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# Provision of second-chance education: the Hong Kong experience

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## Introduction

Not all students benefit from mainstream education that offers a relatively demanding academic programme that leads to university. Some find the academic emphasis not to their liking, some seek employment at the first opportunity, some develop late, and some cannot overcome exogenous factors such as low social-economic status, poor family relationships and parental involvement, and poor treatment by teachers (Ross and Gray, 2005). Some prefer to proceed through the different levels of education to employment in a non-uni-directional way, where re-entering the education process becomes the norm and not the exception, doing it as and when it suits them (Smyth and Hattam, 2004). And some reject it because they resist the dominant social values it represents (Willis, 1977, 1983; Munns and McFadden, 2000). By and large, these students come disproportionately from lower social-economic groups (Shavit, 1990; Oakes, 1985).

Since such students probably have difficulty finding work and end up as social misfits, governments world-wide provide them with second-chance education opportunities to avoid long-term social and security problems. Examples of such opportunities are the early versions of the Further and Technical Education institutes (TAFE) of Australia before they began offering degree programmes (Harris *et al.*, 2005) and the schools set up by the European Commission (European Commission, 2001, 2006). Governments that are concerned with reducing social and economic inequality have added reason because further education and qualifications are crucial for securing employment and advancement (Ayalon, 1990; Brint and Karabel, 1989).

However, it should be noted that graduates of second-chance education might do less well educationally and economically than their counterparts from first-chance education (Dougherty, 1987). In addition, more of the second-chance education opportunities might be taken up by students from higher social-economic groups because of their better family resources and connections, and the jobs available would pay less and have lower status. All this would probably reinforce the inequality (Ayalon, 1990; Ayalon *et al.*, 1992; Brint and Karabel, 1989; Saha, 1985).

## Mainstream and second-chance education in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, the preferred education path, after six years of compulsory primary education (P.1-P.6) and three years of lower secondary education (S.1-S.3), is to continue with two more years of upper secondary school (S.4 and S.5) for students aged 15 and 16 respectively, two years of sixth form (S.6 and S.7) for students aged 17 and 18 respectively, and three years of university. Progression from S.3 to S.4 is based on internal school assessment, while that from S.5 to S.6 is based on public examination (the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination, HKCEE), as is that from S.7 to university (the Hong Kong Advanced Level Certificate Examination, HKALE). In 2003/2004, of the 83,800 students who completed S.3, 78,500 (94 per cent) proceeded to S.4, but of the 78,500 who sat for the HKCEE, only 29,400 (37 per cent) went on to S.6, and of the 29,400 who sat for the HKALE, only 14,500 (49 per cent) went on to university. Thus, while it is easy to proceed from S.3 to S.4, the competition for limited places thereafter is fierce, so that of the 83,800 students who completed S.3, only 29,330 (35 per cent) proceeded to S.6, and 14,246 (17 per cent) to university. The percentage going to university (17 per cent) is very much lower than the average of 53 per cent for

OECD countries, which was why the government committed itself in 2000 to increase the ratio to 30 per cent by 2010/2011 (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2005).

This system, based largely on the old English one, is thus very competitive, selective and exclusive. It is also very examination-oriented, which encourages rote learning at the expense of lateral thinking. In addition, it requires students to specialise early as they have to choose at the start of S.4 for the HKCEE, between the Arts, Commercial or Science stream, on top of the compulsory subjects of Mathematics, Chinese, English and Physical Education. The choice is even narrower for the HKALE, as they specialise within the stream chosen, eventually ending up doing a highly specialised undergraduate degree programme (e.g. engineering specialising in chemical engineering or arts specialising in history). Thus the system forces students to make choices before they are ready and produces graduates expert in their specialised area but quite ignorant of others and unable to apply their expertise in context.

This has prompted the government to replace it with the 334 system, where, after six years of compulsory primary education, students embark on three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education and four years of university education, with the first cohort of students entering the new university system in 2012. Early specialisation will be abolished, school-based assessment expanded, and the two public examinations (HKCEE and HKALE) merged into one public examination (the Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education) at the end of senior secondary education, which offers electives in vocational and technical subjects for students with less interest in or aptitude for academic subjects. Thus students will have a longer period of secondary education, which gives them more time to decide on the study areas. The new four-year university programme will also include a general education component. The hope is that, by abandoning premature specialisation and relying more on internal school assessment, more students will stay on in mainstream education, thus reducing the need for second-chance education (Lim, 2008). The new system will also be more in line with the system in Mainland China and the international community and increase the portability of Hong Kong's education.

Four groups of education institutions provide second-chance opportunities to those who miss out after S.3, S.5 or S.7, who numbered 5,300, 49,100 and 14,900 respectively in 2003/2004. The first and biggest is the continuing education arm of the local universities. Typical of these is the largest and oldest of such operations, the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE) Community College of the University of Hong Kong, which offers a diversified range of two-year full-time broad-based Associate Degree (AD) programmes and two-year/three-year full-time specialised and professionally-oriented Higher Diploma (HD) programmes for S.5 and S.7 graduates. The second group consists of commercial organisations such as the Hong Kong College of Technology, and the third, charitable organisations such as Caritas, founded by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. The fourth consists of the Vocational Training Council (VTC), set up specifically by the government in 1982 to provide vocational education and training (VET).

As in other countries, most students who miss out on mainstream education in Hong Kong come largely from the lower and disadvantaged socio-economic groups. For example, a survey carried out in 2001 by the City University of Hong Kong shows that around 70 per cent of students enrolled in its AD programmes, designed for those who miss out on its degree programmes, came from families with a monthly household income of HK\$15,000 or below (Legislative Council, SAR Hong Kong, 2003: paragraph 20), which is below the median family income of HK\$18,705 (Census and Statistics Department, 2006).

## The VTC

The VTC is chosen as a case-study in the provision of second-chance education in Hong Kong because, unlike the other providers, it has significant numbers of students at all levels of study. At the bottom end, it prepares students who have completed S.3 but have no academic interest and seek immediate employment as skilled workers at the lower end of the labour market (Table I). This is an example par excellence of alternative education where further education beyond acquiring basic vocational and technical skills is not an objective (Shavit *et al.*, 2001). At the top end, again like the other providers, it enables its HD graduates to do the degree courses of overseas universities through top up programmes, where these universities run their courses on a part-time or full-time basis on its campuses (e.g. the UK's University of Manchester and Australia's RMIT University). This diverse offering has made the VTC by far the largest provider of second-hand education in Hong Kong, with over 150,000 students or 35,000 in full-time equivalent terms. The fact that it provides VET, the traditional but much stigmatized route through which those who do badly in mainstream education turn to for a second chance, makes it particularly interesting (Lim, 2008). The paper sets the discussion against the overall changing and often confusing position of second-chance education world-wide, and draws implications which might be useful for improving second-chance education elsewhere.

The VTC offers programmes at different levels in nine disciplines that have played, and will play, an important role in Hong Kong's economic development (e.g. manufacturing, mechanical and industrial engineering, and hospitality, services and tourism). Traditionally, its Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) delivers courses in vocational education and its Training Centres (TCs) trade-specific courses in vocational training, though this division is being broken down. Students who leave at the end of S.3 but not having successfully completed it can take IVE's Certificate of Vocational Studies (CVS) or the TCs' Basic Craft Certificate (BCC). The CVS is a generic two-year course to improve communication ability (English, Chinese and IT), self-esteem and vocational skills, the BCC a one-year one to provide vocational training in craft trades. Students who complete S.5 with five HKCEE passes but not English take IVE's 1-year Foundation Diploma (FD) or the TCs' Technical Foundation Certificate (TFC) or Vocational Certificate (VC). The FD develops communication and vocational skills and in 2003, its exit standard was evaluated by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (now the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, HKCAAVQ), the statutory body responsible for assuring the quality of non-self-accrediting education institutes, to be equivalent to the Government's Project Yi Jin (PYJ). As the Government regards the exit standard of the PYJ to be equivalent to five HKCEE passes for employment and further study purposes, FD graduates are deemed to have acquired the equivalent of the HKCEE, which is obtained by those who remain in mainstream education. The TFC and VC are more trade-specific.

Students with five HKCEE passes but not including English can take the two-year trade-specific Technical Certificate. Those with five HKCEE passes including English can take the two-year Diploma (D) or three-year HD, while those with five HKCEE passes including English and the completion of S.7 can take the two-year HD. A more recent programme is the four-year multiple-entry-and-exit HD, whose minimum entry requirement, the completion of S.5, though not necessarily successfully, is much lower than that for the traditional D and HD. Unlike the others, it guarantees progression to the HD level, if students do well at each stage. While all the courses offer second chances, the *raison d'être* for such education is especially evident in the CVS and four-year HD.

The provision of a second-chance is reinforced by a through-train system, which enables graduates who do well at each level to proceed to the next, all the way to the HD and thereafter to an overseas degree (Figure 1). Students who successfully complete the CVS and FD can proceed to the FD and D/HD respectively, and the few CVS graduates with exceptional results can bypass the FD and go straight to the D/HD. Thus, a student leaving mainstream education at the end of S.3 at the age of 14 without having successfully completed it can end up with a degree from a reputable overseas university. The clear progression pathway between the different award levels exists within IVE and the TCs and also between them. For example, not only can an IVE's CVS graduate proceed to its own FD, D and HD but a TC's BCC graduate can also proceed to IVE's CVS and thereafter HD. Thus, exceptional BCC, CVS and FD students can end up with a HD after six, five and four years respectively of study. This is a far cry from the past where a student with poor academic grades but interested in further studies could hope, at most, for a BCC or CVS award before entering the work force.

### **Testing the VTC's effectiveness**

The effectiveness of the VTC as a provider of second-chance education will be examined against three criteria: accessibility and progression, performance, and employment. The first two are similar to those proposed by Inbar and Sever (1989) but the third (employment) is a more realistic version of their equivalence criterion that second-chance education leads to rewards similar to those provided by mainstream education, because it recognises that much of what determines equivalence lies outside the capacity of education, still less second-chance education, to provide. Contrary to the claim of the Chicago human capital model (Welch, 1973; Raisin *et al.*, 1998), differences in educational level, training and experience can explain only a part of inter-personal differences in pay, with other factors such as social networks and race playing a significant role (Carnoy *et al.*, 1976; Carnoy, 1996; Farley, 1986; Hartmann, 1988). Even if monetary equivalence is achieved, this may not provide social equality because it is difficult to move up the social ladder, especially in a highly stratified and class-conscious society. It is enough that beneficiaries of second-chance education enjoy relatively high employment rates. The three conditions must be present simultaneously as they complement each other. For example, students will not be encouraged to return to education, even with minimal entry requirements, if their chances of success are limited or their success not rewarded.

Specifically, we will:

- examine the accessibility of the CVS and FD and the progression of the graduates through the VTC's own award system;
- compare the performance of the CVS graduates with that of other students in the FD, and the performance of FD graduates with that of other students in the D/HD; and
- compare the employment record of CVS and FD graduates with that of equivalent graduates from other providers.

The CVS and FD have been chosen even though they accounted for only around 20 per cent of IVE's 2004-2005 full-time pre-employment course enrolment, compared to the 80 per cent for the D and HD, because they represent the very essence of the VTC's work in offering second-chance education opportunities. The CVS is for the youngest and most vulnerable of the students discarded from mainstream education, when at age 14, at the end of S.3 and nine years of compulsory education, they find themselves prevented from continuing mainstream education, and for whom the absence of a second chance will most probably see them joining

the ranks of the long-term unemployed and social misfits. The FD is equally important because its students have got through the S.3 hurdle and would have gained a place in the sixth form but for poor grades in the HKCEE, and miss out university.

The data used has been collected by the VTC and has been accepted as reliable by both the Hong Kong Government and the HKCAAVQ. The former uses it for working out the VTC's funding and the auditing of its expenditures. The latter uses it in assessing the VTC's application for "programme area accreditation status" (HKCAAVQ, 2008), the equivalent of self-accrediting status for specific courses for a specified period, where it conducted, over a six-month period (December 2005-May 2006), an institutional review and 21 disciplinary reviews across the entire range of the institution's awards. The statistical data presented in the submissions to support the VTC's claims and in additional documents requested by the HKCAAVQ were scrutinised for accuracy and consistency and found not wanting (Lim, 2009).

### **Accessibility and progression**

Accessibility is important because the *raison d'être* for having second-chance education requires it to impose no or very low academic requirements for entry and only the usual requirements for continuation. This requirement is clearly present for the CVS and FD because entry for the former is only the completion, but not necessarily successfully, of S.3, and that for the latter only five bare passes for the HKCEE. Progression in their study is also met as the completion rate, the percentage of students enrolled in the programmes completing the courses, is high. For example, in 2004-2005, the rates for Craft-level programmes, which include the CVS, and for Technician-level programmes, which include the FD, were 71 per cent and 92 per cent respectively. While the rate for the Craft-level programmes is considerably lower, it is still high considering the poor academic background of the students and the fact that as more S.4 places become available with the decreasing teenage population, those who started the CVS will leave and return to the preferred mainstream education.

### **Performance**

First, we compare the performance of CVS graduates in the FD with that of students who have completed S.5 in mainstream education but not necessarily successfully (henceforth non-CVS graduates). Second, we compare the performance of FD graduates in the D and HD with that of students who enter them with five HKCEE passes, including English or who have completed the HKALE (henceforth E graduates), looking at the two groups' performances in the traditional D and HD, and the newer four-year multiple exit-and-entry HD. If the CVS and FD graduates do as well as the non-CVS and E graduates respectively, then the VTC would have succeeded because of the initially inferior academic background of its students.

#### ***CVS graduates and non-CVS graduates in FD courses***

CVS courses were introduced in 1999/2000 and its graduates can be admitted to the FD and, in 2004-2005, to Level 1 of the four-year multiple-entry-and-exit HD. In addition, CVS graduates with a final average (FA) mark equal to or greater than 65 (Credit or above) may be directly offered D or HD places. In 2004/2005, 260 or 53 per cent of CVS graduates were admitted to the FD and Level 1 of the four-year HD.

In 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, CVS graduates performed less well than non-CVS graduates in the dropout rate, the through-put rate, the module average (MA) mark, and the Vocational English (VE) module mark (Table II). While the differences were small for the MA and VE marks, they are significant for the other measures. However, this

comparison is not valid because like is not compared with like. As CVS graduates admitted to the FD are considered to have an equivalent Education Attainment Index (EAI) of between 0 and 3, they should be compared with non-CVS graduates with similar EAIs. When this is done, the picture is different. The average MA and VE module marks are not all that different, while the dropout rate for CVS graduates was actually lower, though not by much, in two of the four years. It was only in the throughput rate that they did worse. Thus, when like is compared with like, the performance of CVS graduates in the FD was roughly similar to that of non-CVS graduates.

### ***CVS and non-CVS graduates in Level 1 of four-year HD courses***

In 2004-2005, the percentage of students proceeding from Level 1 to Level 2 is lower for CVS graduates than for non-CVS graduates (Table III). The average MA and English marks of CVS graduates in Level 1 are also lower. However, when the comparison is with non-CVS graduates with EAI of between 0 and 3, though CVS graduates still performed less well, the differences are smaller, so their performance can be said to be generally comparable to that of non-CVS graduates.

### ***CVS graduates who progressed from FD to D/HD courses***

In 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, 51 and 58 CVS graduates respectively progressed from the FD to the D/HD. In general, their performance in the non-graduating classes is comparable to that of E graduates (Table IV). In 2004/2005, the first cohort of CVS graduates completed HD courses. Their overall performance in the final year of the course (HD3) was not as good as that of E graduates, though the difference is not marked (Table V). A similar pattern can be seen in the final year of Diploma courses (D2). However, as the number of CVS graduates involved is very small, the results may not be representative.

### ***FD, E and PYI graduates in non-graduating D/HD classes***

The results of the VTC's FD graduates in non-graduating D/HD programmes were compared to those of E graduates and graduates of the government's Project Yi Jin (henceforth PYJ graduates), which was introduced in September 2000 for S.5 leavers with an exit qualification equivalent to five HKCEE passes for employment and further study purposes.

When the MA and the VE module result of FD graduates were compared to those of E graduates in non-graduating D/HD studies in 2004/2005, they were not as good as that of E students but better than those of PYJ graduates (Table VI). However, in all cases, the differences were not that marked. The findings are similar to those of the previous years (Table VII), though the progression rate in 2004/2005 for D1/HD1 classes cannot be compared directly with those of the previous years, as under the new semester and modular system students are allowed to progress and carry any number of failed modules to the next year of study.

### ***FD, E and PYI graduates in graduating D/HD classes***

As with the results for non-graduating D/HD classes, the performance of FD graduates was comparable to those of E graduates and better than those of PYI graduates. In 2004/2005, the throughput rates for FD graduates in D and HD courses were 75.1 per cent and 83.6 per cent respectively, which were only slightly lower than the 76.9 per cent and 87.1 per cent for E graduates, but distinctly higher than the 48.7 per cent and 55.6 per cent for PYJ graduates (Table VIII). The MA and VE module average marks for all three categories of students were quite close. The same results were repeated in 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 (Table IX).

## **Employment**

The employment rate of the VTC's cohort of CVS and FD graduates in the 2004-2005 graduation was 67 per cent, which is surprisingly high because the move to a more knowledge-intensive economy has hit the young with the lowest level of formal qualifications very hard (Census and Statistics Department, 2000). It is also high compared to that for equivalent-level graduates from other providers (Lim, 2008). The rate is lower than the 87 per cent for the same year for all workers of the same age-groups in Hong Kong but is expected because while the VTC's figure refers to the employment situation immediately after graduation, the other refers to that after a much longer period.

Moreover, if the CVS and FD graduates proceed to, and succeed at, the D and HD levels, which many have done, they will enjoy much higher employment rates. In 2004, the employment rate for the VTC's D and HD graduates immediately after graduation was 88 per cent, while that for all workers of the same age-groups in Hong Kong after a time lag was 97 per cent. In addition, forecasts of demand for employment by educational attainment level in the immediate future have suggested very strong demand for them (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2003; VTC, various years). However, more information is needed before a firm conclusion can be made on the effectiveness of the VTC on the employment criterion.

### **Reasons for the effectiveness**

Thus, there is strong evidence on the accessibility and progression, and performance criteria that the CVS and FD programmes have been effective. An important reason for this is that the learning and teaching programmes have avoided much of what had put the young off mainstream education. In their previous nine years of compulsory education which did not interest them, students would have lost self-respect and confidence from not doing well and being constantly reminded of this by unsympathetic teachers. After learning from the mistakes of the first year of the CVS programme, which resembled too much of school, it was re-designed to re-ignite the students' interest in learning. They were offered courses in vocational areas of special interest to them (e.g. hair-dressing); courses in personal development, teamwork and physical education to rebuild confidence; and courses in communications skills to improve employability. However, there is enough generic content for those who do not want to enter the work force immediately to decide where their longer-term interests lie and to continue their study there. The programmes for FD students have been similarly re-designed.

Another important reason is the provision of a caring environment. Unlike most other tertiary education institutions in Hong Kong, the VTC has a Student Affairs Section, with dedicated full-time student counselors to provide pastoral care and academic guidance to help students adjust to the new learning environment and re-enter the educational system more smoothly. The teachers attend short courses specially designed by the VTC's Centre for Teaching and Learning to help them deal with students with behavioural problems (e.g. the compulsory In-service Education and Training Programme for new teachers). Students will also know, and be told, that as the VTC was set up specifically as a second-chance education provider, it does not espouse the dominant social values represented by mainstream education. In other words, in the design of its CVS and FD, the VTC has adopted many of the strategies shown to be necessary for success in second-chance education elsewhere, such as the European Commission's pilot project on second-chance schools (European Commission, 2001, 2006; UNESCO, 2006).

The breaking down of the stigma that has bedevilled second-chance education and VET is also important. The VTC has done this by introducing and implementing eight-year strategic plans (2003/2004 to 2010/2011 and 2009/2010 to 2016/2017) to make it more relevant and



cost-effective, debunk the myths traditionally attached to VET, and adopt a pro-active role in seeking external accreditation. These are on top of the provision of better learning and teaching programmes and the introduction of a new corporate image, the former because all other strategies will come to nothing without it, the latter because the rewards will not be maximised unless the public hears about it. These strategies are pursued as a package, as one without the other will not be effective (Lim, 2008).

Last but not least is the provision of a through-train education for those who want to continue beyond the CVS and FD levels. The VTC's system enables students with the incentive to continue their studies all the way to the highest award, the HD, by proceeding, without hindrance, from one level to another along clear pathways, so long as they meet the normal rules for continuation. This is further strengthened by the availability of part-time studies and part-time day-release studies, where apprentices can study full-time a day a week at the VTC, which fits better with the pathways of the young of today, who often move back and forth between education and work, unlike their predecessors' uni-directional pathway from education to work. Those with the ability to proceed even further can enrol in degree programmes of local and overseas universities. For example, 25 per cent of the VTC's HD graduates from the Department of Mechanical, Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering and the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering have gone on to study mainly in the School of Engineering of the prestigious Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, which is ranked 36th in Shanghai Jiao Tong University's 2009 Academic Ranking of World Universities in the field of Engineering/Technology and Computer Science, and between 201 and 300 overall (Shanghai Jiao Tung University, 2009), and 26th in The Times Higher Education Supplement's, 2009 ranking for universities in Engineering and Technology and 35th overall (Times Higher Education Supplement, 2009). The fact that this has gone on for a long time shows that the VTC's HD graduates can cope with university, which is shown further by the performances of its HD graduates in top-up degree programmes with overseas universities. Take, for example, its HD graduates in Accountancy enter the third year of the three-year Honours degree in Bachelor of Accountancy and Finance of the UK's Leeds Metropolitan University. While this university does not rank high in rankings of universities in the UK, it has scored maximum points in the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in Higher Education's review of the subjects in the programme concerned (QAA, 2001). The advanced standing given to the VTC was 67 per cent, and the performance of its students compared favourably to that of their British counterparts (Lim, 2008). A through-train education system, which provides clear-cut pathways from one level of study to another without hindrance and repetition of previous learning, will show that the education and qualification students receive at each level is not an educational and economic cul de sac, which will encourage them to continue further study, right up to degree level and with excellent chances of success.

### **Concluding remarks**

The VTC's CVS and FD have provided academic failures, usually from lower social-economic groups, with the opportunity to escape from a vicious education and poverty trap, and to lift themselves from the mire of helplessness and sub-ordinate position that this brings. The large intake of CVS graduates in the FD and of FD graduates in the D and HD, and their success over the years shows that the students' interest in education has been maintained and that the impact is not a one-off phenomenon. The interest in, and respect for, education has always been strong in Hong Kong and other societies steep in Confucian values because the legacy of Imperial China's examination system to promote the Confucian tenet of meritocracy in the civil service placed great store on education, as it increased the chances of passing the

examination (Gunde, 2002). But for many students in Hong Kong, enthusiasm for education has been reduced by exclusion from mainstream education and the emphasis on scholarly pursuits, another legacy of the Confucian value system (Creel, 1960). The VTC's second-chance VET programmes have played an important role in the government's efforts to recapture this enthusiasm.

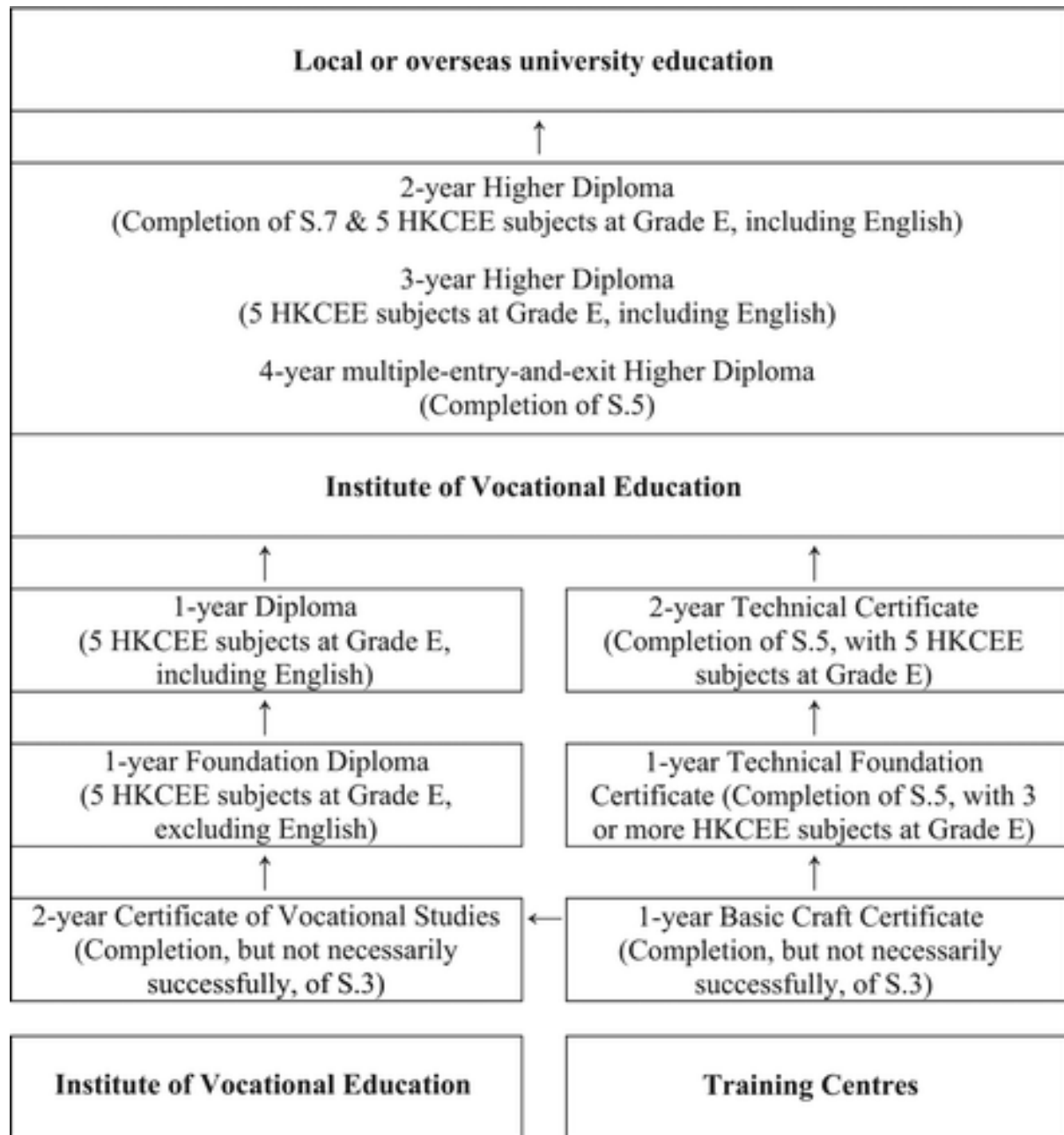


Figure 1 The VTC's through-train education system

**Table I.**  
The Hong Kong  
Qualifications  
Framework (HKQF)  
(2008), the VTC's major  
awards and minimum  
entry requirements

HKQF	Delivery arm of the VTC				
	Institute of Vocational Education			Training Centres	
4	Course <sup>a</sup>	Minimum entry requirements		Course <sup>b</sup>	Minimum entry requirements
	Three-year HD	Five HKCEE subjects at Grade E <sup>c</sup> , including English		-	-
	Two-year HD	Completion of S.7 and 5 HKCEE subjects at Grade E, including English		-	-
	One-year HD	VTC's D		-	-
3	Four-year multiple entry and exit HD	Completion, but not necessarily successfully, of S.5		-	-
	Two-year D	Five HKCEE subjects at Grade E, including English		Two-year TC	Completion of S.5, with five HKCEE subjects at Grade E
2	One-year FD	Five HKCEE subjects at Grade E, excluding English		One-year TFC	Completion of S.5, with three or more HKCEE subjects at Grade E
1	Two-year CVS	Completion, but not necessarily successfully, of S.3		One-year BCC	Completion, but not necessarily successfully, of S.3

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup> HD: Higher Diploma, D: Diploma, FD: Foundation Diploma, CVS: Certificate of Vocational Studies; <sup>b</sup> TC: Technical Certificate, TFC: Technician Foundation Certificate, BCC: Basic Craft Certificate; <sup>c</sup> Grade E is a Pass

**Table I** The Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) (2008), the VTC's major awards and minimum entry requirements

Year	Type of FD student	Average module mark of those who have successfully completed FD	Dropout rate <sup>a</sup> (%)	Throughput rate <sup>b</sup> (%)	Vocational English module mark
2001/2002	CVS graduate	57.4	8.8	48.2	49.2
	Non-CVS graduate with 0-3 EAF <sup>c</sup>	58.9	9.0	63.6	51.0
	Non-CVS graduate	63.2	7.2	78.6	53.7
2002/2003	CVS graduate	55.8	9.6	34.1	44.6
	Non-CVS graduate with 0-3 EAI	59.4	8.5	63.7	49.7
	Non-CVS graduate	63.4	5.6	82.6	51.1
2003/2004	CVS graduate	57.7	11.1	43.8	53.0
	Non-CVS graduate with 0-3 EAI	61.5	12.6	65.1	56.1
	Non-CVS graduate	65.9	6.4	82.3	59.0
2004/2005	CVS graduate	61.2	22.1	36.1	51.8
	Non-CVS graduate with 0-3 EAI	62.3	17.4	52.5	57.7
	Non-CVS graduate	67.8	5.9	84.0	59.7

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup> Percentage of students de-registered or have not attended the final examination; <sup>b</sup> Percentage of graduates in a cohort of student intake; <sup>c</sup> This is calculated from the best six subjects of a candidate's HKCEE results, with Grade A, the highest grade, equal to five marks, Grade B, four, Grade C, three, Grade D, two, Grade E, the lowest passing grade, one, and a Fail, 0. Thus the maximum EAI is 30. The EAI ranks the candidates for S.6 places, with candidates having 14 or more proceeding to S.6 of their parent school, if there are available places, candidates with scores between 8 and 14 in schools elsewhere, and those below 8 not meeting the admission requirement

**Table II.**  
Performances of CVS  
and non-CVS graduates  
in FD courses,  
2001/2002-2004/2005

**Table II** Performances of CVS and non-CVS graduates in FD courses, 2001/2002-2004/2005

Type of Level-1 student	Percentage of Level-1 students progressing to Level 2	Students who progressed to Level 2	Vocational English module mark
	Module average mark		
CVS graduate	70.2	54.9	49.4
Non-CVS graduate	80.7	62.9	57.6
Non-CVS graduate with 0-3 EAI	78.0	60.1	53.2

**Table III** Performances of CVS and non-CVS graduates in Level 1 of four-year HD courses, 2004/2005

Level	Year	Type of student	Percentage progressing to next stage/level	Students progressing to higher level	
				Module average mark	Vocational English mark
HD2	2003/2004	CVS graduate	91.7	58.2	57.1
		E graduate	93.8	57.8	53.1
	2004/2005	CVS graduate	90.9	54.7	50.3
		E graduate	95.1	60.0	50.9
D1	2002/2003	CVS graduate	77.5	54.8	48.3
		E graduate	78.6	57.6	51.7
	2003/2004	CVS graduate	70.6	52.8	45.6
		E graduate	83.7	57.9	50.5
	2004/2005	CVS graduate	95.7	60.0	51.6
		E graduate	90.7	60.5	52.6
HD1	2002/2003	CVS graduate	62.5	55.9	51.2
		E graduate	78.3	57.8	51.3
	2003/2004	CVS graduate	64.7	53.6	47.1
		E graduate	85.5	58.7	51.3
	2004/2005	CVS graduate	74.3	57.2	52.3
		E graduate	92.7	60.4	53.4

**Table IV.** Performances of CVS and E graduates in non-graduating HD/D classes, 2002/2005

**Table IV** Performances of CVS and E graduates in non-graduating HD/D classes, 2002/2005

Type of graduate	Number completing course	Throughput rate (%)	Students completing course		
			Module average	Vocational English mark	
HD3	CVS graduate	10	71.4	58.5	50.0
	E graduate	750	83.8	60.0	55.4
D2	CVS graduate	21	58.3	53.5	51.6
	E graduate	1,409	75.4	56.8	50.4

**Table V.** Performances of CVS and E graduates in graduating HD/D classes, 2004/2005

**Table V** Performances of CVS and E graduates in graduating HD/D classes, 2004/2005

**Table VI.**  
Performances of E, FD and PYJ graduates in non-graduating HD/D classes, 2004/2005

Class in 2004/2005	Type of student	Average EAI of students	Percentage of students progressing to next level	Average result of students progressing to next level	
				Module average mark	Vocational English mark
D1	E graduate	10.6	90.9	62.9	58.4
	FD graduate	10.6	90.8	60.5	52.6
	PYJ graduate	5.0	84.7	59.2	48.6
HD1	E graduate	12.6	90.6	63.4	58.4
	FD graduate	11.4	92.3	60.3	53.4
	PYJ graduate	5.0	80.2	56.5	50.3
HD2	E graduate	13.5	95.7	62.3	55.5
	FD graduate	11.4	95.1	59.2	50.9
	PYJ graduate	5.0	94.7	58.5	50.5

**Table VI** Performances of E, FD and PYJ graduates in non-graduating HD/D classes, 2004/2005

2004/2005 class	Type of student	2002/2003			2003/2004		
		Percentage of students progressing to next level	Module average mark	Vocational English mark	Percentage of students progressing to next level	Module average mark	Vocational English mark
D1	E graduate	83.4	61.1	57.2	84.7	62.1	56.4
	FD graduate	78.6	57.6	51.7	83.5	57.8	50.4
	PYJ graduate	60.9	55.8	48.2	51.7	58.1	48.9
HD1	E graduate	86.5	62.1	58.3	88.5	62.5	56.9
	FD graduate	78.3	57.8	51.3	85.2	58.7	51.3
	PYJ graduate	35.3	55.8	50.0	62.9	57.1	50.4
HD2	E graduate	95.5	61.6	59.1	95.6	61.4	57.5
	FD graduate	93.1	59.6	55.8	93.7	57.8	53.1
	PYJ graduate	100	51.3	56.3	87.5	66.9	53.9

**Table VII.**  
Performances of FD, E and PYJ graduates in non-graduating HD/D classes, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004

**Table VII** Performances of FD, E and PYJ graduates in non-graduating HD/D classes, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004

Class in 2004/2005	Type of student	EAI	Throughput rate (%)	Average result of students completing course	
				Module average mark	Vocational English mark
D2	E graduate	10.5	76.9	61.3	55.1
	FD graduate	10.0	75.1	58.5	50.4
	PYJ graduate	5.0	48.7	58.7	53.9
HD3	E graduate	13.7	87.1	63.0	60.5
	FD graduate	12.5	83.6	60.0	55.5
	PYJ graduate	5.0	55.6	63.5	55.3

**Table VIII.**  
Performances of E, and FD and PYJ graduates in graduating HD/D classes, 2004/2005

**Table VIII** Performances of E, and FD and PYJ graduates in graduating HD/D classes, 2004/2005

Award level	Year	Type of student	Throughput rate (%)	Module Average mark	Vocational English mark
D2	2002/2003	E graduate	76.3	61.3	60.7
		FD graduate	72.6	59.4	57.8
		PYJ graduate	32.5	59.1	58.4
	2003/2004	E graduate	75.5	61.6	60.3
		FD graduate	70.0	59.1	55.4
		PYJ graduate	54.5	58.7	57.4
HD3	2002/2003	E graduate	78.7	63.1	60.4
		FD graduate	91.7	64.1	58.7
		PYJ graduate	NA	NA	NA
	2003/2004	E graduate	78.7	64.3	60.5
		FD graduate	80.8	62.9	58.5
		PYJ graduate	40.0	55.2	Not applicable

**Table IX.**  
Performances of E, FD and PYJ graduates in graduating HD/D classes, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004

**Table IX** Performances of E, FD and PYJ graduates in graduating HD/D classes, 2002/2003 and 2003/2004

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