

**Final Report of Project**

Project No. : 2007 /0115

**Part A**

Project Title: Enhancing School Engagement: Fact-finding and Interventions

Name of Organization/School: Department of Psychology, University of Hong Kong

Project Period: From April 1, 2008 (month/year) to 31 December, 2010 (month/year)

**Part B**

*Please read the **Guidelines to Completion of Final Report of Quality Education Fund Projects** before completing this part of the report.*

Please use separate A4-size sheets to provide an overall report with regard to the following aspects:

1. Attainment of objectives

Objective statement	Activities related to the objective	Extent of attainment of the objective	Evidence or indicators of having achieved the objective	Reasons for not being able to achieve the objective
To investigate the antecedents of school engagement among junior secondary students (Form 1 to Form 3) in Hong Kong	Five questionnaire surveys were conducted in the three secondary schools from July 2008 to July 2010. At the end of each semester, the junior secondary students in these 3 schools completed a questionnaire that measured their school engagement and the personal and contextual factors that contributed to their school engagement.	Fully achieved	From the results of this longitudinal study, we are able to see the vicissitudes of school engagement among junior secondary school students. We are also able to see how school engagement is associated to a number of personal and contextual antecedents. For every survey, we presented the results to the school in report (see Appendix 1). Including the report on the pilot survey, we had prepared 18 reports (6 reports for each of the three schools).	NA
To develop and evaluate the	1. We developed two intervention	Fully achieved	The two programs have been published in	NA

intervention programs that would address these antecedents and promote school engagement among junior secondary students.	programs for F.1 students: Social Competencies Program and Study Skills Program.		Aug 2010.	
	2. We implemented the above two programs and a learning motivation program in the three secondary schools.	Fully achieved	The intervention programs were evaluated with field experimental design. The evaluation reports had been sent to the schools.	NA
	3. We published the two intervention programs and distributed them to 400 secondary schools in Hong Kong	Fully achieved	We received positive feedback from many secondary schools.	NA
	4. We carried out staff development programs for the three secondary schools	Fully achieved	The evaluation from the teachers are positive	NA
	5. A public seminar was organized for the dissemination of the findings and products of the project.	Fully achieved	The evaluation from the participants are positive	NA

## 6. Project impact on learning effectiveness, professional development and school development

### (a) Learning Effectiveness

We have developed a study skills program for junior secondary students. On the basis of information processing theories, we taught students how to turn short-term memory into long-term memory and how to integrate new information into their existing cognitive structure. The learning strategies are able to help students learn more effectively. The evaluation indicated that students who had attended this program were more effective in information processing than their counterparts in the control group. In addition, we also have also developed a social competencies program. In this program, we helped students acquire more adaptive social cognitions and social skills. The evaluation of this program is also positive. Students who had attend this program were more competent in conflict resolution than their counterparts in the control group.

#### (b) Professional Development

The professional development for the three schools was in the format of peer coaching. The project leader took more than a month to work with a panel of teachers in each school for the development of one or more instruction units that would engage students in learning. In Lok Sin Tong Young Ko Hsiao Lin Secondary School, the F. 1 teachers of Integrated Humanities took part in the peer coaching and developed three instruction units that covered pre historic period, early civilizations, and Greek and Roman Empires. In Kwai Chung Methodist College, the F.2 teachers of Chinese Language took part in the peer coaching and developed an instruction unit on character description (人物描寫). In YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College, the F.2 and F. 5 teachers of Liberal Studies took part in the peer coaching and developed a program on project learning and an instruction unit on interpersonal relationship, respectively. The knowledge generated in the peer coaching was not restricted to the teachers who were involved in the peer coaching. In both Lok Sin Tong Young Ko Hsiao Lin Secondary School and Kwai Chung Methodist College, school-based seminars was conducted for all the teachers. How teachers could make their teaching engaging to students were discussed in these seminars. The format of professional development employed by the present project was more intensive and effective than a one-shot workshop or seminar. Peer coaching ensures that psycho-educational theories can really be translated into reality. The impact of peer coaching is obviously bigger than mere one-shot seminar or workshop although it is very labor intensive.

#### (c) School Development

The focus of the current project is not on school development. However, the results of the project do have impact on school development of the three schools. Together with the pilot survey, we have completed 6 surveys in each of the 3 schools. After each survey, we sent a report to each school, informing the principal and teachers about the results of the survey. As contextual factors of school engagement were included in the purview of investigation, the school personnel were able to get insight from the survey reports for school development. For example, one of the schools found that the problem of bullying, a contextual factor, had increased since the last semester. The principal and his team took immediate actions to rectify the problem. The feedback provided by the survey was useful to school development.

#### 7. Cost-effectiveness – a self-evaluation against clear indicators and measures

As shown in the Budget Checklist (Appendix 2), we have a surplus of HK\$22,652.74. We have saved 2.91% of the budget. We did so without compromising the quality of our project or reducing any of our output. In fact, we were able to achieve more than we promised in the proposal. In the proposal, we planned to produce the manuals of two intervention programs in the form of CD ROM. To increase the visibility and the impact of the two programs, we changed our mind and decided to publish the manuals in the form of book with CD ROM attached. We achieve this by cutting our expenditure in equipment and staffing. In sum, we have achieved deliverables as shown in Section 8 and the many activities as shown in Section 9 within 2 and half years with a budget of \$755,847.

8. Deliverables and modes of dissemination; responses to dissemination

Item description (e.g. type, title, quantity, etc.)	Evaluation of the quality and dissemination value of the item	Dissemination activities conducted (e.g. mode, date, etc.) and responses	Is it worthwhile and feasible for the item to be widely disseminated by the QEF? If yes, please suggest the mode(s) of dissemination.
<p>1. Instructor Manual and CD-ROM on Social Cognitions and Skills Program 《社交思考及技巧課程》</p> <p>2. Instructor Manual and CD-ROM on Study Skills Program 《學習技巧課程》</p>	<p>The two programs had been launched in all the three schools. We employed field experimental design to evaluate their effectiveness. The results of the evaluation were sent to the schools in form of report. The results indicated that the programs were effective. Appendices 3 and 4 are the evaluation reports of the two programs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In November 2010, the program was distributed by surface mail to 400 government and subsidized secondary schools in Hong Kong.</li> <li>2. A public seminar was held at the University of Hong Kong on December 4, 2010. About 170 educators attended the seminar and each of them received the manual.</li> <li>3. The responses from the participants of the public seminar on December 4, 2010 were very positive. Please see Appendix 6 for the evaluation.</li> <li>4. The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China asked for 30 copies of the manual so that their social workers and educational psychologists can launch the programs in their school-based services. They picked up the manuals from us in early January 2011.</li> <li>5. The Teacher and Parent Association (PTA) of the TWGHs. S.C.Gaw Memorial College requested a consultation meeting for the implementation of the program. As a result, we met with their principal, responsible person in the PTA, and two educational psychologists in a consultation meeting on January 5, 2011.</li> <li>6. True Light College and HKTA Tang Hin Memorial Schools invited us to conduct staff development workshop in their schools so that their teachers can better master the programs.</li> </ol>	<p>Yes, it is worthwhile and feasible for two manuals to be widely disseminated by the QEF. We have sent 100 copies of the two manuals to the QEF Secretariat. The QEF can include them in its product catalogue and sell them to the public on a reasonable price. In addition, we are willing to share our experience about this manual with the other educators in the promotion and dissemination activities conducted by the QEF. In fact, we have accepted the invitation of the QEF to share the results of our project in the Exhibition of Teaching and Learning organized by the Education City on June 28 and 29, 2011.</p>

9. Activity list

Types of activities <i>(e.g. seminar, performance, etc.)</i>	Brief description <i>(e.g. date, theme, venue, etc.)</i>	No. of participants				Feedback from participants
		schools	teachers	students	others <i>(Please specify)</i>	
1st Wave of questionnaire survey school engagement	July 2008 Longitudinal research	3		1171		N.A.
2nd Wave of questionnaire survey school engagement	Jan 2009 Longitudinal research	3		1506		N.A.
3rd Wave of questionnaire survey school engagement	July 2009 Longitudinal research	3		1516		N.A.
4th Wave of questionnaire survey school engagement	Jan 2010 Longitudinal research	3		1176		N.A.
5th Wave of questionnaire survey school engagement	July 2010 Longitudinal research	3		1058		N.A.
Implementation and evaluation of the Social Cognitions and Skills Program	August 2009 to December 2009 School-based intervention program	3		132		Positive
Implementation and evaluation of the Study Skills Program	August 2009 to December 2009 School-based intervention program	3		147		Positive
Implementation and evaluation of motivation enhancement program	August 2009 to December 2009 School-based intervention program	3		96		Positive
Peer coaching on engaging instruction	October 2009 to January 2010 & December 2011 Peer coaching with a group of teachers in each of the 3 schools	3	15			Positive

School-based seminars	March 2009	2	140			Positive. For details, please see Appendix 5
Public seminar	December 4, 2010 Public seminar for educators on the current project	61	170			Positive. For details, please see Appendix 6.

10. Difficulties encountered and solutions adopted

In the proposal of the current project, we intended to produce electronic manuals instead of printed manuals. Therefore, we only asked for small budget for the production (HK\$30,000). We later reconsidered this decision and came to a conclusion that the impact of the manuals would be greater if both printed manuals and CD-ROM could be produced. However, HK\$30,000 was not enough to produce two printed manuals with CD-ROM. To solve the problem, we had adopted the following strategies:

- a. Minimize the expenses in other items so as to save up the money for the production of the manuals. For example, we had given up 1 notebook computer and 2 digital video cameras.
- b. To save the expense on professional editorial service and formatting, we sent our R.A. to attend publishing course so that she could handle the matters. As the tuition was not covered by the QEF budget, the project leader paid for that with her personal fund.
- c. We recruit many voluntary interns to work for the project. They are local and overseas college students who are eager to attach to research project and intervention programs. We provided the guidance and training to them so that they could provide free assistance to our operations.

*\*The report should be signed by the supervisor of the school/the head of the organization or the one who signed the Quality Education Fund Agreement for allocation of grant on behalf of the organization.*

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