequented to obtain employment?

Front office employees need university and 1 year training. If a person is under 18 years old, they can do a 1 week and 1 month training. Retraining for elderly is available. In the past 2 years, 100 16-18 year olds were trained for house keeping. Lots of people are employed from overseas. These are people who were originally from Hong Kong and left to study overseas.

What has the government done for the Hong Kong people?

The Hong Kong Government has done lots for young people. In the past 5-10 years, the government put lots of money into English instruction.

Why is Japanese an important language for your employees?

30% of hotel guests are from Japan. The Japanese like to travel a lot. Some of staff was trained with 20 2-hour lessons in Japanese. All internal hotel documents are in English.

What job positions are available?

Receptionist – appearance: standard height & facial expressions, speaks English

Waitor/Waitress

Room attendants – work hard, ability to speak out

Can you tell us about your background?

Employer 3 is the Director of Personnel & Training. She is a project manager, who helped start the hotel, which opened at the end of 1990. She was a founder of Excelsior hotel, at which she was a finance director. She studied economics at Sidney University. She used to work at Teradyne. She feels that good communication, ability to work as a group and ability to work as an individual are essential for any employee.

Thursday, January 17, 2002 - 10:00h

Class Observation - School 2 - Putonghua Module

Observations:

The classroom contains 30 seats, and 25 are occupied. A majority of the students hold conversations, 4 sleep for a few minutes at a time. The teacher used the overhead projector 2 times to teach the lesson.

Thoughts:

The classroom seemed a little small. The teacher had only a little control. She was friendly and enthusiastic, and tried to involve the students. Only a few students were quiet and attentive, while most students are either sleeping or actively holding conversations. The teacher is not strict at all, she lets the students do what they want. The students seem to like the teacher, but they still did not pay her much attention.

Friday, January 18, 2002 - 11:00h

Class Observation - School 1 - Chinese Writing Module

Observations:

The classroom contains about 22 seats, and 16 are occupied. Each student goes up to the whiteboard to complete in-class activities. All students were quiet, one played with his cell phone a few times.

Thoughts:

The classroom size is more than adequate. The class is quite well behaved, and the teacher is very enthusiastic. Every student is involved with the numerous class exercises; they run up to the board to answer questions. All the students were very attentive. It was apparent that the students liked the teacher very much.

Wednesday, January 23, 2002 - 17:10h

Class Observation - School 3 - English Module

Observations:

The classroom had 36 seats, and 34 were occupied. The teacher used a Jamiroquai song as an exercise to teach English. He talked through a microphone. 8 students towards the right of the class were continually talking around and making noise as they turned towards each other. The farther away they were from that group of students, the quieter they got.

Thoughts:

The classroom size is a bit small, 34 students with only 2 open seats. Most students were involved with the class, but one area of the class had very talkative students who were not paying much attention. He would try to quiet those talkative students and involve them in the class activities, which did not work very well. He spoke quite a bit of English in the class, approximately 60%.