

Talent-based Coaching in Youth Career Development

“Everyone Needs a Stage”.

Abstract

The existing career and life planning model is proven to be helpful model for the youth to manage their career plan in the open market. However, for those who want to develop their talent as their career, the existing model is not enough.

After 10 years of frontline working experience with the youth, it is proposed that in helping the youth to develop their talent under the perspective of career development, a model of talent-based coaching should be adopted.

Talent-based coaching is proposed on micro and macro levels.

On the micro level, the four stages of talent-based program, namely audience, experience, training and performance; and the specific skills of facilitation along with the program, namely debriefing skills 2R2S, are suggested.

On the macro level, four stages of career and life planning program are developed; assistant coach training, advanced skill training, talent cultural localization and life planning interview. With a year-long program, the youth can learn the role of talent in their career from hobbies, part-time career or full time career.

In this paper, we will consolidate and discuss the critical path in adopting Talent-based Coaching after 10 years of working experience.

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Talent-based training is one of the common activities among the youth service in non-governmental-organizations. In the past, talent-based training program is one of the forms of leisure and recreation. Since 2006, ELCHK has started to consider talent-based training program as one of the ways to help the youth to develop their life planning in responding to the phenomena of “ladder without upward mobilization” and “no unmotivated but only de-motivated youth”. In 2014, ELCHK established the ELCHK Hong Kong Youth Talent Institute. In consolidating the past 10 years of working experience, we develop a model of Talent-based Coaching on both micro and macro levels to suggesting an alternative way to provide career and life planning.

Gen Z Ladder without Upward Mobilization

Most of the upper secondary school students are aiming to enter the university or tertiary education. However, only 20% of them can achieve this goal. For the rest of the 80%, they probably enter the job market or will keep searching for their direction. According to the Statistics Department, the unemployment rate is around 20% through out the recent years. The interpretation of these phenomena of education and employment is as follows.

No Unmotivated but Only De-motivated Youth

The mainstream assertion in the society is suggesting that the youth have the upward mobilization through academic qualification. This path is limited to those who can succeed through climbing the traditional academic ladder. However, those are blamed as failed, lazy, foolish or even deviant just because they are not engaging in school or in economic production activities. Therefore, any dreams not related to making money are regarded as not pragmatic and those reluctant to engage in making money are being labeled as unmotivated. In fact, they are de-motivated by the mainstream society. According to our working experience, most of the non-engaged

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youth are highly motivated in pursuing their dreams and looking for meaningful job than upward mobilization. An alternative to academic pursuit is talent development.

In addition, nowadays not all the youth are aiming at upward mobilization. They rather emphasize the meaningfulness of job or even self-actualization and self-transcendence from Maslow. (McLeod, 2007) “The Umbrella Movement” is a good example of this assertion.

Career Adaptability rather than Career Matching

However, the dominant youth work agenda is how to facilitate the youth from education to employment. Therefore the existing career and life planning model places emphasis on career matching. In today’s uncertain world, career path should not be planned in advance, career daptability is exceedingly important. It should facilitate the youth to learn the importance of engaging in a variety of interesting and beneficial activities, ascertaining their reactions, remaining alert to alternative opportunities, and acquiring learning skills for succeeding in each new activity.

Talented-based Coaching TBC

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the definition of “talent” is “Natural aptitude or skill”. While in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “talent” is defined as a special ability that allows someone to do something well. In summary, talent is referring to the inborn skills with good performance. In daily practice of non-governmental-organization, it usually refers to those talents other than academic performance and more related to performance art such as drama, dance and stage performance.

Coaching is different from counseling, the usual practice among social worker setting. Coaching is defined as *“a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. To be a successful a Coach requires knowledge and an understanding of process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place”*.(Parsloe 1999) It is a favorable skill in facilitating the youth to identify and develop one’s talent.

Whenever to engage the youth in life planning, apart from training and traditional pathway exploration, such as job shadowing, internship, etc., talent-based training can be one of the ways to facilitate the youth to explore their career and life planning. The idea is from interest to dream and from dream to life planning.

Talent-based Coaching is a model to facilitate the youth to have the life planning through joining the talent-based training.

Theoretically based TBC

KSA² model suggested by CHUK is referring to Knowledge, Skill, Attitude and Ability. In Knowledge, DILW model is focusing on Data, Information, Logic and Wisdom. It is a basic to learn how to identify and collect data. Then one develops how to translate data into information and vice versa. That is studying the information and revealing the data and the raw phenomena. With logic and theories, data can be translated into information. Through repeated practice, wisdom will be generated. Then next step is skill. Skill is stressing steps of executing skills. It is important to learn the necessary and sufficient conditions of each skill. If one step cannot be done, it means the preceding step before is not well completed. For better development, only knowledge and skills are not enough. Attitude is crucial in excelling in performance. Attitude is referring to RVB: Rule, Value and Belief. Last but not least, is the subjective agent. Ability is referring to the sense of self efficacy as suggested by Bandura. It also means the inner resources and quality of the subject. KSA² model is the skeleton of the TBC.

Experiential Learning (Kolb 2012) suggests four key concepts, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and new experiment. The important start of the learning path is providing different forms of direct or indirect concrete experience. Then the critical step is reflective observation. Without the reflective observation, abstract conceptualization cannot be reached. When one can learn more about themselves through the process of reflective observation, i.e both acting and attitude. After that, new experiment will be more possible.

According to Stages of Psychosocial Developmental suggested by Erik Erikson, in the stage of adolescence, the developmental task is “identity vs confusion”. The ascent of this stage is not facilitating the formation of a firm identity among the youth as soon as possible. He suggested that not until nineteen or twenty, the youth would not fix their identity. Therefore the importance of the stage of adolescence is SEARCHING. Providing different chances for them to explore about themselves is more important than facilitating them the acquisition of the “thorough self-understanding”.

“SSS model” (CHUK) is suggested, that is Stage-Show-Shine. The youth should

be provided a stage for them to show off themselves with shining points rather than being “stage-show-shame”. Some youth will experience shame on stage and be frightened to perform anymore in future. Therefore they cannot have better self-understanding but rather have trauma in such experience. Then nothing can be proceeded with such experience.

The Micro level of TBC

Stage 1 Audience

Introduce the youth to be audience and enjoy a show of performance arts. The main theme is teach them how to enjoy the show especially the core part of the performance for criticism. This can facilitate the youth the emphasis on the talent of the players rather than just an enjoyment in an entertainment.

Therefore the briefing and debriefing are crucial. It is much more important when introducing new performance art to the youth, for instance Theatresports. Whenever they learn the challenging area in playing theatresports, they will show more interest in this type of performing arts.

Stage 2 Experiential Day(s)

After being a good audience, the youth will be invited to join one to two session(s) of experiential days. With these opportunities they can attempt to taste the interesting parts of the performing arts. They can also gain a higher sense of self efficacy in joining the program. It is important to facilitate the youth the identification their joyful and challenging parts of the activities so that they will consider to have further training.

Stage 3 Pre-group Exercise (optional)

For those youth at risk, pre-group session is suggested. It is critical to facilitate the natural group or newly formed group of youth at risk the learning of the pattern of structural group, such as punctuality, attendance, and positive group norms. In doing so, 3 sessions of pre group exercise will be introduced. Then the youth at risk can be more ready for structural training class.

Stage 4 Training

With the foundation of being a good audience and the good experience in experiential day, the youth will be invited to join the talent-based training with 12 sessions. In these 12 sessions, 3 stages will be gone through to empower the positive

experience in the talent-based training.

Stage 4.1 Individual Skills

For the first 4 session, the focus is on individual skills. That means how well each individual learn the skills in class. Most of the performing arts that engage the youth are performing in groups. However, with different stages and talent in learning, the progress of each member will be different. Some youth may not catch up with the rest of the class. It is critical to keep the pacing of each member in an acceptable range. Otherwise, the high drop-out rate will be expected.

Stage 4.2 Team Work

With the pacing of each member being similar, the second stage of team work must be more emphasized. Then the members can be trained up as a team to lay a good foundation to have a better performance in the future. It is suggested to have 4 sessions to promote the team building. Through cooperation and togetherness, the youth can understand more about their people skills and communication patterns.

Stage 4.3 Preparation for Performance

If the talent-based training is just a training program without any opportunities to perform on stage, the youth would not have a better self understanding for further development. Also, without the performing opportunities, the youth are easy to quit the training as no meaning can be identified.

Therefore a performance should be arranged in the first place and a reasonable goal is set for the youth to engage in. Then they will work hard to learn the skills for a better performance. In addition, they can learn more about themselves through such special experience. According to our experience, 4 sessions are suggested to prepare for the performance in general.

Stage 5 Stage Experience

Stage experience is crucial in talent-based training. With stage experience, it serves as a test for the youth to examine how well they learn in the class. If the test is too unrealistic for the youth, then shame will be the consequence and it even end up with a traumatic experience. Then it not only defacilitate the youth the growth through talent-based training, but also it will tarnish their self-image.

Therefore it is important to prepare a suitable platform for the youth to have their stage performance. The platform can provide a challenge that the youth can accept. In

the beginning, usually the platform like volunteering or joining local district activities will be suggested.

The feedback from the youth, band groups or dance crew will lead to another level after stage performance. Once the horizon is expanded, it would not be smaller. Therefore the arrangement of the platform is closely related to the performance standard that the group can reach.

After having their own experience of stage performance, the youth are invited to be audience again. With a broaden horizon, the youth will share that they have a different perspective as an audience. They can have more self-reflection on being an audience.

Summary on Micro Level

Engaging the youth Analysis participating in talent-based training, especially for those youth at risk, the 5-stage model is suggested. In the past, the youth would easily drop out between the 3rd to 5th sessions. In addition, they would have some traumatic experience that they felt reluctant to have any further development in talent-based activities.

On the TBC micro level, it is suggested to start from ‘interest’, then through the training, the youth will identify their talent. As a board with such identification, they will be more activated to dream about their future. Some may expect to have prospects in performing arts with their identified talent. With talent-based training, these talent-based activities are not an interest class but a good way to promote self-understanding. In doing so, a special set of debriefing skills, 2R2S, will be suggested.

Debriefing- 2R2S

In general debriefing skills, 4 F, Fact, Feeling, Finding and Future is commonly employed in adventure-based counseling. This “4F debriefing skill” is good at capturing the learning in the adventure-based activities. However, it cannot go further to have better self understanding. In TBC, the debriefing skills of 2R2S, **Review-Reflection-Self Understanding-Development of Self**, will be introduced.

Firstly, reviewing skills will focus on the process and the AFT level of the youth. That is acting, feeling and thinking. In the first place, facilitate the youth the study of what has happened in one specific incident or at one stage. Then through reviewing

the process, whenever critical moment is identified, under reflective observation, the youth are assisted to identify the acting, feeling and event thinking in that particular moment.

Then reflection is suggested. It will mainly facilitate the youth the identification of the attitude of the critical incident, RVB: rule, value and belief attached to the incident. Reflection focuses on reflecting one's inner self rather on what one has learn from this experience. Rule refers to the judgement of right and wrong, while it is affected by the value behind, the most concern or what the youth think is important. ultimatly, value is shaped by the belief. Usually it is a sentence or statement that supports the youth to make a decision.

With such inner search, the youth will have a better self understanding. It is important to identify whether the self, RVB in general sense, is a "new finding" or "something revisited". Then we can further explore the importance and meaning of the new finding, learning one side of oneself or revisit the already known part of oneself.

Last but not least, the youth will be assisted to associate how the particular self was developed in the past. It is believed that every part of the self-rule, value and belief can reflect the development of such character or personality. Usually, the youth will share one or a few incidents to facilitate oneself the formulation of such characters. With one or more incident(s) identified, the youth can be advised to review that past incidents to go further to do review.

With 2R2S, the youth can understand themselves better through studying the incident experienced in that stage. Also, it can facilitate the youth the understanding of how their character or personality have been developed throughout the years.

The talent-based training with debriefing skills of 2R2S can transform an interest class into talent and self-concept identification. Through this experience, it can enhance the sense of self efficacy. With the increasing sense of self efficacy, it makes "interest-to-dream" possible. It lays a good foundation to further develop the youth for career and life planning.

The Macro level of TBC

When the youth can concretize their dream, they have to be supported to put dream into action and to explore the pathway for further development. Then the

macro level of TBC is suggested, that is **AC-AS-CL-LP**. Through the concrete experience, the drive to learn will be generated in a natural way. The drive to coach people, to learn the up-to-date skill, study the cultures on both local and international level. Then a better career and life planning will be expected.

Stage 1 Assistant Coach (AC)

When the youth has experienced the micro level of talent-based training of identifying one's talents. They can enroll in the Hong Kong Youth Talent Institutes and undergo the 4 stages. In the first stage, the youth will be trained as Assistant Coach. Then 2-4-2-4-2 model will be suggested. There are 2 sessions of training before 4 sessions as an Assistance Coach. When the AC participates twice, they are asked to have 2 sessions of debriefing.

Stage 2 Advanced Skills (AS)

When the youth has experience of AC, they would like to learn more about the advanced skills. It is because when they take up a new role, they will identify their limitation and room for improvement. Then they are advised to have 24 hours of advanced skills training. Among the 24 hours of training class, observation and professional sharing will be offered.

When the youth have enhanced their skills and knowledge, they will have a clearer picture about their future. With the taste of advanced skill, it can facilitate the youth the setting of their further training plan. Some of the youth like to keep the existing situation while some want to get themselves promoted.

Stage 3 Cultural Localization (CL)

Apart from knowledge and skills of the particular talent in performing arts, it is important to equip the youth in the cultural aspect. There are 24 hours of cultural localization training. The youth are assisted to learn the culture of the particular talent activities especially the development of that talent activities in both Hong Kong and internationally. On the other hand, the youth are advised to learn the subculture on the locality level, such as learning the folks of life of ordinary people.

On the other hand, they learnt a lot in particular talent skills and events. They are advised to have the cross-over culture and social care. The AC will be arranged to have talent performance for social care rather than general competitions or entertainment.

The theatre-based AC will have help related to some social issues to express their views or design some activities for providing alternatives and entertainments to the needy.

Stage 4 Life Planning

The talent-based coaching is aiming at facilitating the youth the exploration of their career and life planning. Therefore, 12 hours of Life Planning sessions will be offered, including their consolidation of the self understanding, pathway exploration and skills in career and life management and planning.

With the coaching, the youth are expected to have a plan on their career and life planning under 3 choices. The talent activities are just a hobby for leisure whereas the talent activities can be a part-time job and can sustain the participation in the mentioned activities. The youth may confirm it is the pathway that s/he want to put more effort to develop it as their career in the future.

If the youth identify the talent activities as their future career, they will be supported to plan and implement according to their talents.

Conclusion

The talent-based coaching, after consolidating the past 10 years of working experience, we have concluded them into micro and macro levels. On the micro level, the youth will be coached to transform the interest into one's talent. Dream will be formulate a whenever one can identify one's potential or possible talents. Also, the talents is not limited to applying in the talent-based activities only. Under the TBC, they can transform their identified skills and talents into the transferrable skill.

Then with different exposures, the youth are advised to join the TBC macro level to learn more about career and life planning through becoming as Assistant Coach. By putting dream into action, the youth will have a clearer picture about their career and life planning.

Life planning is not limited to class room learning or, career-related games. However, through the exploration of interest of the youth, the talent and career plan and management can be facilitated.

We believe in "everyone needs a stage".

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