

Advice from a veteran teacher
The right focus yields results



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Teaching experience:	Over 15 years

Oscar Lee, an experienced accounting teacher at YMCA College of Continuing Education, gives students some insights on what to focus on in order to excel in learning accounting.

Tell us about your study and career background.

I obtained a bachelor's degree in information technology and accounting and a master's degree in information technology education. I have also acquired the CPA qualification. In terms of career, I first spent some time working in an audit firm, and then I began my teaching career at a computer education centre teaching information technology and accounting. After a few years I finally settled here at the YMCA College of Continuing Education where I teach a combination of subjects covering accounting, finance, as well as information technology.

What made you move into teaching? Does your previous audit experience help with your teaching?

I decided to go into teaching because I find it a challenging job. With every individual student being different and having their own unique qualities and needs, I think it is both interesting and rewarding to be able to interact with them, nurture and guide them towards the path of success. This very organic nature of teaching is what draws me to the profession most.

Practical skills and theories are both indispensable in my teaching method. My previous commercial experience obviously helps. As I got to see and understand the operations of different companies, I am able to use them as examples to illustrate some abstract concepts and theories during teaching.

What is your teaching method?

I emphasize interactive teaching and learning. My class is not simply chalk-and-talk. Apart from using my past experience, I also adopt some current issues that are relevant to the topics. I encourage discussions and questions on these issues. We use case questions adopted by the HKIAAT Accounting and Business Case Competition as teaching materials and let students discuss the issues among

themselves. I believe that these practical exercises and class discussions help facilitate students' learning and better equip them with knowledge that can be applied directly at work later on.

How would you comment your students in general?

My students have a very good attitude towards their studies. They are hard-working and this is reflected in their results. I have witnessed countless students coming into our college with meagre achievements from their previous exams, but who went on to show great improvement within the few years they were here.

What are your views on the AAT qualification?

Professional qualifications are essential to the growth of all accounting personnel. They are a standard which employers can use as a base when evaluating the competencies of a candidate.

I also acquired the AAT qualification many years ago. I could see its rising popularity. Although many of our students will go on to pursue further studies upon graduation, they will also acquire the AAT qualification since it is not only well recognized, but is also one of the most direct and well-structured paths to articulate to the Qualification Programme offered by the Hong Kong Institute of CPAs.

What is your advice for accounting students in Hong Kong?

I think one crucial concept that accounting students should know is that there is no spoon-feeding in accounting. Mere memorization and cramming of knowledge will not get you very far. In order to establish a sound basis for learning in accounting, one must be able to think, understand, and apply the concepts behind the knowledge. That is also the key to succeeding in the profession.