

Part C Project Details

Project Title: Enhancing positive values and well-being through Experiential Mindfulness Programme (EMP) among secondary school students 透過體驗式靜觀計劃提升中學生的正面價值觀和身心健康	Project Number 2021/1173 (Revised)
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1. Name of School / Organisation / Individual:

Department of Psychology, The Education University of Hong Kong

2. Needs Assessment and Applicant's Capability

2.1 Need Assessment

2.1.1 Cultivating positive values

In the 21st century, unprecedented worldwide economic, social and technological changes have enhanced future uncertainties. These changes have brought demands to the next generation, for that they need to develop their adaptability, creativity, independent thinking and life-long learning capabilities to make the best of the opportunities ahead. As such, the expectations toward schools and education have also changed. Besides fostering a broad knowledge foundation and providing skills training (i.e., intellectual aspect), the role of education has become inextricably linked with an individual's physical, social, psychological, professional and spiritual development.

Cultivating students' positive values and attitude toward self, others and the world help students cope with demands in societies. Through values education, students can foster a higher level of resilience, a fuller understanding of themselves and their identities and responsibility, as well as develop character strengths that can help them to perform reasonable and ethical judgements, decisions and actions that may continuously sustain their growth and development to meet the challenges of the 21st Century and become informed and responsible citizens committed to the well-being of their fellow humans (Broadbent & Boyle, 2013; Lovat, 2017).

2.1.2 Needs in the school systems - More Resources and Training in Values Education

The EDB has been advocating a holistic and integrated approach to taking forward different facets/"labels" of values education. School-based planning of values education is undertaken by schools in consideration of their own vision and mission. As regards implementation, it is common for schools to complement formal classroom teaching with a wide range of OLE, with the engagement of parents, alumni, non-governmental organizations, etc. The above approach has been implemented for many years and is widely accepted by the school sector to address diverse school needs. However, it often comes with a doubt when implementing these activities about the ambiguity of whether these school activities can really relate to the aimed values education. According to the EDB Task Force on Review of School Curriculum Final Report in September 2020, the Task Force raised the need for more related guidelines and more "life events" exemplars to illustrate how teachers can make use of the curriculum content of the respective subjects and social/"life events" relevant to students' experiences to stimulate discussion on controversial issues (e.g. child abuse, teenage pregnancy, gender issues, cybercrime) and help students understand the different value judgments that these issues reveal, so as to cultivate positive values which cut across and permeate various facets of values education. Moreover, referring to a review on the effectiveness of the implementation of life planning education in secondary schools in Hong Kong, the advisory team also suggested that teachers should be provided with professional training with respect to tailor-made courses to meet individual needs in order to develop and apply more effective teaching and learning strategies to promote values education, the development of teaching materials and tools; courses catering for different student needs. Therefore, these reflect that there is a need for professional training and example materials to enhance and strengthen educators' capabilities and abilities in teaching and guiding their students to cultivate positive values to meet the possible challenges. **The present project will address this need by developing teaching materials and professional training for teachers in implementing values education.** We will use *mindfulness practice* and *experiential learning* as means to enhance values because it nurtures positive psychological resources and self-reflexivity.

2.1.3 Hong Kong Students' Academic Stress and Well-being

Positive values boost one's well-being. Hong Kong is renowned for its high-stress education system. From as early as primary education, Hong Kong students are tied with hours of homework and continuous assessments, in the hope of satisfying the schools' requirements and parents' expectations (Cho & Chan, 2020). Entering secondary education makes studies increasingly onerous for Hong Kong

students as they will have to fight through a ceaseless amount of tests and exams in the following years to come, only to prepare for the fear-striking Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education which determines their chance of getting into university.

Concerning academic performance, Hong Kong students have been recognised for their reading, mathematical and scientific literacy abilities. While Hong Kong students have excelled academically in a class of their own, they are found to be suffering from high stress and anxiety. According to the community survey examining children's happiness and students' academic stress in the last decade, statistics have consistently shown a low level of happiness and a high level of stress among Hong Kong primary and secondary students (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2018). For instance, the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups recently interviewed over 4,000 secondary school students between September and October 2020, and found that over half of the students' stress index has reached seven or above on a scale of 1 to 10. Students have reported their major source of stress stemmed from "preparing for tests and exams", followed by fearing that their "results not matching their expectations" and "having less rest time" (The Standard, 2020). In addition, there has been a rising number of student suicide cases in our society that have appealed to members of the community to work together in students' suicide prevention (Cheung, 2020; Legislative Council Secretariat, 2018). Altogether, these might reveal that Hong Kong students encounter difficulties in maintaining their well-being in the face of the demands and pressures from their studies. **The present project will address this need by enhancing the well-being of students through fostering positive values.**

2.2 Applicant's Capability

Project team composition, background and responsibilities are shown in Table 1. The project team comprises expertise from different relevant areas, including positive psychology, educational psychology, and life and values education. The project leader is experienced in running intervention studies and conducting large-scale research projects. The project team members are strong in research as well as development of teaching materials/packages for use in school settings. For example, Dr. [REDACTED] was the project leader of the project of "Positive Psychology and Education" funded by internal funding from EdUHK. Dr. [REDACTED] has published extensively in the area of mindfulness and mental health. Dr. [REDACTED] holds multiple teaching grants in team-based learning and interprofessional education. Dr. [REDACTED] was the principle investigator of grants supported by General Research Fund and Public Policy Research Grant, focusing on students' well-being. Dr. [REDACTED] is an expert in life education and has been leading multiple education projects related to life and value education.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of the project team members

Name	Role and webpage showing past research work	Position and Research Area	Responsibility
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Project Leader [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, The Education University of Hong Kong Psychoeducation, programme evaluation, and learning strategies	Design of the EMP, design of professional development activities, project management, budget holder, quantitative research and publication
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Team Member [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, The Education University of Hong Kong Mindfulness, psychoeducation, mental health	As project consultant, giving advice on programme design (particularly on mindfulness) and research activities
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Team Member [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Assistant Professor, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong Well-being, students' learning, and program evaluation	As project consultant, giving advice on programme design (particularly on learning and teaching) and research activities
[REDACTED]	Team Member	Associate Professor, Center for	As project consultant,

		Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, The University of Hong Kong Positive psychology, positive education, and big data	giving advice on programme design (particularly on values and well-being) and research activities
	Team Member	Lecturer, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, The Education University of Hong Kong Life and values education	As project consultant, giving advice on values education framework and teaching strategies

3. Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of the project is to develop, evaluate and disseminate a programme for values education focusing on existential exploration and mindfulness practices infusing experiential learning approach. The programme is named as **Experiential Mindfulness Programme (EMP)**. Goals of the project are listed below.

3.1 Short Term Goals:

1. To design and develop the **EMP** for senior secondary school students;
2. To generate research evidence of **EMP** by evaluating the effects of the programme on students' positive values and well-being through program evaluation and student assessment;
3. To provide training for teachers and other professionals to implement **EMP**; and
4. To disseminate the **EMP** to secondary school educators and other related professionals for enhancing the knowledge and skills of implementing values education in school settings.

3.2 Long Term Goals:

1. To promote educators' awareness, knowledge and skills in utilizing **EMP** to promote positive values and well-being among secondary school students; and
2. To promote the implementation of school-based **EMP** in local secondary schools.

4. Targets and Expected Number of Beneficiaries

The targets and expected number of direct beneficiaries are summarized in Table 2. It is estimated around **500 students, 120 secondary school teachers and principals and 80 educators and other related professionals will be direct beneficiaries** of the project. More than **2,000 students and 500 educators/professionals will be indirect beneficiaries** of the project by publishing and disseminating the teaching package of the programme.

Table 2: Targets and expected number of beneficiaries

Targets	Expected number of direct beneficiaries
Students in the participating secondary schools	Around 500 Form 4 and Form 5 students from the 8 participating schools will receive the EMP designed by the project team. In Phase 2, 50 F.4 and F.5 students from 2 secondary schools will receive the EMP. In Phase 3, around 450 students from 8 secondary schools will receive the EMP.
Secondary school teachers and principals	Around 120 teachers and principals will participate in professional development on using the EMP in school settings. A website containing all the programme materials will be disseminated to all secondary schools in Hong Kong.
Educators and other related professionals	80 educators in any sector, academics, tertiary students, other related professionals and the public will participate in the dissemination activities organized by the project. The project website will also be disseminated via EdUHK network.

5. Innovation

The present project aims to enhance outcomes in values education through our innovative approach of experiential mindfulness in which students will experience mindfulness activities designed along existential themes incorporated with experiential learning approach. Infusing experiential learning,

mindfulness with existential perspective is a new way to foster outcomes in values education. The program may serve as a seed project to reinforce the implementation of values education in local secondary schools.

6. Conceptual Framework

6.1 Values and education outcomes

The present project is proposed to generate impacts on values education. Values are of crucial importance for an individual's life, which are believed to pilot a direction to someone's behaviors and preferences. According to Rokeach, value is a belief, preference or standard (Güngör, 2000; Rokeach, 1968).

Evidence regarding the beneficence of values education pedagogy has been increasingly revealed. It was demonstrated that the superordinate values dimension of education should not be regarded as being in opposition to the academic, but rather as a more effective way of achieving it than forms of education that focus on academic outcomes in isolation. A wide range of neuroscience and psychological research have suggested that moral education possesses rare potential to activate those emotional and social centers of the brain that, taken together, can impel the form of sound reasoning associated in educational research generally with efficacious learning (Chowdhury & Garson, 2012; Immordino & Damasio, 2007; Narvaez, 2014). Research insights of this type would appear to highlight the central role that moral education can play in enhancing all educational goals (Jonas, 2012; Narvaez, 2014). Recently, findings from the Australian work provided further evidence that the establishment of implicit values-oriented ambiances of learning, together with explicit discourse about values in ways that draw on students' deeper learning and reflectivity, has power to transform the regular patterns of students' feelings, behaviour, resilience and academic diligence in the direction of more efficacious learning.

6.2 Mindfulness-based practices for adolescents

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) are increasingly used in the management of various mental health issues in adolescents. Mindfulness training refers to a cultivation of a mental state with moment-to-moment attention, awareness and acceptance of bodily sensations, affections and thoughts for enhanced regulation of cognitions and emotions (Lau & Hue, 2011; Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016). Majority of the mindfulness training programmes for adolescents are adapted from mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) interventions which include meditation practices, such as body scan and mindful movement (Black, 2015; Lam, et al., 2015; Van Vliet, 2017). Evidence indicates MBIs in adolescents are promising in improving emotional well-being, stress reduction (Carsley et al. 2017; Felver et al. 2016; Lau & Hue, 2011), as well as social and emotional learning skills, such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-management and sociability (Lantieri et al., 2016; Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016). There is also proven effectiveness that mindfulness enhances meta-cognition, attention and cognitive flexibility (Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016; Weare, 2019).

Existing research mainly focuses on the benefits of MBIs in adolescent's emotional, social and cognitive functioning, in addition, the mindfulness practices involving the qualities of kindness, compassion, acceptance and gratitude support people's constructive and caring behaviours (Hyland, 2015), which demonstrates the potential of MBIs as a tool to cultivate student's positive values and resilience for whole-person development in schools. Therefore, we propose to develop a mindfulness programme to enhance the specific positive values proposed by EDB's value education framework (e.g., sense of responsibility and empathy) as well as well-being of students.

While mindfulness practices are well-established as effective in enhancing well-being, the project team's initial work has shown the inclusion of existential exploration is able to foster well-being and change in beliefs and attitudes toward life (Ly, King, & Yeung, 2022). Existential exploration involves reflection of existential threats such as isolation, freedom, identity, death and meaning of life, which assists individuals to develop self-understanding and find purpose in life, while mindfulness focusing on the present moment and non-judgemental acceptance can be used as a tool to enable people to gain first-hand experience of human existence, which facilitates individuals to build awareness and skills towards discovering insights, guiding them to become more open and receptive to conscious processing of existential issues. To integrate existential exploration and mindfulness, the combination of thematic sharing of existential concerns within daily living contexts at personal level and various kinds of guided mindfulness practices supports the conscious processing of personal concerns and gaining insights for self-growth. Research has shown the promising effect of mindfulness in alleviating

existential anxiety which enhances one's competence in making meaning from existential threats and self-concept, helping people to face life challenges with effective and flexible coping strategies (Lind et al., 2014).

Human fundamental anxieties are rooted in existential concerns including isolation, freedom, identity, death and meaning of life from the existential perspective, in which deep existential concerns occur most prominently after significant negative events (Koole, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 2006; Yalom, 1980). To improve psychological well-being, existential-based therapy cultivates the conscious awareness of the human limitations and the associated anxieties, guiding individuals to accept the universal constraints, re-prioritise their life goals and develop their potentials within the limitations (Jones, 1998; Sakai et al., 2019). Existential-based therapy helps to transform the existential anxieties to self-exploration and self-actualization, empowering individuals to move beyond the mental afflictions (Sakai et al., 2019; Yalom, 1980).

Adolescent development is highly related to the theme of existential philosophy. Psychosocial developmental theory suggests adolescence is a critical period in the development of life goals, values and a sense of direction (Berman, et al., 2006). The literature highlighted the increased freedom and responsibility of choices during the transition from childhood to adolescence would result in the sense of uncertainty and anxiety about finding appropriate life roles, goals, and values (Berman, et al., 2006; Fitzgerald, 2005). Berman, et al. (2006) indicated identity exploration was a significant challenge to most teenagers, which was also associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms. A local survey in recent years reported that nearly half of the secondary school students showed signs of depression and a fifth of respondents reported a sense of emptiness and suicidal ideation (Chiu, 2017). A study indicated mindfulness buffers the emergence of self-doubt and sense of instability in the developmental phase of emerging adults where they may experience the struggle with autonomy and identity exploration (Peer & McAuslan, 2016). The mindful attention promotes self-focus and limits the cognitions that give rise to the feeling of ambivalence, suggesting its positive impact on adolescents' developmental adjustment. In view of the high rates of psychological distress in secondary school students, mindfulness-related strategies to develop positive values are deemed beneficial to promote adolescent's well-being.

6.3 Experiential learning as a pedagogical means

Experiential learning is depicted as a successful pedagogical method to promote active learning in students. The learning mode emphasizes a four-stage learning cycle, including the phases of Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation (Kolb, 1984). It features the knowledge conceptualization from reflection of experiences and the application of modified knowledge to new settings (Kolb, 1984).

Research showed the significant effectiveness of experiential learning in education. Studies found students reported increased motivation and interest in the academic subjects, enhanced learning experience and confidence in applying learned knowledge into practice with the experiential learning basis (Kruger, et al., 2015; Weinberg et al., 2011). The active learning approach in experiential learning increased student's ownership of the learning process that enhanced their comprehension and improved the quality and depth of learning (Bradberry & De Maio, 2019).

According to the Education Bureau (2021), experiential learning is adopted for student's life-wide learning to promote whole-person development and cultivate life-long learning capabilities in secondary school. Five essential life-wide learning experiences including Moral and Civic Education, Physical and Aesthetic education, Career Related Experience, Community Services and Intellectual Development are recommended to take place outside the classroom in different contexts (EDB, 2021). It is found that experiential learning was usually applied in academic subjects, community service and career exposure (Cheung, 2006). However, experiential learning programmes for student's values education is relatively limited.

6.4 The Present Program: *Experiential Mindfulness Programme (EMP)*

The present project aims to develop experiential mindfulness programme (EMP) for Hong Kong secondary school students to enhance their positive values and well-being. The key feature of the current mindfulness-based programme is that existential exploration and experiential activities are incorporated. It is argued that incorporating these two elements will enhance the effectiveness of the programme in achieving the targeted outcomes.

In Hong Kong, values education highly regards using diversity learning experiences (e.g., Visits, uniformed teams and hands-on service learning) with topics covering different aspects of life

(i.e., Individual, Family, School, Social, and Society, Nation and World) in promoting students' positive values and attitudes. These values and attitudes are based on the needs of students at different developmental stages. The values education curriculum framework (pilot version) proposed by EDB in 2021 has suggested ten overarching values and attitudes to nurture, namely *perseverance, respect for others, sense of responsibility, national identity, commitment, integrity, caring, law-abiding, empathy and hard work*. For our project, we will nurture six of these proposed values among students, after considering the scope and unique features of the program. The values that the proposed program focuses on are: **perseverance, respect for others, sense of responsibility, commitment, caring, and empathy**. In one way or another, these values are strongly tied to self-understanding and nurturing positive psychological resources, which could be enhanced by existential exploration and mindfulness practice. As outlined above, we propose that the present program, apart from cultivating positive values, will enhance the well-being of students, given the strong evidence of MBI in fostering well-being in different populations.

6.5 Objectives of EMP:

To enhance positive values and wellbeing of adolescents via:

- (1) Experiential exploration related to existential issues surrounding the daily situations as well as the developmental concerns of secondary school students, and
- (2) Exploration of different forms of guided mindfulness practices.

6.6 Design principles of the EMP include (See Appendix I and Appendix II for further details):

- Integration of exploration of existential concerns with guided mindfulness practices;
- Thematic-based according to the five main existential concerns of *identity, isolation, autonomy, mortality and meaning of life*;
- Carefully designed guided mindfulness practices to enhance participants' positive mental resources for self-understanding, emotional regulations, as well as positive existence; and
- Incorporation of experiential learning activities (e.g., mindful eating and drinking) as one of the pedagogical means to promote engagement.

7. Implementation Plan with Timeline

7.1 Implementation plan

This project will be a 24-month project planning to commence in January 2023 and reach completion in December 2024. There are 3 phases, which are described in detail below. Table 3 shows the detailed implementation timeline.

7.1.1 Phase One (Jan 2023 to May 2023) – Program design and development

The project team will develop the first draft of the EMP, which consists of 10 detailed lesson plans and related teaching materials. **Feedback will be gathered from teachers and principals** on the first draft of the programme for refinement and get it ready for use in the first phase of implementation. When designing the programme, we will take students' developmental and learning needs into account. The learning materials will be correct, complete, objective and impartial.

Trained part-time teachers who will implement the program in the schools as program teachers will be recruited. University graduates with relevant background in Psychology and Education will be identified. The project team will provide training to the program teachers on the implementation of EMP.

7.1.2 Phase Two (Jun 2023 to Dec 2023) – Program evaluation

The EMP and the comparison interventions will be implemented for 8 weeks (20 hours of instruction) in 2 seed schools. Form 4 and Form 5 students from participating schools will be invited to join the programme on a voluntary basis. Recruitment will continue until the target number of participants is achieved. Priority of participation will be given to students who have development and learning needs such as experiencing high level of stress and/or having emotional challenges. Participating students in each school will be randomly assigned to either the EMP group (n = 50), MBI group (n = 50) or the comparison group (n = 50). All programs will be implemented by school teachers supported by trained part-time teachers, who have relevant qualification and background in Psychology, Education or other related areas. The school teachers and part time teachers will be provided at least 10 hours of training by the project team to ensure that they can implement the programme effectively. They will work together closely to deliver the programme. Fidelity checks on adherence to the lesson plans and teaching quality will be conducted by research assistants who will be 'blind' to the condition and hypothesis of

the study. The EMP group features the integration of the existential concerns with guided mindfulness practices. The MBI focuses on mindfulness practices with experiential learning elements. The comparison intervention will be business-as-usual values education activities. Such design enables us to tease out the effects of existential exploration and mindfulness. We can also evaluate whether incorporating existential exploration would be more effective in enhancing values and well-being than MBI. Students in the control group will be provided with EMP after the research phase.

To evaluate the effects of the program quantitatively, students in the EMP group and the comparison interventions will be assessed on their positive values and well-being before, immediately after and 2-month after the intervention implementation. Their level of mindfulness will be measured as well. **We will also measure subjective perception of the programme by the participants of EMP and teachers of their schools**, including perceived usefulness, and perceived changes after receiving the intervention. Focus group interviews will be conducted with participants to gather feedback on the programmes and further evaluate the impacts of the programmes on participants. To investigate the sustained effects of the EMP, a two-month follow-up assessment will be conducted. Details about measures included are presented in Section 10.

7.1.3 Phase Three (Jan 2024 to Dec 2024) – Data analysis, further implementation, production of the teaching manual, professional development activities, and dissemination of findings

Based on the program evaluation findings and feedback from school teachers and principals, the programme (design and materials) will be further refined for further implementation. In this phase, another 6 secondary schools will be invited to join the project, together with the 2 seed schools, to **implement EMP by school teachers (a total of 8 schools)**. Around 15 to 20 teachers from each project school (a total of around 120 teachers) will be provided with training to run the programme (6 to 9 hours of professional development). Continuous feedback and support will be provided to these teachers to ensure that they are able to implement the programme with good quality. It is estimated that around 50-60 F.4 and F.5 students will join the programme from each school and a total of around 450 students will be benefited in the phase of implementation. Same inclusion criteria as in Phase 2 will be applied in participant recruitment and recruitment will continue until the target number is achieved. Program evaluations will be conducted by measuring students' level of mindfulness, positive values, and well-being before and after the intervention.

Consolidating the data from program evaluation and feedback from schools, the programme will be further refined and developed into an electronic teaching package, then will be disseminated widely. Dissemination seminars will be conducted to share the project findings and professional development workshops will be conducted to train up teachers to use the teaching package or incorporate EMP in their school curriculum (see 7.2 and 7.3 for details).

7.2 Professional development activities of the project

In the Phase 2 of the project, the project team will hold 1 professional development workshops for school teachers (3 hours) to understand the rationale, design and implementation of the programme in the seed schools. In Phase 3, school teachers who will run the programme will be given at least 6 to 9 hours of professional development for program implementation. On-going school support will be provided by the project team during the 8-week implementation.

After the program has been finalized, further professional development activities will be organized. Around 100 teachers and principals will participate in the workshops, which aim to train up secondary school teachers to implement EMP in local schools. Project school teachers and principals would have priority to join these professional activities.

7.3 Dissemination activities for educators and the general public

In the last phase of the project, two dissemination seminars will be organized to share the project findings to educators, other related professionals, academics and the public. The electronic teaching package will be widely disseminated via the project website. The website will also present general information related to values education and mindfulness practices. The website aims to serve as a resource platform for teachers to implement values education.

Table 3: Project objectives and related project activities

Project Goals (Short-term)	Project activities
1. To design and develop the EMP for senior secondary school students;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and development of the EMP (Phase 1) • Continuous improvement over the project period with <u>feedback from teachers and principals</u>
2. To generate research evidence of EMP by evaluating the effects of the programme on students' positive values and well-being through program evaluation and student assessment;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the EMP (2 seed schools in Phase 2 and 8 schools in Phase 3) • Program evaluation activities (Phase 2 and Phase 3) with different stakeholders to ensure the validity and quality of the programme • Assessments on participating students' level of mindfulness, positive values, and well-being
3. To provide training for teachers and other professionals to implement EMP ; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development workshops for teachers in seed schools in Phase 2 • Professional development workshops for 8 schools in Phase 3 • On-going school support provided for school to implement EMLEP in phase 2 and phase 3 • Professional development workshops for 100 secondary school teachers
4. To disseminate the EMP to secondary schools and the community for enhancing the awareness and knowledge of implementing values education in school settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The publication of the electronic EMP program through project website • Dissemination of the project website via EdUHK website and social media • Professional activities presented in Section 7.2

Table 4: Timeline of the Project

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Recruitment and liaison with project schools																								
Design and Development of EMP																								
Training of project teacher for Phase 2 implementation																								
Implementation of EMP and fidelity check, pretest, posttest and delayed posttest																								
2-month delayed posttest																								
Data management and analysis																								
Implementation of Phase 3																								
Professional Development Workshops for teachers																								
Dissemination seminars																								
Website development and final report																								

8. Teachers' and Principals' Involvement in the Project

Principals and teachers will be involved in giving feedback and comments on the development of EMP. Their comments will help refine the design of the programme and teaching materials before the final production upon the completion of the project as the project deliverable. Dissemination seminars will be held for teachers and principals both from the participating and non-participating secondary schools in Hong Kong. Other related professional, academics and tertiary students will be invited to attend the dissemination seminars as well.

9. Budget

Table 5: Budget Breakdown

Category of financed item	Item description and calculation	Year 1 (Jan 2023 – Dec 2023)	Year 2 (Jan 2024 – Dec 2024)	Total amount
Staff cost	Post	Salary	Salary	
	Full-time Project Officer \$31,750 x 24 months + \$1,500 X 24 months	12 months \$399,000	12 months \$399,000	\$798,000
	Full-time Research Assistant \$15,500 X 1.05 X 12 months	12 months \$195,300		\$195,300
	Part-time Research Assistants \$130 X 1.05 X 300 hours	\$13,650 (100 hours)	\$27,300 (200 hours)	\$40,950
	Student Helpers \$55 x 200 hours x 1.05	\$5,775 (100 hours)	\$5,775 (100 hours)	\$11,550
Staff cost Subtotal				\$1,045,800
General Expenses				
	Stationery	\$5,020		\$5,020
	Transportation and venue booking	\$30,000		\$30,000
	Postage	\$5,000		\$5,000
	Photocopying	\$10,000		\$10,000
	Sundries	\$6,000		\$6,000
	Audit Fee	\$15,000		\$15,000
General Expenses Subtotal				\$, 71,020
Service	Guest Speakers \$800 X 54 hours	\$43,200 (54 hours)		\$43,200
	Production of digital materials	\$30,000		\$30,000
	Production of website	\$50,000		\$50,000
Service Subtotal				\$123,200
Total:				\$1,240,020
EdUHK admin overheads (15%)				\$186,003
Contingency	Contingency (Non-staff expenses)			\$5,377
Total Amount approved by QEF				\$1,431,400

9.1 Justification of Staff cost:

1. A full-time project officer is needed to support the administrative work and implementation of the project. The project officer will be responsible for liaising with schools, supervising part-time staff and student helpers as well as managing the budget of the project. The project officer will be responsible for managing all financial and personnel affairs, assisting all equipment and services and purchase procedures, recording all fixed assets, providing support to secretarial matters, coordination of data collection activities, and the logistics of workshops, and seminars and dissemination.

Preferably, the project officer should have post-qualification experience gained in tertiary education settings in managing research and development projects.

2. A full-time research assistant is needed to support research activities for the current project. He/she should have a bachelor degree in Psychology, Education or related discipline, preferably with post-qualification working experience. He/she will assist in developing lesson plan and making teaching/research materials, collect/manage data and perform preliminary data analysis.
3. Part-time research assistants are needed to provide additional support to the research-related activities for the project, such as data collection. They should have a bachelor degree in Psychology, Education or related disciplines, preferably with relevant research experience and knowledge in using statistical software, such as SPSS. In particular, we need part-time research assistants to conduct fidelity checks and collect data in schools. In Phase 3, we also need part-time research assistants when we collect data in 8 schools around the same period of time.
4. Student helpers are needed to provide additional support for administering surveys and data entry.

9.2 Justification of General expenses:

1. Stationery is needed for the project staff to handle paperwork, set up and store all file records, provide participants of workshops and seminars with necessary stationery.
2. Transportation will cover all travel expenses of school visits for lesson observation, collecting data, and conducting workshops/seminars. The cost of transportation is estimated as \$10,000. Venue booking fees is needed for conducting professional training workshops and seminars. The cost of venue booking is estimated as \$20,000.
3. Postage is needed to cover the expenses associated with mailing the publicity materials and information of workshops/seminars to schools, such as labels, stamps and envelopes.
4. Photocopying covers the expenses of printing materials of assessment tools, classroom teaching reference kits, information of workshops/seminars etc.
5. Sundries cover all unclassified expenses such as the costs of fax.
6. Audit fee is needed for auditing the budget used after completion of the project, as required by the QEF guideline.

9.3 Justification of Service:

1. Guest speakers will be hired to conduct professional development activities in Phase 1 to Phase 3. We estimated that more than 54 hours of professional development will be conducted for various phases (6 hours for seed schools and 6 hours x 8 schools for project schools).
2. The production of a teaching manual involves service in design and producing digital art work. The cost is estimated as \$30,000.
3. A website will be developed to disseminate the project findings and the teaching manual. The estimated cost for a website developed by an external technology company is \$50,000.

9.4 Justification of Contingency:

1. As the project period will last over 1 year, the proposal reserves a budget as contingency.

9.5 Justification of EdUHK administrative overheads:

1. This budget is needed to cover the administrative support services to be provided by the University and Faculty.

10. Expected Project Outcomes

- EMP teaching manual and resource website are developed and disseminated.
- Participating students have enhanced positive values and well-being.
- Participating teachers have enhanced knowledge and skills in implementing values education.
- Further dissemination of the teaching manual and resource website increases secondary school teacher knowledge and competencies in developing and implementing school-based values education.

11. Project Evaluation

11.1 Phase 1: Research Phase

Measures as shown in Table 6 will be administered to all students participated in Phase 1 of the Project to evaluate the unique effects of EMP. Pretest, posttest and 2-month delayed posttest will be conducted.

In addition, 10 to 15 students participated in EMP and their teachers will be invited to join the focus group interview. We will explore the perception of the programme and perceived effects of the programme. The feedback will then be used to further improve the programme. Each focus group will have around 5 to 6 students/teachers and each focus group interview will be around 1 hour long.

Table 6. Measures used for programme evaluation

Domain	Variable	Measurement	Description
Mindfulness	Mindfulness [15 items]	MAAS (Mindful Attention Awareness Scale) (Brown & Ryan, 2003)	The MAAS is a scale developed for assessing dispositional mindfulness.
Values	Grit (Related values: Perseverance; commitment) [10 items]	Triarchic Model of Grit Scale (Datu & Zhang, 2021)	Triarchic Model of Grit Scale measures participants' perseverance, passion, and adaptability for accomplishing long-term goals. The scale assesses the following dimensions of grit: perseverance of effort (e.g., "I am a hard worker"), consistency of interests (e.g., "New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones"), and adaptability to situations (e.g., "Changing plans or strategies is important to achieve my long-term goals in life").
	Emotional competence (Related values: Empathy; caring; respect for others) [6 items]	Chinese Positive Youth Development Scale (Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2007).	This is a 90-item scale consisting of 15 subscales, in which five of them were used for assessing the resilience, emotional, behavioral, social and moral competence.
	Social competence (Related value: Respect for others; caring; empathy) [7 items]		
	Resilience (Related value: Perseverance; sense of responsibility) [6 items]		
	Personal and Social Responsibility [12 items] (Related value: Sense of responsibility)	Personal and Social Responsibility Scale (PSRS) (Ling et al., 2021)	Personal and Social Responsibility Scale (PSRS) consists of 12 items with four dimensions (i.e., Social Welfare, Duty, Competence, and Efficacy) measuring adolescents' sense of responsibility and efficacy in dealing day-to-day tasks in both personal and civic aspects.

Well-being	Subjective Well-being [10 items]	I-PANAS-SF (Liu, You, Liu, H., & Chung, 2020).	The I-PANAS-SF includes five items measuring positive affect (PA) and five items measuring negative affect (NA). PA indicates the extent to which an individual feels enthusiastic, active and alert, whereas NA relates to an individual's subjective distress and unpleasurable feelings such as anger, fear, guilt and nervousness.
	Meaning of life [10 items]	The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger et al., 2006)	The Meaning in Life Questionnaire was designed to assess meaning in life.

11.2 Phase 2 Evaluation

For Phase 2, based on the results generated from Phase 1, a subset of these questions will be used for program evaluation purposes. In addition, upon completion of each intervention programme, in the last session, an evaluation questionnaire on the programme implementation will be distributed to participants. The questionnaire will ask about their perception of the programme, perceived effectiveness and suggestions for improvement.

12. Sustainability of Project Outcomes

- With the new curriculum framework of values education, the current project will provide resources for secondary school teachers to design school-based values education program.
- The research findings are able to further inform the design, implementation and evaluation of values education in local secondary schools.
- Local secondary schools can implement EMP based on the teaching manual and resource website after the completion of the project.

13. Declaration

The project team hereby declares that:

1. The recruitment of staff, the procurement of goods and services is made on an open, fair and competitive basis with measures taken to avoid conflict of interest in the procurement process;
2. The copyright of the deliverables/materials developed through this project is vested with the QEF and we note that any reproduction, adaption, distribution or provision of the deliverables to the public for commercial purposes by the service provider is strictly prohibited;
3. We understand that the expenditure items funded by the QEF is one-off; and
4. The learning and teaching materials to be developed meet students' learning needs, levels, age and abilities; the content and information should be correct, complete, objective and impartial.

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15. Appendices

Appendix I: EMP Design and Structure

Total of 16 sessions each 75-minute long (a total of 20 hours). The first session will be an orientation with a taste of mindfulness. The final session will be a sharing and reflecting upon the entire personal experience of attending the program. For each intervention, there will be a maximum of 25 students. In the programme, each session will be divided into 2 parts:

- Theme-based existential exploration related to values
- Guided mindfulness practices echoing the theme with an aim to experience various benefit of mindfulness in relation to enhancing positive values and promoting wellbeing.

Experiential learning will be used as the main pedagogy in both parts of a session. In part 1, the theme-based existential exploration will be embedded within authentic indoor and outdoor activities that require students' active engagement, self-reflection on the experiential process as well as cultivating larger perspectives about their lives in relation to societies, humanity and nature. In part 2, the exploration will then be consolidated via guided mindfulness practices. The introducing and practicing of various kinds of mindfulness practices provide an experiential foundation for students to develop cognitive-emotional skills and positive existence. In addition, miniature take home mindfulness activities will be designed for real applications in students' daily living. The table below shows the mapping between existential themes and values addressed in this project.

Existential Themes	Existential exploration	Values
Identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploration of multiple identities and their integration• Understanding how integration of self-identities reduce stress and enhance wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect for others• Sense of responsibility• Perseverance
Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploration of skill-based practices on enhancing connectedness with the psychological resources within and expanding to practices on enhancing connectedness with others as well as the world.• Understanding how cultivation of empathy and caring help to decrease sense of isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caring• Empathy• Respect for others
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploration of self-reflective skills that help to understand and to self-regulate on our own emotions, thoughts and behaviors.• Cultivation of constructive emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathy• Caring• Commitment
Mortality & Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploration on the sense of life purposes and skill-based practices on setting goals relating to self-growth and wellbeing.• Understanding how cultivating larger life perspectives enhances the sense of purposes and meaningfulness of our lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of responsibility• Commitment• Perseverance

Appendix II: Lesson structure sample: Understanding Isolation and Connectedness (2 lessons)

First Lesson: What makes us lonely?

Part 1

- Explorative activity involving the "Loneliness Jar"
- Using drama game to create expression of loneliness
- Engaging in an activity called the "building the unseen walls"

Considering adolescents' premature cognitive skills, abstract reasoning and conceptualization skills in their developmental stage, the games and activities will be used to visualize the abstract theme of isolation in relation to their sense of self by stimulating self-reflection on social relationships and promoting self-understanding.

Part 2

- Guided mindfulness meditation on venturing beyond the unseen walls to increase awareness of feelings and stress
- Debrief with reflection questions and sharing of mindfulness experiences in pairs or groups

Second Lesson: How can we get connected?

Part 1

- Sharing the content in the “Loneliness Jar” anonymously and matching each loneliness scenario with a kind word and a constructive suggestion among group members to allow students to reflect from personal daily events and cultivate respect, empathy and care for others.
- Engaging in a game that identify the elements that leads to the build-up of the “unseen wall” to raise the integrating awareness of thoughts, feeling and behaviour that contribute to the sense of loneliness.
- Engaging in “I am ready to connect” game with group members to enhance connectedness

Part 2

- Guided mindfulness drinking and eating to expand caring and connectedness with the world
 - Incorporating short and informal mindfulness exercise in daily activities to facilitate students’ engagement
 - Involving a wide variety of multi-sensory experiences to accommodate the adolescents’ need for physical activity and novelty
- Debrief with reflection questions and sharing of mindfulness experiences in pairs or groups

16. Report Submission Schedule

The University commits to submit proper reports in strict accordance with the following schedule:

Project Management (Should be submitted via the “Electronic Project Management System” (EPMS))		Financial Management (Hard copy together with supporting documents should be submitted to the QEF Secretariat by mail or in person)	
Type of report and reporting period	Report due on	Type of report and reporting period	Report due on
Progress Report 01/01/2023 - 30/06/2023	31/07/2023	/	/
Progress Report 01/07/2023 - 31/12/2023	31/01/2024	Interim Financial Report 01/01/2023 - 31/12/2023	31/01/2024
Progress Report 01/01/2024 - 30/06/2024	31/07/2024	/	/
Final Report 01/01/2023 - 31/12/2024	31/03/2025	Final Financial Report 01/01/2024 - 31/12/2024	31/03/2025