

**THE PERSONAL GROWTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM**  
**IN HONG KONG PRIMARY SCHOOLS:**  
**SOME CASE STUDIES OF DEVELOPMENT**

**By**

**WONG MAN WAI**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning  
University of East Anglia**

**June, 2010**

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with the author and that no quotation from the thesis, nor any information derived therefrom, may be published without the author's prior, written consent.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to explore possibility of developing personal growth education (PGE), determine the optimum development strategy for Hong Kong primary schools, and discover the significance of the PGE development process for Hong Kong's educational system. Results suggest that PGE development is possible. Stakeholders' perceptions of PGE changed over the implementation period. The key points of the optimum strategy include introducing a new initiative through lobbying, performing a capacity assessment of the school system, clarifying the standpoints of the schools toward different policies, selecting a suitable anchor point for the new initiative, conducting pilot tests, searching for external support, allocating proper resources, and managing the curriculum smartly. In the PGE development process, what is most significant is how to facilitate change. Change implies a shift from the old to a new equilibrium. To effect change and implement the new initiative of PGE, a paradigm shift must occur for all stakeholders, from educational authorities to frontline teachers, in their values, attitudes and strategies. Specifically, expected values and attitudes should primarily involve respect, empathy, and congruence to reach the new equilibrium with double-loop learning, holistic thinking, intimate collaboration and communication. Moreover, results suggest that more attention needs to be given to time, teachers, processes, trust, teacher's autonomy, and an effective whole school approach to guidance. Moreover, this study also explores the importance of cross-disciplinary management, the possibility of integration, and the paradox of the dual identity of student guidance teachers. The introduction of a new initiative may succeed if a paradigm shift occurs. However, with the institution's limited resources, all leaders and stakeholders must be honest for the 'seesaw effect' to take place in a balanced manner, that is, in such a way that different tensions operate and counteract each other to create a particular equilibrium state. A win-win situation cannot be achieved without additional resources and appropriate adjustment.

## CONTENT LIST

<b><u>CHAPTER AND SUB-TITLES</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<u>1.1. Why This Research?</u>	1
1.1.1. The research questions	1
1.1.2. Personal motivation	2
1.1.3. Reflection on the introduction of personal growth education in schools	5
<u>1.2. Needs of Our Children and Curriculum Reform in Hong Kong</u>	6
1.2.1. Our children today	6
1.2.2. Curriculum reform in Hong Kong	9
<u>1.3 Chapter Summary</u>	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>14</b>
<u>2.1. Development of School Guidance Services in Hong Kong and Other Countries</u>	14
2.1.1. The current development of school guidance services in Hong Kong	14
2.1.2. General criticism of the guidance policy in Hong Kong in terms of the Whole School Approach to guidance	19
2.1.3. Difficulties confronted by student guidance teachers in other countries about guidance implementation	23
<u>2.2. Introduction of Personal Growth Education</u>	26
2.2.1. Brief introduction of personal growth education	26
2.2.2. The learning theory and pedagogy of the personal growth education	31
<u>2.3. School-based Curriculum Development of Personal Growth Education and its relationship with the formal curriculum</u>	40
2.3.1. School-based curriculum development	41
2.3.2. Constraints in School-based Curriculum Development	45
2.3.3. Recent Studies related to the personal growth education	46
2.3.4. Orientation of the personal growth education in the formal curriculum	49

<b><u>CHAPTER AND SUB-TITLES</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
2.3.4.1. Moral and Civic Education development and PGE	50
2.3.4.2. Personal, social and humanities education (PSHE) development and PGE	52
2.3.4.3. Recent reform in religious education (Christianity) in Hong Kong	54
<u>2.4 Chapter Summary</u>	58
<b>CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>60</b>
<u>3.1. Introduction</u>	60
<u>3.2. Research Design and Justification</u>	61
3.2.1. Initiation of This Study	61
3.2.2. Research Design and the Three Stages of Data Collection	64
3.2.2.1. Stage One – Action research with case study in School A (2002-2004) and case study in School B (2004-2006)	67
3.2.2.2. Stage Two –Questionnaires to teachers in School A and B 2004 and 2006 and SGTs returned from 77 primary Schools in 2005	81
3.2.2.3. Stage Three - Interviews with different stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, SGTs, social workers and EMB people (2004–2006)	83
3.2.2.4. Limitation of the study as a whole	93
<u>3.3. Chapter Summary</u>	93
<b>CHAPTER FOUR THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THIS STUDY</b>	<b>94</b>
<u>4.1 Introduction</u>	94
<u>4.2. Themes from Action Research</u>	94
4.2.1. Political issues	97
4.2.2. Resources management issues	97
4.2.3. Curriculum management issues	98
<u>4.3. Themes from Questionnaires</u>	99
4.3.1. Themes from the questionnaires to teachers in School A and B	99
4.3.2. Themes from the questionnaires to Student Guidance Teachers (SGTs)	101

<b><u>CHAPTER AND SUB-TITLES</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
4.3.2.1. Political issues	102
4.3.2.2. Resources management issues	102
4.3.2.3. Curriculum management issues	103
4.3.2.4. Growth and workload of student guidance teachers (SGTs) in the process of PGE implementation	105
<u>4.4. Themes from Interviews</u>	106
<u>4.5. Themes that Emerged For the Whole Study</u>	107
4.5.1. Management of political issues	108
4.5.2. Management of resources	109
4.5.3. Management of the curriculum	109
<b>CHAPTER FIVE MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL ISSUES</b>	<b>111</b>
<u>5.1. The ‘Unarticulated’ Policy Context of Personal Growth Education (PGE)</u>	111
5.1.1. EMB’s support for new policies and the truth underlined	111
5.1.2. Elements to prioritize the policies and the paradox of conformity	114
5.1.3. EMB’s policy, school-based development and the hidden agenda	118
5.1.4. Impact of external school review (ESR) on Personal Growth Education development (PGE)	124
5.1.5. Are schools and teachers prepared for the paradigm shift?	126
5.1.6. Is PGE a symbolic policy?	127
5.1.7. Section summary	131
<u>5.2 Involvement of Top Leadership and Middle Management</u>	132
5.2.1. Involvement of top leadership and management	132
5.2.1.1. Can principals help?	133
5.2.1.2. Can deputy principals help?	141
5.2.1.3. The influence of developmental stages and culture of Schools	145
5.2.1.4. Section summary	148
5.2.2. Involvement of middle management	148
5.2.2.1. Can middle managers help?	148
5.2.2.2. Involvement of discipline masters and the collaboration between discipline and guidance	155

<b><u>CHAPTER AND SUB-TITLES</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
5.2.2.3. Struggles of middle management to deal with the new policy	158
5.2.2.4. Collaboration and competition	165
A. Positive expectation for collaboration	
B. Paradigm shift of middle managers	
C. Cross-disciplinary management	
5.2.3. Section summary	174
5.3. <u>The Leadership of Student Guidance Teachers</u>	176
5.3.1 Implications of personal growth education development to student guidance development and student guidance teachers	176
5.3.2. Student guidance teacher as a curriculum leader	178
5.3.3. The unstable status of the student guidance teachers with the changing policy	181
5.3.4. The complex job demands of student guidance teachers	182
5.3.5. Different situation and setting in secondary schools	184
5.3.6. From counsellor to manager: is it possible?	185
5.3.7. Section summary	195
5.4. <u>Chapter Summary</u>	197
<b>CHAPTER SIX MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES</b>	<b>205</b>
6.1. <u>Manpower Management</u>	205
6.1.1. Involvement of teachers-the current situations	205
6.1.1.1. Quality of team members	213
6.1.1.2. Capability of teachers	214
6.1.2. Why teachers keep away from the guidance work?	217
6.1.2.1. Teachers' acceptance of guidance	217
6.1.2.2. The bounded collaboration and isolated working practice of teachers	220
6.1.2.3. Transformative shifts: new demands for teachers	225
6.1.2.4. Impacts of motivations and job satisfaction of teachers	227
6.1.3. Strategies to increase the involvement of teachers in the guidance work	233
6.1.3.1. Teacher training for student guidance and personal growth education (PGE)	233

<b><u>CHAPTER AND SUB-TITLES</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
6.1.3.2. Insight for team management	238
6.1.3.3. The actual Whole-School Approach (WSA)	240
6.1.4. Section summary	241
<u>6.2. Time Management</u>	244
6.2.1. Time is the key element to develop a curriculum	244
6.2.2. Time allocation for the personal growth education (PGE)	245
6.2.3. Section summary	250
<u>6.3. External Support</u>	250
6.3.1. Support from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social workers	250
6.3.2. Support from educational psychologists	252
6.3.3. Section summary	252
<u>6.4. Chapter Summary</u>	253
<b>CHAPTER 7 MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>256</b>
<u>7.1. Introduction</u>	256
<u>7.2 Necessity of PGE and the Expectation for PGE</u>	257
<u>7.3. Teaching, Learning and Changes</u>	261
7.3.1. General feedbacks about the personal growth education (PGE)	261
7.3.2. Teachers' performance in personal growth education lessons	264
7.3.3. Collaborative lesson planning meetings (CLPM), co-teaching and demonstration	270
7.3.3.1. Collaborative lesson planning meetings tings (CLPM)	271
7.3.3.2. Collaborative teaching	274
7.3.3.3. Demonstration	277
7.3.4. Debriefing and self-disclosure	279
7.3.4.1. Debriefing	279
7.3.4.2. Self-disclosure	282
7.3.4.3. Sharing time of the PGE	284
7.3.5. To assess the changes of students after the program	285
7.3.5.1. Introduction of family worksheet and the findings	287
7.3.5.2. Beyond worksheets, what else?	293

<b><u>CHAPTER AND SUB-TITLES</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
7.3.6. Redevelopment of teacher-student relationships	296
7.3.7. Section summary	301
<u>7.4. The modes of delivery of personal growth education</u>	302
7.4.1. School-based design or textbooks?	302
7.4.2. The facts of school-based curriculum development	306
7.4.3. Comments on school-based personal growth education curriculum design	310
7.4.3.1. General comments from Schools A and B	310
7.4.3.2. Teachers' and students' feedback on lesson plan design	313
7.4.4. Is personal growth education really a "subject"?	318
7.4.5. Section summary	323
<u>7.5. Is Integration Possible?</u>	324
7.5.1. Integration of guidance curriculum into the regular curriculum	325
7.5.2. General feedback about integration	327
7.5.3. Integrations of personal growth education in School A and B	332
7.5.4. Conclusion for the comment and actual situation about integration	336
7.5.5. Is integration a feasible approach?	345
7.5.5.1. Is the integration possible for personal growth education (PGE) and Moral and Civic Education (MCE)?	346
7.5.5.2. Is the integration possible for personal growth education (PGE) and General Studies (GS)?	350
7.5.5.3. Is the integration possible for personal growth education (PGE) and Religious Education (RE)?	353
7.5.6. Section summary	360
<u>7.6. Chapter Summary</u>	361
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT      CONCLUSION</b>	<b>366</b>
<u>8.1. Introduction</u>	366
<u>8.2. Summary of the Findings in This Study</u>	366
8.2.1. The positive findings in this study	366
8.2.2. The negative findings from this study	367
8.2.3. Change for the next equilibrium	370



<b><u>CHAPTER AND SUB-TITLES</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.</u></b>
<u>8.3. The Limitations to Change</u>	374
<u>8.4. Paradigm Shift of Values and Attitudes</u>	377
<u>8.5. Mission Possible?</u>	384
8.5.1. Summary of feasible Strategies	384
8.5.2. More crucial points to note	399
8.5.3. Beyond paradigm shift	406
<u>8.6. Conclusion</u>	409
<u>8.7 Further Suggestions</u>	409
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>411-439</b>
<b>APPENDICES AND VERBATIM</b>	

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CC: Curriculum Coordinator

CDC : Curriculum Development Committee

CDHK: Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong

CLPM: Collaborative lesson planning meetings

D&G: Discipline and Guidance

DM: Discipline Master

EDB: Education Bureau (new name after 2007)- applied in the text

EMB: Education and Manpower Bureau (old name before 2007)

GS: General Studies

MCE: Moral and Civic Education

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

P1, P2: Primary One, Primary Two or Level One, Level Two

PGE: Personal Growth Education

PSHE: Personal, Social and Humanities Education

RE: Religious Education

SGO: Student Guidance Officer (serves government primary schools and small schools with no. of classes less than 12, he / she was employed by EDB.)

SGP: Student Guidance Personnel (serves aided primary schools with number of classes between 12 to 18, he / she is employed by different NGOs where they successfully got the tender from the sponsoring bodies, they are all contract staff. Likely, there is strong linkage between NGOs and the sponsoring bodies)

SGT: Student Guidance Teacher (serves aided primary schools with no. of classes equal or over 18, he / she is employed and managed by different sponsoring bodies)

WSA: Whole School Approach

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1.2    Balanced Consideration (extracted from CDC-ED, 2001b June p.11)
- Figure 2.1    Comprehensive Guidance Program Elements (adapted from Gysbers (2002: 29))
- Figure 2.2    Experiential learning theory (adapted from Kolb, 1984)
- Figure 2.3    Diagrammatic Representation of PSHE KLA Curriculum Framework (adopted from Chan (2006))
- Figure 3.1    Research design of this study
- Figure 3.2    Action Research in School A and B from 2002-2006
- Figure 5.1    The additional pressure, apparent consensus and hidden agenda in schools
- Figure 5.2    Requirement for teachers nowadays
- Figure 5.3    The proposed relationship between Management Intensity of School and Professionalism of teachers
- Figure 5.4    Problems solved or problems created?
- Figure 5.5    The role of deputy heads in schools adapted from Garrett and McGeachie (1999:73)
- Figure 6.1    The observed biases or degree of involvement of teachers, discipline masters (DMs), SGTs and the whole school in the areas of teaching, discipline, and guidance and counselling shown in the cases of this study.
- Figure 6.2    Perceived relationships between professional development and satisfaction and commitment (cited in J. L. Crocker, 2005, p. 7)
- Figure 6.3    Trust among stakeholders
- Figure 7.1    Students' feedback in the PGE lessons
- Figure 7.2    Teachers' performance in the PGE lessons
- Figure 7.3    Teachers' and Students' Scores about the curriculum design
- Figure 8.1    The three-step process of organisational change in force field analysis (adapted from Owen, 1995)
- Figure 8.2    Single-loop learning of organisation makes no transition to the new culture.
- Figure 8.3    Summary of the conflicts of "productivity and efficiency" versus "adaptability and job satisfaction" of teachers (adapted from Ng, 1992)
- Figure 8.4    Balanced Consideration for PGE development

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	The structure of this study
Table 3.2	Research methods applied at different data collection stage
Table 3.3	Key developments of the PGE in School A and School B
Table 4.1	Evaluations done in School A and B along the action research
Table 4.2	Factors those supported the implementation of PGE in School A and B noted from the action research
Table 5.1	The conflicting situations observed in Schools A and B:
Table 5.2	The responses of school towards academic and non-academic issues
Table 5.3	Difference between the mission/targets and the hidden agendas of School A and B
Table 5.4	Principal Support in different schools
Table 5.5	Support from middle management in different schools for the PGE
Table 5.6.	The dominant reform items and the developmental stages in School B (observed from 2004-2006)
Table 5.7	Leadership Contexts and Activities Applied to School Counseling (adapted from Dollarhide, 2003, p.306)
Table 5.8	Comparison of a guidance teacher with a manager
Table 7.1	Comparison between GS, MCE, RS, PGE and values education
Table 7.2	Conclusion for the comment and actual situation about integration of PGE
Table 8.1	The paradigm shift expected in this study from a traditional setting to a new equilibrium that facilitates learning and communication for curriculum development.
Table 8.2	Conclusions regarding the positive values and attitudes necessary to overcome changes
Table 8.3	Conclusions regarding the negative values and attitudes that inhibit change found in the study
Table 8.4	Summary of the possible strategies for PGE development in this study
Table 8.5	A proposal of an integrated mode of curriculum structure of PGE
Table 8.6	Summary of values, attitudes and strategies of change (paradigm shift) reflected from this study:

## **INFORMATION OF THE INTERVIEWEES**

Area	Short form	Description	Teaching Experience at the interview time
School A	A-T1	A young teacher	2
	A-T2	A middle manager	over 25
	A-T3	An experienced teacher	over 30
	A-T4	A middle Manager	almost 10
	A-T5	A middle manager	over 10
	A-T6	An experienced teacher	almost 10
	A-T7	An experienced teacher	almost 10
	A-T8	A social worker	---
	A-T9	A middle manager	over 25
	A-T10	A middle Manager	over 25
	A-T11	A middle Manager	over 20
	A-T12	A middle manager	almost 20
School B	B-T1	A middle manager	over 25
	B-T2	An experienced teacher	over 20
	B-T3	An experienced teacher	over 15
	B-T4	An experienced teacher	over 20
	B-T5	An experienced teacher	over 25
	B-T6	A middle manager	over 20
	B-T7	An experienced teacher	over 25
	B-T8	A middle manager	over 30
	B-T9	An experienced teacher	over 30
Lesson study in School B	Teacher R	The class teacher of 3R	over 15
	Teacher S	The class teacher of 3S	3
	Teacher T	The class teacher of 3T	3
Other interviewees	3R	Students in 3R	---
	3S	Students in 3S	---
	3T	Students in 3T	---
	B-6-P1	A parent at Level 6 in School B	---
	A-4-S	A student at level 4 in School A	---
	EDX	EDB officers	---
	SW	Experienced Social Workers	---

Area	Short form	Description	Experience of counselling at the interview time (2006)
Student Guidance Teachers	SG-C	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-D	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-E	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	almost 10
	SG-F	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-G	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-H	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-I	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	almost 10
	SG-J	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	almost 10
	SG-K	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	almost 10
	SG-L	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-M	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-N	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	7
	SG-O	Experienced Student Guidance Teacher	Over 10

School	Type and religion background	Status at the interview time (2006)
A	An aided primary school with religion background	At risk
B	An aided primary school with religion background	Well-developed
C1/C2	An aided primary school (AM and PM sections)	Alright
D	An aided primary school with religion background	At risk
E	An aided primary school	Closing
F	An aided primary school with religion background	At risk
G	An aided primary school with religion background	Well-developed
H	An aided primary school with religion background	Well-developed
I	An aided primary school with religion background	Alright
J	An aided primary school with religion background	Well-developed
K	An aided primary school with religion background	Alright
L	An aided primary school with religion background	Well-developed
M	An aided primary school with religion background	Closing
N	An aided primary school with religion background	Closing
O	An aided primary school with religion background	Well-developed

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A – Case Study Record for School A**

A1	Background and History of School A
A2	Official Status of Student Guidance from 2002–2006 in School A
A3	Personal Growth Education (PGE) Curriculum Developed in School A during 2002–2004
A4	Development History of Personal Growth Education (PGE) of School A during 2002–2004
A5	Implementation Note for School A (Extract)
A6	Agenda and Minutes (Sample)
A7	In-house Teacher Training Programs (Rundown and Reflection)
A8	Extracts from the Annual Evaluation Reports (2002-2004) about Personal Growth Education (PGE) Implementation
A9	Evaluation Samples for Personal Growth Education (PGE) Lessons
A10	Summary of Feedback about Personal Growth Education (PGE) Curriculum Design (2002-2004) from Evaluation Forms and Observations
A11	Samples of Lesson Observation Notes (2002–2004) and Demonstration Notes (2002–2003)
A12	Personal Growth Education (PGE) Worksheet Samples from School A
A13	Summary of Feedback from the Questionnaires for Teachers in School A (2004/2006)

### **Appendix B – Case Study Record for School B**

B1	Background and History of School B
B2	Official status of Student Guidance in School B during 2003-2006
B3	Personal Growth Education (PGE) Curriculum Developed in 2003–2006
B4	Development History of Personal Growth Education (PGE) in 2003–2006
B5	Implementation Note for School B (Extract)
B6	Agenda and Minutes Sample
B7	In-house Teacher Training Programs (Rundown and Reflection)
B8	Extracts from the Annual Evaluation Reports (2004–2006) about Personal Growth Education (PGE) Implementation
B9	Evaluation Samples for Personal Growth Education (PGE) Lessons
B10	Feedback on Lesson Plans and Curriculum Design 2004–2006 (Extract)
B11	Lesson Observation Notes 2004-2006 (Sample)
B12	Lesson Study 2005–2006
B13	Personal Growth Education (PGE) Worksheet Samples
B14	Summary of Feedback from the Questionnaires for Teachers in School B (2004/2006)

B15	Feedback on Personal Growth Education (PGE) Curriculum Design with Quantitative Survey
-----	--

### **Appendix C –Questionnaires Sample and Analysis for Student Guidance Teachers**

C1	Questionnaires Sample for Student Guidance Teachers
C2	Analysis Result of Questionnaires from Student Guidance Teachers
C3	Analysis Result of Questionnaires – SWOT analysis of Personal Growth Education (PGE) in Views of Guidance Teachers

### **Appendix D –Agreement Letter and Questionnaires Sample for School A and B**

D1	Information of the Interviewees
D2	Agreement Letter of Case Study for School A and B
D3	Agreement Letter of Teachers and Students
D4	Questionnaires Sample – Chinese Version
D5	Questionnaires Sample – English Version

### **Appendix F – Official Documents**

F1	Curriculum Structure of Personal Growth Education (EMBSDD, 2004)
F2	The Job List for SGT (Extract from EMB Document)
F3	A Proposed Set of Values and Attitudes for Incorporation in the School Curriculum
F4	A Suggested List of Significant Life Events for Primary Students

### **IMPORTANT VERBATIM FOR ALL CHAPTERS**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to present my heartfelt thanks for the sincere guidance of my dear and respectful supervisor, Professor John Elliott, for his long-term patience and encouragement. I appreciate his generosity and openness in allowing me to change my research topic, his wisdom to guide me through the painful study period, and his humble and serious attitude as a well-known international scholar. Professor Elliot has served as the best model for my future career and studies. In addition, I would like to thank my parents and family for their support and elations.

Further, I must offer my sincerest gratitude to all of the hardworking, respectful, and persevering student guidance teachers and school counsellors in primary schools in Hong Kong, as well as all of my ex-colleagues and the parents, students and all interviewees with whom I collaborated for their altruistic and candid disclosure. Moreover, I would like to thank my former principals of School A and B, who allowed me the opportunity to investigate the problem in depth.

Finally, special thanks must be given to Dr. Nalini Boodhoo (UEA) and Professor Bob Adamson (HKIED) for their constructive advices for dissertation writing; Professor K.C.Ho (OUHK) for his endless support and encouragement throughout this lonely and difficult journey and Professor K.F.Tam (HKPU) for his guidance.